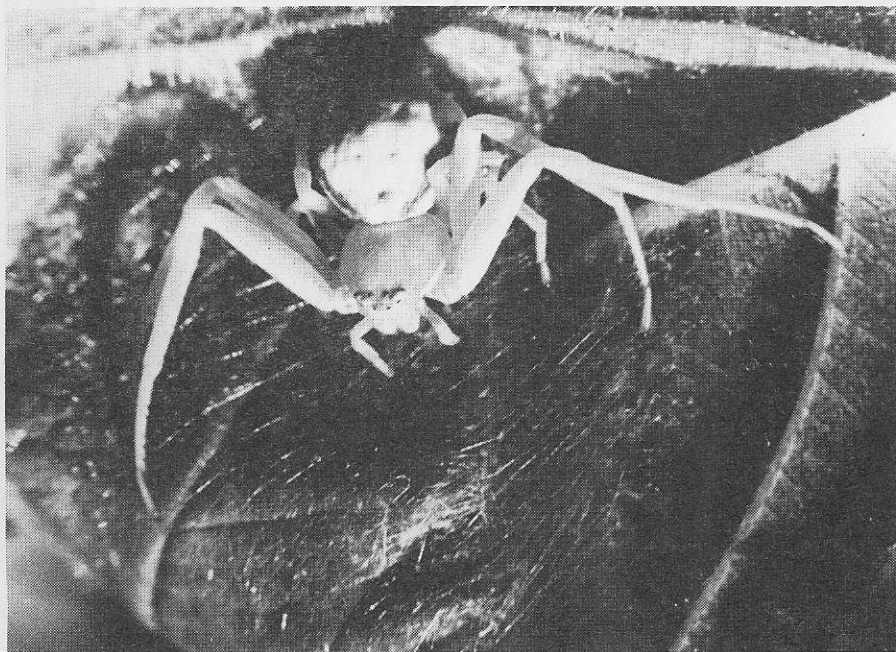


Newbery Request-



THE VICTORIA NATURALIST

published by the
VICTORIA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY
Victoria B.C

September, 1973
Vol. 30, No. 1

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The Crab Spider or Flower Spider (*Misumena vatia*) illustrated on this month's cover was white with mauve markings on the side of the body. Rather than use silk to capture their prey, Crab Spiders have a toxin which is lethal to bees, flies and other insects. The spiders sit on flowers and are able to change colour slowly to blend with the colour of the flower.

I watched this spider guarding her egg sac for between four and five weeks. She disappeared just before the eggs hatched. I have read that they die just before the eggs hatch.

This Flower Spider had the tip of a blackberry leaf folded over and tied down with silk, and she held her legs in a protective crablike fashion over the tied-down leaf. I turned the leaf over and fastened it with a clothes peg to take this photograph. Sometimes she would move out to rest in the sun, but if so much as my shadow passed over her she would quickly move back over the egg sac area.

Their vision of movement is good. All eight eyes are visible as is the tiny claw at the end of each leg.

In all the time I observed her, I saw her feeding only once. And intruders were most unwelcome. I once saw a big black aphid go to cross the leaf area - it was flicked off with remarkable speed.

When the eggs hatched, minute green spiderlings emerged from a tiny hole in the silk at the edge of the leaf.

Cover photo and story by
Bertha Gow



25/10/73

A. H. NEHRING BEQUEST

When Mr. Alfred Nehring, one of our members, died on May 17th of this year, we learned that he had left the residue of his estate to the Victoria Natural History Society. We hope in a future issue of Victoria Naturalist to be able to tell members something about Mr. Nehring himself, and formally to express our enormous appreciation of this most generous gesture of faith in our Society and what it stands for. For the present, however, this notice is just to inform members of the facts and to outline the future possibilities.

The 5-acre property with two ponds and a house is at 5118 West Saanich Road, at the foot of Little Saanich Mountain. Members who wish to look around the property should first ask one of the following officers: President, Vice-president, Secretary, Treasurer.

The Executive Committee of the Society has requested the executors of the estate to sell Mr. Nehring's car and some personal items. Most of the household furnishings remain, however, and no major action has yet been taken.

One possibility that is being considered is to retain the entire property and develop it as a Nature Centre with various displays in the house and the grounds. Quite obviously this very attractive idea also has problems associated with it. Thus it would need a constant and reliable supply of volunteers to work at the property, looking after the grounds, and designing, erecting and maintaining displays, and countless other tasks. It would also mean employing a manager at least on a part-time basis. This also means that we would have to have funds for paying the manager's salary, as well as paying taxes on the property and paying for upkeep of the house and grounds. Possibly funds from the estate might look after this for a year, but after that these things must be paid for out of income.

A second possibility is to recognize the difficulties inherent in the first plan and to admit that we are unable to handle them. In this case the suggestion would be to sell the property and use the money for some other purpose,

Brantley Gardner.

such as buying a much larger acreage of some habitat that might be particularly desirable for wildlife - a marsh, perhaps - in order to save the habitat from development. In this way we would make a real contribution to conservation without having the problems of managing a nature centre.

Unless we decide to sell the property immediately, it seems desirable - essential, even - that we should put a tenant in the house for a year or so while we formulate our plans more closely. If we put a tenant in, while he is in occupancy, members will not be free to visit the property without the express permission of the tenant.

The Executive Committee will welcome ideas from members if they are clearly thought out. If you favour retaining the property we would be interested to hear of anyone who might be asked to be manager of a nature centre. We would be interested in detailed plans for running such a centre. And, most of all, we would like to hear from people who would be willing to put in volunteer work in helping to run such a centre, and how many hours per week they would be willing work. If you favour selling the property and using the money for purchase of some other site, we would be glad of specific suggestions of sites to buy. And if you know of anyone who is looking for accommodation for a year, again, please let us know.

This bequest is one of the greatest things that has ever happened to our Society. We can make best use of it only if members will come forward willing to put in the hours and the work that will make us worthy of Mr. Nehring's faith in us.

J. B. Tatum,
President.

AUDUBON WILDLIFE FILMS: - 1973 - 74:

Enclosed with this magazine you will find the descriptive folder of the Audubon Wildlife Film series.

It is our hope that each of our members will plan to attend the five lectures at the Newcombe Auditorium, Provincial Museum.

All lectures will be held on Friday and Saturday evenings at 8:00 p.m., and the Saturday matinee at 2:30 p.m. Cost of season tickets remains at \$4.00 for adults and \$2.00 for students for both evenings.

A special price of \$3.50 for adult season and \$1.50 for student season tickets has been arranged for the matinee performance. We hope this will help some of our members as well as the general public. Please note these prices are far below those charged for other film series.

Season tickets will go on sale at the September meeting.

May I take this opportunity to thank Enid Lemon for the time and trouble she is taking to ensure that the Audubon Film Series continues to run as smoothly as it has in the past. Her help and encouragement is greatly appreciated.

Anne F. Adamson, Convener,
598-1623.

A. H. Couser, Assistant,
384-0832.

MARINE BIOLOGY TRIP - JUNE 2, 1973

Low tides of the long June days lured a group of Natural History enthusiasts to the slippery kelp-strewn rocks of Smugglers' Cove one sunny morning. Jennifer Brown, the scheduled leader, had taken ill. So David Stirling replaced her as guide to the dozen or so eager investigators. Clad in rubber boots and armed with heavy sticks for prodding, we sloshed through muddy shallows and slid over thick layers of seaweed, fascinated by the abundance of marine life.

From beneath overturned stones tiny shore crabs scuttled away to escape the light, almost disappearing right before our eyes. The slower-moving Spider Crab gained its protection from disturbance by camouflage. Its long legs were covered with algae, making it indistinguishable from the tangle of seaweed where it lay. Higher above the water level we found one specimen of Rock Crab whose powerful pincers were carefully avoided because they can open the shells of clams and oysters.

In the damp mud ribbon worms burrowed their way, and when disturbed shot forth the long proboscis which they use for obtaining food. Flopping about in the water pockets among the stones were small black blennies, lithe and wriggling fish which resemble eels. They were very hard to catch, slipping out of one's hand like magic. We found a little Clingfish, so-called because it can hold to a rocky surface and thus outwit predators. Also enjoying the shallow tide pools were numberless Sculpin - small fish with a sharply tapering body marked in decorative patterns. The large ugly head with protruding pectoral fins over-balanced the small body. For some reason this fish (or a larger species found in the northern Pacific) was often depicted by Indian artists on their totem poles, fish hooks, hats and slate dishes. The Indians used features as symbols to represent the animal depicted, and in the case of the sculpin these were two spines rising over a wide mouth and a joined dorsal fin.

Rocks and boulders were covered with barnacles while chitons clung tenaciously to their undersurface, only distinguished from the background by a regular pattern of overlapping plates on the top of the shell. Most were small but we found one big leather chiton 9 or 10 inches in length. Limpets and periwinkles clung to the damp rocks while in crevices whelks lay, protected by overhanging ledges from the sun's rays. Batches of whelk eggs, known as sea oats, clung in sand-coloured bunches to the rocks.

Lying in the shade of boulders, washed by the shallow flow of tidal water was a large purple starfish as well as several smaller Blood or Sea stars with narrow red rays. Almost hidden between the rock base and the water were a couple of purple urchins looking like great spiny balls, while nearby were soft pulpy sea cucumbers, bright orange in colour. A few dull looking anemones, splotched with red, lay in quiet pools.

Swaying with the ebb and flow of the deeper water in the cove were the thick olive-brown fronds of kelp and seaweed, long narrow blades of eel grass and bulbous air bladders of the bull kelp. A shiny tangle of leathery, slippery leaves covered the exposed area of beach. They were dull and dark in colour but soon to be brilliant green or coral when buoyed up by the water. There were sea staghorn, resembling antlers of a deer, curly grass-green sea lettuce, shirred blades of seersucker, ruffled sea Laver and the rough surface of Turkish Towel kelp. Hanging from exposed rock ledges was the rubbery drapery of the Popping Wrack whose air-filled bladders broke with a crackling noise when squeezed, and the pudgy fingers of Sea Sac, sometimes called Deadman's Fingers. Clusters of tube worms protruded from crevices, the worm at the bottom, lying in the water.

After two hours the tide was washing back into the bay, covering the creatures who must live perpetually beneath the water, bringing greater depth and swimming freedom for the species which spend half their life in shallow tide pools, and revitalizing those crustaceans, worms, and plants which can live high and dry for brief spells. It had been a good morning. The sea sparkled blue beneath sunny skies and we left for home pleased with this short glimpse at life in the intertidal zone.

Elsie G. Turnbull

PROGRAM FOR SEPTEMBER 1973

- Executive Meeting: 8:00 p.m. Room 402 Elliot Building
Tuesday, September 4 University of Victoria
- General Meeting: 8:00 p.m. Newcombe Auditorium
Tuesday, September 11 Provincial Museum (south entrance)
Speaker: Nancy Chapman Turner
Title: Plants of the Pacific Northwest Indians
- Botany Field Trip: Meet at Mayfair Lanes Parking Lot
Saturday, September 8 9:30 a.m. or at corner of Lohbrunner and Blenkinsop for a walk into Mt. Douglas Park. Morning only.
Leader: Stephen Mitchell 477-9248
- Bird Field Trip: Meet at Mayfair Lanes Parking Lot
Saturday, September 15 9:30 a.m. or Esquimalt Lagoon 10:00
Bring Lunch.
Leader: Ruth Stirling
- Bird Field Trip: Combined trip with Vancouver Group.
Sunday, September 23 Need 8 cars capable of carrying 3 visitors each to meet 8:45 a.m. ferry at Swartz Bay. Phone Ruth Stirling for details.

JUNIOR PROGRAM - SEPTEMBER 1973

All outings start from Mayfair lanes parking lot (corner of Roderick and Oak), at 1:30 p.m. unless otherwise noted.

If designated drivers are unable to participate, please inform Gail Mitchell at 477-9248 as soon as possible.

* Note * No outing September 1

- Sept. 8 Both juniors (9-12 years) and intermediates (13-18 years)
Francis Park
"Sign-up" - bring \$2.00 membership fee if not already a '73-'74 member
Drivers: Whittaker, McGavin, Parrish, Sandeman-Allen.
- Sept. 15 Daytrip for both groups with Vancouver juniors to Reifel Refuge Bird Sanctuary. Meet at Mayfair at 7:00 a.m. to catch 8:00 a.m. ferry. Bring foot passenger ferry fare (total of \$4.00). No lunch needed. Return on 4:00 p.m. ferry - arriving at Mayfair approx. 6:00 p.m. Please phone Gail if you will be coming on this outing. (Snack to eat on return ferry or snack money may be appreciated!)
Drivers: Foster, Murray, McGavin, Farnden
- Sept. 22 Juniors Ardmore Beach Drivers: Bryant Hopkins
- Sept. 29 Intermediates Ardmore Beach Drivers: Rhodes Emery

WHAT NEXT?

Perhaps we have gone the storks of northern Europe one better - Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Morris of 1605 Hollywood Place report a sea gull, no less, as having nested on their roof and successfully reared young. Two chicks are still in the nest as of this date (Aug. 14th) and the nest is visible from the street. The roof nesting storks of Europe are supposed to bring good luck - we hope the gulls on the Morris' roof are an equally lucky sign.

NOTES FROM UP ISLAND

Looking out of our window while lunching on May 24th, we spotted an otter on the shore with a large flounder in its "hands". He was biting it around the edges as if it were a cookie and settling down for a long enjoyable meal. Fascinated, we watched a most unusual drama. A large Bald Eagle appeared. It all happened so quickly that we suddenly witnessed a flounderless otter, dazed and frantically searching for his meal. At last, with a gory hole in his back, he dived and was gone. Piecing the whole thing together afterwards, the eagle must have taken the otter by surprise, dug his talons into him, causing him to drop his dinner and made off with the spoils in a flash. We will never forget the bewildered despair of the otter as he thrashed about, wondering where his prize meal had gone.

Elspeth Kerr and Sybil Lees,
Qualicum Beach.

Local Canada Trust offices are offering sets of six attractive seals depicting six different species of flora and fauna. They are yours for the asking and, being well designed and carrying the motto "Save our birds" and "Save our forests" etc., would make an eye-catching "stamp" for the back of envelopes, and one most appropriate to our Society.

A NOTE FROM YOUR EDITOR

As your new Editor, I am both anxious to please and hopeful that as many members as possible will send in articles or short jottings, or anything that you feel will be of interest to our readers. If anyone feels they have something of interest for the magazine but suffers from that all too common malady "writer's block", don't hesitate to phone us. We would be glad to receive the information by phone or in person and put it together for you. Remember, all pieces must be in our hands by the 8th of the month. Thank you.

BIRDS REPORTED

Lazuli Bunting	(1) May 30	Mt. Douglas Mr. and Mrs. Suttill
Caspian Tern	(1) Jul 2	Sooke Harbour Alec James
Great-horned Owl	(1) Jul 8	Beaver Lake J. Grove, B. Parlow, J. Regan
Long-billed Dowitcher	(1) Jul 13	Cedar Hill Golf Course D. B. Sparling

ADDENDA

Mr. Bob Hay just missed the June magazine by a day, and as he had an impressive list of sightings we feel our readers might appreciate a listing. In April and May of this year among his finds he spotted no less than: 2 Wood Duck, 1 European Widgeon, 20 Purple Martin, a pair of Tufted Duck, 2 Mountain Quail, 1 Tufted Puffin, several Common Scoter, 2 breeding Tree Swallows, 1 Cassin's Auklet, 8 Cinnamon Teal, 9 Blue-winged Teal, 1 White-fronted Goose, 1 Green Heron (adult), 6 Vaux Swift, 4 Rough-winged Swallow, 1 Whimbrel and 1 Bullock's Oriole (imm. male).

As the magazine has to be in to the Printers earlier this year, please phone in your bird reports by the 8th of the month. We hope you all had good birding this summer and, as we have had no phone calls this month, we sincerely hope you will phone in your sightings by Sept. 8th for the October magazine. Thank you.

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

"AND GOD CREATED GREAT WHALES"

A rather unique recording has come to our attention. The title is as above. It is a Columbia stereo record and features Andre Kostelanetz and his orchestra. The better part of one side is taken up with a rather unique composition by Hovhaness in "collaboration" with several humpback whales. It may seem an odd combination but it really "comes off" and is testament to the creativity of two of nature's more intelligent animals - man and whale. To quote the back of the record jacket: "... Roger S. Payne, Assistant professor at the Rockefeller University and a member of the Institute for Research in Animal Behaviour, brought to the Maestro some tapes of the singing humpback whales that he had recorded in the depths of the Atlantic Ocean near Bermuda. Kostelanetz was immediately enthusiastic about the musical possibilities of the recordings and suggested that a work be composed incorporating such unusual sounds. The ideal composer, he said, would be Alan Hovhaness..." The result is this recording. We enjoyed it and the remainder of the record offers some pleasant classical and folk music so we feel it is "in toto" a good buy.

M. Slocombe
Editor.

THE SEA AND ITS DESIGNS

Your editor was once an avid but very amateur shell collector. We feel that this aspect of our local natural history has been somewhat overlooked and we would welcome any information or articles by members re their sightings or collection of specimens on our local shores. A word to the wise collector: don't attempt (as we did) to enhance their beauty with shelac or nail polish! And always retain the operculum. We did most of our collecting in the early fifties, and it would appear there are fewer shells these days in our immediate area, but a good low tide will still yield some good specimens. Enid Lemon reports a large abalone from Saturna Island. As far as we know, these shells are protected and must not be moved. They used to be very prevalent in California (sea otters love them for dinner) but now they are being carefully guarded and signs are up warning people not to take them. The signs are amusing where the spelling is concerned. I quote: "No Abaloneaing" !

The fastest wing beat of any insect is 57,000 per minute by the midge *Forcipomyia*. The slowest wing beat of any insect is 300 per minute by a Swallow-tail butterfly.

The fastest swimming bird is the Gentoo Penguin (*Pygoscelis papua*) - timed at 22-1/2 m.p.h. under water!

PICKING THE PAPERBACKS

The Mating Game by June Johns
Sub Title: Sex, Love and Courtship in the Zoo

This is a fairly recent book (1970) and despite its title we do not rate it "R" ! It is a most readable, comprehensive collection of the problems, some hilarious, some sad, of breeding animals in zoos. It is well written and packed with information and, we feel, a valuable addition to any library. It is not written in an anthropomorphic vein but nevertheless on reading it one becomes a bit so - and perhaps rightly.

M. Slocombe, Editor

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A.H. Couser, 403-435 Michigan St.-----	384-0832
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Annual Dues, including subscription: Single \$3; Family \$6; Junior \$2
Junior Membership is restricted to those not under 9½ years and not over 18 years.
Sustaining Membership \$25

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.