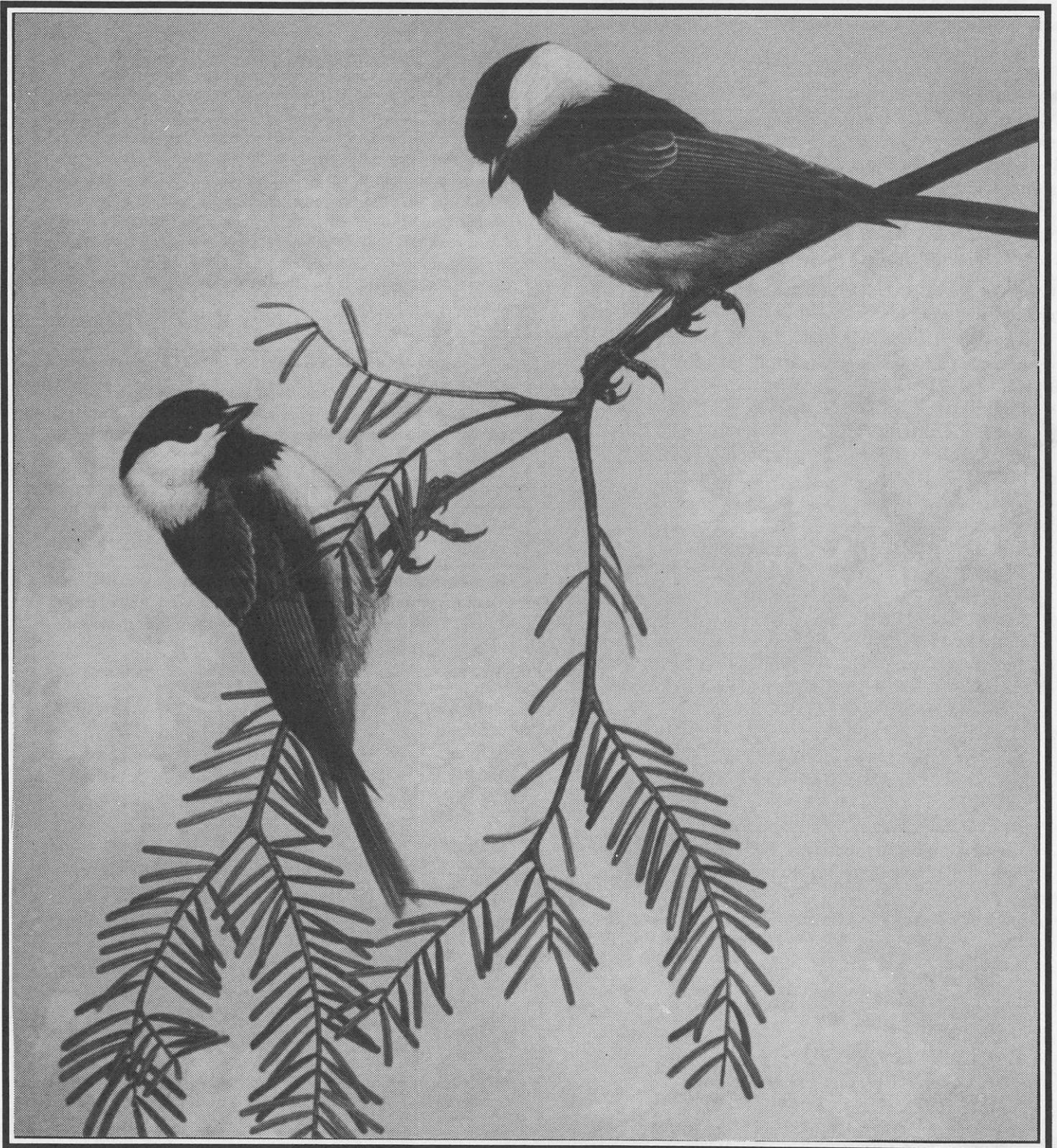




The Victoria NATURALIST

JANUARY
FEBRUARY
1992
VOL 48.4

VICTORIA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY



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 Family \$26.00 Junior Subscriber \$4.00
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VNHS EVENTS TAPE: 479-2054

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS FOR NEXT ISSUE: Jan. 24, 1991

Send to: Warren Drinnan, Editor,
 1863 Oak Bay Avenue, Victoria, B.C. V8R 1C6.
 Phone: Home-652-9618, Work-598-0471.

GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSION

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 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.

VNHS MEMBERSHIP

For membership information and renewal, please contact Tom Gillespie at 361-1694, or write to Membership Committee c/o The Victoria Natural History Society, Box 5220, Victoria, B.C., V8R 6N4.

ADVERTISING GUIDELINES

The deadline for advertising submissions is the first of the month preceding publication. Please contact Jennifer Emms at 479-6323 regarding advertising which requires typesetting.

Ad Size	Price	Dimensions
Back Page	\$120	7.25 x 8 in.
1/2 Page	\$80	7.25 x 5 in.
1/3 Page	\$50	7.25 x 3.25 in.
1/4 Page	\$40	3.25 x 4.675 in.
1/8 Page	\$25	3.25 x 2.25 in.

Guidelines

1. Ad copy should be typeset and camera ready, not just sketched or typed on a typewriter.
2. Minor alterations to existing advertisements will cost \$10. Typesetting of ads is charged at \$20 per hour.
3. Add \$9 per photo for PMT (at Island Blueprint).
4. Advertising fees due and payable when copy submitted. Please submit a cheque.

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Jennifer Emms, 5409 West Saanich Road, R.R.5, Victoria, B.C., V8X 4M6. (Phone: 479-6323 or 385-4212)

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Our Cover

This issue's cover is a painting of chestnut-backed chickadees by Mark Nyhof. The medium used was "gouache" on ragboard, which is similar to watercolours. Mark is a professional painter who had a kestrel displayed at the recent natural history art show at Goldstream. He also painted the pileated woodpecker that was featured on the poster for the art show.

The habitat selection and distribution of the chestnut-backed chickadee, *Parus rufescens*, is the subject of one of our features this month by Michael Corry appearing on page 4.

Corry believes that, on the lower mainland, competition with a more dominant species, the black-capped chickadee, forces the chestnut-backed chickadee into a sub-optimal niche, the dense coniferous forest. The black-capped chickadee is not found on Vancouver Island and consequently the chestnut-backed chickadee can occupy both coniferous and deciduous habitats here.



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Chickadees

By Michael Corry

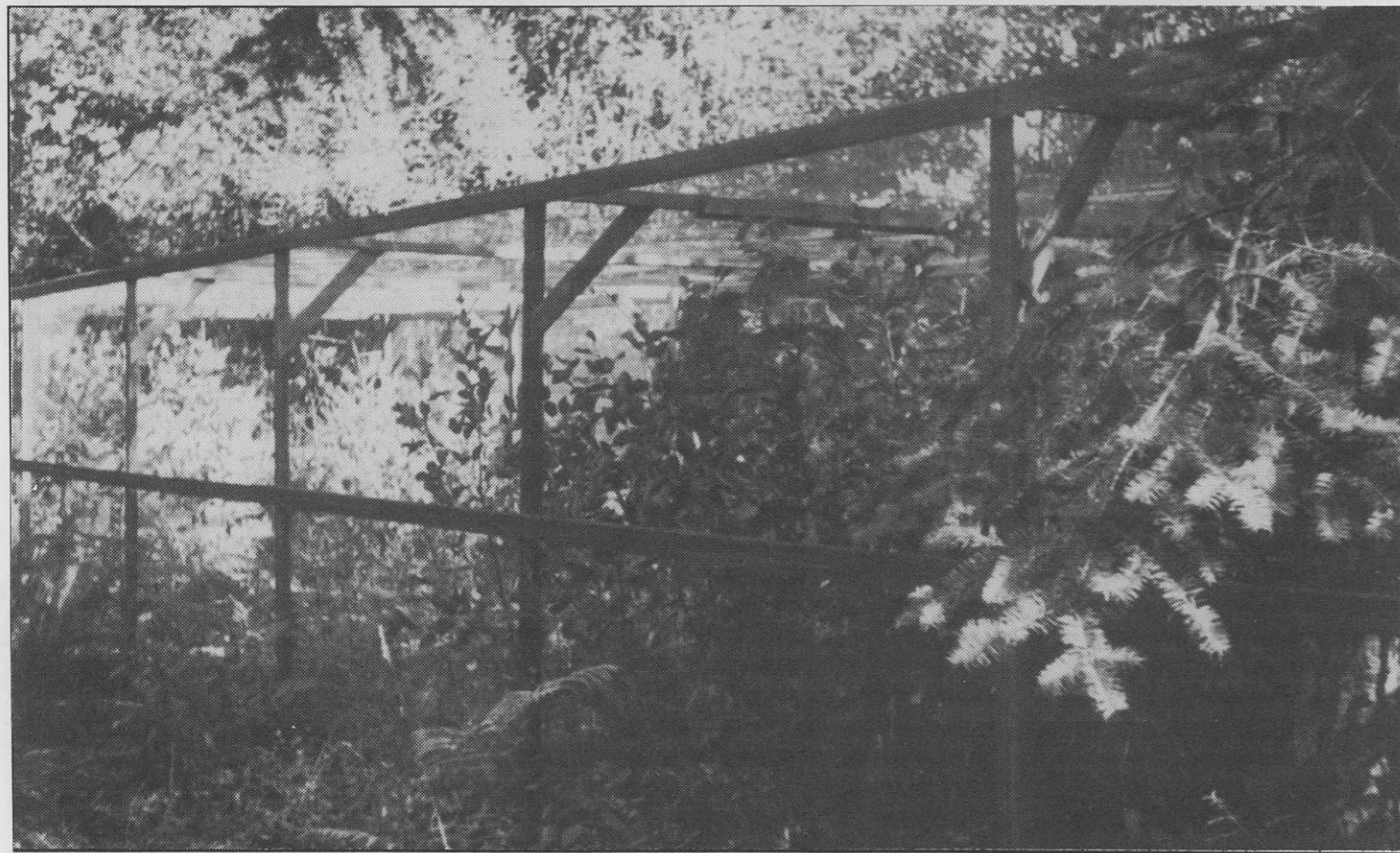
Why are there no black capped chickadees on Vancouver Island? Why do older ornithology texts say that "chestnut-backed chickadees are found almost exclusively in dense coniferous forest" while anyone here on Vancouver Island can observe them commonly in open deciduous habitats as well? These are some of the questions I attempted to answer in my Master's thesis research done during 1968 and 1969. My work was done in this area and involved members of the Victoria Natural History Society but since my thesis was deposited at an American university, interested local people have not had the opportunity to become aware of the answers to these questions.

So even though the work is now 20 years old there is probably value in summarizing it here. Also, many of the general ideas that I was grappling with have now had enough other supporting work done on them to be accepted, been given formal names, and recently have entered standard ecology textbooks.

The title of my thesis was "Habitat Selection and Distribution of the Chestnut-backed Chickadee, *Parus rufescens*." The only work on habitat selection in chestnut-backed chickadees, prior to my time, was done on the mainland. Workers in Vancouver, B.C., in Washington, in Oregon and in California, had found that the bird occurs almost exclusively in dense coniferous habitat. The first thing I did was to document habitat selection on Vancouver Island. I did this by travelling exten-

sively and observing how common the birds were in the different habitat types. As well, I distributed a large number of sighting cards to members of the Victoria Natural History Society. Whenever they sighted a chickadee, or a group of chickadees, they filled in a card noting habitat type, tree species the birds were first observed in, where exactly in the tree the birds were observed, etc., and mailed them back to me. The results indicated that on Vancouver Island chestnut-backed chickadees are seen more commonly in deciduous or mixed habitat than would be expected if there were no selection for deciduous occurring.

Why should there be a discrepancy between the mainland and Vancouver Island? Investigation of this question comprised the main thrust of my work. Because previous workers did not realize that there were areas where chestnut-backed chickadees were inhabiting atypical niches, they made assumptions about the reasons for habitat selection that ignored variables that I thought were important. They assumed that the reason for habitat selection was that the birds had, through evolution, become ecologically specialized for the dense coniferous habitat. However, this could not be right since the Vancouver Island situation contradicted this assumption. My hypothesis was that competition with a more dominant species, the black-capped chickadee, which occupies the deciduous niche on the mainland, forces the chestnut-backed chickadee into a sub optimal niche, the dense coniferous forest. The black-capped chickadee is not found on Vancouver Island and consequently the chestnut-backed chickadee can occupy both habitats here. This is not uncommon in Island situations where fewer species of flora and fauna often result in fewer variables



The aviary where Michael Corry conducted his experimental work with chesnut-backed and black-capped chickadees.

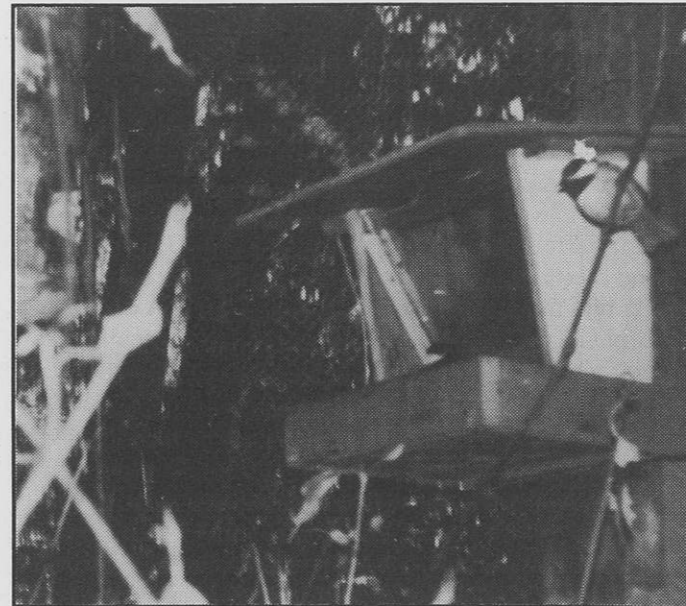


Figure 1 shows a black-capped chickadee head showing above the lip of the feeding tray and a chestnut-backed chickadee on a branch beside the feeding tray. The black-capped chickadees never allowed the chestnut-backed chickadees into the feeding tray at all.

influencing the organisms that are present. The real reasons for things are thus more easily perceived.

The problem with this hypothesis was that no one had ever observed any competition between these two species of chickadees. However, just because no one had observed competition does not mean that it doesn't occasionally occur, and even it is doesn't occur now it could have occurred in the recent evolutionary past.

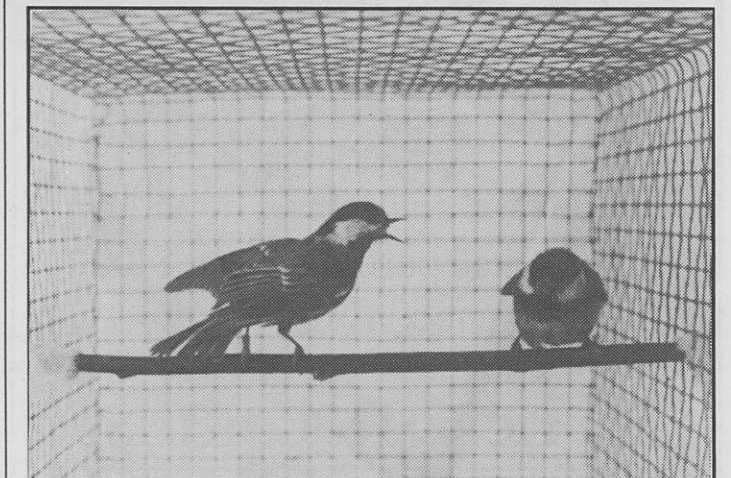
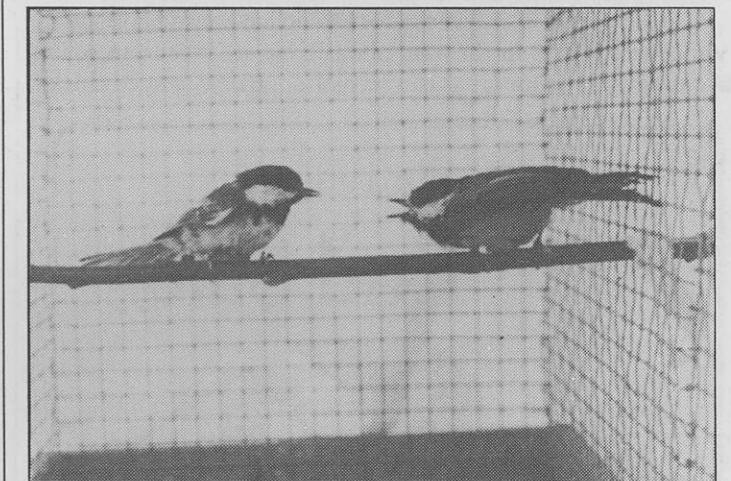
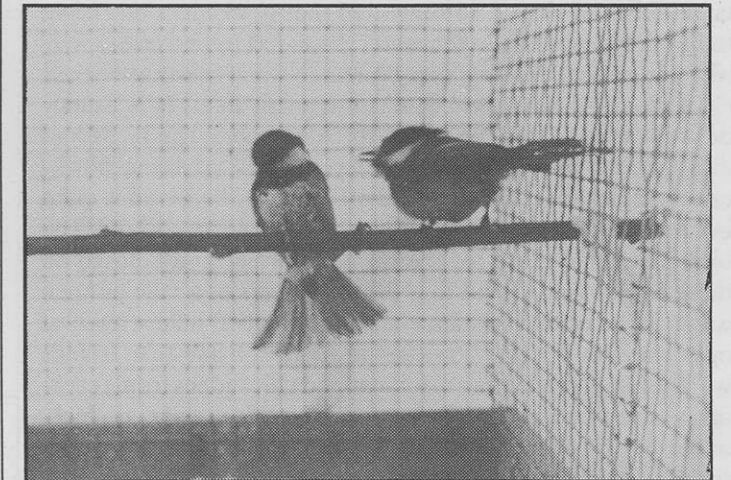
The only way to adequately explore this contention was to do experimental work. No one up to that time had trapped chickadees, kept them in captivity, or done any experimental work with them. Since the birds are mainly insectivorous it is difficult to work with them. How do you use living insects to lure a bird into a trap? How do you collect enough living insects to adequately feed the large number of birds with which you want to work? These sorts of problems were the greatest challenge of this particular work but I eventually learned how to solve them and was successful in my experimental work.

I trapped chickadees and put them in a large aviary in which one end was planted with deciduous trees and the other end with coniferous trees. I recorded the amount of time they spent in either end. Vancouver Island chickadees by themselves spent more time in the deciduous end. Mainland chestnut-backed chickadees by themselves spent more time in the coniferous end. Vancouver Island chestnut-backed chickadees, when put together with black-capped chickadees, spent less time in the deciduous end. This supported my hypothesis but I obtained even more convincing data when I was able to obtain photographs in the aviary of the black-capped chickadees totally dominating the chestnut-backed chickadees through various postural activities. Figure 1 shows a black-capped chickadee head showing above the lip of the feeding tray and a chestnut-backed chickadee on a branch beside the feeding tray. The black-capped chickadees never allowed the

chestnut-backed chickadees into the feeding tray at all. I had to install excess trays to prevent the chestnut-backed chickadees from starving to death.

In a smaller cage I was able to get close-up pictures of black-capped chickadees adopting various postures which totally intimidated the chestnut-backed chickadees. The black-capped chickadees have a white band on their left leg (see Figures 2, 3, and 4). These postures were similar to dominance postures shown by

continued on following page



Figures 2, 3, 4. The postures shown here are similar to dominance postures shown by song sparrows as elucidated by Margaret Morse Nice in her classic work, and were the first documented record of competition between the two species of chickadees.

continued from preceding page

song sparrows as elucidated by Margaret Morse Nice in her classic work. Although there was one earlier unconfirmed field record of competition, these photographs of dominance-submissive behaviour in chickadees were the first documented record of competition between the two species and were a strong support for my hypothesis.

A secondary aspect of the work was the question as to why there are no black-capped chickadees on Vancouver Island. Other workers had suggested that chickadees don't like to fly across extensive open water. I wanted to find out exactly what the critical distance was. I released some chestnut-backed chickadees on Senanos Island in Saanich Inlet. It is exactly one-half mile across the water to Brentwood. The birds had disappeared by the following day. I released some black-capped chickadees on an island off Sidney. The island is quite isolated and it is about one mile to the next nearest island. The birds remained there for the duration of my study. Based on these results I proposed that three-quarters of a mile of open water is the critical distance and that the two mile stretch of open water in Rosario Strait in the American San Juan Islands was the block preventing black-capped chickadees from reaching Vancouver Island. There are in fact black-capped chickadees on the islands immediately adjacent to Anacortes but there are none on any of the islands west of Rosario Strait.

Chestnut-backed chickadees could have island hopped to Vancouver Island in the Campbell River area where a route avoiding open water areas can be plotted. Black-capped chick-

adees could not use that route since they don't occur north of Vancouver on the mainland coast.

Many of the ideas I was dealing with at the time were new and controversial but now appear in the accepted ecological literature. The ability of a niche to contract or expand in response to a competitor is referred to now as the "fundamental niche" versus the "realized niche." The actual change in niche is referred to as "competitive release." I found that mainland chestnut-backed chickadees have slightly longer tails and finer bills than Vancouver Island chickadees. A change in the morphology of an organism as a result of occupying a changed niche is now called "character displacement." The idea that past competition might be a cause of present habitat separation is now referred to as "the ghost of competition past."

There is much recent interest in trying to establish definite cause and effect relationships relative to these ideas but as Michael Begon *et al.* say in their recent Ecology textbook "differences between species are not, in themselves, indications of niche differentiation forged by competition, and interspecific competition cannot be studied by the mere documentation of interspecific differences." This is to say then that mere field observation and speculation alone are not adequate. This area could be a most fruitful area for aspiring ecologists who are willing to become involved in the scientific—experimental approach.

Everyone before Galileo's time knew that if you dropped a ten pound and one pound cannon ball off the Leaning Tower of Pisa the ten pound ball would hit the ground first. After Galileo did the experiment everyone then knew that the two balls in fact hit the ground at the same time. [Actually, Galileo rolled balls down an inclined plane in his discovery of the principle of acceleration.]

Michael Corry is an instructor with the Biology Department at Camosun College. He is also co-Program Head for the new Environmental Technology Program offered at the college.

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 in February. All members of the society are eligible to nominate any other member who in their opinion merits this honour.

Nominations should be forwarded by January 15, 1992, to Betty Kennedy, Awards Committee Chairperson, 101-1440 Beach Drive, Victoria, B.C. 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.

Welcome to New Members

- September 25 William Spriggs and family of Edgelow Street: they enjoy birding.
September 25 Ann Gibson of Locarno Lane: interested in all of nature.
September 25 Gordon Alexander of High Park Place: interested in birds and the sea.
September 30 Annabelle Fraser of Blythwood Road: enjoys botany and birding.
September 30 Isabel Johnson of Weiler Avenue: likes birding, hiking in unspoiled areas, gardening, and photography, particularly of wildlife.
October 2 Daphne Fritsch of Hazel Street: interested in walks, birds and field trips.
October 15 Cyndi Bunker of Taunton Street.
October 22 Aziza Cooper of Latoria Road: enjoys birding.

- October 28 Mickey Grant of East Sooke Road: a gift from Sandra Grant.
November 6 Pyers Bailey of Dunlevy Street.
November 8 Bob Waldon of Hemlock Street in Qualicum Beach: studies large mammals, birds and nature interpretation.
November 14 Sue and Bill Mckee of Dingley Dell: are novice birdwatchers and interested in field trips to help improve their skills in identification.
November 14 John Murray of Thorpe Place: is a birder.
November 20 Stewart Zimmerman and family of Russell Street: interested in habitat preservation.
November 20 Sheelagh Vessey of Carrick Street: is a birdwatcher.
November 21 Jean and Steve Kerr of Prospect Place: both like birding.
November 21 Duncan Jillings of Pendergast Street enjoys hiking and lobbying for habitat protection.

Sparrows

By Karen Skowron

Birds chattering away in my garden is not an unusual sound. Robins, sparrows, starlings and crows are usually in residence. They frequently comment on foodstuffs either offered on purpose or left from our impromptu "picnics". (We can eat outdoors practically year round in this wonderfully temperate climate.)

But there was something different about this chirruping one day last summer.

I was sitting in the garden reading and when I turned my head to investigate the cause for the bird chorus. I stared in astonishment.

My normally mundane clothesline had taken on a bizarre appearance. Imagine this. Six or seven sparrows were pegged out to the left, six or seven sparrows were pegged out to the right. They were all madly squawking. Their combined weight

had pulled the two wires of the pulley clothesline together.

The reason for their animated discussion was in the very middle of the line between the two sets of birds. It was another sparrow with its neck caught between the two wires, its feet sawing at the air, its wings dancing around.

The captured sparrow didn't display a frantic, desperate action. I have no idea why but the whole thing had more the feeling of a drama, a staged event. It wasn't of course (was it?!) but that's how it felt. It didn't feel real.

Instead of leaping to the rescue, I moved out of the garden chair intending to call the kids to come and see. As I stood up, the side birds immediately flew away, the lines sprung apart and the trapped bird dropped a foot or so, found its wings, and also flew off. I stood there, my mouth and eyes wide. I looked around. Of course there was no one else who had witnessed it.

But I had to share the experience. So I am.

Karen Skowron is a professional writer and poet who has recently moved from southern Ontario. She has had a lifelong interest in natural history and has a particular interest in working with urban wilderness gardens.

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Artists Invited to Participate in Brant Festival 92

Parksville-Qualicum Beach's Brant Festival 92 will take off April 10-12, and B.C. artists, carvers, and photographers are invited to join in the celebration by entering the festival's Wildlife Art Exhibition and Sale. Festival 91 drew more than 2,500 visitors to events celebrating the arrival of the Brant in their peak numbers.

Observing flocks of this small migratory sea goose as they stop over in the Brant Capital of Canada is just part of the excitement. Another major attraction for visitors is the opportunity to see and buy outstanding wildlife art, carving and photography.

Festival 92's Wildlife Art Exhibition and Sale will be held at two locations. Works by out-of-town artists will be exhibited in a gallery-like setting at the historic Qualicum College Inn, while local artists will have their works shown at The Old School House Gallery and Art Centre, a heritage building in Qualicum Beach. The Brant Festival is also host to the Western Canada Carving Competition, formerly held at B.C. Place in Vancouver. Last April more than 250 carvers from around North America entered the competition judged by world decoy carving champion Dennis Schroeder.

Entry forms for Brant Festival 92's Wildlife Art,



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Carving, and Photography Exhibitions are available through the Festival's office. Deadline for entries is January 31, 1992.

The Brant Festival is organized by the Mid-Island Wildlife Watch Society, a non-profit group dedicated to promoting wildlife viewing and preservation of wildlife habitat. Half the net income from all festival activities, including donations of artists' works, is directed to a Wildlife Legacy Fund used to preserve, enhance, and manage local wildlife habitat.

Birders Flock to Brant Festival Big Day

The challenge is out and birders across B.C. are signing up to test their skills at Brant Festival 92's Big Day Birding Competition. The festival's April 11th Big Day is for birders, in both novice and expert categories. They'll form teams of up to five participants to see who can find the most species within the Parksville-Qualicum Beach area in a 10-hour time limit.

Several celebrity teams have already registered for this inaugural event. The authors of *The Birds of B.C.* will put down their pens and put their reputation on the line. A contingent of B.C. wildlife artists has been drawn into the fray and a media team has pressed into action. Meanwhile the local Arrowsmith Naturalists have challenged other naturalists' organizations in the province to see who can get the most species.

Those who prefer a less hectic day will want to enter the festival's April 11th Band Reading Competition. Find a partner, a 20-power telescope, and head for local staging grounds to see how many codes your team can read from bands that have been placed on the Brant.

Brant Festival 92's two birding competitions will be followed by a post count gathering where the winners will be declared and prizes awarded. Winning team members will have their names inscribed on the Brant Festival Big Day and Band Reading trophies. They'll also receive keeper trophies and be entered in a draw for the first two volumes of the *Birds of B.C.* Other prizes will be awarded to the eldest and youngest birder, the person who spots the best bird of the day, and the team that compiles the best waterfowl list.

Registration is \$10 per person and includes a Brant Festival Passport. The passport provides entry to most festival events and includes free use of the shuttle buses. Space is limited so register early.

For entry forms or further information on the various exhibitions contact the Brant Festival Office at (604) 248-4117 or 248-4347, or write Brant Festival 92, Box 99, Parksville, B.C., V9P 2G3.

Announcement

10% off all Natural History books to VNHS members.
Large selection: birding, plants, etc.

Well's Used Books,
832 Fort Street.
360-2929

Conservationists and Developer Cooperate to Move a Meadow in Broadmead

By Joan Cowley

Volunteers and friends of Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary kept one step ahead of urban development last Fall when they began digging up and relocating a meadow of wild flowers from an area in Broadmead that was slated for imminent development. The project was co-ordinated by Willie MacGillivray, Site Manager at the Nature Sanctuary, in co-operation with the development company, Broadmead Farms.

Over thirty volunteers worked in teams using hand trowels and shovels to remove shooting stars, camas, Easter and chocolate lilies, nodding onions and yellow violets. Sod and bulbs were placed on stretchers, transferred to a truck and moved to Swan Lake where they were transplanted. Volunteers from the 9th Victoria Girl Guide Co. also relocated Easter lilies to Beacon Hill Park and the University Finnerty Gardens.

Willie MacGillivray explains the project in this way: "Moving the wild flowers from Broadmead was one way to save native habitat that would otherwise be lost. In my view it is also a good illustration of the viability of native vegetation in landscaping. Native plants or indigenous species, aside from their intrinsic beauty, do not require excessive watering or the use of pesticides and herbicides."

In the future MacGillivray would like to see an inventory of representative native habitat set up for the Saanich Peninsula. This could then be used by municipalities and developers when planning for future development so that these special areas are set aside or preserved in some way.

Notice To Members

The Board of Directors is proposing the following items for approval at the Annual General Meeting to be held March 10, 1992, commencing at 7:30 in Begbie 159, at the University of Victoria:

1) FEE INCREASE:

An increase of \$2.00 per membership category is being proposed to take effect as of May, 1992. This is required in order to cover the increased fee that the VNHS must pay to the Federation of B.C. Naturalists, effective January, 1993. (See the B.C. Naturalist, September, 1990, page 14, for details of the FBCN fee increase.)

2) BYLAW CHANGE:

A change is being proposed to Society bylaw number 1.05 dealing with Membership Dues.

Change from: Dues for each class of membership shall be proposed by the Board of Directors and approved at a general meeting of the Society.

Change to: Dues for each class of membership shall be set by the Board of Directors.

In the meantime, this project could become a model for future habitat conservation activities. Where an area can not be preserved, it is important for the developer and conservationist to work together, as has happened in the 'Broadmead Meadow Move'. Plans are now being formulated to move additional flowers from the Broadmead meadow in the Spring. Anyone interested in working on the project is encouraged to contact Joan or Willie at the Nature Sanctuary at 479-0211.

Joan Cowley is Co-ordinator of Volunteer Services for the Swan Lake-Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary.



Carrying a load of specimens are Michael Eby and Barbara Hawkins who worked transplanting wildflowers at a Broadmead meadow. (Photo: Saanich News)

REPORT MARINE MAMMAL SIGHTINGS AND STRANDINGS TO:

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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.

A Voice From The Swamp

By Peggy Price

Ribitt....Ribitt...Ribitt.." I sang, and paused to listen to the music of my brothers and sisters, as their voices echoed across the pond. My name is "Felix", which means "happy," and happy am I on this spring evening filled with music and the colours of the setting sun.

Our world is wet and wonderful - cool, moist and mossy. At the centre of the swamp is the pond where I was born. This beautiful shining home is filled with golden water lilies, which are now in bloom. Their large, green floating leaves are soft and cool to our feet, and make wonderful sun decks, where we can sit quietly and catch flies. Although I am now a handsome, green and shining frog, I was not always this way.

Thinking back, I remember the strange changes which made me what I am. Changes which, if they had happened to anyone but a frog, could be regarded as almost miraculous.

My earliest memories are rather murky. I remember feeling very confined, cramped into a small space. I had a strong urge to escape, and began to thrash about. My egg case split, and I found myself suspended in a jelly like mass, surrounded by many little round eggs, much like the one I had just left. Some of my brothers and sisters had already escaped. We were held together in this jelly, which was floating in the water. Anchored to a reed, it provided shelter for us until we were able to look

out for ourselves.

Being of the same family, we all looked much the same - you might say we resembled minnows, except our heads were larger. We had no fins but rather moved about by thrashing our tails. In time we became quite crowded in our small jelly home and flailed about in an effort to gain a little more room to move. All this effort enabled me to break free and I joyfully felt the coolness of the fresh water on my cheeks as I darted away. I was very energetic - excited to find this new freedom. When other family members escaped, they too gathered about and we were soon swimming happily amongst the reeds and rushes, enjoying our wet, green world.

But there was danger in our pond. We realized this when a strange pointed object broke through the water's surface. The beak snapped up Fred, my brother. In an instant he was gone, and we never saw him again. Fiona, my little sister, was next to go, as the hungry heron continued his attack upon us. We scattered about the pond, hiding under the lily pads until the large gray shadow took flight.

Despite this disturbing event, our happiness returned. We took delight in seeing how fast we could swim through the rushes and stems, but would swiftly take cover whenever the dark shadow again loomed above the surface.

One morning I noticed strange changes taking place within my body. Two little bumps had developed near my tail, and now these were turning into feet. I could not quite understand what was happening, but as my feet grew longer and stronger, I found I could use them as paddles when swimming through the water plants. Soon two more bumps appeared, this time closer to my head. These also turned into handy feet. I found I could grab the water grasses when I became weary of swimming, and did not have to sink into the bottom of pond as I had done earlier.

"This is a great improvement." I shouted to my brother Fenwick, who had developed feet as well.

"I wonder what will happen to us next.", Fenwick said anxiously. "There have been so many changes, I am having trouble remembering who I am!"

I tried to reassure him. "Don't worry, Fen.", I said calmly. "I am sure we will stay this way for awhile."

"I wouldn't count on it." he cried, panic creeping into his voice. "Have you looked at your tail lately?"

I looked, and was shocked to see that my tail was about half its normal size. Fenwick seemed to have the same problem. These strange happenings caused us no pain however, so we tried not to worry and continued our explorations among the water lilies.

Actually, now that we had four legs and disappearing tails, we found that it was much easier to get about the pond. We could even haul ourselves out of the water, now that we possessed these new and efficient appendages.

It was a delight to hop up on to a lily pad, and see the world above. My green body blended well with the textured green leaves. I felt so happy I began to sing.

As the sun set, a rosy glow crept across the pond. All my friends and family began to join me in song, and a loud chorus soon echoed across the quiet waters. What a lovely concert we provided on that warm spring evening. The music carried across the swamp and into the misty fields beyond.

This pleasant life continued. We relaxed on the lily pads in both sunshine and shower. When the sun appeared after the

rain, many tasty flies and plump insects began fluttering about. We had to be quick but practice made us efficient in capturing these delicious morsels. In the blink of an eye, my long, sticky tongue darted out, and the insect vanished. A few more calories had been added to my diet!

This idyllic existence was soon to change. That morning started like any other, and I was sunning myself as usual on my favourite lily pad. Suddenly, a dark shadow loomed over me, and I leaped into the water. I was too late, and instead found myself trapped inside a fine net, from which there was no escape. A human hand reached in and wrapped its fingers around me. They felt dry and unpleasant on my cool body. I was lifted out of the net and dropped into a glass bottle filled with water.

In a panic, I frantically swam against the glass, for I could see my pond home beyond the clear sides my prison. Despite my frantic struggles, I could not escape. The human hand returned. The top of the bottle was removed, and in dropped Fenwick.

"Oh Fen." I cried, "I'm so happy to see you, I've been so frightened and alone." Fen was very brave and comforting, and did his best to calm me down. We tried to think of a way to escape as we swam around and around in the small space inside the bottle.

Then our glass prison was lifted, and we had the sensation of moving. The trip was rough - the water in the bottle sloshed from side to side, carrying us with it.

We reached a large human habitation, and found ourselves indoors. Two larger humans greeted the smaller human which had captured us. Prior to going in, he had concealed the bottle under his coat so the larger humans were not aware of our presence.

Making his way upstairs, the small one took us over to a square tank which sat in the corner of his bedroom. It was about half full of water. We were dumped in and landed with a splash. "At least there is more room in here," said Fen, as we explored the small aquarium. Actually it was quite interesting - it contained reeds and stones and even a little china mermaid. Some of the stones were out of the water, so Fen climbed up, calling for me to join him.

"It could be worse." he said cheerfully. "I don't see any herons about." "I am still frightened," I whispered. "What are we here for? Is he going to eat us?"

"Don't be silly" chided Fen. "Who ever heard of a human eating frogs." Then he was quiet for a moment, for we both just remembered a terrible story we had heard at the pond. A large bullfrog was travelling through one day, and told us to be wary of humans, as they were known to cook and eat frogs - the legs in particular being considered a delicacy.

Even Fen became a little subdued as we considered this dreadful possibility. We were too frightened to put our thoughts into words.

Then the small human returned. He opened a tin, and dropped about a dozen dead flies into the tank. We did not move for we were still afraid. When he left the room our appetites took control, and we snapped up the snacks provided. Then evening came. We could hear the singing from the pond but neither of us felt like joining in.

The distant voices of our family and friends made us feel very isolated and alone. We sat quietly and fell into a restless sleep, and dreamed we were back among the water lilies.

In the morning the small human arose from his bed, dressed, and left us again. Fen sat quietly for a moment, then

said "I'm out of here - come on." He took a flying leap out of the tank and landed on the carpeted floor. He explored the room but could not find an escape. I remained in the tank, for I was not sure that he was doing the right thing.

"I'm feeling a little dry.", Fen's husky voice drifted up from the floor. "I can't find water anywhere. There is nothing growing here. I wish I had stayed with you!"

"Don't worry." I tried to sound upbeat. "No doubt the small human will return soon and find you and put you back in the tank." But I was very worried - I knew Fen could become dehydrated if he was away from the water for too long, and this room was so dry, with no moisture to be found.

Then suddenly the bedroom door opened and in walked the small human's mother. She hummed to herself as she rearranged his bed, patting the blankets into order. She bent down to retrieve his pyjamas, which were lying on the floor. She gave a little shriek, then backed away - for she had spotted Fen on the carpet. "A frog." she muttered. "How on earth...". Then she saw the aquarium with me inside. Bending down again, she picked up Fen and put him back in the water beside me. She watched us for awhile, and smiled when she saw that Fen was swimming about the tank, apparently none the worse for his explorations.

"What a terrible experience," Fen shuddered. "I won't try that again in a hurry. We had better stay put until we find out what he wants with us." "Yes," I agreed, "at least we have food and water here. Perhaps he just wants to watch us grow."

For the next few hours we swam around and around the

continued following page

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continued from preceding page

tank for exercise and tried not to think of our beautiful water lily home. It began to get dark, and we could hear in the distance music from the pond. Our hearts ached, and we longed to be back singing with our family and friends.

Suddenly the door opened and the small human and his mother came into the room. The boy was carrying the bottle he had placed us in after our capture. The mother spoke .."As I explained to you, Jimmy, the frogs would be much happier back in the pond. It is not kind to keep them in such a small area when they are used to being free. If you want something in your aquarium, just wait until Saturday. Then we can go to the pet shop and find some fish for your tank. They would be quite content there as they were born in a tank, so it is all they know. But these two frogs have been so happy in their pond—they could never adjust to life in an aquarium. It is fortunate I found the one who jumped out—I could have stepped on him!"

Fen shuddered at the thought of being crushed underfoot. Jimmy looked down at us as his mother spoke. "I thought they would be happier, Mum," he explained. "I was planning to bring them lots of flies and bugs - they could just relax and eat and not worry about a thing." "That's not the way Nature planned it," his mother said. "All creatures are happiest in their original home - even if there might be some dangers. They need the stimulation of catching their own food, escaping from danger, and living with their own kind in their own environment. Now put them in the bottle - gently - and take them back to their pond. Then you can go to sleep tonight listening to their song - knowing you have made two little green singers very happy."

It was wonderful to slip back into the cool waters of the lily pond. How we sang that night, our hearts full of happiness and contentment. We hoped the small one's mother heard us and that she knew our song of joy was especially for her.

Peggy Price is an avid photographer and writer, especially of children's natural history stories. She was born near Swan Lake which she credits as an important factor in her longstanding involvement with the Victoria Natural History Society.

Thank You

On behalf of B.C. Parks Malahat District, thank you to all the volunteers from the Victoria Natural History Society who helped coordinate and staff the art show (Art Parks and Diversity) at the Goldstream Provincial Park Visitor Centre. The show ran from September 3-22, received over 10,000 visitors, and raised approximately \$1,900 dollars. The profits will be split between the society and a wildlife viewing project in Goldstream Park.

The art show was organized by David Fraser and Leah Ramsay who are to be congratulated for its success. B.C. Parks was able to raise the public's awareness of the role it plays in the preservation of diversity. Without the sponsorship and support from the Victoria Natural History Society the art show would not have been possible. B.C. Parks Malahat District looks forward to again working with the society on a project of mutual interest and benefit. Again thank you to the Society who co-sponsored the art show and all the volunteers who participated.

Robert C. Austad,
B.C. Parks - Malahat District

Green Light for Yellow Graffiti

By Donald Lowen

Residents in several Vancouver Island communities have recently witnessed roving bands of students, youths, and adults painting yellow fish symbols on local streets. These asphalt graffiti artists operate in broad daylight in neighbourhoods close to urban streams, and appear to favour storm drains as a target for their unusual creations. Once they have left their mark on the streets, they have been observed delivering brochures door to door.

When questioned, the fish painters confess that they come from all age groups and walks of life. They really have just one thing in common: they are concerned about the effects of urban pollution--specifically storm drain runoff on fish habitat. They allege to be volunteer members of the Vancouver Island Storm Drain Marking Program, and operate with the blessing and financial support of B.C.'s Ministry of Environment and Fisheries and Oceans Canada.



Members of the Vancouver Island Storm Drain Marking Program say that they're counting on us to think again before we use a storm drain as a receptacle for household wastes. So are the fish. (Photo: Brian Emmett)

According to one spokesperson, the program began on Vancouver Island in 1988 and is now firmly entrenched in 20 communities. In fact, the fish artists have finished their work in Oak Bay, Sidney, North Saanich, Duncan, Lake Cowichan, Comox and Cumberland. Their aim is to paint their nefarious symbol near every storm drain that leads to a fish-bearing stream.

Urban streams are the recipients of a variety of man-made toxins, including swimming pool additives, car wash detergent, rug shampoo and discarded household products like anti-freeze, pesticides and paint thinner. These chemicals often make their way to the creek via the storm drain system.

Members of the Vancouver Island Storm Drain Marking Program know how important salmon and trout are to a local stream's ecology and to the economy and lifestyle of the West Coast. They say that they're counting on us to think again before we use a storm drain as a receptacle for household wastes.

So are the fish.

1991 Fall Raptor Migration

By Michael G. Shepard

Over the past few years, birders have been reporting moderate numbers of raptors gathering near the southern tip of Vancouver Island. A quick check of records shows that even as recently as 20 years ago, very little fall movement was detected.

In the fall of 1991, a project co-sponsored by the Victoria Natural History Society (VNHS) and the Western Institute of Global Studies (WIGS), was initiated to monitor the fall migration in the East Sooke Park/Rocky Point area. Observers were asked to watch for as many hours as possible and count what they saw. The results were phenomenal! However, interpreting the data has been frustrating, as we have not yet been able to figure out a way to deal with duplicate sightings. Hopefully, our methods will be sorted out by the fall of 1992.

In the meantime, we feel that it is still worthwhile to report some generalities of this year's watches. Thirteen raptor species were recorded: turkey vulture, osprey, bald eagle, Northern harrier, sharp-shinned hawk, Cooper's hawk, Northern goshawk, red-tailed hawk, broad-winged hawk, golden eagle, American kestrel, merlin and peregrine falcon. For most species, numbers were low and the data too sketchy to analyze at this time. Hopefully by next fall we'll have a better all around picture. This report deals with the four most common species: turkey vulture, sharp-shinned hawk, red-tailed hawk and American kestrel.

Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura*)

Probably the most interesting and most spectacular sightings involved this species. Numbers built up from 125 in mid-September, to a peak of over 550 birds on September 29. On the latter date, observers at various locations reported kettles of vultures numbering up to 450 birds (MacLeod, 1991, pers. comm.). Sightings were scattered along the shores of Juan de Fuca Strait, from Trial Island in the east, to Secretary Island in the west. We have known that East Sooke and Rocky Point were good areas, but this far exceeded previous records. The highest number reported by Campbell *et al.* (1990, page 8) for B.C. was 300. The gathering of vultures on southern Vancouver Island is probably a relatively recent phenomenon. Tatum (1972 and 1973) reports maximum daily numbers for Victoria area of only 12 and 25 for 1971 and 1972 respectively. In Ontario, turkey vultures were relatively uncommon until about 20 years ago. Fraser (1990) states, "the 1970's marked a rapid expansion of its range and our sightings of these magnificent gliders became more and more frequent... Now they are a common sight in the Ottawa Valley..." After the weekend of September 28 and 29, vulture numbers dropped dramatically, with only 26 seen on October 14 (the last day we have data). We had thought there might be a weather trigger to send them on their way, but conditions were generally fair throughout, and the vultures left anyway.

Sharp-shinned Hawk (*Accipiter striatus*)

Sharpies were reported most days throughout the observation period, with numbers usually in the 15-35 range. There may have been two major movements, as numbers were relatively low in the second half of September. Campbell *et al.* (1990, page 24) state that the fall migration takes place from late August to late October, peaking in early October on the coast. Sauppe (1980) reports 122 birds at Cypress Provincial

Park near Vancouver on October 2, 1979. More frequent observations over a longer period of time will be necessary to determine the timing of migration on southern Vancouver Island.

Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*)

Red-tails are known to have a later migration peak than most of our raptors. Moderate numbers were tallied most days (10-36 birds) throughout September, then, in early October, counts took a great jump, with 101 seen on October 5 (Allinson, 1991, pers. comm.) and 85 on October 13 (Pearce, 1991, pers. comm.). These counts are considerably higher than any listed in Campbell (1990, page 37); the maximum fall count was of 20 birds. The movement of red-tails in our area undoubtedly continues later into the month; however, observations were unfortunately not made later than October 13.

American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*)

The American kestrel is reported year round in small numbers. Tatum (1972 and 1973) reports an increase in the number of records and birds for the months of September and October. Our data, primarily from Rocky Point, (MacLeod, 1991, pers. comm.) suggest that the kestrel movement peaks in early to mid-September, then tapers off with only a few birds seen after the beginning of October. Our largest count was of 14 birds (September 14).

Many birders contributed to this fall's counts. I wish to thank you all for the many hours spent in the field gathering raptor information. Despite the problems of interpreting the data, we are making great strides at understanding the bird movement at the southern end of Vancouver Island. Hopefully we'll have even greater coverage for 1992. Please let us know early if you can take part.

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Michael Shephard is a long-time resident of Victoria and an avid birder. He operates a natural history tour company.

CALENDAR

REGULAR MEETINGS are generally held as follows:

Board of Directors meetings the first Tuesday of each month 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.

JANUARY EVENTS

Bird Walks At Swan Lake are conducted every Wednesday morning at 10:00 a.m., with Don L'Heureux and every Sunday morning at 10:00 a.m. with Bruce Colvin. Bring binoculars and meet in the parking lot at the Nature Sanctuary on Swan Lake Road.

Sunday, January 5

Birdwatching Field Trip to Goldstream Park with Gerry and Gladys Anderson (656-9599). Meet at Goldstream Parking lot at 9:30 a.m. This is a good time to see gulls, eagles and wintering birds.

Sunday, January 5

Seawatch at Clover Point. In December 1991, the Western Institute of Global Studies (WIGS) initiated a project to monitor seabirds along the British Columbia coast and in Puget Sound. Members of the VNHS are involved in the counts at Clover Point. The plan is to conduct dawn to dusk watches once a month, year round. If you can volunteer a minimum of one hour (even if for only one count) as an observer or a recorder, please call Michael Shepard at 380-7615 or Mary-Anne Montgomery at 380-7152 to sign up. A summary of each count will be made available to participants and other interested person.

Tuesday, January 7

Board of Directors Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Clifford Carl Reading Room, Cunningham Building, University of Victoria.

Tuesday, January 14

General Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Begbie 159, University of Victoria. **Jim Cosgrove** of the B.C. Museum will present "Colors of the Emerald Sea". He will focus on the many beautifully coloured animals found in the waters around B.C.

Wednesday, January 22

Birders' Night, 7:30 p.m., Begbie 159, University of Vic-

toria. Nigel Mathews, formally of Kenya and now living in Victoria, will present a slide-illustrated talk on birding in India and Nepal. Members' Night is always entertaining, so come and be surprised.

Saturday, January 25

Birdwatching at Martindale Flats and Island View Beach with Alan MacLeod (382-3854). Meet at Farmer's Market on Island View Road at 9:00 a.m.

FEBRUARY EVENTS

Bird Walks at Swan Lake are conducted every Wednesday morning at 10:00 a.m., with Don L'Heureux and every Sunday morning at 10:00 a.m. with Bruce Colvin. Bring binoculars and meet in the parking lot at the Nature Sanctuary on Swan Lake Road.

Sunday, February 2

Seawatch at Clover Point. See description for January 5.

Tuesday, February 4

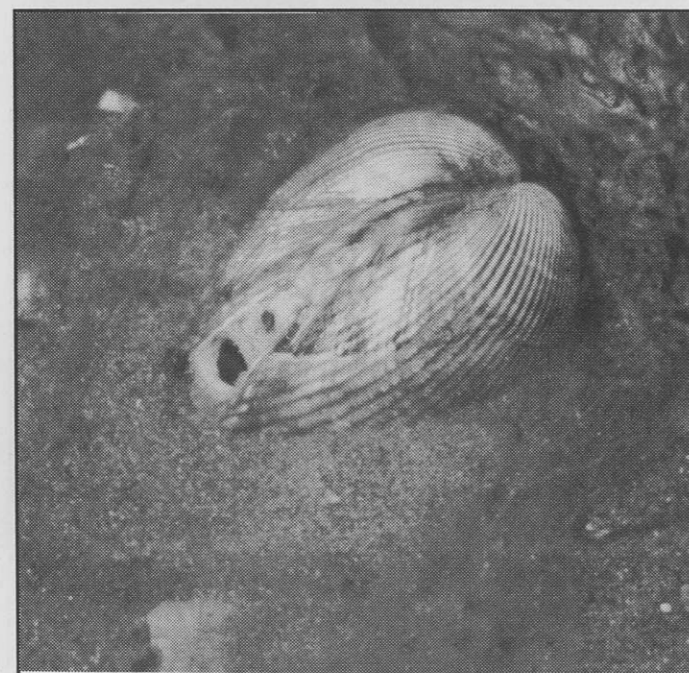
Board of Directors' Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Clifford Carl Reading Room, Cunningham Building, University of Victoria.

Sunday, February 9

The Victoria Waterfront Bird Tour with Lyndis Davis (477-9952). Meet at Ogden Point at 9:30 a.m. Hit all the hotspots along the waterfront on this morning outing.

Tuesday, February 11

Annual Banquet at the Ballroom of Princess Mary Restaurant. Happy Hour begins at 6:00 p.m. with buffet dinner served at 6:30 p.m. There will be ample choice for vegetarian and non-vegetarian alike. Get your tickets early! Cost is \$18 per person (GST included). Tickets are available from



Freda Woodworth (382-6693) or Beth Chatwin (592-5346).

Beverley Glover of the University of Victoria, and a VNHS member, will present **This is Not the Opera House(!): A Naturalist's Journey Through Australia.** She will look at some of the wild places, wildlife, and wildflowers of this island continent. Bev begins the illustrated talk in the Snowy Mountains on a trip with our "alter egos" the Victoria Field Naturalists (Victoria state that is). The trip concentrates on Western Australia and the Northern Territory, but Tasmania and the Queensland coast are not forgotten.

Saturday, February 23

Field Trip to Esquimalt Lagoon and Fort Rodd Hill with Mike MacGrener (658-8624). Meet at lagoon bridge on Lagoon Avenue at 9:30 a.m.

Wednesday, February 26

Birders' Night, 7:30 p.m., Begbie 159, University of Victoria. Tonight is the annual Members' Night. Birders are invited to bring up to 10 slides of birds or trips of interest. If you have something, contact Bryan Gates (598-7789).

Saturday, February 29

Leapyear Hike to Gowlland: Meet at Helmcken Park and Ride at 9:00 a.m. Celebrate leap year by exploring this area for early signs of spring or winter wonderland, depending on the weather. Bring good walking shoes or boots, water; and, if weather is great, you might want to bring a lunch and stay for a picnic. Leaders to be announced.

BULLETIN BOARD

Swan Lake Volunteers

If you are interested in nature and the environment and would enjoy working with children, there is a position for you at Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary. Openings for volunteer naturalists are available weekdays, as well as weekends. Training ses-



Photographs (left and above): Little necked clam, *Protothoca staminca*, taken on a field trip of Pat Bay, by A. Nugent.

sions begin January 20th. Call Joan Cowley at the Nature Sanctuary (479-0122) for more details.

For Sale

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

Anyone interested in Botany?

Adolf Ceska is still interested in feedback on getting a Botany night on third Tuesday of the month. Contact him at 477-1211.

Junior Naturalists

The Victoria Naturalist still seeking contributions from young naturalists. Contact Warren Drinnan, Editor, 652-9618 (work 598-0471).

Distinguished Service Award Nominations Needed

Contact Betty Kennedy, Awards Committee Chairperson at 592-2070. See article this issue for details.

Hiking Tour, Arizona and California - Feb., Mar. 1992.

The Outdoor Club of Victoria has arranged a three-week hiking and natural history tour to Arizona and California. Bus tours leave February 22 with stops at Death Valley, Superstition Mountains, Saguaro National Monument, Sonoran Desert and Palm Springs. For further information, contact Stan Buxcey at 385-7501 or Capital Tours at 384-1432.

Columbia Gorge Trip - April 16-19, 1992

Ten spaces are available for VNHS members on this Spring wildflower and birding trip led by naturalist Bill Merilees. Bus transportation, three nights hotel accommodation, three field lunches and comprehensive medical/travel insurance are included in the package at a cost of \$265.00, double occupancy. The trip is sponsored by Vancouver Island Region, Federation of British Columbia Naturalists (F.B.C.N.). Contact Connie Hawley, 385-2535.

Natural History Cruise

The Vancouver Natural History Society is sponsoring a trip to Bella Bella from Vancouver aboard the vessel *MV Island Roamer*, from April 27 to May 6, 1992. The trip provides a great opportunity to see some of the fascinating coastline of British Columbia with tour leader Bill Merilees. The cost of the trip is \$1695, including return air fare to Vancouver from Bella Bella. Space is limited to 14 people. Those who are interested should contact Audrey Viken in Vancouver (926-3006). For further details on what can be seen on the trip, you can call Bill Merilees in Nanaimo at 758-1801.

Oops!

Our apologies to Klaus and Laura Kollenberg. We inadvertently listed one of their interests as herbs. While they have nothing against these plants, their main interest is in *herps*, or herpetology, the study of reptiles.

The Victoria NATURALIST

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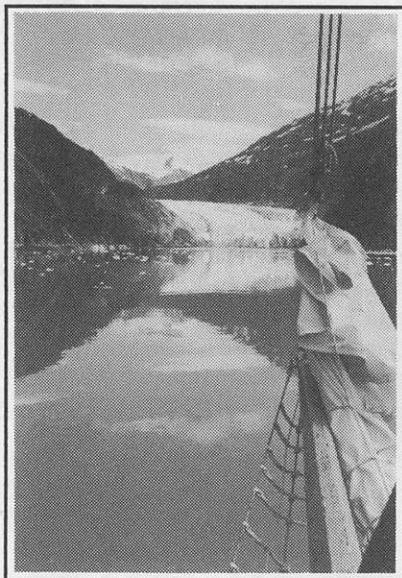
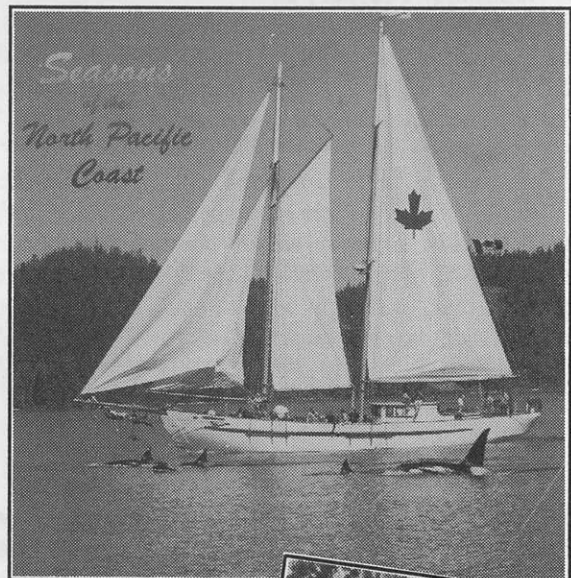
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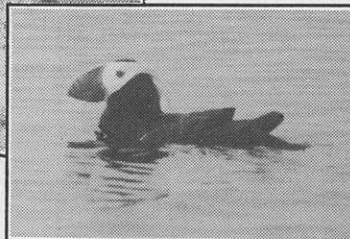
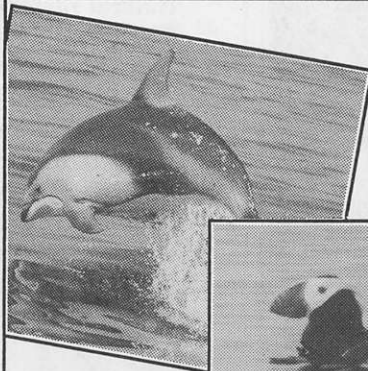
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