

# Connecting People with Nature



*Albino ensatina salamander (Photo: Michael Schmidt)*

## Stanley Park's Secret Nature

Unexpected species lurk in Vancouver's largest park.

*Kathleen Stormont, Fundraising and Communications Coordinator*

You may think Canada's most famous park has no secrets left to hide from its 8 million annual visitors, but Stanley Park's forests and shores continue to yield surprising discoveries for biologists.

A once in a lifetime find this past March astonished an unsuspecting crew of BCIT Fish, Wildlife and Recreation students and volunteers hosted by Robyn Worcester, SPES' Conservation Programs Manager. "When I first saw it, I was not totally sure what I was looking at," said Robyn. What Robyn discovered during a drizzly morning survey for reptile and amphibian species rocked the scientific community: an extremely rare albino ensatina salamander (*Ensatina eschscholtzii*) nestled under a rotting log. Only a small number of true albino amphibians has ever been found – anywhere!

Stanley Park is likely home to a number of elusive and yet-to-be-found critters. *Oxypoda stanleyi*, a tiny beetle no longer than your little fingernail, has only been identified in Stanley Park. Individuals of this species (26 males and females in all) were discovered in 2007 by UBC scientist Dr. John Mclean. Dr. Mclean and his team set up insect traps throughout the Park following a major 2006 wind storm to study the impact of insect populations on the increased volume of dead trees in the forest.

With 60% of this 440 hectare (1000 acre) park's forest still intact, species new to Stanley Park – or species altogether new to science – likely still exist. We do not know, for instance, whether the mysterious Pacific water shrew (*Sorex bendirii*) lives here. It is so endangered, though, that its favourite habitat – moist skunk cabbage sites and stream/pond edges – is protected in the Park as a precautionary measure under the federal Species at Risk Act.

Recognizing that we don't know all there is to know about this urban park, SPES staff continue to monitor and survey its plant and animal



*Pacific water shrew (Photo: US Forest Service)*

populations. Understanding which species call Stanley Park home will help us better inform management plans for a forest that lies scarcely more than a couple of kilometers from Vancouver's downtown core.

*Wondering what you spotted in the Park? Give us a call! We're curious, too. 604-718-6523.*



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# What's New...

## Ranging Around

*Casey Whitelock, Eco Ranger Coordinator*

As of July 2014, our Eco Ranger program will have kicked off its 14th season! Fifty adult volunteers of diverse ages and backgrounds will be in Stanley Park throughout July and August to interact with visitors and provide information about the Park. Our Eco Rangers have gone through extensive training on everything from plant and wildlife identification to the cultural history of Stanley Park. They are ready to share their knowledge!



*EcoRanger volunteers*

Next time you're in the Park, swing by Lumberman's Arch to find an Eco Ranger station where you can learn about what lives in the intertidal zone, or take a leisurely hike to Beaver Lake where Eco Rangers will help you look for signs of beavers, dragon flies, and salamander eggs. Keep your eyes open while you are on Park trails for our bright green shirts and friendly faces. We're always glad to stop and chat about what you're seeing in the Park!

In summer 2013, Eco Rangers connected with just over 16,000 visitors. We interpreted nature and wildlife to 9,000, and helped 5,000 find their way around the Park.

## Chickadee for Mayor!

*Kathleen Stormont, Fundraising and Communications Specialist*

After a close run against five other feathered candidates in May, the black-capped chickadee garnered 277,924 of the 704,000 votes to win the official 'City Bird' title in Vancouver's first ever City Bird Competition. SPES played a key role in organizing this contest and events for Vancouver's second annual Bird Week. "It was a huge success. People who didn't know a varied thrush from a pileated woodpecker were talking and tweeting about these birds," exclaimed SPES's Conservation Programs Manager, Robyn Worcester. "People's awareness about Vancouver's birds skyrocketed!" Raising Vancouverites' awareness about these birds and their importance as key indicators of our environment's health was the main goal of this successful contest. Candidates for city council should take note: More people may have voted in this Bird Week "election" than in the last civic one.



*Black-capped chickadee (Photo: Don Enright)*

## SPES Lands a Q'PANGO Award

*Patricia Thomson, Executive Director*

A *what* award? The BC Society of Landscape Architects awards the Q'PANGO to "...a quasi-public agency or non-governmental organization that has made major contributions to the local, provincial or national landscapes through its advocacy." SPES was recently honoured with the award at a fantastic gala celebrating talented artists who are shaping our urban landscapes. Happy 50th, BCSLA, and thanks to Alan Duncan at Vancouver Park Board (VPB) for the nomination! (l to r: Patricia Thomson, SPES Executive Director; Alan Duncan, VPB; Robyn Worcester, SPES Conservation Programs Manager.)



# Stanley Park's Classroom

## Kids Get Crabby with SPES

*Anita Georgy, School Programs Manager*

SPES' School Programs Environmental Educators spend many of their days at the beach. No, we are not lazing around (we wish), but rather leading what has quickly become the most popular school program offered by SPES: Beach Explorers. This past spring we connected over 600 students with the incredible diversity found in Stanley Park's intertidal zone. Thanks to the assistance of funders including TD Friends of the Environment, we continue to successfully align school programs like Beach Explorers with a changing Ministry of Education curriculum.

One such Beach Explorers day stands out in memory. We had a group of grade three students join us from a school in Surrey. We started with a Seaweeds and Salty Creatures scavenger hunt to get a sense of what types of things lived on this beach. Well, as soon as one student turned over a rock, I heard the loudest, most blood curling shriek I have ever heard! Oh no! Did someone get hurt? I quickly went to investigate and discovered the source of the fear was a teeny,

tiny little crab. Despite living in BC and visiting the beach many times, these students had not seen crabs before. I calmed and distracted them, but really did want them to build empathy for every creature here. So I started my favourite crab exploration activity: Crabitat (habitat for a crab).

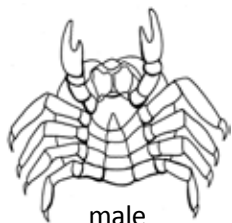


*Holding a crabitat (Photo: Brian Grover)*

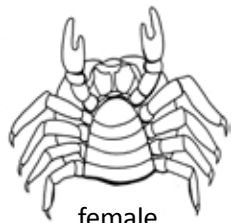
After learning about crabs, building small homes for them and being shown how to safely pick them up, these students were gently cradling the small crabs in their bowls, naming them, observing their behaviour and carefully releasing them into their newly constructed crabitats.

In under an hour, I had successfully converted scared urban children into children who were now eloquently

extolling the virtues of crabs and begging their teacher to come back again. From her comments, we're confident that this is likely: "I appreciated the broad skill-set of the leaders – knowledgeable, practical, generated excitement and curiosity. Thank you!"



male



female

## How to make your own crabitat

Materials: 2 small plastic containers for each child

1. Gather materials to make a home for a crab: a splash of seawater, some seaweed to eat, and sand, shells and rocks to hide under.
2. Look for a small crab to temporarily and gently collect. Make sure to only collect males (see diagram) as the females may be carrying eggs. Please put each rock back as you found it.
3. Gently release your crab into its new home and watch what happens. Does it move sideways? Does it hide? Stay in the open?
4. Release the crab and crabitat gently at the edge of the water so the crab can quickly hide from predators.

# SPES Nature Programs

**Pre-registration recommended for Nature Programs:**

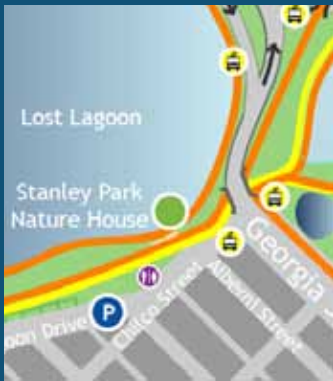
**programs@stanleyparkecolgy.ca**

**604-718-6522**

\$5 for SPES members, children and seniors.  
\$10 for non-members unless otherwise noted.

For all Nature Programs, meet at Stanley Park Nature House unless otherwise noted.


SPES Membership info:  
604-718-6523



**Stanley Park Nature House**  
**Open on weekends**  
**10 am - 4 pm**

Summer Hours  
June 28 - Aug 31  
Tues-Sun 10 am - 5 pm

<p><b>Stanley Park Young Naturalists: Secrets in the Shallows</b></p> <p>What do water bugs, baby ducks, and frogs love? The shallow fresh water of Beaver Lake! Using our eyes and dip nets, we'll explore the creatures that call this special place home. Meet us at the Stanley Park Dining Pavilion, 610 Pipeline Road. For accompanied kids ages 5-14. To preregister, email <a href="mailto:ync@stanleyparkecolgy.ca">ync@stanleyparkecolgy.ca</a>.</p> <p><b>Sat, June 7, 10:00-noon</b></p>	<p><b>Heron Hatchlings</b></p> <p>June is a special time of the year for herons in Stanley Park. The chicks have hatched and it's getting noisy. Discover what juvenile herons need in order to be ready to leave the nest. The tour of the heronry is free for Adopt a Heron Nest program participants <a href="http://stanleyparkecolgy.ca/get-involved/adopt/adopt-a-heron-nest/">http://stanleyparkecolgy.ca/get-involved/adopt/adopt-a-heron-nest/</a></p> <p><b>Sun, June 8, 1:30-3:30pm</b></p>	<p><b>Great Grandfather Trees of Stanley Park</b></p> <p>Stanley Park is home to some of the largest and oldest trees in BC – some are over 700 years old! Explore this ancient forest with your dad on a walk before Father's Day and introduce him to some of the great grandfather trees (also known as Champion Trees) of Stanley Park. Discover how these trees have survived to reach such great age and size.</p> <p><b>Sun, Jun 15, 1:30-3:30pm</b></p>
<p><b>Fragmented Forests</b></p> <p>Stanley Park is an island on the edge of a city, surrounded by ocean, and isolated from other forests. Learn about the challenges faced by fragmented forests like this one, their management, and what you can do to help.</p> <p><b>Sun, July 6, 1:30-3:30pm</b></p>	<p><b>Eagle Nestlings</b></p> <p>Negotiating their way through the canopy, these young and sometimes clumsy eagles are strengthening their wing muscles in preparation for life on their own. Come learn about these soon-to-be graceful predators that call Stanley Park home.</p> <p><b>Sat, July 19, 1:30-3:30pm</b></p>	<p><b>Orienteering Workshop</b></p> <p>Do you love exploring the outdoors? With the right skills to find your way, you will enjoy your adventures with more confidence. At this expert-led workshop learn navigation fundamentals in a wilderness setting. Please register in advance to ensure sufficient workshop materials are available. For ages 16+, \$120</p> <p><b>Sun, Jul 13, 9:00am-3:30pm</b></p>
<p><b>Stanley Park Young Naturalists: Beach Exploration</b></p> <p>Where do beach crabs come from? How does seaweed hold on without roots? We will head down to Lumberman's Arch beach to uncover the incredible world of intertidal plants and animals.</p> <p>For accompanied children ages 5-14. To preregister, email <a href="mailto:ync@stanleyparkecolgy.ca">ync@stanleyparkecolgy.ca</a>.</p> <p><b>Sat, Aug 9, 10:00-noon</b></p>	<p><b>An Intertidal Wonderland</b></p> <p>Pack your rubber boots and be prepared to be blown away by the bizarre life in Stanley Park's intertidal zone. From orange armoured sea cucumbers to red feather duster worms, you might forget what planet you are on!</p> <p><b>Sat, Aug 9, 10:30am-12:30pm</b></p>	<p><b>Adaptation and Evolution in the Park</b></p> <p>Fascinating relationships like those between pollinators and plants, or trees and mycelium, are the result of a millenia's worth of selective pressures. Join us to learn about where these and other unique adaptations have come from and where they might be going.</p> <p><b>Sun, Aug 17, 1:30-3:30pm</b></p>

<p><b>Nature's Hidden Gems</b></p> <p>There's more to Stanley Park's forests than just trees. Borrow a hand lens and join us on a tour of the smaller members of the forest. Meet liverworts and mosses, and the bizarre slime molds and fungi that are often overlooked on the forest floor. Discover the integral role they play in the Park's ecology.</p> <p><b>Sat, Jun 21, 1:30-3:30pm</b></p>	<p><b>Birds of a Feather: International Mud Day</b></p> <p>Celebrate International Mud Day with the birds! From building materials for swallow nests to a sloppy substrate for snipe meals, mud plays an important role in the lives of birds in Stanley Park. Join us for a two-hour easy walking exploration to learn about bird identification and behaviour. Participation by donation.</p> <p><b>Sun, Jun 29, 9:00-11:00am</b></p>	<p><b>Stanley Park Young Naturalists: Quack Snacks</b></p> <p>Should ducks and geese in Stanley Park be eating bread and other "people" snacks? Nope! Come observe these birds feeding around Lost Lagoon and learn what they naturally eat to keep healthy. Kim Hunter, a local artist, will lead a fun art workshop on the topic. For accompanied children ages 5-14. To preregister email <a href="mailto:ync@stanleyparkecolgy.ca">ync@stanleyparkecolgy.ca</a>.</p> <p><b>Sat, July 5, 10:00-noon</b></p>
<p><b>Stanley Park History 101</b></p> <p>Stanley Park has an incredibly rich history. From mystery and romance to forestry, protests and recreation, the stories from the Park's past will surprise you. Join us for a glimpse of what has happened over the last 100+ years.</p> <p><b>Sun, 13 July, 1:30-3:30pm</b></p>	<p><b>Beaver Lake and Salmon Streams</b></p> <p>Discover the unique streams and wetlands around Beaver Lake. Learn about the animals that depend on these areas and what Stanley Park Ecology Society is doing to encourage the return of salmon to the waters of Stanley Park.</p> <p><b>Sun, July 20, 1:30-3:30pm</b></p>	<p><b>Birds of a Feather: Sea Bird Breeding Season</b></p> <p>Out in the sea breeze, in the warmth of summer, there is love in the air! Join us for a two-hour easy walking exploration to learn about bird identification and behaviour. Participation by donation.</p> <p><b>Sun, Jul 27, 9:00-11:00am</b></p>
<p><b>Birds of a Feather: Say Goodbye and Say Hello</b></p> <p>The birds that have graced us with their presence this summer are starting to head south. At the same time other birds are arriving from the south. Join us for a two-hour easy walking exploration to learn about bird identification and behaviour. Participation by donation.</p> <p><b>Sun, Aug 31, 9:00-11:00am</b></p>	 <p><i>Common goldeneye (Photo: Liron Gertsman)</i></p>	<p><b>Rainforest Café</b></p> <p>Many plants and berries look tasty, but what can you pick without getting sick? Explore the range of edible foods growing in our local forests during this "urban foraging" tour with the Stanley Park Ecology Society.</p> <p><b>Sun, Sept 7, 1:30-3:30pm</b></p>

## Stanley Park Eco-Stewards

Join us in restoring wildlife habitat in Stanley Park



- Sat, June 7, 10:00-1:00pm
- Sun, June, 15 12:30-3:30pm
- Sat, July 5, 10:00-1:00pm
- Sun, July 27, 12:30-3:30pm
- Sat, Aug 9, 10:00-1:00pm
- Sun, Aug 31, 12:30-3:30pm

To register, contact:  
[stewardship@stanleyparkecolgy.ca](mailto:stewardship@stanleyparkecolgy.ca) or  
 604-718-6547

# Cool Sightings

## Cutthroat Competition in our Creeks

*Brian Titaro, Conservation Technician*

While Stanley Park's forest abounds with the signs of summer, our SPES conservation team knows that life in the water also changes with the season.

Based on a regular fish monitoring program, SPES has observed that Stanley Park creeks support native cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarki*), a blue-listed species at risk in BC. At this

time of the year, the creeks should be full of small cutthroat eggs hidden between

the pea-sized gravel. When they hatch in late summer, they'll join another salmonid species, coho salmon (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*), that were released four months earlier by local school children. These two species have coexisted on the west coast for millennia, but coho will often out-compete cutthroat for food and habitat since the coho have been in the



Cutthroat trout (Photo: SPES/Robyn Worcester)

creeks at least four months longer.

Besides competing with each other, these fish must also battle challenging stream conditions in Beaver Creek. SPES has been working to support these fish by re-vegetating and stabilizing stream banks with native plants, working with the Vancouver Park Board to maintain consistent water flow from Beaver

Lake and creating a plan to remove artificial migration barriers along the creek.

So the next time you're looking into the clear, serene

waters of one of our creeks, contemplate the silent struggle for survival waged by these two beautiful fish.

Learn more about SPES' habitat restoration and enhancement activities in Stanley Park at <http://bit.ly/1ncglQy>.

## Stanley Park Fun(gus)

*Ivy Smith, Stewardship Coordinator*

Despite Stanley Park's popular urban location, new discoveries are being made all the time. We have recently added another fungus species to Stanley Park's species list. *Mitrella elegans* (also known as bog beacon, swamp lantern or match-stick fungus) has never been documented in the Park until recently near Beaver Creek.

This fungus can be found in Coastal British Columbia in the wet, swampy areas of the forest floor. It has a distinctive tiny bright orange cap a-top a white stem. Some say it looks like a match-stick, so you'll have to look very closely because, staying true to its name, it's about that size! Fungi, like this species, play an important role in the forest ecosystem:

They aid in the decomposition of dead plants and animals and turn them into nutrients that can be used for growth by other plants and organisms.

The next time you are walking the trails of Stanley Park, keep your eyes open – you just might discover something new to add to the Stanley Park species list at <http://bit.ly/1pecWxD>



Bog beacon (Photo: SPES/Ivy Smith)

# Supporting the Park

## Popping for Profit!

*Patricia Thomson, Executive Director*

It may be obvious that SPES has departments for conservation, for urban wildlife, and for education – both public and school-based. But popcorn? Popcorn is in a class of its own at SPES – a most important support for running a non-profit.

In 2004 more than 200 individuals got dirty in creating one of the most whimsical structures in Vancouver: the Stanley Park Cob House. While cob might instantly conjure up a popular picnic treat, the word also refers to an ancient building method that can be a free-form frame of clay, straw and sand. In the case of the Cob House, all materials were upcycled, including the green roof.

Nestled in the heart of the miniature train plaza, the Cob House serves up the best popcorn in the city, and all for good cause! Each bag of **Whole Foods Market** popcorn translates into subsidies for school programs,

and the Society's other underfunded projects and programs. Along with generous donations from **Whistler Water**, SPES can multiply the Whole Foods Market kernel donations many times over to deliciously help us connect kids and the community to nature!



*Stanley Park Cob House (Photo: SPES)*

## Thank You

SPES relies on the generous support of individuals and organizations whose financial support help us to continue our longstanding commitment to environmental education, stewardship and conservation in Stanley Park.

We would like to thank our most recent donors:

Michitsch Systems Inc.

Times Square Suites

Liron Gertsman

Paula Caird

Spencer Chandra Herbert

Nancy Brooks

Susan Brooks

Margaret Duncan

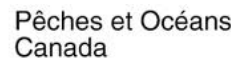
Roy Pursell

Gene Zackowski

Rory Wallace

Bill Jeffries

## Thanks to our Supporters and Partners



### GREENEST CITY FUND



This project was undertaken with the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Federal Department of the Environment.  
Ce projet a été réalisé avec l'appui financier du Gouvernement du Canada agissant par l'entremise du ministère fédéral de l'Environnement.

SPES is a registered charity #11916 6890 RR0001. Charitable tax receipts will be automatically issued for donations of \$30 and more.

# Signs of Summer

## These Berries are for the Birds

*Rose Gardner, Environmental Educator*

Stanley Park is blessed with an abundance of edible berries, many of which ripen through the summer. Oregon grape, thimbleberry, salal and salmonberry are a few of the most commonly found plants with edible berries. But although these fruits are tasty, visitors to the Park should do their best to restrain themselves.



*Salmonberry (Photo: SPES/Robyn Worcester)*

Last spring, while staying overnight in the Park with SPES' Urban Camping school program, it was hard to resist those delicious salmonberries. Every morning, when I awoke early and emerged from my tent, salmonberry bushes, heavy with ripe fruit, surrounded me. The students camping overnight were all still asleep; no one would know. At the same time though, birds such as the Swainson's thrush were singing in the thickets and eating salmonberries themselves. Closely associated with these berries, the



*Swainson's thrush (Photo: Liron Gertsman)*

Swainson's thrush is known as the salmonberry bird in many First Nations languages. And so for the benefit of the birds and all the other creatures that rely on the berries as an important food source, I restrained myself. Instead, I waited patiently for another few months until I could visit my favourite patch of invasive Himalayan blackberries ripening just outside the Park.



*Salal berries (Photo: SPES/Robyn Worcester)*

### Contact Us:

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Volunteering: 604-681-7099  
Conservation: 604-718-6547  
Urban Wildlife: 604-681-9453  
School Programs: 604-257-6907  
Nature House: 604-257-8544

**SPES** promotes awareness of and respect for the natural world and plays a leadership role in the stewardship of Stanley Park through collaborative initiatives in education, research and conservation.

To get the latest news, follow SPES on Facebook and Twitter @ StanleyPkEcoSoc

## Looking to make a LASTING difference for wildlife?

Even a small monthly donation...\$5 or \$10... to Stanley Park Ecology Society is the best way to help us connect people with nature, monitor wildlife at risk, restore vital habitat and conserve biodiversity in Stanley Park's ecosystems. Donating is easy:

Sign up online at <https://www.canadahelps.org/dn/13157> or call us at 604-718-6523. Thank you!