



# THE VICTORIA NATURALIST

published by the  
VICTORIA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY  
Victoria B.C

December 1972

Vol. 29 #4



The Federation of British Columbia Naturalists

# newsletter

General Correspondence to: P.O. Box 34246, Station D, Vancouver 9, B.C.

December, 1972  
Volume 10 Number 4

Newsletter Correspondence to the editor,  
Elton A. Anderson,  
3904 Benson Rd., Victoria, B.C. (477-1132)

## McQueen Lake Environmental Study Centre

Two short years ago it was an unattainable dream - today it is a reality.

The reality of the dream was made possible by the help and active support of many individuals and organizations. At the time the agreement for the land was made it was the policy of the Provincial Department of Education to not put funds into environmental education centres. The break really came when the Federal Government announced its first Opportunity for Youth Grant. This grant, along with centennial funds from children of School District No. 24, a memorial fund and a dedicated Fish and Game club really got this centre under way. Later the same year a Local Initiative Grant and another Opportunity for Youth Grant plus the continued support of local Rotary, Industry, Fish and Game, and many many individuals, groups and agencies made this centre possible. The help and encouragement came from the Minister of Environment, Jack Davis, Len Marchand, M.P., all the way down the line through the local School Board to the child in the classroom. It is truly a project of this metropolitan community of Kamloops.

It was formally opened by Len Marchand, M.P., on October 13 and received by school trustees in a very impressive ceremony held at the centre in which about 400 people took part. The facilities that are now available to the children of School District No. 24 are as follows: 640 acres of land, ponds, meadows and streams covered by a variety of forest and grasslands. 7 miles of trails for walks and communication links to parts of the centre. Many observation wharfs. One well constructed observation blind for birds. 10 very attractive log cabins. One very large classroom resource centre complete with fireplace. One large shelter for class use in day centre. Two very large open fireplaces for fires and barbecues. The professional support and training to the district by S.F.U. environmental team for teaching teachers. An extensive back-up orientation kit on site used for all elementary schools in the district. An exciting curriculum project on how to teach in the environment. An overall concept that McQueen Lake is not an end in itself but only the initial stepping stone in getting children to use the total environment as a classroom. Things have moved so quickly in the past few months that we have real problems in keeping up. The demands for the site go beyond our ability to satisfy them.

Maybe it is appropriate to look at the original goals of the committee when the centre was first conceived. As

stated in our original proposals they are as follows:

"Man is only a part of the interconnected life-systems of this planet".

All life is connected through various inter-linking food chains and energy systems that are both visible and invisible. By exposing children of all ages to various ecosystems, both large and small, we may begin to lay the building blocks of better understanding of our living systems.

An important aspect of this philosophy is to teach that we are ourselves a part of the environment, and that there is no way we can escape from this fact. Such a philosophy opens the door for us to teach aspects of all disciplines in an outdoor setting - from early primary to college years.

We attempt, by teaching in the environment, to create an ethical approach to the environment so that students will come to understand that man is only one of the species which occupy this earth and that other forms of life have a place in the system as well. We want children to learn and appreciate the inter-connected relationships of all life.

Ralph L. Shaw, Secretary,  
McQueen Lake Environmental  
Study Centre



Bert Edwards School photo

Children learning by seeing at McQueen Lake.

## The B.C. Forest Service – Friend or Opponent?

We have put much effort into having the necessity for permanent leave strips along streams and lakes recognized. B.C. Forest Service officials right up to the former minister have agreed but "Planning Guidelines for Coast Logging Operations"; a 5-page document just published by the BCFS, makes no specific mention of such strips and the word "permanent" is nowhere used. Emphasis throughout is on temporary protection of various kinds which will be removed in later years.

Also unmentioned is anything on leaving of timber tongues running up into alpine meadow areas, a form of protection vitally needed in pretty well all areas in B.C. Timber in such tongues is of low value, is often expensive to log, is difficult or impossible to remove without causing environmental damage and the site is of such low quality that it would in most cases take 200 years to grow another crop of marginally commercial timber. Yet it is common practise to require the removal of such tongues – why, we ask? They are worth far more if left for big game and the hiker.

Game needs are slighted in other directions also. An industry forester at Terrace recently castigated the Forest Service for requiring cutting of sub-commercial swamp and streamside areas. We should have the good sense to leave them for game, he said, as they are poor sites anyway.

This inadequate directive points up the fact that to achieve real multiple use all the users must be in on the planning. We shall request a meeting with Resources Minister Williams at an early date to discuss these questions.

## Fall Meeting Held in the Banana Belt

Perfect weather made the fall meeting at Parksville's Island Hall Hotel on October 14 an enjoyable one. About 50 including delegates from 12 clubs were in attendance.

Memberships in the premium classes and a number of generous donations have put the Federation in a better financial position, reported treasurer Dr. Fred Fisher. Elton Anderson said there were now about 4000 members, 450 of these being direct members. The newsletter run remains at 7000 copies.

Phil Croft's report (presented by Norm Pursell) as Canadian Nature Federation representative said the CNF urgently needs more members to remain solvent. He recommended an interior man be found to succeed him so Frank Paul of Vernon was chosen, Steve Cannings of Penticton having declined to stand. A donation of \$100 was made to the CNF. Many other matters were covered (see list of resolutions elsewhere).

About 75 attended the dinner later to hear Dr. Rod Haig-Brown, our honorary president, speak on conservation matters around the province. Though ospreys in normal numbers had been seen at Pennask Lake he said he had seen few young eagles on the Adeena River in the Queen Charlottes.

On salmon, he stressed the importance of the Chilco sockeye run and hoped differences with the Americans would be settled so that the \$14 million rehabilitation project for the Fraser could go ahead before it was too late to be effective. He was hopeful that better environmental planning was coming.

The host club showed off their attractions next day with a field trip to Cathedral Grove and Little Qualicum Park. Coffee at the home of George Tranfield followed. The Arrowsmith club and their efficient secretary, Thelma Farrell, deserve great credit for a good show all round.

## A Few More Trails To Tramp

Mt. Ida, the 5000' mountain south of Salmon Arm, now has a 9-mile looped hiking trail built by 8 Okanagan College students with the aid of an OFY grant. Woods, bluffs and alpine meadows are traversed and the views are tremendous.

On Vancouver Island the Parks Branch has built or improved 20 miles of trail on the Forbidden Plateau. Two loop sections to Lake Helen Mackenzie and to Mt. Albert Edward (6868') and Castlecrag Mtn. (5700') are included.

## Breeding Bird Survey Observers Wanted In B.C.

A breeding bird survey carried out under closely specified conditions has been coordinated for several years by A.J. Erskine, Canadian Wildlife Service, Ottawa, Ont. KIA OW1.

Routes are travelled at set times and singing birds noted.

In B.C. comparatively few have taken part and doubt was felt that useful estimates could be made because of habitat and climate variation, however, Erskine now feels these are possible if more observers can be recruited. He is therefore urging that all those interested write him at the address above for more information. He intends to visit the coast in early spring and hopes to find a B.C. coordinator here.

A White Moose, said to be only the fourth known in Canada, was bagged by a Smithers hunter near Kiniskan Lake.

## Resolutions Passed At the Fall Meeting

**Power Boats:** Asks for a law to control use of power boats on the smaller waterways of the province.

**Litter:** Requests a strong provincial anti-litter campaign.

**Log Dumping in Lakes:** Requests that dumping of bundled logs only be permitted in lakes, pre-sorted wherever feasible.

**Trails:** Asks that the trail program in B.C. be enlarged with particular attention to the high-use Mt. Seymour area.

**Logging On Vancouver Island:** Asks a moratorium on logging of some sites pending a reassessment of forest policy.

**Gulf Islands:** Asks for a study on the ecological effects of logging in the unique Gulf Islands zone.

**Green Belts:** Promises support for an enlarged and accelerated green belt policy in B.C.

**Salmon Point:** (a small sanctuary near Campbell River): Asks this be made a wildlife refuge with no hunting.

**Arctic Slope Conservancy:** Asks the federal government to establish a wildlife conservancy on the Yukon Arctic Slope.

**Kluane National Park:** Asks that lowland areas be added.

**Kechika Proposal:** Urges that a survey be carried out.

**Tchaikazan (Chilcotin):** Requests the promised survey of this area for a provincial park be carried out.

**Spider & Illusion Lakes (Qualicum):** Asks for a park reserve. Land is owned by Scott Paper or a subsidiary.

**Little Mountain (Parksville):** Requests a park reserve of 100 acres on Crown land atop this hill and to the east.

**Falcons:** Requests total protection in B.C. for falcons.

**Grizzlies:** Asks that spring hunting and sale of grizzly hides be prohibited and that more protection be given.

**Poisoning of Predators:** Requests that use of poisons on predators be discontinued and no bounty systems used.

**Humane Traps:** Asks for a ban on use of the leg hold trap.

**Fish & Wildlife Branch:** Asks that staff size be increased and field broadened to include non-harvestable species.

Many other resolutions were passed or considered which dealt with procedural and other matters. The annual meeting is expected to be held in Kamloops next April 14th.

## The First Interior Gull Colony For British Columbia

A gull colony, the first for the interior of British Columbia, was located near Vernon on Okanagan Lake this past summer. Though known for some time to local residents it has not been officially recorded.

During the late May at least 96 ring-billed gull nests and one California gull nest were present, the first nesting records for these species in the province. One glaucous-winged gull and one herring gull were also present. Though much more wary than the other species they appeared to have nested.

During early June rising lake waters flooded out a number of nests including that of the California gull pair. The island is privately owned but received considerable disturbance as many nests held 5, 6 or even 7 eggs.

In early July the island was visited for a third time and 56 chicks were present, 11 of these were banded.

William J. Merilees



Gull Colony on Okanagan Lake

Wm. J. Merilees

## Vaseux Bighorn Protection Becomes Permanent

The project which put the Okanagan-Similkameen Parks Society on the map was buying and fencing land near Vaseux Lake to exclude cattle from California bighorn sheep range. Many were pessimistic but the experiment was a real success. Now the OSPS newsletter reports the Canadian Wildlife Service has bought the area and named it the Bighorn National Wildlife Area. Meanwhile the Society will go after more land for it.

Another victory came last May when the former premier said their 33,000-acre park proposal for Okanagan Mtn. would go ahead. Bob Ahrens of the Parks Branch confirms that this is in the mill. But major enlargement of Cathedrals Park seems as far away as ever and the Osoyoos Arid protection proposal seems hung up on ownership conflicts.

An affiliate member of ours, the large membership of the OSPS includes about all of our Penticton club though their address is Box 737, Summerland. It is a real pleasure to salute an outfit which relies on action rather than words.

## Parks Policy Emerges From Behind the Paper Curtain

Park proposals are now to be released while in the initial stages, a significant change since it will give more groups a chance to be heard. And the silently enforced limit of 6.5 million acres in a province having 230 million acres of Crown land seems a thing of the past as park acreage rose to 6,824,490 acres with the addition of Mt. Edziza Park.

A few changes: Premier Lake Park north of Kimberley gets Class A status and Bugaboo Glacier Park gains 240 acres to a total of 895. 72 acres were added to Strathcona Park.

Purchase of the Aylard farm gives East Sooke Regional Park 248 acres more including beaches, coves and meadows.

## Industry Is Told It May Not Eat Estuaries

Environment Minister Davis has said that no further filling of the estuarine marshes at Squamish will be permitted and has directed that the wharf development at Nanaimo be kept well away from the river mouth. The attitude of the provincial government is expected to be equally firm.

At Prince Rupert the plan for a superport on tiny Kitson Island at the south end of 1.4-mile Flora Bank appears to have died a deserved death. The Bank is an ecologically valuable eelgrass bed and the island, with one of the few sandy beaches in the area, received considerable recreational use. The port may now go in 3 miles further north instead.

Other estuaries threatened with development are Tahsis, Port Hardy and Cowichan Bay. Firm control in this field must be maintained. We don't plunk marshes down on their wharves — why should they put wharves on our marshes?

Please Forward Any Address Changes Promptly and be sure to include your zone number. We get many n/l's returned.

## North Okanagan Club Cuts the Mustard

The Vernon club is the answer to those who like to see their club stay small and cosy — you do better the other way. The members must enjoy their wide-ranging hikes because up to 125 turned out on some and 170 came to their first fall meeting. Work parties were held (unsuccessfully) to save Jim Mack's farm from flooding and to get in the hay for a disabled member. They had a larch stand protected and worked to save Swan Lake — now they have word that Mara Meadows (previously rehabilitated with many work bees) has been made an ecological reserve and that the Wap Lake - Mabel Mtn. area has received protection. And when roses were planned for the City Centre they undertook to plant native species instead.

That last idea is a steal from the Williams Lake club who have been doing this for years in their Boitano Park and now have added a bird feeding station. Clarke's nutcrackers, seen in fair numbers last winter after a lapse of 12 years, are there again this year — they also had a migrating Harris' sparrow. Kamloops saw swans on the Thompson near Pritchard and Comox had 18 trumpeters in Comox Bay on October 28th.

A rare little gull, first ever for B.C., hit Victoria on November 1 while on the 4th 2 Harris' sparrows and a male Anna's hummingbird were spotted. A tropical kingbird reported on October 17-18 was a second for Canada. A snowy Egret seen at Esquimalt Lagoon August 22-29 was the second or third for B.C. as was a common egret seen at Cowichan Bay September 23 to October 8 by the Cowichan Bird Society. Unfortunately this bird was shot by a potshot artist who escaped a witness by running.

Planning first-time Christmas counts are Chilliwack, Nanaimo and Mitletatch — the last is also working for a bird refuge at Salmon Point near Campbell River. Comox is taking a weekly bird count in 3 areas for a year for the Nanaimo F. & W. biologists. The Nanaimo club is trying to stop logging of sub-alpine timber near two colonies of the endangered Vancouver Island marmot. We'll save the rest of the news for the new sheet which is to give club news in more detail to all the clubs. But don't expect too much — we can't read minds at a distance so you'll still need your own sheets.

## A Steelhead River May Be Threatened

Many questions are raised by news that the City of Duncan is considering asking permission to dam the Chemainus River above Copper Canyon as a domestic water supply.

The river supports runs of both summer and winter steelhead and the area is much used for hunting. Will this dam adversely affect the steelhead and will access to the area be restricted? This proposal deserves more study than Duncan is likely to give it, not the least of which is whether alternative sources such as the Cowichan have been explored.

Upcountry, Enderby residents are angry over another example of single-agency planning which would bring a B.C. Hydro line from Mica Dam over Hunter's Range to a sub-station near Ashton Creek. One of three lines from there would then go over the Enderby Bluffs and cross North Enderby farmland.

The Bluffs and Hunter's Range have high recreational value with park and ecological reserve proposals pending for both. Let's give the rest of us a voice in this planning.

## A Ducky Development In The East Kootenay

About 250 acres at Elizabeth Lake just south of Cranbrook near the highway is to be developed as a duck nesting area with water levels controlled in favor of the ducks. Agencies responsible for this excellent idea are the Fish & Wildlife Branch, Ducks Unlimited and the City of Cranbrook.

## Two Membership Classes Dropped And Two New Ones In

We have changes to report for the coming year. Individual and Family membership forms are being phased out in favor of a single Regular form at \$5.00, please note. And a Patron class at \$100.00 has been added for those of you who have both money and a firm desire to help effectively.

We have had a goodly number of contributions for amounts ranging up to a hundred dollars. Names are not published but we do wish to extend our heartfelt thanks to these people for their help. A special thanks also to all those club members who help by taking a direct form of membership in addition — that's what enables us to keep club fees low.

Remember, all direct memberships except those taken since October 1st expire at the end of the year so renew now and save us the added task of sending out reminders next time.

We wish you a Merry Christmas and an easy winter.

REGULAR: \$5.00	CONTRIBUTING: \$50.00
SUSTAINING: \$10.00	PATRON: \$100.00
ACTIVE: \$25.00	LIFE: \$200.00
AFFILIATE: \$5.00 and up. (Non-profit organizations)	
ASSOCIATE: \$5.00 and up. (Profit organizations)	
(Bulk mailings available — write for details.)	

Send to: The Treasurer, Federation of B.C. Naturalists, Box 34246, Stn. D., Vancouver 9, B.C. Use own paper if you wish to keep this intact. PLEASE WRITE AS LEGIBLY AS THIS.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Class \_\_\_\_\_ Amount enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

Are newsletter mailings desired? \_\_\_\_\_

FEES IN EXCESS OF \$5.00 ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE

## Nineteen Clubs Now Under The Roof

The Haney-Pitt Meadows area now has a club in full swing under the name of Alouette Field Naturalists. Steve Robinson, 19963 McNeil Road, Pitt Meadows, is president and Mrs. W. Pickens, 22011 - 132nd Ave., Maple Ridge, secretary. They have already been out on several trips. Come spring we shall be gunning for a lot more clubs in the Fraser Valley.

No. 19 is a club just getting under way in Kitimat, the first of four along Highway 16, we hope. President pro tem is Northern Sentinel publisher Ron Lawrence and Mrs. Phyllis LeBlanc, 71 Wedeene St., Kitimat, is secretary-treasurer. And they are concerned people — right at their first meeting they went after littering and pesticide spraying.

A hearty welcome to both new clubs — the more we are together the stronger we shall be. Now, who will No. 20 be?

## Reifel Refuge Gains More Complete Protection

Sale of the 570-acre Reifel farm near Ladner to the Canadian Wildlife Service for \$2.3 million and donation of the 98-acre George C. Reifel Waterfowl Refuge lease by George H. Reifel brings the total holding to 1531 acres and ensures that it will be protected for all time against development threats. The farm will become the B.C. headquarters of the CWS and some crops plus feed for the birds will still be raised.

The Refuge had its beginning in 1961 when the elder Reifel, a dedicated conservationist, leased 98 acres for \$1 a year to the B.C. Waterfowl Society, formed by Barry Leach, Frank Butler and Fred Auger. The province then gave the Society a reserve on 721 acres of marsh and later the Dept. of National Defense contributed 43 acres. The federal government gave funds to dike 80 acres and Ducks Unlimited donated money to develop nesting areas.

It is now the largest refuge in the West, used by more than 100,000 ducks and 20,000 snow geese in each year. An observation tower has been built and thousands each year visit the Refuge to see this example of conservation in action.

More Protection for Polar Bears and other Arctic species has been asked by Iceland and Norway at the United Nations.

## Books To Note

**PADDLEWHEELS ON THE FRONTIER**, by Art Downs. Gray's Publishing \$9.50 hard covers; Foremost Publishing, \$2.95 and \$3.95 for two part soft covers. P. 160, 215 photos

Few today realize how much is owed in this mountain-strewn province to the more than 300 paddlewheelers of which Art Downs writes so ably. For a hundred years they ran the rivers and ploughed the lakes, an indispensable part of the transportation system for all or part of this time in many sections of the province.

Art's finely turned out book is, in effect, a history of the province since gold rush days. Very few of the old ships have been preserved but this book at least shows them as they once were.

**BRITISH COLUMBIA COAST NAMES**, by Capt. John T. Walbran, J.J. Douglas Ltd. for Vancouver Public Library as a centennial contribution. 1971. P 546, \$12.50.

This reprinting of the Walbran classic is already in its second printing so has been warmly received. The original text with all its historical content is reproduced in facsimile with the pictures slightly enlarged for the sake of clarity. The book is well produced with a generous introduction by Dr. G.P.V. Akrigg.

**CANADA AND THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT**, by the Dept. of the Environment. From Information Canada, \$3.00. 1972, P. 92, 48 photos.

Produced as a contribution to the Stockholm conference this is an able review of environmental aspects in Canada. Over 50 subjects are covered ranging from air monitoring systems and the mercury crisis to water for the prairies and the Georgia Strait underwater park proposal. It pulls no punches — lung cancer in Newfoundland fluorspar miners, high radioactive cesium levels in northern natives and release of arsenic to the atmosphere by roasting of gold ore at Yellowknife are all covered. This book is a worthwhile job.

**ANNUAL BIRD REPORT FOR SOUTHERN VANCOUVER ISLAND**, 1971. Victoria Natural History Society. Paper cover, P. 72, \$1.80.

A full report on 236 species plus book reviews and an article. Order from J.B. Tatum, 416 - 3187 Shelbourne St., Victoria.

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Volume 29: No. 4

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## LACEWINGS

There are more than a million kinds of insects in the world. Many of us think of them as "bugs," and usually in the context of "pests." Entomologists have estimated that somewhat less than 5 per cent of these million different kinds of insects are so-called "enemies of man." Most of them are just there, but some of them could be called "friends of man."

The lacewings certainly belong to the latter category. They are very beautiful creatures measuring about one-half inch in length, and have long feelers, golden-coloured eyes, light green bodies and delicate wings with a very fine venation. Like all insects they have three body parts -- a head, thorax (middle part), and abdomen. Attached to the thorax are three pairs of legs. When disturbed lacewings give off a very offensive odour which to me somewhat resembles cyanide. This is a form of self-defence, should a bird consider the lacewing a tasty meal.

The larvae of these insects are extremely valuable to farmer and gardener alike, owing to their feeding habits. They feed upon aphids (plant lice) with their large strong jaws, and are sometimes given the name "aphid-lions."

The female lays stalked eggs on a plant such as a leaf or a blade of grass. When the young hatch they spin silky cocoons, later emerging as adults.

It is well to remember that when poisonous sprays are used to "control" so-called pests, beneficial insects are often harmed as well. Perhaps one day there will be lacewing farms to control aphids in a way similar to that

in which lady beetles are used in California.

-- Cover photo and story by  
Al Grass.

#### F.B.C.N. DECALS

The Federation of British Columbia Naturalists is the umbrella organization to which nearly all natural history clubs and societies in British Columbia are affiliated. The Federation enables naturalists throughout the province to have a strong voice in matters concerning the natural history of British Columbia. The Victoria Natural History Society is, of course, affiliated, and we are proud that the current President of the Federation, Elton Anderson is a member of our Society. All members of our Society are therefore also members of the Federation, and we receive four issues of the Federation Newsletter each year.

The Federation has recently produced an attractive decal in the form of a Raven of Indian design. You may fix the decal on your car window to indicate your membership in and your support for the Federation. From the purely materialistic point of view, this will be to our advantage; for the affiliation dues that the Society pays to the Federation are on a per capita basis, and, if these dues should ever be increased, our own membership dues would inevitably follow suit. A more important reason for buying the decals, however, is that it demonstrates your active encouragement of the aims of the Federation as well as merely supplying financial support. The decals are available at meetings of our Society at 50¢ each or three for \$1.00.

Individual membership in the Federation is very much encouraged, and enquiries may be directed to Mr. Elton Anderson, 3904 Benson Street, Victoria.

-- J.B. Tatum

#### OTTERS AND OTHERS

By Katherine Sherman

One never knows what one will find birding! On Nov. 7, while quietly meandering along the west shore of Beaver Lake, the Tuesday Group was suddenly confronted by a group of five otter feeding and playing along the edge of the water. On seeing us they took off, but a little later one re-appeared on the rocky promontory of a small island. It had a fish about ten inches long and appeared to be having some difficulty with it.

Evidently it didn't like being watched for it disappeared with its fish behind the rock. A little later a group of five or more were seen across the lake loping around in and out of the trees and roots. One particularly large one could be seen indulging in a vigorous scratch. For most of us these otters, correctly called Canadian River Otters, were a "first." We enjoyed the grace of their movements and their sleek, almost black coats.

Returning our glasses to the rocky promontory, there to our joy was a mink following in the footsteps of the otter and evidently enjoying a few choice leftover tit-bits. By now our interest was more centred on mammals than birds. We decided to lunch in Mount Douglas Park -- a few seals or sea-lions would have rounded off the morning very nicely, but the tide was high and their usual basking rocks were covered.

The Provincial Museum handbook Mammals of British Columbia, published in 1956, states that River Otters are abundant along the coast and the most numerous aquatic mammal along the Gorge in Victoria. In view of the increasing habitation and pollution, it would be interesting to hear how many readers have seen otters recently in either the Gorge or the Inner Harbour. #

## JUNIOR JOTTINGS

On October 21, a foggy Saturday, the intermediates went on their first day-trip of the season. Leaving not so bright, but early on Saturday morning, we drove up to Spectacle Lake on top of the Malahat for about four hours of hiking, exploring and discovery.

As soon as everybody had piled out of the cars at the small parking lot there, and made sure that their lunch was in a secure and identifiable spot, we started down the trail around the lake. Splitting into two groups, with the more rambunctious members in the lead, we proceeded at a comfortable pace, looking for plants not commonly seen at lower elevations, and enjoying the mist-shrouded scenery.

The newer people were taught how to distinguish between the Lodgepole and White Pines by counting needles, and many were fooled by the autumn condition of fireweed, thinking that it was something completely different. Mrs Mitchell collected many different kinds of fungi, and also some berries of the Hairy Manzanita, a bush of the heather family and a close relative of the Kinnikinnick.

In one narrow arm of the lake there is a log jam, and from a perch on one of these logs, a red squirrel strongly scolded one member who ventured too close. Some wrens came to investigate us, flitting from one bush to the next, parallel to our path.

After a walk of pleasant duration along that well-made trail, we arrived back at the parking lot and got our lunches. We talked and ate on some rocks above the lake, watching as a wall of fog engulfed and swallowed everything more than a couple of hundred yards distant. Then, deciding that driving conditions would only worsen, we drove back down to Goldstream to see the first few salmon fighting their way upstream, and then returned to town, considering the day a complete success and one of enjoyment for all.

-- Robin Marles

Full details of this month's junior program will be found on page 48.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR CHRISTMAS

\* What better Christmas present than buying a friend a membership in our Society? Remember that new members joining after Jan 1 pay only half the regular fee. For rates, see the back cover of this magazine. Memberships may be obtained at meetings or by writing to the Treasurer.

\* You have all seen the Steller's Jay, the Douglas Fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), and the Pacific Flowering Dogwood (*Cornus nuttallii*). But who were Georg Steller, David Douglas, Archibald Menzies and Thomas Nuttall? You can read all about the notable naturalists of the Pacific Northwest in A Net of Naturalists, published by the Victoria Natural History Society. Price \$1.35 plus 7¢ tax plus 8¢ postage. Available at meetings or by writing to the Treasurer.

\* How many different sorts of birds were found in southern Vancouver Island last year? Where were they found and when? If you have a friend who is interested in birds, he will be delighted to receive the Annual Bird Report for Southern Vancouver Island 1971. Price as for A Net of Naturalists. Obtainable at meetings or by writing to the President.

\* Looking for an interesting Christmas card? The hasti-notes issued by our Society make excellent Christmas cards, and can also be used at other times of year for birthdays or just for writing letters. Illustrated with a beautiful Fenwick Lansdowne painting of an Audubon's Warbler, one of the characteristic birds of our area. Packages of 10 for 95¢ plus 5¢ tax. Obtainable at meetings or by writing to Enid Lemon (address on back cover).

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EDITOR'S NOTES

From Dec. 20 to Jan. 8, Maeford and Linda Slocombe, our dedicated and capable compilers of *Birds Reported*, will be away on holidays, so all members who see interesting birds during that time are asked to phone them in to Enid Lemon at 598-3517.

We're pleased this month to have a contribution from one of our junior members, Robin Marles, and hope we will be hearing often from Robin and some of the other enthusiastic juniors.

## THEN AND NOW

By A.R. Davidson

The keeping of bird records over the years provides some interesting, and possibly alarming figures.

Never in the 28 years of our Society's existence has it been blessed with so many first-class birders in the field, and their findings show that, while the species are here, their numbers, of the passerines anyway, are considerably less than they were around 20 or more years ago.

It would appear that some birds are more affected by changing conditions than others, a matter possibly of adaptability and resistance to poisons.

Starling, as we all know, are very efficient and have increased here and elsewhere, while our native blackbirds have been reduced to small isolated flocks, and the meadowlark has nearly disappeared altogether. We do miss the meadowlark's song.

The warblers, flycatchers and vireos still arrive at the same time each spring, but the advent of the parasitic cowbird which occurred in May of 1955, has had a detrimental effect on their numbers.

The Western Bluebird has been particularly susceptible to change. In the 1920s it was a familiar bird to most Victorians and nested freely in the city. This year I have had reports of two nesting pairs only.

Even the presumably hardy sparrow family have not survived in anything like their former numbers. Many of us will remember that formerly the Chipping and the White-crowned Sparrows were common every summer, nesting in many of the gardens. How many of the former have been seen this year?

And how about the Purple Finch? Sixteen years we came across a flock on the Sooke River of 135. This was exceptional, but flocks of 50 were frequently seen each winter.

Here are a few figures of flocks seen:

Pipits	1,000	Island View Road	Sept. 18	1955
	750	" " "	"	18 1962
	200	Martindale Road	"	20 1965
	100	" "	"	16 1972
Golden-crowned Sparrows	300	Blenkinsop	October	1949
	175	Killarney Road	May 7	1955
	60	Keatings	Jan. 8	1956
	25	Martindale Road	Sept. 19	1970

However, some of the residents such as chickadees, bushtits, creepers, Song Sparrows, Ruby and Golden-crowned Kinglets, and nuthatches have maintained their numbers, while the ducks, grebes, mergansers, and most of the shore birds are as plentiful as they ever were.

Now that most people are aware of the inherent dangers in the use of poisons, to themselves as well as to all wild life, it is possible there will be an upward swing in bird populations in the years to come. #

## RESOLUTIONS

From time to time this Society has put forward important Resolutions concerning natural history matters. Some of these matters are of local interest and are handled by the Society. Others, of province-wide interest, are referred to the Society of British Columbia Naturalists. Yet others, of national importance, are referred to the Canadian Nature Federation.

We wish to take a much stronger part in these activities. It is most important that Resolutions are prepared well in advance, are properly worded, supported by adequate background information, and directed to the correct authorities.

Members are encouraged to prepare or suggest such Resolutions. Those who do not feel able to work out the exact wording or who are uncertain about some of the background information or who otherwise lack confidence to prepare the material should not be deterred, but should write to our Corresponding Secretary asking that a Resolution be prepared on a subject of concern. The Executive will then undertake to do the necessary work and see the

resolution through.

Please note that there is a deadline of February 24 for submission of Resolutions to the F.B.C.N. for their next meeting. Suggestions of Resolutions for our Society to forward to the F.B.C.N. must therefore be in to Mrs Hooper by February 7 at the very latest, and preferably by January 2.

-- J.B. Tatum

### THE SANDHILL CRANE

By Ruth Chambers

The Sandhill Crane was big news during the week in October that it spent in the field by Lochside Drive immediately south of Lohbrunner Road.

It was there at noon on the day a Society member made a lunch hour trip to see it. Another member saw it there at 5 p.m. on a different day as he went home from work. It looked very tall and dark one morning when the field was still white with hoarfrost.

It seemed very tame and unalarmed if you walked quietly towards it across the field. It was there one moment, said one Blenkinsop Valley resident, and gone the next. As it couldn't have flown away unnoticed, she looked more closely. The crane was crouching behind a small rise in the ground, and how could such a tall bird squat that flat?

A battered copy of Taverner's Birds of Western Canada was read with pleasure. (Our Society library has a copy of this out-of-print classic.)

The Sandhill Crane illustration is by Allan Brooks, and Taverner writes:

"The rattling tinny trumpet of these birds is one of the notable sounds of the west. It can be heard for miles. Far away and softened by the distance, it reaches the ear; a glance around reveals no sound of life, then away off on the pale prairie horizon a few specks heave into sight; they grow into birds with wide waving pinions, heads outstretched on slender necks as if reaching forward. Hoarse horn answers horn louder and clearer, back and forth, throughout the long-drawn line, and they come

on with stately measured beat at a pace that eats the miles. A neighboring hill attracts them, they circle it to see that the coast is clear, and then settle on its top, silhouetted in black against the sky. For a moment the trumpeting redouble as they stand at full height and survey the country for possible dangers, then the sounds cease, one by one the heads drop, the necks gracefully curve as they search the ground about with delicate grace, picking up a morsel here or making a quick reach there with an agile step or two after a fleeing grasshopper. Should the observer show himself, the quick eyes note at once, the trumpet is blown, and all are drawn up to attention again. Often the flock quietly edges over the hilltop where, with body hidden from view, they observe the suspicious object intently, only the head showing periscope-like above the swell of the hill."

There is more, much more, in Taverner. But it is worth recording that in October, 1972, this solitary Sandhill Crane was seen by many people in a valley within five miles of the downtown centre of Victoria. It was watched with pride, pleasure, satisfaction and sympathy. #

### NOVEMBER BIRD FIELD TRIP

When the birders arrived at Clover Point Nov. 18, the north wind was strong, the seas rough, and the birds few. It was cold.

The birders moved into Beacon Hill Park where it was comfortable. Two Goldfinches were noted for their late appearance. A hybrid European Widgeon was the object of some curiosity as well as two other hybrid ducks.

After lunch the hardened birders went to Cattle Point where a strange bird was seen. It took close observation with the telescope to determine that it was a juvenile Northern Shrike. A Glaucous-winged Gull was seen carrying three identification tags on its legs.

Total count for the day was 36 birders and 48 species of birds.

-- Doug Sparling

## THE WATCHER IN THE WRY ...

## Considers Pigeons

In Victoria, birds are the Establishment. Starlings sneer at you from the flower baskets and Robins in the fall just yawn and stay put. But it's the Pigeons that really own the town, and they didn't wait for Mr Chant (the former Public Works Minister?) to not build them a square either.

To let the people know the place is theirs, the pigeons go Phoop on them. True Blue Victorians never noticed, but the tourists complained something awful, so they built a mini-astrodome on Yates as a fallout shelter. This was fine for Yates, but still left a lot of pates to the fates.

But the Watcher to the rescue -- we have a Plan. This involves the outlay, not of money but of our local eagle man, Dave Hancock. Dave appears able to do anything with eagles, so we'll just have him grab us about 20 pairs of Grade A Large specimens from up-coast. Then we'll build them nests of old fence rails on downtown's twinkling towers so they'll feel at home and let them feast forevermore on Pigeon Pickin's.

There's just one thing -- keep your eye on the eagle-birdie, because he goes PHOOOOOOO-P-P!

-- Elton Anderson

(Ed. Note: With apologies to Dave Hancock, Victoria's illustrious city officials, and anyone else who may take offence at this article -- including the pigeons!)

## CANADA AND THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

Canada and the Human Environment is a lavishly illustrated, 92-page book prepared by Environment Canada as one of this country's contributions to the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment held in Sweden in June. But since it also serves as an excellent handbook for concerned Canadians, it is being stocked in quantity by Information Canada centres across Canada. The price is \$3.00 per copy. Free information leaflets will be available at the next general meeting, and a copy of the book is in the Society's library.

## BIRDS REPORTED

Long-billed Dowitcher	(19)	Oct. 7	Martindale Road Ron Satterfield
Goshawk (imm.)	(1)	Oct. 8	Metchosin Mr. and Mrs. Vic Goodwill
Anna's Hummingbird	(1)	Oct. 8	Dunsterville Road Ralph Davies
Bohemian Waxwing	(1)	Oct 11	Mount Finlayson Ron Satterfield
White-throated Sparrow	(1)	Oct 12	Monterey Avenue Grace Bell
Great Horned Owl	(1)	Oct 13	Mount Finlayson Mr and Mrs G.N. Hooper
Whistling Swan (imm.)	(1)	Oct 15	Esquimalt Lagoon Miss Leila Roberts
Snow Goose	(1)	Oct 22	Oak Bay Golf Course Mr. Western
Sandhill Crane	(1)	Oct 21	Blenkinsop Road Joan Alston-Stewart
Harris' Sparrow	(1)	Oct 26	Cadboro Bay Rob McKenzie-Grieve
Skua	(1)	Oct 28	Ogden Point R. Satterfield, H. Couser et al.
Little Gull	(1)	Oct 26	Ogden Point Stuart Johnston
Rusty Blackbird	(3)	Oct 28	Martindale Road Ron Satterfield
Northern Shrike	(1)	Oct 29	Saanich Road Enid Lemon
Prairie Falcon	(1)	Nov. 8	Gorge Road Ralph Fryer

## ADDENDA

Our thanks to all who phoned in this month. Apart from the list above, we had reports of: Nighthawk, Hermit Thrush, European Widgeon (3), Common Scoter, Water Pipit, Horned Lark (4), Snow Bunting (7), Long-billed Marsh Wren, Semipalmated Plover, Golden Plover, Least Sandpiper, Western Sandpiper, Rock Sandpiper, Pigeon Hawk (4), Golden Eagle (3), Marsh Hawk, Short-eared Owl, Cooper's Hawk, Sparrow Hawk, Clarke's Nutcracker (2), Mourning Dove, Slate-coloured Junco (2), and Common Tern.

--M. and L. Slocombe, 3134 Henderson,  
592-9047.

PROGRAM FOR DECEMBER 1972

Executive Meeting: 8 p.m. Board Room 104M  
 Tuesday, Dec. 5 Provincial Museum

General Meeting: 8 p.m. Newcombe Auditorium (south  
 Tuesday, Dec. 12 entrance). Dr. Alan Austin will  
 give an illustrated talk on "The  
 All-Embracing Algae -- An Everyday  
 Encounter." Dr Austin is from the  
 Biology Department at the University  
 of Victoria.

Bird Counts: Birdwatchers are reminded to get in  
 Dec. 16, 19, 26. touch with the Compilers for the  
 three Christmas Counts to be held  
 in the area this year. For details,  
 see the November issue of the Vic-  
 toria Naturalist. The date of the  
 Pender Islands Christmas Count is  
 confirmed as December 19.

## JUNIOR PROGRAM

Meet at 1:30 p.m. north side of Mayfair Lanes park-  
 ing lot (corner of Roderick and Oak) unless otherwise no-  
 ted. If drivers unable to drive on specified day, please  
 inform Gail Mitchell at 477-9248 as early as possible.

- Dec. 9 Juniors. Prospect Lake Marsh. Drivers: Whittaker,  
 Parrish.  
 Dec. 16 Intermediates. Turner's Bog. Drivers: Allen,  
 Neilson.  
 Dec. 30 Juniors. Esquimalt Lagoon. Drivers: Huggett,  
 Mason.  
 Jan. 6 Intermediates. Witty's Lagoon. Drivers: Har-  
 combe, Foster.

Please note there will be NO OUTING Dec. 23 for  
 the juniors.

# VICTORIA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

## Honorary Life Members

Freeman F. King, Albert R. Davidson, George E. Winkler,  
Miss M.C. Melburn, Miss E.K. Lemon, Mrs. L.E. Chambers, E.E. Bridgen

## Officers 1972 - 73

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Dr. Jeremy Tatum  
#416-3187 Shelbourne St.  
592-1332

### Vice-President

K.R. Beckett  
4484 Markham St., R.R.3  
479-5548

### Immediate Past President

Mrs. F.A. Sherman, 2168 Guernsey St. ----- 598-3237  
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Corresponding Secretary: Mrs. G.N. Hooper, 2411 Alpine Cres. --- 477-1152  
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Programme Chairman: Dr. Rosemary Picozzi, 11-1595 Rockland -- 384-4958  
Audubon Wildlife Films: Miss Enid Lemon, 1226 Roslyn Road --- 598-3517  
A.H. Couser, #403-435 Michigan St. ---- 384-0832

### Group Leaders

Botany: Stephen Mitchell, 3930 Braefoot Road ----- 477-9248  
Entomology: Prof. H.H. Huxley, 510-1701 Cedar Hill X Rd. ----- 477-8905  
Ornithology: Ruth Stirling, 3500 Salsbury Way ----- 385-4223  
Marine Biology: Freeman F. King, 541 McKenzie Ave. ----- 479-2966  
David Stirling, 3500 Salsbury Way ----- 385-4223  
Junior Naturalists: Freeman F. King, 541 McKenzie Ave. ----- 479-2966  
Gail Mitchell, 3930 Braefoot Rd. ----- 477-9248

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Ornithology Records: Dr. Jeremy Tatum, (see address above)  
University Liaison: Dr. Rosemary Picozzi (see address above)  
Membership: Mrs. A.R. Davidson, 2144 Brighton Ave. ----- 598-3088  
Librarian: A.R. Davidson, 2144 Brighton Ave. ----- 598-3088  
Federation of B.C. Naturalists: Kerry Joy, Millstream Lake Rd., R.R.6 478-5093  
Friends of the Museum: Dr. D.B. Sparling, #9-1354 Beach Dr. --- 598-4262  
Publicity: Harold Hosford, 450 Tipton St. ----- 478-5794

### "The Victoria Naturalist"

Editor: Barbara McLintock, 3-1006 Tolmie Ave. ----- 383-3097  
Assistant Editor: Harold Hosford, (see address above)

Annual Dues, including subscription: Single \$3; Family \$6; Junior \$2

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

Financial Year is May 1 to April 30.

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