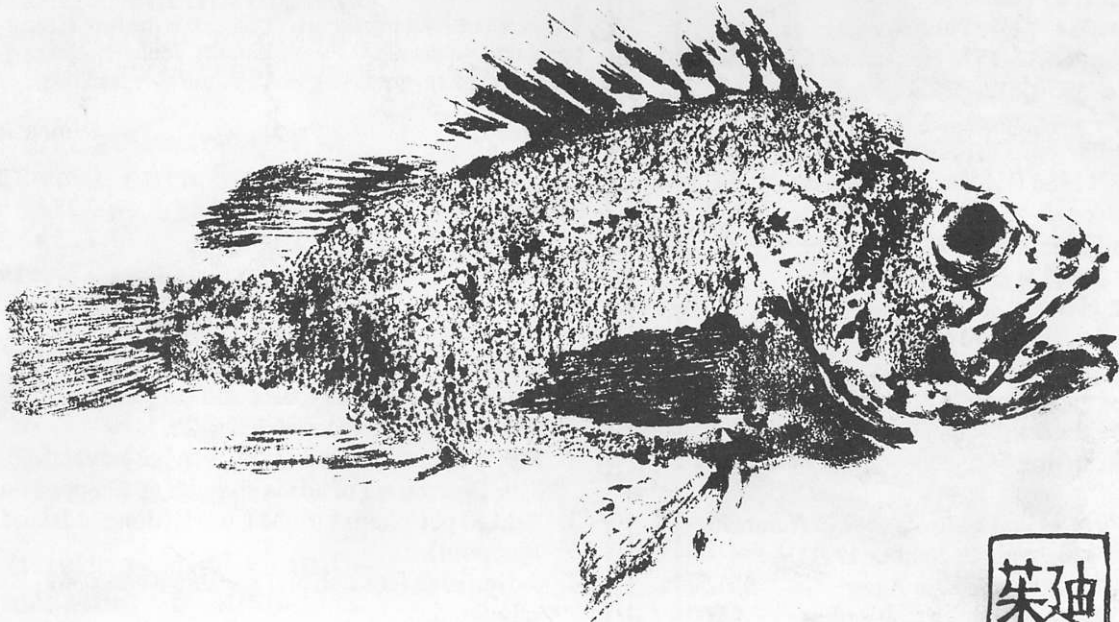
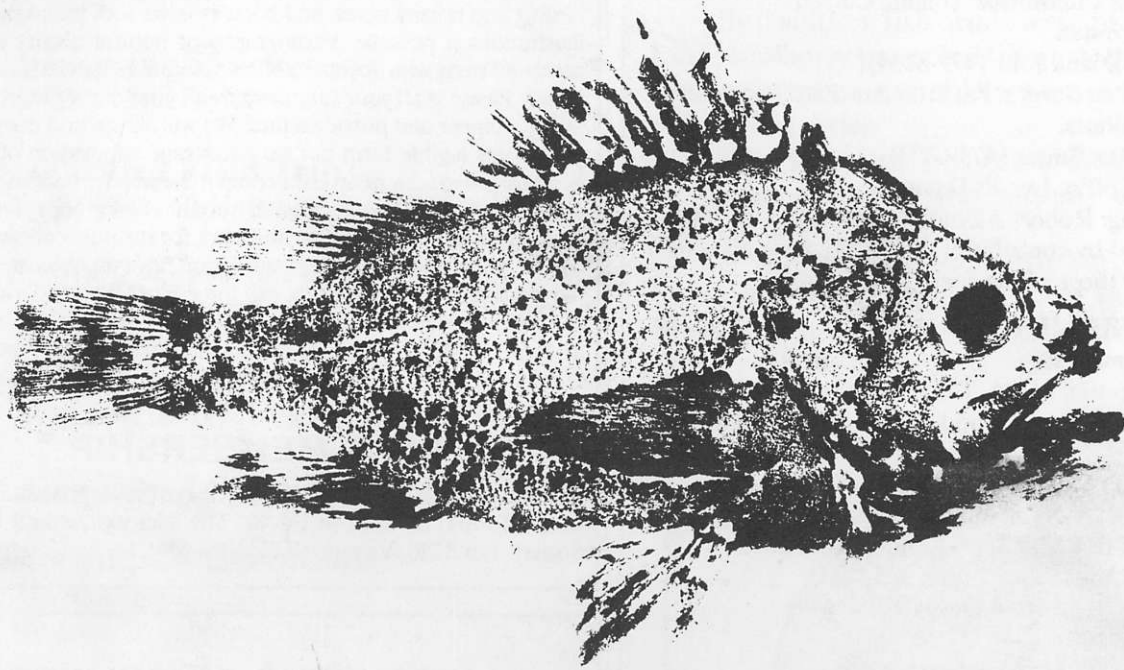




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The Victoria NATURALIST

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Our Cover Illustration

By Lisa Forster-Coull

Gyotaku (pronounced GEE-O-TA-KOO), or fish printing, was originally developed in China, where it was used as a way of recording various species of fish.

It was in Japan, however, that it developed into the complex art form that is popular even today.

By tradition, fish prints were pressed onto handmade Mulberry paper for framing, though today they can be found as wearable art on sweatshirts, scarves and other fabrics.

The fish used here, a Copper Rockfish, *Sebastes caurinus*, was caught off Bamfield by Warren Drinnan.

It was pretreated with salt, brushed with Setacolor dye using a handmade Japanese goat-hair brush, and pressed onto Japanese scroll paper by Lisa Forster-Coull.

—J.C.J. Strclioff



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Beaver Lake Fishway— Improving the Natural Production of Fish Populations

By Lynne Bonner

Next time you visit Beaver Lake Regional Park, take a few minutes to wander over to the outlet at the south end of the lake. What appears to be an ordinary culvert beside the outlet weir is actually a state-of-the-art fishway designed by the Recreational Fisheries Branch.

Cutthroat Trout are native to Elk and Beaver Lakes but their populations have been limited by the availability of good spawning and rearing habitat. Because more than half the lake fishermen in the Victoria area wet their lines in this dual lake system, 15,000 to 20,000 fish (both Rainbow and Cutthroat) have been stocked each year to supplement the naturally occurring trout populations.

However, priorities change and in recent years naturally producing fish populations have been emphasized in the management of Vancouver Island's small lakes. This has led to a greater effort in protecting and improving existing trout habitat. The Habitat Conservation Fund¹ has funded numerous habitat en-

hancement projects on the Island, including the unique fishway at Beaver Lake.

Many years ago a low head dam (or weir) was built at Beaver Lake's outlet to control lake levels. While trout easily moved downstream past the weir to spawn in Colquitz Creek, neither adults nor fry could get up past the weir to return to the lake. As a result, an estimated 300 adult trout disappeared from Elk-Beaver Lake every year.

The solution was to install a fishway that would provide two-way access for both spawning trout and their offspring. With cooperation from the Capital Regional District (who control the weir), the Recreational Fisheries Branch used a prototype fishway design, aimed at passing both adult and juvenile fish into the lake at any water level. This design was tested at the University of British Columbia engineering labs and the Beaver Lake fishway is the first practical application of this prototype.

The fishway consists of a 1.5 metre concrete culvert with two sets of baffled passageways inside, and installed underground beside the weir. The baffles reduce the water velocity as it flows through the conduit making it easier for fish to swim through. The smaller passageway allows trout fry and other smaller fish to move up to the lake where there is more food and room to grow. The larger passageway enables adult trout to return to the lake after spawning in Colquitz Creek.

Because the fishway is installed underground

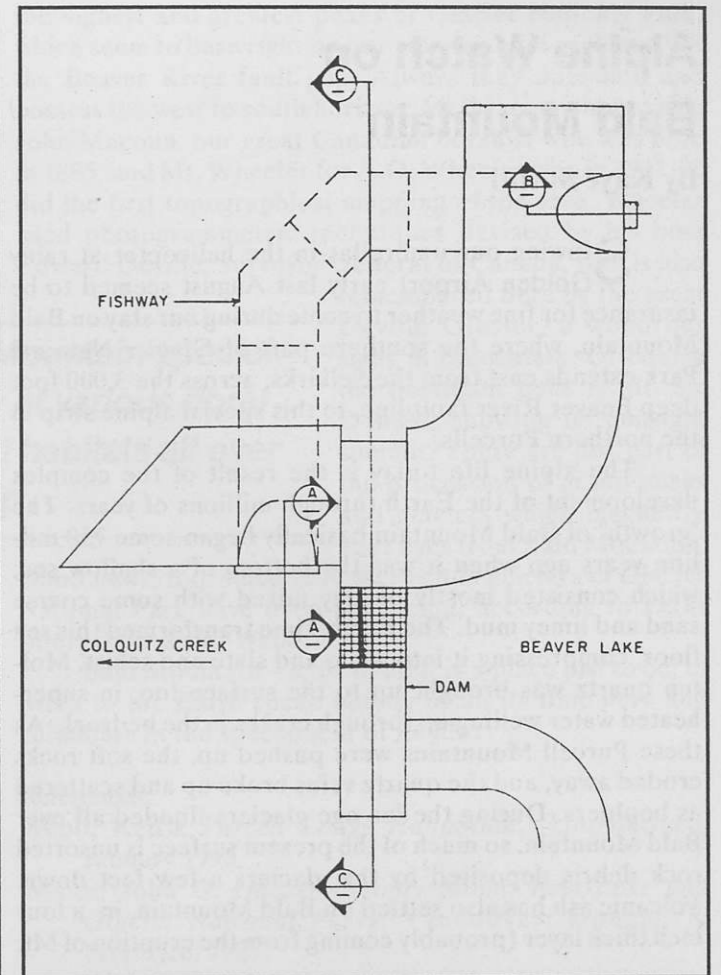
with the upper end below lake level and the lower end at the same level as the outlet streambed, it is nearly horizontal over its 15-metre length. Thus, the fishway can operate without flow control and regardless of the difference in water level between the lake and the outlet stream. The success of this experimental fishway will have important implications throughout the province where similar low head dams have created barriers to fish movement.

To complement these improvements, the spawning area of Colquitz Creek below Beaver Lake was enhanced through adding gravel that has been specifically selected as the right size and shape for trout to lay their eggs in.

Placement of logs and boulders also created small pools which shelter newly emerged trout fry until they are ready to swim up to the lake.

As part of the project, signs explaining trout life history and habitat requirements have been erected so that visitors who walk the trail along Colquitz Creek will understand how important this lovely stream is to fish in Elk and Beaver Lakes. And in May, when the Park is freshened with new greenery and alive with spring flowers, you may be lucky enough to glimpse a pair of spawning trout preparing to lay their eggs in the creek before returning unimpeded to Beaver Lake.

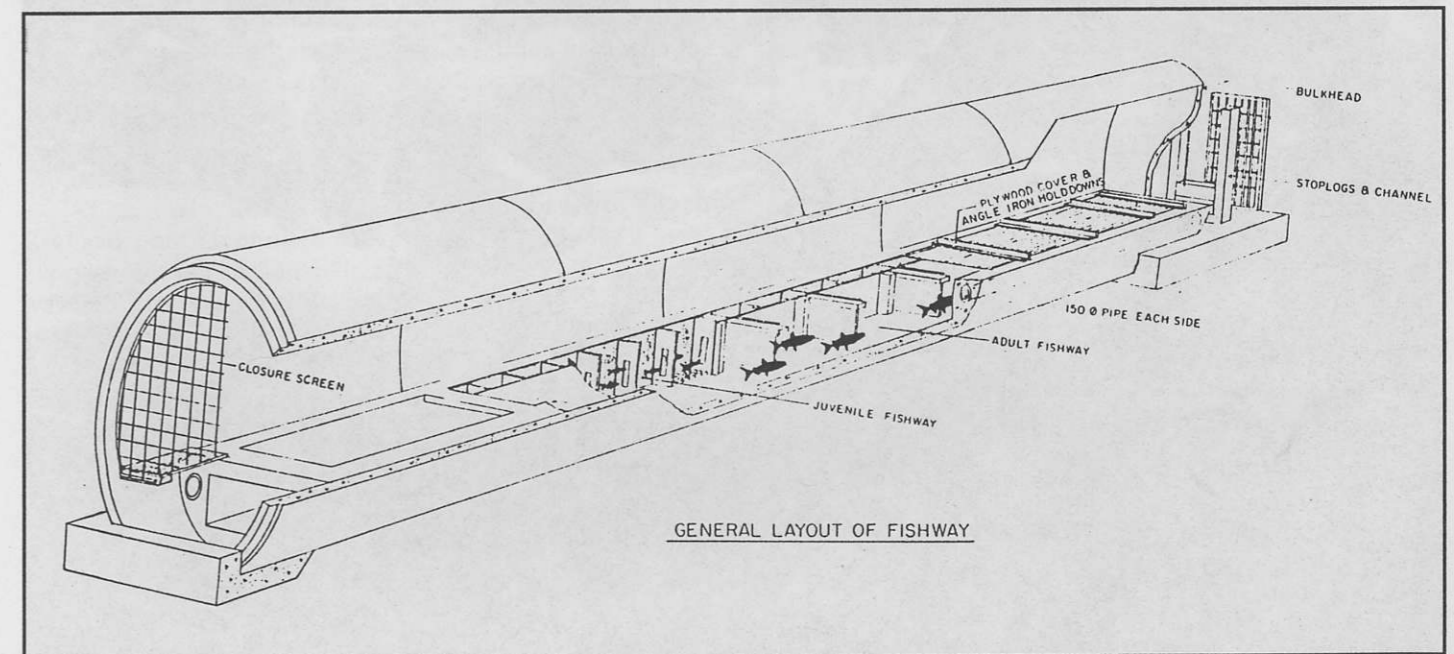
¹The Habitat Conservation Fund is a special purpose fund administered by B.C. Environment. Revenue comes from a \$5.00 surcharge on all fishing, hunting, trapping and guiding licenses. Donations are also received from naturalists and other conservation groups. An article describing the Habitat Conservation Fund appeared in the January-February, 1989 issue of the Victoria Naturalist.



Plan of Beaver Lake fishway shows its angled underground layout. Because the fishway is installed with the upper end below lake level and the lower end at the same level as the outlet streambed it is nearly horizontal over its length and can operate without flow control.



(Right, above) Weir at the outlet of Beaver Lake where it empties into Colquitz Creek. The concrete culvert (left) is a fishway which gives spawning Cutthroat Trout and their fry unrestricted access to the waterway.



General layout of the fishway at Beaver Lake. The drawing shows the two sets of baffled passageways inside the culvert. The smaller passageway allows fry to move up to the lake. The larger enables adult trout to return to the lake after spawning.

Alpine Watch on Bald Mountain

By Kaye Suttill

Stowing our umbrellas in the helicopter at rainy Golden Airport early last August seemed to be insurance for fine weather to come during our stay on Bald Mountain, where the southern part of Glacier National Park extends east from the Selkirks, across the 3,000 foot deep Beaver River fault line, to this special alpine strip in the northern Purcells.

The alpine life today is the result of the complex development of the Earth through millions of years. The "growth" of Bald Mountain basically began some 750 million years ago when it was the bottom of a shallow sea, which consisted mostly of clay mixed with some coarse sand and limey mud. The Earth Time transformed this sea floor, compressing it into shale and slate and schist. Molten quartz was brought up to the surface too, in superheated water welling up through cracks in the bedrock. As these Purcell Mountains were pushed up, the soft rocks eroded away, and the quartz veins broke up and scattered as boulders. During the ice age glaciers flooded all over Bald Mountain, so much of the present surface is unsorted rock debris deposited by the glaciers a few feet down. Volcanic ash has also settled on Bald Mountain, in a four inch thick layer (probably coming from the eruption of Mt.

Mazama in southern Oregon 6,600 years ago, the same which formed the matrix of Crater Lake, and most recently a dusting from Mt. St. Helen's eruption in 1980).

It is the weathering of these rocks through the time factor of climate which selects and directs the plant species (and indirectly the animal life) we have on Bald Mountain today. Bald Mountain is warmer and wetter than the Rockies to the East, but slightly cooler and drier (it has more sun), than the Selkirks to the west. Here the snow cover persists well into June and in isolated spots into August. The snow acts as a protective blanket, keeping the ground at or just above freezing as long as the snow remains. Then the melting snow feeds steady moisture to the plant life, from well drained slopes to wettish meadows to streams. The Alpine Zone is lower here than the Selkirks, starting at around 7,000 feet, probably because of the fierce chilling winter winds.

You can visualize somewhat the depth of the snow cover by noting the krummholzed islands of subalpine fir atop the knolls on Bald Mountain. The bushy lower parts of the trees are tangled masses of branches too dense to bushwack through because they are protected by the snow, in a favourable microclimate. But the trunks rising above the snow are either cut off by the force of abrasive blasting icy winds or stripped of all their bark and branches, occasionally only on the side facing the prevailing winds. Sometimes you see a little flag of small branches atop a bare trunk pole in a time and place of easier wintering. We have never elsewhere noted so many bowed over or stripped tree masts as here on Bald Mountain, and the



Glacier Park: Peaks and Glaciers from Bald Mountain Meadows. (Photo: Kaye Suttill)

krummholzed trees themselves average 4 to 5 feet or less in height, even though they may well be hundreds of years old.

Because of the protective krummholz thickets, lower elevation plants are able to extend their range upward into the alpine zone. We noticed this especially regarding the Heartleaf Arnica. Huddled close to the sheltering low branches, near those habitual bare rock homers which somehow find enough liveable space in minute pockets of soil, the Golden Fleabane. Creeping Spiraea lives in ledge cracks here too, as well as on the acid soil alpine slopes.

What makes Bald Mountain special to us is the density of various floral species in different habitats all over the rolling ridge top, and also the similarities and differences between the floral cover here and the Rockies, our usual alpine "territory". Masses of Coltsfoot and White Marsh Marigold bloom right in the snowmelt hillside streams, while Triangle-leaf Ragwort and Leather-leaved Saxifrage and fringed grass of Parnassus crowd the stream banks. Whole hillsides are alive with Yellow Mountain Heather, with only patchings of white and red. Other slopes are fields of White Pussytoes, and Swamp Laurel lives in more sites than we have ever noted before, even in dryish hollows where, most likely snow has lain.

The wettish meadows are quite like the Rockies: big carpets of colour dominated by palettes of paintbrush, though less tall fleabane live up here, and the only gentian we noted was the little green-blue Glacous Gentian so common in the Old Squaw barrens, jewelizing the meadows. Western Anemones were all over the slopes as well, still abloom near snow patches, in their towheaded baby seed stage elsewhere. We were surprised to find our coastal big Monkey Flower an uncommon resident streamside, along with a new-to-us White Violet almost hidden in the verge, while another we've never seen before was all over the slopes, the small yellow alpine Hawkweed. These are some of the nearly 50 floral species seen easily blooming on Bald Mountain the first week of August.

The only ubiquitous wildlife we noted was Richardson's Ground Squirrel. Grizzly diggings were everywhere, but the only Grizzly sighting to early August was back in mid-July. Why no Marmots? Were they, as we were told, long gone from overeating bears? Only once did a lone Mule Deer show, as we headed to the southern Caribou Ridge.

Pine Grosbeaks were sighted in the subalpine forest below the ridge top, but the only birds we observed atop Bald Mountain were Water Pipits which live all year up here, and one Bald Eagle soaring across. Other alpine breeders, Grey-crowned Rosy Finches and Horned Larks, have been reported here, too.

However, plant and animal life is really just the orchestra seating for the grand performance of alpine watching on Bald Mountain: one has the privilege of viewing the spectacular vistas of the Sir Donald Range and

the highest and greatest peaks of Glacier National Park, which seem to base right on our ridge but are really across the Beaver River fault gap. Always they dominate and possess the west to south horizon: Mt. Macoun, honouring John Macoun, our great Canadian botanist who was here in 1885, and Mt. Wheeler for A.O. Wheeler who in 1901-02 did the first topographical mapping of the area. Wheeler used photogrammetric techniques devised by his boss Edward Deville, Surveyor General of Canada, who is also

remembered here by the great Deville Glacier, a wondrous sight in binoculars. Of course the dominant peak is Mt. Sir Donald, showing its gunsight summit. These are just part of the procession of grand peaks and glaciers which magnetize your eyes from Bald Mountain.

Good news, too: since 1970 all the 440 glaciers in Glacier National Park have been advancing, according to Parks Interpreter Keith Webb.

Bald Mountain – most of all it is a place just to be, to listen to the Earth speak quietly of all its time here and culminate in the specialness of its life.

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Webb, Keith. *Purcell Lodge Handbook*. Unpublished, January 1990.

Woods, John G. *Glacier Country Mount Revelstoke and Glacier National Parks*. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1987.

What makes Bald Mountain special to us is the density of various floral species in different habitats all over the rolling ridge top . . .

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Twins on the Beaches

By Dr. Charlie Low

On B.C. beaches there are a number of species pairs where the two types of critters live in much the same areas, look like each other, have the same habits, and eat similar food. According to classical ecological theory, which states that two animals cannot occupy identical niches, these twin species must be doing something different, otherwise only one of them could live there. It is interesting to look at such pairs and try to figure out what it is that they are doing differently.

For example, upon closer inspection of the two little black snails that are common on the upper levels of rocky beaches, *Littorina sitkana* and *Littorina scutulata*, there are a number of slight dissimilarities. *Littorina scutulata* lives somewhat lower down the beach than *L. sitkana*, although there is about a 90% overlap in their distribution in many localities. *L. scutulata* is also more tolerant of reduced salinities, and so is the more common species in estuarine areas. One of them, I think *L. scutulata* (it has been a while since I read the relevant paper by Sylvia Behrens Yamada), has young which emerge from the egg as young snails, while the other has young which hatch as veligers, and so are planktonic. This influences the distribution, in that the non-planktonic young are much slower in colonizing an area compared to planktonic larvae which are able to settle everywhere within miles of a population of adults.

Another pair of twins are the beach crabs *Hemigrapsus oregonensis* and *Hemigrapsus nudus*, respectively known as the yellow and purple beach crabs. Of these, *H. oregonensis* is the more tolerant of reduced salinities, lower oxygen levels, greater muddiness, and lack of cover. *H. nudus* is more thigmotactic, in that it will stay under rocks much more than *H. oregonensis*, and when cover is in short supply, will displace *H. oregonensis*. As these crabs are a favourite food of practically everything on the beach, including robins,

crows, gulls and, at high tide, fish such as flounders, sculpins and perch, the tendency of *H. nudus* to remain under cover gives it a competitive advantage where waters are clear and the beach is clean. Where waters are muddy and the beach is soft, the impact of predators which hunt by sight is reduced. In this situation, the ability of *H. oregonensis* to detect and avoid or tolerate situations of low oxygen and salinities gives it an advantage over *H. nudus*.

Other twin species include the acorn barnacles *Balanus glandula* and *Chthamalus dalli*. *Balanus* has the plates of the operculum (which cover the opening to the body cavity) meeting at an acute angle while *Chthamalus* has the plates meeting at right angles to form a cross. Common on beaches in the lower intertidal are the small porcelain crabs, *Petrolisthes eriomerus* and *Petrolisthes cinctipes*. These are very small crabs and the only intertidal species with three pairs of walking legs rather than the customary four. *P. eriomerus* has claws which are about twice as long as they are wide, with parallel sides, while *P. cinctipes* has claws which are smaller, about one and a half times as long as wide, and tapered.

These species have overlapping distributions but the reasons they are able to coexist are not known. For people who are interested in spending some time messing around on beaches, and don't mind doing some research, papers by Dr. Joseph Connel and the Royal British Columbia Museum, would be good starting points for the barnacles. The handbook by J.F.L. Hart is recommended for the porcelain and other varieties of crabs. For those with masochistic tendencies, hermit crabs make suitable subjects for study as well.

This is only a small introduction to the variety of organisms to be found on the local beaches where two or more similar species appear to be doing the same thing at the same time in the same place. Other examples include starfish, limpets, whelks, mussels, and some of the seaweeds. For anyone wanting a research subject or just something to occupy the mind for a few hours, I can recommend the beach at low tide. However, there is a serious danger of becoming addicted, as this type of activity can be endlessly fascinating.

Pelagic Bird Field Trip

By R. Warren Drinnan

On October 7, thirteen birders took a chance on the variable west coast weather, and the vagaries of pelagic species, and travelled to Ucluelet to take a trip offshore. We were lucky on both counts. The weather was near-perfect and the birding excellent.

The ship, a 45-foot vessel used for whale watching tours, steamed three hours out into the Pacific Ocean and then turned around after travelling about 25 miles. Near the wharf, a flock of about eight Short-billed Dowitchers were feeding in the intertidal flats and as we left Ucluelet Harbour the usual coastal seabirds such as Pelagic and Double-crested Cormorants, Common Loons, Common Mergansers, Heermann's Gull, and Common Murres were present. Two adult Bald Eagles were feeding along the shoreline. As we travelled further from the coast the rolling swells made using a pair of binoculars an exercise in skillful hand-eye coordination, but numerous Sooty Shearwaters and the occasional Cassin's and Rhinoceros Auklet were spotted.

Periodically, congregations of seabirds were seen, either following a fishing boat or apparently feeding on surface fish and plankton. We maneuvered close by, stopped steaming, and then attracted the birds by pitching into the water popcorn (which was preferred more by the ship's crew than the birds) or dead rockfish. Bruce

Whittington was in charge of serving the menu and most of us were happy with the choice.

The dead fish definitely attracted the birds and it wasn't long before a wide variety of gulls (including the Sabine's and Western), Black-legged Kittiwakes, Fulmars (both light and dark colour phases) and Shearwaters were noisily feeding on the bait. The Fulmars were particularly interesting to watch as they dove down below the surface to grab the sinking fish.

Specialties of the day were the Pink-footed and Short-tailed Shearwaters and the Fork-tailed Storm Petrel. The Short-tailed Shearwater is very similar to the Sooty and we spent a great deal of time looking at hundreds of the latter, which were flying around the boat in characteristic Shearwater fashion. However, when the Short-tailed was spotted, it was noticeably darker on top, with much less white on the wing-linings, and a smaller bill.

There was also an unconfirmed report of a Flesh-footed Shearwater, which looks like a slightly larger version of a Sooty, with paler bill and feet. The white underparts of the Pink-footed Shearwater made identification of that species, at least, easy. Unfortunately, we were unsuccessful at seeing a Black-footed Albatross, which was on last year's trip list.

A total of about 25 species were recorded during the six hour trip and most birders added to their life list, some getting as many as seven new ones. Thanks to both Bruce and Mike Sheppard for organizing the trip. It is an annual event worth taking, providing that you are not prone to seasickness.

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Northern Fulmar. (Photo: Alan Burger)

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Wildlife Reserve is Home to Orphaned Wildlife

By Carol Gore

When "Finnegan" first arrived, he was less than 48 hours old; a beautiful one-and-a-half pound bundle of lanky legs and long curly eyelashes. He was the first of three orphaned black-tailed fawns to be brought this summer to the Wildlife Reserve of Western Canada.

Situated in North Saanich, the Wildlife Reserve of Western Canada is owned and operated by Alex Matheson and his daughter Catriona. On its forty acres, injured animals are rehabilitated and orphaned animals are raised; always with the goal that they will eventually be returned to the wild.

Upon his arrival, Finnegan was bottle-fed colostrum, a yellowish liquid secreted immediately after childbirth by all new mammal mothers. This substance provides the young with valuable nutrients and resistance to infection. Because deer colostrum was unavailable, Finnegan was fed colostrum from a cow, and a few days later graduated to warm goat's milk obtained from a nearby Saanich Peninsula goat farm.

By October, he was up to four 750ml. bottles of goat's milk each day. Gradually, he will be introduced to a new diet of alfalfa, a mixture of crushed wheat, barley, oats and molasses and bramble like blackberries and the occasional Indian plum. At this point, his daily bottles will be phased out.

Finnegan, and "Violet" and "Bruce" (two other fawns brought to the reserve in June), have the run of a half an acre compound closely resembling their natural habitat.

Of course, hand-raised deer become very comfortable in the presence of humans. This is a trait that earns them the affection of the wildlife reserve workers and visitors alike, but does not stand them in good stead for release into the wild. Thus, arrangements are made each spring to transport deer raised at the Reserve to a private island. They are released here, where hunting is forbidden.

Very young fawns like Finnegan are only accepted at the Wildlife Reserve of Western Canada if the mother has been killed, or if they are injured or in great distress. In the wild, deer frequently leave their young for as long as 12 hours at a time to browse and feed; thus, few fawns that are found alone have been abandoned. Naturally, a young wild animal's best chance for survival is in the wild, so fawns that are found there should be left there. If you have good reason to believe that the animal is hurt or its mother is unlikely to return, observe it for at least a day or two. It is best then to seek the advice of the Fish and Wildlife Branch before interfering.

Finnegan and his two companions were clearly unlikely to survive if left where they were. The mother of one was killed on the highway in Metchosin, another was discovered in great distress in the Sooke River, and the third was entangled in a wire fence in Central Saanich.



Orphaned fawn, Finnegan, was one of three black-tailed fawns brought to the Wildlife Reserve of Western Canada this summer. Young fawns like Finnegan are only accepted at the Wildlife Reserve of Western Canada if the mother has been killed, or if they are injured or in great distress.

The sad story of "Ray Charles", a fawn brought to the Reserve last year, illustrates the danger in trying to raise orphaned wild animals at home. The family that found Ray was quite taken with his characteristic spotted coat, long skinny legs, and beautiful big eyes. They decided to try to raise him themselves, though they had no experience with young black-tailed deer. Assuming that babies love milk, they fed him pasteurized cow's milk. That is, until he became ill and went blind, at which point Ray was brought to the Reserve in North Saanich. It should be noted here that it is illegal for the general public to confine any wildlife without certification from the proper authorities.

Though he lived several months longer, in a sense it was already too late for Ray. Having had no colostrum in those key first few days of life, he lacked resistance to a wide variety of infections. A serious eye infection left him completely blind, and for much of his short life, Ray suffered from chronic diarrhoea. His blindness made it difficult for him to manoeuvre about the deer compound at the Reserve. When he died, it was of a brain haemorrhage caused by a blow to the head. According to the veterinarian who examined him, it was far from the first time Ray had bumped his head as he stumbled blindly about.

Fawns are not the only orphans raised at the Wildlife Reserve of Western Canada. Each year the Mathesons,

their single full-time employee, and a number of volunteers also hand-rear baby raccoons, rabbits, harbour seals, and a flock of birds ranging from tiny hummingbirds and swallows to eagles and a Great Blue Heron. They have even raised and released to the wild the occasional mink, otters, and a black bear cub.

Visitors are welcome to tour the reserve provided arrangements are made in advance. This can be done by calling 656-1301.

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My Mystery Bird

By C.P. (Chess) Lyons

After reading the September-October 1990 issue of the *Victoria Naturalist* I unearthed some notes I had made on July first of the same year. At 9:00 a.m. that morning I was standing on a float at Egmont, a little ocean-side town close to the loose end of nowhere. But to give it due significance it is at the end of the road that goes through the Sunshine coast of B.C.

My notes say that it was raining lightly which created a light mist. Whether it was sound or movement that first caught my attention I do not know. What I saw was a smallish bird barrelling along at great speed despite the fact that it was climbing rapidly. Was it a Teal in a great hurry? It could hardly be a Teal in this environment and the wing beats were too fast. And that peculiar one syllable call that floated back through the drizzle...?

Several times the purposeful flight course was suddenly curved as if the bird was buffeted by a strong side wind. Now I think these were manoeuvres to gain altitude. My mystery bird was flying directly for the nearby mountainside. The first crest of land was about 600 feet above the ocean. A second growth forest dominated the slopes but a small clump of mature spruce or Douglas fir jutted up on the ridge top.

Granted that by this time the bird was only a dot to the naked eye but it seemed to me that it had crucified itself on the top of one of those high trees. Idly I wondered if it had skimmed through the tree top to a nearby pond or lake but the terrain said no.

As the morning chill receded from my awakening brain I had a growing suspicion that I might have been watching a Marbled Murrelet. Since then there has been a fair amount of publicity and this confirms the flight pattern, calls, and possible destination I witnessed.

So if you are celebrating July 1 by standing on the government float at Egmont, and just happen to see a bird heading for the tall timber directly above the Shell marine gas station, well, it just might be.....

Distinguished Service Award

The Distinguished Service Award was established by the VNHS Board of Directors in 1988. This prestigious award is granted to a member who has contributed in some outstanding way to the aims and objectives of the Society. Awards are made at the annual dinner or at the general meeting each March. All members of the society are eligible to nominate any other member who in their opinion merits this honour.

Nominations should be forwarded by December 15, 1990 to Betty Kennedy, Awards Committee Chairperson, 101-1440 Beach Drive, Victoria, V8S 2N8.

All nominations must be in writing and should be signed by at least three other members of the Society. A brief biographical sketch and a description of the contributions and achievements of the nominee, along with his or her address and telephone number, should be included. The Awards Committee reviews the nominations and makes recommendations to the Board of Directors, which grants the awards. For more information, contact Betty Kennedy at 592-2070.

Parks and Conservation Committee Update

By Joel Ussery

The Parks and Conservation Committee is gearing up for a busy fall and winter. Work is progressing on conservation plans for each of the committee's priority areas: Martindale Flats, Esquimalt Lagoon, Quick's Bottom, Blenkinsop Valley, and Tod Creek Flats. It is important that all information relevant to habitat protection be considered. The committee is hoping to obtain records of rare plants, inventories of flora and fauna, knowledge of any special soil, drainage or geological considerations, and notice of threats to these areas.

Habitat Protection Needs Your Help

This is a big job for a small committee. You can help by passing on any relevant information about these areas or by volunteering to help with the inventory work. To offer assistance for a specific area call:

Bill Dawkins - 478-7353 - Tod Creek Flats
Art McPhalen - 592-6466 - Quick's Bottom
Henry Niezen - 477-9415 - Blenkinsop Valley
Tony Embleton - 595-6812 - Esquimalt Lagoon
Jerry Anderson - 656-9599 - Martindale Flats

VNHS members can also assist the committee by reporting any threat to waterways, stands of native vegetation, parks and other important habitat areas in the Capital Regional District. Eventually, the committee hopes to have a network of 'conservation observers' throughout the CRD. If you have something to report, want to keep an eye on a specific area, or are interested in coordinating the observer network, please call Tony Embleton at 595-6812.

VNHS members will also be needed to help identify shoreline and adjacent wetland areas needing protection on the southern tip of Vancouver Island, from the Malahat around to Jordan River. The Victoria Natural History Society has been asked by the Federation of B.C. Naturalists (FBCN) to undertake this inventory in preparation for their upcoming Vancouver Island Regional Round Table discussions to be held on March 23, 1991 in Victoria. This FBCN round table (not to be confused with the activities of the B.C. Round Table on Environment and Economy) will bring together naturalists and representatives from industries, municipalities, and government and private agencies to discuss the future of shoreline and adjacent wetlands all along eastern and southern Vancouver Island. Please contact Connie Hawley at 385-2535 if you can assist us in this important initiative.

Upcoming Outings:

The Parks and Conservation Committee plans to visit local areas that may be at risk from existing or future development. All VNHS members are welcome to attend. Dates and locations should appear in the events calendar of the next issue of *The Victoria Naturalist*, but check the VNHS

Event Tape (479-2054) for possible October outings.

Membership Update:

Tony Embleton (Chair), Jerry Anderson (Vice Chair), Gladys Anderson, Doris Brix, Wilda Cottam, Bill Dawkins, Connie Hawley, Art McPhalen, Wilf Medd, Mary Morrison, Henry Niezen, Joel Ussery, and Bruce Whittington.

The Committee:

The Parks and Conservation Committee was introduced in the last issue of *The Victoria Naturalist*. Its members seek to protect the integrity of the habitat critical to the survival of our local flora and fauna.

Natural History Article Contest

Write an article of up to two typed pages on natural history (two submissions per person accepted) and you can win one of three exciting prizes! Anyone can enter, member of the VNHS or not, as long as you have your article with your name, telephone number, and address submitted to the Editor, *The Victoria Naturalist*, 1863 Oak Bay Avenue, Victoria, B.C., V8R 1C8 by December 1, 1990. Winning articles will be printed in the Jan/Feb issue of 1991. The winners will be determined by a three member contest committee and all decisions of the judges will be final.

First Prize

High Sierra daypack constructed of sturdy nylon with main compartment, zip-closed front pocket and great for carrying those essential items in the outdoors.



Pacific Trekking

Second Prize

On the Brink:
Endangered Species in Canada
by Environment Canada.



The Field Naturalist

Third Prize

Membership in the VNHS and subscription to *The Victoria Naturalist* (or Christmas gift subscription if winner is already a member).



**The Victoria
NATURALIST**

Thoughts of Spring and Violet-Green Swallows

By Marie O'Shaughnessy

Violet-green Swallows returned to Victoria as early as March 11th of this year. A notation to that event was made in my journal following an early spring venture with other bird enthusiasts to Martindale Flats.

It was not until May 5th, however, that I noticed a pair of Violet-green Swallows eyeing my newly acquired nesting box in the back garden. It took some time before they made up their minds to check in; not surprisingly, considering the antics of the resident Boxer prowling the back yard territory.

Having a natural affinity towards swallows, I was delighted when "MOTHER-NATURE" convinced them that



Tufted Puffin Colony. (Photo: Alan Burger)

taking up residence in south Oak Bay was not out of the question. The clothes-line provided a suitable perch from which to size up the artificial nesting habitat. Considering the scarcity of natural nesting sites these days this seemed a viable alternative. Their presence over the next few weeks brought many hours of joy and pleasure as I observed their daily activities.

Swallows traditionally herald the arrival of summer but this year summer arrived late in Victoria. It appeared that the inclement weather in May delayed the breeding activities of the swallows.

Violet-green Swallows are beautifully endowed with iridescent green and violet feathering. The male, as in most species of birds, is the more colourful. These swallows brood only once during their breeding season, which generally starts in late May. They line their nests with dry grasses, feathers, hair, and fine fibres. Their clutch size is usually four to five white, smooth, oval-shaped eggs, 18 x 13 mm in diameter. Incubation lasts approximately 13 to 15 days. The nestlings are hatched blind, with creamy-coloured down over the head, shoulders, and back. Both parent birds tend their young, feeding them on insects. Eyes are opened by the 11th day and they leave the nest after 23 to 25 days. Parental devotion continues even after fledging, when young swallows can be seen being fed in mid-air by the parents. This feat requires an aerial display of remarkable precision and accomplishment, considering their speed in flight.

The placement of the nesting box to the back porch afforded a "bird's-eye" view of the swallow's activities. Both parent birds were busy much of June catching insects for their four young, and by July 9th, the increased activity and twittering indicated that the inevitable was about to occur. July 10th and 11th saw the four young hatchlings gather enough courage to launch themselves from the security of the nesting box into their new world.

Violet-green Swallows prepare for their migration flight in late summer. They winter in California, Mexico or Central America. It is now late summer and the joyful exuberance of swallows on the wing can no longer be heard. However, as the autumn leaves begin to fall and thoughts of spring fade, the memory of the Violet-green Swallows remain. My back yard observations this spring and summer have given me a greater understanding of Nature's seasonal events. I wait with anticipation for next spring and the return of the Violet-green Swallows.



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Buller's Shearwater in Juan de Fuca Strait

By Hank Vander Pol

On September 24th, 1990 at approximately 1:35 p.m. I saw what I believe to be a Buller's Shearwater in Juan De Fuca Strait. The bird was seen from the M.V. Coho which was travelling towards Victoria. The weather at that point, passed the halfway mark, and was clear and sunny with no wind. Visibility was excellent. A heavy layer of fog obscured the Canadian side of the Strait.

When first seen through 8 x 40 binoculars the bird was on the water about 600-800 feet slightly to the front and right of the bow. What struck me immediately was the size of the bird combined with the all dark cap of the head contrasting sharply with the white of the face and cheek.

As we rapidly got closer, I could see a dark bill, clearly that of a Shearwater. It appeared to be washing itself, and while doing so, rose halfway out of the water while flapping its long wings twice. I was struck by the pure white of all its underparts, and the white of the underwings.

When the ship was within 200-300 feet from the bird, it took flight in a N.E. direction, directly away from me. The back was a dark greyish colour, with light pale or grey greater coverts, and a palish rump. Its wingbeat appeared slower than the Sooty Shearwater's which were common

that day. As the ship was still travelling at full speed at this point, my total observation time was probably no more than 45 to 50 seconds.

Godfrey in *The Birds of Canada* lists the Buller's as a regular autumn visitor off the B.C. coast. Harrison in *Seabirds - an Identification Guide* reports as many as 1000 seen off the Oregon coast in September. Ken Morgan (pers. comm.) has conducted pelagic bird surveys off the B.C. coast for the last several years.

Data obtained between 1981 and 1990 indicate that the Buller's is most frequently seen from the beginning of September to the end of October, and mostly beyond the continental shelf break. However, it is infrequently seen less than ten km from shore, and over the Swiftsure bank just beyond the mouth of the Juan De Fuca Strait. Ken states that he has seen the Buller's on almost every trip out in the fall, as their southbound migration is much closer to shore than their northbound journey in May and June.

Large numbers of Sooty Shearwaters were seen in the Strait during the past few weeks. It is therefore not inconceivable that a Buller's wandered in with them. No previous sighting, to my knowledge, has been reported from the Strait. Those taking a trip to Port Angeles should keep their eyes open for a Buller's.



Sooty Shearwaters, off Cape Beale. (Photo: Alan Burger)



Cassin's Auklet, at Seabird Rock, Bamfield. (Photo: Alan Burger)

Project FeederWatch

Project FeederWatch is a continent-wide survey of bird feeders designed to answer questions about the distribution of birds in the winter. The Project is a cooperative research venture of the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology and Canada's Long Point Bird Observatory, and is modelled on a successful, eleven year survey in Ontario.

The Project concentrates on common birds so volunteer observers need not be expert birders. Counts are made over a one-to-two day period every other week from November to mid-March. To date, the Dark-eyed Junco has been the most widespread species and the House Sparrow the most abundant. There are nearly 8,000 observers participating in the study.

To join Project FeederWatch, or for further information, contact the Coordinator, Project FeederWatch, Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, 159 Sapsucker Woods, Ithaca, New York, 14850. A small registration fee is required which helps pay for the data forms, newsletters, and analysis and preparation of the reports.

A further thought for those with feeders. Perhaps a contribution, equal to what is being spent on bird seed, could be made to the local food bank. Just as there are hungry birds, there are hungry families in our community.

Welcome to New Members

- July 30. Ian James Greig, of Burnside Road West. Interested in Junior Naturalists.
- August 3. Beverley Cox. Welcome back! Beverley was a member previously in 1988.
- August 3. Paul and Francine Browne, of Russell Street. Interests: Birdwatching, wildlife, nature walks.
- August 11. Steve Baillie, of Nanaimo. Interests: birding, outdoor activity and natural history in general.
- August 15. Valentin Schaefer, of Wakefield Place.
- August 22. Jennifer Button, of Sidney. Interests: Birding, hiking, — "the outdoors".
- September 1. Patricia Corcoran, of Simcoe Street. Interests: Birds, wildflowers and trees.
- September 4. Mrs. Doreen Hopper, of Murdoch Crescent. Interests: "All aspects of the animal kingdom, birds in the 'Victorian' gardens, special interest in hummingbirds which winter in Victoria."
- September 6. Lola Brockie, of Collinson Street. Interested in birding.
- September 18. Martha McCaffrey, of Sunnygrove Place.
- September 18. Bernice Pratt, of Begbie Street. Gift membership from Pat and Bill Doerksen of Winnipeg.
- September 18. Gerard F. Buydens, of Heath Drive.
- September 19. Joe Meade, of Pentrelew Place. Particular interests: mammals, birding, trees, hiking and conservation. Joe is a new arrival in Victoria; he was a member of the St. Lawrence Valley Natural History Society and did volunteer work at Ecomuseum, Ste. Anne de Bellevue.
- September 21. Bill and Rosemary Ward, of Torquay Drive.



Photo credit: Alexandra Morton, Raincoast Research

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Effects of Peregrines on a Seabird Colony

By Alan E. Burger

The recovery of populations of Peregrine Falcons, following their disastrous declines due to DDT and other pollutants, has been keenly followed by naturalists across North America. Here in the Pacific Northwest, the recovery of Peregrines has produced interesting effects on seabirds at Tatoosh Island, Washington. Dr. Robert Paine of the University of Washington, and his colleagues, have been counting Peregrines and other birds on this island regularly for the past 13 years, and have recently published their results (Paine, R.T. et al, 1990, *Auk* 107:1-9). Peregrine sightings have increased consistently during this time and since 1983 the falcons have been seen almost every day during the summer, with up to five individuals hunting around the island.

This may sound like bad news for all the seabirds and oystercatchers which breed on Tatoosh, but Paine and his colleagues found some interesting and initially puzzling changes. Numbers of Leach's and Forked-tailed Storm Petrels have not been noticeably affected by the Peregrines. These little seabirds are occasionally eaten by the falcons, but since they only come ashore in the dead of night, they appear to be less vulnerable than some other species. Rhinoceros Auklets and Cassin's Auklets are the major prey of the falcons, and their populations appear to be significantly affected. Rates of capture of Cassin's Auklets in mist-nets have declined as Peregrine visits increased.

The surprises came when data from other species were analyzed. Since the falcons established themselves, the populations of Common Murres and Pelagic Cormorants have increased significantly, and the breeding success of Black Oystercatchers has doubled. Peregrines seldom take these larger birds, but that doesn't explain why they should benefit from the falcon's presence. This unlikely result is baffling until the role of a final avian player is examined: the Northwestern Crow.

Tatoosh supports a population of between 8-30 crows. It appears that certain of the Peregrines had a particular preference for crows and during their tenure the numbers of crows declined, and several crow remains were found.

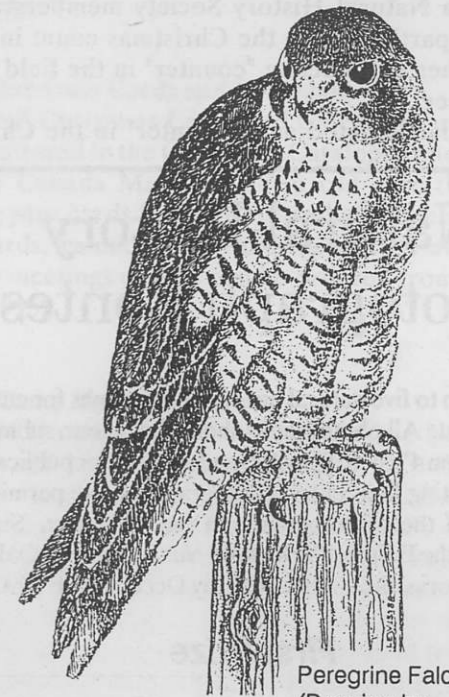
Paine and his co-workers had discovered an interesting food web. Crows are very effective predators of the eggs and

Announcement: 10% off all Natural History books to VNHS members. Large selection: birding, plants, etc. Wells Used Books, 1505 Fell (off Oak Bay), 592-8376.

small chicks of surface-nesting seabirds, such as Murres, Cormorants and Oystercatchers. Nests of these birds were frequently decimated by crows — until the falcons became established.

The presence of Peregrines has reduced the harassment by crows. Burrow-nesters, such as Storm Petrels and Auklets are seldom bothered by crows, but some are very vulnerable to Peregrines.

Clearly the re-establishment of Peregrines is likely to produce both direct and indirect effects on seabird populations, which can be quite unexpected. Something to look out for in British Columbia too.



Peregrine Falcon
(Drawing by Stephen Lewis)

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Christmas Bird Count— December 15, 1990

By David Pearce

The Victoria Christmas Bird Count will be held on Saturday, December 15, 1990. The purpose of the C.B.C. is to count birds observed within a 15 mile diameter circle covering the Greater Victoria area centred on the intersection of Grange Road and Jasmine Avenue in Marigold. The circle is divided into 22 land areas and two ocean areas, each having an area leader.

Victoria Natural History Society members are encouraged to participate in the Christmas count in one of two ways either as an active "counter" in the field or as a feeder watcher.

If you participated as a "counter" in the Christmas

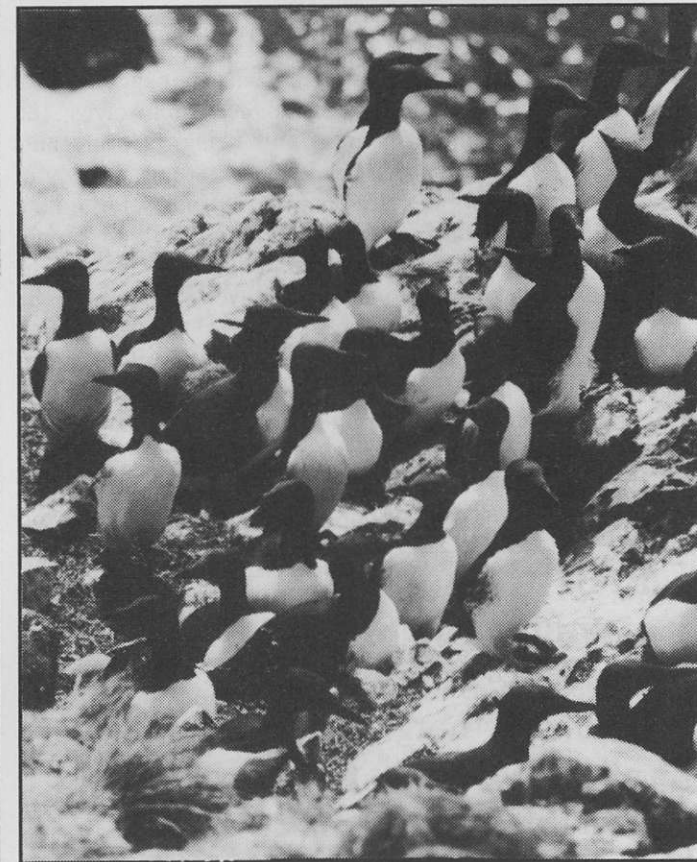
count last year, you will be contacted and asked if you would like to participate this year. If you did not take part in the Victoria count last year but would like to participate, please contact David Pearce, Count Coordinator, at 477-2664 by November 30, or sign up at the November birders' night.

If you have a feeder in your yard and wish to participate as a feeder watcher, simply watch your feeder on December 15 and record all bird species and number of individuals of those species. Mail or bring your list into the Field-Naturalist/Swiftsure Tours, 1241 Broad Street, Victoria, V8W 2A4. Please put your name, address and telephone number on the list. Your report must be received by Friday, December 21 in order to be included in the count records.

If you see a rare bird at your feeder on December 15 (see the new Victoria Area Checklist of Birds or last year's Christmas count results in the March/April issue of *The Victoria Naturalist* to find out what is rare in December), please phone your sighting immediately to the Rare Bird Alert at 592-3381 and leave a message on the tape.

After the count there will be a party at Gordon Head United Church. The gathering will be catered by the Cadboro Bay St. George's Ladies Guild and will cost \$9.00 per person. It will start at 6:30 p.m. and please bring your own plates and cutlery.

Tickets will be on sale at the October and November birder's nights or they can be obtained from Margaret MacKenzie-Grieve at 477-2402 or you can pick them up at the Field Naturalist/Swiftsure Tours.



Common Murre Colony. (Photo: Alan Burger)

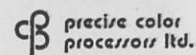
Natural History Photograph Contest

Send in up to five natural history photographs for entry in our contest. All photographs should be colour, submitted in sizes from 4" x 6" to 8" by 10", and suitable for publication. By submitting their entry, photographers give permission for use of their photographs in the *Naturalist*. Submit entries to the Editor, *The Victoria Naturalist*, 1863 Oak Bay Ave., Victoria, B.C., V8R 1C8, by December 1, 1990.

First Prize

16 x 20
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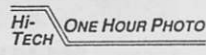
From **Precise Colour**



Second Prize

Development and printing of
24 exposure colour film.

From **Hi-Tech Photo**



Third Prize

Membership in the VNHS and subscription to *The Victoria Naturalist* (or Christmas gift subscription if winner is already a member).



CALENDAR

REGULAR MEETINGS are generally held as follows:

Board of Directors meetings the first Tuesday of each Month; Botany Night the third Tuesday and Birder's Night the fourth Wednesday of each month. Locations are given in the calendar listings.

FIELD TRIPS. Please meet at the location indicated for each trip and BRING A LUNCH. Be equipped for changes in weather, with hat, rain gear and boots, if necessary. **Always phone the VNHS Events Tape at 479-2054 before a trip** to get further details or find out about changes in plans. On VNHS trips, participants usually pool vehicles to reduce parking problems and costs. The Board suggests that fuel costs be shared with the driver.

NOVEMBER EVENTS

Tuesday, Nov. 6.

Board of Directors Meeting at 7:30 in Clifford Carl Reading Room, Cunningham Building, UVic.

Thursday, Nov. 15.

General Meeting of the Thetis Park Nature Sanctuary Association, 8 p.m. at Christ Church Cathedral Auditorium. Bill Young retired Chief Forester of the B.C. Forest Service will talk on David Douglas, Botanist.

Sunday, Nov. 18.

Birding in the Sooke—Jordan River area with Mike Sheppard. Meet at Helmcken Park and Ride at 8 a.m. Hope to see Black-legged Kittiwakes and perhaps pelagic species.

Sunday, Nov. 25.

Gull Workshop with Dave Fraser. Meet at the Goldstream picnic area at 9:30 a.m. A good chance to sharpen your skills for the Christmas Bird Count.

DECEMBER EVENTS

Sunday, Dec. 2.

Birding on Westham Island and Reifel Refuge with Bryan Gates. Meet at Safeway parking lot at Sidney at 8 a.m. Should see Snow Geese, Waterfowl and Raptors.

Tuesday, Dec. 4.

Board of Directors Meeting at 7:30 in Clifford Carl Reading Room, Cunningham Building, UVic.

Tuesday, Dec. 11.

General Meeting and Program—Christmas Member's Night at 8 p.m. in the Begbie Building, Room 159, UVic. Come along or better yet participate in an evening featuring short presentations and displays from talented society members. If you have slides of an interesting subject or travels, display items or a collection, please contact Bev Glover at 721-1476 as soon as possible to help with planning.

Saturday, Dec. 15.

Christmas Bird Count, for details contact Dave Pearce at 477-2664.

BULLETIN BOARD

Wanted - Volunteers

The Program Committee needs volunteers to help with program. Work will involve a meeting twice a year to organize the program and perhaps make a few phone calls. Anyone interested can contact Bev Glover (Publicity) at 721-1476.

CNF Christmas Cards and Calendars

The CNF Christmas Cards and Calendars are here. These are illustrated in the Christmas Catalogue enclosed with the Nature Canada Magazine. You can save the postage by getting your cards from VNHS and also benefit the society. The cards, calendars and diaries will be available at the society meetings or they can be ordered from Lyndis Davis at 477-9952.

FBCN Camp Bulletin

The FBCN camp, hosted by the Victoria Natural History Society will be held from May 12 to 19, 1991. The Camp location is the University of Victoria. Betty Kennedy, Audrey Copping, Wally McGregor, Hank Vander Pol, Roy Wainwright and Lyndis Davis (Chairperson) are the members of the camp committee. Volunteers are still needed to help with the camp. Some of the different duties one can help with are: going out with the daily field trips (especially if you have expertise in botany, birds, geology, local history or any nature subject that you think might be of interest to people from other parts of the province), seeing the campers off in the morning, serving coffee and goodies at the end of the evening programme, and to contribute goodies. There will be a programme each evening so if you have a slide presentation or an interesting vignette do let the camp committee know. Two evening lectures and a dinner at Sooke will be open to our membership. Please watch for more details in the New Year.

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Chocolate Lily,
Fritillaria lanceolata,
observed at Cuthbert Holmes Park
in Saanich during early May.
Photo: Bev Glover