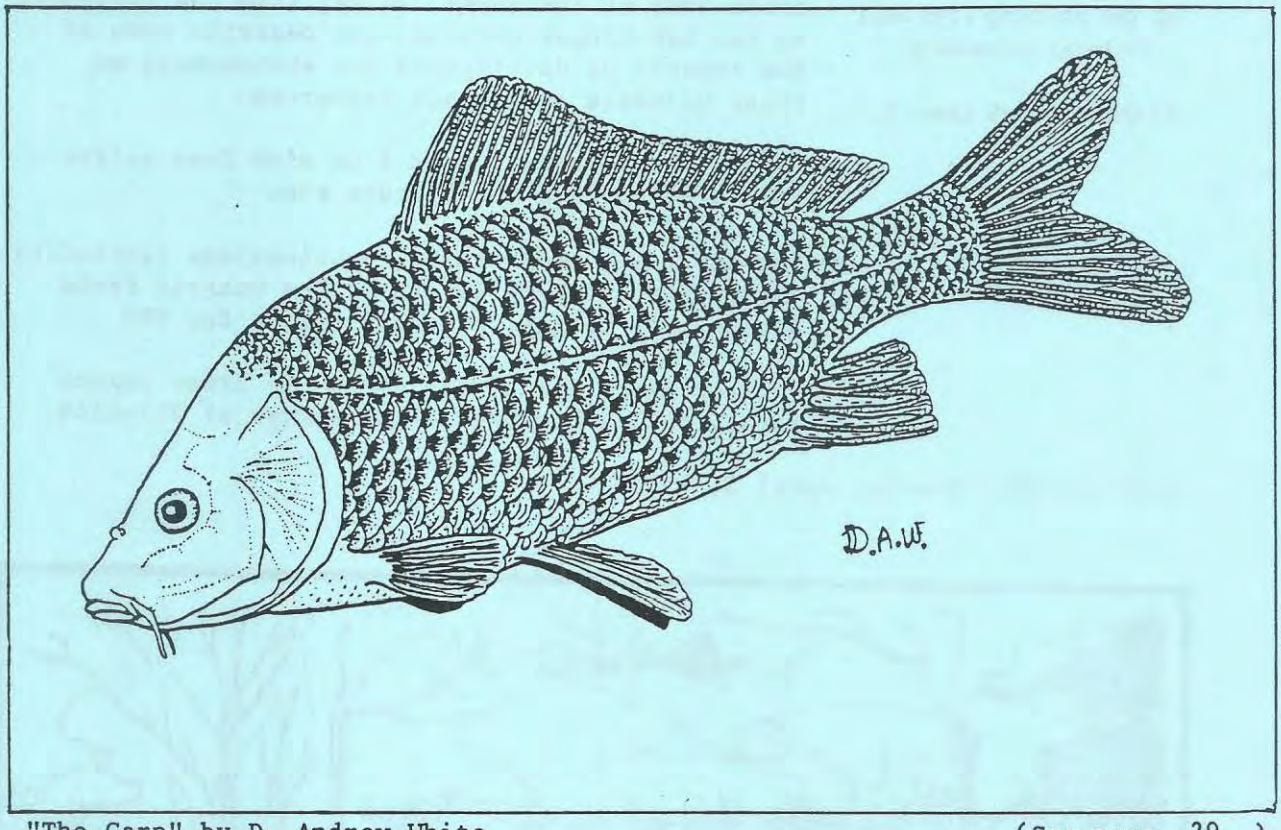
# TORONTO FIELD NATURALIST

Number 450 March 1995




"The Carp" by D. Andrew White (See page 29. )

## INSIDE

# TFN MEETINGS

Sunday, March 5, 1995 - "ENDANGERED SPACES" OF DURHAM REGION
an illustrated talk by Hugh Peacock and
John Foster of the Durham Field Naturalists

at 2:30 pm

in the Northrop Frye Hall
Victoria University

73 Queen's Park Cres. E.

- They will give us a tour of the principal natural areas east of the Rouge Valley, from the lakeshore to the Oak Ridges moraine, and describe some of the impacts of development now encroaching on these valuable open space resources.

+ "social hour" starting at 2 pm with free coffee and juice outside the lecture room

+ for sale: TFN memberships, publications (including checklists and back issues of The Ontario Field Biologist), badges, pins and decals for TFN

+ "Always Alice Cards" for sale. To order custom cards, call TFN member Alice Mandryk at 767-6149.

NEXT MEETING: Sunday, April 2, 1995

BROOKBANKS PARK, "Deerlick Creek", East Don. Drawing by Regina Posluns

# 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.

Wednesday
March 1
10:30 am

OLD MILL - nature walk — Humber, Etobicoke
Leader: George Bryant
Meet at the Old Mill subway station. Bring lunch.
As the days grow longer birds begin to return from the south. Perhaps this is the day to see the first of the returning red-winged blackbirds for this year. Skunk cabbage should be blooming.

Saturday
March 4
10:30 am

ALLAN GARDENS - nature arts — Toronto
Leader: Mary Taylor
Meet at the entrance to the greenhouses which are on the south side of Carlton St. between Jarvis St. and Sherbourne St.
Bring camera, sketching materials and stool, or just come and enjoy an hour or so in the tropics. Lunch is optional. Members often get together at noon to eat and compare their "works".

Sunday
March 5
2:30 pm

TFN MEETING [See page 2.]

Wednesday
March 8
10:30 am

HIGH PARK - nature walk — Toronto
Leader: Morris Sorensen
Meet at the park entrance on the south side of Bloor St. West opposite High Park Ave. Lunch optional.
There is always lots to see in High Park with its great variety of habitats and proximity to Lake Ontario -- ducks on Grenadier pond, early migrants in the woodlands and hawks following the shoreline. Buds will be swelling on trees and shrubs which makes it a good time to identify them.

Sunday
March 12
10 am

HIGH PARK, SUNNYSIDE - birds — lakeshore, Toronto
Leader: Ross Harris
Meet at the park entrance on the south side of Bloor St. West opposite High Park Ave. Bring lunch.
This outing will be through High Park from north to south and along the beach at Sunnyside. See above for what we may see. A visit to the shoreline may also give us a chance to see diving ducks and gulls.

Wednesday
March 15
10:30 am

SCARBOROUGH CITY HALL - nature arts — Scarborough
Leader: Cathy Holland
Meet at the entrance to the Civic Centre which is north of Ellesmere Rd. and east of Brimley Rd. Lunch optional.
Bring camera, sketching material and stool or just come and enjoy. The Civic centre usually has a display of art and is an interesting building to visit. If the weather is appropriate, members may visit the adjacent woodlot.

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MARCH OUTINGS (Cont'd)

Sunday
March 19
1:30 pm

TODMORDEN MILLS - nature in winter — Don, East York
Leader: Paula Davies
Meet at the village entrance on the south side of Pottery Rd., west and downhill from the corner of Broadview Ave. and Mortimer Ave.
Officially it is still winter in Toronto, but signs of spring are all around us. A walk in this historic part of the Don Valley will be followed by hot drinks in one of the historic buildings.

March 21

Since ancient times people have used the vernal equinox to mark the passage of the seasons. On the equinox, which means "equal night", the days and nights are roughly twelve hours long everywhere on the planet. Also on the equinox, the sun rises precisely in the east; and at local noon, it reaches an altitude that is halfway to the highest point it reaches in the sky all year.

extracted from "Getting through the night" by Gail S. Cleere in NATURAL HISTORY, Vol. 103, No. 3, March 1994

Tuesday
March 21
10:30 am

BIRKDALE RAVINE - birds — Highland Cr., Scarborough
Leader: Karin Fawthrop
Meet at the ravine entrance on the west side of Brimley Rd., halfway between Lawrence Ave. East and Ellesmere Rd. Lunch optional.
On this significant day of the year it is interesting to note that this site has been occupied by humans for thousands of years. The entrance to the ravine has a cairn reminding us that this area was used as a burial ground long before the arrival of David and Mary Thomson, first settlers in Scarborough. By now the first robins should have arrived in Toronto so the migration has really begun. Bring binoculars, bird guide and, most important, your notebook and pen. A great time to begin your spring nature observations.

Sunday
March 26
10:30 am

ROUGE - nature walk — Rouge, Scarborough
Leader: George Bryant
Meet at the zoo entrance on the west side of Meadowvale Rd. north of Sheppard Ave. East. Bring lunch.
The Rouge Valley contains the largest, wildest area in Metro Toronto. Walking can be difficult as the hills are steep and paths may be slippery and wet. Wear good walking shoes. Bring binoculars and a notebook. There are many interesting plants and animals to observe and learn about in this undeveloped parkland.

Wednesday
March 29
1 pm

WINDFIELD PARK - nature walk — Wilket Cr., North York
Leader: Eileen Mayo
Meet at the park entrance on the south side of York Mills Rd. just east of Bayview Ave.
Easy walking in this former golf course. Because the park contains a creek and an unspoiled woodlot as well as open areas (a variety of habitats), we usually see many species of birds and by this time some plants will be "greening".

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# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

This month I'd like to tell you about the highlights of our bird observations during the past year. We live close to a treed slope of the West Humber valley, and Ron maintains an extensive feeder for close to six months a year. Because of the January mild spell we have seen fewer species and numbers of birds this year compared to a year ago. The flicker appeared three times, however, and is able to survive because of the dead cottonwoods and elms nearby. Ron noticed one Purple Finch, and the male pheasant has recently returned. A chickadee sang his spring song, as did the White-breasted Nuthatch, whose song is similar to a flicker's but shorter, softer, and more liquid. Two Mourning Doves were also confused and mated this early. A Bluejay gave a perfect imitation of a Redtail's call to scare the birds off the feeder and have it to himself. One day thirty unwelcome starlings appeared, twelve of them in the birdbath at once, with the rest waiting their turn. When they left, the water was depleted and filthy. On a cloudy morning I awoke to see dozens of House Finches perched inches from the windows, waiting for the preferred feeders under the overhang and out of the pouring rain.

You will remember the winter of '94 as horrendously frigid, with deep snowfalls. Up to 120 Common Redpolls invaded, including a "yellowpoll" and an "orangepoll". There were also several Hoary Redpolls, in three different plumages. Once when the windchill was -40°C, Ron pointed out a Northern Shrike, immobile on a hanging feeder, then charging through a flock of birds and across the valley. Soon after dawn on a March day I spied two downies, one behind the other, doing a jerky, clownish routine on a tree limb. Afterwards they flew in upward swoops while "singing"; it was a memorable courtship display. At dusk while driving on the Westway near Humber Creek I noticed four white birds with their necks stretched out, and their wings positioned immediately in front of their tails. These Tundra Swans flew in a diamond pattern, so high above that they appeared small. At the end of the month there were two beautiful Hooded Mergansers on the main Humber, one with just a thin stripe of white on his head, the other with his hood raised. Along with some Buffleheads, these were new for our area list.

Spring brought the usual tantalizing glimpses of migrants winging north, but a few sightings stand out. In April we saw a Hermit Thrush and a towhee in the binoculars at once. In May at the CN Tower screened-in observation platform, a male Bay-breasted Warbler was frantically flying about. The elevator attendant said that birds usually find their way back out, and he'd never seen a dead one there. I do hope the bird rediscovered the opening where he entered, rather than getting swept up by a caretaker. In mid-June a Swainson's Thrush sang two days in a row. This denotes possible breeding, and there are no records of this species in the Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Ontario for this area.

In July there was a pair of young crows in an evergreen, begging for food, fluttering their wings, and performing a comical duet of synchronized caws, often a semitone apart. After an absence of many years a Nighthawk appeared, and Chimney Swifts flew overhead several times. During an August walk along the river a Greater Yellowlegs kept calling stridently when we drew near. (This species used to be called Tattler because it warned other birds of the approach of a hunter.) It caught a small cray-

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT (Cont'd)

fish, but had great difficulty coping with it, until finally it fitted it lengthwise, tail first, into its bill and swallowed it whole. Another day there was a colourful group of birds drinking and/or bathing in the shallows: a Bluejay, cardinal, Song Sparrow, and several robins, goldfinches and Cedar Waxwings. In Union Subway Station a "cheep" alerted me to a House Sparrow that pecked crumbs from the tiled floor, and then flew through the dark to the next station. Another passenger commented that it would have to fly to Eglinton to emerge.

In September there were three species of thrushes bathing in the birdbath at once: a Gray-cheeked, a Swainson's, and an immature robin. Over a week later the dog found a dead Gray-cheeked on the deck. Ron took it to the Museum. In October there was a welcome occurrence when he heard a Screech Owl's tremulous call for the first time in two years. Later an Osprey soared above our street, the white on its head glinting in the sun. For the first time a Fox Sparrow came in December during a mild week. A sapsucker ate fat and a Rusty Blackbird fed on corn for three days. Every day just before sunset a flock of cardinals comes to feed, and once Ron counted 18 of them -- a new record.

I'll conclude with the most memorable sightings. During a prewalk late in the afternoon on November 9th we were walking along a trail high above the West Humber just east of the waterfall. A raptor larger than a redtail, but with the same tail shape, flew with a slight dihedral. It alternated between flapping incredibly strongly to gain altitude, and soaring a short distance. As it wheeled I could discern an elongated cap on the back of its head and nape, but colour visibility was poor because it was a dull, grey day. The field guides confirmed my suspicion that it was a Golden Eagle, the first one I'd seen in the East. (Two weeks before, hawk watchers had seen four near the Grenadier Restaurant in High Park, five minutes after we had followed leader Helen Smith to view the exquisite four and twenty bluebirds feeding and fluttering about.) On the fourth of July we walked through Summerlea Park and nearly to the Humber Valley Golf Club, when a bird the size of a Bluejay caught my eye. I noticed conspicuous black and white stripes. It was flying erratically up and down, making it hard to track with the binoculars. With every wingbeat it emitted a nasal note similar to a woodcock's. This comedian had to be a snipe! Obviously this was a distraction display, but in a surprising location -- grassy meadow with children playing on swings nearby. In the midst of this a boy pursued his unleashed Cocker Spaniel over to us. Then the bird flew directly and quickly ahead. Between us and the river was a recently naturalized area with tall grasses, which is its preferred nesting habitat. A few years before I had seen one during migration along Albion Creek. No mention is made of this species breeding in Metro in the Atlas either. Such experiences as these make the obligatory daily dogwalking and numerous trips outside worthwhile.

Joan O'Donnell

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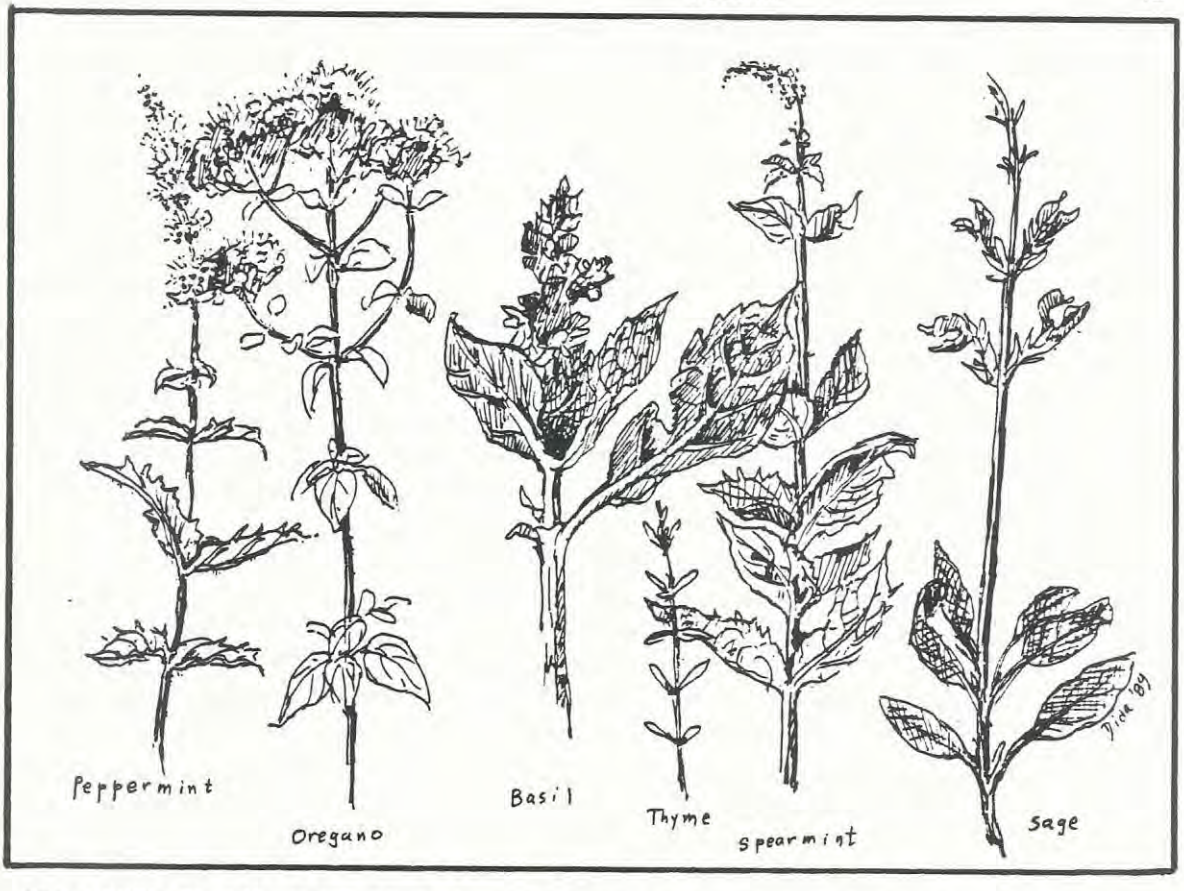
# KEEPING IN TOUCH

Jan. 17, 1995

...I noted with amusement Mary Hunter's story on page 15* about wildflowers, in particular her warning about commercial "native wildflower mixes". Just the other day I received an advertisement in the mail for a new gardening book to be sold in sections. As an inducement to subscribe I was given a free packet of native wildflowers -- so-called. The packet contained a listing of the flower seeds and there was not one that was native!! Also enjoyed Eva Davis' story about finding the butterfly. Makes you wonder how many of these fragile little creatures do get crushed inadvertently....

* in TFN 449

Christine Hanrahan
Ottawa




*SIX HERBS OF THE MINT FAMILY seemed a fitting subject on a sweltering day, August 5, 1989, on a TFN outing to Thompson Park. The leader, Pearl Cassel, led us to her garden off the park where there was cool shelter. These are garden specimens but peppermint is established in the wild in Toronto. It originated in Europe, as did spearmint which is not established but persists where there have been gardens in the past. This also applies to another European plant, wild thyme. Oregano (marjoram) escapes in some areas of Central Ontario but has not been reported in Toronto. There is a plant styled "wild basil", native to Toronto and elsewhere including the Old World; it is in a different genus from the garden basil. Sage (the culinary one) apparently does not escape.*

*DB*

# Toronto Region Wildlife Report

(within a 48 km radius of the Royal Ontario Museum)

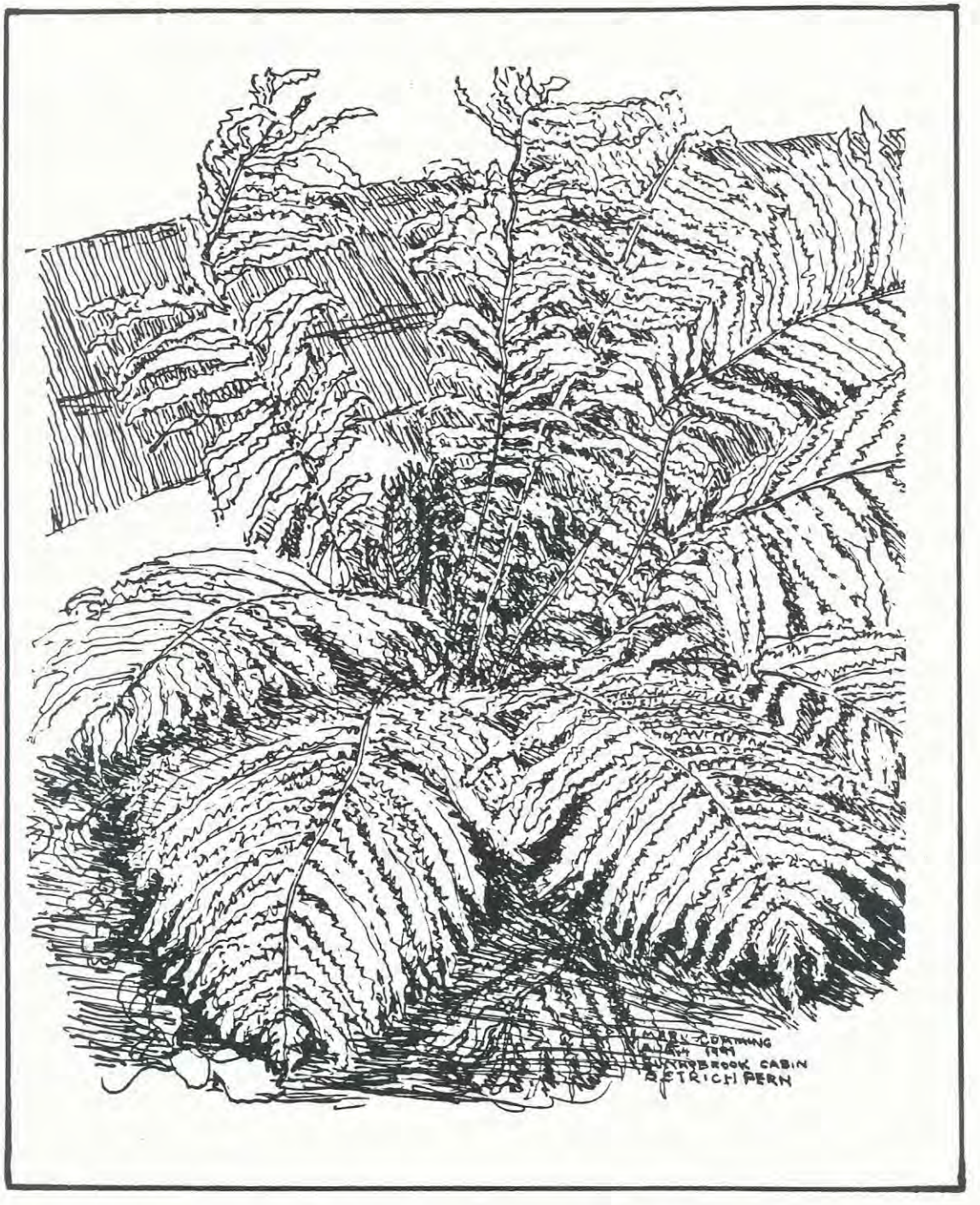
INVERTEBRATES reported in 1994 included leeches, roundworms, water fleas, crayfish, beetle larvae and mayfly larvae, according to input from elementary school classes; pond life appears to be plentiful in Taylor Creek and the Rouge, and lends itself to further study. About 120 INSECT forms were reported as well as the plants that they were using for purposes of feeding, resting, pupating and breeding. They were reported throughout November and even at Christmas outdoors. Among the insects were 40 species of BUTTERFLIES and 20 of MOTHS. The question mark was reported at 14 locations, sometimes with the comma and the mourning-cloak feeding on sap in July. 24 species of FISHES were reported. We are compiling further information from municipal reports which indicates that there are about 65 species of fishes consistently found since the 70's in the Toronto Region. Our current list is still quite representative; only 4 or 5 have not turned up on lists recently, but a few unlisted species have been seen. The pumpkinseed is still the most frequently reported native fish, locally abundant. (No alewife were reported!) 3 AMPHIBIAN species were reported. (Has anyone seen any bullfrogs in the Region - or salamanders?) The 5 species of REPTILES reported included the eastern milk snake in Etobicoke.

All BIRD species on our regular list have been reported, except for the red knot, loggerhead shrike, western meadowlark and the red and white-winged crossbills. Of the approximately 400 bird species known to have visited Toronto at any time, about 40% are occasional, casual or accidental. The other 60% are regularly occurring, most of which are listed in our 1993 TFN checklist; a few, unlisted, have been reported for the past 5 years in small numbers. 40 "irregulars" were reported in 1994.

23 MAMMAL species were reported, including 3 species of bat, but no little brown bat! A coyote den was reported in Thornhill. 14 reports of beaver were received, not all bad! Thickson's Woods Newsletter #11 mentions that the beaver pond in Corbett Creek valley holds back run-off and allows silt from upstream developments to settle before reaching the vulnerable marshlands. Wire will be placed around certain tree-trunks, however.

TFN Toronto Region Records, outings reports and members' reports (including butterfly and moth rearing notes) are on file at TFN Office; TFN and exchange newsletters at the Thomas Fisher Rare Books Library. All of the eager reporting and compiling of all our sources is much appreciated. Please continue to send reports to me at #710, 7 Crescent Place, Toronto, Ont. M4C 5L7. In the case of amphibians and reptiles, these may be sent to Bob Johnson at Metro Zoo, Box 280, West Hill, Ontario M1E 4R5.

Diana Banville




OSTRICH FERN is native to Toronto, occurring in all our watersheds except Mimico Creek and Etobicoke Creek, according to TFN records. If you come across it along these two watercourses, please report. Field drawing is by Mary Cumming.

Ref.: VASCULAR PLANTS OF METROPOLITAN TORONTO, TFN 1990.

## THE 1994 TORONTO CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

The 70th consecutive Toronto Christmas Count was conducted on Dec. 27, 1994. Eighteen routes, plus two sub-routes were surveyed by 73 field participants in 25 to 27 parties, plus five feeder watchers, within the official 7.5 mile radius circle centered at Avenue Rd. and Roselawn Ave.

The weather was mild but dull. The morning was mostly cloudy with some fog over the lake. The fog disappeared by noon, after which it was partly cloudy. There was no snow on the ground with still water partly open and moving water fully open.. Temperatures ranged from 0°C to 6°C. Winds were out of the southwest and ranged from near zero km/hr. at dawn to 25 km/hr. in the late afternoon. Waves on the open waters of Lake Ontario ranged from 0 to 0.5 metres.

A total of 161.25 Party Hours was spent in the field--123.25 hrs. on foot and 38 hrs. by car. 295 miles of the city was covered by car and 114.5 mi. on foot and bicycle. In addition a total of 10 hours was spent counting birds at feeders and 3.5 hours spent owling, covering 1.75 miles of territory. **Eighty-four (84)** species of birds and 1 hybrid totalling **40,831** individuals were observed this year compared to 74 species and 29,784 individuals last year.

The number of individuals were the highest ever by a large margin; the previous high of 30,966 was recorded in 1992. The number of individuals recorded per censuser was 559. The number of species recorded tied the mark set in 1972, and was ten higher than last year. Two new birds were added to the Toronto count (including the larger count area); **Double-crested Cormorant** and **Pine Warbler.** The adult **Golden Eagle** observed in flight over the Taylor Creek Valley by Karl Konze and Kathy Smith was recorded only once previously, in 1964.

A number of factors contributed to this record count. A milder than normal fall and early winter encouraged stragglers and potential over-winterers. A ten day cold spell in early December pushed birds down from further north. The heaviest berry crop, particularly Mountain-ash, in memory, was an irresistible food source. And finally, the count day had good (and comfortable) viewing conditions and good participation. Despite these advantages, one had to work harder than expected to census, as birds were not congregated at feeders but widely dispersed. The trick was to find the berry-laden shrubs or trees where the birds were feeding! The mildness of the weather was evident by Robins and others singing their spring songs and the occasional insect flying about. Hugh Currie even witnessed a toad hopping about on Centre Island!

Waterfowl were counted in record numbers; a combination of the mild weather and good viewing conditions. New highs were recorded for **Northern Shoveler (51), American Wigeon (8), Redhead (238),** and **Hooded Merganser (10)**. The Oldsquaw count was the second highest ever (5037 vs. 5081 in 1971), as was the Gadwall count (467 vs. 468 in 1983). Encouragingly, Black Duck numbers were the highest since 1984. The **Pied-billed Grebe** was the first since 1987, the two **Tundra Swans,** the first since 1985, the two **Harlequin Ducks** and the **Ruddy Duck** the first since 1986. The three **Double-crested Cormorants** that were observed by a non-count participant flying across the Leslie St. Spit were long overdue firsts for the Toronto count.

Accipiter numbers continue to increase, with record highs for both **Sharp-shinned Hawks (6)** and **Northern Goshawks (3)**. The **Merlin,** found by Barbara Mann and Senani Perera in a school-yard, was the first for the count since 1989. The **Golden Eagle** took the honours as the best bird of the count; likely a very late migrant rather than a wintering bird. To illustrate, on January 7, 1995, Norm Murr and Alfred Adamo recorded a significant east to west flight of Rough-legged Hawks and Peregrine Falcons along the Toronto Waterfront. The Northern Goshawk attracted to the activity at Tom Swift's feeder was the best "yard" bird.

**Ring-billed Gulls** were counted in record numbers **(5,991)** as were **Morning Doves (1,048)**. The absence of Snowy Owl from the count for the first time since 1985 was compensated by the high number of Great Horned Owls (12) recorded; the highest since 1985 - is there a connection? The highest count ever was recorded for **Pileated Woodpecker (6), Blue Jay (212)** and **American Crow (826)**. After bouncing back last count, White-breasted Nuthatch numbers (44) were low again, but this may be due to the fact that there were few birds to count at the feeders. However, **Brown Creeper (25)** and **Golden-crowned Kinglet (29)** numbers were all-time highs, and the count of Winter Wrens (10) was the highest since 1971.

Not surprisingly, **American Robins (757),** previous high (496), and **Northern Mockingbirds (3),** were record high in numbers. They feasted on the heaviest berry crop in half a century. **Northern Cardinals (363),** which prefer Multiflora rose hips, also in abundant supply, were censused in record numbers also. The **Pine Warbler,** found by Bill Edmunds in Thornhill, was the first ever on count day for Toronto. It was the first warbler species for the count since 1990.

Good sparrow numbers were recorded. The number of American Tree Sparrows (197) was the highest since 1983. White-crowned sparrows (3) were the most since 1976. Dark-eyed Juncos (639) had their second highest count ever. Unlike the previous year's count, there was a complete absence of Common Redpolls and Pine Siskins. It does not appear that there will be an irruption of Finches in the winter of 94-95 as there was the previous winter.

Additional species recorded on Count Week (Dec. 24 - 30) were Common Loon and Surf Scoter by Craig McLauchlan, Red-shouldered Hawk by Bob Yukich, and Swamp Sparrow by Glenn Coady. Glenn recorded an amazing **58** species on the Lower Humber route. If the flu bug didn't strike his assistants, this total could have been even higher!

The Elliott's graciously hosted the post-count celebration that had an ample supply of delicious food for all. Everyone seemed to enjoy themselves tremendously.

Thanks once more to Hugh Currie and Patrick Stepien-Scanlon for their assistance and advice with the count. This year's count had so many more species and individuals that data entry on my laptop took much longer than last year!

Alfred Adamo, Compiler
Toronto Ornithological Club

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**(Bold print)** indicates a **record high number.**
**Underlined bold print** indicates an **unusual bird** that has not been seen more than once or twice on the Toronto Xmas Counts over the past 10 years.

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1994 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT (cont'd)

**THE 70TH TORONTO ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB CHRISTMAS BIRD CENSUS DECEMBER 27, 1994**

| Totals | Species |
|---|---|
| 1 | Red-throated Loon |
| CW | Common Loon |
| 1 | Pied-billed Grebe |
| 3 | Double-crested Cormorant |
| 2 | Great Blue Heron |
| 2 | Tundra Swan |
| 75 | Mute Swan |
| 3,451 | Canada Goose |
| 4 | Wood Duck |
| 3 | Green-winged Teal |
| 226 | American Black Duck |
| 4,193 | Mallard |
| 3 | Black X Mallard Hybrid |
| 2 | Northern Pintail |
| 51 | Northern Shoveler |
| 447 | Gadwall |
| 8 | American Wigeon |
| 11 | Canvasback |
| 238 | Redhead |
| 544 | Greater Scaup |
| 9 | Lesser Scaup |
| 2 | Harlequin Duck |
| 5,037 | Oldsquaw |
| CW | Surf Scoter |
| 27 | White-winged Scoter |
| 410 | Common Goldeneye |
| 358 | Bufflehead |
| 10 | Hooded Merganser |
| 178 | Common Merganser |
| 171 | Red-breasted Merganser |
| 1 | Ruddy Duck |
| 25 | Duck, sp. |
| 6 | Sharp-shinned Hawk |
| 3 | Cooper's Hawk |
| 3 | Northern Goshawk |
| CW | Red-shouldered Hawk |
| 44 | Red-tailed Hawk |
| 16 | American Kestrel |
| 1 | Merlin |
| 1 | Golden Eagle |
| 7 | Ring-necked Pheasant |
| 1 | American Coot |
| 5,991 | Ring-billed Gull |
| 1,734 | Herring Gull |
| 1 | Thayer's Gull |
| 1 | Iceland Gull (Kumlien's) |
| 4 | Glaucous Gull |
| 96 | Great Black-backed Gull |
| 405 | Gull, sp. |
| 2,330 | Rock Dove |
| 1,048 | Mourning Dove |
| 6 | Eastern Screech-Owl |
| 12 | Great Horned Owl |
| 1 | Long-eared Owl |
| 3 | Belted Kingfisher |
| 1 | Yellow-bellied Sapsucker |
| 143 | Downy Woodpecker |
| 16 | Hairy Woodpecker |
| 14 | Northern Flicker |
| 6 | Pileated Woodpecker |
| 212 | Blue Jay |
| 826 | American Crow |
| 1,024 | Black-capped Chickadee |
| 23 | Red-breasted Nuthatch |
| 44 | White-breasted Nuthatch |
| 25 | Brown Creeper |
| 2 | Carolina Wren |
| 10 | Winter Wren |
| 29 | Golden-crowned Kinglet |
| 1 | Ruby-crowned Kinglet |
| 1 | Hermit Thrush |
| 757 | American Robin |
| 3 | Northern Mockingbird |
| 1 | Brown Thrasher |
| 116 | Cedar Waxwing |
| 2 | Northern Shrike |
| 6,090 | European Starling |
| 1 | Pine Warbler |
| 363 | Northern Cardinal |
| 197 | American Tree Sparrow |
| 44 | Song Sparrow |
| CW | Swamp Sparrow |
| 16 | White-throated Sparrow |
| 3 | White-crowned Sparrow |
| 639 | Dark-eyed Junco |
| 7 | Snow Bunting |
| 2 | Red-winged Blackbird |
| 650 | House Finch |
| 398 | American Goldfinch |
| 1 | Evening Grosbeak |
| 1,957 | House Sparrow |
| | |
| **84** | +4 Count Week Species |
| | |
| **40,831** | +4 Count Week Individuals |

HIGHLIGHTS

The species count of 84 ties the previous high set in 1972.

The individual count was an all-time high, by a wide margin. The previous high (30996) was set in 1992.

Two species, Double-crested Cormorant and Pine Warbler, were first ever for the Toronto count.

The Golden Eagle was recorded on the count only once before, in 1964.

Alfred Adamo, Compiler

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## Lake Ontario Mid-Winter Waterfowl Inventory

January 8, 1995

Compiled by: Bill Edmunds

| Species | Kingston | Quinte | Presqu'ile | Port Hope | Durham | TORONTO AREA Route1 | Route2 | Route3 | Route4 | Route5 | Route6 | Route7 | Subtotal | Hamilton | Niagara | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Common Loon | 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | 3 |
| Horned Grebe | 14 | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | 2 | | 17 |
| Red-necked Grebe | 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 2 |
| Double-crested Cormorant | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 7 | 7 |
| Tundra Swan | 1 | | | | | | | | 2 | | | | 2 | 59 | | 62 |
| Trumpeter Swan | | | | | | 2 | | | | | 1 | | 3 | 12 | | 15 |
| Mute Swan | 3 | | 5 | | | 7 | | 5 | 2 | 42 | 28 | 8 | 92 | 26 | | 126 |
| Snow Goose | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | 1 |
| Canada Goose | 3696 | | | 539 | 842 | 8054 | 920 | 38 | 74 | 845 | 3678 | 1678 | 15287 | 5832 | 184 | 26380 |
| Wood Duck | | | | 1 | | 1 | | | 1 | 3 | | | 5 | 1 | | 7 |
| Green-winged Teal | 1 | | | | | 2 | | | | 1 | | | 3 | 6 | | 10 |
| American Black Duck | 370 | 1 | | 87 | 72 | 128 | 90 | 1 | 13 | 61 | 115 | 63 | 471 | 198 | 17 | 1216 |
| Mallard | 1360 | 1 | 1 | 1807 | 814 | 2601 | 471 | 231 | 486 | 2411 | 2156 | 528 | 8884 | 2712 | 388 | 15967 |
| Northern Pintail | 2 | | | | | 3 | | | 1 | | | | 4 | 31 | | 37 |
| Northern Shoveler | 1 | | | | | | | | | 42 | 6 | | 48 | 22 | | 71 |
| Gadwall | 4 | | | | | 4 | 39 | 124 | 12 | 18 | 204 | | 401 | 204 | | 609 |
| American Wigeon | 2 | | | 1 | | | | | | | 28 | | 28 | 1 | | 32 |
| Canvasback | 5 | | 5 | | | | | | | | 5 | | 5 | 157 | 10 | 182 |
| Redhead | 611 | | 250 | | | | 3 | | | 15 | 160 | | 178 | 61 | | 1100 |
| Ring-necked Duck | 96 | | | 1 | | | | | | | | | | 14 | | 111 |
| Tufted Duck | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | 1 |
| Greater Scaup | 3664 | | 620 | 1 | 10 | 6 | 3 | | 4 | 4 | 1322 | 12 | 1351 | 15775 | | 21421 |
| Lesser Scaup | 13 | | | | | | | | | 3 | 5 | | 8 | 1206 | | 1227 |
| Scaup sp. | | | | | | 20 | | | | | | | 20 | | 646 | 666 |
| Eider sp. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | 1 |
| Harlequin Duck | | | | | | | | | | | 2 | | 2 | 1 | 1 | 4 |
| Oldsquaw | 22600 | 13 | 950 | 149 | 639 | 113 | 71 | 1291 | 81 | 213 | 123 | 17 | 1909 | 52 | 514 | 26826 |
| Black Scoter | 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 4 | 6 |
| Surf Scoter | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | 2 | | 3 |
| White-winged Scoter | 12500 | 139 | | | | 98 | 11 | | | | | | 109 | 146 | 5 | 12899 |
| Common Goldeneye | 2706 | 80 | 4230 | 52 | 1622 | 267 | 104 | 34 | 43 | 240 | 197 | 702 | 1587 | 4326 | 767 | 15370 |
| Barrow's Goldeneye | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 |
| Bufflehead | 10 | 100 | 630 | 98 | 246 | 110 | 36 | 204 | 200 | 226 | 117 | 136 | 1029 | 790 | 400 | 3303 |
| Hooded Merganser | | | | | | 1 | | | 1 | 3 | | | 5 | 9 | 1 | 15 |
| Common Merganser | 831 | | | 33 | 101 | 106 | 28 | | 23 | 17 | 28 | 4 | 206 | 338 | 752 | 2261 |
| Red-breasted Merganser | 65 | 9 | 3 | 7 | 53 | 76 | 67 | 137 | 41 | 46 | 68 | 12 | 447 | 410 | 120 | 1114 |
| Ruddy Duck | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | 1 | 1 | | 2 |
| American Coot | 53 | | | | | 3 | | | 1 | 1 | | 7 | 12 | 106 | 13 | 184 |
| Swan sp. | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | 1 | | | 1 |
| Scoter sp. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 25 | | 25 |
| Merganser sp. | | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 |
| Duck sp. | | 4 | 4000 | 70 | 83 | 46 | | | 2 | | | 28 | 76 | | | 4233 |
| Mallard X Black Duck | | | | 17 | | | | | | 5 | | | 5 | | | 22 |
| Total Birds | 48616 | 348 | 10694 | 2863 | 4482 | 11648 | 1843 | 2065 | 988 | 4196 | 8244 | 3196 | 32180 | 32529 | 3829 | 135541 |
| Total Species | 28 | 7 | 9 | 12 | 9 | 18 | 12 | 9 | 16 | 18 | 19 | 12 | 27 | 32 | 15 | 36 |
| Bald Eagle | 24 | | 1 | | | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 27 |

Weather/Visability: The weather for the day was typified by intermittent sun and cloud, with strong westerly winds; the temperature ranged from -5°C to -10°C. The winds caused choppy wave conditions and whiteouts, which made lake viewing difficult (except at Kingston). Some of the inner bays and channel were frozen over.

Routes: 1 (Whitby to Rouge River); 2 (Rouge River to Coatsworth Cut); 3 (Eastern Headland to Cherry St.); 4 (Toronto Islands); 5 (Parliament St. to Humber River); 6 (Humber River to Watersedge Pk.); 7 (Watersedge Pk. to Bronte)

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## LAKE ONTARIO MID-WINTER WATERFOWL INVENTORY

This year the Mid-winter Waterfowl Inventory (MWWI) was held on January 8, 1995. This is the 49th year for the Toronto area "Duck Count", and the fifth year that we are reporting Census results for the entire Canadian shoreline of Lake Ontario. The windy weather resulted in low numbers of some species (e.g. loons, scoters, eiders, oldsquaw); however, high numbers were reported for most other species, since the birds sought shelter close to shore. In fact, record numbers were seen for several species.

For the entire census area (Kingston to Niagara-on-the-Lake), a record 135,541 waterfowl were found of 36 species. The previous high number of waterfowl was 132,859 during last year's MWWI count. The number of waterfowl reported during the past two MWWI counts is 35% to 45% higher than the previous years' counts. This dramatic increase is NOT due to more Canada Geese and Mallards; the species which have increased are Greater Scaup, White-winged Scoter and Common Goldeneye. Kingston had most of the Oldsquaw (22,600) and the White-winged Scoter (12,500). Greater Scaup numbers were concentrated in Hamilton (15,775). Common Goldeneye numbers continued strongly with 15,370.

In the Toronto area: 32,180 waterfowl of 27 species were seen. Average numbers for the past 5 years are 31,555 birds and 24.5 species. Record high numbers were seen for Mallard, Northern Shoveler, Bufflehead, Hooded Merganser, and American Coot. Low numbers were noted only for Loons, Grebes, Oldsquaw and White-winged Scoter. Rarities included 1 Horned Grebe, 2 Tundra Swan, 5 Wood Duck, 3 Green-winged Teal, 4 Northern Pintail, 5 Canvasback, 2 Harlequin, 3 Hooded Merganser, 1 Ruddy Duck, and 12 American Coot.

Outside the Toronto area, there were some excellent sightings: Niagara had 7 Double-crested Cormorant, a Harlequin, 4 Black Scoter, a Hooded Merganser, and 13 American Coot. Hamilton had the MWWI's only Snow Goose, Tufted Duck and Eider. They saw 32 species in total, including Ring-necked Duck, Harlequin, Surf Scoter, 9 Hooded Merganser, Ruddy Duck, 106 American Coot and a Bald Eagle. Port Hope had 12 species including Wood Duck, Widgeon and Ring-necked Duck. Presqu'ile had more than 10,000 ducks and a Bald Eagle. Kingston had 48,616 (!) waterfowl, including the MWWI's only Red-necked Grebe (2) and Barrow's Goldeneye. They also had 2 Common Loon, 14 Horned Grebe, 96 Ring-necked Duck, 611 Redhead, 2 Black Scoter, a Surf Scoter, 53 American Coot, and 24 Bald Eagle.

Exotics/introduced species included 15 Trumpeter Swan, Mandarin Duck, Chiloe Widgeon, Egyptian Goose, and Bar-headed Goose.

Thanks to all the clubs and individuals who participated. Next year's count, the 50th, will be on Jan. 7, 1996.

Bill Edmunds, compiler □

## 1994 FLAP SPECIES LIST

| Species | Alive | Dead | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| White-throated sparrow | 196 | 169 | 365 |
| White-crowned sparrow | 6 | 8 | 14 |
| Swamp sparrow | 7 | 10 | 17 |
| Fox sparrow | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Song sparrow | 11 | 6 | 17 |
| Lincoln's sparrow | 12 | 6 | 18 |
| Grasshopper sparrow | 1 | | 1 |
| Field sparrow | | 1 | 1 |
| Ovenbird | 165 | 207 | 372 |
| Common yellowthroat | 90 | 55 | 145 |
| Magnolia warbler | 35 | 56 | 91 |
| Black and white warbler | 31 | 33 | 64 |
| American redstart | 19 | 30 | 49 |
| Black-throated blue warbler | 17 | 37 | 54 |
| Yellow-rumped warbler | 5 | 11 | 16 |
| Chestnut-sided warbler | 6 | 15 | 21 |
| Canada warbler | 10 | 3 | 13 |
| Mourning warbler | 13 | 7 | 20 |
| Blackburnian warbler | 4 | 5 | 9 |
| Black-throated green warbler | 6 | 4 | 10 |
| Nashville warbler | 6 | 14 | 20 |
| Palm warbler | 1 | 3 | 4 |
| Wilson's warbler | 3 | 7 | 10 |
| Blackpoll warbler | | 4 | 4 |
| Bay-breasted warbler | 8 | 8 | 16 |
| Northern parula | 3 | 1 | 4 |
| Tennessee warbler | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Northern waterthrush | 8 | 8 | 16 |
| Orange-crowned warbler | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Pine warbler | 12 | 8 | 20 |
| Connecticut warbler | 4 | 4 | 8 |
| Cape May warbler | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Hooded warbler | 1 | | 1 |
| Hermit thrush | 49 | 35 | 84 |
| Swainson's thrush | 1 | 5 | 6 |
| Wood thrush | 8 | 16 | 24 |
| Veery | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| American robin | | 1 | 1 |
| Brown creeper | 62 | 24 | 86 |
| Winter wren | 9 | 2 | 11 |
| House wren | 2 | | 2 |
| Red-eyed vireo | 3 | 10 | 13 |
| Philadelphia vireo | 3 | 1 | 4 |
| Solitary vireo | 1 | | 1 |
| Ruby-crowned kinglet | 18 | 6 | 24 |
| Golden-crowned kinglet | 13 | 12 | 25 |

| Species | Alive | Dead | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Yellow-shafted flicker | 8 | 13 | 21 |
| Yellow-bellied sapsucker | 8 | 11 | 19 |
| Ruby-throated hummingbird | 3 | 9 | 12 |
| Red-breasted nuthatch | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Slate-coloured junco | 14 | 14 | 28 |
| Eastern wood peewee | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| Eastern phoebe | 2 | 3 | 5 |
| Cedar waxwing | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Gray catbird | 5 | 5 | 10 |
| Black-capped chickadee | | 2 | 2 |
| Brown thrasher | 4 | 3 | 7 |
| Rose-breasted grosbeak | 3 | 5 | 8 |
| Northern oriole | | 1 | 1 |
| Mourning dove | | 2 | 2 |
| Great crested flycatcher | 1 | | 1 |
| Yellow-bellied flycatcher | | 3 | 3 |
| Least flycatcher | | 1 | 1 |
| Virginia rail | 4 | 1 | 5 |
| Sora | 1 | | 1 |
| American woodcock | 1 | 12 | 13 |
| Whip-poor-will | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| Common nighthawk | 1 | | 1 |
| Brown-headed cowbird | | 1 | 1 |
| Rufous-sided towhee | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Scarlet tanager | | 1 | 1 |
| Blue jay | | 1 | 1 |
| Eastern screech owl | | 1 | 1 |
| Unknown | 12 | 77 | 89 |
| Total | | | |

**BATS**

| | |
|---|---|
| Silver-haired bat | 2 |
| Red bat | 1 |
| Little brown bat | 1 |
| Hoary bat | 1 |
| Total | 5 |

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# PROJECTS

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED DURING BIRD MIGRATION

Volunteers with the Fatal Light Awareness Program (FLAP) pick up birds that have hit Toronto's office towers during migration. This past year at least one person was out every morning of the peak migratory periods.

Although few birds were seen downtown during the spring migration, there were a great many fatalities during the fall migration, due in part to weather conditions that brought birds into contact with lit windows. One night in September (and FLAP was literally out all night long) we collected over 200 birds. The bad publicity the CN Tower received as a result of this episode prompted personnel to turn off the tower lights immediately. If only the office towers could be made to follow suit!

The list on page 14 includes the number as well as species of birds (and bats) picked up by FLAP members in 1994. Please note, however, that there were many more eaten by gulls, raccoons, rats...or swept up by the street cleaners. The more volunteers we have, the better our chances of saving migrating birds. If you are eager to join the pre-dawn patrol, please call Michael Mesure at 519-833-FLAP or Irene Fedun at 416-762-8889.

[See also pages 21 and 22.]

## NEW WRITING AWARD

The Louise de Kiriline Lawrence Writing Award honours the memory of the late Swedish-Canadian naturalist and author whose books and articles won countless honours and earned international recognition. The award for nature writing will be presented annually, beginning in 1995. The winner will receive $1500 and a framed, illustrated certificate. There will also be two honourable mentions named. Entry forms and complete details concerning this award are available from Natural Heritage/ Natural History Inc. at P.O. Box 95, Station O, Toronto, Ont. M4A 2M8; phone 416-694-7907, fax 416-690-0819.

adapted from NATURE CANADA, Canadian Nature Federation, Winter 1995

## HIKE ONTARIO VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Hike Ontario is the umbrella organization for Ontario's long-distance walking trails (e.g. Bruce Trail, Voyageur Trail, etc.). Its mandate is to promote the development of hiking/walking trails. The organization is looking for volunteers to fill a number of challenging positions in the Walking Centre, Fundraising, and Special Events. Call Lynn Mighton at 426-7362.

PROJECTS (Cont'd)

## 100 YEARS AND COUNTING

Imagine that you are a tree and this year you will be 100 years old. In 1895 you were a seed, nestled in the earth in Toronto. Just like the city around you, you have gone through different stages of your life. At first you were just a seedling, striving for sunlight. As a sapling you were more established, you had more branches, you were not as thin and your roots were spreading underground. Now you are mature, you have more girth and a few dead branches in your crown.

But are you old? That depends on the kind of tree you are. Some trees are relatively short-lived; for example, peach trees live only for a few decades. Others live much longer. For example, a shagbark hickory can live for 300 years. But city trees don't usually live as long as this; on average they live for 32 years.

Why do they have such short lives? City trees are stressed out! They have to deal with compact soils, injuries, salt, little organic matter, and many other hardships. Life is tough on the streets. For a city tree to reach 100 years old is a remarkable achievement, and it deserves recognition. If you know of a tree that is 100 years or older, let us know by nominating it as a Heritage Tree. Tell us the address of the tree, the type of tree it is, how old and its history (if known) and your name. Either, drop a note off at the TFN office, or send a note to Tracy Butler, 685 Surrey Lane, #808, Burlington, Ont. L7T 3Z2.

## ONTARIO TREE ATLAS PROJECT GETS ORGANIZED

Professor Alan Watson, Director of The Arboretum, University of Guelph, has received funding from the Ontario Forest Research Institute to produce an Ontario Tree Atlas. This is a 5-year project to determine the distribution and relative abundance of all native Ontario tree species (of which there are approximately 85), as well as some exotic, or introduced species. This province-wide survey is to begin in May 1995. Contact Rob Guthrie or Rob Rogan at 519-824-4120 if you are interested in volunteering. You may select an area that is close to your home or cottage.

extracted from THE ORCHID, Vol. 41, no. 1, Bulletin of the Peterborough Field Naturalists, January 1995

Coltsfoot's bright signal
shining in the gloom of March,
the long walk's reward.

haiku by Arthur Wade

PROJECTS (Cont'd)

BIRD STUDY AWARDS FOR YOUNG ORNITHOLOGISTS

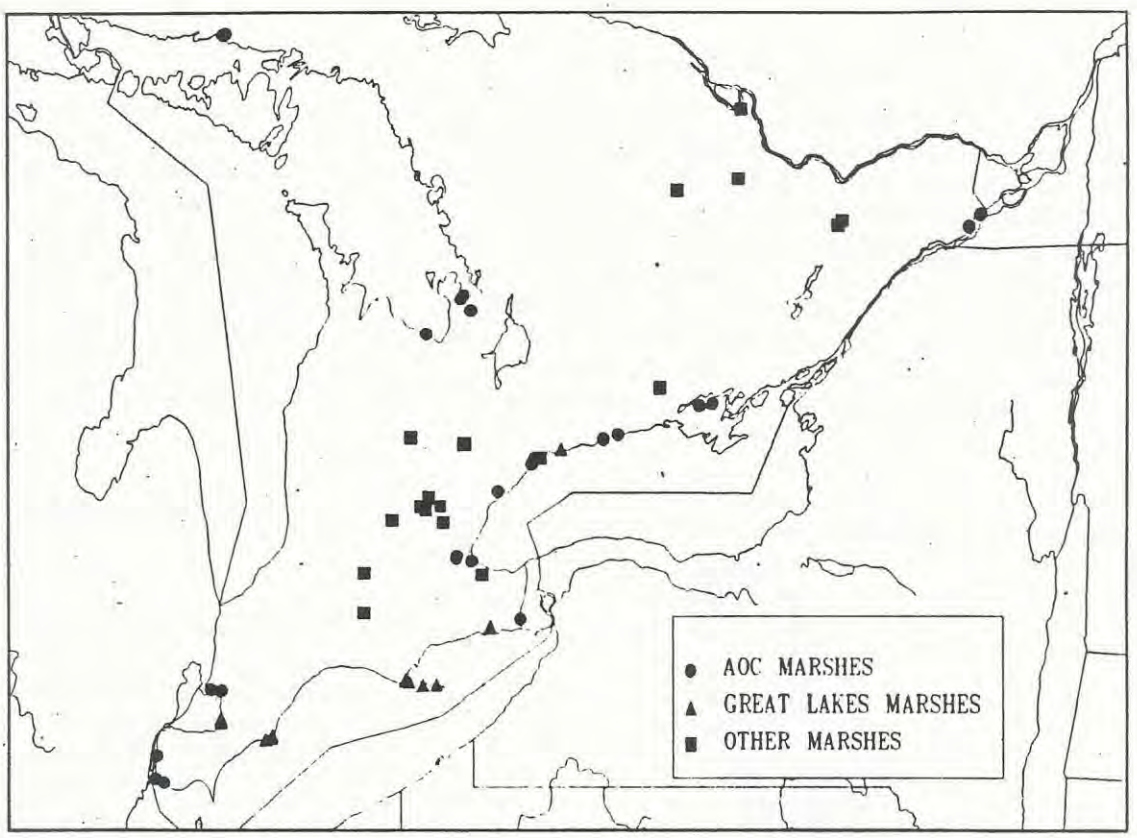
The Doug Tarry Bird Study Awards promote the development of ornithological talents and interests in Canadian teenagers (13-18 years old). Recipients of the awards, now offered free to selected applicants, attend a week-long workshop/natural history camp at Long Point Bird Observatory (LPBO), located on the north shore of Lake Erie. The Award covers all direct costs of the workshop (accommodation, meals, travel while at Long Point, and professional instruction), but recipients are responsible for their own transportation to Long Point for the week which is being held from Sunday July 2 to Sunday July 9, 1995. Applications may be obtained from Rosie Kirton, Long Point Bird Observatory, Box 160, Port Rowan, Ont. NOE 1MO (fax 519-586-3532). □


THE HERMIT THRUSH is famous for his song. Peterson and Godfrey both describe it as "ethereal." Schuyler Mathews devotes thirteen pages to it in his FIELD BOOK OF WILD BIRDS AND THEIR MUSIC. It is reputed to be "the finest of all American bird songs," according to Aretas Saunders in A GUIDE TO BIRD SONGS, and "the purest and most perfect song of any bird," according to Taverner in BIRDS OF CANADA.

(Oh yes, the question of a challenge to the Nightingale has come up.)

Warm drops of spring rain
dripping from ears, chin and nose.
Nature's anointment.

Haiku by J. Kenneth Cook




**1994 Marsh Monitoring routes in s. Ontario. Note: The proximity of some routes overlaps symbols.**

**The Marsh Monitoring Program Needs You!**

Across North America, various types of wetlands and the plants and animals found in them face increasing threats from development and pollution. Two-thirds of the Great Lakes wetlands have been lost; many drained or reclaimed for land development. Forty-three Areas of Concern (AOCs) around the Great Lakes have been identified by the International Joint Commission as being particularly stressed and in urgent need of rehabilitation. Remedial Action Plan (RAP) and Public Advisory Committees (PACs) have been established to implement rehabilitation of the ecosystem in each AOC.

In addition to loss of habitat, scientists around the world are concerned with declining populations of amphibian and birds. In the past few decades, many species once commonly found in North American wetlands have suffered reductions in numbers. Efforts to determine just how much they have declined have been hindered by a lack of knowledge about the present and historical population levels.

The Marsh Monitoring Program (MMP) is a cooperative project of Long Point Bird Observatory and Environment Canada (the Canadian Wildlife Service and the Great Lakes Cleanup Fund), with the support of the U.S. Great Lakes Protection Fund. It has been established to aid the conservation of marsh habitat by establishing a baseline assessment of marsh bird and amphibian species and by monitoring their population changes and habitats over the long term. In addition to monitoring individual sites, the Program will provide valuable data on marsh birds and amphibians on a region-wide basis. The information gathered will be used to assist RAP committees in assessing the progress of their rehabilitation efforts as well as assisting similar community action programs in the rest of the Great Lakes Basin.

The Marsh Monitoring Program is a volunteer-based program. It is open to anyone with an interest in birds and/or frogs and toads. Volunteers have the option of adopting a preselected route or they can set up their own route. The Program focuses on the Great Lakes Basin, but any marsh in Ontario and in any U.S. state bordering the Great Lakes can be surveyed.

A Marsh Monitoring Training Kit will be distributed to all volunteers in March, whether they are monitoring birds, amphibians or both. The Kit is comprised of written instructions for both the bird and amphibian surveys and an identification guide to common wetland vegetation. The Training Kit also includes an instructional tape with examples of the songs and calls of the birds and amphibians most likely to be encountered. This combination of written and audio instruction will open the survey to a much broader audience. You don't need to be an expert ornithologist or herpetologist to take part.

Marsh bird monitoring routes are composed of 4 to 8 permanently marked sample stations surveyed using fixed time, fixed distance,

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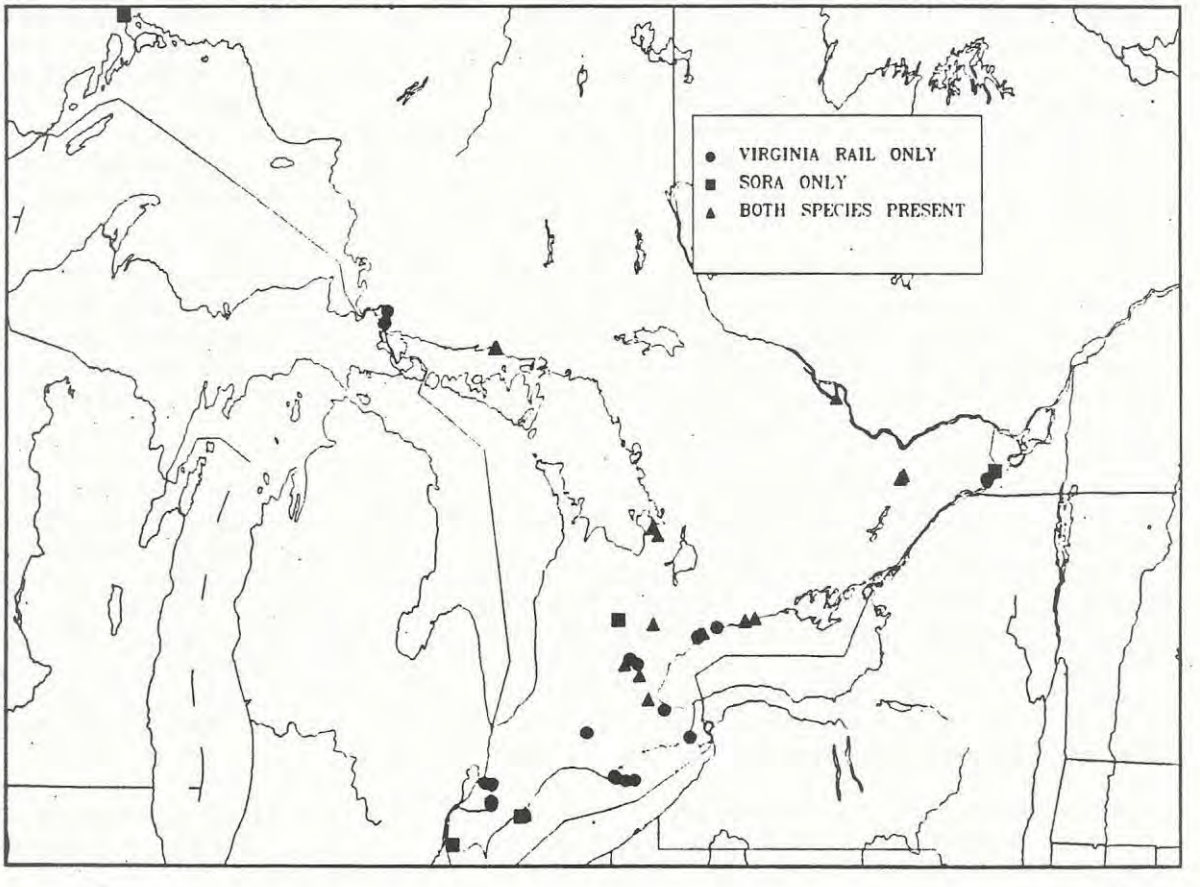
MARSH MONITORING (Cont'd)

point counts with a call playback tape for certain bird species. Two separate visits will be made to each route, not less then ten days apart, between 20 May and 5 July. Surveys are conducted after 6 p.m. and conclude before sunset.

Amphibian monitoring routes may be the same as those used for the marsh bird surveys or they may be set up independently. The amphibian surveys are also based upon point counts; however, no callback tape is used. Each route is visited on three separate occasions no less then 15 days apart. Surveys are conducted over a 10 week period, between 1 April and 1 July, depending upon the latitude of the route. All surveys are carried out after sunset and conclude before midnight. In addition to the population monitoring, stations on both the marsh bird and amphibian routes will be mapped for general vegetation characteristics to help in determining species' habitat associations.

For more information on the Marsh Monitoring Program or to sign up for a route, contact Amy Chabot, MMP Project Coordinator, Long Point Bird Observatory, P.O. Box 160, Port Rowan, Ontario N0E 1M0. Phone: 519-586-3531. Fax: 519-586-3532.




Distribution of Soras and Virginia Rails on 1994 surveys.

# IN THE NEWS

## TURN OFF THE LIGHTS

Canada has become a nation of light polluters. Collectively, we are stealing the night. By turning darkness into day, we are blinding the senses of birds, insects, plants and humans. The offenders range from the mighty to the mundane, from Toronto's CN Tower to neighbours blinding neighbours by shining floodlights at them.

Let's start with the CN Tower. From a single point near the tower, it is possible to see four flashing strobe lights, 36 flashing red lights, two floodlights illuminating the base of the tower, several unseen floodlights that illuminate the upper sections of the tower, nine spotlights that are focused outward to attract distant viewers, and an estimated seven searchlights that are fixed to focus straight up. The tragedy is that under certain weather conditions, such as a moonless night with low clouds, bright lights may attract night migrating birds to their death. The birds become disoriented by the light beams. They fly in a frenzy up, down and around the beams. They crash into the lighted structure, into the light face and each other. Kills of more than 10,000 birds are known to have occurred elsewhere, caused by floodlit structures and by searchlights. The CN Tower authorities are aware of this. Accordingly, the vanity lights on the CN Tower have normally been turned off during the spring and autumn bird migrations. This autumn, the lights were kept on until past the peak of the period for night migrators to fly south. As predicted, hundreds of songbirds were disoriented by the CN Tower lights and fell to the ground exhausted, injured or dead.

If the CN Tower authorities need to re-examine their natural heritage conservation policy, so should many other urban enterprises [see page 14]. There are too many vanity lights focussed on provincial and federal government buildings, industrial buildings, heritage buildings, hotels, banks, and hydroelectric and sewage plants. Further, there are too many misdirected and unshielded lights on baseball diamonds, tennis courts, football fields, golf ranges, parking lots, car-sales lots, gas stations and store fronts, as well as lighted advertising billboards beside highways, streets and farms.

Also of concern is the recent trend for gardeners to install permanent lights that shine on gardens or up into the trees. Such lights can interfere with the normal growth and flowering of plants, and with the life of the insects that pollinate them. There is no glory in shining lights that beckon birds, moths and other organisms to their death. The use of vanity lights and unshielded lights is a vivid display of disrespect for energy conservation and for sustaining Canada's precious heritage of wild birds and other organisms. Let us turn the unnecessary lights off, shield the necessary lights properly, and see the stars again. [See pages 14-15 and 22.]

extracted from an article by Paul Aird in THE GLOBE AND MAIL, January 4, 1995

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IN THE NEWS (Cont'd)

## NEW TORONTO ATTRACTION

A new interactive environmental attraction called EcoDek has opened atop the CN Tower in Toronto. EcoDek is divided into air, water and land-city zones, with interactive exhibits and wide-screen theatres in each zone. Visitors can also search the horizon through "EcoScopes" mounted on the windows. Admission is included in the cost of the elevator ride to the tower observation decks - $12 for adults, $9 for seniors, $7 for children aged 12 and under. [See pages 14-15 and 21.]

extracted from "Travel Notes" by Doug English in THE LONDON FREE PRESS, December 24, 1994

## MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES WILDLIFE ENFORCEMENT DECOY OPERATION

Decoys of deer, moose, bear, turkey, fox, and coyote are being used to apprehend poachers across the province. To simulate live animal movement, decoys normally have a variety of motorized body functions such as moving tails and ears. The decoys are used in and around private property where Conservation Officers know of or suspect illegal poaching activity and can be used at night or during the day. The Ministry has developed an Adopt-a-Decoy program for interested outdoor organizations. The public is encouraged to report poaching infractions either to their local MNR office or to their local Crimestoppers network. For more information, contact Wil Wegman, 905-832-7608.

extracted from a Ministry of Natural Resources Fact Sheet, January 1994

## RED DYE TOUTED AS DEADLY TO FEARED INSECT

A dye that puts the red in red lipstick may soon be used to kill one of the world's most feared agricultural predators, the dreaded Medfly. The dyes give a fatal stomach ache to the Medfly, whose periodic appearances in California trigger massive spraying and other programs to control them. While regularly used to colour soaps and antacid preparations, as well as lipstick, the dyes become lethal when the insects that swallow them are exposed to light. The lethal mixture can either be sprayed on fields or added to baits where sugar and corn protein are used to attract insects. Theoretically the dyes could be used to kill any insect that spends a significant amount of time in the sun, including mosquitoes, blackflies, cutworms, earworms, army worms and ants. Studies of the dyes' effect on mammals - including people - indicate that not only does sunlight not make it through to vital organs, but the liver clears the colorant away in a matter of hours.

extracted from an article by Stephen Strauss in THE GLOBE AND MAIL, December 15, 1994

NEWS (Cont'd)

FORGET GROUNDHOG DAY: BUTTERFLY FOUND IN MARKHAM

A butterfly that doesn't seem to know it's winter turned up in a Markham home on January 30th. It was spotted clinging to fake flowers as a kitten jumped to try and grab the black-winged insect. The butterfly is some kind of swallowtail and "quite magnificent", having a double row of yellow-gold markings on its wings, orange eyes and blue streaks on one side of the wings.

extracted from an article by Brian Dexter in THE TORONTO STAR NORTH YORK, Feb. 2, 1995

ARCHAEOLOGISTS RACE ROAD DEVELOPMENT TO UNEARTH CULTURE

As workers get ready to begin laying the concrete for southern Ontario's newest major highway, archaeologists are also racing against time. Highway 407, expected to be completed by 1997, runs through a portion of southern Ontario that once thrived with prehistoric native industry, farming and culture. The sites date from the Archaic period (about 7000-2000 years ago), to pioneer settlements of the late 1800s. Although larger sites have been found along the corridor, the majority of sites discovered so far have been temporary campsites along river banks. While pressure to begin construction of the highway increases, archaeologists scour fields looking for signs of ancient settlements or pioneer homesteads. Other archaeologists hurry to recover the remains of sites which lie directly in the path of the highway. Ontario's Environmental Assessment Act mandates that a full-scale environmental assessment be completed before government-funded projects, such as land development and highway construction, may begin. Environmental impact assessments generally include three levels of investigation: impact on the natural environment, impact on the social environment and impact on any archaeological or heritage sites that may be affected by a proposed project. Archaeologists rely on artefacts and signs of alterations made to the natural landscape by these ancient people, to reconstruct life in prehistoric Ontario.

extracted from an article by Corbin Andrews in THE TORONTO STAR NORTH YORK, Jan. 5, 1995

WILLOW POWER

Willows may soon be receiving an image makeover as a valuable source of fuel and a means of fighting pollution. Professor Emeritus Louis Zsuffa of the Faculty of Forestry, University of Toronto, is involved in two willow projects. The goal of one, the Canadian Willow Breeding Program, is to develop willow species for fuel energy plantations and timber use. The purpose of the other project is to develop efficient, environmentally sound ways of producing firewood for farmers, factories and others with woodburning facilities. "Willows can grow where and when there is difficulty establishing other crops, for example, on temporarily flooded land and in frosty weather." It is the rapid growth rate of the willow that makes it more effective than other trees as a source of energy. "Most trees take three decades or longer to grow to maturity. Willows normally take two to five years." Because the trees grow so fast, they use more carbon dioxide and produce more oxygen than other species and

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NEWS (Cont'd)

can improve air quality and reduce a trend to global warming. In addition, willows make use of water that is unsuitable for other crops. The heavy metals -- lead and cadmium, for example -- that are found in sludge and waste water are absorbed by willows, and the trees keep these pollutants locked up in their tissue and out of the soil for long periods. "They act as a kind of water purification system." Burning these trees does not have to be an environmental problem. In Europe, smokestacks are fitted with scrubbers that remove the metals before the smoke is released.

extracted from an article by Karina Dahlin in UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO BULLETIN, Jan. 23, 1995

CONTRIBUTORS OF NEWSLETTER CLIPPINGS THIS MONTH: Miriam Abileah, Diana Banville, Sandy Cappell, Mary and Nancy Cumming, Don Davis, Karin Fawthrop, Jim Hodgins, Mary Hunter, Eileen Mayo, Alen McCombie, Joan O'Donnell, Louise Orr, Jim Purnell, Grace Somers, Arthur Wade, Mel Whiteside.

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TORONTO NATIVE

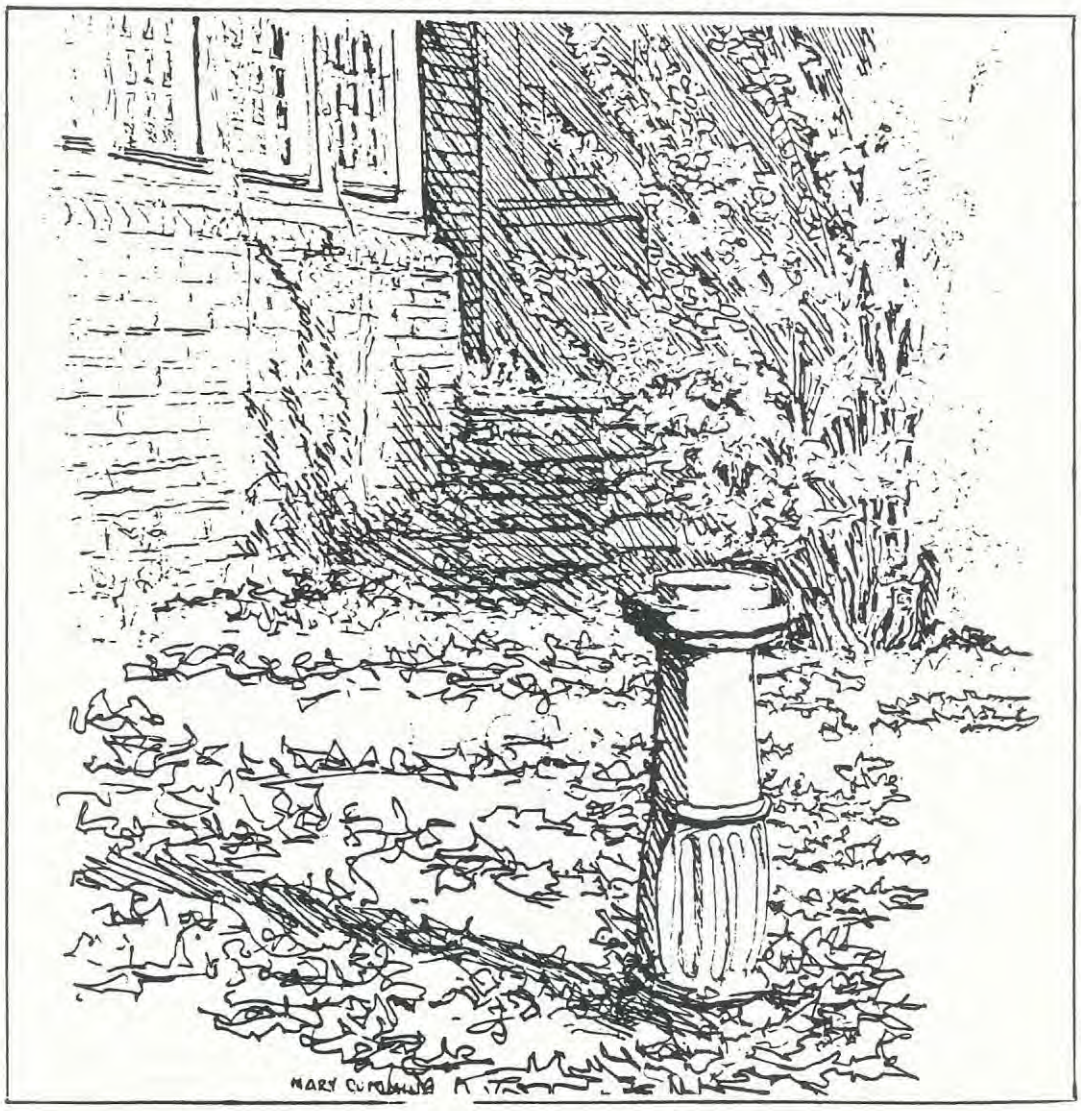
COMMON MILKWEED

is shown in this field drawing by Joanne Doucette in full bloom, with a magnification of a characteristic milkweed floret.

## THE GOULDING HOUSE, TAYLOR CREEK PARK

The East York Council is contemplating the designation of the Goulding Estate located within Taylor Creek Park, as a property of architectural and historical significance. The Goulding House is the last of the Massey houses in the area. Mrs. Goulding, for whom it was built in the twenties, was Dorothy Massey, daughter of Walter Massey (President of Massey-Harris) who, with his wife Susan Denton Massey, created Dentonia Park farm in 1897. The farm,which stretched roughly from Dawes Road to Pharmacy Avenue and from the Danforth to Medhurst Road, was dedicated to the supply of pasteurized milk to combat tuberculosis and typhoid fever then prevalent. Much of the area is now occupied by huge apartment complexes, a golf course and Taylor Creek Park, but the Goulding House still stands, surrounded by its gardens and a forest of introduced and native trees and shrubs. Dorothy's famous cousin, Raymond Massey, reminisces about the farm in his book, WHEN I WAS YOUNG (McClelland & Stewart). You can also read about it in Mollie Gillen's THE MASSEYS published by Ryerson Press. The drawing below, made by Mary Cumming in the garden on a mild November day, shows a corner of the house, at present known as The Corrigan Boys' Residence.

Ref.: East York Resolution #3268, July 4, 1994, Appendix A DB □



# A CIGAR WITH WINGS...

I read the above description of a cicada years ago (long before I encountered my only specimen, and this in spite of childhood years in the tropics as well as 39 years in Ontario), and it enabled me to recognize the creature. It was immobile on a low branch, under a street lamp at night, and whether aiming to go up or down, or merely getting its second wind, I do not know.

Cicadas belong to the Order Hemiptera and the family Cicadidae. A cicada is a squat insect with four transparent wings which it folds over its body "like a roof". It is darkly coloured and some 1" to 2" long. The head is wide and short with bristly antennae. Although an inhabitant of the tropics, many types also live in North America. It is the male which supplies the buzzing, sawing noise by making two drumlike membranes on his abdomen vibrate rapidly. Each species has its own song. If disturbed, cicadas produce a short burst of "protest".

There are two common groups. (1) Dog-day cicadas (genus *Tibicen*): large, very dark, appearing each July and August. They take 4-7 years to develop from egg to adult. (2) Periodical cicadas (genus *Magicicada*): dark with red eyes and wing veins. They take 13-17 years to develop, and the 17-year specimens are sometimes called 17-year locusts.

A female cicada lays her eggs in the twigs of trees by making small holes in the bark with a sawlike organ near the tip of her abdomen. The twigs usually wither from this treatment, and after a few weeks the eggs hatch and young nymphs appear which fall to the ground, enter the soil, and feed on the roots of trees. They remain underground until fully grown, then emerge to climb a tree, shed their skin and become adults. Alas, the reward for this monumental, long-term effort is only a few weeks of life for the adult cicadas. Their song remains, however, synonymous with high summer, which would not be the same without that background busy-ness high in the trees.

Eva Davis

Eva Davis □

# THE WEATHER (THIS TIME LAST YEAR)

MARCH 1994, Toronto

MARCH was unexceptional. Average temperatures were exactly normal, precipitation slightly below normal, and sunshine above normal (the most since 1988). A snowstorm on March 9th-10th brought snowfall totals above normal to about 29 cm at both downtown and the airport; these are the highest levels for the month since 1985 downtown and 1980 at Pearson. High pressure dominated from March 17th-24th; it was mostly sunny during this period with gradually rising temperatures.

Gavin Miller □

Field drawing by Mary Cumming

THE BULL THISTLE is known by many names, according to AN ILLUSTRATED FLORA OF THE NORTHERN UNITED STATES & CANADA by Britton & Brown...

such as:
Common Bur;
Spear Thistle;
Plume Thistle;
Bank Thistle;
Horse,
Bell,
Bird, Blue,
Button,
Boar or
Roadside
Thistle
(not
Scotch,
which is
another
species
rare in
Ontario.)

(Origin
of both
Eurasia).

# COMING EVENTS

Toronto Ornithological Club - no outings in March

Toronto Entomological Association meeting - Sat. March 25 at 1 pm in the McLaughin Planetarium. For more information, call Alan Hanks at (905) 727-6993.

Black Creek Project meeting - Wed. March 1 at 6:30 pm in the Centennial Building next to the City of York City Hall on Eglinton Ave. West, west of Keele St. and east of Jane St. For details, call 661-6600, extension 345.

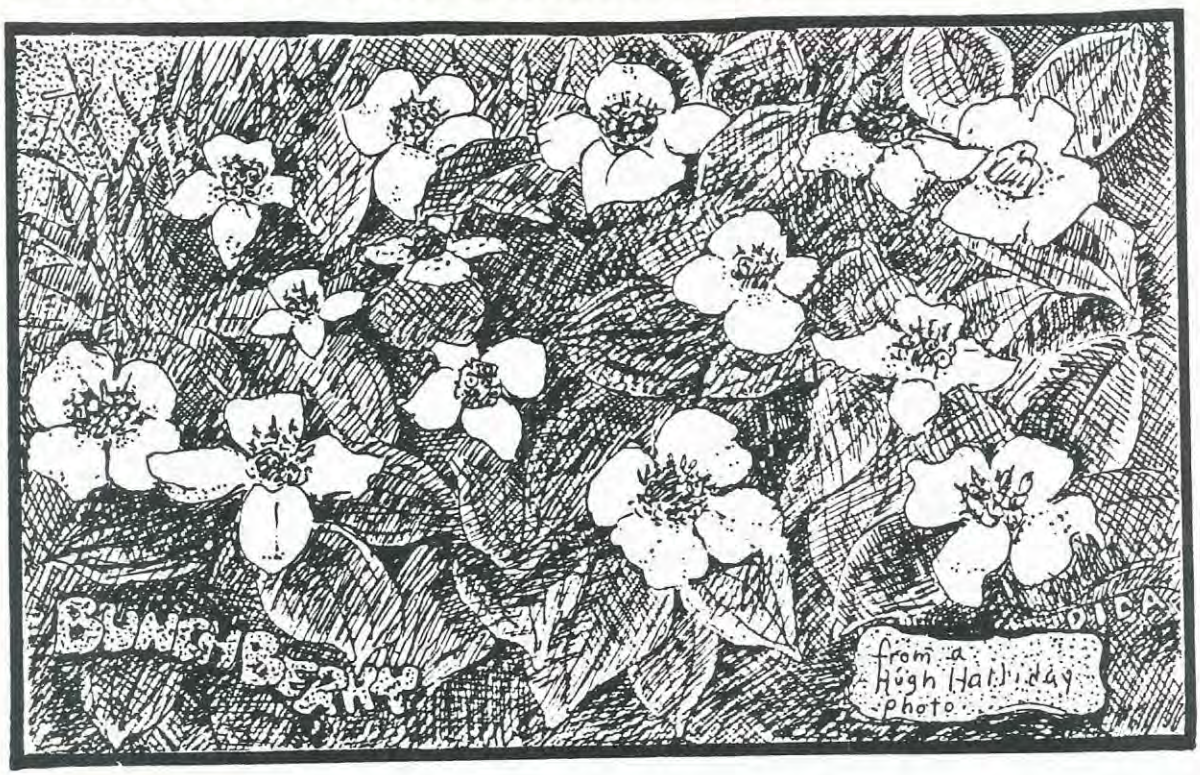
Friends of the Don Headwaters - information about meetings and other events, call Michael White at 944-9490 or Gavin Miller at 921-9305.

Task Force to Bring Back the Don meeting - Wed. March 29 at 6:30 pm in the Toronto City Hall. Call David Stonehouse at 392-1255 for more information.

Mycological Society of Toronto - for information about meetings, forays and membership, call HI-FUNGI.

Save the Rouge Valley System - information about membership and monthly walks in the Rouge Valley may be obtained by calling 289-6643.

Friends of the Don East York meeting - Tues. March 28 at 7 pm at the East York Civic Centre, 880 Coxwell Ave. The program will include a speaker, Ken Towle, on the subject of Declining Songbirds. For more information, call Melanie Milanich at 690-5925.



COMING EVENTS (Cont'd)

Canadian Nature Federation - Conference and General Meeting - June 16, 17, 18, 1995 in Whitehorse, Yukon Territory. Nature tours before, during and after the conference have been arranged. For further information contact the Yukon Conservation Society, CNF Conference, Box 4163, Whitehorse, Yukon, Y1A 3T3 or call (403)668-5678 or fax (403)668-6637.

Presqu'ile Waterfowl Festival - March 25-26 and April 1-2 from 10 am to 4 pm. For details call the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources.

Clean Air, Clean Water Forum - Wed. March 8 at 7:30 pm at the St. Lawrence Centre, 27 Front St. East. Free.

Maple syrup time - at the Kortright Centre, Kleinburg from March 4 until April 17 from 10 am to 3 pm. Admission fee. For more information, call 661-6600.

The Garden Club of Toronto 40th Flower Show - Magic Moments - Wed. March 1 to Fri. March 3 from 10 am to 8 pm and Sat. March 4 and Sun. March 5 from 10 am to 6 pm. Admission fee. Call 447-5218 for more details.

## This Month's Cover

was donated by the illustrator,
D. Andrew White, M.Sc.,
P.O. Box #346, 3221 Eglinton Ave. East,
Scarborough, Ont. (tel. 416 266-3022).

The Carp, rendered here in meticulous anatomical detail, is originally from Asia, introduced via Europe to the New World, and now common in Toronto.

## 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.

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
20 College St., Unit 11
Toronto, Ont. M5G 1K2

Newsletter Committee members: Helen Juhola, Diana Banville, Jenny Bull, Eva Davis, Nancy Fredenburg, Eileen Mayo, Joan O'Donnell, Toshi Oikawa.

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