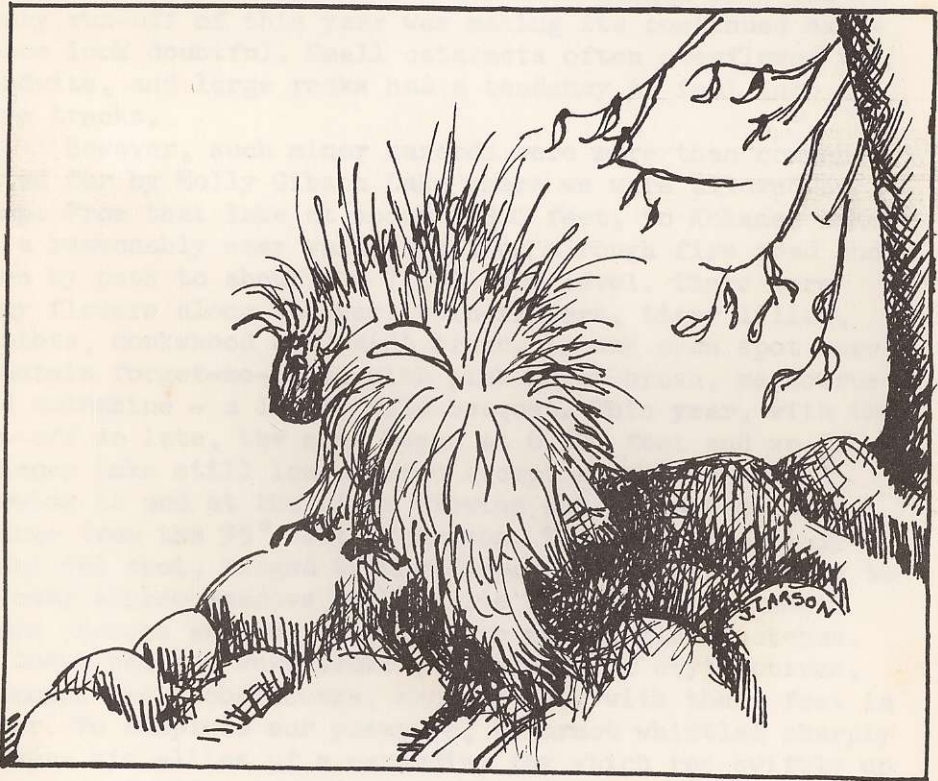


Nov., 1971
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THE VICTORIA NATURALIST



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KOKANEE GLACIER PARK

Situated north and east of Nelson, in the region between Slocan and Kootenay Lakes, this mountain park of 64,000 acres is far enough off the route of the tourist to have retained its wilderness aspect. Undeveloped except for some access roads and some early mine workings it is mainly a mountain park averaging about 9,000 feet in elevation. The road up in early August was in fair shape except towards the end of its ten mile length when the heavy run-off of this year was making its continued existence look doubtful. Small cataracts often overflowed the conduits, and large rocks had a tendency to fall into the tire tracks.

However, such minor hazards were more than compensated for by Molly Gibson Lake where we were allowed to camp. From that lake at about 5,000 feet, to Kokanee Lake is a reasonably easy walk, first on a rough fire road and then by path to about the 7,000 foot level. There were many flowers along the way; twin-flowers, tiger lilies, violets, monkshood and paint brush. In one open spot were mountain forget-me-nots, with pink paint brush, meadowrue and columbine - a lovely wild bouquet. This year, with the run-off so late, the snow began at 6,500 feet and we found Kokanee Lake still ice covered except at the waterfall flowing in and at the river flowing out. It was quite a change from the 95° heat of Nelson. The lake is a truly beautiful spot, ringed by snowcapped mountains. We came to it over alpine meadows still quite deep in snow except where streams and the hot sun were making clear patches. In these patches were growing thousands of erythroniums, anemones and globeflowers, many of them with their feet in water. To complete our pleasure, a marmot whistled sharply to warn his allies of a marauding fox which ran swiftly up the mountainside, turned to look back at us and disappeared into a crevice of rock.

We saw several other hikers, some of whom were going on along the lakeshore and over a low pass to a hut where they would spend the night. From there it is possible to explore the whole area and the glacier itself.

On our return to our tent at Molly Gibson we were amused and curious to see a Volkswagen surrounded by chicken wire as if caged. Later that night we found the reason, when a large corpulent porcupine chose to gnaw the tires of our car. He made quite a din as he attempted to get a diet of sodium chloride from the tires and the underside of the car. Only grudgingly did he waddle off after three sleepy but determined efforts on our part to give him a scare. All those myths about the "porky" shooting his quills came to mind as his bristle of protective armour was turned in our direction. We were at least comforted by the recollection that he is a vegetarian. If ever you leave your car for a few days in the mountains, you are advised to cage your car carefully, or else provide a tasty distraction in the form of a salt lick aperitif.

Try a visit to Kokanee before it is developed.

M.E.W.

*Black and white sketch of Porcupine by Joan Larson
Oak Bay Senior Secondary School*

CHRISTMAS COUNTS

The dates and compilers of four Vancouver Island Counts have been announced as follows:

Victoria: Sunday December 26 - J.B. Tatum,
416-3187 Shelbourne Street
Duncan: Saturday December 18 - J.J. Comer, R.R.1, Duncan
Pender Islands: Tuesday December 21 - Mr. & Mrs. A. Brooks,
R.R.1, Port Washington
Comox: Monday December 27 - Mr. & Mrs. S. Belsom, Box 308,
Comox

Participants are asked to contact the compilers in advance. Participants in the Victoria Count before December 19, and sub-area leaders by November 20.

The National Audubon Society fee for participants is \$1.00. Victoria N.H.S. Members participating in the Victoria Count pay 50¢, the rest being subsidized by the Society. The Count Period is December 18 to January 2.

J.B. Tatum

BIRDS REPORTED

by M. and L. Slocombe, 3134 Henderson Road (592-9047)

Golden plover (2) - September 18 ----- Esquimalt Lagoon
and Clover Point
A.R. Davidson
Pectoral sandpiper (7) - September 18 ---- Esquimalt Lagoon
A.R. Davidson
Say's Phoebe (1) - September 21 ----- Bedford Woods
White-throated sparrow (1) - September 21 -- Bedford Woods
Lewis' Woodpecker (1) - September 21 ----- Bedford Woods
R. McKenzie-Grieve
Lapland Longspur (6) - October 1 ----- Esquimalt Lagoon
R. Muirhead
Spotted Sandpiper (3) - October 2 ----- Esquimalt Lagoon
A.R. Davidson
Great Horned Owl (1) - October 10 ----- Allridge Point
B. McLintock
Long-billed Dowitcher (5) - October 16 ---- Lochside Drive
A.R. Davidson
Horned Lark (16) - October 16 ----- Esquimalt Lagoon
Snow Bunting (1) - October 16 ----- Esquimalt Lagoon
Peregrine Falcon (1) - October 16 ----- Taylor Beach
Group field trip

ADDENDA

The screech owl is back in its hole in the oak at 610 Foul Bay Road. Several reports have been received of pipits by the hundreds in late September and band-tailed pigeons are in abundance feeding on the heavy acorn crop. Eric Porcher spotted a silver-haired bat in Esquimalt, not a bird, to be sure, but an interesting sighting. Good birding everyone, and be sure to phone in your reports.

BEARS EVERYWHERE!

"I'm drivin' along see, and I spot the little crummy (a small truck for taking men to work) parked beside the road. Well there's a guy sitting in the front seat and I'm wondering what the hell he's doin' not being on the job - and so help me Moses it's a bear sittin' there" related the road construction foreman in Wells Gray Park.

And so the bear stories rolled in as I travelled in Wells Gray park attempting to find enough sunshine to photograph a Klahanie TV program. (The long hot spell of summer came to an end the day I picked up camera and tripod and started off. It always does.)

The bear problem was dramatized at Spahata Creek Park, a roadside park about fifteen miles from Wells Gray. As I drove in I noticed a succession of garbage cans dumped over, their contents strewn about. And along a few hundred feet a two-year-old black was methodically checking can after can. The campers appeared strangely apathetic. And why not - for one group told me the bear made a complete round every half-hour. The novelty of picking up their can and mess had worn off, and now the cute bear was regarded as a darn nuisance.

The same problem was encountered at every campsite and reached its peak at the construction camp.

The reason for bear everywhere went back to our cold wet spring. The soapallolies and huckleberries didn't get pollinated so berries were non-existent. But campers came by the hundreds and heaped all sorts of goodies in garbage cans. And at the road construction camp the knowing bears waited for the cook to appear at the back door. A cook's helper, a newcomer, waltzed out his first day literally into the arms of a big bear. He barely stayed long enough to pack his clothes.

The camp garbage dump, although low in aesthetic appeal, did provide a concentration of bear, and an opportunity to study them at close range.

I was amazed at how quickly a wild animal accepted the presence of man. In a couple of days a furry newcomer would be quite at home and hardly take notice of a human. There was little or no show of hostility and you had the feeling you could safely rub shoulders, as to speak.

Each bear soon showed a distinct character. Some were amiable, everybody's friend. One had a miserable disposition and although small in size, kept putting the run on any bear that came too close. A brown with two small cubs would drive away all other bears before bringing in her young to feed. Some were curious and would climb into a truck or stand up and peer in the window of my Volkswagen bus.

The harried Park staff were faced with a multisided problem. People dearly like to see bears but when one insists on sorting through your trailer or starts roaming around with the kids then there's a loud howl for help. Shooting them as fast as they appear is hardly cricket.

So a troublesome creature was lured into a big barrel type of trap and carted off - but off where? The one road from Clearwater on the North Thompson to Clearwater Lake about fifty miles distant is spaced with camps and campsites. Five or six miles was about as far as bruin could be removed from the problem area so there was a good chance he would appear again.

Rubbing noses with humans for several months hardly fits them to escape the Great White Hunter who replaces the campers soon after Labour Day.

Darn those chilled bees who didn't do their job last spring!

Chess Lyons

NEW MEMBERS

Mr. and Mrs. P. Van Den Driesshe --- 2375 Queenswood Drive
 Dr. and Mrs. W.W. Newcombe -- #12 - 686 St. Patrick Street
 Mrs. H.M. Ainscough ----- 1665 Hollywood Crescent
 Mrs. D.B. Grossmith ----- 305 - 1050 Richardson Street
 Mrs. E. Daisy Catts ----- 305 - 1555 Richmond Avenue
 Dr. Christine K. Mather ----- 117 - 1680 Poplar Street
 Mr. and Mrs. W.C. Richardson ----- 643 Beach Drive
 Mrs. M.B. Willing ----- 304 - 2120 Cadboro Bay Road
 Mrs. Shelagh J. Aldous ----- 2811 Tudor Avenue

YOUR DELEGATE'S REPORT

The Vernon Natural History Society was host this year to the annual fall meeting of the Federation of British Columbia Naturalists. The weather co-operated beautifully for the two-day event. Bright sunshine and 60° temperatures greeted the thirty delegates and observers who came from all parts of the province.

Saturday October 9, the business meeting got off to a rousing start on the question of a better name for the new Pacific Rim National Park. Most of the delegates favoured "Wickaninnish" or "Maquinna" in recognition of the highly developed Indian cultures of our West Coast.

Discussion continued on important matters of Provincial Government policy relating to Resource Development; slash burning on steep slopes and Wild Rivers designation.

The Federation will send a strongly worded protest against the Amchitka blast to the United States State Department together with copies to the Soviet Embassy and the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* newspapers.

Perhaps the most important work of the day was the discussion which arose from the Conservation Committee's resolutions presented by Norm Purcell of the Vancouver Club. The first of these concerned the appointment of a member to the Conservation Committee by each member club. This enables both a broader coverage of the Province for vital issues and a faster Federation response to them. Other valuable resolutions passed related to: The Life-saving Trail boundaries between Port Renfrew and Bamfield to include a minimum half-mile strip inland from the trail as well as Tsusiat, Squalicum and Hobiton Lakes; the setting aside of parks in the development of Northern British Columbia; the need for fast action on Yukon National Parks; the opposition to the Moran Dam and its potential threat to salmon.

The day ended with a cocktail hour at the interesting, fine old home of the pioneer Mackie family. This was followed by an excellent banquet at a resort overlooking Okanagan Lake. The Vernon Natural History Society entertained the delegates with a lively slide presentation of their club activities. These included efforts to preserve valuable natural areas around Vernon, a canoe trip around Bowron Lake and a Great Divide trail hike in the Rockies.

Sunday's field trip, led by Jim Grant, took everyone up to the forty acre western larch stand near Lumby. This fine stand is now protected by an Ecological Reserve designation. The preservation of these trees is symbolically significant to the activity of the Federation of British Columbia Naturalists and was a fitting end to a successful meeting with our fellow clubs throughout the Province.

Kerry R. Joy

CERATOPHYLLUS PELECANI - A NEW FLEA FOR CANADA

At 6:30 a.m. on March 19, 1971, I received a telephone call from Mrs. J.L. Climenhaga of Newport Avenue, Victoria, to report that an owl was being mobbed by crows in her neighbour's garden. I investigated and found that the bird was a Long-eared Owl, a very rare bird in our area. The owl was unfortunately injured and it died later the same day. The body was taken to the Provincial Museum.

This sighting raised an interesting question, for, although Vancouver Island is sometimes thought of as being in the breeding range of this species, this has never been proved and there had been no certain records for Victoria since 1924. Is the Long-eared Owl a rare and elusive resident that has escaped notice all these years? Or are the few sightings records of migratory transients?

Acting on a hunch that the fleas on the owl might furnish a clue, I sent them to Mr. F.G.A.M. Smit, Custodian of the Rothschild Flea Collection (British Museum) for determination. They were a male and two female Ceratophyllid fleas identified as *Ceratophyllus pelecani*. This species was first described by Augustson as recently as 1942 from Brown Pelicans in California, though it is also found on other west coast seabirds. Owls frequently pick up fleas from their prey; the owl would therefore be an accidental host rather than the primary host.

I later heard from Dr. G.P. Holland of the Department of Agriculture, Ottawa, that this is a new flea record for Canada. This strongly suggests that the owl was a migrant rather than an elusive resident, but it is also possible that the flea occurs regularly here but has been overlooked. Since there are many California records of its occurrence on Western Gulls, ornithologists engaged in

banding Glaucous-winged Gulls near here should keep a lookout for this flea.

There is evidently much work that can be done by amateurs on the fleas of Vancouver Island and the writer will be glad to receive fleas provided they are labelled with the host, locality, date and collector. Fleas can be sought on pets, farm animals, the person, and on birds and mammals found recently dead. On no account, of course, should anyone attempt to kill a bird or mammal for the purpose of collecting fleas.

J.B. Tatum

REGIONAL WEATHER VARIATIONS

The natural history of the Saanich Peninsula is especially interesting for the variety it offers. Partly this is a result of the meeting here of sea and land and of the variation in soil types and the existence of rock outcrops. Also, though, it reflects an interesting variability in local climate. Within the twenty-five miles of the Peninsula we really have not one climate, but a complex patchwork of several.

Local differences are well documented in publications of the Canadian Meteorological Service from records of some twenty recording stations in our area, but naturalists can easily observe many evidences of variation for themselves.

Differences in rainfall over the area are quite dramatic. The Highland area receives well over forty inches per year, while Gordon Head records but a little over twenty inches. Just ten inches less and it would come close to qualifying as a desert by one definition! Here in our local "rain shadow" we are largely protected from heavy rains by the surrounding mountains which themselves, in places, receive over two hundred inches per year. Not many areas in the world exhibit such a change in so short a distance.

To feel how temperature often varies locally drive Cook Street on a hot summer afternoon from about Hillside to the waterfront at Beacon Hill Park. Within the last few blocks you can often feel a marked temperature drop - it may be as great as 10° F. These southern shores of the peninsula frequently receive an onshore flow of air, so that they have, as Senior weatherman Allan McQuarrie puts it, a Juan de Fuca climate rather than a Saanich Peninsula climate - much

cooler in summer and rather warmer in winter than the balance of the Peninsula.

Other and less pronounced local temperature differences are evident to the weather-watching naturalist. Mount Douglas and Mount Tolmie are quite often cold enough to have snow caps when surrounding lowlands are having rain or sleet. Colwood, Langford, and the Highlands often have snow when the land to eastward is experiencing sleet, rain or even no precipitation. It is quite remarkable how often the edge of the snow lies right through Colwood.

Winds, too, often behave in baffling ways. We quite commonly have westerlies blowing downslope from the Olympics over downtown Victoria - dry, cool, fair weather winds. These curve with the straits around Trial Island, becoming southerlies and then southeasterlies as they approach the vicinity of the airport. Nearing the hills of Saltspring and the Malahat this air is forced to rise, cools, and often produces clouds and even rain. Pity the weatherman!

Our climate is classed by some authorities as "Mediterranean". It makes interesting reading to dig out records for southern European points and make the comparison. Valencia's weather affords some close parallels with our own, while even Rome isn't so very different. In fact a little browsing through the weather of the rest of the world convinces this writer that we do pretty well!

Ted Underhill

"ONE SPILL WILL KILL"

The U.S. is full of problems
And now they're after us.
We all say, "Keep your tankers away!"
But they don't listen to a word we say.
And one will spill,
We're sure it will!
We'll have to wave goodbye
To B.C.'s suffering sock-eye.

Brian Langridge (age 12)
1729 Greenmount Avenue
Port Coquitlam, B.C.

EUROPEAN GREY PARTRIDGE (*Perdix perdix* L.)

We are still very fortunate in having a small flock of Grey Partridges now restricted to the general area of the Patricia Bay Airfield.

These interesting galliformes, native to Europe and Western Asia, were first brought to America about one hundred years ago from stock in Hungary. Thus the common names of Hun and Hungarian Partridge. These first introductions, in the Southern United States, apparently flourished for some time but eventually disappeared. It was not until the early 1900's that success was achieved, this time in more northern locations.

Considering British Columbia only, in 1904 fifty-seven birds were introduced near Vancouver and in 1908-09 over five hundred were released in the Victoria area. These and many other releases made at that time are cited in the Provincial Museum Handbook No.14.

Alien Animals in British Columbia:

For the next forty-five years the state of the partridges in this area is vague but one record in Munro and Cowan, 1947 states:

"Victoria, May 5, 1928 - eggs (W)"

The first reliable records of recent times were made by Mr. A.R. Davidson who has informed me that he observed Huns in the area of Uplands Golf Course and where the University of Victoria now stands. His earliest record had ten birds sighted near Finnerty Road in 1955. His last observation in the Victoria area was in August 1959 of eight birds between Blenkinsop Road and Lost Lake. Earlier that year, January, Mr. Tom Briggs reported six of the partridges in his yard on North Shelbourne Street near Mount Douglas Park.

From such records there appears to be a movement out of Victoria northward. It is now interesting to add one observation which I have in my record book with a question mark following. While walking at Island View Beach one October afternoon in 1960 I caught a glimpse of about twelve birds flying into cover which I strongly suspected to be Hungarian Partridges.

Since that time all records of the Partridges have been from North Saanich between Patricia Bay and Sidney. Following is a list of the yearly high counts in that area over the past ten years made by Mr. Davidson and myself.

It should be understood that other counts of 2 - 9 birds were recorded during that period as well.

January	1961	12	birds
September	1964	14	birds
February	1965	7	birds
January	1966	13	birds
September	1966	31+	birds
January	1967	16	birds
November	1968	9	birds
February	1969	14	birds
December	1969	8	birds
March	1971	9	birds

The counts of 14 in February 1969 and 9 in March 1971 were of birds attracted to a feeding station I had established principally for skylarks during periods of heavy snowfall.

It seems evident that over the last sixteen years numbers from 10 to 16 have been rather constant and the average of high counts stands at 13. I have become particularly interested in the factor or factors involved resulting in counts back down to the average area from the high numbers in the autumn of 1966.

Four possibilities readily come to mind which could provide the reason or reasons limiting the Grey Partridges and these are:

1. Hunting and trapping
2. Predation
3. Nest Mortality
4. Habitat limitation

In the next issue I will cover these points in some detail in order to present some feasible causes for the existence of the birds in such reduced numbers.

I am presenting this article in the sincere hope that every effort will be made to prevent any molesting of these partridges by amateur or professional naturalists particularly.

Ray Beckett

PROGRAM FOR NOVEMBER 1971

- Executive Meeting:** 8:00 p.m. Board Room 104M
Tuesday November 2 Provincial Museum
- Fungus Foray:** Meet at Mayfair Lanes parking lot
Saturday November 6 (north side) 10:30 a.m. for trip
 to Francis Park. Bring lunch
 Leader: Dr. John Paden
 Phone: 477-6911 local 742 (office)
 or 383-3702 (home)
- General Meeting:** 8:00 p.m. Newcombe Auditorium Pro-
Tuesday November 9 vincial Museum (south entrance)
 Mrs. J. Woollett will give an
 illustrated talk on:
 "The Intertidal Zone of the
 Pacific Rim National Park"
- Bird Field Trip:** Meet at Mayfair Lanes parking lot
Saturday November 20 (north side) 9:30 a.m. or
 Esquimalt Lagoon 10:00 a.m.
 Bring lunch
 Leader: R. Muirhead 384-6205
- Ornithology Meeting:** 8:00 p.m. Board Room 401 Provin-
Tuesday November 23 cial 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

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