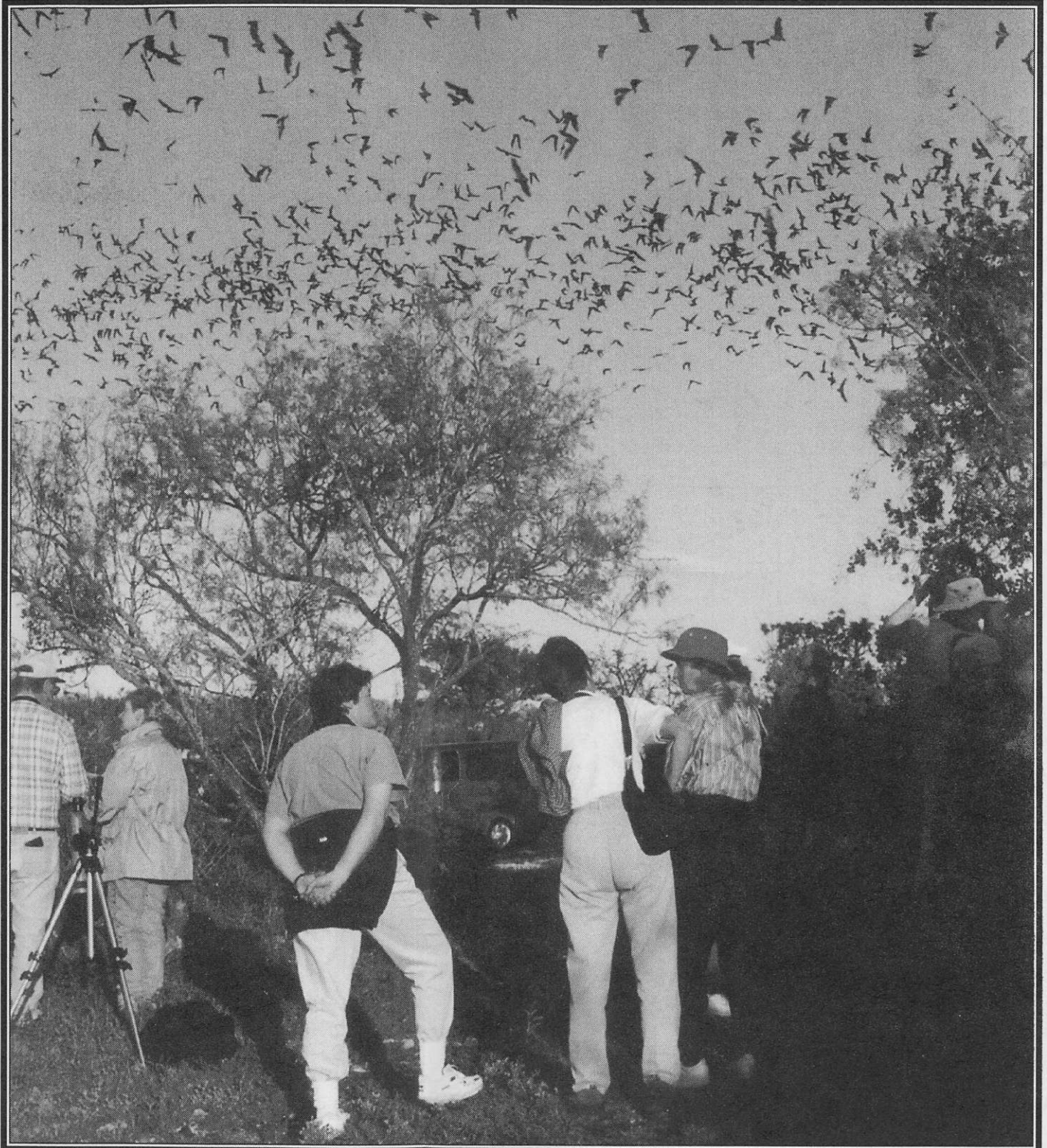


The Victoria NATURALIST

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VOL 53.6

VICTORIA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY





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OUR COVER

A very successful natural history and birding tour of the hot spots in southern Texas has just returned. The front and back cover photos, taken by Bruce Whittington, show a few of over 20 million Mexican Free-tailed Bats as they exit their roosting cave near Concan, in the Hill Country of south Texas. Just prior to this eruption of bats, hundreds of Cave Swallows entered the same cave for the night. Trip members also experienced a spectacular "fallout" of migrating songbirds at High Island. A total of 275 species were recorded during the trip.

The tour was sponsored by the VNHS Habitat Acquisition Trust (HAT) and all proceeds have been donated to the fund. Many thanks to the organizers, and especially to Marilyn Lambert for coordinating the trip.

A major theme of this issue is the Habitat Acquisition Trust, which recently initiated its first fund-raising project to purchase over five hectares of critical estuary and riparian habitat at the mouth of Ayum Creek in Sooke. Our feature article, beginning on page 4, talks about Ayum Creek and its importance. Look also for the pledge form that has been inserted into this issue. If it has gone missing you can pick up copies of the form at the Field-Naturalist on Blanshard Street or at most municipal halls.



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Ayum Creek

By Jeff Stone

Over the past two years Ayum Creek has generated a lot of public attention. First, the Ayum Creek estuary was identified as the southern terminus of the Sea-to-Sea Greenbelt proposal (see *The Victoria Naturalist* January/February 1995 for details on the Sea-to-Sea Greenbelt proposal). Secondly, concern for Ayum Creek emerged among Sooke residents in November 1995 when a proposal for a 78-unit housing complex was announced for

the lands surrounding the mouth of the creek. This proposal subsequently failed but the concern led to the formation of the Society for the Protection of Ayum Creek (SPAC) which continues to work on the protection of the creek. And in March 1997, with concerns of further development proposals, the VNHS Habitat Acquisition Trust (HAT) Foundation, in partnership with SPAC, has initiated a \$625,000 fund-raising drive to purchase the 5.2 ha (12.9 acre) estuary area.

Where is Ayum Creek?

Ayum Creek originates in the Sooke Hills flowing out of the west side of Glinz Lake (Figure 1). The creek flows south and terminates at Cooper's Cove within the Sooke Basin. You cross Ayum Creek approximately five km east of Sooke Village along Highway 14 or the Galloping Goose trail. The properties which HAT will purchase extend along both sides of the creek from Highway 14 south to Sooke Basin. If you are looking at earlier maps Ayum Creek was formerly known as Stoney Creek.

What are the natural values?

Ayum Creek and its watershed (13.7 km²) have many natural values. The creek supports from 300 to 1000 chum as well as coho, steelhead, cutthroat, sculpins and, of course, many invertebrates. The anadromous salmonids can only progress upstream to a nine-metre waterfall (located about 500 m north of the highway) while the cutthroat do not exist below the falls. The lack of cutthroat in the lower reach may be a function of competition for habitat with the coho.

Much of the area surrounding the creek remains in a relatively natural state and helps to support the fauna and flora that we expect to exist (and hopefully do not take for granted) in our southern Vancouver Island forests. The riparian zone is primarily a mature second growth forest that is important in maintaining the creek's high productivity. A 1996 cooperative study by SPAC and the BC Urban Salmon Habitat Program highlighted the importance of the riparian zone due to the low summer stream flow of the creek.

The Ayum Creek properties that *will be* purchased offer further diversity of habitat, with its estuary and mature forest riparian zone. These properties have been modified over the years as the site has been used for at least two

sawmill operations. One of the most noticeable modifications is the log-holding pond that can be seen on the aerial photo (Figure 2). The shore zone is used by wintering waterfowl and migratory shorebirds. Nest boxes erected this April hopefully will attract Purple Martin which historically nested in the Sooke Basin. Additionally, the forested area might be managed to assist the declining coastal Western Screech-owl.

Are there any further values?

Complimentary to its natural value, Ayum Creek and its watershed present both recreational and educational opportunities. In the vision of the Sea-to-Sea Greenbelt, a protected greenspace would extend from the Saanich Inlet to Sooke

Basin, of which the Ayum Creek estuary would be a terminus. Within this greenbelt, a potential 35 km long hiking trail from Tod Inlet to the Sooke basin has been suggested. This trail would connect with the Galloping Goose trail which crosses the creek. The Ayum Creek corridor is also identified as an Unprotected Green Space Core Area within the draft CRD/PCC Regional Green/Blue spaces strategy.

Of greater interest to HAT and SPAC is the potential educational value that the protection of Ayum Creek offers. The current land stewardship initiative and publicity associated with protecting Ayum Creek have created, and will continue to create, an awareness of the natural values of this creek. More directly, Ayum Creek could be used as an interpretive area along the lines of the interpretive program at Goldstream Provincial Park.

Figure 1. Map of the Ayum Creek watershed.

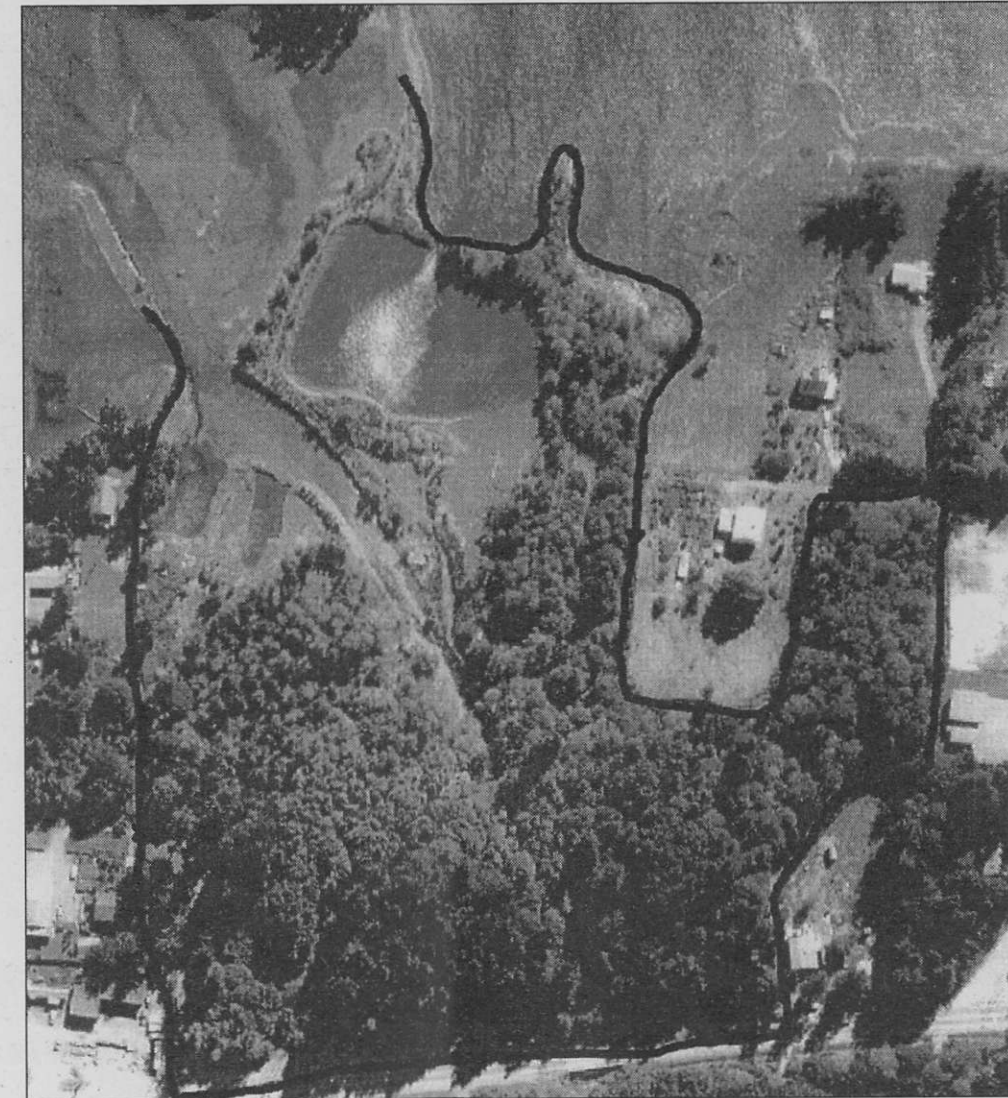
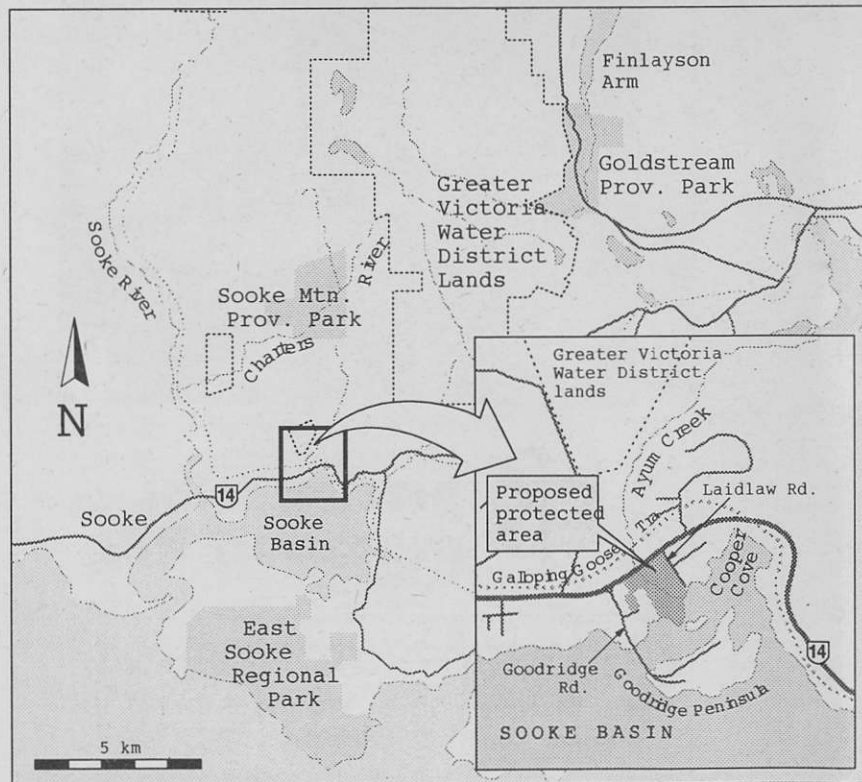
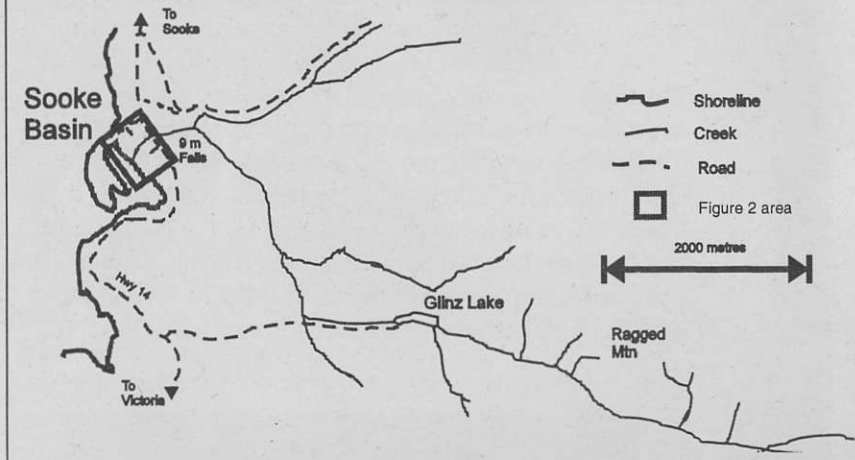


Figure 2. Aerial view of the Ayum Creek and the estuary south of Highway 14. The area outline by the dark line is the area that HAT and SPAC are raising funds to purchase. (Photo courtesy of the Society for the Protection of Ayum Creek.)

What are the future plans?

The Society for the Protection of Ayum Creek was formed over the initial concern about development of the properties at the mouth of the creek. However, members of SPAC were quick to recognize that land stewardship of the entire watershed was important. This awareness has led to their conducting an assessment of the instream habitat, fisheries and riparian area of the entire creek in conjunction with the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks' Urban Salmon Habitat Program. Many SPAC members have been trained in the Streamkeepers Program and, with the purchase of specialized equipment, have initiated a regular stream monitoring program. Joanne Manley, President of SPAC, indicates that SPAC is currently in the second year of a five-year plan. For the first two to three years SPAC will promote educational programs and encouragement for community awareness of Ayum Creek and its surrounding area. They will also be continuing to collect baseline information that is necessary if a management plan in cooperation with government agencies is to be developed. It is this hard work and long-term vision of SPAC, in addition to the natural values of the estuary, that has attracted HAT's Directors to make the Ayum Creek purchase its first major fund-raising initiative.

The purchase of the estuary lands (and subsequent placement of a conservation covenant and transfer to an appropriate agency) will secure only a small portion of Ayum Creek. Much of the land base remains in private ownership or lacks specific objectives of protecting the natural values of the watershed. However, as for all salmon bearing streams, existing federal and provincial legislation provides some

protection to the creek and its riparian areas. The Sooke Electoral Area Official Community Plan identifies streams and their surrounding areas as significant habitat. Nevertheless, such protection can be compromised knowingly or unknowingly by development and other human activities. As such, it is important that further protection be considered. Added protection in some cases may be through acquisition or legal mechanisms such as conservation covenants but much will be through land stewardship by public and private landowners. Ultimately though, the most important protection is the development of a community that cares.

*But now, says the Once-ler,
Now that you're here
the word of the Lorax seems perfectly clear
UNLESS someone like you
cares a whole awful lot
nothing is going to get better
It's not.*

From the Lorax by T.S. Geisell (i.e., Dr. Seuss)

For further information on Ayum Creek and the Society for the Protection of Ayum Creek contact Joanne Manley at 642-7278 or write SPAC at P.O. Box 1282, Sooke, B.C. V0S 1N0.

For further information on how you can help HAT protect Ayum Creek see the Hat Tricks column in this issue of the Naturalist or contact HAT at P.O. Box 8552, Victoria BC V8W 3S2 or 995-2428.



The Ayum estuary at low tide, taken from the Galloping Goose Trail, looking west (Photo: courtesy of SPAC).

President's Report

By David Allinson

Allow me to indulge in a synopsis of the past year and the individuals who make it all happen. Your VNHS Directors and committee members continue to work hard on a variety of projects. I wish to acknowledge the work of your individual Board members:

Audrey Copping has helped make social events like the Christmas Bird Count post-count, the Annual Banquet and our regular meetings a success. **Tony Embleton** continues to keep us informed of both province-wide and local environmental issues as our Federation of British Columbia Naturalists (FBCN) representative. **Dodie Clark** has served ably keeping tabs on our membership. **David Pearce** continues to do an excellent job co-ordinating field trip leaders and the Christmas and Spring Bird Counts. **Bev Glover**, our Publicity Chair, maintains our VNHS booth at a number of exhibits, trade shows and conferences. **Wally Macgregor**, our past-President, has often helped the Board come up with solutions to difficult problems with wisdom and common sense. My acknowledgement also goes out to our Treasurer, **Gordon Hart**, for taking on that

important role with professionalism. **Hank VanderPol** is to be lauded for his work as Society Secretary, an important but difficult position.

I want to remind you all of a man who spends a lot of his time *behind* the scenes — over the past three years **Tom Gillespie** has served as Vice-President and we welcome him as our incoming President. Finally, **Jeff Stone**, our outgoing Conservation Chair, brings pressing local conservation issues to the attention of Board members and is helping to shape the structure and format of the newly-formed VNHS Habitat Acquisition Trust Foundation (HAT).

The creation of HAT was recently finalized and the second annual "Hats Off for Habitat" entertainment fundraiser was a huge success. A number of key individuals should be recognized for their role in the development of HAT, namely, **Jan Garnett**, **Bruce Whittington**, **Marilyn Lambert**, **Leah Ramsay**, **Colleen O'Brien** and in particular, **Jeff Stone**. We are all pleased to learn that the protection of Ayum Creek at Sooke Basin has been chosen as the



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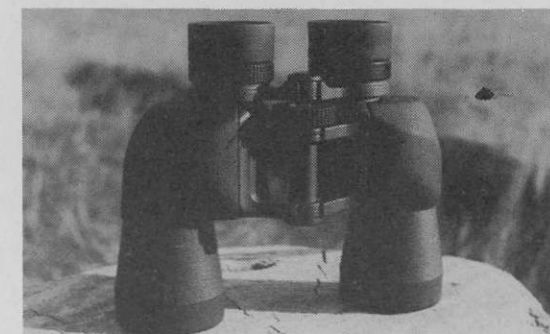


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first acquisition project for HAT and we will be hearing more on their conservation efforts over the coming year (see Ayum Creek article this issue).

Our social event helpers too often stand in the background without recognition and they deserve our thanks and appreciation. The coffee and tea we receive at each meeting, and events like the Annual Banquet and CBC post-count, is thanks largely to **Audrey Copping, Dodie Clark, Barbara Baker** and, especially, **Joan Gowan**.

Serving coffee at meetings has come under scrutiny of late, after the record attendance at the January Birders' Night which overwhelmed our coffee servers. Even more of concern is the lack of income received for coffee and tea — surely we should make enough to cover expenses! Coffee is not a free perk of membership. With the University of Victoria shuffling around our meeting location this fall, our serving of coffee suffered more and we perhaps have to reassess how, and if, we serve beverages at future meetings. Your input and assistance would be appreciated in this matter.

Bryan Gates, Hank VanderPol and **Bruce Whittington** are to be thanked for their excellent work keeping the birding community informed at Birders' Night and via the Rare Bird Alert tape. VNHS member **Hattie Garnier** has generously donated a parabolic mike and dish for making sound recordings. We are still deciding how best to use this new piece of equipment so please let us know your ideas. In addition, our thanks to **Lyndis Davis** for helping out with VNHS publication sales at meetings.

Michael Carson was presented with the VNHS's Distinguished Service Award at our Annual Banquet this year for his continued efforts to protect Blenkinsop Lake, Viaduct Flats and Rithet's Bog among many other conservation projects.

Swan Lake/Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary receives \$4000/year from the VNHS as part of our on-going commitment to assist with their operations, in particular their Young Naturalist and educational programs. Our Society also serves to provide encouragement for those pursuing environmental studies with scholarships and bursaries. These awards include the Alice Hay, the Samuel Simcoe and Freeman King scholarships to the University of Victoria and a bursary for the Environmental Technology Program at Camosun College.

Phil Lambert is to be applauded for his enthusiasm and efforts with the Marine Biology group, offering many interesting field trips and guest speakers. **Adolph Ceska** is also to be congratulated for his continued work organizing the popular botanical field trips and Botany Night.

Monthly Butterfly Counts from April to October have been ably co-ordinated by **Jeff Gaskin**. Make an effort to attend these meetings and outings — you will be surprised at what you will learn. In short, there is more to natural history than just birds!

Our editor, **Warren Drinnan**, with associate editors **Dalia Hull** and **Pamela Thuringer**, are to be praised for the excellent job they do editing and preparing our *Victoria Naturalist* magazine. Desktop publisher **Frances Hunter** gets the magazine out to you in a timely and professional manner. The distribution team of **Tom Gillespie, Dodie Clark, Lyndis Davis, Connie Hawley** and **Tony and Nonie Embleton**, works hard to organize and mail out the *Victoria Naturalist*. The distribution team is particularly in need of volunteer support in order to better delegate tasks and reduce workloads.

In general, a renewed spirit of voluntarism is required to help keep all of our activities on the go. In addition, we all need to look at ways to increase our membership numbers. Finally, and most importantly, our Board of Directors is particularly in need of volunteers as it is currently under-strength. Consider how you can do your part to help make the society better and stronger. New-comers **Dannie Carsen** and **Colleen O'Brien** will be a welcome addition to the Board.

Indeed, it has been a *great* honour to serve as President of the VNHS for the last three years. I have learned a lot about myself and about my own abilities. More importantly, I have learned to respect and rely on those individuals who make this Society as great as it is. When I first joined the Society in 1991 I never imagined I would serve as its President, never mind for three years. I know my strengths do not lie with administration but rather with public education and field trips. Nothing beats "showing" and educating people the importance and beauty of Nature. That is what I know I do best and I would like to do more in the future. I want to thank you all for giving me this opportunity to serve the Board and I will do my part to continue to serve the membership. However, it is time for change and to allow new blood and ideas to chart our future. While we have a lot to be thankful for, we should not take any of it for granted. There remains much to be done and I know that with continued teamwork and camaraderie we can achieve so much more. Once again, thank you!

We would like to thank Dave for his hard work during the past three years that he has been President of the Society. We look forward to joining him on his field trips.

Hat Tricks

A Report on the VNHS Habitat Acquisition Trust Foundation

By Jeff Stone

Hopefully, you are all aware that HAT, in partnership with the Society for the Protection of Ayum Creek, has initiated its first major fund-raising campaign. At the beginning of March HAT, with the greatly appreciated help of Bill Turner, negotiated an option to purchase a 5.2 ha (12.9 acre) property that includes the Ayum Creek estuary. The bottom line of this fund-raising campaign is \$625,000.

Now, I am sure that you are asking yourself — how can I help? The answer is simple: money and/or time. On the money side, HAT is looking for donations for specific and general project use. For our Ayum Creek initiative, a pledge form is enclosed within this issue of the *Naturalist*, or available at the Field-Naturalist and most municipal halls. Such pledges will be used directly for the purchase of the Ayum Creek property. The other side of the pledge form can be used for a direct donation to HAT. These donations are extremely appreciated as HAT requires funds to pay for the option for Ayum Creek (\$5,000 every 2 months), general fund raising, costs associated with conservation covenants that we are negotiating, and monies to initiate a permanent fund to be used for protection of other valuable habitat. We also would

be interested in donations of office equipment (e.g., file cabinet, bookshelves, desk, fax, computer). On the time side, we would appreciate if you would copy and distribute the enclosed pledge/donation form to your friends. Also, if you are willing to help in other ways (fund raising, mailings, technical expertise, web site development) give us a call at 995-2HAT.

If the pledge form inserted in your *Naturalist* did not make it through the mail please contact us at HAT or at one of the above locations to obtain another copy. Details about Ayum Creek and the property we wish to purchase can be found in a separate article in this issue of the *Naturalist*. We also are scheduling walks of the property (with various themes) on every other Sunday, starting on May 4 (see box page 10).

Finally, we would like to thank all who volunteered their musical talents and time to make Musical Hats '97 an enjoyable evening. We also thank all of you who attended and made it a financially successful evening.

For further information on the VNHS Habitat Acquisition Trust Foundation contact us at P.O. Box 8552, Victoria BC V8W 3S2. Messages: 995-2428.



Musical Hats '97 (Photo: Bruce Whittington).

Boundary Bay and Snowy Owls

By David Allinson

Birding at Boundary Bay in the Delta area of Vancouver has much to offer naturalists year-round. In fact, at least 75% of the more than 370 species on the Vancouver bird Checklist have been recorded around Boundary Bay. In late summer and fall, huge numbers of migrating shorebirds use the tidal mud flats as both a staging and feeding station. From fall through spring, Boundary Bay also supports impressive numbers of roosting and feeding swans, geese and other waterfowl. Gull enthusiasts check over the large flocks of gulls attracted to Vancouver's Burns Bog Municipal Waste facility for vagrant Slaty-backed and Glaucous Gulls. However, the region is most famous for hosting the highest concentration of wintering raptors in Canada.

A VNHS field trip on February 22, 1997 introduced some members to one of Canada's premier bird habitats. Our trip was designed specifically to target the large numbers of "invading" Snowy Owls and other birds-of-prey wintering there. Boundary Bay usually averages between two to ten "Snowies" but at its peak the winter of 1996/97 boasted as many as 70 or more Snowy Owls in the Delta area! The irruption of Arctic breeding raptors is part of a cycle of irregular migration, the result of a natural periodic decline of prey sources (e.g., lemmings, voles and hares). These intervals usually occur every three to five years but 1996 appears to have been unusually high. While the principal prey of Snowy Owls on their breeding grounds are

rodents such as mice and voles, studies have noted that much of the prey intake of Snowy Owls wintering in British Columbia consists of grebes and ducks. Owls wintering on the coast may also take a higher percentage of seabirds and alcids.

During our February field trip, nineteen participants tallied a day list of 67 species including such highlights as: 28 Snowy Owls; 14 Short-eared Owls; two Brant; five Eurasian Wigeon; a hybrid American-Eurasian Widgeon; ten Rough-legged Hawks; one Peregrine Falcon; 60 early Bonaparte's Gulls in Active Pass; five Northern Shrikes; two Western Meadowlarks; and, four American Goldfinch. It was difficult to assess the thousands of wintering Dunlin and Black-bellied Plover, as the afternoon high tide did not cooperate. Songbird numbers also seemed sparse, no doubt due to the harsh winter conditions earlier in the season, killing off or pushing south many regular winter visitors. However, fantastic up-close views of Snowy Owls, near the greenhouses at the foot of 64th Street and along the Boundary Bay dyke trail, pleased everyone. Three special moments in particular stood out for me: 1) the sight of a dozen Snowy Owls in a single spotting scope field of view; 2) the spectacle of a Red-tailed Hawk, two Rough-legged Hawks, a Northern Harrier, a Bald Eagle and a Short-eared Owl, all circulating low over our heads, creating an unforgeable example of "birding sensory overload"; and, 3) observing a Northern Shrike, madly flapping and flying awkwardly with a large Townsend's Vole in its grasp, while being half-heartedly chased by a Snowy Owl, less than 40 feet from the trail!

I want to thank everyone who participated on this field trip. In particular, my thanks to everyone's endurance for joining me on the many miles of walking. I promise to reduce that on our next outing to Boundary Bay. The area is so vast, with much to see, that I wanted to share as much of it as possible with you all.

The Boundary Bay area is a spectacular birding locale. Unfortunately, most of the area remains unprotected. Private, municipal, provincial and federal bickering over jurisdiction issues have allowed industrial, recreational and residential development proposals to threaten this productive, yet fragile, ecosystem. Concerned birders and naturalists should make their federally-elected officials aware of the importance of the region and strive for its legal protection.

DAVID ALLINSON is Past-President of the Victoria Natural History Society. His particular interests are the diurnal and nocturnal birds of prey. His is an active volunteer with the Canadian Wildlife Services' bird migration project at Rocky Point and conducts several field trips each year for the VNHS.

Ayum Creek Nature Tours

Guided tours of the Ayum Creek estuary are scheduled for every other Sunday, beginning on Sunday, May 4, from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Meet in the parking lot at the junction of Ayum Creek and Highway 14 (Sooke Road), approximately 1 km west of Saseenos.

The Ponytail Duck

By Gwen Nicol

While aimlessly cruisin' the Kootenays recently, armed with my 8 x 36's, I decided to check the Waneta Dam for rare waterfowl. Sure enough, there was a bunch of ducks mucking about. Most of 'em looked like they'd been sleeping on the road, and one of those machines that paints the white lines had run over their bills and down their sides. But there was one weirdo, front and centre, hard to ignore, sporting a ponytail!

This was a new one on me so I called this guy who keeps tellin' me he's some kind of world expert! After I answered some unkind questions about how much time I'd spent in the beer parlour, he reckoned short of shootin' it and pinning it up on display in the Parliament Buildings, I should try to write about it and hope like hell someone will believe it! Well, here goes.

You remember that movie "10" with Bo Derek on the beach in Mexico? Well, I figure this duck must've been there when they were making it and was mighty impressed by the effects of hair style on the opposite sex. He made damned sure he was in full view, pretending to be feeding, but each time he bobbed up from underwater he casually tossed his locks and sent the water drops flying off. Even I was impressed.

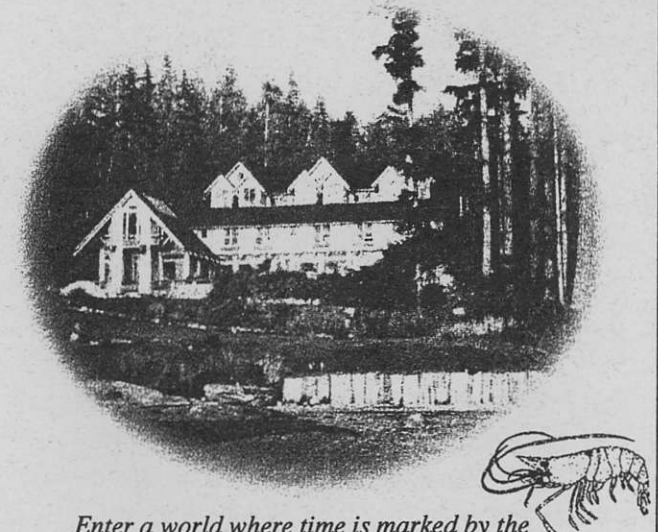
The other guys must've been a bit envious but probably figured they had him with their paint jobs — the hair freak's bill was downright plain, with just a dirty smudge on the tip, and he didn't have any smart stripe on the side — he looked like he'd just stuck a lid from one of those small, white Styrofoam coolers on each wing.

Well, that's about it, really. Now, my book says this could be a Tufted Duck if I was in Victoria, but like I said, this was to hell and gone from any coast so I'm naming it the "Ponytail Duck".

Gwen has also submitted to the authorities, in a more serious note, her observations on this bird for verification of the sighting.

Be sure and take advantage of the many field trips sponsored by the Victoria Natural History Society. Details can be found in the Calendar.

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Federation of British Columbia Naturalists

Vancouver Island Region

By Tony Embleton

Our Region has held four meetings this past year with the eight federated and three affiliated clubs, with an average attendance of 16 naturalists. It is expected that a new club will be established on Hornby Island and perhaps another at Zeballos. During these meetings a number of concerns common to many of the clubs were discussed, including:

- Many forestry issues such the application of the Forest Practices Code and annual allowable cut.
- CSA Forest Management Certification system; the clubs are now examining the Forest Stewardship Council proposals.
- Englishman's River gravel pit proposal and its possible effects on the quality of water.

- Possible deterioration of Lazo Marsh due to development.
- Ecological Reserves and stewardship needs.
- Rossiter Lake and the removal of water for the Mt. Washington Resort.
- Rhododendron Lake and the protection of the habitat for these plants.
- Hybrid poplar plantations and their effects on the land and the groundwater supply.
- Aquaculture and its effects on other flora and fauna.
- Individual clubs have been active in a number of natural history activities, some of which are reported below:
- Several clubs have organized and/or participated in Broom removal work parties.

Federation of British Columbia Naturalists

The Federation of British Columbia Naturalists (FBCN) is made up of 44 Federated and nine Affiliated clubs, with a total membership of about 5,000 members. The clubs meet to exchange ideas and information, go on walks and hikes, have regular speakers and generally enjoy the natural world around their local environment. Some of the larger clubs are also fully involved in a proactive way with issues of conservation, pollution, and the protection and acquisition of important ecological sites.

The strength of the FBCN lies in the fact that it provides a unified voice for naturalist clubs and has done so since 1969. The input of the Federation and its members is valued and respected throughout the province as reasoned, informed and non-confrontational.

The tangible benefits of membership in the Federation include:

- A unified voice for the establishment and proper management of protected natural areas.
- A Board of Directors, consisting of Directors from each member club, that conducts the business of the Federation according to the wishes of the member clubs.
- An office open year-round, five days a week, to answer your queries, provide support services to the Board of Directors and run the operations of the Federation.
- Third Party Liability insurance package for our member clubs, members and Directors.
- Support for club projects and activities including the ability to accept funds as a registered Charitable Organization, to be passed on to individual clubs.
- Educational conservation activities to complement Annual and Fall General Meetings.
- A major conservation project, FBCN Land For Nature, that helps clubs identify and protect habitat that is increasingly threatened by rapid urban growth.
- Involvement in the development and promotion of *Naturescape British Columbia*, a new provincial program to promote caring for wildlife habitat around the home.
- Representation of individual club interests on a number of provincial-level committees, commissions and funding agencies.
- Subscription to the *BC Naturalist* and a special subscription price for the new magazine *Cordillera*, a journal of BC natural history published by the FBCN.
- The opportunity to attend Federation-sponsored camps with like-minded naturalists.

The Victoria Natural History Society is a member of the Federation of British Columbia Naturalists (FBCN) and a portion of our annual dues goes to supporting the activities of this "umbrella" organization. If you are interested in receiving more information on the Federation of British Columbia Naturalists visit their office at 321-1367 West Broadway, Vancouver (postal code V6H 4A9). You can also telephone them at (604) 737-3057 or fax them at (604) 738-7175.

- Arrowsmith Naturalists have worked on the Trail Inventory Project for B.C. and have been establishing an Honour Roll of big and historic trees.
- Arrowsmith Naturalists have also conducted inventories on three properties, one of which is Morello Pond. They have also made recommendations for improving the parking lot at Cathedral Grove.
- The Comox/Strathcona Natural History Society has helped to secure an addition to Seal Bay Regional Nature Park and the Comox Bluffs.
- The Comox/Strathcona Society has also published a Nature Guide to the Comox Valley and works hard each year with the organization of the Trumpeter Swan Festival.
- The Cowichan Valley Natural History Society hosted a Streamkeepers Workshop and the Great Blue Heron Festival.
- Mitlenatch Field Naturalists have been busy doing vegetation inventory mapping on Quadra Island.
- The Oyster Bay Protection Association has been formed with the help of Allan and Betty Brooks of the Mitlenatch club.
- The Nanaimo Field Naturalists have participated in the planning of the Sea Lion Festival; the club has also had success with their experiments with the Purple Loosestrife beetle project.
- The Nanaimo group has worked very hard to preserve and enhance the wetland area known as Buttertubs Marsh.
- The Saltspring Trail and Nature Club and other organizations have been successful in securing the old Mill Farm as a Capital Regional Park and hope to add some parcels of land to it.
- The Victoria Natural History Society has provided input to the Juan de Fuca Trail Provincial Park and has appointed members to serve on the Rithet's Bog and Viaduct Flats management committees.
- The VNHS has also been active in opposition to the extension of the Galloping Goose trail across Blenkinsop Lake, an important natural sanctuary.
- Members of the VNHS have formed the Habitat Acquisition Trust Foundation and have negotiated an option to purchase a property near Sooke — The Ayum Creek estuary.
- The Victoria Society is also working on a proposal to complete the identification of Greenways and to finish the inventory of Ecologically Sensitive Areas.

This report is a summary of the activities of the Vancouver Island affiliates of the Federation of British Columbia Naturalists which was presented at the Annual General Meeting of the FBCN.

DISCOVER BARKLEY SOUND

The Lodge at Shahowis is pleased to offer guests the opportunity to enjoy hands on coastal studies with a team of knowledgeable and intriguing biologists, naturalists and historians and the **Bamfield Marine Station** in an inspiring natural setting.

Birds of Barkley Sound

Owing to its diverse habitats, more species of birds breed in B.C. than any other province. Expeditions focus on a study of marine birds and their habitat and observation and census techniques. Includes study of offshore and inland colonies.



Intertidal Biodiversity

Daily guided tours to explore the treasures of tidal pools and low tide with biologists from the **Bamfield Marine Station**.

Marine Mammals

The waters of Barkley Sound are home to minke, humpbacks, porpoises, river otters, seals and sealions as well as Grey whales and Orcas. Expedition includes survey of natural and social history of the coastal marine mammals including Native hunts and European fur and whale fishery.



The Nootka People

Cultural and archaeological field study of the art, myth, history and ethnobotany of the West Coast First Peoples.

Ethnobotany of Coastal Plants

From canoes and clothing to healing remedies, join our team to examine the plants and seaweeds of the Coastal shores and rainforests. Explore the traditional uses of plants and seaweeds and gather and experiment with the vast array of culinary treasures.

Join us this Summer at Shahowis for these and many other exciting programs. Trips includes lectures and work shops, and guided expeditions on 55' schooner and in Lodge's fleet of 22' TZAR rigid pontoon boats.

1-6 day adventures including deluxe accommodations, meals, and transportation starting at \$135.00/night.

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**Victoria Natural History Society
Balance Sheet as at December 31, 1996**

	General Fund	Conservation Fund	Scholarship Fund	Total 1996	Total 1995
Assets					
Cash	\$11,713	\$468	\$249	\$12,430	\$6,995
Term deposits	4,847	6,660	2,949	14,396	14,000
Accounts receivable	1,479			1,479	798
Inventory of publications	6,689			6,689	7,273
Investments-long-term		86,105	50,895	137,000	137,700
Investments-funds (market Value = \$58,938)		54,002		54,002	54,002
Total	\$24,728	\$147,175	\$54,093	\$225,996	\$220,768
Liabilities					
Accounts payable (Goldstream viewing tower)	\$0			\$0	\$7,863
H.A.T. Fund	7,455			7,455	-271
Prepaid memberships and subscriptions	2,598			2,598	2,035
Scholarships unpaid			\$900	900	3,000
Other: GST paid	-397			-397	-340
Fund balances	15,072	\$147,175	53,193	215,440	208,481
Totals	\$24,728	\$147,175	\$54,093	\$225,996	\$220,768

It is the policy of the Society that:

- i) The General Account shall be self-sustaining;
- ii) The Conservation and Scholarship Funds be maintained as separate funds;
- iii) Accounting shall be performed on an accrual basis;
- iv) Insofar as it is appropriate, the first charge on income shall be to provide for the protection of the capital of the Conservation and Scholarship Funds from erosion of value due to inflation during the year.

Approved on behalf of the Board of Directors
David Allinson *Director*
Gordon Hart *Director/Treasurer*

**Victoria Natural History Society
Statement of Income and Expenditures for the year ending December 31, 1996**

GENERAL ACCOUNT	1996	1995
Income		
Membership dues	\$14,001	\$13,794
Donations	398	547
Interest	584	327
Publications (net of costs)	448	1,485
Advertising	2,202	0
Government grant	0	1,200
Other income (Banquet \$56, Goldstream Art Show \$2,590)	2,646	872
Totals	20,278	18,225
Expenses		
"Naturalist" production & mailing	\$7,941	7,147
Meetings costs	650	181
Postage and office	775	992
Affiliation fees	5,855	5,940
Telephone-bird alert & events tape	1,081	1,102
Miscellaneous	1,841	279
Totals	18,143	15,641
Excess of income over expenditure	\$2,135	2,584
Funds on hand at beginning of year	12,937	10,353
Funds on hand at end of year	15,072	12,937
CONSERVATION FUND		
Income		
Interest	\$7,729	\$9,083
Expenses		
Donation to Swan Lake Nature Center	4,000	4,000
Other donations	200	0
Committee	578	369
Total expenses	4,778	4,369
Excess of income over expenses	2,951	4,714
Funds on hand at beginning of year	144,224	139,510
Funds on hand at end of year	147,175	144,224
SCHOLARSHIP FUND		
Income		
Interest	\$4,626	\$3,329
Expenses		
Scholarships and bursaries	2,850	3,050
Total expenses	2,850	3,050
Excess of income over expenditure	1,776	279
Funds on hand at beginning of year	51,417	51,138
Funds on hand at end of year	53,193	51,417
HABITAT ACQUISITION TRUST FUND — Summary of revenue and expenses for 1996		
Beginning Balance		-\$271
Income		
Donations	1,059	
Muscal Hats	1,997	
Arizona Trip	4,895	
Interest	25	
Total income	7,705	
Expenses		
Community Hall	250	
Balance, end of year	7,455	
GOLDSTREAM VIEWING TOWER FUND		
Balance, beginning of year		\$7,863
Income		
VNHS Art Show - 1995	2,590	
Interest - 1996	121	
Total income	10,574	
Expenses		
Paid to Goldstream, Nov. 11/96	10,574	
Balance, end of year	0	

Habitat Acquisition Trust Tour of Southern Texas, April 1997



Photo: Marilyn Lambert



Photos: Bruce Whittington

Birds in Forested Landscapes

By Cornell Lab of Ornithology

The question "how much forest does a forest bird need?" is almost as difficult to answer as "how much wood could a woodchuck chuck if a woodchuck could chuck wood?" Though the first question is very basic, it's not so simple to answer, particularly when you're considering multiple species in different geographic regions. To address this question and many others, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, in cooperation with Partners In Flight, has designed a new citizen-science project called *Birds in Forested Landscapes* (BFL). The project was field tested during the 1996 breeding season and will be open to volunteer birders throughout North America this year.

As habitats such as forests, prairies and wetlands are lost because of changing land uses, biologists must determine how much habitat is required to support viable populations of birds. This challenge would be easier to meet if we were sure that the sum of the parts always equalled the whole. In other words, do six 50-acre patches of forest serve the same ecological purpose as a contiguous 300-acre forest tract? Scientific evidence suggests that forest fragmentation (dividing large forest tracts into smaller pieces separated by nonforest habitat) is detrimental to some woodland bird species.

The initial goal of BFL is to determine how forest fragmentation and land-use influence the presence and nesting success of seven species of North American forest thrushes: Veery, Gray-cheeked Thrush, Swainson's Thrush, Hermit Thrush, Bicknell's Thrush, Varied Thrush and Wood Thrush — and two forest raptors: Cooper's Hawk and Sharp-shinned Hawk. The project was designed so that additional species can be studied in subsequent years using the BFL model.

In addition to contributing to our knowledge of thrushes and hawks, BFL will serve as a conduit for a flow of habitat management recommendations to the developers of the Partners in Flight North American Bird Conservation Plan

(BCP). Partners In Flight is an extensive coalition of biologists, land managers and educators who are committed to identifying the habitat requirements of healthy bird populations and to ensuring the long-term protection and management of bird habitat throughout the continent. This is a colossal job and would be nearly impossible without the assistance of thousands of volunteer birders and amateur scientists throughout North America.

So, how does BFL work? Once you sign up, you'll receive a participants kit that includes complete instructions, reference materials, data forms and tapes or CD's for censusing forest birds. All BFL participants will select census points in forest patches of different sizes, then visit each point at least twice during the breeding season to census for thrushes, hawks (or both), look for evidence of nesting, and record certain characteristics of their study sites. In the field, participants will record observations on field data sheets. Later, at your home or office, you can transcribe the data to computer-readable data forms and mail them to the Lab of Ornithology. Lab biologists will then analyse the data and report the results to participants, land managers and developers of the BCP. The results will also be published in scientific journals and popular magazines.

Volunteers can sign up to participate in BFL by contacting the Lab (see below). There is no charge for participation in BFL during the 1997 field season. *Birds in Forested Landscapes* is an excellent project for birding groups such as bird clubs and chapters of the National Audubon Society, and student organizations such as the chapters of The Wildlife Society.

By becoming part of the BFL team you will further your knowledge of bird identification and avian ecology, participate in scientific research and help protect forest birds and their habitat throughout North America. *Birds in Forested Landscapes* is funded by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and matching donations.

*Readers interested in participating in the **Birds in Forested Landscapes** project should contact the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, 159 Sapsucker Woods Road, Ithaca, New York, 14850. You can also telephone them at (607) 250-2440 or e-mail them at: birdeducation@cornell.edu.*

Pacific Octopus

By Pamela Thuringer

Spring is in the air, on the land and in the sea, signaling a time of change for most living organisms. Locally, we are fortunate to witness this transformation early in comparison to our northern neighbours, something I have once again been reminded of this year. After spending the first week of March and April traipsing around the Rose Harbour area in the southern Queen Charlotte Islands, and then the eastern shores of Hawkesbury Island, south of Kitimat, it was wonderful to return to the cherry blossom-lined streets of Victoria and contemplate this metamorphic time of year.

The Queen Charlotte Islands or Haida Gwaii are prone to suddenly-changing, often severe, weather patterns throughout most of the year, as was explained to me by a bush pilot on my first trip to these magnificent islands. I was witness to three separate snow squalls as we headed south along the shoreline of Moresby Island on an hour long journey from Sandspit to Rose Harbour. The site of a turn-of-the-century Whaling Station, Rose Harbour, is nestled in one of the southern most parts of the Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve, on the northern end of Kunghit Island. Access to this remote area is only by plane or by boat, and we landed in the harbour amidst blowing snow. During a period of five days we experienced an array of weather patterns, from snow squalls, hail and horizontally-driven rain, to a bright and sunny but crisp last day. Despite the constantly shifting weather above the



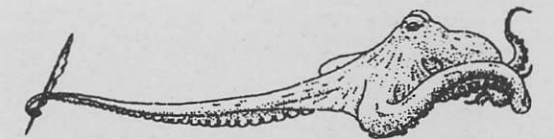
Young bull kelp (*Nereocystis*) (Video image: Pamela Thuringer).

water surface, it was almost a relief to gear up and dive in the relatively consistent (but cold) temperatures of the marine subtidal waters.

One of the more noticeable changes in both the subtidal and intertidal areas brought about by spring is the sprouting of many annual and perennial algal species. There is something quite refreshing and revitalizing about observing all the



Intertidal flat with marsh vegetation fringe (Photo: Pamela Thuringer).



young, less than one metre in height, *Nereocystis* (Bull Kelp) growing in depths of one to ten metres of water. This kelp, which dies back considerably during the winter months, is most commonly recognized as a gigantic and intertwined menagerie of blades and gas-filled floats providing a canopy cover for plants and animals existing below. I experienced the same wave of excitement for new growth upon detecting the tiny 20 cm blades of the eventual large-bladed brown kelps such as *Laminaria* sp. or *Agarum* sp. adhering to hard substrates by their holdfasts. In addition to these subtidal species, and for those members of the team that remained onshore, plenty of old stalks of the perennial algae *Alaria* sp. were visible in the lowest reaches of the intertidal, showing the same signs of new growth.

Jumping east across Hecate Strait, then heading north into the far reaching marine-influenced coastal inlets of the mainland, evidence of spring was also apparent. Although most of the land down to the highest high water mark was still covered in snow, the vast intertidal marsh and mudflat at the head of the bay sported what appeared to be millions of

new shoots in the upper intertidal zone. These fresh green shoots of a variety of sedges and grasses, surfacing amongst the matted yellow remnants of marsh vegetation from the year previous, provide an easily accessible nutrient source for bears emerging from hibernation. As this area of the province is known for the presence of the Kermodei bear, a sub-species of the black bear, I was anticipating catching a glimpse of one meandering out into the three kilometre long and half a kilometre wide intertidal flats to feast on the spring vegetation. I ended up relieved I hadn't encountered any wildlife after coming across a freshly devoured deer carcass in the same intertidal and remembering the timber wolf I had seen loping along a snow covered logging road earlier that day. As uplifting as it is to witness the evolution of spring, I am also reminded that there are other members of the food chain that are triggered by the changing season, all of which deserve our awe and respect.

PAMELA THURINGER is a marine biologist working with a local environmental consulting firm.

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WHEN ANGELS BLOOM

by David Allinson

The angels appeared magically overnight and slowly grew larger...
 Nature's order is a wonder of controlled randomness
 And one is reminded of the significance of the insignificant in spring.
 As each dawn foretells of new beginnings and dramas to unfold,
 This bed of angels by the sea explodes from a cloak of green
 Into a variety of colours that awaken the eyes.
 Camas, larkspur, sea blush, shootingstar, satin, and spring-gold
 All join to bring peace and hope after winter's chill.
 However, this apparent feast for our eyes is not truly designed for us.
 Instead, these angels are enticing insects to partake in their nectar.
 Our knowledge of the natural world is enhanced and expanded
 Each year by our efforts to categorize and itemize,
 But names are arbitrary and teach us little and we still know nothing.
 The key to our role on earth lies beyond study and analysis.
 Just by sitting at the edge of a vestigial meadow of exquisite colour
 One can hear these angels whisper an old, timeless tale.
 Indeed, when these angels bloom let hope join your admiration.
 For as terrifying as the threat of a "Silent Spring" is,
 So too is the threat of a "Dark Spring" where no angels bloom.
 I fear the decline of the meadow is a harbinger of our own demise.
 Stop...stop...look...look...listen...listen, you can hear the angels blooming....

Inspired by the spring wildflower display at the Tower Point section of Witty's Lagoon Regional Park.

Photo: Jonathan Grant, wildlife photographer, Saltspring Island.

Welcome to New Members

FEBRUARY
Jean Ackland
 of Queenswood Drive

Mary Campbell
 of Montford Crescent

Fred Catherwood and Audrey Underwood
 of Douglas Street

Neil Hughes
 of Sooke enjoys birding, conservation and ecology.

Karen Lucas
 of Pembroke Street

Dr. and Joanne Manley
 of Talc Place

Louise Patterson
 of Sooke is interested in natural history, land-use planning and conservation.

Cathy Riley
 of Taunton Street

MARCH
Dawn Arnot
 of Lee Avenue

Wendy Brookes and Jeff Pakczyn
 of Cecelia Road have interests in mushrooms, birds, native plants and protecting the environment.

Catherine Gale
 of Sooke Road is interested in birding, plants and ecosystems, and has a house full of interesting cats.

Roberta Hower
 of Sidney likes birding, hiking, kayaking and canoeing.

Ann Nightingale
 of Halliday Place

Sylvia Samborski
 of MacDonald Drive has interests in ecology, biodiversity, habitat protection, native plantings and environmental education.

Rick Schortinghuis
 of Aquarius Road enjoys birding, wildflowers and intertidal life.

IN SYNC (the Sunflower Young Naturalists Club) is a new Vancouver Island magazine for children, 6-10 years. See Bulletin Board for details.

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. **NOTICE:** Natural History Presentations, Birders' Night and Botany Night will not be held from May to August but will begin again in September. There is a Marine Night on May 26 but the next one will not be until September 29.

MAY EVENTS

Saturday, May 3

Spring Bird Count

This annual event returns to the May time frame to record the bird migration through Victoria. It is the same format as the Christmas Bird Count and the same area leaders will be contacting their troops to do the count in warmer weather. Let us see if we can beat our record of 170 species set in 1993. Contact **David Pearce** (658-0295) if you wish to participate and are not already on the CBC database. There will be a post count gathering at 12:30 p.m. at the Swan Lake Nature Centre. **Note** date change from May 10.

Saturday, May 3

Cedar: Tree of Life

From the cradle to the grave, cedar has been important to coastal B.C.'s First Peoples. Find out why with a CRD Parks Naturalist as your guide. Meet at the Nature House, Francis/King Regional Park, off Munns Road in Saanich at 1:00 p.m. CRD Family event.

Sunday, May 4

Thetis Explorations

On this hike we'll be exploring the lower area of Thetis Lake. We'll start with an invigorating hike up Seymour Hill with its splendid view, then descend and make our way around Thetis Lake. Be sure to bring a lunch and wear sturdy hiking shoes. Meet at the Woollett Information Centre, Thetis Lake Regional Park, by the main parking lot off Highway #1 in View Royal. 1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. CRD Family event.

Tuesday, May 6

Board of Directors' Meeting

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

Saturday, May 10

Birding at Witty's Lagoon

Join **Bryan Gates** (598-7789) for a pleasant morning's birding through the forest and down to the sea at Witty's Lagoon Regional Park. Meet in the parking lot (off Metchosin Road) at 8:00 a.m.

Saturday, May 10

Songbirds at Mill Hill

The songbird migration is just about at its height at this time. Join our guest naturalist and birder to see the bevy of birds that can be found in this spectacular park. Spring wildflowers will be in full bloom on the hill, an added bonus to enjoy on your way to the summit. Meet at the parking lot, Mill Hill Regional Park, off Atkins Avenue in Langford. Saturday 9:00 a.m. CRD Bird-watching event.

Sunday, May 11

Paint-in Artists Festival

Come and enjoy hundreds of paintings on display and meet and mingle with scores of talented artists from the Victoria area. This happy outdoors festival, hosted by the Friends of Hatley Park, celebrates creativity amidst the beautiful natural environment of Hatley Park, on the grounds of Royal Roads University in Colwood. Admission is free but a \$1.00 University parking fee applies. Starts at 1:30 p.m. For more information telephone 391-2563.

Sunday, May 11

To the Trestles and Beyond

Experience the sights that train passengers may have seen 75 years ago...the beautiful Sooke Hills, the roaring waters of the Sooke River or a solitary telegraph wire running beside the tracks. Once giant trestles spanned Charter and Todd creeks. Now there are sturdy bridges, so we can hike across these creeks and beyond. Bring a snack or picnic lunch and wear good walking shoes. Meet at the Sooke River Road parking lot in Sooke. 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m., Galloping Goose Regional Trail. CRD Family event.

Wednesday, May 14

Marine Ecology Presentation

Esquimalt Harbour will be the focus of a talk by **Doug Bright**. Come and learn about marine ecology — *Mud, mud, glorious mud?* Lug a mug to Shoreline School (the blue school just off Admirals Road and the Old Island Highway). 7:00 p.m. For further details, contact Joyce at 479-8944.

Wednesday, May 14

Cultural History Hike

This is a great way to learn about some of the cultural history of our area while getting a bit of exercise. Join a CRD Parks Archaeologist/Naturalist and learn about some of early coastal people's fishing, hunting and food gathering practices. Wear good hiking shoes and pack a lunch. Bring binoculars if you have them. Wednesday 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., East Sooke Regional Park. CRD Adult event.

Saturday, May 17

Midden Matters

What is a midden? And what would you find in one? Join a CRD Parks Naturalist and visit an old archaeological site. Discover what middens can tell us about the past. Meet at 1:00 p.m. at the Nature Information Trailer in the main parking lot off Metchosin Road in Metchosin, Witty's Lagoon Regional Park. CRD Family event.

Sunday, May 18

Nature Walk at Mount Tolmie Park

Join the Mount Tolmie Conservancy Association on a walk around Mount Tolmie from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Meet at the summit and bring your camera and binoculars; be sure and wear sturdy shoes. For further information call **Eric Redekop** at 595-7270.

Sunday, May 18

Hiking High on Mount Work

It's an uphill climb (at least for the first half of the trip) but never fear. Just keep asking our naturalist questions and you can have plenty of stops along the way to rest. And the views from the top are fabulous!! Wear sturdy footwear, bring a walking stick if you have one, and remember to bring your camera to capture the magnificent scenery. Appropriate for adults and children who can handle strenuous hikes. Meet at the Munns Road parking lot in Saanich, Mt. Work Regional Park. 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. CRD Family Hiking event.

Monday, May 19

Great Big Greens

What's huge and green and lives in parks? Give up? Come on this walk to learn about the biggest green things in our parks... TREES! Meet some of these forest giants, learn to identify some local trees and more. Meet at 1:00 p.m. at the Nature House off Munns Road in Saanich, Francis/King Regional Park. CRD Family event.

Wednesday, May 21

Hummingbirds are Here!

Parents and children alike will enjoy this program while learning more about these delightful little birds. We may even get a chance to watch them flying and feeding! Pre-registration is required and a fee will be charged: \$6.00 per adult/child pair and \$4.00 for additional children (maximum of two per adult). 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., Francis/King Regional Park. CRD Parents and Tots event.

Thursday, May 22

Parks and Conservation Committee

All VNHS members are welcome to join in the discussion and express their concerns about local conservation issues. 7:00 p.m. at the Swan Lake Nature House. Note that this meeting has been moved from the regular Wednesday night slot to Thursday. Contact **Mike Carson** at 478-1535 for further details and to confirm the date and location.

Saturday, May 24

Elk/Beaver Lake Hike

Come for a wonderful stroll with **Tom Gillespie** (361-1694) through exceptional nesting habitat on the shore of a favourite recreational lake. Watch for breeding warblers, vireos and water-fowl. Meet at 7:00 a.m. at the parking lot at Jennings Lane on the West side of the Pat Bay Highway.

Saturday, May 24

Bear Aware

There have been a number of bear sightings in our area over the past two years. Learn more about these animals and what you need to do to be safe around them. Our guest speaker, a conservation officer from the Ministry of Environment, will help you to be "bear aware"! Meet at 7:00 p.m. at the Nature House, off Munns Road in

Saanich, Francis/King Regional Park Centre. Pre-registration is required and a fee of \$4/person will be charged. CRD Family event.

Sunday, May 25

Pisaster on the Prowl

Learn who's who at the seashore and why a *Pisaster* means disaster to some of these creatures. This fascinating family outing takes place among the tide pools off Tower Point during low tide. Meet at the Tower Point parking lot off Olympic View Drive in Metchosin. 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m., Witty's Lagoon Regional Park. CRD Family event.

Monday, May 26

Marine Night

Graham Gillespie of the Pacific Biological Station in Nanaimo will present *Something Fishy*, an illustrated talk on the diversity and natural history of marine fishes in British Columbia. Swan Lake Nature Centre. 7:30 p.m. Phone **Phil Lambert**, 477-5922 for details.

Saturday, May 31

Survival Basics

Summer is on its way and many people are planning backpacking and hiking adventures. This is an introductory course to wilderness survival for adults. Learn how to use a compass, how to identify some common wild edibles, building shelters, fires and more. Bring a lunch. 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., East Sooke Regional Park. Pre-registration is required and there will be a fee of \$8/person. CRD Adult event.

JUNE EVENTS

Sunday, June 1

Birding by Ear — Layritz Park

Join **Hank VanderPol** (658-3482) and learn to identify the songs of the dawn chorus. This four hour walk will take us up Broadcast Hill and down to Viaduct Flats. Bring a snack, water and meet Hank at 6:00 a.m. at Layritz Park (off Glyn Road which is off Wilkinson Rd.).

Sunday, June 1

Nature Walk at Mount Tolmie Park (See details, May 18th)

Tuesday, June 3

Board of Directors' Meeting

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

Friday, June 6 - Monday, June 9

Society for Conservation Biology Convention

University of Victoria, Department of Geography. The conference topics range from almost the smallest particles of life in the molecular biology sessions, to the largest life forms in the whale sessions, and, from the theoretical architecture of the life sciences to the subtleties of gaining conservation perspectives across cultural boundaries. A central theme for the conference is marine conservation biology but we hope to promote this theme through a dialogue with conservation scientists from a broad range of backgrounds. For further information, contact **Pat McGuire**, Conference Management, University of Victoria, PO Box 3030, Victoria, B.C. CANADA, V8W 3N6: Phone: 250-721-8470; Fax : 250-721-8774. Or visit their web site at http://geography.geog.uvic.ca/dept/announce/sch_page.html.

Sunday, June 15

Annual Champagne Garden Tour, Royal Roads

Join **David Rutherford**, Head Gardener of Royal Roads, as he leads a fascinating walk and talk describing the plants, trees and history of these exquisite gardens. Then sip champagne on the terrace of Hatley Castle with His Worship, John Bergbusch, Mayor of Colwood. There are two tours: at 1:00 p.m. and again at 2:30 p.m. Arrive early, as demand often exceeds capacity for this delightful yearly social event. Admission by \$8.00 donation; note that a \$1.00 University parking fee applies. For information, telephone 391-2563.

Sunday, June 15

Nature Walk at Mount Tolmie Park (See details, May 18th)

Wednesday, June 18

Parks and Conservation Committee

All VNHS members are welcome to join in the discussion and express their concerns about local conservation issues. 7:00 p.m. at the Swan Lake Nature House. Contact **Mike Carson** at 478-1535 for further details.

Saturday, June 21

Intertidal Field Trip

Explore the rocky intertidal of Macaulay Point. Meet in the parking lot of Fleming Beach, Esquimalt, at the foot of Lampson St. at 10:00 a.m. For further details, contact **Phil Lambert** at 477-5922.

Saturday, June 21

Francis King Park

Join **Alan McLeod** (382-3854) at 7:00 a.m. for a day of birding

Photographers!

Photographers, your best photos are needed. A feature wall in the new library at Juan de Fuca will showcase Garry Oak Meadow beauties. Especially sought is a photo of the Garry Oak Butterfly, *Propertius Duskywing*. Nan Archibold has started the display collection by donating a set of four photographs depicting the acorn to seedling for a Garry Oak. For further information and donations, call **Joyce** at 479-8944.

Request for Volunteers

There is a need for volunteers with experience with habitat issues in general and in bird habitat requirements in particular to assist with the development of an appropriate management plan for Viaduct Flats. If you are interested in helping out, contact **Michael Carson** at 478-1535.

New Children's Naturalist Magazine

IN SYNC (the Sunflower Young Naturalists Club), is a magazine targeted at younger children (6-10 yrs). Its aim is to interest and educate children in the natural world we all share. The format is a cheerful one, including crosswords, an art gallery, front cover contests, poems, puzzles, a creature feature, a science experiment, and articles/stories relating to the environment (both local and global). Subscription is \$20 annually (12 issues). For further

information, call **Carol Ann Shaw** at (250) 743-9375, or write to: IN SYNC, c/o Wildwood Creative Services, 2951 Coleman Road RR #1, Cobble Hill, BC V0R 1L0. E-mail: wildwood@islandnet.com.

Sunday, June 29

Nature Walk at Mount Tolmie Park (See details, May 18th)

JULY EVENTS

Sunday, July 6

Birding on Mandarte and Sidney Islands

Join **David Allinson** on a specially chartered boat to cruise around Mandarte Island to see the largest seabird colony in Georgia Strait. The spectacular cliff face on the south side of the island is covered with nesting cormorants, gulls and guillemots. An elusive pair of Tufted Puffins also nest on the island. Then on to Sidney Island where early migrant shorebirds congregate on the tidal flats. Bring lunch, drinks and \$10.00 for the ferry fare. Meet at the ferry dock at the foot of Beacon Avenue in Sidney at 8:15 a.m. Space on the boat is limited, so please reserve your place with David Allinson at 478-0493.

Saturday and Sunday, July 12 & 13

Hurricane Ridge

Meet at the Coho Ferry Terminal at 5:15 a.m. (for the 5:30 a.m. sailing) for a day of pelagic birding between Victoria and Port Angeles and botany on Hurricane Ridge. Your leaders will be **David Pearce** and **Dannie Carsen** for birding, and **Adolf Ceska** and **Bev Glover** for botany. We will be returning on the 5:15 p.m. sailing on Sunday, arriving back in Victoria at 6:45 p.m. Cost of ferry plus bus will be about \$38.00 per person. Please make reservations with **David Pearce** (658-0295) by July 10th, as bus seats are limited.

BULLETIN BOARD

information, call **Carol Ann Shaw** at (250) 743-9375, or write to: IN SYNC, c/o Wildwood Creative Services, 2951 Coleman Road RR #1, Cobble Hill, BC V0R 1L0. E-mail: wildwood@islandnet.com.

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 regularly on Wednesdays and Sundays at 9:00 a.m. Everyone is welcome.

More Birding On-Line

Bruce Bennett from Whitehorse, Yukon sent in the address for the Yukon Bird Club's home page, which is: <http://www.yukonweb.wis.net/community/ybc/>

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.



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