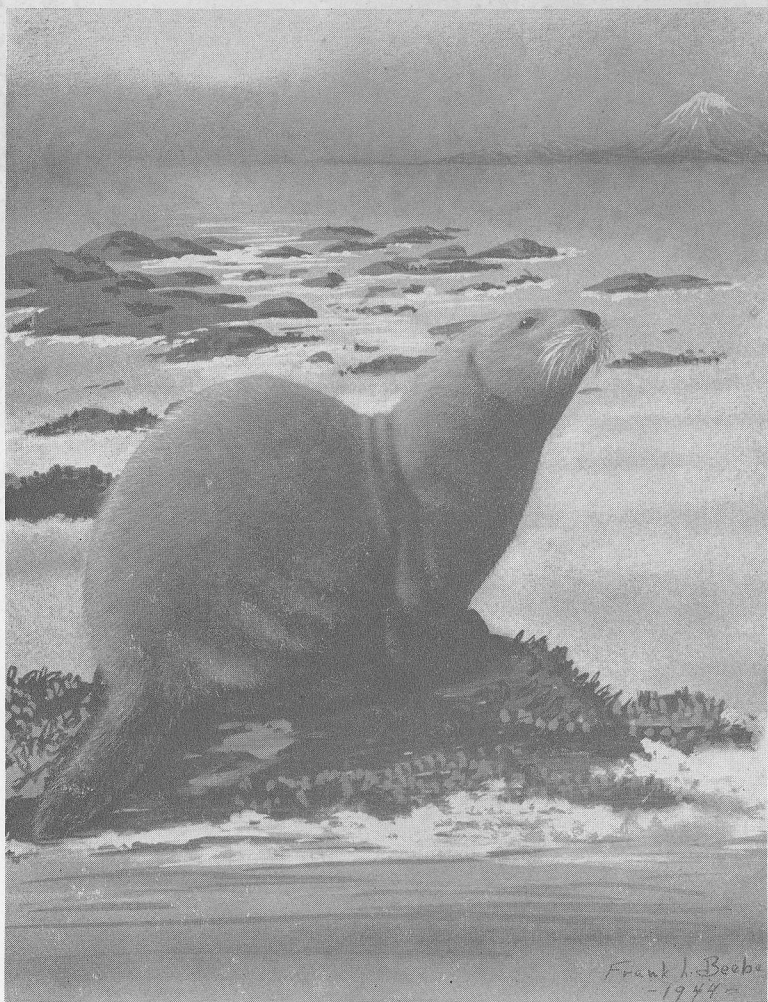


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Frank J. Beabe
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Sea Otter

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OUR COVER

It was the valuable trade in sea otter skins which caused the quarrel between Britain and Spain in the 18th century, and war was only averted by Spain giving up its claim to the Pacific North-West. There is no doubt that the trade in otter pelts attracted hundreds of adventurers and traders to this coast, and this eventually led to the founding of the colony.

But between the activities of Russia and Britain the sea otter was exterminated in British Columbia waters, and will probably never return in numbers. The only otter colonies now remaining are along the coast of Southern California and around the Aleutian Islands. Since 1911 they have been protected by international law.

The sea otter is a large animal, weighing between fifty and eighty pounds and living almost entirely in the sea. Its food consists largely of sea urchins and molluscs.

Any otter seen in this district will undoubtedly be the river otter, a somewhat smaller animal. It is often seen in Portage Inlet, Esquimalt Lagoon and similar habitats.

A.R.D.

BON VOYAGE

by J. M. Barnett

As we stood on Dallas Road looking south the black mantle of night shrouded the Strait and mountains and all we could see were the blinking beacons off in the distance to our right and in front the riding lights of a couple of fishing boats silently drifting along.

In the east was a barely perceptible pin-point of light which, when it drew closer separated into a cluster. As it

approached Clover Point we turned our binoculars on it and were dazzled with the brilliance that magnification gave it.

Down low were myraids of individual lights laid out in precise rows shining through the port-holes of cabins while above them were parallel bars of light along the decks. Above all two single lights from the mastheads hung like stars in the inky darkness.

This was the giant Orient liner 'Iberia' which had over one thousand passengers aboard among whom were two of our members, Barry and Joanna Morgan, bound for New Zealand where they are going to make a new home.

Surely this beautiful vessel never presented a prettier picture.

Shiveringly we hopped into the car when the vessel had past and drove west with it to Finlayson Point and then to Holland Point where it stopped to drop the Pilot into a waiting boat.

Once again we looked at it through our binoculars and thought we could make out some small black dots on the decks which we figured were passengers looking at Victoria's waterfront.

In a matter of minutes the 'Iberia' was again on her way but now she headed out into the Strait of Juan de Fuca towards the tip of Vancouver Island and soon was once again only a point of light which disappeared as she rounded Race Rock.

In a day or two Barry and Joanna will be full of excitement as they identify new pelagic birds or try to photograph an albatross sailing alongside.

With a last 'Bon Voyage' we headed for the comfort of home and wondered if Barry and Joanna were down in their cabin entering up the last of the days notes in the Diary the members presented to them at the last Club Meeting.

Probably it would end something like this:

Sept. 16th: "Had our last look at Victoria
9:10 p.m. P.S.T."

NEW RECORDS OF CHAMISSO'S ORCHID

(Habenaria chorisiana Cham.)

for British Columbia

by Adam F. Szczawinski

British Columbia is a particularly favourable hunting ground for the naturalist. The great variety of all possible habitats to be found between the coast and the interior offers a real paradise for plant collectors. One is always able to add new records, making the flora of British Columbia more complete and better known.

It is the purpose of this paper to call attention to a few interesting new British Columbia localities for Chamisso's Orchid (Habenaria chorisiana Cham.) which were recently added to the distribution of this rare and interesting rein-orchid.

Habenaria chorisiana Cham. Linnaea 3:31.1828

Platanthera chorisiana (Cham.) Reichenb.

Peristylis chorisianus Lindl.

Pseudodiphryllum chorisianum (Cham.) Nevski.

Limnorchis chorisiana (Cham.) J. P. Anders.

Type locality: Unalaska.

Geographical distribution: British Columbia (Vancouver Island, Q. C. I., Prince Rupert area), Alaska (Juneau, fide Anderson) and the Aleutian Islands (Adak, Atka, Attu and Unalaska), Asia (from Saghalin and southern Kamtchatka to Honshu).

Habitat: For this species might be: swamps near the sea, sphagnum bogs, moist mossy banks, boggy slopes in coniferous woods and boggy-rocky slopes in open coniferous woods, at elevations up to 1800 feet. Generally wet habitat associated with sphagnum.

Chamisso's orchid is probably the smallest rein-orchid in North America. D. S. Correll (1950) an authority on orchids in his book "Native Orchids of North America" says "This species and Behring Island Habenaria (Habenaria behringiana (Rydb.) Ames are the rarest orchids in the genus Habenaria within our range, and they are among the rarest plants in North America".

The plant seldom exceeds 5 inches in height. The pair of sub-basal, obtuse leaves and few-flowered inflorescence, arranged in a loose raceme, are very characteristic of this species and make its identification easy. It blooms from

July to August depending on the season, geographical location, and elevation.

Chamisso's orchid was first collected in the Province by John Macoun at Ucluelet (west coast of Vancouver Island) and not found again for many years.

Recently four new records from British Columbia were added for this extremely rare plant. Three records come from the Q. C. I. and one from the Coast in the vicinity of Prince Rupert.

1. Bigsby Inlet, east coast of Moresby Island, (Q. C. I.)
J.A. Calder, D.B.O. Savile and R.L. Taylor, July 5, 1957, #22120 (DAO). Occasional and scattered on boggy-rocky slopes in open coniferous woods up to 700'.
2. Newton Point, Skidegate Channel, Graham Island (Q.C.I.)
J.A. Calder, D.B.O. Savile and R.L. Taylor, July 25, 1957, #22965 (DAO). Widely scattered on open boggy slopes in coniferous woods to summit.
3. Mountain near logging camp on east side of Shields Bay, Rennell Sound, Graham Island (Q.C.I.). J. A. Calder, D.B.O. Savile and R.L. Taylor. Aug. 8, 1957. #23299 (DAO). Moist, mossy banks at about 1800' in coniferous woods; scattered.
4. Sphagnum peat bog, beside the road between Terrace and Prince Rupert about 4 miles south of Prince Rupert. A. F. Szczawinski. Aug. 14, 1960. #35504 (PM). Very rare only 3 specimens seen.

These new records seem worthy of mention as until recently there were very few serviceable collections of this species in the Herbaria of North America.

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A PAGE ON BIRDS

The gentleman who has had the authority to discard Victoria's slogan "Follow the birds to Victoria" apparently is no ornithologist, or he would have known that this is veritably a haven for birds, and that many people from the east do indeed follow the birds to Victoria. Here we have birds of many kinds that are now very rare in the longer 'civilized' areas of the Atlantic seaboard.

It is possibly not generally known that 124 species of birds were identified during Christmas week here last year - a record for Canada. Of these, less than half were residents, the balance being those which nest elsewhere, but spend the winter months with us.

At the present time many species of sea birds have returned from the Arctic and elsewhere to our local waters. Already large flocks of widgeon, mallard, scoters, shovelers, scaup, mergansers, grebe, bufflehead, old squaws, harlequin and others can be seen in most places along our coast.

There is no doubt in most people's minds that birds form a very attractive feature of any landscape. One cannot go far in any direction in Victoria without finding a large variety.

Just to name a few, in the trees are the golden and ruby-crowned kinglets, tree creepers, nuthatches, chickadees, bushtits and three species of woodpeckers. In the fields and shrubs are the towhees, golden and white-crowned sparrows, fox and savannah sparrows, and the occasional horned lark and Alaska longspur.

A visitor to the foot of Bowker Avenue, or to Clover and Cattle Points will find black turnstones, oyster catchers, surf birds, dunlins, black-bellied plovers and killdeers. In the winter months too, come other varieties of gulls, the short-billed and herring gull, while the smallest of them all, the Bonaparte gull, together with the terns, which have been very numerous during the fall, are going further south.

This autumn we have been favoured with an influx of varied thrush, Steller jays and large numbers of juncos. Further in the country, in the fields and hedges of Saanich, are now present large flocks of Brewer and red-winged blackbirds, as many as two thousand having recently been seen together.

The robins, of course, are familiar with everyone, and

in most of the fields from Victoria to the Patricia Bay airport, can be found the skylark, which has extended its territory and increased considerably in numbers of late years. With the skylark can often be seen the local meadowlark and numbers of migrating pipits.

It is possible therefore, that, taking the year round more kinds of birds can be seen in the Victoria area than anywhere in Canada.

A.R.D.

A CHUCKIE CHAT

by George A. Hardy,
(cont'd from October number)

Their larvae feed on roots of various kinds, sometimes including our potatoes and other garden crops. In this stage they have a hard, smooth shiny cuticle, and are appropriately called wire-worms, from a slight resemblance to bits of that useful article. The click-beetle has solved the problem of a quick getaway, if it happens to find itself lying on its back from some cause or other, for by suddenly straightening its back a little peg on the underside is released with a jerk, sending the beetle smartly into the air, when it has a chance of landing right side up, and then scurrying out of sight among the herbage.

Rove Beetles (Staphylinidae) of different kinds like to lodge here from time to time during their travels in search of food, which consists of any creature they are able to overpower. They are long narrow rather flat beetles, characterised by very short wing-cases, which, however, conceal a pair of efficient gauzy wings. These are folded up and packed under the small covers in a very ingenious manner, after the fashion of a parachute. While many of the rove beetles are small, one or two are quite large and if picked up they can give a smart nip with their jaws to the offending fingers. A big black fellow met with in Britain has the unenviable appellation of the Devil's Coachhorse, from the fearsome attitude it assumes when threatened. A similar one around Victoria is nearly as large, but is of a greyish colour, and like the first mentioned curls up the hind end as if about to sting the offender, and at the same time raises the head with wide open jaws.

Thunder Beetles are tiny rove beetles that are occasionally abundant in close warm weather that precedes a thunder storm.

Darkling Beetles (Tenebrionidae) of one species or

another are likely to be uncovered. A common form is a fairly robust black beetle and rather deliberate in its movements, walking about with slow measured tread. It has an odd habit, when alarmed, of standing on its head, possibly on the principal that what the eye does not see the heart cannot grieve over. If protection from enemies is the object it is not always successful, judging from the dismembered remains occasionally found under the stones.

Two-winged Flies (Diptera) are occasionally found under stones in the larval stage; among these are:-

The Leather-jacket. This is one of the early phases of the "Daddy-longlegs" or Crane-fly, an earth-coloured, cylindrical grub with a tough skin, hence the popular name. The skin is semi-transparent and through it can be seen the air tubes which show as silvery lines deep within the tissue. It feeds on grass roots, etc.

Blossom-fly or March-fly (Bibio sp.) So-called because of the time of its appearance about our early flowering fruit trees, often in considerable numbers, where they perform the useful purpose of helping to set the fruit. The larvae of this fly may be found in piled up clusters early in the spring under a convenient chuckie. They are earth coloured and somewhat resemble the caterpillar of a moth, for the head is large and prominent for a dipterous larva. They feed on decayed vegetable matter and are therefore no menace to the fruit grower.

Hover-fly (Microdon sq.). If the galleries of an ant colony are closely examined the grub of another member of the two-winged fly group may be seen. It has no resemblance to a preconceived dipterous form of grub, but is almost circular in shape and much flattened and of a nondescript dun colour. At one time it was described as a species of shell. I have been unable to ascertain exactly what it feeds upon.

Wasps frequently make their home under a rock with a generous cavity beneath it. A common one in our district is the thread-waisted wasp, which constructs small clusters of open paper cells without any covering. The grubs are fed on flies, caterpillars and the like. Sometimes the dreaded Yellow jacket will adopt a cavity beneath a stone. The thing to do in this case is to beat a hurried retreat, for this wasp is the most dangerous of all the native fauna, chiefly because it is so common everywhere, the sting of which can be very painful and occasionally fatal.

Mud-daubing Wasp. We now and again refer to "Mud-slingers" among us humans in a figurative sense, but this wasp is almost literally so, for after building a number of mud cells on the upper surface of a stone and stocking it with caterpillars or spiders, it covers the whole with a coating of mud, blending it on to the rock in such a way that it can hardly be distinguished from it. It looks in fact as if a wad of mud had been slung with some force so as to make it stick.

Spiders of various sorts abound under the chuckies, finding here ideal temporary lodgings in the course of their wanderings.

Wolf-spiders ever on the move, without web or settled home, find here a handy shelter, refuge and often a larder. They carry their egg bundles attached by the spinnerets to the end of the body; later when the eggs hatch the young spiders cling to the body of the mother, often in such numbers as to conceal her shape.

An examination of the underside of the stones will be sure to reveal little silvery discs adhering closely to the surface. These are the egg cases of a small spider. The eggs are contained between the two membranes that make up the disc where they are safe from the disturbers of small life.

The Black Widow spider is frequently found under a stone with plenty of space beneath it to accommodate its irregular entanglement of coarse threads, where it rests, usually upside down, awaiting some insect to trip over the wires. Only the female is met with here - a fairly large shiny, black spider often with a red hour-glass mark beneath and as often without it. Despite the poisonous nature of its venom it never attacks a human unless positively irritated, as under a coat sleeve or similar situation.

Alligator Lizard is one of the vertebrates to be found under chuckies on dry slopes in sunny places. In this part of the country it is known to be one of the hosts of a tick Ixodes californicus, which finally attaches itself to a deer, dog, or even a human.

Snakes like a good warm stony place as hideouts. In our area they are all of the harmless garter snake variety, but chuckie turners should keep an eye open for the Sharp-tailed snake which has been reported from Vancouver Island, but not verified so far as I am aware.

Thus those of us possessed of a cast-iron back with a good spring-hinge in it have a practically unlimited field of inquiry in the search for chuckie dwellers.

YPRES TO BE A BIRD SANCTUARY

"One of the most famous battlefields of the First World War shortly will become a bird sanctuary. Here, the small Flanders town of Ypres where more than half a million men on both sides were killed or wounded, has wiped out the physical reminder of its bitter memories.

In the last three years, the citizens of Ypres have been building a bird sanctuary over the shattered region. It consists of 12 parks, with small woods and lakes, gardens and meadows, where birds of all kinds will nest.

An Ypres tourist official stated that they had often thought the ground would always be useless. In fact, it was doubted if anyone would ever re-visit the place in our time. As to the inhabitants, you can imagine how they felt, with the grim reminder of those terrible battles always before them. But local citizens decided to spur on the town authorities to go one better than simply clearing up rubble, but to do something positive, and that is why we have laid out our bird sanctuary, the official explained."

The above was taken from an item in The Legionary sent in by Mr. Freeman King. With it he appended a note, which read: "I am pleased with this. It brings back both pleasant and very bitter memories for me, being in the scrap there in 1915. It was a beautiful place before the fracas, and I hear it is now just wonderful."

A.R.D.

JUNIOR JOTTINGS

by Freeman King

On Sunday, September 25th, Expedition Seaweed got under way at the Monterey Cafe parking lot at 5 a.m. Fifteen members of the junior branch, with Dr. John Chapman, Alice Grey and 'Yell' Walker, drivers of the cars, left for Port Renfrew via the coast road.

After a brief pause to stretch ourselves at Lost Creek, we moved into the village and parked. After some enquiries as to where the trail led into the bush for the marine garden at Adze Head, we started off. Some sort of a road had been dug out by a 'cat' for about half a mile, then off into the green by way of an old plank road that was built during the early part of the last war by the R.C.A.F. as a road to a look-out point.

Along the old road we spotted some belated bunchberry in bloom and some in fruit. This plank road runs above the ground from two to five or six feet high, but in places it just does not exist and one could step off into fresh air and greenery if not careful. In places trees have fallen across, and then it is a case of up and over or duck 'low bridge'. In many places the salal is several feet above your head, and so thick you can hardly see through it. Mingled with it is a dense thicket of salmon-berry and false azalea. This combination is almost impassible; you would need a machete to hack your way through.

As you go along, you can hear under your feet the running water of numerous streams and yet you cannot see them. You can spot beds of sphagnum moss growing in abundance in the marshy places. As you look into the deep forest of spruce and hemlock you can see old giants of trees that have been broken by age, wind or perhaps heavy snowfalls. The 'spanish mosses' hang down from the trees in large clusters, while the bright green of the fir moss climbs to the top of the scattered maples that stand out in the dense growth.

After a good three mile hike you come to a break-off down to the beach, where you can hear the breakers tumbling on the rocks, then suddenly you are out in the bright sunshine and before you is the open sea. You are at Snuggery Cove - a really fabulous marine garden - where there are so many things to see and wonder at.

Though the sea was calm, the breakers rolled in, some as high as ten feet where they broke against the reef. On the reef itself grow the palm seaweed, the staghorn and the sac seaweed. The way the palm seaweed bends under the waves to spring back and flutter in the wind like a miniature palm grove is something well worth going a long way to see.

On the sandstone foreshore, where you can see some of the marvellous potholes eroded by the sea, you can find hundreds of the wonderful and colourful sea creatures that have their home there. The high sandstone cliffs on the east side of the cove and the volcanic rock with the outlines of feldspar make a sharp contrast to the setting.

After cooking our lunches we made the trek back to Renfrew. This time the way did not seem so long. We now pushed off to the San Juan river to see if the toads had completed their annual migration - to where? Most had gone, but several hundreds were still amongst

the boulders in the river bed.

Steller jays abounded, and came to within three feet from us to pick up pieces of bread which we fed them. So on to Shawnigan Lake through some beautiful country of living forest and then again out into the open where logging had cleared the ground, though in a number of places the new forest planted by the logging operators was showing a remarkable growth, which speaks well for the future.

At the suspension bridge close to the old Bear Creek camp we made a brief and interesting stop. In the deep forest along the Koksilah River we found some very interesting fungi which were collected by Ernie Osbourn to be identified and photographed. And at last we returned to the starting point about 7 p.m., after a full and wonderful day's expedition.

The Hon. Earle Westwood replies to a questioner:-

Question: Teaching children marksmanship may be a safety measure, but isn't it more desirable to plant the idea in their minds that there is more skill, courage and sportsmanship in bringing them back alive by way of camera shots, by wild life photography?

Answer: I agree, and you will be interested to know that we are starting an educational programme on wildlife - lectures, and the showing of coloured nature films. This may tend to have the influence you suggest.

I would not, though I have studied the science of living things all my life, urge the extinction of a single organism from the countryside around me.

From 'A protest against spraying'
by Alfred G. Etter.

NOTICE OF MEETINGS

1960
Saturday BIRD FIELD TRIP: Meet at Monterey Cafe at
 9:30 a.m., or at Esquimalt Lagoon at 10 a.m.
 Nov.5th: Bring lunch. Leaders: T.R.Briggs GR 7-1945
 and D. Stirling GR 9-4646.

Tuesday
 Nov.8th: GENERAL MEETING: At the Douglas Bldg.
 Cafeteria on Elliot Street, next to the
 Museum, at 8 p.m.
 Guest speaker: Dr. John A. Chapman.
 Title of Talk: "On the size of insects".

Saturday
 Nov.12th: AUDUBON SCREEN TOUR
 At the Oak Bay Junior High School Auditorium
 and at 8 p.m. on both nights.
 Monday: Speaker: William Anderson
 Nov.14th: Subject: Design for Survival.

Tuesday: BOTANY MEETING in the museum at 8 p.m.
 Nov.15th: Speaker: Dr. W. G. Ziller,
 Subject: Forest Fungi; illustrated with
 coloured slides.

The Victoria Aquarium Society will show a film entitled
 "The Silent World", an outstanding film of underwater
 photography, on Nov.10th in the Newstead Hall, 734 Fort
 Street, at 7:30 p.m. Adults 50¢ Children 25¢

JUNIORS: 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.

Note: The course for the leader groups is being held at
 the Museum on Mondays at 7:30 p.m.

Anyone who would like to be guided through the Thomas
 Francis Park should get in touch with Mr. King, who will
 be very pleased to arrange an outing on Sundays.

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