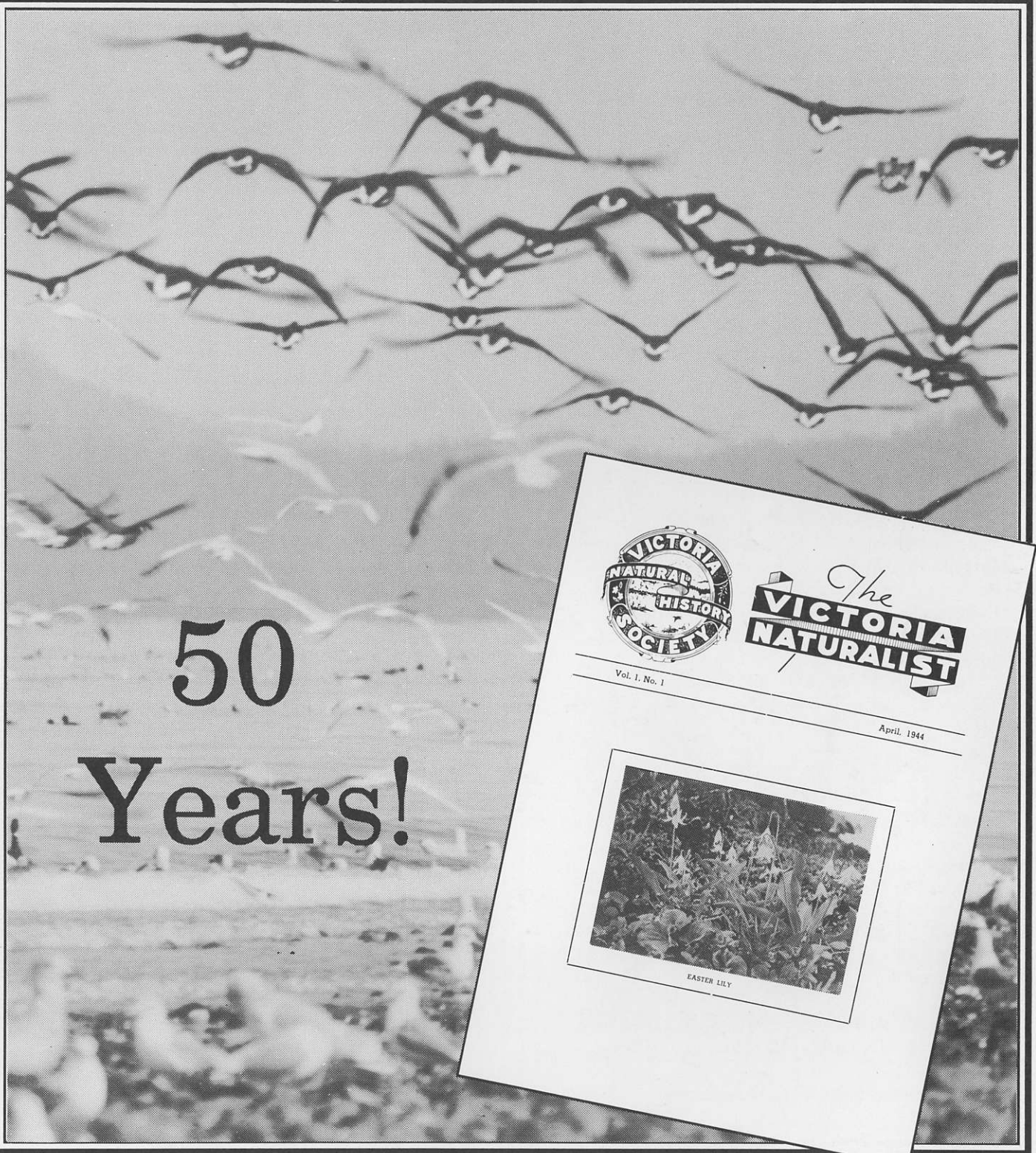




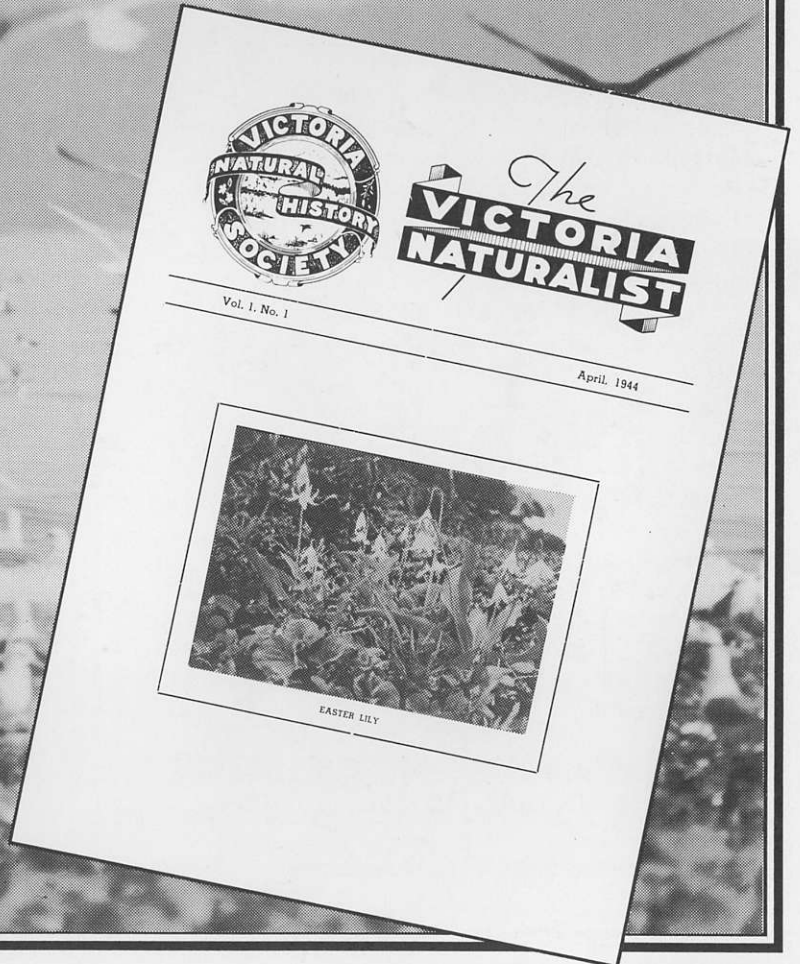
The Victoria NATURALIST

MARCH
APRIL
1994
VOL 50.5

VICTORIA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY



50
Years!



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Gift

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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 any size 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 Associate Editor, Lynton Burger, at 383-4535, 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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For membership information and renewal, please contact Tom Gillespie at 361-1694, or write to Membership Committee c/o The Victoria Natural History Society, Box 5220, Victoria, B.C., V8R 6N4.

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Ad Size	Price	Dimensions (in inches)
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Thank you for your patronage.

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50 YEARS!

The Victoria Natural History Society turns 50! Over the last half-a-decade the VNHS has provided a forum for people who love nature to get together and to share this love with each other. As we reflect on how the VNHS has grown over these years we need to salute the many people who have contributed their time, energy and money to make the society a viable and vibrant organisation in Victoria, indeed in Canada.

The first meeting of the society was held on March 14, 1944 and the first issue of the *Victoria Naturalist* was published in April 1944. In this commemorative issue we feature excerpts from this first issue. We are also planning to include interviews with long-standing members in the next issue.

The newsletter's regular Editor, Warren Drinnan, has migrated temporarily to that little island in the Atlantic. Hi Warren! He and his family will be missing one of their favourite festivals this year. Yes, it's Brant time again! In this issue we outline some of the highlights of this annual Parksville Pageant.

Our cover photo features a flock of Brant taking flight at Qualicum Beach, and a reproduction of the cover of the first issue of *The Victoria Naturalist*.

I hope you'll enjoy the other articles we have in this issue too and take advantage of the many events listed in the Calender. Good reading.

Lynton Burger



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Volume 1, Number 1 — Some Excerpts

FIRST FOREWORD

It is with the heartiest pleasure I address the members of the new Natural History Society in the first copy of the Magazine. May it be the precursor of a long line:

The need of an association of all who are interested in the study and enjoyment of nature has been felt by many of late years, and I have often been asked by new-comers for the whereabouts of our Natural History Society and heard them express surprise that none existed. But the need has not been confined to them. Most of us seek the companionship of common interest and helpful intercourse and are pleased to find it in an organisation whose members find release from the mechanical world in the observation and study of our natural and aboriginal environment. And indeed in these days of private and public pressure there is a genuine and thoroughly defensible relief in the observation of wild life in its various forms. I am sure I speak for all our members when I say we look forward to many happy and profitable hours both out-doors and in-doors in our particular group or groups and in the larger forum of the Society. Our success depends on the enthusiasm of each flowing into the common stream. We have about us a beautiful countryside and a varied shoreline to delight the hearts of naturalists. We hope to learn to know these better ourselves and to share our learning with many others.

Robert Connell, President VNHS, April 1944.

WILDLIFE AND MAN

by G. Clifford Carl

The wild creatures which are found in nature do not live in peace as is popularly supposed. On the contrary, in order to survive they must constantly struggle against conditions within their environment which may be either competitors or predators. The result is that the association and relationships between animals and plants in any one community are very complex and it is only by piecing together a multitude of apparently disconnected observations that a pattern finally becomes visible.

One type of association is the form of a "food chain" which begins with plants, the basic source of all food, and progresses through the herbivores to the carnivores and ends with the larger flesh-eating mammals or birds. In such an association the organisms at the beginning of the "chain" are small and exist in large numbers; toward the end of the chain the size of individuals in each group increases while the numbers decrease. Many such food chains exist in each community and all may be interconnected.

Each species of living thing tends to increase and is held in check by various forces such as climatic conditions, supply of food and presence or absence of enemies. As a result, the number of any species is constantly changing and in turn the numbers of animals or plants associated with it in the food chain fluctuate with it. Therefore, there is no such thing as "balance of nature"; the associations between animals and plants are not *static*, as implied by the word "balance" but rather *dynamic*.

The chief characteristic of life is constant change.

Man interferes greatly with the complex associations that exist in nature by clearing extensive areas of land, by killing off

large numbers of animals for food and by the indiscriminate slaughtering of predators. In order to prevent certain extermination of some species and serious depletion in others it is necessary to carry out some sort of government control.

In this conservation work, organisations such as the newly formed Society can play an important part. Our activities can be directed along three main lines. First, we can act as collectors of information concerning the wildlife of our Province, information which may be of use later to officials in formulating their policies of control. Second, we can function in an advisory capacity in matters concerning the intelligent use of our wildlife. Third, we can aid in educating the public, by lectures, demonstrations and informative articles both for school children and adults so that they will come to appreciate the value which exists in the world of nature around them.

I feel that we in this district are indeed fortunate in having such a wealth of natural history material around us and that we will derive much pleasure in its study. At the same time we have before us unlimited opportunities of putting knowledge so gained to some useful purpose. In many ways the activities of our Society are commencing at an opportune time.

This article was printed in the first issue of the Victoria Naturalist and is a summary of an address given by the author at the first meeting of the Society on March 14, 1944. Would any ecologists or ecology students like to comment on the ecological views presented here?

Letter to Wally Macgregor, President VNHS

Dear Wally:

On behalf of BC Parks, I would like to thank you for the Victoria Natural History Society's participation in the Goldstream Art Show, the Nature of Island Artists.

During the 16 days the show ran, approximately 13,000 people visited the Art Show. With these large numbers of people coming through the Visitor Centre doors, your 122 volunteers were there to assist in the many duties of answering questions and minding the Visitor Centre. The volunteers put in 2002 hours! Without the Natural History Society's participation, we couldn't have had such a successful show — in fact no show at all!

I am pleased to pass on to you that profits from the show totalled \$9,473.34. That gives the Victoria Natural History Society Scholarship Fund and the Goldstream Park Viewing Platform Fund \$4,736.67 each!

Once again Wally, the Natural History Society's participation in the Art Show is what makes the show a success. Please pass on to your volunteers a big thank you from B.C. Parks and the Malahat District Staff!

Looking for the next Art Show in 1995!

Sincerely,

G. David Chater

District Manager,

B.C. Parks.

Brant Festival '94 Spreads Its Wings

A flight plan has been filed and Brant Festival '94, hosted by the central Vancouver Island communities of Parksville-Qualicum Beach April 8-9-10, is ready for take off!

This 3-day celebration of Nature, Art, and Outdoor Fun coincides with the arrival of the Brant in their peak numbers. Each spring, as many as 20,000 of this small sea goose stop to rest and feed on local coastal waters during their annual migration from winter staging areas in Baja, Mexico to breeding grounds in Alaska.

While the Brant enjoy their springtime honeymoon in Parksville-Qualicum Beach, Festival visitors will enjoy their own love-in with nature and the outdoors. Here's a brief look at what's in store at Festival '94.

Brant and other Wildlife Viewing

At the Festival's Brant Viewing Stations, visitors can observe the talkative Brant with their distinctive white collars. Spotting scopes set up by *Bausch and Lomb* means everyone can get a good view of the Brant and other local waterbirds. Meanwhile, the Festival also offers guided field trips to some of the area's best wildlife viewing areas. For families, Rathrevor Provincial Parks Interpretive Program will feature displays on Brant ecology and nature activities suitable for all ages.

Big Day

Pro and Novice birders alike will want to enter Festival 94's Big Day Birding Competition with its draw prize of a pair of Elite 8x42 binoculars, donated by *Bausch and Lomb*. On the Big Day, teams of birders will vie to see how many of the 251 species of birds found in the Parksville-Qualicum area they can record in a 10-hour period. During Festival '92, the Birds of B.C. authors set a bench mark of 106 species: a record that has yet to be broken.

After 10 hours of tenacious tallying, Big Day participants will be ready for the Big Day Wrap-Up Party at the Bayside Inn. Following a check-in and hot meal, prizes will be handed out for Most Species Recorded - Novice and Experienced, Bird of the Day, Best Waterfowl List, and Best Story of the Day.

Morgan Warren

announces

Spring Open House

featuring new Spring print of

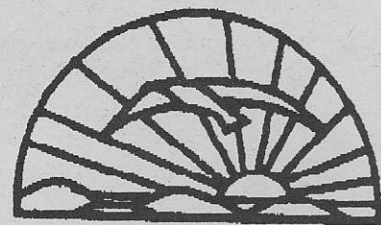
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... Or just enjoy three days and two nights of spectacular natural beauty on Parksville Bay, indoor swimming, hot tub, fitness centre, saunas, tennis and long walks on the beach. Subject to availability.

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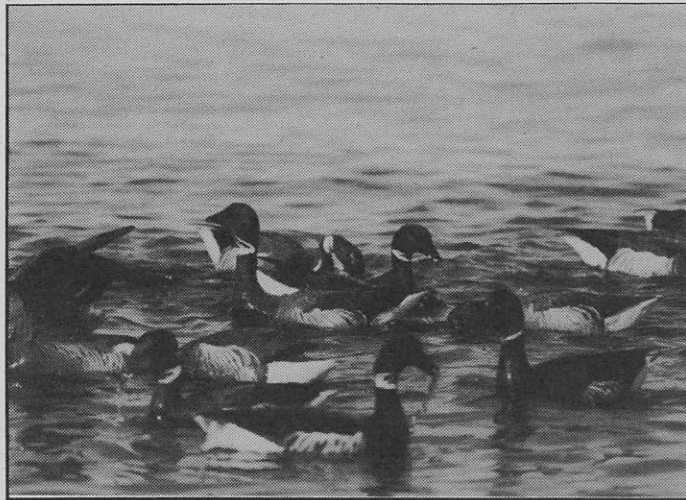
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Brant feeding on Eelgrass at Qualicum Beach.

Sports Optic Check-Up

Brant Festival visitors won't want to forget their binoculars. Besides great wildlife viewing, *Bausch and Lomb* is sponsoring a free Sports Optic Clinic at the Rath Trevor Provincial Park Brant Viewing Area. Sports Optic Repair expert Oreste Dal-Santo will provide advice and information and do external cleaning of binoculars and scopes.

Wildlife Art

The Festival is proud to show off the works of B.C.'s top artists. B.C. Coastal Wildlife is the theme of the Wildlife Art Exhibition and Sale held at the Qualicum Beach Civic Centre. Coastal Habitat is the theme for artists exhibiting at The Old School House Gallery, also in Qualicum Beach.

Victoria watercolourist Morgan Warren has been selected to paint the Festival's 1994 limited edition print. Limited to 500 prints, this work is a study of the delicate beauty of the Brant in their familiar postures. The Festival's Wildlife Art Exhibition and Sale will display the original used to produce the 1994 Limited Edition Print along with several other of Morgan's original works. Also on display will be the

original art by Bruce Muir and Don Li-Leger used to produce the 1991, 1992, and 1993 Brant Festival Commemorative Prints, along with the original work of 30 other B.C. wildlife artists.

Wildlife Carving and Photography

Host to one of the biggest and best events of its kind in the Pacific Northwest, the Brant Festival's Carving Competition will draw crowds to the Qualicum Beach Civic Centre to see wood carvings of birds rendered so realistically it's a wonder they don't fly away. For wildlife photographers, Festival '94 has something special in store. In addition to entering the Wildlife Photography Show and Competition, aspiring photographers can sign up for wildlife photography workshops conducted by a professional photographer.

Wild Evenings in Store

Evenings at the Festival promise to be both entertaining and educational. Wildlife biologist and researcher Andrew Bryant will provide first hand insights into wildlife habitat issues with his presentation *At Home With the Vancouver Island Marmot, the Burrowing Owl, and the Pacific Slope Flycatcher*. Meanwhile, the Brant Festival Dinner and Auction takes on a new twist for 1994 with its country theme and many outdoor recreation auction items.

Helping to Preserve Vital Wildlife Habitat

Parksville-Qualicum Beach is situated on the Pacific Flyway, the major West Coast route for migratory waterfowl. Sponsored by the Mid Island Wildlife Watch Society, the Brant Festival supports wildlife habitat conservation. In 1992, the Festival donated \$5000 to the Nature Trust of B.C. to assist with the purchase of the Englishman River Estuary. At Festival '93, the Province of B.C. designated a 17-kilometre stretch of local coastline as a Wildlife Management Area. The area provides vital habitat for 60 species of waterbirds, including the Pacific Brant and it is the largest coastal site of its kind in B.C. to receive such special status.

For further information contact: Brant Festival 94 Office Telephone (604) 248-4117

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500 Fathoms

by Rod Palm

For a birder, running offshore is like visiting another country. The familiar inshore birds very quickly disappear as the pelagic (open ocean) birds start showing up. The coast line sinks below the horizon, and the ocean swells stretch themselves out as the sea floor's influence is lost in the deep ocean. Being this far offshore in an eight meter open boat brings home a feeling of just how vast the Pacific is. On an overcast day the grey sea dissolves into the sky so you feel as though you are a tiny speck in an infinite grey sphere.

Reading a Canadian Wildlife Service publication we noticed that deep ocean birds off our west coast have never been monitored during the winter months. "Ah ha, let's do that". In order to take this activity on, some guidelines must be followed to give credibility to the research. We laid out a transect with mile "0" being Wilf Rocks (entrance to Tofino Harbour), straight out over the continental shelf, past the continental slope and on to the abyss. The far end of the transect is 36 nautical miles offshore in over 500 fathoms of water. Birds were recorded by species, numbers, distance from shore, depth of water and whether they were on the water or in the air. Water temperature was recorded every 5 miles.

In fall, the first birds to appear on the transects are the Sooty Shearwaters, small groups of Common Murres, Cassin's Auklets, a few Pacific Loons winging by, and maybe a Pomarine Jaeger or two. At about twenty miles there are several species of shearwaters screaming along just inches above the water, rising with each undulating swell like some high speed video game character.

Also in the fall there are large numbers of Northern Fulmars (both light and dark morphs). The fulmars are very aggressive and virtually fearless; if you throw out a food scrap there is a royal battle for the prize. You put away your long lens for these guys, if there is even a hint of food they are within arms length of the boat. Black-footed Albatrosses, like great soaring kites glide past the boat, a few landing on the water with the fulmars. Though not as brave, albatrosses will come to within twenty feet of the boat. They seem to look around in a bit of a stupor wondering what all the fuss is about. Landing seems to be a little scary for these guys and taking off looks like it's the first time they ever tried it; wings thrashing, head bobbing, web feet scrambling for a grip. They seem to be constantly on the verge of wiping out.

During the winter months things really quieten down. All the fulmars are gone, no jaegers are around and there are only a few shearwaters about. You still see the odd Cassin's Auklet, more Common Murres than in the fall and small groups of Marbled and unidentified murrelets. Interestingly, there are still Black-footed Albatrosses in the winter and, better yet, almost as many Laysan Albatrosses. The Laysan seems to be a bit more curious than the Black-footed in that you see its white head coming straight at you from a quarter mile or so away. It is like a game of chicken; "Is it going to turn?" At the last instant (perhaps 4 meters away) it banks away and very quickly is gone and there is no mooching it back, its regal bearing makes me wonder if it isn't insulted by such junk food offerings.

A wonderful bonus on these winter transects has been



Black-footed Albatross (Photo: Lynton Burger).

marine mammals. On both the December and January trips we saw a female Northern Fur Seal. Females are about the same length as Harbour Seals but are much more slender with longer fins and darker in colour. These animals were seen basking on the surface without a care in the world. We were able to pull over close enough to see their Doberman Pincer-like ears and the beige throat streak.

We also saw Grey Whales in January - not in the feeding grounds where you would expect them, but out here more than ten miles from shore just sauntering along down the coast. It's too late for these animals to make it to the breeding grounds in Mexico, party's over, the Greys are already on their northern migration. These whales that we are seeing would be non-breeding; likely they are mothers with last year's calves or very old animals.

Off in the distance, I thought I saw a splash. Yes, and another, heading our way. Dall's Porpoises. We were doing about 20 knots and they easily caught up with us. These porpoises are deceptively fast for such chunky animals and they are only about two meters long. They must not have to work very hard for a living because they always seem to have time for a little race. There are four of them with us for about 15 minutes, leaping through both the bow and stern waves. One cannot help but feel a trace of some sort of prehistoric kinship with these animals; we know each other from somewhere.

This research is presently funded by the Clayoquot Sound Biosphere Study.

Editor's note: This article was first published in *The Sound* and is reproduced here with their permission. Anyone interested in participating in future pelagic tours can contact R & S Tours, Box 213, Tofino, B.C., V0R 2Z0. Or call Rod Palm at 725-3958.



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1993 Victoria Christmas Bird Count

- | | | |
|--|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. BUTCHART GARDENS/NORTHERN HIGHLANDS | 5. LANGFORD LAKE | 9. PORTAGE INLET - THE GORGE |
| 2. CENTRAL HIGHLANDS | 6. ALBERT HEAD - TRIANGLE MOUNTAIN | 10. VICTORIA HARBOUR |
| 3. GOLDSTREAM | 7. ESQUIMALT LAGOON - MILL HILL | 11. BEACON HILL |
| 4. THETIS LAKE/HASTINGS FLATS | 8. ESQUIMALT HARBOUR | 12. OAK BAY |

SPECIES	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
<hr/>												
Barred Owl	1				1	1						
Short-eared Owl												
Northern Saw-whet Owl		1										
Anna's Hummingbird					1							3
Belted Kingfisher	1	2	1	1	2	3	3	11	3	6		2
Red-breasted Sapsucker								2				
Downy Woodpecker	4	6	3	7	6	4	11	4	7	6	12	4
Hairy Woodpecker		3	5	2	1	3	1	1				
<hr/>												
Northern Flicker	45	35	6	25	10	29	16	17	19	3	21	14
Pileated Woodpecker	5	8	1	1			1					
Eurasian Skylark												
Steller's Jay	9	32	28	4	29	6	1					
Northwestern Crow	299	104	179	152	263	114	119	123	254	124	189	36
Common Raven	73	76	12	23	6	17	9	5		1	4	
Chestnut-backed Chickadee	149	136	170	89	117	86	86	80	88	9	66	21
Bushtit	15	101		10	46	44	43	144	165	49	119	60
<hr/>												
Red-breasted Nuthatch	27	47	7	61	12	26	9	12	12	4	18	2
Brown Creeper	3	6	9	11	7	56	2	3	2	1	11	1
Bewick's Wren	13	8	1	9	7	2	6	3	18	2	18	5
Winter Wren	27	33	59	15	2	36	8	8	14	3	20	4
Marsh Wren					1							
American Dipper			8									
Golden-crowned Kinglet	197	363	252	375	122	290	118	84	185	15	165	27
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	5	6	18	4	22	28	12	2	13	10	15	2
<hr/>												
Townsend's Solitaire		1					2					
Hermit Thrush	1		1							1	2	
American Robin	227	186	36	444	103	94	126	82	464	160	260	365
Varied Thrush	26	41	21	26	6	43	8	11	14	5	28	1
American Pipit												
Cedar Waxwing	2	1									3	
Northern Shrike										1		
European Starling	1,468	27	67	312	357	216	46	113	518	177	980	58
<hr/>												
Hutton's Vireo								1				
Orange-crowned Warbler							1					1
Yellow-rumped Warbler												
Townsend's Warbler			1	1		1						
Palm Warbler										1		
Rufous-sided Towhee	56	37	2	25	29	44	35	22	29	13	31	19
Savannah Sparrow	2						3					
Fox Sparrow	24	32	5	9	15	19	13	4	15	10	17	2
<hr/>												
Song Sparrow	55	34	8	21	40	47	37	60	45	20	90	34
Lincoln's Sparrow	2	1										
Swamp Sparrow												

1993 Victoria Christmas Bird Count

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 13. UNIVERSITY - CADBORO BAY | 18. ELK LAKE - CORDOVA BAY |
| 14. 10 MILE POINT | 19. PROSPECT LAKE - QUICKS BOTTOM |
| 15. GORDON HEAD - MOUNT DOUGLAS | 20. MARTINDALE - BEAR HILL |
| 16. SWAN LAKE - CEDAR HILL | 21 - 23. OAK BAY ISLANDS |
| 17. BLENKINSOP - PANAMA FLATS | |

SPECIES	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	TOTAL	COMMENTS
<hr/>											
		1	2					6		19	
	8	12	404			3		1	2	446	high
	1	4	16			6	2	20		95	
	1	1		8		1	11			48	
		19	88			320		184		674	
	6	15	36			10		299	14	576	
			11							11	low
	1					1		2	4	2,089	
<hr/>											
	3	49	7	1	2	15	28	7	11	875	all time high (previous high 636 in 1979)
		15	28			3		14	702	3,549	all time high (previous high 1,664 in 1979)
	4	56	22			14		16	59	1,578	
	2	6	1	1	3	4	6	7	13	147	high
								2		2	
						17	2	66		171	
							2			17	low
<hr/>											
								1		1	
	3	1	1	64	167	573	143	845		3,070	all time high (previous high 2,656 in 1992)
	2			8		12	67	2	32	431	
										1	
	195	94	225	307	1,184	339	609	556	13	7,619	
					29		62	3		391	
				1	2		98		2	127	
				2	3	10	14			54	
<hr/>											
			1					1		10	
	305	22	50	99	46	26	76	111	9	3,160	all time low (previous low 3,339 in 1977)
				11			12			66	
	1		1	36	45	9	72	14		291	
			6			103		11		200	
			8	4			10			241	low
		22	28					28	82	288	
	7	83	120			58		294	9	643	
<hr/>											
								4		4	
	25	48	36			148		528	45	1,337	high
	2	14	9			9			20	146	
	2	6	29			41	6	102	12	443	
										9	low
	18	62	204	11	2	325	20	271	155	2,516	high
	7	22	7	10	23	24	26	13	35	449	
	5		5	10	6	204	72			453	
<hr/>											
	21	34	19			57		258	41	752	all time high (previous high 637 in 1988)
									4	8	low
	4	4	9	1	1	5	3	5	6	95	high

1993 Victoria Christmas Bird Count

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|--|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
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| 2. CENTRAL HIGHLANDS | 6. ALBERT HEAD - TRIANGLE MOUNTAIN | 10. VICTORIA HARBOUR |
| 3. GOLDSTREAM | 7. ESQUIMALT LAGOON - MILL HILL | 11. BEACON HILL |
| 4. THETIS LAKE/HASTINGS FLATS | 8. ESQUIMALT HARBOUR | 12. OAK BAY |

SPECIES	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12

Red-throated Loon						1	6			1	1	1
Pacific Loon						2	4			2	2	6
Common Loon						11	18	8		4	1	4
Pied-billed Grebe		4		3	10		2		3	3		1
Horned Grebe							18	2	1	25	17	
Red-necked Grebe			1			16	1	13	2	68	43	52
Eared Grebe												
Western Grebe						7	2,024	44		4	2	

Double-crested Cormorant	2	17	19	1	39	280	34	31	17	279	26	7
Brandt's Cormorant						12	220	1		1,659	675	220
Pelagic Cormorant	6					104	6	1,203		40	17	31
Great Blue Heron	5	1	6	1	3	5	7	32	5	32	2	5
Tundra Swan												
Trumpeter Swan	72	4			5		1			4		
Mute Swan			2			2	7		2		2	
Greater White-fronted Goose											1	

Snow Goose												
Canada Goose	605		1	183	13	25	131	97	218			
Green-winged Teal	134		18	18	3	67		17	51			
American Black Duck											1	
Mallard	1,992	127	61	75	62	380	277	12	543	94	420	54
Northern Pintail	166					10	22		95		4	
Northern Shoveler	2				11	2	1				8	
Gadwall			1				5		19			

Eurasian Wigeon	2			1		1	1				3	
American Wigeon	703	8	53	21	5	430	271	76	211	200	315	123
Canvasback						3			40			
Ring-necked Duck	28	28		21	19		17					
Greater Scaup		2				23	14	1	40			
Lesser Scaup		6	2						200		6	5
Harlequin Duck						8		14		31	32	43
Oldsquaw							39	10		6	6	11

Black Scoter												
Surf Scoter						58	98	24		137	152	38
White-winged Scoter						9	13			47	22	1
Common Goldeneye			10			17	27	59	13	84	17	18
Barrow's Goldeneye	3		5			1						
Bufflehead	14	22	61	5	22	189	288	204	250	111	115	167
Hooded Merganser	39	15	4	8	17	17	7	51	48	39	6	31
Common Merganser	10	7	56	10	23	1	10	14		16		4

Red-breasted Merganser	7					60	19	70		100	38	28
Ruddy Duck		4										
Bald Eagle	5	1	23	4	3	4	4	2	1	4	1	5

1993 Victoria Christmas Bird Count

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SPECIES	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	TOTAL	COMMENTS	

									2	2		
		1	1		2	2	1	2		22		
	1	1	2	2	1	3	2	4		30		
			1	1	3	1	2	4	1	45	all time high (previous high 43 in 1984)	
										2		
	1	2			1					12		
			2		1		2	1	1	9	equal record high with 1985	
								5		18	low	

	14	20	1		10	48	33	3		366		
						4				4		
				6		350	58			462		
								16	112	214	high	
					34	1		73		128		
		3							7	32		
	3	2								7	low	
		1								1		

		1								1		
									21	103		
									3	26		
										34		
	1,992	127	61	75	62	380	277	12	543	94	420	54
	166					10	22		95		4	
	2				11	2	1			8		
			1				5		19			

	2			1		1	1			3		
	703	8	53	21	5	430	271	76	211	200	315	123
						3			40			
	28	28		21	19		17					
		2				23	14	1	40			
		6	2						200		6	5
						8		14		31	32	43
							39	10		6	6	11

						58	98	24		137	152	38
						9	13			47	22	1
			10			17	27	59	13	84	17	18
	3		5			1						
	14	22	61	5	22	189	288	204	250	111	115	167
	39	15	4	8	17	17	7	51	48	39	6	31
	10	7	56	10	23	1	10	14		16		4

	7					60	19	70		100	38	28
		4										
	5	1	23	4	3	4	4	2	1	4	1	5

1993 Victoria Christmas Bird Count

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SPECIES	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12

Northern Harrier												
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1		1	5	1	1			2		1	1
Cooper's Hawk	3	1	1	1	2				1	2	1	2
Red-tailed Hawk	10	4	5	5	1	3	2	1	1			
American Kestrel	1					1						
Merlin		1	2	1	1				1	1	1	
Pergrine Falcon	1										1	
Ring-necked Pheasant	1			11			1					

California Quail	22	8	30	50	27	82	4		9	4		1
Virginia Rail												
American Coot					3	1	21		6	2		15
Black-bellied Plover							1	79				6
Killdeer			5	10			1			1		3
Black Oystercatcher						5		4		5	2	6
Greater Yellowlegs										1		1
Spotted Sandpiper												

Whimbrel												
Black Turnstone						9	6	22	28	13	4	
Surfbird						3				19		1
Sanderling							7			26	1	
Least Sandpiper						3						
Rock Sandpiper												1
Dunlin							10	16			6	5
Common Snipe	1					1	1					

Mew Gull			5	2	9	12,100	650	40	5	449	750	17
Ring-billed Gull												
California Gull						1	3				1	
Herring Gull			1								2	
Thayer's Gull	1		4	1		148		1,200	195	7	125	8
Western Gull			2				1	3		1	3	
Glaucous-winged Gull	726	17	1,050	96	112	1,143	10,394	608	686	433	1,500	150
Glaucous Gull			1									

Common Murre						39	4	8		58	875	
Pigeon Guillemot						4	1			3	27	54
Marbled Murrelet						7	2	9			7	1
Ancient Murrelet										5	63	
Rhinoceros Auklet						6	1	4		12		4
Rock Dove	29		5	29	6	15	29	237	158	405		21
Band-tailed Pigeon							45					2
Common Barn-Owl	1											

Western Screech-Owl	1	4	1			1						
Great Horned Owl	8	4	1	5		8				1		1
Northern Pygmy-Owl	1	1	1			1						

1993 Victoria Christmas Bird Count

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SPECIES	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	TOTAL	COMMENTS

		1				1	1			6	all time high (previous high 5 in 1990)
								2		2	equal highest with 1970
							1			2	
	9	21	3			3				40	high
	3	2	5		2	4		1	1	53	high
							1			3	
	7	3	11	15	8	10	14	5	3	150	all time high (previous high 96 in 1987)
			1				1	2		20	equal high with 1991

	21	20	17	12	15	28	50	20	3	426	high
		2	1			2	9	6		36	all time high (previous high 29 in 1989)
								19		19	low
							7	1		117	
	185	404	166	160	303	718	171	339	80	4,482	
	1	3	9	5	6	9	54	28	1	342	high
	108	116	75	38	55	192	266	147	5	2,099	all time high (previous high 1,835 in 1991)
	160	146	93	89	139	37	104	14		1,578	all time high (previous high 1,158 in 1992)

	4	34	20	5	2	22	82	27		433	all time high (previous high 196 in 1988)
	3	7	14	2	1	12	18	1	1	171	all time high (previous high 126 in 1989)
	6	16	8	13	8	8	15	29		195	high
	2	7	16	5	5	10	12	45	7	338	
				1	1	1	14	4	2	24	
										8	high
	44	58	89	20	31	323	375	105	2	3,240	high
	1		10	13	8	16	12	15	5	217	

										3	
	1	2					1			9	
	422	219	321	112	171	194	547	579	16	5,128	
	9	44	21	1	1	6	61	41	3	417	
								4		10	low
		2								3	
	118	39	446	75	188	151	34	2,059	38	7,487	

							1			2	
								1		3	
								2	22	25	all time high (previous high 19 in 1992)
					1					3	equal high with 1988
										1	
	27	66	15	54	30	61	46	67	10	718	all time high (previous high 652 in 1989)
									15	1	all time high (previous high 19 in 1990)
	5	17	8	15	10	17	29	30	3	299	

	27	46	34	33	29	25	33	100	44	862	all time high (previous high 814 in 1992)
						3		3	8	6	high
				3						6	all time high (previous high 3 in 1992)

Magical Moments in Victoria Down Under

by Gwennie Hooper

We went to Australia to visit relatives and see the sights. Birding was incidental yet we had some thrilling moments. One was on Phillip Island where all tourists congregate to see the Little (or Fairy) Penguins. In the afternoon daylight we took a boardwalk through a nesting colony of Silver Gulls, handsome birds with white plumage and red bills and feet. Some had young running about, some were still sitting on eggs, and all were squawking and making a huge din.

Then we headed for the Penguin Parade and showed our tickets at the turnstile. "Everything's beaut", said the girl and we walked down a path and installed ourselves behind a sheltering wall under a battery of floodlights. Until it came dusk we amused ourselves watching the Silver Gulls asking for titbits

and occasionally poking at a dead fish washed in by the tide. A Pacific Gull with a massive bill flew by and had a go at the fish while Great Cormorants swam and dived in the surf.

At 7:15 p.m. the first penguin arrived, watched by hundreds of pairs of eyes from two banks of concrete seats. They come from the open sea every night of the year, making a noise a bit like a duck to help them keep together in the water. At intervals more came in, in little groups of 5, 10, and 24 up to the largest at 52 individuals. They swam parallel to the beach until they were opposite the cliff (where there were no people) then flopped out of the surf and tentatively started walking,

From time-to-time we saw Little Penguins flopping down, resting on the grass or sturdily walking upwards. Their progress was quite quick. Earlier, we had seen the black outlines of "muttonbirds" (shearwaters) against the darkening sky . . .

scuttling back as if afraid, then trying again, marching steadfastly across the sand to the cliff and starting the upward climb to their burrows.

We watched avidly for 25 minutes then slowly climbed back towards the Visitor Centre. From time-to-time we saw Little Penguins flopping down, resting on the grass or sturdily walking upwards. Their progress was quite quick. Earlier, we had seen the

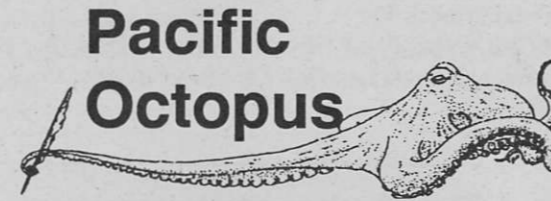
black outlines of "muttonbirds" (shearwaters) against the darkening sky as they too flow into their burrows. In spite of the tourist facilities it was a tremendous experience.

One lunchtime in Rotary Park at Eden I heard a commotion and trained my binoculars on two huge birds at the top of a tall tree. Black, crested, with yellow tails and yellow face patches, the bird book said they were Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos. We watched until they moved to another tree out of sight, then strolled to the lookout to admire the coastal scenery. Flying towards us was a large familiar brown bird, an osprey, the same species we see at home. It passed over our heads and moments later six squawking cockatoos flew out to sea, leaving us thankful we'd been there to see them.

At our campsite at Wilson's Promontory National Park, south of Melbourne, Blue-cheeked Rosellas fed on the ground, the male brilliant red and blue and the female greenish. Also present in great numbers were Silver Gulls. As dusk fell these gulls descended on a sandy spit in the river, taking off in groups for their roosting place. As they gave their loud, raucous calls they were answered from a grove of trees across the river by laughing Kookaburras - laughing, really laughing. A big flock of them and, just as a pack of coyotes all howl and yap, they all laughed. We stood rooted to the spot as darkness fell, until their laughter died away.

The next morning we drove up the hill and saw a kangaroo, a big one, on the side of the road. It crossed and went into the bush and we were thrilled but there were better things in store. Seven more kangaroos, then dozens, until we finally stopped counting. They were lying down peacefully, one was feeding its joey, while some bounded away. They were all around us. Among them were many Emu and to one side a big flock of Sulphur-crested Cockatoos. The epitome of Australia! Until we heard, high above, the song of an introduced English Skylark. Oh, those introductions! We came down to earth and went on our way.

Gwennie and Gordon Hooper are well-travelled members of the Victoria Natural History Society.



Pacific Octopus
By Philip Lambert,
Royal B.C. Museum.

Let's go on Safari

Hang on to your snorkels folks! Once again the Royal British Columbia Museum is taking you on a Coastal Safari - this time to Barkley Sound on the west coast of Vancouver Island. Six days of live TV will beam into your living room via the Knowledge Network. From Monday, April 18 to Saturday, April 23 you can tune in to four one-hour shows each day at 0830, 1000, 1130 and 1300. They will feature natural and human history from on, under and over the productive waters of Barkley Sound.

Our staff at the Royal BC Museum in collaboration with the Institute of Ocean Sciences, Bamfield Marine Station and others will be on the air from two fixed locations and several roving sites. These include the Bamfield Marine Station, a barge anchored over the wreck of the Thiepval, the Research Vessel J.P. Tully and a roving crew on the dive vessel Rendezvous.

We will show you what makes this region a centre of marine research, a premier scuba diving location and a mecca for sports fishing and eco-touring. Our cameras will take you underwater to the lairs of wolf eels and octopus, the secretive six-gill shark, lush growths of marine invertebrates and seaweed, and down to the oozy seafloor - hundreds of metres below the surface aboard a Remote Operated Vehicle (ROV) from the R.V. Tully. Students around the province will be able to question the experts on location via live hook-ups.

So please join us on April 18 for these exciting shows or set up your VCR's so that you can experience the wild west coast from your own living rooms.

Society's Distinguished Service Award Presented to Kaye Suttill

Kaye Suttill was presented with the Victoria Natural History Society's Distinguished Service Award at the Society's Annual Banquet held on February 8, 1994 at the Queen Mary Restaurant.

Kaye has been an enthusiastic member of the VNHS since 1968. She served on the Board of Directors from 1974 to 1978. For two years during that time, Kaye and her husband, Dennis, were responsible for the membership duties of the Society. Kaye is a regular contributor to the Victoria Naturalist magazine, enlightening members with interesting articles on a variety of botanical and other natural history subjects. She has also given a number of slide presentations at the general meetings.

Kaye is a passionate advocate for nature and does not hesitate to let her feelings be known where it might have some influence on decisions.

In appreciation of her many contributions to the Society, Kaye was presented with the Distinguished Service Award by Society President, Wally Macgregor.



A place apart...

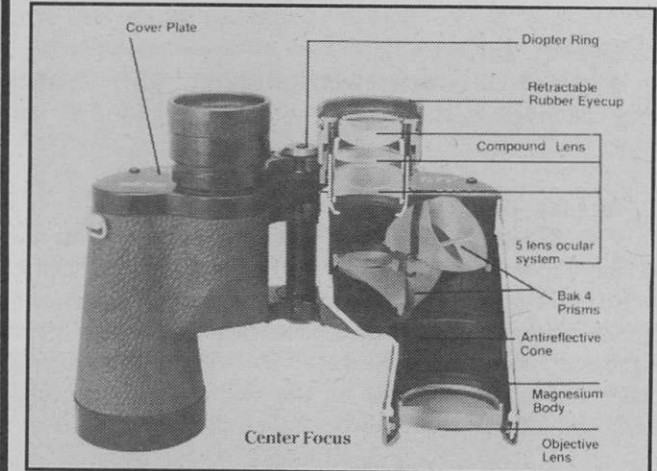
- ~ 180 acres of natural, oceanfront parkland.
- ~ Relaxed country hospitality.
- ~ Fine home cooking.
- ~ Beach sauna and hot tub.
- ~ Salt water swimming pool.
- ~ 5 miles of walking and jogging trails.
- ~ Tennis courts, volleyball, badminton, canoes, row boats, ping-pong.
- ~ 1 mile of waterfront with secluded coves and beaches.



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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 calendar listings. Telephone the VNHS Events Tape at 479-2054 for further information and updates.

MARCH EVENTS

Tuesday, March 1

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

Tuesday, March 8

VNHS Annual General Meeting. Room 159, Begbie Building, University of Victoria, 7:30 p.m. We are pleased to have **Steve Pridgeon** return as our guest speaker with a new program you do not want to miss. Steve, a noted photographer, will present "**Roadrunner Secrets**". He observed these large cuckoos for many weeks along the shores of Lake Mead, Nevada and followed them through their breeding cycle.

Saturday, March 12

Hike to McKenzie Bight. (Mt. Work Regional Park). Join Ben Glover (721-1476) to view the sights, sounds and smells of early spring at this attractive park on Saanich Inlet. Plants, birds and other animals will be the emphasis during this morning walk. Meet at the Helmcken Park 'n Pool at the corner of the TransCanada Hwy. and Helmcken Rd. at 9:30 a.m.

Tuesday, March 15

Botany Night. Swan Lake Nature House, 7:30 p.m. Phone events tape for details.

Wednesday, March 23

Birder's Night. Room 159, Begbie Building, University of Victoria, 7:30 p.m. **Calvor Palmateer** of Victoria will present a slide illustrated talk on the "**Western Bluebird of Vancouver Island: it's past, present and future.**" Bring a friend, a coffee mug and your binoculars.

Saturday, March 26

Birding Hike to Jocelyn Hill. Mike and Barb McGrenere (658-8624) lead our annual jaunt in the scenic and productive Gowland Range of the Highlands. Swallows, early warblers and hawks are passing through this rugged landscape at this time. Bring appropriate footwear and pack a lunch or snack. Meet at the Helmcken Park 'n Pool at the corner of the TransCanada Hwy. and Helmcken Rd. at 9:30 a.m.

Saturday, March 26

Workshop on how birders can contribute to wildlife data collection. Call Mike Sheppard at 388-4227.

Sunday, March 27

RBCM Native Plant Festival. For details of this afternoon festival call the Garry Oak Meadow Society (Joyce Lee 479-8944).

APRIL EVENTS

Tuesday, April 5

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

April 8-10

Brant Festival

Parksville and Qualicum Beach annually host the Brant geese migration with events, art exhibits, and a fun Big Day birding competition. See article in this issue and the back-page advertisement for details.

Tuesday, April 12

General Meeting. Room 159, Begbie Building, University of Victoria, 7:30 p.m. **Dr. Job Kuite** of the University of Victoria, will present a slide illustrated talk entitled "**A Botanist in South America**". Job has travelled to many parts of this continent as part of his research. He will relate stories of what it is like to work as a botanist in South America, search for plant species and the trials of getting into remote areas.

Sunday, April 17

Birding at Mill Hill Regional Park. This is an early morning hike to an excellent migrant songbird trap overlooking View Royal and Colwood. Warblers and flycatchers are to be expected with the chance for rarities like Townsend's Solitaire, Western Bluebird or even the possibility of a Mountain Bluebird or two. Leader TBA. Meet at the Park parking lot off Atkins Rd. near Langford at 8:30 a.m.

Tuesday, April 19

Botany Night. Swan Lake Nature House, 7:30 p.m. Phone events tape for details.

Saturday, April 23

Warbler-watching on Mount Tolmie Park. This park is famous for pulling in rare and uncommon songbirds such as Lazuli Bunting, Indigo Bunting, Western Kingbird and Tennessee Warbler. Watch resident Anna's Hummingbirds fight territorial squabbles with each other and the numerous migrants stopping to feed on the hillside during this morning outing. Leader TBA. Meet at the upper gravel parking area of Mount Tolmie off Cedar Hill Cross Rd. at 8:00 a.m.

Sunday, April 24

"Camas" Day, Beacon Hill Park. Flower, butterfly, bird and archaeology walks accompanied by Royal B.C. Museum staff and volunteers. 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Walks will start at the flagpole at the top of Beacon Hill Park. Co-sponsored by the VNHS and Friends of Beacon Hill Park. Possibility of a children's programme as well. For further information contact Helen Oldershaw (592-6659) and Mari Smaby-Stone (370-2449).

Wednesday, April 27

Birder's Night. Room 159, Begbie Building, University of Victoria, 7:30 p.m. **Alviro Jaramilo**, a UBC graduate student will talk on "Birding in South America."

Saturday, April 30

Spring Migration at Witty's Lagoon Regional Park. Join David Allinson (380-8233) as we monitor the passage of spring migrants in Victoria. This popular park offers diverse habitats which attract many different birds including waterfowl, shorebirds and songbirds. Meet David at the main parking lot off Metchosin Rd. at 8:00 a.m.

BULLETIN BOARD

Honing Your Bird Identification Skills

Many would-be birdwatchers are either frustrated by the sheer variety of birds, or they are intimidated by the seemingly magical prowess of more experienced birders in identifying birds. A combination of classes and field trips with David Allinson will simplify this popular hobby by introducing you to the tools and techniques of birding. The course will also suggest areas for future study and development as a birdwatcher. Besides field identification, topics to be discussed will include bird habitat, conservation, migration, and behaviour. Field trips will include for example Witty's Lagoon Regional Park, the Gowland Range, and Mid Hill Regional Park and are timed for spring migration. Format will take the form of one lecture (general discussion, overview, slides, etc.) and six field trips (to various birding "hotspots" in Victoria). The course will be limited to 12 people. The course starts March 10. For further details and to book your place call the Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary at 479-0211.

Sunday, April 17

Bird-watching at Hatley Park (Royal Roads). Join Brian Allinson and the Friends of the Hatley Park Society for a walk through the extensive gardens, forests and lagoon frontage of Hatley Park in search of local and migrant species. Meet at the Porte Cochere (main entrance) of Hatley Castle for a 9:00 a.m. start. For more information and to register your name, please call the Friends of Hatley Park at 363-4569.

Reminder!

Swan Lake Nature Centre holds birding walks regularly on Wednesdays and Sundays at 9:00 a.m. Everyone is welcome to join in.

Volunteer Opportunities

The following positions are available at Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary:

Office Assistant

An opportunity to put your office skills to work while enjoying the natural surroundings of the Sanctuary. Typing and computer skills would be an asset but are not essential. Training provided.

Native Plant Gardener

With the arrival of spring, work in the native plant garden is increasing. This position offers flexible hours and very pleasant working conditions. Come enjoy the wildflowers while you work.

Interested in a volunteer position at the Nature Sanctuary? Contact Joan Cowley at 479 0211.

For Sale

Ocean to Alpine - A British Columbia Nature Guide. This useful 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*; *Birds of Victoria*; 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).

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 479-8994.

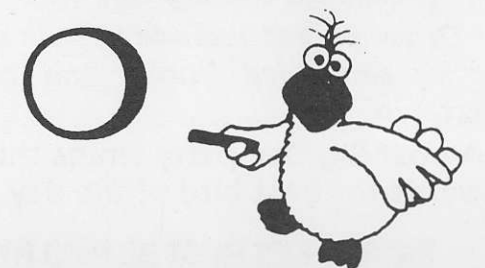
Marine Ecology Station

Explore British Columbia's marine bio-diversity at the Cowichan Bay Maritime Centre. Live exhibits of B.C. sea life 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 phone 746-4955.

Rithet's Bog

A bird inventory is currently being undertaken for this area. Records of sightings from previous years from 1979 onwards will be appreciated, specifying exact date of sighting. Please contact **Michael Carson**, either at Birders Night or at 658-5029.

Seeing spots?



Do you have an orange dot in this circle? If so, you have not paid your dues prior to the January 1, 1994 deadline, and you have already received two free copies of The Victoria Naturalist. To ensure that you receive the next issue of the magazine and continue your membership in the Society, please forward your dues immediately to Box 5220, Stn. B., Victoria, B.C., V8R 6N4.

COUNT YOURSELF IN FOR BRANT FESTIVAL 94's BIG DAY BIRDING COMPETITION

**Saturday, April 9, 1994 5 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Parksville-Qualicum Beach, B.C.**

AND BE READY FOR A SUPER, NATURAL WEEKEND

**Your \$20 Big Day fee includes a Festival Passport
good for entry to:**

- ✓ Wildlife Art, Carving, and Photography Exhibits
- ✓ Sports Optics Clinic at Brant Viewing Area
(Sponsored by Bausch & Lomb Inc.)
- ✓ Natural History Talks and more



Brant Festival's Big Day is a fun event for all birders. Registered teams of experienced and novice birders will comb the Parksville-Qualicum area. The object: see or hear more species of birds than any other team — all the while having a great time.

At the Big Day you'll meet and compete with some of the best birders in B.C. Winners will have their names inscribed on the Brant Festival Big Day Trophy and take home keeper trophies. The *Birds of B.C.* author's team will be back to try to capture the Big Day title.

Draw prizes include a pair of Elite 8x42 binoculars donated by Bausch and Lomb and bird books and recordings donated by The Field Naturalist in Victoria.

A post-Big Day party wraps things up with soup, sandwiches, a silent auction, awards for best bird of the day, story of the day, and lots of other fun.

**ENTRY FEES MUST BE PAID BY APRIL 1. SPACE IS LIMITED, SO REGISTER NOW.
CALL 248-4117 OR WRITE: BRANT FESTIVAL BIG DAY, BOX 327, PARKSVILLE, B.C. V9P 2G5**

Parksville-Qualicum Beach is 30 minutes north of Nanaimo.

For special accommodation packages contact the Brant Festival Office at 248-4117.