

# Owls invade CFB Comox

## Special patrols mounted

Snowy owl patrols have become part of the routine at CFB Comox, since several of the migratory birds arrived at the base recently, says local naturalist Charles Brandt.

During the past three weeks, up to seven snowy owls have been spotted along the runways and in the ammunition dump at the air base, Brandt says.

"Keeping the runways clear is a 24-hour per day, seven day per week job since at times



**What's all the fuss?**

they are perched on the ground along the runways," says Brandt.

Wildlife patrols drive trucks along the runways, sounding horns and making as much noise as possible to scare away the birds, according to the air base.

Snowy owls breed in the arctic tundra, and are often seen on the lower mainland as they migrate to other areas, Brandt said.

The birds were quite com-

mon on the lower mainland last year, but none were known to visit the Island, said Brandt.

Their diet consists mainly of mice and voles in the arctic and water birds along the coast, according to Brandt.

"The owls identified at the base were perched on the roofs of the ammunition dumps, squinting and occasionally yawning and sometimes flying down and landing on the ground."