



TORONTO FIELD NATURALISTS' CLUB NEWSLETTER

Number 263

December 1971

Give your Club a Christmas present this year. Help pay for the Jim Baillie Reserve. No sum is too large or too small.

If you have not previously donated, please give now. We have had a wonderful response to our earlier appeals, but many members have not yet subscribed.

If you have given before, would you consider a further donation. We are still a long way from our \$20,000 objective.

The Toronto Field Naturalists' Club is a registered charitable institution. An official receipt for income tax purposes will be sent to every donor.

THIS IS YOUR RESERVE!

.....
To Mr. A. D. Fry,
250 Martin Grove Rd.,
Islington, Ont.

Date _____

I enclose cheque/money order made out to the "Toronto Field Naturalists' Club" in the amount of \$ _____ as a donation towards the purchase of our new reserve.

Mr./Mrs./Miss _____

Address _____

Visitors welcome!

DECEMBER MEETING

Visitors welcome!

Monday, December 6, 1971, at 8:15 p.m.
in the auditorium of the
ONTARIO INSTITUTE FOR STUDIES IN EDUCATION
252 Bloor Street West

Speaker: DR. DAVID BARR, Assistant Curator,
Department of Entomology and Invertebrate Zoology,
Royal Ontario Museum

Subject: OF MITES AND MEN -- the biology and ecological position of water mites

Beneath the surface of every body of natural, fresh water is a world of animal activity equal in complexity and drama to anything found on dry land. Water mites are a fascinating, colourful, and ubiquitous element of the aquatic fauna. These little known creatures interact with many of the other freshwater organisms in their habitat and even occasionally with man.

The OISE Building is between the St. George and Bedford exits of the St. George subway station. Entrance is on the west side of the building, via a covered walk from Bloor Street. Parking is reached from Prince Arthur Avenue (the first street north of Bloor). There is no charge in the small lot west of the building; a charge of 50¢ is made in the underground garage if an attendant is on duty.

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DECEMBER OUTING

Sunday WILKET CREEK PARK - Birds Leader: Mr. Dave Fiddler
December 5 Meet at the upper parking lot at the entrance on Leslie Street just north
9:00 a.m. of Eglinton Avenue East. Morning only.

Mr. Stu Corbett, Outings Chairman
(251-6807)

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THIS IS OUR LAST CALL FOR 1971-72 FEES! If you have not yet paid your fees we urge you to use the coupon below, as following the December meeting those who have not paid are removed from our mailing list.

To: Mrs. H. C. Robson, Secretary,
Toronto Field Naturalists' Club,
49 Craighurst Ave., Toronto 12, Ont.

Date _____

I (We) wish to renew TFNC membership and enclose cheque or money order.

() Single \$4.00 () Family (Adults) \$6.00 () Life \$100.00

() Corresponding (living more than 20 miles from the OISE Building) \$2.00

() Full-time student (aged 16 or over) \$1.50

Name _____

Address _____

- JUNIOR CLUB The Junior Field Naturalists will meet in the theatre of the Royal Ontario Museum. For further information call the Director, Mr. Mike Singleton, at 447-4197.
Saturday
December 4
10:00 a.m.
- FIELD BIOLOGISTS' GROUP Meet at St. James-Bond United Church, on Avenue Rd. just north of Eglinton. On-street parking can be difficult, but there are several private parking lots nearby on Eglinton. For information regarding the program for this meeting call the chairman, Mr. Don Burton, at 222-6467.
Thursday
December 9
8:00 p.m.
- CONSERVATION & ECOLOGY GROUP There will be no meeting of the Conservation & Ecology Group in December.
Chairman: Prof. Wm. Andrews (425-4607)
- BOTANY GROUP There will be no meeting of the Botany Group in December.
Chairman: Miss Florence Preston (483-9530)
- BIRD GROUP The Bird Group is for all members who want to learn more about birds, especially beginners. Meet at St. James-Bond United Church (see Field Biologists' Group announcement above for directions). Please note date: this was announced in the last Newsletter as November 23 but the meeting room was unavailable on this date. Subject: Bird Identification: winter plumage vis. breeding plumage. Also, birding vocabulary you should know.
Thursday
November 25
8:00 p.m.
and
December 16
8:00 p.m.
- There will also be a meeting of the Bird Group on Thursday, December 16, same place, same time. Topic: Bird Songs, with tapes.
Chairman: Mr. Red Mason (621-3905)

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Help wanted! We have been invited to set up a display in the Royal Ontario Museum in February and March of next year as part of their diamond jubilee celebrations. We need people who would like to work on this. All kinds of help is needed -- installation, co-ordination, sign-writing. We particularly need large photos, both coloured and black and white, as the exhibit will be mostly pictorial. If you think you can help please phone Mrs. Mary Robson, 481-0260.

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Welcome to the following new members, enrolled from October 1 to 27:

Miss Eleanor Beck, Mrs. C. Brehaut, Mr. Roy G. Bristow, Mr. & Mrs. Graham Carey, Mr. James Carlisle, Mr. Wm. S. Dawidowicz, Miss Valerie Davidson, Mr. & Mrs. J. Dineen, Mr. R. W. Finlay, Mrs. Rachel Grover, Dr. Grace Richardson Handley, Mr. & Mrs. W. J. Harris, Miss Margaret Hearn, Mr. G. E. Hendra, Mr. A. C. Hill, Miss Eva Hunt, Mrs. L. Irving, Miss Helen Lloyd, Mr. & Mrs. F. G. Miller, Mr. Edward M. Moore, Miss Honor M. Newby, Mr. W. D. Peters, Mrs. M. Robertson, Mr. Robert Robertson, Miss Marlene Sokoloski, Mrs. Ruth Stulberg, Mr. D. Sutherland, Miss Sue Thomas, Mrs. Marjory L. Tilley, Dr. G. A. Trusler, Miss Pearl G. Wilson.

President - Mr. Clive Goodwin

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

BERMUDIANA

by Elmer Talvila

I think it was that garden book that decided it.

I had been questioning a nice chap in the Bermuda Tourism Office about birds and flowers and plants and shells -- things he knew nothing about, and never asking him about hotels and golf and the Bermuda plan -- things he knew everything about. Finally, in despair, he thumbed through his phone book for help and came up with: "1-3020", the Bermuda Audubon Society. That was all.

As I was leaving for the Trinidad Tourism Office, he called out:

"Wait a minute! Would you like a book on gardens -- free?"

I would.

A good big green book, 200 pages, with pictures, 36 shillings.

Outside on Richmond St. I thought -- that was jolly good of him -- and said: "Dammit! Let's go to Bermuda -- pink pastel houses, off season and all!"

And we went.

Yes, it must have been that garden book (free!) that did it.

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For a month we dreamed:

Anja dreamed about lying on pink sands and dipping her frosty-white toes into a pea-green sea; of moonlit rides in a horsedrawn buggy; of treasures duty-free and 50% off lining the shops of Felicity Street.

I had dreams too. Here are some of them -- and the reality.

To see birds: that beautiful tropicbird, the longtail, swooping down from its craggy home; and the legendary cahow, a nearly extinct rarely-seen petrel; and the goldfinch, not our black and yellow 'wild canary' but the red-faced one from Europe with the tinkling song.

No such luck.

We were too early for the longtail. It is the 'robin' of Bermuda, bringing in Spring, and Spring comes to Bermuda, as it comes to Ontario, in March.

With some luck we might have seen the cahow which had just finished its breeding season and had not yet vanished over the ocean. But David Wingate was away and without Bermuda's Conservation Officer we could not visit the protected nesting islets.

The European goldfinches we saw -- lots of them -- they had red faces, flashes of yellow and they tinkled harmoniously. The only other life bird for me was the Kiskadee flycatcher -- a noisy boisterous fellow introduced from Trinidad some 16 years ago.

There were some old friends too. The white-eyed vireo heard singing "chick of the village" from the day we arrived. Bluebirds were common everywhere. The little ground doves walked just as sedately as their cousins in Florida. And surprisingly a snow goose and an American egret side by side at Spittal Pond.

Yes, there were birds, but we missed the best: the cahow and the longtail.

To gorge myself on sweet loquats picked from the wayside trees,

I stole loquats constantly throughout the Island. The trees were everywhere and the fruit was ripe and tempting. But I never found a sweet one. Maybe I was dreaming about candied kumquats instead.

To find and bring back one decent shell. Or maybe even an indecent one, for after all an animal with no head and its rump always sticking out of the sand must be somewhat indecent.

But Bermuda's beaches are not strewn with shells and shell pickers. You have to dredge for them -- the shells, I mean. Oh, I hunted all right, nearly every inch of some of those little pink beaches. And we did find lots of little -- very little -- keyhole limpet shells. And once I even found a half decent purple shell, but it was just a pile of rubble before we got it home in my handkerchief. We brought back a vial of pink sand though -- it's made of tiny pink shells.

Another dream. To swim across Harrington Sound and back. I even had the route picked -- and the action.

A crowd of locals would cheer me on as I dived in at Flatts Bridge.

Emotional outbursts of "Brave Colonial! Jolly good show!"

I would strike out for Trunk Island, then Shark hole keeping a weather eye out for sharks, touch lightly at Devil's Hole, then a dash back for crumpets and tea.

Ha! I touched lightly once into the Atlantic at Coral Beach. Sixty-one degrees Fahrenheit!

After that I stayed away from the water at all times. (Drank rum instead.)

To visit Nonsuch Island.

I had read my Beebe. In fact I had with me a Public Library copy of "Nonsuch: Land of Water" and remember reading and almost seeing -

"Nonsuch in spring ... ablaze with thousands of pink stars as the oleanders burst forth; later comes the rose red of hibiscus."

And now I knew about the "Living Museum" project, a plan to repopulate Nonsuch with Bermuda's original native plants and animals.

But the time was out of joint, for the island is a nature refuge and David Wingate the warden was away in Jamaica on the trail of the black-capped petrel and wouldn't be back until March. So we never got there and just squinted at it with binoculars from a vantage point near the Castle Harbour Hotel (which we never got to either).

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I bought a local newspaper, the Gazette I think it was.

The news? Tea and crumpet announcements, hosts of traffic accidents, one stolen car (recovered -- where can you hide on an island?) and the clarion ads of the "Forty Thieves" of Front Street (local merchants).

Oh yes, there was one item of major importance: the golden loquats were ripe now and being picked and transformed into "Somers' Gold".

The rest of the world? The world is not much with you in Bermuda; nor missed either.

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More next month about tiptoeing through the Yuccas, trader Bill and the South Seas and the garden of Eden.

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One dream is coming true -- a year late. I will be leading an F.O.N. tour to Bermuda next Feb. 26th to March 5th, and David Wingate will be on hand (we hope) to show us around and take us to all the places I missed.

Tour details are not completely known yet (I am still writing and expecting letters) but it is hoped that the cost will be under \$300. per person.

Would you like to come?

If so, please write or phone at once to reserve a place through the

Federation of Ontario Naturalists

1262 Don Mills Road

Don Mills, Ontario

Phone: 444-8419

The tour will probably be limited to 20 people and a \$50. deposit would be required.

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Members will be interested to know that the film which was taken at the Minesing Swamp Excursion last June is scheduled to be shown on Channel 11, December 30th at 10:00 a.m.

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COMING EVENTS

ROYAL CANADIAN INSTITUTE

Information: 922-2804

Saturday evening lectures, Convocation Hall, University of Toronto, at 8:15 p.m.

- Dec. 4 - "Where Ontario's heritage lingers" - with colour slides.
Peter John Stokes, Consulting restoration architect, Niagara-on-the-Lake.
- Dec. 11 - "Paul Kane's Frontier". J. Russell Harper, Associate Professor, Dept. of Fine Arts, Sir George Williams University, Montreal.

ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM

Information: 928-8550

Free Sunday Films 2:30 p.m.

- Dec. 5 - Universe; Early stone tools; Seven authors in search of a reader.
- Dec. 12 - Family Day.
Animal movie; Pigs; The golden fish; Legend of the Paramo.

Free Tours 12:15 p.m.

- Dec. 9 - Evolution of Mammals
- Dec. 20 - Facts about Fossils

FEDERATION OF ONTARIO NATURALISTS

Information: 444-8419

- Jan. 1-2 - Winter Birds of Southern Ontario. A two-day tour of the Niagara peninsula and Hamilton areas. Object: to see the maximum number of species in the minimum time. Cost \$29.
- Jan. 7-9 - Birding for beginners. Niagara Falls area. Personalized attention to beginners with 4 participants being assigned to each expert leader. Cost \$28.
- Feb. 26-Mar. 5 - Bermuda tour. A leisurely look at Bermuda's plants, birds, caves and fish with tour leaders Elmer Talvila (your Newsletter editor) and David Wingate, Bermuda's Conservation Officer and an outstanding naturalist. Although the emphasis will be on botany we hope to see some 60 species of birds, visit several nature reserves, see crystal caves, explore Nonsuch Island and have time left over for shopping and other sightseeing as well. But don't expect to swim -- too cold. Accommodation will probably be at the Biological Station near St. George and the total tour cost about \$300, per person. But reserve early as the tour is limited to 20 participants.
- Mar. 18-26 - Great Smoky Mountains National Park. This is one of the unique ecological areas in eastern North America. Mountain peaks, virgin forest, some 1200 species of wildflowers and 130 kinds of trees. Much more. Leader Prof. William Andrews, chairman of our Conservation and Ecology Group. Probably cost \$150.

ALSO... A joint project of the Canadian Nature Federation (formerly CAS) and the FAS will be a Trinidad-Tobago tour for 12 days, March 22 to April 3, including 4 days at the famous Asa Wright Bird Sanctuary and 3 days on Tobago with lodging at the Bird of Paradise Inn. Price of tour, all inclusive, double occupancy, \$950. from Toronto, \$850. from Miami. For details contact Mr. Don Baldwin, 47 Duggan Ave., Toronto 195 (488-7769).

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BOTANY OUTINGS REPORT

by Emily Hamilton

The Spring Outings list for '71 gave us choice of many and varied hikes and trips to take, which carried through into summer, and Stu Corbett is to be congratulated for making these possible for so many of us.

The last two outings at the end of June were memorable occasions. On Saturday we went to the Minesing Swamp, near Barrie, for birding and botany. To most of us the area was new territory and we were warned that it is quite easy to get lost in the swamp and we better stick together in groups. But we never got very far away from civilization as we were met by a TV crew, who were to record the outing on film for Education TV.

It was a hot sunny day as we went into an abandoned field to see what plants were invading the vacant land, and the discussion was recorded without a hitch. But when we were looking at some birds through our binoculars a cloud came over the sun, and we had to wait for stronger light to make a better picture. During some interviews which were being recorded the distant whistle of a train was heard - it came through on the soundtrack and we were asked to "please do it again". Then came the sequence of tramping into the swamp in single file. First was the over-all picture; then we were asked to "do it again" for a close-up; then "please do it again" this time for the feet! We learned a good deal about making a film, and not very much about the Swamp. But the lovely Showy Lady's Slipper Cypripedium reginae, was abundant, in full bloom, and was the star of the show.

On Sunday the FERN outing started at half-past seven from the city limits, where the leader, Mr. Ron Scovell, greeted us and gave each a folder containing a map of the route, and showed us where the next stop would be TO ORGANIZE. The folder contained also a check-list of ferns, a diagram of fern types and terminology, and a key to the ferns on the Bruce Trail, and some blank pages for us to make our own notes ... with these completed it is the owner's valuable document. As all cars arrived on time at the appointed STOP, we quickly moved on and drew up beside a swampy wood, which we entered and found many ferns all around us. Not for nothing were we provided with the key - we were set to work to figure them out, and as the names were confirmed we listed them, a total of thirteen ferns in that one small area. Moving on to a beautifully wooded river valley we stopped again under the maples to admire and examine a magnificent stand of the rare Narrow-leaved Glade Fern, Athyrium picnocarpon, and to find two more ferns for the list. On we went, but by this time we were hungry so we settled down at a roadside table to eat our lunches, and sampled the water from a nearby spring. During this break Mr. Scovell showed us specimens of ferns from his herbarium - a superb collection, beautifully mounted. Tramping through the woods again we were shown a stand of Goldie's fern, Dryopteris goldiana, and to the leader's delight happened upon a small plant of Male Fern, Dryopteris filix-mas. Soon we came to the edge of the escarpment, and looking down into one of the typical crevices of that area were amazed to see (on June 27th) six inches of SNOW lying at the bottom! We found a way down into the depths, and examining the plants there found that they were only just leafing out as though it were early May - but the ferns were ready for summer, and the cliffs were covered with Slender Cliff Brake, Cryptogramma stelleri; also found was the rare Green Spleenwort, Asplenium viride. Refreshed from this cooler temperature - it was a hot sultry day - we pressed on to yet another Bruce Trail area, and in these beautiful woods were delighted with more species to add to the list; Silvery Glade fern Athyrium thelypteroides, was growing in an opening, and in a hollow at the base of a maple tree was the smallest possible specimen of Hart's-tongue fern, Phyllitis scolopendrium. This brought the total of species found to 29! a most rewarding expedition, and it was only sad that this was the last group outing for the season.

BONAIRE - FLAMINGO ISLE

by Bruce Parker

At an average distance of fifteen miles off the coast of Venezuela lie the Dutch islands of Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao. These islands differ from the typical West Indies island by substituting the mountainous volcanic terrain for a rather level landscape produced by coral formations. This flatness allows the trade winds freedom to produce a natural air conditioning throughout the islands but also result in very little rainfall. The resulting arid landscape is shown by huge organ-pipe cacti and peculiar divi-divi trees which point forever downwind with their trunks and branches gnarled and twisted by the trade winds. The overall flora and fauna of these islands are predominantly South American, but many West Indian elements are present. The varied birdlife encountered represents both North and South America and the West Indies.

When I visited these islands in May 1967 Bonaire led the three for its birding attractions. The principal town of Bonaire is Kralendijk where 20 to 35 frigate birds were usually wheeling about the pier. This large dark bird which acts much like an extremely large graceful gull has a six to seven foot wingspread and a long deeply forked tail. Other birds seen from this pier were laughing gulls, common and royal terns. An occasional Cayenne tern would pass by to remind one that he is very near South America. In the town itself, the most conspicuous "backyard" birds are the southern mockingbird and the bananaquit. The mockingbird is almost identical to the one found occasionally in Southern Ontario, even though it is a different species. The bananaquit is a very common bird throughout the West Indies, but the local subspecies is restricted to Bonaire.

A shallow pond at the edge of the town proved to be attractive to many birds. On first seeing the pond, my attention was drawn to a shaggy-looking heron near the road. Of the six species of herons and egrets which I saw on Bonaire the reddish egret was the most numerous. Other birds seen at this pond were snowy egrets, least terns and a flock of "peeps" including white-rumped and western sandpipers. After leaving the town the road crosses a flat area and passes the distillation plant where the island's water supply is distilled from the ocean. Along the roadside the scaly-breasted ground dove and the black-faced grassquit were particularly common, as were many goats which wander freely about the island. From here the road climbs slightly, rolls over small hills and passes eroded weatherbeaten limestone cliffs. It was along these cliffs, with their divi-divi and acacia trees and giant organ-pipe cacti, that the island's noisiest bird, the loudly screaming Caribbean parrot, with its bright green plumage, yellow-orange face pattern and long pointed tail, was found in flocks of up to 20 individuals. An interesting feature of this parrot is that the islands of Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao all have their own sub-species which differ from each other mainly in facial pattern. In contrast to the parrots' abundance, its only relative on the island, the yellow-winged parrot, is one of Bonaire's rarest birds. Four of these birds were seen in a gum tree and were not only much larger than the parrot but also correspondingly noisier.

The countryside changes from a flat semi-arid scene to one of hilliness with denser and greener vegetation. When the road swings to begin its return journey by an inland route it skirts the shore of Goto Lake, a landlocked piece of the Caribbean. A variety of shorebirds here included semipalmated plovers, greater yellowlegs, and a few snowy and Wilson's plovers. The lake's main attraction was first seen as a narrow line of pink standing near an island in the blue water; upon closer inspection, this proved to be a flock of about 100 flamingoes. Flamingoes have nested in Bonaire for hundreds of years and this must be one of the few places in the world where a person is able to stay on a paved road and see flamingoes in their natural habitat.

Bonaire is also the home of five species of pigeons and doves. The scaly-naped pigeon is the largest and most restricted of these and is found among the hills near Goto Lake. On the return trip to Kralendijk, birds such as the bare-eyed pigeon, white-fronted dove, violet-eared dove, gray kingbird and brown-breasted flycatcher were fairly common, but two pearly-eyed thrashers and one yellow oriole were also seen. Near the village on Antriol, a lone caracara soaring over a cliff, was the only bird of prey seen. This bird is mainly a scavenger and in Bonaire it replaces the black vulture of South America.

Across the island from Kralendijk is a shallow bay called Lac, which is bordered by an impenetrable growth of mangroves. This area was especially good for common egrets, Louisiana herons and green herons, as well as frigate birds and brown pelicans. Two shorebirds found in this area were interesting, the collared plover because it is a South American species and the black-necked stilt because of its striking black and white plumage and noisy behaviour (apparently nesting at the time).

At the southern end of Bonaire is the island's claim to ornithological fame, an extensive area of shallow saltwater known as the Pekelemeer with a breeding colony of over 1000 pairs of flamingoes. As a wild bird the flamingo is truly majestic, particularly when a flock of about 200 or more take flight with the tropical sun glittering on their orange-pink plumage.

While the number of species of birds found in Bonaire is low, the ease with which they are found and identified makes the island an ideal setting for an introduction to West Indian birdlife.

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BEGINNERS, ANYONE?

Requests were received about a year ago for "beginners" bird hikes. The person who did not know a sparrow from a duck, and really wanted to learn, found regular club outings less than ideal, so we were told.

We arranged a series of outings with limited numbers for "beginners only". At first it was great, but the last one had four people on it, and we have discontinued the trips for lack of interest.

Is this really the case? If you want beginners' hikes, let us know. But also let us know what you didn't like about the ones we did organize. If you have views, please phone Clive Goodwin,

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BOTANY GROUP

by Florence Preston

The subject of Seeds was a timely one for the October meeting of the Botany Group. Mrs. Phyllis Treloar presented a beautiful set of coloured slides illustrating different kinds of seeds and the various methods of dispersal. This was followed by further discussion of the topic by Miss Erna Lewis who, with the assistance of Miss Emily Hamilton, had collected several specimens of seeds and seed pods. These were displayed on tables and everyone had an opportunity to see and study many of the items that had been mentioned during the first part of the evening.

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ADVERTISEMENT

TFN member with stenographical and writing skills desires position or part-time work related to the natural science or natural history field. Has some training in art as well as journalism and ability to do simple drawings. Willing to relocate outside Toronto, if required. Phone 481-5537, evenings.

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ADVERTISEMENT

OFFICE MANAGER for the Federation of Ontario Naturalists

The person selected will be directly responsible to the Executive Director for all administrative detail affecting the daily operation of the Federation. Duties include the management and promotion of the nature bookshop, routine correspondence, staff supervision, membership records and promotion, expediting of special publications and the responsibility for the accounting section, and to produce monthly financial statements. Other duties as assigned.

Qualifications: Experience in office management and staff supervision. Experience in merchandising desirable. Qualified in accounting techniques. Ability to work well with others and under a minimum of supervision.

Challenging opportunity in small office having an administrative staff of ten but with prospects of doubling its size within next five years. Location in Don Mills but a move is anticipated to mid-town Toronto.

Salary: Starting salary \$7,000-\$9,000. per annum depending upon qualifications.

Commencement date: January 3, 1972, or as soon as possible thereafter.

Applications will be received until December 10, 1971.

Send full resume together with references to: Gerald B. McKeating, Executive Director, Federation of Ontario Naturalists, 1262 Don Mills Road, Don Mills, Ontario. Mark envelope: CONFIDENTIAL.

A POSITION IS ALSO OPEN at the F.O.N. for junior accounting duties in the head office. This individual would be responsible to the senior bookkeeper for the daily cash receipts, invoicing, etc. Applicants should be able to type and have basic accounting skills. Write to Mr. G. B. McKeating, Executive Director, Federation of Ontario Naturalists, 1262 Don Mills Road, Ontario.

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ON GOING BIRDING IN JAMAICA
(or when is a Kling-kling not a Kling-kling)

by John Kelly

The middle of March in the Toronto area is about the deadest time of year for the bird-watcher. One's Winter list is completed and it is too early for anything very interesting in the way of Spring arrivals. (It is nice to see Red-winged Blackbirds again, but I find that the novelty very quickly wears off with that species.) This being the case it seemed like a good time to head South for a week. Jamaica seemed like a good place to go for two reasons: - reasonable cost and enough interesting birds to keep one busy, without such a huge number of different species as to be confusing for the non-expert such as myself.

For me the "life birds" started to appear as soon as the Air Canada DC-8 had touched down at Montego Bay. Seeing several Cattle Egrets feeding alongside the runway seemed like a good start to my trip. At that time I did not realize that this chunky Heron is about as common in Jamaica as Starlings are in Toronto! The rapidity with which these birds have colonized that part of the world can be judged by the fact that the book "Introduction to the Birds of Jamaica", published in 1955, does not even mention them!

For reasons of economy I was staying in Kingston, rather than at one of the more fashionable North Coast resorts. In any case the birds were plentiful all over the island. I stayed at a very pleasant small hotel in suburban Kingston in the lower foothills of the Blue Mountains. The lazy birder could get quite a respectable list without leaving the hotel grounds. On waking up in the morning I could look out of my window and watch Saffron Finches, Black-faced Grassquits, Yellow-faced Grassquits and sometimes a Ground Dove feeding on the lawn. Outside the door there would usually be a Yellowthroat in the hedge, (Jamaica is the Winter home of many of our familiar warblers), or one of the handsome black, white and yellow Bananaquits. In a nearby tree there was certain to be an Eastern Mockingbird, usually in good voice.

Waiting for breakfast to be served on the terrace gave one an opportunity for some more relaxed bird watching. Circling over the mountains and sometimes swooping low over the houses would be several Turkey Vultures, known as "John Crow" in Jamaica. Close by several of the small black and white Antillean Palm Swifts would be ceaselessly darting back and forth collecting their own breakfast. Finally one might expect to see Jamaica's national bird the Streamer-tail. The adult male of this species of Hummingbird is bright green with a black cap, and is endowed with two black tail feathers which have a length of over 6". There are two other Hummingbirds in Jamaica, one, the Vervain Hummingbird is just a shade larger than the Bee Hummingbird of Cuba, which, with a length of 2½" is the smallest bird in the World. The other, called the Jamaican Mango is about twice that size and is a very handsome black, greeny bronze and purple colour.

The most spectacular road in Jamaica is the one that leads from Kingston up to a pass through the Blue Mountains known as Hardwar Gap. It was about a 15 mile drive from my hotel to the summit (4,380' above sea level) and when I got there I could see the hotel about five miles away. As you can gather it is not exactly the straightest road in the world. Neither is it the widest and it is mandatory to sound one's horn before rounding the numerous blind curves on the way up. The trip is well worth while, both for the scenery and for the birds. Space does not permit mention of all the birds I saw, but some of the more interesting ones were:- Rufous-throated Solitaire. This is a medium-sized flycatcher-like bird, mostly grey with a reddish throat. Its song often has a rather mournful quality and can be heard a long way off. Imitation of its notes will often bring the bird up close. (It even worked for me, the world's worst whistler!) Stripe-headed Tanager. A member of the same family as our Scarlet Tanager, this example is mostly orange-yellow with black and white wings and a black and white striped head reminiscent of the female Rose-breasted Grosbeak. Jamaican Woodpecker. This bird reminded me of the Red-bellied Woodpecker but is much darker overall. Blue Mountain Vireo. A large, rather plain Vireo, like the Jamaican Woodpecker it is found only in Jamaica. White-chinned Thrush. This is a large Thrush, mostly dark grey, with a white wing stripe and a white chin. Legs and bill are orange. Orangequit. This member of the Honey-creeper family is a rather handsome blue-grey with a chestnut throat. It is found only in Jamaica. It feeds mostly on fruit and nectar, and is sometimes called the "Long-mouthed Blue-quit".

This business of local and colloquial names can be somewhat confusing to the visitor, especially since the names used in the Jamaican bird book already mentioned very often do not agree with the names in the check list available from the Institute of Jamaica. Examples of this sort of thing, in addition to the Orangequit mentioned above, include "Spindalis" for Stripe-headed Tanager, "Wild Pine Sergeant" for Jamaican Blackbird and "Petcherry" for Grey Kingbird. The Streamertail is often called "Doctor-bird" and the "Kling-Kling" if nothing else is a lot less of a mouthful than Greater Antillean Grackle which is the "proper" name for this bird. It looks much like our Grackles, but its voice is more tinkly - hence the name.

The family of Herons is well represented in Jamaica and several species seem to be abundant. These birds are all easy to identify as all the species likely to be seen can also be found in North America. Many of the different kinds are white but they can all be told apart very easily as, apart from size differences, they very conveniently have different coloured bills and legs. After the Cattle Egret, which can even be found on vacant lots in Kingston, the most frequently seen heron is the Little Blue Heron many of them being the white immatures. Every river and marsh seems

to have them, often accompanied by one or two of the slightly smaller Snowy Egrets. The Common Egret lives up to its name and Great Blue and Green Herons seem to be about as numerous in Jamaica as they are in Southern Ontario. I only saw one Louisiana Heron which is a Winter resident in Jamaica, and there are five more species of Herons and Bitterns which I did not see at all.

I was a bit disappointed not to find more sea birds than I did, but this may have been because I did not go to the right places! I only saw one Gull, a Laughing Gull, a fair number of Royal Terns, a few Magnificent Frigate Birds, and a White-tailed Tropicbird. I also saw Brown Pelicans in a couple of places and it is to be hoped that this bird will fare better in the West Indies than it seems to be doing in North America.

As I was based in Kingston, which is in the South-East part of the island, most of the birding I did was in that area. I did manage to make one trip to the more Westerly parts where the country is quite different. Most of fresh water ponds seemed to be in that area so I did not do very well for the fresh-water species. However I did see Least Grebe, Purple Gallinule, Masked Duck and American Jacana.

Shore-birds are quite plentiful, but offer little in the way of surprises to the Ontario resident. The only new one that I encountered was the Wilson's Plover. This bird is very similar to the Semipalmated Plover, but with a brown neck band. The others were all species seen around Toronto either as Summer visitors such as Killdeer and Spotted Sandpiper, or as common Spring and Fall migrants.

Many species of Warblers were in evidence, thankfully in breeding plumage, the most interesting being the Prairie Warbler, rarely seen around Toronto, and the Arrow-headed Warbler, not seen anywhere outside Jamaica. This is a mostly black and white warbler with arrowhead markings on its underparts. It is mostly found in hilly wooded country. It was nice to see such familiar species as Black-and-white Warbler, Yellow W., Myrtle W., American Redstart, as well as several others, knowing that in less than two months they would be appearing around Toronto.

Space does not permit me to mention or describe all the birds to be found in Jamaica. There are over 200 on the list, not all of them present at one time of year of course. During the week I spent on the island I was able to observe 83 species, 50 of which were life birds for me. A two week or longer stay, split between the Eastern and Western parts of the Island would doubtless have produced more. Some of the 83 that I haven't already mentioned were bearers of fascinating names like Jamaican Tody, Olive-throated Parakeet, Guiana Parrotlet, and Smooth-billed Ani.

Of course there is much more to see in Jamaica than birds. The climate is wonderful (driest in the winter), the scenery magnificent, the people are friendly (but don't be surprised if you cannot understand a word they say, even though it is supposed to be English), and for the botanically inclined there are about 2000 species of wild flowers. If you want to know more I suggest that you go there yourself.

One final word. If you intend to go birding in that part of the world "Birds of the West Indies" by James Bond, (Collins, 1971) is a must. The F.O.N. bookshop should carry it but may not. (They have the companion volume "Birds of Trinidad and Tobago.")

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YUKON, 1971

by Lorne E. Argent

"Yukon" is an Indian word meaning "Land of Big Water".

On Monday July 26th, 1971, at 7:30 A.M. Tom Welsh and I boarded a Canadian Pacific Air Lines Boeing 737 Jet at Vancouver's International Airport bound for Whitehorse, Yukon Territory. For me it was a combination of business and pleasure which restricted my movements to some extent.

Our flight to Whitehorse was by way of Prince George, B.C., Forts St. John and Nelson, B.C., Watson Lake, Yukon Territory, arriving at Whitehorse about 1 P.M. The weather was clear and hot, it being 81°F, at Whitehorse. Forest fires were visible for most of the flight, the worst area being between Watson Lake and Whitehorse. While flying over this area, the pilot announced that, on the previous day, it had been necessary to ascend to 35,000 feet to get above the smoke.

As we came in over Whitehorse, a city of about 12,000 population, it looked very comfortable and secure. The city is located on the banks of the Yukon River in what might be called a ravine or valley. As the pilot circled for a landing, it was possible for me to get two very nice pictures. The Yukon River at this point is clean and green in colour.

Whitehorse is a busy place with paved main streets, good stores well stocked with good merchandise and manned by the most friendly and courteous of clerks. The new City Hall is very attractive and, while modern, is not extremely so and is in keeping with the area. The McBride Museum is a must for anyone interested in the history of the Yukon.

Myles Canyon, a short distance from Whitehorse, is worth taking a look at and can be reached by car. Here the Yukon River is deep and swift flowing. At one point where the river emerges from the canyon, there is a basin, similar to the whirlpool basin on the Niagara River, in which there are numerous and rather vicious whirlpools. According to the record, the river at this point along with the Whitehorse Rapids, took a heavy toll in lives, supplies and equipment during the gold rush days. I would like to have seen this area prior to the building of the power dam, at the outskirts of Whitehorse.

We were up early Tuesday morning and left for Mile 1111 Alaska Highway and the Wellgreen Mine of Hudson's Bay Mining and Smelting Company which is located in the Kluane Game Sanctuary. Mining operations were going forward, but the "Mill" was two or three months from completion.

While driving around Kluane Lake we were on the lookout for Dall Sheep but they were nowhere in sight. However, as we searched the mountain with our field glasses, we spotted a Golden Eagle. On the way back to Whitehorse we saw two more soaring and circling in search of food. This was my first sighting of the Golden Eagle and a highlight of the trip. Kluane Lake, a lake of many colours, is beautiful. While I have a nice picture of it, a higher vantage point is required to do it justice.

While in Whitehorse we heard of a pair of nesting Mountain Blue Birds. The property owner was only too pleased to let me try photographing them. Using a 200 mm lens and flash (9:30 P.M.) I managed to get one picture of the male when he came to the bird house with food for the young.

Dawson City is gradually falling down. It will not be too many years before most of the original buildings will either have fallen down or will have been demolished. This is unfortunate, but the amount of money required to restore the buildings at this stage would be astronomical.

A fine view of Dawson City and surrounding area can be had from a lookout known as "The Dome". It is a five mile drive up the mountain but is worthwhile. You can see where the Klondike River merges with the Yukon River. You can also see how the Bonanza River was raped for gold and left in an unrecognizable condition.

We didn't see too much wild life. Two moose on the run, a black bear and countless Arctic ground squirrels. There was an abundance of birds. Not being a bird expert, the only ones I could identify with any degree of certainty were: Rough Legged Hawk; Red Tailed Hawk; Golden Eagle; Spotted Sandpiper; Common Snipe; Black Billed Magpie; Common Raven; Great Jay and the Mountain Blue Bird.

The Alaska Highway is being black topped in stages but it will be a long, long time before it is finished, if ever. Whether surfacing this highway is a good thing, I'm not prepared to say. The traffic on it now is quite fantastic and some people drive altogether too fast as it is. I'm afraid it would be a regular raceway if it were surfaced.

The big problem right now is dust and when a huge transport goes by at 60-70 miles per hour it's worse than driving in a blizzard. Oiling the road has been tried but does more harm than good. This is due to the big tires and dual wheels on the transports lifting sections of the surface material, creating pot holes.

Finally, the Yukon is beautiful in a rugged kind of way, her mountains are majestic and the people the most friendly I've had an opportunity to meet. Mount Logan, at 19,850', is in the St. Elias Mountain Range and is the highest mountain in Canada. If you are prepared to rough it on occasion and have money to spend, don't pass it up. Your visit will be a most rewarding experience.

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SANIBEL ISLAND

by Norm and Esme Avis

Sanibel is a tropical island situated in the Gulf of Mexico, west of Fort Myers and is reached by a three mile causeway (toll) which seems to completely isolate it from the mainland. On arriving there you immediately notice the pace of living has slowed down to a crawl and relaxing is the main form of entertainment. The whole island is a Bird Sanctuary with three distinct areas set aside as Wild Life Refuges. The J. Ding Darling Sanctuary being the largest and it was established as a Winter habitat for migratory ducks and other birds at the Southern end of the Atlantic flyway and is used as a Summer nesting site by some ducks, herons, egrets, anhingas, brown pelicans etc.. In our week's visit we observed 50 species including the roseate spoonbills, all the ones mentioned above, plus numerous shore birds and as we left the warblers were just arriving from the North so anyone visiting during the Winter months could probably add many more. Walkways and observation towers are provided in the sanctuaries but if anyone is going in the hot weather I'd advise them to take lots of insect repellent - we needed it as the temperatures were in the 90's all week and the mosquitoes and "no-see 'ems" were plentiful. The owner of the cottages where we stayed had Bird Feeders all through the property and it was fascinating to watch the cardinals, as plentiful as our starlings, red-winged blackbirds and ground doves as well as the boat tailed grackles and red-bellied woodpeckers which were frequent visitors to the Palm trees outside our window. Shore birds were plentiful, especially sanderlings, on the beach at the front door and as the beaches on the island are considered by experts to be the third best shelling beaches in the world, we spent many pleasant hours collecting shells and even began to get quite choosy before the week was over, discarding many because the choice was so great. Although we are not fishermen, we understood from neighbours, fishing was very good, (no licence needed), and every day we saw ardent fishermen standing in the shallow waters having lots of success. We were most intrigued with the antics of the brown pelicans which followed the actions of the fishermen, then dived for the fish before it could be landed, or swooped to the beach after the fish were thrown there.

Anyone interested in a holiday on Sanibel and wanting more information is quite welcome to contact us at Tel. 699-0317. We thoroughly enjoyed our stay down there and hope to return soon, perhaps when it's a little cooler down there and very cold up here,

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My thanks to all those wonderful people who have written something for the Newsletter and my apologies to a few of you for not publishing your story yet. We have simply run out of space. So watch next month - or the next - for, among others: Wolves in Algonquin, Ospreys on the Severn, Painted buntings on Dauphin Island, and Bluebirds in Manitoba. And Heaven knows what else - in Bermuda. Plus Binoculars Part II.

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