

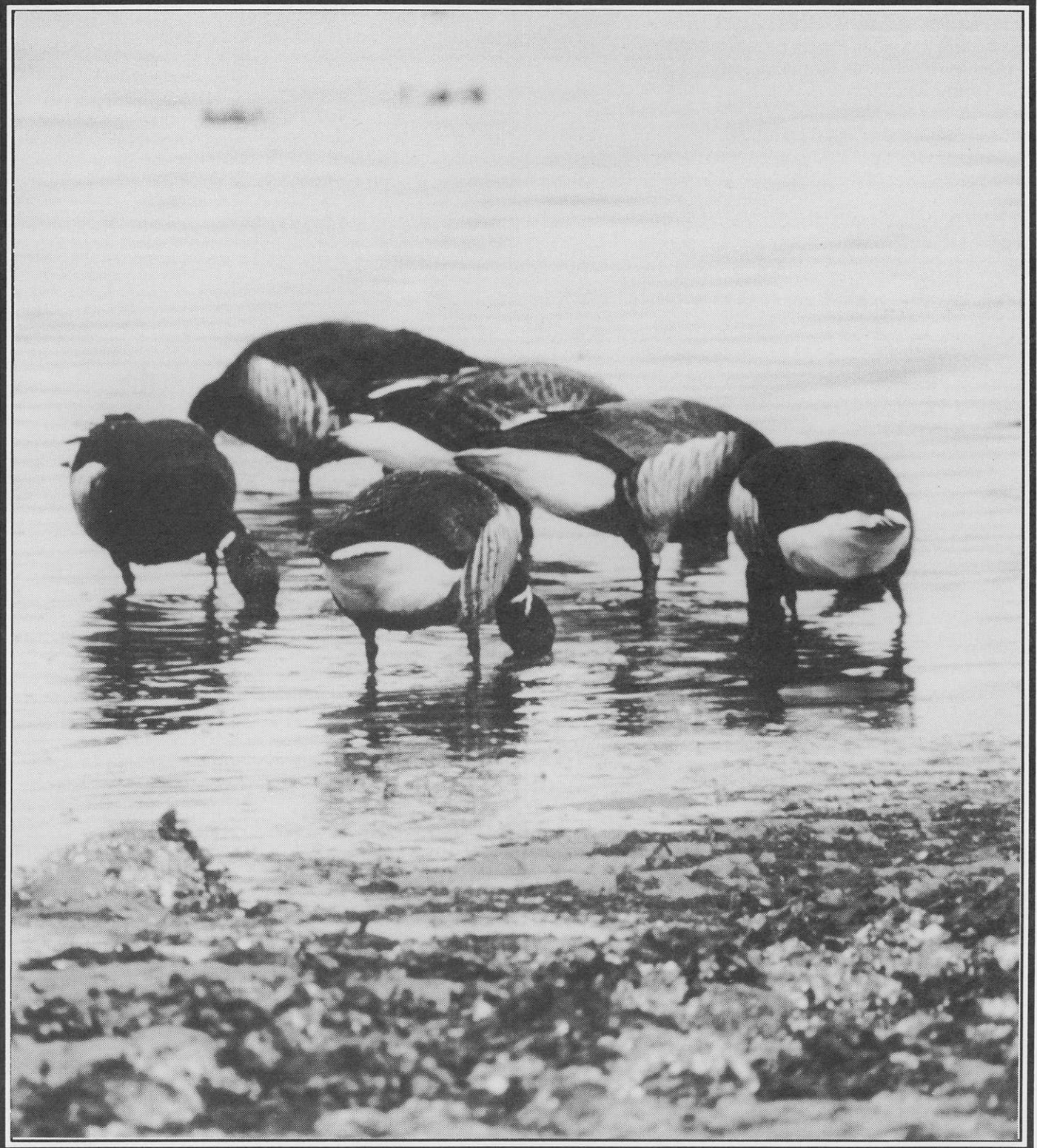


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The Victoria NATURALIST

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Editor: Warren Drinnan, Work-361-3543, Home-652-9618
Associate Editor: Lynton Burger
Contributors: Bev Glover, Marillyn Lambert, Dalia Hull
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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, 1126 Blanshard 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 Dodie Clark at 477-5158, or write to Membership Committee c/o The Victoria Natural History Society, Box 5220, Victoria, B.C., V8R 6N4.

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COVER

The cover photo featured in this issue shows several Brant geese (*Branta bernicla*) on their spring migration feeding along the shore at Parksville-Qualicum Beach.

The photo was taken by Jonathan Grant during the 1994 Brant Festival which is held each year in the Parksville-Qualicum Beach area.

This year the Brant Festival festivities run from April 7 to 9. The three day celebration of Nature, Art and Outdoor Fun coincides with the arrival of the Brant geese in their peak numbers. Each spring as many as 20,000 of these small geese stop to rest and feed on local coastal waters during their annual migration from wintering areas in Mexico to breeding grounds in Alaska.

At Brant Viewing Stations, visitors can observe these talkative dark geese with their white collars. Telescopes set up by Bausch and Lomb means everyone can get a birds-eye view.

More information on the festival can be found in the article starting on page 8.



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A Forest Education Park for the Victoria Area Proposed by Area Professional Foresters

The article on the "Sea-to-Sea Western Greenbelt Proposal" in the last issue (January-February, 1995) of the *Victoria Naturalist* describes three options for possible disposition of the Greater Victoria Water District (GVWD) non-catchment lands: logging, subdivision or park. It was written before a fourth option became evident, a park-like compromise less likely to be rejected by the Water District in favour of short term but much needed monetary gain. This would see the non-catchment lands remain under the jurisdiction of the GVWD to be developed into a multiple-use community forest with the primary purpose being forestry education.

A Community Forest would contribute to a greenbelt and trail system stretching from the Gowland Range to Sooke and

beyond. The 20% of the non-catchment lands consisting of old-growth forest would be preserved, while the remaining 80%, consisting of second-growth forest, would be subject to a variety of management options. The greatest advantage of this alternative over conventional park status is that access would be controlled, so that these lands would continue to serve as a protective buffer between free public access areas (parks) and the catchment, water-supply lands. Limited harvesting under sustained yield guidelines would be part of the educational program and some of the water supply infrastructure. Research projects on the lands currently underway by various agencies would be restricted in a park.

You were requested in the Sea-to-Sea article to write to the Water Board and the Ministers of Municipal Affairs and Environment, Lands and Parks. If you have already done so, another letter supporting the proposal by the South Vancouver Island Chapter of the Association of Professional foresters for a Community Forest as an educational park alternative would be in order. There are two dangers in opting for conventional park, besides giving up a prime educational opportunity:

1.) that the government, in spite of the best intentions as shown by recent additions to nearby parks, are all out of park money;

2.) that the GVWD, deprived of their usual income from harvesting by preservationist lobbying, will opt for immediate cash through sale of these lands for subdivision or to companies already logging nearby lands.

Letters to the Administration Board, GVWD, 479 Sooke Road, Victoria, B.C. V9B 1H7, and to the Ministers of Municipal Affairs and also Environment, Lands and Parks (Parliament Buildings, Victoria, B.C. V8V 1X4), could encourage them to make a decision acceptable to the majority of citizens.

John W. E. Harris, RPF.

For further information on this issue you can contact John Harris at 474-5043 (fax: 474-4577) or write to: Association of B.C. Professional Foresters, Southern Vancouver Island Chapter, Victoria, B.C. V9B 5T8

New Words from a Naturalist's Lexicon

by Bill Merilees

Those who have known David Stirling over the years will be very familiar with his sense of humour and interesting insights about world affairs. On both fronts David can be said to be both inventive and creative, much to the enjoyment of his companions.

The singular purpose of this short note is to add to "the record" additions to the english vocabulary of a couple of Stirlingisms.

The first is the word "pecorated." Before minds run wild with all sorts of erroneous connotations, "pecorated" simply refers to a tree that has been well-worked over by woodpeckers. Following on, and a "natural" extension of this condition, must be "suckerated," referring of course to a tree that has been well-perforated by sapsuckers.

On the subject of definitions, David must be credited with coining a collective noun for a group of naturalists. Most people are familiar with a covey of quail, a murmuration of starlings, a gaggle of geese or a pod of whales. An assembly of naturalists, binos on high watching crossbills or bottoms up observing the diminutive Meadowfoam, is indeed a curious, if not odd, sight. For these gatherings, David's collective term is an "embarrassment!"

It is doubtful if any of his "new" words or definitions will make it into an Oxford or Webster dictionary but each of us can either rejoice a little or chuckle a lot, as we "lay" these unique terms on unknowing souls. Perhaps it was Audubon he wished he'd been, but it will be by Stirling's words that we will remember him!

David Stirling was recently awarded a Life Membership in the Victoria Natural History Society [see Awards article this issue]. Bill Merilees continues to write and "wax poetic" about natural history from Nanaimo.

Distinguished Service Awards

Bryan Gates and Bruce Whittington were the recipients of the Distinguished Service Award and David Stirling was honoured with a Life Membership Award at the Annual VNHS banquet on February 14. These awards were established by the Victoria Natural History Society Board of Directors in 1988 and are granted to members who have contributed in some outstanding way to the aims and objectives of the Society.

Bryan Gates

Bryan Gates has been a member of the Victoria Natural History Society for nearly 20 years during which he has been involved in many of the Society's activities. He has been coordinating Birders' Night for over five years and has operated the Victoria Rare Bird Alert for four years. He is also Chair of the VNHS Birders' Committee and a member of the Victoria Bird Records Committee. Brian has a degree in Wildlife Management from the University of British Columbia. Prior to coming to Victoria he was Regional Biologist for the Lower Mainland and Gulf Islands Region. He is presently Senior Biologist with the Environmental Assessment Branch of the B.C. Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks.

Bryan has led many field trips for the Society, is a participant in the annual Christmas and Spring Bird Count and Breeding Bird Surveys and teaches bird watching courses at Camosun College. He initiated the successful Purple Martin nest box program at Cowichan Bay and Victoria Harbour. Bryan is co-author, with Robin Bovey and Wayne Campbell, of *Birds of Victoria*, a contributor to *Birds of British Columbia* and co-author, with Keith Taylor, of two bird checklists for the Victoria area.

Bruce Whittington

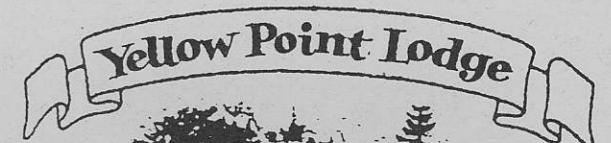
Bruce Whittington began birding seriously about fifteen years ago and joined the VNHS in 1982. He was elected to the Board of Directors where he served as Chair of the Parks and Conservation Committee and Publications Committee, where he helped to compile the 1974-1984 Ten Year Index of the Victoria Naturalist. Bruce has led many birding field trips for the Society and was an area leader for the Christmas Bird Count. He has been active in efforts to preserve Maber and Tod Creek Flats and has worked for the Canadian Wildlife Service and the Capital Regional District providing bird surveys of several Victoria area sites.

Bruce expanded a mail-order business in natural history publications into the Field Naturalist store, which recently moved to a new location. Bruce is quite generous in using the store as a drop off and pick up point for bird sightings, records and magazine contributions and contributes a percentage of sales from VNHS members back to the Society. He is always ready to pass along information on the natural history of the area and about the Society to the public. Bruce writes a weekly column on birding in the *Times-Colonist* and is a contributor to the *Victoria Naturalist*, the *BC Field Naturalist* and the Canadian journal *Wild Bird*.

David Stirling

David Stirling started birding at an early age at his home in Athabasca, Alberta. He did not have the luxury of binoculars and so had to creep up to get a closer look of the bird he was attempting to identify. This way he was able to learn the "ziz" of the birds as well as the markings. Postcards of Allan Brook paintings provided David with his first field guide. He started the life-long practice of keeping a nature diary when he was only twelve years old.

David joined the BC Parks Department in 1959 where he worked with the nature interpretation program. He was responsible for selecting and training students as park naturalists and travelled around the province instructing them on the unique features of each park. Wayne Campbell and the Canning brothers are among the many who were inspired by David. David has held many volunteer positions including sub-regional coordinator for the American Birding Association, the Canadian Nature Federation, the Federation of BC Naturalists and the Victoria Natural History Society. The VNHS has benefited greatly from his commitment as Vice-president, area leader of the Christmas Bird Count and group leader for many Society field trips, both locally and to California and Texas. David has contributed 47 articles on many subjects to the *Victoria Naturalist* and 80 of his papers were referenced in *Birds of British Columbia*. He was also one of the editors of, and a contributor to, the VNHS publication *A Naturalists Guide to the Victoria Region*.



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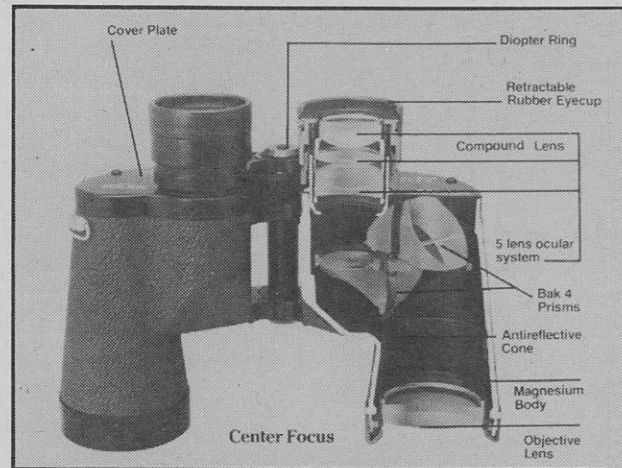
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1994 Butterfly Counts

By Jeff Gaskin

Last year's butterfly count here in Victoria, the only one in Canada, proved to be very successful. In 1994, one additional survey was conducted in April, whereas in 1993 only five counts were held from May to September. The purpose of these counts is to provide a benchmark assessment of butterfly abundance in the Victoria area in the light of drastic decline in numbers and species throughout much of the Northern Hemisphere, arising especially from habitat loss and spoilage from pesticides and other chemicals. Attention is also being directed to the importance of particular local habitats which sustain the region's butterfly population. All surveys are done on the second weekend of each month. Participation in all six surveys was up from last year which was very encouraging and most people who participated said that they enjoyed taking part. Also encouraging was the fact that nearly all parks in Greater Victoria received coverage, which gives us a more accurate picture as to how plentiful or scarce Victoria's butterflies are.

The number of species seen on last year's surveys was up, from 27 to 38 species. A couple of notable finds included two Great Arctics seen in Goldstream Park in June and July and an American Painted Lady, which stayed for nearly two weeks on Mt. Douglas during the latter half of September. Painted Ladies, which were so common in 1991 and again in 1992, were scarce from May-July and were not seen at all in August and September. West Coast Ladies, which are usually only seen when there are large numbers of Painted Ladies, were found only three times last year and always on Mt. Tolmie.

Among the butterfly species which showed a notable increase from last year were the Spring Azure, Sara Orange Tip and Propertius Duskywing. Some butterflies that were seen in 1994, but unfortunately were missed in 1993, included the Cedar Hairstreak, Rustic Blue and Western Meadow Fritillary. Species seen in 1993 but not recorded during the 1994 survey, included the Field Crescent-spot, Reakirt's Copper, Rosner's Hair-streak and Western-tailed Blue. High numbers of Mylitta Crescent-spots and Purplish Coppers were very noticeable at Rithets Bog, the Horticultural Center and the Galloping Goose trail. Not to go unnoticed, was the large number of Milbert's Tortoiseshells seen in June. At one location in Metchosin, thirteen Milbert's Tortoiseshells were observed at the Happy Valley Herb Farm on Happy Valley Road. A good size colony of European Skippers, never before seen in Victoria, were located at Rithet's Bog during the June and July counts. An Edith's Checkerspot, once thought to be extinct in Victoria, was seen by Gordon Hart on the Lockside trail leading to Blenkinsop Lake in the middle of May. Also of note were two Acadian's Hairstreaks seen in August in Brentwood Bay.

Special thanks go out to Gerry and Steve Ansell, Tom Gillespie and Gordon Hart who spent a good deal of their spare time counting and recording butterflies. And thank you to everyone who helped out last year. I hope you will be able to continue to be of assistance during 1995.

Anyone who is interested in helping out with the survey of Victoria butterflies in 1995 should call Jeff Gaskin, at 384-1573.

Table 1. Annual Distribution of Butterfly Species

Butterfly Species	A	M	J	J	A	S	Total
Acadian Hairstreak					2		2
American Painted lady	17					1	2
Anise Swallowtail	25	137	30	114	19	5	330
Brown Elfin	5	10					15
Cabbage White	218	407	270	929	447	429	2700
Cedar Hairstreak		1					1
Edith's Checkerspot		1					1
European Skipper			9	86			95
Fritillary sp.		1					1
Great Arctic			1	1			2
Grey Hairstreak	4	8	3	4	5	3	27
Hydaspe Fritillary				1			1
Johnson's Hairstreak			3				3
Lorquin's Admiral		2	235	420	53	3	713
Milbert's Tortoise Shell	4	2	20	3			29
Monarch?				3?			3
Moss' Elfin	2						2
Mourning Cloak	8	6	1	9		2	26
Mylitta Crescent-spot		8	1	31	3	64	107
Oreas Anglewing	1						1
Painted lady		10	7	6			23
Pale Swallowtail		54	48	14			116
Pine White	88	9	11	149	55	19	331
Propertius Duskywing	3	92	9				104
Purplish Copper		6	27	12	138	78	261
Red Admiral		2	8	5	6	5	26
Rustic Blue?			1?				1
Sara Orange Tip	134	46					180
Satyr Anglewing	36	25	10	8			79
Silvery Blue	6	5					11
Spring Azure	246	495	16	1			758
Two-banded Checkered Skipper		2					2
Vancouver Island Ringlet	3	33	72	10	86	3	204
West Coast Lady		1	1		1		3
Western Meadow Fritillary			1				1
Western Pine Elfin	2	6					8
Western Tiger Swallowtail		76	260	171	5		512
Woodland Skipper				28	1333	139	1500
Zephyr Anglewing	1	1		1?			3

Brant Festival 95 Set to Soar

Parksville-Qualicum Beach will again be the focus of natural history events this spring when the two central Vancouver Island Communities of Parksville-Qualicum Beach host their fifth annual Brant Festival, April 7-8-9.

The three day celebration of Nature, Art and Outdoor Fun coincides with the arrival of the Brant geese in their peak numbers. Each spring as many as 20,000 of these small geese stop to rest and feed on local coastal waters during their annual migration from wintering areas in Mexico to breeding grounds in Alaska.

At Brant Viewing Stations, visitors can observe these talkative dark geese with their white collars. Telescopes set up by Bausch and Lomb means everyone can get a birds-eye view of the Brant and other local waterbirds.

Pro and Novice birders alike will want to enter Festival 95's Big Day Birding Competition with its draw prize of a pair of Elite 8x42 binoculars valued at \$1600, donated by Bausch and Lomb. Big Day teams will try to list as many of the 252 species of birds found in the Parksville-Qualicum area as they can. Families interested in a novel way of exploring nature will want to experience the Festival's newest event: the Unnatural Nature Circuit. Walking the circuit will provide a fun way for people of all ages to test their observation skills, while enjoying the outdoor beauty of the Englishman River Estuary.

The Brant Festival Carving Competition features top carvers from across North America and the event attracts crowds to see these realistic wood carvings of birds. Festival 95's Carving Competition will be held at the Parksville Community Hall. The Festival will also show the works of some of



Brant in Flight off Parksville-Qualicum Beach (Photo: Jonathan Grant).

B.C.'s best-known wildlife artists, sculptors, and photographers which will be on view at Qualicum Beach's Civic Centre and The Old School House Gallery and Art Centre.

Native Arts are also part of the Celebration of Nature. Native carvers and artists from around B.C. will display and demonstrate their art. Also being planned are a Salmon Barbecue to be hosted by the Nanaimo Indian Band and Native Dance presentations.

Friday evening features Canadian Wildlife Service research scientist Dr. Robert Butler, who will explore the mysteries and marvels of shorebird migration in his presentation *Wings Across the Americas*. Saturday, Graham Osborne, author and photographer of *British Columbia - A Wild and Fragile Beauty*, will take audiences on a slide-illustrated adventure in his presentation *Photography in the Wild*.

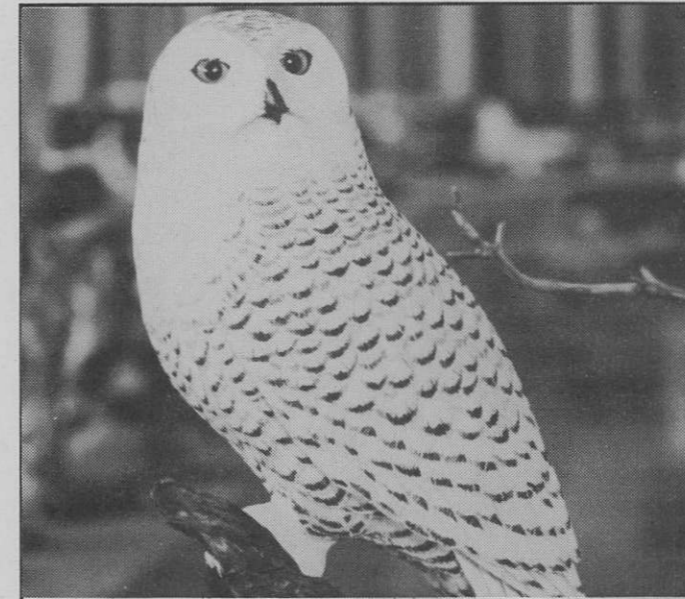
Parksville-Qualicum Beach is situated on the Pacific Flyway, the major West Coast route for migratory birds. Sponsored by the Mid Island Wildlife Watch Society, the Brant Festival supports wildlife habitat conservation. At Festival 93,



Brant Festival 94 Big Day Team.

the Province of B.C. designated 17-kilometres of local coastline as a Wildlife Management Area. The area provides vital habitat for 60 species of waterbirds, including the Pacific Brant and is the largest coastal site of its kind in B.C. to receive such special status.

For further information contact the Brant Festival 95 Office at (604) 248-4117.



Snowy Owl: Past winner of Brant Festival Carving Competition

Sightings Wanted

Colour-banded Double-crested Cormorants

As part of a project to document the seasonal movement patterns of Double-crested Cormorants, the Canadian Wildlife Service has placed coloured, numbered leg bands on approximately 300 cormorant chicks from the southern Vancouver Island - Strait of Georgia area.

Colour bands are red, orange, yellow, blue, green and white, to correspond with breeding colonies. Bands are numbered numerically (1, 2, 3, etc. for orange, yellow, blue and white bands) or alpha-numerically (A00, A01....B99, red and green bands) and are read sideways and downwards towards the foot.

Bands are most easily read while birds are perched on rocks, logbooms or pilings. We are interested in sightings from throughout the Strait of Georgia, Puget Sound and beyond. All assistance will be gratefully acknowledged.

In addition, we have attached radio transmitters (166MHz range) to adult DCCO's. Persons working with radio receivers and interested in listening for birds, please call for the exact frequencies.

Please 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

1994 Christmas Bird Count

Introduction by David Pearce

On December 17 a record number 209 participants took part in the 1994 Victoria Christmas Bird Count. Unfortunately the weather was not as good as it rained all day. This put a damper on the count with only 84,000 birds seen. Most areas recorded their lowest counts with the exception of 10 Mile Point, which had a record high. The species count was 140, once again the highest in Canada but rather average for Victoria.

We recorded eight record highs for the following species (previous highs are in parenthesis): Trumpeter Swan - 243 (218); Canada Goose - 3,180 (3,070); Western Sandpiper - 5 (3); Blue Jay - 3 (1); Hutton's Vireo - 8 (7); Song Sparrow - 937 (862); White-throated Sparrow - 9 (7); and White-crowned Sparrow - 193 (163). We recorded an all-time low for Black Turnstone - 53 (54).

The highlight was a Vesper Sparrow found near Lochside Trail, the first of this species for any Victoria Christmas Count. Since the count began in 1957 we have now recorded 209 species. Other highlights were a Golden Eagle and three Glaucous Gulls at Goldstream; a Gyrfalcon at Martindale; an American Bittern at Viaduct Flats; a Spotted Sandpiper in Cadboro Bay; five Western Sandpipers in Esquimalt Lagoon; a Townsend's Warbler at Langford Lake; six Pine Grosbeaks on Jocelyn Hill; and Blue Jays near Mt. Douglas and at King's Pond.

A compilation of the data is presented on the following pages.

David Pearce has been coordinating the Christmas and Spring Bird Count Surveys for several years and compiling the information in a database. Those interested in the upcoming Spring Bird Count in May can contact David at 658-0295.

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

1994 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 HABOUR | 12. OAK BAY |

SPECIES	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Red-throated Loon						1		8			4	3
Pacific Loon			3			4	4	2		1	25	8
Common Loon			2			3	9	6		4	3	2
Pied-billed Grebe				3	12		9		8			
Horned Grebe						18	10	11		29	48	15
Red-necked Grebe	2		3			16	1	21		29	51	39
Eared Grebe						1						
Western Grebe	1					4	1,071	87		9	4	
Double-crested Cormorant	3		13	3	39	12	12	67	30	69	16	5
Brandt's Cormorant						4		2		1	21	2
Pelagic Cormorant						8	3	49		67	20	28
American Bittern												
Great Blue Heron	5		4		1	3	12	9	2	15	3	4
Trumpeter Swan	101			1								
Mute Swan			2			6	8				1	
Greater White-fronted Goose												
Canada Goose	778			165	5	29	74	100	205			
Green-winged Teal	13		6	49	3				2			
Mallard	1,715	29	72	525	158	172	133	4	277	51	495	35
Northern Pintail	330			26	3							
Northern Shoveler	38				10							
Gadwall							7		2			
Eurasian Wigeon	2										2	
American Wigeon	547		3	354	49	22	73	300	236	194	204	30
Canvasback									58			
Ring-necked Duck	55	26		34	29	7	23	1				
Greater Scaup			1									
Lesser Scaup							3		502		6	3
Harlequin Duck						4	10	25		15	60	37
Oldsquaw						9	2	4			1	3
Black Scoter												
Surf Scoter			13			28	62	14		86	160	50
White-winged Scoter						1				1		2
Common Goldeneye			32			12	58	116	16	53	63	91
Barrow's Goldeneye	4		34			1				2		
Bufflehead	35	26	105	7	10	76	227	93	282	194	161	121
Hooded Merganser	31	9	20	21	2	9	3	55	36	60	2	34
Common Merganser	14		116	40	4	3	26	1		12		
Red-breasted Merganser						30	48	119		55	55	32
Ruddy Duck												
Bald Eagle	5	3	46	2	13	3	7	1			2	1
Northern Harrier	1											
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	3	4	1	2	4	1	1	1	1		1

1994 Victoria Christmas Bird Count

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|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 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
Red-throated Loon		1						5		22	
Pacific Loon	3	17	8			9		47		131	
Common Loon		10	8			9	1	10		67	
Pied-billed Grebe				7		24	8			71	
Horned Grebe		25	48			370		18		592	
Red-necked Grebe	4	11	6			6		26		215	
Eared Grebe			7							8	
Western Grebe		1	5							1,182	
Double-crested Cormorant	1	5	4	3	1	75	14	2		374	
Brandt's Cormorant		5	2							37	
Pelagic Cormorant	1	54	8			4		12		254	
American Bittern							1			1	
Great Blue Heron	1	1		4	5	1	6	9		85	
Trumpeter Swan								141		243	All time high (previous high 218 in 1990)
Mute Swan										17	
Greater White-fronted Goose				1						1	
Canada Goose				1	373	230	30	1,190		3,180	All time high (previous high 3,070 in 1993)
Green-winged Teal					1	87	5	197		363	
Mallard	117	95	29	618	970	215	130	4,380		10,220	
Northern Pintail					5	26	19	133		542	
Northern Shoveler	5			7		5	37	5		107	
Gadwall				15	3	5	42	1		75	
Eurasian Wigeon	1	2								7	
American Wigeon	50	2		709	77	19	6	769		3,644	
Canvasback						18	9			85	
Ring-necked Duck	1			41	5	115	107	15		459	
Greater Scaup						59		2		62	
Lesser Scaup	6		42	3		3	2	9		579	
Harlequin Duck	4	23	5			4		1		188	
Oldsquaw		35	12			69		205		340	
Black Scoter								2		2	
Surf Scoter		12	11			286		138		860	
White-winged Scoter	1	25	26			6				62	
Common Goldeneye	1	33	9			36	2	21		543	
Barrow's Goldeneye								3		44	
Bufflehead	18	51	85	9		315	26	101		1,942	
Hooded Merganser	6	22	6		24	70	30	15		455	
Common Merganser		4			5	223	13	4		465	
Red-breasted Merganser	7	43	7			53		16		465	
Ruddy Duck						36				36	
Bald Eagle	2	4	3		1	1	4	2		100	
Northern Harrier								2		3	
Sharp-shinned Hawk		1				2	2	1		26	

1994 Victoria Christmas Bird Count

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|--|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 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 HABOUR | 12. OAK BAY |

SPECIES	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
<hr/>												
Cooper's Hawk	2	2			3	2	1		2			2
Red-tailed Hawk	10	3	3	3	2	3	1					
Golden Eagle			1									
American Kestrel	1										1	
Merlin									1	1		
Peregrine Falcon						1			1			
Gyrfalcon												
Ring-necked Pheasant							3	2				
<hr/>												
California Quail	44	15	39	17	2	58	4	5		1		12
Virginia Rail												
American Coot	14				9		24		12	4		23
Black-bellied Plover												
Killdeer			1		4		13					
Black Oystercatcher						2		4		3		1
Greater Yellowlegs				7								
Spotted Sandpiper												
<hr/>												
Black Turnstone						3	8	9		24		9
Surfbird										4		
Sanderling								4				12
Western Sandpiper							5					
Rock Sandpiper								16				
Dunlin									1			
Common Snipe									1	1		
Mew Gull	49		135	25		1,117	27	137	419	13	15	5
<hr/>												
California Gull			2					25				
Herring Gull			6				4					
Thayer's Gull			155	3	20	450	3	251	250	8	9	25
Western Gull									1		3	
Glaucous-winged Gull	1,674	49	1,800	46	163	1,290	165	253	528	259	168	322
Glaucous Gull			3									
Common Murre						49	1	3				
Pigeon Guillemot										1	5	3
<hr/>												
Marbled Murrelet						6				8	1	
Ancient Murrelet						10						
Rhinoceros Auklet			1			1		3		3		1
Rock Dove	21	5		2	20		64	8	100	78	135	66
Band-tailed Pigeon					10	7	20					1
Western Screech-Owl						1						
Great Horned Owl						2						
Northern Pygmy-Owl						1						
<hr/>												
Barred Owl	1					1						
Anna's Hummingbird					1	2						3
Belted Kingfisher	3		9	2		1	2	2	2	6		1

1994 Victoria Christmas Bird Count

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|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
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| 17. BLENKINSOP - PANAMA FLATS | |

SPECIES	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	TOTAL	COMMENTS
<hr/>											
	6	1	2	1	2	1	4	4		35	
		1		1	5	3	6	4		45	Equal high with 1993
										1	
										3	
							2	2		6	
					1			4		7	
								1		1	
					4		1			10	
<hr/>											
	12	34			14	18	14	18		307	
						4	5			9	
				47	1	610	15	2		761	
								7		7	
							1	3		22	
	1									11	
					1			4		12	
	1									1	
<hr/>											
										53	All time low (previous low 54)
										4	
										16	
										5	All time high (previous high 3 in 1975)
										16	
						2		23		26	
					1	14	2	15	3	37	
	193	55	2,509	31	613	91	290	419		6,143	
<hr/>											
										27	
										10	
										1,451	
						15	260	2		4	
	28	67	125	362	185	788	210	410		8,892	
										3	
		3	8							2	66
	1	5	4				2			2	23
<hr/>											
		2	4							2	23
		9									19
		1	2								12
		34	3	40	2	2	23	75		678	
		2					8			48	
										1	
		1				1	4			8	
										1	
<hr/>											
									1	3	
	10	19	4							39	
	1	1	2			3	4	3	2	44	

1994 Victoria Christmas Bird Count

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|--|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
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SPECIES	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Red-breasted Sapsucker							1					
Downy Woodpecker	2		2	5	2	1	3	4	7	2	2	*5
Hairy Woodpecker		3	3			1				1		
Northern Flicker	23	20	6	14	23	43	11	8	25	2	8	10
Pileated Woodpecker	2	5	3	1								
Eurasian Skylark												
Steller's Jay	23	35	11	29	41	19	3	6	2			3
Blue Jay												
Northwestern Crow	1,650	46	54	221	166	40	74	82	347	68	62	47
Common Raven	78	38	3	5	8	9	5	2			6	3
Chestnut-backed Chickadee	164	48	71	119	85	49	43	55	75	29	20	48
Bushtit	123	40		2	90	6	8	24	136	56	23	65
Red-breasted Nuthatch	5	12	3	11	12	3	2		6		12	3
Brown Creeper	11	9	8	10	3	7	2	16	13	4	7	1
Bewick's Wren	10	8		4	10	5	4	3	18	2	9	7
Winter Wren	13	36	19	11	7	9	1	14	26	1	13	2
Marsh Wren	1		3		1							
American Dipper			6									
Golden-crowned Kinglet	212	256	272	243	146	89	69	69	169	17	61	57
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	13	8	3	2	19	12	20	12	2	14	6	3
Hermit Thrush						1			1			1
American Robin	160	97	7	121	180	132	69	47	267	110	81	132
Varied Thrush	6	8	3	5	9	19	1		3		4	1
American Pipit												
Cedar Waxwing						5						
Northern Shrike					1							
European Starling	2,375	1	22	234	261	189	99	60	419	101	135	108
Hutton's Vireo		1				1			4			
Orange-crowned Warbler						1						
Yellow-rumped Warbler												
Townsend's Warbler					1							
Rufous-sided Towhee	20	22	5	14	33	45	6	5	20	8	23	26
Vesper Sparrow												
Savannah Sparrow						1						
Fox Sparrow	20	15	4	11	14	25	2	12	14	7	18	8
Song Sparrow	51	40	15	16	46	55	6	8	29	21	50	37
Lincoln's Sparrow												
Swamp Sparrow												
White-throated Sparrow	1			1		1						2
Golden-crowned Sparrow	48	6	13	72	42	64	16	58	31	23	9	29
White-crowned Sparrow	8				2	1	11	1	8	2		3
Dark-eyed Junco	298	132	39	185	342	313	54	91	260	21	94	67
Red-winged Blackbird	165			53	3							

1994 Victoria Christmas Bird Count

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| 17. BLENKINSOP - PANAMA FLATS | |

	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	TOTAL	COMMENTS
										1	
	3	5	4	4	4	6	9	7		77	
	1					1		1		11	
	16	25	21	16	16	16	23	27		353	
			2		1	2	3	2		21	
								48		48	
	12	15	19	8	13	15	35	10		299	
			1	2						3	All time high (previous high 1 in 1963)
	193	120	1,751	130	289	584	253	829		7,006	
	4	1	9		5	11	23	12		222	
	56	107	86	23	19	159	149	122		1,527	
	82	155	41	63	34	116	67	76		1,207	
	2	8	3	2	1	4	5	1		95	
	5	12	5		1	10	4	5		133	
	6	10	6	12	14	17	20	24		189	
	4	11	28	6	5	23	12	43		284	
				1		2	29	4		41	
										6	
	12	61	177	19	21	175	385	179		2,689	
	4	6	7	9	13	18	20	12		203	
				3						6	
	145	178	254	234	229	529	318	485		3,775	
	3	4	7			14	8	4		99	
								11		11	
			3				4			12	
				1				2		4	
	76	182	187	110	196	79	179	2,219		7,232	
		2								8	All time high (previous high 7 in 1980)
										1	
								5		5	
										1	
	20	45	23	35	44	43	73	65		575	
										1	New species
		2						18		21	Equal high with 1993
	10	21	3	16	16	10	28	36		290	
	12	37	21	50	31	182	77	153		937	All time high (previous high 862 in 1993)
					2	1	2	9		14	
							1	1		2	
	2	1			1					9	All time high (previous high 7 in 1993)
	27	59	3	38	38	90	57	125		848	
	27	2	6	2	32	2		86		193	All time high (previous high 163 in 1987)
	73	169	152	40	106	561	152	265		3,414	
		15	12	182	1	24	44	56		555	

1994 Victoria Christmas Bird Count

SPECIES	1994 Victoria Christmas Bird Count											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Western Meadowlark												1
Brewer's Blackbird	93			65	80		90					
Brown-headed Cowbird												
Pine Grosbeak		6										
Purple Finch			12		1	14			2			21
House Finch	37	4		22	5	32	12	59	238	10	4	22
Red Crossbill				2								
Pine Siskin	90	9	15	79		128	175	12	19			61
American Goldfinch					4		1					
Evening Grosbeak												
House Sparrow	36		3	73	36	22	6	37	374	104	13	91
TOTAL BIRDS	11,238	1,075	3,239	2,966	2,247	4,839	3,036	2,508	5,489	1,960	2,425	1,875
TOTAL SPECIES	60	37	56	51	56	81	71	63	52	55	55	64

Welcome New Members

November 29, 1994
John Falkner, of Sidney.

December 2, 1994
Meghan Dovell, age 8, of Selwyn Road: works on articles and school projects with her dad.
Mary Morris & John Harper, W. Saanich Road: enjoy birds, marine ecology, mud & sands, Garry Oak Society.
Fay L. Pettapiece, of Beach Drive: enjoys birdwatching.
Katherine Downard & family, Stelly's Cross Rd: enjoy birds.

December 6, 1994
Dr. Margie Mayfield, Market Street: birds & native plants.

December 13, 1994
Dr. Frances Wood, of San Juan Avenue.
Jennifer Penny, of Adanac Street: enjoys botany and birding.

December 19, 1994
Ian Moul and Linda Nichol, of Irving Road: study seabirds.

December 21, 1994
Paul van Goozen, of Gorge Road West.

December 22, 1994
Geoffrey, Judith and Thomas Godfrey, of Colquitz Avenue.

December 23, 1994
Patricia Simpson and Phil Boulsbee, of View Street: are interested in birding and conservation.

January 2, 1995
W.T. and S.L. Hillcoat, of Fieldmont Place: enjoy nature.

January 7
Jori Mitchell, of Chartwell Drive: participates in birding, photography, hiking and canoeing.
Mark Zabel, of Sidney: is interested in birds, especially the Barrow's Goldeneye.

January 10
Mark Cottle, Cadboro Bay Rd: is a hiker, cyclist & nature photographer.
Art Grabham, of Zinnia Road: birding, the preservation of birds and fish habitat are included in his interests.
A. Pollard and J. Castellas, of Old Esquimalt Road: are birders but are also interested in wetlands and botany.

January 13
Ray Litkenhaus, of Beach Drive.

January 14
Hector W. Duprey, of Burnside Road West: is a birder.
Holly Douglas, of Warren Place: enjoys scuba diving & marine biology.

January 19
Joan Watt, of San Pedro Avenue: is interested in birding.

1994 Victoria Christmas Bird Count

1994 Victoria Christmas Bird Count												TOTAL	COMMENTS
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24		
				7			15					23	
		215	10	95			42					690	
							1					1	
												6	
3				12	36		17					118	
52	113	91	165	78	53	107	37					1,141	
												2	
30	76	181	15	25	219	130	34					1,298	
		1				2						8	
						1						1	
103	111	52	95	164	35	35	82					1,472	
1,463	2,275	6,362	3,207	4,090	6,947	3,351	13,640	0				84,232	
53	71	60	48	57	76	69	92	0				140	

January 20
Ann-Marie Arneson, of Rockland Avenue.

January 23
Nicole Chagnon and family, of Graythorpe Place: enjoy birding and hiking.

January 25
Leonard Ross and family, of Arrow Court.
Geoffrey W. Barnard, of Cedar Hill Road.

January 28
Joan Campbell, of Toronto Street: is interested in birds, wildflowers and the outdoors.

January 30
L. MacLachlan & family, of Kandu Place: enjoy birds, *et al.*

Marine Meeting

To members of the Victoria Natural History Society: A meeting is being held on March 20, 1995 for anyone interested in becoming involved in group activities concerning the marine environment of Victoria and surrounding areas.

Discussions will be held on forming a sub-group of the Natural History Society and to facilitate group activities of a naturalist nature. Activities may include group intertidal walks, SCUBA dives and speciality boat trips.

Interested people please contact: Yves Parizeau (592-7441) or Almudena Supple (383-8472).

THE MIRACLE OF SEEDS:

A Gardener's Weekend Showcase

At the Royal British Columbia Museum, "The Miracle of Seeds" is the upcoming Weekend Showcase presented by the Royal British Columbia Museum and The Heritage Seed Program. The popular springtime event is temporarily relocated to the Crystal Garden, 713 Douglas Street, Victoria on Saturday March 18 and Sunday March 19, 1995 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., daily. Cost is only \$5.00.

Exhibits, hourly workshops, sales and fabulous kids activities combine to create this planter's Eden! This is a once-in-a-lifetime chance to question the gardening experts. Bring your own seeds to the "Seed Swap." Organic and rare cross-strains of seeds will be available for trade, for visitors to take home and cultivate in their own garden.

Kids can get an early start on their own gardening skills with the "Plant Your Own Seed" project, gardening arts and crafts and storytelling. Kids under 6 years receive free admission.

A sample of tentative workshop topics includes: Beneficial Insects in the Garden; The Beauty and Fragrance of Old-Fashioned Roses; Invasive Plants; Gardening Organically; Seeds of Survival; Native Plants; Potatoes; and The Link Between City and Country.

For further information call the Royal BC Museum at 387-3701.

How To Write Advocacy Letters

from The Steelhead Society of B.C.

WHY BOTHER?

Writing letters is an effective way of influencing politics and policies. As a general rule, politicians and bureaucrats credit every letter they receive as representing the thoughts and feelings of 500-1000 taxpayers who simply have not bothered to express their concerns. That makes each letter (your letter!) up to a thousand times more important than most people realise. Letter writing does count - if you take the time to write!

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTIVE LETTERS

Write an individual (independent) letter. If you send a form letter or photocopied letter it is still useful but not as effective. That's because writing an individual letter requires more time than the signing of a petition. Those that receive individual letters realise and respect the time and energy it takes to express your concerns in an individual letter.

Even if you are not the world's best grammarian, don't let that stop you! Try to keep your letter(s) as neat and as error-free as possible. Have someone proof read your letter for accuracy, tone, and grammar.

For maximum effect, give your letter a personal tone. It should also be polite, specific, brief and as non-partisan as possible. It is okay to say that you voted for Mr. X or Ms Y in the last election. You will spoil the effect, however, if you then go on to call him or her a liar, cheat, vandal (or any other nasty name) and that you will never vote for them again in a hundred years! Be aware that secretaries have a habit of throwing such a letter into the recycling bin before the politician even sees it (secretaries correctly conclude that such letters put their bosses in a bad temper, which they bear the brunt of). Politicians who do happen to see name-calling letters often conclude there is nothing to be gained in trying to win back the letter writer's support and may well do the opposite of what you would like them to do (i.e., become more sympathetic to "the other side").

BASIC TYPES OF LETTERS

There are two basic types of letters: endorsement/support and letters that urge action on specific issues. Endorsement/support letters are simple and easier to compose.

WHAT TO PUT IN YOUR LETTER

The following is an example of an endorsement/support letter:

Dear Minister:

Re: _____

I am writing to let you know that I am fully behind the resolution of XYZ Society in calling for _____. The XYZ Society wrote to you about that issue on _____.

This identifies the issue and your support of it. You might then establish your qualifications to comment, or personalize your support of "XYZ" Society by saying:

In my experience

Then give your opinion:

I can assure you, Ms (or Mr). _____, that I have observed _____.

Then make your request:

I urge you as Minister of _____ to take action on this matter. We have a responsibility to our children to make sure that _____.

A little (don't over do it) flattery can be helpful. For example:

When I heard you speak about the need to protect our environment at the community centre during the election I was impressed by your sincerity and determination to take action.

or:

Since your party supported _____, I'm sure you will want to know about a problem with _____.

Long endorsements lose impact and can become confusing. "Significant issue" letters require a bit more thought. Remember:

Keep it brief. Deal with one issue at a time. A one-page letter has a better chance of being read to the end. If you send a two-page letter, chances are good that only the first sentence on the first page will be read (to find out the subject) and you'll get a standard form-letter reply in return.

Keep it specific. If you have an example, stick to it. End with a clear and realistic request. There should be absolutely no ambiguity. You may wish to conclude:

My experience on this matter convinced me that _____.

Be aware of the tone, and how you phrase requests and criticism. It's better to say, "Perhaps you've received bad advice on" than to say "You obviously don't know what you're talking about."

SO WHOM DO YOU WRITE TO?

Politicians Cabinet Ministers usually pass your letter onto a government staff person for a draft reply. That spreads the message in the ministry or department, so it's worth sending your letter to the top! Also send a copy of the letter to your own MLA and/or MP with a few handwritten comments across the top.

While you might be tempted to scribble:

During the election you promised to kick some butts. Do it!

It is better to write something along the lines:

As you are my MLA, I would be grateful if you would take this up with the Minister and let me know what s/he says. If your assistant could call me at _____, we can arrange a meeting early next month to discuss this.

This indicates that you want action, not a brush-off or a form letter reply. While you have given a deadline, it's not so demanding in tone or time-frame that it ends up in the waste basket. If the MLA or MP's assistant calls, you can cancel the meeting if you need to.

The point is: if your MLA thinks there is a chance of you going to the constituency office to complain of neglect - or worse, going to the media, standing up at a

public meeting, or during the next election documenting her/his lack of interest on a serious environmental issue - he or she is far more likely to put the heat on the Minister for some action.

GOVERNMENT STAFF

Bureaucrats often need stroking and advice. Sometimes it helps to write directly to people in charge of a particular area. A letter directly to them shows that you understand that they are important and influential - and that you know who they are. Be sure to copy your letter to the Minister involved.

FORMS OF ADDRESS

Ministers are called "Honourable", a polite (if not always accurate) description. The following is an example of a letter to a provincial minister:

The Honourable Jane Doe, MLA

Minister of _____

A letter to a federal minister is slightly different. The letter PC are added after the letters MP. PC stands for "Privy Council" An archaic term but one that is still used. Example:

The Honourable Jane Doe, MP, PC

Minister of _____

In both cases the letter starts:

Dear Minister: or Dear Ms Doe:

In the case of the Prime Minister, the letter starts:

Dear Prime Minister:

In the case of the Premier, the letter starts:

Dear Premier:

ADDRESSES

All elected provincial politicians have one address. So do all elected federal politicians:

Federal address:

Mr. (or Ms) XXX, MP

House of Commons

Ottawa, Ontario

K1A 0A6

Provincial address:

Ms (or Mr.) XXX, MLA

Parliament Buildings

Victoria, British Columbia

V8V 1X4

Relax while birding
in the Creston Valley
at the

Mânana Farm Bed and Breakfast

15 minutes from wildlife centre
5 minutes from Duck Lake wetlands

Contact Sheila Reynolds,
Box 95, Wynndel, B.C.
(604) 866-5453

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT ADDRESSES AND FAX NUMBERS

Call Inquiry BC. If you are outside the Vancouver area, call 1-800-663-7867. In the Vancouver area, call 660-2421. Through Inquiry BC you can call or fax any provincial department "free".

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ADDRESSES AND FAX NUMBERS

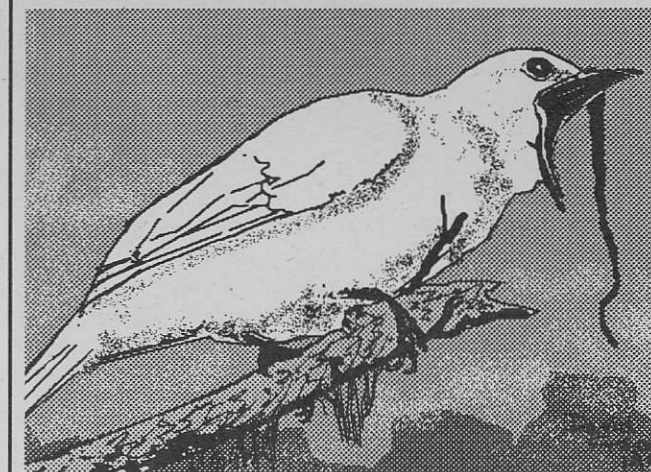
Contact your local MP's office.

Postage

Letters to MPs in Ottawa do not require postage. Letters to Victoria do. Fax letters if you have access to a fax machine. It demonstrates vigilance and promptness on your part - traits noticed by savvy politicians and bureaucrats. And you can fax and mail the same letter! This helps to ensure it stays at the top of the pile!

This article is reprinted with permission. It first appeared in the British Columbia Environmental Network Activists' Handbook and was a contribution from the Steelhead Society of B.C. For information on BCEN phone 604-879-2279 and for the

Annual General Meeting
March 14, Tuesday,
7:30 p..m.
Begbie 159, U-Vic



Leah and Dave Fraser
present
"VENESUELA"

Bring friends and your own mugs.
Door Prize.

Stream Stewardship — a New Approach for Government

British Columbia is blessed with outstanding natural resources, including an enormous diversity and abundance of wildlife. Renewable fish stocks are an important part of this natural heritage and a significant component of B.C.'s economic livelihood.

The viability of these valuable resources, however, is in question. More than ever, the fate of fish and wildlife is increasingly dependent upon our ability to manage, protect, and enhance their habitat. Urban encroachment, industrial development, resource extraction and harvest regimes are increasingly threatening habitat throughout British Columbia.

A new document published jointly by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks, introduces concepts which attempt to accommodate urban development while conserving the fisheries resource. **Stream Stewardship: A Guide for Planners and Developers** is designed for municipal governments, planners, developers and non-governmental community organizations interested in the relationship between urban development and the fisheries resource.

The 48-page document lays out the land development process from its earlier planning phases right through to the completion of construction, outlining how streams and riparian habitat can be protected.

The emphasis is on the existing municipal planning tools which can be better utilized during various stages of the land development process. The Guide also describes both the environmental approval process, which oversees development proposals, and the Land Development Guidelines which describes the technical considerations involved in protecting fish habitat during development.

There is an important role for conservation organizations and community groups to support this new approach to stream stewardship. From educating the public and government about the need for better planning, to involvement in local StreamKeeper's programs, the community needs to get involved.

To learn how you or your community organization can become more involved in Stream Stewardship please plan to attend the upcoming free Information Session on Saturday March 25, 1995, 9:00 am - 12:00 pm at the University of Victoria--Elliot Building, Room 168.

The session, sponsored by the Federation of B.C. Naturalists and the Victoria Natural History Society, will include a panel discussion with representatives from government and community groups.

For more information, contact: Kerry Dawson at the Federation of British Columbia Naturalists (604) 299-2528.

The Doug Tarry Bird Study Awards For Young Ornithologists


The Doug Tarry Bird Study Awards promote the development of ornithological talents and interests in Canadian teenagers. Recipients of the awards attend a week-long workshop/natural history camp at Long Point Bird Observatory (LPBP), located on the north shore of Lake Erie, Ontario.

The Doug Tarry Young Ornithologists' Workshop is a major component of the Observatory's educational program. Since its inception in the mid 1970's, the Workshop has been the jumping-off point for many of today's most talented field biologists. Thanks to the keen foresight and generosity of humanitarian and naturalist Doug Tarry, the Workshop is now offered FREE to selected applicants. This year, the Workshop is being held from **Sunday 2 July to Sunday 9 July 1995**.

The Workshop focuses on "hands-on" learning and training in field ornithology, providing a unique opportunity for like-minded teenagers to markedly enhance their knowledge and skills in the scientific study and aesthetic enjoyment of birds. Participants learn how to identify, age and sex birds, and to study their populations and behaviour.

Careful and skilled instructors teach the secrets of bird handling and banding techniques, how to prepare specimens for scientific study and an array of bird censusing techniques. Regular afternoon trips are taken to places of biological interest within the internationally designated Long Point Biosphere Reserve. Evenings too are busy with slide presentations and nocturnal field work.

Space is limited to six participants, ranging in age from 13-18 years old. The Award covers all direct costs of the workshop (accommodation, meals, travel while at Long Point). Prospective participants are invited to request an application form from: Rosie Kirton, Long Point Observatory, Box 160, Port Rowan, Ontario N0E 1M0 (fax 519-586-3532). Applications are due 1 May 1995.



THIMBLE FARMS

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

175 Arbutus Road 537-5788
SALTSPRING ISLAND

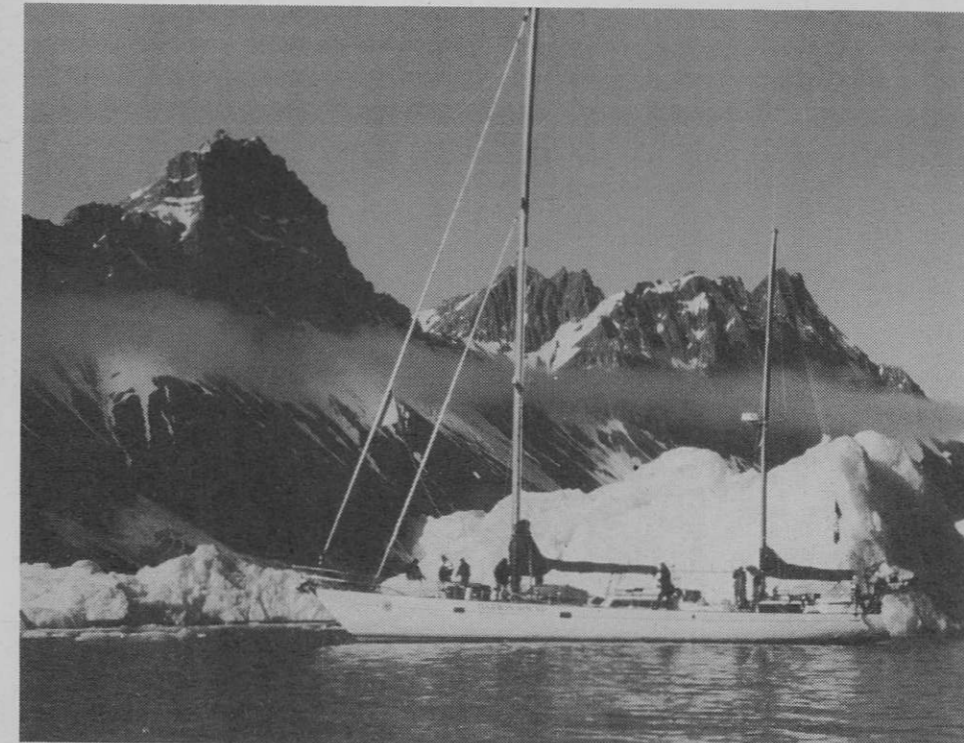
Growing Native???

10% off native plants to VNHS members

Victoria Natural History Society
Irene and Al Whitney present images from 16 years of expeditions while sailing aboard their vessel DARWIN SOUND

A Sailing Expedition from the Queen Charlotte Islands to the Atlantic Polar Ice

Highlights include images from natural history explorations in the Queen Charlotte Islands and during the Whitney's world voyage of discovery from B. C. via Costa Rica, Panama, Belize, Turkey, Scotland and Scandinavia to Spitsbergen in the High Arctic



VNHS
Birder's Night

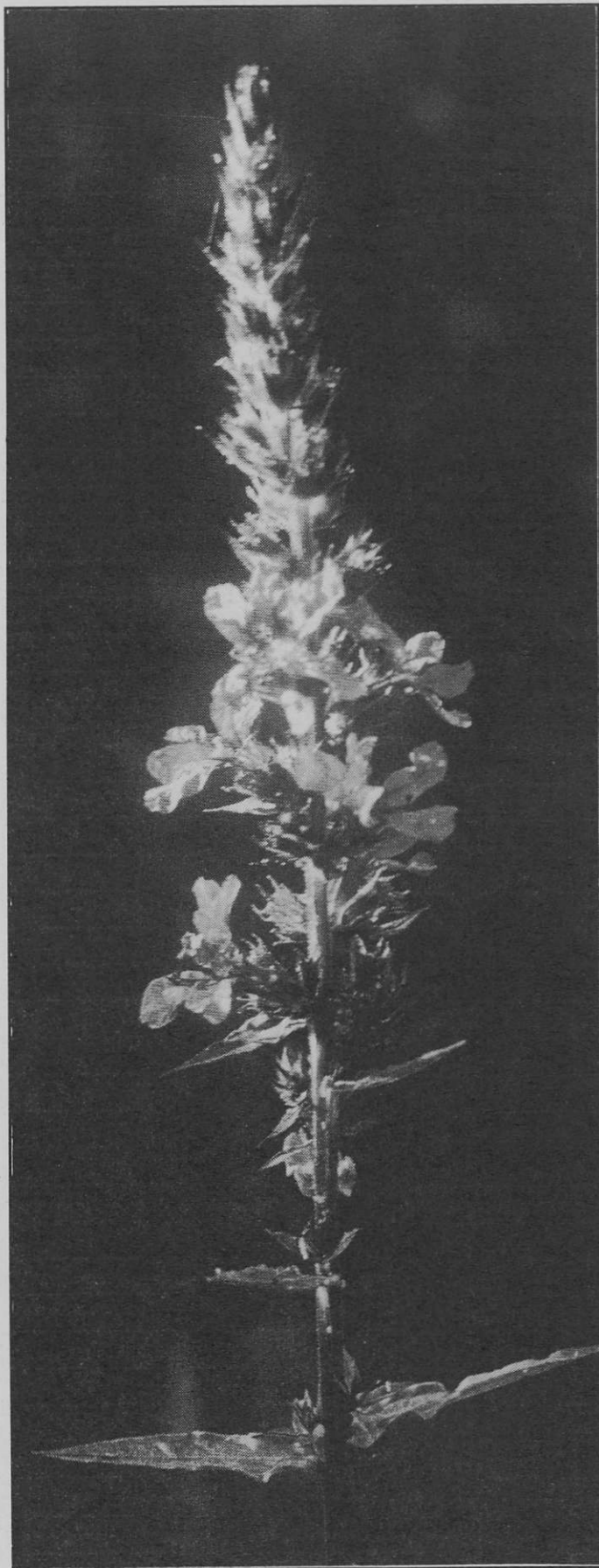
Wednesday,
March 22

7:30 pm

Room 159

Begbie Building
UVic

Coordinated by VNHS Member Brain Gates
Presented by Irene or Al Whitney Box 598, Whistler, B. C. V0N 1B0 - phone or fax: (604) 932-3107



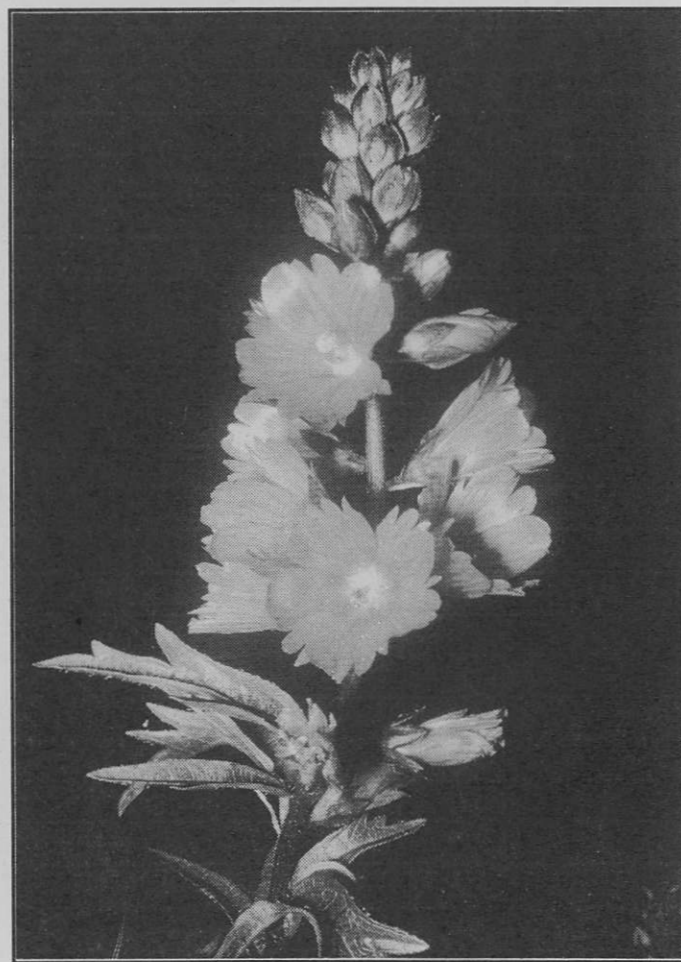
Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) (Photo: William Merilees)

Loosestrife Look-a-likes

by Bill Merilees

With the interest of informing naturalists about Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) this article is intended as an identification guide. Not every tall plant with terminal heads of pink/purple flowers is Purple Loosestrife. To an unfamiliar eye there are at least three native, tall, damp habitat species that might offer confusion. At Nanaimo, the author has received at least two phone calls regarding 'loosestrife infestations' that when visited, turned out to be native species.

The three natives for confusion are Henderson's Checker-mallow (*Sidalcea hendersonii*), Fireweed (*Epilobium angustifolium*) and Hardhack or Douglas' Spirea (*Spiraea douglasii*). While all three bear a superficial resemblance to Purple Loosestrife (see photos), the first two have large one inch (2.5 cm) flowers in loose spikes while Hardhack has tiny fuzzy flowers in tight heads. Purple Loosestrife is generally 'intermediate' for these characters. In addition, loosestrife has a square stem not a circular one.



Henderson's Checker-mallow (*Sidalcea hendersonii*). Photo: William Merilees.

Henderson's Checker-mallow is primarily a species found along brackish tidal channels. It is considered quite rare around southern Vancouver Island from Kelsey Bay south. The stems are tall (to 1.5 m) and the large flowers are narrowly spaced. It is a member of the Mallow Family which includes our garden Hollyhock.

Fireweed should be well known to every naturalist with an interest in flowers. Although not strictly a 'marsh or damp habitat' species, its colonial habit could make it easily mistaken for Purple Loosestrife, especially from a distance. Fireweed quickly colonizes vast areas after environmental disturbances, especially fire and scarification during logging. Fireweed is a member of the Evening Primrose family.

Hardhack or Douglas' Spirea often will be found growing in close proximity to Loosestrife as both favour damp or flooded ground, especially the margins of lakes, ponds and watercourses. Hardhack's round bronze brown stem (square and green/red for loosestrife) is distinctive. Though the flowers are tiny and 'fuzzy,' this is the species most likely to be mistaken for Purple Loosestrife. Although far from a rose in the appearance of its flowers, Hardhack IS indeed a member of the Rose family.

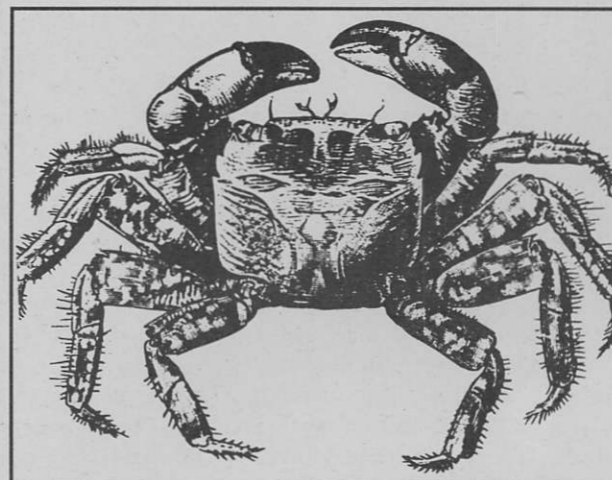
The common name 'loosestrife' also refers to members of the genus *Lysimachia* in the Primula family. Our native and horticultural species are yellow flowered, also

associated with damp habitats. Six species have been reported in British Columbia, of which two are native. On Vancouver Island Fringed Loosestrife (*Lysimachia ciliata*) is usually found growing in standing water.



Fireweed (*Epilobium angustifolium*). Photo: William Merilees.

Natural History Presentation
April 11, Tuesday. 7:30 p.m.
Begbie 159. UVic



Phil Lambert presents
Intertidal Ecology
& Rocky Shores
Bring friends & your own mugs
Door Prize: zodiac trip to
Chatham Island generously donated
by Marilyn Lambert

WHALE HOTLINE

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

On the water:

VHF channel 68 to the vessel *Sundiver*

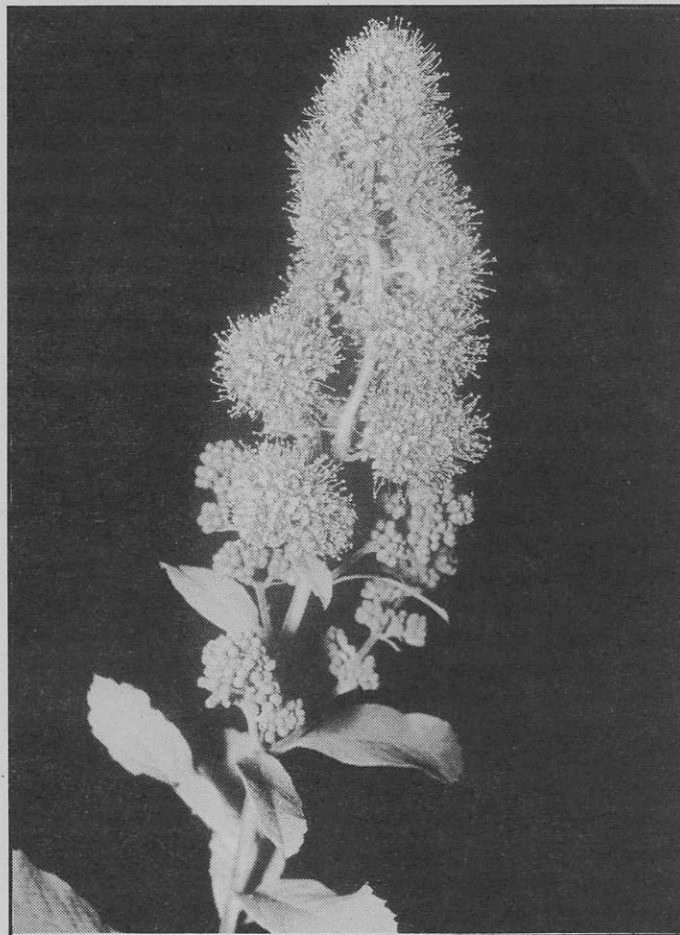
1-800-665 toll-free anywhere in B.C.

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.

Spotted Loosestrife (*L. punctata*) is occasionally found as a garden escape.

As our attention is directed to the problem of Purple Loosestrife and the need to control the spread of this species, it is important that naturalists know what to look for so that accurate identifications of this species can be documented. If this short article has been helpful it will have served the purpose for which it was intended.

Bill Merilees is a frequent contributor of natural history articles on insects, birds and plants. Previous articles on Purple Loosestrife have been published in the Victoria Naturalist, including the July-August, 1994 and September-October, 1994 issues.

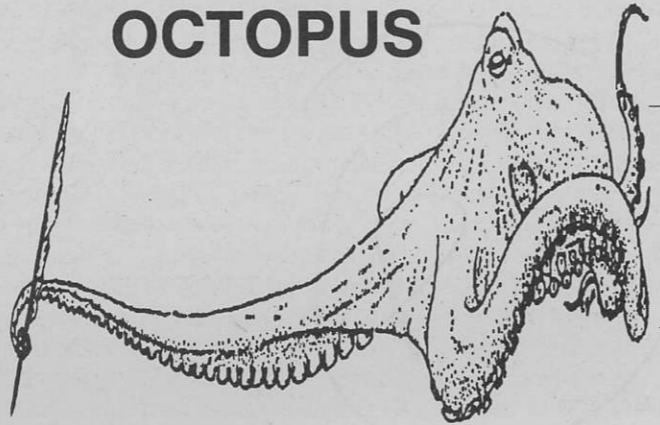


Hardhack or Douglas' Spirea (*Spiraea douglasii*). Photo: William Merilees.

WANTED VOLUNTEER NATURALISTS

The District of Highlands is looking for naturalists interested in surveying flora and fauna found within our municipal boundaries. A workshop will be held in March advising naturalists how to fill out inventory forms while in the field. If you are interested in participating, please leave your name and phone number at the Municipal Hall (1564 Millstream Rd. Telephone: 474-1773).

PACIFIC OCTOPUS



by Lynton Burger

AVIAN OCEAN

The marbled murrelet flew down in the water with quick, deliberate strokes of its stubby wings. Tiny bubbles streamed behind its tail as the increasing pressure forced the air out. Hearing the boat thunder overhead, it dived still deeper, angling away to one side.

The little bird winged its way more slowly now through the water, heading up as the sound of the boat receded. With a gentle plop it popped out of the water, shifting its wings by its side as it scanned the surface. For a few seconds the murrelet paddled about on the surface of the still water. Then it sucked air into its lungs and air sacs, and once more it dived down into the water.

This time it headed down straight and kept going until it neared the sandy seafloor. Levelling off, the murrelet flap-flapped its way above the bottom. It flew over a Dungeness crab, a large Sunflower Star; a Halibut cruising along just off the bottom; geoduck siphons protruding from the sand.

A school of thin, eel-like sandlance came into view and the murrelet veered off towards them. Seeing the incoming shape, the school bunched and then scattered as the murrelet flew in among them. It lunged to the side and caught a Sandlance in its beak.

On the surface once more the murrelet held the flailing, silver slip of a fish firmly in its beak. With a quick cock of its head, the murrelet threw the fish up in the air and then snapped its beak down on the sandlance once more.

Then the bird took off quite suddenly, its short wings beating furiously. It rose up and angled off over the water. The murrelet flew quickly towards the land that lay grey-green beyond the silver-blue water.

The little bird cleared the stunted, old cedars that lined the rocky shore and flew just above the tips of the trees, following the shoreline for a few minutes to a place where the trees grew thicker and higher. Ancient Haida totems stared out to sea from the edge of the forest.

The murrelet flew inland now, over forest-covered hills and valleys. On it went over small lakes and sheltered marshlands. Under the canopies made up of criss-crossed



Marbled Murrelet

boughs of huge, old Sitka Spruce and Western Hemlocks. Over gurgling, clear streams that wound their way through the forest. Then suddenly the bird was in the clear.

For long seconds it winged over a great clear-cut. Scarred and pitted from erosion, the carcasses of split and smaller trees lay where they had been felled, cleared to make way for the trunks of selected trees, dragged and piled and counted and then carted away. Then it was in the cool shade of the forest once more, winging over lush, green ferns.

It slowed as it approached a large Sitka Spruce. Landing on a thick bough, overgrown with moss and lichen, it waddled down the branch, never releasing its hold on the now dead sandlance, until it reached a shallow depression in the lichen, lined by bird droppings. A young chick arched its neck to greet its parent. In a time-honoured ritual the Marbled Murrelet delivered the single sandlance to the open beak of its offspring. As the small chick struggled with the fish, the murrelet rested, exhausted after its long flight.

The sea and the forest: two ecosystems joined by such a small bird. The murrelet needs them both. So do we.

In the next column we'll visit a place far from land - Bowie Seamount.

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.

MARCH EVENTS

Saturday, March 4

Birding trip to Billings Spit and Whiffin Spit. Join Roy Prior (383-5198) to look for early migrants and wintering waterfowl in Sooke Harbour. Pack a lunch and meet at Helmcken Park and Ride at 8:00 a.m. or at Billings Spit (at the end of Kaltasin Road) at 9:00 a.m.

Tuesday, March 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, March 11

Botany trip to Mill Hill Regional Park. Join Adolf Ceska to search for early spring wild flowers. Meet at the Park parking lot off Atkins Avenue near Langford at 9:30 a.m.

Saturday March 11,

Native Vegetation Workshop. Elliot Lecture Wing, University of Victoria, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Sponsored by the Native Vegetation Committee of the Vancouver Island Public Interest Research Group (VIPIRG). Displays, talks, walks, native plant sales, plant i.d. table, raffle and mini-workshops are planned. Tickets at door: \$10.00 adults, \$8.00 seniors/students. Proceeds to Native Plant Garden, UVIC. For further information call Brenda at UVIC Herbarium 721-7097.

Tuesday, March 14

Annual General Meeting and VNHS Natural History Presentation. Room 159, Begbie Building, University of Victoria at 7:30 p.m. The AGM includes the election of the 1995-96 Board of Directors and report from the Treasurer. **David Fraser and Leah Ramsey** will present a slide-illustrated talk on their recent trip to Venezuela. Bring friends and your own coffee mug. A door prize will be awarded.

Sunday, March 19

Skylarks. Birders come from all over North America to see Skylarks in Victoria. Have you seen or heard these lovely songsters lately? Join **Barbara Begg** (656-5296) at the north end of Cresswell Drive (off McTavish Road) at 8:30 a.m. Visitors Welcome!

Monday, March 20

Marine Sub-group Meeting. Those interested in becoming involved in activities con-

cerning the marine environment can contact Yves Parizeau (592-7441) or Almudena Supple (383-8472).

Tuesday, March 21

Botany Night. Swan Lake Nature House, 7:30 p.m. Adolf Ceska will demonstrate computer programs for "interactive identification". Using this computer technology you can identify almost everything you want!

Wednesday, March 22

Birders' Night. Room 159, Begbie Building, University of Victoria, 7:30 p.m. Al Whitney, Skipper of the 71-foot ketch Darwin Sound, will give an audio-visual presentation entitled *A Sailing Expedition from the Queen Charlotte Islands to the Atlantic Polar Ice*. Images of birds, marine mammals and coastal scenery of the Western Pacific Ocean, Central America, Europe and the High Arctic will be featured in this documentation of a journey of discovery. Everyone welcome. Bring a friend and your coffee cup.

Saturday, March 25

Stream Stewardship: A New Approach for Government. Elliot Building, Room 168, University of Victoria. Learn how you or your community organization can become more involved in Stream Stewardship. This free session sponsored by the Federation of B.C. Naturalists and VNHS will include a panel discussion with representatives from government and community groups. For more information please contact Kerry Dawson at the Federation of B.C. Naturalist (604) 299-2528.

Sunday, March 26

Birding Jocelyn Hill with the McGreeneres. Join Mike, Barb and Graham (658-8624) on a hike to one of the most scenic spots in the Victoria area. Meet at Helmcken Park and Ride at 8:30 a.m. or along Martlett Road at 9:00 a.m.

Tuesday March 28

VNHS Natural History Presentation. Room 159, Begbie Building, University of Victoria at 7:30 p.m. Although we normally have only one Natural History Presentation each month, we thought we couldn't pass on the opportunity of having Brian Faulkner present *Seasons of the North Pacific*. This slide presentation of the cultural and natural history of the North Pacific coast includes such fascinating areas as the Kitlope Valley, the Queen Charlotte Islands and southeastern Alaska. Brian is the captain of the *Maple Leaf* and leads ecological tours throughout the Pacific Northwest as well as other parts of the world. Everyone is welcome. Bring your friends and your coffee mug. There will be a door prize.

APRIL EVENTS

Mid to late April

Camas Day. A reminder that the annual Camas Day at Beacon Hill Park will again be held. The date had not been set at the time of publication but will be announced at all VNHS activities and the VNHS events tape (479-2054). Past activities have included birding, wildflower and butterfly walks, family activity walks, Garry Oak

meadow and woodland restoration walks, a park native history walk and informative displays such as the one by the Sencofen Language Instructors of the Lau, Welnew Tribal School of the Saanich Nation on how the early people used the Camas as a valued food source. For further information contact Jeff Stone at 370-2449.

Tuesday, April 4

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.

Friday to Sunday, April 7-8-9

Brant Festival 95. This three day celebration of Nature, Art and Outdoor Fun coincides with the arrival of the Brant geese in their peak numbers during their annual migration from wintering areas in Mexico to breeding grounds in Alaska. Activities include the "Big Day" birding competition, bird carving competition and displays of some of B.C.'s best-known wildlife artists, sculptors and photographers. For details contact the Brant Festival office at (604) 248-4117. (See also the article in this issue of the *Victoria Naturalist*.)

Saturday, April 8

General hike on the Gowlland Range. Bev Glover (721-1476) leads this leisurely hike to search for Spring wild flowers and other flora and fauna. Meet at Helmcken Park and Ride at 9:00 a.m.

Sunday, April 9

Birding by Ferry. Join Roy Prior (383-5198) on a four-hour cruise around the southern Gulf Islands. The ferry stops at Pender, Main and Saturna Islands -- we won't get off but will spend our time watching the marine fauna that frequent these waters. Meet Roy at the gravel parking area along Elk Lake Drive opposite the entrance to Beaver Lake Park at 8:00 a.m. or at the walk on entrance to the Ferry terminal in time for the 9:00 a.m. sailing. Pack a lunch and bring \$4.25 ferry fare.

Tuesday, April 11

VNHS Natural History Presentation. Room 159, Begbie Building, University of Victoria at 7:30 p.m. Phil Lambert of the Royal B.C. Museum, will present a slide show on the *Intertidal Ecology of Rocky Shores*. Bring a friend and your own mug. The door prize will be a inflatable boat trip to Chatam Island, generously donated by Marilyn Lambert.

Saturday, April 15

Pink Lilies. Leon Pavlick leads a trip to see these delicate beauties of Spring. Meet at Helmcken Park and Ride at 9:00 a.m. or meet Leon at the Village Green Hotel parking lot in Duncan at 10:00 a.m. For more information call Marilyn 477-5922.

Tuesday, April 18

Botany Night. Swan Lake Nature House, 7:30 p.m. Ted Lea will talk on *Grassland ecosystems of British Columbia - South Okanagan Valley*.

Sunday, April 23

A Naturalists walk in the Veitch Creek area. Join Ray Zimmerman at the Helmcken Park and Ride at 9:00 a.m. Wear waterproof footwear as we will be crossing Veitch Creek.

Wednesday, April 26

Birders' Night. Room 159, Begbie Building, University of Victoria, 7:30 p.m. Dr. Nigel Mathews of Victoria will take us on an extended birding and natural history expedition to Ecuador. His slides and commentary will describe *Birds of the High Forests and Alpine Slopes of the Andes* a rugged wilderness seen by few visitors. Birding in the more accessible rainforests of Ecuador will also be discussed. Everyone welcome. Bring a friend and your coffee cup.

Saturday, April 29

Songbirds and Shorebirds at Witty's Lagoon. Join David Allinson (380-8233) for a stroll down to the beach. This is a good opportunity to learn special skills required to identify those pesky shorebirds. Meet at Helmcken Park and Ride at 8:30 a.m. or at the Witty's Lagoon parking lot at 9:00 a.m.

UPCOMING MAY EVENTS

Wednesday, May 24

Birders' Night. Room 159, Begbie Building, University of Victoria, 7:30 p.m. A special, extra Birder's Night. Spending most of his time in the mountains and foothills of the Rockies, this is the only month that Peter Sherrington of Alberta is available to describe the *Migration of Golden Eagles in the Rocky Mountains*. He and his colleagues have documented numbers and movement patterns of Golden Eagles and other raptors for a number of years. His findings indicate that there is much to be learned about Golden Eagle movements in Alberta, and even more on the British Columbia side of the Rockies.

BULLETIN BOARD

Birders Wanted.

Share your birding knowledge and enthusiasm. Be a part of a volunteer team to lead bird walks on Sunday mornings at Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary. Birders are invited to sign up for one or more days per month. These popular Sunday events are held between 9 and 11 a.m. and usually have six to twelve participants of all levels. For more details contact Joan at the Nature House (479-0211) or FAX 479-0132.

Announcement!

BEN (Botanical Electronic News), an electronic botanical newsletter, is published on Internet by Adolf Ceska in bi-weekly intervals. To subscribe, send message to: aceska@freenet.victoria.bc.ca.

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.

Camas Day Reminder.

Be prepared to enjoy a walk through Beacon Hill Park in the late April in our annual celebration of the Garry Oak habitat. Details will be available at regular VNHS meetings in April. If you are interested in assisting with Camas Day or wish further information, please contact Jeff Stone at 370-2449.

For Sale

Garry Oak Meadows Colloquium. A colloquium was held

at the University of Victoria in 1993 to study the Garry Oak (*Quercus garryanna*) 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 Garry Oak Meadows Protection Society. The proceedings include papers on the Garry Oak, wildflowers, grasses, insects, and ethical, educational and development issues. To order, send \$12. to Fran Aitkens, #4-921 Foul Bay Road, Victoria, B.C. V8S 4H9.

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 from around Washington State but also extending into Oregon, British Columbia and east to Chicago. Gene Hunn posts the Washington State birding hotline weekly. If you have Internet access send email to listproc@u.washington.edu with the following test line "information tweeters". This will give details on the list and how to subscribe.

From Mary Gustafson at the Bird Banding Laboratory

The National Biological Service's Bird Banding Laboratory (Laurel, MD) can now be reached through E-mail as well as snail mail, phone and fax. Banders can conduct most of their business with the lab by E-mail and others may report bands and observations of marked birds (collars, colour bands, etc.) through this address. Please use the subject line to indicate the subject of your message (i.e., goose collar sighting, band recovery, etc.) and for recoveries include your home name, address, date and exact location of recovery, species and band number or colour marker(s). Mary Gustafson can be found at her E-mail address: gustafsonme@MAIL.FWS.GOV or at the National Biological Service, Bird Banding Laboratory, 12100 Beech Forest Road, Laurel, MD 20708-4037 (phone: 301-497-5790; fax: 301-497-5784).



The Victoria NATURALIST

P.O. Box 5220, Stn. B.,
Victoria, B.C., V8R 6N4.
Publications Mail Reg. 6428

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

FEES ARE
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**BRANT
FESTIVAL 95
APRIL 7-8-9**

**BIG DAY
BIRDING COMPETITION**

Parksville-Qualicum Beach

**Count yourself in for major fun at our Big Day.
And stay for a Super, natural weekend.**

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

- ◆ Wildlife Art, Carving, and Photography ◆ Sports Optics Clinic
- ◆ Family Nature Activities ◆ Natural History Talks and more

Brant Festival's Big Day is an event all birders will enjoy. Teams of experienced and novice birders will comb the Parksville-Qualicum area from tidewater to freshwater and marsh to mountain. The object: see or hear more species of birds than any other team — all the while having a great time.

Meet some of the best and friendliest birders in B.C. Winners will have their names inscribed on the Brant Festival Big Day Trophy and take home keeper trophies. A Big Day party wraps things up with a hot meal, a silent auction and lots of other fun. Awards are presented for Bird of the Day, Best Raptor List, and Story of the Day.

Draw prizes include a pair of Elite 8x42 binoculars (valued at \$1600) sponsored by Bausch and Lomb. Competition prizes include bird books and recordings donated by Victoria's Field Naturalist.

**ENTRY FEES MUST BE PAID BY APRIL 1. SPACE IS LIMITED, SO REGISTER NOW.
CALL 248-4117 OR WRITE: BRANT FESTIVAL 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.

