

TORONTO FIELD NATURALISTS' CLUB NEWSLETTER

Visitors welcome!

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APRIL MEETING

Monday, April 1, 1968, at 8.15 p.m.  
at the  
ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM

235

MEMBERS' NIGHT

Junior Speakers: CATHY KARPENKO, 'Cattails'; CRAIG PARKER, 'The Turquoise-browed Motmot'; JAN ARKEMA, 'Pollution'.

Senior Speakers (illustrated with colour slides): MICHAEL SINGLETON, 'Baker Lake, N.W.T.'; PAUL CATLING, 'The Harrier's Nest'; DR. PETER PEACH, 'Psychedelic Geology'.

WE REGRET TO ANNOUNCE that Miss Rosemary Gaymer has been forced by ill health to resign from the Executive. Mr. Earl Damude has been appointed by the Executive to fill this vacancy. The members will be asked to ratify this appointment at the April Meeting.

In the rotunda: 6 copies of The Birds of Simcoe County, Ont., by O. E. Devitt (sponsored by the Brereton Field Naturalists' Club), 1967, will be on sale - \$2.75 each.

Tickets for the April 6 chartered bus trip to Dundas Marsh are available at \$1.75.

Toronto Bird-finding Guide, ed. Peter Iden, \$1.25. With spring hopefully just round the corner, you'll find this booklet extremely helpful in planning outings and identifying species.

AUDUBON FILMS On Tuesday, April 9, 8.15 p.m. at Eaton Auditorium, Mary Jane Dockeray presents a film photographed by Walter Berlet. Miss Dockeray is a geologist and nature lecturer from Grand Rapids (Michigan) Museum, well known for her radio and TV shows as well as for her work with children. The film presents a many-sided picture of our wonderful out-of-doors. From all seasons and all hours. From beaver, fawns and geese to the little things on the forest floor - lichens, mosses, snails and frogs. Come and see this beautiful film with your friends - it's the last film for this season!

APRIL OUTINGS

Enclosed with this Newsletter is the List of Spring Outings.

Chairman: Jack Gingrich, 489-9953

JUNIOR CLUB The Museum Theatre meeting is in charge of the Fossil Group with  
Saturday 3 speakers and 2 films.  
April 6  
10 a.m.

Director - Mr. Rob't MacLellan, 488-9346

BIRD GROUP Meet in basement of St. James Bond United Church, west side of  
Thursday Avenue Rd., 2 blocks north of Eglinton. Mr. Duncan MacLulich will  
April 11 discuss Bird Flight. Also: Bird Quiz; display of books devoted to  
8 p.m. individual bird species; the usual review of birds in the past and  
coming months.

Chairman: Mr. Clive Goodwin, 241-7572

BOTANY No meeting of the Botany Group until October.  
GROUP

Chairman: Miss Edith Cosens, 481-5013

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - MAY 6, 1968

The recommendations of the Nominating Committee for 1968-69 are as follows:

President: Mr. Jack Gingrich  
Vice-President: Mr. Clive Goodwin  
Members of the Executive: Mr. Stewart Corbett; Mr. Jack Cranmer-  
Byng; Mr. Walter Hutton.

Automatic retirement from the Executive this year: Mr. Jack Cranmer-Byng;  
Mr. Eric Lewis; Mr. Ken Strasser.

The attention of members is drawn to Article 8, Section 3 of the T.F.N.C.  
Constitution:

Nominations for the Executive may be proposed in writing to  
the Secretary by any 3 members of the Club before the 10th  
day of April provided that prior agreement of the nominee  
has been obtained.

Elections will take place at the Annual General Meeting on May 6.

President: Dr. Peter A. Peach

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

# Toronto Field Naturalists' Club.



Number 235

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## ON REACHING MY 40th BIRTHDAY

Early on a March morning I found my eyelids slowly opening as if pried by little fingers and a tiny voice in my ear whispering, 'Is it time to go yet?' A dream? No, it was not a dream. It was Erik and the time was 6 a.m. - definitely not time to go yet. Groggily I remembered my promise to take the whole family out this morning for a hike - early. It's no use fighting Erik for 2 hours. I got up.

About 9 o'clock we started off for Boyd's Conservation Area. It was a balmy winter morning with the temperature the warmest of the year so far - nearly 50°. It was one of those days when my neighbours came out, like groundhogs from their holes, to wash their cars. And there they were already swinging their car brushes and suds pails and pretending to enjoy it. I never wash my decrepit little Volkswagon as I am certain that the dirt binds it together. Even Anja believes this and never washes it either.

There were just the two of us - Erik and I - in the car. The others had begged off with sore throats and colds and chores but I think my recent moroseness and Erik's usual bluster had something to do with it. We were asked to stay away a long time. Anyway, a bird hike might be just the thing to chase away the gloomy thoughts about my imminent 40th birthday and that rapid slide downhill thereafter to eternity - and probably perdition, too. Besides, my bird list was looking rather sick this year and some rareties had been reported recently from Boyd's. So Boyd's it was - a fellow's got to be somewhere.

We parked on Pine Valley Rd. at the back of Boyd's near the turn in the road and walked up the path and down into the valley, pausing on the way to look at a ruined sofa. This is my favourite approach - you don't have to pay a parking fee.

Right away I knew this hike was going to be special. First there was the smell - a sweet primitive smell of hemlock and balsam and just plain warm earth. It permeated the woods and filled my nostrils and lungs and cleaned out at least a pound of Toronto soot and ten pounds of worry and care. It felt good to be a naked ape (fully clothed, I assure you) snorting through the woods with a little monkey jabbering beside me. Then there were the sounds - an indescribable medley of shrieks and warbles, chattering and chattering that seemed to come from all sides at once. Were they siskins, or finches, or even crossbills? It sounded like everything jumbled together (and it was!).

Leaving Erik to build a house from some handy firewood, I crept noiselessly towards the hillside from whence came the sounds. It wasn't long before I spotted some of the songsters. Raspberry-faced purple finches were warbling all about in the lower branches of the trees. And right under my nose were a full dozen of the brightest red crossbills you'd ever expect to see. They paid no attention to me but kept right on working hard at the cones littering the forest floor. I watched entranced as the cone 'petals' flew about. A flock of lively pine siskins joined the fun and soon there were over 50 birds sifting through the leaves above and the cones below on that warm sun-drenched hillside.

And I in the shadows - watching and watching.

It was a long 10 minutes before they decided all at once, 'enough of this', and flew abruptly and noisily away. But I had stored away sights and sounds of a hundred birds - red crossbills and purple finches, pine siskins and goldfinches, chickadees, creepers and nuthatches, bluejays, cardinals and song sparrows, and hairy and downy woodpeckers.

Finally we left too and made our way slowly through the woods towards the entrance of the nature trail. The feeder there was empty so I decided to try my luck along the banks of the little stream flowing now so briskly towards the Humber. I was looking for the varied thrush seen by many birders here during the last few weeks. Erik seemed to be getting rather too well acquainted with a mud puddle so I interested him in 'fishing' in the nearby stream. With the comforting thought that 'he should make an audible splash if he falls in', I set to work searching in earnest for the western straggler.

It wasn't long before a robin-like bird flew over the stream into the evergreen thicket nearby. I caught just a glimpse of orange and some white tail-spots before it vanished - never to be seen again despite all my subsequent diligent searching. It looked very much like a robin and perhaps it was just that. I didn't have long to contemplate this however, as the loud 'house-sparrows' chirping nearby materialized into 3 evening grosbeaks looking as spectacular and large as they always do. Then they too vanished and the woods became silent and drowsy as a summer day.

Soon we were retracing our steps back to the path and reading all the nature trail signs as we went. A flock of 20-30 crows brought visions of owls to my eyes - but no. These were just a score of happy crows - lusty black bawling birds cavorting about the trees, drunk with spring. We climbed back up the hill towards the car, pausing on the way to look at a ruined sofa.

I took the side road to Concession 6 because I wanted to hear yet another song of spring. Opposite some farmer's bare fields we got out - Erik into a ditch. A rough-legged hawk flew over, his white banner clearly visible. Horned larks tinkled in the fields on both sides of us. One was singing on a mound quite close to the road and proclaiming his territorial rights as of old.

On the way home along the 400, I sang too. And to Erik's delight we passed a Cadillac and our speedometer got stuck at 70 and disobeying all matriarchal rules, we opened both windows and let the air blow in our faces.

And suddenly I didn't feel so old any more.

E. T.

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#### NEWS AND VIEWS

.....I went to the University College Symposium on Man and discovered that although nobody knew whether we were naked apes or not, it was certain we weren't naked flies - or hairy ones, either.

.....Ruth Marshall drew my attention to the following: 'A Nature Tour to Churchill, Manitoba, is being organized by the Canadian Audubon Society. 10 days in the land of perma-frost, taiga, tundra and Hudson Bay coastline will provide a real taste of the north and its flora and fauna. From July 15 to 25, starting and ending at Winnipeg, \$350 per person. Further information from Canadian Audubon Society, 46 St. Clair Avenue East, Toronto 7.' You can even go on a whale hunt (white belugas).

.....Congratulations to Dr. Richard Saunders, our well-known former Editor, for winning his Centennial Medal as Chairman of the Canadian Historical Society. Ray Pannell tells me he and Marshall Bartram will be meeting Dr. Saunders in Tucson, Arizona this March for a round of what should be some exciting bird watching. By that time Dr. Saunders should have discovered his 1000th (!) wild flower for the year. I hope we can report more about this in some future Newsletter.

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#### A BIRDWATCHER'S RECOLLECTIONS OF 1967 (Part II)

by Katherine D. Ketchum

July 17 The great attraction for birders in this region was Lake Myvath or 'Midge Lake', a very large but rather shallow body of water well suited to waterfowl. It was dotted with rafts of Whooper Swans, non-breeding birds, we were told, and with various kinds of ducks. In a rushing river flowing out of the lake we saw hosts of Barrow's Goldeneye and a few Harlequin Ducks bobbing down the rapids. Every little pool had its quota of Red-necked (our Northern) Phalaropes and once we saw 12 of them in a single pool. How unlike home! - I thought in a kind of ecstasy. Earlier, a Rock Ptarmigan on the bare lava hills had been my life-bird for the day.

In the south the weather had been good but here in the north it was cold and grey. That night on the school playing-field some Danish gymnasts put on a display. They were very skillful, both men and boys, but complained that the cold was making them stiff, and so did the audience, sitting about on grassy banks.

July 18th brought our poorest weather, mist and then heavy rain. This was a pity, for the views as we twisted along the northern cliffs could have been magnificent. At mid-afternoon we came to a rather rough fishing village where a crowd of rowdy little boys clustered about the door of the small hotel making, as we thought, jeering remarks about the strangers.

However, a treat was in store for us. Our guide Jan, when there a week earlier, had seen a Ross's Gull at the harbour. There he led us, and, wonderful to relate, there it still was. It was a small white gull looking at rest like a little dove. In its petrel-like flight, skimming and touching the water, it showed a wedge-shaped tail, and as it wheeled, dark wing-linings. It did not seem to have the pinkish breast of the mature adult, but one can't expect everything. It was by all odds the rarest bird of our whole trip, for its usual abode is Siberia. In Canada it is occasionally seen in the high Arctic Islands, where few of us birders expect ever to go.

On our way home we were again cheered to see a Great Northern and 4 Red-throated Divers (Loons, to us). The former seems to be a much less well-known bird in Europe than it is to us. In the evening came a different sort of treat, a swim at the pool in the school in water from some thermal spring, so warm that one could loll endlessly without getting chilled. One felt marvellously relaxed after this, and cleaner than almost ever in one's life.

July 19th After a healthful breakfast of prunes, milk, skyr, oatcakes and jam, we took leave of our school hotel. We returned to Akvreyri by a highroad with many hairpin turns on one of which we felt a flurry of snow. At the town's harbour a long hunt was rewarded by seeing a Purple Sandpiper, a bird I had never met in Canada. We had a gala dinner in a most modern restaurant, somewhat of a surprise for a town of that size, and then flew back to Reykjavik. The sun, which had not shown its face in the north, came out to give us most wonderful effects of clouds, greenish sky and glacier-topped mountains, and we could take pictures of it at 11.30 p.m.

That morning we flew to Scotland, our Iceland adventure over except for one more surprise - a view of Sertsey, the new volcanic island off the south coast which appeared about 4 years ago. Its cone looked like many of the older craters on Iceland itself, and we could not detect any activity within it. We left Iceland with a great feeling of satisfaction, having seen, besides its scenery, most of the birds found there. I noted 60 species, not far short of anyone's total.

Scotland was a bit of an anticlimax, for nesting and singing were over and birds hard to see. We did get a glimpse of some of the familiar species, such as robins, wrens, swallows and their relatives, Blue Tits and others, and various of the crow family. There were a few 'lifers' - a Ring Ouzel on a mountainside, some Red Grouse among the heather, and an exciting glimpse of a Capercaillie - that took a team of birdwatchers to flush out of the woods. Lapwings and Curlews were everywhere and our local leader found us some hawks - a Buzzard, a Kestrel and a Peregrine, and we saw the much-publicized Osprey at its nest.

Paris for birds was much as you would expect, but not altogether so. I was told about Bagatelle Park, and took a long taxi-ride to it, a very remote spot with lawns, ponds, great trees and beds of flowers. Moorhens were there, a Jay, a Hedge Sparrow, a Nuthatch walking along the ground, like any ordinary bird, and unexpectedly, a Blackcap (a warbler) playing hide-and-seek among the shrubbery.

Next we went to the Camarque area in the south of France where I listed some 14 'lifers' among 44 species, but missed some hoped-for varieties. We were told, 'you should come in May', for July was very hot and dried-up. One day we had an excellent leader who showed us a Woodchat, Shrike, Bee-eaters, a Hoopoe, a Spectacled Warbler, Little Egrets, Avocets and Black-winged Stilts, not to speak of masses of distant Flamingos. One morning we took a boat-trip on the great Rhône River, seeing gulls and herons and being reminded of a rather similar trip in the Florida Everglades.

The last country that we visited was Holland. This part of our trip was wonderfully organized by the Friesland Tourist Bureau, a member of which was our constant guide. Everything went like clockwork. Meals were on time and delectable, we had some interesting evening entertainments and I, for one, saw 63 species of birds, which was not the top score.

After 2 nights at Amsterdam, agreeable but not birdy, we went by bus and ferry to Lenel Island, and at once began to see interesting things beyond the dykes that bordered the road. First was a flock of Spoonbills, 10 large, white and crested; then a Montague's Harrier and some Bar-tailed Godwits with Cormorants, Shelduck and Skylarks to swell the list.

The next day local naturalists took us to a sanctuary where we sat and stood on a sea wall in the light breeze, waited our turn to look through the telescope, and added Shoveller, Pochard, Green Sandpiper (very elusive) Greenshank, Grey Plover (i.e., Black-bellied) and Little Tern to our list.

Holland was enjoying its best summer since 1959 and on another fine day we pushed through a dense growth (taller than this writer) of fireweed and bushes to come out at last above a little lake. There we saw Flamingos again, ducks in eclipse, a Sandwich tern and two new birds, a Black-necked (or Eared) and a Little Grebe. We stopped briefly in a small town to search the park for a Collared Turtle-Dove, a bird which in recent years has greatly extended its range to the west from Middle Europe. I felt a bit vain at being the first to find, in the courtyard of a little museum, a number of European Tree Sparrows, close relatives of the House Sparrow.

Next we went to Friesland, a most charming district, with its own style of farm buildings, ancient costumes and dialect. Lapwings, Curlew and Golden Plover abounded in the fields, as well as Ruffs in their fall plumage. Here at a farm we saw our only Storks' nest with the young luckily still in it. The farmer's wife had kept records of the parents' arrival, the duration of incubation and the times of feeding the young, and was glad to tell us about them.

Now it was August 10. Much of that day was spent on an excursion boat which travelled along canals and narrow lakes. Sitting at our ease, we could see many Great-crested Grebes, Mallards and Coots, as well as flowery meadows on each side.

Our last treat was an exhibit of Friesian dancing with the women dressed in bright calico frocks and the men looking like old church elders in black top hats. As they danced the lively steps they often sang folk songs and never seemed to lack for breath.

Then came the last day. First we travelled through pleasant towns and countryside from Leeuwarden back to Amsterdam, where we had a long wait in the airport and were tempted by the duty-free shopping. Next came a fantastically long plane trip to Glasgow, Reykjavik and New York, a tremendous wait there, lining up for Immigration and Customs, and finally a brief flight in a cool Air Canada plane right over Niagara Falls and so home to Toronto. Getting there may be half the fun, as the ads claim, but getting home does not seem to be so much vaunted. However, those incidents fade, and friends made, sights seen and birds identified make such a trip a lasting delight.

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#### THE HEAVENS ABOVE - APRIL

April 1 - Sunrise at 6.00 a.m. E.S.T.; sunset at 6.45 p.m. E.S.T.

April 12 - A total eclipse of the moon, visible throughout North America.

The eclipse begins at 10.10 p.m. E.S.T. and ends at 1.25 a.m. E.S.T. (April 13).

Total eclipse is from 11.22 p.m. E.S.T. to 12 a.m. E.S.T. (April 13). Even in total eclipse the moon should be clearly visible. Take a look - and no excuse about getting up for work next morning because April 13 is a Saturday.

April 21 - Lyrid meteor shower lasting about 2 days. This is a very weak shower averaging 15 meteors per hour. It is associated with a comet from 1961.

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#### PLANT FAMILIES

##### THE ROSE FAMILY - ROSACEAE

This immensely varied family is worldwide in distribution and consists of about 100 genera and nearly 3000 species of which some 50 grow in the Metro area. More of our best known garden fruits and ornamentals come from this family than from any other.

The members of this family are often very different from one another. The plants may be herbs (strawberry) or shrubs (rose) or trees (cherry). The leaves may have many forms: simple (apple), compound (rose) or palmate (cinquefoil). But it is in the fruits that the greatest diversity is found. The fruit may take almost any form: an achene - a dry one-seeded fruit as in cinquefoil (Potentilla); a follicle - a dry fruit which splits open as in Spiraea; a drupe - the stone fruit of the plum, peach or cherry; a pome - the edible part is the expanded receptacle as apple - the real fruit is the core; an enlarged receptacle with achenes attached - as in strawberry. (The receptacle is the end of the flower stalk and has the flower parts attached to it). Because of this great variety taxonomists often group the members into tribes based primarily on fruit characteristics. So by their fruits ye shall know them as:

Tribe 1 - the rose family proper. Dry achenes on swollen receptacles.

Tribe 2 - the apple family. Fruit a pome. The ovary is completely surrounded by a fleshy receptacle.

Tribe 3 - the plum family. Fruit a drupe with the seed enclosed in an hard stone.

Some taxonomists have sorted the members into 6 tribes. If this sounds confusing, it probably is. Perhaps with Gertrude Stein we should just say, 'A rose is a rose is a rose.'

The following characteristics should be of some help in identifying this confusing family:

1. The flowers are always regular with 5 distinct petals and usually showy. Red and white are favourite colours (cinquefoil is yellow).
2. The stamens are usually very numerous and often arranged in rings in multiples of 5. Pistils may be one (peach) or many (raspberry, rose, strawberry).
3. The leaves are arranged alternately, nearly always have stipules, but may take many forms - single, compound or palmate.
4. There are usually 5 green sepals which alternate with the petals. They often unite to form a calyx tube (rose).

There are many important members in this family:

Edible fruits: apple, pear, plum, apricot, peach, cherry, blackberry, raspberry, strawberry, quince.

Garden shrubs and trees: roses, serviceberry (Amelanchier), Japanese quince (Chaenomeles), Cotoneaster, hawthorne (Crataegus), pearl bush (Exochorda), Kerria, ninebark (Physocarpus), Prunus, firethorn (Pyracantha), mountainash (Sorbus), Spiraea and many others.

Wild plants: meadow-sweet (Spiraea salicifolia); crab apple (Pyrus coronaria); shadbush (Amelanchier); scarlet haw (Crataegus); wild strawberry (Fragaria); silvery cinquefoil (Potentilla argentea); silver weed (P. anserina); white avens (Geum canadense); wild raspberry (Rubus); purple flowering raspberry; blackberry (Rubus); smooth rose (Rosa blanda); choke cherry (Prunus).

The promiscuous ones: The raspberries and blackberries (Rubus) have a family tree that is more complicated even than Hollywood's. These plants lead a completely promiscuous sex life, hybridizing at the drop of a stolon. Gray lists 205 species of Rubus before he gives up.

#### BOOK REVIEW

We wish to thank Mr. Pallington for writing the following review of an unusual book by an unusual man. I have been leafing through the book myself and find it engrossing on every page. The author's love and knowledge of wild things is everywhere expressed in simple yet lyrical prose. But read Mr. Pallington's review -and then read the book - for yourself.

Hours and The Birds: A Saskatchewan Record. By R.D. Symons. Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1967. Illustrated with full color plates and numerous black and white reproductions by the author. \$12.50 (240 p.)

This book may be considered as an amplified diary (there are several excerpts from the original diaries that the author kept) by an amateur naturalist who had the intelligence and the wisdom to make notes and sketches on his observations of birds, mammals, plants, ecology and history of the Province of Saskatchewan (and adjoining areas). Since he did this over a period of 52 years (1914-1966) the notes multiplied until the author felt there was enough to write a book. Mr. Symons is a man of varied experience: rancher, homesteader, wheat farmer, game warden, conservationist, teacher and writer (his first book is called Many Trails).

One may well say that he kept notes on nature during hours of work, relaxation, and every spare moment; he even selected jobs which would enable him to observe nature. As for the style of writing (breezy, informal, with philosophic overtones), it reminds a reader to some extent of Gilbert White and possibly the famous clergyman, J.G. Wood (the latter is not mentioned in the book) but he also improves on the style. It produces very enjoyable reading for non-naturalists as well as bird watchers. Even poets will appreciate this book since every chapter is introduced by a piece of poetry, mostly the author's own, and it is good. The book should arouse in every reader a greater interest in nature. This may well be the author's main purpose in compiling the book.

That such a fine book should have come to see the light of day is something to be thankful for. This reviewer kept saying to himself, 'Thank God the author was spared an untimely death on the Somme battlefield; that he kept notes and made sketches instead of just casually observing; that he lived long enough to celebrate Canada's Centennial. (The Saskatchewan Centennial Corporation and the Saskatchewan Natural History Society supplied the funds, etc., to make the book a reality).

This reviewer kept a close eye on what Symons had to say regarding the reviewer's pet subjects: (1) that the use of .22 rifles should replace the use of shotguns in hunting game birds (Symons says...the deadly .22 rifle which is too often used against bird life in more southern areas...); (2) that the starling is a 'good bird' (Symons says... 'I have...some regard for (him) only because he was a companion of my boyhood... The sharp-shinned hawks...make constant and deadly war on half-grown (and sometimes mature) starlings...a nuisance, though we must admire him for his cleverness...); (3) that pigeons are needlessly abused (Symons says nothing derogatory, but at one point, he comments: 'of all wild creatures, birds, by voice and flight draw our attention to nature more vividly than any other of the many living creatures that surround us...') (4) that towers, such as 700-foot smokestacks and 52-storey buildings, are deadly to bird life (Symons says, 'radio towers and telephone or powerlines are not weapons against them, far from it, but they can take a terrible toll of migrating flocks...'); (5) that weeds are beneficial (Symons says, 'the weed is not a threat but a fulfillment. How else could the gashes of the machine age be protected from the natural force of erosion but by their ministrations? And the weeds permit of insect life and these together permit the birds).

It is regrettable that Symons, who missed seeing the passenger pigeon (the last known specimen died in Cincinnati in 1914); he came to Canada in the same year) says so little about this unfortunate bird. The whooping crane got more comments - 'The lovely bird was buried in the manure pile (by the farmer who killed it). My plea to skin it was disallowed.' A comment that astounded this reviewer was, 'I have seen people tear down the nests of swallows from church walls.' It will remind readers of shooting and spraying drives in some Ontario parishes to eliminate birds from towers and spires. Good godly Christians...the same kind that wiped out the passenger pigeon and several other species. The chapter that 'shook' this reviewer the most was the final one entitled, 'Farewell my Book', perhaps because he too appreciates homespun philosophy, especially if it is slanted towards Mother Earth.

Over and over again, Symons bemoans the ever-dwindling flocks of his feathered friends and bewails the excessive use (he approves of moderate use) of poisonous sprays by homeowners, farmers and public officials (sprayers of roads, railway lines and forests).

Too many Easterners think of the West as just one big 'bald-headed prairie'. Symons shows that the prairies originally had plenty of vegetation, such as trees and shrubs, but he laments that to this very day, the farmers and others keep slashing away at the last remaining patches of greenery.

The book is enhanced by 3 appendices: I. Looking for birds. II. A checklist of the birds of Saskatchewan. III. Select Bibliography. There is also a set of 3 indices (Birds; Flowers, Shrubs and Trees; Mammals, fish and insects).

Symons reminds this reviewer of our own Jim Baillie, birdman extraordinary. Mr. Baillie ought to take a leaf from Hours and the Birds and hurry up with his own memoirs! Although the author states in the preface, 'I am not a professional naturalist,' the reader likes to think that he is; it would be impossible for an amateur to write such a book as this.

Hours and the Birds (though written, sad to say, by an ex-hunter - in his early years Symons had no compunction about killing a bird for a museum specimen, a moose for 'badly-needed meat' or a goshawk for stealing his chickens) will probably turn out to be a good reference book. Will it be quoted as often as Rachel Carson's Silent Spring? Only time will tell.

Mitchell Pallington.

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BIRDS AT HAPPY NOOK - JANUARY & FEBRUARY, 1968  
by Alf Bunker

Jan. 1 - Temp. 10° below. Bluebirds, Tree Sparrows, Cardinals, Slate-colored Juncos, White-throated Sparrow, House Sparrows, Chickadees, Downy Woodpeckers.

Jan. 3 - 1 Brown Thrasher, 2 Downy Woodpeckers, 8 White-throated Sparrows, 6 Cardinals, 4 Bluejays, 8 Black-capped Chickadees, 10 Slate-colored Juncos, 12 House Sparrows, 4 Tree Sparrows, 1 Sharp-shinned Hawk.

Jan. 4 - Same as the last 3 days, with two new ones: 1 Song Sparrow and 1 Starling.

Jan. 5 - Same birds as before with 1 addition: 1 Northern Shrike sat on a thick bush with several small birds underneath him. He stayed about 1 hour. A Bluejay came and sat about 1 foot away and gave him a good talking-to, with no effect. I finally chased him away.

Jan. 7 - Goldfinches added to our regular list.

Jan. 12 - 4 male and 4 female Evening Grosbeaks - the first for 1968.

Jan. 24 - The same birds have been around our feeders all through the ice and snow storms of Jan. 14 and 15. This was the first day we did not see our Brown Thrasher, but a neighbor got a Brown Thrasher and 3 Robins.

Jan. 26 - Had a visit from a Ring-necked Pheasant and a Brown Creeper.

Jan. 28 - Jim Baillie saw 3 Oregon Juncos.

Jan. 29 - Heard our first cardinal singing.

Jan. 30 - Our first crow flew by.

Feb. 3 - Two white-breasted Nuthatches.

Feb. 4 - 12 Evening Grosbeaks; 12 Goldfinches; 2 White-breasted Nuthatches.

Feb. 5 - 2 Pine Grosbeaks and 12 Evening Grosbeaks.

Feb. 10 - 1 male Purple Finch; 2 Cedar Waxwings.

Feb. 11 - 1 Screech Owl in our bush; 1 Sharp-shinned Hawk.

Feb. 12 - Our first starling; male and female Purple Finches; 1 pair White-breasted Juncos; Oregon Juncos.

Feb. 19 - Cardinals singing.

Feb. 20 - Sharp-shinned Hawk going out into bushes chasing small birds, but no luck. Evening Grosbeaks coming every day now - 15 today. Cardinals feeding each other and a White-throat singing.

Feb. 25 - House Sparrows looking over nest boxes.

End of the month finds flocks of 70 Purple Finches; 50 Evening Grosbeaks; 8 Bluejays; 14 House Sparrows; 12 White-throated Sparrows; 1 Song Sparrow; 10 Slate-colored Juncos; 8 Cardinals; 3 Downy Woodpeckers; 10 Black-capped Chickadees; 1 Brown Thrasher; 5 Starlings; 3 Oregon Juncos; 1 Sharp-shinned hawk; 1 Ringed-Neck Pheasant; 12 Goldfinches; 1 Brown Creeper; 3 Crows; 1 Red-tailed Hawk; 1 Screech Owl; 2 Cedar Waxwings; 2 Pine Grosbeaks; 2 White-breasted Nut hatches; 1 Northern Shrike; 12 Tree Sparrows.

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Following is an interesting observation from Mrs. Joan O'Donnell which shows that Nature in the raw can be observed anywhere, especially Yorkdale! One February evening as I was brushing snow off the car windshield in Yorkdale, a snowy owl circled overhead. As it flapped slowly past, its feathered feet and spherical head were noticeable. It swooped up to the large blue letters on the department store wall where sparrows like to roost in the illuminated warmth. There it hovered at a 45-degree angle attempting to seize its prey. There was a muffled scream, and then the owl flew off, contrasting vividly with the blackness around. 'It pays to shop at Yorkdale!'

#### CHEKHOV AND CONSERVATION

by A. A. Outram.

In a recent issue of the T.F.N.C. Newsletter, we noted two cases of early insight into conservation, one perhaps three centuries ago and the other about 200 years later. Here is an instance a little more recent, but rather remarkable and from an unexpected source. Chekhov, the great Russian dramatist, lived from 1860-1904. One of his plays, 'The Sea Gull' is to be at Stratford, Ont. this summer. You are not likely to find ideas on conservation expressed in this play. However his work 'Uncle Vanya,' is quite a different matter.

In Act I of 'Uncle Vanya', Chekhov, through several of his characters, expresses ideas far in advance of the general thinking of his time. He says that forests beautify the country, teach men to develop a lofty attitude of mind and temper the severity of the climate. He deplores the fact that Russian forests are being destroyed without reforestation; that the habitat of wild animals and birds is being laid waste; that rivers are dwindling or drying up and that wonderful scenery is disappearing forever. He regrets that while man is endowed with reason and ability to increase what has been given to him, he has, instead, destroyed.

'Uncle Vanya' was written in 1899. At that time we presume the feeling of most people in Russia, as in North America, was that the forests were exhaustible.

Elmer Talvila, Editor  
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