



Volume 22 Issue 3

Society for Northwestern Vertebrate Biology



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Many new changes are happening with SNVB and all of them are exciting. Eric Lund (Webmaster) has worked many sleepless nights to bring you this latest dazzling web experience. The website has had a complete overhaul and will allow better access for members to view, update, and renew their memberships. Most notable, it is interactive so submit some of your great photos for the photo of the month contest. Did I mention you can renew your membership now through the website? (hint hint) Memberships are very important to the sustainability of SNVB and our ability to provide Northwest Naturalist, the Annual Meeting, and other publications. This year the Membership Committee (Erim Gomez, Paul Hendricks, Lindsey Thurman, Tiffany Garcia, and Robert Weaver) is implementing a membership drive to recruit new members. Be on the lookout for our new recruiting materials and please help us by encouraging your Naturalist friends to become members. In other big news we will have our 2015 meeting in Portland this February. Many of our members (Becky Hill, Dave Clayton, Eric Lund, Darcy Pickard, and Teal Waterstrat) worked very diligently to analyze different venues and locations for possible meetings and decided on Portland as the place. It is an exciting town with lots of parks, food, and beer and should provide a great background for discussing novel environments, sustainability, and citizen science which are several of the themes we have been kicking around. We will again be partnering with Northwest Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation but are reaching out to other organizations to add to the growing list of symposia and workshops. Please let us know if you would like SNVB to partner with an organization and we will get in touch.

Cheers,
 Steve Wagner



www.thesnvb.org

2015 Meeting Update

Becky Hill SNVB Oregon VP

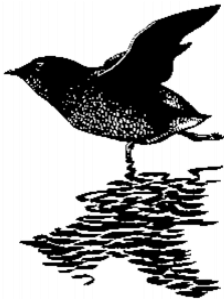
Hello SNVB members:

It's my pleasure to announce the theme and venue for the 2015 SNVB annual meeting. This year we will focus our meeting on: **Defining a New Ecological Baseline: Pacific Northwest Fauna and Flora in the Anthropocene**. And how better to do that in downtown Portland, Oregon at the Embassy Suites Hotel. This fabulous and fun city and hotel will be the perfect backdrop to frame our discussion of defining if and how we should be redrawing the lines of biological and ecological interactions in our highly altered world. As you may know Portland once represented the end of frontier as travelers headed west to start a new and better life on the Oregon Trail, and once again as many of us came Northwest in search of fertile community gardens, thriving farmers markets, wide bike lanes, great coffee, and countless microbrews back in the late 90's. We welcome you to embrace the Anthropocene in one of the most vibrant and progressive cities in North America this February! See you there!

The New face of SNVB (the website 3.0)

-Eric M Lund (SNVB webmaster)

We the board members of the society are pleased to announce the launch of our new-look website which is still located at our same address: www.thesnvb.org.



The most notable addition to our site is the database that we have incorporated into it, which will help us to better organize our membership data. In addition to improving the way we manage the membership data base we have been able to add several additional pages to enrich and explore your experience with SNVB in addition to all the good stuff we had at our old site. Another big improvement is the mobile device friendly format of our new site which will keep SNVB at the tips of your fingers wherever you go!

New pages include the photo of the month page where you can view your fellow member's spectacular photographs in the NW and submit your own images. If your image is selected it will be featured on the SNVB homepage and added to our [image gallery](#) for the world to enjoy. The member publication page is a member driven list of [recent publications](#) by current members. Did you or a colleague recently publish? Just fill out the submission form and we will add it too the list (it doesn't even have to be in the Naturalist).

A lot of our past web content is upgraded on our new site. Login on the members only page (you should have received a password already, but if you forgot its easy to get a new one) to access contemporary issues of Northwestern Naturalist through BioOne, explore indices of older Naturalist and Murrelet volumes, and more!

The [annual meeting](#) page is still the best place to get the most up-to-date information about our fabulous meetings, but you can also relive the good times and research valuable past presentation on our [past meetings](#) page. Want to make a change to your personal information or get your hands on a NW Fauna? It's easy to update your membership information, pay your [membership dues](#), and [purchase publications](#) on the new website.

We hope you enjoy the new website and that it makes your SNVB experience even better. Thank you for your involvement with SNVB and we hope to see you in Portland!

Have ideas about how to make the website better or just want to chat SNVB? Try the contact us page or give Eric an email and we'll get back to you shortly. All board member information can be found on the "about us" page.

On *Rhyacotriton*

- Eric and Soren Lund

On a handful of Fridays over the last few months I have ventured out into the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area with Soren, my soon to be 1 year old son, in search of Pleistocene refugia and lungless salamanders. As far as I can tell the western end of the gorge is one of the best places around to learn how to count costal grooves and identify iridophore patterns on plethodons. Where else in the Northwest this side of the Klamath-Siskiyou can you turn over a rock that might very well have any one of 5 (or even 6?) species of plethodons' hiding under it? We were planning to do the same sort of thing today and then last night while I was reading Soren bedtime stories from the newest edition of *The Murreletter*, hot off the press, he stopped me before we even got to the end of your *Rhyacotriton* letter and said,

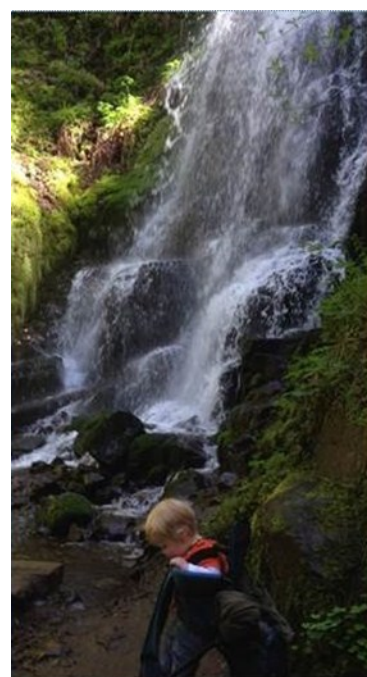
"Da da, ba ba ba ba ba ba ba ba?" (Hey Dad, why don't we go revisit that Wahkeena Falls torrent salamander study site from Nussbaum and Tait's paper from the 70's that you were reading to me the other day and see if we can find any 40 year-old, 3 legged salamanders? And then we could tell everyone about it in *The Murreletter*, uncensored by peer review!)

"I think you are on to something," I said, without tarnishing his dreams that night by telling him that salamanders don't live 40 years², and we had a plan.

After Soren fell asleep I borrowed his dog-eared copy of *Aspects of the Life History and Ecology of The Olympic Salamander, Rhyacotriton olympicus* (Nussbaum and Tait 1977) from his crib-side stand to reread the description of their study sites. They extensively surveyed two sites in the gorge, Wahkeena Falls itself, as well as "a small unnamed creek (214 m elevation) 500 m E of Wahkeena Falls" where they estimated larval densities of torrent salamanders to be 27 - 41 individuals per m² during their sampling in 1973. 27-41 per square meter! Knowing that Multnomah Falls is maybe 1 kilometer east of Wahkeena, I figured that if we headed out on the loop trail that connects those two waterfalls starting at Multnomah we were bound to run into their unnamed study stream along the way. And of course, plethodons.

So this morning we loaded up the car, headed upriver and parked along the old Columbia Gorge scenic highway just west of Multnomah Falls. Soren jumped in the backpack as we stuffed our pockets with Mum-Mums[®] and started walking west down the Return Trail (#442). The first stream we ran into after just a few hundred meters was a 10m tall hanging waterfall with a splash zone of a hundred square meters or so, and lots of wet basalt rocks. I wondered if we had already found their study site though it was quite small and the surface flow mostly ended at the trail. After taking a picture for the family that was paused there and waiting for them to continue down the trail I knelt down and flipped a few rocks, explaining to my son that the best place to look for torrent salamanders in higher flowing streams was in the low flowing margins, but that this entire low flowing rocky splash zone was probably loaded with critters. We did not find salamanders there (yet) and I wanted to get a little further from the sounds of traffic and cover some more ground to better gauge whether we were even at the old study site, so we continued walking.

50 meters or so west of that small falls we found a large Dunn's salamander (*Plethodon dunni*) under a piece of cobble on the north side of the trail. A half kilometer or so later and we were looking up through dense crowds of people (5 per 100m² +/- 2) at Wahkeena Falls.



Soren on the lookout for *R. cascadae* at the base of Fairy Falls, Wahkeena canyon, Oregon.



On *Rhyacotriton* continued

After a quick rinse in Wahkeena's spray zone we continued up the trail into the more narrow canyon and then to Fairy Falls, where we stopped as Soren began scanning the margins of the stream. About 10 meters below the falls we found our first torrent salamander of the day as well as 2 Giant salamander (*Dicamptodon* spp.) larvae. Eventually we made it up to Wahkeena Spring before turning back around for the return trip. On the way down we found a couple more *Dicamptodon* larvae in Wahkeena Creek, several more *P. dunni* (including one of the biggest ones I have ever seen) in the spray zone of Wahkeena Falls and a couple Oregon ensatina salamanders (*Ensatina escholtzii*), before we took a break to crawl around and change our diaper at the Wahkeena picnic area. Then we ambled down the trail towards the car and back to the unnamed stream that we had stopped at near the start of our walk. We found 3 *R. cascadae* there this time around, all right on the trail, though after a few more minutes of crouching down and standing up and crouching down I felt the tell-tale thump of Soren's head on my shoulder indicating that he had fallen asleep. We walked the last little bit of trail to the car in the hopes that he would continue sleeping though *The Transfer* (to car seat). He did!

At the car I scribbled down a couple notes including the final salamander tally: 4 Dunn's salamanders, 2 Ensatinas, 4 Torrents and 3 Giant salamanders.

Afterward

I later traded emails, photos and maps with none other than Cynthia Tate (Thanks for the introduction, Teal). I now know that the little splash zone where we found 3 *R. cascadae* was not the unnamed study stream for from her graduate research and 1977 paper but I also know right where their study site is. Soren is already hatching plans for our next attempt to look for those 40 year old torrent salamanders. We'll keep you posted....

In the meantime, you know who has some great stories about *Rhyacotriton* and who might even be reading this? Mr. R. Bruce Bury, that's who. [Paging Dr. Bury].

Footnotes

¹*Plethodon dunni*, *P. larselli*, *P. vehiculum*, *Ensatina escholtzii* and *Batrachoseps wrightii* all occupy the western end of Columbia gorge in Oregon though you are more likely to find *B. wrightii* under a nice mossy log than a rock (Clayton and Olson 2009). The range of *Aneides ferreus* may also extend to the Columbia River and specimens have been collected from the Sandy River drainage near State Hwy 50 in Oregon, approx. 25 miles south of the gorge.

²Once again Soren was right and I was wrong. The Japanese salamander [has been documented to live 50 years](#), and this [crazy cave salamander up to 100 years!](#)

References

Clayton, D.R., and Olson, D.H. 2009. Conservation Assessment for the Oregon Slender Salamander (*Batrachoseps wrightii*) Version 2.0. U.S.D.A. Forest Service Region 6 and U.S.D.I. Bureau of Land Management. 78pp.

Nussbaum, R.A., and Tait, C.K. 1977. Aspects of the Life History and Ecology of the Olympic Salamander, *Rhyacotriton olympicus*. American Midland Naturalist 98(1). 176-199.

A friendly reminder to keep it clean

Just a quick reminder to keep your gear clean! There have been a couple close calls with Dreissenid mussel (Quagga and Zebra) for Oregon and Washington this year. White nose syndrome weighs heavy on all our minds in the west. Snake Fungal disease, chytrid, turtle shell rot, and a host of other diseases and invasive species are lurking out there waiting for us to introduce it to a naïve environment. So please before you grab a beer and head to the showers toss your gear in a bucket of bleach or the freezer for the weekend. Remember what Smokey's cousin Itchy says, "Only you can stop the spread of invasive species and infectious disease!"

Notable publications regarding NW species

*Enter the Cedar Sculpin (*Cottus schitsuumsh*)*

- Contributed by Paul Hendricks SNVB Inland VP

Whatever we study we all know them. The LBB (little brown birds or bats), LBM (little brown mushrooms), aster spp?, forb spp?, and of course, to all but a few hardcore, aficionados LBS (little brown sculpin). These small grumpy faced *Cottus* are often the most abundant and species rich vertebrates in of our NW streams but are lumped into cottus spp on most datasheets. After 2 years working with Washington's freshwater sculpin I was finally beginning to feel like I could casually throw out species names after a glance in the bucket when Paul dropped this article in my inbox. Cedar Sculpin?! Easily confused with Shorthead sculpin?!? I was about to give up on fish and go back to something easier like keying out sedges in Hitchcock when the 4th line of the abstract (or if I had paid more attention to the title) let me know I wouldn't be seeing them in Western Washington anytime soon. This newly described species has a limited distribution in the St. John and Couer d'Alene Rivers in Idaho and Montana. To learn more about the Cedar Sculpin review [Lemoine and others species description](#) published in ZooTaxa (Vol 3755 no. 3) this year. To see the holotype take a visit to the fisheries collection at the University of Washington Seattle. But above that let all welcome and celebrate a new LB addition the fauna of the NW!

Actinemys, Emys, pacific, western or SOUTHERN? Pond turtles are in the press

The western pond turtle has greatly declined from its former abundance and distribution in Western North America and may need federal protect to ensure its long term existence. Currently a 1992 petition to list the pond turtle under the US Endangered Species Act is under review, partly because the of pressure by conservation groups (Wild Earth Guardians, the Center for Biological Diversity and others) as part of the multi-district listing plan. As the turtle goes through review more information is needed to define the species and its historic and current distribution. Several informative papers have come out in the last months both further clarifying the phyogenetics of the pond turtle as a species and describing their know current distribution.

These the western pond turtle (*Emys marmorata*) have gone through the gauntlet of name changes and subspecies, but [Phillip Spinks, Robert Thompson, and Bradley Shaffer](#) may have the final word on the turtle in their 2014 publication in Volume 23, issue 9 of Molecular Ecology where they revise their earlier work in 2005 with a more detailed look into the turtles genome and conclude that a new species is justified for the former southern subspecies (see Seeliger 1945) of the pond Turtle. Welcome *Emys pallida*, the Southern Western pond turtle!

Just as important as knowing what species you are talking about is knowing where and when that species occurred. [Kimberly Barela and Deanna Olson](#) have done just that for the pond turtle in Vol 95 no 1 of the NW Naturalist where they compiled and mapped records for the pond turtle from 1850 to 2011 to help provide a comprehensive view of the turtle's distribution over 160 years.

Today we as biologist blend intra-genome variation with behavioral observations and historic data to describe a species. And the great thing about that is it allows every one from the Phd professor to a young kid with a passion for wildlife to share in contributing knowledge about NW wildlife. So keep your eyes peeled and your PCR primers fresh. The species are counting on you!

Contact us!

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Corrections

In the last issue of the Murreletter (volume 22 issue 2) I incorrectly stated in the parting thoughts article (page 6) that “Way back in 2009 a workshop on invertebrates was proposed for our 2010 annual meeting in Hood River, Oregon “. This should have read: “Way back in 2001 a workshop on invertebrates was proposed for our 2002 annual meeting in Hood River, Oregon”. My apologies for the error.

The Society for Northwestern Vertebrate Biology, the oldest scientific association devoted to the study of vertebrates in the Pacific Northwest, was founded in 1920 as the Pacific Northwest Bird and Mammal Society. Long recognized as the preeminent union of ornithologists and mammalogists in the Pacific Northwest, the society adopted its current name in 1988 to reflect an expanded taxonomic scope that included amphibians and reptiles.

The scope expanded again in 1999 to include fish. Today the society strives to promote close working relationships among ornithologists, mammalogists, herpetologists, and ichthyologists in our region; foster exchange of scientific information and interest in the study of vertebrates; and offer a forum for these activities through meetings and publications.



The passing of NW conservation leaders



Billy Frank Jr (March 9th 1931 - May 5th, 2014): Son, father, soldier, outlaw, hero, leader, humanitarian, politician, conservationist, and visionary are only few of many words to describe this individual. It would take a book to describe this mans impacts to salmon fisheries in the Pacific NW. Here is a link to one: [Where the Salmon Run](#)

Farley Mowat (May 12th 1921 - May 6th 2014) A great and passionate writer of the north, conservation, and tales of life. Whether his tales were true or tall didn't really matter. He help awake a generation to conservation and activism and all with emotion, humor, and humanity.



Photo: Kyla Zaret

Parting thoughts

Our Mailbox (good things come in small packages)



What is SNVB? Sure we are an amazing collection of individuals interested in NW vertebrate biology. We are tri-annual peer reviewed journal, an online website packed with information, a series of books describing species and methods to investigate them, and a fun and informative meeting. But that's not really all that tangible. It's all abstract collections of ideas, thoughts, data printed on a paper, and synapses firing off in our macrofauna obsessed brains. What is SNVB when it really comes down to it?

SNVB is a physical presence in only one location: 2103 Harrison Ave Olympia Washington, 98502. A wonderful little place where you can fix your computer, renew your tabs, copy a key, buy a new disc, or hop next door for an exotic tropical fish. Kitty corner to a wall of multi-hued disc golf discs. Opposite the front desk sits a plain grey box roughly 4" by 4" labeled 132 that is legally SNVB's home and sole place in the world.

So What is SNVB? A little box that holds our mail, or the ideas and personalities that fill it?

If you're off an adventure send a postcard to our mailing address and we'll include it in the next edition of the Murreletter.



Western Toads, Cora Lake, Gifford Pinchot NF, WA

The **S**ociety for **N**orthwestern **V**ertebrate **B**iology



The longest running scientific association devoted to the study of vertebrate ecology in the Pacific Northwest

Member Benefits

- Northwestern Naturalist, the Society's peer-reviewed scientific journal
- The Murreletter tri-annual e-newsletter
- Discounts on meetings and publications like Northwest Fauna
- Free online access to NW Naturalist archives through BioOne
- Students eligible for annual scholarship
- Up to date information on our rotating intra-regional meetings, publications, and workshops

Northwestern Naturalist

A JOURNAL OF VERTEBRATE BIOLOGY

VOLUME 95 NUMBER 1 SPRING 2013

Northwest Fauna

A MONOGRAPH OF VERTEBRATE BIOLOGY



Western Pond Turtle: Biology, Sampling, Techniques, Inventory and Monitoring, Conservation, and Management

By Bruce Burt, Larry Bell, Jeff Fries, Jo, David Gorman, and
Bernard C. Anderson (Editors)

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