

248

TORONTO FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB NEWSLETTER

Visitors Welcome!

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JANUARY MEETING

Monday, January 5, 1970, at 8.15 p.m.

at the

ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM

SPEAKER: DR. JOHN H. McANDREWS, Associate Curator of Geology,  
Royal Ontario Museum.

SUBJECT: FOSSIL POLLEN AND VEGETATION HISTORY IN SOUTHERN ONTARIO.

Pollen analysis of lake sediments shows a complex pattern of deciduous and coniferous forests since deglaciation 12,000 years ago. Dr. McAndrews, who is also Associate Professor of Botany at the University of Toronto, will illustrate his talk with coloured slides.

NEXT MONTH: The February Meeting will be held on Monday, February 2nd.  
Speaker: Professor K. A. Armson. Subject: Soil.

F. O. N. BOOKSHOP HOURS The Federation of Ontario Naturalists Bookshop, at 1212 Don Mills Road, Don Mills, is open Monday-thru-Friday from 8.30 to 4.30 and Saturdays from 9.30 to 4.30, offering a wide variety of books, bird-song recordings (including the ever-popular 'Songs of Spring' and 'A Day in Algonquin Park'); also binoculars, scopes, tripods, etc.

EXECUTIVE RESIGNATIONS (1) Mr. Elmer Talvila has reluctantly resigned as Editor of the Newsletter. His work has left him with increasingly little time for the Newsletter, and now he will be commuting weekly to Ottawa for the next few months. We are deeply indebted to Elmer for his excellent work as Editor during the past three years.

(2) Prof. Jack Cranmer-Byng has resigned from the Executive because he will be in England on study leave for most of 1970. He has been a very active and valuable member of the Executive since November, 1966.

EXECUTIVE APPOINTMENTS (1) The Executive has appointed Miss Margaret Jeffery as the new Editor of the Newsletter. We welcome her to this position and wish her success in her endeavours.

(2) The Executive has appointed Mr. Douglas Wilkins to fill the vacancy left by the resignation of Prof. Jack Cranmer-Byng, whose term ends in May, 1971. Mr. Wilkins is a lawyer and has been working on the new By-Laws for the Club, which will be required for the proposed incorporation. This appointment will be ratified by a vote at the January Meeting.

FEES If you received only the first two pages of your Newsletter, it means that, according to our records, you have not renewed your membership. Upon receipt of your fee, we shall be glad to send the missing portion. Send cheque or money order to the Secretary,  
Mrs. H. C. Robson, 49 Craighurst Avenue, Toronto 310.  
Single: \$4.00; Family: \$6.00; Corresponding: \$2.00;  
Full Time Student (aged 16 or over): \$1.50.

J A N U A R Y   O U T I N G S

- SUNDAY High Park - Birds. Leader - Mr. Walt Hutton.  
JANUARY 11 Meet at the northwest corner of Keele and Bloor Streets.  
9.30 A.M. Morning only.
- SATURDAY Wilket Creek Park - Birds. Leader - Mr. Gerry Bennett.  
JANUARY 24 Meet at the parking lot at the entrance on Leslie Street, just north of  
9.30 A.M. Eglinton Avenue East. Morning only. Chairman - Mr. Walt Hutton, 782-5955
- SPECIAL The Caledon Hill Bruce Trail Club are holding the following outings.  
INVITATION An invitation has been extended by Gloria Somerville to any of the members  
of the T.F.N.C. who wish to attend.
- SUNDAY Cross-Country hiking from Speyside to Kelso. Leader - Mr. Dan Sutherland.  
JANUARY 18 If there is enough snow, bring your skiis. It could be a good 6½ mile, stile  
10.00 A.M. free run. Meet at the point where the Bruce Trail crosses Hwy. 25. This is  
just south of the Speyside cross-road. From Toronto go west on Hwy. 401 to  
Hwy. 25 (Interchange #39). Turn north about 5 miles to the top of the  
escarpment.
- SATURDAY Circular hike around Rattlesnake Point. Leader - Miss Gloria Somerville.  
JANUARY 31 Meet at the corner of the Base Line and Guelph Line. From Toronto go west  
10.00 A.M. on Hwy. 401 to the Guelph Line exit (Campbellville Interchange #38), turn  
south here to the first road which is the Base Line.
- M.T.R.C.A. The Metro Toronto and Region Conservation Authority Walk - 5 mile walk from  
SUNDAY Boyd Conservation Area. Lunch to be carried (hot chocolate may be purchased).  
JANUARY 11 For further information call: Ken Strasser - 225-4020.  
10.30 A.M. \* \* \* \* \*
- JUNIOR CLUB This meeting will be in charge of the Fish, Reptile and Amphibians Group.  
SATURDAY 2 or 3 interesting films will be shown. The Annual Christmas Bird census  
JANUARY 3 will take place on January 4th for Junior members. Senior members welcome.  
Chairman - Mr. Robert MacLellan, 488-9346
- BOTANY GROUP Meet at Hodgson School, Davisville Avenue just east of Mt. Pleasant Road.  
THURSDAY Speaker: Prof. W.A.G. Morsink, Faculty of Forestry.  
JANUARY 15 Topic: "Native and Exotic Trees in Toronto Parks". Prof. Morsink will show  
8.00 P.M. how enjoyment of the parks in Toronto can include an interesting of the trees.  
Illustrated with slides. Chairman - Miss Erna Lewis, 923-8904
- ECOLOGY AND Meet in Room 300 (third floor) College of Education  
CONSERVATION 371 Bloor Street West (at Spadina).  
GROUP The group will be introduced to the equipment and the procedures that will  
TUESDAY be used in this year's Pollution Study.  
JANUARY 20 Chairman - Prof. W.A. Andrews, 425-4607  
8.00 P.M.
- FIELD Meet at St. James - Bond United Church, 1066 Avenue Road, just north of  
BIOLOGISTS' Eglinton Avenue.  
GROUP Members Night.  
BIRD GROUP Members will be presenting features of nature trips they have taken during  
TUESDAY the year (illustrated with slides).  
JANUARY 27 Other aspects of the Field Biologists' program will be discussed at this  
8.00 P.M. joint meeting.

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# Toronto Field Naturalists' Club.



Number 248

January, 1970

## A POINT OF VIEW

The other day while bird-watching beside the Don, I was thinking about Jack Gingrich's challenge to influence our environment (September Newsletter). It seems to me that our response will tell us much about the value of our Club.

Getting involved can be a nuisance and is often inconvenient. Bird-watching on the Island is much more fun than fighting to save it from a burial shroud of steel and concrete. Gathering evidence of water pollution and insisting that it be looked at by those who are infecting our lakes and streams (often ourselves!) is considerably more difficult than looking for plants.

But we get so much enjoyment from Nature. The valleys of the Don and Humber are favorite haunts of botanists, bird-watchers and amateur ecologists. So when a spokesman for the Ontario Water Resources Commission expresses considerable doubt that the rivers may ever again be used for recreation are we sufficiently concerned to study the problem in depth?

The Island ... only minutes from the pressures of the City ... is a natural asset that other cities would love to have on their doorsteps. What a contribution our Club would make to the quality of life in Toronto if our members would officially place their talents and time alongside those of other people who want to preserve the beauty of the Island.

Away with apathy .. let's get involved in 1970. There's little time left.

- Harold Taylor

## AN HISTORICAL RECORD OF SMALL MAMMAL COLLECTING

The collecting of small mammals such as shrews, mice, and moles is generally done for museums and universities, for scientific purposes. Recently, archaeologists have discovered an instance of shrews having been collected on this continent several centuries before the arrival of Columbus.

Excavation of an Indian Village site in Colorado disclosed over a dozen big earthenware jars. One contained bones of various kinds of animal: rabbits, gophers, turkeys and many others. Another held the bones of nearly 100 shrews and only three bones of anything else. This jar had a capacity of two and a half gallons. There was a flat slab of rock on it for a lid. It would seem likely that the entire bodies of the little creatures had been stored away. Many of the skulls and other bones were in good condition. A study of them led to the identification of three different species of shrew. The present habitat is unsuitable for some of these species and it is thought that much the same condition existed when the village was occupied. Apparently a villager was able to catch these little mammals and bring some of them at least for a considerable distance.

Archaeologists believe the village was occupied between 1200 and 1300 A.D. and so we have a record of small mammal collecting, two hundred years or more before Europeans came to America. We are not sure of the reason for this project. It was not for scientific purposes as we know science today. One explanation is that it was a religious act. We know that the aborigines of this part of the U.S.A. had a shrew as a beast god. It may have been believed that the presence of this jar of shrews was a way to protect stored grain from mice and other rodents.

- A. A. Outram.

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## USING COMMON NAMES FOR PLANTS

Erich Haber

A good number of the plants in our flora have common names; in fact, some may have quite a few. Many of us in referring to a plant call it by the common name that is most widely used in the part of the country that we are from. Since common names have not been standardized as have the scientific names of plants, the problem that may arise is that the name applied to a plant in one part of the country may refer to quite a different plant somewhere else in the country. For example, in eastern North America, we refer to Juniperus virginiana L. as Red Cedar. This same name if used in British Columbia would refer to Thuja plicata Donn, the Western Red Cedar. To complicate matters further, neither tree is in fact a true cedar. The true cedars belong to the genus Cedrus which is native to the Mediterranean area.

Just recently, the author became aware of how easily the use of common names can result in creating unnecessary confusion when he discovered that he had inadvertently applied properties of the European Mandrake (Mandragora officinarum L.) to the North American "Mandrake" or May-Apple (Podophyllum Peltatum L.) In the article Spring Harbingers in Fact and Fancy in the April issue of the Club Newsletter, the author refers to the aphrodisiac properties of Mandrake as found in the Book of Genesis as well as to the superstitions regarding its uprooting and its use as an oracle when its roots were carved into figures of small idols. All of these properties refer to the European Mandrake, the true Mandrake of the Bible and of Shakespeare. It is a member of the Nightshade Family and is found from Spain to Palestine.

This confusion arose because the reference books dealing with flower myths and folklore which were consulted used only the common name of Mandrake in referring to the European plant. Not realizing at the time that our own "Mandrake" is found only in eastern North America and eastern Asia and not in Europe, the author assumed that there was only one plant by that name. The drug Podophyllum, obviously, does refer to our North American plants and is apparently useful in stimulating the liver to produce bile. The added usefulness of the fruit in making jams and jellies can be verified by the author.

Colloquial names are sometimes very descriptive of some physical or chemical attribute of the plant and serve as helpful reminders of the plants which they describe. However, it is hoped that this experience will serve as a reminder to those of us who are sometimes prone to put too much trust in common names that the best name for a plant is its scientific name.

References: Coon, Nelson, 1963. Using Plants for Healing, Hearthside Press Inc. Friend, Rev. Hilderic, 1884. Flowers and Flower Lore. W. Swan Sonnenschein & Co., second edition. Skinner, C.M., 1939. Myths and Legends of Flowers, Trees, Fruits and Plants. J. B. Lippincott Company.

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#### LETTERS FROM READERS - From Mr. Don Burton

Since reading J. Stafford Harris' "Report on Savannah Sparrow" in the April Newsletter, I have been wondering how he distinguished the male and female, having in mind the comments in all the bird books that the sexes are indistinguishable\* in the field. It would appear that he has based his identification on certain behavioural differences. This might be easily done during the nesting season, but Mr. Harris' observations occurred during the winter months.

\*based on plumage

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- From Mr. J. Stafford Harris

I would like to make a report on a visit from a West Coast variety of Fox Sparrow; also, would appreciate any comments from any member who can identify it, one of the many Western Races.

This bird was first observed on May 4th in my flower beds and feeding station which is located a few feet in front of a cedar hedge in which many birds take refuge. During May, June and early July, this bird became almost a daily visitor. It was last seen in August with several young birds in the flower beds.

In the book "The Birds of Canada" by W. Earl Godfrey, he mentions eleven subspecies of the Fox Sparrow, ten in Western Canada. These are described as extremely variable geographically in colour. The Eastern populations are mostly rust-red while the Western races are mostly sooty-brown, some grey in various proportions.

From the book descriptions of the ten Western varieties of Fox Sparrow, we had a visit from one of these varieties this spring and summer. We are now waiting for a return fall visit.

Our visitor was about the size of a robin but slimmer in build and with a longer tail, sooty-grey colour with distinct light streak over each eye. Throat was whitish and with white streaks on breast and sides; also, two white streaks on the back but less distinct.

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The bird mingled freely with the House Sparrows, Starlings and Cowbirds but was not as aggressive as the various Blackbirds or Blue Jays. However, I have seen it chase a House Sparrow which was feeding too closely.

From the book descriptions of the Western varieties of Fox Sparrows, this visitor could perhaps be identified as either: P. I. Schistacea Baird, usual haunts: extreme S.E. British Columbia and S.W. Alberta, Waterton Lakes Park; or P.I. Fuliginosa Ridgway, the darkest and sootiest of the Western Races, usual haunts: S.W. British Columbia, including Vancouver Island but not including Queen Charlotte Islands.

Have other members had visits from any of the Western races of Fox Sparrows? Perhaps some member can identify this particular variety. I would welcome any informative comments in the Newsletter.

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### BOOK REVIEWS

#### "NEVER CRY WOLF" by Farley Mowat

A light-hearted and amusing approach to the much maligned and misunderstood wolf of the North American continent. The author spent several months studying the ways of the wolf, and in particular a family of wolves, in the Canadian Arctic in the company of a "Shaman", an Eskimo of the Wolf Clan. From him he learned much Eskimo-wolf lore, and of the strong links between the wolf, caribou and Eskimo, who lived in such good balance with each other in the past. The author writes with great affection and admiration of the wolf, but not with so great an admiration for Government services, which I truly hope are not so inefficient as it would seem from the narrative.

#### "THE NATURAL HISTORY OF THE DOG" (The World Naturalist Series) Richard & Alice Fienns

This is an erudite and fascinating study of the history of the domesticated dog and his relationship to man. The authors trace the history back into Paleolithic times, and in the telling give many interesting sidelights into the story of man. Unlike Konrad Lorenz, they feel that all dogs originated from the wolf, which in Paleolithic and Mesolithic times was very widespread, and that the then domesticated dog was crossed with the jackal and fox. All three wild animals can be crossed with the dog and produce fertile stock. Both 'Never Cry Wolf' by Farley Mowat and 'Man Meets Dog' by Konrad Lorenz are mentioned in the book under review. 'The Natural History of the Dog' is written in sections, each section covering all aspects of the dog, its history, role in human affairs, races and zoology. There are three very good appendices. A very fascinating book for the general reader, and in particular for the dog lover, another book I would love to possess.

P.M.J.

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#### FILM: "RING OF BRIGHT WATER" (106 minutes)

Filmed mainly in Argyllshire, Scotland and based on Gavin Maxwell's autobiographical novel, it tells the story of a young London man who buys an Otter and goes to live with it in Scotland. The Otter "Mijbil" is the star but he is supported by Bill Travers (the young man) and Virginia McKenna (a Scottish lady doctor). Perhaps you remember this husband-wife team from 'Born Free'. It is definitely a sentimental and romantic film with some touches of humour and one moment of tragedy. There are rugged landscapes and shining waters, golden sunsets, Highland cattle,

basking sharks and wild swans. But, above all, there is the Otter "Mij". The photography is good and the colours attractive. The music is occasionally obtrusive and overloud - for emotional impact. The story line is simple and the dialogue uncluttered and a bit trite. There is the start of a wishy-washy love affair (between doctor and young man) but fortunately it doesn't develop enough warmth to detract from the otters. It's a nice picture - not a brilliant one. You'll learn very little about otters though you'll see lots of them. But you'll remember the yellow gorse, bright waters and rugged Scottish hills and have a pleasant escape for an hour or two.

E.T.

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NIAGARA FLORA

Mr. A. W. Miller of the Niagara Peninsula is quite a botanist. Look at some of the flora he has found over the past fifteen years in the Niagara Peninsula:

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
Butterburr . . . . .	Dufferin Island
Coral Root . . . . .	Pelham Township
Lance-leafed Violet . . . . .	Port Colborne Marsh
Hop Tree . . . . .	Erie Beach
Burning Bush . . . . .	Louth Township
Small Yellow Waterlily . . . . .	Willoughby Township
Ladies Tresses . . . . .	Lake Erie shore
Arrow Arum . . . . .	Ushers Creek
Wild Yam . . . . .	Bertie Township
Climbing Furmitory . . . . .	Bertie Township
Gaura. . . . .	Erie Beach
American Colombo . . . . .	Pelham Township
Leather Tree . . . . .	Pelham Township
Wild Licorice . . . . .	Erie Beach (only known location in Canada)
Holly Fern . . . . .	Niagara Glen
Fragrant Sumac . . . . .	Niagara Glen
Twin Flower . . . . .	Pelham Township
Tufted Cotton Grass . . . . .	Pelham Township
Hackberry . . . . .	Edge of Niagara gorge
Paw Paw Tree . . . . .	8 locations in Lincoln County
Twin Leaf . . . . .	Pelham Township
Virginia Bluebells . . . . .	Tintern
Sedum Ternatum . . . . .	Rockway Falls
Flowering Marsh Rush . . . . .	Boyers Creek
Moon Seed . . . . .	Niagara Glen
Ginseng . . . . .	Beamers Falls
Fairy Candle . . . . .	West of Niagara-on-the-Lake
Joe Pye (purpureum) . . . . .	Near Hydro Plant
Green Dragon . . . . .	Bertie Township
Fall Dandelion . . . . .	Cave Springs
Milk Vetch . . . . .	West of Port Dalhousie
Pad-leaf Orchis . . . . .	Pelham Township
Water Fern . . . . .	Nanticoke
Hibiscus . . . . .	Bertie Township
Largest Tulip Tree in Ontario . . . . .	Rose Hill
Largest Cucumber Tree in Ontario . . . . .	Pelham Township
Coffee Tree . . . . .	Dufferin Islands in Canada)
Cherry Birch . . . . .	West of Port Dalhousie (only known location/

## A FEW DREAMERS IN CANOES

Those of us who consider unexploited wilderness areas as an integral and very necessary part of the Ontario scene felt last year the time had come for an organized citizens' voice to challenge those who seek - and who have gained but abused - special privileges in such areas as Algonquin Park. So it was that the Algonquin Wildlands League came into being .....

In narrow economic terms "value" is a price determined in the marketplace by supply and demand. Under this definition the only way to realize the value of a tree, for example, is to cut it and either saw it up into boards or turn it into paper. A stand of white pine has no value until it is harvested.

If we accept the values of the logging operator, then the tulips along the Rideau Canal are worthless, the waters running over Niagara Falls have no value other than to produce hydro power, a deer bounding through the autumn woods has no value unless shot and eaten, and a white pine tree has no value unless cut and sawed.

But there are aesthetic values which are as real as the economic values of the marketplace. And if the realization of these aesthetic values implies that certain trees mature, fall, and are regenerated by other trees taking their place, with the whine of the saw and the growl of the logging truck never heard on the pine ridge, it does not mean that society is failing to gain the greatest value and failing to make the highest use of the ridge of pine ...

... ultimately all values are human values, whether economic or aesthetic. Some trees must and should be cut to provide homes and income. This applies to most mature trees. But some must be left so that man can gain pleasure, relaxation, and relief from stress and tension far from the evidences of the commercial activities of his fellow man. And that does not mean just that Disneyland front of trees at the water's edge, but over the ridge and beyond ....

- Walter Gray, Director, Algonquin Wildlands League  
(from an address to the Ottawa Committee, A.W.L.)

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The following is an excerpt from ECOLOGY AND INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE  
(published by the CONSERVATION FOUNDATION, Washington, D.C.)

The case study on the fiasco of insecticide use in Peru's Canete Valley was presented by Teodoro Boza Barducci from Lima. He told how the valley's cotton farmers at great expense started an aerial insecticide spraying program. The materials used were developed by United States industry and advocated by the United States Department of Agriculture, which had tested them.

The insecticides caused total destruction of useful insects along with the parasites, and brought about a breakdown of the natural equilibrium within the ecosystem. The pests gradually developed immunity and increased in numbers to a point of producing tremendous damages to the crops. In 1957, the insecticide program was dropped in favor of biological control, which has been successful.

Reporting on man's effects on island ecosystems, F. Raymond Fosberg told how phosphate mining and bauxite mining have brought widespread forms of technological destruction on small Pacific islands.

On raised limestone islands such as Banaba in the Central Pacific, mining removed most of the soil so that agriculture became difficult without elaborate procedures to convert coral rock to soil. Then the water situation, always marginal, deteriorated because of the absence of vegetation that previously had held water. Life became so difficult that, in spite of the islanders' traditional love for their home island, it became the easiest course to use their saved-up share of phosphate profits to buy an island elsewhere and move to it.

#### LOOK BEFORE TINKERING WITH RIVER

When the sluice gates of the first dam across the Zambezi River in central Africa were closed in December, 1958, the rising waters began the formation of 1,700-square-mile Lake Kariba, the largest man-made body of water in the world.

As the first of the major African impoundments, it also altered large sections of African landscape as well as the lives of people in many parts of Rhodesia and Zambia. Millions of dollars were spent on economic and engineering studies. Yet, prior to the decision to proceed with construction, not a single environmental survey of the lake basin or citizen relocation areas was even initiated.

Dr. Thayer Scudder of the California Institute of Technology reported a variety of unforeseen disruptions that have occurred since the dam was completed.

The planners had expected, said Dr. Scudder, that the increase in the fishing resource would compensate for the loss of agricultural lands that were inundated. But after a temporary rise in the fish catch, yields dropped drastically due to factors not fully understood. The expected cash income and jobs did not develop.

Creation of the large lake shore also produced an environment highly suitable for the tsetse fly, which fostered serious outbreaks of disease among cattle, Dr. Scudder said. Many of the people dependent upon cattle for their livelihood have felt the economic impact.

Because the dam was built primarily for hydro-electric power, and water is released for that purpose, shifts in lake level and the effects on river area below the dam have been irregular and have brought considerable uncertainty to farming efforts.

In addition, the planners did not take into consideration the inadequate amount and quality of land available for resettlement of the displaced population, or the natives' unwillingness to change their long-established land-use practices. These practices have led to erosion and destruction of the soil in the new areas.

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#### FAR AWAY PLACES

Far away places so intrigue  
How we yearn to go forth to see  
Things we crave with outstretched hands;  
Romance, adventure and far away lands.

We never ponder, that at our feet,  
And all the lovely things we seek;  
The earth's abundant gifts are there.  
Why aren't we blessed enough to care.

WANTED

LEADERS WANTED ... Members of the Club are needed to lead outings. Whether it is botany, birds, geology or whatever, there is no need to hold a PhD. before qualifying as a leader. Over and above an elementary knowledge of the subject, we will gladly barter away profundity for enthusiasm. How about giving it a try...you might even learn to enjoy it? Remember, there is no better or faster way to learn than by trying to show others. We can use all the help we can get. Please call Walt or Lil Hutton at 782-5955, anytime.

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The new Editor, Miss Margaret Jeffery, will be editing the next issue (this one was thrown together by the Executive). Your contributions are needed to keep the Newsletter interesting, informative and an important communication between members.

The Editor's address is:

1531 Bathurst St., Apt. 403, Toronto 349.