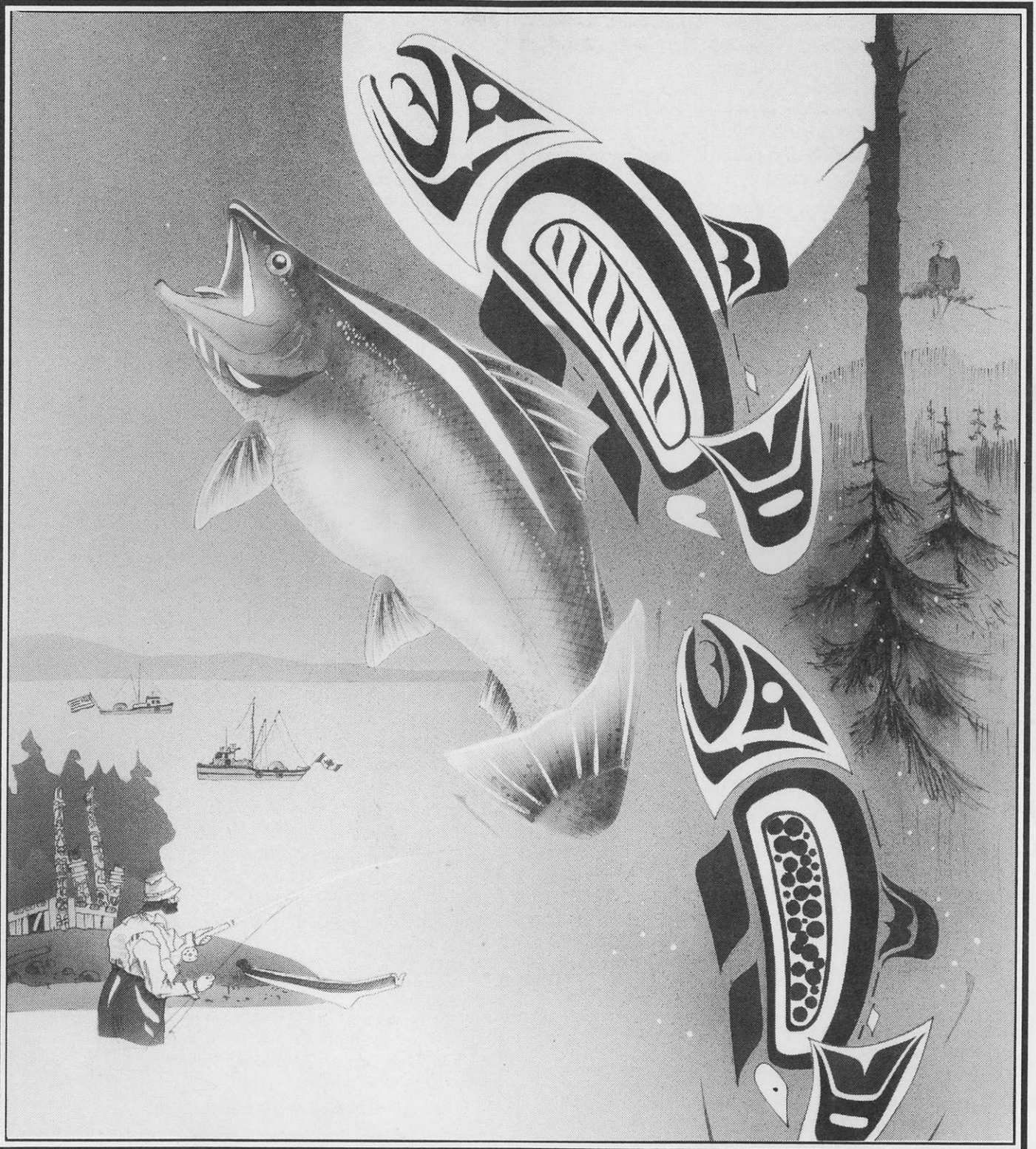


# The Victoria NATURALIST

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VICTORIA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY



# 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 Editor, Warren Drinnan, at 361-3543, or save the text in ASCII format. Blank diskettes may be obtained from the editor and we will return any of your own diskettes submitted. Photos and slides submitted may be picked up at the Field-Naturalist, 1241 Broad Street, or will be returned if a stamped, self-addressed envelope is included with the material.

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## OUR COVER

This month's cover is a drawing titled *Urgent Business*, by local artist Paddy Howard. "In *Urgent Business*, I try to convey the message that a wonderful resource is under attack on many fronts. The rhythm and stability of the beautiful west coast is inextricably tied to the health of the salmon stocks. Their loss would diminish us all. As caretakers of our fragile environment, the business of salmon management is indeed urgent business."

Patty Howard has been carving and painting for over twenty years. His Art History background at the University of British Columbia combined with the strong influences of native west coast art have forged a personal style all his own. Patty was born in Victoria and lives there with his wife and two children. The cover scene is available as a signed poster (\$35). Those interested can contact Paddy at his studio on Duchess Street (598-5824).



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# Welcome New Members

## October 4

Dr. R. Peter Heron, of Mary-Anne Crescent, Victoria.

## October 11

Jeannie McIntosh, of Brighton Avenue, Victoria.

Ann Mitchell, of Chalet Road, Sidney: enjoys plants.

Louise Baumbrough, of Loretta Drive: is a birder.

Alan and Joan Greatbatch, of Sherwood Road, Victoria: are birdwatchers.

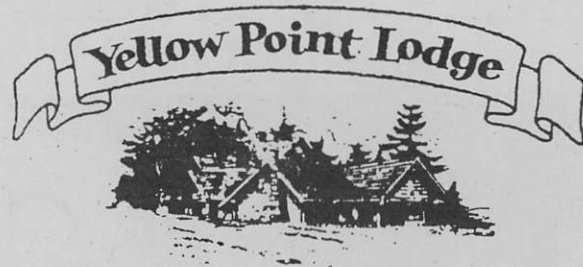
## October 21

Monique and Paul Genuist, of Houlihan Place, Victoria: interests include birding, hiking and preservation of nature.

Linda Ferster, of Swan Street: is a bird watcher and is also interested in conservation and forestry issues.

## November 1

Maureen Funk, of Tyndall Ave.



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## November 8

Shirley Schmidt, of Murray Drive: enjoys birdwatching and flower gardening. Colleen Bauer, of Eric Road: interests are birds and physical geography.

## November 17

Jan E. Mullin, of Wascana Street: is interested in marine biology and in learning about birds.

Brenda Ramsay, of Wascana Street: interests include botany, marine biology and ecology.

## November 22

Howard and Wendy Griffith, of Wellsview Road: enjoy canoeing, hiking and birding.

Ernest W. Thomas, of Rithet Street: is a birder.

## Distinguished Service Award

The Distinguished Service Award was established by the Victoria Natural History Society Board of Directors in 1988. This prestigious award is granted to a member who has contributed in some outstanding way to the aims and objectives of the Society.

Awards are made at the annual dinner in February. All members of the Society can nominate any other member who in their opinion merits this honour.

**Nominations should be forwarded by January 25, 1995 to Wally Macgregor, Awards Committee Chairperson at 1005 Westport Place, V8Y 1G3.**

All nominations must be in writing and should be signed by at least three other members of the Society. A brief biographical sketch and a description of the contributions and achievements of the nominee, along with his or her address and telephone number, should be included.

The Awards Committee reviews the nominations and makes recommendations to the Board of Directors, which grants the awards. For more information, contact Wally Macgregor at 658-8956.

## REQUIRED

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David Allinson,  
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## Birding near Las Vegas, Nevada

by Geoff and Lonny Bate

Last September (1994) my wife, Lonny, and I were on a one month vacation in the western United States and found ourselves in Las Vegas. So, we checked our recreational vehicle into a camp site for three days and made reservations for the shows we wanted to see and tried our hand at the "pokies" and other assorted forms of gambling.

Well, after a day or so we both became bored with this activity and looked around for something else to do. One option was a visit to the Las Vegas Natural History Museum which is located at 900 Las Vegas Blvd. North. While there, we inquired if there were any good birding spots near Las Vegas. We were directed to the west gate of the Desert National Wildlife Refuge. So, on a day when it was forecasted to be close to 40 °C (100 °F!), we set off to find the place.

The west gate is located just off Highway No. 95, the main road north to Reno, about 50 km (30 miles) from downtown Las Vegas. Actually, we discovered the spot from the highway as it was the only small green ribbon of trees in an otherwise stark brown desert. After passing an overpass leading to a store on an Indian Reserve, we found a small sign indicating that a wildlife refuge and viewing area was off to our right

(east). From there a gravel road crossed the desert valley for about 2 km (1.5 miles) to the refuge gate.

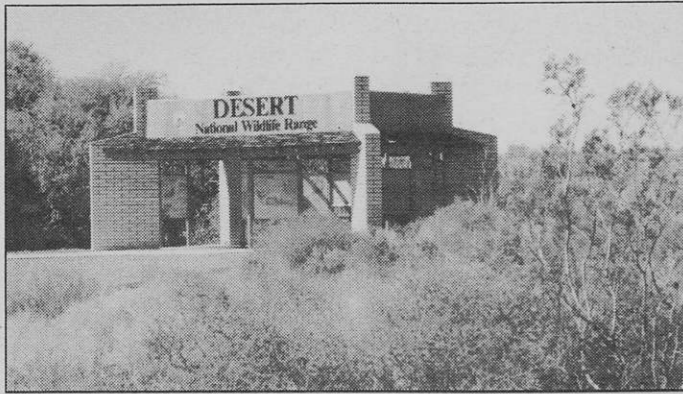
At this point we came upon a sign indicating that we were now at Corn Creek, inside the Desert National Wildlife Refuge. From there it is possible to choose one of three roads into the mountains in the desert to look, primarily, for California Big Horn sheep. There is a warning, however, that a pickup truck in good condition is required and four wheel drive is recommended. (Maybe next time!)

Corn Creek is an oasis. Water emerges from a spring and travels through a series of ponds and disappears into a sandy desert. For thousands of years it was used by native Indians as a stop-off spot, although no permanent village has ever been discovered. In the late 1800's it was occupied, and eventually purchased and developed into a farm to provide overnight lodging for prospectors and other travellers. The Federal Government then purchased the property as part of the refuge.

There is no visitor centre but there is an open area display which provides information regarding development of the refuge, road access, risk factors and general information of flora and fauna. A short loop trail provides access to the ponds. From this loop another foot path leads to other springs which seep into the sand several hundred meters to the north. As we started along the loop trail the shade provided by tall deciduous trees and trickling water provided pleasant relief from the heat. The sounds of birds and the "plop" of frogs jumping into the ponds welcomed us into a different world.



Corn Creek (photo: Geoff and Lonny Bate)



Corn Creek (photo: Geoff and Lonny Bate)

Because water is such a limiting factor in the desert, the ponds and surrounding area were literally alive with birds. Over 200 species have been recorded, most of which were migrants. The species that filled gaps in our life list were the Black-crowned Night Heron, Red-naped Sapsucker, Sage Sparrow, Scaled Quail, Phainopepla and a pair of Ferruginous Hawks.

While fairly common in this area we found the Phainopepla particularly interesting. It reminded us of a cross between our Steller's Jay and the Common Grackle. The quail were also intriguing. At first we thought we had stumbled onto a resident population of California Quail. But the males lacked a black plume and the flock, before they scurried off, were pale greyish in colour, much less than the quail we are used to seeing.

When we spotted herons in the trees we thought we had discovered a flock of little "blues". A check with our book indicated that the black feathers on the back and head revealed that they were Black-crowned Night Herons. While they continuously flew from us when we approached, they simply circled and landed in the trees behind us, never leaving the area. We also had difficulty identifying the Ferruginous Hawks. Finally, when they were in flight, we were able to pick out the contrasting dark wing linings and white flight and tail feathers.

There was one bird species which we saw in this area as well as other places during our trip which defied identification. This was the Western Meadowlark. Now, meadowlarks are not all that common around Victoria but I was raised near the Okanagan where the meadowlark is a common sight throughout early spring and summer. Their bright yellow vest with black "V" and unique song makes this bird easily recognizable by almost everyone. Well, this was no longer the case. The birds we saw were silent, drab, no yellow, no black "V". Identification was possible only when we spotted the patches of white on each side of its short tail, similar to the outer tail feathers of a Dark-eyed Junco. This method of identification is never necessary here in B.C.

Obviously, we had an extremely enjoyable afternoon.

So, the next time you are in Las Vegas, and the glitter and the noise get to you, jump in your car (or rent one) and make the short trip to Corn Creek, in the Desert National Wildlife Refuge. You will be sure to find some bird species not ordinarily seen near Victoria.

Geoff Bate is a wildland fire management consultant. Lonny Bate is a General Accountant with the Ministry of Social Services. Both have become avid birders, particularly during the past 6 years, and have made birding a major part of their holiday experience.

## Victoria Natural History Society Awards

Each year the Victoria Natural History Society (VNHS) presents six awards to graduate and undergraduate students enrolled in programs in the Department of Biology at the University of Victoria and the Environmental Technology Program at Camosun College. The recipients are selected by the Senate Committee on Awards from candidates recommended by the Department of Biology (UVic) or the Environmental Technology coordinators (Camosun College). The awards are:

**The Samuel Simco Bursary.** A bursary of \$650, established from funds bequeathed to the VNHS by the late Samuel Simco, is awarded annually to a student pursuing a degree in Biology and who is specializing in the area of species and/or habitat conservation.

**The Victoria Natural History Society Scholarship.** An award of \$650 is made annually to a third or fourth year student in a major or honours program in Biology and who is specializing in the area of species and/or habitat conservation.

**The Freeman F. King Scholarship.** An award (endowed scholarship) is made annually to a student entering fourth year Biology and preparing for a career in natural history. Preference will be given to students with an interest in field studies, especially in terrestrial biology.

**The Victoria Natural History Society Bursary.** An award of \$250 is made annually to a student enrolled in the Environmental Technology Program at Camosun College.

Recipients of these awards in the 1993-1994 academic year were:

Samuel Simco Bursary: Grant Hopcraft

Victoria Natural History Society Scholarship: Ed Quilty

Freeman F. King Scholarship: Marnie Duthie

Victoria Natural History Society Bursary: Holly Douglas.

## Sightings Wanted

### Colour-banded Double-crested Cormorants

As part of a project to track seasonal movements of Double-crested Cormorants, the Canadian Wildlife Service has placed coloured, numbered leg bands on 300 cormorant chicks from southern Vancouver Island and the Strait of Georgia. Bands are red, orange, yellow, blue and white, to correspond with breeding colonies, and are numbered numerically (1, 2, 3, etc. for orange, yellow, blue and white bands) or alpha-numerically (A00, A01 . . . B99, for red and blue bands). Read bands sideways and downwards towards the foot. They are best seen while birds perch on rocks, booms or pilings. Report sightings to: Ian Moul, Foul Bay Ecological Research Limited, 317 Irving Road, Victoria, B.C., V8S 4A1. Phone: (604) 598-3141. Fax: (604) 598-3120. E-mail: foulbay@islandnet.com. Radio transmitters have also been attached to adult birds. Persons working with radio receivers, who are interested in listening for birds, please call for frequencies.

## Albinistic Northwestern Crows

by Barbara Begg

An *incompletely albinistic* Northwestern Crow was seen southwest of Victoria, B.C., at Pedder Bay Marina, Metchosin, September 11, 16, and 18, 1994. The striking features of the bird were its bill and legs, both the same shade of pink (see photo). The tip of the bill, the eye and eye orbital ring were dark. The age of the bird is in doubt. It had the dark eyes of an adult and the bird exhibited no immature posturing but the plumage showed the brownish tinge on the back and underparts of an immature or a postnuptial adult. In addition, the wings were a dull black and there was no evidence of the glossy sheen of an adult on any of the contour feathers. Perhaps this was an adult with *imperfect albinism* in the plumage. It was interacting normally with a flock of about twenty-five other crows.

The bird was briefly looked for, unsuccessfully, amongst the other crows on September 24 and October 2. However, on September 24 at the same location, were two Northwestern Crows with *matching partial albinism*. Both displayed about four small white feathers on each wing, in the vicinity of the lesser wing coverts and alula. They showed the black sheen of adults and were closely associat-

ing with each other. Identical twins from a past year perhaps? And still together?

Ornithologists generally recognize four types of albinism—*total*, *incomplete*, *imperfect* and *partial*. In total albinism the plumage is white and all the soft parts are pink or white. This is the rarest form, especially in adults. Incomplete albinism is the total absence of pigment in particular body parts, such as all the feathers, or the legs, bill or eyes. Imperfect albinism is when the normal colours of any or all body parts are reduced.

Partial albinism, which is the form most often seen, involves individual white feathers or patches of white, often symmetrical, as in the above mentioned two crows with the white in their wings.

An interesting photograph of an albinistic crow appears on page 37 of the 1983 National Geographic publication *The Wonder of Birds*. This bird seems to be an almost totally albinistic juvenile (based on the presence of an egg tooth and the bird's posture). Slight deviations are one black and one pink toenail on the two toes shown in the picture, and blue eyes.

Young crows normally have blue eyes but if it was a true total albino, the blue pigment should be absent regardless of the stage of development, I would think.

[Editor's Note: A picture of a partially white crow from the Chemainus area was featured in the September-October, 1994 issue of the *Victoria Naturalist*.]

Barbara Begg is a member of the Victoria Natural History Society and a frequent contributor to the *Victoria Naturalist*.



Incomplete albinistic Northwestern Crow, Pedder Bay, Metchosin, September 11, 16, 18, 1994 (photo: David Stirling).

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# Birding Observations Around Rithet's Bog

by Michael Carson

## BACKGROUND

Rithet's Bog is located immediately east of the Patricia Bay Highway in Saanich, nestled in a basin on the western fringes of Broadmead. The accompanying map dates to the mid-1960s, at which time the margins of the basin were largely undisturbed Douglas-fir forest in the east (now treed residential development) and open Garry Oak woodland to the north, to the west (between the Highway and Douglas St., now called Chatterton Way) and to the south. Today, the northern and southern margins have both become residential: Dalewood Lane in the north (AB on map) and the Foxborough Hills townhouse complex (flanking Emily Carr Drive) in the south (EFG on map). Office development is planned for the strip between Douglas and the Highway.

Set against this massive development on three sides, the low part of the basin, Rithet's Bog itself, shows little obvious sign of change from descriptions thirty years ago. There is some concern over deterioration in water quality in the ditches, arising from stormwater runoff along streets, but the habitat seems little different, except for the abundance of trash in the ditch alongside Chatterton Way.

The land itself comprises a central core of forest, largely Lodgepole Pine, surrounded by fields. In the southeast, these

fields have been overgrown by grasses, marsh vegetation, hardhack and shrub-sized willows. To the north and west, the three bare fields have been used for potatoes in recent years, and are typically flooded in winter. Without this annual cultivation, it is assumed that these fields would follow the vegetation succession that took place on the fields in the southeastern part of the bog.

Though best known among naturalists for the stand of lodgepole pine, the area has also long been an attraction for birders, especially in pre-Broadmead days when Western Bluebirds were a common sight in the oak-studded rocky knolls around the bog and when larks sang in the fields (Stirling, 1965).

The land at the time of this survey was still owned by Broadmead Farms Ltd, although negotiations had been under way for some time for acquisition by the municipality. Rumours had long existed as to what its ultimate fate might be, including talk of conversion to a golf course. The bog has recently (September, 1994) been acquired by Saanich and the intent appears to be to treat it as a nature sanctuary.

In view of the uncertainty during the last few years, it seemed appropriate to the Parks and Conservation Committee of the Victoria Natural History Society (VNHS) a year ago, that a bird inventory be undertaken for the area, comparable with that previously done for the Blenkinsop Lake area (Carson, 1994), in order to document what avifauna continue to use the bog and surroundings.

To this end, a one-year once-a-week survey was implemented, beginning in June, 1993 and continuing through to the end of May, 1994. This article is an abridged version of a report on file with the Society.



The small pond, Rithet's Bog (photo: Mike Carsen).

## SCOPE OF THE SURVEY

The survey was essentially a peripheral one. Access into the bog is currently difficult, especially in summer when tall grasses, thistles and related weedy vegetation make movement much more difficult than in winter. The route basically followed the 160-foot contour shown on the attached map. Sightings that were more than fifty metres outside this route (away from the bog) were not included in the inventory. The route taken in the survey is very similar to the new trail constructed by Broadmead Farms. The only real difference is that, in the south, the new trail stays at low level at the edge of the bog, whereas the survey route (GF on map) followed the higher ground which is part of the Foxborough Hills townhouse complex.

Public access to the trail is available in the east, at Fir Tree Glen (D on map), in the north, at the end of Dalewood Lane (B on map), and in the west, from Chatterton Way (at H and just south of A on map). There is a covered bird lookout, constructed by Broadmead Farms Ltd., about mid-way along Dalewood Lane, overlooking the northern field. Ironically, all the uncommon-to-rare species seen in the winter-flooded fields were in the other two fields (seen from H and I on the map). The northern field is the last to flood in late autumn and the first to dry out in spring.

Identification of some birds seen in the interior of the bog was sometimes difficult, even with a spotting scope, and, of course, many birds in bushes and trees well within the bog were simply not seen or heard. Nonetheless, the survey should provide an accurate indication of what is expected as seen from a peripheral walking trail, and it covered all habitats in the area.

Each survey took between 2.5 and 3.5 hours, depending on the abundance of bird life. Starting time also varied, and can be critical in determining the success of observations in this area. In winter, for example, the low-lying bog receives cold air drainage and may be much colder than the surrounding hills; in addition, much of the bog does not receive sunshine until after 9 a.m. because of the hills to the south and east.

In addition to these regular surveys, additional visits were made during the week, especially in the two migration periods, but also in the winter, in the hope of observing exotic waterfowl or other birds frequenting the flooded fields at that time. These visits were rewarded with a total of 8 species not observed on the regular survey. Dawn-time trips in the middle of winter were also instructive: the area proved to be a major overnight roosting area for up to 350 Canada Geese and one associated immature Snow Goose. Half an hour after sunrise these geese had always moved on, dispersing to all points of the compass in a scene reminiscent of early morning frenzy at Toronto International Airport.

Some species were certainly missed in the study. Two which were reported by the Rare Bird Alert were an immature Golden Eagle in September and a Glaucous Gull in March. All these observations were combined into a monthly checklist, based on probability of observation. A separate table is also provided showing the average number of birds seen on the regular surveys as this varied during the course of the year.

## MONTHLY CHECKLIST

A total of 118 species were seen during the 1993-94 survey, ten less than in the comparable survey in the Blenkinsop

Valley in 1992-1993. These are broken down as 18 water-based species, 43 non-perching species and 57 passerines.

The number of water-based species was substantially less than in the Blenkinsop Valley, the number of non-perching species greater (more gulls and shorebirds) and the number of passerine species was slightly less.

In the case of the Blenkinsop Valley checklist, the survey-year sightings were supplemented with observations listed in the card records of the Royal British Columbia Museum for the period 1979-1988. This was not done in the Rithet's Bog study. In order to supplement the survey data with sightings in previous years (back to 1979), a search was made through past copies of the Victoria Naturalist and reports were solicited from other birders. This approach yielded an additional 9 species, compared to an additional 32 species in the Blenkinsop Valley.

The total number of species on the checklist is 127, compared to 165 for the 1979-on period for the Blenkinsop Valley.

## USE OF THE AREA BY BIRDLIFE

### The central forest area

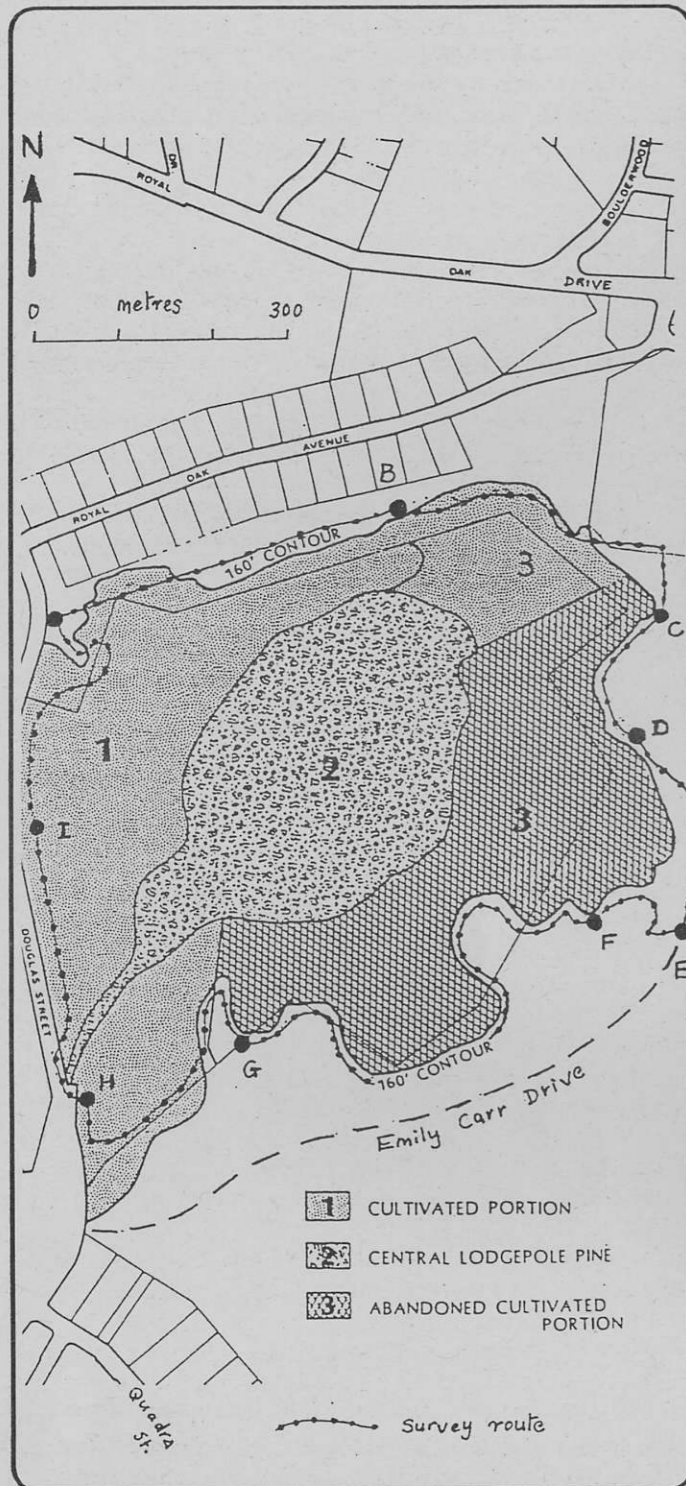
Only a few, short incursions were made into the forest (not part of the regular survey) and few birds were seen. The forest is probably home to at least one species of owl. A Great Horned Owl was seen flying into the trees on several occasions. At other times, Purple Finches were heard singing from the tops of trees and a Western Tanager was sighted in a similar location during June 1993. Accipiters have also been seen flying into forest stand.

### The abandoned fields of the eastern part of the bog

Overall this is probably the most densely populated part of the bog in terms of avifauna. Willow, hawthorn and hardhack bushes, and occasional trees and snags, provide both cover and perching sites, and most of the passerines seen (apart from the strictly woodland species) occur in this area. Yet, even at the time of migration, the area somehow seemed under-utilized by birds. The best viewing sites are in the eastern pocket of the bog at Fir Tree Glen (D on map) and overlooking a small pond (F on map) at the far east edge. The area further to the southwest, which is mostly dense shrub willow and lacks the habitat diversity of this eastern pocket, has never seemed quite as productive in terms of bird life.

Highlights of the year in this area included sightings of both Virginia Rail and Sora during spring and summer. The former were heard calling (sounded more like laughing) throughout the winter, and at least half a dozen adults of that species, and probably twice that number, are believed to be resident in the bog. The rails are not confined to the abandoned field area; they can be found in well-vegetated ditches anywhere in the bog, even flanking Chatterton Way. Four black Virginia Rail chicks were seen with adults in one of the ditches as early as May 8, 1994, possibly indicating that the rails had two broods.

At least four male Anna's Hummingbirds have been seen in the eastern part of the bog, helped by many feeders in the adjacent residences. Swallows seem to be essentially restricted to Violet-Green and Barn Swallows, though identification is hampered by the generally high-level of flight over the marsh (compared to Blenkinsop Lake where swallows frequently skim



Map of Rithet's Bog, Saanich (modified from Sterling, 1965)

the water surface). At least half a dozen Marsh Wrens can be heard during spring and more than three times that number of Common Yellowthroat on most days. The area is dominated by Red-winged Blackbirds in spring and American Goldfinches in summer. Up to 36 Lincoln Sparrows were counted on one day during autumn migration, most of them being "pushed" out of hawthorn bushes. These songbirds attract the expected birds of prey: Northern Shrike is an occasional winter visitor, Merlin is sometimes seen in autumn, and Cooper's Hawk is seen at most times of the year.

#### The northeastern woodland margins

Some of the most pleasant birding can be along the margins of Broadmead on the short trail between Fir Tree Glen (D on map) and Dalewood (B on map). The area hosts the usual winter assemblage of small woodland birds. In the summer of both 1993 and 1994 a few House Wrens established territory in the residential woodland margin, and of the eight common warblers on the checklist, only Townsend's was not seen from this trail. The trail is, in some respects, comparable to Lochside Trail leading to Blenkinsop Lake but it seems to lack the more unusual sightings found on the latter trail, such as Eastern and Western Kingbird, American Tree Sparrow and various owl species. Perhaps this is a reflection of the encroachment of suburbia.

#### The winter-flooded fields

The fields west and north of the lodgepole pine were, up to this year, cultivated for potatoes from June until about mid-September. At that time they are largely devoid of birds, though Savannah Sparrows can be found in Fall migration. The fields become flooded early in the winter and in 1994 retained water in the two fields flanking Chatterton Way until the second week of May, being drained by pumping of the adjacent ditches. The southern field is the last to dry out; a large wet area was still there at the end of May.

Over much of the winter the fields are host to various species of waterfowl, although freezing-over seems to be fairly frequent. Overall, the waterfowl usage of the fields in winter was disappointing, used primarily by Mallards and American Wigeon. A small number of Trumpeter Swans seemed to be resident during most of the early winter while the occasional visit by Eurasian Green-winged Teal and a Tundra Swan provided more interest. The errant Peregrine Falcon or Bald Eagle, looking for a meal from a perch in adjacent cottonwoods, also provided a few moments of excitement.

Perhaps more fascinating than the waterfowl were the winter visits by gulls. Small island-strips in the main flooded field flanking Chatterton Way were frequently full of gulls during mid-winter, and up to seven species were seen. Usually the gulls are simply roosting in the field. Arrivals from, and departures to, the northwest probably indicate that the area is being used as a daytime rest stop after feeding at the Hartland Avenue landfill.

Identification of gulls while roosting requires some patience as well as some experience. Numerous Thayer's Gulls were present in December-January, some of them with a yellow (not brown) iris, making distinction from Herring Gulls difficult to the untrained eye. According to Keith Taylor (1994, pers. comm.) about 2% of the local Thayer's Gull population has the pale yellow iris colour. Thayer's Gull numbers declined dramatically during the third week of January, presumably in response to departures for the herring spawning grounds up-island (Taylor and Harper, 1986).

#### The flooded fields in spring

During April and May, as water levels go down and shore areas become more prominent, the flooded fields are perhaps at their most interesting from a birding standpoint. The fields provided an excellent opportunity to view shorebirds, especially in the early evening, with the sun setting behind the observer on approaching from Chatterton Way.

Most shorebirds were found either in the southern field (H on map), often in the far northeast corner in the shelter of



Rithet's Bog from Chatterton Way.

cottonwoods, or in the main field flanking Chatterton Way (as seen from the berm I on the map). Least Sandpipers were especially common, up to 27 at a time, occasionally joined by smaller numbers of Western Sandpipers. Killdeer nested in the smaller, southwestern field in both years, with a first brood of four downy young scurrying along the field edge as early as April 17, and a nest of four eggs seen on June 6. Both species of Yellowlegs and a Solitary Sandpiper were seen at the end of April and in the first few days of May, with Spotted Sandpipers and a Long-billed Dowitcher (which stayed for 10 days until the fields were dry) arriving in time for the Victoria Spring Bird Count. Several "Spotties" stayed until June 22 at least, frequenting residual puddles in the fields and the banks of the

main outlet ditch, and appeared to have been breeding. This may have resulted from the fact that this year, the first year for some time, the fields were left uncultivated. A full inventory of shorebirds seen between April 9 and May 16 is given in the table.

Northwestern Crows are also common in the late afternoon and early evening in spring, on their return to their night-time roost somewhere to the northeast, and could frequently be seen tormenting the shorebirds. The noisy calls of "killdee, killdee" can dominate the evening, and almost rival the roar of traffic on the highway. There are, however, some unexpected advantages from the presence of the crows. The definitive tail marking on the

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RITHET'S BOG SURVEY JUNE 1993-MAY 1994

Average number of birds per survey

(shown where at least one month greater than 5)

	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M
Canada Goose	0	0	16	2	62	74	35	17	18	5	12	12
Green-winged Teal	0	0	1	0	2	8	13	9	18	12	4	0
Mallard	7	6	2	2	110	47	296	106	46	96	20	21
American Wigeon	0	0	0	0	0	1	10	2	2	1	0	1
California Quail	5	5	4	4	3	1	2	4	3	0	5	5
Killdeer	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	2	5
Thayer's Gull	0	0	0	0	0	0	212	166	0	0	0	0
Glaucous-wi Gull	5	9	11	11	6	24	27	47	37	18	19	10
Rock Dove	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	7	4	0	0	0
Rufous Hummingbird	4	4	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	6
Violet-gr Swallow	23	36	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	21	28
Barn Swallow	14	24	14	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	12
Northwestern Crow	11	12	5	5	16	5	25	45	35	15	19	8
Chestnut- Chickadee	6	6	3	5	8	9	6	7	4	6	4	3
Bushtit	12	13	14	8	7	3	1	14	0	9	8	7
Marsh Wren	1	2	0	0	1	2	1	1	1	3	6	3
Golden-cr Kinglet	0	0	0	2	1	7	8	3	3	2	0	0
Ruby-cr Kinglet	0	0	0	1	2	2	5	3	2	2	0	0
American Robin	23	27	11	13	15	4	25	17	57	16	20	13
Cedar Waxwing	11	9	11	9	2	1	0	2	6	0	0	15
European Starling	13	32	19	3	10	11	8	32	36	8	17	14
Orange-cr Warbler	3	2	9	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	4
Yellow warbler	6	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	6
Common Yellowthroat	11	16	8	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	12
Black-head Grosbeak	6	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Rufous-sided Towhee	6	8	6	5	14	21	12	11	20	15	15	10
Savannah Sparrow	0	0	1	43	19	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Fox Sparrow	0	0	0	1	4	8	2	2	1	1	0	0
Song Sparrow	17	20	14	12	27	28	16	21	25	25	23	20
Lincoln's Sparrow	0	0	4	17	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
White-cr Sparrow	2	12	15	9	2	0	0	0	0	1	2	2
Golden-cr Sparrow	0	0	0	8	12	25	15	31	27	13	9	1
Dark-eyed Junco	0	0	1	0	15	34	30	35	30	7	1	0
Red-wing Blackbird	19	39	3	0	2	0	1	5	8	20	37	37
Brown-head Cowbird	8	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	6
House Finch	12	13	24	10	15	34	15	22	11	11	12	13
Red Crossbill	0	0	0	0	1	9	7	9	6	4	3	1
Pine Siskin	2	5	3	3	3	0	0	19	15	5	9	5
American Goldfinch	9	8	36	19	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	7
House Sparrow	0	4	8	2	1	1	1	0	0	2	4	1

SEPL KILL GRYE LEYE SOSA SDSA WESA LESA LBDO COSN

April 9												2
April 16		2	2									
April 17		2									1	
April 20		2									7	
April 21		1									12	
April 23		2									27	
April 30		1				1				8	14	
May 1				1							12	
May 2			2			1		1			9	
May 4	1		1								5	
May 5			2							2	5	
May 7		4							2	3	4	1
May 8		4				1			3	13	5	1
May 9		4							3	1	15	1
May 10		4							2		8	1
May 11		8							2		8	1
May 12		2							3			1
May 13		6							3			1
May 14		8							3		5	1
May 16		6							3	1		1

ADULT SHOREBIRDS SEEN AT RITHET'S BOG

SPRING 1994

SEPL	Semi-palmated Plover
KILL	Killdeer
GRYE	Greater Yellowlegs
LEYE	Lesser Yellowlegs
SOSA	Solitary Sandpiper
SDSA	Spotted Sandpiper
WESA	Western Sandpiper
LESA	Least Sandpiper
LBDO	Long-billed Dowitcher
COSN	Common Snipe

woodland flanking the bog on its lower slopes. Included in this category are Olive-sided Flycatcher and Chipping Sparrow, both of which have been heard on open high ground further away from the bog.

Turning to species which are now fairly common (at the appropriate time of year) at Rithet's Bog, 22 species were not on Stirling's list: Trumpeter Swan, Red-tailed Hawk, Virginia Rail, Least and Western Sandpipers, Thayer's Gull, Rock Dove, Anna's Hummingbird, Northwestern Crow, Common Raven, Bewick's Wren, House Wren, Marsh Wren, Cedar Waxwing, European Starling, MacGillivray's Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Lincoln's Sparrow, Golden-crowned Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird, Brown-headed Cowbird and House Sparrow. Most of these appear to coincide with species

for which there has been an increase throughout southern Vancouver Island.

COMPARISON WITH BLENKINSOP LAKE

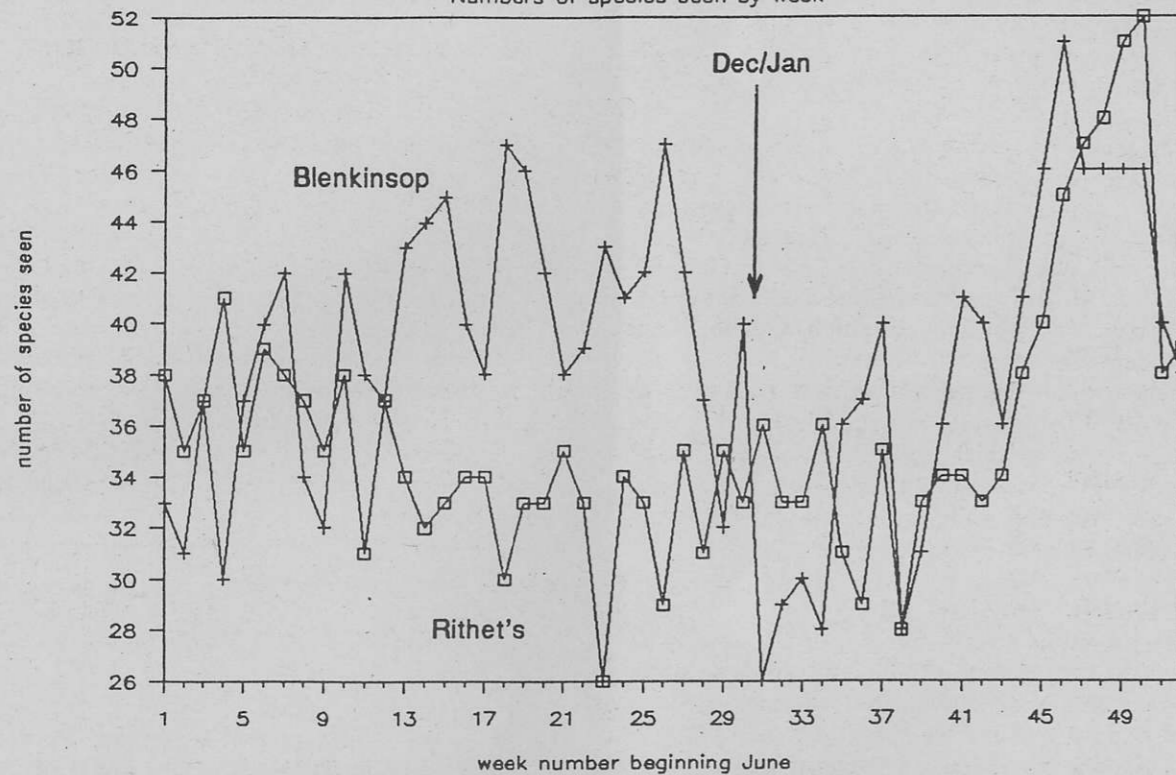
Birding at Rithet's Bog provided an interesting contrast with the 1992-93 survey done for the Blenkinsop Valley. Watching passerines is a particularly frustrating exercise around Rithet's Bog because the birds are not concentrated along the trail (as on Lochside Trail in the Blenkinsop Valley) but are widespread in bushes and thickets that are generally hundreds of metres away from the peripheral trail. It is difficult to know whether any species were missed simply because of lack of access to the heart of the bog.

The graph shows a comparison of number of species



## Rithet's Bog and Blenkinsop Lake

Numbers of species seen by week



observed on each survey compared to the 1992-93 Blenkinsop survey. Species totals were generally lower at Rithet's, especially in the autumn and winter (except during the severe freeze of January 1993). The area lacks the diversity of water-based

birds found on Blenkinsop Lake. On the other hand, species totals were slightly higher at Rithet's in late spring, arising from the shorebird influx, and in the summer, due to the extra woodland species found in the forest margins. The best time



Rithet's Bog from Chatterton Way.

of the year to bird Rithet's Bog, by far, is the first two weeks of May, especially for anyone interested in shorebirds.

Some birds were certainly more common at Rithet's Bog than in the Blenkinsop Valley. These include Trumpeter Swan, Virginia Rail and Sora, shorebirds (except Killdeer), gulls (except Glaucous-winged), Anna's Hummingbird, Red-breasted Nuthatch and Brown Creeper (in the woods), Common Yellowthroat and Lincoln's Sparrow.

Some species were more common in the Blenkinsop Valley. These included most species of water-based birds, owls, and many species of passerines. In the latter category, flycatchers and vireos were generally less frequently observed at Rithet's Bog.

The main difference between the two areas is probably not so much in overall bird abundance and diversity but simply in terms of the much better bird watching along Lochside Trail and around Blenkinsop Lake.

In particular the hedgerows of Lochside Trail seem to concentrate most of the passerines in the Blenkinsop Valley providing close-up views which are rarely available around Rithet's Bog. Shorebird viewing with a spotting scope is, however, better at Rithet's Bog, while a greater diversity of waterfowl is available on Blenkinsop Lake.

### RITHET'S BOG: THE FUTURE

Now that a public trail flanks the entire bog, some consideration should be given as to its impact on wildlife. To some extent, this will depend upon whether usage is restricted to pedestrians and whether unleashed pets are allowed access. Waterfowl, rails and snipe frequently use the ditches that flank the trail system and seem to be sensitive to disturbance. This is especially true of the small pond area (at F on map) which has now been opened up a great deal by trail construction.

A related issue is the future land use of the three fields that have been used, up to the present, for cultivation. These fields provide an important overwintering area for some waterfowl, and a day-time resting area for gulls, both groups attracting the occasional hungry raptor. The fields are also a feeding-stop for shorebirds in spring migration, at which time they are usually still partly waterlogged.

Without ongoing cultivation, it seems almost certain that these fields would change to heavily grassed marshland, perhaps comparable to what happened at Quick's Bottom, and as happened with the abandoned fields in the eastern part of the bog. For this reason it may be advantageous to continue farming the fields in the summer in the future.

On the other hand, cultivation requires dry fields, and this necessitates pumping of the drainage ditches leading from these fields in spring, which may be detrimental to birdlife.

Though tillage is needed to prevent "infilling" of the bare field areas, this does not necessarily mean that the fields need to be cultivated every year. One possibility that the municipality might wish to consider is the creation of a permanent wetlands sanctuary here, by landscaping the fields and maintaining high water levels through the summer. Various agencies exist with the resources to act as consultants in the planning and funding of such wetland sanctuaries. Until such time as this is undertaken, the best protection for the flooded field habitat is probably still summer cultivation.

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### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks are extended to Broadmead Farms Ltd. and to the Grounds Committee of the Foxborough Hills complex for permission to wander on their properties. The bulk of the field survey work was shared with Gordon Hart, Tom Gillespie and Ellen Tremblay. Others who assisted on occasion were: Jerry and Gladys Anderson, David Allinson, Dannie Carsen, Aziza Cooper, Mike McGrenere, Hank van der Pol, Graham Ruxton and Mari Smaby-Stone. Gwennie Hooper and Doreen Loosmore provided records for previous years.

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# The Sea-to-Sea Western Greenbelt Proposal For Greater Victoria

by Michael Carson and Jeff Stone

The people of Victoria have long been blessed with one of the most magnificent hinterlands anywhere: the Strait of Juan de Fuca to the south, an island archipelago to the east, the farming landscape of the Saanich Peninsula to the north, and the green belt of the Highlands and the Sooke Hills to the west. The latter, in particular, marks a striking natural buttress that has largely contained suburban sprawl. Its scenic beauty, especially in summer sunsets, is one of the lasting memories of visitors and residents alike.

These western hills are a natural asset that is easy to take for granted. There are already suburban blights on the western vista and several more are looming. Not too long ago, the views over Finlayson Arm from the Gowlland Range were on a par with some of the most magnificent fjordscapes in New Zealand. Today, those views are marred by development scars on the Malahat Drive. The once-pristine view west from downtown Victoria is similarly compromised by the glass and vinyl reflections from Triangle Mountain.

These few blemishes on the landscape should alert us to what may follow. Hikers to McKenzie Bight may soon have to contend with a municipal Bamberton across the water. And now there is talk of possibly opening up part of the Sooke Hills

to urban development: in the "off-catchment" lands of the Greater Victoria Water District.

With this scenario before us, a proposal has been put forward by the newly-formed Sea-to-Sea Greenbelt Society to try to save this western greenbelt before it is too late. During the summer, members of the Parks and Conservation Committee of the Victoria Natural History Society met to discuss the proposal and to visit the field areas involved. What follows is a statement of support by the Committee on behalf of the Greenbelt Society.

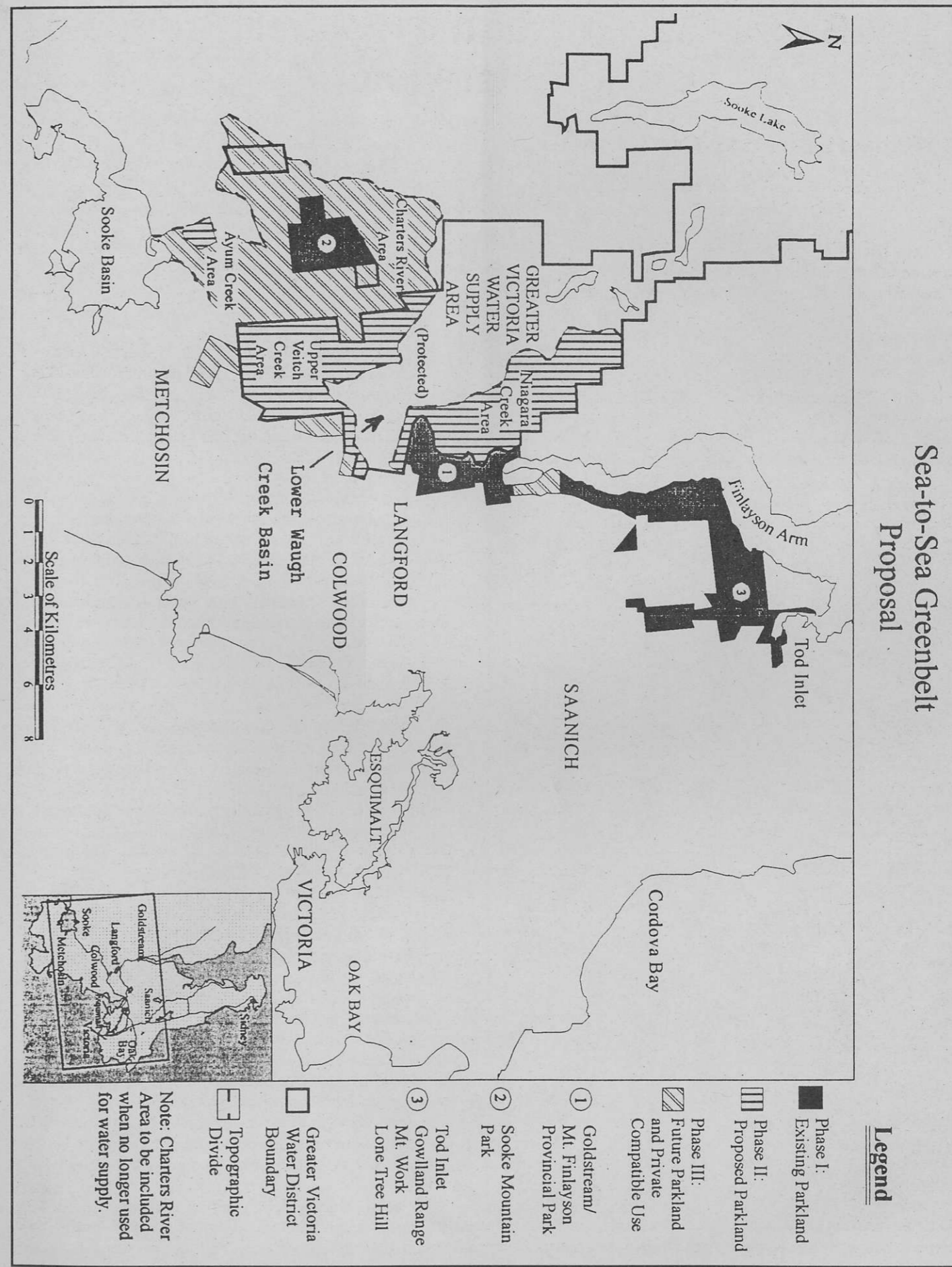
## The Proposal

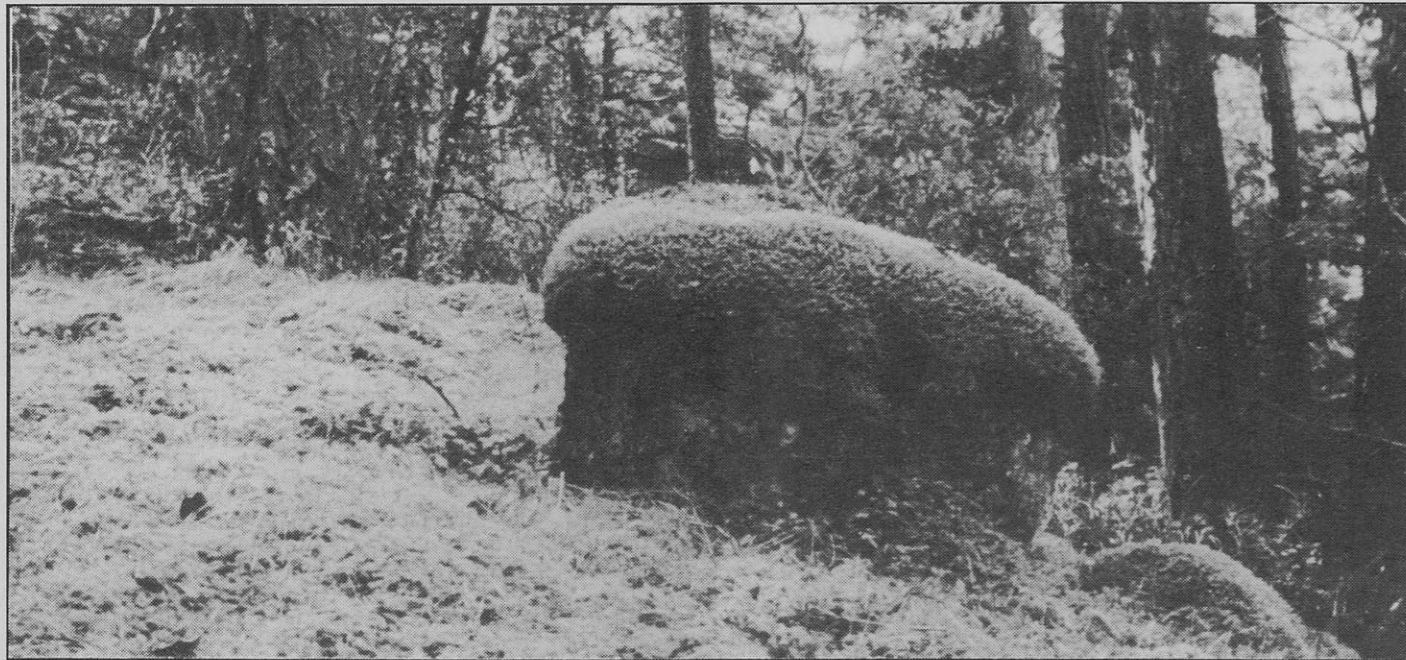
Some of this greenbelt is already dedicated parkland: Sooke Mountain Provincial Park; Goldstream Provincial Park; Mount Finlayson, the Gowlland Range and Partridge Hills of the Highlands Commonwealth Nature Legacy; and, Mount Work Regional Park. These areas, as well as the key areas now needing protection to complete the greenbelt, are indicated in the accompanying map.

The impetus provided by the Provincial Government with its creation of the Highlands Nature Legacy was of major importance. The next step is to build upon this legacy and extend protection southwest into the Sooke Hills. This would provide an almost uninterrupted zone of green space from Tod Inlet in the northeast to Sooke Basin in the southwest: hence the name Sea-To-Sea Greenbelt.



Veitch Creek drainage area: view of Mt. Braden (photo: Bernadette Mertens).





Moss-covered rock, Veitch Creek hills (photo: Bernadette Mertens).



Veitch Creek, autumn scene (photo: Bernadette Mertens).

#### The Benefits of the Proposal

The benefits from this greenbelt are numerous:

- It provides a natural barrier to urban sprawl, a major concern of The Georgia Basin Initiative (B.C. Round Table on the Environment, May-Dec. 1993).
- It provides a large biological sanctuary for the distinctive flora and fauna of the Nanaimo Lowland Ecosection, "one of the most endangered ecosystems in North America" (Biodiversity in B.C., Our Changing Environment - Environment Canada).
- It would double the land in the Ecosection that is protected, from 0.75% to 1.85%, and provide a vast natural corridor for wildlife (The Times-Colonist, July 7, 1994).
- It preserves the visual integrity of the largest and perhaps most significant viewscape from downtown Victoria.
- It extends the Highlands parkland belt southwest to flank one of the most rapidly growing parts of the Capital Regional District, protecting green space while this is still possible.
- Ultimately, it could provide a 25 km-long walking trail from Sooke to Brentwood Bay along some of the most beautiful and varied terrain on southern Vancouver Island, all within 20 km of downtown Victoria. The tourism potential might one day attain the status of the world-famous Milford Trail in New Zealand.

Though the greenbelt forest is already a much-needed retreat from the urban scene, it is in the future that the magnificence of this area will really stand out. Our urban area seems destined to keep growing and in 50 years or less it will abut the greenbelt edge. During that time, what is currently a mature-to-old, second-growth forest over much of its extent, will have developed many more "old-growth" characteristics. People will be able to walk within it without the urban roar on the other side of the hill.

We need hardly add that the potential benefits to human wellbeing, as well as the survivability of other life in our area, will be greatly enhanced if these lands are protected.



Sword fern and old-growth cedar, Niagara Creek drainage area.

#### The Special Features of the Sooke Hills

As previously noted, much of the greenbelt northeast of the Goldstream Estuary, flanking the Saanich Inlet, is already protected parkland. The proposed areas southwest of Goldstream are not "more of the same". The terrain, the biology and the setting are different in several important respects:

- There are no significant all-year creeks in Highlands parks. The gravel-bed streamscape of the Goldstream Valley, while a precious asset to the community, must unfortunately be shared with the non-stop drone of traffic on the adjacent highway. The valley bottoms of Niagara Creek, Veitch Creek, Ayum Creek and Charters River provide comparable streamscapes in a natural setting free from man-made noise.
- Much of the forest area is much older and bigger than in the Highlands, with some Douglas Fir up to seven metres in circumference.
- The area is home to some spectacular large mammals that only rarely venture into the Highlands: Cougar, Ermine, Marten, Gray Wolf, and Black Bear (David Nagorsen, 1986, in *The Naturalist's Guide to the Victoria Region*, p. 134). Footprints of Roosevelt Elk were recently discovered (Monday Magazine, June 30, 1994). Hilltop clearings still produce the Great Arctic Butterfly, once a Vancouver Island specialty, now largely gone from the south island.

#### Importance of the Greater Victoria Water District Lands

The key areas needed to extend the Highlands park area into a true western greenbelt for Greater Victoria are the "off-catchment" lands of the Greater Victoria Water District (GVWD) i.e., lands owned by GVWD that are not needed for water supply (see attached map). These are the Niagara Creek basin (12 km<sup>2</sup>), on the west side of Goldstream Park, and the

Veitch Creek basin (13 km<sup>2</sup>), southwest of Goldstream. Smaller parcels exist in Charters and Ayum Creek basins. The total existing GVWD surplus area is about 32 km<sup>2</sup>.

The unshaded area on the map between the Niagara Creek Area and the Charters River and Upper Veitch Creek areas comprises two catchments:

- 1) Goldstream River draining from Goldstream Lake to Japan Gulch Reservoir; and,
- 2) Waugh Creek leading to Humpback Reservoir. A recent GVWD report indicates that this catchment will become redundant "within two to five years" at which time it will provide another 13 km<sup>2</sup> of surplus land. Lower Waugh Creek Basin is marked on the map by an arrow. Inclusion of this area in the GVWD surplus lands overcomes a major gap in the continuity of the original greenbelt outline and strengthens the case for a truly sea-to-sea greenbelt with a walking trail from Sooke Basin to Tod Inlet.

Inclusion of other areas into the Greenbelt may take several years and the cooperation of many different agencies and landowners. A major step - the most important single step can be implemented immediately, however, by petitioning the GVWD to allocate their off-catchment lands to parkland. The lands are surplus to GVWD needs and their future is about to be determined. As parkland, they would serve as an important buffer between our urban area and our water supply lands.

There seem to be three scenarios emerging as to the fate of the off-catchment lands:

- 1) transfer them to private companies for logging;
- 2) sell them for residential development; or,
- 3) protect them as parkland. There are strong grounds for having them returned to the public. The Times-Colonist (May 29, 1994, p. A3) quotes Vicky Husband of the Sierra Club as saying that the lands have already been paid for from the public purse, having been purchased by Victoria in the early part of the century and then later transferred to the water board.

Recent developments at GVWD indicate that the forestry lobby has been very active, and apparently very successful, in promoting the idea of converting the surplus lands to a "community demonstration forest" with logging.

**Action needed now**

As naturalists, many of whom are concerned with the preservation of Victoria's natural environment, you are urged to make your views known to GVWD, to the Provincial Government and to the media.

The key figures at GVWD are Jack Hull, District Chief Water Commissioner, Board Chairman Geoff Young (Victoria alderman) and Deputy Chairman Bob Gillespie (Saanich councillor) and other members of the Board: Murray Coell and Ian Cass (representing Saanich), Jane Lunt and David McLean (both Victoria), John Pallett (Oak Bay) and Ray Rice (Esquimalt).

At the Provincial level, the logical contacts are Municipal Affairs Minister Darlene Marzari and Environment Minister Moe Sihota. The provincial government has shown great initiative with its Commonwealth Nature Legacy. Additional funding for parkland acquisition will be more difficult, but the Provincial Government can assist in the protection of this greenbelt in many other ways. A major strategy for accommodating and containing growth on southern Vancouver Island has just been commissioned by Marzari's department. The future of the greenbelt lands must be a central component of that strategy.

An effective way of indicating your support for the preservation of the GVWD "surplus lands" would be to write directly to:



Old growth Douglas fir, Niagara Creek drainage area (photo: Jeff Garner).

The District Chief Water Commissioner and Board Members,  
The Greater Victoria Water District,  
479 Island Highway,  
Victoria, BC, V9B 1H7

with copies to:  
The Honourable Darlene Marzari  
Ministry of Municipal Affairs  
Room 306, Parliament Buildings, Victoria, BC, V8V 1X4

The Honourable Moe Sihota,  
Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks  
Room 346, Parliament Buildings,  
Victoria, BC, V8V 1X4.

The clock has already started to tick. Water District staff began work for a report on the eventual fate of the surplus lands several months ago. We hope that a sufficiently large groundswell of support from the numerous outdoor clubs of Greater Victoria will preserve the off-catchment lands. Many of these groups are already engaged in work to protect the greenbelt. We hope that members of the Victoria Natural History Society will voice and pen their support as well.

*Michael Carson (658-5029) and Jeff Stone (370-2449) are members of the Parks and Conservation Committee of VNHS. Additional information on this project may be obtained by phoning either of them, or by directly contacting The Sea-to-Sea Greenbelt Society at 380-3098.*

# Mount Tolmie

by Eric Redekop

More than ten thousand years ago, the land that is now Mount Tolmie emerged, barren and lifeless, from beneath an icy mantle up to a thousand fathoms deep. In those early holocene days, glistening icy crags surrounded an island of exposed abraded and striated bedrock. Warmed by the sun, windborne seeds and spores found them, followed within a season by insects and birds, attracted by the green invitation. As the ice continued melting, meltwaters deposited sands and gravels in vast coastal plains which may have connected Vancouver Island to the Pacific northwest mainland, allowing plant species to extend their distributions to new extremes on the southeast coast of Vancouver Island.

In our region, the land was depressed under the weight of glacial ice for thousands of years. When continental ice sheets eventually melted and refilled the oceans, even the new coastal plains were temporarily overcome by the rising sea, and Mount Tolmie became an island again. As the sea level rose on the slopes of the mountain, ocean waves, currents, and tides washed glacial debris from pockets and striations carved by rocks and ice centuries before, depositing sands and gravels in coastal spits, berms and bars. Eventually, only the top 40 meters of mountain remained above the reach of breaking waves. Freed from the weight of a massive glacier, the crust of the earth sprang up. The shoreline gradually receded, and waves, tides and currents continued washing debris off the rocks.

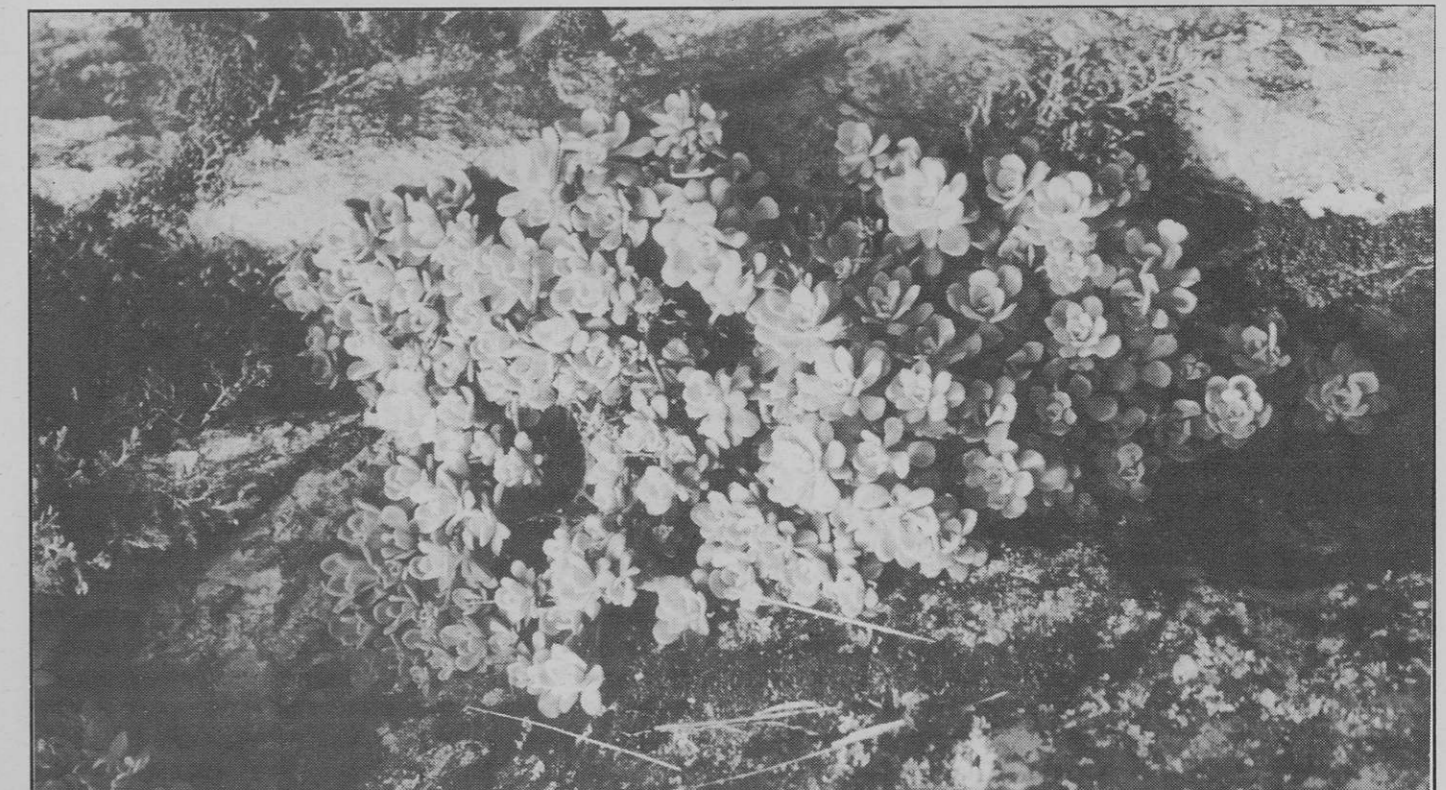
After twenty centuries, the mountain became linked by an emerging sandbar to another island nearby. Called Cedar



Bicycle rack at Mt. Tolmie Park. Bicycle restrictions were adopted in 1993 to curb ecological damage.

Hill in colonial times, it has since been renamed Mount Douglas. In the new valley between, an intertidal estuary alternately flowed with salt and fresh water. Today we know this estuary as Bowker Creek, which once flowed from ancient headwaters near University Heights to its issuance south of Willows Beach in Oak Bay. Gentler eastern slopes rose behind a wide beach, while breakers rolled just below where Cadboro Bay Road is today.

With the emergence of these new lands, plants and animals soon reappeared and adapted to unique local conditions, typified by mild, wet winters alternated with warm, dry summers. Extreme winter events included intense or prolonged rainfalls, and high winds due to storms, while summer extremes featured drought, and wildfires ignited by lightning. Individual fire resistant plants, such as Garry oaks, survived



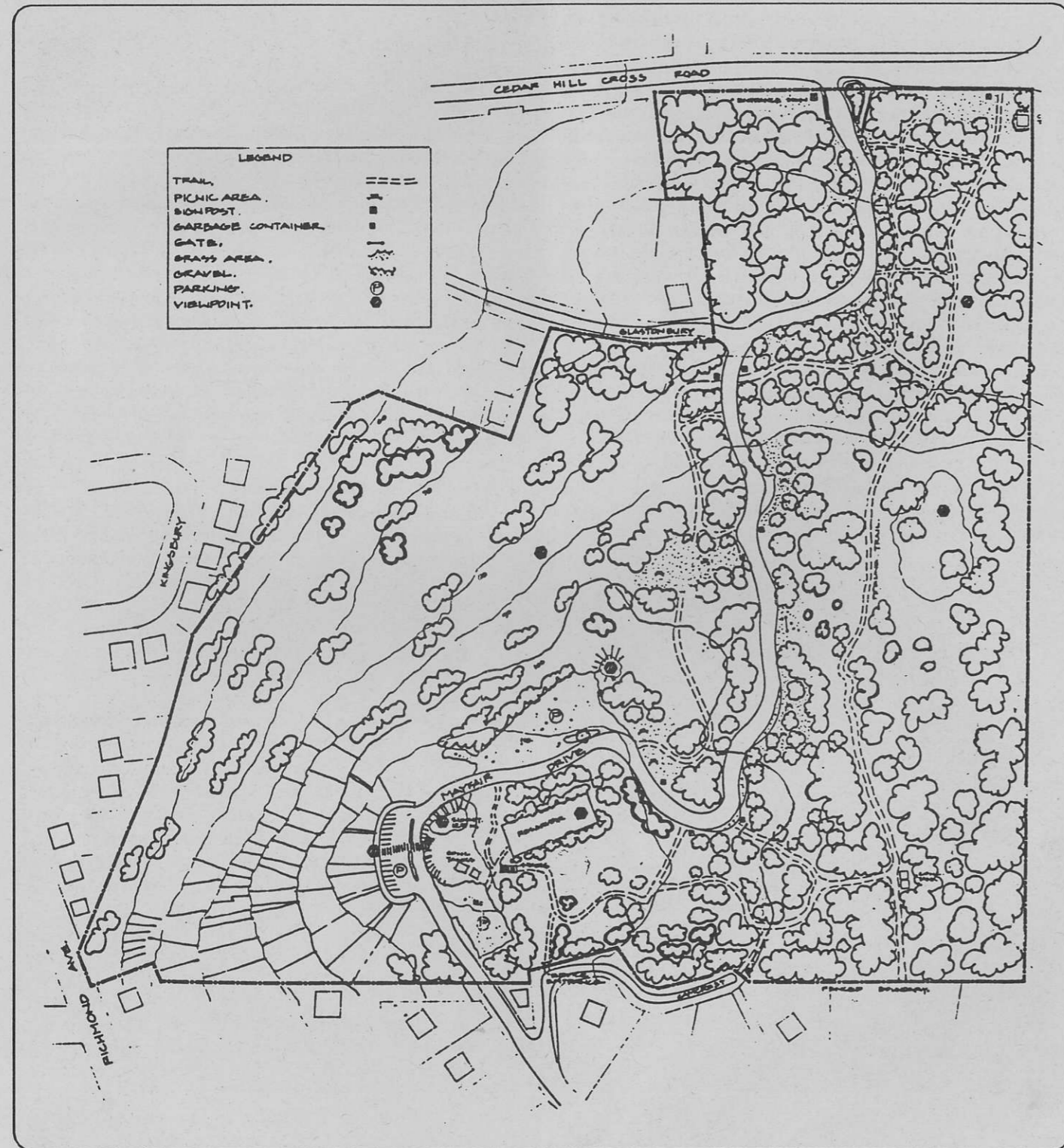
Sedum spathulifolium.

these repeated burns but drought-resistant species also survived normal climatic conditions over the centuries.

The first humans on the scene used these plants and animals to sustain their ancient culture with food, medicine and material to make their homes and tools, and to inspire and express their spirituality in artistic crafts and rituals. In recent centuries, these native peoples would regularly burn the shrub layer in local oak forests to increase natural production of food plants, such as Camas, Wild Onion and Chocolate Lily.

Removal of competition from woody undergrowth for seasonally abundant light, water and nutrients, allowed these plants to thrive and support a rich human culture.

The mountain, for perhaps centuries known by local Songhish natives as *Pkaals*, was probably thought a mere hill by the first Europeans to see it from the water. Captain Lorenzo Ferrer de Maldonado supposedly navigated the legendary Strait of Anain as early as 1588 but it was 1787 when British Captain Charles Barkley renamed the Strait of Juan de Fuca



Map of Mt. Tolmie provided by Saanich Parks and Recreation (1:1000).

after the Greek explorer who claimed it for Spain in 1592. Others explored these waters, including Juan Perez (1774), Bodega y Quadra (1775), Eliza, Quimper, and de Haro (1790) for Spain, Robert Gray for the United States (1789), and Cook (1776) and Vancouver (1792) for Britain.

With the extension of the fur trade across the continent in the early 19th century, competition between American and British interests led to the construction in 1843 of a British fort, eventually named in honour of Queen Victoria, at a place known by the Songhish as *Camosun*, or "place to gather camas." The walls were built of cedar logs hauled from Cedar Hill along a trail on the ridge above the west side of Bowker Creek. Known by colonists as Mount Douglas Road, it was later named Cedar Hill Road to remember its original purpose.

Six Songhish households of the Chekonein, Chilcowitch, and Skingeenis families were relocated from their traditional camp on Cadboro Bay to the Songhees reservation lands, across the harbour from the new fort. Camas meadows in our region, tended by native families for generations, were turned to agricultural purposes of ranching and farming. Vegetables and livestock were raised to feed hungry soldiers, sailors and the growing colonial population of merchants, tradesmen and professionals with their wives and children.

Uplands Farm (Lot 31, Victoria District), on the eastern slopes of the mountain, was one of several farms established in the region by the Hudson's Bay Company. Until the Canadian Pacific Railway reached the west coast at Vancouver in 1886, cattle were shipped to British Columbia through Victoria from San Francisco and driven off shallow draught barges into the ocean for a short swim to shore at Cattle Point. Bay Road was extended westward and across the north slope of Mount Tolmie to meet Cedar Hill Cross Road just east of Bowker Creek in 1861, connecting Uplands Farm with others on Saanich



Camas.

peninsula, such as Lake Hill and Cloverdale. In 1890, the British Columbia Cattle Company was founded and Uplands Farm was developed into a busy cattle ranch complete with a waterfront slaughterhouse and piers.

After 1857, colonists John Work and John Swanson purchased more than 460 acres in adjacent lots, extending from the western boundary of Uplands Farm to the ridge above Cedar Hill Road. These lots were subsequently divided and sold to various owners, including the Anglican Synod of British Columbia, which established Church Farm in 1869 on land bought from farmer Henry King, who held another 156 acres in the valley as late as 1889. Church Farm occupied the Bowker Creek valley between Cedar Hill Road and Uplands Farm, with Mount Tolmie overlooking it from the southeast.

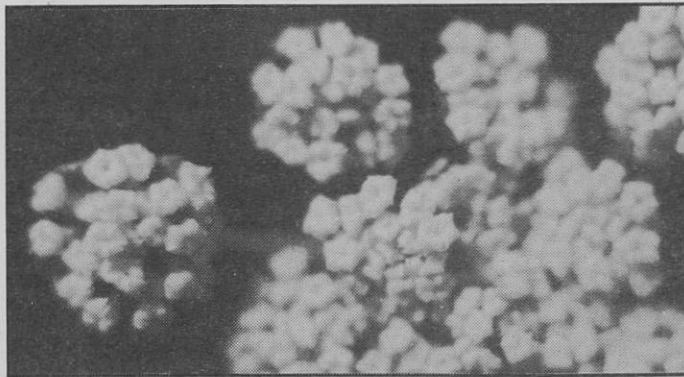
By the time British Army Captain Calhoun Grant retired in 1859 to take up farming, all the lots in Victoria were taken by the Hudson's Bay Company, its employees and friends, so he was forced to homestead in Sooke. Reminded by the landscape of his native Scotland, Grant asked a friend in the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii) to send him a few Scotch broom seeds. He planted twelve seeds in his garden that fall and the following spring three sprouts appeared. In the years that followed, broom spread out from Sooke along roads and into the open pastures and meadows of rural Victoria. Decades later, these areas include many undeveloped natural areas in the Victoria region, such as Mount Tolmie Park.

Richmond Road was called Mount Tolmie Road as early as 1884, and Richmond Road as early as 1888, although the street was not officially named until 1925. Originally a wagon track serving local farmers such as Childe (west of Richmond) and Deans (north of Lansdowne), Richmond Road was improved after 1900 to carry gravel from a pit on the southwest slope by streetcar to James Bay, which was filled in before construction of the Empress Hotel (1905). While the streetcar line ended in the gravel pit, road improvement eventually extended north to Cedar Hill Cross Road and the pit became the site of the Mount Tolmie Ridge apartments (1970).

As early as 1891, speculation in real estate prompted numerous side street and subdivision surveys. Mayfair Drive,



California Poppy (introduced).



Spring Gold, Mt. Tolmie Park.

for example, was another wagon road built in the early 1890s by local realtors J.H. Brownlee and Henry E. Croasdaile. Brownlee and Croasdaile were founders of the Mount Tolmie Home Building Association, which sold lots in the Mount Tolmie Park Estate subdivision (Plan 402-B, Victoria District). Their road crossed the mountain just below the east side of the summit, where the reservoir is today, and descended from the north slope where Glastonbury Road is today. A second road was built below the east side of the summit, a third around the west side (current viewpoint), and following major improvements to this road, the former eastern route was renamed Camcrest Place in 1958. On the north slope, an access road was built to connect Mayfair Drive with Cedar Hill Cross Road, the former lower portion was renamed Glastonbury in 1958, and the entry from Cedar Hill Cross Road was realigned in the early 1960s.

Sixteen acres on the steep, rocky northwest slope of the mountain were in public use as a park as early as 1891 and it was here that Brownlee ran a thrilling wooden roller coaster. After falling into disrepair, it was destroyed by a summer wildfire in 1908. In 1926, the Anglican Synod of British Colum-

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Victoria Natural History Society**

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financial statements.**

**If interested, please contact  
Gordon Devey  
at 652-6879  
or David Allinson  
at 380-8233**

bia agreed to sell its remaining lots on the mountain to Saanich for \$8001.00.

"for the purposes of a recreation area and playground for the use and enjoyment of the public, including... residents, occupants and... members of the public in the surrounding cities and municipalities and members of the public generally..." (Saanich Bylaw #366/1926).

While Saanich Municipality was incorporated in 1906, recreational areas in the region were managed by the Victoria-Saanich Beaches and Parks Committee until the late 1950s, when Victoria and Saanich established their own Parks and Recreation Departments and the management of Mount Tolmie Park was assigned to Saanich alone.

In 1928, local businessman William Bayliss (of Bayliss Neon) raised a forty-foot illuminated cross on the mountain to inspire Christians in Victoria, who could see it nightly from all over the city. After moving to the mountain himself in 1950, he installed a roadside bench in front of his home (3421 Mayfair) for the comfort of weary park patrons on their way to the summit.

Between 1923 and 1941, public Easter Sunday sunrise services were held at the summit, led, until 1937, by local pastor Clem Davies. Almost 4000 souls attended the first service, which was followed by the first live religious broadcast in western Canada on CFCL radio, the forerunner of CJVI/900. As many as 8000 (1930) and as few as 250 (1938, in pouring rain) attended the services, after which the congregation would descend the mountain, gathering Easter lilies on the way.

Easter Sunday services were interrupted in 1942, after Saanich gave permission for the Department of National Defence to build barracks in the area between the two summit roads to house soldiers assigned to observation duties at the summit. The post was used to transfer timing and sighting data from Gonzales Observatory to military units at Fort Rodd Hill and Gordon Head during artillery and paratroop exercises.

While Oak Bay Council received a master plan for development of the Hudson's Bay Woods in 1945, residential development on the gentle eastern slopes of the mountain was delayed until the mid-1950s. Until then, it was a fine source of Douglas fir Christmas trees for intrepid revellers from Uplands. First, Henderson Road was extended north from Lansdowne into former farmland, today the site of Uplands Elementary School and several dozen homes, the first of which were built in the late 1950s. All the roads between Henderson and the park boundary were surveyed and built by 1964, and the first houses east of the park appeared on Plymouth Road. Within a few years, most of the homes on Rattenbury Place, Pelly Place and Frederick Norris Place were built in the former fir-oak forest. As lots in Saanich to the south and west were developed, previously unnamed streets were given their current names: Bonair Place, Lorraine Road (1947), Kingsberry Crescent (1956).

In 1958, the Capital Improvement District Commission, the forerunner of the Provincial Capital Commission, began a series of projects in the park. First, major improvements to Mayfair Drive included an expansion of the summit transit, which afforded an outstanding view westward over the city of Victoria. Other projects followed, including landscaping of park entries from Cedar Hill Cross Road (1965, 1969, 1993), and the area around the summit reservoir (1969). The reservoir itself, with a capacity of 4.8 million litres, was built in 1967 by

the Greater Victoria Water Board to improve water pressure and provide emergency supplies to Ten Mile Point and Gordon Head.

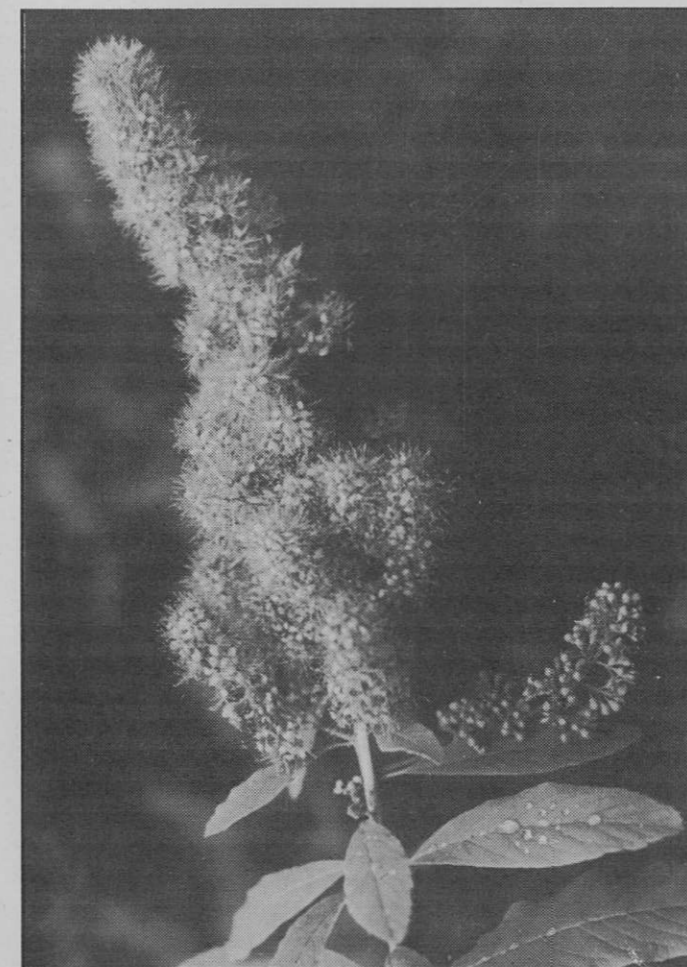
In 1970, the summit viewpoint area underwent a second expansion to its current layout, with improvements including parking, sidewalks, stairs and railings and overflow parking areas off Mayfair Drive on both sides of the summit.

Other significant events on the mountain include the restriction of bicycles to paved areas of the park (1993), and the rezoning of large lots on the southern slopes (1994) to control further subdivision.

Bicycle restrictions were adopted to curb potential ecological damage from cyclists riding across the fragile meadows and mossy outcrops and to enhance public safety by eliminating competitive trail use in the park.

Local naturalists have also recently observed a wide variety of wildlife in Mount Tolmie Park and community volunteers have removed Scotch broom from meadow areas in the park to encourage the growth and increase of native vegetation such as oaks, roses, camas, ferns and mosses.

*Eric Redekop is a member of the Victoria Natural History Society Parks and Conservation Committee and a long-time observer of Mount Tolmie Park. He gives natural history presentations and interpretive walks for Continuing Studies at the University of Victoria and local Parks & Recreation departments. Eric is also Director, Executive Secretary and Program Chair of the Garry Oak Meadow Preservation Society.*



Hardback, in moister sites at Mt. Tolmie.

## Letter to the Editor:

DEAR EDITOR:

I always look forward to receiving the Victoria Naturalist and particularly enjoy the Pacific Octopus column and the articles on marine creatures. As we in Victoria are blessed to live on the Pacific coast with such a diverse and rich marine life, I would really like to see the VNHS give a greater weight to marine ecology reporting along the lines of botany and birding (which I also find fascinating). I wonder if there are like-minded members who would be interested in forming a VNHS committee/study group with a focus on marine biology.

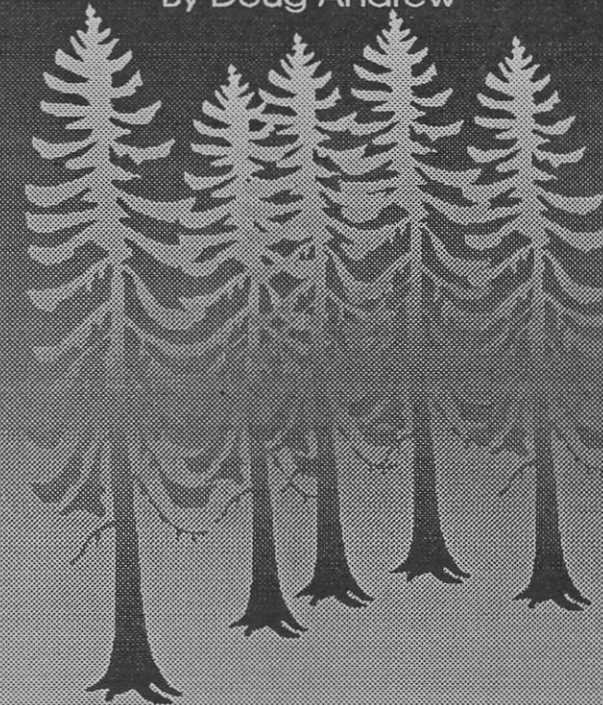
I started diving last year and it has given me a totally new perspective on biodiversity and the wonders of the undersea world. Anyone out there feel the same? Could you imagine one day opening the pages of the Victoria Naturalist and finding reports of counts of sea cucumbers, sea stars, crabs and octopi along with the usual bird counts? I think the VNHS could play an important role in educating and disseminating information about marine life as well as helping protect sea creatures. After all, over 70% of our planet is covered by oceans; it is a vast and fascinating world to study.

**Yves Parizeau**

Those interested in a Marine Biology sub-committee should contact David Allinson, President of the Victoria Natural History Society, or the Editor, Victoria Naturalist. Addresses and phone numbers are on the inside front cover. Yves also would be happy to talk to people about this idea. His number is 592-7441.

## Natural History Presentation

"Shopping Trip to the First Nations Mall"  
By Doug Andrew



Tuesday January 10, 1995  
7:30 p.m., Begbie 159, UVIC

# Bowron Lakes Canoe Trip

by Gwennie Hooper

**B**owron Lake Provincial Park, east of Quesnel and about 800 km north of Victoria, is an oblong of six major lakes and some smaller ones, linked by portages and rivers, stretching 116 km through a wilderness of mountains and marsh. We had canoed the circuit several times but thought we'd like to have one last trip to celebrate Gordon reaching the big Seven-0.

Much time was spent on preparation, chiefly shopping for foodstuffs and packing every meal in separate plastic bags. Then all the food went into a rucksack that could be hoisted up an aluminum ladder to a high platform out of reach of bears. A reservation was not required for our departure on 14th September as only seven other people were leaving then. We occasionally met some of them on the circuit and enjoyed comparing notes. All were younger than us but all chose to rent wheels for the canoes to lessen the strain of portaging. It made Gordon feel better for he wasn't entirely reconciled to not carrying the canoe on his shoulders in the time-honoured way.

The morning we started was fine after an overnight thunderstorm and we and our gear and 17-foot rented canoe were trucked to Trailhead. The circuit begins with a 2.4 km portage so we lifted the canoe on to its wheels, balanced the 60-pound load we were allowed to transport in it, hefted a rucksack each, and set off up the hill. All portages begin uphill. It was hard work, though the trail was quite wide and well-maintained. The canoe weighed 65 pounds, and we had 108 pounds of gear, and *everything* had to be pulled up hill, around corners, over muddy sections and rocks and then down hill at the other end.

We had to stop several times to catch our breath but soon we were dipping our paddles into tiny Kibbee Lake, welcomed by the laughing cry of a Loon. Then a second 2.0 km portage, enlivened by a halt to watch a male Spruce Grouse, only feet away, preening and displaying to three females. He seemed to have got his seasons crossed. After that, more paddling on Indianpoint Lake to its marshy end, where we decided to make camp.

It rained that night and there were showers mixed with sunshine the next day. But that was it. For the next five days the weather was perfect, except for a sudden squall that hit on the sixth day.

Another portage led to Isaac Lake which is 38 km long, with mountains rising steeply on both sides, some with patches of snow. From time to time we heard water rushing down through the dense evergreen forests but only occasionally did we see waterfalls. We got into a delightful routine of paddling for an hour and a half or so, then stopping to have coffee and a snack, and to stretch our legs. On again until lunch time when we'd beach on a sandy spit and sit on a log in the sunshine to eat biscuits and cheese and dried fruit. Common Loons, Red-breasted Mergansers and Red-necked Grebes swam on the water. Osprey flew overhead, fish jumped and Kingfishers rattled and dived. Once we saw a spread-eagled eagle (Bald variety) perched on top of a tree, drying his wings. We paddled easily, making one camp a third of the way down the lake and the next night reaching the far end. There the lake empties over an exhilarating chute with a right-angled bend and we walked

along the portage to take a look at the white water and enjoy the deep mosses and great variety of fungi carpeting the forest floor. A single bat flew over the lake that evening, the only one of the entire trip.

The chute was negotiated followed by two short but challenging portages, after which we hiked to see Isaac Falls. Then came our favourite — McLeary Lake, a little jewel with a marsh at one end that is home to Canada geese and moose if you're lucky, from which can be seen mountains and icy glaciers. There was no ice on McLeary; our little thermometer registered 23 °C. In the dusk we paddled around the lake and Canada geese flew and called and added the wilderness touch that they lose in the city.

Early next morning we set off as mists rose over a still, calm lake and entered the Cariboo River where half-submerged sweepers form a hazard for unwary canoeists. Lanezi Lake, squeezed between steep-sided mountains, was colourful with aspen and birch yellowing among sombre evergreens. We camped at the far end, as we have done on each circuit, and this time shared the campsite with two kayakers and two Barred Owls. One owl perched on the bear cache, then flew to a low stump and allowed me to photograph it. It called all the time with a wheezy sort of hiss, not at all like its usual hoot. Another owl replied in the distance and gradually came nearer until, when we got up in the middle of the night under the bright light of a full moon, both owls were perched nearby, calling. As well, a Great Horned Owl hooted. Birders' heaven! And in the Narrows next morning we surprised a cow moose and her calf.

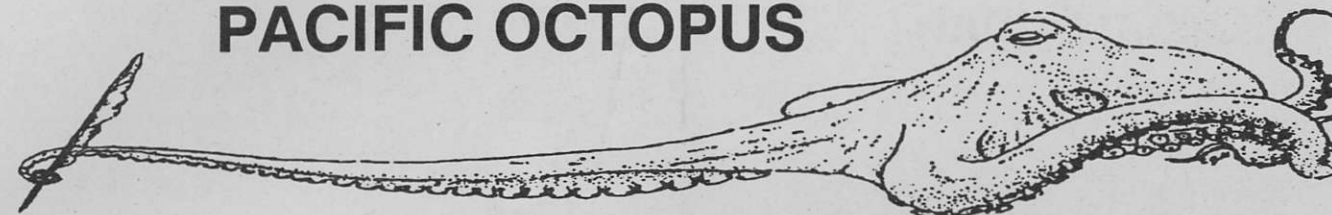
We splashed in the shallow water of Babcock Creek as we dragged the canoe over sandbars to reach the man-repaired beaver dam and deeper water. On the way we watched a mink nosing along the bank, passing close to us but not wavering in its course. We camped that night at Babcock Lake. There we had the sudden rain squall as we were erecting the tent. It was fierce. We were thankful we weren't on the water when it struck. An hour or two later, after cooking and eating supper in the tent, the rain ceased. We stepped outside to investigate a great splashing noise. A moose was feeding on the lake bottom. Down she went, almost submerged, and after an interminable time came up with flattened ears and a dripping mouthful of vegetation. One great shake, her ears were up and she swallowed her meal. Then she was down again under the water, almost before she had time to take a breath.

Next morning the mists were so thick we could see nothing but the near shore. It was ethereal and the sounds of loons and geese echoed back from a white wall. Two more short portages, the last, were separated by a small lake where three otters were playing, stopping to look at us and swim a little closer, and snorting and cavorting before taking off to the shore.

Our last camp was at Bowron Marsh. We paddled a traditional evening circuit of the marsh and river and saw beaver and muskrat swimming peacefully by. Back at the campsite a moose splashed and fed in front of the tent and Canada geese called. More beaver in the morning as we threaded the canoe through the marsh to Bowron Lake and brewed a celebratory mug of coffee on the shore. We returned the canoe mid-morning and set off after lunch on the homeward journey in more of the glorious sunshine that we'd had most of the trip. It may have been the last circuit but it was surely the best.

*Gwennie Hooper and her husband Gordon are frequent flyers. Previous submissions to the Victoria Naturalist include articles on "Birding in Hawaii" and on "Birding in Australia".*

## PACIFIC OCTOPUS



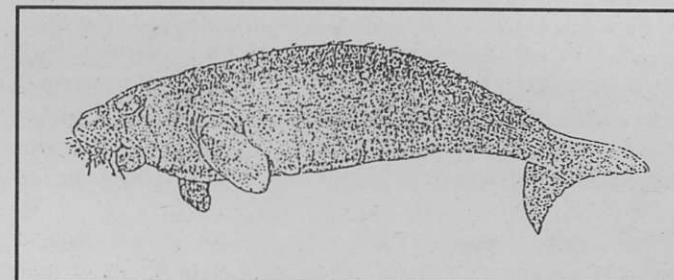
by Lynton Burger

**I**n my last column I introduced you to the North American native mermaid, Sedna. Many cultures around the world have myths and beliefs that relate to the existence of merpeople (mermaids and mermen): creatures that are half human, half sea creature. Perhaps one of the most interesting accounts that I have come upon is that of the creature called *Unguva*. *Unguva*, Swahili for Man-of-the-Sea, lives along the north-west coast of Africa. It is interesting because it shows the link between the merpeople and the Sirenians (aptly named after the Sirens of Greek mythological fame). The Sirenians, you will remember, are that group of vegetarian sea mammals that include the dugongs and manatees. In fact, among the rural Africans of Ethiopia and Somalia, the dugong is the Man-of-the-Sea.

They consider the dugong to belong to a special class of beings - neither animal nor human; a sort of abhuman beast. They are not thought of as malevolent creatures but they do possess 'powers' of which they (the dugongs) themselves are not aware of. With their aid, man might have insight into the mysterious beings of the oceans. So, when a female dugong is caught in fish nets, it must first be taken to a Q'uadi (priest) before being offered for sale in the markets, because one of the ways of securing forbidden 'powers' over a creature-other-than-man (i.e., angel, djinn or fiend) was by taking the dugong to wife, whereupon the human 'husband' would benefit by her powers, becoming wealthier, wiser and able to share her 'sovereignty'. To ensure that such an event had not already happened, the Q'uadi must inspect the creature and examine her womb after slaughter to check that she was not carrying a man-child.

William Travis (of Born Free fame) recorded in his 1967 book, *Voice of the Turtle*, that fishermen who worked for him (he was trying to set up a turtle canning business in north-west Africa) would never leave a man in attendance of a female dugong caught in their nets, lest he be tempted and violate her privately to benefit from her powers.

This set of beliefs is remarkably similar in theme to the classical European myth of a mermaid taking a human husband. The main difference, however, is that the animal (dugong) is recognised as being the 'mermaid'; the two are one and the same. There is one other bit of evidence that I have



The dugong (*Dugong dugon*).

come upon that points to sirenians being the originators of the mermaid myth. It comes from the log of Christopher Columbus, 9 January 1493.

*"Yesterday, when I was going to the Rio del Oro, I saw three sirens (manatees) that came up very high out of the sea. They are not as beautiful as they are painted, since in some ways they have a face like a man. I have seen them on other occasions in Guinea on the coast of Manegueta."*

So here, as with the African *Unguva*, there is acknowledgement that sirens or mermaids are in the fact none other than Sirenians. The way in which female manatees hold their offspring upright in the water while breast-feeding is said to appear very human-like. It is remarkable, too, how geographic locations of accounts of mermaids correspond to the distribution ranges of dugongs and manatees, particularly during the 16th and 17th centuries when European explorers were venturing into tropical waters. I have no doubt that sea mammals such as the Sirenians, and possibly Pinnipeds (seals, sea lions and walrus) in the northern hemisphere, gave rise to the concept of merpeople but I am open to suggestions ...

### Book Review:

*Seven-Tenths - The sea and its thresholds.*

By James Hamilton-Paterson.

Published by Vintage. 1993

This is an unusual book; unusual in its format, for it is a mixture of fact and fiction. The book is extremely well written and its engaging style and eclectic mix of stories, accounts and anecdotes keep you reading on, to learn more about our watery planet. The book covers most of the main sea themes, from reefs to wrecks to creatures of the deep. He also takes a fresh look at the world's fishing crisis in the form of a personal account aboard a fishing boat in the north Atlantic. While it has a strong conservation message, it is not a doom-and-gloom treatise, like so many popular environmental texts these days. An entertaining and engaging read.

*The Pacific Octopus is a regular feature of the Victoria Naturalist.*

### WHALE HOTLINE

Report marine mammal sightings & strandings to  
380-1925 in the Victoria area

On the water:

VHF channel 68 to the vessel *Sundiver*

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

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

## CALENDAR

**REGULAR MEETINGS** are generally held on the following days. **Board of Directors:** the first Tuesday of each month. **Natural History Presentations** (Formally known as the 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.

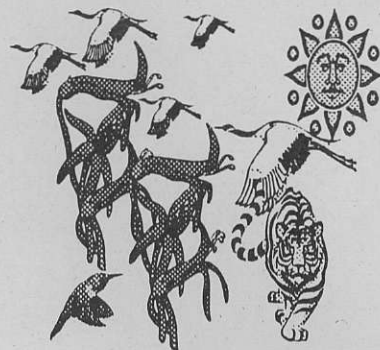
## JANUARY EVENTS

### Tuesday, January 2

**Board of Directors' Meeting.** Clifford Carl Reading Room, Cunningham Building, University of Victoria at 7:30 p.m. Note that Parking Lot "A" by the Cunningham Building no longer exists.

### Tuesday, January 10

**VNHS Natural History Presentation.** Room 159, Begbie Building, University of Victoria at 7:30 p.m. We are pleased to have **Doug Andrew** present *Shopping Trip to the First Nations Mall*, an informative and humorous talk on the use of native plants and animals by the First Nations peoples. Doug is an ethnobiological expert on coastal First Nations technology and is a nature interpreter with Arenaria Research in Goldstream Park.



PACK  
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PICK UP  
YOUR  
WINGS

AND TAKE FLIGHT TO

## THAILAND

A BIRD WATCHING AND NATURALISTS  
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Join Tom Henley and Jeannie McIntosh to experience an exquisite and memorable look at Thailand's tropical flora and fauna, including unique coastal and jungle destinations. Late February departure with limited space, so call soon. (604)-592-7182 or Tel-fax 360-0740

### Saturday, January 14

**Birding at Martindale.** One of our favourite spots for winter birding. Start your 1995 list off with several species of raptors, waterfowl and songbirds. Don't forget your Wellies (rubber boots) and meet **Hank Van der Pol (658-1924)** at the Farmers Market (Island View Beach Road and Pat Bay Highway) at 8:30 a.m.

### Tuesday, January 17

**Botany Night.** Swan Lake Nature House, 7:30 p.m. **Hans Roemer, Thor Henrich and Adolf Ceska** will present "Turkey, 1994 - The Botanical Expedition to the Taurus Mountains".

### Wednesday, January 25

**Birders Night.** Room 159, Begbie Building, University of Victoria at 7:30 p.m. *Birds and Beasts of Southern Africa.* **Bryan Gates** will present a slide-illustrated talk on a recent natural history safari to Zimbabwe and Namibia. From the driest deserts in the world to the mighty Zambezi River, 250 species of birds and 45 species of mammals were identified. Everyone welcome. Bring a friend and your coffee cup.

### Saturday, January 28

**Owling.** Two trips have been planned to seek out our local nocturnal predators. Owls begin breeding early and they are quite vocal and active at this time of year. As it is important to minimize our impact on these birds the trips will be limited to 12 people each. The trips will start at 8:45 P.M. and the locations will vary so pre-register with **David Allinson (380-8233)** for all the details.

## FEBRUARY EVENTS

### Tuesday, February 7

**Board of Directors' Meeting.** Clifford Carl Reading Room, Cunningham Building, University of Victoria at 7:30 p.m. Note that Parking Lot "A" by the Cunningham Building no longer exists.

### Saturday, February 11

**Winter Annuals.** A botany field trip with **Adolf Ceska**. See what wonderful things Adolf can produce out of the greenery in Uplands Park. Meet at the Cattle Point Parking Lot at 10:00 a.m.

### Tuesday, February 14

**Annual Banquet of the Victoria Natural History Society.** The Annual Banquet will again be held at the Princess Mary Restaurant. A "no host" bar opens at 6:30 p.m. with the dinner starting at 7:00 p.m. The guest speaker this year is **Wayne Campbell**. The title of his talk is *Everything You Wanted to Know About Birds but were Afraid to Ask*. The price is \$22.00, which includes all taxes and gratuities. For tickets and further information contact either **Freda Woodsworth** at 382-6693 or **Beth Chatwin (592-5346)**.

### Wednesday, February 15

**Herring Spawn Spectacle.** Join **David Stirling** on this shoreline exploration around Harmac, south of

Nanaimo. During herring spawning there is a tremendous diversity of wildlife here. The waters of Northumberland Channel teem with sea ducks and lashings of cormorants. California and Stellar's Sea Lions cover the log booms at the Harmac Mill and the surrounding trees are festooned with Bald Eagles. Meet **David (477-0625)** at the Helmcken Park and Ride at 9:00 a.m.

### Saturday, February 18

**A Day in Duncan!** On this trip we will bird along the Cowichan River, at the sewage lagoons and at Fish Gut Alley Municipal Park. We will also take in the new Vancouver Island Trout Hatchery. Call **David Fraser (479-0016)** for final details and prepare for a fun-filled day up Island.

### Tuesday, February 21

**Botany Night.** Swan Lake Nature House, 7:30 p.m. **Richard Ring and Neville Winchester** will present some of the results from their canopy research in their talk "Fantastic World Way Above Your Head"

### Wednesday, February 22

**Birders Night.** Room 159, Begbie Building, University of Victoria at 7:30 p.m. Program to be announced on the Rare Bird Alert (592-3381) and on the Events Tape (479-2054). Everyone welcome. Bring a friend and your coffee cup.

### Saturday, February 25

**Owling.** This is trip #2. See January 28 for details.

## BULLETIN BOARD

### Wanted! Donation or Loan of Fossils.

A Fossil Display will be prepared and shown in the City of Duncan Museum. Anyone willing to donate or loan fossil specimens should contact **Dr. Alan McGugan (1-604-743-4332)** or write to him at 1157 Rolmar Crescent, R.R. #2, Cobble Hill, B.C., V0R 1L0. Specimen labels should include the fossil name, location collected and the name of the donor.

### Reminder!

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

**For Sale.** *The Garry Oak Meadows Colloquium.* A colloquium was held at the University of Victoria in 1993 to study the Garry Oak (*Quercus garryana*) and its associated meadow ecosystem. This is one of the rarest and most endangered ecosystems in British Columbia, remaining only in isolated patches on SE Vancouver Island and some Gulf islands. *The Garry Oak Meadows Colloquium* is edited by **Richard Hebda** and **Fran Aitkens** and published by the Garry Oak Meadows Protection Society. The proceedings includes papers on the Garry Oak, wildflowers, grasses, insects, and ethical, educational and development issues. To order, send \$12.00 (includes

postage and handling) to **Fran Aitkens, #4-921 Foul Bay Road, Victoria, B.C. V8S 4H9.**

### 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. Contact: **Lyndis Davis, at 477-9952**

### 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 **Tom Gillespie at 361-1694.**

### Marine Ecology Station

Explore British Columbia's marine bio-diversity at the Cowichan Bay Maritime Centre. Life 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 more information phone **Dr. Bill Austin at 746-4955.**

### Washington State & B.C. Birding E-Mail.

**Dan Victor (@u.washington.edu)** sends this paper message. There is a Washington State (plus B.C.) birding email group called tweeters. This group currently is comprised of 130+ subscribers mostly form around Washington State but also extending into Oregon, British Columbia and as far east as Chicago. A number of interesting discussions have taken place on this forum. Gene Hunn posts the Washington State birding hotline weekly. If you have Internet access send email to [listproc@u.washington.edu](mailto:listproc@u.washington.edu) with the following test line "information tweeters". This will give more details on the list and how to subscribe.

## HELP WANTED

**Volunteers required for behavioral ecology research of Western Grebes off Saanich Peninsula and Gulf Islands.**

*Assistants required for marine bird surveys on Sunday mornings and for observations of foraging behaviour.*

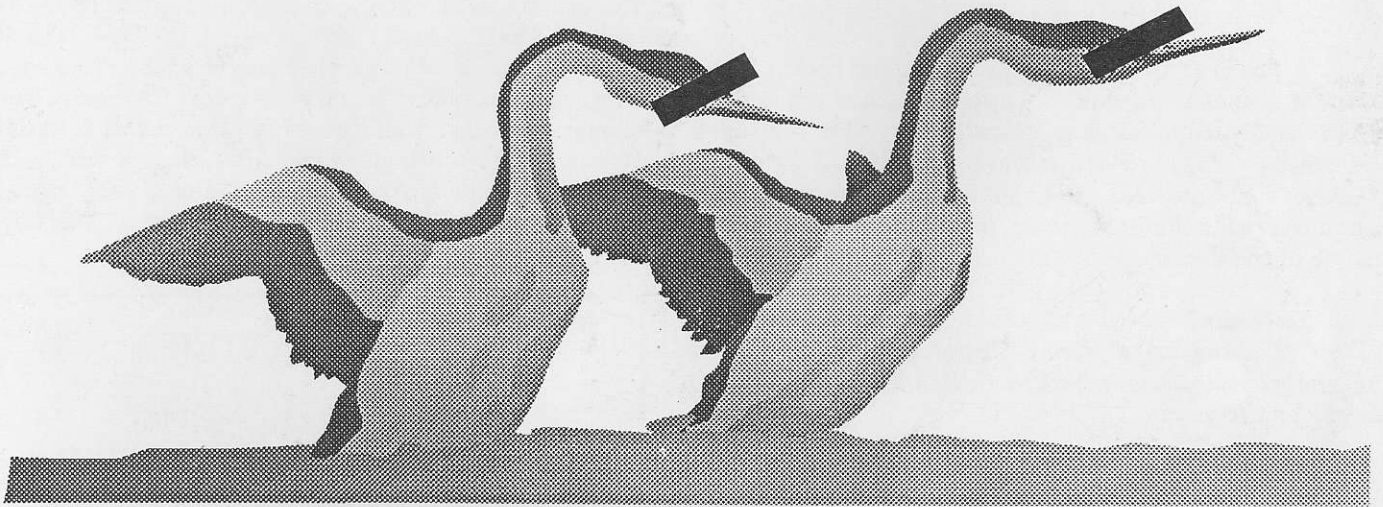
**Contact: James Clowater  
Telephone: 598-4570  
E-Mail: [clowater@sfu.ca](mailto:clowater@sfu.ca)**



FEES ARE  
DUE DEC. 31

Philip &  
Marilyn Lambert,  
1868 Penshurst Road,  
VICTORIA BC V8N 2P3

"Everything You Wanted to Know About  
Birds but was Afraid to Ask"  
by Wayne Campbell



VHNS Annual Banquet, Princess Mary Restaurant  
Tuesday February 14, 1995. Tickets \$22  
(see Events Calendar for details)