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Glaucous-winged gulls.

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DECEMBER MEETING

Due to a previous engagement by the British Columbia Historical Association, the Reading Room of The Provincial Library was occupied and it was necessary to move our December 12 meeting to the main floor of the Museum.

After bringing the fifty attending members to order, Mrs. Hobson quickly disposed of the routine business and asked for exhibits. The only specimen shown was a pair of shark's teeth, exhibited by Mr. Whitehouse; one from a recently caught fish and the other dug out of an Ontario fossil bed and probably close to a million years old. After these had been passed around the meeting was turned over to Mr. Edgar Stansfield, the speaker for the evening.

Mr. Stansfield prefaced his "Natural History Rambles With A Colour Camera" with a talk on the principles of colour film manufacture and some hints from his own experiences on how to get good results when using this type of film. Some of these points were brought out in the Illustrated Lecture which followed.

Most of the botanical photographs were taken in the Stansfield's own wild-flower garden or on field trips with the botany section of the Naturalists. One point that these pictures illustrated was the difficulty of getting certain flower colours to register their full value in competition with others. A field of mixed Camas and Western Buttercups which to the eye was predominantly blue with a background of yellow was to the camera predominantly yellow with some blue Camas if you looked very closely. By varying the exposure Mr. Stansfield got some very good shots of Camas alone and in this connection he has photographed one of the most remarkable specimens of this species yet obtained. The fauna shots were mostly taken around Jasper Park and near their summer home in Alberta. Some of the most interesting pictures were of the Angel Glacier which showed the tremendous thickness of ice and pictures of the face taken at an interval of eleven years

show a definite retreat. This same phenomenon is shown to be occurring in the ice fields of British Columbia by photos obtained by Mr. Winkler over the last fifty years.

After Mr. Stansfield was thanked for a most entertaining evening, the meeting adjourned.

W. T.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN JANUARY

If the weather continues as mild as it has been there will probably be reports of early spring flowers before the month is out. A considerable number of the late fall flowering plants have forgotten to stop blooming, particularly gum weed. All along the sea front this plant is producing new flowers as though it never intended to stop. In the woods the fungus flora is of endless interest and it would not be a bad idea if a group of interested members persuaded Mr. Hardy to pick a warm afternoon to hold a belated fungus foray.

W.T.

The first Vancouver Island record of a Long-tailed Chat, (Icteria virens longicauda) was made by E.B. Irving, Carmanah Point, V.I., the bird was taken October 26th, 1950 and is now in the Provincial Museum collection. C.J.G.

SNOWY OWLS: These birds have been reported in such numbers and have aroused so much local interest that one of our papers got Charles Guiguet, Museum ornithologist, to write a story about this arctic migrant for them.

This is one of the largest species of owl, standing 15 inches high with a round hornless head. Adults may be almost pure white but juveniles which usually make up the bulk of the southern migrants have varying amounts of dark barring on all parts of the body except the face which is pure white. Incidentally Mr. Guiguet and Dr. Carl saw five of them in the vicinity of Oak Bay Golf Course Dec. 16.

Mr. Guiguet points out that the occasional influx of Snowy Owls is probably caused by variations in arctic food supplies and the following of the most abundant supply out of their normal range.

We most heartily support his protest against the shooting of these very interesting predators. All the harm they do to our local bird population is but a drop in the bucket to that alone caused by lead scattered by the concentration of duck hunters in local shooting areas, as witness the

loss of one of the few remaining flocks of Trumpeter Swans from lead poisoning last winter.

Other migrants are constantly arriving and departing, the various sewer outlets attract large flocks of mixed ducks and divers and the numerous species and varieties of shore birds are constantly foraging nearby. Black Brant are arriving early this year and will probably be found during January off Oak Bay and the mud flats at Sidney. The Purple Sandpiper is often found with the other species at this time of year.

W.T.

BOTANY NOTES

Plants collected on the East Saanich Indian Reserve

The August 19th field trip was interesting not only to the ornithologists but to the botanists who also had their innings. Mrs. Hobson and Mr. Tildesley collaborated in compiling the following notes:

There were two members of the Daisy or Aster family, (Compositae). The first was Gum Weed (Grindelia stricta Gries.), a coarse plant with large bright yellow flowers supported by a very sticky involucre of reflexed bracts. This species is very common along our coast near the sea but the most common species in the interior and across the prairies is G. squarrosa Dougl. This latter is a very bad weed of overgrazed pasture lands.

The second representative of this family was a typical sea beach plant with thick, fleshy, narrow leaves and growing low and close to the ground. This is called Mud Disc, (Cotula coronopifolia L.), and has a rather small head of yellow flowers sitting solitary on a thin stem. This plant was particularly interesting because it was parasitized by a dodder which seemed to be the same as the one parasitizing Salthorn or Glasswort, (Salicornia). As this species Cuscuta salina Englem. is reported as only attacking Salicornia it would be interesting to have this specimen definitely identified. Dodder is one of the few higher plants that is completely parasitic. Of the Morning Glory family, it is a leafless twining plant without the power to develop chlorophyll and consequently it is

unable to manufacture its own food. After the seed germinates on the ground, the thread-like seedling attaches itself to the host plant and starts to twine around it. When it has found a host it severs all connection with the soil and sends suckers, called *haustoria*, into the tissue of the plant and from then on is entirely dependent on the host plant for food. Besides this beach dodder we have another native species, Field Dodder (*C. arvensis* Beyrich.), which attacks a number of our field crops particularly clovers, and flax. Both species have yellow stems and produce masses of small whitish flowers and one-seeded capsules which scatter their seeds on the ground in the fall all ready to attack the plants that grow on the land in the following year. *Cuscuta* goes by a number of aliases besides Dodder such as Love-vine, Strangle weed, Gold thread, Devils hair, and Hell bind. The seed is prohibited in any commercial seed sold in Canada.

One very dry seed head of Sea Thrift or Sea Pink, (*Statice Armeria* L.) appeared in the collection. The round green cushions of grass-like leaves stuck full of pink or lavender-headed pins are a common sight all along our coast in early summer. This same species is also most commonly grown as a border and rockery plant in our gardens.

Silvertop or Sea-parsley, (*Glehnia littoralis* Smdt.) was also collected. This belongs to the Parsnip family (*Umbelliferae*); it has a long stocky tap-root and large broad leaves that radiate in all directions to lie flat on the sand. From the center of the plant an umbell of small white flowers appears in due season and later produce a double fruit that is thick winged and corky in texture and creamy-white in colour. Mr. Hardy described the plant as having the appearance of cauliflower or cottage cheese on a green platter.

Two very different appearing members of the Mustard family were found growing around the bay. The first, Sea Rocket, (*Cakile endulata* Hook) is a thick fleshy plant that trails over the sand, sometimes even below high water level. The blue purple flower is typically mustard-like of four petals in the form of a cross: hence *Cruciferae*. The fruit is a thick two jointed

pod, the second joint often seedless. This plant can be eaten and is closely related to Sea-Kale.

The second member of the *Cruciferae* was a common annual weed, Peppergrass (*Lepidium medium* Green.), a bushy low plant consisting mainly of a round head of numerous panicles of flat seed pods. It is common as a weed over most of the world, including Canada.

Sand Verbena (*Abronia latifolia* Esch.) which is usually very sandy but is definitely not a Verbena, belongs to the Four O'Clocks or *Nyctaginaceae* family. It always attracts attention because of the ball of bright orange-coloured calyxes which dot the bare sand where it grows. The plant radiates from a central root which may measure several inches across. The trailing stems bear their kidney shaped leaves in pairs a few inches apart, and both are hairy, sticky and rough, so that the whole plant is sandy, dirty and bedraggled-looking except for the bright flower heads. The fruits are winged and form a rather spikey ball, each fruit containing one seed.

The Chickweed family was represented by two members of the same genus both Sand Spurries (*Spergularia marina* Griesb. and *S. macrotheca* Heynh.). The first is very fleshy and rather smooth, while the other is not quite so thick-leaved but covered with glandular hairs. The leaves are in pairs but have a number of basal leaflets so that it often looks as though the leaves were in a whorl around the stem. *S. marina* grows on the tidal flats while the other species generally grows further back and up the banks above high water.

The last plant in our collection belongs to the Goose-foot family (*Chenopodiaceae*) but does not look very much like Lamb's Quarters or Spinach. In adapting itself to living in high concentrations of salt, Glasswort, (*Salicornia ambigua* Michx.), has reduced itself to a system of fleshy stems with just two scales where the leaves used to be. The flower spike is a swollen tip at the end of the stem with the flowers sunken in pits where the seed is developed. Various species of this genus grow around the edges of alkaline sloughs across Canada.

Most of the above species were also encountered on the Sept. 30th trip to Whitty's Lagoon.

Low Clover, (*Trifolium depauperatum* Desc. Last May Mrs. Stansfield found this dainty little clover growing

near the Topaz reservoir. It belongs to that native group of clovers that differ from the common types by having the flower head subtended by an involucre of bracts; not very noticeable in this particular species. In full bloom the flowers look like tubby little purplish-red urns with yellow spouts because of the inflated standard.

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GEOLOGY GROUP MEETING

In spite of the inclement weather fifteen members gathered at the Museum at 8 p.m. on November 11th to hear Dr. James Black, mining engineer and geologist of the Department of Mines speak on the Atlin country. As he has spent considerable time mapping this area for geological purposes Dr. Black is well qualified to discuss its possibilities. Bounded on the west by the Coast Range the Atlin country is a beautiful area of rolling, low-topped mountains that would be a mecca for tourists if it was not for the great transportation difficulties. Poor transportation also makes difficulties for the prospector and map maker. As in the case of all mature hills, the outcrops are much eroded making it difficult to follow the bedding or horizon of the fold from point to point.

Pictures of the famous Pine Creek and Spruce Creek hydraulic mining areas with monitors working, showed the heavy mass of sedimentary matter that had to be removed before the gold-bearing gravel could be uncovered.

Following Dr. Black, Mr. Winkler showed a series of pictures he took in the north in 1925 and with picture and anecdote made us all familiar with such names as Skagway, White Horse, Carcross, Atlin and the rest.

Thanks were expressed to Dr. Black for his very instructive address, to Mr. Winkler for his interesting pictures and to Mr. Stansfield for his expert handling of the projector.

J.H.W.

The Vapourer Moth,
Notolophus antiqua badia Hy. Edw.

This little day-flying moth has again appeared in noticeable numbers in Victoria after a lapse of six years. In 1944 it was recorded over a wide area throughout the city and adjacent territory but it has not been evident in the intervening time. The moth is chestnut brown in colour with a white dot on each forewing. It flies actively and erratically in the hot sunshine of September days. Like many insects it has alternating periods of abundance and scarcity, the duration of the interval and the extent of the peaks varying according to food supply, parasites and other less obvious causes.

The Vapourer Moth is an intriguing insect, for it departs from the popular notions of moth behaviour in several respects. In the first place it is a day-flier and in the second place only the male has wings, the female being a spidery looking creature that never leaves the surface of its cocoon.

In the fall the cocoons may be found on the trunks of deciduous trees, especially those of the rose family such as plums, or on palings and rose-arbors not far from the feeding station of the caterpillar. If the cocoon contained a male, only a small hole in one end of it gives an indication of the emergence of the moth; if it contained a female a layer of biege-coloured eggs will be found stuck all over the surface of the cocoon since the female remains clinging to the cocoon until the eggs are laid. As soon as this has been accomplished she withers and dies, having served her purpose. The eggs will remain on the cocoon all winter long, hatching in the spring as soon as the leaves of the food plant have burst out of their bud scales. From then on a pretty little caterpillar with varied tufts and bushes of hairs distributed over the body will continue to grow and moult until full fed. Then it spins a light cocoon, pupates and so completes the yearly cycle of growth and development.

A caterpillar reared this season spun up as usual but instead of the expected moth, a small fly of about the size of a housefly emerged. This proved to be the adult of a parasite which preys on caterpillars; the grub lives within the host long enough for the host to complete the

cocoon and to pupate after which the pupa succumbs, leaving the protecting cocoon for the interloper. It will be interesting to see if this moth increases in numbers next year or if it has already been checked by the parasite.

BIRD MOVEMENTS FROM JANUARY TO MID-NOVEMBER

A.R. Davidson, Cadboro Bay = C; J.O. Clay, Shoal Bay = S;
 C. J. Guignet, from Museum Bird Notes = M.

JANUARY 4th: Varied Thrush, S; 5th: Flock of 100 Robins, S;

MARCH 23rd: Violet-green Swallows, C.

APRIL 1st: Valdez, Fox-sparrow, S; 5th: Puget Sound Sparrow, S; 6th: Rufous Hummingbird, male, C&S; Warbling Vireo, C; 9th: Lutescent Warbler, S; 18th: Sitka Kinglet, first brood flying, C; 20th: Savannah Sparrow; Audubon Warbler, S;

22nd: Pileolated Warbler, S&C; Chipping Sparrow, Rufous H. female, C; 23rd: Myrtle Warbler, C&S; 25th: Golden-crowned Sparrow, C&S; 26th: Evening Grosbeak, 37 birds, C; Black Brant, Black Turnstones, S;

MAY 1st: Yellow Warblers, Goldfinch, C&S; Western Flycatcher, S; 6th: Townsend Warbler, C; 12th: House Finch, C; 13th: Russet-backed Thrush, Band-tailed Pigeon, C; 14th: Barn Swallow, Beacon Hill Park; 15th: Tolmie Warbler, S&C; 17th: Hudsonian Curlew, S.

JUNE 4th: Oregon Junco, 1st brood flying; 5th: Wood Pewee, C; 6th: Western Tanager; Nighthawk; Olive-sided Flycatcher; Violet-green Swallow, 1st brood flying, C; 10th: Russet-backed Thrush singing, Shell Island, C; 12th: Glaucous-winged Gulls were nesting on Greater Chain Island. A young bird attacked by adults escaped safely into crevice; 13th: Traill's Flycatcher, singing, C&S; Chipping Sp. 1st brood flying; 17th: House Wren, first brood flying, C; 20th: Chestnut-backed Chickadee; BarnSw. 1st brood flying.

JUNE cont'd: 29th: Pileated Woodpecker, first brood flying; Glaucous-winged Gulls fledglings abundant.

JULY 1st: Marbled Murrelet, young at Oak Bay 1st to 7th. Evening lines of flight throughout summer were scattered but there is little doubt that some pairs must have nested close to Victoria. 2nd: Pigeon Guillemot, young first observed. This species nests on Chain Islands where young were observed, Aug. 11, 12 and 13th in numbers, M; 8th: Western Sandpipers, first adults return; 10th: Goldfinch; 12th: Rough-winged Swallow; 15th: Siskin; all first brood, C; 12th: Ruddy Turnstone four in company with Black, two more Gonzales Point 15th; Least and Western Sandpipers, Willows and Oak Bay beaches 15 to 20, large flocks out in straits, both seen again August 13th; 15th: Wandering Tattler, Oak Bay Hotel; 22nd: Gonzales Point, Mary Todd Island Aug. 13th M; 16th: House Wren last seen; 18th: Bonaparte Gull, C; 21st: Crested Mynah, two seen to fly across Southgate, 2nd record, (Dr. Carl destroyed breeding pair, Oak Bay 1946) M; 23rd: Heermann's Gull; 25th: Least Sandpiper, C; Buff-breasted Sandpiper seen by Mr. E.F.G. White, Oak Bay Golf Course. 28th: Sanderling, Gonzales Point, later Willows and Oak Bay beaches, M; 29th: Greater Yellowlegs, Dowitcher, C; 31st: Puget Sound Sparrows leave second nest, Aug. 9th revisit nest, S.

AUGUST Rhinoceros Auklets in full plumage on waters off Chatham Island, seen in flight and at rest, M; 5th: Western Flycatcher, first brood flying, last seen 7th, C; 12: Harlequin Duck, drakes looking ragged and nondescript as they undergo annual moult among rocks and kelp beds of Oak Bay. When chased by power boat (Aug. 12th) to see if they had regrown primaries, they were able to take off while in late July they were incapable of flight and had to dive among the kelp to escape. 13th: Red-backed Sandpipers, two in flight, Ten Mile Point; Northern Phalaropes, about 200 working the tide lines Cadboro Bay, both immature and

AUGUST cont'd:

old; many adults were in change plumage; Pectoral Sandpiper, three seen on a small beach on Mary Todd Island, M; 13th: Warbling Vireo last seen; 15th: California Gull, Violet-green Swallow last seen; 17th: Lesser Yellowlegs; 18th: Chipping Sparrow last seen; 20th: Semipalmated Sandpiper; 24th: Semipalmated Plover, Wandering Tattler, Beacon Hill; 25th: Nighthawk last seen; Redtailed Hawk; 25th: Western Tanager last seen; 28th: Stilt Sandpiper; 30th: Rufous Hummingbird, Russet-backed Thrush, last seen; 31st: Northern Phalarope, 250, C;

SEPTEMBER 4th: Horned Grebe, C, Osprey, Shoal Harbour; 5th: Band-tailed Pigeon; 9th: American Pipits; 10th: Eared Grebe, Steller Jay, Barn Swallow last seen; 11th: Wandering Tattler, C. Oak Bay, S; Sanderling; 12th: Short-billed Gulls; 13th: Baird Sandpiper; Marsh hawk; 15th: Red-breasted Merganser, C; 21st: American Pipit, Foul Bay; 24th: Puget Sound Sparrow, last seen; Western Grebe; 25th: Goldfinch, Lesser Yellowlegs, C; 28th: Cedar Waxwing; 29th: First Widgeon returned, S; Shoveller, S; 30th: Pectoral Sandpipers, Dowitchers, Witty's L.

OCTOBER 1st: Western Bluebird, Bushtits (28) Finnerty Rd., Yellow Warbler last seen, Hermit Thrush, C; 5th: Bonaparte Gull last seen C; 6th: Solitary Vireo, S; 7th: Pileolated Warbler; 8th: Fox Sparrow C; 12th: Spotted Sandpiper, Mount Douglas Road; 13th: Audubon Warbler, Lutescent Warbler, Solitary Vireo, Varied Thrush, S; 14th: Widgeon, C; 15th: Golden-crowned Sparrow, Surf Birds, Oystercatcher, Greater Scaup, Western Grebe (30) Shovelers, Bufflehead, Clover Point, Seattle Wren, Winter Wren, S; 18th: Old Squaw, Hooded Merganser; 21st: Black-bellied Plover, 27th: Jaeger (Parasitic), C;

NOVEMBER 1st: Golden-crowned Sparrow; 2nd: W. Bluebird, S; 3rd: Pied-billed Grebe; 7th: Saw-whet Owl, C.

November observations of C.J. Guignet: - 6th: Western Canada Geese, 10,000 on Tofino Mud Flats; 10th: Cackling Geese, 14, Ucluelet; Lesser Canada Geese, 150; Mallard, Pintail, Green-winged Teal- too many to count; Canvas-backs, 30, Surf and White-winged Scoters, numerous; American Scoters, 3; Old Squaw, 2; Buffleheads, Barrow's Golden Eye, Dunlin, one small flock.

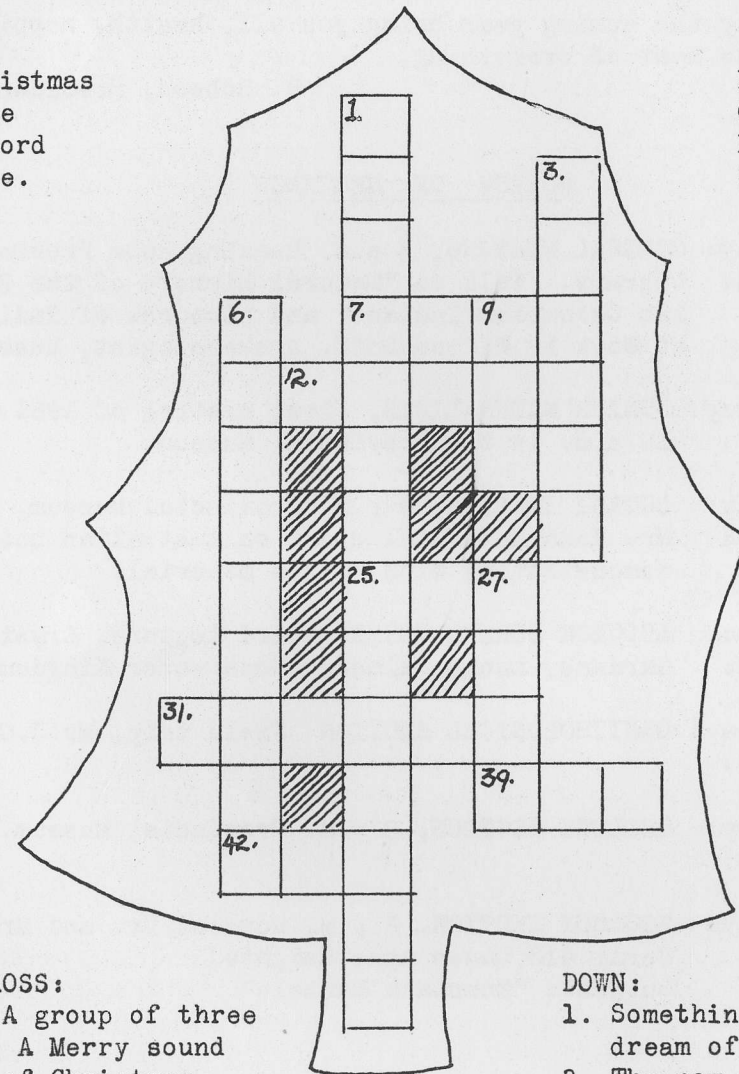
JUNIOR NATURAL HISTORY PAGE

Editor: Doreen Wilby

Phone: E. 2357.

Christmas
Tree
X-word
pzle.

By
Chairman
Brenda
Sigrist.



ACROSS:

- 7: A group of three
12: A Merry sound
of Christmas.
25: A boy's name.
31: A type of decoration.
39: Adam's Wife.
42: A jewel.

Solution to December puzzle:

- ACROSS 1. 10. Skunk Cabbage;
2. Algae; 3. Meekrat; 4. Cells; 5. Rodents; 6. Spores; 7. Round.
DOWN: 8. Six; 9. No; 10. Barred; 11. Kelp; 12. Fish.

DOWN:

1. Something we all
dream of.
3. The now popular
snowman.
6. A form of static
electricity.
9. Illinois (abb.)
27: A chemically
treated log.

A HAPPY NEW YEAR

May the coming year bring you all, health, happiness,
and the best of everything.

R. Hobson, President.

NOTICE OF MEETINGS

Tuesday: GENERAL MEETING, 8 p.m. Reading Room Provincial
Jan. 6: Library. Talk on "Natural History of the British
Columbian Indians" and pictures of Indians
at Work by Wilson Duff, Archaeologist, Museum.

Saturday: JUNIOR NATURALISTS, first meeting of 1951.
Jan.13: 10 a.m. in the Provincial Museum.

Tuesday: BOTANY SECTION, 8 p.m. Provincial Museum,
Jan.16: Mr. John Nutt will speak on Australian botany,
demonstrating with native material.

Monday: AUDUBON SCREEN TOURS third lecture, Crystal
Jan.22: Gardens, Lucie Palmer, "Underwater Kingdom".

Saturday: ORNITHOLOGICAL SECTION Field trip, Mr.J.O.Clay.
Jan.27:

Tuesday: GEOLOGY SECTION, 8 p.m. Provincial Museum.
Jan.30:

Tuesday: ZOOLOGY SECTION, 8 p.m. home of Dr. and Mrs.
Feb.6: Carl, 410 Queen Anne Heights.
Subject: "Mountain Mammals".

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