

The Naturalist as Photographer
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Ladysmith Camera Club presentation
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Notes:

An important aspect of nature photography for naturalists is the documentation of species, habitats, natural history, behaviour, and so on. Since the intent is usually to provide information about the subject, most photography in this genre is done "straight". There is less opportunity to "make the picture", i.e. to visualize a shot and then produce it. Of course, photographers with a naturalist bent will still see - and photograph - the natural world in ways that go beyond documentation, with results that are just as satisfying in their own way.

Many photo opportunities in the natural world happen suddenly and often unexpectedly; there is little time to plan the shot, and it is all too easy to miss the shot completely. Conversely, even a "poor" photograph may hold useful information for naturalists.

Some subjects may be predictable enough that a photographer can set up for a shot and wait for it to happen. Sometimes the time and place are right to wait for the shot, but the subject may or may not show. And there are times when a photographer is on location for an expected opportunity, and an unexpected event takes place as well.

There is great enjoyment in capturing fine images of wildlife and their habitats; paying more attention to the information you have captured in the shots as well is an opportunity to learn more about the natural world - and it can be addictive!

Here are some resources:

A printed bird checklist will have very helpful information on the status of birds in the area, including whether they occur in a given area, at what time of year, and how common they are. Look for them through naturalist clubs or nature stores. Ladysmith (as usual) is caught in the middle, finding itself included as part of both the Victoria and Nanaimo "checklist areas."

To report banded or collared birds:

<http://www.ec.gc.ca/bbo/default.asp?lang=En&n=AA9C96BC-1>

To report marine mammal sightings: <http://wildwhales.org/sightings/> This is a collaboration between Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Vancouver Aquarium, and non-profit groups.

British Columbia Humpback Whale Catalogue (fluke shots):

<http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/science/species-especies/humpback-bosse/BCX/BCX-eng.htm>

There are also online catalogues for whales in Alaska and off the west coast of Vancouver Island.

Catalogue (pdf) of Transient Killer Whales: http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/science/species-especies/cetacean-cetaces/CRP-publications/T%20Cat%202008%20Final%20lo_res.pdf

Catalogue (pdf) of Northern Resident Killer Whales: http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/science/species-especies/cetacean-cetaces/CRP-publications/NRKW%20catalogue%202007%20lo_res.pdf

I've been unable to find an online catalogue of Southern Resident Killer Whales; you may get one by joining some of the organizations, or pick up a hard copy.

If you find injured wildlife, contact North Island Wildlife Recovery Centre

in Errington, <http://www.niwra.org>, or wildlife@niwra.org, or 250-248-8534

For information on "Citizen Science" projects, like Project Feeder Watch, contact Studies Canada:

<http://www.bsc-eoc.org/volunteer.jsp?lang=EN>

Here are some suggested sites (there are many more) where you might find help identifying critters you have photographed:

<http://facweb.furman.edu/~snyder.john/tatum/> Butterflies and Moths of Vancouver Island

<http://www.americaninsects.net>

<http://bugguide.net/node/view/15740>

<https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/search/>

Download notes from an earlier talk titled "Birds on a Budget", on photographing birds, here:

<http://ladysmithcameraclub.com/resources/downloads/>