



JERICHO STEWARDSHIP GROUP

Dedicated to restoring and enhancing the natural areas of Jericho Park

Newsletter

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Jericho Pond survey finds some weird, wonderful and rare insects

While most of us are familiar with the feathered inhabitants of the pond at Jericho Park, it turns out that it is also home to some pretty interesting species of the insect variety as well.

Over the course of the last year, entomologists Karen Needham and Rex Kenner have taken their dip nets and surveyed some of the aquatic insects found in the pond. While they found common dragonflies, water beetles and water boatmen, they also found some big surprises.

The blue dasher (*Pachydiplax longipennis*) is listed as a species at risk in BC. This beautiful dragonfly is associated with ponds containing abundant aquatic vegetation, and in BC is found only in low-lying areas of the south coast and along the north shore of Osoyoos Lake.

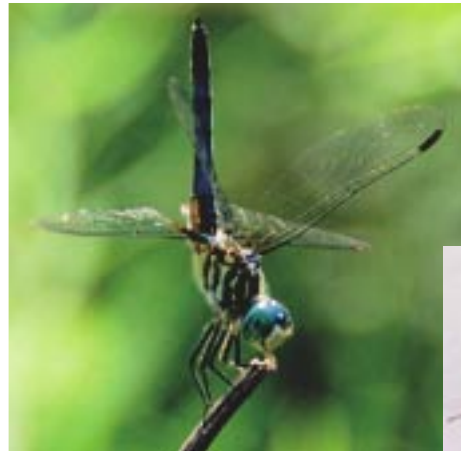
Specimens of BC's only water scorpion (*Ranatra fusca*) were also

found at Jericho. "Although it is not officially considered rare, we seldom see it while collecting in the Lower Mainland," they noted.

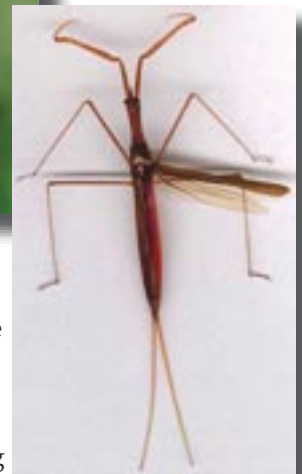
The pair found five other species of aquatic insects that are only rarely seen in the province. (One species, a tiny moss beetle, hadn't been recorded since 1930 and no specimens existed at UBC's Spencer Entomological Museum.)

The survey findings have added to the knowledge that Jericho Park is really important as wildlife habitat, not just for the birds, coyotes and tree frogs that are more often noticed, but also for many rarely-seen species.

Needham and Kenner have also made recommendations to improve



The blue dasher (left) and BC's only water scorpion (below) were among the species found in Jericho Park's pond.



habitat at the pond that include removing some cat-tails and maintaining water levels throughout the year. (Most years, large areas of the pond come close to drying out.)

The Jericho Stewardship Group will continue to work with the Vancouver Park Board to resolve those challenges and enhance habitat at Jericho.

Jericho Park unfortunate victim of continuing civic strike

On July 23, the city experienced day one of what is now a very long strike. As of this writing (Oct. 10), we're now onto Day 82.

While most people would have found it a challenge during the first weeks of the strike to notice any changes at Jericho Park, it is now becoming obvious. The resident beavers have managed to gnaw through at least two trees and are

working away on others. The squatters who plague the park have come back with a vengeance. And the amount of trash seems to grow each day.

The strike has also affected our work at the park. While we have managed to hold two regular work parties, it has had to be without the support of our usual park board friends -- that means no truck to transport tools, no refreshments for

the volunteers, no pick up of the invasive plants removed.

We're hoping that the strike will be resolved the strike ASAP! Because while some of the effects of the strike may be mere inconveniences, others -- such as the increased presence of squatters -- is a serious threat to the safety of park goers of all ages.

Invasive of the Month: European bittersweet (*Solanum dulcamara*)

The culprit: *Solanum dulcamara*, aka European bittersweet, bittersweet nightshade, climbing nightshade. Native to Eurasia, it was introduced to Canada as a garden ornamental.

A semi-woody herbaceous perennial vine, it can grow to 4 metres in length. In fall, it's most easily recognized by its small red berries that hang in clusters. In spring and summer, it's easily recognized by its small purple star-shaped flowers that look similar to the flowers found on potato plants (it's part of the same plant family).

The problem: All parts of *Solanum dulcamara* are poisonous to people and pets, as well as livestock. (Its toxic effects on wildlife is not known.)

Solanum can be an invader in a variety of habitats, but at Jericho Park, it has hit the ponds hardest. The long vines have created thick tangles among the cattails, making it extremely difficult even for waterfowl to get through. Where *Solanum* also covers the ground, it smothers native vegetation needed by wildlife.

How to control *Solanum dulcamara*: Plants can be pulled by hand, trying



Pretty, but problematic: European bittersweet is related to the potato, but unlike the potato, its fruits are poisonous.



to remove as much of the root as possible. Because the plant can regrow from root or plant fragments, it's important to remove the pulled *Solanum*. Also, because all the plant parts are toxic, you'll need to wear gloves.

Alternatives for your garden: Western trumpet honeysuckle (*Lonicera ciliosa*) is a native vine with orange-yellow flowers and orange-red berries that attracts butterflies and hummingbirds. Avoid other common garden vines such as English ivy and periwinkle as they are also invasive species.

Join us!

We meet the second Sunday of each month to remove invasive plants, replant native species and do other projects to enhance wildlife habitat at Jericho Park.

If you're interested, just meet us at the wooden bridge between the two ponds at Jericho at 9 a.m. We work until 1 p.m. (weather permitting), but if you can only manage an hour or two, that's just fine.

Be sure to dress for the elements. That means good footwear – hiking boots or sturdy rubber boots are best – and



clothing to keep you cool.

Although we usually have goodies, it's a good idea to bring a snack and water.

And while we do have some tools, if you have a favourite lopper, pruning saw, clippers or shovel, please bring it with you.

Jericho Stewardship Group (JSG) is a group of volunteers who work with the Vancouver Parks Board with the idea of making Jericho a better place both for the park's wildlife and park visitors. For more information, contact

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