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OUR COVER

This issue's cover features one of the staging and feeding areas for migrating Brant along the coastal shores near Parksville and Qualicum Beach. The photo was taken by Rusty Joerin, Volunteer Co-Chair of the Brant Wildlife Festival 96. The festival is the sixth annual celebration of the arrival of the Brant. The three-day event between April 12 and 14, features art, photography and carving exhibitions, self-guiding nature hikes and the BIG DAY birding competition (see article on page 7). It is well worth a visit.

New look

Some of you may have noticed small changes to the look of *The Victoria Naturalist*. We have a new desktop publisher, Frances Hunter, who is now working with us at the magazine.

For the past six years Robert Allington has been the desktop publisher and he has been a significant contributor to the professional look that the *Naturalist* has achieved over these years. We will miss his expertise as an editor and publisher. Robert is currently very busy as the editor of *Business Logger*, *Business Farmer* and the *Travel and Adventure Guide of British Columbia*, as well as a contributor to other publications such as *The Westcoast Mariner*. We wish him the very best and extend our thanks for his work with the magazine.



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Whale, Dolphin and Porpoise Strandings in British Columbia in 1995

By Pamela M. Willis, Tamara J. Guenther and Ron L. Bates

Strandings of whales, dolphins, or porpoises, in which an animal beaches itself or washes ashore, can be very dramatic events. You may be familiar with "mass strandings", in which several or all members of a group become beached together, requiring tremendous efforts to return them to sea. You might then be surprised to learn that strandings are fairly common in British Columbia. For example, during 1995 we documented 10 such events in the Victoria area alone. Why do these events go largely unnoticed? Strandings in B.C. consist almost exclusively of single, dead animals (usually porpoise in the Victoria area). While these events may not elicit the same degree of excitement typical of strandings of live individuals, they are just as important, as they provide a window through which we can better understand the lives of these marine mammals.

The Stranded Whale and Dolphin Program of B.C. (a component of the Marine Mammal Research Group) was established in 1987 to monitor and respond to strandings and incidental catches (entanglements in fishing gear) of whales, dolphins, and porpoises. The Program compiles records of dead and live-stranded individuals, animals seen floating, and incidental catches (whether dead, released alive, or trailing gear). From these records we can monitor the number of cetacean (whales, dolphins, and porpoises) strandings and incidental catches, the types of cetaceans caught, and the

geographical and seasonal distribution of these events.

One of the most important aspects of the program is the examination of dead animals. Whenever possible, necropsies (autopsies) are performed on the animal. Although determining the cause of death is one of the goals of this procedure, it is very difficult to achieve. However, the information that can be obtained through these necropsies tells us much about how an animal lived its life, if not much about how it died. Marine mammals are poorly understood compared to most land mammals. By taking detailed measurements of animals, over time we can begin to understand aspects such as a species' average size, differences in size between males and females, and length at birth, just to name a few. Both the external and internal anatomy are examined thoroughly for indications of infection or abnormalities, as well as for parasites. Examining the anatomy of stranded animals allows us to determine the types of maladies afflicting marine mammals within British Columbia, and how they vary with time, location, age, sex, and other variables.

Analysis of reproductive organs provides insight into reproductive parameters such as age at sexual maturity and age at first reproduction. Identification of stomach contents indicate what a species eats and provides insight as to the lifestyle it might lead in its pursuit of prey. Tissue and teeth

Continued on page 6



False Killer Whale, Ucluelet Harbour. Photo: M. A. Hobson

Table 1. CETACEAN STRANDINGS AND INCIDENTAL CATCHES FROM 1995. (VI = VANCOUVER ISLAND)

DATE	SPECIES	LOCATION	COMMENTS
14 February 1995	Harbour Porpoise	Esquimalt Lagoon, VI	found dead, male, 117.9 cm
20 February 1995	unidentified large whale	1 mi W Cape Naden	found dead, not recovered
7 April 1995	Dall's Porpoise	Island View Beach, VI	found dead, male, 188.4 cm
9 April 1995	Dall's Porpoise	Race Rocks, VI	found dead, female, 141.4 cm
8 April 1995	Gray Whale	Winter Harbour, VI	found dead, not recovered
21 April 1995	Harbour Porpoise	Clover Point, VI	found dead, male, 117.8 cm
14 April 1995	Gray Whale	Jordan River, VI	found dead, not recovered
21 April 1995	Harbour Porpoise	Howe Sound	found dead, awaiting analysis
15 May 1995	Dall's Porpoise	Ten Mile Point, VI	found dead, male, 136.0 cm
18 May 1995	Harbour Porpoise	Clover Point, VI	found dead, female, 125.3 cm
29 April 1995	Dall's Porpoise	Constance Bank	found dead, not recovered
April/May 1995	Killer Whale	Langara I	found dead
30 May 1995	Harbour Porpoise	Fleming Beach, VI	found dead, female, 129.2 cm
26 June 1995	Dall's Porpoise	Trial Island	found dead, not recovered
04 July 1995	Humpback Whale	off Quatsino Sound	found dead, not recovered
10 July 1995	Gray Whale?	off Winter Harbour	found dead, not recovered
12 July 1995	Dall's Porpoise	Prince Rupert	net entangled, female, 162.8 cm
13 July 1995	Harbour Porpoise	Stories Beach, VI	found dead, female, 158.6 cm
21 July 1995	Harbour Porpoise	Trial Island	found dead, female, 152.1 cm
24 July 1995	Harbour Porpoise	N of Parksville, VI	found dead, female, 149.0 cm
30 July 1995	Pacific White-sided Dolphin	Boat Bay, W Cracroft I	found dead, female, 179.4 cm
31 July 1995	Harbour Porpoise	Crescent Bch, White Rck	found dead, not recovered
18 June 1995	Gray Whale	Boundary Bay	found dead, not recovered
25 July 1995	unidentified porpoise	Tsecowis Creek, VI	found dead, not recovered
June 1995	Gray Whale	Kitasu Bay	found dead, not recovered
08 July 1995	Killer Whale	Hippa I	found dead
17 August 1995	Harbour Porpoise	Ogden Point, VI	found dead, female, 90.1 cm
summer 1995	Harbour Porpoise	Queen Charlotte Strait	found dead, female, 91.0 cm
25 September 1995	Harbour Porpoise	Friendly Cove, Nootka I	found dead, female, ~100.4 cm
06 October 1995	Harbour Porpoise	Tofino, VI	found dead, female, 103.2 cm
20 October 1995	Harbour Porpoise	Shelter Pnt, VI	found dead, awaiting analysis
02 May 1995	unidentified large whale	100 mi W Port Renfrew	found dead, not recovered
mid July 1995	unidentified large whale	Brooks Peninsula	found dead, not recovered
mid July 1995	Harbour Porpoise	Brooks Peninsula	found dead, not recovered
end October 1995	Pacific White-sided Dolphin	N end Johnstone Strait	found dead, not recovered
12 December 1995	Killer Whale	Texada I	found dead, female
17 December 1995	Striped Dolphin	Wickaninnish Beach, VI	found dead, female, 205.4 cm
19 July 1995	unidentified small cetacean	Rose I	found dead, not recovered
06 August 1995	Humpback Whale	2 mi W Engelfield Bay	found dead, not recovered
12 August 1995	Humpback Whale	NE end Langara I	found dead, not recovered
spring/summer 1995	Pacific White-sided Dolphin	Scott Islands	found dead
spring/summer 1995	unidentified porpoise	Scott Islands	found dead

samples are collected, from which can be extracted a variety of data, including age, pollutant levels and genetic information. Evidence of fisheries entanglement can also be recovered by examining the fresh carcass for net marks and sub-dermal bruising, particularly around the jaw, dorsal fin, flippers, and tail. The value and uses of a dead cetacean, it seems, are endless.

For 1995, we have documented 42 strandings and incidental catches of cetaceans within B.C. (Table 1.) Species positively identified included Harbour Porpoise (*Phocoena phocoena*) (15), Dall's Porpoise (*Phocoenoides dalli*) (6), Gray Whale (*Eschrichtius robustus*) (4), Killer Whale (*Orcinus orca*) (3), Humpback Whale (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) (3), Pacific White-sided Dolphin (*Lagenorhynchus obliquidens*) (3) and Striped Dolphin (*Stenella coeruleoalba*) (1). The Striped Dolphin is an uncommon visitor to B.C. waters, having only been recorded 11 times previously. One Dall's Porpoise, recovered near Prince Rupert, was incidentally entangled in fishing gear.

The Stranded Whale and Dolphin Program and its parent organization, the Marine Mammal Research Group, are run entirely by volunteers, and depend highly on information provided by members of the public interested in contributing to local marine mammal research. Reports of whales, dolphins, and porpoises, either live or dead, are sought, including a description of the animal(s), number, date, time, location, and contact information.

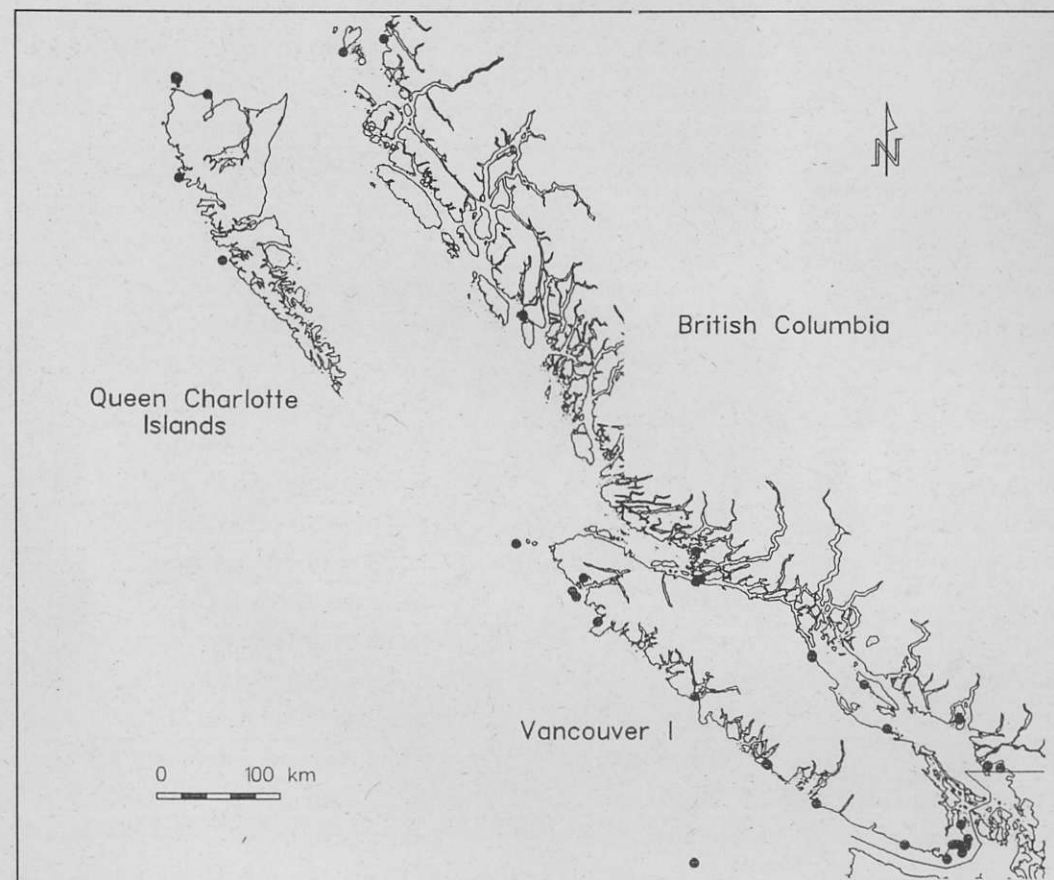
The type and quality of information that can be gathered from a stranded whale or dolphin is highly dependent upon



Sperm Whale, Nootka Island. Photo: Robin W. Baird

how fresh it is upon examination, so the earlier we hear about dead animals, the better. However, we do want to know about all stranded or dead floating whales, regardless of how recently they may have died. We are seeking information on at least 6 animals reported to have stranded on the Cape Scott Islands this past summer and we expect that there are at least a few other strandings from 1995 which have not yet come to our attention. Please contact us if you know of any records which do not appear in Table 1, or if you might have additional information to provide us on animals that are already listed.

Individuals can participate by sending an e-mail message to mmrg@islandnet.com or by calling 380-1925 in Victoria, or toll-free 1-800-665-5939 from other locations in B.C.



WHALE HOTLINE

Report marine mammal sightings and strandings to
380-1925
in the Victoria area
On the water
VHF channel 68 to the vessel **Sundiver**
1-800-665-5939
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 behaviour, as well as your name, phone number and address in case further information is required.

Birds, Art, Carving and Photography Featured at Brant Festival

The big day for birders is April 13 at the Brant Wildlife Festival. Beginning at 0500 hours, teams of birders will be out and about the Parksville and Qualicum Beach region looking to see or hear as many species as possible. Previous festival teams have spotted such rare species as Swamp Sparrow, Black-legged Kittiwake, Iceland Gull, and a Brambling was recently found in the area. Known as the "friendly birding big day", teams are encouraged to gather stories about the day as counting birds.

Beginning at 1500 hours, the reception at the Bayside

Inn will feature awards, socializing and telling of stories gathered during the day. A draw for the newly designed, nitrogen charged, waterproof Elite 8x42 binoculars donated by the Bushnell Corp. will end the day.

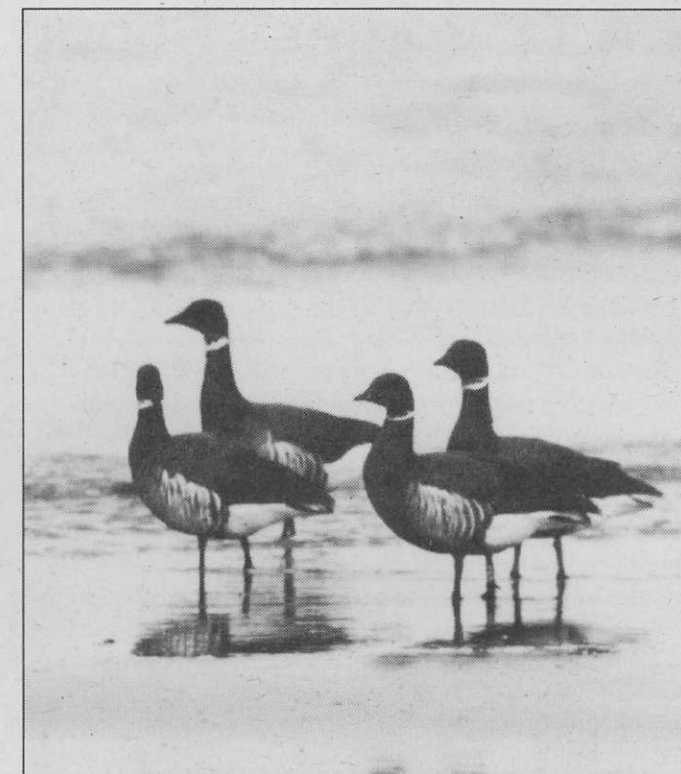
Birders are encouraged to spend the weekend April 12-14 and enjoy all that the Brant Wildlife Festival has to offer. Entry in the Big Day includes a passport good for admission to three art exhibitions, the carving exhibit, photography exhibit and sale, native craft sale and family events, including the "un-natural" nature trail.



Snowy Owl — past winner of Brant Festival Carving Competition.

Registration for the Big Day is just \$20 per person. In addition to a Festival Passport, this includes snacks and coffee at the reception. To obtain a registration form, write to: Big Day, Brant Wildlife Festival/96, P.O. Box 327 Parksville, V9P 2G5 or leave your address on the 24 hour answer machine: (604) 248-4117. The Brant Festival also has a Web page at: <http://qb.island.net/~bfest> and an e-mail address: bfest@qb.island.net. Entry deadline for the big Day is April 1.

Timed to coincide with peak numbers of Brant each April, the Festival is a celebration of nature. A portion of the profits are placed in the Wildlife Legacy Fund to preserve and enhance wildlife habitats. Projects to date include contributions towards the purchase of the Englishman River estuary, Jedediah Island and the Parksville Qualicum Beach Wildlife Management Area.



Brant staging off Parksville-Qualicum Beach. Photo: Jonathan Grant



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H.A.T. Progress Report

By Jan Garnett

Did you know that organizations other than government, The Islands Trust, and The Nature Trust, have only been able to hold conservation covenants since 1994? The change in law is largely because of the convincing efforts of the West Coast Environmental Law Association. Were you also aware that B.C. and Nova Scotia are the only two provinces to allow non-government organizations to hold conservation covenants?

Since the Victoria Natural History Society (VNHS) Board authorized the formation of the Habitat Acquisition Trust (H.A.T.) last autumn, my personal learning curve on conservancy issues and information has become perilously steep. Thankfully, there is an existing and ever-growing library of information about different ways of approaching the goals of H.A.T., what has worked and what apparently isn't working, both in B.C. and in other parts of North America. In fact I'm facing spending an entire day trying to catalogue and file my growing library on the subject so that Bruce can once again get to his desk and the computer without needing a shovel and machete.

The best format for H.A.T. seems to be as a Foundation, with a volunteer board of its own, closely affiliated with the VNHS. This model has worked for the Federation of B.C. Naturalists. With the agreement of the VNHS directors we hope to begin the legal process of forming a foundation and inviting a number of helpful people to form the H.A.T. Board (would we call them the Mortar Board?) within a few months. Meanwhile, all donations and fundraising proceeds are being deposited into a VNHS account earmarked for H.A.T. Conservation Committee Chair Jeff Stone has made the necessary application to Revenue Canada to allow us to accumulate funds over time without the usual annual payout requirement. Since this isn't a precedent, we don't anticipate that there will be any unresolvable problems.

Part of the group education process of the past few months has been a lot of networking, both to let people know who we are, and to glean as much knowledge about conservancy work and fundraising as possible. Bill Turner and Kirk Davis of The Nature Conservancy have been extremely helpful and are always available and cheerful with suggestions about how we can work together for the best benefit. I hope to meet with Ron Erickson of The Nature Trust soon to establish the same personal exchange. Phone calls and letters have at least let them know we're around. Jan Kirkby of the Pender Island Conservancy is an invaluable friend and

information source, having been through this before us.

On January 26th we joined other conservancy representatives from all over B.C., as well as representatives from the Ministry of Environment, The Nature Trust, The Nature Conservancy, and Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO). In the morning we all met and shared the progress and problems each group has experienced (H.A.T. being the new kid on the block). In the afternoon three speakers provided a wealth of information about conservation covenants — when they are appropriate, what processes need to be completed before one

can be put in place, landowner contact and education, and useful examples of good and bad situations. We hope to continue attending these meetings, and I'm finding the contacts and sharing of information to be vital to the long term success of what we are trying to accomplish.

What is becoming clear is that if conservation covenants are to be monitored and enforced over many generations, or "forever", the covenant holder needs to be a conservancy with extensive resources. But larger-scale conservancies won't necessarily be able to provide the manpower to keep an eye on every covenant in which H.A.T. has an interest. So we're

favouring an initial model where they hold the covenant (i.e., are the ones on the title of the particular parcel of still privately-owned land) but we locals do the ongoing landowner contact and regular monitoring of each parcel. The covenant-holder would only be brought into the picture again if terms of the covenant were breached. In certain cases we may wish to hold covenants jointly with one of the large conservancies and/or a level of government.

So why have a local land acquisition fund at all? H.A.T. will have the unique power to identify southern Vancouver Island parcels that are *locally* significant (and we can all think of examples) but which might not attract the attentions of the bigger conservancies. We will have the ability to purchase or accept donations of conservation covenants on our own if we wish, we can do fundraising for a specific venture of local significance, and we can actually purchase a property outright, or some interest in it, if funds are sufficient. Obviously, partnership acquisitions are workable ways of protecting larger areas. We truly believe there is a role for H.A.T. and are determined not to undermine the ongoing accomplishments of the larger-scope conservancy groups. There is no reason we can't complement each other's efforts and goals.

A lot of people are asking when H.A.T. will target its first

H.A.T. will have the unique power to identify southern Vancouver Island parcels that are *locally* significant (and we can all think of examples) but which might not attract the attentions of the bigger conservancies.

acquisition or conservation covenant site. At the moment we're collecting 'wish lists' from people and organizations such as the Capital Regional District, community groups, municipal government representatives and individuals. The Garry Oak Meadow Society has been in touch and we will be doing liaison work with them as much as possible. We've already had a few requests for funds from concerned people trying to prevent destruction of habitat by development close to their homes. I try to share as much information as I can and take the time to go and look at the property in question, but as yet, we are not in a position to do more. As the Foundation Board is established, and the criteria for selection finalized, the funds will begin to accumulate to the point where we can begin to take some action. In any case, negotiations with landowners have to come before widespread appeals for funds for a particular project. The purchase price or covenanting parameters need to be formally agreed upon from the outset, or all efforts could be in vain.

But things are moving quickly and I anticipate some real

action well before the end of this year. It seems vitally important to do the groundwork and establish the right knowledge base so that we can avoid expensive and time-consuming pitfalls. Thanks to Marilyn Lambert's efforts, the Arizona birding trip is now full, with the trip leaders being David

Stirling, Marilyn Lambert and Bruce Whittington (please help him keep his eyes on the road, not the Painted Bunting). Hats Off For Habitat, or Musical Hats, will be history by the time you read this and the proceeds will be safely in the H.A.T. account. Look in the Calendar for information on another H.A.T. fundraiser that Jason Jones and Darren Copley are putting together for late May:

a Vertebrathon! Thanks to all who have helped, are helping and have offered to help. A tip of the H.A.T. for a great team effort.

Jan Garnett has been working hard, with many others, to establish H.A.T. See also Jan's article in the January/February, 1996 issue of The Victoria Naturalist for details on H.A.T.

It seems vitally important to do the groundwork and establish the right knowledge base so that we can avoid expensive and time-consuming pitfalls.

1995 Christmas Bird Count

Introduction by David Pearce

On December 16 we equalled the 1994 record of 209 participants who took part in the 1995 Victoria Christmas Bird Count. We were very fortunate with the weather as it was dry and a mild 10°C, following two weeks of very wet stormy weather. We recorded a total of 104,425 birds and a species count of 147, our second-highest ever and, once again, the highest count in Canada.

We recorded 16 record highs for the following species (previous highs are in parenthesis): Yellow-billed Loon - 2 (1); Bald Eagle - 222 (111); Red-tailed Hawk - 54 (45); Red Phalarope - 20 (8); Ring-billed Gull - 4 (1); California Gull - 130 (74); Northern Pygmy Owl - 5 (4); Anna's Hummingbird - 59 (44); Northern Flicker - 531 (433); Northwestern Crow - 7,266 (7,131); Bewick's Wren - 306 (218); Winter Wren - 485 (451); Orange-crowned Warbler - 4 (3); Purple Finch - 260 (227); House Finch - 1,346 (1,196) and House Sparrow - 2,376 (2,039).

The highlights were 20 Red Phalarope, found in four different areas, and two Yellow-billed Loons, the same one seen in both Esquimalt Lagoon and Esquimalt Harbour and the other one at Ten Mile Point. Other highlights were a Golden Eagle at Albert Head, a Glaucous Gull in Esquimalt Harbour, a Gyrfalcon at Martindale Flats, three Brant at

Island View Beach (the first seen since 1979), an American Bittern at Viaduct Flats, a Tundra Swan at Quick's Bottom, Spotted Sandpipers in Cadboro Bay and Albert Head and five Pine Grosbeaks on Jocelyn Hill.

We had some special guests this year to film our count. John Acorn, host of the *Twits and Pishers* show on the Discovery Channel, flew out from Edmonton with his camera crew to witness our excellent count. They spent the Friday afternoon before the count filming the 140 bald eagles and various gulls at Goldstream Park. On count day they were escorted around by Hank van der Pol and filmed the wildfowl at Martindale, the MacKenzie-Grieve's Anna's hummingbirds in Cadboro Bay and ended up at Clover Point and Beacon Hill Park. They also filmed our post-count gathering at Gordon Head United Church. The show is expected to air some time in March, 1996.

A compilation of the 1995 count data is presented on the following pages.

David Pearce has been organizing the Christmas Bird Count and Spring Bird Count, as well as compiling the data on a computer database, for several years. We thank David for his considerable effort.

1995 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			3			2	27			3		1
Pacific Loon	1		4			16	6	9		1	3	11
Common Loon			2			9	8	11		5	4	4
Yellow-billed Loon							1	1				
Pied-billed Grebe	1	3	1	2	8		10		4			1
Horned Grebe						14	23	1		14	21	1
Red-necked Grebe	4		7			15		20		33	30	30
Eared Grebe												
Western Grebe	1		1			9	41	116		55	1	
Double-crested Cormorant	17	7	44	5	78	77	23	57	67	61	1	6
Brandt's Cormorant						4	2	250		73	25	3
Pelagic Cormorant						12	2	21		49	1	27
American Bittern												
Great Blue Heron	4	1	6		1	4	10	21	9	13	3	4
Tundra Swan												
Trumpeter Swan	48			13								
Mute Swan			2			5	11				1	
Greater White-fronted Goose												
Brant												
Canada Goose	956			412	11	5	6	4	132			
Wood Duck												
Green-winged Teal	87		54	35	2	8			17			
Mallard	533	85	103	179	117	272	176	8	200	50	558	42
Northern Pintail	256						25		2			
Northern Shoveler	5		6	24							2	
Gadwall	1				2		4		20			
Eurasian Wigeon	2		5				1		1		2	
American Wigeon	729		29	179	60	63	144	50	256	170	620	26
Canvasback									56			
Ring-necked Duck	135	15		79	34	1	14					
Greater Scaup						11	6		82			
Lesser Scaup		13					7		58	2	2	12
Harlequin Duck						8	5	28		38	52	26
Oldsquaw						6	25	1		5	1	11
Black Scoter												
Surf Scoter			50			38	173			46	92	13
White-winged Scoter						6	1					4
Common Goldeneye	6	1	137	1		45	48	59	14	44	35	28
Barrow's Goldeneye	2		112									
Bufflehead	36	28	74	14	33	109	326	161	372	106	125	114
Hooded Merganser	13	13	4	19	30	23	4	27	40	75	3	16
Common Merganser		2	164	32	130	9	12	18		3	1	3
Red-breasted Merganser	1		9			46	50	56		90	86	52

1995 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	2				1		3	1	44	
Pacific Loon		23	51			7		3		135	
Common Loon	2	4	3			10		5		67	
Yellow-billed Loon		1								2	All time high (previous high 1 in 1991)
Pied-billed Grebe			2	6		5	9			52	
Horned Grebe	2	21				201		11		309	
Red-necked Grebe	1	6				2		22	5	175	
Eared Grebe						1				1	
Western Grebe	4	1						2		231	
Double-crested Cormorant	4	1	6	1	4	40	18		16	533	
Brandt's Cormorant		11	1						23	392	
Pelagic Cormorant		13	2			2		1	8	138	
American Bittern							1			1	
Great Blue Heron	4	3		2	3	6	9	11	1	115	
Tundra Swan							1			1	
Trumpeter Swan					7	1	62	8		139	
Mute Swan										19	
Greater White-fronted Goose								5	1	6	
Brant								3		3	
Canada Goose				2	286	199	291	798	2	3,104	
Wood Duck				7						7	
Green-winged Teal				2	7	137	11	39		399	
Mallard	114	56	12	655	877	612	137	476		5,262	
Northern Pintail					11		3	13		310	
Northern Shoveler				16	1	3	24	2		83	
Gadwall				3		2	68			100	
Eurasian Wigeon								3		14	
American Wigeon	54	15		591	73	39	147	476		3,721	
Canvasback							26			82	
Ring-necked Duck				7	17	56	112	3		473	
Greater Scaup			16			115	2	43		275	
Lesser Scaup		1		4		2				101	
Harlequin Duck	6	21	17			3		2	35	241	
Oldsquaw		39	42			67		85	60	342	
Black Scoter								7		7	
Surf Scoter		15	48			178		84	8	745	
White-winged Scoter		2	49			4		3	16	85	
Common Goldeneye		7	7			36	8	38	4	518	
Barrow's Goldeneye										114	
Bufflehead	3	25	32	21	4	253	16	46	31	1,929	
Hooded Merganser	18	18	11	21	7	49	15	10	7	423	
Common Merganser				1	26	117	8		2	528	
Red-breasted Merganser	25	61	18			107		2	9	612	

1995 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
Ruddy Duck												
Bald Eagle	9	7	132	4	8	6	6	4	2	1	2	2
Northern Harrier	1											
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	3	1		5	1	1	1	1			2
Cooper's Hawk	3	3			3	4	1	1	2	2	1	2
Northern Goshawk												
Red-tailed Hawk	8	3	1	3	2	2	5		3			
Golden Eagle						1						
American Kestrel	1				1							
Merlin	2	1	1	2	1		1			3		
Peregrine Falcon								1	1			1
Gyr Falcon												
Ring-necked Pheasant	2			2			2					
California Quail	120		14	36	14	103	2	2	10	11		
Virginia Rail		2										
American Coot	58			17	4		10			7		32
Black-bellied Plover							35					
Killdeer	14			2	12		1			4		3
Black Oystercatcher						1		6		5		1
Greater Yellowlegs				4								1
Spotted Sandpiper						1						
Black Turnstone					14	5	26			65	33	22
Surfbird										1	10	10
Sanderling							10	1		2	1	
Rock Sandpiper												
Dunlin						4	20	4			2	
Common Snipe	1				16	1						
Red Phalarope			1			3					1	
Mew Gull	15	6	19	29	6	1,217	1,264	124	239	41	65	19
Ring-billed Gull									4			
California Gull		33				4		80	12			1
Herring Gull	2				5							
Thayer's Gull	2		25		5			410	82		17	4
Western Gull			1			1	1	2	1		2	1
Glaucous-winged Gull	1,515	48	1,687	46	156	1,475	314	683	368	493	322	119
Glaucous Gull								1				
Common Murre						98	107	8		3		
Pigeon Guillemot						7	1	5			2	5
Marbled Murrelet						4	4	3				2
Ancient Murrelet						501	124					
Rhinoceros Auklet						2	3	3		20		
Rock Dove	13	38		2	25			80	14	213	40	214
Band-tailed Pigeon					7			10	7			

1995 Victoria Christmas Bird Count

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| 17. BLENKINSOP - PANAMA FLATS | |

13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	TOTAL	COMMENTS
					1	20			21	
3	6	5	2	4	4	5	7	3	222	All time high (previous high 111 in 1991)
			1				1		3	
	3	1	1		1	2	1		25	
2	3	1	1			1	2		32	
						1			1	
	2	1	2	5	3	12	2		54	All time high (previous high 45 in 1993)
									1	
									2	
1									12	
1							1		5	
							1		1	
				1		1	1		9	
6	33			23	10	33	4		421	
						2			4	
			41	79	216	16	1		481	
							22	150	207	
1				2	1	4	31		75	
								9	22	
								1	6	
	1								2	
		1						10	176	
								2	23	
									14	
								3	3	
							18	83	131	
					1	2	2		23	
								15	20	All time high (previous high 8 in 1979)
39	147		2	153	53	13	4	190	3,645	
									4	All time high (previous high 1 in 1993)
									130	All time high (previous high 74 in 1974)
	1								8	
			1	36	25			3	5	615
								1		10
171	114	75	493	158	304	99	156	106	8,902	
									1	
1		2					1	97	317	
	6	4					1	5	36	
	4						3	1	21	
	69	4					3	98	799	
								8	36	
8	6	5	120	10		17	129		975	
						16			40	

1995 Victoria Christmas Bird Count

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SPECIES	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Mourning Dove												
Western Screech-Owl	2	3				2						
Great Horned Owl	4	2		1		2						
Northern Pygmy-Owl	2	3										
Barred Owl	1											
Northern Saw-whet Owl												
Anna's Hummingbird					2	1	1				3	2
Belted Kingfisher	7		4	2		3	5	7	3	7	1	1
Red-breasted Sapsucker		2	1				2				1	
Downy Woodpecker	9	5	6	6	6	2	15	5	9	1	10	7
Hairy Woodpecker		3	1	1	2	2	1		1	1		
Northern Flicker	44	44	9	22	17	29	46	23	33	11	14	9
Pileated Woodpecker	5	5	1	1		3		1				
Eurasian Skylark												
Steller's Jay	5	25	14	5	21	19	4					
Northwestern Crow	660	24	88	84	50	48	125	227	432	120	197	47
Common Raven	103	62	10	25	13	6	22	2		1	12	2
Chestnut-backed Chickadee	265	75	282	87	144	98	126	60	90	10	60	55
Bushtit	15	39		63	64	23	15	40	201	69	153	23
Red-breasted Nuthatch	57	44	16	42	16	12	30	9	20	1	13	6
Brown Creeper	8	12	4	8	5	13	24	4	1	2	2	
Bewick's Wren	28	12		14	25	4	13	17	25	5	17	9
Winter Wren	43	82	53	36	19	14	33	16	11	2	15	2
Marsh Wren	1				1						1	
American Dipper			5								1	
Golden-crowned Kinglet	443	179	327	182	193	104	163	80	155	5	126	32
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	31	12	4	16	64	13	23	3	24	8	6	6
Townsend's Solitaire		3										
Hermit Thrush	1	2	1	1	5		1		4			
American Robin	1,888	1,503	38	7,434	139	17	654	23	124	113	165	167
Varied Thrush	35	120	30	25	22	8	21	10	8			1
American Pipit						9	1					
Cedar Waxwing	2					6	3					
Northern Shrike					1	2						
European Starling	3,087	4,500	30	363	299	617	305	66	499	297	337	47
Hutton's Vireo	1						1					
Orange-crowned Warbler									2			
Yellow-rumped Warbler												
Rufous-sided Towhee	64	29	3	21	50	32	49	14	39	9	20	27
Savannah Sparrow												
Fox Sparrow	34	25	2	5	21	10	46	4	13	1	3	11
Song Sparrow	86	36	5	10	33	21	46	13	47	38	25	21
Lincoln's Sparrow	8											

1995 Victoria Christmas Bird Count

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SPECIES	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	TOTAL	COMMENTS
Mourning Dove								2		2	
Western Screech-Owl							2			9	
Great Horned Owl		3	1			1	13	1		28	
Northern Pygmy-Owl										5	All time high (previous high 4 in 1989)
Barred Owl							2	1		4	
Northern Saw-whet Owl							1			1	
Anna's Hummingbird	6	34	6	1		3				59	All time high (previous high 44 in 1988)
Belted Kingfisher		1	3		1	9	2			56	
Red-breasted Sapsucker							2			8	
Downy Woodpecker	4	13	7	2	2	12	16	5		142	
Hairy Woodpecker					1	1	1	2		17	
Northern Flicker	21	57	6	14	40	12	53	27		531	All time high (previous high 433 in 1989)
Pileated Woodpecker	1	1	3			1	5	4		31	
Eurasian Skylark								10		10	
Steller's Jay							2			95	
Northwestern Crow	109	483	2,535	205	249	463	169	950	1	7,266	All time high (previous high 7,131 in 1971)
Common Raven	9	13	3		14	9	45	23	1	375	
Chestnut-backed Chickadee	45	83	76	54	23	135	162	91		2,021	
Bushtit	50	153	30	148	101	132	38	71		1,428	
Red-breasted Nuthatch	5	33	8	6	3	9	43	6		379	
Brown Creeper	2	6	12	3	2	7	13	3		131	
Bewick's Wren	10	16	3	11	32	21	32	12		306	All time high (previous high 218 in 1987)
Winter Wren	1	24	33	9	14	25	33	20		485	All time high (previous high 451 in 1990)
Marsh Wren				3		3	19	2		30	
American Dipper										6	
Golden-crowned Kinglet	42	64	82	38	38	315	345	59		2,972	
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	6	18	9	17	15	16	22	8		321	
Townsend's Solitaire			1							4	
Hermit Thrush		1		1		1				18	
American Robin	120	422	82	122	121	127	807	261		14,327	
Varied Thrush		25	4	1		5	36	5		356	
American Pipit								93		103	
Cedar Waxwing		41		10			59	7		128	
Northern Shrike	1						1	1		6	
European Starling	29	453	118	315	216	174	1,098	484		13,334	
Hutton's Vireo		3								5	
Orange-crowned Warbler				2						4	All time high (previous high 3 in 1988)
Yellow-rumped Warbler								1		1	
Rufous-sided Towhee	16	65	21	42	36	50	66	46		699	
Savannah Sparrow					1			6		7	
Fox Sparrow	7	23	4	35	6	10	31	16		307	
Song Sparrow	11	36	19	24	47	46	60	63	2	689	
Lincoln's Sparrow							4	5		17	

1995 Victoria Christmas Bird Count

SPECIES	COUNTS BY LOCATION											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Swamp Sparrow	2							1				
White-throated Sparrow					1		1		1			
Golden-crowned Sparrow	66	8	7	20	20	17	44	13	44	10	7	10
White-crowned Sparrow	1			1			17	2	1	3		1
Harris' Sparrow												
Dark-eyed Junco	511	235	56	174	382	232	323	124	292	56	171	74
Red-winged Blackbird	10			7	36	3	30		1			30
Western Meadowlark										2		

Brewer's Blackbird	250			31	85		39					
Brown-headed Cowbird												
Pine Grosbeak		5										
Purple Finch	11	57	24	3	19	34	5		3	46		8
House Finch	50			20	37	85	83	38	182	17	28	117
Red Crossbill	64	57		180	12	87	36	20				
Pine Siskin	1,307	805	256	217	562	586	617	151	215	17	203	44
American Goldfinch									8	2		

Evening Grosbeak							1					
House Sparrow	27			52	17	38	66	142	466	145	223	46

TOTAL BIRDS	13,843	8,330	3,965	10,287	3,183	6,470	6,234	3,419	5,223	2,635	4,153	1,508
TOTAL SPECIES	79	53	56	59	63	84	91	68	61	66	61	67

1995 Victoria Christmas Bird Count

SPECIES	COUNTS BY LOCATION											TOTAL	COMMENTS	
	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23			
						2							5	
	2									3			8	
	18	27	13	46	36	47	41	121					615	
	18	6	14	5	35	3		35					142	
		1											1	
	133	224	104	116	79	289	270	520					4,365	
				41	8	8	9	16					199	
													2	

				30	214	9		19					677	
					2			2					4	
													5	
	3	5		3	14	2	9	14					260	All time high (previous high 227 in 1993)
	53	107	97	186	83	51	58	54					1,346	All time high (previous high 1,196 in 1993)
		5	1			5	45	47					559	
	209	355	445	87	173	406	494	581					7,730	
				10			2	12					34	

													1	
	109	108	164	398	183	76	42	74					2,376	All time high (previous high 2,039 in 1993)

	1,511	3,650	4,321	4,023	3,574	5,369	5,334	6,375	1,019	104,425				
	51	69	57	57	55	75	77	93	37	147				

Welcome to New Members

DECEMBER

J. L. and Dana Mellor
of Olympic View Drive
enjoy birding and
wildflowers

Jennifer Hoffman
of Chester Avenue
is interested in birding,
botany, marine studies and
hiking

Jennifer Betts
of View Street
likes field trips

John and Susan Smith
of Saanichton

Angela and Henry Bergs
of Neil Street

Jeanne Illingworth
of Savannah Avenue

Don Illingworth
of Richardson Street

Margot Lods
of Gorge Road East

Josephine Munro
of Majestic Drive

JANUARY

Brenda Costanzo
of Richmond Avenue
is interested in native plants

**Colin, Nancy and Raven
Ranson**
of Delmonte Avenue

Marilyn Jubien
of Edmonton, Alberta

**Suzanne Beauchesne and
family**
of Ridgeway Street
enjoy birding

Gordon and Chris Green
of Peacock Place
are interested in marine
biology

David Kelly
of Olympia Avenue
is a birder

Gwen Nicol
of Rossland, B.C.
enjoys birds

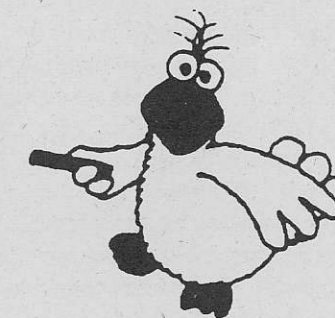
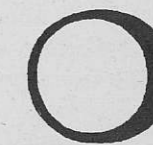
Richard Sturney
of Duncan, B.C.
is interested in birds

Barry Hall
of Duncan, B.C.
is a birder

**Graham and
Vanessa Saayman**
of Emily Carr Drive
interested in participating in
nature conservation projects,
especially with larger
mammals

SEEING SPOTS?

Do you have an orange dot in this circle? If so, you have not paid your dues prior to the January 1, 1996 deadline, and you have already received two free copies of *The Victoria Naturalist*. To ensure that you receive the next issue of the magazine and continue your membership in the Society, please forward your dues immediately to Box 5220, Stn. B., Victoria, B.C., V8R 6N4.



Arizona Snows and Texas Hails

By Keith Taylor

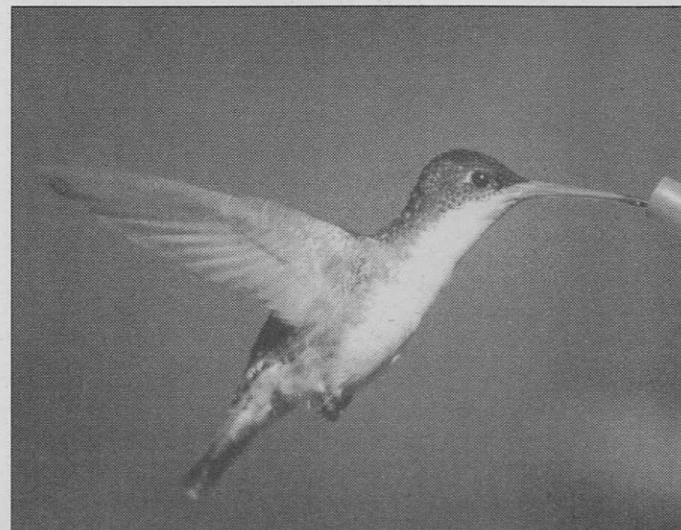
This is a two-part story of a two-week vacation during the first half of May 1995 that would take my wife Patricia and I from Phoenix to Big Bend National Park in central Texas, a location I had yet to visit, and the only site where Colima Warblers are found north of Mexico in their restricted breeding range within the USA. The warbler was a species still missing from both my North America and Life lists. We would return to spend most of the trip in southeastern Arizona seeking the elusive Eared Trogon and to "tick" any Mexican vagrants that might appear. I was also anxious to see both the Gray Vireo and Lucifer Hummingbird again, as the first sightings were fleeting at best, and to actually see a Buff-collared Nightjar. I was to miss both Streak-backed Oriole and Flame-colored Tanager because of poor communication and timing.

Part I

The sun set in an inferno of majestic carmines and magentas as the plane rolled along the Phoenix runway safely terminating the jarring, distressful flight. A compact was reserved in advance at the airport *Alamo Car Rental*. Often the corporation leases 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 us most of the time and it wasn't surprising when we received the usual white Chevy Cavalier. Our first intention was to escape the bustle of the overcrowded city, and as is our usual course of action, drove for an hour or so to the Motel 6 just outside of Casa Grande at the junctions of Interstates 8 and 10 for our first night.

The next day we continued our journey to Tucson with a brief shopping interlude at the striking San Xavier Mission. At a distance, the glowing mission appears as a ghostly apparition floating in a sea of drab ochres and terracottas. Birding was slow but, as always, the walled, white-washed mission with its glaring towers and exotic cactus garden, left a memorable impression. At Madera Canyon we reserved a room at the Santa Rita Lodge for one night towards the end of our trip. Booked for that night, we stayed at the beautiful A-frame Madera Kubo cabins, actually a delightful and less expensive accommodation overlooked by birders. The real novelty of their construction is the use of natural gnarled, contorted, knotty and warped wood throughout. The narrow staircase, incased by a knobby handrail, leads upstairs to a storybook bedroom. Tolkien, in his trilogy, could easily have modeled the hobbit's home after these cabins.

Heading towards the rim of Florida Wash, the flaming evening sky was criss-crossed with the dashing silhouettes of Lesser Nighthawks. My experience with Buff-collared Nightjar was restricted to a brief hearing of the call, an accelerating series of *cuk* notes ending with a *cuka-cheea*, during July of 1984 at Aravaipa Canyon. My goal was not only to hear the bird more clearly but possibly to see its glaring red eyes in the beam of my flashlight. Playing a tape of the rare nightjar's call was prohibited but as I stood alone in the night, the confidence that would be provided by playing the recording was nearly overwhelming. Although



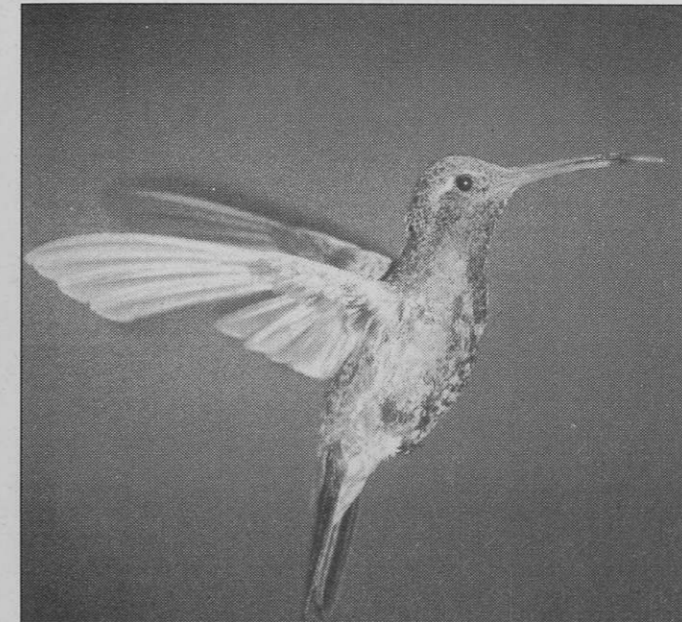
Violet-crowned Hummingbird Photo: Tim Zurowski

two nightjars had become faithful to this location in recent years, my trips to Arizona had never coincided with their occurrence. My vigilance, both in the evenings and pre-dawn, was to go unrewarded, unaware that they were not to return this year.

A phone call to NARBA (the North American Rare Bird Alert) was reassuring; the White-eared Hummingbirds had returned to Ramsey Canyon for the fourth year in a row. As our trips to Arizona had never coincided with the appearance of this rare, but regular, visitor from Mexico, I was somewhat anxious to finally "tick" this embarrassing blank on my A.B.A. and Life lists. We sped off towards Sierra Vista along Highway 10 and directly to upper Ramsey Canyon. The charming Ramsey Canyon Inn is situated in the Huachuca Mountains at an elevation of 5400 feet, along a winding stream and surrounded by large sycamore, maple, juniper, and pine trees. We reserved one of their tastefully decorated rooms for two nights for when we returned from Big Bend. As Pat conversed with Shirlene DeSantis, the owner of this quaint Bed & Breakfast and an old friend, I concentrated on the feeder and within minutes had startling views of two

male White-eared Hummingbirds; later we were to see a female at the adjacent Mile High Preserve. As this pleasant natural stone and wood country guest house was booked, we spent the night in Sierra Vista.

The next day we spent driving at speed towards Big Bend National Park. Late in the day we pulled up to the only motel in the remote hamlet of Study Butte, situated just outside the western gates of the park. The motel was respectable and had a restaurant that served excellent meals (complete with a singing Latino chef). The aesthetic Chisos Lodge, set in a bowl-shaped valley in the centre of the Chisos Mountains at 5500 feet, is blessed with a cool, highland climate and fantastic views. An unsuccessful attempt had been made to reserve a room at the park's lodge two months previous - but its popularity guarantees that the accommodations are often booked for an entire year in advance!



Broad-billed Hummingbird Photo: Tim Zurowski

As the climb to Boot Springs was publicized as "anguishing" in *A Birders Guide to the Rio Grande Valley of Texas* we decided to begin the uncomfortably warm and difficult hike at dawn. Our too-early arousal was unfounded and we sat in the parking lot for one-and-a-half hours, waiting for the first hint of daylight. I decided on the shorter, more difficult route, a mere four-mile jaunt. The trek was not as difficult as predicted and within an hour the trilling song of a Colima Warbler was heard from the steep, scrubby oak hillside. The walk back to the lodge for brunch was also not hot as expected but we still looked forward to the meal and giant jug of java waiting back at the cafeteria. It was high noon when we drove down from the bowl into the private housing area at the lower elevations to search for Lucifer Hummingbirds. Distant views were obtained of a male at one feeder but the desert's temperature had become oppressive so we took time off to visit the cool interior of the nearby park headquarters to shop and inspect the

exhibits. Later, relaxing in the shade surrounding the lodge and gift shop, we sipped cold lemonades as we absorbed the awe-inspiring views.

The following morning we decided to take the easier hike to Laguna Meadows; only 15 minutes up the trail we encountered the first Colima Warbler. In the woodlands of deciduous oaks and maples of the meadows at 6000 feet we had excellent views of approximately twenty of these colourless warblers before returning to the lodge and restaurant for brunch. Listening intently, we played a tape into the junipers lining the bottom portion of the trail for Gray Vireos, without success. That evening we dined at the captivating park restaurant on a delicious gourmet meal. The views are magnificent! Majestic, jagged mountains surround the lodge, their steep-walled canyons framing the endless panoramas of the hazy Chihuahuan desert far below. Soon the tranquil atmosphere outside the window changed dramatically. A violent storm ensued! Coal-black clouds eclipsed the fading light only to be slashed into brilliance by bolts of intense lightning. Apprehensive, we drove slowly towards our motel across the flashing plains, pelted by mothball-sized hail.

KEITH TAYLOR is a regular contributor to *The Victoria Naturalist*. He has published several books on birding in *Costa Rica* and *British Columbia*.



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1995 Butterfly Counts

By Jeff Gaskin

Last year's butterfly counts were conducted between the months of April and September, with a total of six counts held during 1995. All surveys were generally done during the second weekend of each month, although a little leeway was allowed before and after. More butterflies were seen this year due to a greater number of people participating compared to last year.

The total number of species seen in 1995 was down slightly, from 38 to 36. There were seven species seen that were considered to be very rare for this region. However, these sightings were not confirmed by another observer and, thus, a question mark was placed beside the butterfly. Notable finds included an Alfalfa Butterfly, or Orange Sulphur, near Island View Road in mid August, and two Green Commas, seen during July in Goldstream Park. The sulphur was identified by Gerry Ansell while Derrick Marven identified the Green Commas.

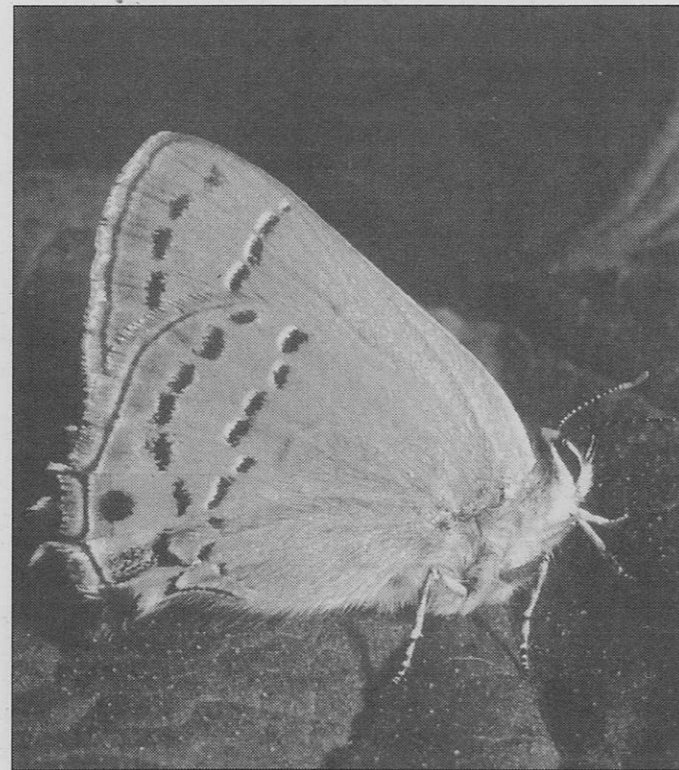
Butterfly species which showed a notable increase from last year were European Skipper, Mourning Cloak, Painted Lady and Satyr Anglewing. Butterflies that were seen in 1995, but unfortunately were missed in 1994, included the Alfalfa Blue, Reakirt's Copper and Roadside Skipper. Species seen in 1994, but missed in the 1995 surveys, included the Acadian Hairstreak, American Painted Lady, Edith's Checkerspot, Great Arctic, Hydaspe Fritillary, Monarch, Oreas Anglewing, Rustic Blue, Two-banded Checkered Skipper and Zephyr Anglewing.

When we begin our butterfly surveys in April 1996 it would be very much appreciated if volunteers who count butterflies would continue their counts until the end of the survey season. At times it might seem to some that the surveys appear tedious and tiresome but all of us must remind ourselves that it is for a worthwhile endeavour.

Another point to keep in mind is that certain areas do not receive frequent coverage during the year. These areas include Thetis Lake Park, Glen Lake, Langford Lake and Florence Lakes, Witty's Lagoon, Triangle Mountain and Albert Head. If readers in these areas, who are interested in helping out, could volunteer their time and effort it would be greatly appreciated.

Special thanks go out to all of you who spent the time in helping us out with this worthwhile endeavour and I hope all of you will be able to provide some assistance again during 1996.

Anyone interested in helping out with the survey of Victoria Butterflies in 1996 should call Jeff Gaskin at 384-1573.



(Top) Grey Hairstreak. (Bottom) Moss's Elfin.
Photos: Art Guppy

MONTHLY DISTRIBUTION OF BUTTERFLY SPECIES

BUTTERFLY SPECIES	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG.	SEPT.	TOTAL
Alfalfa Butterfly					1		1
Anglewing sp.	1						1
Anise Swallowtail	20	128	33	120	13	4	318
Brown Elfin	6	7	1				14
Cabbage White	204	590	390	2348	773	397	4702
Compton's Tortoise Shell ?				1			1
European Skipper			227	616	100		943
Green Comma				2			2
Greenish Blue ?	1	4					5
Grey Hairstreak		6	4	19	6	6	41
Icariades Blue ?		1					1
Johnson's Hairstreak	1						1
Lorqin's Admiral			223	578	20	7	828
Milbert's Tortoise Shell	3	6	10	12	1		32
Moss' Elfin		1					1
Mourning Cloak	20	14	3	25	2	2	66
Mylitta Crescent	1	27	2	227	3	129	289
Painted Lady		1	13	90	34	78	216
Pale Swallowtail		51	50	12	2		115
Pine White			2	577	21	13	613
Propertius Duskywing	9	33	5	1	1		49
Purplish Copper		13	145	28	160	80	426
Reakirt's Copper ?					5		5
Red Admiral			3	13	3	1	20
Roadside Skipper ?		1	1				2
Rosner's Hairstreak		29					29
Sara's Orange Tip	114	42					136
Satyr Anglewing	71	31	12	20		1	135
Silvery Blue	11	8					19
Skipper sp.			1				1
Spring Azure	200	348					548
Sulphur sp.			1				1
Vancouver Island Ringlet		44	146	4	69	9	272
Veined White		1		4			5
West Coast Lady		1	1		1	3	6
Western Meadow Fritillary ?	1						1
Western Pine Elfin		1					1
Western Tiger Swallowtail		64	284	132	5		485
Woodland Skipper				124	1071	135	1330

Davey and the Tuesday Birders

by Kaye Suttill

We've been asked about the beginning of the Tuesday Bird Group; so now let's focus on Albert R. Davidson, "Davey", and how he came to start it.

Davey was born in Yorkshire on the 17th of October, 1888 and first came to Victoria in 1913 working, he said, "... long hours for little money." In the fall of 1926 he befriended J.W. Winson, a naturalist writer and one-time editor of the *Vancouver Province*. Winson was, according to Davey, "a treasure and never-failing well of knowledge. We corresponded for over forty years so the world of nature was opened up to me."

In 1936 Davey bought a small farm and moved to Courtenay. There, through Mr. Winson, he met Theed Pearse and "a new and important friendship began." Pearse's all-absorbing hobby was bird study. He was an Honourary Member of the Pacific Northwest Bird and Mammal Society and active in the American Ornithological Union since 1926. For eleven years Davey accompanied Pearse on his birding trips around Courtenay (Pearse owned three miles of waterfront, part of which is now Miracle Beach Park) and Davey couldn't have had a better mentor to open up the winged world of birds.

In 1947 Davey moved back to Victoria, joined the Natural History Society and would be written up in the January 24, 1971 *Victoria Colonist* as "Bird Man of Victoria". For now we are only concerned with Davey the Tuesday Bird Man. He wrote (in 1976), "In the spring of 1953 or 1954 a few of us, all interested in our beautiful countryside and its flora and fauna, arranged to meet once a week for a field trip. I have continued to come every Tuesday morning. At that time we were just three or four of us." These three or four included Grace Bell, who in time would record local bird songs for Cornell University in New York and be given credit for her contribution to the Peterson *Field Guide to Western Bird Songs*. Another on the early group was Gladys Soulsby, who did so much for our B.C. Nature Federation and, like Davey, was an Honourary Life Member of the Victoria Natural History Society.

In 1954 others, including Lavender Monckton, joined the group. According to Lavender's son George, now Viscount Monckton of Galway, "In 1956 Davey Davidson, the leader of the Tuesday bird walk, brought a newcomer, Eleanore McGavin, along one Tuesday and four years later, on the second of January, 1960, Davey and Eleanore became man and wife."

Here's Davey again. "We kept up regularly every Tuesday morning throughout the year, no matter what the weather. We still do, only the group has increased over the years and now averages 40 people all of whom enjoy the quiet walk in the country and many are the beautiful spots

we visit. Also, we have gained a fair knowledge of our bird and plant life and where we go to find them. When I became 91 years of age, in 1979, it was necessary for me to leave the Tuesday Group as I was slowing up but it is now in good hands and no doubt will continue to give many people who love the outdoors much pleasure."

And so it has, and does, Davey, for this and past years, and I hope for many more years to come.

Kaye Suttill has been a member of the Victoria Natural History Society and the Tuesday Bird Group for many years. She has also been a regular contributor to The Victoria Naturalist writing, among other topics, about alpine environments. [See November/December, 1990 and January/February issue, 1993.]

Conservation and Otherwise

By A.R. (Davey) Davidson

These days conservation is a popular subject. Most of us are gradually realizing that the world is rapidly becoming over-populated and that natural life must be protected, or we will suffer.

At the start of the century, the burning of forests, the traffic and killing of mammals and birds by the millions was commonplace.

However, in 1903, a State game warden system was started in the United States. This was sponsored by Thomas Gilbert Pearson, who, in 1905, formed the National Association of Audubon Societies, later known as the National Audubon Society. So the fight against unlimited slaughter started. Five years later, the Audubon and other natural history societies, now unified and powerful, were able to get legislation passed to stop the killing of birds for their feathers and also the importation of bird plumages.

Until his death in 1943, Gilbert Pearson, with the help of the Audubon Society, continued his conservation activities. In 1916, a treaty was signed between Canada and the United States to protect migratory birds, thus putting the governments of these countries in control. Game departments were created. In 1922, the game department of British Columbia paid bounty on the killing of 17,625 owls and 7,095 eagles. In 1923, they were down to 172 owls and 20 eagles. In 1937, under the heading of "vermin destroyed", the game wardens got 89 eagles, 515 hawks and 239 owls. (Figures from the 1937 report of the B.C. Game Commission.)

In the spring of 1959, legislation protecting all bird predators was passed in British Columbia, a law in which our society [Victoria Natural History Society] took a hand.

This article first appeared in the October, 1967 issue of The Victoria Naturalist.

Pacific Octopus

By Yogi Carolsfeld

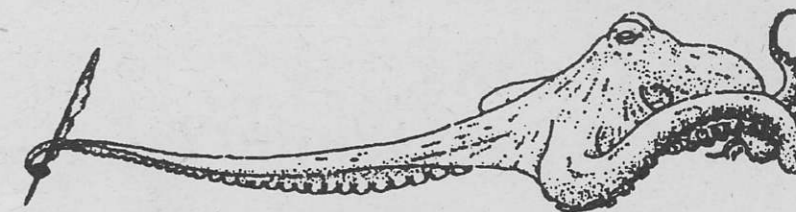
Clam biodiversity: two new arrivals

Bivalves — clams, oysters, mussels, scallops — are some of the best-known seafoods of our coast and represent some of the most successful aquaculture prospects. In particular, oyster culture has been well established for decades in parts of Georgia Strait. However, along with this success have come introduced species. Much as we grow carrots from who-knows-where in our gardens rather than the local species, the cultured oyster is a Japanese species, the cultured clam is the non-native Manila clam, and the most likely cultured scallop will be some version of the Japanese scallop. Other species have also come along as hitchhikers and in many parts of Georgia Strait up to 80% or 90% of the intertidal bivalve biomass is likely to be made up of introduced species.

Two apparently recent arrivals are the "mediterranean" mussel *Mytilus galoprovencialis* and the "varnish" clam, *Nuttalli nuttalli*. The first of these may have come from culture operations in Puget Sound and/or with boats from warmer, richer places (this mussel is found on the Pacific coast as far north as San Francisco). A local hot spot are the docks at Butchart Gardens and Brentwood Bay but in recent years it appears to have also moved into the Victoria waterfront and harbours. It is somewhat larger and broader than the native mussel of this kind, *Mytilus trossalus* (until recently, considered to be *Mytilus edulis*, the east coast blue mussel), and appears to live a little lower on the shore, when they are together.

The "varnish" clam, as it has been dubbed by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) personnel, is a close Japanese cousin to the "mahogany" clam of California. It is a cute little active brown clam found in the high intertidal zone, often close to freshwater streams. A local hot spot is Bamberton but it has also been found, sometimes in amazing densities, on the Sunshine Coast and around Vancouver and Nanaimo. It may have been around for five years or longer but nobody knows yet how it got here. So far, little is known of its apparently very interesting biology, even in its native Japan. In addition to the DFO group, researchers at the University of British Columbia and University of Victoria are looking at this new recruit to our fauna.

The true impact of these new species on our pristine environment is not yet known. They are naughty little creatures, if we apply the currently popular edict of "native only", but many of us would be out on our ear if this principle were strictly implemented. In fact, the varnish clam so far appears to have colonised areas that have little native bivalve



fauna and the mediterranean mussel appears to be partitioning habitats with the native mussel. As yet, there is no evidence of diseases introduced with these species. While we should by no means become complacent about uncontrolled introduction of exotic species, and should continue to protect native ones, for the time being perhaps we should welcome these two new arrivals and their enrichment of our local marine biodiversity.

Yogi Carolsfeld is currently working on his doctorate in marine biology at the University of Victoria.

Time Travel on an Inflatable Raft: A Trip Down the Tatshenshini River

*Join David Fraser at
the U.N.H.S.
Annual General
Meeting in Begbie
159, University of
Victoria at 7:30
p.m. on Tuesday,
March 12th for an
entertaining and
informative look at
the natural history of
the Tatshenshini
River.*

Where Did the Birds Go Last Winter?

From the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology

If the birds didn't show up at your backyard feeder last winter (1994/95), should you worry? Probably not, says ornithologist Kenneth V. Rosenberg. Mild weather probably lets birds find plenty of natural food away from feeders. Rosenberg, senior scientist at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, credits the volunteer participants in Project FeederWatch with answering this question.

The largest backyard bird study in North America, FeederWatch has observers in all 50 U.S. states and 12 Canadian provinces and territories. "Participants in the East reported that many species showed up in smaller numbers than in the previous winter," says Rosenberg. Fortunately, the FeederWatchers' carefully collected data provide insights into the apparent declines.

Consider resident species such as the Hairy Woodpecker, Blue Jay and Northern Cardinal. FeederWatchers counted fewer than usual at Northeast and North Central feeders. But those numbers probably don't indicate real declines, says Rosenberg. Instead, birds may have ignored feeders because mild weather made natural food available. The evidence? Feeder counts for these resident species held steady in the South, where winters are usually mild.

As more evidence that warm winters affect feeder visits, Rosenberg notes that counts for some migratory species, such as White-throated and White-crowned Sparrows and Rufous-sided Towhee, were low in the southeastern region. These birds migrate within North America, moving south for the winter. The fact that feeder counts for these species declined in the Southeast suggests birds didn't need to migrate because of the mild weather and so, stayed up north.

Finally, the mild weather in 1994-95 also seemed to keep the boreal species that sometimes wander out of their usual range — finches, redpolls, and nuthatches — "at home". In harsh winters, these birds invade southern regions, searching for food. But high counts in Alaska suggest that last winter these birds didn't roam.

Unlike easterners, FeederWatchers in the West had a lively time in the winter of 1994-1995, with birds showing up in higher numbers than the previous year. Varied Thrush was at the top of its regular, up-and-down two-year cycle. FeederWatch data also show that Pine Siskins are returning to the West Coast, Nevada and Colorado after a 1993 salmonella outbreak virtually eradicated the species at some western feeders.

Finally, House Finches are presenting FeederWatchers with a paradox: the species is both expanding its range to the north and west, and declining in numbers in the East, probably as a result of a sometimes-fatal eye disease. FeederWatchers will continue to monitor House Finch populations to track the spread of the disease.

Last winter, more than 12,000 FeederWatchers enrolled in Project FeederWatch — the most ever, according to project coordinator Margaret Barker. Nearly 1,000 of these were educators who have made FeederWatch a classroom project. "We still need more participants, though", says Barker, "especially in the western provinces and far north, where we only have a few observers."

Readers interested in Project FeederWatch can write to the Long Point Bird Observatory, PFW-BC, P.O. Box 160, Port Rowan, Ontario, N0E 1M0 or you can contact the Editor of The Victoria Naturalist. There is a fee of \$20.00 charged to participants which goes towards the financing of the project.

Marine Night Report

By Phil Lambert

Once again, our loyal members outdid themselves. On a record cold night in Victoria, with the mercury down around -20°C with the wind chill factor, and side streets caked with sheer ice, they came in droves. Twenty-four to be exact, which in the short existence of Marine Night is a record. My thanks to those who came.

I suspect they were drawn by a combination of the subject matter and the reputation of the speaker, Dr. Lou Hobson from the University of Victoria. He spoke in clear, precise terms about the complexity of Saanich Inlet. Some of the details of surface circulation for example, have only been described in the last few years. He described the surging populations of diatoms that erupt in the spring and the waves of animal plankters that crop those single celled plants through the summer. The uniqueness of this water body came through in his presentation, from the anoxic deep water to the highly variable surface movements of warm and cold water masses. One new member of the audience was heard to exclaim "If this talk is typical of Marine Night speakers I will be attending regularly." That's what I like to hear!

By the time you read this, our February speaker, Jim Cosgrove of the Royal B.C. Museum, will have spoken and I expect you will have heard an excellent presentation on octopus and squid. I will report on his talk in the next issue. We are also looking forward to the last Monday in March when Dr. Alex Peden will reminisce about his life as a fish-watcher, and he has seen them all!

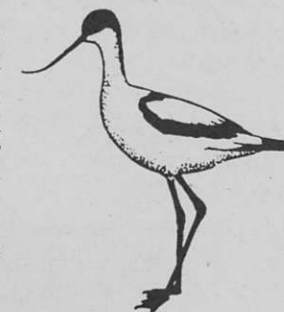
In April, we will continue our coverage of various marine groups with a presentation on plankton by Yousuf Ebrahim of the University of Victoria. When we look closely, and this is usually necessary, we find a collection of organisms that represent virtually every major group of animals and plants in the sea. They range from single cells to massive jellyfish, all united by their habit of drifting at the mercy of the currents. For details of these and other talks check the Events Calendar in this issue. See you at the next Marine Night.

NORTHERN GREECE

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Natural History Presentation

Haida Gwaii The Canadian Galapagos

Join Brian Faulkner on the schooner, Maple Leaf, on a voyage of this amazing group of islands on

Tuesday April 9th at 7:30 p.m.

Room 159, Begbie Building
University of Victoria



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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

MARCH EVENTS

Tuesday, March 5

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.

Sunday, March 10

Royal Roads Forests

Adolf Ceska leads a walk through the old growth forests of Royal Roads. There are some huge trees here and a recent survey turned up the second largest Grand Fir in B. C. Meet Adolf at 10:00 a.m. in the main (upper) parking lot.

Tuesday, March 12

VNHS Annual General Meeting

Room 159, Begbie Building, University of Victoria at 7:30 p.m. Join our perennial favourite speaker, David Fraser, for an entertaining guided time travel tour in *Time Travel on an Inflatable Raft: a Trip Down the Tatshenshini River*. Also on the agenda is a by-law change. See notice to members in the January/February issue (pg 10) of *The Victoria Naturalist*.

Sunday, March 17

Skylarking

We are sure Barbara Begg knows all of the Victoria area Skylarks personally. Let her introduce them to you. Meet Barbara (656-5296) at the north end of Cresswell Road (off McTavish) at 8:30 a.m.

Tuesday, March 19

Botany Night

Swan Lake Nature House, 7:30 p.m. Come and enjoy the slide-illustrate talk by Matt Fairbairn on the *Plants of Southeast Australia*.

Saturday, March 23

Birding Martindale

Search for spring migrants through the Martindale Valley with Alan McLeod (382-3854). Meet at the Farmer's Market, corner of Island View Road and the Pat Bay Highway at 8:00 a.m. Alan promises serious consequences for those forgetting to bring rubber boots.

Monday, March 25

Marine Night

Dr. Alex Peden of the Royal B.C. Museum will give an illustrated talk called *The Art of Fish Watching*. Alex is affectionately known as the "Fish Man" by his colleagues at the Museum. Of the more than 450 species of fish in the marine waters of B.C. Alex has seen most of them, as well as most of our fresh water species. He probably has a story about catching each one, too. See you at Swan Lake Nature Centre, 7:30 pm.

Wednesday, March 27

Birders' Night

Room 159, Begbie Building, University of Victoria, 7:30 p.m.. Everyone Welcome. Andy Stewart of the B.C. Wildlife Branch will present a slide-illustrated talk on *Cooper's Hawks in an Urban Environment*. Bring a friend and your coffee cup.

Sunday, March 31

Hike to McKenzie Bight

Bev Glover (721-1476) leads a hike to explore the early spring flora and fauna of this picturesque area on Saanich Inlet, part of the new Gowlland-Tod Provincial Park. There is a fairly steep uphill walk here so call Bev if you have any questions. Meet at Helmcken Park and Ride at 9:00 a.m. Bring good footwear, food and water.

APRIL EVENTS

Tuesday, April 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, April 9

VNHS Natural History Presentation

Room 159, Begbie Building, University of Victoria at 7:30 p.m. *Haida Gwaii — The Canadian Galapagos*. Travel aboard the beautifully restored classic schooner, *Maple Leaf*, as we explore the links between the natural history of this magnificent archipelago and the culture of the Haida people. Ancient forests, decaying totums and a stunning array of wildlife are illustrated in this slide presentation by Brian Faulkner who has sailed these waters for nine years. Bring your coffee cup and a friend.

Saturday, April 13

Spring Wild Flowers

Join Leon Pavlick on a wild flower exploration of the Cowichan Lake area. Last year we were treated to an amazing display of Pink Fawn Lilies as well as White Fawn Lilies, Trillium and even a Wild Ginger. Carpool 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 at 477-5922.

Sunday, April 14

Birding at Hatley Park

Join David Allinson and the Friends of Hatley Park for a pleasant morning birding through a variety of habitats around the grounds of Hatley Park (Royal Roads University). Meet David (380-8233) at the front entrance to Hatley Castle at 9:00 a.m.

Tuesday, April 16

Botany Night

Swan Lake Nature House, 7:30 p.m. Join Mike Ryan on an entertaining slide-illustrated talk on the *Rare Mosses and Liverworts of British Columbia*.

Saturday, April 20

Lone Tree Hill

David Pearce (658-0295) leads a walk through this interesting regional park. Carpool at Helmcken at 7:30 a.m. or meet in the parking lot at 8:00 a.m. If time permits we may also check the area around Hastings Flats.

Saturday, April 20

Gardening for Wildlife

A native plant Gardening Sale and Demonstration will take place at the Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary on Saturday and Sunday from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The purpose is to promote the use of native plants and creation of wildlife habitat in your back yard. There will be sales of native plants, bird feeders, gardening equipment; guided tours of the Native Plant Garden; and demonstrations on gardening with native plants. The revenue will provide support for the operation of the nature sanctuary. For more information contact Terry Morrison or Joan Cowley at the Nature Sanctuary office at 479-0211.

Sunday, April 21

Gardening for Wildlife

See information under Saturday, April 20.

Wednesday, April 24

Birders' Night

Room 159, Begbie Building, University of Victoria, 7:30 p.m. **Members' Night.** Those who are interested in presenting a few slides should contact Bryan Gates at 598-7789 or leave a message on the VNHS Rare Bird Alert tape at 592-3381.

BULLETIN BOARD

Volunteer Naturalist Opportunity at Swan Lake

Volunteers are needed to assist or head nature education programs for school children. A basic understanding of biology and experience in working with children are assets. Programs are given Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings and afternoons, April-June. Training is provided. If interested, call Joan at 479-0211.

Spring Break Activities

From March 18-22 a full week of programs for families are offered at Swan Lake. Call the Nature Sanctuary Office at 479-0211 for more information.

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 helpful), please contact Jeff Stone at 370-2449.

Saturday, April 27

Native Plant Garden Tour

The Native Plant Study Group of the Victoria Horticultural Society is sponsoring a self-guided tour of local native plant gardens. Come and tour private and public gardens from 10:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. and see how native plants are used in home landscapes and formal gardens. Tickets are \$5.00 and will be available from April 1, 1996 at various bookstores, garden centers and the Field Naturalist. Volunteers are still needed. If you require further information call Nancy Field at 598-2909.

Sunday, April 28

Camas Day, Beacon Hill Park

Join in on the annual spring celebration of the Camas. Wildflower, archaeology and butterfly walks start at 1:00 p.m. Meet at the flag pole near the south end of the park.

Monday, April 29

Marine Night

Yousuf Ebrahim, from the Biology Department at the University of Victoria, teaches marine field biology and a popular course in invertebrate zoology. Tonight he will talk about *High Seas Drifters*, that group of minute animals and plants that usually go unseen but have a major impact on life in the sea — plankton. Come and get the lowdown at Swan Lake Nature Centre, 7:30 pm.

MAY EVENTS

Sunday, May 26

A Really Big Day. Big Days are for the birds! Join us in a search for the highest number of vertebrate species that you can see in 10 hours (5:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.) in the Victoria Checklist area. Categories include Open, Beginner, Green Team and "The Big Sit". Donations and pledges, through the VHNS, will support the Habitat Acquisition Trust and the purple Martin Conservation Effort. For more information, and to register, call 479-6622.

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.

Reminder!

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

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>.

Back Issues of The Victoria Naturalist

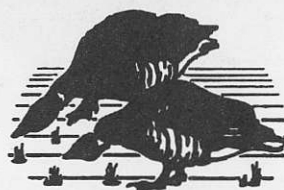
Copies of back issues and indices of *The Victoria Naturalist* are available from Tom Gillespie (361-1694).

BRANT

Wildlife Festival

April 12, 13, 14, 1996

Parksville & Qualicum Beach B.C.



Count Yourself In For The Big Day Birding Competition Sat. April 13, 5 am-3pm

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

- ~Wildlife Art, Carving and Photography Exhibits &
- ~Natural History Talks & ~Family Nature Programs &
- ~Native Arts & Crafts Show and more...

Brant Wildlife Festival's Big Day is a fun event for birders. Each five person team is in friendly competition to see or hear the most species of birds. The Post Big Day party features awards and prizes including *a draw for an Elite 8x42 binoculars donated by BUSHNELL CORP.*

web page: <http://island.net/~bfest>

Entry deadline April 1. Call 248-4117 or write to BWF Big Day Box 327 Parksville, B.C. V9P 2G5. A portion of Festival Profits are donated to The Wildlife Legacy Fund for habitat preservation.

Special Accommodation packages available: call 248-4117

expire: 31-12-96

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