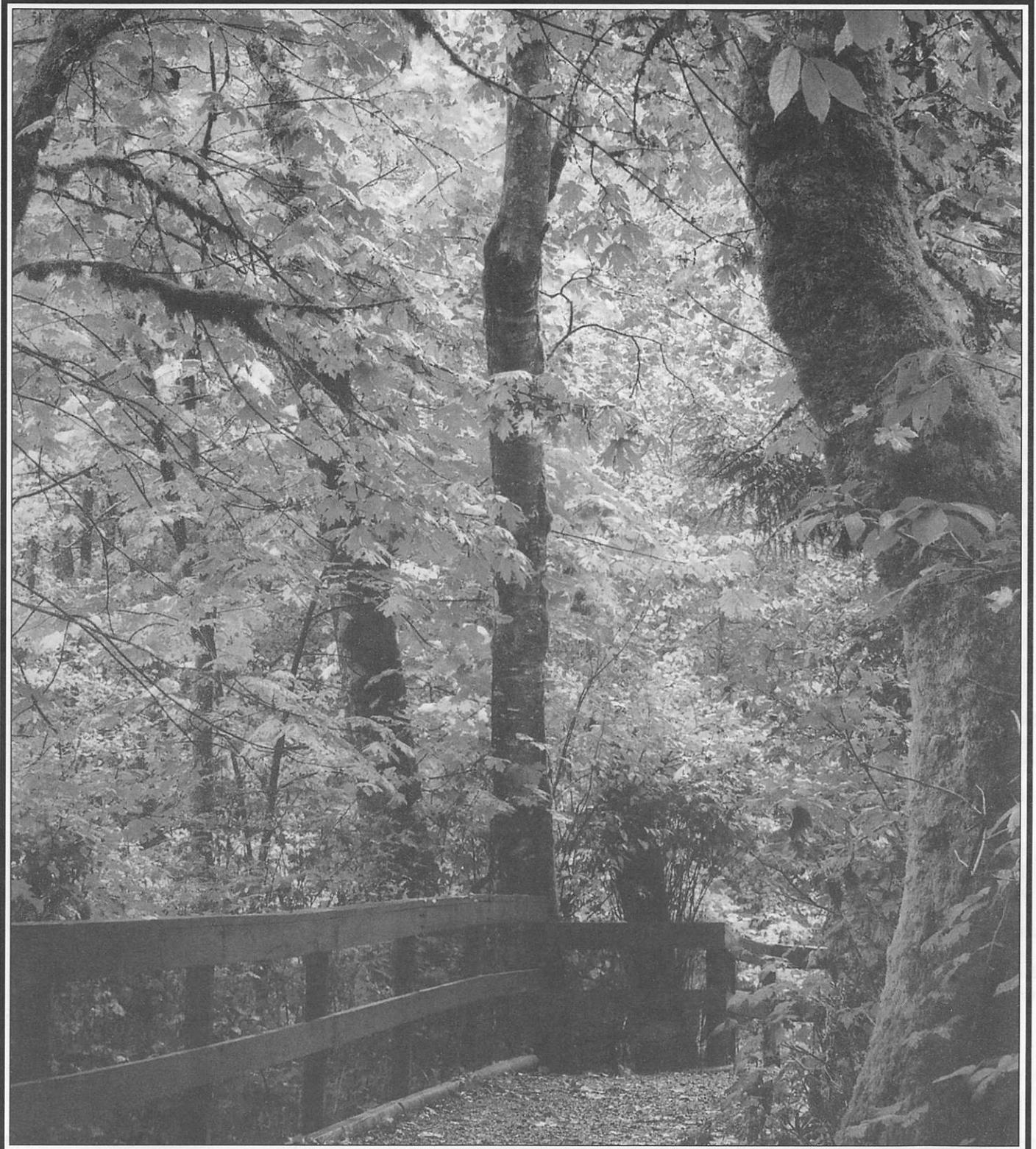




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(*Events, Trips and Programs*)

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John Henigman, henigman@pacificcoast.net

Ed Pellizon, edlps@telus.net

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Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary: Dannie Carsen, 595-2773

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657 Beaver Lake Road, Victoria BC V8Z 5N9

Phone: 250-479-6622

Fax: 479-6622. e-mail: dccopley@island.net

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A NOTE FROM THE EDITORS

As we reflect at the end of a journey that began four years ago, we think about what we would have missed if we let our fears of rejection and failure prevent us from taking on the task of editing the Naturalist. We would not have met so many interesting people, or have had the feeling that we were doing something positive. Opportunities would not have presented themselves as they did.

Fear is an interesting human emotion. At its best, it protects us from dangerous situations. At its worst, it prevents us from doing what we really want to do and can even place us in danger as it allows all manner of tyrannies to take control of us.

The tyrannies of group solidarity and protocol prevent people from speaking loud enough to prevent disasters. The tyranny of intimidation allows more powerful groups to suppress opposition by others; citizens become afraid to express support for projects because of intimidation by domineering opponents. The tyranny of conformity, not good manners, prevents knowledgeable observers from speaking up for fear of "upsetting the apple cart." The tyranny of the quest for "scientific certainty" holds us in the status quo because such certainty does not exist.

In the face of scientific consensus that certain harm will result, our society continues to unnecessarily generate climate changing gases and persistent organic pollutants. The tyranny of the "the economy" has been used to make us fear more the collapse of a purely human construct than the wrath of Mother Nature herself.

Helen Keller is quoted as saying:

"Security is mostly a superstition. It does not exist in nature, nor do the children of humankind as a whole experience it. Avoiding danger is no safer in the long run than outright exposure. Life is either a daring adventure or it is nothing at all."

We are ready to look for new adventures. Hopefully, we will be able to check any irrational fears that might prevent us from doing the things we know we need to do to reduce our impact on the biosphere. As we leave, we also hope that readers of the Naturalist will also be able to surmount their own fears preventing them from taking action. The alternatives are more dangerous than outright action.

You can take the first step in that direction by answering the question: "What do you fear?"

Marilyn and Ross

Goldstream Provincial Park

By Marie O'Shaughnessy

A 'jewel' of a park, can be found 17 kilometres from Victoria that is guaranteed to please. Whether it be a visit by the locals or travellers from afar, one can wander the trails to either find peace and tranquility, excitement, fun or just shows at the Interpretive Center. This is a park for all ages where families can spend some quality time away from the pressures of city and work.

The park offers much in the way of scenery. Over 350 hectares of prime and diverse habitat are waiting there to be explored. Along its pathways, one can bathe in the dappled light beneath the towering canopy of an old growth, temperate rain forest or climb a challenging trail to the top of Mt. Finlayson. At the summit, one can be rewarded with stunning panoramic views. No matter what degree of hike one desires, the trails within this park offer everything. One can find within its boundaries picturesque water falls, an old abandoned gold mine, streams full of spawning salmon in the fall and hundreds of eagles in winter. Combine all of the above with the variety of flora and fauna and abundant tree life available. One can only marvel at this extraordinary west coast, Vancouver Island Park. Stately Big-leaf Maples, whose weathered trunks have gathered some moss over the years, stand tall as totems guarding the forest. Look carefully at these majestic arbors as they stand silent with gnarled faces and watchful eye. They have many stories to tell if one would stand and listen to the whispers in the forest. Other stories and shows are being told at the Nature House or interpretive centre throughout the year by helpful and knowledgeable staff.

To access this park one can take the Trans Canada Highway #1 from Victoria and turn off at the main picnic-parking area at Finlayson Arm Road. A short walk from the parking lot either through the forest or along the main stream leads one to the interpretive centre. Here, all manner of fun activities and programs to help bring awareness of the need to preserve our beautiful parks in British Columbia are available. Hands-on camera controls within the centre highlight the action out on the estuary and beneath the swift flowing waters of the stream. The story of 'Nature' runs continuously via a TV monitor as cameras rotate the various areas where eagles dine on fish, spawning salmon swim and bats congregate in rafters. A viewing platform at the centre is another area to spot the action within the park.

Each second year, The Freeman King Visitor Center, or commonly known as the Nature House, hosts an art show. The 8th 'Nature of Island Artists' show has just completed a very successful run just as the Chum Salmon start theirs. During the past four years, the salmon have been maturing

A large concentration of eagles gathers

here during the winter months with peak

numbers by the Christmas holidays.

Programs at the centre are geared to

these phenomena at this time of year.

somewhere in the vast oceans and now those that need to spawn start their epic journey to their home streams and birthing nests called redds. Upwards of 50,000 salmon will swim their way upstream to their birthplace. Once they have arrived, they will pair and dig a nest, spawn and die. The once tranquil scene at Goldstream Park takes on a new urgency, smell and sound as the park plays host to one of Nature's Miracles. A new generation of life starts while the old fades away. As numbers of spawning salmon increase over the next month, more eagles, gulls and stream life descend to feast upon one of nature's richest banquets. All life benefits from this extraordinary life and death cycle. Nutrients pass through the ground to nourish and feed the plant and tree life that abounds in this park.

A large concentration of eagles gathers here during the winter months with peak numbers by the Christmas holidays. Programs at the centre are geared to these phenomena at this time of year. The eagles' presence has increased since the park designated a quiet zone for all life at the estuary. On cold, damp days visitors can watch the activity of the eagles from the warmth and comfort of the Nature House via the video-cam screen. These activities and visual displays create for all visitors a sense of wonder as we survey our beautiful world. Come celebrate life at Goldstream. Now that the leaves are changing and their colours fade, the whole forest takes on a new look. Down at the 'Nature Cente' the fall/winter months herald a new and productive season. You won't be disappointed as you take in the view. You might even come away inspired as you watch the big-leaf maple leaves fall at Goldstream Provincial Park.

Crested Auklet — A New Species for Victoria

By Bruce Whittington

A new species will be added to the Victoria bird checklist with the sighting of a Crested Auklet (*Aethia cristatella*) at Pedder Bay in Metchosin.

Amélie Rousseau spotted the little alcid on September 5, 2003, while doing a seabird watch from Cape Calver with her husband, Jukka Jantunen. Both are experienced birders and bird banders; Jantunen is the Bander in Charge at the Rocky Point Bird Observatory, on the south shore of Pedder Bay. The two birders identified the bird, and were able to get distant photographs.

There is restricted access to the Department of National Defence facility at Rocky Point, and to the federal penitentiary at William Head, so the bird was not reported again until September 18th. Since then, many parties have seen and photographed the Crested Auklet by boat, using the marina at Pedder Bay as a launching point.

The Crested Auklet is a resident of the North Pacific Ocean and Bering Sea, and nests on rocky islets in the Aleutian Archipelago of Alaska, and islands lying off Alaska and Russia in the Bering Strait. The species nests among piles of rock, often on exposed headlands. A single egg is laid, typically in a deep recess. The birds winter in waters close to their breeding areas, and wander very rarely.

Crested Auklets are plankton feeders, and often dive to great depths in pursuit of their prey. There are records of these birds being found in the stomachs of cod that were caught by fishers at depths of 30 fathoms (55 meters) (Preble and McAtee, 1923).

The Pedder Bay bird has been in the company of its larger cousin, the Rhinoceros Auklet (*Cerorhinca monocerata*). It is about two-thirds the size, and a little warmer in colour. Its whitish iris is visible at some distance. This bird is not yet in adult plumage, but is believed to be in second winter plumage, as it is moulting some of its flight



feathers. The crest that gives the species its name is present, and it is understandable why some have dubbed the little alcid the "Sea Quail". According to Preble and McAtee, the natives of Alaska call the species "Canooskie" — the Little Captain.

There is only one previous record of this species in Canada; a specimen that was



Photos: Bruce Whittington

collected by a sealer named J.M. Lindley, off Kyuquot in the winter of 1892-93 (Campbell *et al*). The specimen was reportedly overlooked for many years in a collection of Alaskan bird specimens. Munro and Cowan (1947) include the species, citing only an earlier reference that claimed "several sight records", but Campbell *et al* do not mention these records.

Roberson (1980) does not include the earlier British Columbia specimen, but lists a record in California in 1979, a beached bird that died the following day. Sibley (2000) indicates an additional record from coastal California, and one from Baja California.

Pedder Bay is a rich feeding area for seabirds, and the Crested Auklet continued to be seen in the first week of October, so there is hope that this individual will survive.

VNHS would like to thank the management and staff at Pedder Bay Marina for their interest in the Crested Auklet, and for their assistance in updating visiting birders on the bird's location.

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Pine Broomrape (*Orobanche pinorum*) at Koksilah Ridge, Vancouver Island

By Adolf Ceska and Oldriska Ceska

In 1914, Robert Glendenning collected a nice specimen of pine broomrape (*Orobanche pinorum* Geyer ex Hook) at "Cowichan River". This was the only collection of pine broomrape in British Columbia and in Canada. Since the plant has not been found again, it was declared extirpated in the 1999 *Illustrated Flora of British Columbia* (Vol. 4, page 8).

In November 2000, while walking along the trail, we stumbled across the blackened remnants of pine broomrape in Koksilah River Provincial Park. We returned to this area again the next summer and in the following three seasons we located more plants in this general area.

Pine broomrape is the largest species of the four broomrape species that grow on Vancouver Island. Its plants are tall, often close to 50 cm, usually with many branches and numerous pinkish flowers with purplish, darker stripes. Plants flower later in the summer, from about late July to the middle of August. Later the plants die and one can find the blackened remnants of the last year's plants, often near the new plants.

The earlier collectors thought that pine broomrape was parasitic on roots of coniferous trees, hence the name. Its close proximity to bushes of oceanspray (*Holodiscus discolor*), and later the identification of roots on which the broomrape was attached, showed that oceanspray is in fact the host of this parasitic plant. In the Koksilah area, one can find plants growing usually quite close to the base of oceanspray bushes, especially those that grow at the bottom of ravines that may have water running through them from winter to early summer. The surrounding forest is a typical drier Douglas-fir forest with dull Oregon-grape (*Mahonia nervosa*) or salal (*Gaultheria shallon*), some twinflower (*Linnaea borealis*), trailing blackberry (*Rubus ursinus*) in the lower shrub layer, and *Eurhynchium oreganum*, *Hylocomium splendens* and *Rhytidiadelphus triquetrus* in the moss layer.

Pine broomrape occurs from northern California through Oregon and Washington, and our British Columbia localities are at the northern limit of its distribution. In Oregon and Washington, it occurs mostly east of the Cascades. There has been only one sighting record in coastal Washington at Orcas Island (Chris Chappell, personal communication).

Shortly after we found several oceanspray bushes with pine broomrape in the Koksilah area, Weyerhaeuser began to log the area adjacent to Koksilah Park. Since we found the broomrape both below and above the logged area, it is probable that some sites might have been destroyed by this logging. In addition, after the forest was opened by logging, there have been numerous windthrows in the Koksilah River



Provincial Park and several bushes with oceanspray that had pinewoods broomrape have been negatively impacted. One can still find some old (last year's) plants on them, but no new ones.

We have been calling for the protection of this area since the late 1970's, long time before we found pine broomrape there. Koksilah River/Eagle Heights grasslands represent an excellent example of our "pocket grasslands" and the Arbutus/Douglas-fir forests that originated after the 1918 forest fire are a good example of this special successional ecosystem. These open forests also host the largest populations of the provincially red-listed white lip rein orchid (*Piperia candida*) we know of in British Columbia. In addition, there is a small stand of old growth Douglas-fir forest in this complex that escaped the 1918 fire. The whole area would be worth protecting as an Ecological Reserve. Such a reserve would combine Vancouver Island "pocket grasslands" with a stand of old-growth forest, as well as forest in late successional stages after the forest fire and now one early successional stage after the recent logging. Only rarely can one find similar diversity both in plant species and vegetation units in such a relatively small area.

At this moment, the Nature Conservancy Canada is negotiating with Weyerhaeuser, to acquire this area for the protection. If those negotiations fail, pine broomrape may again disappear from the flora of British Columbia.

Cape Flattery Tour

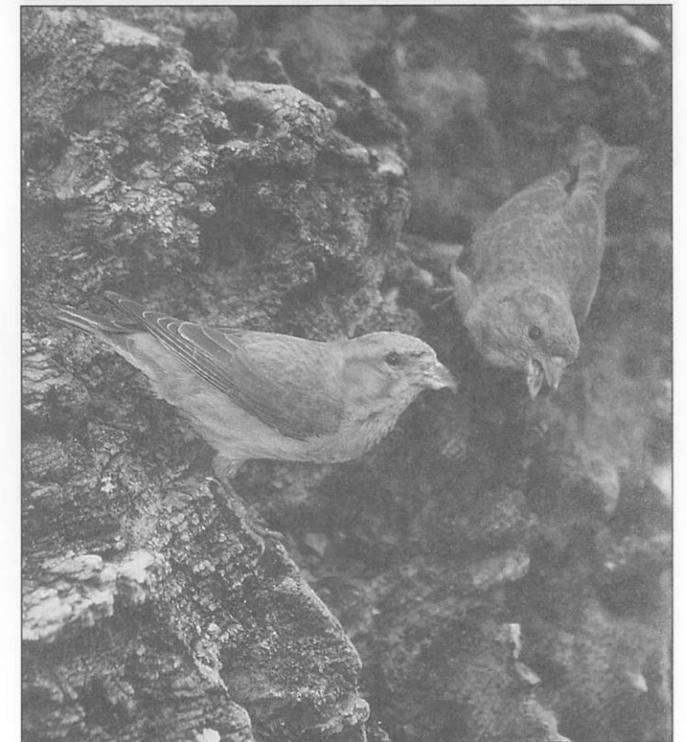
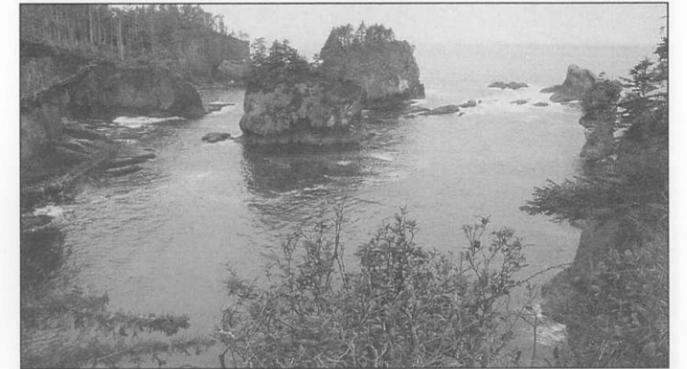
By Katherine Aitchison

We all arrived excited though bleary eyed at 6:00 a.m. at the COHO ferry terminal. A group (from veteran to novice) of forty enthusiastic birders immediately began bird watching from the bow of the ship. Highlights seen from the boat included 25 Red-necked Phalaropes and a Parasitic Jaeger.

Once in Port Angeles, we embarked on our journey to Cape Flattery. Sightings were even being made as the beautiful landscape flashed by the bus windows. At Clallum Bay we had wonderful looks at Red Crossbills on the ground in front of us (usually they are high up in the conifers extracting seeds from cones). We patiently watched as they extracted grit from the driftwood. A Green Heron was also spotted in the estuary, as were Sanderlings and Semipalmated Plovers.

Our next stop was the Makah nation cultural museum in Neah Bay. On display were artifacts from Ozette, a whaling village that was partially covered by a mudslide 500 years ago. In the 1970's, over 50,000 artifacts were found at the site, the best of these being on display at the museum. It gave us a wonderful snapshot of what life was like in a whaling village 500 hundred years ago. The displays were very informative and well presented.

At the river lowlands south of Cape Flattery, a Great Egret was seen and caused quite a commotion from everyone on the bus. Rick, our group leader had heard about the bird being spotted there a week earlier so we felt very privileged to see such a rare sighting. Down a dusty and bumpy road, we arrived at the Cape, full of trepidation and excitement to see the Tufted Puffins. We tramped our way down the trails and boardwalks to discover the wonderful cliffs of Cape Flattery and the view of Toutoushe Island. This island had once been attached to where we were standing. Many thousands of years before the sandstone link had eroded away from the constant pounding of the sea. Spotting scopes were set up at various lookouts to view the delightful and active Tufted Puffins. They dove and flew through the water only to appear moments later with bills filled with silvery fish. Farther off in the distance four grey whales were seen diving and feeding; a large colony of sea lions and Pelagic Cormorants were resting on the rocks near Toutoushe Island. A few lucky birders also caught a glimpse of a Sea otter floating on the waves. We also saw a bounty of Marbled Murrelets, Belted Kingfishers, Harlequin ducks, Pigeon Guillemonts, Black Oystercatchers as well as two immature eagles flying low over the Cape. The sandstone cliffs and sea caves were awesome; one could feel the immense power of the sea vibrating the ground on which we stood.



Cape Flattery, photo: David Pretty. Male and female crossbills, photo: Marie O'Shaughnessy

Numerous species of birds and several mammals were counted. I wanted to make my own contribution to the count but unfortunately, only native species could be included (not the stuffed macaw at the Mexican restaurant!)

Our exciting and refreshing day was concluded with beverages, delicious food and many laughs. We headed for the late ferry, tired but reveling in the wonderful day of sights, memories and newfound friends.

Field Trip Report: Birding Victoria's Waterfront

By Marie O'Shaughnessy

September 7th 2003 — it was a morning that threatened rain. Fifteen warmly clad Birders gathered around their leader in the morning light at Clover Point. The conversation among the participants had one central theme...the change in the weather! Large dark clouds hung above our heads just as the annual Victoria Waterfront field trip began. An outing peppered with rain is not an enjoyable experience. Looking aloft only caused me more anxiety however; I need not have been worried for arched across the heavens at this early hour were two colourful rainbows. This was Nature's sign to me that no rain was about to fall on 'our parade'. The end of one of the rainbows was clearly visible way out in the Straights. My thoughts, as we lifted our binocular and set our scopes created fanciful images of some bird bathing in the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. It made for a pretty picture and I knew in my heart that this was going to be a fine morning of bird watching.

Rain had come to Victoria a few days earlier in the form of some heavy showers. This had surprised Victorians who had become accustomed over the past two months to sunny days and bright blue skies. Rain was something we had not seen for a while and the downpour the previous day was most welcomed. The trees and gardens had begun to soak up the much-needed moisture. Even the grass beneath our feet looked greener as we stood at Clover Point.

This point of land can be an ideal stop off for local and several species of migrating bird during fall. This geographical location invites birds to 'put down' for a much needed rest and 'feed-up' before they journey to their wintering locations. This particular morning, however, nothing of any great significance was to be seen. We spent 30 minutes scanning the rocky shore for shorebirds. We were to be rewarded with only four 'peeps' that flew past rapidly that only an expert birder might have 'called it'. In birding lingo, this means being able to identify the birds by overall shape, size, and colour as they fly by. Our very knowledgeable co-leader Rick Schortinghuis gave them a name...Least Sandpipers. After several minutes of observing noisy Black Oystercatchers, and various gulls on the rocks below we decided to head off to Bowker Avenue. Before we departed, a quick scan of the Kelp beds and beyond provided us with auks for our list. Thus far we had added a Great Blue Heron, Glaucous-winged Gull, Heermann's Gull, California and Mew Gulls. Even an early Thayer's Gull was to be observed on the rocks below the point. Rhinoceros Auklet, Common Murre and Pigeon Guillemots were also seen diving for breakfast amid the waves. A fast moving flock of Surf Scoters jetted past the point as we put away our scopes. Savannah Sparrows and a sizable group of Barn Swallows bid us farewell as we headed quickly to our cars to catch the incoming tide at Bowker.



Sandpiper, Willows Beach. Photos: Marie O'Shaughnessy

Bowker Avenue is always a hot spot for shorebirds especially when the tide is low and large amounts of visible rock are available for these birds to seek their daily requirements of nutrients. As we approached, we could see many Black-bellied Plovers and Black Turnstones scour over the rocks. Surf Birds with four Shortbilled Dowichers were also observed. A dainty Greater Yellowlegs paraded before us at the water's edge. These elegant shorebirds also gather in small numbers on rocks at the Oak Bay Marina and can be found in several secluded bays along the waterfront at this time of year. To observe both Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs side by side is a rare treat. We were to encounter this experience a little later at our stop over at Loon Bay. Killdeer, Hooded Merganser, Mallard and a Bonaparte's Gull were added to our list at Bowker. The usual crows, house sparrows, rock pigeons, previously known as (rock doves) starlings and robins were evident as we gradually made our way along the waterfront.

Our next viewing station took us to Cattle Point where six Common Terns with their distinct wing beat flew past. Marbled Murrelets were heard calling to each other in the distance. Double-crested and Pelagic Cormorants 'hung out to dry' on various rocks and marine markers. A quick pan of the Garry Oaks behind us gave us all great views of a Cooper's Hawk. There was no sign of Horned Larks on the rocks at our feet as expected. This species had been reported earlier to the RBA. I was to find three Horned Larks two days later in the same location. A Lapland Longspur the week of October 1st has now joined the 'visitors list' for Cattle Point this fall. It is prudent to keep an eye on the rocks at

your feet when out birding for one never knows what might be skirting around below as well as above at any time of year. After exhausting all possibilities of seeing anything new at this location we moved on to our next stop.

Loon Bay is a quiet bay just before one enters the Royal Victoria Yacht Club property. Here a pair of skittish Belted Kingfishers can predictably be found. This day was no exception. By now the tide was returning quickly. To find other shorebirds was becoming increasingly more of a challenge. Glimpses of both Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs as they fed at the water's edge were indeed a bonus. Side by side they foraged. This allowed for us as a group, to have that rare opportunity to really observe the subtle differences between the two. Comparisons were made with overall size, bill shape and length, and call notes of these two graceful waders. We also noticed along the water's edge a lonely Western Sandpiper huddled beside a large rock. The tranquility of this setting was suddenly shattered by a vocal group of crows as they chased after a Sharp-shinned Hawk. Finally our time here was over and we needed to return to our vehicles. The musical chatter of an American Goldfinch overhead added yet another species. Song sparrows and House Finches twittering in the morning sun provided additional bird species, which thus far we had missed. A scolding from a Bewick's Wren bid us farewell as we headed for Ogden Point.

Victoria's picturesque harbour is protected somewhat by the Ogden Point Breakwater. This landmark just happened to be our final destination this morning. Here is a great place to walk and bird in relative safety in all fair weather. Leaders of bird field trips love to list all the birds they have encountered on their mornings walk. We were to add two more species this day. It was here that we had hoped to find a few Red-necked Phalarope's. They tend to frequent the kelp beds, but their absence was conspicuous. Several mornings previously they had been reported and observed. During our walk of the entire length of the breakwater, it wasn't long before one keen eyed birder called out a sighting of a Wandering Tattler. This delighted many of those who hadn't seen this shorebird before. Two Wandering Tattlers were seen together later that day. As we headed to the end of our walk another species of sandpiper, Sanderling was seen. An adult and a juvenile were observed huddled together on one of the huge slabs of granite below us that fashion the breakwater. Further scanning with our binocular of the water around us revealed no new species so we quickly beat a retreat to the coffee shop. The sun had by now made an appearance between the cloud cover and it was pleasantly warm for our last moments on the breakwater. A few of us were however, ready for that much needed caffeine fix so headed into the cafe. Several participants and I sat around compiling our bird list as we sipped coffee. I remarked that last year our total bird species had numbered thirty-three. We were fortunate this trip to add an additional seven. The rainbow at the starting point of our field trip proved to be reliable. The sun did indeed peek out between the cloud cover and the rain never fell. It goes without saying, 'A positive outlook really brings in the birds.'



Above: Wandering Tattler, Below: Horned Lark.



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YNC Victoria Really, Really Needs New Leaders!

By Daphne Solecki, Co-ordinator, Young Naturalists' Club of BC



When Sheila Mosher started YNC Victoria in 2001, it grew rapidly to about 50 families who really enjoyed the monthly Explorer Days (family field trips) she and her team organised. Since Sheila stepped down, the only volunteers to come forward were two enthusiastic UVic students who really wanted to help but were unable to commit sufficient time to lead a YNC. Naturally, local YNC membership has fallen off since the principal attraction of membership is the field trips where skilled naturalists and other experts introduce children and parents to all the wonderful natural areas in and around their hometown. Membership is now less than 20.

Meantime other YNCs have started up all around the province, 15 at present, with enthusiastic and rapidly growing membership. Another two clubs are in the initial stages of starting up. Province wide, family membership is now over 500 but we should so much like once again to have a vigorous and active YNC membership in Victoria.

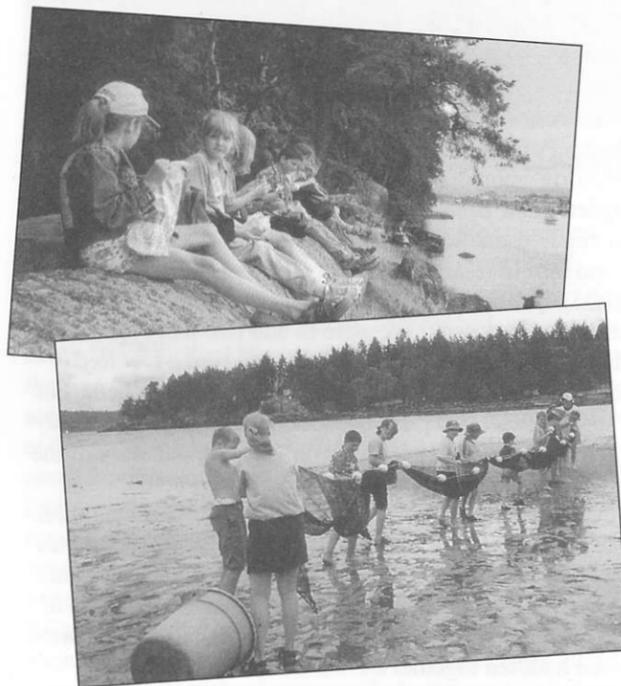
The principal commitment of the YNC leader is to organise a local Explorer Day once a month. YNC leaders will tell you they are all having a great time with their enthusiastic and active participants and find it most rewarding.

All administration, member processing and fundraising is carried out by the YNC co-ordinator and the Management Team. New leaders are supplied with a complete start-up package and other YNC leaders — Nanaimo, Oceanside and Cowichan Valley in particular — would be only too happy to offer support, help and suggestions. There is always e-mail for quick answers to questions.

If you would consider taking a leadership position or joining with other interested volunteers to get YNC Victoria going again, please contact Susanna Solecki in Victoria at 598-8722 or email sannasolecki@hotmail.com or me at 604-736-9471 or daphsol@telus.net. I can also put you in

touch with other YNC leaders to discuss at first hand what is involved.

PS: you may be interested to know that following the BC model, YNC Alberta is starting up this month — a joint venture of the Red Deer River Naturalists and the Federation of Alberta Naturalists, very similar to the partnership between Vancouver Natural History Society and the Federation of BC Naturalists. In addition, we are discussing with the Federation of New Brunswick Naturalists the possibility of starting a YNC in that province.



YNC members at Newcastle Island and seining.

Welcome to New Members

Barry Byers
Luxton Avenue
birds, photography

Janice Hannay
Glasgow Avenue
photography

Joanne St. Gelais
Olympia Avenue

Leo and Joyce Vezina
Seaforth Street
birds

**Duane Lachance and
Renee Cenerini**
Atkins Road

Lillian Main
Douglas Street
birds

Jonathan Stokes
Smythe Street

Big Black Bears

By Yorke Edwards

Through winter's hibernation, a bear stays lying in a cavern under a hollow tree or a large fallen log. Digging may add to the space. Collected leaves and branches help to keep out some cold winter weather while deep snow helps too. One to four little bears are born at a time while their mother is hibernating through winter, but she is in a mix of sleeps and awakenings. Through the rest of winter the young are nursed until spring. Then mothers and cubs stay together for two or sometimes three years before each youngster goes to live alone. In southern Vancouver Island, however, bears can be active through warm winters.

Bears are not usually dangerous to people, but it is wise to keep away from them. Most bears that I have met too closely were running away after my shout, but a few have just held their ground while I backed away slowly. My one exception was a thin and scrawny young bear, three or four years old, approaching my outdoors' breakfast. I was in a national park in a camping area where campers must have fed the bears. Waving and shouting made no stopping it, but it went away whining and muttering when I moved slowly toward it while banging on a tin plate with a large spoon. The clatter was loud, so the poor little bear trotted away whimpering.

In some large and well-forested parks with paved roads running through, bears learn to stay near the action. Often people seeing bears from cars slow down or even stop traffic while blocking the road. Some even get out of their cars to be closer still and may even try to feed them almost at arm's length. Usually the food is the junky kind not good for either bears or people. Feeding bears in parks can result in having to kill them when they have learned to take food from camps, campers, or stopped traffic. The usual wild foods for bears are: parts of many wild and edible plants, the dead deer hit on highways, fish (dead or caught alive), and open garbage dumps used by lazy or thoughtless people.

For four summers in a forest park I often walked along an old and narrow roadway through miles of forest. I was on an old 'tote' road that had once been used for dragging out logs using horses. While walking there, I found four damaged trees beside the road, all much the same but all far apart. Each had lost about a six inch square of chewed off bark, cambium, and some wood, and all squares were about five or six feet from the ground. In all there were long lines of tooth marks in the wood.

At first the four wounded trees were a mystery, but I soon decided that they could be chewed only by a bear, or possibly by several bears, taking off bark, eating cambium, and perhaps eating some soft new wood. While it was bear food, perhaps also the chewed trees had been telling other bears that they were trespassing on private bear property. If

In southern Vancouver Island bears can be active through warm winters.

so the chewed trees were both bear food and bear information.

One day on that tote road I met a bear face to face, but it ran away before I had decided to stand and make loud noises. It was a hot and moist Ontario summer's day and I was both wet and constantly waving off countless blackflies. Suddenly the bear had the road ahead of me. We were both startled, and we both were ready for retreat. The bear ran first and I wondered why. Was it my size? Was it my waving arms about? Was it my personal sweat? Or was it just one of those "people-things" that have invaded the forest?

Black Bears can be dangerous, but perhaps are most dangerous when they know that food is near. Don't feed them. Don't go near them. But do enjoy them from a good distance.

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Christmas Bird Count 2003

Saturday, December 20, 2003

By Ann Nightingale

Most people know that the data we collect on the Christmas Bird Count is sent to a centralized database, but do you know how that data is being used? In the last issue of "American Birds", several articles on the West Nile Virus referred to CBC data. Population studies on individual species rely heavily on the work of "citizen scientists" participating in the Christmas Bird Counts. A visit to the CBC website (<http://www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/>) will let you view maps and articles that have resulted from these surveys.

Over 1800 communities in North America are assigned standardized 15-mile diameter circles in which to count all the birds they can in a single day. In our area, this covers almost the entire greater Victoria region, so we need plenty of help. Counters under 18 years of age and Bird Studies Canada members are invited to participate at no charge. Other counters are asked for a \$5 tax-deductible contribution to offset the costs of the count and follow-up publications.

You don't have to be an expert birder to participate. Novices will be teamed up with more experienced counters. You can help out by acting as a tally person or as a spotter. If you are more experienced, and are wondering about leading a team, we have a couple of leaders looking for interns to take over areas next year.

Most teams start out at first light, and although counting goes on throughout the day, much is completed by noon. There are a few "keeners" who go out looking and listening for owls in the pre-dawn hours, and a few teams of boating birders who check out the offshore waters, weather permitting and suitable boats available. Feeder counts can be reported via the VNHS website or to Lyndis Davis at 744-5750.

For those who are unsure about participating, or who want to tune-up their bird-counting skills, a number of field trips in November and early December will serve as a good practice.

If you are curious, interested, or need more information, please check out the VNHS website (www.vicnhs.bc.ca) and the Christmas Bird Count site (www.birdsource.org) or contact Ann Nightingale at 652-6450 or by email at motmot@shaw.ca. If you have a preference for a specific area, you may contact the team leader for the area directly.

After the day of counting is over, there is a post-count gathering to share stories and find out how we have done. This year the gathering is at St. Luke's Church Hall, 3821 Cedar Hill X Rd (at Cedar Hill Rd.) at 7:00 p.m. Any contributions of finger foods or treats would be appreciated!

Area	Name	Leader	Phone	Email
1.	Butchart Gardens – N. Highlands	Warren Drinnan	652-9618	drinnan99@telus.net
2.	Central Highlands	Rick Schortinghuis	652-3326	shylo@islandnet.com
3.	Goldstream – Finlayson Arm	Adam Taylor	743-7495	a.s.taylor@shaw.ca
4.	Thetis Lake – Hastings Flat	Ann Nightingale	652-6450	motmot@shaw.ca
5.	Langford Lake	Glen Moores	655-3772	gmoores@islandnet.com
6.	Albert Head – Triangle Mountain	David Allinson	480-9433	passerine@shaw.ca
7.	Esquimalt Lagoon – Mill Hill	Derrick Marven	250-748-8504	marven@shaw.ca
8.	Esquimalt Harbour	Camilla Smith	479-4950	CamillaS_@hotmail.com
9.	Portage Inlet – The Gorge	Paul Levesque	995-1404	tuff-puffin@shaw.ca
10.	Victoria Harbour	Naira Johnston	370-2374	naira@uvic.ca
11.	Beacon Hill Park	Tom Gillespie	361-1694	twg@horizonnet.ca
12.	Oak Bay	TBA	652-6450	motmot@shaw.ca
13.	University – Cadboro Bay	Marie O'Shaughnessy	598-9680	moshough@pacificcoast.net
14.	Ten Mile Point – Arbutus Rd	Andy Stewart	477-1328	andy.stewart@shaw.ca
15.	Gordon Head – Mt. Douglas	TBA	652-6450	motmot@shaw.ca
16.	Swan Lake – Cedar Hill	Chris Saunders	391-1159	saunders@yahoo.ca
17.	Blenkinsop Lake – Panama Flats	Cheryl Mackie	479-4083	bcmackie@pacificcoast.net
18.	Elk Lake – Cordova Bay	Colleen O'Brien	388-4520	cob@shaw.ca
19.	Prospect Lake – Quick's Bottom	Dave Fraser	479-0016	goldstrm@island.net
20.	Martindale – Bear Hill	Brent Diakow	656-3190	brent@oceanusplastics.com
21.	Zero Rock (ocean)	Bruce Whittington	477-8611	fieldnat@pacificcoast.net
22.	Chain Islets (ocean)	TBA	652-6450	motmot@shaw.ca
23.	Juan de Fuca (ocean)	Ron Bates	386-1264	rbates@bc1.com

Oh the Joys of Camping

By Marge Crowther

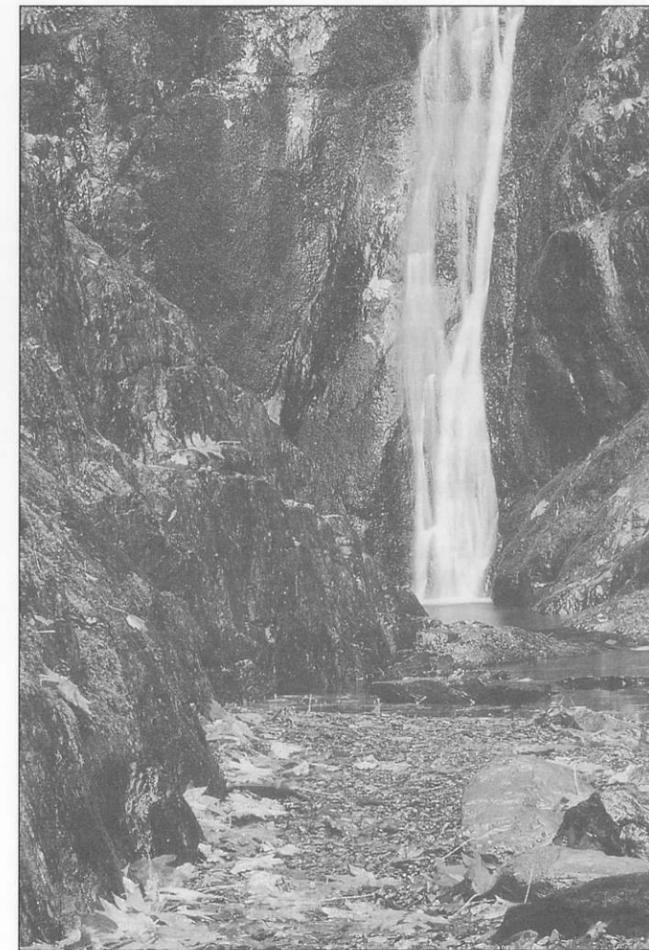
At one time we owned an Okanagan Camper, often staying at Goldstream Campsite. One evening, after a nicely barbequed dinner, the dusk of evening slowly closed in and a seemingly giant moon rose above the treetops. We stepped out onto the road, which seemed almost white in the brilliant light from the moon, the shadows of the tall trees etched in black on the road.

On the far side of the roadway was a strip of earth, a drop-off below us in total darkness. Suddenly, from the depths below came the most unearthly, beautiful scream of a cougar. I had never heard such a sound in my life and I felt my heart lift with joy and wonder at the beauty of it. A moment never to be forgotten.

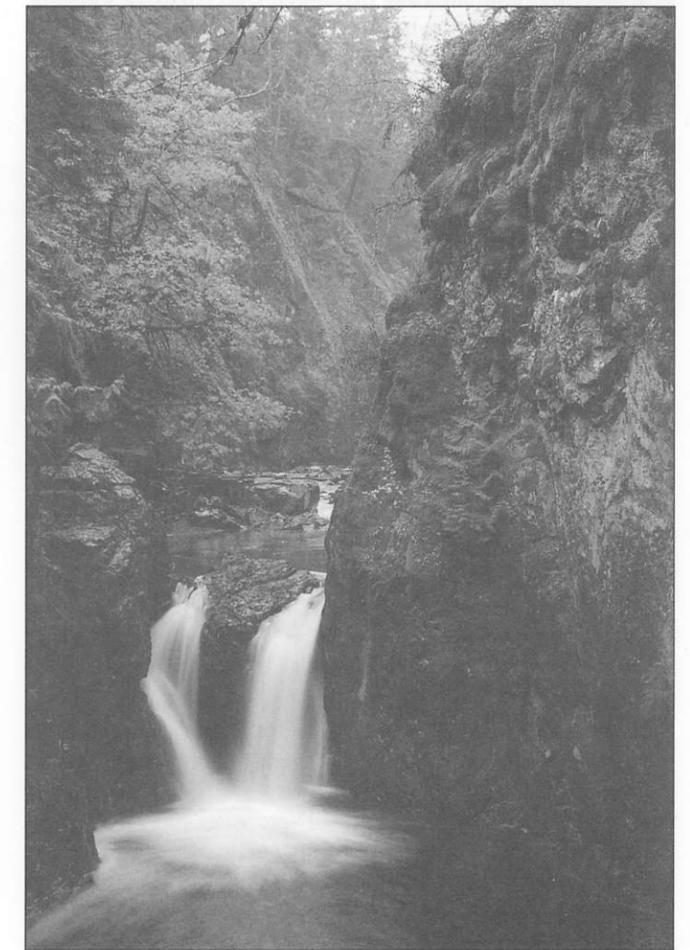
On another trip, as we were leaving Botanical Beach, I remembered our food supply for travelling (we always carried a basket of fruit placed between us in the truck).

I opened my passenger door, ran around to the rear of the camper, climbed inside and grabbed our basket of fruit, placing the basket between our front seats for our journey home. Leaving my door open, I went back to the rear of the camper to grab my purse, check with my husband, and returned to jump into the truck. I was greeted with a snarl and there right on our fruit basket were two of the cutest racoons you ever saw, sitting on now squashed grapes and eating them. They were also eating one of our bananas, which, to my surprise, they had peeled, joyfully munching away, with the banana skin tossed aside!

We knew these guys were fast to grab, but not *that* fast, and they didn't appreciate my yelling "Shoo! Shoo!" as they fled. We tossed all the fruit into the bushes for them to finish off, and drove off laughing.



Niagra Falls, Goldstream Park



Englishman River Falls. Photos: Marie O'Shaughnessy

VNHS Project Update

2004 marks the 60th anniversary of the Victoria Natural History Society, and it promises to be a banner year for VNHS. Last issue, a number of potential projects were listed and several of these have generated interest amongst our members. Progress reports will be made in the Victoria Naturalist, and time-sensitive information will be posted on the VNHS website. As of the printing of this issue, the projects listed below are underway. If you are interested in assisting, contact information is provided.

VNHS Library — The VNHS library is currently housed at Swan Lake Nature Centre. The Centre has provided us with an inventory of almost 600 books that comprise the VNHS collection. Members are currently welcome to access the books at the Centre during normal operating hours. We will be working with Swan Lake to determine if there is a way to increase library access.

Slide collection — VNHS member **Barry Camp** has offered to work on the slide inventory. Barry will be working with Bruce Whittington to categorize and organize this collection. Once indexed, we will be looking for ways to make this collection more accessible.

Historian/archivist — **Bruce Whittington** has volunteered to serve as the VNHS historian/archivist. This will be an especially important role as we prepare for our 60th anniversary.

Victoria Naturalist Index — **Andy Buhler**, a VNHS member who has recently moved away from Victoria has completed indexing the articles that have appeared in The Naturalist during the last 9 years. This information will be posted to the VNHS website.

Field camps and tours — **John Defayette** (598-3442, ul345@victoria.tc.ca) is anxious to hear from members who are interested in multi-day field events. If you have an idea of a location or would like to be informed of trips as they are being planned, please contact John.

Interclub field trips — **John Henigman** has submitted several suggestions to the Federation of BC Naturalists. Watch the VNHS calendar of events for interclub trips around the province.

VNHS 60th Anniversary — There will be several events during 2004 to mark our 60th anniversary. A steering committee will be formed to determine the specifics and the

schedule. If you are interested in serving on the steering committee or have ideas for the anniversary, please contact anniversary@vicnhs.bc.ca or **Donna Ross** at 384-5327.

Esquimalt Lagoon Signage — With one sign in place, it is now time to focus on the second planned sign for the bridge end of the lagoon. **Ann Nightingale** (652-6450, motmot@shaw.ca) will continue with fund-raising for this second sign, assisted by generous donations from VNHS members for an upcoming raffle. If you are interested in writing grant applications for funding for this project, please contact Ann.

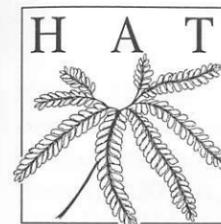
Cat-Owner Education Plan — **Darren Copley** (479-6622, dccopley@island.net) will take the lead on a cat-owner education project. Darren and Claudia's happy cats are shining examples of how owners can be "trained" to enjoy their pets and still minimize predation of native species.

Barn Owl Nest Box Project — **Ed Pellizzon** (881-1476, edlps@telus.net) will be the contact person for an owl nest box program. This team will work with **Andy Stewart** to identify current barn owl nests, educate potential nest box hosts and build and install boxes. If you are interested in helping out with any aspect of this project, please contact Ed.

Purple Martin Nest Box Project — **Darren Copley** (479-6622, dccopley@island.net) is looking for a crew to help build, install and repair purple martin nest boxes in the lower island area. The Purple Martin nest box program is a real success story, but many of the boxes are now getting old and are in need of repair and replacement. VNHS may also be working with students to increase awareness and build boxes in the schools. If you can help, please let Darren know.

Oak Habitat Monitoring — **John Henigman** (598-6326, henigman@pacificcoast.net) is the contact person for an Oak habitat inventory and mapping project. This group will work closely with other Garry Oak stewardship groups to monitor the health of the region's oak meadows. If you would like to assist, please contact John.

There are a few other projects that are under discussion at this time. Updates will be provided in future issues. Thanks go out to all of the members who have come forward (or will) to assist with these projects!



HAT Tricks

By Boyd Pyper, HAT Executive Director

Another successful art exhibit was held this past September and October at the Goldstream Nature House. This success is due in large part to the volunteer efforts of members of the Victoria Natural History Society. Each day of the show there were as many as six volunteers helping to staff the show. This involved welcoming visitors, selling raffle tickets, helping with the silent auction, directing people to the "People's Choice" ballot box, distributing scavenger hunts, and guarding against damage and theft. We also had a tremendous amount of help with the set up and the opening wine and cheese.

This exhibit, entitled *The Nature of Island Artists*, showcases more than 100 artists who gain their inspiration from the natural environment and who live on Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands. Their art is featured in a variety of mediums, including paintings, photography, three-dimensional, fibre, and glass. The goal of the show is to increase the public's awareness of the need to protect the natural world, and the role that parks play in that protection.

This was the eighth biennial show and the third one that HAT has had some involvement in. In the years previous to HAT being involved, the VNHS directed its share of the revenue to the viewing platform that overlooks the estuary at Goldstream Park. HAT's involvement resulted in the funds from shows going to our projects: the Brooks Point acquisition on Pender Island in 1999 and Laughlin Lake on Galiano Island in 2001. This year HAT is using all the funds raised to help keep the Nature House open. As I am sure you are all aware, in 2002 the provincial government determined that educational programming in BC's parks was not a core responsibility of government and all funding dollars were cut.

The show was beautiful and well attended, and I would like to thank all the VNHS members who volunteered to make it another great event. Of course you know who you are, but I would like to take my hat off to the following volunteers, many of who did several shifts over the course of the show (apologies for anyone missed or misspelled!):

Barbro and Stephen Baker
Barbara Begg
Judy Beinder
Maxine Bradley
Bob Chappell
Isabel Clemson
Lyndis Davis

Isobel Dawson
Barb Elton
David Fraser
Marilyn Fuchs
Louise Gates
Ann and Hal Gibbard
Tom Gillespie

Joan and Alan Greatbatch
Gwen Greenwood
Andrew and Gail Harcombe
Gordon Hart
Robert Hadley
Phyllis Henderson
John Henigman
Barbara and Bruce Hanwell
Peter Heron
Edith Hunsberger
Carolyn MacDonald
Jean MacDonald
Cheryl Mackie
Morwyn Marshall
Michael Mascall
Marilyn Miller
Sheila Mosher
Ann Nightingale

Marie O'Shaughnessy
Peggy Price
Leah Ramsay
Pat and Wayne Robertson
Rick Schortinghuis
Camilla Smith
Sheila South
David Stirling
Jan Talbot
Germaine Taylor
Margaret Turner
Miriam Tomlinson
Jean Waye
Bruce Whittington
Sharon and Bert Youell
Joanna and Jim van Barneveld

Many other people volunteered in some way for this event and they will be thanked by name in HAT's next newsletter, due out just before our annual general meeting on December 10 (see the calendar for the exciting details).

Thank you for your continued support of Habitat Acquisition Trust. Please feel free to drop by our office (316 - 620 View Street, Victoria, BC V8W 1J6), call us at 250-995-2428, e-mail us at hatmail@hat.bc.ca or check out our website: www.hat.bc.ca.

DFW
THE REAL LEADERS
Jim Farrell 477-7291

President's Message

By Ann Nightingale

On the weekend of September 27, you could see the smoke and flames from a forest fire near Hurricane Ridge from the hills and shores of Victoria. A miniscule fire by comparison to those that raged in the interior this summer, it served as a reminder of how sometimes our interventions turn into greater harm in the long run. For example, forest fire fighting activities are being blamed for the destruction of the Okanagan Mountain Park fire, but no doubt hundreds of thousands of hectares of habitat have been saved from fires in the past. Invasive plant species are targeted for removal, but as was pointed out at the September Natural History Night, these species serve as food and shelter for local organisms. There are so many

issues which seem to have opposing "right" answers. How is a naturalist (or a naturalist society) to know what to do?

In my view, one of the best characteristics of the Victoria Natural History Society is that its members are encouraged to have and support their own views on controversial issues, even if it means that members may sometimes be at odds. Whether it is writing about the beauty of scotch broom or participating in a broom-bashing event, devising ways to keep grey squirrels away from your feeders or building a better squirrel feeder, diverse views are welcome in VNHS. Share your thoughts, open discussion, and generate interest among your fellow naturalists. We can all learn from each other!

Letters

From: Robert de Borde
To: shylo@islandnet.com
Sent: Sunday, October 05, 2003 3:40 AM
Subject: Welsh birders thanks

Rick (VNHS) Many thanks, once again for allowing me to join your society's Viaduct Flats walk and the Vancouver Shorebirding trip. Your members certainly made me very welcome and were a great help in pointing out the finer details of North American bird Identification. Please convey my thanks to everyone especially Chris, Jeremy, and Geoff at Swan Lake. It was a great pleasure meeting them all.

If I can be of any assistance to any of your members regarding Birding in Britain please don't hesitate to contact me.

Please inform Jeremy that your Golden-crowned Kinglet (*Regulus satrapa*) is not the same bird as our Firecrest (*Regulus ignicapillus*). Close though!

I found your Snipe at the reservoir near Island View Beach and also had excellent close-up views of male Californian Quail. What an extraordinary bird!

My family has invited me back over to Vancouver Island

any time, so perhaps we will meet up again. (Finances and Jet lag permitting)

Very Best Wishes and Good Birding to all,
Rob de Borde

N.B. Royal Society for the Protection of Birds Website :
www.rspb.org.uk

August 12, 2003

To Whom it May Concern:

I wanted to write to express my thanks for awarding me with a Bev Glover Memorial Scholarship. I thoroughly appreciate the recognition and financial contribution you have bestowed upon me and will continue to strive to do my best in my final year at UVic.

Thanks again,
Laura Benard

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 Murray and Anne Fraser 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. The VNHS Calendar also appears on the Internet at: <http://www.vicNHS.bc.ca>.

OCTOBER THROUGH DECEMBER

Glorious Goldstream

Offers World-Class Salmon-Viewing

Goldstream is an excellent salmon-spawning stream with thousands of chum salmon returning between October and December. These chum salmon have traveled thousands of kilometres in their four-year lifetime and are at Goldstream to continue their life cycle by spawning in the river. Good years have seen as many as 50,000 salmon return home to the Goldstream River. The Visitor Centre is open daily this fall/winter from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Weekend activities at the Centre include fish printing, salmon slide shows, videos, and interpretive programs on the hour from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Hot coffee and baked goods are available at the book/gift store and the fire is usually lit to warm you after a walk along the river to see the spawning salmon.

NOVEMBER

Sunday, November 2

Wild Mushroom Show

Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

A special presentation by the South Vancouver Island Mycological Society, displaying the huge variety of mushrooms found in our forests, fields and gardens. Bring your specimens for identification by the mushroom experts. Drop-in program suitable for ages 6 and up. Donations appreciated.

Saturday, November 8

Identifying Mushrooms

Rob Countess will lead this intensive full day identification workshop. After a slide presentation, participants will carpool to a nearby area for collecting and field study. Handouts will aid in the identification of collected specimens. **Pre-registration required.** Bring a mug, a bag lunch, bucket or basket for collecting, and dress for the weather. Swan Lake Nature House, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Cost: \$50.00, Friends of the Sanctuary \$45. Swan Lake Nature House. To register call the Nature House at 479-0211.

Saturday November 8

Musical HATs is Back! A Coffeehouse-style event at Metchosin Community Hall (4401 William Head Road)

Habitat Acquisition Trust will be doing two nights of our extremely popular Musical HATs — a coffeehouse-style evening of food, drink, and fabulous music by a variety of local talent. Last year we tried holding this event in Metchosin and the results were gratifying. Metchosinites came out in droves and wanted more.

With that in mind, we will hold one of the nights at the Metchosin Community Hall, and the other will be at the Prospect Lake Community Hall. Last year these evenings sold out, so do not wait to get your tickets! Doors open at 7 p.m. and the music begins at 7:30 p.m. Tickets: \$10.00 each available at the HAT Office (#316-620 View St.) 995-2428 or at the Goldstream Visitor Centre.

Sunday, November 9

Mushroom Foray

Learn to identify mushrooms in the field, with a focus on wild mushrooms. This full day mushroom workshop, led by **Rob Countess**, will be in the Lake Cowichan area. Handouts provided. Bring a mug, a bag lunch, bucket or basket for collecting and dress for the weather. **Pre-registration** required with Rob at countess@island.net. Meet at Helmcken Park and Ride at 8 a.m. 8 am to 5 p.m. \$75 which includes transportation.

Tuesday, November 11

VNHS Natural History Presentation

The Gooches: Ocean Wanderers!

The speakers for this natural history will be well-known around-the-world sailors **Coryn and Tony Gooch**. They will be showing slides, and talking about the wildlife they have seen on their sailing trips to the high latitudes, to Antarctica, South Georgia, Iceland, Spitsbergen and the Southern Ocean. One invasive species, *Homo sapiens*, has had a devastating impact on the wildlife in the high latitudes and in recent years, there has been a steep decline in the population of albatross due to long line fishing practices. Coryn and Tony will be providing us with first-hand accounts of this decline, and the tragedies they have witnessed on their sailing journeys. 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, November 16

Pelagic Birding on the M.V. Coho

Mike McGrenere will lead this trip on the M.V. Coho on its usual sailing across the Strait of Juan de Fuca and back. The crossing takes 1-1/2 hours and this is the best opportunity to see bird species such as Shearwaters, Fulmars, and Phalaropes, which are usually found further out to sea. We will be birding from the bow of the boat so dress warmly. Bring a lunch and meet at the Black Ball Ferry terminal in the Inner Harbour at 10:00 a.m. for the 10:30 sailing of the M.V. Coho (allow plenty of time for parking). Ferry cost is \$18.00 (US) return (~\$25.00 Can), and it is essential to have 2 pieces of ID with you for customs, one with a photograph. We'll return on the 2:00 p.m. sailing.

Tuesday, November 18

Botany Night

Monks and monkshoods: travels with Tibetan nomads.

Evelyn Hamilton will be showing slides from her recent trek with the yak herding Khampa nomads of Tibet. Slides of the stunning landscapes, beautiful plants, colourful festivities and fascinating people in an area in Tibet seldom visited by outsiders will be presented. This will be a unique opportunity to see an area far off the usual tourist path and learn more about the ecosystems and people. Swan Lake Nature House, 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, November 23

11th Annual Day Trip to Reifel Bird Sanctuary, Delta

Join **Jeremy Gatten** and **Rick Schortinghuis** to view the Snow Goose spectacle at Reifel. Some 20,000 geese pass through Reifel in November. We have arranged a group rate at Reifel for VNHS members for this annual outing. Participants will carpool from in front of the Elk-Beaver Regional Park sign on Elk Lake Drive at 5:45 a.m. for the 7:00 a.m. sailing. With carpooling, costs will be about \$40.00 per person for this all-day birding bonanza. Pack your lunch and a thermos. Call Rick (652-3326 evenings) to confirm, as the trip will be limited to 20 participants. We will return on the 5:00 p.m. sailing.

Monday, November 24

Marine Night

At press time, a speaker had not been confirmed but we will have a speaker for this evening. 7:30 pm at Swan Lake Nature Centre. Please consult <http://pacificcoast.net/~plambert/index.html> or the VNHS website at <http://www.vicnhs.bc.ca/home.html> in October for speaker and title.

Wednesday, November 26

Birders Night

“Getting High in the High Sierra”

Host **Bryan Gates** will present a slide-illustrated talk on his recent exploration of the Sierra de La Laguna, the ancient volcanic mountains of southern Baja California, Mexico. Birds, bushes, ball moss and butterflies are features of this scenic mountain desert. Everyone is welcome. Bring a novice birder and your coffee cup. 7:30 p.m., Murray and Ann Fraser 159, UVic.

Saturday November 29

Musical HATs is Back! A Coffeehouse-style event at the Prospect Lake Community Hall (5358 Sparton Rd)

Habitat Acquisition Trust will be holding two nights of our extremely popular Musical HATs — a coffeehouse-style evenings of food, drink, and fabulous music by a variety of local talent. Last year we tried holding this event in Metchosin and the results were gratifying. Metchosinites came out in droves and wanted more. With that in mind, we will hold one of the nights at the Metchosin Community Hall, and the other will be at the Prospect Lake Community Hall. Last year these evenings sold out, so don't wait to get your tickets! Doors open at 7 p.m. and the music begins at 7:30 p.m. Tickets: \$10.00 each available at the HAT Office (#316 - 620 View St.) 995-2428 or at the Goldstream Visitor Centre.

Sunday, November 30

Birding Martindale Flats

Late migrants, winter arrivals and raptors should make for some great birding with **Brent Diakow**, 656-3190. This trip will give you a chance to tune up your winter bird identification skills for the Christmas Bird Count. Meet at the farm market at the corner of the Pat Bay Highway and Island View Road at 8:30 a.m. Gumboots are highly recommended.

DECEMBER THROUGH FEBRUARY

The Eagles Have Landed!

Visit the Nature House on the estuary at Goldstream Provincial Park during this year's Eagle Extravaganza. There are excellent viewing opportunities as hundreds of Bald Eagles feed on spawned-out salmon carcasses. The Nature House is open daily all winter from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. There will be birds of prey exhibits and great eagle viewing through spotting scopes and video cameras. Call 478-9414 for information.

DECEMBER

Sunday, December 7

Gull Identification Workshop at Goldstream

Learn more than you ever thought possible about the gulls that winter on Vancouver Island. Some come from as far away as the prairies to take advantage of the winter abundance of salmon. Don't be afraid of gulls. Use this as an opportunity to practice for the Christmas bird count. Meet at the Goldstream Picnic Area parking lot by the Finlayson Road bridge at 9:00 a.m. and bring adequate winter clothing and boots. **Bruce Whittington** will lead this trip.

Sunday, December 7

Christmas Lights at Swan Lake

Light up your holidays by making beeswax candles, lanterns and “telescopes” to look at the stars. Use invasive English Ivy and cones to decorate your creations. Have a drink of warm Christmas cider and bring a gift of non-perishable food for the Mustard Seed. This is a drop-in program suitable for children from 5 to 100 years. 1 pm to 3 pm. There will be a small charge for supplies. Donations always welcome.

Tuesday, December 9

VNHS Natural History Presentation Member's Night

Sip hot apple cider and meet with friends for an evening of slides and adventures. Anyone interested in presenting (on any topic) should call Claudia at the HAT office. Do not be shy! You know you want to! Meet at 7:30 p.m., Room 159, Murray and Anne Fraser Building (formerly Begbie), UVic. Bring a mug and a friend; non-members are always welcome.

Wednesday December 10

Habitat Acquisition Trust's Annual General Meeting!

I know that it does not sound that exciting but it is actually always a lot of fun, and refreshments will be served! This is an opportunity to celebrate our successes of the past year, and we conduct some

important matters of business, including electing HAT Directors. Only HAT members may vote at an AGM; memberships will be sold at the meeting 7:30 p.m. Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary, 3873 Swan Lake Rd. The draw for our fabulous kayak raffle will take place here as well: valued at \$4,500 and donated by the Vancouver Island Canoe and Kayak Centre! Tickets are for sale at the HAT office, from HAT directors and staff, at the Goldstream Nature House, and at the Annual General Meeting until the draw. Tickets are \$4 each or 3 for \$10. What a deal!

Sunday, December 14

Christmas Bird Count Tune-up

Meet at Helmken Rd Park and Ride at 8:00 a.m. This trip will give you a chance to tune up your winter bird-spotting identification skills. This trip will cover Knockan Hill Park and Hastings Flats and the roadsides in between, so bring your walking shoes, field guide and notepad. Special interest for novice or near-novice CBCers. For more info, call **Ann Nightingale**, 652-6450.

Saturday, December 20

Christmas Bird Count 2003

You don't have to be an expert birder to participate. Novices will be teamed up with more experienced counters. You can help out by acting as a tally person or as a spotter. If you are more experienced, and are wondering about leading a team, we have a couple of leaders looking for interns to take over areas next year. If you are curious, interested, or need more information, please check out the VNHS website (www.vicnhs.bc.ca) and the Christmas Bird Count site (www.birdsource.org) or contact **Ann Nightingale** at 652-6450 or by email at motmot@shaw.ca.

Saturday, December 27

Sooke Christmas Bird Count

Phone **Jack Mcleod** at 250-642-5369 if you would like to take part.

SEASONAL PROGRAMS AT SWAN LAKE

Families, join us December 27- January 4 for seasonal programs. Involve your family in crafts, games and fun, storytelling and a special warm-weather display. For full details, visit www.swanlake.bc.ca or phone 479-0211 after December 1.

JANUARY

Wednesday, January 28, 2004

Birders Night

“A Bird in a Tree is Worth Two Trips to Taiwan”

Simon Liao, President of the Wild Bird Federation Taiwan, and **Jo Ann MacKenzie** of White Rock will present a slide illustrated talk on the birds and birding in Taiwan, Republic of China. When you see these birds, you will want to join Simon on a future trip to his homeland. Everyone is welcome; bring a novice birder and your coffee cup. 7:30 p.m., Murray and Anne Fraser Building, UVic.

Tuesday February 10, 2004

VNHS Annual Banquet

“Missing Marmots”

Treat yourself to a sumptuous buffet courtesy of the University Club at UVic (formerly referred to as the Faculty Club) and food for your brain courtesy of our special guest **Dr. Andrew Bryant**, Chief Scientist on the Vancouver Island Marmot Recovery Team. Dr. Bryant, also known as “Mr. Marmot” is regularly interviewed regarding issues related to these critically endangered mammals. Come out and hear the latest news on our furry little friend. Happy hour at 6:00 p.m., dinner at 7:00 p.m. Tickets are \$35 and must be purchased in advance, at Natural History Presentations, Birder's Nights, or at the Habitat Acquisition Office (316-620 View) (995-2428). Lots of great door prizes available. We will see you there!

BULLETIN BOARD

Eloise and John Defayette are seeking fellow VNHS members for planning a trip to the Yucatan in January 2004. They are looking for adventurers that like to explore flora and fauna, birding and Mayan cuisine. Phone 250-598- 3442 or e mail: ul345@victoria.tc.ca.

Trail Building at Swan Lake

At Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary, a cobblestone trail is being built on the top of Christmas Hill to minimize the impact

of foot traffic on the native vegetation. This work is being carried out over the winter months while the wildflowers are dormant. The Sanctuary needs volunteer help to complete the trail. This is an ideal opportunity for anyone wanting to get outdoors and work on a worthwhile project. Work parties are being organized for Saturdays as well as most weekdays. Anyone interested is asked to call **Joan** at 479-0211 or email cowley@swanlake.bc.ca



The Victoria NATURALIST

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Dec-03

Philip and Marilyn Lambert
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Musical HATs Is Back! (Now at 2 venues!)

- ♪ Amazingly talented conservationists
- ♪ Lots of terrific raffle prizes
- ♪ Scrumptious goodies and drinks
- ♪ A happy feeling in your heart



November 8

Metchosin Community Hall (4401 William Head Road)

November 29

Prospect Lake Community Hall (5358 Sparton Road)

Doors open at 7 pm and the music begins at 7:30 pm

Tickets: \$10.00, at the HAT Office 995-2428
517-620 View Street hatmail@home.com