

NEWSFRONT

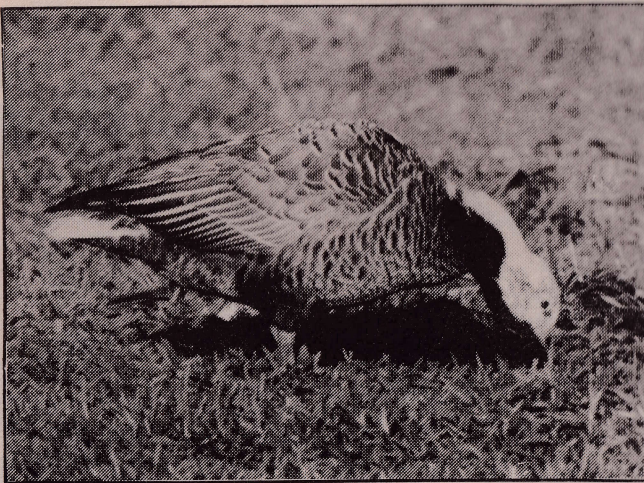
# Rare goose spotted

## WILDLIFE

You may have noticed cars stopped along the highway in Courtenay, between Farquharson Farms and Superstore, and people looking through scopes and binoculars at one particular bird feeding among the trumpeter swans in the large field.

The bird is the rare emperor goose (*Chen canagica*) which breeds (and mostly winters) in Alaska and eastern Siberia. But it does winter irregularly south along the Pacific coast to California.

This magnificent bird with a white head and black throat was first observed and identified by Len Everett, a local sportsman and naturalist from Comox, on Dec. 8. What was striking about the goose was the color of its legs, not yellow,



An emperor goose feeds in a Courtenay farm field. Charles Brandt photo

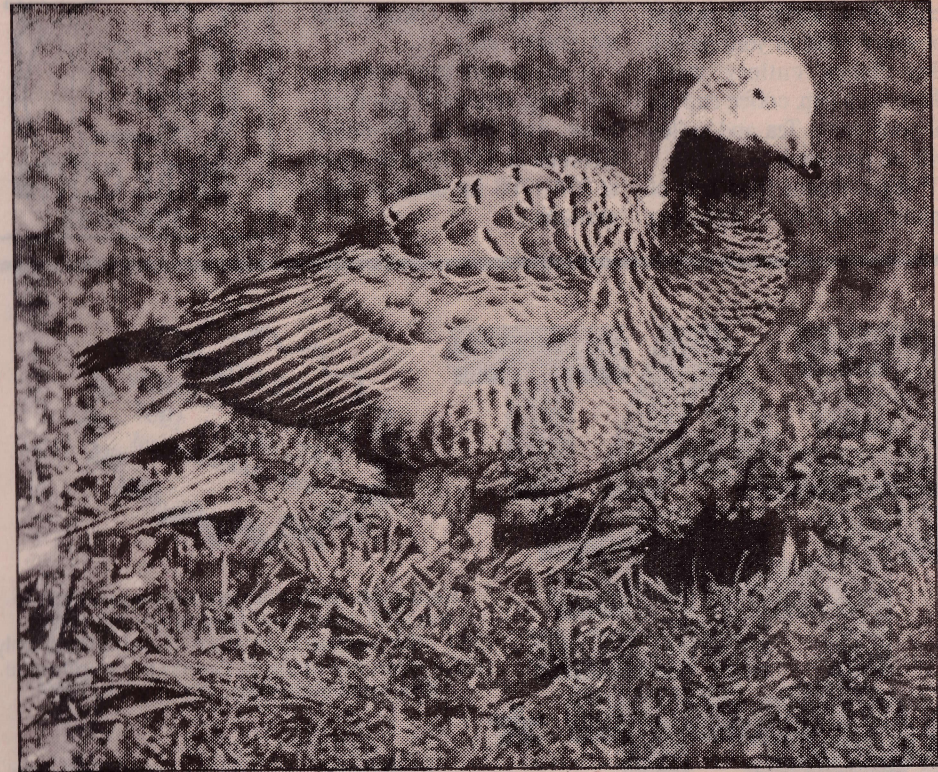
but golden.

According to The Birds of British Columbia, the emperor goose was first discovered in B.C. in 1894 and in 21 of the following years through 1984. It has been reported in 22 localities in B.C., one of them being

Campbell River.

Although there is no mention of Courtenay, the species is listed in the Comox checklist as an accidental visitor, i.e., out of its range. There are only two records of birds in cultivated fields.

N. Island  
Jan 11 '97



Emperor goose is an unusual visitor at Farquharson's

## Rare sighting made

A rare bird was recently discovered among Trumpeter Swans feeding near the Dyke Road, says naturalist Charles Brandt.

The Emperor Goose was recently spotted and identified by Len Everett, a Comox naturalist and sportsman, said Brandt.

"The rare Emperor Goose breeds, and mostly winters in Alaska and eastern Siberia, but it does winter irregularly south along the Pacific coast to California," said Brandt.

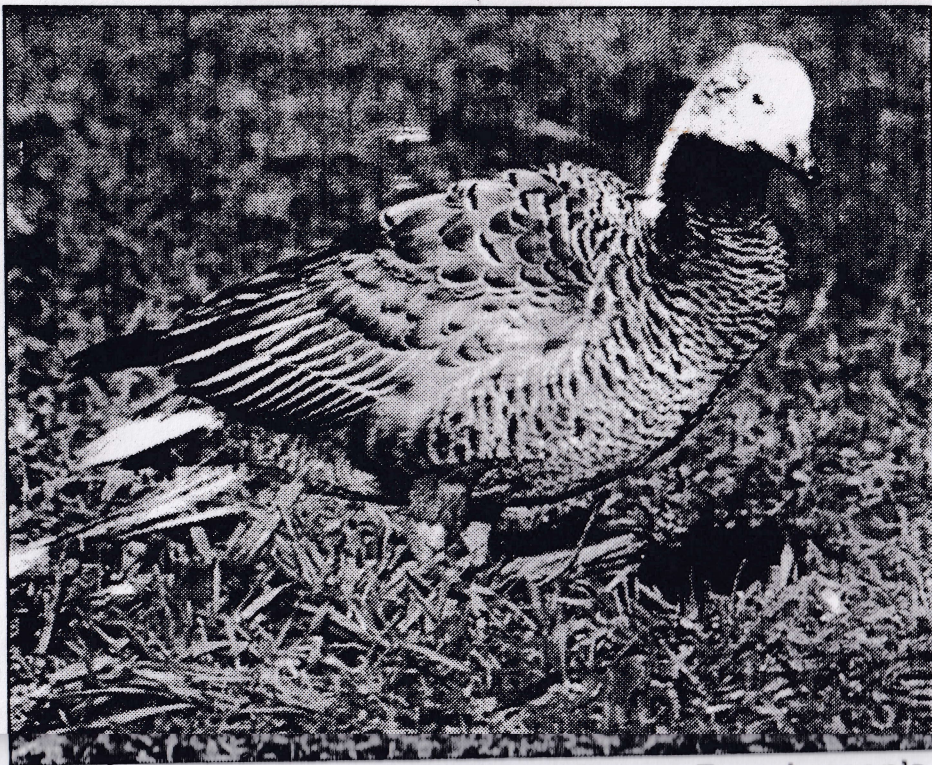
"What, to me, was striking about the

goose was the color of its legs, not yellow but golden," said Brandt.

Emperor geese have been seen in B.C. during only 21 of the 90 years following the first sighting in 1894, according to The Birds of British Columbia, said Brandt.

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### Emperor Goose (*Chen canagica*)

You may have noticed cars stopped along the highway between Farquharson Farms and Superstore and people looking through scopes and binoculars at one particular bird feeding among the Trumpeter Swans in the large field. The bird was the rare Emperor Goose which breeds (and mostly winters) in Alaska and eastern Siberia. But it does winter irregularly south along the Pacific coast to California. This magnificent bird with a white head and black throat was first observed and identified by Len Everett, a local sportsman and naturalist from Comox, on Dec. 8th. What to me was striking about the goose was the colour of its legs, not yellow, but golden.

According to *THE BIRDS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA*, the Emperor Goose was first discovered in B.C. in 1894 and in 21 of the following years through 1984. It has been reported in 22 localities in B.C., one of them being Campbell River. Although there is no mention of Courtenay, the species is listed in the Comox Checklist as an accidental visitor, i.e., out of its range. There are only two records of birds in cultivated fields. (Father Charles Brandt photo).

# A rare Christmas goose

## Sighting of Emperor Goose a birding bonus

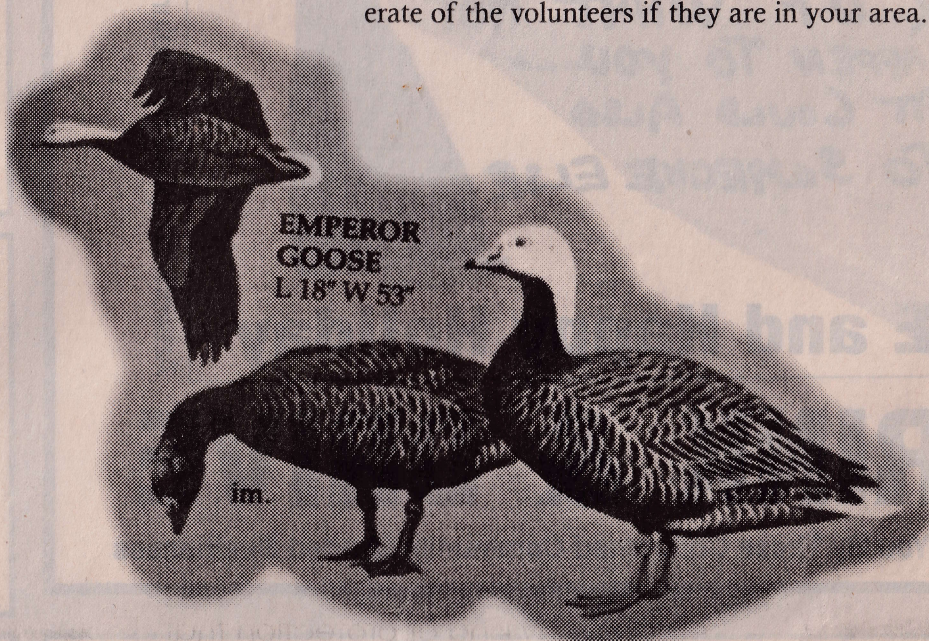
This past week, there has been another rare sighting of a northern bird in the neighborhood.

On Farquharson Farms, near the curve, an Emperor Goose, whose natural habitat is the marshy arctic shores of Alaska, has been seen feeding with the other geese.

The Emperor is a small grey goose, with distinctive black throat and white head. They have been seen before in this area, but any sighting is considered "accidental"—one step away from the rarest category—by local birders.

A reminder that this Sunday, the Comox Strathcona and District

Natural History Society will be conducting the annual Audubon bird count. Please be considerate of the volunteers if they are in your area.



**EMPEROR  
GOOSE**  
L 18" W 53"

im.

**Rare sighting of Emperor Goose made at Farquharson Farms**