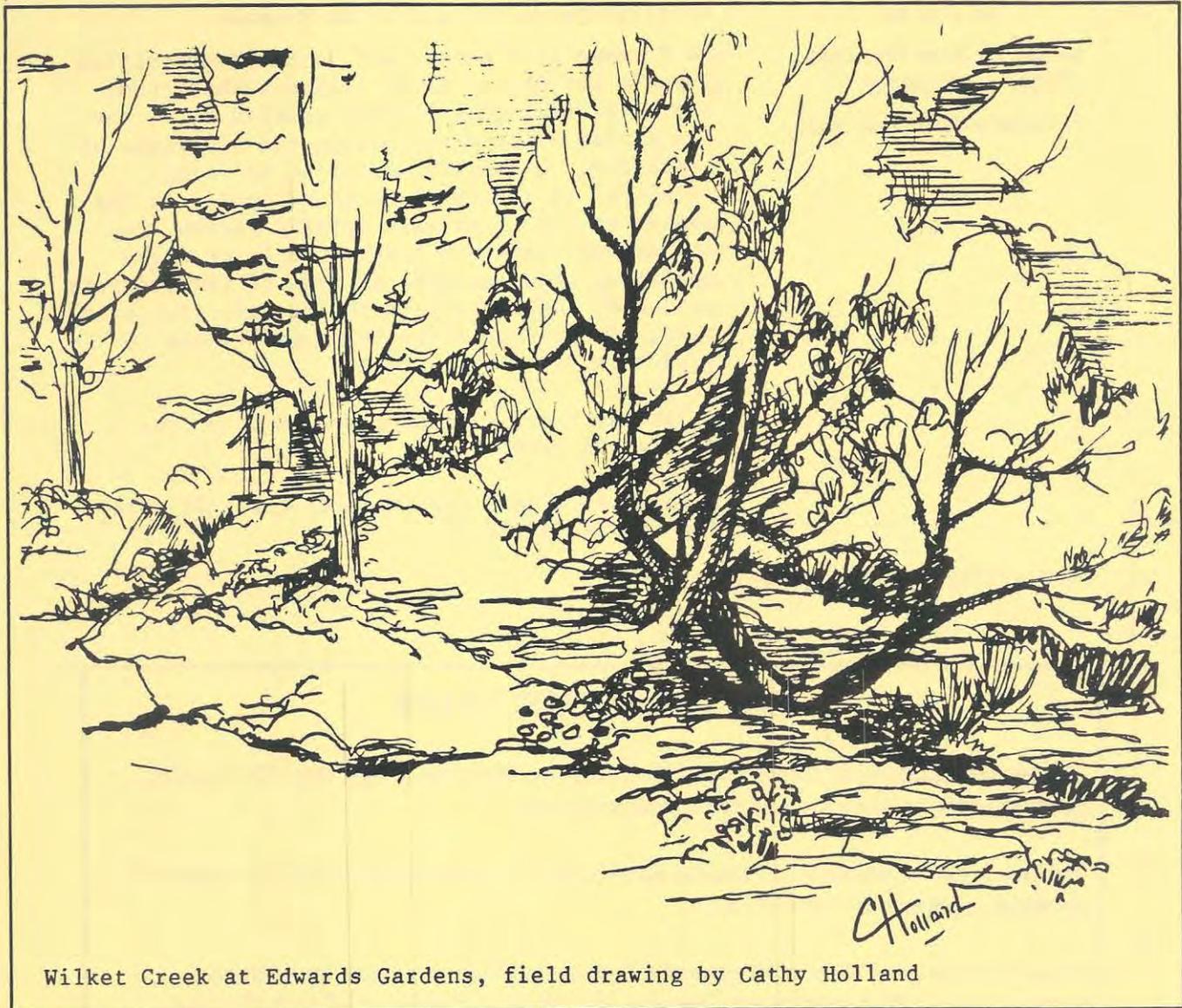


TORONTO FIELD NATURALIST

Number 465

February 1997



Wilket Creek at Edwards Gardens, field drawing by Cathy Holland

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TFN MEETINGS

- Sunday, February 2, 1997 - DON VALLEY BRICKWORKS UPDATE
at 2:30 pm an illustrated lecture by Ed Freeman
- in the Northrop Frye Hall - Ed Freeman is a consultant to the Metropolitan
Victoria University Toronto and Region Conservation Authority on
73 Queen's Park Cres. East the brick making activities carried on at the
Don Valley Brick Works during its 100 years of
operation. Currently this site is being
developed as a Metro Park to be opened in the
summer of 1997. Ed will briefly review the
operations carried out when the brick works
operated, show examples of some of the products
produced, and illustrate the changes that have
been, and are currently being undertaken to
turn this site into a park.
- + a "social hour" beginning at 2 pm with free
coffee and juice
- + a sale of "Always Alice" cards (call 767-6149
for special orders.)

NEXT MEETING: Sunday, March 2, 1997

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
605 - 14 College St.
Toronto, Ontario M5G 1K2

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

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 will know what to wear on outings which go rain or shine.

- Saturday DEER PARK LIBRARY - nature photography Toronto
 Feb. 1 Leader: Robin Powell
 2 pm to Meet on the second floor of the Deer Park Library which is on
 4 pm the north side of St. Clair Ave. East, one block east of
 Yonge St.
 Members are invited to bring their own nature photos, up to 20, or just
 come and enjoy the afternoon. A projector and screen will be provided.
 If you have questions, please call Robin at 928-9493.
- Sunday TFN MEETING [See page 2 for details.]
 Feb. 2
 2:30 pm
- Wednesday EARL BALES PARK - nature walk West Don, North York
 Feb. 5 Leader: Phoebe Cleverley
 10:30 am Meet at the community centre at the north end of the park
 which is on the east side of Bathurst St. just south of
 Sheppard Ave. West. Bring lunch.
 This large Metro Park has many interesting habitats for wildlife -- forested
 tableland and slopes and open meadow in the deep valley.
- Saturday MIMICO CREEK - nature walk Mimico Cr., Etobicoke
 Feb. 8 Leaders: Morris Sorensen & Starr Whitmore
 1:15 pm Meet at the northeast corner of Islington Ave. and Bloor St.
 West.
 \$ entry fee Much wildlife still remains along this highly urbanized creek. A tour and
 for tour tea at Montgomery Inn will follow the walk for those who want to warm up
 and learn something of the human history of the area.
- +
 Saturday URBAN ECOSYSTEMS - water in the city Castle Frank Cr., Toronto
 Feb. 8 Leader: Michael McMann
 2 pm Meet at the High Level Pumping station on the east side of
 Poplar Plains Rd., opposite Cottingham St.
 This walk will include a tour of the pumping station, a walk through the
 Nordheimer Ravine to the water reservoir at St. Clair, and then a walk
 south to a possible tour of the Metro Archives. [North Tor. Green Community walk]
- Sunday BLACK CREEK - nature walk Humber tributary, York
 Feb. 9 Leader: Susan Horvath & Gavin Miller
 2 pm Meet at the entrance to Smythe Park on the west side of Jane
 St. (north of St. Clair Ave. West).
 This is the eleventh and final walk in this series designed to explore Black
 Creek and its tributaries within Metro Toronto. These have been joint outings
 with the Black Creek Project.

FEBRUARY OUTINGS (cont'd)

- Tuesday
Feb. 11
10:30 am
- MT. PLEASANT CEMETERY - nature walk
Leader: Jo Croft
Toronto
- Meet at the Cemetery entrance on the west side of Bayview Ave. opposite Sutherland Dr. Morning only.
Whatever the weather, the roads in the cemetery are level and there are wonderful trees and shrubs to see which in turn attract birds and other wildlife.
- Sunday
Feb. 16
2 pm
- MUD CREEK - nature walk
Leader: Helen Mills
Don tributary, North York
- Meet on the west side of Bathurst St. at Hotspur Rd.
This a joint outing with the North Toronto Green Community to explore the traces of Toronto's lost creeks through the urban landscape, looking for clues to the past.
- Wednesday
Feb. 19
10:30 am
- CENTENNIAL PARK GREENHOUSES - nature walk
Leader: Barbara Kalthroff
Etobicoke
- Meet at the greenhouses on the east side of Elmcrest Rd., north of Rathburn Rd. Bring lunch.
If the weather is pleasant this walk will also include a visit to Etobicoke Valley to look for birds.
- Saturday
Feb. 22
10 am
- METRO ZOO - nature walk and leadership training
Leader: Morris Sorensen & Dr. Bill Rapley
Rouge, Scarborough
- Meet at the zoo entrance on the west side of Meadowvale Rd. north of Sheppard Ave. East. Lunch optional. (You may bring your own, eat at McDonalds, or go home after the morning program.)
IF YOU ARE ON TIME AND WE GO IN AS A GROUP, ADMISSION WILL BE FREE. (For those coming by car, drive past the main entrance to Old Finch Ave. Enter Gate D or E where Dr. Rapley will meet you at the control entrance of the Administration Building and let you in for free.)
This outing will begin with a slide show by Dr. Bill Rapley who spoke at our November meeting. This will be followed by a nature walk on the zoo property. After lunch we plan to have a session about leading walks, so if you have ever wanted to lead an outing and been hesitant to step forward, or if you are an experienced leader, we'd like you all to attend as we share our knowledge on this subject.
SEATING IS RESTRICTED TO 40 PEOPLE FOR THE INDOOR PART OF THIS SESSION, SO PLEASE CALL MORRIS SORENSEN AT 755-6030 IF YOU PLAN TO ATTEND.
- Sunday
Feb. 23
2 pm
- MOSS PARK CREEK - nature walk
Leader: Ian Wheal
Toronto
- Meet at the Wellesley subway station.
This walk will be through city streets where we will be looking for traces of this little known tributary of Taddle Creek.
- Wednesday
Feb. 26
10:30 am
- EAST DON VALLEY - nature walk
Leader: Maureen Allain
East Don, North York
- Meet at the Bayview Woods plaza on the north side of Finch Ave. East halfway between Bayview Ave. and Leslie St. Morning only.
Bring binoculars and notebook and be prepared to listen as well as watch for birds and perhaps mammals.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

As the new year begins, we in Metro Toronto face the great mystery of amalgamation. What does the prospect of amalgamation into "megacity" hold for the protection of natural heritage and other environmental values? The answer is, for the time being, unknown and unknowable. Pessimists fear that if what are now the more compact inner municipalities of Toronto, York and East York lose their political autonomy, nothing will stand in the way of car-happy suburban politicians who delight in big roads and disdain public transit. Optimists hope that being forced to take responsibility for the whole will make both downtown and suburban politicians less parochial and more accountable for the spill-over effects of their decisions. Pessimists fear that the megacity government will be remote and inaccessible to community groups and ordinary citizens, its politicians beholden to big money interests. Optimists hope that simplified structure and process will make intervention in municipal affairs less confusing and exhausting for those whose resources or experience are limited.

Details are still hazy, but it is reasonable to suppose that in practical terms, amalgamation will mean that local municipal functions will be absorbed by some version of the existing Metro government. To get a sense of what this might mean for green space, it might help to take stock of who does what in the old regime, and how they have been doing it.

Let's start with Metro. Metro already has responsibility for the main valleys and much of the waterfront, so amalgamation will not likely mean anything new here. Over the years it is fair to say that Metro has acquired a reputation among local naturalists as a jurisdiction with more money than wisdom. Metro is linked in many minds with big roads and bigger storm sewers. Metro Parks is known for over-engineered, insensitively routed paved trails, extensive parking lots, a seldom-used multi-million dollar baseball facility in the environmentally significant East Point, opulent four-season washrooms that are kept locked in the winter, and "naturalization" plantings involving species not indigenous to the Toronto region. In the past few years, however, Metro has made considerable strides and is now credited with being ahead of many of the area municipalities in its thinking and practice. This has occurred most notably with regard to naturalization. Metro Parks is very cooperative with knowledgeable community groups such as the Black Creek Project, and it co-sponsored the GroundWorks '96 ecological restoration conference this past October. Its plantings have improved over the past four years. Metro Parks should also be commended for taking seriously the nearly intractable problem of off-trail mountain biking in sensitive areas. Under the prodding of councillor Ila Bossons and the Toronto Environmental Alliance, Metro Parks has drastically reduced pesticide use and has been seeking input on how to reduce it further.

Now, on to the municipalities that stand to be swallowed up by amalgamation. Let's begin with the City of Toronto. Toronto is responsible for a number of small



ravines (such as Rosedale and Cedarvale) as well as High Park. Toronto's ravines bylaw and trees bylaw make it a leader in the legal protection of natural heritage on private property (though this is undercut somewhat by its recent ill-fated attempt to legislate against natural meadows on private property). When it comes to naturalization on its own property (especially in High Park, but also on lands adjoining the lower Don Valley), Toronto has earned high praise on its consultation, commitment, expertise and attention to detail. Toronto's commitment to consultation and public input, valuable in some situations, can lead to paralysis where public constituencies clash, as is the case with naturalists versus dog walkers in Sherwood Park (where a heavily used dog run extends into a wooded slope with delicate ground cover).

York and East York are small municipalities with limited resources and some outdated infrastructure. York has a ravine bylaw like the City of Toronto's; East York recently contemplated passing a ravine tree protection bylaw but decided it could not afford to implement such an ordinance. East York, like North York, has supported some kind of Leslie Street extension along the rim of the Don valley. Strapped for cash and desperate for investment, the small municipalities may see themselves as not being able to afford to make environmental protection a priority, whether this involves spending their own money or imposing expensive conditions on proposed private developments. The workings of the little municipalities are more informal and less politicized than those of the City of Toronto. Individual staff members, such as York planner Neil Melman, who has worked closely with the Black Creek Project, and East York Parks manager Bob Ward, who is now a champion of the merits of non-chemical turf maintenance in parks and playing fields, can make a big difference.

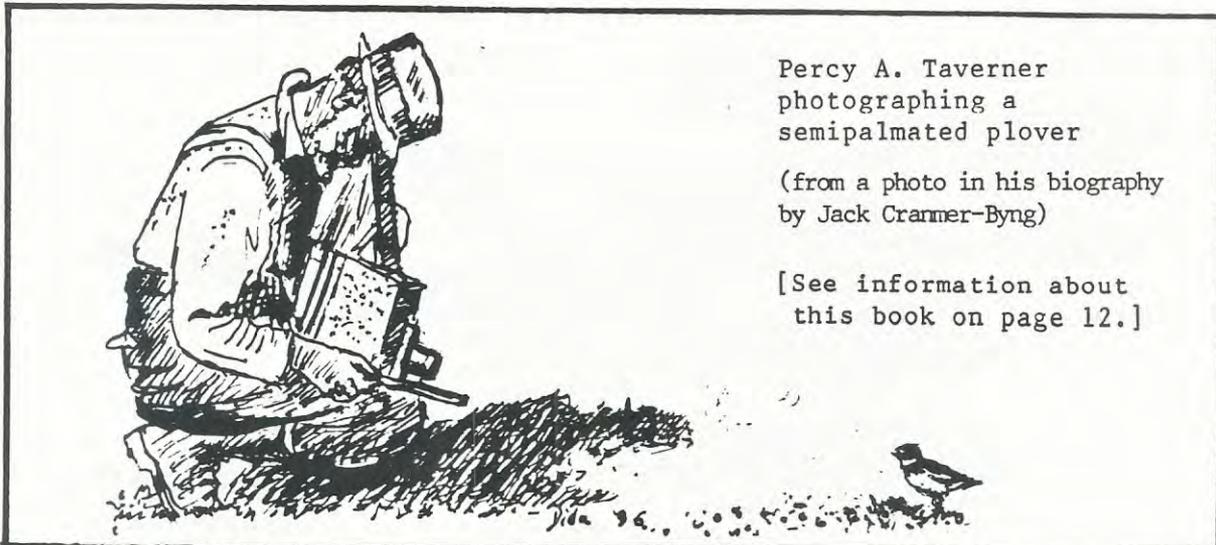
The other municipalities in Metro are the big suburban cities of Etobicoke, North York and Scarborough. Etobicoke has naturalized Barry Creek ravine in Rexdale and some of the Mimico Creek ravines. It attempted a more natural look for parks and other public lands in the early 90s but backed off in the face of complaints. The problem in Etobicoke seems to be its council. Witness Etobicoke council's willingness to approve--against the advice of Metro, the Conservation Authority, and even its own planning staff--a proposed extension on the Comfort Living Co-op that would have encroached on the Humber valley slope. In the 1980s North York was a leader in park naturalization. Those were the days when Bill Granger was on staff, first as arborist then as planner. Since then, it has put naturalization plans on hold and even reversed naturalization in some places. North York councillors have been heard to mutter about the unsavory element attracted to erstwhile wholesome neighbourhoods by natural vegetation (perhaps they have naturalists in mind!). North York Parks department is now known for its closed-door policy toward community groups interested in participating in plantings and naturalization on its land. Scarborough has made a start on naturalizing some of the channelized headwaters of Taylor and Highland Creeks, and has acquired a good reputation on storm water quality issues. Ron Moeser, a Scarborough councillor, has made a name as a stalwart defender of green space, but most of

the natural areas in Scarborough (as elsewhere in Metro) are not under the jurisdiction of the city.

On balance, it is not obvious that amalgamation would have a direct negative impact on nature in Metro through the replacement of enlightened jurisdictions by a benighted one. On the other hand, reorganization always entails confusion. Loss of personnel, disruption of established lines of communication and diminished morale may give standardized, lowest-common-denominator practices the edge over restoration projects requiring sustained attention over time. Amalgamation will not mean the end of arbitrary boundaries and a confusing patchwork of jurisdictions. Existing bylaws will continue in force within the old boundaries of the area municipalities until such time as they are repealed or superseded by enactments of the new megacity council. Separate bylaws for Leaside remained in force until the 1990s, some thirty years after amalgamation with East York. Nor will the old bylaws be replaced in one fell swoop. Rather, some old local bylaws will be replaced by megacity-wide new bylaws while others remain in effect. Thus, while we would no longer have to ask whether a particular matter comes under city or Metro jurisdiction, we would still have to ask which aspects, if any, are still governed by an old local bylaw applying only within the boundaries of a formerly existing municipality. This seems to me a sure recipe for confusion, frustration and litigation.

More fundamentally, amalgamation is a distraction from where the real priorities for municipal restructuring lie. Certainly from an environmental point of view, the crisis in governance looms beyond the Metro boundary, where suburban sprawl--costly to service and entirely dependent on destructive highways--threatens the Oak Ridges Moraine and the headwaters of the Humber, Don and Rouge Rivers. That problem is no problem at all as far as the current provincial regime is concerned.

Allan Greenbaum □



Percy A. Taverner
photographing a
semipalmated plover

(from a photo in his biography
by Jack Cranmer-Byng)

[See information about
this book on page 12.]

KEEPING IN TOUCH

Nov. 14, 1996

On October 17 [1996] I had a mystifying and somewhat unsettling bird watching experience in the little park between the two buildings of First Canadian Place...I saw a man looking intensely at a bird flopping around... I stopped and saw that there were two Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers. The one on top was pecking at the other. We pulled one off a couple of times but each time when we let him go he went back to pecking on the other one. We pulled off the aggressor again, and moved him three or four feet away. Then the bird being pecked crawled up my leg. The other bird attacked him [there]. Then we took the victimized bird off my leg, which proved to be a considerable task, since he had his claws securely buried in the fabric of my slacks. My intent was to put him in a box if he was wounded and call either the Humane Society or the Toronto Wildlife Centre. He was not happy about being carried in hand. The bird put up quite a struggle, pecking on my hand and squawking, and seemed to be pretty strong. I put him down in a flower garden a long distance from the other bird and he disappeared into the dense bed of flowers. I looked later several times for both birds, but did not see either again. What was happening here? Maybe a member of the TFN can answer my question?

R.A. Foor

Ed. note: European starlings, house sparrows and American robins are all species which TFN members have seen engaged in sustained fighting situations. (Territorial behaviour does occur in winter, but it is usually less vigorous than in spring.) Birds can communicate in such a way that, within a species, harmful aggression is usually avoided; rarely, though, it does happen. (Can we say this about the human species?) Metro Library on Yonge St. north of Bloor has an extensive collection of books on birds. A standard introduction to ornithology, with behaviour information included, is WATCHING BIRDS by Roger F. Pasquier.

D.B. ▽



KEEPING IN TOUCH (cont'd)

Nov. 24, 1996

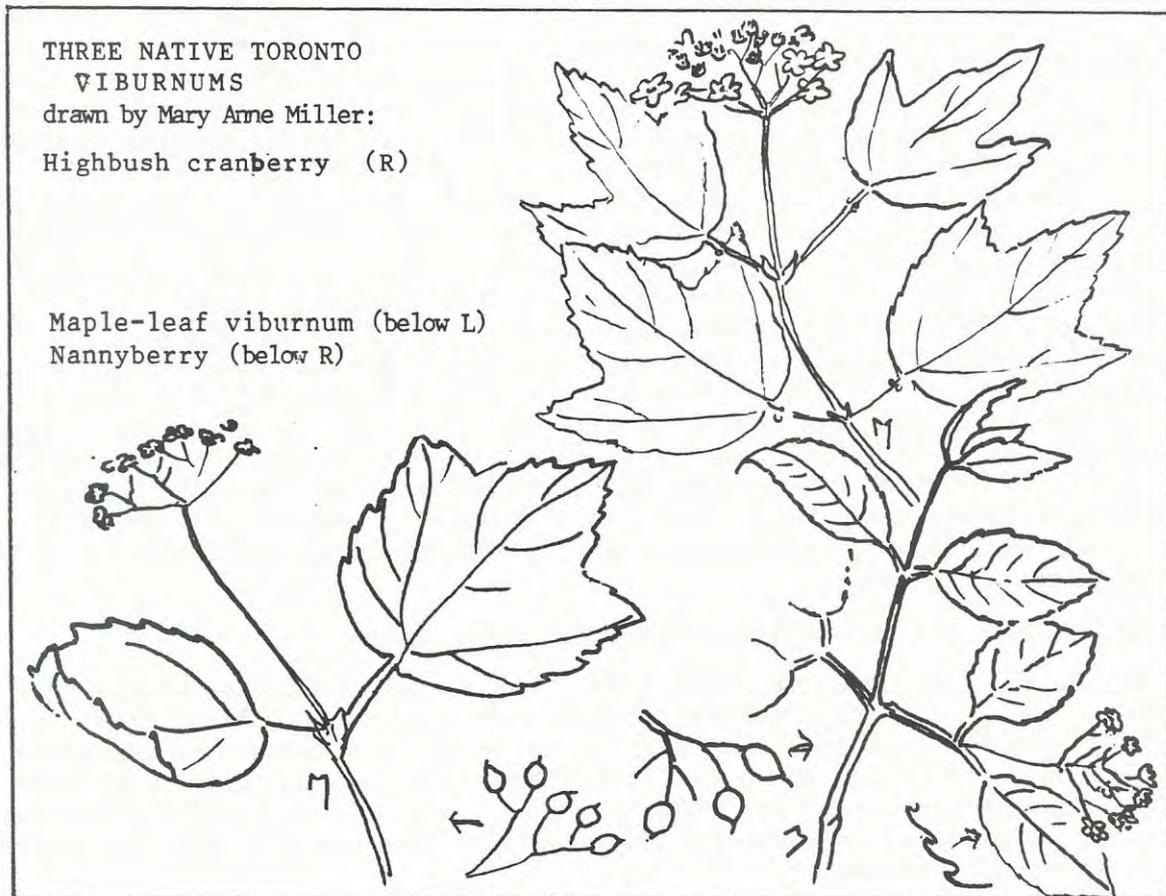
I was sitting here leafing through some recent TFN's when I decided I had to write and tell you how much I enjoy them. I find lots of interesting articles and I really appreciate the book reviews and especially the "In the News" section which brings together useful and timely items which many of us might not otherwise see. I appreciated the sentiments expressed in Christopher Morden's article "The Geese" in TFN 461, pages 13-14, particularly the last paragraph with which I wholeheartedly agree.

Christine Hanrahan
Ottawa

Dec. 20, 1996

Two items in the Dec. 96 TFN were notable and worthwhile. They were the model letter about pesticides and the excellent cartoon about balloons. I understand North York does not allow balloons in its schools. Wonder when free car parking will be disallowed for students and staff? Please continue such features regularly. Also, TFN members need names, addresses, phone/fax numbers of influential political leaders in order to write letters. Thanks. [More about balloons on page 25.]

Helen Hansen



Toronto Region Wildlife Report 1996

INVERTEBRATES: With still more reports to come, 157 identifications have been made to date in this broad category, most of them insects. More information is becoming available to help us identify damselflies and dragonflies with names like "violet dancer", "blue pirate", "Johnny white-face" and "ruby meadowfly", to name a few. We hope to prepare a more suitable checklist to accommodate this group which would be competing in popularity with butterflies if a field guide for northeastern North America were available.

FISHES: See President's Report in TFN 463 for Don status. Our reports for 1996 so far, involving 7 locations, include salmon species, goldfish, carp, blacknose dace, creek chub, white sucker, brown bullhead, brook stickleback and pumpkinseed.

AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES: 10 of our leaders reported on 9 species, including the attractive wood frog in Rowntree Mills Park. Remains of two young northern brown snakes were found in an abandoned bird's nest at Scarborough Bluffs; it was conjectured they had been brought there for the dining convenience of a shrike. When all information is in, our records for 1996 will be sent to Bob Johnson at Metro Zoo.

BIRDS: Only one species on our TFN checklist has not been reported for 1996 but perhaps when December reports come in sightings of the red crossbill will be among them. By July 23, the red-throated loon near the mouth of Highland Creek was beginning to moult, but the red throat, grey of the head and upward tilt of the bill were visible through binoculars. Common loons were counted during the High Park Raptor Watch, when as many as 33 in one day in October were counted. This watch lasted from September 1 to November 30, with hours of watching totalling 427. Active nests or post-nesting activity with young was reported on several species other than those mentioned in our reports for the year 1995: The pied-billed grebe, families near Bolton and in Ernest Thompson Seton Park; great blue heron, colonies at King City and near Bolton; northern shoveler, Aug. 12, 1995, near Schomberg, family; blue-winged teal, family Highland Creek, 1995; hooded merganser female in nest box, Cold Creek; ruddy duck, family at Schomberg in 1995; sharp-shinned hawk, Highland Creek; Virginia rail, Highland Creek 1995 and Leslie Street Spit 1996; Spotted sandpiper Toronto Island; upland sandpiper, Nashville Hydro Station, Vaughan; yellow-bellied sapsucker, Vaughan; downy woodpecker, Thornhill; blue jay, West Humber; red-eyed vireo, G. Ross Lord Park; rose-breasted grosbeak, West Humber; orchard oriole, High park; pine siskin, West Don (nest-building but no breeding confirmed).

MAMMALS will be the subject of another report soon.

Please send in your notes, making sure you specify full name of species, year, time of year and numbers involved and location, to me at #710 - 7 Crescent Place, Toronto M4C 5L7; or to "Keeping in touch" at the newsletter address, for a short anecdote. The above are only samples of some of the material that comes in; there's plenty more where all this came from, and we're grateful to those who provided it. We've come a long way since all those check-marks!

Diana Banville

□

FOR READING

BELUGA: A FAREWELL TO WHALES by Pierre Beland, published by Lyons and Burford, 1996.

Everything you ever wanted to know about Belugas, and more! There is the story of a little six-year old girl who wanted to stop the slaughter of Belugas and then died of influenza in 1918. "Aydin" is the Beluga who has escaped twice from Russia into the Black Sea. More fascinating anecdotes are related in a suspenseful manner as the mysteries of these huge creatures are revealed.

Dr. Beland found his first dead whale on the shores of the St. Lawrence River in 1982. Since then in his work with other scientists of the University of Montreal, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, he has been called many more times to investigate similar deaths. The discoveries are depressing. In 1930 for 9 years Belugas carried a bounty of \$15 "because they ate the fish". Now since 1979 they are on the Endangered Species list, but the toxic chemicals are still in the environment. Where?

Illustrations including a coloured section accompany many of the events described. An appendix contains details of history, behaviour, anatomy and the importance of these amazing animals with a very tenuous future.

Merne Powers



AT ALLAN
GARDENS
A TFN
Nature
Arts
winter
outing.

Drawing
by
Mary
Cumming.



Recently published:

RESTORING NATURE'S PLACE: A guide to Naturalizing Ontario Parks and Greenspace by Donna Havinga and Jean-Marc Daigle, published by Ecological Outlook Consulting and the Ontario Parks Association, 1996, 240 pages; photos, drawings, tables; index; paperback (8.5 X 11), available from the Ontario Parks Association, 1185 Eglinton Ave. East, Suite 404, North York, Ont. M3C 3C6 for \$49.00 plus \$5 for postage + 7% G.S.T.

BLACK BEAR IN ONTARIO: Status and Management by Chris Lompart, published by the Federation of Ontario Naturalists, 1996 (8½ X 11) paperback. Available from the FON, 355 Lesmill Rd., Don Mills, Ont. M3B 2W8 for \$8.00.

A CITIZEN'S GUIDE TO PROTECTING WETLANDS AND WOODLANDS by Neida Gonzalez, published by the Federation of Ontario Naturalists (FON), 1996, (8½ X 11) paperback.

BIRDS OF BRONTE CREEK PROVINCIAL PARK CHECKLIST, published in 1996 and available at the park.

THE DON, COMMUNITY MAP # 9, North Toronto - York Mills Area, a map published in 1996 by the MTRCA and Ward Press Ltd. Available for \$2.00 from Don Cross, 193 Glenview Ave., Toronto, Ont. or by calling 487-1452.

A CHECKLIST OF VASCULAR PLANTS FOR BRUCE AND GREY COUNTIES, ONTARIO, 1996 published by the Owen Sound Field Naturalists, P.O. Box 401, Owen Sound, Ont. N4K 5P7 for \$6.00.

A LIFE WITH BIRDS: PERCY A. TAVERNER, CANADIAN ORNITHOLOGIST by John Cranmer-Byng, a special issue of the Canadian Field-Naturalist, available from the Business Manager, The Canadian-Field Naturalist, Box 35069, Westgate P.O., Ont. K1Z 1A2; cost, \$25 (hard cover) or \$10 (soft cover), plus \$2.50 for postage and handling.

HJ

COLLISION COURSE: The HAZARDS OF LIGHTED STRUCTURES AND WINDOWS TO MIGRATING BIRDS, published by the Fatal Light Awareness Program (FLAP) and the World Wildlife Fund. Call 416-489-8800 to obtain a copy.

Directly resulting from the work of FLAP, a major North American realty company (Brookfield LePage Management Ltd.), which rents office towers across North America, announced that it would endeavour to ensure that its tenants mitigate the bird strike problem by turning off all unnecessary lighting at night during the peak periods of migration. Long Point Bird Observatory was approached to provide information on when these peak seasons were for major cities across the continent. After all these years, something is finally being done about this entirely preventable problem.

adapted from the LONG POINT BIRD OBSERVATORY NEWSLETTER, Vol. 28, No. 3, Fall 1996

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CHECKING THE CHECKLISTS

The TORONTO REGION CHECKLIST OF THE BIRDS to MAY 31, 1996, (374 species) published by the Toronto Ornithological Club (phone 322-6258) gives us a gauge by which to judge the accuracy of the TORONTO BIRD LIST 1993, published by TFN, (234 species) as well as TFN's unpublished supplementary list of species of less frequent occurrence. (144 species) which we maintain to monitor occurrence for guidance in making changes on future printed lists. (TFN total 378 species)

There are 9 species on the TFN supplementary list which were not on the TOC list. One of these is the fork-tailed flycatcher seen at Nobleton and Kortright Centre after the publication of the TOC list. The other eight we assume have not been accepted by the official record committees.

There are 5 species on the TOC list which are not on the TFN supplementary list. The TFN defines "Toronto Region" as "within a 48 km radius of the Royal Ontario Museum" to be consistent with the earlier "30-mile" designation used. TOC rounds off the radius covered to 50 km. This may account to some degree for the small difference.

The TOC list is annotated as to breeding status in a general way, and as to status as a rarity. Most of those with no annotation are the common and uncommon migrants and wintering species in the region. All this is in fine print on a folded card to fit a small pocket.

For more detail on status, the 1983 TFN booklet, TORONTO REGION BIRD CHART, is still a useful guide. If you have a copy, you might make a note in the appropriate column of the five species recorded as breeding in the region since 1983: The double-crested cormorant, peregrine falcon, wild turkey, common raven, and ruby-crowned kinglet. Some of the breeders on the chart listed as "occasional" are breeding in the region more frequently now, e.g. black-crowned night-heron, mute swan, common tern, and house finch. Besides the five, there are 17 species listed as having been known to breed in the region on the TOC list which are not so listed on the TFN chart; again, the 2 km difference in the boundaries may be a reason in some cases.

Our Toronto Region bird fauna is presented in capsule form by each checklist and chart, each with a different perspective and function. We're finding that we need them all!

Diana Banville

□

SNOWY OWL, BURLINGTON BAY

A white bird disguised as a rock
 - or white rock disguised as a bird?
 White bird, waiting impatiently for snow
 to stain the giveaway rocks a safe white.

W. J. Keith

TCCA - Toronto City Centre Airport
(Formerly Toronto Island Airport)

The TCCA began as an airport in 1939, named the Port George VI Airport. Since the beginning access has been by ferry - first a cable ferry, then a tug boat - up to the present Maple City. There is a back-up ferry available named Windmill Point.

In 1983 an agreement governing the airport for 50 years, and known as the Tripartite Agreement, was signed by the City of Toronto, The Toronto Harbour Commission and the federal government. This Agreement prohibited the use of a fixed link - that is, a bridge or tunnel - for access to the airport.

The THC is pushing the fixed link and now, after only thirteen years, and with the concurrence of the other two members of the agreement, an environmental assessment is being made. This is being well handled by consultants but seems to be tailored to making a fixed link palatable rather than emphasizing the disadvantages cited by opponents.

The proponents quote the inadequacies of the ferry for general access, (especially if their wish for expanded airport service is realized), and for emergency service. They quote a ferry operation financial loss due to withdrawal of a provincial subsidy.

Opponents cite the push for jet aircraft, a lengthened runway, the environmental considerations and the interests of citizens living on and using the waterfront, as some of the reasons for opposing a fixed link.

The TFN has regularly been a supporter of Toronto Islands. Members have explored the many and often rare plants which grow in the natural areas. They have delighted in the many bird species seen. The TFN has spoken against damage to environmentally sensitive areas and has expressed concern about dangers to birds from a radio tower.

As long ago as 1976 strong opinions were expressed in the newsletter about an expansion of the airport as it was then. The problems were the same as they are to-day - parkland, housing, noise, traffic congestion.

In a short article it is impossible to mention the many and sometimes subtle reasons why an enlarged airport service could be a mistake. There are reasonable arguments against a fixed link itself, probably to be a swing bridge.

▷ A strong group which has been opposing the plan is the TORONTO WATERFRONT COALITION, Box 43, 260 Adelaide St. E., Toronto ON, M5A 1N0. The Coalition is volunteer and unfunded. The members would appreciate support either by your participation or by your sending a donation.

You can also contact the Toronto M.P.'s:

▷ Bill Graham, Rosedale - Phone 954-2222
Tony Ianno, Trinity/Spadina - Phone 533-2710

Jean Macdonald

□

PROJECTS

HOME SAFE HOME...OR IS IT?

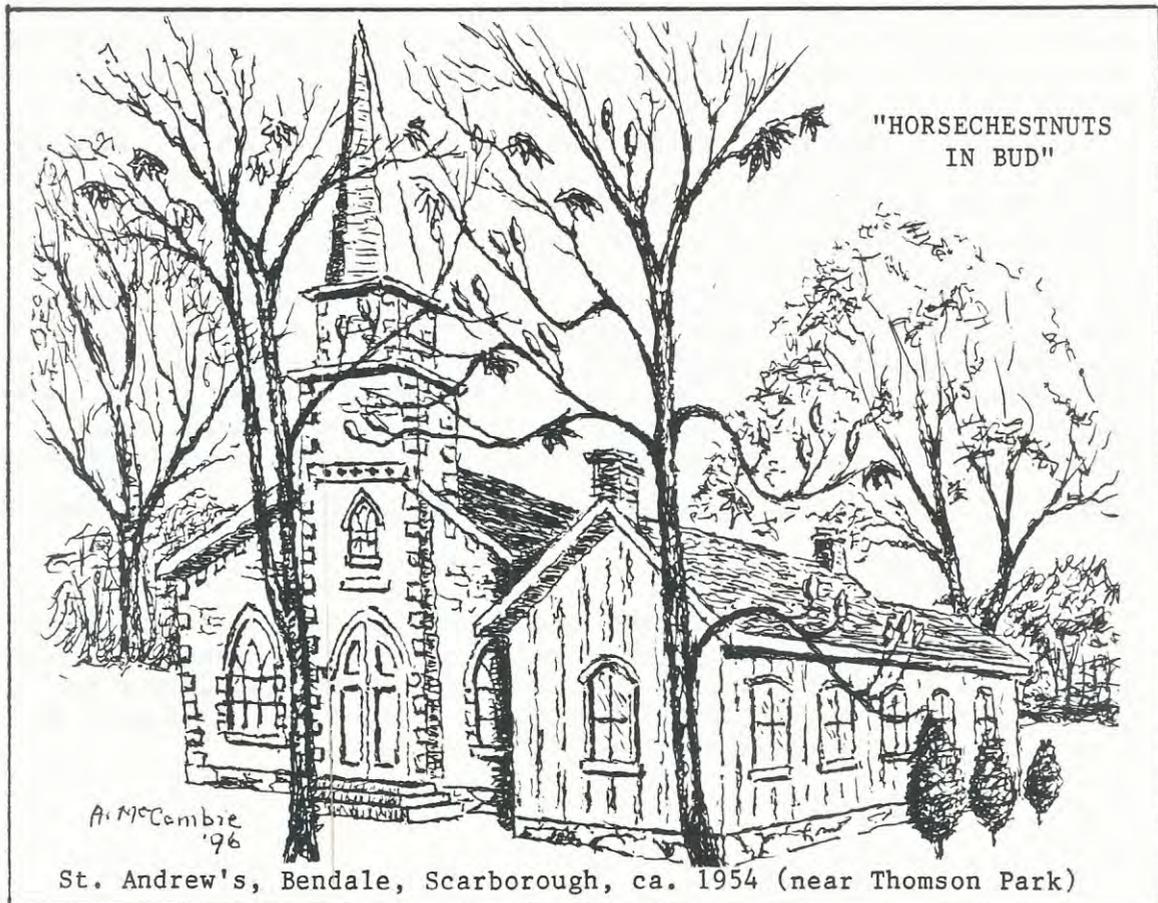
The Toronto Environmental Alliance is running an environmental education project called "Home Safe Home". This project aims to increase awareness about the potential human health and environmental risks associated with common household products (e.g. cleansers and pesticides) and about easily-available and easy-to-make nontoxic alternatives.

The Alliance will conduct Home Safe Home workshops and presentations in private homes, community centres, church basements, schools or other places where people gather. Participants will receive literature from local environmental organizations and green businesses and browse through examples of homemade and store-bought nontoxic products.

In addition to these free-of-charge presentations and workshops, the Alliance also provides personal home audits for a nominal fee. The Home Safe Home crew will guide homeowners on a tour of toxic hot spots in their homes and provide advice on creating healthy living spaces and communities.

For more information on the Home Safe Home project or to book an event for your group, call Colleen, Rich, Janet or Shelley at (416)596-0660.

Colleen Cirillo



PROJECTS (cont'd)

REPORTING BANDED OR COLOUR MARKED BIRDS

▷ 1-800-327-BAND is a new toll free number you can call if you find a banded or colour marked bird. This puts you in direct contact with the banding office. It is hoped that the toll free number will significantly increase reporting rates from the public.

extracted from the LONG POINT BIRD OBSERVATORY NEWSLETTER, Vol. 28, No. 3, Fall 1996

REPORT TRUMPETER SWAN SIGHTINGS

Results from the Trumpeter Swan restoration program in southern Ontario show that wild production is steadily increasing. In 1996, 8 pairs raised 14 cygnets, bringing the free-flying population to 123 birds.

▷ Any sightings of these birds should be reported to H.G. Lumsden, 144 Hillview Rd., Aurora, Ont. L4G 2M5 (905)727-6492.

from the LONG POINT BIRD OBSERVATORY NEWSLETTER, Vol. 28, No. 3, Fall 1996 & the TOC newsletter, Nov. 1996.

CAR SHARE CO-OPERATIVE

One of the biggest problems emerging from our consumer way of life is climate change, which threatens to displace habitats, warm rivers, increase forest fires, and bring more storms, hurricanes, droughts and heatwaves. One of our biggest responsibilities, as humans, is to cut back on our use of fossil fuels, and the other chemicals that are responsible for climate change. One way to do this is to drive less, and to walk, cycle and take the bus more. To make it easier for people to give up their cars, a small group [in Victoria, B.C.] is launching the Victoria Car Share Co-operative. This will involve some 40 people, initially, who will share five cars, based in James Bay. Basically, you pay a \$500 deposit (\$400 returnable), and then a monthly membership fee, and a usage rate per mile and per hour. When you want a car, you simply call the car share manager and book one. The evidence from Europe, where over 20,000 people use car share co-ops, is that membership brings a 66% average reduction in vehicle miles travelled, and an equivalent reduction in pollution and greenhouse gases, and urban stress. I know this is an unusual topic for the Naturalist, but as some sage said, "all things connect". The way we travel today is intimately connected with the way many birds, trees and mammals will live, tomorrow. [For more information call Kathryn Molloy at 604-995-0265.]

▷ extracted from a letter to the editor of the VICTORIA NATURALIST, Vol. 53.3, Nov./Dec. 1996

TFN BOARD NOMINATIONS INVITED

▷ The TFN is looking for people with initiative who are willing to devote time to working as members of the Board of Directors. Please send your suggestions to Joan O'Donnell, Chairman of the Nominating Committee, c/o TFN, 605 - 14 College St., Toronto, Ont. M5G 1K2. (The report of the Committee will be published in the May newsletter.) ▷

PROJECTS (cont'd)

THE URBAN NATURALIST

For those looking for a guest speaker for their club, school or seniors' group, the Urban Naturalist has presentations/slide shows on the following topics:

- Wild Toronto (green spaces in the Greater Toronto Area)
- Not Just Weeds (plant lore)
- Living with the Cree (Northern Manitoba)
- Canadian Wildflowers (various geographic areas)

▷ For a complete list of our outdoor and indoor programs, please send a large, stamped, self-addressed envelope to "The Urban Naturalist", 2085 Lawrence Ave. East (Ste. 5-140), Scarborough, Ont. M1R 2Z4.

HAVE YOU SEEN A COYOTE?

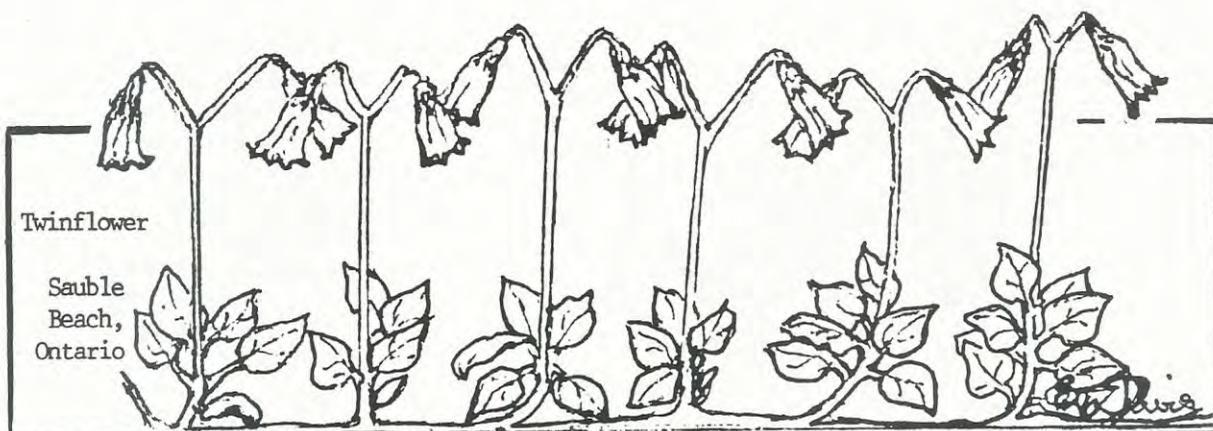
▷ Starr Whitmore and Morris Sorensen are interested in any research being done on coyotes, particularly in the Greater Toronto Area. If you have any information or sightings in the Toronto region, please call Morris at 755-6030.

TORONTO BAY

The "Toronto Bay" initiative originated as a partnership amongst the Waterfront Regeneration Trust, Toronto City Councillor Dan Leckie and the office of Mayor Barbara Hall. The name suggests a vision for the harbour that integrates nature with the living and working community. There has been one meeting attended by over 50 people. Four more are planned at which topics vital to the issues concerning Toronto Bay will be presented and possible kinds of actions discussed.

The next meeting we can alert you to is February 11, 1997. There will be a public forum the last week of February.

▷ If you are interested in getting involved, or want more information, call Leslie Woo, project coordinator at the Waterfront Regeneration Trust at 314-9498. ▷

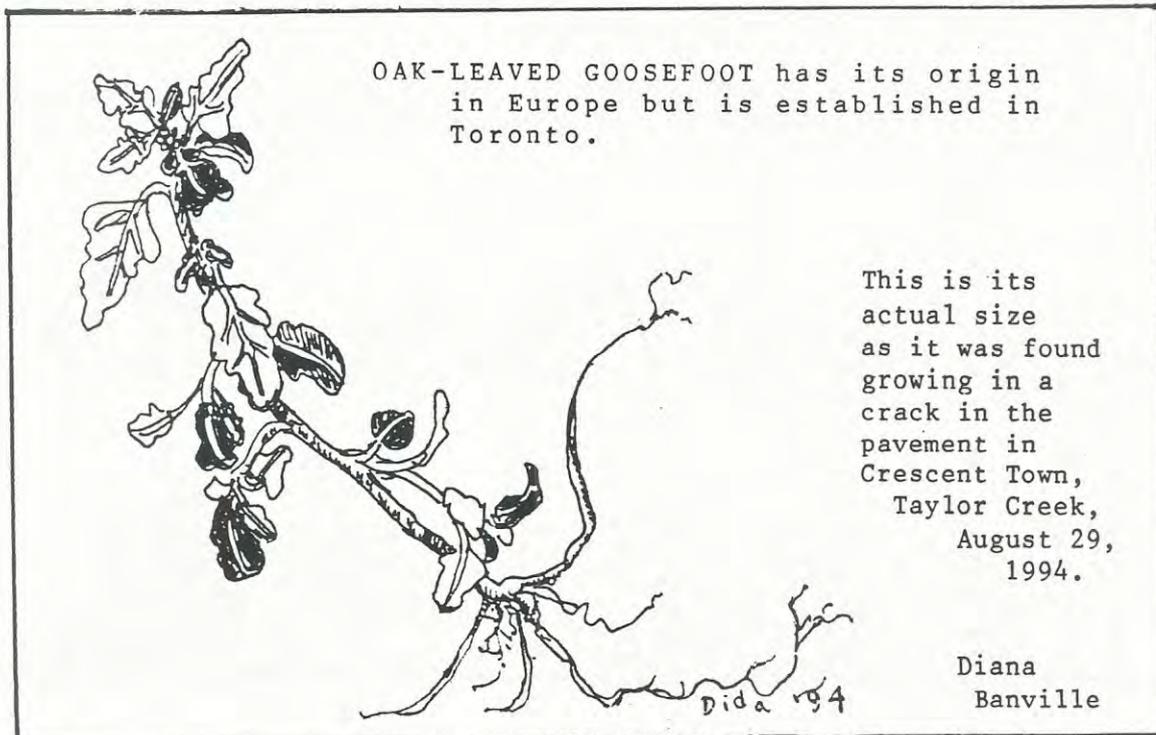


PROJECTS (cont'd)

PROPOSED EXPRESSWAY BAD NEWS

The Ontario government has promised \$100 million in "new money" for a municipal road that will devastate Hamilton's largest park and natural area*. That amounts to \$1000 for EACH of the 100,000 elementary and secondary classrooms in Ontario. Premier Harris announced the \$100 million grant last November 29 - "the same day" that he cut \$6 billion from schools, colleges, hospitals, transit, police and other essential services including the maintenance of existing roads. The eight-kilometre Red Hill Creek Expressway is to be built entirely "inside" a 700 hectare park and will cross Hamilton's last creek 24 times! There is no traffic need for the road and its total cost of \$225 million (more than \$700 per inch!) also promises to bankrupt Hamilton taxpayers. The expressway will eliminate a forest of 10,000 trees in the middle of a city infamous for its poor air quality. It will also degrade or destroy habitat for five nationally and provincially rare species and more than 30 that are regionally rare. In mid-October the government announced another \$3 billion in cuts. But less than a week earlier, Transportation Minister Palladini told Hamilton officials he may be able to find even more money for their road. Help us save our largest park. Demand that the province get its financial priorities straight. Call or write to your nearest Conservative MPP and demand the \$1000 taken from your classroom for this unnecessary road. Ask how another road in another valley will help our children's future. Send a copy of your letter to your local newspaper. You can contact Friends of Red Hill Valley at 68-151 Gateshead Crescent, Stoney Creek, Ontario L8G 3W1 (905)664-8796 for more information.

* The expressway will follow the bed of the Red Hill Creek in Hamilton from Hwy. 403 to link with the QEW at Van Wagner's Beach where the ponds will be destroyed. □



PARTYGOERS

I recently spent time in the magnificence of Ontario wilderness. Overnight the only sounds were of the wind soughing in the tops of the enormous conifers and the barely perceptible lapping of water -- until the local loons decided it was party time! All their vocal range was called forth. The keening (is there a more haunting sound in nature?), the "laughter" (is there a sound more lunatic?), the question and answer, the riposte and retort. There seemed to be endless members of this particular family, each in different quarters of the globe. The to'ing and fro'ing went on for a couple of hours and I was left wondering why, when nearly every other member of the feathered community retires to nest or branch and soberly and decently sleeps the night away, otherwise reticent and dignified loons choose this time to conduct their neighbourhood rounds. They are unarguably nightlifers.

I had lived in Ontario for some 30 years before I encountered this phenomenon. I was up at Wawa, and I came to as what I assumed to be the local Hell's Angels caroused into camp. I remember thinking, "Oh, Lord...an invasion of louts" (motor cyclists in those days, of course, had a very bad reputation), but as the maniacal yodelling continued there flashed into my mind the old saying: Crazy as a loon -- and all was explained. It is impossible to imagine Ontario without them, rowdy night life and all. Theirs is the quintessential voice of the north.

Eva Davis

□



Pale Swallowwort or Dog-strangling Vine
of Europe, copiously established in Toronto
showing flower and fruit

Eva Davis

IN THE NEWS

VISIT TO CONSERVATORY LEADS TO BUTTERFLIES

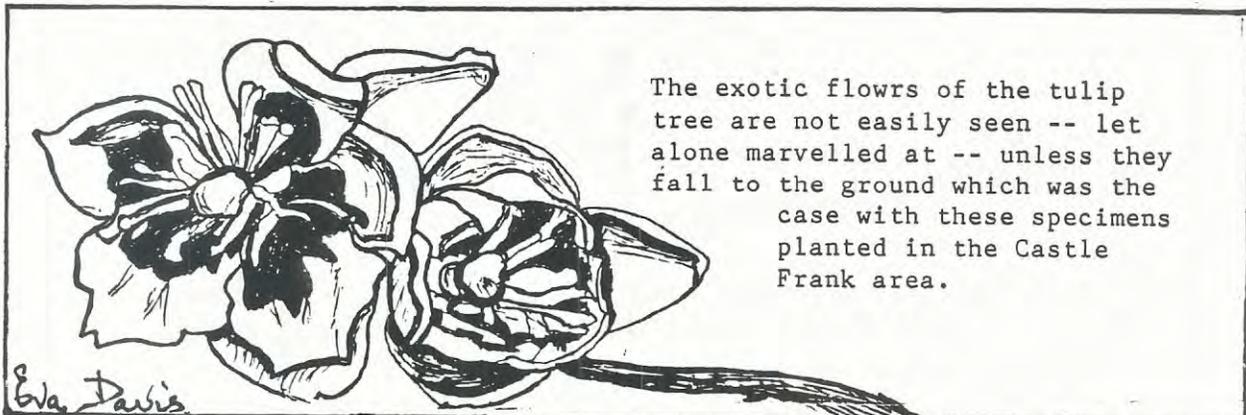
More magical than any theme park, Niagara Parks' new Butterfly Conservatory is a sensational attraction in which thousands of butterflies flutter among tropical flowers. Since it opened (Sat. Dec. 14, 1996), the conservatory has delighted visitors by giving them the opportunity to walk among free-flying butterflies. Unlike most conservatories, which amount to a series of plant-filled rooms, the Butterfly Conservatory is landscaped to create the impression of a jungle setting. It even has a seven-metre high waterfall. At 1,000 square metres, it is one of the largest conservatories in North America, housing more than 100 tropical trees and a wide assortment of plants that provide nectar for butterflies. As an indoor garden alone, the conservatory would be sensational, but with as many as 50 species of butterflies fluttering through this setting, it becomes truly memorable. Butterflies live an average of 12 days in the wild, longer in the protected environment of the conservatory. That means a constant turnover in the butterfly population, which is renewed at an adjoining butterfly rearing lab. Through a plastic-glass window, visitors see chrysalids waiting to emerge, and newly emerged butterflies flying through small openings in the window to find the nectar-laden flowers in the conservatory. With such short life-spans, the conservatory could quickly become littered with colourful corpses. To remove the insect debris, several hungry quail and iguanas are being introduced.

extracted from an article by Betty Zvyatkauskas in the GLOBE AND MAIL, Dec. 18, 1996

BUTTERFLY WARMING

A California ecologist reported in the latest issue of the journal "Nature" that North American butterflies are fleeing northward to escape the effects of global warming. Camille Parmesan of the University of Santa Barbara made the discovery after examining past and present populations of the Edith's checkerspot butterfly. She found that previously observed colonies were now living an average of two degrees further north, while many other sites have become extinct. She wrote that the butterflies in Mexico were four times more likely to have become extinct than those in Canada.

from THE LONDON FREE PRESS, August 31, 1996



The exotic flowers of the tulip tree are not easily seen -- let alone marvelled at -- unless they fall to the ground which was the case with these specimens planted in the Castle Frank area.

IN THE NEWS (cont'd)

OTTAWA RESTORES SEA LAMPREY FUNDING

Federal Fisheries Minister Fred Mifflin restored funding to an enormously successful Canada-US program that has dramatically reduced the population of the sea lamprey, a parasitic, eel-like fish that sucks the blood out of its prey and which is believed to be largely responsible for the severe decline of lake trout and whitefish in the Great Lakes in the 1950s. Last year Ontario fishermen were horrified to learn the Federal Fisheries Department was planning to significantly cut a program that has been described as one of the greatest fishery success stories in the world. They argued the move to reduce funding to \$3.8 million from \$5.1 million would destroy a sport fishery that employs as many as 36,000 people and generates as much as \$1.5 billion a year. The commercial fishery lands a catch worth about \$45 million a year. The impending lamprey invasion became a cross-border issue, with Canada being painted by some Americans as the villain. Canada and the United States have an agreement on lamprey control that dates back to 1954, with the United States picking up 69 per cent of the costs and Canada 31 per cent.

Lampreys are believed to have spread from Lake Ontario through the Welland canal to the other Great Lakes. When their populations were strongest, there were 600,000 in Lake Huron, for example, and about 500,000 in Lake Superior and the same in Lake Michigan. The control measures reduced the lamprey populations in all the Great Lakes, except Lake Erie, by about 90 per cent. Lake Erie still has about 450,000 of the parasites. Because the Lake Erie lamprey spawn in a large river, it is much more difficult to control the population. Although new techniques are being developed, lampreys are primarily killed in streams when they are still in the larval stage with the application of a lampricide known as TFM. Scientists say it has minimal effects on aquatic plants, invertebrates, fish and waterfowl and is not toxic for humans and other mammals. It was discovered in 1957, and is applied every three to five years in streams heavily infested with larval lamprey. It has been an amazing success story.

extracted from an article by Anne McIlroy in THE GLOBE AND MAIL, 8 August 1996



OILED BIRDS DIE DESPITE CLEANING, STUDY FINDS

New research shows that birds returned to nature after an oil spill, despite careful rehabilitation, typically die in a matter of months. Only 12 to 15 per cent of rehabilitated brown pelicans survived for two years. In contrast, 80 to 90 per cent of pelicans that were never known to have been exposed to oil survived as long. Studies showed that many oiled birds died from a host of illnesses, such as anemia, endocrine dysfunction and internal lesions. Birds frequently ingest toxic petroleum products during a spill, either by digesting the oil or breathing the fumes. Rehabilitated pelicans do fairly well right after release. They're well fed and rested, but after a month they start suffering from immunosuppression and they cannot fight off diseases that they would normally encounter. Rehabilitated pelicans lose interest in mating. Only one of the treated birds spent time at a breeding colony, and that was just for a few days. To some scientists, such dismal news about bird recovery undermines the worthiness of avian rescue efforts and raises an ethically charged question: Could the money spent on rehabilitation be better used for spill prevention and habitat restoration instead? Such a plan would mean leaving listless birds to die on oil slicks and coated beaches, a notion that some people find abhorrent. In tallying liability damages for oil spills, a rehabilitated bird should be counted as a dead one. We're doing this cleaning which is supposed to be a fix of some kind and allows the public and politicians to ease their conscience.

extracted from an article by Verne Kopytoff in the GLOBE AND MAIL, Nov. 12, 1996

MUTATIONS FOUND IN GULLS

Herring gulls nesting in heavily polluted Hamilton Harbour have DNA mutation rates that are more than twice as high as those found in birds living in cleaner areas. The changes have been observed only in a few highly mutable areas of DNA, which do not contain the genes that control body functions. Nonetheless, the dramatic differences observed may provide an early warning of the genetic damage that the heavily polluted air around steel mills can cause in humans and animals. The research is now being replicated in the Leslie Spit area of Toronto and a severely polluted section of Gary, Ind.

extracted from an article in the GLOBE AND MAIL, Nov. 30, 1996



IN THE NEWS (cont'd)

RACCOON INVASION

A plague of raccoons in the countryside east of Berlin is causing fear among residents who believe the foreign invaders may be stealing eggs and killing the areas' native birds. The animals are descendants of a colony that was brought from North America 60 years ago, and escaped from the Wolfshagen Fur Farm when it was hit by Allied bombs in 1945. With no natural enemies, their numbers have increased to more than 100,000, with 500 to 1,000 concentrated around the town of Buckow. Farmers there complain that the pests raid henhouses and gnaw through electricity cables. Germans have named the raccoons "wash-bears" owing to their furry features and habit of washing their food.

extracted from "Earthweek" in THE TORONTO STAR, 23 March 1996

DISEASE CARRIED BY RACCOONS

University of Guelph scientist Dr. Ian Barker warns in "The Canadian Medical Association Journal" that raccoons, in particular young raccoons, carry a type of roundworm called *Baylisascaris procyonis* that can cause serious disease in other animals, birds and humans. Barker says that young children are at risk. Eggs of the roundworm in raccoon feces might get on their hands and into their mouths and into the bloodstream. Raccoons tend to defecate in such areas as the crook of a tree. An infected animal can pass hundreds of thousands of eggs a day. They can contaminate an area for perhaps five years and are resistant to common "disinfectants". Infections can cause convulsions and can be fatal.

extracted from "New in Medicine" by Marilyn Dunlop in the TORONTO STAR, Sept. 15, 1996



This sketch is from a photo in SEASONS, the magazine of the Federation of Ontario Naturalists.

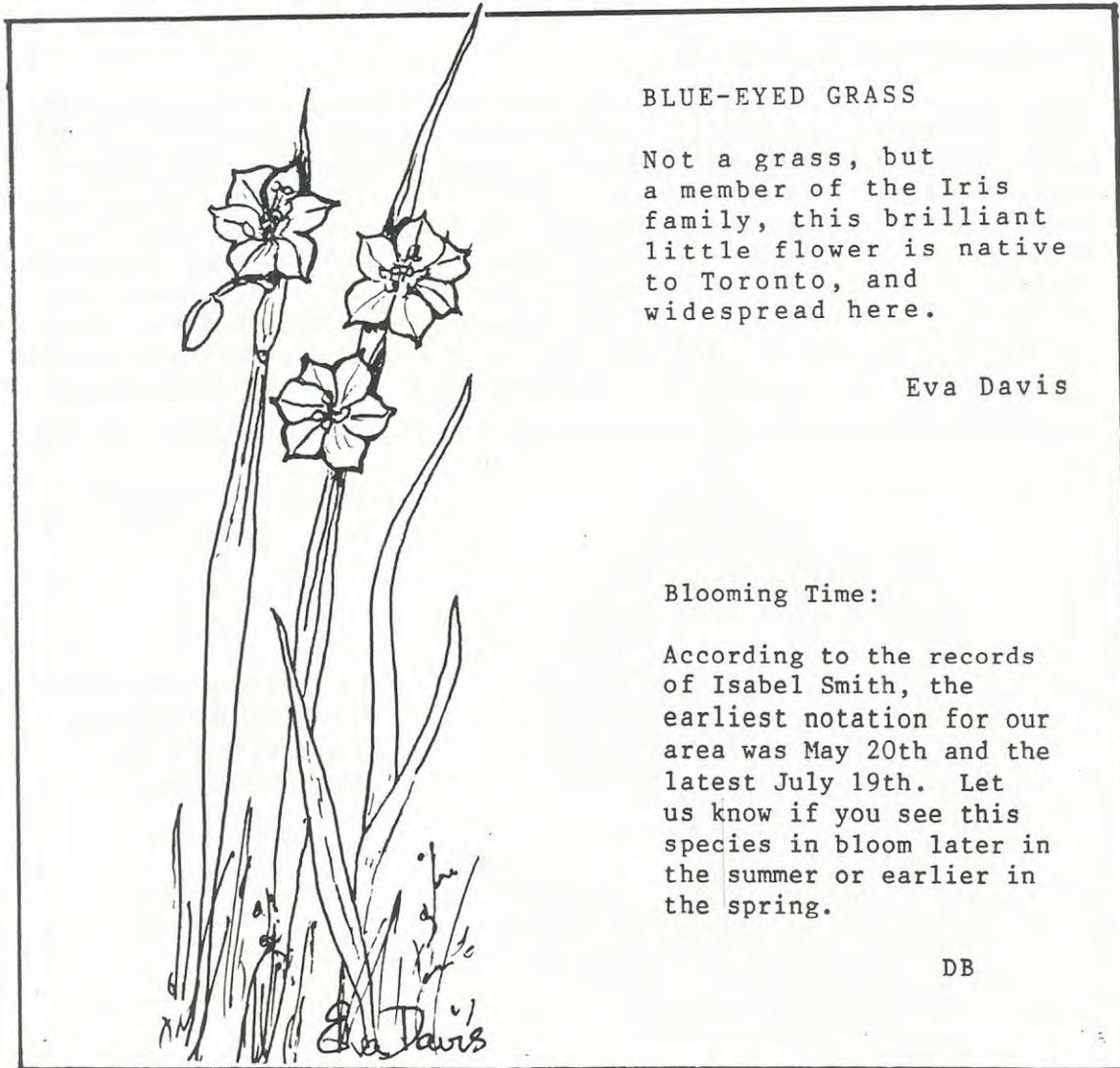
IN THE NEWS (cont'd)

TREE VARIETY SETS RECORD

Ecologists have found that a small patch of Brazilian rain forest contains 476 tree species, more than any spot of similar size ever studied. All 476 species were confined to a plot of two and a half acres. The study area, about 300 miles northeast of Rio de Janeiro, is part of a rain forest ecosystem that is frequently cited as one of the world's most endangered. The study was done in the Atlantic coastal forest, an area of eastern Brazil that has been hit hard since the Portuguese settled it 500 years ago. Ecologists estimate that about 5 per cent of the original forest remains. The study found 104 tree species that had never been seen in the Atlantic coastal forest before and 5 that are completely new to science. Ecologists are amazed at the number of species because on average a similar patch of North American temperate forest contains only 2 to 20 tree species.

extracted from an article in the NEW YORK TIMES, Nov. 12, 1996

▷



BLUE-EYED GRASS

Not a grass, but a member of the Iris family, this brilliant little flower is native to Toronto, and widespread here.

Eva Davis

Blooming Time:

According to the records of Isabel Smith, the earliest notation for our area was May 20th and the latest July 19th. Let us know if you see this species in bloom later in the summer or earlier in the spring.

DB

IN THE NEWS (cont'd)

COLD ENOUGH FOR YOU?

Taking the temperature of a 200-year-old street is vital to its well-being and for all the people who live and work there. Meteorologist Oscar Koren plans to zoom up and down Toronto's Yonge Street over the next months in a van come rain or shine or tornado. His vehicle will contain computers, laser-sensors and a high-tech digital thermometer and will record temperatures automatically. A similar temperature-taking expedition took place on Yonge St. exactly 60 years ago when University of Toronto professor Knowles Middleton drove his car up and down Toronto's main street from the Lakeshore to Hogg's Hollow more times than he could count. His brand-new electric thermometer confirmed what he already suspected -- the distance from the lake and the height above sea-level trigger major temperature differences. For example, Lake Ontario has a cooling effect in summer and warms things up in winter. The 600-foot altitude of the Yonge-Eglinton intersection made it the street's "hot spot", while the big dip at Hog's Hollow stayed cool, drafty and smoke-polluted most of the year. Once the facts about Yonge Street's temperature variations are out (values on different parts of the street for the same time can vary by as much as five degrees Celsius), the data should interest businesses, municipalities, developers, universities, health and science institutes and everyone who lives, works or drives on the street. To get going, Koren needs around \$10,000 to assemble all the gear on the van and to hire a technician and a driver. He hopes some of the businesses, municipalities or financial institutions that would benefit from his temperature study will contribute this modest start-up money. Koren can be reached in Concord by phone at 905-669-2365 or by fax at 905-669-4838.

extracted from an article by Gordon Black in TODAY'S SENIORS, Dec. 1996

TORONTO RANKS NO. 1

According to FORTUNE magazine, Toronto is the best city in the world to mix "work and family". Toronto won points in the international category for low crime rates, clean streets, green spaces and accessibility to art, literature and movies. FORTUNE said Toronto is still the safest city in North America and has "avoided soul-less suburban sprawl by nurturing its downtown and lakefront neighbourhoods. So important is green to Toronto, in fact, that the city keeps a strict count on its trees". FORTUNE notes that Canada's largest city also has less desirable traits, like cold, damp winters and high taxes. "But with eight-minute commutes from many neighbourhoods, nearly 2,000 ethnic restaurants and a veritable national park mentality, what's a little moisture in the air?"

extracted from an article in the LONDON FREE PRESS, Oct. 22, 1996

BALLOONS CAN BE A DANGER TO YOUR HEALTH

Blowing up balloons can damage the lungs, causing air bubbles to spread under the skin throughout the body. The air pressure involved in blowing up balloons is enough to damage the alveoli, the tiny sacs in the lung where air is absorbed. The same thing can happen when people "snort" cocaine or puff at a marijuana joint.

extracted from an article in the GLOBE AND MAIL, Dec. 28, 1996

DRINKING WATER ADDITIVES

In Toronto, about 20 per cent of people surveyed by the city's public health department in 1990 said they regularly substitute bottled water rather than tap water treated with chlorine and containing minute amounts of other chemicals that befoul Lake Ontario. They remain unconvinced the water is absolutely safe to drink. Last spring, a Metro Works survey found about 25 per cent of the population did not trust the quality of tap water. Among those who did drink tap water, nearly 40 per cent used a home filtering device. The key to killing bacteria in drinking water is the addition of chlorine in most treatment plants. Across Canada, 69 per cent of water treatment plants use 8,500 tonnes of chlorine each year as a disinfectant. Another 30 per cent rely on filtering only and 1 per cent use a system that injects ozone into the water as a substitute for chlorine. Treatment with ozone, which breaks down quickly, requires the use of a small amount of chlorine as water leaves the plant to ensure the water and pipes remain clean throughout the distribution system. Without some form of treatment, bacteria from human and animal waste in water can be fatal. About 1.5 billion people around the world do not have safe drinking water supplies and an estimated 9 million die from contaminated water each year. If chlorine does such an incredible job of cleansing water, why is it distrusted by so many people? Chlorine and its compounds are found in some of the most dangerous toxic mixtures known. These include deadly dioxins and furans and the persistent cancer-causing chemicals found in the Great Lakes that both Canada and the U.S. have promised to eliminate. The International Joint Commission that monitors conditions around the Great Lakes has called for a phasing out of the use of chlorine as alternatives to the chemical are found. In the mid-1970s the puzzling presence of chloroform was discovered in drinking water. It does not occur naturally and is not added intentionally. Chloroform is the most common chemical in a group known as trihalomethanes (THMs). It is formed by the reaction of chlorine with bacteria from human and animal waste and other organic material. A recent Health Canada study of 5,000 people in Ontario suggested long-term exposure to THMs through drinking water was responsible for 550 new cases of bladder and colon cancers along with 140 deaths each year in the province. The study found no evidence linking THMs to rectal cancer. The researchers did not recommend eliminating the use of chlorine as a water disinfectant but they did advocate more research to find alternatives for water treatment. One of the simplest methods of ridding drinking water of THMs is to boil it after it comes from the tap.

extracted from "Milton's chlorination pique" by Brian McAndrew in the TORONTO STAR, Nov. 23/96

□

In February
eating the rowanberries,
red-breasted robins.

Haiku by Helen Juhola

THE WEATHER (THIS TIME LAST YEAR)

Toronto, February 1996

The month was not outstanding in any particular way in Toronto. Temperatures were fractionally above normal (but so close that it wasn't really noticeable either way), and snowfall was scanty, being about half or less than half the average. Nowhere in Toronto was there ever more than 4 cm of snow on the ground, and often there was none. The 12.8 cm downtown, and 10.6 cm at Pearson Airport were the lowest snowfall totals for February since 1992 -- not a long time, really, but this is often the driest month of the year and Toronto snowfall is notoriously capricious. Rainfall was a few millimetres above average, and total precipitation slightly below normal in the 40 mm range, but still the highest since 1990.

Actually, some interesting things did happen on the weather map despite the bland average picture. The brutal cold that hovered over the Prairie provinces in January gradually spread southeast for the first six days of February. Conditions in Toronto were definitely cold but not exceptionally frigid, hitting **-20.9°C at Pearson Airport** on Feb. 4th. This is still not in the same league as January 1994, 1981, or 1982; February 1979; or December 1989. The cold spell yielded to seasonable variability and then to a strong mild trend, the latter part of the month accompanied by showers, winds, and even a thunderstorm on the evening of Feb. 23rd.

Gavin Miller



COMING EVENTS

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

- Winter birds, Durham Region - Sat. Feb. 15 from 9 am (all day) with leader, George Bryant. Meet at the Pickering GO station to form a car pool if necessary. Bring a lunch and dress warmly.

Toronto Entomologists Association meeting - Sat. Feb. 22 at 1 pm in Metro Hall, 55 John St. Call 905-727-6993 for more information.

Mycological Society of Toronto meeting - Mon. Feb. 17 at 8 pm at the Civic Garden Centre auditorium. Dr. Jim Ginns will be speaking about Edible and Other Interesting Fungi of Ontario.

High Park Birds in Winter walk - Sun. Feb. 9 at 1:15 pm. Meet at the Grenadier Restaurant. Bring binoculars. This walk is organized by the High Park Citizens' Advisory Committee, Colborne Lodge, and the Dept. of Parks & Recreation (City of Toronto). For more information about tours and other volunteer programs, call 392-7276, ext. 301.

History of Toronto Parks - lecture series at 205 Yonge St. from 12 noon to 1 pm. General admission: \$4 or free for Toronto Historical Board Heritage Partners. Call 392-6827 for details.

- Jan. 23 - What it might have been: St. James Park Victorian Garden
- Jan. 30 - Toronto Downtown Parks
- Feb. 6 - A New Urban Ecology
- Feb. 13 - High Park
- Feb. 20 - Bridging Two Centuries: The Village of Yorkville Park

Toronto Above and Below: Public Works in Toronto 1910 - 1953, a display of photos and maps at the Market Gallery, 95 Front St. East until Feb. 23, 1997. Call 392-7604 for times. Free.

Weather Watch Course - Feb. 15 and 22 from 10 am to 3 pm at the Ontario Science Centre, 770 Don Mills Rd. Cost: \$60. For more details call Vic Tyrer at 696-3255.

Heritage Showcase 1997 - displays and information about Metro Toronto Heritage groups - Feb. 21, 22, 23 at the Scarborough Town Centre.

Volunteers needed to help with the Toronto Field Naturalists' display. Call Sandy Cappell at 663-7738 if you would like to help for a few hours.

Canada's South Coast: A Carolinian Cornucopia - a nature conference and annual general meeting for the Federation of Ontario Naturalists and the Canadian Nature Federation - Aug. 14-17 in Windsor, Ont. For more information call Karen Cedar at 519-966-5852 (days) or Betty Learmouth at 519-944-0825 (evenings) or 519-944-2292 (days).

Help
TFN



COMING EVENTS (cont'd)

Royal Canadian Institute free Sunday lectures at the J.J.R. Macleod auditorium Medical Sciences Building, University of Toronto. Call 928-2096 for more details.

- Jan. 26 - The BAAS meeting in Toronto in 1897: Science then and now
- Feb. 2 - Our immune system: friend or foe?
- Feb. 9 - Science for Youth program
- Feb. 16 - Bats can see with their ears! [joint meeting with TFN]
- Feb. 23 - Kimberlites and their diamonds, from Kimberly to Canada □

Field drawings of
Two native Toronto
GOLDENRODS



↑ "gray" or "dwarf"

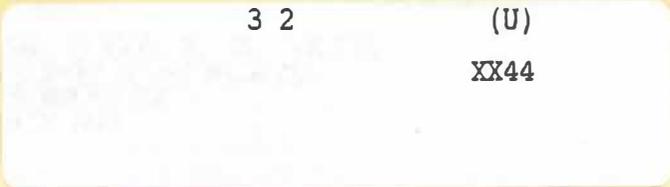
← "zig-zag"

TORONTO FIELD NATURALISTS

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OTHER PUBLICATIONS

TORONTO FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB: ITS HISTORY AND CONSTITUTION, 1965\$ 2.00	INDEX OF TFN NEWSLETTERS (1938 to present).....\$10.00
CHECKLIST OF PLANTS IN FOUR TORONTO PARKS: WILKET CREEK, HIGH PARK, HUMBER VALLEY, LAMBTON WOODS, 1972\$ 2.00	TORONTO REGION BIRD CHART, 1983.....\$ 4.00
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	TORONTO ISLANDS: PLANT COMMUNITIES AND NOTEWORTHY SPECIES, 1987\$ 4.00
	TODMORDEN MILLS, 1987.....\$ 4.00
	VASCULAR PLANTS OF METROPOLITAN TORONTO, 1994 ...\$ 8.00
	TORONTO CHECKLISTS (birds, other vertebrates, butterflies, other invertebrates, mosses, other plants)each 50¢
	NO G.S.T.
	All publications may be ordered from Toronto Field Naturalists, 605-14 College St., Toronto, Ontario M5G 1K2. (Add \$2.00 per item for postage and handling).

MEMBERSHIP FEES (No G.S.T.)

\$30 FAMILY (2 adults - same address, children included)
\$25 SINGLE, SENIOR FAMILY
\$20 STUDENT, SENIOR SINGLE
Tax receipts issued for donations