



May 2019


Naturalists

ONE STEP AT A TIME

Contents

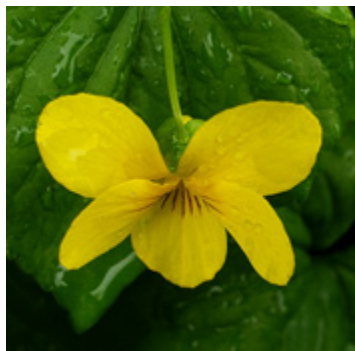
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In the Native Plant Garden



Stream violet

The native plant garden is now enjoying much needed care and rejuvenation thanks to the Washington Native Plant Society local chapter, who are providing leadership in the garden in terms of care, planting and a vision of the garden. With leadership from George Macomber. The garden is benefitting from their experience in native plant care and propagation. The first work party, in early March brought out pruners to shrubs, weeders to the walks and new seeds to the margins. They were careful about moving

into dormant beds and will increase their gardening activity as plants reveal themselves and area growth defines the bio-scape.

The Native Plant Society is having occasional work parties and we are encouraged to participate. It is an opportunity to learn more about native plant habitats and care (I say this from personal experience). This is an area they are quite experienced. Their hand is already showing in the careful pruning, cleaning and clearing and many of our plantings will benefit. Check out the garden. It is just by the climbing rocks on the north end of the Seattle clubhouse. There are new flowers every day. See giant camas in profusion. See the woods garden. See the alpine garden. All are resplendent. It is beginning to look like a show garden!

Garden photos by Anita L. Elder



Anemone



Trout Lily



Lomatium

April Naturalist Hikes

DECEPTION PASS STATE PARK APRIL 17 – BIRDS, BUDS AND FLOWERS



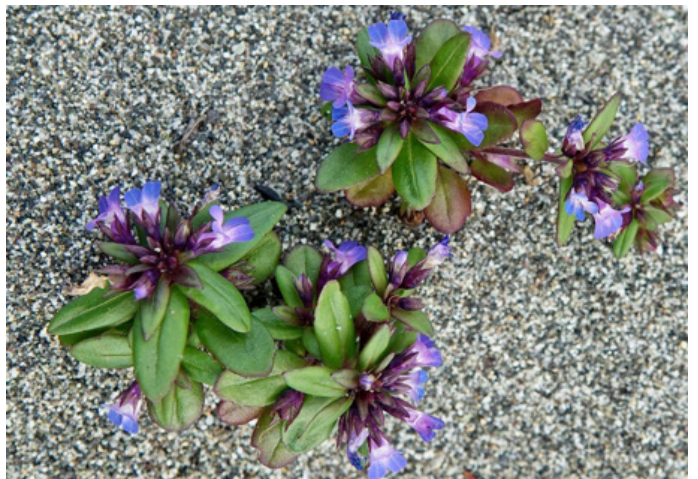
Flotsam



Large group of common loons



California quail – close up and personal



Small flowered blue eyed Mary



Goldback fern and sedum spathulatum



Sea blush

April Hikes (Continued)



Pelagic cormorant



Bighead clover

**SNOW MOUNTAIN RANCH – APRIL 27 – WIND,
BIRDS AND FLOWERS ARE BACK!**

**FRENCHMAN COULEE TRAIL - APRIL 27 - VERY
WINDY AND “SHOWY”**



Showy phlox and balsamroot



Bitter Brush - only bush that had open blooms



Sage violet



Showy phlox entwined with sage brush

Upcoming Hikes

Sign up online under *Explore, Find Activities* and check exploring nature (or click the register buttons below).

The mountain hiking season is nigh upon us, and we nats have many offerings to enjoy.

[Activity Listings - Click for Full List](#)



Whiskey Dick

MAY 1 - STEWART HOUGEN

This trail is moderate, scenic & provides a good introduction to the flowers of the east side. Birds & butterflies will be coming back.



Westberg Trail

MAY 5 - GORDIE SWARTZMAN

A loop trail with enough elevation gain and aspect change to provide a variety of east-side habitats we will bird watch, enjoy flower identification, and take in the views at the top.



McLane Creek Nature Trail

MAY 6 - BECKY ANDRADE

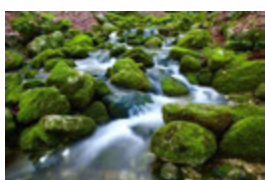
Beautiful wildflowers don't bloom only in the summer. The PNW has a spectacular spring wildflower season. Join the Naturalist Committee of the Olympia Branch Mountaineers for a very leisurely paced evening walk exploring McLane Creek, looking for the spring wildflowers and appreciating the many birds that call it home



Westberg Trail

MAY 11 - GORDIE SWARTZMAN

A loop trail with enough elevation gain and aspect change to provide a variety of east-side habitats we will bird watch, enjoy flower identification, and take in the views at the top.



North Fork Sauk River

MAY 12 - GARY BRILL

The North Fork Sauk River is one of the few old growth low elevation forests on the west side of the Cascades. It has many great trees and is loaded with mosses as well.



Mima Mounds

MAY 13 - DEE ANN KLEIN

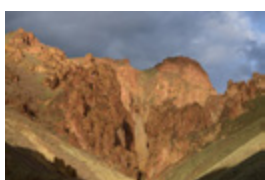
South Puget Sound is blessed with a unique prairie ecosystem that comes into bloom in the spring. Join the Naturalist Committee of the Olympia branch for a leisurely paced evening walk through the Mima Mounds. We will observe the beautiful spring bloom and debate the theories of the formation of the mounds.



Ingells Creek

MAY 15 - GARY BRILL

Ingalls Creek is a great spring hike along a rushing river and is a wonderful wildflower, birding, and butterfly destination.



Leslie Gulch & Juniper Gulch Trail

MAY 17 - 9 - LINDA MOORE

Explore and photograph spectacular high desert scenery, wildflowers, wildlife, dramatic unique eroded rock formations in Leslie Gulch within an ancient volcanic caldera and night sky viewing in SE Oregon's Owyhee Canyonlands.

Upcoming Hikes (Continued)



Black Canyon / Umptanum Ridge

MAY 18 - GORDIE SWARTZMAN

This trip provides views, birds, geology and wildflowers as we amble up Umptanum Ridge via Black Canyon.



Tongue Point Marine Sanctuary

MAY 19 - ANITA ELDER

Identify and photograph sea life in the tide pools during a negative tide.



Stillwater Natural Area

MAY 19 - TOM BANCROFT

Only open to registration for enrolled students of the 2019 Intro to the Natural World course from April 16 to April 20. After that all others may register. We will bird the dike extending from the Eastern Parking lot and then walk back toward the River.



Umptanum Ridge

MAY 22 - STEWART HOUGEN

A strenuous hike up to Umptanum Ridge with great displays of flowers & wonderful views. Some birds & butterflies in the lower areas.



Zumwalt Prairie Preserve

MAY 23 - 25 - LINDA MOORE

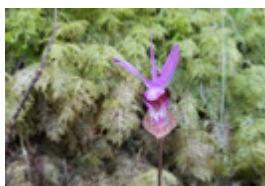
Photo/naturalist-oriented hikes to enjoy great abundance of spring wildflowers, bees and butterfly pollinators, raptors and other wildlife, scenic landscapes.



Magnuson Park

MAY 25 - ANNA MURPHY

We will be looking and listening for both migratory and resident birds in breeding plumage as they seek potential mates and set up territories for nesting.



Gray Wolf Trail

MAY 25 - ASUE LABRIE

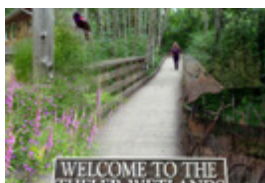
A Naturalist hike at a slow pace with frequent stops to identify wildflowers.



Umptanum Creek Canyon

MAY 26 - TOM BANCROFT

Only open to registration for enrolled students of the 2019 Intro to the Natural World course from April 16 to April 25. After that, all others may register. Come hike this fascinating canyon to look for birds, wildflowers, and plants. The geology is also remarkable here.



Mary E Theler Wetlands

MAY 26 - ANITA ELDER

Leisurely walk through the wetland's trails and boardwalks, identifying and photography birds/waterfowl.

Save The Date: Naturalist & Photo Weekend at Baker Lodge

AUGUST 9-11

We are planning a big hiking weekend on Mt. Baker August 9-11. This will involve three or more fabulous hikes and a stay at the Mt. Baker Lodge. Save the date and make reservations at the lodge when the listing opens. Keep posted!

Naturalist Special Lecture SATURDAY MAY 4 - 7 PM IN GOODMAN A AND B

This talk by Andy Mackinnon is sure to be informative and entertaining. Besides being a great speaker, Andy is also an author of field guides including the classic Pojar and MacKinnon books. Besides the talk, Andy has agreed to lead a field trip, which will be to a park on Fidalgo Island, and will be co-led by Richard Droker, so lichens will be on the agenda as well.

Central Puget Sound Chapter/Washington Native Plant Society Program



Fungal Endophytes: An Astonishing Relationship Andy MacKinnon

MAY 4, 2019 (SAT) | ANDY MACKINNON

The Mountaineers Program Center

Refreshments, Public Invited, Admission is free.

Donations are appreciated!

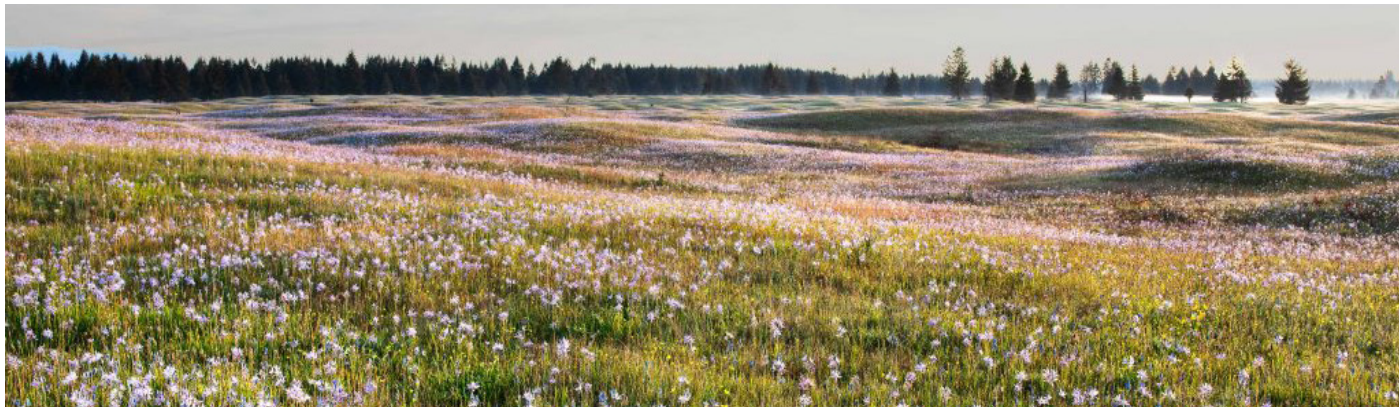
Doors open at 6:00 PM for the Native Plant Identification Workshop

Fungal endophytes are fungi which live inside plants. Certainly fungi live on plants, and are important symbionts on roots of almost all vascular plants. But it turns out that most vascular plants examined have fungi living happily inside them. The diversity of these fungal endophytes is extraordinary. So, what are these endophytes doing inside these plants? How does this relationship benefit, the fungi? How does it benefit the plants? Join Andy MacKinnon in this exploration of an astonishing relationship featuring two of his favourite Kingdoms – plants and fungi.

Andy MacKinnon is a forest ecologist who lives in Metchosin British Columbia Canada. Since December 2014 he's also served as a Councillor in Metchosin, and in spring 2017 he was the Green Party candidate in the riding of Esquimalt - Metchosin. Until his retirement in 2015, he worked for the BC Forest Service for three decades, mostly on BC's coast, where he was responsible for ecosystem classification and mapping and a program of forest ecology research focused on old growth structure and composition, effects of climate change, and BC's native plants and fungi. Andy has also been involved in defining and implementing ecosystem-based management in Haida Gwaii and the Great Bear Rainforest. He has co-taught rainforest ecology field courses in Bamfield and Tofino (for the University of Victoria) and Haida Gwaii (for UBC). Andy is co-author of six best-selling books about plants of western North America. He's an Adjunct Professor at Simon Fraser University, and a Professional Forester and Professional Biologist in BC. Andy was awarded an Honorary Doctor of Science degree by Simon Fraser University in 2013. He's President of the South Vancouver Island Mycological Society, and enjoys drinking good whisky and playing mandolin.

Other Events & Courses

Enjoy the 24th annual Prairie Appreciation Day!



People may be interested in visiting the Glacial Heritage Preserve near the Mima Mounds on May 11th when there will be Prairie Appreciation Day. A number of activities will be happening

Come help us celebrate Spring on our Western Washington Prairies. Bring family and friends for an outing that will be fun for everyone. This year's celebration is on May 11th from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM. Admission is free.

In May, the prairie is usually spangled with swaths of blue Camas with accents of Spring Gold and Buttercups.

Each year, the Friends of Puget Prairies and their partners hold a celebration of spring on the South Sound Prairies at Thurston County's Glacial Heritage and the Department of Natural Resources Mima Mounds Natural Areas, two of the largest remaining remnants of the endangered prairie ecosystem in Western Washington. There will also be open houses at the Violet Prairie Native Seed Farm and at the Colvin Ranch. Please see <http://www.prairieappreciationday.org> for directions to the open houses.

At Glacial Heritage Preserve there are two interpretive loops, one of about 1 mile (the Activity Trail) and the other about 4 miles (the Self-Guided Trail).

The Activity Trail contains a number of informative stations covering various aspects of our South Sound prairies. The stations have experts to discuss each topic as well as activities for children and the young at heart. Take the opportunity to make seed balls, try your hands at writing with ink made from oak galls, talk to experts about gardening with native prairie plants or how fire is used to restore prairies. Or just bring a picnic lunch and enjoy the hayride. New this year is a station on the underground life of the prairies and the presence of the Nisqually Stream Stewards.

The Self-Guided Trail has interpretive signs pointing out many of the unique features of these prairies, and is a good choice for those who just want to absorb the ambiance.

Black Hills Audubon Society will be hosting a 7:30 early morning bird walk at Glacial Heritage-check their website <http://blackhills-audubon.org/> for details.

Mima Mounds: walk around the mounds in full flower and learn restoration techniques like broom pulling. This location is fully handicapped accessible with a paved trail that is ideal for families with toddlers and those who want a less strenuous experience. In addition, group tours of Mima Mounds can be arranged by sending us an email at prairieappreciationday@gmail.com.

Choose your destination based on your time and circumstances. Please leave your pets at home. They are not allowed at Mima Mounds and are inappropriate at Glacial Heritage. Since temperatures can be quite warm, it is not safe to leave your pets in the car.

Visitors are encouraged to bring a donation for the Thurston County Food Bank. (No glass, please.)

More information and directions can be found on the Friends of Puget Prairies website at <http://www.prairieappreciationday.org>, or call either 360-458-5450 or 206-498-3273.

DIRECTIONS

(Continued on next page)

Other Events & Courses (Continued)

Course in Species Identification on Saddle Mountain on the Hanford Preserve

BY MARK DARROCH

Here are links about Mark's upcoming course in May, offered through Wild Society:

- **Info page:** wildsociety.org/hanfordreach
- **Registration page:** <https://www.wildsociety.org/programs/2019-hanford-reach-registration/>
- **FB event:** <https://www.facebook.com/events/2558413137521967/>

GARY BRILL SAYS OF MARK:

This seminar is taught by Mark Darrach, who holds a PHD in Geology and a Masters in Botany. Mark is a private consultant and associate research botanist with the Burke Museum Herbarium. His experience includes eight years as the Lead Botanist for the Umatilla District of the US Forest Service, and he is the author of the Lomatium genus for the new Flora of the Pacific Northwest, published by the U of W Press. He is also co-author of the Lomatium treatment in Flora of North America. He is a fascinating and enthusiast leader, and a visit to the Saddle Mountains of the Hanford Reach National Monument will be a unique and educational experience. The Saddle Mountain unit of the Hanford Reach National Monument is generally closed to the public and is the original heart of the monument. Hence, this experience will be unique.

https://www.fws.gov/refuge/Hanford_Reach/Saddle_Mountain.html

Washington Native Plant Society Study Weekend

MAY 17-19 BAYS BOGS AND BALDS

Online study weekend registration opens January 12, 10am. To register by mail, please contact the WNPS office (wnps@wnps.org; 206-527-3210) to receive a printed registration packet.

More Info - <https://www.wnps.org/events/395>

Naturalist facebook group:



The Facebook Group is a group of Mountaineers who have a passion for the natural world and want to learn more about it.

It is called The Mountaineers Naturalist Group. It is open to Mountaineers Members who are affiliated with the Naturalist Program, either as a current or past student of the Intro to the Natural World course or as a member of the Naturalist Study Group. It provides a place for members to share photos of their hikes and trips, as well as to help with identification of species.

People can search for it on Facebook and ask to join. If they are a current member of The Mountaineers and affiliated with the Naturalist Program, they will be added.

The group is open only to Mountaineers Members as it helps us build camaraderie among our members. (There are many other Facebook groups open to all such as the Washington Native Plant Society and Western Washington Birders.).



Odds & Ends

Poetry

YOU ARE THE HUMMINGBIRD THAT COMES

You are the hummingbird that comes a pure vibration
wings a blur
propeller-burring a million beats to keep still
the world's littlest pivot spinning the heaven's hemisphere
as a wineglass with a wet finger laid on the rim to make it ring

Feathers a rainbow
how you reel
hovering over blossom
cheeks tucked in the honeysuckle to lap a single drop of
nectar onto your tongue
messenger-goddess kicking a gold-dust of pollen out of
your winged heel

The slow promise of your approach makes my throat thick
the job gathers deep in my spin
as if it were a snake making a smooth wave of muscle
toward the taste of water

RHYME FROM ENGLAND

"A swarm of bees in May
Is worth a load of hay;
A swarm of bees in June
Is worth a silver spoon;
A swarm of bees in July
Is not worth a fly."

THOMAS HOOD

"'Tis like the birthday of the world,
When earth was born in bloom;
The light is made of many dyes,
The air is all perfume:
There's crimson buds, and white and blue,
The very rainbow showers
Have turned to blossoms where they fell,
And sown the earth with flowers."

ROBERT FROST

"The sun was warm but the wind was chill.
You know how it is with an April day.
When the sun is out and the wind is still,
You're one month on in the middle of May.
But if you so much as dare to speak,
a cloud come over the sunlit arch,
And wind comes off a frozen peak,
And you're two months back in the middle of March."

THE TREES

Philip Larkin

"The trees are coming into leaf
Like something almost being said;
The recent buds relax and spread,
Their greenness is a kind of grief.

Is it that they are born again
And we grow old? No, they die too,
Their yearly trick of looking new
Is written down in rings of grain.

Yet still the unresting castles thresh
In fullgrown thickness every May.
Last year is dead, they seem to say,
Begin afresh, afresh, afresh."

ODE IN MAY, 1880

William Watson

"What is so sweet and dear
As a prosperous morn in May,
The confident prime of the day,
And the dauntless youth of the year,
When nothing that asks for bliss,
Asking aright, is denied,
And half of the world a bridegroom is,
And half of the world a bride?"

SPRING

Ilia Chavchavadze

"The wood is decked in light green leaf.
The swallow twitters in delight.
The lonely vine sheds joyous tears
Of interwoven dew and light.

Spring weaves a gown of green to clad
The mountain height and wide-spread field.
O when wilt thou, my native land,
In all thy glory stand revealed?"

Just a couple of trip reports from way back in February.

GARY BRILL

I took a few trips to the **Old Sauk River** to check out the rain forest and the amazing density and diversity of mosses along that trail. On February 2nd Gordie Swartzman, Jessie Hey and I did a scheduled Naturalists trip to enjoy these great treats. A simple analysis is that this is a great moss hike.



Odds & Ends (Continued)

On February 6th, Tom Bancroft joined me on a return trip. With a few inches of new snow, most mosses were well-hidden, but a spectacularly clear, cold day provided superb light for photography. Since there was just the two of us and we are each photographers, we took our time and enjoyed ourselves.



Also, from a April 10th Naturalists course field trip at the Wolf Tree Nature Trail, Discovery Park, we found pink fawn lillies, which are not known from King County and are on the DNR list as a Threatened species, *Erythronium revolutum*. I went back a day later to photograph this rare beauty. There are 5 *Erythronium* in Western Washington and they are best distinguished by habitat and elevation, color of the corolla, and whether a patterning similar to that in the following image is present on the leaves.



Mystery flower from Ginkgo State Park in sandy areas. This may be quite rare, or at just perhaps 3" in diameter it may also be a flower that is often passed over. Consequently, the DNR has not determined the significance of the rarity of this plant. See if you can figure it out. Win a prize....the leaves are very distinctive on this sweetie that is so beautiful it ought to be illegal.



Magic in MesoAmerica

BY GORDIE SWARTZMAN

When I was a pre-teen I read a story by WH Hudson called *Green Mansions* in which a young man escapes into a rain forest in Guiana and encounters/befriends a bird-girl named Rima. The magic of the locations described and of a young girl who communicated with birds remained with me and now, as I sit in memory of 8 days spent in the western Panama mountains with five other naturalist friends, I remember the spellbound feeling in the book. We spent our entire time at the Mount Totumas lodge, at 6400' and adjacent to the Amistad National Park that is shared by Panama and Costa Rica. Everything about the place was new and an educational opportunity. We were about as remote as possible, removed over an hour from the nearest small town, at the end of a four wheel drive, boulder strewn 10 km road, despite the comfort of our accommodations, having electricity and fresh water (hydro-electric power self generated by the owners and water from a mountain spring, and having WIFI access (provided through the entrepreneurial spirit of Angel Rodriguez (ex Seattleite, owner and founder of R&E cycle). Our guide was a 21 year old indigeno named Ronaldo, who had the ears of a hare and the eyes of a hawk and could, it appears communicate with many of the birds, having more than passible imitations for many of the birds we encountered. The owners Jeffrey and Alma run the lodge and a shade grown coffee 'finca', and are devoted to keeping the area as pristine as possible, to the point of removing pasture land from 'production'. The lodge grounds are laden with plantings of the plop and grow variety (my kind of gardening). Jeffrey is a capable birder and devotes time to seeing that the plans of visitors are actualized. The 'farm' is in a large caldera, remnant of a blow-out years

Odds & Ends (Continued)

ago similar to Mt. St. Helens. There is a cinder cone in the caldera, Mt. Totomas, a 8500' cloud forest (a higher life zone than the lodge). Our shlep (it was extreme for me) up the mountain revealed a world of broad-limbed giant oaks laden with bromeliads, ferns, orchids and whatever else could cram itself onto the space available. Being even more remote than the lodge, many animals were seen in the game cameras on the top such as jaguars, ocelots and the like – animals with very broad ranges checking out the environs on perhaps regular pathways.

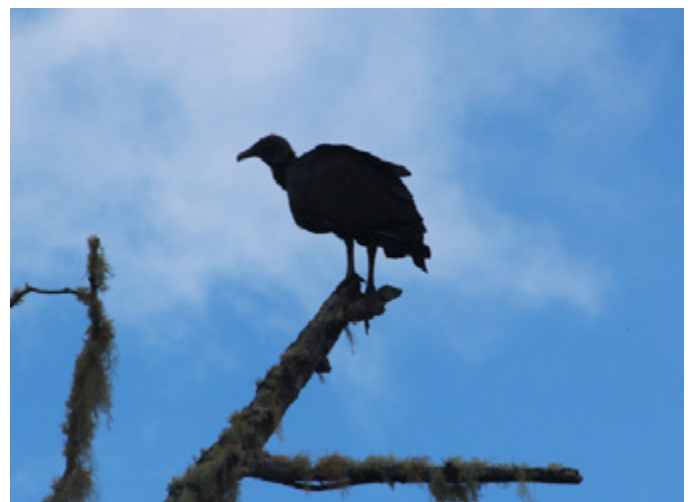


Walking in these woods provide opportunities to see birds in 3 life zones and for me the experience was overwhelming. There were many groups of birds I'd never heard of (for example chlorophonia, chlorospingus, nightingale thrushes) and keeping the names associated with the birds was a challenge. Then there was birding by ear. We were delighted to hear (and see) many migrants that will soon be hear, such as Swainsons thrush (very common there, though as here hard to see), Wilson's warbler and olive sided flycatcher. There were also many endemics. Then there were insects, with a special focus (by Jeffrey) on moths (a light at night attracted moths which we could see and then attracted birds in the

morning that we would otherwise not see). We spent much free time by the feeders, seeing some nesting birds in the area (diminutive hummingbird nests) and learning to distinguish the 8-10 species of hummingbirds commonly visiting feeders (not all species do this). I did feel after 8 days that I could tell a bellbird from a motmot and that I'd probably remember many of the birds if I saw them again. This is the power of repetition.



We did a lot of hiking, since there are many trails to explore, and we were up early and to bed early. The din of the howler monkeys and the birds in the morning is remarkable as were the sunsets on many days. Remoteness brings a low residual light load at night and we were treated to several fabulous night skies. It was the beginning of the rainy season, so we did have rains a couple of days and plenty of clouds. The temperature was pleasant (mostly 60s and shirtsleeve hiking after the morning cool wore off). There were monkeys and motmots, quetzals and coatis, giant trees loaded with bryophytes and fern diversity that was overwhelming, including cycads (tree ferns). If not for the chiggers (still itching) it would be paradise.



Black vulture

Odds & Ends (Continued)



Howler monkeys –curiouser and curiouser



Mystery insect



On the trail

Biodiverse Costa Rica

BY ANITA ELDER

Around the same time that Gordie and his posse were in Panama, I traveled to Costa Rica. I wanted to go with Global Adventures, but my pocket book told me that wasn't an option. So, I made my own arrangements with a travel agency and off I went.



Emerald basilisk (male)

My first stop, after arriving in San Jose, was Tortuguero National Park, which is on the Caribbean side of the country. You have to first travel across very bumpy roads, then board a boat to get to the park. It was also the best way to see wildlife. Everywhere I looked, there was a different animal, bird or reptile! I was very excited when I saw my first two-toed sloth and an olingo!



Hanging nests of the Montezuma oropendola

After spending a couple of days in the park's jungle, I was transferred to La Fortuna at the base of the Arenal volcano. There, I took a naturalist-led walk through a different kind of jungle where it poured down rain almost the entire time (even though it was the "dry" season). Due to the rain, I didn't get as many photos as I would have liked, but I do have my memories.

Three days later, I was taken on an even bumpier, dusty road to the mountains of the Monteverde Cloud Forest. The temperatures were much cooler in the mountains and it reminded me of Seattle with the gray sky and misting clouds that hung low in the trees.

Odds & Ends (Continued)



White-faced capucin monkey

Another naturalist guide led me on a hike in the forest at night and it amazed me how he could spot birds sleeping in trees when it was pitch dark! Besides sleeping birds, I got to see pit vipers, red-kneed tarantulas and various insects.



Arenal volcano



Two-toed sloth

The following day, I went on eight zip-lines, where I got photos of white-nosed coati, black vultures, and beautiful scenery. FYI - the coati act much like our marmots in begging for food. Even though signs are posted to not feed the wildlife, you can tell that people have ignored those signs. At one point, I thought a coati was going to jump up in my lap as I ate a sandwich. I had to stomp my feet, wave my arms and holler for it to go away!



White-nosed coati begging for food



Orange-bellied trogon

SAVE THE DATE: Anita will be offering a presentation on my Costa Rica trip on September 24th.



Frenchman Coulee Trail by Anita Elder

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