

The VICTORIA NATURALIST

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VICTORIA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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(See also inside back cover)

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FRANCIS
PARK
a
fascinating
story



(From time to time, questions are asked about the history of Francis Park and the man the Park is named after. Here, straight from the pages of a little pamphlet produced for the Park, is the whole story.)

Like many other recreational areas of our Province, Francis Park has a colourful and interesting history.

This peaceful parkland was given to the government of British Columbia by the late Thomas Francis, whose father - James Nathan Francis - purchased the 168 acres in the early 1840's for 10 shillings an acre! At the time, Mr. Francis worked with the Hudson's Bay Company, and helped to build old Fort Victoria.

Cover

CANADA GEESE
at Tsehum Harbour
by HAROLD HOSFORD

The rugged pioneer married an attractive Indian girl, and they both worked hard on their land, and built their first cabin across the road from the one still standing.

They felled nearby trees to build their first frontier residence and a couple of barns. Some of the trees were also used to provide barrel staves for Victoria's first brewery. Late in the 1800's a new house was erected where the auditorium now stands.

The hard-working and happy couple had three sons - Robert, Charles and Thomas. But Tom never saw his father who was killed in a logging accident shortly prior to the birth of his third son in 1877.

Mrs. Francis continued to live on the property - always the excellent housewife and fine mother. Robert and Charles died in the early 1900's, and Mrs. Francis passed away about 1912.

Thomas was among the early pupils of the historic Craigflower School. He never married, but continued to live on the property he loved and knew so well. He had a few cattle, and did occasional work for some of his neighbours.

He was an expert hunter and bushman, but never killed except in quest of food. In his later years, Thomas retreated almost completely to his beloved forest land. He had many offers for the timber on his land, and for the land itself, and for many years he steadfastly refused to part with a tree or an acre. He wanted it to remain in its beautiful natural setting.

His great wish was assured in 1960 when he gave the property to the people of British Columbia - and the wooded land was set aside as a park and a sanctuary under the jurisdiction of the Parks Branch of the Provincial Government. A local board was set up to administer the park, with well-known Victoria Naturalist Freeman King as chairman.

Later, the old home of Thomas Francis was destroyed by fire, and the old pioneer went to a nursing home. But not for long. The problem of the burned-out home was mentioned at a meeting of the Thetis Park Nature Sanctuary Association. Members of that Association and of the Victoria Natural History Society raised funds, many local business firms donated material, and with volunteer labor, and considerable assistance from Saanich Municipality, a new cabin was built. When Thomas moved into his new home it was comfortably furnished, with running water and electricity.

The old man enjoyed the comforts of a modern world for only a short while. He died in 1961, and his ashes were scattered by a large rock in the park where he played as a boy.

Today that rock bears a plaque in memory of Thomas Francis.

The Nature House was built that year, and trails were cut to enable visitors to enjoy the beauty of the area. Later, through the generosity of Mrs. Beatrice Mist, the laboratory-workshop was built.

In 1967 - as a Centennial project - the Independent Order of Foresters built the little auditorium. And in 1968, the Province of British Columbia donated an additional adjacent 50 acres to the complex - naming it Freeman King Park.

Earlier, additional acreage had been added to the parkland complex; and today it embraces some 225 acres of natural beauty. It is - and will remain for all time - a peaceful sanctuary for the enjoyment and relaxation of all who thread their way through its quiet wooded trails.

Rest in peace, Thomas Francis. Man will not ravage the land you loved.

Members of the Junior Branch of the Victoria Natural History Society have undertaken the responsibility of cutting and maintaining trails and operating the park and Nature House.

The Park is a sanctuary. No hunting or camping is allowed within its limits. Picnicing is allowed only in the parking lot area. Picking of flowers is prohibited. There is a caretaker in residence.

Come, see, and enjoy.

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ODDS 'N ENDS

..... Jenny Singleton has put out the word that display materials are needed for the Francis Park Nature House. Things like discarded magazines, like B.C. Outdoors, or other items with a natural history theme, will be appreciated. She says she'll be happy to pick the stuff up; just 'phone her at 658-5678 or 477-6911, local 743. (This looks like a good chance for me to get rid of that full-length picture of my mother-in-law)

..... Terry Morrison has a problem -- trees, hundreds of 'em. He's got more than he can handle but he's not giving them away; he's planting them -- at Swan Lake -- or at least he hopes to

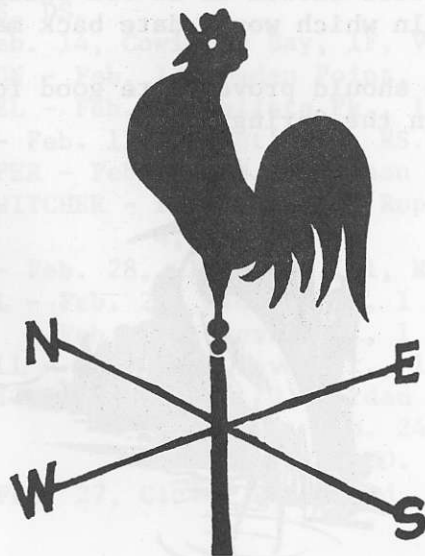
..... Terry is an assistant naturalist at Swan Lake and that's what he's looking for -- assistance. If you've got a strong back and a sharp shovel, and aren't intimidated by hundreds of trees, give Terry a call. He'll try to arrange a Tree Bee and who knows, you may get to be Top Bee

Seriously, these trees should be in the ground next month so if you can help, call Terry at the Saanich Municipal Hall, Local 210

..... While on Swan Lake, more than \$4,000.00 of Mr. Nehring's estate are finally going to work. They'll be helping to erect a board walk and duck-viewing blind, and a wharf which should be in use by summer, certainly by the time the ducks come back next fall

..... More for May. Jessie Woollett will be leading a botany outing on Saturday, May 8th and her destination will be the Wildflower Reserve at Honey-moon Bay on Lake Cowichan. It looks like a 9:30 a.m. start from Mayfair Lanes with a picnic lunch in order just another preview of things to come

..... The cupboard is almost bare and we've got at least one more Naturalist to go before the summer break. Any stories, observations, poems, puzzles you have been holding for a rainy day, let 'em go now; that rainy day is here for the Naturalist. I'd particularly like to hear more from the botanists



..... Oh, yes! Here's one from the big audience-participation night we had in February. It's for those of you who couldn't get down for the meeting. What bird never sets foot on land throughout its whole life? Drop me a note with your guess and your reasons for picking your bird

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FEBRUARY BIRD TRIP

by JACK WILLIAMS

An interesting outing was experienced by about 35 birders on Saturday, February 21. The area covered was north of Thetis Lake and included Prior and Pike Lakes.

The trip was made more rewarding by the help of Terese Todd, who showed us around, and on whose property we were most of the time. Terese also invited us all to her house for the lunch break.

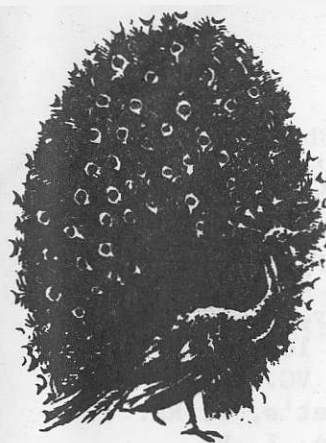
Not too many birds were seen, about 25 species in all, but Terese showed us an old Indian elk pit and also a lime kiln which would date back many years.

This area should prove quite good for birding a little later in the Spring.



BIRD REPORTS

by JACK WILLIAMS



- NORTHERN FULMAR - Feb. 19, Clover Pt., 1 Dk. ph., MEG, VG.
- Feb. 27, Clover Pt., 1 poss. albino, RS, VG
- TRUMPETER SWAN - Feb. 22, Big Barn area, 3, GG.
- Feb. 21, Portage Inlet, 30, RSp, DS.
- BLACK BRANT - Feb. 29, Clover Pt., 12, flying E., VG.
- Feb. 29, Esq. Lag., 6, RS.
- GREEN-WINGED TEAL (EUR.) - Feb. 14, Tzouhalem, 1M, VG.
- Feb. 19, Westholme, 1M, MEG, VG.
- STELLER'S EIDER - Feb. 13, ft. of Rhothesay, 1F, JW, MO.
- BLACK SCOTER - Feb. 13, Robert's Bay, 1M, 1F, JW.
- Feb. 19, Rothesay, 3M, 1F, JW.
- HOODED MERGANSER - Feb. 14, Resthaven, 6M, 32F, DW, JW.
- GOLDEN EAGLE - Feb. 19, nr. Westholme, 1 ad., MEG, VG.
- BALD EAGLE - Feb. 29, over Ten Mile Pt., 5 imm., JW, DW, KS, DS.
- MARSH HAWK - Feb. 14, Cowichan Bay, 1F, VG.
- PEREGRINE FALCON - Feb. 13, Ogden Point, 1 ad., RS.
- AMERICAN KESTREL - Feb. 2, Tulista Pk., 1, DW, JW.
- VIRGINIA RAIL - Feb. 15, Rithet's, 1, RS.
- SPOTTED SANDPIPER - Feb. 14, N. Cowichan ponds, 1, VG.
- LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER - Feb. 18 & 28, Rupert's Pond, 4, VG, RS.
- GLAUCOUS GULL - Feb. 28, Clover Pt., 1, RF.
- CALIFORNIA GULL - Feb. 27, Clover Pt., 1 ad., RF.
- Feb. 29, Clover Pt., 1 ad., RS.
- RING-BILLED GULL - Feb. 25, Clover Pt., 1 ad., MEG.
- BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE - Feb. 10, Jordan River, 4 ad., MEG, VG; Feb. 24, Clover Pt., 1 ad., MEG, MO.
- LITTLE GULL - Feb. 27, Clover Pt., 1 ad., VG, MEG, MO.

MARBLED MURRELET - Feb. 5, Ross Bay, 2, RS.
ANCIENT MURRELET - Feb. 14, Sattelite Chan., 4 ad., VG.
- Feb. 20, Clover Pt., 3, RS.
RHINOCEROS AUKLET - Feb. 29, Clover Pt., 1, VG, MS.
BAND-TAILED PIGEON - Feb. 1, Rocky Pt. Rd., 30, RS.
SHORT-EARED OWL - Feb. 14, Cowichan Bay, 2, VG.
TREE SWALLOW - Feb. 24, Quicks Bottom, 16, MEG, VG.
BLUE JAY - Feb. 21, Towner Pk., 1, RS, VG.
LONG-BILLED MARSH WREN - Feb. 15, Rithet's, 1, RS.
MOCKINGBIRD - Feb. 18, Lagoon & Milburn, 1, VG.
HERMIT THRUSH - Feb. 5, Horth Hill Pk. Lt., 1, DW, JEW.
BOHEMIAN WAXWING - Feb. 10, Lockehaven Dr., 3, KS, DS.
CEDAR WAXWING - Feb. 10, Lockehaven Dr., 6, KS, DS.
NORTHERN SHRIKE - Feb. 14, N. Cowichan Pds., 1 imm., VG.
- Feb. 24, Lohbrunner Rd., 1, MEG, VG.
YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER - Feb. 1, Robertson St., 1, RS.
WESTERN MEADOWLARK - Feb. 7, Oak Bay Golf, 7, JR.
YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD - Feb. 16, 5th St., Sidney, 1,
DW, JW.
EVENING GROSBEAK - Feb. 28, Lover's Lane, 10, DW, JW.
AMERICAN GOLDFINCH - Feb. 25, Beacon Ave., Sidney, 10, JW.
RED CROSSBILL - Feb. 14, Somenos Lake, 20, VG.
- Feb. 20, Gorge Park, 30, RS.
- Feb. 28, Prospect Lake, 30, RS, VG.

Poor weather in February seems to have kept most of the birders at home but also brought quite a few good gull sightings to Clover Pt. The best has to be the Little Gull, (it didn't have the decency to hang around to let me get him on my life list). The Steller's Eider at Sidney was seen by many members and also by about 10 birders from Vancouver and at least that many from the Seattle area. This is the first proven record for our area. It went missing for a week but was seen again on March 1st. The Yellow-headed Blackbird, also at Sidney, scarce here at any time, was way ahead of its usual April arrival in B.C. The Tree Swallows came back to Quick's Bottom (not quite as poetic as Capistrano) on Feb. 24. If they had any brains they turned right around and went south again.

Observers in order of appearance:

MEG, Peggy Goodwill; VG, Vic Goodwill; RS, Ron Satterfield; GG, Gerry Gardner; Rsp, Reita Sparling; Dsp, Doug Sparling; JW, Jack Williams; MO, many obs., DW, Dorothy Williams; KS, Kay Suttill; DS, Dennis Suttill; RF, Ralph Fryer; MS, Mike Shepard; JR, John Rimmington.

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THE SECOND SHOE DROPS

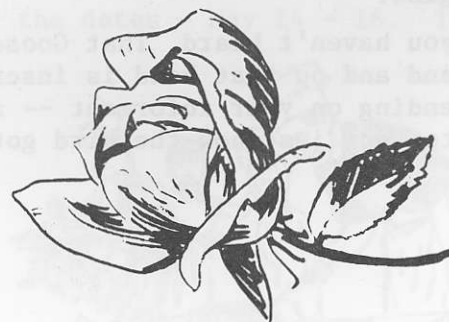
This is the last time of asking. If your membership dues for 1976-77 are still not paid by June 30, you will be missing your Naturalist come September - at least according to the Constitution that could happen.

But we're a bunch of kind souls; you may get some extra grace if you don't make the cut-off, but please try to get your money in now.

Send a cheque or money order to:

The Victoria Natural History
Society,
P. O. Box 1747,
Victoria, B. C.
V8W 2Y1

Not to the Treasurer.



BE SEEING YOU JACK!

It seems like yesterday, but it's actually two years -- two years since Jack Williams took over the reins of Bird Reports and turned it into one of the most popular features of the Naturalist. Now he's calling it a day. Jack & his wife Dorothy, have some travel plans in the wind first then it's back to Vancouver. So our loss is Vancouver's gain.

Our best wishes go with the Williams' and, Jack, if you're ever out this way, drop in -- but be sure to bring lunch!

Editor.

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THE CONTINUING SAGA OF OX4 -- OR IS IT 4X0?

The aid of W.T. "Bill" Munro of the B.C. Fish and Wildlife Branch has been enlisted in our continuing efforts to trace the origin of the elusive OX4. 4X0?

Let's just call it That Goose!

That Goose -- a Canada Goose -- first turned up on one of Ron Satterfield's day lists back in November at Esquimalt Lagoon; then Ben Reece got it at Portage Inlet a few days later. Lately, the bird has apparently moved its headquarters north onto Saanich Peninsula where, according to Leila Roberts, Hank VanderPol and Peter Bricknell, it has been dividing its time between Elk and Beaver Lakes. But we're still none the wiser about its origins.

In case you haven't heard, That Goose is wearing a yellow neck band and on that band is inscribed OX4 -- or 4X0 -- depending on your informant -- and so far nobody seems to know just how the bird gets its adornment.

But Bill Munro has a Hot Line to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Patuxent, Maryland bird banding headquarters where the dociers of all these marked geese are filed -- so, if anybody can get the lowdown on That Goose, Bill can.

Stay tuned for further developments.

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REMEMBER -- IT'S MIRACLE IN MAY

May 14-16 are the big days for the Society's camp-out at Miracle Beach. Stephen Mitchell tells me he's laying-on birdwatching, flower-finding, campfires and a low tide or two and with that kind of a combination you shouldn't stay home. Steve says the whole deal is open to all members, be they junior, intermediate or that other kind. He's even willing to include non-members -- as long as they're friendly non-members.

There are two ways to go -- camp out or sleep in. Campers will arrange their own transportation and provide their own food and equipment; B.C. Parks will provide the campsites -- for a nominal fee, of course.

For sleepers -- in, those with an allergy to canvas (like me), there are three good spots near the beach, any one of which might suit your fancy. They are: Miracle Beach Resort, Golden Anchor Resort, and Teena's Trailer Park, all at R.R. #1, Black Creek, B.C.

Steve has a meeting planned for 9 p.m. on May 14 at the Miracle Beach Nature House where he plans to explain just what is likely to happen in the next two days. He'd like to know ahead of time if you're going; so call him at 477-9248.

Remember the dates - May 14 - 16. The 14th is a Friday.



APRIL PROGRAMMEADULTS:Sat. Apr. 3

Geology - East Sooke Park - bring lunch.

Leader: Ken Northcott.

Meet Mayfair Lanes - 9:00 a.m.

Tues. Apr. 13

General Meeting - 8:00 p.m., Newcombe Auditorium.

Double Feature:

1. Strathcona Park -- Let It Be! - An illustrated plea for protecting this magnificent wilderness from mining exploitation.
Speaker: Brian Pinch.

2. The Natural History of High Mountain Areas with David Polster and David Penning.

Sun. Apr. 25

Botany - Witty's Lagoon - bring lunch.

Leader: Terese Todd.

Meet Mayfair Lanes - 9:30 a.m.

JUNIORS & INTERMEDIATESSat. Apr. 10

Bear Hill - Meet 1:30 p.m., Mayfair Lanes.

Drivers: Askey

Callow

Sat. Apr. 24

Spectacle Lake - Meet 11:00 a.m. Mayfair Lanes.

Bring lunch.

Drivers: Marrion

Hyggen

Intermediates should phone Jenny Singleton

658-5678 or

477-6911, local 743

if they plan to go on either of these trips.

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David Stirling	3500 Salisbury Way	385-4223
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Miss Anne Adamson	1587 Clive Dr.	598-1623
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Mrs. Gail Mitchell	4321 Majestic Dr.	477-9248
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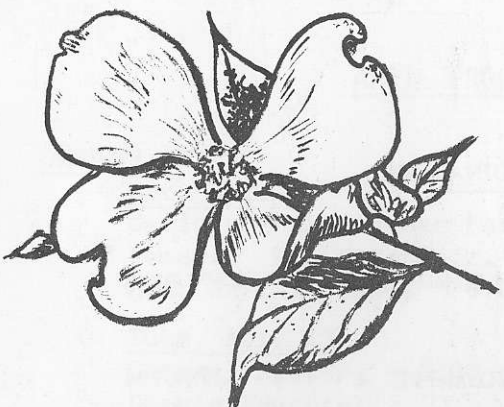
Rick H. Harcombe	461 Sparton	479-4958
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BOTANY:

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