



Since 1923

TORONTO FIELD NATURALIST

Number 621 September 2016



Wild blue lupines in High Park, May 31, 2016. Photo by Miriam Garfinkle

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Mission Statement:

Toronto Field Naturalists connects people with nature in the Toronto area. We help people understand, enjoy, and protect Toronto's green spaces and the species that inhabit them.

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IT'S YOUR NEWSLETTER!

We welcome contributions of original writing (between 20 and 500 words) of observations on nature, especially in the Toronto area. 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). In the accompanying email include location, date and any interesting story or other information associated with the photograph.

Deadline for submissions for October issue: Sept. 1

NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

Jenny Bull, Vivienne Denton, Karin Fawthrop, Nancy Fredenburg, Elisabeth Gladstone, Judy Marshall, Lynn Miller, Toshi Oikawa, Jennifer Smith, Wendy Rothwell (editor).

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YOUTH (under 26)	\$10	\$20
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SINGLE	\$40	\$50
SENIOR FAMILY (65+)	\$40	\$50
FAMILY	\$50	\$60

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

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TFN is on Twitter and Facebook! Got something interesting to share? We'd love to get your photos and insights on TFN activities, Toronto nature events and interesting nature news. Just email media@torontofieldnaturalists.org and be sure to include what your photo is and where it was taken.

To read posts, go to the website torontofieldnaturalists.org and click on Twitter or Facebook.



Photo: Ken Sproule

Tagging Monarchs

TFN member Terry Whittam tags monarch butterflies at Rosetta McClain Gardens during migration. He is there most good weather days from 10 am to 3 pm, August 15 to October 15.

You are welcome to drop by to watch the process.

TFN MEETING

Sunday September 11, 2:30 pm

Five Great Extinctions – Are We Facing Another?

*Kevin Seymour, Assistant Curator in Vertebrate Palaeontology, ROM,
will describe past mass-extinction events and
signs of a possible man-made future extinction.*

VISITORS WELCOME!

SOCIAL: 2:00 – 2:30 pm

Northrop Frye Hall, 73 Queen's Park Cres E, Room 003

Immediately south of Emmanuel College, south of the Museum subway station exit on the east side of Queen's Park. Enter on 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 LECTURES

October 2	Plant Exploration: The Search for Novel Floral Diversity. Spencer Barrett, U of T
November 6	Toronto's Urban Bird Programs, Emily Rondel, Bird Studies Canada
December 4	Wolf & Coyote Behaviour, Dennis Murray, Trent University.

Is Lyme Disease increasing in Southern Ontario?

A public talk by Dr. Andrew Peregrine,
Ontario Veterinary College, University of Guelph

Presented by Toronto Ornithological Club (www.torontobirding.ca)

Monday September 12, 7:30 pm.
Burgundy Room, North York Memorial Hall, 5110 Yonge St.

If you like birding in the woods and fields,
this is a speaker you don't want to miss.

TFN OUTINGS

- TFN events are conducted by unpaid volunteers.
- TFN 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.
- *Please thoroughly clean your footwear before each outing to avoid spreading invasive seeds.*

We recommend you check with the TTC for any schedule disruptions which may occur most weekends this fall. Allow extra time if necessary.

- Sat
Sept 3
1:30 pm **LAKE IROQUOIS SHORELINE – Nature Walk**
Leader: Alexander Cappell. Meet at the southeast corner of Bayview Ave and Moore Ave for a 2 1/2 hour linear walk, flat with some steep slopes and some stairs. We'll get views of Toronto looking south from the shoreline cliff-top, cross the ravines of Yellow Creek and Mud Creek, visit the Rosehill Reservoir and finish at a coffee shop near Yonge and St Clair.
- Mon
Sept 5
10:00 am **ASHBRIDGE'S BAY AND EASTERN BEACHES – Toilet to Tap**
Leader: Bob Kortright. Meet at the southeast corner of Eastern Ave and Coxwell Ave. End at Queen St E and Neville Park Blvd.
- Wed
Sept 7
10:30 am **SMALL'S CREEK AND SMALL'S POND – Nature and Heritage**
Leader: Joanne Doucette. Meet at Fairford Parkette at the southwest corner of Upper Gerrard St E and Fairford Ave for a linear walk on mostly unpaved and uneven surfaces with gentle slopes, some steep slopes and stairs. Small's Creek flows through Williamson's Ravine and disappears underground into the storm sewer system. A series of parks lies over the creek and Small's Pond. The area is also the site of a haunted house which became home to the Toronto Golf Club.
- Sat
Sept 10
1:30 pm **BOTANY HILL – Nature Walk**
Leader: Charles Chaffey. Meet at the Curran Hall Community Centre, 277 Orton Park Rd (95A or B bus east from Ellesmere RT to Orton Park Rd; walk south 0.8 km). A circular walk on mostly unpaved surfaces and gentle slopes. No stairs or washrooms. We will look at general nature, particularly asters and goldenrods, on the west side of Highland Creek opposite Morningside Park. Bring binoculars.
- Sun
Sept 11
2:30 pm **LECTURE: Five Great Extinctions – are we facing another?**
Speaker: Kevin Seymour, Assistant Curator, Department of Natural History, Royal Ontario Museum
Meet at Northrop Frye Hall, 73 Queen's Park Cres E, Room 003. See details on page 3.
- Thurs
Sept 15
9:30 am **TORONTO ISLAND – Nature Walk**
Leader: Jenny Bull. Take the 9:45 am ferry from the docks at the bottom of Bay St to Wards Island and meet the leader at the Wards Island ferry dock at 10:15 am. (Ferry will go to Centre Island first.) Ferry tickets can now be bought online from the City of Toronto website. Lunch optional.
- Sat
Sept 17
10:30 am **HUMBER ARBORETUM – Plants, Insects and Birds**
Leaders: Ray Bielaskie and Jim Graham, Master Gardeners. Meet at the entrance to the arboretum, near the green bubble dome across from parking lot #1 at Humber College for a circular walk on mainly level ground with some small hills. Washrooms at beginning of walk. Check 191 bus Hwy 27 Rocket for express service. Bring lunch if you wish.
- Sun
Sept 18
2:00 pm **TAYLOR'S TODMORDEN MILLS AT THE DON RIVER FALL LINE – Lost Rivers**
Leaders: Dr. John Wilson, Don River advocate, and friends. Meet at Todmorden Mills Museum (67 Pottery Road, just west of Broadview) for a linear walk ending at Beechwood Dr and O'Connor Drive. We will search for lost manufactured watercourses, the mill races of the Lower (Todmorden) Mills and Middle Mill, along with other hidden remains of the industrial heritage that shaped the Don River Valley. Paved trails with some uneven ground. Washrooms at starting location only. A joint outing with Toronto Green Community.

- Tues Sept 20 11:00 am **MOUNT PLEASANT CEMETERY – Trees for Beginners**
Leader: Roger Powley. Meet at the northwest gate entrance, 1791-1815 Yonge St, at the Kay Gardner Beltline Bridge, 300 metres south of Davisville subway station. A circular walk on mostly paved surfaces, mainly flat with some stairs. Learn to identify some of the numerous native and exotic trees that characterize Mount Pleasant Cemetery. Bring lunch and a field guide.
- Sat Sept 24 9:00 am **ALDERVILLE BLACK OAK SAVANNA – 9th Annual Prairie Day. Car-pooling.**
Leader: Joanne Doucette. Leaving Toronto 9 am, back in Toronto around 6 pm. Join us to enjoy a celebration of the remnant tallgrass prairie and black oak savanna ecosystems. A family-friendly event that includes guided hikes, workshops, entertainment, food and fun! Admission by donation plus car-pooling. This is a 1¼ hour drive from Toronto. Space is limited, so reserve by September 16. Leave a message at 647-236-4980.
- Sat Sept 24 1:00 pm **BRICK WORKS AND MOORE PARK – Family walk**
Leader: Jason Ramsay-Brown. Kids, parents, caregivers and friends, come and join the TFN as we explore Brick Works Park and Moore Park ravine. Learn about some of the amazing animals and plants that call the Don Valley home, discover history told by rocks and water, and so much more. We'll meet at the Weston Family Quarry Garden sign by the east pond (behind the Evergreen Farmers Market). Roughly 2km, ending at Moore Ave near Bayview Ave. Some steep hills and uneven ground. Bring water, camera, and your curiosity! Take Evergreen's shuttle from Broadview subway station, or bus #28 Bayview South from Davisville subway station (which can also be used to return to the Brick Works following the walk if you don't wish to walk back).
- Sun Sept 25 1:30 pm **HIGH PARK – Asters, Goldenrods and Nature in Fall**
Leader: Mary Taylor. Meet at the park entrance on the south side of Bloor St W (at the traffic lights) just south of the High Park subway station. This park has exceptional habitats and many rare and interesting species, despite being heavily used.
- Wed Sept 28 10:00 am **HUMBER RIVER SOUTH – Birds**
Leader: Doug Paton. Meet at Old Mill subway station for a linear walk ending near the lake at the Humber Loop. Bring binoculars. Morning only.

THANK YOU TO TFN OUTREACH VOLUNTEERS

Thank you to all TFN members who participated in outreach events in 2016. This year has been our busiest ever for participating in community events which have included: the OISE EcoFair in January; the Toronto Botanical Garden's Get the Jump on Spring in February; Park People's Park Summit in March; Scarborough Seedy Saturday in April; and five events in May: Thorncliffe Seedy Sunday; Leslie St Spit Bird Festival; Toronto Zoo's International Migratory Bird Day; LEAF's "Let It Bee;" and Colonel Sam Smith Park Bird Festival. In June volunteers staffed a TFN table at the Leslieville Tree Festival and in August at the Leslie St Spit Butterfly Festival.

TFN volunteers who represented us this year included: Charles Bruce-Thompson, Jane Cluver, Nancy Dengler, Ron Dengler, Sally Evans, Karin Fawthrop, Claudius Fehr, Elisabeth Gladstone, Rachel Gottesman, Stephen Kamnitzer, Bob Kortright, Anne Leon, Lloyd Mayeda, Linda McCaffrey, Frances Money, Peter Money, Richard Pathak, Jason Ramsay-Brown, Jennifer Smith, Ken Sproule, Orval White, and Fannie Wong. TFN board member Stephen Kamnitzer has coordinated all these events, including handling registrations, recruiting



TFN booth at Col Sam Smith Park Bird Festival.
 Photo: Ron Dengler

volunteers, and transporting display materials.

Many of you may have noticed our new display materials, including new bird nests donated by former TFN president Pinky Franklin. TFN board member Jennifer Smith obtained the necessary permits for the nests, confirmed identifications with ROM ornithologist Mark Peck, provided new photographic images, and added imaginative packaging and new information about our bird and butterfly displays. Many outreach volunteers

enhanced the TFN displays with their own collections and, when I've attended events, I've enjoyed watching visitors to our table try to guess the identity of these mystery objects.

The TFN also has provided nature walk leaders for The Fairview Resident Action Group/ Working Women Community Centre "Train the Trainer" project. In addition, TFN members gave several public talks: Margaret McRae spoke to the Children's Breakfast Club on monarch butterflies, Charles Bruce-Thompson spoke at the Heritage York Annual General Meeting on TFN programs and history, and I spoke to the Forward Baptist Church on connecting with nature in Toronto.

Nancy Dengler

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

First, I would like to thank all TFN members who renewed their memberships this summer and to extend a warm welcome to our new members. While I am one of those who chose a mailed copy of the Newsletter, I know that I also will refer to my online version for walks and other listings and will make good use of both versions. I would like to thank TFN webmaster Lynn Miller and Finances Working Group chair Anne Powell for making the online Newsletter finally happen.

Shortly after the publication of our May Newsletter, the Province announced its proposed changes to the Greenbelt Plan, which include expansion of the Greenbelt into Etobicoke Creek, Humber River, Don River and Rouge River and 24 other river valleys and wetlands – excellent news for TFN members. We have the opportunity to urge even stronger protection of vulnerable water supplies and natural areas, support for local agriculture, and for legislation that will halt urban sprawl outwards by signing on to the letter at www.growourgreenbelt.ca/action, a website supported by Ontario Nature and other environmentally-conscious organizations.

In June, the City of Toronto released its *Toronto Ravine Strategy – Draft Principles and Actions*, written in response to projections that the population of downtown Toronto will double in the next 25 years and the anticipated impacts of climate change. As members of the TFN well know, Toronto's ravine system provides both habitat for native plants and animals and a welcome escape for people from the pressures of urban life. While the draft presents "protecting these green spaces by maintaining and improving their ecological health" as an over-arching goal, our representative to the Ravine Strategy Advisory Group, Jason Ramsay-Brown, expressed concerns that wording needs to be much stronger to truly prioritize protection of nature. The TFN supported the proposal made by Councillor Gord Perks at the June meeting of the Parks and Environment Committee to include a plan for

establishing and monitoring ecosystem health in the final document. The vulnerable state of the Mud/Yellow Creek ravine is emblematic of the issues faced (see page 14).

Recently, the TFN partnered with other nature organizations in Toronto to form ProtectNatureTO, an informal coalition having the goal to protect wildlife and preserve and enhance remaining natural areas in the city by advocating for responsible use. We are concerned with the impacts of invasive plants and overuse by walkers, dogs

and bikers in our ravines and other green spaces. The coalition started by publishing a brochure and fact sheet on responsible dog-walking and the impacts of dogs on wildlife. Copies of both are available from the TFN office.

I am grateful to TFN member Anne Leon who has served as our representative on the TRCA's Scarborough Waterfront Project.

Anne is well-acquainted with the natural features of this 11-km stretch of shoreline extending from Bluffer's Park to East Point Park at the mouth of Highland Creek. During public and advisory group meetings, there has been considerable tension between those who advocate for a continuous recreational path right at the water's edge and those who advocate for leaving the beaches and bluffs in a natural state. Throughout the discussion, Anne has been a steadfast champion for native flora and fauna and retaining the natural landscape of Lake Ontario's shore and bluffs.

Over this summer, I've continued to enjoy numerous TFN walks and visiting new-to-me parts of Toronto. One highlight was walking the open sunny meadows of East Point Park with TFN member Karin Fawthrop on a warm July morning. We observed early-returning solitary sandpipers in the pond and the satisfying sight of dog-strangling vine wilted and yellowing in the sandy dry soils of the bluff. We had wonderful views of the driftwood-strewn beach and the sweep of the shoreline in its natural state, a landscape that I hope will be preserved for future generations.

Nancy Dengler
president@torontofieldnaturalists.org



Nancy's photo of the natural beach at East Point Park looking west from the top of the bluffs.

MONTHLY MEETING REPORT

Ontario's Orchids: Perpetual Beauty Worth All Costs

May 1, 2016. Tom Shields,
Southern Ontario Orchid Society

Tom Shields' very informative talk was superbly illustrated by images of 24 of the 65 orchid species occurring in Ontario. The greatest orchid diversity north of Mexico, 44 species, occurs in Bruce and/or Grey counties (*A Guide to the Orchids of Bruce and Grey Counties*, Bruce-Grey Plant Committee, 1999 reprint). An excellent, although old, reference that Tom recommended is *Our Wild Orchids, Trails and Portraits* by F. Morris and E. Eames (Charles Scribner and Sons, 1929).

Tom is a longstanding member of the Conservation Committee of the Southern Ontario Orchid Society (www.soos.ca) and discussed its work promoting protection of native orchids and their habitats. Ontario orchids are mainly niche specialists dependent on symbiotic relationships with soil fungi. Shallow and delicate root systems mean that even stepping near a plant may cause serious damage. Many species live in bogs, fens, or marshes and draining of such habitats can destroy them. Forest species may do poorly in immature forests as these may lack well developed fungal networks. Tom cautioned us not to pick or attempt to transplant native orchids nor disclose locations to those who might do so.

Shown are four of Tom's 24 species, selected for their diversity of appearance, habitats and strategies.

The yellow lady's slipper variety shown occurs in acidic swampy areas. Another variety of this versatile species is a forest dweller. Both bloom from late May to early June. Tom also showed Ontario's other four *Cypripedium* species.

Three or four coralroot (*Corallorhiza*) species are native to Ontario. These orchids obtain nutrients from soil fungi. Striped coralroot (*C. striata*) flowers in drier forested sites from late May to early July.

Ontario has 11 or 12 species of rein orchids (*Platanthera*). Some have white flowers and strong scents including tall white bog orchid (*P. dilatata*). Such species are at least in part pollinated by nocturnal moths but may also attract bees and butterflies. *P. dilatata* blooms in June/July.

Grass pink is unusual in having the flower's lip uppermost. Yellow-tipped stamen-like hairs (fake anthers) on the lip attract bumble bees. A hinge, at the lip's base, causes bees to be dropped on the column below, where pollen is deposited on them. Pollen transfer without any reward for the bee! This species occurs in fens or on soggy marl flats. Generally it blooms from mid June through July.

Ontario's orchids all deserve our admiration, our care and our advocacy for their conservation.

Peter Money



Top: Yellow Lady's Slipper (*Cypripedium parviflorum* var. *makasin*). Photo: Henry Glowka
Middle left: Striped Coralroot (*Corallorhiza striata*). Photo: Henry Glowka
Middle right: Tall White Bog Orchid (*Platanthera dilatata*). Photo: Kevin Tipson
Bottom: Grass Pink (*Calapogon tuberosus*). Photo: Henry Glowka

EXTRACTS FROM OUTINGS LEADERS' REPORTS

Mosses, Fungi and Wood, Taylor Massey Creek and East Don, Apr 2. Leader: Anne Purvis. We learned about the structure of mosses and discovered our first one, *Barbula*, on the forest floor as we descended into Taylor Creek. It was already fruiting with red setae and pointed capsules. Walking west on the Hydro cut, it was quite wet underfoot, so a perfect micro-climate for glossy, lime green *Brachythecium*. Later we found a whole stump covered with this. We found the fern-like *Fissidens* with dried up capsules from last year, and *Mnium* with fresh green bent capsules. A decaying log was covered with perfect little round holes where a horntail wasp had inserted its ovipositor hundreds of times, and larger holes where the adults had exited two years later. Inside the log were lots of tunnels where the larvae had left trails of sawdust. Larger woodpecker holes reminded us that not all the horntail larvae had survived. Further on we saw more insect activity – bark beetle engraving and emerald ash borer exit holes. We discovered many fungi growing on the dead trees: a jelly fungus, *Exidia glandulosa* (black witches' butter); a bracket fungus, *Peniophora rufa*; birch polypore or *Piptoporus betulinus*; and a sac fungus, scarlet cup, otherwise known as *Sarcoscypha austriaca*. Our final moss sighting was clumps of *Polytrichum* moss covered with last seasons' sporophytes.



Moss and winter leaves. Photo: Lloyd Mayeda

Birds, Lynde Shores and Cranberry Marsh, Apr 6. Leader: Stephen Kamnitzer. On a cold and windy day the birding was very good (35 species). Interesting waterfowl included: northern shoveler, green-winged teal, ring-necked duck, and killdeer. Song birds included white-breasted nuthatch, golden-crowned kinglet, cedar waxwing, American tree sparrow, song sparrow, chipping sparrow, swamp sparrow, white-throated sparrow and purple finch. Also observed were wild turkey, sharp-shinned hawk and turkey vulture.

Early Spring Migrants, Colonel Sam Smith Park, Apr 9. Leaders: Jim and Petra Grass. We saw 37 bird species including: American wigeon, American black duck, American wigeon-mallard hybrid, green-winged teal, redhead duck, red-breasted merganser, horned grebe, red-necked grebe, black-crowned night heron, killdeer, downy woodpecker, northern flicker, blue jay, American crow, tree swallow, brown creeper, golden-crowned kinglet, hermit thrush, palm warbler, song sparrow, fox sparrow, brown-headed cowbird, house finch and American goldfinch.



Black-crowned night heron
Photo: Ken Sproule

Chine Drive and Bluffers Park, Apr 10. Leader: Bob Kortright. Despite continued cold weather barely above freezing, we saw several sapsuckers, a flicker, and a flock of cedar waxwings which were all first of year observations for me. We also saw a flock of 20-30 goldfinches, several white-breasted nuthatches, downy woodpeckers, song sparrows and cardinals. We discussed the preponderance of non-native trees and shrubs and its negative implications for insects and birds.

The Don Forks, Apr 16. Leader: Ken Sproule. Some trout lily was budding. We saw a mourning cloak butterfly, two cecropia cocoons and both golden-crowned and ruby-crowned kinglets. Many song sparrows, cardinals and red-winged blackbirds were seen and heard.

Lost Rivers, Spring Frolic in Ravines of Charles Sauriol Reserve, Apr 17. Leaders: John Wilson and Helen Mills. We explored the ravines, known as Wigmore and Anewen, of two buried creeks that emerge briefly within the Charles Sauriol Conservation Reserve before joining the East Don River. The forest was quite healthy with patches of pine and hemlock, oak, beech, maple, black cherry and birch, cedar (in swampy patches) and many dying ashes marked by city Forestry staff for removal. We observed mourning cloak butterflies (*Nymphalis antiopa*) emerging from hibernation in the leaf litter to begin feeding on tree sap and mating, and saw several comma or question mark butterflies.

This is a good location to observe riverine beach and bank creation and erosion on the East Don relatively unaffected by human alteration. The natural watercourse of the river contrasts with the human-made underground river, the East Don Trunk Sewer, whose stacks we frequently observed through several senses. The river's West, East and Taylor-Massey stems and the trunk sewer system's parallel stems meet at the Forks. The sewers flow through the Coxwell Sanitary Trunk Sewer to Ashbridges Bay Treatment Plant. There the treated effluent is discharged to Lake Ontario, the source of our drinking water, creating a sustainability challenge that must be carefully managed to safeguard the health of our human community.

Spring in the Don Valley, Apr 21. Leader: Tessa Edward. Highlights were a Blanding's turtle in the Brick Works wetland and the most beautiful patch of bloodroot in full bloom at Todmorden Mills Wildflower Preserve.



Bloodroot at Todmorden. Photo: Vivienne Denton

German Mills Creek, Apr 23. Leader: Theresa Moore
We saw several early spring migrants, including brown creeper, ruby-crowned kinglets, hermit thrush, turkey vultures, meadowlark and song sparrows. We also glimpsed what we believed to be a great horned owl. We watched a pair of chickadees removing wood chips as they continued excavation of the nesting cavity they had begun a week earlier. We observed new signage on the west side of the creek indicating the importance of protecting ground nesting birds in the meadow.

As this was Earth Day, the group collected garbage, following which the leader heard from the park's Operations Department: "... I can only assume you had a very good turnout judging from the amount of litter that was picked up on Monday after your clean-up! ... Please pass along my appreciation to everyone who came out to your event – their help with the park clean-up is very much appreciated."

Lambton Park, Apr 27. Leader: Miles Hearn. We saw many spring ephemeral plants and 26 species of birds. Highlights were marsh marigold in flower and a male wood duck romantically attracted to a female mallard.

Taylor Creek Park, April 30. Leader: Margaret McRae. Birds seen included song sparrow, hermit thrush, eastern phoebe, ruby-crowned kinglet, red-breasted nuthatch and white-throated sparrow. The trout lily and bloodroot were in bloom, and we saw cabbage white and mourning cloak butterflies.

Sixteen Mile Creek, Oakville, May 3. Leader: Charles Chaffey. On a perfect sunny spring day we descended the steep paved trail, past hillsides carpeted with yellow trout lilies in full bloom, to the bottomlands with flowering cut-leaved toothwort and abundant Virginia bluebells ready to colour the forest floor blue in a week or two. The colony of twinleaf near the river was exciting to see, and the white flowers and purplish leaves of this uncommon species were examined with much interest. Carolinian white trout lily was dominant on the hills across the river. Trilliums were starting to flower, mostly white, a few white with green stripes, and one clump of red. Early saxifrage and serviceberry were blooming near the edge of the cliff above the river. A damp hollow had been invaded by Japanese butterbur, with quite attractive white flower heads, but a potential threat.

We had lunch sitting on logs on the river bank, entertained by green and leopard frogs and a kingfisher calling as it flew downstream. Dutchman's breeches were blooming nearby. We noticed several mourning cloak butterflies and a few white sulphurs active in the afternoon sunshine and made a detour to a hill with many blue cohosh finishing flowering. After the arduous climb back to our starting point, we all agreed that Oakville should be congratulated for preserving such a beautiful and rich natural area.

For a description and map of this heritage trail, visit www.spnc.ca/BotanyHotspots.html#HTS.



Twinleaf at Sixteen Mile Creek, photo: Lloyd Mayeda

EXTRACTS FROM OUTINGS REPORTS *continued*

Jim Baillie Nature Reserve, May 4. Leader: Miles Hearn. We saw 30 species of birds including: great blue heron, ruffed grouse, wild turkey, belted kingfisher, northern flicker, red-bellied woodpecker, yellow-bellied sapsucker, eastern phoebe, blue jay, American crow, black-capped chickadee, white-breasted nuthatch, red-breasted nuthatch, winter wren, brown thrasher, ruby-crowned kinglet, Nashville warbler, pine warbler, northern waterthrush, common yellowthroat, red-winged blackbird, common grackle, brown-headed cowbird, purple finch, American goldfinch, white-throated sparrow, swamp sparrow and song sparrow.

10th Annual Jane Jacobs Tribute Walk, May 4. Leaders: Pleasance Crawford and Helen Juhola Though Norway maples are few naturalists' favourite tree species, in spring the chartreuse of their flowers can be a welcome sight. This year, they had bloomed just in time for Jane Jacobs' 100th birthday. Also in full bloom and very lovely were our favourite yellow magnolia on Everden and pink saucer magnolia at Everden and Ava. In the ravine, we saw emerging horsetails and flowering coltsfoot and purple violets.

Wilket Creek and Sunnybrook Parks, May 7. Leader: Mary Taylor (reported by Sonia van Heerden) We had a very enjoyable walk and saw many spring flowers: bloodroot, trout lily, hepatica, spring beauty, red trillium and white grandiflora trillium. Many people picnicking and playing soccer on the Sunnybrook plateau did not realize what flowers were just a few steps into the woods.



Trout lily. Photo: Sonia van Heerden

Central Toronto Waterfront Parks, May 10. Leader: John Bacher. The walk highlighted green oases in the blight of Toronto's waterfront. Red-winged blackbirds were singing in the Music Garden, which was radiant with trees and flowers. The Spadina Quay wetland helps

starving northern pike in this otherwise sterile part of the bay. In Coronation Park, turkey vultures were flying just above the trees that were planted on the eve of the Second World War by Men of the Trees – a major mobilization force for the protection of southern Ontario through conservation authorities and tree protection by-laws.

Wildflowers, High Park, May 26. Leader: Wendy Rothwell. This was an exciting time of year to look at wildflowers. We saw about 36 species in bloom, including native, introduced and invasive plants, and learned some interesting facts about them. We were particularly pleased to see many native spring flowers in the woodland area east of Spring Road: Jack-in-the-pulpit, wild geranium, wood anemone, star-flowered false Solomon's seal, foam flower, wild sarsaparilla, trillium, star flower and mitrewort. Along Spring Road we saw a large patch of pussy toes. The climax was a gorgeous display of wild blue lupines on Hawk Hill, an area where a prescribed burn had been done this Spring.



Wild blue lupines in High Park. Photo: Nancy Dengler

Riverdale Park East, May 31. Leader: Vivienne Denton. We looked at the north slope, planted by the Task Force to Bring Back the Don in 1990, and the wetland planting at the base, done in 2002, which is tended by a city stewardship group. Invasive plants have crowded into the understory and the many ash trees of the original woodland planting are dead or dying, but it is good to see that the dead trees are being left to decay where they fall. The resident rabbit hopped into view and red-winged blackbirds loudly claimed their territory in the cattails. Robins and warblers could be heard. We examined the wet patch on the east slope where phragmites overwhelms the original wetland plantings, although where silver maples and other trees have taken hold they are shading it out. Here we saw native cocklebur and spreading dogbane.

NATIVE GREEN-FLOWERED ORCHIDS IN TORONTO

The Orchidaceae (orchid family) in Ontario is discussed in this issue in the monthly meeting report on page 7. Ladies tresses were discussed in the September 2010 newsletter and slipper orchids in April 2011.

Three locally rare green-flowered orchids were recorded in the TFN's *Vascular Plants of Metropolitan Toronto* (2nd ed, 1994). Two are rein orchids (*Platanthera*). These are *P. aquilonis** (tall northern green orchid) and *P. lacera* (ragged fringed orchid). I have not found the latter. The third species is *Liparis loeselii* (Loesel's twayblade).

Tall northern green orchid (*Platanthera aquilonis*) locally is about 50cm tall. It has numerous 3mm flowers forming a compact raceme up to half of the plant's length. The TFN *Vascular Plants* reported it at East Point and on the Toronto Islands. I saw a cluster of four plants in a wet open thicket on Ward's Island in early July 1999 but it was absent during the next several years.

Liparis loeselii can be up to 25cm tall but, where seen locally, is shorter. Its yellowish-green flowers form loose racemes of up to about 12 flowers, these with about 5mm long petals and sepals and 4 by 2mm lips. It blooms from late June to early July. The TFN recorded it in the Rouge valley and at East Point. My images are from a new occurrence in a small moist thicket on the Leslie Street spit. *The ROM Field Guide to Wildflowers of Ontario* (2004) shows it occurs throughout most of the southern half of Ontario.

These Toronto species are not beautiful but deserve our care and attention just as much as the beautiful ones discussed by Tom Shields at the May monthly meeting. All three are worth a search in July and a report to the TFN. *P. lacera* would be a particularly good find. It was only reported at East Point, which is also a locality for the other two species.

Article and photos by Peter Money



Above: Tall northern green orchid (*Platanthera aquilonis*)
Below: Loesel's twayblade (*Liparis loeselii*)



*Note: *P. aquilonis* was recorded as *P. hyperborea* in the TFN's *Vascular Plants* and in *The ROM Field Guide*. It has now been determined that *P. hyperborea* only grows in Iceland and that North American specimens recorded as *P. hyperborea* should be attributed to *P. aquilonis* (see *Flora of North America* at www.eFloras.org).

Thickson's Woods Nature Reserve

15th Annual Birds, Beavers and Butterflies Nature Festival

September 17, 9 am - 3:30 pm. Adults \$5, Kids \$2, Families \$10 (cash only)

Bird Banding

Geology

Guided nature walks

Build your own nature box

Bugs and Botany

Speaking of Wildlife (10 am and 2 pm)

Magic Show (11 am)

Creepy critters (noon)

Nature art and gifts

And more!

From Hwy 401 in Whitby, take Thickson Road south to the Waterfront Trail. Follow the signs.
Info: 905-433-7875 or www.thicksonswoods.com Email: nature@thicksonswoods.com

CHILDREN'S CORNER

TRUE or FALSE? (Do you know why?)

- | | T | F |
|---|---|---|
| 1) Butterflies can taste with their feet. | — | — |
| 2) There is a lizard which shoots blood from its eyes. | — | — |
| 3) Wolves howl at the moon. | — | — |
| 4) A mother rabbit feeds her babies every day at noon. | — | — |
| 5) Crows can recognize individual human faces. | — | — |
| 6) A beaver's teeth are always growing. | — | — |
| 7) Racoons wash their hands after eating. | — | — |
| 8) A cowbird parent sneaks its eggs into another bird's nest. | — | — |
| 9) A wasp will die if it stings you. | — | — |



American crow



Brown-headed cowbird



Eastern cottontail rabbit

Answers on page 18

by Judy Marshall

Photos: Ken Sproule - www.toronto-wildlife.com

TFN GRANTS PROGRAM

The TFN Grants Program began in 2010 after the TFN received a substantial bequest from the Dvorak family. The board and other TFN members held a brainstorming session to determine the best ways to use these funds to further the TFN's objectives. We were reluctant to invest in additional nature reserve lands, largely because of the responsibilities associated with management and stewardship. Many brainstorming session ideas focussed on outreach, especially for youth and children, as participants realized that their own interest in nature was rooted in childhood experiences and wished to provide those opportunities for today's urban young people.

Also, an official objective of the TFN as an incorporated organization is: "To provide facilities and leadership to children in the various fields of natural science, through a junior affiliated organization, the Toronto Junior Field Naturalists Club....." In practice, this is an objective that the TFN hasn't been able to meet formally for many years, so establishing a Grants Program gave us a way to "provide facilities and leadership" indirectly.

The TFN Grants Program was established with a mandate to partner with other organizations by providing funding for activities and programs aimed at helping young people (and others) understand, enjoy and protect nature in the GTA. Over the past seven years (2010-2016), the TFN

Grants Committee has advertised the program, distributed applications, carried out background research, considered requests for funding, and made recommendations to the board. During that time, TFN grants have been awarded to 13 organizations for 21 different programs, reaching thousands of children and youth who might not otherwise have these opportunities to connect with nature. Reports on how the funding for each of these programs was spent have appeared in the TFN Newsletter over these years.

Recently, the budget for the TFN Grants Program has decreased, while the numbers of applications have increased, leading the Grants Committee to be concerned about raising expectations unfairly. Therefore the TFN board has passed a motion that, after this year, the Grants Program be suspended and replaced with a Special Projects Program that would facilitate direct funding of special TFN projects or of partnering with other organizations as appropriate.

I would like to thank all members of the TFN Grants Committee (Elisabeth Gladstone, Bob Kortright, Mary Lieberman, Margaret McRae, Lavinia Mohr, Anne Powell and Wendy Rothwell) for their contributions to the process over the past seven years.

Nancy Dengler

A NATURALIST'S THOUGHTS ON DISAPPEARING BEES

Bees are the world's greatest pollinators, and we have over 350 species of native bees in the Greater Toronto Area that can do a superb job of providing pollination services. However, proponents of the honey bee, a domesticated European species, are begging us to 'save the bees.' Those who issue this plea are primarily commercial beekeepers for whom 'colony collapse' is an economic issue. These bee 'farmers' have no difficulty whatsoever in replacing the hives that die off. It's just that it costs them a lot of money to do so. The honey bee species (*Apis mellifera*) is in no danger at all of disappearing from the surface of the earth as opposed to some native bee pollinators like the rusty-patched bumblebee.

Beekeepers, it must be admitted, have accomplished positive change on major environmental issues through encouraging the planting of wildflowers and curtailing the use of neonicotinoid pesticides. Nevertheless, beekeeping in urban areas can suppress populations of native bees, and have other negative environmental impacts. On the basis of current evidence, the presence of high concentrations of honey bees is a real danger to native bee populations through competition for pollen and the spillover of pests and pathogens. Honey bees are such efficient pollen gatherers that they can seriously reduce the amount of pollen available to support optimal populations of native pollinators. Recent reports from London, England, where urban beekeeping is intensive,

suggest that now there may not be enough pollen resources for the armies of honey bees, let alone native bees.

Also, keeping honey bees, maintaining their hives and harvesting their honey represent a small but real drain on resources such as wood, water, gasoline and electricity. These costs may be justified in terms of honey production, but they can be avoided entirely by depending solely on native pollinators for perfectly adequate pollination

services. Like using native plants instead of horticultural species in the garden, depending on our native pollinators is just better for the environment overall. And the pollination services of native bees, like the best things in life, are entirely free.

So yes, 'save the bees.' But keep in mind that the bees really needing to be saved are those hundreds of native species, the ones that depend on our maintaining as much natural environment as possible.

If you are interested in learning more, the City of Toronto Biodiversity Series has recently published *Bees of Toronto: A Guide to Their Remarkable World*, which should be available at your local library. Here you can discover some of the many native species that live among us, and ways to support them.

Dave Barr

Dave Barr is a local bee expert and the TFN representative on the City of Toronto's Pollinator Advisory Group



Native pollinator, probably a sweat bee of the family Halictidae. Photo: Dave Barr

2016-17 GRANTS AWARDED

High Park Nature Centre: \$5,000 to sponsor the Family Nature Walks and Clubs for Kids programs to encourage observation, appreciation and connection with nature.

Ontario Nature: \$5,000 to support programs to connect youth with nature and cultivate an understanding of, passion for and commitment to the natural world and its conservation.

Fatal Light Awareness Program (FLAP): \$4,000 to educate students of all ages about bird collisions with buildings and to engage them in efforts to make built environments safer for birds.

Bird Studies Canada: \$5,000 to support programs to inspire youth to conserve birds through citizen science.

Toronto Botanical Garden: \$4,770 to the Urban Nature Ravines Series that aims to stimulate interest in nature by exposing children and families from under-served communities to the natural environment in Toronto's ravines and green spaces.

Toronto Wildlife Centre: \$4,230 to support a program to increase awareness of the need for wild animals to be assessed and treated by licensed wildlife rehabilitation professionals.

THE DESTRUCTIVE POWER OF EROSION

This article makes a plea to save Yellow Creek Ravine from erosion.

Help by signing the petition at www.ipetitions.com/petition/yellow-creek-ravine-remediation

Yellow Creek Ravine, aka Vale of Avoca, is a Toronto inner city gem that is imperiled. A short distance from Yonge and St Clair, Summerhill and Davisville subway stops, it is easily accessible for people from all over the city as well as local residents and office workers.



Photo: Mike Caswell

The ravine and trails start at the south end of Mount Pleasant Cemetery, running underneath the St. Clair bridge and below Rosehill Reservoir to Mount Pleasant Road, linking up with Rosedale Ravine, the Brick Works and Moore Park Ravine/Mud Creek. It is a wonderful 2-hour plus walking loop when combined with Mount Pleasant Cemetery that crosses only two roads, Mount Pleasant Avenue and Moore Avenue.

Birdlife is abundant, particularly during migration seasons. Pileated woodpeckers, Baltimore orioles, cedar waxwings, red-tailed hawks and warblers are all easily spotted and photographed.

Sadly, the Yellow Creek Ravine, trails and access points are suffering badly from storm erosion. Large sections of the trails are at risk. Decades-old efforts to reinforce the banks of the creek are failing due to a combination of age and massive increases in storm water flow. Gabion basket walls and cut granite blocks are tumbling into the creek bed creating blockages and pinch points, increasing the pace of erosion.

The damage is caused largely by rainstorms when water levels rise dramatically and the flow rate accelerates, ripping at the banks of the creek. Yellow Creek has its source in Downsview. Virtually all of it is buried inside drains until it emerges from below Mount Pleasant Cemetery. All along its course, storm drains from surrounding roads and neighborhoods feed into the creek. Decades of development along the creek's path have resulted in dramatic increases in run-off. Based on extrapolated estimates, a good rainstorm turns the water flow from a benign stream to a torrent of 45 to 100 cubic meters per second.

Winter road salt feeds the problem, as high salt content water flows into the creek, corroding the metal frame structure of the gabion walls lining its banks. The failing creek bank support structures cause the slopes above to erode, undermining the trees and other vegetation, compounding the problems.



Photo: Mike Caswell

The Toronto Region Conservation Authority is aware of the scale of the destruction that is occurring. They support the need for extensive remediation. The challenge is budget. Unless Toronto City Councillors allocate a budget for the development and implementation of a master plan, nothing will be done. Please sign the petition to help convince politicians to dedicate a budget to save the ravine for future generations.

Rob Spindler

In the autumn sky

A V of honking geese forms

Strong wings beating south

Haiku by Elisabeth Gladstone

FOR READING

Bird Sense – what it's like to be a bird

by Tim Birkhead

Bloomsbury Press 2012. 265 pages

Our curiosity about birds often stops short at identification. We learn enough about behavior, markings, vocalization and size to be able to identify the species, then wander off to find the next one.

But birds are far more interesting than their external appearance suggests, as this book makes clear. Using the framework of the five senses – actually seven if you include magnetic sense and emotion – the author comes as close as could be reasonably expected to describing how birds experience the world through their senses. As each sense is described, a complexity and variety emerges that is astounding, to me at any rate. Furthermore, as the author points out, present knowledge in this field is still only dimly understood. We still have a lot to learn about the private life of birds.

One of the themes running through the book is the default position taken by scientists that, whatever the attribute in question, birds do not possess it. Smell, taste, sensitivity to electro-magnetic fields, emotions, all of these were initially dismissed as being either unlikely, rudimentary or downright impossible; birds get no respect. We still use the descriptor “bird brained” to denote supposed avian stupidity. This habit of underestimating birds’, and nature’s, immense complexity continues; lazy generalizations, human arrogance and solipsism, and willful ignorance all contribute to the casually destructive attitudes that give license to the continuing degradation and despoliation of the natural world we see all around us.

The book is peppered with amusing, illustrative anecdotes drawn from a lifetime of research and observation. The reader is left with new respect and empathy for birds: their variety, adaptability and their often bizarre strategies for survival. Warmly recommended.

Charles Bruce-Thompson

The Invention of Nature:

Alexander von Humboldt's World

by Andrea Wulf

Alfred A. Knopf, 2015

The subject of this book lived from 1769 to 1859, but he was aware of things we are “discovering” now. Though he was the most famous scientist in the world when he was alive, he has been “forgotten” mainly because he was German. The two wars did that.

During his long and very active life, he travelled to South America and later to Russia, making observations and collections concerning every subject he could think of. He saw that people were changing the climate of the earth by removing trees, by irrigation projects and by industry (smoke and steam production). He also realized that the South American and African coasts had at one time been joined. All this he did by observing plants, animals and geology. He measured and counted endlessly, proving his conclusions which we are only now trying to understand. His writings inspired Darwin, Thoreau and Muir.

Though there is a lot of politics in the book, it is a really fascinating story about how “nothing is really new.”

Helen Juhola

AUDIO BEE BOOTH IN HIGH PARK

This beautiful and ingenious viewing installation for native bees and wasps can be seen at High Park Nature's OurSpace (see December 2015 newsletter). It was created by artist Sarah Peebles in consultation with Laurence Packer of CANPOLIN (Canadian Pollination Initiative) and various mellitologists and pollination ecologists. Please check it out next time you are in High Park.

These booths, which have also been installed in various locations in the Toronto area including the Royal Botanical Gardens, allow the public to safely view and listen to solitary-dwelling, mostly native, bees (pollinators quite different from European honey bees) and solitary wasps, nature's insect controllers.

For more information, visit resonatingbodies.wordpress.com/art/amplified-habitats/audio-bee-booths/.

Also see article on page 57 of *Bees of Toronto* in the City of Toronto's Biodiversity series available free at Toronto public libraries.



Jon Hayes of High Park Nature Centre demonstrating audio bee booth (left), and Sarah Peebles' art on the exterior. Photos: Wendy Rothwell

SHOWY LADY'S SLIPPER



Photo: Harvey Medland
See also photo on back cover.

When author Frank Morris published *Our Wild Orchids* in 1929 he recalled his first sighting of the Showy Lady's-slipper:

It is thirty-three years since we first came face to face with the queen of the Lady's-slippers (1896), but the wonder of it never wanes. In many of our wetter and more inaccessible bogs it is to be found in great profusion – thousands of plants – and blooming very freshly at any time between the last week of June and the middle of July.

The Showy's stalk can reach three feet. In the early 1900s they were fairly common in bogs and swamps and most luxuriant where limestone is covered with a blanket of moss. Today, they are a rare find. Their habitat has shrunk and, when picked, the remaining plant will not bloom for seven years, if ever.

Morris used “the Big Pink-and-Whites” as a beacon to locate other orchids. He explained,

Hundreds of country people – children, farmers, trappers – who hardly knew an orchid name, could put us on the track of Cypripedium reginae. Many of our best finds both of bogs and of rare orchids have been made in this way.

If you are on your way to Ottawa and the time is right, visit the Purdy Conservation Area near Lanark where there are hundreds of them waiting to be admired and photographed from the boardwalks.

Harvey Medland

KEEPING IN TOUCH



Here are two recent entries from my journal. I have been recording TFN events since I joined in 1996. Our newsletter is commendable, and it is a privilege for me to be an occasional contributor.

Susan Weiss



Keep up the good work on the newsletter. I love the children's section and actually learn from it.

Nancy Anderson



Jim Hodgins came upon this mural by artist Nick Sweetman at the corner of Bloor Street and Howland Avenue. It is meant to draw public attention to the rapidly disappearing bee populations of the world. Notice the map of North and South America in the bee's eye.

IN THE NEWS

Devastating Loss of Trees

Residents, tree lovers and city officials are reeling from the discovery that developers have razed two lots in York Mills, illegally cutting down over 30 mature trees. One was a 150-year-old linden. City officials are investigating as the company didn't have, or even apply for, permits to remove the trees. It is possible the company was hoping that forgiveness would be easier to obtain than permission.

The new housing is called Bayview Ridge Gate, developed by the Format Group, who describe the property on their website as "Tucked into an established community with quiet streets, mature trees and beautiful, high-end homes." It appears they only believe in the value of mature trees when it is convenient for them.

Mayor John Tory expressed outrage when he visited the site and called for a stiff penalty. Hopefully we will see some justice in this case with a fine that will send a signal to developers that trees are important.

State of North American Birds – 2016

www.stateofthebirds.org/2016

The North American Bird Conservation Initiative has released a study that looks at the vulnerability of bird populations in Canada, the United States and Mexico. The study assesses all 1,154 native bird species in North America and was compiled by a team of experts from all three countries. They have created a Watch List that contains the 432 species (37%) that are at high risk of extinction unless significant action is taken. Species that rely on oceans and

tropical forests are in the worst shape due to small and declining populations, small ranges, and severe threats to their habitats.

Species that live in the Boreal Forest, which covers most of Canada, are faring better, and most are listed as of moderate or low concern. Fourteen of the 73 Boreal Forest species are on the high risk Watch List. Tropical forests have 268 of their 478 species in the high risk category.

The full report includes conservation concern levels for North America's 9 major habitat types, conservation status descriptions and success stories for 7 habitat types, an interactive species assessment, year-round abundance, and further resources for conservation and change.

Bad New for Turtles

The spiny softshell turtle has been added to the Endangered Species List after its numbers continue to drop in Ontario and Quebec, where the only two subpopulations of the turtles exist in Canada. Reasons for the decline are mostly due to habitat degradation and poaching. Conservation efforts in the London area include replenishing stocks, but for every 100 turtles released, only one is likely to survive. In bad years the survival rate is much worse. Poaching is a huge problem, both of eggs and live turtles. There is a large demand for the turtles in groups that have firmly held traditional beliefs in turtles, which leads to illegal trade. If poaching is not curbed, the outlook for this turtle is bleak!

www.cbc.ca/news/canada/windsor/upper-thames-river-spiny-softshell-turtle-1.3618568

Lynn Miller

NEWS FROM BIRD STUDIES CANADA extracts from birdscanada.org

100th Anniversary of Migratory Birds Convention Act

Can you imagine a time when "egret plumes sold for \$32 an ounce ... about twice the price of gold." In the late 1800s, the feather trade and activities such as spring hunting had caused such destruction to bird populations that by the beginning of the 1900s it was clear that conservation was needed. The "first international conservation agreement in the Western Hemisphere" was drafted in 1916. It "represented a massive change in how society thought about wildlife resources." Read the article at www.birdscanada.org/organization/bscnews.html. Click on Migratory Bird Conservation: A Great Act to Follow.

For the **State of North American Birds** in 2016 see item IN THE NEWS above. Major findings also at: www.birdscanada.org/news/the-state-of-north-americas-birds as well as How you Can Help. See also **Top Ways to Help Birds** at www.birdscanada.org/education/tophelp.jsp

Help Monitor Common Nighthawks in Toronto!

Help monitor migrating nighthawks every evening from **August 22 to September 9**. Shifts from 7:00 p.m. until

dark (around an hour and half) at Hawk Hill in High Park, behind the Grenadier Restaurant. Beginner birders welcome! Information at birdscanada.org/research/speciesatrisk/coni/. If you can't volunteer, but are curious about Toronto's most mysterious bird, come to the Nighthawk Count with our Toronto Programs Coordinator Emily Rondel on **August 31** at the High Park Nature Centre.

www.highparknaturecentre.com/ai1ec_event/nighthawk-count-3/?instance_id=7870

Piping Plovers Nesting in Ontario

Until 2015, when a nest failed at Hanlan's Point on Toronto Islands, Piping Plovers had not nested on the Canadian shores of Lake Ontario since 1934. This season, two Piping Plover pairs raised seven young at Darlington Provincial Park, and one pair at Presqu'île Provincial Park raised three young!

Vote for National Bird Symbol

Which bird do you think would make the best national symbol for Canada? Top contenders include common loon, gray jay, and snowy owl. Cast your vote at nationalbird.canadiangeographic.ca/. **The vote closes August 31.**

WEATHER (THIS TIME LAST YEAR)

September 2015

September began with the longest spell of hot, humid weather of the summer (and indeed in a long time). It was marked not by extremes, but duration. Labour Day was the hottest day of the year with a high of 34.0° at Pearson Airport and 32.8° downtown. Cooler air only arrived after the 9th and lasted just a few days. Otherwise, sunny summer conditions continued more-or-less through month's end, though without extreme heat. Daily high temperatures were generally in the mid-twenties. There was almost continuous sunshine from the 13th to 27th. Sunshine hours are no longer recorded.

The mean monthly temperature of 20.0° downtown was the third-warmest on record: the warmest was 20.8° in 2002 and the second-warmest was 1961 with a mean of 20.3°. (If one counts mean maximum temperatures, 1921 was actually the warmest but the nights were relatively cool.)

Pearson's mean of 19.7° was more than 3° above the 30-year average and the second-warmest on record (after 2002).

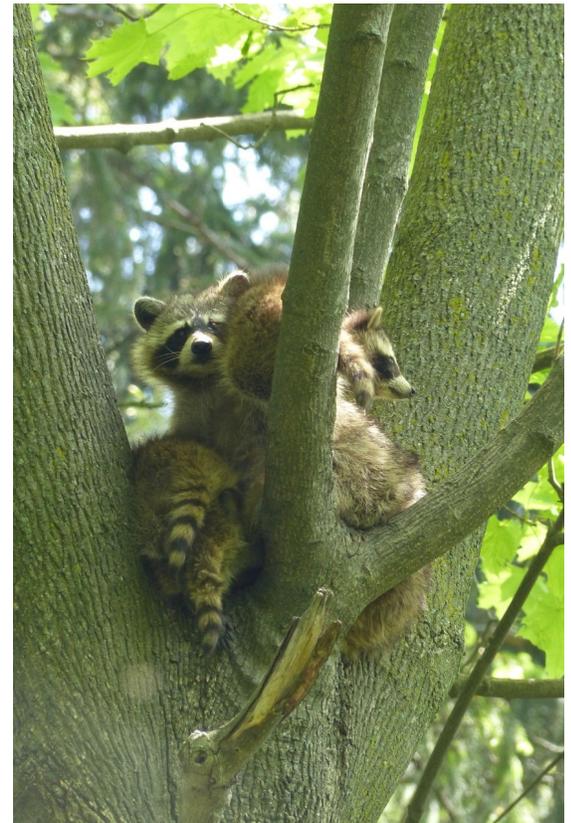
The warmth had not been characteristic of Toronto earlier in 2015 but it did bring our city in harmony with the world, which experienced its warmest or second-warmest September on record, depending on the data source. Certainly it encompassed most of the Pacific Ocean (with El Niño) and most of North America.

Warmth, sunshine and infrequent rains gave the overall impression of a very dry month but, in fact, it was only slightly drier than normal. Downtown had 61.0 mm while Pearson had 62.0 mm. This is about 15 mm below normal. Most of the rain fell on the 11th, 12th and 29th.

Gavin Miller

Answers from p 12

- 1) **T** – A butterfly can stand on a leaf and taste it with its feet. That way the butterfly can tell if its caterpillars will be able to eat the leaf. If they can't, the butterfly won't lay its eggs there.
- 2) **T** – A horned lizard can shoot blood from its eye sockets to scare away predators.
- 3) **F** – Wolves howl during the night because they are nocturnal animals (awake at night). Observers have found that they will howl whether or not the moon can be seen.
- 4) **F** – A mother rabbit leaves her babies in the nest. She goes to feed them only early in the morning and after dark so they will not be seen by predators.
- 5) **T** – Crows can recognize separate human faces and remember them for up to five years. Crows will scold a human wearing a scary mask and sometimes form a mob to try to frighten that person. (nytimes.com/2008/08/26/science/26crow.html).
- 6) **T** – A beaver's teeth grow all the time so that they will not be worn down by chewing on wood.
- 7) **F** – Raccoons don't have a very good grip because they do not have opposable thumbs as people do. So they often hold and roll things with both hands. If near water, it looks as if they are washing their hands.
- 8) **T** – Cowbirds don't build their own nests. A cowbird finds the nest of a bird of a different species, takes out one of the eggs and lays its own egg in the nest. The other birds incubate the cowbird's egg and feed the baby, thinking it is their own. The lazy cowbird doesn't do any work!
- 9) **F** – Female wasps and most female bees can sting over and over again, because their stingers are quite smooth and don't catch. (*Males don't sting!*) Only honeybees die when they sting, because their stingers have large barbs which catch in the victim's skin. The stinger can't be pulled back out, so the honeybee hurts herself when she flies away.



Raccoons seen at the Colonel Sam Smith Birdfest, June 2016. Photo: Ron Dengler

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 (www.torontobirding.ca)

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

- Sun Sept 4, 8 am to noon. High Park. Leader: Leslie Kinrys. Meet at the parking lot inside the Bloor St entrance at High Park Ave. Fall migrants, raptors.
- Sat Sept 10, 8 am to afternoon. Leslie Street Spit. Leaders: Justin Peter and apprentice Caroline Biel. Meet at the entrance to Tommy Thompson Park at Unwin Ave and Leslie St (south of Lake Shore Blvd E). Fall migrants, including warblers and other songbirds, raptors, shorebirds and more.
- Sun Sept 18, 8 am to noon. Lambton Woods. Leader: Don Burton. Meet at James Gardens parking lot (access from Edenbridge Dr east of Royal York Rd, north of Dundas St W). Fall migrants.
- Sat Sept 24, 7:30 am to afternoon. Toronto Islands. Leader: Barry Coombs. Meet at the ferry docks at the foot of Bay St off Queen's Quay to catch the 8:15am ferry to Hanlan's Point (fare required). Bring lunch. Late migrants.

High Park Walking Tours (www.highpark.org)

1st and 3rd Sundays of each month from 10:30 to noon. Meet at the benches south of the Grenadier Restaurant.

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

- Sept 4. Myths and Legends, Colborne Lodge Staff
- Sept 18. Shakespeare in the Park, Julia Bennett

Governor Simcoe's 1793 Journey up the Toronto Carrying Place

Sat Sept 24, 9:30 am. Leader: Madeleine McDowell. Join in the Humber Heritage Committee's Re-enactment of the first day of Lieutenant Governor Simcoe's 1793 journey up the Toronto Carrying Place and learn a bit of history about the Humber's impact on Canada. Start at Rousseaux Site, south of 8 South Kingsway (Petro Canada station). Walk will end at Eglinton Ave W and the Humber, just north of Scarlett Woods Golf Course.

Mycological Society of Toronto (www.myctor.org)

Check their website for forays in September.

Rouge Park Weekly Guided Nature Walks (www.rougepark.com/hike)

Explore Rouge Park's trails with a Hike Ontario certified volunteer leader. E-mail hike@rougepark.com or phone 905-713-3184, Mon - Thurs.

The Market Gallery (www.toronto.ca/marketgallery)

To Nov 12. When the Beatles Rocked Toronto. South St Lawrence Market, 2nd floor, 95 Front St E. Admission \$10 (seniors \$5). Gallery closed Sun, Mon and holidays.

The Gem & Mineral Club of Scarborough (www.scarbagemclub.ca)

Sat Sept 17, 10 am - 6 pm; Sun Sept 18, 11 am - 5 pm. Wonders of the Earth, Gem and Mineral Show and Sale. Don Montgomery Community Centre, 2467 Eglinton Ave E (by Kennedy subway station). Adults \$5. Children \$1.

Lost Rivers Walks (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@labspacestudio.com.

Ian Wheal Walks

- Sun Sept 4, 1:30 pm. Centennial Closure of Fisherman's Island (Ashbridges Bay), a unique fisher-girl site 1874-1916. Meet at the southeast corner of King St E and Parliament St.
- Tues Sept 6, 6:45 pm. Caves of Earls court - Regal Heights - Springmount (Corso Italia). An elevation-physiography walk. Meet at the southwest corner of Dufferin St and Dupont St.

Urban Ravine Restoration: Plants, plans and progress

at Toronto Botanical Garden (www.torontobotanicalgarden.ca)

Fri October 28, 9 am to 5 pm

This one-day symposium will bring together advocates, stewards and scientists to discuss ravine-focused initiatives and research underway in and around the city. Come to learn, connect, be inspired and find your place in this exciting movement. Several TFN members are presenting. Register online: public \$75; members and students \$65. Lunch provided. Parking free.

Toronto Field Naturalists
1519—2 Carlton St.,
Toronto, Ontario, M5B 1J3

Publications Mail
Registration No. 40049590



Showy lady's slippers. Photo: Harvey Medland. See article on page 16.