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VICTORIA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 1747, Victoria, B.C. V8W 2Y1

All correspondence, including membership applications and renewals, should be sent to this address.

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Annual dues, including subscription to "The Victoria Naturalist":

Juniors - \$2.50 Golden Age Single - \$4.00 Regular Single - \$5.00
Family (Golden Age or Regular) - \$7.50 Sustaining - \$25.00

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

The financial year is May 1 to April 30. New members joining after Jan. 1 — half-dues.

Rare Bird Alert 383-0211

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COMMENT

OYEZ! OYEZ! The Juniors have started off in great style. Eighteen children and three mothers attended the November 2nd program at the Provincial Museum, when Dr. Don Abbott talked to them about Archaeology, and showed slides of artifacts and tribal villages.

A field trip followed up on Saturday the 5th, when the children were taken by Dr. Abbott and Nancy Turner to see Indian midden sites.

The ambitious new program has brought several new members to the Junior Branch - a very good start to the season. But we look for many more youngsters to join up.

On another page, Susan Johnson tells about the Camp that the Juniors attended at Sooke, led by Gail Mitchell, which started off this session's outdoor activities. Her enthusiasm speaks for its success.

The Junior Program will be found on the last page, and we look forward to hearing about all the activities during November. Perhaps we shall have some Junior Sightings to record in the Christmas Count on December 17th.

COVER

CLAVARIA FORMOSA

By Bertha McHaffie-Gow

PELAGIC BIRDING TRIPS - FALL 1977

Three pelagic birding trips, sponsored by the British Columbia Provincial Museum, were organised this Fall. On all trips we travelled southwest from Bamfield towards Perouse Bank, returning via Folger Island to look for sea-lions. Sunny skies prevailed on the first and last outings, but the weather for the second trip was poor - windy with occasional rain.

The following is the list of selected species observed offshore this Fall:

	<u>Sept. 10</u>	<u>Sept. 17</u>	<u>Oct. 1</u>
Black-footed Albatross	2	3	17
Northern Fulmar	-	-	8
Pink-footed Shearwater	1	30	6
New Zealand Shearwater	1	6	93
Sooty Shearwater	352	631	312
Short-tailed Shearwater	-	-	2
Fork-tailed Storm-petrel	-	-	107
Brandt's Cormorant	7	42	5
Northern Phalarope	2	4	-
Pomarine Jaeger	9	5	3
Parasitic Jaeger	11	1	-
Sabine's Gull	83	118	247
Arctic Tern	-	2	-
Common Murre	4633	1153	566
Cassin's Auklet	13	5	617
Rhinoceros Auklet	16	11	10
Tufted Puffin	2	-	-

Six trips have been tentatively scheduled for 1978 - April 29, May 13, July 29, September 16, October 21, and November 18. We are now taking bookings to all but the April 29 trip.

Michael G. Shepard
 Birds and Mammals Division
 British Columbia
 Provincial Museum
 Victoria, B.C., V8V 1X4.

EDITORIAL

What a pity that the General Meeting on Tuesday, November 8th, was so poorly attended, because the subject of "to spray or not to spray" the Spruce Budworm (only, it is the Douglas Fir Budworm in B.C. - the Spruce and Balsam Budworm in Eastern Canada) was concisely and fairly put before us by Dr. John Harris. It was interesting to see how helicopters were used in gathering data, even to hovering beside a tall tree, while the forester leaned out to detach branches to be examined later in the laboratories.

The DECEMBER 13TH General Meeting will have J.E. (Ted) Underhill speaking on "The Wildflowers of Western Australia", which should bring out the botanists - and others - in good numbers.

Harry Davidson STILL WANTS volunteers for the Count on Saturday, 17th December. Phone him at 479-1286. Remember to bring your \$1 with you.

The Islands Region of the Federation of B.C. Naturalists had a conference at Ganges on October 22nd, which was well attended by delegates from many of the islands and also from Up-Island. The Saltspring members provided a delicious and satisfying lunch, and thereafter business was gone through briskly and with energy and enthusiasm. Ecology and conservation were the main topics.

Plans were made to try and save the colony of rare Vancouver Island marmots from total extinction due to logging, and to protect the alpine meadows in which they live.

Is there nothing WE can do to save our parks and forests from the vandals on motor bicycles, and those who throw away or break bottles in the undergrowth? Even Francis Park is suffering (what would "Skipper" say?) This is YOUR property - when did you last take a walk through its beautiful forest, at present carpeted with golden maple leaves, and bright green with moss-covered rocks? Trails are well looked after and easy to walk on if you keep to the main ones.

TURKEY VULTURE REPORT

Between 6th and 27th September, many people reported sightings of Turkey Vultures to the Goodwills, but none again until 4 on 2nd October.

The two biggest numbers were (1) 50 on 27th, seen by Mary Lund, soaring in an easterly direction over Cedar Hill X Road, between Hillside Avenue and Mount Douglas, and (2) 71 also seen on 27th, this time by Rob McKenzie-Grieve. They were making for Discovery Island, where some circled over the Island and some rested on a dead tree.

It seems that the great majority of these birds migrate, but not all, as odd ones are seen throughout the year, and it is known that some at least nest in British Columbia as old nests have been found in Oliver, Harrison, Pender and Saltspring Islands, and in Comox, some with signs of recent activity.

TALE OF A DIPPER

by Alf Porcher

On Monday, 10th October, we were having lunch at East Sooke Park, about three miles from Pike Road entrance, when we saw what looked like a dipper at rest on a rock in the salt water.

It was difficult on account of the frontal view of the bird, and due to the fact that it was viewed in a small cove, to determine the length of its tail for definite identification.

It rested on the rock for a long period of time, and ten or more people had excellent views of its semaphore-like eyelids.

Eventually it turned broadside to us and we had a good view of the dipper-like tail.

Anyone else ever see a dipper on salt water?

OCTOBER BIRD SIGHTINGS

<u>No.</u>	<u>Species</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Area Seen</u>	<u>Observer</u>
1	Gadwall	1	Quick's Bottom	R. Satterfield
1	L/B Marsh Wren	1	" "	" "
1	Y/B Sapsucker	2	Schellenberg Pl.	Merle Harvey
3	Cedar Waxwings	2	" "	" "
4	Turkey Vultures	2	Rocky Point Rd.	David Knowles
1	Saw-whet Owl	2	Holland Ave.	Rick West
4	Barn Swallows	5	Esquimalt Lagoon	Ron and Joy Satterfield
1	Northern Shrike	5	2400 Arbutus Rd.	David Knowles
1	Western Gull	6	Vic. Golf Course	Peggie Goodwill
1	B/L Kittiwake	8	" " "	Leila Roberts
2	Am. Kestrels	8	Uplands Park	Bill Savale
1	Am. Bittern	11	Swan Lake	Grace Barkley
1	Rock Sandpiper	13	Clover Point	R. Satterfield
1	Franklin's Gull	17	McMicking Point	R. Satterfield
1	Varied Thrush	21	Munn's Road	Merle Harvey
				A.R. Davidson
1	Eur. Wigeon	22	Esquimalt Lagoon	Len Walton
1	Wht. Thr. Sparrow	25	4255 Dieppe Rd.	Norman Fatt
1	Rufous? Hummingbird	25	2043 Saseenos Rd.	M. van Maurik
1	Tropical Kingbird	26	1784 Island Hwy.	Neil Dane
1	Townsend Warbler	28	Prospect Lake	R. McK-Grieve
1	Les. Yellowlegs	29	Witty's Beach	R. Satterfield
				Vic. Goodwill
1	Goshawk	29	Becher Bay	R. Satterfield
				Vic. Goodwill
1	Snow Bunting	31	Cattle Point	Alf Porcher

AN OPEN LETTERTo The Victoria Natural History Society

Ever since Mr. Nehring's house and property on the West Saanich Road were left to the Society and were sold, giving to the Society capital funds which now amount to \$67,000, I have been hoping to hear that the money is to be put into a worthwhile project that would benefit the natural history of this region.

I cannot believe that Mr. Nehring meant his gift to be used to supplement the Society's current income, or for that matter, to assist the members at all. I like to think he left it to the Society because he knew we are a group committed to the preservation of our natural environment and hoped we would put our inheritance to good use in that direction.

We are a small society and are not activists on the conservation scene; nevertheless, I think we should make our presence felt by contributing a positive programme towards safeguarding the flora and fauna of the district.

What kind of a programme? There are a number of choices. I tend to feel that a continuing research project might be valuable. Could we, for instance, give a \$5,000 grant each year for work on endangered species - flora or fauna - or on an endangered area of Vancouver Island? Such grants should not be too difficult to set up and administer, with the Provincial Museum or University of Victoria to help us evaluate the applications and perhaps oversee the work. Anyway, that is one suggestion. I am sure there are a number that could be considered.

This letter is a plea to you all for some positive plan to be proposed and carried out for using constructively the money from the estate which Mr. Nehring entrusted to us - a plan with which he would be proud to have his name associated.

SIGNED Margaret Wainwright

November, 1977

A WHOOPING GROUSE?

By R.M. Stainforth

Checking through the mail after a lengthy vacation, my eye was caught by the September issue with its cover picture and verbal description of a Blue Grouse on Little Saanich. It brings back to mind an odd incident earlier this year on Radar Hill near Tofino, as follows:

Cars in the parking lot accounted for several groups of visitors, mostly far-travelled. As I walked to the hilltop, something was causing them to gather together, so I went to see what it was. The attraction was an unconcerned male grouse behaving just as did the one on Little Saanich, but furthermore emitting the resonant booming sound, so surprisingly loud relative to the size of these birds.

This distinctive sound led one tourist to announce in excitement: "It's a Whooping Crane!", and to my amazement, the cry was taken up on all sides as they watched the turkey-shaped fowl -- "What a rarity!" "Quick, take its picture!", "A migrating Whooping Crane!"

Within seconds, the excitement was over, as -- again like his Little Saanich cousin -- he flew into a fir tree and backed out of sight, though not out of earshot. I found it sobering to see a group of obviously nature-conscious people, who had made big efforts to reach this wilderness area, so abysmally ignorant on identification of birds. For my own part, I did know it was a grouse, but can't confidently say whether it was a Blue or a Spruce.

A Saanich resident has lost all her Brahmin ducks because a Bald Eagle kept having one after the other for his dinner. Not only ducks, but a Canada Goose sitting on her eggs was killed and eaten in spite of the irate farmer shooting into the air to try and frighten the eagle away.

There must be many more who have items of interest to share with their fellow members. Why not send them in to the "Naturalist"? Or phone the editor at 477-9634 with your news and views (after 6:00 p.m., please).

HERITAGE TREES AT ROYAL ROADS

Sunday, October 16th, turned out sunny and bright but cool. As we gathered at Royal Roads, the cadets band was tuning up, and then led the lads to their Service by the sea -- an unusual start to an outing.

Colin Wood, deputising for Michael Gye, led US around the grounds for three hours, in which we thoroughly enjoyed seeing the old trees in Fall colours, and also his informal descriptions, and answers to innumerable questions from the 33 members present.

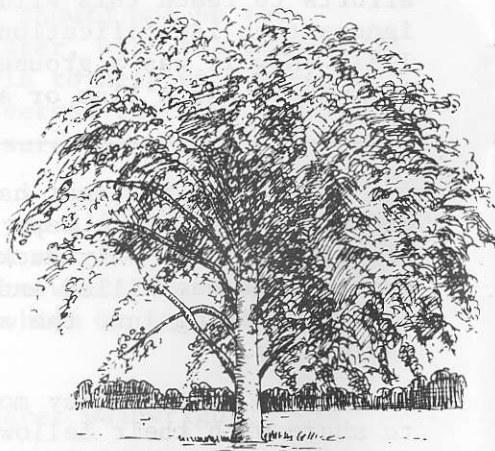
The height, girth, and symmetry of these lovely trees that have been left to Nature to form, were in marked contrast to the disfigured ones we see along the roads, with their hearts pruned out to allow free passage to Man's communications.

Some of the highlights were the maples - 8 varieties of these and about as many variations in colour; the English and columnar oaks; glorious beeches and chesnuts; weeping birch and ash; Umbrella and Parasol pines; and a variety of shrubs into the bargain, showy with scarlet and pink and black shining berries.

We finished up laden with leaves in every shape and colour, picked up from the ground.

We extend grateful thanks to Major Rose for the privilege of being able to go round the grounds in a leisurely way, and to Colin Wood for a very pleasant and instructive outing.

P.S. - Kinsman Gorge Park was omitted from the route unexpectedly at the last minute.



COLOUR ON A GREY DAY

Saturday, October 29th, was the Fungus Foray to Goldstream Park, when 35 people gathered round Dr. Al Funk to learn about mushrooms - edible, not so edible, and downright poisonous.

Not wishing to land up in hospital like the five youths recently, we brought our finds to be identified, and tried to remember those fungi that looked so alike but had such different results if eaten.

The variety of fungus was too numerous for us to list completely, but a selection was laid out on a picnic table and we were amazed by the beautiful array of colours - citrus yellow, rose pink, lilac, purple, orange, pure white, black, gold - and the variation in shapes and sizes, from the dinner-plate-sized *Clitocbe gigantea* to the minute scarlet-capped *Mycena adonis*.

Dr. Funk was untiring in identifying, and in answering questions, and finally produced a frypan and a small stove and cooked a few species (*Chanterelle*, *Shaggy-cap*, *Wood Blewett*, and a *Boletus*) so that we could each taste a morsel - a very popular innovation.

A very interested company gave Dr. Funk a very hearty note of thanks before we split up, some to head home, and some to continue the search for more specimens of that colorful and fascinating part of Nature - the Fungus.

P.S. - The fungus featured on the frontispiece was photographed at Francis Park last year, and not taken at Goldstream Park.

An interesting little magazine has come to our notice. Named the "Sea Otter", it appears to have the same aims as our own Society - to save wildlife habitat and to promote interest in the young generation, to put it briefly. Also to publicize what clubs and societies are doing in the sphere of Nature. This is a new venture, and we can do with all the publicity possible to save our beautiful world. So how about sending in your views on Nature to "Sea Otter"? Mailing address is P.O. Box 1749, Victoria, B.C., V8N 2Y1. Telephone (604) 383-1942. Cost is \$5.00 per year, or 50¢ copy.

ONE DAY IN THE FALL*By Jean McKinnis*

On Sunday, October 9th, 33 birders under Tim Murphy gathered at Beaver Lake Park. After a look at the tree reflections in the placid lake, and at a flock of Band-tailed Pigeons, we plunged into the woods with Tim up front.

Down by the lake shore, we watched a flock of 45 Canada Geese feeding along with Mallard and Wigeon. Noted also were Coots and a small Grebe among the dying lily pads. Going along the trail we spotted several Winter Wrens, then a Towhee and a Song Sparrow. In the trees were Pine Siskins, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Chickadees, Brown Creepers and a Red-breasted Nuthatch.

Across the lake, two Bald Eagles were settled on a tree, their white heads and tails easily seen. Two kingfishers hovered and dived, and Mew and Glaucous-winged Gulls were flying about. Later a Redtailed, a Sharpshin, and a Cooper's Hawks were sighted (it seemed it was a good hunting day), and we heard and saw several flickers and a Pileated Woodpecker.

At Elk Lake Park, a flock of Evening Grosbeaks flew over, and later, a Greater Yellowlegs, repeating his "three note beeps", made us look up to see him fly over our heads.

It is always a thrill to see small animals, so we were glad to notice two brown squirrels and a bright green Tree Frog on the return journey.

We were walking faster now - hungry, I think! - when high on a tree we spied a medium-sized bird, that puzzled us at first, but on getting closer, proved to be a Kestrel. This made 30 species seen in the Beaver Lake area.

After lunch, about half the group proceeded on to Quick's Bottom where we checked up 18 species. Golden-crowned and House Sparrows, Goldfinches and House Finches, a Fox and a Song Sparrow, more Winter Wrens and another Towhee, Green-winged Teal, a Great Blue Heron and three Common Snipe. Red-winged Blackbirds, a flock of Starlings and some Quail came flying in. A vocal crow chased away a Red-tailed hawk from the pond, while flocks of robins seemed to be serious about migrating although taking some time to feed on the hawthorn berries.

DECEMBER ACTIVITIES

A little Pectoral Sandpiper was limping along the shoreline as he twisted about feeding. Could it have been the one seen and photographed by the Tuesday Group ten days previously? If so, they will be pleased to know that it survived.

As we "packed it up" for the day, we found the list total was 42 species seen as we enjoyed this lovely Fall day.

LUNCH HOUR AT OAK BAY MARINA*by A.R. Davidson*

The waters around Oak Bay were marked during the last few days of October and the beginning of November by large flocks of Brandt Cormorants. They were everywhere from Ten Mile Point to the Golf Course, and some of the rocky islands were chock-a-block with them. They could be seen flying low over the water about two feet apart in long lines. It would appear that they were following a large shoal of small fish, which also attracted many terns and Bonaparte's Gulls, and they were diving constantly.

Apparently this shoal of fish also attracted the salmon, as the last time we had lunch in the car at the Oak Bay Marina, the men fishing from the breakwater below us caught six good-sized salmon maybe four to six pounds in less than an hour.

There were other things that caught our attention; three seals came to the breakwater to join in the sport, and many other seabirds, including Heermann's Gulls, Murres, Marbled Murrelets, Grebe and Wigeon, although the latter don't eat fish. We estimated the cormorants numbered about two thousand, but we could not possibly count them.

Certainly having lunch in the car by the open sea is eminently preferable to having it in the kitchen!

DECEMBER ACTIVITIESTUES. DEC. 13

GENERAL MEETING. - 8:00 p.m., Newcombe Auditorium. Speaker: J.E. (Ted) Underhill, on "Wildflowers of Western Australia".

SAT. DEC. 17

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT ... VOLUNTEERS STILL NEEDED.
Phone Harry Davidson - 479-1286.

JUNIORSWED. DEC. 7

Room 112, Provincial Museum.
"Glaciers", with Tom Ovanin.

WED. DEC. 14

Room 112, Provincial Museum.
Nature Photography, with Bob Turner.

SAT. DEC. 17

Meet Mayfair Lanes, 1:30 p.m.
FIELD TRIP. Details later.

WED. JAN. 4

Room 112, Provincial Museum.
Mammals.

SAT. JAN. 7

Meet Mayfair Lanes, 1:30 p.m.
FIELD TRIP. Details later.

NO AUDUBON FILMS IN DECEMBER. The next one will be January 13th and 14th, at 8:00 P.M. in the Newcombe Auditorium as usual. Jeffrey Boswall's film on "Wildlife Safari to Ethiopia" was the outcome of a six-months' journey, and earned him a gold medal from the Emperor Haile Selassie, for his services to the Ethiopian people.

SOOKE CAMP FOR JUNIORS

by Susan Johnson (aged 9)

At 4:30 we left the parking lot with all our gear and headed for Tugwell Creek in Sooke. After the long drive, we arrived at a small cabin by the creek. We unpacked our belongings and started to explore.

We had dinner, and played a game of "Sardines" until dark, then we had our campfire. At campfire, we learned many new songs. Just before going to bed, we had "Mug-up". After what seemed hours later, talking stopped and everyone fell asleep.

After breakfast the next morning, we were divided into three groups. We made our own lunch and headed down the creek to the beach. Along the way we picked up flowers, fungi and other interesting things. We ate our lunch on the beach and headed back to camp. From there, we drove to Fossil Beach, where we had a Scavenger Hunt. When we got back to camp, we were told to get a song and skit ready for campfire. For dinner we had spaghetti, and cake for dessert. Before campfire, we had a Treasure Hunt, then we made some delicious blackberry ice cream. At campfire we did our songs and skits, then had "Mug-up" and went to bed.

The next morning we got up and had our French toast, packed, and started a walk up the creek towards a log dam. Before long it started to rain but we kept on going. We saw many interesting plants on the way, and when we reached the dam we found a few large fungi.

We arrived back at camp in time for lunch. After everything was packed and ready to go, we said goodbye and left for home. We all enjoyed camp, and wish we could have more.