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PERPETUAL SPRING

I will never get used to spring in Victoria. Where I grew up, spring was a slushy business with water running everywhere. The three months between February and June consisted of eight weeks while winter never really gave up, followed by a month of glorious life exploding into summer. That is the way it is in most of Canada. But Victoria is different.

Winter never really comes here. Snow is unusual. It is no trick at all to find roses in January. Snowdrops from my garden often decorate the table on New Year's Day. In February there are ornamental trees in flower along some of the streets in town. When new storms make the nights moist and balmy in February, a few moths will be about my outside lights, and in the mornings after, my Bewick's wren will be piping away in the cypresses as I stand on the front porch to inspect the new day.

I don't own a winter coat any more. What the rest of the country calls "spring clothes" are the heaviest I can muster, and my light raincoat can be a stimulating companion on trips to the frozen East.

By most standards our weather is spring-like all the time. But as soon as the days begin to lengthen enough to light my way home from the office, I suspect that spring is upon us. But seasonal changes are so slow here that it is hard to be sure. And then it happens. Early each year, sooner or later someone comes in out of the night with the message that heralds spring. "Guess what", they say, "There's a big black slug in the dog's dish."

Others can have their bluebirds and violets to usher in the spring, but my herald is a three inch slug, lethargic and very shiny, returning to the dish that always rests by the back door.

R.Y.E.

GEORGE AUSTIN HARDY, 1888 - 1966

by G. Clifford Carl

The all-round naturalist of a generation ago was a very special type of person. He was one who was well-versed in all phases of the out-of-doors and at the same time was an authority in one or two special fields. He could name almost every tree, shrub or flower in the area that he roamed and could identify every bird and insect that came to notice. At the same time he could interpret the patterns of life that flowed by in terms of the rocks, soil and climate that made up the physical world around him.

Such a person was George Austin Hardy. Sparked by direct contact with a countryside rich in living things he developed a keen interest in nature as a youth in the Glasgow area where he was brought up. In those days, more than 60 years ago, formal training in natural science was limited but this lack was offset by living in an area relatively unspoiled by settlement and by association with naturalists who were willing to offer help and encouragement.

After receiving some training as a taxidermist and having taken some biological courses at Glasgow Technical School Hardy emigrated to Alberta where he continued his interests in natural history while trying to make a living as a homesteader. After some time he went back to Britain and worked for a period in London as a taxidermist and later at the Essex Museum. But Canada still had an appeal so he returned to the old homestead in Alberta where he continued to collect for the Essex Museum.

Eventually he moved to the Coast and joined the staff of the British Columbia Provincial Museum; he maintained this happy association for a long productive period broken only by an interlude spent on the prairies in the 1930's.

No matter where he was located George was fascinated by the whole gamut of nature. The plant associations characteristic of the various biotic areas of the province were a constant source of delight and a topic of study and the communities of living creatures along the sea-shore regularly intrigued him.

He was particularly interested in insects and a great part of his life was devoted to their study. For many years he assiduously collected and studied wood-boring

beetles until he became the recognized authority on this particular group. As the possibility of making new discoveries lessened among the wood-borers he became engrossed with studying the life histories of our less well-known moths and produced a long series of papers on these creatures.

To further these studies he became expert in photographing his subjects. A fine collection of colour pictures and a most extensive collection of exquisitely mounted insects attest his skill and patience.

While enthralled by the study of individual plants or animals George had the ability of seeing the whole picture being displayed by nature and he was very conscious of the orderly process of change going on about him. His interests along these lines culminated in published reports on the natural history of areas such as the Forbidden Plateau, Jordan Meadows, Blenkinsop Lake, Manning Park, and other parts of British Columbia visited on museum expeditions. In some of these places his lanky frame clad in short pants and armed with a butterfly net or plant press was a familiar and sometimes startling sight.

Naturally a shy man he tended to avoid meetings and other social gatherings but he became a faithful member of the Victoria Natural History Society at its inception and served as President during the years 1949-50. He was elected an Honorary Life Member in 1961.

During this productive period he published more than 80 articles, reports, scientific papers or popular accounts dealing with a great variety of topics. Foremost among his subjects were insects but his love of beauty never failed to be aroused by exotic-looking fungi and fragrant wild-flowers. Much of his popular writing had to do with these two great groups of plants and his last publication, co-authored with his wife, Winnie, and illustrated by Frank Beebe, featured wild-flowers of the Pacific Northwest, a part of the world he knew so well.

A VISIT TO DUCK LAKE

by Gladys Soulsby

DUCK LAKE is the name given to the 11,000-acre water-fowl refuge and management area near Creston on the southern end of Kootenay Lake ten miles from the United States border. It is an unbelievably beautiful part of a beautiful Province. The prize-winning movie ---

"VALLEY OF THE SWANS" made by the British Columbia Government and shown to our society a year or so ago concerns this sanctuary. This film is in great demand and is being shown all over Canada and the United States. There is especially good feeding and rest assured here for swans, geese and ducks on their migrations to and from their northern breeding grounds.

Three of us visited this area in May 1965 and got in touch with Mr. David W. Gray, Conservation Officer of the Fish and Wildlife Branch in the Provincial Building at Creston. He drove us around for miles on the top of dykes and, while it wasn't the migration season, we found many species of land birds, saw a heronry, and learned a great deal. Mr. Homer Eddy, a Forestry man, whom we met, told us that in his opinion it was a "MUST" for every naturalist in British Columbia to see the spring migration of waterfowl there at Duck Lake. The Fish and Wildlife people forecast approximate dates for the height of this migration and send out notices to interested Societies. One was received this year by our President, telling us that should any of us wish to see this event, the weekend of March 26th, a week before or after, was as close as it could be estimated.

Four of our members took the trip this year, leaving by bus on March 22nd. We had perfect weather. Mr. Jim MacDonald, a retired Forestry man and a member of the Rod and Gun Club, took us around in his car for two days, driving us wherever he thought we could get closest to any of the visiting waterfowl. How grateful we are to him as we had no car of our own! Yes, we did see swans flying (they were just beginning to arrive on Sunday the 27th) and it is a lovely sight! Thousands of Canada geese were seen and heard. Ducks absolutely uncountable of every variety, including redhead, gadwall and wood duck. Of course we saw mountain bluebirds and many other land species also.

Altogether our trip was a wonderful experience and we recommend that plans be laid and enthusiasm engendered next year for more members to see this annual event in our own Province's most important bird sanctuary. It is important that we keep our eyes on Duck Lake!

INNER HARBOUR
by Gordon Hooper

Normally the heart of a city is not a likely place to look for birds, apart from starlings, pigeons, and sparrows. In downtown Victoria traffic streams past the front of the Empress Hotel on Government Street; pedestrians hurry along going to and from the shops; businessmen and civil servants hasten to appointments and government offices. The stately Parliament Buildings nearby preside regally over this scene in the province's capital city. But one who takes time, in the words of the poet, "to stand and stare" (though with binoculars at hand naturally) on the Causeway directly opposite the Empress Hotel, may find that the view of the Inner Harbor spread before him has more bird life than might be supposed. Yachts lie at anchor, tugs constantly plough back and forth, and even pontoon-equipped aircraft taxi out for take-off, but here is what some twenty minutes or less per day revealed to this observer:-

Barrow's Goldeneye, 1. Almost daily Feb.16-Mar.2.
Common Goldeneye. Up to 4. Almost daily Feb.16-Mar.21.
Marbled Murrelet. Up to 10. Almost daily Feb.16-Mar.20.
Common Murre. Up to 3. Almost daily Feb.16-Apr.5.
Common Loon. 1. Feb.18.
Hooded Merganser. 2. Intermittently Feb.19-Mar.28.
Red-breasted Merganser. 2. Intermittently Feb.18-Apr.5.
Red-necked Grebe. Up to 18. Constant, Feb.-Apr. 5.
Western Grebe. Up to 20. Constant, Feb.- April 5
Pied-billed Grebe. 1. Feb.16- Apr. 5.
Scaup. Up to 16. Feb. 16 - March 31.
Cormorant. Up to 7. Constant Feb. 16- April 5.
Great Blue Heron. 2. March 9.
Canada Geese. 2. February 23.
Belted Kingfisher. 2. Feb.28, March 6, 7, and 8.
Mallard 2. March 29, 30.

MINDING YOUR BIRD MANNERS

Make no unusual sound or movement when birds are near.

Don't point - it scares the bird and doesn't help the person you are trying to assist.

Don't slam car doors. Avoid loud talking. Either may scare birds into flying or hiding.

When in vicinity where birds may be, maintain silence and don't move; birds' curiosity may cause them to show themselves. General conversation should be reserved for traveling or when returning to cars. -From "The Wood Duck".

WILDLIFE IN INDIA

by David Stirling

The Victoria Naturalist is not the place for a long account of wildlife in India, but if I may, I should like to mention just a few highlights and general impressions of my visit to that fascinating land.

Twelve persons participated in the tour of India. Ten were from the United States and two were from Canada. During twenty-five days spent in India we visited seven wildlife sanctuaries and national parks. Certain species of wildlife were common to all sanctuaries but some areas have been declared reserves in order to protect a particular kind of animal, for instance lions in the Gir Forest, rhinoceros in Kaziranga, tigers in Corbett Park and elephants in Periyar. Two areas were bird sanctuaries with spectacular breeding colonies of large water birds and many wintering migrants from north of the Himalayas.

Since Hindu religion teaches reverence for all life and since most of India's people are vegetarian, animals have remained abundant even though the human population is now nearly five hundred millions. True, large mammals have declined during the past hundred years but this is the direct result of habitat loss caused by constant demand for more agricultural land to feed the ever growing population. In rural India the human population is overwhelming but the variety and numbers of birds is a delight to the naturalist. Kites, vultures, bee-eaters, mynas, parakeets and rollers are everywhere. Cattle egrets seek insects almost under the feet of people harvesting wheat, black ibises nest in village shade trees and there seems to be a pair of huge sarus cranes at every waterhole.

Another and very pleasant fact is that a visitor can see several species of large mammals in a short time at any of several fine wildlife sanctuaries. Accommodation is available and trained staff is on hand to assist the visitor. This is in contrast to the situation in North America where there are no comparable areas reserved for large mammals and the viewing thereof. In this country official concern is for "game species" which are "managed" for the hunting public. The "viewing public", which incidentally outnumber the hunting public, is ignored.

India has many problems and appears backward in many respects but the Indian attitude toward wildlife is more enlightened than that of most western countries.

EDITOR'S NOTE

We of the Victoria Natural History Society were thrilled to learn some weeks ago that David Stirling, one of our valued members, had been chosen by Treasure Tours of Montreal to lead a group of naturalists to see Wildlife Sanctuaries of India. Congratulations, Dave!

"DIRECT QUOTATIONS FROM PUBLISHED REPORTS about WIDESPREAD POLLUTION OF SOIL, WATER and LIVING THINGS by TOXIC CHEMICALS used in INSECT CONTROL PROGRAMMES. An introduction to the Subject through Direct Quotations from Published Reports."

A COMPILATION by Dr. M.T. Myres, University of Alberta.

This material covers 58 manuscript pages and the document is distributed by Canadian Wildlife Service, Ottawa. It may be read at Victoria Public Library; our Natural History Society has a copy.

Dr. Myres expected persons professionally concerned to find this ready reference useful. But he also stresses the need for increased public understanding. Amateur natural history devotees are amongst "the public", hence we should read this compilation through to the rewarding "brighter side" at the end.

The facts are arranged in this order:-

- Pages 1-6 Various writers and groups views of the problem.
- " 6-30 Acute poisoning & chronic effects of biocide residues.
- " 31-33 Pollution of soil and natural waters.
- " 33-46 Controls, legislation and research.
- " 46-51 Resistance, integrated and biological controls.
- " 51-55 Environment - Variety or Monoculture?
- " 56-58 Additional British and Canadian quotations.

We will have read many of these quotes in the press and elsewhere during the last few years. Also we will have read many which are not included here; the important aspect of this is that Dr. Myres emphasises that he has been concerned solely with POSITIVE evidence - "actual incidents in all their scandalizing detail."

It seems useful to have so much evidence before us from so many worthy sources. No "escape reading" this, yet how can we amateurs do our part in reporting "natural phenomena" unless we try to be intelligently informed?

Remember there is a brighter ending!. The contributions by Charles Elton in the final pages bring forward the approach to the problem which should appeal to all amateur naturalists. Reviewed by Dorothy Palmer.

FRANCIS PARK

by Freeman King

Many thanks to all those who helped with the painting "bee". The many hands made light work, so all the buildings got a new coat of paint on the outside. The inside of the Nature House has now been done over. It looks very clean and fresh and new displays have been set up.

The Erythroniums are a real show now and the Calypsos are coming into bloom, as well as many other interesting flowers. The wood-duck nest that was placed by our treasurer, Mr. Morehen, has been taken over by an owl, a case of "well I am here first."

We are pleased to say that Ross Storey, one of the older juniors, will be Park Naturalist for the summer, so we should look forward to a new collection of insects.

Come, see and enjoy the many attractions of Francis Park.

BIRD NOTES - March 15 to April 17, 1966

by G. M. Bell

March:

- 15: VIOLET-GREEN SWALLOW, "many", Prospect-Florence Lks.
 15: TREE SWALLOW, 4, Quick's Pond; 26th, 2, W. Saan; Ap. 3, Bvr Lk.
 19: PINE SISKIN, 3, Mills Rd. on ground; Mch 30, 2, Bcn Hill Pk.
 April - numerous reports; flocks observed.
 20: GOLDFINCH, 2, McNeill Avenue.
 20: BLUEBIRD, 1 pair, Wilkinson Road
 21: WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW, Victoria Ave; 22nd, Flo'Lk; 24th, Central Ave; 26th, "several", West Saanich.
 22: MOURNING DOVE, Francis Park; 27th, Finnerty Rd.
 24: AUDUBON WARBLER, "in song", Flo.Lk; 26th, 2, Ten Mile Pt; since then numerous sightings elsewhere.
 24: ANCIENT & MARBLED MURRELET, 150-200, Pedder Bay.
 26: REDHEAD DUCK, 2, Flo.Lk. First seen here in 2 years.
 26: RED CROSSBILL, 2, Bedford Rd; 27th, 16, Mt.D.Pk; Ap. 3rd, "a group" in West Saanich.
 26: ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER, 5, W. Saan.; Ap. 3rd, Bvr Lk prkln; also on Chatham Island.
 26: MYRTLE WARBLER, 1, West Saanich Road.
 27: HUNGARIAN PARTRIDGE, 1, Mills Road.
 27: CEDAR WAXWING, sev. "passing flower buds," Vic. Ave.
 30: EVENING GROSBEAK, 3, Bcn Hill Pk & 2 Tel. Bay Rd.
 30: RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRD, Beacon Hill Park. Others since.
 31: SOLITARY VIREO, 1, Royal Rds; Ap 3, Blinkhorn Lk "in ecstatic song."

April: Bird Notes continued

- 2: GOSHAWK, 1, Quick's Pond.
 3: PIPITS - on Chain Islands.
 3: WHIMBREL, 1, Chatham Island.
 3: BARN SWALLOW, 3, Quick's Pond.
 3: Yellowthroat, 1, Blinkhorn Lake
 7: VESPER SPARROW, "in song", McTavish Rd. nr. W. Saanich
 8: CLIFF SWALLOW, 6, Quick's Pond.
 10: SAVANNAH SPARROW, 3, Airfield, Pat Bay.
 10: ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW, 2, Elk Lake.
 12: CINNAMON TEAL, 1, Burnside pond.
 15: TOWNSEND SOLITAIRE, 1, Burnside Road.
 15: CHIPPING SPARROW, Mt. Douglas Park; 16th 2-3 Francis Pk.
 16: YELLOW WARBLER, 1, Francis Park, Bird Grp. Field Day.
 16: TOWNSEND WARBLER, " " " " " "
 16: TURKEY VULTURE, Highlands, by " " " "
 16: PURPLE MARTIN - Munn Rd.
 16: BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER, 1, Francis Park; 1, Munn Rd.
 17: HOUSE WREN, Florence Lake.
 17: BONAPARTE GULL, adult, Saanichton Spit.

Observers: Beckett, Bridgen, Bird Group Field Day, Briggs, Davidson, Fryer, Holmes, King, Lansdowne, Mackenzie-Grieve, Matheson, McAllister, Poynter, Palmer, Soulsby.

Dates when the May migrants may be expected:

WILSON (Black-cap) WARBLER	.....	6th
MACGILLIVRAY WARBLER	.....	6th
WESTERN TANAGER	.....	10th
VAUX SWIFT	.....	10th
TRAILL FLYCATCHER	.....	10th
BLACKHEADED GROSBEAK	.....	17th
WOOD PEEWEE	.....	20th

The above, with the possible exception of the Swift, nest in this district.

Look for the following shorebirds on their way north during the first or second week of May:

semi-palmated plover, pectoral sandpiper, ruddy turnstone, western sandpiper, least sandpiper, wandering tattler, whimbrel (Hudsonian curlew).

These migrant arrivals with dates are from extensive records of Mr. A. R. Davidson.

THE TUESDAY GROUP

It was about twelve years ago when a few friends made an arrangement whereby they would meet at the home of one of them every Tuesday morning and visit some of the many attractive places still to be found in the country around Victoria. They were all interested in knowing more about their own countryside, and about the birds, their identification, their whereabouts and habits, and in extending their knowledge of the local flowers, shrubs and trees.

The group has met each Tuesday since that time. Augmented by other friends with similar tastes, their numbers have occasionally increased to twenty, with an average of probably ten or twelve.

They now meet at the foot of Bowker Avenue in Oak Bay at 9:15 a.m. and start on their trip about 9:30. During that fifteen minutes they can generally list about twenty species of sea and shore birds, as Bowker Avenue is one of the best in Victoria for observing birds. From here they have a choice of many beautiful places to go where birds are to be found, all within a half an hour's drive, as Victoria abounds in these places - if you know where they are!

The pace is easy; the observers ramble along the side roads through woods, or along the beaches or through the fields, enjoying everything they see, the flowers and the fungi, the warmth of the sun in summer and the brisk cold winds of winter, the colours of the trees and the sky, and, needless to say, each other's company. Just a few hours of relaxation, lunch in a warm corner of the woods, or in the cars, and then home, to take up again their manifold duties.

All one requires to participate in these rambles is a love of the out-of-doors and a bit of leisure time.

A.R.D.

PROCESSIONARY CATERPILLARS

Processionary caterpillars feed upon pine needles. They move through the trees in a long procession, one leading and the others following - each with his eyes half closed and his head snugly fitted against the rear extremity of his predecessor.

Jean-Henri Fabre, the great French naturalist, after

patiently experimenting with a group of the caterpillars, finally enticed them to the rim of a large flower pot where he succeeded in getting the first one connected up with the last one, thus forming a complete circle, which started moving around in a procession, which had neither beginning nor end.

The naturalist expected that after a while they would catch on to the joke, get tired of their useless march and start off in some new direction. But not so.

Through sheer force of habit, the living, creeping circle kept moving around the rim of the pot - around and around, keeping the same relentless pace for seven days and seven nights - and would doubtless have continued longer had it not been for sheer exhaustion and ultimate starvation.

Incidentally, an ample supply of food was close at hand and plainly visible, but it was outside the range of the circle, so they continued along the beaten path.

They were following instinct - habit - custom - tradition - precedent - past experience - "standard practice" - or whatever you may choose to call it, but they were following blindly.

They mistook activity for accomplishment. They meant well - but they got no place.

From - The Journal of Industrial Engineering.

THE GRASSHOPPERS

by James W. Haworth
Parksville, B. C.

It was a tragedy for the grasshopper. He (or she) had been sunbathing on the porch step and had been trodden on. Death was instantaneous. Not more than a minute or two had elapsed before I discovered the corpse, and while I was looking at it, another grasshopper came from between the steps and approached the scene of the disaster. When it was a few inches away it paused and surveyed the horizon. Very quickly it ambled over to the dead one and gave the victim a closer inspection. Then it patted the head of the corpse, and I feel sure it was murmuring something like 'poor old Bill (or Belle) drunk again! The tapping on the head continued for several seconds but got no response. It tapped then all down one side of the body, around the tail, and up the other side, all, of course, without result. A

very brief pause followed, then, in the manner of an elephant moving a large log of wood it butted the body with its head, apparently determined to get poor old Belle (or Bill) back into motion. As this action had no effect it reversed itself and tackled the job with its posterior.

Its tailend was inserted between the body and the step and then it heaved rearward for all that it was worth. In this manner it went again around the corpse, quite determined to get poor old Bill (or Belle) back upon his (or her) feet. The effort was fruitless, whereupon it withdrew to a distance of about eight inches or so, and sat down, to think, I presume. Whilst it was performing this very delicate operation, two other grasshoppers came over the far edge of the step and approached and stopped suddenly a few inches from the scene, and surveyed one of their brethren who was obviously D. if not D. After a few seconds they walked quickly over to the remains where they were joined by the first grasshopper which had come upon the tragedy.

Two on one side and one on the other side of the body they all began to tap around even as the first grasshopper had done. This action provoked no movement, so all three rested their tummies across the back of the unfortunate one, and seemingly settled down for a prolonged chinwag. The outcome was that one grasshopper tried to move the body by butting it, the second tried pushing with its rear, but the third one remained over the back of the corpse waving its legs as if praying for help to remove the poor fellow from public view.

These combined efforts lasted for a brief time, when, suddenly all three became motionless. Another few seconds, and some signal seemed to be given. They left the poor girl (or fellow) and, as it says in the Bible, 'withdrew afar off'. Here, some twenty-four inches or so from the misadventure, they put their heads together like three spokes in a wheel. Whether the oldest one did all the talking, I cannot say, but two remained quite quiet, while the third one did a great deal of leg waving. This conference must have lasted about two minutes, after which they walked in single file back to the remains. Thereafter followed another round of tapping, shoving, pushing and heaving, and they achieved nothing. Again a quiet moment, and then they walked away from poor old Bill (or Belle). Eighteen inches from the late lamented they took to the wing and went off in three directions.

This was one of the many times that I have wished that I were able to hold conversation with these creatures which we call "animals".

FAMOUS LINES from "Childe Harold"

by Lord Byron

There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
There is society where none intrudes,
By the deep Sea, and music in its roar;
I love not man the less, but Nature more,
From these our interviews, in which I steal
From all I may be, or have been before,
To mingle with the Universe, and feel
What I can ne'er express, yet cannot all conceal.

A NESTING RECORD OF THE GREAT HORNED OWL

(continued from last month)

by Keith Hodson

A week later I made my third trip to the nest for more photographs and to remove one of the young owls, which were now about two weeks old. When the female left the nest this time it was a small kestrel which harried her. The owlets had easily doubled their size in the time since I had seen them last. They were now able to open their greery yellow eyes. The snow-white down which first covered them was now in the process of being replaced by a denser greyish down. In the nest were the remains of three rats and one crow. There was no sign of the third egg.

On April 17, the owl in the nest was much more aware of its surroundings and when I poked my head over the edge of the nest it opened its mouth wide and made weak hissing sounds at me. Five rats and a robin made up the day's menu and, as you can imagine, the smell around the nest was beginning to get a little high.

The trip on April 26 proved to be the most notable one as far as the actions of the adults were concerned. After making quite a few close swoops at me the female made two passes in succession which literally raised furrows in my hair. Luckily I was able to duck at the right moment to escape a direct hit. As it was, she almost scared me silly as I clung for dear life to the non-too-steady branch that I was on. The ground looked an awfully long way down.

Twice I had to grab the small owl in the nest as I

took photos of it for it seemed intent on backing away from me and going over the side of the nest. A rat and a band-tailed pigeon lay in the perimeter of the nest.

I made my sixth and final trip on May 4. This time the owl seemed doubly intent on jumping out of the nest so I just banded it and quickly left. I didn't feel it was worth the risk of having it leave the nest earlier than usual just for the sake of some pictures. The female was quite aggressive towards me but I managed to wave her off at a safe distance. The remains of a few rats, a mouse, and another red squirrel were evident in the nest.

As it would have been rather difficult to get measurements, weights, etc., of the owl in the nest, the following data are based on observations of my captive owl, "Harold" (a poor name as I suspect that it was of the opposite sex).

April 11. Two weeks old. Harold is covered with a deep greyish down and a few pin feathers are poking their way through it. His egg tooth fell off today.

April 17. Three weeks old. Weighs $24\frac{1}{2}$ oz. The down covering him is much deeper and is a mottled greyish-brown.

April 23. Four weeks old. Weighs 30 oz. The fuzz surrounding his face and the base of his beak has now disappeared and his face has taken a more flattish, owl-like appearance. The primaries and secondaries are about half an inch out of their sheaths; there are no protruding tail feathers yet; his ear feathers are beginning to develop. Harold is getting quite strong and is beginning to try to tear pieces of paper with his feet and beak.

May 2. Five weeks old. Weighs 37 oz. Primaries and secondaries are two to three inches out of their sheaths and many body feathers are beginning to show. Tail feathers are about an inch out of their sheaths. He is getting quite active and does a lot of standing on the edge of his box in order to exercise his wings.

May 7. Six weeks old. Weighs $39\frac{1}{2}$ oz. Body feathers rapidly replacing down. Primaries and secondaries are about six inches long and his tail feathers about three and a half inches long.

May 17. Seven and a half weeks old. Weighs $45\frac{1}{2}$ oz. All main feathers have now gained almost their full length and practically all the down feathers on his back

have disappeared. His front is still quite fuzzy. He can now fly about six feet and it is only a matter of time until he will be flying freely.

Harold's food requirements fluctuated amazingly from two ounces one day to six or seven ounces another day but at about seven weeks the quantity did level off at around four ounces of chicken head and neck a day.

And so Harold grew bigger and stronger day by day. I was a bit worried the first time he flew up into the big tree behind our house and proceeded to settle himself there comfortably for the night. The first several occasions this happened I climbed the tree and retrieved him but this soon proved impractical and it became a matter of routine that Harold would spend the day in the big tree. At meal-time I would go out and call him and he would fly down to me to eat. Afterwards he would resume his post in the tall fir.

One evening I went out into the yard, held out a chicken head in my hand, and called. Instead of flying directly to my fist Harold landed on the ground beside a group of the neighbourhood kids and dogs who were playing at the time. Before I could do anything to stop it one of the dogs bounded across the lawn and grabbed him by the head. With one sickening crunch Harold was no more, and my episode with the owls was over.

It is doubtful that the owls will ever return to these woods for even now bulldozers are making inroads in this plot of bush at the upper end of the Rithet Estate. One of the trails pushed out by these monstrous machines passes directly beneath the now vacant nest.

I would like to offer my thanks to Miss Enid Lemon who was most generous in allowing me the use of her camera with a limitless amount of film at my disposal, and to Mr. Frank Beebe without whose help and advice I would have had a much more difficult time of rearing the owl.

FROM THE TORONTO AREA NATURALISTS

At Elgin Mills, Claude and I stopped to chat with Len Danear. Len not only watches birds but makes his living off them. He has a chicken farm and started mixing sawdust with his chicken feed to cut expenses. After a while the hens were laying eggs with cork centers instead of yolks. Finally he was giving them pure sawdust and they did not know the difference except they started laying

knotholes instead of eggs. Len put 15 knot-holes in the incubator and hatched 14 into chickens with wooden legs. The other was a woodpecker. He had to stop when 35 of his best birds died of shingles. By Slim Pickins. Hasn't the weather been awful?

A LONG WAY FROM HOME

by Terese Todd

One morning recently, as I was paddling slowly around Pike Lake, making a daily duck count, my binoculars focused on a mound of dead bulrushes which had piled up to form a little island as the water receded. Thinking it a good place for some duck to build a nest, I went over to have a look, and, as I came closer I was amazed to see a good sized turtle lying there basking in the sun. As I approached, it slipped into the water surfacing about five or six feet from me where he remained in an almost perpendicular position with head and neck and front part of shell above the water. It remained motionless long enough for me to have a good look at the very beautiful green and yellow colouring of its head and neck and the bright red of the inside front portion of its lower shell. It soon dived and the last I saw of it was as its drab, greenish-brown back lost itself against the muddy lake bottom.

Never having seen a wild turtle in my life - and this one must have been eight inches in length and rather larger than anyone's pet - I hurried back to the house to look it up in Provincial Museum Handbook #3 "The Reptiles of British Columbia".

The description of the Western Painted Turtle (Bell's Turtle) seemed the same but the only native habitat on Vancouver Island is given as Patterson and other lakes near Great Central Lake.

It is a long walk from Great Central Lake, especially for a turtle, so the 64 dollar question is "How did it get to Pike Lake so near the south end of Vancouver Island?"

NATURE COUNCIL MEETING

Everyone is welcome to the biannual meeting of the Nature Council to be held in the Tzouhalem Hotel, Duncan, May 7 and 8. Meet lots of naturalists. Go on a field trip.

Details from R. Y. Edwards.

THE WOOD DUCK PROGRAMME

For those who do not know, this programme has involved the erection of eleven nesting boxes for wood duck as follows:-

- 2 in Beacon Hill Park
- 2 in Beaver Lake Park
- 1 in Thrushmere (Capt. and Mrs. Bell's property)
- 2 in Lohbrunn's (Lakeview Gardens)
- 1 in Francis Park
- 1 in Thetis Lake Park
- 2 in Morehen's property

In addition to the above, three pairs of wood ducks have been obtained by donations. One pair were released in Goodacre Lake, Beacon Hill Park, on March 31st and two pair are being held at Morehen's to produce offspring for later release in favoured localities.

This is a long-term programme planned to bring the wood duck to the point where it will be on most birders' lists for Southern Vancouver Island.

I hope this is not a trend but at present two of the wood duck houses are occupied by screech owls. The two are at Francis Park and Morehen's. If this take-over continues, we will be forced to rename this undertaking a screech owl programme!

C.W.M.

JUNIOR JOTTINGS

by Freeman King

The field trips this month have been varied.

The younger section went to Bear Hill by the new trail going in off Brookleigh Rd. The route winds up through a mixed forest with large numbers of flowering dogwood along the way. There are several fine open spaces where many spring flowers are in bloom. The members also went to Francis Park where they met a group of children who wanted to explore the trails so the two parties mingled, making just over 50 people; all had a very enjoyable afternoon.

The Intermediate section went to the West Summit of Mount Newton where many interesting plants were studied. They also observed some of the life in the little lake where numerous newts were seen. Along the trail we found carpets of the little yellow violet and many trilliums some of which were of outstanding size.

The Leader group went for a cook-out to Iron Mine Bay, East Sooke. A really enjoyable day was spent. Many interesting plants and a number of sea creatures were seen on the little off-shore islands.

As this is written plans are under way for an exhibition of collections to be held at Francis Park on the 17th of May. Both sections will have displays and we hope that there is a good attendance.

The Junior branch will continue to hold their regular Saturday meeting throughout the summer. We never stop, I was going to say "sleep".

BLUEBIRD TRAIL

Carberry, Manitoba, was the center of Ernest Thompson Seton's nature study and the source of many of his noted animal stories. This area continues to offer much of interest for the naturalist through its sandhills and spruce trees.

Several years ago a Canadian Pacific Railway conductor, Jack Lane, and his junior naturalists began erecting nesting boxes for bluebirds, from Carberry westward to the Saskatchewan boundary. They have placed nearly 2000 boxes about a quarter of a mile apart and are now erecting them eastward from Carberry. Year by year the bluebird population has been increasing though a few tree swallows have made their nests in some of the boxes. Along this route western bluebirds arrive to nest late in March and the eastern bluebirds arrive a little later with the meadowlarks and robins. All this is very gratifying for at the turn of the century, naturalist Norman Criddle, who lived in that area, had listed bluebirds as rare in Manitoba.

THAT GULL MAY BE BANDED

Many of us interested in birds, and proud of our sharp eyes, are quite unaware that many glaucous-winged gulls are banded. There has been a banding programme of impressive proportions on this coast for years that has concentrated on gull colonies, and recently the ringed birds have received not only a standard aluminum band but also a small coloured one, a distinctive colour for each colony. Just how active the gull banders have been was evident on November 9 when I boarded a ferry for Tsawwassen at Swartz Bay. Before the boat sailed there were 37 glaucous-winged gulls standing on the rail at the bow of the vessel.

Nine of these had a standard government band. This was probably a chance assemblage of an unusually high proportion of banded birds, but if up to a quarter of our gulls are banded, how many bands have you failed to see lately? And are you looking for and reporting the coloured bands?

R.Y.E.

WITH THE EDITOR

1966 brought a change of editors. Mr. W.Reith, who did such a splendid job as editor, gave up the post and I was asked to assume his duties. I took over with misgivings but have found many of you most helpful. I am very grateful to Mr. W. Reith, Mr. A.R. Davidson former editors, Dr. C. Carl and Miss Monks for their valued assistance and guidance. Mr. Reith has been generous in providing most of the cover pictures. I also thank all you who have provided the many interesting articles to date. But that is not all; this magazine depends on you readers for its contents. Either you write of your special interest, review a book or secure some one specializing in a particular field of natural history to write for us. The editor cannot whip up articles from thin air. The complaint that "the magazine is for the birds" bears too much weight. This proves that ornithologists are writing and reporting constantly and those of you with other interests are not keeping pace. Come, now, produce and let us have a more balanced diet of reading.

The middle of August is the deadline for the next issue.

Have a good holiday.

"The Wood Duck" published by the Hamilton Naturalist Club in their March number reprinted, from the Victoria Naturalist of Jan. 1966 issue, Miss M.C.Melburn's article on the Stinkhorn (*Lysurus Gardner*) as well as the cover picture by Miss Emily Sartain. In the same issue they also reprinted "Starlings More Effective Than Chemicals" taken from our Dec. 1965 number.

NATURE CAMPS 1966

See April issue, page 93.

MEETINGS AND FIELD TRIPS

EXECUTIVE MEETING, Tues. May 3rd: Dr. Carl's office, 8 p.m.
Provincial Museum.

BOTANY FIELD TRIP, Sat. May 7: Meet at Monterey parking lot 10 a.m. for trip to Henderson's Point, Centennial Park and Island View Beach. Bring Lunch. Leader: M.C. Melburn.

ANNUAL MEETING, Tues. May 10: Douglas Bldg. Cafeteria, Elliot Street, 8 p.m. Nomination and election of your new Executive. Your attendance is an indication of your interest! A showing of members' slides will complete this 1965-66 season.

BIRD FIELD TRIP, Sat. May 14: Matheson Lake Park. Meet at Monterey parking lot 9:30 a.m. or Colwood Plaza, 10 a.m. Bring lunch. Leader: Mr. M. Matheson.

EXECUTIVE MEETING, Tues. May 17: Dr. Carl's office, 8 p.m.
Provincial Museum.

BOTANY FIELD TRIP, Sat. June 4: Meet at Monterey parking lot at 9:30 a.m. for trip to Cowichan Lake and Skutz Falls. Bring lunch. Leader: M.C. Melburn.

BIRD FIELD TRIP, Sat. June 11: Spectacle Lake Park. Meet at Monterey parking lot 9:30 a.m. or Malahat Chalet parking lot 10:10 a.m. Bring lunch and walking shoes. Leader: Mr. M. Matheson.

BOTANY FIELD TRIP, Sat. July 9: Meet at Monterey parking lot at 10 a.m. for trip to Saanichton Spit. Bring lunch. Leader: M.C. Melburn.

BIRD FIELD TRIP, Sat. July 16: Boat trip - Sydney Island. Contact leader Mr. Tom Briggs GR8-4145 for reservations. As the boat must be booked in advance, plan now to attend this field trip! It's a good one. Bring lunch.

BOTANY FIELD TRIP, Sat. Aug. 6: Meet at Monterey parking lot at 10 a.m. for trip to Goldstream Campsite and picnic area. Bring lunch. Leader: M.C. Melburn.

BIRD FIELD TRIP, Sat. Aug. 20: Cowichan Bay. Meet at Monterey parking lot 9:30 a.m. or Malahat Summit 10:15 a.m. or Robert Service Park 10:45 a.m. Bring lunch and telescopes. Leader: Mr. M. Matheson.

JUNIOR GROUP: Meet every Saturday at Monterey parking lot, Douglas at Hillside, 1:30 p.m. for field trips.

Leader: Freeman King. Phone 479-2966.

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