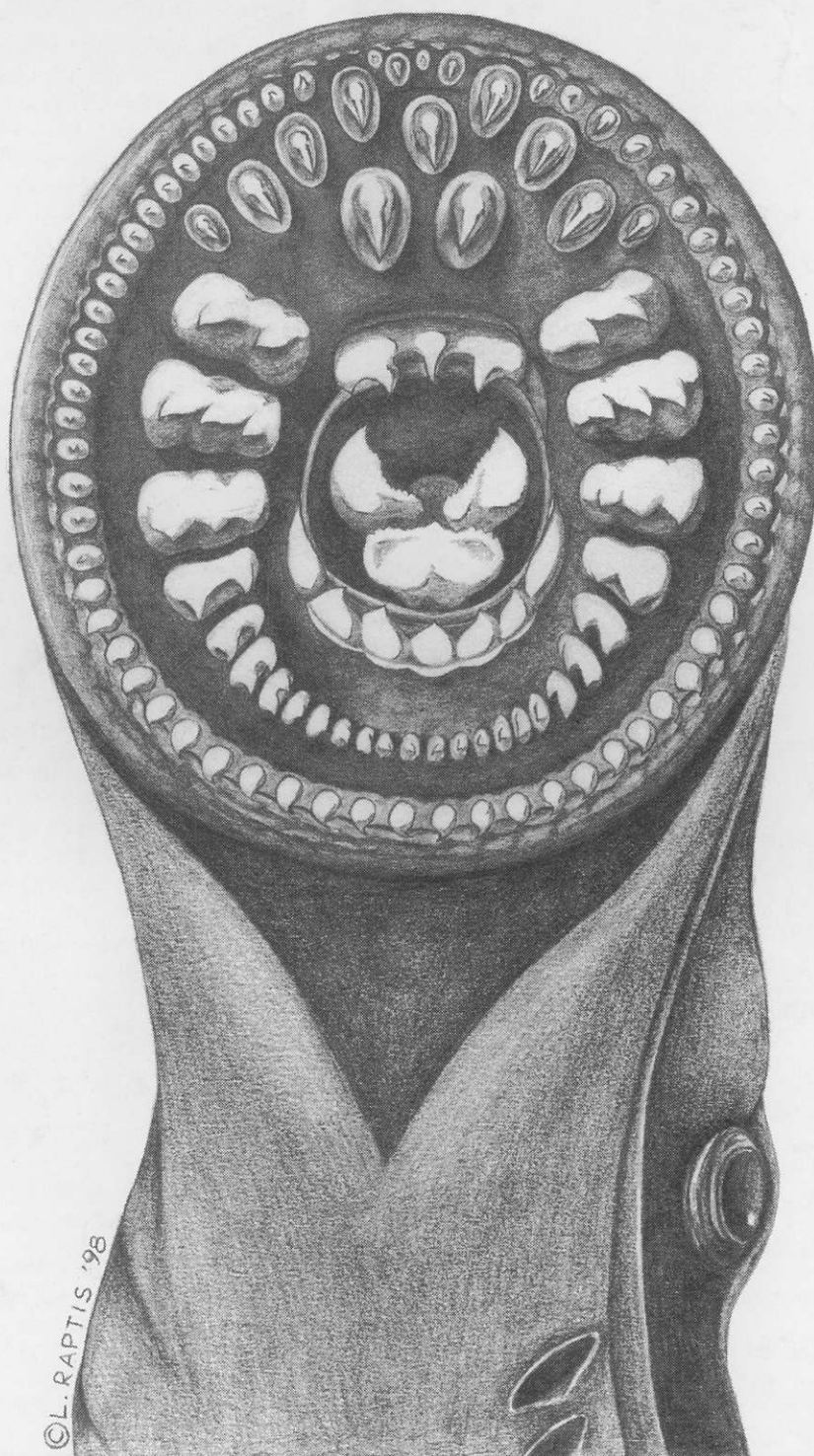


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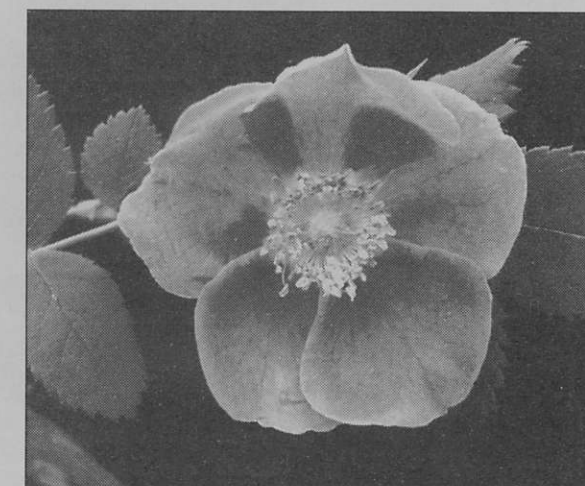
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The mouth of a Lake Lamprey stares at you from
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 a most interesting article on Lake Lamprey on
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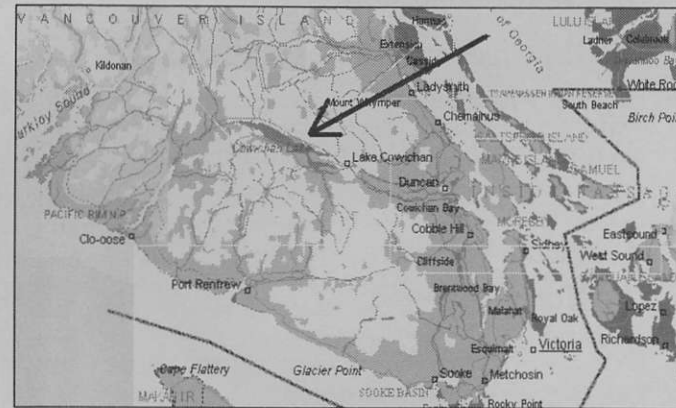
Our Very Own Lake Lamprey, Rare and Little Known

By Loucas Raptis

It is a blood-sucking parasite, an immutable descendant of an ancient and distinguished line of parasites. It is a fish with no spine and no jaws — its kind has done quite nicely with neither of these evolutionary frills for over 280 million years. Its name is *Lampetra macrostoma*: the stone sucker with the big mouth. It shows hardly any interest in sucking stones however. Doing itself no favours, it feeds on the blood of fishes held in much higher regard than it could ever hope for. It is a lamprey, commonly known — or little known — as Lake Lamprey. It is our very own species and can be found in only two connected lakes on Vancouver Island: Cowichan and Mesachie Lakes.

Its eel-like body, barely a foot in length when fully grown, is built around a flexible internal rod, or notochord. The head, shaped and supported by soft cartilage, sports two believable fish eyes and a single nostril right between them. A short distance behind and below each eye there is a row of seven round gill openings. From this point on, the body extends in the form of repeating muscle segments, or myomeres, their arrangement faintly discernable through the smooth and slimy skin. It has no pectoral or pelvic fins, but only two soft dorsal fins, the rear one extending into the spear-shaped tail.

In agility and speed it measures up to any of its potential hosts. Being practically black, however, and almost invisible at night, it probably uses nocturnal stealth to attach itself to the sides of its victims. Its fatal grip is made decisive with its circular, oversized mouth, a mean-looking suction disc seemingly made out of nothing else but rings of horny teeth.



With the rasping action of its incisive tongue it makes short work of scales, skin and tissue and through a well placed hole starts draining blood and vital fluids. A steady drool of an anti-coagulant released into the open wound keeps the liquid diet flowing, until eventually the host is weakened or even killed. The Lake Lamprey will then move on to find another victim and then another and another. A large number of cutthroat trout, coho salmon, and Dolly Varden swimming in Cowichan and Mesachie Lakes carry the bloody round scars of at least one troublesome encounter with the lamprey. The injury invites infection and potential death; yet, the many survivors suggest that the attacks are only infrequently fatal.

The Lake Lamprey feeds on the blood of fishes only as an adult, and unlike its anadromous relative the Pacific

Lamprey, does so only in fresh water. The Lake Lamprey is non-anadromous: it has the opportunity to reach the sea through the Cowichan River, but shows no proclivity to make a dash for it — despite the fact that in the lab it has been able to survive in salt water. So there it stays, a homebody of Cowichan and Mesachie Lakes, feeding on the blood of highly prized salmonids, from its first bite to its last for about two years. And then, finally mature, it stops feeding, and from May to August it may be seen milling about over shallow gravel bars where spawning takes place. That is when the “stone sucking” title comes into the name. Both male and female rearrange stones with their mouths to construct a shallow nest. Their anadromous relatives suck stones to hold their position against stream currents, scale rapids, and even ascend hazardous waterfalls. Lake Lampreys may build several nests during spawning, laying in them successively a few hundred eggs. In the process several males may gather around and spawn with a single female. When they complete their spawning all lampreys die.

The larvae that emerge from the eggs are called ammocoetes, and may stay buried in U-shaped tunnels in the silty bottom of the lake for almost six years. They resemble their parents, but have no teeth and their eyes are covered with a membrane. They filter feed with tentacles under an oral hood, shifting through detritus for algae, diatoms and protozoans. It is a lowly diet, to be sure, but after six years on it they slowly grow to half a foot. Still, six years of eating muck is six years too many, and finally, throughout the summer and into the fall, they gradually metamorphose into convincing-looking lampreys, ready to swim away and suck blood.

This is a curious and interesting lifestyle, but certainly the later part of it does not make easy friends for our Lake Lamprey, and it is the Lake Lamprey, of course, who is most in need of friendship. No sooner was it described and declared a new species by Richard J. Beamish in 1982, than it was designated rare, or vulnerable, by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada in 1986. Not that anyone is going to be alarmed by all these apocalyptic epithets, but one may rest assured that the Lake Lamprey is in no danger of extinction. In the language of animal welfare “vulnerable” is “a species of special concern because of characteristics that make it particularly sensitive to human activities or natural events.” But what is it that makes this parasite unique?

The Lake Lamprey is a “derivative” form of the Pacific Lamprey, *Lampetra tridentata*. The latter is in no shortage of derivative forms, with at least five of them carrying a distinct species designation. The Lake Lamprey has the largest mouth of them all. Besides other obscure morphological and physiological differences, it also differs from them in the size of the eyes, in the position of its gill openings, and in the number and coloration of its velar tentacles (located between the pharynx and oesophagus, protecting the gill chamber from solid chunks of food). Most important, however, the Lake Lamprey is the only known freshwater parasitic lamprey in BC. And this is perhaps the attribute that makes it so distinct.

Despite the absence of physical barriers and the fact of living in proximity, the Lake Lamprey does not mingle or interbreed with the anadromous Pacific Lamprey. It is an ostensibly simple adaptation of two closely related species, but the detailed story, hidden in the glacial past of Vancouver Island, may hold important knowledge inexorably locked in the fate of *Lampetra macrostoma*. This, at any rate, is the case made by Richard J. Beamish in defense of his newly discovered lamprey. But one can easily picture the man sunk in his chair in utter resignation. A unique case study in evolutionary history? Try to present this as a supportive statement to the “outdoor enthusiasts” who enjoy pursuing plentiful, unblemished trout — despite the fact that they are the ones who are the most likely to kill their catch.

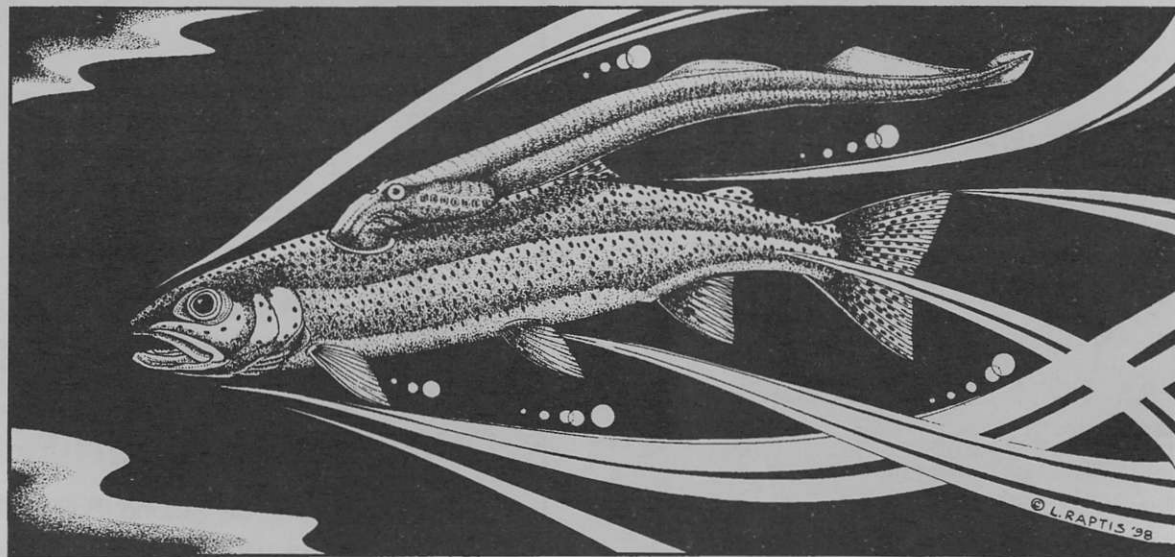
Regardless of favourable arguments, however, all lampreys are damned to exist until the end of time under the grim legacy of their East coast relative the Sea Lamprey (*Petromyzon marinus*) — the “vampire of the Great Lakes.” Sometime in the last century, it found its way into the upper Great Lakes, established itself there, and by the 1950s had nearly wiped out the stocks of lake trout and other commercial fish species. As a note of interest, the Sea Lamprey had been denied access to the Great Lakes by the impervious force of Niagara Falls, until the man-made Welland Ship Canal disrupted this natural arrangement and opened up an artificial pathway. All the same, in the public eye, the Sea Lamprey incident made “lampricides” universally fashionable and justifiable, and one of the derivative forms of the Pacific Lamprey, *Lampetra minima*, has already paid the price of extinction by deliberate extermination.

In this dim light, instead of a plea for protection, the Lake Lamprey should consider itself lucky it has avoided preemptive persecution. Our self-serving attitudes aside, of course, no creature on this planet needs our justification in order to exist. Unfortunately, they all need our sympathy, because invariably our self-righteous activities pose the most serious threat to their existence. True, given its unsavory parasitic habits, a low profile may be the Lake Lamprey’s best bet. But then again, knowing a few things about this strange creature may help us grow a bit more sympathetic. After all, it is our very own Lake Lamprey.

References:

- Beamish, R. J. 1982. *Lampetra macrostoma*, a new species of freshwater parasitic lamprey from the west coast of Canada. *Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences* 39(5): 736-747.
- Beamish, R. J. 1987. Status of the Lake Lamprey, *Lampetra macrostoma*, in Canada. *Canadian Field-Naturalist* 101(2): 186-189.
- Coad, B. W. 1995. *Encyclopedia of Canadian Fishes*. Canadian Museum of Nature, Ottawa. viii + 928 pp.

LOUCAS RAPTIS is a freelance illustrator and amateur naturalist with a special interest in aquatic environments.



Lake Lamprey feeding on cutthroat trout. Illustration: Loucas Raptis

VNHS Greenways Inventory Project

A Progress Report

By Tony Embleton

As you may recall VNHS has been engaged in identifying and inventorying ecological values of the undeveloped lands in greater Victoria for the last year.

As a result of the contribution of about 110 volunteers the following projects were undertaken:

- Discussions with the Conservation Data Centre regarding Sensitive Ecosystems Inventory data verification.
- Contact with all municipalities within the Greater Victoria area to determine what inventory work was being, or had been done, in order to avoid duplication.
- Contact with landowners by phone or letter.
- A listing of all the parks in Saanich, and the inspection sheets prepared for future use.
- A pilot project for the Capital Regional District on how best to conduct an inventory of the Galloping Goose Trail.

- Inventory of 8 undeveloped sites in Colwood.
- Inventory of some Department of National Defence lands in Colwood.
- Baseline inventories of 16 lots in the Highlands District to determine the ecological features and the condition of ecosystems that exist on the covenanted lands of each lot.
- Inventory of the proposed Highlands Municipal hall building site.
- A joint project with Camosun College Environmental Technology Program and VNHS entitled "A Biological Assessment of the Bayside and Dockside Lands of Victoria West" for the City of Victoria.
- Inventory of 28 sites in View Royal.
- A survey of approximately 496 discontinuance of the road rights of way in Saanich. The listing, preparation, and compilation of the inspection sheets. The carrying out of



Laura Gretsing and team at a Highlands site, VNHS Inventory Project. Photo: Tony Embleton

the inspections of these sites to determine whether they could become part of a trail network, greenway, or park.

On behalf of the Victoria Natural History Society (VNHS), I wish to convey our sincere thanks to the our sponsors. Without the generous financial support of these funding agencies we would not have been able to accomplish the many and varied tasks outlined below. Our society contributed \$2,000 to start the project, and then applied for and received approval from the following donors:

For general purposes:

Provincial Capital Commission 1997	\$9,000
BC Real Estate Foundation	\$4,400
Habitat Conservation Trust Fund	\$2,000

For equipment only:

Canada Trust Friends of the Environment Foundation	\$4,500
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A special thanks also goes to Danny Carsen and those who participated in the Valentine Bird Count for their donation. Thanks also goes to a generous anonymous donor.

As many of our volunteers were amateur naturalists, we decided to contract the services of a professional biologist Marlyn Fuchs, to help set up the project, train volunteers, and conduct some of the field work.

The management committee, (composed of Tom Burgess, Cam Finlay, Norm Mogensen, Bernard Morrison, and Tony Embleton), hopes to have all 1998 data reports completed and copied before the end of December. A copy of all data collected will be deposited at the VNHS Habitat Acquisition Trust Foundation office located above The Field-Naturalist store at 1126 Blanshard Street. A copy of data collected for each municipality will be given with a summary to that specific municipality.

We plan to continue to conduct inventories on a request basis or whenever there appears to be a need. Some projects already lined up for 1999 are:

- The Saanich parks survey mentioned earlier.
- Parks Canada inventory of sites in and adjacent to Fort Rodd Hill.
- Craigflower Creek Watershed — to identify where native vegetation has been removed or is in decline; so that restoration can be performed.

We will require more volunteers for next year. If you think you can assist in any way, please contact Cam Finlay at 479-9833

If you would like more information about the project, please contact Tony Embleton at 595-6812 or Norm Mogensen at 447-9114

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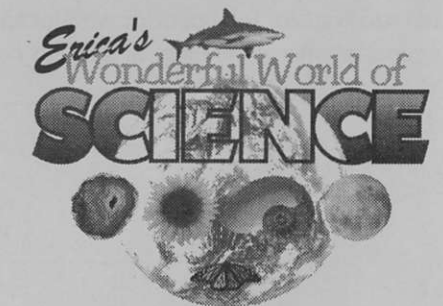
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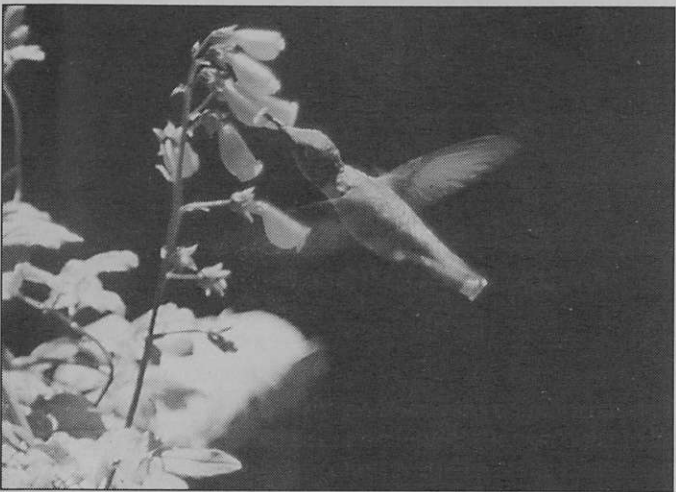
Where Were the Rufous Hummingbirds?

By J. Cam Finlay

As mentioned in the May-June 1998 issue of *The Victoria Naturalist* (Vol 54.6), once the first Rufous hummingbirds arrived this spring, we awaited the large numbers that had come to our feeders the previous two years — they never appeared! During 1996 and 1997 these birds regularly drank 3 cups of sugar water per day. Assuming that a hummingbird will drink its weight in sugar water each day which I learned from a letter to me from staff at the Desert Museum in Tucson, Arizona, 65 hummers are required to consume one cup of fluid. Using these numbers I estimated that there were about 195 birds at our feeders per day. My banding repeats each day confirmed that such was approximately so. In each of the previous two years, as the season progressed and the young appeared at the feeders, the birds consumed up to 8 cups per day — a whopping estimated 500 birds. The feeders were like a beehive in swarming season.

At the Nature House in Goldstream Provincial Park and at Betty and Gilbert Kennedy's home on Galiano Island their feeders too were swarming in the first two weeks of May prior to 1998. This past summer hummers were few at both sites.

Table I illustrates this reduction. Numbers were so low that when we set up to band we would catch one or two birds then have to wait for long periods without another bird appearing and sometimes none came at all. This compared



Rufous Hummingbird feeding at Chilean glory vine, (*Eccremocarpus scaber*). Photos: Jonathan Grant

with up to 14 birds caught per hour on one visit to Goldstream in 1997. We finally quit trapping in mid May because there was no increase in numbers when the young fledged. We actually saw a drop off at that time.

Our results indicate that in 1998 only a third of the birds

TABLE I: Finlay's Rufous trapping results for 1997 and 1998

SITE	DATES	HRS TRAPPING	# RET & NEW	# PER HR	# FEMALE	# MALE
1997						
Finlay	Apr 4- Jun 18	29	142	4.9	102	40
Goldstr	Apr 17- Jul 3	24.5	168	6.9	72	96
Galiano	May 9	4	50	12.5	34	16
Totals		57.5	360	6.26	208	152
1998						
Finlay	Mar 24- May 13	15.6	62	4	32	30
Goldstr	Mar 23- May 12	20	32	1.6	3	29
Galiano	Apr 2- May 14	15.3	37	2.4	17	20
Totals		52.9	131	2.5	52	79

were around (either newly banded or returnees from the year before) as compared to 1997, 360 versus 131 in Table I. Numbers trapped per hour were also about one third of the previous year (6.26 versus 2.5).

Goldstream was particularly low in Rufous (168 in 1997 vs 32 in 1998). Only three females came to Goldstream feeders this year and all were returnees from 1997. As noted in the earlier article, I suggested that males were just passing through. It appeared that only one or two of the 29 caught stayed around. This was confirmed by the Nature House staff at the park.

We visited Galiano once in 1997 and caught 50 birds in four hours. Four return visits in 1998 produced 37 trapped birds (12.5 per hour in 1997 vs 2.4 in 1998) Table I. Betty confirmed these low numbers at her home.

Looking at the paucity of rufous at our three sites early in the season I made some phone calls. Some people reported low numbers at the start of the season followed by an increase to about the same as previous years. Others noted a decrease similar to what we were finding.

Betty McGinnis, at Fanny Bay near Parksville, the only other bander of hummingbirds in Canada, said her birds were late in arriving in numbers but she ended up with about the same as in previous years. She has been banding at this site since 1991 and kindly supplied me with a summary of her data as shown in Table II. Throughout the past five years her numbers trapped per hour have been consistently higher than what I found in 1998. My numbers per hour in 1997 were a

bit lower than hers but I did not trap as often. She set up her trap quite regularly from 10 minutes to 2.5 hours whenever she spotted several new birds. This resulted in more trapped with a higher per hour ratio than I found. I would visit sites less frequently and wait for usually nearly 4 hours to try and get more birds, which often were not there.

Bruce Cousens of Nanaimo also saw a drop in feeder visitation at his rural home this past summer. He has been keeping track of the amount of sugar water used and sent me his data as shown in Table III. He found a relatively constant use of food the first three years and then a drop to almost a third in 1998. My sugar water consumption too shows such a drop as illustrated in Table IV.

We wondered why the fall off in numbers at some sites and others remained relatively constant. In mid season Wayne Campbell (pers comm) phoned several contacts across the province and found that Rufous arrived later and were in lower numbers at some feeders. He suggested that since wildflowers were very abundant in the higher country this past spring/summer because of the warmer weather, the birds forsook feeders to set up breeding groups (they nest in clusters) in more rural regions.

The delay in arrivals here on the nesting grounds could have been the result of the spring heavy rains in the deserts of California and Arizona producing a profusion of wild flowers, in places better than had been seen for 100 years. Once the birds had tanked up on this rarely provided food source, they would quickly move north to breeding

TABLE II: Trapping at Fanny Bay by Betty McGinnis from 1994 to 1998

DATES	HRS	# RET & TRAPPING	# PER HR NEW	# FEMALE	# MALE
1994	66.5	374	5.62	276	98
1995	30	357	11.9	259	98
1996	27	262	9.7	178	84
1997	59	508	8.6	309	199
1998	24.3	215	8.8	132	83
Totals	206.8	1716	8.3	1154	562

TABLE III: Sugar Water Consumption at Bruce Cousens near Nanaimo

YEAR	NO. 1.75 LITRE JARS	TOTAL LITRES
1995	16	about 28.01
1996	14	about 24.51
1997	16	about 28.01
1998	6	about 10.51

TABLE IV: Sugar Water Consumption at Finlay's near Victoria

YEAR	TIME PERIOD	NO. OF CUPS	TOTAL LITRES
1996	Apr 8 - Jul 20	237	about 59
1997	Mar 22- Jun 30	266	about 66.5
1998	Mar 24- Jun 30	less than 135	less than 34

territories and select wild meadows full of flowers to set up the nest clusters. Leah Ramsey and Dave Fraser (pers comm) visited the desert in full bloom at Anza Borrego east of Los Angeles and noted very abundant hummers including a lot of Rufous, all feeding on the many wild blooms in mid April — a time when Rufous are usually on territory in Victoria. Other people I contacted in California and Arizona confirmed the same thing, lots of flowers and hummingbirds in numbers never seen before.

In reviewing the data it appears that the decrease in numbers was mainly in females. There was a drop of 75% in females at my three sites and 48% in males. The largest decrease of females was at Goldstream as mentioned above.

As an aside, I had 40 birds that returned in 1998 from the 360 caught in 1997. An 11% return rate which is about average for hummingbirds found by the 46 Master banders working with these birds in the USA.

I can't wait to see what will happen to Rufous this coming spring.

My special thanks to the following who provided assistance: Betty McGinnis contributed her banding data, Bruce Cousens provided input on sugar water consumption at Nanaimo and Audrey Danard filled the Finlay feeders on the days we were away, BC Parks allowed us to band at Goldstream, Betty Kennedy provided access to the feeders on her Galiano property and to those who ensured that we had all the weights and measurements for the 1998 trapping season including Tom Gillespie, Else Holzken and Frank Moretti. The James L. Baillie Memorial Fund of the Long Point Bird Observatory and Bird Studies Canada provided assistance which I greatly appreciate.



Female Rufous Hummingbird at nest on wind chimes outside house in the north end of Saltsping Island. The comings and goings of the family, which included a large Newfoundland dog, didn't seem to faze the busy mom.

Feathered Friends

By Marge Crowther

We enjoy watching our birdfeeder all year, and I've kept a record since 1954. Last year was a first for Anna's hummingbirds in the winter, and we have them again, a male and a female. We can watch them from our kitchen window, where the feeder hangs under the eaves, protected somewhat from rain and snow.

My husband, Guy, made two wire peanut feeders for the chickadees and nuthatches, and these are right in front of the window. To our surprise, the hummingbirds fly up and take a tiny scrap of nut adhering to the feeder. We've seen this happen on many occasions.

Our biggest surprise came on August 28 when we were sitting out in our deck with our coffees, about four feet from the birdbath. A chickadee landed on its edge, then hopped right into the middle of the water, and had a lovely bath,

remaining there for a good five minutes. It was greyish with a white eyebrow stripe, black cap and throat, the body a lighter grey below. I wished I had my camera, but didn't want to scare the bird away, as it was sitting on a branch of the snowball bush in the sunlight, preening his feathers. I don't know what a Mountain Chickadee was doing here, for we have often see them annually in the Cascade Mountains of Oregon, but he put on a nice show for us.

We have a birch tree by the deck, and each day the seeds flutter down like snowflakes as there are roughly twenty pine Siskins feeding there. We have a resident sapsucker; quite a few of our trees are ringed around with the little holes the bird has made from which to feed. It would be greatly appreciated by us if he volunteered an appearance for our Christmas Bird Count.

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*Off the beaten track, with expert Greek naturalists,
Stam Zogaris and Vasso Vlami.*

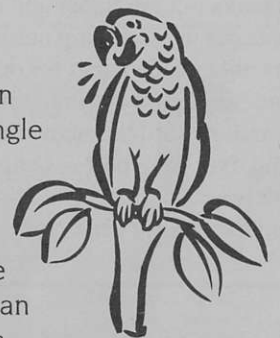
Plus an optional extension:
Evia and Skyros Islands

TOUR FEATURES:

International Airfare • All Transportation • Accomodation in traditional
Hotels and Lodges • Taxes and Services Charges

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 Sophia at Omega:
738-7161 or 1-800-663-2669

OMEGA TRAVEL

Do We Value Our Parks?

BC Naturalists are concerned about lack of funding for provincial parks

Vancouver, November 9 1998: Many of the naturalist clubs, in communities throughout the province, are reporting problems in provincial parks, that they believe are a result of budget and staff cuts. Vandalism of park facilities, abuse of the parks' natural resources, and lack of nature interpretation programs and management planning, are some of the issues that were raised at a meeting last month between representatives of the Federation of British Columbia Naturalists (FBCN) and Cathy McGregor, Minister of Environment, Lands and Parks. FBCN President, Anne Murray, comments: "We believe it makes sense to protect ecosystems through appropriate levels of staffing to provide stewardship and good management of parks. Furthermore, funding cuts do not make sense for the bigger picture of British Columbia's economy."

Provincial parks and their associated tourism and ecotourism expenditures are a bright light in BC's economy. Provincial parks put the Super and the Natural in BC and draw the tourists in increasing numbers. British Columbians and visitors alike value parks for outdoor recreation, wildlife viewing and health and spiritual renewal — they are a vital part of our culture. Studies show that 85% of the population, 15 years and over, take part in nature-related activities during their leisure time.

An important part of the parks experience is face to

face contact with park rangers or naturalists, learning about the ecosystem and what makes it special. Permanent, knowledgeable staff reduce vandalism and poaching, provide safety support for visitors, protect wildlife and habitat, keep campsites clean and safe and do many other tasks that allow the visitors a memorable experience.

BC's tourism depends on a healthy park system — and it costs the tax payer so little. Last year it cost less than one quarter of one percent of each tax dollar. This tiny amount is too small! It is only half the budget supplied 20 years ago, even though the land area now in Provincial Parks has doubled.

Spending on parks has decreased while park area and use have increased dramatically. Compared to expenditures by other provinces in Canada, the BC government spends the least. The average Canadian provincial government spends \$4.00 per day per park visitor. British Columbia spends only \$1.30 per day per visitor, barely one-third the Canadian average.

For more information, contact
Anne Murray 604-943 4460 or 604-943-0273 or
Bev Ramey at 604-224-7689
The Federation of British Columbia Naturalists

Caught in the Act! A Mystery Solved!

By Iris Heron

There are unusual things happening at our house this summer. The sunflower seeds were disappearing at an amazing rate from one of our feeders. We would fill it in the morning but by the next day it would be empty again. Our local feed store was thrilled by our frequent trips for supplies, but we were puzzled. What did we have up on Triangle Mountain? — giant birds? larger-than-life grey squirrels?

One night I was awakened by a strange noise in the garden. I investigated and saw a beautiful buck enjoying a feed of sunflower seeds. He stood poised in the beam of the flashlight, then bounded away. The next day he did a repeat performance and I was able to get two pictures of him looking right at me.

The strange thing is, we have large garden with lots of delicious flowers which he had not touched. But maybe it wasn't so strange after all. We spray everything with fish fertilizer, everything that is except the bird feeders! I guess we'll have to include them next summer!



Photo: Iris Heron

Sandhill Cranes Migrating

By Bob Houston

It was in late September when returning from the BC interior that my wife and I had a most exciting experience. We had stopped in Princeton for lunch, and intended to play golf in the afternoon. However, fortunately as it turned out, it looked like rain, so we decided to look for birds instead.

We drove up northeast of the town on the Osprey Lake Road to look at the pond off the right-hand side of the road, I suppose about 8 kilometers or so. While scanning the water with our binoculars, we heard a very unfamiliar call in the distance, which we decided after a while must be sandhill cranes. We searched the fields with the binoculars but could not see anything. The calls seemed to get closer and I looked up and there were about 200 sandhill cranes in an extended vee formation flying south just beneath the clouds, sometimes disappearing in the clouds and then breaking out

again. This first group was soon followed by another skein of about the same number. More were to come, and in the next 15 to 20 minutes we must have seen about 1,000 cranes, all heading south and calling each other all the time. We drove further up the road and found about 200 more that had landed in the field quite close to the road. Also, at this time we saw a large group circulating around, preparing to land, which they did — unfortunately over the brow of the hill, and we could not see them.

Incidentally, we had a lovely view of an immature rough legged hawk sitting on a stump close to the road. Then a merlin came rushing along, zooming close over his head making him duck.

By this time it was dusk, so we headed home. This was undoubtedly one of the most thrilling experiences of my birding life.



Birds in our Area

By Marie O'Shaughnessy

Hooded Merganser (*Lophodytes Cucullatus*)

August 1998 in Victoria on private pond

Hooded mergansers are one of three species of merganser found in the Victoria Area. It is also the smallest. Approximately 18" in length. The female sports a crested head, but is brownish/grey overall. The upper mandible is dark with a yellowish lower serrated mandible. The male has a vertical fan-shaped white crest that can be raised or lowered. Both have white wing patches seen in flight. These are 'divers' that eat a diet of fish, aquatic insects, and crustaceans. Can be found in good numbers around Oak Bay Marina during the year except during the breeding season when they move to woodland ponds, rivers and sheltered backwaters. They nest in tree cavities, laying 7-13 eggs.

Snow Bunting (*Pietyphenax Nivalis*)

November 14, 1998 at Clover Point, Victoria, BC

Snow buntings are seen most years in very small numbers in this area. Their black and white breeding plumage seen on the tundra contrasts dramatically from their rusty pale winter colouration. During migration they can be seen along seashores, sand dunes, prairies, fields and along roadsides.



Photos: Marie O'Shaughnessy



Hat Tricks

A Report on the VNHS Habitat Acquisition Trust Foundation

The approach of a new millennium has many of us reflecting on our past, our future, and the future of our children or grandchildren and wondering how history will treat this calendar event. At HAT we would love to see the start of the 2nd millennium marked by showing that our generation recognized the importance of our natural areas and that we acted upon this recognition. It would be great to provide millennium gifts to future generations of large pieces of the Sea-to-Sea Greenbelt, of our Garry Oak ecosystem, and of a marine legacy in the Gulf Islands. And we shouldn't forget our waterways and wetlands on this list. However, to make these gifts happen will take the support of many individuals such as yourself.

One way you can show your support for these millennium goals is to become a member of HAT. In the past HAT membership was limited to our Board of Directors who were approved by the VNHS Board of Directors. Our new format opens membership to the public in order to enable more people to have a voice. Membership will provide a regular newsletter (at the moment scheduled for twice a year) and voting privileges. Most importantly membership will demonstrate your support for conserving our valuable habitat (and these numbers are important to politicians and corporate donors!).

The changed bylaws of HAT will still recognize our association with the VNHS. The VNHS (through its Board of Directors) is granted a special membership in HAT. As well the support of VNHS members is recognized by a special membership fee of only \$10.

Our annual membership fees are as follows:

Individual	\$20
Individual student	\$10
Family	\$20
Non-profit Organization	\$20
VNHS member	\$10
School Group	\$20
Corporate	\$20

Additionally, we also have a sustaining membership for a one time fee of \$1,000.

Our new format opens membership to the public in order to enable more people to have a voice.

HAT has purposely kept its annual membership fees low in order to attract individuals and groups of all income brackets. Membership fees will be used to cover the costs associated with maintaining membership and providing information to its members. We also hope that members will consider donating further to HAT in order to assist with its operation (e.g., Land Stewardship Office maintenance, fund raising) and projects (e.g., land acquisition, covenants). As we are a registered charity, any donation beyond annual membership fees will receive a receipt for income tax purposes.

The first \$3,000 in charitable donations received by HAT in 1999 will be used to initiate a permanent fund managed by the Victoria Foundation (to be finalized). Fees received from sustaining memberships and directed donations will also be placed in this fund. Only interest generated will be available to HAT for use in financing HAT's less "charismatic" stewardship activities (e.g., costs associated with obtaining, maintaining, and enforcing conservation covenants). The interest will be useful for HAT to smooth out the cyclic nature of its funding sources for such activities.

It was great to see all the VNHS members who attended the talk by Peter Matthiessen in November. Peter Matthiessen provided an entertaining evening for the 325+ in attendance on the subject of tigers, cranes, and the Sea-to-Sea Greenbelt. As well, the displays in the foyer by the many groups involved with the Sea-to-Sea Greenbelt Alliance rounded out an enjoyable evening. Thanks go to Birget Bateman for her encouragement of this event.

The HAT Board of Directors wishes everyone the best for 1999 and thanks you for making 1998 a successful year.



HAT'S OFF AGAIN!

POINT PELEE — May 11 - 20, 1999

Due to the sorry state of the Canadian dollar, we have decided that this year's HAT° trip south will be to the southernmost point in Canada.

Point Pelee is one of North America's most remarkable bird migration areas. At the western edge of Lake Erie, the "Point" is the first landfall for birds on their spring migration north and mid-May is the most exciting time to be there.

We will also search the hardwood forests for spring wildflowers, bird the shores and marshes along the lake, visit Rondeau Provincial Park and the Long Point Bird Observatory.

Join **David Stirling** to explore this most interesting part of our own country and witness the spectacle of Spring migration at Point Pelee National Park.

Cost: \$1,395.00 CDN(!) per person from Toronto.

For more information, please call Marilyn at 477-5922

All proceeds from this tour will be donated to the Victoria Natural History Society's Habitat Acquisition Trust.



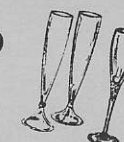
ANNUAL VNHS BANQUET



Tuesday, February 9th, 1999

Princess Mary Restaurant

358 Harbour Road



Happy hour begins at 6:00 p.m. and the dinner starts at 7:00 p.m.

Special guest **Neville Winchester**, who has worked with Sir David Attenborough and *National Geographic* magazine, will be our speaker on the topic of forest canopy research.

Tickets are \$22.00 and must be purchased ahead of time.

Tickets can be purchased at the VNHS Natural History Presentations or at Birders' Night

Contact Stephen Baker at 721-0446 for further details.

Where Have All the Birdies Gone?

By Don Wilkes

After my wife died, my life required rearranging. No longer catering (more than willingly) to her needs an emptiness compounded the loss. I needed to get out and about, meet new people, get involved, in whatever. What to do? Where to start?

In a *Monday Magazine* 'what's going on' column I spotted a number to call about bird-watching; birding, in the short form. Had never done that, aside from casting an eye up at a colourful bird winging by. Why not?

Exercise was a bonus. Digging out an old bird book and a pair of binoculars, I showed up on a Wednesday morning (also meet Sunday) at Swan Lake's parking lot. 'Real' birders and hopefuls like me dribbled in. Ambling around the lake/pond took about three hours, with me nodding my head from time to time as if I had a clue about what was going on.

On one of the Swan Lake outings I heard about the Victoria Natural History Society, joined by dropping into the Field-Naturalist store at the corner of Blanshard and View. At my first UVIC evening meeting I met Claude, a devoted birder visiting from Quebec, took him along with me on what turned out to be a successful quest for raptors at Beecher Head (East Sooke).

I must 'fess up: birding just keeps growing on me. And, I'm getting to see parts of the lower island I might otherwise miss. After upgrading my binocs (to 10x50, roll-down eye-pieces for specs), I did the same for my reference guide, bought Peterson's guide to westcoast birds.

Now, I can't say I get overly excited on spotting a crow, robin, sparrow (LBJs/little brown jobs, sub-species defy me)

or a rock dove (come on ... pigeon). On the other hand, catching a red-tailed or Cooper's hawk drifting by, separating a green heron from its surroundings or finding a kingfisher perched on a dead tree, gives the old heart a flutter. After catching a Virginia Rail or Sora out in the open what followed that morning was all downhill. More recently pinpointing the bird the tracking crew was crowing about, my day'd been made: a Great Horned Owl!

After reading about replacing the trestle bridge destroyed in the late 50s, a friend and I headed for Blenkinsop Lake. Unable to get a fix on an old rail bed somewhere behind Tim Horton's at Borden and McKenzie, we reached the lake the shorter way: a road running off Blenkinsop north of McKenzie (across from sign: Lochside Trail). Not much room to park a car, but after a short hike we found the old bridge-pilings stubs and a few birds.

Fool or newbie birder, I ignored the rain for the VNHS Whiffin Spit outing. Though I soon admitted defeat and left, I later heard that some headed out the spit anyway, that the day had later improved.

That no-go was followed by a hike — and I mean hike — up along the Finlayson Arm to Jocelyn Hill. The uphill trek taxed the bod, but getting back down took its toll on knees I'm sure must be older than the rest of me. Anyway, with those in the know identifying the finds, the list exceeded thirty species spotted.

Well... I guess I lucked out in joining the birding ranks. A few months into it, I can now see why it's said to be the fastest growing hobby in North American (or among seniors, depending on to whom you're talking).

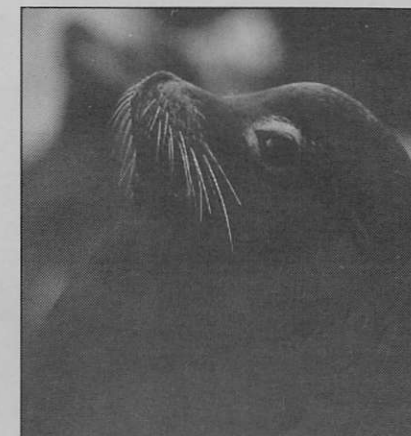
Poem

By Hannah J. Main-van der Kamp

Willow Soul, Geranium Spirit

Willows let go
yellow against blue cedars, know
to honour endings
with the icy bay a brushed steel background
for giving up but

November geraniums hold on
to sheer scarlet, believe in effort,
get up their resolve to be firm
and take a stand
if it kills them.



California Sea Lion, Harmac log booms, Nanaimo

By Jonathan Grant

This shot was taken in February, 1995 during the Sea Lion Festival. Sadly, the festival is no longer operating, however Nanaimo charter boats will take interested parties out to see the sea lions for a fee. You can also view the sea lions at times from the Dodds Narrows trail.

Photo: Jonathan Grant

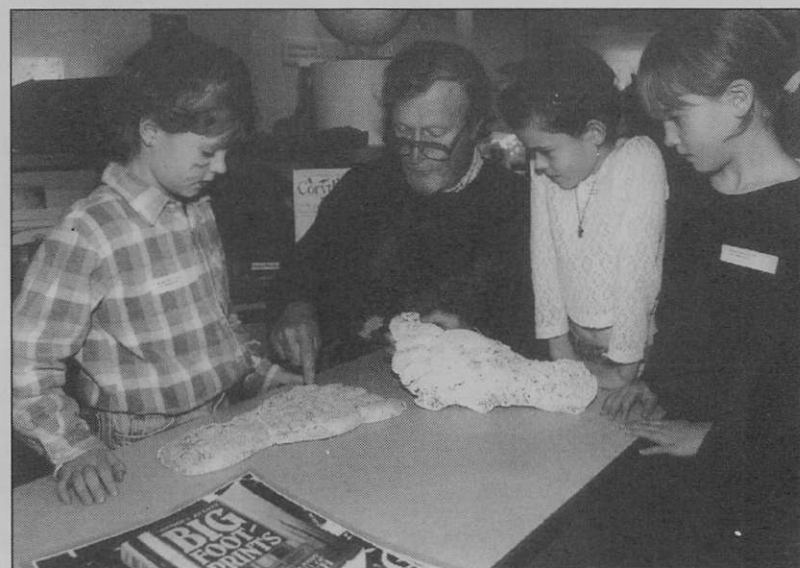


Natural History Presentation

Wildlife biologist Dr. John Bindernagel brings his research on the Sasquatch to the VNHS Natural History Presentation on January 12th.

(See Calendar for details)

Photo: Prince George Citizen



Birds and Wine 1999

South Okanagan & Douglas Lake

May 29 - June 5, 1999

\$1,000 Double Occupancy

Join our trip to the sagebrush and antelope-brush landscape of "Canada's Pocket Desert". Visit scenic Douglas Lake country for birding near upland lakes. We travel by van to visit river riparian, grassland, and ponderosa pine woodlands to listen for the distinctive calls and songs of Okanagan specialties. See Sage Thrasher Bobolink, Lazuli Bunting, Least and Gray Flycatcher, Grasshopper Sparrow, and Long-billed Curlew. Afternoon winery tours, tastings, and a gourmet winery lunch included.



Dannie Carsen, 250-727-0155



Quesco Tours
801 Lily Avenue
Victoria, B.C. V8X 3R7



R.R. 3, Ladysmith, B.C. V0R 2E0
(250) 245-7422

In Memory of Dr. Robert Townley Ogilvie (1930-1998)

By Bruce Whittington

Botanist Bob Ogilvie died on Sunday, November 29, 1998, after a short relapse in a battle with leukaemia. Born on June 27, 1930 in Briercrest, Saskatchewan, he received a Masters degree under Vladimir Krajina at UBC in 1955, and in 1960 he received his Ph.D. from Washington State University. Bob's studies were followed by his early work in the Rocky Mountains, for the federal Forest Research Branch.

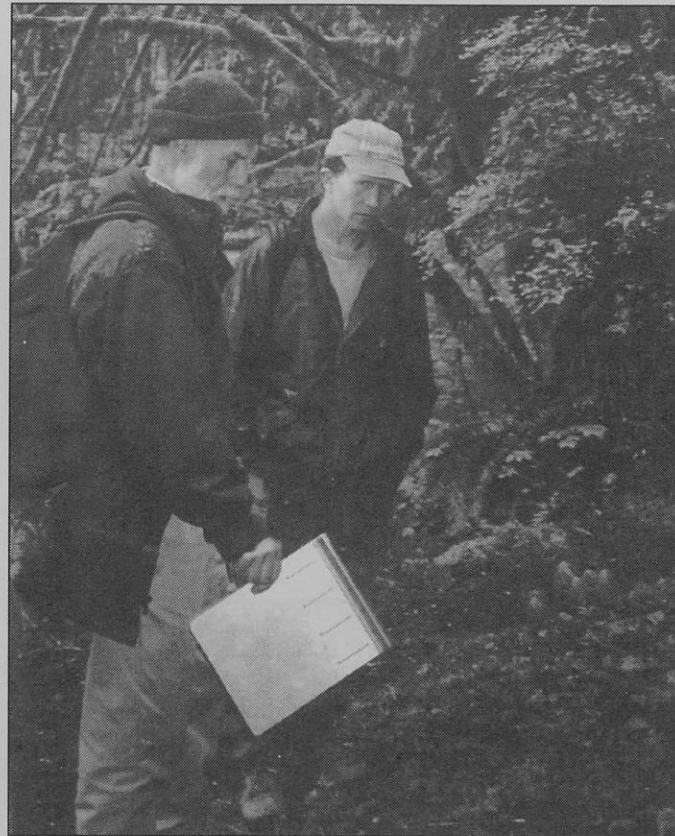
He collected extensively during this time, and concentrated on forest ecology. His interest in mountain forests and alpine vegetation took him to the University of Calgary where he became Associate Professor in 1963. He had a lifelong belief in a multidisciplinary approach to biology, and participated in a study of grizzly bear habitats directed by Dr. Stephen Herrero.

A family cottage near Bowser on Vancouver Island brought Bob and his family to the Island often, and he welcomed the opportunity to move to Victoria. In September of 1977 he accepted a position as Botany Curator in the British Columbia Provincial Museum. He headed the Botany Division until its dissolution in 1986. He was an important force behind the publication of Museum Handbooks and Occasional Papers, and he was an associate editor of the Museum journal *Syesis* until the journal's untimely death in 1985. He remained in the Natural History Division as botany curator until his retirement in July 1995. After his retirement Bob Ogilvie became a frequent visitor to the University of Victoria herbarium, where he worked on his old collections and wrote botanical papers.

The Native Plant Garden around the Museum was Bob's great love. The Garden, established in 1968, was in its prime when Bob came to the Museum. He soon organized daily Native Plant Garden tours, led by a marvellous group of volunteers that Bob and the staff of the Botany Division gathered together. This group has gradually evolved into the active and vibrant Native Plant Study Group of the Victoria Horticultural Society. The Group gained tremendously from Bob's help and his efforts towards popularization of botany.

Bob was active in many other conservation organizations, and he was a long-time member of the Canadian Botanical Association where he served in the Conservation Committee. Bob's opinion was always respected as highly professional, one that reflected his rich field experience and solid botanical knowledge. With Bob's passing, we have lost the voice of a strong advocate for the protection of natural areas in British Columbia and Canada.

He was a proud Scot and except for broom, he liked



Dr. Bob Ogilvie (left), leading a field trip with the Native Plant Study Group.

everything Scotch (whisky — single malt and in moderation, octaves, haggis, porridge, Robert Burns, etc.). As a good Scot he was stubborn and refused to deviate from his principles. He built a strong shell around his private life and not too many people were aware of his personal problems. Even to his closest friends, he presented his losing fight with leukaemia as a "bad flu."

With Bob Ogilvie we all will miss a good friend, colleague, teacher and scientist. He will be fondly remembered by all of us whom he touched with his kindness, humour, help and knowledge.

Donations in Bob's memory may be made to the Habitat Acquisition Trust (250-995-2428) or the Vancouver Island Cancer Centre (250-370-8939).

Adapted with permission from Adolph Ceska's Botanical Electronic Newsletter.

Cuckoo One Way — Crested Myna the Other

By Bill Merilees

Ever since Bill Hughes and Violet Mackay conducted their study of the Crested Myna in south Vancouver in 1963, the strident 'whistle' of the Crested Myna has remained etched on my mind. While I have never seen a North American cuckoo, the much stylised cuc-coo call of Swiss clocks patterned from the onomatopoeic call of the (European) Cuckoo is also well known.

In Nanaimo at the corner of Dufferin Crescent and Boundary Avenue (and also at many other locations in Southwest British Columbia, I am sure) we have a pedestrian activated crosswalk with an 'audible pedestrian signal'. Push the button to cross Dufferin and you get the distinctive cuc-coo cuc-coo call, cross Boundary and you get the Myna's whistle.

The last Crested Mynas to grace Nanaimo's streets were

seen in the early 1970s and with the disappearance of the Crested Myna from Greater Vancouver eminent, this pedestrian signal may be one lasting reminder.

What a 'nice' surprise to be greeted by such bird like sounds at busy pedestrian crossing. For those who can relate these to secondary and tangible experiences, these audible cues can be a happy reminder of previous times and wonderful people.

References:

Mackay, V. M. and W. M. Hughes, 1963. Crested Myna in British Columbia. *Canadian Field Naturalist* 77 :154-162.

Merilees, W. 1984. The Demise of Nanaimo's Crested Mynas. *Discovery* Vol. 13, No. 4 (202) 134-135.

Notes from the VNHS Mailbox

By Bruce Whittington

The Society receives regular mailings from the **North Cascades Institute**, a non-profit organization in Washington. An interesting program of workshops for naturalists is offered, with leaders such as Robert Michael Pyle and Arthur Kruckeberg. The address is 2105 State Route 20, Sedro-Woolley, WA, 98284-9394. Telephone 360-856-5700, ext. 209. E-mail nci@ncascades.org. The web site is www.ncascades.org/nci/

The **Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks** has issued a list of **volunteer opportunities**. These include wardens for properties under MELP supervision, nest box programs, exotic species control, and habitat restoration. Contact **Mark Kissinger, MELP**, 2080-A Labieux Rd., Nanaimo, BC, V9T 6J9, or telephone 250-751-3100.

The **James L. Baillie memorial fund** is accepting **funding applications** in two areas; bird research or education projects, and migration monitoring stations. Deadline for applications is January 25, 1999. Contact Jane Wilson-Kendrick, Bird Studies Canada, P.O. Box 160, Port Rowan, ON, N0E 1M0. Phone 519-586-3531, e-mail jjwilson@bsc-eoc.org

For years, the **standard authority on North American birds** was Arthur Cleveland Bent's *Life Histories of North American Birds*. This multi-volume work from the first half of the century is gradually being replaced by a series of

monographs called *The Birds of North America: Life Histories for the 21st Century*. The group which is publishing this acclaimed series is offering the set (which is not yet complete) to clubs and libraries for \$1,875 (US), a 40% discount off the regular library price of \$3,295. Do you know a benefactor who might purchase a set for the VNHS library?

Volunteer Opportunities

The VNHS has a long relationship with the **Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary**, and a VNHS representative sits on the Sanctuary's board. We are currently looking for a member who can attend about one meeting a month, and report back to the VNHS board as needed. Contact any director for further information.

Part of the costs of publishing the excellent newsletter you enjoy bimonthly are paid by advertising revenues. A **volunteer** (or two, or three) **to co-ordinate advertising sales** would increase those revenues, and make the editor's life much easier. Call **Glen Moores** at 655-3772 for information.

Joan Gowan would like a well-earned break from providing coffee at monthly **Birder's Nights**. It's a job, which has been done by one person, but would work well shared by two or more volunteers. For more information, contact Birder's Night co-ordinator **Bryan Gates** at 598-7789.



Notice of Fee Increase

Notice is hereby given to all VNHS members that the Board of Directors proposes a motion at the AGM, April 13, 1999 to increase subscription rates in line with inflation and the increased cost of providing membership services. New rates will be as follows:

Family \$3	increase to \$35
Regular \$25	increase to \$30
Senior \$24	increase to \$25
Junior subscriber \$12	change to Student subscriber \$20

The change in category of the last membership rate reflects the current and potential levels of membership within the Society. Interest in the Society is very strong within the student body at UVic and a special membership category will attract more student members.

Note: Reduced rate subscribers do not receive FBCN membership with their VNHS membership



Distinguished Service Award

The Victoria Natural History Society Board of Directors established the Distinguished Service Award in 1988. This prestigious award is granted to a member who has contributed in some outstanding way to the aims and objectives of the Society. Awards are made at the annual banquet in February. All members of the Society can nominate any other member who in their opinion merits this honour.

Nominations should be forwarded by January 15 1999 to David Allinson, Awards Committee Chairperson at Box 5220 Station B, Victoria, BC, V8R 6N4

All nominations must be in writing and should be signed by at least two members of the Society. A brief biographical sketch and a description of the contributions and achievements of the nominee, along with his or her address and telephone number, should be included. The Awards Committee reviews the nominations and makes recommendations to the Board of Directors, which grants the awards.

For more information, contact David Allinson at 478-0493

Letters

Poetry

Some time ago I sent you a few pieces of poetry I had written to see if you were interested in including them in *The Victoria Naturalist*. Perhaps you answered my letter and your reply went astray in the mail but in any event I did not hear from you.

I was therefore surprised to see that three of the pieces are in the September/October issue of the magazine. I am most pleased that you considered them worthy of inclusion and must admit that today I bought six copies so that I can brag a little to some friends.

The least I can do is joint the society and I am enclosing a cheque for \$24 for a Golden Age membership.

I have noted that you are interested in submissions with respect to articles on travel and next spring I am booked on a tour of the Galapagos Islands. Please advise whether or not you would be interested in a report on this trip, the birds and animals seen and general information about the islands. Perhaps you have already had an article on this subject but in any event your thoughts on the matter would be appreciated. If you are interested I will keep more detailed notes than would otherwise be the case and early next summer you would receive my piece together with photos etc.

I particularly enjoyed the article on the Farne Islands in your latest issue. I have been there twice and each time stayed in the little town of Seahouses that is mentioned in the piece. I also saw a female Eider and she was sitting on a nest under a bench beside an old ruin.

Robert C. Kensett
Victoria

Be Clear

As a newcomer to Victoria with an interest in natural history, I purchased the November/December *The Victoria Naturalist*. On Friday, November 13 I drove downtown and walked several blocks in the rain to the Victoria Conference Centre to see Peter Matthiessen. There I was told that tickets for the talk were \$10 which was more than I was prepared to pay. I would suggest that event announcements include ticket charges, and if events are for members only.

Camilla Smith
View Royal

Welcome to New Members

OCTOBER

Mel Goldstein and Linda Kvalen
of Beach Drive
list as interests: seaweed, terrestrial plants
and birds

Alan Kotila and family
of Glennan Road

John Pollard
of Pemberton Road
likes birding

Wynne Miles and family
of Island Road

Viggo, Judith and Katy Holm
of Casa Marcia Crescent

John and Shirley Flint
of Dufferin Avenue
are interested in birds, the environment
and astronomy

Arlene Frater Takemoto
of Oak Bay Avenue
is interested in birds

Ron Obleman
of Craigflower Road

Denise Gubersky
of Rhodonite Drive

Jeanne Martin
of Linden Avenue
enjoys birding and plants

NOVEMBER

Nelia Barnfield
of Peacock Place

Samantha Song
of Hampshire Road
is interested in birding, hiking, camping,
general natural history and conservation
biology

Deb Thiessen
of Crescent Road
lists birding, hiking, general natural
history and nature photography as
interests

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 calender 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.

JANUARY EVENTS

January through February
The Eagles Have Landed!

Visit the Nature House on the estuary at Goldstream Provincial Park during this year's Eagle Extravaganza. There are excellent viewing opportunities as hundreds of Bald Eagles feed on spawned-out salmon carcasses. The Nature House is open daily all winter from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. There are new birds of prey exhibits, and eagle viewing through spotting scopes and video camera links. Call 478-9414 for information on special programs and guest speakers.

Saturday, January 2
Duncan Christmas Bird Count

Contact **Derrick Marven** for details at 250-748-8504. Victoria birders can help a lot to increase the coverage of this important count circle. Helps to get your birding year off to a good start too.

Tuesday, January 5
VNHS Board Meeting
7:30 p.m., Swan Lake Nature House

Saturday, January 9
Goldstream Winter Birding with Darren Copley
The Goldstream salmon run provides a winter bounty for hundreds of gulls and other scavengers. Develop your gull identification skills, and look for a possible Golden Eagle among the hundreds of Bald Eagles. Meet at the Finlayson Road bridge in the Goldstream Picnic Area at 9:00 a.m., and bring adequate winter clothing.

Sunday, January 10
Martindale Valley Birding
Kick start your birding year with some great birding at Martindale. Leader **Brent Diakow** knows the valley inside and out. Large numbers of birds can be expected, and there is an excellent possibility of turning up a rarity or two. Regulars to be expected

included Skylarks, American Pipits, Lincoln's Sparrows, Northern Shrike, and Peregrine Falcon. The fields are very muddy and the leader doesn't mind mud, so wear rubber boots. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the farm market at the corner of Island View Road and the Pat Bay Highway.

Tuesday, January 12
VNHS Natural History Presentation
North America's Great Ape: The Sasquatch
This is the title of a recent book by wildlife biologist **John Bindernagel**, who presents an illustrated talk on this enigmatic species. He deals with photographs, plaster casts, animal behaviour, and human scepticism in a rational and compelling way. 7:30 p.m., Room 159, Begbie Building, UVic. Bring a coffee mug; non-members welcome.

Sunday, January 17
Broom Bash on Christmas Hill
This is the last opportunity to remove the Scotch Broom before the wildflowers emerge. Meet in the parking lot at the Nature House at Swan Lake at 1:00 p.m. and walk to the site on Christmas Hill. Wear sturdy footgear and bring gloves and clippers if possible. Hot chocolate and donuts back at the Nature House at 3:30 p.m. For further information call Willie at 479-0211.

Tuesday, January 19
Botany Night
Karen Golinski: Peatbogs of the Czech Republic and Finland
Karen will show slides from several bogs she visited in fall 1998 and will discuss similarities/differences between European and Pacific Northwest wetland vegetation. Swan Lake Nature House, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, January 23
On the Waterfront, with Kevin Slagboom
This trip begins at the Ogden Point breakwater, at 9:00 a.m. Some of Victoria's best winter birding is along the water, where seabirds of many species spend the winter. Unusual passerines are sometimes found as well, among the drift logs and beach wrack.

Monday, January 25
Marine Night
Fighting Sea Lions — Origins of Marine Conservation in BC
Dr. Lorne Hammond, Curator of History, Royal BC Museum, will present an informal, illustrated talk on the history of human/sea lion competition for fish, state culling policy, the role of science, and the early origins of marine conservation in BC. Marine Biology from a historian's perspective, 7:30 p.m. at Swan Lake Nature Centre.

Wednesday, January 27
Birder's Night
Have Western Grebes disappeared from the waters in the Victoria waters? Why not come to the January bird night to listen to the report by **James Colwater**. In addition James will be talking about a new Non-profit Research Foundation. 7:30 p.m. in Room 159 of the Begbie Building, UVic. Bring a coffee mug and binoculars for the slides.

FEBRUARY EVENTS

Tuesday, February 2
VNHS Board Meeting
7:30 p.m., Swan Lake Nature House

Tuesday, February 9
VNHS Annual Banquet
Treat yourself to a break from the February blahs, with a sumptuous buffet at the Princess Mary restaurant. Special guest **Neville Winchester** of UVic will rig us all in safety harnesses and take us aloft to the rainforest canopy. His research in the Carmanah Valley and elsewhere has led to the discovery of many insect species new to science, and new insights into canopy ecosystems. Happy hour at 6:00 p.m., dinner at 7:00. Tickets are \$22.00 and must be purchased in advance, at Natural History Presentations, Birder's Night, or call Stephen Baker at 721-0446. The winning ticket in the Swarovski binocular raffle will be drawn at the banquet.

Sunday, February 14
Second Annual Valentine's Day Couples Count
Join **Dannie and Susan Carsen** for another couples bird romp around Victoria. In the checklist area, both partners need to identify all species, by sight or sound, recorded between 6:00 a.m. and 12:00 noon. No mechanical devices or voice calling for birds, please. After the count is over, meet at Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary at 12:30 p.m. to tally the results. The grand prize for the highest count will be a dinner for two kindly donated by Pagliacci's. Second prize will be a wine and fruit basket, and third prize is a book donated by The Field-Naturalist. Please register at January Birder's Night to get your official contest list, or drop by The Field-Naturalist. For further information, call Dannie at 727-0155. The cost for this event is \$10.00 per couple, and any funds raised will be contributed to the Parks and Conservation Committee to be used for the Greenways Project.

Tuesday, February 16
Botany Night
Dr. Jonathan Moran: Pitcher Plants
Dr. Moran studied pitcher plants, genus *Nepenthes*, in SE Asia | and analyzed the prey caught in the pitchers. In his slide show Dr. Moran will explore the life and death inside the traps of these carnivorous plants. Swan Lake Nature House, 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, February 21
Boundary Bay and Raptors
Join **David Pearce** and **Dannie Carsen** for a spring trip to Boundary Bay and Tsawwassen Jetty. If time and conditions permit, we may also visit Reifel Bird Sanctuary. We expect to see flocks of

waterfowl and shorebirds, and visit some of the best wintering habitat for raptors in western Canada. Car-pooling will reduce your costs to around \$35.00 per person. Meet on Elk Lake Drive at the entrance to Beaver Lake Park to carpool at 5:45 a.m. To register, call Dannie at 727-0155.

Monday, February 22
Marine Night
Changing Seasons in a Changing Ocean
How is the ocean off our doorstep changing? **Dr. Dave Mackas**, Institute of Ocean Sciences, will present recent and historical perspectives on the physical and biological conditions in the Northeast Pacific. If you have questions about the effects of El Niño or global warming on the ocean, this is the talk to attend. Come and hear "Changing Seasons in a Changing Ocean" at 7:30 p.m., Swan Lake Nature Centre.

Wednesday, February 24
Birder's Night
The Barn Owl is one of the most cosmopolitan of species, but it has a very restricted range in British Columbia. Bruce Whittington presents a slide show about the successful nesting of Barn Owls in Victoria, and how to make attractive nest sites available to them. 7:30 p.m. in room 159 of the Begbie Building, UVic. Bring a coffee mug and binoculars for the slides.

Sunday, February 28
Introduction to Moss Identification
Local bryologist Mike Ryan has agreed to lead this popular outing again. The location is Goldstream Provincial Park, where an amazing thirty species of mosses lie ignored at your feet, waiting to be discovered. Meet at 10:00 a.m. in the picnic area of the park, just off the Trans-Canada Highway.

MARCH EVENT

Tuesday, March 2
VNHS Board Meeting
7:30 p.m., Swan Lake Nature House.

BULLETIN BOARD

For Sale
Bushnell Spotting Scope 18X40 50ml lens. Asking \$75.00. Telephone 595-7756.

Volunteer Opportunities at Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary
If you enjoy the outdoors and have an interest in working with children, here is a volunteer position just for you. Volunteer Naturalists are needed to help with the school programs at the Sanctuary beginning late January. Training and ongoing staff support is provided. Call Joan at 479-0211 for more details.



The Victoria NATURALIST

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Draw at the V.N.H.S. Annual Banquet Feb. 9, 1999
Winner will be contacted by V.N.H.S.



Tickets from V.N.H.S. Directors, Regular Meetings and the Field Naturalist