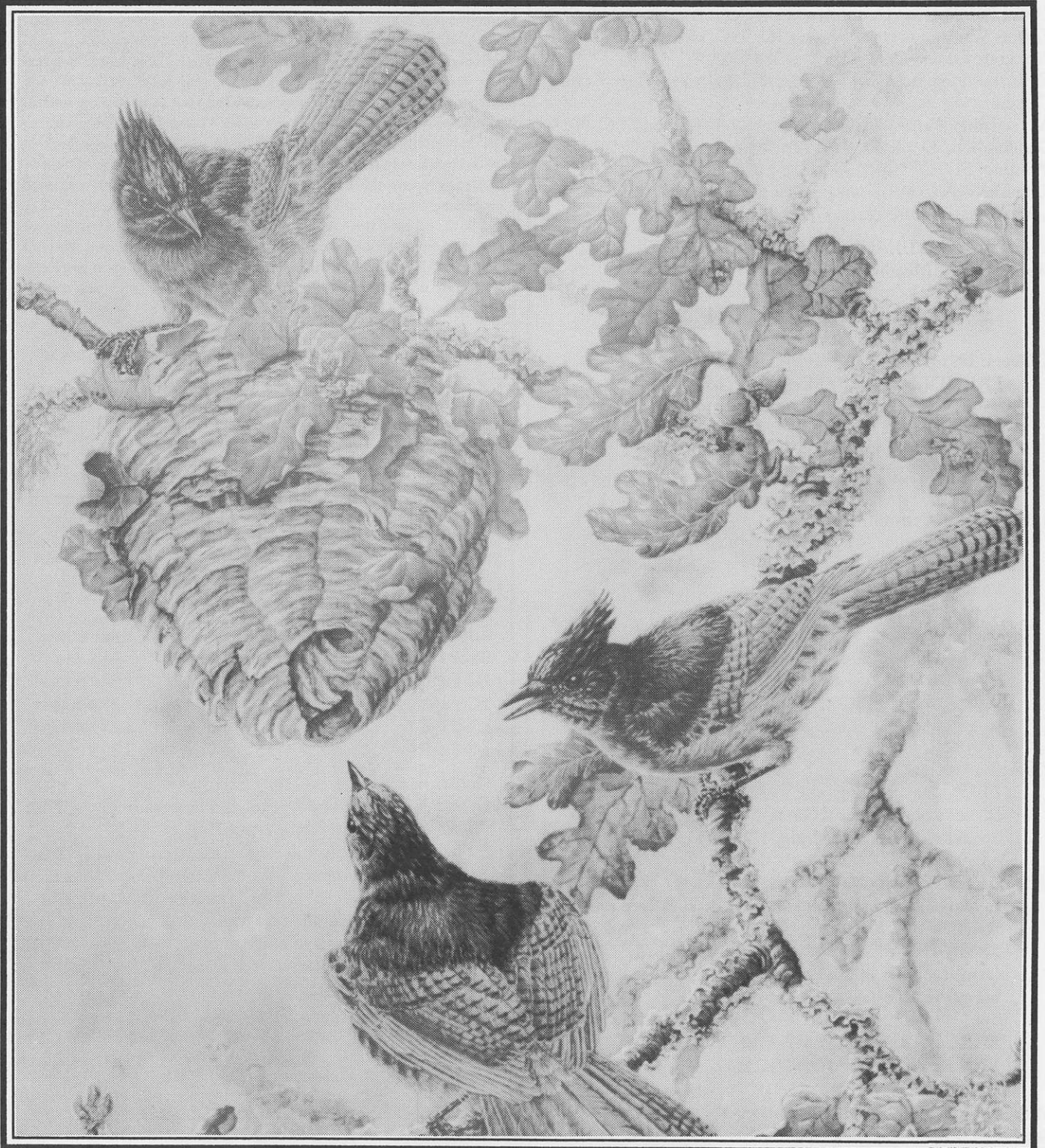




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The Victoria NATURALIST

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

Guidelines

1. Ad copy should be typeset and camera ready, not just sketched or typed on a typewriter.
2. Minor alterations to existing advertisements will cost \$10. Typesetting of ads is charged at \$20 per hour.
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COVER

This month's cover is titled *A Squabble of Jays* by M. Morgan Warren. The painting is featured on this year's poster for the Victoria Natural History Society's Nature Art Show — The Nature of Island Artists, which will be held at Goldstream Provincial Park between September 4 and 19 (see inside article). This painting, plus many others by local artists, will be on display and available for sale. A mounted copy of the poster will be one of the door prizes given during the event. Morgan is a full time Victoria artist whose studio and gallery are out at Canoe Cove, near Sidney. Morgan also wrote the following poem:

"A Squabble of Jays"
 Silence in the woods:
 Broken only by
 "Yank-yank" of nuthatch
 And kinglets tinkle
 High in the canopy;
 Oaks have turned to bronze
 And hornets gone,
 Leaving behind them
 A paper condominium
 As accommodation
 For a spider or three,
 And inspection....
 By noisy blue thieves
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The Nature of Island Artists —VNHS Nature Art Show

Make sure you take time this month, September 4 to 19, to make it out to the Victoria Natural History Society's art show in Goldstream Provincial Park at the Freeman King Visitor Centre. Many members have volunteered to staff the show, the only way a venture of this size would be possible. Money will be raised through commissions on art work, poster sales, donation box and raffle ticket sales to be used for the VNHS scholarship fund and for a viewing platform at the Goldstream Park estuary.

If you have been thinking about purchasing some original artwork by a local artist, this is the time and place. Mark Nyhof, Morgan Warren and Linda Haylock have depicted our provincial bird the Steller's Jay. Robert Bateman has donated a hand-pulled lithograph of a bald eagle. This run of just 90 was done just for donation purposes, so is not available on the public market. There is an original by Sooke artist Sue Coleman, "Pit-lamping", with a Great Blue Heron fishing by the light of a lamp off of a dock. Beverly Robb and Margot Clayton have pieces that show an area of Goldstream Park, very appropriate! There is work by Lissa Calvert, Richard Hunt, Fran Norris, Douglas Penhale, Mary Firman, Christal Kwaterowsky and Peggy Day, just to name a few more. Bertha McHaffie-Gow has a photograph of "Baby Flying Squirrels at Play", definitely a photographic challenge. Photographers, Eric Lofroth, Ken Bowen and Beth McLean will also be show-

ing their work. Wesley Clark has a watercolour of the Lindsey Dickson forest on Denman Island, a beautiful Garry Oak meadow in need of preservation.

A real treat is an original on display by one of the great bird painting masters, J. Fenwick Landsdowne of an Olive-backed Thrush, a sub-species of Swainson's Thrush.

The raffle prizes alone are worth the trip out to Goldstream. Rose Leonard, a Sooke artist has generously donated a Rufous Hummingbird carving. Rose will also be demonstrating at various times throughout the run of the show. When you see Rose, thank her for this contribution to the society. Morgan Warren has donated a new print of a Snowy Owl for the raffle. Along with this wonderful donation, Morgan was very busy this spring doing the leg work for the art show poster. Also to be won is Rob Cannings White-headed Woodpecker print, the same one that appears on the cover of the Cannings' "Bird's of the Okanagan."

There are demonstrations happening throughout the show by the artists, including carvers Brien Foerester, Steve Madsen, Larry Booth and Rose Leonard. Check for the times that Anne Algard, Margot Clayton and Ken Bowen will be demonstrating. Printmakers Trudy Kungold Ammann and Beverlee McLeod are bringing a press to demonstrate printmaking on site.

Call 478-9414 for more information.

Welcome To New Members:

- May 28 David G. McLean, of Gorge Road East: is interested in hiking, birding, marine biology, botany, general ecology and conservation of nature.
- June 8 Beverly, Arthur and Dawson Verboven, of Montreal Street: enjoy backpacking and birding.
- June 8 Joe Materi, of Johnson Street, is enrolled in the Environmental Technology Program at Camosun College.
- June 8 Marion Edworthy, of Fairway Avenue.
- June 8 Mark Gerein, of Connaught Street, studies birds and butterflies.

- June 10 Malcom and Jacqueline Haigh, of Wallace Drive: are interested in birds, flowers and visiting natural beauty spots.
- June 12 Lyn Barnett, of Doncaster Drive.
- June 21 Jim Young and Sharon Pitt, of Quadra Street, are interested in birding, plant identification, geology and herpetology. They are also students with the Camosun Environmental Technology Program.
- July 10 Marjorie Gillis, of Belmont Avenue, enjoys birds and photography.
- July 16 Percy Cowan and Josie Bennett, of Brentwood Drive: enjoy nature walks, birds, flora and fauna of B.C.
- July 23 Maureen Russenes, of Keats Street, is interested in birdwatching, hiking, ecology, conservation and animal behaviours.
- July 24 Diana McBratney, of Munro Road, studies birds and marine life.
- July 31 Peter Giere, of Marburg-Lahn in Germany: a gift from Darren Copley.
- July 31 Robin David Kingsley, of Denman Street, studies animals that pollinate plants and the plants that attract them; also Garry Oak and Brown Bats.
- July 31 John Pollard, of Pemberton Road.



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Wild Roses in October

by Bill Merilees

About mid to late May our Nootka Rose comes into full bloom in south coastal British Columbia. On still mornings their perfume can impart a marvellous fragrance that is a treasure to the nose.

The spring blooming period is quite well defined. From personal observation this lasts about eight weeks. On occasion, single or small numbers of blooms can be found on a sporadic basis, especially in autumn.

In response to a possible mass seabird mortality at Clelland Island Ecological Reserve north west of Tofino, B.C. Parks staff made a quick visit on October 9th, 1992. While the Salmonberry bushes were bare of leaves, many Nootka Rose bushes were covered in blossom. Shrubs with two, three and sometimes more, fully-open flowers were common.

This density of bloom approached or equalled that of a spring blooming with one noticeable difference—the individual flowers had a much paler hue.

Other plant species recorded blooming included Cowparsnip (*Heracleum sphondylium*), Siberian Miner's-lettuce (*Claytonia sibirica*), Yellow Monkey-flower (*Mimulus gut-*

tatus), Water Parsley (*Oenanthe sarmentosa*), Cooley's Hedge-nettle (*Stachys cooleyae*), American Searocket (*Cakile edentula*), Pineapple Weed (*Matricaria discoidea*), a small compact groundsel (*Senecio* sp.) and an *Aster* sp. All these species had numerous 'fresh' blossoms.

Ecological Reserves are special places and as such are not 'open' to all visitors. For management purposes or through the issue of a special permit, those individuals granted this pleasure are indeed fortunate.

Our visit offered a pleasant surprise. On October 9th, 1992, at Clelland Island, it was 'roses in October'. Not unusual for Victoria perhaps, but these roses were not horticultural either!

Bibliography:

- Douglas, G.W., G.B. Straley and D. Meidinger. 1989, 1990 & 1991. *The vascular plants of British Columbia, Parts 1, 2 & 3.* B.C. Ministry of Forests, Victoria, B.C.
- Meidinger, D. 1987. *Recommended vernacular names for common plants of British Columbia.* B.C. Ministry of Forests and Lands, Victoria, B.C.

Bill Merilees is the Visitors Service Coordinator for the Strathcona Region of the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks in Nanaimo. He is a frequent contributor to the Victoria Naturalist.



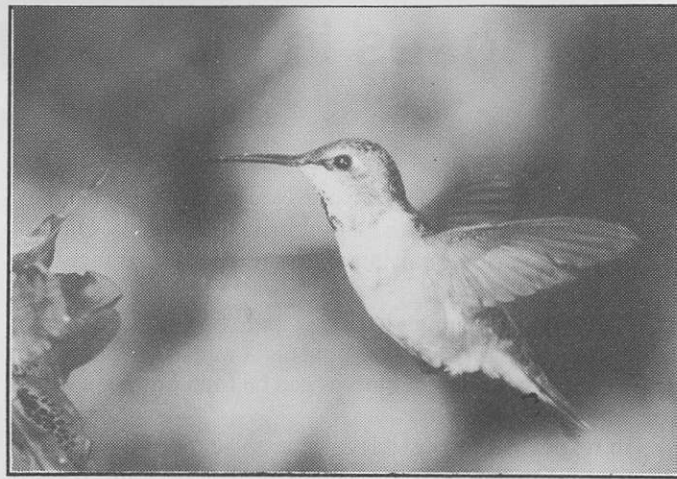
Nootka Rose. (Photo: Bill Merilees)

THEN — A Feathered Fairy

by Mrs. L.M. Kidson

When first I met her she was prospecting, though I, in my ignorance, did not know this until later. She was floating about like a bit of iridescent thistle-down in the dogwood tree very near our bedroom window not more than four or five feet away. Her movements in the tree attracted my attention for two or three days and I imagined that she was finding food there even though the dogwood blooms were on the wane. Finally she centred her interest on the junction of twigs, occasionally flying away and back again in no time and proceeding as before; eventually it dawned on me that she was bringing cobwebs for no other purpose than to build a wee house in which to raise her son and daughter. Scarcely able to believe my good fortune, I watched her spellbound for a while and then called the "man of the house" and he too was incredulous.

For eight days she worked diligently and it was marvelous to watch. It was almost two days before a small disc, less than a 50 cent piece in diameter, was discernable, and from then on the "Fairy Palace" grew rapidly. Tiny flower petals, bit of lichen moss, more cobwebs and even hairs, had to be placed with the utmost care. Sometimes she would hesitate a second deciding, with her wee head tilted to one side and a bit of



Female Rufous Hummingbird. (Photo: Tim Zurovski)

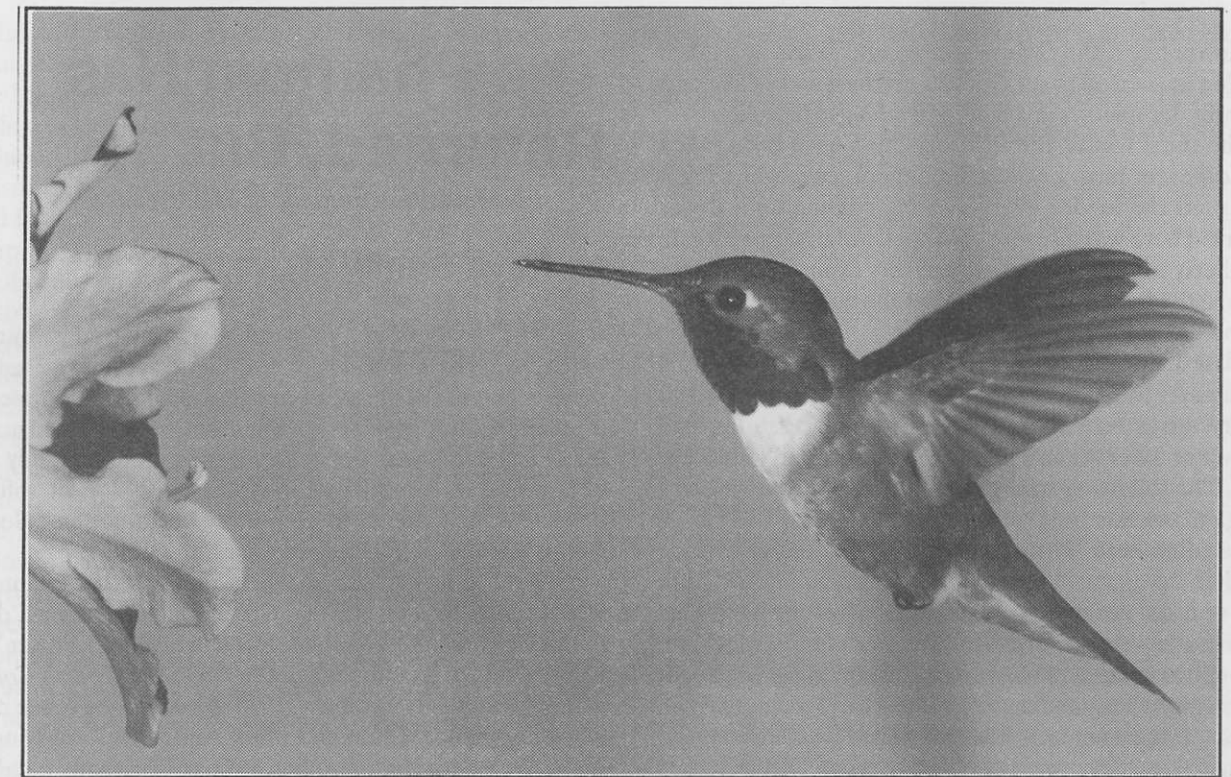
building material held carefully. Then having decided, she would place it firmly, bringing next time a hair or cobweb and darning her material with the tiny needle which passes as her bill. (We housewives could learn from her expert darning and weaving which stood the strain of two sturdy youngsters.)

A dogwood leaf was also sewn scoop-shape into the other side of the nest (and fortunately for us, nearest the window) apparently to act as a safety verandah should the babies fall and it served its purpose later on. Every little while she would sit in the nest and shuffle vigorously then turn the opposite way and shuffle again until the shape fitted and suited her.

She often sat a moment and looked the wee nest over as though she loved it. Eventually she decided to place the two little "pearls" in that marvellous structure and then incubation commenced in real earnest. She was never away very long and one day we watched her fighting two ladies of her own kind who had dared to come into her garden for nectar, telling them in that little "tick" sound which is hummingbird language, that they were very unwelcome.

On the evening of June 21st, visitors came and unconsciously we had been less careful than usual of the light being used in the "hummingbird" room; it was a heartbreak to find the blind high and the light full on. We felt sure that she would have been scared away, but no, she was there and stayed there most of the next day. Why? Because the babies were there too! The following morning while watching her, a "Rufous" flash appeared for a second over and around the nest. Yes, it was he, the daddy Rufous and no other. We had many times been told that the male bird disappears before building commences and does not return. Mr. Shortt, a naturalist now residing at Cordova Bay, said to me, when he heard of our nest, "Now you will have a splendid chance to see if the mate returns". In my anxiety to retrieve the bird's reputation, I wondered if my imagination had run away with me, but fortunately Mr. A.L. Meugens and Mr. E.E.G. White came to see our wee bird that Sunday morning and the latter, on my mentioning about the Rufous, said that he saw one at the bus terminus which is about 100 feet from our house.

The feeding of the babies was really something to behold; several visitors watched the performance with wonder as we did. The regurgitation having taken place immediately the mother alighted on the nest, she would vigorously jam her sharp bill down the throat of the baby, each carefully in turn, and would pack it in so



Male Rufous Hummingbird.

hard one marvelled that she did not pierce their tiny throats. It was interesting to watch them grow. One day a butterfly flew over the nest and they apparently mistook it for their mother; two little eager, open bills popped up ready for afternoon tea but the butterfly passed on leaving no food.

One afternoon, the boy baby, apparently intending to show his sister how clever he was, as boys so often do, climbed to the edge of the nest and was cavorting around when he lost his hold and had a very anxious time trying to regain it. Here is where the leafy verandah came in. We held our breath expecting to see him fall to the ground but his foot suddenly came in contact with the edge of the leaf and it being quite firm gave him the much needed help; he scrambled back into the nest and cuddled down low, looking at his sister with a "don't you dare laugh at me" look.

We wondered how they who are so much on the wing would learn to fly. It was accomplished quite easily; they both flew for long spells but with their feet holding tight to the edge of the nest. We hoped to see them finally take leave of their home and though we kept close and were up at 5:30 a.m., they had already gone leaving behind them the beautiful wee nest and many happy memories. The young birds were around the garden for several days. They were easily identified because they tired so easily and would rest on the rockeries, something one never sees the adults do.

Living in Saskatchewan until last December we had often expressed a keen desire to see a hummingbird's nest someday; how little did we think such joy as this would come our way! There is a hummingbird's nest at the Layritz nurseries which Mrs. Layritz tells us has been used three successive years. We are keeping our fingers crossed. Maybe our little lady will come back.

Mrs. L.M. Kidson lived in Cordova Bay. This article was reprinted from the October, 1945 issue of the Victoria Naturalist.

NOW — The Hummingbirds in Our Garden

by Lyndis Davis

We built our house on a lot in south Gordon Head which has the northern boundary of the University of Victoria along one side. There is heavy bush on the UVIC land which makes it an ideal place for many bird species, including hummingbirds which I have had the pleasure of watching over the years. I thought others might be interested in my "back yard" observations.

Just before we moved in, in November, I observed a male Anna's Hummingbird so I put up a feeder and he started using it immediately. For the first few months he would be on his territory for a few hours on mild days but did not come on cold days or early or late in the day. I presume that at these times he "migrated" to feeders in the warmer clime of Cadboro Bay. As spring approached and the weather warmed up he spent longer on his territory. In the spring he attracted a mate and they bred successfully. Once there were young, the male hummer left the area so that he was not competing with the female and young for the feeder. Rufous Hummingbirds came into the garden in the spring but were chased away from the feeder by the Anna's and did not stay to breed.

The male bird returned here late in the summer to take up his residency again. We got so much pleasure from hearing his "zip-zip" call and would locate him perched on a prominent twig

—continued following page

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high in a bush or tree with a clear view all around. When we worked in the garden he seemed to seek us out, perching and calling on a branch nearby, for minutes at a time, as if asking to be noticed.

In the third winter the territory must have been taken over by a different bird, because he did not leave when it got cold, but used the feeder every evening coming until it was almost dark. There was a severe cold spell in January with gale force northerly winds, to which we are very exposed. The poor bird came to the feeder for 2-3 days but the cold lasted for too long and he did not survive.

I missed my favourite bird that spring. However, a Rufous hummer took advantage of the locale and established his territory, attracted a mate, and they bred successfully. Late that summer another Anna's Hummingbird arrived to take up residence. The following spring a male Rufous Hummingbird arrived again and this time "held his ground" and I had both species breeding here. This was probably due to there being more feeders up as my neighbours had become interested in the birds; so it did not matter if the Anna's kept my feeder for his exclusive use — there were other sources of food nearby.

About two years ago, just before Christmas, my neighbour told me that she had a hummingbird coming to a Fuschia that was still in bloom on their sundeck. They went away for Christmas and took down the Fuschia but did not put up a feeder. On the Sunday after the Christmas Bird Count I was amazed to see a Rufous Hummingbird coming to my feeder. I called Bryan Gates to ask him to come and verify the sighting, which he did. He suggested putting up a second feeder in the hopes that the Anna's would not "defend" both feeders and the Rufous could use one. I saw him for a day or two after that but he was probably weakened by not having had a regular supply of food between the time my neighbour left and when I saw him.

The second feeder is outside our bedroom window and we can hear the vibrating of the wings of the Anna's when he comes to feed first thing in the morning and then he will perch in a shrub close by and call.

This summer for the first time I had four feeders up and have been rewarded by having all members of the families of both species of hummer using them and the garden. In previous years the males have not stayed around once the young were fledged but this year they were here into July.

One evening I observed a female Anna's use the feeder and then alight on a branch in the shrub close to the feeder where she was partly concealed by a leaf. She became very still, moving her head a little at first and then was motionless with her head pulled in and her bill cocked up slightly. Every now and then another bird came to the feeder less than six feet away from her but she remained motionless for half an hour. She then started moving her head very slowly and, after being there for 40 minutes, she flew to the feeder, drank and flew off. I presume that she was either comatose or asleep, as she did not react in any way to the activity around her.

These notes are not scientific and I hope I have not put too much of a "human" interpretation into my observations. However, I hope I have conveyed some of the pleasure that the hummingbirds have given us and how privileged I feel to have them sharing our garden.

Lyndis Davis is a long-time member of the Victoria Natural History Society. She is part of the Distribution team for the Victoria Naturalist and handles the sales of VNHS publications.

The Phantom Has Returned, But ...

(*Cephalanthera austinae* of Tod Creek)

by Kaye Suttill

"The day when this slender, waxy orchid is found may well be marked with a red letter upon your calendar, for it is one of the rarest of our flowers, as well as one of the most interesting....It is truly a Phantom, for which you may seek for years, and then, when least expected it suddenly stands before you in some dim forest aisle, a vision of soft white loveliness, that one seen can never be forgotten." So wrote Leslie Haskins of his Oregon Phantom Orchid.

And so it was for me, when I saw my first Phantom the 9th of June, 1992, on the Tod Creek trail. Ever since I'd heard of this *Cephalanthera austinae* living in the lower Fraser Valley, its only known location when the *Orchids of British Columbia* was published (Szcawinsky, 1959) I had longed to see it. Then when my friends, Elton and Mary Anderson (now Mumford) discovered and photographed it near Musgrove Landing on Salt Spring Island in the late 1970's, I wished more than ever to find this rare orchid, endemic to our Pacific Northwest.

After seeing my first Phantoms beside the trail, I began monitoring the area, checking it five times during June of 1992, until the 28th when the Orchids' flowering appeared to be on the wane.

Although not mentioned in *Flora of the Saanich Peninsula* (Szcawinsky and Harrison, 1973) this Phantom Orchid is known from some private property out in Saanich, where Enid Lemon made a beautiful photographic record of it, and I would hope it may live there in peace for always.

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Unlike the fate of some of our Tod Creek area Phantoms. All June of 1992 they survived an invasion of orchid seekers and lived compatibly with innumerable hikers and dog walkers. After I had been tracking thirty-nine Phantoms in various sites, I concluded the area provided ideal habitat for this rare species: disturbed, wettish deep coniferous woods, dense plant covered floor on weathered limestone — just the right stuff for their saprophytic rhizomes to feed on, nourishing plants by ones and twos and even up to fifteen in one clump.

However, *Cephalanthera austinae* is a Phantom, and Dr. Clark (Clark, 1973) said it flowers at intervals, sometimes only once in seventeen years. So I wondered what we would find this June of 1993. Although we revisited all our former sites several times, we only noted a total of fourteen orchids, less than half those in 1992. Our former group of fifteen was down to five. The tall, easiest seen Orchid No. 1, right above the trail, was not there on the 13th of June, a victim of human predation or had it just not come up this year? Phantom No. 2, across from No. 1, right at the edge of the trail, now intentionally or accidentally embraced by two branches of a Douglas fir, safely obscured we thought. Two days later it was still undisturbed at 11:30 a.m. But on the 20th of June the first thing that caught my eye was the branches tossed aside and the Phantom missing.

Now both Phantoms beside the trail are gone, the easiest accessible to see ones. These inconspicuous orchids may not have been desecrated by children or dog walkers, who had passed them by so often, but by adults who knew their rarity and so coveted them.

How, I ask myself, can such rare plant species be given a chance to survive against human odds? Are they only truly safe when not seen by people? "Who cares!", some said. I do care and only wish they could be looked at like watchers do birds, with joy just in the seeing. What will 1994 bring? We can only hope that these so special Phantoms, with a spot of gold in their throats, will somehow manage to renew their lives in the nurturing Earth of the Tod Creek area. Cherish the Earth.

Further Phantom Facts

Clark, Lewis J. 1973. *Wild flowers of British Columbia*. Gray's Publishing Limited, Sidney, British Columbia.

Report of the Auditor to the Members

I have examined the Balance Sheet of the Victoria Natural History Society as at December 31, 1992 and the Statements of Income and Expenditure for the year ended on that date. These financial statements are the responsibility of the Directors of the Society. My responsibility is to express an opinion of these financial statements based on my audit.

My examination has been conducted strictly for the benefit of the members of the Society. Due to statutory limitations on the authority of members of the Society of Management Accountants of British Columbia, this examination would not meet the requirement of a statutory audit should such an audit be required.

My examination included a general review of the accounting procedures and such tests of accounting records and other supporting evidence as I considered necessary in the

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Szcawinsky, Adam F. 1975. *The orchids of British Columbia*. British Columbia Provincial Museum, Victoria. First printing, 1959; third printing, 1975.
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Kaye Suttill describes herself as an "Earth Lover". She is a frequent contributor to the *Victoria Naturalist*.



Phantom Orchid, *Cephalanthera austinae*. (Photo: Kaye Suttill)

circumstances, except that in the case of revenue it is only possible to verify interest earned and it was otherwise not practicable to extend my examination beyond accounting for receipts as reported by the Society.

In my opinion, except for the effect of any judgement that might have been required had I been able to carry out a verification of certain revenue items (see preceding paragraph), these statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Society as at December 31, 1992 and the results of its operation for the year then ended in accordance with generally accepted accounting principals applied on a basis consistent with that of the preceding year.

Stephen Gentles, CMA
Victoria, May 3, 1993

**Victoria Natural History Society
Statements of Income and Expenditure
for the Year Ended December 31, 1992**

1991	General Account	1992	1991	Nehring Account	1992
	INCOME			INCOME	
\$10,600	Membership dues and donations	\$12,277			
4,635	FBCN Camp (net of costs)	-			
827	Publications (net of cost of goods sold)	1,086			
916	Interest	329	9,555	Interest	9,207
-	Miscellaneous income	59			
<u>16,978</u>		<u>13,751</u>	<u>9,555</u>		<u>9,207</u>
	EXPENDITURE			EXPENDITURE	
3,876	Naturalist-production and mailing (net of advertising and subscription revenues)	5,808	3,925	Conservation Projects Account	4,540
250	Cost of meetings	250	-	Donation-Nature Trust of British Columbia	1,000
681	Postage and stationary	1,076			
2,696	Affiliation fees	3,720			
933	Telephone, Bird Alert system and information service	1,135			
150	Audit and accountancy	-			
877	Miscellaneous	1,046			
<u>9,463</u>		<u>13,035</u>	<u>3,925</u>		<u>5,540</u>
7,515	EXCESS INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE	716	5,630	EXCESS INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE	3,667
19,009	Funds on hand at beginning of year	10,952	90,729	Funds on hand at beginning of year	105,432
(15,572)	Less: Transfer to Nehring and Scholarship accounts	-	9,073	Increase in funding -Transfer from General Fund	-
<u>\$ 10,952</u>	FUND BALANCE	<u>\$ 11,668</u>	<u>\$ 105,432</u>	FUND BALANCE	<u>\$ 109,099</u>

**Victoria Natural History Society
Statements of Income and Expenditure
for the Year Ended December 31, 1992**

1991	Scholarship Account	1992	1991	Conservation Project Account	1992
	INCOME			INCOME	
\$1,781	Interest	\$2,157	\$2,209	Donations	\$612
78	Donations	2,880	2,209		612
<u>1,859</u>		<u>5,037</u>			
	EXPENDITURE			EXPENDITURE	
1,500	Scholarship and Bursaries	1,700	2,500	Donation-Swan Lake Sanctuary	2,500
			292	Office Equipment	-
			2,100	Martindale Flats	-
			-	Blind-Quick's Bottom	880
			753	Miscellaneous	522
<u>1,500</u>		<u>1,700</u>	<u>5,645</u>		<u>3,902</u>
359	EXCESS INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE	3,337	(3,436)	EXCESS INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE	(3,290)
18,643	Funds on hand at beginning of year	25,501	(489)	Funds on hand at beginning of year	-
6,499	Increase in funding -Transfer from General Fund	-	3,925	Increase in funding -Transfer from Nehring Account	4,540
<u>\$ 25,501</u>	FUND BALANCE	<u>\$ 28,838</u>	<u>\$ 0</u>	FUND BALANCE	<u>\$ 1,250</u>

NOTES:

1. It is the policy of the Society that:
 - i) The General Account shall be self sustaining.
 - ii) The Nehring and Scholarship Accounts shall be retained as endowment funds.
 - iii) Accounting shall be performed on an accrual basis.
 - iv) Insofar as it is appropriate, the first charge on income shall be to provide for the protection of the Capital of the Nehring and Scholarship Funds from erosion of value due to inflation during the year.

**Victoria Natural History Society
Balance Sheet as at December 31, 1993**

Total Dec 31, 1991		Total Dec 31, 1992	General Account	Newring Account	Scholarship Account	Conservation Account
ASSETS						
\$ 6,638	Cash at bank	\$ 5,549	\$ 456	\$ 2,546	\$ 1,297	\$1,250
5,895	Term deposits	6,121	503	4,186	1,432	-
50,642	Short term investments at cost (market value 1992: \$58,882 1991: \$52,581)	56,332	4,624	38,535	13,173	-
1,633	Accounts receivable	2,183	2,183	-	-	-
2,153	Stock of books	8,678	8,678	-	-	-
77,059	Long term investments at cost (market value 1992: \$78,578 1991: \$80,411)	77,059	291	63,832	12,936	-
<u>\$ 144,020</u>		<u>\$ 155,922</u>	<u>\$ 16,735</u>	<u>\$ 109,099</u>	<u>\$ 28,838</u>	<u>\$ 1,250</u>
LIABILITIES						
\$ 699	Accounts payable	\$ 2,515	\$ 2,515	-	-	-
1,436	Membership and subscriptions paid in advance	2,552	2,552	-	-	-
141,885	FUND BALANCE	150,855	11,668	\$109,099	\$28,838	\$1,250
<u>\$ 144,020</u>		<u>\$ 155,922</u>	<u>\$ 16,735</u>	<u>\$ 109,099</u>	<u>\$ 28,838</u>	<u>\$ 1,250</u>

ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD

_____ W.G. Macgregor, Director

_____ G.R. Devey, Director

The Owl and the Tanager

by David Allinson

It was one of those perfect spring evenings. On a whim, on June 7, 1993, I talked a family member into joining me on a post-dinner jaunt to Thomas S. Francis Regional Park in search of a much-discussed Western Tanager nest.

Upon arriving at 7:00 p.m. at the nature house of the park, we found ourselves alone. However, I still managed to curse the noise from the traffic along Munn Road, which made ear-birding difficult. As we stood below a large oak tree at the parking lot, I soon heard the "brrrdt" calls of a Western Tanager and found the female right above us. I immediately noted that she seemed agitated as she called continuously and moved about nervously. At first I thought our presence near a nest was cause for her alarm. But soon my eyes were drawn towards a movement above her in the oak. In my binoculars, I could see the distinctive shape of a nest in the fork of a branch and suspected that I'd found the male.

Almost simultaneously, my mother and I discerned a brownish, chunky bird with its back to us at the edge of the nest, and partially hidden by oak leaves. My first thought was that this was a fledgling tanager, followed immediately with the feeling that it may be a Sharp-shinned Hawk, when I focused on its long tail and relative size. Then, in that instant when all birders experience the split-second cognitive process of identification, "it" turned to face us... With glowering, yellow eyes and a bloody beak, a Northern Pygmy-Owl finished off the last of the Western Tanager nestlings (seen only hours earlier by other observers)! As if on cue, the female tanager bravely charged the owl, chased it off the nest, and out over the road they flew into the forest. We could hear robins, chickadees, and finches all around giving alarm calls as the owl departed.

Stuttering and quivering with excitement, we recalled the experience to each other, but from different perspectives. My mother quite frankly was dismayed by the incident, but perhaps was more shocked at the apparent glee and enthusiastic exclamations! You see, I'd always wanted to see a Northern Pygmy-Owl in daylight, having seen many only in flashlight beams or as a silhouettes at dawn or dusk atop trees. To top it off, the whole incident had taken place only 30 feet away.

The female tanager returned to the oak tree, calling constantly and preening, but never venturing too close to the nest itself. I soon became concerned that the male had perished as well, as there was no sign of him. Finally, after 20 minutes, the resplendent male arrived with a very full crop and bill full of insects. Not that one should anthropomorphize, but he appeared to show great concern upon alighting at the edge of the nest. It would appear that it was the female's task to mind the young, feeding them sporadically while the male collected a last, large meal for

the young before nightfall.

We watched as the pair continued to call and forage together in the oak and nearby trees before departing west into the depths of the park.

While sad in one way, I recognized that the behaviour of the owl was natural and surely this happens more often than we care to know. At least the young birds died for a reason (probably to feed young owls) and not at the greedy paws of some semi-feral cat. The Western Tanager nest was exposed, perhaps too inviting to innumerable predators anyway. In addition, it was early enough in the season for the pair to successfully re-nest.

Both of us left the park excited—I'd seen a favoured species in daylight and my mother (a novice birder) was pleased to get two lifebirds in less than 30 seconds! We felt privileged to have been witness to such an event and were not quick to judge the actions of the owl (or the "tardy" male tanager!). Birding is as much about observing behaviour as it is about identifying new or rare species. For all of what we already know about birds, there remains as much yet to be understood. Both amateur and professional ornithologists can help add to the collective knowledge by observing and documenting the movements, behaviour and natural history of our birdlife.

David Allinson is Vice-president of the Victoria Natural History Society and spends much of his spare time birding, reading about birds, or dreaming about birding in exotic locales.

TRIBUTE TO DOUG TURNBULL

Doug Turnbull, honorary life member of the Victoria Natural History Society, died June 23, 1993. Doug was an avid birder and was President of our Society from 1975-1977, and again in 1978-79. He also served as Chairman of the Program and Scholarship committees and as Vice-President. Doug and his wife Elsie were members of the Tuesday Group, a weekly outing of birders.

Doug was a Director of the B.C. Federation of Naturalists and the Canadian Nature Federation, as well as founding President of the Friends of the Provincial Museum. He was also involved with the Arts Community, serving on the Board of Directors of the Victoria Symphony Society for four years and on the local committee of the Victoria International Festival for two years.

Doug was active in community, municipal and provincial affairs. He served as Reeve, Municipality of Tadanac in 1944-45, was President of the Association of Kootenay and Boundary Municipalities in 1945 and Chairman of the Board of Management, Trail-Tadanac Hospital from 1946 to 1949. He was the MLA for Rossland/Trail from 1949-1952 and served as Minister of Health and Welfare, Minister of Trade and Industry, and Minister of Municipal Affairs during that period.

He was always helpful on advice as to how best to approach a problem. Doug led a full and productive life and will be missed by this Society and his many friends.

Birding Mount Tolmie Park

by Keith Taylor

The comforting warmth of sunlight is seldom felt on the skin while walking the dark trails through the rain-drenched, cathedral-like west coast forests. Seeking the sunlit slopes of drier, deciduous Arbutus and Garry Oak communities has always been a delightful alternative.

Atop Mount Tolmie, elevated above the surrounding metropolis of Victoria, the picket-sized morsel of magical California-like habitat seems misplaced. Here, among sun-soaked Garry Oaks, chrome-yellow Broom, flaxen grasses, and cadmium-orange California poppies, one can breathe perfumed air amidst magnificent scenic surroundings and bird with great expectations: over 130 species have been recorded along the excellent network of trails.

Small navigators make big mistakes—birders have learned that they can intercept some of these strays by positioning themselves at strategic points for the everpresent possibility of seeing these vagrants—Mount Tolmie is one of these places. As migrant passerines are confronted by southerly low pressure systems bringing adverse weather, “fall-outs” occur. As these ideal conditions exist the park then becomes attractive to these migrants, the small navigators often seeking the

highest point of land—especially when confronted with a water crossing. The prime season for weather systems and migrants to coincide creating these fall-outs is during the months of May and early June; at other times, especially during sunny weather, there will be few birds. For visiting birders the park has a fair selection of western specialties, for locals it provides the opportunity of experiencing passerine fall-outs and the chance of locating some wayward vagrant from the east or south.

Mount Tolmie has had its share of strays over the years. Most recently, daily morning excursions have brought to the forefront just how great the potential can be for rarities. In the last three years two records of Ash-throated Flycatcher, and single records of Tennessee Warble, Indigo Bunting, Lark Sparrow, and Smith's Longspur have been made. Both Western and Eastern Kingbirds are fairly regular, with Western Kingbird seen annually. Mount Tolmie boasts as the Island's mecca for Lazuli Bunting, recorded during May and June the last few years. This vagrant can appear each spring for a few years, then mysteriously disappear just as quickly for a number of years before reappearing. Mount Tolmie also boasts as one of the better sites to see Anna's Hummingbirds in the “wild” in Canada, with four males holding territories during the height of the breeding season during March through June.

Mount Tolmie can be accessed from either Cedar Hill Cross Road or Richmond Road, just south and west of the University of Victoria. From Cedar Hill Cross Road, turn at the park sign onto the unnamed road to the summit. Starting from the summit parking lot, walk east towards the large cement reservoir used for water storage. A wide chip trail starts off from the south side leading downhill; soon a branch trail should be followed to the left. During their April migration period, Townsend's Solitaires are regularly seen in this area. Usually a soft *eek* betrays their presence as they call from the tips of the Douglas-firs in the neighbouring properties; a dozen can be seen in a good year, with six on an average year. A male Anna's Hummingbird holds territory in the short Garry Oaks along the left side of the path where the path reaches a “T” junction at the bottom of the hill. This individual is only present during the height of breeding. A Smith's Longspur was present in the rocky, short grass areas of the hill during mid-September of 1990.

A short jog to the left, then right at the bottom of the hill, will bring you to an area of moist deciduous scrub where the usual breeding species are Bewick's Wren, Rufous-sided Towhee, and Song Sparrow: all lurk quietly next to fallen logs or in shady recesses in the tangled vegetation. The odd House Wren (rare in this sector of the city) has been seen in late April/early May with a pair staying to nest in 1991. It is in this area that a pair of Least Flycatcher nested in 1970 and the first confirmed record of Tennessee Warbler was made for the checklist area. Long-eared Owl have been found roosting in the Douglas-firs or dense brush close to the homes; a pair of Cooper's Hawk nest in the vicinity. Mount Tolmie may be one of the better sites for Western Wood-Pewee, which are regular migrants during mid-May through early June, rarely non-breeding individuals can be found through summer. Hermit Thrush and Lincoln's Sparrow are very common migrants during their migration “windows”. An Ash-throated Flycatcher was seen briefly in September of 1992. This sector of the park can be alive with flycatchers, vireos, warblers, grosbeaks, tanagers, and sparrows during drop-outs. Downy Woodpecker, Olive-sided, Hammond's and Pacific-slope Flycatchers, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, Bush-

tit, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Winter Wren, Golden-crowned and Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Swainson's Thrush (uncommon), and Wilson's Warblers, Common Yellowthroat, Fox, Golden-crowned, and White-crowned Sparrows, Dark-eyed Junco, Brown-headed Cowbird, Purple Finch, and Red Crossbill all occur in season.

Proceed along the chip trail in a northerly direction. Take the first less distinct trail on your right through an area of Broom and short Garry Oaks. Soon you will come to a fork, keep left. The Garry Oak with the heavy dead snag close to the home is a “station” for a reliable male Anna's Hummingbird; he can be seen virtually at any time throughout the year (although post breeding dispersal takes place about mid-July and Anna's Hummingbirds can be difficult to find again until early September). Listen for his high squeaking song. If you are fortunate he will treat you to his display flight, breaking all the laws of aerodynamics. Comical little knob-topped California Quail are common during the summer months, retreating to neighbouring residential backyards during winter. A second unconfirmed Ash-throated Flycatcher was discovered here in late May of 1990.

Follow the path as it turns back towards the west where it will soon rejoin the chip trail. An uncooperative Indigo Bunting was found near this junction in late May of 1992 and a Lark Sparrow frequented the area in September of 1990. Savannah Sparrows are common migrants among the arid hillsides with the odd Short-eared Owl encountered in grass-clumps during October (Victoria's two summer records come from Mount Tolmie). This is another area where Townsend's Solitaire occur each April and although kingbirds can be found anywhere on Mount Tolmie, they are found here more regularly. Chipping Sparrow breed each year in the vicinity, their streaky juveniles appearing during mid-July.

Follow the chip trail downhill, turning left at the first junction with another chip trail (if you continue straight ahead you can join other trails around the university grounds). This trail will cross the paved “no name” road that leads up and over Mount Tolmie. The path then turns south and uphill to an area

of lawn containing a picnic table. Walk over to the rocks near the picnic table where there is a fantastic vista of the surrounding city lying in a maze of dramatic hills and intervening valleys. The dry hillside above is “the” locality for finding Lazuli Bunting in Victoria. Another “interior” species, Nashville Warbler, was also recorded here. American Kestrels are frequently observed sitting on snags in April and September. The surrounding Garry Oaks always have good numbers of migrant Black-headed Grosbeak and jewel-like Western Tanagers each spring, but during drop-outs as many as 50 of each of these species have been recorded in a single morning. Evening Grosbeaks are heard flying over in winter on occasion, while in summer they can be quite common. Walk the chip trail towards the summit. At the large gravel area walk along the cliff edge checking the Blackberry brambles for sparrows. In winter the odd White-throated Sparrow occurs with the Golden-crowned Sparrows, Dark-eyed Juncos, and House Finch flocks. Winter is usually unchangeable on the mountain with few species, although Townsend's Solitaire has been recorded.

Back at the summit parking lot, check the rocky areas, especially at the northern edge of the railing, where Horned Lark, American Pipit, and a surprising number of Lapland Longspurs forage each autumn; Snow Bunting is a real rarity here! Although the park is not a hawk watching site, raptors can be well represented, silently soaring overhead on still wings. Bald Eagle, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, and Merlin can be seen fairly regularly especially during migrations. Watch the open skies for aerial feeders such as flocks of swallows: Violet-green Swallows nest at man-made nest boxes in the neighbourhood. Both Black and Vaux's Swift cut across the spectacular vistas on sickle wings at unimaginable speeds during summer as storm fronts pass. Diurnal flights of migrating Common Nighthawk are seen from the summit during August as they use the Mount Tolmie - Ten Mile Point corridor, hence crossing Haro Straits to San Juan Island (many raptors also use this route).

Keith Taylor is a wildlife artist and the author of “A Birder's Guide to Vancouver Island.”



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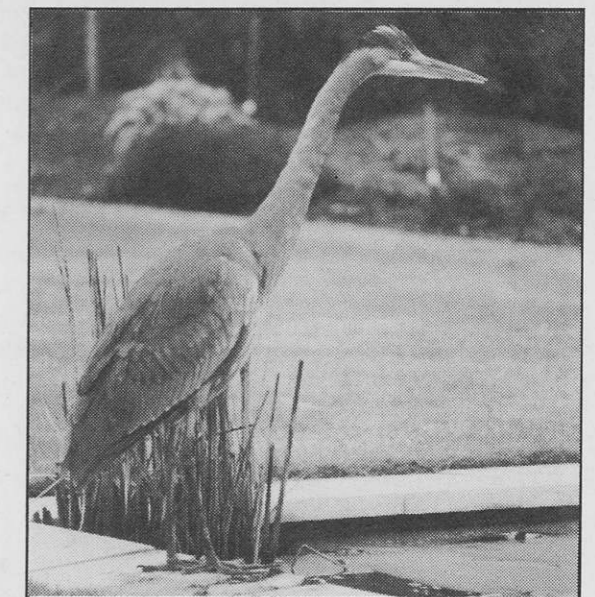
The Goldfish Thief

by Lyndis Davis

The photograph is of a Great Blue Heron that is a frequent visitor to our garden pond since he discovered that he can catch the goldfish in it. His visits usually occur in late fall and in the spring. He is very stealthy and hard to discourage.

We have to resort to putting wire netting out over the pond so that he cannot reach the water. This photo was taken through the bedroom window when I managed to creep up to it with my camera.

I left the window to move to the one in the next room and by the time I reach there he had gone.



Camosun "Enviro-techs" Recognized by Industry Association

by Linda Billings and Joe Materi

This spring, two Environmental Technology students at Camosun College, Linda Billings and Joe Materi, presented their winning paper on sustainability to the 21st annual conference of the B.C. Water & Waste Association (BCWWA). Their project compared the environmental aspects of two types of coffee filters currently on the market: paper and reusable metal filters. The comparison showed metal filters to be the more environmentally-benign practice and illustrated the role of technology in protecting the environment. The competition included students from university engineering schools and colleges throughout the province.

The award was a boost to the fledgling program at Camosun, which had its first intake of students in the fall of 1992. The program is designed to provide broad scientific

knowledge, emphasizing communication and computer skills. As well, there are ample opportunities for practical, "hands-on" learning and experience through spring sessions and co-operative work terms. The hope is that the program will result in graduates who are versatile, fully employable [...and "jolly-in-the-rain."]

The sustainability project was typical of assignments within the program, which challenge students to look at environmental problems both realistically and in depth. Although it is a small scale technology, the research into the production of reusable metal coffee filters showed that large decreases in water consumption, resource use, and waste production are possible. This and other projects proved that seeking alternative practices can be more than just academic exercises.

The conference itself, hosted in Vernon, had environmental stewardship and technology transfer as its two main themes. The BCWWA is increasingly called upon by the public to become involved in water management issues. As well, manufacturers are responding to environmental concerns with technology such as chemical/sludge recovery systems and water conservation devices.

The initiatives taken by colleges, industry associations, and individuals are all part of the environmental solution.

The Victoria Natural History Society offers an annual scholarship to the Environmental Technology Program at Camosun College, which will begin its third year this fall.



Students of Camosun College's Environmental Technology Program gaining hands-on experience in sampling.

Serving in a War Zone

by Margaret Nicholls

Some years ago my husband and I put up a nesting box in a carefully selected spot under the eaves of our house. We waited hopefully and to our great pleasure two swallows moved in, after giving the place a careful once-over. In the fullness of time they produced a healthy crop of babies. To our even greater delight the birds, or their offspring, have returned every year and, apart from keeping a wary eye on the cat who seemed to know she had no chance of a swallow supper, we all co-existed quite happily.

And then two years ago disaster struck in the shape of a family of marauding wrens. At first I thought the wrens charming with their delightful song and cheerful demeanour. Their charms quickly faded when they turned murderous and destroyed the swallow's young family with an efficiency that took the cat's breath away.

We were upset and even contemplated removing the box but decided against it and vowed to protect the swallows as well as we could, although what we could have done against these supersonic dive bombers is difficult to image. Two rather nervous years passed with two successful broods and no wrens doing their Jack the Ripper act and we relaxed a little.

Enviro-tech Co-op

by Rhonda Korol

Since January, 1993, students from the Environmental Technology Co-operative Education Program at Camosun College have gained work experience and contributed to projects including the sampling of storm water discharges along the Victoria Shoreline, monitoring elk populations using radio telemetry, investigating aluminum uptake in bulrushes, and mapping British Columbia's rare plants and animals. These work opportunities have occurred throughout British Columbia and as far away as Yellowknife, Northwest Territories.

By taking courses in a number of areas, including biology, geography, chemistry and geology, Environmental Technology students learn a multi-disciplinary approach to environmental assessment. Training in field sampling techniques, technical writing, and the use of Geographic Information Systems provides the students with skills that are readily transferable to the workplace.

Environmental Technology is the newest of several Co-operative Education Programs at Camosun. Co-op is the integration of academic study with periods of related work experience. Students alternate between on campus study and full time employment with co-operating employers in business, industry and government.

Students from the Environmental Technology Program are available for work terms twice a year—January to April and July to December, with the first graduates expected in April 1994.

If you would like more information about the Environmental Technology Co-op Program, contact Rhonda Korol at Camosun College, 370-3425.

This year we were again on full alert for, as the swallows inspected their usual box, a pair of wrens simultaneously checked the neighbouring unoccupied box. We had put up a second box in the hope that another pair of swallows would move in. "Safety in numbers" we said hopefully. So much for anthropomorphism—we finished up with one box of swallows and another of wrens. We decided to let nature take its course, and watched with some trepidation as the pairs prepared to nest.

The wrens tried some bullying dives on the box and round the swallows heads but the swallows were not intimidated and returned the zooming dives with interest. Soon the birds were too preoccupied with feeding their babies to worry about their neighbours and all sabre-rattling gave way to demands for food from the hungry growing broods.

The only real casualty, as far as we know, was a half-fledged wren found, untouched by claw or beak, lying on the sun deck, obviously pushed out of the nest by rambunctious siblings. The only other psychologically hurt animal was the cat, who is in the midst of a nervous breakdown at the thought of all that dinner on the wing far above her head. Just to add to the cat's distress and the hazards of venturing out on the sundeck without a hard hat, at least one family of hummingbirds had moved in not far from the swallows.

They have all left now and relative calm is restored, although Pearly Mae, the cat, is still inclined to sit hopefully under the boxes muttering wildly under her breath. We await next year with mixed feelings. On one hand it's worse than having children—at least the kids didn't actually eat each other. On the other hand maybe the birds can teach us all a lesson. That it is possible for different ethnic groups to live, if not love, together if they can stop fighting and concentrate on the important things of life.

Margaret Nicholls and her husband Alan live in Saanich and are long time avid members of the Victoria Natural History Society.

Bequest to VNHS

The Victoria Natural History Society has been the recipient of a bequest from Alice Myrtle Hay. Mrs. Hay was a Society member and a long time school teacher in Victoria.

Alice grew up in Victoria and after obtaining her teaching certificate was assigned to a school in Terrace, B.C. where she was introduced to children of many different backgrounds. With this experience Alice realized that teaching children was what she wanted to do. After spending five years in Terrace, Alice moved to Ocean Falls where she married and adopted a daughter.

Alice returned to Victoria, teaching first at Lampson Street in Esquimalt and then at Rock Heights. She loved children and it showed in her tireless efforts to find new ways to stimulate their minds and imagination. She was an excellent teacher and many of her students kept in touch with her as she watched their progress in life. Alice was also very interested in the history of Victoria. She took great pleasure in showing friends the many beautiful buildings and land marks of the city and in their restoration and preservation.

Alice Hay passed away on November 12, 1992. She left behind a daughter, four grandchildren and a great granddaughter. To them all she left a legacy of knowledge and an interest in life.

The amount of the bequest was approximately \$30,000. The Directors of the Victoria Natural History Society believe that an appropriate use of at least part of these funds would be to establish a scholarship or bursary for students of natural history or in the environment studies program at the University of Victoria.

Life in Pholad Holes

By Bill Merilees

The first question that needs to be answered here is "What is a pholad hole?" The obvious answer is a hole made by a pholad, with a pholad being one of a number of clam species in the family Pholadidae that are capable of excavating holes in soft rock or hard clay. Excavating is the operational word here, as movements of the shell are believed to be the method by which these holes are created.

In British Columbia, three pholad species are known, two in the genus *Penitella* and one *Zirphaea* species. Conrad's Piddock, *Penitella conradi*, is the least common of these. So far it has only been found in very small specimens, burrowing into the shells of the Japanese Abalone, *Haliotis kamtschatkana*, along the outer west coast of Vancouver Island. The other two species, the Flap-tipped Piddock, *Penitella penita*, and the Rough Piddock, *Zirfaea pilsbryi*, are quite common. The former is found in fine sandstones throughout the Gulf Islands and the latter in blue clay. The author apologizes to the reader for the use of scientific names, but for marine clams and snails common names are still far from standard (see reference listed below).

The cavities of the Flap-tipped Piddock are a very distinctive flash shape (see photo). Once the clam has settled and started boring, it quickly becomes imprisoned within the

matrix of the cavity. When the clam dies and its shell disintegrates these cavities then become home to a variety of marine creatures. When these animals are clams or snails, the burrows become a straight jacket that often determines the shape of the new occupant's shell.

On a recent trip to LeClair Point in Hesquiat Harbour a number of species of clams, a slipper shell, and a hoof shell were found in pholad burrows (see photo). To better appreciate their distorted form they should be seen or illustrated in three dimensions. The jingle shell, due to its normally wide and flat shape, is particularly distorted.

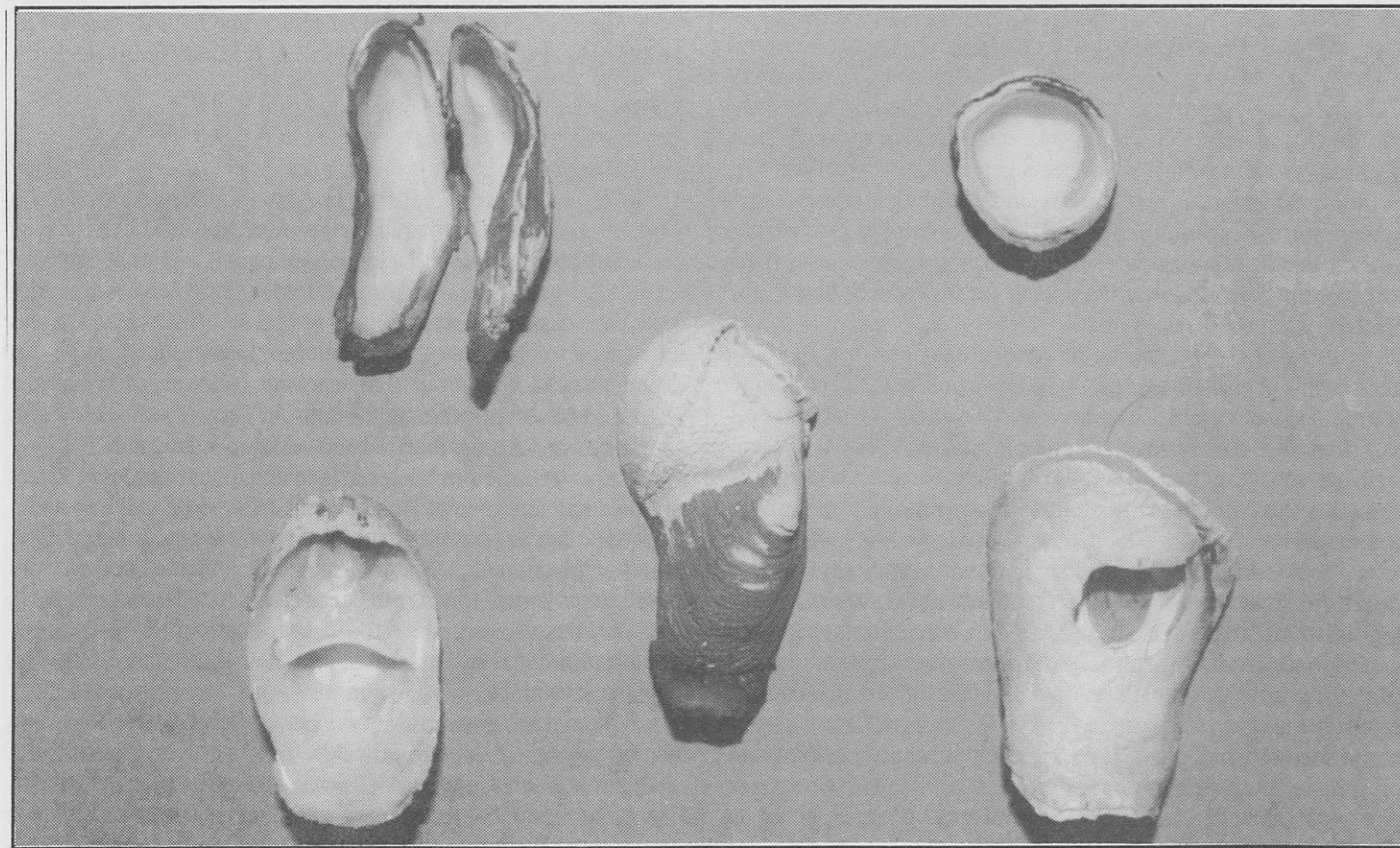
When walking Gulf Island or west coast beaches, particularly during low tides, I advise keeping an eye open for rocks with 5 mm sized holes or flask shaped depressions. These quite well could be pholad burrows. Have a really good look at them. With luck, the pholad, or one of the animals mentioned above, might be home.

Acknowledgements:

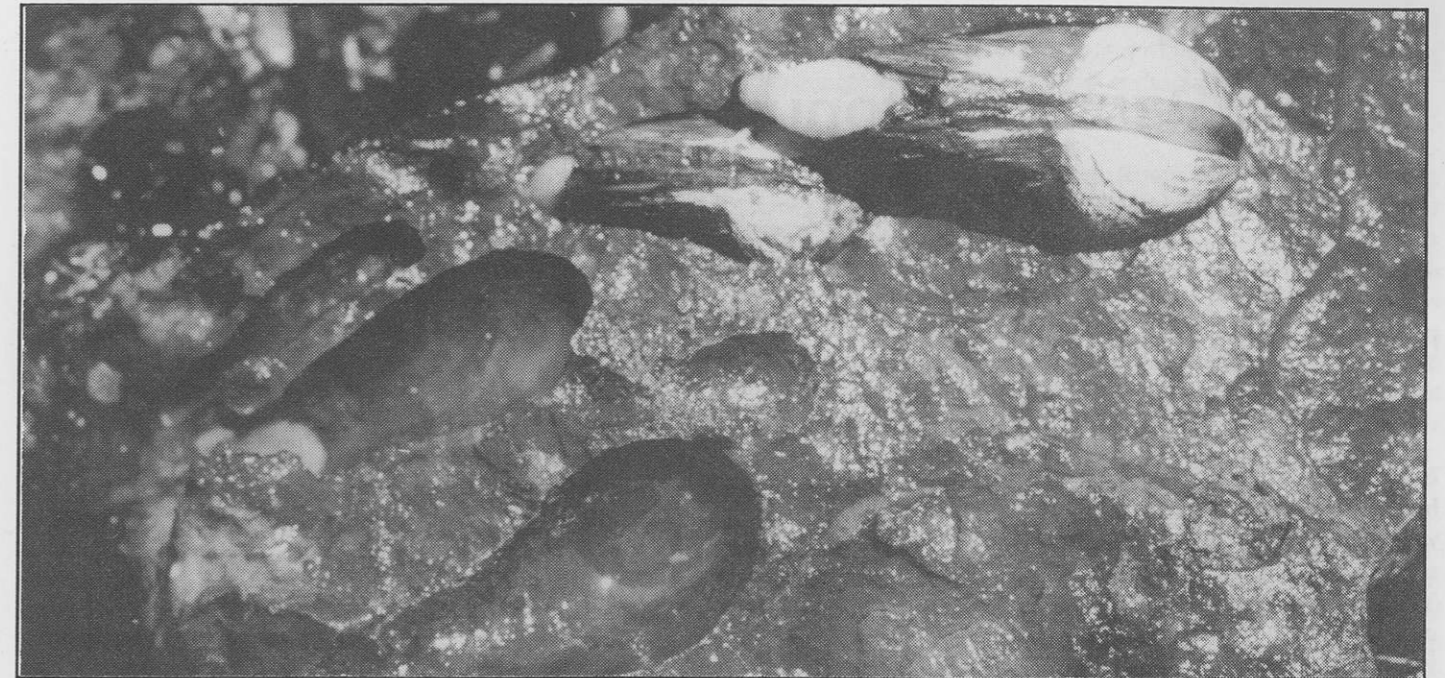
Special thanks are due to Peter Buckland of Boat Basin, our host and guide on this west coast visit, to Stuart Merilees — my enthusiastic travelling companion, and to Dr. Dan Quayle whose help, assistance and incredible knowledge simplified the task of correctly identifying the species collected.

References:

Abbott, R.T., 1974, *American seashells*. Second edition. Van Nostrand Reinhold, New York, 663 p.



Occupants of pholad burrows at LeClair Point, Hesquiat Harbour. Left to right, (top row) False Pacific Jingle, *Pododesmus macroschisma*; Flap-tipped Piddock, *Penitella penita*; Western White Slipper-shell, *Crepidula nummaria*. Bottom row — Pacific White Hoof-shell, *Hipponix cranoides*; Arctic Saxicave, *Hiatella arctica*. (Photo: Bill Merilees)



Clam and burrow of the Flap-tipped Piddock, *Penitella penita*, Dunlop Point, Hornby Island. (Photo: Bill Merilees)

Project Pigeon Watch

by Margaret Barker

Despite all the pigeons and people who coexist in cities, we know surprisingly little about the behaviour of these common birds. That could change when the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology enlists inner city school children to watch pigeons (aka Rock Doves) for science.

"Project Pigeon Watch" is one of three science-education experiments designed by researchers at the Lab to teach scientific methods to thousand of amateurs across the country while providing professionals with data they could not gather otherwise. "Project Tanager" focuses on the breeding habitat requirements of the four tanager species that nest in North America. The Seed Preference Test examines food preferences of ground-feeding birds.

Ornithology is one of the few scientific disciplines that welcomes and relies on the contributions of amateurs. For example, the Cornell Lab already has more than 8,000 Project FeederWatch volunteers throughout North America surveying the birds that come to feeders in winter. Other volunteers make bird sound recordings for our Library of Natural Sounds.

The National Science Foundation (NSF) has provided an \$800,000 grant to help fund these science education experiments. To the NSF, which educates the public to the ways of science, the idea of deploying thousands of observant eyes and ears in the field made sense. Educators at the Cornell Lab devised the National Science Experiments to involve as many people as possible — at different levels of ornithological sophistication — and to answer questions that puzzle even the most knowledgeable birder.

Does the colour of a pigeon's feathers affect its breeding and feeding success?

Look closely at a flock of city pigeons, and you'll see that they

come in different colours and feather patterns. They're all 'colour morphs' of the same species, but we don't know if coloration gives advantages in day-to-day life. For example, do dark pigeons have better luck courting during a snowy winter? Or do 'blue-bar' pigeons dominate other colour types when they're feeding? The students can help us to answer these questions.

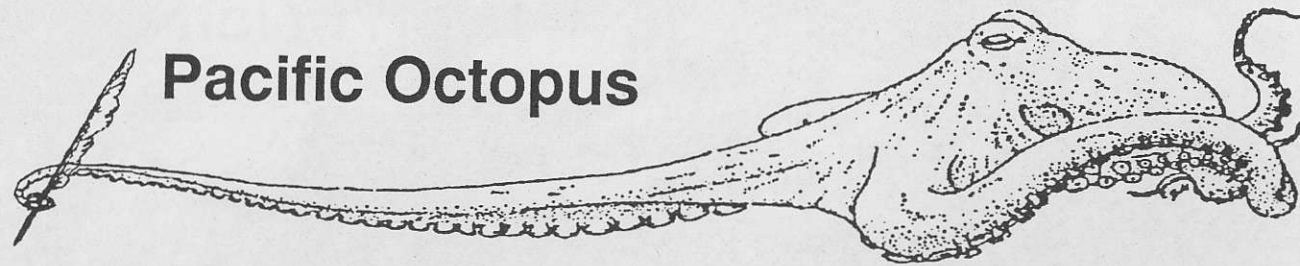
What are the effects of forest fragmentation on breeding tanagers?

Tanagers raise their young in North America but they winter south of the Mexican border, and they need separate habitats for breeding, wintering and resting during migration. Forest breeding sites in North America are vulnerable to activities like logging and real estate development. The ornithologists want birds club members, forest managers, and other volunteers to survey forested sites of varying sizes, looking for signs that tanagers are successfully rearing young.

Are there regional differences in the foods that ground-feeding birds prefer to eat at feeders?

"The National Science Experiment Seed Preference Test is the only large-scale food preference study of its kind," said Diane Tessaglia of the Lab's Bird Population Studies program. "If we can find out which food each species prefers to eat, we may be able to modify our bird-feeding gardens to attract the special we want most." A 1992 Project FeederWatch pilot study that polled 2,265 volunteer observers in 50 states and 11 Canadian provinces found that, continent-wide, ground-feeding birds dislike red milo, a common constituent of commercial feeds. A surprising percentage of ground-feeding sparrows, however, are fond of black-oil sunflower seeds.

Margaret Barker is education outreach coordinator at the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. For more information, or to participate in any of these projects, contact the National Science Experiments, Cornell Lab of Ornithology, 159 Sapsucker Woods Road, Ithaca, New York 14850, (607) 254-2427.



Pacific Octopus

by Lynton Burger

Just imagine it is spring in the Walbran Valley. All around you there are the signs of renewal and growth. Bursting between the leaf litter are new shoots; ferns are brisling with tender fronds. You are camping in this convicted valley to get closer to what may not be there when the next season comes. You wake up to the buzz-buzz of mosquitoes. You are happy that they are there and you are here inside your cosy little tent. You lie in your little tent in the big forest and you reflect on the awakening of life that is happening around you. The silence of the still forest is punctuated by the affirmations of a new season. The start of the cycle if you like, a cycle that is timeless, you can only guess at it's beginning and you don't know if it will end.

You hear a scuttling in the undergrowth; a rustling of the leaves, then silence. A few seconds later it resumes and it pricks your curiosity. A mouse perhaps? You get up to investigate, waving away the mosquitoes as you leave the safety of your tent.

Before you is the scuttler. An elongate, brown bodied creature whose skin appears soft and slightly shiny. It is about half-a-foot in length and is keeping quite still, but obviously aware of you. In it's mouth is a slug, the kind you have seen often on your walks in the forest. The predator, a Northwestern Salamander, stares up at you with small, brown eyes that seem to be about to pop out of it's head. As you bend down for a closer look, it drops the slug and rises up on it's legs, lowers it's head and lashes it's tail back and forth. Abruptly it stops this curious display and scurries into the undergrowth.

Later that day as you are ambling along a forest path, breathing in the mossy fresh air, marvelling at the huge old trees as they stretch up and up through the forest canopy, you stumble upon a quiet pond, lying still, almost hidden by ferns and fallen branches. "Aha!" you think, "this is where the mosquitoes breed." Then a movement in the water catches your attention and you creep closer. In the water are two adult salamanders engaged in what must be either copulation or mortal combat. As you observe them you decide on the former; this is clearly a case of amplexus (mating embrace). The salamander that you have now determined is the male, is clasping the female from above and is rubbing his chin over her nose repeatedly. As you stare in fascination, the male releases the female and swims to the bottom of the pond where he deposits at least two dozen small, round spermatophores. The females follows him and picks them up in her cloaca in order to fertilise them. The mating ritual over, the two salamanders slither from the pond and disappear into the forest.

It is only two months later that you return to the Walbran, for now the future of the valley seems more precarious than ever following the Clayoquot decision and you feel the need,

almost a quiet desperation, to just be there before it's all gone. "What is it?" you wonder as you saunter beneath bows of ancient trees that have filtered the light of a thousand summers as they are doing now, the shafts of light angling down in the green. The answer is right here, you realise. This, all of this ... is it. This timeless web of life and natural death, this whole, this tangled spread of growth and rotting vegetation, this whole ecosystem is it and it cannot be replaced once lost. You cannot plant old growth forest. The truth is as simple as that. A group of backpackers appears on the path ahead of you, heading in the opposite direction, you greet them as they pass. They are part of it too, you realize.

You stop your pondering as you near that pond where you saw the salamanders mating. You almost miss the pond in the dense green undergrowth. You part the ferns and the spiders webs to look down into the clear water. There it is ... a gelatinous mass of eggs, the size of a baseball, lies in the pond attached to a dead branch. Kneeling down on the spongy floor you take a closer look.

Now you can make out the individual eggs, the size of large marbles. The eggs are in different stages of development. Some are still dark, round eggs in the egg mass while others are tiny salamanders, wriggling in their jelly-like cocoons. You notice the feathery external gills protruding from just behind their heads. "How do they breath inside there?" you wonder. Then you see that each individual egg has a green tinge to it and when you look even closer you see that the inside of each egg capsule is coated with algae.

Later you learn that the algae provide the developing young with oxygen and in turn the algae may obtain nutrients from the egg mass and/or from the larvae waste material. No one really knows. This aspect of it hasn't been studied fully, you learn. (Yet another important reason to preserve our forests—we just don't know enough about what's in them.) You also learn that once the larvae hatch out they can develop into 'regular' adults like the ones you saw, in which case they leave the pond and go about their business in the moist, leafy forest floor, or they can remain in the pond and develop into what are called permanent, neotenic larvae without going through any metamorphosis. These neotenic individuals still reach sexual maturity and can actually mate with their 'terrestrial' counterparts.

As you walk back along the spongy pathway in the lazy summer afternoon stillness, you wonder, "Will my children and my childrens' children ever see a neotenic salamander?" and, "What other secrets does this forest hold?"

Lynton Burger is an Associate Editor of the *Victoria Naturalist* and a regular contributor to the magazine. He originated, and is responsible for, the *Pacific Octopus* column each issue.

CALENDAR

REGULAR MEETINGS are generally held on the following days. **Board of Directors:** the first Tuesday of each month. **General Members Meeting:** the second Tuesday of each month. **Botany Night:** the third Tuesday of each Month. **Birders' Night:** the fourth Wednesday of each month. Locations are given in the calender listings. Telephone the VNHS Events Tape at 479-2054 for further information and updates.

SEPTEMBER EVENTS

Saturday, September 4.

Birding at Sidney Spit. Come explore this beautiful provincial park. Well-known as a place to view migrating shorebirds, the park is also an excellent spot for waterfowl and songbirds. Meet at the foot of Beacon Avenue in Sidney in time for the 9:00 a.m. sailing. Bring ferry fare and a lunch for this half-day trip. Leader to be announced.

Saturday, September 4.

Pelagic Birding off Vancouver Island. The Western Institute of Global Studies, Inc. (WIGS) is planning an offshore cruise in search of albatrosses, shearwaters, fulmars, storm-petrels and jaegers, among others. Previous trips have encountered rarer species such as the Flesh-footed Shearwater and South Polar Skua and promotes the optimism for possible sightings of Mottled Petrels, Black-vented Shearwaters or Laysan Albatrosses. Depart at 2:00 p.m. from the Canadian Princess in Ucluelet for a minimum of six hours with a goal of seven hours. Price for VNHS members is \$90.00 and \$100.00 for non-members. Contact Mike Shepard at 388-4337 for further information and registration.

Tuesday, September 7.

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

Wednesday, September 8 to Saturday, September 11.

Building Bridges to Sustainable Communities. An international conference on sustainable development in the Geor-

gia Basin, Puget Sound and Willamette Valley. Conference will be held at the Western Washington University in Bellingham, Washington. For further details contact Jeff Stone 370-2449.

Tuesday, September 14.

VNHS General Meeting. Room 159, Begbie Building, University of Victoria at 7:30 p.m. Rick West will present *Tarantulas of the Americas*. Not only is Rick Chief Inspector with the Victoria SPCA but he is also a research affiliate with the Department of Entomology at the Royal B.C. Museum. His love of arachnology has taken him to many tropical locations in North and South America. He will talk about the natural history of these creatures and their tropical homes as well as providing some information on local spiders found in our gardens.

Thursday, September 16 and Sunday, September 19.

Hawks in Motion Workshop. Join bird-of-prey enthusiast David Allinson for a lecture and slide show on September 16 at the Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. This talk will be followed on September 19 with a field trip to East Sooke Regional Park form 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Come and learn more about the thrilling world of hawk migration and the fall congregation of raptors over the southern tip of Vancouver Island. Cost is \$6.00. Space is limited, so please register your names at Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary (479-0211).

Tuesday, September 21.

Botany Night. Swan Lake Nature House, 7:30 p.m. Join Adolf Ceska for the first of several talks on the identification of B.C. vascular plant families, beginning with the Buttercup family. A presentation on *The plants of Colocum Pass, Washington* will also be given.

Wednesday, September 22.

Birders Night. Room 159, Begbie Building, University of Victoria at 7:30 p.m. Bryan Gates will present a slide-illustrated journey through southeast Alaska including the birds, marine mammals and geological features of the area. Everyone welcome and bring a friend.

Sunday, September 26.

BCFO Hawk Watch. Join British Columbia Field Ornithologists (BCFO) president Mike McGrenere (658-8624) for the

— continued following page

Birders Journal

Latest observations from across Canada; rarity reports; identification and distributional articles; Ontario Round-Up; international conservation news; Photo-Quiz and Prize-Bird; colour photographs; top-quality artwork and colour plates; CBC news; letters; Product Reviews; Book Reviews; Notes and regular columns.

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spectacle of our fall hawk migration at East Sooke Regional Park. Meet at Helmcken Park 'n Ride at 9:30 a.m., or at the Aylard Farm entrance to the park at 10:00 a.m. Bring lunch for this half-day trip in the peak of the hawk migration. Previous trips in late September have regularly produced the locally rare Broad-winged Hawk.

OCTOBER EVENTS

Saturday, October 3.

Hawk Watch at Beechey Head. Our trips continue to monitor and behold the raptor migration at East Sooke Regional Park. Data from previous years show that October can yield good numbers of Red-tailed Hawks, as well as Golden Eagles, Rough-legged Hawks and Northern Goshawks. Meet at the Helmcken Park 'n Ride at 9:30 a.m., or at the Aylard Farm entrance of the park at 10:00 a.m. The leader will be David Pearce (477-2664).

Tuesday, October 5.

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

Saturday, October 9.

Pelagic Birding off Vancouver Island. The Western Institute of Global Studies, Inc. (WIGS) is planning an offshore cruise in search of albatrosses, shearwaters, fulmars, storm-petrels and jaegers, among others. Previous trips have encountered rarer species such as the Flesh-footed Shearwater and South Polar Skua and promotes the optimism for possible sightings of Mottled Petrels, Black-vented Shearwaters or Laysan Albatrosses. Departs at 8:00 a.m. from the Canadian Princess in Ucluelet for a minimum of 8.5 hours and a goal of 10 hours. Price for VNHS members is \$120.00 and \$130.00 for non-members. Contact Mike Shepard at 388-4337 for further information and registration.

Tuesday, September 14.

VNHS General Meeting. Room 159, Begbie Building, University of Victoria at 7:30 p.m. Speaker to be announced on the VNHS Events tape (479-2054).

Sunday, October 17.

Birding at Island View Beach. The views from the dunes and beach at Island View Beach Regional Park can produce grebes, scoters, and sea ducks. Northern Shrikes and even Short-eared Owls may also be seen in the nearby fields. Meet at the park parking lot at 9:00 a.m. for the morning trip. Leader to be announced.

Tuesday, October 19.

Botany Night. Swan Lake Nature House at 7:30 p.m. Adolf Ceska continues his series *Identification of Plant Families of British Columbia*, with the Rose family. Also on the agenda is a slide presentation, *The Costa Rica cloud forest*.

Wednesday, October 20.

Birders Night. Room 159, Begbie Building, University of Victoria at 7:30 p.m. Nigel Mathews will present a slide show *Birding Africa*. Nigel and Cecily Grant recently returned from a 14,700 overland trip through Africa. The recorded 711 species of birds on the journey which took them through Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Swaziland, Lesotho and South Africa. The presentation is a travelogue of their trip.

Sunday, October 31.

Birding at Witty's Lagoon. The popular Metchosin regional park of Witty's Lagoon offers a diversity of habitats from forest to sandy beach. Take a leisurely stroll down to the beach and back with David Allinson (478-0457) in search of fall migrants. Meet at the park parking lot at 9:00 a.m. for this morning walk.

BULLETIN BOARD

For Sale

Ocean to Alpine—A British Columbia Nature Guide. This new book by Joy and Cam Finley is available from Lyndis Davis (477-9952). Also Available for sale: National Geographic's *Field Guide to Birds*; the *Naturalist Guide to the Victoria Region*; the Victoria Area Bird Checklist; and, the new Victoria Natural History Society's Window Decals.

Back Issues of the Victoria Naturalist

Copies of back issues and indices of the Victoria Naturalist are available from Tom Gillespie (361-1694).

Mini-Pelagic Birding. Register your name with Hank Van der Pol (652-1924) if you are interested in informal field trips this fall as a walk-on passenger aboard the *M.V. Coho* to Port Angeles. These same day return trips are weather-dependent, as many rare or uncommon seabirds are pushed into our offshore waters after stormy weather.

Biography of Lavender and Philip Monckton. The Moncktons were long-time residents of Victoria and members of the Natural History Society. Their son George has written a biography of his parents which he has self-published. Only 50 copies of this hardbound book were printed. Persons interested can contact George at 787 Berkshire Drive, London, Ontario, N6J 3S5.

Purple Loosestrife Alert.

Please continue to keep a watch for Purple Loosestrife in the Greater Victoria area while you pursue your naturalist activities this fall. The long showy spikes of small purple/pink flowers are evident from June to September in wet areas of all types. So far, the Parks and Conservation Committee is aware of two major areas of infestation: Kings Pond and Viaduct Flats, with a small number of plants in the Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary. Please call Doris Brix (479-7420) or Colleen O'Brien (388-4520) to report additional sites.

Garry Oak Meadow Society Membership

The Garry Oak Meadow Society aims to promote, conserve and restore our native oak meadow lands. You can help them 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.

Marine Ecology Station

Explore British Columbia's marine biodiversity at the Cowichan Bay Maritime Centre. Life exhibits of B.C. sealife can be seen under microscopes and in live video displays. There are also programs available for schools, camps, naturalists and educators. The Centre is located on the water at 1761 Cowichan Bay Road. For information call 746-4955.

Nature of Island Artists VNHS Art Show at Goldstream Park September 4-19

An exhibition of the work of over 70 island artists, ranging from photography, painting, sculpture, tapestry, silk painting, block prints to pottery, quilt making and basketry.

During the show, some artists will be demonstrating.

Here's the show calendar. (See also, story on page 4 of this magazine)

Saturday September 4.

10 a.m. - 2 p.m. G. Van Den Brink, gold thread embroidery

10 a.m. - 6 p.m. Brien Foerster, wood and stone sculpture

Sunday, September 5

11 a.m. - 5 p.m. Steve Madsen, bird carving in tupelo (wood)

Noon - 6 p.m. Trudy Kungold Ammann and Beverly McCloed - print making.

Monday, September 6

1 p.m. - 4 p.m. Beverly Robb - pastel

Tuesday, September 7

10 a.m. - 1 p.m. Molly Reid mixed media art.

Wednesday, September 8

10 a.m. - noon Anne Algard, drawing with coloured pencil.

1 p.m. - 6 p.m. Kris Paton - mixed watermedia

Thursday, September 8

10 a.m. - 3 p.m. Nancy Lewis Robson, oil painting - wildflowers

1 p.m. - 6 p.m. Kristine Paton - mixed watermedia

Friday, September 10

1 p.m. - 4 p.m. Richard Hunt - mask carving

1 p.m. - 5 p.m. Larry Booth - bird carving

2 p.m. - 4 p.m. Ken Bowen - wildlife photography

Saturday September 11

10 a.m. - 3 p.m. Rose Leonard, bird carving in tupelo (wood)

10 a.m. - 2 p.m. G. Van Den Brink, gold thread embroidery

Sunday, September 12

10 a.m. - 6 p.m. Brien Foerster, stone and wood carving

Monday, September 13

1 p.m. - 5 p.m. Rosemary Partridge, scraperboard

Tuesday, September 14

10 a.m. - 3 p.m. David Fraser - acrylic painting

Wednesday, September 15

10 a.m. - 3 p.m. Nancy Lewis Robson, oil painting - wildflowers

Thursday, 16 September

noon - 2 p.m. Gretchen Markle, silk painting

Friday, 17 September

10 - 4 p.m. Muriel Sibley, clay sculpture

Saturday 18 September

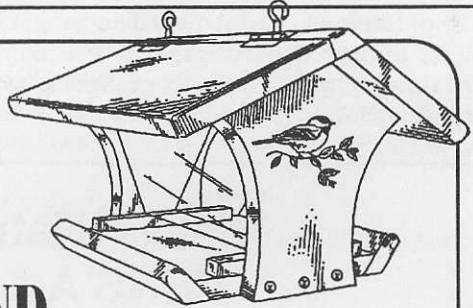
10 a.m. - 2 p.m. G. Van Den Brink, gold thread embroidery

10 a.m. - 3 p.m. Rose Leonard, bird carving in tupelo (wood)

Sunday 19 September

10 a.m. - 6 p.m. Brien Foerster, stone and wood carving

2 p.m. - 6 p.m. Helen Butler, watercolour painting



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