

Gabriola Streamkeepers—Water levels and quality

## **Observations at Coats Marsh, Gabriola Island**

—with notes on Coats Marsh Creek, East Path Creek, and Stump Farm Streams.

### ***References:***

[RDN Coats Marsh Regional Park](#), 2011–2021 Management Plan, Appendix A.

[RDN Coats Marsh Weir Assessment](#), June 1, 2020, SRM Projects.

[Gabriola Riparian Areas](#), February 24, 2012, Madrone.

[RDN Berm Report](#), September 12, 2013.

[RDN Water Level Management](#), September 14, 2021, Madrone.

[RDN NHC/EDI Weir Replacement Study](#), April 12, 2023.

[RDN/NTBC Coats Marsh Weir Management Proposal](#), May 2, 2023.

[RDN NHC/EDI Decommissioning Plan](#), December 18, 2023.

[RDN NHC Beaver Dam Risk Assessment](#), January 10, 2024.

[RDN Coats Marsh Weir Pool Mitigation Plan](#) October 2024.

For an up-to-date list see [here](#) and for pertinent Gabriola Streamkeepers notes see [here](#).

[Coats Marsh hydrogeology](#) .

Water-levels' [summary](#).

Coats Marsh RP and 707 CP Trail [Maps](#): Maps Y and Z.

Gabriola Stream and Wetlands [Atlas](#) .

Coats Marsh Species [Checklists](#) .

Freshwater [fish](#) on Gabriola Island, BC

Coats Marsh – human disturbance of breeding and migratory [ducks and geese](#).

Coats Marsh – [beaver dam stability](#).

Coats Marsh Management - [paper on](#), [weir decommissioning](#)

Coats Marsh brief [history](#).

Long-term precipitation (1944-2024) – [statistics](#). Updated every month and used as the “normal” meaning average precipitation at Coats Marsh.

## **Field observations—2025 (Apr.— )**

THIS FILE ([Field Observations 2025](#)) IS A SUPPLEMENT TO:

“[Observations at Coats Marsh, Gabriola Island](#)” File: 673.

For an up-to-date list of supplements see [here](#) .

Apr.05, 2025 (day 3549, 3288+261):ViGRG cum. 946.7 mm (norm. 959 mm). Cistern 178 mm SCB. [cal. datum: cistern +0.545 m]. Weir 427 mm WPB scale. [cal.datum: weir -0.220 m]. Beaver dam head 0.77 m.



Everything looking fairly "normal" for the time of year. Creeks still running for past few days except East Path Creek dry today. Out on the lake, many in couples, buffleheads, ring-neckeds (not been seen lately), mallards (some recently arrived), hooded mergansers, wood ducks, and Canada geese. Swallows, vultures, bald eagles, sprouting horsetails, and insects (unusually bothersome).

With newly acquired hearing-aids lots more birds making themselves heard as they busy about in the bush, but I'm not going to use an app. to identify them. Seems like cheating to me. My rule remains only count them when a good photograph has been taken that you can match with one in a field guide.



Apr.30, 2025 (day 3574,3288+286):ViGRG cum. 977.0 mm (norm. 1011 mm). Precipitation this month 48% below long-term average. Annual rainfall this year so far, now down to 19% below long-term average.

I recall Charles Darwin in his 1860 publication remarking on the difficulty naturalists had in sometimes differentiating between species, sub-species, and varieties.

A botanist I once accompanied on a visit to Gabriola, managed to find six different "kinds" of buttercup in his first hour here. Here's one, Lesser Spearwort, *Ranunculus flammula* (uncommonly pubescent).



The lower picture is a dainty, spring flower, Western Starflower,<sup>1</sup> *Lysimachia latifolia*, often called *Trientalis latifolia*.

*Nemophila parviflora* is not a wildflower that attracts a lot of attention (it's tiny), but we do have them here in the park and they are native and not weeds, so I'll include a picture of one here.



May 8, 2025 (day 3582,3288+294):ViGRG cum. 982.3 mm (norm. 1024 mm).

Sunny but with a cold wind. The woods full of greenery and the calls and songs of unseen birds from way up in the canopy (my first hearing aids).

Lake level looking normal; dominated by Canada geese, at least four, very noisy and aggressive. Lake mostly devoid of waterbirds out in the open, but there was a pied-billed grebe (not so-often seen these days), a wood duck, and a mallard with about nine ducklings keeping close to reeds and snags.



<sup>1</sup> It often comes with a twin, and occasionally there are triplets, but nothing more than that.



Broom flourishing in the burn-pile clearings.

May 22, 2025 (day  
3596,3288+308):ViGRG cum. 1023.8 mm  
(norm. 1047 mm).

Very April-ish showers.

Not readily-IDed as a buttercup,  
*Ranunculus*  
*uncinatus*.

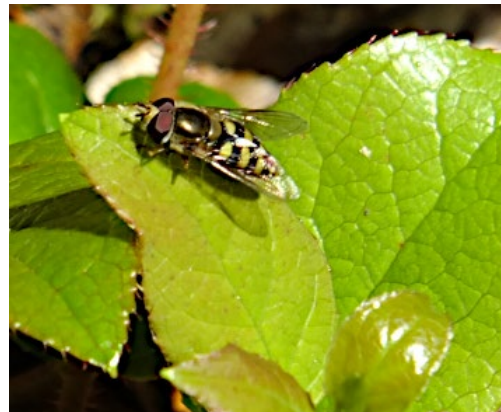
This *little*  
buttercup  
regularly  
sheds its  
five petals.

Native and  
very common  
this time of  
year.





Collection of groundcones (*Boschniakia hookeri*). They're root-parasites of salal, but these appear to be working on a Doug.-fir sapling.



Numerous hovering hover flies. Harmless; nevertheless, a little disturbing when they do it while staring at you just an arm's length away. Probably the feeling's mutual.

*Top:* Innocents abroad better watch out. I saw a bald eagle carrying off a freshly-killed squirrel a few days ago.

RDN has released its final plan for the weir demolition.  
([File: 6117](#))

May 26, 2025 (day 3600,3288+312):ViGRG cum. 1025.4 mm (norm.  
1053 mm).

On show: spring blues and bicoloured  
flaxflowers (*Celastrina echo* and  
*Leptosyphon (Linanthus) bicolor*).



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