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RARE BIRD ALERT - 478-8534
Phone bird sightings to 478-9715

COVER: by Aaron Drabitt

LONG-EARED OWL

Gordon Head

NOVEMBER 1983

VICTORIA AND SOOKE CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS 1983

Roy Prior

On December 17, a very nearly perfect winter's day, the Christmas Bird Count showed that success, in terms of numbers of species and of individuals observed, may well be largely a function of viewing conditions. The 139 species recorded was equal to the previous highest number, and the number of individuals seen was also very high.

Particularly remarkable were a Sooty Shearwater, a Long-billed Dowitcher, a Northern Pygmy-Owl, two species of sapsucker and a Swamp Sparrow. Also of interest were the high numbers of Trumpeter Swans, Anna's Hummingbirds, Bushtits, Dippers and Western Meadowlarks.

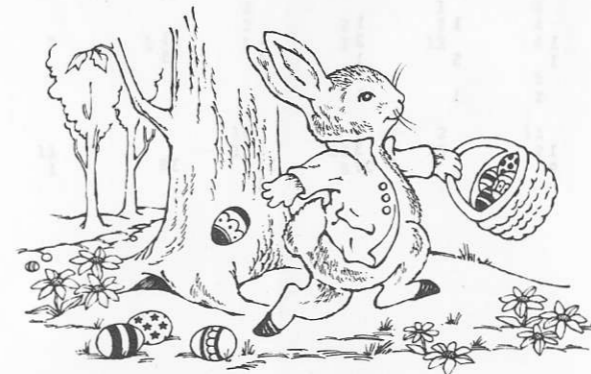
The after-count gathering was also a very pleasant occasion.

This year, for the first time, a count was organized at Sooke, and despite the fact that the number of participants was far lower than those who took part in the Victoria Count, and the fact also that there is far less diversity of habitat in this area, no less than 106 species were recorded.

The weather was mild and conditions good; the highlights, no doubt, were the Barred Owls, 4 Cassin's Auklets, 2 Gray Jays, and the Townsend's Warbler.

The pioneers of this count have set a good target for their successors to beat!

*Mike Swiftlane
 477-5932
 (manager)*



VICTORIA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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VICTORIA WILDLIFE SURVEY - BIRD COUNTS 1982

	Area 1	Area 2	Area 3	Area 4	Area 5	Area 6	Area 7	Area 8	Area 9	Area 10	Area 11
Red-throated Loon						6	4	14		3	6
Arctic Loon			1				6	3		2	6
Common Loon			1			2	6	8		8	7
Pied-billed Grebe	2			19	22	2	6	1			
Horned Grebe	9		2			2	6	1	9		
Red-necked Grebe	8		2			5	20	24		25	57
Eared Grebe						7	1	26		86	11
Western Grebe										1	
Sooty Shearwater							1051			9	20
D-cr. Cormorant	4		15		8	11	50	15	25	53	7
Brandt's Cormorant										121	13
Pelagic Cormorant	1					11	12	20		19	25
cormorant sp.						5					
Great Blue Heron	2		2	2	1	3	9	7	6	15	1
Trumpeter Swan	13		dup	6							
Mute Swan			29		2	11	6		13		
G. White-fr. Goose									4		
Canada Goose	8						51		5		
C (Cackling) Goose							1				
Wood Duck											1
Green-winged Teal	5		36	263	16	53	20	30	22		
Am. Black Duck										1	1
Mallard	205	2	65	93	48	160	305	6	174	12	393
Northern Pintail	2			300	1	24	38		2		
Northern Shoveler	1		2	12	30		2				
Gadwall											6
Eurasian Wigeon				1					1		4
American Wigeon	257		8	63	46	371	108	1	368	144	338
Canvasback							90				
Redhead	1			2				1			
Ring-necked Duck	16			75	7	2	15				
Greater Scaup								2	12	1	
Lesser Scaup									18		15
scaup sp.							106		4		
Harlequin Duck						7	1	34		46	39
Oldsquaw						24	27	10		17	15
Black Scoter											1
Surf Scoter						7	95	22		50	39
White-wing. Scoter						2	110	14		13	3
Common Goldeneye	27		16	2		4	34	9	3	29	2
Barrow's Goldeneye	15		46					2			
Bufflehead	22	1	44	18	5	108	336	17	135	36	70
Hooded Merganser	11		8	15		8	8	21	9	27	
Common Merganser			29	42	15		5	8		1	
Red-br. Merganser	13					16	47	26	2	38	11
Ruddy Duck					1	1					
Bald Eagle (ad)	1	2	3				1				1
Bald Eagle (imm)	1		3							1	1
Bald Eagle (u)						1					
Northern Harrier	1					1			2		
Sharp-shinned Hawk			1	1							
Cooper's Hawk		1		2	1	1			2	1	1
Red-tailed Hawk	3	1	5	1	4	3					
American Kestrel	1										
Merlin			1	1					1		
Peregrine Falcon	1										
Gyr Falcon											
Ring-n. Pheasant		1		3	1				3		2
California Quail		9		27	14	38					
Virginia Rail					1						

	Area 12	Area 13	Area 14	Area 15	Area 16	Area 17	Area 18	Area 19	Area 20	Area 21	Area 22	Area 23	Total
	5	2	2				1	2	5				50
	15		12	190			1		1			7	246
	9	2	4	3			6		9				65
	74	19	19	40	8		3	11					84
	35		3	2			30		36		10		370
			2	1			2		10				222
	6		40	1			1				28	1	5
							15		7				1148
	45	1	12		5		14	22				14	1
	5		8				1					315	301
	82	7	7	15			12		9			156	519
												56	392
		4	1		6	2	3	4	6		9		5
						2	4	13	17				83
						3		2					49
						5		6					66
					65	163	26	219					15
							5						537
						2							6
					24	6	5	47	4				3
													531
	43	114	37	5	380	562	145	1907	575				2
					8	13		6	126				520
					4	1	1	18	17				94
	1	1						36					36
	1334	144	26	63	300	412	134	688	658		39		14
					1			17					5501
													109
													3
													156
													36
	8												282
													137
	36	1	10	1									220
	35	4	10	10									318
	1												2
	37	2	2	14									416
	41			2				49					231
	94	5	5	11									333
													65
	127	21	10	15	18	7	87	2	56				1293
	10	25	3		9	2	75	15	2				271
							315	28					443
	17	12	9	1			20		6			18	236
							6						27
	4	1		4	18			1					28
				2				3				1	11
													3
													2
													7
	1	1					2	1	2				21
							2	2	4				42
							1	3	12				1
													4
													1
													5
													4
	1												1
													1
	8	6	8	11			10	2	11				35
				1			13	28	25				189
								8					10

	Area 1	Area 2	Area 3	Area 4	Area 5	Area 6	Area 7	Area 8	Area 9	Area 10	Area 11
American Coot					20		50		13		
Black-b. Plover							22			98	
Killdeer	1		24	4	1	15	2		5	2	10
Am. Black Oysterc.							5	4		4	1
Greater Yellowlegs						1					
Spotted Sandpiper						4	22	16		49	30
Black Turnstone								5			4
Surf-bird										9	19
Sanderling											
Rock Sandpiper							32		1	74	
Dunlin											
Long-b. Dowitcher				6			12	1	4		
Common Snipe	1	1					2				75
Bonaparte's Gull							30	10	8	75	dup 54
Mew Gull	3		16	2		41	2				
Herring Gull	2		2				2				
Thayer's Gull	250		51		3		1			60	2
Western Gull	3										
W x G-w Gull					1						
Glaucous-w. Gull	3375	4	675	223	80	170	309	450	398	285	302
Glaucous Gull	1		1								
gull sp.	725			750							
Common Murre						2		8		20	157
Pigeon Guillemot						3		2		4	3
Marbled Murrelet						1		2		13	
Ancient Murrelet										1	20
Rhinoceros Auklet										8	
Rock Dove	27	4		7	16		5	55	30	90	115
Band-tailed Pigeon	16	2									
Common Barn-Owl				2							
W. Screech-Owl		1									
Great Horned Owl		2									
N. Pygmy-Owl											
Anna's Hummingbird	1				6	2					
Belted Kingfisher	3		3	3	1	4	5	3		5	
Y-b. Sapsucker											
Red-br. Sapsucker											
Downy Woodpecker	2	1	2	1	11	1		2	3	2	16
Hairy Woodpecker	1		1	1	6				1		2
Northern Flicker	7		8	8	12	10	5	5	10		4
N (Yel-sh) Flicker		2									
Pileated Woodp.	1	2		1	1						
Eurasian Skylark	17										
Steller's Jay	12	9	3	30	29	6	1	9			
Northwestern Crow	975	9	235	40	125	52	55	18	248	19	167
Common Raven	25	4	8	14	6	6	4	3	8		2
Ch.-b. Chickadee	51	27	51	72	95	39	11	28	55	7	84
Bushtit	35	4	36	12	30	6		16	61	61	85
Red-br. Nuthatch	5	4	2	22	9	4	2	2	6		
Brown Creeper	1	1	7	5	2			3	2		11

	Area 12	Area 13	Area 14	Area 15	Area 16	Area 17	Area 18	Area 19	Area 20	Area 21	Area 22	Area 23	Total
	5	3			30		240	15					376
	26	11									18		175
	16	2		8		2	44	16	59		3		204
	7	2									1		26
	6	3											23
	36	4		1			1				12		3
	3												14
	8		2										36
											1		1
								1			1		108
								4	13				1
				1	1	1	5				1		51
	3288	8	67	3	3	9	50	13	8		31	437	439
						1		1			1	4155	7874
	11					31		3			28	1	9
													441
													3H
	90	35	20	186	57	63	987	6440	147		525	50	14871
			500					525					2
	4			1					5				2500
	5		2	1							2	831	1030
	9										8		28
	5										3	1	29
											13	153	192
												1	9
	5												615
		1	34		1								101
													2
													2
													2
													1
	2	1	7	1	2		3	2	1				23H
													39
													2
													2
	1	2	4	4	3	3	7	2		1			68
													18
	11	2	15	4	3	6	16	43	9		4		182
													3
		1	2										11
												70	87
	2	5	10	3		6	5	18					149
	50	1043	76	31	36	1041	527	396	429		3		5575
	2	6	2	7	4	10	18	31					168
	4	46	62	25	2	15	86	158			4		930
	43		52	29	17	36	45	82					687H
		4	8	11		1	10	29					8
		5	3	3	3	4	7	4					127

	Area 1	Area 2	Area 3	Area 4	Area 5	Area 6	Area 7	Area 8	Area 9	Area 10	Area 11
Bewick's Wren	1	1	3	6	28	2		6	12	4	10
Winter Wren	4	4	25	17	26	15		4	11	23	22
Marsh Wren			7	8			2				
American Dipper			7								
Golden-cr. Kinglet	51	4	80	56	90	4	20	1	59	1	108
Ruby-cr. Kinglet	4	1	5	1	17	3		4	2	5	13
Hermit Thrush	1	1	2		3	2		1	1		4
Thrush sp.								1			
American Robin	98	9	6	61	167	260	57	160	199	15	473
Varied Thrush	37	4	31	10	43	38	5	8	8	4	22
Water Pipit	2										
Cedar Waxwing									3		2
Northern Shrike					1						
European Starling	506		15	83	68	120	55	150	90	180	279
Hutton's Vireo			1								1
Yellow-r. Warbler					4						1
Wilson's Warbler											1
Ruf-sided Towhee	19	3	6	22	76	9	2	15	14	8	21
Savannah Sparrow											
Fox Sparrow	11	1	11	12	69	10		8	6	9	16
Song Sparrow	6	9	24	15	120	11	2	12	16	15	19
Lincoln's Sparrow	1			1							1
Swamp Sparrow					1						
White-thr. Sparrow											
Golden-cr. Sparrow	4	3	4	14	34	6		14	17	9	4
White-cr. Sparrow				8	1						1
Harris' Sparrow				1			3				
Dark-eyed Junco	340	9	96	109	453	187	33	100	173	12	103
D-e (S-c) Junco				15	2						
Red-w. Blackbird				15	145			1		1	1
Western Meadowlark	8						2			3	
Brewer's Blackbird	2		25	25							
blackbird sp.						50					
Purple Finch	4		5	15	42	11		8	4		
House Finch	42	4	1	15	29	4		4	32	7	20
Red Crossbill			35	90	2						
Pine Siskin	66	34	25	74	145	175	20	60	32		100
American Goldfinch					8						
Evening Grosbeak			7		7						
House Sparrow	16			27	14	9		12	28	21	122
Total	7393	181	1840	2829	2301	2177	3354	1537	2392	1945	3527

	Area 12	Area 13	Area 14	Area 15	Area 16	Area 17	Area 18	Area 19	Area 20	Area 21	Area 22	Area 23	Total
	8	2	6	5	6	6	17	32	7				63H
	6	1	20	10	2	2	23	49	20		1		162
				3				11	4				285H
													35
													7H
	4	17	23	24	2	12	82	131	47		2		818
		2	2	6		1	4	9	1				80
			5	1			2	1					24
													1
	220	67	241	31	19	51	347	557	183				3221
	12	10	28	14		3	33	29	23				362
									35		3		40
	4	3											12
									1				2
	3	307	54	157	114	157	197	528	958		3		4024
													1
													5
													1
	13	18	28	8	23	15	34	44	11		1		390
						5			6				12
	9	12	23	1	8	5	22	21					254
	6	4	15	13	15	11	25	25	15		8		386
		1				1		1					6H
													1
		1	1										2H
	8	14	10			21	15	19	29				225
		4	3			4		8					32
						1							3
	8	58	171	75	54	84	281	325	182		25		2878H
													2
						9			2				174
				18		10	6		20		1		68H
				25		34			110				226
													50
	3	18	2			21	11		2				147
	7	19	23	48	79	7	65	132	80		5		623H
		11		1				179	4				322
		55	96	5		15	275	606	140				1923
		4					2		6				20
													14
	1	44	53		5	42	67	11	2				474
													0
Total	6026	2240	1908	1168	1346	3050	4766	13867	4535	0	1730	5710	75822

SOOKE BIRD COUNT

Red-throated Loon	14	Red-tailed Hawk	11
Arctic Loon	65	American Kestrel	1
Common Loon	86	Merlin	2
Yellow-b. Loon	1	Peregrine Falcon	1
Loon sp.	2	California Quail	103
Pied-billed Grebe	15	Ruffed Grouse	1
Horned Grebe	139	Grouse sp.	2
Red-necked Grebe	66	Black-b. Plover	12
Eared Grebe	1	Killdeer	47
Western Grebe	97	Am. Black Oysterc.	72
D-cr. Cormorant	194	Spotted Sandpiper	2
Brandt's Cormorant	141	Black Turnstone	94
Pelagic Cormorant	295	Surfbird	18
Great Blue Heron	27	Rock Sandpiper	10
Mute Swan	1	Dunlin	2
Wood Duck	2	Mew Gull	277
Green-winged Teal	20	Herring Gull	3
Mallard	238	Thayer's Gull	11
Northern Pintail	18	Western Gull	1
Northern Shoveler	3	W x G-w Gull	5
Eurasian Wigeon	3	Glaucous-w. Gull	1826
American Wigeon	1077	Glaucous Gull	1
Ring-necked Duck	7	Gull sp.	20
Greater Scaup	82	Common Murre	715
Lesser Scaup	21	Pigeon Guillemot	27
Scaup sp.	3	Marbled Murrelet	26
Harlequin Duck	49	Ancient Murrelet	7
Oldsquaw	32	Cassin's Auklet	4
Black Scoter	9	Rhinoceros Auklet	3
Surf Scoter	202	Rock Dove	19
White-wing. Scoter	57	Band-tailed Pigeon	1
Scoter sp.	1	Barred Owl	1
Common Goldeneye	155	Anna's Hummingbird	2
Barrow's Goldeneye	43	Belted Kingfisher	24
Bufflehead	642	Red-br. Sapsucker	8
Hooded Merganser	52	Downy Woodpecker	16
Common Merganser	72	Hairy Woodpecker	13
Red-br. Merganser	65	Northern Flicker	101
Bald Eagle (ad)	13	Pileated Woodp.	7
Bald Eagle (imm)	5	Gray Jay	2
Sharp-shinned Hawk	9	Steller's Jay	120
Cooper's Hawk	3	Northwestern Crow	655
Accipiter sp.	3	Common Raven	64

Ch.-b. Chickadee	482	Ruf-sided Towhee	74
Bushtit	109	Fox Sparrow	94
Red-br. Nuthatch	54	Song Sparrow	157
Brown Creeper	16	Golden-cr. Sparrow	35
Bewick's Wren	16	White-cr. Sparrow	6
Winter Wren	143	Dark-eyed Junco	869
Golden-cr. Kinglet	916	Red-w. Blackbird	142
Ruby-cr. Kinglet	16	Purple Finch	54
Hermit Thrush	6	House Finch	48
American Robin	577	Red Crossbill	70
Varied Thrush	343	Pine Siskin	2704
European Starling	1457	American Goldfinch	1
Hutton's Vireo	1	Evening Grosbeak	58
Townsend's Warbler	1	House Sparrow	46
	GRAND TOTAL	16,862	

ORANGE-BILLED GLAUCOUS-WINGED GULLS IN VICTORIA

David F. Fraser

Biology Dept.

University of Victoria

During the winter of 1982, there was a large number of orange-billed Glaucous-winged Gulls observed in the Victoria area. In general these gulls are striking in their brilliant orange soft part colours. In the most heavily marked individuals the bill, eye-ring, eye-lids, and legs are brilliant acrylic orange, in startling contrast to the normal colours of Glaucous-winged Gulls where the bill is ivory yellow, the eye-ring is dull red and the legs are a flesh-pink colour (Harrison 1983).

In other respects, these gulls have normally coloured plumage. Gulls with these characteristics were first reported as occurring in the Vancouver area in the late fifties with one bird in the Vancouver garbage dump. By 1962 the number of birds with orange bills and legs occurring in the Vancouver area was estimated at about 30 birds (Vermeer *et al* 1963). These birds were present in Vancouver only during the fall and winter and it was presumed that they bred further to the north and used the Vancouver dump as a wintering area.

I had never seen this colour morph of the Glaucous-winged Gull in Victoria before the winter of 1982, and was surprised when I started to count the numbers of birds matching this description. In March of 1983, I counted 23 lots of 1000 Glaucous-winged Gulls and found that the average contribution of orange-billed birds to the whole population was about 3 percent of the total.

It seems that it is not known whether this abnormal colouration is a product of the diet of these birds or a genetic abnormality in these gulls. Vermeer et al (1963) assumed the colouration had a genetic basis but presented no data as to why they believed this was so.

If these birds have this soft-part colouration due to some genetic difference, this could provide some interesting grounds for future research. Many large gulls choose their mates on the basis of soft part colour, especially eye-ring and eye colour. In addition, the amount of contrast shown between the eye and the eye-ring has been shown to be important in the selection of mating partners in large gulls (Smith, 1979). Could it be that these birds are assortively mating on their breeding grounds based on this isolating mechanism? If so, then could this explain the apparent increase in their numbers amongst birds wintering in the Pacific Northwest (this morph was also sighted in the Seattle area during the past winter).

If this is the case, then one would expect that the numbers of these birds will continue to increase as their offspring mature and become breeding birds.

I would appreciate any reports of Glaucous-winged Gulls with brilliant orange legs and beaks that are seen in the summer months in order to find where these birds are breeding. It seems likely that it is north of the Vancouver and Victoria areas, as there seem to be no sightings of this type of bird during the breeding season, and because the gull colonies in these areas are relatively well studied.

Literature Cited:

Harrison, P. 1983: Seabirds - An Identification Guide. Houghton Mifflin Co. Boston. 448 p.

Smith, N.G. 1967: Visual isolation in gulls. in Birds, readings from Scientific American. Freeman and Co. San Francisco.

Vermeer, K., R.F. Oldeker, M.D.F. Udvardy and K. Kelleher. 1963. Aberrant Glaucous-winged Gulls. Condor 65(4) 332-333.

SOME LIKE IT COLD

Kaye Suttill

They survive in the fiercest winds, the foulest weather; they are often needledly perennials and go through their entire life cycles in a few months or even weeks, dormant-to-stay-alive the rest of the year up in the Far North. Yet some of these Arctic species are also at home in our more southerly habitats, even living on Southern Vancouver Island. The survival adaptations of top-of-the-world species are also logical life assists when they pioneer the exposed rock faces and scree of our mountain heights in B.C.

Many of the Arctic/Alpines hug the ground to escape biting winds, yet bloom as big as they can to assure pollination and reproduction. Bright colouring is said to be a plus for insect attraction, though I think this is countered by the tenacity of white species to hold their own, too, like mountain avens and some saxifrages. However, these have other survival mechanisms, offsetting the lack of colour attraction. Group living in mats or cushions raises the surface temperature and decreases wind speed within, creating its own micro-habitat, and hairs on stems and leaves seem to help along early flowering, lengthening the active life span.

As a genus, the saxifrages seem to have what it takes for Arctic/Alpine survival, as well as in the case of the Tufted Saxifrage life on the rocks of Juan de Fuca Strait. This species, technically Saxifrage *Caespitosa*, can grow on almost any land habitat in the Arctic, reaching the farthest north of all plant life. Saxifrage *bronchialis*, the so-called common saxifrage, is at home from our southern B.C. mountains right up north to the Arctic, while the Purple Saxifrage (*S. oppositifolia*) which joys us so in the Rockies and southern Yukon, is also the very first bloom to herald the High Arctic spring and survives on the northernmost land of our planet Earth, too. The Yellow Mountain Saxifrage, though usually living in streams or lake verges in the Rockies, also exists above treeline and into the High Arctic. Linnaeus, when he found it up in Lapland, named it "aizoides" meaning always alive, and always alive it is, from northern Europe to Greenland to the breadth of western Canada.

Moss Champion utilizes a cushion lifeform, densely matted. It's on a slowed-down life clock, like other Arctic species, not even starting to flower until it is at least 10 years old, and has a growth rate of 7 inches in diameter in 25 years under favourable conditions. Besides growing on mountains in southern B.C., sometimes completely surrounded by snow, it ranges widely in the High Arctic, also reaching the northernmost land on earth.

Thriving in battering winds, adjusting to the steepest slope, able to extend itself by producing new shoots to carpet surrounding rocks, as well as contributing nitrogen to often sterile rock fragment soil, throughout the Rockies, Mountain Avens (*Dryas octopetala*) is also at home in the High Arctic on bare rock, not even needing snow cover. Could it perhaps have survived the Ice Age by living on rocks above the glacial cover?

The Arctic Poppy seems to have special survival adaptability in the Arctic; hardiest of colonizing plants, it is at home on rock and gravel hills, and even on outwash glacier plain, waving in the biting wind on its 6 to 12 inches of hair-covered stem. Yet where we have noted it in several sites above treeline in the Rockies, it is more ground-hugging, propagating well in the windswept scree.

Back to basics, that "elemental" plant union of algae-fungi, the lichen pioneers life on bare rocks in our southerly High Country and the same species are also flourishing up in the High Arctic where other plants can't make it, for lichens' existence is blocked only by perpetual snow and ice, lichen being our highest living plant form, both in elevation and latitude. Like all true Arctic flora, lichens are edible too; boiled in water they make a nutritious, easily digestible food. Liquorice Root Fern, Sweet Coltsfoot, Mountain Sorrel, and of course the various vacciniiums are also edible plants of the Arctic which we find down in southern B.C. too, and of course Labrador Tea.

Other Arctic-Southern B.C. flora include Sea Thrift, Bog Cotton, Yarrow, Swamp Laurel, Butterwort, Sedum Roseum and many others.

If you are interested in checking out Arctic-to-You plant distribution read Circumpolar Arctic Flora by Nicholas Polunin and correlate with your own field observations.

WINTER BOARDER

by Charlie Trotter

He arrived on December 19 (just too late for the Bird Count) and has been one of the best customers at our bird-feeder ever since. He is an Orange-crowned Warbler. He survived the cold weather on fat which he eats in considerable quantity - at least 6 times a day. The resident Bewick's Wren is his pal; they go scrounging together for insects among the leaves on the ground and through the low shrubs. This is a pretty risky business as a large persian cat from two doors away sometimes hunts through our yard.

Our little warbler shows no fear of anyone or anything, coming within 18 inches of us watchers at the window. His lack of discretion may account for his arrival on January 20 without a tail - no doubt a near miss from a cat or hawk.

His abbreviated shape presents a comical picture - especially when he takes off after a flying insect.

With milder weather coming, it would seem that our little winter boarder will survive.

TWO HUNDRED AND FORTY-FIVE IN 1983

by Keith Taylor

In 1983, I decided to break the existing record of a one-person-observation of number of species on southern Vancouver Island; I couldn't have picked a better year!

The boundaries set aside (the challenge area) are Jordan River, east and north to Somenos Lake, Duncan, all lands in the mountains in parallels to these spots. None of the Gulf Islands are included. All birds may be counted on the "M.V. Coho" up to Ediz Hook including American waters, but not inside or on the Hook. The Tsawwassen Ferry cut-off point is just before Active Pass.

To reach the total of 245 species in this area, one must see all of the common, uncommon and even rare species, plus a large number of very rare and accidental species. I managed all the usual rare species but Rough-legged Hawk (none seen), Sandhill Crane, Stilt Sandpiper (none seen), Pomarine Jaeger (none seen), Pygmy Owl, Saw-whet Owl (I have never seen this species on V.I.), Nashville Warbler, Yellow-headed Blackbird, and Pine Grosbeak (none seen).

In the very rare and accidental category, I managed to see 16 of the 26 species seen. To reach a total of 250, I believe 20 accidentals would be necessary.

How much time and money, you ask? I birded every morning from seven 'til nine and the regular weekends; i.e. anyone could put in as much time. Money - I'm afraid to work that one out!

Some of the best times of the year were spent on "M.V. Coho" (many trips were required to get the pelagic species) when both storm-petrels and many fulmars and shearwaters were seen.

Thanks to the Victoria Hotline and to all others who made it possible. 250 in '84?

FIELD TRIP

Twenty-seven people arrived on a very dull morning for the field trip to Elk Lake, which was notable especially for the expertise of the leader, Dave Fraser. Of particular interest to some were his comments on the ecological importance of the woodpeckers, whose ability to penetrate wood provides nest sites for so many species of bird, and on gulls.

He told us that colour is crucial in mate-selection, and that it is believed that imprinting so, is the mechanism by which the young gull acquires this behaviour. Apparently, hybrid gulls learn to recognize their parents by the colour of their heads, and they will seek out as partners gulls of the same species as the parent of the opposite sex. Which prompted one fascinated listener to remark that this fact must have inspired the popular song:

*"I want a gull
Just like the gull
That married dear old Dad."*

NOTESOUT OF THEIR WORLD ...

Los Angeles: The sudden appearance of rustic buntings, birds from Asia, on the west coast of America is baffling the experts. The bunting normally breeds in Siberia and migrates to China and Japan in the winter.

"Basically, these birds are on the wrong side of the globe," said ornithologist Ron Lavelle. "And we are at a loss to explain why they have come here."

... *Sunday Express*, London, January 29th, 1984

Interesting to see that the bird at Jordan River would appear to be not the only one who has gone astray.

And talking of the Rustic Bunting, it seems that Tim Zurowski is determined to get a photographic record, not merely of all the rarities that turn up here, but of all the birds that occur in our area. Anyone interested in acquiring copies of these photographs should phone him at 479-1410.

NOTICESNational Geographic Bird Field Guide:

This excellent guide can be ordered through the Society at a very good price - \$16.00 (Canadian). Phone L. Davis - 592-1341 by March 20th.

Questionnaire Survey

by *Christine Hall*

Recently, questionnaires were distributed to randomly selected members of the V.N.H.S. concerning non-consumptive (appreciative) wildlife-oriented recreation. Thanks to those who have already returned them. To those who received one, but have not yet had time to complete it, I urge you to do so. If wildlife management in B.C. is to become more oriented towards non-consumptive uses, the managers require data concerning preferred activities, locations, etc. Also, in these times where increasing pressure is being placed upon wildlife and their habitat by forestry, mining, etc., it is imperative that a case be built up for the preservation of this resource on the basis of its value to humans. I hope you agree with me on the importance of this information and feel it worthwhile to complete and return the questionnaire.

If you have any queries or have mislaid your questionnaire, please do not hesitate to phone me at 474-4529.

Thetis Lake Nature Sanctuary Association

March 15/84 - General Meeting at 8:00 p.m. at the Newcombe Auditorium. Helen Vieser will show slides "Underwater Experience and Queen Charlottes Adventure".

April 19/84 - General Meeting at 8:00 p.m. at the Newcombe Auditorium. Frank Fish will show slides, "Blue Hills of Massachusetts".

1984 BIRD OBSERVATIONSDECEMBER

<u>No.</u>	<u>Species</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Area Seen</u>	<u>Observer</u>
1	Yellow-billed Loon	1	McNeill Bay	Mike Edgell
1	Cattle Egret	1	Lamont Road	Keith Taylor
1	Barred Owl	1	Seagirt Park	Peter Axhorn
1	Snow Bunting	2	Ross Bay	Ron Satterfield
1	Short-tailed Shearwater	2	Clover Point	Keith Taylor
2	Red Phalarope	2	Clover Point	Keith Taylor
1	Wilson's Warbler	3	River Jordan	Tim Zurowski
1	Black-legged Kittiwake	3	River Jordan	Tim Zurowski
1	Glaucous Gull	3	Goldstream River	Roy Prior
2	Barn Owls	3	Holland Avenue	Keith Taylor
1	Northern Goshawk	4	Spartan Road	Scott Fowler
1	Redhead	4	Courtland Flats	Ray Williams
1	Harris' Sparrow	5	West Saanich Rd.	Marj. Crowther
1	"Whistling" Tundra Swan	6	Hastings Flats	Ron Satterfield
1	Rusty Blackbird	6	Martindale Road	Ron Satterfield
2	Northern Fulmar	8	Albert Head	Don Hanson
2	California Gull	8	Tod Creek Flats	Keith Taylor
1	Townsend's Warbler	10	River Jordan	Keith Taylor
1	Orange-crowned Warbler	11	River Jordan	Dave Stirling
4	Cassin's Auklet	11	Race Rocks	Mike Shepard
1	Sooty Shearwater	17	Albert Head	Christmas Count
1	Lapland Longspur	18	McIntyre Road	Keith Taylor
1	Brown Pelican	20	Pedder Bay	John Upton
1	Short-eared Owl	24	Martindale Road	Alan MacLeod
62	Eurasian Skylark	24	Martindale Road	Alan MacLeod
1	Gyr Falcon	26	Martindale Rd.	Tim Zurowski
1	Western Sandpiper	30	Clover Point	Mike Shepard
2	Gray Jay	31	Grass Lake	Keith Taylor

JANUARY

No.	Species	Date	Area Seen	Observer
70	Red Crossbill	8	1456 Courtland Ave.	Tim Zurowski
1	Townsend's Solitaire	9	Island Road	Jack Todd
4	Brown-headed Cowbird	14	McIntyre Road	Keith Taylor
1	Whimbrel	14	Foot Tudor Ave.	Keith Taylor
1	"Red-naped" Sapsucker	16	Orcas Park Terrace	Beryl Holt
1	"Black" Brant	18	Finlayson Point	Charles Harper
1	Yellow-rumped Warbler	20	McKenzie Ave. at Shelbourne Ave.	Ed Coffin
200	Eared Grebe	21	Gordon Head	Keith Taylor

Prior to this report, Swamp Sparrows were classified as accidental, with only four records for Vancouver Island. During December and January, there were at least nine individuals reported from seven different locations.

Yellow-billed Loons and Barred Owls were also reported with greater frequency.

PROGRAMME -- MARCH & APRIL, 1984

Please meet at the location specified for each trip -- if no location given, field trips will meet at the Mayfair Lanes, corner of Oak and Roderick -- at the specified time. No cars can be left at Mayfair Lanes. Always take a lunch and dress according to the weather.

If you have any problems, please contact Alice Elston (592-1400) or Harry Davidson (479-1286). Always phone the Rare Bird Alert (478-8534) the week before a trip that you anticipate taking in order to obtain full particulars or details of the changes that may have been made. Changes cannot be avoided.

FRIDAY & SATURDAY
MARCH 2 & 3

The Wildlife Film Series will present Bob Roney, Audubon Lecturer, whose topic will be "Yosemite and the High Sierra."

SATURDAY
MARCH 3

Birding on Saanichton (Cordova) Spit with Keith Taylor as Leader. Meet Keith at Mayfair Lanes at 8:00 a.m.

TUESDAY, MARCH 13

Our Annual General Meeting will be held at 8:00 p.m. at the Newcombe Auditorium. Election of Officers will take place at this time. Dr. David Nagorsen, Curator of Mammals at the British Columbia Provincial Museum, will speak to us about the mammals of Vancouver Island and he will also show us slides. Do not miss this very important meeting!

SATURDAY, MARCH 17

Birding at Beacon Hill Park. No leader trip. Meet at the Zoo in the Park at 9:30 a.m.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 28

Birders' Night -- Cedar Hill Junior Secondary School at 7:30 p.m. Programme: Keith Taylor, Shorebird Identification in the Victoria Checklist Area; Reuben Ware, Spring Bird Sounds. For more information, call Reuben Ware, 385-2803.

SATURDAY, MARCH 31

Join Harry Davidson on a birding tour of the Gulf Islands via the British Columbia ferries. As the ferry schedules for this date are unknown at the time of printing, please check with the Rare Bird Alert for further details.

FRIDAY & SATURDAY,
APRIL 6 & 7

The Wildlife Film Series is very pleased to present a lecturer well known to most of us - Wayne Campbell, Associate Curator of the Vertebrate Zoology Division of the British Columbia Provincial Museum. He will discuss the natural and unnatural history of owls. Come to hear and see, "Silent Wings, Big Eyes".

SATURDAY, APRIL 7

Be sure to join Dr. Chris Brayshaw for a walk up Mill Hill to view the spring flowers. Meet at Mayfair Lanes at 9:30 a.m. This date may have to be changed so please check the Rare Bird Alert for details.

TUESDAY, APRIL 10

Dr. Richard Ring, Professor of Entomology, University of Victoria, will speak and show slides about "Butterflies" at our general meeting which will be held at 8:00 p.m. in the Newcombe Auditorium.

SUNDAY, APRIL 15

Join Harold Hosford and Neil Dawe for an interesting visit to Marshall Stevenson Wildlife Sanctuary at Qualicum Beach. Meet Harold at Mayfair Lanes at 8:00 a.m.

SATURDAY, APRIL 21

Don't miss joining Leon Pavelick on his annual trip to view the pink lilies at Sutton Creek Wildflower Reserve. This has become a very enjoyable annual event. Meet Leon at Mayfair Lanes at 8:30 a.m.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 25

Birders' Night at Cedar Hill Junior Secondary School at 7:30 p.m. This will be the final meeting for the year.

SATURDAY, APRIL 28

Birding at Martindale Flats with Alan MacLeod. Check the Rare Bird Alert for full details concerning this trip.

During the past few months, we have put together Nature Diaries, and should now be keeping track of different activities taking place, especially with winter almost over. In the next few months, we have a variety of activities planned. Let's have as good a turnout to these as for the past year. Any new members are very welcome! Juniors, bring along a friend who might be interested.

Now an item for seniors and parents to think about. We have almost finished our year as co-ordinators and have advised Mary Richmond that we will not be continuing for the 1984/85 season. If any of you feel that you wish to take on the job, please contact Mary or either of us. Your help would be appreciated.

The programme for the Spring is shown below:

SUNDAY, MARCH 4

1:00 P.M. There are two topics on the programme for this day at Francis Park. Cathy Carr will present a slide show on South Moresby Island. You are probably aware that many people would like to see part of that area made into a wilderness park; Cathy's presentation will show some of the features that make it attractive. Also, Dannie Carsen will take us on a hike and discuss small mammals (shrews, voles, etc.) and, we hope, capture some in his live-traps so that you can observe them before we let them go. Meet at the Forester's hut.

SUNDAY, MARCH 18

1:00 P.M. Salamander Migration. Alex Peden will lead this programme. Meet at his house next to the Durrance Lake Parking Lot. Try to find a book that tells you about salamanders and other amphibians, so you can learn something about them before then.

SATURDAY, MARCH 31

7:00 P.M. (Note the time change.) Meet at the Dominion Astrophysical Observatory on West Saanich Road. Chris Ackman is going to present a programme dealing with stars and planets. We hope the night will be clear enough to look through the telescope. Dress warmly.

SUNDAY, APRIL 15

1:00 P.M. Marine Biology. Helen Vieser has agreed to show some of her slides on marine life. She will also be diving to bring up live specimens for us to examine. Steve Colwell will be assisting her to identify them. We will also be taking a beach walk, weather permitting. Meet at 2670 Queenswood Drive.

SUNDAY, APRIL 29

1:30 P.M. Mitchell's Sheep Farm. Back by popular demand at Mr. Mitchell's farm. We hope there will still be lots of baby lambs. If it is a nice day, we will hike at Witty's Lagoon afterward.

SATURDAY, MAY 12

(to be confirmed) We are trying to book Fran Benton to give another reptile presentation at Swan Lake. It seems that everyone who went last time wants to go back and touch the snakes again.

SUNDAY, MAY 13

Mother's Day. There won't be a formal Junior Naturalist programme that day, but take your mother, and maybe your grandmother, for a walk through Francis Park or Thetis Lake Park to see the spring flowers. Remember that you are in a park, so look but do not pick!

SUNDAY, MAY 27

1:00 P.M. Final programme for the season. There will be a beach campfire and picnic. Ellie Boisvert will lead "nature spirit songs". You will learn how to light and look after a campfire. Place to be confirmed.

It is good to see that some of you are using your nature diaries. Here are some notes to show you what others are writing in their books.

Observations, January 8, 1984

Jennifer Lewthwaite, age 10-1/2. "At the swamp we saw something like a cave, plants that grow in groups and claw marks."

Brian Lewthwaite, age 6-1/2. "Mosses are very green on the ground because so wet. Ferns mostly brown. Some buds on bushes. Grasses green because they are protected. Huckleberries new buds showing - mostly without leaves. Fungus - bright orange, felt slimy, filled with liquid. Spiders spinning webs."

James Talbot, age 7. "White flat fungus, 3 cm. wide on dead branch. A little slug, 1 cm. long was eating the fungus. Ants are all hiding in ant hills."

Jennifer Talbot, age 9-1/2. "I saw a sword fern with 51 leaves. It has yellow spots on the back. In the summer, the cave has no water in it but it had lots of water in it today, being winter."

Claire Gilbert, age 8-1/2. "I saw cave with water, saw a lyre tree, saw a pond, and a squirrel."

Joshua Deliva, age 8. "This is a sword fern. The bracken fern is brown and the sword fern is not."

Observations January 29, 1984

Jennifer Bocking, age 9. "I saw some broom. There were no flowers on it."

Katie Burrage, age 8. "I went on a hike. I saw a lot of moss. It was growing on the ground and on bark. I tried to pick it up but I dropped it because it had a spider on it."

Jane Morrison, age 7. "We went on a hike. I saw lots of trees - fir, maple."

Bree McConnell, age 7. "We went on a nature hike. I saw an owl scat and a bird nest."

Kris McConnell, age 10. "I saw a robin. It was red and brown. I also saw a pine, maple and cedar tree."

Let's see everyone with their diaries at each programme. Try to add some notes each week.

RAY AND NANCY ADDISON

