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THE VICTORIA NATURALIST



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VICTORIA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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BLACK-TAILED DEER

Although the human population expanding into former grazing grounds is driving the deer population of Vancouver Island into more remote places, one does not have to go too far out in the rural areas to find traces of this shy creature. With the disappearance of natural meadowland for grazing they have adapted very readily to garden plots and fruit trees.

Fort Rodd Hill Park near Belmont Park, set aside as an historic site, has become well-known for an additional attraction by all who visit it. Deer from the surrounding area have gradually moved right in and made this park their own little sanctuary. Mostly does and fawns make this their permanent home but in the fall during rutting season the park is invaded by many wild bucks and it is during this time that one may observe these creatures of the wild at close quarters. They remain wary of humans however and it takes much patience to observe them at close range. The best time to do this is early in the morning before too many park visitors drive the deer to more secluded parts for solitude. The regular park deer are easily distinguished from the wild visitors for they will allow humans to come much closer than will their cautious brothers.

The deer appear to have a well established hierarchy that permits an older doe to boss and bully younger does and immature bucks, but she in turn will meekly relinquish any jurisdictional claims when a mature buck ventures near. One particular buck that has appeared regularly for about five years now automatically rules the herd on his return.

At least six new fawns were born to the park herd this year but unfortunately a similar number of older deer were killed by dogs from nearby residential areas. It would indeed be a shame if these deer who are free to come and go as they please from the park were to fall prey to yet another human hazard, that of dogs left to run at large.

Jack Ralph

WE WENT TO SAN JUAN ... BECAUSE IT WAS THERE

For several years the Island of San Juan had beckoned to us from across the Strait, and finally, having lovely weather and plenty of time, we went to pay a visit. Shaped roughly like a kite, the island is about fifteen miles by seven miles with a shoreline of seventy. Broad at the north it tapers off to a tail at Cattle Point, so named because a boatload of cattle from Victoria had to swim ashore after the vessel carrying them sank during a storm.

The north end is covered with second growth timber, the middle is given over to the raising of sheep and cattle, but it is the south end with its rocky barren hills and fields that contains the interesting ecological story. What is there? Rabbits!

We knew that rabbits can be a pest, but the number on the island is conservatively estimated at the astonishing figure of four million! That I can believe, for at one point when we stopped the car I could count eighty on my side alone. Whole fields have had to be given over to them because the many warrens endanger the legs of sheep and cattle. The origin of the vast rabbit population has been traced back to a rabbit farm abandoned in the 1890's. Recent newspaper accounts about the increase in the number of rabbits seen in the Sooke district made us wonder about the future there.

Since there are so many rabbits available, predators have come in numbers. Both Golden eagles and Bald eagles were frequently seen as well as hawks, but although we had expected to see vultures and ospreys, neither of these appeared. Mr. Charles Nash, a naturalist whom we met, mentioned that in May a survey had checked twenty-five Bald eagle nests and only one chick was reported. This rather ominous fact had everybody wondering. With the clearance of livestock from the fields, the next step was for the skylarks to move in. In three different locations we heard them every day. While half regretful that Victoria is losing its unique status as the home of the skylark in North America, we had to admit to their good choice of location, for the open spaces on the south end of the island are to be taken over for a government park and the signs are already posted.

Other than those mentioned we were rather disappointed in the number of birds we saw. From their checklist of 186 we made a count of 50, all of which were quite

familiar to us. Tantalizing were the sweet songs from deep in the woods where we could not penetrate. Of plants we saw none different from those on Vancouver Island.

We did find San Juan interesting and well worth sharing. Even though the population of the island is only 1500 one can find accommodation in the town of Friday Harbour where there are two good motels and a handsome restaurant. In Roche Harbour there is a boatel open in the summer, and some beach resorts are marked on the island map.

Mrs. D.B. Sparling

BIRD FIELD TRIPS - APRIL TO JULY

The April outing was held at Thomas Francis Park on April 24th under the leadership of Doug Turnbull. Thirty birders enjoyed beautiful spring weather and found fifty-five species. The morning was spent in the area where Francis Park joins Thetis Park and this proved to be good territory for Woodpeckers, Nuthatches and Wrens. A female Western Bluebird was seen as well as various sparrows and warblers. In the afternoon the Bolton farm was visited, and numerous swallows and a number of birds of the open field were seen.

The May 15th trip to Sooke River Road was a great success in spite of the absence of our leader on account of illness in the family. A party of seventeen gathered at Sooke and spent an interesting morning at Whiffen Spit with the Water Birds. Lunch at Sooke River Park was enlivened by a visit by a spotted sandpiper. In the afternoon we called at Matheson Park. Twenty species were noted.

The June 19th trip, led by Rob Mackenzie-Grieve, visited Goldstream Park and Goldstream Flats. An Albino Robin was the star turn for the dozen birders who braved a cloudy and rather doubtful day.

On July 17th, twenty-two birders assembled at Clover Point for a very sociable beginning to the day. We were pleased to see Ches Lyons for a little while at this time. The bird of comment was a Black Legged Kittiwake. The party moved on to Uplands Park where birds were scarce on that hot, still day. Lunch at Gyro Park in Cadboro Bay gave us an opportunity to see a few shore birds. In all, twenty-four species were noted for the day.

Rod Muirhead

ARROWSMITH NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

In response to a thoughtful invitation to our Victoria Society, Rod and Margaret Muirhead attended the First Anniversary meeting of the Arrowsmith Natural History Society at Big Qualicum Reserve Park on the afternoon of July 18. About thirty people gathered, including the visitors from Comox-Strathcona and Duncan as well as ourselves. Discussion centred around great concern for the proper course whereby areas suitable for ecological reserve might be preserved.

The party then settled down to what appeared to be a delicious picnic spread; but as your representatives had unwisely lunched amply before coming, we regretfully took our leave.

Rod Muirhead

NEW MEMBERS SINCE MAY 1, 1971

Miss Margaret Pringle	550 Foul Bay Road
Mr. and Mrs. Osborne Mitchell	701-1420 Beach Drive
Mr. D. Belton (former junior)	2573 Macdonald Drive
Miss Phyllis L. Cowan	4295 Gordon Head Road
Mrs. Joan Crabbe	2421 Alpine Crescent
Miss Gladys V. Hays	409-350 Douglas Street
Mrs. Harriet Webster	409-350 Douglas Street
Mr. Eric M. Counsell	1003-647 Michigan Street
Mrs. M.J. Burnand	319-1063 Foul Bay Road
Mrs. T.L. Miles	3970 Saanich Road
Mr. and Mrs. W.D. Brown	2632 Forbes Street
Mr. and Mrs. A. Hazeland	3821 Miramontes Drive
Mr. and Mrs. W.E. Stark	962 Saturna Place

It's that time again ...

To remind those members who have not yet sent in their dues for the present year. The treasurer would appreciate it if you would mail them directly or see him at the September meeting.

MARINE BIOLOGY FIELD TRIP - JUNE 26

About twenty people turned out on a sunny Saturday, June 26, to explore the shorelife of Smuggler's Cove at Ten Mile Point. We were pleased to welcome several visitors and prospective members who had been attracted by Mr. Harold Hosford's publicity for the trip.

Before we began our explorations our leader, Dr. J.B. Tatum, told us briefly about the five zones of the shore where different types of creatures would be found. We were lucky to have a spring tide which was at its lowest for the day at 12:30 p.m., so a large proportion of the rocky shore was uncovered.

We began our explorations on the two uppermost zones of the shore and found many small periwinkles and Purple Shore Crabs. Spirorbis, a tiny limy spiral worm, was found on much of the seaweed. The rocks, in many cases, were covered with acorn barnacles, which eat by standing on their heads and shovelling food into their mouths with their feet.

Moving down into the middle shore, there were more winkles and also whelk shells. Some of these were occupied by their original owners, but many had been taken over by Hermit Crabs. Various species of mussels and oysters, and Little-neck and Butter Clams were also found. Under a rock we discovered our first starfish, a small grey Six-rayed Star. Gordon Hooper also found a more uncommon Brittle-star. Washed up on the beach was a dead Ling Cod.

As we went further down to the lower and sublittoral zones, nearly all the rocks were covered with the slippery brown Popping Wrack seaweed. We found species of red, green and brown seaweeds, including the green Sea Lettuce, the brittle red Corallina and the brown Sea Cabbage and Bull Kelp.

Many of the more colorful and exciting sea creatures were found in these lower zones. They included three large Purple Starfish, often caught and sold as curios. Among the rocks were several bright orange Sea Cucumbers, probably Sea Gherkins. Turning over rocks we came upon two species of Sea-squirts and several Chitons, and the rock pools held many small Tidepool Sculpin. Other finds included a Breadcrumb Sponge, several Polychaete worms (mostly Sedentary, but one Errant), a Marinogammarus, or shrimp-like sandhopper, parchment tube worms, a small species of blenny, a Rough Sea Anemone, the larger Red Rock Crab, and some limpets and topshells.

Barbara McLintock

BOOK NEWS FOR NATURALISTS

Recent additions to Greater Victoria Public Library

- The Illustrated Natural
History of Canada. 7 vol.
- Ardrey, Robert.....The social contract
- R Dugan, J.R.....World beneath the sea
- R Canada: Geological Survey.....A catalogue of Canadian
minerals
- R Lawick-Goodall, Jane...My friends, the wild chimpanzees
- Curtis, Richard.....Perils of the peaceful atom
- R Taylor, Thomas Mayne.....Pacific Northwest ferns and
Cunningham their allies
- R Duddington, C.L.....Evolution and design in the
plant kingdom
- Carrington, R.T.M.....The mammals
- Lawrence, R.D.....Wildlife in Canada. 1970 rev. ed.
- Cowan, I. McT.....The mammals of British Columbia. 1965
- Ley, Willy.....Another look at Atlantis
- Duddington, C.L.....Evolution in plant design
- Prince, J.H.....Animals in the night
- Schaller, Friedrich.....Soil Animals
- Wilsson, Lars.....My beaver colony
- Cornwall, I.W.....Prehistoric animals and their hunters
- Hellman, G.T.....Bankers, bones and beetles --
The American Museum of National History
- Burns, G.W.....The science of genetics
- Abbott, R.T.....Seashells of North America
- Cattermole, P.J.....The world of geology
- Neale, E.R.W.....The earth sciences in Canada
- Wainwright, Neil.....Coldwater aquariums and simple
outdoor pools
- Warshofsky, Fred.....The control of life

- Firsoff, Vlademar Axel.....Facing the universe
- B.C. Forest Service.....Pocket guide to the trees and
shrubs of British Columbia. 4th ed.
- Schaffer, Victor B.....The year of the whale
- Marais, E.N.....The soul of the ape
- Straughan, R.P.L....The salt-water aquarium in the home
- R Stonehouse, Bernard.....Birds of the New Zealand shore
- Hancock, David.....Wild islands
- Hancock.....Adventure with eagles
- R Coats, A.M.....The quest for plants; a history of
the horticultural explorers
- Berry, Robert James.....Teach yourself genetics
- R Ritchie, J.C...The vegetation of northern Manitoba, III
- R Haines, Francis.....The buffalo
- Guba, E.F.....Wild mushrooms - food and poison

R: Available at Reference Department only.

George McBride
Greater Victoria Public Library

BOOK REVIEW

Sonia Cole's *Races of Man* was written as a complementary handbook to an exhibit in the British Museum of Natural History commemorating the Darwin-Wallace Centenary (1958) and to R. Lydekker's *Guide to the Specimens illustrating the Races of Mankind*. It deals very generally with the highly speculative study of race and its related aspects but such a large topic cannot be sufficiently explored in so few pages (115). Some information seems irrelevant or repetitious while a multitude of questions lie behind a number of statements. For example, "They (Australian Aborigines) must have originated somewhere in south-eastern Asia and probably reached Australia late in Pleistocene times via New Guinea, which was then joined to Asia" (p.82). From my understanding New Guinea and Australia were never joined to the Asian continent at any time during the Pleistocene (Alfred Russel Wallace, *The Malay Archipelago*, London, Macmillan and Co., 1902; Rhodes W.

Fairbridge, "World Sea-Level and Climatic Changes", from *Quaternaria* vol. 6., 1962, pp. 111-134). What source has the author used and what support is there for it? This synthesis of other peoples' work requires far more referencing as well as clearer explanations for scientific terms which should be included only when necessary. Nevertheless, it would be a good beginning for a series of booklets (similar to those on the Northwest Coast Indians from the Provincial Museum) on race. Comments about the migrations of people, the influence of the environment on evolutionary changes, and how recent colonization has affected indigenous populations, e.g. Hawaiians and South African Colored, were most stimulating. Very good photographs and drawings of the various races and types as well as maps were of a great help. The bibliography, although short, contains the main references, however, some of the books and many of the journals may not be easily obtained.

The book is available on loan from the Society's Library.

Maureen Collins

A VERY STRANGE CREATURE

I have been fascinated with butterflies and moths since I was a child and over the years I have become more and more aware of the endless variety of forms and modes of life of all stages of these insects. After a while one becomes inured to the sense of astonishment felt as one encounters each new, unexpected and extraordinary life-history.

But I was altogether unprepared for the sight of one caterpillar I encountered a few years ago. It was a very small, green caterpillar of undistinguished appearance apart from a few threadlike hairs, and it was crawling about on some leaves, every now and again stopping to eat in the perfectly normal fashion. Nothing unusual in that, and I'll swear it even had a look of complete unconcern on its face as though totally unaware that it was doing anything out of the ordinary. Nor was it, with one all-but-incredible exception - it was totally immersed in water!

I went round to some biologist friends, who were quick to explain that lepidoptera were essentially terrestrial insects and that the larvae of many aquatic beetles and caddis flies bore a superficial resemblance

to caterpillars, and I had probably encountered one of these. But I had been interested in moths for too long not to recognize a caterpillar when I saw one. It wasn't until a year later that I finally tracked down my insect.

It was a caterpillar of a moth belonging to the little-known family Pyraustidae, the Chinamarks. Some larvae live on surface plants such as Duckweed, but my caterpillar, probably of the genus *Nymphula*, was completely aquatic. Indeed, the threadlike hairs I saw were actually gills. A friend, Dr. Pieter Moens, succeeded, with some difficulty, in taking a photograph - probably the first time this caterpillar has been photographed in the wild. He also obtained a spectacular photomicrograph of the gills.

The adult moths of this family are for the most part rather ordinary moths with the usual aerial rather than aquatic existence. At least one member, however, has two different forms of adult female. One looks like an ordinary moth, but the other is totally aquatic in the adult stage and it swims under water with its legs. However do such curious life-histories evolve, and what pressures of natural selection shape such very strange creatures?

J.B. Tatum

THE EDITOR'S MAILBOX ...

The letter from Mr. Jack Schick about the Vancouver Island marmot is printed to assist in the distribution of the appeal for information on the species.

Volume 28 of the *Victoria Naturalist* will be presented with the same cover design as for the last few years. If you want a change you will have to give us your constructive suggestions and hopefully some rough sketches to look at. In the meantime, we think the cover picture and story by Mr. Jack Ralph is appealing. It turns out that Jack has a wide interest in photographing nature subjects, including birds, insects, and even fossils and crystals.

We hope our readers will be pleased that the Victoria Public Library has once again provided a list of recent additions. The present list covers several months, and we hope in future to print a list approximately every second issue.

Jennifer Brown, our Programme Chairman, writes from Manning Park to say that her job as naturalist will keep her there until after September 15, and in the meantime Ruth Stirling will be happy to co-ordinate activities.

For next month we will try to keep open for articles and reports until September 19. This should give time for a report on the September Bird Outing and for all those stories you were going to write about your summer experiences. Please try if possible to submit them in type and with the same number of characters per line as in the magazine.

Editor

To: The *Victoria Naturalist*

The Vancouver Island marmot is a rodent about which very little is known. It is today considered to be rare and perhaps in danger of extinction.

This letter is being sent to individuals or parties who, through their trips into sub-alpine or alpine terrain, may have seen this large ('cat size'), brown, rock dwelling ground squirrel. It is very similar to the hoary marmot, or "whistler" of the mainland mountains except for its dark brown coloration and more secretive habits.

A reply from anyone who has seen a colony or individual of this species would be greatly appreciated at your earliest convenience. Photographs would also be welcome.

Sincerely,

W. Jack Schick

Assistant Curator of Birds and Mammals
British Columbia Provincial Museum

THE G. CLIFFORD CARL MEMORIAL

The Memorial to Dr. G. Clifford Carl, sponsored by the Friends of the Provincial Museum, will take the form of a bursary of not less than \$250.00 to be awarded annually to a deserving student entering third or fourth year in the Faculty of Education at the University of Victoria and specializing in the Biological Sciences. It is hoped that it will be possible for the first of these bursaries to be awarded for the 1972-73 academic year.

Contributions have been coming in steadily but somewhat more slowly than had been hoped. The trust fund now stands at slightly over \$1600.00, and several times that amount will be required to produce the annual income necessary. Individual contributions are welcome and receipts for income tax purposes are issued.

Several benefit programmes will be held in the Newcombe Auditorium this fall with proceeds to go to the Memorial Fund.

On September 25th the well-known photographer and lecturer Ches Lyons will present a programme entitled "The Right to Live".

On October 17, a programme of films taken by Doctor Carl entitled "Secrets of the Sea" will be presented by the Victoria Amateur Movie Club.

On November 14, a programme of films by well-known local photographers will be presented by the Victoria Amateur Movie Club. Details will be announced later.

Admission to all programmes will be \$1.50 for adults and 75¢ for children. All will be held in the Newcombe Auditorium, Provincial Museum, beginning at 8:00 p.m.

THE INAUGURAL MEETING OF THE CANADIAN NATURE FEDERATION

The Canadian Nature Federation will succeed the Canadian Audubon Society. The inaugural meeting will be held in Ottawa September 17, 18, 19, 1971, at the Skyline Hotel, Ottawa. Registration Friday September 17, followed by get-together, films; Saturday September 18, business -- speakers, events, culminating in evening banquet; Sunday September 19, field trips.

The Inaugural Meeting of the Canadian Nature Federation is an important historic event in Canadian Natural History and Conservation. Dr. Ted Mosquin, the new chairman, will report on progress to date in forming the Federation and will announce plans for the immediate future. Also the concept of the new Natural History-Conservation-Environment magazine will be outlined - *Nature Canada*, to succeed *Canadian Audubon* and to begin publication January 1972.

It is hoped that naturalists from across Canada will attend. For reservations, apply to:
Canadian Audubon Society, 46 St. Clair Avenue East, Toronto 7

Mrs. H.F. Dickson
Corresponding Secretary

1970 ANNUAL BIRD REPORT: The 1970 Annual Bird Report for Southern Vancouver Island is now available from me at \$1.50 (\$1.75 to non-members), plus 8¢ (9¢) tax plus postage. This illustrated Report has 72 pages and covers all observations of all species in our Area last year.

J.B. Tatum, Chairman, Records Committee

PROGRAM FOR SEPTEMBER 1971

- Executive Meeting: 8:00 p.m. Board Room 104M
 Tuesday September 7 Provincial Museum
- General Meeting: 8:00 p.m. *Cash Bay In His School Auditorium*
 Tuesday September 14 *2101 Cadboro Bay Road* Provincial Museum (south entrance).
 Mr. Harold Hosford presents:
 "A Naturalist Looks at
 Two Provinces"
- Bird Field Trip: Meet at Mayfair Lanes parking lot
 Saturday September 18 (north side) 9:30 a.m. or Island
 View Beach 10:00 a.m. Bring lunch.
 Leader: Rod Muirhead 384-6005
- Ornithology Meeting: 8:00 p.m. Board Room 104M
 Tuesday September 28 Provincial Museum
- Junior Group: Meet every Saturday 1:30 p.m. at
 Mayfair Lanes parking lot (north
 side) for field trip.
 Leader: Freeman King 479-2966

AUDUBON WILDLIFE FILMS 1971-1972

The twenty-sixth season of the Audubon Wildlife Films will start on October 1 and 2 with "Coastline California" presented by Albert J. Wool.

Other speakers and films are:

- October 29 & 30: John Paling "Filming in No-Man's Land"
 January 14 & 15: Lyle K. Moss "Mule Deer Country"
 February 11 & 12: Bower E. Rudrud "Treasure of East Africa"
 March 10 & 11: Robert W. Davison "Journey in Time"

All dates are Fridays and Saturdays, with showings at 8:00 p.m. each evening and matinees at 2:30 p.m. on Saturdays, at the Newcombe Auditorium.

- Season tickets: Saturday matinee; Adults \$3.50
 Students \$1.50
 Friday and Saturday evenings; Adults \$4.00
 Students \$2.00

Available at the September General Meeting.

Ushers will be needed for the evening showings - you get in free!

VICTORIA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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Honourable W.K. Kiernan, Minister of Recreation and Conservation

Honorary Life Members

Freeman F. King, Albert R. Davidson, George E. Winkler,
Miss M.C. Melburn, Miss E.K. Lemon, Mrs. L.E. Chambers

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479-5548

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Audubon Wildlife Films: Miss Enid Lemon, 1226 Roslyn Road - - 598-3517
A.H. Couser, #403 - 435 Michigan St. - - 384-0832

Group Leaders

Botany: Miss Terese Todd, Barker Road, R.R. 6 - - - - - 479-2816
Entomology: Dr. R.A. Ring, 1467 Jamaica Road - - - - - 656-2246
Ornithology: Rod Muirhead, 3431 Salsbury Way - - - - - 384-6005
Marine Biology: Freeman F. King, 541 McKenzie Ave. - - - - - 479-2966
David Stirling, 3500 Salsbury Way - - - - - 385 4223
Junior Naturalists: Freeman F. King, 541 McKenzie Ave. - - - - 479-2966
Mrs. E.C. Osborne, 1536 Vining St. - - - - - 385-8164

Ornithology Records: Dr. Jeremy Tatum, (see address above)
University Liaison: Dr. Jeremy Tatum (see address above)
Membership: Mrs. A.R. Davidson, 2144 Brighton Ave. - - - - - 598-3088
Librarian: A.R. Davidson, 2144 Brighton Ave. - - - - - 598-3088
Federation of B.C. Naturalists: Kerry Joy, Millstream Lake Rd., R.R.6 478-5093
Friends of the Museum: Dr. D.B. Sparling, #9-1354 Beach Dr. - - - 598-4262
A.D. Turnbull, 3614 Cadboro Bay Rd. - - - 592-6025
Publicity: Harold Hosford, 450 Tipton St. - - - - - 478-5794

"The Victoria Naturalist"

Editor: Roy D. Wainwright, 3250 Exeter Road - - - - - 592-1310
Assistant Editor: Mrs. David Stirling, 3500 Salsbury Way - - - - 385-4223

Annual Dues, including subscription: Single \$3; Family \$5; Junior \$2
Junior Membership is restricted to those not under 9½ years and not over 18 years.

Financial Year is May 1 to April 30.

New members joining after January 1 - half fee.

Dues and change of address should be sent to the Treasurer.