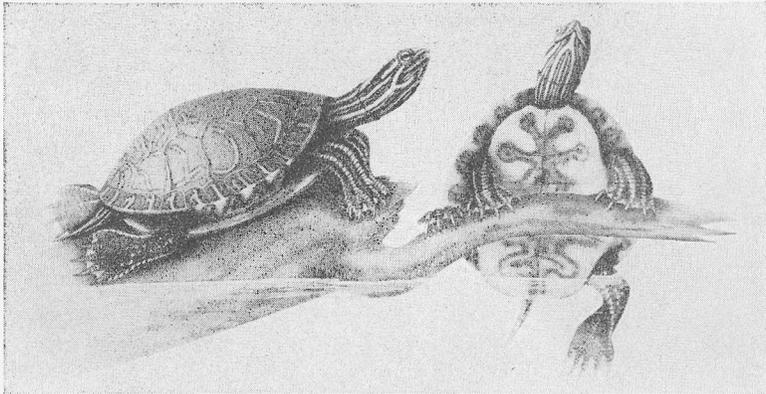


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Western painted turtles.

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THE WESTERN PAINTED TURTLE GETS AROUND

The Western Painted Turtle (see front cover) has a wide distribution in the northwest, extending from California north through Oregon, Washington and well into British Columbia and east to western Illinois and southern Wisconsin. In this Province it is found chiefly in the interior, including the Okanagan Valley north to Genier Lake 40 miles above Kamloops and in the Rocky Mountain Trench from the International border north to Golden. Small colonies are also found on the coast: in lakes near Pender Harbour; on Texada Island; and in Patterson Lake and others near Great Central Lake on Vancouver Island.

Because turtles in the coast region of the Province are so irregular or discontinuous in their distribution some biologists have doubted that they are of natural occurrence. However, while Painted turtles have been planted by man in some lakes west of the Coast Range those in Patterson Lake and other lakes near Great Central Lake appear to be indigenous. Their remoteness from civilization alone supports this view.

Undoubtedly turtles have been released in many lakes without authority and without a proper record being kept. For example, it is reported that several were placed in Kawkawa Lake near Hope about 1924 and others were released in Beaver Lake, Stanley Park, in 1936. Such an introduction or possibly an escape from captivity may account for the Painted turtle which has been present in Langford Lake near Victoria for many years. For several successive seasons this turtle, a large female, has emerged from the lake usually near the north end in order to dig a nest and lay a clutch of eggs. Presumably no mate is present in the lake; no other adult turtle has been observed and no young have ever been seen.

From time to time other turtles turn up in queer places possibly through man's activities. Thus, a recently killed adult turtle was picked up on a street in Vanderhoof about May 15th of this year and turned over to Mr. J.H. Sewell

who sent it to the Museum. Since Vanderhoof is far north of the known normal range it would seem that this animal was an escaped pet.

Another, more fortunate turtle, ten inches in length, made the headlines in the "Chilliwack Progress" for July 23, 1952, when it was found crossing the Trans-Canada Highway within the city limits of Chilliwack. The newspaper account suggests that the reptile may have arrived by way of the Fraser River which is a distinct possibility. However, the same report states that another turtle was taken from the Luckakuck River, a tributary to the Chilliwack, in 1946 which indicates that small numbers of turtles may be permanently present in this area as a result of deliberate plantings or accidental escapes.

Without doubt many other unrecorded instances exist of turtles occurring out of their normal range. These with those on record indicate that in time the Painted turtle will become established in many other areas of the Province, mainly through man's agency.

G. Clifford Carl,
Provincial Museum.

A NATURAL HISTORY OF BEACON HILL PARK

It is probable that from the time of the first settlement at Victoria in 1843, the area where Beacon Hill Park now stands was looked upon as a particularly lovely spot and used for picnics and outings. Little consideration however was given to establishing it as a park until the Colonial Office served notice on the Hudson's Bay Company in 1858 that it was going to re-possess Vancouver Island from the Company. The same year Governor James Douglas ordered that it be reserved for a public park and administered it under the Colonial Government until 1882, except for a period between 1877 and 1879 when Senator W. J. Macdonald and J. W. Douglas, M.P.P. acted as trustees for its management. In 1882 the park was granted in trust to the Corporation of the City of Victoria "to be maintained and preserved by the Corporation and their successors for the use, recreation and

enjoyment of the public---." A considerable portion of the park was lost through sale of lots by the Hudson's Bay Company. This also included other areas in Victoria, even streets which the Company claimed it owned, based on rights antedating the Royal Grant of Vancouver Island to the Company in 1849. The dispute when finally settled left the property so sold in possession of the purchasers. The east boundary originally extended from the waterfront at Cook Street in a straight line north from May Street to a point on Pakington Street near Humboldt Street and thence westerly to Douglas and Blanshard Streets.

Originally the west boundary also was a straight line from the waterfront at Douglas Street north to the intersection of Humboldt and Douglas Streets. Thus the area on the west inside the present dog's leg on Douglas Street and on the east of the park between Cook and Heywood Ave., has been lost. There remains 154 acres today.

The planting of exotic material in Beacon Hill Park dates back to 1889 when a By-law was passed authorizing the expenditure of \$25,000.00 for the development of the park at the suggestion of Mayor Grant, the previous year. The population was about 20,000 at that time. The first thing that was done was to conduct a contest for the best plan for the development of the park. This was won by a Scotsman, John Blair. He was appointed to supervise the work and one of his first jobs was to carve Goodacre Lake out of a swamp and build the bridge which has attracted so much attention over the years. Interest in the park was at a fever pitch judging from the letters to the press and suggestions made for its improvement. It is a pleasure to recall one phase of the early history of the park. In 1889 John Heywood and a number of other citizens gave 2,000 trees and shrubs to the City. These were planted the following autumn. Today, sixty years later, they form the basic planting around Goodacre Lake. Trees were also planted on Douglas Street, Government Street, Heywood Ave. and Rupert Street, and probably other streets. The ash trees on Douglas Street and chestnuts on Rupert St. are probably the only ones left on the street.

Looking back on the work of Mr. Heywood and John Blair we can still say they did an excellent job. Many of the trees have had to be thinned out to allow them more room for growth. They were imported in part from California, but chiefly from Thos. Meehan and Sons of

Philadelphia, leading nurseryman of the day on this continent. Apparently they had no trouble in getting established. With ample moisture in the soil and lots of shade and ground cover amongst the natural forest trees they grew well. It's a very different story today. It is extremely difficult to get material established because of drought, dry soil and exposed windy conditions.

Exotic material which is of interest because of its hardiness or adaptability to local conditions are a collection of Bamboos, Fan Leafed Palm, Big Tree (*Swquoa gigantea*), Laurels, both English and Portugese, Horse Chestnut, Babylon Weeping Willow, Monkey Puzzle, Californian Nutmeg Yew (*Torreya*), and other trees all of which grow freely more or less elsewhere in the Victoria area. Eucalyptus has been tried at various times but even the hardiest forms succumb during severest frosts. Recently specimens of *Metasequoia* have been planted from seed obtained in China just before the Japanese invasion. Like the Ginkgo it dates back to the ice age.

Mayor's Grove, lying west of Heywood Ave. football field was started during a convention of Western Mayors here in 1927. Trees were planted up to 1936 by many distinguished persons including Viscount Willington, Winston Churchill, Gen. Sir Arthur Curry, Lord Robert Baden Powell, Earl of Bessborough, Lord Tweedsmuir and King Prajadhipok of Siam.

The Indian name of Beacon Hill according to James Dean, Indian anthropologist, was Meehacan, signifying belly, because it looks at a distance like the belly of a fat man lying on his back.

Early press reports tell of the open nature of the hill where Indians caught ducks in high nets as they flew to and from the sea. An ancient fortified Indian village stood on Finlayson Point and stone burial mounds were to be found on the hill; but these disappeared prior to 1897.

Since the earliest days Beacon Hill Park has been improved and in turn desecrated by the hand of man. The unauthorized cutting of trees for firewood in the park was a source of worry to authorities even in the 1850's and 60's, there being no direct supervision of the park. Many of the features which appear so natural today are only achieved by hard and costly work. The beauty of the large oak trees is enhanced because they have been pruned of

dead wood which would otherwise mar their rugged outlines. Thick copses of oaks have gradually been thinned. Now young sturdy trees are beginning to replace the scrubby oaks which formerly competed with one another for existence.

Control of the broom on the hilltop which was planted in the early days has been a very necessary action to control its spreading and prevent grass fires. While it is a natural cover for quail and pheasants it becomes a serious fire hazard after it is ten or fifteen years old and can only be kept under control at great expense. Annual reports reveal the fact that broom had to be cut to keep it within bounds as early as 1904. Thousands of dollars have been spent since for the same purpose. Use of 2-4-D and modern machinery now keeps it under reasonable control. It is interesting to notice the return of the wild meadowland flowers, the erythronium, camas, buttercup and wild larkspur following its partial removal. There are now few places around Victoria where the camas can be seen in sheets of blue as in Beacon Hill Park. Some items of maintenance are a compromise between what is desirable from a naturalistic standpoint and what is essential because of the use and abuse it gets from the public. For instance, the grass is cut in the wild meadow areas to prevent serious grass fires which cause great injury particularly to young oak trees. This is detrimental to late blooming wild plants some of which have been killed by the process. On the other hand the hay is cut as high and as late as possible after the camas and erythroniums have ripened seed. Trees such as Douglas and Balsam fir have suffered because of underbrushing and changed underground water tables. When they start to die there is little that can be done to save them so the Parks Department tries to remove them usually a year or so before they are entirely defoliated. This policy has been the subject of considerable criticism; but it is the only sensible thing to do to preserve a tidy looking park. It also permits the department to cut and fall them where they will do the least harm rather than risk injury from breakage during gales if left until they are entirely dead. Only half a dozen original Douglas Fir trees still survive. Judging from those which have been removed, they are about 350 years old.

The Garry Oaks are of considerable interest to botanists, for on this northerly tip of its natural habitat,

extending from Northern California to the Comox region on Vancouver Island, it is here on the Island that they reach their maximum size. At one time it was thought that the scrubby type of oak associated with rocky barren dry areas was different from the large oaks to be seen on the better soils; but this has been disproved. It has been estimated that certain oaks which have been removed because of their dangerous condition in the park were up to 400 years of age. The Garry Oaks in particular give Beacon Hill Park a character which distinguishes it from other large and beautiful parks in the northwest. The larger Douglas Firs though not tall, are rugged and wind-swept and also lend considerable character although they are unfortunately slowly disappearing.

On the Cook Street side of the park there were many fine cottonwood trees up to 4 feet in diameter. Practically all the older trees have been removed because of decay. Second growth trees have been restricted somewhat because of their brittle character. The common wild rose (*R. nutkana*) has been observed growing to a height of about 36 feet through a dense willow tree at the nursery. Broom fires in the past have caused serious injury to the many oak groves on the hill. At one time fire bugs were responsible for a great many fires in Beacon Hill but the number has been fortunately considerably reduced in recent years.

Within living memory the ladyslippers and sword ferns which grew wild in the park have disappeared. On the hill top are many fascinating wild plants. Some like *Lupinus lepidus*, flowering in early June would make excellent dry rock garden specimens. This species is relatively rare, this being the only location where it is known on Vancouver Island.

While the display of camas, erythronium and buttercups in late April and early May is outstanding, there are many interesting field plants to be seen by those who are observant in the same general locations in June when the wild roses are in bloom. These include the Yellow Paint Brush, now quite rare in the park, Cow Parsnip growing against the bush on the south side of Dallas Road, Columbine, *Myosotis laxa*, a species of Forgetmenot, Bilberry (*Vaccinium caespitosum*) and Wild Strawberry on the waterfront, Woolly Sunflower which grows in clumps about a foot high, Indian Consumption Plant (*Lomatium nudicaule*), *Delphinium Menziesii*, the Yellow Avens (*Potentilla gracilis*), *Brodiaea*,

Yarrow and *Lupinus bicolor* and *L. Macrantha*, both annuals. There is also the Tree Lupin, *Lupinus arborea*, really a shrub with attractive yellow flowers, introduced from California.

So much for the early history of Beacon Hill Park and its flora in brief.

Early interest was shown in the fauna of B.C., evident by the establishment of a zoo in the early 1890's which included deer, bear, coyotes, racoons, wolves, lynx and eagle. Lawrence Goodacre, pioneer butcher and alderman in charge of Beacon Hill Park, for many years donated all the meat for carnivorous animals for a period of about 14 years. During the 1920's and '30's several mountain goat and buffalo were kept, but they did not thrive in our damp climate. In 1924 *Ursus Kermodei* arrived and lived for over 20 years in the park, the only specimen in captivity of this white bear, cousin, no doubt, of the common black bear, but a distinct sub-species. Victorians have never taken kindly to a zoo and in time the zoo was abandoned, all but the few remaining deer.

Raccoons have invaded the park in recent years after an absence of forty years or so and have made heavy inroads on the few remaining pheasants and Californian quail which have been introduced into the park.

Swans have inhabited Goodacre Lake since its beginning, recent stock having been obtained from the Royal Swannery on the Thames River, England. Of the wild ducks, mallards live the year 'round in the park and breed freely. American wid-geon invade the park in large numbers in winter, keeping the grass close clipped until May. Teal, Butter-ball, Merganser, Canvas-back and Woodduck are also commonly seen. We have been endeavoring to add to the number of Woodducks but with little success. A relative, the Mandarin duck, a native of the Orient, adds color to the lake.

In the lakes sticklebacks and sunfish are to be found. Catfish have been introduced at times; but endeavors are being made to exterminate them. Several large golden carp still live, purchased from the Japanese Tea Gardens at the Gorge in 1939, following the outbreak of the Second World War.

W. H. Warren,
Park Administrator,
July 21, 1952.

FIELD MEETINGS, BIRD-GROUP, 1952John Dean Park31/5/52

On the last day of May, thirty members met at John Dean Park, some members going west and some eastward in the Park, both trails leading up through the timber to views over Finlayson Arm and the Strait of Georgia respectively. The afternoon and evening were sunny and visibility was good. As usual not many species, 18, were noticed in the area, those heard and seen however were typical of the dry woods of Saanich. Following is the list of birds noted:-

Western Tanager, Violet-green Swallow, Olive-sided Fly-catcher, Townsend Warbler, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Chipping Sparrow, Brown Creeper, Russet-backed Thrush, Audubon Warbler, Red-tailed Hawk, W. Robin, Ring-necked Pheasant, Rufus Hummingbird, California Quail, Pileated Woodpecker, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, Barn Swallow, Song Sparrow. 3½ hours were spent in the Park.

J.O.C.

Field Meeting - Bare Island21/6/52

On the 21st June 14 members left Randle's Landing by launch and visited nesting seabirds on Bare Island. Sea was calm and visibility good. At our approach herons left the trees. The usual number of Double-crested Cormorants, Glaucous-winged Gulls, Oyster Catchers, and Pigeon Guillemots were seen. About 80 nests of Double-crested Cormorants were counted, these being separated by the Baird Cormorant colony of the more precipitous ledges. Crows were busy moving or demolishing cormorant eggs. Not seen in previous years but seen offshore on that day was one Harlequin Duck and two fast-flying Tufted Puffins.

J.O.C.

House-finch or Linnet. (Carpodacus mexicanus)

On the 28th day of May, 1937, Dr. McTaggart Cowan noticed the song of the House Finch, a species hitherto unknown on Vancouver Island. Later two immature specimens were obtained by him for the Provincial Museum. In 1932 S. J. Darcus had recorded the species for the first

time in this Province, at Penticton. The species might have been noticed earlier but for certain similarities shared with the Purple Finches in size, color, lack of color song and flight.

During the past fifteen years the linnet has spread from the vicinity of the Empress Hotel over to the shores of Oak Bay. During the past few seasons the call-note and song have been heard on Burdett Ave., Blanshard St., Belleville St., Beacon Hill Park, Linden Ave., Crescent Rd., Queen Ann Heights, McNeill Ave., Sunset Ave., St. Patrick St., Victoria Golf Links.

Until the winter of /51 - /52 the Linnet was regarded as a summer visitor. Attracted and held by regular feeding, however, it was encouraged to stay through this past winter by Mrs. H.M.S. Bell of St. Patrick St. In her garden as many as 22 birds could be counted at the table at one time. Mrs. Bell now holds a licence for banding birds. Up to the middle of August 54 Linnets had been banded. Mrs. Bell's notes on these birds are of interest. There were 4 Linnets feeding in December, 22 on the 8th January. On the 16th of January 13 Linnets, four of these bright in color. On the 15th March, of 18 birds one was orange and three pink in color. On the 9th March "Redpoll" eating fat. On the 18th March started banding. On the 13th April, 'Definitely identified as House-finch by specimens from Museum.' The House Sparrows and Linnets feed amicably together, the latter have a quiet and gentle method of feeding, unlike the former! 'The shape of the Linnet is 'doveline' with its small head and bill and high round forehead, the California Purple Finch being chunky with heavy beak.'

Mrs. Bell had fed the Linnets largely on crushed sunflower seeds.

Linnets can be brightly colored, the red of the forehead especially being brilliant. California Purple-finches are sometimes well-colored but of a more bricklike red. Females and young of both species are dull and striped.

The Linnet's song is a highly pitched richly-toned hasty warble, sung on a steady line without the curves and inflections of the California Purple Finch. The Linnets song contains the double phrase "tit-chow, tit-chow"; the song may be translated into "Titchitit, Titchairto, Titchow, Titchow, Titchitit (etc.)"

It is hoped that there will be room for both these species in any locality and that one will not drive out the other.

J.O.C.

BIRDS TO LOOK FOR IN AUGUST - SEPTEMBER

From the middle of August onwards bird-seekers can begin to look seriously for birds on migration south.

Walking over flat open country one may easily see a flock of rather plain ashy coloured birds. On closer inspection they reveal a white edge to the tail, and a bobbing movement of the tail, when they are on the ground. They leave the ground almost simultaneously and settle a little further away. These are the American Pipits.

In the same kind of environment the Horned Larks are to be found, in rather smaller groups than the Pipits. These are very distinctive in appearance, a striped brown back, with yellow throat, breast and underparts, with a black collar, a black streak descending from the eye, and generally, but not always noticeable, black horns. They are remarkable for a very long hind toe, and there are many subspecies. They have a high pitched note, which can be heard in flight.

Continuing to the shoreline the smallest gull to be seen at this time of year is the Bonaparte (12" to 14"). The mature birds will still have their black heads, which they will not show in the winter, only a black spot behind the eye. A somewhat larger gull (18") with a very red beak, black tail, dark grey in color will be Heermann's Gull. A little later, late September, the Bonaparte Gulls can be seen flying in large flocks in formation. Clover Point is a good place to see both these gulls, and also the Ruddy Turnstone. This last is seen here only in the fall, and can be distinguished, from the Black Turnstone, by its orange legs, and red and white back. In flight it has a startling pattern of red, white and black. A bird well worth looking for.

In September, a visit to Cadboro Bay in the morning at low tide will probably yield several Dowitchers, easily distinguished by their dark appearance, long bills, and white rump patches, visible in flight. These birds are about three inches longer than a robin. They are quite tame, generally so busy, feeding, that one can approach quite close.

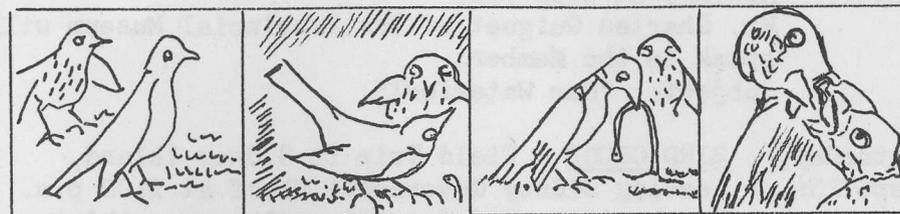
Scarce and less frequent are the Greater Yellow-legs, a rather large, slim, grey, sand-piper, with bright yellow legs, who "teeters". In flight the body and wings are dark, and the tail is white.

R.S.H. - H.A.B.

JUNIOR PAGE

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Out of one hole into another.

George Merrick tells us about his Robin

"I just got it when it fell out of the nest. It didn't have any feathers on it. I brought it home and decided I'd raise it.

I made a nest out of cotton and then went to work digging worms. He'd eat about half a bottle of worms a day. In a couple of days feathers started sprouting out all over him. Soon he left the nest and was slipping and sliding on the floor. Soon he got stronger and his feathers grew more and more as the days went on. Then we took him outside. He would follow me all around. He would hop up the street after me. Finally he was starting to fly. Sometimes if another robin or bird came near him he would fly up to the house top. He was scared of them. Then I would just call him and he would come down and land on my shoulder. We named him Feathers.

He was for about a week a homing robin before he left, and would come back now and then. He has now gotten wild and likes to be out with the other robins in the cherry trees."

Birds I've seen in June and July by George Merrick.

Black Pidgeonhawk, Brown creeper, Seattle wrens, House sparrows, Violet green swallows, Barn swallows, Screech owl, Glaucous-winged gull, Herring gull, Short-billed gull, Robins, Crows, Red-winged blackbird, Downey woodpeckers, Chipping sparrow, Fox sparrows, bush tit, Yellow Warbler, Towhee, Western fly catcher.

Saturday, Sept. 13, 10 o'clock, Provincial Museum.
Members and new members will meet to make plans for the season.

NOTICE OF MEETINGS

1952

Tuesday GENERAL MEETING: Reading Room of the Provincial
 Sept.9: Library at 8:00 p.m.
 Mr. Charles Guiguet of the Provincial Museum will
 speak to the Members.
 Subject: "Our Waterfowl".

Saturday, BIRD GROUP - Field Trip to Sidney Island,
 Sept.13: leaving Sidney Government Wharf at 2:00 p.m.
 The boat engaged for trip will carry thirty-
 five passengers making approximate cost of
 trip eighty-five cents each if full complement
 is reached. It will be appreciated if members
 will communicate with Mrs. K.C. Drury, 524
 Island Road, Garden-7410, as early as possible
 to ensure reservation.

J. O. Clay.

Saturday, GEOLOGY GROUP: Mr. A.H. Marrion, who has made
 Sept.20: a particular study on the Ice Age in Historical
 Geology, will take the members to Gordon
 Head. Meet at Mt. Douglas Park at 1:30 p.m.

Advance Notice of Audubon Screen Tours:

The 1952-53 programme of Audubon Screen Tours for
 Victoria is as follows:

Friday, November 14: Fran William Hall -
 "The Four Corners".
 Friday, December 12: Robert C. Hermes -
 "Bonaventure Diary".
 Friday, February 20: Howard Cleaves -
 "Animals Unaware".
 Friday, March 20: Allan D. Cruickshank -
 "Santa Lucia Sea Cliffs".
 Friday, May 8: Walter H. Shackleton -
 "Oddities in Nature".

The Tours will be presented in the Crystal Garden
 Auditorium at 8 p.m. Mark the dates on your calen-
 dar and plan on getting season tickets when they are
 available.

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