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Members are encouraged to submit articles, field trip reports, birding and botany notes, and book reviews with photographs or illustrations if possible. Photographs of natural history are appreciated along with documentation of location, species names and a date. Please label your submission with your name, address, and phone number and provide a title. We will accept and use copy in almost any legible form but we encourage submission of typed, double-spaced copy or an IBM compatible word processing file on any size diskette, plus printed output. Having copy submitted on diskette saves a lot of time and work for the publications group and we really appreciate the help. If you have an obscure or very old word processing program, call the Editor, Glen Moores, at 655-3772, or save the text in ASCII format. Blank diskettes may be obtained from the editor and we will return any of your own diskettes submitted. Photos and slides submitted may be picked up at the Field-Naturalist, 1126 Blanshard Street, or will be returned if a stamped, self-addressed envelope is included with the material.

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For membership information and renewal, please contact Arlene Yaworsky at 385-9629 (evenings only), or write to Membership Committee c/o The Victoria Natural History Society, Box 5220, Victoria, B.C., V8R 6N4.

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Thank you for your patronage.

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OUR COVER

This month's cover is a photo of a cattle egret taken by Marie O'Shaughnessy. This rare migrant was seen and photographed, making the front page of the *Victoria Times Colonist* on January 5, 1998. It was an extremely tame and very approachable bird. The egret appeared to be undernourished and cold due to the city's icy temperatures.

Within a day or two of the initial sighting, the egret was captured and cared for by the Victoria S.P.C.A. Subsequently, it was flown south to California; where after a short respite at an avian rehabilitation centre, it was released into its natural habitat. A touching conclusion to the tale of the travel-weary, post-breeding wanderer.

Each year, on Vancouver Island one or two are seen during fall migration north of Victoria at Martindale Flats with small herds of cattle. It is a favourite stopover spot for the egrets during their southward journey.



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1997 Butterfly Counts

By Jeff Gaskin

In 1997 butterfly counts were carried out seven times during the year, as an additional count was included in late September. The areas covered by these surveys are similar to the areas covered by the Victoria Christmas Bird Count. The number of participants in 1997 was similar to the one held the previous year with about 80 participants.

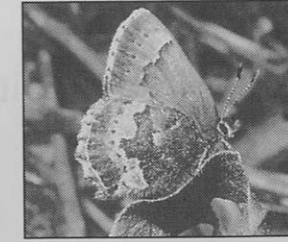
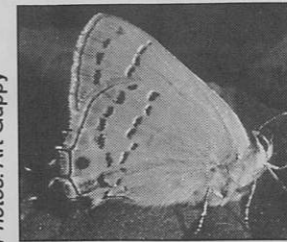
A total of 32 species of butterflies were located during last years' count. However, two of those species were questionable. These were an Edith's Checkerspot at the Happy Valley Herb Farm and two Western Meadow Fritillaries. This past season El Nino was evident as species such as Alfalfa Butterfly, American Painted Lady and West Coast Lady not usually around were seen. Also evident were Red Admirals which posted a 170% increase compared to the previous year. Red Admirals are another species that fluctuate dramatically especially when there is an El Nino.

Among the highlights this year were the 4 Rosner's Hairstreaks which are very reliable during May near Sooke Lake Road. In September a small group of Alfalfa Butterflies or Orange Sulphurs were in a field south of Island View Road, west of McHugh Road. This species has been seen in

previous years in this same field but the count of 7 in late September was a high tally. American Painted Ladies were seen on both Mt. Douglas and Christmas Hill for over a month and Green Commas were also more evident or were understood better by counters getting familiar with the species. To differentiate a Green Comma from a Satyr Anglewing look for a darker looking anglewing with dark borders, marked by a distinguished small white "C" (Comma) mark on the hindwing. Mylitta Crescent spots which hit an all time high a few years ago continued to decline, but they fared better in early September. Species that were missed this year but not missed last year were Western Pine Elfin, California Tortoise Shell, Clodius Parnassian, Veined White and Western Sulphur, however all of the aforementioned are very uncommon to rare in Victoria.

This year we anticipate another good year for butterflies due to our mild winter. We are always looking for new volunteers. Additional observers are needed almost everywhere but especially in Colwood and Langford. If you would like to get involved, even if it is just your own backyard, you can contact me at 384-1573

Photos: Art Guppy



1997 Victoria Butterfly Count Data

Species	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept (1)	Sept (2)	Total
Alfalfa Butterfly						1	7	8
American Painted Lady						3	2	5
Angelwing species		2		1	1		2	6
Anise Swallowtail	28	170	98	90	76	12	6	480
Blues Species		2	1					3
Brown Elfin	10	31	1					42
Cabbage White	238	919	525	893	1,111	1,012	287	4,985
Edith's Checkerspot ?			1					1
Elfin Species			3					3
European Skipper				1,502	748			2,250
Gray Hairstreak	1	9	3	7	7	7		34
Green Comma	2	3			4	2	2	13
Hydaspe Fritillary			1	1				2
Lady species						1		1
Lorguin's Admiral		1	222	994	260	5	2	1,484
Milbert's Tortoise Shell	1			8	2	1		12
Moss' Elfin	1							1
Mourning Cloak	34	41	13	12	6	3	1	110
Mylitta Crescentspot	3	10	1	5	9	24	4	56
Painted Lady		8	9	10	2	2	4	35
Pale Swallowtail		65	94	43	7			209
Pine White			6	19	739	57	12	833
Propertius Duskywing	4	63	10					77
Purplish Copper		19	99	15	269	260	16	678
Red Admiral		5	10	18	20	9	11	73
Rosner's Hairstreak		4						4
Sara's Orange Tip	80	61	4					145
Satyr Anglewing	62	62	16	26	5	1	1	173
Silvery Blue		2	3					5
Skipper species			4		5			9
Spring Azure	228	755	67	1				1,051
Sulphur species						1		1
Two-banded Checkered Skipper		2						2
Vancouver Island Ringlet		22	47	4		12	1	86
West Coast Lady		1	2	1	1	5	10	20
Western Meadow Fritillary ?	1	1						2
Western Tiger Swallowtail		149	544	349	43	2		1,087
Woodland Skipper				42	2,628	513		3,183
	693	2,407	1,784	4,041	5,943	1,933	368	17,169

Birds and Wine 1998

South Okanagan & Douglas Lake

May 23-30 1998

\$800 Double Occupancy

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ponderosa pine woodlands to listen for the distinctive calls and songs of Okanagan specialties. See Sage

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Hat Tricks

A Report on the VNHS Habitat Acquisition Trust Foundation (HAT)

By Jeff Stone

THANK YOU!! We did not get to throw our hats in the air until the last minute but it was worth the wait.

On January 22, the day before we had to remove conditions, David Anderson, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans officially announced that Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) would contribute \$270,000 to the purchase of Ayum Creek. At his press announcement Mr. Anderson noted the need to protect streams of all sizes if we are to protect the salmon resource. As an aside, he also noted the early influence that the VNHS had on him.

The HAT directors enjoyed Mr. Anderson's announcement but the greatest pleasure that we had in the last month was to see the support from individuals. First, we had an impressive response to our full page advertisements in *Monday* magazine in December. And secondly, it was wonderful to see a flurry of pledges from VNHS members in response to our plea in the January/February *Naturalist*. Additionally, the support of the VNHS directors was greatly appreciated as the VNHS contributed \$750 for the *Monday* magazine ad and allowed us to distribute pledge forms with the *Naturalist*.

Fund raising is about obtaining and maintaining support. HAT as an organization will be thanking all contributors but I am sure that those businesses (e.g., Mountain Equipment Coop, Canada Trust, the Field Naturalist) and government officials (DFO, CRD, SEAPARC) that contributed would also be happy to receive thanks from individuals. A few short thank yous can go a long way to helping secure funding in the future.

HAT would like to recognize the hard work of our partner in this fund raising effort, the Society for the Preservation of Ayum Creek (SPAC). It is concerned local individuals who truly make the difference. SPAC will

continue to provide a role in the stewardship and protection of Ayum Creek and its watershed. There is still a lot of work to be done and if you wish to help SPAC in their ongoing stewardship efforts please give SPAC president Joanne Manley a call (and a thank you) at 642-7278.

Personally, I would like to thank all the HAT directors for their role in helping to protect this unique property. HAT is very fortunate to have a diverse board that enjoys working together. It really is a pleasure working with this group of people.

What next? Although, all the HAT directors probably feel like taking a well deserved rest, there is still a tremendous amount of work to be done for Ayum Creek (e.g., collecting donations and issuing receipts, closing the purchase, a conservation covenant, discussions with CRD Parks, transferring the property). We will also be reviewing our first major fund raising effort in order to see how we can improve. One of our goals is to develop and maintain fund raising expertise that can be shared with other conservation groups. Too often a group emerges to raise funds to protect a single property and then when the property is secured the fund raising expertise is lost. HAT wishes to leave a fund raising legacy as well as a natural legacy.

Following the review, we do not expect to jump immediately into another fund raising project such as Ayum Creek. However, in the next 6-12 months we will be directing much of our effort on developing a land stewardship informational role. Hopefully, by the next issue of the *Naturalist* I will be able to provide you with specifics on how we will be accomplishing this.

Finally I would like to repeat our THANK YOU to all who contributed to the Ayum Creek campaign and to HAT in its first year. Without your support it couldn't have been done.

Camas Day at Beacon Hill Park

Sunday, April 19

Join the annual Camas Day festivities at Beacon Hill Park. Activities include a bird walk at 9:00 a.m. and three walks: Wildflowers; Butterflies; and Native History — each of which will start at 11:00 a.m. and again at 1:00 p.m. All walks start at the flagpole at the top of Beacon Hill. This event is supported by the Victoria Natural History Society and the Friends of Beacon Hill Park. For further information contact **Helen Oldershaw** at 592-6659.

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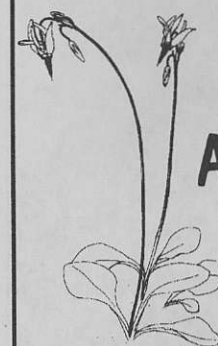
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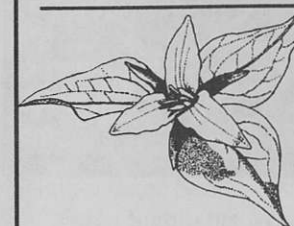
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Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary
3873 Swan Lake Road, Victoria

For more information: 479-0211



Rare Sightings

By Marie O'Shaughnessy

White-Winged Dove (*Zenaida Asiatica*)

On December 1, 1997, this recent and rare arrival was seen and photographed at Tofino on Northern Vancouver Island. The dove was spotted amongst thickets and small trees within the relatively safe haven of a church yard. The bird was also seen visiting a nearby feeder.

Large white wing patches and a short rounded tail distinguish this bird from the Mourning Dove (*Zenaida Macroura*) which is more prevalent on the island.

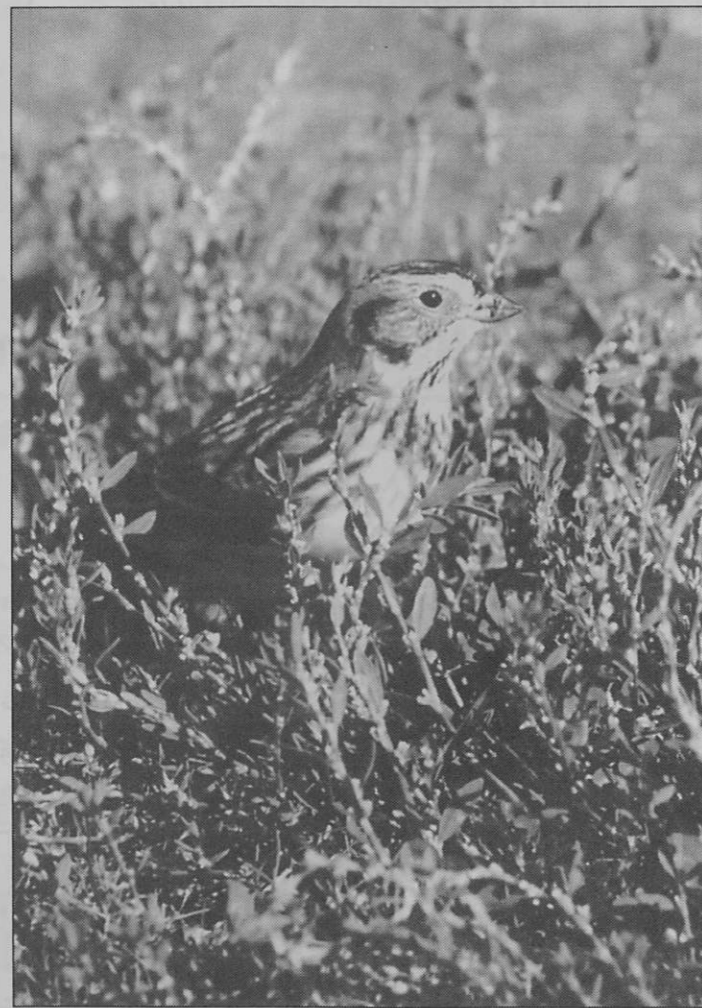
A frequent inhabitant of the American southwest, the White-Winged Dove is usually found in the desert towns, scrub, woodlands, farmlands, and mangroves from SE California through Arizona, Nevada and New Mexico.

No further sightings of this dove have been reported since December.

Lapland Longspur (*Calcarius Lapponicus*)

A sparrow-like bird that breeds on the arctic tundra, the Lapland Longspur stops briefly on Vancouver Island during the fall migration. This little bird, one of four *Calcarii* in North America are usually seen in the Victoria area in isolated numbers at Clover Point and Macaulay Point. This past October, however, more birds than usual were sighted. As many as two dozen were seen at both locations. This increase may have been due to the meteorological condition known as El Nino.

The breeding male of this species is quite spectacular. His black head and breast are separated from a red-brown nape and the black and buff of the wings by a white or buff s-shaped stripe that extends from the eye to the sides of the breast.



Photos: Marie O'Shaughnessy

McFadden Creek Heronry Update

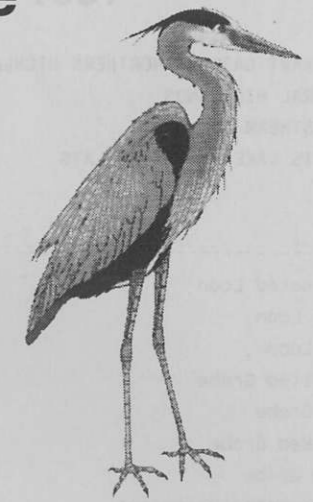
By Glen Moores

The first payment towards purchasing the 5 hectare McFadden Creek Heronry has been made, sealing the deal which will preserve the third largest heron colony on the west coast. "We make payments over the next four years," Waterbird Watch Collective Coordinator Nina Raginsky said. For those of you visiting Salt Spring, there is an excellent viewing spot on North Beach Road.

Purchasing the property has been a joint project of the Waterbird Watch, the Wild Bird Trust and Islands Trust Fund.

If you wish to be a Foster Parent or Friend of the herons you may write a tax deductible cheque payable to the Wild Bird Trust and mail it to:

The Waterbird Watch Collective
272 Beddis Road
Salt Spring Island, B.C. V8K 2J1



You will receive a hand coloured certificate, one photograph of the Heronry and one of your adopted/Friend heron. All donations, large or small, are very welcome and will help with the last \$75,000 of fundraising

Nina Raginsky of the Waterbird Watch Collective can be reached at 250-537-4515

1997 Christmas Bird Count

By David Pearce

On December 20, 196 participants took part in the 1997 Victoria Christmas Bird Count. This was a year during which the strongest ever El Nino warming occurred and it resulted in many birds disappearing from our ocean waters. On the day we were unfortunate with the weather as it was very stormy with periods of rain and only one intrepid boater (Bruce Whittington and crew) dared to venture out into the rough seas. As a result we had one of the poorest counts recording a total of 90,893 birds and a species count of 135, our lowest total since 1986.

Our most exciting event was to add another new species to our CBC list as a Sora was found at Quick's Bottom. This became species number 212 since computerized count figures were first kept in 1957. We recorded 15 record highs for the following species (previous highs are in parenthesis): Greater White-fronted Goose - 28 (23); Canada Goose - 5,156 (4,476); Northern Pintail - 1,133 (1,044); Gadwall - 170 (105); Barrow's Goldeneye - 196 (189); Bald Eagle - 448 (226); Cooper's Hawk - 57 (42); Red-tailed Hawk - 76 (61); Peregrine Falcon - 11 (9); Anna's Hummingbird - 88 (74); American Pipit - 212 (126); Spotted Towhee - 786 (718); Fox Sparrow - 439 (417); House Finch - 1,773 (1,349) and House Sparrow - 2,736 (2,368). We set a record low for White-winged Scoter - 30 (31).

Other highlights were 2 Tundra Swans at Martindale, a

Turkey Vulture in Langford, a Northern Goshawk at Viaduct Flats, 2 Whimbrel in Cadboro Bay and Northern Saw-whet Owls at Esquimalt Lagoon and Playfair Park.

It should be noted that we are seeing new record highs almost every year for Trumpeter Swan, Canada Goose, Gadwall, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, Anna's Hummingbird, House Finch and House Sparrow. On the debit side we appear to have lost all Western Screech Owls, mainly due to predation by Barred Owls, which are also attacking Northern Saw-whet Owls.

1997 was the 10th anniversary of a challenge made with Edmonton to see who could involve the most feeder watchers. They beat us handily setting a world record 1,288 participants, which was organized by Cam Finlay. Cam is on our side now so he challenged Edmonton again and it was accepted. With the help of the press and Kevin Slagboom creating a Home Page on the Internet for entering data we attracted 136 feeder watchers. We still have a fair way to go to beat Edmonton so we will try again next year. Many thanks to Lyndis Davies for manning the phone on count day to help the feeder watchers and for compiling all of the data afterwards.

A compilation of the 1997 count data is presented on the following pages.

1997 Victoria Christmas Bird Count

- | | | |
|--|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. BUTCHART GARDENS/NORTHERN HIGHLANDS | 5. LANGFORD LAKE | 9. PORTAGE INLET - THE GORGE |
| 2. CENTRAL HIGHLANDS | 6. ALBERT HEAD - TRIANGLE MOUNTAIN | 10. VICTORIA HARBOUR |
| 3. GOLDSTREAM | 7. ESQUIMALT LAGOON - MILL HILL | 11. BEACON HILL |
| 4. THETIS LAKE/HASTINGS FLATS | 8. ESQUIMALT HARBOUR | 12. OAK BAY |

SPECIES	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Red-throated Loon						2	5					
Pacific Loon	1		42			10	3	3			3	3
Common Loon	1	1	7			5	2			1	2	1
Pied-billed Grebe	1	7		11	14	1	3		3	1		1
Horned Grebe	10					15	16	4		28	5	3
Red-necked Grebe	2		3			2	2	4		19	2	14
Western Grebe			90				10	2		5		
Double-crested Cormorant	2	5	21	10	27	21	4	11	56	50	18	2
Brandt's Cormorant			1				2	3			1	1
Pelagic Cormorant							4	2		13	30	14
Great Blue Heron	1	4	6	3		4	10	14	10	7	2	
Tundra Swan												
Trumpeter Swan	118	2		3	2							
Mute Swan			2		5	2	4				1	
Greater White-fronted Goose				1								
Canada Goose	1,073			511	44	48		24	541			7
Wood Duck					1				3			
Green-winged Teal	309	1		8	24				1			
Mallard	2,357	126	52	394	153	41	97	52	147	53	296	12
Northern Pintail	961			22	2	1			1			
Northern Shoveler	11			2	18						1	
Gadwall						1						
Eurasian Wigeon	2			2					3			
American Wigeon	1,129	1	7	332	58	6	19	20	190	145	205	2
Canvasback								25				
Redhead												
Ring-necked Duck	107	38		30	22		3	1				
Greater Scaup							1		15			
Lesser Scaup	1	8			8	2	1		210			4
Harlequin Duck						14		9		10	9	21
Oldsquaw			1				5			1	3	3
Black Scoter												
Surf Scoter	6		5			10	33	7		31	16	10
White-winged Scoter			4				2				1	
Common Goldeneye		3	153			27	48	4	22	2	4	21
Barrow's Goldeneye	7		184					5				
Bufflehead	54	16	78	14	13	47	243	33	248	123	46	65
Hooded Merganser	11	9	18	29	10	18	11	8	7	31	20	7
Common Merganser	7	2	79	20	12		7	6	1	53		1
Red-breasted Merganser	1		25			5	53	10		25	6	6
Ruddy Duck												
Turkey Vulture					1							
Bald Eagle	22	12	219	13	41	7	11	19	6	10	3	7

1997 Victoria Christmas 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. HARO STRAIGHT |
| 17. BLENKINSOP - PANAMA FLATS | |

SPECIES	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	TOTAL	COMMENTS
Red-throated Loon								5	1	13	
Pacific Loon		12	10			18		302	30	437	
Common Loon	1	6	5			5		10		47	
Pied-billed Grebe				2	4	2	13	1		64	
Horned Grebe	16	34	41			362		78	7	619	
Red-necked Grebe	1	3	7			8		7		74	
Western Grebe	2		3					3	1	116	
Double-crested Cormorant	3	6	8	3	1	96	26	27	2	399	
Brandt's Cormorant		2						4	2	16	
Pelagic Cormorant	2	30	7			6		10	3	121	
Great Blue Heron	2	3	1	4	5	2	9	12		99	
Tundra Swan								2		2	
Trumpeter Swan				6	31	14	33	96		305	
Mute Swan										14	
Greater White-fronted Goose								27		28	All time high (previous high 23 in 1996)
Canada Goose	237		24	111	979	356	381	820		5,156	All time high (previous high 4,476 in 1996)
Wood Duck				4		2				10	
Green-winged Teal	2				14	4	2	369		734	
Mallard	231	75	181	483	1,038	937	222	2,300		9,247	
Northern Pintail					7	30	4	105		1,133	All time high (previous high 1,044 in 1991)
Northern Shoveler					2	20	18	11		83	
Gadwall					1	2	154	12		170	All time high (previous high 105 in 1996)
Eurasian Wigeon					6			5		18	
American Wigeon	152		42	567	128	126	51	2,200	2	5,382	
Canvasback						12		1		38	
Redhead						1				1	
Ring-necked Duck				1	4	37	152	128	17	540	
Greater Scaup			3			10		11	20	60	
Lesser Scaup				1	2					237	
Harlequin Duck	15	31	5			2		1		117	
Oldsquaw	6	46	23			91		94	150	423	
Black Scoter								7		7	
Surf Scoter	1	11	5			173		285	65	658	
White-winged Scoter	1	6	6					5	5	30	All time low (previous low 31)
Common Goldeneye	1	15	13			29	5	31	21	399	
Barrow's Goldeneye										196	All time high (previous high 189 in 1981)
Bufflehead	34	39	20	13	8	152	17	225	20	1,508	
Hooded Merganser	34	15	3	12	1	128	30	2		404	
Common Merganser					1	418	5	6		618	
Red-breasted Merganser	16	24	19			185		36	12	423	
Ruddy Duck				2	7		1			10	
Turkey Vulture										1	
Bald Eagle	13	8	12	2	10	4	7	18	4	448	All time high (previous high 266 in 1996)

1997 Victoria Christmas Bird Count

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|--|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. BUTCHART GARDENS/NORTHERN HIGHLANDS | 5. LANGFORD LAKE | 9. PORTAGE INLET - THE GORGE |
| 2. CENTRAL HIGHLANDS | 6. ALBERT HEAD - TRIANGLE MOUNTAIN | 10. VICTORIA HARBOUR |
| 3. GOLDSTREAM | 7. ESQUIMALT LAGOON - MILL HILL | 11. BEACON HILL |
| 4. THETIS LAKE/HASTINGS FLATS | 8. ESQUIMALT HAVOUR | 12. OAK BAY |

SPECIES	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Northern Harrier												
Sharp-shinned Hawk		3	2	3		1	1	1	1	1	1	
Cooper's Hawk	2	3		2	1		3	1	5	3	1	1
Northern Goshawk												
Red-tailed Hawk	9	5	1	13	3	3	3	1	3	1		
American Kestrel		1										
Merlin		3		1			2	1	2			
Peregrine Falcon	1							2	1			
Ring-necked Pheasant				1								
California Quail	3		13	36	3	28	3					4
Virginia Rail												
Sora												
American Coot	33			25	35	12	55		26			1
Black-bellied Plover							40					
Killdeer	51				8			1				13
Black Oystercatcher												6
Greater Yellowlegs												2
Whimbrel												
Black Turnstone							8	10		6	8	12
Surfbird								4				19
Sanderling							2				1	
Dunlin							21					40
Common Snipe	2											
Bonaparte's Gull												
Mew Gull	42		23	17	30	135	319	150	35	132	835	13
California Gull												
Herring Gull			8				1				1	
Thayer's Gull	15		12			4			50	19	5	150
Western Gull						1	1	1				2
Glaucous-winged Gull	1,431	22	1,911	118	201	390	2,122	337	568	401	545	174
Common Murre							2	1			7	1
Pigeon Guillemot						1					1	
Marbled Murrelet												1
Ancient Murrelet												2
Rhinoceros Auklet										1		
Rock Dove	1	5		6	80		61	10	416	168	211	55
Band-tailed Pigeon				6	52							
Great Horned Owl				1								
Northern Pygmy-Owl		1										
Barred Owl				1								
Northern Saw-whet Owl								1				
Anna's Hummingbird					1							6
Belted Kingfisher	4		7	1	2	1	6	1	3	2		1

1997 Victoria Christmas Bird Count

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|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 13. UNIVERSITY - CADBORO BAY | 18. ELK LAKE - CORDOVA BAY |
| 14. 10 MILE POINT | 19. PROSPECT LAKE - QUICKS BOTTOM |
| 15. GORDON HEAD - MOUNT DOUGLAS | 20. MARTINDALE - BEAR HILL |
| 16. SWAN LAKE - CEDAR HILL | 21 - 23. HARO STRAIGHT |
| 17. BLENKINSOP - PANAMA FLATS | |

SPECIES	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	TOTAL	COMMENTS
Northern Harrier								2		2	
Sharp-shinned Hawk		2		2			1	2		21	
Cooper's Hawk	5	3	3	2	2	5	10	5		57	All time high (previous high 42 in 1991)
Northern Goshawk							1			1	
Red-tailed Hawk	1	2	1	1	2	6	10	11		76	All time high (previous high 61 in 1996)
American Kestrel										1	
Merlin						1		2		12	
Peregrine Falcon	2		1	1	1			2		11	All time high (previous high 61 in 1985)
Ring-necked Pheasant							1	3		5	
California Quail	18		1		3	10	4	19		145	
Virginia Rail							1			1	
Sora							1			1	New Species
American Coot				16	251	265	26	7		752	
Black-bellied Plover								2		42	
Killdeer	1				15	3	11	59		162	
Black Oystercatcher	2	3								11	
Greater Yellowlegs										3	
Whimbrel										2	
Black Turnstone								2		76	
Surfbird	1	13	7			9				23	
Sanderling										3	
Dunlin		3								64	
Common Snipe	1						2	19		24	
Bonaparte's Gull	1							2		3	
Mew Gull	70	72	16	1	12	78	2	1,573	5	3,560	
California Gull					10					10	
Herring Gull				6						16	
Thayer's Gull	1			2	188			12		458	
Western Gull								2		7	
Glaucous-winged Gull	143	57	173	305	144	420	113	275	27	9,877	
Common Murre		1	7					4	40	63	
Pigeon Guillemot	2	25	6			1		4	27	67	
Marbled Murrelet				1				4		6	
Ancient Murrelet		25	8						172	207	
Rhinoceros Auklet						2				3	
Rock Dove	10		26	63		17	18	51		1,198	
Band-tailed Pigeon			1							59	
Great Horned Owl	1	1					4			7	
Northern Pygmy-Owl										1	
Barred Owl						1				2	
Northern Saw-whet Owl					1					2	
Anna's Hummingbird	26	21	20	1	4	9				88	All time high (previous high 74 in 1996)
Belted Kingfisher	5	2	2			1		2		40	

1997 Victoria Christmas Bird Count

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|--|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
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| 2. CENTRAL HIGHLANDS | 6. ALBERT HEAD - TRIANGLE MOUNTAIN | 10. VICTORIA HARBOUR |
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SPECIES	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Red-breasted Sapsucker	1											
Downy Woodpecker	4	2	2	8	2	2	15		4	4	8	2
Hairy Woodpecker	7								1			
Northern Flicker	21	31	11	15	9	12	31	28	14	3	22	11
Pileated Woodpecker		4	3	1				1				
Eurasian Skylark												
Steller's Jay	5	19	14	14	16		10		1			
Northwestern Crow	315	22	141	127	140	51	61	132	334	139	52	31
Common Raven	100	68	15	25	33	6	16	5	7			3
Chestnut-backed Chickadee	107	171	92	126	79	48	170	24	98	16	62	42
Bushtit	25	38	14	30	77	29	60	24	169	135	55	78
Red-breasted Nuthatch	3	25		4	3	4	27	2	7	2	9	
Brown Creeper	6	8	5	17	2		21	5	4	6	4	1
Bewick's Wren	17	4		15	6	2	12	3	9	2	5	5
Winter Wren	52	46	53	51	8	2	26	20	7	1	18	3
Marsh Wren							1					
American Dipper			7									
Golden-crowned Kinglet	273	282	267	281	139	87	155	23	56	14	72	12
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	15	14	6	16	14		22	17	4	1	5	
Hermit Thrush	2	2	1	1			1	1	1		6	1
American Robin	193	290	13	161	82	97	138	33	153	59	21	37
Varied Thrush	5	7	6	4	2	3	13	13	1			
American Pipit	45											
Cedar Waxwing											4	
Northern Shrike				1						1		
European Starling	1,558	2	18	554	43	26	94	233	633	488	122	52
Hutton's Vireo						1						
Orange-crowned Warbler												
Yellow-rumped Warbler												
Townsend's Warbler												
Spotted Towhee	71	60	7	16	36	30	72	22	39	4	32	33
Savannah Sparrow												
Fox Sparrow	18	30	7	9	22	7	89	6	21	1	7	21
Song Sparrow	60	45	6	17	22	8	78	6	36	5	38	33
Lincoln's Sparrow									3			
White-throated Sparrow						1	1		1			
Golden-crowned Sparrow	8	9	19	27	24	25	21	18	38	5	20	26
White-crowned Sparrow				18	5		8	4	2			8
Dark-eyed Junco	380	178	63	271	164	151	224	151	236	78	151	78
Red-winged Blackbird	8			52	59		29					5
Western Meadowlark	2											
Brewer's Blackbird				27	40		32					
Brown-headed Cowbird				2								

1997 Victoria Christmas Bird Count

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

SPECIES	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	TOTAL	COMMENTS
Red-breasted Sapsucker										1	
Downy Woodpecker	3	12	12	5	7	7	7	8		114	
Hairy Woodpecker						2	1	1		12	
Northern Flicker	5	8	18	13	7	17	19	28		323	
Pileated Woodpecker	1		2			2	3	2		19	
Eurasian Skylark								75		75	
Steller's Jay					1	4	6	5		95	
Northwestern Crow	54	49	591	125	627	4,351	660	2,000		10,002	
Common Raven	10	15	5	2	6	13	38	21		388	
Chestnut-backed Chickadee	43	95	198	53	77	105	353	116		2,075	
Bushtit	53	90	161	46	31	106	56	45		1,322	
Red-breasted Nuthatch	4	15	16	1	10	10	32	5		179	
Brown Creeper		9	14	3		6	16	11		138	
Bewick's Wren	5	14	4	7	7	5	17	24		163	
Winter Wren	6	24	26	3	19	20	35	39		459	
Marsh Wren						1	11	2		15	
American Dipper										7	
Golden-crowned Kinglet	41	12	97	10	28	64	302	88		2,303	
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	2	6	5	4	8	13	25	38		215	
Hermit Thrush		1	3				1			21	
American Robin	91	86	86	70	93	128	132	325		2,288	
Varied Thrush	2		3		2	6	3	5		75	
American Pipit								167		212	All time high (previous high 126 in 1993)
Cedar Waxwing						3				7	
Northern Shrike	1				1			2		6	
European Starling	164	23	304	298	368	495	262	2,919		8,656	
Hutton's Vireo								1		2	
Orange-crowned Warbler		1								1	
Yellow-rumped Warbler				10			1	4		15	
Townsend's Warbler	1		2							3	
Spotted Towhee	29	47	71	29	38	57	64	29		786	All time high (previous high 718 in 1993)
Savannah Sparrow	1	3						5		9	
Fox Sparrow	6	27	31	16	22	29	35	35		439	All time high (previous high 417 in 1992)
Song Sparrow	10	46	33	16	52	29	81	120		741	
Lincoln's Sparrow			1		1		4	4		13	
White-throated Sparrow	2	1								6	
Golden-crowned Sparrow	20	53	46	20	43	21	24	110		577	
White-crowned Sparrow	13		9	1	41			17		126	
Dark-eyed Junco	116	268	266	123	95	240	407	599		4,239	
Red-winged Blackbird	10		1	147	204	111	88	136		850	
Western Meadowlark					3			4		9	
Brewer's Blackbird			2	19	25		30	203		378	
Brown-headed Cowbird								16		18	

1997 Victoria Christmas 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
Purple Finch	10	15	4	2		7	12	2	11			
House Finch	127	18	4	70	6	25	96	78	168	74	46	97
Red Crossbill				8					2			
Pine Siskin	303	43	175	117			87	71	52	24		21
American Goldfinch	20										9	
House Sparrow	7	16		75	58	16	75	182	723	324	121	93
TOTAL BIRDS	11,556	1,727	3,927	3,798	1,962	1,505	4,947	1,866	5,434	2,728	3,184	1,396
TOTAL SPECIES	68	50	53	64	55	55	75	61	60	51	58	60

Welcome to New Members

DECEMBER

Suzanne De Balinhard
of Tahouney Road

Robert and Laura Bridgeman
of Elnido Road
are interested in environmental restoration

Wendy and Grant Laprade
of Songhees Road
are hikers and birders

Wendy Loly and Marion Graham
of Eltham Road
are interested in birding and environmental issues

Frances Gundry
of Niagara Street

Harry Lewis
of Dysart Road

Betsy MacKenzie
of Dallas Road
likes birding ("but not just")

Sophia Morrison
of Bessborough Road
enjoys hikes, photography and painting

Norman Morgensen
of Crestview Road

Henry Niezen
of Ramsay Place
makes nest boxes and bird feeders

Stephen and Purnima Price
of Tudor Avenue
are interested in ecology, conversation biology and public education

Suzanne Rautio and Tom Roe
of Chapman Street

David Scandrett
of Knute Way
has wildflowers and birds for interests

Robert and Ena Wallace
of Chapel Heights

JANUARY

Jan and Johanna Barneveld
of Munn Road

Tom and Judy Burgess
of Govenlock Place
enjoy birds, plants, wildlife viewing and are interested in land-use planning

Rupert Downing
of Avebury Avenue
is interested in birds and marine mammals

Patricia Johnston
of Kings Road

Margaret and Tom Lidkea
of St. Ann Street
are involved with restoring habitat and enjoy birding

Jessie Mantle
of Wordsworth Street

Maureen Mitchell
of Benhomer Drive

Rachel O'Neill
of Fernwood Road
likes birds, fresh air, habitat and rehabilitation

Hilary and James Quayle
of Olive Street

Ann Scarfe
of Gordon Head Road

Shorthill Family
of Cordova Bay Road

Marianne Spanier
of Arm Street

Henry and Marian Summerfield
of Persommon Place
enjoys birds

Steve Taylor
of Stanley Avenue
has interests in marine biology and forestry

Robert and Era Wallace
of Chapel Heights Drive

1997 Victoria Christmas Bird Count

SPECIES	13. UNIVERSITY - CADBORO BAY				18. ELK LAKE - CORDOVA BAY				TOTAL	COMMENTS
	13	14	15	16	18	19	20	21		
	6	8	15	3	16	7	12		130	
	39	160	196	118	104	106	107	134	1,773	All time high (previous high 1,349 in 1996)
	1		7	6	17	84	93	157	1,258	
							1		30	
	46	61	263	290	213	70	62	41	2,736	All time high (previous high 2,368 in 1995)
TOTAL BIRDS	1,848	1,730	3,200	3,053	5,081	10,279	4,293	16,763	616	90,893
TOTAL SPECIES	69	58	68	53	61	73	66	100	21	135

Reminder

Is your subscription due?
If the spot is coloured then
your subscription is now due.
Please complete a Membership
Renewal form as soon as possible.

Name _____

Address _____

Postal Code _____

Phone: _____

Type of membership desired:

Regular _____ \$ 25.00

Family _____ \$ 30.00

Senior _____ \$ 24.00

Junior _____ \$ 7.00



Parks and Conservation Committee

The Parks and Conservation Committee of the VNHS is looking for a member of the VNHS to join an advisory group to assist with the preparation of the Management Plan for Thetis Lake, Thomas Francis/Freeman King and Mill Hill Regional Parks. The proposed time frame for the project is March 1998 to March 1999; Meetings will be bi-monthly and will be conducted by Capital Region District Parks.

For further information please contact Doris Brix at 479-7420.

Two Lifers in One Day on Vancouver Island

By Marie O'Shaughnessy

January 16, 1998, dawned a cold gray day. At 5:45, Hank VanderPol, Jim Eliczuk and myself set off with Hank at the wheel for destinations north of Victoria. We hoped to see a Yellow-Throated Warbler and a Brambling.

As daylight filtered through the gray clouds, Hank's car joined the waiting vehicles bound for the 7:30 ferry from Nanaimo to Gabriola Island. After a twenty minute crossing, we were on our way again.

1773 El Varano Drive was approximately a fifteen minute drive from the ferry dock. The Yellow-Throated Warbler had been seen for several days at that address, visiting a suet/seed bird feeder. The fine mist and dampness of the early morning surrounded us as we took up our positions in the garden to wait in anticipation for the bird. We were rewarded within twenty minutes of our arrival. Our first glimpse of the colourful, robust, little warbler delighted our senses. It flew in and perched on the wooden decking that supported the feeder. It kept us entranced with its musical "chip" and restless foraging over and around the feeder for more than an hour. Neighbourhood birds were no match for the pugnacious warbler. The colourful male chased away all comers from the feeder. The intruder from the southeastern United States proclaimed his new territory despite being far from home. Actually, the forested areas of Vancouver Island are quite similar to the warbler's areas of habitat in the old Confederacy. In this "home away from home" the delightful and enthusiastic "lady of the house" supplied a daily banquet of nutritional "goodies" for the southern warbler.

Sadly, this story has an unfortunate ending. After our visits we learned that by January 25th the energetic little wanderer had been killed at the talons of a hawk. This happened after it had been spooked and flown into a window. The stunned warbler was easy prey for the sharp-eyed predator. Nature's majesty and beauty are always underlined by the cruelty that is very difficult to understand.

After we left Gabriola, the three of us drove northwest from Nanaimo toward Port Alberni. Our first "lifer" had delighted us. Our expectations — like David Copperfield's — were "great" on the second leg of the journey. Ten



Yellow-Throated Warbler. Photo: Marie O'Shaughnessy

kilometers past the west coast port, on the road to Tofino, we turned onto Beaver Creek Road. Atop a small hill, we came to the property of Professor and Mrs. Victor Geist. Both of these bird enthusiasts welcomed us to their "hobby farm." On the grounds was an assortment of juncos, house finches and song sparrows as well as domestic geese and chickens.

We searched for three-quarters of an hour before the brambling arrived with several juncos. Scopes and binoculars are very useful when identifying the "odd bird out." Although the brambling was somewhat timid and reluctant to join the feeding juncos in the chicken pen, it remained visible above our heads in leafless trees when it was not foraging with thirty or more juncos in an adjacent dairy cattle field. Hank and Jim followed its circular foraging pattern for half an hour whilst I delighted in the crowing behaviours of the beautifully plumed roosters that had free range around my feet and tripod.

By 4 p.m. we were safely back in Victoria despite driving rain during most of the return trip. Our journey had been rewarding and now we were able to add two new birds to our year's list.

BIRDING VICTORIA, B.C. WEB SITE

Come and experience Southern Vancouver Island Birding on the Internet. Try your luck at the bird song quizzes. Print out the Victoria checklist. Post a message about a birding trip or tell everyone about your great birding experience. There is a lot to do and lots to explore.

<http://www.islandnet.com/~boom/birding/>



BRANT WILDLIFE FESTIVAL, APRIL 3-5, 1998

Big Day Birding Competition Saturday, April 4

Whether you're a novice or experienced birder, get a team together, grab your binoculars and join the competition for the festival's Big Day trophy. From tide-water to freshwater marsh to coastal forest, you can scour the wide variety of habitats in our area for as many birds as you can find. Over 250 species of birds have been reported from the checklist area. Assuming your team records the most species by the 3:00 p.m. deadline, you're likely to take home the trophy and some special prizes, subject to the final decision of the judges.

Last year, 120 birders in 26 teams scoured the count area from 0500 hours to 1500 hours and the winning team walked away with the trophy by finding 114 species. Highlights of past festivals have included Yellow-billed Loon, Black-legged Kittiwake, Iceland Gull, and Peregrine Falcon.

Following the day in the field, teams meet at the Bayside Inn Resort overlooking beautiful Parksville Bay, for a post count gathering with snacks, stories of the day, awards, and lots of fun. Although it's deemed a competition, emphasis is on having fun, spending a day in the field with friends, and sharing stories.

Prizes are awarded for the Species of the Day, the Story of the Day, the best Shorebird List, the Team Coming from the Farthest Distance and other categories. A highlight will again be the draw prize of a pair of Bausch and Lomb Elite nitrogen purged and hermetically sealed, 8 x 42 binoculars valued at over \$1,600. Bushnell Sports Optics Worldwide has supported the Big Day Competition since its inception, and again this year they play an important role in the festival.

Register Now, Call 250-248-4117

*Parksville-Qualicum Beach is two and a half hours north of Victoria.
For accommodation packages, contact the Brant Festival at 250-248-4117.*

Pacific Octopus

By Pamela Thuringer

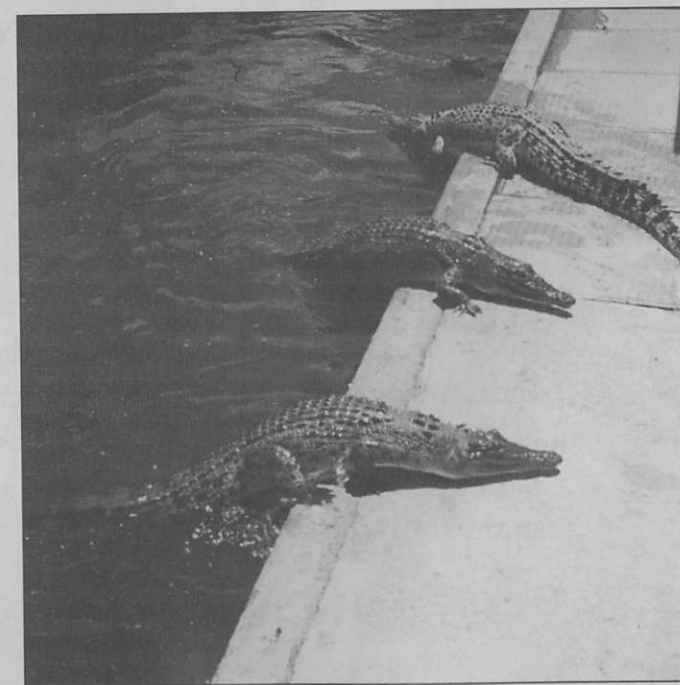
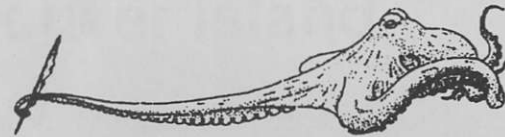
Great Barrier Reef

For a marine biologist full of anticipation for diving on the Great Barrier Reef, traveling 16 hours over water to a continent that lies bounded by the Indian and Pacific oceans, is an arduous undertaking to say the least. Determined to experience a taste of the 2000-km long coral reef system inexplicably missed on a first trip to Australia four years prior, I really did not fully comprehend nor appreciate the many dangers nestled in the beauty of coastal existence in this South Pacific paradise.

Designated a world heritage site, the Great Barrier Reef is found off the northeast coast of Australia and is comprised of approximately 2600 separate reefs with 400 different types of coral. Inhabited by some 1500 species of fish, 4000 types of mollusks (clams, snails etc.), and an approximately 350 echinoderms, this ecosystem also supports thousands of species of sponge, worm and crustacean. Diving in this environment amongst the coral was a definite priority for this trip. Instructed not to touch anything in the hopes of avoiding an encounter with the poison of a scorpion fish, a cryptic stonefish or a cone shell, it was the words of caution about reef sharks that circulated through my mind during the brief descent onto the reef. The makings of a visual feast, this great structure of living organisms with an amazing assortment of tropical fish everywhere the eye could see, certainly held a few memorable moments.

Accustomed to the relatively small size of our north pacific bivalves, the sight of a giant clam (greater than one meter in width) seemingly embedded in the coral, with its gaping multicolored mantle and large diameter siphon certainly caused pause for thought. Watching a spectacularly colored shrimp groom the mouth of a moray eel, knowing at any moment the eel could clamp down its jaws and not only terminate the life of the shrimp but also end my blissful viewing, was indeed quite exciting. Surprised by a massive potato cod while winding my way through the coral menagerie then stopped by the sight of a Clown fish nestled amongst the tentacles of a sea anemone were but a few of my experiences prior to spotting the one thing I secretly hoped to see. About 60 ft. almost directly below the five divers in our group, a 6-8 ft. reef shark hovered over the sandy bottom, which interfaced with the coral reef. Exhilaration rather than fear accompanied my every breath as I watched this revered creature in its own habitat.

Turning to the nearshore of the north Queensland coast, greater dangers to the aquatic minded traveler lurk. Lying just north of the Tropic of Capricorn, this region of Australia is subject to a wet (December-April) and dry season. It is during the onset of the wet season that the extremely dangerous saltwater crocodile (*Crocodylus porosus*), otherwise



Above: Rocky coast of Sydney north shore, New South Wales. Photos: Pam Thuringer.
Below: Two year old saltwater crocodiles, North Queensland.

known as an estuarine crocodile or "saltie", begins its breeding season. This prehistoric reptile, which grows to 8 m in length, is not confined to salt water but is found in estuaries and tidal streams at surprising distances inland. Kilometers of pristine beaches and clear inviting tidal rivers contain these crocodiles which attack anything that invades their territory particularly during breeding season. Difficult as it was not to submerge even a toe into the inviting waters of this hot and extremely humid north coast area, I managed to refrain from such impulses by keeping the thought of a death roll encounter in the forefront of my mind.

Although I did not see one of these salties in the wild, I did get a glimpse of its nature at a working farm outside the coastal town of Cairns. Large murky watered holding pens with hundreds of crocodiles, a few slowly rising to the surface to reveal only eyes and nostrils, were easily viewed from behind the safety of a tall, heavy metal fence. It was quite chilling to see that not one ounce of energy was expended beyond that required to take a look at the cause of vibrations on the muddy banks. Imprinted in my mind was the site of a 5 m long male leaping out of a calm yet eerie looking body of swamp water, powerful jaws open, massive tail thrashing to grab a long pole before disappearing in an instance under the water with only a few ripples to give away its existence. With great awe and respect, I could understand how this creature has survived and adapted through time.

If the knowledge of the existence and behavior of the saltwater crocodile in the nearshore wasn't enough of a concern, there was the added presence of the deadly box jellyfish. Extremely poisonous, "stingers" also inhabit coastal waters and estuaries during the entire wet season and provide

reason number two to stay clear of the water. This did not stop a local man from entering the water from a beach just 10 km north of Cairns one day before my arrival. The town a buzz with the news of a croc attack, it seemed the mans life was spared because he fought back, thus making it just too much of an energy requirement for the 5 m crocodile to continue the fight. Aside from the belief that this person had lost their mind, it was a great surprise to most everyone that he did not perish firstly from the attack and secondly from the infliction of any tentacle burns from the stinging jellyfish.

After acquiring a good appreciation of these real dangers of the north coast, I had to keep in mind during the last leg of my journey that marine recreation in New South Wales was also not without its warnings. Aside from the common and deadly presence of the red back and trap door terrestrial spiders in and around the city of Sydney, swimming in the slightly colder nearshore waters was an interesting cerebral exercise at times. Trying to adhere to my mental note to stick to the policy of keeping one body between me and the open water while not swimming behind the safety of the many beach shark enclosures, I on occasion let my zest to venture further get the best of me.

In an effort not to let fear of what I know about the many real dangers of recreation on the eastern Australian coast, I have come to realize that the only way to fully appreciate the beauty of these nearshore south pacific waters, is to accept and respect the presence and existence of such deadly living organisms

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



Annual General Meeting

All VNHS members are encouraged to attend the 1998 Annual General Meeting

Tuesday, March 10 at 7:30 p.m.

Begbie Building, Room 159, University of Victoria.

Topics to be discussed will include nominations for the Board of Directors, a brief overview of financial statements and the President's Annual Report. Attendance is urged as a quorum of members is required to pass important motions for the coming year.

Johnny Mikes will be presenting a natural history of the
Tatshenshini River after the general meeting.

Bushtits in the Bamboo

By David Stirling

While gardening at 3500 Salsbury Way, May 22, 1997, I noticed a pair of Bushtits, *Psaltriparus minimus*, moving into and out of a small clump of exotic bamboo sp. on the west side of the house. Checking on this frantic activity I saw that the birds were constructing a nest. Only a thin fiber ring was woven at that point. On May 25, a cursory glance, so as not to disturb the birds, showed that the nest was completed. On June 17, the birds' activity indicated that young were being fed. At this time I noticed one of the resident pair of Northwestern Crows, perched on a low Garry Oak branch, cocking an eye in the direction of the bamboo — a bad omen for the Bushtits. I was away until June 23, and not seeing any Bushtits around on my return, I checked the site. The nest was demolished. Only a few tatters remained. I suspect the predator was a crow or, perhaps, a Gray Squirrel, the new kid on the block.

The nest was one metre from the ground, one metre from the house wall in a clump of bamboo 5.5 metres in circumference, 2.5 metres in height with a few spears rising to three metres. During the universal bamboo die-off a few years ago this plant was down to a few sickly spikes. Since then it has recovered with renewed vigor. There are "oceans" of Ocean Spray, *Holodiscus discolor*, one of the Bushtits' favorite shrubs, in the immediate vicinity.



Photo: David Stirling

I found no mention of bamboo on any of the 500 Bushtit nest record cards I checked. On the other hand, many nests had been found in the much maligned, (but much more abundant) exotic Scotch Broom, *Cytisus scoparius*. Campbell, *Birds of British Columbia*, does not mention bamboo as a nesting site for the Bushtit.

References: British Columbia Nest Record Scheme. R.W. Campbell, 1997, *Birds of British Columbia*, Vol. 3, p. 269.

Valentine's Day Couples Count

By Dannie Carsen

Valentine's Day is celebrated in different ways. Some brave souls took on the challenge of birding from seven to noon, with their spouse. Each couple needed to hear or see the bird. We met at 12:30 to tally the results. Many thanks to Michael Shepard and David Stirling as count judges,

The assembled couples told "Best Bird That Got Away" and Best "No-name" Bird stories before the counting was complete. The "Best Bird That Got Away" prize of a package of black oil sunflower seeds was awarded to Kevin and Cynthia Slagboom for a Green-winged Teal that Cynthia missed. Best "No-name" Bird prize of a package of smoked char (courtesy of Kevin Slagboom of Birding Victoria website) was awarded to Joanne and Michael Copeland who described a "Veery-like" type of bird at Quick's Bottom that "flew like a flicker but was not one, was timid, perched 15 feet off the ground in a tree". Everyone agreed that Mike Klazek and Susan Colonval deserved a prize of smoked char for the lowest count of 33, especially since they did not start until 10:00 a.m.

The top prize of a romantic dinner for two at Pagliacci's was won by Darren and Claudia Copley, who racked up an impressive 78 species! A special thank you to Howie Siegel who donated the gift certificate for dinner and a bottle of wine. The second prize of a heart-shaped wine and food basket (camembert, two packages of smoked char courtesy of Kevin Slagboom of Birding Victoria website, and a wonderful Wynne's 1995 Pinot Noir) was won by Jerry and Gladys Anderson with a total of 74 birds. The third prize of Peterson's *A Field Guide to North American Warblers*, kindly donated by Bruce Whittington at the Field-Naturalist, was won by Dannie and Susan Carsen.

Everyone described their best birds of the day, with the highlights being: American Kestrel seen by Jerry and Gladys Anderson near the airport, Northern Shrike at UVIC Orchard seen by Dannie and Susan Carsen, Eared Grebe off Cordova Bay seen by Darren and Claudia Copley, Red-breasted Sapsucker at Goldstream seen by Cathy Reader and Warren Lee.

In total, 110 different bird species were seen. All agreed that the event was great fun and something to repeat in 1999!

Back by Popular Demand!

Natural Greece

Off the beaten track, with expert Greek naturalists,
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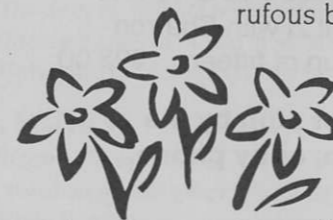
Plus an optional extension:
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Highlights include:

Crete ... walk the White Mountains: haunt of Lammergeier, Cretan wild goat endemic peonies, and wild tulips! Explore a unique jungle of Theophraste's Palms, subtropical beaches, mountain villages, and exquisite Venetian harbours and castles. **Messolonghi** ... lagoons teeming with birds and fringed with oak-clothed hills, plus the ruins of a classical Greek city, its theater hewn out of the rocky hillside! Greece's largest wetland at **Amvrakikos Gulf** with an amazing diversity of birds: Dalmatian pelicans, rufous bush-chats, marsh sandpipers...and perhaps striped dolphins! **Pindos Mountains**, meet the semi-nomadic shepherds, who share an alpine nirvana with brown bears and fields of wildflowers! **Meteora** stunning rock pinnacles sacred to Byzantine monasteries, a refuge for Egyptian vultures, black storks, tortoises...plus wild rock garden of irises, orchids, and more!



Space limited to 20 participants

For itinerary and tour details call Eva Zogaris: 251-7477

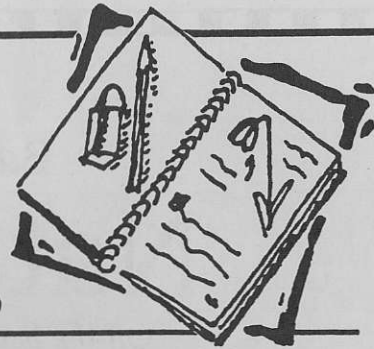
For reservations call Patti at Omega:

738-7161 or 1-800-663-2669

 **OMEGA TRAVEL**



Spring Natural History Courses



Beyond Beginning Birding

Two, 8 field session groups led by local experts on Thursdays or Sundays beginning April 5th and 9th. Fifteen participants per group. \$95.00

Beginning Birding

One 6 session group of fifteen on Saturdays, beginning April 25th. Includes an evening introductory lecture, April 24th. All sessions transit accessible. \$75.00

Marine Ecology

Four three-hour zodiac trips with Seacoast Expeditions. Each trip has a different marine theme but we'll let nature take the lead:

April 11 - Birds of Sea and Shore with David Allinson

April 13 - Marine and Coastal Ecosystems with Marilyn Lambert

May 17 - Marine Mammals & Conservation with Kerry Irish, Marine Mammal Research Group

May 18 - Birds of Sea and Shore with David Allinson

Eleven participants per group. \$80.00

Tidepooling

Evening lecture, May 14th; field session, May 16th with Marilyn Lambert of the Field-Naturalist and Phil Lambert of the RBCM. Twenty participants. \$35.00

Gardening with Native Plants

Evening lecture, April 23rd; full day field-session April 25th with Carrina Maslovat of Woodland Native Plant Nursery and the Field-Naturalist.

Fifteen participants. \$45.00

Spring Botany

Evening lecture, April 30th followed by four, three-hour field sessions May 2, 9, 16, 23 with Carrina Maslovat, Andy MacKinnon, Brenda Costanzo and Bob Ogilvie.

One group of fifteen. \$75.00

Nature Photography ~

Beyond the Basics

Evening lecture April 16, followed by two field sessions April 18 & 19 and a final lecture April 21 with Sharron Milstein. One group of fifteen. \$95.00

For more information about our courses, give us a call or stop by the store for a detailed brochure. You may register in person, or by phone.

the field-naturalist

your partners in the field

1126 Blanshard Street
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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 **Parks and Conservation Committee Meeting:** the third Wednesday 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: We would like to encourage everyone to attend those meetings which are of interest to them but especially the **Natural History Presentations**. The volunteers and speakers at these meetings work hard to provide an entertaining and informative evening and we should all show our appreciation by coming to as many as possible.

MARCH EVENTS

Tuesday March 3

Board of Directors Meeting

Clifford Carl Reading Room, Cunningham Building, University of Victoria, 7:30 pm.

Saturday, March 7

Witty's Lagoon

Join **Roy Prior** for an early spring visit to Witty's Lagoon for early migrants and wintering waterfowl. Meet at the Helmcken Park'n'Ride at 8:00 a.m. or at the first parking lot at 8:30 a.m. Bring your lunch since the group usually pauses at the picnic tables later in the morning.

Tuesday, March 10

Annual General Meeting

Bring your ideas, questions or criticisms to the annual general meeting. The meeting will not be long or tedious — perhaps only 10 minutes if there are enough of you there to vote! Room 159, Begbie Building, University of Victoria, 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday, March 10

Natural History Presentations

Following the short annual general meeting, **Johnny Mikes** of Canadian River Expeditions is coming over from Whistler to give us a fascinating presentation on *Natural History, Plants, and Birds of the Tatshenshini River*. Room 159, Begbie Building, University of Victoria, 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, March 15th

Wildflower Walk

With **Mount Tolmie Conservancy Association**. Meet **Eric Redekop** at the summit viewpoint at 1:00 pm. More info, 595-7270

Tuesday, March 17

Botany Night

Swan Lake Nature Centre, 7:30 p.m. Sponsored by the Victoria Natural History Society and the Native Plant Society of British Columbia. **Program to be announced.**

Thursday, March 19

Native Plant Group Study Group

Join **Mike Miller** speaking on mariposa lilies. Room 118C, 1996 Classroom Bldg, University of Victoria 7:00 p.m.

Sunday, March 22

Birding Martindale Flats and Island View Beach

Join **Brent Diakow** for another chance at a "wonderful spring tour" of Martindale. Wintering waterfowl and raptors as well as sparrows, larks, and warblers plus early spring migrants are possible on this morning tour into wet farm fields. Bring your rubber boots and a lunch and meet at the red barn at Island View Road and Lochside Trail at 8:00 a.m. Phone Brent for details at 656-3190.

Wednesday, March 25

Birders Night

Rob Cannings of Victoria will relive a 10 day tour of Asia with slide illustrations and a talk entitled *Taiwan — Adventures with its Forests, Birds and Biodiversity*. Room 159 Begbie Building, University of Victoria 7:30 p.m. Bring a friend and your coffee mug

Saturday, March 28

Mill Hill Regional Park

Join **Adolf Ceska** on a quest for early spring wild flowers on Mill Hill. Meet at the parking lot off Atkins Road at 9:30 a.m. and bring a lunch. Call Adolf for details at 477-1211.

Sunday, March 29

Hike to McKenzie Bight

Get those hiking boots out for a wonderful walk through early spring flora and fauna of this picturesque area on Saanich Inlet, now part of the new Gowlland-Tod Provincial Park. You will enjoy some steep uphill stretches on this hike but the surrounding views and the interesting variety of plants mean regular stops along the way. Bring good footwear, a lunch, and water. Meet at Helmcken Park'n'Ride at 8:00 a.m. or at the start of the walk at 8:30 p.m. Phone Bev at 721-1476 for details.

Monday, March 30

Marine Night

Many toxic chemicals that drain into the ocean environment are incorporated into living tissues in the marine food chain. **Dr. Peter Ross**, a post doctoral fellow at the Institute of Ocean Sciences in Sidney, is studying the effects of these chemicals on the lives of two species of local marinemammals, Harbour Seals and Killer Whales. Join us this evening to hear his talk entitled, *Dangerous Cargo: Chemical Contaminants in Marine Mammals*. Swan Lake Nature Centre. 7:30 p.m.

APRIL EVENTS

Saturday, April 4

Brant Festival Big Day

Sunday, April 5th

Wildflower Walk

See March 15 for details.

Tuesday, April 7

Board of Directors Meeting

Clifford Carl Reading Room, Cunningham Building, University of Victoria, 7:30pm.

Saturday, April 11

Mount Douglas Park

Kevin Slagboom has been informing birders with his Birding Victoria website for some time. We got him away from his computer to lead this spring tour of Mount Douglas Park. We'll look for spring arrivals as well as emerging wildflowers and butterflies on the slopes. There will be some hill climbing so bring good footwear, a snack, and some water. Meet at the Mount Douglas Park main parking lot at 8:00 am. Phone Kevin at 658-0940 for details.

Tuesday, April 14

Natural History Presentations

We have been fortunate to persuade our own **David Fraser** to come back and tell us about more endangered species in the Begbie Building 159, starting at 7.30 p.m.

Thursday, April 16

Native Plant Study Group

Hannah Nadel will be speaking on *Plants and Pollination*. Room 118C, 1996 Classroom Bldg., University of Victoria, 7:00 p.m.

Saturday, April 18

Spring Wild Flowers Around Cowichan Lake

Come along with **Marilyn Lambert** and **David Stirling** for a wild flower exploration of the Cowichan Bay area. This time of year we expect amazing displays of Pink Fawn Lilies plus White Fawn Lilies, Trillium, and even Wild Ginger. Meet at Helmcken Park'n'Ride at 9:00 a.m. or join up with Marilyn and David at the Village Green Hotel Parking lot in Duncan at 10:00 a.m. Phone Marilyn for details at 477-5922.

Sunday, April 19

Lone Tree Hill

Join **David Pearce** for an invigorating morning hike up rocky Garry oak habitat for spring migrants such as Townsend's Solitaire, Mountain Bluebird and warblers. Meet at Helmcken Park'n'Ride at 7:30 p.m. or at the parking lot on Road at 8:00 a.m. Phone David for details at 658-0295.

Tuesday, April 21

Botany Night

Swan Lake Nature Centre, 7:30 p.m. Sponsored by the Victoria Natural History Society and the Native Plant Society of British Columbia. **Program to be announced.**

Wednesday, April 22

Birders Night

Michelle Masselink of the University of Victoria will present a slide-illustrated talk on British Columbia's official bird — *The Ecology of the Steller's Jay in the Carmanah Valley*. Room 159 Begbie Building, University of Victoria, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, April 25

Birding at Cowichan Bay

Come up to Duncan to join **Alan MacLeod** for a look at the spring shorebird migration and the arrival of Purple Martins. Bring your lunch so you can enjoy it before your return to Victoria. Meet at the Helmcken Park'n'Ride at 8:15 a.m. or the Cowichan Bay Dock Road at 9:00 a.m. Phone Alan for details at 382-3854.

Sunday, April 26

Gowlland-Tod Hike

Enjoy a hilltop hike with **Eric Bonham** through the Gowlland-Tod Provincial Park. The wild flowers are at their best this time of the year and the views are excellent. Bring a lunch and suitable footwear since this hike has some steep stretches. Meet at the Caleb Pike parking lot off Millstream Road at 9:45 a.m. and the hike will finish up at approximately 2:30 p.m. If a few people come at 9:15 a.m., we will arrange for cars to be left at the Mount Work parking lot to return hikers to Caleb Pike. Phone Eric for details at 474-5252.

Sunday, April 26th

Wildflower Walk

See March 15 for details.

Monday, April 27

Marine Night

The new Sidney Fishing Pier at the foot of Bevan Street was built to provide a place for residents and visitors with a place to fish, catch shrimp and crabs or just enjoy the tranquility. To enhance the flora and fauna two artificial reefs were laid on either side of the pier. A dedicated group of volunteer divers has been monitoring the establishment of new marine life. **Keven Conley**, who coordinates the Sidney Pier Artificial Reef Science project, will describe the results so far, using slides and video. Come to Swan Lake Nature Centre to hear about the *Reef Ball Project*. 7:30 p.m.

MAY EVENTS

Saturday, May 2

Broadcast Hill and Viaduct Flats Stroll

Bring your hiking boots and join **Kevin Slagboom** for an informal morning stroll up Broadcast Hill and down to Viaduct Flats. We'll keep our eyes open for flycatchers, warblers, raptors and ducks as we move through the variety of habitats in the area. Meet at the Layritz Park parking lot at 8:00 am. Phone Kevin at 658-0940 for details.

Saturday, May 9

Observatory Hill

Join **Hank VanderPol** for a climb up Observatory Hill at the height of spring migration. Enjoy mixed habitat graced by flycatchers, swallows, tanagers and orioles. At the top, you might see House Wrens, Chipping Sparrows, and soaring raptors. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the bottom of Observatory Hill off West Saanich Road. Bring a snack and some water. Call Hank at 658-3482 for more information.

BULLETIN BOARD

Wanted Articles and Pictures for *The Victoria Naturalist*

Your magazine cannot exist without good articles written by our members for our members. Articles with nature a nature theme (birds, plants, marine). We encourage you to use a word processor and submit the article on disk or E-mail. Description or short article should be included with the photo either print or slide. See the rare bird's photos and articles by Marie O'Shaughnessy for a great example of the photos we need. Deadline for the next issue of *The Victoria Naturalist* is March 27, 1998. **Glen Moores**, 655-3772.

Wanted: Parks Person

The Parks and Conservation Committee of the VNHS is looking for a member of the VNHS to join an advisory group to assist with the preparation of the Management Plan for Thetis Lake, Thomas Francis/Freeman King and Mill Hill Regional Parks. The proposed time frame for the project is March 1998 to March 1999; meetings will be bi-monthly and will be conducted by Capital Region District Parks. For further information please contact **Doris Brix** at 479-7420.

An Appeal for Spare Field Guides

VNHS has undertaken, under the sponsorship of the Provincial Capital Commission and in collaboration with local municipalities, to conduct biological inventories on lands in the Capital Improvement District with high Greenways potential, but that are at risk of early alienation through development. The inventorying effort, which will begin at field sites in early March, will be carried out through the efforts of a wide array of volunteers, many of whom will be college and university students.

We expect that most of the student volunteers will not possess field guides that cover any of the wide array of local biological values. These will likely be needed to supplement any limitations in their field experience. The organizers of this most worthy project appeal to those VNHS members who may have some spare or unused field guides, to lend them to the project (which may continue beyond 1998) at least for the 1998 season.

Subjects for field observations will include: local botany, birds, mammals, amphibians and reptiles, insects, geology, etc.

Please contact **Tony Embleton** at 595-6812 if you are able to contribute field guides.

Spring Break Family Programs Sponsored by Swan Lake Christmas Hill Sanctuary, March 16 - 20

A different program each day: birds, bees, plants and night walks. Call Ann at 479-0211 for more information.

Trips to Columbia Gorge, Western Australia and New Zealand

The Nanaimo Field Naturalists is offering a trip to the Columbia Gorge — April 19th - 23rd, \$495 per person (start in Nanaimo, end in Nanaimo). Contact **Bill Merilees**, 250-758-1801.

The Vancouver Natural History Society is offering the following trips: Western Australia — September 15 - October 15, 1998. Leader: **Bill Merilees**. New Zealand — November, 1998. Leader: **Bill Merilees**. Contact Anza Travel at 1-800-668-6612 for more details.

Greenways in your Community: User's Forum

The Trans-Canada Trail's national organization will hold its annual meeting at St. Ann's Academy, Victoria, during the weekend of March 20-22, 1998. In this connection, The Trans-Canada Trails and the Provincial Capital Commission are jointly sponsoring a community conference to engage the general public in exploring a variety and Trans-Canada Trails and greenways issues, entitled: *Local Greenways and the Trans Canada trail: Connecting Home and Country*.

A greenways/trail user's forum will be an important component of that event. It is scheduled to take place from 10:30 to noon on Saturday, March 21, 1998. It will explore the theme *Growing Green: Greenways for a Healthy and Sustainable Community*. People may attend this single event of the conference only, at no charge. Alternatively, for a \$20 registration fee, they can enjoy the full three days events activities, including exploring problems and solutions in establishing the national trail, supporting efforts in BC and on Vancouver Island, the user's forum, refreshments and Saturday lunch.

Those interested in trails, greenways, nature in our community, and the implications of future urban growth, will want to attend the greenways User's Forum at the St. Ann's Academy, Saturday, March 21, 1998, 10:30 - 12:00 and the conference as a whole.

VNHS Parabolic Microphone

Bob Chappel has recently designed and constructed an amplifier system for the parabolic microphone that is owned by the VNHS. This unit allows independent adjustment of the headphone and tape recorder outputs. The complete system has recently been used by several Society members. There is NO tape recorder with the system but some arrangement may be made with Bob. There will be a nominal fee of \$1.00 for daily use and some realistic fee for weekly use to cover the cost of batteries and maintenance. People interested in trying out this system should contact Bob at home (388-4696) or at the Field Naturalist (388-4174) or E-mail at fieldnat@pacificcoast.net.

Reminder!

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

New Children's Naturalist Magazine

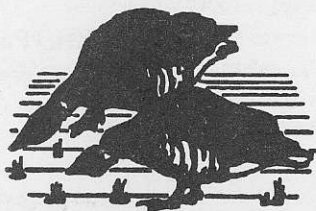
IN SYNC (the Sunflower Young Naturalists Club) is a magazine targeted at younger children (6-10 yrs). Its aim is to interest and educate children in the natural world we all share. The format is a cheerful one, including: crosswords, an art gallery, front cover contests, poems, puzzles, a creature feature, 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

Back Issues of the Victoria Naturalist

Copies of back issues and indexes of *The Victoria Naturalist* are available from **Tom Gillespie** at 361-1694.

Expiry: Dec-98

Claudia and Darren Copley
657 Beaver Lake Road
VICTORIA BC V8Z 5N9



**BRANT
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British Columbia's Premier Wildlife Festival

Parksville-Qualicum Beach

April 3, 4 and 5, 1998

There's lots to see and do at the Brant Wildlife Festival, so make this the year you come spend some time with us. It's a holiday getaway you'll long remember.

Parksville-Qualicum Beach is two and a half hours north of Victoria.

**For accommodation packages,
contact the Brant Festival at 250-248-4117.**