



# **THE VICTORIA NATURALIST**

**published by the  
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# Little Gull Rare Sight

A quartet of Victoria bird-watchers sighted a rare bird — a little gull — Wednesday afternoon at Clover Point.

The little gull — that's its proper name — is the smallest gull ever recorded in North America, said Ralph Fryer, Victoria birdwatcher who's been watching for 50 years (he started when he was nine.)

Clover Point is a popular spot for birdwatchers and over the years 160 different species of birds have been recorded there.

Fryer stopped at the point to see what birds were there Wednesday and he met Mr. and Mrs. Victor Goodwill of Victoria, also members of Victoria Natural History Society.

They were later joined by Ron Satterfield of Victoria, also a member.

Fryer describes the gull as a "very, very small gull." Its chief field mark is the very dark grey underwing. It is about 11 inches long and the

back and upper side of its wings are a uniform light grey with no black tips to the wings as is usual with most gulls.

The head is largely white with a black spot behind each eye. Its tail is white under-

neath and on top and the underside of the body is white.

The little gull, a European bird, was found nesting in Oshawa, Ont., in 1962. This was the first known breeding record in the Western Hemisphere.

There have been sightings in Southern Ontario and there is one authentic record of a male found in the Lake Athabasca region of Saskatchewan in 1962.

But this is the first sighting of the bird in B.C., Fryer said.

Two birdwatchers from Grand Rapids, Mich., happened along as the sighting was made and they were quite excited about the experience. They were Mr. and Mrs. William Johnson.

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## FLYING FUR

What weighs from three to five ounces, has beautiful big eyes and wears a brownish fur coat as soft as the finest velvet?

Artist Glen Ryder and I came across the little fellow on the cover in our search for small owls. When looking for these birds, it is important to check out every tree cavity. This is done by taking a stick and scratching or tapping just below the cavity entrance. With any kind of luck a Screech Owl, Saw-whet Owl or Flying Squirrel will poke its head out just to see what in blazes is going on (maybe a 'coon is trying to climb the tree?). Luck, however, may not be with you, and your tapping could produce a swarm of rather irate bees or yellow jackets seeking revenge!

Flying Squirrels are rather sociable animals -- the one in the photograph had three mates. One author reports that as many as 50 have been found together in a hollow tree.

Moss nests in branches or hollow trees are their natural homes. They will use owl nesting boxes if provided.

Most authors report one breeding season, February to March. Gestation lasts 40 days, and a litter may contain from two to six young; usually the number is three or four. It takes about three months for the babies to get their adult fur, after which they make one complete change each year.

Food of these rodents consists of nuts, seeds and insects. If a sleeping bird or nest of eggs is discovered, a Flying Squirrel may find it

very hard to resist temptation.

It must be one of the most beautiful sights of nature to see a Flying Squirrel gliding through the air (gliding, not flying!). A better name for this mammal might be Gliding Squirrel. It has been recorded that these animals can glide up to 300 feet if there is the advantage of a downward slope.

To learn more about these fascinating mammals you could read "night Gliders: The Flying Squirrels" by Roger A. Caras in North American Mammals, 1967 (The Meredith Press).

-- Cover story and photograph  
by Al Grass

B.C. FEDERATION OF NATURALISTS:  
Your Delegate's Report

By Kerry Joy

A beautiful sunny autumn day greeted 40 naturalists from all parts of the province at Parksville on Oct. 14 for the annual B.C. Federation of Naturalists meeting. The newly-formed Arrowsmith Naturalists Club hosted the delegates at the Island Hall hotel located on Parksville Bay. The meeting hall was so close to the beach that coffee breaks became bird-watching breaks with many gulls, loons, grebes and shorebirds to add interest to the proceedings.

The major part of the meeting was devoted to discussion of conservation issues prepared by the Federation's special committee. These are some of the more important issues presented:

\* A call for a moratorium on logging within some of the critically valuable parts of Vancouver Island's habitat for elk, and also lands adjacent to streams containing fish.

\* A special conservancy area to be created over parts of Puget Sound and the Straits of Georgia with preservation of Boundary Bay and adjacent wet lands.

\* A call to the federal government to add lowland to the Yukon's newly-established Kluane National Park with the prime purpose of protecting vital caribou and dall sheep habitat. The present inadequate boundary includes a land area which is 90 per cent permanent ice and snow.

\* A recommendation that member clubs identify lakes of greatest natural history interest in their areas and forward the names of these to the Minister of Recreation and Conservation with a request for curbing or controlling power boat use on them.

\* A recommendation that an outdoor litter control campaign be started in B.C. with enforcement of existing legislation to halt the deteriorating quality of our landscapes.

\* Adoption of a quick-kill trap and the prohibition of the leg-hold trap be requested for the trapping of mammals.

\* Full protection be given to the Peregrine Falcon in British Columbia.

\* Compulsory registration of firearms be instituted to provide greater control and to prevent the increasing toll of non-game species of birds and mammals.

\* Livestock owners should be compensated for losses caused by predation by cougars, wolves, and other carnivores.

\* A request will be made for a study of the effects of logging on the Gulf Islands, particularly to determine the impact of logging on watershed production and aesthetics.

\* The economic growth of our province be controlled to maintain a high quality living environment and standard of living for all B.C. residents.

In addition, the Victoria Natural History Society presented three items for discussion, all of which were passed unanimously. They were:



1. That the Federation undertake an examination of Fish and Game regulations with a view to protection of small non-game species of mammals and birds.

2. That the practice of spring hunting of bears be stopped. This was added to a resolution asking for a regulation against sale of bear pelts and the restriction of bear hunting to B.C. residents only.

3. That a letter of commendation be written to the Honourable Robert Williams, Minister of Recreation and Conservation, expressing the Federation's hope for greater progress in conservation matters.

The long and interesting business session was topped off with a fine banquet and a speech by Rod Haig-Brown, the Federation's honorary president. Dr. Haig-Brown spoke eloquently on the plight of the Pacific salmon and some solutions to its present decline, and also discussed the Second Century Fund for saving endangered landscapes, plant communities, and unique areas of natural significance. He urged member clubs to go out, identify, document, and submit applications for areas important to our environment.

Sunday's field trip took the delegates to visit Little Qualicum Falls and Macmillan provincial park -- a fitting and symbolic end to an important conservation meeting. #

#### OPEN EXECUTIVE MEETINGS

At its October meeting, your Executive adopted a policy which will make all future Executive meetings open to any member of the Society. In making this decision, the Executive realizes that it makes many decisions which are of interest to the general membership, and hopes the new policy will encourage members to attend meetings at which topics of interest to them will be discussed. Normally members who choose to attend Executive meetings will not participate in debate but the Executive may make exceptions to this rule in unusual circumstances. #

#### HONOURING "SKIPPER" KING

The evening of Sept. 22 was a memorable one for those of us who participated in the surprise birthday party honouring Freeman King. The party, the brain-child of Mr. E.D. Ward-Harris of the Colonist, was arranged by him with the help of Mrs. Gail Mitchell. It was a wide-open affair with many distinguished guests and many local groups represented. Among those paying special tribute to Skipper were General George Pearkes, and Hugh Stephen, former mayor of Victoria.

Since about 1958 we have developed a very special regard for Skipper. We all know of his outstanding work in the cause of conservation, and of his magnificent leadership of the Victoria Natural History Society Junior Naturalists. Not only has he secured Francis Park for future generations, but it was also largely due to his efforts that we have John Dean Park near Sidney and Eves Park near Duncan.

It was altogether a happy occasion, the respect and affection for Skipper being overwhelmingly apparent. Well-deserved tributes were also paid to Mrs. King. Chief of the presentations was a cheque for \$5,000 made up of contributions from the community at large. This cheque was given to Skipper to spend as he wished "with no strings attached," and he might well have used the money to buy himself a new car or to go with Mrs. King on a well-deserved holiday trip. Not our Skipper!

We have lately read in the press that the money has been placed in a special Freeman King fund, and that he and Mrs. King have decided that the entire sum is to be used for the benefit of Francis Park and the Juniors who work there.

--Katherine Sherman

## CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS 1972

The following Christmas Bird Counts are arranged for this year:

1. Duncan, Saturday, December 16. Compiler, John Comer, R.R. 1, Duncan. (748-9560).
2. Pender Islands. Provisionally scheduled for Tuesday, December 19. See next month's Naturalist for confirmation. Compilers, Mr and Mrs A.C. Brooks, South Pender Island. (629-3248).
3. Victoria, Tuesday, December 26. Compiler, Jeremy Tatum, 416-3187 Shelbourne Street, Victoria. (592-1332).

Birdwatchers who wish to participate in these Counts must register in advance with the Compiler or area leader. The participation fee is \$1.00, payable to the Compiler or area leader on the day of the Count. (Subject to Executive approval, a discount for Victoria N.H.S. members in the Victoria Count may be possible.) The fee goes towards partially defraying the cost of publication of the Counts by the National Audubon Society in American Birds. Your Compiler or area leader will give you information on this publication, which is described in the Annual Bird Report for Southern Vancouver Island for 1970.

Those who cannot take part in the Victoria Count are urged very strongly to contact the Duncan and Pender Islands Compilers and to take part in the Counts there. These areas are very short-staffed and they very much need more participants. The Compilers regret that they will not take part in any discussion or correspondence concerning the dates of the Counts.

--Jeremy Tatum

## JUNIOR JOTTINGS

After a few weeks of rest through July and August, September saw the junior group back on an active schedule. The intermediates (aged 12+) examined the burn on the east slope of Mount Douglas. They noticed the trees were only burnt on one side and on the rock slopes licorice fern and Sheep Sorrel or Sourgrass had come back ra-

pidly.

Two trail-making Saturdays at Francis Park followed. The juniors (9 to 12 years) made a new trail, called the Gate of Paradise trail, which branches off the ever popular Lyre Tree Trail. I hope many people will travel this new trail and discover more of Francis Park. The intermediates are working on re-opening the swamp trail, which has been out of use for some time. This trail offers a variety of plant communities and is a good prospect for the birdwatcher.

On Sept. 30 a large group of juniors went to Matheson Lake. Some of the older group attended so were able to break down into smaller groups. Edible fruit such as crabapple, huckleberry, salal, Oregon grape, and rose hips were learned -- and of course sampled. The aquatic vegetation and a freshwater bivalve were also of interest. Two species of garter snakes were observed.

The next Saturday the intermediates visited Swan Lake and did a general survey of a small portion of the area. They noted shrubs such as Red Osier Dogwood and Hardhack; birds included Song Sparrow, Great Blue Heron, Mallard, Red-tailed Hawk and different species of gulls. A pine-white butterfly and a species of borer were identified by an insect enthusiast. Deadly Nightshade with its attractive red berries was an impressive find. Some ideas for the area were put forward by these young naturalists in an impromptu discussion in the grass.

A display of individual collections is planned for the end of March.

Detailed program plans for the Juniors for November will be found on Page 121 under the senior program. In each case the group will meet at 1:30 p.m. at Mayfair Lanes parking lot, north side, corner of Roderick and Oak, unless otherwise noted. If drivers named are unable to drive on their specified day, please inform Gail Mitchell at 477-9248 as early as possible.

--Gail Mitchell



### EGRET SHOT

One of the most exciting of the rare birds that have come our way this season was the beautiful Common Egret found by members of the Cowichan Bird Society at Cowichan Bay in late September. Many of our members travelled to Duncan to see and photograph this lovely bird, the second or third occurrence of the species in the province.

Members will be disgusted to learn that the bird was shot by a hunter on the second day of the duck-hunting season. Shortly after the bird was last seen, one of our members, Leila Roberts, saw a hunter shoot into the dyke frequented by the Egret; a little later the hunter was seen carrying away a long-necked white bird that was undoubtedly the Egret. Although Leila gave chase, she was unable to catch the man.

This revolting and illegal act demonstrates once again the need to tighten up the regulations through which hunting permits are issued.

--Jeremy Tatum

### SITUATION VACANT

(All advertisements in this section must comply with the provisions of the Human Rights Act.)

**CHIEF CO-ORDINATOR OF COFFEE AND COOKIES:** Urgently and immediately required. The holder of this position will be responsible for supplying and selling the above commodities to V.N.H.S. members once a month in the Provincial Museum following each General Meeting of the Society. An initial training period will be given and an assistant will be provided. The position is honorary and provides an excellent opportunity for a member to play an important and appreciated part in the activities of the Society. The coffee and cookie sessions are one of the most enjoyable activities of the Society, and they will come to an end unless this position can be filled immediately. Applications may be made to the president (592-1332) and the first applicant will be successful.

### THE SOCIETY'S LIBRARY

(A note on an aspect of the VNHS's activities that perhaps few members know about. -- Ed.)

There is a library at the disposal of the members at my address, 2144 Brighton Ave. in Oak Bay, containing about 200 books. They cover all aspects of natural history -- anthropology to zoology -- too many to list in full in this article.

A few of the titles of the larger volumes are as follows, all of them having been donated:

- \* The Birds of the World
- \* The Earth Beneath Us
- \* The Shorebirds of North America
- \* Four volumes of the "Life Magazine" series;
- \* Three volumes of the "Birds of Massachusetts;"
- \* Taverner's "Birds of Canada;"
- \* Holland's "Butterflies and Moths;"

Also to be found are:

\*Most of the Handbooks and Occasional Papers, which include the anthropological works of Wilson Duff, all issued by the Provincial Museum and many now out of print.

\* Books by such familiar names as C.P. Lyons, R.T. Peterson, Hugh Halliday, J.H. Kortwright, J.A. Munro, George A. Hardy, Roderick Haig-Brown, W.F. Keller, Stanwell-Fletcher, etc.

\* The writings of Archdeacon Robert Connell.

\* The Society's scrapbooks from November, 1955 to April, 1971.

\* The writings of Mr. J.W. Winson (Wildwood), who was the donor of many of the books.

There are hundreds of magazines, including Canadian Audubon, Wildlife Review, Ottawa Field Naturalist, Natural History (issued by the American Museum of Natural History), and many others.

Also many copies of our own magazine from the first issue in April of 1944.

-- A.R. Davidson

## GARDOM LAKE

By Joan Groves

About eight miles from Salmon Arm in the midst of woods and farming land off the highway lies Gardom Lake. It is reed-rimmed in many places, and well-wooded, especially along the west end. Cottages and farm lands form much of its border. There is only one resort, but still the resulting powerboats spoil the tranquility. Still, in the early morning a loon's cry and the dip of a canoeist's paddle may be the only sounds heard.

Bird life abounds. In the first week of August, a pair of loons, 15 or more Red-necked Grebes, vireos, Red and Yellow-shafted Flickers, Eastern Kingbirds, Redstarts, flycatchers, and many difficult-to-identify fledglings were to be seen.

I was fortunate after much careful watching to find, high in a silver birch, a flycatcher's nest; I believe it was a Western Wood Pewee. A dead branch was his favorite perch, and what appeared to be merely a bump on a limb turned out to be a nest with three fledglings.

One of the parent birds always stood guard on the dead branch. As soon as the other appeared with food, off flew his mate. First only the fledglings' beaks were visible, then heads, then the most adventurous of the three hopped or lurched onto the edge of the nest. Finally all three left the nest for periods, venturing at first only six inches or so. Gradually their wings strengthened and finally they flew to nearby branches. They usually returned to the nest in the evening. The last I saw of them they had all left the nest but were in the same tree. That evening a storm skirted the area and a breeze sprang up.

Next morning there was no sign of the birds, but I hoped they were hiding in the heavy foliage and that no harm had come to them. It was the morning of our departure also, so there was no time to look for them.

I hope my next visit to Gardom Lake will be in the spring as the area must be rich in wildflowers as well as bird life. #

## BIRDS REPORTED

Golden Plover	(1) Sept 5	Clover Point A.R. Davidson
Fox Sparrow	(1) Sept 16	Monterey Ave. Grace Bell
Sabine's Gull	(1) Sept 22	Cordova Spit Bob Hay
Sabine's Gull	(1) Sept 22	Esquimalt Lagoon Stuart Johnston
Common Egret	(1) Sept 23	Cowichan Bay John Comer
Pectoral Sandpiper	(3) Sept 26	Martindale Rd.
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	(1) Sept 26	Martindale Rd.
Marsh Hawk	(1) Sept 29	Vic. Golf Club
Red-breasted Sapsucker	(2) Sept 30	East Sooke A.R. Davidson
Golden Eagle (imm.)	(2) Oct 4	Finnerty Cove G.N. Hooper

## ADDENDA

In this column in the October magazine, please read 12 Horned Larks instead of 12 Lapland Longspurs. The Longspurs "belong" to Mr. Davidson and were seen at Esquimalt Lagoon. Our apologies for the error.

On Sept. 23 at Cattle Point we watched what seemed like a never-ending river of Brandt's Cormorants coming from the north and heading for the Chain Islands. A conservative guess put the number at 3,000. Dave Stirling tells us it is a once only annual move and we were lucky to spot it.

M. and L. Slocombe, 3134 Henderson Rd.,  
592-9047

## ADDENDA FROM THE EDITOR

Seen too late for the column officially were a Sharp-tailed Sandpiper at Saanichton Inlet Oct. 8 by Bob Hay, Jeremy Tatum and Barbara McLintock, and a Tropical Kingbird seen and photographed by many observers at Cadboro Bay during the week of Oct. 16. Both these rarity finds were too exciting to keep a whole month, we felt, so here they are!



PROGRAM FOR NOVEMBER 1972

- Executive Meeting:** 8 p.m. Board Room 104M  
**Tuesday, Nov. 7** Provincial Museum
- General Meeting:** 8 p.m. Newcombe Auditorium  
**Tuesday, Nov. 14** (south entrance). "The World  
of the Beaver" -- a talk  
illustrated with slides by  
Mr. Gary Green.
- Audubon Wildlife Film:** Burdette White, "Gems of  
**Fri., Nov. 10 and Sat.,** Nature, East and West."  
**Nov. 11.** 8 p.m. both days, 2:30  
p.m. Sat. Newcombe Aud-  
itorium.
- Botany Field Trip:** Meet at Mayfair Lanes (north  
**Sunday, Nov. 12** side, corner of Roderick and  
Oak) at 9:30 a.m. for trip  
to Mt. Prevost, Duncan.  
Topic -- Lichens. Bring lunch;  
no hiking involved. Leader:  
Stephen Mitchell.
- Bird Field Trip:** Meet at Mayfair Lanes at  
**Saturday, Nov. 18** 9:30 a.m. or at Clover Point  
at 10 a.m. Bring lunch. Lea-  
der: Dr. Doug Sparling.

## JUNIOR PROGRAM

- Nov. 4** Intermediates Goldstream or Matheson  
Lake. Drivers: McGavin, Rimmington.
- Nov. 11** Juniors. Freeman King and Francis Parks.  
Drivers: Johanson, Brigham.
- Nov. 18** Intermediates. Ardmore. Drivers: Smith,  
Foster.
- Nov. 25** Juniors. Day trip to Spectacle Lake. Meet  
at 9:30 a.m. Bring lunch. Drivers:  
Walsh, Sandemann-Allen.
- Dec. 2** Intermediates. Beaver Lake. Drivers:  
Farnden, Suttill.

# VICTORIA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

## Honorary Life Members

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

## Officers 1972 - 73

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#416-3187 Shelbourne St.  
592-1332

### Vice-President

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4484 Markham St., R.R.3  
479-5548

### Immediate Past President

Mrs. F.A. Sherman, 2168 Guernsey St. ----- 598-3237  
Recording Secretary: Miss Maureen Collins, 2719 Richmond Rd.-- 598-1875  
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### Group Leaders

Botany: Stephen Mitchell, 3930 Braefoot Road ----- 477-9248  
Entomology: Prof. H.H. Huxley, 510-1701 Cedar Hill X Rd. ----- 477-8905  
Ornithology: Ruth Stirling, 3500 Salsbury Way ----- 385-4223  
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  
Gail Mitchell, 3930 Braefoot Rd. ----- 477-9248

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Ornithology Records: Dr. Jeremy Tatum, (see address above)  
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Membership: Mrs. A.R. Davidson, 2144 Brighton Ave. ----- 598-3088  
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Friends of the Museum: Dr. D.B. Sparling, #9-1354 Beach Dr. --- 598-4262  
Publicity: Harold Hosford, 450 Tipton St. ----- 478-5794

### "The Victoria Naturalist"

Editor: Barbara McLintock, 3-1006 Tolmie Ave. ----- 383-3097  
Assistant Editor: Harold Hosford, (see address above)

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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.*