

of pigeons, estimated to be about 300, was reduced to approximately 30.

In British Columbia in the period of November to February inclusive, the Federation of BC Naturalists was involved in a variety of conservation actions including sending letters a draft Kakwa Park management plan, the addition of the white sturgeon to the species at risk list, and the necessity for meaningful public process for environmental assessment on the Deltaport expansion; sending a news release on the impacts on mountain caribou that would result if a proposed helicopter ski proposal land tenure application near Prince George was approved; completing of questionnaires (Skagit Environmental Endowment Commission; Spruce Lake/Big Creek Provincial Parks); and participating in meetings on a wide range of topics. (Adapted from "Your Federation is Working for You" in BCN 43:1)

A KNOTTY PROBLEM IS EXPANDING:

The Japanese knotweed looks like bamboo shoots but is an invasive plant that is spreading quite widely in the northeastern part of the Island. The large, triangular shaped leaves are distinctive as are the reddish stems which may be two plus metres in height. This species, which originates in Asia, is a member of the buckwheat family (*Polygonaceae*) and, like buckwheat, eliminates most other species of vascular plants once it establishes a canopy.

When it starts growing at a site, it is very difficult to eradicate even if one is willing to resort to herbicides. An established stem of Japanese knotweed will regenerate from a piece of rhizome as small as 0.7 grams. The rhizomes are the thickened, underground stem of this plant that stores food and produces shoots that rise above the surface and roots which extend into the soil around the rhizome. In deep soils, rhizomes can extend down to 2 metres. To implement hand or mechanical removal, it will require persistence but repeated hand digging and the destruction of the leaves, rhizomes and stems of small patches can be achieved. Be sure that the plant materials are disposed off by a method that will kill the plant materials such as leaving them to bake in the sun and in dry conditions without contact with soil. Please ensure that you do not put the material where it can reproduce and advise others of the problems with this species!

Editor's Note: - adapted from a BCN 43:1 article by Ernie Sellentin titled "Asian ornamental poses a knotty problem for BC habitat". For more information consult: www.cornwall.gov.uk/environment/knotweed/jap3.htm or <http://tnweeds.ucdavis.edu/moredocs.polspp01.pdf>

WEATHER EVENTS:

Storm surges and severe north-easterly gales last autumn and winter have played havoc with many beaches, dunes, and cliffs. Severe damage was seen in low lying coastal areas, especially those beaches and cliffs that bore the brunt of the wind driven waves. The picnic shelters at Stanhope were completely surrounded by driftwood and stones and sand were deposited to the road edge. The Shore Cottage Lane and shore road junction was destroyed and the steel road sign post was twisted as if it was a piece of spaghetti. (JDM)

There was plenty of open water amidst the ice flows at East Point on Feb. 13 (DO). Most of the ice was gone from Murray River on Mar. 16 and the ice was gone from Little Sands to Wood Islands (DK) on Mar. 21. The water was mostly open except for the mouths of Victoria Harbour, Westmoreland River, & Desable River on Mar. 25 (RA). There was still ice around the shore in western P.E.I. (DK, LH, BMa, DO) on Mar. 29th.

Heavy winter rains and a thaw cycle caused considerable flooding on both March 9 and 29th over much of the Island. Some individuals were stranded as their homes became surrounded by temporary lakes. The first rain storms yielded many centre bare fields and the second reduced many of the snow banks to field edges. Ice stretching most of the way to horizon at Robinson's Island with some open leads on Mar. 27 and some bare sand along the shore (JDM, RHP). The ice opened in Charlottetown Harbour with the open water lead along the Hillsborough River stretching from the Hillsborough Bridge to the area off Hillsborough Hospital on Mar. 28th. The open water stretched from Fullerton's Marsh bridge to the bend on above by Mar. 31st. (JDM) On Apr. 6, some open water was present at Cardigan Bay and the river ice was quite rotten (SSi).

Drying conditions caused a rash of escape fires in grasslands and cutovers on the weekend of April 16th, about 2 to 3 weeks earlier than most years. A snow fall on April 21st left about 7 cm of wet snow overnight but this