

TORONTO FIELD NATURALIST

Number 455

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Brookbanks Park, with white cedar stump by Regina Posluns

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TFN MEETINGS

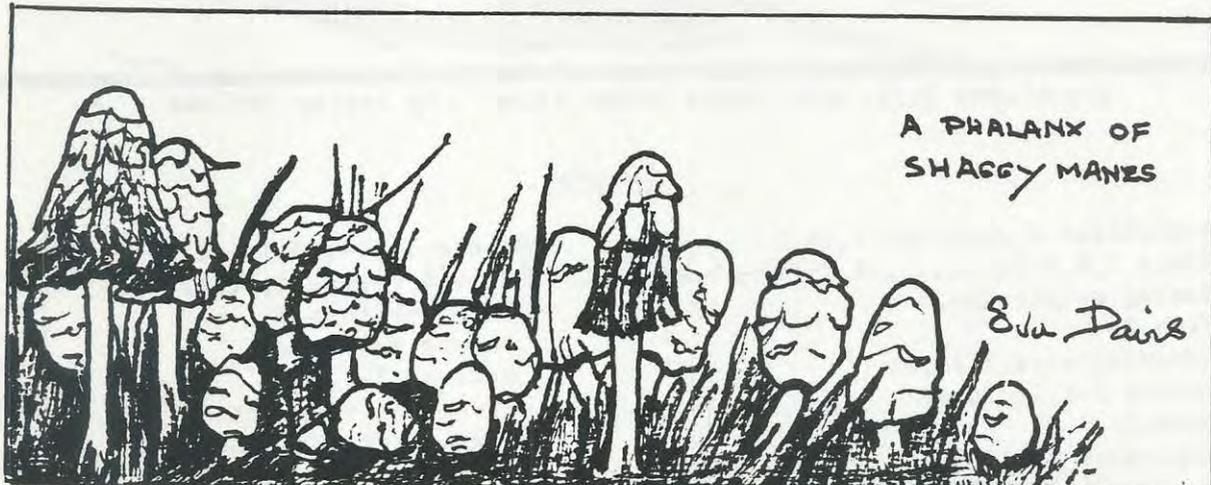
Sunday, November 5, 1995 - THE ECOLOGY OF INVASIVE EXOTICS*
at 2:30 pm
in the Northrop Frye Hall
Victoria University
73 Queen's Park Cres. East

an illustrated lecture by Dr. Spencer Barrett,
from the University of Toronto
Naturalists in Toronto have been watching the spread of
plants from other parts of the world into our ravines.
Why do some kinds of plants do so well, and do they really
replace the native species in time? Dr. Barrett will be
talking about his work with several very successful plant
species.

- + "social hour" starting at 2 pm with free coffee and juice.
- + TFN memberships and publications (including back issues of the Ontario Field Biologist) will be for sale, starting at 2 pm.
- + "Always Alice" cards will be for sale. For custom or individual cards, call TFN member, Alice Mandryk, at 416-767-6149.
- + an opportunity to subscribe to the Canadian Wildflower magazine and buy back issues from Jim Hodgins (416-466-6428--for special orders).
- + an opportunity to order tickets for Jon Dunn's talk on Warblers on Nov. 20. (See page 38 for more information.)

* No, this is not a mistake. Dr. Barrett was unable to attend our October meeting. Instead Dave Taylor gave an illustrated talk about the wild animals of Algonquin Park.

NEXT MEETING: Sunday, December 3, 1995



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 HIGH PARK - nature walk Toronto
 Nov. 1 Leader: Louise Orr
 10 am Meet at the Bloor St. entrance to the park (south side of street opposite High Park Ave.). Bring lunch.
 Bring binoculars, notebook and pen and your favourite field guide. This lovely large park with its many habitats always has something of interest for everyone.
- Saturday YORKVILLE GALLERY HOPPING - nature arts Toronto
 Nov. 4 Leader: Mary Cumming
 11 am Meet at the Cumberland St. exit of the Bay subway station.
 Anyone interested in viewing works of art are welcome. For lunch we will be going to the Bay/Bloor food court where we will discuss what we have seen. Bring any work you may have done to share with us.
- Sunday TFN MEETING (See page 2.)
 Nov. 5
 2 pm
- Wednesday JAMES GARDENS - nature walk Humber, Etobicoke
 Nov. 8 Leader: Carol Sellers
 10:30 am Meet at the park entrance on Edenbridge Dr. (east off Royal York Road). Bring lunch and binoculars.
 This garden/park and the adjacent wild Lambton Woods are excellent places to see birds and unusual plants at any time of year.
- Saturday TODMORDEN MILLS - late fall botany Don, East York
 Nov. 11 Leader: Richard Aaron
 10:30 am Meet at the southwest corner of Broadview Ave. and Mortimer Ave. Bring lunch.
 Many plants can be identified even at this time of year, in fact, many are still flowering. Bring your favourite field guide and note books to use while we look at plants preparing for winter.
- Sunday HUMBER VALLEY - nature walk Humber, Etobicoke
 Nov. 12 Leader: Nancy Fredenburg
 1:30 pm Meet at the Old Mill subway station.
 This is the second in a series of walks to follow the Humber River and its tributaries in Metro Toronto. ▷

NOVEMBER OUTINGS (cont'd)

- Wednesday METRO ZOO - nature arts Rouge, Scarborough
 Nov. 15 Leader: Kathy Holland
 10:30 am Meet at the zoo entrance on the west side of Meadowvale Rd. north of Sheppard Ave. East. Lunch optional.
 \$ entry For absolute or terrified beginners there will be guidance to learn about
 fee negative spaces for discovering form and composition. Bring your supplies for sketching or your camera. Photographers are welcome.
- Saturday YORK CEMETERY - trees West Don, North York
 Nov. 18 Leader: Bill Morsink
 9:30 am Meet at the cemetery entrance on the west side of Beecroft Rd. at North York Blvd. Walk ends at 12:30 pm.
 This walk will include Burnett Wood as well as the cemetery with its collection of trees from all parts of the world. Bring your favourite tree book and a note book.
- Sunday ROSEDALE BROOK (YELLOW CREEK) - nature walk Don trib./ North York,
 Nov. 19 Leader: Diana Park Toronto
 2 pm Meet at the northeast corner of Lawrence Ave. West and Brookview Dr. (between Bathurst St. and the Allan expressway). This is the second in a series of walks being held to explore the "archaeology" of buried tributaries of the Don River and is a joint outing with the "North Toronto Green Community". The walk will end at the Davisville subway station.
- Thursday PROSPECT CEMETERY - nature walk York/Toronto
 Nov. 23 Leader: Ruth Munson
 10:30 am Meet at the cemetery entrance on the south side of Eglinton Ave. West west of Ronald St. (between Dufferin & Caledonia). Morning only.
 This area contains a very fine collection of trees, most of them labelled. It is also an excellent place to find late migrants amongst the many fruiting shrubs.
- Sunday GREYABBAY TRAIL - nature walk lakeshore, Scarborough
 Nov. 26 Leader: Ken Cook
 10:30 am Meet at the foot of Morningside Ave. at Greyabbey Trail. Bring lunch.
 This walk is a joint outing with the "Citizens for a Lakeshore Greenway". Be prepared for a good long walk with terrific views of the lake and bluffs.
- Wednesday CHINE DRIVE RAVINE - birds lakeshore, Scarborough
 Nov. 29 Leader: Karin Fawthrop
 10:30 am Meet at the southeast corner of Kingston Rd. and Midland Ave. Lunch optional.
 This ravine with its variety of native trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants and proximity to Lake Ontario is a great place to find birds at almost any time of year. Bring binoculars and your favourite field guide and note book.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I will take the opportunity afforded by this rather belated inaugural report to fill members in on a couple of stories the TFN has been following--mainly though not entirely from the sidelines--for the past year or so. Each of these stories has to do with official responses to proposed developments in the Humber valley.

The first story is the saga of the Old Mill. TFN members are familiar with this picturesque ruin on the Humber just north of the Bloor bridge. A developer acquired the property and proposed to engulf the old ruin in some manner of hotel--the better, we are assured, to preserve and restore the historic structure. While hardly an eco-catastrophe, the plan does entail more building within the valley, thus transgressing a policy near and dear to the hearts of TFNers. Anyway, the Metro Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (MTRCA) is offering to approve the proposal on condition that the developer enter into a "Liability Reduction Agreement" with the MTRCA. The gist of this agreement is that the developer cannot sue the Authority for any "flood or erosion damage or loss of life associated with the Old Mill development"; further, that the developer will buy for the Authority at least two million dollars worth of liability insurance to cover the damages should some third party sue the Authority for any harm arising from the development. In effect it is saying that the developer can build there, but must do so entirely at its own risk. The MTRCA is washing its hands of any legal responsibility for the outcome.

The second story is the Comfort Living saga. The Comfort Living co-op is a high-rise apartment building that backs onto an environmentally significant part of the Humber valley near Finch and Islington. The building, in fact, encroaches on the valley, and its construction on that site was challenged--unsuccessfully--before the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB). Then, about two years ago, the co-op proposed an extension that would encroach further down the valley slope, disturbing natural vegetation and drainage. This, one would think, is just the sort of development that valleyland policies adopted by all relevant levels of government are meant to block. Despite all that, and despite opposition from TFN and other interested groups, Etobicoke City Council approved the proposal. Just what motivated this decision is unclear to me, but it definitely came as a surprise. Indeed, Etobicoke municipal staff thought council so unlikely to support the proposal that they had not even bothered to draft the necessary official plan and zoning code amendments by the day of the vote. Staff were sent scurrying back to draft the amendments and Council had to vote on the issue again some weeks later in order to pass them. Again, council voted in favour of the development.

This time around, Metro and MTRCA decided to appeal the decision to the OMB. Metro's position seems to be a bit different from MTRCA's. Metro wants new development on the site confined to the "envelope" approved by the original OMB decision that permitted the

PRESIDENT'S REPORT (cont'd)

construction of the building in the first place. This envelope was not entirely filled by the existing building, so some further encroachment on the valley in certain places would be allowed. MTRCA's stand is stronger: they do not want to approve any design that will involve any additional encroachment on valley slopes and natural vegetation on the site.

Comfort Living has now come up with a redesigned plan that avoids further encroachment and impact on natural habitat in the valley. The Authority is happy with the new design. When the last few technical and procedural wrinkles are ironed out, the OMB appeals will be dropped. Frequent monitoring of construction activities to ensure compliance with the plan is promised, but it would not hurt for vigilant TFN members to keep an eye on things as well.

I think there are a couple of lessons to draw from these stories. The first is that although the plans and policies of all municipalities and all levels of government recognize the importance of valleylands in Metro as green corridors, the exclusion of development--even private development--from valley lands is still not automatically assured. The second is that different governments and different agencies have different levels of commitment to valley protection policies. The valley policies of Etobicoke, Metro and MTRCA may sound similar, but if Etobicoke, or even Metro, had the final say on Comfort Living, a rather less green proposal may have got the green light. This is something to keep in mind when considering proposals to streamline the planning process and reduce "red tape".

Allan Greenbaum

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SHERWOOD PARK is aptly named. It is the home of at least a dozen large tree species native to Toronto. Mary Cumming sketched a forest-frequenter apparently admiring one of them. Among the smaller trees also present is the witch-hazel which finds its best habitat in Metro in this location - if numbers are an indicator.

KEEPING IN TOUCH

September 23, 1995

On the TFN trip of September 9, 1995 to the Jim Baillie and Emily Hamilton Nature Reserves with Eva Davis, Morris Sorensen and others, we saw a number of butterfly species. In shrubby areas along the right-of-way between the two properties and in the fields were many clouded sulphurs, some mated pairs. Along "the road" between the properties after lunch, I saw Compton tortoiseshell feeding in mud, a female great spangled fritillary, mourning cloak, viceroy, painted lady, red admirals and a comma species, and an intriguing small orange butterfly, not identified. I think the properties could have potential for many more butterfly species. Perhaps it would be worthwhile to explore this in summer. I would be willing to help.

Margaret Liubavicius

September 25, 1995

I thoroughly enjoyed the geology walk with Nick Eyles on September 24th in the Rouge Valley. I went simply because it was in the Rouge and I seldom get there. I went with my binoculars and bird book, hoping to see some migrants that I would otherwise miss. But the geology talk given by Nick was so captivating that I just about forgot everything else. He was a great teacher. No question was left unanswered, and he managed to explain in such a way that we novices had no problem grasping the essence of the subject. He even managed to make the topic of the geological time-frame relevant and understandable, tying everything in to what we were actually seeing. Please try to get him again. If you don't I'll have to sign up for a geology course at the U of T, and I can't afford the time or money.

We walked over some rough ground, so I watched my footing as we went. Consequently I found: in the grounds approaching Pearce House, one red-bellied snake, dead; on the road to the landfill, one short-tailed shrew, dead; on the footpath approaching the Little Rouge, one short-tailed shrew, dead; on Twin Rivers Drive, near the bridge, one garter snake, dead. Also, one Northern Harrier, actively hunting around Beare landfill; two American Kestrels; one Red-Tailed Hawk; five buteos (unidentified).

Merle Young

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Round-leaved Dogwood in fruit

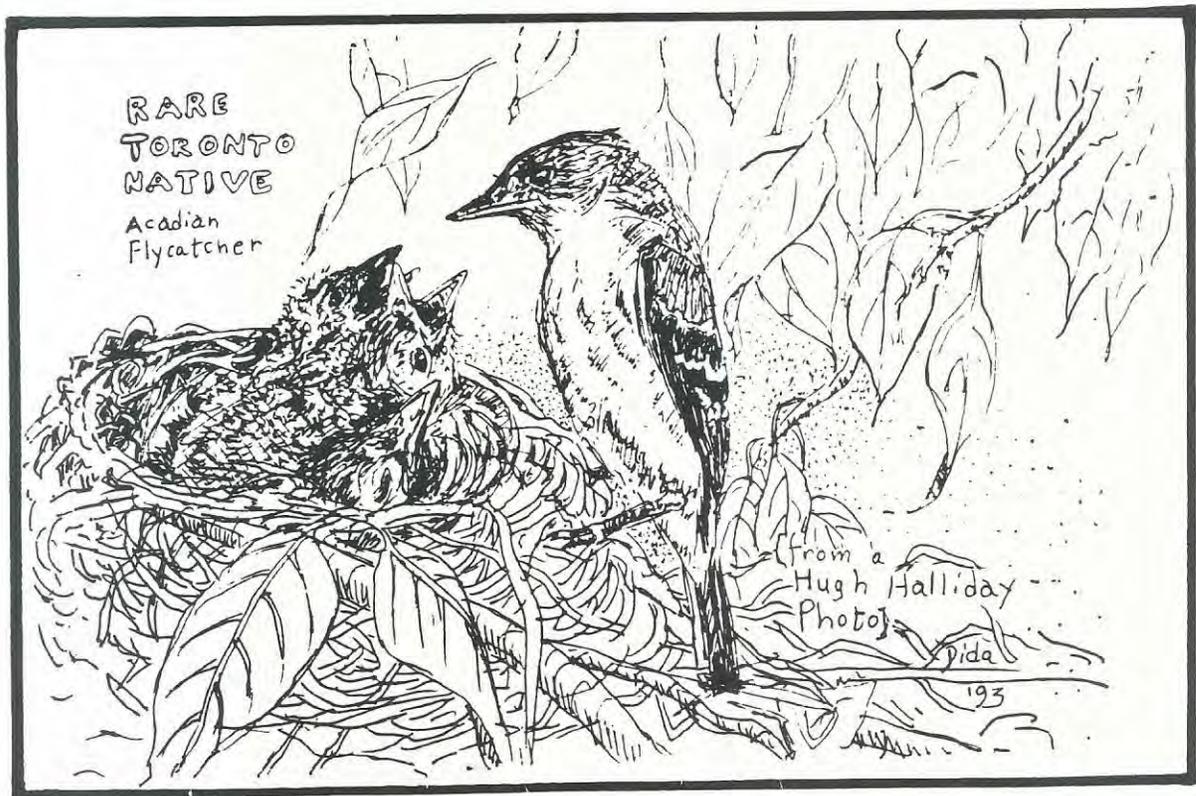
Flowering Dogwood in flower

FOR READING

A BIRD-FINDING GUIDE TO ONTARIO by Clive E. Goodwin, University of Toronto Press, 1995. \$24.95

Since 1982 when this Guide was first published it has provided the experienced and the novice birder with an indispensable reference work on birds in Ontario. This revised edition, subtitled "Where the birds are and how to get there", offers the birder precise directions to well-known and new birding locations accompanied by additional maps and charts. Also included is a detailed annotated checklist with seasonal occurrence charts outlining distribution status for all species of birds found in the province. Ontario offers a host of opportunities for the bird-watcher with more than 450 species of birds, 285 of which are known to have nested. This guide provides invaluable information on popular and productive localities from southern deciduous woodlands to Arctic coastline. It also includes descriptions of seasonal weather conditions, migration patterns and other factors affecting the art of birdwatching. Autographed copies of Clive Goodwin's new Bird-Finding Guide to Ontario can be purchased directly from the Goodwins. Send \$28.45 (which includes postage) to them at 1 Queen St., Suite 401, Cobourg, Ont. K9A 1M8.

adapted from a press release of the University of Toronto Press (June 1995) and a note from the Goodwins



HOW TO PROTECT BIRDS FROM THE WINDOWS IN YOUR HOME

Glass windows are here to stay but window kills need not be part of the equation. The following are preventive measures that you can take in your own home to protect birds. First, don't assume that a single, stationary hawk silhouette, attractively positioned on your picture window, will do the trick. It covers only a very small portion of the window and, unless the bird is headed straight for that spot, it might not be effective. Instead, try covering the entire window surface with objects or patterns two to four inches apart. The patterns must be placed on the external surface so that outside viewers can see them readily. This will transform the window into visible obstacles that even small birds will avoid.

If this solution doesn't jibe with your notion of what a window should be, try a decal attached to a suction cup. A wildlife rehabilitator in the Niagara region was concerned with birds hitting her 16' x 6' picture window until she affixed a 6" x 4" owl silhouette on two suction cups to the surface. Bird strikes stopped. One day she had to take the decal down for a demonstration and, sure enough, a bird hit the window. This kind of silhouette is effective because it engages two of the bird's senses: sight and hearing. The wind will cause it to move slightly (enough to alert the bird to a moving presence) and the heavy, rigid plastic will rattle against the glass. It probably helps too that the silhouette is in the shape of a predatory bird. You can either make your own silhouettes that you screw into suction cups (a great artistic project for kids!) or you can purchase them ready-made from Wild Birds Unlimited, 5468 Dundas Street West, Etobicoke, phone 416-233-3558.



For small to medium sized windows, netting that covers the entire window prevents birds from making contact with an unyielding surface. Again you can create your own design or, for copies of existing plans, contact Fatal Light Awareness Program (FLAP), 1 Guelph Rd., Erin, Ont. N0B 1T0, phone. 905-831-FLAP. Finally, if at all possible, move attractants closer to the window. Place feeders, baths and nutritious vegetation within one to three feet of the window surface so that birds leaving the attractant cannot build up enough momentum to injure or kill themselves.



If a bird does hit your window and appears stunned but shows no signs of external injury, put it in a box or brown paper bag and leave it in a quiet, dark place for an hour or two. If, after that time, the bird appears alert, simply let it out of the box or bag. (Handling causes great stress so avoid this if possible. If you must hold the bird in hand, when you go to release it do not launch the bird as this will disorient rather than help it.) If you have any concerns or questions at all contact your local wildlife rehabilitation centre or humane society.

Just in case you're wondering whether that bird which thumped your window will not succumb to its injuries at some later date...an indigo bunting that was banded after surviving a strike returned a year later almost to the day and hit the same window. Unfortunately, this time it wasn't so lucky.



Wild Bird Rehabilitation Centres:

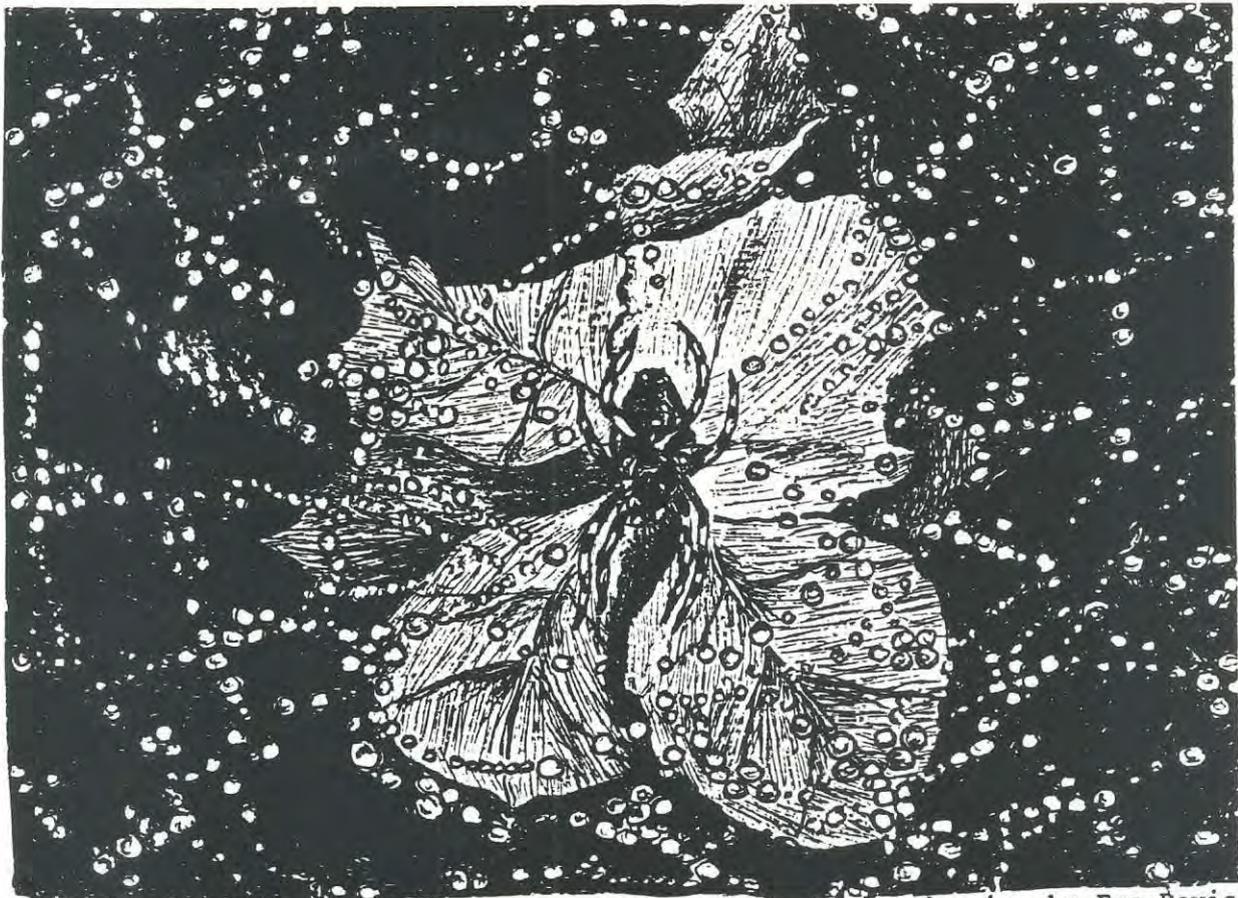
Avicare Bird Rehabilitation Centre, RR 4, Bowmanville, Ont. L1C 3K5; phone: 905-428-2439

Toronto Humane Society, Wildlife Dept., 11 River St., Toronto M5A 4C2; phone: 416-392-2273 (ext. 141)

Toronto Wildlife Centre, 736 Dundas St. E., Toronto M5A 2C3, phone: 416-214-1624

adapted from an article by Daniel Klem Jr. in Bird Watcher's Digest reprinted in TOUCHING DOWN, the newsletter of the Fatal Light Awareness Program. Fall 1995

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ORB-WEB WEAVER ON WEB

drawing by Eva Davis

DONATIONS WANTED

The Toronto Wildlife Centre which helps sick, injured and orphaned wild animals is run entirely by volunteers. If you would like to make a donation please make cheques payable to the Toronto Wildlife Centre, 736 Dundas St. East, Toronto, Ont. M5A 2C3.



WHERE DID THE BIRDS GO LAST WINTER?

If the birds didn't show up at your backyard feeder last winter, should you worry? Probably not. Mild weather probably let birds find plenty of natural food away from feeders. The largest backyard bird study in North America, FeederWatch, has observers in all 50 US states and 12 Canadian provinces and territories. Resident species such as Hairy Woodpecker, Blue Jay and Northern Cardinal were fewer than usual at North-east and North Central feeders. But those numbers probably don't indicate real declines. Instead, birds may have ignored feeders because mild weather made natural food available. The evidence? Feeder counts for these resident species held steady in the South, where winters are usually mild. Counts for some migratory species, such as White-throated and White-crowned Sparrows and Rufous-sided Towhee, were low in the southeastern region. These birds migrate within North America, going south for the winter. The fact that feeder counts for these species declined in the Southeast suggests birds didn't need to migrate because of the mild weather and so stayed up north. The mild weather in 1994-95 seemed to keep the boreal species that sometimes wander out of their usual range -- finches, redpolls, and nuthatches -- "at home". In harsh winters, these birds invade southern regions, searching for food. But high counts in Alaska suggest that last winter these birds didn't roam.

House Finches are presenting Feeder-Watchers with a paradox: the species is both expanding its range to the north and west, and declining in numbers in the East, probably as a result of a sometimes-fatal eye disease. FeederWatchers will continue to monitor House Finch populations to track the spread of the disease. Last winter, more than 12,000 FeederWatchers enrolled in Project FeederWatch -- the most ever. Nearly 1,000 of these were educators who have made FeederWatch a classroom project. More participants are needed though, especially in the western provinces and far north. It's not too late to sign up for Project FeederWatch. Participants receive complete instructions, data forms, the project newsletter, *Birdscope*, and a beautiful bird calendar. Special materials are also available for educators. Send a \$20 cheque to Long Point Bird Observatory, PFW-BC, P.O. Box 160, Port Rowan, Ont. N0E 1M0

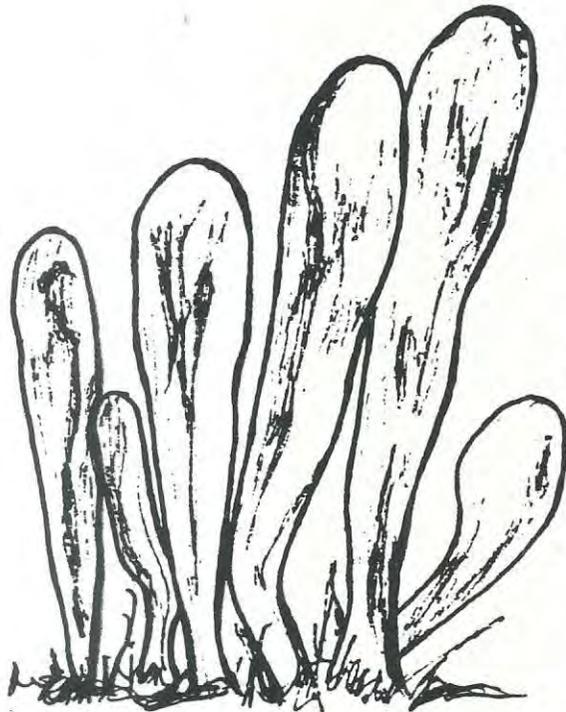
extracted from a news release from Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, Ithaca, NY

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...Most of our so-called noxious weeds are temporary visitors. They are like fireweed that colonizes forest fire wastelands as soon as the embers cool -- the first stage in natural succession. ... Most noxious weeds will disappear naturally as more valued perennials grow. The early colonizers simply cannot stand competition. They flourish dramatically early on and then succumb as other plants that take longer to become established, take over. Find a true old field in Southern Ontario (not one periodically cut or chemically doused) and you will find few noxious weeds. What you will find are grasses, asters and goldenrod.

extracted from "Schoolyard Restoration Projects" by Don Scallen in WILDFLOWER, 10(1), Winter 1994

TWO CONTRASTING FUNGI



Fairy Club

Clavariadelphus pistillaris

Fruiting body: a club, swollen at apex, dry, with longitudinal wrinkles, light yellow to orange-red, purplish bloom over stipe and downy at base; in leaf litter.

2 3/4" - 12" high.

Flesh: white, firm, bruising brown; in age soft and spongy.

Spore deposit: white to buff.

Season: July to October.

Edible.



Old Man of the Woods

Strobilomyces floccopus

Fruiting body: cap 2"-4 3/4" across, dry, convex, gray to black, covered with erect, gray-black woolly scales which overhang cap margin, white flesh showing between scale cracks.

Stipe: gray, shaggy.

Flesh: white, firm, staining red, and finally black when bruised.

Tubes: white-gray, staining red.

Spore deposit: black.

Season: July to October.

Edibility: "Good" to "Not recommended" in different books.

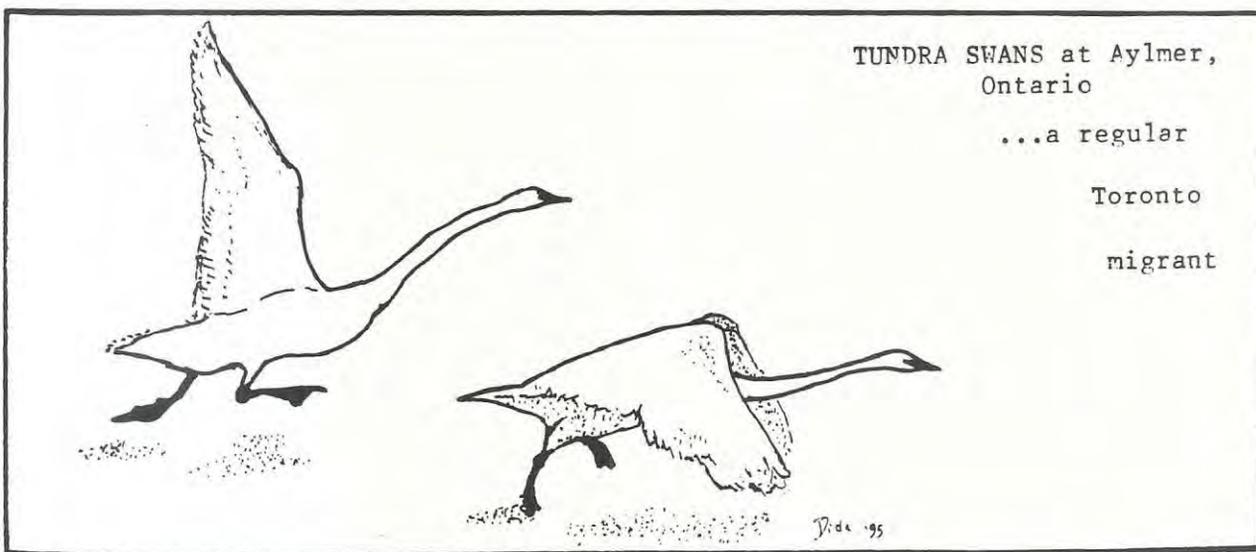
Recommended Reading: MUSHROOMS AND OTHER FUNGI by Geoffrey Kibby, Canadian Nature Guides, Smithmark Publishers Inc., New York, 1992 (No longer reprinted, but still available in stores; around \$10)

EARLY HISTORY OF BOTANY IN NORFOLK COUNTY...

To the best of our knowledge, the first white men to sojourn on the shores of Lake Erie spent the winter of 1669-70 in Woodhouse township in the county of Norfolk. These were the Sulpician Priests François Dollier de Casson and René de Brehant de Galinée, and a group of seven additional hardy French explorers. The memorable winter was spent in a hastily constructed cabin on the east bank of Black Creek at a spot a few hundred yards upstream from the junction of that body of water with the Lynn River at Port Dover.

De Casson and de Galinée described the portion of Norfolk which they saw as "the earthly paradise of Canada"...One of them is reported to have said "There is assuredly no more beautiful region in all of Canada. The woods are open, interspersed with beautiful meadows, watered by rivers and rivulets filled with fish and beaver, an abundance of fruit, and what is more important, so full of game that we saw there at one time more than a hundred roebucks in a single band, herds of fifty or sixty hinds, and bears fatter and of better flavour than the most savoury pigs of France...They stored their granary with some fifty bushels of walnuts and chestnuts, besides apples, plums, grapes, and hackberries. They made wine of the grapes. It was as good as 'Vin de Grave', and was used for Mass". These are the first recorded impressions of conditions as the white man found them in what is now the county of Norfolk.

...from A FLORISTIC STUDY OF NORFOLK COUNTY, ONTARIO, by James E. Cruise, Department of Botany, University of Toronto, in TRANSACTIONS OF THE ROYAL CANADIAN INSTITUTE, No. 72, February, 1969 Vol. XXXV, quoting from J. H. Coyne, 1920 "Exploration of the Great Lakes by Dollier de Casson and Brehant de Galinée", ONTARIO HIST. SOC. PAPERS AND RECORDS, Vol. IV; and THE LAKE ERIE CROSS, Dept. of the Interior 1922. □



TUNDRA SWANS at Aylmer,
Ontario

...a regular

Toronto

migrant

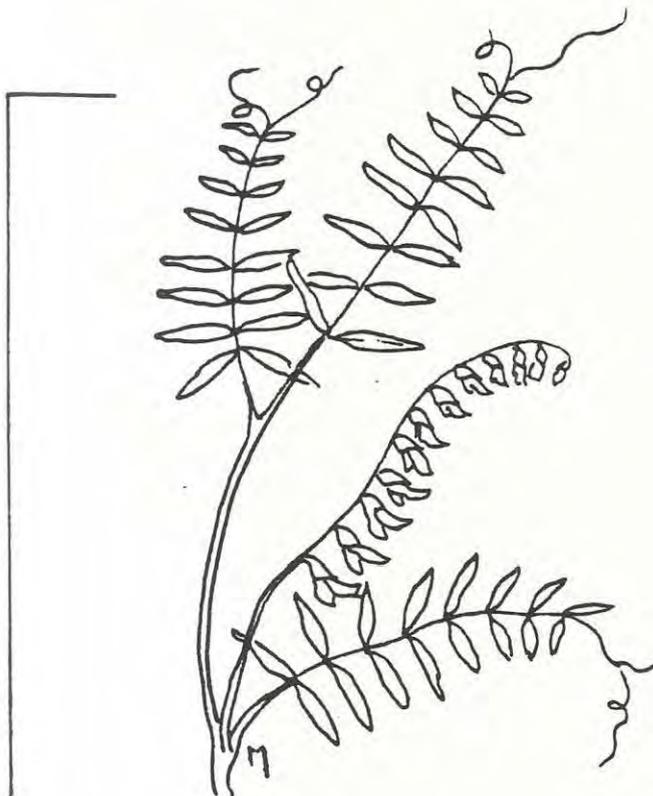
from a Steve Russell photo

PEOPLE INVOLVEMENT THE PRICE OF DEMOCRACY

The democratic process is frustrating and time-consuming. It rarely brings instant gratification. Few people ever get their own way entirely. There are just too many reasonable arguments on both sides of almost every issue. Sometimes even the best arguments fail to persuade. At other times democratic governments pursue long-term policies that do much harm. But these faults are the price we must pay for democracy, because the alternatives are worse. Democracy will never be perfect since it is run by human beings. ...Standing on the sidelines and complaining about government policy is no test of character... What really shows a commitment to this country and to an idea is persistent involvement in the political process, listening to opposing points of view, fashioning reasonable replies and persuading others. That is difficult and time-consuming work. But it is what democracy is all about.

extracted from "The Price to Pay for an Illegal Blockage" by Mr. Justice John Bouck in
READER'S DIGEST, Feb. 1994

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COW VETCH

(pea family)

- a Eurasian plant
established in Toronto

(from the portfolio

FLOWERS OF LONGFORD

by Mary Anne Miller)

Fl. bl/violet, dense, 1 sided
L. 8-12 pairs, narrow, tendrils
Hab. fields, thickets. 60-120cm.
Spr. - sum.

THE ROUGE IN AUGUST

Towards the end of August, I spent a day reconnoitring some of the Valley's trails. River banks were lined with tangles of clotbur with its strange flower arrangement - staminate flowers in short racemes, pistillate flowers buried within their spiky green burs - and with pink-and-white smartweed. Plus the ever proliferating purple loosestrife which, were it human, would surely take the form of a tycoon whose business was successful take-over (as with the other established alien, swallowwort--if only these two insatiates could be got to face off against each other!). One very long stretch was bordered with sunflowers, Jerusalem artichokes, most of them 10 feet tall. Nettles thrived in great thickets, their flowers already changed to curled, sculpted "fingers". In the meadows, goldenrod dominated, punctuated by groups of purplish-brown Joe-Pye-weed and white snakeroot. Poison ivy is widespread in the Rouge, from sproutings to wiry bush, so it is necessary to keep alert.

In the direction of the Kingston Road exit there was a great deal of the infrequently found pale touch-me-not (jewelweed - I still prefer the old exquisite description), though the official name remains a matter of One Man's Colour, etc., since I would describe this variety as quite a bright yellow. Vines had reached their peak: hog-peanut with its whitish-mauve florets, river grape, the creamy filigreed stars of wild cucumber a filmy veil on trunk and branch. A delight was groundnut which the continuing heat had advanced to a state of veritable pullulation. This, like the woolly foxglove widespread in certain areas of the Rouge, has to be caught at just the right time. It could be smelt well before it was seen. The Peterson Guide declares its blossoms "very fragrant". Again, a case of One Man's, etc., for I find their perfume somewhat clinical. The blooms are, however, unarguably beautiful, striking clusters which Peterson describes as chocolate or maroon. This over-simplifies. Groundnut is one of those teasing plants whose flowers defy capture in one all-encompassing camera angle. Like the helleborine orchid, groundnut presents two faces: below a lovely intricacy of glowing red-to-maroon curved petals, above a mass of powdered pink-to-mauve hoods. It is a member of the pea family (the Leguminosae). The north side of Twyn Rivers Drive also displayed this vine but not in the same profusion, this area being more engulfed in swallowwort. Here, however, there was the singularity of a whole grove of juicy blackberries, those brambles possessed of wickedly lethal thorns. Raspberries, in comparison, have canes which merely tickle.

The Rouge, in the right season and weather, also produces an array of fungi. Today it had been bone dry for too long, but on a prowl in July I had found 27 species. Apart from the flora, I observed a castenetting kingfisher working the river and later a great blue heron flapping in the distance. On my exit from the Valley I found a little, silver-grey mole. Dead, naturally, how else would we ever see one.

The Rouge is such a cornucopia that this brief listing constitutes a mere percentage-point of its riches. To paraphrase the commercial: Only in Metro Toronto, you say? ...Wonderful!

Eva Davis

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HOW FAST IS SUCCESSION?

One commonly asked question by visitors to Tommy Thompson Park is, How long will it take for plants to establish on the barren fill that makes up approximately one-third of the site? Similarly, How many years will it take for the east side of the Spit to resemble the west side in terms of the plant communities?

In order to understand the complexity of this query, one must first know a thing or two about natural succession. Natural succession is the process whereby one type of community or ecosystem is gradually replaced by another, over time, as environmental conditions change. Each stage in this process has its own dominant plant species and associated wildlife. Tommy Thompson Park has been called a textbook example of natural succession since researchers and students alike have been able to witness these gradual changes following the initial construction of the land base. At the present time several early to mid-successional stages can be observed at the Park.

In the past 20 years, woodlands have become well established on the western peninsulas; however, in areas immediately east of the main road, only meadows with sparse shrubs have appeared in the same period of time. In this case the type of soil has been the primary factor governing the rate of plant growth and succession in these areas; rapid colonization and growth on the sandy peninsulas versus slow establishment of meadows on fill and rubble.

Many other factors contribute to the rate of plant growth including moisture, nutrients, soil texture, temperature, exposure, and the proximity to seed sources. Some plant species even slow down or speed up the process of natural succession themselves by altering their environment in order to make conditions more favourable for their own prosperity or less suitable for their competitors. Goldenrods, for example, slow the growth of other meadow plant species by producing a toxin in the soil that is harmful to other plants, whereas species such as white sweet clover release nitrogen into the soil, and in doing so improve conditions for other species.

As for the original question, you can begin to see that it is very difficult to predict exactly how long plant colonization and natural succession will take. You can, however, rest assured that over time it will take place. If natural succession can be guaranteed to teach us one thing...it's patience.

an article in TOMMY THOMPSON PARK NEWSLETTER, Vol. 8, no. 2, Fall 1995



*Looking for gentian,
perhaps in late bloom. "I'm here!"
says the buttercup.*

*haiku by Diana Banville
Taylor Creek Park, Nov. 10, 1989*

LOCAL LOONS

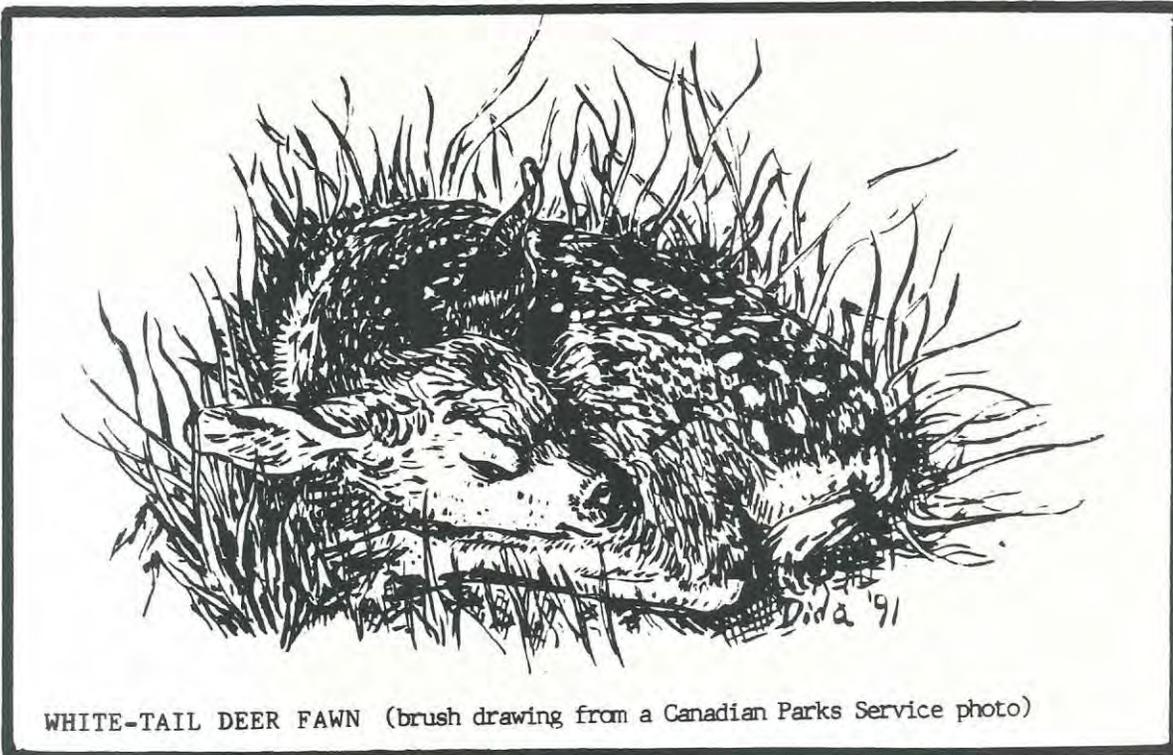
Where is the best place in Ontario to observe loons? Most people asked this question would immediately say a wilderness lake in northern Ontario. Although they may be correct, and we can't think of a place we would rather be,...might we suggest the Toronto waterfront and, in particular, the open water off the eastern shoreline of Tommy Thompson Park during the months of April and October. During these times of year, hundreds of migrating loons can be observed on the open lake as they stop over to rest and feed. This particular area is attractive to loons and other diving birds due to the presence of an offshore shelf and "scarp". The abrupt drop into deeper water at the end of this shelf attracts schools of small fish such as alewife, which in turn provide forage for these fish-eating birds.

Other wildlife species, namely predatory game fish such as salmon and trout, take advantage of this scarp and the small bait fish that are attracted to it. This is particularly evident by the number of charter boats that can be observed trolling this area with hope of catching a "biggie". Perhaps the charter operators are actually closet bird watchers using the presence of fish-eating birds to guide them to potential fishing locations - not likely!

So next time you hear a loon calling on a northern lake, think of the Spit. You may see that loon and perhaps its offspring as they make the long commute through "urban Ontario" on their way to warmer climes for the winter.

an article in TOMMY THOMPSON PARK NEWSLETTER, Vol. 8, no. 2, Fall 1995

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WHITE-TAIL DEER FAWN (brush drawing from a Canadian Parks Service photo)

NIGHT FLIGHT

Birds that soar and glide on fixed wings, such as hawks, vultures, eagles, storks, pelicans, and some cranes, almost always migrate in daytime, because they depend on vertical currents of air, called updrafts or thermals, that are generated when the sun heats the earth. But the many birds that use powered, or flapping, flight, tend to migrate at night. In North America, Europe, and much of Asia, most migrant songbirds and shorebirds, and many waterfowl, travel under cover of darkness. For most, flight commences thirty to forty-five minutes after sunset and peaks three to six hours after takeoff, although some birds migrate throughout the night. As revealed by radar, takeoff can be explosive. Within a few minutes, a clear radar screen can become cluttered with thousands upon thousands of tiny echoes.

In North America, birds that head south before early October are more likely to migrate at night than those that migrate from mid-October through December. An explanation for nocturnal migration is based on the atmosphere itself. During migration, birds must contend with wind, air temperature, and turbulence. The air through which they fly has been the most significant factor in the evolution of their behaviour, structure and physiology.

The atmospheric boundary layer--the band of air that is influenced by the earth's surface--is dynamic. It expands during the day and shrinks at night. Shortly after sunrise, the sun begins to heat the earth, creating thermal convection, or turbulence, which includes the thermal updrafts used by soaring birds. From midday through midafternoon, if skies are clear and if the air is cooler at higher altitudes, thermal activity becomes intense. Thermals rise like columns to 5,000 or more feet above the earth's surface, and the vertical airflow in updrafts can exceed ten miles per hour. Wind direction and wind speed shift almost constantly. If the upper layer of air is warmer than the lower--a phenomenon known as an inversion layer--thermals do not rise to high altitudes. Also, because water is usually cooler than air, thermals rarely form over lakes or oceans. When they do, they are weak and widely spaced. The air over large bodies of water is therefore much less turbulent than it is over land. (For this reason, soaring birds migrate over land-masses and land bridges, where they can ride thermals, rather than over water.) At sundown, the atmosphere cools and turbulence diminishes. By midnight, air near the earth's surface averages about one to twelve degrees F cooler than at midday, and the atmosphere is calmer.

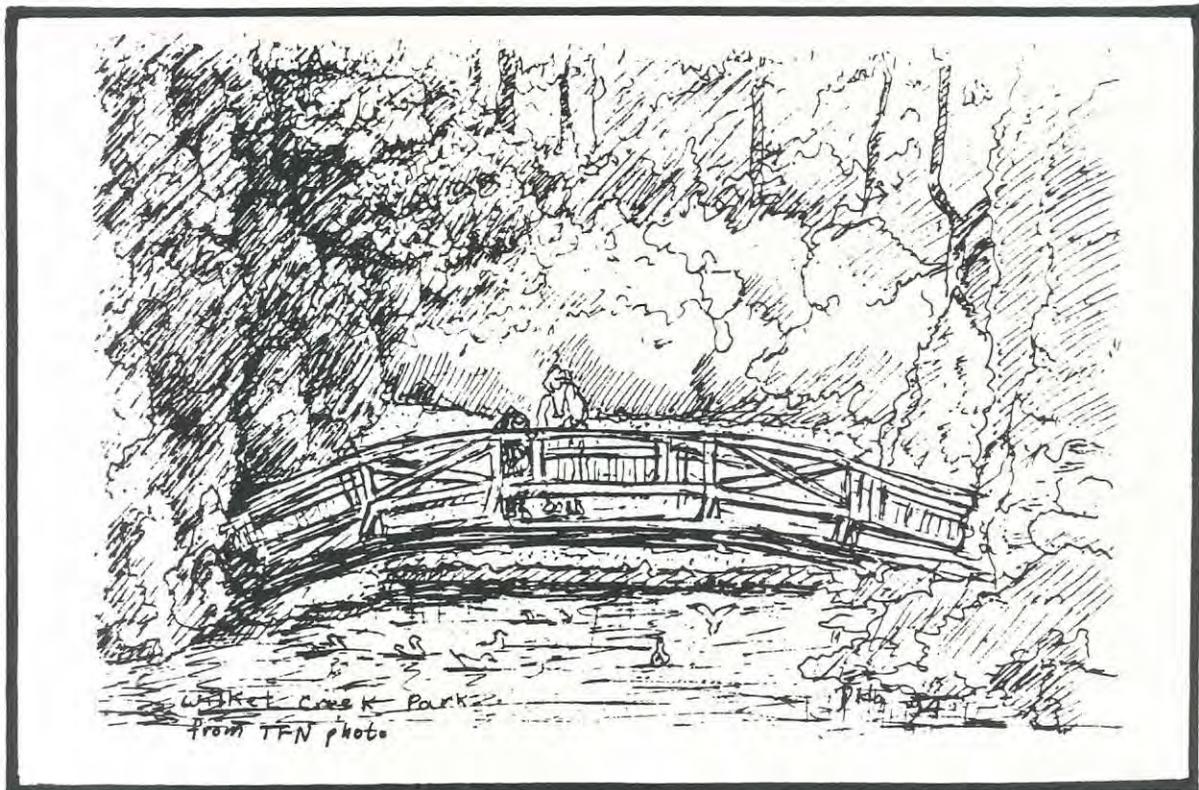
After dark, when thermal activity ceases and the air is smooth, small birds can more easily stay on course, without having to correct for updrafts and turbulence. Air temperature also affects flight. Flapping birds generate great heat; resting body temperatures of almost 100° F increase to between 105° and 110° F during strenuous flight. Although birds can tolerate these high body temperatures, they still must avoid overheating. One way to do this is to fly at night or, in the case of daytime migrants, to fly in cooler seasons and to avoid flying at midday. Those ducks and geese that head south early in the season often fly at night.

THE RISE OF THE DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT ON THE GREAT LAKES

The Double-crested Cormorant, a large fish eating bird, has undergone dramatic changes in population over the last three decades. Devastated by the effects of toxic chemicals, the number of nesting pairs on the Great Lakes decreased by 86%, from approximately 900 in the early 1950s to a mere 125 in 1973. The cormorant disappeared as a nesting bird on Lakes Michigan and Superior and only about 10 pairs remained on Lake Ontario. From 1973 to 1993, however, the cormorant population increased over 300-fold to more than 38,000 pairs. The cormorant is now more numerous on the Great Lakes than at any time in its previously recorded history.

Historically, the Double-crested Cormorant did not nest on the Great Lakes. The first suspected nesting occurred in 1913, at the far western end of Lake Superior. From there, colonies spread eastward to Lake Nipigon in the 1920s, to Lake Huron and Georgian Bay in the early 1930s and finally to Lakes Ontario and Erie in the late 1930s. This range expansion coincided with similar cormorant expansions all across North America. On the Great Lakes, populations increased steadily during the 1930s and 1940s. By the late 1940s and early 1950s, the cormorant had become so common that control measures were authorized in some areas of Ontario to reduce suspected competition with commercial and sport fisheries.

Despite the end of the control measures, the Double-crested Cormorant population declined dramatically throughout the 1960s and early 1970s. During the late 1960s,



CORMORANTS (cont'd)

scientists discovered that the eggshells of cormorants nesting on the Great Lakes had been thinning since about 1955. By the early 1970s, eggshells were nearly 30% thinner than normal. This had a devastating impact on the cormorant population. Thin-shelled eggs could not withstand the weight of the incubating bird and would break before hatching, killing the embryo. Not surprisingly, scientists also discovered that reproductive success--the number of chicks raised successfully--had declined from a normal level of about two chicks per pair to only 0 - 0.2 chicks per pair. This production rate was far too low to balance adult mortality rates. Clearly, something was severely wrong with the cormorants on the Great Lakes. It was shown that the declining cormorant population was related to high levels of toxic contaminants, particularly DDE (a breakdown product of DDT) and PCBs. Cormorants are very sensitive to the effects of DDE, particularly to the resulting eggshell thinning because they incubate their eggs by wrapping the webs of their feet around them--in effect, standing on them.

In the mid 1970s, cormorant numbers began a dramatic recovery. From 1973 to 1993, more than 80 new colonies were established. The rapid decline of contamination levels in the mid and late 1970s was due to regulations that were implemented in the early 1970s restricting the use and production of DDT and related pesticides. Cormorants showed a much slower rate of increase during their initial invasion of the Great Lakes in the 1930s and 1940s, when contaminants were not prevalent. The dramatic cormorant increase was probably augmented by a rise in the numbers of smaller fish, such as rainbow smelt and alewife, which serve as the bird's primary diet. Since the 1970s, these smaller prey fish have been much more abundant than they were 30-40 years earlier. Even though smelt and alewife declined during the 1980s, their numbers were still great enough to provide an abundant food supply for the cormorants.

Legislation now protects cormorants, commercial fishing has decreased, human persecution has lessened, and levels of toxic chemicals are lower. In recent years, the explosive growth of the cormorant population has definitely slowed. In 1994, the cormorant population of Lake Ontario decreased by 6%. This was the first decline in over 15 years. In 1992, a virus killed up to 30% of the young cormorants in several colonies. According to fisheries biologists, stocks of the smaller prey fish have been decreasing dramatically in recent years. Although cormorants are now reproducing at near-normal levels, the fact that deformities are still occurring suggests that contaminant-related health problems still persist in Great Lakes wildlife. There is still considerable work to be done before we can be assured that the Great Lakes Basin is a healthy environment for all species...including ours.

extracted from an article by D.V. Weseloh and B. Collier in the LONG POINT BIRD OBSERVATORY NEWSLETTER, Vol.27, no. 2, Summer 1995, reprinted from a publication of the Canadian Wildlife Service and LPBO

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STREETWISE

Until recently I had only ever observed mourning doves to be skittish creatures apt to take off at merest eye contact. This past April I was on the east side of Victoria Park Avenue, walking south from the subway to the Danforth. I was meandering past a huge apartment complex where the sidewalk is bordered with conifers. By happenstance -- I certainly wasn't looking for birds in such an unlikely locale -- my glance fell upon a pair of mourning doves nestled comfortably side by side on the grass under the low branches of one of the trees by the busy sidewalk and heavy road traffic. This Saturday afternoon the pair didn't ruffle a feather. They might have been bedded down in the peace of the countryside. I stood gawping for three or four minutes. Something like a metre separated them from my feet. The smaller bird, once it caught my eye, stretched its neck nervously, then lowered its head on to its bosom. This, to me, remains a marvel of adaptation.

Eva Davis

Comment: In contrast, we have a note from Doris Tatay saying how rare mourning doves were in Toronto and other parts of Canada in the 1950s.

□



Toronto native...

THE GREAT LOBELIA

is the same blue colour as fringed gentian with which it grows in Taylor Creek Park where this field sketch was made.

It also grows in at least five other locations in Metro, in the Humber, Don and Rouge watersheds.

Ref.: VASCULAR PLANTS OF METROPOLITAN TORONTO
TFN, 1994.

HAMILTON THE WILD

How could a naturalist spend ten days in a hotel in downtown Hamilton in mid-July? Luckily for me a family of Peregrine Falcons was staying at the same hotel, but their "room" was on a ledge above a 15th floor window. I was on the 5th floor. They weren't the quietest neighbours. On my second evening I went out onto a third floor deck to get away from a fire alarm in the hotel only to find I could still hear an alarm. It was the falcons! I had just finished reading an article about a couple who spent many painful hours in a blind in the Scottish wilds in order to see ravens on the nest. Well, here I was in a comfortable hotel room from which I could not only hear a pair of falcons as they came and went from their nest but I could see them hunting. The highlight came several days later when I looked out after supper and saw a young peregrine falcon on the roof of the art gallery across the street. The young bird was still fluffy. In fact as he ran back and forth across the roof (later I learned his name was Hamilton), down floated off him. He looked like an old pillow on legs. The next day officials from the Ministry of Natural Resources, the Canadian Wildlife Service, personnel from the Raptor Rehab Centre in Stoney Creek, and members of the Hamilton Field Naturalists arrived. How were they going to get the young bird back to his parents who seemed too nervous to come down and feed him? Hamilton solved their problem by jumping (or falling) off the art gallery roof onto the street - luckily when no traffic was on it. He was escorted, in a box, to the roof of the hotel, where once again he either jumped or fell and got himself back into the nest. Now the vigil began. Watchers were lined up for all daylight hours when the falcons were active. It appeared the young were not to be trusted to make a proper getaway from the nest. Hamilton, who had been born in the nest, had two nestmates, Wainwright and Alberta, two birds from Wainwright, Alberta, which had been "planted" in the nest after his successful hatching. My "holiday" in Hamilton, Ontario turned into a thrilling bird-watching experience as I and local naturalists watched the young birds flapping their wings and running back and forth on the edge of their nest, with the parents killing prey, tearing it up and later returning to the nest with food. As I waited for the GO bus to take me back to Toronto, I looked up at the 15th floor and saw three fluffy heads looking over the edge. I like to think they were saying goodbye.

Helen Juhola

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*Squadrons of starlings
massing in the far field,
practising manoeuvres,
joining forces
for the long flight south.*

Sr. Margaret Banville

IN THE NEWS

BELL TELEPHONE PIONEERS ADOPT KNOB HILL PARK

The Scarborough Life Members Club of the Bell Telephone Pioneers have joined the Scarborough Recreation, Parks and Culture Department's adopt-a-park program. The Pioneers adopted Knob Hill Park and will form a work party three times a year to clean up the park of unwanted trash. The city will provide the truck, gloves, hip waders and other tools.

extracted from "People" by John Wilkinson in the SCARBOROUGH MIRROR, 2 & 3 September 1995

VOLUNTEERS LOOK FOR BLUE BIRDS OVER ROUGE

Bill Lewis, the education co-ordinator of Save the Rouge Valley System, incorporated his hobby of bird watching and his love of nature into his environmental concerns, and created the Bluebird Box campaign through the organization last year. So far, about 350 boxes have been put up, and despite attracting other birds such as sparrows and wrens, only about four bluebirds have taken up the offer. Lewis believes that the campaign plays a small but nonetheless an important role in the Save the Rouge Valley System's mandate which in turn is significant in saving the planet.

extracted from an article by Sung-Tae Han in THE ROUGE VALLEY MIRROR, 1 September 1995

U.S. PONDERES LIMITS ON PARKS VISITORS

The Grand Canyon is overcrowded and eventually there might be routine restrictions on how many people can visit parts of the park at one time. About five million people a year visit the canyon, most of them driving to the South Rim visitor centre. To deal with traffic, the Park Service has just published a plan calling for a major shift away from the use of private automobiles by tourists, so the only way to visit the most heavily used park areas would be by public transportation, by bicycle or on foot. The plan would cost hundreds of millions of dollars, and if the money cannot be found, there might have to be limits on how many people visit during the peak summer months. Nor is the Grand Canyon the only park with an overcrowding problem. At Yosemite early this summer, there were several weekends when people without reservations to enter the park had to be turned away at the gates. Many visitors are unaware of the damage they can cause simply by walking around. A tourist who steps off the trail can instantly cause damage that will take a decade or more to repair. It is for this reason, not simply for crowd control, that railings are being put up along pathways.

extracted from an article in THE GLOBE AND MAIL, 2 September 1995

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FELLING OF MAPLES RAISES CONCERNS FOR ROUGE PARK FUTURE

The cutting down by Metro of more than three dozen mature maple trees along Steeles Avenue in northeast Scarborough has heightened concerns for the ecological future of the Rouge Park. The discovery came after the Scarborough Public Utilities Commission had offered to move electrical power lines if Metro would agree to change the course of the roadway to avoid the trees. Metro replied that the project has been under way for three years and everything has been approved. Thirty-nine of the 68 trees that stood in the way have now been cut down and the remainder will probably be removed in the next little while. It was bad news for local residents, Rouge Park supporters and naturalists, who have been fighting for guarantees that the flood of traffic to and from the fast-growing communities to the east of Metro won't damage the sensitive ecological balance of the park. The future four-lane highway will extend Steeles east across the Rouge from McCowan Road to the Pickering town line to meet the now-completed four-lane Taunton Road in Pickering. Rouge activists have opposed the project for decades. Pollution from the highway and bridge will threaten natural habitat all the way to Lake Ontario, they believe.

extracted from an article by Sterling Taylor in THE TORONTO STAR. 7 September 1995

RESIDENTS BEING URGED TO HELP SAVE LAKE WILCOX

Residents in the Oak Ridges area of Richmond Hill have been told they must pull together to prevent Lake Wilcox from dying. The 156-hectare lake, which suffers from an overdose of phosphorus, is being considered for a clean-up program at an estimated cost of nearly \$2 million. The lake, a popular spot for swimming, windsurfing and fishing, lies east of Yonge Street near the intersection with King Road. Some of its shores are lined with ritzy homes with lush lawns that run nearly to the shoreline. A 25 per cent reduction in the use of lawn and garden fertilizers by residents in the Lake Wilcox watershed will bring immediate improvements. Also, residents can help improve the lake by not mowing right up to the shore.

extracted from an article by Brian Dexter in THE TORONTO STAR. 17 August 1995

FERTILIZERS BLAMED FOR FROG FATALITIES

In Britain, fertilizers may be good for crops, but they cause frogs an agonizing death. Ammonium nitrate is spread onto fields in spring in the form of granules, which look like road salt, but spring is, unfortunately, when the frogs migrate. But being absorbed, the fertilizers affect the balance of chemicals in the frogs' moist skin. They suffer a massive toxic attack. Where a lot of fertilizers are used, frogs seem to be either still declining, or they have not recovered as well as frogs in areas treated with less fertilizer.

extracted from an article by Trevor Lawson in BBC WILDLIFE, Vol. 13, no. 8, August 1995.

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IN THE NEWS (cont'd)

THE MASSASAUGA RATTLESNAKE

The Massasauga Rattlesnake is a species whose Ontario range has been much reduced due to habitat destruction and persecution by humans. It is now almost entirely confined to areas around Georgian Bay - prime cottage country. Bob Johnson at the Metro Zoo received numerous queries from cottagers about how to deal with rattlers that they felt were too close for comfort. He suggested catching and relocating rather than killing them, but he was unsure about the ultimate welfare of the relocated snakes. Ben Porchuk, a graduate student at Guelph University, has been working with the Blue Racer and Massasauga Rattlesnake, two snakes with small and diminishing populations in Ontario. In 1992, he surgically implanted radio transmitters into ten of these snakes before they were released into their new territories and tracked from July to November. Four of the six females gave birth during this time. All ten snakes chose what seemed to be good places to hibernate, but all died over the winter. The results have led to greater caution in relocations. At present, Massasauga Rattlesnakes in Canada's national parks are only temporarily removed when they cause problems, or are moved one kilometre or less.

adapted from an article by Barbara Bain in THE CARDINAL, newsletter of the McIlwraith Field Naturalists. London. August 1995

IT COULD HAVE BEEN WORSE

Algonquin Park has always been recognized for its outstanding trout fishing. Because trout fishing was "good" it was reasoned that more would be even better. From 1948 to 1964, for example, over 200,000 young Lake Trout were stocked in Lake Opeongo. Only 25 (about 0.01%) were ever caught, at a cost to the taxpayer of over \$1,000 per fish. But even when stocking does work -- and it certainly can under the right circumstances -- there can be still other problems. Two Ministry of Natural Resources biologists recently completed a study of Brook Trout from over 50 lakes throughout the Park. They particularly looked at proteins in our trout and found that fish from each of the Park's five major watersheds all had consistent differences in certain proteins. They also found that many Algonquin Brook Trout populations had the proteins, not of native trout, but of hatchery-reared Brook Trout from Pennsylvania. They are the descendants of stocked fish that in some lakes have replaced the native trout known to have been there. In some of these lakes, then, past stocking has forever wiped out the natural record, and local adaptations, of native Brook Trout in Algonquin. The hatchery strain grew much faster than the native fish but usually this means a short life. Lakes now dominated by hatchery stock are therefore much more vulnerable to being wiped out by one or two years of bad reproduction. Native Brook Trout, being longer lived, are better able to withstand the occasional bad spawning year and still end up leaving more descendants.

adapted from THE RAVEN, Algonquin Park Visitors' Newsletter, vol. 36, no. 8, August 10, 1995



HORMONE COPY-CATS THREAT TO HUMANS

Unusual sexual traits and behaviour among Great Lakes fish are raising worries about an environmental threat with profound implications for humans: chemicals that mimic hormones. Although the concept of "hormone copycats" has been around for several years, it has now been recognized in a major Canada-U.S. report on the state of the Great Lakes. Researchers "identified a potential new problem in the lakes, namely certain chemicals, such as some pesticides which mimic hormones in aquatic organisms and in humans." Hormones are substances produced by the body which regulate many biological processes, including the production of masculine and feminine characteristics. Scientists are reporting growing evidence of hormonal disruption in wildlife populations around the world. What has been most visible is the effects on the male reproductive system. You see a lot more of the feminization in the males. Some scientists have suggested a link between high levels of pesticide and a fourfold increase in breast cancer in the United States.

extracted from an article in THE GLOBE AND MAIL, 2 September 1995

MONARCH WATCH

Monarch butterfly numbers in eastern North America appear to be the lowest they've been in years. Recent butterfly counts and observations from the recent migration confirm this. The Durham Region Butterfly Count found only 12 Monarchs during the June 25th count, compared to 123 found on June 26, 1994. Reasons suggested for the decline include harsh spring storms and abnormal freezing temperatures that may have killed many Monarchs as they migrated to the U.S. from Mexico in March and April. Dr. Fred Urquhart, Monarch expert, noted that about every seven years, the Monarch population dropped dramatically and then rebounded in subsequent years. He postulated that the Monarchs are devastated by a virus and that the population rebounds until the virus mutates, causing another crash in the population.

extracted from an article by Don Davis in ONTARIO INSECTS, newsletter of the Toronto Entomologists' Association, Vol. 1, no. 1, September 1995

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

H.J.

□

Skimming the water
absorbing the sunlight,
black duck.

haiku by Muriel Ford

THE WEATHER (THIS TIME LAST YEAR)

Toronto, November 1994

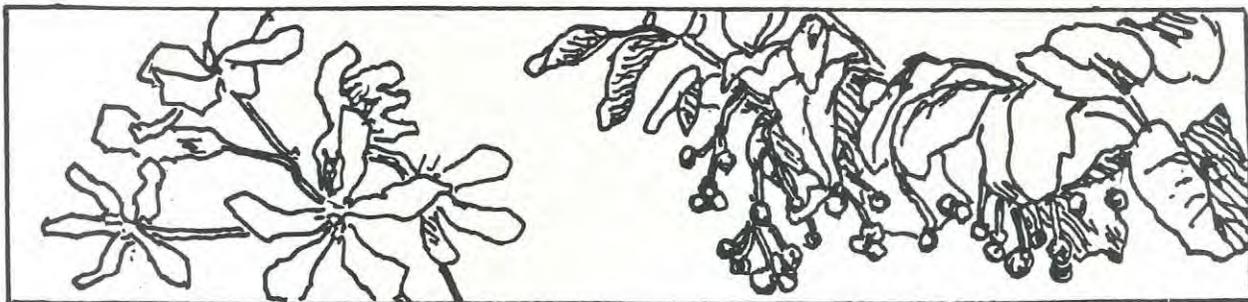
Mild, windy and sunny characterized November. It was the warmest November since 1975, with temperatures averaging over two degrees above normal (7.0°C downtown and 5.4°C at Pearson Airport). There was no frost (at weather screen level) downtown until November 23rd, and not even a trace of snow until the day before that.

A basically zonal flow steered weather systems well to the north of us, allowing for frequent frontal passages but no penetration of cold Arctic air until the final nine days of the month. Rainfall was close to normal, gradually easing the dry conditions of 1994. In the latter part of the month, strong low pressure systems brought high winds on a number of occasions, notably on November 21st to 23rd, and on November 27th to 28th. The first big wind storm brought in relatively cold air and flurries. A trough extended down the east coast of the US and brought flurries as far south as Washington, DC. The latter storm brought some wet snow before it turned to rain and gusts close to 100 km/h. Pearson Airport's average windspeed of 17.8 km/h was the highest since 19.5 km/h in 1989. Toronto Island's peak gust of 98 km/h from the WSW on November 28th was the highest on record for November there. In spite of some instrumental checks and calibrations, the *average* wind speed at Toronto Island was again below normal as it has been every month since February 1991. It was also 17.8 km/h, but the long-term average there is 20.2 km/h.

Fall of 1994 was extraordinary for its combination of mild temperatures, sunshine and dry conditions. The September to November sunshine of 499.2 hours was the highest since 1961 which had 506.4 hours. The average temperature downtown was 12.0°C, the warmest since 1975 which had the same average. At Pearson, the average of 10.4°C was the highest since 1971 which had an average of 10.6°C. The precipitation downtown of 159.2 mm was the lowest since 1976 which had 135.0 mm for the September to November period. (Ironically, the fall of 1976 was very cold) The first snow flakes of the season fell on November 22nd, the second latest first snow on record and the latest since November 28th, 1849.

Gavin Miller

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Juneberry in flower

...and in fruit

MARY SUMMERS

COMING EVENTS

nature
clubs

Jim Baillie Memorial Bird Walks - sponsored by the Toronto Ornithological Club - aimed at the intermediate birder, but beginners are also welcome - free to the public

- Waterfowl - West Toronto Lakeshore - Saturday, Nov. 18 from 9 am (all day) with George Bryant. Meet in the parking lot at Humber Bay Park East. Bring a lunch. Carpool if necessary.

Toronto Entomologists' Association meeting - Saturday, Nov. 25 at 1 pm in the Planetarium Lecture Room starting at 1 pm promptly. For more information, call Alan Hanks at 905-727-6993.

Mycological Society of Toronto meetings and forays - call HI FUNGI for details.

Walker Mineralogical Club - Annual Auction - Sunday, Nov. 5 at 12 noon (viewing), 1 pm start at 111 Moatfield Dr. (Rare mineral specimens, publications, collecting equipment and more.

Black Creek Project (an association of individuals interested in the preservation of the Black Creek - a tributary of the Humber River - through community involvement)

- Annual Planning Meeting - Wednesday, Nov. 1 at 6:30 pm at the Centennial Building (Senior's Lounge), York Municipal Centre, 2694 Eglinton Ave. West.
- Garbage Clean Up - Saturday, Nov. 18 from 10 am to 1 pm at Shoreham and Black Creek. Refreshments supplied. Bring a lunch.

special
events

North American Warblers - an illustrated talk by Jon Dunn - Monday, Nov. 20 at 8 pm at the Cardinal Carter Academy for the Arts, 34 Greenfield Ave. (one block north of Sheppard east of Yonge). Tickets \$15.00 (20% discount for groups of ten or more). For tickets, contact Hugh Currie, 29 Helena Ave., Toronto M6G 2H3 (416-653-0176).

Toronto Railway Parks Walk with Ian Wheal - Saturday, Nov. 4 at 1:30 pm. Walk will go rain or shine and begin at the Davisville subway station. Route is south on Yonge St. to Summerhill subway station, then subway to King St. and streetcar to Spadina Ave. Walk ends at Front St. West and John St.

Citizens for a Lakeshore Greenway interpretive waterfront walk - Saturday, Nov. 11 at 10:30 am. Meet in the parking lot on the east side of Etobicoke Creek just south of Lake Shore Blvd. West. Walk with Verda McDonald from Marie Curtis Park to Sam Smith Park. Bring lunch.

Long Point Bird Observatory Fall Meeting - Sunday, Nov. 12 from 1 pm to 5:30 pm at the Royal Botanical Gardens in Burlington. Tickets: \$10 per person may be ordered from LPBO, P.O. Box 160, Port Rowan, Ont. NOE 1M0. Dan Strickland will be giving a talk entitled "The World of the Gray Jay Revealed".

COMING EVENTS (cont'd)

travel/
education

55 Plus Outdoors Club walk - Sunday, Nov. 5 from 10:30 am to 12:30 pm in High Park with Morris Sorensen on the subject of Nature Prepares for Winter. To register, contact Debra Cohen at 588-9648. (The size of the group is limited.)

also, Sun. Nov. 19 from 2 pm to 4 pm in Taylor Creek Valley with Morris Sorensen on the subject of Nature and History. Again, numbers are limited, so register by calling Debra Cohen at 588-9648.

Southern England Naturalist tour - Mon. May 6 to Sun. May 19, 1996 with Clive and Joy Goodwin. For details, contact Goodwin Enterprises Ltd. by phone or fax (1-905-372-1065) or by writing to 1 Queen St., Apt. 401, Cobourg, Ont. K9A 1M8.

□

Little blue flower, I know you well
but your family name doesn't ring a bell.
I'll have to give it thought.

It rhymes with "porridge".
Indeed, it's "Borage".
Oh, please, forget me not!

Diana Banville

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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TORONTO FIELD NATURALIST

Published eight times a year by the Toronto Field Naturalists, a charitable, non-profit organization, the aims of which are to stimulate public interest in natural history and to encourage the preservation of our natural heritage.

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

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