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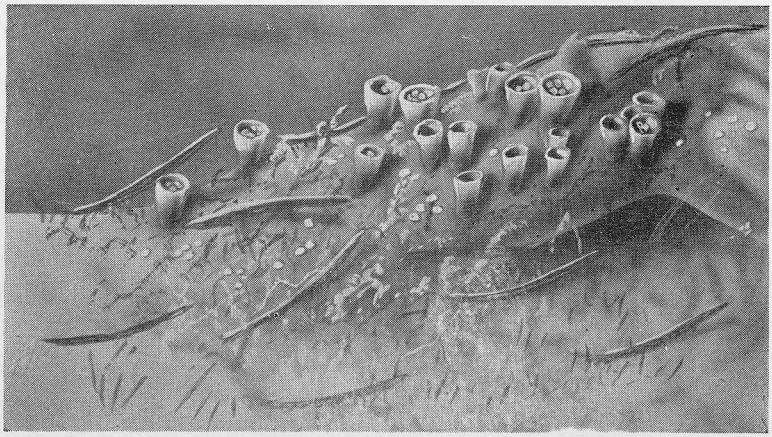

(F. L. Beebe)

Common Bird-nest Fungus

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OUR COVER

THE BIRD-NEST FUNGUS: Even the most casual observer will exclaim with delight on the finding of these unique little goblets as they dot some decaying twig or old board lying beneath the shade of a tree. They look for all the world like miniature birds' nests with eggs complete, in comparison with which a hummingbird's nest, tiny as it is, is as a mammoth to a mouse.

In the fall of the year and winter months the development of the Bird-nest may be watched from tiny pinhead-sized pellets to the mature "fairy" cup.

In size it is between one-quarter inch by three-eighths inch, cup or goblet-shaped, tough, minutely rough pubescent outside, smooth inside, tan colour, lighter inside, bleaching white with age. When young, it has a yellowish lid, which disappears at maturity. The spores in peridioles or packets suggest eggs. Each peridiole is anchored by an elastic thread within the cup.

The elastic threads holding the "eggs" within the cup's interior are supposed to enable them to cling to some distributing agent, such as a beetle's leg and the like, and so be transported to new pastures. On the other hand, some evidence has been found to show that the "eggs" can be distributed by means of drops of rain, hence the "nests" have been given the name of "splash cups". In all cases, no matter by what means dispersal has been carried out, the spore can only be released from the "egg" on the disintegration of its "shell".

There are several genera and species belonging to this intriguing little family, all very much alike but differing in details as to shape, colour, attachments of the peridioles, and the number of coats comprising the goblets. In all cases also, the "nests" are but the reproductive stage of the fungus feeding and growing within rotten wood.

George A. Hardy,
"Some Mushrooms and other
Fungi of British Columbia"

SEPTEMBER GENERAL MEETING

The monthly meeting of the Society was held at the Cafeteria in the Douglas Building on Tuesday, Sept. 9th.

In the absence of the President, Mr. P.M. Monckton, the Vice-President, Mrs. Gladys Soulsby handled the meeting. She spoke of the preliminary work that had been done regarding the formation of a Federation of Naturalists for British Columbia, and stated that a meeting to this end would be called for October 25th, at which representatives of the Vancouver Natural History Society, the North Okanagan Naturalists Club, and the Thetis Park Association would be invited to be present.

The speaker for the evening was Professor G.J.Spencer of the University of British Columbia, his subject being "Social Life in the Insect World". He stated that the life of these social insects had been studied by many scientists for well over one hundred years (this is the centenary year of Charles Darwin's announcement of his theory of the origin of species), but that many of their secrets have yet to be discovered. He discoursed in a most interesting and instructive manner on the wisdom of instinct, and instanced cases of the ignorance of instinct. As he stated, the life of all insects is regulated by its instinct. It has no separate intelligence, nor can it deviate from the life set out for it. The freedom of the individual is subordinated to the welfare of the colony. They always work in accord - a true socialistic state.

Dr. Clifford Carl, in thanking the speaker, told the members that he himself had been a student under Mr.Spencer, and that in those days, as now, Mr. Spencer had such a vivid way of presenting knowledge, interspersed with humour, that his classroom was generally filled to overflowing with students, even those who had never registered for the course.

THE VIRGINIA RAIL

On Aug.18th, Miss Betty Newton found one of these rails on Oxford Street. It had been killed, probably hitting a wire. This is such a shy and retiring bird that we but rarely see it in the field; it would appear to be one of our regular migrants.

FOSSILS OF SOUTH VANCOUVER ISLAND

by A. H. Marrion

The following is condensed from a lecture given by the writer to the Society on March 18th last on the subject of fossils, dealing with the various rock formations and their approximate ages.

The location of the formations was shown on a colored map, and a list of fossils (from various reports) found in each formation was shown, together with a diagram of zones of the different sedimentary rocks of the Nanaimo series.

1. The Leach River Schists. Carbo.Penn. 600 million years ago. Extends from Goldstream to west coast. Sediments greatly metamorphosed. Any original fossils destroyed.
2. Malahat Volcanics. Comformably overlie No.1. No fossils.
3. Sicker Volcanics and Sediments. L. Permian, 500 million years old. An area from Salt Spring Island westwards to Cowichan Lake. Fossils. 1. Brachiopods
   (2 types of Productus, U.& W.)
   2. Crinoidal limestone.
4. Vancouver Volcanics. Widely scattered, as at Oak Bay, Mill Bay, Nanaimo, North of Nitinat area, etc. Triassic. 400 million years. No fossils, but No.5 is found embedded in the Volcanics.
5. Sutton Limestones. Embedded in No.4. Mostly metamorphosed. In Lake Cowichan area fossils are found. 1. Colonial corals. 2. Bryozoans. 3. Pelecypods. 4. Gastropods. 5. Fossil tree trunks.
6. Crystallized Intrusives. Wark and Colquitz Gneiss. Saanich Granodiorite. U. Jurassic. 200 million years. No fossils.
7. Nanaimo series of sediments approximately 10,000 feet thick, in the Cowichan and Nanaimo areas and subdivided into nine groups. U. Cretaceous 140 million years.
   A. Benson. conglomerates on the basal solid rocks, 700 ft., no fossils.
   B. Haslam. 2000 ft. shales, shaly sandstones. Fossils: 1. Tellina. 2. Nucula t. & r. 3. Ineretrix p. 4. Dentalium. 5. Anomia. vancr. 6. Clisocolus. 7. Inoceramus vancr. 8. Heteroceras elong. 9.Ostrea congesta. 10. Rhynchonella sp. 11. Trigonia try. 12. Axinea v. 13. Lima multi. 14. Astarte sp.
   C. E. Wellington. 200 ft. thick. Fossils, coal and leaves.
   D. Extension. 1000 ft. thick. Conglomerate, sandstones. fossils - coal.

E.(Cranberry) Newcastle. 750 ft. thick. Fossils, coal.
F.Protection. 700 ft.thick. Sandstones, shaly sandstones. Fossils: Inoceramus sagensis.
G. Cedar. 900 ft.thick. Carbonaceous rocks. Sandy shales. Fossils: 1. Haminea horni. 2. Tellina sp. 3. Inoceramus vanc.
H. I. J. Decourcy. 1000 ft.thick. Northumberland, 200 ft. thick.
Gabriola 2400 ft.thick.
Mostly sandstones with no fossils.

8. Metchosin Volcanics. Metchosin area. U. Eocene 90 million years. Fossils: Fossil imprints in volcanic ash, Albert Head. Shells in water-washed sediments on shore, Albert Head. 1. Venericardia p. 2. Cardium b. 3. Modiolus o. 4. Meretrix u. 5. Turritella u.
9. Sooke Intrusives. U. Eocene 80 million years. Underlying Metchosin Volcanics. Agabbro exposed in many places. No fossils.
10. Sooke Sediments. L. Miocene, 30 million years. seen along shores from Sooke Harbour towards Jordan River. Formation dips into Juan de Fuca Strait, and a similar formation is found on the American side. Fossils: (a case of specimens in Museum collected by Mr. I.E.Cornwall)
1. Mytillus ficus. 2. Ostrea sp. 3. Solen conradi.
4. Dentallium con. 5. Anomia sp. 6. Macrocallista newc. 7. Bullia bucc. 8. Crepidula prae.
9. Fusinus n. sp. 10. Patella geom. 11. Polineces gal. 12. Trochita inor. 13. Trochita fil.
14. Cryptomya? 15. Pecten sp. 16. Aturia angust.
17. Macoma ast. 18. Pelecypod. 19. Polineces gal.
20. Echinoid. 21. Spisula alb. 22. Nanna neu.
23. Gastropod. 24. Mytillus sam. 25. Brachysphingus wash. 26. Pecten prop. 27. Pectunculus pat.
28. Macrocallista vanc. 29. Schizodesma. 30.Tellina sp. 31. Fusinus sp (new) 32. Fiscus chal.
33. Liomesus ? sul.
11. Pleistocene to recent started about 1 million years ago.
A. Interglacial Blue Clays. Seen in excavations, on shore lines. Shells, wood.
B. Peat beds (Gordon Head) Bog material, wood, insect wings.
C. Vashon Outwash. Wood fragments, bone fragments, elephant tusks and molars. Elephas columbi, E. primigenius, E. imperator. Mastodon. Equus sp. Cetacean. Fossils in stone fragments from Nanaimo series.
12. Recent. Last 10,000 years. Upraised beaches with modern type shells. In some places within six inches of surface. Some shells still retain their skin in a very fresh condition on the outside of the shell.

BIRD NOTES FROM SAANICH

by George A. Hardy

The following notes have been made from time to time concerning the habits or occurrence of one or two of our common birds that have come under my observation.

OREGON TOWHEE. It is well known that some of our small birds have several broods in one season. The towhee is one of them. An opportunity to record this bird occurred in 1954, when one pair was under close observation. The first indication of a young brood developing was the absurdity with which the parent birds packed beaks full of rolled oats from the feeding tray. After a week or two of this the full fledged young appeared to feed themselves at the tray. Soon after this there was a quiet period, then the old birds turned up again and repeated the packing process until the second brood appeared, mixed up with the first. It was noted that about a four week interval separated the food packing process. Thus the first period was about May 14th, the second June 15th. This was followed by a third brood on July 16th, and a fourth on or about August 18th. By the time the dark brown plumage of the first brood was fast being replaced by the adult markings; there were many changes of plumage of the other broods which were all mixed up indiscriminately towards the end.

It is significant that by October only three or four birds were in evidence, the others either having dispersed or met with accidents.

In the spring of 1955, only one pair of towhees was on hand.

VESPER SPARROW. This bird was seen in Royal Oak on September 28, 1957. It was perched on a small stunted oak sapling, flying off on my approach, but not before it had displayed its name plate in the white under tail feathers and general light brown colour - a bird familiar to me in Alberta, but not so in these parts.

THE NIGHTHAWK THAT ATE LIVER

by M.C.M. and J.B.

On August 22nd two small boys appeared at our door carrying a fully-fledged nighthawk. "We have brought you Albert", one announced, "but he won't eat and he can't fly".

We examined the bird carefully and found legs, wings and neck in good working order and there were no signs of injury elsewhere. What to feed a bird that eats flying insects? That was the problem!

In "The Book of Birds" Alexander Wetmore states:- "The food of the nighthawk is composed entirely of insects, including almost everything from the largest moths and dragonflies to mosquitoes and tiny gnats. Several thousand individuals, including more than fifty species, have been found in the stomach of one nighthawk. Flying ants are eaten in large quantities". A. C. Bent states that he found well over two thousand flying ants in one nighthawk's stomach.

Obviously it was hopeless to supply our nighthawk with his normal kind and amount of food, so his first few meals consisted of earthworms. However, these were difficult to find and decidedly awkward to administer. We next used the liver and kidneys from a fresh-caught salmon. At the rate of six meals a day (of approximately 3 cubic cm. each) this lasted only two days, whereupon we turned to chicken livers.

Feeding Albert required the joint efforts of two persons - one to hold him gently but firmly, while the other drew down his incredibly delicate lower mandible to open the enormous mouth and place the food well within. Albert did his part by promptly swallowing - nothing was ever rejected. And never once did this bird soil the hands that held him; always he managed to shift his position enough so that the droppings fell clear.

Right from the first day, feeding was followed by exercise. At first he was merely dropped from a height of two or three feet above soft grass to make him open his wings, flutter a bit and float down. This distance was quickly increased to five or six feet, but even on the fourth day there was still no effort to fly, just a fanning of the wings to slow his descent. On the fifth day from a toss-up of about eight feet he flew and coasted around in a circle of about twenty-five yards circumference. Later that same day a flight of twice that distance was achieved.

During the forenoon of the sixth day each succeeding attempt to fly showed marked improvement. Then in mid-

afternoon when he was launched from a ten-foot toss-up, he circled the lawn, flew up over the house, gained altitude steadily, passed over the tree-tops and continued to circle and climb until he was a mere speck in the distance.

AN UNUSUAL MIGRANT

by A.R.D.

One day last September, we had a phone call from Mr. John Palmer, one of our members living near Colwood, that he had seen a strange hummingbird in his garden.

As far as officially known, only one species of hummingbird has ever been seen on Vancouver Island, the Rufous, and although we went out to investigage, the bird was not seen again at that time.

However, on August 22nd this year, Mr. Palmer again reported the same bird as being present, and stated definitely it was not the Rufous, so on the 26th, a party of us visited him to try and find out what he had seen.

Mr. Palmer operates the Fuchsia Gardens on the Sooke Road, and at this time of year there are hundreds of these plants in full bloom, and, as is well known, the flowers are very attractive to hummingbirds.

We hadn't been there long before this bird came down to the flowers, but we were unable to identify it. The next day Mr. Guiguet from the Museum went out and spent some time there watching the bird at close quarters. He identified it as an Anna's Hummingbird, whose most northern known range is the Sacramento Valley.

This is the first time this bird has been seen in Canada.

On Monday, September 22nd, 1958 a GOLDEN PLOVER was seen at Clover Point by Alan Poynter. The next morning there were two of them and on Wednesday morning there were three on the rocks at this point.

ZOOS, a talk at the May Annual Meeting

by J. O. Clay.

Since the tragedy that has taken place in the death of Maureen Vanstone near Nanaimo, I would bring to your notice the matter of Zoological Gardens in British Columbia. It may be there is still a place for the few, the very few, I hope, and these should be large, well-equipped and spacious Zoological Gardens, such as Whipsnade in England or the one at San Francisco. Such gardens, in addition to the splendid films and books on natural history now available to the public, may be necessary still for increasing the knowledge and understanding of the wild creatures. But it is obvious that there may not be adequate funds available for the building and maintaining of the smaller zoos for the comfort and safety of the animals.

Apart from the question of costs there is the humanitarian aspect of the keeping of animals in captivity which should be stressed. One does not, of course, condemn the keeping of pets wherever sympathy, care and understanding are expended upon them, for that eliminates fear and boredom in the animals. This fear, boredom and anger bred by captivity in animals is indeed something to ponder about. It is common in zoos.

I feel grateful to the S.P.C.A. for the stand that they are taking in regard to the licensing of small zoological gardens and stated I would like to get the support of the Society in having a brief sent to three departments of the Provincial Government, to urge the banning of the existing and of any future private 'Zoos' which may be proposed.

Resulting from this talk a brief was sent by Miss Latimer, our Secretary, asking that Zoological Gardens for profit should become illegal. It may be added that, since the brief was sent, stringent regulations have been enacted regarding zoological gardens, their licensing, enclosure area, water, sleeping quarters, feeding, escape, etc. and also regarding regular inspection.

L O G G I N G

by A.R.D.

Anyone who is interested in how logging is done on Vancouver Island should follow the road from Shawnigan Lake to Port Renfrew. These vast rounded hills and mountains (their height goes up to 3600 feet) have been logged for many years, and the process still goes on.

We have heard much about selective logging, reforestation, etc., but here are square miles of complete destruction. The country has been denuded of all plant life and then burnt down to bare sand, gravel and rocks. Although this is a district which has a heavy rainfall, and the time of our visit was the middle of April, large sections of the hills showed no signs of plant growth, though much of it must have been logged many years ago. I have never seen more complete desolation anywhere on the Island.

The object of our excursion was to find what birds there were, but we saw no sign of any kind of life on these burnt hills, not even crows, ravens or eagles. There is nothing to eat.

The village of Port Renfrew, which has been one of the centres of extensive logging operations for fifty or more years, and from which millions of trees have been taken out, looked very neglected and forlorn. On the other hand, the B. C. Electric headquarters at Jordan River is a clean,bright and prosperous looking village.

Nearing Jordan River the road is fairly close to the sea and here the new growth of trees is making headway. Travelling slowly along this road we saw a blue grouse sitting on a stump. We stopped the car and cautiously got out to have a closer view and found it to be a male bird in its handsome spring plumage and engaged in giving its charactistic hoot, which, though a soft low note, can be heard from a long distance. This bird's colour is mainly a rich dark brown, merging into almost black on the back, and decorated with heavy bright orange eyebrows. When it hooted, the feathers on each side of the neck opened up, showing they were white near the skin and only tipped with black. The colour of its skin, when the air sac showed, was also a bright orange yellow. The underside of the widely spread tail was flecked with white. Although we got quite close to the bird, it showed no fear and was still putting on this display for its unseen mate when we left.

BIRD GROUP MEETING, SEPT. 6th,1958

by J. O. Clay

A second trip this season was made to Portland Island (now named after Princess Margaret). Twenty-one members enjoyed the sunny, clear weather. Several kinds of birds, representing our wintering species, were to be seen on the trip to the island, returned from points unknown in the inland waters where they have bred. There were the gulls from the south, Heerman and California, and from the north, Bonaparte and short-billed; marbled murrelets, whose nesting places are unknown, guillemots, grebes, mergansers, scoters and harlequins, and others.

We found no surface water on the island, consequently the number of land birds was limited to fourteen species; pigeons, woodpeckers, jays, ravens, crows, chickadees, nuthatches, robins, purple finches, siskins, crossbills, savannah sparrows, white-crowned sparrows, and song sparrows, of which number three species are migrants.

There are two good shady trails on the island and many winding sheep trails ending in thick tangles and not good for hiking. On the east and west sides of the island a thick and healthy growth of young firs is found. The clearing extends the length of the island from north to south. Low cliffs surrounding the island are topped by healthy growths of madrona and juniper.

A lovely park is in the making. And at this time no cans and litter disfigure the landscape; no rubbish,little vandalism and, above all, no burned timber.

During the day forty-three species of birds were listed.

BIRD NOTES

One of our favourite places for the observation of shore birds is the foot of Bowker Avenue at Oak Bay. Here, on September 1st, were seen 110 surf birds, 130 black turnstones, 100 common terns, and, among this group of birds one marbled godwit, the latter a rare visitor to our district.

Another area, visited constantly by our more enthusiastic bird watchers, is Clover Point. On September 8th, and for about two weeks thereafter, sooty shearwaters were seen, on one occasion as many as three hundred were flying to and fro over the sea not far from the shore. Occasionally too the rhinoceros auklets come close enough to the land to be seen from this point. Alan Poynter saw them close to the point last week, and we saw three at Gonzales Point at the tip of the Victoria Golf Links about the same time.

At the present time the graceful terns can be seen all around the Victoria sea front, and sometimes one is fortunate enough to see the parasitic jaegers which follow the terns on their migrations. To watch the jaegers pursue the terns to make them disgorge the fish it has just caught is to see one of the most spectacular exhibitions of flying possible, all accomplished with such speed, it is difficult to follow them.

Earlier in the year two of our members, David Sterling and Barry Morgan, reported seeing a calaveras warbler near the Island Highway. A party of us went out one morning in August to try and find this warbler, as they wished their observations to be confirmed, but the birds did not show up at that time. However, on September the 11th, the writer was in the garden of our President, Mr. Monckton, and, at close quarters, saw one of these warblers in such good plumage, that it was unmistakable. These are the first reports of this bird having been seen on Vancouver Island.

A.R.D.

KENNICOTT'S OWL

by George A. Hardy

One of these screech owls was seen trying to get at the young violet-green swallows in the nest box, but was unsuccessful. It tried to reach in with one foot, but my appearance stopped further effort. Whether the owl makes a practice of so robbing nest boxes or not, it certainly seems to be quite within its power.

At another time one of these owls was seen to plunge into the fish pond; it was thought with the object of catching a fish. Subsequent investigation showed that it had caught a large water beetle.

NOTICE OF MEETINGS

1958

Saturday October 4: **BIRD GROUP FIELD TRIP**: Sidney area for shore birds and land birds. Meet at the Monterey Cafe, 2703 Douglas Street, at 9 a.m. or at Macdonald Provincial Park, Shoal Harbour at 9:45 a.m. Bring lunch. Leader: J. O. Clay.

Tuesday October 7: Evening **BOTANY**: Mr. V.E.L. Goddard. "Some of the Wildflowers". Talk, with pictures. Provincial Library at 8 p.m.

Tuesday October 14: Evening. **GENERAL MEETING**: Mr. A. E. Collins, B.C.Forest Service. "The Forest of British Columbia" illustrated. The Museum, 7:45 p.m.

Tuesday October 21: Evening **GEOLOGY**: 'In the beginning' - Primary land masses. Cause of continents due to composition. Continental drift theory. Dr. A. O. Hayes. Provincial Library at 8 p.m.

Saturday October 25: **GEOLOGY FIELD TRIP**: Old Skirt Mines at Goldstream. Meet at Monterey Cafe, 2703 Douglas Street, at 1:30 p.m. Leader: Mr. A. H. Marrion.

JUNIORS: Mr. Freeman King continues with the active group of interested young people. An invitation is extended to any older members wishing to accompany this lively group on its weekly Saturday field outing. Please first telephone Mr. King, GR.9-2966.

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