



The VICTORIA NATURALIST

PUBLISHED BY THE
VICTORIA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY
VICTORIA, B.C.

ISSN 0049-612X

VOL. 38, NO. 5
MAY-JUNE, 1982

VICTORIA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 1747, Victoria, B.C. V8W 2Y1

HONORARY LIFE MEMBERS

Albert R. Davidson - Miss E.K. Lemon - Mrs. L.E. Chambers - E.E. Bridgen
Mrs. H.W.S. Soulsby - A. Douglas Turnbull - Mrs. Peggy Goodwill - Vic Goodwill

OFFICERS & DIRECTORS 1981-1982

Pres: Mrs. Mary Lou Florian, 387-5552 - Vice-Pres: Giff Calvert, 479-4593
Past Pres: A. Douglas Turnbull, 592-6025 - Treas: Arthur B. Durkee, 388-6077
Secretary: Mrs. Alice Elston, 592-1400

Harry Davidson, 479-1286 - Mrs. Anne Knowles, 477-3684 - Wilford Medd, 658-5892
Miss Mary L. Richmond, 385-0504 - Michael G. Shepard, 658-5850
Charles A. Trotter, 477-4365 - Ray Williams, 478-8980

ACTIVITY	CHAIRMAN	TELEPHONE
Audubon	Miss Anne Adamson	598-1623
Botany	Dr. Bob Ogilvie	658-8937
Conservation	Wilford Medd	658-5829
Editor (Naturalist)	Marjorie E. Elston	598-6367
Entomology	Brian Ainscough	478-8959
F.B.C.N.	A. Douglas Turnbull	592-6025
Finance	Arthur B. Durkee	388-6077
Friends of Museum	Mrs. Greta Hutchings	477-1964
Junior Naturalists	Mrs. Margaret Wainwright	592-1310
Librarian	A.R. Davidson	598-3088
Magazine Distribution	Norman & Peggy Johnstone	479-3498
Marine Biology	Dr. Alex Peden	652-3598
Membership	Ed Coffin	592-0964
Ornithology (Field Trips)	Michael G. Shepard	658-5850
Ornithology (Field Notes)	Mrs. Peggy Goodwill	478-9715
Programme	Charles A. Trotter	477-4365
Publications	Michael G. Shepard	658-5850
Scholarships	A. Douglas Turnbull	592-6025
Swan Lake—Freeman King	Giff Calvert	479-4593

Annual Dues — including "The Victoria Naturalist" - Juniors: \$2.50 - Regular: \$10.00
Golden Age: \$9.00 - Family: \$14.00 - Sustaining: \$30.00

Financial Year — May 1st to April 30th
Members joining Jan. 1st to April 30th - half dues

RARE BIRD ALERT - 478-8534

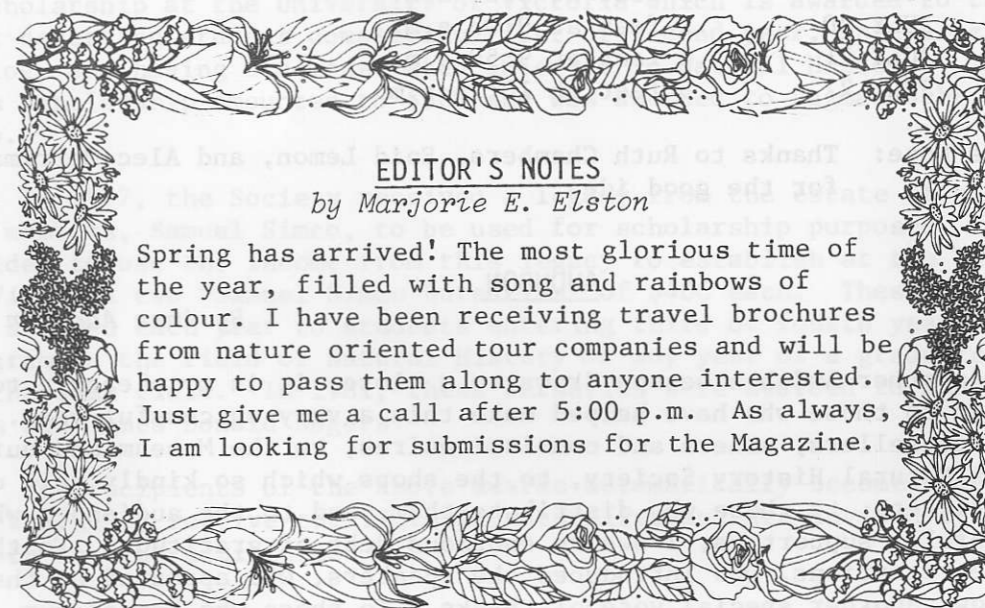
COVER

DUNLIN IN WINTER PLUMAGE, A WATERCOLOUR

by Mark Nyhof

Mark will be having a display and sale of his lovely paintings from May 21 to June 4, 1982 at the Battersby-Love Gallery of Fine Arts Ltd., 1211 Wharf Street, Victoria - Phone: 383-6662.

Anyone who would like to attend the preview on Thursday, May 20th from 5:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. can phone the Gallery for an invitation. Regular gallery hours are from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.



EDITOR'S NOTES

by Marjorie E. Elston

Spring has arrived! The most glorious time of the year, filled with song and rainbows of colour. I have been receiving travel brochures from nature oriented tour companies and will be happy to pass them along to anyone interested. Just give me a call after 5:00 p.m. As always, I am looking for submissions for the Magazine.

LOW TIDES*By Enid Lemon*

June always brings low, low tides and here are a few tips before you go. Always get to your destination two hours before the low tide so you can follow it out as it recedes, and allows more time for exploring the pools, etc.

Remember to always put back the rocks as you found them, to protect the creatures who live under the rocks. Also "a third leg" in the shape of a stout stick is a must. Rocks are hard to land on.

JUNE 20	.7 feet at 8:30 a.m. DST
JUNE 21	.1 feet at 9:25 a.m.
JUNE 22	.2 feet at 10:10 a.m.
JUNE 23	Zero feet at 10:45 a.m.
JUNE 24	.4 feet at 11:40 a.m.
JULY 18	1.2 feet at 7:35 a.m.
JULY 19	.5 feet at 8:25 a.m.
JULY 20	.2 feet at 9:05 a.m.
JULY 21	.2 feet at 9:50 a.m.
JULY 22	.5 feet at 10:25 a.m.

Editor's Note: Thanks to Ruth Chambers, Enid Lemon, and Alec Merriman for the good idea.

AUDUBON*By Anne Adamson*

As another Audubon season draws to a close, it is my pleasure to say thank you to those who have helped make this a very successful year. To the ticket sellers, ushers and commissionaires, to the Museum and our own Victoria Natural History Society, to the shops which so kindly sell our season tickets, to those who distribute them, and to the audiences who so faithfully support us, I owe an enormous debt of gratitude. To those who gave receptions, who introduced the speakers, who appeared on the TV Noon Show, another special vote of thanks. To those who housed our speakers and took care of their needs, I give more kudos. To my faithful and long-suffering assistant Alice Elston, a very humble sense of gratitude.

As you can see, this is not a one-man (person) job but one that is all-encompassing and which includes many friends. To one and all, I say thank you, and please, will you help again next season?

SCHOLARSHIPS AND BURSARIES SUPPORTED BYTHE VICTORIA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY*by Douglas Turnbull*

In these days of the high and increasing cost of university education, our members may be interested in the scholarships and bursaries which are supported at the University of Victoria by the V.N.H.S. and some of the other societies with which our members are associated.

In general, these awards are open to students at the University of Victoria in the regular winter session and selection of recipients is made by the Senate Committee on Awards upon the recommendation of the faculty of the department involved.

Scholarships are awarded on the basis of scholastic excellence while in the case of bursaries, the element of financial need is considered along with scholastic performance.

For many years, the Victoria Natural History Society has provided a scholarship at the University of Victoria which is awarded to the most deserving student completing first or second year, specializing in Biology and having a demonstrated interest in Natural History. In 1981, this scholarship amounted to \$300 and was awarded to Dagmar Gabrielle Popp.

In 1977, the Society received a legacy from the estate of one of our members, Samuel Simco, to be used for scholarship purposes. It was decided to use the income from this legacy to establish at the University of Victoria two "Samuel Simco Bursaries" of \$400 each. These bursaries are awarded each year to students entering third or fourth year in any program in the field of Natural History or any year of a graduate program in the same field. In 1981, these bursaries were awarded to Annamarie Koch and James Donald Rogers.

The recipients of the above awards automatically become members of the V.N.H.S., receive the Victoria Naturalist and are invited to participate in club activities.

It is of interest that our members have assisted in the establishment of other student awards at the University of Victoria by associated societies.

The G. Clifford Carl Memorial Bursary was set up by the Friends of the Provincial Museum using funds from many friends of Dr. Carl. It is

awarded to a deserving student entering third, fourth, or fifth year in the Faculty of Education and specializing in the Biological Sciences or Outdoor Education. In 1981 this award was made to Gordon Leslie Waterous and amounted to \$550.

The Freeman F. King Scholarship was established by friends of Freeman King and is awarded to a student entering third or fourth year, preferably the latter, and preparing for a career in Natural History, considered in a broad demonstrated interest in field studies, especially in biology. In 1981 this award was made to James Donald Rogers and amounted to \$650.

The Thetis Park Nature Sanctuary Association Scholarship is an award of \$500 made annually to an undergraduate with high standing whose main interest is in plant taxonomy. In 1981, this award was made to Annamarie Koch.

I am sure that all our members will agree that the resources made available to our program of scholarships and bursaries are well used.

SANCTUARIES, PARKS, AND SUCH

by Wilf Medd

One often hears it said that some certain place ought to be made a sanctuary so that it can be given proper protection. But what - legally - does this imply? First, any level of government can pass some sort of bill or resolution stating that henceforth a specified area shall be designated a sanctuary (bird, flower, fish, whatever, or just plain, sanctuary). Then it is a sanctuary.

What good does that do? Well, the place becomes recognized. It's established. Further protective regulations could be passed. But I am not sure how much permanent protection goes along with this. At the municipal level, a simple vote of council at any particular meeting - without any prior notification or public involvement - could designate a sanctuary as henceforth not a sanctuary any longer. (So I have been told.)

The best protection is to also get the place incorporated as a municipal park under the appropriate by-laws: a reservation by-law, and a further zoning by-law which permits the land to be used only as a park. Then no change can be made without the council first notifying the public, and advertising a meeting to which the public is invited to come and give their views on the matter. Further, any change would require a two-thirds majority vote of council, and the permission of the Minister of Municipal Affairs. This is surely good protection. Once a park, it is very unlikely

that anyone would try to get rid of it, but even so it would be difficult. Not impossible of course, but assuming some public concern, very difficult.

The only thing is that a park may be used for all sorts of activities - football, family picnics, playgrounds, training dogs, what have you. Which is fine if that is what you want. But if it is to be kept as a nature sanctuary, it should now be so specified in some way, if it hasn't been done so already, perhaps even by a further by-law.

This is municipal. Not that we are criticizing our provincial parks, but if the land in question is the property of the municipal government, there is no point in trying to go to the provincial level. Indeed there would be less protection. At the provincial level, land may be swapped for one purpose or another without informing the public. (We do not, of course, exclude the ecological reserve system, which is provincial. In certain cases, that could be the route to go.)

All this sort of business is sometimes loosely referred to as "dedication", but legally dedication is incurred upon the disposition and development of private property. A good thing, I believe, but not too likely to concern the Natural History Society.

I think I have got all this stuff correct, but in any case my (second-hand) information on the subject is now exhausted.

PROPOSED BOTANY AND BIRDING WEEKEND

to Mt. Washington on Saturday, July 31; Sunday, August 1st; and Monday, August 2nd.

Motel accommodation is available in Courtenay or camping space on the Mountain (the proprietor of the Ski Lodge will let you sleep on the floor of the Lodge if you have your own sleeping bag). The Lodge will be open for drinks only.

If interested, get on the list by phoning:

SHARON GODKIN 384-9978

by July 15th

Contact Sharon for details about this exciting outing.

A QUESTION FOR HAROLD

by Elizabeth North

The article in the weekend "Islander", February 28th - "Seagull Watching" - prompts me to put another question to Mr. Hosford. The Law of Nature I can understand regarding the weak seagull whose parents 'executed' it to put the poor thing out of its misery.

But an incident we witnessed at Esquimalt Lagoon on Saturday (on our return journey from Witty's) did not to us seem to have such excuse for the lamentable cruelty on the part of two mute swans molesting a cygnet. When we arrived on the scene, they seemed close to achieving their end of extinguishing life from the defenceless cygnet, one swan squatting bodily over it (we were quite sure it was not with amorous intent!) while they both took turns at beating it with their beaks, plucking viciously at its head and neck. They would surely have killed it had Charlie Trotter not intervened and prodded the swan on top with his foot till they both reluctantly took off, leaving the cygnet apparently quite dead on the bank.

Here Jean McInnes took over and lifting the cygnet bodily, coaxed it back into action and in a surprisingly short time, it made its way back to the water and sailed away to join his friends further up the Lagoon as though nothing had happened. The adult swans seemed for a moment as if they would pursue him but the cygnet managed to out-swim them and we were happy to see him re-united with, we hoped, his family.

This is the second time I've seen this behaviour with swans, the first was with three adults and in this case the incident took place in the sea. They seemed to all intents and purposes two of them trying to drown the third, though they eventually released it. An old sailor amongst the spectators suggested it was probably a 'widow' swan trying to re-establish herself in a new territory; if so, she was left in no doubt that she was not welcome.

I was also an unwilling spectator of another incident off-shore Dallas Road a few weeks ago which ended in tragedy. This time the villain was a Glaucous Wing Gull and the victim a female Bufflehead.

At first, I thought the gull was struggling with a fish as it kept rearing up and landing on top of this object; then I saw a little spotted head which I recognized as a female Bufflehead appearing and re-appearing as she dived and surfaced in an attempt to get away. I stood helpless on the shore while this skirmish went on. I was too far away to effectively try to break it up by throwing pebbles - then finally, no more Bufflehead - only a few feathers floating on top of the water while the gull casually turned tail and made off in another direction. What was his beef with the smaller bird - surely he didn't want it for food? Just malicious sport? Any comment, Harold?

BIRD WATCHING

by Harold Hosford

On the last day of February - even on the west coast of Canada - one does not look for Killdeer's nests. And yet, when two of these little upland plovers began acting suspicious, on the apron of a parking lot behind a vegetable stand on Island View Road, a nest was the first thing that came to mind. Well, with my car as a blind, it didn't take long to eliminate a nest from the possible reasons for their surreptitious approach to life. They may have had ideas but they certainly didn't have a nest.

On the other hand, both birds seemed to have a bad case of the nervous jitters, a case which manifested itself in a peculiar movement of their legs and feet. After watching them for some time, and noting that both did it and that both feet were "afflicted", I came to the conclusion that what I was seeing was something that couldn't be dismissed as "nerves".

The action is not easy to describe, but if you can picture someone with two sore feet, reluctant to put either of them to the ground, and, kind of, tentatively tapping the ground with the raised foot before putting it down, you'll have a pretty good idea of what I was seeing.

So, what was I seeing?

Well, it's just a guess, but the way I see it the birds were "puddling". Puddling is that behaviour, most frequently seen in gulls feeding in shallow water, where the birds rapidly raise and lower each foot alternately, stirring up the bottom and thereby exposing the tiny animals that live there. The object, of course, being food.

As for the Killdeers, on a packed, dry, gravel surface, "puddling" wouldn't be very productive. On the other hand, when you've just spent some time "puddling" along the water's edge, in a flooded field, maybe it's hard to shake the habit.

--- just something I saw while Watching birds.



ESQUIMALT LAGOON AND FORT RODD HILL

January 23, 1982

By Ed Coffin

One's normal reaction upon observing this sodden Saturday morning was to stay home. Nevertheless, Ron Satterfield and seven fearless followers donned diving gear and plunged in.

At Esquimalt Lagoon, before the weather deteriorated from heavy rain to much worse, the sightings were surprisingly good. An unusually large gathering of great blue herons -- eight or ten; large rafts of common goldeneye, white-winged scoters, and scaup on the Lagoon, and a hundred or more western grebe on the ocean side; good numbers of American coots; a couple of large mixed flocks of black-bellied plovers and dunlins; interesting sightings of belted kingfishers, killdeer, buffleheads, surf scoters, red-breasted mergansers, common snipe, horned grebes, black turnstones, common loons and juncos. Also cormorants -- pelagic to seaward, double-crested on the Lagoon -- and the resident mute swans.

The highlight, however, was a raptor garbed in an almost perfect costume of a Swainson's hawk -- dark collar, white breast and belly -- but with the massive bill and lofty, prolonged perch of an eagle. This was a real puzzler.

Soon thereafter all binoculars and telescopes became thoroughly misted, and birding at Fort Rodd Hill necessitated unaided peering through the torrents. Even so, it was possible to discern clearly a brown creeper, a red-breasted nuthatch, and several chestnut-backed chickadees, as well as some handsome old-squaw offshore.

The staff at Fort Rodd very hospitably provided the birders with the use of their lunch room.

Although the species list totalled only about 35, the concentrations of several were quite abnormal, possibly because of the deluge, and the outing was highly rewarding.

GARDEN ADVENTURES - AND MISADVENTURES

by Yorke Edwards

An after-dinner speech to The Victoria Natural History Society, at the Faculty Club, University of Victoria, February 9, 1982.

It was in March, 1965, that I last talked to you about gardens, and since many of you will remember that occasion, I hesitated to speak of gardens again. I was thorough, as some will never forget. But for those

new faces among us from "have-not parts of Canada", I will quickly comment on that previous paper.* It was called Confessions of a Lazy Gardener, and the theme was that I have very little time or sympathy for fussy gardening, since I spend most of my time in the garden admiring the tall grass and healthy weeds; or trying to see birds and things in the tangles of wild roses and thorn bushes; or studying the snakes, slugs, beetles, butterflies, wood bugs, raccoons, house mice, robins, snails, quails, crows, lichens and many wild grasses - to name a few of the distractions.

I might add that after you heard that paper, it continued on into a short but eventful career. I gave it again as a speech one hurried noon-hour to a local service club - at lunch - and it began badly right after the chairman informed me that time was short - so sorry - and he could give me a whole ten minutes of it. It ended with the entire audience quite stunned from not understanding a word of my instant synopsis. Since none seemed to be either gardeners or naturalists, perhaps they would have had trouble anyway.

Later it was published in a Vancouver magazine of the time called Western Homes and Living - which failed financially shortly after, never to be seen again. Rumour has it that West Vancouver gardeners stormed its offices waving dandelions and August flowers, and persuaded the magazine staff to look for less destructive employment.

This should have warned me, but I ignored the ominous danger signs. In my innocence, I was even flattered when a local garden club asked for the speech. They understood alright. And looking back, it was a bit like giving a church sermon on the joys of sinning. One determined lady said during the question period that if I lived near her house, she would have the police after me. In a way, this saved the day - partly - for a feature of their meetings was to exchange plants, and I came away loaded with plants that they gave me - for which I was uncertain whether they were trying to convert me, or buying me off in their embarrassment over their outspoken lady. At least I had warned them. They knew that giving plants to me was probably the end of the plants.

It was all rather fantastic. The plants they gave to one another were mostly unusual, hard-to-grow things for part of the point of it all was to show off your gardening successes with plants not suited to the region. And they gave these tender things to me right after my speech revealing that, in my garden, it was the survival of the fittest, in which weeds were often the winners. So they knew the result as well as I did. My black thumb prevailed. They all died.

* for those of you wondering, "have-not parts of Canada" are those that have-not snowdrops in January, have-not Song Sparrows singing in February, have-not a rich sea at their doorstep, and have-not mountains to prevent them thinking that people are big and important.

So you see - not all my garden adventures have been in the garden.

Most naturalists, if they have had gardens, have had garden adventures. But I have specialized in gardens - not gardening mind you - but in enjoying the life that gardens contain. And the more native life there, the better, and the more wild native life, the better still.

As a young man, my idea of being a naturalist was to run, not walk, all day from special place to special place, seeing much, but missing most of what was to be seen. This also gave little time to understand what I saw. When I settled down to jobs and family, my work took me many times a year to very special places. (Can you believe it? For 21 years governments paid me to be a naturalist. I often felt quite guilty, feeling maybe I should be paying them on payday.) These special places were in the wild corners of British Columbia, and later in a number of wild places across Canada.

So when I came home from those distant adventures, I wanted just to be a naturalist where I was, whether as I waited for the light at Fort and Government, or while walking with the dog, or when at home. And so in Victoria, and later in Ottawa, when I was in town, most of my adventures were in the garden - and at times even with wild creatures in the house. But the house guests are another story.

My special distant places when I lived in Victoria were with the ptarmigan and alpine larch on Frosty Mountain in Manning Park, or with the moose calves on the Murtle River Flats in Wells Gray Park, or with the big Richardson's voles high in Garibaldi Park. Later, when living in Ottawa, my specials were the gannet cliffs on Newfoundland's Cape St. Mary, and the prairie paradise black with birds at Saskatchewan's Last Mountain Lake, and with the Sharp-tailed Sparrows in Nova Scotia's Tantramar Marshes. When I came home, the details of a small place were what I wanted. I needed home and garden. Consequently I still know little about local special places like Witty's Lagoon, the Royal Roads sand spit, Quick's Bottom and so on about Victoria, or Mer Bleu bog and other places near Ottawa.

So my work programmed me to really look at the garden. In fact it programmed me to be a naturalist everywhere, even at the office. (For instance, I once learned much about Kestrels (or Sparrow Hawks) from an office window 12 stories above downtown Ottawa). I recommend it. Be a naturalist always, not just when you put on your boots to visit a special place. Where you are is special too.

Our first house was on Windsor Road, a white shingled cottage in an orchard, surrounded by many trees, and partly hidden in front of a dense wall of Port Orford Cedars.

That house will always be our best house. The lawn was partly daffodils gone wild, and New Year's dinners featured a centrepiece of home grown snowdrops. A wren in residence sang through the year. Varied Thrushes and Robins enlivened the winters. A few stone piles were the secret of having little reddish garter snakes in summer.

It was here that we became hopelessly addicted to Gravenstein apples. There was this one tree, close to a corner of the house, a tree that was ugly, and rotting, and half dead, and early each fall it produced such wonderful apples that, ever since we were mad enough to sell that property, we devote most of a month each autumn to finding people who will sell us a few gravensteins.

The old tree always seemed to be dying. In 1954 I worried over it, and for 12 years more. But if it was dying, it never got around to it - hasn't even yet, the last time I looked - and perhaps this was because that half dead tree was the "alivest" thing for miles. That tree was home to wood bugs, mildews, chickadees, pill bugs, aphids, robins, beetles and bugs and moths and butterflies, downy woodpeckers, apple scab, earwigs and many more, and it was visited by passing birds in all seasons. That tree taught me more about natural history than possibly any other single living thing through a lifetime of being with wild things. It is my most memorable ecological experience.

I talked about it once, gave a speech, at a naturalists dinner in London, Ontario. Most of my writing and public speaking in those days was about moose, and caribou, and rare birds in wild places. But people seem more willing to understand apple trees. For years after that speech, whenever I moved in naturalists' circles in southern Ontario, I was asked about the apple tree, and a knock on our Windsor Road door was once the announcement of people come from London, Ontario, at long last they said, to see the tree, and to take home a picture to show friends.

My most memorable adventure, and perhaps 20 feet from our city house.

Our next house was in suburban Ottawa, brand new developer's wasteland without a tree for half a mile, and the property deep in cement-like marine clay from an Ice Age invasion of the sea up the St. Lawrence and Ottawa valleys. It was interesting, but mainly because we touched on open fields that were protected as Greenbelt, and there we had woodchucks and cottontails, Purple Martins and Bobolinks, assassin bugs and a host of wonderful field weeds. Winter was snow drifts yards deep, numbing cold to 30° below (F), and Evening Grosbeaks on the window sill a few inches from our noses.

But mostly wild things were scarce. Unable to stand the bleak nakedness, we spent a fortune to have red maple, a big one, planted in the garden, and this instant tree got us the first bird songs of spring from a Red-winged Blackbird. Never a dull moment, really, but somehow it was all so impoverished after our being spoiled by Victoria. There was garden adventure, many adventures in fact, but there was much more wildness in the people. Payton Place really does exist.

We went to Ottawa planning to return to Victoria in five years. Then, one early summer afternoon, I knew it was time to go, for I suddenly realized that over five years I could not remember seeing one honey bee in our garden. I watched, and drove to other places to watch. Not one. So up went the "For Sale" sign.

Our third house, the second in Victoria, was a small coach house at the end of Rockland Place, next to Government House property, which is an oasis of wildness in built-up city. It had far views across the Fairfield flats below, to the sea, and to the Olympics. Here was a secluded garden with a clump of forest - mainly native maple and fir - and distinguished by two huge redwoods. It was there I had my second biggest garden adventure in wildlife ecology. And it was very like a wilderness adventure I had 35 years before near Lake Nipigon, north of Lake Superior.

In 1945, the Ontario Government had a new and very powerful weapon called DDT, and it decided to test the new chemical death on a spruce budworm outbreak killing spruce and balsam in the forests on the Black Sturgeon watershed. It was all experimental then, and a professor from Illinois was hired to study the effects of DDT on forest birds. He was the now renowned ornithologist Dr. Charles Kendeigh, and I (a seasoned young birder - or so others thought - and a first year forestry student) was asked to help him. As it turned out, I was used mainly as a surveying assistant, carrying the end of a surveyor's chain in impossibly straight lines through the thick forest. As for knowing the birds, the professor and I were both in unknown country, alive with birds familiar only as migrants. But we pooled what we knew, and his study broke new ground.

He found that a number of bird species were nesting in unbelievable densities amid that super-abundant food supply of juicy caterpillars. The three species most numerous as nesters were three warblers, Cape Mays, Tennessees, and Bay-breasteds. Everywhere the abundance of birds and the uproar of songs and their activity dominated the forest, and later the decrease in bird numbers after spraying with DDT was so impressive that ever after I have tried to avoid using poisons of all kinds in my gardens. I have vivid memories of birds with violent tremors dying slowly from DDT poisoning. Disturbing memories; we lightly called their fatal tremblings the DDT's.

This great swarm of warblers - and others, hugely increased in numbers at a hugely increased food supply of prey species, remained my major personal experience of observing how populations behave, and of what makes animals numerous. But I was to have another such experience. The winter moth came to Victoria - and to Rockland Place - and I had a second good example, this time an urban example rather than one in the wild north woods, an example right in my own garden.

Fortunately, we lived several years at Rockland Place before the winter moth took over, so in those years I saw the more normal condition to compare later with the lively years when the trees in spring were swarming with caterpillars. I had no time for detailed research, but a large increase in spring birds - easily observed eating larvae - was obvious from short watching periods, and from my being observant as a gardener and odd job naturalist. I must add that I did not spray my trees, but did very carefully spray a few small shrubs beneath, and a few low branches of trees, as an experiment.

My big-leaved maples and a big Oregon ash were almost completely defoliated; while many trees and ornamental plums were full of larvae but seemed to retain much foliage. In the maples on a quiet morning, the droppings from thousands of larvae above fell like rain, into my hair, and pattered gently and constantly on the old leaves on the ground below. The tiny black pellets could be swept into heaps on the paved driveway, like black sand.

The bird response to this bonanza was dramatic; 1978 was the first, and most impressive, year. I had seen, in the car lights, little blizzards of flying moths on warm wet evenings the previous November as I drove through the trees. These were males flying in search of the wingless females. The results began the following April, and it all peaked about mid-May, when my white car was going black with the droppings, and the driveway - and my car - were splattered white in dozens of places with bird droppings. On May 6th, I wrote "the world is full of worms", and on May 22, I noted that there were 4 to 6 times the birds about as compared to previous years.

The birds were eating worms, even the quail, the crows, the band-tailed pigeons, the downy woodpeckers, in all about 14 species. Common species, like starlings and robins, were constant feeders. The robins were nesting almost everywhere, and had obviously greatly increased as a nesting population. Their high territorial density resulted in almost constant robin fights about the property.

The real surprise was the dramatic increase in abundance of the nomadic finches. Red Crossbills came in flocks of up to 100. Evening Grosbeaks were constantly present, and Pine Siskins were often common. None of these three bothered much to visit before.

I will spare you more detail. But it was really an exciting experience, an adventure that lasted well into June, and even after as I watched the trees trying to recover from the loss of their food factories - with variable success.

There have been other garden adventures, perhaps to be told another time, adventures with house mice, a starling, a raccoon family, slugs, snakes, a small blizzard of dragonflies, hawks, black rats, termites, and a flicker tipsy on fallen fruit. But the few examples I have given will illustrate my point that being a naturalist should be a way of enjoying all days, everywhere. When I put on outdoor clothes to naturalize in special places, I try to avoid having to put on the "being a naturalist" too, as if it were another coat to put on for the occasion. I am a naturalist already. There are fascinating things to see, and adventures too, in our gardens, in the street, on downtown sidewalks, even in our houses. This is one reason why I prefer old houses - for the life in them that shares the house with me.

We now live in yet another house, easily the liveliest house we have lived in yet. More adventures; lots of excuses to be a lazy gardener; and endless rewards for being a naturalist everywhere, all the time.

BIRD OBSERVATIONS

FEBRUARY

No.	Species	Date	Area	Observer
1	Barn Owl	5	Belmont Building	Hank Vander Pol
1	Lesser Yellowlegs	6	Blue Heron Basin	Keith Taylor
1	White Gyrfalcon	6	Martindale Flats	Alice Elston
1	American Bittern	8	Swan Lake	Ron Satterfield
1	Black-billed Magpie	10	Cedar Hill Golf Course	Marjorie Elston
1	Townsend's Solitaire	11	Mount Tolmie	Dave Fraser
1	Swamp Sparrow	13	2452 Camelot Road	Jo MacGregor
1	Glaucous Gull	20	Goldstream River	Ray Williams
1	Eurasian Green-winged Teal	27	King's Pond	Ray Williams
1	Goshawk	27	Metchosin Lagoon	V.N.H.S. Field Trip
1	Redhead	28	Martindale 'L' Reservoir	Alan MacLeod

MARCH

1	Gray Jay	13	Tugwell Lake	Ray Williams
1	Yellow-billed Loon	14	French Beach	Keith Taylor
1	Barred Owl	14	Piedmont Drive	Michael Shepard
1	Horned Lark	14	McHugh Road	Michael Shepard
1	Hutton's Vireo	19	Piedmont Drive	Michael Shepard
6	Red Crossbills	25	Ross Bay Cemetery	Ron Satterfield
1	White-throated Sparrow	30	Penrhyn Street	M. & R. Mackenzie-Grieve

JUNIOR NATURALIST PROGRAMME -- APRIL-JUNE, 1982

APRIL 3

Hike from Rocky Point Rd. to Pearson College and the point beyond it. Meet at Matheson Lake turnoff on Rocky Point Rd. at 10:00 A.M. Bring lunch.

APRIL 17

To Cowichan and Gordon Rivers to see the pink lilies and the spring woods. Meet at Skutz Falls fish ladders at 10:30 A.M. Take the Cowichan Lake Road just north of Duncan and watch for the Skutz Falls signpost. Bring lunch.

MAY 1

Hike and birding at Wittys Lagoon and Beach. Meet at Wittys Regional Park parking lot off Metchosin Rd. at 10:00 A.M. Bring lunch and binoculars if you have them.

MAY 15

Orienteering (while you still remember how!) and cook-out at John Dean Park. Hear the legend of Whale Rock. Leaders: Janet & Dave Renfroe. Bring your compasses and, with your lunch, a hamburger wrapped first in tinfoil, then in wet newspaper and again in tinfoil. Throw in a couple of small potatoes too, to roast. 10:00 A.M. - 2:00 P.M. Meet at John Dean parking lot at the top of the hill, off the East Saanich Rd.

JUNE 5

Fun & games that will bring you close to the natural world. Meet at different part of Wittys Regional Park. Turn off Metchosin Rd. on to Duke Rd. and off it on to Olympic View Rd. to the parking lot. Bring a pencil and a magnifying glass if you have one. Also lunch. 10:00 A.M. - 1:00 P.M.

JUNE 20

Sunday. Marine biology trip to Botanical Beach near Port Renfrew, to take advantage of the low, low tide and the spectacular intertidal life. The lowest tide of .7 is at 7:30 A.M., so get there as early as possible. It is a drive of approximately 2 hours to Port Renfrew. Follow the sign for Botanical Beach opposite the road down to the wharf at Port Renfrew. Drive as far as you can, bearing left at the end. Watch out for my van. Walk down the path to the beach. A good plan would be to camp at French Creek Prov. Park the night before.

PARENTS: If you need help with transportation for your child, please phone me or Marilyn well before the programme and we will do our best to help.

MARGARET WAINWRIGHT 592-1310

MARILYN HEWGILL 477-3283



PROGRAM - MAY & JUNE, 1982

- SAT. MAY 1 Botany at Uplands Park.
Leader: Dr. Chris Brayshaw, Assoc. Curator,
Provincial Museum, Botany Dept.
Meet: Cattle Point Parking Lot, 9:00 A.M.
- SAT. MAY 15 Birding in Francis Park.
Leader: Ron Satterfield.
Meet: Mayfair Lanes, 8:00 a.m. or at Francis Park,
8:30 a.m.
- WED. MAY 19 Birders Night.
Time: 7:30 p.m.
- THURS. MAY 20 Annual General Meeting, Newcombe Auditorium, Provincial
Museum. Time: 8:00 p.m.
Speaker: Mary Lou Florian, our President.
Topic: Mary Lou's Recent Trip to Australia.
- SAT. MAY 29 Botany at Matheson Lake.
Leaders: Terese Todd and Katherine Sherman.
Meet: Mayfair Lanes, 9:00 a.m. or at Matheson Lake
Parking Lot, 9:45 a.m.
- SAT. JUNE 12 Birding at Spectacle Lake.
Leader: Anne Knowles.
Meet: Mayfair Lanes, 9:00 a.m. or at the Lake, 9:45 a.m.
- SAT. JUNE 19 Marine Biology at Port Renfrew (combined with the Juniors).
SUN. JUNE 20 Leader: Dr. Alex Peden, Curator of Marine Biology, Prov.
Museum.
Saturday: Meet on the beach at the north end of the bridge
over the San Juan River at 7:00 p.m. This is the end of
the bridge farthest from Port Renfrew. Dr. Peden will
attempt to net some very unusual fish -- specimens which
none of us would ordinarily see.
Sunday: Meet at the Tide Pools on Botany Beach at 7:30 a.m.
(See the Juniors' Program for how to get there.)
- SAT. JUNE 26 Birding at Elk and Beaver Lakes.
No Leader. Meet: Mayfair Lanes 8:00 a.m. or at Elk Lake
Parking Lot (opposite Piedmont Dr.) at 8:30 a.m.

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR CHANGES, PLEASE CALL BIRD ALERT - 478-8534.

Mayfair Lanes is at the corner of Oak and Roderick, by Bowling Alley.
Always take a lunch, and if wet, gumboots or strong shoes.

FINAL DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS TO THE MAGAZINE FOR THE JULY/AUGUST ISSUE
IS MAY 26, 1982.