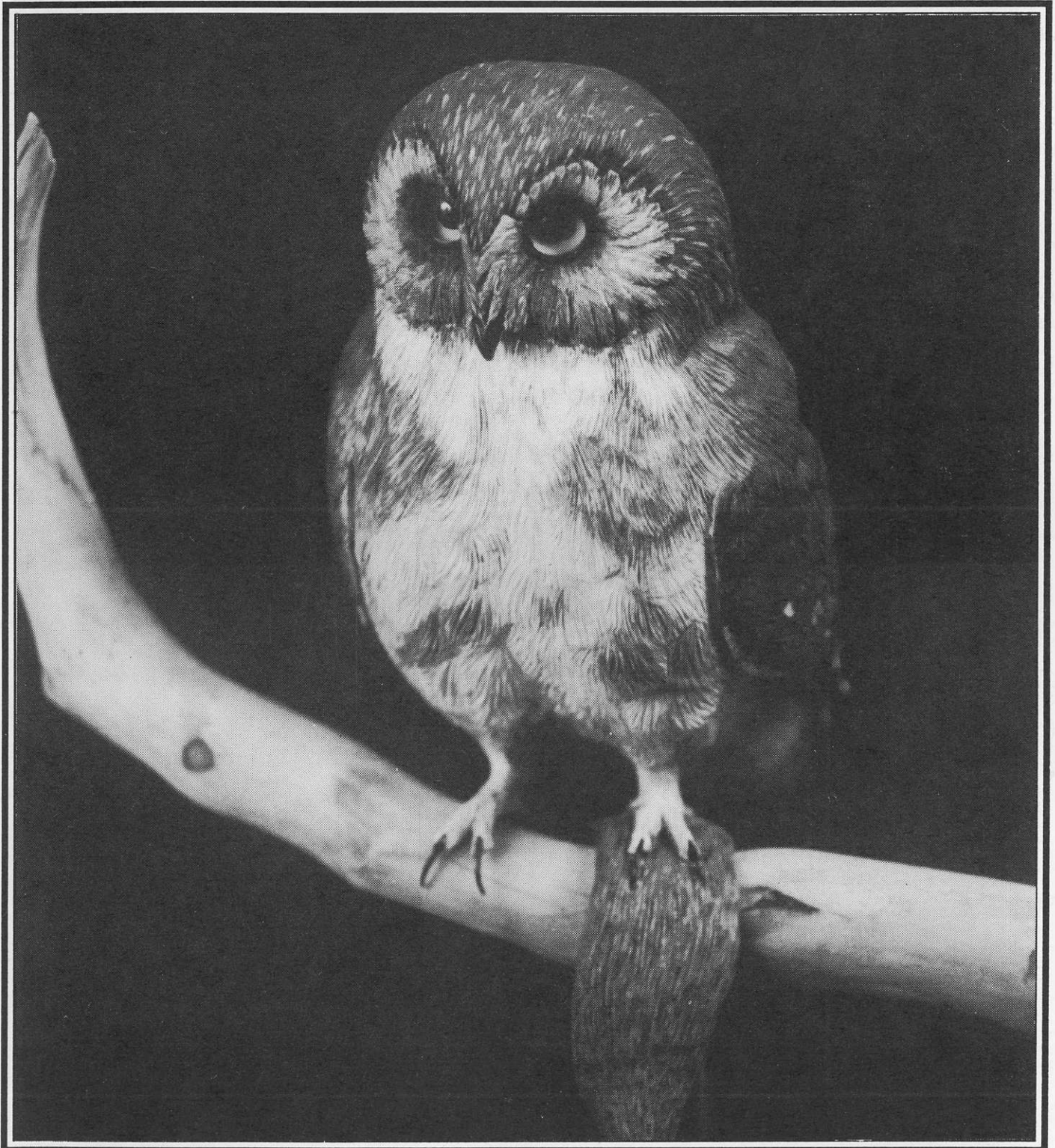




The Victoria NATURALIST

MAY
JUNE
1991
VOL 47.6

VICTORIA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY



The Victoria NATURALIST

Published six times a year by the
VICTORIA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY
P.O. Box 5220, Station B, Victoria, B.C. V8R 6N4
Contents © 1991 as credited.
ISSN 0049-612X Printed in Canada

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Family \$26.00 Junior Subscriber \$4.00
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Members are encouraged to submit articles, field trip reports, birding and botany notes, and book reviews with photographs or illustrations if possible. Photographs of natural history are appreciated along with documentation of location, species names and a date. Please label your submission with your name, address, and phone number and provide a title. We will accept and use copy in almost any legible form but we encourage submission of typed, double-spaced copy or an IBM compatible word processing file on a 360K 5.25" diskette plus printed output. Having copy submitted on diskette saves a lot of time and work for the publications group and we really appreciate the help. If you have an obscure or very old word processing program, call the editor, Warren Drinnan at 598-0471 or 652-9618, or Diana Jolly at 388-4259, or save the text in ASCII format. Blank diskettes may be obtained from the editor and we will return any of your own diskettes submitted. Photos and slides submitted may be picked up at the Field Naturalist, 1241 Broad Street, or will be returned if a stamped, self-addressed envelope is included with the material.

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Our Cover

Keeper of the Night

By Rose Leonard
Wildfowl Carver

Our cover this issue features the wood sculpture of Sooke artist, Rose Leonard.

"Keeper of the Night" is her representation of the Saw-whet Owl. Other works by the artist appear on pages 13 and 15.

Rose Leonard is a self-taught artist who began her professional career in 1988. She was born in Saint John, N.B. in 1963 and discovered an interest in wildlife at an early age. Her first three-dimensional wildlife art was done in 1987, but she has rapidly established a reputation for fine wildlife sculpture.

Rose's work is in private collections, locally, nationally and internationally, and her pieces have won many First Place Ribbons and Best of Division Awards in competition, crediting both her skilled technical ability and her creative talent.

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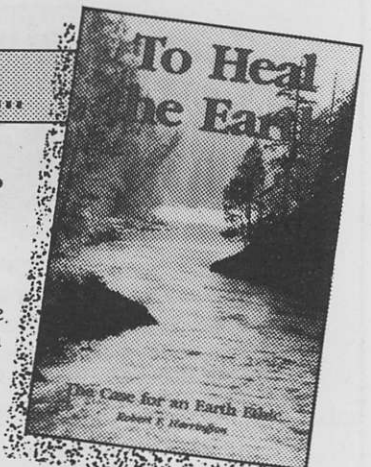
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Freeman King—Naturalist 1891- 1975

By R. Yorke Edwards

Freeman King was a man to remember. In any setting he stood out. He was tall, thin, and straight, with a rough-cut face featuring a wonderfully hooked nose; even in his last years he moved with the vigour of a youth who could hardly wait to get on with life's next adventure. Through most of his years he was to be found in green forest environments where usually he was surrounded by a group of people.

Freeman loved the wild places about Victoria and he had a deep understanding about how plants and animals in those places lived their lives. Being a born story-teller, he enjoyed telling others what his sharp eyes were seeing and what his sharp brain was understanding. He was a spellbinder, in green places or by a campfire, to people of all ages, but he liked children best, and they loved him as only children can love a grownup who has not outgrown the wonder, the enthusiasm, the sense of adventure that is part of childhood.

For many years Freeman was the major force behind the most successful nature club for children in Canada. Victoria's Junior Field Naturalists (part of the Victoria Natural History Society) was envied by naturalists across Canada but none could duplicate its success because none had a Freeman King.

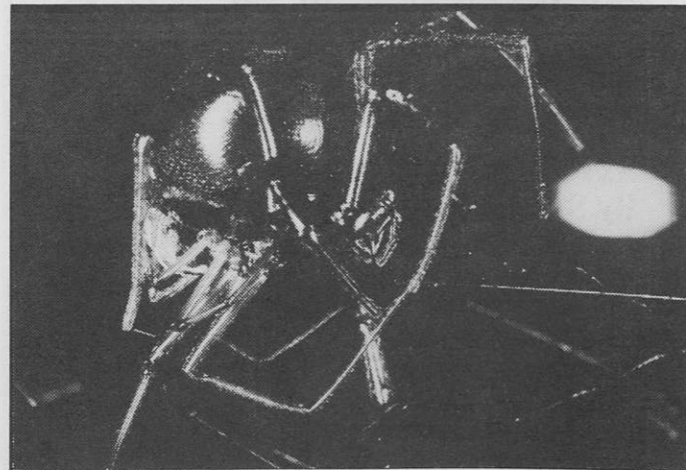
Through his years with his Juniors, and his years before that with the Boy Scouts, Freeman led thousands of youngsters into the green world, and into life, with a delight for exploring the outdoors that no one could ever forget.

Freeman was born in England in 1891. He came to Canada as a young man and after some years on the prairie as a cowhand, policeman and homesteader, he arrived in the Victoria area in 1925, where he soon found himself running camps in the woods for the provincial government. Many Vancouver Island provincial parks were established in those depression years by men in such camps and many of their trails were made by men working with Freeman. Later, he was well known in the Boy Scout movement where he became a Field Commissioner. Then, in the last two decades of his life, his fame as a nature interpreter and park naturalist spread far beyond Victoria and British Columbia. He was a familiar figure in both Thomas S. Francis Provincial Park, to which he devoted part of most days, and Goldstream Provincial Park, where he was Chief Naturalist every summer. He became famous in those years as a communicator and teacher in wild places. For over a decade the government of British Columbia passed a special Order-In-Council each spring so that Freeman could be hired for yet another summer, for he was long past 65, the age when the law discouraged hiring people.

A long list of people who Freeman helped to understand green places were inspired to make natural science their life's occupation. Many of them took biological subjects at university, often going on for advanced degrees. Now, those who are helped by the Freeman King Scholarships of the Victoria Natural History Society, are following in the footsteps of the many others helped directly by this remarkable man. Were he here, he would be pleased to help in this way now, just as he helped so many others personally before. And the only return that he would ask is that those helped would learn to really see what they looked at in this green and living world and that they really try to understand what they saw.

"What is it?" he would ask, pointing to something like a leaf. All he asked was that you tried to find the answer from the leaf. Books were acceptable but the leaf was the one to believe. If you have received a Freeman King Scholarship, welcome to the growing list of people who have been helped by Freeman King.

This article is a reprint from an old publication.



Black Widow Spider (mating). Photo: Steve Pridgeon.

About Our Junior Naturalist Contributors:

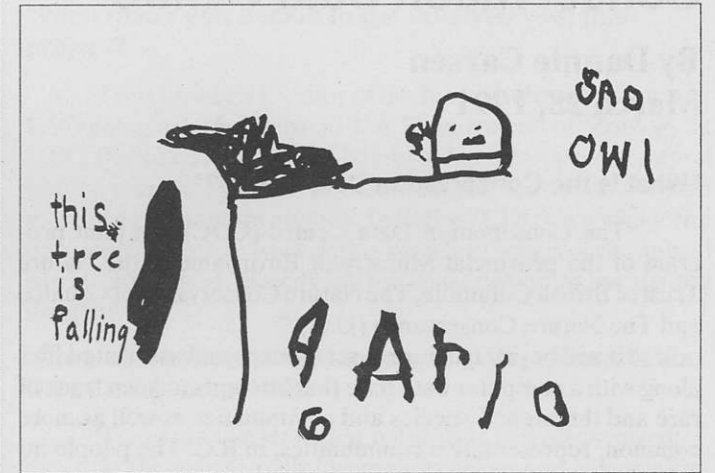
This issue of The Victoria Naturalist features the contributions of Junior Naturalists who responded to Managing Editor Diana Jolly's request for articles and pictures from younger members which appeared in the last issue.

Fourteen-year-old Roberta Cottam produced the R.I.P. Tide cartoon which appears on this page. Roberta is a grade nine student at Claremont Secondary School.

Six-year-old Arlo, whose picture of a "Sad Owl" also appears here, is very concerned about the loss of old growth and rain forests. The "Sad Owl" is one of his favourite themes. The owl is a spotted owl who has lost his home and friends.

Arlo tells everyone he meets about the owl's loss of habitat. He has also written the premier and the prime minister to voice his concerns about the environment. Arlo may be

disadvantaged in some ways since he has cerebral palsy, however our environment is fortunate to have someone like Arlo in its corner.



Sad Owl. (Drawing: Arlo)

Nature in Review By Leon E. Pavlick

Upon her dais she did stand,
Reviewing all her troops.
No men in cadence passed her way,
Just creation doing loops.

A bumblebee from flower to flower,
Sweet nectar sought for sake,
Delivered pollen at each stop,
And so paid for its take.
The flowers colored up the hill,
With bright bold hues — and green;
They set new seeds the like of which,
The world has never seen.
The ground squirrel ate such tender

shoots,
As rendered by the plants;
Its hillside diggings churned the soil,
Helping trees advance.
It bravely tested time's assault —
Knew many changing skies;

Then a red-tailed hawk with claw and
clutch,
Did seize it for its prize.

Upon her dais she did stand,
Both proud and sad this day;
Some of her making soldiered on,
While others slipped away.

Of humankind that's blessed with mind,
So likely to succeed,
She saw there some bright enterprise,
Some caring and some greed.
Some helped others, some put in,
But most did vie for gold
For power too — the kind unearned —
Their peace of mind was sold.
Some used not their mind but brawn;
Each toiled to fill his bowl.
Others denied themselves esteem;
They cheated, lied and stole.
Some got stuck in mankind's web,

While others learned and grew;
Firm ground was there to build upon,
And mires to march through.

You are my warriors, all and each,
In a war that's never won.
Your battles, struggles, move each year,
With a briefly setting sun.
A new day dawns, then your seeds and
spawn,

Go boldly forward to fight —
Each a new trial to test the world,
And conquer what you might.
Some of you have the stuff and luck,
To endure and sow your seeds;
For some of you the fortune's lean,
And you depart with scanty deeds.
But for every one that has ever come,
I've awarded sunshine to —
And rainbow colors, and clear blue
skies,
And rain and morning dew.

R.I.P. TIDE By Roberta Cottam



Interview with Syd Cannings, Conservation Data Centre

By Dannie Carsen
March 28, 1991

"What is the Conservation Data Centre?"

"The Conservation Data Centre (CDC) is a joint program of the provincial Ministry of Environment, the Nature Trust of British Columbia, The Nature Conservancy of Canada, and The Nature Conservancy (U.S.)."

"It will be, in structure, a set of maps and associated files along with a computer data base that attempts to keep track of rare and threatened species and communities as well as more common, representative communities, in B.C. The people involved are:

Carmen Cadrin, Community Ecologist
Syd Cannings, Zoologist
Holly Clermont, Data Manager
George Douglas, Botanist
Andrew Harcombe, Program Coordinator."

"The plan is that in two years time, the provincial government will take over the CDC entirely and it will become part of the Wildlife Branch, Ministry of Environment."

"The system being used (to classify species and communities) is one that has been developed over the last 15 years by The Nature Conservancy (U.S.) which has similar programs in all 50 states, 11 Latin American countries, and in Ontario and Quebec. The system is not only well developed but also shares a common language with the other programs. This enables the B.C. program to get a head start and coordinate and complement efforts across the western hemisphere. The



Mountain Beaver: The Mountain Beaver has a restricted habitat—the mountains south of the Fraser Valley and the Tulameen area. (Photo: Ministry of the Environment)

Nature Conservancy (U.S.) has provided training to the staff members of the B.C. project to enable us to understand the classification system and the computer program with which the data bank information is accessed. Two other strengths of this classification system are:

- i. it provides the means of a somewhat objective ranking of both elements of diversity in terms of their rarity and, subsequently, the ranking of sites of concern in terms of the numbers of rare elements and the threats to them,
- ii. it is an ongoing program which continually updates its information and checks older records to make sure they are correct."

"Do you have a set of objectives or mission statement?"

"A concise mission statement is:
*to provide information
to help conserve natural diversity in B.C.*"

"The Conservation Data Centre is a permanent, yet dynamic, atlas and data bank of the natural diversity of the province with special emphasis on the threatened or endangered elements of that diversity."

"The CDC will be a centralized data bank which will allow 'one-stop shopping' in terms of conservation information."

The Conservation Data Centre Concept

"There would be two thrusts to this concept, a coarse filter and a fine filter."

"The coarse filter would track geographically, and by notation, the natural diversity of the province in the most efficient way. You cannot possibly keep track of every species and every community in detail. So you apply a coarse filter, which is a gap analysis, mapping representative communities and seeing if they are protected within managed areas or in some other manner. This will help capture most of the areas required to be preserved in order to ensure diversity."

"Species, races, biota that will not be protected by that strategy are the rare ones. They are scattered widely across the landscape or are found in a very restricted area of the province, so by accident they may be missed in a protected areas program that is based on representative landscapes."

"The fine filter catches what would fall through the cracks of the coarse filter. To do this a permanent, but dynamic, data bank and atlas of both rare and threatened species, and natural communities is to be established."

"One of our first jobs, with cooperating ministries such as Forests and Environment, is to establish a comprehensive community classification for the province. The communities that need the most work in classification are the non-forested ones such as grassland and alpine. That is one of our biggest challenges."

"How do you expect the information in the data bank to assist planners and conservationists in identifying and setting aside habitat and species for protection?"

"The main challenge in every jurisdiction is to make sensible decisions about land use and you can't make decisions without information. So, when planning for development at the local and provincial levels it would really help to know ahead of time where environmentally sensitive areas are. We can give to municipalities and regional districts a map of their areas showing critical ecological areas so that they can use that to make better decisions about land use."

"The information allows conservation organizations involved in land acquisition (such as the Nature Trust) to set priorities in their use of their limited funding."

"Who is assisting with the funding for this initiative?"

"There are four partners:

1. Provincial Ministry of Environment
2. The Nature Trust
3. The Nature Conservancy of Canada
4. The Nature Conservancy (U.S.)."

"One-half of the costs of the initial period, the first two years, is being borne by the Ministry of Environment. The Nature Trust is coordinating the private funding and the Vancouver Foundation has made a substantial contribution."

"How do you plan to work with all the ministries involved with setting aside lands for protection and special interest groups to facilitate dialogue about land planning?"

"Our job is not to facilitate dialogue about land planning but to provide information so the dialogue is not based on hearsay or inaccurate information. Once the rare and

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threatened habitats and species are mapped, it will become quite clear to everyone involved in conservation issues the great challenge we have in preserving our natural diversity."

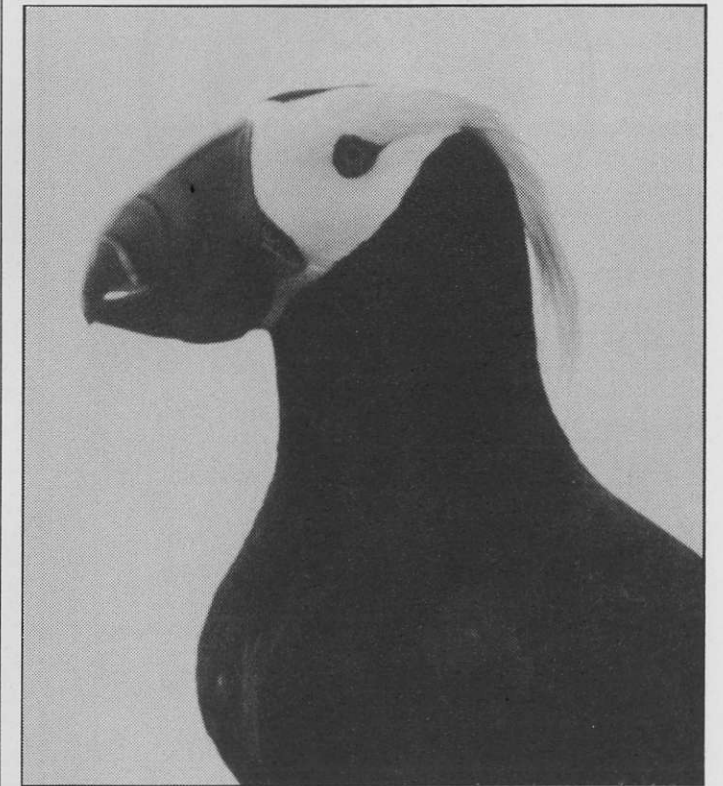
"What made you decide to get involved with this project?"

"I was formerly Curator of the Insect Collection (Spencer Entomological Museum) in the Department of Zoology at UBC. But since I was always interested in all aspects of natural history, even though I was an entomologist, I considered myself more of a generalist in outlook. I saw this (CDC) as a wonderful opportunity, both to work with a broader section of the animal world and to work directly for the conservation of our natural diversity."

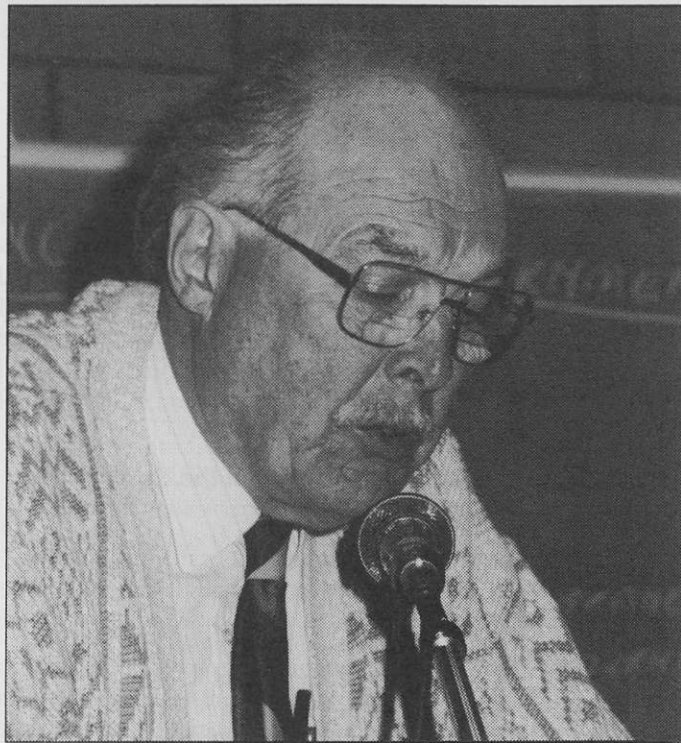
"How can naturalists get involved in the Conservation Data Centre program?"

"There are two ways that naturalists can get involved:

1. They can actually locate rare species and communities for the CDC to make sure we know where they occur.
2. Since the CDC is an ongoing system, we need help to monitor occurrences of rare plants and animals. We want to know when new threats arise so that the site priority can be re-evaluated. We also want to keep track of the unfortunate situations where sites are destroyed or species have disappeared, so that other related sites can be given higher priority. It will be a big job to monitor all these sites around the province, so we will need the help of knowledgeable and concerned naturalists."



Tufted Puffin: This bird is especially vulnerable to oil pollution because of restricted breeding areas. (Photo: Ministry of the Environment)



Tony Embleton, a chair of the Shoreline and Adjacent Wetlands Workshop at the University of Victoria. (Photo: Robert Allington)

Shoring up the Shoreline— Report on the Shoreline and Adjacent Wetlands Workshop

By Patricia Freeman

The Victoria Natural History Society hosted an all-day Shoreline and Adjacent Wetlands Workshop at the University of Victoria on Saturday, March 23rd. The objective was to identify which parts of Vancouver Island's coastline require protection from the pressures of increasing human development. Originally, the workshop was a round table concept developed by the Federation of B.C. Naturalists. Connie Hawley, the Regional Coordinator, suggested using the approach to identify sensitive shoreline habitat for all six Vancouver Island Clubs. The Shoreline Workshop grew to become a major group effort between the FBCN, who received funding from the Ministry of Environment, and six Vancouver Island naturalist clubs. Nine federal and provincial agencies with interests in the Island's shorelines, the Nature Trust, Ducks Unlimited, the Wildlife Viewing Program and the Western Canada Wilderness Committee, all participated in the workshop.

The conference established that 38 shoreline and adjacent wetland locations need protection between Campbell River and the San Juan River. Most estuaries already have some form of protection due to their ecologically sensitive nature and national significance. Unfortunately, estuaries cover only 3% of B.C.'s coastline, which leaves an enormous amount of shoreline exposed to numerous perils.

Immediate threats to the coastal environment are many and varied. Not surprisingly, the greatest one appears to be from planned urban and/or industrial development. Such areas as the unique plant and animal community around Englishman River Estuary (one of the last unprotected estuaries on the east side of Vancouver Island), are facing major urban development. This includes the construction of new marinas, which could cause irreparable damage to the precious beach/estuary ecosystem.

Development is also affecting the Campbell River area. The waterfront around the spit and to the south of the city is currently scheduled for industrial development, and Race Point, the site of some Indian artifacts, is owned by a developer. Also facing potential housing and industrial development are: Black Creek, located near Miracle Beach Provincial Park, Somenos Marsh, a unique wildlife community with heritage value, the Sooke Basin, with its rich waterbird and fish habitat (a key area for potential oil spills), and the San Juan River Estuary.

Here in Victoria, human encroachment is already threatening the lagoon ecosystem at Esquimalt, where many migrating birds stop and rest. Finlayson Arm and Tod Inlet, which is a pre-spawning gathering area for Chum Salmon, are facing a housing/hotel/golf course project. The formerly abundant wildlife from the Gorge Waterway to the Inner Harbour, is also imperilled by nearby houses and new commercial and residential developments.

Logging is another problem for the shoreline, since deforestation shrinks the natural habitat, certain processes may pollute the water, and activity brings with it more humans,

whose mere presence in large numbers can be detrimental. To the bird lover, it is distressing to learn that sentinel trees for Bald Eagles around Gabriola Island Cliffs and Campbell River are disappearing due to deforestation. And at Goose Spit in Courtenay, home to 10% of the world's Trumpeter Swans, logging and mining are causing disturbances.

The tourism industry has a different kind of effect on the shoreline. The B.C. coastline is the number one tourist destination in Canada today. On the one hand, we want the province's economy to be bolstered by visitors' dollars. On the other hand, are we prepared—indeed, are we able—to ensure that delicately balanced habitats are not deleteriously affected? The Ministry of Tourism is currently evaluating Robson Bight as a tourism "hot spot."

A more long-term threat, however, is that of global warming. As Dr. Richard Hebda, the Head of Botany at Victoria's Royal B.C. Museum, pointed out at the workshop, warming will cause an abnormally accelerated change in sea levels. After a three degree Celsius rise in temperature, melting glacier ice and rapidly warming (and rising) water may cause an enormous oceanic increase of 21 cm by the year 2100. By that time, Hebda said, it is possible that estuaries would be completely drowned and those species inhabiting lower, gently-sloping areas would have nowhere to go.

With all these concerns before them, the participants of the Shoreline Workshop came to several conclusions:

1. Vast expanses of Vancouver Island's shoreline are completely unprotected and vulnerable to urban development, logging, tourism and global warming. For the sake of the wildlife that call the shoreline home, and for its special ecosystems, these coastal stretches need immediate protection.

2. A classification system must be designed to identify and prioritize areas of shoreline in need of protection, making special note of the most critical ones.

3. Public awareness is crucial. Politicians and educators should be given as much information as possible for as many locations as possible. Naturalist groups could work with private agencies to this end, and also lobby governments to assist with habitat protection.

4. The designation of a government body, such as Crown Lands through the Ministry of Environment, would serve to protect endangered locations. Perhaps an umbrella group such as a local or regional council could facilitate such efforts.

5. Certain mechanisms exist for protection:

- a) Find out who owns the land. (Everything below the high water mark automatically belongs to Crown Lands; much land above the high water mark is privately owned.)
- b) Educate the landowners. Make them aware of the unique shoreline habitat.
- c) Get verbal agreements (of protection).
- d) Get written agreements.
- e) Sign a management contract.
- f) Get a licence.
- g) Get a lease.
- h) Get a restricted covenant.
- i) Acquire the land.

The above steps must be followed up after each one is done. As you go down the list, each step demands increasing levels of commitment, so the job becomes more and more difficult. Each step, however, increases environmental security.

6. Workshops such as this one, which brought together naturalist groups, private agencies, and government agencies, are invaluable in providing a common arena for discussion.

In fact, it is only through such joint efforts, with full cooperation from all sides, that our spectacular coastal habitat will be preserved for the children of tomorrow.

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Snow Goose with Canada Geese at Buttertubs Marsh, Nanaimo. (Photo: Steve Pridgeon)

Purple Loosestrife

By Diana Jolly

When the common name for *Lythrum salicaria* was thought up years ago, the person who named the plant probably did not know how true to its name it would be. Purple Loosestrife is an exotic plant on the loose on Vancouver Island and causing strife in the natural environment.

Lythrum salicaria is a tall (4 - 8 feet), stalk-like herb that tends to grow in wetland areas. It has six flower petals with opposite facing leaves on the stem. When in bloom, the top of the plant's stalk is adorned with reddish-purple flowers. These purple blooms are considered very attractive to many people; however, the problems that an exotic invasive plant can cause are not to be taken lightly. In the case of Purple Loosestrife, it basically forces all the native forage out of an area.

The initial invasion of this European native plant occurred about 100 years ago, where it was found on the east coast of North America. Since then it has spread in a belt-like fashion across the continent. It is in the United States that the impact of this noxious weed can best be seen. Many states have actual "Purple Loosestrife task forces." In Minnesota, the sale of Purple Loosestrife is prohibited and it is the duty of all private landowners to control or destroy it. In 1983, the Minnesota Commissioner of Agriculture appropriated \$50,000 for the eradication of Purple Loosestrife. In 1990, over \$200,000 more was raised for the control and research of Purple Loosestrife through surcharges on boat licenses.

In the last 15 years, Purple Loosestrife has become evident in British Columbia where, unlike the U.S.A., the seriousness of this invasive plant is not known by many people.

Obviously, from the Minnesota example, the capability of Purple Loosestrife to spread and reproduce is incredible. Purple Loosestrife is a very tolerant plant and can grow in poor soil with little availability to sunlight. Its seeds are very small and can be spread by water and wind, as well as on the feathers or feet of waterfowl. Humans also do their part to spread Purple Loosestrife. Beekeepers plant it for their bees because it is so prolific and it has a lengthy blooming period (July through September). Also, many nurseries, including some in Victoria, still sell Purple Loosestrife as a decorative plant. Once it finds its way into a new area, Purple Loosestrife reproduces very quickly. An article in the March/April issue of *Harrowsmith* reports that Purple Loosestrife is capable of producing 2.7 million seeds in one season. Without the presence of certain European insects, who enjoy munching



Purple Loosestrife

away at Purple Loosestrife, there are no natural enemies to check the spread of this plant.

The havoc that Purple Loosestrife can bring to wetlands is alarming. It chokes out native vegetation such as sedges, cattails and bulrushes, that waterfowl use for nesting sites. This causes problems for waterfowl because Purple Loosestrife grows too densely to provide adequate nesting space. Also, the seeds of Purple Loosestrife are so small that their food value to birds and rodents is insignificant. Thus, serious infestations could bring about a change in migratory patterns. Purple Loosestrife causes other damage to wetlands. Stalks and branches of Purple Loosestrife decay very slowly, which in turn traps nutrients instead of releasing them to provide fertile soil. Ultimately, Purple Loosestrife can take away diversity in a habitat, creating an unhealthy sanctuary for any fauna that may reside there.

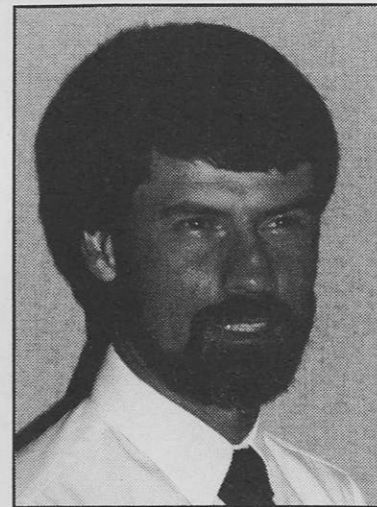
The only efficient way to rid an area of Purple Loosestrife is to pull it out by the roots, making sure all of the root is taken from the ground. Mowing or cutting Loosestrife down does not work because new plants can sprout from the cuttings. Burning is not effective either because it does not eliminate the root. Herbicides can be used but they are not a pleasant alternative, as most destroy all vegetation they come in contact with, not just the target plant.

Fortunately, the situation in British Columbia has not yet reached the extent of that in Minnesota. However, if a plan of action for B.C. is not coordinated soon, the devastation of our wetlands could be horrific. Purple Loosestrife can already be found to a great extent in the Okanagan Valley. Locally, Purple Loosestrife can be found in many wetland areas, including Colquitz Creek, Cuthbert Holmes Park, Swan Lake, and Kings Pond.

Many of the areas where Purple Loosestrife can be found are protected estuaries. However, there is no use protecting these areas if they are not also guarded from exotic invasive plants. The public must be made aware of the hazards of growing Purple Loosestrife. If everybody monitored wetlands and ditches and destroyed any Purple Loosestrife that was found, B.C. could avoid serious infestation. On a government level, a policy must be created to deal with the problem of Purple Loosestrife and other invasive plants. Perhaps the first step could involve preparing an inventory to find out how bad the situation really is in British Columbia. As can be seen by the Minnesota example, reclaiming land from Purple Loosestrife can be a labour intensive and expensive undertaking. As most would agree, taking a proactive approach to the Purple Loosestrife problem now, instead of paying for it later, would be a far better course to take.

Special thanks to Willie MacGillivray, of the Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary, for providing much of the information presented in this article.

President's Report



Mike McGrenere,
President, VNHS

The year 1990 saw the Society continue in an active role with both our educational and recreational events. The Society offered a variety of field trips throughout the year, and both interesting and informative programs at our general meetings and at birders' night. All of our general meetings and birders' night meetings were held in Begbie 159, which has proven to be an ideal meeting place.

Our conservation role expanded under the leadership of Tony Embleton. A group of dedicated volunteers are now monitoring a number of natural areas to ensure the long-term enjoyment of these areas. Earth Day on April 22 was a celebration day for the world and the VNHS participated in events at the Royal B.C. Museum and at Ogden Point.

The Society has been actively planning for two significant events this spring. Connie Hawley, and several other volunteers, scheduled a workshop which brought together representatives of natural history clubs and government agencies from Vancouver Island to discuss our shoreline habitat. This "round table" took place at the University of Victoria on March 23. Also a dedicated group of volunteers, headed by Lyndis Davis, have been planning the agenda of events for the FBCN Field Camp which the Society is hosting in May.

The strength of any Society is in its members and their willingness to contribute their time and expertise to make the Society a success. We are fortunate to have many members who have assisted with the operation of the Society and with special events. I would like to extend a special word of thanks and appreciation to all of our members who have donated their time and energy to the Society during the past year.

We also extend special thanks to retiring Board members: Dannie Carsen, who has handled the Program Committee and Publication Committee during his two years on the Board, and Margaret MacKenzie-Grieve, our hard working social organizer and the Society's representative on the Board of the Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary.

We would also like to thank the Board members who, for various reasons, submitted their resignations during the year - Elizabeth Laugharne, Ed Coffin and Reuben Ware. Ed Coffin resigned due to ill health after a number of years as our Membership Chairman. Reuben Ware, our Secretary for the past two years and former Chairman of the Parks and Conservation Committee, has recently moved to Halifax.

*Respectfully submitted,
Mike McGrenere*

Social Committee Report

By Margaret MacKenzie-Grieve

There were two main social events that took place in the past year: the Post Bird Count Party and the Annual Banquet.

The Post Bird Count Party took place on December 16, 1990 at the Gordon Head United Church Hall, with 130 people attending. Over the years our numbers have increased and we have outgrown various rooms, so we are lucky to have use of such a large hall for the last two years, in the Christmas season.

In 1989, the number of people attending the party was 130. It was found that organizing a potluck supper for such a large number was difficult when the birders who provided the food were out all day counting.

It was decided to get a local Church Guild to do the catering for the 1990 party. This arrangement was easier for the birders, but a lot more work for the helpers who

spent hours preparing the room and washing up afterwards.

I would like to thank Kay Arnott for her beautiful table decorations and for making the coffee. Also, Phyllis and Harold Pollock, Bertha Gow, Christine Rushforth, and Joan Crabbe for their help.

The Annual Banquet was held on February 12, 1991 at the Princess Mary Restaurant in the large ballroom, which provided more room for the 116 members and guests who attended. The buffet meal, with its ample choice, seemed to please everyone, especially the vegetarians.

Rob Butler, from the Canadian Wildlife Service, gave a fascinating talk and slide show at the Annual Banquet. His topic was "The Life and Times of the Great Blue Heron." I am sure when we visit Sidney Spit in the coming months, our interest of the heronry will be increased.

I would like to thank Freda Woodworth for helping to sell the tickets. Once again, Anne Adamson made beautiful baskets of spring flowers, which were given away to winning ticket holders.

Report of the Publications Committee

By Dannie Carsen

We received *The Victoria Naturalist* in fine shape from the capable hands of Brenda Robson, the previous editor and desktop publisher. One of my first tasks was to define clearly the content and style of the magazine, and I would like to thank the members of the publications committee who aided in that task. As the March/April edition of the magazine will attest, we have refined the style and kept the high editorial standards that both Mark Nyhof and Brenda Robson had developed. Since 1989, our desktop publishing has not been done by volunteer labour and this has slightly increased costs which, coupled with decreased advertising revenue, has increased net costs over 1989.

The success of this magazine is due mainly to the abilities and energy of the faithful members of the editorial team. I would like to thank each of them for all the work they have done:

Warren Drinnan, Editor: Solicited articles, decided on contents and tone, edited final proof, organized tasks for the team.

Diana Jolly, Managing Editor: Covered for Warren for the issues when he was out-of-town, keyed articles on word processor, received and collected articles for proofing, remitted them to the desktop publisher.

Pat Freeman, Proofing Editor: Edited articles and final proofs.

Bev Glover, Program Editor: Coordinated events, new members, and bulletin board for the magazine

Jennifer Emms, Advertising Editor: Coordinated display advertising.

Richard Watts, Roving Reporter: Investigated stories on natural history, wrote book reviews, and acted as advisor on story content.

Robert Allington, Desktop Publisher: Placed ads, stories, and illustrations into our template and designed and pasted up the magazine. Robert is also our long-suffering editor of last resort for our mistakes.

Tom Gillespie, Lyndis Davis, Connie Hawley, and helpers, Distribution Team: This is the busy group who produce the labels, attach them to the magazine, and arrange the magazines into postal code order for Canada Post, so we can get second class mailing rates.

Due to the change in editor and desktop publisher, and since almost all our publication team members were new, I felt it was necessary to take a more proactive approach to the role of Publications Chair. When the team needed a hand with arranging covers, soliciting stories, typing last-minute additions, and editing that final proof, I was happy to help. Most importantly, we had regular post-issue meetings to discuss the previous issue and set deadlines for the next issue.

The publications committee has a little more structure now, and we all have specific parts to play in getting the magazine out. With time, we hope to establish regular departments such as:

1. Environmental Report
2. Book Review
3. Interview
4. Junior Naturalist
5. Botany Bites
6. Field Trip Reports

One of the exciting new publications that has been proposed is a small book called *Birding around Victoria*, which would be coordinated by myself with assistance from the Birding Committee. We will be asking members to submit a brief description of a number of favourite areas to bird in Victoria and maps will be developed to assist in finding the locations. This publication could be inexpensive to produce, cheap to print, and provide some revenue for the Society over the next five years.

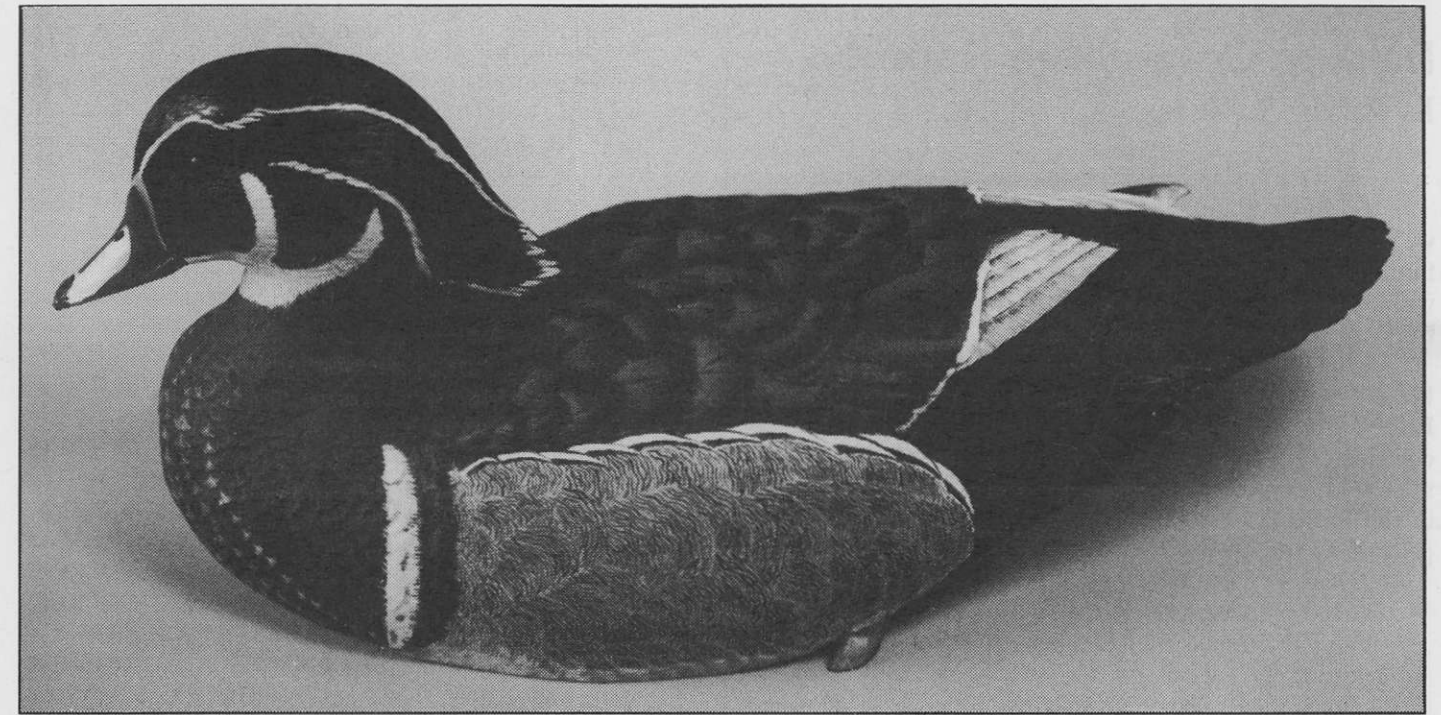
Finally, I would like to encourage all members to continue to submit articles, field trip reports, photos, and illustrations of all kinds, so that our magazine continues to have input from those who enjoy natural history, as well as scientists who undertake studies in the natural sciences. Our magazine is admired all over North America, and it is due in large part to the very active and prolific members of the Society.

Membership Committee Report

By Tom Gillespie

Our membership numbers stood at 822 as of December 31, 1990. Since this date we have had 59 new members up to March 15, 1991. However, with a record number of 294 people delinquent on dues renewal, our paid up membership number is 587 as of March 15, 1991. The number of new members indicates a great increase of interest in our organization during the last year. However, the number of non-renewals shows a lack of support for our conservation and information programs.

It is with great sadness that I must cut these delinquent members from our mailing list in April; but I look forward with hope to the future for strong support from our membership and increasing numbers of new members.



Wood Duck Drake. (Wood carving: Rose Leonard)

Parks and Conservation Committee Report

By Tony Embleton

The past year has been a very active one for this Committee. Five critical areas were identified, headed by a Chairperson:

- 1) Martindale Flats – Jerry Anderson
- 2) Esquimalt Lagoon – Tony Embleton
- 3) Quick's Bottom – Doris Brix
- 4) Blenkinsop Valley – a leader is needed as Henry Niezen, the former Chairperson, had to resign due to ill health.
- 5) Tod Creek Flats – Bill Dawkins

We are in the process of gathering as much data as possible about these areas, which includes forming an inventory of the flora and fauna of each area. Other areas of concern are: Uplands Park, Rithets Bog, Haro Woods, Heal Lake, Knockan Hill Park, Elk/Beaver Lake, Mount Douglas Park, Broadmead Hill, Cuthbert Holmes Park, Christmas Hill, Maber Flats, Beacon Hill Park, Tod Inlet, Chinese Cemetery (Harling Point), Gonzales Hill, Triangle Mountain, Gowland Range, Pat Bay Highway, Interchange at Island View Road, Thetis Lake Park, and other areas which may be affected by the new highway proposal.

Members have attended Municipal Council meetings, written letters, and put forth many suggestions for the protection of the integrity of these areas. On October 2, 1990, a volunteer corps of conservation observers was established, chaired by Margaret Wainwright. Margaret has been able to recruit over forty conservation observers who report any activity that threatens to damage the environment of

their area. Margaret and her volunteers are to be congratulated for keeping the Parks and Conservation Committee up-to-date with any changes of threats to various natural environments.

Some of the contacts/liasons that the Parks and Conservation Committee worked with were Nature Trust, Ducks Unlimited, Canadian Wildlife Service, Canadian Coast Guard, James L. Baillie Memorial Fund, Shell Environment Fund, Habitat Conservation Fund, B.C. Ministry of Environment, B.C. Ministry of Parks, and the B.C. Ministry of Highways. Other studies the Committee is continuing to work on are:

- 1) The conflict of golf courses and agricultural land (ALR).
- 2) The effect of alien species on native species, for example, Broom and Purple Loosestrife.
- 3) Parks Plan 90 and wilderness areas.
- 4) "Land for Wildlife" project of FBCN. We have gathered data on a number of critical areas and presented our concern for these areas for discussion at the Victoria Workshop that was held March 23, 1991.
- 5) The coordination of a Martindale Bird Survey, by Eric Walters. Eric and his volunteers are to be congratulated for their weekly dedication to this ongoing study. Over one hundred members have been involved in this project.
- 6) The expansion of the Parks and Conservation Committee's knowledge of Martindale Flats. The VNHS Board of Directors contracted David Fraser to do a biological study of wildlife use of Martindale Flats. Dave submitted his draft version February 5, 1991.

Sincere thanks to all Committee members who have worked very hard on your behalf to enhance and protect the environment. As an aside, we ask that you help your local farmers by buying and asking for local produce. We must protect farmland.

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Birding Committee Report

By Bryan R. Gates

An astonishing growth in numbers of people interested in birds and birding continued in this past year, and we have no reason to believe that this will not continue into the future. The Birding Committee has recognized this trend and will continue to act to satisfy the varied interests in birds shown by the people of Greater Victoria.

Committee members included: Lyndis Davis, David Fraser, Wally Macgregor, David Pearce, Hank Van der Pol, Eric Walters and Bryan Gates. Each of these individuals has contributed a great deal of time, effort and knowledge, and has suggested new programs and events that will encourage interest in the Society. I thank them for their efforts. Events and programs of the past year have included:

1. Birders' Night. One evening per month, for seven months of the year, we get together at UVic to relax, learn and enjoy. Programs included slide lectures on local or foreign birding, biology of birds, identification skills, and bird photography. We welcome everyone to these meetings; attendance is usually about 90 people but we did host more than 125 at one session this winter. We extend our thanks to the ladies who volunteer with the refreshment services. David Fraser and I will continue to arrange entertaining and informative programs.

2. Rare Bird Alert. As operator of the Rare Bird Alert, I

can assure you that this information service is heavily used — by locals as well as by those living elsewhere who are willing to travel to see a special bird. Direct contacts with NARBA, the North American Rare Bird Alert, have put Victoria on the birding map and have alerted our birders to exciting finds elsewhere in the northwest. I thank Bruce Whittington for ably taking over the tape in my absences.

3. Christmas Bird Count: Always a great success because of our exceptional winter weather and keen birders, David Pearce organized an excellent event again this year. He is now taking advantage of our enthusiasm by organizing a "Spring Christmas Bird Count", to be held in May, when birds are abundant and noses and toes will stay warm. Watch for details.

4. Hank Van der Pol is organizing a Rare Birds Committee for southern Vancouver Island. It will serve to adjudicate on written reports of new, accidental or vagrant species to this area. Revisions to the VNHS Checklist of Birds of Victoria and Southern Vancouver Island will be based on the work of this committee.

5. Bird Habitat Conservation has been pursued by Eric Walters in cooperation with the VNHS Parks and Conservation Committee. Efforts will be increased to seek protection of critical bird habitats here in Greater Victoria.

6. Birding Outings have been coordinated by Wally Macgregor. The best way to hold an organization together and to increase interest is to get people together doing the things they like to do most. Wally will continue to see to these excursions.

7. Communication and friendship between birders increase when a Members List is available. David Pearce has developed and updated a list of birders in this area and has made it available to everyone. The Birding Committee welcomes new enthusiasts and the opportunity to get together with other Society members. Their interest may be slightly different from ours, but we have a common goal which is not only to ensure that we can continue to live in an attractive and healthy environment, but also one that is teeming with biological diversity.



Robin's Nest with Cowbird Egg. (Photo: Mark Nyhof)

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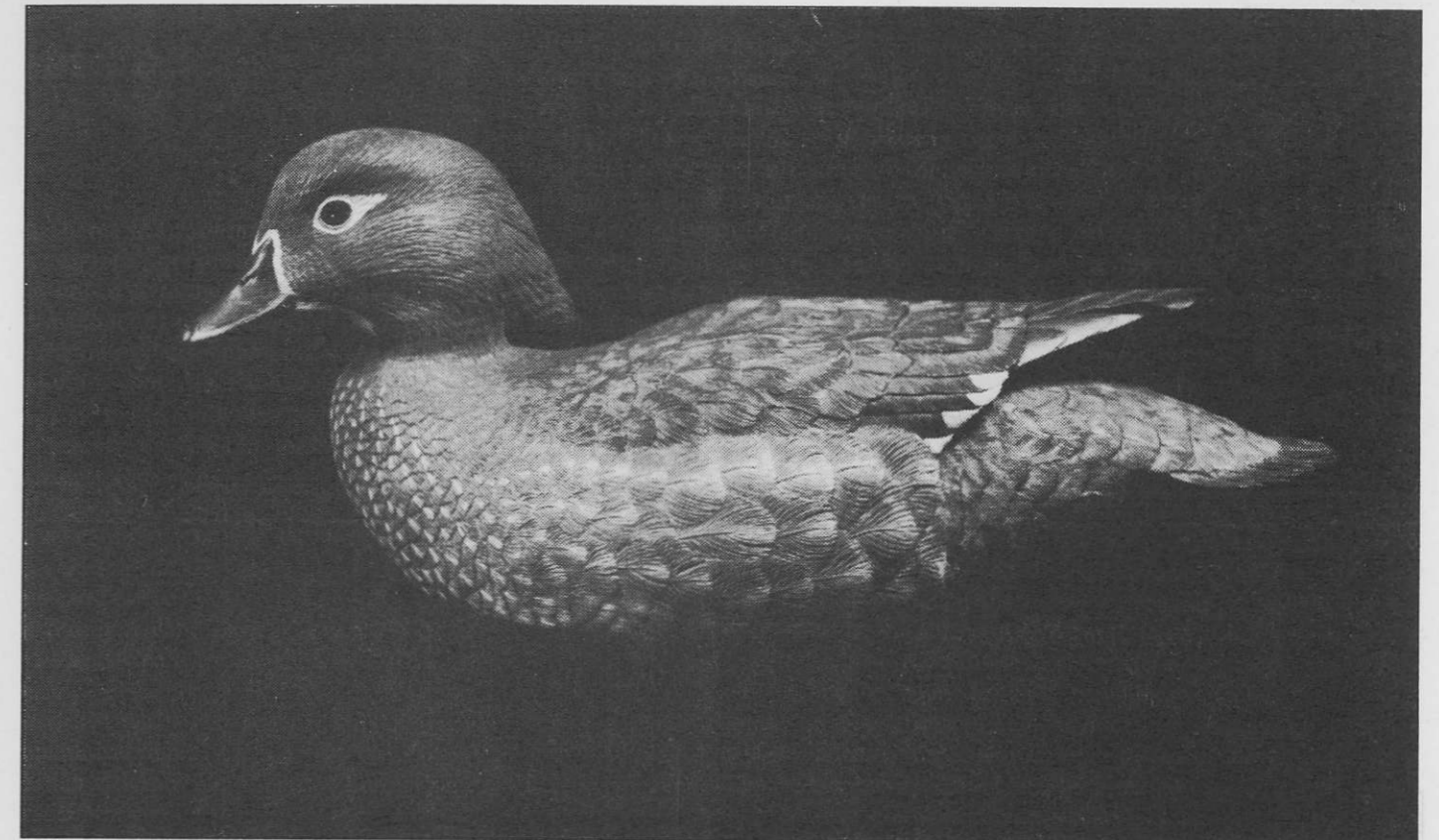
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Wood Duck Hen. (Wood carving: Rose Leonard)

— VICTORIA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY —

Statements of Income and Expenditure For the Year Ended 31 December 1990

1989	GENERAL ACCOUNT	1990	1989	NEHRING ACCOUNT	1990
	Income			Income	
10,537	Membership dues and donations	11,665	6,717	Interest	8,046
2,205	Publications	1,041			
2,056	Annual general meeting F.B.C.N.	—			
1,348	Interest	1,297			
<u>16,146</u>		<u>14,003</u>	<u>6,717</u>		<u>8,046</u>
	Expenditure			Expenditure	
2,705	Naturalist-production & mailing	4,474	—	Martindale Flats Proposal	51
311	Cost of meetings	270	925	Bird Alert System	—
1,633	Postage and stationery	1,303	450	Equipment	—
2,712	Affiliation fees	2,644			
—	Bird alert system	561			
—	Telephone information service	496			
150	Audit and accountancy	150			
512	Miscellaneous	796			
<u>8,023</u>		<u>10,694</u>	<u>1,375</u>		<u>51</u>
8,123	EXCESS INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE	3,309	5,342	EXCESS INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE	7,995
7,577	Funds on hand at beginning of year	15,700	82,392	Funds on hand at beginning of year	85,234
			(2,500)	Transfer to Conservation Project	(2,500)
<u>15,700</u>	FUNDS ON HAND AT END OF YEAR	<u>19,009</u>	<u>85,234</u>	FUNDS ON HAND AT END OF YEAR	<u>90,729</u>

(continued following page)

— VICTORIA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY —
Statements of Income and Expenditure For the Year Ended 31 December 1990

(Continued from preceding page)

1989	CONSERVATION PROJECT	1990	1989	SCHOLARSHIP ACCOUNT	1990
				Income	
579	Funds on hand at beginning of year	(322)	1,365	Interest	1,705
—	Lottery Donation	64			
2,500	Transfer from Nehring account	2,500			
3,079		2,242	1,365		1,705
				Expenditure	
2,500	Donation — Swan Lake	2,500	1,700	Scholarships and Bursaries	1,600
532	Telephone information service	—			
331	Christmas bird count	—	(335)	EXCESS INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE	105
38	Development expenses	231	18,873	Funds on hand at beginning of year	18,538
(322)	FUNDS ON HAND AT END OF YEAR	(489)	18,538	FUNDS ON HAND AT END OF YEAR	18,643

NOTES:

- (1) Interest is recorded on a cash-received basis.
- (2) It is the policy of the Society that:
 - (i) The General Account shall be self-sustaining.
 - (ii) The Nehring and Scholarship accounts shall be retained as endowment funds.

— VICTORIA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY —
Balance Sheet at 31 December 1990

TOTAL DEC 1989		TOTAL DEC 1990	GENERAL ACCOUNT	NEHRING ACCOUNT	CONSERVATION PROJECT	SCHOLARSHIP ACCOUNT
	ASSETS					
11,829	Cash at bank	11,584	770	9,551	(489)	1,752
15,163	Term Deposits	16,808	5,508	7,345	—	3,955
1,341	Accounts receivable	1,154	1,154	—	—	—
5,111	Stock of books		4,066	4,066	—	—
92,080	Investments at cost (market value 1990: \$88,851; 1989: \$87,559)	97,060	10,291	73,833	—	12,936
<u>125,524</u>		<u>130,672</u>	<u>21,789</u>	<u>90,729</u>	<u>(489)</u>	<u>18,643</u>
	LIABILITIES					
1,272	Accounts payable	1,642	1,642	—	—	—
5,102	Memberships paid in advance	1,138	1,138	—	—	—
119,150	FUND BALANCES	127,892	19,009	90,729	(489)	18,643
<u>125,524</u>		<u>130,672</u>	<u>21,789</u>	<u>90,729</u>	<u>(489)</u>	<u>18,643</u>

REPORT OF THE AUDITOR TO THE MEMBERS

I have examined the Balance Sheet of the Victoria Natural History Society as at 31 December 1990 and the Statements of Income and Expenditure for the year ended on that date. My examination included a general review of the accounting procedures and such tests of accounting records and other supporting evidence as I considered necessary in the circumstances, except that in the case of revenue it was not practicable to extend my examination beyond accounting for receipts as reported by the Society.

In my opinion, except for the effect of any adjustments that might have been required had I been able to carry out a verification of revenue (see preceding paragraph), the accompanying statements present fairly the results of the Victoria Natural History Society for the year ended 31 December 1990.

Victoria
17 February 1991

Brian H. Atwell
Chartered Accountant

Library Committee Report

By Ann Scarfe

Cataloguing and preparing a computerized list of library material is nearly complete, thanks to excellent work by Alison Mace, a volunteer with Swan Lake Nature Centre. A total of 1,375 books are now in the combined collection, most of which are housed in the library-reading room at Swan Lake. (Duplicates, periodicals, valuable books and those not pertinent to B.C. are housed downstairs.) About 400 of these books belong to the VNHS.

The successful auction of surplus books at the Annual General Meeting last March raised nearly \$300 to purchase new library books. Duplicate copies of *The Victoria Naturalist* have been sent to the B.C. Provincial Archives to help complete their collection. We are presently working on a complete set to be kept at Swan Lake in a metal filing box. Newer members would be impressed at the number of observations and natural history notes present in previous volumes.

Recently three boxes of the professional journals, *The Wilson Bulletin*, *Auk* and *Condor* were donated to the Bamfield Marine Station. The Committee would still appreciate help with the disposition and cataloguing of numerous boxes of old periodicals.

I encourage all VNHS members to come, visit, and use their library in a comfortable reading room setting with an excellent view of the lake.



Downy Woodpecker.
(Drawing: Mark Nyhof)

Scholarship Committee Report

By D. Elizabeth Kennedy

The 1990-91 winners are as follows:

Freeman King Scholarship — Michael Robert Hammersley; VNHS Scholarship — Elizabeth Joy Thompson; Samuel Simcoe Bursaries — Scott Robert Cope, Robin Leigh Parker; Barbara Champman Award — Jolie Fitzgerald.

Program Committee Report

By Alan E. Burger

A full program of monthly meetings was held in 1990-91. Talks included: "Wildlife in Kenya" (Dave Fraser and Leah Ramsay); "Life in the Sea" (Gordon Green from the Royal British Columbia Museum); "Hershel Island, Yukon" (Mike Shepard); "Hidden Nature — a photographer's look at the unusual in nature" (Steve Pridgeon); "The life and times of Great Blue Herons" (Rob Butler of the Canadian Wildlife Service); "Doing what comes naturally — a look at what naturalists do best in British Columbia" (Bill Merilees of the B.C. Parks Branch); and, "Alive but frozen: how Woolly Bear Caterpillars survive many Arctic winters near the North Pole" (Olga Kukal from U.Vic.). In addition, the December meeting was used as a member's night to show slides and share cider and other Christmas goodies. Talks were all held in the Begbie Building at UVic.



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Welcome To New Members.

- January 23. Tracy Baker,
of Shakespeare St.;
Interested in birds, photography, and carving.
- January 24. W. Robertson,
of Viaduct Ave.;
Has varied interests.
- January 25. Betty Mackie,
of Cambridge St.;
Enjoys all facets of nature.
- January 28. David McDonald,
of Tryon Rd.
- January 31. David Fisher,
of Haida Dr.;
Studies ecological relations.
- February 1. Christopher Muller,
of Queen Anne Hts.;
New junior member, gift from Helen Currie.
- February 1. Donald L'Heureux,
of Wellington Ave.;
Interested in birds and native plants.
- February 1. Anne Harrison,
of Paddock Pl.
- February 7. John and Gail Brighton,
of Nanoose Bay.
- February 7. Francois and Deborah Vinay,
of Cultra Ave.;
Interests are native plants and birds.
- February 9. Sybil Hearn Smith,
of Simcoe St.
- February 9. Andrea Lawrence,
of Galiano Is.;
Interested in birds, especially seabirds.
- February 9. Al DeMartini,
of San Mateo, Ca.;
A gift membership from Andrea Lawrence.
- February 9. Fiona St. Clair,
of Doncaster Rd.;
Fiona is a beginner bird watcher.
- February 12. Blair Tindall,
of Selkirk Ave.;
Interested in conservation & bird photography.
- February 12. Dan Soberg and family,
of Anderson Cove Rd.;
Enjoy hiking and bird watching.

- February 14. Angie Chambers,
of Vincent Ave.;
A gift from Ruth Chambers.
Angie is interested in birds & marine mammals.
- February 14. Paulyne Vining,
of Arm St.;
A gift membership from Jan Broome.
Likes birding and hiking.
- February 15. Hannah J. Main,
of Tudor Ave.;
a bird watcher.
- February 26. Mrs. Sheila Moilliet,
of West Saanich Rd.;
Interests: hiking, native plants
and animal photography.
- February 27. Judith Radford,
of All Bay Rd.;
A Gift membership from Pauline Hemming.
- February 27. Trish and Robin Hoffos,
of Canterbury Rd.
- February 27. Andrew McDonald,
of Townsend Dr.;
Andrew is a bird researcher
at the University of Victoria.
- February 27. Jean McDonald,
of Oakland Ave.;
A new birdwatcher.
- March 3. Frances Bardon,
of Daffodil Ave.;
Interested in birding trips
and the study of local trees and plants.
- March 3. J. Glen Moir,
of Kentwood Lane.
- March 3. Jean and Frank Tabor,
of Sea Ridge Dr.;
Enjoy the study of wildflowers and hiking.
- March 12. Lynn Husted,
of Cyril Owen Place.
- March 16. Marjon Blouw and Rodney Drabkin,
of Victoria Ave.
- March 16. Gwen Curry,
of Jedorah Drive;
Interested in bird and botany research.
- March 16. Eleanor and Harry Rayner,
of Johnson St.
- March 16. Mrs. Margaret Swain,
of Dunsmuir Rd.;
Enjoys birding and hiking in parks.
- March 23. Jean Forrest,
of Alderley Road.
- March 23. Hilary Sandford and James Quayle,
of McKenzie Ave.

Needed for research library –
complete run (or individual copies) of
The Victoria Naturalist.

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Skylark Behaviour Influenced By Snow Cover

By Barbara Begg

Changeable weather in the Victoria area during the winter of 1990/91 appeared to cause Skylarks to flock together more often than usual. This flocking behaviour, brought on by food sources being snow-covered, has been noted in the past (see *The Victoria Naturalist*, Vol. 45.5, 15-18). This winter it was the frequent shifts from snow-covered fields, to clear fields, back to snow covered fields, that apparently motivated the Skylarks to flock, disperse, and again flock accordingly. Also, some of the snow storms were very localized, which probably tended to increase the movement of Skylarks from one area to another.

The graph below shows the correlation between Skylark numbers counted and the presence or absence of snow on specific dates. Most information pertains to the bulb fields at Central Saanich Road/Wallace Drive, with some counts from the Victoria Airport, and one from Martindale Flats. Bird counts were made mainly by myself, with contributions from Jerry and Gladys Anderson, Brent Diakow, Vic and Peggy Goodwill, Chris Sandham, Ron Satterfield, Keith Taylor, and Hank Vander Pol.

When deep snow covered most of the vegetation at

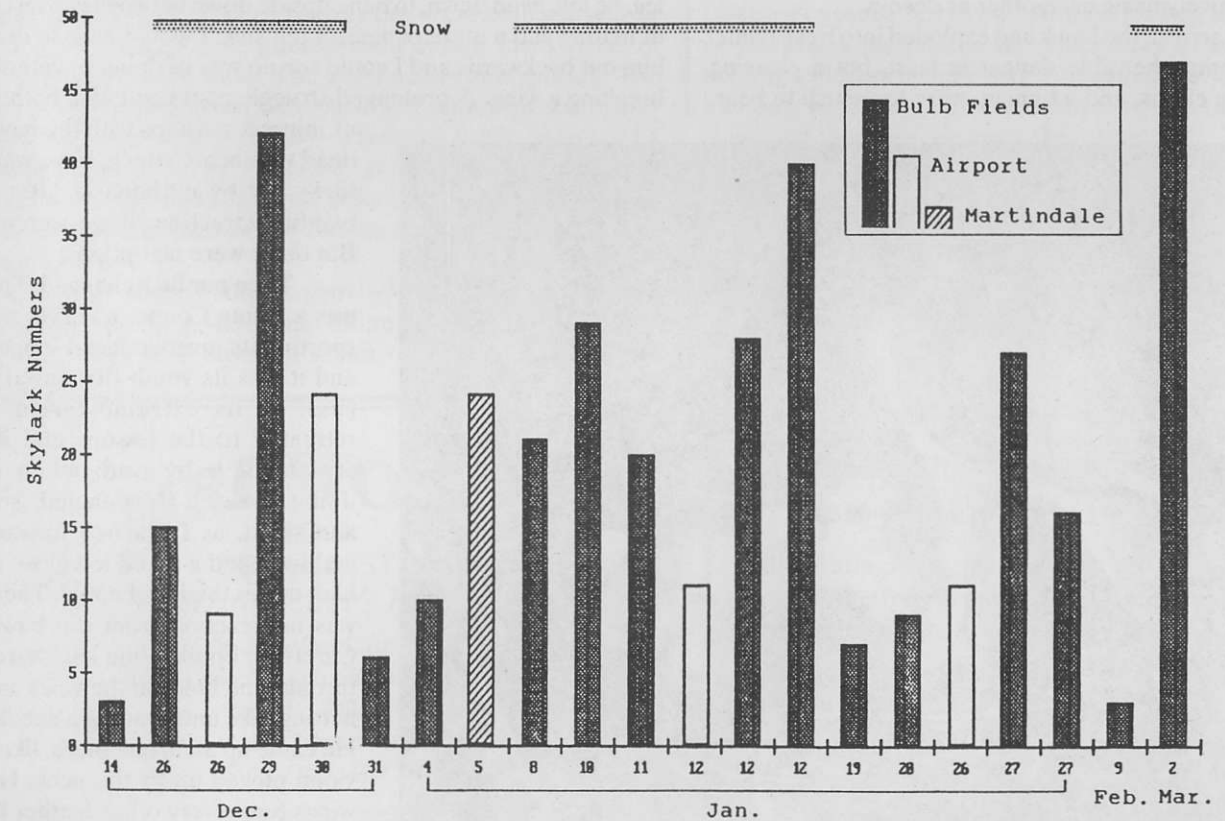
Vantreight's fields in Central Saanich on January 8th, I noted twenty-one calling Skylarks flying straight out of the area and heading southwest toward a tree nursery on the corner of Wallace Drive and Newman Road. This was the first time in about eight years of Skylark observing that I have ever seen the birds so deliberately move away from a usual feeding area. I assume that they were searching for snow-free vegetation and a meal.

Another instance of unusual behaviour was the presence on January 4th and 5th of two Skylarks on the lawns separating Dallas Road from the sea. This location is in Victoria city, between Beacon Hill Park proper and Clover Point, and is heavily utilized by joggers and dog walkers, regardless of the weather. Although cold, the ground was snow-free at the time. Dallas Road is about twenty kilometres from the Skylarks' closest usual haunts.

The identification of the two Skylarks was confirmed by Vic and Peggy Goodwill, (two birds on the 4th), and Keith Taylor, (one bird on the 5th). They were in agreement that the Skylarks appeared to be of our resident subspecies, *Alda arvensis arvensis*, rather than the possible Asian migrant subspecies, *A. arvensis pekinensis*.

Our Skylarks appeared to have had a successful breeding season, in spite of the wet weather, and have apparently come through the winter in good shape. Even though their numbers are already dangerously low, they are "survivors". A Spring census is being conducted again and the results will be published in a future issue of this magazine.

Correlation Between Snow Cover and Skylark Numbers



The graph above shows the correlation between Skylark numbers counted and the presence or absence of snow on specific dates.

Afternoon of the Hawk

By Grace Cockburn

Eyeball to eyeball with one of Nature's most magnificent creatures, I was layered with conflicting emotions. I was entranced and wanted to just stand and gaze at his incredible beauty. I was afraid he would break a leg or wing in his panic, and wanted to hurry to rescue him before this happened. I was terrified of his beak and talons, felt completely inadequate for a rescue mission, hated being at the top of a creaking, swaying ladder, and wished I could just forget that I had found him at all. I desperately wanted to save him.

I was alone and my definition of "small" was changing rapidly. A Cooper's Hawk may be small compared to other birds of prey but the beak and talons facing me were razor-like and looking longer and more lethal by the minute. Moreover, the wary eye that glared rigidly at me was snapping with fury. Fate may have dealt him a nasty blow but, by God he was going to fight to the last!

Which was the nub of the problem. To the hawk I was not a friend but simply the latest ghastly apparition in the nightmare which had begun, I suspect, when he had dived for a starling and missed. Instead, he had connected with the netting over our grape arbor and was now inextricably entangled.

His struggles had attracted the neighbour's Siamese and (I regret to admit) my own cat, who were sitting on top of the arbor, mutually intent on finding a way over the vines and netting. Normally intolerant of one another, they were skilled enough as hunters to recognize the value of teamwork, and were very effectively using each other as decoys.

Upon my arrival, the hawk had exploded into fresh panic. Cats were a comprehensible danger at least, but a clanging ladder, flapping cloths, and a human, were too much to bear.

The slightest movement on my part sent him flailing and thrashing in terror: a tornado of talons, beak and wings. But with one leg locked in netting, his desperate struggles were futile, pitiful, and frightening. I could feel my own tendons straining in sympathy.

I dispersed the cats. The Siamese fled at the sight of the extension ladder swaying about its ears. My own cat, apparently thinking I had come to help her, remained perched on top of the arbor until I climbed the ladder and unceremoniously dropped her to the picnic table below. Now it was just me and the hawk.

One doesn't expect such encounters in a suburban garden, so my safety equipment was limited to my husband's leather garden gloves, which by October were a loose patchwork of holes. Thanks to a fast call to our veterinarian's office, I was also armed with a pair of scissors to cut the netting, an old sheet to throw over the bird, and a pillow case into which I hoped to stuff him once rescued. But I didn't have a clue how to begin: the vet's advice had been necessarily sketchy on the details.

The hawk had been caught for some time. There were several long gashes in the netting where he had tried to cut himself free, but all this had done was produce more strands to further entangle him. And tangled he was. One leg, from thigh to toes, was stretched straight and stiff behind him, encased in an armour of netting. I got ready to throw the sheet over him and could only hope that being covered would calm him down as promised.

I wasn't fast enough. At my first twitch he exploded into the air again and this time his free foot lost its hold on the grapevine he had been clinging to. Jerked back by the tangled leg, he fell, head down, to hang upside down between two layers of netting and a maze of vines. I felt sick. I would have to drag him out backwards and I could see no way of doing so without breaking a wing. A prolonged struggle could end with both of us injured, perhaps with the hawk dead of a heart attack, if we were lucky, or by euthanasia after a painful extraction, if we weren't. But there were no options.

Then our luck changed. This was a young Cooper's Hawk, still sporting its juvenile facial stripes, and it was its youth that saved it (us). In its extreme terror it retreated to the lessons and instincts of babyhood: when in doubt, freeze. He dangled, still and silent, as I reached forward and wrapped a shredded glove as high up his thigh as I could. There was no reaction from the hawk. Carefully, I pulled him backwards through the holes in the vines and netting, like unthreading a needle. He came up all in one piece, like a violin picked up by the neck. His wings (and every other feather he possessed) were tightly clamped to his body, so he emerged un-



Cooper's Hawk with young. (Photo: Ministry of the Environment)

harmed. But the instant his head surfaced above the vines, he exploded once again. This time I was ready. I jerked my vulnerable right hand away from him with reflexes I didn't know I had and flung over him the sheet I had ready in my left hand.

The stillness and silence were instantaneous and total. Whatever it is that being covered does to calm a bird's brain worked to perfection. He lay as still and calm as if asleep (or dead, I couldn't help thinking). I tucked loose ends of sheeting around him and then stuffed him, sheet and all, into the pillowcase. The only bit of him left sticking out was the entangled leg, but it was now a simple matter to cut the netting around him and finish pushing him into the pillowcase.

His stillness was uncanny. The pillowcase sat beside me on the front seat of the car and not once during the ten-minute ride to the vet did it move. I wondered if he had had a heart attack after all, but I wasn't going to risk opening the case to find out.

The veterinarian was out, but his assistants understood the need to release the hawk's leg from the ever-tightening strands of netting as soon as possible. To rescue him only to have him destroyed because of gangrene would have been tragic. One assistant and I repaired to the examining room.

We agreed wholeheartedly that the only piece of hawk that was coming out of the pillowcase was the leg we needed to work on. His wings had been working well up to the moment the sheet covered him, so we would assume for the moment that only the leg was in danger. We pried open a corner of the pillowcase, and found what we wanted: a strand of netting. Pulling gently on that, we soon had the leg out of the case. The rest of the hawk lay immobile in its bag.

We snipped together for about twenty minutes, in companionable silence, broken only by the occasional murmur of concern for the bird, or astonishment at how many layers of netting there really were. The good news came quickly. The toes were gratifyingly warm to touch, and as enough netting was removed, were moving freely — a little too freely, in fact. The more netting we cut off the more careful we had to be. At last it was done. The hawk instantly pulled his foot up into the bag, and we again decided not to risk everything by trying for too close a look.

I knew where I could borrow a large cage and the intent was to put him in it, watch him for an hour or so, and then let him go. "Call us if anything seems to be wrong." With this

advice, I carried the still silent pillowcase back to the car and returned home, stopping enroute for the cage and some advice from my bird-raising friend ("You want a cage for WHAT?").

I carefully fed the open end of the pillowcase into the cage, and then gently shook out the sheet-wrapped hawk. It took him a split second to free himself from the sheet and it was now that he really did almost break a wing. Finding himself caged, with the ladder-human close at hand, he again panicked and his wings beat a frantic tattoo on the bars of the too-small cage. As fast as I could, I wrapped another sheet around the outside of the cage and clipped it in place. As before, being covered brought instant peace. It took several minutes but he finally relaxed and shifted from rigid terror to calm stillness. One wing, then the other, was stretched and groomed. Each leg was stretched and both seemed to function easily and painlessly. I tiptoed out of the room.

I decided to keep him for the hour or so until my children and husband came home from school and office, so that they too could enjoy this rare experience. Also, I confess, I wanted them to actually see it for themselves, fearing that otherwise they may not really believe me. I didn't believe it myself.

It was early twilight when we released him, taking the cage out into the back yard, well away from the netting which had caused so much grief. He knew freedom was at hand. I unclipped the sheet, opened the cage door, and he was out: a streak, a blur. We had but a few seconds to follow his rapid wingbeats, so beautiful to see. Then he was just a small silhouette against the sunset, and then he was gone.

The adventure of the hawk was over. Except that the magic of that unexpected afternoon encounter lingers and brings me more frequently to my windows, hoping that I might catch a glimpse of "my hawk". And the foolish, sentimental part of me hopes that, while he remembers to stay away from netting, and from humans too, the sight of our yard won't bring him only negative memories. I hope he can somehow understand that there was kindness there too.

REPORT MARINE MAMMAL SIGHTINGS AND STRANDINGS TO:

380-1925 in the Victoria area

On the water: VHF channel 68 to the vessel *Sundiver*

1-800-665-5939 toll-free anywhere in B.C.

All sightings, no matter how old, are useful for research purposes, and are put into a computer data base. Records are available to all researchers. When current local sightings of killer whales, or any unusual species, are reported promptly, researchers will try to respond to them. Please report date, time, location, a description of the animals, and number and direction of travel, as well as your name and phone number in case further information is required.


BIRDWOOD BED & BREAKFAST

A Birdwatcher's Haven

Bob & Jan Carroll
RR#2, Fort Saskatchewan, Alberta,
Canada T8L 2N8
Adjacent to Elk Island National Park
SEND FOR FREE BROCHURE


(403) 998-0082

CALENDAR

 **REGULAR MEETINGS** are generally held as follows: Board of Directors meetings the first Tuesday of each Month; Botany Night the third Tuesday, and Birders' 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.

MAY EVENTS

 **Saturday, May 4.**
Cowichan Estuary Birding Trip. A great outing for the beginner. Join David Pearce on an easy walk to learn to identify shore birds, waterfowl, sparrows, swallows, and more. Meet at the Helmcken Park'n'ride at 8:00 a.m., or join the group at the Cowichan Bay Industrial Dock Road at 8:45 a.m. Bring lunch and a novice birder.

Sunday, May 5.
Trial Island Field Trip. Come visit B.C.'s newest Ecological Reserve with the Friends of Ecological Reserves (FER). Trial Island is said to have the "most outstanding assemblage of rare and endangered plants in B.C.," including Golden Paintbrush, Rosy Owllover, California Buttercup, and much more. Meet at McNeil Bay (Schoal Bay) Beach. Ferrying by zodiac will be between 9:30 and 10:30 a.m., returning from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. Bring a lunch, rubber boots, and life jacket (if available). Leader is Adolf Ceska of the Royal B.C. Museum. Cost is \$5.00 for FER members and \$10.00 for non-FER members. This is a popular outing so make sure you come early. For more information phone Henry Bauld 721-5962.

Tuesday, May 7.
Board of Directors' Meeting, 7:30 p.m. Clifford Carl Reading Room, Cunningham Building, UVIC.

Saturday, May 11.
Spring Bird Count. Ever wonder what is in your Christmas Count area in the spring? Come and spend an enjoyable morning finding out. The existing count areas will be used with the same leaders and participants. Official count time is midnight to noon, but you do not need to start that early. If you would like to participate contact David Pearce (477-2664). Barbecue for participants and non-participants at Goldstream Park barbecue pits; 5:00 p.m. Bring your own dinner.

Monday, May 13. FBCN
Camp Open Meeting. The Federation of British Columbia Naturalists (FBCN) will be having an open meeting at 8:00 p.m., Begbie 159, University of Victoria. Neville Winchester of the Univer-


sity will present "Life in the Tree Tops," a look at the ecology of the old growth forest canopy of Carmanah Valley. The platform of the Canopy Research Station allows a unique opportunity to study the temperate rain forest at the top end. Everyone is welcome.

Wednesday, May 15.
FBCN Camp Open Meeting. We are pleased to have Ian McTaggart Cowan speak about the "Nature Trust." The meeting will be held at 8:00 p.m., in Room 159, Begbie Building, University of Victoria. McTaggart Cowan will discuss areas that have been acquired by this organization to help preserve important natural ecosystems in the province. Everyone is welcome.

Saturday, May 18.
FBCN Camp Finale. Sooke Community Association Logging Show and Salmon BBQ. All club members welcome (and non-member guests too!) to the grand finale of the camp. Meet our interesting camp visitors, each other, and get those toes tapping to the music. With a logging show, a home-cooked, three-course meal, bar service, and a dance with a live orchestra, this is a real deal at \$25 each. Contact Lyndis Davis at 477-9952 for tickets. Buses leave the U-Vic residence parking lot on Sinclair at 5:00 p.m. (let the bus driver be your designated driver) and arrive at Sooke about 6:30 p.m. Logging sports will be between 7:00 and 8:00 p.m., dinner will be at 8:00 p.m., followed by dancing until 11:00 p.m. Get your tickets early!

Sunday, May 26.
Birding at Island View. Join Brent Diakow (656-3190) for a birding trip at Island View Beach. Meet at the beach at 8:30 a.m. This spot is always good for a variety of birds found among the water, fields, dunes, thickets and ditches.

JUNE EVENTS


 **Saturday, June 1.**
San Juan Ridge Field Trip. Come and enjoy a field trip with Leon Pavlick to San Juan Ridge, near Port Renfrew, to find the Alpine White Avalanche Lily (*Erythronium montanum*). This lily should be in abundant display this time of year. Meet at the Helmcken Park'n'ride 8:30 a.m. The trip will take all day so bring lunch, drinks, and hiking boots. There is a short walk to the lilies. Be prepared to drive on logging roads. Phone Leon at 387-2469 or 746-5693.

Sunday, June 2.
Cowichan River Footpath Natural History Trip. Join Dannie Carsen on a birding, aquatic habitat, and botany hike along the riverside trail. If you are interested in any of these things, come along. The walk lasts three hours, not including lunch, and is suitable for children who are good walkers. Bring hiking boots and lunch. Meet at the Helmcken Park'n'ride at 8:00 a.m., or the shopping center before the bridge on the south side of Duncan at 9:00 a.m. Usually finished by 2:00 p.m.

Saturday, June 22.
Quick's Bottom Hike. Hank Vander Pol is leading a hike to Layritz Park-Quick's Bottom. This three to four-hour hike will take you through a variety of habitats and will focus on birds, especially listening to their songs. Virginia Rail and Sora


are possible here. If you ever told yourself "I can hear it, I just can't see it", this is the hike for you. Meet at 7:00 a.m. at Layritz Park off Glyn Road (which is off Wilkinson Road). Bring a snack and water. For information call 658-1924.

COMING UP

 **Saturday, May 4.**
Horticulture Center of the Pacific Plant Sale. 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at 505 Quayle Road, Victoria. Phone 479-6162.

Friday to Sunday, June 7-9.
Carmanah Valley Field Trip. This is an opportunity to experience the predawn flights of Marbled Murrelets over old growth forests in Carmanah and Walbran Valleys. Contribute to research being done by a team from the University of Victoria. Participants should be self-equipped and supplied for camping and prepared for easy hiking...and very early mornings! Group transportation can be arranged, if needed. Call Alan Burger (479-9833) to sign up. Birders who would like to help with this project at other times through the summer are also very welcome. Trip also runs July 5-7.

BULLETIN BOARD

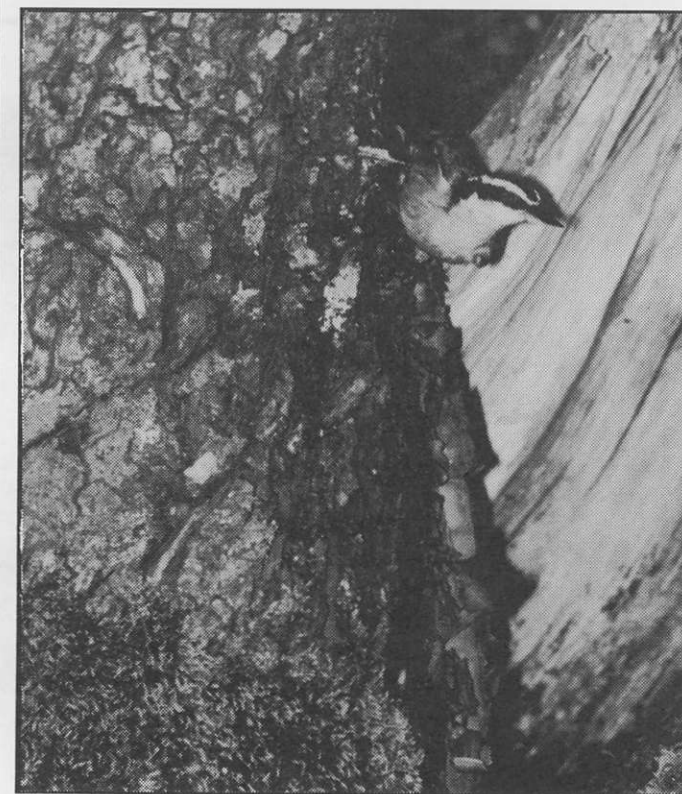
 **For Sale—**
National Geographic Field Guide to Birds, Naturalist Guide to the Victoria Region and Victoria Area Bird Checklists. Contact Lyndis Davis at 477-9952.

Volunteers Needed—
Martindale Flats Study
The Victoria Natural History Society (VNHS) has embarked on a wildlife survey of the Martindale Valley. The purpose of this study is to provide the VNHS with quantitative information on the wildlife use of the area. This information will be used by the Parks and Conservation Committee of the VNHS to make informed submissions regarding land use of the valley. We will be concentrating on accurate estimates of the common birds of this area, so one doesn't have to be an expert to be involved. If you can tell a Mallard from a Trumpeter Swan, then you qualify for the study. This survey will be carried out for at least one year and involves volunteers contributing two hours on either a Saturday or Sunday morning. If you can only volunteer for one day for the whole year, that is fine. All surveys start at 8:00 a.m. at the Barn Market, at the corner of Island View Beach Road and the Pat Bay Highway. If you are going birding at times other than those already mentioned, and would be willing to put two hours in, we could also use your help. Volunteer observers will be given a map and a checklist of the birds to fill in. **Please call Eric Walters at 385-0927 to register and he will give you further information. It is VERY important that you register with Eric so that he can give you the map showing the area you will be responsible for as well as making sure we have enough volunteers each week to make the study worthwhile.**

Attention—
Junior Members of the Victoria Natural History Society.
The editors of *The Victoria Naturalist* would like to announce a new page for members 18 years of age and under. Since a portion of our subscribers are families with children, we feel that young people should also have the opportunity to express themselves. We invite and encourage our young subscribers to submit articles and/or drawings on botany, biology, zoology, or any natural history topic that strikes your fancy. We'll print your name and age. Photographs and drawings should be black and white, if possible, since we are not equipped to reproduce from colour. We reserve the right to edit and condense articles when necessary. Send us something to put in the next issue. Send to:
Diana Jolly
Managing Editor
4368 Wilkinson Rd.
Victoria, B.C., V8Z 5B7.

—WANTED— Publications Chair

The Victoria Natural History Society requires a Publications Chair. The Candidate should have a good knowledge of publishing procedures, be able to provide leadership to the Publications Committee, and have contacts for story ideas, art and photography. The Publications Chair helps to coordinate the editorial, advertising, and production aspects of *The Victoria Naturalist*, and should be prepared to investigate and coordinate new publications.



Red-breasted Nuthatch. (Photo: Steve Pridgeon)

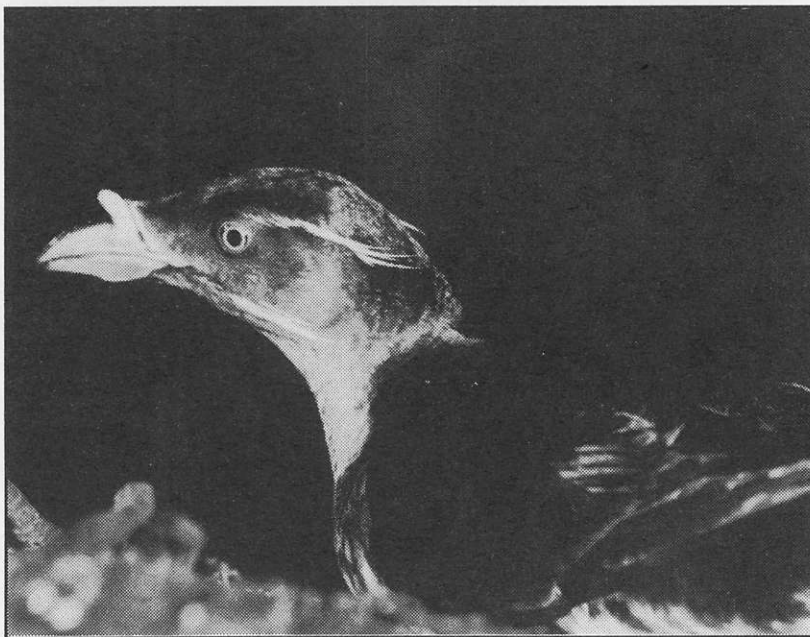


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Rhinoceros Auklet:
Named for the horn-like
extension on its upper
mandible, the Rhinoceros
Auklet uses its horn in
courtship behavior.
"Rhinos" also have
especially stiff tongues
which enable them to pin
numerous fish in their
beaks at one time.

Photo: Steve Pridgeon