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The Victoria NATURALIST

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Chair, Publications Committee: Kim Nemrava
Editor: Warren Drinnan, Work - 361-3543, Home - 652-9618
Associate Editors: Diana Jolly, 388-4259; Jim Mulchinock, 652-7952
Editorial Team: Bev Glover, Richard Watts, Alan Burger, Dannie Carsen
Advertising:
Distribution: Lyndis Davis, Connie Hawley, Tom Gillespie
Desktop Publishing: Robert Allington, Office - 370-5110, Home - 595-7803, Fax - 370-1305
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 2284 Cooperidge Drive, Saanichton, B.C. V0S 1M0.
 or 2nd Floor, 525 Head St., Victoria, B.C. V9A 5S1
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Members are encouraged to submit articles, field trip reports, birding and botany notes, and book reviews with photographs or illustrations if possible. Photographs of natural history are appreciated along with documentation of location, species names and a date. Please label your submission with your name, address, and phone number and provide a title. We will accept and use copy in almost any legible form but we encourage submission of typed, double-spaced copy or an IBM compatible word processing file on a 360K 5.25" diskette plus printed output. Having copy submitted on diskette saves a lot of time and work for the publications group and we really appreciate the help. If you have an obscure or very old word processing program, call the editor, Warren Drinnan, at 361-3543 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.

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OUR COVER

*"The monarch oak, the patriarch of trees,
 springs rising up then spreads by slow degrees.
 One hundred years he grows, one more he stays
 supreme in state, then in one more decays"*

(WORDS PARAPHRASED FROM DRYDEN).

Our Garry oaks are longer-lived than Dryden's English oaks. Many are more than 400 years old while in Washington and Oregon, at the centre of the Garry oak's range, there are individuals which are 700 years old and still living on. Majesty which deserves to be preserved.

For those who would like to plant an acorn to help ensure the future of the species, Joyce Lee, a founding member of the Garry Oak Meadow Society, provides growing instructions for acorns on Page 4.

The cover photo was taken by *Victoria Naturalist* editorial team member, Bev Glover.



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Plant an Acorn for Tomorrow!

By Joyce Lee

Acorns are falling and this is the time to plant for the future. A beautiful native Garry Oak will be yours for the effort! Some planting instructions from the California Oak Foundation are given for those who want to help preserve this endangered habitat.

Planting directly on the site where the acorn was found is the very best method to ensure success. Select a spot with good drainage, dig a hole 10" in diameter and four to five inches deep. Break apart any hard or compacted soil with a shovel. Place one gram (approximately one teaspoon) of nitrogen fertilizer in the bottom of the hole and replace the soil, tapping it down and leaving a one to three inch depression.

Select firm, heavy acorns without weevil holes. Sort by placing acorns in water, selecting only the "sinkers".

Place six to ten acorns in the depression, tips down or sideways. Cover with a mix of leaf mould/compost/soil and water thoroughly. [Henry Neizen, who has been successful in growing Garry oaks also recommends that the acorns not be placed directly on the soil because they tend to rot. He uses oak leaves or peat moss as a bedding.] Keep lightly watered and weed frequently. Thin seedlings to two or three by the end of the first season and to one by the third year.

Grow an oak today and help to restore a part of our lost natural heritage. For more information please call Joyce Lee at 386-3785 or Henry Niezen at 477-9415.

Oak Notes

Oaks are among a group of plants which are known as monoecious, which means that both male catkins and female flowers are found on the same individual plant. Flowers are wind-pollinated and acorns mature and fall in the same year.

Our round plump pointed native Garry oak acorns do not require a period of dormancy and generally germinate immediately after dropping. In fact, emerging roots are visible on some acorns when they hit the ground.

Fall is a wonderful time to appreciate our very own oaks. Enjoy your walks and take time to look at the bark, leaves and acorns. Discover the Garry oak. It is Special to all of us in Canada.

If you have a special oak habitat which you want added to the Garry oak mapping and inventory project, please call 381-2785 or 356-0929.

Joyce Lee is a founding member of the Garry Oak Meadow Society and involved in many natural history events in the area.



The foliage of the Garry Oak. (Photo: Bev Glover)

Quick's Bottom Bird Blind

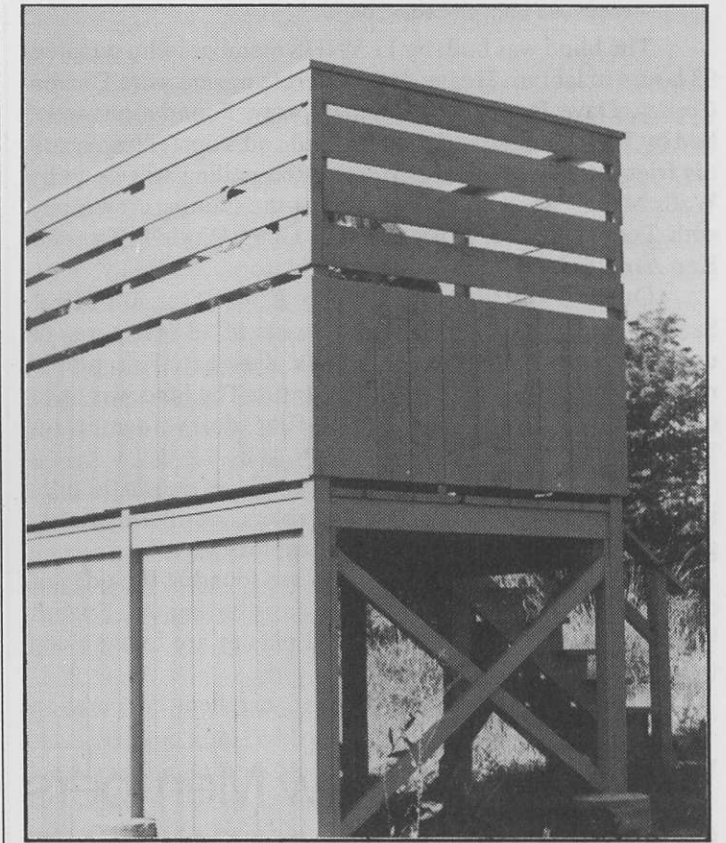
By Shirley Embra

Everyone benefits when naturalists, local governments and concerned citizens cooperate to protect unique habitats. The recently completed bird blind at Quick's Bottom is a happy illustration of the kind of joint effort that can enhance protected areas.

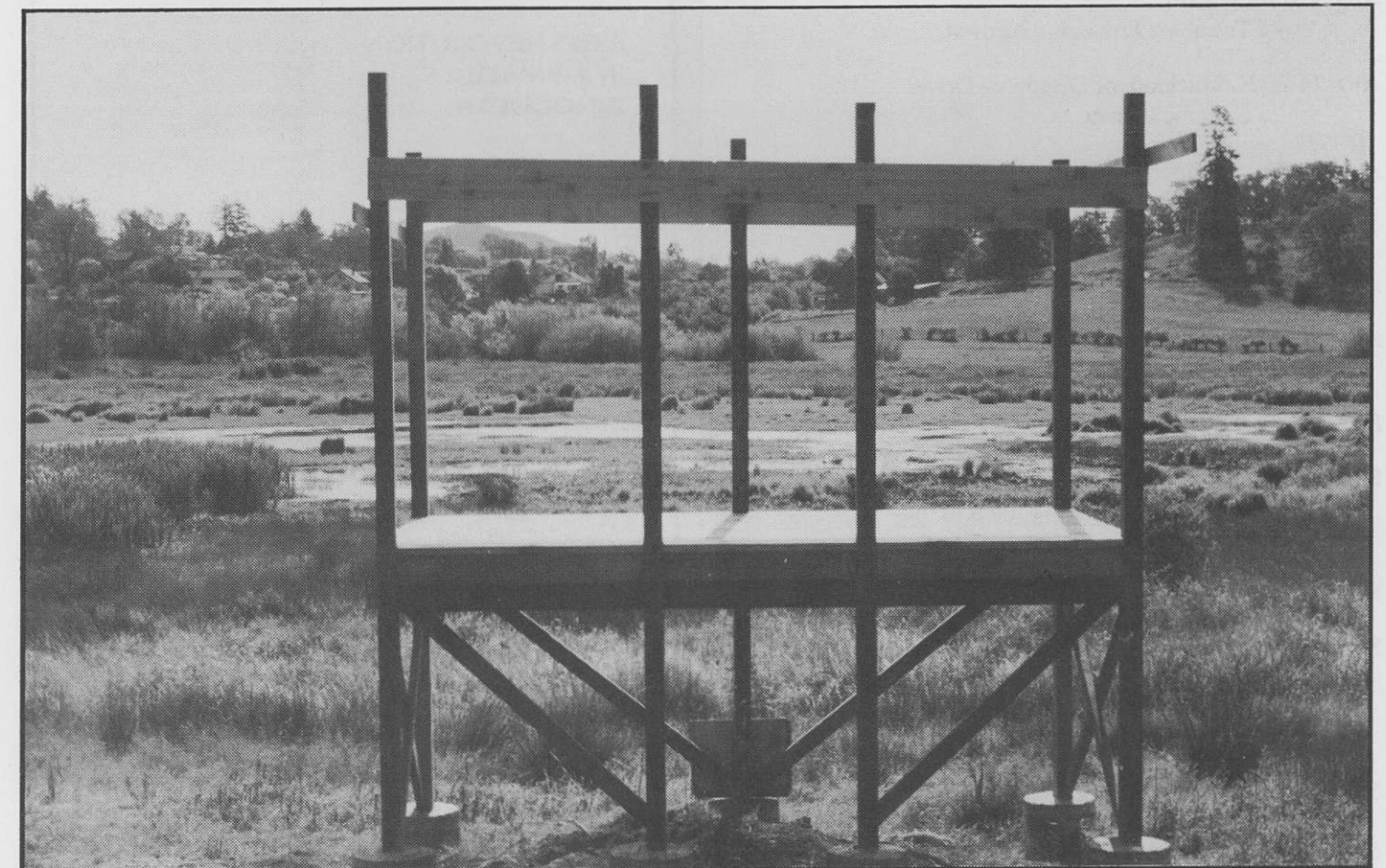
Saanich Mayor Murray Coell, Victoria Natural History Society president Wally Macgregor and VNHS member Tom Gillespie, who supervised construction, were on hand when the blind was officially turned over to Saanich on September 3rd.

The need for a new blind at Quick's Bottom was suggested by the Parks and Conservation Committee, chaired by Tony Embleton. Mrs. Evelyn Duke, a long-time Victoria resident with a special interest in natural history, contributed to the cost of most of the materials. She was delighted to help out when she learned of the project from her friend, VNHS member Margaret Wainwright. Remaining costs were covered by the Warden's Fund of the B.C. Federation of Naturalists and by the Victoria Natural History Society. Stain for the blind was donated by Saanich municipality.

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Recently completed bird blind at Quick's Bottom. (Photo: Shirley Embra)



Bird blind at Quick's Bottom under construction showing the heritage reserve's habitat in the background. (Photo: Shirley Embra)

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The blind was built by 11 VNHS members who donated 93 hours of labour. Heavy duty concrete mixers were Darren Copley, Dave Fraser and Leah Ramsey. Foundations were laid by Tony Embleton, Doug Riddell and Tom Gillespie and his friend Craig McFeely. Most of the nailing was done by Wally Macgregor who also worked on the staining crew along with Tom Gillespie, Mike Carson, Doug Riddell, Kay and Ken Arnott and Tony and Noni Embleton.

Quick's Bottom, located in Royal Oak off West Saanich and Wilkinson Roads, consists of 18.8 hectares of unique marshland which has been designated as public reserve land with special heritage status. The land was once owned by William Quick, the first dairy farmer on Vancouver Island.

More than 100 species of birds have been seen in the area including sandhill cranes, palm warblers, northern orioles, green-backed herons and numerous raptors.

Sedge, water lilies and cattails are found at the edge of the marsh with duckweed and water cress further out. English hawthorn, Canadian thistle and wild parsley are found along the chip trail that skirts the marsh.

Tom Gillespie said he received excellent cooperation

Welcome to New Members

July 30 Daniel and Gail Bryant, of Graham Street: enjoy hiking and birding.

Aug. 5 Mary Walker, of Tremblay Drive: is a birdwatcher.

Aug. 24 W. K. Macleod, of Discovery Drive in Campbell River.

Aug. 24 Jaclyn Dorsey, of Dallas Road: was our copy editor from January 1987 to April 1989.

Aug. 31 Marilyn Fairgrieve, of Fairfield Road: enjoys birding.

Aug. 31 Patricia Carr, of South 3rd Street in Sequim, Wash: is a birdwatcher interested mainly in waterfowl.

Sept. 7 Leslie Harmsworth, of Mckenzie Avenue.

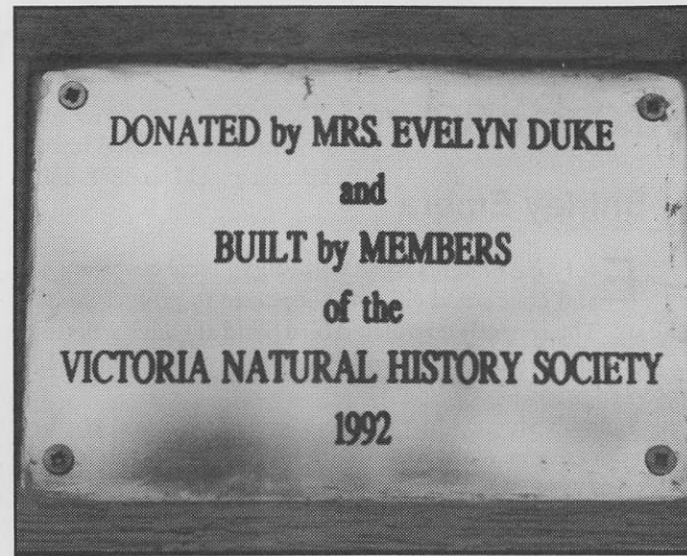
Sept. 15 Peter Nash, who lives in a box at Station B: has been a welcome addition to our Christmas bird counters for two years.

Sept. 21 Ted and Merla Dixon, of Malahat Drive.

Sept. 26 Chris Schreiber, of Aldridge Street: is an active hiker and mountain climber and is interested in all flora and fauna. Now he is improving on his bird-watching skills.

Sept. 30 Ron and Julie Youngash, of Timber Lane: enjoy birds and plants.

Sept. 30 Sheila Barclay, of Cedar Hill Road: is a birdwatcher.




Plaque commemorating Quick Bottom's Bird Blind construction.

throughout the project from David De Shane, Manager of Parks Operations for the District of Saanich and from their Public Works Department. The District will be looking after maintenance of the blind.

Shirley Embra has just recently joined the Victoria Natural History Society and is a member of the Parks and Conservation Committee.

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New Killer Whale "Pod" Discovered Near Victoria

By Eric L. Walters, Robin W. Baird and Tamara J. Guenther

On September 6, 1992 a group of about 75 killer whales was discovered several miles south-east of Victoria, in Juan de Fuca Strait. This in itself is not an unusual event since groups of up to 90 killer whales are regularly seen in this area. However, since an individual killer whale is identifiable based on distinctive features of the dorsal fin and saddle patch, and the pods which use this area are well known (see Bigg *et al.*, 1987), it was easily determined that this group had not been seen here before.

Vinz Eberle, a spotter working for a local whale watching company (Seacoast Expeditions) initially sighted a large group of killer whales south-east of Discovery Island on the morning of the 6th. One of us (ELW), working as a naturalist on the "Porpoise II", realized upon seeing a few individuals, that the group was not one of the regular "resident" pods, and yet was too large to be a group of "transients". (The resident pods that regularly use this area range in size from 16 to 56 individuals

while transient pods are typically composed of 1 to 4 individuals.)

Local researchers, both from the Marine Mammal Research Group (RWB and TJG) and the Center for Whale Research (Friday Harbour, WA), were notified and immediately proceeded to the area. The attempt to obtain good left- and right-hand side photographs of each individual for identification purposes was difficult. The whales were spread out over several miles (in groups of 2 to 20 individuals), group composition changed frequently, long dives lasted up to five minutes, and surfacing patterns were erratic. Since there were so many animals spread out over such a large area, and because the animals were unfamiliar, it was difficult to determine if a particular individual had been previously photographed. As well, high quality photographs were needed, particularly for animals which did not have notches or tears in the dorsal fin, since identification then relies on saddle patch shape and markings.

In total, about 25 rolls of film were taken, the majority by researchers from the Center for Whale Research (Ken Balcomb, Diane Claridge, Dave Ellifrit and Astrid van Ginneken). Analysis of the film for identification of individuals was undertaken by the Center. To date, 65 different whales have been identified from the group, none of which had been previously recorded in the Victoria area. Photographs are currently being checked for matches with previously catalogued whales in other locales in the Eastern North Pacific.

Why is this important? Research on killer whales in the inshore waters around southern Vancouver Island was initiated in 1973 and all three large resident pods were "discovered"

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Small subgroup of "offshore" type killer whales seen September 6, 1992. Photo by Eric L. Walters.

—continued from preceding page

almost immediately (Balcomb *et al.*, 1982; Bigg, 1982). Since then, while the number of known transient killer whales which use this area increases each year, no new large group of killer whales have been documented off Victoria.

Up until recently, killer whales in B.C., Washington State and Alaska have typically been divided into two forms, "residents" and "transients", which appear to specialize on different types of prey, and are likely reproductively isolated populations (Baird *et al.*, 1992). In the last few years, large groups of killer whales have been recorded off the west coast of Vancouver Island and off the Queen Charlotte Islands which do not appear to easily fit the resident/transient dichotomy. These groups have preliminarily been termed "offshore" killer whales, since they were first documented in open water off the west coast of Vancouver Island. The whales observed on September 6 seemed to exhibit behaviours characteristic of both forms previously mentioned, similar to these "offshore" groups. They resembled the resident form in terms of group size yet travelled in a manner similar to transients (*i.e.*, long dives, erratic movements). No predation on either fish (like residents) or marine mammals (like transients) was observed in the eight hours the whales were followed; however, sporadic periods of milling similar to residents foraging on fish was seen a number of times.

In terms of morphology, these whales appeared to have characteristics of both forms. The tip of the dorsal fins generally appeared rounded, like residents, while saddle patch pigmentation patterns were more similar to transients with no black intruding into the greyish white saddle (Baird and Stacey, 1988). A number of the whales in the group seen on September 6 did have some black intruding into the saddle patch, but in a pattern unlike that typically seen in residents. As well, these animals seemed to be smaller than either transients or residents, with the largest males present appearing to be equal in size to "sprouting" (teenage) whales that we are familiar with. Another possibility, however, is that no full-grown males were present in the group seen September 6.

Transient and resident type killer whales have not been known to associate with each other, nor have northern residents been recorded with southern residents. Likewise, "offshore" whales have not been recorded in the company of any known transient or resident whales. There is a possibility that these "offshore" whales may be a third form of killer whale which specializes on offshore prey populations. The perceived size differences might then be explained by the generally lower productivity of offshore waters. Offshore individuals of a variety of other species of odontocetes are smaller than inshore animals, possibly for this reason (see review in Amano and Miyazaki 1992).

One important consideration raised by this encounter is that groups of killer whales, even in an area with extensive long-term research coverage, should not be overlooked in terms of their potential to add to our existing knowledge of this species. Prior to this encounter, all sightings of large groups of killer whales in this area were assumed to be of one or more of the commonly encountered resident pods, but this sighting clearly shows that little can be assumed merely from the group size. One must bear in mind that the notion that these may be a third type of killer whale is merely speculative and more

research is needed. Since virtually nothing is known about this potential "offshore" population of killer whales in B.C., extensive research effort is needed in offshore waters. It is likely this large group should not be considered a "pod". For resident and transient killer whales, a pod has been considered a group of whales that spends the majority of their time together. The September 6 group was likely an association of several smaller, more discrete, groups. Members of the public and individuals otherwise out on the water can help in furthering our understanding of this species by recording and reporting all sightings. Sightings should be reported to 380-1925 in the Victoria area or toll-free anywhere in B.C. to 1-800-665-5939.

For more information, contact the authors at: Marine Mammal Research Group, Box 6244, Victoria, B.C. V8P 5L5 (Fax 380-1206).

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harbour porpoise



Dall's porpoise

WHALE HOTLINE

Report marine mammal sightings and strandings to:

380-1925 in the Victoria area

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

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

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

A Black-shouldered Kite Sighting

By Barbara Begg

The morning of April 21st, 1992 showed promise as the sky brightened clear, still and just a touch of frost. That promise was fulfilled about one hour into my day, at 0605.

A glance out of the kitchen window revealed a grey and white raptor hovering over the back field. My first reaction was to wonder why an osprey would be looking for breakfast over a dry, grassy field. In the next instant, I realized that this bird was an adult black-shouldered kite, a species that I have seen in Kenya, Arizona and Oregon. The Arizona sighting was brief—a drive-by look at a bird perched on a post. In Kenya, however, I recorded this species on nineteen separate days and in Oregon on one day—but a long day. During a fruitless vigil waiting for a reported garganey to show up at a sewage lagoon, a black-shouldered kite kept our spirits up by hover-hunting and kiting over a nearby field for much of the day.

My North Saanich bird was hunting over a rough, grassy field dotted with small hawthorn trees and brambles, directly behind our property on Cresswell Road, and near the open fields of the Victoria International Airport. Viewing conditions

were very good due to the clear sky and the fact that I was looking to the west, away from the rising sun. Facilitating the viewing was the fact that the bird was observed against a backdrop of leafy green deciduous trees rather than the sky. I was able to watch the kite, which was about 110 metres distant, for about one half minute using 7 x 50 binoculars and a 22x spotting scope. The scope is usually mounted at the window when I am home so no time was lost in setting it up.

Field marks that I was able to determine included: a white fore-crown; grey back and upper-wing surface with solid black shoulder patches; pointed wings; and a longish tail with outer feathers pure white and central tail feathers a slightly lighter grey on the upper surface, with the under-surface of the tail appearing all white. There was no barring on the tail. The throat, breast, belly and under-tail coverts were also white. Only a general impression of white was noted for the under-surface of the wings, as they were not seen adequately. The bird was about crow-sized.

The kite, when first seen, was hovering with wings held high, about ten metres above the ground. It then made a vertical drop toward the ground and without alighting, rose vertically to a lesser height, hovered again, descended again, repeated the procedure a third time, folded its wings, then landed. I was unable to see it land due to intervening vegetation.

I hot-lined the sighting immediately, in spite of the early hour, and although a number of birders arrived, unfortunately the bird was not seen again at this location as far as I know. For my own records, this bird was an "Ivory Snow" black-shouldered kite, 99.99% pure and a great addition to my yard list. Any other species, such as owls, osprey, male harrier, gulls and falcons, hybrid or otherwise, I eliminated as potential alternatives due to differences in field marks, size and shape, and usual method of hunting flight.

It is said that there is a northward range expansion of the black-shouldered kite. It is now found regularly at Raymont, in southwest Washington state and likely nests there. There have now been a small number of sightings in south-western British Columbia, probably all awaiting rulings by the records committees.

The black-shouldered kite is found in Africa, southern Eurasia, the United States, Central and South America. At one time, the kite found in the Western Hemisphere was classed as a separate species from the African/Eurasian bird—*Elanus leucurus* and *E. caeruleus*, respectively, commonly called the white-tailed kite and black-shouldered kite. Then it was decided that they were conspecific and both were lumped under *E. caeruleus* (black-shouldered kite) using the "first described" nomenclature, as is the general rule. Now it seems likely that they will be split again, probably reverting back to their original scientific and common names. So in the Americas, birders who have just become comfortable with "black-shouldered kite" should now be thinking "white-tailed kite" again.

[Editors note: Two other sightings of the species have since been reported. One was by David Allinson in the Triangle Mountain area, shortly after Barbara Begg's report. The other was in September in the Maple Bay area, reported by Derrick Marven.]

Barbara Begg is an avid birder and an active member of the Victoria Natural History Society.

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Christmas Bird Count— December 19, 1992

By David Pearce

The Victoria Christmas Bird Count (CBC) will be held on Saturday, December 19, 1992. The purpose of the CBC is to count birds observed within a 15-mile diameter circle covering the Greater Victoria area centred on the intersection of Grange Road and Jasmine Avenue in Marigold. The circle is divided into 22 land areas and two ocean areas, each having an area leader.

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

If you participated as a "counter" in the Christmas count last year, you will be contacted and asked if you would like to participate this year. If you did not take part in the Victoria count last year but would like to participate, please contact David Pearce, Count Coordinator, at 477-2664 by November 30, or sign up at the November Birder's Night.

Housing Development

By Shirley Embra

Tony Embleton, Chairman of the Parks and Conservation Committee of the Victoria Natural History Society, announced at the September Birders' Night that Committee member, Darren Copley, has been awarded \$300.00 by the Federation of B.C. Naturalists Foundation in support of his purple martin nesting box project.

Darren has made some 200 boxes during the three years he has been involved in this rescue mission. He constructed all the boxes at home and co-opted his father, Robert, and cousin Frank, to help install them. VNHS member Eric Walters also lent a hand in previous years.

The donation from the FBCN Foundation will help cover the cost of materials for the boxes which are located at Cowichan Estuary, Ladysmith Harbour, Esquimalt Harbour and the Inner Harbour. This year approximately 60 birds returned to nest, a dramatic increase from eight birds last year.

This year, Darren said, they were "in a panic" to get boxes up in Ladysmith Harbour because the pilings where the birds had been nesting were taken out. They managed to get the boxes up literally hours before the birds returned. The colony was only discovered two years ago.

Darren is enthusiastic about his "labour of love", to which he has devoted many hours, because "this is one endangered species we can actually do something about." He will continue the project next year and would welcome volunteer help to expand the program.

If you have a feeder in your yard and wish to participate as a feeder watcher, simply watch your feeder on December 19 and record all bird species and number of individuals of those species. Mail or bring your list into the Field-Naturalist/Swiftsure Tours, 1241 Broad Street, Victoria, V8W 2A4. Please put your name, address and telephone number on the list. Your report must be received by Wednesday, December 23 in order to be included in the count records.

If you see a rare bird at your feeder on December 19 (see the Victoria Area Checklist of Birds or last year's Christmas count results in the March/April issue of the Victoria Naturalist to find out what is rare in December), please phone your sighting immediately to the Rare Bird Alert at 592-3381 and leave a message on the tape.

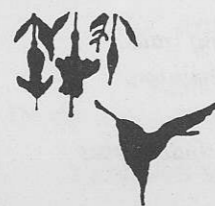
After the count we are planning to hold a meeting at the Gordon Head United Church starting at 7:30 p.m. This will be the same format as a regular Birder's Night, where coffee, tea and biscuits will be served, and we will discuss the day's count results.

Distinguished Service Award

The Distinguished Service Award was established by the Victoria Natural History Society 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 to nominate any other member who in their opinion merits this honour.

Nominations should be forwarded by January 15, 1993 to Mike McGrenere, Awards Committee Chairperson at 1178 Sunnygrove Terrace, V8Y 2V9.

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 Mike McGrenere at 658-8624.



THIMBLE FARMS

Bedding plants – Hanging baskets
Shrubs & ground covers
and fruit trees.

RR1 Arbutus Rd., Southey Pt. 537-5788

Salt Spring Island

Growing Native???

10% off native plants to VNHS members

1958 - 1991 Christmas Bird Counts

By David Pearce

Can our Canadian record of 152 species for the Christmas Bird Count set last year be beaten? Judging from our counts over the past 33 years it could easily be beaten as we have seen a total of 209 different species during those Christmas periods!

Last Spring I received the total Victoria Christmas Bird Counts from 1958 to 1985 from Jeremy Tatum and have written a program that produces the report shown with this article. The report shows for each species seen: the high, low and average counts; the number seen in the last count; the year the highest count was seen; the last year the species was seen; and the percentage of times the species was seen.

Of the 209 species seen, 24 have been seen on only one occasion, 12 have been seen only twice and a further 16 have not been seen since 1985. This totals 52 species so, subtracting that from 209, leaves 157 as a possible future maximum.

We now have over 200 observers taking part in the Christmas Bird Count, far more than in earlier years, so the numbers of birds counted can be expected to be higher. Those species that show the current count appreciably lower than the average count may well be on the decline. Notably these include the horned grebe, Brandt's cormorant, pelagic cormorant, American wigeon, greater scaup, white-winged scoter, ruddy duck, ring-necked pheasant, herring gull, marbled murrelet, ancient murrelet, Eurasian skylark and red crossbill. Species on the increase include the trumpeter swan, Canada goose, green-winged teal, mallard, northern pintail, gadwall, hooded merganser, bald eagle, northern harrier, sharp-shinned hawk, Cooper's hawk, red-tailed hawk, merlin, peregrine falcon, glaucous-winged gull, common raven, chestnut-backed chickadee, song sparrow, golden-crowned sparrow, dark-eyed junco, red-winged blackbird, house finch and house sparrow.

Christmas Bird Count History Report 1958-1991

SPECIES	HIGH COUNT	LOW COUNT	AVERAGE COUNT	1991 COUNT	HIGH YEAR	LAST OBS.	% OBS
Red-throated Loon	147	4	36	30	1962	1991	100
Pacific Loon	267	0	75	114	1967	1991	97
Common Loon	109	23	67	92	1977	1991	100
Yellow-billed Loon	1	0	0	1	1961	1991	12
Pied-billed Grebe	100	7	40	59	1987	1991	100
Horned Grebe	1,153	15	530	306	1967	1991	100
Red-necked Grebe	671	37	170	312	1988	1991	100
Eared Grebe	123	0	34	27	1959	1991	97
Western Grebe	3,314	45	1,071	2,160	1988	1991	100
Northern Fulmar	1	0	0	0	1964	1964	3
Sooty Shearwater	40	0	1	0	1977	1983	6
Short-tailed Shearwater	2	0	0	0	1977	1977	3
Double-crested Cormorant	636	43	222	261	1979	1991	100
Brandt's Cormorant	1,664	0	247	106	1979	1991	97
Pelagic Cormorant	2,345	92	562	246	1962	1991	100
American Bittern	1	0	0	0	1977	1988	6
Great Blue Heron	152	10	68	125	1984	1991	100
Cattle Egret	2	0	0	0	1984	1984	6
Green-backed Heron	1	0	0	0	1990	1990	3
Tundra Swan	41	0	2	1	1965	1991	26
Trumpeter Swan	218	0	22	121	1990	1991	44
Mute Swan	77	0	35	20	1971	1991	97
Lesser White-fronted Goose	1	0	0	0	1990	1990	3
Greater White-fronted Goose	15	0	2	4	1983	1991	65
Snow Goose	17	0	1	1	1988	1991	38
Emporer Goose	1	0	0	0	1987	1987	3
Brant	13	0	2	0	1968	1979	29
Canada Goose	1,612	21	367	1,440	1990	1991	100
Wood Duck	25	0	2	1	1980	1991	36
Green-winged Teal	1,808	201	495	1,808	1991	1991	100
American Black Duck	2	0	0	0	1983	1988	24
Mallard	8,920	1,359	4,606	8,746	1988	1991	100
Northern Pintail	1,044	174	487	1,044	1991	1991	100
Blue-winged Teal	2	0	0	0	1980	1980	3
Northern Shoveler	476	47	127	93	1959	1991	100
Gadwall	69	0	17	69	1991	1991	71
Eurasian Wigeon	28	0	9	17	1985	1991	88
American Wigeon	14,889	3,339	6,647	4,071	1977	1991	100
Canvasback	232	11	63	42	1963	1991	100
Redhead	8	0	1	1	1963	1991	35
Ring-necked Duck	663	1	193	663	1991	1991	100
Greater Scaup	3,139	26	945	32	1963	1991	100
Lesser Scaup	1,012	2	224	475	1976	1991	100
Harlequin Duck	417	82	229	285	1964	1991	100
Oldsquaw	854	48	304	602	1988	1991	100
Black Scoter	16	0	5	1	1973	1991	71
Surf Scoter	1,478	118	550	738	1988	1991	100

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Christmas Bird Count History Report 1958-1991

SPECIES	HIGH COUNT	LOW COUNT	AVERAGE COUNT	1991 COUNT	HIGH YEAR	LAST OBS.	% OBS
White-winged Scoter	834	71	319	77	1979	1991	100
Common Goldeneye	745	143	354	403	1988	1991	100
Barrow's Goldeneye	189	0	30	27	1981	1991	97
Bufflehead	2,863	543	1,464	2,236	1988	1991	100
Hooded Merganser	486	36	247	486	1991	1991	100
Common Merganser	1,602	52	416	366	1964	1991	100
Red-breasted Merganser	637	94	262	414	1988	1991	100
Ruddy Duck	429	0	106	18	1968	1991	97
Bald Eagle	111	2	24	111	1991	1991	100
Northern Harrier	6	0	1	6	1988	1991	32
Sharp-shinned Hawk	27	2	10	23	1990	1991	100
Cooper's Hawk	42	1	13	42	1991	1991	100
Northern Goshawk	2	0	0	1	1963	1991	29
Red-tailed Hawk	43	4	21	43	1984	1991	100
Rough-legged Hawk	1	0	0	0	1970	1985	12
Golden Eagle	4	0	1	3	1978	1991	38
American Kestrel	8	0	2	3	1963	1991	85
Merlin	19	0	5	16	1990	1991	97
Pergrine Falcon	9	0	3	9	1985	1991	85
Gyr Falcon	2	0	0	0	1981	1983	15
Ring-necked Pheasant	93	13	43	13	1960	1991	100
Blue Grouse	3	0	0	2	1975	1991	26
Ruffed Grouse	10	0	2	1	1973	1991	68
California Quail	584	111	272	378	1965	1991	100
Mountain Quail	9	0	0	0	1963	1975	9
Virginia Rail	14	0	3	3	1984	1991	62
American Coot	1,712	149	732	568	1987	1991	100
Sandhill Crane	1	0	0	0	1974	1974	3
Black-bellied Plover	282	0	85	55	1987	1991	97
Greater Golden-Plover	19	0	1	0	1988	1988	3
Killdeer	375	17	162	133	1967	1991	100
Black Oystercatcher	96	17	42	32	1962	1991	100
Greater Yellowlegs	70	0	28	5	1977	1991	94
Lesser Yellowlegs	2	0	0	0	1977	1977	9
Spotted Sandpiper	3	0	1	0	1970	1989	47
Whimbrel	6	0	1	1	1962	1991	35
Black Turnstone	374	54	155	123	1964	1991	100
Surfbird	70	0	15	7	1964	1991	91
Sanderling	67	0	18	10	1973	1991	85
Western Sandpiper	3	0	0	0	1975	1981	6
Least Sandpiper	1	0	0	0	1977	1981	6
Rock Sandpiper	57	0	17	11	1969	1991	82
Dunlin	966	24	237	191	1967	1991	100
Short-billed Dowitcher	6	0	0	0	1964	1965	9
Long-billed Dowitcher	17	0	1	0	1976	1983	18
Common Snipe	115	5	41	12	1964	1991	100
Red Phalarope	8	0	0	0	1979	1987	6
Bonaparte's Gull	5,004	0	280	1	1977	1991	65
Heerman's Gull	1	0	0	0	1964	1964	3
Mew Gull	16,375	677	3,796	2,738	1974	1991	100
Ring-billed Gull	1	0	0	1	1958	1991	15
California Gull	74	0	6	9	1974	1991	53
Herring Gull	288	1	47	16	1980	1991	100
Thayer's Gull	1,962	4	413	1,047	1986	1991	100
Western Gull	12	0	3	9	1989	1991	68
Glaucous-winged Gull	16,794	2,641	8,359	12,749	1986	1991	100
Glaucous Gull	4	0	1	1	1981	1991	50
Black-legged Kittiwake	3	0	0	0	1982	1982	15
Sabine's Gull	1	0	0	0	1963	1963	3
Common Murre	7,831	3	769	403	1973	1991	100
Pigeon Guillemot	260	13	65	60	1965	1991	100
Marbled Murrelet	294	4	64	33	1962	1991	100
Kittlitz's Murrelet	1	0	0	0	1985	1985	3
Ancient Murrelet	6,401	0	416	69	1973	1991	88
Cassin's Auklet	23	0	2	0	1964	1984	26
Rhinoceros Auklet	37	0	5	6	1977	1991	88
Tufted Puffin	2	0	0	0	1965	1966	9
Rock Dove	1,183	171	574	753	1989	1991	100
Band-tailed Pigeon	417	0	55	25	1972	1991	91
Mourning Dove	21	0	1	1	1963	1991	29
Common Barn-Owl	3	0	1	1	1987	1991	47
Western Screech-Owl	23	0	5	23	1991	1991	94
Great Horned Owl	30	0	4	30	1991	1991	76
Snowy Owl	13	0	1	0	1973	1984	9
Northern Pygmy-Owl	4	0	1	2	1989	1991	32

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Christmas Bird Count History Report 1958-1991

SPECIES	HIGH COUNT	LOW COUNT	AVERAGE COUNT	1991 COUNT	HIGH YEAR	LAST OBS.	% OBS
Barred Owl	5	0	0	3	1990	1991	18
Short-eared Owl	2	0	1	0	1970	1989	44
Northern Saw-whet Owl	4	0	1	4	1991	1991	32
Anna's Hummingbird	44	0	11	24	1988	1991	62
Rufous Hummingbird	1	0	0	0	1961	1979	9
Belted Kingfisher	71	13	30	60	1989	1991	100
Three-toed Woodpecker	1	0	0	0	1961	1961	3
Lewis' Woodpecker	2	0	0	0	1958	1960	9
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	2	0	0	0	1983	1987	6
Red-breasted Sapsucker	2	0	0	0	1987	1990	12
Red-breasted Sapsucker	12	0	1	1	1967	1991	56
Downy Woodpecker	96	3	38	87	1987	1991	100
Hairy Woodpecker	20	1	9	20	1991	1991	100
Northern Flicker	433	58	206	321	1989	1991	100
Pileated Woodpecker	29	1	10	22	1989	1991	100
Western Kingbird	1	0	0	0	1963	1963	3
Eurasian Skylark	969	0	95	9	1965	1991	88
Horned Lark	32	0	1	3	1982	1991	15
Violet-green Swallow	1	0	0	0	1982	1982	3
Steller's Jay	324	0	65	74	1987	1991	97
Blue Jay	1	0	0	0	1963	1963	3
Northwestern Crow	7,131	668	3,831	6,338	1971	1991	100
Common Raven	382	21	126	382	1991	1991	100
Chestnut-backed Chickadee	1,835	160	712	1,835	1991	1991	100
Bushtit	1,095	29	328	758	1989	1991	100
Red-breasted Nuthatch	196	5	58	143	1988	1991	100
Brown Creeper	126	0	42	118	1989	1991	97
Rock Wren	1	0	0	0	1975	1977	6
Bewick's Wren	218	21	89	177	1987	1991	100
House Wren	2	0	0	0	1963	1980	12
Winter Wren	451	29	128	322	1990	1991	100
Marsh Wren	52	0	9	9	1984	1991	79
American Dipper	11	0	3	6	1987	1991	88
Golden-crowned Kinglet	2,907	168	783	2,035	1990	1991	100
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	353	14	95	202	1988	1991	100
Western Bluebird	59	0	6	0	1964	1964	12
Mountain Bluebird	3	0	0	0	1990	1990	3
Townsend's Solitaire	6	0	1	6	1991	1991	29
Swainson's Thrush	1	0	0	0	1961	1968	6
Hermit Thrush	34	0	6	3	1965	1991	91
American Robin	14,847	1,137	4,438	6,188	1966	1991	100
Varied Thrush	1,243	12	249	276	1966	1991	100
American Pipit	78	0	17	67	1988	1991	53
Bohemian Waxwing	20	0	1	0	1966	1981	6
Cedar Waxwing	602	0	81	9	1970	1991	91
Northern Shrike	11	0	3	9	1988	1991	85
European Starling	18,183	279	6,112	7,119	1984	1991	100
Hutton's Vireo	7	0	1	3	1980	1991	44
Orange-crowned Warbler	3	0	0	1	1988	1991	24
Yellow-rumped Warbler	17	0	3	13	1988	1991	56
Townsend's Warbler	3	0	0	1	1980	1991	29
Palm Warbler	1	0	0	0	1987	1988	6
MacGillivray's Warbler	1	0	0	0	1967	1967	3
Wilson's Warbler	1	0	0	1	1979	1991	12
Dickcissel	1	0	0	0	1960	1960	3
Rufous-sided Towhee	652	62	240	584	1989	1991	100
American Tree Sparrow	2	0	0	1	1985	1991	9
Savannah Sparrow	19	0	3	10	1990	1991	68
Fox Sparrow	296	9	134	268	1987	1991	100
Song Sparrow	788	74	293	788	1991	1991	100
Lincoln's Sparrow	17	0	2	17	1991	1991	50
Swamp Sparrow	1	0	0	1	1983	1991	9
White-throated Sparrow	5	0	1	4	1989	1991	59
Golden-crowned Sparrow	937	35	237	937	1991	1991	100
White-crowned Sparrow	163	7	41	99	1987	1991	100
Harris' Sparrow	4	0	0	0	1972	1990	29
Dark-eyed Junco	4,447	464	1,711	4,447	1991	1991	100
Lapland Longspur	22	0	1	0	1976	1977	6
Snow Bunting	3	0	0	2	1963	1991	21
Red-winged Blackbird	2,160	0	222	2,160	1991	1991	97
Western Meadowlark	126	2	32	17	1958	1991	100
Yellow-headed Blackbird	2	0	0	0	1981	1981	3
Rusty Blackbird	1	0	0	0	1972	1972	3
Brewer's Blackbird	1,377	84	454	647	1960	1991	100

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Christmas Bird Count History Report 1958-1991

SPECIES	HIGH COUNT	LOW COUNT	AVERAGE COUNT	1991 COUNT	HIGH YEAR	LAST OBS.	% OBS
Brown-headed Cowbird	22	0	2	1	1970	1991	38
Northern Oriole	1	0	0	0	1971	1971	3
Western Tanager	1	0	0	0	1962	1962	3
Brambling	1	0	0	0	1990	1990	3
Pine Grosbeak	26	0	1	0	1973	1973	12
Purple Finch	212	12	102	199	1990	1991	100
House Finch	977	84	405	977	1991	1991	100
Red Crossbill	709	0	107	7	1988	1991	91
White-winged Crossbill	1	0	0	0	1975	1975	3
Pine Siskin	4,136	40	1,189	682	1962	1991	100
American Goldfinch	240	0	27	136	1970	1991	85
Evening Grosbeak	187	0	23	13	1975	1991	76
House Sparrow	1,280	134	475	1,189	1989	1991	100
TOTAL BIRDS	188,638	14,183	61,752	87,755			
TOTAL SPECIES	209	77	128	152			

CALENDAR



REGULAR MEETINGS are generally held on the following days. **General Members Meeting:** the second Tuesday of each month. **Birders' Night:** the fourth Wednesday of each month. **Board of Directors:** the first Tuesday of each month. Locations are given in the calendar listings.

NOVEMBER EVENTS



Mini-pelagic birding on M.V. Coho. Interested participants are requested to Register their names with Hank Vander Pol (658-1924) for trips on the M.V. Coho on stormy weekends. Pelagic birding is at its best usually after a storm. Trips will be on an informal basis and weather dependent. Likely species to be seen include Cassin's auklet, ancient murrelet and sooty shearwater with possible rarities such as Northern fulmar, South polar skua and Leach's storm-petrel.

Sunday, November 1.

Seawatch at Clover Point. This joint VNHS and Western Institute of Global Studies (WIGS) project continues to survey seabird movement at Clover Point. Volunteers are needed to work one hour shifts for the dawn to dusk monitoring. Please Contact Mary-Anne Montgomery (380-7152) if you would like to participate.

Tuesday, November 3.

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

Tuesday, November 10.

General Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Begbie 159, University of Victoria. Briony Penn presents *The public and Private Life of a Garry Oak Meadow*. Briony is a sessional lecturer in the Geography and Environmental Studies Departments of the University of Victoria

and a founding member of the Garry Oak Meadow Society. She will talk about the natural and social history of this community and why it has become so endangered.

Sunday, November 15.

Birding at Martindale Flats. 9:00 a.m. Meet at Farmer's Market on corner of Lockside Drive and Island View Road. Leader: Brent Daikow (656-3190). Come explore one of Canada's premier winter birding "hotspots". Christmas Bird Counts (CBC) have consistently tallied over 90 species in this area alone!

Tuesday, November 17.

Botany Night. 7:30 p.m., Swan Lake Nature Centre. Kaye Suttill will give an illustrated talk about the fascinating plants of South Africa. The next botany night will be the third Tuesday of January.

Thursday, November 19.

Thetis Park Nature Sanctuary Association Meeting. Paul Commandeur and Dick Smith will be presenting a talk on *Travels in the Peoples Republic of China*. The meeting will be held at 7:30 p.m., Christ Church Cathedral Auditorium. For further details call Elizabeth McMillan at 479-7694.

Wednesday, November 25.

Birder's Night. 7:30 p.m., Begbie 159, University of Victoria. Andy Buhler will present *An Armchair Safari Through Kenya*. Everyone Welcome. Bring a friend, coffee mug and your binoculars for a close up look at the screen.

Thursday, November 26.

Garry Oak Meadow Society Meeting. Meet at 7:15 p.m. at the Swan Lake Nature House. Topic: *Rare and Endangered Plants of the Garry Oak Ecosystem*. Join Adolf Ceska of the Royal British Columbia Museum to share in his knowledge of the "specialness" of the plants found in the oak meadows. Be sure to bring "goodies" to the meeting.

Saturday, November 28.

Gulls, Eagles and Salmon at Goldstream Estuary. 10:00 a.m. Meet at main parking lot in Goldstream

Park. Leader: David Fraser (479-0016). Up to 12 species of gull have been seen in Goldstream Provincial Park during the annual return of spawning salmon. In addition, dozens of Bald Eagles congregate to join in on the foray of nature's bounty.

DECEMBER EVENTS



Tuesday, December 1.

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

Saturday, December 5.

Pre-Christmas Bird Count. A "refresher" Field Trip to Witty's Lagoon Regional Park. 10:00 a.m. Meet at park's parking lot in Metchosin. Leader: David Allinson (478-0457). Hone your skills for the upcoming CBCs at this popular birding locale.

Sunday, December 6.

Seawatch at Clover Point. See November 1 for details.

Tuesday, December 8.

General Meeting. 7:30 p.m., Begbie 159, University of Victoria. Christmas Member's Night. Sip hot sweet apple cider and meet with friends for an evening of christmas cheer, displays and five, ten-minute slide presentations on interesting topics or destinations by our many talented members. Come display some of your art, hobbies or give a slide show. Contact Bev Glover (721-1476) or Pam Stacey (370-1249).

Saturday, December 19.

Victoria Christmas Bird Count (CBC). Come participate in Canada's highest species count area. Last year's total of 152 species surpassed our own record of 147. If you have already participated in a CBC, you should be contacted soon by an area leader. If you would like to participate, contact David Pearce (477-2664) or sign up at the November Birder's Night.

Saturday, December 19.

Christmas Bird Count Tabulation and Social. 7:30 p.m., Gordon Head United Church, 4401 Tyndall St. Everyone Welcome.

Sunday, December 20.

Sooke Christmas Bird Count. Sooke is an area that needs more participants to cover this excellent birding locale. Contact Mike Shepard (388-4227) to register your name to help.

To Be Announced.

Bamfield Christmas Bird Count. At press time, this date has not been announced. This area deserves better coverage so your participation is eagerly requested. Please contact Alan Burger (479-9833) for details.

EARLY JANUARY EVENTS



Saturday January 2.

Duncan Christmas Bird Count. Another count deserving of VNHS support to assist the Duncan Birders in covering their area. If you wish to participate contact Derrick Marven (748-8504)

Sunday, January 3.

Seawatch at Clover Point. See November 1 for details.

BULLETIN BOARD



For Sale

National Geographic Field Guide to Birds, Naturalist Guide to the Victoria Region, Victoria Area Bird Checklists and Victoria Natural History Society window decals are for sale by contacting Lyndis Davis at 477-9952.

Volunteers needed!

The Martindale Bird Survey continues. Please volunteer for Saturday Mornings 8:00 to 11:00 a.m. Contact Eric Walters or Darren Copley. For information, see past Bulletin Boards.

Back Issues

Back issues of the *Victoria Naturalist* are available from Tom Gillespie (361-1694) for interested members. Some date back as far as 1944; however, there are no complete sets. There will be no charge for these issues.

Victoria Naturalist Index

Ten year indexes are available from Tom Gillespie (361-1694) for a small charge. These list all the articles by author and subject for quick reference up until June, 1984. An updated index of more recent issues is currently being prepared by Kim Nimrava.

Slide Photographers.

The 1992 program of the Greater Victoria Colour Film Study Group begins September 22. Meetings incorporate slide viewing, speakers, educational programs, field trips and member participation. Club meetings are on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month at 7:30 p.m., Room 105, at the Central Junior Secondary School, 1280 Fort Street. For further information please contact Wayne Maloff at 385-1640.

Garry Oak Meadow Society Membership

The Garry Oak Meadow Society aims to promote, conserve and restore our native oak meadow lands. You can help us to preserve our rarest Canadian habitat by joining the Society or through donations to any branch of Pacific Coast Savings Credit Union. For further information contact Joyce Lee at 386-3785.

 **The Victoria
NATURALIST**

P.O. Box 5220, Stn. B
Victoria, B.C. V8R 6N4

Second Class Mail Reg. 6428

James A. Rainer,
5229 Sonora Drive,
NORTH VANCOUVER,, B.C., V7R 3V7



Saanich Mayor Murray Coell (right), VHNS President Wally MacGregor (left) at Quick's Bottom. (Photo: Shirley Embra)