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TORONTO FIELD NATURALISTS' CLUB NEWSLETTER

Visitors welcome!

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A P R I L M E E T I N G

Monday, April 7, 1969 at 8.15 p.m.

at the

R O Y A L O N T A R I O M U S E U M

MEMBERS' NIGHT

Junior Club Representatives: GAIL PAULING, 'The Wildcats'; CHARLES STOECKLE, 'Garter Snakes as Pets'; PETER MCGEE, 'The Shaping of the Land'.

Senior Club Representatives: (Illustrated with Slides) MISS ROSEMARY GAYMER, 'A Backward Look at 6,000 Miles'; PROF. WILLIAM ANDREWS, 'An Ecological Point of View'; GEORGE THOMPSON, 'Some Ferns of Ontario'.

In the Rotunda: The Toronto Birdfinding Guide, by Peter Iden (\$1.50)  
The Bird Migration Chart, by Jack Gingrich (50¢)  
A Check-list of Plants in Four Toronto Parks (35¢)

Spring is hopefully here and these 3 booklets are 'musts' for the season's Birds & Flowers.

Audubon Wildlife Film: Tuesday, April 8, 8.15 p.m., Eaton Auditorium.

Buzz Moss, 'Mule Deer Country'; 'Stretches from Canada to Mexico, from the Sierras to the Rockies'. The last film for the 1968-69 Season.

The Toronto Film Club is presenting 'An Evening with Jack Carey, A.R.P.S., at the North Toronto Collegiate on Friday, April 11, at 8.00 p.m. The school auditorium is on Roehampton Avenue near Yonge Street, 1 block north of Eglinton Avenue. Tickets at \$1.00 are available at the door. Mr. Carey will show 2 of his nature films as well as films on India and the Everglades National Park.

A P R I L O U T I N G S

Enclosed with this Newsletter is the List of Spring Outings.

Chairman: Mr. Walter Hutton, 782-5955

JUNIOR CLUB      The Museum Theatre meeting is in charge of the Ecology and Fossil Groups, Saturday with 3 speakers and 2-3 short films. The Junior Club Members are supplying the table decorations for the F.O.N. Annual Meeting.

March 29  
10.00 A.M.

Director: Mr. Robert MacLellan, 488-9346

INTERMEDIATE      Meet in Room P-1 (near Ethnology Dept.) Royal Ontario Museum. The meeting GROUP 1 P.M. will be devoted, in part, to a discussion of a suitable Saturday project area.

March 29

Chairman: Mr. Paul Catling, 698-3405

BIRD GROUP      Meet at St. James Bond United Church, west side of Avenue Road, 2 blocks Thursday north of Eglinton Avenue. Speaker: Dr. George Peck.

April 17  
8.00 P.M.

Subject: 'Birds Nests and Habitats'.

Chairman: Mr. Clive Goodwin, 241-1572

BOTANY GROUP Meet at Hodgson School, Davisville Avenue, just east of Mt. Pleasant Road.  
Thursday Speaker: Mr. W. D. Truman. Topic: 'Trees and Shrubs of Mt. Pleasant  
April 17 Cemetery'. Come and hear from an expert arborist about the shrub walk  
8.00 P.M. being built across the Old Beltline Ravine.  
Chairman: Miss Edith Cosens, 481-5013

ECOLOGY AND Meet in Room 300 (3rd floor), College of Education, 371 Bloor Street West,  
CONSERVATION (at Spadina). The meeting will consist of a Work Session on the Don River  
GROUP 8 P.M. Pollution Project (F.O.N. Annual Display).  
Tuesday Chairman: Prof. W. A. Andrews, 425-4607  
April 8

A N N U A L G E N E R A L M E E T I N G - M A Y 5, 1 9 6 9

Recommendations of the Nominating Committee for TFNC Officers for 1969-70 are as follows:

PRESIDENT - - - - - Mr. Jack Gingrich  
VICE-PRESIDENT - - - - - Mr. Clive Goodwin  
MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE - - Professor W. A. Andrews  
Mr. John ten Bruggenkaat  
Mr. Paul Catling  
Miss Emily Hamilton

Miss Hamilton would fill the vacancy left by Mrs. Eva Parsons.  
who retires this year.

Mr. Catling has completed one term of 3 years as Executive Member and Mr. ten Bruggenkaat  
would replace Mr. Earl Damude whose term of office expires this year.

Professor Andrews has served on the Executive for 6 months, completing a term of office  
left unexpired by the resignation in 1968 of Mr. Jack Saker.

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 5.

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President - Mr. John A. Gingrich

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



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NEWS AND VIEWS

.....Turtles of the world, rejoice! Somebody down under loves you. The state of Queensland, Australia, has passed what must be the most important conservation laws ever proposed for turtles anywhere in the world. Queensland will give complete protection to turtles and their eggs along its entire coastline of 2500 miles. This will ensure the survival of the loggerhead, green, hawksbill, flatback and leathery turtles.

.....Add the rare Bermuda petrel (Pterodroma Cahow) to the list of creatures threatened by DDT extinction. This bird was rediscovered in Bermuda in 1951 after a period of 300 years during which it was believed extinct. Now DDT residues have been discovered in its eggs and dead nestlings, probably picked up from cephalopods which are its main food. If nothing is done to reduce DDT levels in the world's oceans the Cahow will be truly extinct in 10 more years.

.....The Editor wishes to thank the many contributors who have relieved him of that desperate feeling he had in February. A goodly number of articles have arrived, both for this issue and the special F.O.N. issue. However, more material is still welcome and particularly a short sketch on the entomology of the Toronto region.

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FROM MY WINDOW (THESE WINTER MONTHS)

by Helen M. Smith

Acquaintances who know me as a 'birdwatcher' invariably ask this time of year, 'How are the birds these days?' and I tell them, 'You'd be amazed how many birds come down here, south, for the winter.' (Not to mention those that stay here.) Yes, birding is fascinating in our cold months, or maybe it is that each one seen or heard is so much appreciated.

So, from my window, here are a few observations taken during such short daylight hours that I happen to be home this season. The setting is a small plot of ground, the edge dropping sharply down a sparsely wooded hill to the 'lower Humber' wilderness on the east side of the Humber river.

For my varied clientele, I have several feeding areas, and you may be interested in what I have found attracts the birds and - I must add - the etcetera.

On the ground along the hillcrest and under my window, which is protected by an overhanging balcony, feed is scattered, and daily (1) cardinals, up to 7 female and 4 male, arrive just before dawn and come periodically during the day until dusk to feed on sunflower seeds and other presumably large seeds. (2) Tree sparrows, up to 40, are my most faithful customers, 'tinkling' and scrapping as they feed on the small seeds of wild bird seed mixtures. (3) And squirrels, the nuisance of so many bird-feeding stations - I have up to 4 black squirrels and 4 gray squirrels - they gorge on sunflower seeds and then carry on eating bird seed. My only solution: put out plenty of everything for them all. (4) Rusty blackbirds - I have been pleased to cater to up to 4 this winter at the ground feeding areas. (5) Occasional guests are a few starlings and house sparrows, up to 6 slate-coloured juncos, a female purple finch, a mourning dove, a Savannah sparrow when snow is deep, redwinged blackbirds in December, a male cowbird, 1-2 bluejays, a male pheasant who goes for cracked corn and larger seeds.

In a feeder suspended outside my window (not yet reached by squirrels) I put sunflower seeds and chopped peanuts on alternate days, and hear and see cheerful chickadees, 2 white-breasted nuthatches daily. Once an American goldfinch came in for sunflower seed, and another day a male yellow-shafted flicker availed himself of chopped peanuts!

On a white oak just down the hillside, I have suet, providing food for downy woodpeckers (up to 2 males and a female), a brown creeper occasionally, the chickadees, white-breasted nuthatches, occasional starlings and the flicker, and a 'long-time-no-see' in this area, a hairy woodpecker has come a couple of times.

Beyond the feeding area, in the trees down the hillside, I see occasional crows (2) and a red-tailed hawk and a great horned owl and a Northern shrike on one occasion each. I've spotted pairs of black ducks flying overhead, gulls unidentified, and flocks of our Canada geese honking their way home at dusk.

During the January thaw, a hibernating raccoon bestirred himself and came to the window for meat scraps and bread, and a skunk found his own food - white grubs - just under the surface of the thawed mud and turf. Tracks of animals and birds in fresh snow are another story.

Nothing to see or hear in our winter season? - Yes, there is, if one has the awareness of seeing eyes and hearing ears that our hobby gives us.

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ROSEMARY'S TRAVELS (Conclusion)

by Rosemary Gaymer

The finale was Kirtland's warblers...lots of them. I stopped for the night at the mid-Michigan resort town of Gaylord, and next morning visited the local office of the Michigan Department of Conservation, where I explained my mission, and was provided with very detailed instructions and large-scale maps, pointed in the right direction and wished lots of luck for the search. They assured me that if I could follow instructions (they didn't seem too sure on that point) there should be no

difficulty in finding the Kirtland's warblers, especially one major colony. All went well, and as I stopped eventually by a sign proclaiming the area to be part of the Kirtland's warbler Habitat Management Area, there were several males singing loudly. The area was upland, mostly lichen-covered open ground, with many small ground shrubs and young Jack Pines, from about 4 to 12 feet high. Several forest fires were deliberately set in recent years, to open up new territories for the Kirtland's warblers, since the Jack Pine seeds germinate after the heat of a humus fire; other suitable areas have been specially planted. The area I visited was one of the latter, which made it easy to approach a singing bird; one just walked up close to it, shielded by a whole row of young Jack Pines. After a while, I was able to isolate the individual songs of 8 different males, each with the strong, ringing tone that characterized the species, and yet each also, just like Baltimore orioles, with a personal touch.

As I turned to go back to the car, a pair of Bald Eagles flew past, low and leisurely, in stately tandem, headed from their nest in the wooded median of the nearby Interstate Highway to a fishing expedition at one of the many lakes - I didn't see them again, but could follow their progress by the screams of indignation from crows and jays as I drove in the same direction. It seemed a fitting end to quite a long expedition.

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#### COMING EVENTS

CBC-TV: 'Man at the Center' - 10.30 p.m., April 17, 24, and May 1.

A look at some of the world's great zoos and the projected plan for a new zoo in Toronto that is expected to take its place alongside the most progressive zoos on the continent.

CONSERVATION AREAS: Bruce's Mills: March 15 to April 13.

Demonstration of maple syrup making.

Clairville Dam: April 20 - Open House (1-5 p.m.)

F.O.N. ANNUAL MEETING - April 25-27, at the Seaway Towers Motor Hotel, Toronto.

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#### IS EVERY LOON FEATHERED?

by Pat Weese

There are strange things done  
In the midnight sun  
By the loons that moil for food.

And so it seemed to this new owner of a telephoto lens! My anxiety for a good close-up was exceeded only by the birds' camera shyness. Each August evening, the faithful pair glided to their fishing spot in front of our cottage. Their movements were encouraging as I set up my equipment. 'They are coming closer. They are coming closer. They are coming closer.' And so continued my chant...until...at last the two loons filled a good portion of the frame. My finger was itching to press the cable release. I held my breath; touched the button; then...realized the sun had dipped below the horizon!

Each night for a week, the loons, the sun and I played the same game.

At the end of the tournament, the winners took a sympathetic turn. I was to have to my advantage a rising sun and a pair of fishing loons. I fumbled to set up the four foot spread of tripod on the three foot wide dock, being careful to set the legs on the planks rather than the spaces between! I snapped a distant shot - the last frame of the film! The birds laughed as they moved mockingly away.

But hardy is the nature photographer. I changed the film as quickly as possible and returned to my cramped quarters, just in time to see two specks in the distance. Fortunately, my mother had brought along a tape of bird songs. She raced down the hill to the water's edge and began to play the loon call.

The two specks enlarged. A faint reply was heard. As they came closer, they stretched their heads in a vain search for the trespassers.

Trying to make themselves known, they stretched magnificently out of the water ... still approaching. So eager to find the source of the strange calls, they forgot the camera, and posed for many fine photos.

The best shot, however, was lost when a passing boater zoomed almost over on top of the birds, naturally chasing them away. My greatest desire at that moment was not to continue snapping the two fishing loons, but to set off in hot pursuit of the loon in the boat!

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DON'T LET THEM KILL OUR POLAR BEARS

(Letter in The Toronto Daily Star, February 1, 1969)

At the headquarters of the International Union for Conservation of Nature in Switzerland there is a red file of animals in danger of extinction. The polar bear is in that file. For the past 100 years it has been ruthlessly over-hunted around the top of the world. The world population is now about 10,000 of which 6,000 are thought to be in Canada, according to the Canadian Wildlife Service.

With great foresight, the government of Ontario established Polar Bear Primitive Park, a 7,000 square-mile sanctuary on James and Hudson Bays. The Canadian Wildlife Service has undertaken an impressive program of research on polar bear life history and biology.

Now a bill before the Territorial Council of the Northwest Territories would, if passed, allow sport hunting of polar bears in Canada. This would be most unfortunate as Canada has an obligation to the world community to protect this great white bear.

In Alaska 'sportsmen' are not only allowed but encouraged by law to fly out over the icefields in ski-equipped airplanes, land alongside polar bears, and gun them down. In Norway it is possible to go polar bear hunting on a luxurious yacht.

Time may be running out for the polar bear. Man should be doing everything within his power to preserve these animals rather than hastening their extinction.

There is no economic or moral justification for a sports hunt of polar bears in Canada. Surely we can allow one species of animal to roam unmolested in our wild lands.

(Signed) James Woodford,  
Executive Director,  
Federation of Ontario Naturalists.

Editor: Travel bureaus offer 8 three-week polar bear hunts, June 2-Sept. 8, in the Arctic icepack around Spitzbergen Islands. Bag limit is one polar bear per hunter; no limit on seals. Rates include the services of an interpreter, and experts for skinning bear and seal. Trophies can be mounted and dressed in Tromso, Norway.

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THE HEAVENS ABOVE - APRIL AND MAY

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

April 2 - Full moon.

April 22 - Lyrid meteor shower. A weak shower averaging 15 meteors per hour and lasting about 2 days.

May 1 - Sunrise at 5.10 a.m. E.S.T.; sunset at 7.21 p.m. E.S.T.

May 2 - Full moon.

May 5 - Eta Aquarid shower. A weak shower averaging 20 meteors per hour and lasting about 3 days. Associated with Halley's Comet.

May 5 - Mercury is at greatest elongation east of the sun. May be seen as an evening star 21 degrees above the western horizon at sunset.

May 14- Venus at greatest brilliancy as a morning star.

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## REPORT ON SAVANNAH SPARROWS

by J. Stafford Harris

In a recent Newsletter (no.241, February, 1969) I was very interested in the Christmas census of 90 birds listed on page 8. On this list I noticed that the Savannah sparrow's name was omitted.

For the past three winters, we have had two Savannah sparrows feeding practically daily in the rear of our home. During the day they spend most of their time hidden in our cedar hedge at the rear of the lot, coming out to feed at fairly regular intervals, sometimes feeding on the ground, other times at the feeding stations which are situated about five feet above the ground and several feet in front of the cedar hedge. Although smaller than the house sparrow and resembling more the song sparrow, the Savannahs appear to be more robust and courageous than either. They are often seen chasing the house sparrow to other parts when approaching too closely to where the Savannahs are feeding. A similar procedure usually takes place when the male Savannah edges too closely to where the female is feeding.

Last winter, the feeding station was placed in a flowering crab apple tree, a few feet from the dining room window where every movement of the birds could be observed. It was amusing to see some of the antics of the Savannahs putting to flight the larger house sparrows, and on several occasions, engaging in aerial combat with them, feet to feet fighting in the air. In every instance, the house sparrows were routed, after which the Savannahs calmly resumed their meal of wild bird seed again.

On a number of instances, when both male and female Savannahs were feeding at the same station, it was observed that they usually fed on opposite sides of it to avoid domestic rows. Invariably, when they fed side to side, the female Savannah, with her beak wide open, would chase the male to the opposite side of the feeding station or to a more discreet distance. Of course, they are no match for the starlings or bluejays, always taking cover in the cedar hedge when the occasion arises.

In the fall of the year, before the snow falls, the Savannahs could scarcely be detected in the flower beds due to their remarkable camouflage of steaked brown coloration. Also, we were very surprised that they could move over the ground with such rapidity, their tiny legs just a blur, and then the brown streak would suddenly disappear in the hedge. With binoculars, we could see them moving about inside the hedge or travelling distances inside it, always without disturbing a leaf. On other occasions, the Savannahs would remain motionless in one spot, in or outside of the hedge, for long periods of time. They are very much at home in a hedge.

Like the song sparrows, they seem to stake out their own territory. To date, we have never seen more than two Savannahs at any time in this vicinity. Exclusive of house sparrows and starlings, our two Savannahs have been our best winter customers. Snow, rain or shine, they rarely pass up a meal.

Both birds are rotund and quite plump, rather shy at times, except when chastising a trespassing house sparrow at meal times, or when followed into the cedar hedge by a foolish house sparrow, resulting in its hasty retreat to other more congenial parts of the hedge, or in flight.

From the above report, you will see that the Savannahs are still very much in evidence in Metro Toronto...

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### BOOK REVIEWS

The Last of the Wild (Eugen Schuhmacher. Collins.)

The Continent We Live On (Sanderson. Random House Press.)

Here are two books that having read, one longs to possess. Unfortunately, they are both rather expensive to buy, but can be borrowed from the Public Libraries, of course. I think they are both unique, in that the information contained in them could not otherwise be obtained within two covers.

The material for The Last of the Wild was gathered over a period of seven years, during which time the author travelled to many places on the five continents photographing and filming some of the world's rarest animals and birds. Eugen Schuhmacher is one of the world's finest photographers of wildlife and his work is known throughout the world.

The book tells of some of the birds and animals at risk throughout the world, so often because of human agencies. It is written in sections, Europe, Asia, America, Antarctica, Australasia and Africa, and each section has its own collection of beautiful photographs in colour.

The last part of the book contains descriptions of every bird and animal, from Adelle penguins to zebras, illustrated throughout the book. These descriptions are not written by Eugen Schuhmacher, but by four European zoologists.

The Continent We Live On also contains some very fine photography, but is of more general interest. It is also written in sections, and gives the topography of each natural zone of Canada and the United States. It tells how the land was formed, and is continuing to form, and of the plants, trees, birds and animals found within the zones. It contains some very good maps.

Both books are very readable, and were written with express purposes in mind. The first book was written to be issued in conjunction with a film on the same subject, in an endeavour to help awaken the conscience of man concerning the great and irreparable harm he is doing in his pursuit of progress. The Continent We Live On was written with the same purpose in mind, but also to fill the very great gap that exists in the gathering together in one book of all this knowledge.

-- P.M.J.

### CANADENSIS - CANADENSE by Emily J. Hamilton

Have you ever noticed that there are many plants with the specific name of canadensis? Centennial Year seemed a good time to investigate the species and to collect and press as many specimens as possible. There were several surprises - some 'canadensis' don't grow in Canada! For instance, there is a small Berberis which reaches its northern limit in Virginia; and two species of Sanicula got mixed up by Linnaeus (or his friends) and so we get the one called marylandica up here and have to go down south to find S.canadensis. There's a Verbena canadensis which grows as far north as Pennsylvania. Another surprise was the Carolina Poplar. One wonders why a tree which was hybridized in France should have been designated Populus canadensis.

Several species grow beyond this area. A shrub in the Heath family, Rhododendron canadense, rhodora azalea, is to be found in Eastern Quebec and Labrador. A woody vine called Moonseed (Menispermum) grows in thickets near Lake Erie. Redbud tree, Cercis, is found growing naturally in Essex county, but has been planted successfully at Glendon Hall, and a specimen is in the Niagara Park, in full bloom in June with many reddish flowers growing straight out of the bark of the branches. To see a Collinsonia plant one had to go over to the Hendrie Trail where it grows abundantly in the woods, but now thanks to the co-operation of the 'Ex' Flower Show, 1967, we have some plants of Horse-balm growing in Lambton Woods.

Some plants used to be called 'canadensis' but now have been given another specific name, however, this doesn't stop one from collecting Fragrant sumach (Rhus) (now 'aromatica') with its bright orange berries - found on the Bruce Trail near Cape Croker. Reading an old book on trees turned up another such change in name. White Spruce used to be Picea canadensis, so there is another specimen to collect.

One doesn't have to wait till summer to begin looking for the plants. In this area one can find Tsuga, Eastern Hemlock, with its graceful branches bearing small cones hanging from the tips, growing in many parks and ravines; and Taxus, American Yew, is a low shrub which may be seen in Wilket Park, though it is really a northern species. Winter twigs may be studied on the Poplar and Redbud, and Amelanchier, a small tree with smooth gray bark, Shadbush, Juneberry or Serviceberry, to give a few of its popular names. Common Elderberry, Sambucus, with its stout twigs and small paired buds, is available in Wilket.

Other shrubs on the list are Shepherdia, Buffaloberry, familiar to those who know 'the Bruce'; there are a few small shrubs in High Park. Lonicera canadensis, Fly-honeysuckle, a very straggly little low bush found in shady woods - easiest to spot when its bright red paired berries are ripe in June; and there's a Rubus, Smooth Canada Blackberry, with square twig and no thorns, a northern species.

The list of easy-to-find plants include: Maianthemum, Canada Mayflower; Asarum, wild ginger; Anemone with its sessile leaves; Aquilegia, columbine; Sanguinaria, bloodroot; Dicentra, squirrel-corn; Geum, Canada Avens, the white one; Potentilla, Canada cinquefoil, the trailing one with palmate leaves; Desmodium, tick-trefoil; Laportea, wood nettle, it stings; Viola, Canada Violet, white inside, violet outside; Helianthemum, frost-weed, to be found in High Park; Cryptotaenia, honewort; Cornus, bunchberry; Pedicularis, wood-betony; Houstonia, Canada bluets, so frequent on the beaches of the Bruce; Anacharis, formerly Elodea canadensis, Waterweed, to be found in shallow quiet water; Antennaria, pussy-toes; Conyza, horse-weed; Solidago, the commonest of the golden-rods; Lactuca canadensis, wild lettuce, found in High Park east of Spring Road - it is not that enormously tall Lactuca which grows beside Grenadier Pond in September; Hieracium, the Canada Hawkweed with its leafy stalk.

The list of not-so-easy-to-find plants, but most are available in Ontario, includes: Allium, wild garlic; Lilium, yellow meadow lily, not so abundant around here; Arabis, sickle-pod, very inconspicuous plant until the 'sickles' are ripe; Hydrastis, golden-seal, nearly exterminated as its yellow rhizomes were collected for medicinal purposes; Sanguisorba, Canada burnet, a northern species; Astragalus, milk-vetch; Hypericum, the smallest of the St. John's - worts; Hydrophyllum, waterleaf; Teucrium, germander, woodsage, an eastern species; Linaria, blue toadflax; Polymnia, leaf-cup; Artemisia canadensis, wormwood, on northern lakeshores.

On the list of 'canadensis' plants there are four grasses and one Juncus (rush) but it takes an expert in this field to identify these plants. P.S. There are six BIRDS called 'canadensis'; how many can you name before consulting your bird book?

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## LETTER FROM THE SOUTH

by Margarett Bowman

.....My husband and I arrived in Sarasota in late November and I became a winter member of the Sarasota Audubon Club and took part in the Christmas Bird Count at Myakka Park. On 12 December the Club had a field trip to Sanibel Island, about 20 miles south of Ft. Myers, and we toured the J. N. Darling Wildlife Refuge - saw many wintering shorebirds and my first osprey. There are very few ducks around - a national concern. This is a big season for myrtle warblers. They are everywhere! The robin here isn't the responsible nest builder and parent we know in Ontario. He really enjoys his southern sojourn, sitting on tree tops and flying erratically across the roads, slightly inebriated from eating pepper berries.

We have just returned from a trip to Everglades National Park where we stayed overnight in Flamingo on the southern edge of the Park. It's a fascinating part of Florida and we saw again many of the large shorebirds, seen first in Mexico; roseate spoonbill, white pelican, wood and white ibis, little and great blue herons, common and snowy egrets.

My husband was delighted to net several new specimens of butterflies: zebra, queen, gulf, fritillary, statira, large orange sulphur, cloudless sulphur, and great southern white.

To date I've added 30 new birds to my list and hope for more when the migrants start north.

Best wishes for the spring season!

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### OUTINGS REPORT

My faithful reporter, Walter Hutton, tells me that a large group of people turned up for both the outings to Vivian Forest and the Turner Tract. The only trouble was that nobody told the birds and few of them were seen.

The group at Vivian Forest saw some pine grosbeaks and cedar waxwings. The others at the Turner Tract saw redpolls and a ruffed grouse and found one cocoon. Fortunately (?) the cocoon did not have to be shared among many entomologists since most of them got lost and missed the outing completely.

Anyway those that made it had a good time despite the lack of birds and cocoons.

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### MY LOVE FOR THE WILDERNESS

by M. E. Kane

Someone once asked me why I 'waste' so much of my free time tramping around the countryside. I told my curious friend that I had many reasons for thus 'wasting' my time. I explained it to him this way:

On a spring day, take a long slow walk along a nature trail. Smell the odor of pine needles, the sweet scent of the flowers. Watch the antics of a pair of squirrels as they leap about the tree tops, and catch your breath a moment as one misses a branch and seems certain to plunge to the ground! Listen to the countless birds singing, each one with a different song. Hear the crickets chirp and the deep thumping of a bullfrog. Listen, and you will hear the song of the wind as it sighs through

the trees. Watch a hawk glide on motionless wings, then suddenly dive earthward to pick off an unsuspecting field mouse. Watch a flight of ducks go by overhead and listen to the sad, infinitely lonely, haunting cry of the loon. Stand still in a forest glade and watch the insects at work. They are underfoot too, so watch where you walk! A chipmunk scolds from a nearby tree, and there's a woodpecker hammering in the distance. Back on the trail you come to a stop as just ahead you spot a mother coon and her young ones. She senses you and stops. A loud squeak sends the little ones out of sight as the mother comes over to inspect the intruder. Satisfied that you mean her no harm, she continues on her way, calling to her young as she goes. On a sunny fall day, look in wonder at the beauty of the trees as mother nature paints them in her most dazzling colours. Look at the sparkling beauty of a sunlit winter landscape. See the animal tracks in the fresh fallen snow. Shake a tree branch and watch the wind play with the snow that falls from it. There's even beauty in the wind swept drifts! Stand at the foot of a towering pine tree and feel humbled by its majestic height. How many lifetimes has it been standing there, how many more will it stand?

This, then, is how I explained to my friend my love for all wild things.

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#### THE BUTCHER BIRD

by R. Knight

Travelling along Finch Avenue East, we turned down a dead-end side road and observed a medium sized gray bird, perched on top of a hawthorn bush - our binoculars told us a shrike. Reported, we passed on. Returning, we saw the bird flying across a grassfield with an object in its beak. It settled in the middle of dense hawthorn shrub. Upon investigating, we found a mouse on a branch with a thorn protruding half out of its back. The bird became quite antagonistic, flying backwards and forwards over our heads, while we were taking a picture of the mouse, and once hovered close by, as sparrow hawks do sometimes, and several times faintly dive-bombed us; no doubt it was anxious or hungry to get to its kill. The little mouse's legs dangling down from the branch reminded me of a hanging man's legs on a western TV movie.

Anyone with a copy of the National Geographic Society's Book, Song and Garden Birds, turn to page 236 for a fuller description of this Butcher Bird.

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#### BUG BUSINESS BOOM

(Editor: Mr. J. Cranmer-Byng sent me a clipping from the Wall Street Journal, September 6, 1968, written by Neil Ullman, about the 'Bug Business'. It is reproduced in part below).

Two trends underlie the bug boom. One is a mounting campaign against the use of chemical pesticides. A New York group called Citizens for Clean Air, for example, recently set loose a million ladybugs in an attempt to rid a park of aphids, lice, scales, borers and other little devils. The group includes the wives of Mayor John Lindsay and Sen. Jacob Javits; a city horticulturist diplomatically assesses the project's value as 'hard to judge'.

The second push for the commercial bug business comes from the Government, which has passed on technological breakthroughs to bug growers. The Agriculture Department's entomology research division now has 25 scientists studying biological control;

it says its efforts in the field are double the efforts of five years ago.

'Beneficial insects are probably our most valuable ally in pest control,' says Edward F. Knipling, the division's director. 'We're trying to find out how to raise them in sufficient numbers at an economical cost. Progress is encouraging'.

Bug ranchers tend to specialize. Mr. Gothard, a 57-year-old former cattleman, limits himself to raising trichogramma. Gothard Inc., a highly professional operation, includes a 4000 square-foot building that houses rows of wood-frame cages, covered by muslin and containing millions of moths. The moths, nourished on 60 tons of wheat kernels a year, are then exposed to the trichogramma; the tiny wasps deposit their own eggs within the moth eggs, effectively preventing the hatching of the moth eggs and packaging the trichogramma eggs for shipment.

Moth eggs filled with the trichogramma are sold to farmers, who scatter them among crops and sometimes even drop them into fields from airplanes. When the trichogramma emerge from the eggs, they take off after any moths residing in the fields. And trichogramma are efficient: a farmer gets enough trichogramma from a square-inch of moth eggs - on the order of 2000 - to treat an acre of land.

There's a little more romance and a lot less precision to the ladybug business. Basically, ladybug collectors head for the hills, bearing sacks and washpans, and scoop two-inch thick swarms of ladybugs from leaves, grass and pine needles. An experienced plucker can grab several hundred ladybugs with one swoop. Ladybugs are stored in cool places (32 degrees to 36 degrees Fahrenheit) until summer, when a gallon can be sold for \$10 postage paid (\$15 air mail).

The praying mantis game is a harvest operation. Mr. Mincemoyer, a 38-year-old former tree surgeon, searches for overgrown fields and turns loose some mantises. 'If they like it', he says, 'you harvest the increase', in the form of egg cases. His special equipment consists of a coat with pockets big enough to hold 400 egg cases, each resembling a ping pong ball.

You don't have to be a big operator to make it in the world of little creeping things. The total capital equipment owned by Western Biological Control Laboratory in Tacoma, Washington, is a refrigerator for storing praying mantis eggs. Melvin R. Hansen, Western Biological owner, says the gross annual income for his family-run business is \$5,000. 'Demand is really starting to take hold', he says.

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Elmer Talvila, Editor (231-1064),  
12 Cranleigh Ct., Islington, Ont.