

*The*  
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COVER PICTURES

September's cover picture, a dark hill silhouetted against a sky full of backlit clouds, the aftermath of a storm, was taken a few miles north of Duncan, when the editor was returning from a rain-washed visit to Alberni Valley.

October's cover shows a glimpse of Spectacle Lake, in Bowron Lake Park, 20 miles east of the historic gold rush town of Barkerville. Bowron Lake Park is a vast, beautiful wilderness area of connecting lakes and rivers - waterways that men of the Provincial Parks Branch are doing their best to preserve in their natural state for the benefit of canoeists. Oddly enough, this photo was also taken soon after a storm.

November's cover picture is of a puffball, *Lycoperdon perlatum*, of the family Gasteromycetes, quite common about this time of year, and edible. This particular specimen was a little more than an inch across, and is shown enlarged to emphasize the tiny spines on its surface. The spines usually wear off quite soon after the puffball forms, leaving net-like markings.

BOOK DONATED

By the kindness of Mrs. R. C. Farrow, the library of The Victoria Natural History Society has gained an outstanding book entitled "The Cry Of A Bird", by Dorothy Yglesias. A great deal of faith, understanding and sympathy is evident throughout the book, and there is little doubt that all people interested in the welfare of wild birds will enjoy reading it.

\* \* \* \*

## THE ROAD

By Freeman King

Over a hundred years ago early settlers built a road to give them access to the Highland area. Traces of this old road can still be found in Francis Park.

A few of the pioneers settled around Pike Lake and Fizzle Lake, and cattle were grazed in the valley at the foot of Big Saanich Mountain (then called Green Mountain).

The old road wends in from what is now Burnside Road, and cuts through the park just below the cabin, then meanders along what we now call the Forest Trail. On the north side of the park are the remains of a plank bridge built across the end of the swamp. The road then turned west between rocky outcrops and on through the forest to Pike Lake, where it skirted a large marsh and rose up the sidehill to Fizzle and Fork Lakes. Branching off this road were several trails which led to Saanich Mountain and flats and ponds in the area.

There are also a number of places where remnants of old "skidroads" can be found. These were used in the days when oxen and horses were used to "skid" logs to the main road, and thence to a sawmill, to help build the original Victoria. Along these roads are many "buckskin" stumps, (stumps with the bark removed), standing stark and naked in the greenery of today's bush. Some of these old stumps are 10 and 12 feet high, and a closer look shows "spring-board" notches. (Springboards were a device used by early loggers to help them cut trees well above ground-level to avoid having to cut through the swelled butt close to ground-level.)

Perhaps it is a coincidence that the old road was built to more or less follow an ancient Indian route to the sea. Along the old road are many traces of clam shells, usually beside a stream or pool, where the Indians stopped to cook their meals. There are also "elk pits". These pits, used for cooking elk, were quite deep and lined with stones. A fire was lit in the pit and when it became hot enough, an elk, wrapped in leaves and hide, was lowered into the pit, covered with earth, and left to cook. (In those days, elk were common in the area.)

If the old road could talk, it would be able to tell many fascinating tales of people who travelled that way in what was then wilderness. Some of the stories would be

amusing, some tragic. Accounts of successes and failures, weddings, birth and deaths, - the trials and tribulations and occasional joys of those who prepared the way for us.

## DUKE OF EDINBURGH CONSERVATION MESSAGE

The following is an extract from a message from the Duke of Edinburgh, read by Dr. H. R. Fletcher, Regius Keeper of the Royal Botanical Garden, during the Tenth International Botanical Congress, August 1964, Edinburgh, Scotland.

"As mankind spreads his activities over every available piece of land area, so the problem of the conservation of wild populations becomes more acute. Perhaps the greatest difficulty of all is to bring some measure of control to the indiscriminate exploitation of wild plant and forest populations."

## SEA BIRDS OFF TOFINO

By Betty Westerborg

If you want to see pelagic birds, make friends with a west coast fisherman and persuade him to take you along on a day's fishing. It will be a long day - start before sunrise and dock after sunset, but worth it if the weather is clear.

At 5:30 A.M. on August 31, Norma Haas and I left Tofino with Mr. & Mrs. F. Maier and their small son, aboard their troller, "Keitha M". Fortunately, it was a perfect day, with a clear sky and no wind.

Tofino Harbour is a breath-taking scene, backgrounded by rugged mountains. As we left it behind we saw the usual scoters, cormorants and gulls.

By the time we had 20 fathoms under us, we saw more and more pelagic birds - marbled murrelets, and Arctic loons. Then came shearwaters, skimming low and gliding down between swells. They all appeared to be sooty shearwaters, and for the rest of the day were a common sight. Murres, travelling in small tight flocks, were more plentiful though, and we saw about 500.

Naturally, we were hoping to see an albatross, but

since there were boats further out, and we were fishing at only 40 fathoms, our chances were slim. The Maiers said they had seen them quite often, but in the 50-fathom range.

However, a lone tufted puffin, that flew past astern, compensated somewhat for the lack of an albatross. Another good sight was a pomarine jaeger that flew over-head. We had a good look at its peculiar twisted tail feathers. We also saw several parasitic jaegers.

The commonest gull at sea was Sabines, which travelled in small flocks of about 50. We saw no Bonapartes.

Off Tofino, even on a perfect day, there is a tremendous ground swell, which is rather conducive to seasickness. I must admit, I had to run to the side a couple of times, but was able to continue birding without delay. I found out that night that even if my lunch wouldn't stay down, my appetite on land had not been impaired.

The deep swells made bird photography virtually impossible, but we were able to get scenery and shots of boats' masts as their hulls disappeared in the troughs.

Our afternoon lethargy was dispelled when a fulmar landed nearby, affording us an excellent chance for close observation. We saw 15 of these birds throughout the remainder of the day. We also saw red phalaropes (20) and fork-tailed petrels (50).

As we returned to the harbour, the sun was sinking behind Lennard Island, silhouetting the lighthouse, and providing a striking photograph.

Next day, to top off our west coast holiday, we saw a very tame buff-breasted sandpiper on the beach at Wick-aninnish Beach Park. This was an unusual place to find this bird which normally prefers a grassy field. We were able to get several photographs of it, and the bird was still there when we left the next day.

#### COMMENDATION

Several months ago, our secretary, Miss Edith Valens, received a letter from The American Museum of Natural History, New York. The first paragraph read, "A few days ago, we received Vol.10, nos.1-3 of your Victoria Naturalist. We feel that there may be enough of value to warrant adding this to our collection."

A very pleasant thing to be said about our little magazine, and a pat on the back for the editor and contributors of ten years ago.

#### BIRDS FOR THE RECORD

White Pelican - - - - Esquimalt Lagoon - Sept. 16th & 17th,  
Numerous observers.

Turkey Vultures - - - Over City  
Miss E. Lemon, Oct. 11th, (8) in  
number.

Mr. D. Stirling, Oct.10th, (23) in  
number.

White Fronted Geese - Cadboro Bay,  
Mr. R. McKenzie-Grieve, Oct. 12th,  
(8) in number.

White Throated Sparrow - - - Cadboro Bay,  
Mr. R. McKenzie-Grieve, Oct. 9th,  
(1)

Arctic Terns - - - - Esquimalt Lagoon - Oct. 11th,  
Numerous observers.

#### MITLENATCH ISLAND NATURE PARK

By David Stirling.

Mitlenatch Island Nature Park is an 88 acre reserve in the Strait of Georgia, eight miles north-east of Miracle Beach. It is well known as a seabird colony, and from May to August one can see, hear, and smell the intense activities of glaucous-winged gulls, pelagic cormorants, pigeon guilemots and northwestern crows. A pair of oystercatchers nest on the south beach, bald eagles frequently drop in for a snack, and as many as seven wandering tattlers were seen last August. Sixty-three species of birds were recorded last summer.

But birds are not the only attraction on Mitlenatch. In early spring the rocks and meadows are ablaze with mimulus, sea blush, and camas. Later comes a spectacular show of tiger lilies, then the rein orchids and ladies

tresses. In late June the cactus flowers are out and finally the floral season ends with the yellow of gumweed covering much of the island.

Marine life is rich and varied. The most spectacular forms being northern abalones, purple-hinged rock scallops, and large red urchins, all found at minus tides.

The amateur geologist will find raised beaches, granite erratics, and other evidence of recent glacial activity; while the archaeologist may see on the beach stone vee-shaped fish weirs built by Indians long forgotten.

Transportation to the Island can be arranged at one of the many boat rentals between Oyster Bay and Campbell River. A Park Naturalist is in attendance from May to September.

#### BOOK RECOMMENDED

The Lost Horizon, by Raymond F. Dasmann, published by MacMillan, is recommended for reading by all who are interested in conservation.

"The present trend of human society is toward a world-embracing monoculture in which only one kind of people, adapted to an industrialized culture, can survive. But the greater the pressures of society, the more a man needs to get away to a place where he can contemplate in peace the meaning of his life."

#### JUNIOR JOTTINGS

By Nancy Chapman

The Juniors have had a wonderful, and busy time, during the past few months. We decided to re-arrange the age groups, so that "A" group contains boys and girls from 9½ to 12, and "B" group has those of twelve and over. The total number for both groups is about 80, with more newcomers all the time.

Junior Audubon Camp at Oliver was very successful. Four of our members went and found it very enjoyable and educational. Everyone had a wonderful time, and our thanks go to Skip, who gave up his time and energy to make it possible. A very interesting trip was made to John Dean Park,

and the little pond below the picnic sites was thoroughly explored. We found many interesting creatures in the pond, and a number of interesting mushroom and moss specimens around the edge. We noticed a large number of dogwood trees in the area, and found many of their bright red seed clusters on the ground.

On a trip to Goldstream Park, we taught some of the younger boys and girls how to press leaves and plants. We arranged to have a few leaders from the older group come out with the younger group to help. In this way, while passing their knowledge onto others, they are learning how to instruct, something which every leader should know.

We were very pleased to have Mrs. Witherspoon, the Audubon lecturer, come on one of our outings. We walked up the powerline clearing from Burnside Road, and found all sorts of wonderful creatures, such as black widow spiders, jumping spiders, and mud wasp grubs in little mud cells. A beautiful specimen of conglomerate rock was found and inspected.

A study was made of the environment change which has occurred since the area was cleared. We noticed also the number of weeds and sun-loving plants that have come in after the trees were removed. We hope our visitor enjoyed it as much as we enjoyed having her with us.

Several of the older leaders, who are now going to University or working, came to Francis Park to help rebuild the bridges in the damaged area on the fern trail. They did an excellent job!

On Sunday, October 11, the Juniors entertained about 30 delegates of the B. C. Nature Council at Francis Park. These people were fed and given guided tours of the trails. Our thanks go to Mrs. W. Whitby who did such a wonderful job of organizing the lunch. It was very successful indeed!

#### NEED ARTICLES

This month's issue of The Naturalist is a slim one--- only eight pages. If the normal bulk of the magazine is to be maintained, we must have more articles. Please write up your adventures and observations and submit them to the editor.

MEETINGS AND FIELD TRIPS

EXECUTIVE MEETING: Dr. Carl's Office,  
November 3 Provincial Museum at - - 8:00 p.m.

AUDUBON WILDLIFE FILM: Oak Bay Junior High School,  
November 6 & 7 at 8:00 p.m.  
Speaker: Earl L. Hilfiker,  
Subject: "Wildlife of the  
Eastern Woodlands"

FUNGUS FORAY: Francis Park  
November 7 Meet at Monterey Parking Lot,  
(Douglas & Hillside) 1:30 p.m.

GENERAL MEETING: Douglas Building Cafeteria  
November 10 Elliot Street - - - - 8:00 p.m.  
Speaker: Dr. S. Lynwood Smith,  
Subject: "Who Lives Where on the  
Seashore and Why."

BIRD FIELD TRIP: Leader: Murray Matheson  
November 14 Meet at Monterey Parking Lot  
(Douglas & Hillside) --- 9:30 a.m.  
or Black Swan - - - - -10:00 a.m.  
Trip to Elk Lake - - Bring Lunch.

BOTANY GROUP MEETING: This month Botany Group is joining  
November 19 forces with Thetis Park Nature Sanctu-  
ary Association.  
Place: Douglas Building Cafeteria,  
Elliot Street - - 8:00 p.m.  
Subject: "B.C.Mushrooms & Fungi."  
(Illustrated)

**SPECIAL NOTE RE DECEMBER GENERAL MEETING**  
**Wednesday, December 9, instead of Tuesday**

**Speaker: Audubon Lecturer - C.P. LYONS -**  
**"NATURE'S PLANS & PUZZLES."**

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1226 Roslyn Road

### Vice-President

FREEMAN F. KING  
Telephone 479-2966

### Editors

W. D. REITH  
6882 Wallace Drive  
Brentwood Bay, B.C.  
Telephone 474-2223

G. CLIFFORD CARL  
410 Queen Anne Heights  
Telephone 383-8524

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