



# The Oystercatcher

The Oystercatcher welcomes - indeed, is dependent on - articles, book reviews, letters from T&N members. Mail to the editor, or leave at the box in the Village Cobbler.  
**THE SALT SPRING TRAIL AND NATURE CLUB - GANGES B.C. VOS-1E0**

SUMMER 1989

Editor- Andrew Gibson  
490 Rainbow Rd., RR3, Ganges 537-4347

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

The semi-annual General Meeting of the Club will take place on Tuesday, June 27 at 12.30 approx. in Ruckle Park Picnic Site (Beaver Point Hall, if wet).

The Club Photo Albums have been placed in the Library. They are in the S.S.I. section, about the middle of the far wall on the right hand side as you enter the front door. They are available for perusal on the premises on a not-to-be-removed basis, similar to reference books. Margaret Briggs is the person looking after these. She will welcome any interesting photos of Club activities, preferably endorsed with names and dates.

A rack for literature on environmental issues has been established in the Library. A lot of interesting material comes to our mailbox. This is being done in conjunction with the Library.

**RECEIPTS FOR DUES:** It has not been the policy of the club to mail out receipts. If for any reason you wish to have your receipt, please contact me.

For the benefit of new members of the Club, perhaps it would be helpful to outline a few guidelines: Please join the group level (hike, regular walk, easy walk) at which you will be comfortable. If in doubt, check with the leader before starting out. So be realistic about the time element - do not start out stating that you have to catch the 2 o'clock ferry. When you have started out with a group you will have been included in the head count - if you wish to leave or separate from the group for any reason it is your duty to inform the leader.

**Automobile Expenses:** If you ride with someone on S.S.I. contribute \$1 per person. For off-island trips the rate is 12 cents a km. (20 cents per mile) plus ferry fare divided by the number of people in the vehicle.

**Leaders:** The Club is consistently short of leaders at all levels. This is becoming serious and could lead to curtailment of our programs if more people do not volunteer to take their turns. Please give your names to co-ordinators, who currently are: **HIKES-** Paul KYNASTON; **REGULAR WALKS-** Nancy HOLCROFT; **EASY WALKS AND INTEREST TRIPS:** Vera LARSON.

Organized activities will resume in early September. Have a pleasant summer with not too many house guests!

Dennis Seward

## NATURE NOTES BY OGDEN NASH

The turtle lives 'twixt plated decks  
Which practically conceals its sex.  
I think it clever of the turtle  
In such a fix to be so fertile

The panther is like a leopard,  
Except that it hasn't been peppered.  
Should you behold a panther crouch,  
Prepare to say Ouch.  
Better yet, if called by a panther,  
Don't anther.



A VISIT TO WILDWOOD TREE FARM

Nancy holcroft

Merv. Wilkinson's Tree Farm is at Yellowpoint near Ladysmith. He has been selectively logging this tract of timber since 1945, a few years after he purchased the property, when he wanted to make use of the land. At one time he owned about 140 acres; now a neighbour owns about half, but together they operate the two properties as a going concern.

Since 1945 most of the land has been cut over 8 times. Trees near the houses are left untouched, producing some beautiful specimens. There is no planting, as all the trees are naturally seeded, and as Mr. Wilkinson keeps certain healthy trees for regenerating, he can be assured of good strong specimens to replace those he cuts.

The average age of tree he takes is about 75 years. The value of a tree increases 20% over 20 years, so leaving a fifty-year old for 20 years greatly increases its value over a short period of time. 100 cords of wood can be cut each year without depleting the stand. Sheep are run between the trees to keep the salal down. One sheep to three acres has been proved a beneficial number. Deer are also allowed to graze, but never seem to destroy.

These are some facts. The reality is a beautiful park-like property of balsam, hemlock, spruce, fir, cedar and some deciduous species, run by a dedicated, kindly gentleman, obviously pleased to see us 17 members, and eager to show us around.

It is noticeable from the start that Merv. Wilinon loves forests, not only for the trees, but for all the living things which make their homes in them - birds, animals, flowers, and the beautiful and varied types of mushrooms we saw on our visit there in November. All parts of the ecosystem are necessary for the regeneration of the land.

We saw not only the stumps of trees cut years ago, but younger ones obtaining nourishment from their remains. He explained how one species will shelter another until it is able to stand on its own, and how woodpeckers, wood ducks and other birds get food and shelter from the old decaying trees. One Douglas fir which he had measured at 7 1/2 ft. diameter he estimated at 1500 years of age, with another nearby of a similar age.

Mr. Wilkinson sells lumber, firewood, seedlings, fence posts and Christmas trees, and has been able to make part of his living quite easily from his property for over 40 years.

We were invited into his home overlooking Quennell Lake to eat our lunch; ducks floated peacefully, and bantam chicks fluttered nearby. It all seemed so lovely, and made it hard to understand the necessity for clearcutting.

As we drove away we realized how beautiful it must be in the Spring, when flowers would abound. Fortunately, Merv. is passing on his expertise to several enthusiastic students, so hopefully this little part of the world will continue to delight for years to come.

Thank you, Merv. Wilkinson.

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THE SAFFORD TRAIL

Sue Mouat

Most members of the Trail and Nature Club have at some time gone on what is known as the Stafford Trail. This is incorrect. It is the Safford Trail. It was called after a man who built a house on a rocky knoll north of the late Bert Lemon's property. Mr. Safford probably built his house just after the first World War. Bob Akerman said he had a wooden leg, possibly as a result of the war. Ted Brown told me that Mr. Safford was an employee of the sawmill at Genoa Bay on Vancouver Is. This mill was steam-powered, and for some reason the local water was not appropriate for steam generation. Therefore a barge was sent regularly to Burgoyne Bay, where water from the creek was pumped aboard. Mr. Safford was in charge of the Salt Spring end of the operation.

Ted told me that Mr. Safford advertised for a wife in an English newspaper. When he went to Victoria to pick up his bride, he approached a young woman hoping she was his intended. However, he was told it was a much older-looking lady nearby. I gather he married her anyway!

Bob Akerman thought the Saffords left Salt Spring in the late Twenties. Their island house was left vacant and burned down some time later. Mr. Safford's job was taken over by Fred Walters of the Cranberry Marsh. He held the job for a number of years until the practice was discontinued.



BOOK REVIEW

Chris Pattinson

"Songbirds in Your Garden" - John K. Terres

One of the most practical and popular books on attracting birds is John K. Terres' "Song - birds in Your Garden", first published by Thomas Y. Crowell Co. in 1953, on how to attract, feed and enjoy birds in your garden and backyard. In several subsequent editions, the last in 1987, new information and descriptions have been introduced, up-to-date listings have been added to the appendix, and results of later surveys and experiments by other observers have added to his store of material.

Although Dr. Terres writes from his home in the northeastern U.S.A., many of his facts and helpful hints can be applied to other locales, including ours. In a friendly, informal style he is able to communicate a sense of fun and a contagious enthusiasm for his hobby, with a wealth of first-hand bird anecdotes. He includes a multitude of useful hints and facts, as well as explicit directions for feeding, nesting, housing, plantings and sounds for attracting birds. Did you ever try attracting California quail by imitating their call, and other birds by "squeaking" with your mouth on the back of your hand? (this may take a bit of practice.)

"Songbirds in Your Garden" gives detailed information on how to feed birds and exactly what food to give them. How about the recipe for 'Marvel-Meal', a peanut butter mixture for birds? (see P.271.) The author discusses birdhouses, feeding stations, and how they should be made, with an abundance of plans, designs and diagrams. He also covers birdbaths and watering fountains. In addition, there is information on the care and feeding of young birds and what to do with injured fledglings. There is a valuable section on the shrubs and trees which can be planted to provide birds with food, shelter and protection; and a special chapter on hummingbirds, which are found in nearly every part of North, Central and South America.

With a preface by Roger Tory Peterson and delightful margin illustrations by Matthew Kalmanoff, "Songbirds in Your Garden" can be borrowed from the Mary Hawkins Public Library, on McPhillips Ave. (639.9).

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THE FEDERATION OF B.C. NATURALISTS

Ailsa Pearse

The Annual General Meeting was held at the University of Victoria on Sat. May 6, 1989. Invited guests introduced by the President, Joe Lotzkar, were: Ray Halliday, Min. of the Environment, Victoria; Chris Dodd, Wildlife Branch, MOE, Victoria; Maureen Wayne, Public Conservation Assistance Fund, MOE, Victoria; Joan Verwoord, Recreation and Sports Branch, Min. of Recreation and Culture; Greg Jones, Ministry of Parks, Victoria; Kathleen Fry, Ducks Unlimited, Surrey; Bob Peart, Exec. Director, Outdoor Rec. Council, Vancouver; Joy Finlay, Vice Pres., Canadian Nature Federation; Ron Erikson, Nature Trust, Vancouver; Joan Williams, Nature Trust, Vancouver.

Over twenty-four resolutions were presented to the members by various naturalist groups throughout the province. These resolutions covered many concerns to be presented to the Federal and/or Provincial Governments. Some of the topics covered by these resolutions are:

- contingency plans to deal with oil spills.
- ban the use of lead shot.
- producers of advertising inserts be required to use newsprint or paper of a type suitable for recycling.
- current efforts to legalize retail trade in wildlife meat be stopped.
- to respect the results of the various Coastal Resource Identification Studies in awarding foreshore leases for mariculture operations.
- to initiate a new Act to better protect our native plants.
- support for public inquiry into land use practises.
- urge the government to deal with licensing ATV's
- support the development of an environmentally sound waste disposal facility in B.C.
- support for Colony Farm (in Port Coquitlam) to become either a working farm again or a Wildlife Management Area.
- urge the government to designate Boundary Bay as a Ramsar site.
- request the Ministry of the Environment of B.C. to set up Private Stewardship Conservation schemes, such as have been established in other provinces to support and compensate landowners.
- request the government to immediately provide encouragement and economic incentives to



- recycle materials into saleable products.
  - request more effort and funds be directed to support Environmental Interpretation Centres and their programs.
  - request a review of nature and quality of environmental components of the B.C. Ministry of Education and Ministry of Environment and to publish the findings suitable for public scrutiny.
  - condemnation of proposed sale of Crown land next to the Ecological Reserve at the head of Osoyoos Lake. This land is essential for the continued existence of burrowing owls in the area.
- These resolutions were all accepted by delegates.

Joe Lotzkar gave his President's Report which included a thirty-minute video on the Time Person of the Year - the Planet Earth. It was a rather depressing account of environmental problems. The Federation has purchased two copies of the video plus 100 reprints of the Time article (which is available for loan in the Cobbler's box).

Joe presented a cheque for \$1000 to Ray Halliday to be used by the Habitat Conservation Assistance Fund.

The Treasurer reported a \$6143 loss in 1988 and a projected gain of \$400 in 1989 provided we can sponsor two casinos and run the President's Appeal (which raised \$10,000) again.

The Executive Assistant asked that individuals and clubs making submissions to the Task Force on Environment and the Economy should send a copy for the office files.

The Camp Committee reported that there will be a camp in North Okanagan and another in Bamfield in 1990.

The Hon. Terry Huberts, Minister of Parks, addressed the meeting. He reported that B.C. has 5.4 million hectares in parks, with 200,000 hectares having been added in the last year. All Class A parks are fully protected. The Park Master Plan for the Valhallas has just been approved, and Master Plans will be approved soon for Desolation Sound, Cathedral, Purcell Wilderness, Garibaldi and Manning Parks. These parks will all have legislated boundaries, which can only be changed by an Act of the Legislature.

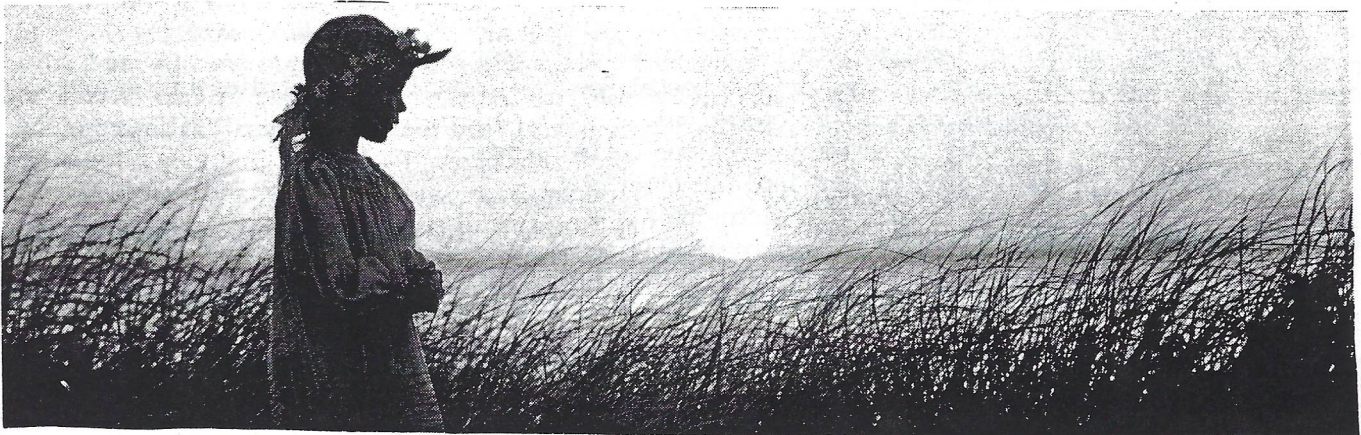
Dr. Huberts then answered questions put by the audience. He claimed responsibility for the one-year moratorium on logging on Crown land on Salt Spring. He assured the group that he would support these lands being made into parks at the end of the moratorium.

The Federation was invited to Salmon Arm by Frank Kime for our 1990 Fall General Meeting. This is the ideal time to visit, as it is a peak year for the salmon spawning on the Adams River.

The meeting was adjourned at 4.30 p.m.. It was with great relief we flooded out into the sunshine. The University campus was really lovely. The rhododendrons in full bloom were glorious, the lawns and trees putting out new green leaves were fresh and lush.

The one complaint with the all-day meeting was having a whole group of naturalists sitting in a windowless, stuffy lecture room. However, the banquet held that evening at Dunsmuir Lodge was compensation. The Lodge sits on the side hill overlooking Swartz Bay, the Gulf Islands and the whole of Sidney and Deep Cove. A very pleasant setting to end the day.

If anyone is interested in further information about the resolutions or other aspects of the meeting, please phone me at 537-9261 (Ailsa Pearse, Director to Federation of B.C. Naturalists).





One day last April an observant passenger on one of the air-conditioned luxury buses speeding along the Pan-American Highway between the Nicaraguan border and San José might, had he (or she) lifted his (or her) eyes from the pages of SPORTS AFIELD (or MS.), have seen, when passing a pueblito called Río Lagarto, a dust-encrusted couple, mature but not yet...er... disintegrated, sitting on the steps of the tienda. They had about them that ineffable soigné air of gringos slowly being dissolved into their constituent elements by the merciless rays of the sun. There was little sign of other life; a lizard darted from stone to stone, hoping to find a heat-prostrated fly, a few vultures circled overhead, eying the couple hopefully. Other than the sizzling of the asphalt and the occasional plop as swooning birds dropped from the trees, the silence was complete. As the bus sped away from this harrowing scene, the passenger, after murmuring "qué será será" may have crossed himself (or herself) while reflecting on the Norteamericanos locos.

Why, you may ask if you haven't nodded off, were we there (for the couple was indeed none other than the writer and his consort)? It was because of our two enthusiasms; one, to see the resplendent quetzals of the cloud forest of Monteverde, reached by a 50 km. mountain road from Río Lagarto; the other, to save a buck. We had been shocked to the core of our financial beings by contemplation of the prices of the tours which fan out all over Costa Rica from the hub city of San José. By riding the people's buses instead of the motorized palanquins favoured by the Croesi, and by taking our chances at finding pensiones at a fraction of the prices of the Sheraton Mucha Moola, we might see the country and still avoid the ignominy of expulsion from the country as undesirable bankrupts.

But there were sacrifices, among them the aforesaid trial by fire at Río Lagarto. We had left Tamarindo Beach at 6 in the morning, and had been disgorged at the inferno at 8, only to find that while the good news was that there would be a bus, the bad news was that it wouldn't come until at least half past three. So we sat there, periodically disappearing in the clouds of dust raised by Monteverde-bound vehicles, all of them oblivious to the couple who, thumbs languidly raised, were expiring in full view. The only relief from the tedium was caused by a tank truck which, by accidentally spilling its oil over a nearby stretch of the Pan-American, caused a reasonable facsimile of an Indianapolis disaster. When that was sorted out, we sank back into our torpid waiting mode.

The bus finally arrived at 5.00, and we staggered aboard into a mob of schoolkids returning from a Remedial Screaming course in San José. Fortunately the altitude put our ears out of commission and 5000' higher and 3 hours later we reached Monteverde, where we were immensely relieved to find a pensión willing to provide dos personas espaciadas (spaced-out types) with bread, bath and bed.

The Monteverde Forest Reserve is huge - about 1500 km<sup>2</sup> - at an altitude of between 1350 and 1600 metres. It is privately owned, having been established in the '50's by American Quakers, who went into dairy farming in this very remote area, and who realized that, with Costa Rica being at that time subjected to B.C.'s current fate of denudation and erosion, they could, at the worst, keep a part of this biological greenhouse (since then, in fact, Costa Rica has seen the light, and now has upwards of 8 percent of her area in parks). The area is a Mecca for biologists, for it is in a virtually pristine state, the only 'improvements' being the narrow trails along which the birdwatchers and botanists make their almost reverential way.

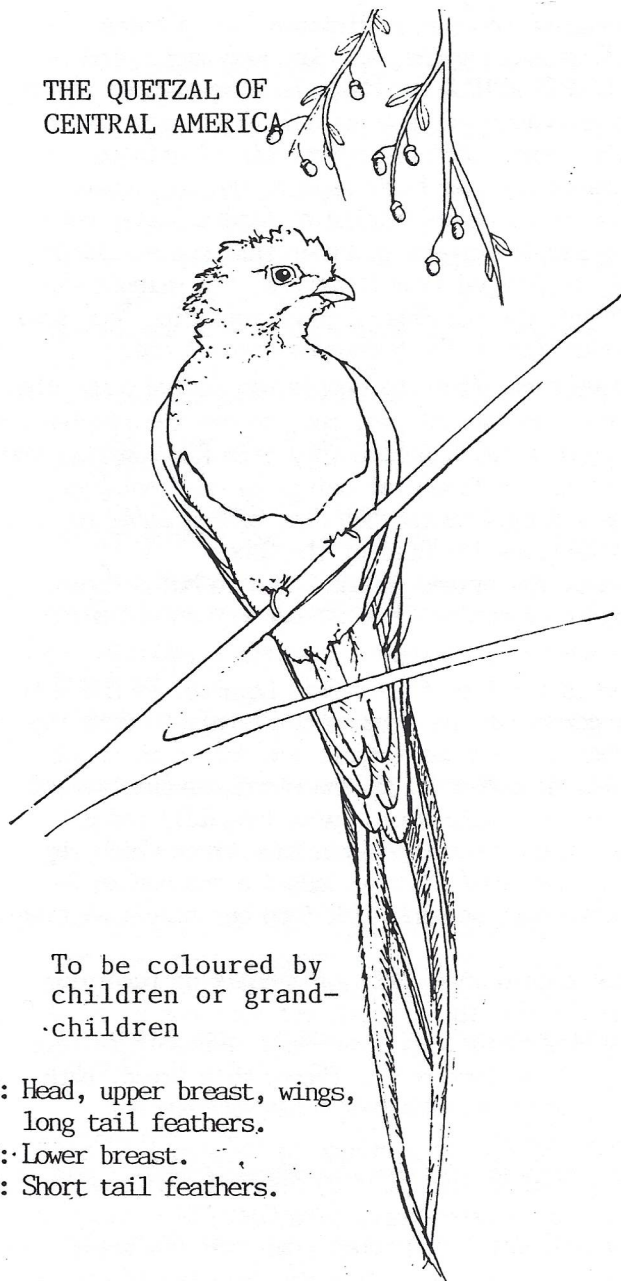
Each day we walked the several kilometres to the reserve, and then into the forest with its vines, its orchids and bromeliads, echoing with the sounds of its hundreds of species of birds. It was fascinating, but, being relaxed about such exotica as lifetime bird counts, our principal druther was to see the quetzal, the fabled bird of the Aztecs, hunted almost to extinction, but now, in a remarkable parallel with its people, again resurgent.

We walked miles of trails, saw, from the knife edge of the Continental Divide, the Atlantic on one side and the Pacific on the other. There were visitors from all over the world, some laid-back types content to use only their eyes, others with binoculars and cameras, and then, inevitably, groups of deadly-serious birders, festooned with camcorders, tripods and audio equipment, who spoke only in whispers, and glared furiously at anybody who dared crackle a leaf as they zeroed-in on the rare red shafted nitwit.

After nearly two days - no quetzal. Then, deep in the forest, as we were giving up hope, we came upon a small party craning their necks upwards, who smiled and whispered "Quetzals!" Sure enough, 100 ft. above us were no less than three males parading their plumage before .



THE QUETZAL OF  
CENTRAL AMERICA



To be coloured by  
children or grand-  
children

GREEN: Head, upper breast, wings,  
long tail feathers.

RED: Lower breast.

WHITE: Short tail feathers.

an only slightly less gorgeous female, busy at her cavity nest. After an hour, during which she alternately tantalized and scorned her suitors, causing them to go into paroxysms of display, we left them to their rituals. That night we were able to see a superb slide show about the bird and animal life of the Reserve, given by a professional biologist-photographer who spends most of his time at Monteverde. Alas, copies of them can't be bought, and nowhere in Costa Rica could we find any but the most pedestrian ones with which to supplement our own. We left for San José the next morning at seven, and two or three days later, pinioned in LACSA's seats (Costa Rica's national airline doesn't stretch its planes—it compresses its passengers) we flew out.

Costa Rica is a trail and nature paradise, and visitors can spend a lot of money there. But it isn't necessary to do so. Costa Ricans travel and vacation extensively in their own country, and so can we, at a fraction of the cost of the red-carpet facilities thought to be essential for us. True, a little Spanish would be useful, but instruction is easily available on our favoured island.



WHETHER YOU ARE WALKING ON YOUR OWN ITINERARY, OR TREKKING WITH A GROUP; WE CAN HELP YOU WITH YOUR TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS. TREK HOLIDAYS AND MOUNTAIN TRAVEL ARE SOME OF THE MANY SUPPLIERS THAT WE CARRY.....CALL US AT .....



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