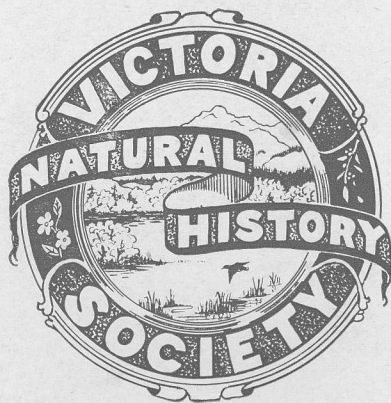


The  
**VICTORIA  
NATURALIST**

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VICTORIA, B. C.

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SEPTEMBER

1947

THE VICTORIA NATURALIST

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The Victoria Natural History Society

The May monthly meeting of the Society was held in the Provincial Library Reading Room on 13th of that month, Dr. Carl taking the chair. Mr. Fred Spencer entertained the Society for an hour by showing several colour films which had been taken by him of B. C. mainland parks and the dry belt. Mr. Spencer's photography showed great taste and a high standard.

Mr. Harwell's 1947 visit to Victoria

On July 3rd Mr. Harwell of the Audubon Society addressed the bird group of the Natural History Society at the home of Dr. Hart. He had motored from Berkley, Cal., in 48 hours in a station wagon in which he sleeps on such tours.

During Mr. Harwell's visit to Canada last year he was collecting material for a talk on Canada. This year's visit was primarily to fill in some gaps in his photographic material due, largely, to unfavourable weather conditions when Mr. Harwell made some of his short stops. Mr. Harwell has now decided to divide his material into two talks, one on the Canadian west and the other on Bonaventure. Bonaventure is remarkable for having the fourth largest gannet colony in the world and members were fascinated by the unique film of gannet family life on that island. Mr. Harwell also showed some very clear close-ups of beavers at work and play in Jasper National Park. As beavers only show themselves in the evenings, photographing them is difficult because of poor light. Mr. Harwell overcame this difficulty by using a large mirror to reflect the evening light on to the beavers, with extraordinary success.

We mention these points in order to impress our members with the great pains and time that goes into

the preparation of talks and films given by the official lecturers for the Audubon Society. We may expect each of the five lectures to be given in Victoria this winter to be a very special treat in both material and photography.

Mr. Harwell's 1947 visit to Vancouver Island was primarily to photograph bird's nests. We hope he was successful even beyond his expectations.

#### BIRD GROUP FIELD MEETINGS 1947

12th April, Mt. Douglas, South side from Marine Drive;

26th April, Colquitz River, meeting at corner of Burnside and Admirals Roads.

4th May, General field meeting at John Dean Park, Saanichton.

10th May, Mt. Douglas, west side, from Blenkinsop Rd.

31st May, Uplands, including new park area.

The Colquitz River area was found to be most abundant in variety of species. In three hours eighteen varieties of birds were seen. At Uplands some good observations were made of pileated Woodpeckers and of black-headed Grosbeaks, etc.

J. O. Clay.

SEASON TICKETS, admitting members and friends to ALL FIVE screen-talks of the Audubon Society (being given for the first time in Victoria) this winter will be selling at the absurdly low price of \$1.00 (even less for students). The catch is that the number of season tickets is limited. So please put in your order at the museum or to any member of the Executive AT ONCE.

#### THE S.O.S. IN NATURE

(Contributed by Mr. M. Jackson of Fanny Bay, V.I.)

While calls for help and of warning of impending danger are commonly intelligible to the "lesser" creatures who may be affected by their import, they are as a rule devoid of any meaning to mankind. Thus, the warning given by other birds that a prowling cat is in the vicinity, is understood by domestic hens who, in their turn, commence to voice their uneasiness. The hens, overheard by their owner, will be credited with cackling over an egg, should he even give the matter a thought. Some time ago a dog was caught in a trap for many terrible days. His urgent calls for help had been heard and interpreted by a man as "barking at something up a tree". He was finally rescued in a starving condition by the same man returning along the trail and being impelled by curiosity as to "what the dog could be barking at."

The naturalist then can not be satisfied merely to identify the call. He should accustom himself to its inflections in order that he may give aid wherever possible. The presence of a hawk is indicated by the American robin by a re-iterated thin "seeep" similar to that of the cedar-waxwing but louder. This should be noted by anyone who keeps chickens. The robins' warning of cats is, however, quite different. It is a dull, peevish-sounding "whut, whut....tut-tut-tut," monotonously repeated and taken up by first one and then another robin. Usually the towhees join in and possibly a wren or two. Unless the cat has caught one of them, there will likely be no undue outcry; just a warning repeated over and over. Such a re-iteration should be heeded by bird lovers and the prowler driven away or shot; this last being no easy matter without aid from a dog, who should not be racing through bushes harbouring nests.

An excited twittering of small birds around a dense bush or conifer affording cover for a nest



should be investigated as it probably indicates a nest-robbing snake. The sharp cracking notes of the juncos - as if flat stones were struck together - may spell trouble and puts the domestic hens on the alert. However it sometimes misleads the hens as well as their owner who may hurry outdoors to foil a non-existent hawk. The assistance given or attempted is recognized and welcomed by the birds even when firearms are involved. This is evident to anyone who has shot a hawk that is being "picketed" by crows. At the appearance of the man with the dreaded weapon there comes a sudden hush. The crows retire a short distance and watch intently. They appear to gloat at what is in store for the hawk. With the report of the gun and the fall of the hawk, there is an exultant roar from the crows, followed by a prudent retreat. This writer advocates that the greatest caution be used in shooting hawks. Be very sure of the species.

#### WESTERN MARTIN (Progne subis hesperia)

To Victoria bird lovers it will be a source of pleasure to know that, after an absence of four or five years, the Western Martin has again returned to Victoria and has been seen in numbers and has also been seen nesting here.

Mrs. Hobson, Miss Ewert and Mr. Clay watched a pair feeding young at the nest site and the writer saw and heard numbers on the Gorge Golf Course on a number of occasions, these, making a very tall dead tree their headquarters, kept up their pleasing chatter whilst feeding almost fully grown young. Mr. Clay estimated their number at 16 or more.

The Western Martin, unlike its Eastern counterpart *P. subis subis*, have not as yet taken to bird houses but prefer the metal cornices of high building or failing these their original nesting sites of holes in trees. If they could be coaxed to use bird houses in this area they would be a wonderful addition to our bird population.

A. L. Meugens.

#### THE OAK LOOPER (Ellopia somniaria Hulst)

Last year and again this year countless people were appalled to see that the stately oaks of Southern Vancouver Island were being stripped of their leaves by a voracious hump-backed caterpillar. The offender was none other than the oak looper.

The oak looper is very closely related to the hemlock looper which is causing extensive damage to forests in B.C. at the present time. As a matter of fact, the connection between these two is so close that some entomologists doubt if there is really any basis for considering them as two distinct species. Thus it would seem best for all practical purposes to consider the oak looper as a hemlock looper variety which prefers a diet of Garry oak. Other trees have been attacked but usually only when intermingled with the host tree. The first reported oak looper damage on Vancouver Island was in 1887. Subsequent outbreaks occurred in 1890, 1904, 1905, 1906, 1918, 1946 and 1947.

The eggs of the oak looper moth are laid on the moss of the tree trunks and limbs from about the middle of August to the middle of October. It is in the egg stage that the oak looper overwinters. In view of the fact that examinations conducted by the forest entomologists have shown hemlock looper egg populations of 120 eggs per square foot to be severe, it is interesting to note that oak looper egg populations up to 1,200 eggs per square foot have been found.

The eggs of the previous year hatch about the middle of May and the larvae begin to eat voraciously almost at once. The larvae are smooth, nearly hairless, and variegated gray in colour making it difficult to distinguish them from the bark and twigs. However, a long description of the larvae

is unnecessary because they are most easily recognized by the characteristic manner in which they travel. They move by grasping with the anal prolegs while extending the body forward, then holding with the front legs they hump their backs to bring up the rear. This produces a looping motion, hence the common names of loopers, measuring worms, and inch-worms. The larvae begin to change to the pupal stage about the beginning of August, but by this time, unfortunately, they have left large numbers of trees completely defoliated or else marred by their feasting activities. However the outlook isn't as bad as it might appear because, being deciduous, oaks are able to replace their leaves in Spring whether they fall naturally or are eaten by caterpillars. Thus while the oak looper may retard the growth of oaks it seldom kills them. Unfortunately Nature didn't equip coniferous trees to replace their foliage when it was eaten by some pest and hence, the hemlock looper is a much more serious problem than is the oak looper.

The adult moths begin to appear about the middle of August and some continue to emerge until early in October. After emerging the moths mate, the females lay the eggs, the moths die, and the eggs overwinter.

Under natural conditions the oak looper is kept in check by insect parasites and a virus disease. For control of the caterpillars on ornamental trees D.D.T. and arsenical sprays are recommended but to be effective these must be used about the beginning of June or at least before the larvae begin to pupate.

What is the outlook for next year? Mr. H. A. Richmond, Superintendent of the Forest Insect Department of the Federal Government, says that he thinks the cycle is on the wane.

R. Forbes,  
Provincial Museum.

On the 31st of July we went to the breakwater. The tide was low but not low enough. Next time we plan to go when the tide is even lower. We walked along the lowest layer of stone facing the sea and we found....

1. Large red and white anemones
2. Large purple, red and green urchins
3. Silver fish
4. Sea-side sow bugs
5. Sand hoppers
6. Shield limpets
7. Key-hole limpets
8. Blue-top shells with slipper shells clinging on
9. Beautifully coloured pectens
10. Sea lemons
11. Sea squirts
12. Armadillo chitons
13. Gum boot chitons
14. Mussels
15. Goose barnacles
16. Sea slugs with brown polka dots
17. Tube worms
18. Sea mats
19. Two or three different kinds of coral
20. Kelp crabs
21. Procelain crabs
22. Rock oysters
23. Some of the iridescent sea-weeds.

We climbed around the end of the breakwater and down to the rough rocks on the west side. Here we found the lamp shells, pectens, sea-cucumbers and star fish.

We climbed two ladders and walked along the top of the breakwater and from there we saw a large red-orange octopus followed by a big sea perch.

Carol Stevens.

OBITUARY

Since our last issue the Society has suffered the loss, by death, of Mr. J. F. Palmer, a valued member of the executive. Mr. Palmer died in August after an operation. Under his leadership the Botany Group had an active and successful year. The field work this summer was particularly fruitful. Mr. Palmer was most helpful and inspiring to work with, never sparing himself, and in his passing the Natural History Society has met with a great loss.

We take this opportunity of extending our sympathy to his bereaved family.

NOTICES

Tuesday Sept.9th The monthly general meeting will be held in the Provincial Library Reading room at eight o'clock.

Speaker: Mr. Harold Mc Williams of the B.C. Forest Service will speak on reforestation in B.C.

Saturday Sept.20: Junior Group meeting at the museum at 10 a.m. A programme of outings and activities is being arranged for the winter months.

Old members are invited to bring any others who are interested.

NOTE: The Stevens family, who have all been active members of the Society, are moving to Vancouver. We extend them our best wishes and our thanks for all they have done for the Society.

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# Victoria Natural History Society

## OFFICERS

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PAST PRESIDENT:

Archdeacon R. Connell

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*Entomology*: Harry Andison

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*Ornithology*: J. O. Clay

Telephone E 3101

*Programme*: A. H. Marrion

Telephone G 1983

*Zoology*: G. C. Carl

Telephone E 8524

Annual Subscription: Single, \$2.00; Family, \$3.00; Junior, \$1.00.

To David Anderson  
197 a. Fairfield Rd.  
Victoria

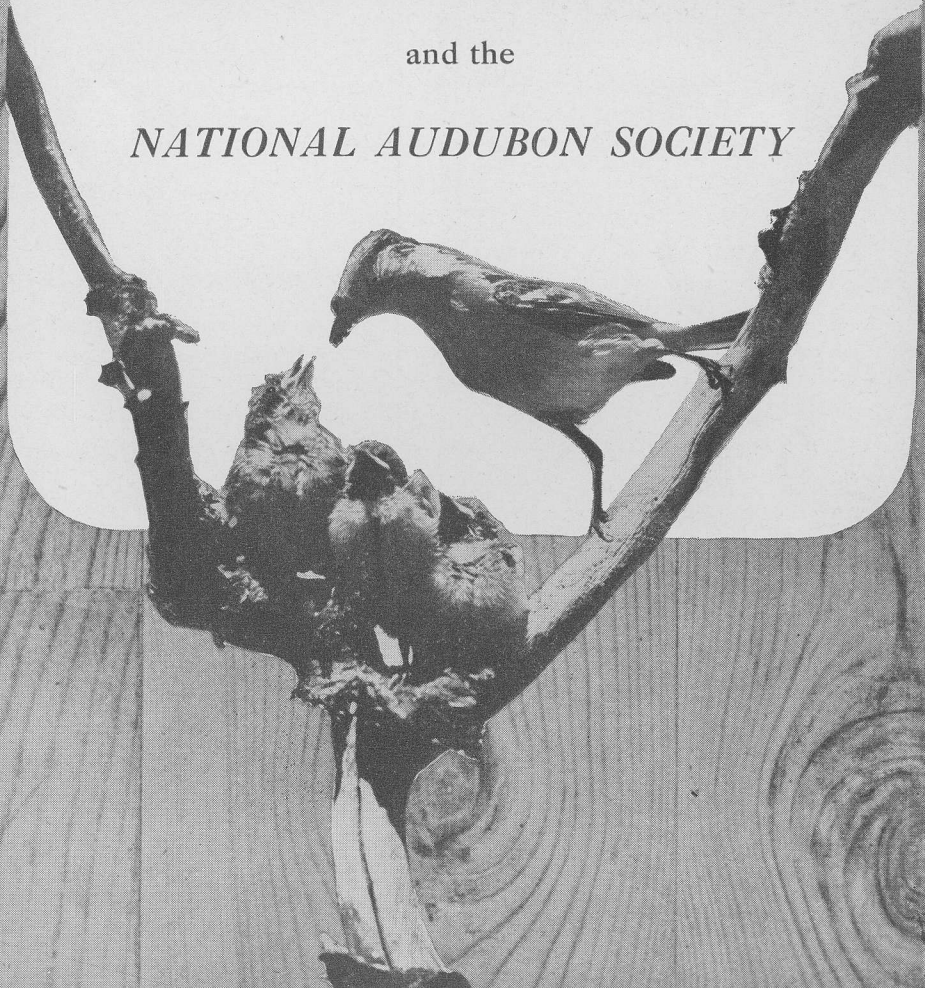
# AUDUBON SCREEN TOURS

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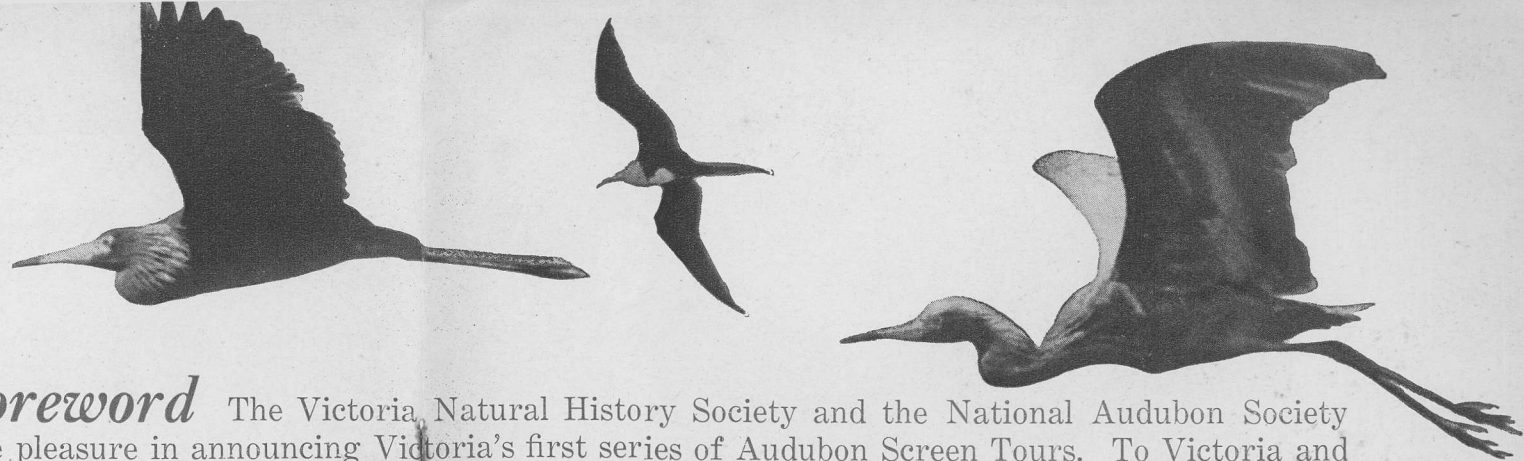
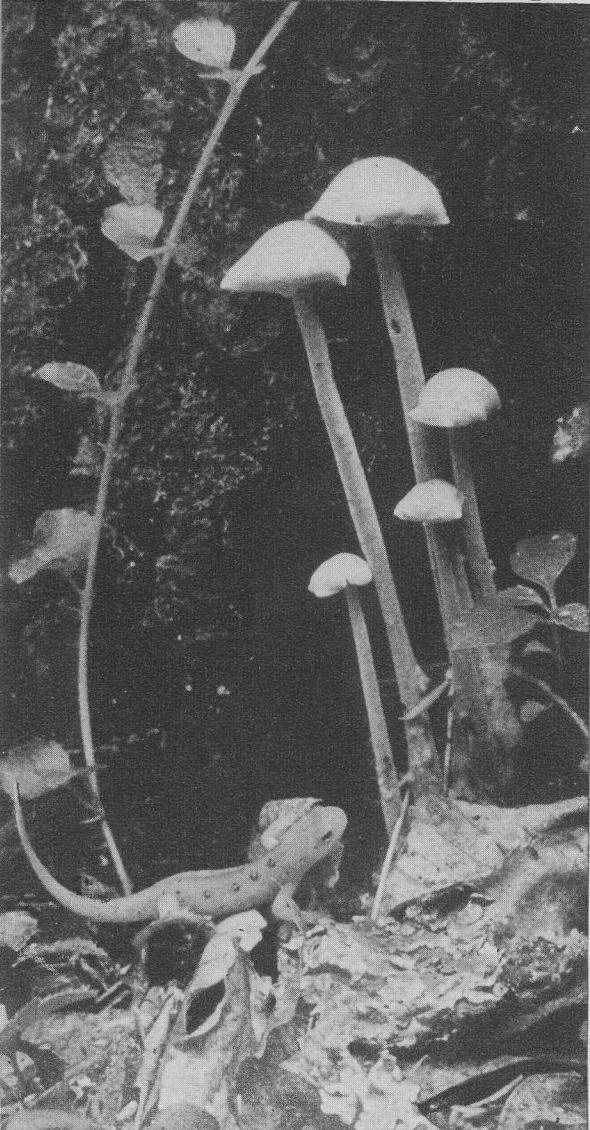
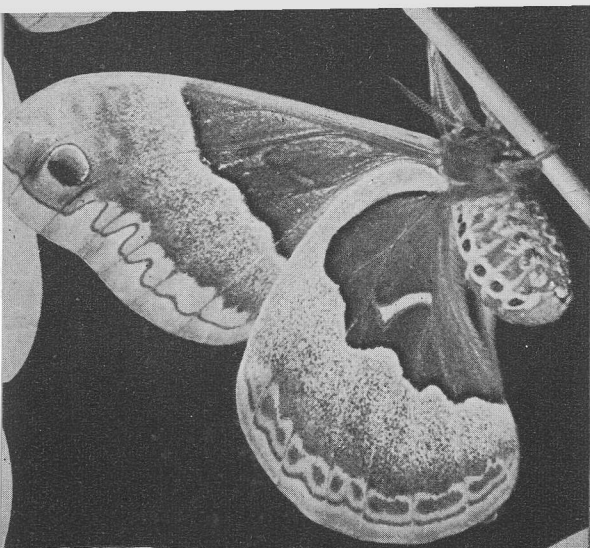
*The VICTORIA NATURAL  
HISTORY SOCIETY*

and the

*NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY*







**Foreword** The Victoria Natural History Society and the National Audubon Society take pleasure in announcing Victoria's first series of Audubon Screen Tours. To Victoria and to more than 100 other cities in both Canada and the United States Audubon Screen Tours bring the finest natural history lecturers, who personally present the best in all-colour out-door motion pictures on a variety of wildlife subjects. These programmes are presented in the interest of wildlife protection, wise use of natural resources and conservation education. We cordially invite your participation.

**1947-48 SEASON**

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 1, 1947

Laurel Reynolds  
"Fun with Birds"

MONDAY, NOV. 3, 1947

Alexander Sprunt  
"Our Living Earth"

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 28, 1948

Roger Tory Peterson  
"The Riddle of Migration"

MONDAY, MARCH 15, 1948

Tom and Arlene Hadley  
"Happy Valley"

THURSDAY, MAY 6, 1948

Telford H. Work  
"Bits of Land Along the Coast"

☆ "FUN WITH BIRDS" ☆

Laurel Reynolds, of Piedmont, California, "amateur naturalist" par excellence, claims to have become that way in self defense. Once married she found birds formidable rivals. Her husband found them fun! The story of how she herself became "converted" through the hobby of kodachrome nature photography, is told in a delightful colorful film. Today, despite her late start, Mrs. Reynolds is an authority on bird life!

☆ "OUR LIVING EARTH" ☆

A profound and significant programme. The meaning and importance of conservation—presented by National Audubon Society conservation authority Alexander Sprunt, Jr. of Charleston, South Carolina. In dramatic motion pictures: the formation and growth of soil; building of a plant from air, earth and water; animal life inter-relations; intelligent use of natural resources. Magnificent studies of birds, flowers, and nature backgrounds. A documentary film programme which everyone ought to see!

☆ "THE RIDDLE OF MIGRATION" ☆

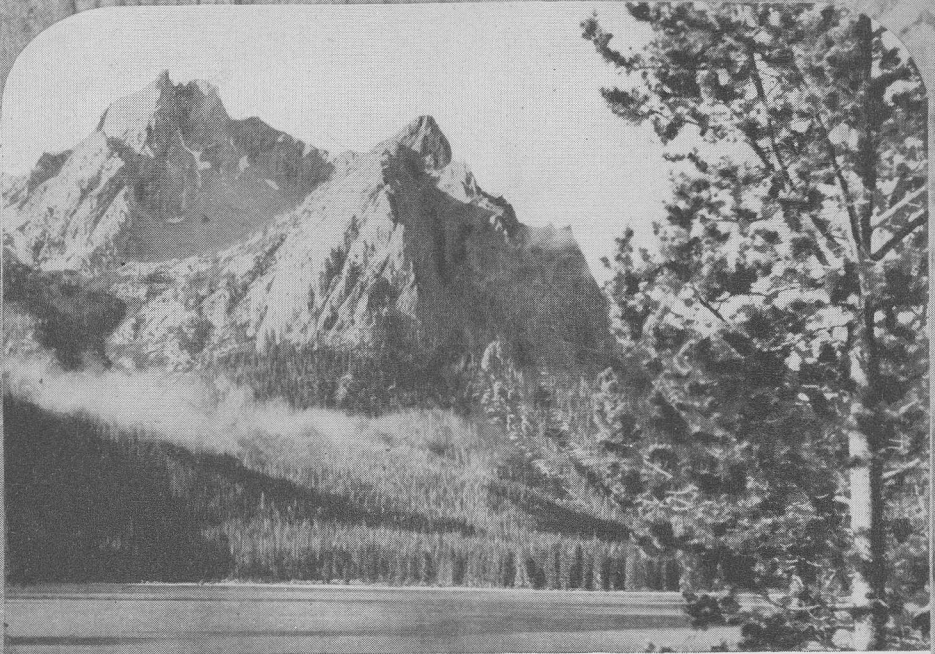
Roger Tory Peterson of New York, artist, scientist, and author of the nation's two most widely used field guides to bird identification, presents in natural colour motion pictures the intriguing riddle of the flyways. The mystery of bird travels—the irresistible lure of the north in spring and of the south in fall provide fascinating material for this educational and interesting programme.

☆ "HAPPY VALLEY" ☆

Tom and Arlene Hadley are leaders of Detroit's powerful out-of-doors movement, a nature team who have found their "happy valley" in the outdoor world of nature. Their programme is a colour motion picture story of canoe treks through northern Michigan, famed as the home of Hiawatha. There they have found poetry and philosophy in trees, wildflowers, songbirds, and wild animals of the woods.

**All Lectures at PRINCE ROBERT HOUSE AUDITORIUM  
912 DOUGLAS STREET**

8 p.m.



☆ "BITS OF LAND ALONG THE COAST" ☆

High adventure on the offshore islands of the California coast! Dr. Telford H. Work, of Santa Monica, California and his companions have retained in colour motion pictures their exciting visits to picturesque oceanic islands, rocky homes and nesting grounds of puffins, murres, guillemots, pelicans and cormorants; where sea lions play in the raging surf. This is a lecture programme of thrilling and unusual bird-watching experiences.

*The Victoria Natural History Society*

invites you to participate in its activities which include a programme of lectures, films, and field trips devoted to the study of native plants and animals. General meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month (except June, July and August) in the Reading Room of the Provincial Library; senior and junior group meetings are held at other times and places. Membership includes subscription to the monthly Bulletin containing notes on local wild life.

Membership Fee: Single \$2.00 per year  
Family \$3.00 Junior \$1.00

Further information may be obtained from:

Miss Marjorie Speed,  
Secretary, Victoria Natural History Society,  
237 Kingstoun Street, Victoria, B. C. Phone E 0919

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