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Mortuary Poles at Ninstints

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MORTUARY POLES OF NINSTINTS

One of the very few places left on the coast where one can still see totem poles in their original locations is the long-deserted Haida Indian village of Ninstints on Anthony Island, near the southern tip of the Queen Charlottes. Even there, most of the poles are decayed and weather-beaten almost beyond recognition. When a Provincial Museum expedition visited the remote island in 1957 its members found that only eleven of the 36 poles on the site could be salvaged. The rest, like those in the cover illustration, were too badly decayed to be removed. To provide some measure of legal protection to the Indian remains and to recognize its historical and anthropological significance, Anthony Island was designated as a Provincial Park.

Nobody has lived at Ninstints since 1884, when the last thirty survivors of the tribe moved up to Skidegate Mission. When the first sea-borne fur traders visited them a century before, they numbered at least ten times that many. Gunpowder, smallpox, alcohol and other gifts of the white man killed so many of the tribe that it dwindled away and ceased to exist.

Oddly enough, it is the first decade of that last century of life of Ninstints which is best known to the historians. For the ten years after 1785 Anthony Island was one of the busiest trading centers on the coast. And according to the ships' captains, its chief, Koyah, was the greatest villain. Some of the bloodiest massacres of the fur trade period occurred here. Attempting to avenge an insult, Koyah tried to capture the ship of the American captain John Kendrick in 1791, but failed and fifty of his people were killed. His next two attempts to capture trading ships were successful and their crews were put to death. A fourth attempt in 1795, however, was his undoing. He and another fifty of his tribe were killed.

The decades that followed were not such stormy ones, and their history is known only in its sketchiest outline. The stories of the totem poles, who their owners were, when they were erected and on what great occasions, now never will be known. ---- Wilson Duff.

| 66 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|--------------|------|----|------|----------|-------|---------|-----------|------------|---------|---------|-------|
| | TMAS BIRD CH | | | | | | VICTORI | A. B.C. | , JANUARY | 2 1960 | | 67 |
| SPECIES | A | B | C | D | | | | ie in the | | 2, 1900 | | |
| LOON, Common | 9 | 13 | 8 | | <u> </u> | F | G | H | . <u> </u> | J | K | TOTAL |
| Arctic | 4 | 2 | | | | 198.1 | | 3 | 6 | | 1 | 40 |
| Red-throated | 5 | 7 | | | | 1 | | | | | | 7 |
| GREBE, Red-necked | 2 | 21 | 6 | | | | | | 3 | | | 15 |
| Horned | 18 | 107 | 25 | | | | | 1 | 8 | | | 38 |
| Eared | 3 | 112 | | | | 11 | | 5 | 15 | | 5 | 186 |
| Western | 1600 | 88 | 4 | | | 1 | | 6 | 1 | | | 123 |
| Pied-billed | 5 | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | | 2 | 1696 |
| CORMORANT, Doub. Cr. | 2 | 20 | 2 | | 1 | | | | 7 | | 4 | 16 |
| Brandt's | 2 | 22 | | | | | 6 | 5 | 3 | | 20 | 58 |
| Pelagic | 3 | 67 | | | | 1 | | | 1 | | | 26 |
| HERON, Great Blue | 2 | 2 | | 2 | 1. | | | 17 | 5 | | | 92 |
| GOOSE, Canada | | | | | | | 2 | | | 2 | | 10 |
| White-fronted | | | | | | 16 | 43 | | 14 | | | 73 |
| MALLARD | 157 | 109 | 12 | 275 | | | 2 | | | | | 2 |
| PINTAIL | 24 | | 5 | 100 | 42 | 86 | 54 | 33 | 113 | 38 | 440 | 1359 |
| TEAL, Green-winged | 1 | | | 375 | | | 18 | | 23 | | 4 | 174 |
| WIDGEON, European | | | | | 40 | 23 | | | ' 15 | | | 454 |
| American | 197 | 1618 | 18 | 1000 | | | | | | | 1 | 1 |
| SHOVELLER | | 46 | | 150 | 550 | 73 | 362 | 51 | 21 | | 700 | 4590 |
| WOOD DUCK | | | | | 4 | 2 | 36 | | 237 | 1 | I_{i} | 476 |
| RING-NECKED DUCK | 1 | | | | | | 1 | | | | | 1 |
| CANVASBACK | 48 | | | | | 1 | 250 | | 36 | | | 288 |
| SCAUP, Greater | 85 | 1340 | 6 | | | 3 | | 1 | | | 6 | 57 |
| Lesser | | | | | | 38 | | 8 | 43 | 1 | 140 | 1661 |
| GOLDENEYE, Common | 34 | 55 | 18 | | | | 35 | | | | | 35 |
| Barrow's | 1 | | 1 | | | 13 | | | 51 | | 10 | 181 |
| BUFFLEHEAD | 63 | 233 | 42 | 4 | | 1 | | | | | | 3 |
| OLD SQUAW | 21 | 36 | | | 6 | 48 | 12 | 7 | 55 | 4 | 75 | 543 |
| HARLEQUIN | | 52 | 29 | | | 2 | | | 13 | | | 72 |
| SCOTER, White-winged | 94 | 54 | 27 | | 4 | | | | | | 2 | 83 |
| Surf | 98 | 81 | 20 | | 6 | 6 | | 7 | 38 | | 1 | 227 |
| Common | | | | | | 7 | | 15 | 86 | | 16 | 323 |
| RUDDY DUCK | 24 | | | | | | | | 8 | | | 8 |
| MERGANSER, Hooded | 8 | 3 | 1 | | | | 3 | | 17 | 1 | 1 | 46 |
| Common | 3 | | | | | 12 | 12 | | | | | 36 |
| Red-breasted | 12 | 39 | 1 | | | 10 | 27 | | 12 | | | 52 |
| HAWK, Sharp-shinned | | | 1 | 2 | | 4 | 1 | | 21 | | 16 | 94 |
| Cooper's | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | 3 |
| Red-tailed | 2 | | 2 | | | | | | | | | 1 |
| BALD EAGLE | | | 1 | | 2 | | 2 | | | 1 | | 9 |
| | | | | | | 1 | | 2 | | | | 4 |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | |

| CHRISTMAS BIRD CENSUS - continued - | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----|------------|-----|-----------------|-----|----------------------------|----|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|-----|------------------------------|--|
| SPECIES | A | В | С | D | E | F | G | н | ĩ | J | K | TOTAL | |
| HAWK, Marsh | | | 1 | | C | Ministration (1993) (1993) | | ADDRESS OF A DECEMPTION | entract transformation transformation | etter second de la constant de la co | | TOTAL | |
| Pigeon | | | | | 2 | | | | | | | T | |
| GROUSE, Ruffed | | | | | 4 | | | | | | | 2 | |
| QUAIL, California | 6 | 56 | 23 | 118 | 110 | 10 | 12 | 79 | 10 | L | | 1 | |
| PHEASANT, Ring-necked | 3 | 1 | | 14 | 9 | 3 | 12 | 19 | 13 | 1 | | 428 | |
| COOT, American | 132 | 26 | | 40 | 9 | 40 | 1 | 10 | 44 | and and | 000 | 44 | |
| OYSTERCATCHER, Black | | 16 | l | 20 | | 40 | T. | 10 | *** | | 200 | 493 | |
| KILLDEER | 31 | 18 | 3 | 37 | 21 | 11 | 7 | 7 | 24 | 31 | 0 | 17 | |
| PLOVER, Black-bellied | | 33 | | 0. | 62 | 7.7 | 1 | 8 | 64 | JI | 6 | 196 | |
| SURFBIRD | | La se bene | 1. | | | | | | | | | 33 | |
| TURNSTONE, Black | 15 | 56 | | | | | | | | | | 1 | |
| SNIPE, Common | | | | 2 | | 1 | | | 4 | 7 | | 71 | |
| WHIMBREL | | 2 | | 2 | | ď | | | 4 | L | | 8 | |
| YELLOWLEGS, Greater | | 3 | | | | | | | | | | 2 | |
| SANDPIPER, Rock | | 16 | | | | | | | | | | 3 | |
| DUNLIN | 16 | 31 | | | | | | | F7 | | | 51 | |
| SANDERLING | | | | | | | | | 7 | | | 54 | |
| GULL, Glaucous-winged | 156 | 284 | 300 | 358 | 300 | 282 | 89 | 31 | 464 | 1074 | 100 | 2420 | |
| Herring | 2 | | | | 4 | 202 | 09 | 10 | 404 | 10/4 | 100 | 3438 | |
| Mew | 225 | 320 | 5 | 60 | | 5 | 2 | 10 | 45 | *± | 1 | 22 677 | |
| MURRE, Common | | 217 | | | | J | 4 | 10 | 40 | | | | |
| GUILLEMOT, Pigeon | 3 | 15 | | | | | | | 2 | | | 217 | |
| MURRELET, Marbled | | 3 | 1 | | | | | | 4 | | | 20 4 | |
| AUKLET, Rhinocerous | | 1 | | | | | | | | | | * | |
| OWL, Screech | | | | | 1 | | | | | | 1 | 1 | |
| KINGFISHER, Belted | 4 | 1 | 3 | | - | 3 | | | 1 | | 1 | 13 | |
| FLICKER, Yellow-shafted | | | | | | 2 | | | 1 | | * | 13 | |
| Red-Shafted | 9 | 6 | 19 | 10 | 35 | 6 | 5 | 3 | 12 | 3 | 4 | 112 | |
| WOODPECKER, Pileated | 2 | | 1 | | 1 | U | 1 | 3 | 14 | | Ŧ | 5 | |
| Lewis | | | | | 1 | | | | | | | 1 | |
| Hairy | | | | 1 | * | | 1 | | 1 | | | 3 | |
| Downy | | | 2 | | 4 | | * | | 1 | 2 | | 9 | |
| SKYLARK | | 4 | | | 35 | | | | 4 | 2 | | 45 | |
| JAY, Steller | | | | 2 | 00 | | | | 7 | 2 | | 3 | |
| RAVEN, Common | 13 | | 5 | | | 2 | 1 | | 8 | 3 | | 32 | |
| CROW, Northwestern | 25 | 76 | 5 | 30 | 180 | 54 | 71 | 68 | 146 | 10 | 3 | 668 | |
| CHICKADEE, Chbacked | 12 | | 32 | 7 | 36 | 2 | 26 | 00 | 29 | 16 | J | 160 | |
| BUSHTIT, Common | | | 70 | 1. St. 1. S. 1. | 10 | annes 🖬 | 14 | | 25 | 6 | | 125 | |
| NUTHATCH, Red-breasted | 3 | | 1 | | 10 | 2 | 3 | | 20 | U | | 125 | |
| CREEPER, Brown | | | 4 | | | 2 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 1 | | 11 | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | and the second second second | |

| CHRISTMAS BIRD | <u>CENSUS</u> - C | ontinued | - | | | | | | | | | |
|--|----------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|---------|------|-----------|--------------|----------|----------------------|-----------|------------------|-------|
| SPECIES | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | Н | I | J | K. | TOTAL |
| REN, Winter | 3 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 14 | 8 | 12 | 6 | 17 | 6 | 1 | 7: |
| Bewick | 3 | | 2 | 1 | 11 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3(|
| Long-billed Marsh | | | | | | | | | 2 | | | 0 |
| OBIN | 9 | 84 | 4000 | 35 | 832 | 24 | 21 | 188 | 285 | 7 | 50 | 553 |
| HRUSH, Varied | 8 | | | | | 12 | | | | | | 20 |
| Hermit | | | 1 | 2 | | | | | | | | - |
| LUEBIRD, Western | | | 55 | | | | | | | | | 5 |
| INGLET, Golden-crowned | 16 | 2 | 37 | | 44 | 44 | 37 | | 126 | 16 | 1 | 32 |
| Ruby-crowned | 4 | 1 | 2 | | 2 | | 4 | | 4 | | - | 1 |
| AXWING, Cedar | | 5 | 500 | | | | | | | | | 50 |
| TARLING | | 10 | 500 | 1 | 2 | | | | 8 | | | 519 |
| PARROW, House | | 22 | 56 | 110 | 30 | 20 | | 37 | • | | | 27 |
| EADOWLARK, Western | 2 | 15 | 1 | | 21 | 4 | 2 | 1 | | | 15 | 6 |
| LACKBIRD, Brewer | 5 | | | 113 | | - | 6 | - | 138 | | 40 | 250 |
| INCH, Purple | | | 1 | | 11 | 6 | | 4 | 4.00 | 15 | | 31 |
| House | 20 | 10 | 55 | 4 | 14 | U | 2 | 9 | 11 | 70 | | 12 |
| ISKIN, Pine | 54 | | 21 | | 3 | 225 | 50 | 5 | | | | 35 |
| ROSSBILL, Red | 19 | | 1 | | 6 | 17 | 19 | 10 | 4 | | | 7 |
| OWHEE, Rufous-sided | 2 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 14 | 7 | 7 | 5 | 8 | 8 | | 6 |
| PARROW, Savannah | | | 1 | | 7.2 | | 1 | 9 | 0 | 0 | | |
| UNCO, Oregon | 36 | 3 | 35 | 25 | 182 | 51 | 30 | 35 | 79 | 46 | 7 | 523 |
| PARROW, White-crowned | | | | 4 | 6 | | 20 | 30 | 19 | 20 | * | 1(|
| Golden-crowned | 2 | | 4 | 6 | 6 | 3 | 1 | 6 | | 7 | 1 | 30 |
| Fox | 2 | 1 | 1 | · · · · | 1 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 3 | | L | 50 |
| Song | 7 | 9 | 9 | 12 | 10 | 7 | 5 | 2 | 31 | 13 | 0 | 107 |
| TOTALS: | 3378 | 5477 | 5993 | 2905 | 2594 | 1215 | 1303 | 693 | 2404 | 1329 | <u>2</u> 1832 | 29123 |
| SPECIES | 64 | 57 | 58 | 32 | 37 | 50 | 46 | 36 | 63 | 31 | 33 | |
| Species seen during Au Goshawk, Golden Eagle, Virginia Rail, Glaucou | Peregrine | Falcon, | | | ×, | <u>A</u> | PROS ESQU | PECT LAK | | 'S LAGOO | n to | |
| Ancient Murrelet, Cass Short-eared Owl, Rufou | sins Auklei Is Hummingh | t, Mournin pird, Yel | ng Dove, low- | | | <u>_B</u> | OGDE | N POINT | vid Ster TO TEN M | ILE POIN | | |
| bellied Sapsucker, Hor Water Pipit, Northern bird American Goldfin | Shrike, Re | | | | | C | | | d Mrs. H NT TO MO | | | |
| bird, American Goldfin | | | | | | D | | | nd Mr. J ANAMA FL | · . · · · | lmer | |
| | | | | | | E | Mr. and | Mrs. A. | R. Davi | dson | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | |

GORDON HEAD AREA

A total of 106 species and 29,158 individuals.

70

- 72
- F Miss D. Webb, Mr. R, Barnes and Mr. F. Buffam THETIS PARK; PORTAGE INLET.
- <u>G</u> Mr. D. Welch, Mr. R. McKenzie-Grieve, Mr. F. King, Mr. W. Adams BEAVER LAKE AND ELK LAKE.
- <u>H</u> Mrs. E. G. Bousfield, Mrs. A. J. Gosling Mrs. L. Monckton ROYAL OAK AVENUE; CORDOVA BAY AREA
- I Mr. Alan Poynter ISLAND VIEW BEACH; LANGFORD LAKE; GOLDSTREAM
- J Miss L. Roberts, Miss M. C. Melburn OLDFIELD ROAD; WEST SAANICH ROAD AREA
- <u>K</u> Mr. J. Barnett, Miss J. Hannay BEACON HILL PARK; GORGE

<u>Juniors participating</u>:- Gail Moyer, Janice Cudmore, Anne Proctor, Gerry Rushton, Gerry Walker, Richard Glendenning.

THE CHRISTMAS BIRD CENSUS

by Alan Poynter

I am sure we all know by now that our Christmas Count was made under the worst conditions we have had for many years; yet the final results prove that the participating members did an excellent job by getting what I consider a very good cross section of the bird population of this area, which is the whole point of the census.

The uncommon species seen were the white-fronted goose, European widgeon, whimbrel (Hudsonian curlew) marsh hawk, rhinoceros auklet, yellow-shafted flicker, savannah sparrow and hermit thrush. There was also a notable drop in the numbers of the smaller birds, while the ring-necked duck and red crossbill were seen in much larger numbers than in previous years.

We all wonder what are the reasons for these changes. To discover the causes is part of the purpose of the Christmas count, of which we fill in a little corner. It is possible, with a little research through the Audubon Field Notes, to follow these fluctuations across the North American continent and perhaps in time the reasons for the population changes will become evident. Many hours were spent with maps and charts and many pages of notes were made in order to prepare for this count, which now has to be taken within a $7\frac{1}{2}$ mile radius. It was my intention that we should cover the area with all the birdwatchers we have, in order to get a true picture of our wintering birds. As a result it is possible that the Victoria count of 106 species, and the Vancouver count of the same number, are the highest taken in Canada to date.

We now have a good picture of our wintering birds, which should be kept up each year from now on. How to do this is a different matter. We will always need observers and good weather. We also need more experience in recognizing certain birds. There are still several groups of confusing birds of which two stand out clearly, the gulls and the scaups which are difficult to separate. We need to extend our experience to other groups, too. To the watcher of song birds I would recommend the shore and water birds, which are not quite as hard as imagined. They all have their own characteristic markings and distinguishing features, and their study will prove to be most fascinating, as well as giving scope to the camera minded.

The count is over and we all enjoyed it; I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their full co-operation.

BIRD ACTIVITY AT THE THREE LAGOONS

Even though the weather let us down miserably, the bird life for the Christmas bird count did not. We had rushed the purchase of a telescope with 15 and 40 power lenses so we would have it for this "big" day only to have it lay dejectedly in the back seat of the car.

Our big thrill of the day was the sighting of two river otters frolicing and sliding on the frozen Little Lagoon. I believe this experience was also shared by another bird count party at Beaver Lake.

Throughout the day we kept our eyes skyward in the hopes of sighting the golden eagle which we had seen on both previous days. But not even a bald eagle was sighted.

The get-together at Alan Poynter's home was for us a refreshing climax to the day. _____ Joanna Morgan.

COUNTING BIRDS THE HARD WAY

by Tommy Briggs

Bird 'D' day dawned dull, dirty, damp, dismal and downright dreary. By rendezvous time with Mr. John Palmer it was worse. A soft, slushy snowfall made upward visibility nearly zero. This was bad 'cause we had set our hearts on a few choice species such as a peregrine and a few pigeon hawks.

Proceeded to Panama Flats on Interurban. Got through it somehow but did not feel too pleased at our poor count of pintails, shovellers, baldpates, green-winged teal and mallards. Got some pleasure out of a single snipe tho'. Went around Carey Road side, but when we got there the flats were bare. Picked up 108 Brewer blackbirds, plus a few house sparrows on the road to help the count some. Managed to find some gulls, killdeer, flickers, chickadees and one lone starling through the sleety downpour, in a meadow close by.

Had lunch and proceeded to Quick's pond to add a few more ducks, mostly baldpates, to the list. Added four buffleheads, plus some coots to the species count. Land birds seemed to be non-existent. Did not get a single bird down Douglas Street to Swan Lake. Got over 500 baldpates and one heron near the creek, so thought we were back in business.

The weather had cleared considerably, with an equivalent boost in spirits. Ice on Swan L. helped the count in that all the birds were concentrated out in the centre. Got green-winged teal, mallards, shovellers, baldpates, gulls and some coots, but there was not a single grebe, merganser, cormorant or wood duck. We really wanted a wood duck too. Combed the lanes nearby to pick up a few quail and pheasant. Went then to a good Bewick wren and kinglet spot where two sharp-shinned hawks, four house finches and two flickers was the total take.

Next stop was another lane near the end of our run, which is always good for many golden-crowned sparrows, song sparrows and juncos. Total: eleven robins, and two hermit thrushes. Must say the hermits were much appreciated. A big help to the species count, if not to the total count. Heard a hairy woodpecker so we waited. Sure enough out it flew. A loner but a species. Things were looking up. Got four white-crowned sparrows right away, which is always a good species to get in winter, which just about closed the day as the sun went down. We weren't too pleased with our effort, but we learned a lot. Can hardly wait for next year. Should get 115 species at least.

AND FIVE SAW -

by G.M. Bell

Bluebirds and linnets near Telegraph Bay Cove, up the hill-side inland. It was the Christmas Bird Count day and this was our highlight....Rare? No. It was not that we saw them; it was the way we saw them -

They were there round ten in the morning, when the snow was heavy, coming down straight and in a veritable thick veil. The arbutus trees left growing in grace and characteristic symmetry of their kind stood out at the side of the black roadway and the green of the lawns which came to their base. The dark conifers up the face of the slope beyond on the rocky hillside were lightly fringed in white.

This was the setting for bluebirds, with linnets mixed in amongst them, flying into the thickly leafed arbutus, hovering against the bark before alighting on an acceptable twig or branch. This was where the blue stood out against white, green, arbutus reds and linnet reds. A number of soberly dressed Oregon juncos were on the grass below this scene.

The bluebirds and linnets flew to the aerial on the nearest house, hovered at the antennae and alighted to remain a few moments before returning to the arbutus tree only a few feet away from where we stood in the roadway. The view of them could hardly have been better.

No, it was not any rarity of species - they are all continually seen - but it was the sheer beauty of the setting and, perhaps, the traditional symbol represented by the bluebird - Happiness.

The omen for the day was good - happiness, peace on earth, good-will to men and animals. Our hearts felt something special; we five, three adults and two junior members of the Victoria Natural History Society, on the hill-side in the snow storm, watching bluebirds and linnets in the arbutus tree with juncos on the ground.

* * * * * * *

THE TALE OF THE OTTERS

by Freeman King

During the annual bird count, the group which went to the Beaver-Elk Lake area had a real surprise and a sight that is seldom seen.

Beaver Lake was frozen over with enough ice to carry the weight of an otter. The five member team were on the west side of the lake when they saw out on the ice close to the island, about 200 yards from shore, four otters playing. They were coming up from a hole in the ice, then scampering along, sliding and rolling over in the snow. Two were at one hole and the other two at a hole about 50 yards distance.

Watching the performance was a blue heron standing on the ice. After watching for a while the heron apparently decided to go and have a "look-see" closer, so he stalked along and then almost went into a run. The otters would dive in the water, then the heron would turn his head as much as to say "Well, where the heck did they go", then the otters would pop up again, and the two at the other hole would do the same. The poor old heron did not know just what to do or what was happening. He would stalk over to one hole to have a look, when the other two would pop up again. It was a real game for the otters and a puzzler for the heron.

After watching for a while we moved on and left the wild creatures to their fun and play.

One thing is sure, the creatures of the wild do have fun and play, and who knows, perhaps they can see the humorous side of life.

Freeman King.

THE CHRISTMAS COUNT ON THE WATER FRONT by David Stirling

Armed with notebooks, binoculars, a telescope, and plenty of enthusiasm, we began counting the rich waterbird population of Victoria's shores just as dawn was breaking on January 2. With the 25 X telescope we hoped to bag a nice quota of the Alcidae that normally stay out beyond the rafts of ducks, scoters and grebes. Unfortunately the low overcast and continuous snow prevented us from making any long range observations. The only place where we saw Alcids was at Clover Point. Here a few pigeon guillemots and marbled murrelets, riding at anchor in the gloom, were just identifiable. Then a good flight of murres, flying in line for easy counting, streamed passed. In fifteen minutes we tallied two hundred seventeen birds. This flurry of sea bird activity ended with a rhinoceros auklet flying directly towards the point; veering off only when collision with the cliff face seemed imminent.

Other birds worth mentioning were: three greater yellow-legs at Clover Point, a pair of whimbrels, thirtyone black-bellied plovers at Bowker Avenue, and a good sprinkling of Brandt's cormorants at various places along the shoreline.

YOU MUST HAVE LUCK by A.R. Davidson

The weather on the Saturday during which the Christmas bird count was taken was anything but promising, the sky being heavily overcast, resulting later in a heavy fall of soft snow.

Our district was Gordon Head, and we searched the highways and the byways, the fields and the woods, but the birds stayed in the shelter of the thickest bushes and remained silent. By noon we had found only a handful of birds, and decided to park the Morris and have lunch in a spot which is normally a favourite haunt of the small birds, and where we had just seen a few robins flying about. This was a road called Hollydene, leading from Marine Drive down towards the sea.

Here indeed were all the birds. Our lunch forgotten, we gazed on the sight of hundreds of robins, mixed with flocks of cedar waxwings, purple finch, flickers, juncos and others. They were all very excited, flying from tree to tree, calling, scolding, and almost shouting in their fever of motion. Feed there was in abundance, the arbutus trees hanging with their ripe orange coloured berries. So rapidly were all these birds whirling around that a count was impossible, and we had to be content with a conservative estimate of 2500 robins and 500 waxwings. Never before had we seen so many waxwings together. Generally

they travel in flocks of from 25 to 50, and often are not seen at all during the winter days.

Two days later this flock was still in the same district, but added to it were approximately 500 starlings, all of them feasting on the arbutus berries.

BELIEVE IT OR NOT

The Washington Biological Survey, which issues metal bands for marking birds to study their migratory habits, recently ordered new bands with different wording. They now read:

> 'Notify Fish & Wildlife Services, Washington, D. C.'

Formerly the band said simply 'Wash. Biol. Surv.'. Unofficial explanation of the change: An irate taxpayer's letter complained, "Sirs, I shot one of your pet crows and followed instructions. I washed it, boiled it, and served it. It was terrible. Stop fooling the people."

MR. FREEMAN KING, PRESIDENT.

At the January general meeting the resignation of Mr. Ralph Fryer was reluctantly accepted. Mr. Fryer explained by letter that on account of evening work he was no longer able to attend meetings and in the best interest of the Society he wished to relinquish his post. To complete the term of office our Vice-President, Mr. Freeman King, was appointed President, and Mr. David Stirling was elected as Vice-president.

WHITE-THROATED SPARROWS

Recently a grain barge was towed to Victoria from the Great Lakes, and in the capacious interior two small birds were noticed by the crew. A friend of Ralph Fryer, knowing he was interested in birds, gave him a description of them, - a small grey sparrow with black and white on the head and a white throat - very probably a white-throated sparrow. Mr. Fryer went down to Yarrows and boarded the barge, but apparently the birds had flown.

Mr. George Hardy reported one of these birds here in 1946, and one was collected in 1913, so normally they are accidental this far west. ---A.R.D.

JUNIOR JOTTINGS by Freeman King

Activities for the month, even with the holidays, have been many and interesting.

The films shown by Mr. John Chapman were excellent. One was a Canadian film and the other a Russian. Both showed the life of the honey bee. The Russian film showed the bees in a hive they had made in a hollow stump, and it was interesting to note the way in which they had built their comb and how the bees repaired it when it had become broken.

Mr. Chapman gave all of those attending a feed on honey in the comb.

We made a trip into the Beaver Lake area through the Girl Guide camp at Kingswood. We did not see the otters we had hoped to find, though a lost boat was spotted in the bushes, of which the Saanich police were notified.

An expedition to Mount Douglas from the east side through the bush proved very interesting, as we noted an abundance of yew trees growing there, as well as a number of holly seedlings, The view from the summit was obscured by fog. The licorice fern and the mosses on this eastern slope were wonderful. The bird chery leaves were almost out, and some magnificent arbutus trees were seen.

The junior leaders took part in the bird count, and all reported that they thoroughly enjoyed the outing.

A meeting of the junior executive was held at the home of Mrs. E. Osborne to make final plans for our party to be held on the 23rd of January.

Through the kindness of Mr. G. Clendenning the car pool for the year has been set up, and our transportation is assured until the end of December. This is a real asset as without this it would be difficult to operate. We now have an average attendance each week of 35 to 40, and new members are asking to join.

All expeditions and trips are planned for the next month, and the all day outings for the seniors plotted.

NOTICE OF MEETINGS

| Tuesday: February 9th: | <u>GENERAL MEETING</u> - at the Douglas Building Cafeteria at 8 p.m. |
|---------------------------|--|
| | <u>Guest Speaker</u> : Mr. Willard Ireland, Provin- cial Librarian and Archivist. <u>Subject</u> : |
| | "Early Botanists in the Pacific North-west." |
| Friday and Saturday, | AUDUBON SCREEN TOUR: At the Oak Bay Junior High School Auditorium at 8 p.m., both |
| February 12 | nights. Speaker: Mr. John Taft. |
| and 13th - | <u>Subject</u> : "The Shandon Hills; a story of Central California." |
| | |
| Tuesday, | GEOLOGY GROUP: At the Douglas Building |
| February | Cafeteria at 8 p.m. |
| 16th | Speaker: Dr. Victor Dolmage |
| | <u>Subject</u> : "Demolition of Ripple Rock, illus- trated with original demolition film; followed |
| | by a lecture entitled 'Some Geological Prin- ciples and their Application'." |
| Saturday | GEOLOGY FIELD TRIP: Meet at Monterey Cafe at |
| February | 1:30 p.m. for a trip to John Dean Park. |
| 20th | Leader: Mr. A. H. Marrion. |
| Tuesday, | BOTANY GROUP: Professor C. W. Lowe will give |
| February | a talk on "Succulent Plants", at the Provin- |
| 23rd | cial Museum at 8 p.m. |
| Saturday, | BIRD FIELD TRIP: Meet at the Monterey Cafe |
| February | at 9:30 a.m. or Mt.Douglas Restaurant parking |
| 27 th | lot at 10 a.m. Bring lunch. Leader: Alan Poynter. |
| | ACAUCA . FILGH FUYHEEL . |

The Juniors will meet each Saturday at the Monterey Cafe at Hillside and Douglas Streets, 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.

<u>NOTE</u>: Owing to the 2-hour parking limit now enforced on the south side of Cadboro Bay Road it is suggested that Screen Tour patrons take advantage of parking facilities behind the school.

Victoria Natural History Society

OFFICERS, 1959–60

Honorary Presidents:

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| GEO. A. HARDY | - | - | 1949-50 | P. M. MONCKTON 1957-58 | 3 |
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| J. A. CUNNINGHAM | - | - | 1952-54 | | |
| | | | | | |

President:

RALPH FRYER 244 Richmond Road Telephone EV 3-8795

Vice-President:

FREEMAN KING 541 McKenzie Avenue Telephone GR 9-2966

Editors:

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G. CLIFFORD CARL Telephone EV 3-8524

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Programme: MRS. E. G. BOUSFIELD Telephone EV 3-3298

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MISS EMILY SARTAIN (Winter) Telephone EV 5-8654

> *Geology:* ALBERT O. HAYES Telephone GR 7-2523

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Conservation: MRS. J. R. PARRIS Telephone EV 3-0572

Juniors: FREEMAN KING Telephone GR 9-2966

Annual dues, including subscription: Single, \$2; Family, \$3; Junior, \$1; Life Membership, \$20.