

THE NEWSLETTER

OF THE TORONTO FIELD NATURALISTS' CLUB
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Did you hear about the discovery of the yellow rail's nest in June by a member of this society? For the first time in bird history in Canada a nest of this rarely seen little rail was found on June 12 at Holland Marsh by O.E.Devitt. A few days previous to the find one of the rails became so excited by an imitation of its song (like the clicking of two pebbles together) that it settled on F.H.Emery's coat lapel, and allowed itself to be picked up.

Our secretary, Mrs. L.E. Jaquith, had the privilege of adding a new bird to the Toronto list when, during the migration last spring, she happened upon a beautiful blue grosbeak along the bank of Bronte Creek. This bird is a southerner, a close relative of the cardinal, with the red of that bird replaced by indigo blue and chestnut. Back in May, too, Murray Speirs, whilst leading a T.F.N.C. Wednesday morning walk, found a white-eyed vireo at Ashbridge's Bay, and so added another new bird to the local list. A second white-eyed vireo was observed in High Park by Dr. and Mrs. Jaquith, and R.M. Saunders. In June, V. Crich came upon a family of saw-whet owls in Cedarvale Ravine. This is only the second time that this interesting small owl has been known to breed in this region. Early in June, T.F. McIlwraith discovered a yellow-throated vireo's nest high up in an oak tree by the east shore of Grenadier Pond--the first record for Toronto.

Now that the fall bird migration is in full swing look for birds in your garden and along the streets. Dr. and Mrs. Jaquith had a visit from a northern water-thrush in their garden on Aug. 27. J.L. Baillie picked up two Tennessee warblers, somehow stunned, on the sidewalk in front of his home in Parkdale. They soon recovered and flew away. T.F. McIlwraith had juncos on his lawn on Sept. 18, an early record. R.M. Saunders observed a yellow-bellied flycatcher and a Cooper's hawk in his garden on Kendal Ave. on the same day (Sept. 18). The next day the same observer, while walking along Harbord St., heard a great commotion among the starlings overhead and on looking up was astonished to see a magnificent peregrine falcon in pursuit of one of the starlings! The two disappeared among the houses before any decision was made in the chase.

Mr. Halliday, our former secretary, has received a great many complaints this summer concerning the destruction of birds' nests in the Humber Valley district. He is making inquiries about similar depredations in other parts of the Toronto region, and about the causes of such malicious destruction. He will welcome any information you can give him. (H.M. Halliday, 25 LeMay Road) Have you any suggestions as to how this organization can deal with such a matter? Let us know.

There appears to have been an extraordinary abundance of the large, showy, black and yellow garden spider this season. Numerous inquiries about it have been received at the Museum. Its prominent silky webs have been a common sight in the garden shrubbery.

An important discovery amongst the Toronto animals was the finding of woodland jumping mice at Nancy Lake on May 20 by Messrs. Rutter and Shortt. This is the second time these mice have been

seen in our area. Another animal find of very great interest was made by T.F. McIlwraith on Sept. 5 at Ashbridge's Bay when he discovered the track of a mink. With the exception of muskrats and skunks, fur-bearing animals are of the greatest rarity in this heavily settled region.

Many of our botanists are watching with concern the rapid spread of the European immigrant, goatsbeard. The yellow variety is, so far, the most common, but the purple kind is extending its range as well. The latter is tall and rich in coloring but the plant is loathed as a farm pest in Europe. Have you noticed how fine the turtlehead is this year? Even in Cedarvale Ravine, where the Parks Department has ripped out most of the undergrowth, there are a few of the velvety, cream-colored heads. New England aster, the deep purple bush aster, appears to be decorating more and more of our dry fields every year.

The workers in the Biological Laboratory of the University of Toronto were delighted this summer when the eggs of a Rocky Mountain ice bug (*Grylloblatta campodeiformis* E. Walker) hatched out. In the fourteen years that various insects of this species have been laying eggs in the laboratory none up to this time has completed its development. This particular female insect was captured as an adult three years ago on Mt. Edith Cavell in Jasper Park and has been in isolation ever since. Each year eggs were deposited but only this year did any of them hatch. The young insects emerged over a period of two to four weeks. The possibility of parthenogenetic development is thereby suggested. (Dr. Norma Ford)

Try this recipe on your feeding tray this winter. Chickadee Pudding: $\frac{3}{4}$ c. melted fat (suet, beef fat, lamb fat, etc.), 1 heaping tbsp. peanut butter, $\frac{3}{4}$ c. dry crumbs, $\frac{1}{4}$ c. cornmeal, $\frac{1}{4}$ c. oatmeal, $\frac{1}{4}$ c. rolled oats, $\frac{1}{4}$ c. flour, $\frac{1}{4}$ c. millet, $\frac{1}{4}$ c. chopped peanuts or peanut hearts; melt the suet and peanut butter together; mix dry ingredients together; stir into melted fat; pour into bowls and set aside to harden. When cold scrape or crumble pudding and put on feeding tray. Or cut off pieces and place in an open-mesh wire cage against tree trunk, pole, etc. The mixture will keep indefinitely in a cool place. This recipe may be varied according to the ingredients on hand. Start with the fat and peanut butter and crumbs and add as many of the other ingredients as you can. Nearly all winter birds like this. So do cats, dogs, and skunks, so put it where they cannot steal it or molest the birds. If you start to feed the birds remember it is a responsibility you have undertaken which can only be neglected afterwards to the great suffering of the birds that have come to rely on your generosity. (Mrs. L.E. Jaquith)

What have you seen or heard? Let us know and we will tell the members of the society through the Newsletter. We all want to know what is to be seen and found in our own neighbourhood. Send observations to R.M. Saunders, 31 Kendal Ave., or put them in the box which will be placed near the door of the hall at each meeting. If our members find the Newsletter interesting, we plan to send out an issue with each monthly notice.