

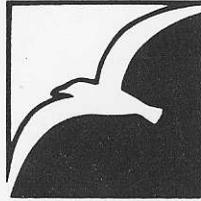
The
**VICTORIA
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VICTORIA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY,
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VICTORIA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

VICTORIA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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COVER PHOTO: by Bertha Gow
Nature's Art: clam - shell and reflection

VICTORIA AND SOOKE CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT 1985

Ray Williams

The 27th Annual Victoria Christmas Bird Count was held on Saturday, December 21st. While two birders briefly got lost in the early morning fog/mist, weather conditions soon improved for the remainder of the day. The 127 species recorded was our lowest total since the 123 species recorded in 1974.

All-time highs were attained by 21 species and our only low was Killdeer, 17 (previous low 37). Among the significant highs (with previous highs in parentheses) were Canada Goose 931 (543), Eurasian Wigeon 28 (21), Merlin 11 (6), Great Horned Owl 7 (4), Anna's Hummingbird 29 (24) and Golden-crowned Kinglet 1607 (1220). New to the Victoria Christmas Count were Kittlitz's Murrelet (1st CBC record south of Alaska) and American Tree Sparrow. Other notable species tallied were Rough-legged Hawk (4th count) and Snow Bunting (3rd count).

A post-count gathering was held at the Fernwood Community Center and was a great success, thanks to the efforts of Dave Fraser and his motley crew. The highlight of the evening was Chef Fraser's 'Kittlitz's Cake'.

The 3rd Annual Sooke Christmas Count was held on December 28th and tallied a respectable 113 species, only 14 less species than the Victoria CBC. This topped our previous high of 107 set in 1984. Among the notable highs were Eared Grebe 13 (1), Red-breasted Merganser 683 (65), Brandt's Cormorant 4280 (1219) and Common Murre 4321 (1935). Best species tallied were White-fronted Goose, Golden Eagle, Northern Saw-Whet Owl, White-breasted Nuthatch (2nd record for Southern Vancouver Island), Northern Goshawk and Harris' Sparrow.

Victoria Count Areas

- 1. Butchart Gardens-Northern Highlands
2. Central Highlands
3. Goldstream-Finlayson Arm
4. Thetis Lake-Hastings Flats
5. Langford Lake
6. Albert Head-Triangle Mountain
7. Esquimalt Lagoon-Mill Hill
8. Esquimalt Harbour
9. Portage Inlet-The Gorge
10. Victoria Harbour
11. Beacon Hill Park-Ross Bay
12. Oak Bay
13. University-Cadboro Bay
14. Ten Mile Point-Arbutus Rd.
15. Gordon Head-Mt. Douglas
16. Swan Lake-Cedar Hill
17. Blenkinsop Lake-Panama Flats
18. Elk Lake-Cordova Bay
19. Prospect Lake-Quick's Bottom
20. Martindale-Bear Hill
21. Zero Rock
22. Chain Islets
23. Juan de Fuca

Area 1 Area 2 Area 3 Area 4 Area 5 Area 6 Area 7 Area 8 Area 9 Area 10 Area 11

Red-throated Loon					4		43			
Pacific Loon	6					1	10			
Common Loon	2		1		2	6	10		9	7
Pied-billed Grebe	8					2		31	14	
Horned Grebe	4		6		8	31	70		18	31
Red-necked Grebe	3		1		2		105		101	16
Eared Grebe										
Western Grebe						720	61		1	9
D-cr. Cormorant	8		15			13	12	16	159	33
Brandt's Cormorant							2		31	
Pelagic Cormorant	4				158	8	21	1	53	50
cormorant sp.									22	
Great Blue Heron	2	1	4		9	8	16	5		2
Trumpeter Swan				2					2	
Mute Swan			25		1	9	4	2		
Canada Goose	5		1	262		6	200	12	141	1
Green-winged Teal	23		32	160	5	11	42	43		
Am. Black Duck									1	
Mallard	851	13	175	226	43	129	115	15	294	76
Northern Pintail	1		2	101	1	18	6	10	21	
Northern Shoveler	1			6	17					
Gadwall					3					
Eurasian Wigeon				2		3	2		4	2
American Wigeon	334		21	92	10	444	365	32	263	423
EUWI X AMWI										230
Canvasback						26	1		30	3
Ring-necked Duck	11			10	16	1	17		7	
Greater Scaup						74			14	2
Lesser Scaup									130	
scaup sp.										
Harlequin Duck					2	8	19		55	45
Oldsquaw					1	6	21		26	13
Black Scoter										
Surf Scoter					33	106	50		28	23
White-wing. Scoter					11	24	62			

Common Goldeneye	12		19		1	5	34		3	33	5
Barrow's Goldeneye	6		67					1			7
goldeneye sp.			4								
Bufflehead	20		59		6	80	265	100	242	50	40
Hooded Merganser	6		15		18	21	6	22	32	93	2
Common Merganser			42		180	2	2	12	19	4	
Red-br. Merganser	19					25	155	35	2	78	20
Ruddy Duck					3		2		2		
Bald Eagle (ad)	1		3		3	2	2	1	1		
Bald Eagle (imm)	1				1						
Bald Eagle (u)	1										
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1			1	1				1		
Cooper's Hawk	1		1	1	1		1		1		2
Red-tailed Hawk	2	1	2		1	2		1			
Rough-legged Hawk								1			
American Kestrel								1			
Merlin					2				1		2
Peregrine Falcon	1				1						
Ring-n. Pheasant	3			2						1	
California Quail	10	8	2			3		4	15	1	
Virginia Rail											
American Coot				3	55				63		
Black-b. Plover							4			20	
Killdeer											
Black Oystercatch.								2		4	14
Greater Yellowlegs							1	3		4	
Black Turnstone							60	25		9	33
Surfbird											15
Sanderling										12	15
Dunlin							124			6	2
Common Snipe	1							2			
Mew Gull	25		27			2	200	318	6	107	200
Herring Gull	15		3								
Thayer's Gull	408		6		4		1	33	1	3	35
Western Gull	2		1							1	
Glaucous-w. Gull	5293	23	538	86	275	378	202	350	755	226	153
Glaucous Gull	1										
gull sp.			60								

	Area 1	Area 2	Area 3	Area 4	Area 5	Area 6	Area 7	Area 8	Area 9	Area 10	Area 11
Common Murre			3					1		15	4
Pigeon Guillemot						12				1	5
Marbled Murrelet								30		10	1
Kittlitz's Murrelet										1	
Ancient Murrelet										3	
Rhinoceros Auklet											
Rock Dove	28				21	18	10	4	83	53	32
Band-tailed Pigeon						2	1		1		
Common Barn-Owl											
W. Screech-Owl											
Great Horned Owl											
Anna's Hummingbird	1				10	2					1
Belted Kingfisher	1		3		2	2	2	6	3	4	
Red-br. Sapsucker											1
Downy Woodpecker	3	1	3		12			2	3	1	6
Hairy Woodpecker		2	2		6						
Northern Flicker	18	2	1	2	2	11	3	16	10	5	6
Pileated Woodp.	1		1		3			1			
Eurasian Skylark	5										
Steller's Jay	1				1	3					
Northwestern Crow	511	4	49	100	336	66	54	240	227	86	38
Common Raven	76	15	10	6	12	11	2	6	2		1
Ch.-b. Chickadee	131	4	19	60	126	35	11	63	21	4	15
Bushtit					135	11		75	27	20	
Red-br. Nuthatch	12	2	5	7	17	7		9			2
Brown Creeper		1	3	1	4	1	1	4	2		4
Bewick's Wren	9	4	2	2	23	2		12	7		3
Winter Wren	3	5	14	2	11	6	2	10	3		3
Marsh Wren			1		1						
American Dipper			6								
Golden-cr. Kinglet	213	12	127	74	130	42	1	104	13		54
Ruby-cr. Kinglet	7	3			6	4	1			1	5
Hermit Thrush					1			1			1
American Robin	326	4	1	234	147	26	9	60	223	23	103
Varied Thrush	4		1		29	13	3	20	7	2	8
Water Pipit											
Cedar Waxwing					4						
Northern Shrike	1			1					1		
European Starling	410	4	22	564	129	72	40	75	631	260	153

Hutton's Vireo											
Ruf-sided Towhee	25	10	4	19	38	21	2	17	9	1	7
Am. Tree Sparrow											
Savannah Sparrow											
Fox Sparrow	12	1		15	43	12		12	13	3	2
Song Sparrow	35	22	18	7	78	14	11	20	22	10	14
Lincoln's Sparrow											
White-thr. Sparrow					1						
Golden-cr. Sparrow	95			25	16	16	14	6	7	9	1
White-cr. Sparrow	3			5	6				2		2
Dark-eyed Junco	310	85	56	109	511	224	14	162	90	2	4
Snow Bunting							1				
Red-w. Blackbird					4			5		25	
Western Meadowlark							2				
Brewer's Blackbird				6	35					90	
blackbird sp.											
Purple Finch	8	6		14	40	13		52	4	4	1
House Finch	25	1		35	54	15		22	70		8
Red Crossbill		4	8	12	1	2					
Pine Siskin	409	257	145	1	245						
American Goldfinch											
Evening Grosbeak						3					
House Sparrow	60			56	4	9	6	35	70	33	8
Total:	9835	495	1636	2311	2894	2051	2995	2622	3699	2337	2264

	Area 11	Area 12	Area 13	Area 14	Area 15	Area 16	Area 17	Area 18	Area 1	Area 20	A 21-23	TOTAL
gull sp.						42						102
Common Murre	4			1						1	512	537 [∞]
Pigeon Guillemot	5	11	25	4	52			53		2	41	81
Marbled Murrelet	1	2		2	4						35	84
Kittlitz's Murrelet												1 ^H
Ancient Murrelet				9	4						141	157
Rhinoceros Auklet											2	2
Rock Dove	32	60	23		21		23	20	69	97		562
Band-tailed Pigeon			6	1				42	1			54
Common Barn-Owl									1	1		2 ^H
W. Screech-Owl							2	3				5
Great Horned Owl					1			6				7 ^H
Anna's Hummingbird	1		4	9	2							29 ^H
Belted Kingfisher		1	2	1				1	2			30
Red-br. Sapsucker	1							1				2
Downy Woodpecker	6	2	3	7	1	3	2	5	5	3	1	63
Hairy Woodpecker					1				2	1		14
Northern Flicker	6	3	5	16	3	7	4	33	32	12	3	194
Pileated Woodp.								2	2			10
Eurasian Skylark										5		10
Steller's Jay								1				6
Northwestern Crow	38	25	93	184	1500	271	217	304	434	281	17	5037
Common Raven	1		4	2	3	6	2	12	39	20	1	230 ^H
Ch.-b. Chickadee	15	12	65	47	14	9	21	124	264	77	6	1128
Bushtit		33		67	8	78	36	53	90	3		636
Red-br. Nuthatch	2		6	5	5		1	5	19	4		106
Brown Creeper	4		1	10	3			8	9	1		53
Bewick's Wren	3	3	12	9	3	10	4	19	11	13		148
Winter Wren	3	1	4	9	1	3	1	3	16	6		103
Marsh Wren						2			1			5
American Dipper												6
Golden-cr. Kinglet	54	17	19	17	56	25	7	259	391	42	4	1607 ^H
Ruby-cr. Kinglet	5	4	3			4	3	6	3	2		52
Hermit Thrush	1	1		1				1				6
American Robin	103	163	183	717	196	192	315	519	312	523		4276
Varied Thrush	8	4	3	20	4	9	12	19	17	6		181
Water Pipit										1		1
Cedar Waxwing		2				8		30	15			59
Northern Shrike			1						1	1		6

European Starling	153	130	94	142	250	1831	146	153	259	932	9	6306
Hutton's Vireo									2			2
Ruf-sided Towhee	7	9	23	22	9	13	20	46	70	29	1	395 ^H
Am. Tree Sparrow									2			2 ^H
Savannah Sparrow									1		1	2
Fox Sparrow	2	7	10	21	1	7	2	14	8	11		194
Song Sparrow	14	9	14	15	7	14	11	31	32	42	8	434
Lincoln's Sparrow					1				1			2
White-thr. Sparrow										1		2
Golden-cr. Sparrow	1	2	10	20	13	35	11	47	21	36		384 ^H
White-cr. Sparrow	2		3	1	12		9		5	26		74 ^H
Dark-eyed Junco	4	31	87	169	115	46	117	277	389	445	15	3258 ^H
Snow Bunting												1
Red-w. Blackbird				1	5	3	3					46
Western Meadowlark										18		20
Brewer's Blackbird					60				9	87		287
blackbird sp.				30								30
Purple Finch	1	2	16	5	3	5	2	14	10	5		204 ^H
House Finch	8	13	29	47	57	48	48	62	71	147		752 ^H
Red Crossbill					2				40			69
Pine Siskin			26	50	155		42	88	433	215		2066
American Goldfinch		2		12						2		16
Evening Grosbeak												3
House Sparrow	8	8	66	22	22	11	22	79	110	27		648
Total:	2264	2484	1360	2870	2986	3772	1830	5366	7605	6503	3286	71201

SOOKE BIRD COUNT

(Species 113 - Individuals 25836)

Red-throated Loon	4	Rock Sandpiper	5
Pacific Loon	66	Dunlin	16
Common Loon	25	Common Snipe	7
loon sp.	5	Mew Gull	91
Pied-billed Grebe	3	Herring Gull	7
Horned Grebe	128	Thayer's Gull	42
Red-necked Grebe	87	Western Gull	8
Eared Grebe	13	W x G-w. Gull	2
Western Grebe	124	Glaucous-w. Gull	5388
D-cr. Cormorant	425	gull sp.	5
Brandt's Cormorant	4280	Common Murre	4321
Pelagic Cormorant	180	Pigeon Guillemot	21
Great Blue Heron	27	Marbled Murrelet	143
Trumpeter Swan	4	Ancient Murrelet	23
Mute Swan	6	Rhinoceros Auklet	1
White-fr. Goose	1	Rock Dove	1
Canada Goose	9	W. Screech-Owl	3
Green-winged Teal	47	Great Horned Owl	1
Mallard	362	N. Saw-whet Owl	1
Northern Pintail	128	Belted Kingfisher	12
Northern Shoveler	2	Red-br. Sapsucker	1
Gadwell	33	Downy Woodpecker	14
Eurasian Wigeon	3	Hairy Woodpecker	6
American Wigeon	1174	Northern Flicker	76
Canvasback	5	Pileated Woodp.	11
Ring-necked Duck	10	Steller's Jay	39
Greater Scaup	82	Northwestern Crow	670
Lesser Scaup	19	Common Raven	69
Harlequin Duck	38	Ch.-b. Chickadee	331
Old Squaw	40	Bushtit	32
Surf Scoter	163	White-br. Nuthatch	1
White-wing. Scoter	57	Red-br. Nuthatch	7
Common Goldeneye	288	Brown Creeper	21
Barrow's Goldeneye	43	Bewick's Wren	9
Bufflehead	1395	Winter Wren	68
Hooded Merganser	100	Marsh Wren	1

Common Merganser	180	American Dipper	2
Red-br. Merganser	683	Golden-cr. Kinglet	892
Ruddy Duck	2	Ruby-cr. Kinglet	10
Bald Eagle (ad)	20	American Robin	239
Bald Eagle (imm)	7	Varied Thrush	21
Northern Harrier	1	Northern Shrike	1
Sharp-shinned Hawk	2	European Starling	672
Cooper's Hawk	4	Hutton's Vireo	1
Northern Goshawk	1	Ruf-sided Towhee	62
Red-tailed Hawk	8	Fox Sparrow	73
Golden Eagle (imm)	1	Song Sparrow	118
American Kestrel	3	Golden-cr. Sparrow	20
Merlin	1	White-cr. Sparrow	2
Peregrine Falcon	1	Harris' Sparrow	1
Ruffed Grouse	2	Dark-eyed Junco	501
Californai Quail	51	Red-w. Blackbird	49
American Coot	20	Brewer's Blackbird	118
Killdeer	10	Purple Finch	15
Black Oystercatcher	29	House Finch	47
Spotted Sandpiper	1	Red Crossbill	109
Black Turnstone	42	Pine Siskin	912
Surfbird	20	Evening Grosbeak	24
		House Sparrow	28

Sooke
Area
Count

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT - ANNUAL REPORT, 1986*by Mary Richmond*

As President of the Victoria Natural History Society it is my privilege and responsibility to present an annual report to the members of our society. In 1985 ten general meetings have been held, plus one annual meeting and one dinner meeting. Ten meetings of the Board have been held.

Most of the work and activity of our society is done by and has been reported by the chairmen of our several committees, whom I thank, most sincerely, both personally and on your behalf.

Our programmes at the general meetings have been varied, interesting and informative, and we thank Mary Lou Florian for arranging these, and many of our field trips. Her contacts through the Provincial Museum and other channels, with so many people who are leaders in their fields, is a great asset to us, as is our continuing relationship with the Provincial Museum which these contacts maintain. I ask your support in increasing attendance at our general meetings. Our speakers generally are of high calibre and merit a wider audience.

Roy Prior has arranged a large number of birding trips, and his great enthusiasm for these is the major factor in their success and in making it possible for him to do this as well as handle the editing and publication of our *Victoria Naturalist*. We would agree, I am sure, to its continuing and increasing excellence as both a record of our activities and a source of information.

As chairman of our membership committee Ed Coffin has maintained meticulous records, and has appropriately even made some of us feel slightly guilty when we let our membership renewal date slip by. He has coped with the changed date of our membership year, and has also looked after the distribution of our magazine. This has involved a good deal of negotiating with the Postal Service – a not consistently simple undertaking.

Keeping track of our admittedly limited funds is no small feat, and we appreciate Art Durkee's willingness and ability as our treasurer.

It is perhaps not fair to single out these Board members, and I do express my sincere thanks to all of them. I would like to say a special word of appreciation to Lyndis Davis, who has served our society in many ways – maintaining our records, representing us at the F.B.C.N., reviewing and redirecting incoming mail, coming up with good and innovative ideas, designing our logo, arranging for coffee, and generally keeping us – and especially me – on track.

One special event of the past year was a weekend in May at the Lion's camp at Squamish – arranged by Katherine Sherman. Thank you Katherine, for a great outing.

The purpose of our society seems to me to have two main thrusts. One involves the development of programmes and activities which are aimed at the education and enjoyment of our members. This is reflected in the programmes at our meetings, in the *Birders' and Botanists' Nights*, as well as in our "Informal" "Tuesday Birders' Group". In this I believe we have done well.

A second thrust must be in the continuing efforts to influence public policy in the preservation and protection of our natural environment. Through inquiry, letters and participation as a club, and as individual members, we have made some contributions in this direction. Our "Blue Bird Programme" – to which Charlie Trotter and Harold Pollock have been major contributors, is a case in point, as is also our letter-writing in relation to the need for a plan for emergency response to oil spills on our coast. But we do need people on our Board and in our society who could bring expertise, time and energy to devote to these areas. On a number of occasions the Board has been asked to take a position on an environmental issue and has been reluctant to do so in the face of a lack of definitive information and/or lack of a resource to investigate the situation adequately. I seek your help in this.

We hope that the "Naturalist's Guide to Victoria" will be available by the middle of 1986. We believe this will have a wide appeal, and will serve both to enhance knowledge and enjoyment of our environment, but will also bring our society, as its publisher, into public view.

I enjoy the friendships I have developed through our society, and I thank you for the privilege of serving as your President.

ANNUAL REPORT ON MEMBERSHIP*by Ed Coffin*

Comparison of 1985 and 1984 totals, both as at December 31st (1985 first): Regular 161 and 145; Family 124 and 126; Sustaining 7 and 9; Golden Age 132 and 141; Scholarships 12 and 8; Honorary Life 8 and 8; Junior 7 and 13; Life 2 and 2. Thus, total memberships are 453 and 452, or, assuming two per Family Membership, 577 and 578 members.

Memberships discontinued on May 31st, because of non-renewal: 1985, 62; 1984, 55. Although we are holding our own, due to influx of new members, the situation is not exactly healthy. We are showing no growth – too many members are dropping out.

Let's have an informal membership drive. If you enjoy *Victoria Natural History Society*, please recommend membership to your friends.

REPORT ON VICTORIA NATURALIST*by Roy Prior*

It seemed to me, which I became editor three and a half years ago, that the magazine should be serving two very different functions. Clearly it was, and is, primarily a link between the members, giving information about events, and indeed serving often enough as the only contact less active members have with the society; and I have tried to continue to do this. But it seemed to me that such a publication had also another and what one might call a scientific aspect: that is to say, publishing material of a scientific nature with a local bias. This is the aspect that I have been trying to strengthen, with such articles as the population studies on certain species of bird by Keith Taylor, the nesting

bird chart by Mark Nyhof, the new birding checklist published early this year, and Adolf Ceska's checklist of rare and uncommon plants. In this connection, I hope to publish in our next issue a survey of birds at the Hartland Road landfill, by Keith Taylor and Charles Harper.

A new feature which we hope to produce regularly is the brief synopsis on the birding seasons (see Dave Fraser's article in this issue). Brief, or not so brief, notes on field trips are greatly appreciated, as are anecdotes on bird and animal behaviour.

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THE VICTORIA "BOOK" ON BIRDS FOR 1985

by Harold Hosford

Victoria's birdwatchers will look back on 1985 with whatever memories each chooses to have but when I was going over Vic Goodwill's seasonal reports for *American Birds*, two recollections were foremost in my mind: the Elegant Terns that made 1984 such a banner year hereabouts did not return in 1985; also, it was hard to overlook that blast of Siberian weather that arrived in November to rewrite just about every weather record in the book for Victoria and the whole of British Columbia. But, the birdwatching picture for Victoria in 1985 had its positive side.

You could say it started in January, the 5th, to be precise, when five Bohemian Waxwings put in an appearance in North Saanich — only the eighth time in these parts for these birds of the northern forests.

In February, the first of a string of reports of Iceland Gulls at the Hartland Dump began coming in. One had actually been seen there the previous month but before 1985 was out, two and maybe three of these arctic gulls were picked out of the welter of gulls that feed at the dump.

March will be remembered for the Western Meadowlarks in Central Saanich, 30 of them by one count on the 3rd, continuing the pattern of good numbers being seen in spring here.

April made its mark on the 8th when more than 240 Fork-tailed Storm-Petrels were counted in the waters off Victoria and from the Coho between Port Angeles and Victoria. According to Keith Taylor's *Birder's Guide to Vancouver Island*, these storm petrels, at best, are erratic in Juan de Fuca Strait.

On May 11, at Cordova Spit, southern Vancouver Island's second Hudsonian Godwit went into the record while two weeks later, on the 25th, at Newton Heights in Central Saanich, the first Lazuli Bunting since May 1977 revived hopes that we haven't seen the last of these gorgeous little songsters from the interior.

Nothing much happened in June, unless you reckon a Mockingbird worth mentioning. One of these rare vagrants was seen in Saanich on the 2nd of the month.

By July, thoughts of autumn, and the often spectacular sightings that are part of that season, began to occupy local birdwatchers. While the Elegant Terns failed to appear, an early Meadowlark on Cobourg Spit on the 30th and 31st of the month kept the flames of hope for other and greater sightings burning brightly.

One of these could have been the Rufous-necked Stint that was seen at Victoria Golf Course on August 27. Unfortunately, this astonishing discovery could not be confirmed before it disappeared to become one of the great mysteries of the year.

By September, things were obviously beginning to pick up. For example, there was the Palm Warbler at Swan Lake on the 6th, a rare "accidental" in these parts, the Sharp-tailed Sandpiper(s) at the reservoirs in Central Saanich from September to November, the Ruff at the "L" reservoir on September 17, the Black Tern at McNeill Bay on the 23rd (only the fifth record for Vancouver Island), and the two "small" eiders at Clover Point on September 1, birds that were figured to be Steller's Eiders. Unfortunately, they, like the Rufous-necked Stint, could not be confirmed.

Iceland Gulls come back into the picture in October when an adult was seen, again at Hartland Dump, on the 12th. Clover Point kept up its reputation as a good spot for rare gulls when a Common Black-headed Gull turned up there on October 1. Another rare winter visitor, a Tree Sparrow, was at Quick's Bottom on the 29th of the month.

As for November — well it's had not to dwell on the weather but there were greater things afoot. There was the count of 108 Skylarks — the highest count in recent years — in Central Saanich on the 30th, a possible second Tree Sparrow at Quick's, Snowy Owls — one at Harling Point on the 5th and another at Holland Point on the 11th — and another

Iceland Gull at the Hartland Dump on the 30th.

While we would like to forget the weather of November, the cold and snow were probably responsible for that high count of Skylarks. But there is little doubt about the weather's role in the last, and most astonishing event of the birding year in 1985. I'm sure we can thank that brutal wave of arctic air for the Kittlitz's Murrelet that showed up in December and stayed for the Christmas Bird Count — another first. Not only did this little fellow achieve distinction as only the second one ever seen south of Alaska but the first ever seen in Canada.

Come to think of it, 1985 wasn't a bad year, at all.

SPECIAL NOTE FOR BOTANISTS:

We hope you found Adolf Ceska's article on rare and uncommon plants of the Victoria area, in the March-April issue, to be of interest. In this regard we would like to acknowledge here that the Society in 1984 accepted for publication in the upcoming Naturalist's Guide to the Victoria Region, expected to be off the press this summer, Leon Pavlick's paper entitled "A Naturalist's Guide to the Botany of the Victoria Region." Leon's article is a more comprehensive, as well as popular, introductory treatment of the botany of the Victoria region. Among other things, it provides information on the presence and locations of numerous rare and uncommon plants in our area. Despite the fact that it contains much similar and identical information to that contained in Adolf's article, Leon's article was independently researched and produced (in 1983). The Victoria Natural History Society regrets any difficulties or inconveniences that may arise for either author as a result of the unfortunate timing of publication of these two articles.

SUMMARY

Winter Bird Report
Southern Vancouver Island
December 1, 1985 to February 28, 1986

by David F. Fraser

This is a brief summary of the 85/86 Winter Bird Report for Southern Vancouver Island, the first report since Vic Goodwill decided not to continue to serve as compiler for this region. The report has been compiled by several people: A. Loons through Ducks (Roy Prior and Mike Edgell), B. Vultures through Cranes (Bruce Whittington), C. Plovers through Puffins (David F. Fraser, Leah Ramsay, Tracee Geernaert and Eric Lofroth), D. Doves through Thrushes (Barb and Mike McGrenere), E. Catbird through Weaver Finches (Lyndis David). The original report is filed at the Provincial Museum and the V.N.H.S. library, and a copy is sent to the regional editor of American Birds.

The data for the report is extracted from sighting cards submitted from Vancouver Island birders. The report is only as complete as the information received, and birders are urged to submit sighting cards by the end of each month. Sighting cards can either be brought to Victoria Natural History Society General Meetings, Birders' Nights or

dropped off to Swiftsure Tours Office, 119 - 645 Fort St., Victoria, B.C. V8W 1G2. All cards are forwarded to the B.C. Provincial Museum. Cards are available from the B.C. Provincial Museum, or can be picked up on Birders' Night.

SUMMARY

A. Loons through Ducks

A Yellow-billed Loon was seen on 27 December on Cowichan Bay (Vic Goodwill) and 8 further reports were received of an individual at this location through 2 Feb. (David Stirling). A total of 11 reports of Eared Grebe were received, as well as counts of 5 on 21 Dec. on the Victoria CBC and 13 on 28 December on the Sooke CBC. High count for the reporting period for Western Grebe was a sighting of about 1500 birds on 2 Jan. in Satellite Channel (Vic Goodwill). Brandt's Cormorants appeared to be in high numbers especially in Sooke, where the Sooke CBC recorded 4280 birds. American Bittern were seen at two localities, one adult at Buttertubs Marsh, Nanaimo (G. Gillespie) and another immature bird on 7 & 8 Feb. at Swan Lake, Saanich (Robin Baird, Joyce and Ron Satterfield). Trumpeter Swans were reported from all their usual locations, with highest concentrations at Wallace Drive, Saanichton, and at Cowichan Bay. Three reports of single White-fronted Geese associating with domestic geese were received 28 Dec. (Sooke CBC), 31 Dec. (Vic Goodwill) and 13 Jan. (M. E. and Vic Goodwill) all from the east corner of the junction of Highway 14 and Croce Rd. in the Sooke District. A single sighting of 4 Brant on 25 January in Georgia Strait was reported by J. and R. Satterfield. A Eurasian Greenwinged Teal was reported from Blenkinsop Lake, Saanich on 17 Feb. (Vic Goodwill). 2 American Black Ducks wintered, with all sightings from Beacon Hill Park and the Harrison Yacht Pond, Victoria. Gadwall were seen at Quick's Bottom (high count 60 by Tracy Hooper on 26 Dec.), Sooke River Estuary and Elk-Beaver Lakes, with several reports of lone birds on salt water during the reporting period. Eurasian Wigeon were reported from the usual locations with a high count of 28 on the Victoria CBC. A 1 Feb.

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survey for this species in the CBC area produced only 16 birds (Mike Edgell, Roy Prior). Three birds with characteristics in common with both Eurasian and American Wigeon wintered in Beacon Hill and were photographed (Roy Prior and Jo-Ann McEachern). 2 male Redheads were present from 18 Jan. to 19 Feb. at Beaver Lake (m. obs.) and other sightings, probably of the same birds from the Interurban/Viaduct area of Saanich from 19 Jan. to 30 Jan. (Mike Edgell). A small pond which serves as a nocturnal roost site for Hooded Mergansers at Kingsberry Crescent near Mount Tolmie continues to be heavily used, with 113 birds being reported on 28 Feb. (Roy Prior). Highest report of Ruddy Ducks was a flock of 138 birds on Swan Lake, Saanich on 18 Feb. (Roy Prior).

B. Vultures through Cranes

Four reports of Northern Harriers were received in November and December from widely scattered places, Martindale Rd., Central Saanich, Cowichan Bay, J.V. Clyne Sanctuary in Port Alberni, and one bird on the Sooke CBC. Three Northern Goshawk reports were received, one unaged on 1 Dec., Martindale Flats, 1 immature skirmishing with a Peregrine Falcon north of Martindale Flats on 7 Dec. (Alan MacLeod) and one on 28 December on the Sooke CBC. There was one report of a Harlan's phase Red-tailed Hawk from Swan Lake, Central Saanich on 26 December (Jeremy Tatum). A total of nine reports of Golden Eagles were received, all single birds and involving at least one immature and one adult. Other than one from the Sooke CBC and one from the Goldstream Estuary, all the reports were from the Saanich Peninsula. A small number of American Kestrel reports were received, again all from the Saanich Peninsula, except for a single report of 2 birds on 14 January from 1098 Matheson Lake Rd., Metchosin (Jack Collins). Peregrine Falcon reports were numerous, and observers making more detailed notes on plumage should enable compilers to make a better estimate of the numbers of birds wintering in our area. Only two reports of Gyrfalcons were received, one grey-phase bird on 8 December at the Patricia Bay Airport, Sidney, (J. and R. Satterfield) and one grey-phase bird flying low over a field corner of Tomlinson and Stelly's Crossroad, near Brentwood (David F. Fraser). The only report of a Virginia Rail was 1 on the Victoria CBC.

C. Plovers through Puffins

Killdeer reports were low with an all-time low on the Victoria CBC of 17 (previous low was 37). A single Spotted Sandpiper was reported, from the Sooke CBC. Up to a pair of Whimbrel wintered in the Ten Mile Point area of Saanich, (first report 1 on 25 December, Keith Taylor, M.E. and Vic Goodwill; last report, 2 on 26 Jan. Mike McGrenere), the only other sighting was a single bird in Funnel Cove, Oak Bay on 19 Jan. (Keith Taylor). A Ruddy Turnstone was reported from Imrie Island on the Pender CBC (Ray Williams). Rock Sandpipers appeared in small numbers from Clover and Cattle Points, Victoria from 26 December through the reporting period. This species also appeared on the Sooke CBC. Bonaparte's Gulls were seen in small numbers in December, no reports for January or February. There was one report of a California Gull, a second year bird on 5 December, Sooke Estuary (Bob Hay).

The complement of wintering gulls at the Hartland Avenue dump included high numbers of Thayer's Gulls. Keith Taylor's and Charles Harper's detailed study of numbers (in press) also included a review of ICELAND GULL sightings in this area. An ICELAND x THAYER'S GULL was reported from this location 11 Jan. (Keith Taylor and Charles Harper) along with a first winter ICELAND GULL.

A first winter Iceland Gull was reported on the Sooke River Estuary on 1 January by Bob Hay. A total of 15,765 Glaucous-winged Gulls were reported on the Victoria CBC. Small numbers of single Glaucous Gulls were found in December and January, with the last report for this period being of 1 second winter bird, Sooke River Estuary (Bob Hay).

The KITTLITZ'S MURRELET was seen throughout December in the Ogden Pt. area of Victoria. There were no reports for the month of January (where did it go?), but it reappeared on 2 Feb. (M.E. and Vic Goodwill, M. and Ray Williams) and remained throughout the reporting period.

There were two reports of Cassin's Auklets for this period, 1 on 9 December, Ogden Pt., Victoria (J. and R. Satterfield) and another there on 3 Feb. (Mike McGrenere).

D. Doves through Thrushes:

Small numbers of Band-tailed Pigeons were reported in December and in February (no January reports) with 54 on the Victoria CBC. A single Mourning Dove was seen on 27 Dec. in Central Saanich (G. and J. Anderson), 2 Common Barn Owls were seen on the Victoria CBC, and a new Victoria CBC count high of 7 Great Horned Owls (previous high 4) was recorded. One Northern Pygmy Owl report, 1 bird heard calling on 13 February, near Parksville (Mike McGrenere). Barred Owls were reported from several localities in the Victoria area. One Short-eared Owl was reported on Christmas Day from Central Saanich (Alan L. MacLeod). Three Northern Saw-whet Owls were reported, one at 1500 Chambers St., Victoria on 14 Dec. (Rick West), one on 28 December (Sooke CBC) and one on 11 Jan. at Goodland Farm, Munns Road, Highlands District (Alan L. MacLeod, Harold Hosford, Bruce Whittington).

Anna's Hummingbirds continued to increase in numbers in Victoria with a new CBC high of 29 (previous high 24). An influx of Red-breasted Sapsuckers in December into the Victoria area tapered off quickly with no reports for January, and only two for February.

The first reports of Tree Swallows for the year included 2 at Swan Lake (Roz Coy et al.) and 1 at the east end of Ross Bay (Ron Satterfield), both sightings from 27 Feb.

Eurasian Skylark numbers seem to be down, with a high count of 30 on 15 Feb. in the McHugh Rd. area of Saanich (Alan McLeod et al.). Steller's Jays appeared scarce this year, with few reports for this reporting period.

The fifth record of a WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH for Vancouver Island was first seen at a feeder at 587 Wooton Rd. on the Sooke CBC (Ray Williams). The bird was seen by numerous observers throughout the remainder of the reporting period.

Townsend's Solitaires were represented by only two reports, one on 22 December at Mt. Tolmie Park, Victoria (Tim Zurowski and Keith Taylor) and one on 28 January at 1352 May

St., Victoria (J. and R. Satterfield). There were only 4 reports of Hermit Thrushes for this reporting period, not including the 6 seen on the Victoria CBC. A high count of between 300 and 400 Varied Thrushes on the roadside between Sooke and Jordan River on 23 February was noted by Robin Baird.

E. Catbird through Weaver Finches

Four reports of Water Pipits were received during the reporting period. Cedar Waxwings were represented by 12 reports, with a concentration of birds on the trail to Blenkinsop Lake throughout the months of January and February. One report of a BOHEMIAN WAXWING was received, on 17 and 18 February at 338 Wickheim Rd. (P. Becker). A total of 27 Northern Shrike reports were received, all of single birds. Winter reports of warblers were restricted to two species this year, with 3 reports of Yellow-rumped Warbler: 1 on 9 and 10 February at Swan Lake (L.G. Roberts and M. & B. McGrenere) and 1 on 27 February at 2551 Florence Lk. Rd. (L.G. Roberts and T. and G. Briggs) as well as 4 reports of Orange-crowned Warblers: 1 at Swan Lake, 16 December (Keith Taylor), and again on 25 January (B. Gales) and 1 on 27 Feb. at 3060 Glen Lake Rd.

Two AMERICAN TREE SPARROWS at the tree nursery at Quick's Bottom made a new high for the Victoria CBC, and 1 - 2 birds were seen there sporadically throughout the reporting period. A report of a wintering Chipping Sparrow was received, without details or photo-documentation. There were only 4 reports of single White-throated Sparrows, and the only reports received of Lincoln's Sparrows were 2 birds on the Victoria CBC. At least 3 Harris' Sparrows wintered in the area with a report of one on the Sooke CBC and single birds being seen nearly daily during December, January and February on feeders at Welch Rd. and Cresswell Rd. in Saanich. A total of 5 reports of "Slate-coloured Juncos" were received. There were 4 reports of Snow Buntings at Wiffin Spit with a high of 10 birds on 1 December (Keith Taylor and Tim Zurowski) and 1 bird was reported from the Victoria CBC. Rusty Blackbirds were represented by two reports, one from Island View Rd., Central Saanich on 12 December (David F. Fraser), and 1 on the 19th of January at Courtland Flats (Tim Zurowski). David Stirling reported the only Brown-headed Cowbird sighting for the period, 2 on 7 December, Island View Road.

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BIRD OBSERVATIONS FEBRUARY 1986

No.	Species	Date	Area Seen	Observer
1	Kittlitz's Murrelet+	2	Ogden Point, Victoria	Joy & Ron Satterfield
1	Cassin's Auklet	3	Ogden Point, Victoria	Mike McGrenere
1	American Bittern	7	Swan Lake	Robin Baird
9	Evening Grosbeak	8	Witty's Lagoon Park	Roy Prior
1	Common Barn-Owl	16	Island View Road	Ruben Ware
1	American Kestrel	16	Welch Road	Bryan Gates
1	Bohemian Waxwing	17	Wickheim Road	Phyl Becker
2	Red Crossbill	24	6587 W. Saanich Road	Bruce Whittington
1	Bohemian Waxwing	17	Wickheim Road	Phyl Becker
2	Red Crossbill	24	6587 W. Saanich Road	Bruce Whittington
1	Savannah Sparrow	26	McHugh Road	Vic Goodwill
2	Violet-green Swallow	27	Swan Lake	Rosalind Coy
1	Tree Swallow	27	Clover Pint	Ron Satterfield
1	Red-breasted Sapsucker	27	2551 Florence Lake Rd.	Gwen & Tom Briggs
4	California Gull	28	Boatswain Bank	Vic Goodwill

Thursday, May 8

Biology walking tour. Native plant garden. Provincial Museum. Leader Kathy Cox. Ethnobotanical and gardening notes on the native plants. Bring pencil and paper. Meet outside main entrance of Provincial Museum at 1:30 p.m.

Sunday, May 11

Birding at Witty's Lagoon and Devonian Park. Meet at Helmcken Park-and-Ride at 8:00 a.m. or Witty's Lagoon parking lot at 8:30 a.m. Leaders Barb and Mike McGrenere.

Sunday, May 11

Insects. Leader Michelle Gaudet (B. 652-4426). Investigate insects at Quick's Bottom. Met Mayfair Lanes at 1:00 p.m. or Quick's Bottom at 1:15 p.m.

Tuesday, May 13

General Meeting. Newcombe Auditorium, 8 p.m. Talent Night. Show off your leisure talents (with a nature theme). Slides (12 picture vignettes), photographs, paintings, carving, embroiders – other ideas? Co-ordinator: Lyndis Davis, 477-9952. Let her know what you are bringing so that there is enough display space. Coffee will be served.

Saturday, May 17

Combined birding and ecology field trip to Mount Work, leader Mike Edgell. Meet Mayfair Lanes at 9:30 a.m. or Durrance Lake parking lot at 10:00 a.m. Ring Mike Edgell at 592-6998 if you plan to attend.

Thursday, May 22

Sub-tidal dive. Ogden Breakwater, 6:30 p.m. Leader Leah Ramsay, 652-5934. Marine animals will be brought up to be examined and described. Meet at the breakwater. Bring hand lenses. Wear boots.

Saturday, May 24

Birding at Munn's Road, leader Anne Knowles. Meet at Helmcken Park-and-Ride at 8:30 a.m.

Sunday, May 25

8:45 a.m. ferry to Saltspring. Tour of eco-reserve on Mt. Maxwell, Saltspring Island. Leader, Simon Henson (537-5796). Meet Simon at 9:30 at the T-junction on the road to Mt. Maxwell. Turn off the road to Ganges on Cranberry Road. To co-ordinate cars phone Lyndis Davis at 477-9952.

Wednesday, May 29

Birders Night. Picnic at 7355 Tomlinson, 6 p.m. Turn of Stelly's X Rd. opposite the school. Bring something to barbecue, plate, cutlery, a drink. Phone Lyndis at 477-9952 if you have not put your name on the sign-up sheet for what else to bring.

Saturday, June 7

Birding at Spectacle Lake, leader Alan McLeod. Meet at Helmcken Park-and-Ride at 7 a.m. or Spectacle Lake parking lot at 7:45 a.m.

Saturday, June 14

Birding at Tugwell Lake, leader Keith Taylor. Meet at 7:30 at the Helmcken Park-and-Ride.

Thursday, June 19

Mid-Summer Picnic. Aylards Farm, East Sooke Park, 6:30 p.m. Bring the family and your picnic supper (and lawn chair), also a 'goodie' to contribute to a shared plate for a snack after a walk. (Picnic is automatically cancelled if it is wet at noon.)

Saturday, June 28

Botany at Jordan Meadows, west of Shawnigan Lake, with Gerry Allen, 381-0936. Meet at Helmcken Park-and-Ride at 9:00 a.m. Bring boots.

Saturday, July 19

Hurricane Ridge. It is hoped to run this trip this year. Leaving on 6:30 ferry to Port Angeles and returning on the 5:15 ferry. Cost about \$25.00 (ferry and bus). Contact Freda Woodworth at 382-6693 between 8 and 9 a.m. if you are interested as we would like an idea of numbers. More details in the next issue.

N.B. Bus will go to turnaround at Hurricane Ridge.

What's That Singing?

The Victoria Natural History Society offers free hour-long walks to introduce you to some of the birds you often see and hear. Bring binoculars if you have them.

CATTLE POINT, UPLANDS PARK

Meeting at Parking Lot every Monday from 7:30 to 8 p.m. 28.4 til 26.5.86

BEACON HILL PARK

Meeting at Parking Lot west of Zoo every Monday from 6:30 to 8 p.m. 28.4 til 26.5.86

BEAVER LAKE, ELK LAKE

Meet on Beaver Lake Parking Lot. Bring waterproof footwear. Every Thursday from 9 to 10:30 a.m. 24.4 til 22.5.86

SIDNEY COLE BAY PARK

Meet at Parking Lot every Thursday from 6:30 to 8 p.m. 1.5 til 29.5.86

KINGS POND

Meeting at Kings Pond, end of Ascot every Wednesday from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. 30.4 til 28.5.86

BLINKINSOP LAKE

Meet end of Lochside Drive every Thursday from 9:30 to 11 a.m. 1.5 til 29.5.86

OGDEN POINT BREAKWATER

Birds and Marine Life. Meet in front of Breakwater every Wednesday from 6:30 to 8 p.m. 30.4 til 28.5.86

FRANCIS PARK

Birding and Botany. Meet at Nature House every Tuesday from 6:30 to 8 p.m. 29.4 til 27.5.86.

JOIN THE TUESDAY BIRDERS

Meet at end of Bowker Avenue every Tuesday from 9 a.m. to 12 Noon (bring lunch). 29.4 til 27.5.86.

JUNIOR PROGRAMME

May 3

Glaciation left over at Bear Hill. Meet at 9:30 a.m. at Swan Lake Nature House or at 10:00 a.m. at Bear Hill Parking Lot off Bear Hill Road.

May 17

Picnic and nature walk at Witty's Lagoon. Meet at the Witty's Lagoon Nature House at 10:00 a.m.

Saturday, May 17

Meeting at Parking Lot every Monday from 8:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. at BEACON HILL PARK. Meeting at Parking Lot west of Zoo every Monday from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. at BEAVER LAKE ELK LAKE.

Thursday, May 22

Meet on Beaver Lake Parking Lot at 10:00 a.m. Meeting at Kings Point every Wednesday from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. at BEAVER LAKE ELK LAKE.

Saturday, May 24

Meeting at Kings Point every Wednesday from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. at BEAVER LAKE ELK LAKE.

Sunday, May 25

Meet and go! Leave at 8:30 a.m. at BEAVER LAKE ELK LAKE. Leader, Simon Hansen (537-5796). Meet Simon at 9:00 a.m. at BEAVER LAKE ELK LAKE. Meet at Kings Point every Wednesday from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. at BEAVER LAKE ELK LAKE. Leader, Lynda Davis at 477-9952.

Friday, May 29

Birding and Botany Meet at Nature House every Tuesday from 8:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. at BEAVER LAKE ELK LAKE. Bring something to barbecue, plate, cutlery, and a chair. Meet at Kings Point every Wednesday from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. at BEAVER LAKE ELK LAKE.

Saturday, June 7

Meet at end of Bowker Avenue every Tuesday from 8 a.m. to 12 noon (bring lunch). Birding at Spectacle Lake, leader Alan McLeod. Meet at Helmcken Park-and-Ride at 7 a.m. or Spectacle Lake parking lot at 7:45 a.m.

Saturday, June 14

Birding at Tugwell Lake, leader Keith Taylor. Meet at 7:30 a.m. at Helmcken Park-and-Ride.