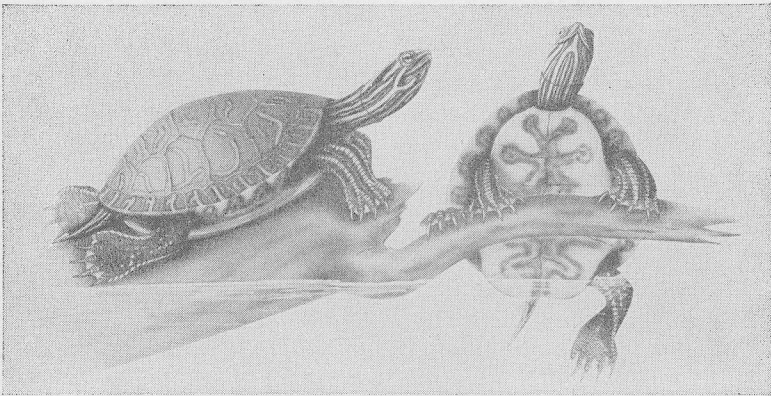


The
VICTORIA
NATURALIST

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Western painted turtle.

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The Steelhead or Rainbow Trout

A favorite sport fish with anglers on the coast is the Steelhead trout, found in most of our larger streams at certain seasons. The time of run varies from stream to stream, depending upon local conditions and perhaps upon the habits of the population of fish concerned. In the Cowichan, egg laying usually takes place in January, February and March on the gravel bars of the main river and in the larger tributaries. After spawning the fish gradually move downstream to the sea, possibly to return and spawn again another year, for unlike Pacific salmon which die after the eggs are laid, steelhead continue to live.

In the coastal river systems of this Province there is a type of trout of this species which remains permanently in fresh water. These non-sea-going fish are commonly called "rainbow trout", which is a useful name to distinguish them from the anadromous "steelhead". Recent studies show that these two types differ in average scale count as well as in migratory habits.

The young of both steelheads and rainbows may be distinguished from the young of Pacific salmon by the presence of no more than 12 rays in the anal fin. They may be distinguished further from young of cut-throat trout by the short head and jaw and usually by the lack of teeth on the back of the tongue.

The food of rainbow and young steelhead trout is largely made up of insects, chiefly caddis-flies and black-flies supplemented occasionally by fish and salmon-eggs when these are available.

Steelheads vary greatly in size; while the "rainbow" type average about two or three pounds in weight

the sea-run type average about ten pounds with some individuals attaining a weight of 36 pounds. Being one of our gamiest fishes the steelhead is a favorite with sport fishermen in this Province.

G. C. C.

WESTERN PAINTED TURTLE

The Painted turtle (front cover) is native to British Columbia being found throughout the interior of the Province as far north as Genier Lake (north of Kamloops). On the coast it occurs at Pender Harbour and on Texada Island while on Vancouver Island it is found in Patterson and other lakes near Great Central Lake.

The favourite habitat of the Painted turtle is a permanent pond or small lake but margins of larger lakes such as Osoyoos Lake and Okanagan Lake are also frequented. Here, turtles are commonly seen resting on floating logs or other objects near the water where they bask in the sun many hours of the day. The food consists chiefly of water-snails, aquatic insects, fish fry, and certain water-plants. In captivity they thrive on earthworms, chopped beef, lettuce and cabbage.

Cedar waxwings: Mr. A. L. Meugens reports seeing a large flock (300-400) of cedar waxwings at the Gorge Vale Golf Club on February 27th.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE VARIED THRUSH

BY WALTER MACKAY DRAYCOT

The recent lengthy spell of cold weather has given an opportunity for a study of the supposedly docile varied thrush; whom the uninitiated refer to as a robin. The true robin, harbinger of spring, has a more pleasing personality. For over a month snow has covered the ground and for that period my feathered friends have been fed twice a day.

A large portion of solidified rendered fats has been placed on a table in the garden for their benefit; around it grain and other food is strewn. The varied thrush family were the first to spot the slab of fat. At no time during the month were two of these birds seen to eat in harmony. Whichever one took the stand he or she it was who kept the others at bay until satisfied or was interrupted by noise, presence of humans, or some other distraction. In maintaining their 'right' to eating solo fashion they resorted to battle, despite the fact that there was plenty for all. To a lesser extent their aggressive nature was pronounced even while engaged in eating the grain. The males are most ungentlemanly in their attitude toward the females, with whom they do battle; but one female amazon did hold her position on the slab of fat and was able to ward off all-comers. Cock-fighting, in miniature, was often indulged in, with heads down and true to form as they sprang at each other, airwards. Only the males performed this act, while the females looked on, some standing on one leg.

One noticeable feature to this "eating alone" was the arrival of a drab looking flicker with a pronounced black gorget on his breast and being a subspecies bore no distinguishing colour other than the wave-bars on his wings and lower back. A varied thrush occupying the slab stepped back with head lowered for battle. The flicker paid no attention but commenced to peck at the fat. The other, realizing that discretion is the better part of valour,

continued his interrupted pecking. This happened on four occasions. It is different, of course, with the Steller's Jay; he takes the field as the varied thrush family scurry into the trees. The lesser-sized birds, towhee, junco and sparrow wisely bided their time for a chance at the fat. It came toward sundown when the varied thrushes had departed for the day. These smaller birds ate collectively. For a whole month these same birds have not missed one day's attendance. The varied thrushes are distinguished mainly by their "battle scars" -- displaced feathers.

Lynn Valley,
North Vancouver,
January 1949.

Violet-green swallows were noted for the first time this season by Mr. C. J. Guiguet on March 17 and by Mr. J. Galliford on March 23rd.

Black oyster-catchers and Black brant have been observed moving up the coast during the week of March 16th. Courting actions of the oyster-catchers were observed by Mr. and Mrs. Dick Bird of Regina.

A young male Cooper's hawk carrying an adult quail killed itself by flying into a window at Royal Roads. The specimens were submitted by Captain H.S. Rayner and are now in the Museum collection.

A male muskrat was observed on Government Street in front of the Empress Hotel by E. J. Maxwell on March 22, while a second individual was seen at Tunnel Hill on the Malahat by C. J. Guiguet on March 17.

A ROBIN IS REARED

by M. Jackson

One day last spring I drove a crow away from a robin's nest containing three nestlings. Two of them were already dead; each with an eye plucked out. But from between their tiny, three-day-old bodies, the survivor gasped for the life which only I could now give to her. The crow still watched intently from a near-by tree top; a cold rain was falling, and the parent birds were helpless. In twenty minutes she would be dead from exposure. So I carried her nest and all, home to warmth and food. At 17 days she was well feathered and almost able to eat without being hand-fed.

In raising this young bird, two things in particular have surprised me. First, that her consumption of food reached its peak when she was four and five days old. From then on it declined perceptibly until at 17 days she ate roughly one-half the amount she did at four and five days. She enjoyed splendid health and vigor from the very start. In fact, we were able to give her better attention than she would have had in competition with her two nestmates. On the other hand, we have been unable to give her that vital instruction which wild creatures appear to give their young; supplementing their instincts. This lack may eventually have proved disastrous to her.

The second surprising thing was her great capacity for play. I have watched young robins left to themselves and have never seen any evidence of this before, beyond a brief tugging at some grassy sod. This, I ascribed to a desire to obtain some small insects from the grass. It is possibly a sign of hunger, rather than of play. However, our young bird played about with a wriggling worm, only to desert it in favour of tugging energetically at a piece of cloth, my shirt cuff, anything that caught her eye, in fact. But her principal amusement was to haul sheets of newspaper, rags, etc. across the

floor. She flew quite well and was evidently delighted in her ability to do so. She was quite as playful as a small puppy, not at all destructive, and not so unpleasant to clean up after, the excreta consisting mainly of earth.

However, no one should attempt to rear one of these birds without giving consideration to these facts:

(1) It is illegal. I ignored this in the face of a higher law. (2) The odds against successful rearing are tremendous. People seem unable to resist experimentation: "See if it will eat this." - "Perhaps it's thirsty," and so forth. It must be fed at 40 minute intervals for several days. Most people simply haven't got time or patience for this. At dusk it must be coaxed and hushed to rest, once it has learned to fly. The urge to find a safe place for the night is tremendous and terrifying to it. (3) It must be kept till it can feed itself regularly before being liberated.

The Treasurer announces that the 1949-50 dues are now payable, and may be mailed to him direct. (Rev. T. Taylor, 935 Metchosin Road, Box 3503, R.R.1, Victoria,) or may be left care of the Museum office.

REPORT OF THE ANNUAL MEETING

Following the reading of the Minutes of the 1948 Annual Meeting President Hardy welcomed visitors including Mr. and Mrs. Dick Bird of Regina, Saskatchewan. A letter from Mr. J. O. Clay concerning the shooting of Bald eagles in the Comox area was referred to the Executive for consideration. After the presentation of Annual Reports the following officers were elected: President, G. A. Hardy; Vice-President, Ernest Smith; Secretary, Mrs. James A. Bland; Treasurer, Rev. T. Taylor; Editor, G. C. Carl; Programme, Mrs. A. F. Sarratt; Botany, W. Tildesley; Ornithology, J.O. Clay; Zoology, G. C. Carl; Marine Biology, G.A.Hardy; Geology, Mrs. William Mathews.

The following proposal concerning Honorary Membership was passed unanimously: "For many years Archdeacon Robert Connell has fostered the study of the natural history of this Province, particularly of the southern Vancouver Island area through numerous newspaper articles and other publications as well as through lectures and field-trips. As a recognized authority in the twin sciences of geology and botany and as an all-round naturalist Archdeacon Connell has contributed much to the encouragement of the study of natural history in this area.

Accordingly, we the undersigned members take pleasure in proposing Archdeacon Connell for Honorary Membership in the Victoria Natural History Society in recognition of his outstanding service. (Signed) G. Clifford Carl, George A. Hardy, A. H. Marrion."

By this action Archdeacon Connell becomes our first Honorary Member.

As specimens for examination President Hardy exhibited a portion of wild honeysuckle showing the strangling nature of its spiral growth and an example of fasciation in a branch of ocean spray. Dr. Carl then passed around a mastodon (?) tooth found in a gravel pit at Cobble Hill by Mr. Les Smith of Shawnigan Lake.

The President then introduced Mr. E. G. Oldham, Forester-in-charge of Parks Division, B.C. Forest Service whose presentation is summarized as follows:

"Development of Resources of the Northwest Territories"

In the position of Superintendent of Forests and Wildlife, Mr. Oldham was in charge of a vast area in the Northwest Territories including Wood-buffalo National Park. Five large administrative districts had their headquarters at Fort Smith on the Slave River. The National Park contains 17,300 square miles ranging in elevation from 600 to 3500 feet. About one-eighth of the area is covered with water while a similar portion consists of muskeg. Timber running 3000 board feet to the acre is present.

The greater part of the Northwest Territories proper consists of muskeg and tundra with no trees except stunted willow. The Mackenzie Mountains to the northwest (over 10,000 feet in elevation) and the Richardson Mountains form the boundaries for the Mackenzie delta. Temperatures range from minus 73 degrees (Fort Good Hope) to 100 degrees with an average precipitation of 12 - 15 inches; snow averages $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet.

The forested areas, restricted to the borders of the water ways, consist of white spruce, black spruce, larch and poplar. Wildlife includes the wood-buffalo (numbering over 10,000), moose, deer, caribou (barren-ground, woodland and mountain), goat, sheep, bears, (including the barren-ground grizzly), ptarmigan, willow grouse, blue grouse, prairie chicken, beaver, marten, muskrat and foxes. The greatest muskrat producing area known is in the delta of the Mackenzie.

The largest and richest ore body in North America is located in the Fort Smith area. Gold, radium and oil are present in quantity.

Fishes are represented by whitefish, trout,

goldeye, jackfish, ling and others. A mixed population of whites, Indians and Eskimo is localized in this area.

A fine motion-picture film in colour showed part of the topography of the country, its wildlife (including the imported reindeer) and something of the people.

G. C. C.

JUNIOR PAGE

The Eyed Hawk Moth (Smerinthus Cerisyi Kby.)

The members of the family Sphingidae are, to my way of thinking, among the most beautiful of moths. The eyed hawk moth in particular, both the larva and the adult, is outstanding.

In April, the adult moth lays her eggs upon willow or poplar trees. Towards the end of April or the beginning of May, small, very pale green caterpillars emerge. These attack the surrounding foliage, molting quite often at first, and later on, less frequently, growing larger at each successive molt. These larvae are very beautiful creatures. Near the end of the larval development, they are a blue-green in colour with a blue head. On the eighth segment is a blue horn and on the head, an inverted yellow V.

Near the end of September, the caterpillar forms a cell in the ground and the skin splits and falls off, leaving it in the pupal stage. This chrysalis is a brownish-black colour. It remains in this state throughout the winter, and in the spring, on the first warm day that the insect is fully developed, the moth breaks out. At first its wings are moist and shrivelled up, but soon, due to the influx of fluids from the body they expand and the

moth is ready for flight. The adult, when fully dry, has forewings of various shades of rich brown. The hind wings are pink in colour with two black and blue eyespots. Underneath, the reverse is the case. The forewings have the pink, while the hind wings have none. The fuzzy body is also brown.

Brian Ainscough

Junior Editor.

Mr. and Mrs. Philpot, bird enthusiasts of Fort William, Ont., who are wintering here, have accurately described a Yellow-billed Loon which they observed at close range with binoculars at Clover Point on March 31st.

VICTORIA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY
TREASURER'S REPORT FOR YEAR ENDING MARCH 1, 1949

<u>INCOME:</u>		Balance from 1948-49 --\$86.40
Membership Fees 85 @ \$2.	- - - -	\$170.00
" " 22 @ \$3.	- - - -	66.00
Extra payments	- - - - -	5.00
Junior fees	- - - - -	28.75
Donation to Juniors	- - - - -	10.50
Affiliation Fee of Society for the Preservation of Native Plants of B.C.	- - - - -	10.00
National Museum of Canada Library Ottawa	- - - - -	2.00
Mr. W. M. Draycot	- - - - -	2.00
Interest	- - - - -	1.68
Sale of Bird lists	- - - - -	1.45
		<u>\$297.38</u>
		<u>297.38</u>
		<u>383.78</u>

EXPENSES:

Printing & Postage on 8 issues of "Naturalist"	200.62
Card system - Buckle Printing Co.	6.48
Junior Supplies	6.40
Advertising	1.14
Stamps - Treasurer	2.00
	<u>\$216.64</u>
Cash in Bank	161.14
" on hand	6.00
	<u>\$383.78</u>
	<u>383.78</u>

(signed) T. Taylor,
Treasurer.

I have audited the accounts of the Natural History Society and find same to be in order.

Re Membership: the number of members is slightly reduced over the previous year being 96 against 101.

There is still an outstanding account of \$26.17 which leaves an increase in funds for the year of \$54.67 together with old balance of \$86.40 for a total of \$141.07.

A.L. Meugens.

1949

Tuesday
April 5: BOTANY GROUP MEETING in the Museum
at 8 p.m. Mr. W. Tildesley.

Tuesday
April 12: GENERAL MEETING, Provincial Museum
at 8 p.m. Speaker: Dr. D.B. Quayle
Biologist, Provincial Department of
Fisheries. Subject: "Shellfish in
British Columbia".

Tuesday
April 19: Ornithology Group Meeting at the home
of Dr. and Mrs. Carl, 410 Queen Anne
Heights at 8 p.m. (Take Gonzales bus
to Queen Anne Heights, one stop be-
yond Foul Bay Rd.) Dr. Carl on "Bird
Sounds".

Tuesday
April 26: Geology Group Meeting in the Museum
at 8 p.m. Mr. George Winkler on
"The Effect of plants and animals
on the earth's surface."

Tuesday
May 3: Botany Group Meeting, Provincial Museum
at 8 p.m. Mr. W. Tildesley.

AFFILIATED SOCIETY:

Society for the Preservation of Native Plants -

Officers for 1948: President: Mrs. Hugh Mackenzie,
1039 Richardson St., Victoria, B.C.

Phone E.1475.

Secretary: Miss Ellen Hart,
1513 Laurel Lane, Victoria, B.C.

Phone G.5425.

Treasurer: Mr. John Worthington,
247 Government St., Victoria, B.C.



STEELHEAD TROUT.

Salmo gairdnerii gairdnerii Richardson.
Young in fresh water.

Victoria Natural History Society

OFFICERS.

Honorary Presidents:

J. A. MUNRO, Dominion Wildlife
Officer for British Columbia.
HON. WM. T. STRAITH,
Minister of Education.

President:

GEORGE A. HARDY.
Telephone: E 1111, Local 457.

Past Presidents:

ARCHDEACON ROBERT CONNELL.
G. CLIFFORD CARL.

Vice-President:

ERNEST SMITH.
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W. T. TILDESLEY.

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Treasurer:

REV. T. TAYLOR,
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Box 3503, R.R. 1, Victoria.

Chairmen of Groups:

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Botany: W. T. TILDESLEY.
Telephone: G 8544.

Ornithology: J. O. CLAY.
Telephone: E 3101.

Marine: GEORGE A. HARDY.
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Zoology: G. CLIFFORD CARL.
Telephone: E 8524.

Geology: MRS. WILLIAM MATHEWS.
Telephone: G 5684.

Junior: RON SIBBALD.
Telephone: E 4324.

Annual dues, including subscription: Single, \$2; Family, \$3; Junior, \$1.

AFFILIATED SOCIETY.

SOCIETY FOR THE PRESERVATION OF NATIVE PLANTS.

President: MRS. HUGH MCKENZIE, 1039 Richardson Street, Victoria, B.C.

Secretary: MISS ELLEN HART, 1513 Laurel Lane, Victoria, B.C.

Treasurer: JOHN WORTHINGTON, 247 Government Street, Victoria, B.C.

To