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RARE BIRD ALERT - 478-8534

COVER PHOTO: Large shells are *Saxidomus giganteus* (Butter clam);
small shells are *Mya truncata*, (Blunt soft-shell clam).

Photo by Dave Hutchcroft, B.C.P.M. (see article on the following page)

PARK SURVEILLANCE

by Wilf Medd

The V.N.H.S. has initiated a system of volunteers to systematically visit the various nature parks and regions in the vicinity of Victoria, to report on general conditions, possible vandalism, or various practices or incidents which might be injurious to the well-being of the park. To begin with, the programme will be looked after by the conservation committee.

A volunteer will be asked to do only what any private citizen, interested in the ecology of our natural regions, would feel obliged to do; but on a more regular and systematic basis, which we believe is the important aspect of the programme. It is important not only that any abuses should be reported, but that this should be done promptly without fail, and that general conditions should be consistently and regularly monitored. The volunteer would expect to become quite familiar with one certain region or park, to visit it frequently, to observe general conditions, hopefully to simply note that all is well, perhaps make various recommendations on possible improvements, and to report anything untoward to the conservation committee, perhaps also directly to the particular park authorities. (Inasmuch as we have no authority of any kind, a volunteer is asked to do no more than this, essentially to observe and report.) If you live near a certain park, or do, or can, or would visit some park fairly regularly, please consider this programme.

The parks concerned are the following: Matheson Lake, Uplands, Mt. Douglas, MacDonald, Goldstream, Topaz, Mt. Tolmie, Logan, John Dean, and Prospect Lake. Also sanctuaries at King's Pond, Quick's Bottom, and public land near Blenkinsop Lake (Thetis Lake, with a society all its own, has been omitted here).

Surely these are not all? No indeed. There are in addition 15 Capital Regional District Parks (see article p.81). However, the C.R.D. have their own Volunteer Warden system, similar to the one outlined above but of a more formal character. If you are interested with respect to one of the CRD parks, they suggest you phone the park headquarters at 478-3344 (see C.R.D. newsletter August/82 and their brochure "Parks for all Seasons".)

Of the 13 regions listed in our program, and the 15 in the C.R.D. program, there is hopefully one that is just right for you. To discuss the matter further, contact someone on the conservation committee, presently including: Wilf Medd, 658-5829; Ann Knowles, 477-3684; Dr. Ross, 598-3614.

TWELVE THOUSAND YEARS OF NATURAL HISTORY IN THE BASEMENTS OF FAIRFIELD

by Richard J. Hebda & Grant R. Keddie
British Columbia Provincial Museum
Archaeology Division

This winter the City of Victoria Capital Improvement Plan involved excavations to install larger sanitary sewers along May Street in the Fairfield district (Fig. 1). As we had hoped for, workers exposed a fascinating sequence of distinct beds or strata (Fig. 2), most prominent of which was a thick layer of shells only 2.5 m (8 feet) below the surface. During a workers' lunch break, we jumped into the excavation pit at the northeast corner of Linden and May Streets and feverishly sampled the various horizons.

The deepest bed consists of a jumble of shells -- some broken and others perfectly intact, still joined at the hinge -- an indication that these molluscs were living in place and not transported from elsewhere. The two most abundant clams in this deposit are *Mya truncata* (Blunt soft-shell clam) and *Saxidomus giganteus* (Butter clam) (see cover photo). The Butter clams are particularly large. Other mollusc species preserved include *Mytilus edulis* (common mussel), barnacles, snails which, based on the neat holes drilled in some of the clam shells, must have been predatory. Some of the clam shells have calcareous tubes winding over the surface, evidence of serpulid sea-worms. Today such an assemblage of organisms occurs in shallow, somewhat protected waters along the coast of British Columbia. Based on radiocarbon dates of shells obtained at Cook Street nearby, we can envisage that 12,000-12,500 years ago a shallow channel separated the Beacon Hill upland from Moss Rocks and Rockland Heights.

This early period after the ice-age was characterized by rapidly dropping sea levels, consequently this "fossil" channel became abandoned. As the sea fell relative to the land the channel must have been dammed -- perhaps by logs or by a sand bar -- for in its place a shallow basin was formed. During the process of abandonment increasingly finer sediments were deposited to form the graded sequence of sand to silty clay above the shell beds. By 11,000 years ago, this remnant basin became a shallow lake supporting aquatic vegetation and inhabited by freshwater snails, *Lymnaea stagnalis* (Great pond snail) and *Gyraulus parvus* (Modest gyraulus). A layer of these freshwater molluscs occurs 1.25 m below the surface.

Throughout the natural accumulation process of silt and plant remains, and perhaps assisted by warmer and drier climates between 10,000 and 6,000 years ago, the lake filled in and the bottom emerged. Eventually marsh and swamp plants occupied this wet bottomland and their remains formed the black peat which occurs from one-half to one meter below the surface. This swamp was still here when Victoria first began to grow as a town. Eventually, however, demand for land necessitated the filling in of the swamp with sand and gravel upon which today's houses were built.

What we have related is only part of the story for in this sequence of sediments, pollen grains have recorded the history of the forest. In our future studies, we hope to reveal this fascinating story and further detail the record of the prehistoric landscape recorded outside the basement walls of Fairfield.

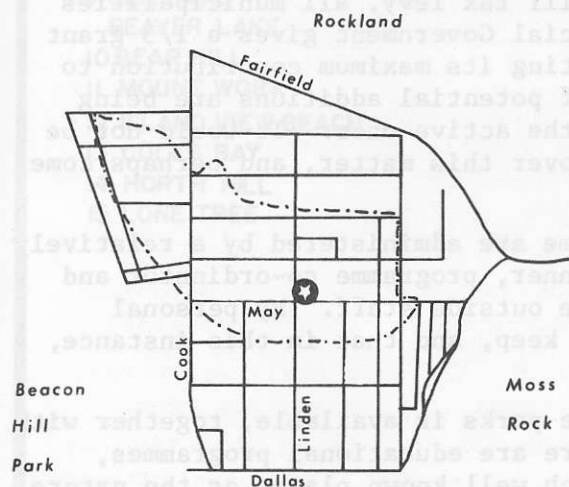
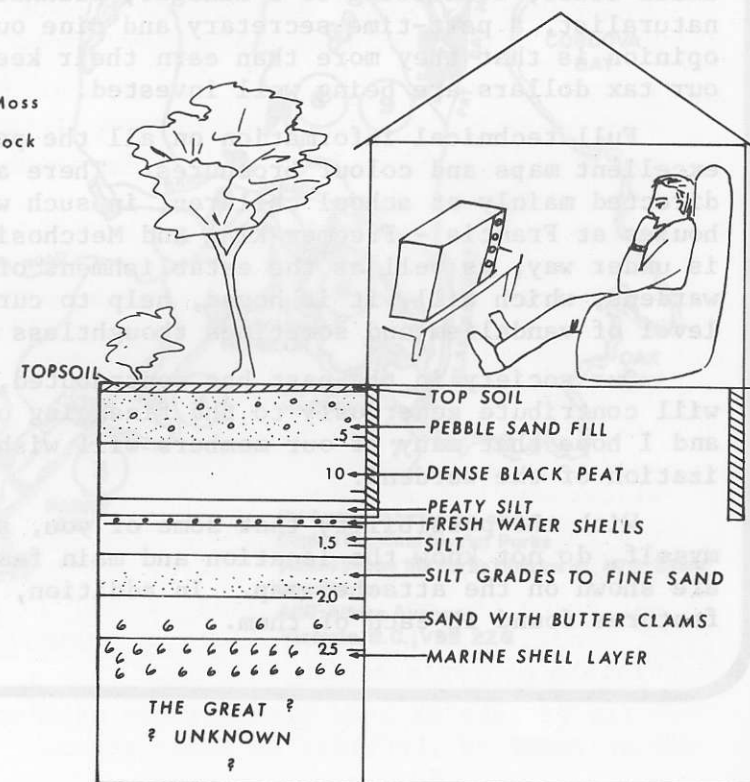


Figure 1

Outline of old Fairfield Swamp.

Figure 2

Sequence of sediment layers at May and Linden Streets, showing position of 12,000 year old shells.



It was as recently as 1965 that the Provincial Government passed the "Regional Parks Act", allowing for the purchase of certain lands for park purposes, and for the extension and completion of the Victoria Scenic Drive.

This was a result of recommendations made by the Capital Regional Planning Board, and in 1966 the Regional District took on the responsibility of acquiring, developing and operating these parks.

Starting with 9 in 1965, the Capital Regional District now administers no less than 15 parks covering approximately 6,300 acres, stretching from East Sooke to Horth Hill at the north end of the Saanich Peninsula.

The programme is financed by a 3/4 mill tax levy, all municipalities sharing in this. In addition, the Provincial Government gives a 1/3 grant towards the cost of new acquisitions, limiting its maximum contribution to any one purchase to \$350,000. A number of potential additions are being considered, Botanical Beach being one of the active ones. It would not be out of order for our membership to think over this matter, and perhaps come up with suggestions for acquisition.

The many facets of the parks programme are administered by a relatively small staff, consisting of a manager, planner, programme co-ordinator and naturalist, a part-time secretary and nine outside staff. My personal opinion is that they more than earn their keep, and that in this instance, our tax dollars are being well invested.

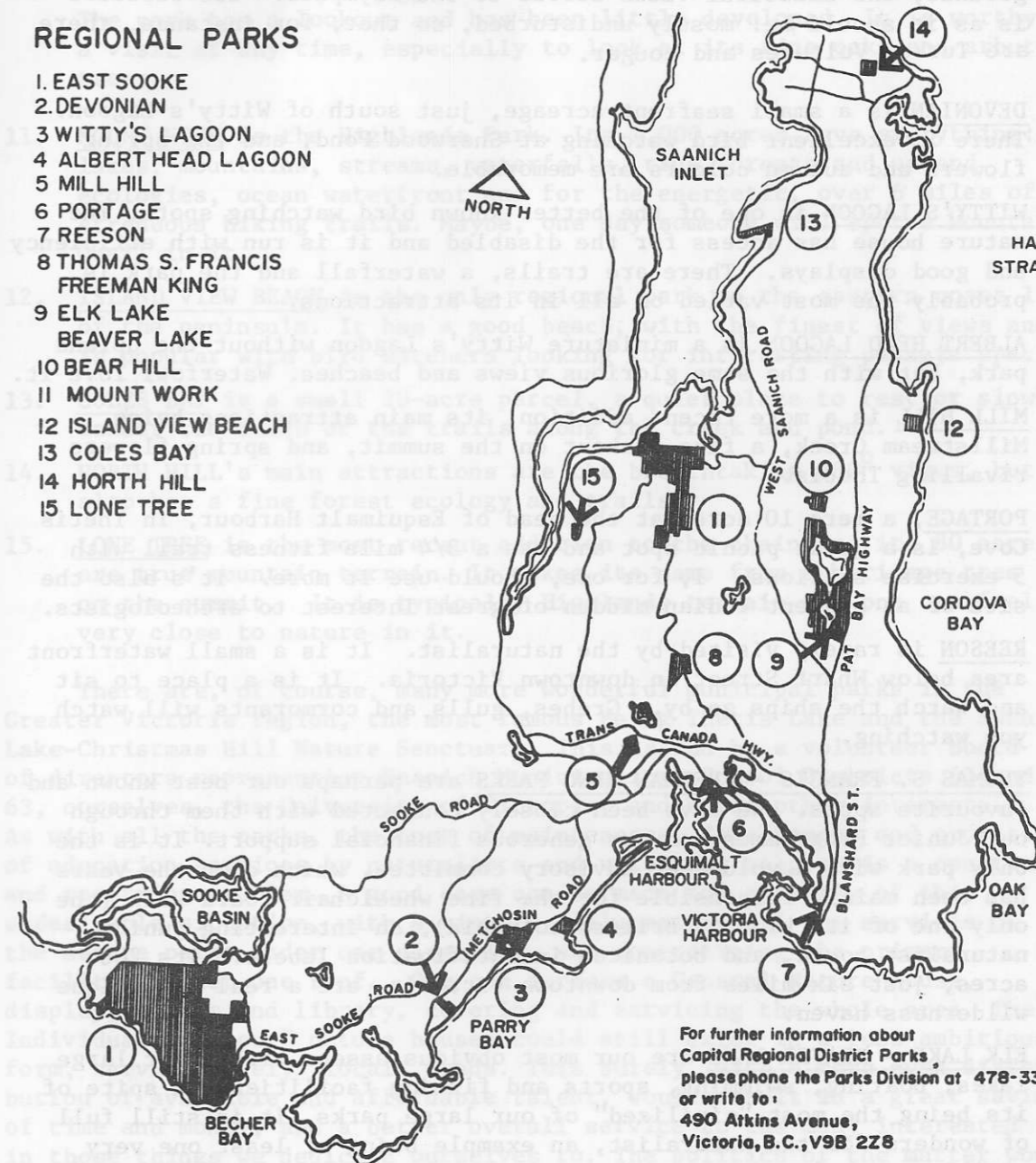
Full technical information on all the parks is available, together with excellent maps and colour brochures. There are educational programmes, directed mainly at school children, in such well known places as the nature houses at Francis - Freeman King and Metchosin Lagoon. A species inventory is under way, as well as the establishment of a system of volunteer park wardens, which will, it is hoped, help to curtail the unfortunately high level of vandalism and sometimes thoughtless misuse.

Our society in the past has contributed, and I am sure in the future will contribute generously to the financing of these educational programmes, and I hope that many of our members will wish to participate in the organization of the wardens.

With the possibility that some of you, as indeed was the case with myself, do not know the location and main features of all the parks, these are shown on the attached map. In addition, I am listing the salient features found in each of them.

REGIONAL PARKS

1. EAST SOOKE
2. DEVONIAN
3. WITTY'S LAGOON
4. ALBERT HEAD LAGOON
5. MILL HILL
6. PORTAGE
7. REESON
8. THOMAS S. FRANCIS FREEMAN KING
9. ELK LAKE BEAVER LAKE
10. BEAR HILL
11. MOUNT WORK
12. ISLAND VIEW BEACH
13. COLES BAY
14. HORTH HILL
15. LONE TREE



For further information about Capital Regional District Parks, please phone the Parks Division at 478-3344 or write to:
490 Atkins Avenue,
Victoria, B.C., V9B 2Z8

1. EAST SOOKE is wild and magnificent. It has 30 miles of trails and over 6 miles of wonderfully rugged Pacific coastline, with beaches, tidepools and overpowering cliffs. There are Salish petroglyphs and burial grounds, and beautiful views across to the Olympics. Its wildlife is as it should be: mostly undisturbed, so that, for instance, there are Turkey Vultures and cougar.
2. DEVONIAN is a small seafront acreage, just south of Witty's Lagoon. There is excellent bird watching at Sherwood Pond, and the spring flowers and autumn colours are memorable.
3. WITTY'S LAGOON is one of the better known bird watching spots. The nature house has access for the disabled and it is run with efficiency and good displays. There are trails, a waterfall and the park is probably the most varied of all in its attractions.
4. ALBERT HEAD LAGOON is a miniature Witty's Lagoon without the upland park, but with the same glorious views and beaches. Waterfowl love it.
5. MILL HILL is a more recent addition, its main attractions being Millstream Creek, a fine lookout on the summit, and spring flowers rivalling Thetis.
6. PORTAGE, a mere 10 acres at the head of Esquimalt Harbour, in Thetis Cove, is a great picnic spot and has a 3/4 mile fitness trail with 5 exercise stations. I, for one, should use it more. It's also the site of an ancient Indian midden of great interest to archeologists.
7. REESON is rarely visited by the naturalist. It is a small waterfront area below Wharf Street in downtown Victoria. It is a place to sit and watch the ships go by. Grebes, gulls and cormorants will watch you watching.
8. THOMAS S. FRANCIS - FREEMAN KING PARKS are perhaps our best known and favourite spots. We have been closely connected with them through our Junior Programmes and our generous financial support. It is the only park with a volunteer advisory committee, which down the years has been mainly responsible for the fine wheelchair board walk (the only one of its kind in British Columbia), an interesting junior naturalist house, and botanical identification labels. Its 200 acres, just six miles from downtown Victoria, are a real and unique wilderness haven.
9. ELK LAKE - BEAVER LAKE are our most obvious assets with their large lakes, boating, swimming, sports and fishing facilities. In spite of its being the most "civilized" of our large parks, it is still full of wonders for the naturalist, an example being at least one very visible osprey's nest.

10. BEAR HILL probably had a bear at some time. It certainly housed a cougar until a few years ago. Its shooting was partly responsible for the recent and sometimes aggravating deer population explosion in Saanich. The park has a lookout and has been little developed. It is worthy of a visit at any time, especially to look at its fine oaks and arbutus trees.
11. MOUNT WORK is the Highlands Park. Its 1,000 acres have everything: lakes, mountains, streams, waterfalls, true forests and upland ecologies, ocean waterfront and for the energetic, over 6 miles of strenuous hiking trails. Maybe, one day someone will spot a Mountain Quail in it.
12. ISLAND VIEW BEACH is the only regional park on the eastern coast line of the peninsula. It has a good beach, with the finest of views and is popular with bird watchers looking for interesting pelagic species.
13. COLES BAY is a small 20-acre parcel, a quiet place to rest or slowly wander the beach or the trails along the creek and pond.
14. HORTH HILL's main attractions are the breathtaking 360° views, but it also has a fine forest ecology and trails.
15. LONE TREE is the most recent addition to the chain and its 80 acres are true mountain terrain. It takes its name from a heritage tree on the summit. It is typically Highlands terrain and one can feel very close to nature in it.

There are, of course, many more wonderful municipal parks in the Greater Victoria region, the most famous being Thetis Lake and the Swan Lake-Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary. This is run by a volunteer board of directors representing Saanich Municipality, School Districts 61 and 63, ourselves, the University of Victoria, and a few other interests. As with all the parks, the cost of maintenance, development and provision of education services by naturalists and volunteer helpers is a constant and recurring problem. A good case can be made for a review of this undesirable situation, with a view to amalgamating all the services of the nature parks under one direction, and centralizing the primary facilities under one roof. One can foresee a Central Nature House, display, museum and library, covering and servicing the whole area. The individual "amateur" nature houses could still exist in a less ambitious form, serving purely "local" needs. This surely, with a more even distribution of available and affordable talent, would result in a great saving of time and money, and a better overall service to the many interested in those things we dedicate ourselves to. The politics of the matter would have to be overcome and a lot of hard work and sell would be needed. I believe that the objective should be continuously kept in mind by all those involved, and hopefully success could be achieved, at least in the lifetime of most of us.

A NATURALIST GUIDE TO THE MAMMALS
OF SOUTHERN VANCOUVER ISLAND

*David Nagorsen,
British Columbia Provincial Museum,
Vertebrate Zoology Division*

Vancouver Island offers a number of small and large mammals for the field naturalist. It has an interesting variety of land mammals including several alien species that were recently introduced by man. The extensive coastline with its numerous islands provides great opportunities for observing various marine mammals.

I have attempted to outline some of the mammals associated with southern Vancouver Island and the areas where they are most likely to be observed. For detailed descriptions of these mammals and their habits, I recommend "The Mammals of Canada" by A.W.F. Banfield or "The Mammals of British Columbia", British Columbia Provincial Museum Handbook No. 11 by I. McTaggart Cowan and C.J. Guiget.

Beaver

This large aquatic rodent is found throughout Vancouver Island. The Beaver is typically associated with fresh water streams and ponds, although it will swim in salt water. Overtrapping and habitat destruction in the early 1900's drastically reduced populations and from 1928 to 1949 the beaver was protected from trapping on Vancouver Island. With its management as a furbearer, populations of beaver have recovered.

A good area for observing the Beaver is Nanaimo Lakes.

Muskrat

This mammal is not native to Vancouver Island and the populations here are the result of introductions from the Mainland. Muskrats were first released at Cowichan Lake in the early 1920's. The Muskrat is now well established on Vancouver Island and it has also been introduced to Pender Island.

Good areas for observing muskrats are the Gorge area, Swan Lake, and Elk Lake.

Vancouver Marmot

The Vancouver Marmot is found only on Vancouver Island where it typically inhabits alpine and subalpine habitats in the Island Range. Because of its rarity, the Ministry of Environment designated this animal as an endangered species in 1980. It is unlikely that the Vancouver Marmot was ever abundant and to what extent its populations are declining is unknown. Fish and Wildlife Branch of the Ministry of Environment is presently attempting to locate and inventory the various colonies.

Vancouver Marmots can be seen at Mt. Washington, and Green Mountain. There is also a captive colony at the Okanagan Game Farm near Penticton.

Eastern Cottontail Rabbit

This rabbit is not native and in fact there are no species of rabbits native to Vancouver Island. The Cottontail was introduced in the Sooke area in the mid 1960's probably from a stock of rabbits from southern Ontario. It has rapidly expanded its range throughout the southern part of the Island and there are now records from as far north as the Cowichan Valley.

The cottontail can be seen in open farmland areas around Victoria, Sooke, and the Saanich Peninsula.

European Rabbit

This is another species of introduced rabbit. The European Rabbit is a domesticated animal and, as a result of escapes or deliberate releases, European Rabbits have been found in the wild on Vancouver Island and some of its offshore islands.

At present wild populations are known to occur only on Triangle Island and Sidney Island. There are also populations in the San Juan Islands that are derived from introductions made in the early 1900's.

Gray Squirrel

This is yet another mammal that has been recently introduced. The Gray Squirrel is an eastern mammal and was first introduced to B.C. in the early 1900's when three or four pairs from Ontario were released into Stanley Park, Vancouver. In the 1960's the Gray Squirrel first appeared on Vancouver Island probably as a result of an introduction of individuals from Stanley Park. Although there are gray and black colour phases in this squirrel, only the gray colour phase has been seen on Vancouver Island.

The Gray Squirrel is confined to the Sooke-Metchosin area and can be seen in the St. Mary's churchyard at Metchosin, Parry Bay, and Devonian Park at Taylor Beach. Look for this squirrel in the garry oak where it feeds on acorns.

Raccoon

This mammal is very common on Vancouver Island and may even be seen in Victoria. It also occurs on Saltspring, Saturna, and Pender Islands. Raccoons often can be seen in and around the Victoria area.

Cougar

This is the only wild species of cat on Vancouver Island. It ranges throughout the Island and is relatively common in some areas but is rarely seen because of its wariness. Cougars are reported from time to

time in the vicinity of Victoria. This past autumn wildlife officers captured a cougar near Santa Clara Avenue in Saanich. The cougar was tranquilized and then transplanted to the Nitinat area. In 1961 a cougar was shot at the corner of Johnson and Government Streets in downtown Victoria.

Elk

The Elk was originally common on Vancouver Island and was even found in the deciduous forest of the southeast coast. Although its range has decreased, small herds are still found on the Island. Elk can be seen at Shaw Creek at Cowichan Lake, and the Nanaimo River valley region.

Fallow Deer

This is a European species of deer. It was first introduced to James Island in the late 1800's. In the 1930's animals were transplanted to Saltspring and Pender Islands and the Alberni region on Vancouver Island. The population on Pender Island and the Alberni area died out but Fallow Deer are still found on James Island, Saltspring Island, and Sidney Island.

Black-tailed Deer

This is the most common member of the deer family on Vancouver Island and is found virtually everywhere on the Island. A good area near Victoria where Black-tailed Deer can be usually seen is the grounds at Fort Rodd Hill.

Black Bear

This is the only bear found on Vancouver Island. Although there are cinnamon, white and blue colour phases in addition to the usual black phase found on the B.C. Mainland, only the black colour phase occurs on Vancouver Island. This bear is widely distributed throughout the Island. A good area for seeing Black Bears is the Cowichan Lake garbage dump.

River Otter

In other parts of Canada, the River Otter is associated with fresh water lakes and streams. However, in this region River Otters are most abundant along the shorelines of the coast. They are strong swimmers even in open seas. A pair of tame River Otters that were taken from Victoria Harbour to Stanley Park Zoo in Vancouver escaped and swam across the Strait of Georgia to Victoria in about three weeks.

River Otters can be seen virtually anywhere along the coast of Vancouver Island. They are frequently observed in Victoria Harbour and along the Gorge.

Sea Otter

Before European exploration, the Sea Otter was abundant along the entire Pacific coast of North America. However, mainly as a result of overhunting, populations drastically declined and by the late 1920's, this mammal was extinct in B.C. From 1969 to 1972, eighty-nine Sea Otters from Alaska were released at the Bunsby Islands off the northeast coast of Vancouver Island. At present there is a population of about 70 individuals at Bunsby Islands and Bajo Point. Sea Otters have also been sighted in Barkley Sound, Race Rocks, and the Victoria area.

Harbour Seal

This seal is very common along the entire coast of Vancouver Island. The Harbour Seal is often found close to shore. Females with young can be found in summer at Race Rocks. In winter Harbour Seals can be seen at Race Rocks, Sidney Island and Chain Islands.

Northern Sea Lion

These large mammals are common in B.C. waters. During the breeding season in summer, adult males with harems of females gather on rocks called breeding rookeries. At this time females give birth to their young and breeding takes place. The only breeding rookeries on Vancouver Island are found at Cape Scott on the north tip of the Island and at Solander on the northwest coast. Non-breeding Sea Lions, usually young males, can be found in summer at Sea Lion Rocks near Long Beach. In winter Sea Lions move closer to the coastline along Vancouver Island. Good areas for viewing Sea Lions in winter are Race Rocks, Folger Island in Barkley Sound, the Saanich Inlet, and around the Gulf Islands.

California Sea Lion

During the summer this mammal is found along the coast of California and Mexico. However, in winter males move up the coast as far north as southern B.C. On Vancouver Island, California Sea Lions can be seen at Race Rocks and in Barkley Sound during winter. Recently a few young males have been seen in summer at Solander on the northwest coast of the Island.

Elephant Seal

The Elephant Seal is the largest of the seals and sea lions found in B.C. waters. During summer months these mammals breed on islands off California. However, in winter males apparently may move as far north as B.C. Male Elephant Seals have been seen at Race Rocks and the Gulf Islands during winter.

Harbour Porpoise

This small porpoise is commonly seen in bays and harbours along the coast of Vancouver Island. It can be seen in Victoria Harbour. The Harbour Porpoise travels in small groups of one or two individuals.

Killer Whale

This large member of the Dolphin family is very common in the coastal waters of B.C. Most killer whales travel in groups called pods that contain from 3-30 individuals. Movement of pods may be related to the movement of salmon, an important food item for Killer Whales. Best area for seeing Killer Whales is in Johnstone Strait, although they also can be seen in the Straits of Georgia and Juan de Fuca.

Gray Whale

This large whale spends the summer months in the Bering and Chukchi Seas. From October to December it migrates southwards to Baja California where females give birth to calves. The return migration northward takes place from late January to May. During the south and north migrations, Gray Whales pass close to shore along the west coast of Vancouver Island. Good areas for observing migrating whales are at Green Point and Portland Point at Long Beach. Although most Gray Whales spend the summer in Arctic waters, a few Gray Whales have been seen near Qualicum Beach during summer.

ANOTHER CASE OF FASCIATION

by Lyndis Davis

In April, I discovered that my forsythia was producing another fasciated branch. It is somewhat deformed for all of its length, and about 4' from the ground it has split into two, and the tops of both branches show a marked deformity - 6-8 'stems' growing together to produce a flat stem 1/2 - 3/4" in width, with many leaves on it. One of the branches has started to curl.

I hope to make a photographic record of the branches over the summer. The same area of the bush produced a fasciated stem in 1980. I was glad to have Katherine Sherman's research printed in the May/June 1981 Naturalist to tell me what had happened the previous summer. Anyone interested? Give me a call.

OBSERVATIONS

by Roy Prior

Hooded Mergansers - This winter, numbers of this species have roosted regularly at a small pond on Kingsberry Crescent, off Richmond. When I arrived there at 5:35 on February 22, night was falling, and 3 Hooded Mergansers were there, along with about 20 Mallards and 20 American Widgeon. In the next hour, they were joined by a further 77 Hooded Mergansers, flying in from the north in small groups, usually pairs, 1 male 1 female, but sometimes 3 or 4 at a time. They came in very steeply to avoid the willows which overhang the water, and touched down, all members of the group seeming to hit the water simultaneously, with a considerable splash. Their first concern was to drink, then there would be a lot more splashing as they performed their ablutions. I assume that this is a favourite roost of a rather large proportion of the local population of the species.

Cedar Waxwings - On February 17, I noticed 150 Cedar Waxwings at the parking lot behind the services building at UVic. What had attracted them was clear to see: a long run of cotoneaster shrubs, their branches thickly clustered with bright red berries. Over the next month, the red patches dwindled day by day as varying numbers of these birds congregated in the willows and flew down to gorge themselves: on March 9 I counted, to my astonishment, over 200. On March 30 I saw one last group of 43: and by then, the berries too had practically all disappeared.

The VN welcomes reports of interesting observations made by readers.

FIELD TRIPSGeology, Saturday February 12

by Harry Davidson

Dr. Brown, of UVic, gave an interested group a short classroom lecture, with charts, illustrating a new approach to the geology of Vancouver Island in terms of the currently popular "tectonic plate" theory of continental migration. Following this, a trip to Rodd Hill area yielded field samples supporting the hypothesis. An added bonus was an exceptional singing performance by a Red Crossbill in full sight of the group.

Witty's Lagoon, Saturday, March 5

by Ed Coffin

Attendance: 22. Weather: good visibility (no rain, no sun). Distance: 4 miles, from parking lot to beach and back.

Birds: 36 species, including: 2 female Hermit Thrushes; 1 Pintail; several Common Mergansers; several Black-bellied Plovers mixed in with a flock of 101 Dunlins; a Varied Thrush; a Pine Siskin; and several Bald Eagles.

Mammals: Numerous Harbour Seals offshore; a Grey Squirrel near the parking lot (this species is introduced and not too well regarded).

Plants: Three kinds of Montia; Storksbill; Salmonberry in bloom already; spring blossoms of Indian-plum (in quantity), White Erythronium, Skunk Cabbage, Oregon Grape, Red-flowered Currant, and Blue-eyed Mary.

Aquatic Biology, Saturday March 12

by Harry Davidson

Dr. Alec Peden led a small group of amateur biologists to Durrance Lake, where he had set out traps, and was able to produce salamanders and sunfish from every one. In an excursion to the bottom of a deep ravine, he located a different, terrestrial species of salamander with orange-red back. This animal could be termed a single-sided salamander because, when displayed on one hand and then rapidly inverted onto the other, it always arrived right side up. A walk around the Durrance Lake peripheral trail completed a very entertaining morning.

North Saanich

by Sally Hamill

On Saturday, March 26th, a grey and blustery day, Bruce Whittington led about 22 of us, including two American visitors, on an interesting outing to Coles Bay Regional Park. There, after a short forest walk, we came to the beach where we found Barrow's Goldeneyes, Red-necked Grebe, Bald Eagles and Red-tailed Hawks. Then we proceeded to Patricia Bay and were rewarded, on a walk around the western end of the airport, with the song and sightings of Skylarks and Killdeer. On the Bay, we saw a large mixed raft of scaup, goldeneyes, White-winged and Surf Scoters, mergansers, Oldsquaw, and, of course, Mallard and widgeon. The morning was climaxed by the sighting on the way to lunch at Bazan Bay of a male Northern Harrier.

NOTICES

The Board of SWAN LAKE-CHRISTMAS HILL NATURE SANCTUARY is holding a BENEFIT DINNER AND NATURE ART AUCTION at the University of Victoria Faculty Club on Friday 14 Oct. 1983. Many of the major artists of Nature Art in southern B.C. will provide original works for the Auction. For further information, phone D.A. Ross at 598-3614.

Dues Renewal: All '82-'83 memberships expired on April 30th. (See notice in March-April issue of the V.N.)

This year, COSEWIC has asked Ken de Smet to prepare a status report on the Merlin (*Falco columbarius*). If you have information on this species which you think would be relevant, particularly long-term observations or regional reports on the distribution, abundance and limiting factors affecting this species, please let me know. Also, if you know anyone who has been involved in hawk-watches or has information on the species, please pass this request on to them. Your assistance in these efforts will be greatly appreciated. Address: Box 14, 1495 St. James St., Winnipeg, Manitoba R3H 0W9.

BIRD OBSERVATIONS

FEBRUARY 1983

<u>No.</u>	<u>Species</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Area Seen</u>	<u>Observer</u>
1	Ruddy Turnstone	1	Oak Bay Marina	Dave Fraser
1	"Eurasian" G-W Teal	4	King's Pond	Keith Taylor
1	Great Horned Owl	5	1456 Courtland Ave.	Tim Zurowski
1	Screech Owl	9	610 Foul Bay Rd.	Ron Satterfield
3	Western Bluebirds	11	Pears Rd.	Leila G. Roberts
1	Franklin's Gull	12	Clover Point	Dave Fraser
1	Yellow-billed Loon	20	Mill Bay	Keith Taylor
1	Turkey Vulture	22	Swartz Bay	H.E. Bauer
1	Snow Goose	25	Island View Rd.	Roy Prior
1	Redhead	27	Martindale Rd.	Alan MacLeod



MARCH

1	Rufous Hummingbird	5	Chatham Islands	Keith Taylor
1	Long-billed Dowitcher	5	Swan Lake	Ron Satterfield
6	"Black" Brant	5	Gotha Point	Roy Prior
2	Golden Eagle	9	Malahat	Ron Satterfield
1	Yellow Warbler	13	Mandarte Island	Dave Fraser & John Fitzpatrick
2	Osprey	16	Swartz Bay	Tony Buckle
1	Swainson's Thrush	23	Metchosin Mountain	Ron Satterfield
1	Barred Owl	26	UVic Woods	M. & A. Slocomb

PROGRAMME

MAY -- JUNE, 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). Anybody having extra space in their car and willing to take passengers, advise Alice Elston.

SUNDAY, MAY 1 Birding, Gulf Islands tour via B.C. Ferries. Leave Swartz Bay at 8:45 a.m. and return 12:30 p.m. Leaderless trip.

SATURDAY MAY 7 Botany. Cattle Point and Uplands Park. Meet Dr. A. Ceska, leader, at Cattle Point at 9:00 a.m.

FRIDAY & SATURDAY, AND SUNDAY, MAY 13, 14, 15 Family Weekend at Miracle Beach. Meet Harold Hosford, Leader, at Nature House at 9:00 p.m., Friday night and at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday morning to discuss plans for the weekend.

SATURDAY, MAY 21 Birding. Francis Park. Meet at Nature House at 9:00 a.m. Leader to be announced.

TUESDAY, MAY 24 Annual General Meeting. Speaker will be Shamus McCann. His talk and slides will be about elephant seals in the Antarctic. Meeting time, 8:00 p.m.

SATURDAY, MAY 28 Botany. Island View Beach. Leaders: Charlie Trotter and Dr. G. Allen.

SATURDAY, JUNE 4 Birding. Dawn Chorus - University of Victoria Woods. Please meet leader, Ron Satterfield, at #1 Parking Lot at 5:00 a.m.

SATURDAY, JUNE 11 Beachcombing and study of the intertidal area. Meet leader, Rick Kool at Ogden Point Breakwater at 9:00 A.M.

SUNDAY, JUNE 12

Birding. Beaver & Elk Lakes. Leader to be announced.

SATURDAY, JUNE 18

Birding. East Sooke Park. Leader to be announced.

SATURDAY, JUNE 25

Birding. Spectacle Lake. Leaders: Anne Knowles and Alice Elston.

Final deadline for submissions to the Magazine for the July/August Issue is May 31.

JUNIOR PROGRAMME

MAY -- JUNE, 1983

MAY 13-15

Weekend at Miracle Beach Provincial Park, 21 km. north of Courtenay. Meet at the Provincial Campground either Friday evening or Saturday morning. Stay at the campground or nearby motel (see below)*. This will be a great natural history weekend. Leader: Harold Hosford of the Provincial Museum and Times-Colonist (see also Senior Programme).

* Miracle Beach Resort, R.R. #1, Black Creek, VOR 1C0
Phone: 337-5171

MAY 28

Mr. and Mrs. Giff Calvert have kindly invited us again to come to their home at 4373 Prospect Lake Road to explore the woods and the pond on the property. Goslings and ducklings should be on display. Bring lunch. 10:00 to 12:30.

JUNE 11

Canoeing at Thetis Lake. 10:00 to 12:30. Meet at the second parking lot by the water. Bring a life preserver if possible and wear soft-soled shoes. Bring lunch.

JUNE 25

We will have a Marine Biology Trip sometime around this date. Details later.