



# TORONTO FIELD NATURALIST

Number 593 February 2013



Red Squirrel photographed by Anne Leon

## REGULARS

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*Toronto Field Naturalist* is published by the Toronto Field Naturalists, a charitable, non-profit organization, the aims of which are to stimulate public interest in natural history and to encourage the preservation of our natural heritage. Issued monthly September to December and February to May. Views expressed in the Newsletter are not necessarily those of the editor or Toronto Field Naturalists. The Newsletter is printed on 100% recycled paper.

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### IT'S YOUR NEWSLETTER!

We welcome contributions of original writing of observations on nature in and around Toronto (up to 500 words). We also welcome reviews, poems, sketches, paintings and digital photographs. Please include "Newsletter" in the subject line when sending by email, or on the envelope if sent by mail. Please re-name digital photographs with the subject and your name (abbreviations ok); scale your photos to less than 1 MB each. In the accompanying email include location, date and any interesting story or other information associated with the photograph.

**Deadline for submissions for March issue: Feb 1**

### NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

Jenny Bull (co-editor), Karin Fawthrop, Nancy Fredenburg, Elisabeth Gladstone, Mary Lieberman, Judy Marshall, Ruth Munson, Toshi Oikawa, Wendy Rothwell (co-editor).

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### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

|                                   |                        |  |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------|--|
| President & Outings               | Margaret McRae         |  |
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| Nature Reserves & Outings         | Charles Bruce-Thompson |  |
| Outreach                          | Tom Brown              |  |
| Webmaster                         | Lynn Miller            |  |

### MEMBERSHIP FEES

\$20 YOUTH (under 26)

\$30 SENIOR SINGLE (65+)

\$40 SINGLE, SENIOR FAMILY (2 adults, 65+)

\$50 FAMILY (2 adults – same address, children included)

No HST. Tax receipts issued for donations. Send membership fees and address changes to the TFN office.

*Please note: TFN does not give out its membership list.*

### Toronto Field Naturalists

1519-2 Carlton St, Toronto M5B 1J3

Tel: 416-593-2656

Web: [www.torontofieldnaturalists.org](http://www.torontofieldnaturalists.org)

Email: [office@torontofieldnaturalists.org](mailto:office@torontofieldnaturalists.org)

## GET THE JUMP ON SPRING AND HELP TFN AT THE SAME TIME!

Saturday, February 23, 10 am - 4 pm,  
Toronto Botanical Garden

Once again TFN will be participating in this annual festival celebrating horticulture, gardening and environmental issues.

**We need volunteers for our booth.**

If you plan to attend, and can spare a few hours to help promote TFN, please contact the office at 416-593-2656 or email [office@torontofieldnaturalists.org](mailto:office@torontofieldnaturalists.org)

For more information about this event see [www.torontobotanicalgarden.ca](http://www.torontobotanicalgarden.ca) or phone 416-397-1341



Photo: Barry Tocher

## TFN MEETING

**Sunday, February 3, 2013**

**2:30 pm**

### Bats: A Lifetime Affair

*Brock Fenton, bat expert and Professor, University of Western Ontario, will tell of his lifelong fascination with bats, with a focus on the role of echolocation in foraging behavior and communication.*

**VISITORS WELCOME!**

**SOCIAL: 2:00 – 2:30 pm**

**Room 001, Emmanuel College, University of Toronto, 75 Queen's Park Cres E**

Emmanuel College is just south of the Museum subway station exit on the east side of Queen's Park. Enter via the second door south on Queen's Park, which is wheelchair accessible. There is an elevator inside to the right. Room 001 is one floor below street level.

**For information:** call 416-593-2656 up to noon on the Friday preceding the lecture.

#### Upcoming Lectures

- Mar 3 **Nature Where Plates Collide, North Pacific & Himalaya**  
Peter Money, geologist
- Apr 14 **Insect Life Cycles**  
James Kamstra, terrestrial ecologist
- May 5 **Ecology of Breeding Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers**  
Doug Tozer, ornithologist

**Please send your suggestions for speakers for the 2013-14 TFN monthly lecture series to the TFN office (see contact info, page 2)**

#### Nature Images Event

##### **ART and PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBIT**

Framed works by TFN members

**February 2 to 28, 2013**

Call the library for hours and access

##### **DIGITAL SHOW & SALE**

Nature images by TFN photographers and special sale of artworks to benefit the TFN

**Saturday, February 2, 2013**

1:30 to 4 pm

Light refreshments - lug a mug

Auditorium, S Walter Stewart Library,  
170 Memorial Park Avenue

1 block north of Mortimer, 2 blocks west of Coxwell  
TTC bus north from Coxwell subway station  
to Mortimer or Cosburn

## TFN OUTINGS

- TFN events are conducted by unpaid volunteers.
- The club assumes no responsibility for injuries sustained by anyone participating in our activities.
- Children and visitors are welcome at all TFN events. Children must be accompanied by an adult.
- If you plan to bring children in a stroller, be aware that there may be steps or other unsuitable terrain.
- Please do not bring pets.
- To get to outings on time, check TTC routes and schedules ([www.ttc.ca](http://www.ttc.ca) or 416-393-4636).
- Outings go rain or shine: check the weather by calling 416-661-0123 so you will know what to wear.
- Wear appropriate footwear for walking on trails which may be muddy, steep or uneven.

- Sat  
Feb 2  
1:30 pm      **NATURE IMAGES EVENT – Nature Arts**  
Leaders: Gail Gregory and Lynn Miller  
Meet at S Walter Stewart Library, 170 Memorial Park Ave, lower auditorium. Members may bring up to 20 digital photos to show. See notice on page 3.
- Sun  
Feb 3  
2:30 pm      **LECTURE – Bats: A Lifetime Affair**  
Speaker: Brock Fenton, bat expert  
Emmanuel College, 75 Queen’s Park Cres E. See page 3.
- Wed  
Feb 6  
10:00 am      **UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO GREENHOUSES – Botany**  
Leader: Nancy Dengler  
Meet at the entrance to 33 Willcocks St (Faculty of Forestry, Earth Sciences Centre, one block south of Harbord St and ½ block east of Spadina Ave). Dress in layers for tropical conditions indoors. Morning only.
- Thurs  
Feb 7  
or 14      **SNOWSHOEING AT NATURE RESERVES - TENTATIVE**  
Contact Margaret McRae at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] if you would like to join us to snowshoe at the Nature Reserves. Car pooling will be arranged. Date is tentative and subject to weather conditions.
- Sat  
Feb 9  
9:45 am      **TORONTO ISLANDS – Birds and Plants**  
Leader: Ken Sproule  
Meet at the ferry docks at the foot of Bay Street in time to catch the 10:00 am ferry to Ward’s Island. Bring money for ferry. A circular walk, returning on the 12:45 pm ferry. Bring binoculars and drinking water.
- Tues  
Feb 12  
10:00 am      **ASHBRIDGE’S BAY – Birds**  
Leader: Doug Paton  
Meet in front of the Beaches Library, 2161 Queen St E, south side, just east of Lee Avenue. Bring lunch and binoculars.
- Sat  
Feb 16  
10:00 am      **BLUFFERS PARK – Birds and Plants**  
Leader: Miles Hearn  
Meet at the southwest corner of Brimley Ave and Kingston Rd for a circular walk. Morning only.
- Sun  
Feb 17  
2:00 pm      **PATH: ONCE IN A LIFETIME – Lost Rivers**  
Leaders: John Wilson, Lacey Williams and friends  
Meet at the Eaton Centre, inside the Queen St entrance just west of Yonge St, under the Canada Geese installation *Flight Stop* by Michael Snow, to explore Toronto’s PATH system. Toronto’s central core is perhaps the most manufactured landscape in Canada. The 17km PATH system beneath the towers of Yonge, Bay and University offers us a challenging and unusual goal – to discover proxies in the city’s core for the natural landscape that has been lost. A joint walk with the Toronto Green Community.

- Thurs      **HUMBER BAY PARK EAST - Birds**  
 Feb 21      Leader: Wendy Rothwell  
 10:00 am      Meet at the southwest corner of Lake Shore Blvd W and Park Lawn Rd. Bring binoculars. Morning only.
- Sat      **ST JAMES CEMETERY TO RIVERDALE FARM – Trees and Birds**  
 Feb 23      Leader: Bob Kortright  
 1:30 pm      Meet at the entrance to St James Cemetery on the east side of Parliament St, 100m north of Wellesley St. We will visit the old cemeteries of St James and the Necropolis, passing houses and gardens of Cabbagetown, ending at Riverdale farm where snacks may be available. Bring binoculars.
- Wed      **THOMSON MEMORIAL PARK – Birds and Plants**  
 Feb 27      Leader: Miles Hearn  
 10:00 am      Meet at the northeast corner of Lawrence Ave E and Brimley Rd for a circular walk. Bring binoculars. Morning only.



### FOR ENJOYMENT OF WINTER OUTINGS

- Long underwear
- Layered clothing
- Waterproof boots
- Thick socks
- Iceers to prevent falls
- Warm hat
- Mittens over gloves
- Binoculars
- Camera
- TTC Ride Guide
- Snack
- Thermos for hot drink
- Sunglasses

## Send us Your Memories!!

The TFN's 90th Anniversary Celebration Committee wants to hear from you. Awesome sightings, quiet epiphanies, disasters on the track or trail, time-honoured lore or stories passed down by parents or elders, or just simply stuff you like about being a naturalist - you name it, we need it. If we like it, it could be part of the entertaining show we are intending to mount in October 2013.

Don't worry, you won't be required to perform it if you don't want to. There'll be others to do that. So rack your brains, scour your attics and basements - it needn't be an earth-shaking literary masterpiece, just genuine and heartfelt. And, please, no more than 500 words long. It could be a song or a poem or a dance or a painting for that matter, just short and sweet.

Help us celebrate TFN's 90 excellent years of existence. And - **IMPORTANT** - don't forget to include the acronym TFN in the subject line of your e-mail so we don't end up deleting it.

E-mail [office@torontofieldnaturalists.org](mailto:office@torontofieldnaturalists.org)  
 or mail to **1519-2 Carlton St., Toronto M5B 1J3**

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

It has been very busy since I became President in October. Within 2 weeks we were told we should buy a new computer immediately because the original one we have had since 2005 was going to die very soon. So we bought one and have installed some updated software and all our programs and data from the old computer. It seems to be working okay but we have to familiarize ourselves with newer programs.

It was nice to have some snow at the end of December. We didn't get to use our snowshoes at all last winter but I have already been on mine once this year, and we are planning to snowshoe at the nature reserves in February. Please contact me if you would like to join us there as we will be car-pooling.

We have designed and ordered two TFN banners, one horizontal and one vertical, to be used at promotional events. Thank you to Nancy Dengler for all her work in putting the design together. We plan to be at *Get the Jump on Spring* at the Toronto Botanical Garden on February 23 from 10 am to 4 pm. We need a few people to man our table at that event so please let us know if you are interested and available. You can contact me as Tom Brown will be away.

We are making good progress on organizing our 90th anniversary event for Friday, October 4 at the Papermill Theatre at Todmorden Mills. We have had

several meetings and are making headway in creating the content for the program. Please reserve the date on your calendar and celebrate with us. It will be fun. There will be activities for everyone who wants to participate. Please let us know as soon as possible if you would like to be involved and in what way. We will use actors, musicians, singers, dancers, storytellers, scenery makers, stage hands, writers, photographers and there will be tasks we haven't even thought of yet. We would like to find a photographer who can tape the entire program onto dvd's to give to the people who take part in it.

Byron Bulmer wants to be replaced as our auditor this year. We have to find someone willing to replace him soon as our year end is June 30. If you know someone we could approach, please advise the office.

Don't forget to attend our Nature Images Event on February 2 at 1:30 pm at the S Walter Stewart Library. You will also be able to view the Nature Arts Exhibit which will be on display for the entire month of February at that location. Another upcoming event to plan for is a trip to Happy Valley Forest in April to look for salamanders as well as birds.

Margaret McRae

### Toronto Field Naturalists Grants Program

TFN provides funding for projects and programs that further our objectives of connecting people and nature in Toronto.

Please send your suggestions of nature-related projects and programs suitable for consideration for the 2013-14 TFN grants program to the TFN office (see contact info on page 2).

### 2012 Ontario Nature Conservation Awards

#### Nomination Deadline: April 8, 2013

Ontario Nature Conservation Awards recognize excellence by honouring individuals, groups, government agencies and corporations who have worked to protect Ontario's nature.

Awards are published in the autumn issue of ON Nature. For descriptions of the awards, and nominating procedures, see [www.ontarionature.org](http://www.ontarionature.org) or e-mail [info@ontarionature.org](mailto:info@ontarionature.org) or phone 416 444-8419.

## MONTHLY MEETING REPORT

### Ontario's Wild Bees, Sunday December 2

Laurence Packer, Melittologist and York University Professor of Biology and Environmental Studies

Bees have existed for about 100 million years. About 20,000 species have been identified to date, including 806 in Canada (as of early December 2012) and 400 in Ontario. The world's smallest bee is about 1.6 mm long. The largest is several centimeters long.

Misconceptions about bees are as widespread as bees.

Contrary to common belief, most wild bees are not honey bees. Only a few hundred bee species make honey. Most species do not live in hive colonies, preferring instead to live in such places as solitary holes in the ground or solitary nests inside hollow stems or holes in houses.

Not all bees work hard. Some do not build nests at all. Fifteen percent of bees are "cuckoo bees" that lay their eggs in the nests of other bees. One Canadian species uses abandoned snail shells for laying its eggs together with food stored for the larva. Others make a nest of tiny stones held together with resin. Many bees lay eggs, provide a nearby supply of pollen, and then leave.

Not all bees can sting. The stinger is a modified egg-laying apparatus. Male bees do not have this apparatus and therefore cannot sting.

It is not only honey bees that pollinate plants. Many wild bees are also pollinators. Conversely, not all bees collect pollen.

In Ontario, about one third of bees nest in cavities, mostly in the ground. One fifth are social bees living in colonies, and about one quarter are cuckoo bees. Many of the cuckoo bees are nearly bald as they have no need to carry pollen in their hairs.

Not all bees are yellow. Toronto's *Agapostemon* species is bright shiny green. It's a solitary communal nester with many bees using a common entrance but each having its own nest area. This makes it harder for predators to get at them.

In Ontario, the first bees to appear each year in early April are the maple flower-loving *Colletes inaequalis*, a ground nesting bee that excretes a cellophane-like substance that it uses to plaster its nest and make it waterproof. Many of Ontario's spring bees are solitary nesters.

Some of Ontario's bees such as the males in the Megachilidae family are territorial and aggressive. They fight each other as well as bees of other species including honey bees, landing on their opponent's tail and slashing it with a sharp structure on their chest. Their colourful head patterns help them compete for female attention.

Some wild bees are becoming more rare, and a few have already been listed as endangered. The formerly most common Ontario bumblebee has now become exceedingly rare. Global warming is causing a divergence between the timing of the annual appearance of certain flowers and the bees that depend on them. Between 1970 and 2010 a one-month gap has appeared between black currant flowering and the emergence of the bees that collect its pollen.

Studies show that some bees will only visit native plants. For example, in Ontario, *Macropis nuda* will only go to native creeping jenny and will not visit garden varieties.



*Agapostemon sericeus* female.

Image from [www.yorku.ca/bugsrus/bee\\_tribes\\_of\\_the\\_world/Bee\\_Tribes.html](http://www.yorku.ca/bugsrus/bee_tribes_of_the_world/Bee_Tribes.html)

Bees are marvelous, pretty and important. Albert Einstein supposed that if bees disappeared, humans would last only four more years without bee pollination of wild and cultivated plants.

The use of pesticides and the spread of diseases linked to bee-keeping practices that are causing commercial honey bee colony collapse are also affecting wild bees.

*Continued on page 10*

## EXTRACTS FROM OUTINGS LEADERS REPORTS

**Nature Arts, Taylor Creek , Nov 3. Leader: Charles Bruce-Thompson.** We saw typical Don Valley native, invasive and introduced plant species, including three Turkish hazelnuts. Many new plantings particularly grey dogwood. We saw a red tailed hawk and heard a pileated woodpecker (call only). We were impeded at the forks/DVP by the construction of two bridges so we turned back and retraced our steps.

**Garrison Creek topography, Nov 7. Leader: Alexander Cappell.** We followed a side branch of the Garrison, then the main branch. The curving streets, dips in the roads and lanes, parkettes on hillsides, front lawns sloping down to the streets and the big holes of Bickford Park and Christie Pits (former quarries) showed us where the now-buried creek was. Against a sunny south-facing wall, a goldenrod in flower was sheltering behind a young Amur maple, both growing out of a crack in the sidewalk.

**Col. Samuel Smith Park, Nov 10. Leader: Wendy Rothwell.** Not many winter water fowl had arrived. We were pleased to see quite a flock of horned grebe. We discussed the difficulty of distinguishing a non-breeding male red-breasted merganser from a female. Other birds included red-necked grebe, black-crowned night-heron (juvenile), northern shoveler, greater scaup, long-tailed duck, bufflehead, American crow, ruby-crowned kinglet, northern mockingbird, and swamp sparrow. Plants in flower included white sweet-clover, trailing bellflower, and brown knapweed (*Centaurea jacea*). Sea buckthorn was in fruit. We also saw a woolly bear caterpillar.

**Trees and architecture, Queen's Park and University of Toronto, Nov 14. Leader: Richard Partington.** We looked in the chapel of Trinity College and were struck by how the perpendicular Gothic gives the impression of a stylized avenue of trees. A little Bach trio sonata being softly practised on the organ while we were there completed the sense of wonder. Some of Toronto's finest architects were notably represented through the walk. Trees included: sugar and sycamore maples, Bradford pear (beautiful fall foliage, fruiting), devil's walking stick (*Aralia spinosa*), American beech, sycamore, London plane, cottonwood, Kentucky coffeetree, tulip tree, crabapple, cypress (weeping cultivar), butternut, Cornelian cherry (dogwood family); Turkish hazel, witch-hazel (flowering), zelkova (still holding its leaves), Amur cork tree, yellow buckeye, Ohio buckeye, redbud, dawn redwood, jack pine.

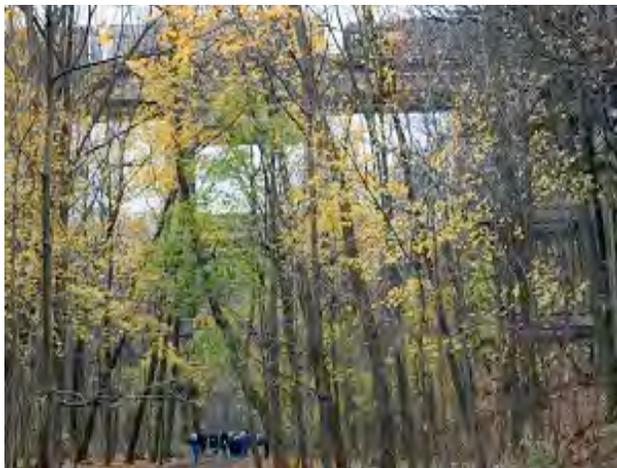
**Tree identification, Scarborough Bluffs, Nov 17. Leader: D. Andrew White.** We saw largetooth aspen, white and green ashes, winterberry euonymus [*Euonymus bungeanus*], eastern hemlock, horse chestnut, Japanese knotweed, sugar and Norway maples, white pine, snowberry, blue, white and Norway spruces, staghorn sumac, black walnut, crack, white, Bebb and weeping willows, yew trees. Fungi seen were: *Daedaleopsis confragosa*, *Tyromyces chioneus* and *Ustulina deusta* (burnt-crust fungus). It was odd not to see any winter moths. We saw a red-bellied woodpecker and white-tailed deer (female and two young).

**Topography: hills and dales of Yonge St, Nov 21. Leader: Alexander Cappell.** We went into the Vale of Avoca where, the dominant tree is the Norway maple, the understory is Japanese knotweed and the ground cover is goutweed. Yellow Creek, buried elsewhere, flows above ground here, eroding its banks and toppling gabion baskets. Climbing up, we admired the beautiful houses built right on the slope of the Lake Iroquois shoreline. Next, we saw the boulevard of Siberian elms on Marlborough Ave, and headed south to climb down into Ramsden Park, a former quarry which is the valley of (buried) Castle Frank Brook.

**Birds and trees, Guild Inn, Nov 24. Leader: Bob Kortright.** We visited the historic buildings of the Guild, the surrounding woods, the gardens with their roses in flower, sculptures and architectural fragments rescued from demolished buildings, the bluffs, and the lake where we saw a loon. In the woods we found a clump of *Flammulina velutipes* (velvet foot) on a stump, probably our latest-fruiting mushroom, and an attractive one. There was also lots of *Dibutryon* (cherry gall fungus) making it easy to identify the cherry trees and shrubs. We also found orange jelly, tinder polypore, turkey tail, and other bracket fungi. There were large serviceberry, ironwood (*Ostrya*), and muscledwood or hornbeam (*Carpinus caroliniana*, often called blue beech, inappropriately because it is not a beech). [See also Keeping in Touch, page 14]

**High Park, Dec 8. Leader: Wendy Rothwell.** We were shocked by the amount of buckthorn, despite efforts of High Park Nature to clear it. Birds included northern shoveler, lesser scaup (1), bufflehead, hooded merganser (many), common merganser, hairy woodpecker, red-breasted nuthatch, American robins (singing), dark-eyed junco, American goldfinch.

*Continued on next page*



**Bestview Park and the East Don, Dec 4. Leader: Stephen Kamnitzer.** See photos page 19.

**Col Sam Smith Park, Dec 11. Leader: Doug Paton.** We had a very good look at a red-necked grebe in winter plumage and a male kestrel that kept flying ahead of us. We saw it hovering several times as well.

**E.T. Seton Park, Dec 15. Leader: Ken Sproule.** The mountain bike path along the West Don Valley was pretty muddy, a lot of garbage on it under the Overlea bridge. More trail building in progress. Saw bat nesting boxes in the pine forest below the Science Centre, and large beaver-gnawed tree at Don forks, still standing after a few years, but dead. At a bird feeder we saw house finch (male and female), American goldfinch, American tree sparrow (on ground at feeder and two in spruce), black-capped chickadee (also in trees and shrubs), northern cardinal (male and female). We saw dark-eyed juncos feeding on path, American robin (many together in flight, a few feeding on European buckthorn fruit, some singing), downy woodpecker (male in tree), hairy woodpecker (3 in various trees), red-tailed hawk (3 sightings in flight), and barred owl (in tree).



**Birds and trees, Ashbridge's Bay Park, Dec 29. Leader: Bob Kortright.** At our starting point, I pointed out that the expanse of ice between the park road, Lakeshore Blvd, the sewage treatment plant and Coatsworth Cut, is the remains of Ashbridge's Bay which once extended from east of Woodbine to Toronto harbor. It covered most of the area south of Eastern Ave south to a sandbar that extended to Toronto Island, that was cut through here (Coatsworth Cut) in hopes of diluting the pollution in the bay. Oddly, even the storm sewer outlets into the bay were devoid of ducks. However, we had excellent looks at a wide variety of ducks and gulls (one Iceland gull among many herring and ring-billed gulls). On land we found only a patient pair of cardinals and a large flock of chickadees, but enjoyed the company, beauty of the snow and ice encrusting rocks and trees on the southeast promontory, and the diverse shrubs and trees throughout.



From top:

- TFN outing, Brick Works, Nov 11. Photo: Augusta Takeda
- TFN outing, Don Valley, Dec 22. Photo: Gail Gregory
- Robin and starling eating common buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*, family Rhamnaceae)
- Close up of buckthorn fruit and thorn-tipped short shoot
- Robin eating sea-buckthorn (*Hippophae rhamnoides*, family Eleagnaceae). Photos: Jenny Bull

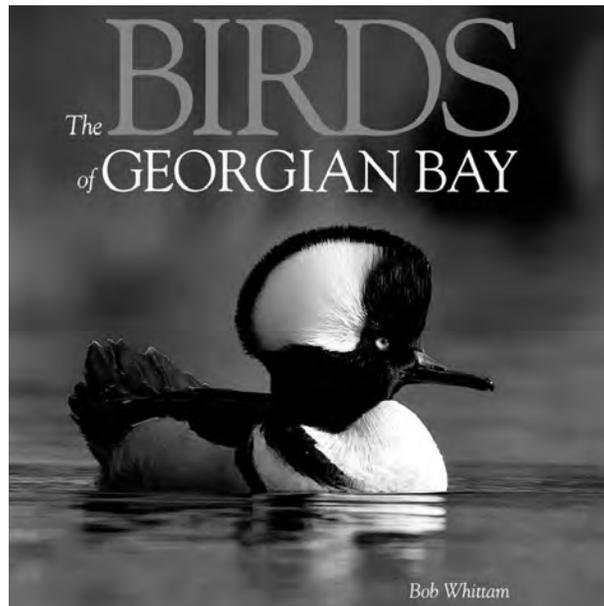
## FOR READING

### ***The Birds of Georgian Bay: Sharing the Joy of Birding*, by Bob Whittam,**

The Friends of Wye Marsh, 2012. Hard cover, 240 pages, \$34.95. Also [www.facebook.com/thebirdsofgeorgianbay](http://www.facebook.com/thebirdsofgeorgianbay)

The title nearly says it all! This is a superb book on the birds of a region familiar to many TFN members. Highly recommended for anyone interested in birds or in natural history in general, especially those having visited or planning to visit the Georgian Bay region. Please note that all proceeds from sales of this book will be donated to supporting the ecologically very valuable Wye Marsh.

The topics covered are organized into well written chapters; Birdwatch Basics, Families of Birds, Migration, Habitats, Bad News, Good News, A Better Plan for Birds and People, Important Bird Areas, Parks and Wildlife Areas, and The Geology of Georgian Bay. These are supplemented by Appendices, a Provisional Bird Checklist, and a good index. What I regard as major strengths are the superb illustrations throughout the text and many anecdotes on birds, birders, and birding which very much bring the human touch to the discussion. In the acknowledgements, the aim stated is



to write a book to appeal to anyone who wants to know more about birds and “who with subtle persuasion might become a bird watcher.” I think Bob Whittam and his many collaborators have succeeded admirably.

Peter Money

### Monthly Meeting Report *continued from page 7*

What can we do to keep our bees? We can buy organic food to reduce the use of insecticides. In our gardens, we can plant native plants or simple flowering plants that bees can get at. Ground nesting bees prefer bare ground. We can reduce mulching to leave bare earth patches in our gardens for them. We can leave old dead stems around for nesting sites rather than cleaning them up.

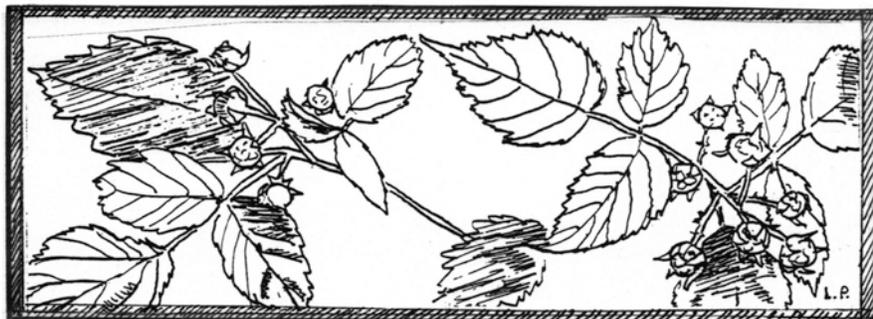
Raspberry bushes provide good nesting sites as well

as food for bees. Dr. Packer’s bee-friendly back yard hosts 35 bee species.

Unfortunately, there are no good field guides to bees. However, those interested in learning more about our bees can look forward to the spring publication of a guide to Toronto’s bees covering a small portion of the 400 bees of Ontario.

For further information see Laurence Packer’s book, *Keeping the Bees: Why all bees are at risk and what we can do to save them*.

Lavinia Mohr



Black raspberry drawn by Lenore Patterson.

## CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT (CBC) 2012

The first CBC was held in 1900 with the intent of replacing the traditional Christmas bird hunt. This season, over 2000 counts were held across the Americas. They are held any day in the 23-day period centred on Christmas, between December 14 and January 5. Each count area is a circle 24km (15 miles) in diameter organized by a local group. All data contributes to the central database managed by Audubon.

The longest running Citizen Science survey in the world, this count is very helpful in determining bird population trends, including those that result in species-at-risk designations. Many participants enjoy not only the count, but also gathering for hot food and drinks at the end of the day as results are tallied and stories swapped. New this year is elimination of the \$5 fee previously charged to participants who were not members of Audubon or Bird Studies Canada. Costs of the program are being reduced by no longer mailing a summary of results to participants – the results will be available online, as are results from past counts.

The Toronto CBC began that first year, 1900, making it the oldest in Canada. The 88th Toronto Ornithological Club (TOC) CBC was held Dec 16. The Toronto circle (centered at the intersection of Roselawn Avenue and Avenue Road) is divided into 26 sectors, each with its own team searching for as many birds as they can find before dark. Despite the frequent rain showers, we tallied 98 species, which was a new record high by 4. Firsts for the count were indigo bunting at Rennie Park, blue-gray gnatcatcher at Sunnyside, and two Nashville warblers just north of Cherry Street and Lakeshore. Eleven new records were established apart from the 3 new species. These were pied-billed grebe 2 (previous 1), black-crowned night-heron 20 (prev 8) hooded merganser 152, Bonaparte's gull 16 (prev 7), black-capped chickadee 1313, red-breasted nuthatch 115 (prev 57), winter wren 19 (prev 12), mockingbird 31 (prev 14), and cardinal 443 (prev 397).

Other rarities found on this season's counts in southern Ontario include greater white-fronted goose, blue-winged teal, Townsend's solitaire, cackling goose, Eurasian wigeon, black-legged kittiwake, red-throated loon, harlequin duck, house wren, common yellowthroat, Cape May warbler, orange-crowned warbler, ruby-crowned kinglet, and American pipit.

If you cannot wait to participate in the next CBC, there are lots of other opportunities to get involved in similar activities before December. By the time you read this, the Rouge winter bird count and Lake Ontario winter waterfowl count will be over, but consider the Great Backyard Bird Count in February (see box), the TOC's warbler count in May, and breeding bird counts (generally in June). If you don't want to join an organized count, eBird allows reporting of counts anywhere in the world at any time. Links to Toronto Ornithological Club and Bird Studies Canada are on the Toronto Field Naturalists website, or search any of the above on the internet for more information.

Bob Kortright

### The 16th annual GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT

**Friday, Feb 15 through Monday, Feb 18**

The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) is an annual 4-day event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of where the birds are.

**Beginning in 2013, GBBC checklists will be accepted from anywhere in the world!**

Everyone is welcome—from beginners to experts. It takes as little as 15 minutes on one day, or you can count for as long as you like each day of the event. It's free, fun, and easy—and it helps the birds.

Participants tally the number of individual birds of each species they see during their count period. They enter these numbers on the GBBC website.

Beginning in 2013, **each participant must set up a free GBBC account to submit their checklists.** You'll only need to do this once to participate in all future GBBC events.

For more information go to:  
[www.birdsource.org/gbbc/whycount.html](http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/whycount.html)

## IN THE NEWS

### OFFICE COMPLEX MORE FRIENDLY FOR MIGRATORY BIRDS

Extracted from a news release from Ecojustice and Ontario Nature at [www.ecojustice.ca](http://www.ecojustice.ca). Click on Media Centre.

After legal action from Ecojustice and Ontario Nature, two of Toronto's most lethal buildings for birds have been retrofitted to reduce bird strikes. But the charges, that reflected light from an office complex caused the death or injury of hundreds of birds, were dismissed last November. Ecojustice and Ontario Nature are considering an appeal. 900 birds were killed or injured in 2008 and 2009 after striking the windows of the Consilium Place office complex. FLAP (Fatal Light Awareness Program), a non-profit group aiming to prevent bird strikes, documented that at least 7,000 dead and injured birds were collected from Consilium Place over a 10-year span. The City of Toronto developed its Bird-Friendly Development Guidelines in March 2007 and requires any building built after January 2010 to include measures to reduce bird strikes. It also recommends the use of window films to provide visual cues to birds about the danger. New owners of Consilium Place have been completing the installation of window films installed to the height of the tree line as recommended by Toronto's Bird-Friendly Development Guidelines. Ecojustice's lawyer said that they hoped that other owners will take similar action and that tenants will spur their landlords to install available, effective solutions. Ecojustice is awaiting a decision from a separate bird strike case against Cadillac Fairview for its Yonge Corporate Centre buildings. About 10 of those birds, including Canada warblers and olive-sided flycatchers, are listed as Threatened. That case involves charges under the *Species at Risk Act*, the *Environmental Protection Act* and the *Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act*.

### ROUGE NATIONAL URBAN PARK

Environmental Defence, Ontario Nature and Friends of the Rouge Watershed have written to the Premier about their concern that environmental protections for the future Rouge National Urban Park will be less strict than those that currently exist, an article in the *Toronto Star* reported on Dec 26 ([www.thestar.com/news/gta/article/1307121--tougher-protection-sought-for-rouge-lands](http://www.thestar.com/news/gta/article/1307121--tougher-protection-sought-for-rouge-lands)). The groups are urging the provincial government to insist on five conditions before signing over large tracts of land to the federal government.

They want the province to obtain more robust environmental guarantees for the future park and to get a guarantee that all farming in the park will be sustainable. More than 60 per cent of the future park is slated to be leased to farmers and closed to the public.

### DOWNSVIEW PARK

An article in *The Globe and Mail*, Dec. 8, titled "The uncertain fate of Toronto's Downsview Park" ([www.theglobeandmail.com/news/toronto/the-uncertain-fate-of-torontos-downsview-park/article/6117677/](http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/toronto/the-uncertain-fate-of-torontos-downsview-park/article/6117677/)), reported that Canada Lands Co., the Crown property management arm, would be taking over management of Downsview Park from Parc Downsview Park, Inc. (PDP). As a result, the fate of Canada's largest urban national park is now unclear. Prior to PDP stepping in to take control in 2006, Downsview Park had been more or less stalled, used mostly as a site for big events. The Park now has a lake, hills, 60,000 trees, walking/running paths, and environmentally sensitive parking [see article in TFN 578, March 2011]. The local residents association had a good relationship with PDP, which was charged with finding non-taxpayer ways to pay for the park and development of adjacent land. Residents now fear that, rather than following the original plans for the land, the federal government will "just care about getting the most bang for their buck," and sell off the land to developers. Local MPP Monte Kwinter shares those concerns and likens the situation to what happened in the central waterfront when the federal government gave land to Harbourfront for a park that ended up as the site of the first towers that now form a solid wall along the waterfront.

### TAKE ACTION!

As condos continue to rise, increasing population density in the city, and as our parks continue to be stressed by over-use, we need to inform our elected representatives about how much we value open spaces for both human recreation and wildlife habitat.

Please write to your councillor, MPP and MP to let them know your opinion on the state of both new and established parks – quantity and quality – in the city.

We need to be ever vigilant and pro-active to protect this vital resource.

## TORONTO SHORE PLANT SPECIES: GIFTS FROM GLACIATION AND (MAYBE) GULLS

*Cakile edentula* (American sea rocket) belongs to the Brassicaceae (mustard) family, formerly known as the Cruciferae. It is a plant of sandy beaches on the Pacific and Atlantic coasts of North America, a niche it occupies as it can tolerate marine beach saline soils. In Ontario it occurs on the shores of lakes Huron, Erie, and Ontario and east along the St. Lawrence valley. In Toronto it is considered uncommon but has been reported on beaches in Marie Curtis Park, on the Toronto Islands and Leslie Street spit, at East Point, and in the Rouge valley.

Why is this marine beach plant here? Regard it as a gift from the Laurentide Ice Sheet, a glacial complex whose enormous weight so depressed the bedrock that, almost 13,000 years ago, the Champlain Sea was formed, an extension of the Atlantic as far west as Cornwall, Ontario. From there it took just a short migration of this species to reach the ancestral Great Lakes. *Cakile edentula* is about 15 to 30 cm tall with flowers, about 6 mm across, that have four sepals and petals, a characteristic of its large family (about 3300 species, 340 genera). Its fleshy leaves, a common feature of saline soil specialists, distinguish it from the many other mustards occurring in our area. This species can bloom from summer to early fall.



American sea rocket, *Cakile edentula*

*Spergularia maritima* (intermediate sand-spurrey) is a European member of the Caryophyllaceae (pink) family. It seems to require saline soils, unlike *Cakile edentula* which can grow in or out of such an environment. The weak-stemmed plants, up to 15 cm long, form mats. The fleshy cylindrical leaves indicate a saline soils specialist. The flowers are about 6 to 8 mm across. It may bloom from late spring to fall. My image is from a 401 off-ramp to Kingston Road. The

1994 (2nd ed.) of the TFN's *Vascular Plants of Metropolitan Toronto* reported it in the Lower Don Valley. It probably initially arrived as seeds on the feathers or feet of birds that visited Toronto roadsides. Gulls are the most likely birds to have done so. The possibility cannot be ruled out that the seeds were in mud attached to vehicles. This species has been called a "highway halophyte" (A.A. Reznicek, *Michigan Botanist*, 1980, 19:23-30), a plant that spreads along heavily salted highways.



Intermediate sand spurrey, *Spergularia maritima*

Wildflower guides commonly distinguish native from introduced or alien plants. Introduced plants are "not native...but brought in and...established" (*Newcomb's Wildflower Guide*, 1977, p.15). Alien plants are "originally not native but now established by introduction or as escapes" (*Peterson Field Guides, Wildflowers Northeastern/Northcentral North America*, 1968, p.ix). A problem with both definitions: all local plant species have been introduced as or since the Laurentide Ice Sheet melted back. *The ROM Field Guide to Wildflowers of Ontario* (2004, p. 7) deals with this by defining as native species that migrated north when/after the ice melted. However, *Cakile edentula* migrated westward! *Spergularia maritima* is plainly introduced but *S. marina*, which I had thought I had found, is a North American salt marsh species also now found here. How should such a recently arrived North American species, if not transported by humans, be regarded? Is an "old" introduction (American sea rocket) native whereas a new one (e.g. *S. marina*) would not be? If so, how old is old enough to change the status? Perhaps ponder this while crouching beside sand-spurrey at an off-ramp or curb, but perhaps not, considering that roadside crouching can generate strange looks from passing motorists.

Article and photos by Peter Money

## KEEPING IN TOUCH

Bob Kortright led a truly enjoyable walk on Nov 24 at the Guild Inn. At the beginning of the walk we saw a fallen tree with a 60 to 70 cm rock in its roots. I presume the tree had grown around this rock. When we walked below the Guild I was fascinated with the male and female cones and catkins appearing on the alder at the same time.



Past year's alder seed cones and next year's pollen catkins.



At home, the squirrels visit daily. The red squirrel (see photo on the front cover) is a male. During the year deer appear and eat many of the plants in my back garden. In the fall, rose leaves are gently taken off without harming the stems. The deer-resistant dogwoods have been nibbled at the top but are surviving. Two euonymous resemble palm trees as their lowest branches have gone. We have had as many as six deer at a time. The buck (photo at left) was rarely seen in previous years but has appeared five times already this fall and early winter. In return for the plants eaten, one buck left a beautiful antler by our back fence and I saw it before the creatures ate it for calcium. It takes pride of place in our living room.

I saw the lovely barred owl on the December cover but am sending the triptych (below) anyway as I was so pleased to get the different head positions. Hope you enjoy looking at it.

Happy New Year and all the best for 2013.

Anne Leon

Happy New Year TFN!

How common are common redpolls in Toronto, specifically in north Scarborough? We saw our first ones in our backyard, today, January 1, over 25 at our home at McCowan and Steeles.

Thanks, Al Roffey

*Bob Kortright replies next page*



## FROM THE ARCHIVES

Extracted from TFN Newsletter no. 10, November 1939

What a wonderful November this has been for the watchers of birds! Usually one of the low spots during the year, this month has seen an extraordinary influx of birds from the northern wilds for which this is almost the far south. The little pine siskin, relative of the goldfinch, was among the first to come, a particularly large flock being seen at Ashbridge's Bay. Evening grosbeaks and common redpolls have both been noted at York Mills. Pine grosbeaks have been seen and heard in a great many places, notably at Sunnybrook Park. Lapland longspurs were also seen near the gates of that park. Northern shrikes are common this year, as well as purple finches and red-breasted nuthatches.

Of very great interest is the wave of barred owls and saw-whet owls that has reached us this month. J.L. Baillie has been overwhelmed at the Royal Ontario Museum with reports of these owls. The barred owl is one of the finest rat-catchers in the world. We have had the good fortune to see one almost every morning

in the last fortnight on our way to the office. We also have had the novel experience of seeing nine saw-whet owls in two weeks after having seen only the same number in nine years.

Outstanding in our sights of northern birds this month has been the view of a flock of six white-winged crossbills in Sunnybrook Park in a grove of hemlocks. Detected first by their notes, we found them at the top of one hemlock, busily opening the cones with their fantastic crossed bills. Their rose-red bodies glowed in the sun and contrasted sharply with the green of the tree and the black of their wings, the white wing bars flashed like flakes of snow. It was a Christmas scene, and a fascinating one, that we had the privilege to watch but could not paint as it deserved. We stayed as long as the birds remained – some ten minutes, when some whimsy sent them whirling across the ravine and out of sight.

### *Keeping in Touch continued*

Like other winter finches (crossbills, pine and evening grosbeaks, pine siskin, purple finch), and a few non-finch species (Bohemian waxwings, red-breasted nuthatch, and blue jay), redpolls come south to Toronto and beyond in winter when they don't find enough food north of here. Ron Pittaway publishes a winter finch forecast each fall (see [ofo.ca](http://ofo.ca) under Articles), based on reports of cone crops across the north. This year, many finches of all these species came south early due to widespread tree seed crop failure across the eastern

boreal forest. In the case of redpolls, the key trees are birches and alders. In Toronto they are found, generally in flocks, on these trees, in weedy fields, or at feeders with nyger seed, often with goldfinches. A good way to see how common a species is in the winter is to look on the Christmas Bird Count website. Common redpolls, with a few hoary redpolls mixed in, are found in Toronto more winters than not, but are found in Algonquin most winters.

Bob Kortright



Left: redpoll sheltering from the wind on willow near alders; pine siskin and white-winged crossbill feeding on alder seed. Photos: Jenny Bull

## PLANT FAMILIES: GRASSES

Continuing our survey of six plant families that have been recognized for centuries and still retain their old names, here is Elmer Talvila's description of the grass family from a 1967 TFN newsletter. The older scientific family name is Graminae; the newer is Poaceae.

### The grass family – Graminae By Elmer Talvila

Grasses are everywhere. They dominate a quarter of the earth's plant areas from the arctic to the tropics. They cover the prairies and plains of North America, the pampas of South America, the savannahs of Africa and the steppes of Central Asia. We lie on it and under it; we grow it and mow it.

This largest and most advanced family of Monocots contains about 500 genera and 5,000 species. Although this number is exceeded by such families as the Compositae and roses, grass is undoubtedly number one with respect to numbers of individuals. The grass family is first also in importance as a food for man and beast. To it belong all the cereals such as wheat, corn, rice, and many forage crops such as sorghum, timothy, millet, as well as sugar cane and bamboo.

Many systems of classification have been devised – all difficult. Most grasses are identified to species – if at all – more by examining such tiny structures as glumes (chaffy bracts), lemmas (flowering glumes) and florets (glumey flowers). For further complications we have paleas, awns and lodicules. Grasses, as you can see, speak a language all their own.

When in bloom, grasses become magically transformed as they open their tiny florets and wave thousands of tiny white, yellow or purple anthers in the wind.

You can always tell a grass but you can never tell which.

In the Metropolitan Toronto area there are about 80 species of grasses, none of which I have ever succeeded in keying out with my Gray's [*Manual of Botany*] without cheating. The best way to identify grasses is to take a grasshound with you. If you can't find one of these rare people then here are a few characteristics of grasses which might be of help.

1. Mainly herbaceous perennials with fibrous roots forming extensive tangles of rhizomes and roots below the surface.
2. The stems are usually round and hollow, although corn and sugar cane are pithy. They appear jointed due to the presence of nodes at which leaves are attached. Note that sedges (Cyperaceae) have triangular shaped pithy stems.
3. The leaves are long and narrow, arranged alternately on either side of the stem. The leaf bases are modified into sheaths which surround the stem and extend from the nodes at which they are attached to the next node above.

*Continued on next page*



From left: top row:  
switchgrass (*Panicum virgatum*)  
big bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*)  
marram grass (*Ammophila breviligulata*)  
common reed (*Phragmites*)  
bottom row:  
Canada wild rye (*Elymus canadensis*)  
foxtail barley (*Hordeum jubatum*)

4. The flowers are arranged in **spikelets** of one or more flowers which are themselves arranged in spikes or panicles. Each spikelet is protected by a series of outer chaffy bracts called **glumes**.

5. Each individual flower (**floret**) is enclosed by a lower bract (**lemma**) and an upper one (**palea**). To the lemma may be attached a bristly structure called an **awn**. There are no sepals or petals, just some small scales called lodicules.

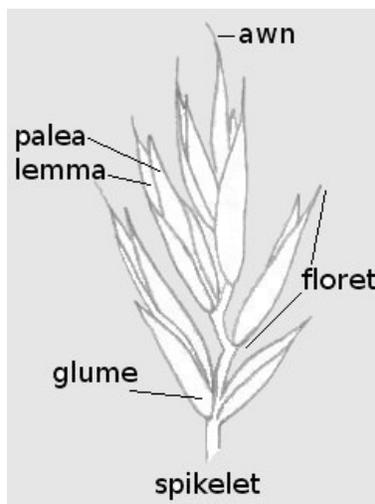
6. The fruit is a single seed or grain.

For the serious grass student (non-hippie variety), there are several good references: A.S. Hitchcock: *Manual of the grasses of the United States*; R.W. Pohl: *How to know the grasses*; US Dept of Agriculture: *Grass* (Yearbook of Agriculture).

Here are a few individual members of this family:

**Wheat** is the world's most widely cultivated plant and has been known to man as far back as 4700 BC in Iraq. Wheat started us brewing and bread-making. Charles Saunders became an authentic Canadian hero by developing the famous Marquis strain in the early 1900s.

**Bamboo**: The only grass that might be called a tree. Some species may grow 120 feet tall and have a diameter of 8 feet (*Dendrocalamus*). They grow fast, too –



as much as 3 feet a day or 25 feet a month. You can hear them grow – literally, according to some observers. Bamboos bloom only after a long interval of time, 33-66 years, and then die. Curiously all bamboos of the same species bloom in the same year regardless of where they are growing. Bamboos are used for practically everything: food, furniture, paper, lumber, water pipes, vessels and poetic inspiration.

**Cymbopogon** [lemongrass] is a source of citronella oil used in perfumes, soaps and mosquito repellents.

**Rye** used to kill thousands of the poor who fed on rye infected with ergot, a fungal disease. They developed violent itching or spasms, a condition known as St. Anthony's fire.

**Some pretenders**: sawgrass, cotton-grass, eelgrass, blue-eyed grass, yellow-eyed grass, and grass of Parnassus are not grasses.

Finally, a few grass names which tickled my fancy: Job's tears, cheat, chess, nimble Will, fly-away, catchfly, smut, holy, poverty, billion-dollar, toothache, panic, quake, blue-joint and gardener's gaiters.

Ed. comment: While Elmer's take on grass identification is rather "glumey", there are some grasses in Toronto that are reasonably easy to recognize without having a grasp of grass terminology. Many of them can still be recognized in winter as they retain the remains of their fruiting heads for several months.

As tall-grass prairie extends into southwestern Ontario, there are some tall prairie grasses that can be found here such as big bluestem (also known as turkey foot) and switch-grass. Switch-grass has delicate open flowering heads and can grow in large dense clumps – I once found a well-hidden mallard duck nesting in the middle of a clump!

Our Great Lakes shoreline provides dune habitat for marram grass. Marram actually helps to hold the dune together. It only flowers successfully when it is being continually buried by blowing sand. A great example of marram can be seen on the restored dune across from the Toronto

Island Filtration Plant. This site also has several kinds of prairie grasses.

Then there's the tallest grass around these parts: common reed (or phragmites). It's hard to miss its height and waving flowering heads in damp, wet or inundated ground. It has fast-growing runners that march across the ground and can become very invasive.

Some grasses have very long awns that are distinctive: examples are Canada wild rye with its nodding heads and foxtail barley found along the sides of roads or paths. Timothy, mentioned above, has narrow, cylindrical, very dense flower heads and is seen in meadows, "wasteland," and roadsides.

So, to get to know the grasses I recommend starting with a few that can be recognized without having to look at minute characters, and taking advantage of opportunities to go out with a "grasshound" on a TFN outing. Don't be glumey!

## WEATHER (THIS TIME LAST YEAR)

### February 2012

The mild, dry conditions of January continued right through February with this month being the second-warmest on record (and the meteorological winter December to February likewise being the second warmest such period). Aside from the long-continued warm conditions, there was really no weather of note in Toronto. Globally, arctic air was restricted to Eurasia, with cold weather intruding into western Europe during the first part of the month and continuing into North Africa (snow in Libya!) and the Middle East.

The monthly mean temperature was 0.9° downtown (it was 1.4° in 1998) and -0.4° at Pearson (it was -0.3° in 1998). There was only one brief spell of coldish weather: the 11th – 12th, when it dropped to -12.3° downtown and -13.9° at Pearson. This

relatively weak showing for cold snaps is now the norm for February; the last time it hit -20° downtown in February was in 1995 (2009 at Pearson). The warmest day was 10.9° on the 1st, although high temperatures above 5° were reasonably common.

The winter continued more or less snow-free. The 12.8 cm at Pearson was the lowest since 2002 (7.0 cm). Downtown did slightly better with 15.6 cm. Rainfall wasn't much more abundant. Total precipitation was 39.6 mm downtown and only 26.6 mm at Pearson Airport. Conditions were drier as recently as 2010, however.

Sunshine was slightly below normal, with 102.1 hours recorded (normal 113.2).

## COMING EVENTS

If you plan to attend any of these events, we recommend that you contact the organizing group beforehand to confirm time and place.

### Toronto Entomologists' Association

Sat Feb 23, 1:15 pm. Leaf-mining Insects. Speaker: William D. McIlveen. Room 206, Victoria College. Information: [www.ontarioinsects.org](http://www.ontarioinsects.org).

### Science on Sundays

Feb 3, 3 pm. Rapid Change in the Arctic: Who Wins? Who Loses? Speaker: Peter J. Ewins, D.Phil., Senior Officer, Species, World Wildlife Fund Canada. Macleod Auditorium, Medical Sciences Bldg, University of Toronto, 1 King's College Circle. Information: [www.royalcanadianinstitute.org](http://www.royalcanadianinstitute.org).

### High Park Walking Tours

1st and 3rd Sundays of each month, 10:30 am to noon. Meet at the benches across the road south of Grenadier Restaurant. Information: [walkingtours@highpark.org](mailto:walkingtours@highpark.org) or [www.highpark.org](http://www.highpark.org)

- Feb 3. The Naked Trees of Winter. Leader: Toronto Urban Forestry.
- Feb 17. Do You Know the Park? Leader: Walking Tours Committee.

### Rouge Park Weekly Guided Nature Walks

Explore Rouge Park's trails with a Hike Ontario certified volunteer leader. Information: visit [www.rougepark.com/hike](http://www.rougepark.com/hike), e-mail [hike@rougepark.com](mailto:hike@rougepark.com) or phone 905-713-3184 Monday thru Thursday.

### The Market Gallery

To Mar 2, 2013. The Water Czar: R.C. Harris Works for Toronto, 1912-45. This exhibition will chronicle his unprecedented and unmatched 33-year career as head of the City's works department through archival photos, maps and plans, and by artefacts rarely or never seen before. South St Lawrence Market, 2nd floor, 95 Front St E. Note: gallery closed Sun, Mon, and holidays. Information: [www.toronto.ca/culture/the\\_market\\_gallery/index.htm](http://www.toronto.ca/culture/the_market_gallery/index.htm) or 416-392-7604.

### Harbourfront Centre

Through June 2013. Uncharted Waters: Toronto's Enigmatic Harbour. An outdoor photography exhibition that explores the spectacular environmental and cultural resource that is the harbour of Toronto. Information: [harbourfrontcentre.com/visualarts](http://harbourfrontcentre.com/visualarts)

### Ian Wheal Walks

Sun Feb 3. 11 am. Baldwin-Grossman Village. Meet at southwest corner of University Ave and College St., walk to Kensington Market, end at College St and Spadina Ave. 1 ½ hrs. Free.



**Beaver Dams on German Mills Creek**

photographed by Stephen Kamnitzer (about 1 km south and East of Leslie and Steeles).

Clockwise from top: 1 to 3 taken Sept 18; 4 to 7 taken Dec 4.

Stephen said: “5 shows what looks like a second beaver dam, a little further downstream and built by taking advantage of a large tree that had fallen previously and traversed the stream. 6 shows the lodge.” When Stephen returned on Dec 10, he saw many newly cut down trees plus a clearly visible path where the beavers have cut down trees and dragged them down the river.



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**Publications Mail**  
Registration No. 40049590



Great blue heron photographed by Augusta Takeda, at the pond in Don Valley Brick Works Park, TFN outing, November 11, 2012