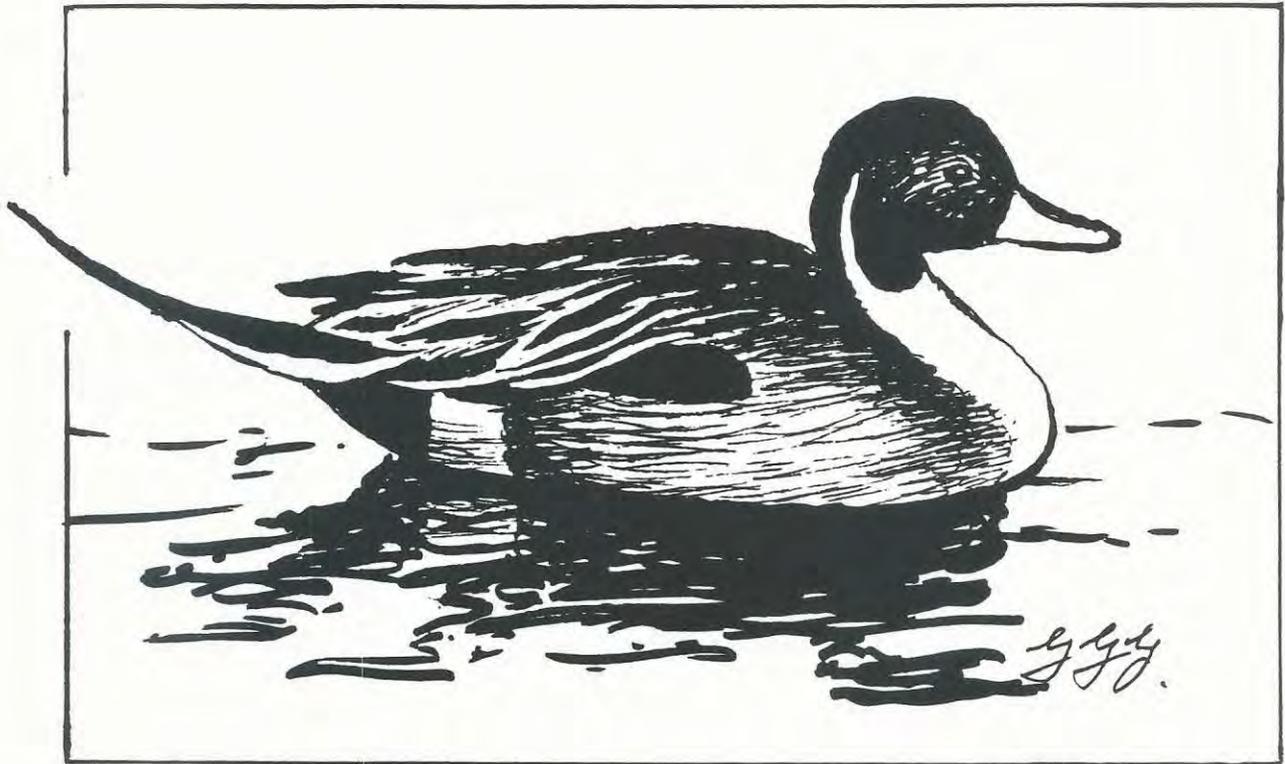


TORONTO FIELD NATURALIST

Number 448

December 1994



- from an Arthur Morris photo

Male Northern Pintail

Geraldine Goodwin

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TFN MEETINGS

- Sunday, December 4, 1994 - ARE AMPHIBIANS DISAPPEARING?
at 2:30 pm
in the Northrop Frye Hall
Victoria University
73 Queen's Park Cres. East
- an illustrated lecture by Dr. Larry Licht, Professor of Biology, York University
 - Various factors influencing the numbers of amphibians will be discussed, including acid rain and ultra violet light.
 - + "social hour" beginning at 2 pm with coffee and juice available outside the lecture hall.
 - + TFN memberships and publications for sale from 2 pm, outside the lecture room.
 - + "Always Alice Cards" for sale. To order custom cards, call TFN member Alice Mandryk at 767-6149.
 - + FON Christmas Cards will be available for sale (\$6.00 per package, 10 cards per package, Bateman's "Snowy Owl")

NEXT MEETING: Sunday, February 5, 1995 [No January meeting]

Board of Directors

President: Joan O'Donnell (744-3888) 3 Sims Cres., Etobicoke M9V 2S9

Vice-President: Allan Greenbaum (665-9391) 705 - 4 Assiniboine Rd.,
Downsview M3J 1L2

Past President: Eileen Mayo (445-4621) 803 - 16 Concorde Place,
Don Mills M3C 3S6

Secretary-Treasurer: Aarne Juhola (924-5806) 112 - 51 Alexander St.
Toronto M4Y 1B3

Other Directors:

Tracy Butler (905-637-9100) 808 - 685 Surrey Lane, Burlington, Ont. L7T 3Z2

Alexander Cappell (663-7738) 109 - 35 Cedarcroft Blvd., Willowdale M2R 2Z4

Ken Cook (699-8506) 154 Drayton Ave., Toronto M4C 3M2

Karin Fawthrop (282-6044) 347 Beechgrove Dr., Scarborough M1E 4A2

Nancy Fredenburg (781-8550) 807 - 360 Ridelle Ave., Toronto M6B 1K1

Helen Juhola (924-5806) 112 - 51 Alexander St., Toronto M4Y 1B3

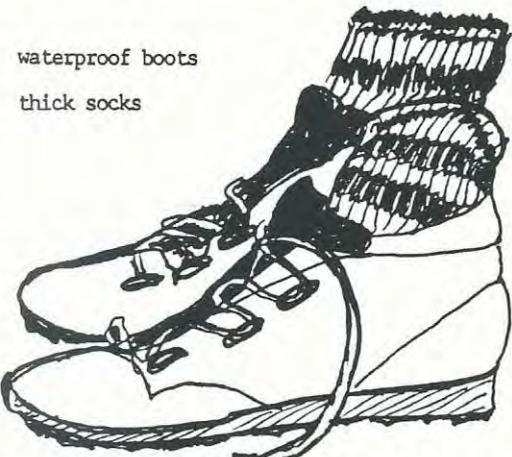
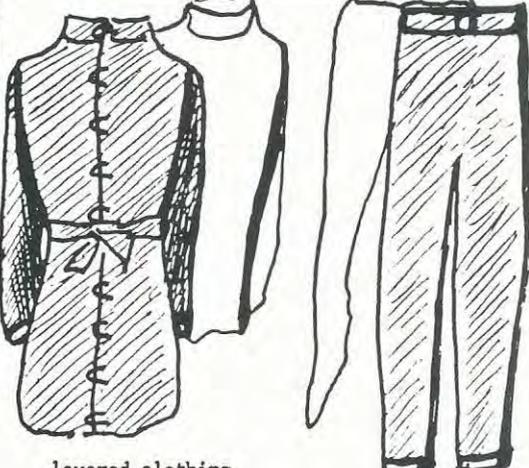
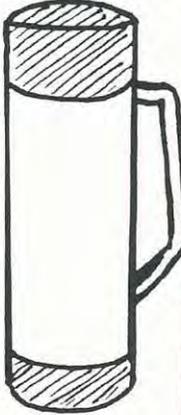
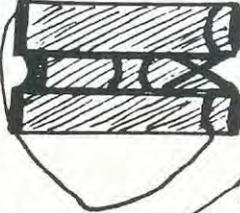
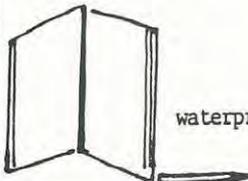
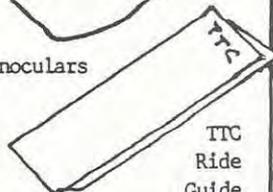
Ann Millett (905-792-0844) 138 Folkstone Cres., Brampton L6T 3M5

Morris Sorensen (755-6030) 29 Janet Blvd., Scarborough M1R 1H7

NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE: Helen Juhola, Diana Banville, Eva Davis,
Nancy Fredenburg, Eileen Mayo, Joan O'Donnell,
Toshi Oikawa.

Special thanks to Jenny Bull, Alexander Cappell and Karin Fawthrop for their able assistance when extra help has been needed.

FOR ENJOYMENT OF WINTER OUTINGS

<p>peaked woolly cap with ear muffs</p> 	 <p>mittens over gloves</p>
<p>waterproof boots thick socks</p> 	 <p>layered clothing</p>
<p>sun glasses, if desired</p>  <p>snack</p>  <p>thermos for hot drink</p> 	<p>camera</p>  <p>binoculars</p>  <p>waterproof notebook</p>  <p>TTC Ride Guide</p>  <p><i>Eva Davis</i></p>

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 393-4636.
 Check the weather by calling 661-0123 so you'll know what to wear on outings which go rain or shine.

- Saturday YORK CEMETERY GREENHOUSES - nature arts North York
 Dec. 3 Leader: Erik Wiersma
 10:30 am Meet at the North York Centre subway station. Lunch optional.
 Bring camera, sketching materials and stool, or just come and enjoy the
 exotic flora in the greenhouse or the fine collection of trees in the
 cemetery. Members usually spend the morning sketching etc. and compare
 works during the lunch hour.
- Sunday, Dec. 4 - TFN MEETING [See page 2.]
- Wednesday GARDINER MUSEUM - nature arts Toronto
 Dec. 7 Leader: Leslie Mirylees
 10:30 am Meet at the museum entrance on the east side of Queen's Park
 just south of Bloor St. West. Lunch optional.
 Bring sketching materials and be prepared to compare "works" during the
 lunch hour. The museum contains an excellent collection of ceramic art,
 many decorated with nature subjects.
 \$ admission fee
- Sunday TORONTO ISLAND - nature photography Lakeshore, Toronto
 Dec. 11 Leaders: Morris Sorensen & Star Whitmore
 11 am Meet at the ferry docks at the foot of Bay St. to take the
 first available ferry. Bring lunch, a hot drink, and camera
 preferably with a tripod.
 \$ ferry tickets
 The island can be very cold and windy but has many inspiring subjects for
 the nature photographer who is prepared with appropriate clothing and
 equipment.
- Thursday HIGH PARK - nature walk Toronto
 Dec. 15 Leader: volunteer required (call Ann Millett at 905-792-0844)
 10:30 am Meet at the park entrance on Bloor St. West opposite High Park
 Ave. Bring lunch.
 This large park contains many habitats from remnant savannah to forested
 ravines to a large pond. Its large size and proximity to Lake Ontario make
 it a pleasant and scenic place to visit at any time of the year.
- Thursday ERNEST THOMPSON PARK - nature walk West Don, North York
 Dec. 29 Leader: Joe Croft
 11 am Meet on the south side of Eglinton Ave. East at Leslie St.
 This will be a brisk walk in the valley to enjoy the scenery and the exercise.
 No lunch. Walking is on level ground. The valley is reached either by
 a stairway from the meeting place or in the parking lot at the foot of the
 stairs.

OUTINGS (cont'd)

- Wednesday LAMBTON WOODS - birds Humber, Etobicoke
 Jan. 4 Leader: Barbara Kalthroff
 10:30 am Meet on the east side of Royal York Rd. at Edenbridge Dr.
 Lunch optional.
 The site of our outing is environmentally significant. Rare plants and a favourite habitat for many kinds of birds make it an interesting place to visit at any time of the year. Good trails.
- Saturday NORTH YORK CENTRAL LIBRARY - nature arts North York
 Jan. 7 Leader: Diana Banville
 10:30 am Meet at the North York Centre subway station. Lunch optional.
 We will be looking at books on the subject of nature arts. Bring examples of your "work" to be discussed during the lunch hour.
- Thursday TORONTO ISLANDS - birds Lakeshore, Toronto
 Jan. 12 Leader: Ann Millett
 10:30 am Meet at the ferry docks at the foot of Bay St. to take the first
 \$ ferry ferry. Dress warmly and bring a lunch and hot drink.
 tickets The Island is an excellent place to see waterfowl during winter. Many other kinds of birds find the undeveloped areas fine places to shelter and feed.
- Saturday YORK CEMETERY - birds West Don, North York
 Jan. 14 Leader: Carol Sellers
 11 am Meet at the cemetery entrance on the west side of Senlac Rd.
 north of Sheppard Ave. West. Dress warmly and bring a hot drink.
 Open fields with hedgerows and tableland forest provide a variety of places for birds to feed and shelter.
- Sunday MOORE PARK RAVINE - nature walk Don tributary, Toronto/East York
 Jan. 15 Leader: Steven Peck
 1:30 pm Meet at the ravine entrance on Moore Ave. just east of Hudson
 Dr. (This is a joint outing with the Friends of the Don East York.)
 This well-wooded ravine has an interesting history and has long been a popular place for naturalists to observe wildlife in the city.
- Wednesday YORK CITY HALL - nature arts Black Creek, City of York
 Jan. 18 Leader: Wilma Bell
 10:30 am Meet at the City Hall entrance on the north side of Eglinton
 Ave. West, just west of Keele St. Lunch optional.
 Bring cameras, sketching materials and stool or just come and enjoy. The municipal offices contain a small greenhouse and often have art on display.
 This building is adjacent to the valley of Black Creek for those wanting to walk outside. Usually members compare their works during the lunch hour.
- Saturday LAMBTON PARK - savanna remnant in winter Humber, City of York
 Jan. 21 Leader: David Orsini
 11 am Meet at the park entrance on the north side of Dundas St. West,
 west of Scarlett Rd. Bring lunch and a warm drink.
 This small park perched above the Humber River is very different from the park known as Lambton Woods on the opposite side of the river. Compare species here with those found in High Park's black oak woodlands.

JANUARY OUTINGS (cont'd)

Sunday CHINE DRIVE RAVINE - nature walk Lakeshore, Scarborough

Jan. 22 Leader: Graham Neville

1:30 pm Meet on the south side of Kingston Rd. at Chine Dr.

Several deep ravines lead out to the Scarborough bluffs. These provide shelter from the wind for walkers as well as wildlife. Views of the bluffs in winter can be spectacular.

Thursday DOWNTOWN - urban natural history Toronto

Jan. 26 Leader: Lee Jackson

10:30 am Meet at the Bay subway station (west side of Bay St. just north of Bloor St. West). Morning only.

This will be a brisk walk to examine the chosen habitat of the most abundant animal in this region (the most visible anyway). We will be walking toward Harbourfront.

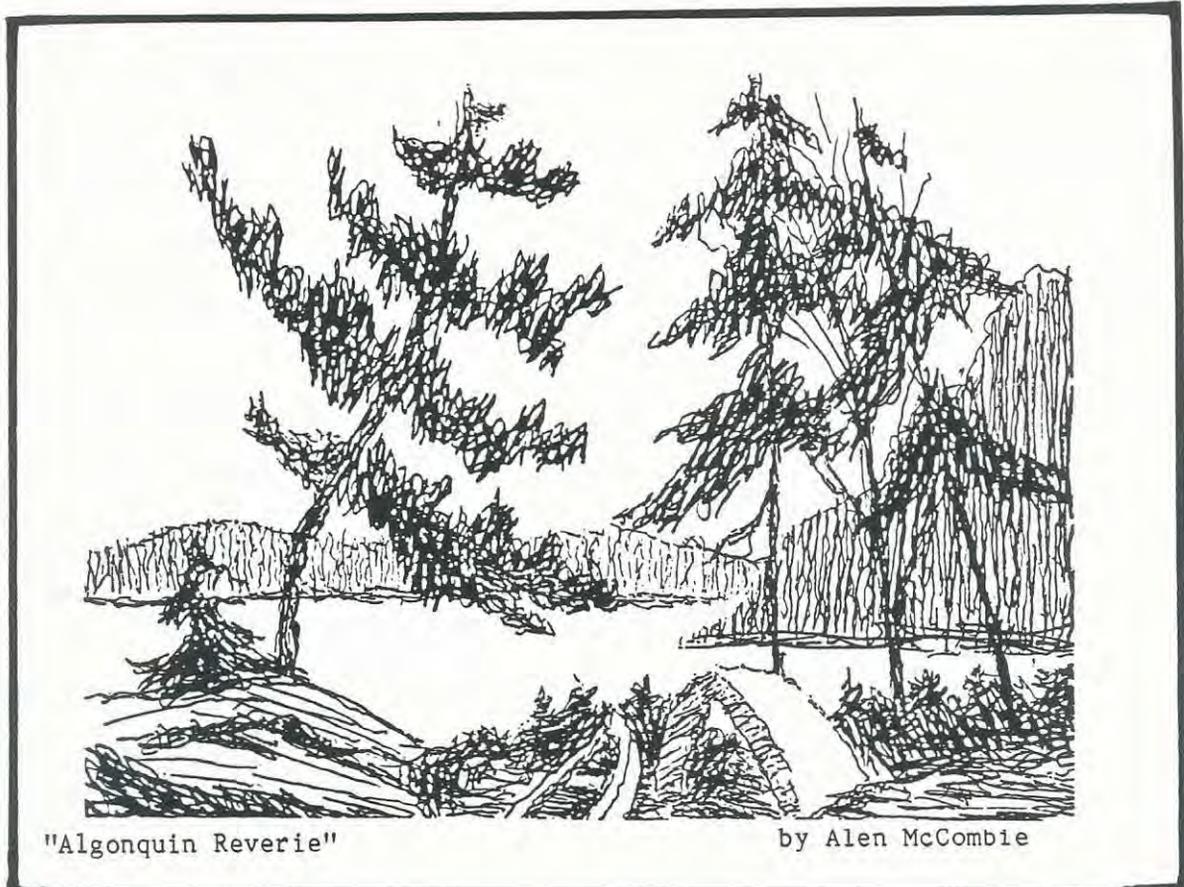
Sunday SCARBOROUGH BLUFFS - nature walk Lakeshore, Scarborough

Jan. 29 Leaders: Boris Mather & Ken Cook

1:30 pm Meet on the south side of Kingston Rd. at Birchmount Rd.

This is a joint outing with the Citizens for a Lakeshore Greenway. We will have a chance to look at the lake from the bluffs and examine some of the problems of creating a walking trail along this piece of Lake Ontario shoreline.

□



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

This is a potpourri of ways in which members can help the environment during the approaching Christmas season.

At the September monthly meeting some of you missed getting a flyer about F.L.A.P. If you want one or wish to make a donation or become a volunteer, the address is: Fatal Light Awareness Program, 1 Guelph Road, Erin, Ont. NOB 1T0.

Last month I mentioned several conjectures as to why a local meadow under the Hydro lines was allowed to naturalize. Since then I discovered the real reason during a chat with a neighbour. She had been persistent in making phone calls and writing letters to the municipality and to Ontario Hydro. They eventually agreed to stop mowing that particular area on a trial basis in order to gauge public reaction. This illustrates what the efforts of one dedicated individual can accomplish.

We were saddened to hear of the passing of Florence Wilson, the only child of Jim Baillie, on Wednesday, September 21, 1994. She had been an active naturalist and a life member of TFN. Instead of flowers, donations were requested to be made to the Toronto Field Naturalists.

Be sure to read Allan Greenbaum's report about the threat to our Jim Baillie and Emily Hamilton Reserves on pages 8-11. Jack Gingrich, a Past President of the TFN, is very interested in the reserve, and offered his help. Consequently he attended and reported on a workshop in the Wilfrid Town Hall that was organized by local residents. In addition he participated in a walk on our reserve with officials and interested neighbours.

We urge you all to send letters opposing the proposed extension of Highway 404. The more people who do this, the better. Emphasize that the need for the highway is not justified. You might also mention the sensitive wetlands. Write to: The Hon. Bob Rae, Premier of Ontario, Room 281, Legislative Building, Queen's Park, Toronto, Ont. M7A 1A1. Send a copy to The Hon. Mike Farnan, Minister of Transportation, Ministry of Transportation, 1201 Wilson Avenue, Downsview, Ontario M3M 1J8. Also send a copy to The Hon. Larry O'Connor, MPP for Durham-York -- while the house is in session until December 8 -- 11th floor, Hepburn Block, 80 Grosvenor Street, Toronto M7A 2C4 or riding office: 133A High Street, Sutton, Ont. LOE 1R0.

Season's Greetings,

Joan O'Donnell

□

Every new [development] proposal is assessed for its impact on the current environmental conditions, not on the cumulative effect over generations of time. Without a longer memory span, our reference points are too current to see the dimensions of what is happening.

extracted from "Our short memories are developers' allies" by David Suzuki in the LONDON FREE PRESS, Feb. 5, 1994

PROPOSED HIGHWAY 404 EXTENSION THREATENS TFN NATURE RESERVES

The Ontario Ministry of Transport is presently engaged in a route planning study and environmental assessment for a proposed extension of Highway 404. Highway planners have not yet generated precise route alternatives, but they have sketched a set of what they call "corridor opportunities". These corridor opportunities (see map) are envelopes somewhere within which the highway right-of-way may be located. One of these envelopes includes the Jim Baillie and Emily Hamilton Nature Reserves.

Presently, the 404 ends at Davis Drive near the town of Newmarket. The Ministry of Transportation is contemplating extending the highway in an northeasterly direction, where it will connect with Highway 12 and proceed up the east side of Lake Simcoe. It also plans to build an east-west thoroughfare connecting Highways 400 and 404. According to the Ministry, the rationale for the Highway 404 extension is projected commuter traffic volume in the area 20 years hence. A further rationale may be the transport of gravel from quarries in the Brechin area northeast of Lake Simcoe.

Local residents first heard of the plans last April, when they received notification in the mail of information meetings. A few of these residents in the vicinity of our reserves set about organizing grassroots opposition over the summer. Their organization, People Against The Highway 404 ("PATH 404") set up two meetings in October at the Wilfrid Town Hall in which concerned citizens could interrogate the Ministry staff and their consultants. Unlike the initial meetings organized by the Ministry, these October meetings were well attended (by up to 200 people), and the highway planners faced tough questioning.

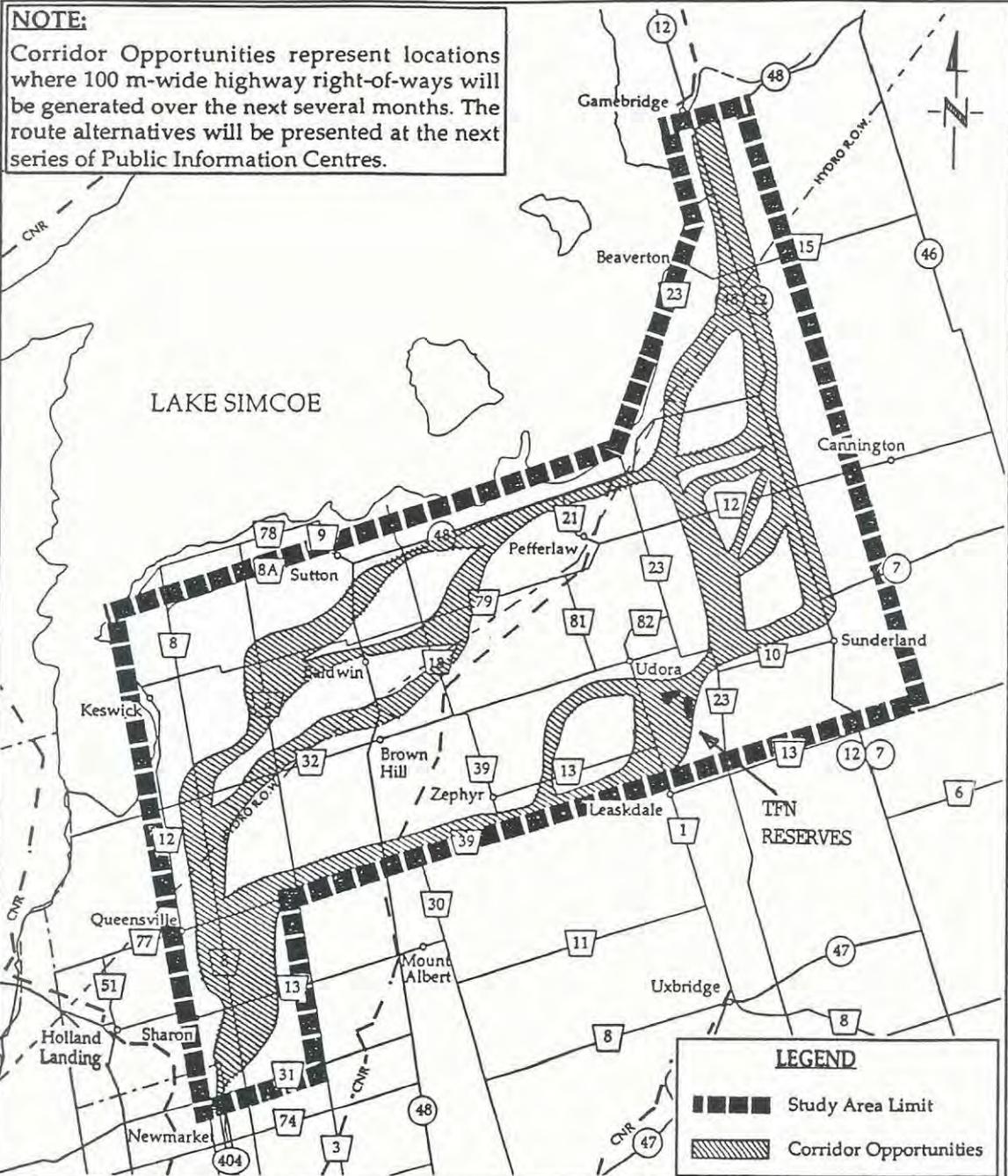
Jack Gingrich, a past president of the TFN who played a major role in the purchase of the Jim Baillie reserve lands, attended the second of these meetings on October 20. He reported that local residents felt no need for a new highway, encountered no traffic problems on local roads (except for the stretch of Davis Dr. between the 404 and Newmarket), and disliked travelling on 400-series freeways.

On October 25, Jack and I met with PATH 404 members at the home of Sharon Murray, located not far from the Emily Hamilton reserve. We led the group on a short field trip through the Jim Baillie and Emily Hamilton reserves. We were joined on the walks by Ministry of Transport planner Heather Pearson and by naturalist Dale Hoy, who works for an environmental planning firm retained by the Ministry. Our guests seemed impressed with the beauty and ecological diversity of our properties, and I learned a great deal about the people and wildlife of the area from them.

The TFN should join PATH 404 in opposing the extension of highway 404. Obviously, the TFN would strenuously oppose any route that would impinge on the provincially significant Uxbridge Brook wetland complex, of which our reserves represent a small part. I

NATURE RESERVE REPORT (cont'd)

NOTE:
 Corridor Opportunities represent locations where 100 m-wide highway right-of-ways will be generated over the next several months. The route alternatives will be presented at the next series of Public Information Centres.

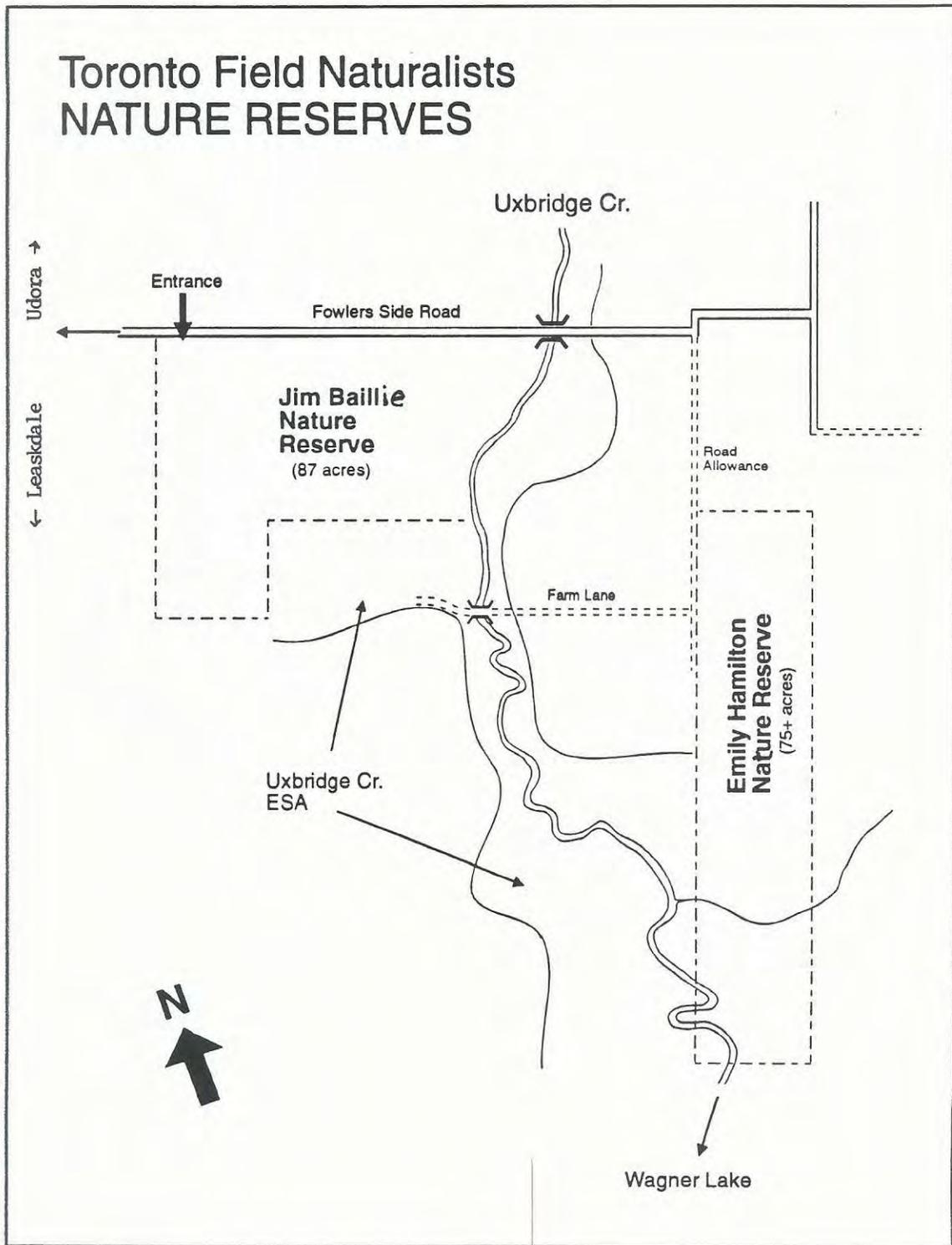


CORRIDOR OPPORTUNITIES



Highway 404 Extension: Davis Drive to Highway 12
 Route Planning Study and Environmental Assessment
 WP-299-86-00





Jim Baillie Nature Reserve: purchased 1970/73

Emily Hamilton Nature Reserve: purchased 1987

NATURE RESERVE REPORT (cont'd)

suspect that the planners are unlikely to favour a route that would cross a natural area that the province has declared provincially significant. Local farmers are also of this opinion, but while they fully appreciate the value of the wetlands, they are concerned that farmland not be sacrificed to protect wetland. An approach that emphasizes deciding on the least objectionable route will have the effect of pitting some landowners against others. Besides, any route would cut across several watersheds, create a further barrier to the movement of wildlife, and further contribute to the fragmentation of habitat.

Why should the 404 extension be built at all? As Jack Gingrich pointed out, if there is a need to move gravel from Brechin, rail transport can do the job much more efficiently and cleanly. The position of the Ministry of Transport seems to be that the need is to accommodate projected commuter traffic, and that the Ministry is required to build highways where the demand exists. This need could arise only from the development of far-flung "dormitory suburbs" in the northeast, the residents of which would drive to work in Newmarket, Markham and Metro Toronto. The idea seems to be that as long as local municipalities approve these developments, the province must service them with highways. Of course, the local municipalities will continue to approve these automobile-dependent developments if the province is bound to service them. The effect of this vicious circle is to ensure a wasteful, economically inefficient and environmentally destructive settlement pattern in Southern Ontario.

Everyone these days makes at least a ritual bow to the notion of "sustainability", and provincial policy pays due lip service to the need for more compact settlement patterns. The *Environmental Assessment Act* requires proponents to consider not only alternative ways of carrying out the undertaking in question, but also "alternatives to the undertaking" itself. The alternative to supplying more highways is to devise such policies as will forestall the demand for them. At the very least, the environmental assessment presently being prepared should give serious consideration to such alternatives. Better still, the province should kill the 404 extension now.

Allan Greenbaum

□

Comment: See page 7 for names and addresses to send your letter to, objecting to this proposal.

Night's ghostly moonlight
reflecting from rippled brook
twists dark images.

Haiku by J. Kenneth Cook

KEEPING IN TOUCH

June 16, 1994

At its meeting of April 12, 1994, the Task Force to Bring Back the Don requested that I report on how the City could respond to concerns expressed by Ms. Juhola regarding the effect of dogs on natural areas, and how the City could work with dog owners to protect designated areas, ravines and other natural areas from overuse.

In a recent report dated March 15, 1994, to the Neighbourhoods Committee, I responded to a petition from the Sherwood Park Advisory Committee to increase the area in Sherwood park where dogs are allowed to run off leash. In addressing this petition, I advised the Neighbourhoods Committee that my Department has concerns about the natural environment of the forested areas of Sherwood Park. Staff are specifically concerned about the long-term effect of dogs running free in the ravine and the impact that this has on vegetation and wild life.

Generally, dogs running free tend to discourage the natural movement of wildlife and over time can contribute to the deterioration in quality and abundance of flora and fauna. Since the existing area of Sherwood Park where dogs are currently allowed to run off leash has been established for some time, I agreed that we would continue to monitor the condition of the forested area and report back to the Neighbourhoods Committee with recommendations for appropriate action if the long-term health of the natural environment is jeopardized. I believe that the concerns raised by Ms. Juhola are valid and that uncontrolled use of natural areas by dogs or humans can contribute to their degradation.

As you are aware, several areas have been established by City Council across the City where dogs are allowed to run off leash. Until 1993, all of these were in natural areas and include High Park, Sherwood Park, Glen Stewart Ravine, Park Drive Reservation Lands, Cedarvale Ravine and Nordheimer Ravine. In 1993 an area of Greenwood Park was established on a pilot project basis for dogs to run off leash between 6:00 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. Since that time an area of Trinity Bellwoods has also been established for similar use.

In light of the developing concerns with respect to the effect of dogs and other foot traffic on the sensitive natural areas of the City, this Department will be working with groups such as the Sherwood Park Advisory Committee towards reviewing the established practice wherein dogs are allowed to run off leash in natural areas and recommending alternatives where appropriate. As I'm sure you are aware, this will be a very sensitive issue in that some of these areas have been used by the public for many years. I believe that any change is best accomplished with the support of the community through its Advisory groups such as the Don Valley Task Force and the Sherwood Park Advisory Committee. This Department would be happy to work with the Task Force to Bring Back the Don towards addressing this issue in the Don Valley as well as other areas in the City of Toronto.

Herb Pirk, Commissioner
City of Toronto Department of Parks and Recreation

KEEPING IN TOUCH (cont'd)

October 30, 1994

I read with interest Ethel Day's report of the removal of a dead adult Osprey from a nest near Lake Dalrymple (Orillia area near Sebright) [447: 7:Nov], and the fact that the other adult returned and that the young Osprey survived. It apparently fledged a couple of weeks later.

There are several aspects of this dramatic story which are worth mentioning. First, it was a very good example of a grassroots network achieving rapid and appropriate response.

The report of what looked like a dead Osprey hanging from a nesting pole with a bleating chick beside it was received by a member of the Georgian Bay Osprey Society (GBOS) who phoned me in Toronto.

Christine Mason, Manager of the Midland SPCA Wildlife Centre was contacted. We then contacted one of our members who knew a Mr. Bob Bowles of Orillia, a naturalist working for Ontario Hydro. It was he who arranged for a "picker" to be produced to examine the high nest. Christine Mason (a godsend to GBOS) has rescued injured Ospreys in the past with the help of volunteers from our Society. She is aware of how terribly unwise it is to remove an Osprey from its natural setting. Up in the Hydro "picker" she made the quick decision to leave the young chick in the nest with a fish for dinner. It seemed healthy and was already as large as an adult. Dave Johnston, a Ministry of Natural Resources volunteer all the way from Minden, stayed 24 hours to confirm that the surviving parent would come back to feed the young once the carcass of its mate had been removed.

The dead adult was taken by Mason to Guelph and was found to have been shot. This event occurred in late June. In August another Osprey in the full flush of migration was rescued, injured, and on examination at the Guelph Wild Bird Clinic also was found to have been shot at Lafontaine near Midland -- died two days later. The GBOS and the Midland SPCA Wildlife Centre jointly donated a reward of \$1,000 for information about these shootings.

Although nothing has come to light and although this raptor has a fragile enough existence just trying to survive without such despicable events, at least there is a network of concerned people. Some of them have gone to no end of trouble to assist the Osprey.

Kittie Fells, President
Georgian Bay Osprey Society

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FOR READING

ALGONQUIN PARK (EXCURSIONS WITH A PHOTOGRAPHER) by Dave Taylor, Natural Heritage/Natural History Inc., 1994; 208 pages, \$19.95 (soft cover).

I picked up this book with great anticipation as some of my fondest memories revolve around Algonquin Park. It was here as a 9-year-old child that I took my very first photographs using an old Kodak box camera and I have been returning ever since. As I read Mr. Taylor's book I found myself reliving many of my own trips to the park.

The book is divided into two sections. The first part is a visual exploration of Algonquin's ecosystems through the author's camera. His informal yet informative style makes you feel that you are right there with him as he and his family and friends explore this very special area of Ontario throughout the changing seasons. As a trained naturalist, he uses photography to record the complex relationships of landforms, plants and animals which make up the park's varied habitats.

The second, and shorter, part of the book discusses the types of equipment needed to photograph in the park. Much of what is said here is relevant to nature photography elsewhere as well, particularly if one wishes to follow the ecosystem approach set out by the author.

There is little to criticize in this book. Mr. Taylor's interests, while diverse, lean somewhat toward the photography of predators and other large mammals such as moose, and this is reflected to a certain extent in his writing. To be fair, he also gives considerable space to fungi, pitcher plants and other unusual botanical subjects. He also seems to have a certain bias towards Canon equipment. It has been my experience that virtually any 35 mm camera system from a major manufacturer will do a good job provided that the photographer knows how to use it.

The criticisms above are minor. The book is well written and well illustrated. Mr. Taylor portrays deep appreciation of his subject matter and his ecological approach is one which I hope others will follow. I would recommend this book, not only to anyone who is planning a visit to Algonquin Park but to anyone who is at all interested in nature photography.

Morris Sorensen

▷
APOLOGIES: to Allan Greenhaum whose name was left off the two reviews in the last newsletter (447:11-12:NOV).

THANKS: to the following members who have donated books etc. to the TFN: Adrian Bevis, Beatrice Hogan, Helen Mazewski, Jeff Nadir, and Gloria Somerville.

Bedecked with ruby,
garnet and cornelian,
crab-tree in winter.

haiku by Arthur Wade

FOR READING (cont'd)

EASTERN BIRDS: A GUIDE TO FIELD IDENTIFICATION OF NORTH AMERICAN SPECIES
by James Coe, Golden Press, New York, Western Publishing Company Inc.,
1994; 160 pages, \$16.95.

Golden has just come out with a handy new guide to eastern birds. It's an abridged version, covering only species that are widely distributed in the East, which is pretty much what most of us are likely to see.

At the front of the book are "habitat plates": illustrations of various habitats, including the roadside and backyard, showing the birds most likely to be found there. These are followed by four pages of "confusing songbirds", birds that look similar and may be hard to identify unless you've seen them before.

The remainder of the book covers the individual birds in detail -- description and distribution map on the left page, nice colour plates on the right. The plates often have the feeling of a pleasing picture rather than a technical drawing. The descriptions, unfortunately, do not always include the bird's songs and calls, so it's necessary to add your own notes.

The major selling point of this guide is its size: less than half the weight of the Peterson guide and almost as complete. For beginners there is the added advantage of the introductory plates and the overall "friendly" feel to the illustrations. For those beyond the beginner level, it's a useful everyday book and leaves room in your pack for other guides and bug jars.

Carol Sellers

RECENTLY PUBLISHED:

THE HIKE ONTARIO GUIDE TO WALKS AROUND TORONTO by Brad Cundiff, a Boston Mills Press Book, 1994; available from Hike Ontario, 1220 Sheppard Ave. East, Willowdale, Ont. M2K 2X1 for \$15 + \$2.50 for postage and handling.

TORONTO REGION INVERTEBRATE LIST, compiled by Diana Banville, published by the Toronto Field Naturalists, 1994; 50¢ each or 5/\$2.00.

Also available in this series:

TORONTO REGION BUTTERFLY LIST, compiled by Diana Banville, published by the Toronto Field Naturalists, 1993; 50¢ each or 5/\$2.00.

TORONTO REGION MOSS LIST, compiled by Diana Banville, published by the Toronto Field Naturalists, 1992; 50¢ each or 5/\$2.00.

TORONTO REGION VERTEBRATE LIST, compiled by Diana Banville, published by the Toronto Field Naturalists, 1993; 50¢ each or 5/\$2.00.
(includes amphibians, reptiles, mammals, fishes)

TORONTO REGION BIRD LIST, compiled by Diana Banville, published by the Toronto Field Naturalists, 1993; 50¢ each or 5/\$2.00.

TORONTO REGION PLANT LIST, compiled by Diana Banville, published by the Toronto Field Naturalists; 1990; 50¢ each or 5/\$2.00.

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IN THE NEWS

SALMON HATCHERIES THREAT TO NATURAL POPULATION

Salmon produced in fish hatcheries are creating more harm than good in efforts to replenish dwindling fish stocks, a University of Toronto study has found. Salmon raised in hatcheries are competitively inferior and competitively threaten the genetic integrity of the wild population as interbreeding occurs, according to Mart Gross, co-author of the study. Salmon raised in hatchery pools instead of free flowing rivers have smaller tails and don't develop muscles as strong as their wild counterparts necessary for swimming against the current. As a result hatchery salmon were also found to die of heart attacks, unable to cope with the strains of natural survival. The current Pacific salmon problem, where as many as two million salmon have "disappeared" this year alone, may also be partially attributable to the genetically disadvantaged hatchery salmon. Hatchery fish could well be deficient in their homing abilities -- in essence, unable to find their way back to their spawning grounds. The solution to dealing with the diminishing fish stocks, according to the study, is to practice better habitat conservation and enforce fishing harvest regulations. Hatcheries could then be turned into aquaculture centres, producing fish solely for consumption.

extracted from an article by Jim Bridges in THE VARSITY, Oct. 11, 1994

TROUT UNLIMITED -- IN ACTION ON THE UPPER HUMBER

Volunteers of Trout Unlimited's (TU) Greg Clark Chapter are making headway restoring the upper Humber and its coldwater tributaries. After four years of hard work, including volunteer work days and summer Environmental Youth Corps programs, the river and its coldwater fishery are showing signs of improvement. This season Environmental Youth Corps crews worked with private landowners along the river to implement stream improvement works including clean-ups, cattle fencing, riparian planting, and trout habitat improvement. TU and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources have been working together to rear brown trout fry from eggs collected in the wild and incubated in a portable hatchery built by volunteers. The fry are stocked at various locations that are considered prime trout habitat in hopes of restoring a self-sustaining wild trout population. Fishing enthusiasts can expect to see results in several years.

extracted from THE HUMBER ADVOCATE, Oct. 1994

Comment: Please note the following quotes from FISHES OF ONTARIO by H.H. MacKay, published by the Ont. Dept. of Lands and Forests, 1963: The brown trout is native to the streams of Europe and the British Isles. It has been artificially propagated and distributed in New Zealand, Africa and America. In 1913, brown trout fingerlings were introduced in various streams in southern Ontario. Research has shown that the introduction of non-native species of fish must be attended with great care. Improvement of the habitat for native species may be a more reasonable management procedure than the introduction of foreign species. Because of their greater tolerance to environmental conditions and their more aggressive nature, browns can displace brook trout where productive populations of the latter would otherwise continue to exist.

IN THE NEWS (cont'd)

GARDEN BIRDS IN DECLINE

Some of Britain's favourite garden birds have suffered drastic declines over the last 15 years, according to a survey carried out by members of the Young Ornithologists Club. Even the most common birds, such as starling and house sparrow are not immune. The cheeky sparrow, once the most numerous garden bird with an average of nearly nine birds per garden, is down to less than 3.5 in each plot, a fall of 63%. Starlings are down by nearly a half of their 1979 figure, despite huge flocks visiting towns and cities every winter from Scandinavia and Russia. Researchers urge gardeners to cut back on the use of sprays wherever possible, and to use only lightly if all else fails. Gardeners can also help by planting native berry-bearing bushes.

extracted from AMATEUR GARDENING, July 30, 1994



HIGH PARK'S LOOSEY GOOSIES

Goose droppings take much of the blame for Grenadier Pond's severe pollution problem, either by direct deposit or washed by rain from shore. The geese start feeding at dawn. Their high-efficiency digestive system begins discharging feces within minutes. After an exhausting day of feeding, digesting and defecating, the flock has produced 18.7 kilograms, adding up to 131 kilograms to the pond each week. By year's end the park has been coated in an astounding 6.8 tonnes of slick goose excrement. The High Park geese produce more feces than average geese. They have a weight problem brought on by many of the park's 1.5 million visitors who arrive, plastic bags in hand, loaded with stale bread and other goodies. The Toronto parks department is trying to retake the pond and restore it as a small, clean oasis within the city. One of the first acts has been to erect signs pleading with visitors to please stop feeding the geese. The geese, weighing in at a hefty 4.5 kilograms per bird compared with a species average of 3.2 kilograms, and their feeders gather at the park's marshy southwest corner. The ritual created a barren, trampled shoreline. The city planted trees to discourage geese from using the large, flat patch for takeoffs and landing but it didn't stop the handouts. The goose droppings contain nutrients -- both phosphorus and nitrogen -- responsible for creating the sickly, polluted mess. Goose feces contribute 40 percent of the phosphorus in the pond. About \$45,000 is being spent on demonstration projects to capture the public's eye and draw attention to the plight of the pond. The Canadian National Sportsmen's Shows contributed \$15,000. But it will take a minimum of five years and millions of dollars to revitalize the pond.

extracted from an article by Brian McAndrew in THE TORONTO STAR, Sep. 21, 1994

STARLINGS CREATE FLAP IN NEIGHBOURHOOD

For the last six years, starlings have gathered in huge flocks to take advantage of mature trees on Rosscowan Court, Kilkenny Drive and other streets in the Huntingwood Drive and Pharmacy Road area. In addition to the cacophony of sound created by the flocks, the starlings -- thousands of them -- leave behind white reminders of their sojourn into the area on sidewalks, driveways and in pools. The starlings turn up every night about 7 pm and the racket begins along the tree-lined streets. Neighbours on the street have tried just about everything to discourage the birds. They've put floodlights in the trees, created noise on the street, one woman brings out a "boombox" and some try pounding the tree trunks - all to no avail.

adapted from an article by John Wilkinson in the SCARBOROUGH MIRROR, Aug. 17, 1994

Let us permit nature to have her way; she understands her business better than we do. -- French philosopher Michel de Montaigne (1533-92), inventor of the personal essay.

from the GLOBE AND MAIL, Aug. 26, 1993

IN THE NEWS (cont'd)

OFFICE TOWER LIGHTS, POOR CLOUD COVER LURE BIRDS TO DEATH

More than 200 birds were killed or injured when a low cloud cover and strong winds prevented birds that were heading south during the fall migration from clearing Toronto's downtown office towers. More than 100 birds, half of them dead, were discovered at the base of the CN Tower. The birds, on their way to wintering grounds in Central and South America, strike the office windows at speeds up to 50 km/h. Spotlights shining toward the sky were blamed for the deaths at the CN Tower. A tower spokesperson confirmed the spotlights will remain off at the request of the Fatal Light Awareness Program (FLAP). The organization appealed to tenants of office towers to turn lights off at night. Most of the dead birds have been warblers but numerous other species follow a flight path through Toronto that began in mid-August and continues until the end of October.

adapted from an article by Brian McAndrew in THE TORONTO STAR, Sep. 10, 1994

GEESE PLUCKED FROM DIESEL POND DEATH

A Canadian National Railway employee spotted nine Canada geese mired in a 60 by 60 metre (200 by 200 foot) industrial containment pond at the company's marshalling yard near Highway 7 and Jane St. in Vaughan. The reservoir, which is surrounded by trees and greenery, is used to store oil and diesel fuel for recycling purposes. There is no netting above the pond to keep birds out, something the Toronto Humane Society and other animal rights groups said should be in place. Animal control teams from Vaughan and Richmond Hill rescued the diesel-soaked birds and transferred them to the Toronto Humane Society shelter on River Street. Shelter staff worked through the night and morning to clean the geese. Each bird took over an hour to shampoo, shower clean and blow dry. A shelter staffperson said she had hoped CN would take positive action and make sure the area is properly covered. A spokesperson for CN said "That pond has been there for 20-plus years and only once before has there been an incident involving birds." A bird rescue expert from Deseronto who has helped save birds caught in several large oil spills, including the Exxon Valdez spill in Alaska in 1989, was also called in to help the geese. "Birds mistake storage and waste ponds for water all the time. Usually you don't hear about it though because, if nobody sees the birds in there, they die and sink."

adapted from an article by Jim Rankin in THE TORONTO STAR, June 10, 1994

THANKS to the following members for donating clippings:
Joe and Ernie Baltz, Diana Banville, Alexander Cappell,
Mary and Nancy Cumming, Karin Fawthrop, Mary Hunter,
Eileen Mayo, Jean McGill, N. McHugh, Alen McCombie,
Ruth Munson, Joan O'Donnell, Louise Orr,
Jim Purnell, Grace Somers.

MOUNTAIN BIKING THREATENS OUR WILD AREAS

As mountain biking has become increasingly popular and other areas in the Toronto region have been closed, more cyclists have looked to the Don Valley for off-road cycling. Unfortunately, serious erosion has occurred in certain environmentally sensitive areas. The Metro Toronto Parks and Property Department has been forced to close some areas to cyclists, among them Glendon Forest and Lambton Woods. It is generally agreed, however, that widespread closures, difficult to enforce and putting greater pressure on other areas, are not an effective long term answer to the problem.

While environmentally sensitive areas may have to remain closed to cyclists, other approaches offer more effective long term results. The Task Force to Bring Back the Don is working with Metro Parks and Property, City Parks and Recreation, The Metro Cycling Committee, The Evergreen Foundation, and the Toronto Field Naturalists among others, to find solutions to the problem. An intensive public education campaign, and programs involving mountain bikers in trail maintenance and restoration, are two options. Metro Parks and Property Department agreed to take a leading role in solving the problem. While there are no easy answers, the stage is now set for groups to work together to meet the needs of a variety of park users, while protecting urban wild areas.

adapted from an article by Elisabeth Bruckmann in CYCLOMETER, newsletter of the Toronto City Cycling Committee, Sept-Oct 1994

DOGS ARE IN CITIES ON SUFFERANCE, SO OWNERS SHOULD CLEAN UP THEIR ACTS

Houston, Texas, has an estimated dog population of a half-million. The animals put out 63,000 tons of feces and 122 million litres of urine a year and there are no facilities for the disposal or denaturing of that waste. "Apart from the obnoxious sight and odour, this results in the breeding of flies and rodents with the concomitant potential for disease, overfertilization of the environment, the death of trees and the eutrophication of bodies of water.....A study done in 1949 observed that one dog feces deposit produced anywhere from one to 558 flies. From a pollution point of view, the impact of 400 tons of dog feces and 4 million litres of urine *per day* in Canada...is considerable. We do not tolerate human feces being deposited in public places to be carried away in storm sewers, so why should we have to put up with that of animals?"

extracted from an article by Lee Lester in THE GLOBE AND MAIL, July 5, 1994

...Experts agree that each urban tree is worth more than \$50,000 a year in air conditioning, controlling pollution, reducing erosion, and providing wildlife shelter...

from "Planning for a livable Boston" by Holly Compton Alderman in the RADCLIFFE QUARTERLY, March 1993

IN THE NEWS (cont'd)

ONTARIO PROHIBITS LOGGING OF OLD PINES AT NINE MORE SITES

Ontario added more than 10,000 hectares of old-growth red and white pine to the list of areas in which logging is not allowed. The newly listed areas will bring the total protected area to more than 32,000 hectares, almost one-third of the old-growth red and white pine in Ontario. The government has drawn up a management plan for red and white pine in the Fort Frances-Atikokan area that will act as a model. Under the plan, the best old-growth forests will be preserved, areas to be harvested will be maintained through natural regeneration techniques, and some previously forested areas will be restored. Old growth forests act as a reserve against mistakes in forest practices where logging is allowed, they protect biological diversity by providing an undisturbed home for plant and animal life, they are esthetically important, and their preservation helps show the world that Ontario has sound forest practices.

adapted from an article by James Rusk in THE GLOBE AND MAIL, Oct. 18, 1994

"VERMIN" PLANT DIFFICULT TO CONTROL

Polygonum cuspidata, Japanese Knotweed, was thought of once as a useful addition to the gardens of England when introduced in 1825. It's become such a pest that it's been placed on the "Do not cultivate this plant anywhere or we will lock you up and throw away the key" list. The plant spreads by throwing out underground stems, rhizomes. If the ends are broken they release dormant buds which spring into life and away it goes again. So it's out with the paraffin and burn, burn, burn! Sounds drastic, but digging it out has no effect. It's been known for weeds buried to a depth of 15 feet to force their way to the surface.

extracted from an article in AMATEUR GARDENING, Sept. 17, 1994

MAJOR UNDERWATER DISCOVERY

This past summer an underwater waterfall, rivalling the magnitude of Niagara Falls, was discovered in Georgian Bay between Tobermory and Manitoulin Island. The discovery of the submerged, post glacial waterfall, with its spillway dating back several thousand years followed several years of speculation over its existence. The falls were discovered near Tobermory's Flowerpot Island. The spillway, it is anticipated, carried as much as three times the amount of water now going over Niagara Falls. Staff of the Cormorant, a Canadian Forces Naval Ship, located the falls using submersibles (mini submarines).

adapted from an article in THE MANITOULIN RECORDER, Aug. 3, 1994

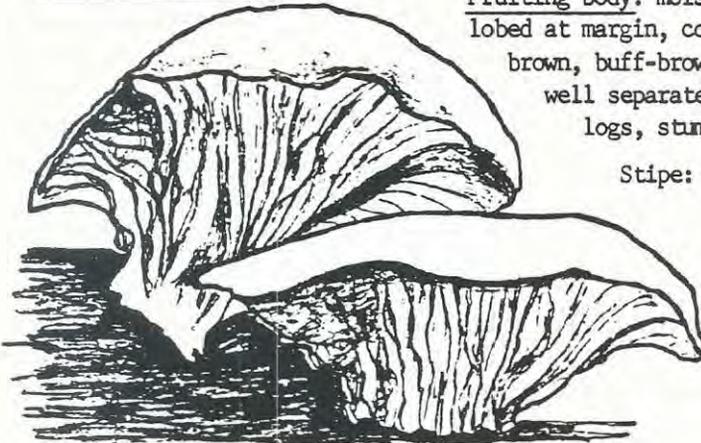
Next issue of the TORONTO FIELD NATURALIST will be mailed in mid-January and will contain information about the FEBRUARY meetings, outings, etc.

□

OYSTERS, OF SORTS

The Pleurotus group with its Allies contains many interesting fungi. Possibly the best known is the Oyster Mushroom.

Pleurotus ostreatus



Fruiting body: moist, shell-shaped cap, often wavy and lobed at margin, colour variable from blue-gray to gray-brown, buff-brown in age; 2½"-5½" across; gills decurrent, well separated, cream to pale ochre; in clusters on logs, stumps, trunks of deciduous trees.

Stipe: white, off-centre, short, or absent.

Flesh: white, thick.

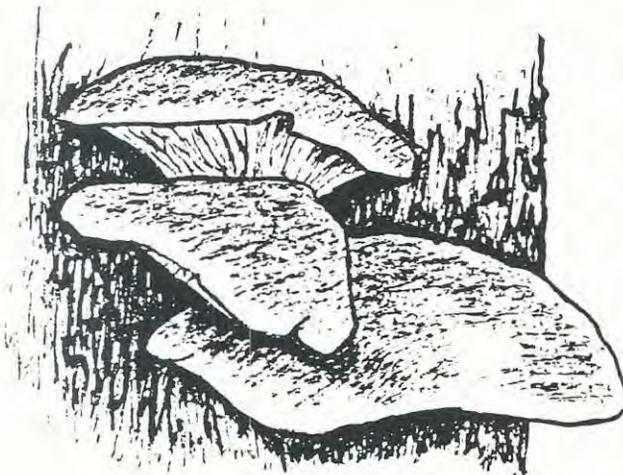
Spore deposit: white to palest lilac.

Season: October to January, often throughout a mild winter.

Edibility: "Edible - delicious".

The Fall Oyster

Panellus serotinus



Fruiting body: viscid, smooth, fan-shaped cap, margin wavy, olive-green to yellow or violet-tinged, 1½"-2 ¾" across; gills crowded, narrow, ochre, often with a flush of violet on the edges; in clumps on logs of both hardwoods and conifers.

Stipe: short, or lacking.

Flesh: thick, white.

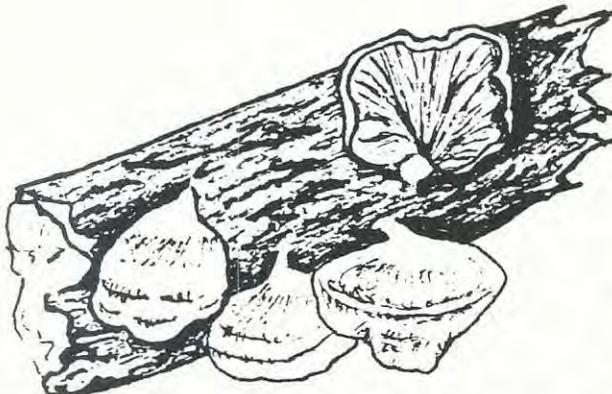
Spore deposit: yellowish.

Season: August to October.

Edibility: Not edible.

The Luminescent Panellus

Panellus stipticus



Fruiting body: small, dry, hairy, fan- to kidney-shaped cap, orange-yellow to brown; ½"-1" across; gills narrow, close, orange-buff; in clusters on decaying wood.

Stipe: stubby, laterally attached.

Flesh: tough, light pinkish yellow.

Spore deposit: white.

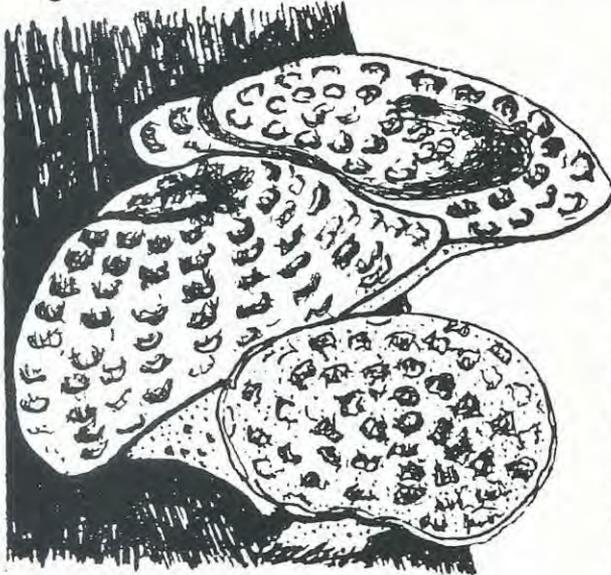
Season: May to December.

Edibility: Not edible.

"Its specific name alludes to its traditional reputation for staunching blood" (Roger Phillips, MUSHROOMS OF NORTH AMERICA). Its common name refers to the fact that, if left in a dark room for several minutes, the gills of this small fungus can be seen to glow with a faint green light.

THREE COMMON POLYPORES

Bracket fungi belong to a group which has pores instead of gills. They grow on wood.



Dryad's Saddle
Polyporus squamosus

Fruiting body: cap 2" - 12" across and $\frac{1}{2}$ " - 2" thick, fan-shaped, cream surface covered with concentric, dark brown, flattened scales; pores creamy, decurrent (running down stipe); specimens singly or in overlapping clusters on wounds of living deciduous trees or on logs.

Stipe: off-centre, with black base.

Flesh: white, succulent when young, turning corky.

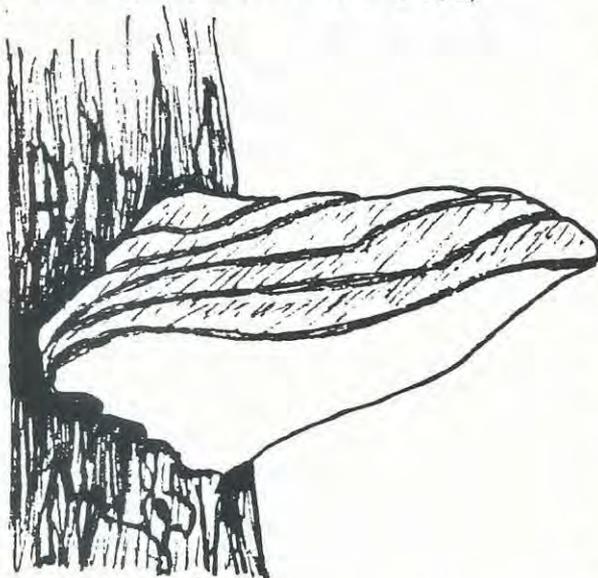
Spore deposit: white.

Odour: mealy.

Season: May to November.

Edibility: edible only when very young.

This fungus causes white rot in trees, but remains nevertheless an impressive species.



Artist's Conk
Ganoderma applanatum

Fruiting body: cap 4" - 20" across, a woody bracket lasting for years and adding tube-layer to layer annually; gray-brown with white margin; pores white, bruising brown instantly; on both dead and living deciduous trees.

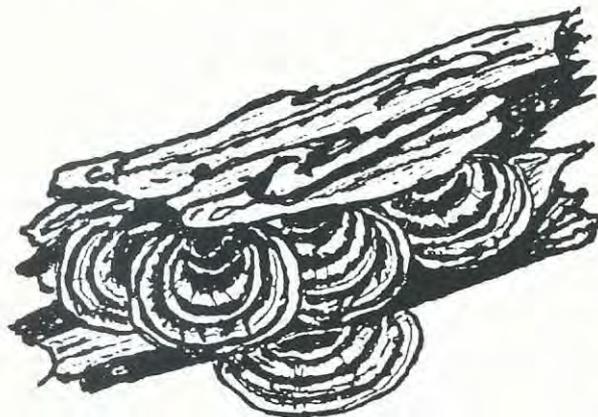
Stipe: none.

Flesh: pale cinnamon, soft to corky.

Spore deposit: bright russet.

Season: throughout year. Perennial.

Edibility: inedible. It produces white rot in heartwood and sapwood and derives its common name from the fact that pictures can be etched or engraved on its pore surface.



Turkey Tail
Trametes versicolor

Fruiting body: cap 1" - 4" across, forming large overlapping groups, zoned black-green, gray-blue, gray-brown or rust, velvety surface, white margin; pores white to light brown; clustered on decaying logs or wounds of living trees. Wide-spread.

Stipe: none or rudimentary.

Flesh: white, leathery.

Spore deposit: white.

Season: May to December.

Edibility: not edible.

PROJECTS

HERITAGE TREE HUNT

Goals of the Toronto Field Naturalists are to encourage the study of natural history and the preservation of our natural heritage. One aspect of our natural heritage that is often taken for granted is our trees. While walking on the street we often pass them without a second glance, except maybe in the fall when they are in their full glory! Just as important, we often neglect to thank those individuals responsible for their care. Both of these points are especially important in the case of our heritage trees. What are heritage trees? In Toronto, a heritage tree is defined as a healthy tree that is any one of the following:

- more than 100 years old
- the only one of its kind
- of historic interest (e.g. the maple on Laing St. of "Maple Leaf Forever" fame)
- the largest specimen of a particular species in Metro
- with unusual physical characteristics
- of particularly good form (possibly providing a good source of seeds)
- growing beyond the normal range for that species

Do we have any heritage trees in Toronto? We certainly do! However, recognition of these trees is important, not just for our sake but also for the next generation. But first we must know where our heritage trees are. Do you know any heritage trees? If you do, tell us the address and authority(ies) responsible for their care, the reason for nominating them, and the species. Please send this information to: Tracy Butler, 685 Surrey Lane #808, Burlington, Ont. L7T 3Z2; or send it to the TFN office, 20 College St., Unit 11, Toronto, Ont. M5G 1K2.

Tracy Butler

HELPING THE ENVIRONMENT

With reference to last month's article about the success of "Adopt A Highway" in Northern Ontario, TFN member Karin Fawthrop reports that she participates in a similar programme in Scarborough. For the past two years parishioners, friends and neighbours of Melville Presbyterian Church (70 Old Kingston Road) have cleaned up the stretch of roadway between the Church and the beginning of U of T property at the bottom of the hill. Karin says this has made for great visual improvement. Congratulations, Karin. Are there any more member success stories out there?

CONSERVATION SCHOLARSHIPS

Two awards of \$1,000 each are available through the B. Harper Bull Conservation Fellowship Awards Program, administered by the Conservation Foundation. The scholarships are available to encourage and assist University and College students residing or studying in the Greater Toronto Region, and wishing to broaden their knowledge of conservation through study, travel and practical experience. Contact The Conservation Foundation of Greater Toronto, 5 Shoreham Dr., Downsview, Ont. M3N 1S4 or call 661-6600, extension 276. Deadline for acceptance is March 31, 1995.

PROJECTS (cont'd)

HOUSE FINCH DISEASE SURVEY

A disease affecting House Finches in the eastern United States is generating concern among bird watchers and wildlife officials. Participants in Project FeederWatch were among the first to detect and report the problem. The Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Long Point Bird Observatory now want to mobilize backyard birders to help collect precise information about where the disease is occurring and to determine whether other bird species are also affected. The disease affecting eastern House Finches is a respiratory infection believed to be caused by a bacterium, *Mycoplasma gallisepticum*, normally found in poultry. The infection poses no known health threat to humans and is extremely rare in wild birds. Confirmed cases in House Finches have been reported from most East Coast states between North Carolina and Massachusetts; no cases have yet been reported from Canada. Surprisingly few individual birds have tested positive for the specific disease, however, and wildlife authorities agree that much more research is needed. To date, the disease has not been confirmed in any wild species other than the House Finch. What is not known is the total extent of this outbreak, how the disease is transmitted, whether species other than the House Finch are affected, and whether infected birds can recover and survive. You can therefore make a significant contribution to our understanding of the disease, especially its distribution and spread. The most visible sign of the disease is conjunctivitis, or eye infection, that can be seen at close range when birds visit feeders. Infected birds appear to have red, swollen, runny, or crusty eyes; in extreme cases the eyes are swollen shut or crusted over, and the birds are essentially blind. Such birds have obvious trouble feeding and may stay on the ground under feeders attempting to find seeds. Note that some other diseases, such as avian pox, may cause eye lesions, but usually warty ones rather than red, oozy ones. If you see sick birds, please contact Long Point Bird Observatory, P.O.Box 160, Port Rowan, Ont. NOE 1M0.

PROTECT THE DON'S HEADWATERS

Many people are interested in the efforts made to "bring back the Don", and many good steps have been taken to do so. However, in order to bring back the Don, we need to protect the headwaters in Vaughan and Richmond Hill. The Don starts in the Oak Ridges Moraine and still has some clear headwaters, rural woodlots, and even a few farms. Redside dace, a rare fish that is listed as vulnerable by the Committee for the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) has been found in the headwaters. It needs good water quality. But this area is threatened by urban sprawl. In its own way it's as important as the Rouge, because the Don provides a corridor to downtown Toronto and has enormous historical importance as well, having been an inspiration to many naturalists from Elizabeth Simcoe's days to the present. We have made some headway -- the proposed Highway 407 will now cross the East Don with a bridge instead of a culvert, maintaining the integrity of the stream and valley corridor. A number of us celebrated this on November 4. But we need your help. To help protect the Don headwaters, please call Gavin Miller at (416) 921-9305 or Michael White at (416) 944-9490. Anyone who's interested in the Don is urged to join the "Friends of the Don York Region".

Gavin Miller

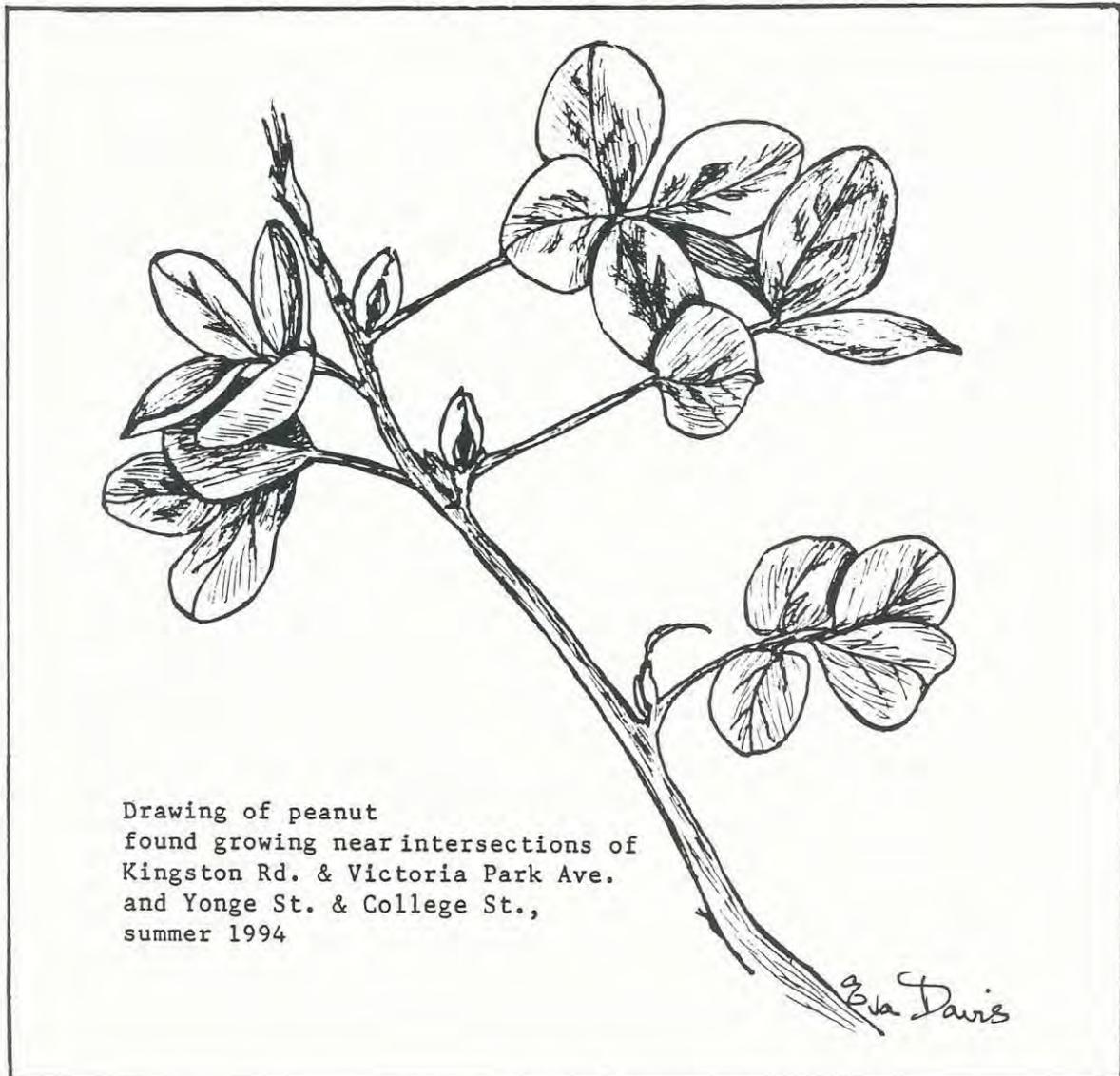
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NATIVE OF BRAZIL FOUND GROWING IN TORONTO

In two locations this past summer, TFN members found a mysterious plant growing as an apparent weed. Eva Davis found the plant growing in a pot on her balcony. I found one growing in a flowerbed beside the door of the next apartment building in our complex. We were puzzled by this succulent-leaved, recumbent plant with small yellow flowers in the axils of its 4-leaved compound leaves. What could it possibly be? Bravely we picked a flowering stem, pressed it and delivered it to the University of Toronto Herbarium to be identified. Guess what? According to Ken Barber of the herbarium, it is peanut (*Arachis hypogaea*), a native of South America and grown commercially as far north as southern Ontario. Apparently a couple of unroasted peanuts escaped the digestive systems of the many squirrels in this city and the nuts germinated. When Eva transplanted hers to another pot, she found she had a crop of five peanuts.

Helen Juhola

□



THE WEATHER (THIS TIME LAST YEAR)

December, 1993, Toronto

This was a dry, sunny month with a sudden change from dominant warmth to sharp cold just before Christmas. It was also one of the least snowy of Decembers on record: 2.8 cm downtown was the lowest since 1943 and tied with that year as the second lowest snowfall on record (1877 only reported 0.8 cm). At Pearson Airport, there was a little bit more (8.8 cm, the third lowest on record and the lowest since 1950). Owing to the lack of snow, it was the driest December since 1960.

Temperatures were almost uniformly above normal up to December 22nd. The only exception was a brief cold outbreak on December 11th - 12th. It could have been one of the mildest Decembers on record, but Arctic air finally pushed south for the final nine days. This brought snow squall activity to the lee of the Great Lakes, but as the winds were all from a westerly quadrant, Toronto only got dusted with a streamer off Lake Huron on December 22nd. Muskoka, the Lake Huron watershed, and Buffalo got hit instead. Boxing Day saw close to record-low daytime temperatures of around -15 °C although they did not break the 1872/1925 reading of -16.1 °C at the downtown station. The cold ending to December lowered the mean temperatures so that they were not quite a degree above the long-term average.

Sunshine was above normal by a considerable degree. Some Ontario stations were in the range of 100 hours. The bright conditions occurred during both the mild and cold periods of the month. Toronto City's 92.5 hours was the most since 1988. Winds were lighter than average at both Pearson and Toronto Island Airports; Toronto Island racked up yet another month of record light winds this year.

Gavin Miller

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THE NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWL visits Toronto in migration and, to a lesser extent, in winter. It has been known to breed in Toronto Region.

Ref. TORONTO REGION RECORDS, TFN

(Drawing by Jean McGill
from a Warren Greene photo.)



January 1994, Toronto

This was one of the coldest months on record across all of Ontario, and it was colder than normal almost everywhere in North America east of the Rockies. Record cold extended south into the US midwest and Virginia, although Florida escaped any serious freeze. Monthly averages in the Toronto area were about 5 to 6 degrees below normal. Toronto Pearson Airport had its coldest month in its records beginning in 1938; and downtown's -10.0 °C was the coldest month since February, 1934. It was also the coldest January since 1920, and the mean maximum temperature of -6.5 °C was the lowest for January since 1857. The mean maximum was the fourth lowest for any month in records dating back to 1841. (February of 1875 and 1934; and January 1857, had lower mean maximum temperatures). These records are truly remarkable given the urban heat island effect in Toronto.

Precipitation was quite variable because of persistent east to northeast winds which at intervals yielded lake-effect snow. Snowfall downtown was 75.4 cm, the most since 1914 (76.7 cm) ; and the most for any month since December 1944 (92.5 cm). But at Pearson Airport, the total snowfall was only 37.7 cm, just 5.4 cm above normal and the most for January since 1987. (My own weather station at 43 Huntley St., about a kilometre east of the official downtown Toronto weather station, recorded 88.8 cm of snow.) Rainfall, almost totally from a single storm system on January 27th - 28th which brought ugly conditions, was in the 25 - 30 mm range.

The extreme of cold was reached between January 14th and 20th. On January 15th, Toronto had its coldest day since February 1934, with a maximum of -20.9 °C and a minimum of -24.8 °C. The next morning it dropped to -25.9 °C (the lowest since January 4, 1981). A brief warm-up with snow followed, and then a second cold outbreak, which struck further south and to the west. It wasn't as cold in Toronto, but in Windsor on January 19th the high and low were -20.9 °C and -29.1 °C respectively, both all-time records for any day in Windsor. Florida narrowly escaped a severe freeze. Temperatures dipped into the -20s (°C) well into Virginia.

Gavin Miller

□

Winter day's dawning. Molten fires that bank the east bitter cold denies.

haiku by Arthur Wade

COMING EVENTS

Toronto Ornithological Club - Christmas Bird Count - an annual all-day project. To participate, call Alfred Adamo at 905-238-5166. (Dec. 27)

Toronto Entomological Club: December - no meeting; Jan. 28 at 1 pm in the Multi-Room on the main floor of the Planetarium - regular meeting. For more information call Alan Hanks at 905-727-6993.

Mycological Society of Toronto - no December meeting, but for details of January meeting, call HI-FUNGI.

Task Force to Bring Back the Don - no December meeting, but for details of January meeting, call David Stonehouse at 392-1255.

Black Creek Project - for information about monthly meetings and work projects, call 661-6600, extension 345.

Save the Rouge Valley System - for information about monthly nature walks in the Rouge Valley, call 289-6643.

Friends of the Don East York - for information about monthly meetings, call 467-7305.

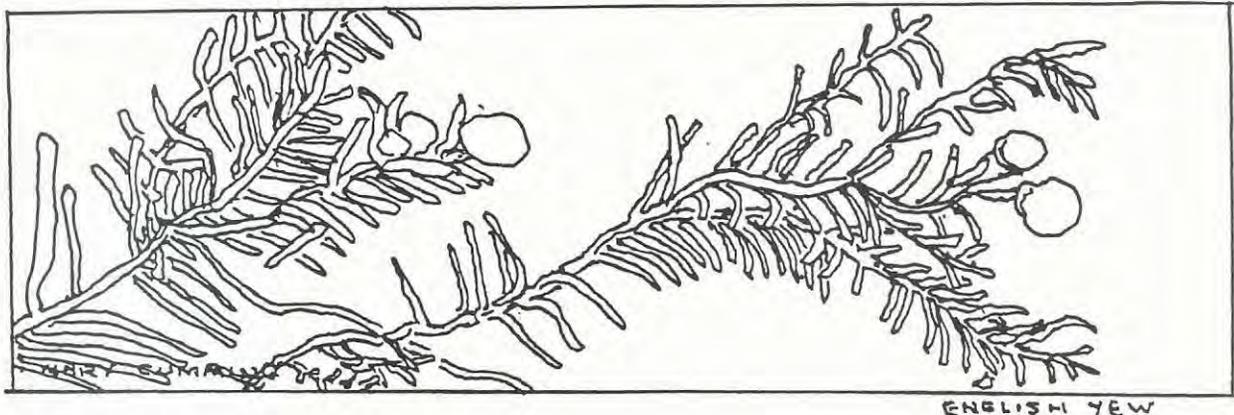
Allan Gardens Victorian Christmas Flower Show - Dec. 4 to Jan. 4 from 10 am to 5:30 pm; Conservatory by candlelight daily from 4 to 5:30 pm.

Metro Toronto and Region Conservation Authority - Don Watershed Regeneration Council Information Meeting - Thursday, Dec. 1 from 7 pm to 8:30 pm in the Councillors' Lounge in the North York Civic Centre. Call Adele Freeman at 661-6600, extension 238 for more details.

Toronto Ornithological Club Jim Baillie Memorial Bird Walks - aimed at the intermediate birder, but beginners are also welcome. Free.

- Gulls and Waterfowl - S.W. corner of Grenadier Pond, Ellis Avenue and The Queensway, walking to Sunnyside - Jan. 14 from 2 pm to dusk with Patrick Stephan-Scanlon.

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OTHER PUBLICATIONS

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