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Waxwing

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CEDAR WAXWINGS

These birds can be found over most of North America, and in Victoria are more or less resident. They appear and disappear at all seasons, due to some inherent restlessness, not lack of food. Often, for weeks at a time, we miss them on our bird outings, then suddenly they are found everywhere.

The best description I have read of the cedar waxwing is given in the Birds of Massachusetts by E. H. Forbush, as follows:

"Who can describe the grace and elegance of this bird? What other common bird is dressed in a robe of so delicate and silky a texture? Those shades of blending beauty - velvety black brightening into fawn, melting browns, shifting saffrons, quaker drabs, pale blue-gray and slate, with trimmings of white and golden-yellow, and little red appendages on the wing-quills not found in any other family of birds - all combined with its symmetrical form, give it an appearance and distinction peculiarly its own. Its erectile crest expresses every emotion. When lying loose and low upon the head it signifies ease and comfort. Excitement or surprise erect it at once, and in fear it is pressed flat.

"At any time of the year, in almost any part of the country, one may hear some curious wheezing, lisping notes, and, on looking about him, may see a dozen or a hundred little birds in sight, flying in an easy, rather undulating course, to alight in a compact body on the nearest tree, where they remain silent and motionless for a few minutes, drawn up to their full heights, displaying their long top-knots; then they begin to move about and feed.

"Like some other plump and well-fed personages, the cedar waxwing is easy going, and blessed with a good disposition. It is fond of good company. When the nesting season is past each harmonious little family joins with others until the flock may number from thirty to hundreds of birds. They keep well together throughout the winter and spring until the nesting season again arrives."

A.R.D.

FUNGUS HUNTING IN JOHN DEAN PARK

October 22, 1960

by M.C.Melburn

A party of 19 observers collected specimens representing 55 species of fungi; among them were two of a colour not at all common in this group of plants. The larger one was blewits (*Tricholoma personatum*) having a five-inch compact cap of a violet-blue colour; the other one was *Glitocybe odora*, whose two-inch cap is bluish-green; and it sports "anise" perfume, making it even more attractive. *Helvella lacunosa* has the form of a dark-grey saddle mounted on a whitish, grooved and pitted column; the young in heart appreciate its common name, which is elf's saddle.

We are accustomed to look to the sky for stars but earth-stars can be found underfoot. This relative of puff-balls has its spore-case well wrapped up in a stout outer covering which at maturity splits into six or eight segments, turning out and down to lift the "powder packet" more or less off the ground. Our earth-star was *Geaster triplex* whose spores are discharged through a conic-pointed aperture.

Then there was peg-top (*Gomphidius glutinosus*) a black-spored species whose flesh-coloured cap is heavily coated with slime; this sticky coating may be a protective feature as far as certain insect enemies are concerned, but it seems to be "sauce for the pudding" in the eyes of the slugs.

Some other specimens found were:- candle-snuff fungus (*Xylaria hypoxylon*) thrusting up black fingers wearing white tips; *Collybia albopilata*, producing a bouquet of dainty white-capped mushrooms always found growing out of half-buried Douglas fir cones; crested *lepiota*, wearing a cap nicely decorated with reddish-brown scales arranged in concentric rings; various *clavarias*, *Boletinus pictus* and the peach-coloured jelly fungus, *Phlogiotis helvelloides*.

All our collections were made within a few hundred yards of the parking-ground and just at the edge of the picnic area we found on a bark-free log the prize of the day, a cluster of tawny fruiting bodies each approximately one-fifteenth of an inch in diameter. This species, *Sphaerobolus stellatus*, is a relative of birds'-nest fungus from which it differs by producing its spores in a single spherical ball. This proved to be a veritable battery

of small guns. Here is how the firing is done. After the apex of the cup splits to form an eight-pointed star-shaped opening, osmotic tension builds up to such a degree that the inner lining of the cup suddenly turns inside out to catapult its brown spore-case to a distance of from 14 to 17 feet. Dr. A. H. R. Buller, one of Canada's most eminent mycologists, called *Sphaerobolus stellatus* "not only the largest and most powerful but also the loudest of all fungus guns".

M. C. Melburn.

THE CALIFORNIA TORTOISE-SHELL

on Vancouver Island.

by G.A. Hardy

Those of us with an eye for detail may have noticed a fairly large orange-brown, black-spotted butterfly in our gardens, fields and along country roads in the vicinity of Victoria and surrounding district. It first came to my attention this year on September 8, while the last was seen on October 18. During this period it was quite common, particularly along the highway between Victoria and Goldstream.

This is the California Tortoise-shell, *Nymphalis californica* Bdv., the common name possibly suggested by a superficial resemblance to the once well-known article of commerce. It has a wide distribution along the Pacific coastal regions from British Columbia to California. While it occurs more frequently on the mainland, this is the first appearance on Vancouver Island, to my knowledge, since the year 1952-53, when quite a noticeable influx was observed.

The normal food-plant is the wild lilac, *Ceanothus* species. In particularly favourable seasons the caterpillars exhaust their food supply, initiating a northerly migratory movement of the butterflies in search of the hereditary sustenance, hence a sporadic appearance in places where they are usually scarce or absent.

Judging by their behaviour in 1952, some individuals will undoubtedly hibernate here but are not likely to remain to propagate the species in the following spring. In the last invasion a definite easterly drift was observed in the autumn. I have no certain proof of such a tendency this year.

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FALL MIGRATION

by Alan Poynter

Emphasis has always been placed on the spring migration of the warblers on the eastern half of this continent. With over thirty species crossing the forty-ninth parallel in huge waves it could only be considered spectacular, arriving, as they do, within a period of two or three weeks. But with only ten species of warblers reaching Vancouver Island, and three of these rarely, together with the long slow spring, we do not witness this spectacular movement, but when the nesting season is over and the first signs of fall are upon us, the southward migration has an interest all its own.

The first week of August this year saw the first migrating birds with us with the yellow and orange-crowned warblers. The McGillivray's and black-cap came out of the cover of the underbrush and could be seen feeding higher in the trees. By the second and third week everything was on the move; warblers, chickadees, flycatchers, vireos, tanagers, juncos, tree creepers; all mixed in together, in waves of probably a hundred birds moving restlessly through the trees, feeding as they moved. With the foliage still green and heavy, it was difficult to focus on any one bird for more than a moment.

During this period we had an exceptionally good migration of flycatchers, and the illusive black-throated grey and Nashville warblers were both seen.

By the end of August, the movement of these birds was almost finished, but in their place came the Audubon and a few myrtle warblers. Throughout the month of September the number of flocks and species reduced rapidly, but the Audubon warblers seemed to gather in larger flocks. On the CJVI towers could often be seen dozens of Audubons with twenty to thirty western bluebirds mixed in with them.

By the middle of October the movement was almost at an end, only the Audubon warblers could be seen. Then we had the fox sparrows, and a few of the hard-to-find Lincoln sparrows, while the golden-crowned sparrow, with a few white-crowned sparrows, were everywhere. During September too, came the western savannah sparrows, and, mingling with them, the pipits. The more diligent of our bird watchers also found small flocks of horned larks, Alaska longspurs, and once, that rare bird, with us, the snow bunting.

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AUTUMN HARLEQUINADE

by Dorothy Palmer

Autumn Harlequinade, - brilliant tints, damp earthy fragrances, birds harmonizing in the trees and geese calling against the skies, misty mornings and golden sunsets, sudden breezes, leaves fluttering down, carpets of brown and yellow.

Is Spring any more delightful? ...

... With varying delights in each season of the year our swamp reveals its beauties. This swamp is closed in by slopes treed with dogwoods and arbutus, firs and balsams, maples and oaks, growing willy-nilly, studded with dead woodpecker snags. Around the bottom land tall aspens form an honour guard, now uniformed in brassy orange.

A fallen tree beside the swamp is favoured for watching and listening. There is bewitchment of a halcyon autumn day, lying on a log, seeing past the trees' canopy woolly cloudlets drift across a misty blue sky, - and listening.

If we are "unhurried and wise" a fallen tree in the woods tempts us to lay flat along its mossy surface to see our world from a new perspective. We MAY shed today's thinking confusions, may drop our knowing certainties, may regain a transparency towards understanding Nature. That is, IF we are unhurried and wise, and IF we are humble; for humility is the keynote.

Here on the edge of the woods, lying back on our fallen giant, our world appears to be utterly still, utterly silent.

... The softest rustle, a ballerina whirls amber skirts, a broad maple leaf whispers down to earth, sighs to rest. ... A gentle zephyr drifts down from the hills; slowly the aspens yield their golden slumbers to clapping castanets, leaves whirling, - myriads of brassy pieces-of-eight.

Uneasy movements rustle softly through the woods, little feet pass mysteriously, dried bracken crackles.

Briefly quiet; - in the distance a chattering squirrel flirts through dogwood trees; flickers call gaily across the clearing; a Steller jay scolds in fluttery flight; ravens call over the sheltering hill; a pileated woodpecker cries ecstatically between staccato appetisers. A nuthatch sounds his odd purring chant as he runs along the under sides of branches. A flight of siskins may swish by, kinglets may sing sotto voce through the fir trees.

Wild ducks will not return to the swamp until midwinter,

for our swamp is dry from July to December. When the water soaks away clumps of sedges show and horse-tails, docks, hardhack and troops of small wayward aspens.

In the autumn our swamp is green with small sedges and darker green horse-tails, decorated by bowing brown seed heads of the larger sedges and brown dock statuary, browned hardhack flowers, and over all the brilliance of the tall aspens. Between the aspen trunks a few red osier dogwoods glow richly, and, bordering, wild blackberries lay red and green patchwork quilts.

Later the aspen leaves turn to glowing copper, blackening as autumn merges with oncoming winter. ... Winter rains fill this natural catchment with water up to the treed slopes, drowning all growth up to ten feet and more. Silver and black aspens step out into the water with mirrored repetitions; across smooth water wild ducks ripple shadowed wakes and beyond, grey branches border the swamp, flanked by alders and cedars.

This is our "Everglades" in winter, - a shadowy grey and silver scene, dark tree trunks standing in deep water, mirrored reflections, wild fowl drifting, dark cedars protecting. Teal and widgeon, and white puffs of buffle-heads swimming confidently. If a human treads stealthily in the woods scores of mallards rise, splashing and quacking to wing, crying, over the trees and away. ...

When the water recedes in spring marsh violets blue the banks, and quickly after the water a variety of yellow flowers covers the ground; later very pale blue camass bloom amongst the small aspens. Summer warmth brings a wash of smoky pink hardhack blooms and spangles of stately yellow flowers. In late summer wild asters are waves of pale mauve-blue. And moss creeps forward across the deer's winter pawing patch.

... Leaving the swamp of an autumn evening flocks of crows will be cawing, wheeling over the fir trees, for these woods are their winter dormitories. They come flying over in groups half an hour before sunset and put on an amusing display for an hour each evening. In the gloaming they circle blackly against the sky, talking ceaselessly; they select a few roosting branches, then rustle away into flights and swoop down and up and around and try again, and over again.

Home from our rambling around the swamp the crows will entertain with their bedtime stories while we relax with cups of tea. And darkness drops the crows' last act curtain.

TOMORROW

by Freeman King

"To morrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death."

(Macbeth)

Unless we do something more than just talk about conservation 'tomorrow' will be too late.

One of the most awful things in the destructive results of so-called human progress is the pollution of our streams, rivers and lakes, which kills off the fish and most other living creatures which dwell in the waters. The water becomes unfit to drink and in many cases unfit for swimming.

This poisoning is also detrimental to our bird life, especially to those species which feed among the marshes and waterways. If the food which is necessary for their existence is gone, then they too must move away or die.

The removal of forest cover from the banks of rivers and lakes must be discontinued also, for by logging close to the shores we allow the rain to run off in flood stage, taking with it the good soil which has taken countless years to build up.

In these thoughtless practices we are helping to upset the balance of nature, for not only do they destroy the natural habitat of fishes and birds, but all living creatures in a chain reaction from the soil, including the bacteria, insects, other animal life, and so on to mankind.

It has been stated that conservation is a state of harmony between mankind and the land. We need a new creed and a determination to continue our efforts to attain this state. Our only hope is in education, but it is not a simple solution to the problem. It is one for statesman-like people who will take a long range view, and who can look well into the future.

"For we shall not pass this way again, and any good thing we can do for those who follow us, let us do it now. Let us not fail or neglect".

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A CHRISTMAS CENSUS

by J. M. Barnett

It is now the beginning of the winter season, and the drawing near of the end of another calendar year.

It is the season of peace and goodwill, and a time of pleasant memories, when we like to bundle up of an evening, leave the warmth of home, and wander off into the night.

As we stroll along the waterfront we notice the stars, follow the quiet progress of the riding lights on a vessel out on the dark waters, feel the sting of the salt air on our faces and smell the off-shore beds of kelp. We listen to the crash of waves on the rocks, and gradually vivid pictures of our activities during the past months form in front of us.

Our first picture was a white one, and took us back to the time when the year was still young. On a field of sparkling snow were four brilliant animated sapphires - bluebirds - which had chosen this one day in the year to pass through our backyard, pause for a moment on the fence and leave us with a feeling of awe at the beauty in nature.

Following this in a sunny picture; crocus dotting the green of grass, and a golden field of daffodils on Beacon Hill.

It is spring, and we journey to Sidney to see one of the sights of the northern migration of the birds. In a beautiful quiet tree-lined bay are about five hundred black brant feeding along the shore. They rise soon after our arrival and fly in an irregular line across the bay, their silhouettes making a lacy pattern in the sky.

A charming valley among the Sooke hills where Kirby Creek softly gurgled its way, gave us a picture painted in shades of green. Lying across a gully was an old giant of the woods, fallen possibly a hundred and fifty years ago, and now adorned with moss and ferns and plants of all kinds; a beautiful example of nature's reforestation.

We were in perfect accord with the poets one day in June as we drove along a tree-bordered road near Mount Douglas, looking for a bird we had never seen before - a black-headed grosbeak. We found him on the topmost twig of a bush, singing his beautiful song, and, to make it a memorable occasion, he was accompanied by a purple finch on an adjoining twig. Black and gold and purple - the colours reminded us of a sunset we had admired on a previous evening.

The beautiful day in July when we took the boat trip

around Bare Island gave us a picture of two tufted puffins flying close around the boat, their red beaks, white faces and yellow tufts contrasting with their black bodies, backed by a brilliant blue sky. A noteworthy feature of the trip was the sight of a glaucous-winged gull diving down on a marauding crow which was on the point of robbing his nest, and knocking him into the water. It was laughable to see the villain splashing and floundering his way to shore. As we rounded the island our last look showed a sorry-looking bedraggled black bird standing on a rock with towering gray cliffs behind him.

And now it is time for the southward migration, which is led by the shorebirds, and once again we see an island, small and bare, but well patronized by birds. Our picture shows the inland waters lapping a rocky shore along which some black turnstones and surfbirds scrambled about looking more like animated stones than birds. One lone bird, a wandering tattler, stood perfectly still on top of a rock, making a bold silhouette. In the distance was the dark green of trees on Princess Margaret island, where we were going.

Now two pictures crowd in. The first depicted storm and stress and showed some rugged firs, bent and twisted by strong winds, standing on an exposed point on Discovery Island. The second was a peaceful scene showing the shore on Island View beach where two black-bellied and one golden plover rested. In their eclipse plumage they melted into the pebbly background. The little golden plover is the champion long distance flyer among the shore birds, and as we watched him facing the waters, which he would soon be crossing, we wondered what strange lands and sights he would see before returning north next spring.

At the time of the harvest moon we strolled along an old railway right-of-way bordered by poplars in rich gold dressed among which kinglets and chickadees actively searched for food. Then we came to a row of hawthorns covered with rich red berries; a feast for a host of birds passing through. Here we saw our first varied thrush, with the afternoon sun high-lighting his red-gold breast, across which he wore a black velvet ribbon. And although he was no highway robber he had a black mask over his eyes. As we admired this beauty we thought that of all the illustrations we had seen of him not one did his colouring justice. To complete the pleasure of this day we saw an intimate picture of one of these colourful thrushes bathing in a secluded part of the ditch overhung by bushes and trees.

November brings us our winter visitors, the ducks, and

what better place than Esquimalt Lagoon to see a goodly number of species? On a brilliant sunny day the quiet tree-lined waters were dotted with the blacks and whites and browns of these birds, and at our leisure we admired the rich plumage of buffle-heads, pintails, shovellers and widgeons. But our picture of the day was a log-strewn beach with a small black, white and brown bird standing on an old stump. It seemed a strange setting for a snow bunting, and as we watched him the scene seemed to fade away and was replaced by white field with large flocks of his kind whirling around, looking more like wind driven snow than birds.

We shivered at the bleak scene memory had brought, and came back to the present, to find we were once again back on our doorstep.

It had been a pleasant and peaceful walk, and as we opened the front door to enter the comfort and warmth of home we closed our book of memories - our Christmas Census for 1960.

THE SIZE OF INSECTS

by Ruth Chambers

Why are insects so small? Dr. Chapman asked when he addressed our Society on November 8th. Why, in the course of their long evolution, had they not become larger? Why did we not have ants as large as dogs, or spiders of human size?

Entomologists could give no positive answers to these questions, Dr. Chapman said. But the small size of insects was sometimes to their advantage, and there appeared to be definite relationship between their size and form.

Insects, for instance, have an exoskeleton. If they were larger, this type of skeleton would be unable to support them.

During the vulnerable period when insects shed their integument, their small size helps them to hide from their enemies.

Insects lose heat rapidly, and therefore the sun probably means more to them than it does to us. They also dry out easily, and many insects have a layer of fat which helps them to retain moisture. (Some flea powders destroy the flea by destroying the protective layer of fat).

Being small, insects pass quickly from the egg to adult stage, and this short reproductive cycle is favorable

to mutations and adaptations. Already, we have DDT-resistant flies.

Small in size, highly vulnerable during their moulting stage, possessed of a 'cold problem', a 'drying-out' problem, and a complicated respiratory system, insects are nevertheless extremely powerful in relation to their size, and compose two-thirds of the known natural species in the world.

SWALLOWS PIRATING BLACK SWIFTS

by David Stirling

Instances of one species of bird parasitizing another are numerous. Artists are fond of depicting bald eagles swooping down on an overloaded osprey. Along our coasts in September we often see jaegers harrying terns and small gulls. At Esquimalt Lagoon hard working coots bring up eel grass from the bottom only to have it snatched by non-diving widgeon. Pearse (Murrelet, January - April 1950) records a similar association between horned grebe and surf scoter; and glaucous-winged gull and Pacific loon. Then there is the unusual case recorded in The Victoria Naturalist (October, 1960) of an over-eager gull swooping down to take a kingfisher's catch and in the excitement making a meal of the kingfisher too.

The following observation of swallows and swifts although not so spectacular, is of sufficient interest and, I believe, so seldom seen that it is worth recording.

On July 5, 1959, between 8:00 P.M. and 9:00 P.M., about one hundred black swifts, (*Nephoecetes niger*) were observed feeding over the mouth of Black Creek, Vancouver Island. The swifts were flying in a tight circle from nearly ground level to a height of approximately three hundred feet, giving the illusion of an ascending column of birds. In the lower portion of the "chimney" five species of swallows were observed. On seven occasions I watched swallows chasing swifts apparently with the intention of taking insects from them. These spirited and noisy pursuits lasted between ten and fifteen seconds by actual timing. Always the swallow out-maneuvered the swift and succeeded (or so it seemed) in relieving the larger bird of its insect prey. Twice the pursuing swallow was identified as the violet-green species.

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A MORNING ON THE BEACH

by Helen M. Mathieson

It was a misty morning with the sea like glass as I ambled slowly and quietly to the beach so as not to disturb the shyer birds, and was halted by the number and especially the variety of sea birds in view. The whole bay seemed ringed with birds, most of them keeping to their own kind. Most eye-catching because of their nearness was a family of common loons, six of them, adult and immature in their different plumages.

I sat down on the bank, amidst a wealth of golden maple leaves, to enjoy the sight before me. As usual in this bay the eared grebe were nearest to the shore, then the horned; beyond them the harlequin ducks and then the white-winged and American scoter (the surf scoter is uncommon here). Further out there were two great rafts of birds, too distant to be accurately identified. Bird Rock had its quota of gulls, and an adjacent rock, its cormorants.

Our heron, locally known as 'Brack' was present, also the resident kingfisher, and on the beach two killdeer, a bird rarely seen here. In fact, in spite of the quietness of this bay, with its rocks and sandy beach, shore birds are seldom seen.

I then heard 'noises off', and round the corner emerged a flotilla of fourteen red-breasted mergansers, keeping formation, and scooping up what seemed to be shiners, as they carried right across the bay, keeping the same distance from shore.

So much for the sea birds, but during the while, the land birds had been busy too. I had hardly got seated when a family of Audubon warblers came to a stunted fir near by, fluttering around picking up their meat course for the day. Then the daily fly past of what I call the 'group' came along: chickadees, ruby-crowned and golden-crowned kinglets, and tagging along one tree behind, a solitary vireo. Lower down appeared a Bewick wren, and then a loud rustling in the leaves betrayed the presence of a towhee. I felt very honored. A raven flew quite low over my head, and as I walked back from the beach I watched a tree creeper at work.

No outstanding birds on my list, but a most enjoyable time was had by human, and, I hope, birds alike.

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THE FLIGHT OF THE DUNLIN

by Alan Poynter

On Vancouver Island the dunlin can be seen sometimes by the hundred, so it was an experience for me to see a flock of maybe two thousand fly past the Tsawwassen Terminal, where they were met by an equally large flock coming from the opposite direction, and within seconds a third flock dropped out of the sky, forming one large flock of approximately seven thousand birds. For the next five minutes I observed one of the most spectacular displays of aerial gyrations I have ever seen. The backdrop was a red sunset over the Gulf Islands. The actors a host of dunlin.

On the meeting of these three flocks the birds began a steep climb in the form of a column of drifting smoke, with the lead birds occasionally rolling over to show their white bellies. This white ripple passed all the way down the spiraling column as it rose to a height of about fifteen hundred feet, whereupon the uppermost dunlin, mere specks in the sky, would turn over and drop in a perpendicular dive to the water, white bodies dropping as they passed the black backs of the climbing birds, giving the impression of the smoke column being turned inside out.

On reaching the water the flock spread out into the three original flocks, which rolled and turned, black and white, as only sandpipers can, to join up again into one body to perform their spiral climb.

After several minutes the three flocks moved off in a southerly direction. It could have been to a tideline roost off Point Roberts, or the whole display could have been the beginning of the night time migration flight which sandpipers perform.

No matter what, I felt I had been privileged to witness this unusual performance.

THE NOVEMBER BIRD GROUP FIELD TRIP

by Tom Briggs

This meeting was held on November 5th. The weather was clear and warm. Twenty-seven members met near the bridge end of Coburg Spit (Esquimalt Lagoon)

Large numbers of ducks, comprising fourteen species, were seen in the lagoon in a beautiful setting under perfect conditions. Among them was one European widgeon. In addition there was a large raft of western grebe on

the sea side of the spit.

For the first time to our knowledge, a skylark was seen here, evidence that these birds are extending their range, as this lagoon is many miles from their usual territory on the Saanich peninsula. We must also record here one snow bunting, an unusual bird for Victoria.

After lunch the party proceeded to the Goldstream Flats to watch the dippers in action. At least ten or twelve were seen feeding on the eggs of the spawning salmon.

In all, sixty-four species were identified.

A DICKCISSEL IN VICTORIA

In the garden of Capt. and Mrs. H.M.S. Bell on St. Patrick Street there is a large feeding cage, with several openings, and there, all the year, come the birds for their feed, which is always present.

Regularly, every autumn, come the fox sparrows, numbers of them, the golden-crowned and the white-crowned sparrows, together with towhees, song sparrows, linnets, and occasionally an unusual visitor.

Early in the morning of November 16th Mrs. Bell saw a sparrow in the enclosure which she could not recognize, so she caught the bird and put it in a small cage where it could better be seen.

We got all the bird books out, but there was no west coast sparrow like this one. Finally, we contacted Ralph Fryer, who, after a careful examination, identified it as an adult female dickcissel, which was afterwards confirmed by Charles Guiguet, the Provincial Museum biologist.

No wonder we were puzzled, as this bird is not known west of southern Saskatchewan and Wyoming, although in the "Review of the Bird Fauna of British Columbia" (Munro and Cowan) there is one record of this bird having been collected at Vaseux Lake in the Okanagan Valley on June 12th 1922.

How this second bird reached here, eleven hundred miles west of its normal range, will in all probability, remain a mystery. It was a strong, and vigorous bird, so the following morning Mrs. Bell released it, in the hope that it will continue its migration; these sparrows wintering from Guatemala to Columbia and Trinidad. At the time of going to press however, this bird is still in Mrs. Bell's garden, feeding with the other birds.

A.R.D.

JUNIOR JOTTINGS

by Freeman King

Members of the intermediate group have cleared an eleven hundred yard trail in Francis Park. This takes in the high land and down into the creek bottom. This trail is accessible to all members who wish to use it, and signs have been posted showing some of the outstanding features. They have also cleared out the entrance to a limestone cave found on the property, and hope soon to have a trail cleared to it from the road.

An expedition to the old copper mine on Mount Douglas by the younger section proved to be very interesting. All the group went in and explored.

An interesting and rugged trip was made into the Thetis Park sanctuary by going in from the Prospect Lake Road, where the country dips down into some sharp valleys and heavy cedar groves. A large number of fungi were found. At the foot of a large rock outcrop a number of deer antlers were seen, as well as horns from goats. The mystery is, why so many in one spot. Did the animals fall over the cliff, or what?

A trip along the power line off Munn Road, hunting for insects and other small creatures was a real success. Dr. Chapman went along with us, and was able to give some first class advice on the habits of some of the many insects that abounded in this area. It was interesting to note the lichen taking hold on the newly blasted rocks where power line towers had been erected.

The leader group, for their monthly expedition, went to the 'Blue Heron Bay' peninsula off East Saanich Road close to Macdonald Park, where many types of fungi were found in among the balsam fir forest. Water birds of all kinds abound in the bay, this being a federal sanctuary. It was very interesting to note the osprey's nest on an isolated fir tree on the northern tip of the peninsula. Growing close by there are some sequoia and cedar of lebanon trees, no doubt planted by some early settlers many years ago, as these trees are over eighty feet tall.

Cooking our dinners at the park in the rain with wet wood (try this some time!) over which we cooked some of the mushrooms we had found, made it a real day's outing for the girls and boys who love the out-of-doors.

NOTICE OF MEETINGS

1960

Saturday BIRD FIELD TRIP: Meet at Monterey Cafe at
 Dec.3rd: 9:30 a.m. or parking lot at Beaver Lake at
 10 a.m., bring lunch. Tea and coffee will
 be provided by Mr. & Mrs. J.A.Berry, 4651
 Pipe Line Road, where the luncheon time will
 be spent.

Tuesday GENERAL MEETING: At the Douglas Building
 Dec.13th: Cafeteria on Elliott Street, next to the
 Museum, at 8 p.m. Guest Speaker: Mr. Alan
 Best, Curator, Stanley Park Zoo, who will give
 an illustrated address on his recent trip to
 the Falkland Islands and South Georgia to
 collect penguins.

Monday The Christmas Bird Census will be held on this
 Dec.26th: day. It is hoped there will be twelve parties
 in the field, and arrangements have been made
 to have two members in each party. If any
 other members would like to participate in
 this event, please telephone Mr. Tom Briggs at
 GR 7-1945 or Mr. Dave Stirling at GR 9-4646.

Saturday A separate Christmas bird count will be taken
 Dec.31st: of the north Saanich area. Meet at Sidney
 Wharf at 9 a.m. sharp. Will all those willing
 to take part in this census, please phone Dave
 Stirling or Tom Briggs as early in the month
 as convenient.

The Juniors will meet each Saturday at the Monterey Cafe
 at Hillside and Douglas Streets at 1:30 p.m. for field
 trips. Leader: Mr. Freeman King. Anyone who would like
 to join these trips is very welcome. Mr. King can be
 contacted at GR 9-2966.

Note: The course for the leader groups of the Juniors
 is being held at the Museum on Mondays at 7:30 p.m.

Victoria Natural History Society

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