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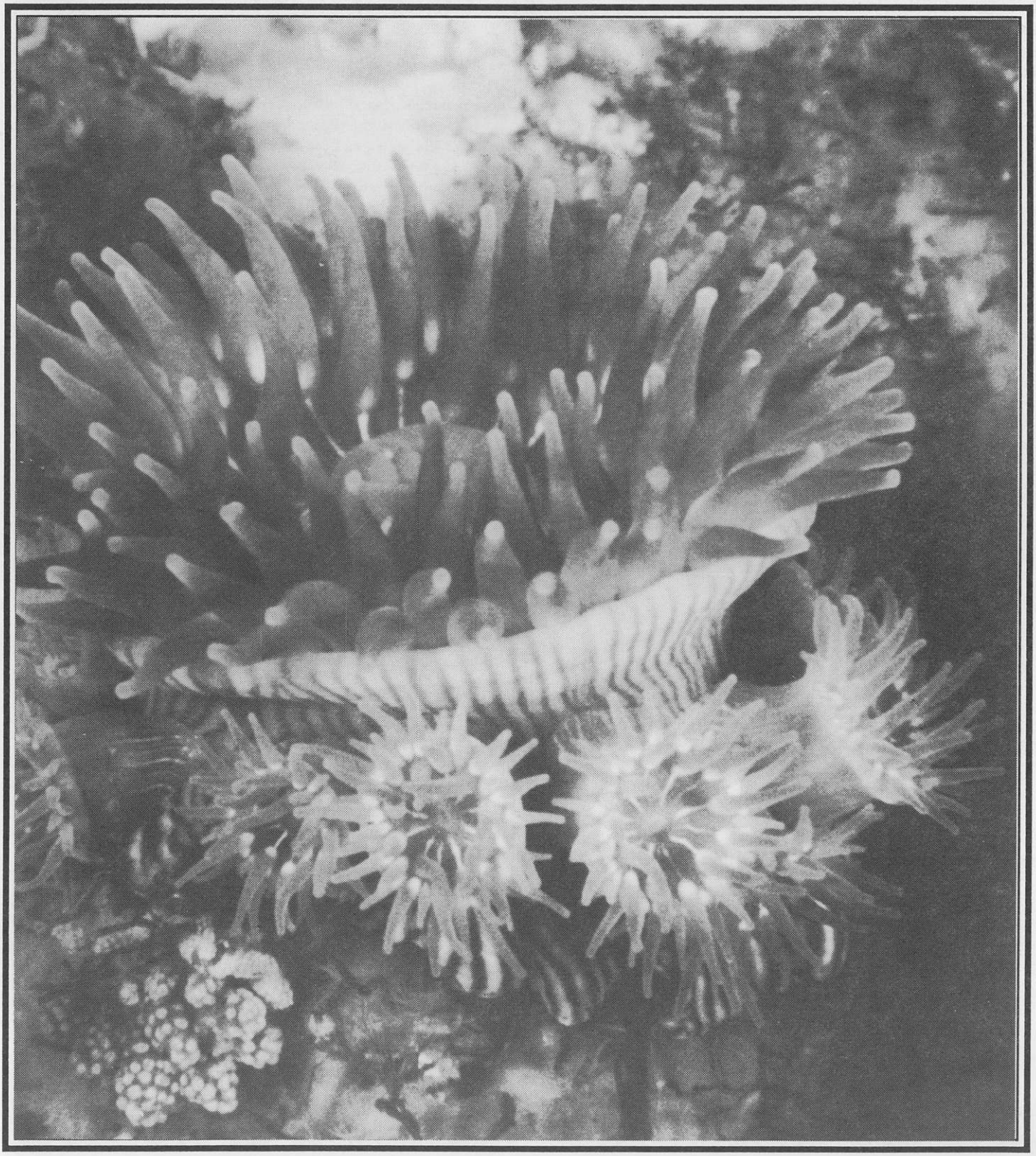

The Victoria NATURALIST

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GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSION

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.

VNHS MEMBERSHIP

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.

ADVERTISING GUIDELINES

We do our best to ensure your ad is produced accurately. Should we make an error, please contact us and a correction can be printed in the next issue. A charge of $20.00 per hour is levied for typesetting. Minor alterations to existing ads cost $10.00. Add $15 per photo for PMT. Advertising fees are due and payable when copy is submitted. Please submit a cheque payable to The Victoria Naturalist.

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Thank you for your patronage.

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OUR COVER

Brooding Sea Anemome

By Mo Morrough

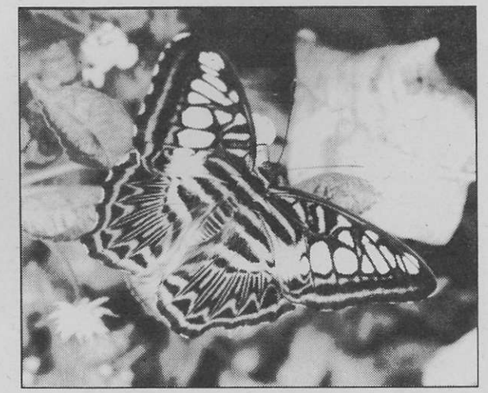
The brooding sea anenome pictured on the cover is from a photograph for a 1992 Calendar produced by Mo Morrough.

Morrough is a local diver and an avid uderwater photographer.

If you would like a copy of her latest 1996 Calendar, please contact her by phone at (604) 936-9101, or write to her.

Mail orders should be addressed to Mo Morrough, Apt. 305, 630 Clark Road, Coquitlam, B.C., V35 3X8.

The cost is $12.50 plus postage.



H.A.T.'s Off and Running

By Jan Garnett

"Presently in A.L.R. but excellent holding property. This parcel is not in the A.L.R. and there exists some rezoning potential to higher-density use in the near future. Engineering study shows proper drainage would convert the areas of the property that are low-lying and seasonally flooded to useable residential land."

We have all seen these marketing phrases and I encounter them every day in my work. Reading them brings on a familiar irritation at the general insensitivity of the commercial world. There's also frustration at not being able to actually buy some of these pieces of land and slap some covenants and safeguards on them – or at least call up someone else who can.

There have always been people objecting to the inexorable "progress" of development, but never enough numbers simultaneously, and rarely those with political or corporate power. What people are gradually realizing is that individual personal power is as potent as anything else if enough people are moving in the same direction. There is an increasing willingness to step back and assess the abysmal record of our species and look at remedial action. Increasingly, the world of "pure" science is linking up with business, environmental action groups, conservationists and government. A lot of people are moving from wringing their hands and pointing their fingers to actually initiating grassroots changes in the way things happen, and are allowed to happen. Backyard biodiversity initiatives accomplish a lot. Political involvement and commitment is really important. However, in some cases the initiative for the protection of habitat through purchase must be taken by a concerned non-government organization.

At the October VNHS Board Meeting the directors entertained a proposal that a habitat protection trust fund be established under the aegis of the Society. The Board gave general approval at the November meeting to form a sub-committee charged with the task of setting up the Fund and fund raising initiatives. Besides myself, other sub-committee members for the new Habitat Acquisition Trust fund, or H.A.T., are my husband Bruce Whittington, Leah Ramsay and David Fraser. Many other people have expressed enthusiasm and offered to help, so when the framework is firmly established the sub-committee list will grow and the workload begin to spread in a delightful fashion. Conservation Committee chairman Jeff Stone has been of immense assistance in this initiative and will, I hope, continue to be hopelessly involved in the process.

The Victoria Natural History Society constitution states three objects of the Society:

a) to stimulate active interest in natural history
b) to study and protect flora and fauna and their habitat
c) to work with other societies and like bodies having interests in common with this Society, within and beyond the Province of British Columbia.

It also states that the operations of the Society are to be chiefly carried on in Southern Vancouver Island. Seems like a pretty good place to hang our H.A.T.!

Privately owned wetlands are examples of habitats that the H.A.T. fund could help to conserve.

As I write this in mid-November, the format of the fund is as yet undecided. There are several options including a simple fund under VNHS's charitable tax number, forming a separate but related foundation, or being a fund in partnership with an existing foundation. Needless to say, Revenue Canada and legal experts offer varying opinions on the subject. But luckily a local lawyer has volunteered his services and experience to assist us in setting up the trust. The format will likely be resolved soon. Then the real work of building a permanent, effective trust fund for the future of our local habitat will begin.

How to Help

1. Make the concept of a locally-managed trust fund part of your thinking and talk to friends, neighbours and relatives about it. The more educated everyone is the more energy will be created to get it going and make it a prominent, permanent part of our Southern Vancouver Island community.

2. Donations from individuals, groups, and companies are essential. If you have a corporate friend or are an owner or director yourself, please consider H.A.T. for tax-deductible donations.

3. Allow us to put your name on a list of future Friends of H.A.T. – people who **might, maybe, sometime**, *be willing to help with fundraisers, etc. You can reach* **Bruce Whittington or Jan Garnett at 652-1529,** *or Dave Fraser and Leah Ramsay at 479-0016. Please leave a message at either number if no one is there. Those of you who have already offered to help, be assured youre already on the list!*

Whatever legal form H.A.T. takes, it will be designed to function as a private, non-profit, charitable entity controlling a revolving trust fund. It will be supported by both the public and private sector through donations, bequests, fundraisers and volunteer involvement. Donations and bequests can be of money, land, or interest in land. Apart from direct land donations funds will accumulate in the trust towards the purchase of "significant" parcels of land as they become available.

The decision as to what lands are targeted by the trust will be determined through a formal process depending on the legal framework. The decisions will have to be made on a case-by-case basis as to whether each parcel will have protective covenants placed on it and be leased or resold, or be administered by an existing larger conservancy group. Because of the high real estate values on the south Island it may from time to time be appropriate to join forces with these established organizations, as well as with levels of government and other agencies or corporations.

Go Birding in Arizona for H.A.T.!!!!!!

Marilyn Lambert is organizing a birding tour to Arizona in late April, 1996 with all profit to be donated to the Habitat Acquisition Fund. Marilyn has had lots of experience with tours and is well versed in the secret nooks and crannies frequented by Arizona birds. David Stirling, one of Victorias best tour guides will be leading this one. Lifers and great memories all in one. Call Marilyn at 477-5922 for more information or to register. Hats off(sorry) to Marilyn for designing this fundraiser. More information will be presented at Birders Nights and in the Victoria Naturalist as the trip comes together. Once again, numbers will be limited so please act soon.

On the bright side, trusts are not legally bound to offer "fair market value" and can operate with fewer constraints than government. According to Calvin Sandborn, whose publication on protective areas strategies will soon be published, landowners often are more willing to negotiate with a community-based group whose goals are philanthropic and whose directors are volunteers. Another use being considered for trust fund money would involve purchasing conservation covenants on parcels of privately-owned land rather than actually buying the land – a far more affordable route in many situations.

The advantages of land trust funds have been amply documented elsewhere and we are accumulating quite a research file on the subject. It's wonderful how many people in Victoria seem to have had the same idea within the past year or two and have already offered to help with H.A.T. There is a long history of successful land trusts elsewhere in the world, notably in Great Britain and the U.S. Perhaps we Canadians, cautious at the best of times, were slower to organize along these lines because of our misguided notion of endless national wilderness and resources and safely-pocketed population patterns. But particularly since the Nature Trust was established in this province in 1971 there has been a gradual rise in the number

and scope of land trust bodies. The recent surge in this movement is shown by the activity and effectiveness of the Nature Conservancy, the Pender Island Conservancy Association with its tremendous efforts that resulted in the preservation of Medicine Beach, the Friends of Jedediah, the Islands Trust, the Galiano Conservancy Association, several other Gulf Island conservancy groups and up-Island trusts. And no one will forget the landmark acquisition of the Commonwealth Nature Legacy Park, a triumph of cooperation over cynicism if there ever was one.

Every trust fund seems to operate a little differently, and no doubt H.A.T. will reflect our own local ways and needs. The hope is that funds raised will occasionally be matched by government, corporations, and/or larger conservancy organizations. Each trust fund expenditure will likely be unique and tailor-made to the situation. We aim to protect parcels from the size of a large couch to a few square kilometres, provided certain criteria of availability, suitability, and afford ability are present. Of course the efforts won't always bring tangible success. But sometimes it will come together, and gradually the record of habitat protection will grow. Partnerships with other organizations (e.g. The Nature Conservancy, The Nature Trust, or local government) will be a necessary and important component for the continued protection and management of lands secured with H.A.T. funds. We must recognize the limitation that the VNHS does not have the expertise or resources necessary for the long-term management of lands.

Come to Musical H.A.T.!

Set aside Saturday evening, February 24th, 1996 to attend the first fundraiser at Prospect Lake Community Hall. You might be surprised at the all-star line-up of otherwise quiet and respectable naturalist-types who will be putting on their musical hats and going on stage that night. We have a disproportionate number of musically talented types in V.N.H.S. and Friends, and quite a few bright stars will shine that night. Prospect Lake Community Hall is on Spartan Road off West Saanich Road. Were planning a coffee house atmosphere. Snacks, beer, and wine will also be on hand (in moderation). Dave Fraser is planning all sorts of raffles and door prizes and other ways to channel your money into the H.A.T. coffers, so bring lots. Admission numbers have to be limited, and tickets will become available in the New Year. Further information will be available at V.N.H.S. meetings and in free newspaper notices. Its going to be an evening full of laughter, music and fun for a great cause.

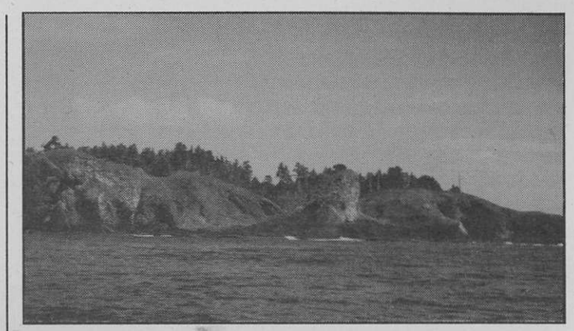
For the moment donations and revenue from fundraising will be placed in a specially earmarked savings account for the H.A.T. All donations will go through VNHS in this form, with cheques made out to the Society, "In trust for the Habitat Acquisition Trust".

Donations may be dropped off to Bruce Whittington or any staff member at the Field Naturalist store on the corner of Blanshard and View. The H.A.T. committee would like to thank all those individuals and organizations who have been so helpful with providing research material, experience and advice. It's great to know you're all there to lean on.

Jan Garnett is a Victoria area Realtor, gardener, birdwatcher and a V.N.H.S. member since 1988.

St. Lazaria Island – National Wildlife Refuge, Sitka, Alaska

By Dale Geils



St. Lazaria Island, Alaska

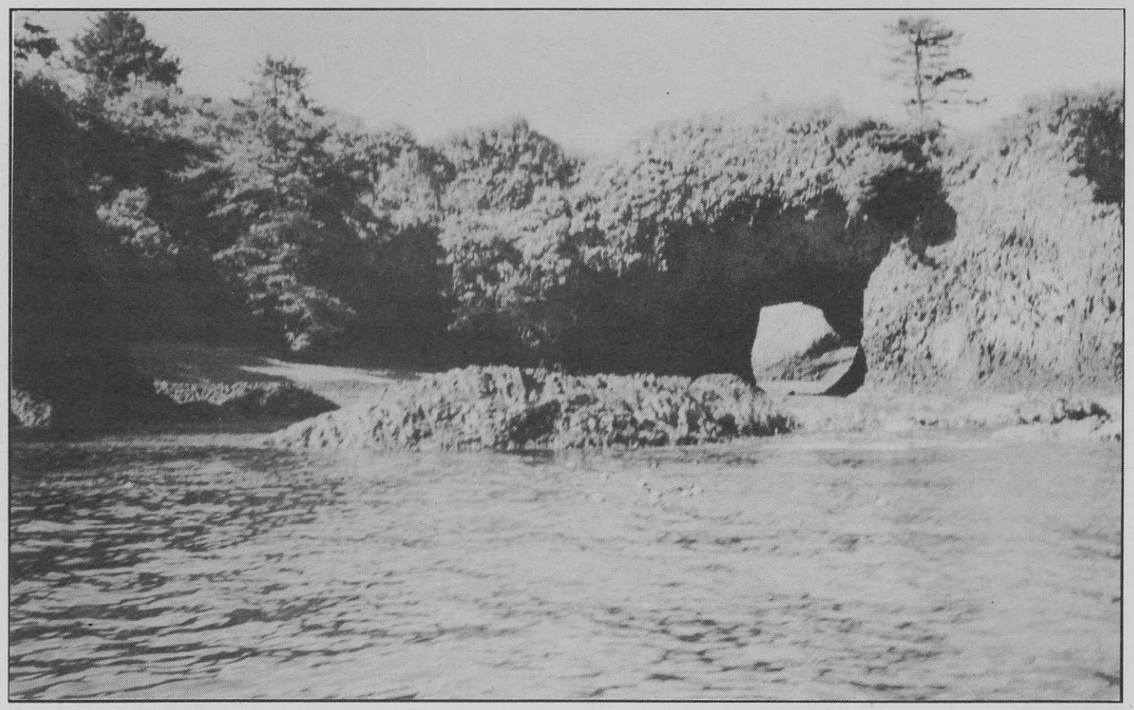
My interest in visiting St. Lazaria Island was first aroused when I saw a documentary by David Attenborough called "Punk Puffins and Hard Rock" that featured the birds on the island.

St. Lazaria, located at the mouth of Sitka Sound, has many interesting geological rock formations. The island's caves, crevasses, faults and sheer volcanic cliffs are ideal habitat for sea birds which come there in the thousands to nest and roost. There is even a sub-terranean seaway that leads into a small lake in the centre.

St. Lazaria lies in a temperate rain forest zone and much of the island grows Sitka Spruce. The flat, grassy areas on top are honey-combed with nests and the bushes and thick undergrowth provide excellent cover for the bird population.

It was a perfect day on August 9, 1995 when we set off from the marina at Sitka early one morning in a 25-foot boat owned and operated by Walt. He is an experienced birder and is also conversant with the fascinating history of south-east Alaska – a most interesting person.

My main reason for going on this outing was to see some Puffins and I was not to be disappointed! On the way to the island we saw many rafts of birds and Walt would slow the boat right down and edge closer so we could get a good look at Pigeon Guillemots, White-winged Scoter, Rhinoceros Auklets, Marbled Murrelets, Tufted Puffins and many more species of birds on the water. The Puffins were a joy to watch, bobbing happily in the water, not in the least perturbed by the nearness of humans. At one point we were in the middle of dozens of these colourful birds. Closer to St. Lazaria we soon spotted Pacific Loons and Red-throated Loons, then Black Oystercatchers in the tide pools by the rocky shore. The Pelagic and Brandts Cormorants were sighted on the rock faces. Then a



St. Lazaria Island, Alaska

Black-legged Kittiwake flew in. These birds nest on cliff edges.

Walt pointed out a "landing strip" at the top of a cliff, where the storm petrels, who only fly in at sunset and leave again before dawn, had made a definite trail entrance which led into the thick underbrush. You could see clearly where all the grasses had been worn away by the constant landing and the bare earth was worn smooth where the birds came in to this passageway.

The Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel and the Leach's Storm-Petrel both dig tunnels for nest holes and often use the same one year after year. An evening sunset cruise from Sitka to watch the petrels return from the sea is offered by some wildlife boat charters.

We continued making our way slowly around the island staying fairly close to shore. We enjoyed watching the antics of the Red-necked Phalaropes as they twirled and spun with ease in the shallow rocky areas. These were juveniles and were snapping and feasting on insects on the water surface.

St. Lazaria has huge cavernous areas which face the open Pacific. We saw cormorants flying into one large cave and disappear into the darkness. The steep sides were covered with guano, indicating many birds were using these caves for roosting and nesting.

Another cave was "staked out" by Common Murre that lined the sheer rock sides, standing erect and using the tiniest shelves and cracks in the rock to stand upon.

Many of the sea birds such as Pigeon Guillemots prefer narrow, elongated cracks in the rock faces for nest building, and we noticed several of these.

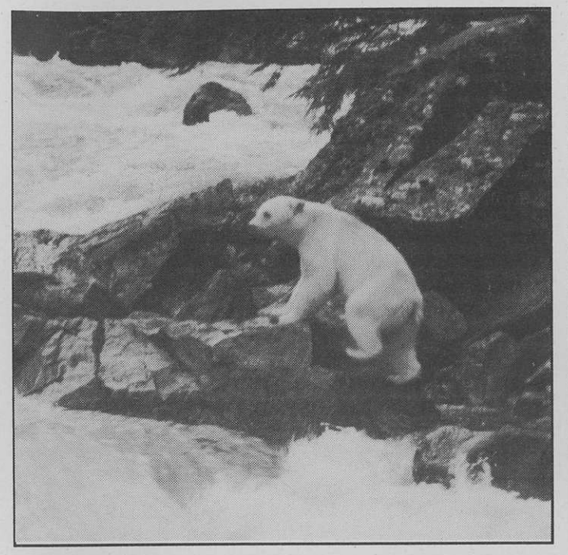
At one end of the island we saw the dusky brown female Harlequin Ducks which seem to like the rough waters in the shallows and were diving and feeding on small crabs, limpets, chitons and other marine life.

Continuing on, we came to a grassy high cliff area where hundreds of Tufted Puffins had their nests. These were burrows in the soil but also some crevices in rocky places were used. They were so interesting to watch. By using their bills to show affection, the males and females also were on the alert to guard their territory and could become quiet aggressive if another puffin happened to show an interest in what they were doing, and came too close.

On the rock cliffs, the Glaucous-winged Gulls were constantly on the move, flying out to sea to search for food for their young. The nests were so crowded that there was hardly room to fit them all in the space available.

Well, we were all reluctant to turn and head for home. Walt said it had been one of those rare, perfect days that do not happen often in that part of the world. On the way back, we saw again many Marbled Murrelets and he recounted a tale of the discovery of the nesting habitats of this remarkable bird. The story goes that when a logger felled a large tree in an old growth forest about fifteen years ago, a nest happened to fall on his head. Fortunately, the eggs were unharmed and he took them in to be identified. They were found to be the nest and eggs of the Marbled Murrelet which likes to build on the thick moss of the old growth coniferous forest.

By this time we had been out for four hours, so we headed for Sitka Harbour, the memories of all the birds we had been able to observe still sharp in our mind. The experience of seeing the wonderful island of St. Lazaria will last forever.



Spirit Bear.

Beware the Yellow Slug!

By Constance Hawley

A carnivorous slug! And it eats earthworms! What a terrible thought! That was my reaction to Rob Cannings' description of the creature I took to the Royal B.C. Museum for identification.

When I found it under a pile of leaf mulch at the back of my garden, it looked like a yellow candy. A closer look showed it to be alive – a dry smooth body, about 4 cm (1.5 in.) long with some ridging across the back, and pale lemon yellow in colour. Rob Cannings identified it as *Testacella haleotidea*, an introduced species of slug. This slug became the first specimen of its kind in the Museum collection. As the leaf mulch, under which the slug was found, came from the Victoria City Parks' compost pile, I decided the slug must have come from other than my garden.

This Fall when I was dividing a perennial in the front garden, I noticed a yellowish form in the soil. Another *Testacella*! Specimen #2 in the museum collection. Then I began to wonder whether my garden would become the source of an exploding population. Rob volunteered to look for information. A quick search turned up only one useful reference – Eugene Kozloff's *Plants and Animals of the Pacific Northwest.* Kozloff describes *Testacella* as an oddity, "the only introduced slug which appears *not* to be a vegetarian". He notes that "... on the back of the posterior is a little external shell whose shape slightly resembles that of an abalone (hence the specific name that alludes to *Haliotis*, the genus of abalone). The length of the slug may reach five cm (two in)."

According to Kozloff, the colour is "... either greyish brown or pale yellow, although perhaps other colours may be found in our region. The teeth on the radula--the ribbon like structure that most slugs use for rasping away plant material – are barbed and used for impaling earthworms, which are swallowed whole".

As all local garden earthworms are also introductions to North America, the slugs may have arrived in the same way over the years – in soil with imported plants or soil used as ballast in ships. There is little information indicating when they first appeared in this area or how common they are. Although there seems to be no impact on the earthworm population at this time, the introduction of any such destructive species is a concern.

In Great Britain, the introduction of another earthworm-eating species is causing great concern, according to an article in *The Garden,* a publication of the Royal Horticultural Society. The New Zealand flatworm *Artioposthia triangulata*, was first identified in a garden in Northern Ireland in 1963. Since then it has spread rapidly, probably through the movement of containerized plants, throughout Northern Ireland and Scotland. In Scotland, all the major city botanic gardens are affected, as are 24% of the nurseries and garden centres and many domestic gardens. The article states that "... in the long term earthworms in agricultural land in Wales, Ireland, the Pennines and Lake District of England, and western and northern Scotland, look to be at risk, together with any gardens in the U.K. that are irrigated and provide shelter for plants". There is evidence that earthworms are being reduced to below detectable levels in some areas. There are no known controls.

The moral of the story is that it is important to abide by Agricultural Canada's regulations regarding the importation of plant products. Don't be tempted to smuggle in that old rose from Gramma's garden – you may be importing dangerous guests!

References

Cannings, Rob. Biologist, Royal B.C. Museum, Personal Communications.

Kozloff, E.N. 1991. *Plants and animals of the Pacific Northwest.* University of Washington Press, Seattle. 264 pp.

Boag, B. 1995. *Menace of the Flatworm*. The Garden 120: 638-639

Notice to Members

The Board of Directors is proposing the following change to a bylaw for approval at the Annual General Meeting to be held March 12, 1996, commencing at 7:30 pm in Begbie 159, at the University of Victoria:

Bylaw Change

In Section 1.04 change b) **Non-payment of Dues** from:

A member ceases to be in good standing and membership ceases if dues are not paid within three months of the beginning of the fiscal year (ie., January 1st).

Change to:

Annual dues for new members joining and paying dues after April 1, 1996 shall be due and payable on the last day of the anniversary month of joining the Society. Members who joined prior to April 1, 1996 shall continue to have their membership renewable on January 1st of each year. Members shall cease to be in good standing if dues are unpaid at the renewal date but shall be reinstated without penalty upon receipt of dues within two months of the annual due date. Membership shall expire if dues remain unpaid after the two month period of grace.

Rationale

The board of directors wish to stress that this proposed change will NOT affect existing members but instead it will enhance society operations with a number of key benefits. More importantly, the current membership system created an inequity for new members joining after April (e.g., a new member joining in May or June does not get the benefit of a full year of membership). In addition, by having all the memberships fall due at the same time, the Membership Director has the difficult task of compiling the details for our membership over a very short period. In turn, this would eventually spread cashflow over the year assisting our treasurers bookkeeping duties. Finally, the date of expiry for each member could be printed on the address label so that one may check on membership status at any time.

If necessary, time for questions and further comments regarding this bylaw change will be made during the AGM in March.

David Allinson, President.

Welcome to New Members

October 3
Jerry Nelson,
of Linden Avenue.

October 6
Lynda Pope,
of Saanichton:
is interested in botany and birds.

October 23
Wm. A. Mackie,
of Parry Cross Road:
is a bird watcher.

October 23
Ethel Taylor,
of Bowker Avenue:
enjoys plants, gardening, and walking.

October 23
Gail and Jim Bodkin,
of Stanley Avenue:
are interested in birds.

October 23
Alan Thurston,
of Sooke:
interests include photography, botany, and birds.

October 23
Margaret Smart,
of Foul Bay Road.

October 23
June Pretzer,
of Victoria:
is interested in birds, medicinal native plants
and aboriginal use of them.

November 1
Barb McCall,
of Admirals Road:
likes birds and her nephews and is a Swan Lake volunteer

November 2
Margaret Beck,
of Metchosin Road:
enjoys wading birds.

November 2
David Ingram,
of Foul Bay Road:
counts intertidal studies, wetland conservation,
and birds among his interests.

November 7
Doug Currie,
of Brentwood Bay:
is interested in birding and natural history.

November 7
Laura Humphries,
of Selwyn Road:
enjoys birds, betony, insects and different lands.

November 7
Mark Faker,
of Sidney.

November 7
Philip and Mey Critchlow,
of Excelsior Road:
are birders and animal watchers.

November 22
Joyce Anderson,
of Valewood Trail:
interests include birds, native plants,
marine life, and wildlife.

November 22
Isabel Barker,
of Brentwood Bay:
is a birder.

November 22
David Gravelle,
of Haultain Street:
is interested in ornithology and
entomology (butterflies).

November 22
Frank and Arden Moretti,
of Eastdowne Road:
study birds.

November 22
John and Maureen Quested,
of Stanehill Place.

November 22
Irama Vanderwerf,
of Cook Street:
enjoys birds and marine life.

November 24
Derek and Mary Chu,
of Rattenbury Place:
are interested in bird watching
and marine biology.

November 24
Eileen Vanderflier-Keller,
of Arbutus Road:
interests include birding and conservation.

Sea Anemones

By Gordon Green

Carnivorous and always hungry, sea anemones are not plants as some people think but silent, slow motion predators, devouring any small animal careless enough to stray within reach of their deadly tentacles. Equipped with tiny poisonous harpoons, and digestive enzymes so strong they can digest the flesh of a small animal in 15 minutes, sea anemones belie their harmless appearance.

Sea anemones are animals belonging to the phylum Cnidaria, which includes the jellyfish, corals and sea pens. They live in all oceans from the shore to a depth of 10,000 metres and range in size from one centimetre to almost two metres in diameter. They attach themselves to rocks, wharves and other hard surfaces, or construct burrows in mud and sand.

Sea anemones have a flat upper surface, with a central mouth surrounded by tentacles, a tubular body and a flat base that attaches the animal to the substrate.

The tentacles are used for capturing prey and defending against predators. Each tentacle is covered with thousands of tiny stinging capsules called nematocysts. These capsules each contain a tiny coiled thread with a barb on the end. The hollow threads carry a minute amount of poison capable of paralysing or killing small animals. When a small fish, shrimp or crab comes into contact with the tentacles, hundreds of the capsules burst open and fire their barbed threads like harpoons, which pierce the skin of the animal and inject their poison.

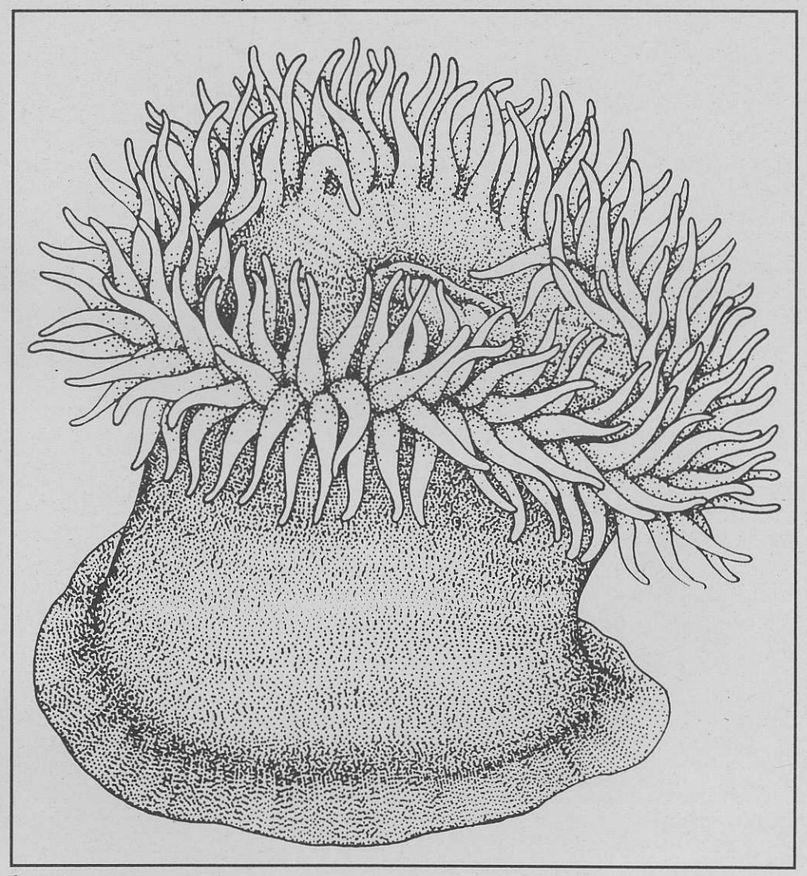
The thread remains attached to the tentacle so, like a harpooned whale, the victim is held by its captor. The anemone moves all the nearby tentacles into position to sting and hold its prey until it is subdued by the poison. The prey is then moved to the mouth and swallowed whole. Any nondigestible parts such as bones or shell are later spit out through the mouth. Although some tropical species can inflict painful stings, none of British Columbia's anemones are poisonous to humans.

Sea anemones have no visible sense organs but they can distinguish between edible and inedible items. A piece of paper dropped onto the tentacles of a sea anemone will be grasped but then discarded. If the paper is first soaked in clam juice, however, the anemone grasps and then eats the paper because it tastes like food.

The stinging cells can also be used for defence: a mouthful of poisonous barbs is unappetizing to most animals. The sea slug *Aeolidia* is one animal that enjoys a good feed of sea anemone, sometimes eating 50 to 100 per cent of its own body weight at one sitting. Attacks must be carried out carefully, as Aeolidia is not immune to the anemone's poison and a large anemone can seriously injure or kill the sea slug. The digestive tract of *Aeolidia* is lined with a protective coating to prevent injury from any unexploded nematocysts it consumes.

Sea anemones also use their poisonous stings against their own kind, usually while competing for territory. Some species even possess special club-like structures packed with potent stinging capsules with which to battle other anemones. These territorial fights often result in serious injury and even death to one or both anemones.

Many sea anemones have the ability to clone themselves—to reproduce by splitting in two (a useful trait when you are stuck to a rock with no members of the opposite sex nearby). Some species break off a small part of their base, which then grows into an adult anemone. Others seem to crawl in two directions at once slowly tearing themselves in half lengthwise (don't try this at home kids!). Both methods result in two genetically identical animals where once there was one.



Sea Anenome.

A small intertidal anemone known as *Anthopleura elegantissima* is a master of cloning. An individual will clone itself many times, creating large aggregations of genetically identical anemones. As the colony expands, it may run into another colony of different genetic makeup.

When one colony encroaches on the territory of another, the anemones on the periphery engage in warfare, using bulbous "clubs" full of nematocysts to sting the enemy.

The anemones strike each other with their weapons until one draws away or dies. Considerable injury may be inflicted on members of both clones and eventually a narrow band of bare rock is established between the colonies. Encroachment by either colony in this no-anemone's-land results in further battles.

Many species of sea anemones inhabit rocky shores, especially where there are tide pools in which they can remain submerged when the tide goes out. Anemones attached to rocks left high and dry at low tide will usually be in crevices or on the underside of rocks where it stays cold and wet. Anemones out of water generally have their tentacles retracted into their bodies to prevent drying and may appear to be little more than wet, squishy lumps.

Sea anemones are among the most colourful marine animals in British Columbia, occurring in many shades of red, green, white, orange and pink. When they are seen in large colourful clusters, it is easy to understand why people sometimes mistake them for flowers.

Gordon Green is Curator of Invertebrates at the Royal B.C. Museum.

The Last Endemic

By Keith Taylor

This is a story of a one week trip during the first week of April 1994 to observe the last North American endemic still missing from my lifelist and to anoint a five year plan to fulfil a childhood dream, recording all the regularly occurring species seen annually north of the Mexican border. With an A.B.A. list of 710-plus, I still needed ten or so endemics but I was also anxious to clean-up those species that inhabit areas of the continent isolated from the hot spots of the USA, where vagrants and accidentals regularly occur (i.e., Arizona, California, Texas and Florida). On this trip I was to see all of the species found in the centre of the continent leaving only two isolated regions, Big Bend (Colima Warbler: seen 1995) and the North Atlantic pelagics.

Descending, the scar of Las Vegas spoilt the spectacular views from the plane's window of the vast desert extending to infinity. Plans had changed somewhat since booking the least expensive flight to the southwest six weeks previous. At that time I planned to drive from Vegas to Death Valley, the only site in the A.B.A. area where Ruddy Ground-Dove could be found year round and a bird I still needed on my A.B.A. list; to chase any vagrants in the southwest; and finally to tick what was then my last North American endemic, Lesser Prairie-Chicken, in southeastern Colorado. Since making my plans a Ruddy Ground-Dove and a Rufous-capped Warbler had appeared in Arizona and the rosy-finches had been re-split into three separate species once again. As I still needed Brown-capped Rosy-Finch, I would drive a 3,000 mile great circular route in six days from Vegas to Arizona, through New Mexico to northern Colorado, then back through Utah to Vegas.

A compact was reserved in advance with *Almo Car Rental*. The company usually leases out the cheaper cars quickly and, as is often the case, the customer hiring a compact must receive a mid-size at the same price. This has occurred to me most of the time; what a surprise when a three-cylinder compact pulled up! I immediately became panic-stricken. Would this car survive a 3,000 mile trip at the usual 80 mile-an-hour plus highway speeds I drive?

Leaving Vegas at 3:30 pm., I cautiously held to the 65 mile-an-hour speed limit. The car performed beautifully and I soon crept up to 75 mph and held there until reaching the Highway 289 turn-off north of Nogales on the Mexican/Arizona border. The clock on the dash read 3:00 a.m. when the ignition switch was turned off under a sign reading *Sycamore Canyon*. I struggled into the back seat, and exhausted, immediately fell asleep in spite of the cramped quarters.

The directions to the Rufous-capped Warbler on NARBA (the North American Rare Bird Alert) instructed birders to walk for three hours into the canyon looking for a obelisk placed at a position where the canyon changed direction from south to west. As I wished to arrive at the site just after dawn, I wore just a light shirt so the chilly night air would awake me. One hour later, dressed in a light sweatshirt and backpack containing four bottles of *Koala* soft drinks, a scope and tape recorder, I trekked into the night with the light of the full moon towards the Mexican border.

Despite birding Arizona twenty-plus times I had never been into Sycamore Canyon. I was totally unprepared when the trail into the canyon soon evaporated. The sands of the dry riverbed made excellent walking and the narrow, steep walls of the canyon silhouetted against the silvery sky were easy to follow. The soft sand recorded what I perceived to be the many tracks of birders before me; in places the flat riverbed was barricaded by a rampart of great boulders that, in times of rain, would be small waterfalls. Finding a passage through these was a difficult task in the dark.

The mellow *hoos* of several Mountain Pygmy-Owls were heard at the first hint of dawn. One hour later I was becoming apprehensive! Had I passed the site since the canyon had made several changes in direction from south to west? Then a small piece of red flagging tape caught my eye. Was the tape placed here to signal birders? I looked around for the obelisk. Sure enough, there on the riverbed was the inconspicuous obelisk. I had passed right by it! Relieved, I listened for the warbler's song for a few minutes and hearing nothing sought the assurance that only a tape recorder can bring.

I played the song a couple of times without any response, I then walked further into the canyon and tried again. Suddenly, from high up on the canyon wall: *chip, chirp, chipa-chupity chipity cha-cheweet.* The bright, jerky, rambling medley beginning with a couple of chirping notes and ending with a clear, whistled, note was the signal of the presence of my first A.B.A. Rufous-capped Warbler. Scrambling up the steep hillside, I soon had memorable views of this exquisite vagrant.

Hiking back out of the aesthetic canyon the sun sparkled and danced through the leaves above the huge white-trunked Sycamores after which the canyon is named. The calls of Elegant Trogons were noted several times, amplified as they echoed off the canyon walls. One male trogon was seen as well as a Mountain Pygmy-Owl being mobbed by a flock of passerines. I ticked this in case of a future split from Northern Pygmy-Owl. Cassin's Kingbird, Dusky-capped Flycatcher, Black Phoebe, Canyon Wren, Rock Wren, Painted Redstart, Black-headed Grosbreak and Black-throated Sparrow were among the common species seen returning to the trailhead. Moving at a fast pace under the climbing sun I soon guzzled the bottles of *Koala*. Ah, sun and warmth! I blessed Arizona – the land I love, my true home.

Pulling under the glaring-white towers of the striking San Xavier Mission around noon I immediately visited the Father, who is a birder, to ask for updates on the female Ruddy Ground-Dove – yes, the bird was still coming to the feeder. From the comfort of the car I watched the feeder and soon noted many Inca Doves and Bendire's Thrashers. Curve-bills are the common thrasher at the mission through the year, with Bendire's only occurring in early spring when a pair nest and regularly visit the feeder. At least one pair of Crissal Thrasher (with their rusty-buff undertail coverts; not as red as illustrated in the National Geographic's *Birds of North America* are easily found in the thick wash mesquite throughout the year. The sparse desert scrub bordering the washes that surround the mission are productive for locating many of the common species of this habitat such as Gambel's Quail, White-winged Dove, Common Ground-Dove, Say's Phoebe, Verdin, Cactus Wren, Northern Cardinal, Pyrrhuloxia, House Finch and Canyon Towhee.

After an unknown length of time I awoke feeling the heat generated by the greenhouse effect inside the car; the lack of sleep the night before had caught up with me. Breakfast! Coffee! The San Xavier Mission rests on an Indian Reservation where the Papagos operate a small tourist centre and restaurant. Soon I was breaking my fast with copious quantities of coffee and a great plate of huevos rancheros. For three hours I continued to watch the feeder breaking the vigilance several times to circle the mission but remained unsuccessful in finding the dove. Immediately behind my rental car, there was this *one* patch of thorny scrub which I had ignored. Walking within two feet of the rear bumper I flushed the square-tailed quarry. I had now ticked all the birds I needed in Arizona.

Driving toward the Arizona/New Mexico border, singing to Willy Nelson's "On the Road Again," I was aware of how alive I felt. This was really living! This was *real* birding! I surrendered to the first nod at the wheel and soon exited the freeway at the next motel for the second night of the trip. The entire third day was spent driving across New Mexico with brief meal breaks and late in the day I pulled into a motel at the hamlet of Springfield, in southeastern Colorado. The office was filled with enough cigarette smoke to asphyxiate an elephant but the friendly owner was kind enough to lend an alarm clock for my early arousal the next day.

Several minutes passed before the morning light became bright enough to actually see the distinguishing field-marks as the males inflated their dull orange-red neck sacs and erected their dark neck tufts a few feet from the car. This was a lifer!

A thin crimson ribbon etched the rim of the eastern skyline as the rental car inched along the strattling ruts with only the beams of the headlights cutting the pitch-dark. One mile from the main dirt road outside Campo the car halted on the shortgrass prairie under the sign designating *Lesser Prairie-Chicken lek*. As I cranked open the window the cold dawn air rushed in along with the humorous, low *oo-loo-woo* courtship calls of the displaying chickens. Several minutes passed before the morning light became bright enough to actually see the distinguishing field-marks as the males inflated their dull orange-red neck sacs and erected their dark neck tufts a few feet from the car. This was a lifer!

A call was placed in Colorado Springs that afternoon to chat to Cindy Lippincott, then Sales Manager of ABA Sales one of the major suppliers of my books within the USA. The topic of rosy-finches was obviously brought to light and I was advised to contact Harold Holt, author of *A Birders Guide to Colorado*, to find out if the finches were still present. Arriving in Denver later that day Harold gave me encouragement, assisting with directions and the phone numbers of the feeder owners who later granted permission to watch their feeders and assurance that all three species of rosy-finch were still present.

That night was spent at a rustic, log cabin-style motel in Idaho Springs, a small town high in the mountains just west of Denver. Clouds drifted over the stars and silvery-flakes began to drift down from the heavens. Anxious, I awoke before dawn and began the relatively short drive, a safeguard against getting stuck in the ever deepening snow. The accumulation became deeper and deeper as I progressed uphill towards the home. When I managed to reach the driveway, the snow blanketed the road to a depth of one-foot. I pointed the car downhill to use gravity for an easy escape. Shivering with the polar temperatures of this winter wonderland, I waited patiently. Within a half-hour the incandescent daylight brought the first rosy-finches. The last endemic! Dozens of Brown-capped Rosy-Finches completed the family.

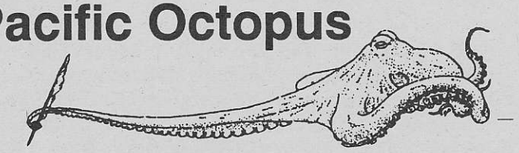
Longing for sunshine and sultry temperatures I immediately left Colorado and headed towards Utah along Highway 70. Driving was treacherous as snowploughs continued to clear the freeway, flinging salt and sand across the windscreen. As the mountain passes became memory, the roadway became a deserted, horizontal, seemingly endless gray ribbon. Pushing the car over 80 mph it continued to perform well. Bright sunshine and fantastic, rose-tinted sandstone formations came into view. It was mid-morning so I pulled up to an appealing restaurant next to the colourful cliffs and spires to celebrate my achievement with brunch, which consisted of a tasty Spanish omelette and a giant jug of coffee.

The canyon country in southwestern Utah is fantastic! As this was a sector of the state I had never seen, and with plenty of spare time before my reserved flight home, I decided to do some sightseeing and spent the next day visiting Zion and Bryce Canyon National Parks. Roads through the canyons are surrounded by a wonderland of flame-red pinnacles, balancing rocks and free-standing hexagonal columns hundreds of feet high, eroded into grotesque shapes. Zion in particular was a magic place where the road rolled over the smooth, unbroken multi-coloured sandstones of the canyon floor and up through a tunnel high above. Views were breathtaking!

Later that day I had completed the full circle and was back at Las Vegas. I spent the night at a motel outside the overcrowded city, in a small town named Pahrump. Placing a phone call home that night, my wife informed me that the Siberian Accentor had reappeared at the feeder near Salmon Arm in British Columbia.

I arrived the following morning at the airport with hopes of catching a flight home a day sooner than my reservation... success! Later that evening I arrived home and at 7:00 a.m. the next morning was working on a Sunshine Breakfast aboard a ferry sailing for Tsawwassen. At noon I drove up to the home outside Salmon Arm and was invited inside to watch for the accentor. Bits of suet fell onto the ground from the feeder above, as the Downy Woodpecker fed. Within 15 minutes the terrestrial Siberian Accentor appeared from the dense brush into clear view and began eating the scattered suet. No words could justify the excitement I felt! The first confirmed Canadian record and only the second record south of Alaska, where the accentor is still extremely rare. The shy, sparrow-like accentor was certainly a great ending to a fantastic trip!

Pacific Octopus



By Pamela Thuringer

Insects occupy almost every niche imaginable, from the ecosystems of the subarctic, to the tropical rainforests, to the hottest places of the Australian outback. Why then, have only a limited number of insects adapted to survive and become viable in the marine environment? A wide range of aquatic insects exist, why not marine? When I posed this question to a local entomologist, he said, upon some consideration, "This is a mystery". It seems both entomologists and marine biologists have for the most part overlooked this member of the ecosystem. Only a small part of the insect fauna inhabit the marine intertidal but their distribution is world wide.

An example of an insect adapting to the marine environment are those belonging to the family Chironomidae. Four species of Chironomids, commonly known as midges, spend a majority of their larval life cycle in the intertidal of the British Columbia coast. These insects inhabit both rocky and sandy shorelines from low to high intertidal. The larvae feed on diatoms and green algae such as *Ulva* and *Enteromorpha*, commonly found in the intertidal zone. These larvae are preyed upon by intertidal sculpins, salmon fry, marine mites and another intertidal insect, Rove Beetles. Once adults, the midges then become prey of swallows and martins.

This past summer, I had my first good look at a Chironomid captured in a sediment sample from the tidal mud banks of the Skeena River. More recently, while processing the sediment sample, I began to think about adaptations insects would need to undergo to live in a marine environment. Osmoregulation, the ability to live in a wide range of salinities, would be necessary. Respiration while submerged in the seawater would also be required; the utilization of dissolved oxygen in the marine environment verses the utilization of atmospheric oxygen in the terrestrial environment. Chironomid larvae have been shown to respire actively and osmoregulate in seawater at some temperatures. Respiration for the Rove Beetle, a marine insect mentioned above, is accomplished by utilizing trapped air in the sand substrate as a form of physical "gills" whilst submerged during tidal inundation. Air entrapment is also used as a method for respiration for beetles inhabiting rocky shores and is achieved by utilizing air pockets in a variety of crevices, including those below the basal plates of barnacles.

Since first considering writing about marine insects, I have been informed of a few more insects and their adaptations for saltwater existence. These include:

– an intertidal crane fly and the modification of part of the pupae structure into a form of gills;

– One of the above-mentioned chironomids, along with a number of other insects, and their existence in the natural salt springs on Saltspring Island, all of which are tolerant through adaptation to the high saline environments, and

– four intertidal chironomids which possess an increasing degree of adaptation to the marine environment, including: i) adaptations for anchoring to the substrate in the rather inhospitable intertidal zone; and ii) leg modifications to increase the success of mating on a hard substrate as opposed to mating in the air.

The intertidal is a hostile environment. When exposed, organisms must fight desiccation and predation from the terrestrial environment by birds and small mammals; when submerged, there is salt regulation and predation from fish. Insect adaptation to the intertidal zone is perhaps just a foothold into the marine environment. What's next – pelagic insects?

Marine Night Report

By Phil Lambert

Despite the draw of the Quebec Referendum vote, we were able to lure away about 15 people to our October 30th session. Gordon Green of the Royal BC Museum gave an excellent overview of the diversity of crustaceans in British Columbia, from the well-known Dungeness Crab to some tiny pin-head sized seed shrimps found in fresh water. It was well illustrated with colour slides and photos taken through a scanning electron microscope.

The evening of Friday, November 24th started as a "dark and stormy night" but our perseverance paid off. The storm abated and the stars came out as we gathered at Willows Beach to sample the shallow subtidal life with a seine net. About 30 enthusiasts with flashlights and abundant curiosity gathered to see what treasures we would drag ashore. Although not as prolific as in the summer, we did come up with some interesting species - herring, smelt, shiner perch, various sculpins, juvenile Dungeness crabs, kelp crabs, sand shrimp, coon-striped shrimp, a small pipefish, a fish called a Sturgeon Poacher and the highlight of the evening, a Spiny Lumpsucker. Many thanks to all who took part. Despite the rather ominous beginning it was one of our most well-attended field trips yet.

We finished off the month of November with an excellent presentation by graduate student, Sally Leys, who described the intriguing biology of boot sponges that she is studying for her Ph.D. thesis. She showed us a selection of sponges common to our coastal waters and also told us about a newly discovered carnivorous sponge which does not seem to fit the normal sponge mold.

The unusual cell structure of the boot sponge also challenges the definition of what a sponge is. Typical sponges have cells with a nucleus and a membrane around them but boot sponges appear to be one huge cell with many nuclei. In a petri dish she was able to show that individual cells join and combine their contents. So a metre-long sponge, that does not appear to have identifiable nerves, may send impulses via these giant cells. Her talk was illustrated with colour slides, underwater video and microscope video.

Stay tuned for more talks on marine subjects. In January we have a presentation on the biological oceanography of Saanich Inlet and in February a talk on those fascinating creatures, squids and octopuses. See the calendar for details.

In Case You Were Wondering

By Barbara Begg

Information on the first record of Grasshopper Sparrow for Vancouver Island was inadvertently omitted form the September/October, 1995, issue of the Victoria Naturalist (see Page 10).

On October 8, 1975, a Grasshopper Sparrow was reported by Jack Williams of Sidney and Ernest Carhart of Detroit, Michigan. It was found and photographed near Lochside Trail , south of Island View Road, Central Saanich, an area still producing rarities twenty years later. The bird was a by-product of a search for Skylarks, a similar scenario to the 1992 discovery. Of course, Mr. Williams was very excited about this unprecedented find but Mr. Carhart was far more thrilled by the Eurasian Skylarks (pers. comm.).

On October 26 this year, Keith Taylor found yet another Grasshopper Sparrow, for the third Vancouver Island record. This bird was skulking at Rithet's Bog, Saanich, and though difficult to view, was seen by a number of observers.

Urban Cooper's Hawk Study – Call for Volunteers

Volunteers are needed to assist with early morning surveys to locate Cooper's Hawk nests in urban Greater Victoria. This is the second year of a long term study on the breeding biology of Cooper's Hawks in an urban landscape. Nest surveys are conducted at dawn, generally require less than 1.5 hours time and usually do not interfere with normal work routines. Surveys will be conducted from early March through late April, 1995. All volunteers will be provided training to recognize the "sights and sounds" of an active nest site. Good naturalist skills and the ability to cheerfully arise predawn on wet, stormy, mornings are a definite asset. If you are interested in becoming involved or wish to learn more about this study please contact:

Andy Stewart,
Wildlife Branch
BC Environment
780 Blanshard
Victoria, B. C.
V8V 1X4
Phone: 387-9780
Fax: 356-9145
E-mail: astewart@fwhdept.env.gov.bc.ca

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. **Marine Night**: the last Monday of each month. Locations are given in the calender 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 9.

VNHS Natural History Presentation. Room 159, Begbie Building, University of Victoria at 7:30 p.m. Darren Copley and Jason Jones of Arenaria Research and Interpretation will present an entertaining and thought-provoking look at the changes which have occurred throughout the years in the role of naturalists and their relationship to the environment in *From Remington to Bushnell: The Evolution of a Naturalist*. Bring your coffee cup and a friend.

Saturday, January 13.

Birding Saanichton Bay. Join Hank Van der Pol (658-1924) and bird the hedgerows and waterfront at Saanichton Bay. Meet at the KOA Campground at 9:00 a.m. Rubber boots are always a good idea at this time of year.

Tuesday, January 16.

Botany Night. Swan Lake Nature House, 7:30 p.m. Del Meidinger, Forest Ecologist in Southeast Asia

Saturday, January 27.

Owling. Our popular series of trips to search for nocturnal predators returns. Breeding season comes early for these birds and they are quite active at this time of year. To minimize our impact, these trips are limited to 12 people each. To register and for more details on trip #1 call Darren Copley (479-6622). It is worth coming out at night just to hear Darren's Barred Owl call.

Monday, January 29, 1996

Marine Night. Dr. Lou Hobson of the U-Vic Biology Department will present **A Profile of Saanich Inlet**. A talk about the inner workings of the tides, currents and biological oceanography of this local fjord. Swan Lake Nature Centre, 7:30 pm.

Wednesday, January 31.

Birders' Night. Room 159, Begbie Building, University of Victoria, 7:30 p.m. . Wayne Campbell of the Ministry of the Environment will present a slide-illustrated talk on wildlife in B.C. —an annual review of status and conservation. This is an opportunity for everyone to participate and discuss the future of wildlife in the province. Everyone Welcome. C Bring a friend and your coffee cup.

FEBRUARY EVENTS

Tuesday, February 6.

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, February 13.

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 is **Michael Hobbis.** The title of his talk is *Kitlope and the Central Coast with Spirit Bear*. The price is $ 22.00 which includes all taxes and gratuities. For tickets and further information contact Freda Woodsworth (382-6693) or Beth Chatwin (592-5346).

Sunday, February 18.

Birding Blenkinsop Lake. Join Mike Carson (658-5029) for a pleasant mornings birding at this interesting area. Meet at the corner of Lohbrunner and Lochside at 10:00 a.m. Don't forget your rubber boots.

Tuesday, February 20.

Botany Night. Swan Lake Nature House, 7:30 p.m. Andy MacKinnon and Marving Eng—"Old Forests of B.C."

Saturday, February 24.

Bryophyting at Goldstream. A walk to look at Mosses, Liverworts and Lichens. Join Mike Ryan (727-2153) and learn more about these often overlooked, interesting plants. Meet in the Goldstream Parking Lot at the picnic area at 9:30 a.m.

Saturday, February 24.

Owling Trip #2. See January 27. David Allinson (380-8233) leads our walk this evening. Please call him for more details and to register.

Monday, February 26, 1996

Marine Night. Jim Cosgrove of the Royal BC Museum presents a talk with the intriguing title of *Skin deep beauty, group sex and motherly love*. An expose about the biology of squids and octopuses. Jim has been studying local cephalopods for many years. Swan Lake Nature Centre, 7:30 pm.

Wednesday, February 28.

Birders' Night. Room 159, Begbie Building, University of Victoria, 7:30 p.m. Derrick Marven of Duncan will present a slide-illustrated talk on birding at Pt. Pelee and southern Ontario Everyone Welcome. Program to be announced. Call Bryan Gates for more information at 598-7789 or the VHNS Events tape at 479-2054. Bring a friend and your coffee cup.

MARCH EVENTS

Tuesday, March 12

VNHS Annual General Meeting. Members are reminded that the Annual General Meeting takes place in Room 159, Begbie Building, University of Victoria at 7:30 p.m. On the agenda is a by-law change. See notice to members in this issue of the *Victoria Naturalist*.

BULLETIN BOARD

A Nature of Winter

Visit the Goldstream Park Nature Centre until January 21, 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. to explore some of the natural history of the park during the winter season. For further information you can contact the nature house at 478-9414.

Goldstream Park Bird Course

During the spring a number of courses are offered at the park. *Biology for Birders* includes both classroom (Monday evenings) and field (Sunday mornings) sessions during the period March 4 to April 27. *Birding for Beginners* has two sections: 1) Thursday Mornings, March 7 to April 25; and, 2) Saturday mornings from March 9 to April 27. Interested participants should visit the Nature Centre or contact the Park by fax at 478-9414.

Birding in Arizona

A few members have expressed an interest in a birding tour of Southeastern Arizona at the end of April, 1996. This is a good time of year to visit this special area as it is not too hot! Well over 100 species of birds can be seen here, including several Mexican species that just sneak over the border. If enough people are interested I will find a leader and organize a tour. See also display ad in this issue. For further details call Marilyn at 477-5922.

Bird Sightings Wanted

A bird inventory for Viaduct Flats and surrounding woods and fields is now being prepared for publication in the January/February issue. Would anyone with sightings of uncommon to accidental species in this area please contact Michael Carson with month and year of sighting. Phone 478-1535. Or mail to Ross-Durrance Road, Rural Route 5, Victoria, B.C. V8X 4M6.

VNHS Conservation Volunteers Wanted

Are you concerned about the future of Greater Victoria's natural heritage? Want to do something to help? The VNHS Parks and Conservation Committee would like to know about your concerns. We are also interested in members who would like to be involved with the VNHS Parks and Conservation Committee or to Volunteer time on specific projects. To voice your concerns or to volunteer your time (even a single hour is helpfull), please contact Jeff Stone at 370-2449.

Volunteer Needed

The Parks and Conservation Society has a small project for a willing volunteer. Someone is needed to gather information and fill out an application for a grant proposal for money to complete work on projects such as our inventory of Sensitive Areas. If this interests you, contact Tony Embleton at 595-6812.

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 - is an electronic botanical newsletter distributed on Internet by Adolf Ceska in about bi-weekly intervals. To subscribe to BEN send a 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.

For Sale

The 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 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 Tom Gillespie at 954A Queens Ave. Suite A, Victoria, B.C. V8T 1M6.

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 Victoria Natural History Society's Window Decals are for sale, contact Lyndis Davis at 744-5750.

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 with the following test line "information tweeters". This will give more details on the list and how to subscribe.

My Ladybird Afternoon

By Margaret Jeal

On a sunny fall afternoon, Oct. 14, 1995, I sat on my balcony surrounded by ladybirds—hundreds of them. They flew in - up the sides of the building, up the walls of the balcony, onto the awnings, onto the window panes, in the windows and out again, onto my arms and shirt as I ate lunch. I even had one strolling the rims of my eyeglasses as I stood at the kitchen sink. They were on everything except the many plants on my balcony! I tried to count the spots—17 I think.

I later heard that other people had similar hordes in their gardens and local entomologists explained that this was normal hibernating activity for these insects. An item I found in *Insect Life* by Arnett and Jacques caught my fancy--it read "...the beetle we call "Ladybug" (Coccinellidae) congregates during the winter months, most noticeably those in mountainous areas, high in mountain meadows. For some reason, probably to keep cool and not break dormancy before there are other insects for them to eat, they collect in large masses on vegetation in these mountains. They swarm in the fall, flying ten to fifteen miles or even more to reach these winter homes".

My apartment is on the 3rd floor of an apartment building half way up the west side of Mt. Tolmie. Were my ladybirds trying to reach the top of our "mountain" when they bumped into our building? If so they finally make it to the top?

The Victoria NATURALIST

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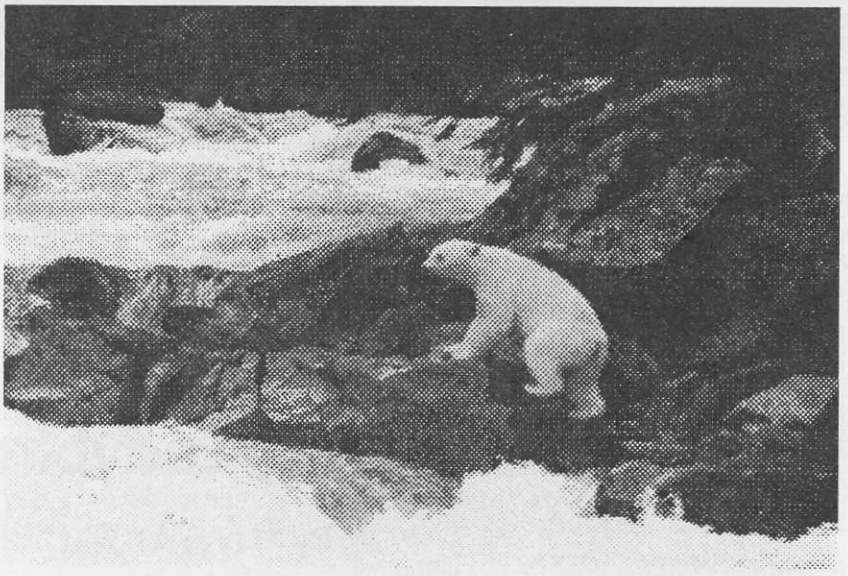
FEES ARE
DUE DEC. 31

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

Kitlope and the Central Coast with Spirit Bear



Join Michael Hobbis on the classic sailing vessel, the Duen, for a natural and cultural exploration of the Kitlope Valley and coastal B.C. including a look at the spirit (kermode) bear.

Annual Banquet

Tuesday February 13, 1996

See Events Calender for details