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83-10



The VICTORIA NATURALIST

PUBLISHED BY THE
VICTORIA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY
VICTORIA, B.C.
ISSN 0049-612X



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VOL. 39, NO. 5
MARCH-APRIL 1983

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RARE BIRD ALERT - 478-8534

VICTORIA CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT
DECEMBER 18, 1982

by Roy Prior

High winds and rainstorms plagued the observers at the Victoria C.B.C. It was a day of both low and high counts: as one might expect given the weather conditions, especially on the waterfront, counts of loons, grebes, bay and sea ducks, and shorebirds tended to be low, with all-time lows for Horned Grebe, Western Grebe, Greater Scaup and White-winged Scoter. American Coot, Dunlin, Common Flicker and Song Sparrow also registered their lowest totals on record. On the other hand, all-time highs were recorded for Eurasian Wigeon, Black-legged Kittiwake, Horned Lark (only the 3rd count record - the group seems to be settled at McHugh Rd. for the winter), Bushtit, Dipper and Dark-eyed Junco. The Goshawk was the first one found on the count since 1969, and a Black Duck made its second appearance. The surprise of the day, however, was the Violet-green Swallow, never before recorded on the count.

The total number of species, 130, was respectable, but the number of individuals was well down.

The post-count gathering, held at St. Luke's church hall, was a great success.

Thanks to all participants and to the volunteers at the post-count gathering.

COUNT AREAS

- | | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| 1. Butchart Gardens - Northern Highlands | 13. University-Cadboro Bay |
| 2. Central Highlands | 14. Ten Mile Point-Arbutus Rd. |
| 3. Goldstream-Finlayson Arm | 15. Gordon Head-Mount Douglas |
| 4. Thetis Lake-Hastings Flats | 16. Swan Lake-Cedar Hill |
| 5. Langford Lake | 17. Blenkinsop Lake-Panama Flats |
| 6. Albert Head-Triangle Mountain | 18. Elk Lake-Cordova Bay |
| 7. Esquimalt Lagoon-Mill Hill | 19. Prospect Lake-Quick's Bottom |
| 8. Esquimalt Harbour | 20. Martindale-Bear Hill |
| 9. Portage Inlet-The Gorge | 21. Zero Rock |
| 10. Victoria Harbour | 22. Chain Islets (no count) |
| 11. Beacon Hill Park-Ross Bay | 23. Juan de Fuca |
| 12. Oak Bay | |

VICTORIA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

	1	2	3+5	4	6	7	8	9
Common Loon	2				3		4	2
Arctic Loon					5		3	
Red-throated Loon	1				2	3	3	
Loon sp.								
Red-necked Grebe	2		1		4		1	
Horned Grebe	11		16		4		7	
Eared Grebe								
Western Grebe					15		2	
Pied-billed Grebe			19	6	2	1		1
Double-crested Cormorant	7		32	3	5	10	12	15
Brandt's Cormorant								
Pelagic Cormorant	5		1		4		15	3
Cormorant sp.								
Great Blue Heron	1	1	5	1	4	12	21	2
Mute Swan			6		7	10	1	4
Trumpeter Swan								
Swan sp.								
Canada Goose	7	2	6	5				42
Mallard	30	7	132	824	359	16	2	43
Black Duck								
Gadwall								
Pintail	30		26	513	1			
Green-winged Teal	178		41	82	7		1	40
Eurasian Wigeon	4		1	1				
American Wigeon	1479		80	210	626	6		62
Northern Shoveler	2		11					
Wood Duck								
Ring-necked Duck			10	52		4		
Canvasback						19		24
Greater Scaup								
Lesser Scaup						20		70
Scaup sp.								2
Common Goldeneye	6		58	2	4	95	9	7
Barrow's Goldeneye	1		42				2	
Bufflehead	7	2	91	4	43	207	12	148
Oldsquaw						23	12	
Harlequin Duck					2			
White-winged Scoter					3	40	4	
Surf Scoter			10		20	36	50	1
Ruddy Duck								
Hooded Merganser	5		11	26	25	21	18	4
Common Merganser	1		98	21	2	2		1
Red-breasted Merganser	11		1		15	48	12	1
Goshawk								
Sharp-shinned Hawk			1	1			1	
Cooper's Hawk		2						
Red-tailed Hawk	6		5		2			
Rough-legged Hawk								

BASE KIND ALERT - 478-8634

	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21-23	TOTAL	
Common Loon	2	2	2	1	3	2			1			1	25	L
Arctic Loon		2	1	1					1			1	14	L
Red-throated Loon		4	4										17	
Loon sp.		1											1	
Red-necked Grebe	29		2						1				40	L
Horned Grebe	16	14	11	7	6	21			10				123	L
Eared Grebe		1											1	L
Western Grebe	6	4	4	9	2	2			1				45	L
Pied-billed Grebe	3		4	4			1		1		3		41	
Double-crested Cormorant	14	24	12		24		4	4	22	4			192	
Brandt's Cormorant									2			9	11	L
Pelagic Cormorant	53	69	64	5	32	40			9				300	
Cormorant sp.		13											13	
Great Blue Heron	1	4	1	2		2	7	3		5	7		79	
Mute Swan		3											31	
Trumpeter Swan												2	2	
Swan sp.										1			1	
Canada Goose	11	299	50	94		35	36	83	120	38	13		352	H
Mallard		1					423	553	345	430	1242		4895	
Black Duck													1	H
Gadwall										19			19	
Pintail							7	3		7	144		731	
Green-winged Teal							4	4	5		105		467	
Eurasian Wigeon		4	1	1				1			2		15	H
American Wigeon	49	296	730	131		87	532	635	99	195	1596		6813	
Northern Shoveler		3				1	23			29	4		73	
Wood Duck		1											1	
Ring-necked Duck										61	47		174	
Canvasback										1		8	52	
Greater Scaup										12			26	L
Lesser Scaup								48				4	153	
Scaup sp.	1								5	24			52	
Common Goldeneye	20	5	47	2	12	14							281	
Barrow's Goldeneye													45	
Bufflehead	39	27	121	31	25	20	8	3	73	9	41		911	L
Oldsquaw	4	1	17		6	9					5	14	91	L
Harlequin Duck	23	64	27	4	15	13			2		1		151	
White-winged Scoter	6	4	1		6	7							71	L
Surf Scoter	32	31	14	1	15	10							273	L
Ruddy Duck									6				6	L
Hooded Merganser	16	2	18	15	2	1		1	27	12	1		205	
Common Merganser	5								250	23	2		405	
Red-breasted Merganser	47	10	22	6	6	36			59			1	275	H
Goshawk						1							1	
Sharp-shinned Hawk		1								1			5	L
Cooper's Hawk			1						1			1	7	
Red-tailed Hawk					2	2	1		1				30	
Rough-legged Hawk										7	4		1	H

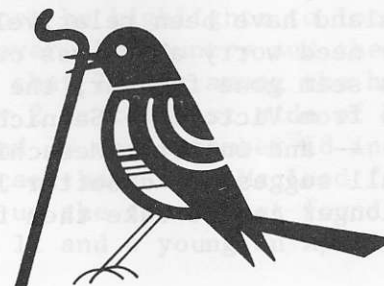
	1	2	3+5	4	6	7	8	9
Golden Eagle			1					
Bald Eagle	2	2	10			3	2	1
Peregrine Falcon								
Merlin			1				1	
American Kestrel			1					
Ruffed Grouse		1						
California Quail				33				
Ring-necked Pheasant							2	
Virginia Rail								
American Coot						9		18
Black Oystercatcher								
Killdeer	3		1		13			
Black-bellied Plover								
Black Turnstone					1	2	12	
Common Snipe			1				3	
Greater Yellowlegs			11		11			
Dunlin							8	
Sanderling								
Glaucous Gull			1					
Glaucous-winged Gull	2190	9	774	261	274	350	1200	581
Western Gull	1							100
Herring Gull	2		1					
Thayer's Gull	100		3					
Mew Gull	1	4	10		108			5
Bonaparte's Gull								2
Gull sp	1053							
Black-legged Kittiwake								
Common Murre					1		1	
Pigeon Guillemot					6			
Marbled Murrelet	4						4	
Ancient Murrelet								
Murrelet sp					7			
Rhinoceros Auklet								
Band-tailed Pigeon								
Rock Dove	2	7	2				18	6
Screech Owl								
Great Horned Owl			1					
Anna's Hummingbird			5			1		
Belted Kingfisher		1	3	1		3	3	1
Common Flicker	1	1	7	12	2	1	4	
Pileated Woodpecker		1	1					
Red-breasted Sapsucker			1					
Hairy Woodpecker			2	2				
Downy Woodpecker		1	6		1	1		
Skylark								
Horned Lark								
Violet-green Swallow								
Steller's Jay		1						
Common Raven	33	4	11	12	1		9	2
Northwestern Crow	564	7	62	50	187	16	150	131

	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21-23	TOTAL							
			1										2							
	1	1	1	1		1		1	1	1	1	1	29							
											1		1							
													2							
													1							
	10		10	14	10	10		6	65	7			165							
						1	3	7	2	2	14		31							
									3				3							
		1	6	4			1		133	12			184 L							
			38										38							
			16				1		24	17	58		133							
			3								35		38							
	3	21	16									3	55 L							
				7	11								7 L							
										15			55							
								5				11	24 L							
		18									3		21							
													1							
	247	122	300	84	400	178	63	170	577	449	321		8550							
													1							
								15					118							
								50					155							
	1		1																	
	79	134	10	226	8	211	12	739	217		195	300	2259							
			2					1				4	9 L							
	60	118							14				1245							
			3										3 H							
		81										27	112							
												7	15							
					2															
						3			1				3							
													17							
		56	7									2	65							
													7							
									2				2							
										5			5							
	10	73	30	1	6		6	22	12		145		340							
		1						2					3							
													1							
													13 H							
	2		1	5	2								25							
				1	1		4	1		2			58 L							
				1	7	2	1	1	6	9	3		3							
				1									1							
													1							
							1		1				6							
								1	1	1	1	1	16							
												22	22							
												32	32 H							
							1						1 H NEW							
													1 L							
	33	4	11	12	1			2	6	15	3		107							
	564	7	62	50	187	16	150	131	44	97	10	200	376	1205	116	213	249	144	465	4286

	1	2	3+5	4	6	7	8	9
Chestnut-backed Chickadee	6	9	26	26	24	10	15	8
Bushtit		7		4	4		30	
Red-breasted Nuthatch		2	5	7	1			
Brown Creeper		2	2			2	1	
Dipper			6					
Winter Wren	4	7	6	8	5	2	6	1
Bewick's Wren	2		3	5	3	1	5	
Long-billed Marsh Wren	1	1						
American Robin	80	9	419	60	75	10	40	38
Varied Thrush		4	17	2	1	1		
Hermit Thrush								
Golden-crowned Kinglet	7	9	41	30	101	11	42	
Ruby-crowned Kinglet		1	6		8		5	
Cedar Waxwing	10	2						
Northern Shrike								
Starling	240	42	120	170	382	7	38	18
Orange-crowned Warbler								
Townsend's Warbler								
House Sparrow		9				6		12
Western Meadowlark						2		
Red-winged Blackbird			200					
Brewer's Blackbird	10		1					
Brown-headed Cowbird								
Evening Grosbeak		2						
Purple Finch			5	6	22			3
House Finch	24		3	8	6	4	10	11
Pine Siskin	24	211	510	51	120	15	50	
American Goldfinch					2			50
Red Crossbill		9		50	19			
Rufous-sided Towhee	4	4	11	5	4		6	4
Savannah Sparrow								
Dark-eyed Junco	81	42	265	113	189	38	30	57
Harris Sparrow	1							
White-crowned Sparrow								
Golden-crowned Sparrow	3	9	1		1	1	4	10
Fox Sparrow	1	1	11		4			1
Lincoln's Sparrow								
Song Sparrow	5	3	4	2	5	1	1	3
	6257	438	3282	2669	2752	1070	1892	1535



	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21-23	TOTAL
The White-throated Sparrow	10	15	18	76	55	39	6		58	92	19		512
	31	20	20	54	35	35	54	12	44	2	27		379 H
						3			1	2			21
	1		2	2		2			4	5	2		25
													6 H
	1	3	2	8	8	4		2	3	8	2		80
	1		2	1	3	1	1		5	3	1		37 L
										11			13
		9	4	28	40	80	5	53	983	298	30		2261
					6	5				3	2		41
										1			1
	6	8	26	6	14	31	15	6	93	36	29		511
				5	1	1		2	12	4	7		52
									5				17
												1	1
	291	876	27	584	1350	1439	20	56	2357	414	1560		9991 H
							1						1 H
										1			1
	43	2		40	19		12		22		6		171 L
											20		22 H
											32		232 H
								45			150		206 L
											10		10 H
													2
			4	6						17	1		64
		10	14	59	100	13	4		35	4	63		368 H
				50					56	43			1130
											12		64 H
													78
	2		1	8	8	4	3	1	9	13	2		89 L
													2
	12	12	38	78	60	47	9	35	177	317	80		1680 H
					2	2	2		1	2	5		14
	4		1	20	4	9		4	17	10	4		102
	3		2		4			7	1				35 L
								1			2		3
	6		5	5	1	2	2		16	7	6		74 L
	1247	2581	1793	1900	2678	3655	1445	2744	6343	2828	6601	374	54084



I embarked on the challenge of describing the birdwatching highlights of the year just completed with some trepidation. My first concern -- where to get the information -- was quickly put to rest by reference to the excellent quarterly reports Vic and Peggy Goodwill prepare for American Birds. Just about everything I needed for the task, I found in these reports. My second concern -- what constituted a "highlight" -- may not rest so easily, because one man's highlight might be another's ho-hum. With this in mind, please remember that what follows is 1982 in review -- from one point of view.

Another decision, forced on me by space alone, was to delete the names of people. I did this on the assumption that it is the birds we are interested in, not who saw them. Only where, again, in my opinion, the observer's name contributes something to the record, do I include it.

So; where to start? For some reason the Gyrfalcon comes to mind. Despite the fact that any observant birdwatcher in the Victoria area in winter should be able to turn up one of these great northern hunters almost anytime, they are still highlights. Last year maintained the tradition of the last three or four years when Gyrfalcons, in any one of their colour phases, could be seen around the flats of Martindale Road -- in winter. This was as true at the end of last winter as it was at the beginning of this. Two records are more worthy of note than the others. There were the three seen on one day -- November 30 -- all in the Martindale area; and there was the magnificent white-phase bird seen in January (8, 10 and 11) first at Anderson Hill, Oak Bay, and later (believed to be the same bird) at Island View Beach.

Jumping from the open country to the woods, a bona fide Yellow-bellied Sapsucker seen on November 4, was the first here for this "species" since 1933. I can emphasize species now because the former confusion about the status of the coastal, red "form", has been cleared up; it is now a bona fide species itself -- called, appropriately, the Red-breasted Sapsucker -- and no longer a subspecies, race or form (take your pick) of the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker.

Again in the woods, I draw your attention to the chickadees. For years, birdwatchers on Vancouver Island have been relatively secure in the knowledge that the only chickadee they need worry about was our "own" Chestnut-backed Chickadee. Well, those days seem gone forever; the Black-caps have arrived. Three records this year, two from Victoria - Saanich, October 8 (1) and Francis Park, October 12 (3) -- and one from Mesachie Lake near Lake Cowichan (3 birds on September 26), all suggest we'd better look closely at our chickadees from now on. No longer can we take them for granted.

The White-throated Sparrow seems worth mentioning among woodland birds too. This former rarity has been turning up in such numbers this year that one begins to wonder what is going on. In the spring at least four birds could be identified from the reports that came in from Cadboro Bay, Metchosin and Saanich. As this winter (1982-83) got underway, another dozen could be worked out of reports from the aforementioned places as well as Sooke, Langford, Courtland Avenue, View Royal and Fort Rodd Hill.

Leaving the woods again, two reports of Brown Pelicans are undoubtedly highlights. The first turned up in the Spring (April 15) on the Sooke Basin; the second, in December, at Willows Beach. Both records are further evidence of the recovery of Brown Pelicans on the west coast since D.D.T. was banned, and their gradual spread from nesting grounds in California.

Now we come to a real highlight -- one that had a lot of people in a true flap and one that still manages to arouse some debate several months after it happened. I refer to the sudden, and quite startling, appearance of a (?) White-faced Ibis in May. This highlight began at 8:00 a.m. on May 24 when Keith Taylor spotted an adult at Quick's Bottom. As soon as he was sure of what he was seeing, Keith got the word onto the Rare Bird Alert. By 8:50 a.m. Ron Satterfield had seen the bird and confirmed Keith's identification, but before anyone else could see it, the bird took off heading south. That was at 9:05 a.m. Forty minutes later, Yorke Edwards saw another (?) ibis along the shore near his home on Ratcliffe Lane in Oak Bay. At the time, Yorke didn't know about the bird from Quick's Bottom and he put his on the Rare Bird Alert.

By this time, birdwatchers were scurrying all over the place in search of the ibis(es). By 10:30 it (?) was back at Quick's Bottom where it stayed briefly before disappearing. At 11:25 it (?) appeared again at Quick's, this time from the west, and stayed for most of the day, letting many people have a good look at a very rare bird in these parts. It was still at Quick's at 5:15 p.m. but when I was there, about 6 p.m., I didn't see it. The bird was last seen at Quick's at 7:20 p.m., when it again took off heading south.

Because of the timing and the distance the two places are apart (11 miles) most people think there had to be two birds. I'm among the minority.

While Skylarks may not be highlights to local birdwatchers they still attract people from all over the country and their welfare is still of much concern to us. So it is that I list among the highlights of 1982 the sighting of 40 on January 2 on the east side of McHugh Road, 55 on April 12 near the "L" reservoir and 70 on September 18 in a corn stubblefield, all in Central Saanich. We can thank Alan MacLeod for keeping an eye on the Skylarks and for turning up the first nest found for several years, one that had 4 eggs on April 12 and 4 young on April 24.

The 1982 Christmas Bird Count will be remembered for, among other things, a Violet-green Swallow (a "first" for our Count) seen at Swan Lake. Just to show the Doubting Thomases, it turned up again a week later, on December 24.

Two Lewis' Woodpeckers got into the act this year. Since their good years, little has been seen of these striking big woodpeckers but -- maybe it's a hopeful sign -- this year one turned up in Cadboro Bay on June 5 and another near King's Pond on November 11.

While 1982 wasn't a good year for Cattle Egrets hereabouts, we did get one, on October 23, on a lawn on Edgelow Street in Saanich.

As the year began to ebb, the highlights began to flow. On November 21, for example, Roy Prior put together enough good detail on a swan seen on the Colquitz River to give Canada its second record of a "Bewick's" Swan; it was British Columbia's first.

The "key" to the sighting, and identification, was the amount of yellow on the otherwise black beak. Roy's bird had an extensive patch of yellow from the eye half way to the nostril.

The identification may be academic because "Bewick's" Swan and our "Whistling" Swan are now considered to be races of the same species -- the Tundra Swan. Still, the races can be recognized in the field, so, since "Bewick's" is a bird of Asia -- not North America -- its presence here is a highlight.

Late in the summer a curlew -- of that much we are sure -- stirred up a lot of interest on the University of Victoria campus. It was first reported as a Whimbrel. This was subsequently corrected and a much-rarer Long-billed Curlew went into the book. Many people saw it during its stay and Bertha Gow got an excellent picture of it but just as the dust was settling, Keith Taylor reported a Whimbrel again -- from the same place.

The Long-billed Curlew was last seen on September 3; the second (?) Whimbrel was first seen on September 5. The whole incident moved John Hutchings so much that he waxed poetic and *The Victoria Naturalist* - Vol. 39, No. 3 - records his thoughts on the subject for posterity.

Almost as perplexing was the appearance of what was thought to be a Long-toed Stint near Cordova Spit on September 19. It was seen again on the 20th and despite a great similarity to a Least Sandpiper there was strong support for the bird being the little fellow from the outer Aleutian Islands. Even an authority from England was drawn into the debate but, as of this writing, the question is still open. The bird would be a "first" for British Columbia and Canada.

Two sightings late last summer raise the question of how often Arctic Terns are overlooked among the Common Terns passing through here in August and September. One Arctic was seen at Cordova Spit on September 6 and two more at Clover Point on September 19. I heard of others later in the month as well as the suggestion that a lot of those late terns might be Arctic. So there's a challenge; bone up on your terns and let's hear it for Arctics.

Another question was raised by the report of a White-winged Dove -- it would have been only the second for Canada for this sub-tropical bird -- on November 18. The bird was seen near Cadboro Bay but its identity could not be confirmed. If it had been, then the status of the bird would have caused more questions because an aviarist on Mercer Island, near Seattle, raises White-winged Doves.

While on the subject of tropical birds, there's the Tropical Kingbird. One of these wanderers from western Mexico kept the local birding fraternity on the "fly" for two weeks in November when it staked-out part of Colwood near Lagoon Road on November 14. It did survive some cold nights but was not apparently up to the sustained cold that occurred at the time.

I gleaned three other rarities from Vic and Peggy Goodwill's reports -- a Bobolink near the "L" reservoir in Martindale on October 20, a Dickcissel at a feeder on Courtland Avenue on September 26 (this is the second record of a Dickcissel for Greater Victoria and only the fourth for British Columbia) and a Little Gull at Witty's Lagoon on August 29 -- which helped to make 1982 a rich one for birdwatchers around Victoria.

PRE-CBC EURASIAN WIGEON COUNT

by Mike Edgell

On December 11, 1982, one week before the 1982 CBC, Bob Hay, Alan MacLeod, Roy Prior, Ron Satterfield, Keith Taylor, Jim Wilson and Mike Edgell dispersed through the CBC area and the northern part of the Saanich Peninsula in a concentrated search for Eurasian Wigeon. Viewing conditions were poor, and ducks were widely scattered and wary, but 21 individuals were counted, including 3 male Eurasian/American hybrids and 2 females. Twenty of the birds were found in the CBC area, compared with the 15 recorded on the 18th. On a similar count 2 weeks after the 1981 CBC, Mike Edgell found 27 individuals including 6 females, compared with the 12 recorded on the 1981 count day.

It is interesting to put these figures in a broader context of trends and numbers over the past few years. Until the mid-1960's, east coast CBC's (from Massachusetts to Florida) invariably recorded more Eurasian wigeon than those on the west coast (British Columbia to California). Numbers ranged from 5 to 20 per year. However, in 1967 west coast records surpassed those from the east, and have continued to climb, from 10 birds in 1967 to 167 birds in 1981. Since 1967, records for all other North American stations combined have never risen above 16 in any year. Over 90 percent of recorded

Eurasian wigeon on CBC's now come from the west coast, and B.C. contributes 25-40 percent of these records each year. Statistical analysis shows that these trends are real, and not due to shifts in observer effort or count locations.* Thus the west coast of North America, in the last 20 years, has increasingly become part of the regular wintering range of a large number of wigeon from east Siberian breeding grounds. But how large is large? As females go almost unreported, and as CBC's can only record a fraction of individuals, the 167 wigeon on the west coast in 1981 (including 38 in B.C.) take on an even more interesting dimension. And there is always that intriguing possibility of breeding "somewhere in Alaska".

* *Analysis of wigeon occurrence in North America for the period 1945-1980 will appear shortly in Journal of Biogeography: "Trans-hemispheric movements of Holarctic Anatidae - The Eurasian Wigeon in North America".*

ADDITIONAL RECORDS OF THE GIANT COW PARSNIP ON VANCOUVER ISLAND

by Bill Merilees

The Giant Cow Parsnip (Heracleum mantegazzianum) is a monstrous and spectacular species. It may reach more than 4 meters in height and the flower heads may be a meter across. Native to the Caucasus region of Russia, it became a horticultural oddity because of its size, form and easy cultivation (Bailey, 1958). In the British Isles, it is now a nuisance weed.

In Canada it is established in southern Ontario and in the Greater Vancouver Area (Morton, 1978, Merilees, 1981). In British Columbia the first published record for this species appears to be that of Edith Camm (Camm et al, 1976) who studied specimens from North Vancouver and drew attention to this species' poisonous properties. Skin contact with this plant and subsequent exposure to sunlight causes severe blistering, termed bullous dermatitis. The presence of this species in North Vancouver goes back to at least the 1920's (Merilees, 1981).

On Vancouver Island the species was first identified in 1978 (Merilees, 1978, Dawe, 1979) at French Creek on the Island Highway. Since that time many additional records of this remarkable species have been made. Those known are recorded on the accompanying table.

The fact that such a huge and distinctive plant as the Giant Cow Parsnip could go undetected for such a long time is a puzzle. However, the answer is quite simple. Some time ago (about 1969) I understand a photograph of Adam Szczawinski, the Provincial Botanist, and Freeman King appeared in a Victoria newspaper with a huge 'cow parsnip' found on Helmcken Road. Because British Columbia had only 'one' species of Heracleum there was no botanist or naturalist who did not assume this was so!! The story was similar

in Ontario. In both areas, reports of children developing awful blisters after contact with this plant, triggered the true I.D. (Kamermans, 1977; Camm et al 1976). Now that the presence and distinctive features of the Giant Cow Parsnip are becoming known, the original puzzle is being understood. The cover photo of this species shows most of the distinctive features of this species. Where else does it occur? I would appreciate knowing.

If anyone can tell me when the Szczawinski-King photograph appeared, I would be most grateful.

Giant Cow Parsnip Bibliography

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- Camm, E., H.W.L. Buck and J.C. Mitchell 1976: Phytophotodermatitis from Heracleum mantegazzianum. Contact Dermatitis 2:68-72.
- Dawe, N.K. and E.R. White 1979: Giant Cow Parsnip (Heracleum mantegazzianum) on Vancouver Island British Columbia. Canadian Field Naturalist, 93 (1):82.
- Kamermans, J.K. 1977: A Hairy Horror in my Huron Haunts. Wood Duck 31:49-50.
- Merilees, W.J. 1978: Giant Cow Parsnip - French Creek. Fed. of B.C. Naturalists, Newsletter 16 (4).
- Merilees, W.J. 1981: The Giant Cow Parsnip in Greater Vancouver. Discovery N.S. 10(2):36-38.
- Morton, J.K. 1978: Distribution of the Giant Cow Parsnip (Heracleum mantegazzianum) in Canada. Canadian Field Naturalist, 92(2): 182-185.

Locations for Giant Cow Parsnips:

- | | | |
|------------------|---|----------------|
| 1. Bamfield | July 4, 1979 - in private garden | Author |
| 2. Headquarters* | June 18, 1982 - abandoned garden | David Stirling |
| 3. Black Creek* | July 3, 1980 - highway roadside | Author |
| 4. Merville | 1978 - near the beach | Melda Buchanan |
| 5. Comox | 1978 - Filberg House | Melda Buchanan |
| 6. Courtenay | 1981 | Ann Zielinski |
| 7. French Creek* | site of first discovery | |
| 8. Nanaimo | Comox Road near Front Street, 1981 | Author |
| 9. Nanaimo* | Golf Club on Island Highway, 1982 | Author |
| 10. Duncan | 6756 Chisholm Trail, 1979 | Kath Watson |
| 11. Victoria | Helmcken and Burnside Roads, 1969? | A. Szczawinski |
| 12. Victoria | Quadra & Humboldt Streets, 1981 | David Stirling |
| | Government and Bay Streets, 1982 | David Stirling |
| 13. Oak Bay* | next to 3085 Uplands Drive, 1979 | Bryan Gates |
| 14. Parksville* | Highway #4 towards Coombes, July 12, 1981 | Author |

* photographs taken by author

NOTICESDues Renewal

All '82-'83 memberships will expire April 30th. Some members have renewed already. All others should start thinking about it. With interesting new features being planned for the Victoria Naturalist, you will not want to risk being cut off with the May-June issue. Back issues are not always available.

Dues are high enough already! To postpone any possible increase, we are economizing in two ways. Reminders will be mailed only to out-of-town members. Receipts and membership cards will be mailed only to out-of-town members; otherwise they may be obtained at the monthly General Meeting, or by enclosing a self-addressed, stamped envelope with the cheque, or by phoning 592-0964.

New Director

The Board of Directors has regretfully accepted the resignation of Ray Williams as director and has appointed Roy Prior to fill the vacant position for the balance of the term (until May 1983).

Missing Journals

Two issues of American Birds, vol. 35 no. 3 and vol. 36 no. 1, are missing from the V.N.H.S. library. Will anyone knowing their whereabouts or where we might get hold of a copy of either to complete our set, please let us know.

Thetis Park Nature Sanctuary Association Programme

March 17th - OVERVIEW OF CHINA - Part 1. Slides by Mary Winstone to be shown at the Newcombe Auditorium, 8:00 p.m.

April 21st - OVERVIEW OF CHINA - Part 2. Slides by Mary Winstone to be shown at the Newcombe Auditorium, 8:00 p.m.

Coastal Cruises

A series of coastal cruises are to be held this summer in the M.V. Bastion City: (1) The South Moresby Wilderness Area; (2) Gulf of Georgia; (3) Port Hardy to Prince Rupert. For information contact Bill Merilees, 1655 Sherwood Drive, Nanaimo, B.C., V9T 1H2, tel. 758-1801.

FIELD TRIPSBlue Heron Basin, Saturday December 4*by Harry Davidson*

The combination of a fine day during a spell of poor weather and curiosity over a controversial ecological area brought some thirty people out for a pleasant walk. About forty species were seen including a fair number of sea birds but only one Great Blue Heron. Extensive land clearing had been done in the vicinity, but no foreshore development. As there are seven major marinas in Tsehum Harbour already, one more is not likely to have a significant effect on bird population.

During thirty years of sailing in that area, I have not seen much real change in sea bird use of the harbour. Floats shelter small fish, and grebes, cormorants, mergansers and herons commonly feed around the floats undisturbed by people and boats.

The most interesting sighting was a Cooper's Hawk seen by Lois Clark in a tree immediately above a large group of us as we peered out to sea.

Birding for Beginners, Beacon Hill Park - Saturday, January 15

Some fifteen prospective birders showed up. First the leaders, Alice Elston and Lyndis Davis, gave an informative (and indeed quite expert) explanation about binoculars, what all the numbers mean, recommended types, and how to use them; also an account of various recommended books on the subject of birds and bird watching. Various points about how to observe and identify, and take notes in the field were explained, and demonstrated during a walk around Beacon Hill Park. Besides the usual gulls, wigeons, and Mallards, there were Canvasback, Lesser Scaup, a Black Duck, and a Wood Duck; and in the trees kinglets, Fox Sparrow, Winter Wren, Swainson's Thrush, etc. - a good variety for many interesting points of discussion.

Our thanks to the leaders for a well-organized, informative and pleasant outing.

Victoria Waterfront, Saturday January 22*by Roy Prior*

Forty-two people gathered on a mild, dry winter morning for the birding trip along the waterfront. Highlights of the trip were 7 Sanderlings at Ogden Point and 1 at Clover Point, a male Wood Duck in Beacon Hill Park, and 6 Rock Sandpipers (scarce this winter) at Clover Point. Two male and one female Eurasian Wigeon were at Beacon Hill Park, and the opportunity was taken for a comparison between these and the two hybrid wigeon (Eurasian/American) also present there. A flock of Oldsquaw and 2 Bald Eagles were at McNeill Bay, and more Oldsquaw at Ogden Point.

SIGHTINGS"Bewick's" Tundra Swan*by Roy Prior*

Since I came to live near the mouth of the Colquitz River, I have got to know some of the people who live on the river where it emerges from the woods behind the Tillicum Shopping Centre. On November 21 at about 12:30, I received a phone call telling me there were two "Whistling" Swans on the river, a decidedly odd place for this bird. I hurried down, and the sight I saw completely flabbergasted me. One of the two might just have been the ordinary whistler that we know, although the thin irregular line running down from the eye was very long; but the second bird had a large expanse of yellow at the base of the bill, stretching almost the entire depth of the upper mandible, extending half-way to the nostril, and covering over a quarter of the total area of the bill. There was no doubt in my mind about identification, as I have seen many such birds in England: it was a "Bewick's" Tundra Swan, a bird not normally present at all in North America.

These two birds remained there, first swimming, then standing in a meadow, for about twenty minutes. I watched them through both binoculars and scope, until they were driven away by the pair of Mute Swans which consider that area to be their property. That afternoon, several of us tried to find them again, but without success.

Next morning - a Sunday - I was dragged from sleep at 8:00 a.m. "They're back!" I dashed to the river, only to get my second shock. "They" were not the same birds! One was clearly an orthodox "Whistling" Swan, but the other had a scimitar-shaped yellow line on its bill, curving down from the eye almost to the edge of the lower mandible. This time I managed to take photos, before these two were driven away in their turn by the Mute Swans.

Subsequent research revealed that more than a dozen observations of "Bewick's" Tundra Swans have been recorded on this continent in the last seven years, mostly in California, but including one from Saskatchewan (the only Canadian record). My very tentative surmise about these four is that they may have been a family group, a "Bewick's" mated with a "Whistling" Swan, and two intergrade offspring.

Elephant Seal*by John A. Mitchell*

On Wednesday, December 1st, 1982 I was preparing my small boat for a morning's fishing at Hall's Boathouse, Finlayson Arm, when I heard a loud "whooshing" sound behind me. Upon turning around I was surprised to see the head and shoulders of a large bull Elephant Seal between the dock and the shore - I was about twenty feet from the animal and he was in this small area, the depth being approximately 10 feet. He submerged and I crawled along the dock, at which point he surfaced again - we were then no more than six feet apart.

We contemplated each other for a full minute - I admired his magnificent inflatable snout and he no doubt admired my recently trimmed white beard. He then submerged and headed out, at which time I could see his bulk clearly - I estimate he was fifteen feet long and five feet across the shoulders and probably weighed a couple of tons. A few minutes later Mr. George Hall appeared and I told him of my sighting - he looked at me as if I had been into the magic mushrooms, but when I returned from fishing later in the morning, he reported that the Elephant Seal had appeared on the other side of the dock about half-an-hour after I had left. He said he might have made a sighting about five years ago, but that this was the only time he had seen one in that area.

The waters of Finlayson Arm are an ideal area to observe nature. I frequently observe sea lions, Harbour Seals, Grey Seals, and from time to time, killer whales, plus one sighting of Dall Porpoise. This is apart from the abundant bird life.

NOTESFishing for Owls

On December 7th, Dr. Robert Nero, author of The Great Grey Owl, gave a presentation on the work he has been doing for a number of years on this bird, and showed a 25-minute film of a pair bringing up their brood. The whole of his account of his work was absolutely fascinating. However, for me the highlight of the evening was his explanation, illustrated with slides, of how he catches Great Grey Owls for banding in the depths of a prairie winter.

Their equipment consists of: a fishing rod and line, a net for gaffing hooked fish, one real and one pretend mouse, and a sheet of paper. Dr. Nero's explanation of how he stands at the roadside in several feet of snow, at a temperature of -20°F , solemnly fishing for his owl, was one of the most splendid comic tales I have ever heard.

Disappearing Snakes and Lizards*by Katherine Sherman*

We all get concerned about the disappearance of certain species of birds and flowers, but what about our garter snakes and lizards? Have these disappeared from Victoria? A friend living in Fairfield reports there used to be snakes in her garden, but not now. An Oak Bay friend reports they still turn up in her garden where there are rocky outcroppings. Are there any left in Beacon Hill Park or Uplands? It would be interesting if members jotted down snake sightings within the four municipal areas. I would be happy to summarize their observations at the end of the summer. My phone number is 598-3237.

More About Crows

by A.H.H. Donald

Tannis Warburton wonders where the crows are going in the evening. My wife and I have been watching them fly north over Sidney and Roberts Bay for more than eighteen years, and wondered where they spent the night. I think our crows' destination was given recently by Lyn Hancock in an article in the "Islander" in which she mentioned the "hundreds of crows on Portland Island".

In the spring crows nest in Sidney, many of them in the tall fir trees along Beaufort Road. When nesting they do not fly north for the night until the young are big enough.

All year long we have crows in Sidney and district during the day, in our trees and on our grass, but in the evening when the young can fly they gather in the trees along the shore and take off for the north in groups farther than we can see with our binoculars. What I call the "Central Saanich mob" seem to come north from south of Mt. Newton - they do not stop off before flying over the water and are flying quite high by the time they pass over us.

In the summer the evening flight may take an hour or more to complete but in the winter it is over quite soon. When we had the southeast gales recently, hundreds gathered in the trees along Beaufort Road and discussed the matter, some making tentative starts till at last they all jumped up more or less together and were blown across the Bay over Coal Island like a ragged cloud of black leaves.

In the morning they don't form flocks, they just dribble back. Perhaps some bird watcher in the Gulf Islands may know where they spend the night.

Fortunate Flicker

by Harry Davidson

There is one flicker alive today only by virtue of the long arm of coincidence. Around noon one day, hearing a slight but strange noise in the basement, I traced it to the furnace area. After shutting off the power, I cautiously dismantled the flue pipe, attached a plastic bag over the open end, and shook out a very angry flicker. He had begun to explore the large hole in a birch tree and worked himself into a one-way trip down a four-inch flue to within one jump of the furnace firebox and was unable to turn around.

The day had been warm enough to keep the furnace off for a while before he was discovered, and he seemed to have suffered no damage except to his dignity, in resembling a crow more than a flicker.

Crossword

I must apologize for the omission of two clues from last month's crossword - which did not make solving it any easier! However, Miss S.J. Stevenson, of Sooke, having telephoned to get these clues, sent in a complete solution - congratulations!

Solution: Across: 1 Quail 3 Vireo 7 Ibis 8 Sora 9 Crow 10 Kite
12 Avis 13 April 16 Bill 17 Auk 18 Ail 19 Tern
23 Scoter 24 Owl 25 Least 26 Toy

Down: 1,16 Quick's Bottom 2 Ani 4 Rio 5 Ova 6 Hornbill
8 Swan 8(a)(missing) Rail 11 Teal 14 Plan
15 Bushtit 20 Roll 21 Coot 22 Prey

BIRD OBSERVATIONSDECEMBER 1982

No.	Species	Date	Area Seen	Observer
1	Yellow-billed Loon	4	Towner Bay	Keith Taylor
1	Rough-legged Hawk	4	4373 Prospect Lk.Rd.	Giff Calvert
3	Snow Buntings	6	Coburg Peninsula	Leila G. Roberts
1	Short-tailed Shearwater	7	Clover Point	Keith Taylor
1	Mourning Dove	7	Island View Rd.	Brent Diakow
1	Northern Goshawk	7	Lochside Park	Tuesday Group
1	Golden Eagle	7	Elk Lake	Ron Satterfield
1	Glaucous Gull	10	Goldstream Estuary	Keith Taylor
1	Townsend's Warbler	11	Observatory Hill	Keith Taylor
1	Redhead	12	Portage Inlet	Keith Taylor
5	Whimbrel	13	Ten Mile Point	Keith Taylor
1	Red Phalarope	17	Clover Point	Keith Taylor
1	Violet-green Swallow	18	Swan Lake	Christmas Bird Count
1	Harris' Sparrow	18	Wallace Drive	Bruce Whittington
24	Water Pipit	26	Island View Road	Dave Stirling
1	Orange-crowned Warbler	30	Swan Lake	Lyndis Davis
1	"Red-naped" Sapsucker	30	1764 Orcas Park Terr.	Beryl Holt

JANUARY 1983

1	Cinnamon Teal (male)	1	Esquimalt Lagoon	Jo MacGregor
2	Long-billed Dowitcher	1	Gonzales Bay	Mike Shepard
1	Black-legged Kittiwake	2	Clover Point	Ron Satterfield
2	Spotted Sandpiper	9	Sooke Basin	Keith Taylor
1	Barred Owl (heard)	10	UVic Campus	Dave Fraser
1	Bohemian Waxwing	13	2452 Camelot Road	Jo MacGregor

JANUARY 1983

No.	Species	Date	Area Seen	Observer
1	American Bittern	15	Duncan Sewage Pond	Harold Hosford & Alan MacLeod
8	Lincoln's Sparrow	16	Lochside Trail north	Dave Fraser
2	American Tree Sparrow	16	of Martindale Road	Wayne Weber
1	Violet-green Swallow	16	Swan Lake	Keith Taylor
150	Yellow-rumped Warbler	23	Swan Lake	Dave Fraser
1	Townsend's Solitaire	27	UVic Campus	Keith Taylor
1	"Eurasian" Green-winged Teal	27	Tsehum Harbour	

The records of the Violet-green Swallow and the Cinnamon Teal are the first winter records for the Southern Vancouver Island area.

PROGRAMME
MARCH-APRIL, 1983

Unless otherwise specified, all field trips meet at Mayfair Lanes, at the corner of Oak and Roderick at 9:00 a.m. Please make sure that you check with Rare Bird Alert (478-8534) for any changes that may have occurred in plans. Always take a lunch and dress according to the weather. If you are not sure of having transportation, please check with the leader of the trip, or with Alice Elston (592-1400).

<u>Saturday, March 5</u>	Birding, Witty's Lagoon. Leader: Ed Coffin (592-0964)
<u>Friday, March 4 & Saturday, March 5</u>	A Wildlife Series Film by Brent Cook - "Beneath the Lowest Tides". Underwater film with slide presentation taken in waters off the coast of British Columbia. This is a special presentation by the Provincial Museum. Place: Newcombe Auditorium. Time: 8:00 p.m. We regret that in the last issue this feature was incorrectly described as an Audubon film.
<u>Tuesday, March 8</u>	General Meeting - Newcombe Auditorium - 8:00 p.m. The speaker will be Helen Viesser who will show a slide show called "The Underwater Experience".
<u>Saturday, March 12</u>	Aquatic Biology at Durrance Lake. Leader: Alex Peden.
<u>Wednesday, March 16</u>	Birders' Night - Band Room - Cedar Hill Junior Sec. School, 7:30 p.m.
<u>Saturday, March 19</u>	Botany, Mill Hill. Leader: Dr. G. Allen.
<u>Saturday, March 26</u>	Birding, North Saanich. Leader: Bruce Whittington.

Saturday, April 9

Birding, Island View Beach. Leaders: Marian & Arthur Durkee (388-6077).

Friday, April 8 & Saturday, April 9

A Wildlife Series Film by Audubon lecturer, Fran Hall. "Kiwi Country". Newcombe Auditorium at 8:00 p.m.

Tuesday, April 12

General Meeting - Newcombe Auditorium - 8:00 p.m. The speaker will be Adrian Dorst and his topic will be "Meares Island" which will be accompanied by slides.

Saturday, April 16

Birding, Spectacle Lake. Leader: Keith Taylor.

Saturday, April 23

Botany - Leon Pavelick - 8:30. Pink Lilies, Sutton Creek Wildflower Reserve. Please phone Bird Alert in case of changes in date.

Wednesday, April 27

Birders' Night - Band Room - Cedar Hill Junior Sec. School, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, April 30

Botany - Thetis Lake. Leaders: Alice Elston and Katherine Sherman.

SPECIAL NOTE: Plans are being made to hold a Family Camp at Miracle Beach on the weekend of May 14. Leader: Harold Hosford. Full details will be published in the next magazine.

Tickets for films are purchased at the door, price \$3.00, senior citizens and students \$2.50.

For activities at the B.C. Provincial Museum, free parking is available (outside working hours) at the government employees' parking lot between Michigan and Superior, just behind the Museum.

FINAL DEADLINE for submissions to the Magazine for the MAY/JUNE issue is March 31, 1983.

JUNIOR PROGRAMME

MARCH - APRIL 1983

March 5

Fossils, 10:00 to 1:00. Meet at Muir Creek on the Port Renfrew Road past Sooke at 10:00 a.m. Bring lunch and a hammer (rock hammer if you have one) to dig out fossils from the cliff.

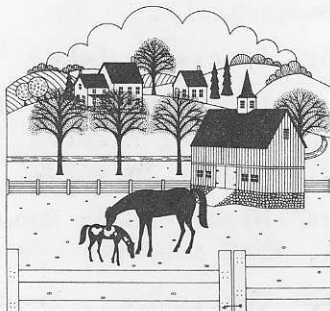
March 19

Hike in the East Sooke Park to see the petroglyphs and have lunch on Radar Hill. Meet at 10:00 a.m. at the Aylard Farm parking lot. 10:00 to 12:30.

April 9

Visit to Mitchell's sheep farm on the right at the end of Witty's Lagoon Road, the first road past the Regional Park parking lot.

10:00 - 12:30. See the lambs, the farm, ride in the farm wagon and have lunch on the beach.



April 23

To Cowichan Lake Forestry Experimental Station, Mesachie Lake, 10:00.

Drive to the town of Lake Cowichan and take the road to Honeymoon Bay on the south side of the Lake. Just before Honeymoon Bay and after crossing a railroad line, turn right onto Mesachie Lake Road. Meet at that corner at 10:00 A.M.

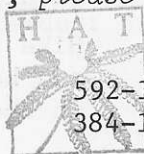
This is a special programme led by Mr. Trevor Green at the Experimental Station.

Bring lunch.

During the winter, please gather as many different kinds of shells as you can. In April we shall have a programme on shells. You may bring shells from other parts of the world so long as you know their names and where they are from.

If you wish any information, or are a new member, please call me or my new partner:

MARGARET WAINWRIGHT
MORWYN MARSHALL



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