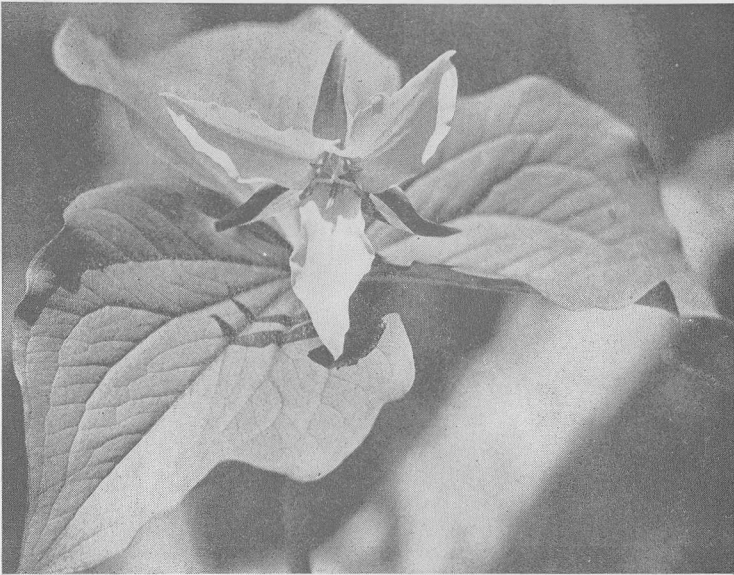


The
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Vol. 9, No. 1

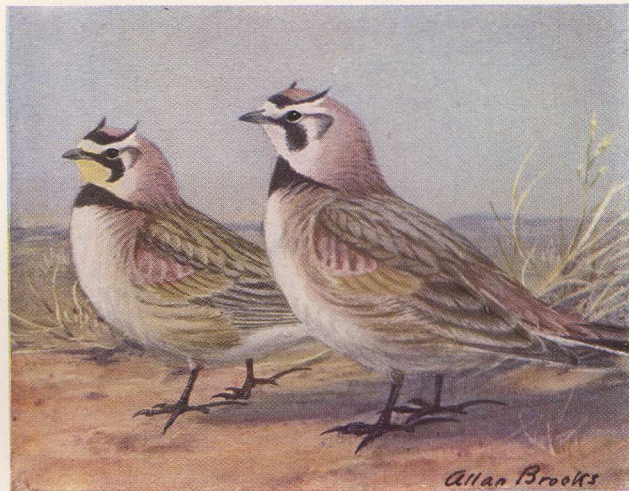
April, 1952



(Photo by V. E. L. Goddard.)

Trillium or wake-robin.

Published by the
VICTORIA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY
Victoria, B.C.



A. Horned Lark; scale, $\frac{1}{2}$
 Desert Horned Lark Pallid Horned Lark



B. Kingbird; scale, $\frac{1}{4}$

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HORNED LARK AND EASTERN KINGBIRD

The "pallid" horned lark (*Otocoris alpestris arcticola*), pictured here with an eastern race which does not occur on the coast, nests in the alpine country throughout most of western British Columbia. This is the race usually seen in migration during the spring and fall movements. It is a bird of the open, consequently it is not surprising that most reports here come from such areas as Cattle Point, Oak Bay golf course, Sidney airport, Rocky Point and other non-forested areas at the south end of the Island.

The south-western section of the Province is occupied by a small dark race of the species; the "streaked" horned lark (*Otocoris alpestris strigata*). This bird resides and nests on the Puget Sound lowlands and has been recorded from the Victoria area on few occasions. It also is a bird of the open and consequently should be looked for in the habitat mentioned above. Should one be interested in seeing this bird on the mainland the fields and meadow lands of Lulu and Sea Islands are the most promising areas to search.

The Eastern Kingbird (*Tyrannus tyrannus*) is a large fly-catcher which is uncommon on Vancouver Island. It is essentially a bird of the interior, but has penetrated down the major river valleys to the coast and is frequently seen in the lower Fraser Valley. A bird of the open, it prefers parkland habitat, where small deciduous groves and open fields prevail, and in such areas it may be observed perched on a high twig or telephone wire.

Nesting and specimen records of this species were secured on Vancouver Island at Courtney.

C. J. Guiguet

REPORT OF THE 1951-1952 ANNUAL MEETING.

The Annual Meeting of the Victoria Natural History Society was held on Tuesday, March 11th, 1952, at 8 P.M. in the Museum. The President, Mrs. James Hobson, was in the Chair.

The minutes of the 1951 Annual Meeting and the Treasurer's Annual Report were read and adopted. The President called for reports from Chairmen of groups.

EDITOR'S REPORT. As I am retiring from the editorship of the Naturalist I would like to give some accounting of my stewardship and make a few suggestions. I would like to thank Dr. Carl for his help and guidance, and our other editor, Mrs. Sarratt, has been of tremendous help. I appreciate the support the members have given me, particularly those who have supplied manuscripts. No startling innovations have taken place during the past two years, but the Naturalist is still the greatest financial effort the Society is putting forth. We have extended our exchange list to Saskatchewan - "The Blue Jay", Ontario - "The Wood Duck", and England - "Country-side", and I think two other publications will be available. This brings me to the first of the suggestions that I would like to make to the new executive - the appointment of a librarian. With the amount of material available to the members for borrowing, I think it would be a good idea to have one person responsible for keeping this material in order and a record of its use. This would probably have to be done at the regular monthly meetings; so the librarian would have to be in a position to bring the publications to the meetings and to keep them between meetings. My other suggestions have to do with the Naturalist. We have now completed eight volumes but we have only single copies of several numbers. To be certain that these complete volumes will not be broken by loss of single copies I would like the executive to consider having these eight volumes bound into two books. I would also suggest that a complete index be written for the completed volumes and enough of these be printed to supply all subscribers with a single copy.

W. T. Tildesley.

BOTANY. Summer Activities: Five field trips. The first was to Gonzales Hill on April 21st. Although a number of plants were found in bloom the earlier of the spring flowers had dried up because of the lack of seasonal rains. The group adjourned to the garden of Mrs. Bogart for tea. On May 12th the botanists were led by Mr. G.A. Hardy around and up Mt. Douglas. There was a large attendance and over 60 species of plants were found in flower. A very pleasant hour was spent in Mr. Hardy's garden where Mrs. Hardy served tea. The third field trip was to Ten Mile Point on June 3rd. The spring flowers were over and the summer flowers showed the effect of the continued lack of rain. After a picnic lunch on the beach a visit was made to Dr. Gussow's garden nearby. Dr. Gussow showed us many interesting plants and described a number of the experiments he had made with both native and cultivated plants. On July 14th the group visited the arboretum at the Dominion Experimental Station, Saanichton. We saw the fine collection of trees brought from all parts of the world. On October 27th Mr. Hardy took a large number of members on a fungus foray through the Hudson's Bay Woods near the home of our President, Mrs. Hobson. A large collection of fungi was obtained. At Mrs. Hobson's house Mr. Hardy commented on the fungi, after which Mrs. Hobson entertained the group with tea. Four indoor meetings were held. On March 20th the group chairman spoke on "The Distribution of Microscopic Plants by Air". On November 18th the group met at the home of Mrs. E. Stansfield on Topaz Avenue when the chairman gave an illustrated talk on "The Vegetation of the Prairie". The last two meetings, February 26th and March 4th, were a part of a short series on identification of characteristics to be observed when making field studies.

C. W. Lowe

ORNITHOLOGY. 17th April. A quiz at the home of Mrs. Read, 1025 Bewdley Avenue. 5th May. Meet at Metchosin - went through the property of Miss Houghton. 42 species seen. 26 people attended. 19th May. Meet at Uplands (Landsdowne & Nottingham). 25 species seen - 29 people attended. 16th June. 23 members met at Sidney. Visited Bare Island and Shell Island. 22nd September. Witty's Lagoon. Saw 19 species; 36 people attended. 20th November. 48 people heard Mr. E.R. Patrick and saw film put out by Ducks Un-

limited. 42 species seen. The annual Christmas bird count took place as usual. Members who took part are thank for their co-operation.

J.O. Clay.

GEOLOGY. Five meetings were held during the year including field trips. These were well attended. It is hoped that next season a continuous series can be arranged. The field trip to Jordan River under the direction of Mr. Winkler was much enjoyed, some 25 members taking part. The C.M. & S. Co. are now diamond drilling the ore bodies from the opposite direction from that taken by the previous lessees. The other field trip to Mt. Sicker was not so well attended; possibly it was a little too far, anyhow only ten showed up, which was a great pity as the weather was lovely and it was a nice drive to the foot of the mountain. We were most fortunate in having Dr. Hayes with us, as he took charge at the mine and explained the geological structure and later the methods of reducing and extracting the different ores. Should the opportunity occur again, I am sure many more would like to become acquainted with the "Twin J". I would like to express my thanks to all those who so kindly assisted in creating an interest in what Dr. Hayes describes as "The Science of Rocks."

J.H. Whitehouse.

MARINE BIOLOGY. Professor J.A. Cunningham reported that 8 meetings had been held, 4 out-of-doors and 4 in the Laboratory at Victoria College. Two very good meetings were those at the Chinese Cemetery and at the Breakwater under low tide conditions, which are essential for outdoor meetings.

AUDUBON LECTURES. The President thanked Mr. H.D.R. Stewart for the excellent work done by him in connection with the lectures. No report is available till the close of the lecture season.

The meeting expressed thanks to the Chairmen of groups and other officers for their work for the Society.

The President brought forward the re-draft of the Constitution which had been prepared by a committee consisting of Dr. Carl and Mr. Tildesley, in order to make the Constitution acceptable within the Act, in the event that the Society should in the future decide to apply for

registration as an Incorporated Society. The President read the document and its adoption was moved by Dr. Carl, seconded by Mr. Woodward and passed.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT. The retiring President expressed gratitude to all those who had been of such great help during her two years of office. She named especially the members of the executive, the people who lent or offered to lend their houses for group meetings and those car owners who made a point of attending field trips in order to provide transportation for other members. She warmly thanked Dr. G. Clifford Carl for the use of the Museum, his office, time and knowledge and work on the projector. She also thanked the Museum staff, mentioning Mr. G.A. Hardy and Mr. King, the latter for his work in preparing the Museum for meetings, etc. She included in her thanks Mr. Ireland and his staff for the loan of the Provincial Library Reading Room.

The meeting gave the President hearty applause and passed an unanimous vote of thanks to her for her services during two years of office as President.

The meeting then proceeded to the election of officers for the coming year. As no nominations were made from the floor the proffered slate of names was passed unanimously. The list of officers will be found on the back cover of the current magazine.

The new President, Professor J.A. Cunningham, then took the Chair amid applause. His first business was to introduce Mr. W.P. Keller of Rocky Point, who presented a report entitled "Rocky Point Reprieve", in which he pleaded for the use of this beautiful and interesting 3,000 acre district as a National Park and Wild Life Sanctuary, rather than for the establishment of a Naval Arsenal. The President assured him that the Society would give consideration to his report. The business of the Meeting being concluded, the President called on Mr. Phillip Monckton to show his interesting and delightful coloured slides of flowers and shrubs of B.C. Mr. Monckton is a land surveyor in the Department of Lands. Colour photography of Nature subjects has been his hobby for many years. The wonderful colour and lighting of these pictures held the audience entranced.

TREASURER'S REPORT FOR YEAR ENDING
FEB. 29th, 1952

Our membership remains much about the same. We have 8 more family memberships this year as compared with the previous year.

Membership for the year ending Feb.28th,1951	117
Membership for the year ending Feb.29th,1952	109
Dues received for year ending Feb.28th,1951	\$ 250.00
Dues received for year ending Feb.29th,1952	247.93
Approx. \$2.00 less. 9¢ being for exchange on a cheque paid for dues.	
Total income to Feb. 28th, 1951	273.74
Total income to Feb. 29th, 1952	321.05
Increase	47.31

This increase of \$47.31 is made up mostly by receipt of \$40.00 from the Audubon Committee of the Victoria Natural History Society for advertising the Screen Tours in the "Naturalist" for years 1950-51 and 1951-52.

Cost of publishing the "Naturalist" 1950-51	225.57
Cost of publishing the "Naturalist" 1951-52	225.16

You will notice what a very large percentage of our income is spent in publishing our magazine.

This report is respectfully submitted.

Edwin W. Adshead
Treasurer.

ALIEN ANIMALS ON VANCOUVER ISLAND

G. Clifford Carl
Provincial Museum, Victoria, B.C.

From time to time there have been introduced on Vancouver Island a number of species of mammals which were not found here naturally. Many of these aliens have become widely spread as a permanent part of our fauna. Successful species include muskrat, domestic goat, domestic cat, Norway rat, roof rat, black rat, house mouse, and possibly mountain goat. Mammals which apparently have not succeeded or whose future is still uncertain include chipmunk, domestic rabbit, European polecat, and even European hedgehog.

Of all the introductions, that of the muskrat is perhaps the most successful, though a "mixed blessing". Individuals from the mainland were first brought to Vancouver Island by the Provincial Game Department in 1923 for the purpose of providing an additional fur-bearer of value to trappers. The first animals were liberated in the Cowichan Lake area under the supervision of Mr. Buchanan Simpson who still lives in the district; others were released near Campbell River, Jordan River, Port Alice, Ucluelet, and possibly at other points. Apparently the new immigrants found conditions very suitable, for they increased in numbers and spread rapidly. By 1931, about 9,000 pelts were taken by trappers and by 1940, muskrat colonies were to be found in all favourable areas along the south and east coast of the Island from Sooke at least to Campbell River, and on portions of the West Coast as well. While the muskrat has proved to be of considerable value as a fur-bearer, it has been responsible for a certain amount of crop damage, in some areas, and also has been blamed for destroying water plants in fishing areas. A certain amount of control has been necessary in cases where such damage has been of a serious nature.

A year after the introduction of muskrats, four mountain goats from the vicinity of Banff, Alberta, were brought to Vancouver Island and released in the Shaw Creek area north of Cowichan Lake. While goats have not been actually seen in recent years by officials of the Game Commission, this area is so suited to these

animals that authorities believe that they may be doing well.

Domestic goats apparently took up an independent existence some years ago in isolated parts of the Highland district not far from Victoria. Animals are still occasionally seen on the mountainside facing Malahat Drive. In all likelihood they will persist until civilization encroaches on their sanctuary or until they are killed off by hunters.

Previous to these introductions, about the year 1904 or 1905, before a Provincial Game Commission was set up, private individuals released European fallow deer on James Island and possibly on other nearby islands. The animals increased in number and began to prove a nuisance subsequent to the building of the Canadian Industries Limited Powder Works, so that in the early 1930's officials of the Game Commission removed some of these deer to Salt Spring Island and to Vancouver Island. Fallow deer are still present on these islands; during 1951 individuals were observed in the Alberni area of Vancouver Island but it is unlikely that this species will ever match the native deer in numbers.

Another result of man's activities is the presence of domestic cats in the wild state. Such animals are found in all areas adjacent to centres of population and are particularly abundant in the Malahat district. Wherever they are present they do a great deal of harm to small native species particularly ground nesting birds and such game birds as quail and pheasant. When time and opportunity permit, officials of the Game Commission trap or shoot these unwanted cats in the interests of conservation. The abandoning of domestic pets such as the cat should be severely discouraged.

In nearly all parts of the world inhabited by man we find rats living in close association. In spite of improvements in methods of rat control Vancouver Island is no exception. All three rats are present here also, probably introduced accidentally from ships. The largest and most common is the Norway rat which reaches a total length of 15 or 16 inches. The Black rat and Roof rat (or Alexandrine rat) are both smaller and not so common. (See a previous issue, Vol.3, No.7, for distinguishing features).

House mice too have been brought to the Island by accident and are now found in most urban areas. With the advent of modern types of construction, the house mouse is not now so commonly found inside buildings but it is still one of the most common rodents in the vicinity of man's habitation.

For some unknown reason chipmunks are not native to Vancouver Island although they are common on the adjacent mainland. From time to time, however, chipmunks have been released on the island, some in Beacon Hill Park in Victoria. Occasional individuals are still to be seen. For example, Mr. D. Davison of the B.C. Forest Service reports seeing three chipmunks crossing the Highway near the Kiwanis drinking fountain at Mill Bay about 1938, and Mr. E.J. Maxwell of the Provincial Museum observed a chipmunk at Spectacle Lake, on Malahat Mountain in the spring of 1951. It is possible that in time these rodents will become well established on Vancouver Island.

Domestic rabbits, too, have been released or have escaped from captivity on several occasions but they have not yet become abundant. In fact very few, if any, rabbits are to be found on Vancouver Island at the present time, which is fortunate. They are present, however, on some of the adjacent coastal islands such as Strong Tide Island, near Chatham Island, off Oak Bay. On San Juan Island (State of Washington) wild domestic rabbits are extremely numerous and extremely destructive necessitating costly control measures especially around truck gardens.

Under the heading of unusual foreign animals it is interesting to note that a specimen of the European polecat or fitch was captured at Menzies Creek near Duncan in February, 1946, by Mr. E.C. Mayea. Mr. Mayea also reported that a second polecat was in the same area but he was unable to trap it. No satisfactory explanation of the presence of these animals on Vancouver Island has ever been received. There is also an unauthenticated record of a South American coypu, a rodent somewhat like a large muskrat, being taken near Courtenay in June, 1949. These fur-bearers are farmed in captivity in various parts of North America and escaped animals are now to be found in several areas including southwestern British

Columbia, but apart from the above report there are no authoritative records for Vancouver Island.

Another unauthenticated record is provided by the reported release of a pair of European hedgehogs in the Sooke area many years ago. Without much doubt the animals have failed to survive judging by the fact that none has been seen since that time.

In general the introduction of alien species of animals (or plants) should never be attempted before an authoritative study has been made to determine if conditions in the new area are entirely suitable. Not only must the requirements of the introduced species be well understood but also the possible effects of the introduction upon the native species already present. Areas of land (or water) can support only a definite number of living forms. If foreign species are introduced they maintain their numbers at the expense of the native species. Occasionally, too, in the absence of natural checks, the population of the introduced species increases to produce a plague as in the famous cases of the rabbits in Australia and the North American deer in New Zealand.

So far Vancouver Island has not suffered too badly from the introduction of foreign species of mammals, and there is little danger of such species getting "out of hand" if proper care is taken.

SANDHILL CRANES

I had been told by several old-timers at Cadboro Bay who knew I was interested in birds, that Sandhill Cranes still came here on their spring and autumn migrations, although not in their former numbers. They described them and their trumpet-like call, so different from the harsh cry of the Heron, which is the only bird they could be confused with; I am glad to be able to confirm their reports by seeing and hearing one which landed on the beach on the morning of the 21st of October. However, it was soon disturbed; when I saw the bird it was rising from the beach and finally flew off in the direction of Ten Mile Point.

A. R. Davidson

JUNIOR PAGE

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Solution to last month's bird puzzle.

Across:

1. Mallard
2. Hummingbird
3. Heron
4. Screech
5. Crow
6. Junco
7. Gobbler
8. Bittern

Down:

9. Glaucous wing
10. Rail
11. Grebe
12. Murre
13. Tern
14. Cob
15. Robin
16. Geese
6. Jay

By Gerry Skinner.

The swallows come early in April. They have become very tame from being beside the kitchen window. At last the eggs were laid. Some sparrows, through their jealousy, pushed out the swallow's eggs. After the second egg was out a broom came sweeping at them.

A little while later the babies' parents went away for nearly two days. We got worried about them and brought them in. We fed the swallows some squashed ants by my mother holding open their mouths while I stuffed the ants inside. At last the mother and father came back. We saw the first one fly. This is a true story.

POEM

Do the bees
Have diseases
In the month of May?

Question:

Tommy Glenny, "What is the difference between a Junco and a Snowbird?"

Bruce Colvin, "No difference. Snow-bird is another name used."

Tommy Glenny, "What is the difference between a barn owl and a screech owl?"

Bruce Colvin, "The barn owl is larger and the Screech owl has sort of horns on it."

NOTICE OF MEETINGS1952

- Tuesday GENERAL MEETING: Provincial Museum 8 P.M.
 April 8th: This will be our last in-door general meeting before the Spring and Summer Field Trips. Entertainment is being arranged and refreshments will be served. This gathering together of the members will also provide a splendid opportunity to discuss a Bird Emblem, which is under consideration, for this Province. Several members will be prepared to speak and a discussion on the subject will be welcome.
- Saturday MARINE BIOLOGY: Meet at the Breakwater at
 April 26th 10:00 A.M. Take Outer Wharf Bus.
 J.A. Cunningham.
- Saturday Junior Naturalists meet at the Museum at
 April 19th 10:00 A.M.
 & April 26th:

THIS MONTH'S COVER

The trillium or wake-robin (*Trillium ovatum* Pursh) is among our most eagerly sought spring flowers. The large alabaster-white blossoms are effectively set off by a ruff composed of three ample leaves of richest green. The snowy freshness of the newly opened flower is replaced by a pinkish or reddish tinge with age.

The name trillium refers to the fact that all the parts of the plant are in threes or multiples of three, as demonstrated by the stamens which are six in number. The name wake-robin is more applicable to eastern America than to the Pacific slopes, for there the trillium shows up at about the time the robin puts in its first appearance after a winter's absence.

The trillium reaches its best development in the cool, moist, humus-rich soils of coniferous forests. Four species are recorded from the Pacific Coast, of which only one, ovatum, is found in British Columbia.

George A. Hardy

Victoria Natural History Society

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To