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THRUSH

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Bald Eagle Nests in the Nanaimo Area, 1983

by Don Blood and Myke Chutter

INTRODUCTION

Bald eagles occur year-round in the Nanaimo area, but there is little recorded information about their nest sites or nesting activities. Because urban/industrial development and residential expansion could adversely affect nesting habitats, an accurate inventory of nest sites is needed. One site appears to have been disturbed and perhaps lost due to the Duke Point development, and suitable nest trees are rapidly being removed as subdivisions spread. Large new developments such as Fairwinds at Powder Point could be a threat. Documentation of presently used nest sites and their characteristics, and of suitable alternative habitats, could allow city and regional planners to accommodate these natural values in their long-term plans. As the region becomes more and more dependent on tourism, the opportunity to observe and study large raptors at their nest sites in a settled environment will become increasingly valuable.

METHODS

We made intermittent visits to known nest sites, largely those within Nanaimo City limits, and attempted to locate additional nests in the surrounding area. The shoreline from Lantzville to Northwest Bay, and around Gabriola Island, was surveyed by boat. The number of visits per site varied from one to 13. A worthy objective of the Nanaimo Field-Naturalists would be to document all eagle nest sites in the area between Parksville and Ladysmith. Our survey coverage in 1983 was quite uneven, and a large area from Harmac to Ladysmith, and including DeCourcey and Valdes Islands, was not included. A start has been made, but much remains to be done.

RESULTS

1. Nesting Chronology

Based in repeat visits to nests, the following timing is suggested for the Nanaimo area:

Egg laying: early to mid-March

Incubation: mid-March to late April
Hatching: late-April to early May
Young in nest: early May to mid July
Fledging: mid to late July.

Flying young were seen as early as July 16, but they returned to the nest for about 2 weeks after that. Bald eagles are associated with the nest sites for 5 or more months, giving ample time for surveys and study.

2. Abundance and Status

The location of bald eagle nests is shown in Figure 1. Additional nests may occur in places where adult pairs were present during the nesting season, but no nest could be found. Based on total shoreline in the 1983 survey area (170 km) there is about 1 nest site per 14 km of shoreline. However, active nests were as close as 2 km to each other (sites 7 and 8). Alternate nests occur at some sites (e.g. 3, 6, 8) but cannot be shown on Figure 1 because of the map scale.

Preliminary information on breeding status is given in Table 1. The data are incomplete because we could not see into all nests from the ground, and because one site (12) was located after the nesting season. The mean number of young in six successful nests was 1.3.

3. Nest Site Characteristics

Some information on nesting sites is given in Table 2. All nests are quite close to the shoreline, and all in old Douglas fir trees. The circumference of 5 measured trees varied from 3.7 to 4.9 m. These trees are probably over 100 years old, possibly much older. In some areas there are very few suitable trees available. Most are on private lands where the owners could conceivably fall the trees, however No. 5 (Maude Island) is in a government reserve, and 8 and 9 are in City of Nanaimo parks.

THE FUTURE

Additional surveys and observations are needed in order to complete coverage of the Parksville to Ladysmith area, to determine status of sites

classed as uncertain in 1983, and to monitor use of the known nests. The completed inventory then should be brought to the attention of city and regional planners, Fish and Wildlife Branch, and the landowners on whose properties the nests are located.

Our observations suggest that local eagles are very tolerant of human presence and non-threatening disturbance. Eaglets raised in the Eagle Point subdivision, for example, appear to accept houses, car traffic, street lights etc. as part of their natural environment, and should readily nest in such environments when of breeding age. Bald eagles nesting in this area obtain almost all of their food from the marine environment, which probably has changed little in historic times. Those at Hammond Bay seem even to have learned that fish offal is often available at the boat ramp there.

One factor which has changed considerably however is the availability of suitable nest trees. Not only must they be near the shoreline and have an unobstructed view of the water, they must have appropriate branch structure and be large enough (i.e. old enough) to support the bulky nest. Fewer and fewer of these "veteran" trees remain in the Nanaimo area. Since individual nest trees may eventually fall due to storms etc., the availability of nearby alternate trees should also be considered. Food availability and territorial requirements result in nesting territories being spaced at 2 km or greater distances apart. Therefore, nesting trees need to be scattered throughout the Nanaimo area if the present eagle population is to be maintained.

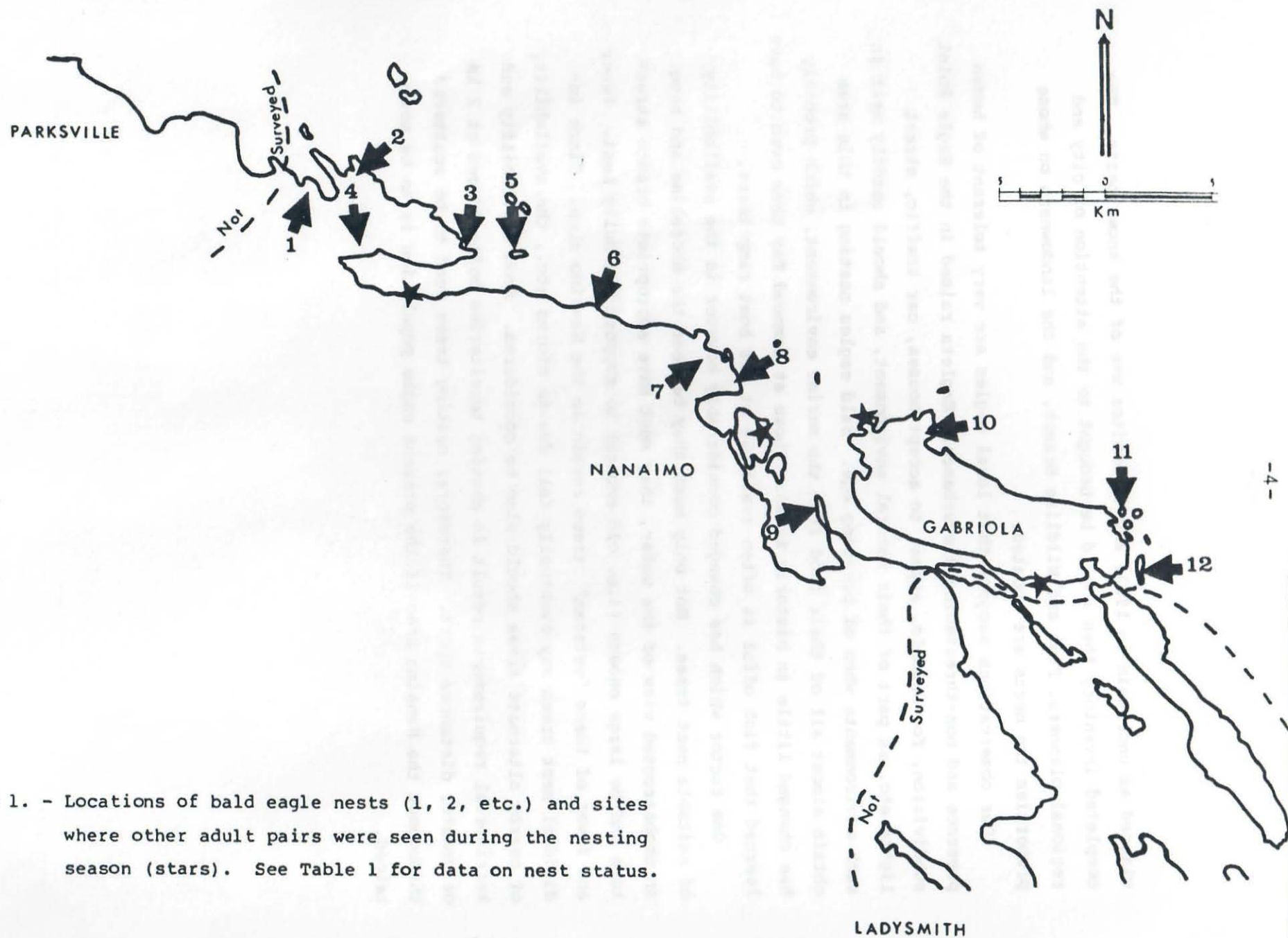


FIGURE 1. - Locations of bald eagle nests (1, 2, etc.) and sites where other adult pairs were seen during the nesting season (stars). See Table 1 for data on nest status.

Table 1. - Status of Nanaimo area bald eagle nests in 1983.

| Nest No. | Location* | Status** | No. young produced | Remarks |
|----------|--------------------|----------|--------------------|---|
| 1 | Northwest Bay | Oc. | ? | Could not get a clear view of the nest due to dense forest. |
| 2 | Dorcas Pt. | S | 1 | Large juvenile present, June 14. |
| 3 | Wallis Pt. | A | 0 | One adult on nest June 11. No young observed on later visits. |
| 4 | Nanoose | Oc. | ? | Pair of adults in vicinity on 3 visits. |
| 5 | Maude Isl. | S | 1 | Large juvenile present, June 25. No adults in vicinity. |
| 6 | Eagle (Icarus) Pt. | S | 2 | One juvenile flying by July 16, but both still at nest on July 22. |
| 7 | Hammond Bay | S | 1 | Fledged by July 19. |
| 8 | Planta Park | S | 1 | Flying by July 17; still at nest on July 19. |
| 9 | Jack Point | Oc. | 0 | Ad. pair present but nest in state of disrepair. Possibly another nest? |
| 10 | Leboeuf Bay | Oc. | ? | Adults perched in nest tree on June 18. Too distant to determine nest contents. |
| 11 | Vance Isl. | S | 2 | Two large young, June 18. |
| 12 | Breakwater Isl. | ? | ? | Nest found after nesting season. |

* See Figure 1.

** Oc. = Occupied, i.e. two adult eagles present in nest vicinity in breeding season.

A = Active, i.e. apparent incubation, but no young subsequently seen.

S = Successful, i.e. one or more young present in July, and probably fledged.

Table 2. - Some characteristics of bald eagle nest sites in the Nanaimo area.

| Nest No. | Tree Species | Other Suitable Trees | Distance from Shoreline (m) | Land description/status |
|----------|--------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| 1 | Doug. fir | Many | 150 m | D.L. 51, Nanoose District, just S. of Hathaway Rd. Some nearby logging. Probably MacMillan-Bloedel land. <u>THREAT:</u> Good timber stand. Could be logged. |
| 2 | Doug. fir | Few? | 80 m+ | Remainder Lot B, Plan 1777, DL 110, Nanoose Land District. Privately owned subdivision lots. Dorcas Pt. Rd. <u>THREAT:</u> Land owner could cut down tree. |
| 3a | Doug. fir | Few/Many | 25 m | D.L. 78, Plan 1567 D.S. Inactive nest in partly dead tree. This location to become part of Fairwinds (Ranch Point Estates) development. <u>THREAT:</u> Dying tree may be a hazard, and therefore cut down. |
| 3b | Doug. fir | Many | 30 m | D.L. 78 - Ministry of Defence Land. Also a shellfish culture lease in this bay. <u>THREAT:</u> Probably safe unless DND expands facilities to this area. |
| 3c | Doug. fir | Many | 25 m | D.L. 78 - old nest on Ministry of Defence land. <u>THREAT:</u> Probably safe unless DND expands facilities to this area. |
| 4 | Doug. fir | Many | 320 m | D.L. 78, Plans 28802 or 15562 (e. of Parker Rd.). D.L. 67 to west. Apparently privately held. <u>THREAT:</u> Owner could clear the land. |
| 5 | Doug. fir | Few | 15 m | Government Reserve. <u>THREAT:</u> None at present. |
| 6 | Doug. fir | Very few | 30 m | Lot 6 or 7, D.L. 53. Near Right of Way Plan No. 33769. On a lot in private subdivision (Eagle Point). <u>THREAT:</u> Lot owner could fall the tree. However, this site is well known; also the tree is below the bank and not a threat to houses at top. |

| Lot No. | Tree Species | Other Suitable Trees | Distance from Shoreline (m) | Land description/status |
|---------|--------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| 7 | Doug. fir | Few | 200 m | D.L. 41, Nanaimo Land District. Private land held for subdivision. <u>THREAT:</u> This land will probably be cleared in the near future. High quality view property overlooking Hammond Bay. |
| 8 | Doug. fir | Many | 150 m+ | Planta Park. Nest tree 25 m from lot lines. <u>THREAT:</u> Apparently little threat at present if this part of the park is not developed or adjacent house construction does not disturb the birds. |
| 9 | Doug. fir | Very few | 25 m | Lot 25, Plan 37924, Sec. 8. City of Nanaimo parkland (Jack Pt. Park; 43 ac.) adjacent to Duke Point Industrial Park. <u>THREAT:</u> The nest tree should be safe, but industrial activity may deter birds from using it. Apparently not active in 1983. |
| 10 | Doug. fir | Few/Many | 150 m+ | Fringe within 200 m of shoreline is zoned R-1 (Resource protection); behind that is R-3 (rural residential). <u>THREAT:</u> Could be logged or cleared. |
| 11 | Doug. fir | Several | 20 m | Lot 15. This island (Vance Isl.) is zoned R-1 (Resource protection) but is posted with no trespassing signs, and appears to be privately owned. <u>THREAT:</u> Owner could fall trees? |
| 12 | Doug. fir | ? | ? | Lot 22. This island (Breakwater Island) also zoned R-1. Privately owned. <u>THREAT:</u> Logging or land clearing. |

MAMMALS - THE VANCOUVER ISLAND BOX SCORE

Using the British Columbia Provincial Museum (1965 edition) handbook as the base, our province has or has had 136 mammal species living within its borders. Of these the Red Bat is considered accidental, the Dawson Caribou of the Queen Charlotte Islands is believed extinct, the Red Deer and Nutria once introduced are no longer present and an additional eight species are present as established introductions. This leaves a total of 124 species of mammals native and currently present in British Columbia.

Getting 'down' to terrestrial mammals which excludes the 14 species of bats, 5 seals, 8 dolphins and 11 whales, there remain 86 species, from shrews to mountain sheep native to our province. The question which follows is " HOW MANY OF THESE 86 SPECIES OCCUR NATURALLY ON VANCOUVER ISLAND ? Would you believe only nineteen!

By exclusion Vancouver Island has no moles, pikas, rabbits, ground squirrels, chipmunks, flying squirrels, pocket gophers, pocket mice, pack rats, harvest mice, lemmings, red-backed and heather voles, muskrat, jumping mice, coyotes, foxes, porcupines, badgers, skunks, bobcat and lynx, moose, caribou, bison, sheep or goats native to its shores. What we do have are 19 species, which in many cases are now different to a degree from their mainland relatives, to be recognized as subspecies and in one case as a full species. See table 1.

From a zoogeographical point of view, Vancouver Island might best be recognized, not by what it has, but rather by what it does not have. For instance no less than 33 species whose distribution reaches the mainland coast adjacent Vancouver Island, have never made it across the salt water canal. Comparing 'haves' and 'have nots' the have nots have it almost 2:1.

To upset this balance at least eleven mammal species have been introduced here. Can you name these ?? A summary of these introductions will appear in a future edition of this newsletter.

Bill Merilees,

VANCOUVER ISLAND'S MAMMALS represented by:

| | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Wandering Shrew | two endemic sub species |
| Navigator Shrew | two endemic sub species |
| Vancouver Island Marmot | endemic species |
| Red Squirrel | endemic sub species |
| American Beaver | - |
| Deer Mouse | two endemic sub species |
| Townsend's Vole | two endemic sub species |
| Wolf | endemic sub species |
| Black Bear | endemic sub species |
| Raccoon | endemic sub species |
| Marten | - |
| Short-tailed Weasle | endemic sub species |
| Mink | endemic sub species |
| Wolverine | endemic sub species |
| River Otter | - |
| Sea Otter | - |
| Cougar | endemic sub species |
| Elk | endemic sub species |
| Black-tailed Deer | - |

TABLE 1:

THE DEMISE OF NANAIMO'S CRESTED MYNAS

by Bill Merilees

Wild, exotic and in Vancouver, the Crested Myna has fascinated bird watchers ever since it was first noticed very late in the last century (1897). Presumably from escaped cage stock, a wild population quickly grew. However, unlike the European Starling, despite the initial explosion in numbers and modest proliferation in area, the Myna has virtually remained a "Greater Vancouver" bird. Here, despite nearly ninety years of residence since its first notice, this Myna still remains Canada's, British Columbia's and Vancouver's only exotic endemic. This status and distinction prompts birders from across North America to include Vancouver on their "listing" travels.

When and how the Crested Myna got to Nanaimo is as poorly known as its original introduction to Vancouver. On Vancouver Island, brief appearances of small groups of Mynas have been noted around Courtenay in 1937 and Victoria in 1946. Theed Pearse suggested for the Courtenay birds that they might have become trapped in the hold of a coastal freighter and were released at the next port of call, after Vancouver. This explanation is equally fitting and possible for the Victoria and/or Nanaimo records.

In Nanaimo, the first published record of their occurrence was January, 1952, when our current Director of the B. C. Provincial Museum, Yorke Edwards, and his former Curator, Charlie Guiguet, noted a small number in the downtown "core". When they arrived is unknown, but Bill Ricker, biologist at the Biological Station, noted their presence as early as 1932, shortly after his arrival in Nanaimo.

By 1964, the numbers of Crested Mynas in Nanaimo was noted as being not more than thirty by Alistair Muir. He also noted three nesting locations in the downtown portion of the City. At this time, Mynas were commonly seen on the Sears parking lot.

During the earlier series of Nanaimo Christmas Bird Counts from 1963 to 1968, Fred Dobson and participants documented a decline from about thirty (Muir's figure) in 1963 to 4 in 1968. Apparently, the last Crested Myna survived in Nanaimo until the early 1970's. Unfortunately, the specific dates of these records by Wayne Campbell and Peter Van Kerkoerle are not available.

Why the Crested Myna lost its foothold in Nanaimo is unclear. Some suggest the very severe winter of 1968 was responsible. The decline, however, seems to have started well before this time. Habitat modification is another possibility, but downtown Nanaimo has changed little over the years. A further suggestion, since the Myna is a communal roosting species, is a disease transmitted through the population at these sites. While any, all or none of these possibilities could be true, one inescapable observation from the Christmas Bird Counts is that the Myna population declined while the European Starling population increased dramatically. Competition between these species for nesting sites is perhaps the most plausible answer to this question. Unfortunately, there is no data to support or discredit this.

| YEAR | MYNAS | STARLINGS | YEAR | MYNAS | STARLINGS |
|------|-------|-----------|------|-------|-----------|
| 1963 | 63* | 102 | 1966 | 6 | 187 |
| 1964 | 26 | 236 | 1967 | 6 | 2495 |
| 1965 | 20 | 267 | 1968 | 4 | 505 |

*In 1963-64, Alistair Muir kept close watch on the Mynas in Nanaimo. His figure of "not more than 30" indicates possible double counting here.

From this information, give or take a year or two, the Crested Myna was a resident of Nanaimo City for about forty years, by far the longest, stable satellite colony outside Greater Vancouver.

Will the Crested Myna ever appear in Nanaimo again? The chances are slim, especially since the population of this species in B. C. is on the decline. From an estimated high of 20,000 birds in 1927, it had declined to about 2,500 birds in 1963. A recent study by the Vancouver Natural History Society in 1980 suggests this population has further slipped to about 1,500 individuals. The area over which these occur is also becoming more restricted.

Considering the ubiquitous presence of the European Starling (which also appears to be decreasing in numbers), which competes with the Myna for nesting spaces, it appears that little and none are our hopes of once again hearing the raucous call of the Crested Myna in Nanaimo. In fact, without some turnaround in the Myna population trend in Vancouver, it appears this species might in time disappear from British Columbia and North America. This is particularly sad when, in a time of growing tourism awareness, of all the songbirds, it is the Crested Myna and none other that puts Vancouver on the birding map of North America.

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- Guiguet, C. J. 1952: Another Record of Crested Myna on Vancouver Island. Victoria Naturalist, 9 (5): 52-53.
- Mackay, V. M. & W. M. Hughes. 1963: Crested Myna in British Columbia. Canadian Field Naturalist. Vol. 77: 154-162.
- Pearse, T. 1938: Crested Myna (Japanese Starling) on Vancouver Island. B. C. Murrelet, Vol. 19 (1-2): 18.
- Scheffer, T. H. & C. Cottam. 1935: The Crested Myna of Chinese Starling in the Pacific Northwest. U.S. Department of Agriculture No. 467: 1-27.
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Bill Merilees
September 24, 1984

BOOK REVIEWS

by Mary Barraclough

Three books that have been published on Ecology and Resources are available from "Between The Lines" at 427 Bloor St. West, Toronto, Ontario.

Cut and Run--The assault on Canada's forests
by Jamie Swift. Paperback \$12.95

Chemical Nightmare--The unnecessary legacy
of toxic waste by John Jackson.

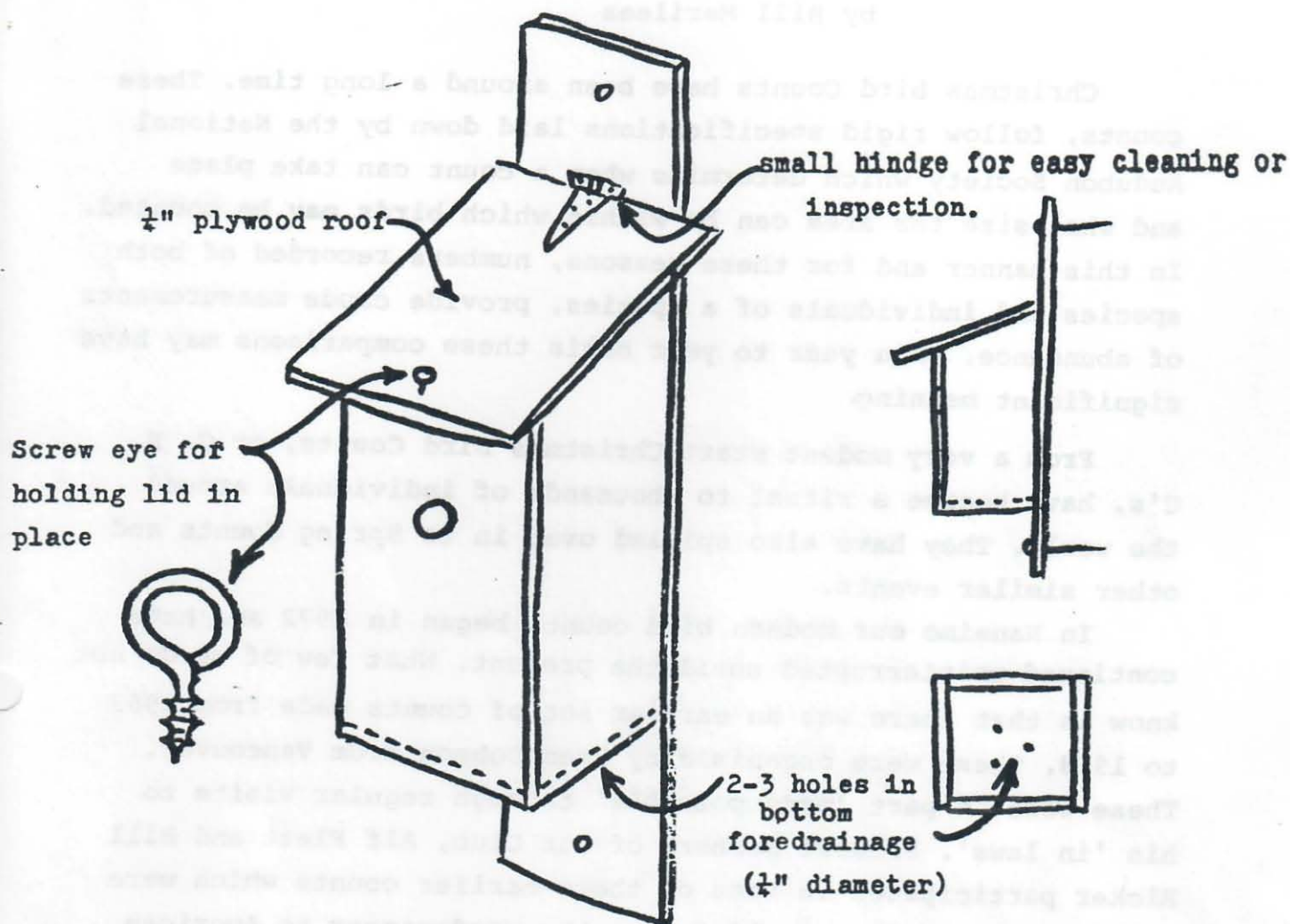
Electric Empire--The inside story of Ontario
Hydro by Paul MacKay and OPIRG.

The series examines the main actors like the huge Ontario Hydro and the timber companies that are sacrificing our environment and future resources to short term gain. It exposes the tunnel vision that is destroying the ecological basis of life through chemical pollutants, acid rain, toxic wastes and radiation poisoning.

I have read Cut and Run. It is a very readable account of the history of Canada's lumber and forest industry. How it has been exploited with little thought concerning renewal and reforestation. The forests are an important resource. If thought had been given to control of the source, it can be a perpetual, renewal resource. Examples of the uncontrolled cutting has resulted in the near extinction of the Eastern White Pine and the lack of forest resources in areas like Ocean Falls and Terrace.

The author has interviewed a wide cross-section of people involved in the forest industry. It is important that we understand the workings of the forests. He advocates local control of the resource and feels that environmentalists must work with the loggers and forest industry to promote mutual benefits.

A SIMPLE BIRD HOUSE



MATERIALS: 1" X 6" rough cedar for swallow, wren or bluebird box.
1" X 8" rough cedar for Starling or Kestrel box.

| SPECIES | HOLE SIZE | ENTRANCE ABOVE FLOOR |
|----------|-----------|----------------------|
| SWALLOW | 1½" | 3" |
| WREN | 1" | 5" |
| BLUEBIRD | 1½" | 6" |
| STARLING | 2" | 10" |
| KESTREL | 3" | 12" |

EARLIER CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

IN NANAIMO

by Bill Merilees

Christmas Bird Counts have been around a long time. These counts, follow rigid specifications laid down by the National Audubon Society which determines when a count can take place and what size the area can be within which birds may be counted. In this manner and for these reasons, numbers recorded of both species and individuals of a species, provide crude measurements of abundance. On a year to year basis these comparisons may have significant meaning.

From a very modest start Christmas Bird Counts, or C. B. C's, have become a ritual to thousands of individuals around the world. They have also spilled over in to Spring Counts and other similar events.

In Nanaimo our modern bird counts began in 1972 and have continued uninterrupted until the present. What few of us do not know is that there was an earlier set of counts made from 1963 to 1968. These were organised by Fred Dobson from Vancouver. These were in part 'made possible' through regular visits to his 'in laws'. Present members of our Club, Alf Flett and Bill Ricker participated in some of these earlier counts which were published in Audubon Field Notes, the predecessor to American Birds.

Fred Dobson is an oceanographer now living in Armdale, Nova Scotia. Earlier he worked at the Pacific Biological Station. Always an active birder, Fred and his family participate in 2 or 3 C.B.C.'s each year. Hopefully, one day he will be back in Nanaimo for one of our Modern Counts !

The following results of these earlier counts are interesting in a number of respects. For one, they occurred when the Crested Mya was still found in Nanaimo. They were also before the Anna's Hummingbird began to appear. Today Trumpeter Swans are fairly common, but in the early 60's they were frightfully scarce.

As with all of us 'learning to identify' birds, Fred is quick to point out that in the following counts "they did not correctly count Brandt's Cormorants".

For the Clubs records and the quick reference of members, following is a summary of these earlier Christmas Bird Counts made at Nanaimo.

| | 1963 | 1964 | 1965 | 1966 | 1967 | 1968 |
|-------------------------|------|------|------|------|-------|------|
| No. of parties | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 |
| No. of individuals | 2 | 4 | 2 | | 7 | 2 |
| Hours total | 9 | 21 | 9 | 9 | 18 | 9½ |
| Miles total | 64 | 126 | 58 | 69 | 102 | 54 |
| No. of species | 74 | 82 | 69 | 55 | 81 | 73 |
| Species in Count period | 5 | 2 | 12 | 0 | 6 | 8 |
| Individuals counted | 4414 | 6857 | 4793 | 4225 | 10141 | 9712 |

Hours

| | | | | | | |
|---------------|----|-----|----|----|----|----|
| Hours walking | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 2½ |
| by car | 4 | 17 | 7 | 7 | 14 | 7 |
| by boat | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Miles walking | 7 | 7 | 4 | 5 | 13 | 4 |
| by car | 50 | 113 | 54 | 64 | 87 | 50 |
| by boat | 7 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 |

PARTICIPANTS:

1963: Fred and Evelyn Dobson

1964: Fred and Evelyn Dobson, Alistair Muir, Alf Flett

1965: Fred and Evelyn Dobson

1966: Fred and Evelyn Dobson, Jim Elliott

1967: Fred and Evelyn Dobson, Anthony Dobson, Jim and Gillian Elliott, Bill and Carl Ricker.

1968: Fred and Evelyn Dobson

| SPECIES | 1963 | 1964 | 1965 | 1966 | 1967 | 1968 |
|--------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| COMMON LOON | 21 | 19 | 5 | 3 | 21 | 11 |
| ARCTIC LOON | - | 7 | - | 9 | 16 | 15 |
| RED-THROATED LOON | 1 | - | + | - | 5 | 1 |
| RED-NECKED GREBE | 11 | 9 | 6 | 10 | 34 | 10 |
| HORNED GREBE | 37 | 40 | 32 | 7 | 52 | 24 |
| EARED GREBE | - | 17 | 5 | - | 15 | 2 |
| WESTERN GREBE | 675 | 639 | 1065 | 652 | 1031 | 2000 |
| PIED-BILLED GREBE | 1 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT | 16 | 79 | 57 | 2 | 14 | 3 |
| BRANDT'S CORMORANT | + | 4 | 15 | 1 | 1601 | 2262 |
| PELAGIC CORMORANT | 54 | 143 | 228 | 1047 | 29 | 3 |
| GREAT BLUE HERON | 3 | 8 | 3 | 1 | 13 | 4 |
| WHISTLING SWAN | - | - | - | - | 1 | 2 |
| MALLARD | 10 | 51 | 121 | 4 | 9 | 23 |
| PINTAIL | - | 16 | 105 | - | - | 6 |
| GREEN-WINGED TEAL | - | 3 | 230 | 9 | 4 | 50 |
| BLUE-WINGED TEAL | - | - | - | - | 30 | - |
| AMERICAN WIDGEON | 36 | 68 | 143 | 46 | 7 | 25 |
| NORTHERN SHOVELER | - | - | 2 | - | 8 | 3 |
| RING-NECKED DUCK | - | 20 | 5 | - | - | + |
| CANVASBACK | - | - | 2 | - | - | - |
| GREATER SCAUP | 47 | 143 | 53 | 35 | 106 | 324 |
| LESSER SCAUP | 1 | 75 | 9 | 8 | 17 | 19 |
| COMMON GOLDENEYE | 96 | 130 | 169 | 73 | 192 | 101 |
| BARROW'S GOLDENEYE | 46 | 82 | 15 | 21 | 24 | 26 |
| BUFFLEHEAD | 111 | 133 | 59 | 67 | 140 | 90 |
| OLDSQUAW | 1 | 5 | 1 | - | 32 | + |
| HARLEQUIN DUCK | 20 | 13 | + | 6 | 19 | 13 |
| WHITE-WINGED SCOTER | 161 | 292 | 154 | 52 | 56 | 98 |
| SURF SCOTER | 152 | 467 | 184 | 112 | 139 | 260 |
| BLACK SCOTER | 50 | 61 | 9 | 5 | + | 14 |
| RUDDY DUCK | 3 | 5 | - | - | 4 | - |
| HOODED MERGANSER | 6 | 17 | 2 | 2 | 15 | 7 |
| COMMON MERGANSER | 7 | 7 | 6 | - | 16 | 12 |
| RED-BREASTED MERGANSER | 14 | 19 | 27 | 15 | 28 | 25 |
| GOSHAWK | 1 | - | - | - | - | - |
| SHARP-SHINNED HAWK | - | 2 | 3 | - | 2 | - |
| COOPER'S HAWK | - | 1 | - | - | 1 | + |

| | 1963 | 1964 | 1965 | 1966 | 1967 | 1968 |
|----------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| RED-TAILED HAWK | 1 | 2 | + | - | + | 3 |
| BALD EAGLE | 2 | 18 | 10 | 1 | 8 | 2 |
| MARSH HAWK | - | - | + | 1 | + | - |
| MERLIN | - | - | 4 | 1 | - | 1 |
| AMERICAN KESTREL | - | 1 | - | - | - | - |
| RUFFED GROUSE | - | - | - | - | 2 | 1 |
| CALIFORNIA QUAIL | - | - | 1 | - | - | - |
| RING-NECKED PHEASANT | + | 7 | - | - | 5 | 3 |
| AMERICAN COOT | 38 | 24 | 1 | 9 | 5 | 5 |
| BLACK OYSTERCATCHER | + | - | - | - | 7 | 1 |
| KILLDEER | 41 | 21 | 5 | - | 3 | 8 |
| SURFBIRD | 1 | - | + | 40 | 29 | + |
| BLACK TURNSTONE | 17 | 31 | + | 10 | 112 | 3 |
| COMMON SNIPE | 1 | 1 | - | - | 5 | 1 |
| SPOTTED SANDPIPER | 1 | - | - | - | 2 | - |
| GREATER YELLOWLEGS | - | - | - | - | 1 | - |
| ROCK SANDPIPER | - | - | - | - | 6 | - |
| DUNLIN | - | 124 | 95 | - | - | 60 |
| GLAUCOUS-WINGED GULL | 174 | 1380 | 380 | 1011 | 1467 | 1730 |
| HERRING GULL | 51 | 79 | 2 | - | 100 | 2 |
| CALIFORNIA GULL | - | - | - | - | 1 | - |
| MEW GULL | 403 | 341 | 125 | 190 | 396 | 160 |
| BONAPARTE'S GULL | - | 39 | - | - | 175 | - |
| COMMON MURRE | 23 | 29 | 10 | 5 | 571 | 70 |
| PIGEON GUILLEMOT | 1 | - | + | - | + | + |
| MARbled MURRELET | 15 | 14 | 12 | 4 | 72 | 38 |
| ANCIENT MURRELET | - | - | + | - | 54 | - |
| RHINOCEROUS AUKLET | 1 | - | - | - | - | - |
| BAND-TAILED PIGEON | - | - | 76 | - | - | - |
| SNOWY OWL | - | 1 | - | - | - | - |
| SHORT-EARED OWL | 1 | 1 | - | 1 | - | 2 |
| BELTED KINGFISHER | 6 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 6 | 1 |
| COMMON FLICKER | 27 | 25 | 13 | 5 | 17 | 21 |
| PILEATED WOODPECKER | 2 | - | - | - | 4 | - |
| HAIRY WOODPECKER | 1 | + | + | - | - | + |
| DOWNY WOODPECKER | - | 1 | + | - | 2 | + |
| STELLER'S JAY | 14 | 2 | 6 | - | 2 | - |
| COMMON RAVEN | 6 | 7 | 9 | 3 | 22 | 6 |

| | 1963 | 1964 | 1965 | 1966 | 1967 | 1968 |
|---------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| NORTHWESTERN CROW | 13 | 619 | 363 | 161 | 468 | 731 |
| CHESTNUT-BACKED CHICKADEE | 15 | 31 | 30 | 14 | 29 | 24 |
| BUSHTIT | 23 | 30 | 4 | - | 12 | 40 |
| RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH | 1 | - | - | - | - | - |
| BROWN CREEPER | 6 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 6 | - |
| DIPPER | - | - | - | - | + | + |
| WINTER WREN | 11 | 14 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 12 |
| BEWICK'S WREN | 3 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 8 | 4 |
| LONG-BILLED MARSH WREN | - | - | - | - | 1 | 2 |
| AMERICAN ROBIN | 340 | 413 | 240 | 75 | 74 | 363 |
| VARIED THRUSH | 13 | 19 | 53 | 6 | 2 | 8 |
| HERMIT THRUSH | - | + | - | - | - | - |
| TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRE | 2 | - | - | - | - | - |
| GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET | 13 | 53 | 14 | 6 | 101 | 25 |
| RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET | 14 | 4 | + | 2 | 15 | 4 |
| CEDAR WAXWING | 37 | 2 | - | - | - | - |
| NORTHERN SHRIKE | - | 2 | - | - | 1 | - |
| EUROPEAN STARLING | 102 | 236 | 267 | 187 | 2495 | 505 |
| CRESTED MYNA | 63 | 26 | 20 | 6 | 6 | 4 |
| TOWNSEND'S WARBLER | - | - | + | - | - | - |
| HOUSE SPARROW | 7 | 50 | 35 | 80 | 51 | 7 |
| WESTERN MEADOWLARK | + | 21 | 1 | 1 | - | 1 |
| RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD | 15 | 71 | 3 | - | 3 | - |
| BREWER'S BLACKBIRD | 38 | 24 | 31 | - | 4 | 72 |
| EVENING GROSBEAK | 34 | - | - | - | - | 10 |
| PURPLE FINCH | 1 | 12 | 6 | 4 | - | 88 |
| HOUSE FINCH | 4 | 6 | 9 | - | 1 | - |
| PINE SISKIN | 171 | 106 | 1 | - | + | 155 |
| AMERICAN GOLDFINCH | - | 1 | - | - | - | - |
| RUFIOUS-SIDED TOWHEE | 22 | 24 | 14 | 1 | 15 | 21 |
| DARK-EYED JUNCO | 75 | 292 | 156 | 199 | 65 | 70 |
| WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW | - | 2 | - | - | - | - |
| GOLDEN-CROWNED SPARROW | - | 2 | 7 | - | - | - |
| FOX SPARROW | 4 | 13 | 11 | - | 10 | 1 |
| LINCOLN'S SPARROW | - | - | - | - | - | 1 |
| SONG SPARROW | 36 | 55 | 49 | 6 | 26 | 11 |

THE MARMOT ON VANCOUVER ISLAND

by W.E. Barraclough

The first scientific record of the Vancouver Marmot, Marmota vancouverensis, found exclusively on Vancouver Island, is reported by Harry Schelwald Swarth in the University of California Publications in Zoology, 7:201, in 1911 on the basis of his field collection from the mountain peaks near Port Alberni in 1910. Scientific records are not necessarily the first reports of observations. The earliest report of marmots on Vancouver Island are given by Mr. W. H. Lomas, who had been the teacher at the Somenos Lake School, and appointed to be Indian catechist in 1867 by the Anglican Bishop Hills. Quoting from the booklet One Hundred Years at St. Peter's Quamichan by David R. Williams, 1966---"In August, 1871, Mr. Lomas made a journey to the head of the Cowichan River. He describes a canyon extending about two miles, at the end of which was situated a hunting station called "Skutto", meaning a waterfall. Today of course, we know this as Skutz Falls. At this point all the canoes had to be unloaded and towed through the rapids. He was impressed by Cowichan Lake and the mountains surrounding it. One evening his party dined on marmot, which was cooked over a fire of yellow cedar.

Since there is only one species of marmot found on Vancouver Island, it is probably safe to assume that the marmots

eaten by the native Indians at that time in the Lake Cowichan area are the same species. One might wonder; were the marmots more plentiful over 100 years ago? Did the marmots live at lower altitudes? How did the natives catch them? Where did they catch them? Did they eat marmot very often? Maybe our logging operations have driven them to the higher altitudes?

CHRISTMAS BIRDCOUNT 1983

by Peter van Kerkoerle

On the 27th of December, 1983, we had our Christmas Birdcount. The weather was good this year. The temperature was above freezing, and there was little wind. It was a perfect birding day. 21 Nanaimo club members showed up, and this number increased to 25 as 4 Victoria club members made the effort to help us out.

Mike Shepard brought his boat and the ocean part of our count circle was done by the Victoria group. They brought back a large list. A new species on our counts was a Ruddy Turnstone. As they also spent several hours walking over the outlying islands, they increased their large list by a good number of land birds.

Ed and Mary Barraclough were lucky to see 5 Hutton's Vireos. On most of our counts we miss seeing these little birds. It is possible that this vireo is becoming more numerous. I have seen quite a few of them this summer.

Kathy and Rick Ikona had 5 Virginia Rails in Buttertubs Marsh, but missed the American Bittern. The number of Trumpeter Swans dipped for the first time in ten years. This year it was 214, down from 243 last year. American Wigeon were up at 2008.

Birds of prey showed up well, but not exceptionally so. The Bald Eagle number of 86 was the highest ever. We could have done better on owls. No owls were found on this year's count. Owls often roost in one particular tree or barn for months on end, so once an owl is found in such a spot it is wise to check this place on count day.

There was one more interesting new species on our count. It was the Black-capped Chickadee seen by Ed Barraclough at his feeder.

The total number of species on our 1983 count was 109, and the number of individuals was 17,323. This makes it our second best count. 1977 was our top year with 114 species 17,610 individuals.

Thanks goes to all of you who helped make this count such a success. Special thanks to the 4 Victoria birders who took the time and effort to help us out. It is surely appreciated and we hope we will see you again this year.

Additional Note:

Lately a lot of rare and uncommon birds have been seen in our area and this makes birding very exciting. Several White-throated Sparrows visited our feeder this spring. A year ago it was a Tree Sparrow that brightened the winter with a three month stay. This spring 2 Barred Owls showed up. 2 mature Golden Eagles and 1 immature soared overhead this spring. Our pond had a rare guest when a Green-backed Heron stayed several weeks. A very shy Mourning Dove showed up during the last week of August. All of these birds were seen around or from our house. Other people saw Swainson's Hawk and Ed Barraclough saw a Great Gray Owl in May next to his garden on top of a hydro pole. A Green-backed Heron is presently at York Lake and can be easily spotted. Maybe other birders have seen a number of interesting species. Please let us hear from you!

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