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# THE VICTORIA NATURALIST



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COVER PICTURE

In British Columbia, in Canada for that matter, and perhaps in North America, Thomas S. Francis Park and its development is unique in the annals of parks.

Six or seven years ago, the area faced the same fate as any other relatively virgin land in close proximity to an urban centre -- it seemed almost inevitable that it would be raped by logging and further violated by a subdivision. But, before its aged and loving owner died, he gave the land to the Parks Branch of the British Columbia Department of Recreation and Conservation. It thereby became a Class "C" Provincial Park and a public recreation area. That was its salvation.

The realization of its greatest value to humanity began when, in the normal course of procedure for a Class "C" park, administration of the area became the duty of a responsible group of citizens -- in this case the Victoria Natural History Society.

To bring the promise of their new charge to fulfillment, the Natural History Society chose to pass responsibility for the care of the park to Freeman "Skipper" King and his (at that time) embryo Junior Group. The Society could not have made a better choice. Under the guiding ways of Skipper, the youngsters went to work. Now, with a minimum amount of aid from adults, the park has nature trails, a nature house, a laboratory and a caretaker's house complete with caretaker. Since 1961, 75,000 visitors have strolled the trails. The nature house is always stocked with exhibits of plant, insect and other life currently active in the park. Several promising students, now in senior high school grades or university, began their detailed studies of biology in the park laboratory. At all times, the caretaker keeps a friendly but watchful eye on whoever comes or goes.



Time means very little to some of the life in the park, but it has meant a great deal to the original group of youngsters on Skipper's team. They are now the seniors and leaders of the Junior Group; they have had the satisfaction of seeing a proposal become a reality and have learned a lot in the process; they have seen hundreds of people enjoy the results of their labour. The boys' frames have filled out and their voices deepened in the process. The girls have become more shapely -- in fact, one of them married a week or two ago. Perhaps it will not be so very long before Skipper casts a grandfatherly eye on the junior of a one time junior naturalist.

This month's cover picture shows the youngsters pitching in with a will, as they always do, to get on with their latest self-imposed task, a three-mile Centennial Trail.

Photo by Bill Reith.

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#### BIRD NAMES IN CANADA AND BRITAIN

By Jeremy Tatum

When an Englishman arrives in Canada, he probably already knows he must call petrol gasoline and lorries trucks, but he may well be surprised to learn that one drives on the pavement. He probably knows what drapes are, but has no idea what a valance is. He will learn that men wear suspenders, but that it would be very effeminate to carry a purse. His trousers will no longer have turn-ups, but his pants will have cuffs.

If he is a birdwatcher, he has still further adjustments to make to his vocabulary. There are many birds common to Britain and to Canada which have different names in the two countries and there are similar names which are attached to different birds. This article is an explanation of these differences.

Loons are called divers in Britain, and the four species are as follows (North American names first):

Arctic or Pacific loon	Black-throated diver
Common loon	Great northern diver
Yellow-billed loon	White-billed diver
Red-throated loon	Red-throated diver

#### Grebes:

Holboell's grebe	Red-necked grebe
Horned grebe	Slavonian grebe
Eared grebe	Black-necked grebe

The petrels are confusing since Leach's petrel is called in Britain either Leach's petrel or fork-tailed petrel, whereas the fork-tailed petrel sometimes seen off Victoria is a different species unknown in Europe.

The white pelican of Europe is not the same species as the North American white pelican, but this is unlikely to trouble an English birdwatcher unless he visits Eastern Europe.

The Canadian great blue heron is not the same species as the heron of Britain, although it looks very similar. The British heron is sometimes called the grey heron, but this is not unusual amongst amateur birdwatchers in England. The American egret is conspecific with the great white heron of Europe; but in America, the great white heron refers to a different species. The black-crowned night heron is sometimes seen in England, where it is known simply as the night heron. The bittern in England is a different species from that on this continent.

Amongst the ducks, the names are for the most part the same on both sides of the Atlantic. The teal of Europe is very similar to our green-winged teal, but it is a distinct species distinguishable in the field. The wigeon of Europe (spelled without a "d" in England) is not the same bird as our baldpate widgeon; it is sometimes in the Victoria area in winter. The scaup of Britain is the greater scaup, and in spite of repeated claims, there is no authentic record of a lesser scaup in England.

There are also the following differences (North American names first).

Old squaw	Long-tailed duck
White-winged scoter	Velvet scoter
Common merganser	Goosander

The white-winged and velvet scoters are often regarded as different species. Amongst the geese, the only difficulty is that in England the Brant and black Brant are regarded as subspecies of a single species called the Brent goose.

Vultures in Europe are quite unrelated to those in

North America, and there are species known as black vulture on both continents. The word buzzard is not officially used by birders in Canada, and it usually suggests a vulture-like bird. In England, the buteo hawks are known as buzzards, and the one species common to both countries is called rough-legged buzzard in England and rough-legged hawk in Canada.

The sparrow hawk causes some confusion, for in Britain the sparrow hawk is an accipiter not unlike our sharp-shinned hawk. There is a bird in England which looks a bit like what a Canadian would call a sparrow hawk, but which is called a kestrel. Consequently, an Englishman would refer to the North American bird as an American kestrel. Other differences amongst birds of prey are:-

Marsh hawk	Hen harrier
Pigeon hawk	Merlin

The marsh harrier of Britain does not occur on this continent and is not the same bird as our marsh hawk.

Willow ptarmigan	Willow grouse
Ring-necked pheasant	Pheasant
Hungarian partridge	Partridge

The European and North American purple gallinules are different species and so are the coots. The moorhen of England is known on this continent as the Florida gallinule.

Shorebirds (sandpipers, plovers, etc.) are known collectively in Britain as waders. The word peep is not used. Only the little stint (very similar to our least sandpiper) and the rare Temminck's stint would be small enough to qualify. Some ornithologists regard the very similar black and white oystercatchers of Europe and North America as different species; the "lumpers" regard the two and even the black oystercatchers as all belonging to one species. The rock and Aleutian sandpipers here are regarded as subspecies of a single species. In England, a bird called the purple sandpiper may also be a subspecies of the rock sandpiper, although some authorities regard it as a separate species. There is also

controversy as to whether the semipalmated plover of North America is conspecific with the ringed plover of Britain.

Snowy plover	Kentish plover
Black-billed plover	Grey plover
Ruddy turnstone	Turnstone
Wilson's snipe	Snipe
Red-backed sandpiper or Dunlin	Dunlin (always)
Hudsonian curlew or Whimbrel	Whimbrel (always)
Lesser yellowlegs	Yellowshank
Red phalarope	Grey phalarope
Northern phalarope	Red-necked phalarope

The woodcocks of the two countries are different species; so are the golden plovers. Dowichers have sometimes been seen in England, where they were known at one time as red-breasted snipe, although the name dowicher is now used. I do not know whether the species involved has been reliably identified. The avocets are different species, and the black-winged stilt of Europe is not the same bird as the black-necked stilt of North America.

Amongst the sea-birds, there are these differences:-

Parasitic jaeger	Arctic skua
Pomarine jaeger	(Pomatorhine skua (Pomarine skua
Long-tailed jaeger	Long-tailed skua
Skua	Great skua
Mew or short-billed gull	Common gull
Black-legged kittiwake	Kittiwake
Least tern	Little tern
Cabot's tern	Sandwich tern

Alcids are called collectively auks in Britain, rather than alcids (except among professionals to whom "alcid" is a "scientific" name)

Razor-billed auk	Razorbill
Dovekie	Little auk
Common murre	Guillemot
Thick-billed murre	Brunnich's guillemot

There are three very similar doves sometimes seen in



England, two of which are called collared dove and the other is the Barbary dove. One of the collared doves, Streptopelia risoria, and the Barbary dove are escapees from captivity and do not really count. The other collared dove, S. decaoto, is a true wild bird which has only recently colonized England. The point of mentioning that here is that S. risoria also occurs on this continent as an escapee (near Los Angeles) and is listed in Peterson as the ringed turtle dove. The turtle dove of Britain is a different species.

The few owls that occur in Canada and Britain bear the same names in both countries, but the name pygmy owl refers to two different species. The European pygmy owl has not been recorded in Britain.

#### Passerines:

Horned lark	Shore lark
Barn swallow	Swallow
Bank swallow	Sand martin
Black-winged magpie	Magpie

Chickadees of the genus Parus are called tits in Britain.

Black-capped chickadee	Willow tit
Red-breasted nuthatch	Corsican nuthatch

This species was left on Corsica when the ice-cap retreated. Corsica is the only place in Europe where it occurs, so that its world distribution is extremely curious.

The dipper of North America is a different bird from its relative in Britain.

Brown creeper	Tree creeper
Winter wren	Wren

The family Icteridae is a New World family which includes blackbirds, orioles, meadowlarks and others. The meadowlarks are not related to the true larks, and the orioles are not related to the orioles of the Old World. The English blackbird is not remotely related to the icterid blackbirds; it is a thrush and looks like an American robin, but is black. The English redwing is another thrush, not at all related to our red-winged blackbird. The English robin is a very small member of the thrush

family, not at all like the American robin (which is also a thrush) in appearance. Chats in England also belong to the thrush family, and are not related to the yellow-breasted chat of this continent.

The warblers of Europe are not related to the warblers of North America. The latter are sometimes called wood-warblers, but the picture is further confused by the fact that one of the British warblers is called the wood warbler (although it is not a wood warbler). American ornithologists regard kinglets as being Old World warblers, but British ornithologists put them in a separate family, and refer to them as goldcrests rather than kinglets. There are no kinglets common to both continents. Wilson's warbler is sometimes called the blackcap, but it must be remembered that the European blackcap is an unrelated sylviid warbler. North American redstarts are parulid warblers, but European redstarts are members of the thrush family.

European flycatchers are not related to New World flycatchers (tyrant flycatchers) although they look very similar externally.

The American pipit is a race of the water pipit which occurs in Europe. The subspecies which is common in Britain is called the rock pipit.

Bohemian waxwing	Waxwing
Northern shrike	Great grey shrike
Lapland longspur	Lapland bunting

#### Sparrows:

The house sparrow is unrelated to the fringillid sparrows of North America. No fringillids are known as sparrows in Britain. The tree sparrow of Britain is related to the house sparrow and is not related to the North American tree sparrow.

#### Crossbills:

This is a difficult group with several species and subspecies. The common crossbill in England is probably the same species as the crossbill in Scotland, although they have noticeably different bills. The species involved is the same as our red crossbill. The parrot

crossbill of Europe may or may not be a distinct species. The bird known here as the white-winged crossbill is a distinct species, known as the two-barred crossbill in England.

The siskin of Britain is a different bird from our pine siskin, and the goldfinches are very different. The English linnet is not the same bird as our house finch.

The redpolls are another difficult group. Several subspecies are recognized in Europe, with such names as lesser, greater, and mealy redpolls. A distinct species is known as the hoary redpoll in North America and the Arctic redpoll in Europe.

This completes what to my knowledge are the main differences in bird names in Canada and Britain. It can be quite confusing!

One last point. For migration studies, birds are ringed in England, not banded.

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SO SORRY, PLEASE!

(An error corrected)

by P. J. Croft

In an article of mine which was printed in the May 1965 issue of the Victoria Naturalist, the opening paragraph made reference to certain statements in the Victoria and Vancouver newspapers in connection with the release and recapture of specimens of the Monarch butterfly (*Danais plexippus*) as part of a research program being conducted by the University of Toronto. It later developed that the press releases were not accurate, and it has been suggested that, for the record, a brief note of correction should be published in the Victoria Naturalist, which finds its way to many important centres of learning.

The specimens in question were not released in Ontario, and did not find their way, as stated in the press, to the Canadian West Coast by the normal processes of migration. They were, as part of the experiment, sent from the University of Toronto, after being tagged, to Mrs. Margaret West, a research associate at Gibsons, B.C. and were systematically released by her, each release and

each recapture being recorded. The author has, during the summer, been in touch with Dr. Urquhart of the University of Toronto, who is conducting the research, with Mrs. West, and with Mr. Todd of Victoria who recaptured the specimen which "made the headlines".

Mrs. West, whose school-age daughter is an enthusiastic Lepidopterist, has the following to say:

"We received 248 butterflies last year. A small proportion were dead on arrival, mainly among the shipments received in July, which had been caught in the field. Later shipments arriving in September were hand reared and all in excellent condition. According to my slip returned with the annual newsletter to associates, six of our butterflies were recovered, but the list does not include the butterfly returned by Mr. Todd nor another which was reported in the White Rock paper in late September or October. The list is as follows: No. 5 released in July - recovered on Sidney Island September 15th. No. 46 returned from Gibsons July 4th - released with No. 5 on July 3rd. No. 120 released September 11th and recovered in West Vancouver September 14th. No. 126, also released September 11th and found at Britannia September 13th. No. 222 released October 2nd and recovered in Vancouver October 5th, and No. 228 also from the October 2nd shipment - reported from West Vancouver on October 6th and again October 12th. This is a very high average of returns; in the east about one butterfly in 200 is traced, but I imagine this is accounted for by the fact that Monarchs are unfamiliar to many people here and hence caught the eye."

It may be permissible to observe that the reference to the migration research project was incidental, and, since the Monarch butterfly had momentarily become "News", provided a reason for publishing an article on this interesting and handsome insect. The bulk of the article dealt in detail with the author's personal observations of its life-cycle, and is accurate in every respect.



# BANK SWALLOWS ON THE WEST COAST

By G.A. Poynter

On September 2nd, 1965, while on a one day visit to Vancouver, the writer stopped for an hour at the new Ladner Sewage Pond, which had already proven to be a great attraction to both resident and migrant birds.

Many shorebirds were feeding on the dykes, but the obvious highlight was a large flock of barn swallows (about 3000 - 4000) resting among the cat-tails. A close examination showed only twenty or thirty swallows of the bank, tree, rough-winged and cliff species.

Three birds observed in flight were identified as bank swallows and two others of this species were located in the midst of the resting birds. All field marks were checked, including call notes. Realizing this was an unusual record for the Coast, with Munro and Cowan indicating only one summer record west of the Coast Range, a note was sent to Miss G. Wright of the Vancouver Natural History Society, who was able to find several bank swallows in the same general area a week later.

In a return note, Miss Wright advised that four bank swallows had also been found on Mittlenatch Island on August 24 by Wayne Campbell of the Vancouver Natural History Society.

Any of our birders familiar with the Okanagan area will know this species on its home ground, but is it not possible that because of the difficulty identifying swallows on the wing, this species has been overlooked during migration period? Three sightings within two weeks may indicate this.

## JUNIOR JOTTINGS

By Freeman King

The Junior Group has been very active during the past month. They surveyed the burned area in Francis Park and explored the hill along its south boundry. An expedition went to Triangle Mountain to explore the newly formed pond. The open field and Garry oak groves off Burnside Road were examined and found to be quite different from the surround-

ing country.

A staff meeting was held to plan fall and winter activities. It was decided that the intermediate section would go to Francis Park during one Saturday per month to become fully acquainted with the terrain and ecology of the whole area because there are several sections that have not yet been thoroughly examined. During other Saturdays, they will go further afield. The leader section will go on field cook-out expeditions during the last Sunday of each month. Intermediate membership is now 50 and the younger section numbers 45.

The younger section will continue to meet every second Saturday for field trips with the objective to be governed by weather conditions.

We are pleased to welcome Mrs. Lorraine Jones and Miss Rita Gustus to the adult leader group. Their help and guidance is greatly appreciated.

All members congratulate Gail for winning the Freeman F. King Scholarship this year, and wish her much happiness in her new role as a wife.

We also want to thank Linda "Fuzzy" for doing a fine job of looking after the nature house and trails in Francis Park during the past summer.

During the staff meeting, the question of adding to the nature house and laboratory was discussed. It was decided that it would be advantageous to enlarge the buildings to provide room for wet weather meetings and study sessions. The Junior Group will now study ways and means of raising funds to pay the cost of the extensions.

More books have been acquired to add to the contents of the study library.

Ossey (Mrs. Osborne) has done a commendable job of arranging transportation for the coming season. We would be unable to operate without the co-operation of parents who supply transportation.

It has been proposed that the intermediate section hold an exhibition in the nature house during the Christmas holidays and there will be more on that subject at a later date.

CORRECTION: Murray Matheson's phone number is 383-7381

MEETINGS AND FIELD TRIPS

EXECUTIVE MEETING: At 8:00 P.M. in Dr. Carl's Office,  
October 5 Provincial Museum.

GENERAL MEETING: At 8:00 P.M., Douglas Building  
October 12 Cafeteria.

Speaker: Dr. G. C. Carl

Subject: Nature's Submarines  
Illustrated.

BIRD FIELD TRIP: To Island View Beach. Meet at  
October 16 Monterey Parking Lot at 9:30 A.M.  
Bring lunch. Murray Matheson leading.

BOTANY GROUP: Provincial Museum, 8:00 P.M.  
October 26 Speaker: Ted Underhill  
Subject: "A Wandering Botanist in  
the Okanagan."

AUDUBON WILDLIFE FILMS: Oak Bay Junior High School.  
October 29 and 30 Speaker: William Ferguson.  
Subject: "Once Around the World"

FUNGUS FORAY: Meet at Monterey Parking Lot, 1:30 P.M.  
November 6 to go to Francis Park. Bring tea.

INVITATION TO NATURE COUNCIL MEETING

If you are a naturalist, and especially if you belong to a natural history society in British Columbia, you are invited by your Nature Council to attend its fall meeting at the Faculty Club, University of British Columbia at 9:00 a.m., October 16, and to take part in its field trips led by experts on October 17, at 10:00 a.m., at Lighthouse Park and Caulfield, West Vancouver. This is your chance to see other places and to meet naturalists from all over British Columbia.

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