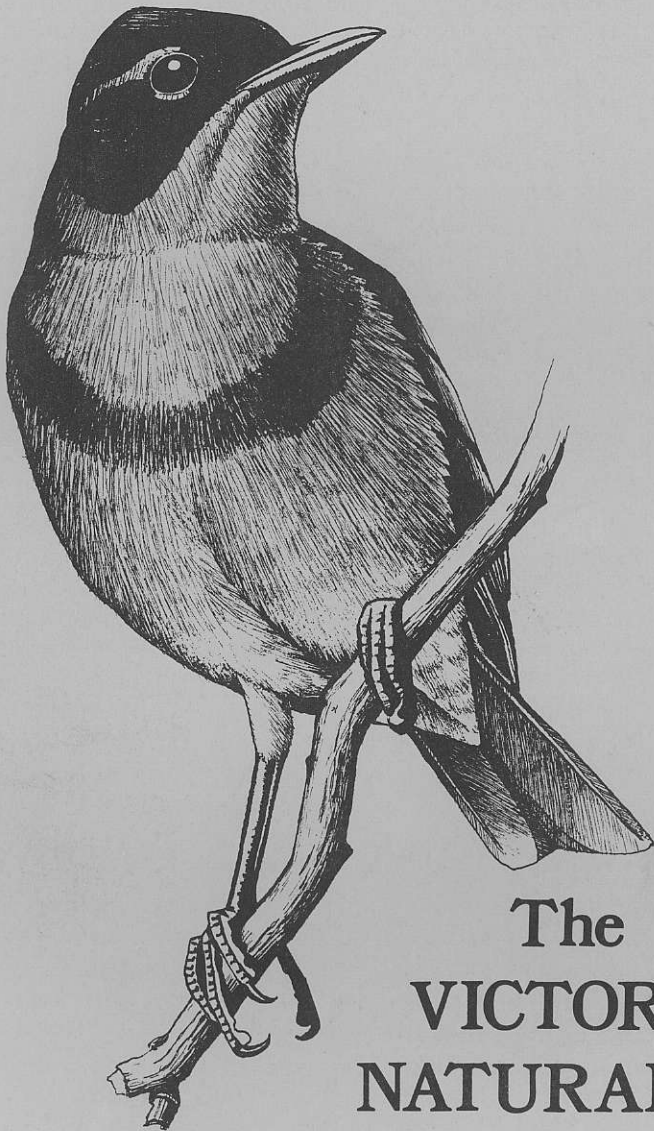


Welcome Canadian Nature Federation



The
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VICTORIA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY
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(See also inside back cover)

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Junior Membership is restricted to those not under 8 years and not over 18 years.

Financial year is May 1 to April 30
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DUES AND CHANGE OF ADDRESS SHOULD BE SENT TO THE TREASURER.

VOL. 31, No. 10

JUNE 1975

A BIRD FOR ALL SEASONS

by Harold Hosford

Thanks to Keith Taylor, who drew the sketch which graces our cover and much of this year's C.N.F. Conference publicity material, the Varied Thrush has become a little better known across Canada. Why did we choose this colourful westerner to help invite Canada's naturalists to Victoria? First; it wasn't an accidental choice, we had ulterior motives. Second; we hoped to use the power of the unified voice of Canada's foremost naturalist organization to support our case in a purely local issue.

For several years, Victoria naturalists, and the Victoria Natural History Society in particular - and with the full support of Federation of British Columbia Naturalists - have been organizing support to have the Varied Thrush recognized as the official British Columbia bird. We have our provincial flower - the dogwood - why not a provincial bird? And what more appropriate choice for such recognition than the Varied Thrush.

This big, bold, confident, colourful and sagacious bird typifies British Columbia. It summers in our mountain forests from the Yukon to the U.S. Boundary and is a familiar occupant of

Cover

Varied Thrush (*Ixoreus naevius*)
Pen and Ink Sketch by Keith Taylor

our parks, golf courses and wooded residential areas of the southwest every winter. Only in the northeast, where the aspen parklands slice across the Peace River country, is the Varied Thrush a stranger to British Columbians. No other bird can make such a wide claim to landed status in this province.

Somehow, when I think of British Columbia, I think of shining mountains and dark, green forests, and when I think of shining mountains and dark, green forests I think of Varied Thrushes.

What do you think?

* * * * *

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE VICTORIA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

by A.R. Davidson

As a copy of our June issue is to be given to all those attending the Canadian Nature Conference it is fitting that some account of our Society be included.

Let me go back to the beginning. On March 26, 1890, a few gentlemen met in the Provincial Museum and there and then the Natural History Society of British Columbia was formed, 40 gentlemen signifying their wish to join. On April 12 of the same year they held their first field meeting at Cadboro Bay, attended by 14 members, among them Mr. J. Fannin, the Museum Curator, and Dr. C.F. Newcombe, whose name is perpetuated in the Newcombe Auditorium.

This original Society continued until March 3, 1933, when it was dissolved. So far it has not been possible to locate any of its minutes or manuscripts but it is recorded that many prominent Victorians were members and officers. *All men you*

understand. Ladies were very useful bringing up the children and other household duties, but not to engage in such a serious matter as natural history.

We do know however that in the fall of 1903 they imported 100 Skylarks from Europe and released them. And that in 1913 another 49 were liberated.

It is easy to imagine those tall-hatted gentlemen (I have a photograph of the first field meeting mentioned above) driving up the hill to Finnerty's fields, where the University of Victoria is now situated, opening the cages and watching those Skylarks flying round their new territory.

It must have suited the birds, because they have been resident ever since. Last year at least seven pairs nested on the University property in spite of the change from the quiet pastures of 1903 to the present clusters of buildings, acres of blacktop crowded with cars, and thousands of students.

From 1933 there was a hiatus of 11 years, but in April, 1944, a meeting was held in the Museum and, to quote from the editorial of the first issue of the Victoria Naturalist, dated April 1944 - "By the number that attended this meeting, and by their enthusiasm, it is evident that a society of this type has long been needed in this district."

And so it was! A list of members printed in the March, 1947, issue gave the membership as 111, and this has increased steadily over the years.

On October 14, 1947, the first Audubon lectures were presented, Roger Tory Peterson being one of the first speakers. Five lectures were given annually until 1960, attended so well that for the next nine years each lecture was given twice, and from 1969 to the present our Society has sponsored one matinee and two evening lectures

(fifteen lectures in all) each winter.

By 1958, natural history societies having considerably increased in numbers in British Columbia, Mrs. Gladys Soulsby (who was president of the V.N.H.S. at that time) proposed that a Federation of B.C. Societies be formed. To this end a meeting was held on February 16 of that year. Further meetings over the years resulted in the B.C. Nature Council being officially formed on May 11, 1963, with seven societies represented. The name was later changed to the Federation of British Columbia Naturalists, which, as of March this year, included more than 5,000 people in 34 clubs, plus about 500 direct members.

The Federation issues a quarterly newsletter, edited by Elton A. Anderson, and a copy is sent to all members.

Our Society has had its ups and downs, finances sometimes being at a low ebb, but the Naturalist has never missed a number, nine, and sometimes ten, issues being mailed each year to every member, to Museums, Universities and other natural history societies across Canada.

* * * * *

FIELD STUDIES OF THE FALCONIFORMES OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Vultures, Hawks, Falcons, Eagles by F.L. Beebe
British Columbia Provincial Museum, No. 17.
Occasional Paper Series

A Review by David Stirling

Mr. Beebe, British Columbia's protagonist of falconry and undoubted expert on hawks in the hand and in the bush has consigned to a 163 page, 7-1/2" x 10" "Occasional Paper", a lifetime's experience with birds of prey.

Let me say at the outset that we have here an excellent book. The author mostly sticks to the facts. Only occasionally does the expected Beebe bias appear. This book, in fact, seems rather tame to me after reading some of the author's early works such as the "Myth of the Vanishing Peregrine." But possibly this is to be expected as this, his latest book, has been published by that august institution, the Provincial Museum.

In the preface Beebe gives thanks to a battery of falconers and their toadies who have contributed their knowledge: others - the bird-watchers - appear to have been more or less ignored. Here, too, we hear from the great god of game management, Aldo Leopold, who considered falconry, "All in all the ideal hobby." More recently, Robert Arbib, writing in American Birds says, "Falconry is a useless and in some aspects an inhumane activity ... promoted as a glamorous activity associated with medieval nobility ... ego gratification"

This book is well organized and presented. The chapters on geographical origins, functional adaptations, social behavior and other aspects of hawk biology are very good indeed. Only in the chapter on human attitudes, when the author lapses into a fulmination on Judeo-Christian wildlife ethics, does he get slightly ridiculous.

The species accounts contain a wealth of information. The author emphasizes the difficulty that even experienced falconers have in identifying and separating hawks. On the grey phase of the Gyrfalcon he says, "Very difficult, sometimes impossible to distinguish with certainty from three other species --- the peregrine falcon, prairie falcon and goshawk." I wonder how valid are the records of Cooper's Hawks, Goshawks, Peregrine Falcons and Gyrfalcons from the Victoria area? All would-be experts please take heed. I had hoped to see information on the altitudinal migrations of Red-tailed and Swainson's Hawks which

is a noticeable feature of August and September in the B.C. Interior. I had thought, too, that the author might mention the opportunistic habit of the boreal Goshawks which arouse the ire of trappers by regularly stealing small mammals along traplines; and that this hawk also caches prey and even has been observed to come to carrion.

Beebe is one of the few naturalists left who still believes that D.D.T. has not been a major factor in the decline of the peregrine and other birds. Well, some people still insist that the Earth is flat.

Beebe's illustrations, particularly his flight silhouettes, are an excellent aid to identification.

I strongly recommend that all birdwatchers buy or borrow a copy of this book as soon as possible. It should be required reading for everyone interested in British Columbia's Vultures, Hawks, Falcons, and Eagles.

* * * * *

IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO GET IN ON CNF '75

Here's a run-down on some of the things happening at U. Vic. between June 12 and 16 when the Canadian Nature Federation holds its annual conference there. Why not join in the fun.

Thursday, June 12:- 6 a.m. Bird Walk; 6 a.m. Botanical Beach; 8:30 & 9:30 a.m. Mandarte Isl.; 9 a.m. Uplands Park; 9 a.m. East Sooke Park; 11:15 a.m. Cattle Point; 2 p.m. Goldstream Park; 7 p.m. Francis Park; 10 p.m. Stargazing.

Friday, June 13: 6 a.m. Bird Walk; 6 a.m. Botanical Beach; 8:30 & 9:30 a.m. Mandarte Isl.; 9 a.m. Uplands Park; 9 a.m. East Sooke Park; 11:30 a.m. Cattle Point; 2 p.m. Island View; 2 p.m. Thetis L.;

7:30 p.m. Opening Nature Art '75 Provincial Archives; 8 p.m. Visit Provincial Museum; 10 p.m. Dominion Astrophysical Observatory.

Saturday, June 14:- 6 a.m. Bird Walk; 9 a.m. CNF Business Meeting; 11:30 a.m. B.C. Government sponsored Luncheon; 1:30 p.m. Conference Opens; 2 p.m. Wild Mountains Fragile Seas, R.Y. Edwards; 3:15 p.m. The Nature of Western Forests, Dr. Ted Baker; 4:10 The Submarine Zoo, Brent Cooke; 6 p.m. Happy Hour; 7 p.m. Banquet.

Sunday, June 15:- 6 a.m. Bird Walk; 9:30 a.m. Rich Estuaries, Dr. Keith Wade; 10:30 a.m. Top of the World, Ted Underhill; 11:30 a.m. Pacific Ocean Birds, R. Wayne Campbell; 12:15 Lunch; 1:30 p.m. Okanagan Country, Steve Cannings; 2:15 p.m. The Fishes Out There, Dr. John McInerney; 3:15 How Deadly Are Oil Spills, Dr. Wm. Austin; 4 p.m. Conference Sum-up; 6:30 Picnic (hopefully).

Monday, June 16:- 6 a.m. Bird Walk; 8 a.m. Pacific Rim; 9 a.m. Salt Spring Isl.; 9 a.m. Lagoons; 9 a.m. Island View.

Events underlined are Field Trips. Time for them indicates time leaving U. Vic.

Conference Registration Fee.....\$15.00
Banquet (Saturday June 14).....\$ 6.00

Banquet speaker Dr. A.F. Szczawinski, Curator of Botany, British Columbia Provincial Museum, Victoria.

For further information, contact -

Mrs. Margaret Wainwright,
C.N.F. Conference,
3260 Exeter Road,
Victoria, V8R 6H6
Phone: 595-8113

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VICTORIA WATER

by John L. Rimmington

The medical people have another scare for us. It appears the people who drink soft water suffer heart failure at a slightly higher rate than those who drink hard water. This appears to be fairly certain but no one can give any explanation as to why a little lime in the water can make any difference. There are theories, of course, but nothing definite.

The water in Victoria comes from Sooke Lake and the Goldstream River and since it flows down from hard undissolvable rocks, it is about as pure minerally as water in a rain barrel. It is very slightly acid.

In the old days people somehow were suspicious of such clear water and a market sprang up for water with a little more "tang" to it. Two main sources were found in Victoria.

North of Fairfield Road west of Moss Street was a commercial spring whose waters were highly esteemed locally. An old negro pedalled the water, carrying it in a flat wagon in stone jars, and vended it as "Crystal Spring Water."

On Spring Road west of Fernwood between Pembroke and Denman was a spring whose esteemed waters percolated down from a glacial gravel ridge. The area around the spring was cemented and steps built down to the area. Some of the gravel from the same ridge was excavated in a pit nearby. The filled-in pit is now the site of Victoria High School.

East of Kamloops and Princeton the water is over-mineralized and farmers find it can upset their cows' stomachs as effectively as any laxative.

In the Saanich Peninsula around Sidney some

well waters are quite hard with calcium content. On a farm north of the airport one of the springs has so high an iron content that big chunks of very pure iron ore are built up where the springs surface.

The nearest warm mineral spring is at Alberni.

Strangely enough, our ancestors seemed aware that mineralized water was better than softer water, even as far back as Roman times or even to the arrival of the white man to Victoria. The "Mystic Spring" near Cadboro Bay Road and Sinclair still runs freely but in early days its waters were venerated by Indians far and near, as described in the December 1969 "Naturalist."

Actually, Victoria water is ideal for making tea, a fact much appreciated behind the Tweed Curtain in Oak Bay.

For those who are very nervous about the extra purity of our waters perhaps some bottled water made by adding a pinch of precipitated chalk might suffice. The lime so added will harden the water and eliminate the acid. I wouldn't suggest adding it to the bath water because our city water is ideal for bathing and especially desirable for washing hair.

* * * * *

ALIKE AND DIFFERENT

by Reita Sparling

When the Sparlings decided to go south we chose Brownsville, Texas, for our headquarters because it is near Mexico and close to the Gulf of Mexico.

We arrived here in the first week of November. What we did and saw getting here is a story in itself with plenty of surprizes and a few disappointments. One of the latter was being 'out of season'

for the California Condors.

Getting check lists is always a great help. We got two surprises on first reading the list for the Laguna-Atascosa Refuge, just east of Brownsville, when we found no Crows or Mallards listed. Mottled Ducks apparently replace Mallards here but 150 miles north, at Corpus Christi, Mallards appear on the list again.

There were many other kinds of ducks, all familiar to us, and several kinds of geese; Canadas were the most common but Blues and Snows were also abundant. As usual, some lists showed these last two as separate species. One booklet even made the amusing suggestion that they be counted as one species when not seen and as two when seen. We did!

Part of the refuge is seeded to grain as food for the waterfowl. But this year, for some as yet unknown reason the geese left in mid-winter. No one seems to know for where or why. A sharp frost in December, which accompanied a generally poor winter, may have had a part in moving the birds.

We could name all the little shorebirds we saw along the Gulf - and one big one - the Long-billed Curlew. We have seen more Long-billed Curlews this year than in all our other years put together. By the first of March most of the shorebirds and waterbirds had left for the north.

Several kinds of egrets can be seen, including that clown the Reddish Egret which goes through such strange gyrations to stir up the water around it - or so we interpret their actions. There were also Great Blue, Little Blue, Black-crowned and Great White Herons - the last, seen at the Santa Ana Refuge on the Rio Grande west of Brownsville.

A few species of Mexican birds make their way into the United States here and one, the Great-tailed Grackle, comes over in hoards. They are certainly well named and when they get together in one of the night roosts, are hard to overlook.

One Mexican we were particularly pleased to find was the Clay-colored Robin, which is just that. Birders here are also pleased that the Brown Jay has become established north of the Border and now nests near the Falcon Dam farther up the Rio Grande. We plan to get up there and see them.

One of the most exciting events of our trip has been the visit to Aransas and the Whoopers. There are now only 49 in the wild, but the 23 in zoos around the country help make the picture a little brighter.

Aboard a well-named craft "The Whooping Crane" with about 40 other passengers, we were able to look in on the cranes with ease. The operators of the boat offer a money back guarantee if no cranes are sighted. We did not get our money back. We saw cranes!

The first were 4 far away but certainly Whooping Cranes. Then 2 were seen, very close, and photographed. They even whooped! Then a third group was seen in the distance and the Captain of the Whooping Crane said that we would have to take his word for it that the smallest bird in this group was the one and only young Whooping Crane to come south in 1974.

Only one.

* * * * *

THE PARKSVILLE WEEKEND

by Dorothy and Jack Williams

This up-island adventure drew about 25 enthusiasts, including one from Vancouver, and with the complete cooperation of the weatherman, everyone shared an interesting time.

We met in Parksville and set off for the Marshall-Stevenson Sanctuary on the Little Qualicum River where the resident naturalist, Neil Dawe, led us on a tour of the area.

On the beach the wind was troublesome but we managed to see flocks of Black Brant and Bonaparte's Gulls at the mouth of the river. Returning to the woods we saw Water Pipits and Killdeers and, once in the shelter of the trees, began to see Yellow-rumped Warblers (both Audubon's and Myrtle), Orange-crowned Warblers and Ruby-crowned Kinglets. The forest floor was carpeted with trillium and yellow violets bordered the paths.

Not wanting to waste any daylight we finished off the first day at Englishman River Falls Park, a beautiful spot and one which seldom fails to produce something interesting. This time was no exception. We not only saw a pair of Dippers but got a pretty good idea of where their nest was as well.

Saturday night was stormy but Sunday dawned brilliantly clear. With the wind still near gale force we abandoned a trip to the exposed Parksville flats and chose the Big Qualicum River instead.

An hour's walk upstream toward Horn Lake produced more Orange-crowned and Yellow-rumped Warblers, Kingfishers, Ravens, Bald Eagles, Turkey Vultures, Great Blue Herons, hundreds of swallows and another Dipper. This time we found its nest under a bridge.

A rather surprising sight along the river was a Great Blue Heron which rose ahead of us and went soaring into the clear blue sky like some great hawk.

After the fish hatchery it was on to a place called Hamilton Swamp, a spot none of us had seen before. Following a good circular trail you come to a large swampy lake. We didn't see too many birds - a few ducks far out on the lake and a Yellowthroat and some Red-winged Blackbirds nearby.

With the day wearing on the group began to break up, some going to Little Qualicum Falls, some returning to Parksville and home, while others spent a short time at Rath Trevor Park.

The Williams' stayed in Nanaimo Sunday night and drove back to Hornby Island Monday for some fossil hunting. It was lots of work with no spectacular finds but we did end up with a few baculites. Bald Eagles were abundant along the shore, one we watched steal a fish from a Great Blue Heron. On the water two or three thousand Surf Scoters, 200 Oldsquaws and many Pigeon Guillemots rode at anchor.

Hornby Island looked like a good spot for birding but the day goes fast and ferries have to be caught so we will have to leave the serious birding 'till the next time.

* * * * *



BIRD REPORTS

by Jack Williams

- RED-THROATED LOON - April 24, Clover Point (1), Ron Satterfield.
- ARCTIC LOON - April 16, Clover Point (1), RS.
- PIED-BILLED GREBE - April 24, Beaver L. (1), RS.
- EARED GREBE - April 18/20, W. of Clover Point (1) RS.
- TRUMPETER SWAN - April 6, flying over Clover Point (2), RS.
- WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE - April 7, Clover Point (1); April 17, Portage Inlet (1) RS.
- CANADA GOOSE - April 13, Burnside (33) RS; April 21, over Robertson St. (150) Ralph Fryer; April 29, over Esquimalt Lagoon (52) Vic Goodwill.
- WOOD DUCK - April 18, Quick's Pond (1m, 1 f) RS.
- EUROPEAN WIGEON - April 11, Beacon Hill Park, (1m) Joan Groves.
- GADWALL - April 23, Quick's Pond (7m, 7f) the Goodwills.

CINNAMON TEAL - April 18, Quick's Pond (1m, 1f) RS
BLACK SCOTER - April 25, Bazan Bay (10m, 6f) Jack Williams; April 30, Clover Point (1m) RS
BARROW'S GOLDENEYE - April 1, Island View (1m) RS; April 16, Brentwood Bay (2m) Gerry Gardner
TURKEY VULTURE - March 23, S. Pender Isl. (1) Allan Brooks.
MARSH HAWK - April 16, N. Cowichan Ponds (1f); April 22, Cowichan Bay (1f) VG
GOSHAWK - April 18, Lohbrunner's (1 imm.) the Goodwills.
GOLDEN EAGLE - April 16, (1 ad. carrying nesting material) VG, and April 20, (1 ad.) RS, both at Runnel Hill.
OSPREY - April 20, Prospect L. (1) GG; 5 nests, at various locations, found occupied during April, VG
AMERICAN KESTREL - April 13, Sidney (1m) JW; April 13, Butler Logging Rd. (1m) the Goodwills; April 21, Prevost Hill (1m), the Goodwills; April 27, Matheson L. (1f) Pat Swift, the Woods and the Goodwills.
MERLIN - April 12, Cook St. (1) RS & VG; April 20, Cowichan Bay (1) RS.
GYRFALCON - April 22, Gordon Head (1 imm. dark phase) RS
PRAIRIE FALCON - April 1, Southgate St. (1 on TV aerial) the Goodwills.
BLUE GROUSE - April 27, Goldstream (2) RS
SANDHILL CRANE - April 1, Island View (1) RS; April 7, 18 & 26, Saanich (1) the Goodwills.
BAIRD'S SANDPIPER - April 22, Clover Point (1) MG, Leila Roberts & RF; April 24, Clover Point (1) RS.
COMMON SNIPE - April 22, Lohbrunner's (4), Tuesday Group.
LONG BILLED DOWITCHER - April 21, Sooke R. Flats (3) RS.
SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER - April 23, Island View (1) RS.
WANDERING TATTLER - April 30, Oak Bay Golf Course (3) & Holland Point (1) RS
BONAPARTE'S GULL - April 4, Clover Point (4) RS.
RING-BILLED GULL - April 16, Duncan Ponds (1 ad.) VG.
HERRING GULL - April 15, Clover Point (1 ad.) RS.

CALIFORNIA GULL - April 15, Clover Point (1 ad.) RS
WESTERN GULL - April 3 & 16, Clover Point (2 ad.) RS.
GLAUCOUS GULL - April 15 & 16 Clover Point (1) RF & RS.
COMMON MURRE - April 22, Saanich Inlet (1) VG
MARbled MURRELET - April 9 & 19, Clover Point (2) RS & the Goodwills.
RHINOCEROS AUKLET - April 1, Clover Point (1) RS
GREAT HORNED OWL - April 1, Granville St., (1) Marg. Gillie
BURROWING OWL - April 20, Vic. West helicopter pad (1), Harold Hosford
PILEATED WOODPECKER - April 22, Cattle Point (2) Tuesday Group.
HAIRY WOODPECKER - April 13, Second L. (1) RS.
SKYLARK - April 3, Riding Academy (6) Rob. Duncan.
HORNED LARK - April 19, North Uplands (1), Josanne & Kevan Brehart.
TREE SWALLOW - April 7, Lakehill Dist. (3) RD
ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW - April 12, Cordova Spit (1) VG & RS.
BARN SWALLOW - April 15, Elk L. (1) the Goodwills.
CLIFF SWALLOW - April 12, Quick's Pond (2) VG & RS
DIPPER - April 29, Goldstream (2 ad. & 1 imm. and more in the nest being fed) VG.
LONG BILLED MARSH WREN - April 3, Quick's Pond (2) RS.
MOCKINGBIRD - Still present on Wickheim Rd. (1) the Goodwills.
HERMIT THRUSH - April 22, Haro Woods (1) LR & MG; April 26, Swan L. (1) RS & VG.
MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRD - April 21, Mount Douglas (2) the Goodwills.
TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRE - April 1, Maple Mountain (1) AB; April 21, Gordon Head (1) Mount Douglas (2) the Goodwills; the Tuesday Group saw the Mount Douglas pair again on April 22.
WATER PIPIT - April 22, Lohbrunner's (20) Tuesday Group.
HUTTON'S VIREO - April 27, Haro Woods (1 pair, nest found) J. Piuze.
YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER - (Myrtle) - April 24, Beaver L. (3) RS; April 22, Duncan Ponds (1) VG.

TOWNSEND'S WARBLER - April 27, Goldstream (4) RS

COMMON YELLOWTHROAT - April 22, Lohbrunner's (1)

Tuesday Group.

WESTERN MEADOWLARK - April 16, Clover Point (1)

VG & RF

BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD - April 18, Lochside s. of Lohbrunner's (4) the Goodwills.

YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD - April 15, Interurban (1) RF.

EVENING GROSBEAK - April 1, Duncan 23; April 25, Beaver L. (6) LR; April 29, Pipeline Rd. (8) Grace Bell.

AMERICAN GOLDFINCH - April 29, Thetis L. (2) RS: April 28, Florence L. (1 m.) the Goodwills.

CHIPPING SPARROW - April 29, Thetis L. (3) RS.

LINCOLN'S SPARROW - April 20, Cowichan Bay (1) RS.

SAVANNAH SPARROW - April 25, Tulista Park, Sidney (30) (Aleutian Race) JW.

Harold Hosford's Burrowing Owl seems to be the first seen around here in many years; probably attracted to the rodents at the garbage piles. Nothing like a Burrowing Owl to brighten you up when you're down in the dumps. (Ouch! Ed.)

Had an interesting 'phone call from a new member in Sidney, Mr. Donald. He says he had hummingbirds at his feeder on Robert's Bay last December 10 & 23. These surely would be Annas, the first report I have had of them in Sidney. Mr. Donald also told of seeing an Oldsquaw, feeding near shore, caught by a cat. Mr. Donald, shoeless, rushed out and scared the cat off. The final result on the duck is not known. I wonder what the odds are on a cat catching an Oldsquaw.

I heard that Joan Crabbe found a dead Sora on her lawn. The bird was taken to the Museum where Keith Taylor said it was an early arrival (and departure too I guess).

Nothing on Rufus Hummingbirds this spring. I

wonder when the earliest arrival was?

I think I'm going to mention every month what people haven't seen because any time I say that, I immediately get a response. Something like "I didn't know such and such was scarce. I saw a flock last week."

* * * * *

REPORTS ON

THE F.B.C.N. SPRING CONFERENCE

by David Stirling

The F.B.C.N. is very much alive. More than 90 persons attended the April Conference in Kamloops where 16 resolutions submitted by member clubs were debated. Of these, the following 14 were passed:

hydro-carbon disturbance to freshwater systems,

power boats on mountain lakes,

sewage disposal in the Shuswap,

horsepower restrictions on outboard motors on mountain lakes,

all terrain vehicles and hunting,

sewage holding tanks on boats on Shuswap Lake,

Yanks Peak park proposal,

Little Mountain area park proposal,

discharge of firearms near highways,

all-terrain vehicles and firearms,

protection for certain plants harvested commercially,

logging limitations in sub-alpine forests,

speed restrictions on power boats and

protection for the Tsitika River watershed.

Two resolutions - slash burning and a request for battery powered boats - were defeated.

Briefs and reports were submitted on the Tsitika/Schoen controversy, Canada's immigration policy, nest record scheme, wilderness proposals, watershed proposals, predator control, threatened species (artificial propagation of falcons) and recreational use of wild lands.

An important change in F.B.C.N. policy will come about with the adoption of a proposal to replace the usual fall conference with regional meetings under regional vice-presidents, beginning with fall meetings this year. One annual conference, possibly at the central location of Kamloops, will be held in the spring. It is hoped that both local club and F.B.C.N. influence will be strengthened with this reorganization.

Several new officers were elected including a new president, Mr. Norm Purcell, of the Vancouver Natural History Society. (Watch for details of the conference, lists of new officers and addresses of clubs in the next NEWSLETTER.)

Social contact with so many enthusiastic B.C. naturalists is one of the major benefits of a meeting such as this and helps to inspire the jaded. And the natural history was great in spite of the bitter winds. Migrating Sandhill Cranes, Canada Geese, Whistling Swans, five White Pelicans, ten species of raptors, were highlights. On sunny slopes, gardens of early buttercups, spring-beauty and yellow-bells delighted the flower-watchers and a dozen Mountain Bluebirds in a small field will be long remembered.

I would like to suggest that more Victorian naturalists attend the spring F.B.C.N. meeting. It would be a worthwhile social-work-natural-history trip.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the Kamloops people for their truly fine efforts on the behalf of all who attended.

KIDS COUNTRY

ACROSS THIS LAND with Chris Walsh
(final instalment)

Chris takes a last look at P.E.I. before heading west again to his new home in Ottawa.

There is a bridge in Charlottetown, P.E.I., that always has Arctic Terns on it. I didn't think much of this until I noticed the pilings of an old bridge beside the main bridge. These pilings were literally covered with terns and their nests. There were quite a few Great Blue Herons and one or two Sandhill Cranes as well.

We caught a ferry at Borden, P.E.I., heading for Nova Scotia. The trip across was uneventful. That night we stayed at Dartmouth where I saw some old friends and we had a lot of fun. While sitting on one of my friend's doorstep I noticed a number of eyed hawk moths around his porch light. I caught one to be sure.

The next day we left Nova Scotia and headed for Quebec where I was born. At one point we ran out of gas and had to walk a mile to a gas station. I almost stepped on a marmot in a field on the way to the station.

That night we stayed at Levis, Que., in the Loup Garou Hotel (translated, the Werewolf Hotel).

The next day, we arrived in Ottawa where I will live for the next few years.

Christopher Walsh
179A Woodridge Cres.,
Ottawa.

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SUMMER PROGRAMADULTS

Sat. June 7: Ornithology Francis Park Area;
meet Mayfair Lanes Parking Lot 9 a.m. or
Francis Park 9:30 a.m. Bring lunch.
Leader: Doug Turnbull.

June 12/16: C.N.F. Conference - U. of Victoria.

Sun. June 21: General Natural History
Pitt Meadows and Lake. Take 7 a.m. ferry
from Swartz Bay; use our own cars; make
up car pools and share expenses. Should
arrive Pitt Meadows about 10 a.m., will
bird to 3 or 4 p.m., choose your own
ferry home. Bring lunch (lots of it).
Please let Jack Williams (656-1484) know
if you plan to go, then he can arrange
car pools and give directions.

Sun. July 13: Botany and Amphibians -
Jordan Meadows. Bring lunch, boots and
bug juice. Leader Steven Mitchell
promises gentians and rein orchids, and
toads and frogs and bugs! Call Steven
(477-9248) if you're going. He's
arranging transportation.

JUNIORS & INTERMEDIATES

Sat. June 7: Francis Park: get things ready
for the C.N.F., meet 1:30 p.m. Drivers:
Callow and Forbes.

Sat. June 21: Arbutus Ridge Trail: Meet 1:30
Drivers: Mothersill and Whittaker.

Sat. July 5: China Beach: meet 9 a.m., bring
lunch. Driver: Askey.

Sat. Aug. 9: Salt Spring Island: meet 8 a.m.
bring lunch. Driver: Whitney.

All trips leave from the Mayfair Lanes Parking
Lot, Oak and Roderick corner.

* * * * *

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