

The
**VICTORIA
NATURALIST**

1946



NESTING OF DOUBLE CRESTED CORMORANTS

BALLINGALL ISLAND, B. C.

THE VICTORIA NATURALIST

Published by

The Victoria Natural History SocietyVOL.3, No.5November 1946

The October monthly meeting of the Society was held in the Provincial Library on 8th inst. Dr. Carl took the chair. After the usual business Mr. G. Hardy, of the Provincial Museum, addressed the members.

Mr. Hardy's subject was "A trip through the Rockies" but before speaking to this subject, Mr. Hardy exhibited two skins of birds he had lately seen near Victoria which are seldom seen here. The skins were specimens that had been in the museum for some years.

The first bird Mr. Hardy spoke of was the white--throated sparrow. This bird has a reddish back, white stripes on the head and a yellow patch above the beak. It is not unlike the golden crowned sparrow but easily distinguishable in the hand or at close quarters. The last record of it being seen here is for 1913, though doubtless others have been here since then.

The second bird was the bush tit, a tiny bird like a wisp of blue smoke, with no distinguishing colour markings. It is quite tame and a flock of at least two dozen were seen near Blenkinsop Road.

Mr. Marrion showed photos of the V.I. earthquake which indicated clearly the shift of land caused by the quake.

Mr. Hardy reported that a Mr. McKeachey had found a strange bird at Ross Bay following some recent high winds. The bird was identified as a fork-tailed petrel. It was injured and later died.

Mr. Hardy then spoke of his recent trip to the Rockies. His talk was illustrated by two films

kindly loaned by the C.P.R. Company. As Mr. Hardy's talk was in the form of a commentary on the films it is difficult to report clearly, but the following will perhaps give an idea of the impressions gained by Mr. Hardy.

"The deer in Jasper Park are very tame and very fat. The elk seen there were introduced to the park and are denuding the woods of shrubs and wild flowers. The silver bush and the aspen leaves are eaten by the elk. These animals are very clumsy, as they run looking backwards. The coyote would seem to be the only animal not protected and is often shot. As he is the natural enemy of the deer and elk these are increasing so rapidly that they will in time destroy the beauty of the park, and will, later still, be unable to find enough food.

The pika hare is common in Jasper Park. This little animal assembles piles of herbage to be eaten during the winter.

Other animals of the Rockies were the whistler, the grisly bear, the mountain goat, the wild sheep and the moose.

The flowers are varied and plentiful, though the yellow poppies grown around the Chateau at Lake Louise are not native to the Rockies. Some of the original glaciers are still in the Rockies, but in places are retreating at the rate of 200 feet annually.

Following is a list of some of the Plants which may be found wild in the Rockies:-

PLANTS SHOWN IN "TRIP TO THE ROCKIES" OCT. 6th.

<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Scientific Name</u>
White Geranium	Geranium Richardsonii
Lindley's Aster	Aster Lindleyana
Golden Erigeron	Erigeron aureus
Woolly Pussy-toes	Antennaria lanata
Common Saxifrage	Saxifraga bronchialis
Cinquefoil	Potentilla dissecta
Strawberry Blite	Chenopodium capitatum
Swamp Laurel	Kalmia porrifolia
Giant Ragwort	Senecio triangularis
Red Heather	Phyllodoce empetrifomis
Moss Campion	Silene acaulis
Wide-leaved Willow-herb	Epilobium latifolium
Mountain Poppy	Papaver nudicaule

---- NOTICE ----

In reference to a revision of the check list of BUTTERFLIES and MOTHS of B.C. (Macrolepidoptera)

This work is now under way. Any records of species found in B.C. or of the food plants of the caterpillars, or date of appearance of the perfect insect, would be welcomed by the compiler.

MR. J.R.J. LLEWELLYN JONES
ARRANMORE
R.M.D. No.1,
COBBLE HILL, B.C.

Birds of Lost Lake and District:

On September 18th and on 21st, Lost Lake was visited by Mr. Clay and members of the bird group. In all 31 species were seen, among them the pied billed grebe, red-tailed hawk, Cooper's hawk, Sharp-shinned hawk, pipit and cliff Swallow.

The Lake was approached from Quadra Street.

THE BLACK BEAR
(URSUS AMERICANO)

The black bear is found throughout Vancouver Island in ever increasing numbers. Since his hide is no longer required to give added height to the martial Guardsman, he is not hunted as extensively as in former years, when good bear hides commanded a high price in the fur market.

This animal is essentially the same bear that is found on the mainland, and, with certain exceptions, follows the same pattern of behaviour throughout the Province.

Where this creature has been, for any length of time, reared in close contact with the haunts of man, it has developed a greater degree of cunning and perspicuity, even to the extent of becoming an almost nocturnal animal. In the vicinity of logging, mining, and construction camps, where food, in the way of garbage, is plentiful and the struggle for existence less strenuous, there is a very noticeable effect on the rhythm of its life. In some cases, (except in very cold latitudes) it does not enter hibernation and in quite a number of cases the cubs are born in the late spring instead of in January and February as in winter hibernation.

In remote areas where the black bear seldom comes in contact with man, he is frequently seen feeding during the hours of daylight, and the female may be seen frolicing with her young.

These animals are not solely vegetarian in their diet as is popularly supposed, but like the pig, they will eat anything, depending on their environment. In districts along the coast, where salmon are plentiful, they concentrate on a diet of fish as long as the 'run' lasts, then they will take to a diet of berries, commencing on the variety that flourish at low altitudes and gradually working up to the late varieties found in the hills, where

moose and deer are plentiful the black bear will lie in wait for newly born moose calves and deer fawns. I have not known of one of these creatures attacking either an adult moose or deer, though I have found them feeding on the partially decomposed remains of deer and moose, and in some cases being cannibalistic.

As a general rule this bear hibernates, although the degree of torpor is not very great, also the time of entering upon this winter sleep varies considerably with the severity of the season.

The northern portion of Vancouver Island sees the black bear retire early, whereas in the southern areas the animal remains out quite late, depending on the food supply. The male generally remains out longer than the female as the latter is compelled to retire early if expecting cubs.

The cubs, usually two in number, occasionally three, are born about the latter end of January, or the beginning of February, and are produced in a very undeveloped condition, appearing almost as embryo. The early rate of growth after delivery is very rapid, however, until the second year. The black bear reaches maturity between six and seven years of age, and will weigh, when in good condition, from 350 to 400 lbs. The males usually reach the greatest size. Some years ago I was compelled to shoot one of these creatures and found it to be a female measuring 7 ft. 1 inch and weighing over 500 lbs. It was learned later that this particular animal was a notorious calf thief and had lived off the ranchers for years.

There is considerable variation in the shape of the head of the black bear. The general rule is a small head and sharp muzzle but this is offset by finding many of the species with large heads and blunt muzzles. This variety of bear does not run as true to type as the grizzly, whose

head features are very distinct. Age and diet do not necessarily affect its size. Some are to be found small but aged and others, comparatively young, are of great size. The colour also varies considerably. On some parts of the Island the black is tinged with brown, and in others a considerable patch of white hair is to be found on the breast. In other instances there is a distinct blending of brown and black. I have seen a mother black bear with a brown cub.

In remote areas this bear breeds every other year and it is only where living conditions are made easy by civilization that the animal has offspring every year.

From the human interest point of view, the black bear is worthy of study.

The female is a very devoted parent and will invariably sacrifice herself to protect her young. The cubs are well trained and Mrs. Bruin sees that she is obeyed. I have watched a mother bear and her young feeding on a hillside and have seen her slap and cuff the youngsters for some misdemeanour or insult known only to them. These antics would occur every few minutes and then the mother would retire a few yards to feed. Once again for some reason, only understood by bears, Mrs. Bruin would charge her children, knock them squeeling and then go back to feed again. To an onlooker, ignorant of the bear language, this performance was distinctly ludicrous. I discovered later that the two cubs had been feeding on the putrid remains of a deer, possibly the mother did not approve of such a diet.

This bear is usually harmless, but like all wild creatures is very nervous and highly strung when surprised or cornered, and is liable to become rattled and attack. If warned of the approach of a human, he usually flees faster in the opposite direction than, perhaps, the equally frightened man.

George Stevenson,
Game Warden.

REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE GEOLOGY GROUP:

During July, a group of geologists including several members of the Society, went to the beach at Ocean View Park, Saanichton, to inspect the large number of tree roots and logs imbedded in swamp material and exposed at low tide.

The tide that day was the lowest of the year. Two views were held as to the origin of the remains. One that the Maywood clay bank in the vicinity had eroded away until the interglacial swamp material (similar to that at Gordon Head but at a lower horizon(?) was exposed. The other view was that the present swamp area, now filling the lagoon at the base of the cliffs, once extended further seawards, or that since glacial times it has been depressed by a sliding action of the clays below, seawards. When cut the wood appears fresher than the wood from Gordon Head swamp, and appears to be cedar, fir and cypress.

On Sunday, September 14th, the geological group chartered a bus for a trip to the fossil beds at Muir Creek. Leaving town at 10:45 the destination was reached at noon. The geologists followed a trail along the west bank to the shore. There was time to study the fossil deposits before the tide reached the cliffs. By splitting rock fragments on the shore, members were able to find a number of different shell specimens, clams mussels, small moon shells, whelks and one fine fossil of razor clam. Showing the flora of the ancient landscape, fossil leaves of willow and alder were found, together with lumps of fossil wood containing the burrows of the torredo, filled with cemented sand.

Thirty members and friends took advantage of the opportunity and expressed their opinion that the trip was successful and very enjoyable.

A. H. Marrion.

REPORT ON THE MARINE BIOLOGY EXCURSION

Fourteen members and friends attended the sea-shore trip to the Shoal Bay district on the afternoon of June 15th.

A cold wind and drizzle of rain was anything but pleasant, except possibly to the sea creatures which are never happier than when thoroughly soaked. A mimeographed sheet of "What to look for" was distributed as a guide to the salient features of the shore zone, in the hope this would give a representative conception of the area as a whole.

Nearly all the species indicated were observed and ticked off as found, details of which are contained in a reproduction of the guide sheet, part of which is given in this issue. (The rest of the sheet will be given in the December issue of the Naturalist.)

It will be noted that an excellent record of flowering plants peculiar to the sea shore were seen, while sea-weeds were also in great profusion, including the giant kelps, *Macrocytis* and *Nereocystis*.

Animal life was abundant and although the tide was not as low as could have been desired, most of the typical tide-water forms and associations were found; barnacles to chitons, periwinkles to starfish, and gobies to blennies. Hosts of hermit and shore crabs, limpets and top shells, anemones, case worms and isopods were there to delight the finder. A mild excitement was created by the discovery of the marine slater and silver fish by one of the juniors, whose joyous exclamations brought all hands to remove the obstructing log, there to expose the long sought objects of our search in plentiful numbers.

Thus despite the handicap of inclement weather the afternoon was a decided success, a tribute to the ardent enthusiasts who braved the

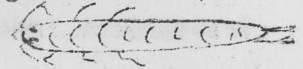
elements to make this possible.

CHART

What to Look For:

ZONE I - Plants: Flowering plants--Thrift, Seaside Plantain, Shore Lupine, Sand Bur, Sage-brush, Salt-grass; Algae--Enteromorpha (a green alga that grows near fresh-water seepage close to high tide mark.

Animals: Silver fish (running over rocks)



Pill-bug, Seaside Sow-bug



Sand Hoppers (under damp debris)



ZONE II - Plants: Flowering plants -- eel-grass; Algae--Many of the larger algae have been washed up from below low tide.

Bladderwrack



Corallines



Prionitis



ZONE II Cont'd

Gigartina, warty surface



Iridophycus, smooth with iridescence



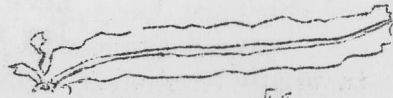
Halosaccion, small upright bladders



Egregia, thick main stem



Alaria, strong midrib



Nereocystis, single bladder at tip



Macrocystis, broad flat base, many small bladders



Costaria, ribbed and cross-ribbed



Laminaria, smooth



Desmarestia, edges spinose



Report on the Botany field meetings:

On April 20th, Mr. Palmer took the members into the wild part of Beacon Hill Park and explained the native trees, shrubs and flowers.

May 18th, Archdeacon Connell took about 20 members to Mount Douglas Park to see the spring flowers.

June 1st, at Beacon Hill Park, Mr. W. H. Warren spoke to about 15 members on the trees and flowers of the park.

June 22nd, Florence Lake, Langford, Archdeacon Connell, Mr. G. Hardy and Mr. Palmer explained the trees, shrubs and flowers of this area. About 20 members were present.

J. F. Palmer.

JUNIOR GROUP

The first meeting of the Junior group will have taken place before this issue reaches members, but this group will, from now on, meet every Saturday at 10 a.m. in the Museum.

A Contest has been arranged for Junior members in which they will compete for valuable book prizes which have been generously offered by the Society for the Preservation of Native Plants.

Interested Juniors can obtain details and conditions of this competition at the Saturday meetings, so are advised to be sure to attend the next meeting, on November 2nd.

NOTICES OF MEETINGS

Tuesday The monthly meeting will be held in the
 Nov.12th: Provincial Library at 8 p.m.
 Dr. Petrie will speak on
 "Tides".

Group Meetings

Tuesday Bird Group meeting at Miss Sara Spencer's
 Nov.5th: 1040 Moss St., at 8 p.m.
 Dr. Carl will speak on the birds of the
 Pribilofs.

Tuesday Entomology Group will meet in Mr.Downes'
 Nov.19th: former office on Superior St. Mr.Harry
 Andison is now convener for this Group
 following the resignation of Mr. Downes
 to whom we extend our very best thanks
 for all his work on behalf of the Society.

Tuesday Botany Group meeting at the home of Mrs.
 Nov.26th: Read,1025 Bewdley Ave. (Esquimalt) at
 8 p.m. Speaker: Mr. Palmer.

Tuesday Geology Group meeting. Details to be
 Dec.3rd: given at the monthly meeting Nov.12th.

WANTED

A volunteer to assist with the function-
 ing of the Junior Group on Saturday mornings.

The work of this group has steadily in-
 creased and takes up more of Dr.Carl's time than he
 can spare. Do you know of anyone with leisure on
 Saturday mornings, some knowledge of natural history
 and an enthusiasm for the youthful enquiring mind,
 who might be willing to help?

If you do, would you call Dr.Carl at the
 Museum.

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To

David Anderson

1972

Fairfield Rd.

Victoria