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Long-eared owl. Photo: Brent Diakow

Long Eared Owl— Martindale Flats

By Brent Diakow

Monday, December 16th was bright, sunny and seemed the perfect day to take my lunch to a favourite spot, Martindale road. Arriving just after noon, I parked, took out a sandwich and while looking north with my binoculars through a large flock of feeding ducks I observed a falcon like bird stooping over the fields. Before I could identify this mystery bird, it put down in a small grove of deciduous trees just east of Lockside trail.

Two days earlier I had walked these same fields as participant of the area Christmas bird count. On count day, I had seen a peregrine but it was a quick observation at a distant bird. Now an excellent opportunity had presented itself, these same deciduous trees were only a short walk from Lockside trail. As I proceeded north on Lockside I met Aziza Cooper, another regular Martindale birder who joined me on this falcon search.

From Lockside we walked east through a fallow grass field towards an adjoining field overgrown with teasel in the centre of which stood our targeted deciduous trees. Climbing over a fence we soon discovered a trail that hugged the south edge of the grove and so continued quietly through the teasel and tall grass intently focusing on the distant bare tree tops.

Barely forty feet along the trail, I was distracted by a slight movement deep within an overgrown tangle of trees. Peering into this shadowy thicket again I noticed this movement. It appeared to be a small animal up in a tree slowly turning its head, however, when the face turned square to me I instantly recognized the head profile. Raising my binoculars I whispered "long-eared owl!" Aziza now was peering into the tangle as I positioned her head and pointed with the directions "look between those two branches, ten feet off the ground, about thirty feet into the woods." "Got it!" was her response.

With our binoculars we observed this bird was not alarmed by our presence and after viewing for a few minutes, we proceeded to search for our mystery bird.

Within another fifty feet of the trail we spotted the profile of our search, set up the scope and confirmed an immature peregrine. After a quick study of this falcon, we back-tracked to the owl.

Aziza began to take field notes while I rushed back to retrieve my camera from my truck. My only telephoto lens is an 135 mm but previous observations of this species have taught me a slow approach will allow for a close encounter. Virtually crawling in the underbrush to within fifteen feet, yet cautious not to flush this bird so others might locate it, I snapped off seven shots. After carefully backing away, I attached a candy wrapper as a marked on a teasel stem near our original point of discovery.

Within the hour I had hot-lined this bird and know of three other birders who confirmed the sighting that afternoon. Unfortunately, this owl was not relocated in the following days.

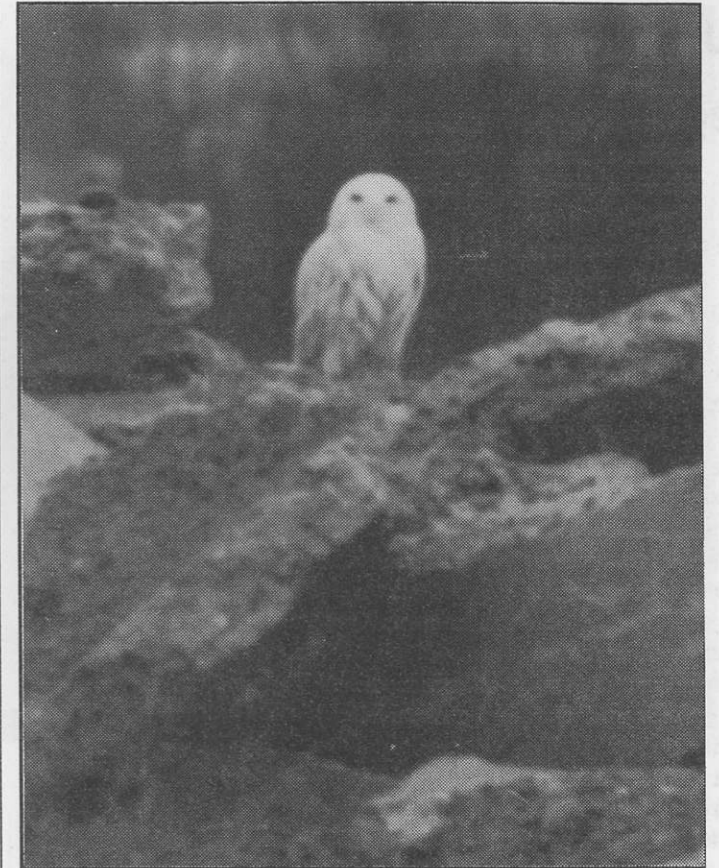
In subsequent research I note the book *The Birds of British Columbia* (Campbell et al., 1990) sites as noteworthy records only fifteen previous references to Vancouver Island. Long-eared observations of which Victoria/Saanich account for seven. In *A Birders Guide to Vancouver Island* (K. Taylor, 1990) a total of nineteen previous Vancouver Island sightings are listed with twelve occurring in Victoria/Saanich areas. Both books cite the first record as 1899 and list the species as a 'very rare vagrant'.

In closing it is interesting to note that the Martindale Valley is home, however temporarily, to such a variety of bird species. Any Victoria birder worth their salt knows that through the winter this threatened farming area is host to large numbers of mixed sparrows, waterfowl, hawks and falcons. This winter four owl species were recorded on the Martindale Christmas count; these include barn, great-horned, Western screech and Northern saw-whet. Add to this list a short-eared in November, a snowy a week before the Christmas count and long-eared two days after the count.

References:

Campbell, W., N.K. Dawe, I. McTaggart-Cowan, J.M. Cooper, G.W. Kaiser and M.C.E. McNall. 1990. *The Birds of British Columbia, Volume Two - Nonpasserines*. Royal British Columbia Museum and Canadian Wildlife Service, Victoria, B.C. 636 pages.
K. Taylor. 1990. *A Birders Guide to Vancouver Island*. Top Drawer Infosystems. 168 pages.

Brent Diakow can often be seen searching the fields of Martindale Flats. He is leading a birding trip of the area on March 28.



Snowy owl. Photo: Brent Diakow

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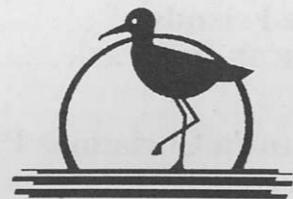
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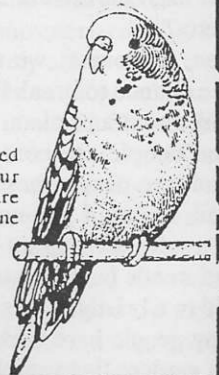
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Urban Wilderness Gardening

By Karen Skowron

I was delighted to learn that the way I had always gardened not only had a picturesque name but was beneficial to the environment as well.

"So you're an urban wilderness gardener," a man who studies about such things said to me a few years back.

It sounded a compliment (my free spirited gardening had been more frowned on than praised in the past) so I asked him to explain what he meant.

Well, the result of that conversation was a national organization, Urban Wilderness Gardeners, which continues to exist as a resource network for those who are or want to be more natural in their gardening. Their mandate is to "provide alternatives to manicured lawns" and the alternatives are as varied and fascinating and individual as people themselves.

Essentially an urban wilderness gardener works with nature instead of attempting to control the environment. It's quite an experience.

A new awareness comes about when the manicured lawn mentality is looked at and questioned. I did a self studies course at university to discover why our North American properties are so uniform, neat, predictable, high maintenance, environmentally unsound. So boring.

It was interesting research taking me back to feudal England when an expanse of carefully tended lawn that did not need to be used for growing food or grazing animals, with foundation planting that drew the admiring (hopefully!) eye along that stretch of green to the house, symbolized wealth and status.

It makes no sense today to carry on this tradition when it means wasting energy and water when it requires the use of pesticides and herbicides which are leaking into our water systems, when it takes so much time to keep those zillion of tiny grass plants crowded together, green, the same height. Urban wilderness gardeners are usually hooked on the adventure when they see they get something back from their properties, instead of just putting so much out.

The first thing people usually say when presented with the idea is — "I never thought about this before."

Then they are presently surprised when they ask, "What do I have to do?" and the answer is "What do you want or need from your property?"

Often, of course, we don't know what we want when offered the chance to break from a rut or change a pattern. It's fun to think about and plan.

Some people are content to merely cut their lawn less (more than one person has said, "I cut my lawn every week without fail. I guess I just never thought about it.") They find they have a soft and fragrant carpet that tends to choke out the weeds and needs far less watering to stay green. Most find it preferable to a bristly brown brush cut.

Many people have benefitted from the examples of urban wilderness gardens that were listed in the newsletters. Fruit trees, mini-meadow, a pond, a boardwalk instead of a cement walkway, herb scented patios, front yard vegetable gardens (if that's where the sun is! urban wilderness gardening is very logical), summerhouses, sun catcher fences, lots of trees (natural air conditioners and air

purifiers) have all inspired "I can do that!"

An urban wilderness garden outside a house can be aesthetically pleasing for the inhabitants in that it doesn't offer an uninterrupted view of the street (as the lawn and foundation planting does) but gives a pleasant, natural background whenever one looks out a window. Many of us have yearnings for country. We can have some aspects of this in the city.

Natural habitats are provided with urban wilderness gardening. There are trees and shrubs and flowers very attractive to birds and butterflies and learning about these, experimenting with them, is worthwhile.

My house in Toronto with its urban wilderness garden had a grove of sumac trees right by the road which drew many visitors — scarlet cardinals in the winter when my soul was starved for colour; monarchs wanting a rest on their migratory trip; naturalists from across the country and Europe; school kids on field trips.

And when I walked home along the city side walk mine was the garden where the crickets were singing.

Karen Skowron, a writer and poet, has recently moved to Victoria from Ontario. Urban Wilderness Gardeners can be reached at Box 10, Postal Station H, Toronto, Ontario, M4C 5H7.

Witty's Lagoon Management Plan to be Developed

By Lloyd Rushton

Are you a frequent visitor to Witty's Lagoon Regional Park in Metchosin? Do you scan the lagoon during the fall bird migration to see who's dropped in? Have you ever wandered through the spring wildflowers at Tower Point? If so, you'll be interested in the future of the Capital Regional District (CRD) Parks' premier nature appreciation park.

CRD Parks recently announced that Management Plan will be developed in 1992 for Witty's Lagoon Regional Park. The plan will define how the park will be managed, developed and used in the future and how the natural and cultural resources will be protected. The key issues that will be addressed include:

- natural resource management and protection;
- determination of appropriate recreational uses that should be permitted in the park;
- parking requirements; and,
- land acquisition.

Full public input into the development of the Management Plan means that your views are important. To have your name on the Witty's Lagoon Management Plan mailing list, call CRD Parks at 478-3344. Additionally, an Advisory Planning Group is being established and will include a representative from the Victoria Natural History Society.

In the meantime, for those of you visiting Witty's Lagoon during the coming months, please note that the Witty's Lagoon Nature House is temporarily closed until further notice.

Lloyd Rushton is Programs Co-ordinator with Capital Regional District Parks



Fresh water estuary, San José del Cabo.

Beginning Birder in the Baja

By Gwen Curry

Several months ago in the first flush of birding fever, I phoned the Rare Bird Alert to report a flock of snow geese on the north shore of Elk Lake. To my surprise I received a call back from Bryan Gates who patiently asked a few questions about the salient features of these snow geese. Since then, on walks around the lake my husband never fails to point out my 'snow geese' near the shore! My enthusiasm hasn't diminished but I think my powers of research and observation may have.

Preparing for my short trip to the southern tip of Baja California I wandered into the Field Naturalist on Broad Street to see if there were any books on the area. A helpful employee suggested my Peterson Field Guide to Western Birds was probably all I'd need as there were only about four land birds, the rest being sea birds. I resigned myself to the prospect of a week of swimming, playing tennis, walking and reading although I did take my binoculars and field guide. What I didn't realize was that he meant there were only about four land birds indigenous to the area. After three days of casual birding this became apparent: I had made notes and drawings on 39 species and identified twenty-eight. My Peterson Field Guide was very relevant but I couldn't wait to get home and identify the mystery birds with more information about their Mexican habitat.

After checking into our hotel room I stood in the open hallway with binoculars trained in the desert outside. A couple who had travelled to the area many times told me about the American kestrels on the telephone wires across the street. I was able to revel in the wonderful plumage of the male kestrel until my arms could no longer hold the binoculars up! Birds were supposed to fly away. In fact, pairs of kestrels dotted the

roadway over the desert marking their territory. They seemed to feed on the many butterflies, moths and dragonflies that flitted over the desert. Reluctantly, I came to look upon the kestrels as I do robins at home, they were so plentiful.

There had been rain before our arrival on December 14th and the desert was in bloom: Bougainvillea, morning glory, marigolds, bleeding heart, honeysuckle, red, yellow, lavender, pink, vermilion, white, blue, every conceivable colour and shape sparkled against the dark green of the desert bushes.

On an as yet undeveloped tract of land bordered by the beach, the road and two resort hotels I lifted my field glasses to have a look into the scrub. An hour and a half later I was still glued to the same spot. I had to consciously follow only one bird at a time until I had enough identifying characteristics and behavioural patterns. As I watched a pair (almost everything seemed to be in pairs) of handsome hooded orioles, hummingbirds, doves, gnatcatchers, flycatchers, wrens and sparrows would flit annoyingly in and out of my field of vision.

On another walk I stood, mesmerized, looking at the bushes in someone's front yard. Only about three feet in front of me was a female black-chinned hummingbird who returned my stare with curious turns of its tiny head. She sat plump and comfortable on her perch feeling quite safe in her thorny haven. I was helpless as I was usually never the first to leave. Two houses down I encountered what may have been her mate (former mate?) who looked quite black under the cloudy sky of that afternoon but with the unmistakable neat rectangle of purple under the chin. On the same street was a male Costa's hummingbird with its broad purple 'moustache' projecting to the sides. His head was cobalt blue while the gorget remained purple. In the same area was a long, thin hummingbird which had a red bill with a white tip which I couldn't identify.

On the third day we rented a car and drove up the Pacific

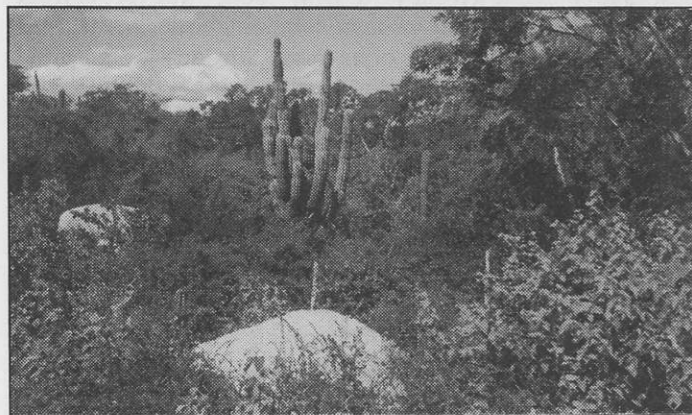
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Brown pelicans.

Coast from San Jose del Cabo, to Cabo san Lucan, Migrino and finally Todos Santos. As we drove up the narrow highway I noted two 'lovebirds' in my cryptic notes, sitting on a telephone wire close together, the size of robins with white-pink breasts and long tails. Possibly scissor-tailed flycatchers. As the landscape changed to classic Baja desert with giant Cardon Cacti rising above the dense scrub I was shocked by two large turquoise military macaws who flew so close to one another they overlapped, their wingbeats synchronized. Gila woodpeckers, also in pairs, called out from the tops of the Sajuaro-like Cardon Cacti. turkey vultures, common enough now in the Victoria area were malevolent looking when seen in silhouetted groups of 20, hunched, neckless on the tops of the cacti as the sun set into the Pacific.

Down the beach from our hotel was a fresh water estuary. One pamphlet stated that 200 species of birds could be found here. It resembled a Louisiana Bayou except that the cypress trees standing in the water were replaced by tall palms. Here, hundreds of American coots beeped at each other interspersed with the occasional common moorhen and a few small ducks. Ospreys kept watch on the tops of the palms while magnificent frigate birds glided effortlessly high above looking much smaller than their eight foot wing span.



Desert scrub with large Cardon Cactus.

The most endearing sea birds were undoubtedly the brown pelicans. They looked ridiculous standing on the shore with their incredibly top heavy bills but as soon as they were airborne they were transformed. Their habit of gliding on their six foot wing span only inches from the beach gave great close-up views.

As the sun was setting on our final day I got up the nerve to walk into the middle of the desert and lose myself in the tall vegetation. I was rewarded by a greater roadrunner, a scorpion, two jack rabbits and cactus wrens which act a little like roosters in the desert helping the sun to rise and set (or perhaps advertising for a mate?). I was given a taste of the many smaller birds in the thickets, difficult to identify even at close range they were so quick. Their quickness may have been due to the magnificent grey bird perched quietly on a tall twig. About the size of a robin with a black mask and subtle grey plumage, he would swoop down to the desert floor and up into a thicket flashing his white wing bars. He was, of course, a loggerhead shrike.

I still haven't mentioned the scrub jays, the Cooper's hawk on the 8th hole of the golf course or the Lapland longspurs. Lapland longspurs?

Walking the two miles into town on our first day I stopped to watch six to eight chunky birds running and stopping under the scrub. They were just a few feet on the other side of a chain link fence but I used my binoculars anyway. Not having any idea what they were I made a detailed description of their heads as that seemed the most interesting part. I noted the four distinct colours: yellow ochre, dark grey-brown, buff-white and red-brown at the back of the neck. Later, on the beach, was the time to research the day's notes. They were indeed Lapland longspurs in their winter plumage but the closest rare migration was southern California according to the Peterson's Guide.

Maybe it was just as well that I couldn't locate a San Jose del Cabo Rare Bird Alert!

Gwen Curry is an artist and Associate Professor in the Visual Arts Department at the University of Victoria.

JUNIOR NATURALISTS—

Mid-Winter Bald Eagle Survey for British Columbia

By Christopher Chutter

On Sunday, January 12th, my Dad and I walked around Witty's Lagoon, together with my dog Bear. We did this to count bald eagles as part of a mid-winter bald eagle count. This is a province-wide survey to try to count all the eagles in their areas. It must be done before noon as eagles usually stay on their perches until then. In the afternoon they start flying around, which makes it more likely that they might be counted more than once, which is something we try not to do. This count is organized by the B.C. Wildlife Branch that my Dad works for. After the count, everyone sends their results in and the biologists add them up to see how many eagles we have.

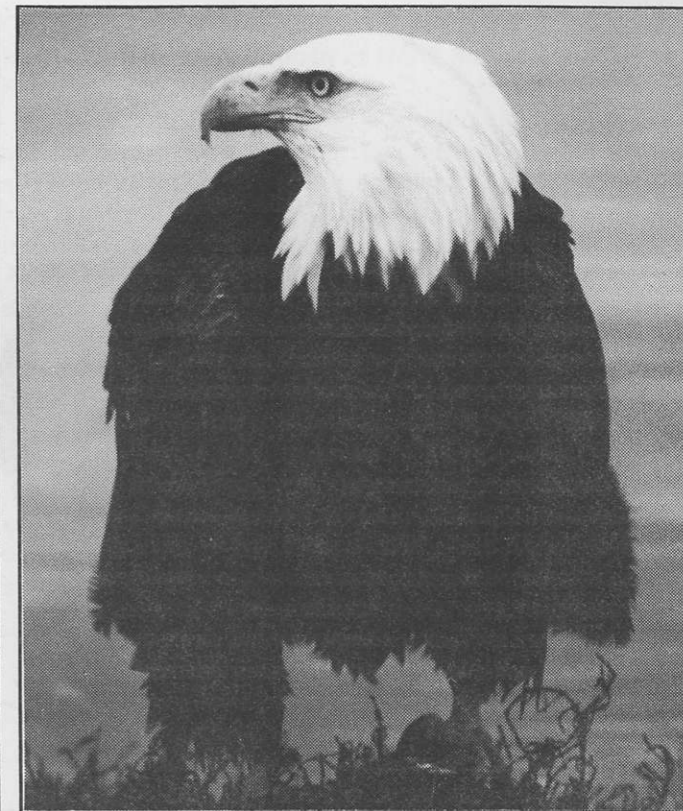
On average, we get about 30,000 bald eagles wintering in B.C., which is almost half of the 70,000 eagles estimated to be in North America today. Most of B.C.'s bald eagles winter along the southwest coast, but usually only about 50 are counted around Victoria. They prefer areas near large estuaries where there are lots of fish for them to eat. For instance, the people around Squamish sometimes count more than 1,000 eagles in their area.

During our walk, Dad and I saw a big waterfall. It was really fast and loud. We could still hear it when it was out of sight. Above the waterfall, we crossed a bridge over a small creek. I went down to the creek to look in it, and was surprised to see lots of tiny fish swim away. Farther down the trail Bear chased a gray squirrel up a tree and later on we stopped to watch a hairy woodpecker feeding on bugs on an old oak tree.

In the lagoon we saw a lot of ducks. There were many mallards and wigeons, and a few green-winged teal. I also saw my first pintails. These ducks were tipping upside down to feed on the seeds on the bottom of the lagoon. I noticed that the males had very long skinny tails. At the end of the trail, we reached a beach. We saw many birds, especially sea-gulls, and also lots of seals. Dad saw two eagles on an island about half a kilometre offshore. He told me that they were both immature as they didn't have their white heads and white tails yet. They were so far away though that I couldn't tell that they were eagles, even through binoculars. On the way back we noticed the tide had gone out and that the lagoon was now full of great blue herons. We even saw one catch and eat a couple of fish.

Although we only saw two eagles it was a fun day. It was neat to see so many animals and to walk so long, and so far, without seeing any houses or roads. I think Bear enjoyed it too. He was so tired when we got home that he slept for the rest of the day. Dad, Bear and I are looking forward to next years survey, when hopefully I'll see an eagle close enough to identify it.

Christopher Chutter, nine years old, is currently in Grade four. He's an avid naturalist and really misses the old frog pond in the woods behind the family's old house in Nanaimo.



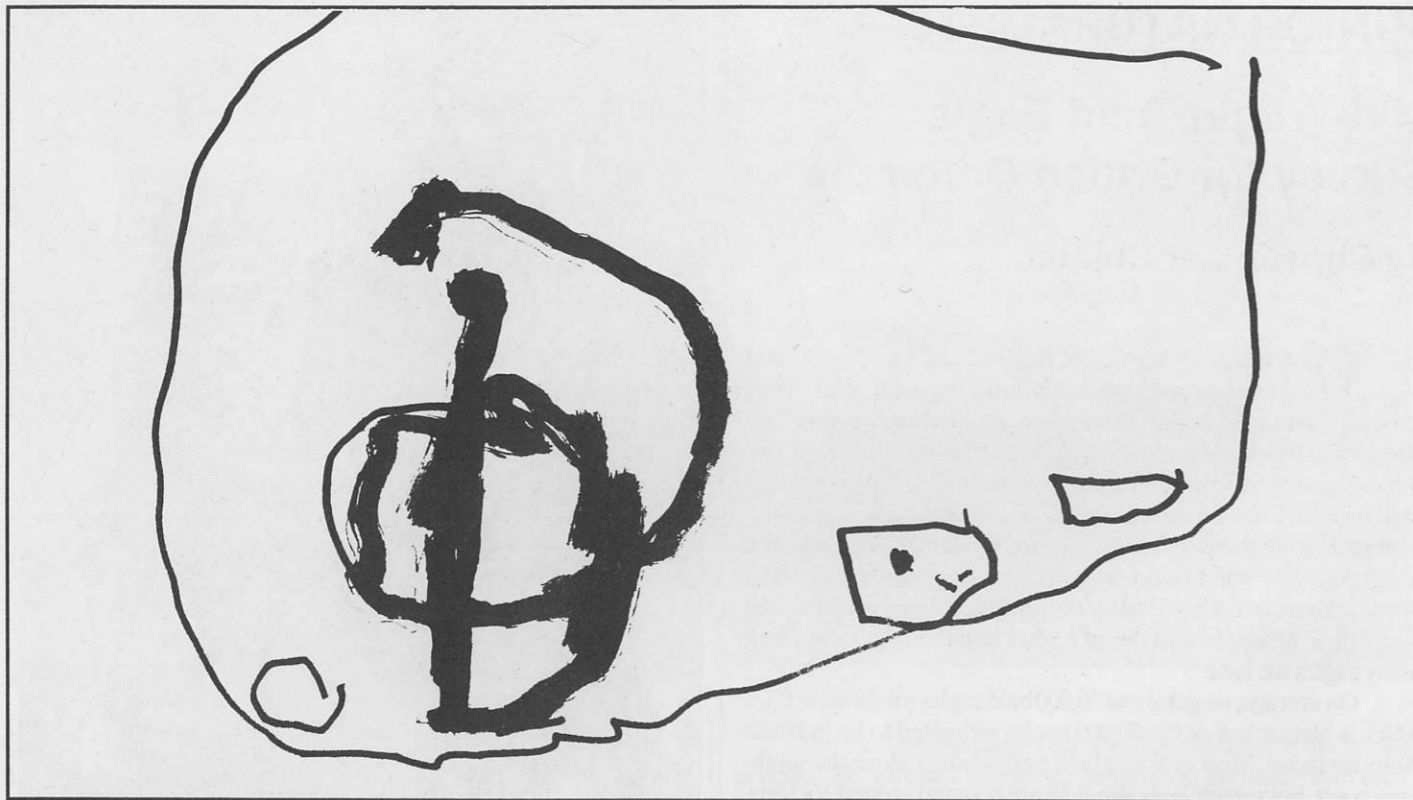
Bald Eagle. Photo: Steve Pridgeon.



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**JUNIOR NATURALISTS—
Observations on
Rubber
'Banana Belly'
Boa**

By Arlo Erickson

On January 22, 1992 at 2:00 p.m. we were very lucky. We decided to visit Swan Lake Nature House. In an aquarium in the meeting room, a rubber boa lives. This afternoon the boa was shedding its' skin. Ann Scarfe helped the boa a little bit. She picked up the old skin and gently pulled it. She had it stretched out of the aquarium so I could feel it. The rest of the skin was still on the boa. I could see the eyes of the boa. The dry skin in the aquarium is one ruler long. The newer skin being shed is two and a half rulers long. This skin is soft and feels oily and sticky. It smells snaky. I looked at the skin after it was shed. I could see the head, the tail part had a hole.

I held the snake in my hands. The snake feels rubbery and slippery. The colours of the boa was black and a yellow belly.

Please go and see the rubber boa yourselves at Swan Lake. This boa came from the Okanagan Valley. Go soon, it might go home this summer.

Arlo Erickson is seven years old. He is a proud life member of our F.B.C.N. Arlo attends Sundance School in Victoria where he is an enthusiastic member of the Young Naturalists.

**American Birding
Association Commendation
Awards**

By Barbara Begg and Hank Vander Pol

About two years ago, the American Birding Association (ABA) instituted a Certificate of Commendation award program for individuals. There are two types of certificates: one for a specific occurrence, such as the finding of a new bird species for a particular area, and one for hospitality shown to the birding community over a period of time.

Although veteran birders and ABA members are eligible for these awards, the Association is particularly interested in receiving nominations of casual or non-birders.

We are pleased to announce the receipt of Certificates of

Commendation by Vancouver Island bird and people lovers, Beryl and John Holt, formally of North Saanich, and Aurora Patterson of Tofino.

Beryl and John have had a life-long interest in birds and backyard bird feeding. Over the years they have attracted a number of rare or uncommon bird species and have gladly shared "their" birds with others. Some of the interesting species that have turned up at their feeders are Anna's hummingbird, Lewis' woodpecker, red-naped sapsucker, tropical kingbird, blue jay, Townsend's solitaire, white-throated sparrow, Harris' sparrow, and most recently, a brambling. The brambling was at their feeding station on Wain Road in North Saanich from December 14, 1990, to about May 8, 1991.

During this time, outstanding hospitality was shown to many visiting birders, no mean feat, as their home was in a controlled entrance development and the bird could only be viewed satisfactorily from inside their home while comfortably seated on their dining room table. A small sampling of people

using the dining room table were bird watchers from Utah, California, Nova Scotia, Texas, Arizona, Florida, Ontario, mainland B.C. and of course, many local birders. Not only were the Brambling and other species delightful birds, but they were "lifers" for many appreciative birders.

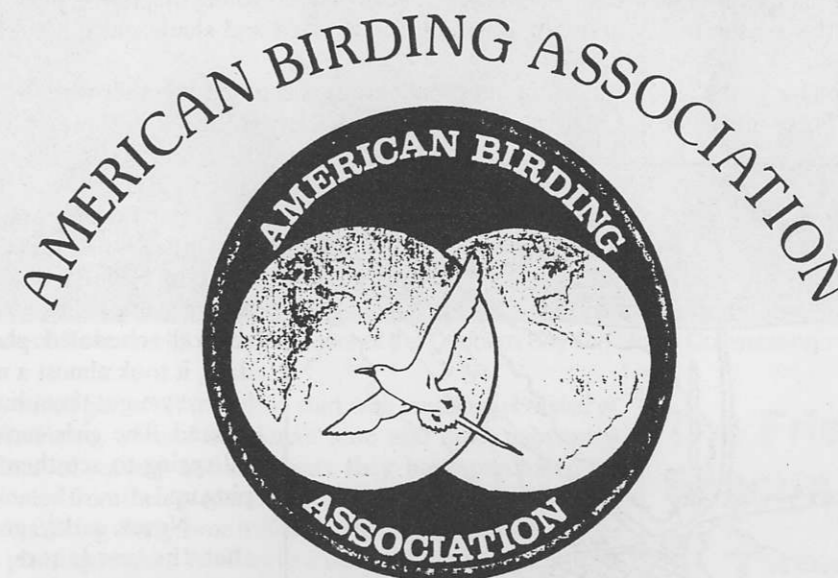
The rustic bunting, which showed up at Aurora Paterson's feeder in Tofino, drew birders from all across North America. Aurora, or Rory as she is known to her friends, was a gracious hostess at all times, serving coffee or tea to any unexpected guests who arrived on the doorstep.

Well over 150 birders, from as far away as the Maritime provinces to Kansas, came to see the bunting which stayed for almost three months during the 1990/91 winter.

Rory is a avid bird lover. She took a bird rehabilitation course from Cornell University, and one of her rooms is completely outfitted to care for sick or injured birds. She has rehabilitated several raptors during that time.

Thank you, Rory, for being such a gracious host.

Barbara Begg and Hank Vander Pol are long-time members of the Natural History Society and frequent contributors to the Victoria Naturalist.



COMMENDATION

TO Beryl and John Holt
Sidney, B. C.

In Recognition and Appreciation of their gracious hospitality and service to the birdwatching community

For the Board of Directors:

Alan R. Keith
President

Charles P. Wells
Secretary

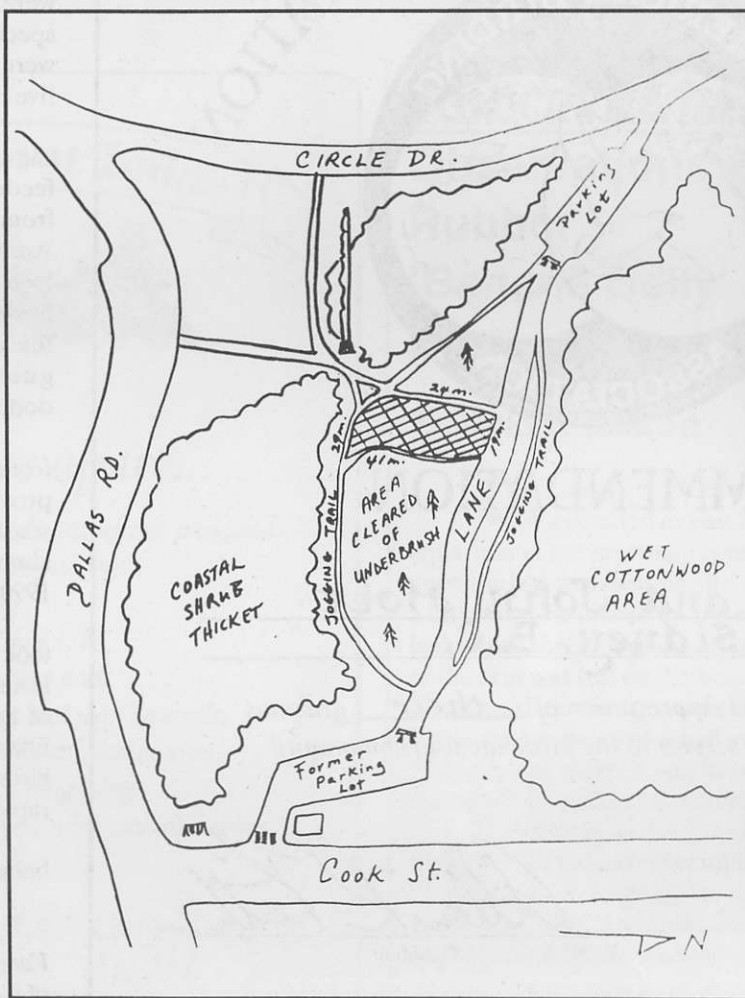
Date Jan. 9, 1992

Revegetation Project In The Southeast Woods Of Beacon Hill Park: An Update

By Agnes Lynn and Helen Oldershaw

In the *Victoria Naturalist* Vol.47.4 (1991), Joel Ussery and Helen Oldershaw, members of the Revegetation Project Committee, gave an introduction to our experimental project in the Southeast Woods of Beacon Hill Park. Since that time we have had a number of planting, weeding, and re-evaluating sessions with Agnes' Cadboro Bay Girl Guide Company, several members of the C.U.P.E. parks staff, and Dr. Christopher Brayshaw (who initiated the native plant garden at the Royal B.C. Museum and who has been of invaluable assistance to us in the correct identification of plants). Joel is attending classes at Simon Fraser University this season but he'll be back with us in the summer.

Most of us are new at this type of 'gardening' and have found that as well as having to seek advice from books and from knowledgeable advisors, we also have to learn from our painful mistakes. For example, a few casualties among the low Oregon grape (*Mahonia nervosa*) taught us that we had planted them in too dry a spot beside a path - even within the small area of our 'plot', soil moisture conditions can vary enough to be the cause of fatalities in certain species if planted in an unfavourable location. (Also, we had decided to do only minimal watering of young plants as it is better for them to adapt quickly to natural conditions.) Nevertheless, the experience is proving very enjoyable. It is challenging and always interesting. In this type of ecosystem, how does one plant interact with another? How much care do certain seedlings need in the beginning stages of growth and for how long? How badly were the soil nutrients depleted by the scraping off of the dirt when the



Revegetation Project in Southeast Wood of Beacon Hill Park. Project area shown hatched

inner area of the woods was cleared in 1986?

As part of the Girl Guide program, the girls must be of service to the community and they must learn about the natural history of the area. Some of the girls have made this their service project for their All-Round Cord so must spend a total of 15-20 hours each working in the park. As well as weeding and planting in our section they often take walks through the other areas of the woods to learn about the trees and plants there. They love all the little pathways around the boggy cottonwood section the best.

The big challenge with the girls is to get them to work without trampling the young seedlings. They have learned to stay on the paths or very carefully tiptoe to where they are to weed or plant. They are fascinated by the little trees that have seeded naturally and are being allowed to grow unthreatened by seasonal mowings. Some of them are now almost 4 inches tall.

"Weeds" take on new faces when the gardeners are endeavouring to allow and assist an area to regenerate. Wall lettuce and broad-leaf plantain may appear natural but they are actually European transplants. We have dug up all the ivy and holly seedlings and have planted young firs, ferns, and Oregon grape in an attempt to replace and shade out the cultivated grasses.

Our latest endeavour was to get together with the Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary Society in its 'Wildflower Meadow Rescue' at Broadmead in Saanich. There were plenty of Easter lily bulbs to share among Swan Lake and Beacon Hill Park. Unfortunately, due to heavy rain on several scheduled planting days, it took almost a month before we got them into the ground. The girls can't wait till spring to see them popping up.

Never a day goes by that the gardeners don't learn something. We all can recognize a great number of the plants and know if they belong or if they are intruders. We also feel the effects of the cold breeze off the sea and have learned how that shapes the trees. We have seen how the Southwest Woods are protected by the dense bush ('coastal shrub') along Dallas Road. We see the birds watching us work, such as the little wren which snoops at each plant after it has gone in. It's an enjoyable place for the young people, the parents, and the other adults who come to help.

We appreciate the grant from the Natural History



Friends of Beacon Hill Park. Members of the Cadboro Bay Girl Guide Co. weeding.

Society which got us off to a good start with seedlings obtained at Thimble Farms. Several individuals have also made substantial donations of money and/or plants they have purchased or transplanted from their gardens. We can always use more plants and gardeners. Bring along some trillium bulbs or just yourself and join us in a planting session. We'll try to advertise dates and times. You can also give one of us a call at 592-6659 or 721-0634.

Agnes Lynn and Helen Oldershaw are members of "Friends of Beacon Hill Park", a non-profit organization that is working towards the protection and promotion of the natural and cultural history of the park.

Ethnobotany Books Wanted

I am interested in purchasing books, pamphlets, and papers on the subjects of botany and ethnobotany.

I am particularly interested in B.C. Provincial Handbooks Numbers 24, 34, 36, and 38. If you have these or related books on your shelves that you are no longer using, I would very much appreciate them for my self-guided ethnobotany studies. Please phone collect or write:

Jan Kirkby,
RR1, Pender Island, B.C., V0N 2M0
629-3381

The Friends of Beacon Hill Park

The Friends of Beacon Hill Park is a non-profit society which was incorporated on July 17, 1989 for the purpose of protecting and promoting the natural and cultural history of the park. Along with the Revegetation Project (in the Southeast Woods), we also administered a C.J.S. (Canadian Job Strategy) grant in which two researchers and an artist compiled information and produced illustrations for a book about the park. We are now hoping to obtain a grant to hire a student to conduct tours this summer. (We meet monthly on the second Wednesday in the library of Sir James Douglas School, Fairfield and Moss, at 7:30 pm.

MEETING ANNOUNCEMENTS

Wednesday, March 11, 7:30 pm. Library of Sir James Douglas School (Fairfield and Moss) Program: Discussion and slide show: *The Planting Program in the Natural Areas of Beacon Hill Park.*

Wednesday, April 8, 7:30 pm. Library of Sir James Douglas School (Fairfield and Moss) Program: Discussion and slide show: *The Cultural History of Beacon Hill Park.*

Victoria Christmas Bird Count - December 14, 1991

By Michael G. Shepard

It was an unremarkable count, we thought, until the results were being tabulated. Most parties felt that birding was less than spectacular, but as each group reported in, we realized that the number of species was adding up significantly. Even after count night, a few additions were phoned in, resulting in a surprising and almost unbelievable total, new Canadian record of 152 species, far eclipsing our previous mark of 147!

Probably the most interesting figure I found was that for each of twenty-one species, only a single individual was recorded, showing just how easy it could have been to have a count of less than 140. Our excellent coverage (over 200 observers in up to 68 parties) certainly helped our total.

As for total numbers of individuals, record highs, etc., there were very few highlights. Good effort and great weather produced record numbers of Western screech, great horned and Northern saw-whet owls. The most striking increases were of ring-necked ducks (up 62%) and red-winged blackbirds, up a whopping 437%.

Every count we have a few lows. This year, three species (American wigeon, white-winged scoter and red crossbill) were significantly down in numbers. The wigeon and scoter populations are of particular concern, as the numbers have been relatively low for years.

Thank you everyone for your participation. We'll see you on Saturday, 19 December 1992 for the next Victoria Christmas Bird Count.

Michael Shepard helped organize the Christmas Bird Count this year and hosted the evening wind-up party. Thanks Michael.

Christmas Bird Count, 1991 Participants

Anne Adamson, Bernice and Neil Adderson, Arnold Adlkirchner, Hector Alexander, David Allinson, Gladys and Jerry Anderson, Ida Andrews, Muriel Andrews, Pat Atkinson, Sally Atton, Peter Axhorn, Robin Baird, John Ballard, George Baker, Karen and Richard Barnett, Henry Bauld, Brent Beach, Barbara Begg, Ann Belither, Jo Berthier, Anita Birk, Steven Blumberg, Beryl and Harry Borris, Barbara and Richard Botham, Peter Bricknell, Colleen Bryden, Bev Bullen, Alan Burger, David Campbell, Syd Cannings, Dannie Carsen, Beth Chatwin, Trudy Chatwin,

continued page 16

1991 Christmas Bird Count Data

SPECIES	1	2	3	4	5
Red-throated Loon					
Pacific Loon					
Common Loon					
Yellow-billed Loon					
Pied-billed Grebe	3	7		4	12
Horned Grebe	9				
Red-necked Grebe	1		3		
Eared Grebe					
Western Grebe					
Double-crested Cormorant	1	6	7	6	38
Brandt's Cormorant					
Pelagic Cormorant					
Great Blue Heron	5	2	2		3
Tundra Swan					
Trumpeter Swan	30			11	1
Mute Swan					
Greater White-fronted Goose	1				
Snow Goose					
Canada Goose	364	5		197	
Wood Duck					
Green-winged Teal	118		11	445	21
Mallard	1,503	23	17	285	199
Northern Pintail	285			328	17
Northern Shoveler	1			7	3
Gadwall					
Eurasian Wigeon	7			1	1
American Wigeon	1,272	1	14	249	103
Canvasback				2	
Redhead					
Ring-necked Duck	63	14		117	7
Greater Scaup				3	
Lesser Scaup	1	10			2
Harlequin Duck					
Oldsquaw					
Black Scoter					
Surf Scoter			6		
White-winged Scoter					
Common Goldeneye	2		22		3
Barrow's Goldeneye			12		
Bufflehead	35	6	91	12	54
Hooded Merganser	13	9	7	12	12
Common Merganser	8	1	49	16	33
Red-breasted Merganser					

1. Butchart Gardens/ Northern Highlands
2. Central Highlands
3. Goldstream
4. Thetis Lake/ Hastings Flats
5. Langford Lake

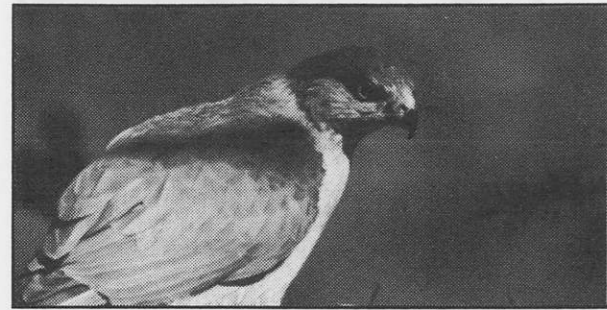
1991 Christmas Bird Count Data

	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	TOTAL	COMMENTS
		19	1				1			2					7		30	
		25	5		2	5	14		8	1			2		47	5	114	
	5	18	13		4	4	6	1	9	9			5		17	1	92	
		2					1										1	fourth record
				3					1		7	2	12	4	2		59	
	5	26	21		25	20	7	4	15	102			7	3	46	16	306	low
	2	35	15		12	35	11	34	12	3			1		147	1	312	
									2	6			18		1		27	
	1	2,147	3						4	1					4		2,160	
	5	11	15	36	37	27	5	3	4	4			25	11	2	18	261	
	1		2		2	2				6			3		4	86	106	
		9	21		45	26	34	5	25	17			3		6	55	246	
	9	11	27	6	9		8	5	5	1	3	1	5	4	8	11	125	
							1								1		1	
	6	9		4								2	1	1	74		121	
											1						20	
												2			1		4	
															1		1	
	62	75	28	167								144	107	71	220		1,440	
														1			1	
	31			7							1		2	156	1,012	4	1,808	all time high
	262	153	7	301	51	360	122	326	40	13	257	813	531	322	3,144	17	8,746	second highest
	4	4		15				1				37	2	52	299		1,044	all time high
	24		8	2				1						34	13		93	
	5	9		5							2	2	10	28	8		69	all time high
		1				2		2	1				1	1			17	
	291	178		95	126	309	122	108	18		539	207	103	142	184	10	4,071	very low
				12									24	4			42	
													1				1	
		2		3				1			47	58	33	285	33		663	all time high
	6		5	8					5			2	2			1	32	
	2			433		3	2						13	8	1		475	
	6		30		10	34	34		46	4					31	90	285	
		27	4		2	1	19	4	220	79			1		205	40	602	
															1		1	
	4	262	38		63	39	57	24	67	27			25		85	41	738	
		13					3	28	10	9			3		9	2	77	very low
	7	62	64	9	30	11	75	2	38	20			7	7	36	8	403	
						14	1										27	
	209	193	164	283	129	86	203	20	23	107	5	1	152	28	251	184	2,236	
	11	8	61	61	70	1	41	6	26	3		2	74	30	16	23	486	all time high
	15	2	24		1		3		4		2	1	134	50	23		366	
	9	109	115		48	14	14	8	20	14			1		54	8	414	

6. Albert Head/ Triangle Mountain
7. Esquimalt Lagoon/ Mill Hill
8. Esquimalt Harbour
9. Portage Inlet/ The Gorge
10. Victoria Harbour
11. Beacon Hill

12. Oak Bay
13. University/ Cadboro Bay
14. 10 Mile Point
15. Gordon Head/ Mount Douglas
16. Swan Lake/ Cedar Hill
17. Blenkinsop/ Panama Flats

18. Elk Lake Cordova Bay
 19. Prospect Lake/ Quick's Bottom
 20. Martindale/ Bear Hill
 - 21-23. Oak Bay Islands.
- Count continues following page



Cooper's Hawk. The Christmas Bird count recorded an all time high for the species.

Dorothy Clark, Carmen Codrin, Aziza Cooper, Darren Copley, Audrey Copping, Christian Cote, Joan Crabbe, Wanda Crawford, James Cuell, Helen Currie, Joyce Danby, Denny Davis, Lyndis Davis, Katie Dawson, Barb deBoer, Brent Diakow, Heidi Dougal, Christine & Warren Drinnan, Art Durkee, Don Eastman, Mike Edgell, Alice Elston, Nonie and Tony Embleton, Shirley Embra, Jennifer Emms, Yorke Edwards, Joanne Farley, Anita Farrar, Blake Ford, David Fraser, Arlene Galloway, Jan Garnett, Jeff Gaskin, Bryan Gates, Tracee Geernaert, Margaret Gillard, Tom Gillespie, Bev Glover, Coryn and Tony Gooch, Dana Griffith, Vera Guernsey, Leah Halsall, Sally Hamill, Barbara and Bruce Hanwell, Wendy Harbord, Andrew Harcombe, Louis Haviland, Connie Hawley, Al and Phyllis Henderson, Dorothy Henderson, Stefan Himmer, Gordon and Gwennie Hooper, Mary Hooper, Bob Houston, Glen Huengaard, Eileen and Jack Husted, Alan and Barbara Irwin, Jason Irwin, Margaret Jeal, Kaye Johannes, Betty Kennedy, Barb and Jim Kirby, Barbara and Robert Lake, Marilyn Lambert, Ann Laws, Tim Leadem, Wally Lee, Don LHeureux, Barb McClintock, Dolena MacCuish, Wally Macgregor, Barb and Mike McGrenere, Margaret and Rob Mackenzie-Grieve, Alan MacLeod, Art McPhalen, Ian McTaggart-Cowan, D. Marvin, Nigel Mathews, June Mayall, Ken Meadows, Cicely Meek, Marilyn Miller, Gail and Stephen Mitchell, Mary-Anne Montgomery, Glen and Judy Moores, Ken Morgan, Betty and Jim Mundy, Peter Nash, Brian Nyberg, Mark Nyhof, Colleen O'Brien, Wayne Osborne, Marie O'Shaughnessy, Calvor Palmateer, David Pearce (co-compiler), Fred Peirce, Sharon Pickthorne, Flo and Jan Pikula, Deb Poltman, Sue Pratt, Leah Ramsay, Colin Rankin, Chris Roberts, Wayne Robertson, Graham Ruxton, Chris Sandham, Donna Sanford, Joy and Ron Satterfield, Bill Savale, Anne Scarfe, John Shaneman, Sandra Shaw, Cynthia Shepard (co-compiler), Michael Shepard (chief compiler - 1241 Broad Street, Victoria, B.C. V8W 2A4), Anne Sheridan, Dan Soberg, Sheila South, Bill Spriggs, Sheila Stuart, John Stewart, David Stirling, Clive Strauss, Jeremy Tatum, Mike Toochin, Mariam Tomlinson, Jane Toms, Margaret Turner, Hank Vander Pol, Margaret Wainwright, Richard and Sally Wait, Eric Walters, Emily and Syd Watts, Debbie Wellwood, Ron Weir, Inez and Tom Weston, Jim Weston, Bruce Whittington, John Willow, Chandra Wong, Freda Woodworth, Mark Yunker.

1991 Christmas Bird Count Data

SPECIES	1	2	3	4	5
Ruddy Duck	10				
Bald Eagle		7	22	2	12
Northern Harrier	1				
Sharp-shinned Hawk		3	1	2	
Cooper's Hawk	3		1	2	2
Northern Goshawk	1				
Red-tailed Hawk	6	1	4	2	5
Golden Eagle			1		2
American Kestrel					
Merlin	2	1			
Pergrine Falcon	1			1	
Ring-necked Pheasant				3	
Blue Grouse				2	
Ruffed Grouse		1			
California Quail	15	10	5		50
Virginia Rail					
American Coot	4				3
Black-bellied Plover					
Killdeer	12				3
Black Oystercatcher					
Greater Yellowlegs					
Whimbrel					
Black Turnstone					
Surfbird					
Sanderling					
Rock Sandpiper					
Dunlin		151	1		
Common Snipe	3				
Bonaparte's Gull					
Mew Gull	1		19	10	12
Ring-billed Gull					
California Gull					
Herring Gull	2		5		
Thayer's Gull	6		250	1	8
Western Gull	2		2		
Glaucous-winged Gull	1,159	21	2,400	50	257
Glaucous Gull			1		
Common Murre					
Pigeon Guillemot					
Marbled Murrelet					
Ancient Murrelet					
Rhinoceros Auklet					
Rock Dove	4			6	20

1. Butchart Gardens/ Northern Highlands
2. Central Highlands
3. Goldstream
4. Thetis Lake/ Hastings Flats
5. Langford Lake

1991 Christmas Bird Count Data

	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	TOTAL	COMMENTS
													1	7			18	
	7	5	1	2	5	3	1	2	5	7	1	1	5	6	12	5	111	
	2	1	3	1			2	1		1					3	1	6	all time high (tied)
	4		1		4		1	2	1		4	2	2	7	6		42	all time high
	5	1								4		1	4	2	8		43	all time high (tied)
					1										2		3	
	2	2		1				1	1	3				1	2		16	
	1		1			1		1	1			1	1	2			9	all time high
												1		2	5		13	all time low (tied)
																	2	
																	1	
	84	24	2		8	2	8		16	6	7	33	10	47	51		378	
													2	1			3	
		17		18			9	1			66	11	386	52	1		568	
		6	18		5										25	1	55	
		38	1	13			2			3		6	14	1	40		133	
		3	1		9	8	7		2							2	32	
		1	2					2									5	
										1							1	
	3	24	19		35	20	4		4							14	123	
			2			1	4										7	
			1		9												10	
			1													10	11	
		151	1												39		191	
											2	2		1	2	2	12	low
															1		1	
	514	830	78	2	8	2	14	25	1,075	10		1	7	8	38	84	2,738	
									1								1	
		2	6									1					9	
	2	2			1					1	3						16	
	25	8	205	6			315						198	2	8	15	1,047	
					1	3										1	9	
	1,575	924	204	254	277	210	138	165	95	89	280	235	242	75	135	3,964	12,749	
																	1	
		36	9		2		1		2						32	321	403	
	2	2	4			3	3	2	9	3					7	25	60	
	1	8	2				2								2	18	33	
																	69	69
	1		2		1				1							1	6	
		42	12	132	120	110	72		13	48	44	15	5	77	33		753	

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 6. Albert Head/ Triangle Mountain | 12. Oak Bay | 18. Elk Lake Cordova Bay |
| 7. Esquimalt Lagoon/ Mill Hill | 13. University/ Cadboro Bay | 19. Prospect Lake/ Quick's Bottom |
| 8. Esquimalt Harbour | 14. 10 Mile Point | 20. Martindale/ Bear Hill |
| 9. Portage Inlet/ The Gorge | 15. Gordon Head/ Mount Douglas | 21-23. Oak Bay Islands. |
| 10. Victoria Harbour | 16. Swan Lake/ Cedar Hill | Count continues following page |
| 11. Beacon Hill | 17. Blenkinsop/ Panama Flats | |

Tropical Birds on McMicking Point

By Yorke Edwards

Victoria is famed as the mildest city in Canada. While ecologists sometimes call its climate "Mediterranean" none yet has called it tropical. But a tropical element usually confined to the tropics does live here, birds wild and free however briefly, active and boisterous when encountered but only occasionally seen.

On a birding walk in Victoria, what could be more stunning than a riveting squawk followed by a

Parrots . . . I see them on the Point more frequently than I see varied thrushes, or Townsend's warblers, or all flycatchers put together.

vividly green and red bird dashing by with all the directness of a jet fighter headed for the horizon? Strange as it may seem, McMicking Point (near Beach and Newport) often has parrots. I see them on the Point more frequently than I see varied thrushes, or Townsend's warblers, or all flycatchers put together.

McMicking Point is no Point Pelee for birds, but it is periodically host to unexpected wanderers, some unusual for Victoria and especially so for a dry and rocky place with scarce trees. A few examples are gray jay, purple martins, yellow-headed blackbirds, northern orioles, black-throated gray warblers and saw-whet owl. My longer list of unusuals contains ten records for parrots.

Birds are wanderers endowed with the magic of flight to travel fast and free. Still, their flights are somewhat influenced by the world below. One terrestrial feature that can deflect their directions of flight is shorelines; and a feature of shorelines that temporarily collects confused bird travellers is points. Extensive water ahead often turns travelling land birds to parallel the shore and, when following along it, a point of land can then confuse and delay them. Suddenly the shoreline below vanishes behind and an about face is the only logical alternative to entering the watery world ahead. Confusion results, and the birds tend to land for a while to reorient.

With harsh cries and dashing flight most of the parrots that arrive on McMicking Point seem to come to our rare spells of hot and rather humid weather. Most were seen in May (3 seen) and July (3 also), often when a hot day or two follows prolonged cool and cloudy weather but I have seen them in June, September and October as well.

continued page 20

1991 Christmas Bird Count Data

SPECIES	1	2	3	4	5
Band-tailed Pigeon		4			
Mourning Dove					
Common Barn-Owl					
Western Screech-Owl	1	1	4		
Great Horned Owl			2		
Northern Pygmy-Owl	1			1	
Barred Owl					
Northern Saw-whet Owl					
Anna's Hummingbird					1
Belted Kingfisher	2	4	1	2	
Red-breasted Sapsucker					
Downy Woodpecker	2	5	2	3	15
Hairy Woodpecker		7	4	1	
Northern Flicker	15	16	5	19	12
Pileated Woodpecker	6	3	1	1	
Eurasian Skylark					
Horned Lark					
Steller's Jay	2	11	16	2	19
Northwestern Crow	589	96	187	1,241	270
Common Raven	53	152	12	16	15
Chestnut-backed Chickadee	166	114	86	154	118
Bushtit	55	1		15	16
Red-breasted Nuthatch	11	22		12	5
Brown Creeper	4	5	7	22	
Bewick's Wren	8	16		5	4
Winter Wren	21	43	49	24	12
Marsh Wren		1		2	1
American Dipper			6		
Golden-crowned Kinglet	205	148	210	326	95
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	5	4	8	3	27
Townsend's Solitaire		2	2		
Hermit Thrush				1	
American Robin	424	1,351	96	219	361
Varied Thrush	13	54	80	17	6
American Pipit					
Cedar Waxwing		1		1	1
Northern Shrike	2			1	1
European Starling	1,745	16	9	475	299
Hutton's Vireo					
Orange-crowned Warbler					
Yellow-rumped Warbler					
Townsend's Warbler			1		
Wilson's Warbler					

1. Butchart Gardens/ Northern Highlands
2. Central Highlands
3. Goldstream
4. Thetis Lake/ Hastings Flats
5. Langford Lake

1991 Christmas Bird Count Data

	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	TOTAL	COMMENTS
		2					1							18			25	
												1					1	
										1			5	8	3		23	all time high
		1						3	2		1	3		14	4		30	all time high
													1	2			3	
														2	2		4	all time high
	3							7	10	2		1					24	
	6	2	10	3	5		4	2	1	3			6	4	4	1	60	
																1	1	
	3	6	3	4	3	2	1	1	2	2	9	5	6	5	7	1	87	
		1									2	1	3	1			20	all time high
	31	21	12	13	5	7	11		13	26	21	15	25	25	24	5	321	
	1							1	3	1			3	1	1		22	
																9	9	
	7	8													3		3	
	57	124	64	95	64	26	40	129	45	34	240	364	1,317	679	514	163	6,338	
	17	2	2	3	7	3			4	14	2	5	18	44	12	1	382	all time high
	88	124	59	28	9	46	22	103	54	55	81	72	211	139	102	4	1,835	all time high
				60	32	35	50	12	67	72	102	65	54	80	42		758	
	5	11	20	5	1	2		4	7	4	2	3	9	17	3		143	
	10	2	1	4	1	6	1	6	5	5	5	8	14	3	8	1	118	
		10	11	9	1	1	7	6	3	9	7	14	17	31	18		177	
	17	25	2	17		5	4	5	7	4	3	6	24	31	17	6	322	
		1												2	2		9	
																	6	
	88	79	19	66	9	33	6	8	28	51	45	61	182	300	68	8	2,035	
	10	1	1	5		5		1	4	8	52	22	24	7	15		202	
	1					1											6	all time high
	1																3	
	353	127	103	104	4	2	23	627	462	298	135	89	235	869	306		6,188	
	20	4		6	1	2		1	10	14	1	2	16	24	5		276	
																	67	67
									3			3					9	
				1										2	2		9	
	319	141	378		77	22	3	109	421	670	180	39	750	244	1,219	3	7,119	
				1				2	1								3	
																	1	
																	13	
																	1	
																	1	fourth record

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 6. Albert Head/ Triangle Mountain | 12. Oak Bay | 18. Elk Lake Cordova Bay |
| 7. Esquimalt Lagoon/ Mill Hill | 13. University/ Cadboro Bay | 19. Prospect Lake/ Quick's Bottom |
| 8. Esquimalt Harbour | 14. 10 Mile Point | 20. Martindale/ Bear Hill |
| 9. Portage Inlet/ The Gorge | 15. Gordon Head/ Mount Douglas | 21-23. Oak Bay Islands. |
| 10. Victoria Harbour | 16. Swan Lake/ Cedar Hill | |
| 11. Beacon Hill | 17. Blenkinsop/ Panama Flats | |

... when a hot spell has people thoughtlessly throwing their windows open to catch a breeze. Out goes Polly.

Most were budgerigars ("budgies," for short, the little "lovebirds" of commerce). I have seen yellow ones four times, one mostly blue, and one in poor light offshore trying to be friendly with swimming gulls near Mouat. Larger kinds were cockatoos (seen twice; crested; grey with yellow and rose on the face), a parakeet (white below, grey above, yellow or whitish head; not seen well) and a large green parrot with a red face. All ten were strong fliers and attracted attention with their cries.

The budgies also showed marked attractions to other birds. In addition to the one wishing he could swim, one joined three quail feeding on the ground in a feeder, another overly friendly one, was chased off vigorously three times by house sparrows and another tried to join a clutter of starlings feeding on a lawn, returning to them several times after being chased off.

Of course, all of these parrots were escaped pets, although most were nervously wild whenever I tried a close approach.

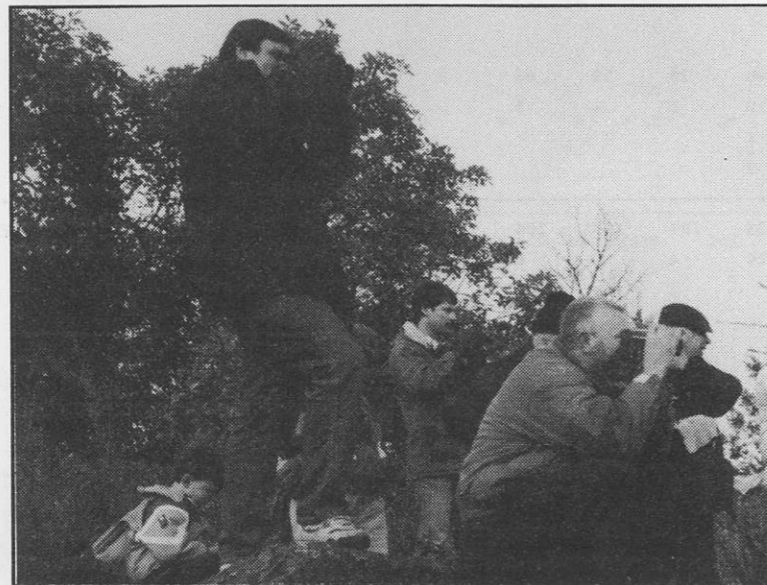
My theory of their peak occurrences in May and July is that parrots given periodic freedoms in a house through winter can escape easily when a hot spell has people thoughtlessly throwing their windows open to catch a breeze. Out goes Polly. Or a nice walk in the sunshine on a finger or shoulder makes escape easier still. Another theory is about the solitary record in June between the peaks in May and July. On average, June seems to have fewer of those rare and isolated hot days of some springs and early summers, so is a month of fewer open windows and sunny walks. In contrast, May can have a few hot days and the last half of July is often the beginning of blue skies smiling down on our annual cloudless drought.

Some years were especially good for parrots. I saw three in 1982 and two in both 1983 and 1985. Singles in 1986 and 1990 complete the list except for the one not recorded but remembered as the distant budgie wanting to swim with the gulls. In twelve years of records, then, there were only seven years (or the unrecorded budgie might make it six) when I failed to meet a parrot on the Point.

So Victoria does host tropical birds that fly unfettered and wild—and no doubt also fly vulnerable to very short survivals. The record indicates that there will be others and like all birders I dream of seeing the best. When hot days open more windows, maybe a big and flashing scarlet macaw will liven up my parrot list for the Point.

1991 Christmas Bird Count Data

SPECIES	1	2	3	4	5
Rufous-sided Towhee	48	26	12	28	21
American Tree Sparrow					
Savannah Sparrow					
Fox Sparrow	9	17	12	6	9
Song Sparrow	76	29	12	18	28
Lincoln's Sparrow					
Swamp Sparrow					
White-throated Sparrow				1	
Golden-crowned Sparrow	28	21	24	25	34
White-crowned Sparrow					4
Dark-eyed Junco	439	226	108	152	424
Snow Bunting					
Red-winged Blackbird	1			46	5
Western Meadowlark	13				
Brewer's Blackbird	20			116	30
Brown-headed Cowbird					
Purple Finch	1	19	5	2	17
House Finch	41		4	44	7
Red Crossbill		2			
Pine Siskin	50	70	2	43	35
American Goldfinch	2				
Evening Grosbeak		1			
House Sparrow		1	14	8	3
TOTAL BIRDS	9,012	2,617	3,933	4,828	2,778
TOTAL SPECIES	70	52	54	63	58



1. Butchart Gardens/ Northern Highlands
2. Central Highlands
3. Goldstream
4. Thetis Lake/ Hastings Flats
5. Langford Lake
6. Albert Head/ Triangle Mountain

1991 Christmas Bird Count Data

	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	TOTAL	COMMENTS
	30	22	20	17	13	9	26	30	32	24	36	35	40	59	53	3	584	
				1													1	third record
	18	23	7	5	3	1	18	7	14	6	36	18	10	19	29	1	268	
	24	76	15	33	24	6	31	12	35	15	36	42	30	54	156	36	788	all time high
												4			13		17	all time high
															1		1	third record
								1				2					4	
	34	152	8	27	22	7	33	37	24	21	123	49	17	59	192		937	all time high
		4		2	2		2	6	5		16	2	2		54		99	
	371	323	157	126	25	35	68	155	78	149	258	192	292	447	376	46	4,447	all time high
																2	2	
			6				3				26	24	4		2,045		2,160	all time high
										4							17	
	1	49													50	381	647	
															1		1	
	7	25		8	2		6	4	14	14	22	7	12	9	23	2	199	second highest
	12	45	9	85	46		26	65	42	120	103	65	68	81	114		977	all time high
			5														7	very low
			67	15	20		12	15		6		73	105	35	134		682	
	8	3		10		61	5	1	1			10		14	21		136	
											5			7			13	
			60	60	86	69		13	86	33	120	330	169	34	16	87	1,189	second highest
	4,752	7,084	2,228	2,703	1,597	1,674	1,785	2,230	3,260	2,360	3,157	3,254	5,525	4,939	12,601	5,438	87,755	
	67	80	68	55	57	53	65	59	69	61	49	63	76	75	104	53	152	

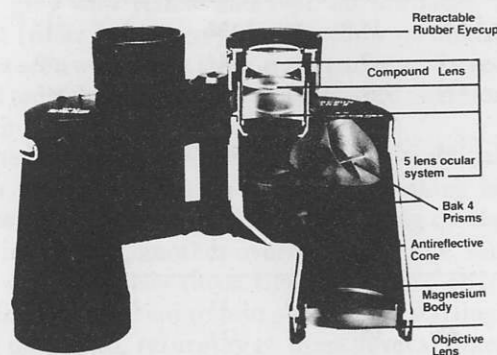


7. Esquimalt Lagoon/ Mill Hill
8. Esquimalt Harbour
9. Portage Inlet/ The Gorge
10. Victoria Harbour
11. Beacon Hill
12. Oak Bay
13. University/ Cadboro Bay
14. 10 Mile Point
15. Gordon Head/ Mount Douglas
16. Swan Lake/ Cedar Hill
17. Blenkinsop/ Panama Flats
18. Elk Lake Cordova Bay
19. Prospect Lake/ Quick's Bottom
20. Martindale/ Bear Hill
- 21-23. Oak Bay Islands.

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the field-naturalist

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A Lesser Whitefront Goose

By Karl Sars

Most of my life I have lived in the country. I love and need to be in nature. December 1989, after having lived on a lovely old farm near the city of Victoria for several years, I decided, for practical reasons, to move into town. I ended up spending two difficult years in this, for me, so harsh environment.

After a lot of soul searching, I made up my mind to change my situation. Soon after I was clear and definite about this, I was offered a job, and home to go with it, back in the country. I felt very excited with this new beginning. Not only was I back amongst the trees and the hills, but also I now had regular contact with some old friends, not only of the human variety, but also of the feathered kind. Birds have been my passion for many years. Particularly close to my heart are ducks, geese and swans. Here I would be right across from one of my favourite winter birdwatching spots, with the, to me, so dear and familiar sounds and sight of waterfowl right at my doorstep.

The evening of my first day at work and in my new home, my black labrador and I went for a stroll towards the water. It was dusk, and the birds were only dark silhouettes against the reflection of the still bright and colourful evening sky. A large flock of mallards moved slowly away when they spotted us, uttering their soft little sounds. Then, suddenly, there was one clear, louder call, with a touch of alarm. I froze instantly. The birdman and explorer in me were on immediate alert. I had something different in front of me, some bird that did not belong here. At the same time, there was a vague memory of having heard the sound before somewhere in my past of working with ornamental waterfowl. I quickly scanned the flock in front of me.

It was pretty dark by now and even had I had my binoculars with me, it would have been difficult to see details. And then I spotted the strange caller. It was right in the midst of the mallards, appearing only slightly larger than the ducks. It moved nervously, uttering its calls: wek-wek wekke-wek! I immediately recognized its shape as that of a goose. And I knew I was looking at something special.

There I was, standing on the shore, feeling just as nervous as the bird on the water! This had to be a rare European vagrant. I was feeling the excitement and frustration of a birdwatcher having a very special bird so close, with the prospect of not being able to positively identify it. I looked and listened a little longer and then rushed home to my books. But as I feared, I did not have enough information.

For the next nine days, off and on, I would hear that distinct little call coming from somewhere across the road. Finally, on December 10, after hearing the bird again, I managed to break away from my work and, armed with my spotting scope, started to scan the flooded fields. Lots of ducks, lots of Canada Geese. Suddenly, there it was! A small goose, by itself, farther up onto the shore. This time I could see the details. Its rapid movements, its small dainty form, its white forehead and even the typical yellow eye ring. This was all I needed. The memory flashed back: a lesser whitefronted goose!



Lesser Whitefront Goose

The memory of that name was followed immediately by the memory of another: Peter Scott, one of my heroes and fellow lover of waterfowl. I have always strongly felt the same love for this particular group of birds as he displayed in his writings and paintings.

Some years ago I decided I wanted to meet Peter and spend some time at his now world-renowned waterfowl collection at Slimbridge, England. It was a pair of lesser whitefronts (also rare in England), that Peter discovered amongst a large flock of regular European whitefronted geese, that made him decide that this was to be the location of his dream bird collection.

On the day that I discovered my lesser whitefront, I too felt that I had just taken my first step to make a dream come true, with my home in the country again and in a situation where I belonged.

SEEING INTO NATURE

A Photography Workshop
with Adele Curtis and Sharron Milstein
April 22 - 29, 1992
at Point-No-Point Ocean Resort
on the southwest coast of Vancouver Island
for information:
Sharron Milstein, Box 8141 Victoria V8W 3R8
Telephone: (604) 361-6393

Capital Regional District Parks Public Programs— March 1992

Sunday, March 1. "Tree of Life." 1:30 pm. Francis/King Regional Park Does a tree stop being important after it dies? What fascinating forest creatures play a role in the tree's life cycle. Join us to find out the answers and much more in this nature drama for children and their adults. Meet at the Forester's Cabin, 1710 Munn Road in Saanich. Seating is limited so plan to arrive early.

Sunday, March 8 "The Plant and People Connection - Native Uses of Plants." 1:00 pm. Witty's Lagoon Regional Park. We often take for granted the ease with which we obtain our food, clothing and medicines. There is a cost for this convenience, as we lose touch with the natural sources from which this bounty stems. On this naturalist-led walk, learn how the First Peoples used their knowledge of their natural surroundings to sustain themselves. Meet at the Witty's Lagoon main parking lot on Metchosin Road.

Sunday, March 15 "Fungus Among Us." 1:00 pm. Witty's Lagoon Regional Park. Some fungi help to build the forest while others shorten the lives of trees. Still other fungi are of marrying algae. Come on this naturalist-led walk to learn more on this fascinating topic. Meet at the Witty's Lagoon main parking lot on Metchosin Road.

Thursday, March 19 Through Sunday, March 22 "Fannin Days." Reeson Regional Park (Foot of Yates St. in Victoria). As part of the Royal B. C. Museum's Fannin Days, CRD Parks will be presenting a special interpretive display of marine artifacts, and natural history related to First Nations involvement in marine transportation of South Vancouver Island. Canoe rides from the Park area will be provided by the Victoria Native Friendship Centre.

Sunday, March 29 "Mystery Walk at Bear Hill." 1:00 pm. Bear Hill Regional Park. With guest naturalist Jim Mulchinock. For details phone 474-PARK.

CRD Parks Update: A reminder about the upcoming Nature Photography Workshop with award-winning photographer Adele Curtis. Reserve a space now so you won't be disappointed, as enrolment is limited. There will be two separate workshops, one in early spring (April 3rd through 5th, Friday evening to Sunday afternoon) and another in late spring, (May 22nd through 30th). For more information call 478-3344.

NATURE HOUSE HOURS:
Francis/King Regional Park (newly renovated)
1710 Munn Road, in Saanich.
Open Hours: Noon - 4:00 pm,
Saturdays, Sundays and Holiday Mondays.

Witty's Lagoon Regional Park
Nature House is closed until further notice.

For details on CRD Parks Programs, call 474-PARK (7275) - 24 hour recorded information line.

Martindale Flats -- We Did It!

By Darren R. Copley & Eric L. Walters

The Parks & Conservation Committee (PCC) is proud to announce the completion of one year of our Martindale Flats Wildlife Survey. Thanks to the many volunteers from the Victoria Natural History Society (VNHS), the survey has been a wonderful success. It has given the VNHS the ability to document the importance of the area to waterfowl, raptors, Western meadowlarks and Eurasian skylarks.

HISTORY OF THE STUDY: The study began in November of 1990 in order to allow the PCC to make informed submissions regarding land use of the area. The area is located on the Saanich Peninsula on the East side of the Pat Bay Highway (see map). Each Saturday for an entire year, three volunteer observers met at the Barn Market at 8:00 am and surveyed one of three areas and recorded all the wildlife in each area. The surveys usually lasted about two hours and the information was recorded on survey forms. The following week, a different set of volunteers was involved.

FUTURE PLANS: The PCC has decided to continue the study in an effort to obtain more data. This will allow us to fill in some of the gaps when some survey weeks were missed because of a lack of volunteers. We have decided to change the format of the study to both improve the number of weeks being surveyed as well as standardizing the effort. This will be accomplished in the following manner:

a) Leaders for each week will be selected and those leaders will be responsible for finding two other people to aid in the survey. Of course, any single individuals that are interested would be forwarded to the pertinent leader for the week involved. The leaders will be asked to volunteer for a prescribed week each month if possible (eg. Jane Smith will be responsible for the second Saturday of each month).

b) New maps will be issued for each of the three areas to explain the route to be travelled. This will keep the effort more consistent for different individuals. This will mean that everyone taking part in the survey each week will be following the same path.

WHAT CAN YOU DO? The PCC would like to see volunteers step forward as either leaders for a particular week or as individuals willing to help out occasionally. It takes a lot of time to organize volunteers so if you're willing to help out, please contact the coordinators: Darren Copley 479-9879; Eric Walters 383-8812; Dave Fraser 479-0016. If you don't feel that you know your birds well enough to take part then why not go along with someone that does and improve your birding skills. This is not supposed to be work but rather, a fun excuse to go birding; get some exercise; and help the wildlife of the area. If you still feel you can't possibly assist with the survey, you can do something else.

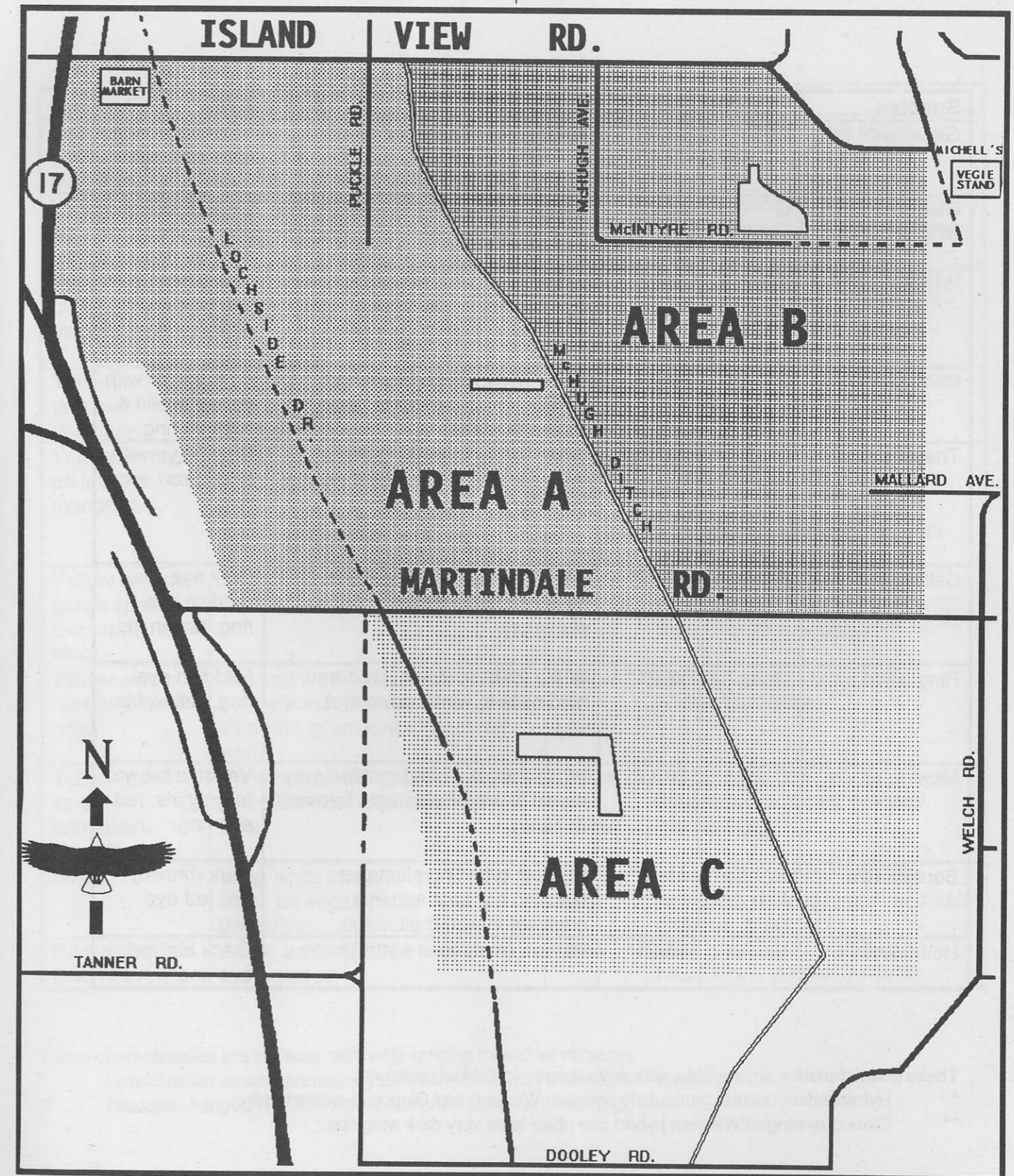
HELPING OUR FARMERS: The farmers on Vancouver Island are experiencing problems and many fields of vegetables are being left to rot because there is a limited market for them. What is happening in a lot of cases is that the farmer must sell the land in order to survive. Many of the fields in our area provide excellent habitat for waterfowl like trumpeter swans, mallards, American wigeons, Northern pintails, green-winged

teals which, in turn, attract other species like peregrine falcons and bald eagles. These fields are also important for other species of concern such as Western meadowlarks and Eurasian skylarks. We can do our part to "protect" the farmers and the

birds by buying local produce. Another way to help is to encourage your grocer to sell local produce. We have to do our part to protect what little waterfowl habitat is left on Vancouver Island. Let's make a difference -- please do your part!



L. Reservoir, Martindale Flats. Photo: Tony Embleton.



Martindale Flats Wildlife Survey Map.

Adult Gulls in Victoria

(Credit to Mike Sheppard)

Species	F/C/U/R	Size	Head	Eyes
Glaucous	R	26-32"	White.	Yellow eye ring, light coloured eye.
Glaucous-winged	C	24-27"	White (clouded or streaked in winter), egg-shaped.	Light brown or silvery eyes, red eye ring.
Western	U	24-27"	White.	Yellowish-grey iris, yellowish-pink eye ring.
Herring	U	22 -26"	White (clouded and streaked grey-brown, heaviest at neck, in winter plumage).	Pale yellow with yellow eyelid & red eye ring.
Thayer's	C	22 -25"	White (brownish-grey streaks, heaviest at nape and hind neck, in winter).	Brown eye with purple-red eye ring.
California	F	17-22"	White (conspicuous neckline of dusky spots on nape in winter plumage).	Dark eye - reddish eye ring, brown iris.
Ring-billed	U	18-21"	White (dark spots on nape and hind neck in winter plumage).	Reddish eye ring, yellow iris.
Mew	C	14-17"	White (streaked and mottled grey-brown in winter plumage, heaviest at nape).	Variable brown to grey iris, red eye ring.
Bonaparte's	C	11-14"	Black in breeding plumage; blackish ear spot and eye crescent in winter plumage.	Dark (brown) iris, red eye ring.
Heerman's	U	15-21"	Whitish (mottled in winter).	Black iris, red eye ring.

These characteristics are variable, with wide-ranging individual variation.

* Hybridization occurs, particularly between Western and Glaucous-winged gulls.

** Glaucous-winged/Western hybrid can often have very dark wing tips.

Adult Gulls in Victoria

Bill	Wing Tips	Legs	Remarks
Yellow, red spot on lower mandible.	White, unmarked primaries.	Flesh	Very pale mantle; flat crown; white back.
Yellow, red spot on lower mandible.	Grey spots; grey primaries with white windows near tip of each feather.	Flesh.	Most common gull in Victoria area. Heavy-bodied; large, heavy bill.*
Yellow, red spot on lower mandible.	Black with small, white tips blending into dark mantle.	Flesh.	Slate-coloured back and wings contrasting to snowy underparts. Larger and thicker set than Herring.*
Yellow, red spot on lower mandible.	Black upper and lower surface with white spots on outer two primaries.	Flesh.	This large gull has a combination of black wing tips and flesh-coloured legs.**
Yellow, red spot on lower mandible.	Small, black tips and larger white windows than Herring's.	Bright pink.	Mantle slightly darker grey than Herring's. Grey tongue on two outermost primaries reaches white tip. Bill shorter, finer than Herring.
Yellow with red gonys spot overlapped by black.	Black with white spots; outermost primary has long, all-white tip.	Greenish yellow.	Gape orange to reddish; round head; upright stance. More petite than Glaucous-winged or Herring.
Yellow with complete black ring.	Two outer primaries have white sub-terminal spot; next four show diminishing amount of black with white.	Yellowish green.	Reddish gape. Larger, heavier-bodied than Mew.
Yellow-green, small unmarked, ploverlike.	Primaries black-tipped with white - two outermost with large white spot.	Greenish yellow.	Round head, thin bill, large eyes. Elegant proportions; graceful, buoyant flight.
Black.	Long white triangle, edged with black on edge of outermost primaries.	Orange-red.	Black head in summer; white head with dark ear patch and pale pink feet in winter.
Red, short, thin. Often red/black.	Black, unmarked tips - white trailing edge.	Black.	Dark grey mantle - snow white head, black tail with white tip.

These characteristics are variable, with wide-ranging individual variation.

* Hybridization occurs, particularly between Western and Glaucous-winged gulls.

** Glaucous-winged/Western hybrid can often have very dark wing tips.

Welcome to New Members

- November 27 Margaret Bowen of Westbury Road: interested in birds and photography.
- November 27 Sharon Speevak and Brian Clemens from Nanaimo.
- December 7 John Stewart of Seaforth Street: is a birdwatcher.
- December 7 Sheila Mattson of Obed Avenue: enjoys all aspects of natural history.
- December 7 Mary Gelpke of Regents Place: enjoys flowers.
- December 9 R. De Wit of Dooley Road: is a birdwatcher.
- December 10 Carol Berryman of Metchosin Road: enjoys birding.
- December 18 Bernice and Neil Adderson, of Burdette Ave: are interested in birds and hiking.
- December 19 Wally Lee of Ash Road: a gift from Andrea Lee.
- December 23 Margot Ormiston of Begbie Street.
- December 27 Blair Humphrey and Diana Rowles of May street.
- December 30 H. D. Myers of Esquimalt Road: studies birds and local history.
- January 2 Mike Carson of Rithetwood Drive.
- January 2 Arne Laurson, of Carnarvon Street: studies botany and geology.
- January 7 Terry Eskes and Chris Trehearne of Gorge Road East: are interested in birds and native flora.
- January 9 Mrs. Pat Derry of Karger Terrace: is a novice birder and enjoys hiking.
- January 9 Betty N. Daniel of Kays Road: likes birding and field trips.
- January 9 Jim Mason of Wollastom Street.
- January 14 Joyce Clearihue of Broughton Street.
- January 14 David Allinson of Karger Terrace: is a birdwatcher and

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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.

- January 20 interested in conservation. Sally Atton of Doyle Road: likes birds, owls in particular.
- January 21 Kathy Stavrum of Gillespie Road: enjoys birding and wildflowers.
- January 21 Wendy and Michael Chutter of Triest Crescent: enjoy birding.
- January 22 Gordon Fawcett of Scottswood Close: is interested in birds and astronomy.
- January 22 G. Burrage of Colleen Court.
- January 22 Tracy Huras and family of Interurban Road.
- January 22 Glen Hvenegaard of Sinclair Road: enjoys birding field trips.
- January 22 Andy and Marilyn Buhler of Dingley Dell: are interested in birds and botany.
- January 22 George Baker of Saul Street: is a novice birder.

The Parks & Conservation Committee: A Team That Makes A Difference!

By Eric L. Walters & Darren R. Copley

The Parks & Conservation Committee (PCC) has begun the year with a bang, as the volunteers continue to join our team. Thanks to the dedication of Tony Embleton, who has taken the committee from a few volunteers to the present group of energetic individuals, we now have a renewed leadership for 1992.

Special mention must also go out to our former secretary, Gladys Anderson; Margaret Wainwright, as coordinator of the Observer Program; Jerry and Gladys Anderson, for their efforts on the Martindale Flats project; Connie Hawley, for her work with the F.B.C.N.; Joel Ussery, for his work on local issues; and the many other people working hard for the PCC.

The PCC works on behalf of the Victoria Natural History Society (VNHS) in its endeavour to protect the integrity of the habitat critical to the survival of our local flora and fauna. The PCC is a strong voice for the VNHS but it relies on input from its members. If you have any input into the focus of the PCC, we invite your comments.

Despite the fact that we are the largest of any of the VNHS's committees, we are still limited in our efforts by our size. We encourage all those that feel a need to protect the environment to help with our efforts. All are welcome to attend our monthly meetings held the third Wednesday of each month at the Swan Lake Nature House at 7:30 pm. By attending our meeting does not mean a life-long commitment but rather a way for our members to see what goes on behind-the-scenes. If you want to become involved with a bunch of energetic, positive, exciting people then why not come out and be a part of our team. For further information, contact Tony Embleton (Chair) at 595-6812.

BOOK REVIEW

A Guide to the Birds of Costa Rica (1989)
By F. Gary Stiles and Alexander F. Skutch,
Illustrated By Dana Gardner

A Guide to The Birds of Thailand (Late 1991)
By Boonsong Lekagul and Philip D. Round

Reviewed by Keith Taylor

A Guide to the Birds of Costa Rica (1989)

At first glance it is obvious why this gargantuan volume was not titled *A Field Guide to the Birds of Costa Rica*. The poor-quality paper, large dimensions and 510 pages create a cumbersome weight in the field. The introduction, though very informative, should have been briefer and throughout the long text accompanying each species, the nesting and range information could have been illuminated; the ranges' reduced to easy-to-interpret maps. The plates are inconveniently grouped centrally in the book causing one to look elsewhere in the section on habitats (but the poor-quality black-and-white photographs look like they have been xeroxed). A briefer sector with colour photos could create fantasies within the reader's mind: a picture of an exotic forest usually entices one to see a new country as much as its' birds. The bird-finding section is certainly an afterthought and a waste of space (especially with *A Birders Guide to Costa Rica* on the market).

The whole format of this guide is very poor...especially lacking range maps.

The written descriptions given by the authors are good but seldom definitive on the more difficult species (Stiles' interest is obviously oriented more toward breeding biology and behaviour than to field-identification). However, the written descriptions of songs and calls are easy to interpret in the field.

Although oversimplified, the plates by Dana Gardner are generally pleasantly drawn showing proper "jizz". The colours are quite accurate. I would like to see more detail and more definitive field-marks on the more difficult species. Although the illustrations may be adequate for the more experienced birder, others may find the shorebirds, woodcreepers and flycatchers difficult.

The scrub flycatcher drawing stands-out as a terrible representation of that species! More illustrations of juvenile plumages are needed (visitors have attributed the orange-rumped juvenile scarlet-rumped cacique as a new species to Costa Rica).

Costa Rica is the number-four destination in the world for birders, and rightfully so! 855 species are found in a land-mass the size of Vancouver Island; more than found anywhere else in the world in a comparable area. The country has a high standard of health, is stable economically and perfectly safe.

As a major destination it deserves a better field guide. Many birders visiting Costa Rica tear out the plates and leave the greater volume of the text in their hotel rooms and often carry a copy of *A Guide to the Birds of Columbia* by Hilty and Brown for its excellent illustrations by (the best

bird illustrator in the world) Guy Tudor.

However, as the only "book-in-town", a copy of *A Guide to the Birds of Costa Rica* is an indispensable tool for identifying the birds there and many will find it adequate until a more compact book comes our way.

A Guide to The Birds of Thailand (Late 1991)

In comparison to the Costa Rica Guide, *A Guide to the Birds of Thailand* has an excellent format. The 460 pages are printed on high-quality paper and, although it has 915 species between its' covers, it is much thinner. Each plate has the text placed opposite (or nearly so) and is accompanied by a range map (much like the *National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America*). The introduction is informative but brief. There are two excellent-quality colour photographs of two habitat types: enticing, there should have been several more.

Phil Round is one of the foremost field-men in the world and unparalleled in his knowledge of Thai birds. His written descriptions complement the high-quality illustrations by Kamol Komolphalin and Mongkol Wongkalasin. The authors' descriptions are often definitive and follow the most up-to-date information on the separation of the most difficult species.

Not only are comparisons made of lengths of primary-tail-tertials on various species but also of plumages which are actually illustrated a few times (this must be a milestone for a country field guide!)

It is difficult to fault the plates accompanying this book: these are done part-time in the evenings after a full-time day job! I find some drawings of the birds too thin (i.e. woodpeckers) and often standing birds appear off-balance (tilted towards their tails). A few illustrations are too small on the page leaving much white-paper that could have been filled with a larger drawing.


Many birds appear darker or less colourful than in life; many greys appear too blue (i.e. shorebirds). Two illustrations that stand-out as poor are the first-winter herring gull and great knot (which does not illustrate the primary-protection properly etc.). Interestingly, the text on separation of great reed-warbler and clamorous reed-warbler is (inconsistently) brief and does not mention the difference in primary lengths between the two species, but is illustrated correctly.

Thailand has been a major destination for British birders for a number of years. Although the airfare is somewhat expensive for North Americans, the low cost of food and (relatively) inexpensive accommodations should entice birders to this exotic Oriental region. With an excellent field guide and soon to be released *A Birders Guide to Thailand*, birding should be a breeze.

Congratulations! to the authors and artists of *A Guide to the Birds of Thailand*. This book should stand on its' own for a number of years. Everyone should own a copy of this book to help identify any palaeartic vagrant that could show in the Victoria area (the *A Field Guide to the Birds of Japan* text Wild Bird Society of Japan is illustrated so poorly that few of the birds are even recognizable!).


Keith Taylor is a local wildlife artist and author of "*A Birders Guide to Vancouver Island*."

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.

MARCH EVENTS

 **Sunday, March 1**
Seawatch at Clover Point. Beginning 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 Victoria Natural History Society (VNHS) are involved in the counts at Clover Point. We are conducting dawn to dusk watches the first Sunday of each month year round. If you can volunteer a minimum of one hour (even if for only one count) as a prime observer or a recorder, please call Michael Shepard at 388-4227 or Mary-Anne Montgomery at 380-7152 to sign up. A summary of each count will be made available to participants and other interested persons.

Tuesday, March 3.
Board of Directors' Meeting, 7:30 pm Clifford Carl Reading Room, Cunningham Building, University of Victoria (UVIC).

Saturday, March 7
Botany field trip. As part of the revived Botany Night series, the botany study group will be having outings every other Saturday. Anyone interested in learning about plants is welcome to come along. Adolf Ceska (477-1211) is heading up the botany group. For details of upcoming walks, check the Events Tape at 479-2054.

Tuesday, March 10
Annual General Meeting. 7:30 pm Begbie 159. UVIC. Issues include the fee increase and the bylaw change as outlined on page 9 of the Jan/Feb Naturalist. For the program, Dave Fraser and Leah Ramsay present Quiche to Quetzals. This illustrated show looks at the fascinating people, habitats and wildlife of Guatemala. A must see for those planning to travel to Central America and for those who are not.

Saturday, March 14
Birdwatching trip to Witty's Lagoon. Meet at Witty's Lagoon Parking Lot at 9:00 a.m. Leader David Allinson (478-0457)


Tuesday, March 17.
Botany night. 7:30 pm Swan Lake Nature Centre. If you are interested in the plant kingdom, do come to this evening hosted by Adolf Ceska. You are sure to find something of interest. For details contact the Events Tape or Adolf.

Saturday, March 21
Botany outing: Thetis Lake Park cleanup. The botany group plans to participate in this cleaning effort and invites all VNHS members to come and help. Come to the park by 10:00 a.m. with work gloves in hand and several garbage bags. Can botanists pull out more garbage per capita than birders? Come out and settle this question.

Wednesday, March 25
Birders' night. 7:30 pm Begbie 159. University of Victoria (UVIC). Fred Sharpe, research biologist with the US Park Service, will propose a cooperative Hawk Watch Project for Southern Vancouver Island and the Olympic Peninsula of Washington State in his talk entitled "Hawk's Eye View." Learn how to contribute to the project or at least learn when and where to observe the significant migration of raptors to and from Vancouver Island. Everyone welcome. Bring a friend and your coffee mug.

Saturday, March 28
Birding at Island View Beach and Martindale Flats. Join Brent Diakow for a look at one of Victoria's best birding areas. Meet at Island View Beach parking lot at 8:30 a.m.. For further information call Brent at 656-3190

APRIL EVENTS

 **Saturday, April 4.**
Botany field trip. Check Events tape (479-2054) for details

Saturday, April 4
Spring hawk watch at Beechy Head. Spring is the time when a huge movement of raptors occurs near Cape Flattery, Washington. The raptor monitoring project of the VNHS and WIGS begun last fall continues by taking us to Beechy Head for a day long watch. If you would like to participate for a few hours, please call Michael Shepard (388-4227)

Sunday, April 5
Seawatch at Clover Point. See description for March 1

Tuesday, April 7
Board of Directors' Meeting, 7:30 pm Clifford Carl Reading Room, Cunningham Building, UVIC.

Saturday, April 11
Birdwatching trip to Beacon Hill Park. Meet at Children's Zoo Parking Lot at 9:00 a.m. We will search for early migrants. Leader David Allinson (478-0457).

Tuesday, April 14
General Meeting. 7:30 pm Begbie 159 UVIC. Cris Guppie will present a show on Butterflies, the jewels of the insect world.

Saturday, April 18
Botany field trip. Check Events tape (479-2054) for details.

Tuesday, April 21
Botany night, 7:30 pm Swan Lake Nature Centre. Hosted by Adolf Ceska (477-1211).

Wednesday April 22
Birders' night, 7:30 pm Begbie 159. UVIC. The Natural History and Birds of the Lake Baikal Region of the Russian Republic will be the subject of a slide illustrated talk by Michael Tripp, formerly of San Francisco State University and now residing in Victoria. Michael has worked with Russian park officials for the past 2 years. Everyone Welcome. Bring a friend and your coffee mug.

Saturday, April 25
Birdwatching trip to Gowland Range. Meet at Helmcken Park'n'Ride at 9:00 a.m. Spring migration will be arriving. Bring hiking boots, water and lunch. Leader David Allinson (478-0457).

EARLY MAY EVENTS


 **Saturday, May 2**
Botany field trip. Check Events tape (479-2054) for details

Saturday May 2
Birding in the Cowichan Valley. Meet David Alcroft (743-3487) at 9:00 a.m. at the Aitken and Fraser Store in Shawnigan Lake junction of Shawnigan Lake Road and the Shawnigan-Mill Bay Road.

Sunday, May 3
Seawatch at Clover Point. See Description for March 1.

Saturday, May 9.
Second annual spring bird count. Get out the bird tapes, the walking shoes and help with this migrating bird census. The count is from dawn until noon. A Barbecue will be held at 6:00 pm at Goldstream Park. If you wish to participate, contact David Pearce at 477-2664. Further details will be in the May/June magazine.

BULLETIN BOARD

 **For Sale**
National Geographic Field Guide to Birds, Naturalist

Guide to the Victoria Region & Victoria Area Bird Checklists for sale by contacting Lyndis Davis at 477-9952.

Volunteers
The Martindale Survey is being extended and volunteers are needed for surveys on Saturday mornings 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Contact Darren Copley (479-9879) or Eric Walters (385-0927). Congratulations to Tom Gillespie who won the 1991 survey participants' draw for a bird feeder.

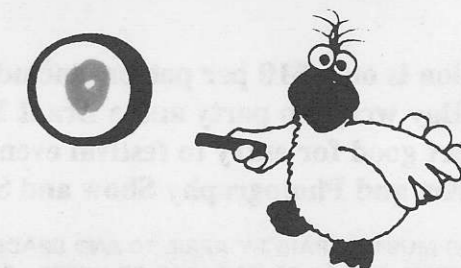
Hawk Sighting Reports Wanted
Spring is the time when a huge movement of raptors occurs near Cape Flattery, Washington. No significant movement has yet been detected on the B.C. Coast. Keep a watch out wherever you are this spring, and please report your sightings of any flocks to Michael Shepard (388-4227).

Slide Photographers
Our 1992 program has begun. Meetings incorporate slide viewing, speakers, educational programs, field trips and member participation. Club meetings first and third Tuesdays of each month, 8:00 pm at Windsor Park Pavilion, Oak Bay. Colour Film Study Group. 385-1640. For further information please contact: W. Wayne Maloff, President, Greater Victoria Colour Film Study Group - 385-1640.

INTERPRETIVE POSITIONS

In anticipation of having vacancies for Seasonal Naturalists from May - September 1992, Capital Regional District Parks is currently accepting applications. For further details contact: Lloyd Rushton, Programs Coordinator, CRD Parks, 478-3344.

Seeing spots?



Do you have an orange dot in this circle? If so, you have not paid your dues prior to the January 1, 1992 deadline, and you have already received two free copies of the *Naturalist*. To ensure that you receive the next issue of the magazine and continue your membership in the Society, please forward your dues immediately to Box 5220, Stn. B., Victoria, B.C., V8R 6N4.

DON'T GET LEFT OFF THE LIST!

COUNT YOURSELF IN FOR BRANT FESTIVAL 92'S BIG DAY BIRDING COMPETITION

April 11, 1992 5 A.M. - 3 P.M.

Parksville-Qualicum Beach area (on Vancouver Island)

This first-time event will appeal to all birders -- pro and novice alike.

The objective: registered birders will scour the Parksville-Qualicum area attempting to see or hear more birds than any other team -- all the while having a great time.

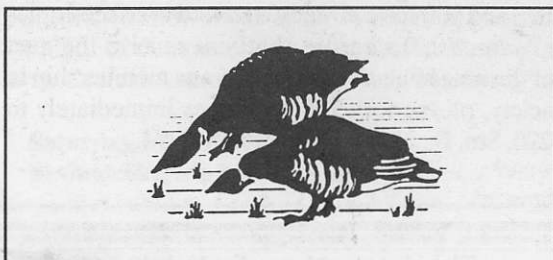
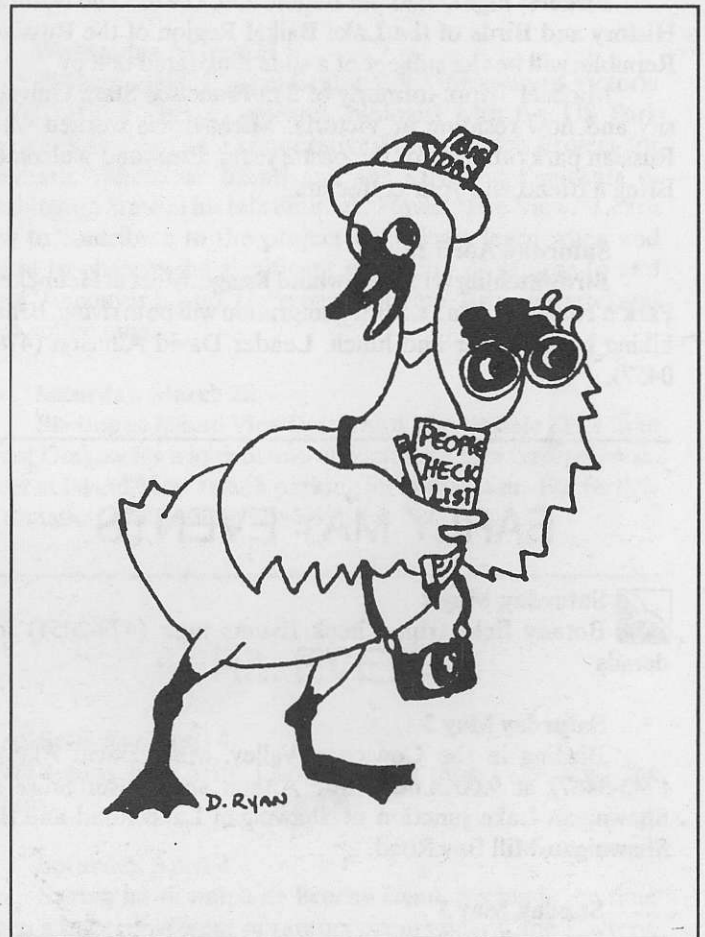
Meet and compete with the *Birds of B.C.* authors and B.C.'s top wildlife artists. Winners will have their names inscribed on the Brant Festival Big Day trophy and take home keeper trophies.

Participants will also be eligible for draw prizes including field glasses supplied by Bausch and Lomb Canada, Sierra Design Gore-Tex outdoor wear and packs provided by Pacific Trekking of Victoria and field equipment sponsored by Victoria's Field Naturalist.

Registration is only \$10 per person, including a post-Big Day wrap up party and a Brant Festival 92 Passport good for entry to festival events such as the Western Canada Carving Competition, Wildlife Art and Photography Show and Sale and Natural History Presentations.

ENTRY FEES MUST BE PAID BY APRIL 10 AND SPACE IS LIMITED SO REGISTER NOW. CALL THE BRANT FESTIVAL OFFICE AT 248-4117 OR WRITE : BRANT FESTIVAL BIG DAY, BOX 99, PARKSVILLE, BC V9P 2G3

STAY THE WEEKEND AND CATCH ALL THE EVENTS AT SUPER, NATURAL BRANT FESTIVAL 92.



Parksville-Qualicum Beach is 150 kilometers north of Victoria. For details on special accommodation packages contact the Brant Festival Office at 248-4117.