

Nov. 1968
Vol. 25, No. 3

Article by Freeman Keep

Harvey

THE VICTORIA NATURALIST



published by the
VICTORIA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Victoria B.C

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COVER PICTURE

Courtesy: Victoria Daily Times

COVER STORY

LEAFLESS OAKS AND UNCERTAIN SKY

By Ruth Chambers.

"Our Garry oaks," we Victorians sometimes call them, and we do have some beauties although many were destroyed as Greater Victoria grew.

But Quercus garryana - named in 1839 by David Douglas for Nicholas Garry, secretary of the Hudson's Bay Company - extends from British Columbia to the mountains along the central coast of California.

In our province it is the only native species of oak and is found on the east coast of Vancouver Island as far north as the Courtenay valley and on the nearby islands in Georgia Strait.

It is the only native oak in the State of Washington and is the principal native oak in Oregon. In the United States it is sometimes called by the local names of Pacific post oak, Pacific white oak, prairie oak, Oregon oak, western oak and western white oak.

In early autumn, Victorians with a tall Garry oak growing by the house, hear acorns striking the roof and rolling down its slope. The bronze leaves fall later. Then Victorians, of differing ages and types, sweep them from paths and porch steps, rake them from the grass, scoop them from roof gutters, compost them, burn them, bless them or curse them as the case may be.

But the shapes of Garry oaks, particularly against a winter sunset, are beautiful to behold.

References: 1) Native Trees of Canada. 2) Sylvical Series No. 10, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Portland, Oregon.

NATURE COUNCIL FALL MEETING - KELOWNA, OCTOBER 12

The following brief report of your delegate is subject to correction of errors and omissions by official minutes. Present were the full executive and delegates from seven of the eight affiliated clubs. Several observers were present from Kelowna, one from Vernon, and Mrs. Garman, Mrs. Soulsby, Mrs. Walker and Elton Anderson attended from Victoria. The meeting began at 9:30 a.m. and, with breaks for lunch and dinner, lasted until 11:00 p.m.

Main business of this meeting was a review of the aims and objects of the Council, and of ways and means of making B.C.N.C. more effective. The chairman had several suggestions as did Elton Anderson who also submitted opinions from other interested people. Your delegate had suggested that we centralize our executive and empower them to act on their own initiative; that we increase our per capita levy to give the executive a more realistic budget and possibly allow a wider distribution of the News letter; that we extend membership to include Associate Members; that we improve communication within the Council by having all briefs, etc. channeled through the Council Executive for further presentation; that we improve liaison with Government and Industry to make efforts toward conservation more effective; and that, as a means to this end, we might consider affiliation with the B.C. Wildlife Federation.

Following a full and wide discussion of every suggestion made, the meeting decided that rather than to continue as we had until now, we had to revitalize the Council. To achieve this it was decided that the organization be incorporated under the Societies Act. Peter Legge who had been revamping the constitution to conform to requirements of the Act was asked to proceed with the work, and to include in his revision provision for Associate, Individual and Sustaining Memberships; and a possible enlargement of the executive by including directors (regional), the enlarged executive to meet frequently during the year to conduct organization business. The Council as a whole would meet only annually instead of twice yearly as now. Finances were considered, and delegates were asked to take to their clubs for approval a proposal to raise the per capita fee from 25¢ to 50¢ beginning with the new fiscal year (next April). This will give the new executive a more realistic budget to

work with.

A Publicity Committee was set up, chaired by G.H. Potts of Cowichan-Duncan and to include Mrs. Soulsby, Elton Anderson and Dave Hancock. Copy for publication in the Newsletter to be forwarded to G.H. Potts, Box 533, Duncan.

As the incorporation will probably mean a change of name, it was decided that all Hasty Notes on hand would be sold at half price, i.e. 50¢ per packet rather than \$1.00.

Regarding the sales of A Naturalist's Guide to the Victoria Region, it was decided that profits from the sale of this publication would be shared equally with the Victoria Natural History Society.

Elton Anderson presented a comprehensive and well-documented brief on the clearing of Mica Dam reservoir, and a survey of proposed dam sites in the province.

Dr. Stace-Smith reported on a meeting of himself and Dr. Brink of the Conservation Committee (Vancouver N.H.S.) with Hon. Mr. Kiernan, Minister of Recreation and Conservation. Discussion took place on Provincial Park policy, and the committee were quite optimistic with results of the meeting. One advance, they thought, was that the Minister had in mind the setting up of an advisory committee consisting of professional personnel from forestry, mining, fisheries etc., and including representatives from various conservation-minded organizations in the province. This committee would be chaired by the Minister and meet at his call to advise on conservation matters.

Mrs. Gibbard, Naramata, reported on the Pacific Nest Record scheme, and asked for fuller co-operation of member clubs in reporting.

The next meeting, (Annual), is proposed to be held in the Comox-Courtenay area early in April, 1969. As the term of office of the present executive expires then, Mr. Elton Anderson was asked to head the nominating committee seeking candidates for the new executive.

H.D. Walker

HERRING BALL AND SEA BIRDS

During the fall months when the salmon run coincides with the migration of the pelagic birds, it is not uncommon to witness a herring ball. When in panic, large numbers of herring literally form a large ball on or near the surface of the water, possibly as a defensive measure in the presence of predatory salmon below the school.

The migrating salmon are often located by fishermen through the activity of sea birds attracted to the surfacing herring, and on August 28 with no wind and a glassy sea the writer observed a herring ball close in to Clover Point. A flock of transient Bonaparte gulls sweeping in tight circle and making occasional stoops to the water was the first indication of anything unusual and within seconds the entire sewer outlet population of glaucous-winged gulls were splashing and flopping into the area, their approach being quite unlike the delicate flight pattern of the Bonapartes.

Following the gulls were several strings of Brandt cormorant flying low over the water and only changing direction to join in the melee and literally dropping on to the water in the midst of the gulls, they promptly slipped below the surface in a very business-like manner.

During the arrival of these species, a pair of pigeon guillemots and three rhinoceros auklets had either flown in unnoticed or had been underwater in the general area, surfacing only after the arrival of the gulls and cormorants. One auklet struggled valiantly with a large fish, but lost it to a marauding Heermann's gull that was one of several in the area. Mew and California gulls were soon on the scene with several pelagic cormorants and a single sooty shearwater, skimming the water with the "flap and glide" flight so characteristic of that family, came in from the distant fog bank.

Within two minutes the splashing, screaming mass of birds exceeded two hundred and still more birds were pouring in. A flock of northern phalarope circled the scene at a distance but hesitated to join the free for all. Common murres that had been scattered in strings and loose family flocks prior to the excitement were arriving in numbers with the young of the year staying close to adult birds and occasionally "begging" for fish when the adults surfaced.

One dark phase and one light phase parasitic jaeger

arrived and dropped to the water to feed on the surface and make an occasional dashing flight after gulls of all sizes. Only one common tern came to the herring ball but the species had only been in the area in small numbers during the early fall migration.

Lasting for about fifteen minutes, the incident moved past the point with the tide and the birds slowly dispersed. The Alcids remained at the scene after gulls and cormorants flew off. A quick estimate of the entire flock of birds was 370 with 14 species represented.

No doubt the activity below the surface was as hectic as the scene above. The writer was left feeling that he had witnessed only half the incident.

G. Allen Poynter

BIRDS FOR THE RECORD

by G.N. and G. Hooper, 2411 Alpine Cr. (477-1152)

Sabine's gull (2) - Clover Pt. -	Sep. 17 - Ralph Fryer
Marsh hawk (1) - Island View Beach -	Sep. 21 -
Peregrine falcon (1) - Enid K. Lemon (Saturday Field Trip)	Sep. 21 -
Yellow-bellied sapsucker (3) - Towner Park -	Sep. 28 -
Buff-breasted sandpiper (1) - Witty's Lagoon -	Oct. 5 -
Mourning dove (5) - Wallace Drive -	A.R. and Eleanore Davidson
European widgeon (2) - Esquimalt Lagoon -	Oct. 5 - Ralph Fryer
Lapland longspur (1) - Cattle Pt. -	Oct. 8 - Tuesday Group
White-fronted goose (2) - Dallas Rd. - (Yacht pond)	Oct. 10 - Ralph Fryer

Migrants and winter residents:

Ancient murrelet (1)	Sep. 17 - RF
Varied thrush -	Sep. 21 - ARD
Hermit thrush -	Sep. 28 - ARD
Vaux's swift (50-60) -	Sep. 28 - ARD
Turkey vulture (24) - Sep. 30 - GNH; (25)	Oct. 8 - ARD
Eared grebe (1) -	Oct. 5 - AP

BOOK NEWS FOR NATURALISTS

The following list is of books which have recently been added to the Greater Victoria Public Library:

- Cloudesley-
Thompson, J.L. Animal twilight.
Garvey R. Animal orphanage.
Lovell, Sir. B. Our present knowledge of the Universe.
Gluck, I.D. It's all done with mirrors.
McLeish, J. Looking at chromosomes.
McClure, F.A. Bamboos.
Haas, E. Pride's Progress.
Dugan, J.T. World beneath the sea.
Miller, R.C. The Sea.
Hoyt, M. Jewels from the ocean deep: shell collecting.
Brewer, J. Wings in the meadow: Monach butterfly.
Keller, W.P. Under desert skies.
Kirkaldy, J.F. Fossils in colour.
Comber, L.C. Biology in the modern world.
Hardy, Sir A.C. Great waters: Marine biology - Antarctic.
Karp, W. Charles Darwin and the Origin of Species.
Ravensdale, T. Coral fishes.
Roberts, C. The scientific conscience.
Brooks, M.G. The life of the mountains.
Symonds, R.D. Hours and the birds.
Hallett, J.P. Animal Kitabu.
Andrewes, Sir C.H. Natural history of viruses.
Wiley, L. Rare wild flowers of North America.
Chapin, H. Search for Atlantis.
Costello, D.F. The world of the ant.
Clark, J.G.D. Stone Age hunters.
Lawrence, R.D. There the water-lilies grow.
Leslie, R.F. The bears and I.
Smith, J.E. "Torrey Canyon" pollution and marine life.
Levi-Strauss, C. Structural anthropology.
Dasmann, R.F. A different kind of country.
Vesey-Fitzgerald, B. The world of fishes.
Thorburn, A. Thorburn's birds.
List supplied by Mr.G. McBride, Circulation Dept. G.V.P.L.

DAWN REDWOOD AND BALD CYPRESS

Two closely related trees, dawn redwood or Chinese redwood, Metasequoia glyptostroboides and bald cypress, Taxodium Distichum, can be seen in Beacon Hill Park. Two trees of each species are growing near Goodacre Lake.

Living dawn redwood trees were first seen and described by botanists in China in 1945. Since several species of this genus had been known from fossils it was only natural for the term "Living fossil" to be used. Of course, "living fossil" is a misnomer for fossils are the remains of living things embedded in rock; therefore very much dead. The discovery of the dawn redwood has been called "the most exciting botanical find of the century."

The Bald Cypress is a common tree of the southeastern United States where it forms pure forests in swamps and river flood plains. It is found as far north as the Delaware coast and in the Mississippi valley to southern Illinois. An unusual feature of the bald cypress is the growth from the roots of erect woody projections known as "knees". These "knees" may be seen under the cypress trees near the bridge on Goodacre Lake.

Dawn redwood and bald cypress are difficult to separate. Both are deciduous conifers with soft green needles and shallowly fissured stringy bark. Both species also shed their lateral shoots as well as their leaves, but they can be identified by close attention to the following characteristics:

<u>Dawn Redwood</u>	Lateral twigs three inches or more in length. Leaves dark green, one inch or more in length, rounded end with tiny point.
<u>Bald Cypress</u>	Lateral twigs less than 3" in length. Leaves light yellowish-green, 1/2" or less in length pointed end.

Take a walk around Goodacre Lake if you want to see living fossils and cypress knees!

David Stirling.

WINTER STOREHOUSE

Often, during the winter, when we are tidying up the piles of flowerpots at Lakeview Gardens, we find a store of wheat grains in the equivalent of the "attic" at the top of the pile and lower down this rustic "highrise" will be the nest of the deermouse. Once, lifting the top pot off a pile, I glimpsed the tip of a tail disappearing through the drainage hole of the next pot. The mouse raced me down until she was finally trapped under the lowest. This indicates that probably she usually entered through the drainage hole of the top pot.

Last winter a comfy little apartment had been nibbled out of the middle of a pile of paper pots. Do the mice carry the wheat grains one by one from the sack of bird feed to this winter granary?

Unfortunately, the deermice have a passion for the seeds of rare peonies and magnolias, so I fear no mercy is shown them, and they are easily trapped.

Doris Page

JUNIOR JOTTINGS

The Juniors, with over ninety official members, are well into a good year of hiking, learning and fun!

At the beginning of the month, the intermediate group went to Mount Douglas Beach. It was fascinating, for each over-turned rock revealed an unknown plant or animal. The clay beds, studied closely, uncovered a story over a million years old.

The next week, the junior group went to Francis Park where the fall mushrooms were at their peak. The next Saturday, the older group had a general "clean up" bee at Francis Park. The Nature House was cleaned, the displays were changed, and the area round the Nature House was cleared of paper. Also, in one area of the Park, the young fir trees and broom plants were cleared to make an "artificial" meadow.

Last Saturday, the younger group went to Witty's Lagoon in Metchosin, where marine life (seaweeds especially) was studied. This month, also, eight leaders and Skip went on an all-day cookout to Saltspring Island, (There is no better way to learn so much, and yet have so much fun.) We also ushered for John Taft's Audubon film, "Central California's Coastal Plain."

Barbara Chapman

NEW FOREST

Wherever we drive on our island, the forest is always present in various stages. It is the economic base upon which we all largely depend.

A few years ago, the Cowichan Valley with its "stumps and desolation" was an ugly blot on the landscape. A short while ago, the Malahat Drive was a bare and ugly hillside. The great Campbell River fire left thousands of acres desolate except for snags and burnt stumps.

Today, these places are new living green forest.

Here is a chance for students and naturalists to see history repeating itself as it has done in the past.

About 300 years ago, most of the forest growth on the island was destroyed by a gigantic fire. This we can read from some of the very old Douglas firs and cedars that withstood the fire.

Perhaps the same kind of devastation took place many times before.

There are large areas of our province which should be utilised for man. But logging methods should be such that a living forest will grow again.

Some areas of our forest lands must be left with no violation by logging, mining or other commercial ventures.

These untouched lands are needed for recreation and for study. Such lands show the process of natural growth and are examples of the habitat of animals that naturally belong there.

Untouched lands can be kept. But only if public opinion is aroused, and enough people insist that such lands remain untouched.

Freeman King.

SUBSCRIPTION RENEWALS PLEASE: These are still lagging. Are you uncertain about yours? Or did you plain forget? Dues may be paid at the monthly meeting or sent direct to our Treasurer, Mr. E.E. Bridgen, 2159 Central Avenue, Victoria, B.C. Cheques or Money Orders should be made payable to the Victoria Natural History Society. The dues are printed on the back cover.

BEFORE MAN

Regrettably, there is no regular article for this space this month so, for readers who may not know it, we present a familiar general knowledge story of an invention that combined imagination and acute observation of natural history.

In London, England, a vast new building was needed for the Exhibition of 1851. No architect could produce a suitable design. Then Joseph Paxton, a gardener employed by the Duke of Devonshire, drew - on a sheet of blotting-paper, it is said - a rough plan based on an entirely new principle.

Where did he get this new idea which was used in the building of the Crystal Palace?

In 1837, Sir Robert Schomburgk described to the Royal Geographical Society a lily he had found in British Guiana. Its huge leaf, sometimes nearly 40 feet in circumference, had great powers of flotation. The back of the leaf had an intricate pattern of veins that looked like wickerwork. Because Great Britain had a new young queen, Sir Robert named the lily Victoria Regia in her honour.

The lily caused a great stir in England. The Illustrated London News had a sketch of a Victoria Regia lily leaf with a small girl standing on it as it floated.

Paxton, later Sir Joseph Paxton, copied in iron the lines in the vegetable cellular structure which gave such strength to the lily leaf.

Practical botany produced a palace!

Ruth Chambers.

A NET OF NATURALISTS

During the summer, your editor with much help put together a 40-page booklet A Net of Naturalists. All the text was written by members of our Society. Some of it appeared in Volume 24 of the magazine. Of the 14 black and white photographs, nearly all will be new to members. This is a Victoria Natural History Society publication. All proceeds from its sale go to the Society. It may be obtained through Mr. Bridgen, at the British Columbia Provincial Museum, at Ford's Book Store, and, in Oak Bay, at Ivy's Book Shop. It costs \$1.35 plus 7¢ tax when bought "across the counter." Mail orders, please add ten cents for handling charges.

Editor.

INSIDE STORY OF THE 'GATOR POACHERS

A September 30 Audubon News Release says that a gory picture of a dozen dead alligators, photographed in a poacher's skiff in Everglades National Park, opens a story on "America's dirtiest business" in the September-October issue of Audubon, the magazine of the National Audubon Society.

The conservation organization is alarmed because the high price of alligator products is encouraging poaching and thus threatening to wipe out this ancient species that has slithered through the swamps since the age of the dinosaurs. When an alligator wallet can fetch \$95 in a fashionable store in New York, Dallas or San Francisco, there's enough money coming in to finance a multi-million-dollar poaching operation in the south-eastern states where the remaining alligators live.

Even the alligator poachers, says the magazine, agree that the big reptiles are far fewer than they were a few years ago, especially the large breeding ones.

Naturally the poacher is concerned that the creature who brings him up to \$700 a night may be wiped out soon! But he has no intention of doing anything about it.

Until the animal is extinct, prices will surely continue to go higher.

"An alligator purse should be an object of disgust, not pride" ends the News Release.

FORD FOUNDATION & ECOLOGY:

The July 15, 1968, issue of Audubon Leader's Conservation Guide announces that the Ford Foundation plans to continue and expand its sponsorship of research and education in ecology with grants totalling nearly \$4 million to seven universities and the Missouri Botanical Garden.

\$483,200 is the grant to the University of British Columbia for a new interdisciplinary programme of graduate education in resource science.

PROGRAM FOR NOVEMBERAudubon Wildlife Film

Friday and Saturday
November 1 & 2

William Hall presents
"The Real Yellowstone"
8:00 p.m. Newcombe Auditorium
British Columbia Provincial
Museum (South entrance).
Entrance to parking lot from
Superior Street.

Annual Fungus Foray

Saturday, Nov. 2

Meet at Monterey Parking Lot at
10:00 a.m. for trip to Francis
Park. Bring lunch.
Leader: Miss M.C. Melburn
384-9052.

Executive Meeting

Tuesday, Nov. 5

8:00 p.m., home of Mrs. S. Prior
1903 Shotbolt Road.

General Meeting

Tuesday, Nov. 12

Douglas Building cafeteria
8:00 p.m.
Dr. W. Gordon Fields will speak
on "Biology at the University
of Victoria".

Bird Field Trip

Saturday, Nov. 16

Meet at Monterey Parking Lot
9:30 a.m. or Bazan Bay at
10:00 a.m. Bring lunch.

Junior Group

Meet every Saturday, 1:30 p.m.
Monterey Parking Lot, Douglas
at Hillside for field trip.
Leader: Mr. Freeman King.
479-2966

NEW BIRD CHECK LIST:

Our Society's new Bird Check List has now been
printed and may be purchased from Treasurer E.E. Bridgen,
2159 Central Ave. Telephone 383-3577.

A NET OF NATURALISTS:

This new booklet also sells at the Francis Park
Nature House, at monthly General Meetings, and at
Audubon Wildlife Films. For details see Page 34.

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