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(See also inside back cover)

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DUES AND CHANGE OF ADDRESS SHOULD BE SENT TO THE TREASURER.

THE VICTORIA NATURALIST

Published by

THE VICTORIA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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YOU'LL REALLY DIG THIS

by Jack Williams

Perhaps you wondered what the cover of the September Naturalist was all about. Some suggested it was a Victoria street scene during the garbage collectors strike. To me it was a surprise because I was in the process of writing an article on the subject — not garbage, but fossils for some future issue of the Naturalist. And that's what last month's cover was — a picture of fossil shells, the Muir Creek fossils.

When flowers are out of season or birds scarce why not seek fossils for a change? They are never out of season, sometimes quite plentiful in the right spots and they can't get away from you. They've been dead for millions of years so you can do them little harm and, if you collect, it can be great fun trying to catalogue your finds. The thrill of bringing to light something from past ages and being able to study it can be very exciting.

There are several good spots for fossil hunting in British Columbia. Vancouver Island itself has many places where fossil shells, plants and animals may be found, many of them in reasonably soft shaly material so they are not hard to get out. Others, such as the ones on Hornby Island, are contained inside very hard concretions. It is difficult to break these and still keep the fossil inside intact.

Cover
GARRY OAKS ON A MISTY AUTUMN MORN
by Ken Alexander

Besides the shells, bones and plant remains that we usually think of first when dealing with the subject of fossils, there is much more petrified material including many types of woods. These are very interesting in themselves and when cut and polished can be quite beautiful; it is also a challenge to try and identify the original wood because many of those found in British Columbia are no longer native in our type of climate, but, being millions of years old, grew here when the area was tropical. These include such types as palm and ginkgo.

Some rock is composed of what was the bottom of shallow lakes or seas and contains plant material such as crinoids; many rocks can be found which when cut reveal the sections which form the stems; these appear in the shape of "Lifesavers". This material also polishes well. In some places fossilized coral is found which forms a beautiful pattern in the stone when cut.

There are fossil locations as near as Muir Creek and in the Duncan and Nanaimo areas. The Hornby Island location is excellent for Ammonites and Baculites. When you are farther afield, Cranbrook has good Trilobite digging and, of course, the region around Drumheller, Alberta, is a fabulous spot for dinosaur bone and much other material.

So get yourself a rock hammer and a fossil book and go to it.

HEY, GAIL! QUICK!

by Florence Weekes

Suddenly a shout rises, "Hey, Gail! In the water over here! Quick! There's something that's got a mouth that's sticking out of the rock!"

JAWS? And all the children about?

Not to worry. We are at a tide pool at Beaver Point on Saltspring Island. The "mouth" turns out to be the syphon of a clam buried in the bottom. The junior naturalists of the Victoria Natural History Society are on another outing and Gail Mitchell, their leader, is being bombarded with announcements and questions.

One child after another shouts out a discovery as they peer into the miniature world of the tide pool.

"Hey, Gail, here's a sea urchin," and all eyes turn to the spiny ball under the surface. "I can't pull him off the rock; he's holding on with his tube feet."

"There's a purple starfish arm. It's moving!
It's regenerating itself, just the arm!"

"Hey, a crab! Look at him go!"

Lessons are brief and constantly interrupted as new forms of life reveal themselves in and beside the water.

One young naturalist doesn't quite make it to the first big pool. Stumbling over wet rocks covered with slippery sea lettuce and bladder wrack; intent on clutching two feathers in one hand and a driftwood stick in the other; eyes on the children ahead, the gulls above, the sea below and the pools behind, three-year-old Michael goes down sprawling--and bawling. Do you know what it feels like to keel-haul yourself on a rockface of barnacles and upright mussel shells? When you're wearing thin shirt and short pants and your skin is baby soft? Just ask Michael. It h-u-r-t-s.

For a few moments Gail holds him but the magic of the place has its own healing. Almost before his skin has reacted with the red scratch etchings on cheeks and knees and tummy, his eyes are focusing on a tiny hermit crab scuttling across Gail's palm.

"Will it hurt you?" asks one of the other children.

"No, it's just a little tickle as he walks across your hand."

The hermit crab has obviously outgrown the little periwinkle shell that covers its most vulnerable parts. Soon a search is on to try to find it a bigger "house". But this search, like all today's projects, is short-lived; there are just too many diversions.

"Hey, Gail, I found a tube worm. If I put him back in the water will he flower out again?"

"Hey, Gail, we're trying to open a mussel...Hey, we're looking at the inside of a mussel."

"Hey, Gail, under here...a sort of pinky thing!"
It's a sea cucumber this time, bright orange tentacles
feather-dusting the water. It is pulled out by one
of the braver ones; examined by all, and then returned
to the water.

"Hey, what's this?"

"A chiton; see its eight plates."

"Well, what's this sort of flat-shelled thing?"

"A limpet. And, see, it even has a barnacle growing on it."

"Hey, look at this big anemone. I just touched it and it curled right up."

"So do the tube worms. Look; I touch it and it disappears into its tube like lightning."

"Hey, fish! Look at the bullheads swimming in here."

"Hey, Gail! Did a crow do this, Gail!" This time it's a crushed snail shell. And who's to know what eats what in this busy, changing, ever-cycling world of the tide line?

"Hey, Gail!" It is like a Greek chorus; every few minutes another excited call.

And Michael? For the moment he's sitting solemnly on a rock in the sun, sucking the wet end of his tide-pool-stirring piece of driftwood and quietly contemplating the sea.

Now it's time for lunch. And how to collect all the young charges? Andrew and Patrick have found a horizontal arbutus trunk that makes an excellent couch. Jenny is dragging an eight-foot length of kelp back to the car. Janice is down at the water putting back a starfish. Michael has lost his two feathers and is searching in vain for them. And already the arbutus trunk is empty and the boys have disappeared again.

The afternoon brings more fun, more spills, more tears—and—smiles, more discoveries, more pure joy and sheer exuberance. Michael has climbed into Gail's van and wants to go home with her. She promises to invite him next time. Finally she takes them all for a swim at Vesuvius and then it's back on the ferry and home.

Our juniors have had a good day.

OVERDUE? - OVER TO YOU

Your dues are due
And to those of you
Who have done nothing yet about them
We politely say:
Please hurry and pay We can't get along without them.

(Thanks to an anonymous member of the Tuesday Group)

ROCKY MOUNTAIN WILD FLOWERS - A Review

by Kaye Suttill

Do you ever see mountains where buildings or sky are to your eyes? Do you joy all year to flowering earth? Then you will savour Rocky Mountain Wild Flowers, by A.E. Porsild, illustrations by Dagny Tande Lid., National Museum of Natural Sciences and Parks Canada, Ottawa, Natural History Series No. 2, 1974, 454 pp., \$5.00 paper bound. Whether this 5" x 7" book goes into the field with you (it weighs a full pound) or keeps wise company on your instant reference shelf, it is a welcome plus to your flora reading.

The author says the main purpose of the book is to help the visitor to Banff, Jasper and Waterton Lakes National Parks "recognize and know a little better the commoner and more spectacular wild flowers". Since many of these species are indigenous to similar areas in B.C., as well as to adjacent ones in U.S.A., the book is useful throughout much of the western high country.

More than 250 plants, including grasses, trees and shrubs, are illustrated in colour and accompanied by notes on size, description, range and where to find them, with supplementary information given on another 180 similar or related species. Measurements of plants and plant parts are given in the metric system, with a conversion 6" rule inside the back cover for those of us not yet familiar with centimeters. Each illustration is also noted re scale of drawing to actual plant size. The plants are arranged in the usual sequence of technical manuals, beginning with the ferns, ascending to the herbaceous, showy flowering plants; and common names are given where available, as well as Latin names. At the end of the book comes a useful glossary of botanical terms and that most referred-to blessing, The Index, in this case alphabetically listing the scientific and common names of all the plants mentioned in the text.

No reference is made anywhere in the text re the $\underline{\text{When}}$ of flowering, whether a particular species blooms as the snow melts in the alpine spring or end of the season. However, blank space below the species texts can be ideal for notes.

I question the areas "where found" for certain species. For example, Mountain Death Camas, we have observed often on rocky or grassy slopes from as low as 3,000' beside the Robson River to timberline on the Plain of Six Glaciers, not "alpine tundra", as stated in the text. The Western Wood Lily's habitat, also, is given as "alpine meadows" whilst we have photographed it in clearings in the woods and at the bottom of Maligne Canyon; we have never seen it on alpine meadows.

To me the most interesting part of the book is its Introduction. For whilst each plant text gives the What and Where the Introduction has an outline of the geohistorical background and the Whence of the plants described. Also, on its first page, the Introduction starts taking you down the highway from Jasper to Banff, enhancing the miles as you go with descriptions of the botanical setting. Remember, the frame of reference in Rocky Mountain Wild Flowers is always Alberta's National Parks, though in mind you constantly think "Yoho", too!

The illustrations by Dagny Tande Lid of Oslo, Norway, were made from plant specimens she, her husband and the author collected during a two-months trip through the Alberta Rockies. They are a miniature herbarium and have charm as meticulous flower portraits, especially the Drummond's Avens, Alpine Forget-me-not, and Fireweed.

But for field identification I find these two-dimensional, flat-plane drawings a mixed blessing. For checking leaf structure and plant parts the specimen profiles aid identification. However, some flowers are not recognizable. For example, Anemone drummondii, that small, delicately-curved-petal flower hugging windswept rocks above timberline,

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by JACK WILLIAMS

BIRD

REPORTS

and Claytonia lanceolata whose flowers crowding the snowmelt. And the Eriogonums don't look themselves either, and that jewel of the Saxifrage family, the YELLOW Saxifrage azoides is through wrong colour. portrayed mud-orange, a cadaver of its joyful, gravelwater, living self. The very use of specimen profiles including the roots (which you don't see in the field) tends to confuse by stressing verticality and minimizing the aliveness of depth dimension. You miss the way-you-see-the-plants look in situ. A plant even looks quite different seen singly with its roots than in the clump community it lives. Truly, the living aspect, which colour photography on site has, is missing in herbarium specimen profiles, which are so useful later in detailed checking.

So my reaction to Rocky Mountain Wild Flowers is to treasure its text, and its illustrations as flower portraits, as well as filling need for a miniature Herbarium, but for identification, for field recognition, to use these herbarium two-dimensional specimen drawings in conjunction with a preferred wild flower book with coloured photographs.

AUDUBON FILMS

Land Of The Rio Grande will be featured on the next Audubon Wildlife Film to be shown Friday, Oct. 31, and Saturday, Nov. 1, in the Newcombe Auditorium. Charles Hotchkiss will lead the way as we explore 1900 miles of one of America's most historic and beautiful rivers, the border between Mexico and the U.S.A. The time is 8:00 p.m., for both showings, and admission is \$1.50 (\$1.00 for senior citizens) a bargain at twice the price!

RED-NECKED GREBE - Aug. 15, Bazan Bay, 40, JW. PIER-BILLED BREBE - Aug. 10, Martindale, 1a & 5 imm., RS. GREEN HERON - Aug. 13, Duncan Ponds, 1a, M & VG. AMERICAN WIGEON - Aug. 23, Oak Bay, 8, Witty's, 8, RS. PINTAIL - Aug. 14, Esquimalt L., 1f, VG; Aug. 23, Esq. Lag., 44, Witty's Lag., 27, RS. GREEN-WINGED TEAL - Aug. 10, Martindale, 1f, RS. COMMON GOLDENEYE - Aug. 19, Sooke Harbour, 1f, VG. BUFFLEHEAD - Aug. 9, Sooke Harbour, 1m, LGR. HOODED MERGANSER - Aug. 14, Robert's Bay, 11, JW. GOLDEN EAGLE - Aug. 25, SE Matheson L., 1a, VG. MARSH HAWK - July 31, Isl. View Rd., 1, AK. PEREGRINE FALCON - Aug. 17, Enterprise Chan., 1, VG; Aug. 18, off Clover Pt., 1, M & VG; Aug. 25, Metchosin Lag., 1, VG. MERLIN - Aug. 23, Bowker, 1 imm., RS.

AMERICAN KESTREL - Aug. 1, Florence L., 1, TB; Aug. 1,3, & 8, Lochside nr. McTavish, 1, JW; Aug. 31, Ten Mile Pt., 1, V. Guernsey. GOLDEN PLOVER - Aug. 29, Esquimalt Lag., 1, RS.

SEMI-PALMATED PLOVER - Aug. 2, Witty's, 29, RS. WHIMBREL - Aug. 4, Robert's Pt., 1, JW; Aug. 5, Cattle Pt., 1, TG.

SPOTTED SANDPIPER - Aug. 3, Mt. Doug. Beach, 15 (flk)JW. WANDERING TATTLER - Aug., Hood Lane, 3, RS.

LESSER YELLOWLEGS - Aug. 10, Witty's, 8, McIntyre, 24, RS; Aug. 23, Oak Bay, 11, Witty's, 29, RS.

SURFBIRD - Aug. 7, Clover Pt., 94, RS. RED KNOT - Aug. 31, Clover Pt., 2, M & VG.

PECTORAL SANDPIPER - Aug. 10, Martindale Res., 7, LGR, RS. & M & VG.

BAIRD'S SANDPIPER - 1 ea. at Cordova Spit, Aug. 3, RS; Cadboro Bay, Aug. 15, M & VG; Metchosin Lagoon, Aug. 25, VG; and Clover Pt., Aug. 29, M & VG.

NORTHERN PHALAROPE - July 31, Clover Pt., 9, RS. PARASITIC JAEGAR - Aug. 13, Clover Pt., 1 lt. phase ad., RS: Aug. 20, Cl. Pt., 1, M & VG.

RING-BILLED GULL - Aug. 19, Clover Pt., 1 imm., RS. BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE - Aug. 1, Clover Pt., 1, RS. FRANKLIN'S GULL - Clover Pt., 1 imm., Aug. 4, RS & 1 ad., Aug. 15, RF; Aug. 14, Esq. Lagoon, 1 imm., VG. BLACK-HEADED GULL - Aug. 15, Clover Pt., 1 ad, M & JS. COMMON MURRE - Aug. 30, Royal Rds., 2, VG & RS. TUFTED PUFFIN - Aug. 8, Clover Pt., 1, RS; Aug. 9, Mouat Reef, 1, M & VG. MOURNING DOVE - Aug. 5, Gordon Head, 3, TG; Aug. 9, nr. Blenkinsop L., 1, VG & RS; Aug. 25, Mt. Newton X Rd., 1, J & DW. COMMON NIGHTHAWK - Aug. 30, Sannishton Bay, 3, J & DW. BLACK SWIFT - Aug. 10, Highland Rd., 2, M & VG; Aug. 25, SE Matheson L., 2, VG; Aug. 26, Glenmeadows G.C., 6, Mr. Donald. KISKADEE FLYCATCHER - July, S. Pender Is., 1, Mary Roddick. BANK SWALLOW - Aug. 26, Cowichan Bay, 1, VG. BLACK-THROATED GREY WARBLER - Aug. 31, Lover's La., 3; Haro Woods, 3, J & DW. TENNESSEE WARBLER - Aug. 24, Lover's La., 2, RS. WESTERN TANAGER - Aug. 19, Ten Mile Pt., 1, TG; Aug. 31, Lover's La., 2, J & DW. BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK - Aug. 23, Witty's, 1 imm., RS. EVENING GROSBEAK - Aug. 7, Hunt Rd., 1f, M & VG; Aug. 19, Ten Mile Pt., 2, TG. LINCOLN'S SPARROW - Aug. 26, Duncan Ponds, 2, VG.

The strangest find of the summer goes to Mary Roddick and her Kiskadee Flycatcher. Mary is a good birder and familiar with the bird in Mexico. The Kiskadee is such a striking bird that there could hardly be any mistake. Mary thought it might have come up on one of the American yachts but after a Thick-billed Kingbird at Qualicum and a Tropical at Victoria, I'd believe any kind of flycatcher.

GOLDEN SPARROW - Aug. 30, Goldstream Pk., 3, RS & VG.

FOX SPARROW - Aug. 30, Goldstream Pk., 1, RS & VG.

For the 'Wish-I-Could-Have-Been-There' award try Ron Satterfield's 2 Tennessee Warblers - a real find.

A Black-headed Gull has turned up at Clover Point again this year. It was found by Marion and John Steeves of Montreal and verified by Ralph Fryer, the Goodwills and Ron Satterfield. The bird was still here early in September, changing into winter plummage.

My best bird of the summer turned up in the wettest week. Ever optimists, the Williams' drove to Gold River on August 27 and took the M.V. Uchuck III to Friendly Cove. It poured all the way but when we arrived at Friendly Cove the sun came out for an hour, just long enough for a walk on the beach where, beautiful to behold, was a Buff-breasted Sandpiper. Our day was made! Who cares about the rain.

CORRECTION - Last month we had Ervio Sian and Glen Ryder seeing a Whistling Swan at Quick's Pond. This should have been a Bittern, the Whistling Swan was seen by Leila Roberts at Esquimalt Lagoon. (Editor's error - Ed.)

Ed. Note - Costs and space are once again with us, thus the need for brevity in our bird notes. From now on our motto will be as many records as possible by using abbreviations as much as possible. So the initials of the reporters belong to the following people - J & DW, Jack and Dorothy Williams; RS, Ron Satterfield; M & VG, the Goodwills; LGR, Leila G. Roberts; AK, Anne Knowles; TB, Tom Briggs; TG, Tuesday Group; RF, Ralph Fryer; M & JS, Marion and John Steeves.

BUT don't let our space problems stop you from sending in the reports - keep 'em coming.

BIRDING: THE COWICHAN VALLEY by Elsie Turnbull

The August field trip was to Cowichan Bay, led by Ron Satterfield and was attended by about forty people. A dull morning with threat of rain turned into a sunny warm afternoon, just right for clambering along dikes on the tide flats and walking around the sewage ponds outside Duncan. Waders and ducks fed in the ponds, a covey of tawny dowitchers, half a dozen gangling Greater Yellowlegs, a scurry of peeps on the margin. Mallards and teal paddled along the channel while a gaggle of geese flew honking overhead. On every post a swallow perched—Barn, Rough—winged or Violet green—ready to dart into the air after insects and occasionally rippling the surface of the water. High in the sky, Black Swifts circled, their dark wings looking like scimitars.

In the swamp several Great Blue Herons kept watch for food, as did a Kingfisher sitting on a post while far out at the bay's edge a single Peregrine Falcon surveyed the landscape.

In straggling file we followed along the dike, an uneven path made hazardous by slippery grasses, hidden holes and over-grown hedges of thornapple, briar and crabapple. Flitting through a tangle of thistles were flocks of goldfinches. Across the marsh came the liquid song of Purple Martins and some birders caught a fleeting glimpse of the purplish irridescent birds, uncommon in Victoria.

Lunch at Quamichan Lake brought the sight of a Wood Duck flying along the shoreline, and Solitary Vireos, Cedar Waxwings, siskins, chickadees, Yellow and Wilson's Warblers, one redwing, one creeper and one House Finch in the woods behind the picnic tables. Drumming on the trees were Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers and a flicker while a Dileated fed on berries of the cascara trees.

The long walk around the sewage ponds yielded few birds. Teal, Blue-winged and Green-winged, a Shoveller and a Coot swam about. Bonaparte Gulls rested on the surface and a Spotted Sandpiper sped a few feet above the water.

Some returning birders paid a visit to Cherry Point but a most suitable finish to the day was experienced by Mr. and Mrs. John Robinson who glimpsed an Osprey standing on the edge of its nest beside the Malahat Highway not far from Goldstream.

ODDS 'N ENDS

- * If you haven't been out to Francis Park since before the C.N.F. meetings last June, you're in for a surprise. A team of young people, led by Gail Mitchell, Jennifer Fisher and Pat Swift did a smashin' job of refurbishing the Nature House -- and oh that colour scheme....
- * October 4 looks like a big day up Qualicum Parksville way. The F.B.C.N. is holding its fall regional meeting at 2 p.m. in the Marshall-Stevenson Wildlife Area, near Qualicum Beach, and the Mitlenatch Field Naturalists Society is holding a Look-in at the Englishman River flats at Parksville. The Look-in is to raise support for protecting about 270 acres of river estuary. The Arrowsmith Natural History Society will lead a tour of the area, leaving from the ball park in Parksville at 11 a.m. Here's a first class chance to see a fine natural area and attend the F.B.C.N. meetings. There'll be time to do both. Jack Williams says.... bring lunch....
- * Appointments: Ruth Chambers Public Relations; James Bryden, alternate representative to the Friends of the Provincial Museum; and John Rimmington, book sales.....

* And speaking of books sales, John'll be pushing the new, revised and updated, edition of a Naturalist's Guide to Victoria — something every Victoria Naturalist should have. He's got a good deal going too — \$1.50 to members. If you're not a member it'll be \$2.00 please. Just another reason for being a member....

* Speaking of members, We Need New Members. Quite aside from the Nehring money, the Society is not paying its way. As Pogo would say, our out-'spensis is greater than our in-'spensis and that can lead to bankruptcy. There are two ways we can change this: live within our means — which could result in a much smaller, less frequent Naturalist — or get more members. You can help with the latter. Surely you have a friend, of friends, who might enjoy membership in our Society. Think a bit. If you have, bring them along to the next meeting — then maybe they'll join. It's all in a good cause.....

* And in another good cause, the late Elton Anderson devoted a lot of time in his last years to a campaign to have a standardized returnable glass pop bottle throughout the bottling industry. Elton made some headway in the fight but he'd have been the first to admit the battle is far from won. In continuing the fight the V.N.H.S. recently wrote to Jack Radford, Minister of Recreation and Conservation, and to Phyllis Young, Minister of Consumer Services, outlining the economic and environmental advantages of standard-ization. In replying, Mrs. Young thought the proposal a good idea but made no commitments; Mr. Radford passed his letter on to Robert Williams, Lands, Forests and Water Resources, who is now apparently responsible for legislation on this subject.....

* Apropos the earlier note about costs, the Naturalist is smaller by 4 pages this month. We will try to keep it at that for a while and see what savings can be realized. But aside from the printing costs, a major expense is postage and envelopes — we can do little about postage, but we may try mailing without envelopes. By addressing the outside back cover we can save 5¢ a copy, which is \$20.00 per issue or \$200.00 a year. Any other ideas?

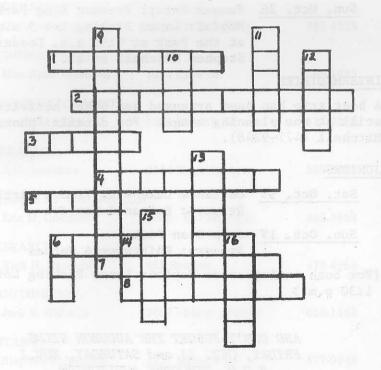
KIDS COUNTRY

TRY THIS BIRD PUZZLE

A little more than 22 years ago this little cross-word puzzle by Dr. Clifford Carl appeared in the Junior Section of The Naturalist. There's no reason why it couldn't be as much fun to do today as it must have been then.

Maybe after doing this one you could make one yourself. We'll print it if you do.

Look for the answers to this one in the next Naturalist.



ACROSS: 1. A common duck. 2. Our smallest bird. 3. Long-legged, fish-eater. 4. An owl. 5. An egg-eater. 6. Winter bird. 7. Turkey. 8. Swamp bird.

DOWN: 9. Our commonest gull. 10. A thin-bodied marsh bird. 11. Hell diver. 12. Looks like a penguin. 13. A small gull-like bird. 6. A cheeky bird. 14. A male swan. 15. Red Breast. 16. Flys in a V.

PROGRAM

ADULTS	
Sat. Oct. 4	Englishman River Look-in; meet at ball park, Parksville, 11 a.m. F.B.C.N. regional meetings, Marshall-
Tues. Oct.14	Stevenson Refuge, nr. Qualicum, 2 p.m. General Meeting, 8 p.m., Newcombe Aud. Speaker: Jim Pojar. Topic: At Home on the Range - Spatsizi Country.
Sun. Oct. 19	Ornithology: The Best of North Saanich. Meet Mayfair Lanes Parking Lot 9 a.m. or Sidney Hotel, 9:30 a.m. Bring lunch. Leader: Jack 'Bring Lunch' Williams.
Sun. Oct. 26	Fungas Foray: Freeman King Park. Meet Mayfair Lanes Parking Lot 9 a.m. or at the Park at 9:30 a.m. Leaders: Stephen Mitchell et al.

INTERMEDIATES

A boat trip has been arranged and other activities are still at the planning stage. For details 'phone Gail Mitchell (477-9248).

JUNIORS

Sat. Oct. 11 Durrance Lake - to find a turtle Drivers: Belton & Marrion

Sun. Oct. 19 John Dean Park
Drivers: Whittaker & Forbes

(For both outings meet Mayfair Lanes Parking Lot at 1:30 p.m.)

AND DON'T FORGET THE AUDUBON FILMS FRIDAY, OCT. 31 and SATURDAY, NOV.1 8 P.M. NEWCOMBE AUDITORIUM

CHARLES HOTCHKISS - THE LAND OF THE RIO GRANDE

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