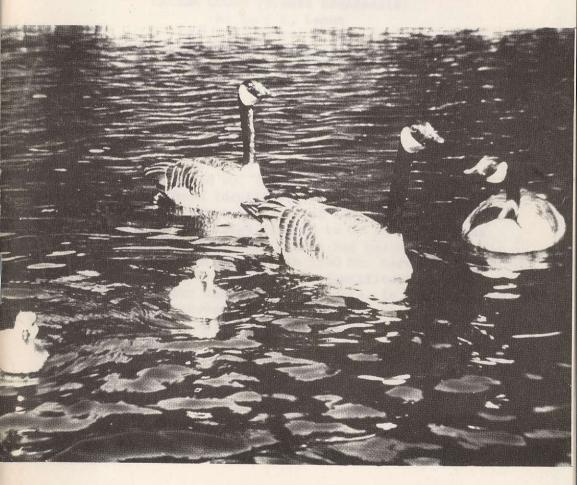
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THE VICTORIA NATURALIST



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February, 1969

COVER PICTURE
by Enid K. Lemon

COVER STORY

CANADA GOOSE (Branta canadensis)
by Enid K. Lemon

My first introduction to the Canada goose was when, as a small child, I was taken by my mother to St.James' Park, London, England, to feed the geese. Little did I know that thirty years later I would see the magnificent sight of these splendid waterfowl strung out in a V formation, silhouetted against a full moon on their migration north.

It is unlikely that Canada geese can be confused with any other species. But it is quite likely that the many subspecies can be mixed up. At the moment there are 11 subspecies that have been identified. These vary in size from the small cackling, about the size of a mallard duck, to the Giant Canada which may weigh from 18 to 20 pounds. It was thought that Branta canadensis maxima had become extinct about 50 years ago. Fortunately in 1960 Mr. Harold C.Hanson of the Illinois Natural History Survey identified some in a flock of Canadas near Rochester, Minnesota. In Canada, Giants are found in Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario. In June, 1968, I visited Mr. Oliver Wells, Sardis, who has a pair of these magnificent birds.

Canada geese breed from east to west and from north to south of the country. The larger races breed in the south, the smaller subspecies breed on the islets of the tundra.

The cover picture was taken at Pike Lake on May 18,1968. I am most grateful to Miss Terese Todd for allowing me to photograph on her property, and to Mr. T. Sowerby for the black and white reproduction from my 35 mm. colour slide.

* * * * * * * * * * * *

FREEWAY BIRDING

In early December my wife and I set out from Victoria to motor to Arizona for a winter holiday. We wanted to get there quickly so speed took precedence over leisurely birding. We did, however, encounter some interesting concentrations of birds. In addition the roadside telephone wires provided front row seats for some of the birds.

Along the coast of Oregon the weather was wild with wind and rain. We saw a score of sea-lions swimming in the surf off the sea-lion caves. Further on we saw surf scoters swimming between the breakers just before they dashed on the beach and so really living up to their name.

In Northern California as we drove around Humboldt Bay near Eureka there were concentrations of shore birds of all sizes on some of the muddy banks, but there was no place to stop so closer inspection was impossible. Over a distance of about five miles around the bay we saw at least 30 common egrets feeding in the pastures close to the sea, sometimes among herds of cattle.

In the redwoods we saw Steller's jays, varied and Swainson's thrushes. A little further south a flock of 20 turkey vultures circled over one spot. After spending the night at Santa Rosa (made famous by Luther Burbank) we left the Freeway at Petaluma (famous for chickens and eggs). While my wife examined the house, I birded in the park of about ten acres surrounding it. There were scores of western bluebirds, meadowlarks, purple, house and goldfinches, water pipits, golden-crowned sparrows as well as several loggerhead shrikes, sparrow hawks, mockingbirds, scrub jays and one black phoebe.

South of San Francisco at Moss Landing there is a marshy bay behind a sand dune where a small river flows to the sea. Here we found a bewildering number of shore birds of all sizes - numerous willets, marbled godwits and smaller shore birds, several long-billed curlews, avocets, snowy and common egrets.

On a sand bar were dozens of brown pelicans, with numerous Heermann's, western, herring and California gulls plus a few terns. I did not have time to identify all the smaller shore birds but there were many varieties.

The little community of Pacific Grove near Monterey is famous as the winter home of many thousands of Monarch butterflies. These butterflies apparently gather from a large area and spend the winter clinging in semi-dormancy to the tall trees, mostly pines and Monterey cypress in a rather limited area in the community. We saw them on a cloudy windy day with some sunny periods. Some of the butterflies were fluttering around but most were clinging in groups to the upper boughs of the trees looking like moss or lichens. The tenacity and endurance of these frail insects is amazing.

From Monterey we travelled to Bakersfield and across the Mojave Desert to Needles and into Arizona. Our last birding in California was at the Porter Dam on the Colorado River. Here we saw black and Say's phoebes, cactus wrens, phainopeplas and lesser goldfinches as well as other more familiar birds.

While birding from a freeway is unsatisfactory in many ways, one does cover a lot of territory and, if one can stop for a short time at strategic spots, one can see a lot of different birds.

A. Douglas Turnbull

BOOK NEWS FOR NATURALISTS

The following books were added to the Greater Victoria Public Library during December, 1968.

Bergmann P.G. Riddle of Gravitation
Cohen, B.L. Heart of the atom
Milne, L.J. Ages of Life
Trefflich, H. Jungle for Sale
Rudloe, J. Sea brings forth
Chambers, R.E. Net of Naturalists
Gillham, M.E. Sub-Antarctic sanctuary:
Macquarie Island

Raaen, V.F. Carbon-14

Ordish, G. Pigeons and People

McCoy, J.J. Complete book of cat health and care

Milne, L.J. Living Plants of the world

Briggs, P. Men in the Sea

Lansdowne, F. Birds of the Eastern Forest

List supplied by Mr. G. McBride Circulation, G.V.P.L.

SCAVENGERS (No.3)

The seas and oceans of the world cover a large area and support tremendous populations of fishes and other organisms but there is only a limited area, mostly its shallower coastal waters, capable of supporting plant life. Thus there is a comparative scarcity of herbivores. The remainder are carnivores that prey on one another. It seems to be the destiny of fishes to be eaten by other fishes. But there is in the sea a continuous rain of bodies and fragments of plant and animal remains sinking to the bottom where they furnish food for many scavengers, mostly small crustaceans and other invertebrates.

We have all heard of shipworms or teredos. This is a misnomer as they are not worms but molluscs. In a sense they can be classed as scavengers also. While better known for their attacks on piling and the wooden bottoms of ships, they can also be found in floating driftwood or logs. They enter as minute larvae and never leave their burrows again. Soon the logs become so riddled with these burrows that they become waterlogged or collapse and sink to the bottom where other scavengers take over until they completely disintegrate. A few years ago, at Discovery Island, I anchored out a cedar log of about eight to ten inches diameter and protected with copper paint. In a little over a year it sank. When retrieved, it showed no damage on the outside. But when it was cut through there was hardly any wood 'eft and it was held together by the linings of the many burrows.

I believe that the teredo proper is an import. The native species is Bankia setacea.

On the beach we often find piles of decomposing seaweed. This is mostly disposed of by the numerous beach fleas or hoppers, <u>Orchestia</u> or <u>Orchestoidea</u>. These are small crustaceans. While the smaller ones work all day, the larger ones come out mostly at night and spend the day in sand burrows or under the weed piles. Thousands can be seen along seaweed rows at the high tidemark especially in the evening.

In shallow water any organic remains are a food source for crabs and other crustaceans. Crab traps baited with fish heads or waste meat produce good results. Smaller debris sinking in shallow water becomes part of the mud covering the sea bottom, in certain areas. Here, among the scavengers, we find the lugworms, Arenicola. They ingest the detritus and extract from it any particles of remaining organic material.

A. Dehen

BIRDS COMMON TO VICTORIA ARE NEW RECORDS IN MANNING PARK

During my two summers in Manning Park as a naturalist, 16 new records have been added to that park's bird list. Considering that this mountain paradise of 176,431 acres is little more than 100 miles east of Victoria, it is interesting to know that all but one of the new sightings are rather common fare to local birders.

Three of the new finds were a great surprise to me: the house sparrow, American goldfinch, and common snipe. The first mentioned is readily found in Hope only 16 miles to the west, and in Princeton which is 30 miles by highway east of the park boundary. The goldfinch is found in at least the southern portions of every province, and the snipe is even more widely distributed.

It was a wonderful experience to me to see, as new records, water-frequenting birds so well-known and numerous here on Vancouver Island. These include the Arctic loon; ring-necked, horned, eared and pied-billed grebes; shoveller; ruddy duck; white-winged scoter; mew gull; and one graceful Arctic tern.

Two birds, perhaps not as numerous here as most of the above although they have long been on our check lists, were a delight - the red-head duck and the cliff swallow. The latter species has nested successfully the past two years and it appears that these birds will be permanent summer visitors.

So far I have mentioned 15 birds - the 16th, the black-chinned hummingbird, is still a blank on my life list. Unfortunately for me, I was not with the two observers who spotted the little migrant.

A check list of the birds of Manning Park can be obtained from the Parks Branch, Department of Recreation and Conservation, Parliament Buildings, Victoria, or at Manning Park Nature House during the summer.

Kenneth R. Beckett

CHRISTMAS BIRD CENSUS

		1 898 9	dia parin	evos bu						
SPECIES:	<u>B</u>	<u>C</u>	19 8 0 <u>D</u>	02 0 <u>E</u> 1	onoma Spani	<u>F</u>	<u>G</u>	Ī	<u>H & K</u>	TOTALS
Common Loon		9	1.5		161-01	23	18	31	7	95
Arctic Loon		co area	1	2		22	19	7	65	116
Red-throated Loon		1	A DEST	3		3	4	3	1	15.
Red-necked Grebe		3		6	2.4	49	8	3	70	139
Horned Grebe		38	16	28		128	135	127	13	485
Eared Grebe		3	CHA	2		33	5		3	46
Western Grebe		121	aved les	30087 W		244	56	6	93 - 369	435
Pied-billed Grebe		1	2	ant gate	abite		32 54	6		9
Double-crested Cormorant		6	9	31		5	37	26		115
Brandt's Cormorant			TR DEGI	wo.m. a.		35	6		8	50
Pelagic Cormorant		4	4	15	20000 D-11	133	72	8	3 399	236
Great Blue Heron		5	2	1		2	4		4	18
Mute Swan			17		1003			16	3	36
Canada Goose	M INTRUCTOR A		59		St. 12. 2	1		15		75
Black Brant								13		13
Snow Goose				3 E 1	111.20	4				4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4
Mallard		965	114	522	China	76	150	1200	454	3481
Pintail		276		6	Markon I	1	4	26	506	819
Green-winged Teal		75	85				4	6	143	313
European Widgeon		diameter and	5. ±		0593		2		7	2
American Widgeon		785	161	318		527	345	715	488	3339
Shoveller		1	15	19	90.13	53	2	852	81 2	92
Ring-necked Duck					01303			3	N ati a	ffull & 3 traggross
Canvasback		7	72	1				25		105
Greater Scaup		108	90	65	*	490	85	7	9	854
Lesser Scaup		1			WOOR =	83	2	12	1	99
Scaup sp.						1145				1145
Common Goldeneye		70	12	39	A STATE OF THE STA	55	30	8	20	234
Barrow's Goldeneye				2				1		avel 3 milerarch
Bufflehead		348	77	64	mans I in a	612	86	96	94	1377
Oldsquaw		9		8	and all	62	38	29	11	157
Harlequin Duck		9		24		104	46	8		191
White-winged Scoter		136	27	12		192	75	35	3	480
Surf Scoter	aff dags	127		56	and a	128	83	153	44	591
Common Scoter	May 15 Prince of			11				9	2	ahaaba 12 kadna (17
Ruddy Duck		130	2	3		18	1	275	1 textorist	429
Common Merganser				100000				915		915
Red-breasted Merganser		17				83	47	12		177
Hooded Merganser		2	3	7		6		7.5		93
Goshawk						1				1
								4		

CHRISTMAS BIRD CENSUS - continued

SPECIES:		<u>B</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>D</u>	E	<u>F</u>	<u>G</u>	<u>I</u> ,	<u>H & K</u>	TOTALS
Sharp-skinned Hawk				í			1	1	. 1	4
Cooper's Hawk					1		1	1 1	2	5
Red-tailed Hawk				24		*	1	1	3	5
Bald Eagle			€ 2	1			1			4
Pigeon Hawk							18 02 1			word 1793
Sparrow Hawk					1	0	110			thanked Obia
California Quail		30	80	127	26	76	105	9	129	582
Ring-necked Pheasant				7	2	3	7	2	25	46
American Coot			131	42	3	57	32	1377	30	1672
Black Oystercatcher						17				17
Killdeer Plover			27	32	15	32	38	44	10	198
Black-bellied Plover					2	76		GOOI I	3	82
Surfbird						2				2
Black Turnstone			30	25	5	51		6		151
Common Snipe			4			3		1	2	20
Greater Yellowlegs			271	1	1	10			1 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2	14
Rock Sandpiper			•	•	•	39				39
Dunlin			155	38	42	110			438	846
Sanderling			133	30	74	4			430	
Glaucous-winged Gull		1	2045	240	149	805	513	361	359	4473
Herring Gull		-	2	240	11	8	8	301	2	31
California Gull			_		11	5			4	51
Mew Gull			350	10	68	1646	56	6	81	the state of the s
Bonaparte's Gull			330	10	00	1040	30	0	01	2217
Common Murre					1	46	/.	9	05	
Pigeon Guillemot					1	17	18	9	1	61
Marbled Murrelet					1	10		11		45
Rhinoceros Auklet					1	10	9	11		30
					1					
Band-tailed Pigeon						4		1		T and
Mourning Dove							0.5 %		5 2	5
Barn Owl							1			1
Screech Owl							1			1
Short-eared Owl			- 8	4.6			10.6-14	KAN TO	1	1
Belted Kingfisher		165	223	2	1	1	1	9	A.	17
Red-shafted Flicker Pileated Woodpecker		3	8	7	7	17	40	7	13	102
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	r		1			î			101	4
Hairy Woodpecker		1	516		1		32 4 1 6			4
Downy Woodpecker		6		2	1	13		2	2	3
Skylark				2	•	6	64	2 7	3 131	37 208

CHRISTMAS BIRD CENSUS - continued

SPECIES:	<u>B</u>	<u>c</u>	D	<u>E</u>	
Steller's Jay	1	2			
Common Raven		2	2		
Common Crow				1	
Northwestern Crow	5	82	223	50	
Chestnut-backed Chickadee	18	18	9	9	
Common Bushtit	20		28	22	
Red-breasted Nuthatch	4			1	
Brown Creeper		1	1	2	
Winter Wren	1	4	5	3	
Bewicks Wren	1		1	2	
Robin		11	1000	20	
Varied Thrush	3	1	9	2	
Hermit Thrush	2				
Swainson's Thrush					
Golden-crowned Kinglet		11		1	
Ruby-crowned Kinglet		2	1	1	
Cedar Waxwing			8	FX 65	
Starling	6	19	646	506	
House sparrow	30	23	62	46	
Western Meadowlark				8 11	
Red-wing Blackbird		34	3		
Brewer's Blackbird		23	11	23	
Brown-headed Cowbird					
Purple Finch	39		9		
House Finch	21	1	5	3	
Pine Siskin		60		55	
American Goldfirch					
Red Crossbill	2		29	3	
Rufous-sided Towhee	19	10	40	5	
Savannah Sparrow				1 -	
Slate-coloured Junco					
Oregon Junco	161	148	275	11	
White-crowned Sparrow	12				
Golden-crowned Sparrow	18	11	32	04 10	
White-throated Sparrow				5	
Fox Sparrow	27	. 9	26	12	
Song Sparrow	6	10	_17	4	
Total Individuals	437	6577	3755	2391	
Total Species	25	61	59	71	
Total number of birds		9,660	Total	A STATE OF THE STA	-

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CHRISTMAS BIRD CENSUS (continued)

Seen during count period but not on count day: white-fronted goose, rough-legged hawk, knot, pygmy owl, rufous hummingbird, northern shrike, pine grosbeak.

Areas "A" and "J" were not covered this year because of poor road conditions. Area "B" had only a slight coverage and areas "H" and "K" were combined under one group of observers. There was no coverage of the Chain Islands-Discovery Island areas.

The following persons participated in the Bird Count. Some were in the field all day; others only an hour or so. Several others, not listed here, phoned in counts from their feeding stations.

Mr.Bill Adams, Mr.K.R.Beckett, Mrs.H.M.Bell, Mr.Desi Belton, Mr.& Mrs.Tom Briggs, Mr.Wayne Campbell, Miss Maureen Collins, Mr. & Mrs.A.R.Davidson, Mr. & Mrs.L.Downes, Mr.Henry Ford, Mr.Ralph Fryer, Mrs.J.Gosling, Miss L.Halsal, Mr.Alan Hockley, Mr.& Mrs.Gordon Hooper, Mr.A.J.James, Mrs.I.Jarvi, Mr.K.R.Joy, Mr.Freeman King, Miss E.K.Lemon, Mr.& Mrs.M.C. Matheson, Master Hugh Matheson, Miss Jean Matheson, Mr.C. Meiklejohn, Miss M.C.Melburn, Mr.Mike Miller, Mr.R.Mackenzie-Grieve, Mr.Andrew McGee, Miss E.McCammon, Mrs.P.Monckton, Mr. & Mrs.C.Morehen, Mr.& Mrs.J.Palmer, Mrs.J.R.Parris, Mr.G.A.Poynter, Mr.Peter Press, Mrs.Rutherford, Mr.Ron Satterfield, Mr.M.Seymour, Mrs.T.J.Shield, Dr.& Mrs.D.B. Sparling, Mr.Wm.Spriggs, Mr.& Mrs.David Stirling, Miss T. Todd, Mr.& Mrs.H.Walker.

On behalf of all the birdwatchers we should like to thank Mr. & Mrs.Murray Matheson for their efforts and their hospitality at their home on the evening of the count day.

David and Ruth Stirling (compilers)

AREA A - Prospect Lake - Munn Road

AREA B - Florence Lake - Goldstream

AREA C - Esquimalt Lagoon - Witty's

AREA D - Portage Inlet - Thetis Lake

AREA E - Beacon Hill Park - Esquimalt

AREA F - Clover Point - Oak Bay

AREA G - Ten Mile Point - Gordon Head

AREA H - Swan Lake - Panama Flats

AREA I - Blenkinsop - Elk Lake

AREA J - Burnside - Quick's Pond

AREA K - Martindale - Island View Beach

COMOX BIRD CENSUS

The annual Christmas bird count was held in the Comox area on December 22. Weather conditions were extremely bad with gale force winds and sleet. The inclement weather and difficulty in observing resulted in a drop in count numbers over last year. 68 species and 6,149 individuals were noted as compared with 85 species and 14,013 individuals last year.

Highlights of the count were two sparrows not commonly found here. A Harris's sparrow was seen at the feeder of S. Belsom on the Back Road and a White-throated sparrow was found near Puntledge Park in Courtenay. Trumpeter swans were present again this year, and ten individuals were counted. Barrow's golden-eyes were unusually numerous (73) in the Courtenay River.

Fourteen members of the Comox-Strathcona Natural History Society carried out the count assisted by David and Ruth Stirling and Allan Brooks from the Victoria Natural History Society. Participants gathered at the home of Betty Westerborg in the evening to tally up the lists and compare notes.

Betty Westerborg

BIRDS FOR THE RECORD

by G.N. and G. Hooper, 2411 Alpine Cr. (477-1152) Barrow's goldeneye (2) - Bazan Bay -Dec.14 -A.R. and Eleanore Davidson Slate-colored junco (1) - Bonnie View Place -Dec.17 -Cy Morehen Dec. 22 -Trumpeter swan (9) - Comox -Harris's sparrow (1) - (also Dec.12) -Whitethroated sparrow (1) -Comox Christmas Bird Census European widgeon (1) - Martindale Road -Dec. 26 -Rufous hummingbird (1 female) - Ten Mile Pt. -Dec.27 -Allen Poynter Dec.31 -Knot (1) - Clover Pt, -Ralph Fryer Jan. 5 -- Oak Bay Marina (west side) -- UVic -A.R. and Eleanore Davidson Jan. 12 -- UVic -Allen Poynter Shoveller (28) - Hood Lane -Jan. 4 -A.R. and Eleanore Davidson Jan. 10 -Townsend's solitaire (1) - Salsbury Way -Ruth Stirling American goldfinch (30) - Victoria Ave. -Jan. 12 -A.R. and Eleanore Davidson

Christmas Bird Census - January 1, 1969

Black brant (13) - Cordova Bay -M.C.M. Matheson Snow goose (4) - Oak Bay -Allen Poynter European widgeon (2) - Lockehaven Dr. - R.Mackenzie-Grieve Goshawk (1) - UVic -A. James and D. Belton Barn Owl (1) - Edgelow Rd. -A.R. and Eleanore Davidson J. Alston-Stewart - Lobbrunner/Lochside -Short-eared owl (1) - Martindale Rd. - D. and R. Stirling Common crow (1) - James Bay -Ralph Fryer Brown-headed cowbird (1) - Sayward Rd. - D. & R. Stirling Savannah sparrow (3) - Martindale Rd. - D. & R. Stirling

BEFORE MAN

This month, we have no article on Nature's inventions before man, but it is interesting to know that the scales on a butterfly's wings are arranged on the same principle as the shingles, shakes, slates and tiles of a roof made by human hands. These scales, mostly too small to be seen by the unaided eye, vary in almost every species but are arranged on the same plan, being placed in successive rows each overlapping the other.

If you plunged a butterfly into water, the long hairs of the body would be soaked and cling together, but the water would roll off the wings like rain off the roof.

Moreover, the colours on a butterfly's wings are not due to pigment but to light broken and refracted by those minute scales.

JUNIOR JOTTINGS

One might think that in the winter months the activities in Francis Park might decrease. Recent events prove otherwise.

Several of the Park's small tree frogs were collected to go on display in Winnipeg. Studies were made of two different types of lichen cells; fungi and algae and how these live in harmony. Many species of mosses were collected and studied.

Although recent attendance has been quite small we still have a few hardy venturers coming out in these cold, wet months. This month's leader hike to Camp Bernard was called off due to the heavy snowfall; however the leaders did spend an afternoon clearing the trails at Francis Park.

All of this month's junior hikes were cancelled because of the holiday season.

The snow and winds did quite a lot of pruning at the Park, but no serious damage was done.

Currently plans are being made to paint and remodel the Francis Park Nature House.

Although the weather may be cold and dreary, a trip to Francis Park can be educational, interesting and enjoyable.

Ross McMillan, junior

PROGRAMME FOR FEBRUARY

EXECUTIVE MEETING: Tuesday, Feb.4, 8 p.m. at home of Mrs. S. Prior, 1903 Shotbolt Road.

AUDUBON WILDLIFE FILM: Alvah W.Sanborn will present "Wings of the Wild" at Newcombe Auditorium, British Columbia Provincial Museum (South Entrance). Please note the three showings of this film (1) Friday, Feb.7 at 8 p.m. (2) Saturday, Feb.8, a matinee at 2:30 p.m. (3) Saturday, Feb.8 at 8 p.m. If they wish, season ticket holders may attend the matinee instead of the evening designated on their ticket. But there will be no reserved seats at the matinee.

GENERAL MEETING: February 11 in the Douglas Bldg. Cafeteria at 8 p.m. The speaker will be Mr.Howard Paish, Executive Director, B.C.Wildlife Federation. The subject is "Beautiful British Columbia - Fact or Fiction".

ENTOMOLOGY MEETING: Thursday, Feb.13 at 7:30 p.m. at Victoria High School. Dr.John Chapman (384-5568). Film "The Alder Wood Wasp". Note the earlier time, 7:30 p.m. and not 8 p.m. as in January.

BOTANY MEETING: To be announced. For details contact Mrs.J.M.Woollett, 624 Harbinger Avenue, telephone 384-4836

HERITAGE COURT PRESENTS: In January the Museum announced a series of illustrated lectures at two-week intervals.

Mr.David Hancock and Mr.Clarence Tillenius are to speak in January (Jan.17 and 31). On Friday, Feb.14 at 8 p.m. in the Newcombe Auditorium, Mr.John Theberge will speak on "Wolves". Admission to all lectures in this series is free.

BIRD FIELD TRIP: Saturday, Feb.22. To Beaver-Elk Lake. Meet at Monterey Parking Lot at 9:30 a.m. or Beaver Lake Parking Lot at 10 a.m. Bring lunch. Leader Mr.A.Schutz (386-0541)

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

ADVANCE NOTICE: This spring, the B.C. Nature Council will meet at Comox on April 26 and 27. Any of our members may attend as observers, although only our delegate, Mr.H.D. Walker, may vote.

HERITAGE COURT PRESENTS: February 28 Watch newspapers for details.

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