



The Victoria NATURALIST

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VICTORIA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY



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I hope that you have taken advantage of our many field trips and slide show presentations, at the University of Victoria and at Swan Lake Nature Centre.

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COVER PHOTO: Macoun's Meadowfoam by Adolf Ceska	

The connections between "now" and "then" continue in this issue of our magazine. On the one hand, Bruce Whittington mentions early concerns (in the 1950s) over the arrival of European Starling (page 5) and later (page 20) Hans Boerger discovers that Starlings rank third in terms of sheer abundance in the Vancouver Island Christmas Bird Count data. Apparently those early concerns had some merit (and all of this ties in well with the "Alien Animals" article reprinted from the same time period – page 10).

Bruce also mentions Miss M.C. Melburn as an important contributor to botanical phenology during the 1950s. Well Miss Melburn also had a keen eye for the rare, because she is co-attributed with the rediscovery of *Limnanthes macounii* in Adolf and Oluna's (Oldriska's) piece (page 14) about one of our Island's rarest plants.

I can also appreciate the synchronicity of the historical accounts of an active "young naturalist" component to the VNHS, and the current article (page 9) announcing a revitalization of the Young Naturalists Club and a call for involvement. It almost feels as though I've planned it (which I haven't!).

On another topic: It was wonderful to watch the surprise and pleasure of the recipients of this year's awards at the annual banquet. All were genuinely taken aback by their nomination, which is the mark of someone involved for all the right reasons. Distinguished Service Awards are not given out every year, and it is even less often that Honorary Life Membership status is given. This year two members have joined those illustrious few. Read about the award recipients (page 22) and you will understand why they deserve the recognition. Congratulations to each of you.

Claudia

President's Message

Several events have occurred in the last few months to make me think about the ebb and flow in organizations. VNHS has an amazing number of projects on the go, especially with the 60th anniversary events underway. Field trips are offered almost every weekend, birding courses have started, and dozens of people are representing VNHS on a wide variety of committees and projects around the community.

Yet at the same time, people who have been mainstays in our organization are stepping back. Whether it is due to health issues, time constraints, personal interests or relocation, individuals come and go (and sometimes come back again.) In the last few months, significant contributors to VNHS have made life changes that will take them away from their active roles with our society. Ross Archibald stepped down from the Board of Directors towards the end of last year. Ross and his wife Marilyn served as co-editors of *The Naturalist* since 2000, continuing its tradition of being one of the best natural history publications in North America. Producing a magazine every two months for several years took a great amount of dedication, for which we thank Ross and Marilyn. Claudia Copley is our new editor, assisted by a distribution team of Tom Gillespie and Phyllis Henderson who toil away behind the scenes.

By the time you receive this issue, Bruce Whittington will be living in Ladysmith. It's difficult for me to think of the Victoria Natural History Society without thinking of Bruce. His contributions to VNHS are too numerous to mention here, but it goes without saying that the central island's gain is a tremendous loss to us. We all wish him the best in his new endeavors up-island.

As well as changes in leadership, VNHS has also seen changes in focus. I have been reminded lately how "birdy" VNHS has become. This is quite different from the VNHS of the 1940's where botany was the main focus. One of the great advantages of our society is that it provides opportunities in all aspects of natural history. We rely very heavily on Adolf and Oluna Ceska and Marilyn and Phil Lambert to provide balance in our organization, and are grateful for their constant efforts. Recently VNHS members have expressed interest in learning more about geology, archeology, and anthropology. If you have expertise in these or other natural history areas and are willing to help us achieve more diversity, please contact me or any other VNHS director. We'd be happy to provide a showcase for your passion.

Ann Nightingale, President

Addendum to the "1940s and 1950s Naturalists" Article

By Cam Finlay

Those of you who read my earlier note (January/February 2004 issue of the *Naturalist*) about some early Victoria birders may remember that I had no information about Mrs. G. J. Jackson, the lady with the hat on our left in the photo. Then at a monthly meeting of the Victoria Naturalists, Joyce Clearihue provided me with some information, and put me in touch with Mrs. Charlotte Monk. Between these two I now know her as a person, rather than only as an image in a photo.

Bonnie Jackson lived with her husband John, a B.C.

Surveyor, on a large acreage set on a Garry Oak meadow at the present intersection of Cedar Hill X Road and Mackenzie Ave. The Jackson's land was a haven for native birds attracted to her many feeders and the very large and beautiful garden, her two hobbies. Bonny loved to stroll around their property, admiring the spring flowers erupting in the meadow and watching the numerous native birds.

However their lifestyle was rudely interrupted when politicians decided that Mackenzie Avenue must be extended east to provide access to the new campus and buildings for the University, plus west to tie into the new highway to the ferry terminal. Today half a dozen houses occupy this once pristine meadow.

Following the sale of their land, Bonny and John relocated to a home overlooking the Uplands Golf course. Here she again placed many bird feeders. Later when John was confined to the home he would sit on the porch and watch the birds moving among the feeders.

Joyce Clearihue used to play in the Jackson's yard, where Bonny would lay out a blanket and a large box filled with toys. Bonny had no children of her own, so she was able to enjoy watching them play for hours in her yard. One day Joyce remembers spotting a pheasant in the Jackson's yard. Running over and catching it by hand, she proudly carried the struggling bird into the house to show Mrs. Jackson, who Joyce knew loved birds.

According to Ruth Clay, who originally supplied us with the photo of the group, when J. O. Clay organized the Tuesday birding group, the participants, including Bonny, all became life-long friends.



Mrs. G. J. Jackson, at left.

A Little History: Moving Forward in the Fifties

By Bruce Whittington

As the Victoria Natural History Society moved into the 1950s, it settled into a pattern that would seem familiar today. In 1957, membership stood at 130, or about .01 percent of the city's population. 47 years later, our membership is about 750, or .02 percent of Victorians. Memberships in the 1950s cost \$2.00 for a single member, and \$3.00 for a family.

There were regular field trips and evening programs, with most having a focus on botany, birds, or geology. Throughout the decade, the Society sponsored the Audubon Screen Tours Program, which brought quality natural history films to a wide audience in the city, and generated a small profit each year for other activities.

The juniors had an active program of meetings and field trips, led by a solid support group from the Society's membership. The 1950s also marked the appearance of Freeman King, who led the Juniors on many occasions. King, who was known as "Skipper", is honoured in the name of Francis/King Regional Park, and in the Freeman King Visitor Centre at Goldstream Provincial Park.

Members continued to publish *The Victoria Naturalist*, producing nine issues each year, monthly from September through April – a notable accomplishment in an era without computers or email. The editorship changed several times early in the decade, but in 1953 the name of A.R. Davidson appeared on the masthead, and continued through the decade. Davidson, known in later years as "Davey", would have a long and active relationship with VNHS.

The VNHS Junior Section always had a page or two in the magazine, and Freeman King wrote many articles for the Juniors. The young naturalists also wrote about their own explorations. In the December 1956 issue, an aspiring herpetologist named Russel Porter wrote:

"Last year I when I went to school at Doncaster a boy brought a lot of frogs to school. He gave one to me. We had to hide them from the teacher so we washed out our ink wells and put some grass and water in it. After school I took my frog home and I let him go. He is still around; I heard him just the other day."

The junior editor welcomed especially the contributions of a young Alex Peden, since "he can type". (Peden went on to a distinguished career as a biologist).

There continued a sense that the natural world was still to be managed, and used for the benefit of humans ("man"). Many field trips were scheduled to places such as fish packing plants, working mines and forest service seed nurseries. There are also many instances in the magazine where people report shooting hawks and owls as vermin.

But the young society was maturing. By 1956, the Society had written to the province's attorney-general, decrying the lack of protection for birds of prey, and arguing that all species are connected in a natural web. VNHS members also put forward their concerns on a number of other issues of the day. The Society wrote letters urging the establishment of a provincial natural history museum, and a national botanical garden. VNHS expressed concern about the deaths of seabirds from the oil-contaminated bilge water pumped out of ships. In 1952, members were addressed about a proposed naval arsenal at Rocky Point (which proceeded in any case). The Victoria members also joined members of the Vancouver Natural History Society in proposing the establishment of a federation of BC Naturalists.

Adam Szczawinski, then of the Provincial Museum, wrote an article celebrating the Dogwood, recently designated B.C.'s provincial floral emblem. There was considerable discussion, too, about choosing a provincial bird. The American Dipper and the Varied Thrush were popular choices, with the Steller's Jay not highly regarded, since it was considered "harmful". The jay persevered to be named the official bird of the province in 1987.

Each issue of the magazine featured informative essays by some of the many experts in Victoria at that time, but there were also many original contributions from the members, Miss M.C. Melburn was an amateur botanist who was an acknowledged local authority. She published, in several issues of the *Naturalist*, a chronology of 360 species of flowering plants through the year, and it is still a valuable reference today.

Some of our "good ideas" of today are actually not so new. Grace M. Bell urged members to consider wildlife when developing their gardens, and Mr. E.E. Bossence published a diagram of a half-moon shaped entrance hole for swallow boxes, to discourage House Sparrows. There were concerns expressed that the European Starling would become a nuisance.

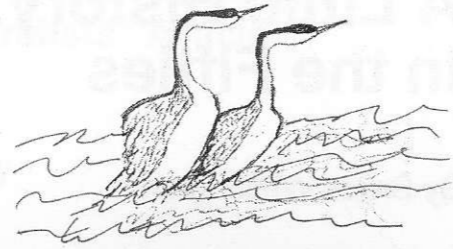
Familiar names appear in the pages of the magazine in this decade. Yorke Edwards, then with the Parks and Recreation Division of the BC Forest Service, wrote about BC Parks. He is still writing for the *Naturalist!* David Stirling and the late Enid K. Lemon, both Honorary Life Members of the Society, were contributors as well.

It was a time for the Society to find some equilibrium, and settle into its role in the community. Its goals of celebrating and enjoying nature were secure, and its willingness to share its passion with others was well established. Its "love affair with nature" was in full bloom.



No Dancing in the Lagoon – Notes on the Grebe Implosion

By David Stirling



For many years, under the leaden skies of winter, I enjoyed the spectacle of a huge raft of Western Grebes off the Esquimalt Lagoon spit. Western Grebes usually feed at night. Resting by day, with heads tucked in reducing long necks to mere bumps, they have the appearance of grey curling stones awaiting the start of the Winnipeg Bonspiel. Since 1997 the grebe flock has dropped from numbers in the thousands to a few scattered groups or even zero. These empty waters are confirmed by the Christmas Bird Count data. Then, last year the Western Grebe received the dubious honour of mention on the Rare Bird Alert. Grebes have become scarce all around Victoria.

In order to check on my impression that four [I have not included the resident Pied-billed grebe] wintering grebe species have declined, I checked the Victoria Christmas Bird Counts back to 1958. My table shows that although counts for all four species have been variable over these years they all show a recent decline.

Horned Grebe numbers dropped below the hundred mark for the first in 1998, rallied again in 1999, the fell again for the next three years. Red-necked Grebe numbers are very erratic but there is a drop below the hundred mark in 1997 and no recovery since. Eared Grebes have never been numerous on the Victoria count. [This species winters mostly south

Year	Horned Grebe	Red-necked Grebe	Eared Grebe	Western Grebe*	
1958	613	41	34	554	
1959	186	38	123	1696	1600
1960	519	56	41	755	254
1961	619	52	65	751	600
1962	668	137	97	729	327
1963	657	139	108	533	182
1964	332	104	55	782	108
1965	487	49	55	429	218
1966	1140	149	54	824	465
1967	1153	118	90	985	428
1968	485	139	46	435	121
1969	695	152	66	1154	1013
1970	485	61	30	351	60
1971	638	102	57	198	47
1972	543	52	23	523	406
1973	556	258	18	716	603
1974	618	87	10	826	603
1975	720	142	16	2055	1507
1976	711	76	33	1666	1503
1977	585	194	19	2842	2213
1978	175	43	1	61	4
1979	379	65	8	554	360

Year	Horned Grebe	Red-necked Grebe	Eared Grebe	Western Grebe*	
1980	400	223	0	1344	1152
1981	423	148	4	1116	1025
1982	123	40	1	45	15
1983	370	222	5	1148	1051
1984	455	205	11	775	575
1985	514	332	5	828	720
1986	772	377	5	498	402
1987	650	295	10	2282	2000
1988	818	671	26	3314	3000
1989	507	347	15	2441	2075
1990	293	369	9	1093	987
1991	306	312	27	2160	2147
1992	262	191	5	1539	1521
1993	674	576	11	2089	2024
1994	593	215	8	1182	1071
1995	309	175	1	231	41
1996	463	116	0	494	479
1997	619	74	0	116	10
1998	79	39	1	132	82
1999	311	46	12	156	76
2000	7	23	0	4	0
2001	94	55	1	41	27
2002	44	34	1	4	0

*Two Western Grebe Columns: Column # 4 total CBC count. Column # 5 Esquimalt Lagoon count. No lagoon count in 1958.

of our area as you can see if you check the Christmas Counts from lower Puget Sound south to California.] A decline is noticeable beginning way back in 1978. Since 1996, 'zeros' and 'ones' have been the norm except in 1999. Western Grebes have experienced the sharpest decline. Total CBC numbers between 1987 and 1994 were over the thousand; 3,314 in 1988; 3,000 were off Esquimalt Lagoon.

There are a number of reasons why grebe counts have been variable over past years before the 'implosion'. Perhaps, the most important one is weather. Birds on the open water are very difficult to count in the winter gales and high seas that seem to happen frequently on CBC day. A powerful SE gale might account for some low Western Grebe counts in the past, particularly off Esquimalt Lagoon. Perhaps, lack of food in a specific area is another reason. Conditions on the breeding grounds might be the real cause of the grebe decline. Two species, Western and Eared, colonial nesters on prairie sloughs and shallow bays of larger lakes, build semi-floating nest that are vulnerable to natural predators such as gulls and ravens and natural calamities such as droughts, floods, wind and hail. And now a greater threat – recreation. Marinas and artificial beaches have been constructed near or on grebe nesting areas. Boaters and other water-recreational activities harass nesting birds and feeding groups.

In the 1960's I monitored a Western Grebe colony on Shuswap Lake near the Salmon Arm marina. I contacted

local officials including the MLA regarding protection for the site. Nothing much happened at that time. In 2001, I received a delightful little booklet, *Dancing in the Bay Salmon Arm* documenting the changes that have occurred at the colony area. Although there is "unprecedented commercial development along the shore" and the marina has grown larger, the dredging spoil has created an island "with a surprising gain of a more secure habitat for Western Grebes." Although much original nesting habitat has disappeared, "a nature area with a viewing blind has been constructed." The grebe population peaked in 1996. In the year 2000 there were 200 adults and 50 young, down from 1996 but about average for the past ten years. The shy grebe, with a bit of help from us, appears to be a resilient and adaptable species.

Let us work to keep Grebes among our wintering birds of the saltchuck.

References:

Christmas Bird Counts results published in *The Victoria Naturalist*, c/o Victoria Natural History Society, P.O. Box 5220, Stn B Victoria, BC, V8R 6N4

Dancing in the Bay Salmon Arm, Frank and Doris Kime, Salmon Arm Nature Enhancement Society, P.O. Box 27, Salmon Arm, BC, V1E 4N2

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Signs of Spring

By James Miskelly

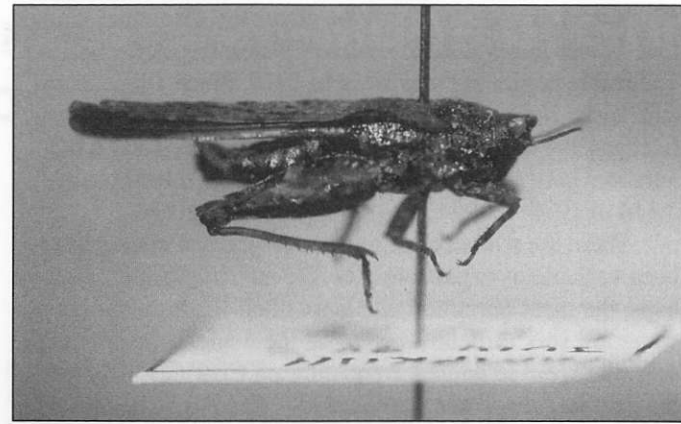
For most naturalists, spring is officially beginning at the first observation of some certain species. Maybe for you it's the first Satin Flower on your favourite hilltop, or the first Song Sparrow calling from the corner of your yard. One rarely noticed species that should be on everyone's list is the Pigmy Grasshopper, also known as Groundhopper or Grouse Locust. These small insects are the only local grasshoppers that hibernate as adults, and so may be seen on any warm day in the earliest of springs.

Pigmy Grasshopper is a general name for the family Tetrigidae. Two species have been recorded from Victoria, *Tetrix subulata* and *T. brunerii* (Vickery & Kevan, 1985), although I have only found *T. subulata*. This species does not seem to have a common name, which is somewhat surprising for an animal that is found from the Mackenzie delta to Mexico, from Bella Bella to Newfoundland, and also in Europe and Asia. Since we have only one common species, the family name, Pigmy Grasshopper, will have to suffice.

Pigmy Grasshoppers are easily distinguished from other grasshoppers by the time of year and by their small size (about 1.5cm). On closer inspection, however, they also have some unique physical features. The most apparent is the pronotum, which in most grasshoppers is a saddle-like structure directly behind the head. In Pigmy Grasshoppers this structure is exaggerated into a long pointed shield that extends over the abdomen and covers the wings.

Pigmy Grasshoppers are usually found around wetlands in Victoria. Typical habitats include some dense grasses and sedges and some exposed wet soil, although I once found one on a very dry coastal bluff. It is believed that they feed mainly on algae that grow on the soil surface. They may also feed on small seedlings, moss, and detritus. Because of their small size and cryptic colouration, they often go unseen. On cold days, they are almost invisible as they lie motionless on the wet soil, while on warm days, they may hop and fly so rapidly that they escape notice. Once you have an eye for them, however, you may see hundreds in a small area of good habitat. The first person to survey the grasshoppers of Vancouver Island provided a good description of their behaviour. "Their leaping powers are amazing, and on dry leaves they sound like falling shot when they land, and are extremely hard to detect when at rest upon the soil or leaves" (Buckell, 1930).

Hard to detect they may be, but just be sure to lower your eyes now and then the next time you're out in your favourite wetland. You may discover yet another reason to be excited about the spring.



Pigmy grasshopper. Photo: James Miskelly

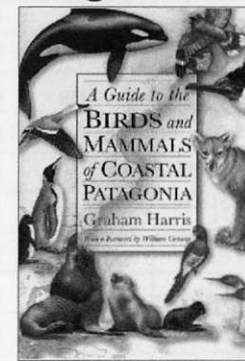
(Editor's note: Join James in April when he will be our speaker for Natural History Night. He will be presenting on the butterflies of the Victoria region.)

Literature Cited:

Buckell, E. R. 1930. The Dermaptera and Orthoptera of Vancouver Island, British Columbia. Proceedings of the Entomological Society of British Columbia 27(2): 17-51.

Vickery, V. R., and D. K. Kevan. 1985. The Grasshoppers, Crickets, and Related Insects of Canada and Adjacent Regions. Biosystematics Research Unit, Ottawa. 918pp.

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Calling All Young Naturalists!

By Renée Cenerini – Victoria YNC Leader

Do you know a child who is nuts about nature? Wacky over wildflowers? Crazy about caterpillars? Kooky over...well, you get the idea. If so then there is some great news for you and your child. The Victoria chapter of the Young Naturalists' Club of British Columbia is officially re-launched and is seeking new members.

What is the Young Naturalists' Club (YNC) you may ask? It is a club made up of young people who have a keen interest in nature and want to learn more about everything relating to nature in our beautiful province. From insects to birds, and wildflowers to rocks, YNC explores it all.

Membership includes a subscription to NatureWILD Magazine, our very own quarterly publication, which has features on a variety of BC's plants and animals, as well as pictures, puzzles, games, ideas for nature study, and current environmental news from our province. You also get to join us on our monthly Explorer days, which take you out to all kinds of different locations with naturalists as your guides.

Explorer days this year will include a low tide beach exploration, a pond life search, a wildflower walk, a dragon-

fly derby and many more exciting outings! In fact, our very first Explorer Day was on February 29, at Francis King Park. Members can also get started on nature study and environmental action (with ideas and tips from YNC) and earn Action Awards at Bronze, Silver and Gold levels.

New members of the YNC receive a fabulous welcome pack which includes a participation passport, a handy bird and insect I.D. card, a bird checklist, an official membership card, your first issue of NatureWILD, as well as information about YNC Explorer Days and Action Awards. All this and a surprise gift too!

If all this sounds like something that appeals to your nature nut then check out our web site at www.naturalhistory.bc.ca/YNC, send us an e-mail at victoriaync@hotmail.com or give Renée a call at 250-380-3557.

YNC is also looking for naturalists to "guest star" for our Explorer Days. If you have a passion or expertise relating to nature that you'd love to share with eager young future naturalists, please get in touch with us.

CAMAS DAY

WHEN: Sunday, May 2, 2004 - 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

WHERE: Beacon Hill Park (walks begin at the flagpole)

Guided Walks

9:00 a.m. Birding Walk in Beacon Hill Park (1 hour)

Join Tom Gillespie from the Victoria Natural History Society and learn to recognize some of the birds who call the park home.

11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. Wildflower Walks (1 hour each)

Noted botanists Adolf Ceska and T. C. Brayshaw will lead groups to seek out the common and not so common flowers in the wildflower meadows of the park.

11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. Native History of Beacon Hill Park (1 hour each)

Grant Keddie, Archaeologist at the Royal B. C. Museum, will lead a fascinating walk to archaeological sites in the park.

Sponsored by the Victoria Natural History Society and Friends of Beacon Hill Park.

For information call Helen Oldershaw at 592-6659 or Tom Gillespie at 361-1694.

Editor's note: This article is reprinted from Volume 9, Number 1 of the Victoria Natural History Society's newsletter (April 1952), as part of our 60th anniversary celebrations. One article from each of the last six decades will appear in each of the six issues of our magazine we produce in 2004. Half a century has been enough time to witness some dramatic changes in the mammalian fauna since this article was written.



Alien Animals on Vancouver Island

By G. Clifford Carl, Provincial Museum

From time to time there have been introduced on Vancouver Island a number of species of mammals which were not found here naturally. Many of these aliens have become widely spread as a permanent part of our fauna. Successful species include muskrat, domestic goat, domestic cat, Norway rat, roof rat, black rat, house mouse, and possibly mountain goat. Mammals which apparently have not succeeded or whose future is still uncertain include chipmunk, domestic rabbit (*Editor's note: No uncertainty here!*), European polecat, and even European hedgehog.

Of all the introductions, that of the muskrat is perhaps the most successful, though a 'mixed blessing'. Individuals from the mainland were first brought to Vancouver Island by the Provincial Game Department in 1923 for the purpose of providing an additional fur-bearer of value to trappers. The first animals were liberated in the Cowichan lake area under the supervision of Mr. Buchanan Simpson who still lives in the district; others were released near Campbell River, Jordan River, Port Alice, Ucluelet, and possibly at other points. Apparently the new immigrants found conditions very suitable, for they increased in numbers and spread rapidly. By 1931, about 9,000 pelts were taken by trappers and by 1940, muskrat colonies were to be found in all favourable areas along the south and east coast of the Island from Sooke at least to Campbell River, and on portions of the West Coast as well. While the muskrat has proved to be of considerable value as a furbearer, it has been responsible for a certain amount of crop damage, in some areas, and also has been blamed for destroying water plants in fishing areas. A certain amount of control has been necessary in cases where such damage has been of a serious nature.

A year after the introduction of muskrats, four mountain goats from the vicinity of Banff, Alberta, were brought to Vancouver Island and released in the Shaw Creek area north of Cowichan Lake. While goats have not been actually seen in recent years by officials of the Game Commission, this area is so suited to these animals that authorities believe that they may be doing well. (*Editor's note: Fortunately this introduction did not "take", unlike the similar situation in*

Olympic National Park south of us. Twelve goats from BC and Alaska and were brought in around the same time period and they now number in the hundreds. Because they eat and trample fragile alpine ecosystems, there have been a variety of efforts to rid the park of them.)

Domestic goats apparently took up an independent existence some years ago in isolated parts of the Highland district not far from Victoria. Animals are still occasionally seen on the mountainside facing Malahat Drive. In all likelihood they will persist until civilization encroaches on their

Another result of man's activities is the presence of domestic cats in the wild state. Such animals are found in all areas adjacent to centres of population and are particularly abundant in the Malahat district.

sanctuary or until they are killed off by hunters. (*Editor's note: Domestic goats are no longer reported from this area, now Gowlland Tod Provincial Park.*)

Previous to these introductions, about the year 1904 or 1905, before a Provincial Game Commission was set up, private individuals released European fallow deer on James Island and possibly on other nearby islands. The animals increased in number and began to prove a nuisance subsequent to the building of the Canadian Industries Limited Powder Works, so that in the early 1930's officials of the Game Commission removed some of these deer to Salt Spring Island and to Vancouver Island. Fallow deer are still present on these islands; during 1951 individuals were observed in the

Alberni area of Vancouver Island but it is unlikely that this species will ever match the native deer in numbers. (*Editor's note: James Island and nearby Sidney Island both still have fallow deer on them. The impact on the vegetation on Sidney Island is striking, so there has been limited-entry hunting allowed over the years in an effort to reduce the deer numbers.*)

Another result of man's activities is the presence of domestic cats in the wild state. Such animals are found in all areas adjacent to centres of population and are particularly abundant in the Malahat district. Wherever they are present, they do a great deal of harm to small native species, particularly ground nesting birds and such game birds as quail and pheasant. (*Editor's note: also both introduced species.*) When time and opportunity permit, officials of the Game Commission trap or shoot these unwanted cats in the interests of conservation. The abandoning of domestic pets such as the cat should be severely discouraged. (*Editor's note: there is not enough space to say all I would like here!*)

In nearly all parts of the world inhabited by man we find rats living in close association. In spite of improvements in methods of rat control, Vancouver Island is no exception. All three rats are present here also, probably introduced accidentally from ships. The largest and most common in the Norway rat which reaches a total length of 15 or 16 inches. The Black rat and Roof rat (or Alexandrine rat) are both smaller and not so common. (*Editor's note: the Black rat and Roof rat are now considered one species.*)

House mice too have been brought to the Island by accident and are now found in most urban areas. With the advent of modern types of construction, the house mouse is not now so commonly found inside buildings but it is still one of the most common rodents in the vicinity of man's habitation.

For some unknown reason chipmunks are not native to Vancouver Island, although they are common on the adjacent mainland. From time to time, however, chipmunks have been released on the island, some in Beacon Hill Park in Victoria. Occasional individuals are still to be seen. For example, Mr. D. Davison of the B.C. Forest Service reports seeing three chipmunks crossing the Highway near the Kiwanis drinking fountain at Mill Bay about 1938, and Mr. E.J. Maxwell of the Provincial Museum observed a chipmunk at Spectacle Lake, on Malahat Mountain in the spring of 1951. It is possible that in time these rodents will become well established on Vancouver Island. (*Editor's note: this has not occurred.*)

Domestic rabbits, too, have been released or have escaped from captivity on several occasions but they have not yet become abundant. In fact very few, if any, rabbits are to be found on Vancouver Island at the present time, which is fortunate. (*Editor's note: In addition to the European (domestic) rabbit, we also have the Eastern Cottontail on the Island now. Both species are thriving and the long-term impacts are not known, particularly in relation to herbivory in the Garry Oak ecosystem.*) They are present, however, on some of the adjacent coastal islands such as Strong Tide Island, near Chatham Island, off Oak Bay. On San Juan Island (State of Washington) wild domestic rabbits are extremely numerous and extremely destructive necessitating costly control measures especially around truck gardens.



Eastern Cottontail (*Sylvilagus floridanus*).
Photo: Dave Fraser

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Under the heading of unusual foreign animals it is interesting to note that a specimen of the European polecat or fitch was captured at Menzies Creek near Duncan in February, 1946, by Mr. E.G. Mayea. Mr. Mayea also reported that a second polecat was in the same area but he was unable to trap it. No satisfactory explanation of the presence of these animals on Vancouver Island has ever been received. There is also an unauthenticated record of a South American coypu (*Editor's note: also known as Nutria*), a rodent somewhat like a large muskrat, being taken near Courtenay in June, 1949. These fur-bearers are farmed in captivity in various parts of North America and escaped animals are now to be found in several areas, including Southwestern British Columbia, but apart from the above report there are no authoritative records for Vancouver Island.

Another unauthenticated record is provided by the reported release of a pair of European hedgehogs in the Sooke area many years ago. Without much doubt the animals have failed to survive judging by the fact that none have been seen since that time.

In general the introduction of alien species of animals (or plants) should never be attempted before an authoritative study has been made to determine if conditions in the new area are entirely suitable. Not only must the requirements of the introduced species be well understood but also the possible effects of the introduction upon the native species already present. Areas of land (or water) can support only a definite number of living forms. If foreign species are introduced they maintain their numbers at the expense of the native species. Occasionally, too, in the absence of natural checks, the population of the introduced species increases to produce a plague as in the famous cases of the rabbits in Australia and the North American deer in New Zealand. (*Editor's note: the impact of introductions of non-native species is second only to habitat loss in terms of being linked to the global decline in biological diversity. Every effort to prevent further introductions must be made, and controls of existing introduced species are essential.*)

So far Vancouver Island has not suffered too badly from the introduction of foreign species of mammals, and there is

little danger of such species getting "out of hand" if proper care is taken. (*Editor's note: There is no mention of the introduced Eastern Gray Squirrel in this article because that intentional introduction occurred in 1966. Possible overall impacts of this species include reduced bird populations due to tree cavity competition and predation of eggs and nestlings by squirrels, displacement of the native red squirrel through competition and disease transmission, and negative impacts on Garry Oak regeneration due to bark stripping of young trees and acorn "notching", which prevents germination.*)

References:

Eder, T. and Pattie, D. 2001. *Mammals of British Columbia*. Lone Pine Publishing, Vancouver, B.C.

Garry Oak Ecosystems Recovery Team. 2003. *Invasive Species in Garry Oak and Associated Ecosystems in British Columbia*. Garry Oak Ecosystems Recovery Team, Victoria, B.C.

Wildlife Tree Stewardship Report for 2003

By Gwen Greenwood

The Wildlife Tree Stewardship Initiative (WiTS) has become, since its inception in 2000, a large and successful "Citizens Science Project". Along the East side of Vancouver Island the project currently involves approximately 225 nest trees and 150 monitors and the FBCN Lower Mainland Region is also joining in the fun. In our Capital Region District (Sooke to Sidney) we have a total of 70 nest trees (past and present... plus a couple of power poles!) to watch and 31 people involved with watching them. The sites vary from remote forest or seashore, with perhaps one or two visits per year, to urban settings with several people observing the same nest. (The more eyes the merrier!) After all, one of the greatest spin-offs for a program like this is education and community involvement.

For me, one of the rewards in working with WiTS is witnessing the enthusiasm and connection felt by people who are living near enough to observe these magnificent birds several times a day. It's exciting to hear about the individual personalities and behaviours of each different bird or pair. There is so much to learn!

Some of the more interesting stories to come out of this past season are as follows:

- In March a pair of eagles were seen fighting in an aerial battle over the Ridge Golf Course at Cordova Bay. Unfortunately, both died – 1 immediately and 1 later

– when their talons remained locked together as they fell onto the golf course.

- March 18 brought an event reported earlier by Marie O'Shaughnessy in the May-June '03 issue of The Victoria Naturalist titled "Mirrored Eagles". Two adult eagles at the 'Oak Bay Fire Hall' nest became entangled in the tree, with one hanging upside down for approximately an hour. Meanwhile another adult remained sitting on the nest. The interlocked pair disengaged just before intervention by the firefighters. This nest seemed destined to fail this year, and, by the end of April, the eagles had disappeared from the site altogether.
- In May, an eaglet approximately 4 weeks old, was found on the ground in John Dean Park. It was taken to the Wild Animal Recovery Centre in Metchosin (WILDARC) and later transferred to the Orphaned Wildlife Rehabilitation Society (OWL) in Delta. Here it was adopted and fed by their 'foster mom' "Mama", an adult female eagle who cannot be released into the wild. Mama successfully raised "Samantha" and she was released with another orphaned eaglet November 1 at OWL.
- July 9 a young eagle was found on the road in Central Saanich, having fallen (or been pushed by a sibling) from the nest. It was injured and malnourished, though



"Samantha" as a chick. Photo: courtesy of O.W.L.

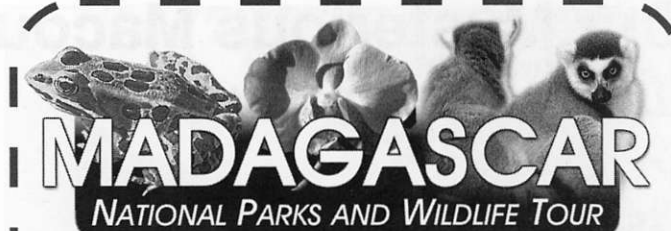
fortunately had no broken bones. It was sent to North Island Wildlife Recovery Centre at Errington and was released near Duncan on November 28.

Overall, our area from Sooke to Sidney monitored 22 active Bald Eagle territories that produced 28 young altogether. Five of the 22 nests failed but 11 nests successfully produced 2 eaglets each. We have sporadically monitored 10 active nests on the small islands within an 8 km radius of Sidney and we would like to expand these observations. If anyone is regularly boating in that area and wouldn't mind casting an eye on a couple of nests, please contact me.

The WiTS program also includes other raptor and heron nest trees. The monitoring of these sites is in the preliminary stages in our area, so we only have five Osprey, two Red Tailed Hawk, and three Great Horned Owl nests.

Rocky Point provided a success story for an Osprey nest. A pair had built a nest on top of a power pole, uncomfortably close to the live wires. The Base was understandably concerned about the fire hazard, but after an assessment by the necessary authorities, it was decided to postpone the removal of the nest until after the young fledged. An alternate pole and platform were erected and at the end of September the nest was transferred. One dead chick was found in the nest, another had an injured leg but was flying, and a third appeared to be healthy. The injured juvenile did land and feed at the new nest site.

In addition to a baseline for our breeding eagle and raptor populations, habitat protection, neighbourhood stewardship, and an increased public awareness are some of the benefits and goals for this expanding citizens science project. If you are interested in observing or helping to establish the raptor or heron monitoring for the upcoming season please contact Gwen at 652-2876 or email tggreenwood@shaw.ca.



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Naturalist Bill Merilees is looking for a small group of travelling companions to join him on a tour to Madagascar. His recent visit to this ancient island country, sometimes referred to as the Lost Continent, has resulted in a return journey carefully planned to enhance the experience of all participants. You will also encounter a unique and varied landscape containing animals and plants found nowhere else on earth.

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Bill's tours generally fill up fast so an early expression of interest is recommended. Call Lori Mezzomo for more information

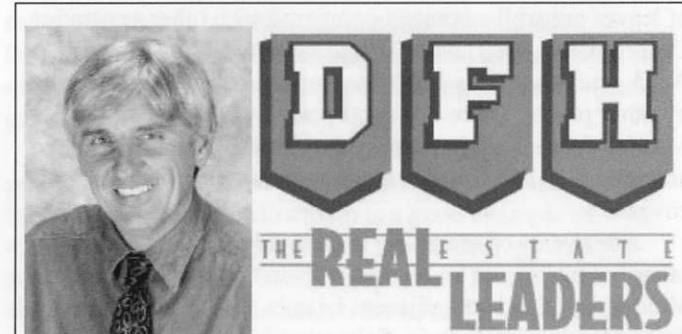
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Jim Farrell 477-7291

Our Mysterious Macoun's Meadowfoam

(*Limnanthes macounii*)

By Adolf Ceska and Oldriska Ceska

In May, 1875, the "Dominion botanist" John Macoun visited Victoria from Ottawa and "in Victoria ditches" collected the first specimens of a previously unknown plant. The plant was a small annual that had a few pinnate leaves and small flowers with four sepals, four small whitish petals, and eight stamens (see cover photo). Each flower produced up to four relatively large, wrinkled nutlets. Macoun had never seen anything like it before, and, as a matter of fact, nobody had. He recognized the family, it obviously belonged to the meadowfoam family (Limnanthaceae), but all other species of this family had either five petals (meadowfoam, *Limnanthes*) or three petals (false mermaid, *Floerkea*). He sent the specimen to the specialist on this family, Dr. Trelease, who described it as a new species and named it *Limnanthes macounii*, Macoun's Meadowfoam, in John Macoun's honour.

We do not know where the "Victoria ditches" that John Macoun first collected this plant are located. Early Victoria botanists, such as R.T. Anderson and C.F. Newcombe, knew the plant from Oak Bay, Dallas Road, and the Four Mile House area. After the death of Macoun, Newcombe and Anderson in the second and third decades of the last century, Victoria botanists lost sight of this plant. In 1956 the authoritative treatment of the Vascular Plants of the Pacific Northwest edited by C.L. Hitchcock concluded that "Macoun's Meadowfoam was a local species that no longer survived". Ironically, this statement was published the very same year Miss M.C. Melburn found a large population of this plant on Cattle Point, and James Calder another population on Trial Island.

We started to be interested in this plant in 1972, when we found it – by accident – on Oak Bay's Chinese Cemetery. The plant is most visible in winter, when its small rosettes of leaves are well advanced compared with other vegetation. Unfortunately, later, when it is in flower in late March or April, one has to search hard to find it, since it is overgrown by other plants. There is a short period when Macoun's Meadowfoam is again more conspicuous: its unripe nutlets are yellowish and contrast again with the green vegetation cover.

After years of searching (that involved our friends and other botanists), we know it now from the southern part of Vancouver Island and adjacent islands, from East Sooke Park, Metchosin, Victoria, Saltspring Island, Yellow Point, Gabriola Island, and up to Hornby Island (see map). It grows in depressions close to the coast (the farthest from the coast



Limnanthes Macounii nutlets. Photo: Adolf Ceska

it occurs is on Montreal Hill in Metchosin), in places where there is enough moisture during winter and early spring. Those are vernal pools with shallow soil (Uplands Park, Cattle Point), seepy places (Saxe Point), or wet depression in open forests (Yellow Point, and the Rocky Point area).

Seeds germinate in fall after the first heavy rains and survive the winter as young plants. Flowers put in an appearance from late March to April, and small nutlets are produced that ripen by the middle of June (see photo). The whole plant then dies, and a new cycle will begin in the fall.

Macoun's Meadowfoam is a member of the meadowfoam family (Limnanthaceae), which has two genera – meadowfoam (*Limnanthes*) and false mermaid weed (*Floerkea*). The genus meadowfoam has nine species, all of them, with the exception of our Macoun's Meadowfoam, occur in California and southern Oregon. False mermaid weed has only one species that occurs all across North America and also in the interior of southern British Columbia. It is interesting to note that the genus meadowfoam contains some species (or subspecies) that are extremely rare and occur in small areas (our Macoun's Meadowfoam belongs to this group), and about the same number of species and subspecies that are common and often very conspicuous components of California and southern Oregon meadows and vernal pools. Several years ago, one species of meadowfoam (white meadowfoam – *Limnanthes alba*) was developed into a com-

mercial plant and it is grown in Oregon as an oil plant. The oil is pressed from the nutlets. It is high quality oil similar to the sperm whale oil. Practically the same oil occurs in other meadowfoam species, including our Macoun's Meadowfoam.

For a long time, Macoun's Meadowfoam had been known only from the southern Vancouver Island and several adjacent islands and from nowhere else in the world. In 1998 a large population was found in a heavily fertilized Brussel sprout field south of San Francisco. Macoun's Meadowfoam that grows in that field is bigger (everything is bigger in California), looks slightly different, and it is not as winter hardy as our plants. All this may indicate that this species occurs elsewhere in California and has spread into this particular field. We predict that Macoun's Meadowfoam has natural, indigenous populations in California and southern Oregon, but no other sites have been found there so far.

Macoun's Meadowfoam should be considered rare in British Columbia. From 1972, when we first saw it on the Chinese Cemetery, to 1987, when we wrote a COSEWIC status report on it, we have found approximately 50 patches of it. The majority of those patches were small and had either less than 50 plants, or between 50 and 200 plants. Only about ten of them were larger and had close to 1,000 plants each.

Since our 1987 report, we have witnessed a steady decline of Macoun's Meadowfoam. Out of the 50 known patches, we lost about 16 of them, most of them either on private property or on lands designated as Indian Reserve. One population – that might have been known to C.F. Newcombe in the Four Mile House area – has been built over. One patch on Saltspring Island disappeared under a patio that covered the depression with the plant. On Smyth Head, in the Becher Bay area, one of the largest population of Macoun's Meadowfoam we have ever seen was reduced to almost nothing when the remnants of a wooden building were burnt at the site. In another case, one small patch was lost when the owner of the property drilled through it to connect his heat pump with the ocean water. Another Meadowfoam patch ended up underneath a house that was moved to the Yellow Point area from Oak Bay and stored temporarily in the area containing the plant. All these threats are unpredictable, and if you want to sound like a good scientist, plant disappearance due to these cause is called "stochastic [=unpredictable] extinction". This type seem to be the most common on private properties because one cannot know what idea the owner of the property will have when he wakes up in the morning.

There is one common threat to all Meadowfoam patches: competition of introduced species, mostly grasses. Macoun's Meadowfoam has to have open soil for germination and it cannot grow in swards of perennial grasses. Orchard grass (*Dactylis glomerata*), bent grass (*Agrostis* spp.), and, in urban areas, perennial rye grass (*Lolium perenne*), are the major threats to Macoun's Meadowfoam. In areas with deeper soil, these grasses have a competitive advantage and pose a serious threat to Meadowfoam populations. Most of the patches with deeper soil are either declining or disappearing. The recently introduced noxious weeds: burrowing



Distribution map of Macoun's Meadowfoam

clover (*Trifolium subterraneum*) and lawn burrweed (*Soliva sessilis*), present serious competition in the drier habitats with Macoun's Meadowfoam at Rocky Point in Metchosin, and Ruckle Point on Saltspring Island.

There was a relatively large population of Macoun's Meadowfoam in the Devonian Park in Metchosin. The area had been farmed and grazed before it became a park and the grass sod was fragmented by grazing cows. After the grazing stopped, grasses (orchard grass and bent) flourished and totally pushed out Meadowfoam. About ten years ago, the area was totally overgrown, and Meadowfoam and other plants typical of vernal pools disappeared from the site. Five years ago we took a weed eater, and with the help of the CRD Parks personnel, destroyed and removed grass tussocks from the site. The next fall, Macoun's Meadowfoam came back from the seed bank in the soil and, since then, we count about 30 to 50 plants on this restored site each year. It is interesting to note that the other vernal pool species that used to occur on this site (e.g., Heterocodon – *Heterocodon rariflorum* and Chaffweed – *Anagallis minima*) have never come back. Even on this restored site, the introduced grasses are coming back. It is obvious that this site and other similar sites should be monitored and remedial actions taken in order to sustain Meadowfoam populations where non-native grasses are taking over.

The history of Macoun's Meadowfoam illustrates the problems that botanists on southern Vancouver Island are facing. Macoun's Meadowfoam is a good example of what we call southern elements. It has similar ecology and phenology to many other "southern species". Furthermore, its elusive nature makes the search for it, and its monitoring, more difficult (but also more exciting) than that of any other similar species.

A Sixty Year Love Affair with Nature!

2004 marks the 60th Anniversary of the Victoria Natural History Society. A committee has been struck and we are busy planning events to celebrate this milestone in our Society's history. Some of the activities we have planned are: monthly field trips to botanically interesting localities of rare plants and rare ecosystems with Oluna and Adolf; Rick is planning historic field trips to revisit favourite birding spots from each decade of the last 60 years; Marie and Rick are coordinating a photo contest for members (see details in this issue); and Donna and Marilyn are coordinating a picnic in June with several different nature walks highlighting birds, bugs, botany and barnacles. Keep an eye out for more details in upcoming issues of the "Naturalist" magazine.

If you have suggestions for other activities you would like to see during this year please contact any of the following committee members and we will try to incorporate them into our plans.

Committee members are: Donna Ross and Marilyn Lambert (co-chair), Ann Nightingale, Marie O'Shaughnessy, Adolf and Oluna Ceska, Rick Schortinghuis, Phil Lambert, Isobel Dawson Bruce Whittington, Veronica Druce, Darren and Claudia Copley.

So bring your family, bring your friends and come out to help us celebrate our "Sixty Year Love Affair With Nature".



The 2003 Christmas Bird Count – Year of the Hummingbird

By Ann Nightingale

On December 20, 169 birders saw something unusual for a Victoria Christmas Bird Count – good weather! Boats were able to get out on the water, greatly assisting in reaching a total of 82,358 individual birds of 137 species. There was also another occurrence that had most count leaders amazed. The number of Anna's Hummingbirds was an unprecedented 348, coming close to doubling the previous record of 198 set in 1999.

Despite the good weather and great participation, there were no truly rare birds reported, but we did have one outstanding record for this time of year. A Yellow-Headed Blackbird was seen with other blackbirds in the Martindale Flats-Island View count area. The only other year since 1958 with a record was 1981.

New records were established for several species: Anna's Hummingbird, Wood Duck, Peregrine Falcon, Thayer's Gull, and White-Crowned Sparrow, while American Dipper, Whimbrel and Barred Owl tied their record numbers.

Thanks go out to all of the count participants, especially to the area leaders and to Barbro Baker and Joan Gowan who managed a great post-count gathering at St. Luke's Church Hall.

Although it may seem early to start talking about next year's Christmas Bird Count, we have set some special goals

to commemorate VNHS's 60th anniversary. Victoria's count day record was set in 1991 with 152 species – also setting the Canadian record. In 2004, we would like to make an effort to beat that record by finding 160 species in the count area. However, realizing that the right combination of weather, timing and good luck all come into play, we are expanding our target time to include all of the count week. Each year, there are species seen either just before or just after the count day that evade the birders during the count. For instance, this year Rufous Hummingbird, Ruddy Duck, Golden Eagle and Barn Owl were all seen during count week, but not on count day. Next year, we will be encouraging birders to get out and find those unusual species for a whole week to try to reach our target of 160. And if we can break the record on count day, so much the better!

This means we will need lots of eyes and ears out there looking for birds. If you haven't participated for a few years, or would be new to the count, 2004 would be an excellent year to get involved. Watch for more news on our plans as the year progresses! Count Day is December 18, 2004.

If you are interested in reviewing Christmas Bird Count data, historical information and trends can be seen online at <http://www.audubon.org/bird/cbc>. The circle code for the Victoria area is BCVI.

2003 Victoria Christmas Bird Count – including Feeder Watch

Species	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	Total #	Comments		
Red-throated loon																								23			
Pacific loon																									237		
Common loon																									40		
Pied-billed grebe																									55		
Horned grebe																									164		
Red-necked grebe																									247		
Eared grebe																									14		
Western grebe																									102		
Brandt's cormorant																									1,287		
Double-crested cormorant																									757		
Pelagic cormorant																									356		
Great blue heron																									126		
Turkey vulture																									1		
Canada goose	926	17	18	201	25	19	98	168	116	4	18	2	21	1	39	6	600	482	217	806	13	27	26	3,850			
Mute swan																									21		
Trumpeter swan	238																								437		
Wood duck																									36		
Gadwall																									116		
Eurasian wigeon																									10		
American wigeon	65	3	36	46	28	196	329	260	178	2	200	8	34	167	15	11	77	190							1,845		
Mallard	217	22	29	52	110	87	232	78	48	13	622	4	137	60	163	162	567	278	165	459	2				3,511		
Northern shoveler	2																								72		
Northern pintail	43																								131		
Green-winged teal	73	9	4	6	3	4																			198		
Canvasback																									34		
Redhead																									2		
Ring-necked duck	19	19																							366		
Greater scaup																									41		
Lesser scaup																									96		
Unidentified scaup																									6		
Harlequin duck																									162		
Surf scoter																									625		
White-winged scoter																									119		
Long-tailed duck																									531		
Bufflehead	27	2																							1,456		
Common goldeneye	6																								382		
Barrow's goldeneye	1																								61		
Hooded merganser	15	5	3	2	24	24	3	21	5	25	3	12	21	24	7	9	81	53	15						375		
Common merganser	1	1	10	2	38	9	2	42	14	42	6	15	3	8	14	203	88	33	84	675	20	1	576				
Red-breasted merganser																									675		
Bald eagle (adult)	2	4	40	1	3	5	1	3	2	1															95		
Bald eagle (juvenile)	1	1	22																						31		
Northern harrier																									1		
Sharp-shinned hawk	1	1																							7		
Cooper's hawk	3	1	1	2																					38		
Red-tailed hawk	6	1	3	2	2	1	2																		31		
Northern Goshawk																										1	
American kestrel																										2	
Merlin	1	1																								14	
Peregrine falcon	1	1																								15	
Ring-necked pheasant	1	1																								8	
California quail	34	23	62	4	12	13																				229	
Virginia rail																										6	
American coot																										109	
Black-bellied plover	43																									21	
Killdeer																										62	
Black oystercatcher																										2	

The Most Abundant Winter Bird on Vancouver Island is...?

By Hans Boerger

Since moving to Parksville three years ago, I have enjoyed the opportunity of participating in many of the 12 Christmas Bird Counts on Vancouver Island (Victoria, Sooke, Duncan, Nanaimo, Nanoose, Parksville-Qualicum Beach, Deep Bay, Comox, Campbell River, Port Alberni, Bamfield and Tofino). This has made me curious as to what species is the most abundant on the island during the winter months.

The data from these counts are maintained by the Audubon Society and are made available on their website (<http://audubon.birdsource.org>). I have used the data from the 103rd CBC conducted Dec 2002 - January 2003. A total of 328,355 individuals belonging to 170 species were recorded at the above 12 Vancouver Island sites. This does not include the Bufflehead x Goldeneye hybrid recorded from Campbell River, the Glaucous-winged x Western Gull hybrid recorded from Port Alberni and Victoria, the Yellow-shafted variety of the Flicker recorded from Nanaimo, nor the Slate-colored variety of the Junco recorded from Duncan. It also does not include Turkey which I have recorded twice on the Nanaimo CBC, but which is still excluded on the basis that it has not existed in the wild state for a sufficient period of time. However, to my knowledge, there are at least three well-established populations in the mid-island area (Nanaimo, Nanoose Hill and Horne Lake). The 170 species does include the Silver Pheasant recorded from Nanaimo.

The effort that goes into these 12 island counts is truly remarkable. A total of 570 people participated in the field and another 162 did feeder counts. This commitment is especially astounding considering that the weather was awful for half of the counts. At the Victoria count a member of our party was hit by a falling branch during a sudden squall. In Comox, the after-count party was completed by candlelight, after the storm that had raged since early afternoon turned off the lights. A total of 1286 party-hours were spent in the field. Dividing the total of 328,355 birds by the total party-hours gives 255 birds seen per party-hour. In other words, for every hour that you and your friends spent birding on Vancouver Island in winter, you would expect to see an average of 255 birds.

Now to the question of the most abundant bird winter bird on Vancouver Island. The old BC Tourism's motto "Follow the gulls to the island" was well chosen, as the Glaucous-winged Gull is by far the most abundant species recorded on CBC on Vancouver Island, with 37,646 birds counted at the 12 sites. Since many of the 15,480 birds identified only as gulls must have included many Glaucous-winged Gulls, it is

not improbable that the total number is in the neighbourhood of 50,000!

To my surprise, the second most abundant species was the American Wigeon with 20,667 birds counted. Third place belongs to the European Starling (19,549 birds); fourth place to the American Robin (19,228 birds). The Mallard, my initial guess for second-place species, came in a distant fifth with 17,726 birds counted. Northwestern Crows, with 16,557 birds, placed sixth, followed by Dark-eyed Junco (12,434 birds), Pine Siskin (11,847 birds) and Canada Goose (11,836 birds). Tenth place was held by Surf Scoter with 9,240 birds.

By the way, having participated in the Victoria, Sooke, Nanaimo, Parksville, Comox and Port Alberni bird counts, I have come to the conclusion that the Comox Naturalists have the best After Count Dinner, complete with wine! And Will Lemmon, long-time Parksville birder, is by far the best dressed at these events, showing up in a tuxedo!

Paint the "City Green"!

By Josh Craig



Perhaps you were at the Saanich Fair last summer and saw a trailer with a lush garden growing on top. Did your child come home talking about a fun presentation with a gardener and a giant bee? Maybe you're renovating your house and have had an assessment of your home's energy efficiency. Did you pledge to walk to work, school or to do some nearby errands in October? If any of these ring a bell, you've participated in one of City Green's programs.

While the range of programs is wide, City Green's mission is well defined. City Green is a non-profit community initiative that empowers the people and organizations of Greater Victoria to enhance their health, save money and reduce their environmental impact. Its programs include Energuide for Houses, the Sustainable Transportation Empowerment Program! (STEP!), and Pesticide Free Naturally! (PFN!). City Green also provides sustainability consulting to local commercial and institutional customers on a fee-for-service basis. City Green is widening its focus to include related issues of Transportation Demand Management (TDM) and Climate Change.

Reducing the impact of climate change can mean savings for homeowners. The less fuel and electricity needed to heat drafty homes, the less carbon dioxide emitted to the atmosphere. Would you like to receive a grant from the federal government for making your home more energy efficient? City Green offers the Energuide for Houses energy evaluation, developed and quality assured by Natural Resources Canada. A trained assessor will evaluate your home and make detailed suggestions for improvement. After

renovations, the assessor returns and the difference in energy efficiency of your home forms the basis of your grant. **City Green is happy to promote this program to VNHS members by donating \$25.00 from each Energuide assessment purchased by a member back to the VNHS. Support the Society and save money at the same time!** Contact City Green for more information and to book your assessment.

Cars; they are stressful, wasteful and expensive. Are they really a necessity? TDM, a system of incentives and disincentives that reduce the number of single occupancy vehicle trips, helps communities become safer and healthier. Decreasing the number of cars on the road will go a long way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and climate change. STEP! promotes initiatives and strategies that make the car an option, not a necessity. STEP! educates commuters about the benefits of using active (cycling, walking, running, inline skating) and sustainable (carpooling, ridesharing, mass transit) transportation options. In 2003, the STEP! program promoted the National Commuter Challenge in June and Victoria Walk Week in October. Both events were packed with exciting and fun ways to create healthy lifestyles, build strong workplace teams, and maintain a healthy environment through the use of transportation solutions.

Look for these events in 2004. As well, STEP! will continue to offer Go Green Choices training for local workplaces that want to take action on transportation problems while saving money, increasing staff productivity, and gaining recognition as a responsible corporate citizen. The Go Green Choices program provides tools to employees and management to promote green commuting. If you are keen to make your business or workplace healthy, wealthy, and wise contact Tathra Street at City Green.

Pesticides, who needs them? These toxic chemicals cause the greatest harm to the most vulnerable members of our community; our children, the elderly and our pets. Pesticides are passed through the food chain and harm wild terrestrial and aquatic organisms. As support for a ban on cosmetic pesticides in Greater Victoria grows, Pesticide Free, Naturally! (PFN!) builds public awareness around the health and environmental effects of pesticide use. The program helps residents eliminate pesticides from their homes, gardens and neighbourhoods with practical and inexpensive solutions to gardening challenges. Many of those solutions are in the PFN! Guide to Healthy Gardening.

Did you purchase or receive a Guide last year? Have you put out your PFN! lawn sign for all to see? If not, get it out there. Show some pride in your pesticide free yard and talk to your neighbours about becoming Pesticide Free Naturally! In the spring, City Green will be happy to come by and work with them during a Green Garden Visit. This free, one-hour visit provides tips and advice for successful organic gardening. The Gardens in Motion portable organic garden reached thousands last summer as it toured fairs and markets all over the CRD. Look for the garden again and take the opportunity to smell, touch and taste organic plants and gather information from Master Gardeners on site. You'll be able to find out about the PFN! popular series of Organic Gardening Workshops, and the elementary school Classroom Visit program.

City Green has a lot going on. We invite volunteers to get in touch with us, as there are some fantastic opportunities to get involved in public education and events happening this year. Learn more about everything we do at our website: www.citygreen.ca, or call us at 381-9995.

Welcome to New Members

Judith Terry
Ferndale Road
Birds

Elizabeth and Matthew Poppe
Rockland Avenue

Dave Robichaud and Melissa Frey
Government Street

Norma Friedman
Sea Point Drive

Mrs. Elsbeth Jackh
Sandell Place

Caroline Monahan
Dufferin Avenue

Brian Mason
Menzies Street
Birds, mammals

Elizabeth Portman
Albina Street

Joan Richardt and Ron Glendinning
Prosser Road
Birds

Mr. Gideon Louw
Lancelot Place

Peter Lewis and Cathy Roney
Duke Street

James A. Schurman
Arbutus Road
Wildlife, archaeology, anthropology

Ivy Jeffers
Lochside Drive

David, Geoffrey and Jean Newell
Byron Street
Birds

Jack Sutherland
St. Ann Street
Birds, plants, fungi

Margaret Acker
Cordova Bay Road

Lynda Bexson
Shakespeare Street
Birds, gardening, dogs

Catherine Holahan
Cottage Way,
Galiano Island
Birds, geology, plants, photography

Nicky and Bruce Tutt
Deep Cove Road
Birds, botany, conservation

Diane Knight
Rockingham Road



2004 VNHS Award Recipients

(presented at the VNHS annual banquet)

Honorary Life Membership:

Lyndis A. Davis

Lyndis Davis has been a stalwart supporter of the Victoria Natural History Society for well over twenty years. During this time, she has served the society well, organising and participating in many events the society has undertaken.

A volunteer organization like VNHS relies heavily on fundraising to carry on its activities. At most meetings Lyndis can be found sitting quietly near the back of the room where she sells memberships, lapel pins, greeting cards, raffle tickets and whatever new fundraising item comes along. This is probably how most members know Lyndis.

However, fundraising is not the only way that Lyndis has contributed over the years.

Some of Lyndis' many contributions include:

- She designed the lovely gull logo you see on VNHS materials
- Lyndis was a board member from 1982 to 1986. During this time, Lyndis served as secretary and drafted revisions to the Society's constitution and bylaws.

- She co-ordinated the "Feeder Watchers Program" for several Christmas Bird Counts
- Lyndis distributed the "Naturalist Guide to the Victoria Region" to various outlets around town.
- She is a volunteer for other organizations and events including Habitat Acquisition Trust and the Goldstream Art Show.
- ...and somehow she managed to obtain copies of the National Geographic's Birds of North America Field Guides before they were available in stores. This was a great service for local birders wanting the very latest in bird guides.

She has organized many field trips, arranged showings of wildlife films, and written numerous articles for *The Naturalist* – the list goes on and on.

Lyndis received a distinguished service award in 1989. In recognition of her continuous and outstanding involvement with the Victoria Natural History Society, the Board of Directors is pleased to have granted Lyndis Davis an Honorary Life Membership at our annual banquet.



President Ann Nightingale presenting a certificate to Lyndis Davis. Photo: Bruce Whittington

Honorary Life Membership:

Bruce Whittington

Although many would be surprised to hear it, Bruce Whittington became involved in the field of natural history as an amateur. Over the past two decades, Bruce has led field trips, locally and around North America, authored birding and conservation articles for several publications, managed a natural history retail store, led birding courses and worked as a naturalist at Goldstream Provincial Park and Swan Lake. Bruce is a keen birder, an active participant in the Brant Festival and co-founder of the Port Renfrew Big Day. Not bad for an amateur.

Bruce joined the Victoria Natural History Society in 1981 and served as President from 1999-2003. As a member of the board, he has participated, and continues to participate in many projects, including the Bird Records Committee, Esquimalt Lagoon Stewardship Initiative, and the Goldstream Art Show. Bruce was a key player in the formation of the VNHS Habitat Acquisition Trust.

Ultimately, Bruce became Executive Director of HAT, and was instrumental in the negotiation of conservation covenants throughout the region. Under his leadership, funds were raised to save several important pieces of Habitat, including Brooks Point and Laughlin Lake on the Gulf Islands. Since leaving HAT, Bruce continues to keep the profile of natural history and conservation high through his writing and photography.

In addition to all the efforts he has made on behalf of VNHS and HAT, Bruce volunteers at the Rocky Point Bird Observatory migration monitoring station and serves on the Environmental Fund Advisory Committee of the Victoria Foundation.

For these and the many other contributions Bruce has made for the benefit of natural history, the Board of Directors is pleased to have granted Bruce Whittington an Honorary Life Membership at our annual banquet.



Distinguished Service Award:

Adolf and Oluna Ceska

Adolf and Oluna Ceska have been members of the Victoria Natural History Society since 1987, contributing to the field of natural history professionally and by donating their time and experience. Although you are more likely to hear Adolf's name than Oluna's, members of VNHS know that they work as a team on most of their botanical activities for the society. Oluna is a botanist and mycologist in her own right and is also a talented botanical illustrator.

Adolf and Oluna have led many field trips, including some famous expeditions that have measured less than 200 metres from start to finish. Adolf instigated and continues to host VNHS Botany Nights, bringing in many renowned botanists to show the plants of the world to our members. There is no doubt that Adolf and Oluna keep the profile of botany – and Latin – at the forefront with VNHS members.

Their contributions to the natural history field are not limited to VNHS. Anywhere they can provide botanical information, they have selflessly put in the time – from the native plant gardens at the Royal British Columbia Museum to fungi displays at the Swan Lake Nature Centre. Adolf has also been a leader at Camas Day in Beacon Hill Park every year since the event first started in 1993 and both Adolf and Oluna lead forays for the Southern Vancouver Island Mycological Society. Adolf created the internet accessible "Botanical Electronic News" in 1991 and he and Oluna continue to moderate it.

For their tireless efforts on behalf of the Victoria Natural History Society, the Board of Directors presented Adolf and Oluna Ceska with a Distinguished Service Award.

Below, l. to r.: Bruce Whittington. Photo: Bob Chappell. Adolf and Oluna Ceska. Photo: Bruce Whittington.

Letters

Victoria Natural History Society Bursary Committee
Re: Victoria Natural History Society Bursary

Thank you very much for your assistance with my tuition this fall. While I am not at the point of emptying the piggy bank just yet, you have delayed that inevitable act by a couple of weeks.

I am sure you are aware that I am enrolled in the Bachelor of Commerce program at Royal Roads. We just finished our exams last week. I have only received one grade so far this semester, Managerial Accounting & Control and I am very happy with my first A. I had a good semester and anticipating a couple more A's and a B.

I have not had a lot of time for extra curricular activities but I have joined EMAT (Environmental Management

Advisory Team.) I am already impressed by how responsive the Royal Roads community is to environmental issues. As part of my Environmental Sustainability class next semester I plan to do a research assignment looking at the impact on alternative transportation (i.e. carpooling and transit) that would result from increased parking rates. I am looking forward to next semester.

Currently I am heading north, my parents live in Fort St. John, and I am spending Christmas in my home, Whitehorse. But like I said, I am already looking forward to next semester at RR and I wanted to thank you for making it a little easier by taking some of the worries away.

Sincerely, Dave Hayley

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

REGULAR MEETINGS are generally held on the following days. **Board of Directors:** the first Tuesday of each month (directors' meetings are held at Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary); **Natural History Presentations:** the second Tuesday at 7:30 p.m., in Murray and Anne Fraser 159, University of Victoria; **Botany Night:** the third Tuesday, 7:30 p.m., Swan Lake Nature Centre; **Parks and Conservation Committee Meeting:** the third Wednesday, 7:00 p.m., Swan Lake Nature Centre; **Birders' Night:** the fourth Wednesday, 7:30 p.m., Murray and Anne Fraser 159, University of Victoria. **Marine Night:** the last Monday, 7:30 p.m., Swan Lake Nature Centre. Locations are given in the calendar listings. Telephone the VNHS Events Tape at 479-2054 for further information and updates. The VNHS Calendar also appears on the Internet at: <http://www.vicNHS.bc.ca>.

MARCH

Tuesday, March 9

VNHS Natural History Presentation (and Annual General Meeting)
"Sharp-tailed Snake Stewardship"

Most people know we have three species of garter snakes in Victoria, but few are aware that we also have the Sharp-tailed snake, *Contia tenuis*, right at our doorstep. The Sharp-tailed snake is listed as endangered by COSEWIC and red-listed in BC. It is only known from a handful of places on the southern Gulf Islands and Vancouver Island. Sharp-tailed Snakes are non-venomous and completely harmless to humans. They are chestnut brown in colour, about as thick as a pencil, and up to 30 cm long. If you are interested in knowing more about this elusive snake, **Christian Engelstoft** and **Kristina Ovaska** will show you how to identify it, tell what they currently know about its biology, and give you some ideas of what you can do on your property to enhance its habitat. Everyone welcome. Bring a friend and your coffee cup, 7:30 p.m. Murray and Ann Fraser 159, UVic.

Saturday, March 13

Field Trip
Spring Plants of Observatory Hill

Join Adolf and Oluna Ceska, and Hans Roemer on a botanical adventure close to the Centre of the Universe. We should see several rare spring plants (Scalepod – *Idahoia scapigera*, White Fairy-Poppy – *Meconella oregana*, Chocolate-tips – *Lomatium dissectum*, etc.), old growth Douglas-fir forest, and for those really keen, some rare liverworts. Meet at the first Parking lot on your left on the top at 10:00 a.m., bring a lunch. 2+1/2 to 3 hours. Call Adolf at 477-1211 if you need more information. This trip is the third of a series of monthly botanical trips with Oluna, Adolf and their friends to search for rare plants of our area, all in celebration of our 60th anniversary.

Tuesday, March 16

Botany Night
"First Peoples' Basketry – Used For Many Purposes"

Dr. Nancy Turner, well-known ethnobotanist, will discuss the technology of the First Peoples' baskets, plant materials used in basketry, and some of the numerous uses of baskets in the lives of First Peoples. Swan Lake Nature House, 7:30 p.m. Call Adolf at 477-1211 if you need more information.

Sunday, Mar 21

Field Trip
Birding Viaduct Flats and Quicks Bottom

Come and check out the great new trails around Viaduct Flats, and those trails connecting with Quicks bottom. Meet on Interurban Road at Viaduct Ave. West at 8:00 a.m. Leader TBA.

Sunday, March 21

Inter-club Field Trip
Englishman and Little Qualicum River Estuaries

The Arrowsmith Naturalists are inviting all FBCN Vancouver Island Regional Clubs to participate in a specially-planned field trip. The day will begin at 09:30 a.m. by meeting at the Shelley Hall (Kinsmen) at 186 Shelley Rd in Parksville for a pre-trip get-together (and coffee and munchies). From there, around 10 a.m., groups will proceed to the Englishman River and Little Qualicum estuaries. As the herring run will be in full swing the opportunity to view sea and shore birds will be fantastic. So that the group is not too large, we will break into smaller groups with several leaders, including **Alan Poynter**, **John Brighton**, **Roger Simms** and others. Club Directors are asked to contact **Maggie Little** a week before for directions to Shelley Hall, and to let her know the numbers of members from your club planning to attend. This will facilitate Arrowsmith to know how much coffee, munchies, and leaders etc. to arrange. Please call Maggie at (cell phone) 1-250-248-0712.

Wednesday, March 24

Birders' Night
"Fascinating Birds and Wildlife of Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands"

The infamous oddness of the Galapagos is the subject of a slide-illustrated talk by **Rob Gowan** of Victoria. Join us to learn about a part of the world where mountains, temperatures and bird densities are all high. Everyone welcome. Bring a friend and a novice birder. 7:30 p.m., Murray and Anne Fraser Building, UVic.

Saturday, March 27

Field Trip
A Nature Walk at UVic

As part of our 60th anniversary year, **David Stirling**, a long time naturalist in the Victoria area, will be pointing out the changes that have taken place at UVic over the last 50 years. There used to be Skylarks there, Western Screech owls nested there, and shorebirds wintered there. Meet on Cedar Hill Cross Road, opposite the Henderson Recreation Centre, at 8:30 a.m.




Gardening for Wildlife

A Native Plant Gardening Sale and Demonstration

Saturday and Sunday, April 24 and 25
10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Sale: Native Plants (over 100 species)	Door Prizes Displays
Native Plant Seeds	Admission:
Presentations	\$3/day, \$5/weekend pass
Books	Friends Members Free
Bird Feeders	
Nesting Boxes	

Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary
3873 Swan Lake Road, Victoria, B.C.
For more information: 479-0211



A complete plant list and description of presentations is available on our web site - www.swanlake.bc.ca

A variety of special presentations will be held both days, including:

- ☒ **Attracting Butterflies to your Garden**
- ☒ **Creating a Water Garden with Native Plants**
- ☒ **Planting for Hummingbirds**
- ☒ **Garry Oak Woodland Restoration**
- ☒ **Native Plant Garden Tours**

Monday, March 29

Marine Night

"The Bigger They Are the Harder They Fall: The Recovery of Blue Whales in California"

In the Pacific, blue and fin whales were hunted aggressively until the mid sixties, leaving their population levels at a low ebb. In the 1990's oceanographers noticed an increasing number of large whales in the California Current System. This region now has the largest population of blue whales. Tonight's speaker, Kerry Irish, is a Master's candidate at UBC with John Ford. She is analysing 7 years of baleen whale surveys during a time of strong El Nino and La Nina events in an attempt to correlate the distribution of these whale species with oceanographic conditions. Join us: 7:30 p.m. at Swan Lake Nature Centre.

APRIL

Sunday, April 4

Field Trip

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, April 11

Field Trip

Spring Flowers in Brentwood Bay

Rick Schortinghuis will lead an exploration of two parks: Oak Haven Park and Gore Park in Central Saanich. Meet at 9 a.m. on at the entrance to Oak Haven Park on Garden Gate Drive (off Wallace and just South of Benvenuto Ave.) Phone Rick Schortinghuis for more information (652-3326)

Tuesday, April 13

VNHS Natural History Presentation

"The Past Sixty Years: Trends in Butterfly Populations on Southern Vancouver Island"

Butterfly populations in the Victoria area have undergone great changes since the early days of the VNHS. James Miskelly, a University of Victoria graduate student, will describe some of the changes and how they have been documented by the VNHS. The focus will be on species at risk and locally rare species, as well as what we can do to reverse the current trends. Everyone welcome. Bring a friend and your coffee cup, 7:30 p.m., Murray and Ann Fraser Building, Room 159, UVic.

Saturday, April 17

Field Trip

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.

Sunday, April 18

Field Trip

Spring Plants of the Rocky Point

This trip is the fourth of a series of monthly botanical trips to search for rare plants of our area, all in celebration of our 60th anniversary. Join Adolf and Oluna Ceska for yet another hunt. We will finally see Macoun's meadowfoam (*Limnanthes macounii*) both in flower and fruit, Chamisso's candy-flower (*Montia chamissoi*), Nuttall's quillwort (*Isoetes nuttallii*), Winged Water-Starwort (*Callitriche marginata*) and many other spring flowers, in this area with restricted access. Meet at Helmcken Road Park & Ride at 9:30 a.m. Bring a lunch and allow 3 to 4 hours for this adventure. Call Adolf at 477-1211 if you need more information.

Tuesday, April 20

Botany Night

"Bryophytes and Other Plants of the Venezuelan Andes: Cloud Forests (~2300m asl) and the Paramo (~3500m asl) Near Merida"

Wynne Miles visited Venezuela in conjunction with the XV World Congress of the International Association of Bryologists (IAB) January 10 - 18, 2004. Come to see bryophytes, ferns galore, bromeliads, *Decussocarpus* forests, *Polylepis* woods (Rosaceae), orchids, ... McInternet Cafes and more! Swan Lake Nature House, 7:30 p.m. Call Adolf at 477-1211 if you need more information.

Saturday and Sunday, April 24 & 25

Gardening for Wildlife - A Native Plant Gardening Sale and Demonstration

A selection of over 4,000 native plants (more than 100 species) are available at this special (9th annual) weekend event, as well as seeds, books, bird feeders and nesting boxes. Workshops, presentations, demonstrations and displays on gardening with drought-tolerant native plants and developing wildlife habitat in urban settings are included in the admission price of \$3/day, \$5/weekend. Plant list and presentation schedule at www.swanlake.bc.ca, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Swan Lake Nature House, 3873 Swan Lake Road, Victoria.

Saturday, April 24

Field Trip

A Natural History Walk in Uplands Park

Join Joy and Cam Finlay for a guided walk in Uplands Park to see spring wildflowers, birds and butterflies. Meet at Cattle Point at 8 a.m. Call Joy or Cam at 479-9833 for more information.

Sunday, April 25

Field Trip

Wildflowers and Birds on Jocelyn Hill

Join Rick Schortinghuis for a memorable nature hike up Jocelyn Hill. At this time of year Jocelyn Hill can be a good location for Townsend's Solitaires and Blue Grouse. 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 652-3326

Monday, April 26

Marine Night

"Environmental Aspects of BC Offshore Oil Exploration and Production"

A proposal to lift the moratorium on oil and gas exploration off the BC coast is in the news lately. What are the facts and what is at stake? Dr. Gerry Graham has been a marine environmental policy specialist for thirty years. His illustrated talk will focus on the marine biology of the Queen Charlotte Basin and vulnerability of particular species to oil spills and seismic exploration. His company, Worldocean Consulting Ltd is currently developing environmental software which will help responsible authorities decide, on the spot, on the most appropriate response option for a given spill. Venture out of your domestic habitat and join us for this interesting talk: 7:30 p.m. at Swan Lake Nature Centre.

Wednesday, April 28

Birders' Night

"One Plus One Equals Six...or Is It Sex?"

Local photographers David Pretty and Marie O'Shaughnessy will give a joint presentation on the nesting activities of Great Blue Herons in Beacon Hill Park, Victoria. There are many things to learn about our local herons and their interactions with the Bald Eagles that often nest nearby. Everyone welcome. Bring a novice birder and your coffee cup, 7:30 p.m. Murray and Ann Fraser 159, UVic.

Saturday, May 1

Garden Tour

A Showcase of Beautiful and Sustainable Landscapes and Gardens

This tour is brought to you by the Wild Garden Party, a

collaboration of local non-governmental organizations that includes City Green, Greater Victoria Compost Education Centre, Habitat Acquisition Trust, Lifecycles Project Society, Native Plant Study Group, and Naturescape BC. Featured gardens are located throughout Greater Victoria and come in all shapes and sizes. What they have in common is a commitment to lessening their impact on the natural world. Tickets are \$10 and all participants will be entered in the door prize draw for an autographed copy of *Native Plants in the Coastal Garden* by April Pettinger and Brenda Costanzo, and dinner for two at the well known local restaurant. To purchase your ticket, please call or drop by the Habitat Acquisition Trust office (995-2428 or 316-620 View Street)

MAY

Sunday May 2

Camas Day

This annual event, held at Beacon Hill Park, will include free guided walks for birds, botany, etc. Please see the advertisement in this issue of the magazine for more details (page 9).

Sunday, May 2

Field Trip

Wild Flowers and Birds on Mount Tzuhalem

Join Ed Pellizzon and Rick Schortinghuis for a hike to the Ecological Reserve on Mount Tzuhalem, also to another area of Mount Tzuhalem accessed from Genoa Bay. Bring a lunch and a drink, and be prepared for a strenuous hike. Meet at Helmcken Park and Ride at 7:00 a.m. Call Ed at 881-1476 or Rick at 652-3326 if you need more information.

BULLETIN BOARD

Spring Break At Swan Lake (March 15-19)

Be energetic, inquisitive and playful with your family at Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary during Spring Break. Drop-in programs for all ages...digging for bones as a member of the Rot Squad, being green on St. Patrick's Day, going on a twilight walk, having lunch on Christmas Hill, jaunting around the lake with bingo and prizes, and leaning about Nature, the First Inventor. Suggested donation \$1.00/child. Check out our website www.swanlake.bc.ca for details.

Fossil Fair 2004

The Victoria Palaeontology Society's 8th Fossil Fair and Open House will display a rich and diverse variety of fossil plants and animals from Vancouver Island and other areas of B.C. Saturday, March 27 and Sunday, March 28 from 10 to 4 each day at the Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary. All are welcome.

Designing The Native Plant Garden

Brenda Costanzo will lead this workshop for participants with a working knowledge of native plants. It will cover basic garden design concepts, enabling you to plan your own native plant garden. A short slide show will introduce some native plant combinations appropriate for particular habitats. Participants will develop a planting plan for their own garden. Section 1, Saturday, April 3, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. or Section 2, Saturday April 17, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Cost \$45.00, Friends of Swan Lake \$41.50 Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary, 3873 Swan Lake Rd. For more information call Ann Scarfe at 479-0211.

The weekend of April 2-4 is this year's **Brant Festival** in Parksville. More information is available on the Internet at www.brantfestival.bc.ba



Renewal Date: Dec-03 X **FEES ARE DUE**
Philip and Marilyn Lambert
1868 Penshurst Road
VICTORIA BC V8N 2P3



Victoria Natural History Society

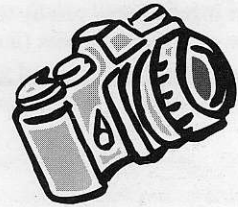
60th Anniversary Photo Contest



The Victoria Natural History Society, in celebration of its 60th Anniversary, is sponsoring a Nature Photography Contest. There are many fine photographers in our group – here is your chance to enter your work for a prize and support nature at the same time. So get out those cameras and get busy – the contest entries close September 1, 2004. Judging will occur in September, when there will be a reception and display of the winning photos. Details to follow in future issues of the *Naturalist*. Proceeds will go to VNHS 60th Anniversary Legacy Project.

Photo Contest Rules:

1. Photos must be taken in Victoria Checklist Area (South of Ladysmith).
2. Entry categories include: 1. Flora, 2. Fauna 3. Habitat.
3. Each person is limited to three photos per category.
4. Members only can submit.
5. VNHS reserves right to use all photos submitted.
6. Either digital or regular photos printed 8 x10 or 8 x 12.
7. Digital entries cannot be submitted electronically. Digital prints should match the quality and character of the original file; do not send colour photocopies. Compositional changes to digital files are not acceptable; tonal or colour cast corrections are acceptable. Original file resolution must be at least 2.5 megapixels or 2800 x 2100 dpi. Original digital files or negatives must be available for reproduction.
8. Entrance fee: \$15.00 covers up to 3 photos entered.
9. Prizes in each of the 3 categories will be:
 - First Prize: \$50.00,
 - Second Prize: \$25.00 worth of merchandise,
 - Third Prize: \$15.00 worth of merchandise,



In addition, a Grand prize of \$100.00 will be awarded to best in show.

10. Entries must be received by September 1, 2004.
11. Judging will be by a panel of persons outside the VNHS membership. Decision of panel is final.
12. VNHS cannot be held responsible for entries that are lost or damaged.
13. Each entry must be labelled on the back with photographer's name, address and telephone number, category of entry, and must be accompanied by completed entry form (available at VNHS meetings, Swan Lake, Goldstream Nature House and the HAT office). Drop-off during the months of June, July and August, with cheque made payable to the VNHS at: Swan Lake Nature House, 3873 Swan Lake Road, Victoria, B.C. **Open 7 days a week Mon-Fri 8:30-4 p.m., weekends and holidays 12 -4 p.m.**

Be sure to have them log the photos in and be sure to include your cheque.

Entrants will be able to pick up their photos at Swan Lake after contest completion.