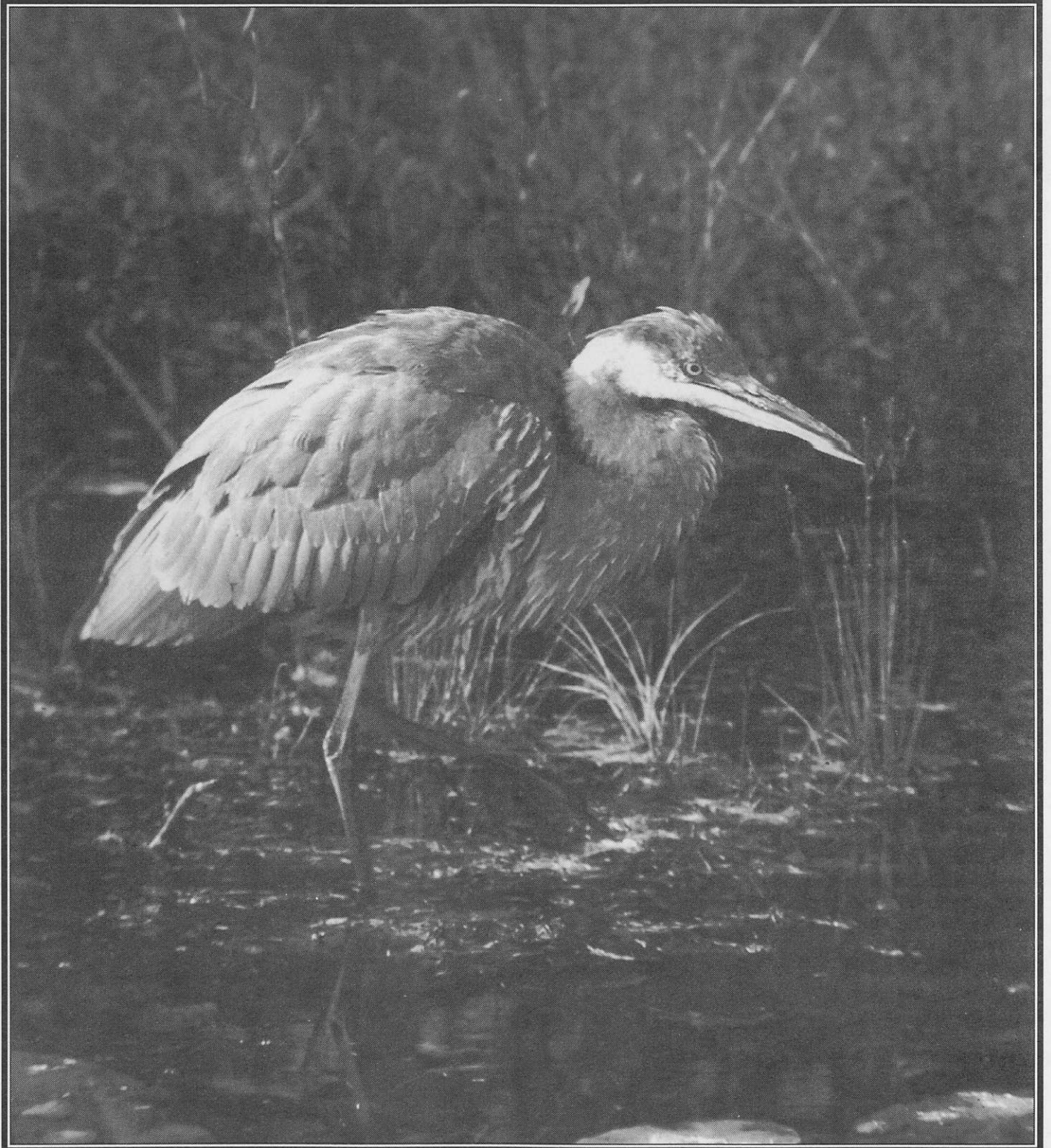




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Thank you for your patronage.

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OUR
COVER

Our lead article in this issue is related to the protection of the McFadden Creek Heron rookery that may be in jeopardy since the property is unprotected and up for sale. Efforts are now underway to raise funding to purchase the 12-acre property to protect this important nesting area. The cover photo of a Great Blue Heron was taken by Canadian wildlife photographer Jonathan Grant, of Saltspring Island. Jonathan's work can be seen at the *Off the Waterfront Gallery* and *Artcraft* in Ganges, Saltspring Island.

A REMINDER

Materials submitted to the *Victoria Naturalist* (disks, photos, etc.) can be picked up at *The Field-Naturalist* store, 1126 Blanshard Street, Victoria.



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McFadden Creek Rookery At Risk

By Michelle Grant

It's 5:15 p.m. in early March and perched high in the stand of alders and cottonwoods, forty to fifty great blue herons mingle. A strange cacophony of staccato sounds punctuate the air: a scream, a bark, a sneeze, a guttural grunt and finally a rushing of wings. For the residents of this area, another nesting season has begun.

Ideally situated a half kilometre from the rich tidal flats of McFadden Creek on Saltspring Island, these Coastal Non-Migratory Great Blue Herons would appear to have everything going for them. A close-knit community of 118 nests bordered by agricultural land, their complacency would seem only natural. But like so many wild species, they are subject to habitat fragmentation and their homeland may at best prove only a temporary refuge.

Identified as the largest unprotected heron rookery in the Georgia Basin and possibly in all of B.C., the McFadden Creek Rookery is up for sale. While the owner of this 12-acre parcel would like to see the land and rookery preserved, he lacks the resources to do so. B.C.'s Wildlife

Act does protect nesting trees of herons, eagles and ospreys from being cut down, but rarely is this enough to ensure the birds will remain.

Hérons are sensitive to any disturbance of the site prior and during nesting. With a declining population of only 9,000 Non-migratory Great Blue Herons left in B.C., experts like Rob Butler, a biologist with the Canadian Wildlife Service, are worried. Currently blue-listed provincially, the species is considered vulnerable or at risk. With development galloping in the lower mainland and island coastal areas, herons are having to make way for humans.

Although the Point Roberts rookery, with its 187 nests, is on the increase, it's important not to read too much into this. Putting all our eggs into one nest can mean the total extinction of a species should disaster strike the crucial area. Rather than depending on one or two major rookeries to sustain a species, Rob Butler would prefer to see the existence of 30-40 separate colonies.

Efforts to preserve the McFadden Creek Heronry are

underway. As of May 17th, \$39,000 has been raised towards the purchase price of \$230,000, thanks to the commitment of local and off-island residents and generous donations from artist Robert Bateman, the Habitat Conservation Trust Fund, and the B.C. Land Conservancy.

Fundraising efforts by Wild Bird Trust, in partnership with Saltspring Waterbird Watch Collective, continue. A Foster Parent plan is in place where donors of any amount can, on paper, become surrogate parents. For information on fund-raising, or to find out more about the rookery, contact **Nina Raginsky** at 537-4515.

Donations should be made out to Wild Bird Trust and sent to:

The Waterbird Watch Collective
272 Beddis Road
Saltspring Island
B.C. V8K 2J1.

A raffle for a Robert Bateman limited edition print titled "Heron in Flight" will take place at the Green Rose Barn Sale on Saltspring Island, on August 23rd. Raffle tickets of \$2.00 each can be purchased at The Field Naturalist store. A silent auction of art pieces, craft items, goods and services will also be held. Additional items for the raffle are still needed; for arrangements contact Nina Raginsky. Contributions over \$10.00 are tax deductible.



McFadden Creek Rookery (Photo: Jonathan Grant).

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Blenkinsop Lake

By Tom Gillespie

A recent column on "Wheel Life" (April 12) *Times-Colonist* newspaper, lobbying for a bridge over Blenkinsop Lake, unfortunately oversimplifies a rather complex matter. For the sake of brevity, only two points are touched upon below. Our comments are based on a one-year weekly survey of birdlife in the valley, and related surveys there and elsewhere on the Peninsula.

The article claims that a trestle "will not disturb most wildlife, but a few species may be sensitive to pedestrian and bicycle activities". It is true that Mallards, American Wigeon and Canada Geese constitute a majority of the waterfowl that use the lake, and all are species that adapt easily to human presence. However, the lake is a significant overwintering area, nesting site and migration stopover for 14 other water-based species, and eight more species that are infrequent visitors.

Many of these other species definitely appear to be sensitive to human disturbance, especially during autumn migration when moving south from northern breeding grounds. At this time of year, having been subject to the sounds of gunfire en route, birds are particularly skittish. In our surveys, the mere glimpse of a white toque or sunlight reflecting off a metal scope, would send them into the air. While there are a few other shallow lakes in the region, none has the secluded, woodland border afforded by Blenkinsop Lake. Swan Lake is open and actually much deeper, attracting primarily diving waterfowl such as Double-crested Cormorants. The Narrows between Beaver and Elk Lakes is similar habitat but is a hive of boating activity, and does not boast the numbers and species diversity of Blenkinsop Lake. Viaduct Flats, by the Horticulture Centre of the Pacific, offers shallow water and quiet, but ecologically is a different water body. Green Herons, for example, which are a specialty of Blenkinsop Lake, and relatively rare in the Victoria area, are seldom seen at Viaduct.

Our experience is that with the noise and visual disturbance afforded by movement across a bridge over the lake, the species diversity of lake birdlife will decline markedly, and convert the water body to a Beacon Hill type pond. There is a solitude to this off-the-beaten-track water body that seems to be as attractive to wildlife as it is to the local-area residents who use it to get away from the hustle and bustle of urban life. Notwithstanding the obvious merits in linking up the Galloping Goose with the Saanich

Peninsula, there is no doubt that this solitude will disappear if the connection is made too close to the lake.

The second point is one not mentioned in "Wheel Life". This is the significant bird habitat of Lochside Trail between the lake and the Trail Head near Lohbrunner Road.

This area has long been a prime spot for Victoria birders because the strip of mixed riparian bush and tree cover, spreading up from the lake, is a magnet for songbirds, both during migration and in the breeding season. The strip is renowned for the wonderful song of the Black-headed Grosbeak in May through July. This colourful migrant from Central America nests in riparian habitat throughout western U.S. and in British Columbia.

Such habitat is fast disappearing, at a rate on a par with, if not exceeding, old-growth forests. In the Greater Victoria area, the Black-headed Grosbeak is a rare-to-uncommon species, with only 19 singing males documented in our 1994 survey, seven of which were on this stretch of Lochside Trail. None was found on the trail to the south of the lake, where suburbia encroaches.

The attraction of this lake-side trail vegetation is not restricted to the Black-headed Grosbeak. Between spring and autumn it is full of warblers and vireos, some common visitors, some less common, and is a regular site for rare visitors that are normally found in riparian habitat in the Okanagan. The trail is perhaps the most reliable place for finding Western and Eastern Kingbirds, again relatively rare in Victoria.

In what ways would this trail-side bird population be affected by conversion of the trail to a through route for cyclists and others? The increase in traffic would probably have limited impact on some species; after all, many songbirds nest in gardens in the middle of suburbia. The ubiquitous House Sparrows and starlings nest downtown. Our main concern here is the simple fact that conversion of the narrow trail to a multipurpose through-corridor would require destruction of much of the trail side vegetation. In the short term, heavy equipment to build a bridge will require a good access route. In the long term, the safe use of such a trail by large numbers of cyclists, walkers (often with dogs), equestrians, and wheelchair users, will certainly require widening from the present

This area is a magnet for songbirds, both during migration and in the breeding season...renowned for the wonderful song of the Black-headed Grosbeak in May through July.

Wanted — Bull Frog and Green Frog Sightings

Evidence is accumulating that the introduced Bullfrog has out competed and displaced native amphibians from large areas of Washington, Oregon and California, and the lower Fraser Valley. Aside from amphibians, adult Bullfrogs are known to eat turtle hatchlings, ducklings and other birds, and even garter snakes.

Bullfrog introductions seem to be the result of unsuccessful attempts at farming them for their meaty legs and their subsequent release into the wild. In B.C. the first records of Bullfrogs are from the Burnaby Lake area, around 1940. They now occur in the lower Fraser Valley from Vancouver to Chilliwack and on Vancouver Island from Victoria to Parksville and even on some Gulf Islands.

Green Frogs were imported for the pet trade, and as tadpoles for aquatic gardens, and subsequently escaped into the wild. The first records of Green Frogs from B.C. are from Little Mountain, near Hope, around 1948. They are now found in parts of the lower Fraser Valley as well as around Victoria. The impact of the Green Frog on the native fauna is not clear.

The purpose of my study is to map the occurrence of both of these introduced species in the Greater Victoria Region. Some ponds will be intensively surveyed in areas of high densities of these exotics to estimate population sizes and the co-occurrence of other amphibians. This study will provide baseline information for developing my doctoral project at the University of Victoria. The project will focus on the impact of these introduced species on the community structure of ponds and the associated native fauna. The results may provide insights for the conservation of local amphibians and for the control of the Bullfrog.



Bullfrog (*Rana catesbeiana*)

I seek the help of the members of the Victoria Natural History Society to locate all ponds where either of these two species may be found. If you have seen or heard either of these two frogs in your neighbourhood, please call:

Purnima Price
Department of Biology, University of Victoria
Phone: 472-4684(W) or 477-7600 (H)
Fax: 721-7120
E-mail: purnimap@uvic.ca

I will also collect any roadkills or dead frogs that you may find. I greatly appreciate your help in this project.

narrow path. As trees and bushes are removed, and the existing thin bush-tree strip becomes even more discontinuous, the scant deciduous cover that currently attracts birds will become insufficient to sustain present birdlife.

In the short term, the loss of this riparian habitat may not be devastating for the bird species involved. There is still comparable habitat left around Cowichan Bay, and places on the mainland, even if it is disappearing quickly. But what a sad moment for Victoria, when we eliminate such colourful tropical visitors from our local region.

Saanich Council has wrestled with the problem of how to connect the Galloping Goose with the Saanich Peninsula

for many years now, in the face of strong pressure from its own staff to build a bridge and get on with it. These Councils deserve credit for their cautious approach in trying to find the best solution to this complex problem. While we understand the impatience of the cycling community, they should not forget that there are other interests at stake too, and that other routes must be considered.

TOM GILLESPIE is President of the Victoria Natural History Society. This article was originally published in the *Times-Colonist*.

Hat Tricks

A Report on the VNHS Habitat Acquisition Trust Foundation

By Jeff Stone

Thanks to all of you who have generously contributed or pledged monies to HAT and our Ayum Creek project. As of June 15, we have over \$88,000 towards the \$625,000 purchase price of the Ayum Creek properties. With these totals we are pleased to be right on our projected schedule for the fund-raising drive.

We also appreciate those who have provided general donations to HAT and participated in the fund-raising activities (e.g., Musical HATs). Such monies help with operating costs (e.g., phone bills) to proceed with the Ayum Creek project and to initiate other HAT activities such as conservation covenants and land stewardship.

HAT held its first Annual General Meeting on June 11, at which time a new Board of Directors was elected. The Directors for 1997/1998 are: Jan Garnett, Marilyn Lambert, Andrew Harcombe, Andrew MacDonald, Andy MacKinnon, Colleen O'Brien, Murray Rankin, Calvin Sandborn, Michael Shepard, Jeff Stone and Bruce Whittington. We are pleased to welcome our new Board members (Andrew, Andrew, Andy, Murray and Calvin) who bring a wealth of experience with them. We also would like to thank Leah Ramsay, who is leaving the Board, for her contribution in getting HAT started. Thanks Leah.

A huge thank-you to Marilyn Lambert for doing such a wonderful job of organizing the Texas Birding trip as a fund-raiser for HAT. Her excellent management, and the donation of tour-guide services by David Stirling and Bruce Whittington, meant that HAT benefitted by around \$8,000.

Other Current HAT Activities:

- HAT has been asked to be the co-holder of a conservation covenant on all of John Dean Park, upon its hand-over by the Province to the CRD. We are working on the terms and wording of the covenant, along with the Friends of John Dean Park.
- HAT is finalizing a conservation covenant, along with the Cowichan Community Land Trust, on the property of 93-year-old Chip Meredith. Mr. Meredith is a delightful piece of history himself and has a beautiful, valuable and historic Saanich Inlet waterfront parcel just north of Mill Bay. At least one additional adjoining property is expected to be covenanted by HAT in the next few years, making it a significant piece of protected forest and foreshore in a very sensitive area.
- A number of other properties in this area are being assessed at the request of the owners for possible conservation covenants. The HAT Directors are grappling with the issues of establishing comprehensive criteria and procedures for taking on covenants and monitoring them over the years.

- The new HAT brochure is being distributed to municipal offices, possible funding sources, legal offices and individuals.
- Extensive funding proposals are being prepared and delivered for the Ayum Creek project, along with verbal presentations.
- The Field-Naturalist is donating office space upstairs for HAT and a staff member will soon be in place as Executive Director.

As our HAT gets bigger (and hopefully not our heads) we require assistance on a variety of projects. Please do not be shy in offering any help, even if it is only an hour here and there.

- On the fund-raising side, we require people to:
- prepare the pledge database for "call in" of pledges;
 - produce an information sheet on bequests;
 - assist with bi-weekly Ayum Creek site visits;
 - assist with preparation of fund-raising dinner;
 - assist with a direct mail campaign;
 - assist with contacting businesses for donations of monies and/or advertising.

- On the land stewardship side, we require people to:
- provide flora and fauna expertise on the site visits;
 - compile lists of land stewardship resources;
 - compile lists of local natural history resources;
 - produce information sheets on land stewardship subjects.

If you are interested in assisting or have any ideas that you would like to share with us, please contact Jeff Stone at 370-2449 or any of the other Directors. We can be contacted at:

VNHS Habitat Acquisition Trust Foundation
P.O. Box 8552, Victoria, B.C. V8W 3S2
Messages: (250) 995-2HAT.

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 Goldstream Art Show Is On Again

Goldstream Provincial Park and the Victoria Natural History Society are, once again, co-sponsoring a show of natural history-related art from September 20 to October 12, 1997. *The Nature of Island Artists* will be held at the Freeman King Visitor Centre (in Goldstream Provincial Park) and will showcase artists from Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands. The exhibit aims to increase public awareness of the importance of conserving natural areas through the use of a medium that is accessible to all — art.

The successes of the four previous shows in 1988, 1991, 1993 and 1995 were due to the participation of a team of Victoria Natural History Society volunteers and the artists involved. In 1991, over 10,000 people viewed the exhibition and in 1993 and 1995 approximately 13,000 visitors toured the Centre. A commission of 30 percent of each piece sold will be shared between the **Habitat Acquisition Trust**, a foundation created by the VNHS, and the **Freeman King Visitor Centre**. HAT will use the proceeds to purchase locally significant habitats and the Centre will remain open through December and January, a time when more than 200 Bald Eagles visit the estuary to feed on spawned-out salmon.

Many pieces will be for sale by silent auction. Still others will be for sale at a set price and can be purchased immediately, so don't wait until the last minute to visit the show!

Help!

We require a large team of VNHS volunteers to run the show. If you have volunteered for previous shows we will be calling you! If you haven't helped before but would like to be involved this time, please call **Marilyn Lambert** at 477-5922.

If you know of artists that should be invited to the show, have them send a photograph of their work, their address, phone number and an indication of the medium to: Victoria Natural History Society Art Show Committee, c/o Claudia and Darren Copley, 657 Beaver Lake Road, Victoria, B.C. V8Z 5N9. Photographs that are accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope will be returned. These entries may be too late for this year's show but they will be considered for any future shows.

Artists, BC Parks and VNHS volunteers who work with the show are invited to attend a private wine and cheese opening on September 19 at 7:30 p.m.

1997 Spring Bird Count

Introduction by David Pearce

The sixth annual Spring Bird Count took place on May 3 with 89 participants. Spring arrived two weeks late due to a cold wet winter. The day was cloudy with sunny periods and some showers, reaching a high of 16 degrees. This is the earliest we have held the spring count so a few of our winter visitors were still here while some of the spring migrants had yet to return. Due to the relatively low number of participants we recorded a low of 150 species and a low of 22,120 birds, 7,000 below the record. With two new species added this year we have now recorded a total of 201 species since the Spring Bird Count started seven years ago.

Highlights of this year's count included two new species, an American Bittern at Glen Lake and a Costa's Hummingbird in Cadboro Bay. The latter spent 10 days at Rob and Margaret McKenzie-Grieves house, the second record for B.C. and 25 years since the first Costa's Hummingbird was found in the same yard! Other highlights included a Yellow-billed Loon off Tower Point; a late Northern Harrier at Blenkinsop; a Swainson's Hawk near Prospect Lake; and five Caspian Terns at Esquimalt Lagoon.

Record highs were set for 12 species and record lows

were recorded for 38 species. Most of the record highs were for over-wintering ducks and grebes still here after a late spring. Record lows were set for birds that hadn't yet arrived. Species on the decline continue to include Pelagic Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Mute Swan, Hairy Woodpecker, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Tree Swallow, Yellow Warbler, and Wilson's Warbler. There was also a marked lack of Cliff Swallows, which normally return in mid-April.

Last year we held the count in June to record an idea of the breeding bird population of Victoria. The result was quite different from the May count and perhaps more important. With the continuing advance of development in Victoria it is very important that we gather data on the breeding bird locations so we will be holding the spring count in June for the next few years. Therefore, the next Spring Bird Count will be held on June 6, 1998.

Thanks to all who took part in this year's count and to Swan Lake for making the centre available for our post count gathering.

DAVID PEARCE is Vice President of the VNHS and coordinates the annual Christmas and Spring bird counts.

1997 Spring 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 HARBOUR | 12. OAK BAY |

SPECIES	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Pacific Loon						7	2				3	
Common Loon	1	4				8	4	5		3	3	
Yellow-billed Loon						1						
Pied-billed Grebe												
Horned Grebe						5	5					2
Red-necked Grebe						10	2			3	12	5
Western Grebe												
Double-crested Cormorant			1		4	13	39	3	69	4	38	29
Brandt's Cormorant						3					1	3
Pelagic Cormorant						8				20	28	55
American Bittern					1							
Great Blue Heron	5	1		3		5	8	5	15	5	4	1
Trumpeter Swan				1								
Mute Swan						2					1	
Greater White-fronted Goose												
Brant											31	
Canada Goose	85	9	18	45	23	39	11	20	41	16		12
Wood Duck	2											
Green-winged Teal				5		3	14					
Mallard	32	20	9	32	9	87	21	21	47	33	77	5
Northern Pintail	2					3						
Cinnamon Teal												
Northern Shoveler	1					1				1		
Gadwall								4				
American Wigeon						15	2	2	6	5	20	
Ring-necked Duck				8								
Lesser Scaup									76		1	
Harlequin Duck						7				27	19	5
Oldsquaw												
Black Scoter												
Surf Scoter						28	9			4	31	19
White-winged Scoter						8	1					5
Common Goldeneye			2			1						
Bufflehead	4		13		2	32	1	2	36	15	2	27
Hooded Merganser	2		2			5			4			
Common Merganser			12	3		2	2		27	12	4	
Red-breasted Merganser						24	87		3	12	14	2
Turkey Vulture	8	4	1	12		6	7	1				
Osprey				1				2				
Bald Eagle	3	2	5	5		2	1	2	2	3	3	4
Northern Harrier												
Sharp-shinned Hawk												

1997 Spring Bird Count

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 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
Pacific Loon		1	7			1		41		62	
Common Loon		4	2			8	1	5		48	
Yellow-billed Loon										1	
Pied-billed Grebe					1		6			7	
Horned Grebe			3			38		4		57	All time high (previous high 6 in 1991)
Red-necked Grebe	1	4	6					7	1	51	
Western Grebe			1							1	
Double-crested Cormorant	3	12	1			8	3	5	350	582	All time low (previous low 690)
Brandt's Cormorant		2							60	69	
Pelagic Cormorant	26	4	1			2			46	190	All time low (previous low 203)
American Bittern										1	New species
Great Blue Heron	2	3		5	3	2	6	6	3	82	All time low (previous low 122)
Trumpeter Swan										1	
Mute Swan										3	All time low (previous low 11)
Greater White-fronted Goose								2		2	
Brant		28								59	
Canada Goose	2	10		2	7	7	57	139	18	561	
Wood Duck						1	11			14	
Green-winged Teal				3			2	6		33	
Mallard	92	10	3	117	16	9	68	41		749	
Northern Pintail	5	35								45	All time high (previous high 10 in 1993)
Cinnamon Teal					2					2	
Northern Shoveler		20		1						24	
Gadwall							8			12	
American Wigeon	2			4		2	15			73	All time high (previous high 39 in 1993)
Ring-necked Duck						4				12	
Lesser Scaup										77	All time high (previous high 13 in 1995)
Harlequin Duck		2	5			9		7	12	93	
Oldsquaw		39	4			24		51		118	All time high (previous high 87 in 1991)
Black Scoter								1		1	
Surf Scoter	4	15	17			42		76		245	
White-winged Scoter		1	8			2		2		27	
Common Goldeneye										3	
Bufflehead	3	2	3			18	1	1	4	166	
Hooded Merganser							4	1		18	
Common Merganser										62	All time high (previous high 40 in 1993)
Red-breasted Merganser		3	18	1		29		29		222	All time high (previous high 118 in 1991)
Turkey Vulture			2					7		48	
Osprey										3	
Bald Eagle	1	2	3	2	3	1	1	7	3	55	
Northern Harrier					1					1	
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1			1		1				3	

1997 Spring 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 HARBOUR | 12. OAK BAY |

SPECIES	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Cooper's Hawk		2			1	1	1	2	2	3	4	1
Swainson's Hawk												
Red-tailed Hawk	6	1		2	2	2	1		2			
American Kestrel					1							
Merlin				1								
Ring-necked Pheasant		1		7		2	1					1
Ruffed Grouse						2						
California Quail	9	11	3	15	21	60			6		4	19
Virginia Rail												
Black-bellied Plover						4					8	3
Semipalmated Plover							3					
Killdeer	14	4		15	1	6	2	1	1	9		3
Black Oystercatcher						2	2			10	3	6
Greater Yellowlegs						4						
Spotted Sandpiper				1					1			
Whimbrel							4					18
Black Turnstone						3						1
Western Sandpiper				15		50	1					2
Least Sandpiper				3		12						
Dunlin						5					2	
Short-billed Dowitcher												1
Long-billed Dowitcher												
Common Snipe						3						
Mew Gull			6			30	90					1
California Gull			1			3	1			1	1	
Thayer's Gull						1						
Glaucous-winged Gull	44	4	22	7	16	204	117	112	198	123	120	157
Caspian Tern							5					
Common Murre						5					5	
Pigeon Guillemot						5	1	4		11	8	9
Marbled Murrelet						12				3	4	3
Rhinoceros Auklet						19	2	3		10	26	23
Rock Dove	2			2	2	4	30	7	46	23	43	9
Band-tailed Pigeon				11		35						
Mourning Dove							1					
Great Horned Owl												
Vaux's Swift	1				2							
Anna's Hummingbird					1	3						
Costa's Hummingbird												
Rufous Hummingbird	22	7	18	19	18	45	7	3	7		1	1
Belted Kingfisher			1			2	1			4		
Downy Woodpecker	3		1	4	6	2		2	2	3	2	
Hairy Woodpecker		1		2		1						

1997 Spring Bird Count

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 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 | |

	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	TOTAL	COMMENTS
	2	2		1			4	1	1	28	All time high (previous high 21 in 1995)
							1			1	
			3		1		3	8		31	
										1	
										1	
				2	4		1	5		24	All time low (previous low 39)
										2	
	11	1	2		19	1	6	18		206	All time low (previous low 287)
							1			1	All time low (previous low 2)
								1	5	21	
										3	
			3		15		2	30	2	108	
	2	1							12	38	
										4	
										1	
									1	23	
										4	
	7							73	19	167	
								8		23	All time low (previous low 41)
								10	6	23	All time low (previous low 31)
										1	
									12	12	
										4	
						1					
										127	All time high (previous high 113 in 1995)
										8	
										1	
	128	32	48		30	96	18	56	1,520	3,052	All time low (previous low 4,251)
										5	All time high (previous high 3 in 1994)
										10	
	4	18	8					4	12	84	
		13								35	
		11	2					1	13	110	
	4		12	5	1	1		40		231	
		6	3					2	4	61	
				1						1	
	1							1		3	
									1	4	
	3	3	1			3				14	
	1									1	New species (2nd record for B.C.)
	1	3	11		16	3	33	18	1	234	
	1									10	All time low (previous low 17)
	6	1		1			1	5		39	
									1	6	

1997 Spring 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 |
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| 4. THETIS LAKE/HASTINGS FLATS | 8. ESQUIMALT HARBOUR | 12. OAK BAY |

SPECIES	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Northern Flicker	4	13	4	19	19	7	3	3		2		1
Pileated Woodpecker	2	3	2	2			1	1	1			
Hammond's Flycatcher				4		1						
Pacific Slope Flycatcher	16	13	7	16	12	19	2		1		2	
Eurasian Skylark										1		
Purple Martin												
Tree Swallow		1			2	6					4	
Violet-green Swallow	155	19	16	114	98	180	18	21	49	30	27	15
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	2	1			1	7		4				
Cliff Swallow												
Barn Swallow	39	4	1	25	12	80	1	17	14	14	11	10
Steller's Jay	7		9	4	6	6						
Northwestern Crow	73	2	15	25	45	74	27	94	152	128	83	52
Common Raven	7	6	2	17	6	4	6	4	2			
Chestnut-backed Chickadee	47	12	3	41	24	38	14	26	16	22	23	13
Bushtit	7			10	10	8		24	39	10	25	14
Red-breasted Nuthatch	11	10	1	21	7	7	9	2	4	3	9	5
Brown Creeper			1	11	2	29	2	6	2			
Bewick's Wren	8	4	5	13	12	21		15	34	9	10	10
House Wren		6		8	3	6						
Winter Wren	15	3	16	20	6	3	10	15	9			1
Marsh Wren					3							
Golden-crowned Kinglet	5		9	28	1	16	2	8			2	
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	3		1	1	4	3		3				5
Townsend's Solitaire			1				2					
Swainson's Thrush	1											
Hermit Thrush									1			
American Robin	87	45	31	95	94	297	28	81	123	57	42	63
Varied Thrush	3	1	4		3	7						
American Pipit												
Cedar Waxwing				1							1	
European Starling	74	7	9	62	25	212	23	61	250	150	109	25
Solitary Vireo	1	1		4		6	2				1	
Hutton's Vireo				1								
Warbling Vireo		1	1			5						
Orange-crowned Warbler	44	22	22	48	49	73	10	5	25	6	11	7
Yellow Warbler	2	2				2				1	1	1
Yellow-rumped Warbler		2	5	21	30	12	11	1	10	5	20	1
Black-throated Gray Warbler	8		2	6	3	2						
Townsend's Warbler	4	26		39	18	12	3					
MacGillivray's Warbler		18		8		2						
Common Yellowthroat	8	7	1	6	11	3	1		2			
Wilson's Warbler		6	2	16	8	1	1		4	1	1	1

1997 Spring Bird Count

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|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 13. UNIVERSITY - CADBORO BAY | 18. ELK LAKE - CORDOVA BAY |
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| 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
Northern Flicker	2	4	2		1	2	11	9		106	
Pileated Woodpecker	1		1			1	4	1		20	All time low (previous low 27)
Hammond's Flycatcher										5	All time low (previous low 23)
Pacific Slope Flycatcher		1			2	3		8		102	All time low (previous low 143)
Eurasian Skylark								7		7	All time low (previous low 9)
Purple Martin										1	All time low (previous low 1)
Tree Swallow			2		1	4	2	16		38	All time low (previous low 49)
Violet-green Swallow	93	31	7	60	47	72	119	124	6	1,301	
Northern Rough-winged Swallow							10	1		26	
Cliff Swallow						2				2	All time low (previous low 22)
Barn Swallow	10	5	6	14	11	2	42	33	2	353	All time low (previous low 485)
Steller's Jay										32	
Northwestern Crow	97	27	14	59	30	26	20	116	14	1,173	All time low (previous low 1,178)
Common Raven	6	5	3			2	9	7		86	
Chestnut-backed Chickadee	15	20	17	1	3	21	42	48		446	
Bushtit	3	11	14	4	4	2	3	8		196	
Red-breasted Nuthatch	6	5	3	1	1		41	8		154	
Brown Creeper		1	3	2		1	3	4		67	
Bewick's Wren	16	8	5	8	7	5	1	24		215	
House Wren	2					1	9		1	36	All time low (previous low 60)
Winter Wren		3	12			6		22		141	
Marsh Wren				2			11			16	
Golden-crowned Kinglet		3					3	7		84	
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	2	1			1			1		25	All time high (previous high 11 in 1993)
Townsend's Solitaire										3	
Swainson's Thrush										1	
Hermit Thrush										2	
American Robin	111	29	42	82	42	66	84	82		1,581	All time low (previous low 1,759)
Varied Thrush					2					20	
American Pipit					10			58		68	
Cedar Waxwing	1	2								5	
European Starling	46	20	62	107	39	24	53	194	4	1,556	All time low (previous low 1,630)
Solitary Vireo								2		17	All time low (previous low 20)
Hutton's Vireo										1	All time low (previous low 3)
Warbling Vireo							1			8	All time low (previous low 9)
Orange-crowned Warbler	14	12	12	4	6	16	14	31		431	All time low (previous low 474)
Yellow Warbler							4	4		17	All time low (previous low 28)
Yellow-rumped Warbler	10				5	8	5	26	1	173	
Black-throated Gray Warbler		1				1	1			24	All time low (previous low 42)
Townsend's Warbler						1	1	1		105	All time low (previous low 157)
MacGillivray's Warbler										28	All time low (previous low 41)
Common Yellowthroat			1	5	7	2	18	21		93	All time low (previous low 109)
Wilson's Warbler		1		8		1	1			52	All time low (previous low 53)

1997 Spring Bird Count

SPECIES	1. BUTCHART GARDENS/NORTHERN HIGHLANDS				5. LANGFORD LAKE				9. PORTAGE INLET - THE GORGE			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Black-headed Grosbeak												
Spotted Towhee	24	18	6	23	36	24	7	6	13	3	4	28
Chipping Sparrow	9	2		31	5	15	23	5				
Savannah Sparrow						11	17	4	13		7	4
Fox Sparrow	4									1		1
Song Sparrow	27	21	5	24	20	22	1	3	8	10	7	8
Lincoln's Sparrow				1	1				3			
Golden-crowned Sparrow	8	2	8	1	4	7		23	49	2	9	18
White-crowned Sparrow		11	2	19	9	21	12	15	42	14	7	5
Dark-eyed Junco	25	5	18	50	6	19	9	5		2		
Red-winged Blackbird	36	8		30	48	23	18	1	9	1		1
Western Meadowlark												
Brewer's Blackbird	7			3	2	4		8				
Brown-headed Cowbird	19	8	2	23	9	29		2	5	2	6	21
Western Tanager		1		1					2			
Purple Finch	2	12	2	12	7	8	1	1	9			
House Finch	11	1		7	22	24	3	59	89	119	25	34
Red Crossbill		2		10		12			1			
Pine Siskin	38	12	5	97	46	97	21	27	45	24	25	
American Goldfinch	4	9		12		6			1			4
Evening Grosbeak				1		3			4			
House Sparrow	18			21	11	18	7	58	252	154	125	33
TOTAL BIRDS	1,111	418	333	1,271	850	2,345	780	805	1,878	1,134	1,123	810
TOTAL SPECIES	59	54	49	72	58	105	66	51	56	52	61	56

Request for Volunteers

Volunteer Naturalists are needed at Swan Lake-Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary for school programs beginning in September. All that is required is an understanding of local natural history and an interest in working with children. Training is provided.

Contact Joan at 479-0211.

1997 Spring Bird Count

SPECIES	13. UNIVERSITY - CADBORO BAY				18. ELK LAKE - CORDOVA BAY				TOTAL	COMMENTS	
	13	14	15	16	18	19	20	21			
					1				1		
	24	10	10	23	10	13	37	29		348	All time low (previous low 403)
	2					2	7	8	1	110	
	8	3	12		18			79	2	178	
										6	
	4	7	8	16	25	10	12	30	5	273	All time low (previous low 349)
							1	1		7	
	12		2	10	8		8	8		179	
	4	1	5	3	35	6	6	4	2	223	
	5				1	2	61	24		232	All time high (previous high 218 in 1993)
	5	5	8	75	19	5	90	54	10	446	
								1		1	
	4	4		14			6	22		74	All time low (previous low 84)
	4	10	2	3	10	17	9	6	11	198	
			2				1			7	
	3		2	2		1	36	2		100	
	61	21	12	7	32	27	47	34		635	
							4			29	
	1	33	20		3	24	83	18		619	
	1				4		9	9		59	All time low (previous low 107)
						2				10	All time low (previous low 12)
	53	6	18	69	42	14	2	19		920	
	939	578	485	726	549	698	1,183	1,943	2,161	22,120	
	57	60	56	39	46	59	70	82	34	150	

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

The Central Saanich Bulb Fields and the Red-throated Pipit in British Columbia

By Keith Taylor

The Central Saanich bulb fields encompass the farm lands that surround Central Saanich Road, Wallace Drive and East Saanich Road, bordered to the north by the Central Saanich border. As these fields contain a monoculture of daffodils, tulips or grains, they appear unattractive and unproductive to birders — and for most of the year this is true. The impact that plowing these fields has on the appearance of noteworthy birds during autumn migration, however, is often exciting. Many of Victoria's birders have still not discovered these fields, instead congregating among them are varied habitats that surround Martindale Flats.

Although American Pipits (*Anthus rubescens*) are abundant on agricultural fields throughout the Saanich Peninsula during migration, the numbers that use these particular fields for staging/feeding is often staggering and possibly one of the greatest concentrations along the coast of British Columbia. The stimulus that attracts pipits to these fields (other than neighbouring fields) remains in question. Small groups of these buff-bellied pipits begin to arrive during the first week of September with the greatest bulk during the last two weeks of the month, when totals of over 10,000 have been recorded over several days during a twelve-year study. The pipits are still common into the first two weeks of October, after which small flocks remain through the winter. The majority of migrant American Pipits remain on the fields for three to five days before moving south — possibly to the major staging site on the southern tip of San Juan Island, a large grassy region known as American Camp. As the pipits move south (evident by monumental fluctuations of populations occupying the fields) they take accompanying rarities with them such as the Red-throated Pipit and Yellow Wagtail.

Other interesting species regularly seen in small numbers each fall include Pacific and American Golden Plovers, Horned Lark and Lapland Longspur, which are found feeding in the stubbly, plowed fields. The introduced Eurasian Skylark utilize the field edges for nesting. Tufted Duck, Gyrfalcon, Tropical Kingbird, Common Grackle, Grasshopper and Vesper Sparrows are among other rarities recorded. Accidental birds located on the bulb fields include two records of Red-throated Pipit (*Anthus cervinus*) and one of Yellow Wagtail (*Motacilla flava*).

Unlike American Pipits, Red-throated Pipits are fond of hiding among dense grasses and are not seen initially until they are flushed. When flushed, the pipit takes long flights, calling repeatedly before plummeting back with the

characteristic bouncing drop of the pipit family. Finding Red-throated Pipits requires an instantaneous recognition of the call, a long, drawn-out penetrating *SEEEeh* or *Speeeh*, starting explosively and trailing off to an ultrasonic ending (Roberson, 1980). American Pipits calls are not as piercing as those of the Red-throated and often give a clear *teeseetsee* upon rising, a sharp *pip-pit* (often in a rapid series) and a *stit-it* as an alarm. However, Red-throated Pipits give a second, less-distinctive call often given on the ground, a shorter and lower-pitched *spuuh* or *stuh* (Jonsson, 1993). This call was heard on the bulb fields September 20, 1996 and unrecognizable to the author until hearing the call again from the Red-throated Pipit seen at Esquimalt Lagoon two days later.

A first winter Yellow Wagtail was found by Hank VanderPol on Martindale Flats September 4-7, 1995. This first confirmed Vancouver Island record was subsequently seen by many observers. A second individual, found by Brent Diakow and others, was on the bulb fields from October 5-11, 1995. This was unquestionably a different wagtail.

British Columbia Red-throated Pipit Records:

- October 2, 1985, Swan Lake, Saanich (1, heard only). Keith Taylor*.
- October 3, 1985, Burnaby Lake, Burnaby (1). Mike Force*.
- December 23-27(?), 1990, Delta (1, first winter). Many observers.
- September 4-November 21, 1991, Sand Spit, Queen Charlottes (1-4). Mike Bentley and others.
- September 19-21, 1992, Central Saanich bulb fields (1, fading alternate). K. Taylor and many observers.
- September 20, 1996, Central Saanich bulb fields (1, heard only). K. Taylor*.
- September 22, 1996, Esquimalt Lagoon, Colwood (1, mainly in alternate). K. Taylor and others; Cathy Reader, photo.

* Unconfirmed records

Bibliography

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 Ferrand, et al, 1983. *Master Guide to Birding*
 Roberson, 1980. *Rare Birds of West Coast*.
 Jonsson, 1993. *Birds of Europe*.
 Taylor, 1993. The Red-throated Pipit in Canada. *Birders Journal*.

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RARE BIRDS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA CALENDAR — 1998

A Rare Birds of British Columbia calendar is planned for publication. This is not possible, however, without the generosity of those who will photograph the birds that occur throughout the 1997 birding year. Seven colour photos will be required. This project has been contemplated personally but assistance by any British Columbia bird-oriented organization is most welcome as a colour publication can be expensive. As it is possible that the calendar may not make a profit (especially in its first year), payment for photos will be on a profit-share basis. One of the goals of the calendar is to generate an increased awareness in the importance of photographing British Columbia's rare birds. For instance, not a single photo was taken of the Yellow Wagtail in Central Saanich, even though it allowed lone observers to approach closely.

Photographs must be of the actual vagrants recorded in British Columbia in 1997.

Photos can be sent to: B.C. Calendar, #406-3363 Glasgow Avenue, Victoria, B.C. V8X 1M5.

For more information, contact Keith Taylor at 383-3677

Birding in Victoria Comes to the Internet

By Kevin Slagboom

For those of you who don't know me, I'm the Internet birding fellow you might have met either traipsing around the local parks, attending Birder's night, or cyber-surfing the Net. Recently, I have started a new initiative to help promote birding in our Garden City and the Internet is my primary tool!

Birding Victoria, BC (<http://www.islandnet.com/~boom/birding/>) is a new Internet website devoted to bringing local birding information to area residents and to others around the globe. Already people from all over the world have visited the website. Birders from as far away as South Africa, Europe, Southern United States, and Eastern Canada have signed the guest book. It's been a real treat to read their positive comments.

Birding Victoria, BC offers birding information services that are uniquely Internet. There is an on-line Bird Watch Posting Area where visitors are encouraged to post their recent field notes or browse the latest messages posted by others. "Birding by Ear" skills area is another feature where users may download bird songs to listen to and then fill out a contest form to submit their guesses. This idea of "virtual birding" is an exciting direction that will be developed further in the coming months. Other pages on the website include: a printable Southern Vancouver Island checklist, a Birder's guest book, a section with visitor's information, local hotspot maps, a page with links to other birding websites, and a section for birding related articles. This site even offers up to date Victoria weather reports by way of a link to the Environment Canada weather database.

The aim of *Birding Victoria, BC* is to provide a well rounded source of birding information to help local and visiting birders maximize their field trips, enhance their

skills, and keep up to date with the latest information. There is still a long way to go and a lot of work to be done but I feel the service will become invaluable.

The website was launched March 5, 1997, and has been growing steadily. One of the directions the site will be taking is to promote habitat conservation. The site will focus on sensitive areas around our city to describe their fragile state and importance. The goal is to build awareness. Helping to ensure protection of these sensitive areas will hopefully enrich our birding experience for years to come.

Currently, the Victoria Natural History Society is exploring the possibilities of connecting to the Internet. A sub-committee of Society members have formed to assist in the development of *Birding Victoria, BC* as well as opening way to lead into the VNHS website. There also exist opportunities to start other natural history related websites as direct affiliates of the birding site (and in a bigger scope as a module of the proposed VNHS website). Suggestions include a Botany related site, a Conservation site and a Marine site.

There is plenty of time to explore these new directions as not everyone is connected to the Internet. On the other hand, every new year brings technology closer to our everyday lives and one day we will find that the Internet, or a form thereof, will be our main communications tool. In that sense, *Birding Victoria, BC* will be there to meet it.

If you are interested in assisting or becoming part of this new project, please contact Kevin Slagboom at 658-0940 or by Email: boom@islandnet.com. Good Internet Birding!

Be sure and take advantage of the many field trips sponsored by the Victoria Natural History Society.

Details can be found in the Calendar.

The Olympic Vulture Study

By Diann MacRae

In September of 1997, the Olympic Vulture Study begins its sixth year of research into the migration of Turkey Vultures from Vancouver Island to the U.S. mainland. Any help you can give us in tracking these birds, either before their actual take-off from Vancouver Island or during their journey south, will be much appreciated.

During the five years we have been censusing Turkey Vultures from the northern Olympic Peninsula coast — the Salt Creek Recreational Area, to be exact — we have counted 5,504 vultures coming into land from the water, and these all were within a three-mile section of the coast. Last year's count of 1,899 Turkey Vultures was the highest ever. This does not particularly mean that there were more vultures, just that the weather was much better than usual and we were on site more hours.

Much of the success of the study comes from the response of many Canadian vulture-watchers who have shared their sightings with us. The behavioural anecdotes have also been much appreciated. All comments regarding

the vultures are recorded and filed and much of the information has been used for educational purposes and research presentations.

We welcome anyone to visit us at the site. Salt Creek Park is 14 miles west of Port Angeles, Washington (where there is a ferry terminal from Victoria, B.C.), on SR 112. Turn right at Camp Hayden Road and follow it for 4.2 miles to the campground. The watch site is at the far west end of the park at the last tidepool access facing north. The site is wheelchair accessible.

Any information on vulture sightings, especially over any of the northern waters such as the Georgia Strait, Puget Sound and the Strait of Juan de Fuca, will be much appreciated. Include with your reports date, time, weather and a short description of vulture activity.

Please send your sightings to **Diann MacRae**, Coordinator, Olympic Vulture Study, 22622 - 53rd Avenue S.E., Bothell, WA 98021, or E-mail to tvulture@scn.org.

Welcome to New Members

APRIL

Barbara Bawlf
of Redwood Avenue
likes birding.

The Eastmans
of Beaver Lake Road
are interested in birds, nature travel and the conservation of natural areas.

Catherine Fryer
of Lidgate Court
enjoys native flora and fauna.

Alison and Jonathan Moran
of Ash Road
have an interest in birds and marine life.

Chrissie Nienaber-Roberts and Keith Roberts
of Douglas Street
are new to Victoria and enthusiastic about geology and all aspects of natural history and its sustainable use.

Jean Strachan
of Setchfield Road
interests include wildflowers, birds and butterflies.

Janet Skinner
of Meadow Place.

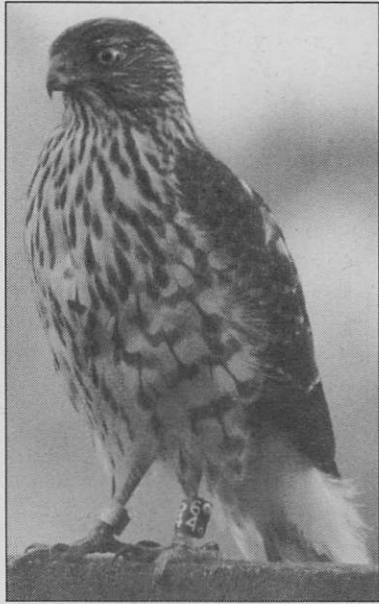
Kevin Slagboom
of Marsett Place
includes birding, natural history and promoting environmental awareness among his interests.

Margaret Spark
of Kingston Street
enjoys nature walks, wildflowers and kayaking.

MAY
Margaret Baxter
of LaSalle Street
Lorette Dickson
of Willow Street
is interested in native plants and marine life.

C. McEwen
of Saltspring Island.

John Schreiber and family
of Howe Street.



DUST PORTRAIT
by Dannie Carsen

The shape of wings and a tail was marked against dusty glass. Dust portrait of the Cooper's hawk. Tiny detail of feathers caught in the film of dust. Came calling for lunch at the bird feeder. House sparrows scattered everywhere and the hawk followed one towards the window. Hit glass.

Stunned hawk lay in a crumpled heap on the flowerbed. So still next to hyacinths and tulips and bluebells. Strangely immobile this flower of the hunter she was.

Jerry bent and studied the intricate pattern of tiny red feathers at her breast. Drop of bright blood at her beak.

Eyes open. Her fierce gaze transfixed him. Red eyes burned at the edges of his fear of wildness. Dread coursing through veins stopped his action, slowed his escape. Jerry understood now how the hawk immobilized house sparrows. Hypnotized starlings. Paralyzed the young robins from tree branches in daylight. Just a trade, she'd explain, kindly killing the weak, the defenceless, the slow. Show no pity. Hold them with one strong talon and rip off their heads in the plucking tree. No sheep here sorry for the grass.

Jerry had the hawk now by the talons. Eyes followed his. No retreat, she just waited for her fate. Carried to the workbench she did not struggle as he covered her head. Subdued her fire. Put the wildness away. Pidgeon now at the roost. Now he must log the bird in his journal. Somehow put a downpayment on her using brushes and paint.

Jerry captures her mahogany breast with tiny striations of paint lighter and darker revealing the texture. Ruffled her feathers slightly to show their underside. Now he shivered strokes for slate-gray back. Spread her tail to view the black bars. Subtle flash of white beneath her tail. The yellow talons fascinate him. Killing scimitars to close around prey. Jerry paints all of her. Except her head.

Now the hood is raised. Get the head with the flattened top and dark streak of feathers. Flowing back over the neck. Gleam of life back in her eyes. Searching for freedom now. Straining at the jesses head held back in agony.

Tiny brushstrokes describe her wings in minute perfection. Meticulous patterns of feather and wing and talon and beak. Almost sublime. Completion eludes his hand. The canvas disappoints. The picture he has of the hawk is tainted. Her struggling body is not art. Restraint forbids beauty never allows the curved line of freedom.

He knows. Has to release her. Only by letting the wildness out and losing his model can he capture her. The essential hawk.

She flies with a faint wing whisper. To the tall trees. On his retina is burned her image. The wildness within returns to his hand. Here is the colour, the line, the shadow that will finish her. Imply the coiled expectation. Hawkishness. It eluded him before, this coiled spring, fierce for escape a moment before release. The tension emerges.

Oh yes, her portrait screams wildness at him now.

Cooper's Hawk
(Photo: Andy Stewart)

Dannie Carsen is an avid naturalist who enjoys trying to find that perfect birding location in the interior of B.C. Recently, he submitted two short stories (one about natural history) to the Emerging Writers contest Otherwords97 and was chosen to attend the B.C. Festival of the Arts in Powell River this May 21-25.

Code of Birding Ethics

American Birding Association

1. Promote the welfare of birds and their environment.

1(a) Support the protection of important bird habitats.

1(b) To avoid stressing birds or exposing them to danger, exercise restraint and caution during observation, photography, sound recording, or filming.

Limit the use of recordings and other methods of attracting birds and never use such methods in heavily birded areas or for attracting any species that is Threatened, Endangered, of Special Concern, or is rare in your local area.

Keep well back from nests and nesting colonies, roosts, display areas and important feeding sites. In such sensitive areas, if there is a need for extended observation, photography, filming, or recording, try to use a blind or hide and take advantage of natural cover.

Use artificial light sparingly for filming or photography, especially for close-ups.

1(c) Before advertising the presence of a rare bird, evaluate the potential for disturbance to the bird, its surroundings and other people in the area, and proceed only if access can be controlled, disturbance can be minimized, and permission has been obtained from private land-owners. The sites of rare nesting birds should be divulged only to the proper conservation authorities.

1(d) Stay on roads, trails and paths, where they exist; otherwise, keep habitat disturbance to a minimum.

2. Respect the law and the rights of others.

2(a) Do not enter private property without the owner's explicit permission.

2(b) Follow all laws, rules and regulations governing use of roads and public areas, both at home and abroad.

2(c) Practice common courtesy in contacts with other people. Your exemplary behaviour will generate goodwill with birders and non-birders alike.

3. Ensure that feeders, nest structures and other artificial bird environments are safe.

3(a) Keep dispensers, water and food clean and free of decay or disease. It is important to feed birds continually during harsh weather.

3(b) Maintain and clean nest structures regularly.

3(c) If you are attracting birds to an area, ensure the birds are not exposed to predation from cats and other domestic animals, or dangers posed by artificial hazards.

4. Group birding, whether organized or impromptu, requires special care.

4(a) Respect the interests, rights and skills of fellow birders, as well as those of people participating in other legitimate outdoor activities. Freely share your knowledge and experience, except where code 1(c) applies. Be especially helpful to beginning birders.

4(b) If you witness unethical birding behaviour, assess the situation and intervene if you think it prudent. When interceding, inform the person(s) of the inappropriate action and attempt, within reason, to have it stopped. If the behaviour continues, document it and notify appropriate individuals or organisations.

The Code of Birding Ethics was developed by the American Birding Association and is reprinted here with permission of the ABA.

Pacific Octopus

By Pamela Thuringer

With the advent of the summer daytime low tide cycles, I once again direct my attention towards an annual sojourn into the instruction of intertidal mapping and beach seine techniques with a group of environmental technology students from Camosun College. Despite the rather early 6:00 a.m. meeting on the Ross Bay Seawall, in the steady drizzle of our all too familiar temperate "wet" coast climate, coupled with the talk of cold salt water trickling into leaky chest waders, all present were eager to plunge into the challenge of translating the physical and biological characteristics of the pebble beach in the western portion of Ross Bay into a habitat map.

The occurrence of intertidal banding, across shore differences driven by physical characteristics and associated biotic community assemblages, is a common link shared by nearshore marine environments worldwide, which enables an observer to document the complexities of habitats through detailed collection of vertical elevation information, substrate and vegetation types and percent cover, as well as invertebrate species abundances. With the use of transects, a metered line running perpendicular to shore, a compass, a level rod, a survey staff and the ability to describe and observe, every student was given the opportunity to systematically move from the log strewn upper intertidal to the



diatom covered pebbles of the lower reaches, in order to build one page of a dynamic intertidal storybook. It is through this very process that what first may have appeared to be a stark pebble beach was later transformed into a energy-driven result of biophysical interactions.

Wading into the shallow intertidal waters to sample fish that utilize the nearshore with a beach seine net, the students eagerly completed their second task during the daily low tide cycle with fervour. As onlookers ventured onto the beach to inquire about the activity, students enthusiastically explained how to identify fish, proper handling techniques after which they are released back into the water. Each day's beach seine and intertidal mapping was successful from all points of view as instructors, students and the public interacted and exchanged knowledge.

A most enjoyable and fulfilling six day field instruction experience of watching the students work together was supplemented by the witnessing of a pod of killer whales, mammals of the sea, move through their environment less than one kilometre off the beach as those on land stood in wonder.

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



Elevation measurements for physical banding (Photo: Pamela Thuringer).

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, Botany Night and Marine Night will not be held in July or August but will begin again in September.

JULY EVENTS

Wednesday, July 2

Nature Fun for Preschoolers (Birds)

Mari Smaby-Stone and **Karen Reid** will introduce your preschooler (4-6 years) to nature through this hands-on action packed program. Each class will include nature oriented crafts, activities, games and lots of fun. Bring a snack, dress appropriately for the weather and please be on time. 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary. For children 4 to 6 years. Pre-registration is required — \$7.00/class (Friends members - \$5.00/class).

Saturday, July 5

Wildflower Walk

Join the Mount Tolmie Conservancy Association on a walk around Mount Tolmie, 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m., rain or shine. Meet at the summit viewpoint. For further information phone 595-7270.

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 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.

Sunday, July 6

Broom Bash

The Garry Oak Meadow Invasive Plant Removal Program is a project of the Garry Oak Meadow Preservation Society, with funding by the B.C. Ministry of Environment, Lands & Parks Habitat Conservation Trust Fund and the Saanich Summer Sunfest. Mount Tolmie Park, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Wear gloves, long sleeves and a hat. Follow the flagging tape to the work area west of Mayfair Drive. For further information contact **Eric Redekop** at 595-7270.

Tuesday, July 8

Swan Lake Discovery Walk (Family)

Take a walk around the lake and discover who calls this home. Good walking shoes, a hat, a snack and a water bottle are recommended. Swan Lake Nature Centre, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Pre-registration is required.

Wednesday, July 9

Webbed Wonders (Family)

Come and visit with Swan Lake's most popular animals — the

ducks. We'll explore their habitat, sample their dinner and make some hilarious duck crafts. Swan Lake Nature Centre, 10:00 a.m., 1:00 p.m., and 3:00 p.m.

Thursday, July 10

Christmas Hill Scavenger Hike (Family)

Join a naturalist for a fun and informative hike and hunt up Christmas Hill. Good walking shoes and something to drink are recommended. Swan Lake Nature Centre, 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Pre-registration is required.

Saturday and Sunday, July 12 & 13

Hurricane Ridge

Meet at the Coho Ferry Terminal at 6:00 a.m. (for the 6:20 a.m. sailing) for a day of pelagic birding between Victoria and Port Angeles and botany on Hurricane Ridge. Your leaders will be **Dannie Carsen** and **Bev Glover** on Saturday, and **David Pearce** and **Marilyn Lambert** on Sunday. We will be returning on the 5:15 p.m. sailing arriving back in Victoria at 6:45 p.m. Cost of ferry plus bus will be about \$35.00 per person. Please make reservations with **David Pearce** (658-0295) soon, as this trip is almost full.

Sunday, July 13

Broom Bash

Mount Tolmie Park, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. See July 6 entry for details.

Monday to Friday, July 14 to 18

Swan Lake Summer Camp

First time offered — Swan Lake day Camp. Small group sizes will explore Swan Lake, Christmas Hill and the plants and animals of different habitats, with **Mary Meek**. Learn about the fir forest (ecology), geology, native plants (botany) and hydrology. All activities are age-related and include lots of hands-on activities. Ages 7 - 9 years. Swan Lake Nature Centre. Pre-registration required — \$60 per session (Friends members - \$50).

Wednesday, July 16

Nature Fun for Pre-schoolers (Reptiles)

Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary. See July 2 entry for details.

Thursday, July 17

Stream Dynamics (Family)

Join **Jennifer Sutherst** and **Patricia Edmonds** for this exciting visual display. See a stream model in action, complete with bridges, farmyards and dams. Learn how these structures interact with high and low water flows and how people affect the watershed around them. Admission by Donation. Swan Lake Nature Centre: 9:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 1:00 p.m. and 2:30 p.m.

Sunday, July 20

Esquimalt Lagoon Early Shorebirds

Join **Jeff Gaskin** (387-1573) for a morning trip to a wonderful sheltered lagoon and a chance to view the first of the returning shorebirds. Rare and unusual species such as Mongolian Plover have been seen here in summer. Meet at the Ocean Boulevard end near the wooden bridge at 7:30 a.m.

Sunday, July 20

Broom Bash

Mount Tolmie Park, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. *See July 6 entry for details.*

Monday, July 21

The Healing Earth (Adult)

Herbs for health and happiness!! Expert herbalist **Carol McGrath** will take you on a fun and informative walk. She will point out native and exotic plants with medicinal and edible properties. 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Pre-registration is required. \$3.00/person (Friends members — \$2).

Tuesday and Wednesday, July 22 and 23

Art in the Park

Enjoy this unique opportunity to draw or paint the splendour of Swan Lake during this summer art program. **Meghan Lidkea** will introduce the world of nature while experimenting with various art and craft techniques. Swan Lake Nature Centre. Ages 7 - 10 years. Pre-registration is required — \$7.00/class (Friends members — \$5.00/class).

Wednesday, July 23

Nature Fun for Pre-schoolers (Bugs)

Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary. *See July 2 entry for details.*

Thursday, July 24

RahRah Reptiles (Family)

Jaws that can hear and tongues that can smell - come explore the amazing world of reptiles. This special program features a snake show, crafts and visiting celebrity reptiles. Swan Lake Nature Centre, 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Admission by donation.

Sunday, July 27

Shorebird Migration Workshop — Witty's Lagoon

Join **David Allinson** (478-0493) to sort out and enjoy the south-bound shorebirds on the mudflats and beach of this favourite CRD park. The hillside forests and seaside woods and bushes are a haven for resident and visiting songbirds. Meet at the parking lot off Metchosin Road at 8:00 a.m.

Sunday, July 27

Broom Bash

Mount Tolmie Park, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. *See July 6 entry for details.*

Tuesday and Wednesday, July 29 and 30

Art in the Park

Swan Lake Nature Centre. *See July 22-23 entry for details.*

Wednesday, July 30

Nature Fun for Pre-schoolers (Nature Hike)

Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary. *See July 2 entry for details.*

Thursday, July 31

Halloween in July

Start getting ready for Halloween early! You could be your favourite animal. Come and learn about animal senses and make some cool masks. Ages 5 years and up. Swan Lake Nature Centre, 1:00 p.m. and 2:15 p.m. Limited space so register early. \$5.00/child (Friends members — \$3.50/child).

AUGUST EVENTS

Sunday, August 3

Broom Bash

Mount Tolmie Park, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. *See July 6 entry for details.*

Tuesday and Wednesday, August 5 and 6

Art in the Park

See July 22-23 entry for details.

Thursday, August 7

Swan Lake Spider!! (Family)

This is a great time to cure your arachnophobia! Come and meet your local cute and cuddly spiders! We will have crafts, story-telling, a spider hunt, informative activities and on-site spider experts to answer all your questions. Swan Lake Nature Centre, 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Admission by donation.

Sunday, August 10

Sidney Island Birding

Come to this wonderful provincial park with **David Allinson** (478-0493) to witness good numbers of migrating Western and Least Sandpipers as well as many other possible shorebirds. Alcids and sea mammals such as Harbour Porpoise are observed on the pleasant boat trip and many songbirds are heard on the island hike. Meet at the foot of Beacon Avenue in Sidney at 8:30 a.m. for the 9:00 a.m. sailing. Bring ferry fare (\$5 return) and a lunch plus lots to drink.

Sunday, August 10

Broom Bash

Mount Tolmie Park, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. *See July 6 entry for details.*

Tuesday and Wednesday, August 12 and 13

Art in the Park

See July 22-23 entry for details.

Thursday, August 14

Nature's Night Life (Family)

Moonlight brings out the shy creatures of the Sanctuary. Experience the sounds, sight and smells of the dark side of the lake. Swan Lake Nature Centre, 8:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. Pre-registration is required. \$3.00/child (Friends members — \$2.00).

Sunday August 17

Birding at Cowichan Bay

Join **Derrick Marvin** or **David Pearce** to see the southern shorebird migration, possible raptors, and the breeding success of Purple Martins. Meet at the Helmcken Park'n'Ride at 8:15 a.m. or at the Cowichan Bay Dock Road at 9:00 a.m. Bring your lunch and something to drink.

Sunday, August 17

Broom Bash

Mount Tolmie Park, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. *See July 6 entry .*

Monday to Friday, August 18 to 22

Swan Lake Summer Camp

See July 14 entry for details.

Sunday, August 24

Victoria Waterfront Tour

Join **Marilyn Lambert**, 477-5922, for a trip around the Victoria waterfront starting at Ogden Point and finishing at Cattle Point. This is a great opportunity to learn the small microhabitats for particular shorebirds and how they attract southbound birds year

Request for Volunteers

Volunteer Naturalists are needed at Swan Lake-Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary for school programs beginning in September. All that is required is an understanding of local natural history and an interest in working with children. Training is provided. Contact **Joan** at 479-0211.

CRD Parks Natural History Events

Throughout July and August CRD Parks offers a multitude of natural history hikes, lectures and other activities at Witty's Lagoon, Elk/Beaver Lake, Matheson Lake, Francis King, Thetis Lake and Island View Beach Parks. Brochures are available at these parks and many other locations, including the Swan Lake Nature Centre and the Field Naturalist store.

The Goldstream Art Show

Goldstream Provincial Park and the Victoria Natural History Society are, once again, co-sponsoring a show of natural history-related art from September 20 to October 12, 1997. *The Nature of Island Artists* will be held at the Freeman King Visitor Centre (in Goldstream Provincial Park) and will showcase artists from Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands. *See article, page 9.*

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.

Marine Ecology Station

Explore British Columbia's marine bio-diversity at the Cowichan Bay Maritime Centre. Life exhibits of BC sea life can be seen under

after year. Other fall migrants and local resident songbirds will also be observed. There will be a nice long stop at Clover Point and Cattle Point so you can observe any birds offshore. Meet at Ogden Point at 7:00 a.m. and bring a lunch and something to drink.

Sunday, August 24

Broom Bash

Mount Tolmie Park, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. *See July 6 entry for details.*

Thursday, August 28

Snake Day (Family)

Snakes, snakes and more snakes! Swan Lake-Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary and CRD Parks are pleased to present this ever popular event to all those interested in learning more about these fascinating reptiles. Join naturalists for an eventful day of programs, crafts and lore. Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park, 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Sunday, August 31

Broom Bash

Mount Tolmie Park, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. *See July 6 entry.*

BULLETIN BOARD

microscopes and in live video displays. There are also programs available for schools, camps, naturalists and educators. The Centre is located on the water at 1761 Cowichan Bay Road. For more information phone **Dr. Bill Austin** at 746-4955.

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 Rd. RR #1, Cobble Hill, BC V0R 1L0. E-mail: wildwood@islandnet.com.

Victoria Birding Online

Come and experience this new Internet site using Netscape Navigator 3.0 or Microsoft Internet Explorer 3.0. Catch up on the latest Victoria birding reports right from home. The address is: <http://www.islandnet.com/~boom/birding/>

Young Birders

The American Birding Association has announced its new, year-long competition that encourages young birders to develop their birding skills by keeping a field notebook for one year. Entrants keep a field notebook and write several essays over the year. There are three categories: 10-12 years; 13-15 years; and 16-18 years. First prize in each category includes a pair of Leica 8x32 BA Ultra Binoculars and a scholarship to attend a field ornithology summer camp. To learn more about his competition, and/or about the ABA, contact Paul Green at (719)578-9703 or E-mail him at paulgrn@aba.org. Visit their Web site at www.americanbirding.org.

fall natural history courses with

the field-naturalist



Beginning Birding

We start with the basics of field identification, equipment and resources in an evening lecture and follow it with six field sessions around Victoria, all of which are accessible by public transportation.

Evening Lecture - September 11

Saturday Field Sessions - September 13, 20, 27 October 4, 18, 25

\$70 per person - limit 15

Beyond Beginning Birding

Our popular eight session course returns for its fall edition. Our group of local experts takes you on the next step in birding with an emphasis on hard to identify groups and birding by ear at sites chosen for their fall birding action.

Thursdays - September 11, 18, 25 October 2, 16, 23, 30 November 6

Sundays - September 14, 21, 28 October 5, 19 26 November 3

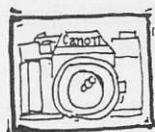
\$80 per person - limit 15

Gardening with Native Plants

This three Saturday session course introduces you to Southern Vancouver Island's showiest natives and gives practical information about garden design with a focus on wildlife habitat creation. Our leader, **Carrina Maslovat**, is co-owner of Woodland Native Plant Nursery in Metchosin.

September 13, 20, 27

\$75 per person - limit 15



Nature Photography-Beyond the Basics

For those already familiar with their 35mm SLR we'll work in the manual mode to explore techniques and approaches to creatively express the natural subject. **Sharron Milstein**, our leader, is well known in the community for the quality of her teaching skills and her creative images of nature.

Evening Workshops - October 8 & 15 Weekend Sessions - October 11 & 12

\$95 per person - limit 15

The Geology of Southern Vancouver Island

Our leader, **Chris Yorath**, is a Scientist Emeritus of the Geological Survey of Canada. He is the co-author with Hugh Nasmith of the acclaimed *Geology of Southern Vancouver Island* (1995) and author of a number of other publications. The workshop will start with an evening lecture, followed by a whirlwind tour of the Southern Island.

Evening Lecture - Thursday, October 23 Field Session - Sunday, October 26

\$35 per person - limit 20

An Introduction to Mushroom Identification

Adolf Ceska, plant ecologist with the Conservation Data Centre, and his wife **Oluna** will spend an evening discussing how to key out mushrooms, then a full day out in the field. The course is followed by the Southern Vancouver Island Mycological Society's annual mushroom show at Swan Lake, an excellent opportunity to try out your new skills.

Evening workshop - Wednesday, October 22 Field Session - Friday, October 24

\$35 per person - limit 20

All courses will require private transportation, except Beginning Birding, and you may be asked to carpool. For more information, or to register, call the Field-Naturalist at 388-4174 or stop by the store at 1126 Blanshard Street. Detailed brochures about all the courses will be available soon.