



# The Oystercatcher

PUBLISHED BY THE HORIZON BOOK COMMITTEE  
IN ASSOCIATION WITH  
THE SALT SPRING TRAIL AND NATURE CLUB - GANGES B.C. VOS-1EO

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Editor - I.C. Shank.  
Associate Editor - J. King.

## INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Last year, the Trail & Nature Club produced two excellent Newsletters, under the editorship of Ken Campbell, before deciding to abandon the project. As our Committee feels there is a place for a publication of this nature on the Island, we will be publishing a Quarterly to be known as The Oystercatcher.

The cost of the Newsletters was borne by the Trail & Nature Club and a form of distribution adopted which did not involve the post office. We intend to mail the Quarterly to interested subscribers who are willing to pay \$2. per year for (4) issues, commencing with the June edition. At the rate of 32¢ for each mailing this amounts to \$1.28, which leaves only 72¢ to pay for the paper, duplicating, etc. There will be a deficit which the Book Committee will assume for the coming year.

This issue will be free. Those who have already paid up will have their subscription start with the June issue.

In order for The Oystercatcher to become an interesting and informative publication, we need a good deal of help in the form of articles. These need not be typed, as long as they are legible, we will do the rest.

We also welcome suggestions on improving our product or sources of information.

In order for us to get your name on our permanent mailing list, we need your \$2. and mailing address. To this end for your convenience, we have placed an application form on the last page of this issue. Thank you.

We are indebted to Doug Penhale for designing our masthead, and to Carol Penhale for typing this edition.

The Editor.



## TRAIL AND NATURE CLUB NEWS

The Annual Meeting was held in Central Hall on February 22nd. As usual, the pot-luck supper was enjoyed by all. It was so well attended that a few extra tables had to be added to accommodate all the members and guests present.

The following Officers were elected:

President - Peggy Jacobs  
Secretary - Edna Gatt

Vice-Pres. Jean King  
Treasurer - Carolyn Moore

A motion was passed, unanimously, to sponsor an essay and art competition at the local elementary schools on the subject of wildlife preservation and conservation. A total of \$100 in prizes will be provided with the Trail & Nature Club and the Book Committee sharing the amount.

The subject of the competition for this year will be - My Favorite Wild Flower. The judges will be nominated by the two sponsoring organizations, and the prize winners will be reported in the June issue of this quarterly.

The concluding feature of the evening was a showing of slides by Bob Ball where he and Betty had hiked and back-packed in the past and recent years. The slides and commentary were excellent. Bob received a well deserved hearty vote of thanks and applause for his contribution towards an enjoyable evening.

INTRODUCING - PEGGY JACOBS, the newly elected President of the Trail & Nature Club.

A native of England, she grew up within 20 miles from the famous Lake District and started hiking as a child, and when she met her future husband, took up rock climbing.

They emigrated to Canada in 1955 and lived in Edmonton. After her husband's death in 1965 Peggy returned to England in 1974. She moved back to Canada in 1980 and to Salt Spring.

Peggy was a member of the British Rock and Alpine Club, and later a member of the Alpine Club of Canada. She is a graduate of a rock and ice climbing school, and has climbed and skied all over Europe and parts of Canada.

(Editor's note: Peggy was reluctant to give us the above information but we feel that we now know her better. In addition to her love of hiking and rock climbing, she brings to the club an effervescent personality and enthusiasm for all outdoor activities.)

### SPECIAL EVENTS

- March 22 - Off island. Walk and lunch, Witty's Lagoon, and visit to Pearson College.
- April 4 - Botany walk on Churchill Road and property of Mr. and Mrs. I.C. Shank.

Further details and times will appear in the Driftwood.



## THE BIRDS

Bird Count '82 saw a dedicated group of observers, armed with binoculars and notebooks, fan out over the island as they took part in the annual exercise in masochism known as the Christmas Bird Count.

The rules of the game stipulate that only those birds seen between dawn and dusk of the prearranged day be counted. This seems to be known to our feathered friends which are conspicuous by their absence as they find sheltered nooks to hide in. In spite of this lack of cooperation the count totalled 13,161 birds of 90 species. This compares with last year when the count was 14,724 birds and 96 species. We had 111 observers in the field, 8 less than in 1981.

This year, due to the lack of count cards, it was decided that the island be divided into 11 zones each with a coordinator who would take the counts by phone and pass their totals to the overall coordinator who compiled the grand total and sent the information to the appropriate authorities. This system worked well, with all the paperwork being completed before the New Year.

Some facts and figures that may be of interest are:

Largest count:- Zone 10 (Southey Point) with 9 observers, 2691 birds of 58 species.

Smallest count:- Zone 3 (Cusheon Lake) with 4 observers, 352 birds of 17 species.

Most observers:- Zone 1 (Fulford Harbour) with 20.

Most of one specie:- Zone 2 (Beaver Point) with 1475 robins.

No rare birds were sighted though Vesper Sparrows were reported from the Beaver Point area (Z2) and Grey Crowned Rosy Finch from Vesuvius (Z9). We had one sighting of a Marsh Hawk or Northern Harrier as it is now named. This bird may have come over from the Cowichan Valley where they are common.

Some observers brightened their day by adding the extraneous animal species they saw, such as seals, salmon, and from Zone 1, seven peacock seen strutting across a road. Sadly, the donkey, whose braying in 1980 caused one lady to declare she had discovered a 'rara avis', has gone to new pastures.

Thankyou to all who participated in the count. See you next year.

J. King.

## SUTTON CREEK WILDFLOWER RESERVE - Honeymoon Bay, B.C.

Every spring, a number of Salt Spring residents travel to the Cowichan Lake area to view the Pink Easter Lilies (*Erythronium revolutum*) growing by Sutton Creek, a few miles west of Honeymoon Bay. It is an unforgettable sight to see acres of pink blooms growing so profusely. These lilies have only survived because of the conservation work done by individuals and the company which until recently, owned the land.

The original owner of the property was a Mr. Henry March who acquired the land around 1887/1888. He is reputed to have sold some of the lily bulbs to seed firms but only those bulbs that had been



uprooted by livestock and which, if left uncovered, would have probably expired anyway. A descendent later sold the farm to Western Forest Products. In recent years, the wives of the directors of the forest company exerted enough influence over their husbands to restrain the company from doing anything which would harm the lilies. This appeared to give the lilies the protection they needed in the years to come but, unfortunately, Western Forest Products decided to close down their operations, in the area, and sold the land, which included the acreage where the lilies are growing.

As there was no indication from the new owners as to what they intended to do with the property, Cedric and Gertie Myers got busy and approached individuals who might be able to offer assistance in purchasing the property, where the lilies abounded. Through the good offices of Dr. McTaggart-Cowan, the Second Centuary Fund was able to purchase the property and thus officially afford it protection as a designated Wildflower Reserve.

We can all rejoice in this act of preservation which will ensure that present and future generations will be able to enjoy these beautiful flowers in the years to come. We offer our congratulations to the Myer's, the Second Centuary Fund, and all those who had a hand in this project.

(We are indebted to Gertie and Cedric Myers for extracting the above material from an article which they authored for the January 1983 issue of the Cowichan Valley Naturalist.)

WANTED - EARLY OR RARE BIRD SIGHTINGS

Please let your local coordinator know of any interesting birds or other wildlife you see so that they can be included in a column to be written by Marg Pearce for our forthcoming issues.

Where are your lists for the B.C. Museum Atlas of Wildlife? Keep a record and pass it on to your coordinator.

Coordinators

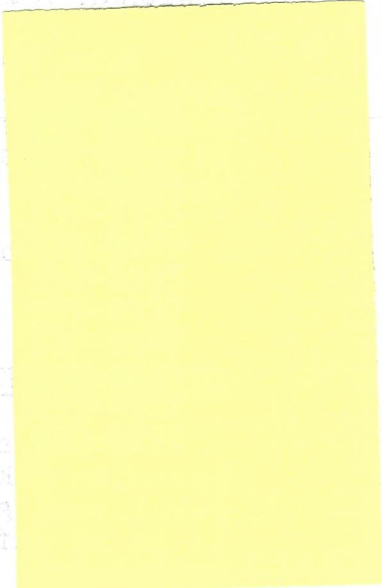
North End/St. Mary Lake  
Southey Point  
Vesuvius  
Booth Bay  
Ganges  
Long Harbour  
Hundred Hills  
Beddis Road  
Cusheon Lake  
Beaver Point  
Fulford/Burgoyne

Margaret Pragnell  
Jack Foster  
Bob MacLeod  
Nancy Braithwaite  
Rosemary Thomas  
Marg Pearce  
Joan Lott  
Chris Pattinson  
Toni Luton  
Ken Campbell  
Jean King

UNUSUAL WILD FLOWERS

Phantom Orchid (Eburophyton austiniae)

This plant is called the phantom orchid because it does not appear every year and being white in color. It is usually found growing in moist, coniferous woods. It has been reported growing in the



Musgrave Landing area on Salt Spring, but the sightings have been few and far between. Perhaps, the condition of the road has something to do with it which may be a form of protection for the orchid as we have, far too many, unthinking individuals who would take specimens home. It does not survive transplanting because it is a saprophyte and needs very selective conditions to grow.

The Phantom Orchid should not be confused with another saprophytic plant - Indian Pipe, which is quite prevalent on the island and described on page 4, "Wildflowers of Salt Spring Island". The Phantom Orchid is an erect plant, which may reach a height of 30 inches. It has white, fleshy flowers.

Candy Stick or Barber's Pole (*Allotropia virgata*)

A saprophytic herb growing to a height of 30 inches with a white and red stem, hence the name Candy Stick or Barber's Pole. In June 1970, R.D. Bird and I.C. Shank, found it growing along the Musgrave Landing road, on the west side of the highest point of the road. It was growing in a logged over area along with wintergreen and salal. It is reputed to flower from the end of May to August. The flowers are much less conspicuous than the stem.

Saprophyte - A plant, usually lacking chlorophyll or nearly so, obtaining nutrients from non-living organic matter via root association with a fungus.

I.C. Shank