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THE HARRIS SPARROW

At the bottom of our garden there is a pile of brush, which is always a favourite place of the small birds. Here, in their season, can be found white-crowned and the golden-crowned sparrows, juncos, Seattle wrens, towhees, chipping sparrows, and, once in a while, Lincoln sparrows.

On December 7th there was a bird among the gathering of golden-crowned sparrows and juncos which was a new species to me. It was larger even than the golden-crowned, and had a bright pink bill, very noticeable against the black throat and head, and it was very white underneath. This strange sparrow stayed around for quite a while, giving me an opportunity of observing it closely, and making it easy to identify it as a Harris sparrow. This bird is on our local check list, but Munro and Cowan, in their "Review of the Bird Fauna of B.C." call it an uncommon transient and give October 1894 as the last time it was officially reported in Victoria.

Today, January 21st, a Harris sparrow again appeared in the garden, possibly, of course, the same bird, and it was once more in the company of golden-crowned sparrows and juncos.

L.G.R.

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The Christmas count of the Vancouver Natural History Society totalled 37,953 birds. Among the figures given were the following:-

1720 Robins.  
7631 Starlings.  
7580 Lesser Snow Geese

## CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT. JANUARY 2, 1956

- A. City and east to Gonzales Bay: H.D.R. Stewart,  
J. H. Whitehouse.
- B. Shoal Bay to Spoon Bay: J. O. Clay, P. Symons.
- C. Humber Rd. around to Telegraph Bay Rd.: Mrs. J.R. Inglis,  
Miss E.K. Lemon.
- D. Ten Mile Point south of Telegraph Bay Rd: B. Pattenden,  
Wm. Adams.
- E. Cadboro Bay & Queenswood District: Mrs. G.E. Soulsby,  
Mrs. E. McGavin, A. R. Davidson.
- F. Sidney and North Saanich: Miss M.C. Melburn,  
Miss L.G. Roberts, Mrs. W.L. Taylor.
- G. Lost Lake and District: G. A. Hardy.
- H. Elk Lake and District: J. O. Clay, P. Symons.
- I. Swan Lake, Douglas Street, Panama Flats:  
Mr. K. E. Christiansen

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	Total
LOON, Common		3			3	10				16
" Pacific						1				1
" Red-throated						1				1
GREBE, Horned	7	8	23	6	3	18				65
" Eared		2		7	1	16				26
" Western		53	3			58				114
" Pied-billed						1				1
GUILLEMOT, Pigeon				1		7				8
CORMORANT, D.-cr.	11	7								18
" Baird		10	5	17	15	26				73
HERON			1							1
GOOSE, Canada						32	30			62
MALLARD	416	5	58		14	37	200	224	250	1204
WIDGEON, European					1					1
BALDPATE	609	759	95		150	96	400	180	1520	3809
PINTAIL		2				64		2		68
TEAL, Green-winged					1	27		16		44
SHOVELLER	13	70	14		2	12		9		120
WOODDUCK	2									2
MANDARIN	4									4
RINGNECK DUCK									11	11
CANVASBACK	8					2				10
SCAUP, Greater	200	500	53		5	123		78		959
GOLDENEYE, American	1	16	1	9	2	20		1		50
" Barrows						2				2
BUFFLEHEAD	12	80	21	8	1	55		5		182

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	total
OLD SQUAW		1		8		1				10
HARLEQUIN	7	16		13	7					43
SCOTER, Wh.-winged		8		5	7	89				109
" Surf	5	7	6	6	8	15				47
" American						5				5
RUDDY DUCK						105		3		108
MERGANSER, Hooded	4		2			6				12
" American								15		15
" Red-breasted		4	5	2		20				31
HAWK, Cooper				1	1	1				3
" Sparrow						1				1
EAGLE, Bald								1		1
" Golden						1	1			2
HAWK, Pigeon				1				1		2
GROUSE, Ruffed						1				1
QUAIL, California	10			32	10					52
PHEASANT, Ring-necked					1	1		3		5
COOT	1		26			48		308	101	484
SURFBIRD		5								5
TURNSTONE, Black	25	30								55
YELLOWLEGS, Greater						3				3
SANDPIPER, Aleutian		9								9
" Red-backed					18	18				36
GULL, Gl.-winged	395	140	50	40	100	221	2	100		1048
" Herring	3									3
" California	6									6
" Sh.-billed		140		2	1	111	20			274
KILLDEER					5					5
KINGFISHER						5				5
FLICKER, No.-west.	1	1	4	13	26	13	1			59
WOODPECKER, Pileated				1	1	1				3
" Harris				2						2
" Downy					1					1
SKYLARK					20					20
CROW, No.-west.			25	1	4	267		4		301
CHICKADEE, Ch.-back	1		20	32	90	13	4			160
BUSHTIT			20			12				32
NUTHATCH, Red-breasted				3	12	3				18
CREEPER, brown					1					1
WREN, Winter	3		3	8	11		4			29
" Seattle			1		2	1	2			6
ROBIN, No.-western	1	2	3	5	1	57				69
THRUSH, Varied			3	16	47	6				72
KINGLET, Golden-cr.			1	33	36	6				76

## CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT - Continued - -

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	Total
SHRIKE, No.-west				1						1
SPARROW, house					20	8				28
MEADOWLARK, W.	5						1			6
BLACKBIRD, R.wing.		3	3						200	206
" Brewer		23	23						500	546
FINCH, Purple				11	35	2				48
" House					50					50
SISKIN				10						10
TOWHEE	1		2	1	13	2	1			20
SPARROW, Savannah		1								1
JUNCO, Oregon		37	28	168	85	75				293
SPARROW, G.-crowned				2	2	12				16
" Fox				8	3		3			14
" Song, rusty	1	6	6	2	19	7	4			45
	1752	1948	505	475	835	1745	643	980	2582	11465

A total of 84 varieties and 11465 individuals.

Weather showery and mild.

## TOPOGRAPHY OF TEN MILE POINT

By A. O. Hayes

Referring to 'Surface Features' on page 79 of the January issue of the Victoria Naturalist, reference is made to the flatter land found at varying levels along the slopes of the upland, and their origin is discussed as follows:- "These are apparently due to ocean erosion when the sea rose after the melting of the continental ice cap, and again when the land rose after the load of ice was removed". This view requires further consideration, since the preservation of the glaciated surface suggests pre-glacial rather than post-glacial ocean erosion.

Post-glacial erosion was seen by members of the geology group at Pym Island, which is situated about one mile north-east of Swartz Bay. Between low and high tide sedimentary rock, softer than gneiss, has been worn back destroying the glaciated surface. But at Cadboro Point and many other places exposed to the force of storm waves the surface remains smoothed and striated or grooved down to tide water. Not only are the evidences of the glaciated surface found at the water's edge, but along the slopes of Prevost Hill and on the top of Mount Tolmie there are similar almost perfectly preserved flutings made by boulders when they were moved southward over this coastal region (see accompanying map).

During Tertiary time that lasted about 65 million years, a cover of Upper Cretaceous sediments was removed from the gneiss. Remnants of these softer rocks are found fringing the north end of Saanich peninsula, and on Coal Island north of Sidney, and it may be that they covered a much wider area of the gneiss of the Saanich peninsula. After this cover was removed the Gneiss was exposed to the various processes of weathering, by the atmosphere, rain and running water, and in all probability to ocean erosion, for Tertiary sediments of marine origin occur in the Puget Sound area.

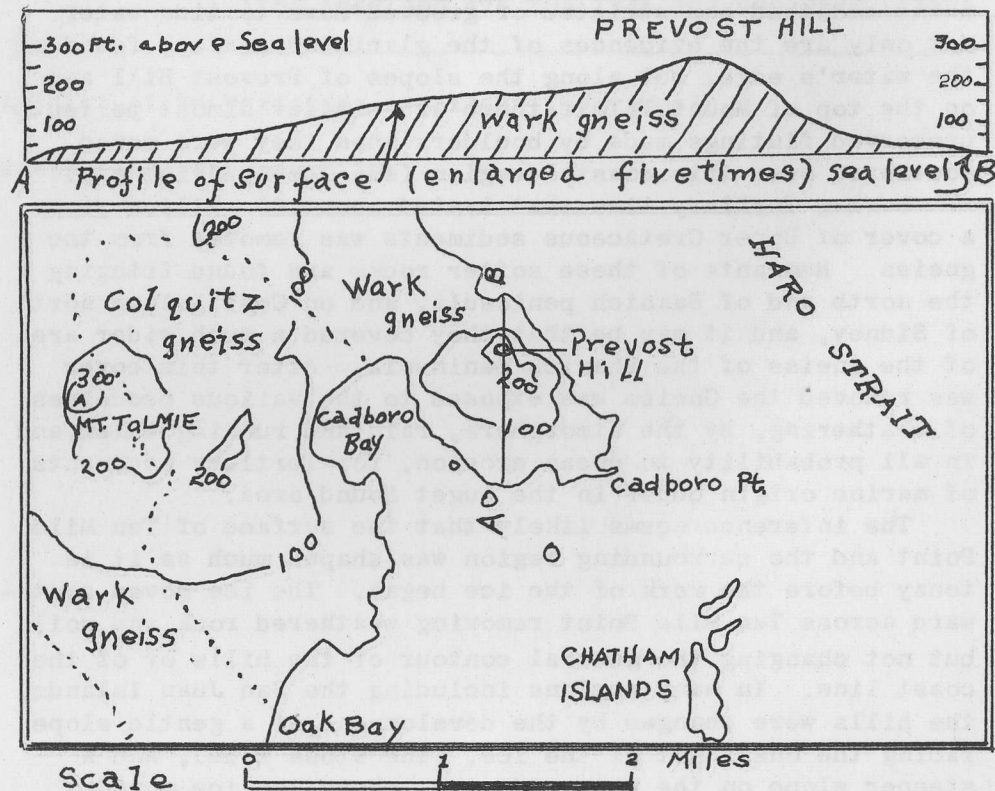
The inference seems likely that the surface of Ten Mile Point and the surrounding region was shaped much as it is today before the work of the ice began. The ice moved southward across Ten Mile Point removing weathered rock and soil, but not changing the general contour of the hills or of the coast line. In many regions including the San Juan Islands, the hills were changed by the development of a gentle slope facing the onslaught of the ice, (the stoss side), and a steeper slope on the downward side, where the ice moved



away from the hill (the lee side). The shapes of Prevost Hill and Mount Tolmie do not exhibit this form of erosion, a good geological problem on which to work.

The tentative conclusion in the light of the facts presented is that the topography is due mainly to erosion in Tertiary time modified slightly by glaciation, and very little by ocean erosion, so far as the gneiss is concerned, in the Greater Victoria area. There are, of course, many deposits of boulders left by the ice, and glacial moraines, also gravel sand and clay transported by melt-water streams, and covering the glaciated surface, in suitable places for their accumulation. But on the slopes of such higher elevations as Prevost Hill and Mount Tolmie, the inter-glacial and post-glacial submergence received by the whole of the Saanich peninsula, effectively washed off most of the sediments, leaving bare rocks.

Errata:- December issue, page 66, 'shistone' should read 'shistose'; 'crincidal' should read 'crinoidal'.



Based on map 20A 1915 Geol. Surv. Canada.

### UNUSUAL BIRDS OF THE YEAR

- A HARRIS SPARROW was seen in Victoria on December 7th by Miss Leila Roberts.
- GOLDEN EAGLES were seen on several occasions both in Victoria and elsewhere on the Island.
- A pair of COWBIRDS came through Cadboro Bay this spring, a young bird being raised by a pair of yellow warblers.
- A BARN OWL was observed by a party of bird watchers in the glen at Cadboro Bay.
- A flock of eighteen KNOTS was seen at Saanichton Spit.
- MORNING DOVES were seen in numbers up to twelve several times this summer.
- An AUDUBON WARBLER was seen in December in Oak Bay and another one at Cadboro Bay.
- A BLACK-THROATED GREY WARBLER visited the garden of Mrs. W. L. Taylor at Towner Park, and a pair were seen by Mrs. Bell on St. Patrick Street.
- VARIED THRUSH have been exceptionally numerous this fall and winter since their first arrival the last week in September.

One hundred and eighty species of birds have been identified in this district during 1955.

TWO HUDSONIAN CURLEWS are again spending the winter at Oak Bay. Only one TOWNSEND SOLITAIRE was reported during the year, on December 13th on King George Terrace.

RED-BREASTED SAPSUCKERS were reported twice, both during November.

### Note to Recorders of Birds' Nests

Dr. M. D. F. Udvardy and his assistant have asked for the return of all used record forms containing information on nesting birds during the 1955 season. They are anxious to complete their files for the past season so cooperating members are asked to send any records that they may have to Dr. Udvardy, Department of Zoology, The University of British Columbia, Vancouver 8, B. C.

New record forms will be available for the coming season and these workers hope that many more persons in the Victoria area will cooperate by undertaking to keep such records.

## COONS AND QUAIL

Early one morning recently I was walking along the Cadboro Bay Beach in search of shore birds, but none did I see but a lone Hudsonian curlew, so tame that I walked around him without disturbing him in the least. It was then I noticed the very recent tracks of two coons which had been ambling along the beach side by side not very long before. I noticed that every few yards they had dug down about a couple of inches into the sand and excavated some variety of thin shelled clam about three inches long, as these shells had evidently been recently opened and emptied. Just as long as these coons keep on the beach and dig clams it is all right with me, but when they come into my garden and eat my nice ripe prunes as they do, I don't feel so happy about it. Still, it is nice to think that these animals can survive in our midst in spite of all the depredations of man.

Then there are the quail. Everyone loves the quail but me. I carefully dig my garden, plant fall rye and rake it over, and before the night has passed all the nice quail in the neighbourhood are having their Thanksgiving dinner on my rye. I'm afraid there is none left, but the quail are happy.

A.R.D.

The following list was taken by Mr. R. W. Sinclair of the B. C. Game Department on January 3rd.

	<u>Esquimalt Harbour</u>	<u>Sooke Harbour</u>
Mallard	200	100
Baldpate	150	100
Pintail	100	200
Green-winged Teal	25	25
Blue-winged Teal	25	
Canvasback	25	
Greater Scaup	250	700
American Goldeneye	50	100
Bufflehead	75	150
Scoters	200	900
Mergansers	25	200
Coot	150	200
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	1275	2675
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	Total 3950	--

## IS THE GOOSE A HUSBAND?

(Contributed)

On a sunny Sunday of October, 1954, the Husband family, who live on the sea fronting Uplands, were surprised to see a very large bird flying in to their lawn with some wild mallard and widgeon, which had formed the habit of coming in twice a day to be fed by the children.

The large bird was snowy white in flight, with gray wing tips, and very large wing spread. It declined to remain with the ducks when the children approached, taking off with a long run.

There was an immediate and prolonged rush for the bird books, because, while sure that it was a goose, it was much larger than a Canada goose, and its markings resembled an Arctic Snow Goose to some extent, and it flew with a majesty that no domestic Goose could emulate.

Grain was purchased, and the Goose gradually approached warily, and with much hissing, and after about a week, would feed.

The next development was that the Goose acquired a constant companion in a Canada Goose, and they could be seen every day, doing, for some unfathomable reason, sentry go in front of the mallard and widgeon; with the large Goose two paces ahead, and the Canada Goose following in echelon; up and down, up and down, on parade, with the most comical waddle and amusing seriousness.

Dr. Clifford Carl and others at the Provincial Museum were contacted to see if they could type the bird, and their opinion, after viewing, was that it was possible that it might have been the result of a cross between a domestic goose and an Arctic snow goose, although, such crossing was unlikely.

The bird had apparently been wounded at some time, which might have accounted for its presence in this area.

After a period the children became very attached to the bird, and ways and means were discussed to encourage it to take-up permanent residence.

One day the Canada Goose companion disappeared. However, the children heard of a week old clutch of ducklings, whose father had been a Pekin Drake, and mother a wild mallard, the hen having been killed by a raccoon on the Nursery Farm of Mr. Ed. Lohbrunner.

The ducklings, (five of them), were brought home and kept in a spare bedroom in the house: fed cream of wheat and water for several days, and each day brought out on the lawn in a



large cardboard box and introduced to the Goose. She showed much interest.

Finally, the great day arrived, and to the mounting apprehension of the children, the ducklings were left with the Goose.

All day long the Goose surreptitiously examined the ducklings, and when darkness fell, all the birds were lost sight of.

Since there was fear of rats, crows and other predators, a search was made through all the undergrowth with flashlights trying to find the ducklings in case the Goose had not taken them. To no avail.

The following morning, it developed that the Goose not only had adopted them, but, with true maternal instinct had taken them out in the ocean for the night.

The Goose has mothered them ever since and, although, the ducks are now fully grown, (two with mallard markings and three Pekin duck), they are still treated and protected like babies by the Goose.

The Goose has developed a remarkable affection for only one of the family, Mrs. Husband, and will leave the ducks for a considerable period to follow Mrs. Husband all around the garden, and out to the garage, or stand beside her chair, gurgling happily, while Mrs. Husband sits reading.

The children were told by many experts that the ducks would be unable to fly, since they had been overfed, but one of the most interesting sights has been the flying lessons put on by Mother Goose.

The Goose is a large heavy bird and needs quite a run to take off. She would do this again and again, and look back hopefully to see if the ducks would follow.

The ducks would go through all the motions on the ground, but could not take off for more than a few feet, until one day, when a forty mile wind was blowing, the Goose took off, and the ducks made their token gesture very dutifully, and to their dismay were suddenly about fifty feet high, over the ocean. With frightened quacks they came down to three point landings like sacks of potatoes, and paddled madly for shore.

The birds have been much photographed, and news pictures have circulated from Coast to Coast.

The little family is very happy, and while wildlifelore has it that a wild Goose will only mate once, this particular Goose has achieved contentment by adopting her family.

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JUNIOR NATURAL HISTORY PAGE

Gerry Skinner --- Editor

**BUDDIES:** While we were living in Ottawa I had the good fortune to become the owner of a Siberian Huskie, who, to us, is "Smoky." Although his full name is Smoky of Rosedale, Smoky's ancestors were born by the banks of the Kolyina River in Northern Siberia and he has snow-shoe feet (web-footed inter fur) and his eyes are protected from snow and wind by strong white eyelashes. His tail is bushy, his fur is soft and in winter he has an undercoat of wool as well to keep him doubly warm.

On our way back to Victoria we stopped to see the animals in the zoo in a town called Minot, in North Dakota. In one of the cages we saw two timber wolves pacing endlessly up and down, taking no notice of the crowds and longing to be free. When we came up to the cage everyone was surprised to see the biggest of the wolves stop when he saw Smoky, and then, believe it or not, both the wolf and Smoky tried very hard to get into the cage to his friend. All of us thought that the two, wolf and dog, realized by instinct, that "way back" they had been buddies, and were pleased to see each other.

by George Dufour

**MY GRUB:** Hans, my grub, has died! This paragraph is written in memory of him. He was given to me by the Provincial Museum entomologist Mr. George Hardy, and was the "worm" or larva of a California prionus. A prionus is a great brown beetle with a pair of wings.

Poor Hans never had a chance to become a beetle, but he was a great wood eater. In spite of all the feeding he died when he was only three years old.

by Gerry Skinner.

**ANNOUNCEMENT:** Mr. Clay's bird field trip, February 14, will be our last Tuesday until we meet Tuesday, April 10th. The Saturday morning film shows will be on February 25 until March 24th. Junior Natural History Members may attend the 9:30 or 11 o'clock shows by showing their membership card.

NOTICES OF MEETINGS

1956

Monday

AUDUBON SCREEN TOUR

Feb. 6:

Cleveland P. Grant.

"American Birds and Big Game" to be held in  
Oak Bay Junior High School at 8 p.m.

SATURDAY

Feb. 11:

BIRD GROUP MEETING

Field trip to Sidney.

Meet at Monterey Cafe at 9:45 a.m.

or at Sidney Wharf at 10:30 a.m.

Bring lunch.

Leader: Mr. J. O. Clay.

TUESDAY

GENERAL MEETING

Feb. 14:

Provincial Museum at 8 p.m.

Subject: "South Nohanni River N.W.T."

Illustrated with coloured slides.

Speaker: Mr. R. M. Patterson.

TUESDAY

GEOLOGY GROUP MEETING

Feb. 21:

Provincial Museum at 8 p.m.

Subject: "Our Rocks".

Speaker: Mr. A. H. Marrion.

TUESDAY

BOTANY GROUP MEETING

Feb. 28:

Provincial Museum at 8 p.m.

Subject: "Lichens within our reach".

Speaker: Dr. Adam F. Szczawinski.

The Junior Group will meet on February 7th  
and February 14 and not again until April 10.  
Museum film shows instead Saturdays 9:30 a.m. and  
11:00 a.m. February 25 to March 24. Bring your  
membership card.

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