



The Victoria NATURALIST

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VICTORIA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY



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VICTORIA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

P.O. Box 5220, Station B, Victoria, BC, V8R 6N4

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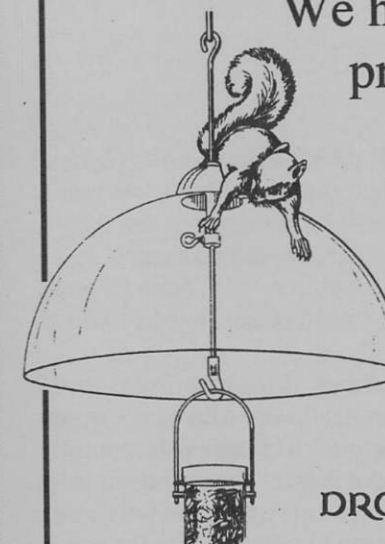
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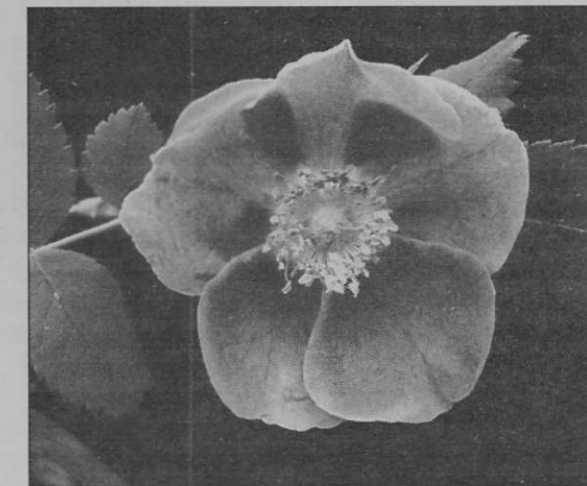
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Costa Rica in the "Green Season"

By Gordon Hart

I'd been reading Aaron Sekerak's *A Travel & Site Guide to Birds of Costa Rica*, when sometime during last year's cold and damp spring, Anne-Marie suggested that we go. Once I realized she was serious, I didn't take much convincing! Our only free time was in August, during Costa Rica's rainy season, called the "green season" by the tourist industry.

The country really is green then, there are fewer tourists, and hotel and resort prices are often lower. Although it makes for shorter lists, bird identification is a bit easier since most North American migrants are not present to confuse things! It does rain, mostly at night, but in two weeks, we were never seriously inconvenienced by it, and most mornings the sun shone.

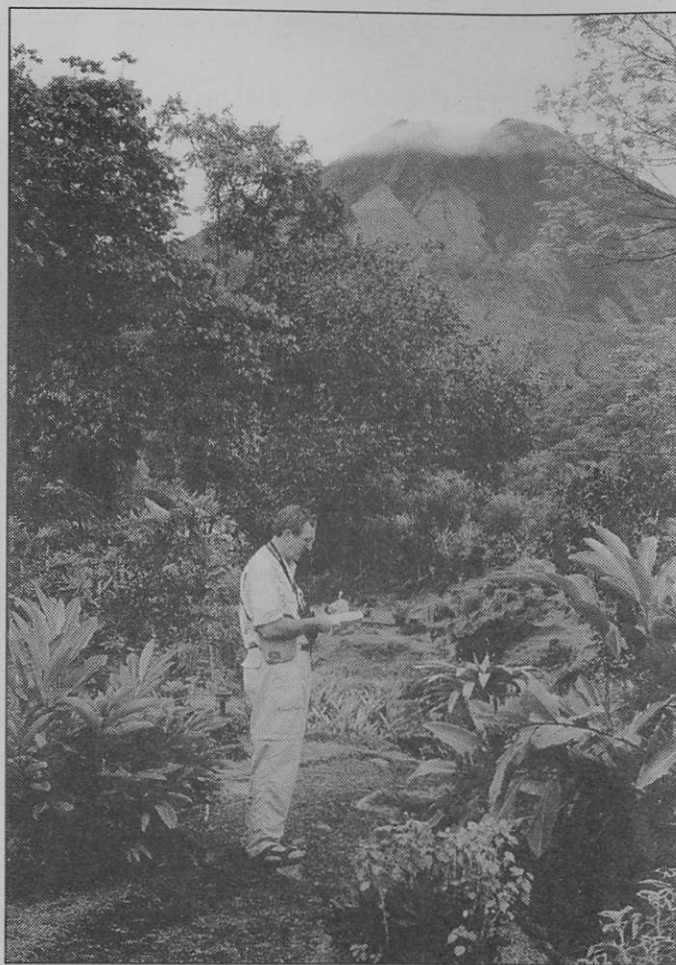
We stayed the first night at the Canadian-owned Tuetal Lodge, near the airport. Having arrived after dark, I emerged about 5:30 a.m., to see that we were on one side of a forested river valley. Black Vultures perched on trees below us and flew around at low altitudes until the thermals developed. A Rufous-tailed Hummingbird buzzed noisily around me going to various flowering trees, Blue-and-white Swallows flew overhead, and butterflies were already flying. Branches rustling drew my attention to two large squirrels — black above and bright rufous underneath. Below, a Blue-crowned Motmot sat quietly on a branch with its long tail swinging back and forth like a pendulum.

Everything was so incredibly beautiful and exotic that I found it quite overwhelming. The motmot was quickly followed by a Great Kiskadee, Great-tailed Grackles, White-tipped Doves, and White-crowned Parrots with raucous calls flying overhead. A Hoffman's Woodpecker landed on a tall tree, while lower down a Squirrel Cuckoo with long barred tail hopped from branch to branch. My new copy of Stiles and Skutch, *Birds of Costa Rica*, was getting its first real work-out!

Later, in the nearby town of Alajuela, we ordered breakfast at an open-air restaurant from a menu with pictures (very helpful!), while getting a first look at the common bird of towns and suburbs, the Blue-Gray Tanager, looking like a pale Mountain Bluebird. A walk to the *parque central* produced more parrots, grackles and Red-billed Pigeons in the palm and mango trees.

Later, we hopped a bus to Zoo Ave, a zoo and rehabilitation centre for wildlife abandoned or recovered from poachers. It was a good way to see some of the birds and animals closer than we might in the wild, including the Resplendent Quetzal, the sacred bird of the Mayas. However, huddled on his perch he didn't look like he felt very resplendent.

The next day, we headed north to La Fortuna, near the Arenal Volcano. The bus ride was a good way to see the



"Under the volcano." Photo: Gordon Hart

scenery and the people as we headed out of the central valley and up into the mountains. At the highest point, clouds were swirling around us as we passed a house in the mist with an older couple sitting on their front porch watching the world go by. Our descent started into another climatic zone and soon, we were in the flat Caribbean lowlands, passing by plantations, cattle pastures and patches of forest.

We stayed at Los Lagos, a resort on the lower slopes of the volcano where soon after arrival, a Keel-billed Toucan became the bird of the day — I hadn't really believed that they could be seen so easily in the wild! A Black-striped Woodcreeper, like a robin-sized Brown Creeper, was the first seen of several members of this family. A familiar Spotted Sandpiper bobbed on the bank of an ornamental pond, while a tiny Green Kingfisher fished in the manner of its larger relatives. Besides the Rufous-tailed Hummingbird, a less common Blue-throated Goldentail posed for us briefly.

Other birds in the garden area included Ruddy Ground Dove, Clay-colored Robin (the national bird), Yellow-throated Euphonia, and Red-legged Honeycreeper. Orange-chinned Parakeets flew overhead. We won't mention the

empid-like flycatchers that were everywhere sitting quietly, sallying forth to catch an insect and all the time looking as nondescript as a flycatcher can! Other highlights were two more toucan species — a Chestnut-mandibled Toucan, and two Collared Aracaris.

An afternoon walk up towards the volcano produced a White Hawk, easily seen against the dark green leaves and three white American Swallow-tailed Kites flying gracefully in front of the volcanic cone with long black deep-V tails and black-tipped wings. We walked along the edge of a small lake as large and noisy Banded-backed Wrens chased each other around a nearly empty campground—engaged in what Stiles & Skutch refer to as "animated, cacophonous duets". A Black-cheeked Woodpecker with scarlet red crown and nape quietly chipped away on a dead tree. On the far side of the lake, a troop of Howler Monkeys bellowed and roared — such unlikely sounds from such cute little animals.

We birded around the lodge until sunset, and during dinner the clouds cleared from the top of the volcano, and glowing orange-red lava could be seen flowing down from the peak. Later, in the darkness outside our cabin, the light-show continued, with a river of lava and exploding boulders hurtling and bouncing down the slope, lightning flashing far off in the sky, and all around us fireflies blinking like Christmas lights.

The next morning, I was awake at 5, with Howler Monkeys bellowing from the forest, and birds moaning, chirping, hooting and whistling. We were fairly high up and below us the ground fog covered the lowland plains; blue mountains loomed to the west, and the volcano behind us had its top enshrouded in mist with lava flows smoking down its flanks. Birds were flying here and there at top speed. The sun was climbing up through the low cloud in the distance. I felt like I was in a magical kingdom, something out of "Lord of the Rings"! I spent an hour within 50 metres of the cabin and added several new species — a hedgerow had a constant parade of smaller birds, and scattered large trees attracted many larger species.

After breakfast, we caught the bus around Lake Arenal, Costa Rica's "Lake District". We got off at Villa Decary, a small bed and breakfast run by two Americans. It is set in beautifully designed gardens in a former coffee plantation surrounded by forest and overlooking the lake. The slope in front of our room was covered with groupings of *Datura* with pale pink aromatic flowers ("Angels' Trumpets"), and coffee bushes with their dark glossy green leaves. A Great Egret was fishing by the grassy edge of the lake.

The owners have a bird feeding station on a stump that can be seen from the rooms, and a few pieces of fruit attract a large variety of birds. New birds were Masked Tityra, Buff-throated Saltator, and the most interesting — a group of chicken-sized Plain-headed Chachalacas who appeared walking along branches of a nearby tree before flying down to the feeding area. After cleaning up the rest of the fruit they retired in a dignified manner back to the forest.

We made a short trip up the road to the Arenal Botanical Gardens where the best bird was a tiny Little Hermit (a hummingbird), rufous and cinnamon with a long white-

tipped tail. Later, back at Villa Decary, we saw about 130 Montezuma's Orepodolas, a large oriole relative, brown with yellow outer tail feathers, flying down the lake in small flocks. They are colonial nesters, and were apparently heading to their night roost.

The following morning, a walk by a shaded stream on the property produced a Northern Waterthrush bobbing its tail as it turned over leaves with its bill. After a fantastic breakfast with a fruit plate decorated with blossoms, followed by pancakes with homemade preserves of pineapple, papaya, ginger and lemon, we were waiting for the bus and watching Howler Monkeys moving slowly from tree to tree along the lakeside.

The brightly painted bus, probably an American school bus in its previous incarnation, arrived on time, and we had an enjoyable ride around Lake Arenal with its continuously changing views of the volcano and the lush countryside. Streams rushed down to the lake, reminiscent of driving through Goldstream, only the road itself was more like the road to Port Renfrew.

It was August 15th, and "Mothers' Day", a major holiday only in Costa Rica, in some ways similar to

I felt like I was in a magical kingdom, something out of "Lord of the Rings"!

Christmas. The bus became crowded as mothers and children and *campesinos* (farmers) bearing gifts boarded the bus in their finest clothes on their way to visit their mothers.

After stopping for lunch, we boarded the bus to Monteverde. This bus also had lots of family groups, but half the passengers now were young Americans and Europeans, who had summer jobs in the area, or were taking Spanish courses. The road gained altitude as pastures and remnant forest gave way to steep slopes planted with glossy green coffee bushes. An Eastern Meadowlark stood in a field, while further up two Keel-billed Toucans flew across a patch of coffee surrounded by forest.

We arrived at Santa Elena, a small village about 2 km from Monteverde itself, and central for visiting all the local attractions. The Santa Elena Reserve is nearby where the birding is as good or better than Monteverde. The Ecological Farm has a canopy tour, and better birding. We stayed at Arco Iris, a small resort tucked away on the edge of the village but out of sight of it. The owners, Haymo and Susanna, are not birders, but sympathetic to our condition. Our first bird there after the ubiquitous Rufous-tailed Hummingbird was a Steely-vented Hummingbird. Later at sunset, the same little tree covered with star-like red flowers attracted a group of small bats.

The next morning we were offered a lift up to the Monteverde reserve by a young couple from Texas who had a rental Suzuki Sidekick, one of the most common vehicles on the roads here. Most are driven by tourists in a country where very few residents own a private car. Just before the entrance

is the world-renowned Hummingbird Gallery, which lived up to our expectations.

The feeders in front of the gallery and gift shop were alive with birds, including at least six species of hummer. The relatively huge (4") Violet Sabrewing was the most impressive with its long decurved bill and dark blue-purple plumage.

At the reserve, we paid the entrance fee and signed in for a trail. One was already closed because the maximum number of hikers had already been reached, and this was the low season! We quickly spotted several new species: Slate-Throated Redstart, Prong-Billed barbet, Common Bush Tanager, and Black-faced Solitaire. The latter, like many of its relatives, has a beautiful ethereal song. Soon, we met like-minded hikers: Edmond, a bird researcher from Peru, and a young couple from the States.

We were soon calling out birds every few metres: White-throated Spadebill, Nightingale Wren, Pale-breasted Spinetail, several Three-striped Warblers, a woodcreeper sp. (look at the page in Stiles and Skutch!), and Gray-breasted Wood Wren. We heard a Black Guan, then it obligingly flew to a better vantage point, so we all had a good view. A Collared Redstart was the last new species by the time we arrived at the lookout. Misty clouds drifted across the valley with a distant view of the Caribbean coast.

Back at the entrance, Anne-Marie and I elected to walk back down, since we had been told that the Quetzals were feeding further down the slope. It was a pleasant walk, but no Quetzals. We stopped in at CASEM, the womens' craft cooperative, and the coffee shop next door, where we availed ourselves of free samples, and bought some coffee to take back.

We crossed the street to Stella's Bakery, another landmark mentioned in all the guidebooks, and then took the afternoon shuttle bus for the last kilometre. Back at Arco Iris, a Yellow-Faced Grassquit greeted us on the grounds, and towards evening two Emerald Toucanets appeared in a tree behind our cabin, making four species of toucan that we had seen.

The next morning, we thought it would be interesting to tour the Childrens' Rain Forest, especially for Anne-Marie as a teacher. The visitors' centre had books and displays of local flora and fauna, and displays by local children from their class visits. One trail was through primary forest along the edge of a steep valley with a river far below. There were cooling breezes coming up from the Pacific and beautiful views of the Gulf of Nicoya in the distance. Just another sunny day in the rainforest! Among the new sightings were a Nightingale Wren, and Orange-bellied Trogon. Butterflies were everywhere, with many large Blue Morphos patrolling up and down the trail. We passed by a Violet Sabrewing lek, where their chips could be heard all around us. Further on, we saw a Long-tailed Manakin, with scarlet cap, and two extremely long tail feathers. We found out later that their lek was nearby on another trail.

Later, back at Arco Iris, a double rainbow over a banana tree in the yard was a great end to the afternoon, and our visit to Monteverde. We caught the bus to the Pacific coast

the next morning at six, and rode in the morning sun down the mountain picking up and dropping off local people and schoolchildren till we arrived at the Inter-American Highway and then on to the old port town of Puntarenas by 9 a.m.

The town is quite unusual in that it is built on a narrow sand spit stretching out into the gulf, so it is only a few streets wide with many cross streets. The fish boats by the ferry dock all had a complement of Olivaceous Cormorants and Brown Pelicans roosting on them. Huge Magnificent Frigatebirds circled around. At 11, the launch set out across the flat-calm gulf. The only new birds were flocks of Laughing Gulls.

Once ashore, we joined the international crowd of young back-packers, and some of the locals, in transferring to a bus for the trip to the small beach-front village of Montezuma. Our younger acquaintances had told us that this was their favourite stop in Costa Rica.

The oppressive heat and humidity was not a good start for us, after the temperate montane climate of Monteverde. Although it had the advantage of lots of English being spoken, it was too "touristy" for us, and we decided to use it as a rest stop before continuing on our way.

We stayed at a cabin at Los Mangos, situated in a mango orchard. It has a swimming pool, where a large Iguana was sunning itself, ignoring the two bathers swimming laps a few feet away. A Bare-throated Tiger Heron stood quietly by a stream flowing onto a rocky section of beach and nearby a Spotted Sandpiper bobbed.

As the sun went down, bats flew around the mango trees, while the evening rain clouds threatened. We kept hearing a very loud sound like an automatic water sprinkler. We later found the source, a large cicada. The Ticos say they call in the rain, and they turned out to be right.

Later, at dinner at a beach-front restaurant with sand under our feet, we watched the lightning flash out at sea and before dessert, the rain started. We were under cover, and so could continue to enjoy our meal.

The next morning the stream was a raging torrent and the sun was shining again. Outside our cabin, a young Howler Monkey napped in a tree, after snacking on mangos, taking a bite or two from each. What a sad little face! A big Iguana climbed up the same tree for a nap after feeding on fallen mangos.

We prepared to head south to Carara National Park. This area is in the transition zone between the drier north and the wetter south coast, so the flora and fauna are a mix of both. I had phoned ahead to Tarcol Lodge only to find that it was closed for the season. Then we got a call back saying it would be opened up just for us and that a driver would pick us up in Puntarenas. There would be a cook and a guard (who didn't speak English), but no one else. Anne-Marie was a bit worried about being alone, but we thought we would at least go and have a look.

The ferry back to Puntarenas went to a different terminal at the other end of town and, of course, there was no driver waiting. Everyone left, including all the taxis, and I started looking for a pay phone. This was one of those

moments that makes independent travel exciting, when finally a minivan pulled up and the driver asked in English for me. After introducing himself, Hernan then told us he had found out about the change in terminal, but had been delayed for half an hour by an accident on the highway.

With a feeling of relief, we placed our packs in the car and headed off. Hernan was an accountant who also was interested in the outdoors, and was very proud of his country. He stopped several times for roadside birds, and then at the bridge over the Tarcoles River to see the crocodiles - there were several including some huge ones looking like beached logs on the sand bars. Two Scarlet Macaws flew up the river giving us our first look at these beautifully coloured birds in the wild.

We turned off past the bridge to the sleepy village of Tarcoles, and then back to the shores of the river to Tarcol Lodge. We passed fields of emerald green rice and more birds: Blue-black Grassquits on the side of the road, many flycatcher species we had seen before; and a female Green-Breasted Mango, a large hummingbird at the south end of its range here. Dozens of Cattle Egrets perched on and beside the exotic-looking long-eared cows.

The lodge is an old renovated house, built on the edge of the tidal river flats with mangrove swamp extending from one side and a beautiful view across the river and towards the open ocean on the other side. We were pleasantly surprised to meet Mrs. Erb, the owner, who had decided to come down for the weekend and keep us company. John and Kathleen Erb also own Rancho Naturalista. John was in Europe promoting the lodges at the big "birdwatching fairs" in England and the Netherlands. We were happy at this turn of events and soon settled into some armchair birding on the porch with a cup of tea — Murchie's Earl Grey we had brought with us.

The flats at low tide were spotted here and there with shorebirds large and small: beautiful Roseate Spoonbills, White Ibis, Snowy Egrets, lots of Yellow-crowned Night Herons and Green Herons. Tall white Wood Storks stalked the beach, looking like dignified older gentlemen, while around them scurried various peeps and larger shorebirds. Most of the Ruddy Turnstones and Black-bellied Plovers were still in breeding plumage. Two Black-bellied Whistling Ducks flew by, and toward evening, we saw a Common Pauraque, similar to, but larger than a Common Nighthawk.

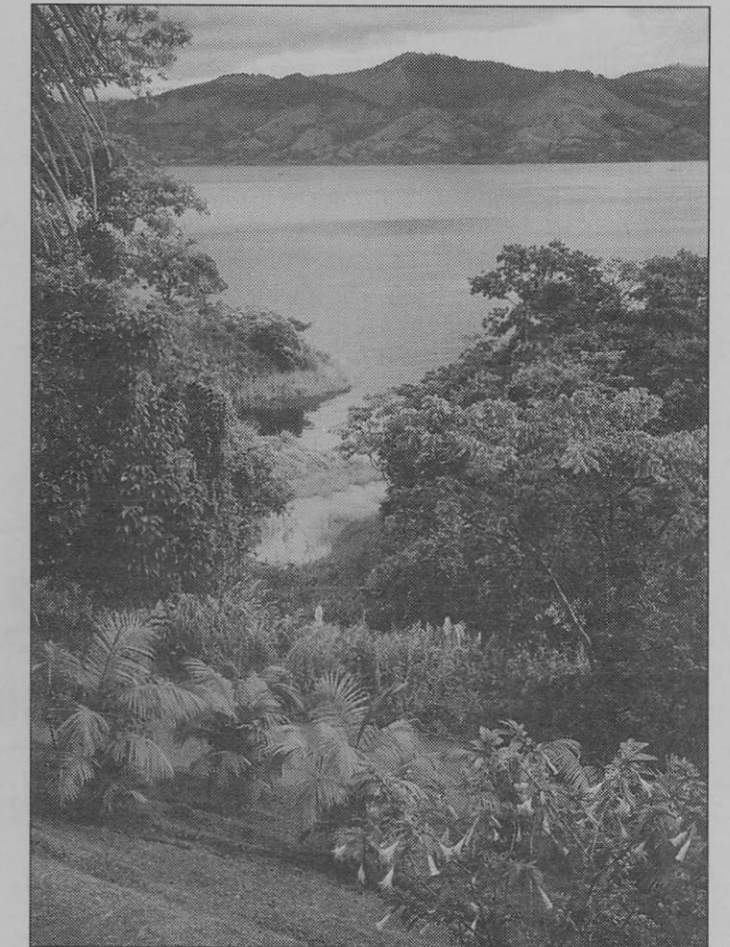
The next morning we opted to start the day with verandah birding. Mangrove Swallows flew overhead, an Amazon Kingfisher hunted from a pole on the mud flats, a Mangrove Warbler and a Rufous-naped Wren flitted through the low bushes in front of the verandah, and a beautiful Rose-throated Becard perched in a tree beside us.

On the mud-flats, new birds today were Little Blue Heron and Snowy Egrets, with their yellow legs and contrasting black feet. Five or six Scarlet Macaws noisily landed across the river giving us another look at their gaudy plumage and a Yellow-headed Caracara flew by.

I went for a walk in the mangroves where a Boat-billed Heron with its incongruously heavy bill perched quietly on a branch over a shallow backwater. Most of the other birds

seen were flycatchers — Tropical Gnatcatcher, Dusky-Capped Flycatcher, Brown-Crested Flycatcher, and a Mistletoe Tyrannulet. Back on the verandah at noon, we saw five large crocodiles on a sandbar in the river, and at high tide a small croc drifted in and lay not 20 feet away in a few inches of water. A little later, a Tri-coloured Heron added to our "verandah list".

The next morning, we left for the first of two visits to Carara National Park. This reserve was formerly on the edge of a large private land-holding, so that the present reserve



Villary Decary overlooking Lake Arenal. Photo: Gordon Hart

includes recovering second-growth and untouched rainforest, bordering the Tarcoles River.

On this visit our first new species was a beautiful Fiery-Billed Aracari, the 5th species of toucan seen, and a south Pacific-coast specialty. Further along where the path approached the river, we saw more lifers — snake-necked Anhingas and beautiful Northern Jacanas. We also saw our first Basilisk Lizard — it dashed across a stretch of water to an over-hanging branch, living up to its popular name of "Jesus Christ Lizard". Other highlights were a Baird's Trogon, and a glimpse of a Giant Anteater crossing the trail. We were back by 11 for brunch — another great meal offsetting any good our morning walk may have done!

In the afternoon, we drove up a mountain road south of Carara to viewpoints looking over the Pacific coast — awesome! By the roadside, we saw a Violaceous Trogon, a Gray Hawk, more Aracaris, and two Coatumundis, a raccoon-sized mammal with a long tail carried high over the body.

We got back to Tarcol by late afternoon, where it was 29°C. and humid. We settled again on the verandah with a pot of Earl Grey in time to see another lifer — Sandwich Terns flying over the river. A Green Heron with his spiky “punk” hairdo stalked his supper on the now-exposed sand flats in front of us, while two large crocodiles snoozed further out on a big sandbar.

We were up the next morning at 5.30 for another trip to Carara, this time with a guide. We were at the reserve by 6.30 and in the first 30 minutes, we had 20 species, 13 of which were trip birds (and lifers!). We hadn't gone 100 meters. Among them was a Black-headed Trogon — the third trogon species seen here; and several kinds of antbird and woodcreeper.

The next hour produced another 19 species, with a very vocal Laughing Falcon being a highlight. A troop of White-faced Monkeys appeared and seemed oblivious to our presence. We saw a Rufous-tailed Jacamar, which looks like a large hummingbird with a long straight bill. It likes to catch Blue Morpho Butterflies which it kills by whacking them against a tree before eating them, discarding the beautiful

wings which float down to the forest floor.

We reached the river by 9.30, and added a Purple Gallinule to the birds from yesterday. We saw a few more birds on the way back, including two large Crested Guans, and a pretty little Dot-winged Antwren, with its dark wings covered with small white dots. We were back at the entrance by 10.15, and had seen about 65 species in less than four hours. By now, I was getting used to flipping quickly through the 50+ colour plates in Stiles and Skutch. After lunch, we drove back to San Jose with Mrs. Erb.

On Tuesday, we did a bit of the tourist routine, shopping in town for souvenirs, and then went back to Tuetal Lodge for the last night. Wednesday morning in the pink dawn, Clay-coloured Robins sang, roosters crowed, two Rufous-naped Wrens kept up their “incessant duetting” in querulous unmusical tones, and a Motmot hunted quietly from low branches in the shadows.

After finding a few more birds — all familiar to me by now, we left for the airport by 7. The trip was all we hoped it would be and more. We saw between 165-170 species, almost all lifers, without tapes and without a guide most of the time.

If anyone would like to join us for a return trip this summer, Mrs. Erb will help us arrange a tour with driver and minibus and guides at special low season rates. If you think you might be interested, call me at 721-1264.

The Freshwater Fishes of Vancouver Island

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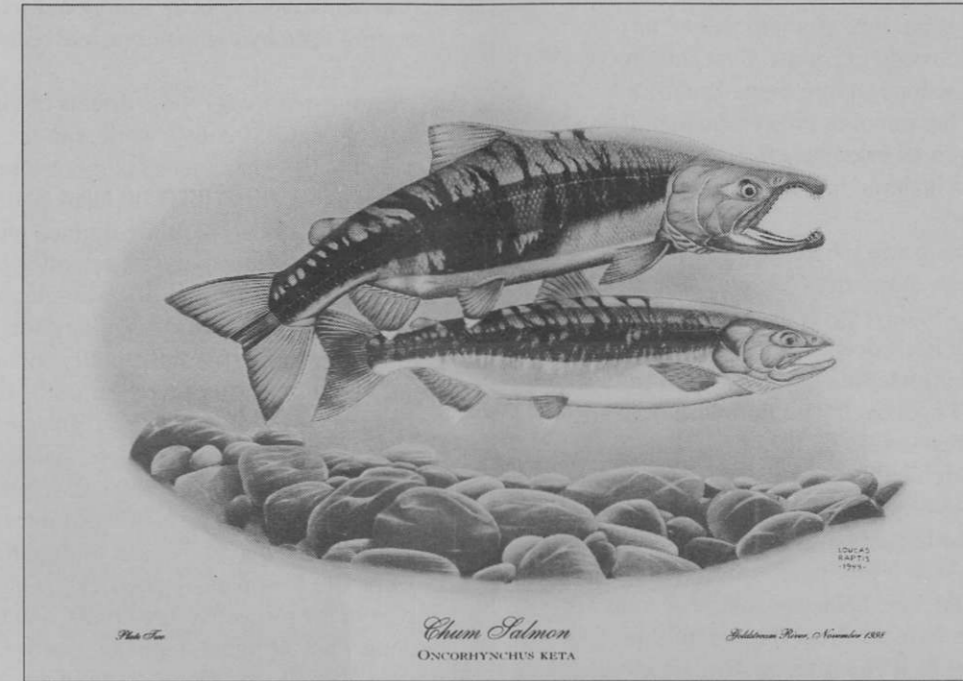


Plate Two: Chum Salmon

Chum salmon are the most widely distributed of all seven species of Pacific salmon—in abundance they are second only to pink salmon and in average size smaller only to chinook. They enter the streams and rivers of Vancouver Island to spawn from the middle of October to the beginning of December. The run at Goldstream River attracts thousands of spectators each year who gather along the banks to watch the fighting displays of large, hook-nosed males and their courting, pairing and spawning with the smaller females. After they complete their spawning, both males and females die, their decomposing bodies providing nourishment to the river from which they themselves came three or four years earlier.

The parr-marked fry can be seen gathering in loose schools as early as March, but they don't linger in the river for long. The eelgrass beds of the estuary will be their nursery, until, acclimatized to their saline environment, they venture into the open waters of the North Pacific Ocean. There they feed heavily on euphausiids, copepods, small mollusks, fish, and squid larvae. By the time they return to their natal streams to spawn, they will have grown over 30 inches in length and may weigh 10 to 20 pounds.

The hooked jaws and large sharp teeth of the spawning males have earned the chum the common name “dog salmon.”

The Freshwater Fishes of Vancouver Island

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A Native Plant Gardening Sale and Demonstration

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The Dirt on Camas

By Maureen Funk and Dawn Loewen

At our January meeting, Brenda Beckwith (known affectionately as the Fire Woman) treated us to a fascinating discussion of camas, First Nations, fire and the many interactions among them. Brenda's presentation described her ongoing PhD research at the University of Victoria, and particularly focused on the trailblazing study she is undertaking with CRD Parks. (Pun definitely intended!)

Brenda's photogenic study subject is the bulbous perennial camas (*Camassia quamash* and *C. leichtlinii*, Liliaceae). It takes about five years to develop from seed to flowering, with the bulb relocating itself deeper in the soil each year. Vegetative reproduction (offsetting of the bulbs) is not well understood, but Brenda's research has confirmed that bulbs of both camas species can indeed divide.

The carbohydrate-rich bulbs were a staple in the Coast Salish diet, and an important item of trade. Women selectively harvested the largest bulbs in great quantities. One of Brenda's key research problems is to determine how such large harvests could have been sustainable. To answer this question, she needs to reconstruct the "cultural landscape," or the landscape as it was affected by indigenous people.

One step in her landscape reconstruction is to estimate what camas densities may have been like around Greater Victoria. She could simply go to a rocky meadow like Mt. Tolmie and count, but her results would perhaps not be representative of the former typical or optimal camas habitat. At one time much of our area was marshy, except for a dry period in late summer.

But, you say, camas doesn't grow in the water! Brenda proved otherwise. She showed photos of camas (*C. quamash*) in Idaho, growing luxuriantly over huge expanses — in decidedly *wet* prairie! And you can see camas growing with wet feet closer to home. Just visit the Somas estuary near Port Alberni, where Brenda, along with her supervisor Nancy Turner, discovered camas and other traditional food plants like riceroot (*Fritillaria camschatcensis*).

So, it's very likely that before the land around Victoria was drained, farmed, and eventually paved, such wet fields represented areas of prime camas growth — and thus prime harvesting areas for First Nations.

Which brings us to the next step in landscape reconstruction. First Nations' harvesting is an important factor to consider in pre-European camas ecology. Obviously, it reduced the number of bulbs in the ground. Paradoxically, however, the ultimate effect of selective harvesting may have been neutral or even positive! Digging aerates the soil, and allows the bulbs left behind to migrate deeper — in turn,

perhaps, allowing these plants to mature and flower faster. Also, harvesters deliberately weeded out competitors like death camas as they gathered camas bulbs. Finally, digging may have encouraged vegetative reproduction.

But First Nations management of camas meadows went beyond the incidental effects of harvesting. People also applied regular, deliberate landscape burning. The low-intensity fires may have benefited camas and other herbaceous food plants by adding nutrients to the soil, removing shrubby competitors, and reducing insect infestations.

Hard evidence for these effects of digging and fire is lacking. Enter Brenda's work with the CRD. She has 40 small (one square metre) plots scattered around three regional parks: Mill Hill, Devonian, and Witty's Lagoon/Tower Point. Her 40 plots are divided into four sets of ten, with each set assigned one of the following treatments: control, fire, digging, and fire + digging. Last summer Brenda got her hands dirty digging camas bulbs in the traditional manner (she felt "totally connected to every woman who's ever harvested camas"), and did detailed vegetation surveys for each plot. The camas bulbs were numerous (as many as 282 in one square metre), but very small compared to ethnographic descriptions. This is probably a result of the thick matting of introduced grasses, and is very likely also due to the lack of digging and burning.

The fire treatments were tricky — she had to get permission from the respective fire chiefs, and their stipulations for burning were stringent. Fate (i.e., the weather) smiled on Brenda, though, and all the burning was done successfully. Now we just need to wait a year to find out the results!

If a recent controlled burn on Yellow Island (in the Washington San Juans) is any indication, the results may be dramatic. Brenda showed before-and-after photos of that burn, and the growth of camas and other native herbs went from scattered and scant to thick and robust. Yellow Island, however, does not have a broom problem, and Brenda admits this is a serious concern when burning in our area. However, she sees burning as potentially a long-term component of a restoration strategy, in which regular burning would deplete the broom seed bank.

Of course, restoring camas meadow ecosystems in Greater Victoria will require more than just burning in a few areas. It will require the populace to change its attitude. As long as there is rampant and thoughtless habitat destruction, along with threats to existing parks (witness the current Beacon Hill Park idiocy), Brenda's work will remain an interesting academic exercise largely relevant to understanding the past. Let's hope our society smartens up in time to apply it meaningfully in the future.

BRENDA and DAWN are members of the Native Plant Study Group, a sub-group of the Victoria Horticultural Society. They meet the third Thursday of the month at 7 p.m. at the University of Victoria. For more information contact Maureen Funk at 477-6957.



Brant Wildlife Festival April 7, 8, 9, 2000



Count yourself in for major fun at our Big Day Birding Competition
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- The Brant Wildlife Festival 2000 includes
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 - ◆ Brant Viewing & Family Nature Activities
 - ◆ Breakfast with Bateman

Brant Wildlife Festival 2000's Big Day is an event all birders will enjoy. Teams of experienced and novice birders will comb the Parksville - Qualicum Beach area from tidewater to freshwater and marsh to mountain. The object: see or hear more species than any other team - all the while having a great time.

Meet some of the best and friendliest birders in B.C. at the Big Day Wrap Up. Awards presented for Most Species, Bird of the Day, Story of the Day, Most Owl, and the Parksville Flats Cup. Draw prizes include a pair of Elite binoculars sponsored by: **Bushnell Sports Optics Worldwide**. The competition will take place on Friday, April 7th at 9:00pm continuing through Saturday April 8th to 3:00pm.

ENTRY FEES MUST BE PAID BY MARCH 22ND. Your \$20 Big Day Entry Fee includes a Passport good for entry to Wildlife Art & Photography Exhibitions, Family Nature Activities and Big Day Wrap Up Meal.

Please register us for the Big Day Birding Competition
We are paying the registration fee of \$20 per member by:

Cheque or Money Order _____ Visa _____ Card Number: _____

Mastercard _____ Card Number: _____ Expiry Date: _____

Signature: _____

Team Information

Do you wish to be put on a team? _____ Team Name: _____
Captain (or put me on a team) _____

minimum of 3 members and a max. of 5 members including Captain

Mailing Address: _____ City: _____

Postal Code: _____ Phone#: _____ Fax#: _____

Members: 1. _____ 2. _____

3. _____ 4. _____

Please return completed registration form by March 22, 2000 to:

Big Day Birding Competition - Brant Wildlife Festival
PO Box 327, Parksville, B.C. V9P 2G5

Phone: (250) 752-9171 or Fax: (250) 752-9883 E-Mail: brant@nisa.net
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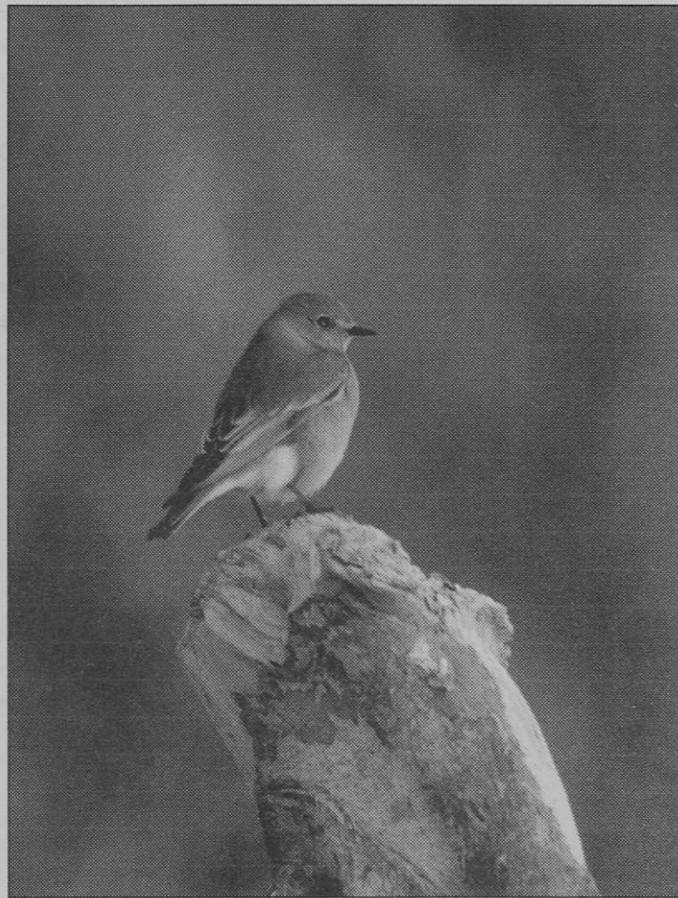
Mountain Bluebird

By Marie O'Shaughnessy

This female Mountain Bluebird was photographed by Marie O'Shaughnessy November 25th 1999. It was seen by many as it was "flycatching" at Holland Point along the Dallas Road waterfront from November 22nd to 28th. Most observers found it either foraging over the driftwood and beached kelp or amongst the grasses at the foot of the bluff. Its main source of food at that time appeared to be flying insects. These birds differ from the other bluebird species during foraging as they tend to "hover." Mountain Bluebirds can be found in the Western parts of Canada and the U.S. They differ in colour from the Western Bluebird and Eastern Bluebird, having no chestnut-red on their bodies. The male is predominately a bright blue with a pale grey-whitish belly and undertail coverts. The female tends to be a brownish gray with an aqua-blue wash over its wings, rump and tail. They are found at elevations ranging to 2300 metres (7000 feet), and nest in open areas such as meadows, hayfields, prairies, clearcuts and edges of coniferous and deciduous forests. Nests have been found among rocks, crevices, mammal burrows, abandoned woodpecker holes and especially in nest boxes.

The male returns first to the established breeding site, followed by the female a few days or even a week later. They defend their breeding territory vigorously as both European Starlings and House Sparrows compete with bluebirds for nesting cavities. The male Mountain Bluebird guards his mate diligently, possibly because it has been observed that both sexes will sneak copulations with individuals other than their mate. The female chooses the nest sight and builds the nest with little help from the male, although he will contribute some nest material. The nest includes grasses, weed-stems, twigs, pine needles, bark, feathers and even wool and hair.

Egg laying commences in late April or early May with the female laying one egg per day, to a clutch size of from 4 to 8 eggs, the average being 5 or 6. The eggs are smooth, glossy and range in colour from pale blue to rarely white. Mountain Bluebird eggs are generally paler in colour than those of their cousins the Western and Eastern Bluebirds. The male feeds the incubating female and occasionally shares incubating responsibilities. The female continues to brood her young for another week after the eggs hatch, as the young are "altricial" at birth, that is, naked and blind. Both parents feed their young until fledging takes place, generally from 17 to 22 days. The fledglings are totally dependent on them for food and protection for three to four weeks.



Female Mountain Bluebird (*Sialia currucoides*) Approx. 7" (18 cm). Photo: Marie O'Shaughnessy

Mountain Bluebirds are double-brooders over much of their range, and even triple-brooders in the south.

As the summer progresses, family groups and unsuccessful nesters join together in loose flocks. It is not known if these flocks remain together during migration or on their wintering grounds. Of the three North American bluebirds, the Mountain Bluebird is the most migratory, and those in the north leave their nesting areas earlier than those in the south. They winter in the southern United States and central Mexico where they inhabit open lowland, deserts and grasslands.

We see few Mountain Bluebirds here on Vancouver Island, so when one shows up, take a good, long look.



Black Oystercatchers at the Oak Bay Marina. Photo: Marie O'Shaughnessy

1999 Christmas Bird Count

Introduction by Dannie Carsen

On this past December 18, 180 keen participants enjoyed a fairly warm 1999 Victoria Christmas Bird Count. We had temperatures of 6-8°C and slightly cloudy skies clearing in the afternoon. Strong northwest winds of 15-30 kph made it more difficult to observe waterfowl along the coast and a bit rough for birders counting offshore in boats. Still, it was a great day for birding! Counters in the field produced 91,255 birds and feeder watchers added 11,091 for a total of 102,346 birds seen. The overall species count was 139 species, which is down from last year's total of 142. Victoria may have slipped to the second highest count in Canada!

Congratulations to the feeder watchers who turned out in fewer numbers (only 181 versus 334 for last year) but produced a substantial number of birds per watcher and a few rarities such as Townsend's warbler! I appreciated the work of Cam Finlay, Lyndis Davis and the rest of the feeder watcher team in collecting and compiling the results.

We added two species to our CBC list in 1999 with a Heermann's gull seen in Cordova Bay and a female Western tanager seen at Bryan Gate's feeder on Uplands Road. We now have 216 species listed on the CBC since 1957. We recorded record highs (with help from feeder watchers) for:

	1999	Previous High
Anna's hummingbird	198	(177)
Red-breasted sapsucker	12	(3)

Bushtit	2,523	(1,989)
Dark-eyed junco	8,823	(6,356)
Pine siskin	9,386	(7,998)

Other highlights were 2 Brown pelicans seen in Victoria and Esquimalt Harbours (could be the same bird flying around), a Redhead seen at Quick's Bottom, a lone Turkey vulture at Esquimalt Lagoon, a Rough-legged hawk and American tree sparrow found again by the intrepid Martindale team, a Cassin's Auklet off Tower Point, and a Heermann's gull seen around Victoria Harbour. Please try and salt your favourite areas with feed before next year's count to attract more rarities!

Please send your revised team lists so they may be revised for next year (if you haven't already) to Dannie Carsen at 3332 Doncaster Drive, Victoria, B.C. V8P 3V8 or fax (please phone first) to 595-2773. I will be creating a brand new Christmas Count checklist which will freshen the bird species expected and remove the requirement for documentation for birds that are no longer exceptionally rare (such as Savannah sparrow and Black Scoter). I also plan to add birds that have been seen two or three times to the checklist. Once the revisions have been made, the count area leaders (and anyone else who is interested) will be sent a sample copy for your comments. The goal is to make it easier for team leaders to record participants, money collected, telephone numbers, groups, weather conditions, time, mileage, species and individual totals, field descriptions, and weather conditions. More complete and accurate data can thus be collected and submitted to the Audubon Society.

The 1999 count data (available in Excel) follows.

1999 Victoria Christmas Bird Count

Including Feeder Watch

Count Areas Species (*) = field notes	Gordon Head / Mount Douglas Area 15	Swan Lake / Cedar Hill Area 16	Blenkinsop / Panama Flats Area 17	Elk Lake / Cordova Bay Area 18	Prospect Lake / Quicks Bottom Area 19	Martindale / Bear Hill Area 20	Oak Bay Islands (offshore) Area 22	Albert Head / Esq Harbour (offshore) Area 23	Victoria Count Total #	Comments
Golden-crowned kinglet	65	8	6	161	331	193			2,066	
Ruby-crowned kinglet	7	13	5	35	28	40			305	
Western bluebird (*)										
Hermit thrush	1	2		1					9	Low compared with 48 seen in 1998
American robin	283	96	99	133	247	968			3,772	
Varied thrush	21	4		30	206	21			1,002	
American pipit					1	103			104	
Cedar waxwing			10		2	32			86	
Northern shrike				2		2			7	
European starling	114	275	387	198	274	3111			6,902	
Hutton's vireo (*)				1					3	
Orange-crowned warbler									4	
Yellow-rumped warbler					1	7			8	
Townsend's warbler (*)				1					1	Feeder Watch
Western tanager (*New)									2	Female at Bryan Gate's feeder
Spotted towhee	38	45	25	69	34	74			732	
American tree sparrow (*New)						1			1	Martindale Flats
Savannah sparrow				1	89	6			112	
Fox sparrow	23	29	16	12	100	83			630	
Song sparrow	20	34	14	52	96	86			777	
Swamp sparrow (*New)										
Lincoln's sparrow			3	1	14	27			47	
White-throated sparrow				1		1			9	
Golden-crowned sparrow	31	63	58	56	56	121			853	
White-crowned sparrow		8	11	7	7	74			142	
Harris' sparrow (*)										
Dark-eyed junco	233	177	154	539	1060	1102			8,823	All time high, previous high 6356 in 1998 (Feeder Watch 2162)
Red-winged blackbird	20	72	144	120	128	298			895	
Western meadowlark						3			5	
Brewer's blackbird	100	10	15	23	22	312			550	
Brown-headed cowbird						1			1	
Purple finch	14	27	14	7	21	2			293	
House finch	170	118	82	199	83	264			1,957	
Red crossbill	10	45	12	23	115	35			701	
Pine siskin	324	79	122	753	1637	810			9,386	All time high, previous high 7998 in 1993
American goldfinch									80	
Evening grosbeak									1	
House sparrow	166	289	148	77	89	230			2,975	
Count Totals	4,336	2,775	4,580	8,720	7,039	17,420	56	2,292	102,346	
Species Totals	64	56	60	89	74	109	12	5	139	Slightly lower than 1998 CBC total of 142

Poems

By Hannah J. Main-van der Kamp

Every Polarity Attracts Its Opposite

Starling horde infects the oak meadow.
Fevered whistles, a whirring workshop
full of clicks, fan belts needing oil.

Tiresome birds who appear to neither
toil nor reap nor keep Lent. To those
who espouse simplicity is given

frantic companions. Hermit heckled
with hooting. Rookery droppings abound
on the ascetic. They catcall, deride

penitence, these lice-ridden rags
of sparkling cloisonné.

1999 Victoria Christmas Bird Count

Including Feeder Watch

Count Areas Species (*) = field notes	Butchart Gardens / Northern Highlands Area 1	Central Highlands Area 2	Goldstream Area 3	Thetis Lake / Hastings Flats Area 4	Langford Lake Area 5	Albert Head / Triangle Mtn Area 6	Esquimalt Lagoon / Mill Hill Area 7	Esquimalt Harbour Area 8	Portage Inlet / The Gorge Area 9	Victoria Harbour Area 10	Beacon Hill Area 11	Oak Bay Area 12	UVIC/ Cadboro Bay Area 13	10 Mile Point Area 14
Golden-crowned kinglet	210	260	77	156	14	218	175	3	104	3	15	18	15	34
Ruby-crowned kinglet	8	11	2	22	7	18	49		31	1	6	2	6	14
Western bluebird (*)														
Hermit thrush	1	1				1	1			1				
American robin	177	97	6	129	112	127	220	74	298	206	91	103	176	130
Varied thrush	34	128	3	117	32	90	272	6	11		5	4	7	11
American pipit														
Cedar waxwing							14				5	22		1
Northern shrike	1									1		1		
European starling	602	12	44	104	49	46	112	70	721	356	131	147	57	92
Hutton's vireo (*)		2												
Orange-crowned warbler							1				1			2
Yellow-rumped warbler														
Townsend's warbler (*)														
Western tanager (*New)													2	
Spotted towhee	50	63	3	39	17	46	73	13	32	7	6	25	18	55
American tree sparrow (*New)														
Savannah sparrow									16					
Fox sparrow	29	28	6	16	5	44	162	3	20	2	9	10	6	27
Song sparrow	39	47	2	52	23	19	106	4	49	31	7	18	16	62
Swamp sparrow (*New)														
Lincoln's sparrow							2							
White-throated sparrow							4						1	2
Golden-crowned sparrow	57	12	8	16	18	54	104	15	64	31	10	28	14	37
White-crowned sparrow	9			6		1					2	2	4	11
Harris' sparrow (*)														
Dark-eyed junco	896	822	12	332	407	920	617	142	509	218	104	190	114	275
Red-winged blackbird	72			5	7	1	8					4	16	
Western meadowlark							1			1				
Brewer's blackbird	2			1	20		45							
Brown-headed cowbird														
Purple finch	28	3	9	27	6	16	18	1	5		15	15	14	51
House finch	125	15	1	33	7	54	180	23	214	61	43	88	121	76
Red crossbill	8	244		95		53	16		1		3			41
Pine siskin	1323	1941	351	508	263	145	452	121	210	96	1	3	102	145
American goldfinch									15	40	10	15		
Evening grosbeak						1								
House sparrow	42			76	72	127	85	87	546	431	111	203	75	121
Count Totals	9,242	4,312	5,499	2,599	1,853	7,859	4,648	2,341	4,995	3,184	1,880	2,173	2,059	2,485
Species Totals	63	48	45	60	49	82	83	60	56	60	57	65	69	69

Morning, Noon and Night

Full of enterprise, finches
carpet the thicket with twitters,
cacophony of busyness.

All the hot midday, red-eyed towhees
whine in the dust,
spoiled children.

Flicker high in oak labrinths
exults. Sunrise under one wing,
it's going down under another.

Sooke Christmas Bird Count

December 27, 1999

By Jack McLeod

The morning dawned crisp and clear and fine weather maintained during the day except for some pesky fog around Rocky Point/Race Rocks which disappeared before noon. Turnout was great — all eight areas were covered adequately. Species count was 104 and total number 25,811 and I'm led to understand this is high for Sooke.

Descriptions were provided for three species new to the Sooke Count; snow goose (white phase), gray jay, and house wren and these are presently under review. Other notables included American kestrel (Metchosin/Pedder Bay), two Virginia rails, two yellow-rumped warblers and a Linclon's sparrow (Beecher Bay/Matheson Lake Park), a Townsend's warbler (East Sooke Park/Sooke Basin South), and five turkey vultures (Rocky Point/Race Rocks). Six hermit thrushes were observed in five of the eight areas.

The Race Rock observers had an extraordinary day.

Two species observed there accounted for 39 per cent of the circle's grand total; common murre (7,252), and mew gull (3,050). As well, 42 of the circle's 72 bald eagles were from this area, and 51 of the circle's 68 harlequin ducks. Strong currents and upwelling probably accounts for the concentrations of birds and attests to the area's enormous productivity.

Thanks to Gary Fletcher of Pearson College for providing the boat at Race Rocks, to the Area Leaders for submitting your material in record time, to Jean McLeod for hosting the noon-hour and post-count gatherings, to Mike and Barb McGrenere for bringing great shortbread, and finally to the participants for your great turnout! We'll probably never beat Victoria's turnouts and counts but, hey, you never know!

SOOKE CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT, DECEMBER 27, 1999
SUMMARY SHEET

Species	Number Observed								TOTAL
	Area 1	Area 2	Area 3	Area 4	Area 5	Area 6	Area 7	Area 8	
Red-throated loon		1		1	5	1			8
Pacific loon	2	11	1	8	2	3	8		35
Common loon	10	11	2	5		2	1		31
Pied-billed grebe	2	7		1		2			12
Horned grebe	1	17		1		27	6		52
Red-necked grebe	4	5	1	1	8	3	3		25
Western grebe	4	4		15					23
D.-crested cormorant	49	54	13	23	78	28	6	3	254
Brandt's cormorant	1	4		4	12				21
Pelagic cormorant	29	12	21	1	25	1			89
Great blue heron	1	7	7	1	7	4	2	1	30
Trumpeter swan	dup 2	2	1						3
Mute swan		dup 2	5				2		7
Gr. white fronted goose		dup 6	6						6
Snow goose (*N)		1							1
Canada goose	71	288	105	27	2		103	2	598
Green-winged teal		5	3					8	16
Mallard	1	76	300	34	17	5	18	20	471
Northern pintail			100						100
Eurasian wigeon		2	2				2		6
American wigeon		419	158	10	2		385	100	1074
Ring-necked duck	17	5					4	4	30
Greater scaup		2		52					54

Species	Number Observed								TOTAL
	Area 1	Area 2	Area 3	Area 4	Area 5	Area 6	Area 7	Area 8	
Lesser scaup		13	31	35					79
Scaup sp.		90							90
Harlequin duck	2	12	3			51			68
Oldsquaw		21		2	4				27
Black scoter				2					2
Surf scoter	31	125		115	41	11	3	4	330
White-winged scoter	4	6		12	7	6			35
Common goldeneye	12	13	18	29	2	18		4	96
Barrow's goldeneye		12	11	4					27
Bufflehead	29	362	105	40	231	93	47	11	918
Hooded merganser	2	8	11	2	19	10	11	4	67
Common merganser	7	2	25	10	23	1	14	9	91
Red breasted merganser	11	179	56	29	5	16	10		306
Turkey vulture					5				5
Bald eagle	3	6	5	6	42	5	1	4	72
Sharp-shinned hawk					3			1	4
Red-tailed hawk	7	1	2	2	1	1	1	2	17
American kestrel							1		1
Merlin		1	1		1				3
Peregrine falcon		2	1	1					4
California quail			41			31	2	20	94
Virginia rail						3			3
American coot		31				1			32
Kildeer		1	3		1	1		4	10
Black oystercatcher		4			1				5
Spotted sandpiper			2						2
Black turnstone		33	1	37	25	1			97
Rock sandpiper					6				6
Common snipe	1				1			7	9
Mew gull	125	8	24	30	2725	3	135		3050
Herring gull					2				2
Thayer's gull	10	2			48				60
Western gull		1			1				2
Glaucous-winged gull	66	211	162	154	177	104	45	52	971
Unidentified gull	40								40
Common murre		2			7250				7252
Pigeon guillemot.					5	3			8
Marbled murrelet		3		1	2	2		4	12
Ancient murrelet					2				2
Rhinoceros auklet	2	1		1	8				12
Rock dove			5					2	7
Great horned owl						1			1
Belted kingfisher	1	3	10	3	2		1		20
Red-breasted sapsucker			1	2					3
Downy woodpecker			4	2	3	4	5	2	20
Hairy woodpecker	2	2	2	3	4		2	1	16

Species	Number Observed								TOTAL
	Area 1	Area 2	Area 3	Area 4	Area 5	Area 6	Area 7	Area 8	
Northern flicker	15	3	20	3	10	9	10	7	77
Pileated woodpecker	2	1		1	1	1			6
Gray jay (*N)	1								1
Steller's jay	5	8	17	1	1	7	2	9	50
Northwestern crow	226	110	206	46	8	5	20	27	648
Common raven	13	11	7	17	6	8	3	29	94
Ch.-backed chickadee	22	80	89	38	17	27	26	43	342
Bushtit					14		4		18
Red breasted nuthatch	5		6	1	5	2	5	14	38
Brown creeper		1	8	3	7	8	13	5	45
Bewick's wren	1	5	9	2	1	3	3	38	62
House wren (*N)				1					1
Winter wren	27	14	20	21	13	21	1		117
Marsh wren					1		1		2
Golden-crowned kinglet	75	78	90	187	77	29	22	115	673
Ruby-crowned kinglet	6	16	25	2	27	4	10	10	100
Hermit thrush		1		1		2	1	1	6
American robin	57	91	70	17	54	95	75	31	490
Varied thrush	35	6	17	23	34	29	13	25	182
Cedar waxwing	3								3
European starling	128	170	87	35	14	2	239	106	781
Yellow-rumped warbler						2			2
Townsend's warbler				1					1
Spotted towhee	10	6	69	8	9	11	18	15	146
Fox sparrow	20	24	48	3	7	7	8	21	138
Song sparrow	64	49	32	19	11	24	26	28	253
Lincoln's sparrow						1			1
Golden-crowned sparrow		10	29	6	4	13	16	18	96
White-crowned sparrow	25	2							27
Dark-eyed junco	125	126	334	127	149	155	107	160	1283
Red-winged blackbird	80	79			19		1		179
Brewer's blackbird		60					25	50	135
Purple finch	1	1	1		3		13		19
House finch		70	43	15	14	5	11	14	172
Red crossbill	21	1	6	51	119	20	28	30	276
Pine siskin	298	283	613	132	278	185	299	210	2298
House sparrow	25	84	6				10		125
COUNT TOTALS	1837	3478	3101	1467	11759	1066	1828	1275	25811
SPECIES TOTALS	56	76	62	64	69	56	55	46	104

*N=New to list (field description required)
dup = duplicate record

Area 1 = Otter Point/Young Lake Area 2 = Sooke Townsite/Whiffin Spit Area 3 = Billings Spit/Sooke R./Sooke Basin (north)
Area 4 = E. Sooke Pk./Sooke Basin (south) Area 5 = Rocky Point/Race Rocks Area 6 = Beecher Bay, Matheson Lk. Pk. Area
7 = Metchosin/Pedder Area 8 = Roche Cove/North Metchosin Bay

Wildlife Program *Still* in Crisis!

By Tom Burgess

This is a two part message. The first part is an update on the Ministry of Environment Plan budget/staff issue, which was introduced to you in the July/August 1999 *Victoria Naturalist*.

On November 17th, I, and Anne Murray, from Federation of BC Naturalists, Doug Walker, from BC Wildlife Federation, and Bill Wareham, from the Sierra Club, met with Minister Joan Sawiki, and her assistant. We were scheduled for one hour, but got a little extra time. It was a pleasant, positive, hearing.

We provided her with the background to my March '99 Open Letter, and the sending of the July 1st letter to former Premier Clark, signed by 54 Conservation Groups, representing 215,000 supporters and members. We advised her also that we had not yet had any response from government, (and still have not, at this writing!). She was aware of, and understood many of the concerns raised, and was impressed and grateful for the joint effort by so many Conservationists. She was also aware of how hard her very dedicated staff were working, and how difficult their circumstances. She advised us to re-send our letter to the new Premier, and we have done that. We were also advised that our efforts had been helpful to her last September, in securing \$5 million. We let her know that we were grateful for the very modest start on recovery, but disappointed at how little of the funding, (barely half!) actually went into our areas of interest. She indicated that the Tire Recovery money had to be an integral part of the \$5 million package, otherwise the additional funding might not have been forthcoming.

We reiterated the requests we alluded to in our July 1st letter: rescinding the 1999 cuts of 134 positions; replacing the past budget and staff cuts over five years; implementation of the Parks Legacy Panel Report; and public discussions of suitable base budgets, and a wide range of funding sources. We also advised her of our interests in seeing a restructuring of her Ministry to bring Fisheries back into the fold, and to more closely link the various data and inventory programs.

The Minister gave us a sympathetic hearing, and appeared grateful for our efforts. She advised that actions were being taken regarding the Parks Legacy report.

However, she made it plain that annual budget increases in the order of what we were asking (\$15 million increase, annually, for five years, for Wildlife, Fisheries, Habitat Protection, and Parks programs) were a very tall order, and unlikely, without substantial public pressure, and something of a turn-around on the part of her colleagues. She was resolved to obtain increased budget, and more staff, and said she would do her best. At this writing, however, there is no indication of *any* planning for increased budgets and staff in the various offices contacted around the province! She and her colleagues, and all Opposition MLA's, need to hear loudly and clearly from the public. Failing this, the hoped-for recovery will be a long time coming, if at all!

This brings me to the second part, a request for your help. If we don't adequately staff, resource, organize and coordinate our natural resource management agencies, we face the steady erosion of much that we hold dear. So, what am I asking?

We need letters to the Premier, to NDP Leadership hopefuls, to *all* MLA's, and articles or letters to all local and regional newspapers. Send them from yourselves, or from your significant others, your family members, friends, or neighbours. But send them! Time is of the essence. *Now*, when next year's budgets are being planned, is the time to let our political leaders know that a *major* increase is required, not just nickels and dimes.

A recent government News Release made reference to a "pre-budget consultation paper", called "Budget 2000: Choices and Challenges", released by Finance Minister Paul Ramsey. A copy of this may be obtained from the Ministry of Finance and Corporate Relations website, at www.fin.gov.bc.ca, or by calling 250-387-3347. The Minister wants to hear what the public has to say on budgetary matters. The timing of this is wondrous! Let's all tell him exactly what we want, to ensure our fish, wildlife, and parks are well protected, and managed.

Your help is essential, if we are to get the attention of our government. If you really care about our environment, act now!

TOM BURGESS can be reached at 250-642-0015.

1999 Butterfly Counts

By Jeff Gaskin

Last year's Butterfly counts were memorable and will go down on record as counts that were marred by the Gypsy Moth spray. The spray for the Gypsy Moth happened three times last year, and although the April and to an extent the May counts weren't affected by it, counts after May were affected. Species hurt very badly by it were Lorquin's Admiral, Pine White and Woodland Skipper. the European Skipper which flourished during July and August of 1998 was pretty well obliterated in 1999.

A total of 32 species were tallied, which was up one

from last year, despite the three sprays. Among the highlights were: one Green Comma, three Johnson's Hairstreak's at their usual location near Sooke Lake Road, and one Variable Checkerspot in the Goldstream estuary.

As we head into the year 2000, we are still as always looks for more counters. People unfamiliar with our region's butterflies can obtain a colourful leaflet or brochure at the Swan Lake Nature Center. If you would like to take part, even if it be just your street or neighbourhood, you can contact me at 384-1573.



Photo: Bruce Whittington

1999 Victoria Butterfly Count Data

Species	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept (1)	Sept (2)	1999 Total	1998 Total
Alfalfa Butterfly								-	1
American Painted Lady								-	3
Angelwing species						1		1	2
Anise Swallowtail	18	103	77	26	9	7	2	242	329
Blues Species								-	1
Brown Elfin	21	20		1		1		43	34
Cabbage White	158	434	528	176	646	411	147	2,500	3,781
Elfin Species		2						2	
European Skipper			1					1	2,682
Gray Hairstreak	10	2	4	2	8			26	41
Green Comma					1			1	4
Hairstreak Species	2							2	
Greenish Blue								-	
Hydaspe Fritillary			1	2	3			6	5
Johnson's Hairstreak		2	1					3	
Lady species								-	2
Lorquin's Admiral	1	2	8	78	73	21		183	845
Milbert's Tortoise Shell	3	4	4	9	1	1		22	15
Moss' Elfin	4							4	3
Mourning Cloak	35	23	6	7		2		73	62
Mylitta Crescentspot	3	7	1		14	12	5	42	297
Pacific Orange Tip	161	70	3					234	
Painted Lady		5		11	2	2	1	21	160
Pale Swallowtail		12	46	44	6			108	143
Pine White		2		3	39	7	5	56	1,466
Propertius Duskywing		12	9					21	31
Purplish Copper		8	11	21	24	122	20	206	592
Red Admiral			1	4	1	4	1	11	27
Rosner's Hairstreak			2					2	
Sara's Orange Tip								-	171
Satyr Comma	85	45	11	7				148	179
Silvery Blue		21	2					23	2
Skipper species		1						1	16
Spring Azure	190	728	120	13				1,051	664
Sulphur species								-	4
Swallowtail species		1						1	1
Two-banded Checkered Skip			1					1	1
Vancouver Island Ringlet		21	42	4		6		73	88
Variable Checker Spot			1					1	
West Coast Lady				3				3	8
Western Pine Elfin	1	4						5	2
Western Sulphur			1					1	
Western Tiger Swallowtail	1	37	318	468	76	1		901	903
Woodland Skipper				3	275	190	3	471	3,784
Totals	693	1,566	1,199	882	1,178	788	184	6,490	16,350

Spring Bird Count 2000

This year's count will be held on Saturday, May 6.

I would like to encourage all leaders to organize their areas well ahead of time. To aid this, I shall have available at the Birders' Nights, the lists of last year's participants. Please check with me if you are interested in participating. Even if you took part last year, it would probably be a good idea to check that I have names and phone numbers correct. If you missed last year, but took part in other years, you will have to have your name added again, so please check with me. Part of the fun of being in a Bird Count is in being a member of a team. Some teams have been together for several years and now know their area well. It can also be a good way to extend your knowledge of the good birding spots in Greater Victoria. There are four areas currently lacking leaders and several need more participants.

Please don't be shy about offering yourself as a leader.

A leader has to:

- Be familiar with the assigned area.
- Be prepared to do some phoning to organize the count in that area.
- Be prepared to ask people to help in that area

- Be prepared to bring everybody together at the end of the count, collect the data, and then submit it to the organizer.

You'll notice that I have said nothing about being a super birder — it isn't necessary! The area organizer doesn't even really need to be out birding on the day of the count, although it would be best to check that everyone is out in their sub-area.

I know that there are lots of people who are interested in Bird Counts, but feel that they are either not a good enough birder or not physically capable of doing a whole day's birding. Being a leader and organizing an area could be an excellent opportunity to participate and it is indeed a very essential job. A good leader fosters the team spirit and encourages the participants to work together. If you enjoy a project which involves bringing people together in a common goal, please try being a leader.

MARILYN MILLER can be reached at 658-1723 or saddle@uvvm.uvic.ca

The Nature of Island Artists

Last month's thankyou letter from *The Nature of Island Artists* did not contain a complete list of volunteers. The following is the list of people from the Victoria Natural History Society who helped staff the show, protect the artwork, and sell raffle tickets. We could not have done it without your participation and we really appreciate your support! Our apologies if there is anyone who's name we missed or even misspelled!

Alan Greatbatch
Andrew Harcombe
Andy Buhler
Ann Gibson
Anna Young
Anne Gibbard
Anne Scarfe
Arlene Yaworsky
Armstrong
Barbara Begg
Barbro Baker
Barry Gatten
Bev Glover
Bob Chappell
Bob Hooper
Bob Loosmore
Bruce Whittington
Cam Finlay
Camilla Smith
Carol Halvorson
Carolyn MacDonald
Carrina Maslovat
Clare Rumball
Claudia/Mike

Colleen Long
Connie Hawley
Daphne Horne
David Allinson
David Stirling
Denise Gubersky
Don Eastman
Doreen Loosmore
Dorothy / Elena
Edith Hunsberger
Enid Lemon
Germaine Taylor
Gladys Craig
Gordon Hart
Hal Gibbard
Heidi Sohm
Heidi Sohm
Herb Brown
Holly Douglas
Inga Nyquist
Iris Heron
Isabel Clemson
Isobel Dawson
Jean McDonald

Jenny Eastman
Jeremy Gatten
Jim Fliczuk
Joan Greatbatch
Johanna VanBarneveld
John McKinnon
John Olafson
Jori Mitchell
June Mayall
Katie Dawson
Keith Gibson
Ken Sohm
Linda Beare
Lloyd Walters
Louise Gates
Lyndis Davis
Margaret Gray
Margaret Jeal
Margaret Turner
Marilyn Buhler
Marilyn Fuchs
Marilyn Lambert
Marilyn Miller
Marion Edworthy

Mary Hooper
Mary Winstone
Maryann Johnson
Maureen Funk
Maxine Bradley
Morwyn Marshall
Olive Quayle
Pat Robertson
Peter Heron
Philip Critchlow
Phyllis Henderson
Rick Schortinghuis
Rosemary Walters
Scott Black
Stephen Baker
Stephen Baker
Sue Ennis
Tom Gillespie
Val Edwards
Wayne Robertson
Wynn Miles

Valentine's Day Couples Count

By Dannie Carsen

The telephone message late Sunday, February 13 read "Great fun! We should promote the Valentine's Day Couples Count better and get a few more couples next year!" Susan and I always enjoy the excitement of this treasure hunt for birds. We revise our route each year and enumerate the bird species for our plan: the one that will win us the grand prize of a romantic dinner for two from Pagliacci's. Unfortunately, we didn't win... but maybe next year!

This February, we had four new couples take part and two of them found their way to enough birds to win prizes! We had eight couples in all and that is pretty good odds for the three prizes. You like to bird? Get a partner who enjoys some pleasant morning birding (or not) and come on out! Tell your reluctant early riser the proceeds of the count, around \$50 this year, go the Parks and Conservation Committee habitat survey.

We had a cool morning but a wonderful clear sunny day for this year's count. A very nice walk down from Glendale to the water at Viaduct yielded Ruddy ducks, pied-billed grebes, and a cold, strangled Marsh wren. As usual, the Black scoters and Pacific loons were found at Island View and even a lone Savannah sparrow. At King's Pond, we listened with pleasure to the Anna's hummingbird singing persistently there. It was surprisingly quiet at Loon and Spoon Bay, and luckily Susan glimpsed a Peregrine falcon flying swiftly over the horizon. I had just enough time to get my binoculars up and see its swift wing beats before it disappeared. We ended up at Clover Point where we picked up an oystercatcher and a turnstone and tried frantically to make one of those hybrid gulls into a Western gull. If we had, we would have tied for third!


Gerry and Gladys Anderson again found the most birds at 76 species, a little lower than their 78 of last year. They were surprised to be challenged by Andy and Marilyn Buhler who also observed 76 species! What to do. Tom Gillespie, who was asked to judge the count at the last minute, rose to the occasion to resolve the tie.

"The rarest bird will break the tie." Tom announced this gravely. Trouble was, both the Buhlers and the Andersons had similarly rare birds. Luckily, Gerry Anderson kindly offered to take the second prize of the heart shaped wine and fruit basket. Our first prize winners of the romantic dinner for two to Pagliacci's, generously donated by Howie Siegel, was Andy and Marilyn Buhler! The third prize of three birdsong tapes, kindly donated by Bruce Whittington at the Field-Naturalist, was won by one of the new couples, Gavin Bieber and Jackie Weber with 72 species.

Highlights of the count included a Rough-winged and

Tree swallow at Cowichan Bay observed by Ev and Barb Miyasaki, who introduced the long distance couple probe into Duncan as a strategy. An American kestrel was on Mills Road and a Northern pygmy owl was at Cathy Reader and Warren Lee's house in the Highlands! Cathy and Warren also announced they had a "helper" with their daughter Emma who was occasionally pishing for birds, since the rules forbid voice calling and pishing by the couple. Another couple admitted hanging around a pishing non-participant just to scare up some birds! So, next year, we will allow all non-mechanical means of attracting birds, to avoid these situations with second-hand pishing. Cedar waxwings, hard to find this spring, were observed at Quick's Bottom.

In all, the combined species count for the day was 111 species! With only six hours to bird, 111 species compares favourably with the Christmas Count with 139 species this Christmas. Everyone enjoyed the day and I'd like to thank participants for coming out and for helping the Parks and Conservation Committee habitat survey!



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



HAT Tricks

By Bruce Whittington

The last few months have been eventful for our affiliated land trust, the Habitat Acquisition Trust, with many projects underway, and new faces in the conservation field.

During the summer, HAT became involved in the campaign to purchase the property known as Brooks Point on South Pender Island. Begun by the Friends of Brooks Point, the Pender Island Conservancy Association, and the Islands Trust Fund, the campaign welcomed the participation of HAT and the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC). HAT raised funds with several events. The Prospect Lake Community Hall reverberated with two more successful Musical HATs nights, and the Goldstream Art Show drew record crowds in raising funds for Brooks Point. HAT finished its campaign with a Christmas donation initiative. NCC completed the Brooks Point project with a major infusion of cash, and the Point is now bought and paid for, and owned by CRD Parks. HAT thanks the many VNHS members who contributed, either directly or through their support for the Goldstream Art Show. The property is accessible to the public, but will not officially become a park until CRD has developed a management plan.

Andrew MacDonald completed a contract with HAT as the Land Stewardship Office Coordinator, and has moved to a stewardship position with NCC. To keep the office open to the public, HAT hired Clare Rumball, who very ably kept the operation running. Clare also assisted in preparing numerous funding proposals to support HAT's ongoing operation, as well as several specific projects. Clare has now left for a well-earned sojourn to Europe, and in her place we are fortunate to have found Joanna Kafarowski, whose considerable experience will continue to move HAT forward.

The Tod Creek/Prospect Lake Stewardship Enhancement Program (STEP) continues to evolve. Karen Hurley, the former Environmental Planner for Saanich, has been hired by HAT to coordinate this project. HAT is working with several landowners in the watershed who are considering placing conservation covenants on their properties.

HAT has also received funding from the Real Estate

Foundation to provide information to municipal councillors and staff members on stewardship tools. We are working with consultant Judith Cullington on presentations to the Association of Vancouver Island Municipalities, as well as to individual local governments. A stewardship "toolbox" will also be prepared, which will be available both in print and on HAT's website.

Other funding has been received, and HAT is optimistic that further funding will permit the hiring of an Executive Director, a move which would allow the land trust to give habitat protection the full-time attention it needs.

As you read this, a dozen birders are revelling in the bird life of western Mexico, on another HAT's Off tour. Leaders David Stirling and Bruce Whittington join organizer Marilyn Lambert for this tour, the profit from which will support HAT's conservation work.

HAT continues to welcome donations at any time, and these may be specified for particular uses if desired. It has become increasingly advantageous for donors to give insurance policies and stocks as charitable donations, and HAT has engaged Steve Housser of RBC Dominion Securities to handle such donations. We are also continuing to build HAT's endowment fund with the Victoria Foundation.

Finally, HAT has lost two long time directors, Inga Nyquist and Murray Rankin, who have both left to accommodate increasing commitments at work. We are pleased, however to welcome three new directors. Alan Law is a computer consultant with an interest in administration and fundraising. Eric Lofroth is a biologist with the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks, and joins HAT's Projects Committee. Michael Mascall is a consultant with considerable experience in the formation and operation of community land trusts. All three have already become active in HAT's work.

HAT continues to grow, and new members are welcome; VNHS members enjoy a reduced membership fee. If you would like more information about HAT or its work, drop into the office at 1126 Blanshard Street, or call 995-2428. You can also reach HAT at hat@islandnet.com, and there is more information about HAT on the website: www.hat.bc.ca

The winner of the SWAROVSKI BINOCULAR drawn at the VNHS ANNUAL BANQUET, February 8, 2000 is ANNE STEWART of Banfield, BC. Congratulations, Anne! On behalf of the Publicity Team of the VNHS, I would like to thank all those who contributed so generously toward our many wonderful door prizes for the Annual Banquet held at the Princess Mary Restaurant. — Marie O'Shaughnessy

Welcome to New Members

DECEMBER

David Brogliatto
of Surrey, BC
likes snowboarding, birdwatching, horseback riding, writing and canoeing

Muriel Carlson
of Saskatoon, SK
is interested in birds, flower, animals, ecosystems, archaeology (have honours degree), just about anything natural

Jennifer Hill
of St. Patrick Street
is the owner of a wild bird store

Jodie Holloway
of Lillian Road
is interested in the environment and its health and happiness, scuba diving, outdoor activities

Bryce Kendrick
of Lochside Drive
lists mycology, hiking, birdwatching and conservation as interests

Eric C. Lofroth and Rhonda Korol
of Clarke Road
are interested in birding and conservation

Laurie Jones
of Qu'Appelle Street

Bert and Norma Buckley
of Shorncliffe Road
enjoy birding

Kitty Lloyd
of Brentwood Bay
is interested in marine biology, botany

JANUARY
Andrew Madding
of Fern Street

John Cossom
of Hazel Street
lists birding and conservation as interests

Margot Louis
of Arbutus Road
is interested in birding, astronomy, mosses and lichens

Margaret and Dennis Devico
of Harbour Road
like birding, wildflowers

Katherine Jones
of Seaview Road
lists birding, conservation, alpine plants, rhododendrons, native plants, marine life and field trips as interests

Veronica Druce
of Beach Drive
interest is birding

Ross Archibald and family
of Linden Avenue
are interested in wetlands, coastal zone, restoration

Margaret Burd
of Southgate Avenue

Camilla Smith
of View Royal Avenue
likes birding and other nature observation, hiking, kayaking

Kay Charbonneau
of Dallas Road

Darryl Muralt
of Langvista Drive
is interested in outdoor rambling, geology, natural history, birds and mammals

Chris Stanfield
of Helen Road

Joy Muralt
of Langvista Drive
lists birds, mammals, seashore and woods as interests

Letters to the Editor

Capital Regional District Parks is pleased to announce that your name, along with others who have donated to the Elsie King Interpretive Trail, will be inscribed on the memorial sign to be placed in the Nature House at Francis/King Regional Park.

Your inscription will appear as:
Victoria Natural History Society
Thank you for your support for the Elsie King Trail project.

Sincerely Christine Morissette
Manager, Victoria Services
Capital Regional District Parks

News of the death of David Pearce was very much of a shock to Jean and me.

We would like to congratulate Dannie Carsen on his excellent "Remembering David Pearce" in the magazine. It brought home to us — who barely knew him — what a great loss he will be to the Society and his friends and colleagues, and to us.

Our deepest sympathy to all.
Sincerely,
Jean and Gordon Devey

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.

MARCH

Tuesday, March 14

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, UVic, 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday, March 14

VNHS Natural History Presentation

Black Bear and Salmon Interactions in Coastal Forests

Following the short annual general meeting, **Dr. Tom Reimchen** of the University of Victoria, will present his fascinating research on black bears and their interactions with salmon in B.C. streams. Ecologically equivalent to the migrating herds of wildebeest in the Serengeti Plain, migrating salmon constitute a major yearly pulse of biomass in coastal watersheds. In some of the streams studied by Dr. Reimchen, over 50% of the returning salmon biomass is transported to the forest floor by black bears. Another 50% of this salmon biomass is abandoned by the bear on the forest floor and represents a major source of nutrients for a diversity of secondary scavengers including birds, small mammals and insects, and may be an important component to the overall energy budget in riparian habitats. His work will show us that a major reduction in numbers of salmon entering coastal streams over the last 90 years combined with localized elimination of black bears will have resulted in a substantial reduction in riparian productivity. Don't miss this opportunity to view some of his video footage of the nocturnal feeding behaviour of bears, including rare footage of the white *Kermode* bear. We'll see you at 7:30 p.m., Room 159, Begbie Building, UVic. Bring a coffee mug and a friend; non-members are welcome.

Saturday, March 18

Birding at Rithet's Bog

Join **Marie O'Shaughnessy**, for a birding walk around Rithet's Bog. There should be swallows around, and perhaps the first of our Rufous Hummingbirds returning to spar with resident Anna's Hummingbirds. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the parking lot on Dalewood Lane (just off Chatterton Way in the northwest corner of the bog). Call Marie at 598-9680 for more information.

Sunday, March 19

Birding Martindale

Search for spring migrants, along with the wintering birds through the Martindale Valley with **Brent Diakow**. Meet at the Farmers Market on the corner of Island View Road and the Pat Bay Highway at 8:00 a.m. Wear rubber boots and be prepared for the weather! Call Brent at 656-3190 for more information.

Tuesday, March 21

Botany Night

Swan Lake Nature Centre. 7:30 p.m. Program to be announced.

Wednesday, March 22

Birders Night

Begbie 159, UVIC. **John Neville** of Saltspring Island will present an audio and slide program entitled *Bird Songs of Canada's West Coast*. Hear the wonderful and varied songs of our local birds, test your ability to identify them by sound and learn about John's experiences with local birding. Everyone is welcome bring a friend, your binocular and coffee cup.

Monday, March 27

Marine Night

Gordon Green, Royal BC Museum, will present *From Sponges to Spiny Lumpsums: Marine Life of B.C.* A colourful slide show of some of our diverse marine life, their habits and natural history. 7:30 pm Swan Lake Nature Centre.

APRIL

Tuesday, April 11

VNHS Natural History Presentation

Fossas, Vangas and Lemurs – a visit to Madagascar

"Madagascar is truly the naturalists promised land. Here nature seems to have withdrawn into a private sanctuary in order to work on designs which are different from those she has created elsewhere. At every step you are met by the most bizarre and wonderful forms." Joseph Philibert Commerson, 1771.

With almost 90% of its species found nowhere else, Madagascar has run a separate evolutionary course from the rest of the world. Join biologists **David Fraser** and **Leah Ramsay** for an illustrated talk on the fourth largest island on the planet. From the Spiny Forests, to the rainforests of Ranomafana; from the dry woodlands to the remote Masoala Peninsula we'll visit some of Madagascar's strange inhabitants, its baobabs, tenrecs, sifakas, chameleons and euphorbias on one of the bizarrest adventures available to a naturalist. The meeting starts at 7:30 p.m., Room 159, Begbie Building, UVic. Bring a coffee mug and a friend; non-members are welcome.

Saturday, April 15

Wildflowers on Mt. Wells

Join **Hans Roemer** (B.C. Parks Ecological Reserves) for a guided hike up Mt. Wells to see the beautiful displays of spring flowers. Be prepared for a strenuous hike and be sure to bring a snack and something to drink. Meet at the Helmcken Rd. Park-and-Ride at 9:00 a.m. For more information call Hans at 479-6470.

Sunday, April 16

Spring Wildflowers around Cowichan Lake

Come along with **Marilyn Lambert** for a wildflower exploration of the Cowichan Lake area. This time of year we expect to see some amazing displays of both pink and white fawn lilies, trillium, and wild ginger. Meet at the Helmcken Rd. Park-and-Ride at 9:00 a.m. Phone Marilyn at 477-5922 for more information.

Monday, April 17

Marine Night

(NOTE DATE- this month's talk is not on the last Monday due to a clash with Easter Monday.) *Clues from Clams: Using shells to track sea level changes and human occupation.* **Rene Hetherington**, PhD candidate from University of Victoria, will describe her research work on the Queen Charlotte Islands to determine past sea levels and extent of early human occupation. 7:30 pm Swan Lake Nature Centre.

Tuesday, April 18

Botany Night

Swan Lake Nature Centre. 7:30 p.m. Program to be announced.

Saturday, April 22

Birding Cowichan Bay

Take a trip up to Duncan and join **Derrick Marven** for a look at the annual spring shorebird migration and possibly the early arrival of Purple Martins. Meet at the Cowichan Bay Dock Road at 8:30 a.m. Phone Derrick at 250 748-8504 for more information. To arrange a car-pool, please contact the Field-Naturalist at 388-4174.

Sunday, April 23

Wildflowers and Birds on Jocelyn Hill

Join **Carrina Maslovat** (botany) and **Rick Schortinghuis** (birds)

for a memorable hike up Jocelyn Hill. At this time of year Jocelyn Hill can be a good location for Townsend's Solitaires. There is an amazing diversity of wildflowers in bloom and the panoramic views from the top are breathtaking. Pack a lunch and a drink, and be prepared for a strenuous hike. To sign up for this hike please call Rick at 642-3596 or Carrina at 592-2733.

Wednesday, April 27

Birders Night

Begbie 159, UVIC. **Bryan Gates** will present an audio presentation from song sparrows to murrelets, with supporting slides and birding experience. Everyone is welcome bring a friend, your binocular and coffee cup.

Saturday, April 29

From Sea to Forest: Ethnobotany Walk at Devonian Regional Park.

Brenda Beckwith and **Dawn Loewen**. Meet in park parking lot (off William Head Rd., past Taylor Rd., in Metchosin) at 9:30am. The walk will focus on the ethnobotany and ecology of the plant communities found within the botanically diverse Devonian Regional Park. Local Indigenous resource management and traditional ecological knowledge will be highlighted. For further information contact Brenda at 472-4694

Saturday, April 29

Birding Mt. Douglas Park

Join **Kevin Slagboom** in searching for spring arrivals and the emerging wildflowers and butterflies on the slopes of Mt. Douglas. There will be some climbing so bring good footwear, a snack, and some water. Meet at the main parking lot at Mt. Douglas at 8:00 a.m. Phone Kevin at 658-0940 for more details.

BULLETIN BOARD

Volunteers Needed

Share your enthusiasm for nature with elementary school children. Join the volunteer naturalist team at **Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary**. Volunteers are needed to help with programs starting mid March and ending early June. For more details call **Joan** at 479-0211 or e-mail jeowley@swanlake.bc.ca.



The Victoria NATURALIST

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Expires: Mar-2000

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