



# The Oystercatcher

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

SPRING 1991

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## FROM THE PRESIDENT

Welcome to new members of the club. First, many thanks to Patti May-Lawson and Murray Shoolbraid for publishing this edition of the Oystercatcher. It involved a great deal of effort by them and others, so please communicate with them and tell them what you think about this newsletter. Did it fill a need? Suggestions for improvement? Topics for the future?

Also, thanks to all who are helping the club in many other ways. We have 197 paid-up members as of March 1991. I hope we have many fun times together during the year.

Some of our Tuesday outings are oversubscribed and some of our members and potential members cannot come on Tuesdays. Therefore events will be scheduled other days of the week. Glen Moores, an expert on birds, has offered to start a birders' group (see Glen's article in this issue).

Our V.P. Jim Barber is chairing a trails committee; this is also in the organizational phase. The trail work will be on public land. We hope that volunteers other than T&N Club members will take on some of the work.

Thank you all for coming to the monthly meeting in February. The Ministry of Crown Lands now knows that we are still interested in the disposition of all the Crown Land parcels on SSI. Monthly meetings will continue in March, April and May.

The purchase of the Martin Williams property is approaching; a part of the process has been the preparation

of a management plan, of which a draft has been circulated amongst the executive, and after approval it will form the basis of an agreement between the Trust Fund Board and the T&N Club for the management of the property. The club is helping to make this park a reality for the community.

Please let the executive know your thoughts about the club's future. How would you like the club to evolve? If you would like an issue discussed at an exec. meeting, please contact one of the officers.

The Spring trip is to the S. Okanagan, June 3-7, staying four nights at the Sunoka Motor Lodge. Highlights: trips to Vaseux Lake, Bighorn sheep range, the burrowing owl ecological reserve, and Mt. Kobau. Reservations to be in by mid-April, around \$180.00 (NOT including travel costs); see Fiona. The first day's resource is Steve Canning; 2nd day, Ecological Reserve Wardens; 3rd, to be announced. Note that the lodge has an indoor swimming pool and a hot tub!

The Fall trip is to the Bamfield Biological Test Station, Sept. 10-14.

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#### BIRDING ON SALT SPRING ISLAND

by Glen Moores

Another Christmas count has taken place on our Island with 192 people out counting and observing the Island birds. It was interesting to note that on such a wet misty day we all observed 29,566 birds (or thereabouts) and 102 separate species. Included in the unusual species were American Bittern, Snow Geese, Horned Lark and Black-throated Grey Warbler. In all it was a great count and I hope all the coordinators and participants will be out next year to tally up the birds once again.

Three species of birds have been seen in the count period but not on the count day, namely the elusive Blue Jay (not Stellar Jay), a tree sparrow at Glen Smith's bird feeder, and an Anna's Hummingbird existing on heated sugar water.

A visitor to our Island reported a Glaucous Gull at Vesuvius ferry dock in early January. Unusual sightings like this that should be added to the bird history of the Island. In this regard I have volunteered to record unusual sightings that you observe. I would be interested in any sightings of unusual birds that you see. Please telephone Glen at 537-4306 (home) or 537-5557 (office).

I have volunteered to lead a discussion on Basic Birding on April 12; all interested, both novices and experts, are welcome. We can all learn from discussions. Plans are underway for outings to see the birds and habitats. For

times and places, please see the advertisements in the Driftwood.

Spring is the time to start looking for breeding birds. Our records of such birds on the island needs to be expanded. Why not keep a record of all breeding birds that you see. Document your observation with good notes. Some species that have not been documented as breeding on our island include Greenbacked Heron, American Bittern, Purple Martin, and Townsend's Solitaire. All four species have been observed breeding close to the island, but not here. I would be most interested in hearing about your observation.

A good reference to the birds of SSI is found in the Check List of the Birds of Salt Spring Island by David Fraser, available at the local book stores.

Good Birding!

#### EVENING MEETINGS COMMENCED

The first in a series of evening meetings, initiated by President Fiona was held on Thursday 21 February in the United Church. This was extremely well attended by over 50 members and demonstrated the interest in the whole matter of the use of Crown Lands on the Island.

The speakers were Max Nock, Manager, Land Administration, and Mike McGrenere of Development and Marketing Branch, both of the Ministry of Crown Lands.

Max gave an overview of the Ministry and with 93% of the land mass of the province being Crown Land, it was surprising to learn that the Ministry is small, with some 800 total employees. While the mission of the Ministry is to "protect and preserve", at the same time it was expected to "generate revenue" which led to conflict on occasion. Mike described the policy and programmes of the Ministry with the aid of slides which took us on a brief tour of the province, and then both speakers answered questions.

The Ministry representatives are to be congratulated on their respective presentations, but more particularly on their frank approach and responses to questions. We learned that there are some 4000 existing licences for use of Crown land with approximately 500 received annually. Sale of Crown land usually involved small parcels, certainly under 5 acres and most often being the resale of lots forfeited due to non-payment of taxes.

It was reassuring to learn that no tenure was granted by the Ministry to an applicant where the intended use was in conflict with local zoning, but it was also pointed out that

the applicant always had the opportunity to apply for rezoning to that authority and then re-apply to the Ministry when no such conflict would arise.

There is no doubt that Max and Mike returned to Victoria well aware of the concern of the community over the use of Crown lands on the Island, as well as concerns of a more general interest, as was pointed out by Glen Moores in the vote of thanks given the speakers. They certainly earned, and everyone else enjoyed, the refreshments provided by Bev Frankcombe and her Social Committee.

### Trail Committee

Chairman: Jim Barber

Members: 1) Bob Ball - Erskine Park land & Martin Williams property  
 2) Jean King - Mountain Meadows (new trails)  
 3) Maureen Milburn - linear parkland, dedicated new trails; Old Scott Farm (next to Ruckle Park)  
 4) Nick Gilbert - Hope Hill, Reginald Hill  
 5) Anne Barber - Channel Ridge & North End  
 6) Betty Kirk - Arnell Park, Ruckle Park

Federation of B.C. Naturalists passed a motion to raise the fee from \$8.00 to \$10.00 for 1992. *oops, T.o.N. passed this motion*

Thanks to the Village Cobbler shop, and remember to use the drop-off box for trail and nature items.

FLASH!! Joy Newton breaks leg! Rescued by Texada Logging!! There were thirteen (!) people on the hike--draw your own conclusions. Hope to see her back on the trail soon.

Stargazers: Star watch was April 17th (Sunday) evening. Despite the rain forecast, it was a cold but clear night. Carol and John Howell and Les Pragnell had their telescopes, and we saw Jupiter and four of its 15 moons (Io, Ganymede, Europa, and Callisto). We also saw the Orion nebula and the Pleiades (aka The Seven Sisters) in the group-constellation of Taurus. Les made his own 10-inch reflector telescope, a good light-gatherer. For the future: April 22nd, there will be Lyro meteor showers, and May 5th, Aquarid ditto. This was all at Joan Lott's home, where she served a Moroccan dish called cous-cous, different and delicious; also a good home-made wine from Paul Ranney, plus lots of other goodies, tea, coffee, etc. Great fun.

PROVINCIAL PARKS & WILDERNESS FOR THE 90S wants us to answer five questions on where we want our future parks to be. Fiona Flook has arranged time at the library to help us answer these questions on Monday March 18, 10-12 A.M. and 7:30-9:30 P.M.

Remember that on off-island trips we should always share the gas and ferry fare costs: for gas, 20 per km or 30 per mile, and the complete ferry fee (car and passengers) should be divided by the number of riders.

Future Thursday evening meetings at United Church, 7:30 P.M., arranged by President Fiona:

March 14th, Alice Nicholson's talk on "Biodiversity and Bicycles".

April 11th, Glen Moores' Introduction to Birding.

May 9th, Members' Fun Night: slide shows from members' trips.

The humble scribes wish to say that any typos, errors of fact or fiction, and similar things pernickety readers may care to snipe at, are not their responsibility, but should be laid at the well-trodden door of the local leprechauns. St Patrick, where are you when we need you??

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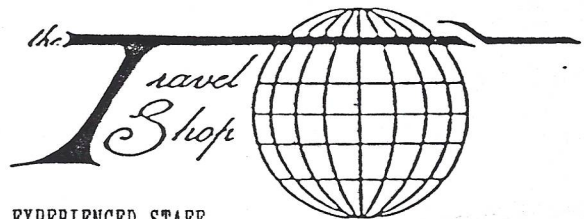
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