



THE VICTORIA NATURALIST

**published by the
VICTORIA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY
Victoria B.C**

February, 1974
Vol. 30, No. 6

Published by
THE VICTORIA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

VOL. 30: No. 6

Feb. 1974

SNOWY OWLS - FIRST REPORT

While much is known about the causes and the mechanics of periodic Snowy Owl invasions such as the one now being experienced in southwestern British Columbia, less study has been directed to the activities of these owls on their chosen wintering grounds. In an attempt to provide some answers to the questions of distribution, age and sex make up of the group, and the feeding habits of the owls occupying this area, and to record the numbers of owls involved, a rather hasty survey was organized for November 18.

The Society's Christmas Bird Count organization was expanded to include coverage of the rest of the Saanich Peninsula, the offshore islands of Juan de Fuca and Haro Straits, and the Duncan area. Observers were in the field between 10.00 am and 2.00 pm on the count day.

In all 13 Snowy Owls were recorded on the survey with 3 or 4 others known to be in the area but believed to be among those that were counted. All owls seen were on the off-shore islands with 5 on Trial, 3 on Greater Chain, 1 in a small group of islets next to Greater Chain, and 4 in the Chatham/Discovery complex. Except for treeless Trial Island, where a few owls were seen in the uplands, the birds were close to the shore often among the beach logs.

Among the probables were 2 seen at Pat Bay airport, 1 at Chemainus, and another nearly white bird seen at Swan Lake, all recorded on Saturday November 17.

Of the 8 birds aged and sexed by plumage and size, 7 were juveniles, birds of the year, and 1 an adult female. This seems to support the belief that it is the young of the year that abandon the nesting grounds first when the lemmings give out.

One owl was seen eating a female Harlequin Duck on the count day while earlier in the week there were reports of Mew Gulls being taken as well.

More information is needed on just what these owls exploit for food when they move into areas where their normal mammalian prey is not abundant. Any observations on this aspect of the owl's behaviour while in this area should be sent to me at 303 Daniel Place for a future report. Please record the time and place of the observations, the age and sex of the owl if possible and the age, sex and species of the prey. Notes on the techniques used by the owls to obtain their prey would be valuable as well.

The distribution of the owls on the off-shore islands also raises some interesting questions. With some evidence that waterfowl and sea birds become the principal prey species in this area, the choice of these islands, surrounded as they are by abundant food, seems appropriate. The islands also provide the owls with open, exposed habitat similar to that in which they hunt in the arctic. One look at Trial Island from Hood Lane should be enough to convince an observer of this.

But one cannot help wondering if the islands became the only haven open to the owls when they were confronted with the formidable obstacle of the Straits of Juan de Fuca.

The question, at least initially, can be answered with a qualified no. Judging from the distribution of the early reports the owls were found in many unlikely places, such as wooded cemeteries and downtown buildings, while later, when they had had a chance to survey the area, they settled in those places where attractive habitat and abundant food existed - namely the off-shore islands.

A survey such as this raises more questions than it answers but while many of the observers were disappointed at not seeing an owl, they can take solace from the fact their efforts turned up the unusual distribution of the birds, a fact in itself worth the effort.

My thanks to all who took part. If we can get another survey established for later in the season, I hope you will all take part again as enthusiastically as you did this time.

... Harold Hosford

(Cover Photo - Harold Hosford)

CHRISTMAS COUNT 1973

In spite of some rain and cold winds the recent Christmas count was an overwhelming success with 58,890 birds sighted and an amazing species total of 131. Although not included in the following tables, several additional species were seen in the count period. These were: a Redhead, a Short-eared Owl, a Brown-headed Cowbird, a Townsend's Warbler, a Tree Sparrow and a Red Phalarope.

Mr. Keith Taylor acted as compiler this year as Dr. Tatum was comet watching in Chile. A big vote of thanks goes to everyone who took part in the count and especially to Anne Adamson who provided such a delightful reception that evening.

KEY TO AREAS

<u>Area A:</u>	Prospect Lake -- Durrance Lake
<u>Area B:</u>	Florence Lake -- Goldstream
<u>Area C:</u>	Esquimalt Lagoon -- Witty's
<u>Area D:</u>	Portage Inlet -- Thetis Lake
<u>Area E:</u>	Beacon Hill Park -- Esquimalt
<u>Area F:</u>	Clover Point -- Oak Bay
<u>Area G:</u>	University -- Cadboro Bay
<u>Area H:</u>	Swan Lake -- Panama Flats
<u>Area I:</u>	Blenkinsop -- Elk Lake
<u>Area J:</u>	Burnside -- Quick's Pond
<u>Area K:</u>	Martindale -- Island View
<u>Area L:</u>	Chain, Trial, Chatham Islands

Note: The letters to the right of some species totals in the count tables have the following meanings:

H - highest or equal to highest ever

L - lowest or equal to lowest ever

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

SPECIES	A	B	C	D	E
COMMON LOON	0	0	14	2	4
YELLOW-BILLED LOON	0	0	0	0	0
RED-THROATED LOON	0	0	0	2	2
ARCTIC LOON	0	0	18	1	0
RED-NECKED GREBE	0	23	3	2	12
HORNED GREBE	0	7	21	3	7
EARED GREBE	0	0	2	2	2
WESTERN GREBE	0	4	603	0	3
PIED-BILLED GREBE	1	3	0	0	0
DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT	1	10	3	17	8
PELAGIC CORMORANT	0	0	28	1	56
BRANDT'S CORMORANT	0	0	0	0	3
GREAT BLUE HERON	0	0	7	5	6
WHISTLING SWAN	0	0	0	0	0
MUTE SWAN	0	0	5	18	0
CANADA GOOSE	0	0	9	64	0
MALLARD DUCK	308	146	138	46	700
GADWALL	0	0	0	0	0
PINTAIL	49	43	48	1	0
GREEN-WINGED TEAL	3	4	14	0	0
EUROPEAN WIDGEON	0	0	0	0	0
AMERICAN WIDGEON	270	480	226	45	508
SHOVELLER	0	40	0	0	2
RING-NECKED DUCK	91	1	0	1	0
CANVASBACK	19	0	14	0	8
GREATER SCAUP	0	0	83	9	350
LESSER SCAUP	0	4	0	0	104
COMMON GOLDENEYE	1	17	36	15	27
BARROW'S GOLDENEYE	0	1	0	0	1
BUFFLEHEAD	7	39	258	26	85
OLD SQUAW	0	0	13	2	13
HARLEQUIN	0	0	11	1	55
WHITE WINGED SCOTER	0	0	72	7	22
SURF SCOTER	0	1	80	0	31
COMMON SCOTER	0	0	0	1	1
RUDDY DUCK	0	0	0	0	0
HOODED MERGANSER	2	10	2	46	11
COMMON MERGANSER	60	22	2	5	0
RED-BREASTED MERGANSER	0	3	29	1	23
SHARP-SHINNED HAWK	1	1	0	1	0
COOPER'S HAWK	0	0	1	1	0
RED-TAILED HAWK	3	1	1	3	0
GOLDEN EAGLE	0	1	0	0	0

VICTORIA, B.C., DECEMBER 30, 1973

F	G	H	I	J	K	L	TOTAL
7	8	0	11	0	4	12	62
0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
1	2	0	1	0	1	6	15
16	1	0	0	0	0	87	123
43	19	0	0	0	5	151	258 H
122	64	0	60	0	26	276	586
4	8	0	0	0	0	0	18 L
37	44	0	0	0	0	25	716
0	0	3	0	0	0	0	7 L
3	19	4	13	0	1	11	90
10	4	0	39	0	2	584	724
90	103	0	0	0	0	690	886 H
4	3	2	0	0	10	6	43
0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3 H
0	0	0	4	0	0	0	27
0	0	0	22	0	2	0	97
226	498	148	582	235	190	85	3302
0	0	4	0	5	0	0	9 H
0	3	99	0	63	8	7	321
0	0	638	0	26	0	0	685
0	0	4	0	1	0	0	5
210	130	930	319	292	2030	172	5612
6	2	17	5	21	0	0	93
0	0	1	4	2	16	0	116
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	41
1036	12	0	51	0	8	22	1571
0	0	1	4	0	0	14	127
41	16	0	13	0	13	158	337
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
300	83	8	53	9	72	415	1355
48	5	0	4	0	4	661	750 H
48	39	0	0	0	14	92	260
29	15	0	3	0	7	167	322
81	44	0	31	0	5	466	739
0	0	0	0	0	2	12	16 H
0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1 L
0	10	0	60	0	7	4	152
0	4	0	8	0	1	2	104
8	25	0	23	4	2	39	157
0	3	0	1	3	0	1	11
0	1	1	1	1	0	1	7
0	0	1	3	3	3	1	19
0	1	0	0	0	0	1	3 H

SPECIES	A	B	C	D	E
BALD EAGLE	1	2	3	0	0
GYRFALCON	0	0	1	0	0
PEREGRINE FALCON	0	0	0	0	0
MERLIN	0	1	0	0	0
AMERICAN KESTREL	0	0	0	0	0
BLUE GROUSE	0	0	0	1	0
RUFFED GROUSE	1	0	0	2	0
CALIFORNIA QUAIL	25	0	2	18	2
MOUNTAIN QUAIL	0	0	0	5	0
RING-NECKED PHEASANT	3	3	2	3	4
VIRGINIA RAIL	0	0	0	0	0
AMERICAN COOT	9	1	66	4	4
BLACK OYSTERCATCHER	0	0	1	0	6
KILLDEER	17	0	4	6	0
BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER	0	0	0	0	0
SURFBIRD	0	0	0	0	0
BLACK TURNSTONE	0	0	9	15	13
COMMON SNIBE	1	0	1	0	0
SPOTTED SANDPIPER	0	0	0	0	0
GREATER YELLOWLEGS	0	0	1	0	0
ROCK SANDPIPER	0	0	0	0	0
DUNLIN	0	0	9	0	2
SANDERLING	0	0	0	0	1
GLAUCOUS-WINGED GULL	1618	230	445	100	300
WESTERN GULL	0	0	0	0	0
HERRING GULL	2	0	0	0	4
THAYER'S GULL	0	0	0	0	2
CALIFORNIA GULL	0	0	0	0	0
MEW GULL	0	8	437	5	16
BONAPARTE'S GULL	0	0	0	0	0
COMMON MURRE	0	1	0	0	0
PIGEON GUILLEMOT	0	0	2	0	2
MARbled MURRELET	0	0	1	0	3
ANCIENT MURRELET	0	0	0	0	0
ROCK DOVE	0	3	0	4	0
BAND-TAILED PIGEON	0	0	0	25	0
BARN OWL	0	0	0	0	1
GREAT HORNED OWL	0	0	0	0	0
SCREECH OWL	0	0	4	0	0
SNOWY OWL	0	0	1	0	0
ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRD	0	0	0	0	0
BELTED KINGFISHER	0	2	5	1	1
NORTHERN FLICKER	6	14	30	34	6
PILEATED WOODPECKER	3	1	1	1	0
HAIRY WOODPECKER	1	10	0	1	0

	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	TOTAL	
	3	2	0	3	1	1	4	20	H
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	H
	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	3	
	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	
	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
	0	0	0	0	7	0	0	10	H
	27	44	0	65	4	32	0	219	
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	
	0	7	7	5	3	4	0	41	
	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	
	13	12	27	57	1	0	0	194	L
	12	1	0	0	0	0	2	22	
	0	4	0	0	15	1	0	47	L
	7	3	0	0	0	0	111	121	
	5	2	0	0	0	0	1	8	
	94	8	0	0	0	0	44	183	
	0	36	2	2	0	0	0	42	
	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	
	6	2	0	0	0	0	1	10	
	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	
	28	0	0	0	0	5	176	220	
	1	0	0	0	0	0	65	67	H
	255	358	6	239	72	185	945	4753	
	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	
	41	61	0	0	4	0	2	114	H
	4	0	0	0	0	0	95	101	H
	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	4	
	530	271	65	0	0	32	2330	3694	
	0	0	0	0	0	0	55	55	H
	4	25	0	0	0	0	7801	7831	H
	15	3	0	1	0	2	215	240	
	0	6	0	0	0	0	9	19	
	1000	20	0	0	0	0	5381	6401	H
	26	0	29	23	35	50	1	171	
	0	14	0	5	0	0	0	44	
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	
	5	0	0	0	0	0	7	13	H
	0	13	0	0	0	0	0	13	H
	0	1	1	0	0	1	4	16	
	12	16	3	30	6	15	3	175	
	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	9	
	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	15	

SPECIES	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	TOTAL
DOWNY WOODPECKER	0	8	1	1	2	2	2	0	4	2	0	0	22
SKYLARK	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2 L
STELLER'S JAY	5	6	6	3	0	0	1	0	2	3	0	0	26
COMMON RAVEN	18	6	3	18	0	0	6	0	6	4	15	2	78
NORTH-WESTERN CROW	80	0	141	60	10	318	402	174	458	212	360	435	2650
CHESTNUT-BACKED CHICKADEE	23	75	72	64	30	19	76	0	51	37	29	5	481
COMMON BUSHTIT	0	0	0	6	25	24	21	0	12	4	0	0	92
RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH	4	18	21	79	1	0	11	0	20	8	1	0	163 H
BROWN CREEPER	2	3	3	5	1	0	4	1	1	1	0	0	21
DIPPER	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
WINTER WREN	1	17	4	9	1	1	19	0	2	2	1	1	58
BEWICK'S WREN	5	7	6	6	0	3	14	2	11	5	3	1	63
LONG-BILLED MARSH WREN	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	0	0	4 H
AMERICAN ROBIN	48	25	92	78	29	850	419	105	191	48	374	12	2271
VARIED THRUSH	23	35	3	4	8	0	10	0	7	1	0	1	92
HERMIT THRUSH	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET	53	14	78	88	26	8	19	0	26	42	12	0	366
RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET	1	3	13	0	0	1	8	3	9	1	0	0	39
CEDAR WAXWING	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
NORTHERN SHRIKE	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	5
STARLING	47	69	122	374	20	78	685	62	180	15	1567	5	3224
ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
AUDUBON'S WARBLER	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
HOUSE SPARROW	2	0	3	0	12	50	204	30	13	21	1	0	336
WESTERN MEADOWLARK	0	0	2	0	7	2	0	0	0	0	3	0	14
RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD	0	0	0	0	3	5	7	3	2	0	0	0	20
BREWER'S BLACKBIRD	0	12	0	0	14	0	0	0	164	0	35	0	225
EVENING GROSBEAK	0	0	10	0	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	14
PURPLE FINCH	2	47	1	1	4	14	26	1	2	0	1	0	99
HOUSE FINCH	0	7	9	10	7	32	101	0	2	20	3	85	276
AMERICAN GOLDFINCH	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
PINE SISKIN	6	304	390	179	20	90	154	0	113	16	30	4	1306
PINE GROSBEAK	0	0	0	25	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	26 H
RED CROSSBILL	52	96	19	101	0	0	80	0	33	42	12	11	446 H
RUFOUS-SIDED TOWHEE	9	24	7	14	4	7	29	11	18	4	21	3	151
DARK-EYED JUNCO	78	219	171	153	9	31	238	58	80	120	128	5	1290
WHITE-THROATED SPARROW	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2 H
WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW	0	0	2	1	0	9	6	0	2	0	0	0	20
GOLDEN-CROWNED SPARROW	3	8	13	0	2	8	18	8	3	3	0	0	66
LINCOLN'S SPARROW	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
FOX SPARROW	5	14	0	2	1	5	18	14	11	4	1	1	76
SONG SPARROW	4	13	27	8	10	20	24	16	9	7	21	12	171
SNOW BUNTING	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
<u>TOTAL INDIVIDUALS</u>	2975	2173	3985	1843	2659	6059	4682	2494	3190	1438	5382	22010	58890
<u>TOTAL SPECIES</u>	49	60	74	69	66	72	82	42	70	49	56	69	131

THE RESCUE

The air was cold but the winter sun warmed us as we walked towards the fifth tee at Colwood one morning recently. Our attention was drawn to some gulls circling excitedly above something on the ice on the nearby pond. As we went to investigate we found that the object of their harassment was a female widgeon. She was not frozen in the ice, as we first thought, but was on her belly with legs outspread. Despite incessant attempts with her wings she was unable either to stand up or fly.

A search for a long ladder proved fruitless and I was told, in no uncertain terms, that to venture out on the thin ice was crazy -- even with a ladder.

While we were still trying to figure out what to do our problem was solved by two men from across the pond who arrived with a canoe on their truck. A rope was tied to the canoe and it was pushed out on to the ice. The lightest person being the obvious one for the job, I removed my golf shoes and climbed into the canoe. All went well until I reached the bow and then, with much cracking, the ice broke and we became water borne. A man jumped into the rear of the canoe, then, and handed me a shovel. With him steadying the canoe I was able to bash away at the ice without fear of tipping over. The ice was thicker as we got further out on the pond and, after a short time of wielding the shovel from a kneeling position, I asked for relief. We were pulled back to shore and the man and I changed places. The ice was about three-quarters of an inch thick at this point so the going was slow and, of course, the widgeon kept flopping away from us as we approached. Finally we were close enough so that the man in the bow was able to reach out with about a fifteen foot rake (normally used to retrieve balls from a water hazard) and gently pull the duck to him.

There appeared to be nothing visually wrong with the bird but it seemed sensible to have it examined by a professional so, wrapped gently in a car rug to keep it quiet, it had its first car ride to the S.P.C.A.

Later, when I called to enquire about the duck, I was told that she had had to be put to sleep.

There are those who will laugh at our attempt to help

one bird when thousands are killed each year by hunters yet perhaps some of those who came to help were hunters themselves. Anyway, it was heartening that some did care and did come and I remember also what someone else said as I was getting in my car with the duck "What do you expect to get out of it?" My answer was "Peace of mind."

(Mr. Davidson sent us the above article which he meant to include in the June issue. He does not know who the author is. Perhaps the author will read this and hopefully send us something more at a future date.)

... the Editor

BOOK REVIEW

Any T.V. addicts amongst our readers (we plead guilty) will have seen Euell Gibbons hopping out of the shrubbery to do his bit for some vitamin-packed breakfast cereal. His prefacing remarks are always to the effect "Did you know Goldenrod makes an excellent tea?" or "Are you aware that parts of the pine tree are edible?" He seems personable on the tube, not the least raucous and he certainly looks healthy so we ordered his new book Stalking the Healthful Herbs. It was obvious from the first perusal of the book that Mr. Gibbons has done his homework well, and he dishes up botanical information, recipes, history and humour in delightful doses. Miss Melburn kindly checked the index for us and there are at least 14 sections of the book applicable to our region. The author is a witty and incisive writer and gets right to the root (pardon the pun) of his subject - the finding, preparation and every possible use of wild herbs etc. It is pleasing that he relies on his own taste buds when accepting or rejecting a concoction and is not afraid to say something tastes awful.

Any man who would try three times to make peace in the kitchen with skunk cabbage deserves a medal. This is not only a useful and informative book but a fun one. We recommend it.

... M. Slocombe

THE BAR-TAILED GODWIT

In August, 1972, Bob Hay phoned to say that there was a godwit in the pond on the Indian reserve near Sidney. Armed with scope and camera we went to see and photograph it if we could. We did. The pictures turned out well and we were glad to add a Marbled Godwit to the picture file.

Almost a year later when Keith Taylor came back from Australia he heard about it and was interested in some of the features of the description so he came to see the picture. He and Wayne Campbell examined it carefully and to the surprise of the Sparlings decided the bird was the much rarer Bar-tailed Godwit.

Bar-tails are much better known in Europe than in North America. In his "Birds of Britain and Europe" Peterson shows a nesting area in northern Scandinavia but a winter and roving area all around the British Isles and as far as the coast of Spain. In his "Guide to the Western Birds" he gives "Northern Eurasia and Alaska but wintering in Central Eurasia to North Africa and Australia." He notes that it builds its nest on the tundra.

It is almost unknown in Canada. In Taverner's "Birds of Canada" published in 1934 he says "There is a single record near Vancouver in 1931." In Godfrey's "Birds of Canada," published in 1966, he says "the one Canadian specimen is referable to the Alaskan subspecies *Limosa lapponica baueri*, being accidental in Canada-Colebrook October 30, 1931." The same one that Taverner noted! So, suitably identified by the experts, Vancouver Island can claim the second Canadian record. Anyone interested in seeing the slide could contact either Wayne Campbell or Dr. Sparling.

... D.B. and Reita Sparling.

EDITOR'S NOTE

We realize this issue of the Naturalist is pretty "birdy" but we ask the botanists, geologists, insect watchers and fish followers not to despair - we plan much more diversity in future issues.

... M. Slocombe

BIRDS REPORTED

Gray Jay (1)	Dec. 6	Goldstream H. Hosford
Ring-necked Duck (3)	Dec. 12	Old West Road
Ruddy Duck (13)	Dec. 19	Esquimalt Lagoon Mr. & Mrs. Davidson
Glaucous Gull (2)	Dec. 19	Glen Lake & Sooke River Vic Goodwill
Rusty Blackbird (1)	Dec. 23	Duncan
Cassin's Finch (8)	Dec. 23	Duncan, Vic Goodwill & R. Satterfield
Short-eared Owl (1)	Dec. 23	Rithet's Swamp Enid Lemon
European Widgeon (1)	Dec. 27	The Gorge Mr. & Mrs. Davies
Evening Grosbeak (20)	Dec. 27	Blenkinsop Road Mr. & Mrs. Davidson
Barn Owl (1)	Dec. 30	Huron St. R. Fryer
Tree Sparrow (1)	Jan. 1	Sinclair Rd. Tuesday Group
Gray-crowned Rosy Finch (3)	Jan. 11	Florence St. D. Sparling

ADDENDA

This has been quite a month for raptors. Besides the ones noted above, sightings have been reported of Two Hawk Owls (at Wilkinson Road and Cattle Point, both by Ralph Fryer), three Gyrfalcons (one at Ten Mile Point by Keith Taylor and Bob Hay, one in Central Saanich by Ron Satterfield and Vic Goodwill and one at Markham St. by Rick West), two Great Horned Owls (one at Mill Bay by Ron Satterfield and Vic Goodwill and one at Newport Ave. by the Tuesday group). And on Dec. 25th Dave Stirling and Cy Moorehen spied a Peregrine Falcon with its kill, a Band-tailed Pigeon.

Arbutus Road appears to have turned into a winter resort for some Annah's Hummingbirds - Mr. and Mrs. V. Copp report that two have been coming to their feeder frequently and Betty Lothian had three Annah's all at one time at her feeder on Jan. 1st.

Another surprise this month was the sighting of an Oriole sp. by Miss Faith Hodgson in Central Saanich. Cy Moorehen, Mr. and Mrs. Davidson and Bob MacKenzie-Grieve all got a glimpse of it as well. Apparently it has been in the area for some six weeks.

We take this opportunity to tell our readers that we plan to be away from Feb. 2nd through the 8th, so please phone in your sightings either before or after those dates. Thank you.

M. & L. Slocombe
3134 Henderson Road
Phone 592-9047

FEBRUARY PROGRAM

- Tuesday Feb. 5 Executive Meeting. 7:30 p.m.
Rm. 402 Elliot Bldg., UVic.
- Saturday Feb. 9 Botany workshop. 9:30 a.m.
Morning only.
Rm. 2024 Cunningham Bldg., UVic.
Leader: Stephen Mitchell
- Tuesday Feb. 12 General Meeting. 8:00 p.m.
Newcombe Auditorium, Prov. Museum
Speakers: Kay and Dennis Suttill
Topic: Flowers in the Rockies.
- Saturday Feb. 16 Bird trip. Martindale Rd.
Meet at Mayfair Lanes 9:30 a.m. or
Martindale Rd. 10:00.
Leader: Ruth Stirling.

* * * * *

The Victoria Natural History Society Coach Tour to California March 16 - April 2nd has a few vacancies left. Any interested member may obtain details from:

Mr. Fred Corbett

B.C. Travel

Telephone 385-4732

JUNIOR JOTTINGS

I am happy to say we now have a wealth of naturalists helping to lead the junior outings. They include Pat Swift; Jenny Singleton; Barb Chapman; Dave Thompson; Bruce Fredericks and Greg Scott. The juniors will benefit from the participation of these experienced people and I would like to thank them all for their help. Of course, these leaders will also benefit - we do learn from children!

Before Christmas, the small auditorium at Francis Park came in handy. On a wet Saturday we had a slide show which we treated as an informal "quiz" - however, nobody could see to write in the dark! Most of the slides were of flowering plants found on Vancouver Island, but they did include a few birds and two mammals not on the island, a moose and a family of skunks! Some hot chocolate was "rustled up" in the lab as a Christmas treat - and to warm us up!

Perhaps most of the juniors were too full of Christmas food as only four enthusiasts turned out on December 29th for another visit to Francis Park. However, a small group is fun - we all had a chance to see the little things which might be missed with a big group such as tiny fungi, lichens, moss spore capsules and a squirrel's dining table.

Over the holiday season so many of us become pre-occupied with the traditional visiting - eating - drinking custom. It is little wonder that we often do not feel in perfect health. Remember, next festive season, no matter what the weather - get out for a hike (long or short) in one of the nearby parks - I guarantee you will feel better for it!

Thank you "everyone" for the poinsettia! We look forward to exciting new discoveries and deeper appreciation of "old discoveries."

Happy times in 1974!

... Gail Mitchell

* * * * *

JUNIOR PROGRAM

All outings leave from the north side of Mayfair Lanes parking lot at 1:30 p.m. If drivers are unable to participate please inform Gail (477-9248) as soon as possible.

DRIVERS

Feb. 2	Juniors	Cattle Point	Whittaker Mothersill
Feb. 9	Intermediates	Arbutus Ridge Trail	Foster McGavin
Feb. 16	NO OUTING (Audubon film at 2:30 at Newcombe Auditorium)		
Feb. 23	Juniors	Francis Park	Parrish Farnden
Mar. 2	Intermediates	Matheson Lake	Singleton Walsh

* * * * *

The longest horns of any animal belong to the pre-historic giant deer (*Megaceros giganteus*) which lived in Northern Europe and Northern Asia as recently as 50,000 B.C. It stood seven feet at the shoulder and had antlers measuring an incredible fourteen feet across.

* * * * *

The biggest jellyfish ever recorded was a specimen washed up on the coast of Massachusetts around 1870. It had a bell seven and a half feet in diameter and tentacles measuring 120 feet. This gave it a theoretical tentacular span of some 250 feet.

* * * * *

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

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS 1973 - 74

President	Vice-President
Dr. Jeremy Tatum	Mrs. G.N. Hooper
305 - 1680 Poplar Ave.	2411 Alpine Cres.
477-1089	477-1152

Immediate Past President

Mrs. F.A. Sherman, 2168 Guernsey St. -----	598-3237
Secretary: Mrs. J.L. Rimmington, 3372 Henderson Rd.-----	592-6037
Treasurer: Miss Maureen Collins, 2719 Richmond Rd. -----	598-1875
Programme Chairman: Stephen Mitchell, 4321 Majestic Dr. -----	477-9248

Group Leaders

Botany: Stephen Mitchell, (see address above)	
Ornithology: Mrs. Ruth Stirling, 3500 Salsbury Way -----	385-4223
Marine Biology: David Stirling, 3500 Salsbury Way -----	385-4223
Junior Naturalists: Freeman F. King, 541 McKenzie Ave. -----	479-2966
Editor - "The Victoria Naturalist":	
Maeford Slocombe, 3134 Henderson Rd. -----	592-9047
University Liaison: Dr. Rosemary Picozzi, 11-1595 Rockland-----	384-4958
Federation of B.C. Naturalists:	
Kerry Joy, Millstream Lake Rd., R.R.6 -----	478-5093

OTHER OFFICERS

Audubon Wildlife Films: Miss Anne Adamson, 1587 Clive Dr. -----	598-1623
A.H. Couser, 403-435 Michigan St.-----	384-0832
Asst. Junior Naturalists: Mrs. Gail Mitchell, 4321 Majestic -----	477-9248
Librarian: A.R. Davidson, 2144 Brighton Ave. -----	598-3088
Friends of the Museum: Dr. D.B. Sparling, 9-1354 Beach Dr. -----	598-4262

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.