



THE VICTORIA NATURALIST

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VICTORIA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY
Victoria B.C

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VICTORIA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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(See also inside back cover)

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Annual Dues, including subscription to the Victoria Naturalist:
Junior - \$2.50; Golden Age Single - \$4.00; Regular Single - \$5.00;
Family (Golden or Regular) - \$7.50; Sustaining - \$25.00.

Junior Membership is restricted to those not under 8 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.

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SEPTEMBER 1974

CONSIDER THE LOWLY CRAYFISH

Though we may not often see them, crayfish are very common animals in our rapidly flowing rivers and fresh water lakes. The best way to find one is to get a twelve-year-old boy or girl to find one for you. They'll do it in a matter of minutes. The one on this month's cover was found for me by a youngster at Shawnigan Lake. Its name is Astacus trowbridgi.

Crayfish are decapod crustacea and therefore have ten legs. The first pair bear the huge claws used for seizing food and for fighting. The other four pairs, of which the first two bear small claws, are used for normal locomotion. When the crayfish wants to make a quick get-away however, it uses its tail. By pushing its tail rapidly forward beneath its body, the animal can shoot backwards with surprising speed.

My young friend knew this about crayfish before he tried to catch one for me.

Crayfish are omniverous. They will eat any small animal they can catch as well as much vegetable matter. They are also scavengers but more by chance than by choice. They are in turn preyed upon by large fish, herons, mink, otters, racoons and man. Being large, easily obtained, and typical arthropods, they are much in demand for scientific research and for educational purposes. So great was the demand for them at one time in the British Isles, for example, that the only native species was almost exterminated in some areas.

Sometimes I feel that if this is what education in natural history is all about, it were

better that our children were left in ignorance of the wonders of our natural world.

Recently I visited Butchart Gardens and while admiring one of their beautiful white water lilies chanced to see a pair of large claws emerge from the water, followed by several pairs of spidery legs, all of which wrapped themselves around one of the fresh petals of a particularly choice blossom. The legs belonged to a crayfish which, in a trice had snipped off the petal and disappeared with it under the water.

I did not tell the gardeners.

It was the late Clifford Carl who first pointed out to me the close similarity between our local crayfish and those of Europe. Here, and in Europe, these animals require well-aerated, cool water. They do not do well in aquaria unless skillfully handled. In eastern Canada there are some very different crayfish from those found here, including some curious species that burrow into the mud and build chimneys above their burrows. Others flourish in little more than a damp field. These can be so numerous in parts of the United States as to become something of an agricultural nuisance.

Our species, however, require oxygenated water and are therefore very sensitive to most forms of pollution. Those who concern themselves with environmental matters would do well to study the distribution of these splendid crustaceans.

... *Jeremy Tatum*

NEHRING UPDATE

The Nehring estate was sold in mid-June for \$54,500 and the transaction was completed in early August. Contents of the house were sold, or are about to be sold, for a total sum yet to be complete, and therefore to be reported at a later date. The property itself is now a milestone in the Society's history, and a large sum of money, the

result of Mr. Nehring's magnificent generosity, is now part of the Society's assets.

The Society is deeply indebted to Gilbert ("Giff") Calvert who, as our agent through the sale of the property and of the contents of the house gave much time to us, looked after endless details for us, and as our Real Estate Agent, requested a commission much below the going rate. I will take this opportunity, as I hope I can on other occasions, to thank him for his efficient help and great generosity.

The money is now invested. As approved at the General Meeting in May, \$10,000. has been offered to the District of Saanich for use in the Swan Lake-Christmas Hill Nature Centre. The money was offered for the improvement of habitat for waterbirds and for the construction of viewing facilities, and on the condition that the Society would have representation in the administering and planning of the Centre's facilities and operations. Our offer has been accepted.

At Swan Lake, and in other ways in other places, the gift of Alfred H. Nehring will enlarge the stature of the Victoria Natural History Society as long as it shall endure. May others follow his memorable lead.

... *R. Yorke Edwards*

NOW HEAR THIS!

Starting Wednesday September 18,

and until further notice,

all general meetings of the

Victoria Natural History Society

will be held in

THE ST. JOHN'S AMBULANCE AUDITORIUM

941 PANDORA

.....

NOW YOU KNOW

REMEMBERING IS UP TO YOU

SPECTACLE LAKE & COBBLE HILL BIRD TRIPJULY 21, 1974

Some twenty members led by Dr. Jeremy Tatum spent several interesting hours on this warm July day trying to coax the birds out of hiding or to get them to sing for us. As Jeremy said before we started, this was the terrible July trip and don't expect too much.

While waiting for others to arrive at Spectacle Lake we were shown some Stonefly nymphs under rocks in a little stream and now we know what Dippers are looking for when they run around under the water.

Apart from the fact that a male Western Tanager was spotted by Rob. Mackenzie-Grieve, on the way up, things got off to a slow start, and Chestnut-backed Chickadees and Golden-crowned Kinglets were our only bird companions on the first part of the walk around the lake.

We heard Steller's Jays and a little later ran into a small flock which gave us a good scolding for disturbing them. At the same time a family of Wilson's Warblers appeared in the willows and seemed quite agitated at our presence. The only bird on the lake itself was a Hooded Merganser either a female or a well-grown immature. A Common Nighthawk was heard and seen and several Rufous Hummingbirds buzzed our group.

One short stop yielded many chickadees (Chestnut-Backed of course), a Western Flycatcher, Brown Creepers, a Yellow-rumped Warbler and an Orange-crowned Warbler.

We had now completed the trip around the lake so, leaving our sweaters and jackets behind we headed for the power-line trail. Our first bird there was a Turkey Vulture but soon our attention turned to flycatcher identification. A little Empidonax was found sitting in a tree close by. This being an area where Hammond's Flycatchers are

seen we tried our best to make it a Hammond's, but, as it would not sing, nobody was willing to declare it such. So, possible Hammond's, possible Willow; who knows?

Later we found an Olive-sided Flycatcher in at its usual spot atop a snag and, even though the day was hot, he only called for "Three Beers" once or twice, being content with "Pip-Pip-Pip" most of the time.

Further along the line we saw many Common Flickers, White-crowned Sparrows, Towhee and on the way back four House Wrens. By the time we arrived back at the lake everyone was ready for a rest and some lunch.

One more bird was added to our list during lunch, a Sharp-shinned Hawk, which put in a brief appearance. Also for luncheon viewing we had crayfish and tadpoles from the lake, and a variety of beautiful butterflies and dragonflies.

After lunch, feeling much rested, Jeremy suggested that we go to Cobble Hill to look for Vesper Sparrows and Spotted Sandpipers which had evidently been nesting there. We saw the "Spottie" as soon as we arrived but no amount of searching could dig up a Vesper Sparrow even though there were many around the previous week. However in our walk through the fields we added American Goldfinch, Savannah Sparrow, three Red-tailed Hawks, (including a very pale immature with a very squeaky voice) a small flock of Red Crossbills, a few Pine Siskins and, to some of the ladies consternation, several garter snakes of both Striped and Puget varieties.

By this time the birds had become very quiet so we decided to call it a day with a total count of about 36 species. Many thanks to Jeremy for showing us that there is more to be seen in the woods than mosquitos on a hot July day and for introducing us to an interesting spot at Cobble Hill which I am sure many of us will want to visit again at some other season.

... Jack Williams

BEAT INFLATION!

The Natural History Society has an almost-new Aldis Star 300, 35 mm slide projector for sale. Included in the package is a 200 mm projection lens, a spare projection bulb and a durable carrying case. At \$25.00 for the lot this is the kind of bargain you can't afford to miss. Jeremy Tatum has the machine and all the details. Give him a call at 477-1089 and start yourself on the way to the deal of a lifetime.

THE MEN TO SEE

Jeremy Tatum, our man in charge of leaders, has enlisted the able support of Stephen Mitchell and Jack Williams to lead the botany and ornithology field trips respectively. All communications regarding these field trips should be directed to them. Stephen's 'phone number is 477-9248; Jack's 656-1484.

Stephen is also Programme Director and as such would welcome your thoughts on who and what for our up-coming winter programme.

Jack, on the other hand, has taken on the task of writing the Bird Reports for The Naturalist this year. He'll, of course, be looking for your reports on rarities and regulars, to fill out this popular part of our magazine.

And speaking of The Naturalist, despite any rumors to the contrary, it is alive and well and in no imminent danger of folding. Therefore we still need your help, your reports, your notes, your ideas and - yes - even your criticisms.

Your new editor has a large ear and is a willing listener so if you've got something on your mind let me know. The 'phone is always handy and the number is 478-5794. Who knows, I may just be home.

BIRD REPORTS

Arctic Loon (12)	July 9	Offshore, Mt. Douglas Park A.R. Davidson
Black Brant (1)	June 4	Clover Point, the Goodwills
Green-winged Teal (2)	July 4	Cadboro Bay, Rob Mackenzie-Grieve
Cinnamon Teal (3)	July 22	Colquitz River, Anne Knowles & the Goodwills
Rough-legged Hawk (1)	July 31	Mandarte Island, the Davidsons
Golden Eagle (1)	June 22	The Malahat, Ron Satterfield
Bald Eagle (14) (22)	June 17 July 6	Active Pass, Bob Hay Active Pass, Ron Satterfield
Peregrine Falcon (1)	July 15	Cowichan Bay, Vic Goodwill
Ruffed Grouse (6) (hen with 5 young)	July 2	Beaver Lake, Rob Mackenzie-Grieve

Virginia Rail: Leila Roberts and the Goodwills found a nearly full-grown young-of-the-year in the "rail" marsh east of Swan Lake on July 1. On July 30, the Goodwills saw 2 downy black chicks feeding on a mud flat in the same area.

Common Snipe: On July 29, at the "L" reservoir on Martindale Road in Central Saanich, Ron Satterfield and Vic Goodwill put up "a stub-tailed, purplish-hued, half-grown juvenile from the grass near the water's edge." This appears to be the first nesting evidence for this species near Victoria.

Semi-palmated Sandpiper: A.R. Davidson, reporting for the Tuesday Group on a bird seen by them on July 2 at Cadboro Bay, wrote "this fellow did not associate with the other peeps. He had a short bill, black legs, (and was) a grey-brown bird without any cinnamon colour."

Buff-breasted Sandpiper (1)	July 22	Panama Flats, Ralph Fryer
Avocet (1)	Aug. 9	Esquimalt Lagoon, Vic Goodwill
Red Phalarope (2)	Aug. 12	Clover Point, Vic Goodwill & Ron Satterfield

Heerman's Gull: First reported on June 22 when Ralph Fryer saw one at Harling Point in Oak Bay. By July they were being seen regularly around Victoria with the highest count being 50, seen at Cordova Spit on July 20 by Ron Satterfield.

Black-legged Kittiwake: Seven reports in all and all from Clover Point; 1 immature on June 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6; 2 immatures on the 8th and another single on the 10th. Ron Satterfield and the Goodwills.

Anna's Hummingbird: Continues to keep things humming around Victoria. A male visited H. Alexander's feeder in Saanich throughout June and July; another male was last seen at Rob Mackenzie-Grieve's feeder at Cadboro Bay on June 5 and the Davidson's saw another male in Haro Road woods on July 18.

Mockingbird (1)	July 5	Oak Bay, Mrs. E. Lansdowne
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Confirmed July 8 by A.R. Davidson & the Goodwills

Red-eyed Vireo (1)	June 15	Saanich, Ron Satterfield
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Northern Oriole (Bullock's): Reported from Gyro Park, Cadboro Bay, from June 8 to July 26 and was thought to have nested in the area. An adult male and an immature male were seen in the area on July 1. Rob Mackenzie-Grieve, the Goodwills, Leila Roberts and others.

Western Kingbird: On June 20, Rob Mackenzie-Grieve spotted one at Sproat Lake near Port Alberni and 3 weeks later, on July 10, another was seen in Central Saanich by the Goodwills.

Evening Grosbeak (1)	July 2	Oak Bay, Grace Bell
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... Harold Hosford

PROVINCIAL BIRD REPORT BORN

Featured in the June issue of Discovery, journal of The Vancouver Natural History Society, was the first of what it is hoped will become a regular part of British Columbia's ornithological record - a provincial bird report. Brain-child of Michael Shepard, chairman of the Vancouver society's Birds and Mammal section, the first report covered sightings made between December 1, 1973, and March 15, 1974.

The format is similar to that used in American Birds and includes notes on rarities and unusual movements as well as on the state of our resident populations. While coverage of the province is as yet incomplete, this problem should be overcome in future as more and more naturalists funnel their records into the report.

Anyone wishing to contribute records for the report may send their material either to

Wayne Campbell,
Birds and Mammals Division,
B.C. Provincial Museum,
Victoria, B.C. V8W 1A1

or to

Michael Shepard,
2956 Trimble Street,
Vancouver, B.C.
V6R 4A1

VANCOUVER BIRD TRIP

SEPTEMBER
 S M T W T F S
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
 8 9 10 11 12 13 14
 15 16 17 18 19 20 21
 22 23 24 25 26 27 28
 29 30

CIRCLE

SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 15

ON YOUR CALENDAR!

That's the day Victoria's birders will be guests of their Vancouver counterparts for a days birding on the Fraser River delta.

Plans are to board the 7:00 a.m. ferry from Swartz Bay as foot passengers and be met by the Vancouver people at Tsawassen at 8:40 a.m. They will be providing the transportation from the ferry terminal. On this side you will be able to drive to Swartz Bay and park there, or you can bus and ferry your way to Tsawassen.

Vancouver must know how many plan to take in the trip so that sufficient transportation can be arranged. Jack Williams is the contact man. If you plan to go, let him know as soon as possible and certainly no later than September 8. His 'phone number is 656-1484.

Mid-September on the Fraser delta means shore-birds and waterfowl. It may also mean some surprises which the mainlanders will be certain to have strategically located for our benefit.

Oh, yes! Don't forget to bring a lunch.

JUNIOR PROGRAM

September 1974

NOTE: Don't forget to send your membership fee (\$2.50) to the treasurer, Mr. Kenneth Alexander, 1382 Craigdarroch Road.

SEPTEMBER 14 Juniors and Intermediates
 Trail making at Francis Park
 Meet 1:30 p.m., Mayfair Lanes
 Drivers: McGavin, Farnden & Askey

SEPTEMBER 21 Intermediates
 Spectacle Lake
 Meet 10:30 a.m., Mayfair Lanes
 Bring Lunch
 Drivers: Rimmington & Singleton

SEPTEMBER 28 Juniors
 Island View Beach
 Meet 1:30 p.m., Mayfair Lanes
 Drivers: Murray & Hopkins

If drivers are unable to participate, please contact Gail (477-9248) as soon as possible.

Juniors and intermediates interested in an overnight trip to the Vancouver area on October 5/6 should contact Gail no later than September 21. We will be billeted by members of the Western Society of Young Naturalists.

SEPTEMBER PROGRAM

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 14: Botany Field Trip
 Island View Beach
 Meet Mayfair Lanes Parking
 Lot 9:30 a.m. or at the
 beach 10:00 a.m.
 Bring lunch
 Leaders: Mrs. K. Sherman
 Mrs. K. Dickieson

SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 15: Birding Field Trip
 Vancouver
 For Details see page 10

WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 18: General Meeting
 St. John's Ambulance
 Auditorium, 941 Pandora
 8:00 p.m.
 Speaker: Kerry R. Joy
 Rambling through B.C.
 Provincial Parks

*PLEASE NOTE THE CHANGE OF VENUE FOR
 THE GENERAL MEETING*

SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 22: Birding Field Trip
 Island View Beach
 Meet Mayfair Lanes Parking
 Lot 9:00 a.m. or at beach
 10:00 a.m.
 Bring lunch
 Leader: Jack Williams

NOTE: Members wishing to leave their cars on the
 Mayfair parking lot may do so but the manager
 requests that they be left at the Oak and
 Roderick corner of the lot.

COORDINATORS

PROGRAMME:

Stephen R. Mitchell 4321 Majestic Dr. 477-9248

LEADERS:

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THE VICTORIA NATURALIST:

Harold Hosford 303 Daniel Pl. 478-5794

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JUNIOR NATURALISTS:

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