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# The Victoria NATURALIST

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The July/August (1989) issue of *The Victoria Naturalist* was printed as Vol. 45.7, when in fact it should have been Vol. 46.1.

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## On the Cover

We thought we'd try to extend the summer a little by bringing you this illustration of salmonberries (*Rubus spectabilis*) painted by Oldriska Ceska (better known by her nickname, Oluna). In her botanical illustrations Oluna often combines watercolours with ink, as she has done in this picture to illustrate the texture of the foliage and the two colour forms of the fruit--golden and ruby.

Oluna is a self-taught artist, greatly influenced by the Czech school of botanical illustration. She works in the Biology Department at the University of Victoria doing chemical analyses of various plant products. A few years ago, she and her team discovered and described a new, previously unknown chemical compound in coriander (cilantro, Chinese parsley). Oluna is an excellent field botanist with a good knowledge of flowering plants, bryophytes, lichens and mushrooms, and her expertise is evident in the detail of her watercolours. Her enthusiasm for field work leaves her with little free time for painting, however, so she only manages to do one or two pictures a year.

## Conservation Concerns

*The Victoria Naturalist* received a letter from Maud Vant of Parksville dated June 5, 1989, in which she expresses her concern about the loss of habitat and diminishing wildlife numbers in B.C. Maud is especially concerned about the Boundary Bay salt marshes. Boundary Bay and adjacent farmlands include 6,000 hectares of salt marsh which make up some of the last remaining wetlands of their type in the Fraser Delta. For more information about Boundary Bay, consult the June 1989 issue of *Discovery* (the quarterly publication of the Vancouver Natural History Society) or contact Dr. Barry Leach, Fraser Wetland Committee, Box 9030, Surrey, B.C. V3T 5H8.

Conservation issues such as saving Boundary Bay, The Stein Valley, the Khutzeymateen, Carmanah Creek and various other refuges for weary urbanites and beleaguered wildlife are becoming common topics in the media. For Victoria naturalists, the protection of wetland and estuary habitats closer to home is likely to be of greater concern than the preservation of Boundary Bay. We know that most members of the VNHS are concerned about conservation and environmental issues in general, but we'd be interested in hearing what issues are of particular interest to you, and how you feel the *Naturalist* should be addressing them. Please write The Contents Editor, 205-429 Linden Avenue, Victoria V8V 4G2. Your comments need not be written for publication, and will not be published unless that is your expressed intention.

-- Dannie Carsen

# The Brown Bullhead

by Graham E. Gillespie

There are two species of catfish that inhabit the waters of British Columbia. The brown bullhead, *Ictalurus nebulosus*, is the larger and more common type, achieving a total length of 10 inches and a weight of three to four pounds. The smaller black bullhead, *Ictalurus melas*, is found in British Columbia only in Osoyoos Lake. As the name implies, it differs from the brown bullhead primarily in colouration.

The brown bullhead is native to waters from Nova Scotia south to Florida, and northwest to Saskatchewan. There are introduced populations throughout the lower Fraser Valley, and in several lakes on southern Vancouver Island. Carl *et al.* (1959) list them as being present in Young Lake (near Sooke), Beaver, Elk, Langford, Prospect, Thetis, Swan, Glen, and Lost lakes (in or near Victoria), Shawnigan Lake (on the Malahat), Somenos Lake (near Duncan), and Fuller Lake (near Chemainus).

Carl *et al.* also chronicle the introduction of the brown bullhead to Vancouver Island. In 1906 live specimens were imported from Portland, Oregon, for display in a restaurant in Victoria. Some of these fish were acquired by a man who then introduced them to Beaver Lake by throwing them from the window of a passing train. Langford Lake was stocked at about the same time, and these two lakes probably served as the source for introductions into other lakes on Vancouver Island.

The brown bullhead is a moderately long-bodied fish with a relatively wide, flat head, small eyes, and a large, wide mouth. It is dark yellowish-brown above and laterally, lightening rapidly to a pale belly. The dark colouration appears in a mottled pattern, particularly in adults. This colouration is continuous onto the tail, a trait which helps to separate the brown bullhead from the black, which has a light band at the base of the tail. The dorsal fins of both bullheads contain six soft rays in addition to the spine. The anal fin of the brown bullhead has 22 to 23 soft rays, while that of the black has 17 to 21.

Brown bullheads breed in late spring and early summer, in the shallows of lakes, and in slow water in rivers or creeks. Both parents build the nest, which consists of a shallow depression cleared in the mud or silt. They often build nests near or under cover objects, and occasionally dig burrows. Spawning is quiet, with the parents suspended side-by-side over the nest, facing opposite directions. The eggs are fertilized externally, and released over multiple spawning acts, totalling up to 13,000 for a large female.

One or both of the parents care for the eggs, fanning them with their fins, stirring them in the nest with barbels and fins, or taking them up in their mouths and ejecting them back into the nest. The eggs hatch in six to nine days, and the young remain in the nest until their yolk sacs are absorbed--about another seven days. Once they begin to swim about, the young are guarded in a tight herd by the parents. In two weeks, when they are about two inches long and the parents' herding and guarding are less effective, the fry wander off to fend for themselves. Sexual maturity is attained at three years, and the maximum age is about eight years.

The food of adult brown bullheads is listed as offal, waste, molluscs, immature and terrestrial insects, leeches, crustaceans, worms, algae, plant material, fishes, and fish eggs (Scott



and Crossman, 1973; the reference does not specify which fish eggs or fry are eaten). The young eat smaller invertebrates, newly hatched fishes, and fish eggs. Bullheads compete for bottom food resources with many fishes. Though their nocturnal habits make this conflict seem indirect, their effective feeding habits and large populations (in suitable habitats) make them significant competitors. In turn, bullheads are eaten by a variety of predatory fishes, such as pickerel, pike, muskellunge, walleye, and sauger (all of which are absent from the bullhead's introduced range in British Columbia).

Scott and Crossman (1973) translate *Ictalurus nebulosus* as "clouded catfish," from the Latin *ichthys* (= fish) and *nebul* (= clouded, referring to their colouration). The species was first described as *Pimelodus nebulosus* by LeSueur in 1819, from specimens collected in the Delaware River at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Between 1823 and 1907 researchers described specimens of this fish under the genus *Pimelodus* and (later) *Ameiurus*, attributing a variety of species names. Taylor (1955) inserted the old genus *Ameiurus* into the present *Icta-*

*lurus*, though Nelson (1984) still lists *Ameiurus* as a valid genus, so the situation is not fully resolved. (Full references on the bullhead's taxonomy can be found in Scott and Crossman (1973).)

Scott and Crossman list additional common names, including: northern brown, marbled, and common bullheads; brown and common catfish; mudcat; hornpout; horned pout; minister; and a French common name: barbotte brune. "Bullhead" is a vernacular term used in British Columbia to refer to some of the common species of sculpin. The official use of this name is restricted to three species of true catfishes belonging to the North American catfish family, the Ictaluridae (Robins *et al.*, 1980).

Catfishes exhibit several physical traits that set them apart from other groups of fishes. All have a smooth, scale-less body, and a non-rayed, fleshy fin (called an adipose fin) positioned between the single dorsal fin and the tail. The dorsal and pectoral fins are each armed with a single, large spine on their leading edge, which can be locked into an erect position by a combination of bones and muscles. These spines are more strongly serrated on the brown bullhead than on the black, with the barbs pointed away from the tip, and making them difficult to remove once they puncture the skin. In some ictalurids (the stonecats and madtoms, genus *Noturus*) these fins are also equipped with a longitudinal groove leading from a venom sac, which delivers a painful 'sting' when the spine breaks the skin.

The most obvious catfish trait is the presence of four pairs of barbels, or whiskers, around the mouth. The largest pair extend backwards from the maxillae, or upper jaws, to about the posterior edge of the gill cover. There are two pairs under the lower jaw, the smaller pair being towards the midline, and the longer pair outside of these. The fourth pair is positioned just behind the nostrils.

Catfishes also exhibit two traits shared by the minnows, suckers and tetras. Taxonomists collect these fishes together into the Order Cypriniformes, a very successful group of relatively small New World fishes. Two unique traits that contribute to the survival of the cyprinid are the Weberian apparatus and a fright substance termed "Schreckstoff."

The Weberian apparatus is a series of bones, derived from the vertebral column, which form a connection between the swim bladder and the inner ear of the fish, allowing the fish to use its swim bladder as a sort of eardrum. The bones transfer vibrations from this bladder to the ear, much like the inner ear bones of mammals. The swim bladder is a baglike, gas-filled organ in the visceral cavity of the fish which maintains the animal's neutral buoyancy in the water.

Schreckstoff, or fright substance, is a feature unique to a group of cyprinid fish called the Superorder Ostariophysi, made up of the catfishes, minnows,

tetra-like fishes, knifefishes, and their relatives. It is a compound present in the body that is released when a fish is injured, and causes a fright reaction in other members of closely related species. Thus, when a catfish is injured by a predator, other catfish sense the compound in the water and are warned of the threat.

The sense of taste is extremely well developed in catfishes. Their chemical receptors, or "taste buds," are scattered over their entire bodies, with a higher concentration over the head and in the barbels. Bullheads have been shown to be able to detect food by smell over five metres away (Bardach *et al.*, 1967). It is conceivable that a catfish could experience a taste with its tail, and turn to go back and find the source. This enhanced sense of smell also increases the effectiveness of the fright compound discussed above, as they are able to detect it at great distances.

All of these attributes help to make catfishes well-suited to a nocturnal life in turbid waters. Although the eyes of catfishes are small, a trait of most nocturnal creatures, the improved sense of hearing provided by the Weberian apparatus, well-developed sense of taste, and the non-visual alarm signal of Schreckstoff all contribute to the survival of these species.

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## Red Kite Spotted on British Trip

by Phyl Downey and Glenys Hughes

We left Victoria at the end of April this year for a three-week Elderhostel field trip to Britain. We flew from London to Inverness, where a tour bus was waiting to take us to Aigas, the lovely home of Sir John and Lady Lucy Lister-Kaye.

During our week in this part of Scotland we saw and heard many birds; the dawn chorus was just lovely. We heard many Cuckoos and saw one quite close to us. We also saw Black Grouse doing their mating dance in a meadow one morning. Chaffinch were everywhere, and we heard the lovely Winter Warbler, a sure sign of spring. We didn't see any Golden Eagles, although they are usually quite plentiful.

From there we travelled to The Burren, County Clare. This is a marvelous area of bare limestone rocks, home to many wildflowers whose native habitats range from the Mediterranean to the Arctic. Spring Orchids were in full flower and we saw lovely deep blue wild gentians and many other wildflowers along the roadways. We had some fun with our guide, who had such an Irish accent that some of the Americans on our tour could hardly understand him!

Next we sailed across the Irish Sea to Llandrindod Wells, in the

heart of Wales. Here they promised that we would see some Red Kites (*Milvus milvus*). We saw many birds and many wildflowers (the bluebells were a sight to behold), but no kites. Then one day we were in our big tour bus when suddenly the driver stopped in the middle of the road and pointed to the sky. There it was--a Red Kite--and we all hurriedly got out of the bus to see this lovely bird. Many of the villagers also gathered 'round, and all cars were stopped as there was no room for them to pass! We had a good view of this bird, with its whitish head and deeply-forked, long red tail. It stands about 24 inches (61 centimetres) tall and has a streaked red/brown body and angled wings.

Established pairs build flat and rather untidy nests in trees, usually oak, beech or larch. Nests are built of sticks and may be decorated externally with rubbish (paper, twine, etc.) or with wool. Two or sometimes three eggs are laid at two-day intervals in late March or early April. The newly-hatched young are brooded by the female for two to three weeks and are fed field mice, magpie, crow, or some of the smaller perching birds. The parents sometimes travel over seven miles for food for their young. Some eight to ten weeks after hatching, the fully grown chicks leave the nest.

The Red Kite used to be a common bird in Britain but it has declined in numbers as a result of being starved out of towns and shot or poisoned in the countryside. Kites today are threatened by the use of toxic chemicals in Britain, and in recent years there has been an upsurge in the taking of eggs for private collections. However, the Red Kite is now protected under Britain's Wildlife and Countryside Act of 1981, and everything possible is being done to preserve these lovely birds.

## Close Encounter

by Dr. G.F. Houston

My wife and I were in Kamloops in April this year, so while in that region I thought it would be a good opportunity to visit Oliver and the White Lake area to look for Longbilled Curlew.



At White Lake, while having a picnic lunch on the east side of the lake against the rock face, we witnessed a very unusual incident. A fracas suddenly erupted over our heads as a medium-sized gray and black bird flew over us carrying something in its feet while being hotly pursued and harried by two smaller birds.

The chase moved over the lake and then back towards us. As the birds got nearer to us I could see that a Northern Shrike was carrying its prey dangling precariously from one foot. It came closer to us and finally dropped a small bird almost at our feet and then took off, still being pursued by the presumed parents of the young bird.

We walked over and studied the bird on the ground and came to the conclusion that it was a young fully-fledged Crossbill. It seemed unhurt but in a state of shock. We photographed it and were then wondering what to do with it when some other birders appeared and picked it up. It suddenly decided to take off and flew away, apparently unharmed.

The Shrike had appeared once on the cliff top but did not venture down to retrieve its prey.

## An Annotated List of the Birds of Southwest Vancouver Island

### Part Two: Passerines

by H. Van der Pol and K. Taylor

This article is a continuation of our report in the July/August (1989) issue of *The Victoria Naturalist*, in which we described the study area and methods and dealt with non-passerines. In this section we deal with the passerines (perching birds).

Many birds common on the eastern side of Vancouver Island are absent or rare on the western side. These differences are most apparent in the passerine group. A quick comparison of the bar graphs in the new Victoria "Checklist of Birds" and the bar graphs that accompany this article will soon reveal these differences in status.

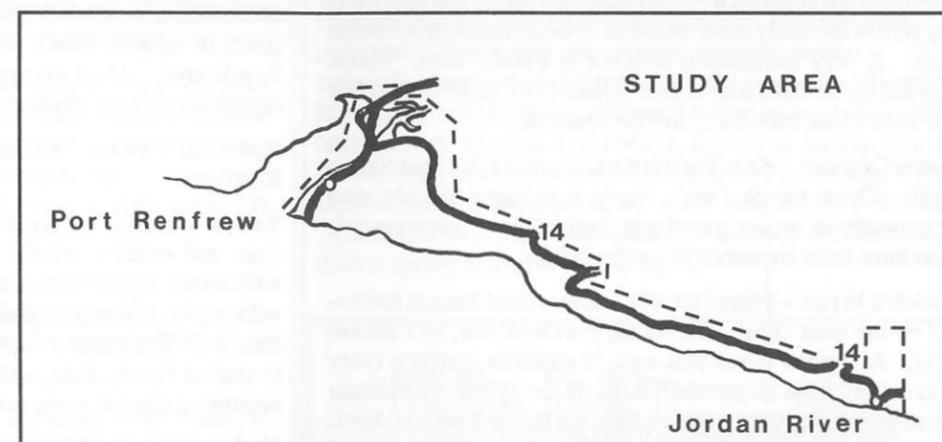
This report covers the region between Jordan River and Port Renfrew, with the greatest coverage made around Jordan River. Breeding bird surveys (BBS) were done annually, in the second week of June, from 1980 through 1989, between Jordan River and Port Renfrew along Highway 14. The results of these surveys are reflected in this section on passerines.

The status of birds of the west coast of Vancouver Island is shown with bar graphs on the checklist, with the species recorded within the study area indicated with an asterisk (\*). A second bar graph was added for species whose status differs from that of the Pacific Rim National Park. These are marked with -SW- if the status applies to the entire southwest coast study area, or -JR- if it applies only to Jordan River.

Notes on the birds in the checklist and additional rare species are given in the text, and include data from breeding bird surveys.

**Western Wood-Pewee** -- Where "east" meets "west" at Jordan River, this species migrates uncommonly in the last two weeks of May and into the second week of June. On 15 May 1988 an unusual total of eight were found during the big "drop out" (see Western Tanager). Usually singles are found, with six to eight per migration period. Only two birds have been recorded on the breeding bird survey (BBS), one on 10 June 1984 at mile 17 past Jordan River, and one on 8 June 1986 at mile 16.

**Willow Flycatcher** -- This species is unusual, as it is found locally in small numbers along the southwest coast, an east coast species. It is rare elsewhere on the west coast of the Island. Associated with second-growth slash and other dis-



turbed areas - usually willows. On the BBS an average of three birds have been recorded each year. Seven pairs breed in slash close to Jordan River.

**Hammond's Flycatcher** -- One was seen at Jordan River from 15 May to 12 June 1988 (a singing male, possibly breeding). Although outside the study area of interest, one was also seen at Sombrio Beach on 25 July 1982, one on 15 June 1983 at Bedspring Bridge and one on 15 May 1988 at Point No Point.

**Western Kingbird** -- Four sightings at Jordan River: one each in May 1959, on 10 June 1984, 11 September 1988 and 11 June 1989.

**Tropical Kingbird** -- One Tropical Kingbird was taken as a specimen in February 1923 in Port Renfrew.

**Eastern Kingbird** -- At Jordan River, one Eastern Kingbird was seen on 14 June 1980, and one each on 4 and 30 June 1983.

**Tree Swallow** -- Rare in summer (carded) on lakes in the study area. None have been seen in migration, breeding bird surveys, or personally by the authors.

**Violet-green Swallow** -- Common summer resident and spring transient at Jordan River; eight pairs nesting. This and the Barn Swallow are associated with buildings on the west coast with few or none found between settlements. (The next settlement

is Port Renfrew.)

**Barn Swallow** -- Common summer resident and spring transient at Jordan River; eight to ten pairs nesting. Found later here than at Pacific Rim, with the last nest vacant by September 11.

**Cliff Swallow** -- Two nesting pairs at Jordan River are the only ones seen in the study area.

**Bushtit** -- This southeast coastal lowland species is casual to the west coast. At Jordan River nesting occurs in May and June in the available disturbed habitat created by human habitation, now in shrubs (salmonberry). A high count of 26 on 3 July 1988, in family groups, just before exodus. Occurs very rarely in other months, unrecorded from late January through April. The only Bushtits seen on the BBS were four birds on 6 June 1982, two miles outside Jordan River.

**Red-breasted Nuthatch** -- This common east coast species is very rare in the study area. None have been recorded at Jordan River. A very uncommon resident at Pacific Rim. Those recorded on the BBS are: one on 6 June 1987, mile 19, and one on 6 June 1988, mile 24.5, in Port Renfrew.

**Brown Creeper** -- As at Pacific Rim, a rare resident but occurs locally (China Beach Park), where it is found readily, and occasionally in winter months at Jordan River (uncommon). None have been encountered on the BBS.

**Bewick's Wren** -- Found locally (rare) around human habitation on the west coast: Bamfield, Port Renfrew, and Jordan River. At Jordan River this wren's numbers increase (very uncommon) from September through December (maximum one to three). It is very rare in January through to late April. Severe winters possibly restrict pioneering individuals. Found on the southwest coast in logged and other disturbed areas at lowest elevations. One individual at mile 8, 6 June 1983, is the only record on the BBS.

**Marsh Wren** -- Three were seen on 3 December 1988 at Port Renfrew.

**Ruby-crowned Kinglet** -- A common transient and winter visitor at Jordan River (uncommon in winter at Pacific Rim and Port Renfrew). A vagrant in summer months.

**Townsend's Solitaire** -- One was seen on 24 April 1973 at Jordan River.

**Hermit Thrush** -- Along with the Fox Sparrow these two species only breed on the west coast. The status is as at Pacific Rim. Very prevalent at Jordan River from late October through winter. During the arctic cold snap in February 1989, 28 individuals flocked to Jordan River's beaches (2 February). On the BBS, singing birds are recorded yearly with an increase over the past few years.

**American Robin** -- Unlike Pacific Rim, an uncommon winter visitor. An abundant summer resident and transient.

**Northern Mockingbird** -- One seen on 29 June 1983 at Jordan River.

**Wagtail (species)** -- One sighting on 11 September 1988

(either immature White or Black-backed), at Jordan River.

**Water Pipit** -- A rare spring transient, uncommon fall transient along beaches. Flocks of two to six and, rarely, six to twelve.

**Northern Shrike** -- At Jordan River, one seen on 22 October 1988 and one on 27 December 1988 to 14 January 1989 (possibly the same bird).

**Solitary Vireo** -- The usual west coast status is rare, but found later in fall migration. One on 24 September 1988 at Jordan River.

**Hutton's Vireo** -- Unlike Pacific Rim (where rare), this species is uncommon at lower elevations along the southwest coast. Six pairs inhabit the Jordan River area. Hutton's Vireos are found in denser populations here than on Southern Vancouver Island.

**Warbling Vireo** -- A very common summer resident on all of the southern west coast (as shown in the survey by K. Taylor south of Alberni Inlet), but locally uncommon in the Long Beach area. Most common in the alders that fringe the numerous logging roads at low to mid-elevations.

**Red-eyed Vireo** -- One was seen on 18 June 1988 at Jordan River.

**Yellow Warbler** -- Found breeding locally in small numbers (rare and erratic), usually in disturbed areas with brush or willows or around wet areas (such as lakes and bogs) with willows. A common transient both in spring and fall for short duration. The status on the southwest coast may be very close to that at Pacific Rim, although the spring migration on the southwest coast is more prevalent.

**Yellow-rumped Warbler** -- A common transient, with few found breeding in the study area (the status over much of the west coast). This warbler is found in fall migration much later than at Pacific Rim, matching that of the east coast in late September through mid-October. This warbler breeds more commonly at Pacific Rim than in the study area. The only winter record was one seen on 2 February 1989.

**Palm Warbler** -- Two sightings at Jordan River from 26 to 29 November 1983 and 10 October 1988.

**Townsend's Warbler** -- The Townsend's Warbler is less common as a breeding species in the study area than in most other areas of Vancouver Island. There are ten pairs in the Jordan River area. A common transient, with individuals seen into January. It is difficult to believe that few are seen past July at Pacific Rim. On the BBS this warbler has only been heard six times in eight years.

**MacGillivray's Warbler** -- This second-most common warbler in the study area arrives in early May, two weeks earlier than at Pacific Rim (coincides to the day with Victoria); otherwise the status is identical. Found in disturbed areas, especially salal, in logging slash, and along roadways. The Wilson's Warbler is by far the most common warbler on the BBS, followed by MacGillivray's and then Orange-crowned.

**Western Tanager** -- At Jordan River this species is an uncom-

mon spring transient and rare summer resident (singing male). On 15 May 1988 an unusual total of 16 birds were found during a large "drop-out" of passerines two days after a very strong southeasterly storm. This tanager is usually found in small numbers of one to three per migration period, with 10-16 in unusual years.

**Black-headed Grosbeak** -- The usual status for the west coast is rare, but a small colony (or late migrants since Black-headed Grosbeaks migrate into mid-June), found near Port Renfrew periodically on the BBS. One singing male was seen at Jordan River on 4 June 1988; two Black-headed Grosbeaks on 6 June 1982, mile 23; one on 8 June 1986, mile 15; one on 8 June 1986, mile 22; one on 8 June 1986, mile 23; and one on 8 June 1986, mile 24.

**Rufous-sided Towhee** -- An uncommon summer resident at lower elevations (rare at higher elevations), in the available disturbed areas (six pairs at Jordan River). In the winter months it becomes very common only at Jordan River (25). There has been an average of four birds per year on the BBS.

**Lincoln's Sparrow** -- Rare spring, common fall transient with a high count of 35 on 1 September 1988. This secretive sparrow may occur locally in good numbers anywhere on the west coast. Most found at Jordan River occur in disturbed areas, especially the slash on the east end of town. A late date (December 27) indicates rare wintering.

**Swamp Sparrow** -- One adult and two immatures were seen from 11 December 1983 through 21 January 1984; also, one adult on 29 October 1988, and one on 14 January 1989, all at Jordan River.

**White-throated Sparrow** -- Two sightings were made of immature birds: one from 28 November through 3 December 1983 and one from 1 to 10 October 1988. Both were at Jordan River.

**Golden-crowned and White-crowned Sparrows** -- Both of these sparrows are found on the southwest coast, especially at Jordan River, in winter months. A small flock of Golden-crowns (six to 10) and White-crowns (zero to two); otherwise the status is as that at Pacific Rim, except that spring migrant Golden-crowns are gone in the study area by mid-May. No Golden-crowns have been recorded in summer as yet. White-crowns are common summer residents.

**Lapland Longspur** -- One seen on 1 November 1986 at Jordan River.

**Snow Bunting** -- A Snow Bunting was seen on 28 November 1983 at Jordan River.

**Rustic Bunting** -- An immature bird was sighted between 25 November 1983 and 20 February 1984, at Jordan River.

**Red-winged Blackbird** -- Casual on the west coast even in the available marshy areas. At Jordan River spring transients "overshoot," especially in late April. Five were seen on 24 April and an individual on 17 April. Very rare throughout the rest of the year with a total of seven individuals (six males). Individuals were seen in February, on 15 May and 5 July, and four on 3 December 1988, at Port Renfrew.

**Brewer's Blackbird** -- One female from 1 to 10 October 1988, at Jordan River.

**Northern Oriole** -- At Jordan River, a female was spotted on 4 June 1988.

**Purple Finch** -- Very rare in the winter months. Uncommon to fairly common locally at lower elevations from mid-April through July. Primarily associated with disturbed areas feeding on seasonal food supplies (introduced berry species).

**House Finch** -- Casual on the west coast, the same applies in the study area. A juvenile was seen at Jordan River on 12 June 1988. On 10 October 1988, at Jordan River, a male and female were sighted. One on 15 June 1985, mile 7.5; three on 4 June 1983, miles 13 and 24; and four on 14 June 1980: one at mile five; two at mile seven, and one at mile 11.

**American Goldfinch** -- As at Pacific Rim, the American Goldfinch is most often seen in open disturbed areas such as roadside ditches and slash where thistles provide food. A common migrant and uncommon summer resident. It is especially common in September in the slash east of Jordan River, where 30 have been counted at one time. Arrives here later than at Victoria (mid-May), the same arrival date at Pacific Rim; however, it stays later than at Pacific Rim (early October), where most leave by early August. At Victoria "goldfinches" are common until mid-October with wintering flocks; spring arrival is in mid-April.



## NEW BOOKS

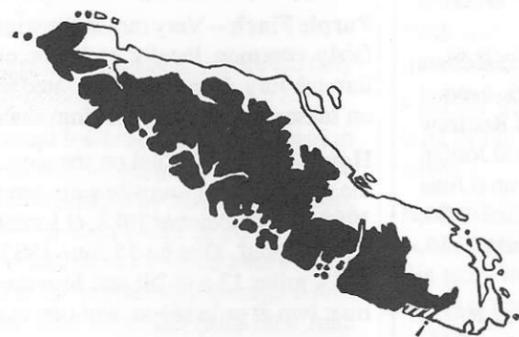
Indicator Plants of Coastal B.C.	\$36.95
Wildflowers of the Western Cascades	\$24.95
Mosses, Lichens and Ferns of Northwestern North America	\$24.95
North American Owls	\$55.00
Where to Watch Birds in Britain and Europe	\$27.50
Handbook of the Canadian Rockies	\$25.00

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CHECKLIST OF WESTERN VANCOUVER ISLAND BIRDS



**Area Covered:**  
Jordan River north to  
Cape Scott. The status  
centered at Long Beach.

- West Coast
- ▨ South-West Coast (-sw-)\*
- ! Jordan River (-JR-)

EXPLANATION OF SYMBOLS

- Hard to Miss
- Should See
- May See
- Lucky to Find
- How Lucky Can You Get

	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
* Olive-sided Flycatcher					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Western Wood Pewee					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Willow Flycatcher					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Hammond's Flycatcher					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Western Flycatcher					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Say's Phoebe					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Ash-throated Flycatcher					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Gray Kingbird					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Tropical Kingbird					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Western Kingbird					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Eastern Kingbird					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Scissor-tailed Flycatcher					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Horned Lark					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Purple Martin					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Tree Swallow					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Violet-green Swallow					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Northern Rough-winged Swallow					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Bank Swallow					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Cliff Swallow					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Barn Swallow					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Gray Jay					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
* Steller's Jay					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Blue Jay					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Clark's Nutcracker					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Black-billed Magpie					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Northwestern Crow					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Common Raven					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Chestnut-backed Chickadee					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Bushtit					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Red-breasted Nuthatch					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Brown Creeper					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Bewick's Wren					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* House Wren					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Winter Wren					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Marsh Wren					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* American Dipper					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Golden-crowned Kinglet					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Ruby-crowned Kinglet					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Blue-gray Gnatcatcher					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Western Bluebird					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Mountain Bluebird					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Townsend's Solitaire					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Swainson's Thrush					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Hermit Thrush					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
* American Robin					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Varied Thrush					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Northern Mockingbird					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Sage Thrasher					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Brown Thrasher					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Wagtail Sp.					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Water Pipit					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Bohemian Waxwing					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Cedar Waxwing					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Northern Shrike					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* European Starling					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Solitary Vireo					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Hutton's Vireo					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Warbling Vireo					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Red-eyed Vireo					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Orange-crowned Warbler					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Nashville Warbler					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Yellow Warbler					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Yellow-rumped Warbler					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Black-throated Gray Warbler					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Townsend's Warbler					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Palm Warbler					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Blackpoll Warbler					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* American Redstart					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* MacGillivray's Warbler					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Common Yellowthroat					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Wilson's Warbler					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Yellow-breasted Chat					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Western Tanager					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Black-headed Grosbeak					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Lazuli Bunting					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Dickcissel					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Rufous-sided Towhee					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* American Tree Sparrow					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Chipping Sparrow					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Clay-colored Sparrow					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Vesper Sparrow					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Lark Sparrow					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Savannah Sparrow					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Fox Sparrow					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Song Sparrow					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Lincoln's Sparrow					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Swamp Sparrow					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* White-throated Sparrow					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Golden-crowned Sparrow					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* White-crowned Sparrow					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
* Harris' Sparrow					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Dark-eyed Junco					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Lapland Longspur					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Chestnut-collared Longspur					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Rustic Bunting					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Snow Bunting					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* McKay's Bunting					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Red-winged Blackbird					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Western Meadowlark					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Yellow-headed Blackbird					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Rusty Blackbird					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Brewer's Blackbird					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Common Grackle					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Brown-headed Cowbird					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Northern Oriole					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Brambling					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Rosy Finch					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Pine Grosbeak					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Purple Finch					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* House Finch					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Red Crossbill					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* White-winged Crossbill					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Pine Siskin					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* American Goldfinch					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Evening Grosbeak					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* House Sparrow					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

291 species  
197 s-west

- r - resident Tahsis - common
- h - hypothetical
- a - alpine
- l - common locally
- o - well offshore
- s - south coast (southern half)
- ? - may breed Brooks Peninsula
- t - status of most of southern half
- m - most migrants, northern half

	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
* Curlew Sandpiper					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Black-billed Cuckoo					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
* Tennessee Warbler					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

# An Annotated List of the Marine Mammals of British Columbia

by Robin W. Baird and Pam J. Stacey

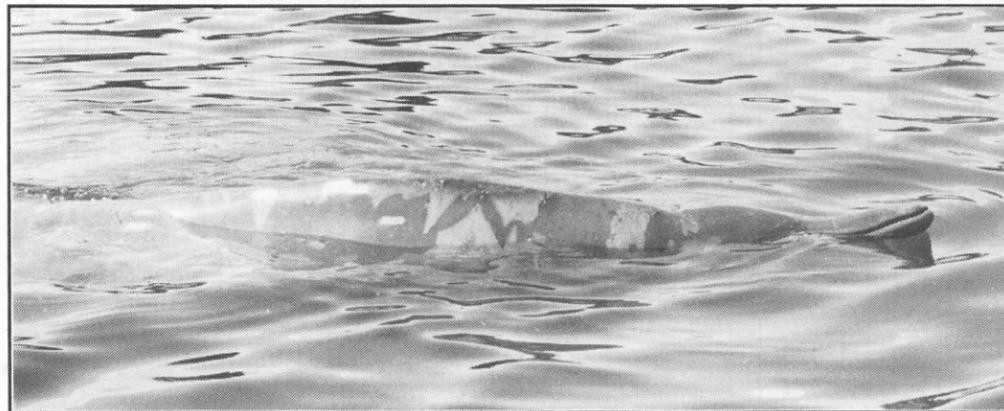
The following is an annotated list of marine mammals of British Columbia. Three of the species included have not yet been recorded from B.C. waters, but have been recorded from adjacent waters to the south and may eventually be recorded here. A single species of terrestrial mammal commonly occurring in the marine environment in B.C. is also included, making a total of 33 species of mammals potentially found in the marine waters of B.C. This list is only as accurate as available records allow, and unpublished or otherwise unavailable records may surface and warrant re-evaluation of status. For larger and typically offshore species, status is based predominantly on whaling records and sightings prior to 1967, summarized by Pike and MacAskie (1969). Little has been published on the status of these species in B.C. waters since then. For the smaller, less common species the status is for the most part based on as yet unpublished records: from stranded animals in the last few years reported to the Stranded Whale and Dolphin Program (Baird *et al.*, 1988; Stacey *et al.*, 1989) or records held at the Royal British Columbia Museum and the Pacific Biological Station; from animals caught incidentally in the Canadian experimental drift-net fishery for flying squid (*Ommastrephes bartramii*) from 1983 through 1987 (Jamieson and Heritage, 1988); from records submitted by Department of Fisheries and Oceans vessels participating in the B.C. Cetacean Sighting Program; and from records called in to the Whale Hotline, operated by The Whale Museum in Friday Harbor.

The list covers the entire B.C. coast and waters up to 320 kilometres (200 miles) offshore, within the Canadian extended economic zone. This leads to some problems in general applicability to small areas, as some species are found year-round in large numbers in some parts of the province (e.g., Steller sea lion) but are present elsewhere only seasonally.

Other species such as the Pacific white-sided dolphin are largely offshore around southern Vancouver Island, but in northern areas regularly make inshore movements. Additionally, there are more records in southern B.C. waters due to more sighting effort, so this list may be more accurate for southern areas. However, marine mammals regularly make short-term long-range movements, more similar to birds than to terrestrial mammals, and almost any species could be found throughout the area covered. It is more likely, however, for offshore species to occasionally stray into nearshore areas, or die and wash up on shore, than for species dependent on shallow habitats (such as the otters, or the gray whale) to move offshore.

Effort for all species is biased towards summer, but listings of seasonal presence of offshore species may be more biased than for nearshore species, where some records may be strandings, sightings from shore, or sightings in protected waters.

This list differs from bird checklists in that the terms of relative abundance for the various species are not based strictly on absolute number, but rather take into consideration the abundance of the species in British Columbia as compared to elsewhere in the world. Thus harbour seals, with an estimated population of about 75,000, and killer whales, with a population of about 350, are both considered common. This is because compared to their abundance elsewhere in the world, killer whales certainly are common in B.C. References are provided to refer individuals to further information if up-to-date publications or reports are available. A comprehensive review of the status of all species based on records prior to 1967 can be found in Pike and MacAskie (1969). The definitions for terms of status provided below are generally based on those used in avian checklists.



A beaked whale (*Mesoplodon* sp.) that could not be positively identified to species, temporarily beached near Nanaimo, B.C., August 5, 1979. Most of the markings on its back are likely peeling skin due to extended exposure to the sun. Photo by Michael A. Bigg, Pacific Biological Station.

## List of Terms:

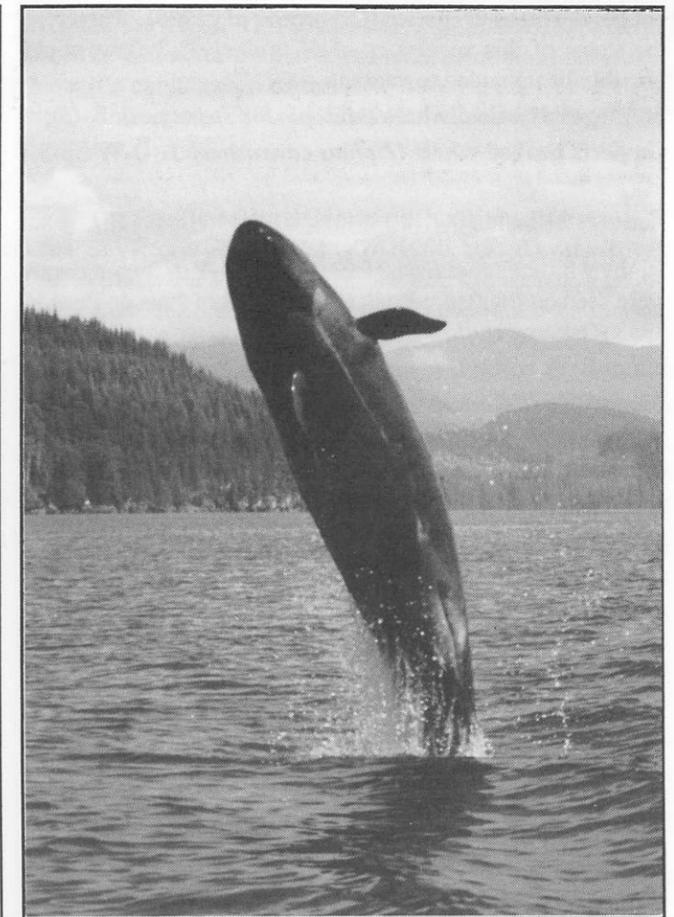
- C Common. Moderate to large numbers.
- FC Fairly Common. Low to moderate numbers.
- U Uncommon. Usually in low numbers or irregular.
- R Rare. Occurs most years but usually few records per year.
- V Vagrant. Not expected annually but more than five records.
- A Accidental. Five or fewer records, outside normal range.
- H Hypothetical. Not yet recorded, but recorded from adjacent waters.
- L Local. May be fairly common but in localized areas.
- O Offshore. Generally in open waters, offshore.
- I Inshore. Generally in inshore waters, or within several miles of the west coast of Vancouver Island.
- (8) Number of Confirmed Records (accidental and vagrant only).
- Y Year-round.
- S Summer. June to August.
- F Fall. September to November.
- W Winter. December to February.
- Sp Spring. March to May.

## Porpoises

- Dall's porpoise (*Phocoenoides dalli*) C-Y -- (Jefferson, in press).
- Harbour porpoise (*Phocoena phocoena*) C-I-Y.

## Dolphins

- Pacific white-sided dolphin (*Lagenorhynchus obliquidens*) C-O/U-I-L-Y -- (Stacey and Baird, 1989).
- Striped dolphin (*Stenella coeruleoalba*) V-(8)-W-Sp-- (Baird and Stacey in prep).
- Common dolphin (*Delphinus delphis*) A-(1) -- a single animal found dead on the beach in Victoria, April 1953 (Guiguet, 1954).
- Northern right whale dolphin (*Lissodelphis borealis*) R-O-Y -- (Baird and Stacey, 1989a).
- Risso's dolphin (*Grampus griseus*) R-Y (Baird and Stacey, 1989b).
- Bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*) H-A -- one record of a stranding from near Anacortes, WA (Osborne and Ransom, 1988). Normal distribution is only to central California, and considering the extreme range extension of this record, it is possible the animal had escaped from captivity.
- False killer whale (*Pseudorca crassidens*) V-(7)-Sp-S-F -- (Baird *et al.*, 1989). All records since 1987; four records may be repeat sightings of the same individual over a two year period, in one small geographical area, making the species accidental, but this cannot be confirmed.
- Short-finned pilot whale (*Globicephala macrorhynchus*) R-O-Sp-S-F (Baird and Stacey, 1989c).
- Killer whale (*Orcinus orca*) C-Y (Bigg *et al.*, 1987).



A false killer whale (*Pseudorca crassidens*) near Tzartus Island, Barkley Sound, July 29, 1989. This individual had been in the general area for several months. Pectoral flipper shape is diagnostic for this species. L.M. Barry/R.W. Baird photo.

## Sperm Whales

- Sperm whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*) C-O-Y.
- Dwarf sperm whale (*Kogia simus*) A-(1) -- one live stranding of a single animal at Pachena Bay, west side of Vancouver Island, in September 1981 (Nagorsen and Stewart, 1983). In accordance with the definitions of terms given above, this record must be considered accidental. Even in regions where large numbers of strandings occur (e.g., Florida), this species and the one listed below (*K. breviceps*) are seldom sighted live, possibly because of their small size, avoidance of boats, and low inconspicuous blow.
- Pygmy sperm whale (*Kogia breviceps*) H-A -- three records from Washington State, from May, June and October (Osborne *et al.*, 1988) make an eventual sighting in B.C. likely.

## Beaked Whales

- Baird's beaked whale (*Berardius bairdii*) R-O-Y.
- Hubbs' beaked whale (*Mesoplodon carlhubbsi*) A-(4) -- two additional records of *Mesoplodon* sp. exist from B.C. but can

not be identified to species (Osborne *et al.*, 1988). Therefore the status of this species or of *M. stejnegeri*, below, could possibly be upgraded to vagrant.

**Stejneger's beaked whale** (*Mesoplodon stejnegeri*) A-(5).

**Cuvier's beaked whale** (*Ziphius cavirostris*) R-O-W-Sp-S.

### Baleen Whales

**Right whale** (*Eubalaena glacialis*) V-O-Y -- two animals were seen on Swiftsure Bank off the Strait of Juan de Fuca in 1983 (Osborne *et al.*, 1988).

**Humpback whale** (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) U-L-Sp-S-F.

**Blue whale** (*Balaenoptera musculus*) R-O-S-F.

**Fin whale** (*Balaenoptera physalus*) U-O-S -- (Meredith and Campbell, 1988).

**Sei whale** (*Balaenoptera borealis*) U-O-S.

**Minke whale** (*Balaenoptera acutorostrata*) FC-Y.

**Gray whale** (*Eschrichtius robustus*) C-I-Y -- found sporadically in small numbers year-round throughout inshore waters, and in large numbers during migrations off the west side of Vancouver Island (Reeves and Mitchell, 1988).

### Pinnipeds

**Steller sea lion** (*Eumetopias jubatus*) C-I-Y -- year-round resident, concentrated around breeding colonies in summer, dispersion throughout province from fall through spring (Bigg, 1988a).

**California sea lion** (*Zalophus californianus*) C-L-I-Y -- rare in summer, seasonal visitor from the south, does not breed in B.C. (Bigg, 1988b).

**Northern fur seal** (*Callorhinus ursinus*) C-O-Y -- does not breed in B.C., largest numbers January through June (Kajimura and Loughlin, 1988).

**Harbour seal** (*Phoca vitulina*) C-I-Y -- year-round resident.

**Elephant seal** (*Mirounga angustirostris*) U-Y -- usually only single animals sighted. Does not breed in B.C..

**Ribbon seal** (*Phoca fasciata*) H-A -- normal range is in Bering and Okhotsk Seas, but one record off California (Roest, 1964) makes strays possible in B.C.

### Otters

**Sea otter** (*Enhydra lutris*) FC-L-I-Y -- two year-round colonies on the west coast of Vancouver Island; occasional strays from Victoria to the Queen Charlottes.

**River otter** (*Lutra canadensis*) C-I-Y -- year-round resident, largely terrestrial but often found in marine environment.

To assist us in updating this list, please submit records of any of these species to the authors. All records will be acknowledged in any resulting publications. We thank Mike Bigg for assistance with status assignments.

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## Clipboard

Registration is now underway for fall community education courses in our area, and there are some good offerings for naturalists this year. To get you going, we thought we'd mention some that have been brought to our attention. Register early--all of these classes are expected to fill up quickly.

**The Natural History of B.C. Marine Mammals.** One evening per week for ten weeks starting Sept. 18. Topics to include species identification, distribution, behaviour, ecology, and other aspects of marine mammal biology. Instructors: Robin Baird and Pam Stacey. Information: Camosun College, 592-1556.

**Birdwatching: An Introduction.** One evening class (Sept. 19) and nine Saturday morning field trips. Instruction on identification and the natural history of birds, including migration, moulting, nesting, behaviour and food. Instructor: Bruce Whittington. Information: Camosun College, 592-1556.

**Birdwatching for Beginners.** One morning class (Sept. 19) and nine Tuesday morning field trips. Topics as above. Instructor: Bruce Whittington. Information: Peninsula Recreation Commission, 656-7271.

**Birding in Victoria: Field Study for the Beginner.** Six sessions, 8:30-10:30 a.m. M-W-F, Sept. 18 to 29. An introduction to the birds, birding techniques, and some of the best birding spots in the Greater Victoria area. **More of the same** in a three-session follow-up course, same time slots, Oct. 2 to 6. Instructor: Dave Fraser. Information: UVic Extension, 721-8451.

**The Owls of British Columbia.** An evening or afternoon lecture using slides, tapes and museum material, followed by an evening field trip. Section 1: Oct. 2 (7-9 p.m.) and Oct. 4 (7-9 p.m.). Section 2: Sept. 25 (1:30-3:30 p.m.) and Sept. 27 (7-9 p.m.). Instructor: Dave Fraser. Information: UVic Extension, 721-8451.

**Between the Tides.** 12 Tuesday evening sessions, Sept. 26 to Dec. 12. Examines the plants and animals of intertidal zones through a combination of lectures, demonstrations and field trips. Instructor: Yousuf Ebrahim. Information: UVic Extension, 721-8451.

The Pacific Seabird Group will hold its annual meeting in Victoria February 21 to 24, 1990, hosted by the Royal British Columbia Museum. The meeting will include a major symposium entitled "Ecology and Conservation of Marine Birds of the Temperate North Pacific" co-sponsored by the PSG, the Museum, the Wildlife Branch, Ministry of Environment, and the Canadian Wildlife Service. For information write Dr. Kees Vermeer, c/o Institute of Ocean Sciences, Sidney; or Elaine Gibb, Royal B.C. Museum.

The Third International Orca Symposium will be held in Victoria March 9 to 12, 1990, co-hosted by the Royal British Columbia Museum, The Whale Museum (Friday Harbor), and the University of Washington Friday Harbor Laboratories. The symposium will focus on the behavioural ecology of killer whales in comparison with other social predators. Abstracts for presentations must be submitted by Nov. 1, 1989. For information write The Whale Museum, Friday Harbor, WA 98250.

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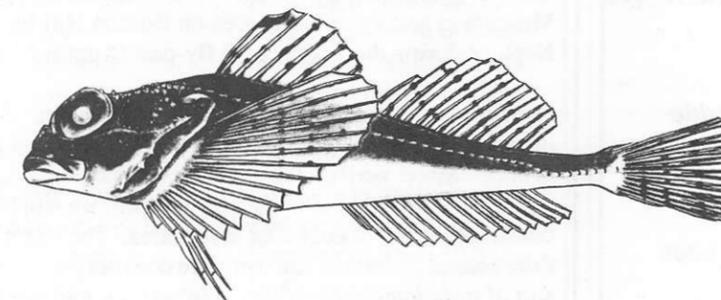
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## Scientific Illustration & Graphic Art



Karen Uldall-Ekman, (B.Sc.)

Victoria, B.C.

658-8297

# Beacon Hill Park: An Update

by Anne Fletcher of the Friends of Beacon Hill Park

In the spring of this year a group calling itself the Friends of the Southeast Wood was formed to fight for the preservation of the natural wooded area that makes up the southeast portion of Beacon Hill Park. City Council was at the time considering a proposal to clear extensive areas of the wood in response to concerns about offensive uses of the park and perceived threats to personal security. We (the Friends) presented a proposal to Council suggesting alternative solutions to these problems (see the July/August issue of the *Naturalist*), and convinced the City to postpone the intended clearing for several months until the effectiveness of our proposals could be evaluated.

Our group has since registered as a non-profit society under the name the Friends of Beacon Hill Park, reflecting our broader concerns with the natural and human history of the park as a whole. Over the summer we have continued to lobby for special status for the wild, uncultivated areas of the park, and have begun to implement some of our plans for establishing a positive presence in the Southeast Wood. These plans include developing a system of clearly defined nature trails and offering nature walks and interpretive programs in the area. We also have hopes for the eventual establishment of a nature and history centre on top of Beacon Hill, at the site of the Checkers Pavilion. We believe we can obtain the necessary funding for such an undertaking, provided we can get approval in principle from the City.

The original "stay of execution" for the Southeast Wood was

to have been until mid-September, but at its August meeting the Parks and Recreation Commission decided to recommend to City Council that this period be further extended until its Beacon Hill sub-committee could meet with our group and look in greater detail at our proposals.

In June we conducted a survey of residents living next to the Wood (along lower Cook Street) and found that almost all of them support what we are doing. This was quite a relief, since we had been led to believe that most of them wanted the area cleared. On the contrary, most reported having no problems with the area, though a few neighbours said they were bothered by noise such as squealing of tires or people drinking or acting rowdy. It was generally acknowledged, however, that such disturbances usually result from teenagers driving or walking up Cook Street after leaving Clover Point or the beach below Cook Street, and do not originate in the park. None of the residents had ever observed open sexual activity in the Wood, and none had ever been threatened while passing through it, though a number of those interviewed walk through the Wood daily or very frequently. Unfortunately there is one very vocal neighbour who feels threatened by the presence of homosexual men in the Wood, and thinks that clearing the brush is the only solution. The results of our survey lead us to believe that much of the concern that has arisen over problems in the Wood has been the result of this one man's perceptions and complaints. A more extensive neighbourhood survey conducted by the Victoria City Police yielded substantially the same results.

We began our nature and history walks in mid-July and continue to recruit volunteers to conduct special walks focussing on such themes as seabirds and seashore life, ethnobotany, geology, heritage trees, native history and the history of the Hudson's Bay Company. The walks have been particularly popular with residents of James Bay and Fairfield, but we've also had visitors from Edmonton, Toronto, and Texas. We recently cooperated with the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada (Victoria Centre) and the Royal British Columbia Museum in setting up telescopes on Beacon Hill for viewing Neptune during the Voyageur II fly-past (August 21 to 26).

Construction of nature trails has not yet begun. We have proposed a four foot wide trail in the north and south sides of the Wood. Since part of the north side is under water from approximately October to the end of April, we would need to construct several boardwalks in this area. The south side is a drier coastal shrub area and therefore does not present the same sort of trail-building problems. We've been told that the birds were affected when the middle area was cleared of underbrush

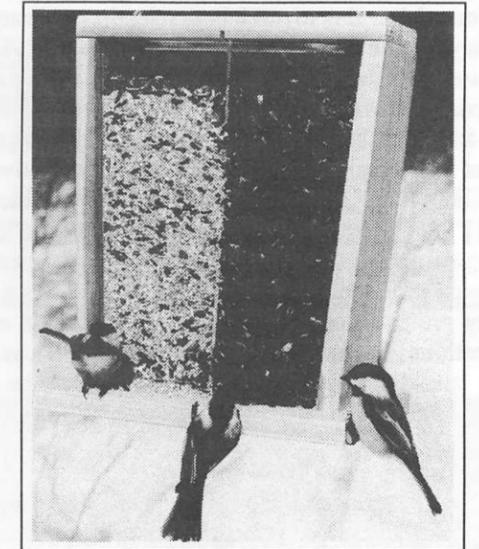
In the July/August issue of the *Naturalist* we published a list of birds (14 species) that had been identified this past spring in the southeast corner of Beacon Hill Park. To give a more complete picture of the number and variety of birds known to use this area, we now include the following list of species recorded in the Southeast Wood on the Christmas Bird Counts of 1984-1988. This list was compiled by John Cooper of the Royal British Columbia Museum.

Great Blue Heron	Roosting in trees
Bald Eagle	Roosting in trees
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Roosting in trees, foraging
Cooper's Hawk	Roosting in trees, foraging
Red-tailed Hawk	Roosting in trees
Merlin	Roosting in trees, foraging
Peregrine Falcon	Roosting in trees
Glaucous-winged Gull	Flying overhead
Rock Dove	Foraging near road
Belted Kingfisher	Flying overhead
Downy Woodpecker	Foraging
Hairy Woodpecker	Foraging
Red-breasted Sapsucker	Foraging
Northern Flicker	Foraging
Steller's Jay	Foraging
Northwestern Crow	Roosting, foraging
Common Raven	Roosting, foraging
Chestnut-backed Chickadee	Foraging
Bushtit	Foraging
Red-breasted Nuthatch	Foraging
Brown Creeper	Foraging
Winter Wren	Foraging and roosting in brush thickets
Golden-crowned Kinglet	Foraging and roosting in brush thickets
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Foraging and roosting in brush thickets
Hermit Thrush	Foraging and roosting in brush thickets
Varied Thrush	Foraging and roosting in brush thickets
American Robin	Foraging and roosting in brush thickets
European Starling	Roosting, foraging
Rufous-sided Towhee	Foraging in brush thickets
Fox Sparrow	Foraging in brush thickets
Song Sparrow	Foraging in brush thickets
Lincoln's Sparrow	Foraging in brush thickets
White-crowned Sparrow	Foraging in brush thickets
Purple Finch	Foraging in trees
House Finch	Roosting
Red Crossbill	Foraging in trees
Pine Siskin	Foraging in trees
Evening Grosbeak	Foraging in trees
House Sparrow	Foraging near road

in 1985. Our long-term plans are to replant this area with native plants that are food for birds, and with wildflowers to encourage more people to visit the area. We also propose closing off unwanted trails and replanting them with native plants.

Don Anderson, Director of Parks, seems very concerned about protecting the wet north area in particular. Laura Acton and Tom Loring, who are on the Beacon Hill sub-committee, are also very supportive of our efforts, so we have good reason to hope that things will work out well. In addition we have the support of the Victoria Natural History Society, the Greenbelt Society, and botanists at the Royal British Columbia Museum.

The Friends are encouraged by the results of the neighbourhood survey, the popularity of our nature walks, and the support we have been receiving from other Victorians, and we are excited about the interpretive programs being planned for the future and the possibility of a history and nature centre. Political lobbying has consumed much of our time so far, but this has been necessary to ensure the preservation of the area. Our group has now become part of the history of Beacon Hill Park, and we hope that 100 years from now someone giving a history and nature walk will speak favourably of our efforts to save the wild areas of the park for future generations.



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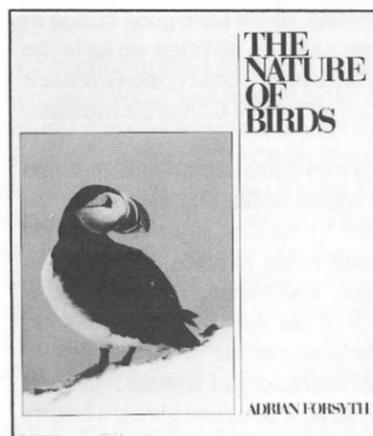
## The Following Publications May be Ordered through VNHS:

*The Naturalist's Guide to the Victoria Region*  
(a VNHS publication)  
Members' price \$10.50  
Non-members \$11.95

*National Geographic Society Field Guide  
to the Birds of North America*  
\$23.00

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## For the Naturalist and the Scientist



### THE NATURE OF BIRDS.

Adrian Forsyth.  
1988. Camden House Publishing.  
Soft cover. 160 pp.  
144 colour photographs. \$19.95.

Adrian Forsyth is trying to reach both scientists and naturalists in his essays on the natural history of birds. In his 1988 book *The Nature of Birds*, Forsyth manages to blend the scientific side of avian behavioural ecology with the purely subjective and non-analytical enjoyment of birds and their song. While looking at bird behaviour he asks simple, almost naive questions such as "Why are some birds' songs so incredibly beautiful?" and "Why is bird plumage so colourful?" when the biological and behavioural requirements for species recognition would presumably be met by mediocrity. As a former university professor and a keen naturalist, Forsyth answers these questions in a considered yet informal manner, as though he were speaking to us personally on subjects he enjoys speculating about.

This book would grace your coffee table. Enclosed in an attractive soft cover are 160 glossy pages full of photographs of birds and their habitat. The photographs are excellent and they are well integrated into the text, each with a short paragraph of introduction. Despite the scientific content of the book, the prose is clear and simple. Paragraphs flow together well and each chapter begins with personal observations of birds that help us understand the author's point of view.

*The Nature of Birds* consists of twelve essays addressing such topics as nests, beauty, song, mating, and relationships. My favourite essays were the ones on nests, song, and mating, but the chapter on the "emigrant factor" was also worthwhile, as it directed my attention to the global migration patterns of birds. There is a common thread linking all twelve of Forsyth's essays that transcends both gender and species-specific behaviour. This thread is the idea of "the selfish gene," or an

individual bird exhibiting remarkable, even unbelievable, behaviour in order to improve the chances of survival of its offspring over those of its competitors.

Nest design is examined to determine whether thermal requirements, available materials, predator avoidance or landscape limitations are more important in the style of a species' nest. Locating the nest near wasps or hornets to discourage predators, or near the nests of other species such as Red-wing Blackbirds to take advantage of their mobbing behaviour, are two of the examples used to show how important site selection is in the nesting game.

In the chapter on beauty, which I found to be one of the most fascinating in the book, Forsyth explains carefully the benefits of brightly coloured feathers and vivid plumage designs in attracting a mate versus the risk of attracting a predator. The subjective question about beauty of male birds and whether it has any relevance to the female bird choosing the most handsome suitor is explored, and the reader is left pondering the rationale of sexual selection as observed by Darwin and other evolutionists.

The chapter on song is warmly introduced by the author with a story about how the song of the Hermit Thrush caused him to resign from a tenured university position in order to write about natural history. The beauty of birds' songs is emphasized through the use of poetic quotations and through the author's subjective and emotional response to the music. Forsyth points out that a distinction can be made between the songs of monogamous males and those of polygynous males (those that mate with more than one female). The songs of the former tend to be more musical and are characterized by phrases of pure tones to attract one mate, whereas the songs of polygynous males are aggressive vocal displays relating to dominance at the nest site, and tend to be characterized by noisy clicks, buzzing and booming sounds to attract several mates. The possibility that female birds actually find one male's song more beautiful than another, and the ability of some birds to improve their song repertoire from year to year suggest reasons for the success of the mature male. (This leaves room for hope for mature males in the VNHS who are still learning courting songs!) Forsyth gives several examples of dueting by paired birds that we can listen for during the dawn chorus.

Mating strategies from monogamy to polyandry are defined and discussed in the fourth essay on reproductive success. Sexual dimorphism (the occurrence of marked physical differences between males and females within a species) is also discussed, and examples are given of how it affects mating systems. Continuing in the same vein, the essay on infanticide, cuckoldry and other natural acts solves some of the mystery of intentional destruction of eggs and nestlings by female birds in the light of "individuals trying to perpetrate the genes that constitute them." Infanticide in nesting colonies and sibling rivalry are likewise explained as individual birds looking out for their own reproductive interests. Nest parasitism and

cuckoldry are explained in terms of increasing the reproductive success of the individuals involved at their rival's expense.

Throughout the book, all these mysteries of bird behaviour are explored both from a subjective and an objective or scientific point of view. The book is easily read over a period of two or three days, and the complexities of bird behaviour become apparent in a painless manner. The author uses the final essay to make an appeal to amateur bird watchers and keen but untrained naturalists to consult with scientists in order to improve the information available on the global distribution of bird species and their behaviour. Adrian Forsyth has an important message for groups such as the VNHS to avoid the common misconception that research can only be undertaken by doctoral graduates. Scientists and naturalists, he suggests, can learn from one another. Perhaps a popular movement in behavioural ecology, fuelled by the careful study of individual species in particular locations, can assist scientists in providing ideas and information for making general predictions on a larger scale. Forsyth also advocates independent research, usually consisting of plain observations of bird behaviour, as a valuable contribution to increase the information available on local ecosystems.

*The Nature of Birds* is a sensitive and clearly written series of essays on bird behaviour that should hold the interest of amateur bird watchers and ornithologists alike. I highly recommend this book if you are interested in learning more about bird behaviour and perhaps how a naturalist could get involved in research. It is not a comprehensive approach to behavioural ecology, and the two chapters on images and intelligence are perhaps less focussed and more meandering than the rest of the book. However, the philosophical and personal approach to bird behaviour in this book should appeal to most readers.

Reviewed by Dannie Carsen.



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## BOLEN BOOKS

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## Welcome to New Members

- May 31 Helen Lindsay, of Belcher Avenue. Interested in lectures, films and classes, field trips, *The Victoria Naturalist*, and the Christmas Bird Count.
- May 31 Helen Hove, of Foul Bay Road.
- May 31 Anne and John Lowan, of Oldfield Road.
- May 31 Peter and Margo Steveninck, of Mary Street. Particular interests: birds, wildflowers, and wildlife in general.
- May 31 Walter and Gudrun Gordon, of Galiano Island.
- May 31 Jean and Leslie Waye, of Montford Crescent. Jean is a novice birder, but enthusiastic.
- June 6 David A.R. Riddell, of Uplands Road.
- June 7 Diane Richardson, of Fulford Harbour. Interested in birds and *The Victoria Naturalist*.
- June 14 James A. Rainer, of North Vancouver. Interests: ornithology, botany, ecology. All of nature!
- June 14 Greg Jones, of Doncaster Drive.
- June 15 Chester and Jeanne Chard, of Sea Ridge Drive.
- June 20 Mr. and Mrs. John Thompson, of Windsor Road. Their membership is a "Welcome to Victoria" gift from member Jean McDougall.
- June 22 Audrey Copping, of Cedar Hill Road. Interests: "Anything pertaining to the biosphere. I would especially like to learn about western birds."
- June 22 Mrs. Alison Acker, of Island Highway. Particular interests: wildflowers and rambles.
- June 26 Jim and Midge Phillips, of Lochside Drive.
- June 27 Craufurd and Joan Monier-Williams, of Sidney. "Our main interest at the moment is in bird watching. We are also interested in environmental concerns."
- June 29 Richard Ring, of the University of Victoria Department of Biology. An entomologist.
- June 29 Kay Niemi, of Sooke. Enjoys *The Victoria Naturalist*. Interested in learning more about birds and bird watching; also interested in plants and trees.
- July 5 Fran Aitkens, of Foul Bay Road.
- July 5 Mrs. Jean T. Hay, of Pitcombe Place. Particular interests: seashore and birds.
- July 10 Donna L. Taylor, of Sooke.
- July 12 Bud Wilson, of Parkcrest Drive. Bud is very interested in preserving our natural environment. As a new resident of Victoria, he is interested in receiving *The Victoria Naturalist* and associating with members of the group.

## Christmas Cards and Calendars

Once again the VNHS will be ordering Christmas cards and calendars from the Canadian Nature Federation. These are good quality cards with designs contributed by famous nature artists. It will benefit both VNHS and CNF if you use these cards for your Christmas greetings. The cards and calendars should be here by the **October 10th general meeting**, so make sure you attend the meeting to make your selection. If you cannot get to the meeting call **Lyndis Davis at 477-9952** to see the cards--but do help your society by sending nature cards and using or sending nature calendars and engagement diaries.

### "Name the Bird" Contest Winners

We had a tremendous response to our contest, with many phone calls and entries. The correct answers were:

1. Ruddy Duck
2. Cliff Swallow
3. Common Snipe
4. Oldsquaw
5. Eurasian Skylark
6. Black-headed Grosbeak
7. Common Raven
8. Western Tanager
9. California Gull
10. Belted Kingfisher

Please see Bruce Whittington for a detailed recital of his references for the more obscure behaviours. The winners of the contest and the runners up are listed below. Since we had a "tie," Bruce has agreed to award a \$20 gift certificate to both winners; Diane and Barbara, please pick up your certificates at the Field-Naturalist. Thanks to all who participated! We encourage any suggestions for further contests.

All Correct: Diane Richardson, Barbara Begg  
 One Wrong: Mark Nyhof  
 Two Wrong: Steve Baillie, Jennifer Emms  
 Three Wrong: Mark Elliott, Marjorie Russell

## Distinguished Service Award

The Distinguished Service Award was established by the VNHS Board of Directors in 1988. This prestigious award is granted to a member of the Society who has contributed in some outstanding way to the aims and objectives of the Society. Awards are made at the annual dinner or at the annual general meeting each March. All members of the Society are eligible to nominate any other member who in their opinion merits this honour.

Nominations should be forwarded to the Awards Committee Chairperson (currently Reuben Ware) by **December 15, 1989**. All nominations must be in writing and should be signed by at least three other members of the Society. A brief biographical sketch and a description of the contributions and achievements of the nominee, along with his or her address and telephone number, should be included. The Awards Committee reviews the nominations and makes recommendations to the Board of Directors, which grants the awards. For more information, contact Reuben Ware at 385-2803.

## New Checklist of Birds Available

The Victoria Natural History Society has published a new, updated "Checklist of the Birds--Victoria and Southeastern Vancouver Island." This list was compiled by Bryan Gates and Keith Taylor and published by the VNHS with financial help from the **Public Conservation Assistance Fund**. The checklist is complete with bar graphs depicting seasonal occurrences for 332 species that have been recorded from Victoria to Ladysmith. Even the casual birder or naturalist is assisted by the checklist in learning our diverse avifauna and their migratory habits. The graphs may, in a small way, assist in confirming the identification of those species that tend to confuse us all.

The VNHS would like to thank Bryan and Keith for their efforts in compiling this new checklist and commend them on its ease of use.

Copies of the checklist may be obtained for \$1.00 each from Lyndis Davis, the Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary, or by sending a self-addressed, stamped long envelope to P.O. Box 5220, Station B, Victoria, B.C. V8R 6N4.

## VISIT SIDNEY SPIT MARINE PARK

- BIRD SANCTUARY
- FOREST TRAILS
- SAND BEACHES
- PICNIC AREA
- CAMP SITES



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# Calendar of Events

## Meetings:

**Tuesday, Sept. 5.** Board of Directors meeting at 7:30 p.m. in Clifford Carl Reading Room, Cunningham Building, UVic.

**Tuesday, Sept. 12.** General meeting at 8 p.m. in Room 159, Begbie Building, UVic. Program presentation: The Natural History of the Queen Charlottes--A Kayaker's Perspective (see Presentations and Films, below, for details).

**Tuesday, Oct. 3.** Board of Directors meeting at 7:30 p.m. in Clifford Carl Reading Room, Cunningham Building, UVic.

**Tuesday, Oct. 10.** General meeting at 8 p.m. in Room 159, Begbie Building, UVic. See information below on presentation: The Natural History of Undersea Life Around Victoria.

## Presentations and Films:

**Tuesday, Sept. 12.** The Natural History of the Queen Charlottes--A Kayaker's Perspective. Join Barbara Souther, a

naturalist and wilderness guide, for a slide presentation of the natural and cultural history of South Moresby Island. Life zones from alpine to ocean, methods of touring and how to get there are all covered in this one hour presentation following the general meeting. Meeting starts at 8 p.m., presentation to follow at approximately 9 p.m. Room 159, Begbie Building, UVic.

**Saturday, Sept. 16. Recreation Day at Memorial Arena.** 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Recreation and leisure activities around Victoria from swimming to orienteering are the focus of this family event. The VNHS is having a booth to encourage natural history observation and study as a leisure activity, so come out and give us your support.

**Wednesday, Sept 27. Birders Night** at 7:30 p.m. in Cornett B108, UVic. Meet with other birders to hear what is going on in our area. Coffee and tea are served followed by a slide illustrated talk on "Birding and Travel in Cuba" by John Dawson and naturalist Marylee Stephenson.

**Tuesday, Oct. 10. The Natural History of Undersea Life Around Victoria.** Join Jim Cosgrove and Gord Oliver for a slide show and talk on the invertebrate, fish and mammal life in Victoria waters--from tidal pools to scuba diving. Diving history, some general information on scuba and anecdotes about underwater encounters with ocean wildlife will be part of the program. Jim Cosgrove is a marine biologist, an octopus specialist for the Royal B.C. Museum and a scuba instructor. Gord Oliver is owner and divemaster of Frank White's Scuba Shop and an experienced instructor in underwater discovery techniques. Follows the general meeting, which begins at 8 p.m.; talk should begin at approximately 9 p.m.

**Tuesday, Oct 17. Botany Night** meeting and slide show at Royal B.C. Museum classroom at 7:30 p.m. Phone Adolf Ceska for details at 477-1211 (home) or 387-2423 (work).

**Wednesday, Oct. 25. Birders Night** at 7:30 p.m. in Cornett B108, UVic. Meet with other birders to hear what is going on in our area. Following coffee and tea, Wayne Campbell of the Royal B.C. Museum will give a slide-illustrated talk on the Birds of the Queen Charlotte Islands.

**Saturday, Oct. 28. Mushroom Fair** from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the Royal B.C. Museum main foyer. In cooperation with the Pacific Forestry Centre, the museum is preparing a display of mushrooms and examples of identification techniques. Staff and volunteers will be available to answer questions.

## Field Trips:

Please meet at the location indicated for each trip. For field trips BRING A LUNCH and be equipped for changes in the weather. Always phone the VNHS Event Tape (479-2054) before a trip to obtain full particulars or details about changes (sometimes unavoidable). On VNHS trips participants usually pool vehicles to reduce parking problems and costs. The board suggests that fuel costs be shared with the driver.

If you would like to lead a field trip, or have an idea for a program or club activity, please phone Dannie Carsen (384-4924), or Richard Ring (656-2246).

**Sunday, Sept. 3. Owling at Goldstream Park,** 8:30 p.m. at the campsite amphitheatre. A slide show in the amphitheatre will be followed by an owl prowling to attract owls with their calls. The campsite is located off the Trans-Canada highway. Before reaching Goldstream Park, turn left opposite the Shell station at a sign for Ma Miller's Pub. Phone Dave Fraser at 479-0016 for details.

**Sunday, Sept. 10. Birding at Witty's Lagoon** with leader Bruce Whittington. Meet at 8 a.m. at Helmcken Park and Ride or at 8:45 in the Witty's Lagoon parking lot. This trip will be a good opportunity to identify shore birds on the mudflats of the lagoon.

**Sunday, Sept. 17. Botany field trip** with Adolf Ceska at Elk Lake. Meet next to rowing club boathouse at 9 a.m. and bring rubber boots, waders or a dinghy (if you have one). Search for aquatic and wetland plants along the shoreline. This is the best time to explore for late summer water plants and learn how to identify them. Bring a change of clothes in case you get wet.

**Saturday, Sept. 23. Waterbird Birding around Duncan.** Join Tom and Inez Weston, leaders familiar with the Duncan area, to visit Cherry Point, Somenos Lake and the Crofton shoreline. Meet at Helmcken Park and Ride at 8:30 a.m. or catch up with Tom and Inez at the Mill Bay Centre parking lot around 9 a.m. by turning right off highway after passing Bamberton.

**Sunday, Oct. 8. Birding trip to see Turkey Vultures "kettling."** David Pearce leads this trip to Aylard Farm at the East end of East Sooke Park. Our main target is the soaring Turkey Vulture. If the thermals are not "working," there will be hedgerows to explore and seabirds to see in the area. Meet at Helmcken Park and Ride at 9 a.m. or Aylard Farm parking lot (at the end of Becher Bay Road) at 10 a.m.

**Saturday, Oct. 21. Birding trip to Jordan River.** There is a good possibility of seeing kittiwakes and an excellent variety of pelagic birds to be seen. The leader will be Hank Van der Pol. He doesn't promise any rare or uncommon species, but there is always the potential... Meet at 8 a.m. at Helmcken Park and Ride, where a car pool will be organized for the 1.5 hour drive. Phone Hank at 658-1924 for more information.

**Sunday, Nov. 5. Gull identification workshop** with Dave Fraser. An excellent opportunity to hone your skills before the Christmas Bird Count. Dave will show slides and lead a walk at Goldstream to identify the gulls, and follow with an examination of specimens back at the Visitor Centre. Meet at the Goldstream Park Nature House at 10 a.m.

**Saturday, Dec. 16. Victoria Christmas Bird Count** and Post-count Party. Remember to keep this date free and start thinking about your count area.

# Swan Lake Lecture Series

**Thursday, Sept. 28.** Friends of the Nature Sanctuary Lecture Series, Lecture #6. Royal Astronomical Society of Canada, Victoria Centre, helps us present a **Star Party**. This program will include a talk and slide show, and several telescopes will be on hand for viewing the heavens (a special evening program will be presented if cloudy). 8 p.m.; adults \$1; children 50¢; free to Friends of the Nature Sanctuary).

**Thursday, Oct. 26.** Friends of the Nature Sanctuary Lecture Series, Lecture #7. "Bats, Creatures of the Night." Dave Nagorsen, curator of vertebrate zoology at the Royal British Columbia Museum, will give a talk and slide show on the creatures that don't bump into things in the night. He will demonstrate a bat detector and take recordings to show you the echolocation process. 8 p.m.; adults \$1; children 50¢; free to Friends of the Nature Sanctuary).

The Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary is open 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday to Friday, and on weekends (please call ahead for our fall weekend hours: 479-0211).

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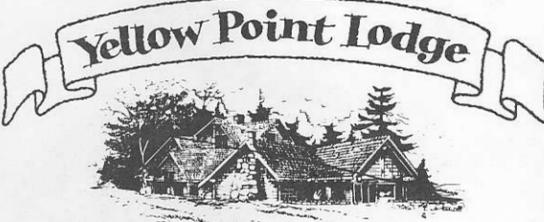
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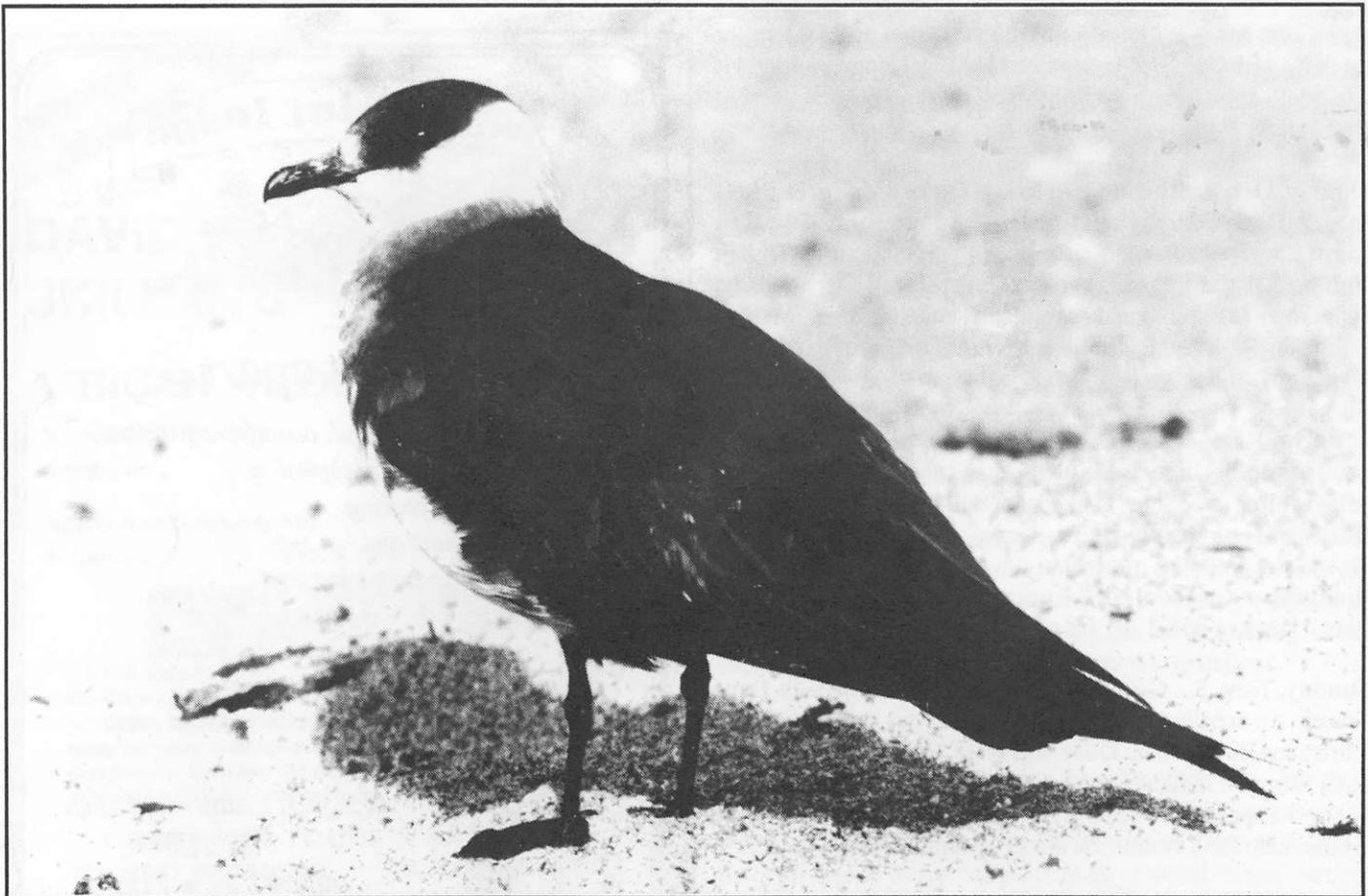
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*Parasitic Jaeger, a regular late summer and fall visitor to the Victoria coastline.*

*Photo by Rob Cannings.*