

NI'NOXSOLA

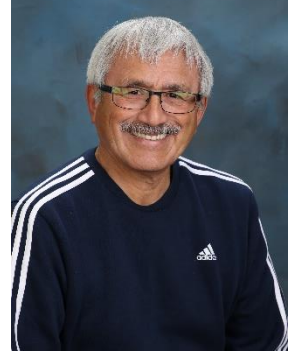
Elders in Residence Program
Indigenous Education Comox Valley Schools



Bryce Mercredi

Animal Encounters

Ducks



There was an area on the outskirts which used to be a vegetable farm in the summer but had been abandoned. The field became very grassy and was a favourite for birds to nest in. The grass was high and provided protection to the nesting birds. This abandoned farmland was situated between two lakes and had a creek which drained from Frame Lake to this lake which then drained into Great Slave Lake.

One summer day I was walking through the field to see my great uncle, who lived on the shore of Great Slave, when a female duck flopped in front of me and pretended to have a broken wing. She flopped along in front of trying to lead me away. I knew that there was a nest nearby and began to cautiously search for it. The mother was frantically trying to lead me away. Finally, I saw the nest, and carefully counted 12 eggs. The nest was well hidden and if the mama sat very still I wouldn't have upset her and would have been totally unaware that there was a nest.

Another day as I was wandering in the field when I came upon a nighthawk who was sitting on a nest. She didn't move and had blended quite well on the ground. Unlike the mama duck she didn't try to lure me away. I was very fortunate to see this. You can see the nighthawks at night. The night hawks are aptly named, as you only see them at night. The nights up North are very short, and it doesn't really get dark. They swoop in the skies feeding on flying insects and have a very distinct call. I have heard and seen them down here and it reminds me of home.

After a week at a fly camp on another lake, we were returning to our base camp from a small bay. There was a small rocky island in the middle of the bay where we noticed a loon slip into the water. We stopped at this island and saw that the loon had laid an egg in a small depression. The mother loon was agitated and was swimming in circles just off the island. We left and watched as she went back to sit on her egg.

As we got close to our camp, we saw a mother duck with her brood of 10 ducklings heading across the bay. Suddenly there was a swirl in the water and a duckling in the rear disappeared, then there was another swirl and another duckling disappeared. The ducklings were swallowed by a large northern pike. The family reached the far shore minus 2 ducklings.

Loon



Nighthawk



Pintail

