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COVER PICTURE

Eyed Hawk Moth Larva

by Terese Todd

HAWK MOTHS

Hawk Moths or Sphinx Moths (*Sphingidae*) are a large family of moths, many of which are large in size, brightly coloured and spectacular in appearance. Some species are quite common, but they always cause great excitement when they are seen. They are streamlined in shape, with narrow wings and powerful, rapid flight. Some resemble hummingbirds in size and action as they hover in front of flowers seeking nectar, and many are strongly migratory. The majority are nocturnal, but a few may be seen during the daylight hours.

Butterflies and moths belong to the great insect order *Lepidoptera*, which means "scaly wings". This is because the wing consists of a transparent membrane covered with thousands of tiny coloured scales of beautiful and varied shape which give the wings their beautiful patterns. A few species of Hawk Moths, however, shed their scales after their first flight to reveal transparent wings. The bodies of these insects are often bee-like or wasp-like in colour and pattern and they could be mistaken for a bee by an inexperienced entomologist or a would-be predator. This group of Hawk Moths is usually called Bee Hawks.

One of the more frequently-encountered Hawk Moths in the Victoria region, not a Bee Hawk, is the Eyed Hawk Moth, the caterpillar of which is shown in Terese Todd's fine photograph. Eyed Hawk Moths belong to the genus *Smerinthus*, of which there are several species in different parts of the world. Our own species here is *S. cerisyi*. The adult looks like a bunch of dried leaves and is difficult to see as it rests on a tree trunk. If you do see it and touch it, however, it will very suddenly spread its wings to reveal the hind wings to show two very startling

pink and blue eye-like patterns, enough to scare the wits out of any predator. The moths are quite harmless, however, and make good eating if you happen to be a bird.

Caterpillars of Hawk Moths are demonstration-size models. On the one illustrated you can see the three pairs of true legs on the first three segments, the four pairs of prolegs on segments 6-9, and the claspers at the end. The grip of the prolegs and claspers is very strong and it is not easy to dislodge a caterpillar from a twig. Nearly all moth larvae have four pairs of prolegs, an exception being the Geometers, which have only one. You can also see a series of tiny elliptical holes at the side of each segment except 2 and 3. These are the spiracles or breathing tubes. The big, fearsome-looking (but quite harmless) spike at the end of the tail is typical of Sphingid larvae. The Eyed Hawk Moth feeds on *Salix* (Willow) and *Populus* (Poplar or Cottonwood) leaves and it is the colour of *Salix* or *Populus* leaves.

If the caterpillar has survived the attentions of the little Braconid wasps that lay their eggs under its skin, at the end of the summer it crawls down the tree and buries itself a few inches under the soil, where it spends the winter as a big, brown chrysalis. Some of the Hawk Moths (not this one) have such a long proboscis that there is a separate external compartment for it in the chrysalis case. If you really want to gain a reputation for eccentricity, you can search for these chrysalides (note the plural, Greek scholars!) by digging for them with a trowel under a Poplar or Willow tree. If you find one, keep it under as natural conditions as possible, watching every day until it emerges. It should then be released in the habitat where it was found.

J.B. Tatum

FINDS OIL POLLUTION IN ATLANTIC STAGGERING

The Atlantic Oceanographic Laboratory, Canada, has reported that oil pollution in the Atlantic Ocean has reached a staggering level. Surface water samples taken by ships of the Bedford Institute between Halifax and the Azores were nearly all contaminated with oil, an AOL chemical oceanographer has revealed.

TORONTO GLOBE & MAIL, August 27, 1971, p.1, col.7; 33"

CAVES - AN OFTEN OVERLOOKED ASPECT OF NATURAL HISTORY

One aspect of natural history which many of us tend to overlook is caves. Yet caves, though they contain no animal or plant life, have a fascination all their own with their crystal-clear pools and spectacular rock formations.

About 250 caves have been discovered to date on Vancouver Island. Most of them are, of course, very small, but some extend as far as 1,500 feet underground. Many of the largest and most beautiful caves on the Island are to be found in the Horne Lake district northwest of Qualicum Beach.

A day spent last summer exploring two of these caves with members of the Vancouver Island Cave Exploration Group led me to believe the underground may have almost as much of interest to offer as the thick woods surrounding them.

I would not, however, recommend cave exploration as a pastime for the faint of heart or unsure of foot. Before going down into the caves, I was equipped with a hard hat and a miner's headlamp, for the caves are completely dark. Much of the movement inside them consists of wriggling through ten-inch wide passages and climbing up wet rock faces at 45 degree angles. When the next step at one of the caves involved crawling on one's stomach through a rocky passage before reaching a ten-foot drop, even the lure of more magnificent formations could not tempt me further.

The formations to be seen in the first passages, however, gave me a more than adequate glimpse of the beauty to be found in the unspoiled cave. Our headlamps shone on pure creamy white rock coming down the cave wall in huge vertical waves. There were a few of the traditional pillar-like stalactites and stalagmites, but more formations were arranged in patterns called bacon-drips or soda-straws. The bacon-drip looks like thin slices of rock hanging from the cave roof, while sodastraws are such delicate rock icicles it seems incredible they can remain attached to the ceiling. In some places the water which has condensed onto everything in the cave has settled into pools which lie absolutely still atop the rock.

Like most other natural history attractions, the greatest threat to the caves is man. Vandals and unthinking visitors to the caves break off pieces of the formations (which have taken hundreds of years to form) to take

home as souvenirs. The formations of some of the caves have been almost completely destroyed by these souvenir hunters.

As a result, the Vancouver Island Cave Exploration Group (a volunteer organization devoted to exploring, surveying and protecting the caves) has put a great deal of effort into locking up the entrances to some of the larger unspoiled caves. These can now be toured only by making an appointment with the Provincial Recreation and Conservation Department who will obtain a guide from the V.I.C.E.G. In this way, the group and government hope to preserve the beautiful formations for future generations to enjoy.

Barbara McLintock

PRECIOUS STAND OF PINK ERYTHRONIUMS SAVED

Forty years ago Alpine garden enthusiasts spoke in hushed voices of a wonderful stand of *Erythronium revolutum* (Smith) in the Cowichan district which was a closely guarded secret.

Some five or six years ago I visited the area with Yorke Edwards who was then a naturalist with the B.C. Parks Branch, in the hope that it could be bought and preserved by the government; but nothing came of it. It is the finest stand in British Columbia.

It now appears that Western Forest Industries Limited has purchased seventeen acres from Charles Marsh on Sutton Creek, next to Marsh Meadows Country Club at Honey-moon Bay for a "Wildflower Reserve". This is great news for plant lovers and the company deserves commendation for this public service.

I understand that members of the Cowichan Valley Natural History Society and local garden club members keep a watchful eye on the reserve when the flowers are in bloom - usually about April 15-20. When seen May 6 this year the area was a mass of pink, yellow and white among the ferns and hellebore - bleeding heart, violets and wild strawberries.

Mark the date to see them next year; but remember - love 'em and leave 'em.

Herb Warren

COWICHAN BAY BIRD TRIP

August 21, Enid Lemon led us to our rendezvous at Duncan Tennis Club or Rugby Club if you prefer. We met Miss Betty Mackinnon who provided local knowledge and guidance. The day was not promising. It was overcast and raining, but not too cold. We visited the backwaters of Cowichan Bay from the haul road through the Indian Reserve, then went to a swamp area on the north side road; later we went to the Art Mann Kinsmen Park on Quamichan Lake. We lunched there then went to the Duncan Lagoons and the Cowichan River.

Thirty-one persons turned out on a grim day which improved very much after lunch. Forty-four species were noted. Particularly interesting items were: a pair of Green Herons, Blue-wing Teal, Cooper and Red-Tail hawks, Spotted sandpiper, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs together, Pectoral Sandpiper from very close. Northern Phalarope, Black Swifts and Wood Ducks.

In spite of a wet start we all went home very well pleased with the day and very thankful to Betty Mackinnon of Duncan.

ISLAND VIEW BEACH BIRD TRIP

September 18 the weatherman gave us one of his very best, it was a beautiful day. Forty-three persons joined in our walk along the sand bar which was exposed by the low tide (4 ft). Shore-birds were seen in the pools and among the gulls were Heerman's in various stages of plumage, Common Loons were plentiful. We visited the pool at the north end; a Long Billed Marsh Wren was in residence. Flocks of House Finches were frequent. We lunched at the parking lot then those who remained walked south to Cowichan Head.

Other notables among the forty species noted were: Pipits, Yellowthroat, Lincoln Sparrow and Mourning Dove.

Rod Muirhead

GRIZZLIES

The grizzly bear not only looks distinctly different from the black bear; it has different habits. Perhaps thirty to forty percent of its food is meat, while meat makes up only twenty to thirty percent of a black bear's diet. The grizzly is also much more a single-minded animal than the black bear, as illustrated by the following anecdote.

Last June, Dave Stirling, Mike Shephard and myself, were birdwatching on the Trans-Mountain (gas) Pipeline near Mount Robson. Looking downhill, we noticed a "cinnamon" bear, which, on observation, proved to be a grizzly. Since the bear was upwind from us, we felt safe in approaching closer. The bear was feeding on fireweed and grasses, and this, along with the fact that bears have poor eyesight, allowed us to get within three hundred yards.

He finally showed his suspicions by rearing on his hind legs and looking in our direction, then he headed into the woods. We walked down to where he had been feeding, only to be warned away by his growls (a bear's growl sounds like heavy breathing or snoring). Dave was ready to run, so we backed off. The bear, which had apparently climbed a short distance up a spruce, ran further into the woods. Now, I had had a fair amount of experience with black bears, and I knew that they sometimes bluffed, and I had read some stories about grizzlies which I thought were greatly exaggerated. I had had no experience with grizzlies.

Since the bear had run further into the woods I decided that he was afraid of us, and, determined to get a better look, I entered a clearing and climbed a spruce. I couldn't see the bear but he was nearby and ran further into the woods. I crossed the clearing and climbed about fifteen feet to the first branch of a large willow. There was the bear - about ninety feet away - and as soon as he saw me he charged. I didn't wait around to find out whether grizzlies could climb trees or not. On the way up the tree the bear used its teeth to remove first one then the other of my shoes. I had now reached the treetop, about thirty or thirty-five feet up, and the bear stopped about five feet from the branched crown. There was only one problem. I am six feet tall.

Of course I had called for help; the others came shouting and threw sticks into the bushes (clearing was diagonal to the pipeline, so they couldn't see what was happening). Then they heard: "The bear's got me". It did indeed have my right foot in its mouth, but I quickly pulled it out. My mood changed from hopeless fear to one of fear mixed with anger; I kicked the bear in the head with my shoeless feet. I realized that noise would attract the bear so I stopped yelling; of course, the others thought I was dead. I had to yell at them to make noise, and eventually they made enough noise with enough continuity to distract the bear. He headed in their direction, then stalked off into the woods. I waited a couple of minutes until I was sure he was gone, climbed down the tree, grabbed my shoes and glasses, and leapt over ten-foot high bushes to the car. I required only six stitches.

This was a wild bear. We disturbed him on his feeding grounds. He warned us to leave by growling and by refusing to leave himself. I stupidly ignored the warning; I deserved the punishment - and was very lucky that it wasn't more severe. This was a beautiful bear: his back was tawny, his face, the colour of cinnamon spice, and his undersides, russet. He weighed four hundred to four hundred and fifty pounds. The last thing I would want is to see this bear killed.

Grizzlies are extinct on the great plains and have been virtually exterminated in the U.S. simply because they are the one animal in North America who will not move over for man. The grizzly was here first; he has more right to be here than we do. I hope you will all join in the fight to ban hunting of the grizzly in British Columbia. Write a letter to Ken Kiernan. If any of you would like to know more about bears, ask Dave Stirling or myself, or consult these books: *Mammals of North America* (Victor Cahalane) and *A Field Guide to Animal Tracks* (Olaus Murie).

D. Belton

BIRDS REPORTED

by M. and L. Slocombe - 3134 Henderson Road (592-9047)

Black swift (8) - May 15 ----- Victoria
A.R. Davidson
Whimbrel (1) - May 16 ----- Hood Lane
Mrs. Knowles
Western kingbird (1) - May 16 ----- Witty's Lagoon
Wandering tattler (1) - May 20 ----- Clover Point
M. Waring and C. Hewson
Lapland longspur (1) - May 21 ----- Clover Point
(summer plumage) K. Taylor
Green heron (1) - May 29 ----- Beach Drive
Least flycatcher (1) - July 1 ----- Munn Road
A.R. Davidson
Mockingbird (1) - August 8 - Gowland Pt., S. Pender Island
Mrs. Eve Smith
Pectoral sandpiper (1) - August 28 ----- Panama Flats
A.R. Davidson
Solitary sandpiper (1) - September 6 ----- Witty's Lagoon
J. Tatum
White-fronted goose (2) - September 12 - Sooke Golf Course
Terease Todd
Vaux swift (45) - September 17 ----- Uplands Park
Golden plover (1) - September 17 ----- Clover Point
A.R. Davidson

ADDENDA

It appears to have been a rewarding summer for both birds and birders. Ralph Fryer reports that two Glaucous-winged gulls nested successfully atop a shed roof at V.M.D. (a first?). On September 18 your editors saw six red-tailed hawks circling together over the University area.

For the next magazine please phone in your reports by October 16. Thank you.

Editor's Note: In August we received a note from our bird editors who had just returned from a six-week's trip abroad. They obviously had not received any records to report, but did say that the English sparrow was thriving in both London and Paris, and that London's anti-pollution policy has increased the bird population as a whole in the parks and suburbs. We regret that their "nil" report of bird sightings did not find its way into the September issue, but now they are back in business as usual.

EXTRAS FOR YOUR YEAR'S BIRD LIST

If you want a cheap pelagic trip, take the *Coho* ferry to Port Angeles. From the ferry I counted sixty fork-tailed petrels, a puffin, three parasitic jaegers and one pomarine jaeger. Sooty shearwaters can be identified at vast distances by the stiff wings and by the flight habit of alternating flapping and gliding close to the water. These have been seen also at Clover Point, as have the jaegers.

There has been a shortage of shore birds this year, but some are overlooked because of uncertainty of identification on the part of the experienced. If one studies *The Shore Birds of North America* one can become familiar enough to identify the sandpipers. In the last weeks of August, I found four of the semi-palmated sandpipers at Oak Bay, Cadboro Bay and Loon Bay. A solitary sandpiper was seen by Ron Satterfield in August at the flooded gravel pit at Aldeane Road near the Colwood Golf Course. The treed area is typical habitat for this bird. On September 6 I found a sharptail sandpiper in its habitat of wet grass at Colwood Golf Course.

The fields north of Martindale Road have produced two vesper sparrows and a long billed marsh wren. These fields look promising and should be watched by all. Watch for that dickcissel or bobolink that might be there.

K. Taylor

THE EDITOR'S MAIL BOX ...

875 West Queens Road
North Vancouver, B.C.

September 16, 1971

The Editor
The Victoria Naturalist

Dear Sir:

I noted with genuine enthusiasm that Mr. Schick of the Provincial Museum staff is appealing through the medium of our publication for information pertaining to the location of the rather rare Vancouver Island Marmot.

Because of the recent controversial publicity on the shooting of rare and unusual animals by professional collectors I hesitate to forward my records without confirmation that it is not Mr. Schick's intention to kill and collect any of these mammals.

It would encourage our membership to know briefly what type of study work Jack has in mind on this and any other project we may assist him on and if collecting is intended, the membership should be advised.

G.A. Poynter

Past President

Victoria Natural History Society

SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS INTRODUCED

At the September general meeting, the President introduced two young people who have won recognition in the field of Biology. Miss Willa Noble, a Botany Major at the University of Victoria, won the Victoria Natural History Scholarship. Andrew Harcombe, the winner of the Freeman King Scholarship, was given added congratulations by Freeman King himself. Both these young people had spent summers with the Parks Branch in the nature interpretation programme.

WHIPPOORWILL ON SOUTH PENDER ISLAND

Verandah-sleeping in the summertime does lend itself to the hearing of nocturnal and early morning bird calls but when one is awakened at 4:30 a.m. by the sound of a whippoorwill one wonders if one is dreaming ... Such a thing happened on South Pender Island on the morning of July 22 this summer. The call came from the edge of the woods at the bottom of a field - about one hundred and fifty yards from our house. The first time I heard the song I hardly trusted my ears and did not awaken my husband. However, a few minutes later the bird called again and it was unmistakable. This time I made sure Allan listened. "There's no doubt about it - it's a whippoorwill" he said. (We have both heard the bird in Eastern Canada). We listened for some time but it did not call again once it was light.

After checking in *Birds of Canada* we noted the range of the whippoorwill does not extend west of central Saskatchewan. Jeremy Tatum later informed us that there were no British Columbia records. Next morning we were prepared with tape recorder to get an official British Columbia record, (a sight record would be next to impossible as these birds are rarely seen). We listened from 3:30 to 5:00 a.m. the next morning but unfortunately no call was heard. Several further attempts to record the bird were made by ourselves, Jeremy Tatum and Barbara McLintock, but to no avail. The bird was not heard again.

Betty Brooks
South Pender Island

IFTF IMPOSES FUR SALE BAN ON ENDANGERED SPECIES

An indefinite ban on the fur sales of five endangered animal species and a three-year ban on two other species have been imposed voluntarily by the International Fur Trade Federation. Starting next month, the world's twenty-three major fur consuming countries will place a ban on the tiger, snow leopard, clouded leopard, LaPlata Otter and giant otter.

FINANCIAL TIMES (London), August 24, 1971, p.4, col.6; 18"

PROGRAM FOR OCTOBER 1971

- Audubon Wildlife Film: Newcombe Auditorium Provincial
 Fri., Sat., October 1--2 Museum (south entrance)
 at 8:00 p.m. Albert J. Wool presents:
 Saturday October 2 "Coastline California"
 at 2:30 p.m.
- Executive Meeting: 8:00 p.m. Board Room 104M
 Tuesday October 5 Provincial Museum
- Federation of British
 Columbia Naturalists: Vernon, B.C.
 October 9, 10, 11
- General Meeting: 8:00 p.m. Newcombe Auditorium
 Tuesday October 12 Provincial Museum (south
 entrance) Mr. Freeman King
 will give an illustrated talk
 on: "The Forest Community"
- Bird Field Trip: Meet at Mayfair Lanes parking
 Saturday October 16 lot (north side) 9:30 a.m. or
 Witty's Lagoon 10:00 a.m.
 Bring Lunch.
 Leader: Jeremy Tatum 592-1332
- Ornithology Meeting: 8:00 p.m. Board Room 104M
 Tuesday October 26 Provincial Museum
- Audubon Wildlife Film: Newcombe Auditorium Provincial
 Fri., Sat., October 29-30 Museum (south entrance)
 at 8:00 p.m. John Paling presents:
 Saturday October 30 "Filming in No-Man's Land"
 at 2:30 p.m.
- G. Clifford Carl Memorial Newcombe Auditorium 8:00 p.m.
 Fund Programme: Film title:
 Sunday October 17 "The Essence of Life"

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A.D. Turnbull, 3614 Cadboro Bay Rd. - - 592-6025

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Junior Membership is restricted to those not under 9½ years and not over 18 years.

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New members joining after January 1 - half fee.

Dues and change of address should be sent to the Treasurer.