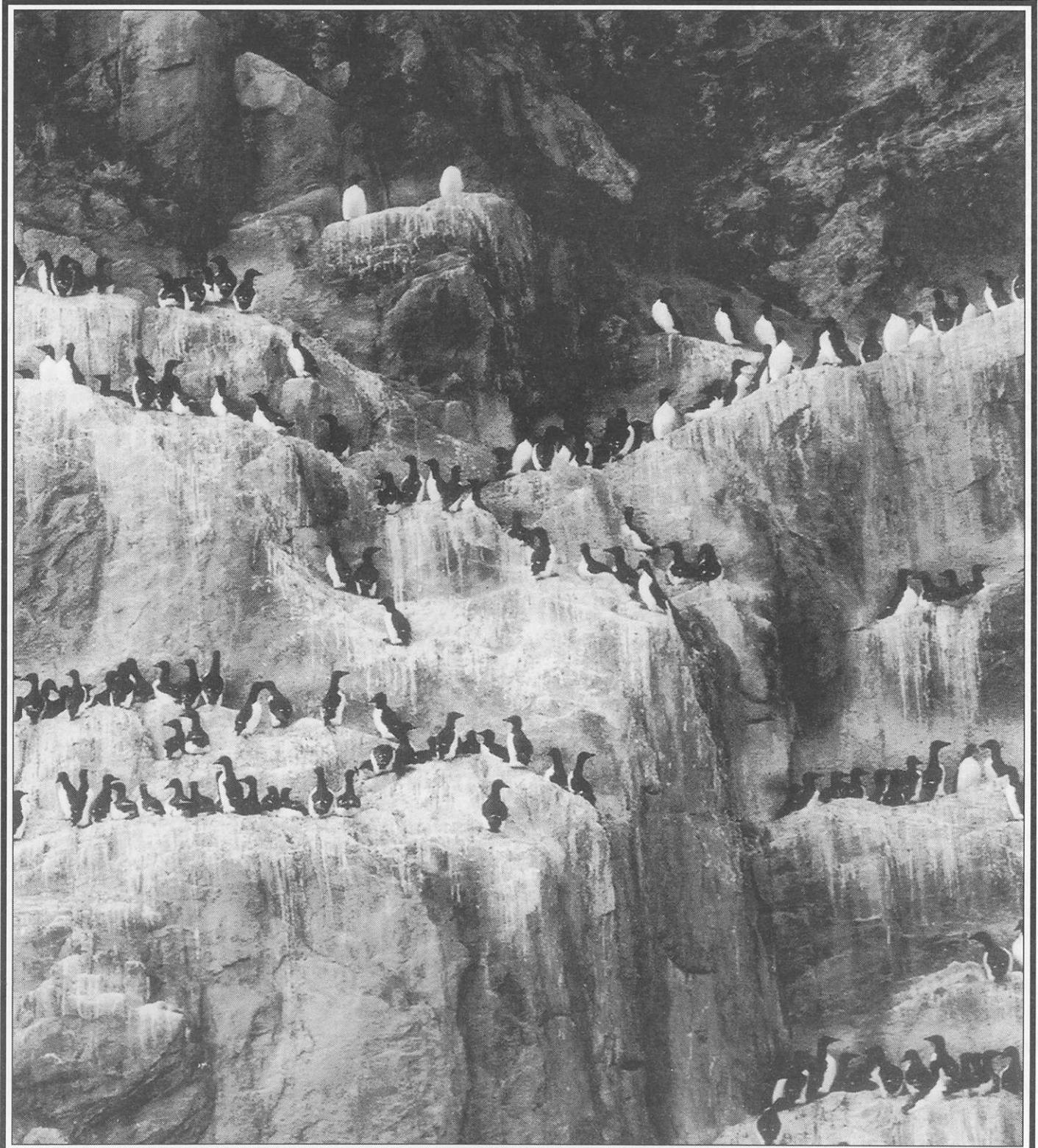




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COVER PHOTO

Arctic Thick-billed Murres by Lyndis Davis

Hard-nosed, rational decision makers are pictured in
 our society as representing an ideal we should all
 strive to achieve. If only we take such an approach,
 they say, a new era, Utopia, is just around the
 corner. On the other hand, conservationists and
 environmentalists are characterized as hopeless
 romantics out of touch with the "real" world.

Romance is the white knight hero rescuing us
 from evil. So, in actual fact, it is the hard-nosed,
 rational types who are the hopeless romantics. They
 refuse to face the reality, that healthy biological
 systems are essential to the survival of the human
 race. They prefer to dream that their rational ways of
 thinking will find the hero-type solution to destroy
 any problems that might arise, and humans can
 continue to live in blissful ignorance of the
 precarious state of our essential life support systems.
 Their thinking may be rational but does it bear any
 semblance to common sense?

Now is the time for the so-called romantics,
 common sense conservationists and environ-
 mentalists, to raise their voices in aid of our bio-
 physical environment; even those of us who feel
 more comfortable in the background. John Ralston
 Saul noted in his recent visit to Victoria, that we have
 too long confused the politeness of civil society with
 the smoothness of conformity fostered by our so-
 called leaders. The voices need only be small, for
 many small voices can be even more effective than a
 few annoyingly loud ones. We each can work in
 small steps, but we need to start now.

Marilyn and Ross

Arctic Odyssey

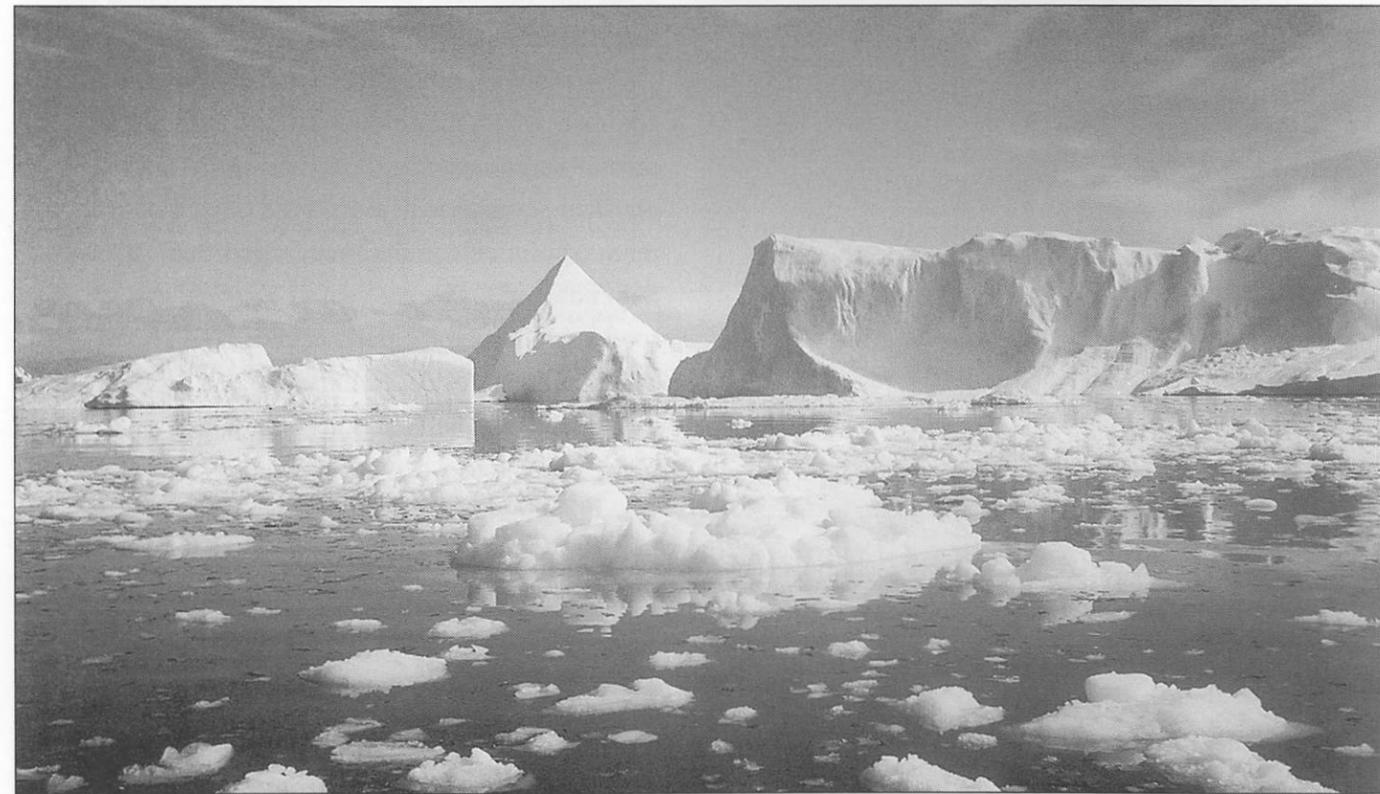
By Lyndis Davis

In July 2001, I joined a 12-day "Arctic Adventure" with Adventure Canada and Canadian Geographic to Greenland and Baffin Island. Our ship "Akademik Ioffe" was a Russian research vessel with a length of 117m (about 380'). There were 108 "explorers" (mostly Canadians but also from the States, UK, NZ, Oz) and 10 resource people who gave talks and slide shows. The two Inuit traveling with us demonstrated drum dancing, antler carving, and talked about life in the North and there were often song evenings. The food was good and plentiful, the cabins small but quite comfortable, and the Russian staff was all very friendly and efficient. To go ashore, we traveled in Zodiacs that were carried on deck.

We joined the ship in Greenland having flown from Ottawa. The ship went down Sandre Stromfjord (the longest fjord in the world) during the night. Darkness never fell, as we were above the Arctic Circle. Going out on deck, the air seemed "pure" and made us want to take deep breaths. We turned north up the coast to the small fishing community of Itivdleq where we went ashore to explore. The village is very gay as the houses are painted different colours — so that people know where they are in a whiteout. There were few

people about, as most families had gone fishing. The church was beautiful and so peaceful; Aiju (one of the Inuit with us) played the organ. She had been born in Itivdleq but had been sent to Denmark at the age of eight for schooling, and had never been back. She found her family's house and met some people who knew her family. Because there were no roads in the village, only paths, there were patches of flowers everywhere — chickweed, dryas and cotton grass with their white heads bending in the breeze. There were many Snow Buntings flying around and a few Lapland Longspurs as well as four husky puppies. The adult dogs are not allowed in the village; they have to be tethered on the outskirts, and in the summer are "banished" to the nearby islands where they can be free. Food is thrown to them 2 or 3 times a week.

Our next stop was in Disco Bay further up the coast. The highlight was a "cruise amongst the icebergs". This was a marvelous experience as the sunshine lit up the bergs and made them glisten, really showing up the colours in the ice. Disco Bay is where icebergs start their journey to the sea. The glacier that the bergs calve from is about 30 km up the fjord and they drift down the fjord, getting "stuck" at the mouth of the inlet on a shallow bar. Eventually breaking



Icebergs in Disko Bay, near Ilulissat. Photos: Lyndis Davis

free, they drift around the bay until the currents and winds catch them and take them out to sea where they drift north up Davis Straight, west to the Canadian side, and south past Baffin Island, Labrador and Newfoundland. Although icebergs are constantly melting, it can take some up to 3 years to melt.

We crossed Davis Straight in a flat calm (no one had ever experienced such a calm crossing).

Off the Baffin coast, we ran into fog and pack ice. This ice is frozen sea water (as opposed to icebergs which are calved from glaciers) and does not reach the size of icebergs; but of course, the icebergs get caught in the pack ice in the winter. Pack ice also drifts around with the currents when it breaks up in the spring. Unfortunately it had drifted in to the coast and the ship had to slow down to make its way through leads, as gaps in the pack ice are called. The ice also blocked the entrance to Cumberland Sound and this meant that we could not get to Pangnirtung. We went back out to sea and continued south to the SE corner of the Island where we visited the Savage Islands. Once clear of the pack ice, we were back in the sunshine.

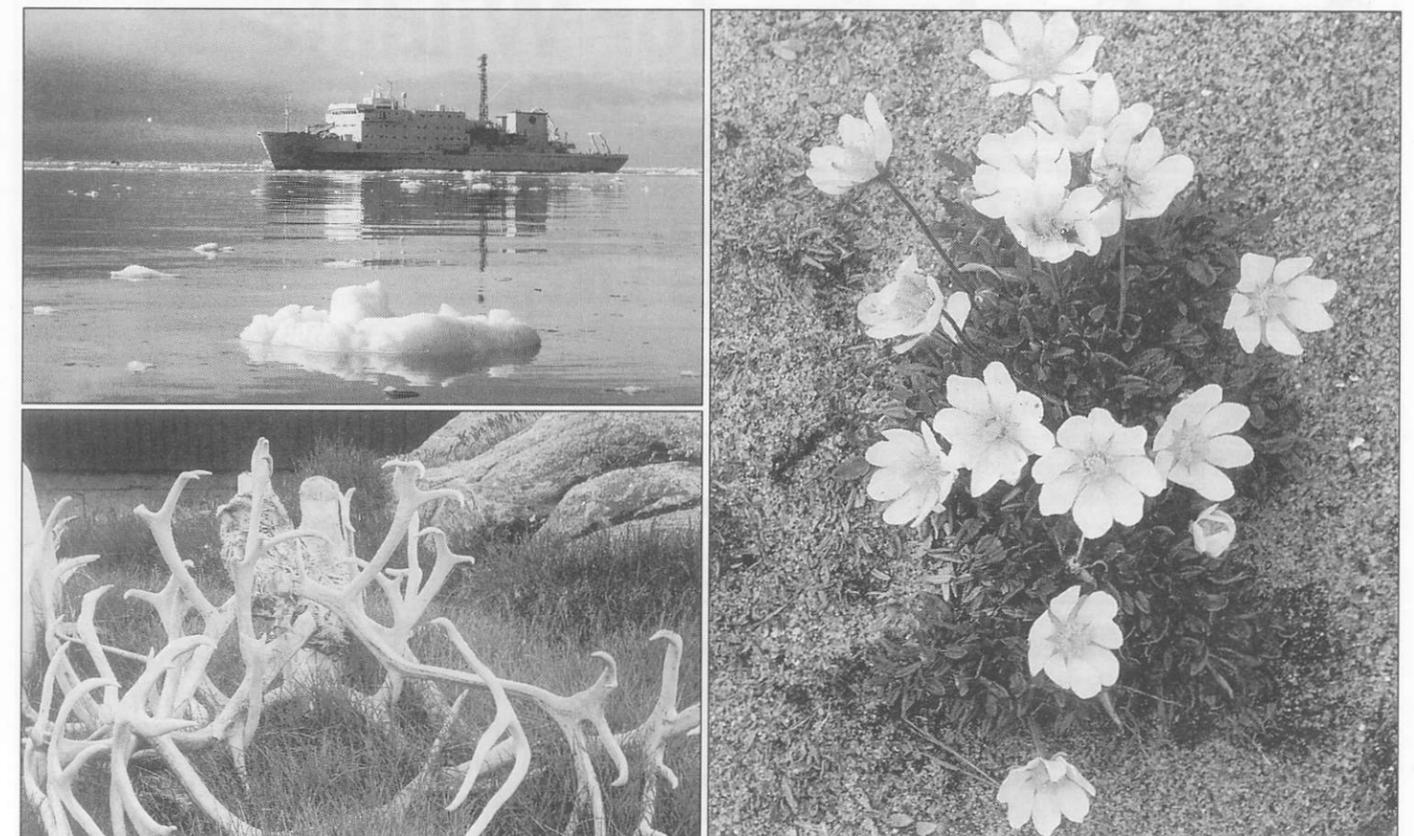
The Savage Islands were special as we saw our first polar bears. They were "lounging" on two islands beside our channel providing us with excellent views. We landed further up the channel. Two people with rifles went up to the top of the ridge to keep a watch out for bears, and when a mother and two cubs were sighted, we returned to the boats. The place we landed was all rocks and gravel but we found

clumps of moss campion and purple saxifrage with their deep purple flowers; low to the ground and protected from the wind by rocks — stunning to see in such an inhospitable place. We also saw a few common eider ducks and black guillemots. The fog returned and we had trouble finding the "Ioffe", but with the help of GPS, all the zodiacs returned safely to the ship.

Our next stop was Shaftesbury Inlet, a real highlight. We went there to see the rocks that marked an ancient Thule house situated on a lake about 1 km from where we landed. The stream flowing out of the lake had fish weirs across it to prevent Arctic char escaping to the sea so that the Innu could catch them. The house and weir may have been built 4000 years ago and the weirs were used up to the 1930's. What made it so memorable was the beautiful warm day, the meadows we walked through to reach the lake that were so full of wildflowers — fireweed, Pyrola, Arctic toadflax, buttercups, lousewort, and arnica. There were four butterfly species, and a Semi-palmated plover. There were also several caribou antlers and other bones scattered about which we were told could be 100 years old, since they do not rot, nor do rodents eat them.

We went south to the Quebec coast to see the cliffs at the Digges Islands where there were thousands of Thickbilled murre nesting — neat black and white birds lined up on the ledges, flying in hundreds overhead to their feeding grounds, and sitting on the water. It was a thrilling bonus, because we would not have got there if we had gone up Cumberland Strait.

Below: "Cruise ship" Research Vessel Akademik Ioffe, Arctic Dryas and caribou antlers waiting for carving.



On our way to Cape Dorset, we visited Mallikjuaq Historic Park to see a restored Thule house and the remains of two others. One of the park wildlife officers told us about the site. To my joy, there was an innukshuk down by the sea. That and the polar bears were the things that I most wanted to see.

Our last "natural" stop was at Walrus Island off Coral Harbour. It is used in the summer by walrus because there are rich clam beds off shore. The walrus were in the water and hauled out on the rocks. The polar bears know that the walrus go there and sometimes one will swim the considerable distance to the island to try his luck. One of the zodiacs went round the far side of the island and did see a bear eating a walrus but it took off to higher ground when it heard the motor. This island was featured on the recent TV program on walrus.

We visited four communities along the Baffin coast. A "cruise ship" was a novelty as none had visited them before. We were given a very warm welcome — being met at the landing place by guides who took us round the village and showed us the church, the stores and the tent or restaurant where the villagers had their carvings for sale. The quality and price of the pieces varied considerably as these carvers were not members of the co-operative and thus could not sell through the co-operative. Our visit was an opportunity for them to sell their work. Members of the co-operative are usually better carvers and can ask higher prices. There were also wall hangings, and in Cape Dorset, Inuit prints. One of our leaders had been brought up in Cape Dorset in the '50's.

It was his father who had realized the potential of the drawings produced by the Inuit. He went to Japan to learn print-making so that he could teach the technique to the villagers who demonstrated their print-making for us.

Our visit to each community ended with a gathering at the community center. We were welcomed, and the villagers put on a show — a fashion show, a demonstration of throat singing, and drum dancing. The young people did a "square dance" with live music, but no caller. The dance went on and on: no one — neither the musicians nor the dancers — knowing when or how to finish it! At one place, we were given a demonstration of indoor arctic games — a sealskin ball is suspended from a moveable bar and the person has to kick the ball from various positions: standing with feet together, jumping up to kick with one leg and landing on that leg, starting from a squat with hands on the floor, kicking the ball. These games are used in competition between villages and also at the Arctic Games.

As we flew back from Rankin Inlet, we reflected on how fortunate we were. The weather was quite warm, the skies usually sunny, with light cloud (good for photography), and an occasional drizzle that we didn't really notice, since we wore raingear for the shore trips. The movement of the small boats made it cool and we were often splashed when traveling into the wind. The sea was always smooth as we moved from place to place. We reflected about the warm glow from the people we met, and from the orange Arctic sunsets we had seen.

Camas

By Yorke Edwards

For many years, I drove mornings along Dallas Road toward the Government Buildings. In late Spring, I enjoyed a glowing blue on the sloping grassland in Beacon Hill Park. In springtime it was crowded with blue Camas flowers, with a touch of red. The slope is still blue every year, and not only is it beautiful to see, but is history preserved as well.

Long before the invasion of Europeans, the grassy area was worked by the local First Peoples agriculturally harvesting Camas bulbs. The Camas fields were burned off periodically to clear away dead grass and destroying young shrubs and trees. Oaks in other parts of the park were perhaps tolerated because they were solitary, and possibly because their acorns were sometimes food too.

Common wild Camas

(*Camassia quamash*), often found in the company of the larger and even bluer Camas (*Camassia leichtlinii*), is in the Lily Family. Living from southern British Columbia into Alberta, and south to California and Utah, it thrives where climates have moist earth in early spring followed by dry summers. On Vancouver Island in late spring, open grasslands can turn the blue of Camas at its best. Our Island's south-eastern area of balmy climate seems to be just right for Camas as it grows northward up Vancouver Island's east coast, from Victoria to about Comox. It also thrives planted in gardens. Patience is required though, because it takes freshly planted bulbs from four to six years to bear their first flowers.

According to my Western garden book, which covers the warm coast from Vancouver Island south into northern California, two other Camas species, with paler blue flowers are found. The leaves of all kinds are long, rather wide, and wither away in summer.

European Americans first discovered Camas in 1806; by a group of soldiers led by Lewis and Clark, while exploring westward to what is now the north-western United States. They were the first United States citizens to cross the continent to the Pacific Ocean. (Canada's Alexander Mackenzie crossed the continent to the Pacific near what is now Bella Coola in 1793). Lewis and Clark travelled over land across the prairie, on foot or with Indian horses, then across the mountains and down the Columbia River to the sea. Surprisingly, United States' President, Thomas Jefferson had told them to record, and if possible collect, the new plants and animals encountered on their journey. Among their collection was Camas.

Throughout the region where camas grows, the bulbs were a food staple for many groups of the First Peoples. It

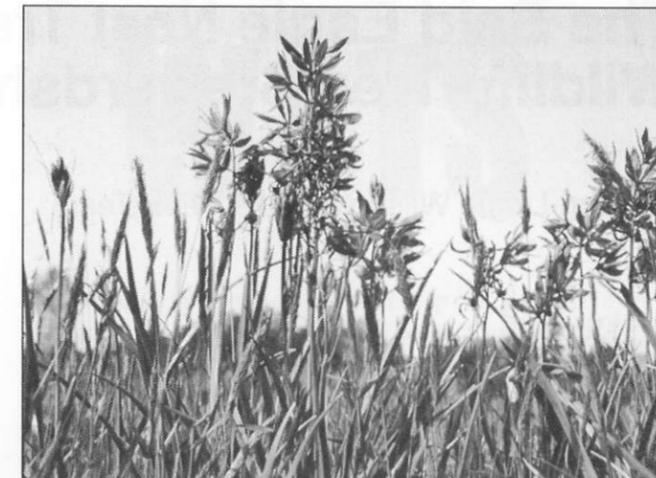


Photo: Ross Archibald

was also important in their trade with others from areas where Camas did not grow (Nu-Chah-Nulth from the West Coast of Vancouver Island).

From Vancouver Island into California, the First People dug square pits for fires, then lined their sides with slabs of stone, placing one across the top. Wet inside, the pit was heated and water added to steam cook the bulbs. The cooking took several days, with a sweet result, a good and flavourful food. The bulbs were at times the main food source. Sometimes up to 20 pounds of bulbs were steamed at one time. They were eaten hot, or saved for future need.

But **beware**: If you want to eat Camas bulbs, be sure they are not bulbs of the Death Camas (*Zygadenus venenosus*), which grows similar bulbs and leaves, but has white flowers. Eaten, the bulbs are deadly. First Peoples marked the locations of Death Camas plants when they were flowering so as not to make a fatal mistake. Before seeking Camas bulbs, it is best to know the two different plants from a good botany book. Nancy Turner's book *Food Plants of Coastal First People* published by the Royal British Columbia Museum is an excellent reference guide.

David Douglas was the first botanist to collect Camas seeds to send them to well known European botanists, the world's best at that time. Douglas was a famous finder of new plants, collecting 340 new species through his years of discovery. Today in British Columbia, the word 'Douglas' is used often botanically as in the name 'Douglas fir'. Douglas sent seeds of the tree that bears his name to Kew Gardens in London. Many Douglas firs were then planted in the large gardens of British estates. Today some old giant Douglas firs still thrive on English and Scottish estates.

Camas bulbs have a historic past of feeding countless people through centuries. Colourful in bloom, they now grow in many gardens, and still can be found in parts in our vanishing wild grasslands. Some wild patches still turn blue in Spring, but most fields once blue, are now paved or built over by urban sprawl. Cities and their wants can soon destroy wild plants. Considering that many plant families first lived over three millions of years ago, we need to do more about saving them. (See the Canadian Encyclopedia, page 2191).

Gardening for Wildlife

A Native Plant Gardening Sale and Demonstration

Saturday and Sunday, April 20 and 21

10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Sale: Native Plants (over 100 species) Native Plant Seeds Presentations Books Bird Feeders Nesting Boxes	Door Prizes Displays Admission: \$3/day, \$5/weekend pass Friends Members Free
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A complete plant list and description of presentations is available on our web site - www.swanlake.bc.ca

A variety of special presentations will be held both days, including:

- * The New "Native Plants in the Coastal Garden", 2nd edition - April Pettinger and Brenda Costanzo
- * Groundcovers, Mosses and Mulches - Susan Bastin
- * Fabulous Ferns - Rosalynn Woodgate
- * Native Plant Garden Tours - Willie MacGillivray
- * and more

The Bald Eagle Nest Tree Project and the Wildlife Tree Stewardship Initiative (WiTS)

By Kerri-Lynne Wilson and the WiTS Team

Background

For over a decade, Ministry of Water, Land, and Air Protection has been conducting an inventory of bald eagle nest trees with the help of local biologists and naturalists. This process was always short of funding and in 1999, the Bald Eagle Nest Tree project was proposed by Karen Morrison, Wildlife Habitat Technician with BC Environment, and John Maher, BC Hydro Regional Environmental Coordinator. The project identified a need for a continued inventory and improved protection of the remaining eagle nest trees on the southeast coast of Vancouver Island. It also provided an opportunity to combine the information and skills of both organizations. BC Hydro's Strategic Environmental Initiatives Program, established to help find green energy sources and new ways to become a sustainable energy company, funded the project for one year during the 2000-2001 Bald Eagle nesting season.

Accomplishments

During the project, Bald Eagle nest trees in hard to access areas and not previously inventoried along the Vancouver Island southern coastline and Gulf Islands were documented by helicopter. Also, inventories containing tree location, tree condition and eagle productivity were entered from hardcopy into a database. Inventories of known trees were completed in the Capital Regional District and the Cowichan Valley, and new trees were inventoried in Nanaimo and Comox-Strathcona Regional Districts.

Detailed assessments were completed on two Bald Eagle nest trees in the Nanoose Area. The trees were found to be unsound and had a high potential to fail and hit a target (i.e. power lines, buildings, people, etc.) so they were felled.

The database containing nest tree information was improved in MS Access and many locations and eagle productivity information was placed in a Bald Eagle Atlas on the web-based Community Mapping Network. The atlas is interactive and viewers can see locations (1:50,000 scale), productivity, and observer's notes. Arborists assessed the health of many trees in urban locations in Comox-Strathcona, Nanaimo, Cowichan Valley, and Capital Regional Districts. Detailed assessments were completed on two Bald Eagle nest trees in the Nanoose area and the trees were found to be unsound and felled. In one case, there were many alternative trees suitable for nesting within the eagle's territory. In the other case, a sub-optimal eagle nesting tree (second growth

Douglas-fir) was pruned to open up the spaces between the branches to mimic a veteran Douglas-fir (optimal nesting habitat). Cut branches, similar to the ones used for eagle nests, were placed on top of two strong limbs to encourage the eagles to nest in the tree. Also, an artificial nest platform on a pole was erected by BC Hydro.

Artificial nest platforms for Bald Eagles are not well studied and the eagles seem to be very discriminating about where they choose to nest. In Campbell River, a pole and platform was placed in a park very close to a Cottonwood nest tree in the backyard of a subdivision home. Cottonwoods are sub-optimal eagle nest trees because they are short-lived and have weak branch attachments. The urban territory that the Bald Eagle pair occupied contained no alternative nest trees should the branches supporting the nest in the Cottonwood fail. The park owners granted permission to erect a platform so the Campbell River BC Hydro line crew, with some direction from the project, could build and erect the platform. FBCN naturalists are monitoring the platform.

Volunteers

At the end of the project, there were over 100 volunteer Bald Eagle Nest Tree Monitors as compared to around 30 at the beginning of the project. Monitors visited nest trees during the 2000/2001 eagle breeding season and recorded information on eagle activity, tree condition, and any land-use that may be detrimental to the nest tree or eagles. Monitors were given workshops that included presentations on Bald Eagle biology, tree condition, recording data and landowner contact. This information was collected at the end of the season and reviewed, and the data entered into the database. The project ended in September 2001. However plans for continuation and expansion of the project were in the works.

The Transition

An application to the federal government's EcoAction program for the Wildlife Tree Stewardship Initiative was successful. The project would continue with a focus change from just Bald Eagle nest trees to wildlife trees and their buffer areas; the focus being on the ecosystem associated with wildlife trees.

The Wildlife Tree Stewardship Initiative (WiTS)

The Wildlife Tree Stewardship Initiative or WiTS is an initiative of the Federation of BC Naturalists. Partners include Environment Canada, Ministry of Water, Lands, and Air Protection, BC Hydro, the Wildlife Tree Committee of BC, and Cowichan Community Land Trust. The goal is to conserve dwindling coastal wildlife tree habitats through volunteer monitoring, landowner agreements, and community education along the Strait of Georgia on Vancouver Island. Eventually, the initiative hopes to expand to other coastal areas of BC.

The Issue

The southeast coast of Vancouver Island, and associated islands, contains some of the most altered ecosystems in BC. Within these ecosystems, agriculture, forestry, and urbanization are placing many wildlife species at risk. Yet, the ability to see wildlife is one of the reasons we choose to live on, or visit Vancouver Island. The WiTS initiative aims to document and conserve wildlife trees within the remnant habitats of these ecosystems.

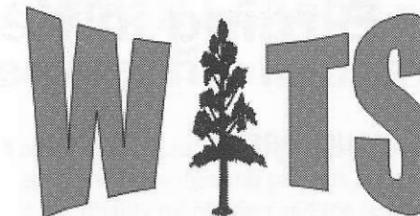
By definition, a wildlife tree is "any standing dead or live tree with special characteristics that provide valuable habitat for the conservation or enhancement of wildlife. They play an important role in forest ecosystems by contributing to and maintaining the biological diversity in BC forests (Wildlife Tree Committee of BC)".

Under Section 34 of the Provincial *Wildlife Act*, year-round protection applies to the nests of Bald Eagles, Ospreys, Great Blue Herons, Burrowing Owls, and Peregrine Falcons. Federal and Provincial protection for nests of most migratory birds only occurs when there is a bird or egg in the nest. This leaves the tree vulnerable to removal at other times. There is no federal or provincial protection for the critical buffer area around the tree that provides necessary feeding, roosting, and perching habitat.

Volunteers

Currently, the initiative has over 100 volunteer wildlife tree stewards from over 35 communities covering southeast Vancouver Island from Campbell River to Sooke and approximately 650 plus wildlife trees have been documented to date. The majority of the stewards are FBCN members, however many are landowners with wildlife trees, and others are interested observers. While monitoring wildlife trees, the stewards have noticed some of the 80 species that utilize a wildlife trees including owl nests, Peregrine Falcons, Golden Eagles, Marbled Murrelet activity, hawk nests, passerine activity, and even a honey bee colony!

The stewards from each area have their own Wildlife Tree Coordinator. The coordinator keeps track of stewards and their trees, provides advice to the stewards, and collects forms at the end of the monitoring season. In order to aid the



coordinators in their duties, a workshop was provided that included topics such as landowner contact, covenants, wildlife tree species, tree condition, and recording data.

Volunteer stewards are WiTS link to landowners. Prior to entering a property to monitor a wildlife tree, the steward must obtain landowner permission. Often, the steward develops a rapport with the landowner and can provide information on the value of wildlife trees. Stewards also can inform WiTS which landowners may be interested in a stewardship or conservation covenant. The initiative aims to secure 50-75 stewardship agreements or conservation covenants covering approximately 350-525 hectares of coastal wildlife trees.

Community education

By having the community informed, interested, and participating in land stewardship (trees and buffer area), there will be an increase in the protection of valuable wildlife habitats in the form of stewardship agreements, land covenants, municipal plans and bylaws, and enforcement of current provincial and federal wildlife tree protection.

WiTS will educate communities through distributing brochures and pamphlets, writing articles, partnering with other projects, creating a website with links to an interactive wildlife tree atlas, and giving presentations at community events, museums, schools, and local naturalist groups.

Become Involved

1. Become a Wildlife Tree Steward in your area.
2. Help us to identify areas of land that have wildlife tree value.
3. Consider placing protective stewardship/conservation agreements, or covenants, on identified wildlife tree habitat on your land.
4. Provide hands-on help to enhance valuable habitat (tree planting, constructing nest boxes, etc.) with WiTS.
5. Encourage your local government to incorporate wildlife tree protection into bylaws, zoning, Neighborhood and Official Community Plans.
6. Learn about wildlife trees. Contact us if you are interested.

For more information, contact Kerri-Lynne Wilson, FBCN Wildlife Tree Stewardship Coordinator, (250) 746-3803 kerri-lynn.wilson@bchydro.bc.ca

Winter Birding in Kelowna, January 2002

By Marie O'Shaughnessy

My travels recently took me to one of the most picturesque Birding hot spots of B.C. Nestled in the central Okanagan, lies Kelowna, the third largest city in British Columbia. My little five-day getaway in January proved most beneficial: renewing old acquaintances and chasing after birds. Old man winter hadn't dealt this orchard city much of a blow for little snow was visible upon my arrival. I wasn't in Kelowna more than an hour before I had found a first winter Glaucous Gull with a small gathering of Ring-billed Gulls that were preening at the far end of a marina jetty. A brunch at the Manteo Resort with a friend gave me good views of the Lake as well as the gulls. I thought that this was going to be a great trip!

During the following three days, I was able to bird at my leisure. I was fortunate to be staying at the Grand Hotel with scenic parks, local marsh, marinas, beaches and bird walks, all within easy distance on foot. I was thrilled to observe 200 plus American Coots as they manoeuvred playfully on the lake one morning. It was along the lake edge, that I too noticed an American Dipper that seemed so out of place as it foraged amongst the rocks within the calm waters at my feet. This was so unlike its usual swift moving stream's habitat. I watched for a while, and then added it to my list, which at that time included thirty-five species. Rotary Marsh located in Waterfront Park near the hotel was home to a successful nesting pair of Osprey last summer. The artificial nesting pole, complete with nest, loomed tall over the marshy waters.

My visit to Kelowna was especially memorable, for I was able to connect with expert birder, Hank Vanderpol who retired from Victoria with his wife. Hank certainly brought me smiles and additional birds to add to my list during the time we spent birding together. I had called him, not really expecting to find Hank at home. I was convinced he would be off in some exotic place adding to his world list of feathered friends. Imagine my delight when he said he was free to do what both he and I love best. Birding! Winter in Kelowna has its fair share of rare and over-wintering birds to delight a visitor from the coast. A Great-tailed Grackle that frequents a MacDonald's restaurant in Kelowna a year or more after its original sighting, was not to be listed on this occasion. My guess was that it was finally tired of the fast food menu and is apparently now only seen infrequently at this location. We left disappointed but had hot coffee and donuts to comfort us.

Our morning of birding had started at 9.15 am. Relatively late for Hank, but I was on holidays and needed the rest. It seemed to me, and the birds, that a new day at this time of year, did not really start until 8 am. I didn't really want to become active until later either. So, I thought our agreed upon start time was perfect as we headed to Munson

Road. We were searching for a Hoary Redpoll and Harris' Sparrow but neither was to be observed; however, we had good looks at Common Redpolls and Mourning Doves at this location. We also recorded a Downey Woodpecker, Red-winged Blackbird, White-crowned Sparrow, Black-capped Chickadee, Great Blue Heron and several winter plumaged American Goldfinches. We hopped back into the car and were on our way again.

We Birders are known for our sudden halts while driving, when we stop and look for interesting birds. Stopping and starting is what we Birders do well. Unsuspecting drivers who follow car loads of birders need to be aware of this kind of behaviour for it can create difficulties on the roads.

Our next destination was to check out the Gyrfalcon that had recently been reported at the cattle feed lots on Highway 97. The fourth telegraph pole in from the roadway had been identified as the common roost for this bird. It was decidedly empty of a sitting bird as we drove up. However, with scope mounted, and Hank's persistent scanning, a Golden Eagle filled the scope's field of vision. It was sitting regally on the lower branches of a not too distant tree. The restless Rock Doves were everywhere but the Gyrfalcon remained elusive if it was indeed there at all.

Sipping on our warm coffee we headed for a new area. We thought we might find the missing Hoary Redpoll. Taking Joe Rich Road into a subdivision, we found ourselves suddenly delighting in one of the biggest flock of Bohemian Waxwings I had ever seen. They milled around the subdivision flying in and out of the Cedar and Mountain Ash trees. We eventually found a flock of Common Redpolls, but the much sought after Hoary was not evident. A family of California Quail bulleted from the dense branches of a bush. We finally left after a glimpse of a Sharp-shinned Hawk sitting as though a sentinel high in a skeletal tree. We saw two American Kestrels later as we meandered through the orchards and surrounding country roads. I even saw thirty-five Mourning Doves all in close proximity within several trees. This many of one species was a novelty for me, as was a group of five brightly coloured Ring-necked Pheasants scurrying through the dead grasses.

Our birding tour took us to higher elevations, and as we motored the highway, the weather suddenly changed. Snowflakes began to fall, reminding us that winter really was here. After all it was still January! We travelled further into the blowing snow to be rewarded with a view of a handsome Rough-legged Hawk sitting at the crown of a roadside tree. We managed to 'spook' it so that it flew to yet another tree. The image of this magnificent hawk as the snowflakes blew across our view was truly memorable. It was a photo-

grapher's moment but I had no camera at hand! Some of the best opportunities for a good shot arise it seems, when the camera is in the car.

The thickening snows persuaded Hank to turn the car around and head back into town. On the way, we caught sight of yet another Rough-legged Hawk, a few Juncos, one or two Song Sparrows, and a lone Steller's Jay. Robins were evident in great numbers as they rooted around fallen apples in some of the orchards. We heard a cacophony of bird sound throughout one particular orchard, making identification rather challenging.

As we neared the end of our birding trip, we found nine Pine Grosbeaks foraging on the Mountain Ash berries. We sat in the car, out of the cold, and observed their feeding activity almost at eye level. This gave me an opportunity to really observe a species that I had rarely seen at the coast. The splendour of these birds contrasted well with the backdrop of red berries.

All too soon our outing came to an end as other commitments had been made. However, the time I spent with Hank was very rewarding. I was very pleased with my Okanagan experience. It had been a great five hours of birding made more enjoyable with the company of a good friend.

Once back at my hotel, Hank told me of a great spot to scout before I left Kelowna. Knox Mountain Park area was indeed a bonanza the next day when I visited. The cooler temperatures and a few centimetres of snow over night brought more birds to flock together. Several large rafts of assorted waterfowl were evident on the lake. I was able to add seven more birds to my list providing me with a grand total of fifty-seven species for the five days of part time birding. I saw great numbers of Redheads on the lake that truly amazed me. In and around Victoria only a few are ever seen. Canvasbacks seemed scarce that day in Kelowna. I did, however, miss the Northern Shoveler, and the Wood Duck that had been reported. My excitement peaked as two Trumpeter Swans floated past me while I was watching the assortment of ducks. This seemed so unusual for I had become accustomed to the Swans on Martindale Flats in Victoria ambling around the farmer's fields.

One of the most moving experiences of my trip to Kelowna, was watching the large flocks of honking Canada Geese. They would fly low in their typical 'V' formation, traveling from one area of the valley to their roost each evening. Their call echoed in my mind as they disappeared into the blush and shadows at the end of another winter's day.

On the afternoon of my departure, large silver wings lifted me aloft so that I too could fly into the west with the setting sun. My 'bird' took me safely through the snow clouds that had covered the valley, and as I reached the soaring heights, I was able to sit back and relax and watched the changing landscape far below blush with the diminishing colour of a closing day.

Esquimalt Lagoon Stewardship Initiative

The work on Esquimalt Lagoon is moving ahead at a good pace now. Several projects are underway, such as water quality monitoring and the development of a recreational use plan to reduce habitat destruction in the area. ELSI's member groups, including VNHS at Habitat Acquisition Trust have submitted grant proposals to work on community outreach and education.

VNHS has taken the lead in a project to provide interpretive signs at the lagoon. We are hoping to raise at least \$15,000 in cash or "in-kind" contributions to erect two kiosks and a number of smaller stand-alone signs. To date, \$4500 has been committed and several grant applications are under consideration.

Volunteers are being sought for the sign and other projects. In particular, we are looking for a few artists who may be able to paint birds in a style similar to those the sign company has in stock. ELSI has identified a need for a logo, so if you have talent in this area, please contact Jody Watson at 360-3065 or jwatson@crd.bc.ca. We are also looking for writers who may be able to put together articles for the newspapers or press releases for other media. If you would like to help out with the Esquimalt Lagoon Stewardship Initiative, please contact Ann Nightingale at 652-6450 or motmot@shaw.ca.



AUSTRALIA'S GREAT BARRIER REEF
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- Heron Island National Park located on the Great Barrier Reef (2 nights)
- Overnight Rail Journey on the Sunlander train (1st class)
- Lake Barine and Lake Eachern National Parks
- Daintree River, Port Douglas and Rainforest Habitat
- Ocean Spirit Cruise to Michaelmas Cay, Great Barrier Reef
- Cairns and environs

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Federation of BC Naturalists' Annual General Meeting

We are counting down to the 2002 FBCN AGM, the first that VNHS has hosted in ten years. Mark May 10-12 on your calendar and plan to attend this great event! Having it in your home city means that you can meet with other naturalists, attend a lot of the functions, and spend three full days enjoying what Victoria has to offer at minimal expense (and you get to sleep in your own bed!)

The AGM will include a full day field trip to the Carmannah-Walbran area on Thursday, field trips, workshops, and the AGM on Friday and Saturday, a banquet on Saturday evening, May 12, (open to VNHS member whether or not they attend the conference), and more field trips on Sunday.

Registration forms will be available at VNHS meetings, the Habitat Acquisition Trust office, and on the VNHS website (www.vicnhs.bc.ca). More details will be on the website and in the Spring issue of the *FBCN Naturalist*.

If you are interested in helping out with the workshops, field trips or other aspects of the conference, please contact Ann Nightingale at 652-6450 or motmot@shaw.ca.



Natural History Course



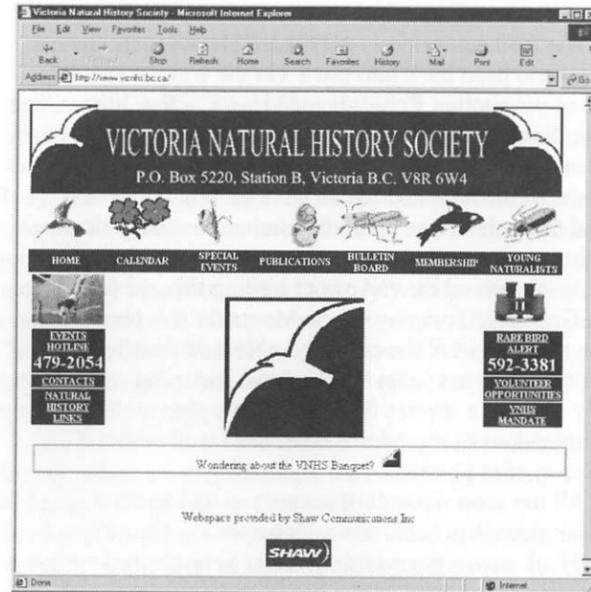
Here is a chance to support the society while learning a bit more about natural history. Programs instructors are experienced VNHS trip leaders who have volunteered their time. The proceeds will support VNHS conservation and education activities. Please note the lower prices for members (yet another reason to join!). We are interested in offering other courses but require more leaders to come forward. Please call Claudia at 479-6622 if you have any suggestions.

Beyond Beginning Birding



Take the next step beyond the basics of identification. Our group of local VNHS experts places an emphasis on birding by ear and the identifying field marks of those difficult groups and species. This course includes 8 very diverse field sessions around Victoria led by 8 different leaders. The cost is \$95.00 for non-members and \$65.00 for members. Each session is limited to fifteen. Sessions run on Thursday or Sunday mornings beginning on April 4th.

If you have any questions, or would like to register, call Darren or Claudia Copley at 479-6622.



www.VicNHS.bc.ca

Victoria Natural History Society's website is now online, thanks to the efforts of John Taylor and the sponsorship of Shaw Cablesystems.

John took on the project late last spring when Mt. Douglas High School was looking for organizations to work with their students to create websites. Students, Jennifer Chan, Tracy Wong and Tim Chow worked under John's direction and teacher Lara Wear's supervision to develop a plan for the site for their Information Technology 12 class. This gave the students an opportunity to build their web development skills, and gave VNHS the start of a new website.

After the student project was over, John continued to refine the webpages. In December, Shaw Cablesystems agreed to host the website and our new domain address was registered. It seems like it has been a long time coming, but we are finally there!

The VNHS website will provide information on upcoming events, links to VNHS reports and other websites, and updates to information published in *The Victoria Naturalist*. Please visit the site and send your ideas for other topics you would like to see included to feedback@vicnhs.bc.ca.

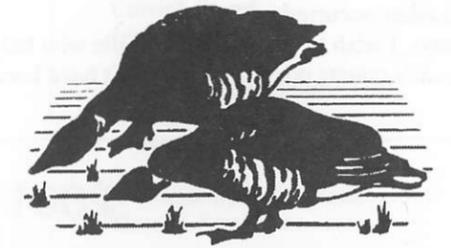
2002 Brant Wildlife Festival Set to Take Flight!

The 12th Annual Brant Wildlife Festival takes off on April 12, 13 and 14, 2002, with events throughout the Parksville-Qualicum Beach area.

This year's theme "A Feast of Nature" focuses on the abundance and diversity of the natural world around us. Celebrating the arrival of over 20,000 Brant to Oceanside beaches — an essential rest stop on their journey from Mexico to their northern breeding grounds — marks the occasion for the festival.

The Festival was formed in 1990 as a project of the Mid-Island Wildlife Watch Society (MIWWS). The society's primary goal is the preservation, enhancement and management of wildlife and their habitats in the mid-island area. Money raised at the festival goes to the Wildlife Legacy Fund. Projects such as the 17 km shoreline now protected as the Parksville-Qualicum Wildlife Management Area, the Brown Property Preservation, and Jedediah Island have already benefited from the fund. A bursary is also being established for students pursuing environmental studies.

Festival organizers plan to entertain, enlighten and educate the thousands of people that attend the wide range of events planned for 2002. Birders, expert or novice, will flock to the renowned Big Day Birding Competition, or to one of the birding workshops currently being planned. Children and families will once again delight in the Unnatural Nature Walk, the birdhouse building workshop and the Kids' Wall of



THE BRANT WILDLIFE FESTIVAL ©

Art at The Old School House. The ever-popular Wildlife Carving and Canadian Fish Carving Championships, drawing carvers from across North America, showcases human fascination with the beauty of our natural world.

Calls for entry to Art and Photography, Student Art and Carving events will be available at the festival office, (250) 752-9171, or online at: <http://brantfestival.bc.ca>. This year's Art Exhibition is especially interested in attracting both 2- and 3-D artists working in a range of mediums.

Check out the website, <http://brantfestival.bc.ca> for up-to-date information, and mark April 12-14, 2002 on your calendars, and plan to join us for a weekend long celebration of nature!

Deborra Schug, Festival Manager, (250) 752-9171, office@brantfestival.bc.ca

2001 Butterfly Count

By Jeff Gaskin

The Butterfly Counts in Victoria were held on six occasions during the past year, between April and September, around the middle of each month. This year it was decided that during the month of September there would be just one count instead of the usual two. The areas covered by all six counts reach from Brentwood Bay and Island View Beach in the north, west to Goldstream Park and south to Witty's Lagoon. This year there were, at one time or another, 92 participants; an increase of about 12 participants from last year.

A grand total of 32 species of butterflies were seen this year, which was an increase of four over last year but the same number as two years ago. The total number of individual butterflies was 10,500.

Among the better "finds" on this year's counts were: one Clodius Parnassian (Darren Copley and Carol Berryman) located right beside the Goldstream Visitor Centre; two European Skippers in or near Rithet's Bog, where there were

thousands in the past, in July (Sharon Hartwell and Bob Hooper); three Green Commas, one in August on Woodridge Drive in the Highlands (Diane Crowther), one in the Gorge neighborhood in September (Jeff Gaskin) and the third, also in September, at the Horticultural Centre (Sue Ennis). This year, I am proud to say that not just one but two Monarchs were seen: one in Broadmead (Bob Hooper) and the other in a garden on Pickford Road (Lorraine Collett). Finally, a sulphur butterfly, probably a Clouded Sulphur, was seen at the Royal Roads University grounds (Ann Nightingale): the only one of that species to be seen here this year.

Species of butterflies that continue to decline in number in Victoria include Mourning Cloak and Satyr Anglewing. The Pine White, European Skipper and Woodland Skipper continue to take a long time to recover from the aerial gypsy moth spraying in 1999.

On a brighter note, Lorquin's Admiral, a species that declined somewhat from the spraying in 1999, continued to

rebound, and this year in its peak month of July, was almost back to normal as 532 were counted. During April and May, there were more Elfin and Two-banded Checkered Skippers present than is usually the case, and in July a huge eruption of Painted Ladies occurred in the city.

As always, I wish to thank all the people who helped make this year's counts possible. I wouldn't have been able

to do all the work myself, without the assistance of Anne Knowles, Sheila South, Phyllis Henderson, Morwyn Marshall, and Joan Inglis who helped by phoning participants. Many thanks also go out to Gordon Hart, the Crowthers, Bob Hooper and Sharon Hartwell, who helped count in several different areas during the year.

2001 Butterfly Count

Species	April	May	June	July	August	Sept.	Total
Anglewing species				2			2
Anise Swallowtail	43	107	47	33	25	8	263
Blues species				1			1
Brown Elfin	33	17					50
Cabbage White	458	1009	824	733	511	435	3970
Clodius Parnassian			1				1
Elfin species	1						1
European Skipper				2			2
Gray Hairstreak	1	4	3	7	4	2	21
Green Comma					1	2	3
Hydaspe Fritillary		1	1	3		2	7
Lorquin's Admiral		2	56	532	77	3	670
Milbert's Tortiseshell		1	2	1	1	1	6
Monarch				2			2
Moss' Elfin	11	1					12
Mourning Cloak	9	4	1	1		2	17
Mylitta Crescent	5	25	9	28	12	40	119
Painted Lady		15	17	98	21	50	201
Pale Swallowtail		41	130	18	1		190
Pine White			1	52	40	5	98
Propertius Duskywing	7	32	7				46
Purplish Copper	1	10	55	17	138	151	372
Red Admiral		1	3	4	6	9	23
Rosner's Hairstreak		2					2
Sara's Orange Tip	34	32	1				67
Satyr Anglewing	38	25	5	2	1		71
Silvery Blue		5	2				7
Spring Azure	278	1059	156				1493
Sulphur species					1		1
Two-banded Chd. Skipper	2	7					9
Vancouver Island Ringlet		25	33	2	28	6	94
West Coast Lady		1	1	11	6	6	25
Western Pine Elfin	1	1					2
Wester Tiger Swallowtail		42	380	252	14		688
Woodland Skipper				59	1249	206	1514
Total Species	14 + 1sp	25	22	20 + 2sp	18	16	32
Total Individuals	922	2469	1735	1860	2136	928	10050

Welcome to New Members

Bruce Gibbons and Colleen Croy-Gibbons
View Royal Avenue
birds, nature (learning about the island as we're new West Coast residents), conservation

Duncan and Pat Currie
Pender Park Drive, North Saanich
birds, botany

Dalia Hull-Thor
Townley Street

John Schreiber
Howe Street

M.B. Pat and Helen Steele
Stuart Park Terrace, Sidney
birds, mammals, botany, geology

Katie Christie
Hillside Ave

David Welch
Oldfield Road

Evelyn and Don Spencer
Barbara Drive
just a beginner — loves the outdoors

Janet and Wim Kalkman
Linden Avenue

Romualda Casper
Simcoe Street

James Clowater
Oak Bay Avenue

Carol Anne Milo
Oak Bay Avenue

Mary Shoffner
Carrick Street
birds, geology

Robert and Penelope Hill
Wain Road, Sidney
greenspaces projects

Jim and Colleen Force
Rosario Street

Darrell and Camille Long
Oakland Avenue
Birding, astronomy, photography, sustainable living, naturescaping and gardening

Renate and Jim Leeson
Haultain Street
birds

Sooke Christmas Bird Count, December 22, 2001

By Jack McLeod

For the land counters, December 22nd was a beautiful day, sunny and not too cold (3 to 7 degrees). However, the boaters, Norm MacLeod and Gary Fletcher at Race Rocks, and David Stirling and Glen Varney out of Sooke were stopped cold by screeching NE gales. Nevertheless, Norm and company were out again to Race Rocks on the 23rd and added three "count weeks (CW)" to the count: Surfbird, Rock Sandpiper and Iceland Gull (*glaucoides*). The latter a truly exceptional record for the area; the observation supported by a good photograph of the bird.

The Count total was 20,780 birds, in 112 species (including the three from count week). This was slightly less than last year's count of 23,000 birds and 118 species. Unusual species included: Golden Eagle (Muriel Carlson, Daniel Bryant et.al.), Blue Grouse (Bruce Whittington and Glen Moores), Townsend's Warbler (Colleen O'Brien and Robin Robinson), Common Redpoll (Robin Robinson) and Yellow-headed Blackbird (Barb McGrenere). The last two were first-ever records for the Sooke circle. Other significant sightings were: a Hutton's Vireo, three Lincoln's Sparrows, two Anna's Hummingbirds, and two Northern Pygmy Owls. Rare Birds descriptions have been sent to Dick Cannings, at Bird Studies Canada.

Like last year, this year was notable for high counts. Huge flocks of Double-crested Cormorants, which were present here throughout most of the fall, were counted (617).

Numbers have subsequently declined. The 2 Blue Grouse and 214 California Quail were high counts. One hundred and fifty-six of the 260 Common Ravens were seen in East Sooke Park.

Most unusual however were the following passerines species, all high counts: Brown Creeper (56), Winter Wren (298), Ruby-crowned Kinglet (167), Hermit Thrush (23), Varied Thrush (458), Spotted Towhee (210), Fox Sparrow (227), Song Sparrow (266), Lincoln's Sparrow (3), Golden-crowned Sparrow (185) and Dark-eyed Junco (1453). This may explain the high counts for Sharp-shinned Hawk (10) and Red-tailed Hawk (25).

There were 43 participants, including nine were feeder-watchers thanks to the efforts of Shirley Connor, who got the Feeder Count off to a great start this year. Thanks go to Area Leaders Jeremy Kimm, Mike McGrenere, Bob Chappell, Muriel Carlson, Alan MacLeod, Colleen O'Brien, Mike Shepard, and Barbara Begg, and to David Stirling who gave a valiant try! A special vote of thanks is owing to Jean McLeod and Terri Muir who provided food and beverages at the post-count gathering, Holy Trinity Anglican Church. I am most grateful for the great turnout and look forward to seeing you all next year. The count is posted to the Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count site: <http://www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/>.

SOOKE CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT, DECEMBER 22/2001 - COUNT SUMMARY

Species	Otter Point/Young Lake	Sooke Townsite/Whiffin Spit	Saseenos/Sooke Basin (N)	E. Sooke /Sooke Basin (S)	Rocky Point/Race Rocks	Beecher Bay, Matheson Lk. Pk.	Metchosin/Pedder Bay	Roche Cove/North Metchosin	Feeders	TOTAL
	Area 1	Area 2	Area 3	Area 4	Area 5	Area 6	Area 7	Area 8	Feeders	
Red-throated Loon		1	2	2	1		1	1		8
Pacific Loon	4	2	1	26	8	9				50
Common Loon	3	4		1	4	2				14
Pied-billed Grebe	1	3	1			3	1			9
Horned Grebe	19	3	2	2		10	1			37
Red-necked Grebe		5	14			3	6	1		29
Western Grebe	24	2	4	1		11	2			44
Double-crested Cormorant	211	220	61	54	39	28	3	1		617
Brandt's Cormorant	70				27		1			98
Pelagic Cormorant	4	15	25	23	4	3	5	2		81
Great Blue Heron	1	3	9	6	2	3	3			27
Mute Swan			5	3			2			10
Gr. White-fronted Goose		3								3
Canada Goose	254	210	207	32		2	58	3		766
Wood Duck						2				2
Green-winged Teal		6	5							11
Mallard	9	84	144	40	7	3	22	14		323
Northern Pintail		1								1
Northern Shoveller		2								2
Eurasian Wigeon		3	2							5
American Wigeon	18	455	157	16	4		2	12		664
Ring-necked Duck		11			5	18	2			36
Greater Scaup			80	2						82
Lesser Scaup	3	38		1						42
Scaup sp.			5							5
Harlequin Duck	5	15								20
Long-tailed Duck		10		2		8				20
Surf Scoter	39	145	74	112	4		4			378
White-winged Scoter	4	1	9		1	7				22
Common Goldeneye	8	14	63	16	1			3		105
Barrow's Goldeneye			56	6						62
Bufflehead	45	277	146	224	55	62	31	29		869
Hooded Merganser	3	14	2	6	7	20	4	2		58
Common Merganser	1	7	13	9		1	3			34
Red-breasted Merganser	22	130	6	3		11	35			207
Turkey Vulture					2		3			5
Bald Eagle	6	8	5	5	3	8	5	1	2	43
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	2	1	1	2		1	2		10
Cooper's Hawk		1	2			1		5		9
Red-tailed Hawk	3	8	6	1	1	2	1	3		25
Golden Eagle (*)				2						2
American Kestrel			1					1		2

dup Duplicate record
HC High count for circle

US unusual species

* Field Description Required

SOOKE CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT, DECEMBER 22/2001 - COUNT SUMMARY

Species	Otter Point/Young Lake	Sooke Townsite/Whiffin Spit	Saseenos/Sooke Basin (N)	E. Sooke /Sooke Basin (S)	Rocky Point/Race Rocks	Beecher Bay, Matheson Lk. Pk.	Metchosin/Pedder Bay	Roche Cove/North Metchosin	Feeders	TOTAL
	Area 1	Area 2	Area 3	Area 4	Area 5	Area 6	Area 7	Area 8	Feeders	
Merlin	1			2		2				5
Blue grouse (*)				1				1		2
Ruffed Grouse				1						1
California Quail	10		56	22	2	40	28	9	47	214
Virginia Rail						4				4
American Coot		4	1			2				7
Killdeer	10		12							22
Black Oystercatcher		9								9
Black Turnstone		40	5				6			51
Surfbird										CW
Rock Sandpiper										CW
Mew Gull	40	57	21	90	250	1	290	1		750
Thayer's Gull	1		17		108		1			127
Iceland (glaucoides) Gull (N)*										CW
Western Gull			1							1
Glaucous-winged Gull	272	95	167	58	60	62	79	53		846
Unidentified gull			51		300	2				353
Common Murre	6	1		9	220	4				240
Pigeon Guillemot.					1	2				3
Marbled Murrelet			1			4		2		7
Ancient Murrelet				4	135					139
Rock Dove		12	19			3		8		42
Band-tailed Pigeon							1	8		9
Western screech Owl								1		1
Great horned Owl	1									1
Northern Pygmy Owl (*)		1						1		2
Barred Owl (*)			1							1
Anna's Hummingbird								2		2
Belted Kingfisher	1	3	5	4	1	5	6	4		29
Red-breasted Sapsucker	2					1		1		4
Downy Woodpecker		1	3	1	1	3	2	5		16
Hairy Woodpecker			2			1	1	1	1	6
Northern Flicker	12	7	13	13	9	15	17	16	3	105
Pileated Woodpecker		1	1					1		3
Steller's Jay	19	16	27	8	2	11	4	33	9	129
Northwestern Crow	107	158	112	7		21	69	63		537
Common Raven	16	21	28	15	2	8	11	156	3	260
Chestnut-backed Chickadee	79	32	67	23	25	50	37	99	20	432
Bushtit	44	25	15				15	8		107
Red breasted Nuthatch	4	3	18	8	2	14	8	46	4	107
Brown Creeper	1	1	21	2		9	12	10		56
Bewick's Wren	1		23			1	6	3		34

dup Duplicate record
HC High count for circle

US unusual species

* Field Description Required

SOOKE CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT, DECEMBER 22/2001 - COUNT SUMMARY

Species	Area 1	Area 2	Area 3	Area 4	Area 5	Area 6	Area 7	Area 8	Feeders	TOTAL
	Otter Point/Young Lake	Sooke Townsite/Whiffin Spit	Saseenos/Sooke Basin (N)	E. Sooke/Sooke Basin (S)	Rocky Point/Race Rocks	Beecher Bay, Matheson Lk. Pk.	Metchoosin/Pedder Bay	Roche Cove/North Metchoosin		
Winter Wren	23	45	62	46	12	24	22	63	1	298
American Dipper		4								4
Golden-crowned Kinglet	58	33	201	195	78	51	36	161		813
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	15	4	97	14		11	6	20		167
Hermit Thrush	7	1		3	1	8	1	2		23
American Robin	87	40	78	69	28	98	53	113	3	569
Varied Thrush	60	35	160	35	17	30	25	84	12	458
American Pipit		1								1
European Starling	102	123	61	22		18	188	103	2	619
Hutton's Vireo (*)		1								1
Townsend's Warbler (*)	1					1				2
Spotted Towhee	11	26	71	9		12	26	42	13	210
Fox Sparrow	12	19	74		7	15	34	42	24	227
Song Sparrow	23	30	95	14	9	20	23	48	4	266
Lincoln's Sparrow (*)			3							3
White-throated Sparrow		2								2
Golden-crowned Sparrow	6	41	5		9	18	40	64	2	185
White-crowned Sparrow	1	9	1		1		15	3	1	31
Dark-eyed Junco	108	37	381	81	42	195	68	356	185	1453
Red-winged Blackbird	8	40				5	104	1	16	174
Y.-headed Blackbird (N)*		1								1
Western Meadowlark		2								2
Brewer's Blackbird	1	32					45			78
Purple Finch		3	13	2	1	1		16	3	39
House Finch	7	61	20	16		25	12	2	7	150
Common Redpoll(N)*	1									1
Red Crossbill	28	12	7	10	12		6	21		96
Pine Siskin	707	1140	1411	467	82	180	377	777	170	5311
Evening Grosbeak			1				1			2
House Sparrow	18	53	2	1			15	2	2	93
COUNT TOTALS	2669	3985	4538	1848	1594	1194	1886	2532	534	20780
SPECIES TOTALS	64	78	72	58	46	61	61	58	23	112

*= Field description required
 dup = duplicate record
 US = unusual species
 HC = high count for circle
 c

dup Duplicate record
 HC High count for circle

* Field Description Required

US unusual species



HAT'S OFF AGAIN !

SOUTHERN ALBERTA AND SASKATCHEWAN

May 25 — June 8, 2002

Join Bruce Whittington and Marilyn Lambert under those magnificent prairie skies to explore the grasslands and rolling hills of southern Alberta and southwestern Saskatchewan. Longspurs and pipits will be singing, and the prairie wildflowers will be in full bloom. Our travels will take us to the world famous Royal Tyrrell Museum, Dinosaur Provincial Park, Cypress Hills Provincial Park, Grasslands National Park and beyond.

For more information, please call Marilyn at 477-5922

All profits from this tour will be donated to the VNHS Habitat Acquisition Trust.

2001 Victoria Christmas Bird Count

By Dannie Carsen

As promised, the weather improved greatly for this year's Christmas Bird Count (CBC) compared with the snow and horizontal rain of 2000. On December 15, 2001, 193 keen observers recorded 85,232 birds, despite strong offshore winds and some afternoon rain. However, the number of species was low in relation to the average of 142 seen through the 1990's. We found only 136 species in the Victoria count circle compared with 153 found in Ladner (a new Canadian record). Perhaps we need a roving squad of "hit birders" to search and enumerate those rare species which are lurking in the CBC bushes!

All time highs were observed for species such as: Turkey vulture (8), Greater white-fronted geese (68), Northern pintail (1,268), Hooded merganser (662), Long-tailed duck (448), Barrow's goldeneye (361), Barn owl (6), Barred owl (8), Chestnut-backed chickadee (1,946), Winter wren (569), and Ruby-crowned kinglet. Large numbers of passerine birds (such as wrens, kinglets, siskins, and chickadees) were observed for this count compared with last year. Better weather, particularly inland, was probably one of the factors leading to the increased numbers.

Missed species included: Northern harrier, Black-bellied

plover (seen during count week), Surfbird, Whimbrel, Western meadowlark, and some rarer warblers and sparrows. Low numbers of loons, grebes, cormorants, shorebirds, and alcids characterized this count due to wind and waves. Heavy seas stopped our usual offshore island counts too. All time lows were recorded for Harlequin duck, White-winged scoter, Ring-necked pheasant, Black oystercatcher, and Dunlin. Harlequin ducks have had an observable decline over the last 40 years if we average the results for 10-year periods to reduce observer and weather related effects (1960s-264, 1970s-183, 1980s-232, 1990s-181). Standardizing the results with observer hours enhances the downward trend.

Birds of interest were the Iceland gull observed at Goldstream, a Townsend's solitaire in the Highlands, and a count week Common redpoll at Ten Mile Point.

Observations over the years show certain species in the Victoria area are often only observed in one count area. Eared grebe, Northern goshawk, American kestrel, Sandhill crane, Iceland gull, Northern shrike, Skylark, American dipper, Rusty blackbird, and Evening grosbeak were examples of species observed in only one count area this year.

2001 Victoria Christmas Bird Count including Feeder Watch

Count Areas	Butchart Gardens / Northern Highlands	Central Highlands	Goldstream	Thetis Lake / Hastings Flats	Langford Lake	Albert Head / Triangle Mtn	Esquimalt Lagoon / Mill Hill	Esquimalt Harbour	Portage Inlet / The Gorge	Victoria Harbour	Beacon Hill	Oak Bay
	Area 1	Area 2	Area 3	Area 4	Area 5	Area 6	Area 7	Area 8	Area 9	Area 10	Area 11	Area 12
Red-throated loon						9	1			2		
Pacific loon		1				16	5			2	11	
Common loon						8	4	2		1	2	2
Pied-billed grebe	4	2		4	13	1	4					
Horned grebe						8	15					1
Red-necked grebe						17	4			10	5	1
Eared grebe												
Western grebe						4	27			2		
Brandt's cormorant						2				4		3
Double-crested cormorant	9	2	11	3	148	38	14	40	28	154	20	2
Pelagic cormorant						10	2			8	4	8
Great blue heron	3	2	3		3	5	10	25	4	1	6	1
Turkey vulture		3					2					
Greater white-fronted goose												
Canada goose	884		2	240	133	24	113	54	93			
Mute swan							8	10				
Trumpeter swan	137			4								
Wood duck					2							
Gadwall	1			2	4	7			1			
Eurasian wigeon					6	1			1		5	
American wigeon	2521		14	21	32	388	170	2	63	14	168	
Mallard	2155	21	19	63	137	109	76	42	74		183	
Northern shoveler	7			12	9	5						
Northern pintail	1250			7		1						
Green-winged teal	411			6	6	2						
Canvasback									17			
Ring-necked duck	61	16		14	173		3					
Greater scaup					19		3		21			
Lesser scaup				4					59			
Harlequin duck						4	2			17	13	14
Surf scoter			17			12	46			1	28	2
White-winged scoter						2	2			13		
Black scoter								4				
Long-tailed duck						12						
Bufflehead	21	10	113	1	11	119	128	108	266	100	40	154
Common goldeneye	6		17		1	7	51		6	157	47	2
Barrow's goldeneye	2		340			1		18				
Hooded merganser	17	5	8	6	8	22	4	16	14	46	7	54
Common merganser	4		57	4	83	2	2	16	6	37		8
Red-breasted merganser	1					34	80	30		48	25	14
Ruddy duck												
Bald eagle	8	4	72	4	4	5	3	1	3	1		3
Bald eagle			77			1	2					
Sharp-shinned hawk		1		6	1							1
Cooper's hawk	3	3		5	3	2		1	6	1	1	3
Northern goshawk*												
Red-tailed hawk	5	5	3	5	1	3						
American kestrel												
Merlin		1		1	1	1	1		1			1
Peregrine falcon						1						1
Ring-necked pheasant				2								
Ruffed grouse		1										
Blue grouse		2		1								
California quail	21		16	36	12	43	20	8	11			
Virginia rail												
American coot	4			4			1					2
Sandhill crane												
Killdeer	15			23	2	2				1		12
Black oystercatcher												9
Greater yellowlegs						1						3
Spotted sandpiper						1				1		
Black turnstone						6	5	5		47	4	8
Sanderling										9		
Dunlin						12						
Common snipe												
Iceland Gull			1									
Bonaparte's gull										1		
Mew gull	10		5		2	75	59	50		4	5	32
California gull							2					
Herring gull			6									
Thayer's gull	2		18			275	2		1	1		4
Western gull			1			1	1		1	1		
Glaucous-winged gull	381	31	2970	111	150	131	153	175	1005	163	197	117
Unidentified gull	231		3			200	112	191		36		
Common murre						165		8		7		1

2001 Victoria Christmas Bird Count including Feeder Watch

Count Areas	UVIC/ Cadboro Bay	10 Mile Point	Gordon Head / Mount Douglas	Swan Lake / Cedar Hill	Blenkinsop / Panama Flats	Elk Lake / Cordova Bay	Prospect Lake / Quicks Bottom	Martindale / Bear Hill	Albert Head / Esq Harbour (offshore)	Victoria Count (Field & Feeder)	Comments
	Area 13	Area 14	Area 15	Area 16	Area 17	Area 18	Area 19	Area 20	Area 23	Total #	
Red-throated loon			1			2		1		18	
Pacific loon	1	6	8			3		5		58	
Common loon		5				1	1	3	1	30	
Pied-billed grebe					4	17	3			52	
Horned grebe			26			42		2		94	
Red-necked grebe		12						6		55	
Eared grebe						1				1	
Western grebe			2			5		1		41	
Brandt's cormorant	2	4	2					2	34	53	
Double-crested cormorant	4	4	9		4	46	17	8	30	591	
Pelagic cormorant	8	20	13			16		4		93	
Great blue heron	1		1			2	7	6	15	96	
Turkey vulture								3		8	prev high 6 in 1996
Greater white-fronted goos						17		51		68	prev high 39 in 1999
Canada goose						756	90	223	620	3,232	
Mute swan										18	
Trumpeter swan						28	7	45	48	269	
Wood duck	2			8						12	
Gadwall						8	2	12	10	47	
Eurasian wigeon					6	2		2		23	
American wigeon	74		18	71	195	23	72	401		4,247	
Mallard	146	28	81	169	1277	306	209	806		5,901	
Northern shoveler			2	5	6	6		13		65	
Northern pintail							2	8		1,268	prev high 1133 in 1997
Green-winged teal				1	2	4	29	53		514	
Canvasback						21				38	
Ring-necked duck				24	51	189	38	14		583	
Greater scaup						1		7		51	
Lesser scaup				3				4		70	
Harlequin duck		7	1							58	
Surf scoter		78	7			28		170	43	432	
White-winged scoter		4	3			2		4		30	
Black scoter								3		7	
Long-tailed duck	2	53	25			51		295	10	448	prev high 119 in 2000
Bufflehead	2	4	180	19	6	103	22	177	12	1,596	
Common goldeneye			99			44		4		441	
Barrow's goldeneye										361	prev high 196 in 1997
Hooded merganser	25	10	6	305	3	65	18	23		662	prev high 564 in 1998
Common merganser	2		1	2	12	95	15	4	1	351	
Red-breasted merganser	5	2	27			53		32		351	
Ruddy duck				5						5	
Bald eagle	6	3	1	2	4	10	5	11	2	152	
Bald eagle		1				2	1	1		85	
Sharp-shinned hawk		3					2	1		15	
Cooper's hawk	2	5	3	1	2	3	1	1		45	
Northern goshawk*								1		1	
Red-tailed hawk		1	3	1	1	3	8	9		48	
American kestrel								1		1	
Merlin	1	1		1	1	2	1	1		15	
Peregrine falcon					2		1	2		7	
Ring-necked pheasant								2		4	
Ruffed grouse										1	
Blue grouse										3	
California quail		2				17		27		213	
Virginia rail							3	1		4	
American coot	1			23	22	83		3		143	
Sandhill crane								1		1	
Killdeer						4	11	11		81	
Black oystercatcher										9	
Greater yellowlegs										4	
Spotted sandpiper										2	
Black turnstone										75	
Sanderling										9	
Dunlin										12	
Common snipe					4			13		17	
Iceland Gull										1	
Bonaparte's gull										1	
Mew gull	27	18	65			265		43	47	707	
California gull								4		6	
Herring gull				8				2		16	
Thayer's gull		1			5	9		7		325	
Western gull										5	
Glaucous-winged gull	150	103	100	283	276	271	63	185	80	7,095	
Unidentified gull			17		79	75	414	2	43	1,403	
Common murre	2		3					6	46	238	

2001 Victoria Christmas Bird Count including Feeder Watch

Count Areas	Butchart Gardens / Northern Highlands	Central Highlands	Goldstream	Thetis Lake / Hastings Flats	Langford Lake	Albert Head / Triangle Mtn	Esquimalt Lagoon / Mill Hill	Esquimalt Harbour	Portage Inlet / The Gorge	Victoria Harbour	Beacon Hill	Oak Bay
	Area 1	Area 2	Area 3	Area 4	Area 5	Area 6	Area 7	Area 8	Area 9	Area 10	Area 11	Area 12
Pigeon guillemot.						9					3	
Marbled murrelet							2	4		2	2	
Ancient murrelet						120						
Rhinoceros auklet										8		
Rock dove	11			6	80	6	132		192	84	120	
Band-tailed pigeon			5									
Barn owl												
Great horned owl			2			5						
Northern pygmy owl				3								
Barred owl			1	2	1				1		1	
Northern saw-whet owl												
Anna's hummingbird				9		4	1	2	9	4	1	8
Belted kingfisher	3		2		5	2	1	4	6	2		
Red-breasted sapsucker			1	1	1		1					
Downy woodpecker	1		2	7	4	2	2		9	5	4	2
Hairy woodpecker	2	3			2	4			1			
Northern flicker	28	47	8	42	27	21	24	4	21	2	7	6
Pileated woodpecker	2	2	2	4	2							
Northern shrike												
Hutton's vireo												
Steller's jay	4	45	18	45	78	5	12	1	3			
Northwestern crow	393	41	43	237	71	30	63	20	225	68	71	39
Common raven	26	42	8	23	23	8	8	3	7	1		2
Sky lark												
Chestnut-backed chickadee	150	243	84	161	66	106	92	43	52	26	12	21
Bushtit	49		16	75	57	19	12	20	144	130	28	23
Red-breasted nuthatch	33	120	18	33	33	36	25	3	16	7	17	1
Brown creeper	6	6	8	15	4	5	4	4	6		3	1
Bewick's wren	6	7	1	15	15	7	22		11	13	2	2
Winter wren	37	43	52	64	29	27	55		17	16	13	4
Marsh wren					1	2						
American dipper			9									
Golden-crowned kinglet	151	238	280	262	213	133	145	2	92	39	31	15
Ruby-crowned kinglet	27	10	9	24	59	12	31	1	17	6	1	5
Townsend's solitaire	1											
Hermit thrush		1	3	1	2	6	4		2			
American robin	286		66	1848	78	88	137	75	1152	127	106	36
Varied thrush	28	165	45	56	39	66	29	2	16	1	2	
European starling	642	64	61	400	55	29	77	23	782	328	157	85
American pipit												
Cedar waxwing						6						
Orange-crowned warbler										1		
Yellow-rumped warbler												
Spotted towhee	53	41	9	56	44	38	47	4	40	32	7	15
Savannah sparrow						2						
Fox sparrow	16	60	8	66	22	30	86	2	27	37	8	10
Song sparrow	113	32	15	40	32	33	84	2	48	38	8	3
Lincoln's sparrow	2					4	1					
White-throated sparrow				1					1			
White-crowned sparrow	2			1		9	8		1	2		9
Golden-crowned sparrow	67	9	7	50	25	66	39	3	59	52	9	14
Dark-eyed junco	439	309	170	274	250	268	170	54	280	74	15	30
Red-winged blackbird	127	2		1	36	37	17					6
Brewer's blackbird	10			81			63					
Rusty Blackbird												
Brown-headed cowbird												
Purple finch	1		2	5		9			1	1		23
House finch	100	2	15	48	14	26	22		161	89	30	44
Red crossbill	49	260	30	47	55	10	5		20			
Pine siskin	1360	163	1157	163	565	500	394	50	224	60	13	28
American goldfinch									24	3		6
Evening grosbeak												
House sparrow	100	15		194	64	79	12	6	528	311	68	27
Count Totals	12,499	2,080	5,930	4,949	3,017	3,655	2,960	1,151	5,876	2,459	1,510	928
Species Totals	62	43	53	63	60	85	69	45	56	61	46	55

2001 Victoria Christmas Bird Count including Feeder Watch

Count Areas	UVIC/ Cadboro Bay	10 Mile Point	Gordon Head / Mount Douglas	Swan Lake / Cedar Hill	Blenkinsop / Panama Flats	Elk Lake / Cordova Bay	Prospect Lake / Quicks Bottom	Mantdale / Bear Hill	Albert Head / Esq Harbour (offshore)	Victoria Count (Field & Feeder)	Comments
	Area 13	Area 14	Area 15	Area 16	Area 17	Area 18	Area 19	Area 20	Area 23	Total #	
Pigeon guillemot.	1	13	3			1		2		32	
Marbled murrelet		20								30	
Ancient murrelet			3					3		126	
Rhinoceros auklet									11	19	
Rock dove			4	11	24		72	55		797	
Band-tailed pigeon										5	
Barn owl								1	5	6	
Great horned owl	1						2	13		23	
Northern pygmy owl										3	
Barred owl				1				1		8	prev high 8 in 1998
Northern saw-whet owl								1		1	
Anna's hummingbird	7	21	10	6	2	3	6			93	
Belted kingfisher		2			1	5	6			39	
Red-breasted sapsucker				3			4			11	
Downy woodpecker	2	5	3	1	4	4	7	4		68	
Hairy woodpecker							3			15	
Northern flicker	11	17	3	22	12	30	31	26		389	
Pileated woodpecker	1	1	1		1	4	4	3		26	
Northern shrike			1							1	
Hutton's vireo								2		2	
Steller's jay		3			2	5	28	3		252	
Northwestern crow	122	49	171	82	134	2812	250	1200	2	6,123	
Common raven	6	3	2	8	4	18	39	19		250	
Sky lark								102		102	
Chestnut-backed chickadee	51	107	72	64	23	124	321	128		1,946	
Bushtit	40	179	14	29	36	125	67	164		1,227	
Red-breasted nuthatch	11	33	9	9	4	23	109	18		558	
Brown creeper	5	10	14		4	14	11	9		129	
Bewick's wren		16	6	7	15	13	29	28		215	
Winter wren	4	29	17	12	12	34	43	61		569	prev high 485 in 1995
Marsh wren				3	1	1	9	2		19	
American dipper										9	
Golden-crowned kinglet	23	75	101	43	38	193	940	212		3,226	
Ruby-crowned kinglet	6	16	15	24	10	15	31	44		363	prev high 353 in 1988
Townsend's solitaire										1	
Hermit thrush		4	1				1	2		27	
American robin	139	185	88	706	492	350	873	720		7,552	
Varied thrush	8	20	18	5	1	39	43	36		619	
European starling	16	71	309	120	260	140	153	1925		5,697	
American pipit								180		180	
Cedar waxwing		4					7	3		20	
Orange-crowned warbler			1							2	
Yellow-rumped warbler								14		14	
Spotted towhee	13	47	22	55	28	35	121	62		769	
Savannah sparrow								4		6	
Fox sparrow	21	33	18	32	21	11	72	102		682	
Song sparrow	16	36	13	35	38	54	76	119		835	
Lincoln's sparrow					6	4	2	7		26	
White-throated sparrow				1	1		1	1		6	
White-crowned sparrow	4			1	51		11	117		216	
Golden-crowned sparrow	21	23	50	39	47	65	29	171		845	
Dark-eyed junco	104	302	142	79	92	253	382	657		4,344	
Red-winged blackbird				36	286	73	274	233		1,128	
Brewer's blackbird					38		3	205		400	
Rusty Blackbird							1			1	
Brown-headed cowbird								4		4	
Purple finch		21	3	4	1	1	17	4		94	
House finch	40	38	79	172	75	117	131	121		1,324	
Red crossbill		34				5	119	3		637	
Pine siskin	138	31	149	65	343	454	1034	687		7,578	
American goldfinch							4			37	
Evening grosbeak							1			1	
House sparrow	56	62	114	324	129	137	88	109		2,423	
Count Totals	1,329	1,887	2,160	2,936	5,022	7,124	6,771	10,626	363	85,232	
Species Totals	46	57	58	50	61	72	75	93	14	136	

President's Report

By Bruce Whittington

Keeping Common Birds Common

I think I am among the majority when I say that I joined the VNHS because of my interest in birds. VNHS birding activities continue to draw the largest numbers of our members, whether it is a waterfront field trip, or a presentation at Birders' Night.

The birds we spend so much of our free time watching are no more or less important than other species groups, but there is one facet of birds which does set them apart: They are mobile. This month, for example, we will see the return of the Rufous Hummingbirds, and most of the swallows will be back to nest again in our yards and front porches. They are but the first of many birds that spend only a part of their lives in our part of the world. We take it for granted that they have been gone, and we give little thought to their lives until they arrive here again.

At the end of January, I attended a two-day workshop hosted by Partners in Flight, a consortium of groups working to understand and maintain land bird populations in the western hemisphere. It is an exciting and challenging initiative, and what struck me throughout the two days was the breadth of involvement of people who care about birds.

Partners in Flight is one of four components in the North American Bird Conservation Initiative, and its focus is on landbirds. Shorebirds, waterbirds, and waterfowl are being monitored under different umbrellas. North America has been divided into ecoregions known as Bird Conservation Regions; there are twelve in Canada, and five in BC. Here on Vancouver Island, we fall right in the middle of the Northern Pacific Rainforest BCR.

If it is beginning to sound like science, you are right. At the workshop, there were scientists by the metric tonne, as you might expect. But there was also Peter Hamel from Haida Gwaii, amateur birder of the keenest sort, and David Allinson, President of the Rocky Point Bird Observatory. Bob Altman represented the American Bird Conservancy, and there were representatives from regional, provincial, and national conservation organizations. Field staff from BC Hydro and Weyerhaeuser spoke about industry's efforts to manage bird habitats. The BC and Yukon Partners in Flight team brought this wide-ranging group together for one purpose: To ask for help.

By tapping into all this experience, their goal was to refine their list of "focal species" which will become part of their monitoring program. These species are chosen because their habitat requirements are shared by a whole suite of species; protect habitat for a carefully selected few, and there is a good chance you will succeed in protecting habitat for them all.

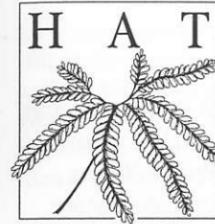
I left the workshop (and they did make us work) with a clutch of business cards and email addresses. But more than this, I left feeling just a little provincial. The workshop was a powerful reminder that the birds we watch here are also being watched elsewhere: by Alaskan foresters, by Sunday birders in Portland, Oregon, and by biologists in Central America.

It is very easy to become limited in our thinking about birds (and being on an island doesn't help). But we need to recognize the importance of supporting this kind of thinking on other levels. We can do that as individuals, by supporting other organizations that work to protect birds. As an organization, it is important that VNHS support the Federation of BC Naturalists and others like it that speak with a broader mandate. But the picture is even bigger than that. Our input is valued by Partners in Flight, by the Important Bird Areas Program, and by many other hemispheric and global initiatives. But, if we are not there, we can not tell them what we know.

It is a little bit like voting. It is not fair to complain about the results if you did not cast a ballot. As naturalists, we can wring our hands as birds decline, or we can play a role. And we can continue to enjoy recreational birding at the same time. Sound like a commitment? Well, if you have ever taken part in a Christmas Bird Count, then you have already contributed.

So keep notes. Do bird counts. Volunteer. We will try to keep you informed about events and activities of that sort. If you are going to a workshop, and you think you could represent VNHS, let us know. If we all help to keep the information flowing, we may just be able to keep those common birds common.

CAMOSUN TRAVEL
3111 Cedar Hill Rd
info@ctravel.ca
595-5444



HAT Tricks

By Bruce Whittington

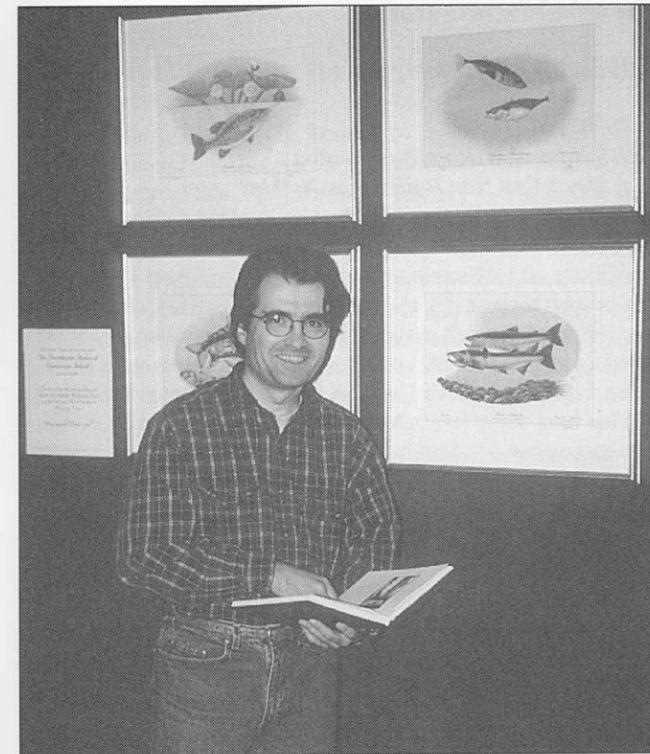
How One HAT Supporter is Making a Difference

An organization like Habitat Acquisition Trust works because of the efforts of many people. These include directors, staff, and volunteers, and a large disparate group of people we call "supporters".

Supporters are people who, in one way or another, contribute something that help the organization to achieve its goals. They work in a variety of ways, but I would like to tell you about the efforts of one individual.

Loucas Raptis is an illustrator. VNHS members will know his work from several issues of the *Naturalist*, and also the American Dipper sketch, which he donated for use on the cover of the Society's new bird checklist.

Loucas is also an avid fly fisherman and a keen conservationist. In an ambitious project called "The Freshwater Fishes of Vancouver Island", he is producing a series of 30 limited edition art prints, in an elegant portfolio. The series may be purchased by subscription, and for a closer look at the project, and Loucas' work, you



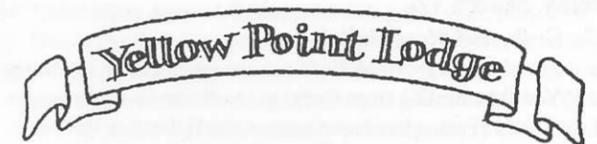
Loucas Raptis donates to H.A.T. Photo: Bruce Whittington

can visit his web site at: <http://www.islandnet.com/~benrap/>

What is unique about this project, however, is that Loucas is donating 10% of the proceeds of the sales of his work to Habitat Acquisition Trust. It is a remarkable gesture that demonstrates a commitment to the environment and a respect for HAT's work.

Loucas is also donating one complete subscription, for all of the prints, as they are released, each year throughout the six-year project. These are sold by raffle, so that anyone can have a chance to own a set. HAT is currently running such a raffle, with tickets selling for \$2.00 each, or 3 for \$5.00. Tickets will be available at the HAT office, but watch for HAT supporters lurking at various events too, ticket books in hand. The draw date will be in late June. HAT will use the proceeds to further its conservation goals in the Capital Regional District.

All of HAT's supporters have their own personal reasons for contributing, and every one contributes in their own way. We're very grateful to Loucas Raptis for the way in which he has pledged his support, and we're working hard to make the most of every dollar we spend in our work.



R.R. 3, Ladysmith, B.C. V0R 2E0
(250) 245-7422

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., Murray and Anne Fraser 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.

MARCH

Saturday, March 9

A Leisurely 10 km Stroll

Walk around the loop trail at Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park with an avid naturalist. Meet at 8 a.m. in the Beaver Lake parking lot by the playground and concession. There are no hills but there can be mud! Wear shoes that still feel good after walking a few hours (2-3 hours) and bring binoculars if you have them.

Tuesday, March 12

VNHS Natural History Presentation Have You Heard the Buzz?

Steve Mitchell is a well-known beekeeper from the Cowichan Valley and a botanist at the University of Victoria. He will be (no pun intended!) exploring the nature of some of the solitary and social bees we have in our region, as well as their relationship with native plants. Steve can answer all those questions you have about the Blue Orchard Bee, bumblebees, and honeybees. He will have slides and specimens, as well as examples of bee houses and their maintenance. We will see you at 7:30 p.m., Room 159, Murray and Anne Fraser Building, UVic. Bring a coffee mug and a friend; non-members are welcome.

Sunday, March 17

Gulls, Gulls, and More Gulls!

Take a day trip with David Allinson to see sea ducks and gulls up island! You'll be birding from Cedar to Qualicum on this trip so it will start early! Pack a lunch and meet at the Helmcken Park-and-Ride at 8 a.m.. Call David Allinson, 478-0493, for more information

Tuesday, March 19

Botany Night – Domesticated Cucumbers

Ken Marr (Royal BC Museum): Domestication of cucumbers and their relatives in China.. Swan Lake Nature House, 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, March 24

Wildflowers on Mt. Wells

Join Jan Brown and Alan MacLeod for a guided hike up Mt. Wells to see the beautiful displays of spring flowers. Be prepared for a strenuous hike and be sure to bring a snack and something to drink. Meet at the Helmcken Rd. Park-and-Ride at 7:30 a.m. or on Awsworth Rd. off of Sooke Rd. just north of Humpback Road. Turn right on Awsworth Rd. and park in open area on your right. For more information, call Jan or Alan at 382-3854.

Monday, March 25

Marine Night — Dangerous Invader or Fortunate Accident
Graham Gillespie, a biologist with the Shellfish Section of the

Pacific Biological Station in Nanaimo, will speak about the biology of a recently introduced species of clam in a talk, "The Varnish Clam: Dangerous Invader or Fortunate Accident?" This species will be viewed in context with other marine molluscan invaders and intentional introductions. 7:30 p.m., Swan Lake Nature Centre.

Saturday, March 30

Birding at Rithet's Bog

Join Marie O'Shaughnessy, for a birding walk around Rithet's Bog. There should be swallows around, and perhaps the first of our Rufous Hummingbirds returning to spar with resident Anna's Hummingbirds. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the parking lot on Dalewood Lane (just off Chatterton Way in the northwest corner of the bog). Call Marie at 598-9680 for more information.

Sunday, March 31

Spring Flowers in Brentwood Bay

Rick Schortinghuis will lead an exploration of two parks: Oak Haven Park and Gore Park in Central Saanich. Meet 9 a.m. on at the entrance to Oak Haven Park on Garden Gate Drive (off Wallace and just South of Benvenuto Ave.) Phone Rick Schortinghuis for more information (652-3326).

APRIL

Tuesday, April 9

VNHS Natural History Presentation They Don't Call 'Em Bullies For Nothin'

Come one, come all. Come hear the lament of the displaced "auoauaron" (red-legged frog) drowning its sorrow in "a jug of rum". Okay, okay! Purnima Govindarajulu will have to get serious soon because she will be metamorphosing into an academic. But until then! She will cover the history and natural history of the introduced bullfrog in BC and discuss their impact on some of the native frogs. Purnima is a University of Victoria doctoral student who has been doing research on the impacts of this introduced frog and what we can do about the problem. The meeting starts at 7:30 p.m., Room 159, Murray and Anne Fraser Building, UVic. Bring a coffee mug and a friend; non-members are welcome.

Tuesday, April 16

Botany Night – Garry Oak History

Ted Lea (Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management): History of Garry oak ecosystems in the Greater Victoria area. Swan Lake Nature House, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, April 20

Wildflowers and Birds on Jocelyn Hill

Join Carrina Maslovat (botany) and Rick Schortinghuis (birds)

for a memorable hike up Jocelyn Hill. At this time of year, Jocelyn Hill can be a good location for Townsend's Solitaires. There is an amazing diversity of wildflowers in bloom and the panoramic views from the top are breathtaking. Pack a lunch and a drink, and be prepared for a strenuous hike. To sign up for this hike please call Rick at 652-3326 or Carrina at 592-2733.

Saturday and Sunday, April 20 and 21

Gardening for Wildlife — A Native Plant Gardening Sale and Demonstration

Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary, 3873 Swan Lake Road, Victoria, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Over 100 species of Native Plants; Seeds, Books, Bird Feeders, Nesting Boxes. Presentations on gardening with drought-tolerant native plants and developing wildlife habitat in an urban area, including a presentation by April Pettinger and Brenda Costanzo on *The New Native Plants in the Coastal Garden*, 2nd edition. Admission: \$3/day, \$5/weekend pass (price includes admission to all workshops and presentations) Free to 'Friends of the Sanctuary.' Plant list and presentation schedule available at our website: www.swanlake.bc.ca. Call 479-0211 for more information.

Sunday, April 21

Spring Wildflowers around Cowichan Lake

Come along with Marilyn Lambert for a wildflower exploration of the Cowichan Lake area. This time of year we expect to see some amazing displays of both pink and white fawn lilies, trillium, and wild ginger. Meet at the Helmcken Rd. Park-and-Ride at 9:00 a.m. Phone Marilyn at 477-5922 for more information.

Spring Break is Family Time at Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary

Monday, March 18 or Friday, March 22 — Night Eyes, Night Skies. Tuesday, March 19 — Habitat Hunt. Wednesday, March 20 — Strange (but true) Science. Thursday, March 21 — Pulp to Paper. Contact Ann Scarfe at 479-0211 for more information.

The **Beyond Beginning Birding Course** starts in early April and involves 8 field trips to different locations and with a variety of different leaders. Cost to members is \$65 and all the money goes towards conservation initiatives of the society. Phone Darren or Claudia (479-6622) for more information.

The **Victoria Butterfly Count** starts up again and we are always looking for keen-eyed volunteers. Saturday April 20 and Sunday April 21 is the first one of the year so get out your field guide! Jeff Gaskin is the count coordinator, so give him a call at 381-7248

The **Spring Bird Count** is Saturday May 4 this year, midnight to noon. The post-count gathering will be at Swan Lake. Phone Rick Schortinghuis for more information and to get involved (652-3326).

The weekend of April 12-14 is this year's **Brant Festival** in Parksville. More information is available on the Internet.

Friday, April 26

A Natural History Walk in Uplands Park

Join Joy and Cam Finlay for a guided walk in Uplands Park to see spring wildflowers, birds and butterflies. Meet at Cattle Point at 8 a.m.. Call Joy or Cam at 479-9833 for more information.

Saturday, April 27

Birding Mt. Douglas Park

Join Kevin Slagboom in searching for spring arrivals and the emerging wildflowers and butterflies on the slopes of Mt. Douglas. There will be some climbing, so bring good footwear, a snack, and some water. Meet at the main parking lot on the ocean side of the road (picnic area) at Mt. Douglas at 8:00 a.m. Phone Kevin at 658-0940 for more details.

Sunday, April 28

Botanical Exploration

Hans Roemer will lead you on a journey through the old growth forest on the Royal Roads University grounds. To avoid the confusion of too many parking lots, meet at 9 a.m. at the boathouse at the edge of Esquimalt Lagoon on the University side.

Monday, April 29

Marine Night

Enjoy an illustrated talk on some aspect of our marine or fresh water environment. Title TBA. 7:30 p.m. at Swan Lake Nature Centre. For information closer to the date consult the web site at: <http://pacificcoast.net/~plambert/index.html>

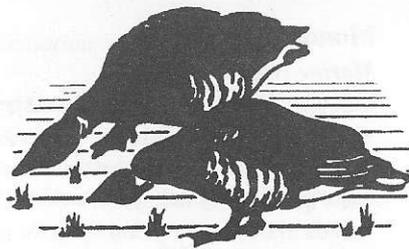
BULLETIN BOARD

The Victoria Natural History Society is hosting the **Federation of BC Naturalists Annual General Meeting** this year: May 9,10, 11, 12. This is the perfect opportunity for you to get involved with your club. Let's make this meeting really shine! If you would like to do a presentation or lead a field trip, please call Claudia at 479-6622. If you would like to volunteer in some other capacity, please call Ann at 652-6450.

Did you know that murre can dive to 180 metres? Do you know how they can do that? Would you like to know the truth about wettable cormorant feathers? Then take the **Marine Birds Course**. Marine Birds is a course for naturalists and enthusiasts. Learn where to find and how to identify marine birds. Discover fascinating secrets about how they live and feed. The emphasis will be on unique and interesting biological and behavioural information that will capture the imagination of both amateurs and professionals. James Clowater, an ornithologist who specializes in the behavioural ecology of marine birds, instructs the course. Sessions begin on March 21, 2002, meeting Thursdays 7- 9 p.m. at Swan Lake Nature House. Cost is \$75.00 for 5 — 2 hr. sessions (\$67.50 for Friends of the Sanctuary). Shoreline fieldtrips are included in cost and an optional 3 hour field trip will be included for an additional cost depending on participation and charter fees. Call Swan Lake to pre-register (250) 479-0211.



BRANT WILDLIFE FESTIVAL



April 12-14, 2002

Parksville-Qualicum Beach
www.brantfestival.bc.ca

Count yourself in for major fun at our
Big Day Birding Competition
Saturday, April 13, 2002

Teams of novice and experienced birders will comb the Oceanside area from tidewater to freshwater and marsh to mountain. The objective, to see or hear more species than any other team, all while having a great time! Awards this year include the Golden Raspberry, Young Guns, Best Amateurs, and more!

Check out our website for more info and registration forms, or call the office at (250) 752-9171, and we'll drop them into the mail to you. Big Day Registration includes a hearty wrap-up lunch and awards ceremony, and a chance to win a pair of Bausch & Lomb 8x42 Elite binoculars donated by Bushnell.

Registration deadline is March 29, 2002. Get your team together today!

Come for the day, stay for the weekend!

Events at this year's festival include our Opening Night Reception, Wildlife Art & Photography Exhibition, Woodcarving Exhibit & Competition, and events for families. Partnered with Malaspina University-College, this year's expanded speakers' series includes: Dick Cannings, discussing his new book, *Roadside Natural History*; Mike Chutters, Owl Talk & Owl Prowl; Graham Beard on Fossils; Tim Goater, talk on snakes with live snakes; Dan Doyle on peregrines and goshawks, Colin Bartlett on novice birding, Marty Boorsboom on outdoor photography, and more.

Many new nature walks and talks are planned, including a 5-hour guided hike up the historic Cameron Lake Trail. Milner Gardens & Woodlands is also partnering with the festival, offering gardening and birding talks on Saturday and Sunday.



Big Day Birding Competition - Brant Wildlife Festival
174 Railway Street, Qualicum Beach B.C. V9K 1K7
Tel: (250) 752-9171 email: office@brantfestival.bc.ca
www.brantfestival.bc.ca

