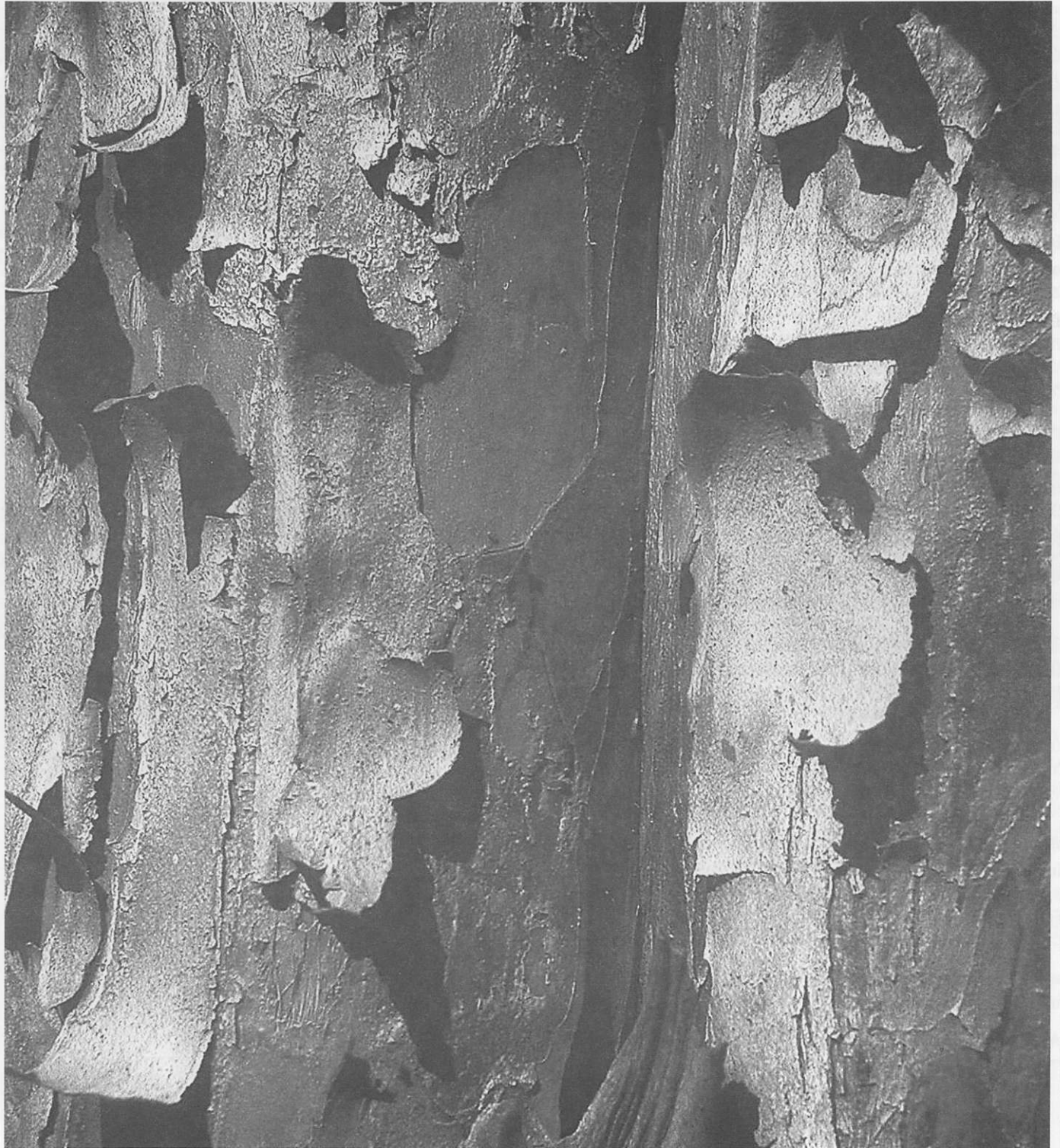




The Victoria NATURALIST

NOVEMBER
DECEMBER
2005
VOL 62.3

VICTORIA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY



Published six times a year by the
VICTORIA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY,
P.O. Box 5220, Station B, Victoria, B.C. V8R 6N4
Contents © 2005 as credited.

ISSN 0049-612X Printed in Canada
The Victoria Naturalist acknowledges the financial support of the
Government of Canada through the Publications Assistance Program
towards our mailing costs.
Publication Mail Commercial Sales Agreement Number 40045722
Publications Mail Registration No. 09841

Editor: Claudia Copley, 479-6622
Desktop Publishing: Frances Hunter, 479-1956
Distribution: Tom Gillespie, Phyllis Henderson
Printing: Fotoprint, 382-8218

Opinions expressed by contributors to *The Victoria Naturalist*
are not necessarily those of the Society.

VICTORIA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Honorary Life Members Mrs. Ruth Chambers, Mrs. Lyndis Davis,
Mrs. Peggy Goodwill, Mr. David Stirling, Mr. Bruce Whittington

Officers: 2004-2005

PRESIDENT: Ann Nightingale, 652-6450, motmot@shaw.ca
VICE-PRESIDENT: Claudia Copley, 479-6622, dccopley@island.net
PAST-PRESIDENT: Bruce Whittington, 250-245-1484,
fieldnat@pacificcoast.net
TREASURER: Gordon Hart, 721-1264, gordh19@shaw.ca
SECRETARY: Isobel Dawson, 721-0232, idawson@uvic.ca

Directors and Committees

Darren Copley, 479-6622, dccopley@island.net (*Membership*)
Rick Schortinghuis, 652-3326, shylo@islandnet.com (*Field Trips*)
Marie O'Shaughnessy, 598-9680, isis_mosh@shaw.ca (*Publicity*)
John Defayette, 598-3442, ul345@victoria.tc.ca (*Publicity*)
John Henigman, 598-6326, henigman@pacificcoast.net
(*Parks and Conservation, FBCN representative*)
Ed Pellizzon, 881-1476, edlps@telus.net (*Programs*)
Donna M. Ross, 384-5327, hoshihana@shaw.ca (*Social & Publicity*)
James Miskelly, 477-0490, jmiskelly@telus.net (*Butterfly Surveys,*
Swan Lake Representative)

Presentation Coordinators

Marine Night: Phil Lambert, 477-5922
Botany Night: Adolf Ceska, 477-1211
Natural History Night and Birders' Night: Ed Pellizzon, 881-1476

Annual Dues, Victoria Natural History Society

Includes *The Victoria Naturalist* and *B.C. Naturalist*
Regular \$30.00 Golden Age \$25.00
Family \$35.00 Student \$20.00
(Any donation in excess of the above fees is income tax deductible)

Annual Subscription Rate, Victoria Naturalist, or membership
without subscription \$20.00

RARE BIRD ALERT: 592-3381 **VNHS EVENTS TAPE:** 479-2054

VNHS Website: www.vicnhs.bc.ca

SUBMISSIONS

Deadline for next issue: December 1, 2005
Send to: Claudia Copley, Editor

657 Beaver Lake Road, Victoria BC V8Z 5N9
Phone: 250-479-6622
Fax: 479-6622 e-mail: dccopley@island.net

Guidelines for Submissions

Members are encouraged to submit articles, field trip reports, natural history notes, and book reviews with photographs or illustrations if possible. Photographs of natural history are appreciated along with documentation of location, species names and a date. Please label your submission with your name, address, and phone number and provide a title. We request submission of typed, double-spaced copy in an IBM compatible word processing file on diskette, or by e-mail. Photos and slides, and diskettes submitted will be returned if a stamped, self-addressed envelope is included with the material. Digital images are welcome, but they need to be high resolution: a minimum of 1200 x 1550 pixels, or 300 dpi at the size of photos in the magazine.

VNHS MEMBERSHIP

For membership information and renewal, please contact Darren Copley, 479-6622, or write to Membership Committee c/o The Victoria Natural History Society, Box 5220, Victoria, B.C., V8R 6N4. A copy of our membership form is available on our website www.vicnhs.bc.ca.

ADVERTISING GUIDELINES

We do our best to ensure your ad is produced accurately. Should we make an error, please contact us and a correction can be printed in the next issue. A charge is levied for typesetting. Minor alterations to existing ads cost \$10.00. Add \$15 per photo. Advertising fees are due and payable when copy is submitted. Please submit a cheque payable to The Victoria Natural History Society.

Ad Size	Price	Dimensions (in inches)
Back page	\$120	7.5" width x 8" height
Full page, inside	\$100	7.5 width x 9.5" height
1/2 page, horizontal	\$80	7.5" width x 4.75" height
1/2 page, vertical	\$80	3.5" width x 9.5" height
1/3 page horizontal	\$50	7.5" width x 3.25" height
1/3 page, vertical	\$50	3.5" width x 6.5" height
1/4 page, horizontal	\$40	7.5" width x 2.25" height
1/4 page, vertical	\$40	3.5" width x 4.75" height
1/8 page, horizontal	\$25	3.5" width x 2.25" height

Rates as of February, 1994. May be subject to change.

Submit advertising to:
email dccopley@island.net
or phone Claudia Copley at 250-479-6622

Thank you for your patronage.

Contents

President's Message	4
Species At Risk at Fort Rodd Hill & Fisgard Lighthouse National Historic Site By Sara Sandwith	4
Gourmet Diners By Michael Fox.....	5
Pups, Pups, and More Pups: A Stellar Year for the Vancouver Island Marmot By Robert Huber	6
European Wall Lizard (<i>Podarcis muralis</i>) By Ann Nightingale	7
Three Rivers: The Yukon's Great Boreal Wilderness By Juri Peepre	8
A Victorian Collection By Philip Lambert	10
American White Pelicans By Marie O'Shaughnessy.....	14
Christmas Bird Count 2005 By Ann Nightingale	16
HAT Tricks By Todd Carnahan	17
Welcome to New Members	17
Calendar of Events.....	18
Bulletin Board.....	19

COVER PHOTO:
Yew Tree Bark by Ann Nightingale. An entry in the
VNHS 60th Anniversary Photo Contest.

*"In the end, we will conserve only what we love,
we will love only what we understand, we will
understand only what we are taught."*

—Baba Dioum

This well-known quote provides a segue for the
somewhat disparate topics of this issue's editorial.

First off, I would like to express my appreciation
to the 52 volunteers who stepped forward and agreed
to help promote natural history to local schoolchild-
ren. What a phenomenal response! These members
of our Society are keen participants in our "Schools
Program"; they have agreed to assist with field trips,
give presentations to classes, and be available as
resource people on a large range of natural history
topics. Offering these services at no charge will go
a long way to ensuring that these opportunities are
available to all schoolchildren in our region, regard-
less of socioeconomic status.

The second item I wanted to broach was an idea
put forward by a member of our Society. She sug-
gested that each issue of the magazine could have an
article that highlights a particular organism that lives
in our region – introducing it and providing some
interesting information about it. Ideally every issue
will have a "creature feature" from a different author
and on a large variety of topics: plants, marine inver-
tebrates, amphibians, insects, fish, spiders, etc. Ann
Nightingale has started us off on this new path with
her article about a well-established exotic that many
people may not have yet "met" (p. 7), and I hope that
these introductions can continue through regular
submissions by our members.

Claudia

President's Message

About this time every year, a certain controversy is raised. Should you, or should you not, feed the birds? Some residential developments and even whole municipalities have banned bird feeding. Signs at ponds warn of the danger of feeding bread to the ducks, and the "do not feed the animals" warnings at parks include providing seed for birds.

On the "con" side of the argument, encouraging wild birds to feeders increases the risk of predation from cats and hawks, can spread diseases, and can result in window strikes causing injury or death. Many of the feeder birds are introduced species – House Sparrows, Starlings and Rock Pigeons in particular. Seed on the ground can attract squirrels, rats and mice.

On the "pro" side, providing food can make the difference between individual birds surviving or not, can introduce nature enjoyment to people, can provide data for "citizen science" efforts such as the Backyard Feederwatch and Christmas Bird Count programs. Feeding birds may offset some of the damage we have done through development, habitat destruction and pollution. Besides, as many have pointed out, it's just a lot of fun to see birds up close and personal at the feeders.

If you choose to feed the birds, keep a few things in mind:

- Provide healthy, appropriate food. There are a number of good wild bird foods available. Depending on the species of birds you have in your yard, certain types of food may work better than others.
- Only put out what can be eaten in a reasonable period of time. Wet food will go mouldy, which is neither attractive nor healthy for the birds. Change the food in your feeders regularly, even if it means throwing the older food out.
- Keep the feeders clean. A good scrubbing with a mild bleach solution or a run through the dishwasher should be done several times a season even if the feeder appears clean.
- Think about the whole environment. Attracting birds to your feeder if the area is frequented by cats or other predators just doesn't make sense. Likewise, avoid putting feeders in areas where pesticides or fertilizers are used.
- Place your feeders within 3 feet or more than 20 feet away from your windows. Most injuries occur as the birds leave the feeders. If the feeder is quite close to the window, the birds won't have built up the speed to sustain an injury.

Each of us will have to come to our own decision about whether feeding the birds is the right thing to do. Whether you feed them or prefer to observe them in a natural setting, remember to enjoy living in an ideal place for birds and people in the winter.

Ann Nightingale

Species At Risk at Fort Rodd Hill & Fisgard Lighthouse National Historic Site

By Sara Sandwith
Parks Canada Heritage Presentation Officer
& Species At Risk Outreach Coordinator

This fall, Fort Rodd Hill is hosting a series of Project Days where volunteers can join our Species At Risk team in eradicating invasive plants and protecting our remnant Garry oak habitat. Conan Webb and his teams have been studying the site and different eradication techniques for the past four years. They have made great headway in clearing patches of Daphne laurel, Scotch broom, and English ivy, locating rare and endangered plants such as deltoid balsamroot, and raising awareness among the site's visitors.

One of the biggest problems with clearing plots of land is that disturbed soil provides prime habitat for the re-colonization by invasive plants. In addition, native plants are often tasty to herbivores like our local Columbia black-tailed deer, so are more likely to become a 'deer snack'. Faced with



Deltoid balsamroot (*Balsamorhiza deltoidea*), an endangered species located at Fort Rodd Hill. Photo: Conan Webb, Parks Canada Agency

the pressure of regular browsing, our native plants cannot compete as well against the less palatable invasives.

This year's volunteers will help us clear orchard grass within a 'deer enclosure' – a site designed to protect rehabilitating vegetation from over-grazing by the abundant deer. Orchard grass is ranked #1 on the Garry Oak Ecosystem Recovery Team's list of 'top-ten invasive plants threatening Garry oak ecosystems.' Conan and his crews collected native grass seed over the past two summers, which they will plant to prevent invasives from colonizing the newly cleared soil. Next year they will add shootingstars (*Dodecatheon* sp.) and camas.

To learn more about our ongoing volunteer opportunities, please contact me at 478-5849, or Sara.Sandwith@pc.gc.ca.

Gourmet Diners

By Michael Fox

In the eight years that we have lived here in View Royal, the Cedar Waxwings that visit our garden to feast on the fruit of the bitter cherry are as predictable as the seasons. To the untrained eye, the small, bright red cherries seemed ripe by mid August, but the discerning eye of the waxwing knows the moment of perfection better than that.

This week, the first week in September, they attacked the tree *en masse* and in little more than a day the top third of the twenty foot tree was denuded of fruit. The flock of fifty to one hundred individuals consists of both mature birds and this year's young. They are easily distinguished: the adults sleekly beautiful with their cinnamon coloured breasts and the youngsters looking as though they had a good towel after a shower. Sadly, one or two of the young waxwings often fly into our windows.

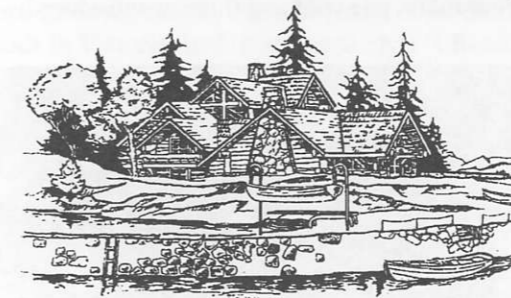
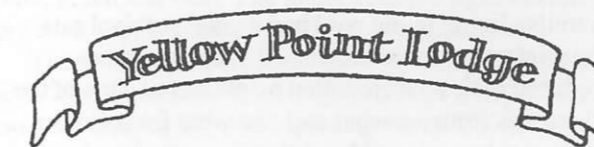
The flock of waxwings spend about a week here on their gourmet dining. They spend a little while eating the bitter cherries and then visit a grove of black cottonwoods across



Cedar Waxwing.
Photo: Marie O'Shaughnessy

the road, where they spend time catching insects on the fly above the trees. Then they come back to the bitter cherry to repeat the process. It seems to me that the cherries ripen from the top down, since that is way the waxwings remove the fruit. They don't bother to retrieve the ones they drop but they do a very thorough job of removing them.

Within a week the feast is finished and this most handsome of small birds moves on.



3700 Yellow Point Road,
Ladysmith, B.C. V9G 1E8
(250) 245-7422

Nature Trips 2006

led by Canadian Professionals

Bathurst Inlet, Nunavut
Brazil
Franz Josef Land
Galapagos & Ecuador
Iceland
KHAM Inner Circle, China
New Zealand
Panama
Spitzbergen
St. Paul's Island, Pribilof
South West England
Tuscany & Florence



Tel. 604-461-4289 or josephine@bestway.com
www.skiesunlimited.com



BESTWAY
TOURS & SAFARIS (BC Reg#592)
8678 Greenhall Avenue, Ste #206 Burnaby, BC V5J 3M6

Pups, Pups, and More Pups: A Stellar Year for the Vancouver Island Marmot!

By Robert Huber, Executive Director, Marmot Recovery Foundation

Captive Breeding

The Vancouver Island marmots that are a part of our captive breeding program are certainly taking their “jobs” very seriously this year! Thirteen litters of marmots producing 48 marmot pups were born this spring – that’s five more litters than last year and 22 more pups than were born in captivity last year. We also had two pups born in the wild. Although the number of wild births was lower than we had hoped, we do anticipate a larger number of litters and wild-born pups next year.

If you add the 48 pups to the 91 marmots already living in captivity, and then factor in the releases and deaths – there are about 120-125 Vancouver Island marmots spread out among our four breeding facilities. This robust captive population means we’ll be able to increase the number of Vancouver Island marmots we release back into the wild in the next few years, and this is our ultimate goal – to restore the population of Vancouver Island marmots to self-sustaining numbers in their native habitat.

Releases and Protection

And speaking of releases ... Over the course of the summer, we released 15 captive born marmots into the mountains of Vancouver Island. Three males and two females were let go onto Green Mountain and two females and five males were released at Haley Lake. We also released two marmots on

Mount Washington, with the hopes they will pair up with marmots already there – and then have more pups next year. We have also found a new mate for the attractive, “femme fatale” – KC on Heather Mountain. This will be KC’s fourth mate.

As we did last year, we protected the marmots from predators with a number of non-lethal control measures. The Haley Lake site had human shepherds watching over the marmots. The Green Mountain site was equipped with fencing and fladry (lines strung with flapping flagging tape which have been used in other recovery projects to deter predators). There was a periodic human presence on Green Mountain as well. And then there was the new “Buddy” system to keep cougars at bay. Buddy is our new trained hunting dog, used to smell and track the cougars. He helps us know when cougars are present, and he can also bark at them and chase them away. We will be assessing the effectiveness of each of these non-lethal predator management techniques over the course of the next few years.

Wild Population

The marmots living in the wild had a good survival rate over the winter, despite some losses. Three marmots – re-introduced males – were killed by predators. One of the predations was from a cougar and two were from Golden Eagles. Four more, one wild and three re-introduced



These pictures show male Vancouver Island marmot On slo (left), and his mate Haida shortly after they emerged from hibernation this spring. On slo and Haida were two of the captive born marmots released into the wild last year. Photos: Andrew Bryant

animals, emerged from hibernation with very low body weight and didn’t thrive. They had eaten enough and were healthy going into hibernation, but we had an unusually warm winter this year. That may have made their body temperature fluctuate, using up too much “fuel”. We are taking steps to increase the probability of over-winter survival in the wild; and we also hope there is an abundance of snow pack this year. There are now 30-35 marmots in the wild, so we are slowly and surely increasing the number of the wild population.

The total number of Vancouver Island marmots now stands at around 150 – at least double the number which existed when the Marmot Recovery Foundation was formed in 1998. We have made great progress, but we still have

European Wall Lizard (*Podarcis muralis*)

By Ann Nightingale

The European wall lizard is a small (less than 23 cm, including the tail), active, colonial lizard which can be found in a few locations around Victoria. The scales are variable in colour, and can appear grey, brown, black, white, green and blue. The undersides are light-coloured and may even appear pinkish or a light orange colour.

The wall lizard was introduced to Greater Victoria in the 1970’s, apparently from a release from Rudy’s Pet Park Zoo on Durrance Rd. Through intentional and accidental transport, these reptiles now can be found in several neighbourhoods in Victoria, including the Stelly’s X Road/Wallace Drive area, the Wilkinson/Roy Rd area, and, more recently, Triangle Mountain.

Victoria is not the only North American home to these Italian and southern European natives. There are also *P. muralis* colonies on Long Island, in New York City, in Cincinnati, Ohio and Topeka, Kansas.

The wall lizard is a proficient hunter of invertebrates, including beetles, flies, butterflies, and spiders. Although primarily found in developed areas, at least one colony exists along the BC Hydro power line right-of-way, putting them in the same environment as the native alligator lizard (*Elgaria coerulea*). Although there is no indication at this time that there is a conflict between the two species, they may compete for similar habitat and food sources where their ranges overlap.

The female lizards lay a clutch of 2 to 11 eggs, and may breed several times each year. Hatchlings emerge about a month after laying. In Victoria, the lizards can be seen basking in the sun from February to November most years. They hibernate between November and February, and mate shortly after coming out of hibernation. In

a long way to go to achieve our desired level of 400-600 Vancouver Island marmots in the wild. With your help and support our captive breeding and reintroduction programs can increase the wild population to a sustainable level and ensure this uniquely Canadian treasure continues to be a part of our rich cultural heritage.

Visit us at www.marmots.org, write us at Box 2332, Stn A, Nanaimo, BC V9R 6X9, call toll free: 1-877-4MARMOT (1-877-462-7668), or email us at marmot@islandnet.com for more information on our “Adopt-a-Marmot Club”, donating, or purchasing a marmot plush toy. All of these options make great gift ideas, just in time for the holiday season!



European Wall Lizard. Photo: Ann Nightingale

inclement weather, or under perceived threat, they scurry into the cracks between rocks, into logs, or under any available cover. The relatively mild climate on southern Vancouver Island is not a threat to their survival.

Introduced species have the potential to displace natives and become invasive and people often unwittingly contribute to the spread of introduced species by moving them to new locations well away from their home site. No matter how cute or harmless an introduced species appears, animals should never be moved to new locations.

The BC Ministry of the Environment is monitoring the spread of the European wall lizard. If you see this lizard outside of its known locations, you may report your sighting using a form available at <http://www.bcreptiles.ca/report-sightings.htm>.

Three Rivers: The Yukon's Great Boreal Wilderness

Victoria hosts national touring art exhibition featuring northern nature

By Juri Peepre

The Wind, Snake, and Bonnet Plume rivers rise in the stunning Selwyn and Wernecke Mountains and flow through the vast Peel River basin on the Yukon's northeastern border, an area that accounts for 14 percent of the territory. Perched at the apex of Canada's boreal forest and the northern end of the Rocky Mountain chain, the Peel watershed also includes some of the unglaciated area known as Beringia. A blend of biomes, it is a distinct and varied land of plateaus and mountains, rivers and wetlands, not yet fully revealed to science.

Here, unbounded and colourful mountain ranges frame pristine taiga forests and subarctic watersheds. Robust woodland and barren-ground caribou, free-ranging wolverine and grizzly bear, the threatened Anatum Peregrine Falcon, unspoiled aquatic habitat, and thousands upon thousands of boreal songbirds and migratory waterfowl occupy an ancient and unfettered landscape that is the essence of wildness.

This is the traditional territory of the Nacho Nyak Dun and Tetl'it Gwich'in First Nations; for generations they were sustained by the plants, fish and wildlife of this region as they traversed its valleys and mountains on a network of travel and trade routes. Today the wilderness of the Peel basin serves as a vital benchmark of untamed nature; ancient and complex ecological processes continue to evolve freely, and the full complement of predators and prey ranges across the landscape. Although fishing, hunting and trapping are still important to the way of life in the region, local people and visitors

from around the world also value the watershed as a premiere destination for canoeing, backcountry travel, photography, education, cultural activities, and scientific research.

Wilderness without beginning or end; wild spaces big enough for a journey of discovery almost beyond the imagination of most Canadians – that's the country of the Wind, Snake and Bonnet Plume Rivers. How does one celebrate and protect a vast boreal mountain wilderness area unknown to most people? The Yukon Chapter of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS) took on this challenge by bringing to life the ambitious *Three Rivers Journey* project in the summer of 2003, when we invited 18 nationally prominent artists, writers, journalists, and photographers to join local people in simultaneous journeys along the remote Wind, Snake, and Bonnet Plume Rivers.

After 18 exhilarating and arduous days, the *Three Rivers Journey* ended at the confluence of the Snake and Peel rivers. Here, members of the Tetl'it Gwich'in First Nation greeted the 37 paddlers – artists, writers, filmmakers, scientists, conservationists and First Nations community members – with gun salutes and a chorus of cheers, welcoming them to an elders' feast held on the banks of the Peel. More than 100 people participated in this gathering, the majority having travelled upstream by riverboat from Fort McPherson – a trip of at least eight hours. We feasted on fresh moose meat and grayling, and listened to elders and First Nations members speak eloquently about the importance of the land, wildlife and waters of the Peel basin.

Later, in return for sharing in the *Three Rivers Journey*, many of the participants created art and literary works that responded to this wild and mystic landscape.



Wind River. Photos provided by author



These artistic explorations of northern Canada's primeval origins and cultural heritage were then embodied in a national touring art exhibit, as well as an illustrated literary anthology. The sumptuous new book *Three Rivers: the Yukon's Great Boreal Wilderness* honours one of the world's finest wild mountain river systems and highlights the threats to its integrity. Through visual art, imagery, essays, stories and poems, this book aims to present conservation essentials that will help safeguard this vital wilderness.

Just as the Three Rivers area slowly begins to gain the recognition that it deserves, plans for development are already compromising its future. The Peel watershed, like much of Canada's North, is vulnerable to the continental hunger for hydrocarbons, including new development schemes for oil and natural gas, pipelines, coal and coal-bed methane. Consecutive Yukon governments have offered these precious lands to industry at bargain sale prices.

Our goal is to protect and conserve the wildlands of the Three Rivers and the ecological integrity of the greater Peel watershed. To achieve this goal, CPAWS proposes a core protected area in the Three Rivers watersheds and special conservation zones in the remainder of the Peel watershed to preserve critical wetlands, sensitive river corridors and other important biological and cultural features.

The Snake River

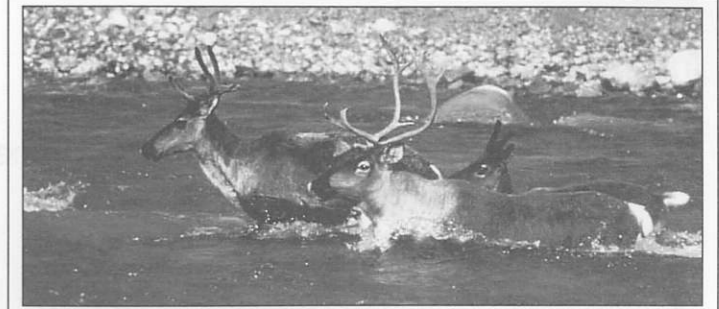
There are no reptiles in the North; *Gyûu dazhoo njik*, the Gwich'in name for the Snake River, translates literally as "worm hairy river." According to legend, in ancient times a giant worm came out of the ocean and travelled up the Mackenzie and into the Peel River, swallowing huge boulders as it went. To this day this worm remains hidden either inside a riverside lake or within a mountain near the river's headwaters.

For more than 150 kilometres, the Snake River surges past layered and serrated ridges streaked with rust, ochre and maroon, while lofty glacial peaks like Mount Macdonald tower above it. The swift-flowing upper Snake is one of the most stunning wild rivers in the Canadian North, and its many side valleys invite exploration. There, amid alpine meadows profuse with arnica and arctic lupine, live woodland caribou, Dall sheep, grizzly bear, moose and raptors. Where the lower Snake slows and cuts deep into the Peel Plateau, giant poplar trees and stands of tall spruce provide perches for Bald Eagles.

The Bonnet Plume River

One of Canada's premier whitewater canoeing rivers, the Bonnet Plume is famed for its long and turbulent canyons, powerful falls and rocky portages. Although known to the Gwich'in as *Tsaih Tlak Njik*, River of Black Sands, it was later named after a Gwich'in man, Andrew Flett Bonnetplume, who was the main translator for the Klondike stampedeers who travelled up the Peel and Wind Rivers on their way to Dawson City.

Near the headwaters of the river, Bonnet Plume Lake is set among sharp peaks and steep alpine meadows. Its



Classified as a threatened species in most regions, woodland caribou live on a mere 50 percent of their historic range in Canada. Extremely sensitive to disturbance, their survival depends on access to large expanses of mature boreal forest with thick mats of ground lichen. But as industrial development moves farther and farther north, roads and seismic lines are fragmenting the frontier forests the caribou need. Some biologists have used the term "extinction in slow motion" to describe the decline of this species. The Bonnet Plume herd in the Peel watershed is one of the largest in the Yukon with its range still intact.

aquamarine waters empty into the river through the apron of a massive rockslide before entering a valley of deep green spruce and feathermoss forests that sweep away to the mountain slopes. In its lower reaches the braided river flows through plateaus dotted with wetlands as it rushes toward the Peel River canyon.

The Wind River

Even in a land of clear-flowing rivers, the translucent blue-green waters of the Wind stand out. Flowing over a never-ending carpet of cobble rocks and sand, the Wind River passes between gnarled limestone ridges intersected by twisted creek canyons that beckon hikers, and slides past huge alluvial fans and dryas meadows offering idyllic camping. Dall sheep can be seen at the mineral licks next to the river.

The Gwich'in regularly travelled the Wind and knew it as *Tr'inlintr'ali Njik*, "always blowing creek." In 1899, they helped a group of Klondike-bound goldrushers who spent a winter on the banks of the lower river. The ill-fated Lost Patrol of the Royal Northwest Mounted Police came to grief in this country.

Don't miss your chance to see the *Three Rivers: Wild Waters, Sacred Places* touring national group art exhibition at the Maltwood Art Gallery, University of Victoria until December 23. See back cover.

Learn more about the natural and cultural history of the northern Yukon in: *Three Rivers: The Yukon's Great Boreal Wilderness* (Harbour Publishing, November, 2005) A coffee table book with awe-inspiring photography and natural history writing. Available at your local independent bookstore, or order online through CPAWS-Yukon. Visit www.cpausyukon.org to learn more about the Three Rivers Project.

A Victorian Collection

By Philip Lambert, Invertebrate Curator at the Royal BC Museum

I would not blame you for feeling a bit uneasy, if you entered a large room where the wooden floors creaked and cracked as you walked and hundreds of pairs of glassy eyes stared blankly at you. I felt this recently when I came face to face with a collection of furry animals imprisoned in rows of glass cases and on the walls high above, more glassy-eyed animals stared across the room at each other. The main natural history exhibit of the Irish National Museum in Dublin transported me back to the Victorian era of classical museum exhibits. In this museum the displays themselves are historical artifacts.

I was visiting the Museum, thanks to a grant from Enterprise Ireland that provided travel expenses for foreign experts to study their extensive biological collections. The echinoderms (sea stars and allies) were the focus of my attention. The specimen catalogue read like a snapshot of the history of marine biology with entries like, "22 April 1873 Challenger Expedition", "Spitzbergen, 20 July 1907",

"9 Feb 1900 Southern Cross Expedition", or "Queen Charlotte Sound, New Zealand, 27 June 1874, Challenger Expedition". The ones that caught my eye were "Unnamed asteroid Vancouver Island, Dr. Forbes" or "Unnamed holothuroidea, Gulf of Georgia, no. 84 MCZ, Harvard 1869, donated by E.P. Wright". I was curious to find out how specimens from British Columbia ended up in Dublin, Ireland and what species they were.

Most of the original museum building that opened in 1857 was taken over by the new Republic of Ireland in 1922 and converted to their parliament (House of Representatives and Senate). They refused to use any buildings occupied by the British during their stay, even the specially designed parliament building was abandoned and now serves as a bank. The exhibits of the Natural History Museum occupy one wing of the previous building that now has a separate entrance on Merrion Street. I will come back to the exhibits later.

The Museum stores its research collection a few blocks



Irish National Museum's natural history exhibit hall. All photos: Phil Lambert

away in a separate building, which was originally a British Army barracks, dating back to 1827. It has the distinction of being the first British military structure to be taken over by the Irish Government forces after the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1922. Out in front of the wall, next to the street, a row of cannon barrels with their tips buried vertically in the ground and joined by a looping chain, form a rather unique fence. They are reportedly old Russian cannons.

As you can imagine, the inside of the fortress-like building, that is nearly two hundred years old, is showing its years. The stone stairs are rounded off at the edges with the wear of thousands of army boots. A series of rooms linked by metal doors now house the national biological collections. Most of the windows have been sealed up behind large plates of cast iron, which present a rather dungeon-like atmosphere. As my host Julia Sigwart leads me through these rooms on the way to her office, we pass a historical legacy. One room contains masses of giant black antlers, the remnants of the extinct Giant Irish Deer, which have been excavated from bogs around Ireland. The next one has marine mammal bones stacked on open shelves, followed by some old display cases containing mounted birds from around the world. After several more rooms of equally intriguing contents, we reached her brick-lined office, which is a rather spartan affair, with a couple of tables, some filing cabinets and old metal bookcases.

One room contains masses of giant black antlers, the remnants of the extinct Giant Irish Deer, which have been excavated from bogs around Ireland.

Ms Sigwart has a joint appointment with the National Museum of Ireland and University College Dublin (UCD). Her job is to make the tremendous resources of the Natural History Museum more accessible for teaching and research at UCD, and to the scientific community as a whole. (See <http://www.ucd.ie/zoology/museum/>) She has identified funding sources in Ireland and the European Union to support projects that will document the collections, make them more accessible, and add value to them. During my stay, I saw volunteers working diligently to enter the bird collection into a database and several graduate students utilized the collection for their phylogenetic studies. She was also putting



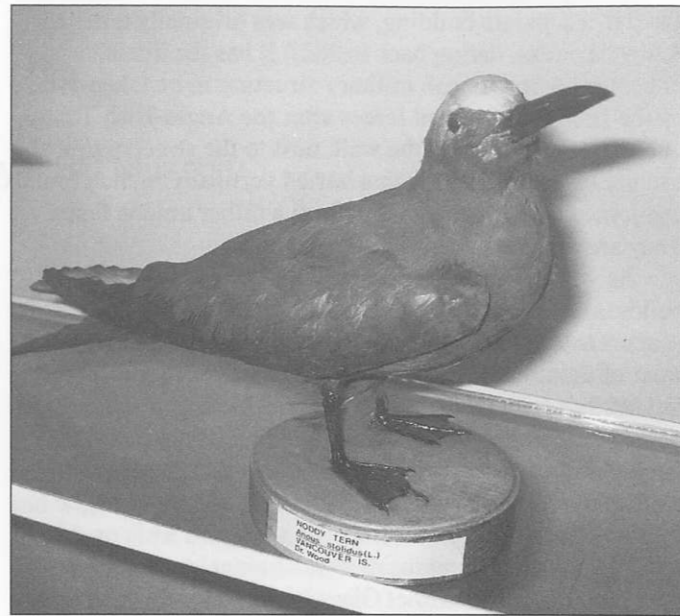
Top: Irish National Museum. Below: Giant Irish Deer antlers. Right: Julia Sigwart

the finishing touches to a web site (<http://www.ucd.ie/ureka/>) that announced a new program to support visiting students who could sign up to take part in a research project. Travel, accommodation and a daily stipend would be covered by a grant for those who qualified. What a wonderful opportunity for a student who yearned to visit historic Dublin and gain some valuable experience with collections-based research.

Our footsteps echoed off the stone walls as Julia led me down the worn stairs below her office and through a heavy, clanging iron door. The marine invertebrates had already benefited from the program and were nicely housed in freshly painted and numbered wooden cabinets. She directed me to the sea cucumbers and sea stars (Phylum Echinodermata) and left me to peruse the contents. I located some specimens collected in British Columbia plus a number of others from the Atlantic Ocean that needed identifying. The next challenge was to find some facilities to study the specimens. The nearest sink was down the hall in the bathroom and a single dissecting scope was available.

In order to identify sea cucumbers one needs to check the internal anatomy but, more importantly, examine the microscopic ossicles in the animal's skin using a high-powered compound microscope – not available in the building. The museum has been chronically under funded and, more importantly, understaffed. This natural history collection of major historical importance has, incredibly, only six people caring for more than three million specimens in the zoology and geology collections, running the administration, and providing public education programs. Compare this to a typical European or North American national museum with around 100 staff for collections of similar size. Prior to Ms. Sigwart's arrival in 2003, no electronic databases were in use so the real number of specimens can only be estimated. To work on my specimens I would have to gather them up in a box, hail a taxi and travel 15 minutes to the biology building at UCD, where I was directed to a small supply room with the research microscope nestled in a corner. Still no sink nearby! I wish Julia well in her quest to document these collections and make them more accessible for research. As to upgrading the facilities Julia comments, "Plumbing will never change in my lifetime. But, if I had another technician I would have someone to order pencils!"

I was able to confirm the identification of six species of sea cucumbers, five sea stars, six brittle stars and one sea urchin. Six lots had been collected from British Columbia according to the labels in the jars. It was not clear when or how they were acquired. There were no collection dates recorded, however, the collectors or perhaps the donors were a Dr. Forbes and E. P. Wright. Dr. Edward Forbes (1815-1854) was a British marine zoologist from the Isle of Man. He was professor of botany at King's College in London and a curator in the Geological Society where he collected and described marine animals, mainly echinoderms. He wrote *A History of British Starfishes and other Animals of the Class Echinodermata* in 1841. E. P. Wright (1834-1910) was Professor of Zoology at Trinity College in Dublin. Many of these biologists had networks of colleagues around the world who exchanged specimens with

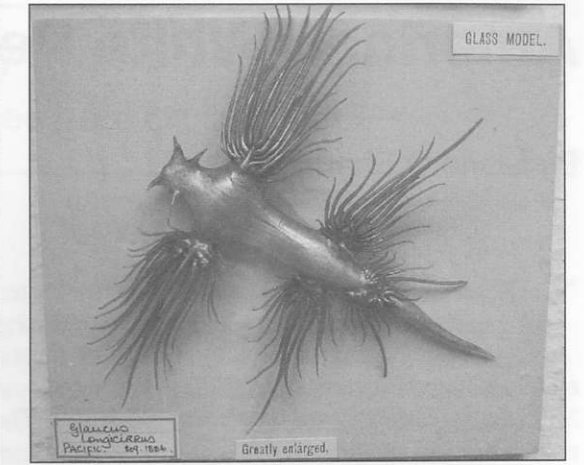
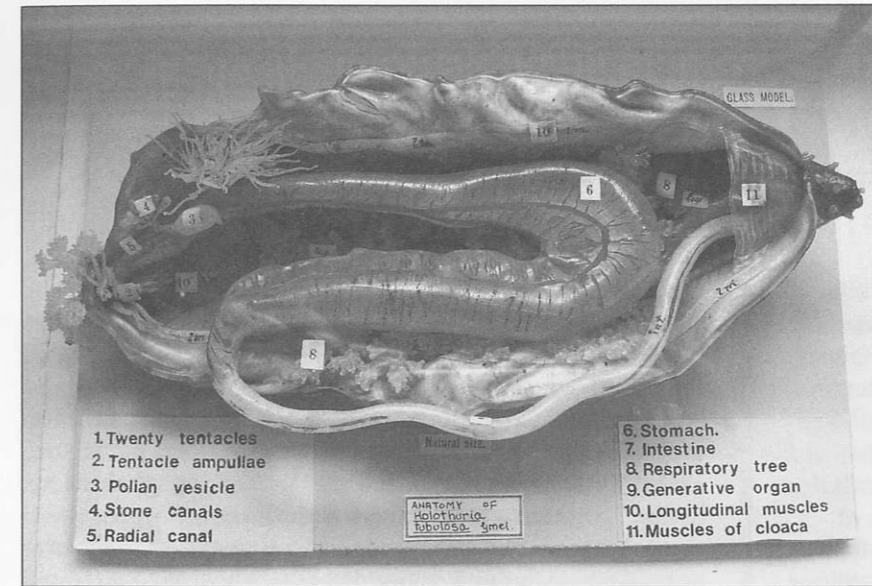


A Noddy Tern from British Columbia?

each other. Who supplied them with specimens from British Columbia? We can only guess.

Five of the six specimens from BC were relatively common so did not generate much interest, but one specimen was a type of cushion star that is only recorded in the Arctic regions as far south as the Aleutian Islands. The big question is: can we trust the locality data and announce a range extension for this species? Some other circumstantial evidence indicates the data may not be trusted. In the natural history exhibit, my wife Marilyn spotted two mounted bird specimens. One was labeled as a Noddy Tern (*Anous stolidus*) the other a White Tern (*Gygis alba*) and both were labeled as collected on Vancouver Island. However, according to Michael McNall at the Royal BC Museum, neither of these species is known from here. Both are tropical Pacific and Indian Ocean with the Hawaiian Islands being the closest likely occurrence. Can these data be trusted? Unfortunately there is probably no way of verifying them so until I find some corroborating evidence they will remain a question mark.

Let's return to the public exhibits on Merrion Street. Standing on the creaky wooden floor of the world fauna section I, view the glass cases of vertebrate species filling much of the floor area and high overhead the massive skeletons of a Fin and a Humpback whale cast their shadows on the animals below. The birds, mammals and other vertebrates are depicted in classic mounted poses. The two mezzanine levels surrounding the main gallery house the invertebrates. Various shelled invertebrates are displayed as dried specimens in glass-topped cases. But many marine animals have no shell and are rather soft and translucent. Nowadays we tend to use colour photographs to display these animals, perhaps with a preserved specimen as backup, but in the 19th Century this museum employed a father and son team of German craftsmen to create amazing works of art out of glass.



Left, Sea cucumber dissection. Right: Pelagic nudibranch.

The Natural History Museum in Dublin purchased 85 glass models from Leopold and Rudolph Blaschka in 1878 for £15. This was the beginning of a long association with this world famous father and son team, who gained their renown for producing glass flowers for Harvard University. Eventually the Dublin museum would acquire 530 glass models with over 300 of them on display in the public galleries. Most of them depict soft, translucent whole animals such as sea cucumbers, jellyfish, worms, nudibranchs, and microscopic radiolarians (single celled marine organisms). The technique is particularly useful in showing internal anatomy for biology students. One model illustrates the intricate internal parts of a sponge; another reveals the internal organs of a sea cucumber. How they did it using molten glass in such fine detail is beyond my comprehension. They must have possessed amazing patience. The glass models on the two mezzanine floors were installed in 1906 and have

not moved since. They constitute the largest collection of Blaschka models on display in the world. Much of this museum is in its original state, preserving not only the animals and plants but also the original feel of a Victorian Museum. If you are interested in art or science this is a "must see" in Dublin.

References

Walsh, D. and Monaghan, N. 2003. The collection of Blaschka glass models in the Natural History Museum, Dublin. *Journal of the Irish Museums Association* 13: 43-48.

Further reading on the Internet:

"Flowers out of glass": <http://www.rps.psu.edu/sep99/glass.html>
Cornell University Blaschka models: <http://www.warmus.com/Blaschka%20Sea%20Creatures%20Cornell%20Warmus.htm>

10% OFF scopes & binoculars for VNHS members
(with this ad)

CAMERA TRADERS

Market Square
#110-560 Johnson Street
Victoria
ph/fax: 250 382 6838
www.camera-traders.com



*Field Scopes
*Binoculars
*Telescopes
*Microscopes
*Tripods
*Accessories



MODERN - VINTAGE

WE BUY & SELL

American White Pelicans

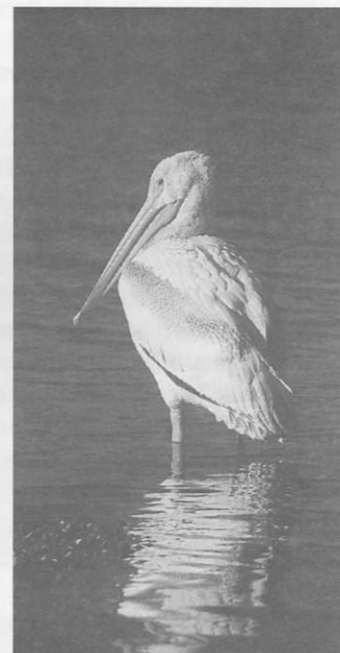
By Marie O'Shaughnessy

You can imagine my surprise when two large, white birds circled slowly around in the central region of Esquimalt Lagoon late one afternoon. It was approximately 5.30 pm September 22, 2005. I had been watching the Mute Swans farther down the Coburg Peninsula. The afternoon's warmth and peacefulness had made me somewhat mellow as I rested comfortably, with my sore knee stretched out before me.

As I watched, these two white birds descended to the inside shore of the Lagoon. Flying in on their magnificent 108" black and white wings, these heavy weights (sixteen or more pounds) of chunky but graceful bird drifted slowly down to join the swans preening below. Initially, from where I sat, I thought these were more swans flying in to join the

others. Having seen their distinct shape before in Alberta and the Chilcotin area of BC, it suddenly occurred to me that these birds were not Mute Swans. There was no mistaking them: two American White Pelicans had landed!

I realised with excitement that I needed to move fast. I needed to confirm what I had seen and that meant getting closer to the birds. I also hoped no one would spook them before I got a good look. I drove to the little sandy peninsula that attracts the waterfowl and swans. Here the two pelicans cruised quietly around, undecided as to where to settle. Their arrival caused some concern to the resident Mute Swan population. No doubt they had never seen pelicans before. In contrast to their gracefulness in flight and on water, the pelican's awkwardness on land became apparent



American White Pelicans. Photos: Marie O'Shaughnessy

The American White Pelican is highly migratory and it is the larger of the two pelicans we may see here on the coast.

as they lumbered up the incline to preen with the swans. I cautiously approached the mixed avian flock from the parked car. Fortunately for me, these birds had decided to stay, so I was able to get closer. My little digital camera was working overtime. I knew I had to capture these birds on memory card/film for the record. As far as I could recall, there had not been any reported sightings of American White Pelicans in the Victoria area for many years, so I knew this sighting was significant. I watched for some time, fascinated by the interaction between the swans and the two pelicans. To be so close to these birds was all rather awesome. I was really alone with them and it felt good.

It occurred to me that I needed to call the Rare Bird Alert telephone line. The message was out and soon David Allinson was down at the Lagoon to witness these birds for himself. He was joined later by others and it was determined that these were immature birds on migration to points south of BC, possibly Mexico. The two pelicans continued to roost overnight at the Lagoon, but by 10 am the next morning they were seen flying toward Fort Rodd Hill and were not reported again. My encounter with these unusual migrants was indeed special.

The American White Pelican is highly migratory and it is the larger of the two pelicans we may see here on the coast. In comparison, the Brown Pelican, which we do see most years, is half the weight of the White and is purely a marine bird, frequenting ocean shores and bays. The White Pelican however, prefers lakes and shallow lagoons in which to breed and forage. Their style of fishing is different from one another. Whites scoop fish with their large bills from the surface of the lake by submerging their heads. They may forage cooperatively (they are colonial birds) and are not built for diving, in contrast to the Brown's, which dive while foraging.

The only known breeding colony for American White Pelicans for BC is at Stum Lake, in the Chilcotin. The pelicans are colonial nesters, with as few as 120 or as many as 152 pairs some years, nesting on islands within the lake. This breeding colony does not forage at Stum lake but can be seen flying to several smaller lakes within the Chilcotin Plateau. A 70-km flight from their breeding grounds to a favourite foraging area is not unusual for White Pelicans, which in BC appears to be Chilcotin Lake.

The American White Pelican usually lays two eggs in a nest scrape on the ground that contains an assortment of debris. Sticks, stones,

weeds, feathers and fish bones can be found in these nests. Only one chick generally survives, due to harassment from the older chick. The nest, eggs and chicks are tended by both adults. The young are hatched as altricial chicks, so are fully dependent on their parents until fledging. These pelicans are easily disturbed by human activity at nesting sites and will abandon their nests during the breeding season.

In autumn, the family groups start to migrate south. In flight these pelicans are breathtaking to watch. They can soar in large groups on thermals and create loose v- formations as they wend their way south. Those in British Columbia migrate west of the Rocky Mountains, heading southwest through the USA. They winter in southern California, along the Gulf Coast, and in Mexico.

The last record for American White Pelicans in Victoria was June 14, 1986. A single adult was seen at Portage Inlet.

References

- Campbell, R.W., Dawe, N.K., McTaggart-Cowan I., Cooper, J.M., Kaiser, G.W., and McNall, M.C.E. 1990. *The Birds of British Columbia Volume 1 – Nonpasserines*. Royal BC Museum, Victoria, BC. 514 pgs.
- Ehrlich, P.R., Dobkin, D.S. and Wheye, D. 1988. *The Birder's Handbook*. Simon and Schuster, New York. 785 pgs.

Wild Birds Unlimited®
Your Backyard Birdfeeding Specialist®



starting at just \$445

Waterproof, Fogproof, Phase Corrected, Fully Multi-coated BaK4 prisms, Twist-Up Eyecups, Rubber Armored, Incredibly Lightweight, Extremely Close Focusing, Platinum Protection Warranty
Everything you want in a binocular...for one low price

3631 Shelbourne Street, Victoria 250-595-3595

See our great selection of optics including:



Wild Birds Unlimited
Visit us for the best in:
feeders, seed, nature
gifts & optics.

Christmas Bird Count 2005 (Saturday, December 17)

By Ann Nightingale

Beginning on Christmas Day 1900, ornithologist Frank Chapman, an early officer in the then budding Audubon Society, proposed a new holiday tradition—a “Christmas Bird Census” – that would count birds in the holidays rather than hunt them. So began the Christmas Bird Count. These efforts have allowed hobbyists and scientists to monitor population trends and to get just a little closer to nature during the Christmas season.

More than 1800 communities in North America are assigned standardized 15-mile diameter circles in which to count all the birds they can in a single day. In our area, this covers almost the entire greater Victoria region, so we need plenty of help. Counters under 18 years of age and Bird Studies Canada members are invited to participate at no charge. Other counters are asked for a \$5 tax-deductible contribution to offset the costs of the count and follow-up publications.

You don't have to be an expert birder to participate. Novices will be teamed up with more experienced counters. You can help out by acting as a tally person or as a spotter. If you are more experienced, and are wondering about leading a team, we have areas in need of coordinators.

This year will be a bit more relaxed than our Canadian record-breaking effort last year (154 species.)

Most teams start out at first light, and although counting goes on throughout the day, much is completed by noon. There are a few “keeners” who go out looking and listening for owls in the pre-dawn hours, and a few teams of boating birders who check out the offshore waters, weather permitting and suitable boats available. Feeder counts can be reported via the VNHS website.

For those who are unsure about participating, or who want to tune-up their bird-counting skills, a number of field trips in November and early December will serve as a good practice.

If you are curious, interested, would like to see lists and pictures of the region's winter birds, or just need more information, please check out the VNHS website (www.vicnhs.bc.ca/cbc/) and the Christmas Bird Count site (www.birdsource.org) or contact Ann Nightingale at 652-6450 or by email at mtmot@shaw.ca. If you have a preference to count in a specific area, you may contact the team leader for the area directly.

After the day of counting is over, there is a post-count gathering to share stories and find out how we have done. The post-count gathering is at St. Luke's Church Hall, 3821 Cedar Hill X Rd (at Cedar Hill Rd.) at 7:00 pm. Any contributions of finger foods or treats would be appreciated!

Area	Name	Leader	Phone	Email
1	Butchart Gardens – N. Highlands	Warren Drinnan	652-9618	drinnan99@telus.net
2	Central Highlands	Rick Schortinghuis	652-3326	shylo@islandnet.com
3	Goldstream – Finlayson Arm	Adam Taylor	250-743-4273	a.s.taylor@telus.net
4	Thetis Lake – Hastings Flat	Jessica Murray	655-3090	rosyfinch@shaw.ca
5	Langford Lake	Glen Moores	655-3772	gmoores@islandnet.com
6	Albert Head – Triangle Mountain	David Allinson	480-9433	passerine@shaw.ca
7	Esquimalt Lagoon – Mill Hill	Derrick Marven	250-748-8504	marven@shaw.ca
8	Esquimalt Harbour	Camilla Smith	479-4950	CamillaS_@hotmail.com
9	Portage Inlet – The Gorge	David Kelly	658-8669	sdkelly@shaw.ca
10	Victoria Harbour	Ann Nightingale	652-6450	mtmot@shaw.ca
11	Beacon Hill Park	Tom Gillespie	361-1694	twg@horizonnet.ca
12	Oak Bay	Mike Edgell	656-5998	dadv@uvic.ca
13	University – Cadboro Bay	Marie O'Shaughnessy	598-9680	isis_mosh@shaw.ca
14	Ten Mile Point – Arbutus Rd	Andy Stewart	477-1328	andy.stewart@shaw.ca
15	Gordon Head – Mt. Douglas	Donna Ross	384-5327	hoshihana@shaw.ca
16	Swan Lake – Cedar Hill	Bill Dancer	721-5273	cdancer@pacificcoast.net
17	Blenkinsop Lake – Panama Flats	Dannie Carsen	544-2117	dcarsen@shaw.ca
18	Elk Lake – Cordova Bay	Colleen O'Brien	388-4520	cob@shaw.ca
19	Prospect Lake – Quick's Bottom	Darren & Claudia Copley	479-6622	dccopley@island.net
20	Martindale – Bear Hill	Brent Diakow	656-3190	brent@oceanusplastics.com
21	Zero Rock (ocean)	Barry Byers	382-0750	byersbarry@hotmail.com
22	Chain Islets (ocean)	Bruce Whittington	250-245-5325	fieldnat@pacificcoast.net
23	Juan de Fuca (ocean)	Ron Bates	386-1264	rbates@bc1.com



Habitat Acquisition Trust
Creating a Conservation Legacy

HAT Tricks

By Todd Carnahan, Habitat Acquisition Trust's Stewardship Coordinator

HAT Buys 400 kg of Native Grasses

Where can one purchase mature plants and seeds of grasses native to our Garry oak ecosystem? Sorry, there are no commercial suppliers. But that is about to change, thanks to Dr. Manivalde (Many) Vaartnou of the University of British Columbia. His ten-year experiment to determine if native grass seed stocks can be grown for reclamation ended this year – with a commitment by a Canadian supplier to produce commercial quantities.

Most Garry oak meadows in Victoria are full of invasive, introduced grasses like timothy and colonial bent grass. Seeded into pastures for animal fodder by colonists for many years, these grasses have replaced our native species. Although community interest in restoring native biodiversity is growing fast, a lack of native grass seed currently limits our efforts. While other political jurisdictions, such as Australia, Alaska, and much of the contiguous United States have legislation that requires the use of native species in restoration of public lands, this is not the case in western Canada. Here, vast amounts of introduced grass seed are added annually to our landscape. For example, on Vancouver Island over 100 000 kg of non-native seed is distributed annually by the forest industry and the Ministry of Transportation and Highways.



Grass planters Dr. Manivalde Vaartnou and Todd Carnahan. Photo provided by author

As Many ends his experiment, HAT has seized this unique opportunity to recover mature plants from Many's retired seed-increase nursery just south of Duncan, BC. Kathryn Martell and I armed ourselves with picks and shovels and filled a Toyota wagon with 400 kilograms of fescues, needlegrasses, bromes, and wild rye. Magnus Bein of the Restoration of Natural Systems Program helped to pot up and water the plants, which are now being cared for in a University of Victoria greenhouse.

This fall, the grasses will be transplanted to the Matson Lands Conservation Area as part of an ongoing restoration strategy. HAT staff and community volunteers will create a naturescape garden along the ridge top trail. David Price of Mandalay Developments contributed soil for the project and native shrubs were purchased from Russell Nurseries. The design features drought-tolerant native shrubs and native grasses that will annually re-seed the meadows below.

Contact HAT at 995-2428 for more information.

Office: 316-620 View St. Victoria

Mail: PO Box 8552 Victoria BC V8W 3S2

www.hat.bc.ca and www.conservationconnection.bc.ca: your database of conservation organizations and events in the CRD.

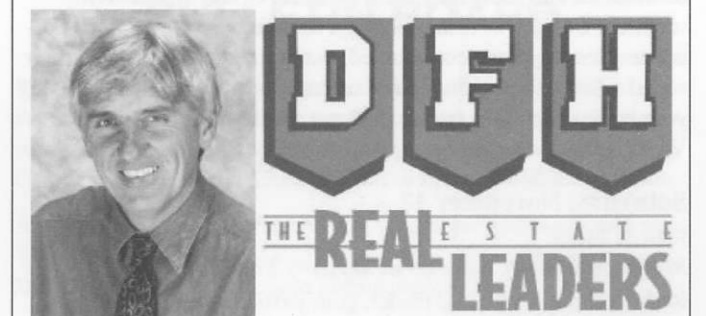
Welcome to New Members

Christine Sanderson and Dale W. Read
East Sooke Road
birds, botany geology, marine

Sharon White
Christmas Avenue
birds, marine life

Pauline Davis
Firwood Place

David Cuillerier
Blackberry Road



Jim Farrell 477-7291 jamesbfarrell@shaw.ca

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

REGULAR MEETINGS are generally held September-April on the following days. **Board of Directors:** the first Tuesday of each month (directors' meetings are held at Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary at 7:30 p.m.); **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; **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>, and is updated regularly.

NOVEMBER

November through December

EVENT

Glorious Goldstream Offers World-Class Salmon-Viewing
Goldstream is a world-class salmon-spawning stream with thousands of chum salmon returning between October and December. These chum salmon have traveled thousands of kilometres in their four-year lifetime and are at Goldstream to continue their life cycle by spawning in the river. Good years have seen as many as 60,000 salmon return home to the Goldstream River. The Visitor Centre is open daily this fall/winter from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Weekend activities at the Centre include fish printing, salmon slide shows, videos, and interpretive programs. Hot coffee and baked goods are available at the book/gift store and the fire is usually lit to warm you after a walk along the river to see the spawning salmon. Don't miss seeing our new Salmon Cam in the river. Volunteers always needed, please call 478-9414 to see how you can help.

Thursday, November 3

EVENT

HAT is hosting a gala dinner with the new Environment Minister, **Barry Penner**. For details and/or tickets, please call the HAT office at 995-2428.

Tuesday, November 8

NATURAL HISTORY PRESENTATION

The Late Prehistoric Mortuary Landscape of Southern Vancouver Island

Burial cairns on southern Vancouver Island are a short lived and localised phenomenon of the Late Prehistoric Period, occurring between 1500-1000 years before present. Early historic accounts tell of cairns occurring in the hundreds in the Victoria area. Large intact burial cairns sites in the Metchosin area have been recently inventoried and these sites form the basis of **Darcy Mathews'** research. Darcy will also talk about how the ancestral Straits Salish peoples may have constructed, maintained and contested their social relationships using burial cairns. Everyone welcome. Bring your coffee cup and a friend. 7:30 pm, Fraser 159, University of Victoria.

Saturday, November 12

FIELD TRIP

Mushroom Study Session at Mystery Location

Rather than a designated leader, your participation is what will make this event a success. Each person will come ready to share knowledge with others. Interested beginners welcome also. Bring your favourite field guide. Please note this is an observation trip, not intended for collecting. Bring lunch, snacks and drinks for

the all day outing. Meet at Helmcken Park and Ride at 9:00 am to car-pool. No pets please. Call **Agnes** at 721-0634 or email: thelynns@shaw.ca for more information.

Tuesday, November 15

BOTANY NIGHT,

Flora Poetica – Plants in Poetry

Andy MacKinnon, Poet Laureate of the Botany Nights, will moderate an evening that will combine beauty of plants and poetry. Admission: In lieu of admission bring one or more poems that deal with plants. No roses, tulips, or lilies, please. Swan Lake Nature Centre, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, November 19

FIELD TRIP

Snow Geese at Reifel Bird Sanctuary

Come and see the annual Snow Goose spectacle at the Reifel Bird Sanctuary. Every November thousands of Snow Geese stop over in this part of the Fraser River delta. Past trips have produced over 100 species of birds. Participants will carpool from in front of the Elk-Beaver Lake Regional Park sign on Elk Lake Drive at 6:00 a.m. for the 7:00 a.m. ferry sailing. We will return on the 5:00 p.m. sailing. Cost should be about \$40.00 per person with car pooling. Bring a lunch and a drink. Call Rick at 652-3326 to confirm. **Rick Schortinghuis** and **Gabe David** will be your leaders for this trip.

Sunday, November 20

FIELD TRIP

Pelagic Birding on the M.V. Coho

Mike McGrenere will lead this trip on the M.V. Coho on its usual sailing across the Strait of Juan de Fuca and back. The crossing takes 1½ hours and this is the best opportunity to see birds such as shearwaters, fulmars, and phalaropes, which are usually found further out to sea. We will be birding from the bow of the boat so **dress warmly**. Bring a lunch and meet at the Black Ball Ferry terminal in the Inner Harbour at 10:00 a.m. for the 10:30 sailing of the M.V. Coho (allow plenty of time for parking). Ferry cost is \$14.00 (US) return (~\$22.00 Can), and it is essential to have **2 pieces of ID** with you for customs, one with a photograph. We'll return on the 2:00 p.m. sailing

Wednesday, November 23

BIRDERS' NIGHT

Birds and Marine Animals of the Cold Continent - Antarctica and the Southern Ocean.

David Ashurst will be our guest speaker for this evening. David has worked as a scientist and lecturer on tour ships in Antarctica. Everyone welcome. 7:30 p.m., Fraser 159, UVic. Bring a friend and your coffee cup.

Sunday November 27

FIELD TRIP

Adventure to the Big Trees

Visit the Red Creek Fir near Port Renfrew plus other big trees on the way. Bring lunch, snacks and drinks for the all day outing. Starts from Victoria at 9:00 am. You must pre-register for this trip due to transportation limitations. Guaranteed spot if you are willing to bring your 4-wheel-drive for carpooling. No pets please. Date may change due to weather conditions. Call **Agnes** at 721-0634 or email her (thelynns@shaw.ca) to register or for more information.

Monday, November 28

MARINE NIGHT

Marine Life of the Pacific Northwest: A Photographic Encyclopedia of Invertebrates, Seaweeds and Selected Fishes

The authors, **Andy Lamb** and **Bernard P. Hanby**, will discuss the trials and triumphs of publishing an encyclopedia of this size. Their new reference book, over twenty-five years in the making, includes over 1400 species of saltwater animals and seaweeds and over 1700 images. Their presentation and slide show will focus on the process of gathering information and photographs, and the trips they did while preparing this book. Andy is a marine naturalist and educator who has worked both as Chief Collector and as School Program Co-ordinator at the Vancouver Aquarium. Formerly, he was a fish culturist with Fisheries and Oceans Canada. He is also the author of the marine classic, *Coastal Fishes of the Pacific Northwest*. Bernard is a noted underwater photographer and the recipient of the Vancouver Natural History Society's 2003 Davidson Award for Conservation and Education. He currently serves on the Conservation and Research Committee of the Vancouver Aquarium Marine Science Centre. Room 157 – Fraser Building, University of Victoria.

DECEMBER

December through February

EVENT

The Eagles Have Landed!

Visit the Nature House on the estuary at Goldstream Provincial Park during this year's Eagle Extravaganza. There are excellent viewing opportunities as hundreds of Bald Eagles feed on spawned-out salmon carcasses. The Nature House is open daily all winter from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. There will be great eagle viewing through spotting scopes and video cameras.

Friday, December 2 and Saturday, December 3

EVENT

Musical HATS!

Two fun-filled evenings of fabulous music and food! Both nights will be held at the Prospect Lake Community Hall. For details and/or tickets, please call the HAT office at 995-2428.

Saturday, December 3

FIELD TRIP

Gull Identification Workshop at Goldstream

Learn more than you ever thought possible about the gulls that winter on Vancouver Island. Some come from as far away as the prairies to take advantage of the winter abundance of salmon. Don't be afraid of gulls. Use this as an opportunity to practice for the Christmas bird count. Meet at the Goldstream Picnic

Area parking lot by the Finlayson Road bridge at 9:00 a.m. Bring adequate winter clothing and boots. **Gabe David** will lead this trip.

Sunday, December 4

FIELD TRIP

Birding Martindale Flats

Late migrants, winter arrivals, and raptors should make for some great birding with **Brent Daikow** (656-3190). Meet at the farm market at the corner of the Pat Bay Highway and Island View Road at 8:00 a.m. Gum boots are mandatory!!!!

Saturday, December 10

FIELD TRIP

Christmas Bird Count Tune-up

Meet at the Helmcken Rd. Park and Ride at 8:00 a.m. This will give you a chance to tune up your winter bird-spotting identification skills. We will cover Knockan Hill Park, Hastings Flats and all the roadsides in between, so bring your walking shoes, field guide and notepad. This is an excellent practice -run for novice or near- novice CBCers. For more info, call **Ann Nightingale**: 652-6450.

Sunday December 11

FIELD TRIP

Christmas Bird Count Tune-up

Meet at the foot of Viaduct Ave. and Interurban Rd. at 8:00 a.m. We will cover Viaduct Flats and Quick's Bottom and areas in between. Call **Rick Schortinghuis** if you need more information.

Tuesday, December 13

VNHS NATURAL HISTORY PRESENTATION

Member's Night

Did you go on any trips this year? Or maybe you have taken many pictures and just want to share them. VNHS Members Night is the place for you! Tell us about your adventures and dazzle us with your pictures. We can accommodate digital pictures with our laptop computer and digital projector, and good old fashioned slides with our reliable slide projector. Anyone interested in doing a presentation can call **Ed Pellizzon** at 881-1476. We meet at 7:30 pm, room 159 at the Fraser building at UVic.

Saturday, December 17

Victoria Christmas Bird Count

Contact **Ann Nightingale** 652-6450 or motmot@shaw.ca.

BULLETIN BOARD

Member planning a birding/natural history trip to Costa Rica in February would like to share travel expenses with other members who might be interested. One to four (max) others would be ideal. Contact **Clive Prior** at 250-385-7264 or cprior988@hotmail.com.

Are you going on one of the VNHS field trips? Willing to pick up a VNHS member in James Bay? If yes, then please telephone 384-7553. Thank you for your consideration.

Jeremy Tatum would like to remind all the birdwatchers that an Annual Bird Report will be published for the year, so remember to send in your records. Please contact Jeremy at jtatum@uvic.ca or 477-1089 for more information.

Three Rivers: Wild Waters, Sacred Places

The *Three Rivers: Wild Waters, Sacred Places* exhibition will help foster a new appreciation for the Wind, Snake and Bonnet Plume watersheds, along with the entire expanse of Yukon's wild beauty that too many take for granted. The exhibition challenges the way we perceive the links between art and nature, and perhaps it will compel many to re-think their notions about conservation.

September – December, 2005

Maltwood Art Museum and Gallery
University Centre, University of Victoria
Phone: 250-721-6562 or
250-721-8298 (recording)
Gallery Hours: 10am to 4pm
Monday to Friday

