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VICTORIA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY



View of Cambridge Bay

G.F. (Bob) Houston

Arctic Adventure

By Dr. G.F. (Bob) Houston Contest Winner

When a friend and colleague said in the spring that he was thinking of flying to Cambridge Bay in the Northwest Territories and asked me if I would like to come, I jumped at the opportunity to visit an area where I knew at that time of year there would be many interesting birds nesting.

I checked in Godfrey's *Birds of Canada* and found that roughly 45 species nested in the Cambridge Bay area, many of them being migrants that passed through Victoria in the spring and fall.

We left Victoria on a beautiful sunny morning, June 14, in a single-engine Beechcraft Bonanza, and flew north over the Coast Mountains and then the Chilcotin and Cariboo areas to Fort St. John, where we refuelled before flying on to Yellowknife. After a short stop there, we pressed on north to Cambridge Bay. The terrain after Yellowknife became more and more desolate and consisted of literally thousands of small lakes in the tundra. Some of them were still frozen, and they varied enormously in size and shape. We were flying at 10,000 feet, so we were unable to make

out any animal or bird life, but we presumed there must be caribou and smaller animals and birds. We passed over Bathurst Inlet, which was icebound, although cracks showed in the ice everywhere. There is a lodge in the inlet, very expensive I believe, but they cater to visitors who wish to see some of the wildlife and birds of the area, and they have a very interesting programme. Visitors are flown in from Yellowknife.

We approached Cambridge Bay on Victoria Island at 8 p.m. and landed on a gravel runway there in clear skies and sun. The first bird I saw on the airport ground was a Lapland Longspur, and I was to see plenty more of them and in fact find about three nests - on the ground, quite open but made of dry grasses and lichen and lined with a few feathers. The eggs were pale pinkish in colour with rusty spots at the larger end.

We were taken to our billets and had a hearty meal, and I immediately went out on to the tundra searching for birds. There were plenty about - mostly Sandpipers, Golden Plover, Black-bellied Plover, Horned Larks, King and Common Eiders, Old Squaw and Pintail. After walking for a few hours I found it was 2 o'clock in the morning and still broad daylight, with sun about 10 degrees above the horizon to the north, so I went off to bed - and had difficulty getting to sleep.

(continued on page 3)

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In Memoriam

We have lost another of our longtime members of the Society, Mrs. Gladys Soulsby, who was prominent in the activities of the Society for many years and was President in 1958-1959. Her chief interest was the possibility of affiliation of all the B.C. societies. This was eventually accomplished at a meeting on May 11, 1963, with a membership of seven societies. By 1987 this had increased to thirty. The Bulletin of the B.C. Nature Council (this name was afterwards changed to the Federation of B.C. Naturalists) was edited by Mrs. Soulsby for the first five years, from 1963-1968.

She was forthright, imperious and lovable, and we enjoyed many extended birding excursions with her and her husband, Harry, who predeceased her by some years. He was a retired Naval Commander and also a talented artist in both painting and sculpture.

Gladys was one of the first members of what came to be known as the Tuesday Group, which met regularly every week at the foot of Bowker Avenue for the past thirty years, and continues to do so.

Gladys will be missed by her many old friends.

Eleanore and Albert Davidson

May 17, 1987

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Opinions expressed by contributors to the Victoria Naturalist are not necessarily those of the Society.

Letters

Andrew and I were delighted to have been asked to judge the entries for this month's competition. It was a difficult task but there was a clear winner. Dr. Houston's account of his trip to the Arctic was both informative and interesting. We hope that he enjoys his prize!

May I compliment you on the high standard of the articles in The Naturalist. The magazine is a delight to read. It gives useful information to members of the Natural History Society and contains much interesting material for amateurs such as ourselves. I'm sure that the members of the society are delighted to have a magazine of such high quality.

Yours sincerely,

Christine Rushforth, Llandaff Pl., Victoria

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS JULY 24

continued from "Arctic Adventure", cover

Clear skies and a cool breeze greeted me when I went out after a quick breakfast the next morning. One needed a parka, mitts and a woolen cap, as it was quite chilly. Snow Buntings were about in the town singing, and one pair I found nesting in a large 4-inch drainpipe in the back of the house I was staying in. On the way out of town, about 15 feet off the gravel road I watched a pair of Horned Larks building a nest under the edge of a piece of cardboard. There was unfortunately an awful lot of garbage of all kinds lying about.

Out of town on the tundra I put up several small Sandpipers - I think the commonest was the Baird's - and found several nests, all with four russet-coloured eggs. The birds performed the usual broken-wing ploy but I was quite successful in locating their nests. Semipalmated Plovers also appeared to be nesting but I was unsuccessful here.

Golden Plover were about, but no nests were found; however, I did find a Black-bellied Plover's nest with four large dark green blotched eggs; the parent bird made an awful fuss when I was near the nest.

Amongst the other birds seen were the three types of Jaeger, Long-tailed, Pomarine and Parasitic, the former being the most common and quite tame. They would sit on the ground and allow me to approach within about 20 or 30 yards. They did not appear to be nesting; in fact, I think a visit a couple of weeks later in the month would have produced more nesting birds.

The King Eiders were paired off but did not seem to be nesting, as there was a lot of ice still on the lakes. Probably another week or two and they would have nested. Apparently after mating the males fly off to the sea and leave the whole business of rearing the brood to the females. The

males looked very splendid in their gorgeous, colourful plumage.

One Sandpiper I positively identified was a Stilt Sandpiper. That was quite a thrill as I had never seen one before, but it was comparatively easy to recognize in its breeding plumage.

One day we took a trip out on 3-wheel ATV's. I sat on the back of one driven by the Wildlife Biologist there, for a bumpy but enjoyable ride over the tundra to a lake where there were supposed to be lots of birds. We saw Tundra Swan, Sabine's Gull, Arctic Tern, Red Phalarope and numerous Sandpipers, Ruddy Turnstone, and Golden and Black-bellied Plover. Willow Ptarmigan - still pure white - were also seen.

On one of my hikes over the tundra with my friend we came upon the remains of a Shaman (witch-doctor) lying in a box on a small hill. Parts of the mummified remains were scattered around the box, a forearm still showing the marks of tattoo on the parchment-like skin. It is possible that an arctic fox had disturbed the corpse.

On my last day, the school principal told me he had found a Rough-legged Hawk's nest in a rocky knoll about six miles out of town - it had three eggs in it - would I like to see it? You bet I would! We had to leave Cambridge Bay that evening, but I thought we would have time for the trip. We drove three miles out of town and then got out and hiked at great speed over the tundra about three miles. As we neared the nest site there were no hawks around, which seemed odd to me, and when we reached the nest we found it had been robbed - a great disappointment.

On the way back we saw a flock of Snow Geese and found a Canada Goose nest with four eggs. Several Semipalmated Sandpipers sprang up from the tundra, but we couldn't spot the nests. We arrived back after a strenuous seven-mile hike, boarded the plane and headed home after a memorable three-day stay in which the sun never went below the horizon and we never saw a cloud.

I missed several birds which I had hoped to see - Snowy Owl and Gyrfalcon, to name just a couple.

Our return to Yellowknife was uneventful. After taking off we flew a few miles inland over Victoria Island, hoping to see some musk-ox we had heard were in the vicinity. But no luck, so we headed south. After a night in Yellowknife, we visited the new Museum of the North there. It is most interesting and worth a longer visit than we were able to give it. A final bird note: we found a Yellow Warbler on her nest just outside the museum.

The leg from Yellowknife to Fort St. John was rather hairy, as we ran into a storm and had to climb to 13,000 feet where we bounced around like a cockleshell and ice formed on the wings and windscreen. However, after about three quarters of an hour of this we came out of the clouds, landed at Fort St. John for a refuel and then came on to Victoria. We arrived at 7:15 p.m. Three most interesting and exciting days in the Arctic!

Harbour Porpoises (*Phocoena phocoena*) Around Victoria

By Robin William Baird

Harbour porpoises are one of the most common cetaceans found locally, but few people see them, or perhaps properly identify them. Canada's smallest cetacean, averaging around 5 feet, is usually shy of boats and typically travels in small groups of 1 to 3 individuals, although groups of up to 100 have been recorded locally (Calambokidis et al., 1985).

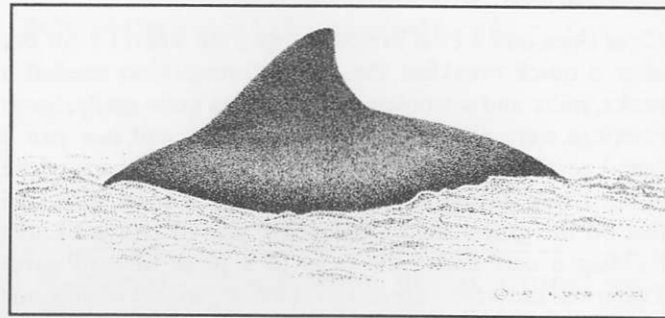
Harbour porpoises are an in-shore animal, feeding in shallow water on schooling fish. They have a small, dark, triangular dorsal fin, and when they surface they have no noticeable blow. Usually all you can see is the dark dorsal fin and body. Visible on stranded individuals, or if they rise further out of the water, is the grayish-brown side and whitish belly. When feeding in large groups on prey very close to the surface, they can sometimes make many splashes and show much of their body. They have no noticeable beak such as is seen in many species of dolphins. The harbour porpoise has spade-shaped teeth, one of the major characteristics that separate porpoises from dolphins, which have conically shaped teeth.

A cetacean that harbour porpoises might be confused with is the Dall's porpoise, but there are some obvious differences. First, harbour porpoises do not travel at high speeds like the Dall's porpoise, which goes along throwing up a "rooster-tail" of water. Most often you only see a harbour porpoise surface once or twice and then disappear. A second difference is that most Dall's porpoises have white markings on their dorsal fin (although the occasional individual with an all-black dorsal fin is seen in this area, such as the individual which washed up May 21, 1987, at French Beach Provincial Park). Third, harbour porpoises very rarely approach boats. I have had two wake-riding once, however, and they've been reported bow-riding, spy-hopping and leaping on occasion as well (Sekiguchi, 1986).

Sightings are common almost anywhere around Victoria. There are reports from Victoria and Esquimalt Harbours, off Dallas Road and Ten Mile Point, in Cordova Bay and in Haro Strait. These cetaceans appear to be present year-round.

Harbour porpoises do not receive much publicity. You don't see articles and photographs in many magazines, like you do of killer whales. One reason may be that they are very difficult to photograph. Although I have had many sightings, I have yet to get a good photo. Very few photographs of live free-swimming animals are available. Harbour porpoises have been kept in captivity, but most of these have only lived for a few months or years.

There have been four strandings of harbour porpoises around southern Vancouver Island this spring. Three reports in Victoria, one in February and two in May, plus one stranding in Campbell River in May, make probably the largest number of single strandings of harbour porpoises recorded in this area over such a short period of time. An autopsy on the harbour porpoise stranded in Campbell River, performed by Ken Langelier, DVM., of the Island Veterinary Hospital in Nanaimo, the Cetacean Watch Society Nanaimo representative, revealed an apparently healthy adult female which had recently given birth. No noticeable cause of death was found. Neither was a cause of death found in the February stranding, although in that case the head had been removed by persons unknown and has not been recovered. Toxicity tests undertaken on the February specimen revealed low levels of most of the heavy metals and toxic chemicals tested for. However, without anything to compare the results to, nothing can yet be determined. Results from tests performed on the other three harbour porpoises and on a Dall's porpoise which washed up May 21, 1987, at French Beach Provincial Park should give a better view into the range of chemical levels and their significance.



The question still remains: are the four recent strandings the result of a disease, pollution, man-made causes, or just a natural occurrence? Many incidental catches in gill-nets are reported in the greater Puget Sound area (Everitt et al., 1980). Pollution is thought to be the cause of harbour porpoises' virtual disappearance from Puget Sound (Calambokidis et al., 1985), where they were once the most common cetacean (Scheffer and Slipp, 1948). Are harbour porpoise numbers increasing in this area, and is the increase in the number of strandings just a result of the larger population size? Only increased research and reportings of sightings will tell.

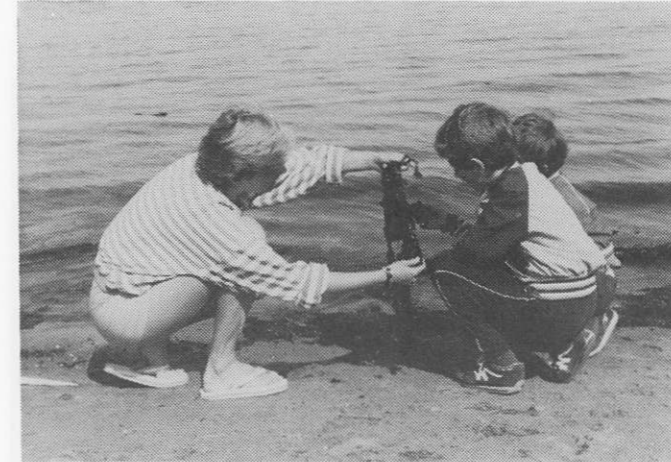
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Seaside Explorations - A Program for Children

By Carol Bosy

During one of my first visits to the Pacific coast in 1980, I had the opportunity to delight in some of the most pristine coastlines of British Columbia. My awe and love for the ocean and its inhabitants were conceived during this visit, which turned out to be the impetus for my later environmental involvement.



Upon completion in Ontario of my degree in Biological and Environmental Science, I decided to venture out to the western regions of Canada to do some exploring. Planted in my mind was the seed of hope that the Pacific Northwest had not yet ravaged its environment with secondary and tertiary industries, as Ontario had done. During my adventures along the coastal and interior areas, I was delighted to find that much of the regional landscapes had escaped the inevitable encroachment of man's industrial artistry. My attention, however, was quickly drawn to some of the local marine issues which seemed to be commanding the headlines of the local papers. Hastily I proceeded to become involved with local environmental and political groups. After limited involvement and much careful analysis, I decided that the political arena was not the most effective way to create a change in our perceptions, attitudes and consciousness. It somehow seemed more pressing that we become a personal example of our environmental morals and beliefs, before we could efficiently manoeuvre any political change.

Using my personal interests and educational background, I decided in 1985 to develop a marine awareness program which would help individuals develop their environmental sensitivity. This program, SEASIDE EXPLORATIONS, was designed to enhance children's perceptions and responses to their physical environment. During the one-week programs, the children explore the intertidal and subtidal shorelines, bike to various types of beaches, visit local marine-based industries, cook clam chowder and Indian bread, visit the B.C. Provincial Museum's biology labs and

research departments, and learn about seaside survival. The children in the programs are old enough to work cooperatively in a group situation as well as respond to the chosen environments. During this summer's programs, an added adventure will compliment the week's smorgasborg of activities. An overnight camp-out on Discovery Island has been included in the Basic and Advanced programs, and there will be video productions for the returning students.

It is my hope that through producing such opportunities for our children we can truly work towards making a difference in our relationship with this magnificent but finite earth on which we live.

Note: Carol Bosy, Biologist and Outdoor Education Specialist, is working in conjunction with the B.C. Provincial Museum in order to make this program available to the public. If anyone is interested in finding out more about the program and how your child can become involved, call Seaside Explorations at 389-0442.

Sea Bird and Marine Mammal Censusing To Be Undertaken Off Victoria This Summer

Daily censuses of sea birds and marine mammals off the Victoria waterfront will be undertaken this summer by VNHS members Robin Baird and Pam Stacey while working as naturalists aboard a new water-based tour company running trips out of Victoria. Distribution and numbers of marine birds and mammals will be recorded. Photographic records of any rare species will be obtained. Research on marine mammals will include photoidentification of individual whales, recording of vocalizations, and recording of dive times and travel patterns.

Regional Parks Information Line

The CRD Parks Department has recently initiated a 24-hour recorded-information line. By dialing 474-PARK (474-7275) you can have access to information on CRD nature house tours, dates and times of nature walks, special park events, and natural history sightings of interest. For further information you can call the Programs Coordinator at 478-3344.

News of our former editor and vice-president, Roy Prior Jo-Ann and Roy are delighted to announce the birth of their son Kenneth

Two New Mammals for Goldstream Provincial Park

By David F. Fraser

Within the last three years two new species of mammals, the Eastern Grey Squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*) and the Hoary Bat (*Lasiurus cinereus*) have been recorded within the boundaries of Goldstream Provincial Park, just north of Victoria.

Eastern Grey Squirrel

The Eastern Grey Squirrel was first noticed by Park staff in the summer of 1985, with one grey-phased individual present in the campground at the south end of the park. By the beginning of the summer of 1986 there were at least four animals using the campground area and the ridge immediately to the north. On August 6, 1986 there was a black-phase adult Eastern Grey Squirrel in the campground, apparently the first record of this colour phase from the southern Vancouver Island population (Nagorsen 1986). On August 28 a road-killed Eastern Grey Squirrel was found near the Picnic-ground at Goldstream (specimen deposited in the collection of the Biology Dept., University of Victoria), and by October the species had spread throughout the Goldstream Estuary. At least 20 individuals were present in the park in September including small animals which were presumably this year's offspring.

Eastern Grey Squirrels are not native to Vancouver Island, and the population, the result of a 1960's introduction (Nagorsen 1986), seems to be expanding its range, with recent sightings from East Sooke Park through Metchosin and out to Goldstream (B.C. Provincial Museum sighting cards and pers. obs.). As the population continues to expand it seems likely that this species will become part of the fauna of the Saanich Peninsula and expand northward up the Malahat (to merge with the introduced population in Parksville and Qualicum?). Naturalists can help document the spread of this species by reporting sightings to the Provincial Museum or to myself.

Hoary Bat

On August 27, 1986 I found a live Hoary Bat near the Goldstream Nature House hanging upside-down in a big-leaved maple (*Acer macrophyllum*) while I was unlocking a gate.

The bat dropped out of the tree at about 9:00 P.M. and hovered momentarily in front of my vehicle headlights. I recognized the animal immediately by its silver fur, tawny face and short round ears rimmed in black. This represents the first record for Goldstream Park. There are seven other sight records or specimens from Vancouver Island at the



Hoary Bat on Big-leaved Maple. David F. Fraser © 1987

B.C. Provincial Museum, and this record fits in with the pattern of an early August (5 records) to mid-September (2 records) migration through Vancouver Island of this species. This is similar to migration timing seen in Manitoba (Barclay 1984). There is also one specimen in the National Museum of Natural Sciences collected in Victoria in October (van Zyll de Jong 1985).

This species may be much more common in Victoria than the available records indicate, as its silver fur matches lichen-covered branches and it tends to fly late in the evening (Shump and Shump 1982).

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Pelagic Birds in the Inner Juan de Fuca Strait

by K. Taylor and C. Harper

Although Victoria does not face the open Pacific, a number of pelagic species find their way up Juan de Fuca Strait to our area, where they are sighted from such promontories as Clover Point, Ten-Mile Point and Albert Head, from leisure craft and commercial fishing vessels, and from aboard the M. V. "Coho", the ferry that plies the Strait between Victoria and Port Angeles, Washington.

In 1983 we began a regular schedule of trips aboard the M.V. "Coho" for the purpose of discovering the status of pelagic species in the inner Strait. Trips have been taken in all months of the year, but concentrated in March and in September through November, partly because of schedule limitations (there is no same-day run during the winter months) and partly because of the evidence of peak bird activity during the fall months.

As with pelagics anywhere, the complete story of their movements here in the inner Strait is not yet fully known, but at least the basics can be outlined. The best time of year to add pelagics to your yearlist is from mid-September to late November, with mid-October showing peak numbers of individuals and species. The most frequently-encountered pelagic species are Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel, Sooty Shearwater, Northern Fulmar, Red-necked Phalarope, Parasitic Jaeger and Ancient Murrelet. Littoral species that are abundant or regularly seen from the ferry in season include Common Murre, Rhinoceros Auklet, Marbled Murrelet, Pigeon Guillemot, and our three species of cormorant, as well as waterfowl and gulls. Rarely seen pelagics include Leach's Storm-Petrel, Cassin's Auklet, Red Phalarope and Tufted Puffin. During the year of El Nino (1983), a few Short-tailed Shearwaters were added to the list. There were also single observations of Pomarine Jaeger and Sabine's Gull.

For those with wider interests, the usual marine mammals seen from the ferry were Harbour Seal, Dall's and Harbour Porpoise, and occasional Killer Whales and Steller's and California Sea Lions.

Most pelagic species are seen during fall migration period; their occurrence this far up the Strait may be weather-related, the birds being either blown in during storms or lost in heavy fogs. (In the fall of 1986, pelagics were very scarce when the weather was unusually fine.) Again, fluctuating food resources and such as El Nino conditions are certainly factors contributing to "invasions": the sudden influx of large numbers of individuals such as the Sooty and Short-tailed Shearwaters and Fulmars in 1983 (El Nino), the hundreds of Fork-tailed Storm-Petrels in various years, and possibly the thousands of Red Phalaropes in 1982.

With such a narrow line of dissection as the route taken by the "Coho", very little can be said about distribution within the inner Strait. Storm-Petrels and Fulmars are most often seen in the area of swell south of Race Rocks and north of the mid-channel buoy. Most pelagics are encountered here on the morning trips to Port Angeles; on the afternoon return trips, most are seen north of Race Rocks, closer to Victoria. Possibly the back-eddy and tide-rip accesses food for the birds in this latter area. Many pelagic specimens collected in the past were taken at Albert Head and William Head, where congregations of individuals still occur. Small numbers of Cassin's Auklets winter in the Race Rocks area. Mike Shepard (pers. comm.) notes that at least occasionally in winter, more pelagics (i.e. Sooty Shearwaters) may be seen in the tide-rip area southeast of Discovery Island.

SPECIES ACCOUNTS

Short-tailed Albatross Accidental. Two specimens from the 1880's, one of which is from William Head in June.


Black-footed Albatross Accidental. One off Port Angeles in September, 1952, recorded in the journal *Seaswallow*. There is a second record mentioned as seen from the M.V. "Coho" (Ed Moody?), but no details of this sighting exist. It is most likely that this species has never been seen within the Victoria checklist area; mention of this species by sports fishermen usually refers to Shearwaters, for which they often use the name "albatross".

Northern Fulmar This species is uncommon but recorded every year. In most years it is seen on 50 - 75 percent of "Coho" trips from mid-October to late February; the best time to see it is from the third week of October to the third week of November. There is one July record.

Pink-footed Shearwater Accidental (unconfirmed). One was recorded at Clover Point on September 22, 1958 (A. Poynter) and another seen from the Victoria Golf Club course on July 15, 1980 (R. Satterfield).

Sooty Shearwater Seen every year, though erratic in numbers from rare to abundant. Seen from early September (rarely, early August) to late December, with most records in September. Frequently seen from shore between September 8 and 26, although in 1984-86 most records from the

(continued on page 8)



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Continued from "Pelagic Birds", page 7

"Coho" have come much later (November - December). Accidental in May. This species is recorded throughout the Strait of Georgia and into Puget Sound. As a note of interest, there is a record of a partially albinistic (piebald) Sooty from Clover Point on September 16, 1983; so beware of hasty calls on 'light-bellied' shearwaters!

Short-tailed Shearwater Accidental. A specimen was collected at Albert Head on October 24, 1891, and another at William Head on February 23, 1901. Sight records occur from October 18 through February 11. In the fall of 1983 small numbers invaded the straits and were seen as far as Vancouver and well into Puget Sound. In the past, dark shearwaters seen from December through February were automatically considered more likely to be this species than Sooty Shearwaters. This is not the case: Short-tailed Shearwaters are accidental in all seasons, and all dark shearwaters should be considered Sooty until proven otherwise.

Black-vented Shearwater Accidental. Two specimens from October 24, 1891, one from November of the same year, and one from February of 1895, all taken at Albert Head.

Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel Irregular in small numbers, one or two birds seen on 25-50 percent of "Coho" trips, usually from early September through late October but most likely during September. On the other hand, there were no "Coho" records in 1986. This species has been recorded from early March to early November, and is also erratically numerous, with hundreds seen in October 1963, July 1975, and March to May 1985. It has also been recorded from the Strait of Georgia.

Leach's Storm-Petrel Very rare from the M.V. "Coho" and in the Juan de Fuca Strait. Dates of area records are: February 22 (dead), March 17, June, July 5, October 1-13-24-27, November 15, and December 4 (dead). Accidental to the Strait of Georgia but more frequent in Johnstone Strait.

Red-necked Phalarope A rare (erratically, common) May migrant and common or abundant fall migrant, beginning in early July and peaking in August and early September, with the latest records in late October. Seen commonly from shore, but more abundant offshore. Also seen in the Strait of Georgia, where it is a rare spring and uncommon fall migrant.

Red Phalarope Regular, rare to uncommon (abundant in 1982) fall migrant, and rare winter visitor from early October to early December. Infrequently seen from the "Coho" and casual in other straits.

Pomarine Jaeger A very rare fall migrant from mid-July through mid-November, with one May record. Most often seen in September. Very rarely seen from the "Coho"; also recorded from the Strait of Georgia.

Parasitic Jaeger An accidental spring migrant from May through mid-August, and a common fall migrant from September through mid-October with stragglers rarely staying

into December. Infrequently seen from the "Coho" and recorded uncommonly through the Strait of Georgia.

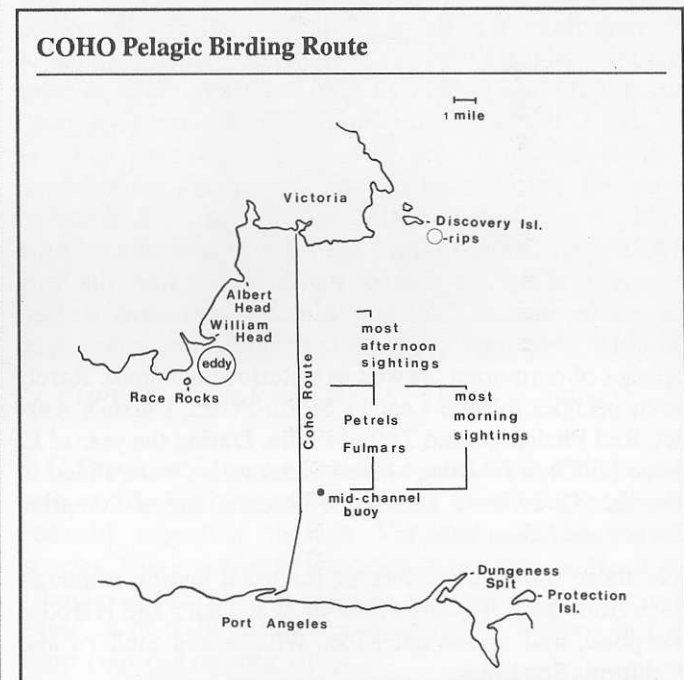
Long-tailed Jaeger A rare fall migrant (recorded more often than Pomarine) from early August through late October, most often in September and October (Victoria). Seen throughout all straits, but not yet recorded from M.V. "Coho".

South Polar Skua An accidental fall visitor from early October through late November. One "Coho" record on November 22, 1981. Also recorded from Vancouver.

Black-legged Kittiwake Regular in the northern straits south to Campbell River, scarce or absent from the Strait of Georgia, and recorded in Juan de Fuca Strait in all months except August. Reliably seen at Jordan River from November through March. In the past, seen frequently from the "Coho" and from Clover Point, but now absent.

Red-legged Kittiwake Hypothetical. One reported June 7, 1979, in Victoria (a sub-adult) by M. and V. Goodwill.

Sabine's Gull Rare fall migrant from September through late December, with additional records from May through August. On February 11-12, 1985, three adults in partial breeding plumage (dark heads) were seen (K. Taylor, V.



and M. Goodwill), for the first Canadian overwintering record of this species. Seen in all straits, with most records from September to late October, but only rarely seen from M.V. "Coho". Sabine's Gulls were once more regular at Clover Point sewer outfall.

Arctic Tern A (very?) rare fall migrant in all straits from late July to mid-October; accidental in May. Never seen from the "Coho". A small colony exists at Jetty Island, Everett Harbor, Washington.

Kittlitz's Murrelet Accidental. One recorded and photographed at Ogden Point, Victoria, November 24, 1985, through April 10(12), 1986.

Ancient Murrelet Seen in large numbers during fall migration in October (rarely, late September) and November, from shore and from the M.V. "Coho". A common winter visitor until early February, with stragglers into late April; rare individuals are seen from early July to mid-September. Occasional in all other straits.

Cassin's Auklet Occasionally seen from M.V. "Coho" from late September through late February, best from late November through early February (do not count on this one!). There is a local winter congregation of a few birds at Race Rocks. The species has been seen at Victoria in all months. A few summer and possibly breed at Protection Island, Washington, and these birds may account for some of the very rare summer records from Victoria and from the "Coho". Accidental in the Strait of Georgia and a rare but regular migrant in Johnstone Strait.

Parakeet Auklet Accidental. There is an unconfirmed sighting of two birds in breeding plumage at Dungeness Spit, Washington, from April 15, 1978, reported by Dory and Stan Smith.

Tufted Puffin Rare summer breeder, with small colonies on the Washington State side of Juan de Fuca Strait, including Protection Island, and at B.C.'s Mandarte Island; it arrives in late April and departs in late September, with one March and one December record. Best seen from Clover Point in June and July; very rarely seen from M.V. "Coho". Accidental in the Strait of Georgia.

Horned Puffin Accidental. The records are: two at Comox on November 19, 1930; one at Seymour Narrows on August 18, 1957; at Victoria on August 12, 1964, and June 27, 1973; at Oak Bay on May 11, 1979; and two on Constance Banks off Victoria, June 4, 1979.

NOTE For those interested in taking the M.V. "Coho" minipelagic trip, the ferry leaves Victoria from 430 Belleville Street and travels to downtown Port Angeles. Departure times and frequencies vary seasonally; same-day return trips can only be made from mid-March through late November. Return fare for a foot passenger is \$14 CDN at the time of writing. Crossing time is 1 hour 35 minutes each way.

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Oliver - Osoyoos Naturalists Entertain

By V. Guernsey and Dorothy McCann

Some 60 B.C. Naturalists from both east and west in the province, including 6 from Victoria, enjoyed the warm hospitality of the Oliver - Osoyoos Naturalists on May 16, 17 and 18. The three days of hiking, birdwatching and botanizing in the valley, which looked its finest in the brilliant sunshine, were great.

We saw an interesting slide show of the flora and fauna of the Ecological Reserve. The slide show was prepared by Sheila Bull. We heard about their efforts to bring back the Burrowing Owls to the valley, which has been done with some success. We even saw two on a fence. We also heard how Sherri Klein, with help from the club, is raising money to build an enclosure for injured birds.

On Saturday, Sherri led a small group to see the pictographs near Vaseux Lake, while the majority, led by Daphne Malins, climbed to Black Mountain to bird and admire flowers and the scenic views.

Sunday the hardier types climbed to White Lake Heliopad, and another group went to Anarchist Mountain. The biggest crowd took the easier route to the Ecological Reserve, led by Joan and Harold King. That evening a sumptuous pot-luck supper was served to over 100 people in the orchard-garden of Alice and Dave Munday.

On Monday the Naturalists headed for McIntyre Bluff for a terrific view of the whole valley. A smaller group birded around Rattlesnake Lake. Here the birders found a few of many highlights. In a grove of Western Black Beech, we observed an aggressive display of Rufous, Black-chinned and Calliope hummers and a few huge wasps, all fighting over the sap oozing down the trunk of a tree. We stood and watched this natural hummingbird feeder for some time. Later a Ruffled Grouse in the grey phase, a Northern Three-toed Woodpecker and a Western Wood-Pewee held our interest.

We saw about 100 species altogether. It was a superb weekend, put together by a small club of 40 members.

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CRD PARKS SUMMER PROGRAMS 1987

INTERPRETATION PROGRAMS

NATURE WALKS - Join the C. R. D. Park Naturalists for interesting explorations of the beauty and wonder in your Regional Parks.

From seashore snoops to archaeology digs to forest rambles, these interpretive walks offer something for everyone. Some programs can accommodate the disabled.

Call the 24 hour recorded information line at 474 - PARK for details on topics and meeting places. No charge or pre-registration required. For additional details call 478 - 3344.

NATURE WALKS ARE HELD:
Saturdays at ELK/BEAVER LAKE at 11:00 a.m. - July 11 to September 5 (except August 22).

Sundays at WITTY'S LAGOON at 10:00 a.m. - July 12 to September 6.

Tuesdays at various Regional Parks at 10:00 a.m. - July 14 to Sept. 1 (except August 4).

FAMILY CANOEING - Canoe through the early morning mist with Park Naturalists searching for elusive birds and other lakeshore life.

Saturdays from 6:00 a.m. - 8:00 a.m. at ELK LAKE. Excursions on July 11, 25, 29, August 8 and September 5. All equipment is provided. Pre-registration including a fee of \$5.00 for adults and teens and \$2.00 for children twelve and under required. For registration information phone 478 - 3344.

GROUP NATURE PROGRAMS - The C. R. D. Parks Department has limited opening for group nature walks and special programs designed especially for your group. If you and your group would like to spend an hour or two exploring one of your Regional Parks with a C. R. D. Naturalist give us a call. Pre-registration required. No charge. For additional information call 478 - 3344.

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENT WEEK JUNE 1 - 7

To mark this special week family nature programs will be offered. Come out and explore the natural world of your Regional Parks!

Sunday, May 31 - 11:00 a.m. "Life on the Rocks", a family nature walk looking at life in the intertidal zone. WITTY'S LAGOON - meet at the Tower Point parking lot on Olympic View Drive in Metchosin. No charge.

Saturday, June 6, 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. - "Duckweed and Denizens", a close-up look at lakeshore plants and animals. BEAVER LAKE - meet at the Lifeguard building. No charge.

Visit a nature house, enroll in a program, join us on a nature walk and meet our friendly naturalists.

SEASONAL NATURALIST STAFF:

Senior Naturalist: DEB THIESSEN
Naturalists: ROSALIND COY
GLYNNIS HOOD
JOEL USSERY
Assistant Naturalist: ALLISON RIMMER



COMMUNITY EVENTS

Join the C. R. D. Parks staff at these community sponsored events. We'll have interesting displays, park information and special programs for the entire family at each of these fun-filled community celebrations.

SATURDAY, JUNE 13 at EAST SOOKE DAY - 11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. at East Sooke Community Hall on Coppermine Road in East Sooke.

- Family games
- Pony rides
- Tug of war
- Family entertainment
- Nature exhibits
- Strawberries & ice cream
- Other refreshments & food

WEDNESDAY, JULY 1 at SIDNEY DAYS - Family Fun Day - noon to 4:00 p.m. at Tulista Park in Sidney.

- Childrens Carnival of Games
- Fish Pond
- Face Painting
- Adult picnic games
- Food Fare
- Nature exhibits

SUNDAY, JULY 5 at SAANICH STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL - 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at Beaver Lake.

- Family entertainment
- Ice cream & strawberries
- Rowing Club demonstrations
- Life Guard demonstrations
- Pony Rides
- Petting Zoo
- Horseshoe competition
- Jazzercise
- Nature exhibits
- Family nature walks
- Concessions

NATURE HOUSES

Friendly parks staff and volunteers await your visit to our interesting and informative nature houses. See, touch, and smell the live exhibits, view the interpretive displays, watch a film or talk to a naturalist.

The nature houses are located in FRANCIS/KING REGIONAL PARK on Munn's Road in Saanich and in WITTY'S LAGOON REGIONAL PARK in Metchosin. No admission charge.

Both nature houses are wheelchair accessible.

Nature House Summer Hours

FRANCIS/KING Noon - 4:00 p.m.
Friday - Sunday
June 27 - September 6

WITTY'S LAGOON 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Wednesday - Sunday
and holiday Mondays
June 28 - September 6

SPECIAL EVENTS

SUNDAY, JUNE 21 - OPEN HOUSE at FRANCIS/KING REGIONAL PARK, 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. A special day for families and friends. Discover the stately cedars, the enormous firs and the many other wonders that make this park one of the true gems of the C. R. D. Parks System.

- Naturalist led walks
- Archaeology talks
- Nature house tours
- Films
- Forest Mystery Box
- Book Prizes
- Refreshments
- No charge
- Facilities for the handicapped.

SUNDAY, JUNE 28 - OPEN HOUSE at WITTY'S LAGOON REGIONAL PARK, 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Bring a picnic and join us for an exciting day at Witty's.

- Visits to archaeology sites
- Walks with a Naturalist
- Osprey sightings
- West Coast Mystery Box
- Children's Nature Games
- Films
- Refreshments
- Book Prizes
- No Charge
- Facilities for the handicapped.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 22 - STEP BACK IN TIME at WITTY'S LAGOON REGIONAL PARK, noon to 5:00 p.m. A Western Communities Heritage Fair event.

Join the C. R. D. Naturalists and Provincial Museum staff as they step back in time for a look at Witty's Lagoon before the white settlers arrived.

- Archaeology digs
- Visits to native fortification sites
- Native tool-making demonstrations
- Ethnobotany walks
- Indian legends for children
- Nature walks
- Craft demonstrations
- Special exhibits
- Films
- Refreshments
- Picnic sites
- Book prizes
- Facilities for the handicapped.

Get your Heritage Fair passport stamped here!

CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS

- interesting, informative experiences intended to develop awareness and appreciation of nature
- occur outdoors, rain or shine
- children should wear old clothes they can get wet and dirty
- parents provide transportation as well as a light snack and drink for lunch time programs
- for information and pre-registration call 478-3344
- pre-registration including the appropriate program fee is required; make cheques payable to: C. R. D. PARKS DEPARTMENT - NATURE PROGRAMS and send or bring to CRD Parks Department, 490 Atkins Ave., Victoria, B. C. V9B 2Z8
Open 8:30 - 4:30 Monday to Friday

DEER MICE [DM] age 5
1st SESSION WITTY'S LAGOON
(DM 1) July 15 & 17
10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
\$10.00 per child

2nd SESSION BEAVER LAKE
(DM 2) July 22 & 24
9:30 - 11:30 a.m.
\$8.00 per child

3rd SESSION BEAVER LAKE
(DM 3) July 22 & 24
1:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.
\$8.00 per child

4th SESSION WITTY'S LAGOON
(DM 4) July 29 & 31
10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
\$10.00 per child

TREE FROGS [TF] ages 6 & 7

1st SESSION WITTY'S LAGOON
(TF 1) July 15 & 17
10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
\$10.00 per child

2nd SESSION BEAVER LAKE
(TF 2) July 22 & 24
9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
\$8.00 per child

3rd SESSION BEAVER LAKE
(TF 3) July 22 & 24
1:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.
\$8.00 per child

4th SESSION WITTY'S LAGOON
(TF 4) July 29 & 31
10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
\$10.00 per child

SEA STARS [SS] ages 8 & 9
1st SESSION WITTY'S LAGOON
(SS 1) July 15 & 17
10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
\$10.00 per child

2nd SESSION WITTY'S LAGOON
(SS 2) July 29 & 31
10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
\$10.00 per child

OSPREYS [OS] ages 10 & 11
1st SESSION WITTY'S LAGOON
(OS 1) July 15 & 17
10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
\$10.00 per child

2nd SESSION WITTY'S LAGOON
(OS 2) July 29 & 31
10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
\$10.00 per child

JUNIOR NATURALISTS [JN] ages 10 - 12
One six day session only
(JN 1) WITTY'S LAGOON
August 12, 14, 19, 21, 26 and 28
10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
\$24.00 per child



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478-3344

To help us in our effort to continually improve our Regional Parks programs, we welcome your constructive comments at any time. Please contact Lloyd Rushton, Programs Coordinator 478-3344 or write to 490 Atkins Ave., Victoria, B. C. V9B 2Z8.

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CRD PARKS
SUMMER PROGRAMS 1987

ENJOY YOUR REGIONAL PARKS!

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VISIT YOUR REGIONAL PARKS

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- WITTY'S LAGOON
- ALBERT HEAD
- REESON
- PORTAGE
- ROCHE COVE
- LONE TREE HILL
- MILL HILL
- FRANCIS/KING
- ELK/BEAVER LAKES
- BEAR HILL
- MOUNT WORK
- ISLAND VIEW
- COLES BAY
- HORTH HILL

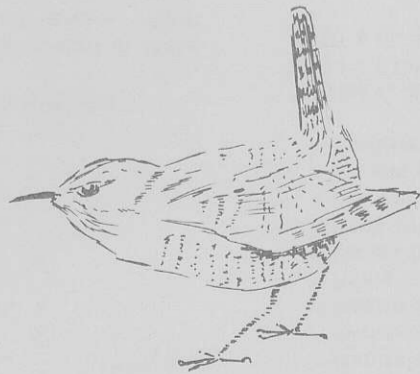
FACILITIES RESERVATIONS

- Group picnic sites in some Regional Parks are available for reservation by your group. Booking of these sites requires a permit. No charge.
- The Forester's Cabin in Francis/King Regional Park is available for small group meetings. It will accommodate approximately twenty people and is an ideal setting for presentations, slide shows or other group activities. No charge.

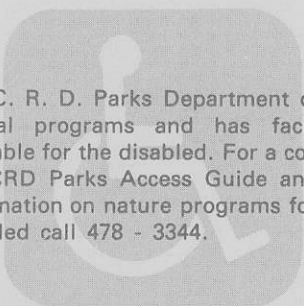
For information on these facilities phone 478 - 3344.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN CRD PARKS?

By dialing 474-PARK (474-7275) you have 24 hour access to details on nature house hours, dates and times of nature walks, special park events and recent natural history sightings of interest.



The C. R. D. Parks Department offers special programs and has facilities available for the disabled. For a copy of the CRD Parks Access Guide and for information on nature programs for the disabled call 478 - 3344.



THANKS FOR HELPING US!

Over the years individuals, businesses and organizations have made donations to help improve your Regional Parks and Programs.

Generous donations have helped in everything from purchasing a new aquarium to acquiring new parkland.

Anyone wishing to make a tax deductible donation is invited to contact Ramona Herrick, Parks Administrator, 490 Atkins Avenue, Victoria, B. C., V9B 2Z8 (478 - 3344) to personally discuss your gift or donation.

Your generosity and support is greatly appreciated. Thank you!

REGIONAL PARKS HERITAGE PROJECT

This summer the C. R. D. Parks Department will be carrying out an inventory of cultural heritage sites within its parks and developing policies and standards for effective management of these resources.

As part of this project, a seasonal staff archaeologist will be offering several public presentations and leading visits to archaeology sites within the parks. Watch your local community calendar or phone 474-PARK to obtain information on the topics, times and places for these special public programs.

This project is financially supported by the Government of British Columbia through the B. C. Heritage Trust.

BOOK REVIEW

By Bruce Whittington

A Wilderness Original: The Life of Bob Marshall.
James M.A. Glover, The Mountaineers, Seattle, 1986, 323 pp.

Hamilton Mack Laing: Hunter-Naturalist.
Richard Mackie, Sono Nis Press, Victoria, 1985, 234 pp.

For the amateur naturalist today, the enjoyment of the natural world has never been easier. We have excellent field guides to help us identify the flora and fauna and landforms of an area, multicoloured maps to guide us to and through these areas, and a choice of accommodation to fit any budget.

But while all of this has opened dozens of doors for us, another door is slowly but surely closing. That is the opportunity of genuine discovery, of obtaining type specimens, of naming mountains, of simply walking where no one has walked before and recording what was seen.

For most of us, the only way we can feel the thrill of discovery is vicariously, and biographical accounts can fill the bill quite nicely. Two recent publications offer intimate looks at pioneers in their fields, and they invite comparison.

Bob Marshall, an American, was a man obsessed with the outdoors. His favourite pastime was to set out on long walks of thirty miles or more in his native Adirondacks, and later in the West. Born in 1901, he was a forester by training, but used his education to get him positions in which he could influence public policy on conservation issues. There is a large wilderness area in Montana named after him, in recognition of his commitment. He died suddenly and unexpectedly before his 39th birthday.

Mack Laing was a Canadian, born in 1883. From his earliest days he was an avid naturalist and hunter; in those times the two went together without question. His skill as a hunter eventually found him deeply involved in the early days of Canadian scientific collecting, with the likes of Taverner, Brooks and Munro. He was a firm believer that wildlife was a resource to be managed, and this meant destroying the "bad" animals to save the "good" animals.

Richard Mackie has done a good job with his chronicle of Laing's life. Part of his success is certainly due to the fact that Laing's story is close to home for us: he spent much of his life on the west coast, and was involved with some of Canada's most famous naturalists and scientists. But Mackie has nicely covered the chronological progression and significant elements of Laing the man in a way which does not blur or confuse either. I suspect that readers less familiar with the man or his contemporaries would find this to be true also. The black and white photographs and colour reproductions of Laing's paintings are of good

quality and do much to add detail which would be cumbersome in the text.

James Glover has faced a more difficult task in his handling of Bob Marshall's biography. His book seems to forge along, snatching at facts and figures along the way. In an odd way, it reflects Marshall's brief and obsessive life. He was impatient and energetic, and a compulsive maker of lists and comparisons, and it is almost as though he knew he had a lot of living to do in a short time. In contrast to Laing, Marshall led a life which was politically much less predictable and more frustrating, and Glover has done a good job of covering Marshall's accomplishments despite the fact that they do not make as tidy a story as do Laing's exploits. We are left at the end wishing that Marshall had lived longer, so that we could see his life more rounded and complete in its maturity.

The two men were alike in their commitment to their cause, but were quite different in the way they lived their lives. But in both cases they accomplished a great deal, and neither ever really stopped doing what he liked best. Both biographies are laced with the excitement of discovery, and full of references to people and events of an earlier period. I imagined myself in a different place at a different time, and, as I typed this review into my word processor, I was glad to have read both books.



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The Orphan

By Anne Knowles

One cold evening in late June after a day of strong wind, my son brought home, in the palm of his hand, two minute baby birds. One died en route and the other looked as though it should die - neck stretched out, eyes closed, gasping for breath. However, it was put into a box with soft material under and over it.

We fed it a mixture of bantam egg beaten with a little milk, by an eyedropper. This continued every 20 minutes for 2 hours, then we went to bed. I fully expected this baby bird to be dead the next morning, as all our attempts at bird care had failed. But no, when we lifted the piece of material covering him, there was his head bobbing about, and when the dropper was touched to his beak - a large, bright, hot-pinked interior surrounded by bright yellow - it gaped and bobbed at us. Next day his eyes were open and his diet was changed from runny egg to hard boiled egg slightly softened with milk. As the days went by he grew steadily stronger, standing up on his makeshift nest, although we noticed that one foot appeared to be injured, probably from the fall, when he and the other nestlings were blown, nest and all, out of the fir trees.

As the weeks went by our little bird flourished. He grew from 2 1/2 inches when first brought home to 4 inches when fully grown. He had a short thin beak, a very pale yellow breast with light brown streakings and a suggestion of wings bars. He graduated from the box to a small cage, with a perch, that was suspended from the curtain rod in the kitchen (to be safe from the cat). We thought he was of the warbler family and instead of the hairless green caterpillars which were very hard to find (although I did find a lovely one on a prize lettuce at the Horticultural Show and took it carefully home for him) we fed him tinned cat food.

As he grew and lost his baby fluff and grew proper feathers I thought he should learn to fly, and little by little he did, first jumping up from arm to arm and then taking short flights of a foot or so until he was flying about the house in great style. He loved being out and swooped around the kitchen, usually landing on the highest perch available.

He had graduated from egg mix to cat food, and eventually he learned to eat this himself. Also he had a dish of Zebra Finch seed which he enjoyed, showering the surrounding area with seed husks. I thought he should be introduced to fruit and offered him a piece of nice ripe raspberry, but he said he didn't like raspberry and swayed from side to side on his perch like a small child shaking its head, determined not to have any of that nasty stuff.

He liked to land on peoples' heads, and there he would flutter his wings as though dusting. A box of sandy dry material was obtained for him to have the earth, but he didn't dust. Next a saucer of water was put down for him and he was placed in it. It didn't take long for him to get the right idea, and the water flew all around him.

The last stage in his development was singing. It was a very quiet subdued little chirrupy twitter but it was definitely a song. I tried to record it, but like a shy child he would stop as soon as the mike appeared.

By this time we knew that he was a Pine Siskin. Our next problem - where and when to release him. Before we could carry out our plans, he accidentally flew out of a small open window, and we never saw him again. After six weeks of daily and intimate contact with this tiny bird, we missed him greatly. We could only hope that he survived.

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The Beautiful Maritime Shooting-star

By Art Guppy

The maritime shooting-star is not a meteor aimed at the ocean. It is one of the beautiful flowering plants of the genus *Dodecatheon* commonly called shooting-stars or, sometimes, peacocks. For many years this rare shooting-star has been known to the specialists who grow rock garden plants as the "Sooke Dodecatheon", and they have prized it in their gardens and have propagated it. To botanists it is a form of the highly variable species *Dodecatheon pulchellum* or, if they use the older name, *Dodecatheon pauciflorum* (or an even older synonym, *D. radicum*).

In calling the plant the "maritime shooting-star", I am not attempting to give it an additional name, but am merely identifying it by its habitat.

For many years the maritime shooting-star was believed to exist in the wild only on a rocky headland about eight kilometres west of Sooke. Lewis Clark included it in his *Wild Flowers of British Columbia* and applied the name *Dodecatheon littorale* to it (Clark 1973). However, it was not so named in accordance with the Rules of the International Code of Botanical Nomenclature, so that name is not legitimate. He also suggested that "it appears to be a polyploid" (Clark 1973). However, polyploidy generally does not show in the outward appearance of a *Dodecatheon* plant (Beamish 1955), and, furthermore, until recently the only chromosome counts that had been made for the species along the coast of B.C. were all polyploid (Taylor and Mulligan 1968). Lewis Clark did provide an excellent photograph of the plant.

There has been speculation that this remarkable plant is the result of hybridization between *Dodecatheon pulchellum* and another common shooting-star, *Dodecatheon hendersonii* (Clark and Trelawny 1974). However, there seems to be no evidence to support that supposition. *Dodecatheon pulchellum* and *D. hendersonii* commonly grow in close proximity (for example, on Mt. Tzuhalem, on Mill Hill and on Camas Hill) and no hybrids are to be found.

Regardless of the speculation and the confusion over nomenclature, it is a beautiful plant, perhaps the most

beautiful of all the shooting-stars. Characteristically it carries an inflorescence of many flowers at the top of a short, sturdy stipe. The flowers are often a deep, rich pink, and tend to be larger and sturdier than is usual for the species. The leaves are wide, thick, and tend to lie close to the ground. The leaves do somewhat resemble those of *Dodecatheon hendersonii*, which presumably is the reason for the suggestion that it might be a hybrid.

I have been very interested in this delightful plant ever since some twenty years ago I was told of the lone known colony of the plant by the well-known alpine garden specialist, the late Ed Lohbrunner. Since then I have made many visits to the headland to see how the colony has been getting along. It has been rumored that the plant is extinct in the wild, but the rumor fortunately is false. The plants do get quite badly trodden upon when weather attracts people to the nearby beach and the headland, but they survive.

After many years of believing the plant to exist so very precariously on that one headland, I was delighted this spring when I visited Trial Island (south of Oak Bay) to find

the maritime shooting-star quite plentiful there. Its characteristics on Trial Island are identical to those which identify the plant on the headland beyond Sooke. No doubt there have been, and possibly still are, other colonies of the plant on coastal rocks and islands between those two populations.

When one thinks of the weather conditions on exposed coastal rocks and islets, it is not difficult to see that evolution has been at work selecting these distinctive plants from the normal rather slender and less showy form of the species.

Dodecatheon pulchellum is highly variable over its wide range (much of temperate North America), which will have given natural selection a generous assortment of genes to work upon. For survival on the wind-swept coastal rocks the advantages of the short, sturdy stipe and the sturdy leaves pressed close to the ground are obvious. It seems reasonable also to suppose that there would be a selective advantage for a showy inflorescence in an environment where there would be competition with other flowering plants for the services of the relatively few pollinating insects able to brave the winds off the ocean.

The future of the maritime shooting-star unfortunately cannot be considered secure. A person with a trowel could exterminate it on the headland site in about half an hour. There are many more of the plants on Trial Island, but the island is being considered as the site for a sewage treatment facility for Oak Bay.



The maritime shooting star on Trial Island © Art Guppy

Trial Island has been proposed as an ecological reserve, not specially for this shooting-star but for the many beautiful and rare plants which grow there (Ceska 1983). Certainly those who value nature should support that proposal.

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The "Other" Skylark

By Lyndis Davis and Margaret Jeal

While hiking down from Rattlesnake Lake in the Okanagan, in an area of grass-covered slopes with well-spaced evergreens, we heard a very melodious warbling song that lasted for several minutes, stopped briefly, and then started again.

We eventually spotted the singer, a dark bird, Towhee size, with a pale stripe along the centre of the wings. He was about 25 feet up, flying into a fairly strong wind, almost holding station but every now and then being blown sideways or backwards and then returning to about the same spot. He was singing continually. It was thrilling - but what was this bird putting on this unexpected performance? It was hard to identify him against the sky. Then he landed on the top-most branch of a fir and we got our glasses on him.

A Townsend's Solitaire.

And he repeated the performance twice more while we watched. Such incidents make birding an "event", and keep us coming back for more.

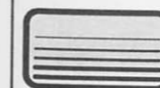
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Konukson Park

By A.R. Davidson

About 20 years ago a parcel of land at Ten Mile Point reverted to Saanich for unpaid taxes. I believe there were about 15 acres. When the local residents heard of this they petitioned the Saanich Council that it be reserved as a park, and one day in 1969 a delegation of the Council including Ed Lum, the Mayor, met at Ten Mile Point with the Cadboro Bay Ratepayers Association and other interested people including my wife and myself. The result was that in January 1970 a part of the property measuring 3.74 hectares (or approximately 9 1/4 acres) was dedicated as a park and given the name of Konukson.

Since then all of the Ten Mile Point area has been built up, leaving this forested oasis in the centre. How wise was the Council in preserving it and how grateful we are for the initiative of the Cadboro Bay residents.

Every time the Saanich Parks Branch put a sign up it was destroyed. However, the Park borders the north side of Sea Point Road and the path leading into it can easily be found. The west boundary is Bedford Road, where there is another access. There are wellmade paths throughout, with one being a right-of-way of Tudor Ave. There is a small swamp where grows the largest cottonwood tree we know of, measuring 21 1/2 feet in circumference. There are rocky outcrops brilliant with wild flowers in Spring. There are some magnificent Douglas firs, and the ground cover is mainly salal and wild boxwood and Oregon grape. This area from Telegraph Bay Road to the tip of the point used to be, in my opinion, the most delightful bit of country around Victoria and one of the best birding places enjoyed by many of us for a considerable number of years. Now it is all gone, but fortunately we still have this park.

The name given to this park has an interest. In the Daily Times of January 26, 1970, Humphrey Davy, who was one of our members, wrote an article in which he quoted Chief Ed Underwood of the Tsawout Band at Saanichton that the name "Koguksen", as it was spelled then, meant "Running Nose Point" because of a running tide around a nose-shaped point, which he said was most imaginative and most descriptive. And indeed it is, as at that time we were able to get to the tip of the point (now, alas, privately owned) and found the tides swirling around there to be most formidable. It was also an excellent place for sea birds.

Members wishing to see The Victoria Natural History income and expenditure balance sheet for the year ending April 30, 1986, may contact the treasurer for a copy.

Upcoming Programs

Please meet at the location indicated for each trip. No cars can be left at Mayfair Lanes. For field trips BRING A LUNCH and be equipped for changes in the weather. Always phone the rare bird alert: 592-3381 the week before a trip you plan to take in order to obtain full particulars or details about changes (sometimes unavoidable) that have been made. On V.N.H.S. trips, participants usually pool vehicles to reduce parking problems and costs. A considerable fuel bill can be run up on a trip, consuming 5 to 10 cents a km. The Board suggests that these costs be shared with the driver. Contact Lyndis Davis at 477-9952 if you want to borrow the Society scope for a scheduled trip.

July and August Programs

Saturday, July 11: Subtidal Life with Steve Cross, open air slide show on Sidney Island at dusk. Take the ferry (cost \$5.00 for adults, 4.00 for seniors and 3.00 for children - return trip) from Seaport Marina, 1 block north of Beacon Ave. Wharf on Seaport Place, Sidney. The 'foot-passenger only' ferry departs hourly 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Take a picnic supper, catch the slide show and return on a special post-talk ferry trip that night.

Saturday, July 11: Seashore Life - an illustrated talk with Jessie Wollet. Slide show at dusk at the Meeting Place in the Goldstream Campground, Goldstream Provincial Park.

Saturday, July 11 and Sunday, July 12: Natural History trips to Hurricane Ridge. Enjoy a day high up in the wildflower meadows of Hurricane Ridge. With a preciously short growing season, many species are in flower simultaneously. We'll look for marsh marigolds, monkey flowers, avalanche lilies and some endemics known as magenta paintbrush, Flell's violet and Piper bellflower. Wildlife in the area includes mountain goats, Olympic marmots, black-tailed deer, gray jays and horned larks. The view down to the Strait of Juan de Fuca and across to Vancouver Island alone is worth the trip! Bring your camera, as the opportunities for photography are endless. Come explore Washington's Olympic mountains. Cost \$48 per person for non-members, \$43 for members. Includes ferry fare and land transportation. Leader: Marilyn Lambert. Phone 388-4227 for reservations.

Monday, July 13: Owls and Bats of the Gulf Islands, with Dave Fraser, 9:00 P.M. Slide show and post-show owling trip - Ruckle Provincial Park, Salt Spring Island - walk in camping is available at Ruckle Provincial Park.

Saturday, July 18: Witty's Lagoon. Meet Park and Ride at 8:30 a.m. or Witty's parking lot at 9:00. Leader: Reuben Ware.

Saturday, July 25: Swiftsure tour of Chain Islands. Meet at Cattle Point at 10:00 a.m. Cost: \$22 for 4 hours. Bring lunch.

Saturday, July 29: Whales in our Waters with Robin Baird from Cetacean Watch - open air slide show on Sidney Island

at dusk. Take the ferry (cost \$5.00 for adults, 4.00 for seniors and 3.00 for children - return trip) from Seaport Marina, 1 block north of Beacon Ave. Wharf on Seaport Place, Sidney. The 'foot-passenger only' ferry departs hourly 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Take a picnic supper, catch the slide show and return on a special post-talk ferry trip that night.

August Program

Saturday, August 1: Whales in our Waters with Pam Stacey of Cetacean Watch - an illustrated talk at dusk in the Goldstream Campground Meeting Place.

Monday, August 3: Snakes of B.C. - talk and rattlesnake demonstration, Montague Harbour Provincial Park at 9:00 a.m. - check with the Swartz Bay ferry terminal for sailing times. Montague Harbour Provincial Park is within easy walking distance from the Montague Harbour ferry terminal on Galiano.

Saturday, August 8: A Look at the Ecological Reserves in British Columbia with Hans Roemer, dusk at the Meeting Place, Goldstream Provincial Park.

Sunday, August 9: Victoria Natural History Society Picnic on Portland Island. Bring a picnic lunch - we will depart 9:00 a.m. to cruise via Charter Boat around the seabird colony on Mandarte Island, looking at Brandt's, Double Crested and Pelagic Cormorant's, Pigeon Guillemots, Rhinoceros Auklets - and with some luck some of the island's nesting Tufted Puffins. Then it's on to a two hour ramble/lunch stop on Portland Island, and back to Sidney by mid afternoon. Cost \$25.00 per person. Space is limited so please reserve early! Call Leah Ramsay at 652-5934 before July 20 to reserve your spot.

Saturday, August 15: Coastal Plants and Coastal Native Peoples - an illustrated talk with Dr. Nancy Turner - come along and try some Indian Ice Cream! Take the ferry (cost \$5.00 for adults, 4.00 for seniors and 3.00 for children - return trip) from Seaport Marina, 1 block north of Beacon Ave. Wharf on Seaport Place, Sidney. The 'foot-passenger only' ferry departs hourly 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Take a picnic supper, catch the slide show and return on a special post-talk ferry trip that night.

Saturday, August 15: Butterflies and Moths - an illustrated talk with Jeremy Tatum, Goldstream Provincial Park - meet at dusk at the Meeting Place in the Campground.

Sunday, August 16 - Cowichan Bay with Mike McGrenere. Meet Park and Ride at 8:30 a.m. or Robert Service Memorial at 9:15.

Saturday, August 22: Shorebirds at Sidney Spit with Dave Fraser. Meet at the wharf on Sidney Island at 6:30 p.m. (i.e. catch the 6:00 p.m. ferry) - we'll shorebird watch until dusk, followed by a slide presentation on the birds of sea and shore around Sidney Island. Take the ferry (cost \$5.00 for adults, 4.00 for seniors and 3.00 for children - return trip) from Seaport Marina, 1 block north of Beacon Ave. Wharf on Seaport Place, Sidney. The 'foot-passenger only' ferry departs hourly, catch the slide show and return on a special post-talk ferry trip that night.

Saturday, August 22. A Look at Mushrooms with Jessie Woollet - meet at dusk at the Meeting Place, Goldstream Provincial Park Campground.

Saturday, August 29 - Sidney Island. No leader. Meet 9:30 a.m. at Sidney Island ferry, Sidney. Seniors \$4 return, regular \$5 return. Bring lunch.

Some of the upcoming September Program.....

Saturday, September 5: Snakes Alive! A live snake demonstration and illustrated talk with Dr. P. T. Gregory, meet at 8:00 p.m. at the Meeting Place - Goldstream Provincial Park Campground.

Tuesday, September 9: 'Seals and Sealions of our coast - their relationship with Man and the Environment', illustrated talk with Dave Newell. General Meeting will follow. Newcombe Auditorium, B.C. Provincial Museum at 8:00 p.m. All welcome.

March Birding

By Anne Knowles

Saturday, March 28, saw 27 birders (and two well-behaved dogs) join Eric Lofroth for an interesting and knowledgeable walk around Cordova Spit and the north end of Island View Beach.

Highlights were: a Common Loon in summer plumage; Pigeon Guillemots in winter, summer and transitional dress; several Rhinoceros Auklets; Old Squaw yodelling and also in transitional plumage; a lone Greater Yellowlegs on the mud-flats; Red-breasted and Hooded Mergansers; and a good view of a singing Savannah Sparrow, with well-defined yellow lores making it easy to identify. In the area behind the dunes two Red-tailed Hawks and a Northern Harrier were soaring, and below them another Northern Harrier was quartering the fields.

Altogether, 37 species were seen. Many thanks to Eric for leading us with enthusiasm and giving helpful information.

Welcome to New Members

Mar. 23	Larry Citra, of Cobble Hill.
Mar. 23	Shirley Bulinckx, of Oak Bay Ave.; a bird watcher, bird photographer and bird artist.
Apr. 1	Arlene Galloway, of Feltham Rd.
Apr. 1	John & Josie Kempers, of Deep Cove area, Sidney.
Apr. 2	Peter A.T. Haines, of Woodcreek Dr., Sidney; interested in birding.
Apr. 2	Basil & Kathlyn Benger, of Galiano; interested in birds and flowers.
Apr. 8	George & Margaret Griffiths, of Galiano Island; interested in eagles.
Apr. 8	Sheila Rymer, of Central Saanich Rd.; interested in birding.
Apr. 9	Helen McDormand, of Pandora Ave.
Apr. 14	Barbara de Boer, of Burton Ave.; interested in both birding and botany.
Apr. 15	Jim & Trudie Duxbury, of Woodburn Ave.
Apr. 16	Laura B. Willows, of Pakington St.
Apr. 21	Donna M. Ross, of Sheringham Pt. Rd., Sooke; interested in birding, conservation, wildlife and environment.
Apr. 21	Annette Wigod, of Belcher Ave.; interested in field trips, hiking and nature study.
Apr. 22	Arthur J. Andrews, of Wyndeatt Ave.
Apr. 23	Ernest Paget, of Arrow Rd.; interested in birding and botany.
Apr. 24	Jim Weston, of Vancouver St.; co-author of The Naturalist's Guide to the Victoria Region; has helped with "Victoria Naturalist" publication. (Jim joined VNHS several months ago, but Membership was not informed.)
Apr. 27	Willi Boepple, Francis Park caretaker; interested in edible and medicinal wild plants, wildlife, fungi, trees, photography, astronomy, dairy goat husbandry, Garry Oak preservation.
Apr. 28	Jessie McEachern, of Niagara St.; interested in birds, animals, hiking.
May 4	Mr. & Mrs. D.L. Clancy, of Heron St.; general interest in nature.
May 4	George R. Newell, of Seagirt Rd., Sooke.
May 5	Gordon Davidson. Welcome back!
May 5	Carol Bosy, of Eberts St.; interested in marine biology and outdoor education in general.
May 6	Bill Roberts, of Locarno Lane, interested in birds. Welcome back!
May 7	Edward Andrusiak, of Galiano Island; interested in birds, reptiles, amphibians, intertidal life, presentation of natural history information to audiences.
May 12	D. Jean Mitchell, of Dunsmuir Rd.
May 13	Mary & Robert Skinner, of Devlin Pl., Sidney; interested in birds, flowers, rocks.
May 13	Megan Kyrie, of Elford St.; interested in birding, seashore life, wildlife, botany, ecology.
May 21	Miss G. E. Simcoe, of Toronto, Ontario; interested in birding and botany.
May 22	Mrs. Barbara C. Fields, of Arbutus Rd.; likes horticulture, marine biology; interested in learning about ornithology.
May 25	Isabel Scrimgeour, of Gorge Road E.
May 27	Julia M. Roberts, of Albert Ave.; interested in wildflowers, birds
June 3	Ray Perkins, of Norma Court; general interest in wildlife and the environment.
June 4	Cheryl Y. Caldwell, of Simcoe St.; birdwatcher.

Edited, with Contributions, by

Jim Weston & David Stirling

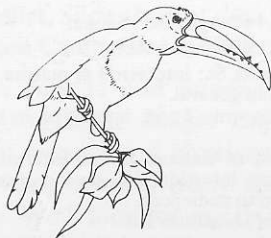
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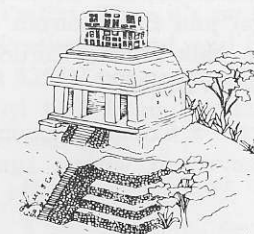
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