

## THE NEWSLETTER

OF THE TORONTO FIELD NATURALISTS' CLUB  
Number 8 September 1939

As naturalists and ramblers in the out of doors all seasons have their attraction for us. The passing of summer, the coming of autumn, the forecast of winter, to us these signify new experiences, new ventures, new life. Every season brings something unknown to us before and refreshing contact with the familiar, with old friends. To be a naturalist is to be granted one of the greatest of all boons, the privilege of living constantly in anticipation.

As members of this club we now commence a new season of fellowship in meeting and field trip. At the recent meeting of your executive committee it was decided unanimously that it would be unwise to cease our activities because of the unhappy struggle into which we are now plunged. Now is the time, if ever, to remind ourselves of the constancy of nature, of eternal beauties, of unchanging truths. So far as we possibly can we should keep ourselves from the contemplation of hostility, horror, and hatred. We have got to deal sometime with a future of settlement and peace. That should never be forgotten, for if it is, we fight to no purpose, and when that future comes to be formed it will be well made only if we maintain balance of mind and serenity of heart and soul. Those who know how to live in truth with nature have one means of performing that duty to themselves and to their nation that others do not have. Let us cling to it.

This fall we have watched the finest hawk flights that we have ever seen, and reports have been coming from all over the region of similar experiences by other observers. Nothing is more stirring than a flight of these great birds wheeling, sailing, and darting across the heavens, now silhouetted against a snow-white cloud, now hung in infinite blue space, with the sun playing upon their rich coloring. On September 11 we observed 685 hawks, in less than two hours, flying along the ancient Wells Hill route. The conditions were ideal, with a strong northwest wind and intermittent cumulus clouds. The hawks were flying very high, on the average about 2000-3000 feet, but with many as high as 5000-7000 feet. These latter were at times obscured by clouds passing beneath them. The sun was so strong and the atmosphere so clear in the blue spots that the colors stood out even at that height. Most of the hawks were buteos, flying in groups of 30-90, with many Cooper's hawks, and some falcons. Six duck hawks were recorded. The prize was a magnificent bald eagle. Its form announced it as an eagle, but for some time it circled beneath the clouds, then suddenly it stopped wheeling and sailed swiftly out into blue space where the sun struck in full brilliance upon its sheer white head and tail. It was a sight that will never be forgotten.

Dr and Mrs Jaquith report the sight of similar flight of hawks along the lakefront near Pickering, on Sunday, Sept. 17. Scarboro Bluffs, Wells Hill, and Sunnybrook Park are perhaps the best places to observe hawk flights in our region. On Sept. 16 J.L.Baillie and Fred Urquhart saw a large flight at Erindale Pond. They also had the good fortune to see an enormous collection of chimney swifts (300-500) in migration. The late date as well as the number was unusual in this observation. On Sept. 9 several observers found a Wilson's phalarope at Sunnyside. This is one of our daintiest shore birds, always active, always graceful. It is rare at Toronto but probably regular in migration.

During the summer three new species of birds were added to the Ontario breeding list: the Nelson's sparrow at Attawapiskat Post, James Bay, on Aug. 8, by Douglas Deeks; the common redpoll, on Aug. 10, and the blackpoll warbler, on Aug. 13, at Lake Attawapiskat, 300-400 miles distant from the previous point, by Clifford Hope. This brings the Ontario breeding list to 219.

A noteworthy discovery in the mammal world of this province was made by Leslie Prince, who was associated with Mr Hope, when he managed to trap 60 specimens of the pigmy shrew. This is more of these tiny beasts than existed before in all the museums of the world. This discovery seems to alter the opinion previously held that this animal, though generally distributed throughout Ontario, was very rare. A red bat, rare at Toronto, was captured in the cedars near the Children's Zoo at the Canadian National Exhibition by William Carrick. This is a migratory species, and was doubtless on its way south. Dr and Mrs Jaquith were so fortunate as to spot a fine fox in a field near Bradford on Aug. 26.

Few of us realize that there are about 140 species of dragon flies which inhabit the province of Ontario. A little less than one half of them are resident in the Toronto area, and wandering representatives of other species may be seen there from time to time. One of the number, the Anax dragonfly, still to be seen at this time of year, is migratory like the Monarch butterfly. They have been observed in huge numbers upon rare occasions during their southward flight by Professor E.M.Walker, both above the campus of the University of Toronto, and along the lakefront. They winter in the southern states but whether the same individuals return to Ontario in the spring is unknown. The ones that come back are fresh in appearance, and ready to take up breeding, whereas it would seem likely that any which had made the fall migration and returned would be badly torn and tattered. All of us have been frightened as children with the superstitions about the "darning needles", but the serious study of these attractive and beautiful insects, whose beneficent worth is to be measured in the annual toll that they levy on the flies and mosquitoes, is strongly recommended to the members of this club.

Any field observations may be sent to either Mrs L.E.Jaquith, 72 Hudson Drive, or R.M.Saunders, 31 Kendal Avenue.

## New Members

Mrs K.M.Millsom	Mr A.R.Whittemore
Mrs Sydney Giles	Mr Wm.G.Clements
Mr Cecil A.Larn	James G.Morgan
Miss Myrtle McKay	Miss Alice Boulton
Miss Lois Shaw	Mrs Mary J. Mason
Miss A.J.Milliken	Mr John Daniell-Jenkins
Mr Chas.J.Zusi	Mrs John Daniell-Jenkins
Dr C.E.Cooper Cole	Mr Norman Martin
Mrs Roy T.Jones	Professor T.W.Dwight
Miss R.Stulton	Miss Dorothy Dwight
Miss Gertrude Wallace	Miss Jean Dwight