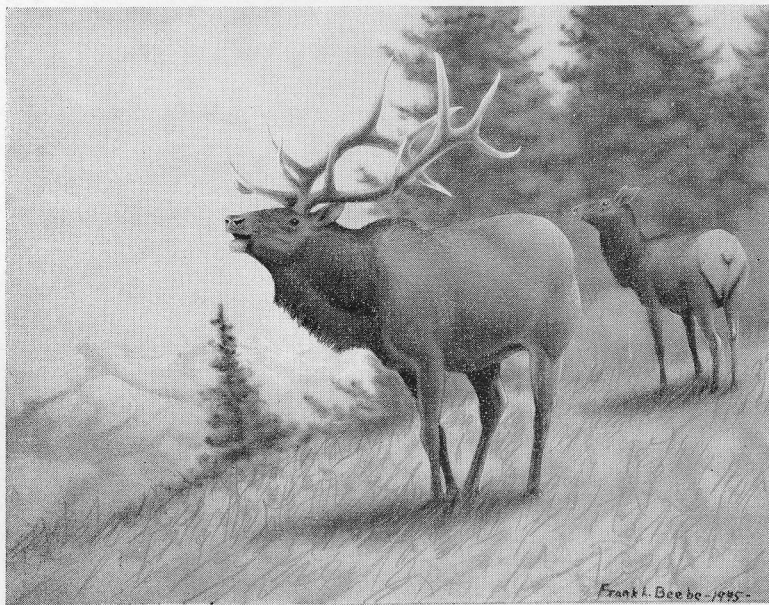


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(F. L. Beebe)

Elk

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THE ELK IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

The elk or wapiti is a member of the deer family and of that group is second in size only to the moose. It is a beautifully proportioned animal, richly coloured in dark brown, fawn and yellow. Mature bulls carry a huge rack of antlers which is grown during the summer and shed the following spring. During the rut in September, the bull gathers a harem of cows which he defends against rivals. The antlers, now hardened and bearing sharp tines, are brought into play with sometimes fatal results.

Two subspecies of elk occur within the Province. One, the Rocky Mountain elk is found in the western reaches of the mountains after which it was named. In British Columbia the centre of population is in the south with scattered bands occurring north to the Muskwa River. Introductions of this race have been made to various parts of the Province previously unoccupied by elk.

On Vancouver Island the darker, more richly coloured Roosevelt elk occurs naturally. It was not introduced here, as many people believe. This elk is found in many areas on Vancouver Island and was introduced successfully to the Queen Charlottes. At one time the Roosevelt elk roamed the Lower Mainland and the Saanich Peninsula, but disappeared as man took over the habitat there. It is still abundant on the Olympic Peninsula.

In recent years remaining elk herds throughout the Province have been increasing, and are approaching a "high" which threatens their range in some areas.

A herd that winters annually at the junction of the Nanaimo and Green rivers is easily seen from the road in late December and January.

Members wishing to view these animals must obtain permission to enter this area from the Comox Logging Company at Nanaimo.

C. J. Guiguet.

EIGHTEENTH FUNGUS FORAY

November 4, 1961

by

M. C. Melburn

Francis Park was a new area for our annual hunt and it yielded a good harvest, well over 65 species; and although there were 33 observers in the party, we probably missed many more kinds hidden under cover in the darker parts of the forest.

Plenty of our better-known fungus friends were there e.g. bird's-nest fungus, elf-saddles, earth-stars, russulas, candle-snuff fungus, little bell, giant clitocybe and the dainty little *Collybia albopilata* that grows only out of Douglas fir cones.

Two members of the peziza type were the scarlet elf-cup (*Aleuria aurantia*) and the brownish-yellow rabbit-ears (*Otidea onotica*) both growing on the forest floor. There were two species of Jelly-like fungus, *Tremelledon gelatinosum*, looking like a little fan made of water-soaked snow and wearing hydnum-like teeth, and the peach-coloured aristocratic *Phlogiotis helvelloides*, of quite similar shape.

By far the greater number of mushrooms have spores that are white, or of some shade of rusty-brown; in quite a number the spores are purple and a few have black ones. Pink-spored species are rather scarce around here but we found two examples i.e. an *Entoloma* and the fawn-coloured *Pluteus* (*Pluteus cervinus*).

Those of the party interested in edible mushrooms were specially pleased to see so many of the painted boletinus (*Boletinus pictus*). These large yellowish-brown specimens, with reddish tones, run up to four inches in cap diameter and have stout fibrous-coated stems. Also in the edible class were the delicious *Lactarius* and wood *agaricus*.

Perhaps the most brilliant mushrooms were the amethyst-coloured variety of *Laccaria laccata* and the little cone-shaped *Hygrophorus* whose sticky cap presents a blend of scarlet and deep yellow, staining black with age - a warning of its poisonous content.

Shelf fungi were well represented in our "catch", *Polyporus versicolor*, *Polyporus abietinus*, *Fomes roseus* and *Fomes pinicola*.

A rather uncommon "find" was *Verpa conica*, a relative of the elf-saddles and morels. Its brown bell-shaped cap

has a white lining and it is mounted on a longish stem almost as thick as the width of its cap.

Fungi are decidedly particular about location; many grow in forest debris, others on dead wood and still others on living trees and other plants. Some are found growing on fallen leaves e.g. on our maple leaves you will find the reddish-black spots of *Rhytisma punctatum* and on old softened salal leaves there grows a species of *Coccomyces* showing dull gray fruiting bodies smaller than pin heads. Moreover, like the "bugs that have other bugs to bite 'em" here, too, we sometimes find a parallel condition i.e. a fungus feeding on a fungus. Look for the yellow growth coating parts of velvet-top fungus (*Polyporus Schweinitzii*) and the webby mould-like growth covering so many of our russulas. These are parasitic species feeding on the more substantial types which themselves are either parasitic or merely subsisting on dead organic matter. This latter group are said to be saprophytic; they do a great work in breaking down dead tissue so that it can become available as food for other plants.

How is it we can go out and collect fungus specimens with a clear conscience whereas picking wild flowering-plants is taboo? For the very good reason that in collecting mushrooms we are taking only the "fruit" and leaving behind the real plant (mycelium) where it belongs.

GOOD HUNTING!

A WHITE-THROATED SPARROW

During the month of October a sparrow appeared in the garden of Mr. & Mrs. James Hobson on Argyle Street, which, from its song and appearance was neither a white-crowned nor a golden-crowned sparrow. One day however, when it alighted on the feeding tray, Mrs. Hobson was able for the first time to have a good look at it, and to determine, to her pleasure, that it was a white-throated sparrow.

This is interesting, as early in December 1959 five of these birds (an eastern species) escaped from a grain barge while it was at Yarrows, and one of these was subsequently seen by a number of our members at the home of the Misses Baird on Richmond Road. Then it was seen once more on October 10th, 1960, on Shelbourne Street, where Tom Briggs then lived. After that none of our bird watchers had caught sight of any of these birds until this one turned up.

A.R.D.

BIRDS TO BE SEEN

by Tom Briggs

Recently a young couple remarked that they liked to look at birds but that there weren't any birds to be seen. This took place at Happy Valley, midst terrific habitat, complete with running water. I was nonplussed. Granted we cannot compete with some countries nor some areas in North America but we do have birds. To us, most of the birds we see are routine, but they are interesting.

To add to the interest at this time of the year a few uncommon birds are seen and reported. In a rough list of these added annual avian arrivals since October I would include whistling swans, cackling geese, white-fronted geese, snow geese, European widgeons, a redhead duck, Barrow golden-eyes, a goshawk, pigeon hawks, marsh hawks, whimbrels, yellow-shafted flickers, a red-breasted sapsucker (yellow-bellied), hermit thrushes, Audubon warblers, myrtle warblers, black-throated gray warblers, shrikes, slate-coloured juncos, a white-throated sparrow, Lapland longspurs and snow buntings.

This observer was very fortunate to see a goshawk recently. Distress noises led to this largest accipiter in the act of striking at a hen pheasant 'neath some hard, dry bushes which protected the victim somewhat. The goshawk was disturbed at my arrival and took off. The pheasant headed for cover and seemed to be in good shape. This close-up afforded me an excellent view of the hawk on the ground, taking off, flying and perching.

The red-breasted sapsucker was seen by Dave and Ruth Stirling and myself near Munns Road and the power line, not too far past Francis Park. It worked on one tree for hours. It was observed again four days later, on Nov. 16. We are hoping it stays awhile for other members to see.

Mr. and Mrs. H. W. S. Soulsby reported a northern three-toed woodpecker near Prospect Lake Road and the power-line. It has not been verified but signs and habitat are perfect, encouraging some of us to make frequent visits.

Ring-necked ducks can be seen at Florence Lake any day.

Still maintain there are birds to be seen.

GLIMPSES OF NATURAL HISTORY

by W. Mackay Draycot

Lakes and ponds throughout British Columbia offer a wide variety of types, depending upon the locality, the local flora and fauna, and the acidity or alkalinity of the water. I have visited scores of these lakes but one in particular will not be forgotten. It is situated off a way-side road north of Princeton in a delightfully picturesque setting surrounded by trees and with its margin decorated with a broad thick growth of tall cut-grass, whose leaves have saw-like edges. Pushing the grass aside as we waded through it resulted in bleeding hands and slashed trousers. No other lake or pond in this vicinity had cut-grass!

Sundown was approaching as we walked to a small lake in the same dry-belt vicinity with a view to camping, but what we saw made us alter our plan. Scattered along the lake shore were hundreds of Western spadefoot toads, so thick that it was impossible to avoid treading on a few. Like a swarm of bees a group of about fifty huddled up tightly against a small boulder. Only a few took to the water, but within a foot or so from shore; others attempted to hide in the sand and under stones. All were about $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches in length.

Northwest of Kamloops, on the west bank of the North Thompson River, we entered a dirt logging road. Halting to obtain a supply of fresh water tumbling down the mountain side over rocks, we looked around at a scene that resembled fairyland. The forest growth, as yet untouched by the logger, comprised a pleasing mixture of plants, shrubs, coniferous and deciduous trees. In a deep gully that lay to the right were two deer, calmly browsing. Darting, flying hither and yon, and around us, was the largest assemblage of butterflies, moths and other winged insects any admirer could hope to see in this Province, especially an entomologist; these beauties of all colours and designs were in the hundreds. But why had they assembled here? Our time was limited so with two rabbits escorting us in front we moved on.

Up in the northern zone where the sillness around you is weird we observed a lone raven on the prowl, then two. In size they could be mistaken for eagles. We were emerging from a hasty visit to Quesnel Lake, many miles east of Quesnel town, on an old logging trail overgrown with shrubbery. Five ravens were gracefully circling overhead. On entering a clearing we saw a rabbit dart across the trail. Immediately

pandemonium ensued, the ravens, all five of them, dived, circled, screeched like mad demons only a few feet above our car then two of them swooped down--- end of rabbit!

A pleasant surprise while camping near Bridge Lake was the visit by a lone cowbird. She just made herself at home, hopped on the table and ate with us, even came into the tent but got on our nerves when we were walking about for she could have been trodden on. Perhaps bread and honey should not have been given to her--but she liked it.

And those were the important highlights of a 1,200 mile jaunt in quest of fresh-water mollusks!

A CANADIAN RECORD

by M.C. Melburn

A fungus collected in the Thomas Francis Park on October 13th, 1961, has just been identified by Dr. J. Walton Groves, head of the Mycology Section, Research Branch, Plant Research Institute, Canadian Experimental Farm, Ottawa.

COLLYBIA AMBUSTA FR. was found growing in half-buried burnt wood near the site of the old Francis cabin.

Dr. Groves' letter reads, in part - "We have some specimens from Sweden and England, but this is our only Canadian record of this species".

BIRD NOTES FROM THE COURTENAY AREA

by B. Westerborg, Black Creek, B.C.

Logging operations have altered the habitat for birds over a large area between the coastal lowlands and the Forbidden Plateau. "Clear logging" and slash burning have created a landscape which, though hardly equalled for desolation is nevertheless of great interest to naturalists. The primeval forest and the bird-life it harboured have disappeared but many other birds have increased and some species previously unknown in the region have become regular summer visitors.

Here are some of the birds I observed on several trips to the "slashings" last summer: wood duck, ring-necked duck, red-tailed hawk, golden eagle, (an adult flew up from a freshly killed fawn and joined another adult and two immatures in giving an impressive display of aerobatics), black swift, Vaux swift, Hammond flycatcher, olive-sided flycatcher western bluebird (small flocks with Audubon warblers) Townsend solitaire, Townsend warbler, western tanager; evening

grosbeak, white-crowned, and golden-crowned sparrows.

On the Forbidden Plateau at the 4,000 ft. level, in late July, I found three northern three-toed woodpeckers, gray jays, varied thrushes, and hermit thrushes.

Some interesting birds seen in the Black Creek-Comox area this year were: whistling swan (a flock of 16, Oct. 21-30) trumpeter swan (one bird reported at various places during the summer; seen with whistling swans at the Dyke Slough Oct. 23), white-fronted goose, sandhill crane (D. Guthrie), upland plover (Oct. 1. D. Guthrie), solitary sand-piper (July 28), barn owl (vide T. Pearse), saw-whet owl, Hutton vireo, black-throated gray warbler (April 28, Sept. 9), Harris sparrow (H.M. Laing), and lapland longspur.

A CLOVER POINT DRAMA

One morning recently, our good friend Ralph Fryer was standing at the tip of Clover Point watching the mass of gulls feeding at the outlet, when, without apparent reason, they got excited and flew in all directions. Ralph looked around, but could not see anything that might have disturbed them, but, being an experienced bird watcher, he looked more intently at the gulls themselves, and then saw, in their midst, a peregrine falcon. The gulls were quite aware of its presence and were very uneasy. A moment later the hawk made one of its lightning dives on a Bonaparte gull, striking it hard, thereupon all the other gulls mobbed the hawk, compelling it to drop its prey. In the melee, the hawk disappeared, and the gulls returned to their foraging for food.

A. R. D.

NOTICE

Please notify the editor (phone EV 4-9595) of any change of address, or if you do not receive your magazine promptly at the beginning of each month.

OUR LIBRARY

The library of the society now contains over 130 books, included in which are the following:

Flora of Southern British Columbia, by J. K. Henry
 Flora of Washington State, by C. O. Piper
 Field Guide to Common Mushrooms, by W. S. Thomas
 The Mushroom Hunters' Field Guide, by A. H. Smith
 The Wild Flowers of the Rockies by Geo. and W. Hardy
 Wild America, by James Fisher and R. T. Peterson
 Wild Paradise, by Guy Mountfort
 The Bird Watcher's Anthology, by R. T. Peterson
 Dance of the Trees, by R. St. B. Baker
 Milestones in Opopogoland, by C. P. Lyons
 Milestones on Vancouver Island, by C. P. Lyons
 Milestones on the Mighty Fraser, by C. P. Lyons
 Trees, Shrubs and Flowers to Know in B.C., by C.P.Lyons
 Union Bay, by Higman and Larrison
 The Tundra World, by Stanwell Fletcher
 Birds of America, by T. Gilbert Pearson
 Birds of Canada, by Taverner
 Birds of Alberta, by Salt Wilk
 Birds of Massachusetts, by E. H. Forbush, 3 Volumes
 The Audubon Bird Guides, by Richard H.Pough. 3 "
 North American Birds of Prey, by A. Sprunt, Jr.
 Ducks, Geese and Swans of North America, by Kortright
 Life and Adventures of John James Audubon, by R.Buchanan
 Field Guide to the Ferns, by Boughton Cobb
 (Peterson Field Guide)
 The Birds of California in 3 volumes by Wm. Leon Dawson
 Wild Life in Colours, by R. T. Peterson
 Serengeti Shall Not Die, by B. & M. Grzimek
 The Living Land, by R. Haig-Brown
 Guide to Western Birds, by R. T. Peterson (new edition)
 Adventures among Birds, by Hugh Halliday
 Adventures among Animals, by Hugh Halliday
 Canada's Wild Glory, by W. Phillip Keller

In addition, the library contains practically all the publications of the Provincial Museum, the Golden Nature Guides to Insects: Flowers: Trees: Fishes and Seashore.

Received since writing the above are:-

Between Pacific Tides, by E.F.Ricketts & Jack Calvin
 Seaweeds at Ebb Tide, by Muriel Lewin Guberlet
 Native Trees of Canada, issued by the Dominion
 Forest Service.

The 'Birds of Massachusetts' were donated by Miss Marie Weldon of New York, the 'Birds of California' by Mr. J. W. Winson, and 'Serengeti Shall Not Die' by Ruth Stirling.

Our grateful thanks are also due Mr. Winson for the thirty valuable books he has donated to the society, and there are more to come.

At the present time this library is being taken care of by Mr. & Mrs. Davidson at 825 Monterey Avenue, and are available to our members.

TWO ANNUAL EVENTS

The "Fungus foray" held last month, an account of which you will find on page 42 of this issue, is the eighteenth of the series. This autumn outing was inaugurated by Mr. George A. Hardy in 1944, the year the society was formed, and has been a regular feature of our botanical group since. George Hardy conducted the first twelve outings, then Professor Lowe, and the last five have been led by Miss Melburn. With the exception of three of these trips, all have been written up in the magazine.

The bird group, too, have had a special sea trip each year, of which the most significant is the one taken to Bare Island. This was first undertaken in 1945, and continued during 1950, 1951, 1952, 1953, 1955, 1957, 1959 and 1961. This island is an important nesting place for glaucous-winged gulls, Baird and double-crested cormorants and pigeon guillemots. Since 1957 two students of the University of British Columbia have summered there and made exhaustive investigations into the breeding habits of these birds. Apparently they found the records kept by the society valuable, as last month one of these bird students, writing from Haren in the Netherlands, says "the bulletin of your society is really the first private journal in the Province to publish worthwhile natural history observations."

" C O S Y "

by Ross Storey
 (Junior Member)

One Sunday afternoon in late October, we heard a thud on the front room window. We all rushed outside and there sitting on the driveway was a male evening grosbeak. We knew what it was because we had seen it in pictures, and

also out in the trees.

He is about the size of a robin. He had black and white wings, a yellow breast, and also had a yellow "V" on his head, over his bill. We could tell he was a member of the Grosbeak family because of his heavy bill used for cracking seeds.

We could see that his wing was hurt, and he couldn't fly. We knew that if we let him go, our cat would get him, so we put him in a box until we thought what to do with him. First we set him on an apple tree in our neighbour's garden. We went back in an hour, and found he was still there and so we took him down and set him back in the box. The next day, my mother took him to the vet to ask him if his wing was broken, and he said it would heal up if he was kept quiet for a week or two. We then decided to get a bird cage for him. We borrowed a cage from one of our friends.

At first when we went near it he would jump from side to side, but otherwise he did not mind it at all. We built a perch for him to sit on. At first, because of his hurt wing, when he sat on the perch he would lose his balance and fall off.

We named him Cosy, because of the warm house we lived in. After about four days he could swing on the swing quite well. We knew exactly what to feed him, for the flocks of these birds would sit in the Maple Tree and crack seeds open and eat the inside.

Right about now he was getting pretty tame, so my Mom would let him out of the cage a few hours each day in the house.

When he was in the cage my Dad would hold a seed in his hand and break it open, then he would put the seed on his finger. He would put his finger between the cracks of the cage and Cosy would take it off and eat it.

His wing was getting better now, and he could fly. So the next time a flock of these landed in the tree we planned to let him go. Finally one did come. He flew to the window sill and looked out. He started walking up and down and pecking on the window, so we let him go to continue his journey southward with the rest of the flock.

The above essay, by Ross Storey, was adjudged the best article by a boy in the competition sponsored by our Society this spring.

JUNIOR JOTTINGS

by Freeman King

The expedition to Roche Cove was very interesting. We found a large number of fungi, including one large specimen which was at least eighteen inches across. Also a few purple starfish were found clinging to the steep rock at the entrance to the cove.

The trip to Triangle Mountain provided some unusual rock formations. One particular rock had numerous white inserts of limestone scattered throughout the vein. It looked like a plum pudding with lots of currants in it.

Our evening at the Provincial Museum was more than interesting. Mr. Chess Lyons gave us an illustrated talk on some of the flora and fauna of the interior of British Columbia. A large number of parents were in attendance. Thanks, Mr. Lyons.

In spite of the very cold day our expedition to Island View Beach was worth while. On the beach we saw a beautiful pattern of many varieties of seaweed that had been washed up by the high winds and tides.

Our trip to Green Mountain showed us some really rugged country of broken rock slides. There, too, were many cascara trees.

The Junior Branch will present a display of natural objects collected by the members, at the Douglas Building Cafeteria on Elliott Street on December 28th at 7:30 p.m. Senior Members of the Society and parents of the Juniors are especially invited to be present.

THE CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

The arrangements for the annual bird count have now been made, and the Poynters extend an invitation to the adult participants to call around during the evening while the compilation of the various groups' figures is being made.

This bird count is being held on the Saturday before Christmas, December 23rd.

The address is 1555 Monterey Avenue.

NOTICE OF MEETINGS1961Saturday
Dec. 2nd:BIRD FIELD TRIP:

Meet at the Monterey Cafe at 9:30 a.m.
or at the Beaver Lake parking lot at 10 a.m.;
bring lunch.

Leader: Mr. T. R. Briggs.

Tuesday
Dec. 12th:GENERAL MEETING:

At the Douglas Building Cafeteria on Elliot
Street at 8 p.m.

Speaker: Mr. R.Y. Edwards, Parks Branch,
Dep't of Recreation & Conservation

Subject: "Mittlenatch Island Nature Park"
Illustrated.

Saturday
Dec. 16th:ENTOMOLOGY:

A visit to the Provincial Museum 9:30 a.m.
Dr. John A. Chapman.

Saturday
Dec. 23rd:

The CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT will be held on
this day. For further particulars please
telephone D. Stirling at GR 9-4646 or
T.R. Briggs at GR 8-4145.

Thursday
Dec. 28th:

THE JUNIORS will hold an exhibition at
the Douglas Building Cafeteria on Elliot
Street at 7:30 p.m.

Saturday
Dec. 30th:

A separate CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT will be taken
of the north Saanich area. For further par-
ticulars please telephone G. A. Poynter at
EV 4-8330.

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