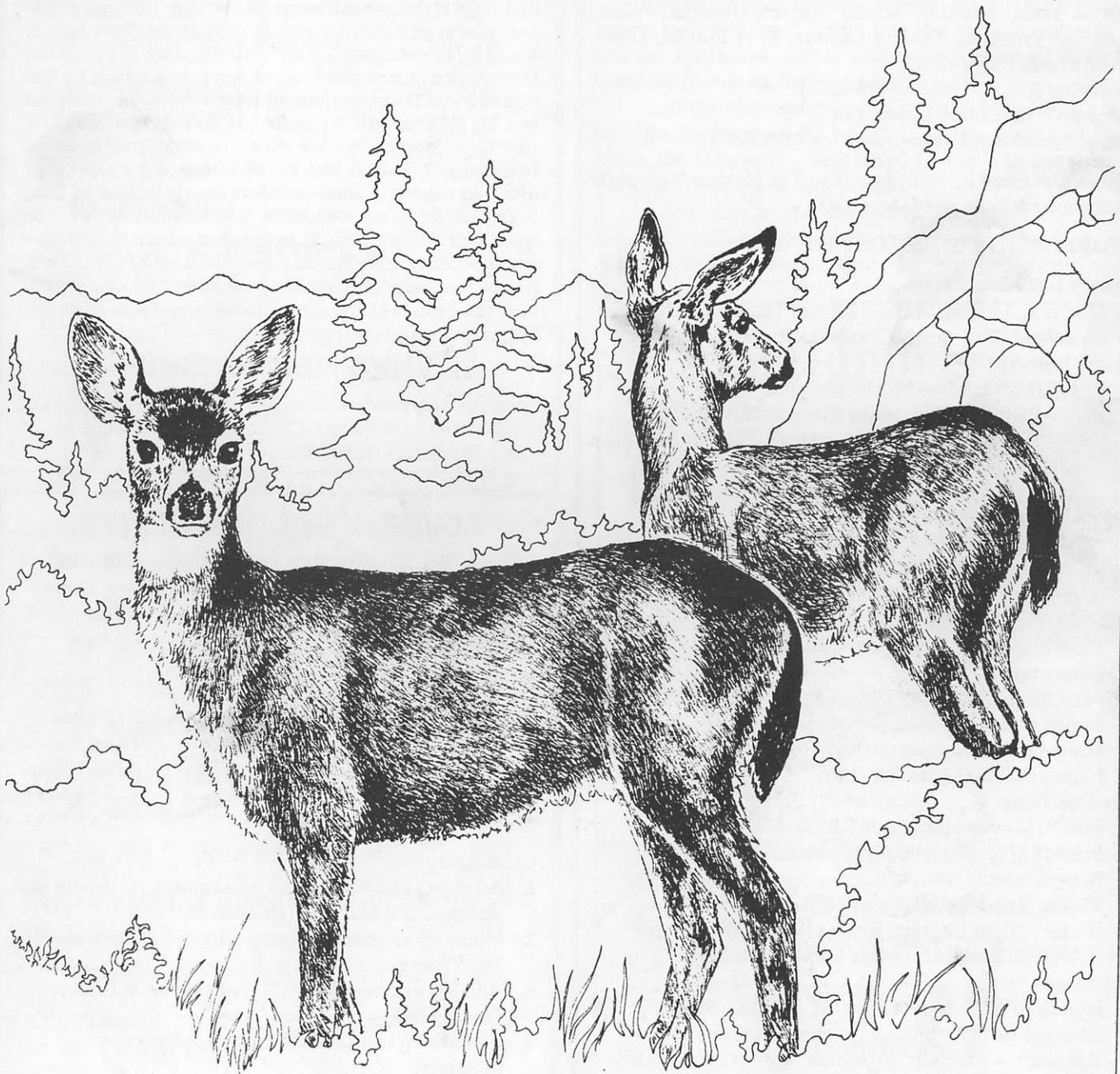


The Victoria NATURALIST

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AUGUST
1990
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Laura Friis
1990

The Victoria NATURALIST

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Our Cover Illustration

BLACK-TAILED DEER

By Laura Friis

Our cover is a finely detailed pen and ink drawing of two Columbian Black-tailed Deer by Laura Friis, a Wildlife Research Biologist who works for the Wildlife Branch of the Ministry of Environment in Victoria.

Laura has been drawing animals since she could hold a pencil, and works mostly with pen and ink and scraperboard. She also works with pastels and acrylic, but her subject matter is usually mammals, both wild and tamed.

Laura's other work appears in the *Wildlife Habitat Handbook for the Southern Interior Ecoprovince, Volume 1 Species Notes for Mammals* (mentioned in the last issue) and in numerous Wildlife Branch reports.

Laura also arranges travel in her spare time, and occasionally escorts natural history tours to East Africa, South America, and Southeast Asia.

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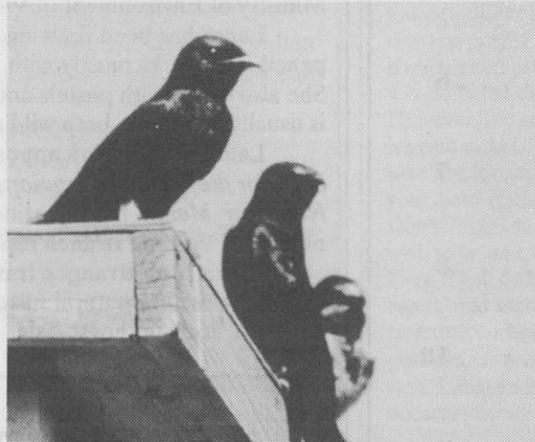
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Report finds fewer than 50 birds left in B.C.

By Eric L. Walters,
Darren R. Copley, and Samantha J. Statton

As a result of a recent provincial government report (Fraser *et al.*, in press), Purple Martins have been recommended to be raised to a Red Listing. This means that they would be considered for designation for Endangered or Threatened status if the recommendation is accepted. According to the report, fewer than 50 birds are left in British Columbia. Some say the estimate should be closer to 30 since only 39 birds were sighted in 1989 some of which may have been the same birds. As a result of this report, several V.N.H.S. members have begun a nest box programme in a "last ditch" effort to save the species from disappearing from the Province.



Purple Martins: VNHS members have begun a nestbox programme in an effort to save the species from disappearing in B.C. (Photo: D.F. Fraser)

Purple Martins traditionally nested in burnt or logged areas where tall snags still stood and in old pilings near the ocean. Because of the removal of old pilings and snags and from starling competition, the martin population has taken a turn for the worse. One of the few options left seems to be the need for a large-scale nest box programme.

The first phase of the 1990 Purple Martin nest box programme is nearing completion. Thanks to the kind support of many individuals, we have been able to build 162 boxes to date. Boxes have been erected in Sooke Basin, Esquimalt Harbour, the Inner Harbour, the Gorge, Purple Martin Pond (between Munn Road and Burnside Road just east of the power lines), and Cowichan Bay. At press time we were working on erecting boxes in the Nanaimo, Ladysmith, and Sidney areas.

For those that frequent any of the above mentioned areas and would be willing to monitor boxes, we can provide you with a detailed map of nest box locations. All boxes are marked with a numbered sequence. We are requesting that anyone that sees or hears a Purple Martin immediately report the sighting to us. If you notice any birds using nest boxes, you should take note of the box number. By reporting all sightings (even in the "usual locations"), we should be able to get a better estimate of the B.C. population and determine which type of nest box is the most successful. We would also like to know if other species are using the nest boxes such as starlings or smaller swallows.

Let us hope that our current population estimate of 30 birds is an underestimate. Hopefully, through the efforts of birders throughout the Province, we'll be able to see the

population return to historic levels. In this manner, our largest swallow will continue to entertain British Columbians with its graceful flight and striking song for many years to come.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

Many thanks are due to the following people for which the programme would not have been possible: several anonymous property owners in Sooke, many anonymous V.N.H.S. members at Birder's Night who provided financial donations, Brulen Construction, Frank Copley, John and Andy Fischer, Shane Forde, Dave Fraser, Tom Gillespie, John and Sherry Granger, Karnell Jawl, West Bay Marina, Robb MacKenzie-Grieve, Colleen O'Brien, Tom Plasterer, Jim Selk, Gerry Vantreight, Sid Watts, Alf Webb, and Bruce Whittington. Special thanks are due to Bob and Jean Copley for use of their truck, use of their garage as a shop, and for providing materials, food, and moral support. Additional thanks are due to Bryan Gates, Calvor Palmateer, and Harold Pollock who, up until now, have kept the Purple Martin from being extirpated from the Province.

REFERENCE:

Fraser, D.F., Walters, E.L. and C. Siddle. In press. Species management plan for the red and blue listed forest and grassland birds of British Columbia. Contract report for the Wildlife Branch, Ministry of Environment.

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There Are California Quails in My Backyard

By Patricia Freeman

My backyard is a haven, a refuge, for birds. It's a shelter in a storm. The only problem is, they don't know it. Winged creatures ignore everything in sight. And it isn't as though there's nothing to choose from. Birdfeeders, stocked full of the supermarket's most appealing and expensive gourmet wildlife nibbles (guaranteed by the manufacturer to attract 20 species of birds), sway neglectedly from every other branch of two cherry trees. Goopy globs of peanut butter project from the holes of sawed-off log feeders. Delectable red sugar-water awaits tiny humming-bird beaks, and fresh, clear water glistens in the brand new bird-bath. Meanwhile, hand-carved coconut shells provide perfect nesting sights for all those chicks that are not hatching in my backyard.

However, things have changed recently. A few days ago I spotted two of the most comical-looking birds I've ever seen, picking away at the ground near the vegetable patch. I would like to describe them as big, fat birds with a funny thing on their heads, but naturalists know them as *Oreortyx pictus*, the largest of the North American Quails. You and I call them California Quails. At last, something is feeding in my backyard!

Bird books tell us that the California Quail is a member of the pheasant family, in the "gallinaceous" order - that is, heavy-bodied terrestrial birds such as turkeys, grouse, domestic fowl, and the like. But to me they simply look like funny chickens.

But they are chickens with a difference. Protruding at a slight angle from the forehead is a distinctive, black plume, or tuft of feathers, about an inch or so long, if my eyes serve me well. As in so much of nature, the male is somewhat more impressive than the female, whose head plume is shorter and straighter, and whose markings are a more subdued overall grey. Also, she lacks the male's black-and-white colouring, as well as the two clear, white head stripes. Below a grey chest, the male's black-and-cream abdominal feathers give the appearance of scales. Both female and male average from nine to 11 plump inches in length.

Now that I've had a chance to have a good close-up look at these odd fellows, I have an idea of what they sound like, and how they behave. Once you've heard their call it's easy to recognize, even for beginner birders like me. In *A Field Guide to Western Birds*, Roger Peterson describes it as "Where are you? You go way, Chicago.", but I've never heard a bird sound the way it's supposed to. To me, they sound more like owls, with an uprising "woook". I've also heard them give a series of low, short whistles.

But if you don't hear them, you will surely never forget their behaviour. Quiet birds that like to feed on insects, buds, grasses and berries, California Quails will suddenly stand upright and dash across the lawn if suddenly disturbed, just like the "Roadrunner" in *Bugs Bunny*. The body remains poised, absolutely stationary, while their legs revolve a mile a minute. A most unusual sight. They have also been known to "mount

guard", and I've seen them do this for fifteen or twenty minutes at a stretch on my back fence: an individual, usually a male, surveys the area while the others feed, with one bird taking over for another, on a relay basis.

We are lucky to have these peculiar birds on the Island at all, since they are not native to the region. Originally found in Oregon and California, they were introduced to Vancouver Island and the Fraser Valley during the 1870's, where they were only partially successful. Now, however, they range from Washington, to Idaho and Nevada. They remain at a low level on southern Vancouver Island, except for the Saanich Peninsula, Saltspring Island, and the city of Victoria, where they flourish.

California Quails do get around, though, as they will migrate on foot from their high, breeding territory, to protected valleys, to winter in coveys of six to 12 birds. They nest eight to 12 lightly spotted, reddish eggs in a scrape lined with dry grass and leaves,

preferably in brushy, wooded areas in dry mountain regions, and they seem to be especially partial to broom.

I know I will do whatever I can to maintain their visits, because I am happy to have them in my backyard!



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Moth Mystery —

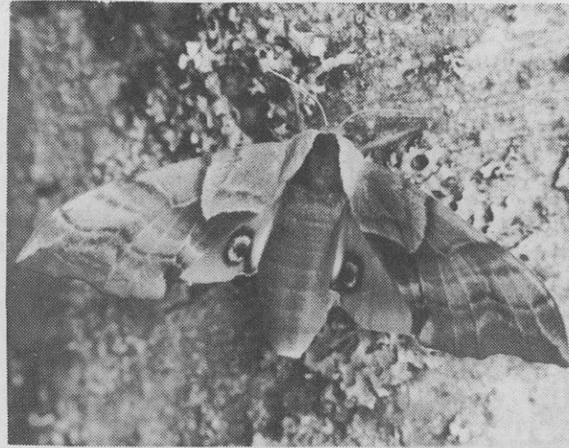
Beautiful Cerisy's Sphinx moth rarely seen

By Bertha McHaffie-Gow

If you should be digging in your garden and find a black capsule, about the size of your little finger to the second joint, treasure it. This is the cocoon of the Cerisy's sphinx moth. Sometime during the spring months a beautiful moth will emerge from the capsule.

The moth is beige in color with pink and blue around the eyes on the under wings. The texture of the wings and body appears velvety. These beautiful creatures are seldom seen because of their short life and nocturnal habits. After mating, the female will lay a clutch of eggs which starts another cycle of moth life.

The moth's eggs are the



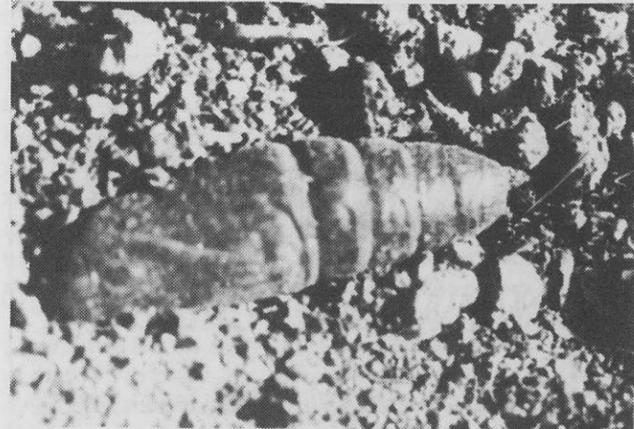
Cerisy's Sphinx Moth is beige in color with pink and blue around the "eyes" on the under wings

size and color of a slightly flattened radish seed. As minute as the hatching larva is, one can see the tail or horn quite clearly.

The larva feeding on willow changes color as it grows, becoming lime green with a bluish horn. When disturbed it assumes a sphinx-like position on a green stem. This position and color is truly a life saving camouflage.

At the end of the adult caterpillar stage it will bury itself in the earth and form the black capsule in order to live through the winter. During this time metamorphosis takes place—the mystery of changing from a crawling caterpillar to a beautiful winged moth.

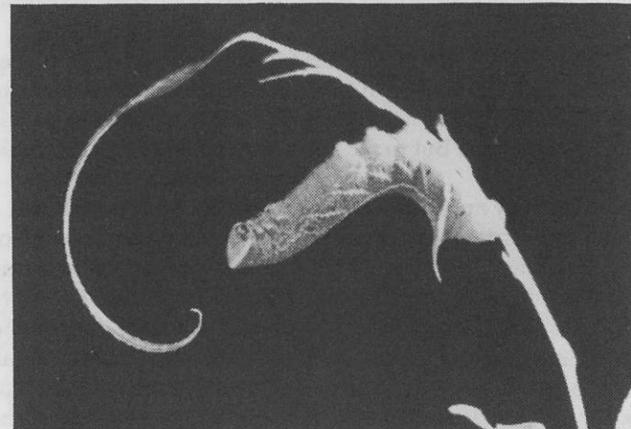
Thanks to the late Davy Davidson and Eleanor for the moth eggs and to Rob Mackenzie-Grieve for the caterpillar to photograph.



The cocoon of the Cerisy's Sphinx moth—about the size of your little finger to the second joint.



The moth's eggs are the size and colour of a slightly flattened radish seed.



The feeding larva assumes a life-saving sphinx-like camouflage.



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Scottish Broom —

First independent farmer on the Island, Captain Walter Grant, introduced legume

By Diana Jolly

Even though they are not native species, there are many different plants and animals that presently thrive on Vancouver Island. One such species which has found a "perfect" niche on Vancouver Island is Scottish broom, *Cytisus scoparius*. This transplanted shrub is native to Scotland.

The culprit who initially introduced Scottish broom to Vancouver Island was Captain Walter Colquhoun Grant. Captain Grant moved to Sooke from Scotland in 1849 and became the first independent farmer on Vancouver Island.

Not long after settling in Sooke, Grant made a trip to the Sandwich Islands. While he was there he noticed some Scottish broom growing, which was probably brought in by a previous Scottish settler, and the bushes reminded him of his homeland. Grant managed to get some seeds from the British consul in Honolulu, Mr. Wylie, and took them back to Sooke with him.

Captain Grant then planted the broom seeds at his Sooke homestead. However, Grant never did get to see his broom plants because soon after planting the seeds, the Crimean War began and Grant decided to return to Europe to fight in the war. Captain Grant ended up only staying two years in Sooke.

Grant's farm was later bought by the Muir family. By that time only three broom plants had flourished from all the broom seed Grant had planted.



Close-up look at Scottish Broom. (Picture by Jennifer Smyly.)

The men of the Muir family wanted to uproot the bushes but Mrs. Muir protested because the broom reminded her of her Scottish homeland.

The plant spread to other areas on Vancouver Island as visitors to Sooke admired the broom plant and took some seeds home to grow in their own gardens. Scottish broom continued to flourish and now can be found on almost any vacant field or hillside around Victoria.

Scottish broom is a species of the nitrogen-fixing legume family. This type of broom averages about five feet tall and it consists of a mass of spindly green branches with small green leaves. It is most easily identified by its bright yellow flowers which appear in May and June. The rest of the time this shrub has small, hairy-like seed pods hanging from it.

On dry summer days one can hear the seed pods snapping open, a process which flings the broom seeds out farther. It is believed that ants and quail also aid in dispersing the broom seeds. It is a pioneer bush found in open and cleared areas as it does not thrive well in the shade.

Unfortunately, it thrives so well in cleared areas that it tends to deter the growth of other pioneer native plants. Thus, this plant is a menace to farmers, park employees and others concerned with preserving "natural" environments.

Birds of Prey.

There are 34 species of birds of prey in B.C. Of these, 19 species are hawks and 15 species are owls.

"The Birds of Prey of B.C.", co-authored by W. Graham Turnbull and R. Wayne Campbell, is an accurate simple to use guide for identifying these birds.

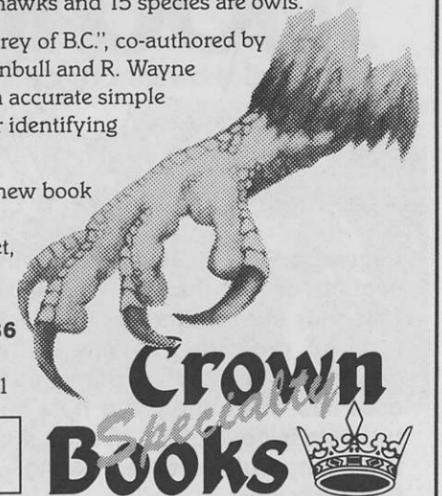
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Parasitic Flowering Plants in B.C.

By Job Kuijt

The Broomrapes are the only flowering parasites in B.C. which are true holoparasites, lacking any trace of chlorophyll. There are no more than about half a dozen species in the Province, but they are part of a world-wide family. Our species belong to two genera, one of annual plants (*Orobanche*), the other perennial (*Boschniakia*).

Some species of the family elsewhere are known to have seeds that can survive in the soil for half a century or more and remain viable, but such information is not available for ours. In all probability, however, seeds survive for decades. Seeds of most Broomrapes are the size of dust particles and are produced by the hundreds or even thousands per flower. A species that is parasitic on sugar cane in the Philippines is claimed to have up to 70,000 seeds per capsule, surely a record for the flowering plants! It stands to reason that such extremely small seeds have embryos of no more than a small cluster of living cells, without any sign of cotyledons or radicle. This is true of our *Boschniakia* as well, which has much larger and fewer seeds per capsule.

There is much interest in the germination of these seeds, for it requires stimulation by certain organic compounds which naturally leak out of young host roots. In this way the parasite is able to select not only the species attacked, but also the moment of attack.

It seems that Broomrape seeds remain dormant in the soil, no matter what the temperature or moisture conditions are, until they are awakened by a susceptible young host root growing within 1-2 mm. That mechanism, naturally, requires great numbers of seeds and an extended longevity in order to be successful. When stimulated by the appropriate host exudates, the rudimentary embryo enlarges at one pole, which then grows straight towards the young host root, forms a small attachment knob, and penetrates the living tissues to start its parasitic way of life. In many of the true Broomrapes (*Orobanche*), this phase is followed by the formation of numerous delicate roots each of which can produce additional small haustoria along their length when meeting host roots (Fig.6). Soon the flower stalk grows up and appears above the soil.

Flowers are often yellowish-white to pink, but our One-flowered Broomrape (Fig.7) on the Coast has deep blue-purple flowers with a yellow spot on the lip. They may be seen in flower from the middle of April into June, depending on elevation and spring.

In the drier parts of the Province, the Fascicled Broomrape and *O. corymbosa* parasitize Sagebrush and its relatives; the former is also found occasionally in the oak zone on southern Vancouver Island.

The leaves of Broomrapes poorly developed

Population size is closely tied in with the early summer rainfall; in good years they are locally quite common, but in unusually dry years they may not appear at all. That is the liberty plants can take if their seeds live for decades. Behind the sandy beaches of the southern part of the Strait of Georgia we sometimes find yet another species that is parasitic on certain beach plants (*O. californica*, Fig.8), with a dense cluster of purple flowers just emerging from the sand. The leaves of all Broomrapes are poorly developed and anything but green.

In B.C., there are four or five species on record of true Broomrapes, *Orobanche*. The most attractive one of these is the One-flowered Broomrape already mentioned. It is never really one-flowered, but appears so because of its long flower stalks which are attached to a short underground stem. The

species commonly parasitizes *Sedum*, but may also attack members of the Saxifrage or Carrot families as well as numerous others. The rarest is a small, yellowish species, *O. pinorum*, of the southern Okanagan. We may guess that there is a relationship between the hosts recorded and the spectrum of exudates produced by young host roots.

Boschniakia is a small genus of perhaps only two species, both of which are native to B.C. A very tall, brownish-red one, *B. rossica*, grows on alder in northern B.C. and from adjacent Alaska through Siberia to beyond the Ural Mountains. Our local species, *B. hookeri* (Groundcone, Fig.1-5) is much smaller, reaching at best only a couple of inches above the soil. It is mostly parasitic on Salal, and is found sporadically all through lower coastal forests in southern B.C. At times it can be very common in certain spots along Long Beach. Its haustorium can grow to the size of a small potato and give rise to several flowering stalks some years in a row. Interestingly, there seem to be two quite different color forms in our area: at Long Beach and around Victoria I have seen only creamy white ones, whereas at Horseshoe Bay, years ago, I found only deep purple plants. I am not totally convinced that all of this diversity belongs to one and the same species.

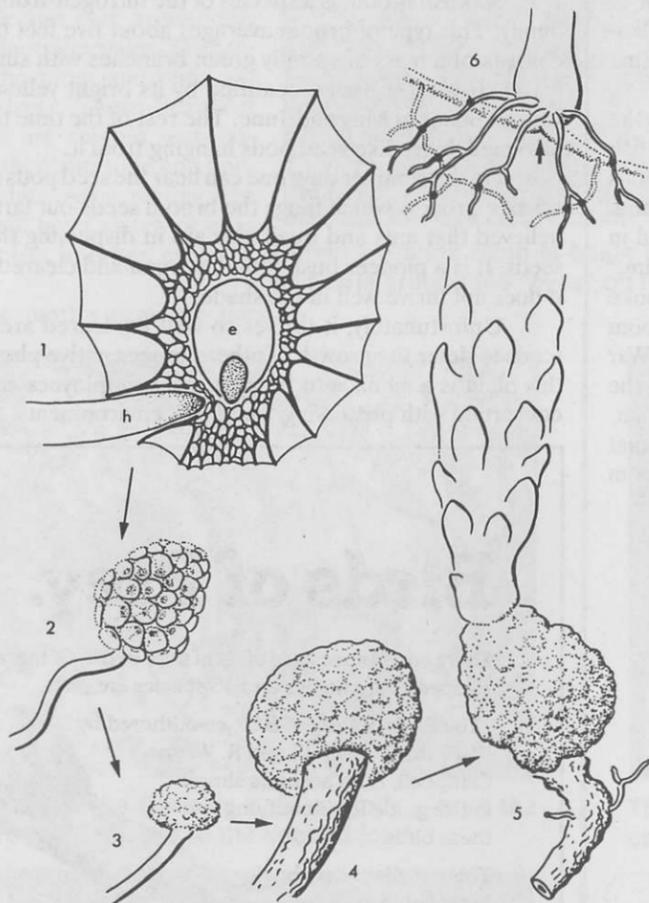
Boschniakia has evolved a truly unique method of guiding the growing host root towards the dormant embryo. Its seeds are little three-dimensional honeycombs, each depression funnel-shaped and pointing towards the tiny embryo. The root tip of Salal may grow into this cavity and thus into close proximity of the embryo, which is now stimulated to germinate and grow towards the host root. We may presume a chemical agent to be active here as in other Broomrapes, but the mechanical guidance seems to be unique to *Boschniakia*.



Fig.7 *Orobanche uniflora*, One-flowered Broomrape is an annual parasite on *Sedum*. Photographed at Yellowpoint. (Copyright, David F. Fraser/Arenaria.)



Fig.8 Clustered Broomrape (*Orobanche californica*) parasitizes *Grindelia*. Photographed at Esquimalt Lagoon. (Copyright, David F. Fraser/Arenaria.)



Legends: Fig.1-5 Development in Groundcone (*Boschniakia*). a. A section of the dormant *Boschniakia* seed, showing the embryo (shaded) surrounded by the central endosperm (e), and the host root (h) growing into one of the large superficial cells of the parasite's seed coat. b. Same, as seen from the outside. c. The seed coat has been shed, the host's root tip has died, and the young tubercle is developing in what appears to be a terminal position. d. Enlarging tubercle. e. Young, mature tuber, bearing its first flowering stalk.

Fig.6 The main haustorial contact (arrow) of a Broomrape (*Orobanche*), with several roots growing from its base to produce secondary haustoria shown as black dots (diagrammatic; host root stippled).

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The intelligence of the species has caused some to refer to them as “flying primates”

By R. Warren Drinnan

A short while ago I was passing by a local pet shop and noticed a grey parrot sitting passively in a cage. The bird looked to be in good condition, with none of the mangy appearance that was common in the past. He (or she — the sex of parrots is extremely difficult to differentiate) looked fine, but there was something about that bird that didn't seem quite right. It looked docile and lethargic.

I admit that I didn't think much about that bird after leaving the store until I read an article by Annabelle Birchall in a recent issue of *New Scientist* (24 February, 1990; volume 125, pp 38-43) outlining recent research on the intelligence of parrots.

Parrots belong to the family Psittacidae, which also includes macaws, parakeets, cockatoos and budgerigars. Most species are found in the tropical regions of Central and South America, Africa, south-east Asia and Australia. In North America north of the Mexican border, most members of this family are introduced species. The Carolina parakeet, one of two native species, became extinct in 1914 while the thick-billed parrot has not been seen since the early part of this century. The red-crowned parrot is accidental in southern Texas. Of the 340 known species, 15 have recently become extinct and another 77 are in immediate danger. Some are threatened by the loss of habitat, but others are threatened because of trading, both legal and illegal, in the pet market.

Until recently, little was known about the level of intelligence and complex social life displayed by parrots in the wild. Field research is not easy. The article describes one instance which required scientists to sit for hours suspended 40 metres (+ 120 feet) in the air, by a kind of jungle jolly jumper.

This heroic effort yielded important information on parrots. For example, the low reproductive rates generally found in captive birds, previously thought to be because of a disruption to their natural lifestyle, is also found in wild populations. While this might give some pet owners a small feeling of comfort, it also means that some species cannot be harvested from their habitat without threatening their populations. Such is the case with the scarlet macaw, now believed to be among the world's most threatened birds.

The research also indicated that parrots are permanently attached to another partner and live together in social groups in which some 90 percent of their time is spent taking care of each other, preening their partners and foraging for food. The young apparently stay with their parents for several years, learning new skills throughout their development.

Parrots have far larger brains for their body size than most other birds and their abilities are only just beginning to be appreciated. Many people are familiar with the ability of parrots to “talk”, but unlike the mimicking of myna birds, or crows and ravens, parrots appear to be able to understand abstract concepts that so far have been attributed only to

primates. The article describes the cognitive processes of an African grey parrot named Alex (a neutral gender name). Irene Pepperberg of Northwestern University taught Alex labels for over 80 objects and then followed experiments similar to those carried out on chimpanzees. Alex, it turns out, was capable of distinguishing or categorizing items on the basis of colour, shape, material, and was able to quantify up to six objects. Alex was also able to distinguish “same” or “different”, along with the concept “none”, recognizing, for example, the relationship between a blade of grass and a green pen, or the absence of a similarity (or difference) between two objects. Alex appears to be far ahead of what other birds, or even non-primate mammals, are capable of doing — in fact, parrots have sometimes been referred to as flying primates.

Researchers are also investigating other aspects of captivity — the optimum size of cage, for example, and the height it is set. Hung very high and parrots appear to dominate their owners; hung low and the birds seem to be cowed. Research on breeding is also important.

The evidence is that birds bred in captivity are easier to tame, suffer less stress, and easier to train, compared to wild-caught birds. Work on such techniques as artificial insemination is progressing, although it suffers from the difficulty in distinguishing sex. (One story from the article, a personal favorite, involves six sulphur-crested cockatoos which were caged together in the belief that at least one potential breeding pair was present. Unfortunately, parrots of the same sex will often undergo conventional rituals of courtship, and much time was lost in unmet expectations. Breeding success in the Union Club was more likely.)

Those who would keep a parrot as a pet must recognize in the bird a highly intelligent animal but with the emotional requirements of a two to three year old child. In other words, the owner must be prepared to spend as much time stimulating the bird as with a human, but with the realization that this “child” never grows up. Without this attention, and without the interaction with members of their own species, parrots will suffer depression, frustration and boredom. Owning a parrot is quite a commitment.

The field research and psychological investigations have a number of implications with respect to pet shops and pet owners. Parrots require a lot of intellectual stimulation and social contact. Individuals deprived of these essential elements to their well-being often display signs of stress such as feather plucking, aggressiveness, and other forms of self-mutilation. Captive birds generally live only about five years, on average, while life expectancy in the wild exceeds 50 years.

The beauty and intelligence of parrots such as the scarlet macaw or the hyacinth macaw are appreciated by all, and it is easy to understand their popularity as pets. However, as Ms Birchall concludes, “. . . bird lovers will be increasingly faced with the need to balance the value they put on the companionship they receive against the birds' own needs and welfare.”

SEASONAL INTERPRETIVE STAFF

Senior Naturalist
Deb Thiessen

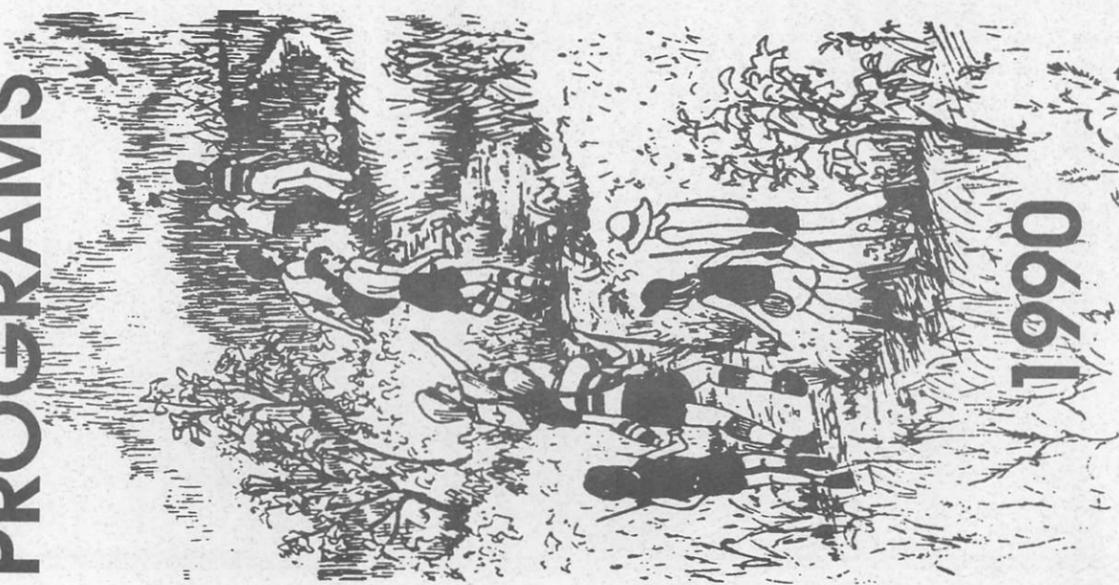
Naturalists
Susan Ellenton
Kit Hasell
Terri Martin

Assistant Naturalist
Sue Louks

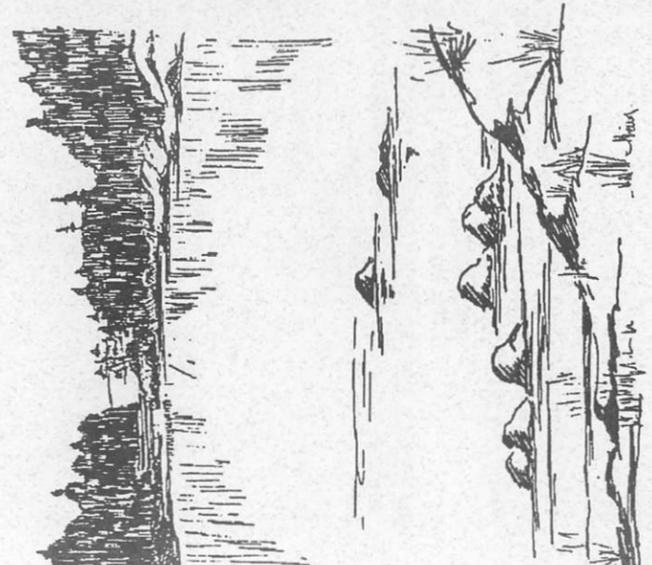
Archaeologist
Christine Barnett



CRD PARKS SUMMER PROGRAMS



1990



Capital Regional District Parks
490 Atkins Avenue
Victoria, B.C.
V9B 2Z8
478-3344





Capital Regional District Parks - Summer Programs - 1990

INTERPRETATION PROGRAMS

NATURE WALKS - Join the CRD Park Naturalists for interesting explorations of the beauty and wonder in your Regional Parks. From seashore snoops to archaeology digs to forest rambles, these interpretative walks offer something for everyone. Some programs can accommodate people with disabilities.

Pick-up a copy of the monthly program flyer or call the 24-hour recorded information line at 474-PARK (474-7275) for weekly details on topics and meeting places. No charge or pre-registration required.

NATURE WALKS ARE HELD:

- TUESDAYS at various regional parks at 10:00 am July 10 to August 28.
- SATURDAYS at ELK/BEAVER LAKE at 10:00 am July 7 to September 1.
- SUNDAYS at WITTY'S LAGOON at various times, July 1 to September 2 (except July 8 and August 5)
- HOLIDAY MONDAYS (August 6 and September 3) at various regional parks.



SUNRISE SEEKERS - FAMILY CANOEING - Canoe through the early morning mist with our Park Naturalists searching for elusive birds and other lakeshore life.

SATURDAYS from 6:00 am - 8:30 am July 7 to September 1 at ELK/BEAVER LAKE REGIONAL PARK.

SUNDAYS (July 15, August 12, September 2) 6:00 am - 8:00 am.

All equipment is provided. Pre-registration and pre-payment of fees is required. Fee is \$6.00 for adults and teens and \$2.00 for children under twelve.

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENT WEEK (JUNE 3 - JUNE 9)

SUNDAY, JUNE 3 - 10:00 am to 2:30 pm Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park. Environment Week begins today. Join a CRD park naturalist for "LAKE LOOP" a 4 1/2 hour hike around Elk and Beaver Lake. Entertaining exercise at its best. Meet at the information kiosk at the Hamsterly Beach parking lot (off Brookleigh Road).

SATURDAY, JUNE 9 - 10:30 am and 2:30 pm - Witty's Lagoon Regional Park - "KIDS AND PARENTS FOREST SNOOP" - Come celebrate National PARK DAY by snooping in the forest with your family. Pet a slug, meet a tree, and much more. Parent participation expected. Meet at Witty's Nature House.

COMMUNITY EVENT

SAANICH STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL - Join the CRD Parks staff as we help Saanich celebrate its annual Strawberry Festival at Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park. Sunday, July 8 at Beaver Lake 9:00 am - 4:00 pm.

- Pancake breakfast
- Special demonstrations
- Petting zoo
- Horseshoe competition
- CRD Parks family nature walks
- CRD Parks children's nature games
- Family entertainment
- Pony rides
- Children's face painting
- CRD Parks nature exhibits
- Food concessions

Free shuttle bus available starting at 12:00 noon from the Royal Oak Shopping Centre.



CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS

- interesting, fun, informative experiences intended to develop awareness and appreciation of nature.
- occur outdoors, rain or shine
- children should wear old clothes they can get wet and dirty
- for program details and pre-registration information call 478-3344

pre-registration including the appropriate program fee is required; make cheques payable to CRD Parks Department - Nature Programs and send or bring to the CRD Parks Department, 490 Atkins Avenue, Victoria, B.C. V9B 2Z8. Open 8:30 - 4:30 Monday to Friday.

JUNIOR NATURALIST - ages 10-12

In a special 4 day conservation day camp, girls and boys with a keen interest in nature will have an opportunity to learn about forest, saltmarsh and seashore through various nature projects and activities.

1 Session only August 7 - 10 (Tuesday - Friday) 10:00 am - 2:00 pm each day Witty's Lagoon Regional Park (Metchosin) \$20.00 per child

Note: For this program we will endeavour to assist in car-pooling through exchange of participant phone numbers. Enrolment limited so register early!

ADVENTURES IN ARCHAEOLOGY - ages 10-12

A special 3 day archaeology day camp where girls and boys with a curiosity for things of the past can get some hands-on experience. Find out what an archaeologist really does!

1 session only July 24 - 26 Tuesday - Thursday 10:00 am - 2:00 pm each day \$15.00 per child

Note: Tuesday & Wednesday are at Witty's Lagoon Regional Park (Metchosin) Thursday will be held at the Royal B.C. Museum. For This program we will endeavour to assist in car-pooling through exchange of participant phone numbers. Enrolment limited so register early!

DEER MICE - ages 5 - 7



1st Session	July 12	Francis/King	10:00 - 12:00 am
2nd Session	July 12	Francis/King	1:00 - 3:00 pm
3rd Session	August 2	Witty's Lagoon	10:00-12:00 am
4th Session	August 2	Witty's Lagoon	1:00 -3:00 pm
5th Session	August 16	Elk/Beaver Lake	10:00 -12:00 am
6th Session	August 16	Elk/Beaver Lake	1:00 - 3:00 pm

TREE FROGS - ages 8 & 9



1st Session	July 12	Francis/King	10:00 -12:00 am
2nd Session	July 12	Francis/King	1:00 - 3:00 pm
3rd Session	August 2	Witty's Lagoon	10:00-12:00 am
4th Session	August 2	Witty's Lagoon	1:00 - 3:00 pm
5th Session	August 16	Elk/Beaver Lake	10:00-12:00 am
6th Session	August 16	Elk/Beaver Lake	1:00 - 3:00 pm

FEE - \$4.00 PER CHILD, PER SESSION

SHARING NATURE WITH CHILDREN - AN ADULT WORKSHOP

Francis/King Regional Park (Saanich) Sunday July 29 10:00 am - 3:30 pm - Naturalists will lead you on a special day of games, walks, and explorations designed to deepen your experience of nature and help you to share this experience with children.

This workshop is suitable for parents, community group leaders, teachers, and any adults who want to explore nature with children.

FEE - \$12.00 per person

Pre-registration required. For additional information call 478-3344. Limited enrolment. Register early.

SHARING NATURE WITH CHILDREN

An exciting two-hour program for children and their adults. Including nature games, explorations, and stories. This program will provide an opportunity for children and their adults to share nature-oriented experiences.

Session 1 Coles Bay Regional Park (North Saanich) Children ages 5-7 & adults Monday, August 6 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm

Session 2 East Sooke Regional Park (Sooke) Children ages 5-7 & adults Sunday, August 26 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm

FEE - Adults \$3.00, Children \$1.00 per session



SPECIAL EVENTS

SUNDAY, JUNE 24 - OPEN HOUSE AT WITTY'S LAGOON REGIONAL PARK - 11:00 am to 4:00 pm. Bring a picnic and join us for an exciting day at Witty's!

- Nature house tours
- Walks with a naturalist
- WestCoast mystery box
- Prizes and refreshments
- Most facilities wheelchair accessible
- Visits to archaeology sites
- Special entertainment
- Children's nature games
- No charge

SUNDAY, JULY 22 - FAMILY DAY AT COLES BAY REGIONAL PARK - 11:00 am to 4:00 pm. This is a day for children accompanied by adults, to celebrate the natural beauty of this forest and seashore park. Bring a picnic and join the fun!

- Naturalist led family walks
- Storytelling
- West Coast mystery box
- Prizes
- No charge
- Live displays
- Children's nature games
- Mini-hikes for children
- Refreshments

SUNDAY AUGUST 5 - FAMILY DAY AT EAST SOOKE REGIONAL PARK 11:00 am to 4:00 pm. If you missed our Coles Bay Day, or had so much fun you want to do it again, come to this magical west coast park for a day of family fun for children accompanied by adults. Bring a picnic, your hiking shoes and your love of nature.

- Family nature walks
- Storytelling
- West Coast mystery box
- Prizes
- No charge
- Live displays
- Children's nature games
- Mini-hikes for children
- Refreshments

SUNDAY, AUGUST 19 - STEP BACK IN TIME AT WITTY'S LAGOON REGIONAL PARK 11:00 am - 5:00 pm. A Western Communities Heritage Days event. Join the CRD naturalists and special guests as they step back in time for a look at Witty's Lagoon before the white settlers arrived.

- Archaeology displays
- Native tool display
- Indian myths and legends
- Native craft demonstrations
- Special exhibits
- Picnic sites
- Traditional Native Salmon B.B.Q.
- Visits to pre-historic native sites
- Facilities for people with disabilities
- Ethnobotany walks
- Nature walks
- Cedar Mystery box
- Refreshments
- Prizes

THURSDAY, AUGUST 23 - SNAKE DAY AT WITTY'S LAGOON REGIONAL PARK - 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm SNAKES, SNAKES, AND MORE SNAKES

- Local snakes
- Snake lore
- Snakes to touch
- Wheelchair accessible
- Guest snakes
- And more
- No charge



I Too was a Tourist in the Carmanah Valley or Are we Loving it to Death?

By Dannie Carsen

Everyone gathered in the Town and Country parking lot at 6 a.m., on Saturday, May 19th prepared for a three day visit into the Carmanah Valley. While we waited for the vans, which were a bit tardy, my tape deck entertained the group with the bird sounds they might hear in the rainforest. Finally, after memorizing calls of the Great Horned Owl, Western Screech Owl, Northern Pygmy Owl, Winter Wren, Pacific Slope Flycatcher, Varied Thrush, and Hutton's Vireo, the vans arrived and we headed to the Carmanah road via Lake Cowichan.

As the VNHS group leader, I had previously arranged with Dennis Kasngasmiemi, of the Western Canada Wilderness Committee, to bring a group of naturalists into the Upper Valley in order to estimate the species and numbers of flora and fauna in the rainforest. By doing so, we hoped to bring attention to the beautiful, pristine Upper Carmanah Valley with the intent of preserving the entire Carmanah Valley. With the support of eight WCWC volunteers, we planned two camps in the Upper Valley, each to accommodate 17-18 people.

As we started the Upper Carmanah trail, everyone remarked on the gigantic clearcut that the trail wound through before it reached the untouched woods. The contrast between clearcut and green, moist and shaded forest, was evident to all. Trekking along newly built cedar boardwalk, we marvelled at

the work that the WCWC had undertaken to complete the first 20 minutes of the trail to Camp Hummingbird. This was the base camp for the WCWC volunteers and some of our group. Some of the group elected to stay at the first camp but the majority of the group pressed on to the next site, with Dennis and myself running up before everyone arrived to plan the location of the cooking, tents and waste disposal.

The new camp was in a very pleasant location near the



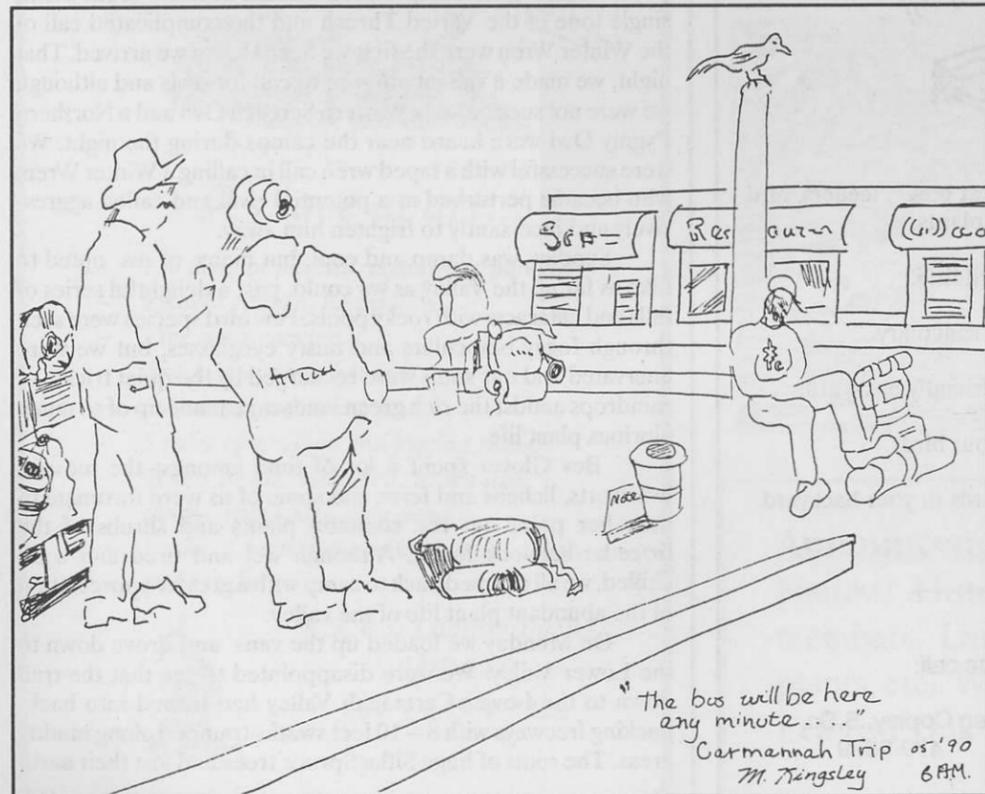
Trekking along the newly constructed boardwalk

creek with trillium, mosses and numerous lilies carpeting the forest floor and thickets of thick riparian growth along the creekside over which Rufous Hummingbirds hovered and Varied Thrush flitted. Despite some mixups with tents and

other arrangements, by late afternoon we were all settled in and comfortable in our new camp. The Hamm family, in their explorations, discovered both a young salamander (clouded?) and a globe of amphibian eggs floating at the surface of a little backeddy not far from camp. Other than that, no amphibians, reptiles, or mammals were seen along the river except for one lone red squirrel. We did see or hear many of the ordinary bird species of the temperate rainforest such as the American Dipper, Steller's Jay, Hutton's Vireo, Hairy Woodpecker and Hermit Thrush.

The Upper Carmanah was green, mossy and carpeted with spring flowers such as White and Purple Lilies of the Valley, Bleeding Heart, Buttercup, Columbine and Yellow Violet. It was a most peaceful place. With the stream flowing nearby and

—continued on Page 12—



ENJOY YOUR REGIONAL PARKS!

Hiking, swimming, nature study, picnicking, fishing, horseback riding, bird watching, beachcombing, and photography - CRD parks offer all this and more ...



Visit your Regional Parks

- Albert Head Lagoon (Metchosin)
- Bear Hill (Saanich)
- Coles Bay (North Saanich)
- Devonian (Metchosin)
- East Sooke (Sooke)
- Elk/Beaver (Saanich)
- Francis/King (Saanich)
- Galloping Goose Corridor (Western Communities)
- North Hill (North Saanich)
- Island View Beach (Central Saanich)
- Lone Tree Hill (Langford)
- Mill Hill (Langford/View Royal)
- Mt. Norman (South Pender Island - proposed opening 1991)
- Mount Work (Langford)
- Reeson (Victoria)
- Roche Cove (Sooke)
- Witty's Lagoon (Metchosin)

GROUP NATURE PROGRAMS

The CRD Parks Department has limited openings for group nature walks and special programs designed especially for seniors, people with disabilities, and other community groups.

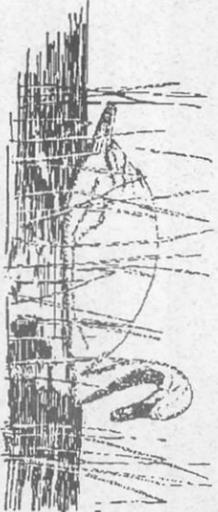
If you and your group would like to spend an hour or two exploring one of your regional parks with a CRD Naturalist, give us a call. Pre-registration required. For additional information call 478-3344.

FACILITIES RESERVATIONS

Group picnic sites in some Regional Parks are available for reservation at a nominal fee. Booking of these sites requires a permit. The Forester's Cabin at Francis/King Regional Park is also available for mail group meetings. For information contact the CRD Parks office.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN CRD PARKS?

By dialing 474-PARK (474-7275), you have 24-hour access to details on nature house hours, dates and times of nature walks, special park events, recent natural history sightings of interest and Elk/Beaver Lake boating closures.



The CRD Parks Department offers special programs and has facilities available for people with disabilities. For a copy of the CRD Parks Access Guide and for information on special nature programs call 478-3344.



Friendly parks staff and volunteers await your visit to our interesting and informative nature houses. See, touch, and smell the live exhibits, view the interpretive displays, watch a film or talk to a naturalist.

The nature houses are located in Francis/King Regional Park on Munn Road in Saanich and in Witty's Lagoon Regional Park in Metchosin. No admission charge.

Both nature houses are wheelchair accessible.

Summer Hours:

Francis/King Noon - 4:00 pm
Friday - Sunday, and holiday Mondays
June 29 - September 3

Witty's Lagoon 11:00 am - 4:00 pm
Wednesday - Friday
10:00 am - 4:00 pm
Saturday, Sunday, & holiday Mondays
June 24 - September 3

We'd like to hear from you - To help us in our efforts to continually improve our Regional Parks Programs, we welcome your constructive comments at any time. Please contact Lloyd Rushon, Programs Coordinator, 478-3344 or write to 490 Atkins Avenue, Victoria, B.C. V9B 2Z8

“We named it Camp Varied Thrush because of the clear, single tone of the Varied Thrush”

—continued from Page 11—

large trees dimming the light, it seemed muted and misty in the morning rain.

The term *rainforest* justified itself during the first night out as we experienced a tremendous downpour. Even though we were expecting it, the rain dampened our spirits a little. Some of us were to awake at 5 a.m. on Sunday to catch the

“dawn chorus” but when I woke up, all I could hear was the sound of heavy rain and the occasional call of the Varied Thrush. Finally, at 6:30 a.m., the rain abated somewhat, which encouraged me to wake the cook and to start the coffee.

Amid tales of wet tents, soggy sleeping bags and other



Wet tents, soggy sleeping bags and other woes, but still it was a memorable site.

woes we all stood underneath the cooking tarp and waited for our porridge. Still, it was a memorable spot.

We named it Camp Varied Thrush because of the clear, single tone of the Varied Thrush and the complicated call of the Winter Wren were the first we heard when we arrived. That night, we made a valiant attempt to call for owls and although we were not successful, a Western Screech Owl and a Northern Pygmy Owl were heard near the camps during the night. We were successful with a taped wren call in calling a Winter Wren, who became perturbed at a potential rival and called aggressively and incessantly to frighten him away.

Sunday was damp and cool, but many of us opted to hike as far up the Valley as we could, past a delightful series of falls and cataracts with rocky pools. Few bird species were seen through foggy binoculars and misty eyeglasses, but we were enervated and our souls were recharged by the quiet trickle of raindrops amidst the rich green landscape made up of so much glorious plant life.

Bev Glover spent a lot of time amongst the mosses, liverworts, lichens and ferns and some of us were fortunate to hear her point out the common plants and shrubs of the fir/cedar/hemlock forest. Although wet and tired and a bit chilled, we all tramped back to camp with a greater appreciation of the abundant plant life of the valley.

On Monday we loaded up the vans and drove down to the Lower Valley. We were disappointed to see that the trail down to the Lower Carmanah Valley had turned into back-packing freeways with 8–10 foot swaths tramped along muddy areas. The roots of huge Sitka Spruce trees had lost their earth

—continued on Page 13—

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Darren Copley, B.Sc. 479-9879

Some popular camping areas resemble the overworked landscape after a rock concert

—continued from Page 12—

covering, and vegetation in the more popular camping spots was flattened and gone. The stately trees were surrounded with people's footpaths and resembled an overworked landscape



The vegetation in the most popular camping areas is flattened and gone

after a rock festival. Despite all this degradation, we hiked up to the fallen giant and stared with delight at the giant Sitka spruce that we were able to walk to in the 2 hours we had in the Lower Valley.

It was clear that the big trees had been such a powerful draw as an ecotourism attraction that the large numbers of people coming into the Valley (we counted 25 cars and 2 busses) were far more than the Lower Valley could support. With the Lower Valley in its indefinite state, not quite park yet but soon to be taken out of TFL 44, it is difficult to allot responsibility for controlling access and determining the carrying capacity for the area. It would seem appropriate for the Ministry of Forests, MacMillan Bloedel, and the Ministry of Parks to sit down with the Western Canada Wilderness Committee and work out a strategy for protecting the recreational values of the Lower Valley so that it is not completely ruined from overuse.

I had mixed feelings about the Carmanah Valley when I came away from this weekend. It seemed unfortunate that such a pristine wilderness valley should be spoiled by too many sightseers and ecologically conscious tourists who were attracted by publicity generated in an effort to preserve the Valley from logging. There is a certain irony apparent here, and we should encourage public and private agencies who have control over the valley to do something instead of sling mud at the opposite side.



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Announcement: 10% off all Natural History books to VNHS members. Large selection: birding, plants, etc. Wells Used Books, 1505 Fell (off Oak Bay), 592-8376.

Forty species of birds sighted in one-day

By Chris Sandham

The Cowichan River foot path was the location of the June 10th trip lead by Dannie Carsen and it proved to be very effective for birders. We started our trip near the Cowichan Valley Fish and Game Clubhouse (not far from Duncan) with 10 enthusiastic birders, botanists and our aquatic specialist Anne Parkinson. We welcomed some new birders from South Africa, John and Sue Malcomess from Kenton-on-the-Sea, who were interested in all these "new birds". Anne proved to be very knowledgeable in identifying plant species along the trail.

I exclaimed "Spotties" as they landed on the opposite side of the river, much to our delight.

Birding actually began before we got out of the cars, as we spotted seven Turkey Vultures "kettling" over the Malahat Drive. The songs of Townsend's Warblers, Pacific Slope Flycatchers and Winter Wrens filled the air as the group started the long but enjoyable walk. The calls from a pair of Hairy Woodpeckers caught our attention as they flew from tree to tree, while a little further down the trail the voices of Varied Thrush, Common Yellowthroat and a Warbling Vireo filled the air. We quickly passed last year's total of 19 species and broke

the record when we saw the Bald Eagle, first with its white head visible against a tree, then flying down the river. As Yellow Warblers and Western Wood-Pewee sang, Belted Kingfishers went fishing.

During lunch, a pair of Spotted Sandpipers flew upstream and I exclaimed "Spotties" as they landed on the opposite side of the river, much to our delight. After lunch, the group split up. The first group left right away and, while returning, were very fortunate to spot a Barred Owl and a Ruffed Grouse with her young. The second group walked further down the trail and along

the way saw a Red-breasted Sapsucker, heard a Black-throated Grey Warbler, and spotted an American Dipper in Holt Creek at precisely the same spot as last year.

Turkey Vulture
Orange-crowned Warbler
Barn Swallow
Pine Siskin
Band Tailed Pigeon
European Starling
Northwestern Crow
Chestnut-backed Chickadee
Varied Thrush
Common Yellowthroat
Bald Eagle
Warbling Vireo
Song Sparrow
Yellow Warbler
Belted Kingfisher
Brown Creeper
Western Wood-Pewee
Bewick's Wren
Violet Green Swallow
American Robin

Rufous-side Towhee
Pacific-Sloped Flycatcher
Winter Wren
Golden-crowned Kinglet
Hairy Woodpecker
Swainson's Thrush
Rufous Hummingbird
Dark-eyed Junco
Spotted Sandpiper
Common Merganser
Great Blue Heron
Red Crossbill
Red-breasted Sapsucker
American Dipper
Black-throated Gray Warbler
Northern Flicker
Barred Owl
Ruffed Grouse
Brewer's Blackbird



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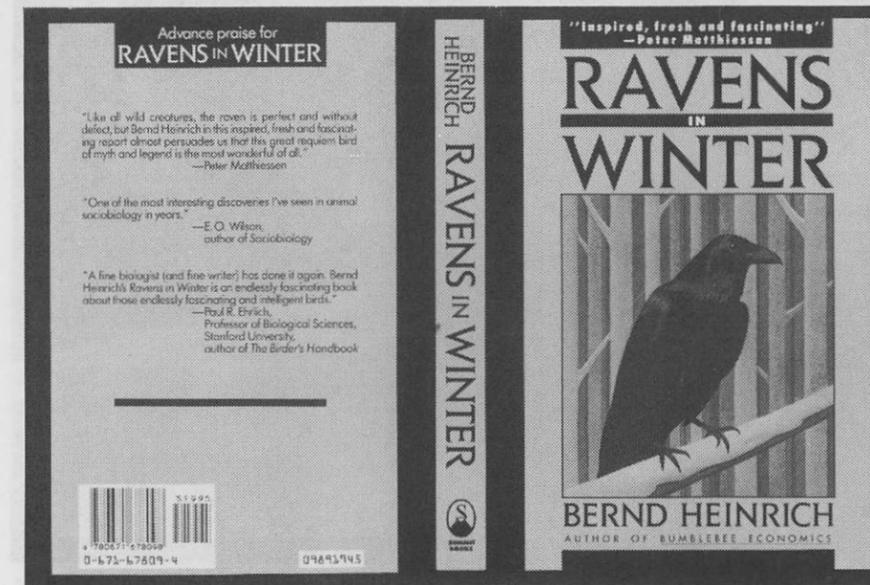
Recycle Recycle Recycle

Did you know that programs for kids can make use of yogurt cartons, plastic bottles, meat trays, tags from bread bags, egg cartons, toilet and paper towel tubes, frozen juice "tins", wool and fabric scraps, dress-up clothes, etc.? If you start collecting now, you can very quickly take quite a collection to the nearest park program or day care, Henderson Park Pavilion, or the Crystal Pool.

You will feel like you have accomplished something in a small way while reducing the garbage volume from your home. If you keep collecting throughout the year, you will have a good supply to take down for the next year's program. The more you recycle, the less you have to carry out to the garbage can!

BOOK REVIEW—

Ravens In Winter was the result of four years of observing Ravens in the middle of winter in the Maine woods



Ravens In Winter
Bernd Heinrich
Published by Summit Books: ©1989

Review by Richard Watts

Bernd Heinrich writes that he first became intrigued with Raven behaviour when he happened across a group of the birds feeding at the carcass of a moose killed by a poacher. Watching and listening to the birds it appeared to Heinrich as if the birds were deliberately recruiting other Ravens to come and join in the feast. This recruiting behaviour did not fit his presumptions of Raven society. Why would a bird which lives either alone or in a mated pair actively call other members of its species to share in a food bonanza like a freshly-killed moose? Answering this question was to take four years of observing Ravens in the middle of winter in the Maine woods.

The author is obviously a devotee of the relatively new study of sociobiology—a field which seeks to link all animal behaviour to biological roots. When every action is viewed as having a base in the biological necessities of obtaining, and competing for, food, shelter and breeding privileges the concept of altruism, the deliberate sacrificing of a biological advantage for the sake of a fellow, is regarded as impossible, or non-existent. In the sociobiologist's version of the animal world nobody does anything for nothing. The idea that Ravens might actually recruit others to join in a feast at a food source did not fit easily with Heinrich's sociobiological view of the animal world.

He does conclude that Ravens recruit and invite others to join in feasts. Heinrich also concludes there is nothing particularly noble or altruistic in Raven motives. To explain it here would give it away. The book is written in the form of a dated journal interspersed with chapters containing essays on biology, science and discussions of related research on Ravens and

other related species like crows, jays, magpies and nutcrackers. At times Heinrich's writing is pedestrian, particularly when he delves into other scientists' research.

Also pedestrian is the art work, a number of pencil sketches done by the author. In an article on the same subject published in February 1989 issue of Natural History magazine a number of photographs by the author were included. Including such photos in place of or alongside the pencil sketches would improve the book.

Nevertheless, there is real satisfaction to be found in *Ravens in Winter*, especially in the diary of Heinrich's observations. What birder, even the most fanatical of list builders, does not have favourite birds? Their favoured birds offer endless hours of pleasant observation without ever boring or tiring the birder who holds the species close

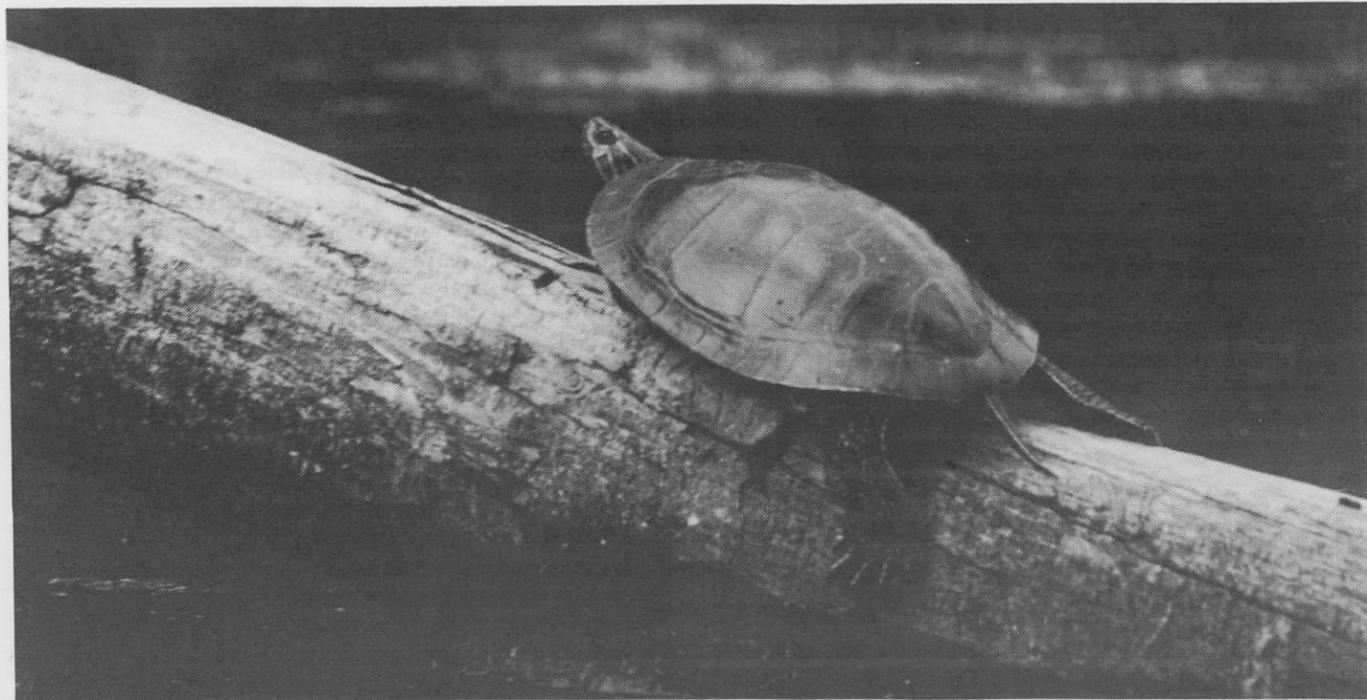
to his or her heart. Heinrich obviously feels this way about the Raven. Heinrich's book is so obviously a detailed record of observations of a favourite bird that other birders will read it with a mixture of pleasure and envy.



Photo credit: Alexandra Morton, Raincoast Research

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Far from Victoria this Painted Turtle is basking in the sun near Duck Lake in the beautiful Creston Valley.

A Birder's Trip to Roberts Bank and Reifel

By Sheila South

When the University of Victoria extension course David Fraser led in the Fall of 1988 finished, six of the group were so keen we continued on informally. We have gradually honed our listening skills and become more familiar with the less common birds.

At Birder's Night in April when Bryan Gates told his story of a million dots in the classroom tile and a million birds at Boundary Bay it sparked an interest in mainland birding for a couple of relatively new birders.

Imagine our pleasure and surprise when we told Bryan we were thinking of going the following Wednesday and he offered to come along. The original group increased to two carloads with five passengers each.

The ferry trips were relatively uneventful, yielding mainly Pelagic Cormorants and Pigeon Guillemot. We did enjoy

several eagles and a large number of lingering Bonaparte's Gulls. We began at Roberts Bank where the highlight was the pair of Caspian Terns. A close second had to be the single Hermit Thrush which alternately hopped down from the railway tracks to the gravel area alongside and back onto the rails. He accompanied us for several minutes while we examined his stance and field marks.

Two and a half hours later we realized birding at Boundary Bay would probably yield the same species and as several of us had not been to Reifel Wildlife Sanctuary we decided to go there instead. An hour at Reifel is not nearly long enough and gives us good excuse to go back in the Fall.

It was a good day with a total of eighty-three species identified, more than ever before. A special thank-you to Barbara Hanwell and Lorna Wood for driving and Bryan Gates for assisting us.

Or was it a mess of ducks...

By Anne Algard

Some time ago I came across an article in the Canadian Wildlife Federation magazine which had been adapted from James Lipton's book *An Exaltation of Larks*. Originally, these terms came from medieval books of courtesy, which were primers to let gentlemen know the socially acceptable terms of the hunt. Several people said perhaps the naturalist may want to reprint them. So here is the list as it pertains to birds. Do with it what you will:

- a covey of partridges
- a fall of woodcocks
- a wedge of swans
- a party of jays
- a colony of penquins
- a flock of ducks (in the air)

- a rafter of turkeys (meaning a motley collection)
- a dule of doves (French for mourning is "deuil")
- a sort of mallards (French "sordre", to rise in flight)
- a tidings of magpies
- an unkindness of ravens
- a building of rooks
- a paddling of ducks (in the water)
- a cast of hawks
- a host of sparrows
- a descent of woodpeckers
- a mustering of storks
- a spring of teal
- a murmuration of starlings
- a parliament of owls
- an ostentation of peacocks
- a congregation of plovers
- a bouquet of pheasants
- an exaltation of larks

And there you have it! Interesting groupings of birds, eh?

Adventure at Botanical Beach—

Tidepools: large and small, deep and shallow.

By Diana Jolly

We who live in Victoria's maritime climate sometimes wish to be transported to Palm Springs, where toting umbrellas and scraping mud off your shoes almost never happens. However, this wish is forgotten instantly after spending the day on one the west coast beaches. These hide-away paradises are places that you yearn to keep all to yourself but they are so spectacular you can not help but whisper about them to close friends.

Botanical Beach is just such a place.

After overhearing many secret conversations about Botanical Beach the time had come for me to make my own journey there. After a three and a half hour drive up the west coast road, a drive in which one has many miles to survey the local logging practices, I reached the end of the road, Port Renfrew. From the hotel at Port Renfrew a primitive road to Botanical Beach begins.

After scraping the muffler on the deeply rutted road for about a mile, it was time to pull the car to the side of the road and walk the rest of the way. It took about 30 minutes—just a short refreshing stroll—to reach the beach.

When I first stepped out of the thick bush to view the coastline, the scenery left me in awe. The sandy, driftwood-covered beach stretched out into a relatively flat and extensive rock outcrop. This unique sandstone-based rock was indented with tidepools: large and small, deep and shallow. It was as though millions of asteroids had fallen from the sky and left behind their crater-marked signatures.

Fortunately, I happened to visit the beach at low tide and was able to explore the area intensively. Where the rock base met the ocean, large rolling waves splashed forcefully against the mussel ridden, rock wall which dropped off suddenly into the sea. On the open ocean bottom Spider or Kelp Crab scurried over rocks. Just above the ocean floor, fish which my

travelmate thought were perch darted through the kelp. Inside the actual tidepools were numerous examples of west coast sea life.

Perhaps, the first life form to catch your eye are the Sea Urchins. These purple *Echinodermata* line the bottom and sides of the pools. Many rest in little cave-like shelves that are suited to each individual. At the time of the visit I wondered whether the crevice had been there first and the urchin had found it and inhabited it, or whether the sea urchin itself had made this sheltered home.

Lynwood Smith suggests that the Urchin does protect itself against the pounding surf by using its spines and teeth to dig protective holes in the rocks. Sea Anemone were also abundant in the tide pools. The large size of some of the Giant Green Anemone was overwhelming. Other sea life consisted of Sculpins, Sea Stars, Chitons, Limpets, and purple Shore Crabs. Staring into the tidepools was a hypnotic experience. The diverse landscape was also interesting and behind every point of the coast there was something different to see, from sandy beaches and tidepools to jagged rocks and streams. After an afternoon of pure adventure it was time to start for home.

As I tramped over the rough trail back to the car I felt so very lucky to have been able to experience a piece of the "west coast".

Botanical Beach has recently been designated as a Provincial Park. Hopefully, this park will be maintained as a rugged wilderness area. However, as the Provincial Park pamphlet warns, there is a concern that people will collect and disturb the sealife. Perhaps this message should also be displayed at the entrance of the beach as well. This is one area that we do not want to resemble a desert.

REFERENCES

1. Smith, Lynwood. *Common Seashore Life of the Pacific Northwest*. California: Naturegraph Company, 1962, p. 40.



Overlooking Kootenay Lake near Ainsworth, this Osprey surveys its domain with royal disdain.

Welcome to New Members

- | | |
|---|---|
| Apr. 10 Mrs. Doreen W. Jones, of Parker Avenue.
Interests: Bird watching, plant & animal life. | field trips. |
| Apr. 10 Shauna Hamilton/Mike Savory, of Glanford Avenue.
Particular Interests: Conservation, forests, wolves, birds, whales. | May 1 Clint Draper, of Santa Anita Avenue. New Junior.
Interests: Mythology, nature (birds), history. |
| Apr. 10 Cathy Quann, of Pembroke Street.
Particular Interest: Hiking. | May 1 Juniper English, of Derby Road.
New Junior. Interests: Ocean fish, snakes, crafts. |
| Apr. 10 Marilyn Bloomfield, of Dallas Road.
Particular Interests: Hiking, canoing. | May 1 Laura Trunkey, of Bank Street.
New Junior. Interests: Music, birding. |
| Apr. 11 Jessica Tucker, of Seaview Road.
Particular Interest: Wild flowers. | May 1 Andrew Hildred, of Oliver Street.
New Junior. Interests: Fish and turtles. |
| Apr. 11 John and Heather Robertson, of Shawnigan Lake. | May 2 Jacquie Peters, of Belmont Avenue.
Particular Interests: Botany, marine biology, maintenance of bluebird boxes. |
| Apr. 12 Wilda and Robert Cottam, of Carolwood Drive.
Interests: Environment, birds / wildlife. | May 2 Marie Tunheim, of Granada Crescent. |
| Apr. 17 Mrs. A. Bishop, of Vantreight Drive. | May 15 Deb Thiessen, of Amphion Street.
Welcome back! Deb, a C.R.D. Park Naturalist, was a member in 1988. |
| Apr. 18 Ray and Deidre Zacharias, of Burdett Avenue.
Interests: Wild flowers, birds, nature walks. | May 16 Mary Gordon, of Dallas Road.
Welcome back! Mary was a member in 1987. |
| Apr. 24 Ivan DeFaveri, of Sooke. Recently moved here.
Particular Interest: Birding. | May 17 Linda Snider/Arnold Adlkirchner,
of Peshurst Road. Linda and Arnold are interested in birding and habitat conservation. |
| Apr. 30 John H. Esling, of Telegraph Bay Road. | May 22 Dorothy Austin, of Tuxedo Drive.
Particular Interest: Birding. |
| May 1 Carolyn Teasdale, of Baldwin Place. New Junior.
Interests: Hiking, nature, exploring. | May 23 Elaine Ojala, of Torquay Drive. |
| May 1 Alison Teasdale, of Baldwin Place. New Junior.
Interests: Exploring nature, things from the ocean, | |

Ash-throated Flycatcher on Southern Vancouver Island

by K. Taylor

 It was a regular morning, the same old routine. Coffee at the A&W and a short outing on Mt. Tolmie before the daily grind. I parked the car before walking the trail to say hello to the male Anna's Hummingbird on his station. A few yards down the trail "Ka-brick", adrenaline, "Ka-brick", heart-racing. I covered the 100 yards in seconds. "Ka-brick", blood-pressure, where are you?

A few more milli-seconds and a very loud tick on my Canada list and Vancouver Island and B.C. lists all at once! I had recognized the call immediately.

It flew to another Garry Oak. Field marks: medium-sized Myiarchus, distinctive brownish bushy crest, ashy throat and upper breast, pale yellow breast, some burnt umber in primaries and retrices, call notes.

Blood-pressure eases some, adrenaline slows. Confirmation! Back to the car in record time. Speed limits ignored. "Hello Peggy. Ash-throated Flycatcher, Mt. Tolmie, 5 minutes ago. I'll stick around till someone arrives."

Back on top, 15 minutes have elapsed. No Flycatcher! Birders begin to arrive; a lesser rarity—a Lazuli Bunting—is found. The Flycatcher remains priority. Two hours of searching. No Flycatcher, no confirmation!

What began as a dull day had become a day of excitement and frustration. It was the kind of day that keeps birders birding; the thrill of an additional tick. However, the disappointment of not having other birders share the sighting and not having it confirmed will keep the day less memorable.

It was the kind of day that keeps birders birding; the thrill of an additional tick. However, the disappointment of not having other birders share the sighting and not having it confirmed will keep the day less memorable.

This sighting of an Ash-throated Flycatcher on May 29, 1990 is the first positive sighting on Southern Vancouver Island and the first spring record for the Island. There are many spring records from Vancouver, where the bird is a regular rarity. A bird (most likely this species) was seen on Sept. 23, 1984 in Saanich.

There are three records for the west coast:

- (1) Nov. 14, 1971 Vargas Isl.
- (1) Nov. 14, 1972 Ucluelet
- (1) Sept. 7, 1983 Long Beach

CALENDAR

 **REGULAR MEETINGS** are held as follows: Board of Directors meetings the first Tuesday of each Month; Botany Night the third Tuesday and Birder's Night the fourth Wednesday of each month. Locations are given in the calendar listings

FIELD TRIPS. Please meet at the location indicated for each trip and BRING A LUNCH. Be equipped for changes in weather, with hat, rain gear and boots, if necessary. **Always phone the VNHS Events Tape at 479-2054 before a trip** to get further details or find out about changes in plans. On VNHS trips, participants usually pool vehicles to reduce parking problems and costs. The Board suggests that fuel costs be shared with the driver.

JULY EVENTS

 **Saturday, July 14**
Barbara Begg will lead a trip to the Airport fields, woods and pond. This area is threatened by the proposed development of a golf course but at the moment is still intact. It is a skylark area! Join Barbara who knows the area very well to see this before it is destroyed. Meet at the north end (nearest the airport) of Cresswell Road (off McTavish Rd.) at 9:00 a.m.

AUGUST EVENTS

 **Sunday, August 26**
Birding at Cowichan Bay catch the fall migration at Cowichan Bay. Meet at Helmken Park and Ride at 8:30 or the Cowichan Bay Dock Road at 9:15 a.m. Leader to be announced. Check events table.

Score One For the Botanists

By Barbara Begg

 The April 29th Victoria Natural History Society botany/birding trip to the Gowlland Range in the Highlands was enjoyed by 33 lucky participants. Not only was the weather co-operative, but we had no fewer than five botanists to answer all our questions. With odds like that, needless to say, we spent most of the day looking down at flora rather than up at fauna. The large variety of trees, bushes and ferns and the delightful blossoming spring flowers were dutifully identified for us using Latinized names, and when prompted just a little, common names. In layman's language, we enjoyed Shooting Stars, Spring Gold, Fringe Cup, Monkey Flowers, Sea Blush, Calypso Orchids, Oregon Grape, Hairy Manzanita, Trilliums, Parsley Fern, rare Goldstars, and many other species of flora. When our botanist leaders let their guard down, we took furtive glances at Turkey Vultures, Osprey, Bald Eagles, Rufous Hummingbirds, and White-crowned Sparrows; listened to Steller's Jays, Solitary Vireos, Orange-crowned Warblers and Purple Finches; and marvelled at the scenic beauty. We studied a large variety of plants and flowers and still managed to tally 26 species of birds.

Thanks go to Nancy McMinn, the Ceskas and Lyndis Davis for arranging a great day, and also to Chris Brayshaw and Bob Ogilvie for sharing their knowledge.

Newcastle Island Trip—

The day's highlight was sighting a mink on the trail ahead

By Lyndis Davis

 Newcastle Island is a Provincial Park, a 20 minute ferry ride from downtown Nanaimo. It is used by school groups, clubs, family parties and individuals for overnight camping, orienteering, cycling, hiking and picnics. Our small group joined Bill Merilees for a natural/social history tour of the Island. Bill is very knowledgeable on both aspects and, although the day was damp, Bill's enthusiasm cheered us all up.

We hiked around most of the perimeter trail, past the scout troupe who were camped in the meadows at the south end, and then shared the trail with orienteers until we reached the coal mine shaft. After that we had the trails to ourselves.

We passed Mallard Lake, which was originally dammed to provide water to Nanaimo. The lake lived up to its name!

We stopped for lunch at the shelter overlooking Departure Bay and learned its significance, and that of Entrance Island, to early navigation.

The sandstone quarry was most interesting, as it was selected over any other quarry in North America to provide the stone for building the San Francisco Mint. On the edge of the cliff is one of the circular columns that was taken from the quarry for the Mint, but the ship transporting it was wrecked on Mayne Island in a snow storm. Two columns and several other large stones were raised from the wreck in 1987 and the column was brought back to the quarry—four feet in diameter and 30 feet long. The west towers of Christ Church Cathedral are also built of sandstone from Newcastle Island. At another site, pulp stones were cut from the sandstone for pulp mills in Eastern Canada, and were considered of the highest quality.

The Japanese had a saltery on the Island between the wars. The stumps of the pilings for the wharves can be seen on the beach, and the concrete foundations for the buildings are in the meadows behind the shore. Photos show the Japanese tramping thousands of herring into the boxes of brine and large ships at the wharf loading cargo.

The Indians had two villages on the Island and buried their dead in the rock clefts on the western shore.

There is also a route where the telegraph cable crossed from the Island, to Nanaimo, to Point Grey. At the time, it was the longest underwater cable in the world.

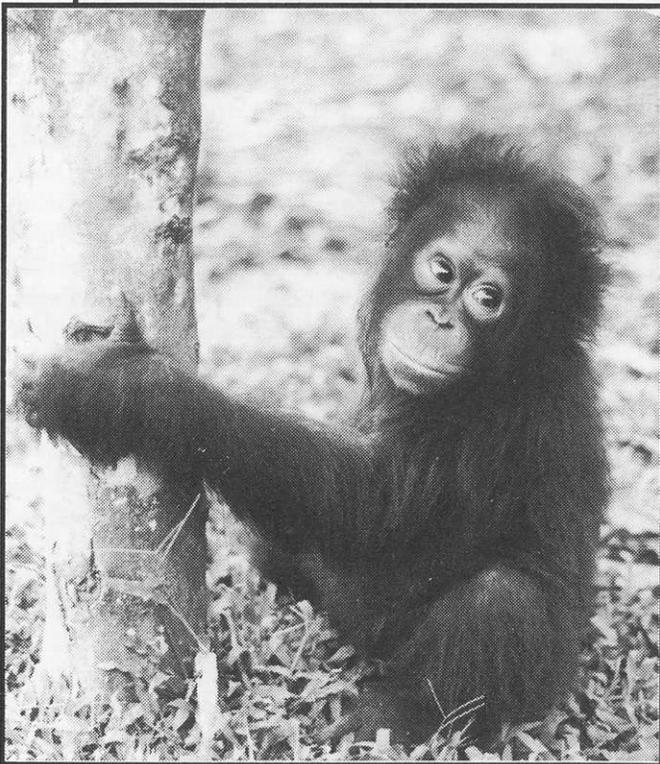
Despite the drizzly conditions, we did see some wildlife. We had good views of bald eagles and a downy woodpecker, and heard other resident and summer birds. We did some tidepooling and found several areas that had "poque" ground cones (*Boschniakia hookeri*) which parasitize salal. The day's highlight was a mink that ran down the trail ahead of us for 50 yards before disappearing into the bush.

Our thanks to Bill Merilees for a most interesting day.

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