



TORONTO FIELD NATURALIST

Number 607 November 2014



Mimico Creek, photographed by Robin Powell, 2001. See page 2.

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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 reports, 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 200kb each*. In the accompanying email include location, date and any interesting story or other information associated with the photograph.

Deadline for submissions for December issue, Nov. 6

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Jenny Bull (co-editor), Vivienne Denton, Karin Fawthrop, Nancy Fredenburg, Elisabeth Gladstone, Judy Marshall, Toshi Oikawa, Wendy Rothwell (co-editor).

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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.

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ON THE COVER



This photograph of Mimico Creek above Lakeshore Road was taken by Robin Powell in 2001.

Part of TFN's Slide Collection, it is one of

400 slides selected to be digitized, and therefore "ready-for-use" in our 21st century environment.

The slide collection has been meticulously sorted and documented by Pleasance Crawford and Helen Juhola. They continue to set down the stories that accompany these images, capturing the history of both the TFN and Toronto's ever-changing parks and other open spaces.



September Monthly Meeting Social: (from left) President Margaret McRae, Vice-president Nancy Dengler, and members Madeleine McDowell and Elisabeth Gladstone. Photo: Ron Dengler

TFN MEETING

Sunday, November 2, 2014

2:30 pm

Origin of Modern Ecosystems

*Jean-Bernard Caron, ROM Paleontologist,
will describe exciting new fossil discoveries from BC*

VISITORS WELCOME!

SOCIAL: 2:00 – 2:30 pm

Room 003, Northrop Frye Hall,

73 Queen's Park Cres East

Immediately southeast of Emmanuel College, south of the Museum subway station exit on the east side of Queen's Park. Enter on either the west or north side of the building. The west entrance is wheelchair accessible.

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

Upcoming TFN Lectures

- | | |
|--------|---|
| Dec 7 | <i>What is Happening with Monarch Butterflies?</i>
Donald Davis, Citizen Scientist |
| Feb 1 | <i>Mosses, Mooses & Mycorrhizas</i>
Terry Carleton, Forest Ecology Professor, U of T |
| Mar 1 | <i>What the *&! Is a Bioblitz?</i>
Shawn Blackburn, Programs Coordinator, Toronto Zoo |
| Apr 12 | <i>Climate Change, Bees & Flowering Plants</i>
James Thomson & Sheila Colla, Conservation Biologists, U of T |
| May 3 | <i>Toronto's Urban Forests</i>
Janet McKay, Executive Director, LEAF |

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 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 HUNTING ANIMALS DOWNTOWN (SCULPTURE) – Nature Arts

Nov 1 Leader: Joanne Doucette

1:00 pm Meet at the northwest corner of Melinda St and Yonge St, 1 block south of King subway station. A 2-hour walking tour of some of the great nature sculptures in the financial district.

Sun LECTURE – Origin of Modern Ecosystems

Nov 2 Speaker: Jean-Bernard Caron, ROM Paleontologist

2:30 pm Room 003, Northrop Frye Hall, 73 Queen's Park Cres E. See page 3.

Thurs WALK THE BELTLINE – Heritage

Nov 6 Leader: Linda McCaffrey

10:00 am Meet at Davisville subway station, southwest corner of Yonge St and Chaplin Cres. Historic railway commissioned in 1892 to serve suburbs in North Toronto. Defunct in 1894. Find out why. A 3-hour loop walk or exit at Eglinton West subway station for a shorter walk.

Sat MORNINGSIDE PARK – Nature Walk

Nov 8 Leader: Orval White

1:30 pm Meet at the first parking lot in Morningside Park for a 2-hour walk. Park entrance is on the west side of Morningside Ave south of Ellesmere Rd and north of Kingston Rd.

Thur. COLONEL SAMUEL SMITH PARK – Birds

Nov 13 Leader: Doug Paton

10:00 am Meet at the southwest corner of Lake Shore Blvd W and Kipling Ave. Bring binoculars. Morning only.

Sat ROSEDALE VALLEY TO BRICK WORKS – History and Nature

Nov 15 Leader: Kayoko Smith

11:00 am Meet at southeast corner of St Clair Ave E and Yonge St. Bring lunch or buy at the Brick Works. A 3-hour non-circular walk ending at Riverdale Park with option to drop out at the Brick Works.

Sun DEER PARK: OLD OAKS, OTHER TREES & LOCAL HISTORY – Lost Rivers

Nov 16 Leader: Janet Langdon

2:00 pm Meet at the southeast corner of Avoca Ave and St Clair Ave E (one block east of St Clair subway station). Celebrate the fine trees in the Deer Park neighbourhood and hear some natural and built history along the way. A joint outing with the Toronto Green Community.

Tues BIRDING ON THE BOARDWALK – Nature Walk

Nov 18 Leader: Joanne Doucette

1:00 pm Meet outside the Beaches library, 2161 Queen St E (#501 streetcar to Lee Ave). Walk will end at Ashbridges Bay.

Sat LESLIE STREET SPIT – Nature Walk and Waterfowl

Nov 22 Leader: Stephen Kamnitzer

10:00 am Meet at the entrance to the spit at the foot of Leslie St. We will spend about 5 hours exploring the spit including the somewhat remote southeast corner. Bring lunch and water and dress warmly. Early dropouts possible.

- Wed **PROSPECT CEMETERY – Nature and Built Heritage**
 Nov 26 Leader: Pleasance Crawford
 1:30 pm Meet at the cemetery's main entrance, 1450 St Clair Ave W, opposite the north end of Lansdowne Ave (#512 St Clair W streetcar or any #47 Lansdowne bus). A circular walk. Bring binoculars.
- Sat **TREES AND ARCHITECTURE – Nature Walk**
 Nov 29 Leader: Richard Partington
 1:00 pm Meet at the southwest corner of Charles St W and Queen's Park. We will explore the adjacent area and note the wealth of interest, arboreal and architectural, ending at the north end of Philosopher's Walk.

Wild Urban Plants (aka weeds)

Two walks in September led by Miles Hearn followed alleyways and went through industrial wastelands, from the Bathurst-Queen area to Fort York and in Thorncliffe Park, where “many spontaneous plants growing with zero maintenance” were discovered. [See review of *Wild Urban Plants* field guide, p12] Among the many plants identified on these outings were over 20 in the Aster family, some of which are illustrated below from TFN's art archive:

Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), common ragweed (*Ambrosia artemisiifolia*), common and great burdock

(*Arctium* spp), mugwort (*Artemisia*), devil's beggar-ticks (*Bidens frondosa*), chicory (*Cichorium intybus*), bull thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*), Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), horseweed (*Conyza canadensis*), daisy fleabane (*Erigeron* sp), galinsoga (*Galinsoga quadriradiata*), prickly lettuce (*Lactuca serriola*), groundsel (*Senecio vulgaris*), common and field sow-thistle (*Sonchus* spp), tansy (*Tanacetum vulgare*), dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*), coltsfoot (*Tussilago farfara*), cocklebur (*Xanthium strumarium*), heath aster (*Symphiotrichum* sp), New England aster (*Symphiotrichum novae-angliae*), paniced aster (*Symphiotrichum lanceolatum*), Canada goldenrod (*Solidago canadensis*)



From top left: ragweed by Joyce Cave, galinsoga by Diana Banville, yarrow by Mary Anne Miller, bull-thistle by Leslie Mirylees, coltsfoot by D.A. White, chicory by Martha Wallace, cocklebur by Eva Davis, groundsel by Joanne Doucette

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I would like to express my personal thanks, as well as those of the board and TFN members, to Margaret McRae for her leadership and dedication during her term as president. Margaret has been a tireless volunteer, most notably as organizer of the TFN's highly successful nature outings program. Margaret herself is an active participant in many of these walks, sharing her considerable knowledge of natural history and photographic expertise. Margaret was the primary organizer behind the TFN's memorable 90th anniversary celebration at Todmorden Mills Papermill Theatre. Margaret is always an energetic, self-reliant, and committed volunteer, and the TFN has benefited from these attributes many times over, including installation of a new office computer at the start of her term, organization of numerous outreach activities, and responses to the many requests that come into the office.

I would also like to express my gratitude to former past presidents and board members Wendy Rothwell and Bob Kortright whose long-term TFN experience and good common sense have been invaluable in keeping the TFN on course. Wendy continues to serve as co-editor of the TFN Newsletter and as TFN bookkeeper, and I hope that Bob will continue to offer his expertise and advice on environmental issues. In addition I would like to add my personal welcome to new board member Joanne Doucette who will lead the TFN Nature Arts group as well as provide her expertise in financial matters.

I joined the TFN in 2005 after retiring from the University of Toronto. Although I continued to work part-time for several years, one of my goals for retirement was to get to know Toronto better. I was drawn to the TFN because of its informative and attractive Newsletter and because of the outings program that introduced me to parts of Toronto that I wouldn't have known about otherwise. Although I had taught botany at U of T for over 35 years, my field of study had been the microscopic structure of plants. I had grown up in a suburb of San Francisco and loved the opportunities for outdoor activity that the California landscape provided, but think that I had not been a close observer of (non-microscopic) nature until moving to Toronto in 1967.

My first early spring here was particularly memorable, with jewel-like warblers perched on bare branches and the forest floor covered with spring flowers seemingly overnight. Participating in TFN outings in recent years has

helped me notice more about the nature around me and inspired me to try to be more observant.

My primary involvement with the TFN thus far has been in organizing the lectures for the monthly meetings. In the spring of 2009, Corinne McDonald and I agreed to take on the task of inviting, scheduling and hosting speakers, investigating venues, and providing lecture reports for the Newsletter. I was amenable to this task as I had been a speaker in January, 1986, talking about a trip to the Galapagos Islands, and remembered the TFN audience in the old Board of Education auditorium on College St. as being a very responsive one. Corinne and I enjoyed working together over these past five years and both appreciated having the other as backup and sounding board. I specialized in introducing the speakers while Corinne took on responsibility for writing the Newsletter reports under a very short deadline.

Over the years, Corinne has written more than 30 monthly meeting reports and has done an outstanding job of conveying the lecture's content and occasional humour, as well as providing links to additional information. TFN board member Lavinia Mohr joined the lectures committee in 2012 and frequent TFN lecturer Peter Money joined this last year, so that the responsibilities for finding new speakers and writing the reports under a short deadline is spread more broadly.

The TFN lectures committee maintains a database of potential speakers, many suggested by TFN members, and continues to invite new ideas for the monthly meeting lectures. While I am on the topic of TFN monthly meetings, I also want to thank long-time volunteer Elizabeth Gladstone who has faithfully kept attendance numbers and looked after TFN membership and publication sales for each monthly meeting.

I am writing this report after a morning walk in Glendon ravine. After heavy rains during the night and early

Continued on page 11



Bay-breasted warbler.
Watercolour by
Cameron Coneybeare

MONTHLY MEETING REPORT

Designing Toronto's Open Spaces: Toronto's Linear Networks

October 5. James Brown and Kim Storey, Brown and Storey Architects

Yonge-Dundas Square, the new Victoria Park TTC station, and the revitalized St George Street are some of the public spaces designed by these two award-winning architects.

Brown and Storey see that pathways in most city parks are meant to get people through them as quickly as possible. They are re-thinking parks and pathways, making them places that can be used both to “get through” and for a variety of other uses. They have a strong interest in multi-use linear networks in urban spaces that link neighbourhoods and build in room for our flora and fauna. This was the idea behind their design for the West Toronto Railpath (WTR). Since its completion in 2009, it has won the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects Regional Honour Award of Excellence 2013, a National Urban Design Award in 2012, and a Toronto Urban Design Award in 2011.

The West Toronto Railpath follows two kilometres of railway line (from Dundas Street West near College Street to just north of Dupont Street) that served Toronto's west end industries in the 19th and 20th centuries. Most people never saw this landscape. Access was forbidden. The old rail corridor is now a linear open space park with a multi-use trail for cycling and walking. It has connections that open up previously dead-end neighbourhood streets, and features vertical connections to major avenues. New vegetation enhances the former abandoned wildness. The WTR design allows the city to keep some of its urban forest and natural habitat while at the same time enabling people in Toronto to discover and use previously inaccessible lands. The 10-meter-wide corridor is planted with native species. Regrettably, they have come to be regarded by some as “weeds” needing to be mowed.

Brown and Storey keep encouraging city and transit officials to think differently about incorporating living elements into urban infrastructure. They have also envisioned “green walls” of vegetation, instead of concrete walls, along the route of the airport express train line, and even did studies on the acoustic properties of a green wall. A green wall would become habitat for birds, clean the air, and create a beautiful edge to a railway. But so far, it has not been accepted.

They have also put forward a grand vision for the Garrison Creek watershed which is not very visible at ground level, but can be clearly seen from above. Their vision is a linear network along its course linking to existing and new parks

with large ponds to collect stormwater. But this remains a vision that has not been adopted.

Brown and Storey are now working on the outside perimeter of the new TTC yard near Leslie Street where they aim to incorporate something of the Leslie Street Spit experience in the hope that people will not only move through it but also spend time there.

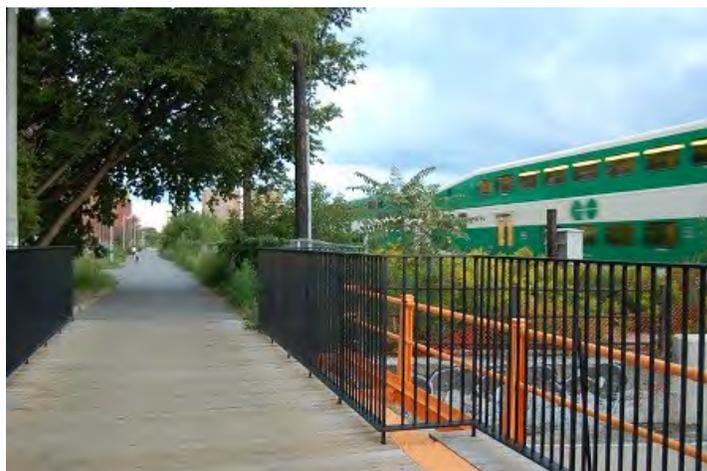
Toronto is fortunate that these two gifted architects have put their touch on some of its public spaces. They suggested that the TFN is a natural ally in some of their efforts to change Toronto's landscapes.

Lavinia Mohr

Top: Typical of many of Brown & Storey's projects, the linear West Toronto Railpath (WTR) is very long and very narrow.

Bottom: Elements of the WTR: train, fence, vegetation, walk/cycle path and, in the distance, links to the neighbourhood's dead-end streets.

Photos: courtesy Brown and Storey Architects



EXTRACTS FROM OUTINGS LEADERS REPORTS

Trees and Architecture, Queen's Park, Aug 21. Leader: Richard Partington. We explored the Queen's Park area south of the legislature, an architecturally significant and enjoyable walk. The smokebush (*Cotinus*) so punningly planted around the Firemens' Memorial has, alas, been ineptly hacked back so as to deprive the shrubs of most of their "smoke".

Lower Humber River, Aug 24. Leader: Mary Taylor. In flower were yellow wood-sorrel, pale jewelweed, enchanter's nightshade, purple loosestrife, evening primrose, common milkweed, wild parsley, golden Alexanders, hedge parsley, Queen Anne's lace, honewort, wild cucumber, Jerusalem artichoke, purple coneflower, black-eyed Susan, Joe-pye-weed, zigzag, Canada and narrow-leaved goldenrods, common dandelion, annual sow-thistle and chickory. We noted mayapple, black raspberry, white mulberry and common buckthorn in fruit. We heard a downy woodpecker, northern flicker, kingfisher, American goldfinch and cedar waxwings, and saw a great egret.

Wild Urban Plants (weeds), Sept 4 and 9. Leader: Miles Hearn. See page 5.

Nature Arts, Wards Island, Sept 6. Leader: Joe Bernaske. In flower were goldenrod, New England aster, bellflower, crown vetch, red clover, Queen Anne's lace, bouncing-bet, jewelweed, daisy fleabane and curly dock. We saw monarch and cabbage white butterflies, damselflies, a painted turtle and a green frog. Birds included blue jay, chickadee, ring-billed gull, mallard and cormorant. The fence at the north end of the pier at the Eastern Gap is broken and needs immediate repair as the pier is crumbling around the edges.

West Deane and Heathercrest Parks, Sept 13. Leader: Brian Yawney. We discussed the recent preservation of the 7-acre Heathercrest Park and the reforestation and wetland enhancement in the park. Inoculation was demonstrated at some failing ash trees. The substantial hydrogeological alteration of Mimico Creek was discussed in the context of the overall watershed profile and a new automatic water monitoring unit was pointed out. Garbage was light given recent volunteer shoreline clean-ups although some egregious examples of drive-by yard waste disposal in a ravine watercourse were seen. Trees observed included abundant heritage red oaks, white oaks, several shagbark and bitternut hickories, American and blue beeches, sugar maple, hackberries and fruiting historic remnant apple orchards. There were scads of squirrels thriving on acorns. We saw several red-tailed hawks and northern flickers and a spray of singing blue jays.

Wards Island, Sept 14. Leader: Jenny Bull. We discussed the origin of the island, and how the original wetlands were developed 100 years ago into the current system of islands and lagoons. We searched out plants mentioned in the TFN booklet *Toronto Islands: Plant Communities and Noteworthy Species* by Steve Varga, particularly fringed gentians and ladies'-tresses in flower. Gerardia was almost over but we found plants covered in masses of seed capsules. Evidence of beavers included many shrubby-looking coppiced cottonwoods, traces of leafy branches pulled over the sand on the beach, and a small channel dug in the wetland behind the dune in an attempt to have a watery passage to the lodge. The wetland is fast filling in with cattails and reed grass, and the wet meadows are becoming shrubby with red-osier dogwood.



Top: Fringed gentians in Taylor Creek Park, September 9. Photo: Joanne Doucette
Bottom: Ladies'-tresses orchids on Wards Island, September 12. Photo: Jenny Bull

We saw several native grasses such as switch-grass, Canada blue-joint, Canada wild rye, drop-seed, and marram (beach) grass; biennials such as wormwood and evening primrose that grow basal leaves the first year and put up flowering stems the second year; sand-bar and woolly-headed (or heart-leaved) willows with roseate and pine-cone galls – both caused by midge species; colonization of new dunes by a rare sedge and silverweed, with its many red runners and tiny plantlets; a quick view of how poison ivy looks in late summer; and various other plants such as gray goldenrod, heath aster, tick-trefoil, common milkweed and Nelson's horsetail. We encountered one garter snake, saw few birds, but did see monarchs migrating and some yellows and whites.



Col Sam Smith Park, Sept 18. Leader: Kerry D. Adams.

It was cloudy and on the cool side at 13°. However for bird lovers it was a very special day, especially in a mixed-use urban park, as we sighted about a dozen species, two of which are uncommon and rare: the least bittern and the sora. They were very co-operative, and gave each of us a chance to observe them at close range (one to two metres distance). No need for binoculars.

E T Seton Park and the Forks of the Don, Sept 20.

Leader: Margaret McRae. We visited the woods in E T Seton Park, both forks of the Don, and the elevated wetlands, and had lunch on the rocks in Taylor Massey Creek parking lot. The bridge over Taylor Massey Creek had been removed and will eventually be built in a new place. We noted also that the dead tree at the West fork has fallen down. We visited the pond below the Science Centre where we saw most of our birds and then walked through the thick pine forest where we saw some bat boxes. We exited through the cattail swamp and dog-strangling vine in the woods, then visited the slope where the river was re-routed a few years ago and saw that the plantings on the slope are flourishing.

Birds and Insects, Edwards Gardens and Wilket Creek, Sept 25. Leader: Carol Sellers.

A beautiful day to walk through the Botanical Gardens. Lots of interesting plants and a good display of pollinator habitat. Several blue jays migrating over while others squawked and gorged on acorns. Several large orb-weaving spiders in their webs. Highlight was the northern walkingstick that climbed Kayoko's back and posed in her hair.

Salmon Spotting and Wild Flower Identification, East Don Parkland, Sept 27. Leader: Phil Goodwin.

There was lots of variety to see among trees and wildflowers and, of course, salmon. There are many good viewing stations for salmon-spotting on this route. We saw 8 Chinook salmon, 5-10 lbs or more. Seven were around the old Cummer bridge. The other one was by itself half way between the old and new Cummer Ave bridges. Plants seen were Jerusalem artichoke, New England, heath and panicked asters, snakeroot, bouncing-bet, common tansy, evening primrose, butter-and-eggs, purple-flowering raspberry, milkweed, dogwood, serviceberry, black locust, tamarack, weeping willow and buckthorn.



Pine-cone and rosette galls caused by midges on willows. Photos: Jenny Bull

"This shy least bittern was hiding in the rushes at Col Sam Smith Park, in mid-September."

Photo: Carole Giangrande

THE SPORE SHOOTERS



Geoglossum rufum (top left)

Helvella lacunosa (top right)

Scarlet cup (bottom)

Although most mushrooms drop their spores, there are many that ripen them in sacs (asci) and then shoot them into the air. They include morels, truffles and finger-shaped fungus.

Their shooting ability can be revealed in a spore print. Instead of the usual wagon-wheel, the spore-shooters leave a halo around the mushroom.

Harvey Medland



PRESIDENT'S REPORT *continued from page 6*

morning, the forest was looking fresh and colourful, with tangles of Virginia creeper high in the canopy a crimson red, red-osier dogwood a burgundy, and individual sugar maples a coral colour. Canada and zig-zag goldenrods, panicked and New England asters, woodland sunflower and white snake-root enlivened the trailside. Calls of blue jays added to the early autumnal feeling. Ron and I were surprised to come across a large snapping turtle at the side of the trail which slowly and deliberately walked to the edge of the West Don River and swam directly across to the opposite shore, despite a very strong current from the recent rains. A little while later, a Cooper's hawk shot across the trail seemingly just above our heads, a reminder of how fortunate we all are to be able to enjoy the remarkable natural heritage of Toronto's parks and ravines.

Nancy Dengler



Virginia creeper, drawn by Diana Banville

FOR READING

***A Feathered River Across the Sky:
The Passenger Pigeon's Flight To Extinction***

By Joel Greenberg

2014. Bloomsbury, 289 pages.

One of the most important books to be published this year is Joel Greenberg's requiem for a species which has now been extinct for a century, the passenger pigeon. As he describes vividly in the introduction, "As late as 1860, one flight near Toronto likely exceeded one billion birds and maybe three billion. Forty years later the species was almost extinct, and by late afternoon on September 1, 1914, it was completely extinct when Martha, the last of her species, died in the Cincinnati Zoo. Human beings destroyed passenger pigeons almost every time they encountered them, and they used almost every imaginable device in the process.

Unrelenting carnage reduced the population to the point where it began its inexorable spiral to obliteration."

Greenberg's requiem's tragedy is made ever more poignant by his account of how the change to more conservationist attitudes by the 1930s, when controls against poaching and forest destruction began to have a real impact, meant the species became extinct just before it could be rescued.

This chronology is made more heart rending, by his description of reasonable but inadequate efforts by the 1890s to rescue passenger pigeons through captive breeding programs.

Greenberg provides us with a dark view of Toronto in the 19th century where thousands participated in the slaughter of passenger pigeons but nobody dreamed of assisting the bird's survival through efforts such as those attempted in the United States through captive breeding, until it was too late to find any birds in the wild. Greenberg cites Margaret Mitchell's 1935 book published by the Royal Ontario Museum to document the slaughter here. She described how for "several days, the city took on the character of a war zone, with the nonstop cacophony of discharging firearms resounding everywhere. Police attempted to

enforce the ordinance banning guns within the city, but it proved impossible given the sheer numbers of transgressors, including those of such high status as city council members, crown lawyers, and even the county sheriff." Astonishingly, under its Small Bird Act of 1887, Ontario specifically exempted the passenger pigeon from birds that could "no longer be killed or molested." Protection here did not come till 1897 when there were precious few wild birds to protect.

Greenberg carefully describes how the destruction of forests by fire and the slaughter of passenger pigeons were horribly synchronized. Trees would be set on fire so that the young squabs would fall to the ground to be collected by hunters. Torch lights would be used in the evening to blind and confuse birds. Entire forests would be set ablaze to kill birds by heat whose fallen corpses

would then be collected for personal use or sale. In Texas, fires burnt thousands of acres of thick stands of juniper forests which were used as breeding grounds. Forested swamps would be drained for the dual purpose of eliminating breeding habitat and creating agricultural land.

In his thoughtful polemic which should become a reference text for many years, the only matter which Greenberg leaves out is any assessment of hoped for efforts to resurrect the passenger pigeon. The means

sought is to use DNA from the collection of dead birds in the Royal Ontario Museum to be replicated and spliced into the genome of its most closely related relative, the Peruvian band-tailed pigeon. While Greenberg may not be hopeful about this prospect which is estimated by its supporters to take eight to nine years to reach success, it is worthy of public discussion. One of the reasons these efforts may succeed is that, as Greenberg points out, the once-destroyed forests of the Great Lakes region needed for the birds habitat, have been, to a remarkable extent, themselves been brought back to life.

John Bacher



Passenger pigeon exhibit at ROM, photographed by Mary Lou Bacher

Wild Urban Plants of the Northeast A Field Guide

By Peter del Tredici

2010. Cornell University Press, 392 pages

This is the book that Miles Hearn recommended when he lead two wild urban walks in September (see page 5). It is primarily a reference book with photographs and descriptions of the multitude of plants that grow in our cities without any help from us – usually called weeds. Tredici calls them spontaneous urban plants.

Of special interest is the introduction, which challenges our “native = good, introduced = bad” assumptions. He says the notion that every city has a native flora that can be restored is absurd, given that humans have totally transformed the land on which cities have been built. He’s not talking about our carefully nurtured wetlands and protected natural areas. Rather, his interest is in the seldom-noticed plants that grow in cracks in the sidewalk, in neglected patches between buildings and roads and railway lines and in vacant industrial spaces that have been abandoned and not yet redeveloped.

Even *Ailanthus altissima*, or tree-of-heaven, which most of us love to hate, is given a friendly word: “*Ailanthus* is just as good at sequestering carbon and creating shade as our beloved native species or showy horticultural selections. Indeed, if one were to ask whether our cities would be better or worse without *Ailanthus*, the answer would clearly be the latter, given that the tree typically grows where few other plants can survive.”

As a field guide, this book is a wonderful aid to identification of the plants that grow uninvited all over the city, and it has lots of extra information, including the ecological function that each plant provides. Did you know that prickly lettuce (*Lactuca serriola*), lambsquarters (*Chenopodium album*) and mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris*) help clean up contaminated sites by selectively storing heavy metals such as cadmium, lead, copper, zinc, chromium and nickel in their tissues?

Jane Cluver

From Canadian Tree Tours website (canadiantreetours.org/species-pages/Tree-of-heaven,_Chinese_sumac.html)

“Tree-of-heaven is a hardy, fast-growing species capable of thriving in the most inhospitable conditions. It has reportedly been able to grow from root sprouts up to 46m (150') away from the parent tree. It can take root in cracks in the pavement and can withstand pollution, drought, and poor soil. It also secretes toxic compounds that suppress competing plant growth.”

Pocket Guide to Butterflies of Southern and Eastern Ontario

By Rick Cvasin

2014

Carol Sellers, TFN’s insect expert, writes: “I have this and find it very useful for TFN outings. It weighs nothing and has excellent photos. You can find information about ordering it at www.ontariobutterflies.ca/pocket-guides/southern-eastern-ontario” The guide is a laminated accordion-fold reference covering 110 species with 245 images from the field.



American lady photographed by Lynn Pady,
Ashbridges Bay, September 16.



Ailanthus altissima (tree-of-heaven)
Photographed by Jenny Bull

The following four books are recommended by Helen Juhola:

The Monkey's Voyage

By Alan de Queroz, 2014.

The story of how plants and animals got to where they are in the world (and it wasn't on floating continents).

White Beech: The Rainforest Years

By Germaine Greer, 2013.

Surprise! Germaine Greer and her sister are botanists, and the "white beech" is *not* a beech! This is an amazing story about Australia's many plant species and how many invasive introduced species are there causing problems.

Along the Shore: Rediscovering Toronto's Waterfront Heritage

By M. Jane Fairburn, 2013.

The illustrations alone are fascinating, but it's a good read about the natural history and human history of Toronto's shoreline from the Rouge to Etobicoke.

On Paper: The everything of its 2000-year-old history

By Nicholas A. Basbanes, 2013.

Another good read, though not directly about natural history. In spite of all the new technology, paper is still *the* way to keep records. This book tells us *everything* there is to know about paper.

Reclaiming the Don: An Environmental History of Toronto's Don Valley

By Jennifer L. Bonnell

2014. University of Toronto Press, 316 pages

Extract from the publisher's website (www.utppublishing.com/):

"A small river in a big city, the Don River Valley is often overlooked when it comes to explaining Toronto's growth. With *Reclaiming the Don*, Jennifer L. Bonnell unearths the missing story of the relationship between the river, the valley, and the city, from the establishment of the town of York in the 1790s to the construction of the Don Valley Parkway in the 1960s ... Exploring the interrelationship between urban residents and their natural environments, she shows how successive generations of Toronto residents have imagined the Don as an opportunity, a refuge, and an eyesore. Combining extensive research with in-depth analysis, *Reclaiming the Don* will be a must-read for anyone interested in the history of Toronto's development."

**"WALK THE DON"
trail guides**

"Walk the Don" is a series of self-guided interpretive walks located throughout the watershed. There are currently eight guided walks with more to come. All walks use prepared trails and are suitable for family use. Download at www.discoverthedon.ca/walkthedon

FOR READING *continued on next page*

No cicadas heard?

A sad result of aging

Diminished hearing!

Haiku by Helen Juhola, summer 2014



Cicada photographed by Jenny Bull

FOR READING continued

Siege Of Bitterns

By Steve Burrows,
Dundurn, 352 pages, \$15.99

Described by Dundurn as a “birder murder mystery,” this is a terrific new book that I recommend to anyone with an interest in our feathered friends! Terrific read. Fly out to your nearest book seller or library to pick up a copy and then sit back and enjoy. The perfect read from start to finish.

Lynn Pady

Walden Warming

By Richard B Primack
2014. University of Chicago Press, 264 pages.

Extracted from the publisher’s website
(press.uchicago.edu/):

“In *Walden Warming*, Richard B. Primack uses Henry David Thoreau’s meticulous notes on the natural history of Concord, Mass, to track the effects of a warming climate on Concord’s plants and animals.

Many of the wildflower species that Thoreau observed have declined in abundance or have disappeared from Concord, and warming temperatures have altered other aspects such as the dates when ice departs from Walden Pond in late winter and birds arrive in spring. The author shows that climate change is already here, and it is affecting not just Walden Pond but many other places in Concord and the surrounding region.”



Least bittern in Col. Sam Smith Park, September 8
Photo: Lynn Pady

The Double-Crested Cormorant: Plight of a Feathered Pariah

By Linda R. Wires
Illustrated by Barry Kent Mackay
2014. Yale University Press, 368 pages

This book was launched at the TRCA’s Annual Spring Bird Festival this May on the Leslie St Spit, home to 12,000 nesting pairs of double-crested cormorants, the largest colony on the Great Lakes.

The book describes the “cultural, historical, scientific, and political elements of the cormorant’s story.” There is a review at animalallianceoffice.blogspot.ca/2014/04/book-review-double-crested-cormorant.html



Double-crested cormorants on the Leslie Street Spit, Sept. 5, 1993. Drawing by Diana Banville

TORONTO WILDFLOWERS: ST. JOHN'S-WORTS

The genus *Hypericum* (St. John's-wort) has been assigned to the Clusiaceae (mangosteen family), formerly known as the Guttiferae. Its former family, Hypericaceae, is now considered to be a tribe (Hypericeae) of a subfamily within the Clusiaceae family. This family includes 36 genera and about 1600 species. The edible mangosteen, reputedly Queen Victoria's favourite fruit, belongs to a different subfamily. *Hypericum* fruits are very different; they are, alas, dry capsules.

The TFN's *Vascular Plants of Metropolitan Toronto* (1994, 2nd ed.) lists two native *Hypericum* species, both locally rare, and two introduced species. I have not found one of the native species, the so-called larger Canada St. John's-wort (*H. majus*), actually a small flowered species. It was only recorded by the TFN on the Toronto Islands. The second species is great St. John's-wort (*H. pyramidatum*) reported from the eastern branch of the Humber (Rowntree Mills), the West Don, and the Rouge Valley. My image, taken in mid-July, is from the west side of the lower Rouge. Here *H. pyramidatum* occurs in a small wet meadow/clearing. Plants are up to nearly 2 m tall and have terminal flowers up to 5 cm across. This species has also been reported in Quebec and the northern half of the eastern US.

The introduced species are *H. perforatum* (common St. John's-wort) and *H. prolificum* (shrubby St. John's-wort), the latter planted in High Park. *H. perforatum* is widespread and common in cleared areas in Toronto. Its flowers, about 20 mm across, form terminal clusters on branched stems up to 80 cm tall. It can bloom at any time from June until September. In the wild *H. prolificum*, also a summer blooming species, can be up to 2 m tall. It has about 20 mm wide flowers. Its native range extends from Ontario through most of the eastern half of the US.

Neither *H. pyramidatum* nor *H. prolificum* are included in *The ROM Field Guide to Wildflowers of Ontario* (2004), which does not include shrubby plants. Finding good images requires some searching. It is hoped this article will help in identifying *H. pyramidatum* in the wild and let you spot *H. prolificum* on your visits to High Park. New occurrences or confirmation of reported occurrences of *H. pyramidatum* should be reported to the TFN.

Peter Money



Hypericum pyramidatum (below),
H. perforatum (above),
H. prolificum (left)

Photos: Peter Money



KEEPING IN TOUCH

Here are a couple of house finches, very loyal to my backyard now that I've switched from black oil to safflower in the Squirrel Buster, leaving them with so little competition (only cardinals on the feeder, and mourning doves cleaning up underneath).

Skip Shand



Sunday, September 14th, was all-around gorgeous. Hundreds of monarch butterflies visited Rosetta McClain Gardens, the Toronto Islands, and other spots near the lakeshore, stopping to feed as they drifted west. But all was not as it seemed: Watching monarchs feasting on Canada goldenrod and New England aster near the Snake Island bridge, I photographed one that was neither a monarch nor a viceroy but an American lady. Good thing I looked twice!

Pleasance Crawford

I spent the morning of September 14 at Centre Island with my 7-year old grandson. The wind was blowing steadily out of the east that day. My grandson noticed a monarch flying westward. Then another! Then another! He became so excited, he continued to count for several hours as the monarchs moved westward in a steady stream. With a little help, he got to 429!

Once home, I checked the Journey North website and found sightings for the previous few days that included a count of 800 from a hawk-watcher at Rosetta McClain Gardens and more than 1000 one day on the Etobicoke lakeshore. Reporting this to my grandson, he was thrilled again to have been one of many witnesses of this amazing phenomenon.

Jenny Bull



Ed.: An article by Margaret Bream in the *Toronto Star* (Renewed reign of the monarch, Sept 21) reported that she had found roosting monarchs on Sept 14 in cottonwoods on the Leslie St Spit, following a tip from a spit visitor.

Ed.: Ken Cook brought to our attention a remarkable radar map showing a shape like a butterfly! Turns out it wasn't a weird thunderstorm or other weather-related phenomenon. It was likely thousands of migrating monarchs half way between Canada and Mexico! See the butterfly radar map at www.mnn.com/earth-matters/animals/blogs/weird-cloud-on-radar-maps-wasnt-caused-by-weather

FROM THE ARCHIVES

From TFN #488, December 1999 Extracted from the President's Report

Even as a child, I loved “the woods.” I grew up in York Mills, or Hogg’s Hollow, where the West Don River crosses under Yonge Street and winds southeastward past Rosedale Golf Club and Sunnybrook Farm (now Park) to join the East Don at the Forks and flow on into Lake Ontario. Donwoods Drive was a steep hill at the end of our street which, if you followed it through the valley, ended as a path leading through a wooded area near the river, a place of mystery and adventure, sometimes a place of sanctuary and peace. I had to cross the West Don on my way to school. Just beyond the bridge, in the ’30s and early ’40s, the road led between a stable (where one could occasionally see a blacksmith at work) and an orchard. We used to swim in the river on hot days in the summer and sometimes skate on the ice on the coldest winter days. I also remember driving over that bridge through a raging torrent on the night of Hurricane Hazel in 1954.

But enough reminiscing. As we all know, the Don became polluted while Toronto grew to be Canada’s largest city. Storm waters whooshed into it, tearing at the banks with overflow from vast housing developments, carrying industrial and road pollutants and, at times, household waste water because of “combined sewer overflow.” The pristine stream teeming with fish in a lush valley full of wildlife, which had drawn aboriginals to the height of land above present-day Riverdale Park East as long ago as 3000 BC, and the Simcoes to build their summer house, Castle Frank, on the western ridge in the 1790s, had become too filthy for swimming. It no longer freezes over because of pollution, especially road salt.

Nearly 12 years ago, I joined TFN and began to understand the monumental efforts that had been made over the years by many dedicated individuals and groups to protect and restore the ravines, forests, meadows and wildlife that remained within the Toronto area. Some projects have failed, some have brought only partial success, but we continue to guard our precious country in the city.

Celebrating its tenth anniversary in September of this year, the Task Force to Bring Back the Don hosted Bring Back the Don Day. All were invited to “see the Don by water, by rail and by land.” Families were especially welcomed for the boat tour of Toronto’s inner harbour, offering a look at the hoped-for plan to restore a natural course for the river as it enters the bay, and also for the chartered GO train trip up the valley from Union Station to Oriole. I was delighted to

assist with this trip led by John Wilson of Bring Back the Don. The train travelled slowly so that all could follow the running historical commentary provided by Mike Filey, an excellent communicator and journalist. John Wilson shared the honours with comments on various reclamation sites such as Chester Springs Marsh and Charles Sauriol Conservation Reserve, and I was able to join them with a few naturalist’s observations.

If you have never hiked the Don Valley, I would urge you to join any of our walks that explore wildflower meadows, deep woods, river and stream banks, cattail marshes, and ponds where you may glimpse a fox, a Phoebe (bird that is), butterflies and damselflies, a host of emerging toadlets, or an entire chorus of frogs peering from a cloak of bright green duckweed. Your leader will perhaps also point out some of the problems exacerbated by the urban environment: fragmentation of natural areas and proliferation of such invasive species as garlic mustard, Japanese knotweed, dog-strangling vine, purple loosestrife and phragmites.

At a reception in the City Hall rotunda on October 26th, the Toronto Field Naturalists, along with many other organizations and individuals, were recognized for “outstanding efforts...in promoting a healthy and green environment within the City.” There are many groups who share our mission to restore and preserve our river valleys, including the Don. We need to work together and keep our elected officials and staff alert to the needs and benefits of Toronto the Green.

Phoebe Cleverley

Ed: see new book *Reclaiming the Don*, page 14



Bestview Park, East Don, drawn by Diana Banville, 1992

IN THE NEWS

Climate change pushing birds to extinction

Extracted from a press release at naturecanada.ca/ (click on News)

Climate change seriously threatens bird species across Canada and the United States according to a new report released in September by Nature Canada's partner organization, the Audubon Society. The report uses climate models based on hundreds of thousands of citizen-science observations to predict how birds in the U.S. and Canada will react to climate change, and concludes that half of all bird species studied could see their populations drop dramatically by 2050.

Habitat disruption brought on by climate change is one of the main factors pushing bird populations into areas to which they are not adapted and climate change is happening so fast that many species simply cannot keep up. A bird might adapt to a drier climate, but the insects it eats might not. Or, a bird might fare better than projected if, say, a predator or competitor currently limiting its range declines.

"Canada needs to prepare itself for an influx of climate refugee species displaced by warmer temperatures, habitat loss, drought or extreme weather," said Stephen Hazell, Nature Canada's Interim Executive Director. "Iconic species like the Chestnut-collared Longspur and the Ivory Gull need our support right now to ensure that they have the habitat they need to survive next year but also in coming years due to worsening climate change."

The report echoes the findings of the State of Canada's Birds 2012 report [see TFN 590-15], produced in partnership with Nature Canada, showing that many bird species are declining dramatically in Canada. To help

mitigate the impact of climate change, Nature Canada and provincial affiliates are working with local field naturalist groups and First Nations communities to steward and conserve the Important Bird Areas (IBAs) in Canada.

There are also plans for a new citizen science project, in which the public will see how the predictions for 2020 compare with what's actually happening on the ground. Those findings will feed into updated models, and help direct conservation.

View the report at climate.audubon.org/

People's Climate March

On September 21, an estimated 300,000 to 400,000 people marched for action on climate change in New York City, including the UN Secretary General. Over 2500 events were held the same day in 166 countries. An estimated 3000 people marched in Toronto, 5000 people in Montreal, and 40,000 in London, UK.

Recent reports say that August 2014 was the warmest month on record and that global CO2 emissions are higher than ever.

The march was held two days before a UN Summit on Climate attended by 120 world leaders. Statements made at the summit outlining intentions for future climate action can be viewed at: www.un.org/climatechange/summit/

WEATHER (THIS TIME LAST YEAR)

November 2013

November was a variable, dryish, but overall cold month. There were ups and downs with mild weather as late as the 17th, but the last week or so was emphatically cold with temperatures as low as -12.8° on the 24th (Pearson Airport). That day had a high of only -5°. Although there wasn't very much snow (2.4 cm downtown as opposed to a normal of about 9 cm and 4.8 cm at the airport), the impression was given of an early start to serious winter weather. It proved indeed to be a taste of things to come

for the coming winter.

The monthly stats also included a mean monthly temperature of 2.1° at Pearson Airport: 1.7° below normal and the coldest since 1996 (which averaged 0.9°), a monthly maximum of 16.0° on the 6th and total precipitation about half the usual or even slightly less (32.3 mm downtown and 36.2 mm at Pearson).

Gavin Miller

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.

Jim Baillie Memorial Bird Walks – Toronto Ornithological Club

Aimed at the intermediate birder, but beginners also welcome. Free to the public. Information: www.torontobirding.ca.

Sat Nov 29, 8:30 am to afternoon. West Toronto Lakeshore and Beyond - Waterfowl and winter birding. Leader: Pat Hodgson. Meet at the parking lot at Humber Bay Park East (located off Park Lawn Rd south of Lake Shore Blvd W).

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: 416-392-6916 or walkingtours@highpark.org or www.highpark.org.

- Nov 2. Geological Wonders and Origins, Frank Remiz
- Nov 16. Art of the Park, Grace Petrucci.

Rouge Park Weekly Guided Nature Walks

Explore Rouge Park's trails with a Hike Ontario certified volunteer leader.

Information: visit www.rougepark.com/hike, e-mail hike@rougepark.com or phone 905-713-3184, Monday thru Thursday.

The Market Gallery

To Jan 17, 2015. South St Lawrence Market, 2nd floor, 95 Front St E. Free. Toronto does her Bit – The Home Front in the Great War. Gallery closed Sun, Mon and holidays. Information: www.facebook.com/TorontoMarketGallery

Harbourfront Centre

To June 2015. No Flat City, Toronto's Incomparable Terrain. A photographic exhibit of the GTA landscape.

Toronto Entomological Association

- Nov 21, 8 pm. Get Wild! ROM Field Guide to the Butterflies of Ontario. All four co-authors will be present to sign books at this special Friday Night Live (a ROM pub night). Adults only. \$12 ROM entry fee.
- Nov 22, 1:30 pm. The Importance of Insect Conservation. Lecturer: Georges Brossard. ROM Theatre. Free. Pre-registration required at www.rom.on.ca/en/activities-programs/events-calendar/entomology-a-social-science

Lost Rivers Walks

Information: www.lostrivers.ca. Walking tours limited to 20 participants. Pre-registration is not required but, to ensure a spot on the tour, please email in advance to info@labpacestudio.com.

Royal Canadian Institute for the Advancement of Science (RCI) – Fall Lectures

Sundays at 2 pm (doors open at 1:15) unless otherwise noted. Macleod Auditorium, Medical Sciences Building, University of Toronto, 1 King's College Circle (nearest subway Queen's Park Station)

- Nov 2. Mining Environment Issues Move North. Speaker: Graeme Spiers, Chair Environmental Monitoring, Director, Elliot Lake Research Field Station, Vale Living with Lakes Watershed Centre, Depts of Chemistry, Earth Science and Biology, Laurentian U.
- Nov 9. How to Feed 9 Billion in 2050. Speaker: David Jenkins, Depts of Nutritional Sciences and Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, UofT; Director of Clinical Nutrition and Risk Factor Modification Center, Li Ka Shing Knowledge Inst of St. Michael's Hospital
- Nov 16, 3:00 – 4:00 pm: FUN FOR KIDS, Speaker Russell Zeid, RCI Council Member. An hour of family fun and exciting science demonstrations for kids with Russell the RCI's mad scientist. Free.
- Nov 23. How Does the Evolutionary Ecology of Cannabis Influence Your Health? Speaker: Lesley Campbell, Dept of Chemistry and Biology, Ryerson U.
- Nov 27, 7:30 – 8:30 pm: Getting "Function" Right: Why Genomics Needs Philosophy. Speaker: W. Ford Doolittle, Dept of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, Dalhousie U.
- Nov 30. Therapeutic Immunization: A Novel Approach to Treat HIV-1-Infected Patients. Speaker: Arnaldo Caruso, Dept of Molecular and Translational Medicine, Section of Microbiology, U of Brescia Medical School, Italy.

Ian Wheal Walks

Sun Nov 23, 2 pm. Memorial military walk: Horse Drovers Trail to Tory Glen, Scarlett Plains (estate of Reeve George Symes) Meet at the northeast corner of Dundas St W and Runnymede Rd.

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Monarch migration, Ashbridges Bay, September 16. Photo: L Pady