

The  
**VICTORIA**  
**NATURALIST**

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Fairy-ring mushroom (*Marasmius oreades*).

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The Fairy Ring fungus (see cover) is a common species, growing in grass in the form of a more or less complete ring. It is an edible variety, and quite palatable. This fungus commences its growth at the centre of any given ring. Gradually the mycelium exhausts the soil and growth, which is perennial, proceeds outward around the edges. Eventually a small circle is formed. This process is continued from year to year, the ring becoming larger and larger, and gradually creeping forward all around the edges. The mycelium for a time kills the grass, but this will soon fill in again from its underground roots.

(from Mushrooms & Toadstools  
by H.T.Gussow & W.S. Odell)

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THE HAMMERHEAD SHARK IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

by G.C.Carl, Provincial Museum

Two sight records of a hammerhead shark which have come to the museum recently seem worthy of note since this fish has not yet been recorded from British Columbia.

The first record is supplied by Mr. R.W. Hill of the troller "Dolless" who reports seeing a hammerhead shark some miles off Ucluelet in 1952. The second, also reported by Mr. Hill, is a sight record obtained by Carl and Gil Miller of the troller "Erskin" while fishing off Ucluelet during the 1953 season. The hammerhead is so distinctive in shape that it could not be mistaken for any other fish.

Hammerheads are rarely taken off the coast of southern California and there are no records north of that state.. However, since they are said to frequent warm surface waters it is not surprising that individuals occasionally wander into the warm water off our coast.

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REPORT ON THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY LECTURES  
in the Oak Bay Junior High School Auditorium,  
Cadboro Bay Road for the season of 1953-54.

Five evening lectures were given in the above auditorium.

The total attendance at the lectures was 2,731 or an average of 546.

The Receipts and Disbursements for the season are as follows:

Receipts:

Sale of season tickets and door admissions - \$1182.56

Disbursements:

National Audubon Society of New York	- \$500.00
High School Auditorium Rental	- 225.00
Printed Matter	- 26.60
Advertising -	- 163.31
Amusement Tax -	- 63.81
Screen rent	- 35.50
Supplies	- 18.02
Petty Cash	- 10.00

\$1042.24

Total Expenses - \$1042.24

Proceeds for division - \$140.32

Half of Proceeds - \$70.16

Five hundred tickets were printed and 244 sold which included 5 complimentary tickets leaving 256 unsold and on hand.

All monies received were paid over to the Treasurer and the accounts have been paid by him. The receipts for the disbursements are on his file.

In conclusion I would like to extend my thanks to Dr. Carl for his valuable help at the lectures also to those who sold the season tickets and to the members who helped at the door and in the hall.

Yours respectfully,  
Lenora Panton  
for the Auditorium Committee.

We have carefully examined and checked the above items in the account and find the statement correct.

Auditors: EDWIN W. ADSHEAD  
J. H. WHITEHOUSE.

THE SWIMMING BAT

One evening in late August, while walking on the beach between Bowker Creek and Oak Bay Boat-house, two of us were witnesses to a curious incident. It was just before sundown when we noticed a movement in the water about fifteen feet out. All that was visible was a little brown head encircled by ripples of water moving rhythmically towards shore. A minute or so later, a very wet and bedraggled brown bat emerged, crawled slowly over the gravel a few feet and took refuge in a tangled mass of seaweed. Full of curiosity, we went right up to it, but it didn't move or seem aware of our presence. From the ripples in the water, it was apparent that its wings were completely outspread while it swam and that the distance from wing-tip to wing-tip was about that of a violet-green swallow.

Joan Inglis.

--- THE ATOM ---

The mighty little atom  
Had been around so long  
It seemed almost too commonplace  
A subject for a song -  
But we hit its solar plexus  
And the fulminations vex us -  
Bing! Bang! Bong!

O angry little atom  
Was our treatment of you wrong?  
We thought of you as passive  
And peaceable, though strong,  
But lately you perplex us  
With threats to soon annex us -  
Bing! Bang! Bong!

Pisces.

ROBINS AND GARTER SNAKES

Since the beaks of American Robins are not adapted to dismembering even very small garter snakes some members may have wondered just why the robin attacked the snake as described in the September issue of the Naturalist. Also, what became of the dead snake?

Almost certainly the robin swallowed its victim whole, incredible as it may seem. Several years ago we witnessed a female robin kill and swallow a garter snake that was between 8 and 9 inches in length-- it was definitely not less than 8 inches long, and around 5/16 inch diameter in the middle. The robin was unafraid of us, being one of several visiting our feeding-board, and we were able to approach to within 15 feet of her.

Having thrashed the snake about in the manner described in the Naturalist, until it was limp and lifeless, the robin laid the snake straight out on the grass, with the head towards her, and commenced to swallow it. When the snake was half swallowed the bird paused for a few moments, and we expected to see the snake regurgitated. However, she resumed swallowing and the rest of the snake disappeared. The bird then stood motionless for a brief period, then resumed its search for more appropriate food for its nestlings. Was this a record length for a robin to swallow?

Snakes do not appear to be a common food for robins, and it would seem that only very hungry birds such as those feeding chicks would prey on them. We once saw a male robin attack a very small garter snake which was not more than 5 to 6 inches in length. The bird was plainly very nervous and evidently was not mistaking the little snake for a large worm. He would peck and jump away, until the baby reptile finally wound itself up and struck at the robin with its tiny jaws as wide as they would go. The robin then flew away.

Morris Jackson,  
Fanny Bay, B.C.

GEOLOGY GROUP MEETINGS

On April 27th, we started the first of our series of lectures on BACKYARD GEOLOGY by Mr. A. H. Marrion. The subject was CLAYS. Twenty-five members and two visitors were present.

Mr. Marrion outlined the history of pottery from the very earliest times - a potter's wheel being used in the time of Jeremiah. China clay was not discovered until much later and for a long time China and Japan, alone, made fine china. In 1709 white clay, or kaolin, was discovered in Germany and then at Limoges in France and still later in England. Kaolin consists of silica and alumina and is decayed felspar.

The formation of clays was discussed, the chief method being the dissolving of certain minerals in rocks, such as felspar, hornblende and mica by the carbonic acid present in rain. Clays can be left by ordinary and glacial streams and may be deposited in seas or lakes.

The occurrence of various clays in the Victoria area was out-lined and interesting charts, made by Mr. Marrion, were shown. Blue and brown clays occur in many areas often in combination and in a number of instances perfect shells have been found in the blue clay.

We were then introduced to two local potters, Mrs. H. M. Jones and Mrs. McMoran. They showed some delightful samples of pottery made from local clay and answered questions. We were also shown many interesting specimens of clay and rock. Professor Lowe then thanked Mr. Marrion for his most interesting evening.

The following Saturday a good crowd turned up at Baker's Brickyards where we first studied the clay pits and then saw the many fascinating processes involved in the making of bricks, tiles and flower-pots. On leaving, Mr. Graham, who had so ably conducted us on our tour, presented each member with a miniature flower-pot.

K. M. S.

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CHRONOLOGICAL PLANT LIST

This list of the flowering dates of Victoria's plants, trees and shrubs compiled by Miss M. C. Melburn, a member of our Society, was commenced in the May issue, and will be continued in the November number.

1954					
<u>Flowering Date</u>	<u>Family</u>	<u>Scientific Name</u>	<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Location</u>	
May 4	Primulaceae	Centunculus minimus	chaffweed	Cattle Pt.	
" "	Plantaginaceae	Plantago Bigelovii	plantain sp.	" "	
" 7	Nymphaeaceae	Nymphaea polysepala	yellow pond lily	Thetis Lake	
" "	Compositae	Balsamorhiza deltoidea	balsam root	"	
" "	"	Achillea millefolium	yarrow	"	
" "	"	Antennaria Howellii	everlasting	"	
" 7	"	Microseris Bigelovii	--	"	
" "	Polemoniaceae	Gilia tenella	gilia sp.	"	
" "	Umbelliferae	Sanicula septentrionalis (S. Nevodensis)	sanicle sp.	"	
" "	Leguminosae	Hosackia parviflora	bird-foot clover	"	
" "	"	Lathyrus Nuttallii	purple pea	"	
" "	Primulaceae	Trientalis latifolia	star flower	"	
" "	Rosaceae	Amelanchier florida	saskatoon or June berry	"	
" "	Ericaceae	Arctostaphylos Uva-Ursi	bearberry	"	
" 8	Liliaceae	Camassia Leichtlinii	later camas	Ten Mile Pt.	
" "	Caprifoliaceae	Lonicera ciliosa	orange honeysuckle	"	
" "	Urticaceae	Urtica Lyallii	nettles	"	
" "	Rosaceae	Rubus macropetalus	trailing blackberry	"	
" "	Orchidaceae	Corallorhiza maculata	spotted coral root	Killarney Wd.	
" 9	Compositae	Matricaria matricarioides	pineapple weed	Wayside	
" 14	Rosaceae	Crataegus brevispina	black hawthorn	Humber Wd.	
" "	Leguminosae	Vicia tetrasperma	hairy vetch	Cadboro Bay	
" "	"	Trifolium dubium	clover sp.	lawn	
" "	Rosaceae	Pyrus occidentalis	western mountain ash	roadside	
" "	Plantaginaceae	Plantago maritima	seaside plantain	sea shore	
" "	Leguminosae	Vicia tetrasperma	hairy vetch	Cadboro Bay	
" "	Umbelliferae	Sanicula arctopoides	sanicle sp.	Chinese Cemetery	
" "	"	Heracleum lanatum	cow parsnip	Oak Bay Golf Course	
" "	Leguminosae	Lathyrus maritimus	beach pea	Ten Mile Pt.	
" 15	Rosaceae	Pyrus diversifolia	crab apple	Arbutus Rd.	
" "	Berberidaceae	Achlys triphylla	vanilla leaf	Killarney Wd.	
" "	Cruciferae	Sisymbrium officinale	hedge mustard	Arbutus Rd.	
" "	Rhamnaceae	Rhus Purshiana	casacara	"	
" "	Saxifragaceae	Tiarella trifoliata	foam flower	"	
" 16	"	Ribes lacustre	swamp gooseberry	Spectacle L.	
" "	Betulaceae	Alnus sitchensis	green alder	"	
" 18	Cruciferae	Lepidium campestre	field cress	Sach's Pt.	
" "	Compositae	Anthemis arvensis	mayweed	Ten Mile Pt.	
" "	Ranunculaceae	Delphinium Menziesii	Menzie's larkspur	"	
" 20	Orchidaceae	Corallorhiza striata	striped coral root	Mt. Douglas	
" "	Portulacaceae	Calandrinia caulescens	red maids	"	
" "	"	Montia parvifolia	miner's lettuce	"	
" "	Cruciferae	Thysanocarpus curvipes	lace-pod	"	
" "	Caryophyllaceae	Silene gallica	wild pink	"	
" "	Saxifragaceae	Heuchera micrantha	alum root	"	
" "	Leguminosae	Lupinus bicolor	white-flowered species	"	
" "	Umbelliferae	Leptotaenia dissecta	chocolate-tips	"	
" "	Compositae	Agoseris laciniata	false dandelion	"	
" "	"	Eryophyllum lanatum	woolly sunflower	"	
" "	"	Grindelia stricta	gumweed	Uplands Shore.	

SWAN LAKE: 1954

On the first official day of summer we took advantage of fine weather to visit low-lying brushy fields near the lake edge. We were greeted by the clear leisurely song of the black-headed grosbeak, dressed in his pied and coloured plumage. He is one of the Province's best singers. This one was singing from a favourite branch atop a high willow. The poem of this avian swain, if one dare anthropomorphically to set it to his music, seemed by its lilt to say:

Pretty, pretty proud, hulloo!  
 (Wooing Polly Perrew)  
 Wait, wait, pretty Poll Perrew  
 Pretty Poll Perrew.

However, two days later he was singing the song of the anxious parent:

Bridget, Bridget, worry, will you,  
 Worry for you. Which way will you?  
 Wait, wait, wait.  
 Wish it, wish it, wish it for you,  
 Wish I would he never saw you.  
 Wait, wait, wait.

(N.B. This is not a challenge to other poets)

From down by the water came the 'song' of the Traill flycatcher. Today the song was loudly whispered 'Fitz-bew'. Another day it might be whispered 'Whispercheer'.

The bird was hawking for flies from favourite stances of dry willow, vibrating his slender tail after each sortie. Seemingly a mere small loose bag of fluff, he could smarten into quite a bird, with yellow bill, white throat and underparts, back brownish, grey wing-bars. This bird shuns a human crowd (as he did for us lately) but is undisturbed and confident with two quiet observers nearby. According to the books this species is a habitant of open meadows near water, and may belong here only in the Puget Sound and Gulf Island area, wintering in Mexico.

J. O. C.

BIRD GROUP MEETING AT SIDNEY

On Saturday, September 11th; a warm, quiet and cloudy day, 32 members of the society proceeded to Sidney, meeting at the government wharf, then on to the gardens and foreshore owned by Mr. R. E. Gile and from there to Mrs. Jackson's waterfront property on Shoal Harbour, concluding with a visit to the mud flats surrounding the Resthaven Sanitarium. 50 species of birds were identified, including a flock of about 200 western sandpipers. 2 herring gulls, 5 ruddy ducks and an osprey which circled the group many times, carrying in its talons a small fish. Curiously enough, no swallows were observed on this trip, but one party of members were fortunate enough to spot one solitary black swift.

The area covered on this bird group meeting included the open sea, salt water mudflats, marshes, beaches, rocky bluffs, woodland and fields. In addition most of the district is a bird sanctuary, so as a place for bird observation, it could hardly be bettered.

A.R.D.

BIRDS AT CLOVER POINT

This little promontary, situated off Dallas Road near Moss Street, is well known to the bird group as one of the best places in Victoria to observe sea birds. Here can be seen to advantage the sea gulls, and, in their season, the shore birds. Here come every summer the ruddy turnstones, the wandering tattlers, spotted sandpipers, and other varieties of shore and sea birds.

As an example of the bird life this point offers, the following species were seen on two trips taken on the 15th and 17th of September. On the rocks to the north were 7 surfbirds, all in one group, and, curiously enough, in the centre of the group were 4 dowitchers. What these latter birds were doing on the rocks in the company of the surfbirds it is hard to say. On another rock, close by, were 7 black oyster-catchers, and a group of the more familiar black turnstones. Also on the rocks and in the nearby

waters were scores of gulls, glaucous-winged, Bonapartes, short-billed, Californian, Heerman, and a couple of herring gulls. A little off shore were at least a hundred terns, but our attention was centered on a very black sea bird which was harrying the terns. This bird was new to us, and it was some time before we were able to identify it as a sooty shearwater. Just as we were leaving two parasitic jaegers came along, and a group of about 80 terns, which had been resting on the kelp beds, rose into the air with one of the jaegers in the middle of the flock. Immediately there occurred one of the fastest aerial avian mixups that can be imagined. It was all too swift motion for us to see what really was happening but in about five seconds the jaeger emerged intact and quickly disappeared, while the terns settled down again on to the kelp. Here also, on the grass, the rocks and the beaches, were a flock of about one hundred savannah sparrows, a few American pipits and half a dozen meadowlarks. On the day following our trip to the point, about fifty northern phalarope were seen, and on the 19th, a solitary wandering tattler, a newly arrived pair of scaup and one Holboell grebe and, in the same week, the rather uncommon sanderling.

A. R. D.

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---- AUTUMN ----

We wonder at the gifts from nature's store  
 So little have we done but scratch the earth,  
 Waited for the warm sun and rain that came  
 In springtime and again in October.  
 The seeds are saved for planting next year's crop  
 Dahlias lifted, shrubs transplanted,  
 Tulip and narcissus bulbs are scattered,  
 Apples and potatoes are boxed and stored.  
 Now let winter come and the cold blasts blow  
 We have our hearth and wood piled high to burn.  
 The earth has kept her orbit round the sun  
 The moon has waxed and waned her shadowed course  
 If puny man stirs up too great a fight  
 In the great universe we sense God's might.

A. O. Hayes

JUNIOR PAGE

Chairman: Jack Wood

Secretary: Ralph Gustafson

We had elections on the 21st of September with some difficulty as Dr. Carl's Indian mask making idea was so interesting that many had no spare hand to hold up for voting. Mr. Duff brought several masks and whistles which he used to illustrate his talk. Anyhow, going back to elections; Jack Wood was elected Chairman, Ralph Gustafson Vice-chairman and Keith Gray Secretary. Next week the editor will be elected.

NEWS ITEM: When you come into the Museum look among the stuffed birds for a rhinoceros auklet. It is a sea bird with a horn on its nose like a rhino which gives it its name. Mr. Maxwell was fishing and one dived after his fly bait and got hooked by the eyelid. Mr. Maxwell set it free and it waved goodbye gratefully. Mr. Guignet said, "Guess what I caught yesterday", and you have guessed it, he had caught the same kind of bird on his bait also.

INTEREST ITEM: A sick fox sparrow was given to Jack and Clifford Wood's father. Mr. Woods came into the meeting on Tuesday and said he had found an air pocket in the bird's crop. He could see the swelling by blowing back the feathers. He punctured it with a needle and the bird flew away before he could even band it. Mr. Wood has a permit to keep a wild bird aviary and he keeps records of the habits of his boarders.

Here are the names of the plants Miss Milburn showed us on one of the field trips she took us in Beacon Hill Park in April: Meadow grass, sedge, lily, camas, sheep sorrel, three chickweeds, five kinds of mustards, wild turnip, buttercup, early saxifrage, fringe cup, lupin, spring vetch, two clovers, spring gold, Indian consumption plant, shooting star, narrow leaf plantain, common daisy, dandelion and weed groundsel.

DON'T FORGET - Tuesdays at 3:30 in the Museum is the time and place of the Junior Naturalists' meetings. And bring some news for this page when you can.

NOTICE OF MEETINGS

1954

- Saturday  
October 2: GEOLOGY GROUP: Field trip to McIntyre Gravel Pit. Meet at Mount Douglas Picnic Grounds at 2 p.m. Cordova Bay bus leaves Coach Lines Depot at 1:30 p.m. Leader Mr. A.H. Marrion.
- Tuesday  
October 12: GENERAL MEETING: Provincial Library at 8 p.m. The B.C. Forest Service will give the following three films: SEASONAL CHANGES OF TREES; THE FOREST GROWS; THE FLIGHT OF THE SEABIRDS. It is hoped there will also be a short talk.
- Saturday  
October 16: PACIFIC NORTHWEST BIRD AND MAMMAL SOCIETY: Meetings to be held at the Provincial Museum. Sessions at 2:30 p.m. and 8 p.m. Members invited.
- Tuesday  
October 19: MARINE BIOLOGY: Meet at Biology Lab. Victoria College at 8 p.m. Subject: CLAMS; Prof. J. A. Cunningham.
- Tuesday  
October 26: BACKYARD GEOLOGY No.3. GRAVELS: Provincial Museum at 8 p.m. Mr. H. A. Marrion.
- Saturday  
October 30: GEOLOGY GROUP: Field Trip, Time and place will be announced at General and Group Meetings.

In case members have not already heard, there will be an Evening Course of 10 lectures at the Museum entitled, - BRITISH COLUMBIA BEFORE AND AFTER; Lectures will be given by the various members of the Museum Staff. Fee for course - \$9 single \$13.50 for husband and wife. Register immediately, if interested, with the Registrar at Victoria College.

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To