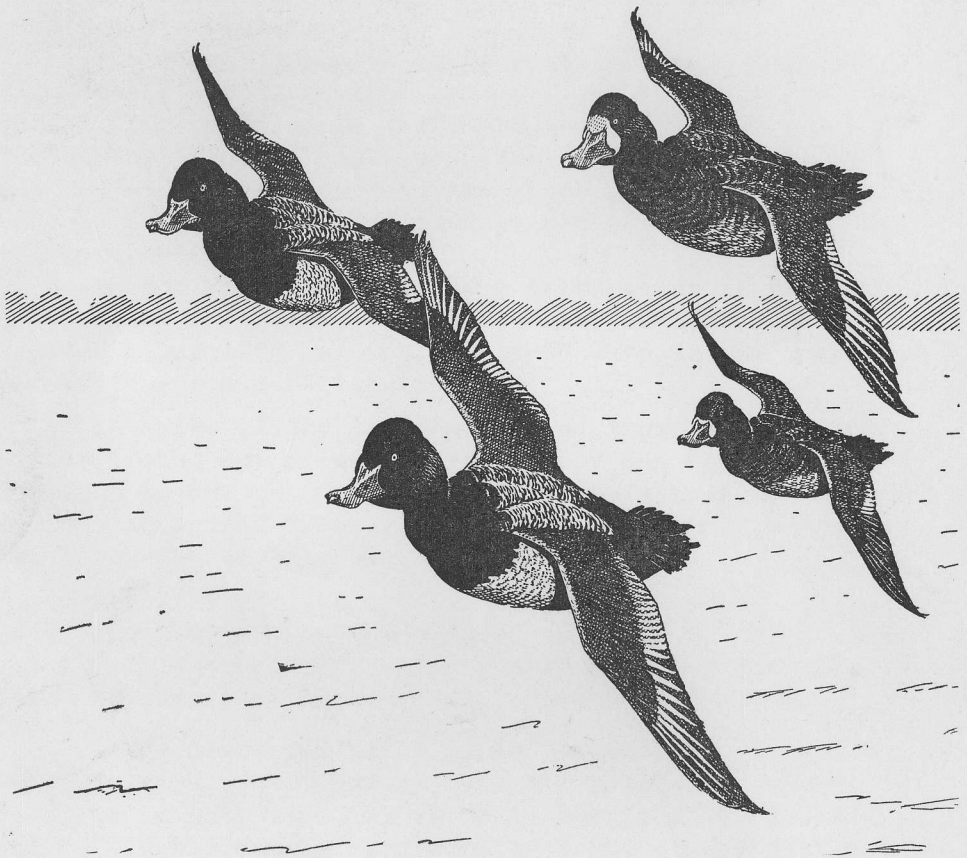


The
**VICTORIA
NATURALIST**

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Scaup

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OUR COVER

The range of the scaup duck covers the northern part of the Northern Hemisphere, and it is practically circumpolar in distribution.

The lesser scaup is so like the greater scaup (in Frank Beebe's illustration the male birds are in the lead) that in the field it is difficult to distinguish one from the other. In some cases even their measurements overlap, and the usual difference in the shade of the gloss on the head of the male is not always evident. Possibly the two may interbreed.

In the Victoria area the greater scaup is the common species, as our Christmas count indicates; the number counted being 1892, of which only 30 were lesser scaup, as far as they could be identified.

In spite of the large number of these birds which winter around our coast, there is only one nesting record for them in British Columbia. Their main breeding ground is in Alaska, the Yukon and eastward about half way across the Northwest Territories.

The diet of this species consists of about half and half vegetable and animal matter, but many of them, particularly on the coast, subsist almost entirely upon shellfish, crustaceans, insects, and other animal foods.

Large flocks of these birds can be seen at Clover Point all the winter months. On the water they appear to be black at both ends and white in the middle. The flanks and back are finely barred with gray but at any distance these parts appear quite white. The bill is blue, hence the gunner's nickname 'blue-bill'.

Much of the above information was obtained from Handbook No. 15, the 'Waterfowl of British Columbia' published by the Provincial Museum, written by Mr. C.J. Guiguet, and illustrated by Mr. Frank Beebe. These are a most useful series of books to all those interested in our local birds.

CHRISTMAS BIRD CENSUS - continued -

SPECIES:	A	B & C	D	E
FALCON, Peregrine				1
HAWK, Pigeon				
Sparrowhawk			1	
GROUSE, Ruffed			1	
QUAIL, California		5	8	1
PHEASANT, Ring-necked	6	2	4	1
COOT, American	1	215	189	12
OYSTER-CATCHER, Black				7
PLOVER, Killdeer		33	15	
Black-bellied				
SURF BIRD				
TURNSTONE, Black		4		28
SNIPE, Common		2	3	
WHIMBREL				
YELLOWLEGS, Greater				6
SANDPIPER, Rock				
DUNLIN		1		
GULL, Glaucous-winged	163	625	682	205
Herring			7	
Short-billed	45	220	127	30
Bonaparte		1		
MURRE, Common				
GUILLEMOT, Pigeon				
MURRELET, Marbled				1
Ancient				
AUKLET, Cassin's				
Rhinoceros				
DOVE, Mourning	1			
OWL, Screech				
KINGFISHER, Belted		5	7	6
FLICKER, Red-shafted	16	2	9	9
WOODPECKER, Pileated				
Lewis				
Hairy		2	1	
Downy	2	1	1	1
SKYLARK				
JAY, Steller	4	12	13	18
RAVEN, Common	12	3	4	
CROW, Northwestern	13	112	225	221
CHICKADEE, Chestnut-backed	14	6	57	10
BUSHTIT, Common	3			
NUTHATCH, Red-breasted	2	2	1	

F	G	H	I	J	K	L	TOTAL
						2	3
		1					1
		1					2
			1				2
59	27	65	28	60			253
2	5	30	20	23			93
20	29	5			1		472
34	3					20	64
3		39		35			125
32	35						67
4							4
98	10	1					141
4	5	1	1				16
2							2
1							7
47							47
95	6						102
742	788	110	34	239	345		3933
18	6						31
167	100	90		77	113	3000	3969
							1
						50	176
26	100						43
31	7				5		64
12	1					50	64
2						50	52
						3	3
						7	7
							1
							1
	1						24
2	1		3				186
34	51	25	22	13	5		1
			1				1
1							10
1	4	1				1	22
5	5	2	3	2			35
9	20		6				275
31	103	25	28	31	10		33
			1	8	5		901
48	78	100	24	25	55		261
25	45	25	42	20	17		60
35			22				13
		3	3	2			

CHRISTMAS BIRD CENSUS - Continued -

SPECIES:	A	B & C	D	E
CREEPER, Brown	2	1	3	1
DIPPER		2		
WREN, House				
Winter	8	2	8	4
Bewick	3	2	5	2
Marsh				
ROBIN	1	15	14	16
THRUSH, Varied	1		1	8
BLUEBIRD, Western				
KINGLET, Golden-crowned		12	46	44
Ruby-crowned	2	1		
SHRIKE, Northern				
WAXWING, Cedar			40	
STARLING			1	1
SPARROW, House			11	26
MEADOWLARK, Western		20	21	26
BLACKBIRD, Red-winged				2
Brewer				
DICKCISSEL				
GROSBEAK, Evening				
FINCH, Purple				
House		11	6	
SISKIN, Pine			210	65
TOWHEE, Rufous-sided	7	4	13	6
JUNCO, Oregon	36	35	96	
Slate-coloured				
SPARROW, White-crowned				
Golden-crowned				
Fox	6	3	4	9
Lincoln				
Song	8	23	23	6
TOTALS:				
Individuals -	<u>846</u>	<u>3258</u>	<u>3006</u>	<u>1786</u>
Species	42	64	63	60

Total number of Birds - - 32,325

F	G	H	I	J	K	L	TOTAL
1	4	2	2	6	1		23
							2
1							1
2	8	3	16	12	7		70
3	7	6	10	2	5		45
			1				1
409	608	700	24	22	80		1889
2	32	2	6	3			55
	6					20	26
19	8	10	28	74	10		251
2	7	1	1	2	3		19
			1				1
		60					100
6	51	15	205				279
69	35	13	3	26	11		194
12		21	6		5		111
		150	4		1		157
5	112	140		65	1055		1377
1							1
				3			3
15	38	10	11				74
71	48	3	11				150
	200				300		775
16	43	17	2	8	15		131
56	137	85	83	37	17		582
		1					1
2	2		6		13		23
18	25	40	4	1	7		95
7	3	16		2	9		59
			1				1
<u>28</u>	<u>45</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>24</u>		<u>234</u>
<u>6452</u>	<u>4362</u>	<u>2897</u>	<u>1597</u>	<u>2316</u>	<u>2598</u>	<u>3207</u>	<u>32325</u>
77	70	49	62	37	43	11	

Total number of Species - - 115

CHRISTMAS BIRD CENSUS - Continued -

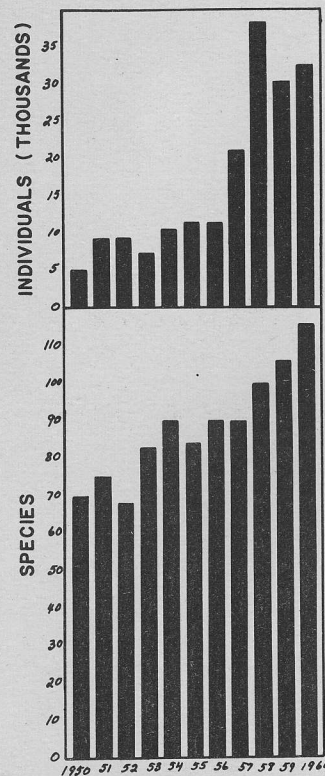
Seen in area during count period but not on count day:

Audubon's Warbler, Red Crossbill, Rufous Hummingbird, Roughleg Hawk, Sanderling, Goshawk, Lesser Yellowleg.

- A Mrs. G. Soulsby, Mr. F. King,
PROSPECT LAKE, FRANCIS PARK, HEAL'S RANGE
- B & C Mr. & Mrs. D. Stirling, Mr. R. Barnes,
ESQUIMALT LAGOON TO WITTY'S LAGOON, FLORENCE LAKE
TO GOLDSTREAM PARK.
- D Mr. R. Becket, Mr. R. McKenzie-Grieve, Mr. W. Adams,
Mr. D. Welsh,
PORTAGE INLET, VIEW ROYAL, THETIS LAKE.
- E Miss L. Roberts, Mrs. A.J. Gosling, Mr. J. Barnett,
BEACON HILL PARK; GORGE.
- F Mr. G. A. Poynter, Miss N. Haas,
CLOVER POINT TO CATTLE POINT.
- G Mr. & Mrs. A.R. Davidson, Mr. J.E. Underhill,
Miss C. Underhill,
GORDON HEAD AREA
- H Mr. T. Briggs, Mrs. M. Winstone, Mr. J.H.C. Palmer,
SWAN LAKE AND PANAMA FLATS
- I Mr. R. Fryer, Mrs. H.M.S. Bell,
ROYAL OAK AVENUE, ELK AND BEAVER LAKES
- J Miss E. Lemon, Mrs. M. Slocombe, Mr. D. Hancock,
WILKINSON, BURNSIDE AND INTERURBAN AREA
- K Mrs. W. L. Taylor, Miss T. Kirkpatrick,
CENTRAL SAANICH AREA.
- L Mr. C. Guiguet,
WATERS ADJACENT TO DISCOVERY ISLAND.

JUNIORS PARTICIPATING: Gail Moyer, Nancy Chapman,
Rick Glendenning, Anne Proctor, Gerry Rushton,
Gerry Walker, Dave Grey, Trevor Gibbons.

THE CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT



The Christmas Bird Count has been described as "the most enthusiastic nature activity of the year". From Cocoa, Florida to Coho, Alaska this is the "big day". No census of this nature can be 100% accurate; but, if all participants temper their enthusiasm with caution and a desire for correct identification of species, we will have a bird count that is of considerable value to students of avian distribution and population.

An official Audubon Society Bird Count must fit within a fifteen mile diameter circle, and must be made during the period announced each year in Audubon Field Notes. Participants are charged .50¢ each which helps pay for publication of the report. Bird counts have been made and printed since 1900. Last year a record breaking 594 reports were published. Victoria counts have been made since 1944 and published in the Victoria Naturalist.

Canadian counts not published in Field Notes can be found in the Bluejay or the Field Naturalist.

The graph at left shows the number of species and individuals recorded on each Victoria count during the past ten years. It is not an accurate representation of the birds occurring here on each of these census days because of two variable factors. (1) The number of observers. In 1951 there were six observers in the field; in 1960 there were twenty-seven. (2) Addition of new areas. Recently the area has been expanded to take in several sections rich in bird life.

The highest Victoria bird population count was made in 1958 when a huge starling and robin roost boosted the total to 37,974 individuals. In 1959 (Jan. 2, 1960) 106 species were observed on count day but a record 124 species were seen in the area during the count period.

David Stirling.

1960 CHRISTMAS BIRD CENSUS, NORTH SAANICH -
December 31st, 1960

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>G</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
LOON, Common	4	10	3	2	2		2	23
Arctic	160	71				4	6	241
Red-throated		9						9
GREBE, Red-necked	2	15			6	2	13	38
Horned	22	129	20	6	27	6	36	246
Eared		10	6	15	5			36
Western	17	60	500			1	4	582
CORMORANT, Double crested		2			1	2	14	19
Brandt		1						1
Pelagic	15	85	16	7	2	6	52	183
HERON, Great blue	2	4	3					9
GOOSE, White fronted		9						9
DUCK, Mallard		24				1	6	31
Pintail		59		1				60
Green-winged teal		74			35			109
American Widgeon	23	303	9	25	300	3	60	723
Shoveller					1			1
Canvasback		14						14
Greater scaup	19	314	29	12	121			495
Lesser scaup	1	4						5
Common Goldeneye	22	40	16	16	47		32	173
Barrows Goldeneye	2	1				2		5
Bufflehead	29	174	20	10	78	1	2	314
Old Squaw	18	29			26			73
Harlequin	6	15		2	3			26
White-winged Scoter	37	174	389	15	54	6	10	685
Surf Scoter	8	81	70	5	72	2	6	244
Common Scoter		4			3			7
Ruddy		113		200	97			410
MERGANSER, Hooded	1	17		2	8			28
Common	7							7
Red-breasted	12	103		9	12	4	15	155
HAWK, Sharp-shinned			3		1	1		5
Coopers						1		1
American rough-legged			1					1
EAGLE, Bald	1		1			2		4
FALCON, Peregrine		1			1			2
GROUSE, Ruffed						1		1
QUAIL, California		11	12		50	20	20	113
PHEASANT, Ring-necked		3	6	13		3	1	26
PARTRIDGE, Grey		7						7

Covering the Saanich Peninsula north of Brentwood
Crossroad and Island View Beach Road.

1960 CHRISTMAS BIRD CENSUS, NORTH SAANICH -
Continued -

SPECIES	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	TOTAL
COOT, American		100	3		61		5	169
KILLDEER		5		19				24
TURNSTONE, Black			3		20			23
SNIFE, Common		1			3			4
YELLOWLEGS, Greater		11			4			15
DUNLIN		7			50			57
GULL, Glaucous-winged	68	210	228	20	55	45	300	926
Herring		5				1	17	23
Mew		69	56		75	5	10	215
MURRE, Common						3	6	9
GUILLEMOT, Pigeon	2	14	1		2	5	1	25
MURRELET, Marbled		6				2	2	10
Ancient						1		1
AUKLET, Rhinoceros						1	1	2
OWL, Short-eared		2						2
KINGFISHER, Belted	1	4	4		1		2	12
FLICKER, Red-shafted	7	4	12	6	8	4	15	56
WOODPECKER, Pileated	1					1		2
Hairy			1				2	3
Downy	2	2			1	1	3	9
LARK, Sky		63		1	1			65
Horned		2						2
JAY, Steller	7	2	15	15	1	13	45	98
RAVEN, Common	3	4				2	2	11
CROW, North-western	4	185	80	24	128	25	110	556
CHICKADEE, Chestnut-back	6	9	20	5	10	18	48	116
BUSHTIT, Common	1		8					9
NUTHATCH, Red-breasted	3	2	2		1	1		9
CREEPER, Brown	4	1	1	1		1	8	16
WREN, Winter	6	1	12	2	2	2	4	29
Bewick	5	3	8	1	2	2	7	28
ROBIN	122	309	600	343	1	22	67	1464
THRUSH, Varied	7	2	12	2		3	8	34
KINGLET, Golden-crowned	6	66	50		6	14	58	200
Ruby-crowned		6	6	2	6	5	6	31
PIPIT, Water		3						3
SHRIKE, Northern							2	2
STARLING		162	125	500	1200	550	826	3363
SPARROW, House		1	2			7	20	30
MEADOWLARK, Western		11	17	2	3	2		35

December 31st, 1960.

1960 CHRISTMAS BIRD CENSUS, NORTH SAANICH -

Continued -

SPECIES	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	TOTAL
BLACKBIRD, Red-winged - - - - -							40	40
Brewers - - - - -			1			12	1028	1041
FINCH, Purple - - - - -			1	1	1	8	1	12
House - - - - -		32		16		1	10	59
SISKIN, Pine - - - - -	90			6				96
CROSSBILL, Red - - - - -		2						2
TOWHEE, Rufous sided - - - - -	11	4	20	6	6	7	21	75
JUNCO, Slate coloured - - - - -						1		1
Oregon - - - - -	106	77	73	11	26	126	80	499
SPARROW, Chipping - - - - -						1		1
White-crowned - - - - -						8	8	16
Golden-crowned - - - - -	2	23	6		1	24	44	100
Fox - - - - -		2	3	2		11	9	27
Song - - - - -	11	26	20	17	18	21	20	133
TOTALS	883	3408	2494	1342	2645	1024	3115	14911
SPECIES	45	72	47	38	51	56	52	95

A Mr. T.R.Briggs and Mr. Ralph Fryer
NORTH EAST CORNER OF PENINSULA

B Mr. G.A. Poynter and Miss Norma Haas
WATERFRONT FROM SIDNEY WHARF TO SWARTZ BAY

C Miss Enid Lemon, Messrs. McKenzie-Grieve and W.D.Reith
DEEP COVE, TOWNER PARK, PATRICIA BAY

D Mesdames H.M.S.Bell & H.W.S.Soulsby & Miss Joan Hannay
AIRPORT, MILLS ROAD, WILLINGDON ROAD

E Mr. and Mrs. David Stirling
EAST SAANICH RESERVATION & WATER FRONT TO BAZEN BAY

F Messrs. Ray Beckett and William Adams
JOHN DEAN PARK AND ARDMORE WATERFRONT

G Mrs. Gwen Taylor and Mr. and Mrs. A.R. Davidson
STELLYS AND MT. NEWTON CROSS ROADS AND WATERFRONT

Total number of birds seen - 14,911

Total number of species seen 95

The weather on the two days chosen for these bird counts
was ideal, being calm and mild, with no rain.

BIRD COUNT SIDE LINES

by Freeman King

While on the annual bird count one could spot many other interesting things.

At Butchart's Gardens as we moved up a sunken path, a squirrel jumped on the top of a small stump. He chattered at us and walked around the stump, then looked down and seemed to say "Now what are you people doing here at this early time of the day". We were only six feet away from him.

A large slate gray cat was stalking something in the tall grass behind one of the potting sheds. A stone was tossed at him, and he jumped about four feet into the air then like a streak took off with his ears laid back. Perhaps some little bird or mouse escaped from being the cat's breakfast.

On the way to Tod Creek we noted that some of the blue-green algae commencing to grow. This particular algae grows on limestone and normally grows in the spring. On the Durrance Road pussy willow was seen in bud and the leaves of the bird cherry were appearing through the wax sheath. On the clay bottom of a pond there were trails of one of the water beetles. The water was clear and the trails could be traced until they reached the 'back-end' of the little creature sticking out of the mud.

Along Wallace Drive as we made the count of the many ducks that were feeding on the plowed fields, three dogs on the prowl wandered across the field. They went to within fifty yards of the ducks, which did not take flight, but waddled further inland. It is apparent that the birds recognize animals that are not natural predators, and do not take fright on seeing ordinary domestic animals. At the same place we spotted a number of flickers that were eating something on the ground in the meadow. We got to within ten feet before the birds left. On investigating we saw that they were digging into the roots of a plantain. Could be that some insect or grub was there.

Just off Echo Road where we stopped for lunch there is a large rock face that is covered with moss and polypody fern. At the top of the cliff is a large grove of arbutus trees. As the noon sun broke through the clouds it made a beautiful picture. At the foot of Prospect Lake a large muskrat came out of the rushes and swam to a little island. A duck in close proximity took off and the rat dived. He

must have had a bolt hole or an escape hatch under water, for we never saw him come to the surface again.

Yes, there are many things that can be seen on a bird count if you use your eyes.

BLOOD ON THE SNOW

by Frank L. Beebe

(continued from January)

That the predators should quite regularly kill far more than they can eat appears, at first glance, very wasteful and senseless, yet it can be easily shown to serve a very useful and fundamental purpose in the lives of these animals. In the more highly developed predators - the birds and mammals - there is a clear disconnection between the acts of hunting and of eating. By this I mean that in these groups the activity of hunting and killing is a completed action in its own right and quite often has nothing at all to do with eating. To prove this point I need only draw attention to some very familiar examples. I would list first the very familiar well-fed, domestic cat that regularly hunts and kills rats, mice and birds but never eats them; or the field-dog that will hunt or track all day until completely exhausted, certainly with no thought of food (in the form of the animal it chases) as reward; or the racing grey-hounds that will chase even a mechanical rabbit, certainly not to eat it, but mostly because it runs away; and finally the "bloodthirsty" ferret that will kill rabbits or rats until completely exhausted, yet eat not a bite from a one of them.

This last, a kind of killing orgy, is the most convincing proof of all, and while the members of the weasel family are best known for this, it is normal behaviour to most predatory animals. Foxes, dogs and wolves will all kill wantonly and wastefully when they find themselves amongst confined poultry or sheep. So too will bears. The raptorial birds are no different, and nearly any of them will become similarly excited under like circumstances. I have known a horned owl to kill every chicken in a coop - some fifty birds in all - in a single night. Cooper hawks and goshawks will do the very same thing if they get in amongst confined poultry.

Granting that these are abnormal circumstances they do point up an interesting fact concerning the nature of the predatory animals, which is that with very few exceptions the urge to kill, once aroused, is a more powerful force in these creatures than normal hunger. One of the most signi-

ficant things about this orgiastic killing is that once aroused and enjoying themselves in the excitement of bloody shambles of this kind they seldom, almost never, pause to eat. Rather, they kill until exhausted and typically leave the scene without having eaten anything. Sometimes however they will carry one of their victims off with them, to be eaten later, at leisure, after the fiery excitement of the killing has died down.

Even under more normal circumstances, wherever prey is abundant and exposed, hunting is often continued long after hunger has been completely sated. When harvesting oats in Alberta I have watched a little hawk-owl catching the field mice exposed by the lifting of the stooks. It worked on those mice almost continuously all day for several days. It could not have possibly eaten a tenth of what it killed. Shrikes will do the very same thing, and they advertise their butchery by skewering their victims on barbed wire, or thorns for all to see. Inasmuch as these birds were destroying mostly mice in this wholesale manner the action, to human eyes, was most commendable. Had it been a goshawk working similar mayhem in an exposed population of chukar or gray partridge it would have appeared like "wanton destruction" - even though the motivation and the action is exactly the same.

Now, having given a convincing series of examples we must look for meanings. Predation is not a simple matter, but it is fairly clear that the development of a powerful urge to hunt and kill, an urge independent of, and often transcending hunger, is necessary to the survival of the higher predators. The simplest, and most obvious place where it is needed, and must be developed, is to permit the male predator to supply food far in excess of its own needs to the female when she is brooding or incapacitated with young, and later to permit both sexes to supply the needs of the growing young. Inasmuch as these creatures can not possibly know, in the human sense, that they must provide for their young or the species will perish, some sort of comparatively simple stimulus-reaction mechanism must be developed to take care of the situation, and an excess of hunting energy distinct and separate from hunger is at once the simplest and most effective answer.

(to be continued)

JUNIOR JOTTINGS

by Freeman King

Activities over the holidays were somewhat curtailed. A number of the intermediate group took part in the annual bird count. Members who are taking the instructional course went out to the Dominion Pathology Laboratory at Saanichton, where they were shown how to operate a microscope and what to look for in certain plants. Dr. W. Orchard, the senior officer, in charge of the laboratory, made the visit very interesting and informative.

The two groups put on their displays at the Provincial Museum of the natural history subjects they had collected over a period of time on their rambles. These displays were very good indeed, the collections ranging from mounted plants to rock specimens, including birds nests, mammals, mosses, fungi, and a mixture of many things. It was very pleasing to see that in most cases the displays were excellently mounted and named. The collection of moths and butterflies were very good.

We want to thank members of the society who visited the show, and to those who acted as judges - our gratitude.

A party was held on the 30th December at the home of Mrs. J. Lee for intermediate group, at which over thirty members attended.

THE BIRD COUNT

On the evening of Boxing Day, a group of tired but enthusiastic birders met at the home of Mr. & Mrs. Alan Poynter at 1155 Monterey Ave. They had just moved in a few days previously. It was certainly the occasion of a real house warming. Alan had tacked a large sheet of paper on the wall containing a list of all the possible birds, and as the observers arrived and brought their reports, the number of species on the chart increased slowly to a total of 114, the greatest number ever counted in one day in this area. The excitement grew until one couldn't hear one's own voice. Everyone was talking at once and nearly everyone was there. Many thanks to Helen and Alan Poynter, and to all those who worked so hard to make this count the best yet.

The weather helped, of course. It was just the kind of day we had prayed for; calm, mild, and even sunny. Most of the birds seen were all normal for this time of year, and even some common species were missing. The one unusual bird was the dickcissel, which really shouldn't have been within a thousand miles of Victoria.

NOTICE OF MEETINGS1961

- Saturday
Feb. 4th ENTOMOLOGY
Meet at Museum, 9:30 a.m. to view Museum
Collection and discuss projects.
- Sunday,
February 12th: TOM FRANCIS PARK TOUR
Meet at Cottage, 2 p.m.
Leader: Mr. Freeman King.
- Tuesday,
February 14th: GENERAL MEETING
Douglas Building Cafeteria, Elliott St.
at 8 p.m.
There will be two Moving Picture Films:
"The Fossil Story" and
"Rival World"; also -
 Mr. R. Bruce Scott, who, for thirty
 years was connected with the cable
 station at Bamfield, will give a brief
 history of the West Coast Ocean Beach
 Park.
- Tuesday,
February 21st: BOTANY MEETING
Professor C.B. Lowe speaks on -
"Gardens and other Beauty Spots of Britain"
This will be at the Museum at 8 p.m. and
will be illustrated with slides.
- Saturday,
February 25th: BIRD FIELD TRIP
Meet at Mount Douglas Park, 10 a.m. (or
9:30 at Monterey Cafe). Bring lunch.
Mr. D. S. Stirling and Mr. T. Briggs,
Co-Leaders.
- Tuesday,
February 28th: GEOLOGY MEETING
At the Museum, 8 p.m. Dr. Athol Sutherland-
Brown speaks on the -
"Geology of the Queen Charlottes"

JUNIORS 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.

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