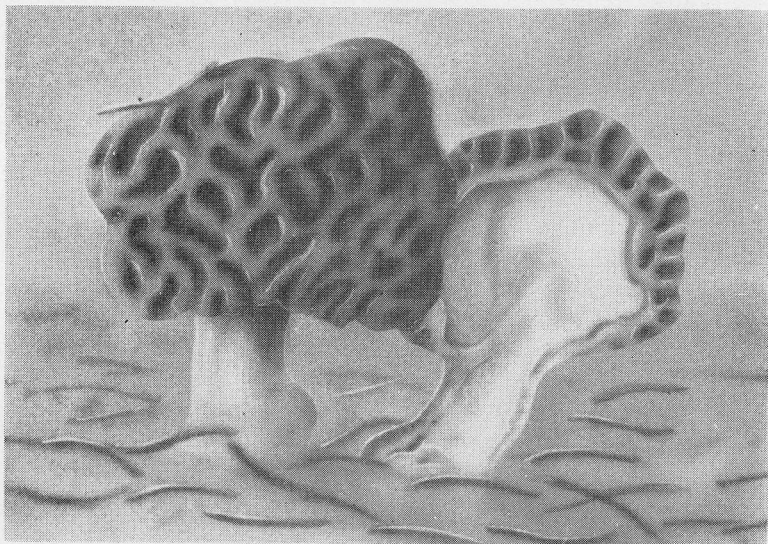


*The*  
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(F. L. Beebe.)

Common Morel

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OUR COVER

There are several kinds of morels, but they are all edible, and, consequently, are favourites with mushroom consumers whenever they can be found. Morels are very partial to burnt-over areas, where they may often be picked up by the bushel, a fact so well known that in the past forests have needed protection from over-enthusiastic morel-lovers who have deliberately set fire to patches of woodland for the sake of the morels that later spring up in abundance. The species *Morchella conica* is more partial to this habitat than *M.esculenta*, which usually grows in grassy places.

The morel is found most commonly in the spring months of the year, under coniferous trees and in woodland borders, glades and dells.

In time of plenty they may be dried and so preserved indefinitely, needing only to be soaked in water before using in the same manner as freshly picked specimens.

From "Some Mushrooms and other Fungi of British Columbia" by George A. Hardy. Provincial Museum Handbook No.4.

SOMETHING DIFFERENT

A friend of mine has an unusual pet - a bright green tree frog - which isn't more than an inch long.

At night it wanders over the garden and climbs the wall of the house, apparently, my friend says, in an endeavour to get in the window, but in the day-time it is always to be found in the same place - the centre of a giant orange zinnia flower - a perfect setting for the brilliant green of the frog.

What I cannot understand is how this frog is able to determine which of the numerous flower stalks it must climb to arrive at this particular zinnia flower, but it does. There are three more tree frogs in this little garden, but they do not associate with this one, which has held its seat in the zinnia for some weeks now.

A.R.D.



FALL BIRDS

by Alan Poynter

September to me means cool mornings, rolling mists on the water, quick blustering gales and colour on the hill-sides, but most of all, migrating birds. Silent and active, with only one thought; fly south, feed and fly south again.

During this one month most of our rare birds are seen. Standing on a prominent point of our shore, we have seen the sooty shearwaters moving in and out of the fog banks, flapping and gliding low on the water, while the terns dive for feed, to fly off under the harrying of the jaeger.

Surf birds that fly in at night in flocks of twenty to sixty, mixing with black and ruddy turnstones, all feeding under the spray on the rocks. Sandpipers roaming the water's edge; western, least, pectoral, Baird and sanderling. It takes a good eye to sort them out, and a fast one to follow their twistings and turnings when put to flight.

A lonely wandering tattler picking its way over the smooth wet rocks, while myriads of phalarope move leapfrog style over the water beyond the kelp beds.

On the open grassy sea-front, savannah sparrows feeding on fallen seed, but they are not all savannahs; a closer scrutiny might reveal a Lapland longspur, or a horned lark, with a dash of white in the tail feathers; but then there are pipits, no time to waste as a flock lifts with undulating flight, calling and flying, calling and flying south.

An early morning after the winds have died down will surely bring some good finds. Leaving a trail of footprints in the heavy dew on the golf course, and moving slowly, we see a golden plover standing on the brink of a sand trap; with what else? It can only be the upland plover! With head held high, then a short run and powerful wings lift this bird over the greens to settle with three killdeer and one bedraggled black-bellied plover, not in summer dress, yet showing little of the sleek grey winter plumage.

One can't resist a second look, and an evening visit reveals in their place a whimbrel, with its long curved bill prodding and probing, and only steps behind another bird, a new bird, a first! With buff breast and chestnut crown, when will we know them all? Once more we study the books, and find this one is a sharp-tailed sandpiper, a very rare and welcome visitor.

The woods are quiet, empty nests now seen in the partially bare branches, choked with leaves or hanging crazily out of a crotch in the alders. No song, no busy feeding of young. The rosy evening sky reflects the mood, but over there a bird, and here a flock of everything, chickadee, bushtit, kinglets, vireos and warblers, the yellow, orange-crowned, Audubon or myrtle. Nashville, Townsend and black-throated grey. We have seen them all, but only for minutes as they pass, then all is quiet, as the birds fly south, feed and fly south again.

SOAPOLALLIE PARTIES

by Dorothy Palmer

When the soapollie berries were dead ripe and would fall off and disappear over night, then an Indian woman spread a blanket underneath a bush and shook the bush, causing the small berries to fall in a shower; the blanket was carefully taken up and the harvest emptied into a large container. Next the woman washed her hands and arms, she scrubbed them thoroughly again and again, right up to her shoulders, until satisfied that her hands and arms were utterly clean and greaseless, for the slightest trace of grease prevents the berry juice from frothing. Now ready, she plunged a hand amongst the ripe berries and started to beat them. As she beat a froth arose; when all the mess of berries was a pile of pinkish froth, risen right up to above her elbow, then the feast was ready. Meanwhile all the children of the village had been clamouring around her, impatient for their treat. Children and adults tucked in until the vessel was scraped clean;— doubtless the tribal tummies benefited likewise. ... This "Soapollie Party" was witnessed on the Malahat Indian Reserve a few years ago.

In the Victoria environs many of the soapollie bushes do not fruit, but fruiting bushes have been reported in the Wilkinson Road district and in the Highlands, and fruiting bushes will be found in many other places near the city. A resident in the Highlands used to bring in soapollie berries each summer. We have mouth-watering memories of several "Soapollie Parties". Our parties were not so picturesque as the feast observed on the Malahat Reserve, — we used a mechanical rotary beater, — but the froth looked and tasted just as delicious.

Soapollie, *Shepherdia canadensis*, is a valuable



liver stimulant and laxative. Bears use the soapollie berries as seasonal digestive. Doctor Irene Bastow Hudson, in her booklet "Medicinal & Food Plants of British Columbia" gives a delightful description of a before dawn scene she witnessed of bears picking the berries; this was in the Arrow Lakes region. The Doctor's party had planned to pick the berries but the bears were up first, bears of all sizes and rotundities, and when they departed not one berry was left nor one wasted.

Doctor Hudson expresses the interesting thought that our native Indians garnered their considerable knowledge of the medicinal qualities of many wild plants by watching the use which wild animals made of them. Her booklet is available on loan from the B. C. Provincial Public Library Open Shelf.

A check of Dr. Hudson's list of British Columbia's medicinal plants with the current list of some common plants found in the Thetis Park Nature Sanctuary shows that probably 30% of the Thetis Park plants have medicinal values. Apparently preparations may be concocted from certain plants to be used for discouraging mosquitoes, to treat bee and wasp stings, to combat rattlesnake venom, to heal cuts and bruises, to soothe skin irritations, and to give relief in many ways. Maybe some outdoor camping types would find the Thetis Sanctuary handy for familiarizing themselves with these plants before the next trip up-country.

And IF watercress stimulates a distaste for nicotine, as Dr. Hudson suggests, there is a pleasant cure for the cigarette habit. Does anyone know of a good bed of watercress? Outside the Sanctuary, naturally.

#### AN ODD HOUSE GUEST

by Alan Poynter

A Fairfield resident picked up a rhinoceros auklet in Ross Bay a few weeks ago. The bird was unable to swim or fly when found, but with care and attention and proper feeding it has now fully recovered, and obviously enjoys the comforts of modern living.

Several attempts have been made to release the auklet, but without success. It would appear that the oil glands do not properly function, as bathing the bird had to be abandoned. In fact, we were told it got hysterical and when attempts were made to put it back in the sea, it sank.

Now, it is doing fine and seems to have completely

taken over the household. It is hand fed, and consumes three smelts a day. The bird has its own box to sleep in, which it occupies for most of the daylight hours.

The evenings are spent running and hopping furiously forty or fifty times non-stop around the living room, with periods of practice flights the length of the house. After completing a perfect landing it stands erect with its chest out, or else running back to try again after a 'flop'.

This is indeed an odd house pet.

#### THE CASPIAN TERN

We were standing on the bank of the Nanaimo River, close to where it enters the sea. This was about five o'clock in the afternoon of September 12th. There is a gravel road here, leading from the highway along the south side of the Nanaimo River, through an Indian reservation. Occasionally this is a good birding area, but on this day there were very few to be seen, so we concentrated on a flock of gulls on the other side of the river, apparently asleep on the shingle.

As we watched them, there was a sudden commotion, and they all rose in the air, and from their midst came some of the harshest bird-notes we have ever heard, a noise no gull we know could produce even in its last extremity. Two of them disengaged themselves from the flock and came towards us, flying directly low over our heads.

We could see they had forked tails, heavy red bills, and black wing-tips. They were fully as large as California gulls, and were, without question, Caspian terns.

This bird has never been collected in British Columbia to our knowledge, and evidence of their occasional presence is based on a few sight records only.

We were just fortunate in having such a close view of this species of tern, which is cosmopolitan in range but uncommon everywhere. We are just in receipt of a copy of the North Queensland Naturalist, from Cairns, Australia, for the month of June, and we notice that one had been seen there.

A.R.D.



JUNIOR ESSAYS

The Essay Contest for the Juniors, conducted by the Society this spring, while not productive of many entries, contained some well expressed articles on nature subjects.

The following, written by Kathleen Wilson, age 11, gained the first prize for girls.

Other prize-winning entries will be published in later issues of the 'Naturalist'.

A NATURE CLUB WALK

I live in a big City where it isn't easy to study nature outdoors, but I am luckier than some town children because across the road there is an old golf course which has not been used for three years.

Several friends, my sister and I often go for walks here, and we call ourselves the 'Nature Club'. This is about a walk we took there.

As we enter what we call the 'Valley of Flowers', we see some bleeding hearts, bluebells, and I mustn't forget the dainty blue and pink forget-me-nots. Some iris are standing in blue array. Mother Nature did not put these here. Some gardeners threw them away and they have taken root.

Some hunters are training their dogs for pheasant hunting, but what they don't know will not hurt them, because there are pheasants on this very golf course, and farther in where the tall grass is we see a female pheasant fly up from her nest trying to lead us away. We wished we had seen the cock though.

Looking up into the maple tree, we see a song sparrow singing his heart out to his mate. His song is three notes the same, then a beautiful trill. There is a beauty spot in the middle of his breast.

"What are these little holes in the grass?" we wonder. A little gray field mouse peeps out of one and pops quickly back in again as soon as he sees us. Another scampers in even faster than the other, and we see no more.

A few feet away from the road we see a sad sight to behold. A great blue heron, probably hit by a car, is lying dead. Its lovely blue-grey feathers are too beautiful to leave, so we each take one in memory of him. We continue walking a little sadly.

There are not many wild flowers here.

In the summer there are many barn swallows swooping high and low, as well as violet-greens, who don't swoop so

close. During early summer in the trees there are several bird songs I do not know. One winter day I saw many cedar waxwings eating red berries.

This is a pleasant place to go, but soon it will all be taken up by new homes, and my friends will surely miss our interesting nature walks.

THE AUGUST BIRD TRIP

by Alan Poynter

This field trip was held on Saturday the 29th, with several new members present, making a total of twenty-one on the Princess Margaret Island boat trip.

Our weatherman was kind to us, and with only a light breeze, we were able to observe the water-birds quite well. It was of interest to note the large numbers of marbled murrelets, of which we estimate there were between three and four hundred seen during the day.

Our young navigator took us in quite close to the rocky islets where scores of cormorants collect between feeding. It was a wonderful opportunity to compare our three species, which at this time were all present in the area. The Brandt outnumbered the double-crested and the pelagic considerably.

Princess Margaret Island (formerly Portland) is always interesting from the natural history aspect, though birdwise the field is limited, with only eighteen species being found, making up a total of fifty-four species seen in seven hours over the day.

I find it difficult to pick out a highlight for this trip, but if anyone can help me to identify an immature eagle, with a blunt wedge-shaped tail, seen on this trip, it would be appreciated.

WILD LIFE IN VICTORIA

On the evening of September 4th we were taking Mrs. Peggy King back to her hotel (as she is our only Vancouver member, we have to treat her well). It was about eight o'clock standard time, but fairly dark. At the corner of Richardson and Maddison Streets, a district solidly residential, there passed in front of the car three odd shaped animals. They certainly were not dogs, and we had never seen cats humping along like these were, so we stopped the car, and turned it so that the headlights shone on the animals (fortunately there was no immediate traffic) and they resolved themselves



into a mother raccoon and two half-grown youngsters.

Our nearness did not have the effect of increasing their speed at all, but they did make a tentative effort to climb an oak tree in one of the gardens, but apparently decided it wasn't worth the trouble, so crossed the road, passing out of sight between two of the houses.

The nearest piece of woodland is what is left of the Pemberton Woods, which is at least two hundred yards away, and now quite small in area. We can only speculate where they came from, and what they were doing travelling our busy streets at night.

A.R.D.

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#### CO-OPERATION AMONG SWALLOWS

The radio programme "Outdoors with the Experts", draws considerable correspondence from people who take an interest in our wildlife.

One recent letter that came to our attention was from a lady who had been watching a pair of barn swallows attempt to build a nest on the round base of a porch light attached to the stucco wall of their home at Departure Bay.

For days the pair tried to make the mud stick to the metal, but more fell off than stayed on. The birds worked for about a week on this project, with very little success. Then a third barn swallow came to their assistance, working with the pair for one day, and finally the building was completed by attaching the nest to the stucco wall as well as to the fixture.

They raised one family here, and then left; probably too many flashing lights were hard on their nerves.

A.R.D.

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#### GEOLOGY GROUP

The first meeting of the present session was held on September 15th at 8 p.m. in the museum. A lecture on 'Introduction to Geology' was given by Dr. A. O. Hayes, after which rock and fossil collections brought by members were seen and a cross section of British Columbia from Alberta to the Pacific Coast, was displayed by Mr. A. H. Marrion.

About thirty people attended. So it was suggested that a summary of Dr. Hayes' address be published in the 'Naturalist'. This is given below.

#### INTRODUCTION TO GEOLOGY

Speculative ideas about the origin and history of the earth continued, according to the records, from the time of the Greeks, about 300 B.C., to the time of Hutton, in 1788, or over 2000 years. James Hutton taught that geology is the history of the earth as revealed by the rocks.

Fossils, especially shells, were noticed by Strabo, a Greek who wrote about 7 B.C. about marine shells in the rocks of the earth's crust now high above the level of the sea. Pliny, a Roman in 77 A.D., compiled a monumental work on natural history including the extensive writings of Theophrastus on stones and minerals published in Greece about the third century B. C. This served as a source book for sixteen centuries. Pliny died while witnessing the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 A.D. Leonardo da Vinci, the great artist and engineer of Florence, also correctly concluded that shells in the rocks of Italy were of marine origin, hardened into rock and elevated above sea level. In 546 A.D. Georgius Agricola published a great work on mineralogy, listing 576 minerals and rocks in Latin names. Many of these names are still used. The book was called "DeReFossilium". At that time the word fossil applied to minerals. Organic remains were called extraneous fossils, as they were thought to have been placed in the rocks in some way not understood. That fossils were of organic origin, it was contended, was contrary to Holy Writ. Later some theologians attributed them to the Noachian Deluge.

One hundred and seventy-one years ago James Hutton published his "Theory of the Earth", and in 1795 a two volume treatise entitled "Theory of the Earth with Proofs and Illustrations" was published. He held that the past



was to be interpreted through the present, and should not be based on speculation. He explained the nature of igneous and metamorphic rocks and of unconformities. He was the first to establish the true explanation of the sequence of events that brought the earth to its present state. As is frequently the case where new ideas are held, he was bitterly opposed by those who supported orthodox views. One of these was Kitwan, who later was President of the Royal Irish Academy, and an ardent supporter of the great teacher at the Freiberg Mining Academy in Silesia, Abraham Gottlob Werner, who taught that all rocks, even granite, originated as precipitates in a universal ocean that covered the whole earth, even the highest mountains. Theologians, and even the poet Goethe, liked Werner's view as it seemed to agree with Biblical teachings of the great flood.

Quite independently, but almost contemporaneously, William Smith, a civil engineer engaged in surveying for the construction of canals in England, towards the end of the eighteenth century, made a hobby of collecting rocks and fossils, and amassed a tremendous amount of data, meticulously labeled and arranged, so that finally he was able to prepare a geological map of England. This showed the distribution of strata of the same age, in the same colour, and thus provided both the distribution of the strata below and above the Carboniferous, and the relative age of each formation. It was the first modern geological map of England, and was published in 1815.

In 1830 Professor Charles Lyell of Cambridge published his "Elements of Geology", and in 1833 the same author completed a two volume treatise entitled "Principals of Geology". In these books the ideas of both Hutton and Smith were included, and it became the first text book of geology, the fundamentals of which have not changed. It was clearly written, a classic of the English language, and the maps are hand-coloured in the original edition of the 'Elements' and many of the drawings are from the author's pen.

Thus modern geology had its start at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

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## THE JUNIOR PAGE

by Freeman King

Since the summer camp, the juniors have been very active on their field trips. Places of interest visited were: 'The Farm' at Mr. R. McMinn's on Millstream Road; John Dean Park to see the monument placed there by the B. C. Forest Service Survey Department, marking the original post placed there by Joshua Trutch in 1858. Thunderbirds Cave on the north summit of Mount Newton; Island View Beach where we hunted for sea shore animals and fossils in the clay banks; and Doug. Wood's game farm at Keatings, where we were shown the different types of game birds that were raised there.

An all day expedition was made to Sandstone Creek in the Jordan River area, where a number of fossils were collected by the members.

During the hot weather swimming expeditions were held, and a trip to Rithet's swamp, a fascinating place, where a number of plants were found that do not grow in other places. During this trip it was interesting to note where ravens had excavated a number of wasp's nests built along a drainage ditch.

On one of the trips to Thetis Lake we saw an osprey take a fish from the lake and carry it to the little ones that could be seen in the nest at the top of a large snag on the west side of the lake.

The Leader Group made an expedition to Port Renfrew via Jordan River, and returned by way of Shawnigan Lake. During the expedition we cooked our lunch at Lost Creek and there found blueberries growing in abundance; also huckleberries which were twice the size of those growing in this vicinity. Here a young bear was watched as he ran along the road before disappearing in the bush.

Thousands of young toads were found on the bank of the San Juan River. They were recently transformed from the tadpole stage; it was rather strange to see the tadpoles in the running water of the river, as usually they are hatched out in swamps.

The Junior Branch Leaders held an executive meeting, at which the fall programme was drawn up, and those who are assisting with the ushering at the Audubon Screen Tours were appointed.

Mrs. Kay Osborne has joined the group as assistant leader.

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NOTICE OF MEETINGS

- Friday & Saturday  
Oct. 2nd and 3rd.      AUDUBON SCREEN TOUR: At the Oak Bay Junior High School at 8 p.m., both nights.  
Speaker: Cleveland P. Grant  
Subject: Land of Early Autumn.
- Tuesday:  
Oct. 13th      GENERAL MEETING: At the Provincial Museum at 8 p.m. Slides will be shown by our members David Sterling and Barry Morgan. These include local scenes, birds and flowers, a trip to the Okanagan, and other interesting subjects.
- Saturday:  
Oct. 17th      BIRD FIELD TRIP: Meet at the Monterey Cafe at 9 a.m., or at the Island View Beach at 9:45 a.m. Bring lunch.  
Leader: Alan Poynter.
- Tuesday:  
Oct. 20th      GEOLOGY GROUP: Provincial Museum at 8 p.m.  
Speaker: Dr. A. O. Hayes.  
Subject: "The oldest rocks of Southern Vancouver Island."
- Saturday:  
Oct. 24th      GEOLOGY FIELD TRIP: Meet at the Monterey Cafe at 1:30 p.m., or at McMorran's Store, Cordova Bay, at 2 p.m.  
Leader: Mr. A. H. Marrion.

JUNIOR BRANCH

The Juniors will meet each Saturday at the Monterey Cafe at 1:30 p.m. for field trips. Leader, Mr. Freeman King. Anyone who would like to join these trips is very welcome. Mr. King can be contacted at GR.9-2966.

There are no botany meetings for this month.

AUDUBON SCREEN TOURS

Miss Enid Lemon, who is in charge of the arrangements for these lectures, advises that the season tickets, which are limited to 200 adults for each lecture, are selling out rapidly, and would advise those who wish to purchase same do so at an early date, so as not to be disappointed.



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