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A NOTE FROM THE EDITORS

Scholarship means the qualities or attainments of a
scholar. These qualities include hardworking, studious,
and often lacking in sufficient funds. In our experience,
students working in degree areas relevant to conservation
issues are most often intelligent, dedicated individuals
who could be pursuing lucrative careers were it not
for their sense of responsibility toward the rest of our
biosphere.

Recipients of VNHS funded scholarships at the
University of Victoria and Camosun College have
expressed, in letters to the Society, their gratefulness
for the funding they have received.

At Royal Roads University there is a program at the
Masters level in Environment and Management (which is
keeping Ross exceptionally busy), and a Bachelors level
program in Environmental Science.

The Environmental Science Program at Royal Roads
differs from the usual undergraduate degree program.
Learners begin their programs at other institutions,
completing their final two university years in one intense
calendar year at Royal Roads. This means that the learners
miss the opportunity to spend a summer building up funds
for the next academic year.

VNHS has recently received a substantial gift for
our scholarship fund. Society directors are now having
discussions with Royal Roads University as to how best
to arrange a VNHS scholarship at that institution. One
option discussed will potentially see the university adding
matching funds to the amount that VNHS can provide.
The more the Society can raise, the more we will see in
the fund, and the larger a scholarship we can provide
without using up the capital in the fund.

This is your opportunity to make a difference.
You may not be able to return to school yourself to arm
yourself with the knowledge to create the change we
need in order to preserve the flora and fauna that we, as
naturalists, love to observe, but your donations to the
VNHS Scholarship Fund will enable deserving students
to make the difference you would like to see.

Marilyn and Ross

Checklist for a New Millenium

By Bruce Whittington

Sharpen your pencils, because the 2001 edition of the *Checklist of Birds for Victoria and Southeastern Vancouver Island* has just come off the presses.

VNHS has been publishing bird checklists since at least 1959, and the checklist has quietly become one of the hallmarks of the Society. Birders use them to keep track of species they have seen during a particular day, or year, or perhaps for a given backyard. Over the years these checklists have changed a lot.

The early versions were only four pages, with brief distribution codes, and a place to "check off" each species. In 1959, there were 235 species on the list. What was birding like back then? Well, no one had ever seen any falcon other than a Peregrine here at that time. No Barred Owls, no Willow Flycatchers. On the other hand, a birder could look for Grey Partridges and Mountain Quail.

The new edition follows the very successful format that was used in the 1989 and 1994 editions. Bar graphs indicate at a glance how common a species is, and when it might be expected during the year. The additional information makes the checklist considerably larger, and it now appears as a 16-page booklet, though

it is still pocket-sized. Nesting species are indicated with an "N". New in this edition is a bracketed "(N)", which indicates that the species once nested here, but no longer does. Lewis' Woodpecker is an example of a breeding species that has been lost in this region.

Some of the changes in the new list are obvious. A quick look will tell you that there are now 362 species that have been recorded in the Victoria area. That is an increase of fifteen species over the 1994 edition. Several species have been recorded for the first time since 1994, like the Loggerhead Shrike. Some are vagrants that are unlikely to occur here again. Other changes mark the change in status of birds that are now regular visitors, like the Broad-winged Hawk.

Some of the "new" species are not really new at all. The Oldsquaw, for instance, has vanished, but it has not become extinct in our area. It has resurfaced (as diving ducks do) as the Long-tailed Duck. The change is the result of a decision to standardize the name to that used in Europe, and to eliminate a name which some felt was less than politically correct.

Every checklist, from the moment it is "finished", is doomed to obsolescence. This one remained intact for only a few days, before its integrity was assaulted. The single record for Yellow-Breasted Chat was based on a decision by the Bird Records Committee, which accepted the field description of a single observer as "hypothetical". Soon after the release of the checklist, another chat was videotaped in a Victoria backyard. This will secure the status of Yellow-breasted Chat on the Victoria list, and renders the new list out of date at the same time.

Only a short time later, the methodical Keith Taylor turned up a singing male Chestnut-sided Warbler. It was seen by several birders, and photographed, and is certain to be accepted as a new species number 363 for the checklist area.

In a short time, we have seen just how dynamic a bird checklist is. The changes come sometimes from the taxonomists, but there are also the changes wrought by the birds themselves. And through it all, there are the efforts of the birders, who head for the field whenever they can. It is their efforts that document the changing patterns of our avifauna, information which contributes to the scientific data. The checklist makes it easy for observers to record their data, and

to know when sightings are of more than casual significance. The observations that are recorded then come full circle, and help to make the next checklist accurate and current.

We are very grateful to Bryan Gates, who compiled the checklist, coordinated the Bird Records Committee through its decision-making process, and arranged for the printing of the checklist. VNHS member Loucas Raptis generously donated the cover image of the American Dipper.

VNHS is especially pleased to acknowledge the support of the Willard and Elva Dawson Fund within the Victoria Foundation, which made the publication of this edition of the checklist possible. These two organizations both have long histories in the Victoria area, and we look forward to other partnership opportunities in the future.

The new VNHS bird checklist will be available at most Society functions, when the fall season begins again. In the meantime, they are available at Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary, Goldstream Nature House, and at the HAT office, 517-620 View Street. We hope to have them placed with retail stores soon as well. The price remains unchanged, at \$1.50, pencil not included.



VNHS checklists date back to at least 1959. They are revised about every five to seven years. The two most recent editions have had print runs of 5000 copies each.

Can Binoculars Save Birds?

By Bob and Barbara Lake

Can old, unused binoculars save birds? Well, in Uganda they can, with your help.

While in Kampala, Uganda in March we were part of a team providing postgraduate medical training to medical workers in Uganda, East Africa. Barbara was leading a continuing nursing education workshop on palliative care for RNs while I was teaching part of a diploma course in hospital administration. Our teaching schedule was disrupted by Presidential elections, a process that takes days rather than hours.

For us this presented an opportunity to go birding. Days earlier one of the guests at our hotel gave himself away; he raised a pair of binoculars while eating in the outdoor dining room. A fellow birder! We were soon chatting about birds and we learned that he was gathering material for his degree thesis. Our new friend was able to provide us with the name of a Ugandan bird guide, Elias Kabogozza.

Armed with his cell phone number, we were able to contact Elias in spite of the fact he was deep in the Ugandan bush somewhere. In a few days he showed up at our hotel and we organized a four-day birding trip into the Queen Elizabeth Park that is located adjacent to Lake Edward on the Congo (or Zaire) border. Elias turned out to be an ideal guide; he knew his birds, wasn't afraid to consult the book if in doubt and had eagle sharp eyesight.

We spent four delightful days finding and identifying birds at the roadside, in towns we passed through and, for the most part, in the Queen Elizabeth Park. The park has a variety of habitat — savannah, scrub bush and riverside (weavers, fish eagles, cormorants, pied and malachite kingfishers). We saw over 200 species in the 4 days we birded with Elias. The lions, hippos and elephants were an added attraction.

As we drove back to Kampala, Elias told us about his special project, to educate youth about the importance of preserving and promoting the bird life in Uganda. Unfortu-

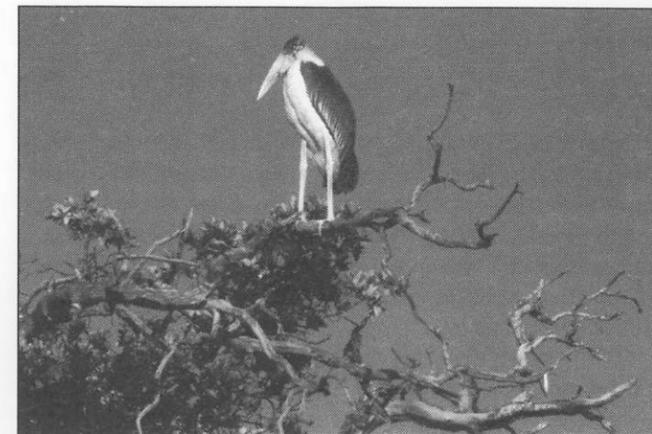


Photo: Robert Lake

nately, birds in Uganda are too often seen as a nuisance, either as a threat to crops and domestic fowl or as dirty unwanted scavengers. The Marabou Stork, a scavenger of city dumpsters is particularly vulnerable to human abuse. Birds are also a source of amusement for small boys armed with rocks.

Elias' project involves going into the schools and setting up birding clubs. Here children learn about the useful role birds play in their environment and economy (eco-tourism being a major source of dollars). They learn to identify birds and to appreciate their aesthetic value. The activity of educating youth in this way includes, of course, field trips. And this was Elias' dilemma. Kids soon become disinterested if they have to share a pair of binoculars, or even do without.

Elias asked if we had an old, unused pair of binoculars that we could send so that he could loan them to the kids during field trips. Well, we have one pair and we will send it. Much better that they educate and delight some child than lie forgotten and unused in a drawer. If you have some unused binoculars in working condition, perhaps we could send them along as well.

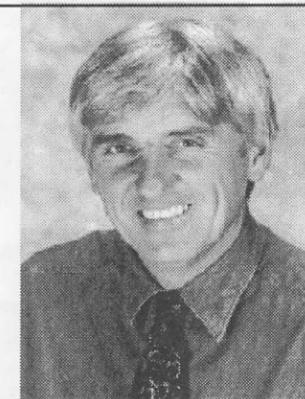
Contact: Barbara and Bob Lake 652-3358 or robert_lake@telus.net. Thanks.



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An Ecclesiastical Visitor

By Sylvia Austin

Back in 1973, although we weren't birders, we liked watching birds. We could just about tell the difference between a junco and a chickadee, and the feeder hanging in our Oak Bay garden gave us a lot of pleasure. As long as the birds came we continued to feed them, and this is probably why we were visited one Saturday in July by a bird that even we could identify.

"We've got a Cardinal in our back garden," I told my birding friend by telephone.

"Sylvia," the dry English voice replied, "that would be most...unusual."

"Well, what else could it be?"

She was at the door within fifteen minutes. "Well, of course it must be from someone's aviary," she said, "but I'd like to ask a couple of people to have a look — just in case."

Just in case? As ignorant as we felt we were about birds, we were also ignorant about birders and birding. All birds are not created equal, we discovered. While an exotic species that is blown in from afar by the vagaries of the wind "counts", your neighbour's errant Budgerigar does not. But when Davy Davidson, guru of Victoria's naturalist community, gave his opinion that our Cardinal was a possible "list" candidate, the news spread like wildfire.

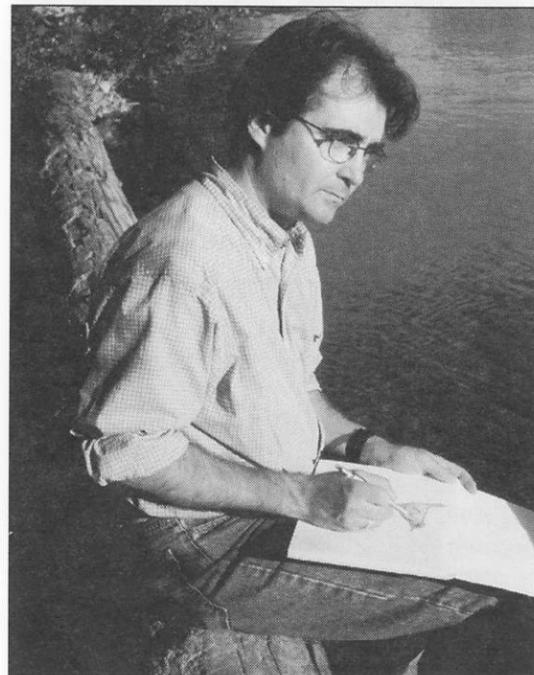
There had been no reports of an escapee, and the bird was not banded. Its feathers were not cage-worn, and its feeding behaviour was not like that of a caged bird. It was further rumoured that a Cardinal had been spotted in Oregon State in recent months.

Sunday morning we were awakened at an early (to us) hour by birders fresh from their dawn expeditions. Our bedroom, which had the best view, was soon filled with excited "life listers", while we in our dressing gowns bemusedly served tea and apologized for the unmade bed. As the week progressed, we came home from work to find birders crouched in the shrubbery, or lurking down the side of the house. They were polite, charming, and determined.

We bought Buckerfield's best parrot mix, and our Cardinal continued to put on a great show. Then suddenly, after about two weeks, he was gone, never to be heard from again.

He will not be found on any Victoria bird checklist; the final verdict was that he was an escapee. We, however, were left with happy memories of a beautiful bird and a wonderful group of fascinating people. We also learned that birding gives you a lifelong purpose — there's always one more bird to add to the list.

The Cover Artist this Month



Loucas Raptis was born in Athens, Greece, in 1961 and emigrated to Canada at the age of twenty. As an amateur naturalist he has studied, written about, and drawn animals since childhood. As an amateur illustrator he has published and illustrated numerous articles in natural history and sport fishing journals.

In 1996, he was invited by the Haig-Brown Fly Fishing Association of Victoria to illustrate a limited edition of *Pool and Rapid*, written by the late Vancouver Island writer and conservationist Roderick Haig-Brown. The work was received with critical acclaim.

Since then, Loucas has produced many illustrations depicting the freshwater fishes of British Columbia on commissions by the provincial government. This body of work was recently exhibited in its entirety at the Freshwater Eco-Centre in Duncan during his first one-man art exhibition entitled FIN ART.

He is currently involved in a six-year project, *The Freshwater Fishes of Vancouver Island*, a series of fine limited edition prints in the style of nineteenth century hand-coloured lithographs. Part of the proceeds from this project are being donated to conservation organizations involved in the acquisition and restoration of freshwater habitat on Vancouver Island. Loucas works and lives in Victoria with his wife Allison Benner.

Source: www.islandnet.com/~benrap/

Photo: Bruce Whittington

The *Psaltriparus Minimus* and *Pieris Japonica*

By Lyndis Davis

Last summer the *Pieris Japonica* (Japanese Andromeda) outside my bedroom window sent up some very long new shoots. These produced 4-5 inch long stalks of buds, and I derived much pleasure from observing the flowers gradually opening, starting about mid-March. As the flowers opened the stalks gradually bent over from the weight of the flowers and two particularly long branches bent towards the window until they touched it. These were the first flowers to open — with the warmth from the window perhaps.

One afternoon, about the middle of April, a movement on the flower clusters nearest the window caught my eye. A Bushtit was pecking around in the blossoms. It was very busy, occasionally trying another group of flowers but quickly coming back to the ones that touched the window. It was there for about an hour. The next morning it returned for another half hour at the same spray. A second Bushtit was with it for a short while. After that I saw the odd bird in other

parts of the bush. I was fascinated that this one Bushtit would spend so long going over the one cluster of flowers; and came back for another go.

The flowers were also visited by a variety of bees and flies — at least two species of bumblebees, blue orchard bees and others.

In May my neighbor called me about a tiny bird on her *Pieris* that she could not identify. It turned out to be an immature Bushtit, but seemed to be sheltering on the bush rather than feeding. I feared that it had become separated from its family and would not be able to fend for itself. Later, however, I heard adults calling; so I hope it was reunited with them.

Now that the flowers are dropping, comes the task of removing the spent blossoms — not onerous but time consuming. A small price to pay for having so enjoyed the observing life in the two *Pieris* bushes over a period of about 2 months, from the first opening of the flowers to their final dropping for this year.

Perspective from Some Interesting Statistics

(Passed on by Joy and Cam Finlay)

Each year in North America:

Cougars attack 3.8 people and kill 0.2;

Dogs attack 222,000 people and kill 20;

Rattlesnakes bite 5,000 people and kill 12;

Bees sting hundreds of thousands of people and kill 40;

Lightning strikes hundreds of people and kills 80;

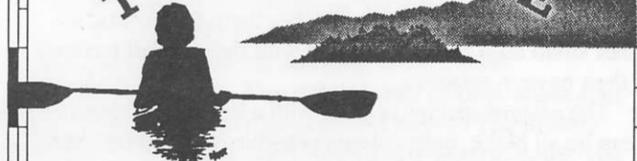
Cars kill 45,000; and

Total strangers murder over 1000 people.

Source: Ross, Ian. 2001. *The Cougar as a Peaceful Adversary*. *Wild Lands Advocate*. Vol. 9(1), February.

URL: www.albertawilderness.ca

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Our Squirrel Invasion

By Yorke Edwards

About forty years ago, Eastern Grey Squirrels were released somewhere not far west of Victoria. They were possibly brought to this area from Vancouver's Stanley Park where they have lived for many years, or perhaps they were trapped in their natural homeland which sprawls from the southern parts of Manitoba, Ontario and Quebec down the eastern United States to the Gulf of Mexico. That large eastern area has mostly hardwood forests. Some of these forests contain twenty-seven species of oaks, all of them producing acorns that are the Grey Squirrels' favoured foods.

Having populated Victoria, our squirrels have now spread up the Island to well beyond Duncan and will stop, probably north of Comox, where the oaks meet the softwood forest that covers most of Vancouver Island.

For some reason, this squirrel has been captured, transported, and released into numerous parts of the world. In addition to those in British Columbia, they were released into the British Isles in 1876, then again in 1929; into South Africa in 1905; and more recently into Italy, Australia and New Zealand. They have also been released into a number of cities in Central Oregon bordering the territory of the Western Gray Squirrels, a separate species that is larger, darker and even more elegant looking than the eastern species. The home territory of the western species extends from southern Oregon south into Northern California, a rather small area when compared with the original territory of their eastern relatives.

The eastern species is grey, with a brownish tinge, or it can be all black, both colours possible in the same litter. In their natural territory, which extends from Ontario southward, the black gray squirrels are at least twice as numerous in Ontario than the gray ones, but in the eastern United States nearly all gray squirrels become gray.

The word "squirrel" derives roughly from Latin, meaning, "it sits in the shadow of its tail". The tail is fluffy, elegant, and becomes a bit of a parachute in an accidental fall from a tree. At night, the tail curls around the sleeping squirrel for warmth.

I first watched grey squirrels in Queen's Park in Toronto, a large rough lawn with many trees and surrounded by heavy traffic. About a hundred and fifty years ago, the park was in the centre of the city, but now it is next to the downtown business area. In Queen's Park, the large and scattered oaks and other hardwood trees provide homes for many gray squirrels, all of them black. Probably since the beginning, they have been fed daily by people eating lunches on the many park benches. To me, the squirrels were a lively bit of nature in the city's dreary chaos.

Grey Squirrels are often on the ground but are usually



Photo: Roger Napier

not far from trees. On the ground, they can run up to fifteen miles per hour and in trees can leap about six feet horizontally from limb to limb. They can cross about twelve feet in a gliding fall between more widely separated trees. Unlike many mammals, there is no evidence that they defend territories, probably because in the years of food scarcity they must migrate in search of it elsewhere.

Their average life span, based on studies in the United States, is only about eleven or twelve months. A few may live for many years. Hunters, killing thousands of squirrels each year, are probably responsible for the short average life span.

Their nests are made of leaves and twigs year around, usually located in a hole in a tree, or in the fork of a large tree. Young ones are born in the nest.

In eastern hardwood forests, their native home from Ontario southward, the largest populations live in forests consisting of at least twenty-five percent oaks. The squirrels now spreading up Vancouver Island are probably following the oaks. In most years, acorns are available to north of Comox.

To those of us who see what we look at, oaks are in and about Victoria numerous, and most of them old, large, and in winter crowned by naked twig and branches making zigzags against the sky. Grey Squirrels prefer living in large oaks, with their annual crops of acorns, more than any other of our trees, but when acorns are scarce, they also eat seeds of pines, maples and elms, sometimes insects, inner tree bark, birds eggs, mushrooms (some poisonous to humans) and such other food as they can find. They are not territorial, seeming to live where the food is.

To survive through winters they store food in summer and autumn, but in years when acorns and other foods have poor crops, the squirrels face trouble. In the miles of forests

in the eastern United States a century ago, when the squirrels faced famines, thousands of hungry squirrels radiated in autumn looking for forests with food. Most died, especially when rivers blocked their way.

Squirrels living in cities, like those in Victoria, face dangers different from those in forests. Busy car traffic crisscrosses their territories, numerous cats hunt them, in some cities (like Victoria) hungry hawks feed on them, nesting in attics results in "people problems", and sparse

acorns crops all tend to keep their numbers down.

Introducing foreign species into new territory is always fraught with danger. Once they are established, it becomes almost impossible to get rid of them. Local examples of introduced species are house mice, Norway rats, black rats, starlings, house sparrows, Scottish broom and Gorse. We find all of them on or close to the Edwards property.

Usually such invaders are destructive to native life. But, as Pogo once said: "I have met the enemy, and he is us."

If You Go Out in the Woods Today...

By Michael Fox

You'd better watch out for poison oak. If it is winter, you won't know you've found it until it's too late. This was my unpleasant learning experience on a beautiful spring day in early March while conducting vegetation inventories at the Department of National Defense's Mary Hill site with the Green Spaces Project of the Victoria Natural History Society. The botanists were excited by my accidental discovery — much more excited than I was!

If I never see poison oak again it's still too soon.

Agriculture Canada says in its web site bulletin:

Western poison oak (*Toxicodendron diversilobum*) is a rare plant in Canada. It is confined to a few remote areas on the East Coast of Vancouver Island and on some small adjacent islands. Few Canadians are likely to encounter this plant.

Adolph Ceska, one of Victoria's most knowledgeable botanists, reckons that I discovered only the second known patch of poison oak on the Island. I suspect that there may be more because my dermatologist says he has treated other Victoria residents suffering from poison oak contact dermatitis.

Poison oak is usually a shrub up to six feet tall, or a taller tree-climbing vine, with triple leaflets although leaves of five, seven or nine leaflets are possible as well and short, smooth hair underneath. In all cases, the stem of the central leaflet is longest. Leaves are notched or toothed and dark green with a paler underside. In spring, the plant can also be identified by the small greenish-white flowers it produces and by its whitish fruit in later summer or early fall. Plants are red and dark green in spring and summer, with yellowing leaves anytime, especially in dry areas. Leaves may turn bright red in the fall; the plant loses its (yellowed, then brown) leaves in winter, leaving toxic stems. *All parts of the plant remain toxic throughout the seasons.*

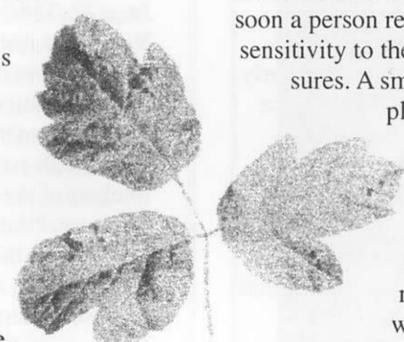
Primary contamination results from contact with bruised

or broken plant parts that release 'toxicodendrol', an oily resin containing the toxic chemical 'urushiol'. The oil readily penetrates the skin. Contact with any part of the plant results in a red, bumpy skin rash, usually on areas of the body where the skin is thinnest, like the wrists, shins, neck, and face. The tough palms of your hands may be unaffected. There may be swelling near the rash, which usually progresses to itchy blisters that ooze, harden, and then crack. The rash may appear as early as thirty minutes or as late as two weeks after exposure. What determines how soon a person reacts after exposure is the degree of allergic sensitivity to the plant and the number of previous exposures. A small percentage of the population is completely unaffected by poison oak. Don't gamble on being among them.

The rash reaches its peak about four to five days after it begins. The blisters break open, releasing a watery liquid. The fluid from the blisters does not spread the rash. Healing usually takes one to two weeks. The rash, which is a type of allergic reaction, is actually caused by the body's reaction to the oil rather than damage by the oil itself.

Take action without delay if you believe that there is even a remote chance that you have been in physical contact with poison oak. Time is of the essence. Remove all your clothing and wash yourself, or better yet, shower thoroughly using a mild soap or detergent. Also wash all your clothes several times. Don't forget under your fingernails! You'll still suffer from the initial contact sites but you may avoid transferring the oil to fresh sites. Early use of an antihistamine may reduce the symptoms. If the symptoms are severe, see your doctor without delay.

Of course, all this is predicated on knowing that you have been in contact with poison oak. *Far better to recognize it and avoid it.* Believe me, you don't want this experience!



Where Has All the Clover Gone?

By Nancy J. Turner

In September, 1991, T.C. Brayshaw collected a modest specimen of *Trifolium wormskioldii* on Dallas Road, at the west point south of Menzies Street ("along seashore; open, south-facing, eroding bank above beach, mainly grassy" V 151489). As he has been doing for many, many years, with this collection he was helping us, with his careful, meticulous work, to understand our flora better and to document the changes that have occurred to our local ecosystems. We owe him so much for his critical contributions. In the case of this collection, it is particularly significant because, as far as I can determine, it represented the last population of *T. wormskioldii* along the Victoria waterfront.

Bob (Turner) and I went to the spot and found an enormous cement storm drain enclosure and no sign of this native clover, although there were plenty of introduced clovers and grasses and even some *Camassia*, *Sanicula bipinnatifida* and other characteristic native species in the vicinity.

Trifolium wormskioldii Lehm. was once common — even abundant — all along this stretch of Victoria's coastline. James Douglas, when he arrived here in 1842, commented on the clover, which Chris Brayshaw, Adam Szczawinski and others conclude must have been, at least in part, *T. wormskioldii*: "Both Kinds [of soil], however, produce Abundance of Grass, and several varieties of Red Clover grow on the rich moist Bottoms.... In Two Places particularly, we saw several Acres of Clover growing with a Luxuriance and Compactness more resembling the close Sward of a well-managed Lea than the Produce of an uncultivated Waste." (Douglas's report, Fort Vancouver, HBC, July 12, 1842)

In fact, the point where Douglas first disembarked from the Beaver he himself named Clover Point, from the fact that "a large area of ground here was found covered with a species of red clover, growing most luxuriantly" (Walbran 1971: 96). For Douglas, the clover and meadowlands he found were an indicator of the potential of the area for modification and management, for re-creating England and the English style of land use. "Being pretty well assured of the Capabilities of the Soil as respects the Purposes of Agriculture, the Climate being also mild and pleasant, we ought to be able to grow every Kind of Grain Raised in England..."

The clover was seen as a promising indication of the possibilities for improvements: "The growth of indigenous vegetation is more luxuriant, than in any other place, I have seen in America, indicating a rich productive soil. Though the survey I made was rather laborious, not being so light and active of foot as in my younger days, I was nevertheless delighted in ranging over fields knee deep in clover, tall

grasses and ferns reaching above our heads, at these unequivocal proofs of fertility". (James Douglas in Hargrave 1938: 420-421, as cited by Akrigg and Akrigg 1975: 357.)

Unfortunately, the scale and scope of landscape change that has emanated from this concept has not been easily measured or acknowledged, and the cultural and biological impacts have not been fully assessed. For First Peoples, the loss of valued cultural resources caused profound grief and sadness, still felt today by Elders who remember some of the lands as they used to be. For most people, however, the loss of lands and resources, if recognized at all, is seen as the inevitable result of progress. Many people still do not grasp the importance of maintaining "wild" ecosystems or species, and, if they value greenspace, it makes little difference to them whether it is a green lawn, and agricultural field, or a natural wood or meadow. Many people still view any uncultivated area as "waste", just as James Douglas did over 150 years ago. The value in this land and its ecosystems, for them, is in their potential, not in themselves.

This is well reflected in the words of Berhold Seeman, a naturalist with the expedition which sailed in H.M.S. Herald, under Captain Henry Kellett, D.B., 1845-51, who wrote in June 27, 1846: "In walking from Ogden Point round to Fort Victoria, a distance of little more than a mile, we thought we had never seen a more beautiful country; it quite exceeded our expectation; and yet Vancouver's descriptions made us look for something beyond common scenery. It is a natural park; noble oaks and ferns are seen in the greatest luxuriance; thickets of the hazel [?] and the willow, shrubberies of the poplar and the alder, are dotted about. One could hardly believe that this was not the work of art; more particularly when finding signs of cultivation in every direction — enclosed pasture-land, fields of wheat, potatoes and turnips. Civilization had encroached upon the beautiful domain, and the savage could no longer exist in the filth and indolence of mere animal life.... The fort of Victoria was founded in 1843, and stands on the east shore of the harbour, or rather creek, about a mile from the entrance. The approach is pretty by nature, though somewhat rude by art. The first place we came to was the dairy, an establishment of great importance to the fort.... We were astonished at all we saw. About 160 acres are cultivated with oats, wheat, potatoes, turnips, carrots, and other vegetables, and every day more land is converted into fields. Barely three years had elapsed since the settlement was made, yet all the necessaries and most of the comforts of civilized life already existed in what was a wilderness..." (Scholefield, 1914)

Yet, unrecognized by the colonists, the lands they were changing were already under a degree of care and manage-

ment by the local First Peoples, and the existing resources were already being used, just not in the ways that the newcomers could perceive. As a result, resources that were desired and once plentiful for First Peoples were intentionally and unintentionally diminished, at least in part because their value was not acknowledged. Of course, as these species dwindled in range and abundance, they became less salient to the First Peoples themselves, and as this occurred, the cultural memory about them diminished. Thus, in a spiraling downward cycle, species deteriorated and disappeared and only a few noticed or cared. Those who cared were not able to communicate their concerns to those who were causing the changes. In short, there was a terrible lack of communication that has continued to the present day.

As noted, *Trifolium wormskioldii*, because it is a perennial, and because when it grows luxuriantly it forms a very showy display, is likely the major species referred to by James Douglas and after which Clover Point off Dallas Road is named. Its rhizomes were also a valued food of First Nations and were undoubtedly used by the Lekwungen peoples who used the area around Ross Bay and Beacon Hill Park along with the rest of the Victoria area. Dr. Newcombe collected this species in June, 1917 off Dallas Road, Victoria, on "moist ground near the sea" (V: 42028, 42029; 8951), and specimens in the Royal B.C. Herbarium (V) show that it has grown in many sites around the city. It is characterized as "common" (J.R. Anderson, 1920) and growing in "open grass" (J.R. Anderson, 1920), "rich meadows" (J.R. Anderson, 1894), "rich open lands (J.R. Anderson, 1896), "damp ground" (M.C. Melburn, 1970), "moist meadow" (T.C. Brayshaw, 1981); or "dry open ground (V.E.I. Goddard, 1930). Yet, although other native clover species can still be readily found on rocky sites and refugia around the city, *T. wormskioldii*, cannot be called "common" around Victoria today by any stretch of the imagination. It is, in fact, virtually absent from the entire Victoria coastline. The work of Chris Brayshaw has helped us to piece together its passing, and, maybe it will help us to bring it back again.

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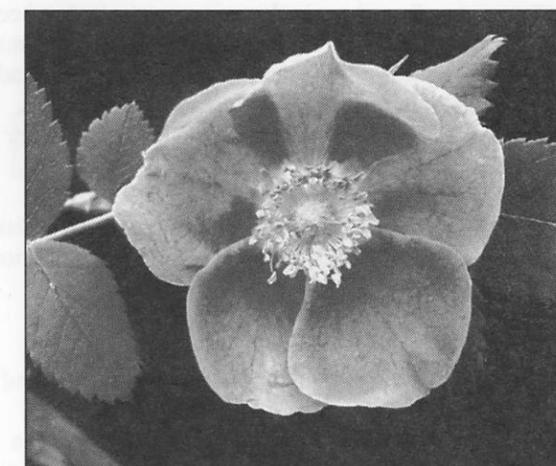
This article previously appeared in Botanical Electronic News, edited by Adolf Ceska. BEN is archived at <http://www.ou.edu/cas/botany-micro/ben/>

Letters to the Editor

The Editors, The Victoria Naturalist

I have been a member of the VNHS for the last two years. Having a September to May commitment Wednesday evening, I unfortunately miss the Birders' Night. Imagine my delight when I opened my *Victoria Naturalist* and saw the numerous birding walks scheduled for May and June. Thank-you to those organizing and leading these events!

Camilla Smith



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Cooper's Hawks on the Internet

Did you know that if you live in Greater Victoria you probably have a Cooper's hawk nest within one kilometre of your home?

Actually, if you have an Internet connection, you can have a Cooper's hawk nest as close as your computer. Andy Stewart and Dave Hill, along with a group of volunteers including VNHS members, have tracked down funding, found a cooperating homeowner, installed a camera above the nest (which is about 20 metres above the ground), and are now webcasting live images of a Cooper's hawk family on their nest.

Here is a sampling of some of the comments received on the site to date:

"Wow!! This is absolutely great!! What an opportunity!!! And as a bonus, I've discovered it feels really wonderful to be able to "go" to a hawk's nest anytime I want to,

during my work hours! Just a peek once in a while is very restorative — a real stress-buster!"

"Thanks to everyone who made this happen and for sharing it with us!"

"That is totally awesome."

"This is really very amazing! I've sent it along to a number of people that would be interested, and may not know about it."

"Andy that is so cool I am hooked to viewing the sucker every couple of hours or so. Can't wait to see the chicks. There sure is a lot of work there."

Even after the young hawks fledge, they will return to the nest for feeding.

To bring these birds into your home, take a look at the website: <http://www.victoriacoopershawk.bc.ca>.

Pondweeds, Bur-reeds and their Relatives of British Columbia

A Review by Ross Archibald

In another article in this issue, Nancy Turner praises T. Christopher Brayshaw in these terms: "As he has been doing for many, many years, with this collection he was helping us, with his careful, meticulous work, to understand our flora better and to document the changes that have occurred to our local ecosystems. We owe him so much for his critical contributions."

By the late 1970s Dr. Brayshaw had recognized the importance of aquatic members of the flora of British Columbia. He realized that knowledge of the identities, distributions and abundances of aquatic plants in the Province is an essential tool in assessing the effects of human terrestrial activities on the quality of our waters. His recognition of this fact resulted in the 1985 publication of *Pondweeds and Bur-reeds, and Their Relatives, of British Columbia*.

More than a dry technical treatise, this volume was an attempt to make the subject of aquatic plants accessible, and the specific work widely useable. However, it goes beyond being merely a widely useable identification manual. Each illustration is carefully crafted by the author to illustrate and clarify the text and diagnostic keys. The drawings alone made this volume a valuable addition to botanical collections.

Even at the time of the first publication, Dr. Brayshaw noted a rapid growth in information during the six years he spent preparing the manuscript. He commented in his preface that the information-growth was continuing. In response to the information growth over the last fifteen years, Dr. Brayshaw has prepared a second edition.

Two aspects that detracted from the generally useful and functional first edition were its format and the fact that the

range maps were all collected at the end of the book, requiring flipping back and forth from description to range map. In the new edition, the format is a convenient 15.25 cm by 22.86 cm (6" by 9") format, and the range maps are now grouped with each species description and illustration, making it much easier to use the book.

As Dr. Brayshaw mentions in his preface to the new edition, a plant classification scheme, as published in a book, is a snapshot in time, or more poetically, a single frame in a motion picture film. Since 1985, new species have been discovered; revisions have been made in the identities and names of several plants; and adjustments have been made to the classification scheme. In addition, the author has modified some illustrations, added new illustrations, and updated range maps to reflect new collections. The author's illustrations, displaying intimate knowledge of the plants, are still outstanding examples of the botanical illustrator's craft.

Like the original, the second edition of *Pondweeds, Bur-reeds and their Relatives of British Columbia* is a must for any botanical collection.

References:

Brayshaw, T. Christopher. 2000. *Pondweeds, Bur-reeds and their Relatives of British Columbia*. Victoria: Royal British Columbia Museum.

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President's Report "Company's Coming"

By Bruce Whittington

As naturalist organizations go, VNHS is very fortunate. Our membership consistently hovers somewhere in the mid 700's, second in the province only to the "other" VNHS in Vancouver.

We enjoy a solid foundation laid by other naturalists, beginning when the Society was founded in 1944. Their work has passed on to us an informative and respected magazine, a solid scholarship program, and an active slate of presentations and field trips. Our community is home to a provincial museum, two universities, a college, and professionals in the natural history field from many parks agencies, and departments of the federal and provincial governments. Our programs (and our membership rolls, too) benefit greatly from the contributions of these people.

We are rarely called upon to share these resources that we so often take for granted. Now, we have an opportunity to do that.

Every year, the Federation of BC Naturalists (of which the VNHS is an affiliate) holds its Annual General Meeting in the city or town of one of the member organizations. The VNHS Board has offered to host the next FBCN AGM, to be held in May of 2002. We are confident that we have the experience and enthusiasm to host a successful and memorable event. To make sure we pull it off, we are asking for your help.

We will be expected to organize adequate meeting facilities, and accommodation. There will be a program of field trips, and guest speakers. Attendance normally is about 100, but we believe that an exciting May weekend on southern Vancouver Island will draw more than this. We are also considering activities for the general public to help generate publicity. Profit from the event will be shared between VNHS and FBCN. FBCN covers any losses that might be incurred (according to FBCN President Anne Murray, this has never happened).

Please consider the ways you might help. We will need field trip ideas, and leaders. Volunteers with experience in arranging catered meals will greatly assist us. There will be many other opportunities, including such specific tasks as photography, media contacts, audio-visual equipment coordination, registration attendants, and clerical tasks. We are sure there are things we haven't even thought of yet.

This is an opportunity to learn more about the significant work that FBCN does on our behalf at the provincial level. It is also a chance to welcome fellow naturalists from far afield in BC. We have so much we can share with them — let's really show them a Victoria welcome.

Welcome to New Members

Barbara Chouinard
Bushby Street
(birds)

Muriel Park
Viewmont Avenue

Kim West
Lands End Road
(birds)

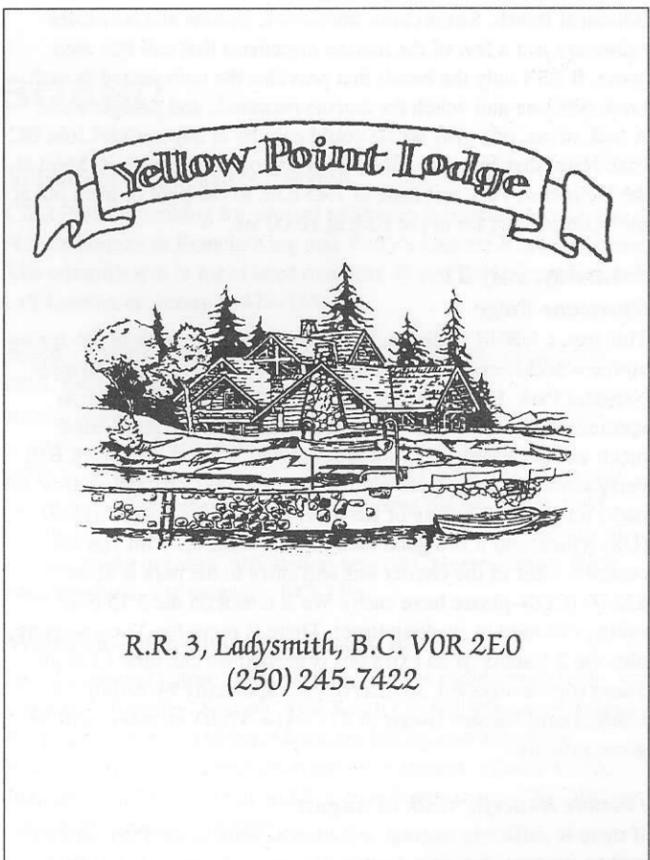
George and Evelyn Andrew
Linden Avenue
(birds)

Patricia M. Woods
Shelbourne Street

Leo Vezina and Joyce Danby
Seaforth Street
(birds, hiking, kayaking)

Ray Schofield
Lekwammen Drive
(birds and conservation)

Catherine and John Weed
Townsend Drive
(habitat preservation)



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

REGULAR MEETINGS are generally held on the following days. **Board of Directors:** the first Tuesday of each month (directors' meetings are held at Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary); **Natural History Presentations** (formally known as the General Members Meeting): the second Tuesday at 7:30 p.m., in Begbie 159, University of Victoria; **Botany Night:** the third Tuesday, 7:30 p.m., Swan Lake Nature Centre; **Parks and Conservation Committee Meeting:** the third Wednesday, 7:00 p.m., Swan Lake Nature Centre; **Birders' Night:** the fourth Wednesday, 7:30 p.m., Begbie 159, University of Victoria. **Marine Night:** the last Monday, 7:30 p.m., Swan Lake Nature Centre. Locations are given in the calendar listings. Telephone the VNHS Events Tape at 479-2054 for further information and updates.

JULY

Saturday, July 14

Birding Witty's Lagoons

Need help sorting out all those returning shorebirds. Let Gordon Hart guide you through the steps it takes to become a shorebird lover. What next, gulls? Meet at 8:00 a.m. in the main parking lot.

Saturday, July 21 and Sunday July 22

Monthly Butterfly Count

The Victoria area July Butterfly Count needs your eyes. Call **Jeff Gaskin** at 384-1573 if you would like to participate.

Sunday, July 22

Botanical Beach

You never know what the receding tide will reveal at beautiful Botanical Beach. Sea urchins, anemones, chitons and barnacles galore are just a few of the marine organisms that call this area home. It isn't only the beach that provides the unexpected though: Look offshore and watch for marine mammals and pelagic birds. A seal, orcas, or a gray whale could pass by at any minute! Join BC Park Naturalist **Vanessa Elton** for a day on the west coast. Meet at the Helmcken Park and Ride at 7:45 a.m. to car-pool or meet out at the main parking lot in the park at 10:00 am.

Saturday, July 21

Hurricane Ridge

This trip, a VNHS tradition, is timed to catch the peak of the *spring* alpine wildflowers on Hurricane Ridge in Washington's Olympic National Park. Bird from the ferry, and look for high elevation species in the mountains. There are facilities in the park, but a lunch and something to drink is suggested. Meet at the Black Ball Ferry terminal in the Inner Harbour before 6:00 a.m. (allow time to park) for the 6:10 sailing of the M.V. Coho. Ferry cost is \$14.00 (US) return, and it is a good idea to have some ID with you for customs. Cost of the charter bus and entry to the park is about \$22.00 (CDN-please have cash). We'll return on the 5:15 p.m. sailing (90 minute crossing time). There is room for 22 participants plus the 2 leaders. If an extra bus is needed we can take 13 more. These trips always fill, so reserve your spot early by calling the **Goldstream Nature House** at 478-9414. *VNHS members will be given priority.*

Possible Butterfly Walk in August

If there is sufficient interest, a Butterfly Walk in the Duncan area will be organized during August. If you are interested, call **Rick Shortinghuis**, 642-3596.

AUGUST

Sunday, August 5

Hurricane Ridge

This trip, a VNHS tradition, is timed to catch the *summer* alpine wildflowers on Hurricane Ridge in Washington's Olympic National Park. Bird from the ferry, and look for high elevation species in the mountains. There are facilities in the park, but a lunch and something to drink is suggested. Meet at the Black Ball Ferry terminal in the Inner Harbour before 6:00 a.m. (allow time to park) for the 6:10 sailing of the M.V. Coho. Ferry cost is \$14.00 (US) return, and it is a good idea to have some ID with you for customs. Cost of the charter bus and entry to the park is about \$22.00 (CDN — please have cash). We'll return on the 5:15 p.m. sailing (90 minute crossing time). There is room for 22 participants plus the 2 leaders: **Rick Shortinghuis** (642-3596) and **Marilyn Lambert**. If an extra bus is needed we can take 13 more. These trips always fill, so reserve your spot early by calling the **Goldstream Nature House** at 478-9414. *VNHS members will be given priority.*

Sunday, August 5

Life's a Beach Seine

Special guest speakers will lead this exploration at the low tide in Bamberton Provincial Park on Saanich Inlet. Using a beach seine, we'll bring in an amazing assortment of marine life for a closer look. Learn a little about the natural history of these rarely seen creatures. Meet at the Helmcken Park and Ride at 12:15 p.m., or 1:00 p.m. at the change rooms in the park (down on the beach). Bamberton Park is located 35 km north of Victoria and was originally created as a recreational area for the employees of the now-closed Bamberton Cement Plant. Allow 1.5 hrs. for the program.

Sunday, August 12

Dragonflies for Beginners, by Beginners?

As Dennis Paulson says in his new book, *Dragonflies of Washington*, "Perhaps even more than butterflies, dragonflies are birdwatchers' insects." Meet **Darren Copley** at the Beaver Lake Retriever Ponds at 11:00 a.m. (another advantage over birding) and we'll see what we can find. We'll look at what field guides are available, some tricks to catching dragonflies, and even how to key out the difficult ones. Bring binoculars, an insect net (if you have one), and hope for sunny weather.

Saturday, August 20 and Sunday, August 21

Monthly Butterfly Count

The Victoria area August Butterfly Count needs your eyes. Call **Jeff Gaskin** at 384-1573 if you would like to participate.

NEW FIELD-TRIP

Saturday, August 25

Sea Otters, Puffins, and Archaeological Museum

Join us for a field trip on the Olympic Peninsula to Cape Flattery and the First Nations Cultural and Research Center. Cape Flattery is the most northern point in the continental United States and is one of the closest locations where you might see puffins or sea otters. Islands off the point are also home to thousands of seabirds throughout the year. In 1970 tidal erosion uncovered an ancient whaling village at Ozette, parts of which had been covered by a mudslide hundreds of years ago. The artifacts that were subsequently found have now classified Ozette as one the most significant archaeological discoveries ever made in North America! In 1979 the Cultural and Research Center opened to the public in order to share this great archaeological find. Meet at the Black Ball Ferry terminal in the Inner Harbour before 6:00 a.m. (allow time to park) for the 6:10 sailing of the M.V. Coho. Ferry cost is \$14.00 (US) return, and it is a good idea to have some ID with you for customs. Cost of the charter bus and entry to the museum is about \$18.00 (US-this will vary with number of participants). We'll return on the 5:15 p.m. sailing (90 minute crossing time). There is room for 24 participants. Reserve your spot early by calling the **Goldstream Nature House** at 478-9414. Bring a lunch!

BULLETIN BOARD

The Goldstream Art Show Request for Volunteers

Goldstream Provincial Park, the Habitat Acquisition Trust, and the Victoria Natural History Society are once again co-sponsoring a show of nature-inspired art from September 14 to October 8, 2001. *The Nature of Island Artists* will be held at the Freeman King Visitor Centre (Goldstream Provincial Park) and will showcase artists from Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands. To successfully operate this show and raise money for the Habitat Acquisition Trust and Goldstream's Eagle Extravaganza, we need volunteers to help staff the centre during the day, as well as help distribute posters to advertise the event. Please call **Johanna van Barneveld** at 474-3028 to get on the volunteer list. Volunteers will be invited to participate in the opening wine and cheese on September 14.

BC Parks Summer Visitor Programs

Free programming is available in many of the Provincial Parks on Southern Vancouver Island; including special Jerry's Rangers Programs, designed especially for children. The summer program schedule for BC Parks is available at Goldstream Park and other BC Parks offices. Call 478-9414 for information on how you can get one. Read about our up-coming special events in the calendars and especially some of our exciting new workshops.

YOUNG NATURALISTS EVENTS

July 22

Marine Life at a Sandy Beach

Sidney Spit Provincial Park Meeting before 11 a.m. at Sidney Spit Ferry. Join naturalist **Susanna Solecki** and other leaders for an exploration of the low tide zone at this sandy beach. We'll have a picnic lunch after arriving, then head out for the great low tide at 12:40. Ferry approximately \$6/passenger. Call **Sheila Mosher** or **Carolyn MacDonald** to register and get a list of what to bring.

August 12

The World of Dragonflies

Beaver Lake Retriever Ponds 11:00 am. This amazing predatory insect has over 5,000 species throughout the world. Join naturalist **Darren Copley** on a hunt by the ponds to have a closer look at some of our local species of dragonflies. You will never look at dragonflies the same again! Call **Sheila Mosher** or **Carolyn MacDonald** to register.

Victoria Young Naturalist Club

Coordinator: **Sheila Mosher**, phone: 652-3502
Program Coordinator: **Carolyn MacDonald**, phone: 544-2246
Organizing Committee: **Susanna Solecki**, **Lori VanInisberg**, **Maureen Funk**. (The Victoria Young Naturalists' Club is a local chapter of the Young Naturalists' Club of British Columbia. YNC chapters are supported by local natural history societies throughout BC.)

Volunteer Naturalists Needed

CRD Parks is looking for several volunteer naturalists to staff the Nature Houses at Francis/King and Witty's Lagoon Regional Parks. The commitment is for at least one year. If you're interested please call **Laesha** or **Jenny** at 478-3344.

Rocky Point Bird Observatory Welcomes Members and Volunteers

Rocky point Bird Observatory memberships (\$25 per year) are available by contacting **Tom Gillespie**, Treasurer, 361-1694. RPBO could not run without volunteer field assistants. If you are interested in volunteering some time during the upcoming field season (mid-July to mid-October), or if you wish to attend one of the upcoming evening information sessions, please contact **Rick Shortinghuis**, site manager, 642-3596.

Walbran-Carmanah Rainforest Tours

Enjoy primeval nature at it's very best...weekend/daytrips with Carmanah Forestry Society. Also South Central Vancouver Island Recreation Map — Hiking, Mountain Biking and Kayaking Routes along with Carmanah-Walbran, Nahmint-Alberni Valley, Juan de Fuca Marine Trail and San Juan Ridge Insets. 381-1141 or carmanah @pacificcoast.net



The Victoria NATURALIST

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