

Connecting People with Nature



SPES staff with salamander. Photo by Michael Schmidt.

Vancouverites Set to BioBlitz Stanley Park

On August 24 and 25, hundreds of local people will help Stanley Park Ecology Society (SPES) survey, record and learn about the creatures that live in the Park.

As part of our 25th birthday year celebrations, we invite the community to help us learn about each of the wonderful creatures that flies, hops, crawls and flutters in Stanley Park.

People taking part can find a whole host of fun and interesting activities to see and do. There will be opportunities to survey local wildlife, take part in hands-on stewardship activities and learning about everything from forest ecology to local birds to bats and beavers through

educational walks and talks.

This BioBlitz is SPES' main contribution to *Celebrate! Stanley Park*, the City of Vancouver's 125th anniversary celebration of Stanley Park that takes place at the same time.

Find out what's happening during the Stanley Park BioBlitz on page 2.



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BioBlitz

August 24 & 25

Stanley Park BioBlitz

Surveys, talks, walks and displays are happening all weekend long in Stanley Park at Lumberman's Arch, Lost Lagoon, Second Beach and the Rose Garden. All events are free and there's no need to pre-register, just show up a little early to ensure you get a spot.

Go to stanleyparkecology.ca/bioblitz to view the full events schedule.

BioBlitz Highlights

Community Partner Displays

Both days, 10 am - 5 pm,
Lumberman's Arch.

Come to Lumberman's Arch to meet some of the environmental organizations that work in your neighbourhood. They offer inside information, tips and fun nature activities.

Upcycling English Ivy: Create a Bio-net

Both days at 12 - 2:30 pm and 3:30 - 6 pm,
Rose Garden. Drop in.

Join eco-artists in crocheting English ivy into matting that will be used in future erosion control restoration projects in Stanley Park. Beginners are welcome (also see pg. 8).

Plankton Survey

Saturday, 10 am - 12 pm,
Lumberman's Arch.

Join a plankton expert and look through microscopes at some fantastic miniature critters that live in the plankton world, just feet away from the seawall.

Bat Mist Netting Survey

Saturday from 7:40 - 10 pm,
meet at Lumberman's Arch.

Join local experts as they 'mist net' bats to assess their health. Learn how this fascinating work is done and about these wonderful creatures before setting them free again.

Beach Seine Survey

Saturday, 3 - 4:30 pm,
meet at Lumberman's Arch.

Explore the waters off the Seawall while you learn about some of the creatures that call these waters home.

Bird Survey

Sunday, 8:30 - 10 am,
meet at the Nature House on Lost Lagoon

Help scientists identify birds in the park. These surveys contribute valuable data for bird conservation initiatives.

Owl Survey

Saturday from 7:40 - 10 pm,
meet at Lumberman's Arch.

Take a walk and learn about local owls. Use an audio recorder to see if you can entice an owl into having a conversation with you!

Hummingbird Banding

Sunday, 9 - 11 am,
Rose Garden.

Join a local expert who bands hummingbirds to track their migration routes. See them up close and learn about what makes them so special.



Fun activities for all.
Photo by Brian Grover.



Owl survey.
Photo by Don Enright.



Beach seine survey.
Photo by Robyn Worcester.



Hummingbird banding.
Photo by Robyn Worcester.

What is a BioBlitz?

Within a 24-hour period, scientists, volunteers and members of the public will collaborate on finding, identifying and recording as many species of plants, animals, fungi, and other organisms as possible to increase our knowledge of the Park's native biodiversity. Having a deeper understanding of the ecology of Stanley Park will help us better our stewardship activities and will guide the advice we give to our partners at the Park Board on habitat management strategies.

The Stanley Park BioBlitz is generously sponsored by TD Friends of the Environment Foundation and the Employment Program of British Columbia.

Beaver Lake, a wildlife mecca



Beaver at Beaver Lake. Photo by Mark T. White.

Beaver Lake in Stanley Park is one of the last remaining wetlands in Vancouver and it is home to some amazing wildlife. Beaver Lake is a popular spot for young fledgling great blue herons in training to catch some easy meals before heading off to better feeding grounds further afield. You may also see the majestic blue dasher dragonfly whizzing alongside the quick and maneuverable barn swallows. Both are species at risk in BC and both are after the same thing – a feast of small flying insects.

However, if you have been a visitor of Beaver Lake for many years, you may have noticed that it is shrinking. In the year 1938, the lake was nearly seven hectares. In that same year, two events changed the fate of Beaver Lake forever. First, the causeway was built which continues to have significant effects on the amount of water that Beaver Lake receives from surrounding streams, effectively diminishing the size of Beaver Lake's watershed. The second, and most detrimental event, was the introduction of the invasive fragrant water lily, which has since grown to cover much of the lake.

Today the lake is nearly half the size it was in 1938, and research has shown that this trend will continue if nothing is done. Although it is a common natural process for a lake to shrink and eventually fill in over time, the introduction of invasive plants has rapidly sped up the process.

If nothing is done to counter this manmade challenge, Beaver Lake will quickly become a forest meadow, and many of the species that rely on this much needed freshwater habitat will disappear.

Fortunately a great deal of research has already been completed and Vancouver Park Board, with guidance from SPES and the Stanley Park Ecological Action Plan (2011), has already begun planning for restoration activities that will hopefully be approved and carried out over the next few years.

Among the 80 species of birds and many other species that will benefit from the restoration, we can also hope for a return of extirpated wildlife like the western painted turtle and Pacific tree frog. And let us not forget the beavers of Beaver Lake, who should be quite happy to see their lake deepened. Since the return of a solitary beaver in 2008 after a 60 year absence, these busy workers have already begun the dredging process themselves, moving mud, sticks and branches from around their lodge to plug the flow to Beaver Creek. The five beavers that now call the lake home are working tirelessly to maintain their lake habitat, and we can safely say that we are working with these Canadian icons to see that their dreams come true.

Dan Straker,
Urban Wildlife Programs Coordinator



Invasive water lilies at Beaver Lake. Photo by Andrew Chan



Great blue heron.
Photo by Michael Schmidt.



Female blue dasher.
Photo by Don Enright.

SPES Nature Programs



Stanley Park Nature House

Come and visit Vancouver's only ecology centre. Explore interpretive displays to learn about Stanley Park's plants and animals.

Find us under the viewing plaza at the north end of Alberni Street.

**Open on weekends
10 am - 4 pm**



Photo by Brian Grover.

Nature Programs

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

Pre-registration recommended for nature programs:

**programs@stanleyparkecology.ca
604-718-6522**

Stanley Park Young Naturalists: Nature Through New Eyes

Uncover your inner animal and create a wildlife mask that shows your wild side. Explore the wonderful world around us with a nature art specialist. For accompanied kids ages 5-14.

Sat, September 7, 10 am -12 noon

Urban Foraging

Lush berries and edible plants are plentiful, but which ones will fill your tummy without putting you in the ground? Explore the range of edible indigenous foods found in our local forests.

Sun Sept 8, 1:30-3:30 pm *

Underground in Stanley Park: Creature Colonies

Beneath the trails and towering trees there are vast colonies and creature caverns. Uncover facts about the millions of creatures we seldom see that keep Stanley Park healthy and vibrant.

Sun, Sept 15, 1:30-3:30 pm *



Photo by Michael Schmidt.

Animal Crossing

With the wet weather on its way, muddy boots are to be expected, but whose muddy feet left all these curious tracks? Take a closer look at the signs animals leave behind that can tell us who's hiding just around the corner.

Sun, Sept 22, 1:30-3:30 pm *

Birds of a Feather

Join us every month for an easy 2 hour walking exploration to learn about bird ID and behaviour. Meet at the Stanley Park Nature House.

Participation by donation.

Sun, Sept 29, 9-11 am

World Rivers Day: Salmon Forest

As many as six different salmon species swim past Stanley Park on a return trip to their natal streams to spawn. Learn how they influence not only the streams they inhabit but the forests around them.

Sun, Sept 29, 1:30-3:30 pm *

Stanley Park Young Naturalists: Fun With Fungi

Do garden gnomes really live in little mushroom houses? Come along as we learn all about the fantastic fungi that live in the forests of Stanley Park. For accompanied kids ages 5-14.

Sat, Oct 5, 10 am - 12 noon



Photo by Michael Schmidt.

Nocturnal by Nature: Stanley Park's Night Life

The days are getting shorter and the nights longer; a perfect combination for the creatures of the night. Join us for an afternoon stroll and reveal the true nature of Stanley Parks night life.

Sun, Oct 6, 1:30-3:30 pm *

Fierce Flyers

Join us as we explore the world of predatory birds that call Stanley Park home. Learn about their special adaptations, interesting habits, and take apart a real owl pellet to see who was eaten for dinner.

Sun, Oct 20, 1:30-3:30 pm *

Stanley Park Ecology Society Annual General Meeting

Join SPES for a special keynote presentation by well-renowned biologist and author, Dick Cannings on the birds of British Columbia.

West End Community Centre
Thu, Oct 24, 7:30-9:30 pm

Birds of a Feather

Cooler weather is on its way, and with it the winter birds. Join us for a two-hour easy walking exploration to learn about bird identification and behaviour. Participation by donation.

Sun, Oct 27, 9-11 am



Photo by Don Enright.

Amazing Eagles: A visual presentation.

Explore the fascinating world of bald eagles with pioneer eagle researcher, David Hancock.

Participation by donation.

West End Community Center
Sat, Nov 2, 1-3 pm

Forests, Feathers, and Foreshores

Looking for ideas on how to get through the winter? Join in on an enlightening look at how plants and animals adjust to survive the cool, wet (and sometimes white) West Coast winter.

Sun, Nov 3, 1:30-3:30 pm *

War and Peace in Stanley Park

On the edge of the city and isolated from other forests, learn how plants and animals survive in Stanley Park. Learn about the challenges of fragmented forests and their management. *

Sun, Nov 10, 1:30-3:30 pm *

Birds of a Feather

Join us every month for an easy 2 hour walking exploration to learn about bird ID and behaviour. Meet at the Stanley Park Nature House.

Participation by donation.

Sun, Nov 24, 9-11 am

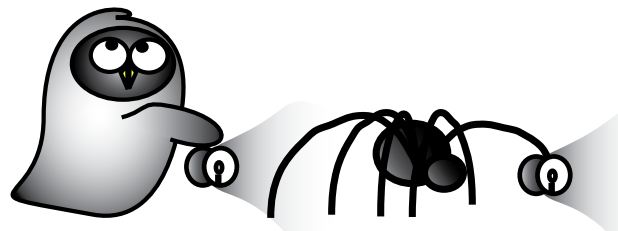
Creatures of the Night

Running in parallel with the Stanley Park Ghost Train, SPES' nature program, "Creatures of the Night" is an entertaining adventure for explorers of all ages.

From the miniature train plaza, follow your ecology guide through the forest on a 30 minute candle-lit walk to meet some of Stanley Park's elusive animals.

On each half hour, 6:30-9 pm, Thu-Sun.

Tickets: \$5 Adults, \$3 Children & \$15 Family of four.



Lanterns are provided; bring your sense of adventure!

*Nature Program Fees:

\$5 for SPES members, children and seniors.

\$10 for non-members.

For information about membership, see page 7.

Membership Perks!

Halloween Ghost Train in Stanley Park

Crawl out from your coffins, slither from your slabs, and ooze out from your tombs! These October nights summon you from darkness.

Oct 11 - Nov 2

(except Thanksgiving Monday)

SPES members ride free on October 9; just show your membership card.

Bright Nights Christmas Train

During the holiday season the Miniature Train and Plaza in Stanley Park go through a festive transformation of nearly two million lights and displays. Fun for all!

Dec 5 - Jan 5

SPES members ride free on December 4; show your membership card.

Not a member yet or time to renew?

Read more about SPES memberships on page 7.

Nature Notes

Although we work our days in Stanley Park, even the staff rarely get to catch sight of all the surprising and often overlooked wildlife wonders. We are grateful for the generosity of a number of very talented photographers who know the woods and wetlands in a way that inspires interest and intrigue.

Here are a few nature notes shared recently by one such eagle-eye nature-enthusiast, Peter Woods:

July 14, 2013 - Stanley Park

"I was on one of my regular insect surveys and encountered this exotic looking moth in the forest - in the dark - on South Creek Trail about 50 m west of the Shakespeare Garden. The insect landed on a damaged portion of an exposed Douglas fir root. I had to use flash to get the photo since it was in dense shade.



Douglas-fir pitch moth, July 14, 2013.
Photo by Peter Woods.

About Clearwing Moths

Clearwing moths (family Sesiidae), also called wasp moths, is a family of approximately 1,000 species of moths that are long-legged with a slender, dark body with bright red or yellow markings. The wings frequently lack scales and are transparent. They look like anything but moths actually and many mimic bees or wasps quite convincingly. This is their main form of defence against predators and it allows them to be active during the day.

"Now, looking at it more closely, I suspect that it's a female and could have been laying eggs. I'm going back to check tomorrow (Monday). This is only the second clear-wing moth I've ever seen in Stanley Park ... and the second species!"



Sequoia pitch moth, August 8, 2008.
Photo by Peter Woods.

"The Sequoia pitch moth above was 'my' first clear-wing moth in Stanley Park. The moth flew into a Himalayan blackberry thicket on the south side of Lost Lagoon where I was busy photographing bumblebees."

"I have to add just one more moth from today. It's only 4mm long but armed and dangerous."



Unidentified moth, July 14, 2013.
Photo by Peter Woods.

BECOME A SUPPORTER



School children on a field trip in Stanley Park.
Photo by Mike Mills.

Get your membership!

Together we are **making a real difference to nature and wildlife** in Vancouver's urban wilderness, Stanley Park, and helping people of all ages enjoy the natural world.

Purchase your SPES membership through our secure online membership store. Only \$20 for an individual membership and \$15 for seniors or youth.

www.stanleyparkecology.ca/membership

Benefits include a special invitation to ride the Halloween Ghost Train and Christmas Bright Lights Train in Stanley Park (see page 5 for dates) and 20% off food at Prospect Point Cafe and Stanley's Bar & Grill.

If you prefer to phone us or have us send a membership form by mail, call 604-718-6523.

Thanks to our Supporters and Partners



The Employment Program of British Columbia is funded by the Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia.



TD Friends of the Environment Foundation



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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:

Victor Balon
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Vancouver Craft Beer Week

SPES is a registered charity #11916 6890 RRR0001. Charitable tax receipts will be issued for donations of \$30 and more.

Creative Solutions to Restoration



Repurposing English ivy.
Photo by Sharon Kallis.



Crocheting English ivy. Photo by Sharon Kallis..

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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

In 2009, SPES launched a pilot project in collaboration with local artist Sharon Kallis that took a creative approach to ecological restoration in Stanley Park. Through the pilot project, we found that English ivy, one of the main invasive plant species in the Park, can actually be repurposed and used as bio-netting for erosion control.

With financial support from the Greenest City Community Grants program and the Vancouver Foundation, this year we are putting into action what we learned from the pilot project to control erosion on a slope which had previously been cleared of English ivy along the north side of Lost Lagoon.

This multi stage project began with the removal of English ivy by a team of volunteers. The vines were then processed and crocheted with the help of volunteers using the fence on top of the Nature House as a crochet hook, producing mats of various lengths and widths.

The mats were hung to dry and are scheduled to be installed in early October. Bound with willow stakes, the crocheted mats will secure soil onto the slope and native plants will be planted to grow through the holes. Over time the bio-nets will decompose and the slope will become restored as the roots of plants begin to stabilize the slope preventing further erosion.

If you are interested in learning more about this project or volunteering, please contact our stewardship coordinator at stewardship@stanleyparkecolgy.ca.

During the Stanley Park BioBlitz, August 24 and 25 from 12-2:30 pm and 3:30-6 pm, eco-artist Sharon Kallis will be in the Rose Garden working with the community to crochet more mats using invasive plant materials. Come on by to try it out for yourself!

Ivy Smith, Stewardship Coordinator