



# TORONTO FIELD NATURALIST

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.

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## NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

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## IT'S YOUR NEWSLETTER!

Send us your original writing (up to 500 words) of your thoughts and experiences of nature in and around Toronto. Do you have a favourite natural area in Toronto? Did a TFN outing introduce you to a new park? Tell us about it! Did you see any plants or animals that particularly interested you? Let us know! Tell us what, where and when, and any field guides or other sources consulted.

Also welcome are: reviews, poems, cartoons and sketches, natural history items in the news, and digital photos of TFN outings. Remember that photos will be reproduced in black and white photocopy. Please include your name, address and phone number so submissions can be acknowledged. Newspaper clippings should include source and date.

Unsigned letters or emails will not be read. Attachments to unsigned emails will not be opened.

Note the deadline for submissions of time-sensitive material, e.g., notices of meetings or events. Deadline for March issue: February 2, 2007. Send by mail or email.

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# TFN PUBLICATIONS

TORONTO FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB TSH STORY AND CONSTITUTION 1965	\$2 00
CHECKLIST OF PLANTS IN FOUR TORONTO PARKS WILKET CREEK HIGH PARK HUMBER VALLEY LAMBTON WOODS 1972	\$2 00
TORONTO THE GREEN 1976 Metropolitan Toronto's important natural areas are described and recommendations given for their conservation and management includes maps bibliography and index	\$10 00
TORONTO FIELD NATURALISTS RAVINE SURVEYS Survey No 1 -- Chatsworth Ravine 1973 Survey No 2 -- Brookbanks Ravine 1974 Survey No 3 -- Chapman Valley Ravine 1975 Survey No 4 -- Wigmore Ravine 1975 Survey No 5 -- Park Drive Ravine 1976 Survey No 6 -- Burke Ravine 1976 Survey No 7 -- Taylor Creek - Woodbine Bridge Ravines 1977 Survey No 8 -- West Don Valley 1978	ea \$5 00
INDEX OF TFN NEWSLETTERS (1938 to 1978) INDEX OF SINGLE YEARS FROM 1979	\$10 00 ea \$1 00
TORONTO REGIONAL BIRD CHART 1983	\$5 00
A GUIDE TO ONTARIO MOSSES 1985	\$5 00
GUIDE TO TORONTO FIELD NATURALISTS' NATURE RESERVES 2001	\$5 00
TORONTO ISLANDS PLANT COMMUNITIES AND NOTEWORTHY SPECIES 1987	\$5 00
TODMORDEN MLLS 1987	\$5 00
VASCULAR PLANTS OF METROPOLITAN TORONTO 1994	\$10 00
TORONTO CHECKLISTS (birds other vertebrates butterflies other invertebrates mosses other plants)	ea 50¢
HUMBER FORKS AT THE STLETOWN 2000	\$5 00

Add \$2.00 *per item* for postage and handling; no GST.  
Order from TFN office, see address above.

## MEMBERSHIP FEES

\$50 FAMILY (2 adults – same address, children included)  
\$40 SINGLE, SENIOR FAMILY (2 adults, 65+)  
\$30 STUDENT, SENIOR SINGLE (65+)

No GST. Tax receipts issued for donations. Membership fees and address changes should be sent to the TFN office.

*Please note: It has always been the policy of the Toronto Field Naturalists not to give out its membership list.*

## TFN MEETING

Sunday, February 4, 2007 at 2:30 pm

### Bon Echo, Sandbanks and Charleston Provincial Parks

*David Bree*

*Naturalist, Ontario Provincial Parks*

How the geology of these parks influences the scenery and wildlife  
in these diverse and very different ecosystems

#### VISITORS WELCOME!

#### SOCIAL

2:00 - 2:30 pm

Bring your own mug for coffee or juice if you wish,  
only paper cups provided.

For more information call the TFN office at (416) 593-2656

**ROOM 001, EMMANUEL COLLEGE  
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO  
75 QUEEN'S PARK CRESCENT EAST**

Room 001 is one floor below street level. Entrance at south end of the building, down a few steps on an outside stairwell.

**Wheelchair Entrance:** Second door south on Queen's Park Crescent E. Door does not have automatic opener. Elevator is inside to the right.



**NEXT MEETING:** March 4, 2007  
From Chile to chillier (Patagonia to the Weddell Sea)  
Speaker: Peter Money

## 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 by calling 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.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| Thursday<br>February 1<br>1:30 p.m.            | <b>TORONTO – Urban Nature</b><br>Leader: Helen Juhola<br>Meet at the foot of Yonge Street on the south side of Queen’s Quay.   |
| Saturday<br>February 3<br>10:30 a.m.           | <b>CEDARVALE/NORDHEIMER RAVINE – Nature Arts in Winter</b><br>Leader: Mary Taylor<br>Meet at St. Clair West Subway Station, at the exit on the north side of St. Clair. Ave. W. Participants can choose between working in a spacious indoor café with excellent views of the adjoining parkland, or walking and finding something to draw or photograph in the ravines themselves. Art is a natural partner for the fascinating study of nature in winter. Bring what you need for your artwork. We will meet for lunch and showing of our current/other works. |
| Sunday<br>February 4<br>2:00 p.m.<br>2:30 p.m. | <b>MONTHLY MEETING – see notice on page 3</b><br><br>Social<br>Lecture – Bon Echo, Sandbanks and Charleston Provincial Parks   |
| Wednesday<br>February 7<br>10:00 a.m.          | <b>HUMBER BAY PARK EAST – Birding</b><br>Leader: Marg Catto<br>Meet at the southwest corner of Lake Shore Blvd. W. and Park Lawn Rd. Bring binoculars, dress warmly. Morning only.   |
| Sunday<br>February 11<br>1 – 3 p.m.            | <b>SHERWOOD PARK</b><br>Leader: Janice Palmer<br>Meet at the main entrance at the end of Sherwood Ave. just a short walk east from Mount Pleasant Rd. The leader will discuss problems with the use of the park. Be prepared for winter conditions.  |
| Wednesday<br>February 14<br>1:30 p.m.          | <b>TORONTO DOWNTOWN – Walk on city streets to see how nature has been interpreted by humans.</b><br>Leader: Ed Freeman<br>Meet at the northeast corner of Queen St. E. and Yonge St. Walk will end at the Market Gallery on Front St. E.   |
| Saturday<br>February 17<br>11 a.m.             | <b>NEW WATERFRONT TRAIL – Nature Walk</b><br>Leader: Roger Powley<br>Meet at the Rouge Hill GO Station (at the end of Lawrence Ave. E.). The walk will be to Highland Creek and return. Bring lunch and binoculars, and dress warmly.  |

- Sunday  
February 18  
2 p.m.      **CROOKSHANK AND OTHER LOST CREEKS IN OLD TORONTO – Lost Rivers Walk**  
Leader: Helen Mills  
Meet at Allan Gardens outside the main entrance to the Greenhouses. We will start warm with a quick visit to the greenhouses, then leave Allan Gardens to explore parts of Taddle, Crookshank, Sumach and Mandela Creeks, and the former course of the Don River. The walk will end at the Distillery District where we can defrost in a fair trade coffee shop. Moderate difficulty. This is a joint walk with Toronto Green Community.
- Tuesday  
February 20  
10:00 a.m.      **COLONEL SAMUEL SMITH PARK – Birds**  
Leader: Doug Paton  
Meet at the southwest corner of Kipling Avenue and Lakeshore Blvd. W. Bring lunch, binoculars and dress warmly.
- Saturday  
February 24  
1 p.m.      **CRUIKSHANK PARK – Nature Walk along the Humber**  
Leader: Mary Lou Ashbourne  
Meet at the entrance to Cruikshank Park on the west side of Weston Rd. at Church St. The walk will last about 1 1/2 to 2 hours depending on weather conditions.

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## ONTARIO NATURE'S 75<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY GALA

The Gala held in November at the Royal Ontario Museum was a fine opportunity for over 300 nature lovers to celebrate the founding 75 years ago of the Federation of Ontario Naturalists, now Ontario Nature. Rosemary Speirs, President of Ontario Nature, welcomed the participants, making special mention of the role played by the four founding clubs present at the Gala. TFN was presented with a plaque commemorating our role.

Jim Bradley, former Minister of the Environment from 1985 to 1990 and currently Minister of Tourism and Minister Responsible for Seniors, who has enjoyed a long relationship with Ontario Nature, spoke warmly of his links to the organization. David Ramsay, Minister of Natural Resources and Minister Responsible for Aboriginal Affairs, also congratulated Ontario Nature on its accomplishments and offered his best wishes for a productive future.

Ontario Nature was also celebrating a successful move of its office from the old building at Leslie and 401 to new premises at 366 Adelaide St. West.

*Barry Mitchell*



Ontario Nature's founding clubs. Left to right: Bruce Falls (Brodie Club), Paul Aird (Brodie Club), Thomas McIlwraith, Barry Mitchell (Toronto Field Naturalists), Pinky Franklin (Toronto Field Naturalists), Jill Attick (Hamilton Naturalists' Club), Paul Attick (Hamilton Naturalists' Club), Winnifred Wake (McIlwraith Field Naturalists of London Inc.), David Wake (McIlwraith Field Naturalists of London Inc.)

## PRESIDENT 'S REPORT

Although you're reading this at the end of January, I'm writing it in a post-Christmas lull, during which I have been catching up on reading the news. I am struck by the number of headlines reporting natural, or perhaps more accurately, unnatural events that are occurring for the first time in recorded history: extreme weather conditions in B.C. causing extensive damage and leaving hundreds of thousands without power for days; three of Canada's snowiest cities, Quebec, Timmins and Thunder Bay had a green Christmas; the St. Lawrence Seaway was ice-free and open to ships for a record number of days; and for the first time in history, according to the UN, a majority of human beings will be living in vast urban areas. These news items, read on the cusp of a new year, which is traditionally a time of introspection and reflection, have given me cause to think about things, to think about my role ("If you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem") and by extension, the role of the TFN. My conclusion is that I have renewed appreciation for the value of the TFN as an organization that connects urban people to nature. For many that connection is simply enjoying the wonders of the natural world. For others it is an opportunity to be educated or to share their knowledge and experiences through the newsletters, outings and lectures. These interactions have the potential to inspire people and motivate them to take responsibility for their part in the task of stewardship of our

environment. I am grateful to the members of the TFN, past and present, who have fostered a connection with nature and championed its cause. Hopefully 2007 will be a record year, not for calamitous weather and its effects, but rather for the number of people who connect and join us.

On a lighter note, I hooted with laughter while reading the Owling article by Elmer (Ilmari) Talvila (From the Archives) in last month's newsletter. In October while visiting my cousin in St. Louis, Missouri, I inadvertently used Talvila's most successful method of "not to go looking for owls at all". We were walking and talking on a path in a forest when, at first glance, I saw what I thought was an unusual burl on the side of a tree. On second thought I decided it must be a giant paper wasps nest. When the sun momentarily illuminated two bright yellow orbs, I knew without doubt that I was staring at a huge owl. We stood frozen to the spot until it majestically lifted off and flew away. Simultaneously we turned toward each other, eyes owlshly wide open in amazement. Then we hugged, hooted and high-fived. We thought for sure it must be a Great Grey Owl but as Ilmari noted – *impossible!* Great Greys do not occur in Missouri!

*Pinky Franklin*

### Donations and Bequests

Your membership fees pay for the TFN's normal expenditures: rent, mailings, phone, insurance, etc. For special projects and extraordinary expenses, we rely on the generosity of our members. We are pleased to report that, in 2006, 130 members donated a total of \$6,575. This money will allow us to explore ways to strengthen our organization. We are also grateful that, over the years, several members have made bequests to the TFN in their wills.

In the past, donations and bequests have made possible the purchase of our nature reserves. More recently, we have been able to add colour to, and use recycled paper for, the newsletter. Our organization's data has been computerized and our web site is being enhanced. Our latest endeavour is creating an inventory of the TFN's valuable slide collection (see next page).

We would like to take this opportunity to remind our members that, as a charitable non-profit organization, the TFN can issue charitable receipts for use as deductions on your income tax return. Also, new tax rules enacted this past year have made donating securities more attractive, as any increased value is not subject to capital gains tax.

Please consider making a donation to the TFN.

## THE TFN SLIDE COLLECTION: A LITTLE-KNOWN RESOURCE

TFN owns an estimated twelve thousand 35-mm colour slides. This valuable collection focuses on Toronto valleys, watercourses, shorelines, plants, and animals, and on TFN properties and activities. It includes Louise Herzberg's reproductions of historical maps and photos; Mel Whiteside's documentation of the construction of the Don Valley Parkway in the late 1950s; and William Gunn's careful studies of native birds. All told, it contains the work of more than a dozen TFN photographers past and present.



Red-breasted Nuthatch by William Gunn, one of many slides in the TFN's collection.

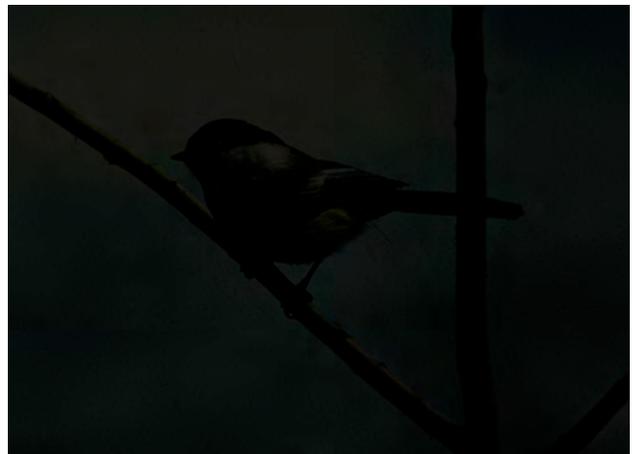
Mark Sawyer started the collection in the early 1970s. Robin Powell, who became slide librarian about 1976, encouraged members to donate their best shots—especially of subjects not already represented in the growing collection. Anyone who has visited the TFN office has seen signs of Robin's achievement: document boxes marked "Mimico Cr.," "Etobicoke Cr.," "West Don R.," "Rouge R.," and so on; and loose-leaf binders labeled "flowers," "birds," "insects," "aerial views," and more. Seen as a whole, the collection is an important visual record of the recent natural history of Toronto.

Most of the slides are mounted and inserted in plastic sheets; but the plastics do not meet current archival standards. Also, the sheets and slides are numbered and labeled, but without a comprehensive database, browsing is awkward and time-consuming. Now that more and more photographers are using digital cameras, the time seems right to preserve TFN's slide collection and, at the same time, make it more

accessible for those preparing displays, slide shows, PowerPoint presentations, and publications.

In the October 2006 newsletter Pinky Franklin mentioned TFN's need for "someone interested in working on our slide collection," and several members responded. Helen Juhola and Pleasance Crawford began the project by re-filing loose slides and, in the process, getting a better understanding of the scope of the holdings. They also visited the slide collection of the herbarium at the ROM and received Deb Metsger and Maggie Dickson's expert advice on storing slides and creating a digital record of a collection such as TFN's.

As a result, TFN purchased two new four-drawer hanging-file cabinets with enough space to house and protect its entire collection. The next task—a daunting one without the help of a few computer-savvy members—is to create a database that will allow users to search for images in a variety of ways. The final jobs are to number the slides, enter them in the computer, insert them in hanging archival preservers, and file those in the new cabinets. Although scanning the slides is not part of this initial process, the database will be able to incorporate digital scans that may be produced later.



Black-capped Chickadee by William Gunn.

If all goes well, images of winter on the Scarborough Bluffs, white-flowered members of the composite family, pupas of mourning cloak butterflies, and TFN outings anywhere in Toronto will all be safely stored and easily retrieved. The work will take time, but it is underway.

*Helen Juhola and Pleasance Crawford*

## MONTHLY LECTURE REPORT

**Diamonds: where they form and how to find them, Sunday, December 3, 2006**

Dr. Dan Schulze, University of Toronto at Mississauga

Diamonds are a girl's best friend right? Well almost, but what with the entire global diamond business (and thus prices) controlled by a tight monopoly, that friend is an awfully expensive piece of carbon for the man in her life. But then any league table where Canada has come from nowhere in 1998 to now being third can't be all that bad: I refer of course to world diamond production and our emerging role as provider of gems to the world.

There is a diamond exploration boom underway in Canada with about 200 diamond exploration projects, involving about 300 different companies and an annual exploration budget of about \$100 million. Exploration is underway in virtually all provinces. By 2013, Canada is expected to supply more than 20% of the world's supply that was worth \$8 billion in 2004.

This was the topic of Dan (the 'Diamond Man') Schulze's lecture to TFN on December 3rd just before Christmas, thereby providing a gem of a lecture for prospective diamond purchasers. Dan told us all about diamond formation, what they are composed of and where they form.

Hearts and diamonds are intertwined in most adverts for wedding bands and they are in another way too, geologically speaking. At the heart of Canada is the Shield made mostly of old hard rocks. Dan told us that it is below this heartland that diamonds have been stored in the upper mantle, about 140 km down, to be released episodically in great bursts of melted rock propelled upwards to the Earth's surface as carrot-shaped kimberlite pipes. A carrot containing carats no less. No one knows the why and wherefore of what exactly happened 2.5 billion years ago, how diamonds have been preserved down there, and what exactly triggers their upward ascent. Take a look at a diamond and you are holding a piece of the innards of planet Earth; not only that but also that thing on your finger is actually older than 2.5 billion years. If that doesn't impress you then,

frankly, nothing ever will. Gaze on a diamond and reflect on the immensity of Earth history.

Finding diamonds was just a pipe dream for a few hardened prospectors in the 1980's. Canada's first kimberlite pipe worth mining was found in the mid-90's in the Yellowknife area of the Northwest Territories, part of the so-called Slave Province which actually hosts the oldest rocks so far known on the planet (4 billion years). The pipe was located by sampling glacial sediments eroded off the pipe by ice sheets during the last glaciation. Diamonds are actually rare in most kimberlites but they are associated with so-called 'accessory' minerals which themselves are common; find these in sediments and kimberlites are close by. Most pipes are now found below lakes; the rock is soft and easily scoured by ice sheets into deep holes. A bit like your checking account after you've visited the jewellers. Pipes have now been found virtually all the way across Canada (except for the southern and eastern parts where the rocks are too young) so, who knows, maybe we can still climb up that league table. Ontario's first mine will open shortly in the far north near James Bay.

During question period, some attendees expressed concerns about the environmental effects of diamond mining in Northern Canada. This issue, and the effectiveness of environmental assessments for mining, will be a topic for a future lecture.

Dan Schulze received his BA at the State University of New York, his MSc at Queen's University, and his PhD at the University of Texas. He was appointed to Queen's in 1984 and came to the University of Toronto as a professor in 1989. His research includes the origin of kimberlites and mantle rocks and he has worked in the far north of Canada, the U.S., South Africa and Venezuela.

Dan is the first TFN lecturer this year to bring samples and we thank him for a sparkling, multifaceted lecture.

*Nick Eyles*

## OUTING REPORT — LESLIE STREET SPIT SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10

This was a typical December day, typical at least for recent years—sunny, warm and delightful! The lagoon waters were open and south winds forced ducks close to shore where we had brilliant views of 13 species and approximately 3,000 ducks (15 Black Duck, 50 Mallard, 20 Gadwall, 2 American Wigeon, 20 Redhead, 500 Greater Scaup, 500 Long-tailed Duck, 500 Common Goldeneye, 15 Bufflehead, 15 Hooded Merganser, 10 Common Merganser, 10 Red-breasted Merganser). Most were in the sheltered cells but offshore we noted White-winged Scoter (1) and a Red-necked Grebe (1). A Horned Grebe was with the ducks by the boat slips.

The highlight of the day was an adult Red-shouldered Hawk—a lifer for several. It flew south low over our heads to the tip, then reversed and flew north back towards the city. I judged the bird to be a late migrant.

We observed virtually no passerine species (only two Black-capped Chickadees and four American Tree Sparrows) or raptors (just one male American Kestrel) on the whole spit including the base. It would seem that the abundant Coyotes, as evidenced by scat, have been out-competing raptors. On the plus side we were

not bothered by European Starlings, House Sparrows, Rock Pigeon or, most blessedly, Canada Geese.

Remarkably we did see six Great Blue Herons including a pair arriving over the lake from points east.

Twenty years ago birdwatchers assumed that fall migration ceased at the end of November—the first of December heralded the beginning of winter. Any bird seen thereafter was a resident or winter transient, certainly not one still in the process of migrating south. Times have changed. In all likelihood, these Great Blue Herons will galvanize themselves and head south before freeze-up. How many will be recorded on the Toronto Christmas Bird count?

As it turns out, Sunday is not a good day for those relying on public transit to walk on the spit. Participants must trek two kilometres from Queen St just to get to the meeting point! During our 4 ½ hour outing we covered about eight kilometres so we obtained lots of exercise value during the day. Perhaps the best way for a birdwatcher to cover the Leslie Spit is with a bicycle and a telescope—we observed several doing so.

*George Bryant*



Great Blue Heron, drawn by Eva Davis

### GREAT BLUE HERON

Silent grey stick, a sentinel,  
Watching over the satin mirror  
Along the shore.  
Disturbed, with raucous squawk  
And slow majestic wings  
Takes flight to stand again,  
Watching in rigid stillness  
On farther shore.

*Jean Collins*

## RISING TEMPERATURES AND SEA LEVELS – NATURAL PHENOMENA?

One would have to be living in a cave not to be aware of the concerns that are being raised by the majority of climate scientists, namely, human activities are causing serious harmful changes to Earth's climate. Although there can be no doubt that the average global temperature and sea levels are rising, many reputable scientists have, for the last 20 years, criticized and offered alternative explanations for the observed climate change. To gain some insights on this issue, I thought the public lecture given by Richard Peltier, an atmospheric scientist, at the University of Toronto in the spring of 2006 was particularly interesting.

To address the skeptics with the popular view that the observed rise in average temperature is due to "natural variability" throughout the history of the earth, the professor presented a chronology of dramatic climate change events that happened from 750 million years ago to the present era. The picture he painted was that the past "natural climate variability" was in direct correlation with the concentration of the amount of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) in the atmosphere and that, at the present time, we are experiencing climate change that is unprecedented in Earth's history.

These conclusions were largely based on chemical models that were derived to fit the measured abundance of certain carbon and oxygen isotopes in surface layers of carbonate rocks and in the sediments on ocean floors from which the extent of ice cover at various periods of time could be inferred.

One such model used the fact that a certain oxygen isotope in the oceans becomes enriched whenever water is removed to form ice sheets. Thus from records of such oxygen isotope abundance in ocean sediment layers, a new phenomenon that began around a million years ago was revealed. Specifically, the records showed that ice age occurred on the earth in cycles of approximately 100,000 years. Furthermore

these ice cover periods were found to correlate with the lows of atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> concentration determined from gas bubbles trapped in Antarctic ice core layers. That is, low temperature coincided with low CO<sub>2</sub> concentration in the atmosphere.

Finally in continuing his theme to the present era, the professor presented to the audience a graph of temperature and CO<sub>2</sub> vs time covering a period from year 1000 to year 2000. The graph, shown below, consists of CO<sub>2</sub> measurements from ice cores and temperatures inferred from indicators such as tree rings, which apart from illustrating the indisputable link between CO<sub>2</sub> concentration and temperature, also show the unprecedented increase ("hockey stick shape") in temperature starting around year 1900. This period, being the start of the industrial revolution and fossil burning, no doubt launched the beginning of drastic anthropogenic (i.e. human) impacts on Earth's climate and which, to this date, is an ever increasing problem that needs to be rectified.

*John Yuen*

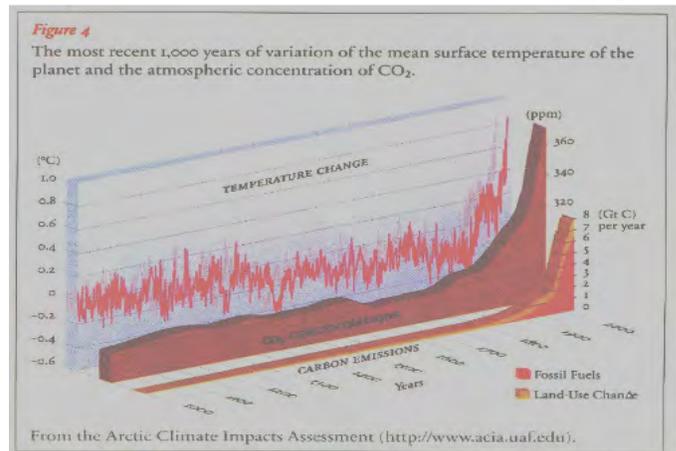


Figure from Arctic Climate Impact Assessment's overview report *Impacts of a Warming Arctic* ([www.acia.uaf.edu](http://www.acia.uaf.edu)). See also W. Richard Peltier, "Earth Evolution and Climate: A History in Carbon." *Arts & Science Review*, University of Toronto, spring 2006

### TFN BOARD NOMINATIONS INVITED

The TFN is looking for people with initiative who are willing to devote time to working as members of the Board of Directors. Please send your suggestions to the Chairman of the Nominating Committee, c/o TFN, 1519 - 2 Carlton St., Toronto, ON M5B 1J3. The report of the Committee will be published in the May newsletter.

## ECOLOGY TIDBITS

### Amphibian Trouble:

Almost 20 years ago, naturalists and biologists started to notice that something was seriously the matter with amphibians. Frog populations all over the world were declining alarmingly or disappearing altogether. Amphibians began turning up with weird deformities. Katheryn Phillips (1994), in an early popular book on the topic, dubbed it “an ecological mystery” and so it remains, though more and more clues are coming to light. Infectious diseases and human-caused environmental changes have been suggested as explanations for amphibian decline. Recent research has turned up evidence in support of both explanations; indeed, one promising hypothesis is that environmental changes are killing off amphibians by promoting lethal infections.

Amphibians are prone to various kinds of infections. For example, Wisconsin biologists recently discovered that limb deformities in salamanders are caused by trematode (flatworm) infections (Johnson et al. 2006). Salamanders are able to regrow limbs that have been lost. Salamanders commonly get their legs bitten off by predators (mainly, it turns out, other salamanders). Trematode infection interferes with the proper development of regrowing limbs.

More serious is chytridiomycosis, an infection which is caused by the fungus *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis* and which is implicated in frog declines the world over. One affected species is the Mountain Yellow-leg Frog (*Rana muscosa*) which used to be the most common frog in eastern California but which has declined by 80% over the past 50 years. A team of U.C. Berkeley biologists examined the effects of chytridiomycosis on this frog in a part of the Sierra Nevada where the frog population was still healthy and where the disease was present at fewer than a fifth of the sites studied (Rachowicz et al. 2006). They found that while chytridiomycosis has little effect on the health of tadpoles, practically all infected individuals die of the disease upon metamorphosis. As a result, frog populations at sites experiencing chytridiomycosis outbreaks declined on average by 88%, while frog populations at sites unaffected by the

disease actually increased by an average 45% over the same 2 year period. Alas, 16% of the previously clean sites had become infected during this time.

Chytridiomycosis is clearly a deadly threat to frogs, but why has it become such a problem in recent decades? Some circumstantial evidence points to climate change. The extinctions of 74 species of frogs in the genus *Atelopus* (found in highlands of South and Central America) over the past 20 years coincided with rising temperatures in these frogs’ habitats (Pounds et al. 2006). The frogs went extinct just as climatic conditions became more favorable to chytridiomycosis outbreaks.

What about the effects of toxic chemicals? Another Berkeley biologist, Tyrone Hayes, has been investigating this issue. He stirred up controversy when he and his team reported that

atrazine—a herbicide widely used in corn farming—could induce sexual deformities in Leopard Frogs at concentrations as low as one tenth of one part per billion (Hayes et al. 2002, 2003). When industry-linked scientists claimed that they could not replicate his results, Hayes (2004) pointed to flaws in the critics’ experiments and argued that even the critics’ data supported the link between atrazine and frog malformation.

In their most recent study, Hayes and his team (2006) examined the effects on frogs of being exposed to low doses (0.1 ppb) of each of nine pesticides commonly used by mid-western corn farmers, and the effects of being exposed to similar doses of all 9 pesticides

simultaneously. The latter treatment, of course, more closely resembles the actual conditions that frogs would experience in the Nebraska countryside (or that of southern Ontario), though when pesticides are approved for use only their individual effects are typically tested. The Hayes team found that none of the pesticides on its own killed more than 8% of the exposed frogs, and some of the pesticides didn’t kill



Yellow Spotted Salamander,  
drawn by Diana Banville



Leopard Frog,  
drawn by Diana Banville

## THE TFN AND I

As long as I can remember I have been fascinated by birds and other wildlife. I grew up in North Toronto by Mount Pleasant Cemetery just before television, so we played outside. I could walk easily to The Beltline and Don Valley and we became familiar with many of the trails. I explored these urban wildlands looking for birds, animals or adventures. Ring-necked Pheasants, Red Foxes and even Loggerhead Shrikes were all common sights then. With my father's help I put



Red Fox drawn by D. Andrew White

names to many of the common birds, but was mystified by the various black and white ducks which we saw in winter. For my twelfth birthday, I received a pair of binoculars and a new Peterson field guide to the birds. Armed with these I headed to Cherry Street to sort out the ducks in Toronto Harbour. I identified Mallards and Blacks but was still confused by the many diving ducks.

As I walked north towards the Queen streetcar, a car full of exuberant young boys stopped to pick me up. Ilmar Talvila, another youngster and leader of the bird group of the Toronto Junior Field Naturalists was the driver. They too had been to the harbour looking at ducks and identified them for me. I learned that the two most abundant diving duck species were Greater Scaup and Common Merganser. I joined the junior club and met Ilmar and the others again at the next meeting in the museum theatre.

From this chance meeting, I became a regular attendee on bird walks led by notables such as Jim Baillie and Dr. Richard Saunders. Jim Baillie gave generously of his time to young birdwatchers, while Dr. Saunders'

early morning walks in Cedarvale Ravine were a not-to-be-missed birding activity. For the next several years I attended many of the monthly evening meetings of the TFN. A year or two later, I was elected Editor of *Flight*, the annual publication of the junior club!

After university, I moved to Hamilton and joined the Hamilton Naturalists Club. By 1973 Stephanie was Club Secretary and I was Editor of *The Wood Duck*. We encouraged exchanges between other club's Newsletters—I was delighted to discover that my mentor Ilmar was Editor of the TFN Newsletter.

We came back to Toronto in 1974 and I quickly rejoined the TFN. While a faithful reader of the Newsletter, work, family and exotic birding pursuits precluded active involvement.

Then in 1990, I got a fortuitous chance to retire even earlier than I had dreamt possible. I had always envied the nature tour operations led by Gus Yaki and Clive Goodwin. For a birdwatcher, what could be better than making your part-time hobby into a full time activity? My interests in natural history are broad—at times I had been almost as keen on botany as on birds, mammals, butterflies, reptiles and amphibians. At the beginning I worked with both Clive and Gus. When Clive decided to retire and Gus moved out of the province, I realized it was time to establish my own nature tour company—Natural History Travel. Both Gus and Clive were very supportive.

In the spring of 1992, I phoned Helen Juhola, then Editor of the TFN Newsletter just to let her know I was planning to lead nature tours. Helen gave me a piece of good advice. "Start off slowly," she said, "and try to develop a loyal clientele over several years." So this is what I did—for the first few years, most of my tours consisted of short one to three days trips out of Toronto. At that time I purchased a bright red jacket so everybody in a tour could readily spot me—their "leader". Many of my participants already belonged to the TFN and if not, we encouraged them to join.

For fifteen years, I've led nature tours. I've visited many places I would never otherwise have seen. We visited all 50 states, ticking off our last state, North Dakota, while touring the International Peace Garden bordering Manitoba. As well, we saw many off-the-beaten-path parts of Canada, such as Cambridge Bay, Dempster Highway and Churchill.

I've also often led TFN outings, sometimes to Mount Pleasant Cemetery, The Beltline or Toronto Island, places I visited frequently while searching for birds in my youth. Once I led an outing to Toronto Island on Saturday of the Victoria Day weekend, perhaps the best time of the year to see migrant birds. Sixty-four people showed up ready to have me point out all the birds! With this many people, I had my hands full. To handle the crowd, we walked to a focal point, stood up on a tree stump or park bench, gave an address on what we were seeing, including birds and plants, and then walked to the next shouting point. This turned out well and, with the many pairs of eyes present, we saw a good selection of birds.

Last June I attended the dedication of the new TFN sanctuary dedicated to Aarne and Helen Juhola. It was a glorious day—I was delighted to see many old friends. In particular, Ilmar Talvila was there—he hasn't changed in fifty years.

Over the course of almost fifteen years, my bright red jacket had faded to a dull pink, to the amusement of many. It had been through many escapades and exotic destinations—I had quite an affection for my tour

guide talisman. In November, on a birding tour to Madagascar, I left my red jacket in a hotel room. Not a good omen, as I discovered on my return to Canada—my travel agent partner was retiring. It wouldn't be easy to find a new partner, so I decided that the time was right for me to retire. I had always realized my second career as a professional nature tour leader would come to an end, but just when I did not know. There were still so many places to visit and flowers to smell.

The Toronto Field Naturalists Club and many individual members have been central to many of my activities, both as a boy and during my years leading tours. This has been a lifelong relationship, and I owe a great debt of gratitude to the TFN and its members.

It is with a twinge of sadness that I wind up my nature tour business, but we had a good run. We, and I include the many members of the TFN who joined me over the years, saw a lot more of the world and enjoyed many more encounters with wildlife and plants than I had dreamt possible. Besides, with a little more free time, I may be able to participate in more TFN activities and possibly attend the odd outing.

*George Bryant*

#### ECOLOGY TIDBITS *continued from page 11.*

any. When the frogs were (more realistically) exposed to all the pesticides simultaneously, however, mortality jumped to 35%. More interesting still, much of the mortality was caused by a distinctive bacterial infection which developed in 70% of the frogs exposed to the mixture of pesticides. None of the frogs exposed to just one pesticide came down with the infection, even though all the frogs were found to carry the bacteria in question. In other words, the synergistic

effect of exposure to several different commonly used pesticides seemed to destroy the frogs' resistance to infection. The disease that killed the frogs in the Hayes study was not the same as the fungal infection that seems to be killing off wild frog populations, but it does at least raise the possibility that pesticides or other chemicals may be implicated in this pandemic.

*Allan Greenbaum*

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## LAKE ONTARIO PARK: PLANNING BEGINS

From the Autumn 2006 newsletter of *Friends of the Spit* (re-printed with permission)

The Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation has engaged a team of consultants, led by *Field Operations* of New York City, to design the new Lake Ontario Park as a signature park for Toronto's waterfront. Geographically, Lake Ontario Park extends from Cherry Beach east to the R.C. Harris Filtration Plant. The park itself will amalgamate and incorporate the existing parks in the Beach, Cherry Beach and the North Shore, and will bring the Spit into the overall Park planning framework.

A public meeting was held at Cherry Beach in June, and the consultants heard from members of the public. In a series of facilitated discussions, group after group reported that a contemporary waterfront park should be tranquil, should work with the environment, should emphasize the lakefront, should provide a rural space for the residents, should retain soft shorelines, keep wild areas wild, etc. etc. etc. Presumably, the consultants got the picture.

From Friends of the Spit's perspective, the Spit is the crown jewel in this Park; it is a Public Urban Wilderness, it is functioning well. It provides a car-free experience, and it provides tranquility, so necessary in Toronto. To expand the Spit to link it through to the Don, within the stabilizing infrastructure of a new park (which will guarantee the Spit's boundaries) all seems quite desirable. A diversity of use is planned for Lake Ontario Park: Friends of the Spit advocates that in the Portlands, the most intense and active uses occur at the north and west with a gradual filter towards the passive more tranquil uses of the Baselands and Spit.

In early October, the consultant team reported to both the LOP Steering Committee (composed mostly of government officials of the various branches) and to the LOP Stakeholders Committee. *Friends of the Spit* has one representative on the Stakeholders Committee. Additionally, other organizations such as the Outer Harbour Sailing Federation, various aquatic clubs, the City Cycling Committee, etc. are represented.

At that time, the Committee was treated to the consultants' initial thoughts. A number were quite progressive, such as the reinstatement of the

Fisherman's Isle barrier beach landform which stretches from Cherry Beach through the North Shore through to Leslie Street, a suggestion that Ashbridges' Bay and Coatsworth Cut might become a giant marsh, with the sailing clubs relocated elsewhere on the Ashbridges' Bay park arm, and a general sense of ecological awareness for the Park.

However, many problems were also apparent with these initial design proposals, including the fact that the existing Tommy Thompson Park Master Plan was essentially ignored. That Master Plan, agreed to in the early '90s with an Environmental Assessment completed in 1995, sets the framework for the Conservation Authority's management of the Park. A great deal of time and effort went into forging that Master Plan. Our position is that it must be maintained and respected.

The consultants' trial balloon of a canal (!!!) bisecting the Baselands and joining the Outer Harbour through to Lake Ontario at Ashbridges' Bay is being strongly and vociferously protested while other illogical ideas such as a camp for children out on the Spit are also meeting with surprise and disapproval (think of the car traffic for servicing the emergency facilities: simply the development to achieve the camp would ruin the very attributes it seeks to praise and witness!!)

The Stakeholders and Steering Committees' comments are being received by the consultants. The TWRC indicates the next meetings of these two committees will be in December. The mandated Public Meeting is scheduled for January 2007. This Public Meeting will present the design concepts to the public-at-large, and, in return, the consultants will receive the public's comments. **Make your views known so that Lake Ontario Park remains unique, with the Spit as the crown jewel in that unique park.** Let's have the "experts" enshrine the concept of "public urban wilderness" and "Let It Be" for the Spit and the Baselands. No fancy canals are needed, no fancy infrastructure: just secure boundaries and the will to have a nature wild park, without cars.

## COYOTE STUDY

Extracts from a report prepared by Rick Portiss, TRCA, presented at a meeting of the Don Watershed Regeneration Council on November 16, 2006 at which the TFN was represented by Sandy Cappell.

The Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) and Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) have been studying the habits and habitats of coyotes in Downsview Park, Tommy Thompson Park and the Lower Don corridor. This study will assist TRCA and its partners in understanding the conditions and nature of coyote-people conflicts as well as determining critical habitat requirements including corridors for these animals. The MNR and TRCA have been in partnership conducting an urban coyote study using radio telemetry techniques since 2001. The study is coming to a conclusion and preliminary findings are now available.

Within the last decade the eastern coyote (*Canis latrans*) has become well established in Tommy Thompson Park, Downsview Park and through the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Coyotes now inhabit many parks, ravines, and valleys and use these green space areas, roads, railways and hydro rights of way as travel corridors from primary habitat areas like Tommy Thompson Park. Concurrent with the growth of the coyote population, the number of reported coyote-people conflicts has risen dramatically. Coyote predation on dogs and cats is commonly reported. Coyote fearlessness towards people is frequently interpreted by members of the public as aggressiveness and a cause for concern about the safety of both humans and pets.

TRCA and the City of Toronto are the two principal land owners in the GTA that respond to public concerns about coyotes. In November 1999 staff met with local municipalities, animal control specialists, human societies and interest groups to assess and determine the criteria for managing nuisance coyotes and discussed the possible range of management actions needed to address coyote-people conflicts. At this meeting there was general concurrence that resolving issues about urban coyotes has to be based on

an enhanced understanding of the habits and habitats of these animals.

Since this initial meeting, staff have established a partnership with MNR to further improve understanding of these urban canids and conduct a coyote telemetry research project at the Lower Don Port Land, Tommy Thompson Park and Downsview Park. This telemetry work has allowed [them] to determine urban coyote population densities, organization among family groups or packs, behaviour (including fearlessness towards people and attacks on pets as prey items), territorial fidelity, food habits, dispersion of sub-adults and diseases. The previous lack of available information on these aspects of urban coyote ecology was possibly undermining the effectiveness of many management decisions directed

towards resolving and preventing conflicts with people.

### Preliminary Results:

Coyotes are highly adaptable and have been part of the urban landscape for several decades across North America. However, study of urban

populations has been very limited, and

there has been a general assumption that urban coyotes are restricted to areas such as ravines, golf courses and parks. Preliminary analysis of the data in this study shows three major findings:

- 1) Coyotes are not restricted to natural areas and golf courses. Radio-collared coyotes in the study utilized both active and derelict industrial lands that contained virtually no natural areas such as woodlots or ravines.
- 2) Coyotes showed a propensity for areas that are fenced off, or otherwise off limits to public use (e.g. brown fields). In these areas coyotes appear to adapt to active industrial activity, possibly more readily than they do to direct human contact (e.g. people and dogs in urban parks and ravines).

*Continued on page 17.*



Coyote, drawn by D. Andrew White

## DECLINING SCAUP POPULATION

Extracted from an article by Megan Ogilvie in the Winter 2006/2007 issue of *ON NATURE*

Each year, during spring and fall migrations, tens of thousands of scaup stop to rest and feed for several weeks on the lower Great Lakes. There are between 3.4 and 3.5 million scaup in North America, according to recent estimates. This is the lowest number ever recorded for scaup since the Waterfowl Breeding Population and Habitat Survey began in 1955.

Ornithologists first noticed a decline in the continental scaup population in the 1970s. Over the next two decades, scaup numbers continued to drop – precipitously. But experts weren't worried. Other waterfowl populations were falling, primarily due to drought conditions on the prairies, which are prime breeding grounds for many of these species. But as water conditions on the prairies improved, so too did waterfowl populations. Except for scaup. "Their population has continued to decline every year, even at a time when most other waterfowl species are returning," says Scott Petrie [research director of The Long Point Waterfowl and Wetlands Research Fund (LPWWRF)].

Scaup populations have dropped from about 6.3 million in the mid 1980s to about 3.5 million now. Waterfowl scientists across North America are trying to determine what caused the decline in the population and what is impeding its recovery. Christine Custer, a wildlife biologist with the U.S.

Department of the Interior who studied scaup in the late 1990s, worries that a plummeting scaup population is indicative of other problems in an ecosystem. "Scaup could be the canary in the coal mine," she says. "Something is going on somewhere. If their population is having problems, it could mean bigger ramifications for other animal and plant species."

Waterfowl scientists are investigating three main hypotheses for falling scaup populations. One theory is that human-induced climate change is altering the ecosystem at breeding grounds for scaup in the north. Researchers are also studying whether food limitations – snails are one of the birds' primary food sources – in the upper midwest prairies are affecting scaup survival.

Here in Ontario, Petrie and his colleague Shannon Badzinski, also with LPWWRF, which is run out of Bird Studies Canada in Port Rowan, are investigating how environmental contaminants, acquired when the birds stop to rest and feed on the Great Lakes, affect scaup reproduction or survival.

According to Petrie, scaup are in danger of being poisoned by a new food source – zebra mussels. The non-native species of mollusk was accidentally introduced to the Great Lakes in the mid-1980s and has since multiplied, spreading to all the Great Lakes, choking out other lake life and dramatically changing aquatic ecosystems. As zebra mussels began to cover the rocky bottoms of the Great Lakes, more and more scaup started to spend longer periods of time on their staging grounds on Lake Ontario and Lake Erie. Scaup numbers at Long Point on Lake Erie jumped from an average of about 7,500 birds during the 1970s and 1980s to nearly 50,000 in the 1990s. Quickly adapting

to the new, abundant food, scaup switched to a diet dominated by zebra mussels, eating less of their traditional foods, such as native gastropods and aquatic plants. LPWWRF studies confirmed that scaup now eat large quantities of zebra mussels on the lower Great Lakes in the spring. But this novel food was no blessing, says



Petrie. Zebra mussels, which feed by filtering phytoplankton from the water column, accumulate contaminants from the water much faster than do native mollusk species, which feed on algae growing on rocks. The mussels, in turn, pass the contaminants on to their predators, including scaup.

One such contaminant is selenium, a semi-metallic element birds require in trace amounts but that is toxic at high doses. Selenium occurs naturally in rocks and soils. In the Great Lakes region, however, soils are deficient in the mineral and it is believed that the element gets into the Great Lakes as an industry byproduct, primarily from the burning of fossil fuels.

Preliminary research has shown that selenium is the only contaminant present in high enough amounts to damage the health of the scaup that spend time on the Great Lakes. LPWWRF studies have shown that at least 77 percent of Lesser Scaup and 94 percent of Greater Scaup in the lower Great Lakes left spring staging area with potentially unhealthy burdens of selenium. The research is clear: scaup are acquiring selenium after they arrive at the lower Great Lakes in the spring and begin eating hundreds of zebra mussels.

Until last year, Petrie's research focused on lesser scaup, but the population of greater scaup may also be declining. Lindsay Ware, a master's student at the University of Western Ontario, has begun to investigate whether unhealthy burdens of contaminants affect the overall health of greater scaup. She has made Lake Ontario's Hamilton Harbour her research spot. Hamilton Harbour, a 2,000-hectare embayment separated from Lake Ontario by a long, sloping sandbar, is bounded by highways, industry and urban waterfronts. Steel plants loom over the southern shore,

rock and rubble form unnatural beaches and piers poke like long tongues into the murky bay. Scaup, like many waterfowl, use Hamilton Harbour as a staging ground during both their spring and fall migrations. But some greater scaup are now opting to winter in the harbour, where warmer lake waters do not freeze over and an abundance of zebra mussels provides a year-round smorgasbord for the birds.

If waterfowl scientists could definitively show that elevated selenium levels are affecting scaup health and reproduction, this evidence may be enough to initiate a clean-up of the lower Great Lakes of selenium. "We're not going to get rid of zebra mussels," Petrie laughs. "But we could reduce the amount of selenium getting into the Great Lakes by regulating industry in the region." Doing that could help scaup, as well as a number of yet unknown species, bounce back to traditional population numbers. "This theory won't be the one silver bullet to solve scaup population decline," says Petrie. But, he suggests, it may prove to be a final piece in a yet unsolved puzzle.

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#### COYOTE STUDY *continued from page 15*

3) Dispersing coyotes used railway lines to travel widely. Several resident coyotes from the two study areas (Downsview and the Lower Don Port Lands) used railway lines to disperse to areas north of the city as far away as Midland and Keswick. These findings, among others, are important in consideration of coyote conflict issues and improved public messaging on urban coyotes.

This research has given TRCA and MNR valuable insight into the function and features of connective corridors between Tommy Thompson Park, Lower

Don Port Lands, Downsview Park and the surrounding urban areas. Delineating these connective corridors provides valuable insight into the habitat requirements of these animals and information gained from this type of study would be valuable, if not essential, to sound planning decisions related to the City of Toronto's waterfront revitalization initiatives. Understanding both the causes of conflicts and the habitat requirements of coyotes improves the management of our areas and provides some direction to any future planning to allow for an improved coexistence between communities and coyotes.

#### ATLAS OF THE BREEDING BIRDS OF ONTARIO 2001-2005

The atlas is available at special pre-publication prices substantially lower than the anticipated retail price of \$96. For orders placed by February 28, 2007, prices (including shipping, handling and GST) are:  
 \$67 for Atlassers (people who participated in the atlas project), and  
 \$79 for non-atlassers.

Order online at [www.birdsontario.org](http://www.birdsontario.org), or by phone at 1-866-900-7100. Publication due September 2007.

## KEEPING IN TOUCH

### Downy Woodpecker Rescue

*In response to the request from FLAP published in our December Newsletter, TFN member Elizabeth Block reported the following experience:*



Downy Woodpecker,  
drawn by  
Geraldine Goodwin

The meeting room at Quaker House in Toronto has a long, high plate glass window facing the garden. A few years ago, during announcements at the end of meeting, there was a thud. A Downy Woodpecker had hit the glass and was lying stunned outside. As soon as announcements were over, several of us, including John Sparling who is an expert

birder, went outside. John moved his finger in front of the bird; she followed it with her eyes. Then he touched her lightly on the breast and whoosh! off she flew. She was OK.

After that, we put a couple of those black silhouettes of falcons on the glass. There is no way of knowing if it has prevented other birds from flying into the glass; if they did, and they were hurt or killed, John says that a raccoon would probably have eaten them.

*Elizabeth Block*

### Predation Observed

During an evening walk along a biking/hiking asphalt trail beside a tributary of the St. Maurice River in Shawinigan, Quebec on July 26, 2006, we saw what was undoubtedly a murder.

An earthworm, about 20 cm long, shot across our path like an arrow. Almost immediately a 2 cm-long narrow black creature caught up with it, biting and encircling the worm's body about a third of the way from its end. The worm writhed violently and exuded mucus, but the creature held on until the worm stopped moving. On looking more closely, I could see that the creature appeared to be a beetle larva. Since then I have decided (after consulting ALL my insect books) it was probably a firefly larva. According to *The Insect*

*Guide* by R.B. Swain (1948), "the larvae of fireflies are entirely predacious. Snails are the chief food [but] earthworms also figure in their diet." The beetle larva is said to inject a paralyzing fluid into its prey, which may greatly exceed it in size.

That was one of the most interesting observations I made last summer.

*Helen Juhola*

### Environment Monitoring and Protection

To report spills in our watercourses (or anyone dumping inappropriate liquids into storm sewers), please call:

**Toronto Water Spill Reporting at 416-338-8888.**

Recently I saw water in the Curity Ravine looking like milk. I spoke to a man in a nearby truck marked "Environmental Monitoring and Protection", and he said he had looked into the matter. It's only by contacting *Toronto Water Spill Reporting* that agents can get to the pollution quickly and possibly find its source.

Remember, all that stuff is on its way to Lake Ontario, the source of our drinking water!

*Helen Juhola*

### Osage Oranges

I call this "Forbidden Fruit." It's a photo of osage



oranges at the Christie plant on the Queensway. I was able to collect a few that had fallen outside the fence. I keep them in a basket for their citrus scent. Several osage orange

trees grow at this location (both male and female) so there is usually a lovely crop of fruit. It's a southern species related to mulberries.

*Helen Juhola*

## The Hazards of Good Intentions

I recall the occasion when, exiting from the side door of my Scarborough apartment building, I passed a Blue Box, empty – but for a small mouse frantically attempting to scale its plastic sides and constantly sliding back down. Taking pity, I up-ended the box, and went on my way, replete with Good Deeds.

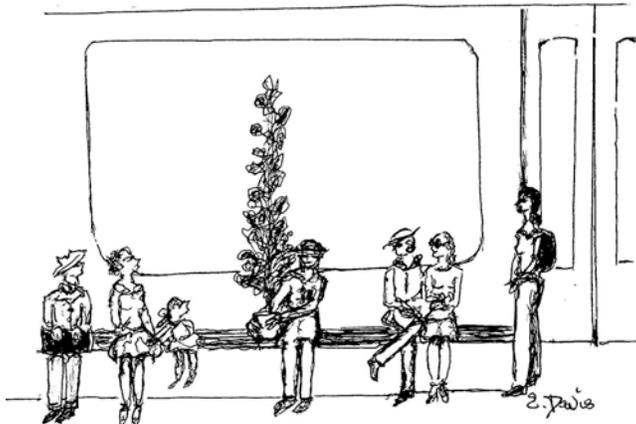
At the bus stop I became aware that All Was Not Well. The other travelers were eyeing me warily from a distance. And indeed, something was running around inside my blouse! The mouse had latched onto my trousers and continued upwards where it was desperately seeking an outlet. I clutched and smacked in an effort to nail the culprit, when, with a Herculean effort, it ran the length of my arm and squeezed itself under my cuff, where it exited in an arc that took it across the streetcar tracks into someone's garden. At that fortuitous moment, the bus arrived. Just think if I had boarded, not knowing! The chaos that could have resulted; the lifting of skirts; the standing on seats; the general squeals of upset! And, much more to the point, I might have sat on the poor thing. (I have never understood the panic induced by a mouse. After all, it is not a physical threat to life or limb, and we are monumentally bigger!)

The other occasion resulted from taking pity on a discarded plant. It had been thrown over someone's garden wall. It was in a pot. It was beautiful and

flourishing and came up to my waist. Belonging to the school (supported by some of the world's greatest philosophers) which believes that all living things are sentient – quite apart from the fact that some of my best houseplants have been salvaged from someone's dumpings – I picked it up and carted it home. Everyone stared at me on the subway. A young woman stopped dead as she exited and nearly got caught in the doors. A young man winked and enquired, in a whisper, where I had got that plant. "It had been thrown away," I explained. Satisfied (why?) he slithered back into line. On the bus the staring continued until the good woman next to me couldn't stand it and informed me that I was hugging a marijuana plant. This broke the ice, and for the rest of the journey I was the centre of attention with directions on what to do with it. Never burn it. The smoke would attract unwelcome attention, and possibly the police. (This was at the height of the forbidden substances campaign, though it was still perfectly legal to smoke yourself to death.) On the other hand, I could incorporate its narcotic effects into cookies, which

would make me the life and soul of any party. Once home, I put it on my balcony where it grew so rapidly that I finally had to stop watering it and watch it slowly die. All this, because of our silly predilections! (And I still rescue any discarded plant I come across.)

*Eva Davis*



## TRUMPETER SWANS

The Ontario Field Ornithologists (ONTBIRDS) are winding down their Trumpeter Swan Reintroduction Program and cygnets are no longer being released. Any sightings of Trumpeter Swans should be reported directly to Harry Lumsden (email: [THEHOLTENTWO@cs.com](mailto:THEHOLTENTWO@cs.com)) or Bev Kingdon (email: [bev.ki@sympatico.ca](mailto:bev.ki@sympatico.ca))

Please include number of birds, date, time, location and band numbers if visible, colour of both the tag and number, tag type (wing, collar, etc). The information supplied will go a long way in helping to keep track of the general well-being of the Trumpeter population.

## In Praise of Boston Ivy

I am amazed that, of all the hundreds of articles I have read about the ways in which we can help our environment, I have never come across one that recommended the planting of Boston Ivy (*Parthenocissus tricuspidata*).

The ivy leaves absorb carbon, thus cutting back on the amount of greenhouse carbon dioxide in our atmosphere just as other vegetation does. Our house is like a big rectangular tree in the summer season, providing all the advantages of photosynthesis to the noxious atmosphere of our city.

Our ivy helps conserve electricity because we don't need air conditioning. The big ivy leaves completely shade the bricks and prevent the sun's hot rays from warming the house in the summer. It is a pleasure to enter our cool house on a hot summer day. Since Boston Ivy is deciduous, we do not lose the advantage of the sun's rays in winter. Thus, there is a saving in heating oil from the sun shining on the brick walls.

We should explain why we planted Boston Ivy. We bought our home thirty years ago, a well-built thirty-five year old brick house. The only problem was that the previous owners had added imitation shutters around the windows and in painting the shutters had got a good deal of paint on the brickwork. We had poor success at removing the paint, and decided to cover the brick with Boston Ivy. We planted ivy at the foot of the house walls and before long our house was covered with handsome shiny three-lobed leaves which turn bright red in the fall.

In October we have a great crop of small purple grapes that attract many fruit-eating birds. The dominant species is Hermit Thrush; as many as a dozen at a time swooping in and grabbing the berries and sitting on the fence to eat them. There are also robins and starlings and once in awhile a catbird, a cardinal or even a phoebe. When the migrants have left, a few grapes remain and dry up on the vines to provide food for the winter birds. Last December a Hermit Thrush stayed on and added a record for the Toronto Christmas Bird Count.

We had heard stories of ivy damaging walls by sending out rootlets to anchor the plant and gather nourishment and moisture, so we checked from time to time to see if this was so. We found that the ivy did not use rootlets, but rather little sticky pads to grip the wall. In thirty years, the ivy has done no damage to the brick. In fact, we feel that the leaves have provided protection to the bricks from the sun and rain.

We have never concerned ourselves with watering or fertilizing our ivy. It gets along fine without such attention. The only maintenance our Boston Ivy requires is an annual trimming around the windows and at places where it attempts to spread up onto the roof. Since the plant is easily cut or torn from the wall, this task can be accomplished in a morning by anyone capable of climbing a ladder.

If you have a brick home, we highly recommend the planting of Boston Ivy. You will not only be serving your own interest, but also those of our natural environment.

*George Fairfield*

### VOLUNTEERS NEEDED WESTERN WATERFRONT PLAN

In January 2007 the City of Toronto is embarking on the development of a Master Plan for the Western Waterfront between Marilyn Bell Park and the Humber River. This area features 41 hectares of parkland, including the Martin Goodman and Humber River Trails, three City beaches (collectively known as Sunnyside Beach) and key historic sites. For further information, visit

[www.toronto.ca/waterfront/pdf/western\\_waterfront\\_report\\_29aug06.pdf](http://www.toronto.ca/waterfront/pdf/western_waterfront_report_29aug06.pdf)

We feel it is important that the TFN participate in this process. If you are interested in this part of the City and would be willing to attend meetings, please contact Barry Mitchell, c/o the TFN office (see page 2).

## FROM THE ARCHIVES

THE DEER YARD AND WINTER AT BOYD, from an article in TFN Newsletter no. 155, April 1958.

During the recent F.O.N. field trip (February 23) held in co-operation with the Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, local naturalists were given a striking demonstration of the unsuspected wealth of wild life still to be found within easy reach of Toronto.

Hardly had we got out of our cars in the valley at the Boyd Property, a new MTRCA park and conservation project in the Humber Valley between Woodbridge and Kleinburg, when someone shouted, "Look!" We did, and saw two deer dashing from a hemlock wood onto the river; two more followed, then a fifth, and all five deer went streaming in line up the bank and along a hillside in full view. Tails raised, heads arched, they made a wonderful sight, and a perfect introduction to the park. The best part was that this was no prearranged affair; this was a natural sight, naturally occurring, within 25 miles of the center of Toronto, such a sight as most Torontonians would think you had to go a hundred miles at least to see. What a proof this was of the value and success of protection.

And we were to have more! When we broke into parties and went into the wood, what should we find but the spot where the deer had been bedding down. John Mitchele made the discovery, and heralds were immediately dispatched to call in members of other parties nearby. Few of the people present had ever seen a deer "yard", as such winter resting and feeding grounds are called. Certainly it was new to me though I have tramped miles of bush in winter where deer yards could have been. The greyish ellipses, melted hollows in the snow where the deer had lain the previous night, were dotted about beneath the heaviest hemlock cover. Beside each hollow was a pile of dark droppings, and leading to and away from the "bed" were lines of tracks. As we wandered further in the thick evergreen grove we found more and more evidence: additional beds, more droppings, more tracks, which showed conclusively that the deer had been using this grove for a long time as their regular winter home. Wherever cedar (*arbor vitae*) existed, the lower branches had been browsed. In some places cedars had fallen or branches had been broken off, presumably as a result of ice storms: in such cases the deer had stripped them clean. In a few spots to which deer tracks led the snow had been cleared forcibly from steep banks, as if the animals had been seeking roots or

ferns to eat. The Authority men who were with us said that about ten deer were living in the park. At this late date in the winter season food may be getting scarce, though the snowfall this winter has hardly been very serious in the Toronto region.

The deer and deer yard were assuredly the major find of the trip. Still, the deer were by no means the only animals to be found or which were living in this area. One of the party caught sight of a large hole, some 20-25 feet up a tall tree. When I looked at the hole I was able, through my binoculars, to see that, snugly inside, a large porcupine was cozily asleep. One (person) was especially interested in seeing the porcupine's tracks. Right at the base of the tree this was not possible, since the animal had packed a trail so hard that no individual tracks were discernible. A few yards off, however, the broad snowshoe-like tracks could be made out. And, inasmuch as we had just seen a perfect set of raccoon tracks a little farther back in the wood, it was possible to demonstrate the difference between the two tracks to perfection.

The only trouble with tracks and their study in this wood was that they were so numerous, so interlacing, over-lapping and mixed together that often it was difficult to find a clear track of one species. The snow under the trees looked rather as if a five o'clock animal rush hour had occurred. The whole wood was in fact riddled with tracks, and if they were sometimes hard to tell apart they were at the same time mute testimony to a teeming animal population. Fox, red squirrel, cottontail, jack rabbit, raccoon, porcupine, deer, weasel, mice, were all represented. A world of mysteries was there to be investigated if any observer could and would take the time.

Indeed, the visit to the Boyd Property was a revelation. The long sweep of valley, flanked with groves of evergreen and hardwoods, everywhere full of signs of wild life, was both beautiful and heartening. To know that the MTRCA is really acquiring lands of this size (the Boyd Property is 230 acres) and character raises the real prospect of our being on the way to building up a park and conservation system worthy of the name, and one commensurate with the immense demands that must be put on it in so densely populated an area.

*Ed.*: The writer of this article, though not named, but was probably Dr. Richard M. Saunders, newsletter editor from 1938 to 1965 and club president from 1940 to 1943.

## IN THE NEWS

### DEER HUNTING IN ROUGE RAISES CONCERNS

Extracted from an article by Mike Adler in Scarborough Mirror, December 1<sup>st</sup> 2006 (reprinted with permission)

Tree stands and discarded deer parts suggest Scarborough's Rouge Park is attracting another kind of nature lover – bow hunters. If that surprises some people, given the park is run by a public agency with a no-hunting policy, they are not alone.

Andy McKinnon, an amateur photographer out to document the urban wilderness and its animals, knew nothing about hunting there until a day 18 months ago when he happened to look up. There was a man with a crossbow. Since then, McKinnon said he's found field dressings, entrails, hooves, deer heads and bags of body parts along the side of Sewells Road, near a farm field that contained several tree stands along its edges last week. "You can see people here pretty well every day," McKinnon said. So numerous now they're a nuisance to farmers and may be damaging some replanted areas of the park. White-tailed Deer were once made a symbol by those fighting to keep the Rouge Valley green. Long before the park was opened in 1995, members of Save The Rouge Valley System wore T-shirts depicting a doe and young fawn.

When McKinnon first saw a hunter in the park, he called police. The police asked McKinnon for pictures, which made him nervous, he recalled. "Do you want to take a picture of an armed man?" Next, McKinnon contacted the park's managers, its owner the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, responsible for hunting regulations. None of the agencies, Toronto police nor the city itself – whose municipal code says people need a permit to bring a bow or other offensive weapon into a park – has really done anything about it, McKinnon said.

Rouge Park assistant manager, Barb Davies, said park staff have no enforcement powers, so there's not much they can do other than remove the stands. The ministry and conservation authority say they respond to complaints but have few staff for enforcement.

A place with a lot of deer will attract hunters, said Paul Harpley, a Toronto Zoo manager and long-time observer of deer in the valley. An early member of Save The Rouge, Harpley said the group had its own concerns about hunters. "We had the police involved a fair bit," he remembers, but added, "hunting seemed to cease by the time the park opened." Harpley, who is on the park's natural heritage committee, advised management to study how deer browsing is affecting the park, noting their attraction to areas replanted by Friends of the Rouge Watershed and other groups.



White-tailed Deer, photographed by Wendy Rothwell

"The browse survey will be completed this spring," said Davies, adding local farmers have complained deer are taking an increasing toll on crops. "In some areas," she said, "you see trilliums the size of a quarter because this is their second sprouting." Future plantings may have to use older plants, different species or other methods of discouraging deer, which can leap over fences but are reluctant to jump tape that moves in the wind,"

Davies said, but added, "You can't tape the whole park."

Urban green belts such as Rouge are holding more and more deer, the result of a population explosion during the last two decades. The only way to deal with that excess and reduce the growing number of deer-vehicle collisions is by hunting, said Ed Reid, wildlife biologist for the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters. Stressing he doesn't defend people who hunt illegally, Reid said he's confident hunting on the edge of the city can be safe, and noted other Southern Ontario conservation authorities allow hunting or have agreements with local hunting groups. "It's not at all too soon to start talking about deer management in the park," he concluded.

Though admitting he's not sure how the park could control its deer population without a hunt, Ron Dewell (of the TRCA) said the authority's ban comes down to safety. In its half-century of management, the authority has only allowed one controlled deer hunt: 20 years ago

after market gardeners in the Vaughan hamlet of Nashville complained. "But the hunt had little effect," Dewell said.

"Deer may be damaging the planting sites but their browsing doesn't seem like a serious problem," said Jim Robb, general manager of Friends of the Rouge

Watershed. Saying he doesn't object to hunts but is concerned for the safety of people and pets, Robb is calling on the city to dedicate a bylaw enforcement officer for northeast Scarborough so the park has help dealing with hunters, unauthorized ATV use and frequent dumping along park roads.

## CABINET APPROVES EXPANSION OF MASSIVE MILTON QUARRY

A media release posted on eco-site.comm. December 7, 2006

In a stunning betrayal of the Ontario Liberal government's signature environment accomplishment, Dalton McGuinty's Cabinet has just approved the expansion of the largest active quarry in Canada in the middle of the Golden Horseshoe Greenbelt. The quarry expansion on the Niagara Escarpment, which is part of the Greenbelt, was vigorously opposed at an 82-day public hearing by two environment organizations, the Coalition on the Niagara Escarpment (CONE) and Protect Our Water and Environmental Resources (POWER) - both of whom are member groups in the Ontario Greenbelt Alliance. At a minimum, this decision means major disruption for many decades to the Escarpment's natural green corridor just north of Highway 401 in Halton Region.

Dufferin Aggregates' Milton Quarry property is a highly ecologically significant area: The 205-acre expansion will squeeze the Escarpment's continuous green corridor in the Halton Forest, which is the largest tract of forest along the Escarpment south of Grey County and the largest intact upland forest in the Greater Toronto Area. The quarry expansion will provide only 10 to 12 years of stone. Yet the ecological integrity of the Greenbelt will be jeopardized for centuries to come because the environmental mitigation measures during and after quarrying will involve massive engineering works for water control that will need to operate successfully forever in an attempt to protect the water resources of the area - wetlands, creeks and groundwater tables.

"It is unconscionable that a government would entrust environmental protection for hundreds or thousands of years to a human-made engineering solution that purports to hold back a wall of water created by mining below the groundwater table - all for the sake of 10 to 12 years of quarrying," said CONE President Jean Hilborn.

In exchange for squeezing the Escarpment's natural corridor, McGuinty's Cabinet hoped to sweeten the bitter pill of this environmentally devastating decision by stating that Cabinet would support an amendment to the Niagara Escarpment Plan to add to the Plan Area some adjacent lands owned by Dufferin Aggregates. "There is no way that this land swap makes up for the precious natural corridor that will be lost," said POWER President Leslie Adams. "The Niagara Escarpment is supposed to be permanent and continuous, not something to be shoved around to suit a quarry company."

The Cabinet decision was accompanied by a two-page statement which attempts to rationalize the quarry expansion. Cabinet states that approving the expansion does not "contravene applicable laws, policies or regulations." On the contrary, CONE and POWER's position is that the expansion offends the very purpose of the Niagara Escarpment Plan. As stated in the Plan, the purpose is "to provide for the maintenance of the Niagara Escarpment and land in its vicinity substantially as a continuous natural environment and to ensure only such development occurs as its compatible with that natural environment." CONE and POWER provided scientific expert witnesses and a 163-page final argument for the public hearing outlining the ways in which the quarry expansion would run afoul of the purpose and objectives of the Plan. The arguments were reaffirmed in a 59-page appeal to Cabinet.

"Dufferin Aggregates is this government's first big, tough decision about protecting the Niagara Escarpment since coming to power in 2003," said CONE's Jean Hilborn, vowing that "This quarry decision will generate outrage in the environmental community and with the Ontario public across the Greenbelt and beyond."

*Ed.* A number of TFN members signed a petition protesting this proposed development.

## DEER STRUCK BY CAR

The Toronto Star reported that a 270 kilogram buck was struck by a car on the Bayview Extension near Rosedale Valley Road on Saturday, December 9. The Toronto Humane Society came to the rescue and determined that injuries were minimal – broken teeth

and an injured shoulder. After initial treatment, the deer was taken to Aspen Valley Wildlife Sanctuary near Huntsville, whose staff are optimistic it will recover and be released.

## MORE LANDOWNERS NOW HELPING TO PROTECT OAK RIDGES MORAINES

A media release issued by Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation, November 7, 2006, [www.ormf.com](http://www.ormf.com)

More landowners are now helping to protect the Oak Ridges Moraine, as a result of a major landowner contact program launched earlier this year in selected areas of the Oak Ridges Moraine, part of Ontario's Greenbelt. Called the 'Caring for the Moraine Project' (CMP), it was created by 23 conservation and environmental organizations working together to provide coordinated conservation services, made possible with a grant of \$230,000 from the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation, and contributions from the project organizations totaling \$460,000.

Over the past six months, more than 40,000 landowners living in three large areas of the Moraine containing important and sensitive environmental features have been contacted. This has resulted in more than 160,000 trees planted over an area of 80 hectares, almost 2.5 kilometers of restored streams in important watershed locations, and over 3 hectares of new wetlands. The CMP will continue next year, in newly expanded project areas, with \$600,000 of new funding from the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation and over \$1 million in funding contributions from the partner organizations.

This is the first time that major conservation and environmental protection agencies and organizations on the Moraine have come together to develop a strategic plan and provide comprehensive, coordinated conservation services for landowners living in particularly important areas of the Moraine.

The CMP is strictly a voluntary program. It has been designed to be a user friendly, one-stop starting point for people who own land on the Oak Ridges Moraine and are seeking advice on land management and restoration, on protecting their drinking water sources,

and on how to improve their property value while helping to protect its natural features.

The Oak Ridges Moraine is one of Ontario's most prominent ecosystems. Its rolling hills, unique kettle lakes, hiking trails and vistas stretch across the top of the Greater Toronto Area. It is a big area - more than 160 kilometers in length. Stretching from the Niagara Escarpment in Caledon to east of Rice Lake, it is the starting point of the 65 rivers flowing into Lake Ontario, Lake Simcoe and the Kawartha Lakes, and is the source of drinking water for over 250,000 people. It is important that Moraine landowners get good advice and support to help them protect these vital areas.

"This project demonstrates that landowners on the Moraine want to help protect its many important environmental features," said Kate Potter, co-ordinator of the project. With this project, landowners can access the resources, experience and expertise of almost two dozen organizations, ranging from the Community Streams Stewards Program, Conservation Authorities on the Moraine, Ducks Unlimited Canada, Kawartha Heritage Conservancy, Large Woodlands Conservation Cooperative, local municipalities, the Nature Conservancy of Canada, the Oak Ridges Trail Association, Stewardship Councils on the Moraine and the Wetland Habitat Fund.

The three new expanded areas for the project are: (1) The Western Headwaters area, covering parts of Peel and York Region, and Simcoe County (2) The York-Durham Headwaters area, covering parts of York and Durham Region, and (3) The Ganaraska Hills area, covering parts of Durham Region, Northumberland and Peterborough Counties and the City of Kawartha Lakes.

## HAWKS DEAL DEATH FROM ABOVE

From an article by Rob Ferguson in the *Toronto Star*, November 4, 2006 (reprinted courtesy Torstar Syndication Services)

Sometimes there's no safe place to hide when you're under attack at the Legislature. Politicians have learned this over decades – often the hard way – as rivals and reporters circle in for the, um, kill.

But the lesson has truly been a matter of life and death for the rapidly dwindling squirrel population at Queen's Park, thanks to a family of Red-tailed Hawks nesting atop the Legislature's west wing since last spring. "They're doing a job on them," says one staffer who regularly watches the Queen's Park air show. It features dramatic high-speed fly-by snatches of the bushy-tailed rodents and mid-air takedowns of birds leaving a poof of feathers fluttering gently to earth. "As you can see, there are no pigeons here," he adds, gesturing upward.

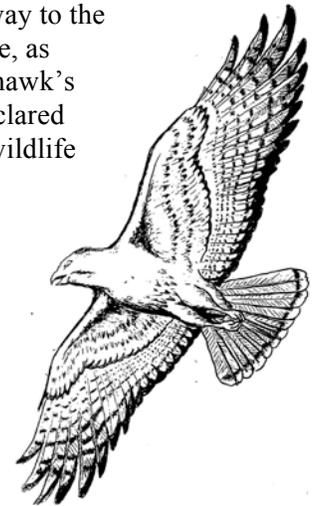
Indeed, at the busiest time of the year for squirrels, it's unusual to find more than two or three on the vast front lawn of Queen's Park at any one time. They learn to stay close to the trees – or else. It's also getting harder to lure squirrels into the open for a free peanut, a habit picked up by more than a few hawk helpers eager for a rare glimpse of Mother Nature's wild side. Any other year, dozens of the cute, furry critters would be out burying nuts for the winter. Alas, the hawks are so thorough in their eating habits that there aren't even any leftovers.

What mesmerizes the denizens of Queen's Park, from passers by to veteran politicians, is the spectacle of Darwin's survival of the fittest unfolding in the middle of Toronto. "In the seven years I've been at Queen's Park, I've never seen hawks choose to nest at the Pink Palace," says Labour Minister Steve Peters. "Most urbanites would think raptors would be nesting out in the wild, not in downtown Toronto."

Red-tailed Hawks are the most common hawks in North America, mainly seen in the open countryside, where clear vistas make spotting prey easier, according to a website produced by the Cornell University Lab of Ornithology in Ithaca, N.Y. But they're also seen in cities when conditions are right, said Nathalie Karvonen, of the Toronto Wildlife Centre. "They do tend to like grassy areas where they can watch things," she told *The Star*. "They may even go hunting at the backyard bird feeder."

Another regular watcher notes the Legislature, with big, heavily treed parks front and back, is the next best thing to a grocery store for hungry hawks. "There's not too many other hunting areas in the downtown," notes Julian Zielenski, a cystic fibrosis researcher at the Hospital for Sick Children, who regularly gets off the subway a couple of stops early to watch the hawks, camera in hand. "It's amazing to encounter this in the heart of the city, not just them being here, but breeding here."

Most regulars agree the mama and papa hawk hatched three babies in a nest above a third-floor office window. Mama is easy to spot because she's bigger than her husband, a hawk trait. While the Legislature's maintenance crew will gently discourage birds from nesting on windowsills – and young raccoons from settling in the doorway to the lieutenant governor's suite, as happened this year – the hawk's huge nest was quickly declared off limits. "For me, it's wildlife appreciation," said Peter Battaglino, supervisor of building services and housekeeping, who shepherded the wayward raccoon to a grove of nearby trees. "There's not too much around here downtown with all the buildings and pavement and pollution."



Red-tailed Hawk by D. Andrew White

There are more practical reasons, too. The nest is almost a metre across and no one wants to meet up with hawks angry about an unexpected eviction notice. They stand almost 30 centimetres tall with sharp talons and a beak built for carnivorous pleasures. "Those aren't pieces of straw in that nest. They're tree branches," added Battaglino. He has another reason for appreciating the hawks, who have helped limit the buildup of bird droppings on statues around the property by hunting seagulls, pigeons and their feathered friends. "I'd like them to stay year round to help keep this place clean, like a Queen's Park pet."

## WEATHER (THIS TIME LAST YEAR)

### February, 2006

February brought a return to more normal winter conditions, but with relatively little snow cover. The virtually unbroken mild weather finally came to an end after the 5th. It was mostly bright and cold the 6th to 13th and again the 18th to the end of the month. An interlude of mild and stormy weather occurred mid-month, with thunderstorms overnight the 16th to 17th. Winds gusted to 91 km/h. Total rainfall was in the 55-60 mm range, the highest since 2001. Snowfall was just slightly below normal at 22 cm, but with the bare January and the mid-February rains, snow cover was generally thin and not very persistent.

The monthly mean temperature was  $-3.6^{\circ}$  at Pearson (30-year average  $-5.4^{\circ}$ ) and  $-2.4^{\circ}$  downtown (normal  $-3.3^{\circ}$ ). The coldest reading was  $-14.5^{\circ}$  at Pearson Airport on the 18<sup>th</sup> (it fell to  $-15.2^{\circ}$  on December 13<sup>th</sup>, thus 2002 remains the winter least affected by any cold air masses).

The winter overall was very mild, but the moderate temperatures of February and the cold weather in December made it less remarkable than 2001-2002. The period December-February at Pearson averaged  $-2.3^{\circ}$ ; it was  $0.0^{\circ}$  in 2001-2002,  $-1.1^{\circ}$  in 1997-98, and  $-2.2^{\circ}$  in 1982-83.

*Gavin Miller*



High Park in winter, photographed by Wendy Rothwell

## COMING EVENTS

### Toronto Ornithological Club

- Sunday, Jan. 28 from 1:30 p.m. to sunset. "Gulls and Waterfowl," Sunnyside. Leader Glenn Coady. Meet in the Sunnyside parking lot at the foot of Windermere Ave. Dress warmly.
- Sunday, Feb. 4 from 9:00 a.m. to early p.m. "Winter Birds," Durham Region. Leader Rayfield Pye. Meet at the south west. corner of the Pickering GO station parking lot (Bayly/Liverpool) to carpool if necessary. Bring a lunch and dress warmly.

### Science on Sundays

Sundays at 3 p.m. Royal Canadian Institute, J.J.R. Macleod Auditorium, Medical Sciences Building, U of T, 1 King's College Circle 416-977-2983, [www.royalcanadianinstitute.org](http://www.royalcanadianinstitute.org)

- Jan. 28. The Embarrassment of Riches: The Ecological Consequences of Increasing Numbers of Arctic Geese. Robert L. Jefferies
- Feb. 4. Patterns Patterns Everywhere. Martin Golubitsky.
- Feb 11. Novel Therapies for Viral Infection. Katalin A. Hudak
- Feb 18. University Automotive Research As an Asset for Canada. Robert R. Frise
- Feb 25. Regeneration of the Injured Spinal Cord: Pipedream or Reality? Michael G. Fehlings

### Get the Jump on Spring

Saturday, Feb. 17, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Get the Jump on Spring, an annual festival celebrating horticulture, gardening and environmental issues. Toronto Botanical Garden, southwest corner of Lawrence Ave. E. at Leslie St. Free.

Information: 416-397-1340 or [info@torontobotanicalgarden.ca](mailto:info@torontobotanicalgarden.ca)

### High Park Nature Centre

Sundays at 1:15 p.m. For more information call 416-392-1748 ext. 5 or [www.highpark.org](http://www.highpark.org).

- Feb. 4. Black Oak Savannah in Winter – Discover how the plants and animals that inhabit High Park's black oak savannah survive the winter! Meet at the benches across the road from the south side of the Grenadier Café and Tea House. Led by Terry Fahey, local naturalist.
- Feb. 18. Family Orienteering – Learn how to find your way through High Park using a map and compass to orient yourself! After a brief lesson on map and compass reading at the Nature Centre, families will head out as a team on the Nature Centre's six station orienteering course. Please bring a compass if you have one and remember to dress for the weather! Meet at the High Park Nature Centre at the intersection of Parkside Drive and Indian Valley Crescent. Led by High Park Nature staff.

### The Market Gallery

To Feb. 25, 2007. Building Blocks: Queen Street West 1847-1890. South St. Lawrence Market, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, 95 Front St. E. Free. Photographs, maps, plans and drawings illustrating the building of Queen St. W. from University Ave. to Dufferin St. For further information call 416-392-7604.

### Ian Wheal Walks

Saturday, Feb. 24, 2007 at 2 p.m. Ben Lamond: Nature and Prehistory. A walk of slopes, springs and a former wild area adjacent to Kingston Road (Norway Hill). Meet at entrance to Main Street Subway Station. Free.

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Ron Allan leading Western Lakeshore Urban Ecology walk, November 2, 2006 , photographed by Nora Jancik