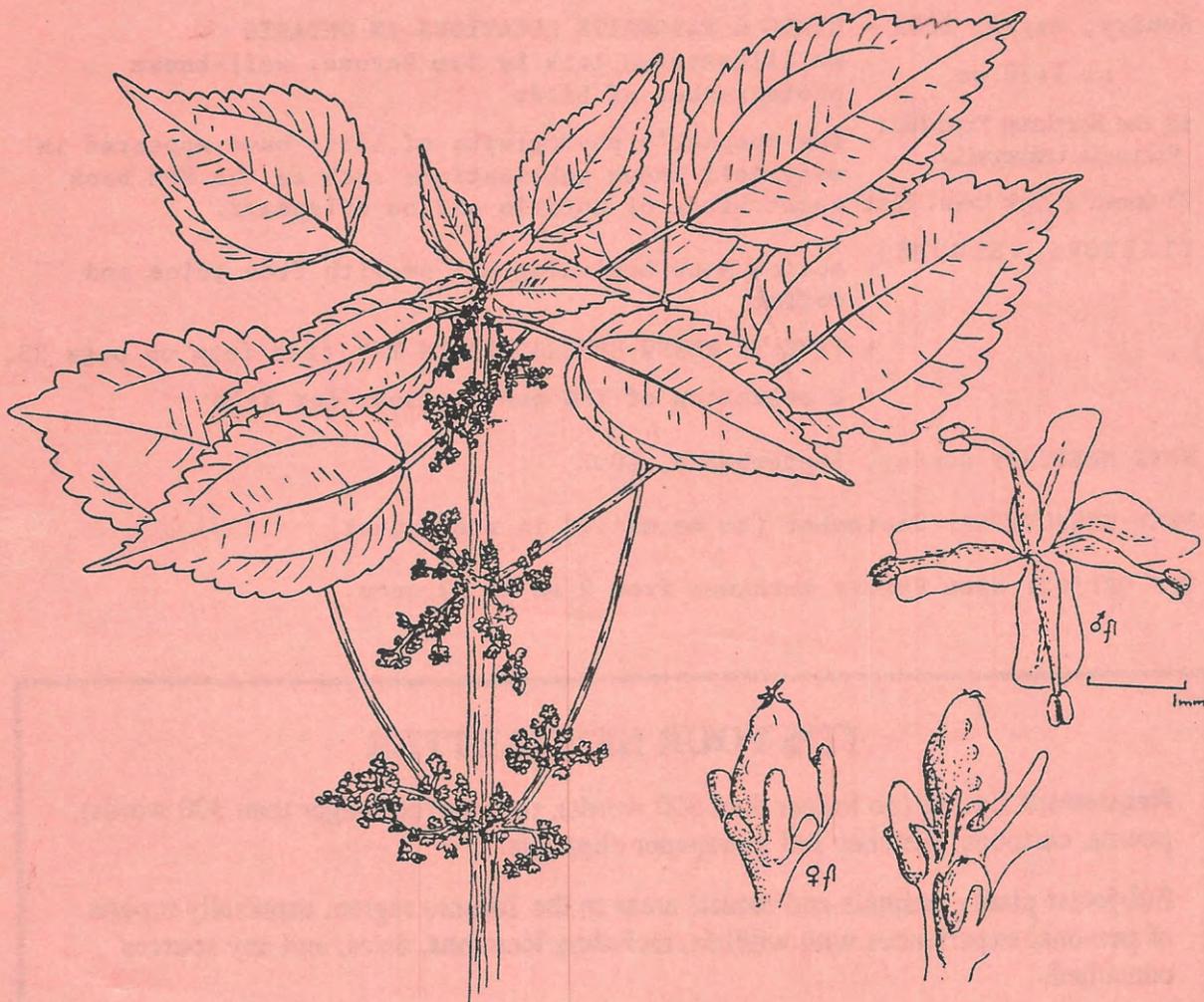


TORONTO FIELD NATURALIST

Number 508

SUMMER ISSUE

May 2002



"DWARF CLEARWEED" by John Sparling

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TFN MEETINGS

Sunday, May 5, 2002 - BIRDS & FAVOURITE LOCATIONS IN ONTARIO
at 2:30 pm an illustrated talk by Sam Barone, well-known
photographer of birds

in the Northrop Frye Hall - The speaker's photographs of birds have appeared in
Victoria University many well known publications such as the ROM book
73 Queen's Park Cres. East about birds of Ontario and on calendars.

VISITORS WELCOME! + social hour beginning at 2 pm with free juice and
coffee

+ TIME TO RENEW MEMBERSHIP IN TFN (See form on page 33.)

+ a selection of TFN publications for sale

NEXT MEETING: Sunday, September 8, 2002

NEXT NEWSLETTER: September (to be mailed in mid-August)

TFN OFFICE: open Friday mornings from 9 am to 12 noon.

IT'S YOUR NEWSLETTER

Requested: Essays (no longer than 500 words), reviews (no longer than 300 words), poems, cartoons, sketches and newspaper clippings.

Subjects: plants, animals and natural areas in the Toronto region, especially reports of personal experiences with wildlife, including locations, dates, and any sources consulted.

Please include your name, address and telephone number so submissions can be acknowledged. With newspaper clippings, include source and date of each clipping.

Time dated material such as notices of meetings should be submitted at least six weeks before the month in which the event is to take place.

Send material to: Toronto Field Naturalists
2 Carlton St., #1519
Toronto, Ont. M5B 1J3

Editor: Helen Juhola

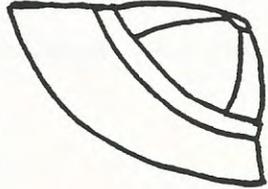
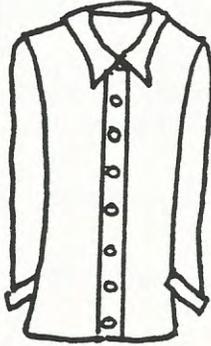
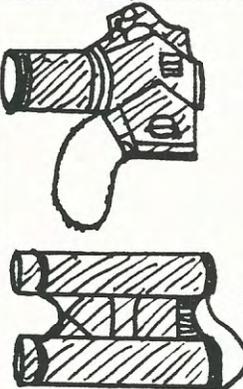
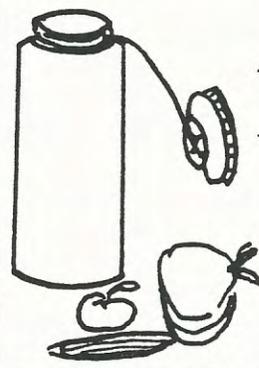
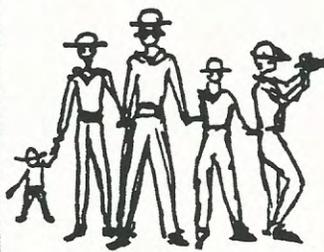
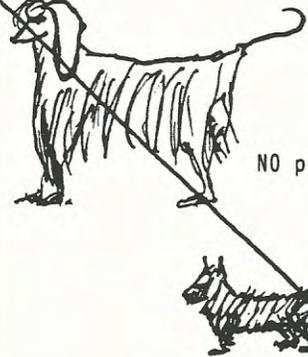
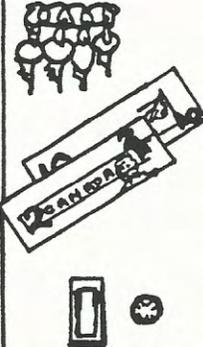
Poetry, Art and Nature Observations: Diana Banville

Assistants: Patricia Brind, Eva Davis, Karin Fawthrop, Nancy Fredenburg,
Toshi Oikawa, Marilyn Murphy, Robin Powell

Printer: DM Printing

Mailer: Perkins Mailing Services

FOR ENJOYMENT OF OUTINGS

<p>wide brim on hat for protection from sun</p> 	<p>long sleeves to protect you from: mosquitoes poison ivy thistles</p> 	<p>slacks to protect you from: mosquitoes poison ivy thistles ticks</p> 
<p>long socks to help you avoid ticks</p>  <p>hiking boots or running shoes</p> 	 <p>rainwear</p>	 <p>sun glasses sun screen insect repellent</p>
 <p>free TTC RIDE GUIDE Metro map notebook & pen</p>	 <p>camera binoculars</p>	 <p>thermos or flask snack</p>
<p>Bring your family and/or friends</p> 	 <p>NO pets</p>	 <p>keys money TTC fare</p>

REMEMBER ALSO TO BRING A PLASTIC BAG FOR GARBAGE ALONG THE ROUTE!

E.D.

TFN OUTINGS

REMEMBER: Children and visitors are welcome on all outings but please, **NO PETS!**
 To get to outings on time, check TTC routes and schedules by calling 416-393-4636.
 Check the weather by calling 416-661-0123 so you will know what to wear on outings
 which go rain or shine.

- Thursday ASHBRIDGE'S ESTATE - evening ramble
 May 2 Leader: Pleasance Crawford
 6:45 pm Meet at 1444 Queen St. East (east of Greenwood).
- Saturday TORONTO ZOO - nature arts
 May 4 Leader: Melanie Milanich
 10:30 am Meet at the zoo entrance on the west side of Meadowvale Rd.
 \$ entry north of Sheppard Ave. East. Bring what you need for photography,
 fee sketching or painting, and anything you wish to show the group
 when we compare our morning's work after lunch (available there).
- May 5 TFN MEETING (See page 2 for details.)
- Wednesday PARK DRIVE RAVINE - evening ramble
 May 8 Leader: Colleen Prentice
 6:45 pm Meet at Castle Frank subway station.
- Thursday MARITA . PAYNE PARK - nature walk
 May 9 Leader: Carol Sellers
 10 am Meet at the northwest corner of Steeles Ave. West and Dufferin
 St. Bring lunch.
- Saturday HUMBER VALLEY - nature walk
 May 11 Leader: Maryse Mahy
 2 pm Meet at the Old Mill subway station.
- Sunday CHAPMAN VALLEY - nature walk
 May 12 Leader: George Leja
 10 am Meet on the west side of Scarlett Rd. at Chapman Rd. (north
 of Eglinton Ave. West). Bring lunch. ▷

FOR OTHER OUTINGS AND EVENTS, SEE PAGE 31 and 32.

▷ INTERNATIONAL BIRD MIGRATION DAY - TORONTO ZOO - May 11.
 To volunteer at TFN display, call Andre Vietinghoff at 416-232-9241.

FOR IAN WHEAL HERITAGE WALKS, SEE NOW.

SUMMER OUTINGS (cont'd)

- Monday
May 13
6:45 pm
CASA LOMA GARDENS - evening ramble
Leader: Lorraine Johnson
Meet at the corner of Spadina Rd. and Austin Terrace (where Spadina bends for Casa Loma), south of St. Clair Ave. West.
- Wednesday
May 15
10 am
MOUNT PLEASANT CEMETERY - trees
Leader: Roger Powley
Meet at the Davisville subway station. Bring lunch.
- Saturday
May 18
10 am
to 2 pm
WIGMORE PARK - wildflowers
Leader: Kathleen Fall
Meet at the school on the west side of Sloane Ave. north of Eglinton Ave. East. Bring lunch.
- Sunday
May 19
2 pm
LOWER YELLOW CREEK - urban ecology
Leader: Peter Hare
Meet at the Davisville subway station.
This is a joint outing with the North Toronto Green Community.
- Monday
May 20
6:45 pm
TORONTO'S WATERFRONT - evening ramble
Leader: Anne Scott
Meet at the northwest corner of Bay St. and Queens Quay.
- Wednesday
May 22
10 am
EARL BALES PARK - nature walk
Leader: Phoebe Cleverley
Meet at the community centre at the north end of the park which is on the east side of Bathurst St., south of Sheppard Ave. West. Bring lunch.
- Saturday
May 25
10 am
BLUFFERS MEADOW - birds
Leader: Ken Cook
Meet at the southeast corner of Kingston Rd. and Chine Dr.
Bring lunch.
- Sunday
May 26
2 pm
GUILDWOOD PARK - heritage walk
Leader: Wayne Reeves
Meet at the park entrance on the south side of Guildwood Parkway opposite Galloway Rd.
- Tuesday
May 28
6:45 pm
GERMAN MILLS - evening ramble
Leader: Theresa Moore
Meet at the northeast corner of Steeles Ave. East and Leslie St.
- Wednesday
May 29
10:30 am
CHARLES SAURIOL NATURE RESERVE - nature walk
Leader: Robin Powell
Meet at the park entrance on the south side of Lawrence Ave. East just east of the Don Valley Parkway. Bring lunch. This will be a long walk with lots of hills to climb.

SUMMER OUTINGS (cont'd)

- Saturday HIGH PARK - nature arts
June 1 Leader: Nancy Anderson
10:30 am Meet at the park entrance on the south side of Bloor St. West opposite High Park Ave. Bring what you need for photography, sketching, or painting and anything you wish to show the group when we compare our morning's work after lunch (available there).
- Wednesday UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO HABITAT SITES - evening ramble
June 5 Leader: Jim Hodgins
6:45 pm Meet at the southwest corner of St. George St. and Harbord St.
- Thursday COL. SAM SMITH PARK - nature walk
June 6 Leader: Valerie Allen
10 am Meet at the southeast corner of Lake Shore Blvd. West and Kipling Ave. Bring lunch.
- Saturday LOWER HUMBER - nature walk
June 8 Leader: Ron Allan
1:30 pm Meet at Lambton House on Old Dundas St. which is south of Dundas St. West just east of the Humber River.
- Sunday HIGH PARK - trees
June 9 Leader: Bohdan Kowalyk
1:30 pm Meet at the park entrance on the south side of Bloor St. West opposite High Park Ave.
- Tuesday EAST DON VALLEY - birds & butterflies
June 11 Leader: Ann Gray
10 am Meet at the northwest corner of Sheppard Ave. East and Leslie St. Bring lunch, binoculars, bug jar and water.
- Thursday DAVID BALFOUR RAVINE - evening ramble
June 13 Leader: Maryse Mahy
6:45 pm Meet at the Summerhill subway station.
- Saturday LESLIE STREET SPIT - nature walk
June 15 Leader: Boris Mather
10 am Meet at the foot of Leslie St. Bring lunch and water.
to 4 pm This is a joint outing with the Toronto Bay Initiative.
- Sunday SMALL'S POND - urban ecology
June 16 Leaders: Ed Freeman & Ian Wheal
2 pm Meet at the northeast corner of Queen St. East and Coxwell Ave. This is a joint outing with the North Toronto Green Community.
- Thursday CEDARVALE RAVINE - nature walk
June 20 Leader: Ruth Munson
10:30 am Meet at the Heath St. exit of the St. Clair West subway station. Morning only.

SUMMER OUTINGS (cont'd)

- June 21 SUMMER BEGINS.
- Friday COL. SAM SMITH PARK - evening ramble
June 21 Leader: Wayne Reeves
6:45 pm Meet on the south side of Lake Shore Blvd. West at the foot of Kipling Ave.
- Sunday ROUGE VALLEY - nature walk
June 23 Leader: Bill Lewis
1 pm to Meet at the Pearse House which is on the east side of Meadowvale
3 pm Rd., north of Sheppard Ave. East.
- Tuesday SHERWOOD PARK - nature walk
June 25 Leader: Janice Palmer
9:30 am Meet at the park entrance at the east end of Sherwood Ave., one block east of Mt. Pleasant Rd. and north of Eglinton Ave East. Join a 2.5 km walk, with moderate climbing, through the park to examine both negative and positive impacts of human activities on a very popular urban park. After the walk, the leader will stay to discuss any pertinent issues with those who bring a lunch.
- Thursday WILKET CREEK SOURCES - evening ramble
June 27 Leader: Alexander Cappell
6:45 pm Meet at the northeast corner of Finch Ave. West and Carney Rd. (halfway between Yonge St. and Bathurst St.).
- Saturday LESLIE STREET SPIT - nature walk
June 29 Leader: Ann Gray
9:30 am Meet at the foot of Leslie St. Bring lunch, water and binoculars.
- Wednesday DON MILLS GARDEN - evening ramble
July 3 Leader: Tom Atkinson
6:45 pm Meet at the southeast corner of Lawrence Ave. East and Leslie St.
- Thursday ETOBICOKE VALLEY - nature walk
July 4 Leader: Diana Karrandjas
10 am Meet on the bridge over Etobicoke Creek on Lake Shore Blvd. West. west of Browns Line. Bring lunch.
- Saturday EGLINTON PARK - nature arts
July 6 Leader: Mary Cumming
10:30 am Meet at the entrance to the community centre on the north side of Eglinton Ave. West just west of Edith Dr. (3 short blocks west of Yonge St.)
Bring what you need for photography, sketching or painting and anything you wish to show the group when we compare our morning's work after lunch (which you may want to bring with you).

SUMMER OUTINGS (cont'd)

- Sunday
July 7
10:30 am LOWER DON VALLEY - nature walk
Leader: David Stonehouse
Meet at the Broadview subway station. Morning only.
- Tuesday
July 9
6:45 pm WARDEN WOODS - evening ramble
Leader: Melanie Milanich
Meet at the Warden subway station.
- Wednesday
July 10
10 am MORNINGSIDE PARK - insects
Leader: Carol Sellers
Meet at the park entrance on the west side of Morningside Ave.
north of Lawrence Ave. East.
Bring lunch, binoculars and bug jar.
- Saturday
July 13
8 am to 12 noon COL. SAM SMITH PARK - birds
Leader: Andre Vietinghoff
Meet at the southwest corner of Lake Shore Blvd. West and
Kipling Ave.
- Monday
July 15
6:45 pm LOWER DON VALLEY - evening ramble
Leader: Rosemary Aubert
Meet at the Broadview subway station.
- Wednesday
July 17
9:30 am TORONTO ISLANDS - nature walk
Leader: Phoebe Cleverley
Meet at the ferry docks at the foot of Bay St. in time to take
\$ ferry fare the ferry to Hanlan's Point. Bring lunch.
- Sunday
July 21
2 pm NORTH TORONTO GARDENS - urban ecology
Leader: Helen Mills
Meet at the garden on the north side of the Eglinton Community
Centre (on the north side of Eglinton Ave. West just three
short blocks west of Yonge St.)
This is a joint outing with the North Toronto Green Community.
- Wednesday
July 24
10 am WINDFIELDS PARK - nature walk
Leader: Phoebe Cleverley
Meet at the southeast corner of York Mills Rd. and Bayview Ave.
Bring lunch.
- Thursday
July 25
6:45 pm HIGH PARK - evening ramble
Leader: George Bryant
Meet at the park entrance on the south side of Bloor St. West
opposite High Park Ave.
- Sunday
July 28
10:30 am GATES GULLY - nature walk
Leader: Karin Fawthrop
Meet on the south side of Kingston Rd. opposite Bellamy Rd. South.
Morning only.

SUMMER OUTINGS (cont'd)

- Tuesday
July 30
2 pm
LOST TRIBUTARIES OF BURKE BROOK - urban ecology
Leader: Peter Hare
Meet at the southwest corner of Yonge St. and Lawrence Ave.
- Wednesday
July 31
6:45 pm
WYCHWOOD PARK - evening ramble
Leader: Albert Fulton
Meet at the northwest corner of Bathurst St. and Davenport Rd.
- Saturday
August 3
10:30 am
MONTGOMERY INN - nature arts
Leader: Andrew White
Meet at the northeast corner of Bloor St. West and Islington Ave. Bring what you need for lunch, photography, sketching or painting and anything you wish to show the group when we compare our morning's work after lunch.
- Wednesday
Aug. 7
10 am
COL. DANFORTH PARK - nature walk
Leader: Karin Fawthrop
Meet at the park entrance on the south side of Kingston Rd. at Col. Danforth Trail (just east of the bridge over Highland Creek). Morning only.
- Thursday
Aug. 8
6:45 pm
GARRISON CREEK - evening ramble
Leader: Jon Harstone
Meet at the Christie subway station.
- Sunday
August 11
1:30 pm
DOWNTOWN TORONTO - urban geology
Leader: Kathleen Kemp
Meet at the St. Andrew subway station for a two-hour walk.
- Thursday
August 15
10 am
WESTERN LAKESHORE - birds
Leader: Doug Paton
Meet at the Queen St. West Humber loop. Bring lunch.
- Saturday
Aug. 17
2 pm
WATERFRONT GARDENS - garden tour
Leader: Peter Iveson
Meet at the southwest corner of Queens Quay W and Bathurst St. This is a joint outing with the Toronto Bay Initiative.
- Sunday
August 18
2 pm
CITIES OF THE WORLD - urban ecology
Leader: Peter Hare
Meet at the St. Clair subway station (south side of St. Clair Ave. just east of Yonge St.).
This is a joint outing with the North Toronto Green Community.
- Thursday
August 22
10 am
ERNEST THOMPSON SETON PARK - birds, butterflies & dragonflies
Leader: Ann Gray
Meet on the south side of Eglinton Ave. East opposite Leslie St. Bring lunch, binoculars, water.

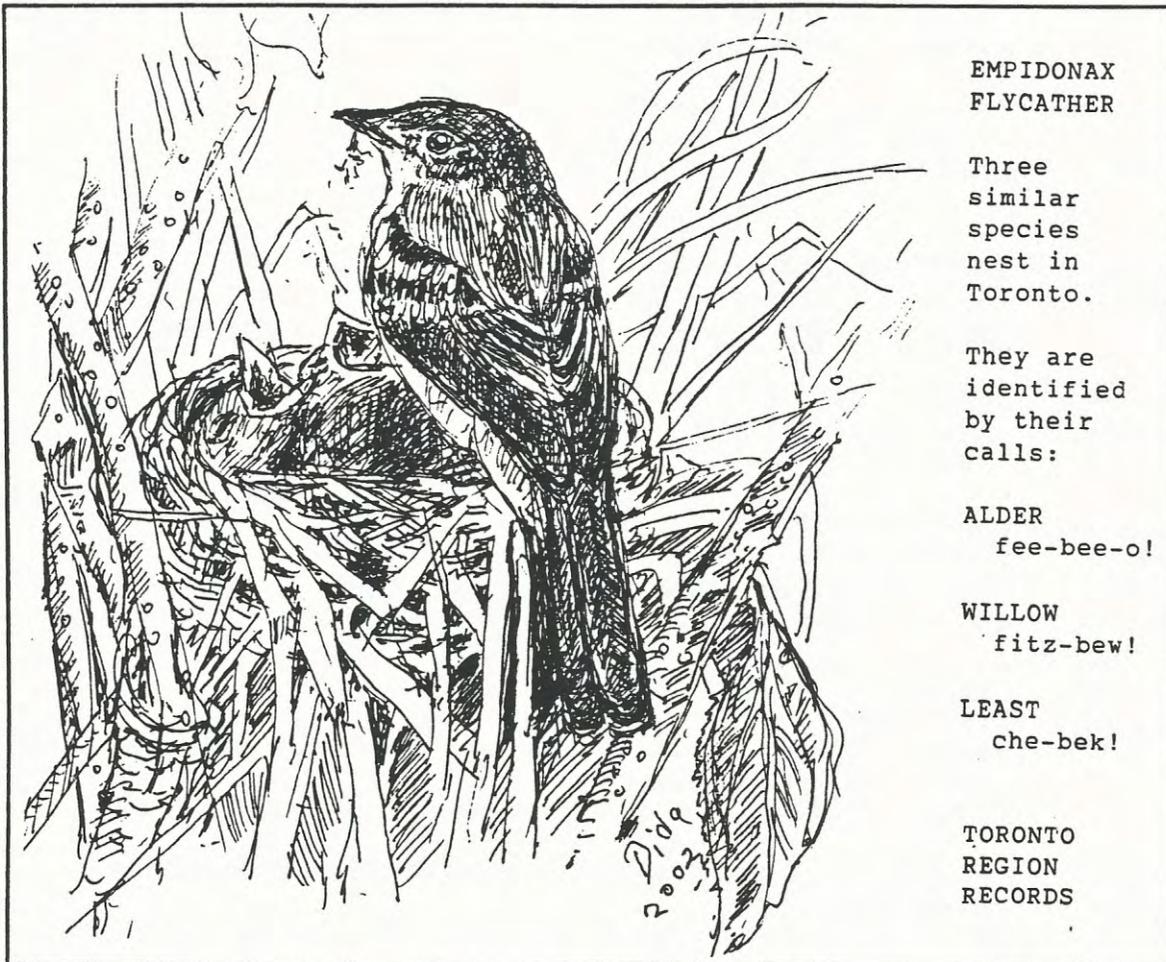
SUMMER OUTINGS (cont'd)

Sunday EAST POINT PARK - nature walk
August 25 Leader: Boris Mather
10:30 am Meet at the southeast corner of the Guildwood Parkway and
Morningside Ave. Bring lunch, water.

Thursday HIGH PARK - nature walk
August 29 Leader: George Bryant
9:30 am Meet at the park entrance on the south side of Bloor St. West
opposite High Park Ave. Morning only.

Saturday G.R. LORD PARK - nature walk
August 31 Leaders: Heather Mackey, Colleen Prentice & Sheldon Page
9 am Meet at the northeast corner of Finch Ave. West and
Dufferin St. Morning only.

□



EMPIDONAX
FLYCATHER

Three
similar
species
nest in
Toronto.

They are
identified
by their
calls:

ALDER
fee-bee-o!

WILLOW
fitz-bew!

LEAST
che-bek!

TORONTO
REGION
RECORDS

(Drawing by Diana Banville based on an Eliot Porter photo.)

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

When the proposed legislation to protect the Oak Ridges Moraine was announced by the Minister of Housing, I was elated that the province was finally doing something serious to protect this unique natural heritage feature. However, on closer examination of the conservation plan and accompanying legislation, I began to have doubts about their real effectiveness. Two recent issues have only deepened my concerns, proposed development in Richmond Hill and construction of a golf course in the northern part of the city of Vaughan.

In the Richmond Hill area, the land use maps of the Moraine show a narrow corridor of linkage and green space crowded on both the north and south by existing and proposed development. I was surprised by the scale of the proposed development as reported in newspaper articles and the angry response by the Minister of Housing to the criticism that resulted. It seems what's going to be developed will be green space and linkage areas in name only. I hope that Richmond Hill City Council will buy some of the affected land so that remaining development can be reconfigured to provide better protection for Bond and Wilcox Lakes. As well there would be greater continuity of the Oak Ridges Moraine through Richmond Hill.

In lands designated natural core areas within the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, trees have been cut and site grading started for a golf course named Eagle's Nest. The proposed golf course is located just to the east of the Keele Valley landfill site. A part of the proposed golf course is in lands designated as environmentally significant area (ESA). As well, the Ministry of Natural Resources has designated these lands as a regional area of natural and scientific interest (ANSI). This ESA/ANSI represents a part of the McGill ESA that is the largest remaining contiguous natural area in the Don River watershed. An official plan amendment initiated and approved by the City of Vaughan identified part of this ESA/ANSI for golf course purposes. Unfortunately, the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority only became aware of this after the fact. The conservation authority has not accepted any of the Environmental Impact Studies prepared by the developer's consultants. In an attempt to get around this and other delays, the developer took preemptive action by proceeding with construction (tree cutting, site grading and storm water structures) in advance of permit approvals. As a result, the Regional Municipality of York has laid charges under Regional Tree By-laws and Forestry Act. This golf course is not the only threat to the McGill ESA. Other intrusions are the proposed opening of the Teston Road allowance (east west), and aggregate extraction which, if approved, would fragment and seriously disrupt the ESA's ecology and hydrology. Presently the Conservation Authority's position is that the proposed golf course plan must be revised to locate all facilities outside the limits of the ESA/ANSI and to restore all damaged areas.

▷

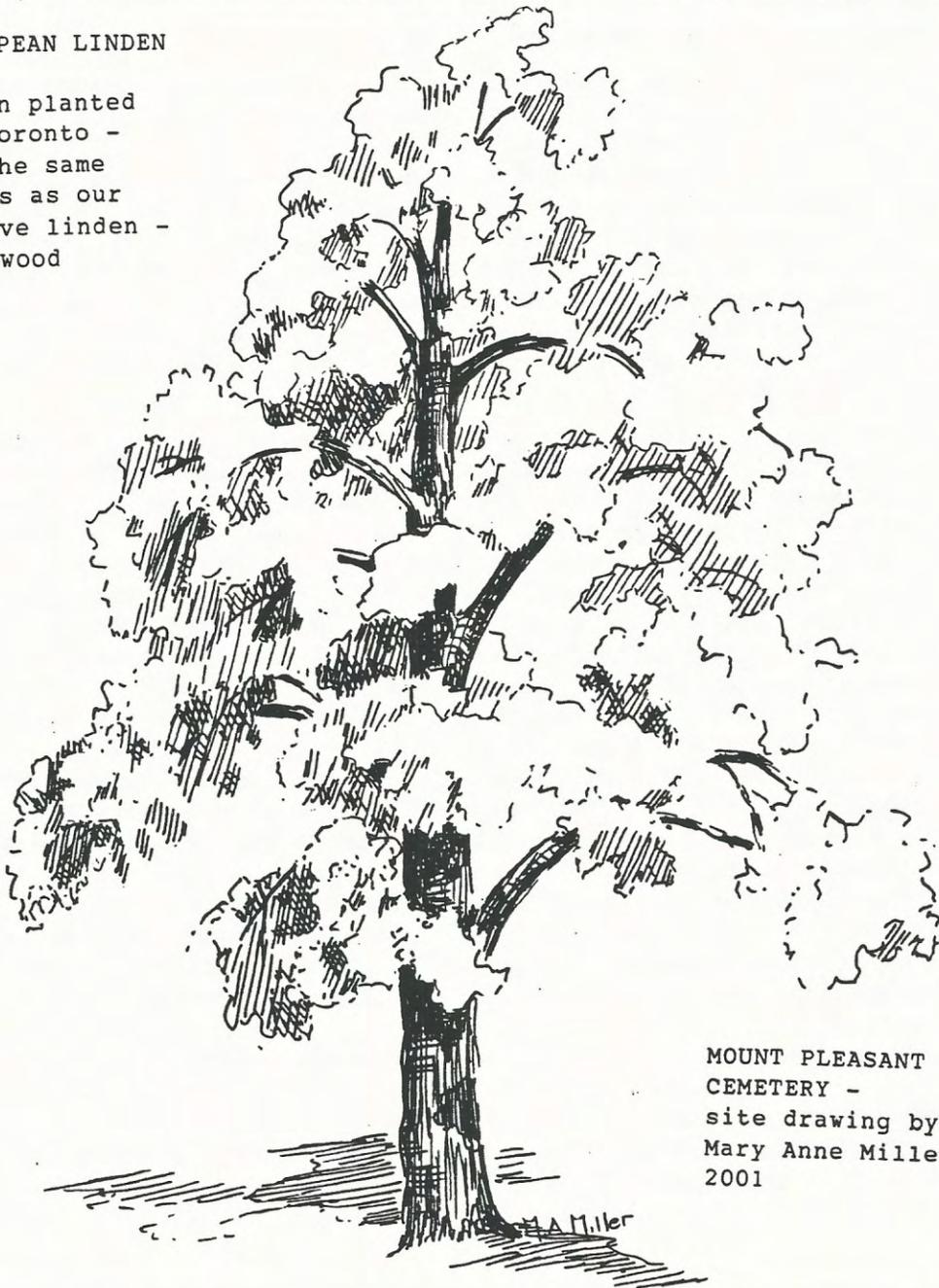
Regions and municipalities that are too accommodating and ruthless developers are going to be a severe challenge to the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act. I still feel the Act is better than nothing, but for how much longer.

Robin Powell

□

EUROPEAN LINDEN

often planted
in Toronto -
in the same
genus as our
native linden -
basswood



MOUNT PLEASANT
CEMETERY -
site drawing by
Mary Anne Miller
2001

M.A. Miller

REPORT OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Nominating Committee, chaired by Phoebe Cleverley, recommends the following slate of nominees to the Board for the 2002 - 2003 year:

President:	Robin Powell
Vice Present:	Karin Fawthrop
Past President:	Phoebe Cleverley
Directors due to retire in 2003:	Helen Juhola Diana Karrandjas Sheldon Page ¹
Directors due to retire in 2004:	Alexander Cappell Nancy Fredenburg Aarne Juhola
Directors due to retire in 2005:	Elaine Farragher Gail Gregory ² Andre Vietinghoff

TFN by-law No. 1, Section 5(g) provides that "any three members may submit, in writing, to the Secretary-Treasurer by July 15th the name of a candidate accompanied by the written consent of the nominee. Such nominations shall be published in the September issue of the newsletter and the names of such nominees shall be added to the list of candidates submitted by the Nominating Committee". The Secretary-Treasurer is Aarne Juhola, 112 - 51 Alexander St., Toronto, Ont. M4Y 1B3.

According to TFN by-law No. 1, Section 5(b), "If an election is required it shall be by ballot mailed to all members. Ballots may be mailed to the auditor or deposited at the Annual General Meeting prior to the commencement of the meeting. The ballots will be tabulated by the auditor who shall announce the results".

Phoebe Cleverley,
Nominating Committee

□

- 1 Sheldon Page is completing the term of Murray Seymour who has moved to Parry Sound. Sheldon has helped at monthly meetings, at displays and at the nature reserve.
- 2 Gail Gregory is replacing Colleen Prentice. Gail has led outings and is on the Outings Committee, arranging mid-week walks east of Yonge St.

KEEPING IN TOUCH

Mar. 25, 2002

On December 15, 2001 there was a raft of at least a dozen birds out on Lake Couchiching. They were not the silhouette of mallards, but were too far away to pick up detail with my binoculars. Finally three or four "Curious Georges" swam closer to shore. Scrambling through Peterson's I discovered that they were Barrow's goldeneye. It was as big a thrill to see them for the first time as it was to see hooded mergansers a couple of years ago.

Always enjoy the newsletter and pass it on to others.

V. M. Clarke,
Orillia

Mar. 25, 2002

(Note: Experienced birders, please forgive any identification mistakes!)

I'm always astonished at the number and type of birds I can see on my commute from downtown Toronto to North York.

When I had a bird feeder, I used to eat breakfast while watching house finches, grackles, cardinals, blue jays, mourning doves, and miscellaneous little brown birds. But when the pigeons started showing up, I stopped using the feeder.

Walking down to the bus stop, I spot two male red-winged blackbirds in the park competing for space. "Conkaree...conkaree...this is my territoree..." I startle a mourning dove which flies away with a whistling sound. Pigeons are making nests under the railroad bridge. In the spring and summer, I sometimes hear and occasionally see a catbird, imitating other birdcalls, meows, and car alarms.

Driving along Black Creek Boulevard, or taking the bus around the old Downsview airport, I often see red-tailed hawks on fences and in trees, preening themselves or looking for breakfast. I also see lots of crows (or ravens?).

Once I get to the York University campus, I can see kestrels, big flocks of starlings, and Canada geese. Lots of Canada geese. Lots of hungry, aggressive Canada geese.

I'm glad to see that birds can adapt so well to city life!

Rhonda Sussman

An interest in natural science is an essential part of a cultured and healthy mind receptive to the wonders of the world around it.

from NABOKOV'S BLUES: THE SCIENTIFIC ODYSSEY OF A LITERARY GENIUS by Kurt Johnson and Steve Coates, McGraw Hill, 1999

▷

KEEPING IN TOUCH (cont'd)

March 28, 2002

In response to George Bryant's inquiry -- following his interesting report in TFN 507:7, April 2002 -- Toronto Region Records show the black-crowned night-heron as reported all months of the year. In Bruce Parker's TORONTO REGION BIRD CHART, 1983, the status of this species was "occasionally nesting". By 1990 it was "frequently nesting". However, in winter only occasional individuals were reported until 1998. Seven were observed on Rennie Pond on December 3, 1998-- 2 adult and 5 immature. Also five were observed there on December 19 that year. On December 5, 1999, ten were reported -- 4 adult and 6 immature. At the time, this count was considered high for December.

On January 8, 2000, at the Lower Don location thirteen black-crowned night-herons were reported, including both adult and immature birds -- 3 just north of the Queen Street bridge, on the west bank in thick brush, and 10 in willow on the east bank. This was a record count that year. Observations were also reported for January 23 and 30, 2000. More reports came in during February and March, 2000. Five adults and five immature birds were considered to have wintered up to March 12, 2000. Several reports of up to twenty-five birds received between March 21 and 30, 2000, of observations on Toronto Islands and High Park, were considered to be arrivals. Over eight hundred were seen April 9, 2000, at Leslie Street Spit -- as nesting pairs.

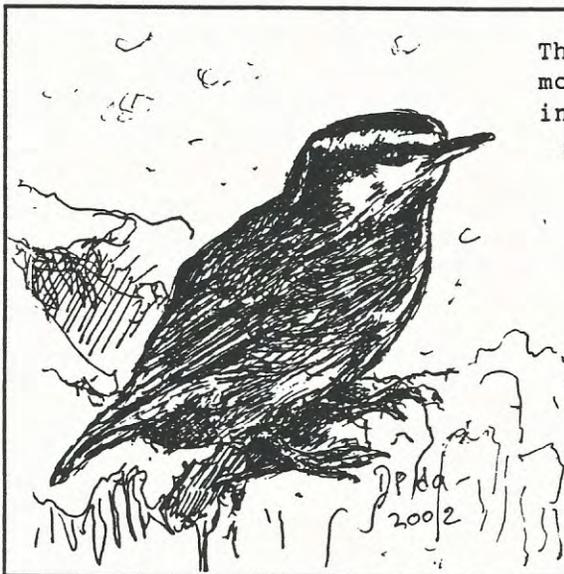
In 2001, five adults and one immature of the species were at Queen Street bridge on January 14th but on the 20th, with the river frozen downstream, not one was seen by the same observer.

Something is new in 2002! We had never received a report, till we heard from George, that explained just what those night-herons do at night!

See also pages 22-23,

DB, TFN Records.

□



The RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH is seen all months of the year in Toronto - common in winter but less so as a breeding species, preferring conifers.

In 2001, however, in High Park and Humber Valley our reporters observed it in song April 18, nest-building May 9 and carrying food July 7.

Ref. TORONTO REGION RECORDS TFN.

Drawing by Diana Banville
based on a Maslowski photo.

FOR READING

WILD NIGHTS: Nature Returns to the City, Anne Matthews,
North Point Press, New York, 2001 (208 pages)

I understand that from the C.N. Tower what was the most fertile land in Ontario within a 35-mile radius can now be viewed as largely under asphalt and concrete, and anyone who lives in the Big City (any Big City) and sees yet another woodlot become a mall or corn fields metamorphose into row housing should read this book.

WILD NIGHTS is brimming with fascinating, surprising, and alarming facts, elegantly written, witty, poetic, wideranging -- and ultimately Doomsday unless we discard our delusion of 'being in charge'. As Anne Matthews writes, "Humans are the first species to become a geophysical force" with all the environmental degradation that follows our burning of fossil fuels, our chemical fertilizers, clear-cutting, filling of wetlands, able, in short, "to alter 50% of the planet's land surface".

New York City is now home to snowy owls, peregrines, great egret, glossy ibis, yellow-crowned night heron, wild turkeys, Canada geese, coyotes, black bear, porpoises, snapping turtles, the occasional white-tailed deer, falcons (nature's speed Olympians, able to dive at 200 miles an hour). Plus less acceptable residents. The quick look at the disappearing cockroaches before ushering in guests. The need "even in the fancier Manhattan zip codes" to keep "a big heavy brick on the toilet lid", Norway rats being known to emerge through toilets (have we reached this stage in Toronto?).

As long as we continue to absorb the living space of other species and modern civilization continues to propel plants and animals beyond their natural ranges, 'exotics' will change "the nature of nature". Among invaders in America are many familiars: zebra mussel, crabgrass, purple loosestrife, Russian olive, buckthorn, European gypsy moth, garlic mustard -- and the less familiar can not be far behind. "Bio-pollution ...makes itself at home in a borderless biosphere". Do 'exotics' upset the balance of nature? Absolutely, say some scientists. Diversity is all, protecting against the wipe-out of whole communities of plants and animals. Nonsense, say others, there is no balance to disrupt, only struggle.

Global warming, however, "has begun to render both sides moot, and mute". New York, like all metropolises, is grounded in an inter-Ice Age interlude, and in the last chapter, "Rising Tide", Matthews explores possible futures applicable to megacities.

The book's last sentence returns us to the present: "Below the railroad tracks, among the reeds, a bittern waits".

As I said at the beginning, an education and a "must".

Eva Davis



PROJECTS

HELP LOONS

- . Keep it wild. Work to preserve the wild parts of your lake.
- . Keep your shoreline natural. Vegetated shorelines provide shelter for both fish and loons.
- . Watch your wake. Use sensitive boating practices and steer clear of loons.
- . Get the lead out. Use non-lead sinkers and jigs (and don't discard fishing line and hooks).
- . Don't mess with the food chain. Don't feed nest predators such as raccoons or gulls. Dispose of your garbage properly.
- . Lobby for loons. Get involved in national air pollution issues and local water quality programs.
- . Spread the word. Place loon conservation messages on websites and in papers and newsletters.
- . Be a citizen scientist! Watch over nesting areas by joining the Canadian Lakes Loon Survey!

Information on the common loon and on loon-friendly lakes is available free of charge, or if you would like to participate in the Canadian Lakes Loon Survey, or support it as a contributing donor, send your name and address and the \$25.00 (tax creditable) registration fee to Kathy Jones at: The Canadian Lakes Loon Survey, Bird Studies Canada, P.O.Box 160, Port Rowan, ON NOE 1M0, E-mail: aqsurvey@bsc-eoc.org; Phone: toll free 888-448-2473; Web Page: www.bsc-eoc.org/cllsmain.html. Please indicate whether you would like to receive a CLLS reporting booklet. All CLLS supporters receive annual updates on the survey's results. Donations are welcome.

MIGRATORY BIRDS NEED BETTER PROTECTION

No evidence of even a single federal charge over the destruction of migratory bird nests has been laid despite estimates that logging operations destroy as many as 85,000 nests each year in Ontario. NAFTA's Commission for Environmental Co-operation (CEC) has been asked to investigate the Canadian government's failure to enforce its own environmental legislation, resulting in the widespread destruction of migratory bird nests during logging operations.

What You Can Do. You can e-mail federal Environment Minister David Anderson (E-mail: Anderson.D@parl.gc.ca. Be sure to include your full name and postal mailing address) and ask him why the Canadian government is not doing more to protect migratory birds. Point out that Canada's forests, as breeding and nesting grounds, are critically important to the survival of these long-distance fliers and that we owe it to them and to ourselves to ensure that Canada provides safe nesting sites that they can return to year after year.

from EARTHWAYS, March 2002

PROJECTS (cont'd)

LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE SIGHTINGS WANTED

During the past three seasons, Bird Studies Canada has safely banded 464 loggerhead shrikes. They are out there somewhere. We are trying to understand the problems of a small, endangered population. Possible factors in their decline are habitat loss, collisions with cars (especially during migration), pesticides (especially on the wintering grounds) and climate change. If you see a shrike, please check their legs for colour bands and record the presence/absence of the bands and colour combinations. Specify the vertical order of the colours on the left and right legs separately. All information collected will be kept confidential.

▷ Report all sightings immediately to the Species at Risk Hot Line at 1-866-833-8888[or from the USA, to Bird Studies Canada at 1-888-448-BIRD (2473)].

PEREGINE NESTING SEASON UNDERWAY

The Southern Ontario peregrine population has shown encouraging signs of growth in recent years, in large part due to the stewardship efforts of the local community around each active nest. As of March 23, 2002 an egg was visible at 3250 Bloor St. West (at Islington) and nests are probably occupied in Mississauga (at the Mississauga Executive Centre) and at Mississauga/Clarkson (St. Lawrence Cement), Toronto (King and Yonge), and Toronto (Mount Sinai Hospital). There have also been repeated sightings of individual peregrines in Port Credit, Scarborough, Brampton and uptown Toronto (Yonge/Eglinton). Please keep notes on any sightings and send them to the TFN office. We will redirect them or you may send them to Marcel Gahbauer <marcel.gahbauer@utoronto.ca>

NATURE ART FOR SALE

Buy nature art from TFN to support purchase of natural areas:

- high quality "Nels Maher" reproductions of his fern prints - \$25 each
- mounted, enlarged show photos of nature subjects by Hugh Halliday, from the 1940s - \$35 each.

▷ These may be examined at the TFN office on Friday mornings from 9 am to 12 noon. Call 416-593-2656.

CONSERVATION AUTHORITY HABITAT RESTORATION

▷ Groups or individuals interested in habitat restoration may have a guided tour, participate in a planting event, perform ongoing maintenance or monitor a restoration site. For more information: contact Colleen Cirillo, Community Environmental Stewardship Technician at (416) 661-6600 ext.5394 or e-mail: ccirillo@trca.on.ca.

We may come to favour cosmopolitan ecosystems, in much the same way that many people now prefer multicultural experiences to those which are provincial. This may be more in tune with the postmodern world than attempts to protect native species. It is an approach to the development of more robust environments which can adapt to the dynamic social and ecological changes that confront us.

from "Gardening on the Edge" by Paul Evans in BBC WILDLIFE, Vol. 16, No. 7, July 1998

PROJECTS (cont'd)

LAND DEAL AIMS TO SAVE WILDLIFE AREA

A \$1.6-million land purchase will preserve a 1,214-hectare (3,000-acre) wildlife area on the Carden Plain northeast of Lake Simcoe. The Couchiching Conservancy, a local 300-member organization has been working behind closed doors along with the Toronto-based Nature Conservancy of Canada to complete the land deal. The Nature Conservancy of Canada describes itself as a national charity organization dedicated to land conservation and wildlife preservation. The 1,214-hectare tract, 35 kilometres east of Orillia and a two-hour drive from Toronto, will be designated a nature reserve, and protected from development forever. The property is just north of the village of Kirkfield, between Canal Lake on the south, and Dalrymple Lake on the west. It contains endangered species of birds and plants. The purchase price of \$1.6 million will also include a stewardship fund to ensure that the property can be protected and managed in perpetuity. With quarry companies intent on digging into the Carden Plain, which is emerging as a major supply area for limestone for the Greater Toronto area market, it is all the more important that the area be preserved.

from the ORILLIA PACKET & TIMES, March 27, 2002

▷ Comment: Donations to help with the purchase of this land may be sent to the Nature Conservancy of Canada (Ont. Office), Orchard Park Office Centre, RR#5, 5420 Highway 6 North, Guelph, Ont. N1H 6J2 (Call 519-826-0068). Specify that your donation is for the purchase of the Carden Plain property. Charitable receipts are issued.

ANIMAL CRUELTY LEGISLATION

▷ Legislation to increase penalties for animal cruelty is expected to be voted on in parliament soon. To many of us, animals are a very precious part of our environment. If you are interested in this issue, please contact your MP and ask him to vote in favour of this proposed anti-cruelty legislation (Bill C15-B).

Chris Girigulus

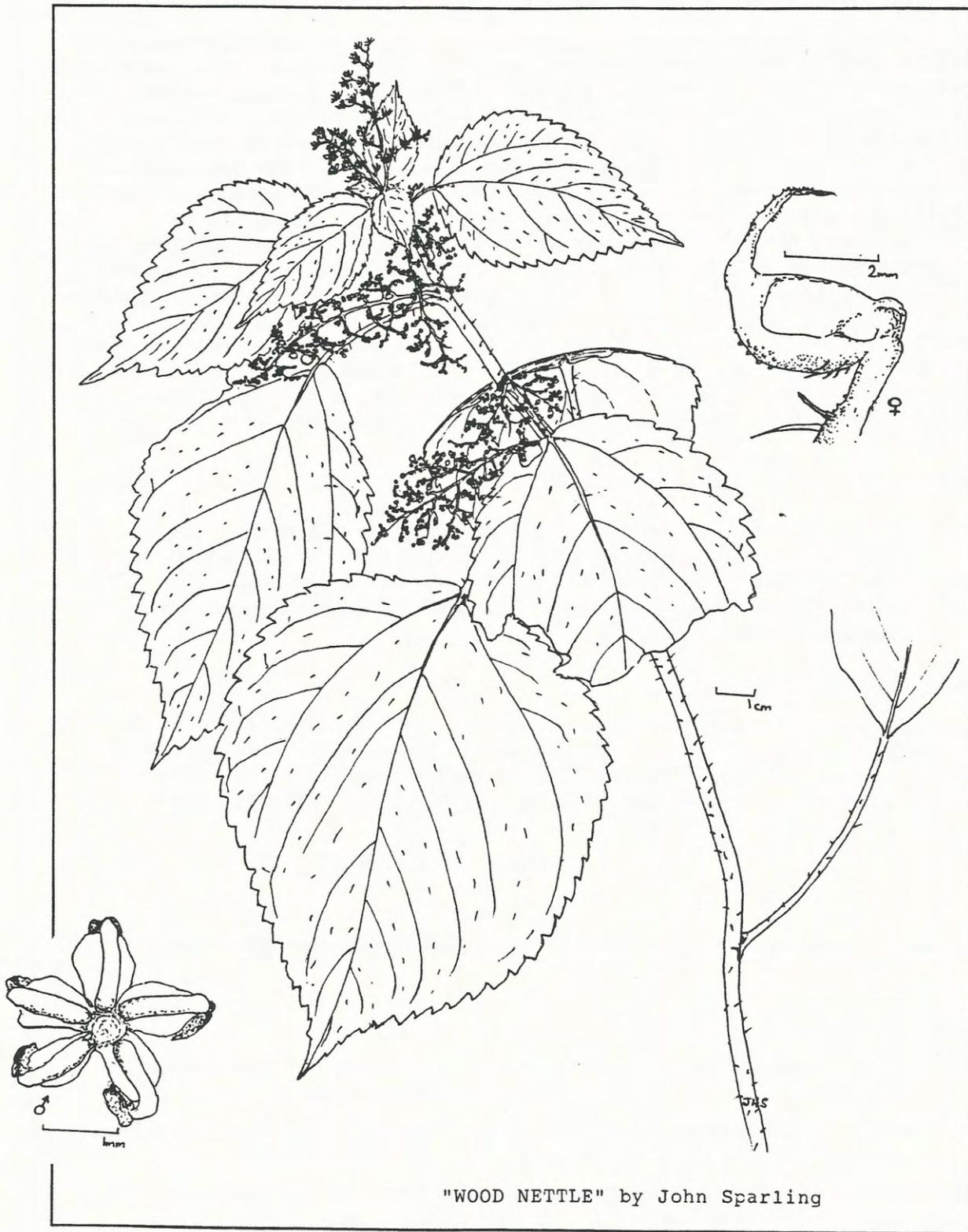
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Cardinal [Northern Cardinal]

1905: A rare summer resident of south-western counties. Stragglers have been taken at various places as far east as Toronto.

2002: Now a common resident in much of Southern Ontario, having increased greatly because of bird feeders with sunflower seeds.

from "1905 Bird Checklist of Ontario: Comparing 1905 and 2002" by Jean Iron and Ron Pittaway in OFO NEWS (newsletter of the Ontario Field Ornithologists), Vol. 20, No. 1, Feb. 2002



"WOOD NETTLE" by John Sparling

THIS MONTH'S COVER

NETTLES IN MY YARD

Most of us are very familiar with the common stinging nettle (*Urtica dioica*) and when walking through the ravines of Toronto, who has not inadvertently brushed up against a clump. We might also know that the stinging hairs act rather like small hypodermic needles, which when broken, inject the chemicals including histamine and acetyl choline through the skin to cause the irritation. It is interesting to speculate why this adaptation, possibly to ward off herbivores, has evolved. The wood nettle (*Laportea canadensis*) with its larger oval-shaped and alternately-arranged leaves also provides a similar punch to the off-trail woodland botanist or the unsuspecting herbivore. *Laportea* has only one species in North America, but in Australia is the genus of the infamous "stinging trees".

In Toronto, we have a similar nettle, the false nettle (*Boehmeria cylindrica*) which is not a stinger. It grows in the same kind of woodland habitats as the wood nettle, but for some reason doesn't have hairs. Nor does the clearweed (*Pilea pumila*) which happily also crops up in my garden in late summer.

The nettles are an interesting group, closely related to hops and *Cannabis* with which they may be combined in the nettle family *Urticaceae*. They also have flowers which are either male or female. These are found on the same plant, and even may be found side by side on the same branch. One has to wonder what the mechanism is which determines whether the flowers become male or female!

In my youth, I thought that all nettles stung when they were touched, to be cured only when dock leaves, generally growing close by, were crushed and applied to the skin surface. It was later that I read about the native "stinging" nettle (subspecies *gracilis*) which has narrower leaves and is much gentler in its action. The real "stinger" is the European introduction. This is often recognized as the subspecies *dioica*. But then we have to wonder whether they cross-pollinate and, if so, how the offspring compare with the parents.

Nettles are fascinating in several ways; *Urtica* leaves when young are a substitute for spinach.

John Sparling

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AMERICAN ROBIN
- field sketches
by Diana Banville



Taylor Creek Park
May 19, 1994

Toronto's Night Bird

When we think of birds that prefer darkness, owls and nightjars come to mind. These birds do occur in Toronto —mainly during migration, often involving only a few individuals. Screech owls and great horned owls, year round residents, are an exception. You can find them in the large forested tracts such as the Humber or Rouge Valleys-on the outskirts of our congested centre. As for nightjars, whip-poor-wills favour undisturbed open pine and oak forests, well away from urban areas. Sadly, nighthawks, once a background sound of those hot un-air-conditioned summer nights, are no longer with us. Large moths, their food sources, have succumbed to Toronto's light pollution and pesticides. As well, our omnipresent ring-billed gulls made quick work of their eggs, laid on flat roofs. We miss the nighthawk's nasal calls and whooshing booms echoing through the cities' downtown canyons.

Toronto nevertheless is blessed with a night bird that dwells right beside us in the heart of the city. In fact these birds like the city so much that this year for the first time several individuals chose to remain throughout the year. The species is the black-crowned night-heron. This winter at least nine individuals roosted along the Don River right under the Queen Street Bridge!

Although most people recognize the stately great blue heron, few are familiar with the locally abundant black-crowned night-heron. Like many other herons, our night-herons nest colonially. One of our most cosmopolitan birds, this species actually occurs on seven continents (Australia and Antarctica being the exceptions). In Ontario, at the northern edge of its range in eastern North America, the colonies are located mainly on the lower Great Lakes. The Toronto colony is located on the Leslie Spit. It is one of the largest with over 1000 pairs returning each year to a wooded peninsula.

Shy and retiring, the black-crowned night heron flies to its hunting grounds at dusk. At that time you may observe them anywhere over the city. Oftentimes their presence is announced by a distinctive call,

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NIGHT-HERONS (cont'd)

"quock". In the darkness, the sound of a night heron somewhere above us is a pleasant reminder of how close we are to a natural area.

During this winter I observed a group of black-crowned night herons that roosted beside the Lower Don River. In the early morning they perched in the honeysuckle bushes on the west bank, catching the warmth of the sunrise. Later on they would move over to their favourite roost, a large twisted crack willow. At night they fed along the riverbanks, hunting for fish illuminated by the overhead lights of the Don Valley Parkway. On December 1, 2001, I counted five individuals. At various days thereafter I visited the birds and the same five (four adults, one immature) were always present. Then on the last day of the birders' winter, February 28, I was shocked to find nine, all perched in the same tree. Six were handsome adults with long white head plumes; three were brown-streaked immatures.

To view the black-crowned night herons, take the Queen Street car to the Don River and cross to the north side of the bridge. Look straight down at the willow. The birds should be there but they blend in amazingly well. It took me almost half an hour to verify that in fact there were nine birds, even though they were all in a bare tree!

To many people the thought of being able to restore the Lower Don River after centuries of abuse to its original condition is inconceivable. The presence of these birds happily shows us that although a lot of remediation is still required, we are making progress. Our native wild animals are returning, even some species that shun the daylight.

George Bryant

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See also page 15.

High-rise apartment
complex looms over the creek,
yet kingfisher calls.

haiku by Diana Banville
Crescent Town, May 11, 1997

IN THE NEWS

WASTE NOT

Alberta is famous for producing two things: petroleum and cattle. Unfortunately, both cause some nasty environmental problems. Extracting oil and gas harms the earth. And ranchers find that their livestock produce far more manure than they could use as fertilizer. Researchers have discovered that they can use one problem to solve the other. Manure not only adds nutrients to soil, it can also actually heal the damage done by oil and gas operations.

Grazing cattle distribute their waste across a pasture, but in feedlots, operations where cattle are fattened up before slaughter, it is amassed in huge quantities. At any given time, about 1.2 million cattle are on Canadian feedlots, 72 per cent of them in Alberta. Contaminated earth was mixed with raw cattle or poultry manure, and turned over repeatedly, introducing oxygen to the mix. As a result, the material heated up, and micro-organisms -- microscopic populations of bacteria, fungus and mould that are indigenous to the soil and organic wastes -- set to work breaking down both the manure and the hydrocarbons. By adding livestock manure or pulp-and-paper waste, the degree of hydrocarbon contamination dropped from 5 per cent to 1 per cent or less, making the soil so hospitable for plant life again that it met government remediation criteria. Composted and fresh beef cattle manure can actually replace soil lost to oil and gas production. Results show that it is not only a cost-effective way to heal the land, it also makes a site more productive.

from an article by Dawn Walton in THE GLOBE AND MAIL, February 2, 2002

ROOF GARDENS BOON IN WINTER

In the dead of winter, gardens on the roof provide significant insulation, according to results of the first year of a federal test in Toronto of the University of Toronto's Institute for Environmental Studies which is co-ordinating the study financed by Environment Canada. On a hot day, rooftop gardens and vegetation shading walls and windows can reduce the need for building air conditioning by as much as 20 per cent.

The gardens are built over the roof by adding a waterproof membrane and a layer of porous material for drainage. The soil is a combination of sand, organic material and mineral-rich stone. The plots create a thick insulating layer expected to last at least 30 years without leaking. Roofs make up a large percentage of the surface area downtown and are a major contributor to the "heat-island effect".

In the hottest days of last summer, temperatures measured in the financial district were as much as 10 degrees higher than in suburban Newmarket. Standard roofing materials reflect the sun's heat, but trees and plants absorb it. They also help cool the air by releasing water vapour.

Researchers are discovering other environmental benefits. Storm water flowing off a bare roof rushes directly into the sewer system, raising the risks of floods and pollution. A well-designed roof garden can absorb most of the rain and release it slowly.

from an article by Wallace Immen in THE GLOBE AND MAIL, February 16, 2002



IN THE NEWS (cont'd)

NOISY ONTARIO CROWS SPREAD GLOOM

In Woodstock, birders tallied 39,000 crows during the annual Christmas bird count in December, 10 times the number recorded the year before. The biggest population in the province was counted in the town of Essex, near Windsor, where 61,000 crows decided to roost. That's an improvement over the 117,000 crows that came to roost in Essex the year before, and far less than the 160,000 birds that descended upon Chatham in 1999.

The crow population has been steadily increasing since the early 1990s, according to bird-count figures (www.birdsource.org). At the root of the problem, not surprisingly, is shrinking habitat. As forests were chopped down to make way for farmland, crows had to migrate to nearby towns and cities where the tree-lined streets were the next best thing to the fringe of the forest. Crows, intelligent creatures capable of transmitting cultural information from generation to generation, quickly caught on when humans stopped taking pot shots at them with guns.

from an article by Kim Honey in THE GLOBE AND MAIL, February 22, 2002

MONARCH DISASTER

A shower of between 220 and 270 million frozen monarch butterflies fell from the trees after a drenching rainstorm was immediately followed by freezing temperatures in the insects' winter Mexican habitat. Researchers from the U.S. and Mexico say that the species is not likely to be threatened by this single event, but worry the decimated population could be vulnerable to future weather events, deforestation and disease. The monarchs in the affected Mexican sanctuaries make up the entire breeding stock of the butterflies that migrate each spring and summer to the eastern United States and Canada.

from an article by Steve Newman in THE TORONTO STAR, February 16, 2002

DRUMMING UP SUPPORT FOR WOODPECKERS

Woodpeckers have a thick skull, a space between the outer membrane of the brain itself, and strong muscles in the bill and skull which all act as "shock absorbers". Woodpeckers also have a highly-modified tongue (much like that of a hummingbird) folded within their bill that can be extended to great lengths to reach wood-boring insects. The tongue is also sticky with strong teeth and spikes pointing backwards, so that the tongue can stick to an insect, impale it, or in the case of the yellow-bellied sapsucker, can be used to lap sap. Other specialized adaptations include stiff tails, sharp claws to grip the trunk, and even special bristle-like feathers in their nostrils that apparently afford protection against inhaling wood dust. Woodpeckers also have phenomenal hearing that allows them to detect larvae of wood-boring insects moving around in the bark and over-wintering cluster flies hidden under wooden shingles of houses.

from an article by Debbie Badzinski in BIRDWATCH CANADA, Winter 2002

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IN THE NEWS (cont'd)

LIGHTNING KILLS TWO SHELTERING UNDER TREE

Any kind of a thunderstorm has the potential to produce lightning and consequently injuries. Environment Canada urges people to take cover when lightning and thunder occur less than five seconds apart. Each second represents about 300 metres from the lightning.

Other advice from the department:

- . Get to a house or vehicle (not a convertible) if you can.
- . If you must stay outdoors, stick to low-lying areas. Avoid trees, poles, hilltops and metal fences.
- . In a forest, seek a low area under a thick growth of small trees or bushes.
- . If you are swimming or boating, head for land.
- . If you are in a field far from shelter and you feel your hair stand on end, kneel on the ground with your feet together and your hands on your knees. Bend forward, but don't lie flat.
- . If you are in a group caught in the open, spread out. Keep people several metres apart.

from THE GLOBE AND MAIL, July 23, 2001

HUNTERS' TOXIC LEGACY CONTINUES TO KILL WILDLIFE

Lead shot poisons millions of waterfowl in North America each year. It took decades, but finally lead shot has been pretty well banned from waterfowl shooting in North America, although some hunters use it illegally. Despite the ban, lead shot continues to threaten waterfowl -- the toxic metal poisons the birds while they feed. These seed-eating birds have muscular gizzards, the organ in the digestive track that helps grind grain to aid digestion. The birds swallow grit -- small stones, pebbles and coarse sand -- to help the gizzard grind the grain. Birds can't differentiate between lead pellets and sand or gravel on pond bottoms. Many birds die slowly after ingesting lead. A single pellet is toxic enough to kill a duck, swan or goose.

And even though lead shot may not be used to hunt waterfowl, it is still to be found in the shotgun cartridges hunters use to bring down other game. The cartridges are packed full of small round lead balls that emerge from the gun in a long stream that fans out, quickly losing velocity. Pellets not absorbed by a target fall into the water, or onto the ground. Most miss -- any target close enough to absorb all the pellets would be blown to bits. And so waterfowl continue to die.

Now comes a report from the Canadian Wildlife Service based on studies of upland game birds, raptors, and songbirds, which has determined that, "frequency of elevated lead exposure in these species is often as high or higher than was observed for waterfowl before the ban on lead shot came into effect, indicating that the problem could be more widespread than originally imagined." It was certainly bad before, with many lake bottoms containing up to 180,000 pellets per hectare, and a few containing millions.

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IN THE NEWS (cont'd)

The report, in the current issue of Environment Canada's Science and the Environment Bulletin, suggests that in addition to the lasting toxic legacy left by waterfowl hunters, the hunting of big game, small game and upland birds such as grouse, plus residue from shooting ranges, continues to poison our wildlife.

from an article by Barry Kent MacKay in THE TORONTO STAR, February 17, 2002

FINDING WEST NILE BUG NOW COULD AFFECT SPRING DEFENCE PLAN

But one of the country's leading virologists says Canadians should be more concerned about dying from a seasonal 'flu virus or hepatitis than from the West Nile virus now striking fear in urban Ontario. Other viral infections are much more serious than West Nile. The likelihood of contracting viruses such as influenza, hepatitis or even Ebola is far higher than being bitten by a mosquito carrying the potentially, but not usually, deadly disease. Wear protective clothing and use mosquito repellent when outdoors in areas where there are a lot of mosquitoes. That's always the main message.

from an article by Paul Moloney and Karen Palmer in THE TORONTO STAR, August 29, 2001

OTTAWA MAY CLOSE PORTS TO SHIPS THAT POLLUTE WATERS

The Canadian government is considering shutting its ports to ships from countries that constantly foul coastal waters and kill thousands of birds each year with oily bilge. The federal government will be cracking down on ocean polluters with increased surveillance at sea and will be striving for higher fines for vessels that are caught dumping bilges at sea. Until recently, fines meted out for coastal pollution were so low that some ships deliberately dumped their bilges in Canadian waters rather than pay thousands of dollars in fees to properly dispose of wastes in ports in Canada and the United States.

Environmentalists have urged the federal government to bring in stiffer environmental legislation, with heavy fines for marine pollution.

from an article by Kevin Cox, in THE GLOBE AND MAIL, March 3, 2002

THE EXPERTS AGREE: THEY'VE NEVER SEEN A WARMER WINTER

It's being called the year without winter. Parts of Ontario had winter temperatures averaging above the freezing point, something that almost never happens. Lake Erie, which usually ices over, remained free of ice, and snowfalls in Toronto have been half normal.

Temperatures have been the highest ever from December to February in the broad zone from Windsor to Quebec City and Bagotville, and all the way up to Val-d'Or in Northern Quebec. All winter, this vast region has been feeling winds from the southwest U.S. push back the Arctic patterns that normally dominate the climate in Central Canada. Environment Canada said this winter is the 19th consecutive season of above-normal temperatures for Canada as a whole, a stretch that began in the summer of 1997 in Ontario.

from an article by Martin Mittelstaedt in THE GLOBE AND MAIL, March 8, 2002

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MUSSEL WARS: ALIENS NUKING NATIVE SPECIES

Research from 1993 to 2000 documented the biodiversity toll exacted by invading zebra mussels that originated from the Black and Caspian sea regions. Along the 30-kilometre stretch of the Rideau River under study, zebra mussels annihilated all the native mussels -- previously present in hundreds of thousands and three separate species, the eastern elliptio, the common floater and the eastern lampmussel.

What most Canadians don't know is that North America's rivers and lakes are home to the world's richest diversity of freshwater mussel, nearly 300 species or subspecies. The Rideau River alone, for instance, has a dozen species or subspecies out of Canada's total of 52. England has only nine. But loss of habitat, water pollution, damming and harvesting for shirt buttons and cultivated pearls had already brought more than half of North America's mussel species to the brink a decade ago. Then along came the zebra mussel, first identified in Lake St. Clair in 1988.

The ecological disruption caused by zebra mussels hasn't received as much attention as the cost of clearing clogged intakes at power stations and water treatment plants or the extra work for boaters faced with scraping fouled hulls. Yet the threat to biodiversity from alien species could well be the more serious problem in the long term. Lacking any natural predator in their new home, some alien invaders quickly become dominant, wiping out native species and creating a monoculture and the danger of an ecosystem collapse.

Not all river systems are equally vulnerable. The zebra mussel thrives in slow-flowing, chemically hard waters with lots of dissolved calcium for shell-building and abundant plankton for food in the spring and summer. It does not do as well in fast-flowing rivers and streams of the Canadian Shield where the granite bedrock creates soft water much lower in calcium content. Our freshwater mussels will often burrow into sand, mud or silt. But unlike Canadian saltwater mussels, they lack any means to attach themselves permanently to structures, rocks, boats or other shellfish. When necessary, they can move several metres in a day. Yet the native mussels can't move or live normally when they're coated with hundreds of zebra mussels. Scientists aren't sure exactly how zebra mussels cause the death of the native species. It could be suffocation, starvation, winter die-off from their weakened condition or even the shell equivalent of strangulation because the native mussels can no longer open and close their two sides.

from an article by Peter Calamai in THE TORONTO STAR, February 16, 2002

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On balcony rail,
Coo! Coo! Coo! says the pigeon.
No nesting here, dear!

haiku by Therese Paradis, April 1999

THE WEATHER (THIS TIME LAST YEAR)

May 2001, Toronto

For the first ten days, May was shaping up to be the hottest on record, even beating 1998, but then things began to change as near-normal temperatures moved in, mid-month. And for the final ten days, an upper-level low dominated the weather, bringing persistent (but not unwelcome) rains and fairly cool temperatures. Monthly mean temperatures (15.2°C downtown and 14.8°C at Pearson) ended up being well within the range of the past few years and well below the record set in 1998.

Hot, dry weather early in the month brought temperatures of 30°C on May 3rd, and continued more-or-less until May 12th, when a cooler pattern emerged. The upper level low during the latter third of the month brought welcome rains -- frequent and at times heavy. 50-80 mm fell on May 21st-22nd. The month ended up with 128 mm of precipitation downtown and 92 mm at Pearson, just slightly less than last year's deluge. Sunshine hours, however, continued above normal because of the first two-thirds of the month, with 252.4 hours.

June 2001, Toronto

June had a cool start, but quickly converted to a mostly hot, humid pattern broken by scattered thunderstorms along cold fronts. The first five days had highs in the teens, while the last four had highs in the low thirties. Mean monthly temperatures, like those of May, were well within the range of the recent warm trend.

Rainfall was light across Ontario, although Toronto fared better with about 60 mm. (Normal is about 70-75 mm.) Sunshine was close to average.

July 2001, Toronto

July was overall remarkably pleasant, but the strong dry trend that affected most of Ontario and the Great Lakes basin as well as other parts of North America revealed a sinister aspect to the month.

The month began with something unfamiliar -- record cold -- which came after a late June heat wave. A strong cold front on the holiday weekend brought sweater weather to cottage country and an overnight low of 9.7°C to downtown Toronto. This is the lowest reading for July since 1968 and the first one below 10°C since 1972. (However, it was not a record going back to 1840 for the day or month.)

The upper level trough that brought the cold kept things unsettled at first. An outbreak of thunderstorms on July 4th brought scattered tornadoes to southwestern and eastern Ontario, but in general, there was little moisture to work with in terms of bringing heavy rains. Bright, dry, pleasant weather was the rule as the building heat was concentrated westwards, only touching the Toronto area from July 20th-24th. Monthly mean temperatures were near or slightly below the long-term average, and

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THE WEATHER (cont'd)

precipitation was about 30-50 mm, or about half the normal. Toronto had more rain than most of Ontario or the Great Lakes basin, as many localities had 20 mm or less. Great Lakes water levels stabilized at their very low 1999 levels.

Winds averaged above normal with 15.5 km/h at Pearson Airport, due to persistent northwesterly flows.

August 2001, Toronto

The most noteworthy feature of August was the severe heat wave during the first nine days of the month. This heat wave covered much of North America, from the Canadian prairies east to the Atlantic, and south to Texas. Temperatures rose above 30°C from August 1st-9th, and were over 35°C for four days from August 6th-9th. The hottest day was August 8th with a maximum of 36.9°C downtown and 37.9°C at Pearson Airport. The latter is just over 100°F, and the highest since 38.3°C in August 1948 -- the hottest reading in airport records, which do not go back to July 1936 when 40°C+ readings occurred in Toronto. The overnight minimum of 26.2°C downtown was probably the highest overnight minimum on record, and would compare quite proudly with such torrid locales as Texas and India.

After this brutal heat wave, temperatures dropped back to near or only slightly warm temperatures the rest of the month. The average of 23.8°C downtown and 23.2°C at Pearson was the highest since 1959.

Serious drought intensified across the Great Lakes and indeed, most of the inhabited parts of Canada from the Rockies to Newfoundland. All of the rain in August fell in the second half of the month, and amounted to just over half the normal. Every month this year, except February and May, has had below-normal precipitation, and drought has been present or incipient most of the time since the summer of 1997. Even 2000, which had a very wet late spring, had below-normal precipitation across the calendar year. Nonetheless, rains between August 16th and 27th brought some relief to our area. The dryness resulted in a wider range between day and night temperatures overall -- notwithstanding record-high minimums on a few occasions during the heat wave. The difference between the average high and low downtown was 9.2°C, the greatest diurnal range for August since 1970 (normal is 8.4°C). Sunshine at Pearson was 268.9 hours, about 25 hours above normal and the highest since 1998.

Some statistics concerning the drought:

- . The entire Great Lakes region received less than 3/4 its normal rainfall, the driest since 1948.
- . Crop losses ranged from 20-25%.
- . London, Kitchener-Waterloo, Hamilton, Niagara, Trenton fared worse than Toronto, with about 15% of the normal rainfall for June to August.

Gavin Miller

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COMING EVENTS

Toronto Ornithological Club - Jim Baillie Memorial Bird Walks - free for the intermediate birder, but beginners are welcome

- Sat. May 4 from 7:30 am to 12 noon with Bob Yukich. Meet in the parking area inside the entrance at High Park. Spring Migration
- Sat. May 11 from 7:30 am to 12 noon with Don Burton. Meet in the parking lot at James Gardens (access from Edenbridge Dr.) Warblers
- Mon. May 20 from 7:45 am (all day) with Luc Fazio. Meet at the Toronto Islands ferry docks in time to catch the 8 am ferry to Hanlan's Point. Bring a lunch. Peak Migration
- Sat. May 25 from 7:30 am to 12 noon with Andrew Keaveney. Meet in the parking lot at the landfill at the foot of Kipling Ave. Whimbrels and Late Migrants

High Park Tuesday evening walks - beginning at 6:45 just south of the Grenadier Restaurant, \$2 donation requested

May 14 May 28 June 11 June 25 July 9 July 23 (moths + begins at 8:30 pm) Aug. 6 Aug. 20

For more details call 416-392-1748 or 416-392-6916.

Rouge Valley Conservation Centre - guided theme walks - free - beginning at 1 pm and lasting about 2 hours

- May 12 - spring flowers
- ~~June 9~~ - valley geology
- July 14 - butterflies and moths
- August 11 - summer in the valley

For more details call 416-282-8265.

Friends of the Don East

- Sat. May 4 at 10 am - Warden Woods litter cleanup. Meet at Warden and St. Clair. Hotdog lunch at noon.
 - Sat. May 25 at 10 am - Geology and history of the Toronto Brickworks
 - Sat. June 15 - Crothers Woods
- Call 416-466-9153 for complete details.

Presqu'ile Park

- one-day courses for \$10 each - Call 613-475-1688 for details.
 - weekend programs
- Events sponsored by Friends of Presqu'ile Park and Ontario Parks.

North American Native Plant Society Wildflower Sale - Sat. May 11 from 10 am to 4 pm at the Civic Garden Centre, 777 Lawrence Ave. East at Leslie St.

Casa Loma Gardens - open and free every Tuesday evening from 4 pm til dusk and all day (2nd Monday of the month) May 13, June 10, July 8, August 12).
Call 416-923-1171 for more information.

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COMING EVENTS (cont'd)

Citizens Concerned about the Future of the Etobicoke Waterfront

- Bird walk - Sat. May 4; 9 am to 11 am at Col. Sam Smith Park (foot of Kipling Ave.) in south parking lot. Leader is Don Burton.
- Bird walk - Sat. June 1; 9 am to 11 am at Col. Sam Smith Park (foot of Kipling Ave.) in south parking lot. Leader is Ron Scovell.
Sponsored by TD Friends of the Environment Foundation.

The Living Rivers Festival - Sun. May 5 from 12 noon to 5 pm at the Don Valley Brick Works. \$5 admission button includes shuttle bus service from Broadview subway station. Call 416-469-2977 for more details.

Thickson's Woods Land Trust - official opening of the "missing link" meadow - Sat. May 4 from 8 am to 12 noon. Opening includes a pancake breakfast, silent auction, bake sale, and raffle for a quilt and wildlife art, plus guided tours of the meadow and woods. Call 905-725-2116 for details.

All about ponds and pond life - Mon. June 10 from 7 pm to 9 pm at the Don Valley Brick Works. Free. Bring rubber boots. Organized by the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority. Call 416-661-6600, ext. 5660 for more information.

All about insects - Mon. June 24 from 7 pm to 9 pm at the Don Valley Brick Works. Call 416-661-6600, ext. 5660.

All about fish - Tue. July 23 (rain date July 24) from 6 pm to 8 pm at the Spadina Quay Wetland, south end of Spadina Ave. Call 416-661-6600, ext. 5660.

Royal Ontario Museum walk to Don Valley Brick Works beginning at Chorley Park and ending at the Ontario Science Centre. Leader is Ed Freeman. Cost is \$30. Call 416-586-8000 for details. Walk is May 19 at 10 am.

Don Valley Communities: May 11 at 10 am - walking tour with Katherine Kirzati beginning at the Prince Edward Viaduct, one block west of Broadview Stn. Cost is \$2.00. Call 416-396-2819 for more details.

Toronto Entomologists' Association

- Sat. June 15 at 10 am - Butterflies of the Hockley Valley. Meet at the Hockley Valley Provincial Nature Reserve just north of Orangeville. From Hwy. 10, turn east on Hockley Valley Rd. (County Rd. 10) and park at the entrance at Line 2 EHS Mono. Bring lunch. Leader is Tim Sabo.
- Sat. July 20 at 8 pm - Moths of Durham with Dave Beadle. Meet at 172 Way St., Brooklin, just north of the junction of Hwy 7 (Winchester Rd.) and Hwy. 12 (Baldwin St.). Turn northwest onto Way from Baldwin.
- Sat. August 17 at 10 am - Spiders of Blackwater/Beaver Creek. Meet on the road shoulder where Beaver Creek flows under Hwy 12 just south of Blackwater. Bring lunch. Leader is Tom Mason.
For all outings, call Carol Sellers at 416-421-7398 if you plan to attend -- for last minute changes. Website: www.ontarioinsects.org

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