

TORONTO FIELD NATURALISTS' CLUB NEWSLETTER

MAY MEETING

Monday, May 2, 1966, at 8.15 p.m.
at the
ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM

Monday, May 2nd, is the TFNC's ANNUAL MEETING and ELECTION OF OFFICERS for the coming year's activities (refer to your April Newsletter for the nominating committee's slate of proposed officers)--but the entire meeting is not devoted to business!

We have been fortunate in obtaining two nature movies for screening:

1. WHITETHROAT, by Dan Gibson

A white-throated sparrow is host during this recent award-winning film which deals with various types of wild animals in their wilderness home.

2. BLACK DUCK, by William Carrick

Mr. Carrick's photographic achievements are well known to naturalists. He has recently taken charge of Niska Waterfowl Research Station, near Guelph.

In the rotunda - FON Bird Check Lists, 5¢

- TFNC History and Constitution, 50¢

- "Flight", annual Junior Club publication, 50¢

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Important announcements regarding Spring Outings will be found on the next page.

A REMINDER! The many visitors and newer members attending our meetings and field trips will appreciate the friendly and helpful attitude of older members. Newcomers who are ignored soon become discouraged and fall away. Let's all be TFNC boosters!

JUNIOR CLUB After hearing the excellent talks given by Junior Club members at our April meeting, many of our members may be interested in attending the closing meeting of the Junior Club in the Museum theatre on Saturday, May 7, at 10.00 a.m. Prizes will be awarded and "Flight" magazine distributed. Walt Disney's "Living Desert" will be shown; visitors will be asked to contribute 25¢ to help defray the cost of this film. The annual Junior Club outing will be held at the Boyd Conservation Area on Sat., May 28.

Director - Mr. Robt. MacLellan, 488-9346

A TV SERIES Members will be interested in a new series on "University of the Air" OF SPECIAL (8.30-9.00 a.m., CFTO) dealing with Museum activities and utilizing INTEREST Museum personnel. Dates and topics are as follows:

May 10 - Introduction,
Dr. E. Swinton,
Director, ROM
" 17 - Textiles
" 21 - Biology
" 24 - Mineralogy
" 25 - Archaeology

June 1 - Conservation
" 7 - Ethnology
" 8 - Reptiles
" 14 - Ornithology
" 15 - Iran (Far East)
" 21 - Entomology
" 22 - Geology

Outings

The following information is supplementary to the instructions in the Spring Outings booklet:

Clarification of driving instructions for April 30 outing. Hwy. 403 is not well marked for exit via Hwy. 6 South. The exit for Hwy. 6 North is used, and further signs indicate where to turn for Hwy. 6 South. There are also signs indicating the Royal Botanical Gardens. Follow these, and they will lead you onto Hwy. 6 South, but turn left, not right, at Hwy. 2.

Details of Tweed-Kaladar weekend. Saturday, May 21, 10.00 a.m.: Meet in park just south of Park Place Motel, Tweed, at the south end of the Tweed main street on Hwy. 37. Details of Sunday trip will be given out on Saturday. For the benefit of those wishing to join the outing on Sunday, one of the leaders will be at the above location at 10.00 a.m. Sunday also. Monday will be free (not organized) for those wishing to explore this delightful area on their own. The National Topographical Maps are: 31 C/6 East and West, 31 C/11 East and West.

Driving instructions for June 26 outing, Elora. Meet at the parking lot at the pavilion of Elora Gorge Park (in the main part of the park, outside the town). Suggested route from Toronto: west on Hwy. 401 to Interchange 37, and north on Hwy. 6 through Guelph; about 4 miles north of Guelph use the left fork where Hwy. 6 swings to the right (to Fergus). Turn left at the first intersection after the railway tracks near Elora, then right at the next intersection, into the park. Turn to the right to get to the pavilion. A charge is made for parking.

Botany outing in August. A botany outing will be held at Wilket Creek Park on a Saturday morning in August. For details, phone Jack or Mary Gingrich at 531-9701 between August 1 and 12.

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Wildlife Areas on Toronto Island

Members are reminded that Gull Island, Doughnut Island, and Muggs' Island are wildlife sanctuaries, and closed to people for all months of the year. In addition, in order to protect nesting species and resting migrants from disturbance and vandalism by the public, the area north of the Filtration Plant will be closed from May 1 to July 15 each year.

However, members of the TFNC are exempt from this last restriction, and Island police have been notified that production of a valid TFNC membership card is sufficient authorization to enter the Filtration Plant nature area at any time. A few members reported last year that they were turned away despite the production of their membership cards. We have checked this matter through with the Police Department and are assured that instructions to personnel on the area have been made very clear. Should any further trouble be encountered please notify the Club secretary (481-0260) and we will report it immediately to those in authority.

President - Mr. R. F. Norman

Secretary - Mrs. H. Robson,
49 Craighurst Ave.,
Toronto 12 (481-0260)



Number 220

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April 1966

One of our favourite pastimes is the study of topographical maps of Ontario. We have taken dozens of arm-chair trips through many townships, rambling, in spirit, along rapid ripply rivers, crossing orchid-studded bogs, enjoying vicariously a myriad of scenic splendours which in reality we may never visit in person.

Often we have wondered, while perusing these paper paradises, why so many of our lovely lakes have names so lack-lustre and unimaginative. Show a tourist a map with two lakes called Round Lake and Lake Amethyst and see which one catches his interest. Even though Round Lake may be the more picturesque by far, the image which the more colourful name conjures up in the mind of the traveller wins his blessing. Clearly Round Lake has been slandered. So then have the hundreds of others which carry such erring epithets as Little Lake, Stony Lake, Sand Lake, and so on. Such titles are not even descriptive as we are likely to find that Stony Lake is sandy, Little Lake is the largest of the three, and Sand Lake is rimmed with rugged rocks.

How could those responsible for naming our virgin waters be so dull-spirited and witless when an endless variety of pleasant and soul-stirring titles could have been chosen? Let us get rid of these common colourless names and have more names like Hiawatha, Lake Anemone, Madawaska, Whispering Lake, and their like. Even the quiet highland beauty of Scotland's Loch Lomond is further enhanced by its alliterative, lullaby-like name.

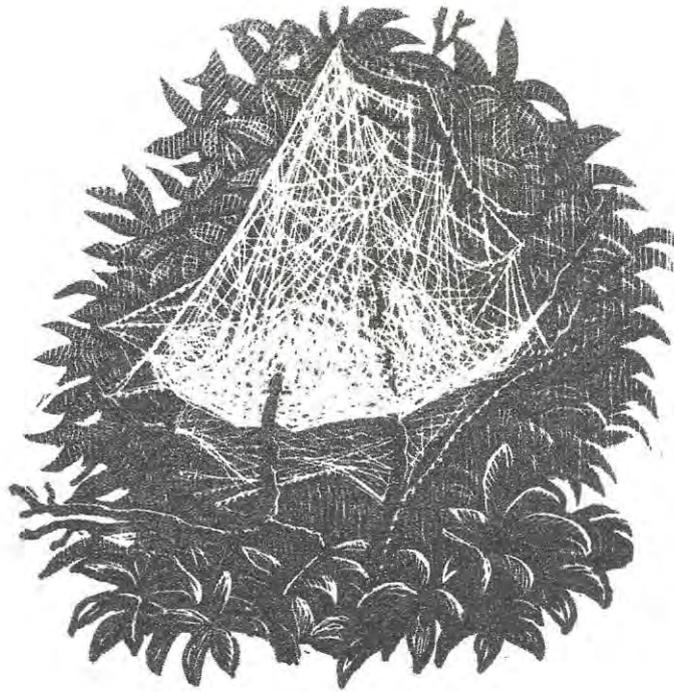
As Robert Benchley would say, I'm afraid the whole thing has to be done over.

G. Bennett

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SILKEN SPLENDOUR

by

Paul Geraghty

Excerpt from a camper's diary...

Sheguiandah Bay, Manitoulin Island, September 1st...As I nest quietly and peacefully in my sleeping bag this morning, upon awakening before dawn, I hear moisture dropping gently on the walls of my tent. To my surprise, when I go outside to begin my daily, early ramble, I discern that the drip, drip is caused by a heavy fog, not by rain at all. The end of the 40' pier adjacent to my tent is not visible, nor is any part of the shoreline except that immediately close to my location. No wind stirs; there are no human voices, only the water birds' morning salutes, hushed today because the sounds are not carrying full volume through the moist medium which has closed in over land and water.

My ears detect the fascinating, eerie, haunting, many-toned voices of the loons from far across the bay, and the gulls soon pick up the harsher keynotes, flinging them against the dull wall of water over water. Penetrating the fog also are the muffled-sounding motors of fishing boats--but that is the only indication of their presence out yonder. As I look out over the water at this overall grayness I cannot call it a void--it is too positive a colour; instead, I think of it as a movable drape, which perhaps can be swept aside with one motion of mind over matter, either mine or Nature's.

An immature merganser swims at ease in the shallow shoals by the reed bed close to shore. For my delighted eyes the sedges and cattails also have a special display: from the tops of many of these marsh plants is suspended a network of lacework. Dozens of spider webs of many sizes and designs are spread from reed tip to reed tip like so many delicate, crocheted doilies hung up to dry.

As I walk up the hill to the road, away from the beach, the pattern of webwork continues--on bushes, on blades of grasses, from tree trunk to tree branch; even the fence rails have their filmy wares to show. Out to the long pier now: many large boulders of quartzite and conglomerate reveal their surfaces now softened by a spider-spun overlay of silken intricacy. In the slight breeze which is now apparent the hanging webs swing and sway like hammocks. Closer observation, however, shows me that the hammocks are lethal in nature and are not for pleasure, since the occupants are flies and insects caught by the sticky silk strands so cunningly and beautifully created by the owners of the swinging traps.

Would that the sun would poke its far-reaching fingers through the mist long enough to turn the webs into multi-coloured prisms of Nature's fashioning!

G. Ruth Marshall

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Excerpt from a home-owner's diary...

My 'back forty', October/November...There seemed to be an unusually large number of orb weaving garden spiders around this fall. They particularly like cedar thickets and the pyramidal junipers used for foundation planting. With nightly patrols around our place, flashlight in hand, I was able to watch about a dozen or so; some of them were real whoppers with bodies as big as the first joint of my thumb, light brown, and with beautiful cream-coloured spots and crosses on their backs. Underneath they are covered with soft, silky hairs lying close to the body and along the legs, but through this down they have fearsome looking, peg-shaped bristles which stick out like thorns!

The trap these spiders set for flying insects is a beautiful thing; its construction is so fascinating that it is worth taking a chair and electric lantern and settling down for an hour to watch.

Building begins by stringing a triatic, a stout horizontal tightly stretched 'rope' made of many strands of 'general purpose' construction silk. The first filament is positioned by climbing laboriously over the foliage and paying it out carefully from the spinnerets with one hind foot, taking care that it does not foul a twig on the way. This is most precisely done, since it is upon the accurate placing of this first strand that the effectiveness of the final web depends. I have seen it stated that the thread is spun and allowed to blow in the wind until it catches at the other end; that is too hazardous, and in any case the thread is not sticky. The rest of the 'rope' is made by climbing to and fro along the strands until enough thickness is built up--the strands being cemented in place at either end, usually to different places on the twigs, with special glue from the spinnerets.

Next come the side stays, made in the same way, slung from the ends of the triatic and joining at a point midway below, so that at this stage it looks like an equilateral triangle with an apex at the bottom. The sides are sometimes guyed outwards at this time, but this depends on the position of suitable parts of the bush. The radials are next started by the spider's dropping on a single thread from the centre of the triatic and cementing it near the apex of the side stays, then climbing this thread and, from about midway up, starting another which will in turn be glued to the triatic--a measured distance over from the middle thread. Always, when climbing along a thread and spinning an additional filament, the new thread passes from the spinnerets through a hook at the end of one of the hind legs; this keeps the thread constantly taut and free from obstructions. These radial threads are of a much more elastic material than are the triatic and the stays, and are not particularly sticky. It seems almost unbelievable, but the spider must have some sort of built-in computer able to solve trigonometrical functions, because the radials all come out without about the same angle (15 to 20 degrees) between them. This means that when they are cemented to the triatic and side stays, the distances between them must be progressively greater towards the apices of the triangles.

When all of the radial threads are in place, the spiral part of the web is made. This is the part for which the whole structure is built, for it is the 'flypaper'. The filament is of a still different material, much finer and more elastic than even the radials. It also has a coating of mucilage, probably an albumin-like substance which is not sticky when produced, but after half a minute or so absorbs sufficient moisture from the atmosphere to become like a string of very sticky beads. The first spiral is spun from the centre out, and is open, consisting of only four turns. Using this as a guide, the spider fills in the spaces, very carefully spinning the filament, keeping it taut with one hind leg and at each radial measuring the distance from the last spiral thread with the other hind leg.

At each intersection of radial and spiral, the threads are cemented together with a dab of the 'glue' produced by the spinnerets. This is quite complex, because there is at one and the same time a thread being produced from the spinnerets, passing through the hook in the hind foot which is holding it with the correct tension--and sideways, out of the way. She then is able to bring the rear end of her abdomen around to the intersection of the two threads and glue them together without getting mixed up with the thread being spun. The process is repeated at each radial until the entire web is filled in from outside to centre.

Then comes what I think is a most remarkable step! Crisscrossing at the centre

of the web are all the radials, some spirals, and construction threads used at various stages during the process; in fact, it is quite a mess of threads. In addition, the placing of the various threads has changed the configuration of the web and it needs to be tidied up. This is exactly what the spider does. She proceeds to eat the centre out of her web and to spin a new central part, pulling at each section until the tension is right, filling the space with a sort of honeycomb-like pattern of threads, and it is on this that she will rest, head downward, waiting for a fly.

When an insect bumbles into the web and sticks, its struggles pull more and more of the sticky threads towards it, enmeshing it further. With this, the spider is galvanized into instant action. Clamping one hind foot on a thread on either side of the victim she turns him with her other legs like a chicken on a spit, all the while laying on layers of a broad ribbon of silk which looks like sticky, satiny, parcel-sealing tape. In just a few seconds the prey is covered and immobile inside an elastic straight-jacket. If he struggles, more tape is added. I watched a grasshopper, twice the length of the spider, become immobile in twenty seconds.

In the warm weather the flies are consumed immediately but, later on in the fall, a larder is started, possibly to compensate for the scarcity of insects, and the 'parcels' are hung up under twigs near the retreat. The spiders occupy the web only during the hours of darkness, although they do not seem to be bothered by a flashlight beam. I found that they were alarmed by very few things, although they did object to being breathed upon. In the daytime they retreat to the shelter of some twigs or cedar fronds which they tie together with silk; access is by means of a ladder from the centre of the web.

All presumably are now in hibernation, although I have not found out where. One evening in October there were eight or so occupied webs in the garden; two nights later, not a spider could be found.

Peter A. Peach

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Wildflower Preserve in James Gardens

The continued co-operation of TFNC members is requested in notifying the Parks Department of Metropolitan Toronto where sizeable groups of plants might be obtained for transplanting to the wildflower preserve being created in James Gardens.

The Parks Department are particularly interested in acquiring plants of the following species: White and Red Trilliums, Marsh Marigold, Hepatica, Jack-in-the-Pulpit, Spring Beauty, Blue Cohosh, Solomon's Seal, False Solomon's Seal, Foam-flower, Bead Ruby, Adder's Tongue (Dog-tooth Violet), Toothwort, Bulbous Lilies, and various ferns.

No doubt some of our members will know of locations (preferably in the Metropolitan area) where building projects threaten the destruction of quantities of wildflowers of the desired kinds. If so, please ascertain who is the owner of the land, and obtain permission for removal of the plants, then notify Mr. Ron Hambly (487-5291) of the Metropolitan Parks Department.

The Parks Department explain that "the transplanting time is rather critical, because most of these species would be best transplanted during their dormant stage . . .

Therefore, it may be necessary for us to delay action in connection with certain species in order to wait for the optimum time to move them. Each case will have to be judged on its own merits."

This is a long-term project of great cultural and educational value, and one in which our Club is pleased to co-operate.

Toronto Region Field Notes

As announced in the last issue of the Newsletter, the Bird Study Group is undertaking the compilation of a regular summary of bird observations in the Toronto Region. This is not meant to be an up-to-the-minute report, but rather a compilation of important observations and events, such as invasions, new birds for the area, migration observations, nesting records, etc.

If this is to be successful we will need the co-operation of all TFNC members who are interested in birds. Please send in your observations on the form included at the end of this issue. Remember all interesting observations are wanted--not just reports of rarities. From the observations submitted, together with other sources, it is hoped that a composite list of bird records over a long term can be compiled and eventually published.

Book Review

PHOTOGRAPHY FOR SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATION - A Handbook. By Alfred A. Blaker. San Francisco: W. H. Freeman and Company. 1965. 158 pages. Illus. Price \$8.00 in U.S.A.: Approx. \$9.00 in Canada.

This handbook is designed primarily "to provide a source of useful and practical information about photography for those persons who need to make pictures to illustrate articles to be submitted for scientific publication." However, it contains an exceptional amount of useful information on the basics of photography, which the reviewer thought it worth while to call to the readers' attention. While it is designed initially for black and white photography, there are special considerations for colour work as well.

The book, perhaps more than any other work of its kind, deals with lighting--something we can all profit from. Whereas a digestion of this book may not win any awards for the photographer, it will most certainly help him in recording on film some of the details for which he has hitherto been striving but has failed to attain.

The author is the Principal Photographer, Scientific Photographic Laboratory, The University of California, Berkeley, California. The book is adequately illustrated; unlike so many other photography books it is more a text than an album.

Walter M. Tovell

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Dissa and Data

Pollution is Not New

Mr. A. A. Outram sends us a clipping from The Professional Engineer and Engineering Digest quoting from Coleridge:

In Kohln, a town of Monks and bones
And pavements fang'd with murderous stones,
And rags, and hags, and hideous wenches;
I counted two and seventy stenches,
All well defined, and several stinks!
Ye Nymphs that reign o'er sewers and sinks,
The river Rhine, it is well known,
Doth wash your city of Cologne;
But tell me, Nymphs, what power divine
Shall henceforth wash the river Rhine?

Samuel Taylor Coleridge
1772-1834

Professional or Amateur?

Occasionally someone takes us to task for not including enough serious material of a scientific nature in the Newsletter. Another criticism heard a few times is that we should devote more space to conservation literature.

While we agree that this type of literature is important, we wonder if such subjects are not well represented already in the many other periodicals to which most naturalists subscribe. Must everything be scientific? Can't something be retained as a sanctum for the amateur who simply wants to enjoy the world without getting involved in the politics of land management or the science of chromosomes and biomes?

We see no point in our masquerading as a literary thought-leader on such subjects. Better they be left in the very capable hands of the professionals who, we'd say, are doing an excellent job without our help.

In Case Anyone Asks

Death and taxes have a lot in common but at least death can't get any worse Elizabeth Harwood of the Richmond Hill Naturalists knows a species of mosquito out west that will eat a cow and then ring the cow bell to attract the calf Absinthe makth the heart grow fonder Helping an old lady across the street can be difficult, especially if she doesn't want to go The Toronto Field Naturalists' Club welcomes new members. Tell your friends Frustration is a motorist who, after ten minutes in a traffic tie-up, realizes he's in a car wash line-up In his book, Edible and Poisonous Mushrooms of Canada, J. W. Groves has a sure way of telling edible fungi from poisonous ones. Eat them. If you die, they were poisonous Try to attend as many TFN outings as possible There should be a heavy nut crop this fall. It's election year A sign in a delicatessen at Sheppard & Bathurst says, "Out of his goodness, Stanley reduces his chopped liver." Congratulations to the CBC for their many fine nature programmes A friend of mine collects Hungarian rhapsodies. He's a Liszt hound.

Mighty aches from little toe corns grow As the shipwrecked Asian said,
"Wouldn't a dhow go good now?"

Poets' Corner

We continue to run across references to Nature in Poetry and have collected a few specifically relating to the subject of Instinct.

From Alexander Pope:

Birds and beasts can fly their foe:
So chanticleer, who never saw a fox,
Yet shunn'd him as a sailor shuns the rocks.

From Matthew Prior:

Hence, when anatomists discourse
How like brute organs are to ours,
They grant, if higher powers think fit,
A bear might soon be made a wit,
And that, for anything in nature,
Pigs might squeak love-odes, dogs bark satire.

And from Swift an observation on either reasoning or instinct:

Brutes find out where their talents lie:
A bear will not attempt to fly;
A founder'd horse will oft debate
Before he tries a five-barr'd gate.

G. Bennett

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What's Around?

by Slim Pickins

Hi, folks,

Our country relatives called on us the other day. My brother says, "Hi, Slim, we're in town to see the sights so we thought we'd call on you first." He was a witness in court the other day. The judge said to the defendant, "Guilty or Not Guilty?" and he says, "Judge, that's for me to know and you to find out."

Well, they wanted to see some birds so we went to Downsview Dells which is a mighty fine park. To get there go to Sheppard and Jane and drive east on Sheppard to Keele and go west. When you're right down in the hollow, turn south into the Park. You'll see the sign. First, I think you should drive right in to the end of the road so you'll get an idea what the places looks like. Black Creek flows through the Park. Walk around for an hour. If you go there around the end of April you should see ruby-crowned kinglets, myrtle warblers, hermit thrushes, and white-throated sparrows plus many others. If you go in the middle of May, you should see at least ten species of warblers.

Well folks, I won't be seeing you any more. I've taken a job keeping a light-house on a rock off Tierra del Fuego. There is no mail service. My Indian guide, Patchacanoe, will take me there and then he'll leave. The only way to get in touch is to throw a bottle with a note in it in the ocean and wait until it gets there. It's worth a try.

Hasn't the weather been awful?

Yours truly,

Slim Pickins

P.S. Be sure to leave some of the wet stuff in the bottle.

Annual Report, 1965-66 Season

In the 1965-66 season, the Toronto Field Naturalists' Club has continued its main activities in the pattern which has proven most successful over many years. Miss Ruth Marshall as chairman of the Programme Committee, has provided a programme for our monthly meetings in which speakers and subjects of great interest to naturalists have been presented.

The Audubon Wildlife Films have again been presented, with two unfortunate occurrences to mark the season. On one evening the projectionist employed by Eaton's did not arrive, and the programme was delayed 45 minutes before a substitute could be found. Another film evening was November 9, 1965, when the great electrical power black-out occurred; restoration of power allowed the film to be shown, but hundreds of people did not attempt to reach the auditorium.

Under the chairmanship of Mr. Jack Gingrich, the Outings Committee has again arranged a programme of outings that is proving to be very popular. During last Fall and Winter, 17 bird and botany walks took place, and for this Spring there are 27 outings which include the Spring weekend at Tweed and three bus trips to areas some distance from Toronto.

You will remember that last summer Dr. R. M. Saunders found it necessary to end his work as Editor of the Newsletter, after 26 years. Mr. Gerry Bennett has earned our gratitude for stepping in as Editor this season, and we must all regret that pressure of other work prevents him from continuing.

Since last October, copies of the Club History and Constitution have been on sale to members at a price of 50 cents. This publication I recommend to everyone seriously interested in the knowing of the Club's aims and activities since its inception.

This season has seen the emergence of a new, rather specialized activity in the Bird Study Group. Mr. Jim Woodford and his committee have produced a programme of interest and challenge for people wishing to learn more about identification, structure, habits, migration, etc., of birds. The average attendance has been about 40, which indicates a high level of interest among members. This is most satisfying to those directly involved with the study group; much planning and work is required for setting up something new of this kind.

The Botany Group has asked to be more formally associated with the TFNC so that the Executive can appoint a chairman for that group. Your Executive has welcomed and agreed to this suggestion, and is ready to give any administrative assistance that the Botany Group may require.

In my report of last year, I referred to our need to attract and interest young people in natural history. The Membership and Publicity committee under the chairmanship of Miss Rosemary Gaymer, has made a special study of this, and has prepared informative material for schools and youth organizations. In addition, we have introduced as a temporary measure, a Student class of membership at a reduced rate to attract young people. This will need to be continued for a few years to see what results are achieved. Another feature of this committee's work has been the appraisal of various designs for an arm-badge. Members of the TFNC have often expressed an interest in having a club badge that will help identification in the field, and your Executive has selected a design which we believe to be in keeping with the spirit of the time.

My thanks and appreciation are due to all members of the Executive for their efforts in the continuation and extension of the Club's activities throughout the year.

Respectfully submitted,

Ronald F. Norman, President.

Interim Statement of Receipts and Disbursements*

May 1, 1965 to March 31, 1966

Receipts

Fees	\$2,109.00	
Donations	81.05	
F.O.N. Cards	423.09	
Interest on stocks & bonds	117.60	
Sale of bus tickets (Presqu'ile, Rockwood)	237.00	
Literature (check lists, Club history)	52.25	
Sundries	34.50	
Audubon Wildlife Films	<u>3,066.32</u>	
Total receipts	6,120.81	
Add balance on hand April 30, 1965	<u>3,159.84</u>	\$9,280.65

Disbursements

Printing	1,312.01	
Postage	147.57	
Office Supplies	100.64	
Salaries, honoraria, etc.	885.00	
F.O.N. Cards	372.20	
Theatre rental, films	303.75	
Affiliation fees	69.30	
F.O.N. Camp Scholarships	275.00	
Donation - Junior Club	100.00	
Bus charter fee (Presqu'ile, Rockwood)	207.00	
Sundries	137.86	
Audubon Wildlife Films	<u>1,953.12</u>	
Total disbursements	5,863.45	
BALANCE March 31, 1966	<u>3,417.20</u>	\$9,280.65

*The balance as shown on this interim statement has been verified with the bank balance for March 31, 1966. An audited statement of receipts and disbursements for the fiscal year April 30, 1965 to April 30, 1966 will be on display for inspection at the May meeting and will be published in the next issue of the Newsletter, in September.

Estimated receipts for the month of April 1966 - \$315.00

Estimated disbursements for the month of April 1966 - \$430.00

Mrs. H. Robson, Secretary-Treasurer.

