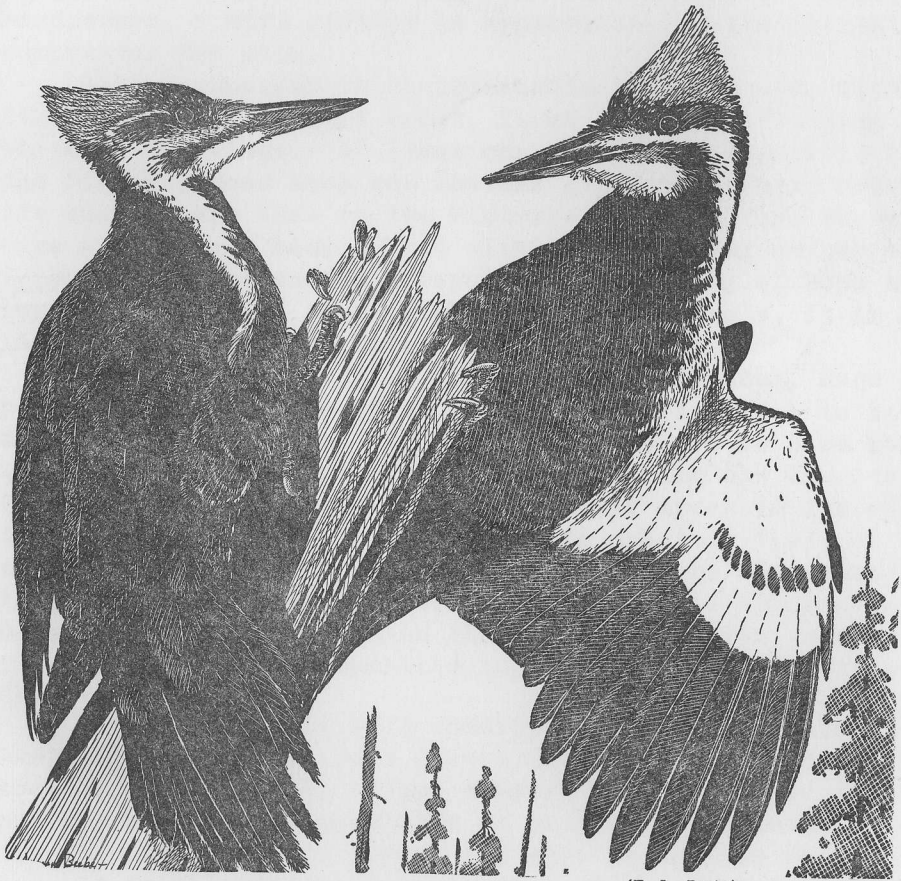


The
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(F. L. Beebe)

Pileated Woodpecker

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OUR COVER

The pileated woodpecker of North America is probably the largest of the group. Its length from bill to tail can reach to almost twenty inches, and from wing-tip to wing-tip twenty-eight inches. Its European equivalent, the black woodpecker, a bird similar in appearance, is its nearest competitor for size.

This woodpecker is unmistakable in the woods, with its black body, scarlet crest, large size, and flashing white on its wings. At least one pair nests regularly in the Finnerty Road area and another pair at Ten Mile Point. Its numbers are less in the Victoria district than was the case a few years back. What with the shrinking number of forest trees, poisonous sprays, to say nothing of boys shooting at anything in sight with their twenty-two's, it is having a hard time to survive.

The bill of this bird is a unique instrument. Made apparently of horn like other bird's bills, it seems to have some of the attributes of tempered steel. It is used recklessly as both axe and crowbar, for the bird can hew its way through the bark of the largest dead fir trees in its effort to get at the grubs, which have their greatest field of activity between the bark and the wood. It can also make large holes through the hard outer wood of an apparently sound Douglas fir, to reach the core of the tree, which, through some incomprehensible instinct, it knows contains grubs.

The food of this bird consists chiefly of beetles and their larvae, mostly wood borers and ants. They eat enormous numbers of both. Other insects such as flies, caterpillars and grasshoppers seem to be taken incidentally. Little vegetable food is taken, and this is chiefly wild berries.

It is interesting to note that on the Christmas Census, with all our experts ranging through the country from Witty's Lagoon, to the Highland District on the west, and going north halfway up the Saanich peninsula, only five pileated woodpeckers were seen or heard, and its call carries for a considerable distance. It is a high-pitched stentorian note, which is not exactly laughter, although something like it in form. This, if heard, would have led our bird-watchers to the bird itself.

A.R.D.

CHRISTMAS BIRD CENSUS

Being birds seen within a 15 mile diameter circle

SPECIES:	A	B	C	D
LOON, Common		1	15	
Yellow-Billed				
Arctic				
Red-throated			15	
GREBE, Red-necked			14	
Horned	4	1	24	8
Eared			7	2
Western		1	600	19
Pied-billed	2	5	2	2
CORMORANT, Double-crested			41	25
Brandt			4	
Pelagic	1		11	5
HERON, Great Blue	2	8	12	7
SWAN, Whistling	1			
GOOSE, Canada	34	11		28
White-fronted				
Snow				
DUCK, Mallard	62	61	92	59
Gadwall				
Pintail	10		1	
Green-winged Teal				2
European Widgeon	1			
American Widgeon	777	90	6	38
Shoveler	12	35		1
Redhead				
Ring-necked	1	245	3	13
Canvasback			3	12
Greater Scaup	11	12	223	190
Lesser Scaup				
Common Goldeneye		4	53	26
Barrow's Goldeneye		6		4
Bufflehead	12	25	301	75
Oldsquaw	3		24	
Harlequin				
SCOTER, White-winged	1	10	190	5
Surf		10	154	
Common				
RUDDY DUCK	13	3	135	6
MERGANSER, Hooded	9		2	16
Common	109		7	600
Red-breasted	5	1	27	206

VICTORIA, B.C. DECEMBER 23, 1961

E	F	G	I	J	K	L	TOTAL
	7	5	3		3	6	40
	1						1
	1	4					5
		1				27	43
7	22	5	4				52
27	119	365	37		4	30	619
	42	1	6			7	65
	70	52	8			1	751
	1		10				22
16	1	1				3	87
	27	14	7			65	117
10	116	114	14			150	420
1	3	1	3			7	34
							1
1			6				80
	1						1
			1				1
355	57	24	415	890	36	12	2063
						1	1
	1			325	1		338
	2	5	4	325	9	15	362
							1
178	889	130	894	2960	53	50	6065
2	58		53	90	1		252
			1				1
			81				343
7			5				27
308	849	245	29			100	1967
2	46		1				49
30	99	59	80		6	30	387
							10
184	322	100	25	20	5	30	1099
	43	35	23			50	178
5	89	46				100	240
6	112	222	36			150	732
34	64	63	39			75	439
					6		6
	4	12	24				197
3	22	8	35			45	140
			48				764
16	38	16	8			20	337

CHRISTMAS BIRD CENSUS - Continued -

SPECIES:	A	B	C	D
RAVEN, Common	4	16	1	20
CROW, Northwestern	113	515	72	745
CHICKADEE, Chestnut-backed	26	50	12	16
BUSHTIT, Common	8			
NUTHATCH, Red-breasted	11	8		1
CREEPER, Brown		12	1	2
DIPPER		1		
WREN, Winter	17	9	3	8
Bewick's	3	1	3	4
ROBIN	110	10	54	2000
THRUSH, Varied	3	2	1	6
Hermit				
Swainson's				
BLUEBIRD, Western	9			
SOLITAIRE, Townsend's				
KINGLET, Golden-crowned	29	70	16	73
Ruby-crowned	1	6	3	
WAXWING, Cedar				120
SHRIKE, Northern				1
STARLING	73	36	2	122
WARBLER, Audubon's				
SPARROW, House			58	10
MEADOWLARK, Western			8	4
BLACKBIRD, Red-winged	21		1	
Brewer's	20	2	1	
GROSBEAK, Evening		2		
FINCH, Purple	4	9	7	2
House		1	127	9
SISKIN, Pine	279	363	285	60
GOLDFINCH, American	4			
CROSSBILL, Red	20	6	10	
TOWHEE, Rufous-sided	9	20	6	12
SPARROW, Savannah				
JUNCO, Slate-colored	1			
Oregon	67	115	56	82
SPARROW, White-crowned			1	
Golden-crowned	17	2	5	
White-throated				
Fox	2	8	2	4
Song	14	18	11	19
TOTAL	2937	2592	3211	5707
Species:	57	55	68	59

Total number of Birds - - 58,425

E	F	G	I	J	K	L	TOTAL
		2	1	15	6	2	67
11	438	100	75	100	250	50	2469
4	73	70	24	42	12	14	343
	60	30	14	36			148
		5		5		3	33
1	1			3	3	1	24
							1
7	2	10	9	1	6		72
2	7	8	6	2	16	2	54
291	292	848	2733	425	600	125	7488
6	13	26	6	1	5	16	85
		1	1			1	3
						1	1
			12	7	12	8	48
		1					1
26	18	44	32	20	4	8	340
3	5	4	6	2	4		34
			1				121
	1					2	4
12	30	46	105	2	10000	30	10458
	1						1
36	41	21	36	40	15		257
2		23	3		6		46
1	2	1	2	12			40
32	14	3	212	260	204		748
			8				10
	11	20	17	2	27	20	119
	93	51	88	2		12	383
	150	200	315	60	400	65	2177
	3						7
	4			25		15	80
15	23	29	14	21	16		165
			1				1
	1	1	1				4
76	135	200	300	250	69		1350
	1		1		4		7
3	8	11	2	13	16		77
			1				1
4	16	8	1	3	6		54
17	27	38	32	4	17	8	205
1989	6027	4525	7774	7397	12178	4088	58425
48	83	72	77	50	43	54	

Total species - - - - - 124

NAMES OF PARTICIPANTS IN THE BIRD COUNT
AND THE DISTRICT THEY COVERED

- A Mr. R. Mackenzie-Grieve, Mr. F. King, Mr. & Mrs. W. Sendall
PROSPECT LAKE, FRANCIS PARK, HEAL'S RANGE
- B Mr. T. Briggs, Mr. & Mrs. J. Palmer, Miss J. Hannay,
Miss L. Halsall
FLORENCE AND LANGFORD LAKES. GOLDSTREAM
PARK.
- C Mr. D. Stirling, Mr. D. Guthrie, Mrs. B. Westerborg, Mr. R. Barnes
ESQUIMALT LAGOON TO WITTY'S LAGOON
- D Miss L. Roberts, Mr. K. R. Beckett, Mr. W. Adams
PORTAGE INLET, VIEW ROYAL, THETIS LAKE.
- E Mr. J. M. Barnett, Rev. and Mrs. D. Sparling
BEACON HILL PARK: GORGE.
- F Mr. G. A. Poynter, Mr. B. Reith, Mr. R. Fryer
CLOVER POINT TO CATTLE POINT.
- G Mr. and Mrs. A. R. Davidson
TEN MILE POINT: GORDON HEAD.
- I Mr. R. Y. Edwards, Mrs. H. M. Bell, Dr. E. M. Hagmeier,
Mr. M. Matheson, Mr. J. E. Underhill, Mrs. P. Monckton.
ROYAL OAK AVE. ELK AND BEAVER LAKES
- J Miss E. K. Lemon, Mrs. M. Slocombe, Mr. D. A. Hancock
WILKINSON, BURNSIDE & INTERURBAN AREA.
- K Mr. F. L. Beebe, Mrs. W. L. Taylor, Mr. R. Huckin,
Miss Toni Kirkpatrick.
CENTRAL SAANICH AREA
- L Mr. C. J. Guiguet
WATERS ADJACENT TO DISCOVERY ISLAND

JUNIORS PARTICIPATING:

Nancy Chapman
Gail Moyer,
Chris Morgan
Jerry Nelson

Fourteen additional species were seen in the area during the count period, but not on the count day, as follows:- fulmar; wood duck; golden eagle; whimbrel; Virginia rail; glaucous gull; ring-billed gull; Bonaparte gull; rhinoceros auklet; tufted puffin; Lewis woodpecker; long-billed marsh wren; orange-crowned warbler; brown-headed cowbird.

THE CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT IN BEACON HILL PARK

by J. M. Barnett

After a week of gales and showers we had a break in the weather. On the day of the count there was little or no sunshine but the temperature was moderate. Winds were light, and rain was confined to one brief shower in the afternoon.

We were disappointed at the absence of the European widgeon this year in the park, and the four wood ducks, which had been there the previous day, but this was compensated for by the presence of two young western gulls.

The Rev. and Mrs. Sparling found two sapsuckers, and reported a large number of robins, varied thrush, towhees and Brewer blackbirds.

A heron flying over and a redwing blackbird were unexpected species, which helped swell the total.

In this beautiful one hundred and fifty-four acres of parkland and the adjoining waterfront we found thirty-nine species of birds, a total which would be hard to equal in any area of comparative size in Canada at this time of the year.

THE CHRISTMAS COUNT: GORDON HEAD & 10 MILE POINT

by Eleanor & Albert Davidson

To reach a total of 124 species of birds on one winter's day in this area meant that the groups in the field put in a really busy day, and also that most of them must have seen one or more unusual species.

Our total for this district was 71, an average figure for this time of year, and our one special bird was a Townsend solitaire, which was seen where Gordon Head Road goes down over the rocks into the sea.

This is a bird one expects to find in the summer time in the interior, and not in the middle of winter on the edge of the sea.

WILD FLOWERS FOUND IN BLOOM

January 10, 1962.

Cat's-ear (*Hypochaeris radicata*)
 perennial daisy (*Bellis perennis*)
 common groundsel (*Senecio vulgaris*)
 hawk's beard (*Crepis capillaris*)
 common thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*)
 tree lupine (*Lupinus arboreus*)
 broom (*Cytisus scoparius*)
 gorse (*Ulex europaeus*)
 dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*)
 yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*)
 gumweed (*Grindelia integrifolia*)
 shepherd's purse (*Capsella bursapastoris*)
 yellow rocket (*Barbarea vulgaris*)
 hedge mustard (*Sisymbrium officinale*)
 pepper-grass (*Lepidium densiflorum*)
 wild radish (*Raphanus sativus*)
 jointed charlock (*Raphanus raphanistrum*)
 avens (*Geum macrophyllum*)
 corn spurrey (*Spergula arvensis*)
 chickweed (*Stellaria media*)
 miner's lettuce (*Montia sibirica*)
 creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*)
 petty spurge (*Euphorbia peplus*)

Most observers in this area will agree that it is more than a little surprising to find that so many of our wild plants have felt comfortable enough to produce bloom at this early date. Part of the explanation may hinge on the fact that 19 out of these 23 plants are "immigrants". No doubt they find living conditions here more favourable than do their kind in the homeland. The other four of this list, gumweed, pepper-grass, miner's lettuce and avens are native (indigenous) here.

Many of the 19 non-native (exotic) plants have names with an interesting history. For example, *Hypochaeris* appears in "History of Plants" written by Theophrastus (372-287 B.C.), a Greek philosopher, who was a pupil of Aristotle. So if you are not yet acquainted with cat's-ear, you really are a little behind the times.

The word *Ulex* was used as a plant name as long ago as the days of Pliny (23-79 A.D.) but it is not known for certain whether it was applied to the same plant known to us as gorse or furze. *Crepis* comes from a Greek word meaning

"sandal", probably referring to the shape of its seed. *Cirsium*, also from the Greek, means "a swelled vein", for which ailment the thistle was supposed to be a remedy. Achilles is supposed to have discovered the medicinal virtues of "yarrow", hence its genus name, *Achillea*. *Raphanus* derives from "rha" meaning "quickly", an obvious reference to the very rapid germination of wild radish seed, a characteristic which it has in common with practically all the crucifers.

Many groundsel species are hoary in appearance and this is reflected in their genus name, *Senecio*, which comes from *senex*, an old man; or it might refer to the white pappus attached to the seed. *Lupinus*, from *lupus*, a wolf, refers to the fact that these plants were thought to devour the fertility of the soil; *Ranunculus*, from *rana*, a frog, because Pliny noticed that aquatic species of buttercups were found in frog territory; and *Spergula*, from the verb *spargere* meaning "to scatter". Spurge (*Euphorbia*) was named for a famous king's physician, Euphorbus. His patron was Juba II, King of Mauretania, who married the daughter of Antony and Cleopatra. Incidentally petty spurge has two interesting and rather surprising relatives, one being our handsome Christmas-time plant, *Poinsettia pulcherrima*, and the other being the huge castor-oil plant used so effectively as background plants in large flower-beds. Shepherd's purse has an odd-shaped seed-case, so it bears the name *Capsella*, meaning "a little box"; and *Stellaria*, coming from *stella*, a star, was chosen for the chickweed group because of their star-shaped flowers.

Often a plant's scientific name reflects the name of the botanist who discovered it or was the first to describe it. Two examples of such are as follows: *Grindelia* (gumweed) is named for Prof. D.H. Grindel, a Russian botanist; *Montia* (miner's lettuce) honours the Italian botanist, Monti.

This sort of information is not readily available for every wild plant but a little time spent on this phase of botanical lore can prove interesting and worthwhile.

M. C. Melburn.

A CHRISTMAS PARTY

To celebrate the success of the bird count on December 23rd we gathered at the home of Mr. & Mrs. Alan Poynter to compare notes and sum up the day's events. Many thanks to the Poynters for a wonderful evening.

NORTH SAANICH COUNT - DECEMBER 30th 1961

LOON, common - - - - -	22	KILLDEER - - - - -	62
arctic - - - - -	62	TURNSTONE, black - - - - -	13
red-throated - - - - -	3	SNIPE, common - - - - -	1
GREBE, red-necked - - - - -	54	YELLOWLEGS, greater - - - - -	5
horned - - - - -	144	DUNLIN - - - - -	37
eared - - - - -	19	GULL, glaucous-wing - - - - -	675
western - - - - -	565	herring - - - - -	6
pied-billed - - - - -	1	mew - - - - -	24
CORMORANT, d. crested - - - - -	4	MURRE, common - - - - -	17
Brandt - - - - -	3	GUILLEMOT, pigeon - - - - -	5
pelagic - - - - -	61	MURRELET, marbled - - - - -	18
HERON, great blue - - - - -	9	KINGFISHER, belted - - - - -	6
GOOSE, Canada - - - - -	75	FLICKER, red-shafted - - - - -	24
DUCK, mallard - - - - -	31	WOODPECKER, pileated - - - - -	1
pintail - - - - -	4	hairy - - - - -	2
green-wing teal - - - - -	40	SKYLARK - - - - -	34
Am. widgeon - - - - -	230	JAY, Steller - - - - -	1
shoveller - - - - -	2	RAVEN, common - - - - -	2
canvasback - - - - -	45	CROW, north-western - - - - -	265
greater scaup - - - - -	319	CHICKADEE, chestnut b. - - - - -	26
lesser scaup - - - - -	5	NUTHATCH, red-breasted - - - - -	1
common golden-eye - - - - -	85	CREEPER, brown - - - - -	4
bufflehead - - - - -	165	WREN, winter - - - - -	5
old squaw - - - - -	35	Bewick - - - - -	4
harlequin - - - - -	12	ROBIN - - - - -	1327
white-wing scoter - - - - -	352	THRUSH, varied - - - - -	11
surf scoter - - - - -	126	KINGLET, golden-crown - - - - -	19
common scoter - - - - -	2	ruby-crown - - - - -	5
ruddy - - - - -	264	WAXWING, cedar - - - - -	6
MERGANSEr, hooded - - - - -	10	STARLING - - - - -	340
red-breasted - - - - -	76	SPARROW, house - - - - -	46
HAWK, sharp-shinned - - - - -	1	MEADOWLARK, western - - - - -	6
Cooper - - - - -	1	BLACKBIRD, Brewer - - - - -	6
red-tailed - - - - -	1	FINCH, purple - - - - -	6
peregrine falcon - - - - -	1	house - - - - -	176
pigeon - - - - -	1	SISKIN, pine - - - - -	180
QUAIL, California - - - - -	37	TOWHEE, rufous-sided - - - - -	20
PHEASANT, ring-necked - - - - -	1	JUNCO, Oregon - - - - -	132
COOT, American - - - - -	66	SPARROW, golden-cr. - - - - -	24
		fox - - - - -	2
		song - - - - -	35

number of species 80;
number of individuals 6513

NORTH SAANICH BIRD CENSUS

by Alan Poynter

The count was planned for December 30, 1961 and was based on the same area as last year which was the first year we had attempted Two (2) Christmas Counts.

Through lack of counters it was not carried out in our usual efficient manner, but the few participants did enjoy a pleasant day carrying out a general coverage of the area.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank the people who did turn out and express a very special thanks to Mrs. G. Taylor who once again threw open her home for the lunch break in the delightful Towner Bay setting.

MISS HELEN BAIRD

The passing of Miss Helen Baird in December will be regretted by all who knew her. For many years a member, she took part in many of the botanical and bird field trips, and acted as our secretary for two years, from April 1954 to May 1956.

Her work had been that of a librarian, first at Princeton University and later at the Minneapolis Public Library. She retired in 1948, and, with her sister Margery, who was in charge of the V. O. N. in Victoria, made her home on Richmond Avenue, where they created a lovely garden on what had been bare rocks at the rear of the house.

We will miss Helen Baird, and, on behalf of her many friends in the Society, wish to express our sympathy to her sister on her great loss.

THE JANUARY AUDUBON LECTURE

Most of these lectures occur on Fridays and Saturdays of the week, but this month it will be held on Monday and Tuesday, January 29 and 30. Mr. Emerson Scott, the lecturer, is well known to us, and we can confidently expect an excellent film, showing the birds and animals of the Pacific North West.

AN EDITORIAL

by Freeman King

During the past year we have had some excellent lecturers both from the Audubon group and locally on the importance of conservation and the preservation of our natural resources.

The need of preserving our forests, our soil, and the pollution of our streams and lakes has been pointed out to us by many speakers, and is the recurring theme of many of the outstanding periodicals in North America.

I feel it is in the interest of us all in the Society to do all we can to help maintain and preserve our resources before they have disappeared.

Soil erosion has been called a "creeping death". It is not only fatal to the growth of plants, but to the development of man. It is a wasting of our capital, which cannot be replaced. Our forests produce 32 per cent of our created wealth in Canada. On this basic industry our trade and commerce depends. How are we using it and how are we destroying it by over cutting and fire losses.

Forestry represents one of the three major ways of using our land. The others are cropping and pasture.

There is no overall rule of thumb as to where trees should be planted or left in their natural state. Each scheme needs to be looked at individually, and the long term results as well as the immediate effects should be assessed.

We can live without houses or clothing for months, but we cannot go even hours without water. The flow of our streams is steadily taking away our soil, often through the poor management in the way in which the surrounding area has been handled.

How many of our rivers, lakes, yes, and our beaches have been put out of bounds because of pollution?

The harmful effects of pollution falls into three broad categories: danger to human health, direct economic losses, and damage to recreational resources.

The question is, what can we do as individuals? Each and all of us can use our influence on our Governments at all levels to insure that our resources are wisely used.

Remember it is individuals that collectively make up the whole.

JUNIOR JOTTINGS

by Freeman King

In spite of much wet and cold weather the junior branch have had a good month's activities.

At Francis Park they have conducted soil, plant, and bird surveys.

Work parties on trails and water pools were held to ensure that there will be water during the summer for fire protection.

A hike into the Thetis panhandle proved to be very interesting.

A party for the "A" group was held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. P.S. Watt on Bowker Avenue, Oak Bay.

Our display and exhibit held on the 28th December was outstanding. Mr. George Chatterton, M.P., opened the affair for us, encouraging the children to carry on the work of conservation.

A five week training course is being held at the Provincial Museum. Dr. Clifford Carl, Dr. John Chapman, Charles Guiguet and York Edwards are helping to conduct same.

A number of the Leader section were shown some of the work conducted at the laboratory of the Dominion Experimental Farm at Saanichton by Dr. W. Orchard.

THE AUDUBON LECTURES

It may be of interest to our members to know that these lectures have been sponsored by our Society since October 1st 1947, when the first lecture was given by Laurel Reynolds who is a well known photographer and lecturer, in Prince Robert House on Douglas Street, which building was demolished several years ago. Then the Crystal Garden Auditorium was used, but it was not very satisfactory for our purpose, neither was the auditorium of the S.J. Willis Junior High School, which was tried next. After that, however (September 1953) we have used the Oak Bay Junior High School Auditorium, to everyone's satisfaction. It is too small for our audiences, but is comfortable, with permanent seats and a raised floor, and having the lecture given on two consecutive days has eliminated overcrowding.

NOTICE OF MEETINGS1962

- Tuesday,
Feb. 13: GENERAL MEETING:
At the Douglas Building Cafeteria on
Elliott Street, at 8 p.m.
Speakers: Mr. P. Croft, Mr. R. Fryer.
Illustrated.
- Tuesday,
Feb. 20: BOTANY:
At the Museum at 8 p.m.
Speaker: Prof. Lowe
Subject: Discussion on Lilies.
- Friday &
Saturday,
Feb. 23 & 24 AUDUBON SCREEN TOUR:
At the Oak Bay Junior High School Auditorium
at 8 p.m. Both nights.
Speaker: Howard Cleaves
Subject: "Animals Are Exciting"
- Saturday,
Feb. 24: BIRD FIELD TRIP:
Meet at the Monterey Cafe at 9:30 a.m.
or Mt. Douglas Park at 10 a.m.
Bring lunch.
Leader: Mr. T.R. Briggs.

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.

A RECORD COUNT

While the 1961 Christmas Count for this district constitutes a Canadian record for the number of species seen, it does not mean that higher counts are not possible. In the count period for the last four years 150 species have been identified.

VICTORIA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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Minister of Recreation and Conservation

MR. J. W. EASTHAM
Former Provincial Plant Pathologist

Honorary Life Members

DR. G. CLIFFORD CARL
Director, Provincial Museum

MR. GEORGE A. HARDY
Former Provincial Botanist

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A. O. HAYES - - - - 1956-57
P. M. MONCKTON - - 1957-58
MRS. G. E. SOULSBY - 1958-59
RALPH FRYER - - - 1960-

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