



TORONTO FIELD NATURALISTS' CLUB NEWSLETTER

Number 264

January 1972

Visitors welcome!

JANUARY MEETING

Visitors welcome!

Monday, January 3, 1972, at 8:15 p.m.
in the auditorium of the
ONTARIO INSTITUTE FOR STUDIES IN EDUCATION
252 Bloor Street West

FILM NIGHT

- (1) "Delta of the Orinoco" - The people and life on a river in Venezuela, photographed by Robert Hermes. This remarkable film shows strange animals such as the howatzin, anableps, and three-toed sloth.
- (2) "Among Fish" - A short film showing how fish live, breed, and swim, with underwater photography.
- (3) "The Robin" - One of the 'Private Life' series of films by the B.B.C. featuring the bird which is sometimes considered to be Britain's national bird.

Next month: On Monday, February 7, Mr. Donald Baldwin will speak on "Birding in British Honduras".

Program chairman: Mr. Jack Gingrich,
489-9953

JANUARY OUTING

Sunday WILKET CREEK PARK - Birds Leader: Mr. Ed Franks
January 9 Enter the park from Leslie Street just north of Lawrence Ave. E., and meet at the second parking lot, at the foot of the stairs. The group will proceed through the park north and thence to the Glendon Campus of York University.

Chairman: Mr. Stu Corbett, 261-6807

IF YOU RECEIVED ONLY THIS SHEET OF THE NEWSLETTER, it is our way of telling you that according to our records you have not yet renewed your membership for 1971-72. Upon receipt of your fee we will gladly send you the missing portion. (If you think there has been an error, please do not hesitate to call the secretary, Mrs. Mary Robson, 481-0260).

Single membership \$4.00

Family \$6.00

Corresponding \$2.00

Full-time student (aged 16 or over) \$2.00

Life \$100.00

JUNIOR CLUB The program will be conducted by the Mineralogy Group. Visitors are
Saturday welcome. Meet in the theatre of the Royal Ontario Museum. It is
January 8 advisable to arrive early as at 10:00 a.m. the stairway leading downstairs
10:00 a.m. from the front doors is closed, and it will be necessary to go through
the turnstiles.

Director: Mr. Mike Singleton, 447-4197

ECOLOGY AND There will be no meeting in January.
CONSERVATION
GROUP

Chairman: Prof. Wm. Andrews, 425-4607

FIELD Meet at St. James-Bond United Church, on Avenue Rd. just north of
BIOLOGISTS' Eglinton Ave. W. On-street parking can be difficult, but there are
GROUP several private parking lots nearby on Eglinton. For information
Thursday regarding the program for this meeting please call the chairman, Mr.
January 13 Don Burton, at 222-6467.
8:00 p.m.

BOTANY GROUP Meet in the library of Hodgson School, Davisville Ave. just east of
Thursday Mt. Pleasant Rd. (parking entrance from Millwood Rd., the first street
January 20 north). Speaker: Dr. John Grear, Department of Botany, University of
8:00 p.m. Toronto. Subject: "The Golden Club".
Chairman: Miss Florence Preston, 483-9530

BIRD GROUP Meet at St. James-Bond United Church. See Field Biologists' Group,
Thursday above, for directions. Topic: "Look-alikes" -- crow or raven? downy or
January 27 hairy? herring or ring-bill?
8:00 p.m. Chairman: Mr. Red Mason, 621-3905

JIM BAILLIE RESERVE. Next summer we look forward to arranging for one or more outings
on the Reserve, using trails planned over the past fall. Surveys have revealed that
we own a very rich natural area, well worthy of preservation. To support this Reserve
is a most useful activity for naturalists today -- we may not have the chance in years
to come! Donations may be sent at any time to Mr. A. D. Fry, 250 Martingrove Rd.,
Islington, Ont. Receipt for income tax purposes will be mailed promptly.

We are pleased to welcome the following new members, who enrolled between October 28
and November 27:

Dr. & Mrs. Edward Armour, Mr. Peter F. Baigent, Miss Celia Brown, Dr. Jacqueline Carlson,
Mr. R. G. Casson, Mrs. A. Clarke, Miss Frances Croke, Miss Joanne Davison, Mr. T. H. G.
Fletcher, Mr. & Mrs. Geoff Gaherty, Mrs. C. Haines, Mr. John D. Lyons Hayes, Mrs. L. B.
Helm, Miss R. M. Isber, Miss Mai Jakson, Mrs. V. E. Jones, Mr. & Mrs. W. L. Jones,
Miss Ann Kelly, Mr. Arthur D. Latornell, Mrs. Leana Lippe, Mr. Bob McCarroll, Mr. Alan
McClair, Mr. S. B. McCutcheon, Miss Elizabeth M. Norwood, Mrs. T. O'Connor, Dr. & Mrs.
David M. Pendergast, Dr. & Mrs. J. T. Rankin, Mrs. Alan Stollery, Miss Maire Synnott,
Mrs. P. E. Treloar, Miss J. E. Walker, Mr. G. D. Wotherspoon.

President: Mr. Clive E. Goodwin

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

WHERE ON EARTH IS DAUPHIN ISLAND?

by Rosemary Gaymer

"You-all want a Painted Bunting?"

"YES!" ... "That-woman-from-Canada-with-a-red-Volkswagen" exploded from among the palmetto bushes under the Live Oak and from the general vicinity of three Worm-eating Warblers, two Hooded Warblers, several Yellow-throated Warblers and a mixed bag of other Warblers, Sparrows, Thrushes and Wrens ... "Where is it?"

"Here y'are - take it." And suddenly every other bird was dull and drab compared to this many-coloured jewel which sat calmly in my hand. He already wore a leg band, having encountered our mist nets earlier that same morning, and seemed to accept the routine.

Brilliant tanager-red from chin to tail below, plus a red eye ring to punctuate his otherwise hyacinth purple head and nape; bright jade green on his back, with wings of deeper, slightly bluer green which were liberally sprinkled with shadings of red in the coverts and secondaries; a red rump which inclined slightly towards orange; and a purplish brown tail ... each main colour area sharply defined, rather as if a child had let its imagination run riot instead of keeping to the numbers of the painting kit. He was incredible.

Later, I was to see a number of Painted Buntings at large, through the binoculars, males as well as the bright green but otherwise unmarked females, and became slightly less stunned by their impact as the days went by. The first one will remain brightest in memory.

Dauphin Island, off the coast of Alabama, in late April. It was a fabulous week - and has completely spoilt me for Point Pelee!

My last two visits to the Island had been Christmas Count occasions in 1956 and 1957, at which time, while staying with friends near the Gulf Coast, I had been able to contact Alabama birders and had joined them in extended field trips which included the Counts. In April of this year, the annual meeting of the Wilson Ornithological Society had been scheduled for the Island location jointly with the traditional Spring get-together of the Alabama Ornithological Society. And it was just so contrived to happen that my vacation was scheduled to match.

Dauphin Island lies a few miles off the south-western corner of Mobile Bay, joined to the mainland in recent years by a series of bridges and causeways over extensive marshes and shallow bays. The Island is shaped rather like an elongated lamb chop, the thick end being about 5 miles long and a mile or so wide, wooded with pines, live oaks and palmetto undergrowth and protected on the Gulf side by a series of high sand dunes. These dunes flatten and stretch out to make up the 15 miles or more of the thin, western end of the island, which is a few hundred yards narrow, an unbroken strip of sand and grass, with occasional marshy sections - surf breaking to the South, calm inland coastal waterway to the North.

The Island is very historic, and stiff with legends and tales, having been colonized with the first French settlement of the Louisiana Territory in the early 1700's. The original French Governor, Cadillac (that's where the name came from!), had his residence there. Then the English and subsequently Americans took it over, and the old Fort at

the eastern tip of the Island, overlooking the entrance to Mobile Bay, became one of the last strongholds of the Confederate Army during the Civil War. A second fort is situated across the water at the western tip of an East-West peninsula that closes in the base of the wide Bay of Mobile to a 4-mile width.

Dauphin Island is now, in effect, a large resort in a state of rapid development and, as everywhere, the public areas are steadily being bought for private housing developments, marinas and clubs. The conservationists are not so worried about the land birds - there will always be enough cover for them, since part of the attraction of the area consists in the lovely shade pines among which the houses are being built, and all the gardens have heavy cover in the form of bushes and shrubs. There is concern, though, for the water and shore birds that use the area in Fall, Winter and Spring, as developments encroach more and more on the marshes. There is a fairly large Audubon Sanctuary, and hopefully that will remain.

My drive to the South had been leisurely, lazily stretching over three and a half days, including visits to a number of prime birding places en route, such as the North Chagrin River Park in Cleveland, the O'Shaunessy Dam in southern Ohio, Mammoth Cave National Park in Kentucky and the Wheeler Wildlife Refuge in northern Alabama. Then came a reunion weekend with birding friends in Birmingham, and the tough all-at-once convoy drive down to the Coast ... a drive that I can't remember too much about, except for the endless ribbons of deep crimson clover that lined the Interstate Highway's verges and median.

Birding started seriously - but relaxedly - the next day, Monday April 19th. Before the Wilson Society meeting there were four full days of sun and swimming (with seven species of Terns fishing or flying alongside as I swam), birdbanding (which included catching a number of tree frogs each evening), straight birding, sitting and doing nothing, and the usual long rounds of talks about all matters that are apt to be integral components of any extended birding trip.

The migration patterns over that part of the Gulf Coast are now being studied intensively and extensively, and were the subject of a fascinating major symposium of papers at the Wilson meeting later in the week. The area is a catch-all for migrants which fly straight across the Gulf. One major stream of passerine birds leaves from the northern tip of Yucatan, with peak departure times between 7 and 9 p.m., reaching the Gulf Coast's sand-based islands around 3 to 5 p.m. the following day - if they make it. Another migration route is across the Gulf from the Everglades of Florida, a route followed by a number of species which island-hop through the West Indies before angling north-west across the Gulf.

If the weather is particularly good and winds favourable, the birds may overfly the coast and arrive inland, anywhere from the Florida panhandle, through Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi. If they have encountered headwinds, rain or heavy dew during the journey, the survivors literally precipitate out of the sky and hurtle down to the first land they see, without much discrimination as to habitat. Hence one is just as likely to find tree-top Warblers in the westerly exposed, grassy part of the Island as one is to band them in the woods at the East end.

Early rising was strictly unnecessary so far as seeing small birds was concerned. One of the best plans was to gather in the afternoons around the big Shell Mounds at the East End of the Island (mounds built up by Indians many centuries ago from their discarded oyster shells, and eventually used by them as a pow-wow arena) which gave good views into the hunge spreading branches of the evergreen Live Oaks, which were festooned with Spanish Moss, or perhaps into the just-in-leaf Pecan trees. One never knew which

was best at any given moment. There would be "nothing to see" - then one used binoculars to scan the sky, and suddenly there would be tiny specks of life diving down with arrow-closed wings, raining into the trees. A tree would be empty of birds - so, a quick glance at some of the Parula Warblers that were already setting up nesting territories in the vicinity of the Mounds - glance back at the empty tree, only to note the instant arrival of, say, a large posse of Kingbirds and several dozen Warblers of assorted types; or it might have been a mix of Orioles - Orchard and Baltimore; or Tanagers - Summer and Scarlet; or Grosbeaks - Blue and Rose-breasted. There was constant change. One large Pecan tree was host to more than 40 species of birds in uncountable numbers within a three hour period. Birders from all over North America including Hawaii, and from Europe, were stunned. No work needed, except that of trying to keep up with the confusion of identities among the arrivals - both avian and human! All that was necessary was to find a comfortable sloping patch of grass on the Mounds, sit down and watch at leisure. Disgraceful.

However, the purists and compulsive work-for-it birders could find lots of foot-slogging - if their consciences bothered them - walking along the miles and miles of sand in the hope of seeing shore and oceanic birds. And they were there, either for the working or the waiting. As always, I found the waiting method most productive. There was either nothing happening, or everything occurring at once. A flight of about 150 Black Skimmers cavorting by, for instance, at the same moment that a flock of Black-necked Stilts flew in the opposite direction: which to watch? There were Gannets, both juvenile and adults, gliding over the sea and overriding the considerable storm-induced surf, and competing for one's attention with the nearby Gull-billed Terns; then calm became total excitement as one of those "Gannets" came closer in the tumultuous south-west wind and proved itself to be a juvenile Blue-faced Booby ... very rare indeed. And then another Booby, and another. And fortunately for the sanity of some of us, a number of Booby experts were present, so the sighting was authenticated.

The best migration-arrival situation being caused by these south-west storms, the Alabama birders had been praying for rain and (temporary) bad weather, so that the maximum birding mileage could be obtained for the Wilson Society visitors. The Islanders, being more accustomed to vacationers who worship sun and calm water, found us to be rather extraordinary in our joy at unpleasant weather forecasts! And a bit awed that our prayers were answered!

Highlights of the week are so many it is difficult to isolate them ... The elegance and nonchalant ease of flight of a Swallow-tailed Kite as it flew over the Sanctuary banding area ... Knowing that I was conscious of the highly unusual head-down, legs-forward, mid-air attitude of a duck gliding down to a marshy landing, against the sun, but missing the significance and kicking myself later when others had positively identified a Fulvous Tree Duck at the very same place in the marsh, and I couldn't honestly say I'd seen it, though it most likely was the same bird ... Receiving the eye-shocks of a mlt Painted Bunting and a glowing Baltimore Oriole in the binoculars at the same time, likewise males of both Scarlet and Summer Tanagers in full sunlight ... Handling so many Worm-eating and Hooded Warblers from the mist nets that one reached the point of becoming actually bored with them ... Enjoying the ridiculous juxtaposition of seeing several Glaucous Gulls (a record for the State of Alabama) on the Gulf Coast on the same day as a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher and some Hummingbirds ... The constant chatter, from dawn till after dark, emanating from the Fish Crows, whose loud but short call notes ("koh" and "kak" ... the vowels rhyming respectively with very nasally uttered "cock" and "cat") which accompanied the whole week's activities ... The squadrons of Cattle Egrets feeding on the wide grassed areas either side of, and between the lanes of the main road of the Island, chasing grasshoppers with abandon, the old birds completely at ease with the traffic, the yearlings still very nervous and jumpy ... And achieving considerable familiarity with Seaside and Sharp-tailed Sparrows. Among other things.

163 species for the week, for those of you who worry about statistics, plus more versions than I knew existed of Southern seafood meals, especially "srimp" (the Coastal Plain dialect leaves out the "H") - on which I lost weight. So the birds must have had me working harder than I realized.

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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.

Jan. 8 - Mr. Gunter Voss, on the plans for the new zoo.

Jan. 15 - On computing; speaker from Honeywell Controls.

Jan. 22 - Mr. Oakah Jones, Consumers' Gas Company.

Jan. 29 - Mr. Terence Dickenson, of Strasburg Planetarium, Rochester, on Mars.

ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM

Information: 928-3690

Free Sunday Films 2:30 p.m.

Jan. 16 - Ancient New World; Point of Pines; Angkor, the Lost City; Viking Ships of Roskilde,

Jan. 23 - The Titan: Story of Michelangelo.

Jan. 30 - Science on Safari; Dream of Wild Horses.

Free Tours 12:15 p.m.

Jan. 13 - Geology tour

Jan. 28 - About birds

Jan. 31 - Gemstones

Exhibitions

Mineral Gallery - Froberg mineral collection, to January 15.

- Jan. 24-Mar. 12 - Exhibition of carved and ornamented mineral objets d'art, by George Stangl of New York.

Lecture series

"Through the Microscope" - Wednesday evenings 8:30 p.m., Planetarium Lecture Room, free. Jan. 5, 12, 19, 26 and throughout February (January lectures mainly on rocks and minerals).

REMEMBER: 1972 is the Royal Ontario Museum's Diamond Jubilee Year

FEDERATION OF ONTARIO NATURALISTS

TOURS

Information: 444-8419

Jan. 1-2 - Winter Birds of Southern Ontario, 2-day tour of Niagara peninsula.

Jan. 7-9 - Birding for beginners, Niagara Falls area.

Feb. 26-Mar. 5 - Bermuda tour.

Mar. 18-26 - Greaty Smoky Mountains National Park.

(SEE DECEMBER NEWSLETTER FOR FULL DETAILS OF THESE TOURS, also Canadian Nature Federation and FAS tour of Trinidad and Tobago, March 22-April 3.)

B I N O C U L A R S - Part II

by Jack Gingrich

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS WHEN CHOOSING BINOCULARS

1. Almost all binoculars are hinged so that the distance between the left and right halves can be adjusted; this is important, because this distance must be adjusted to suit the distance between your eyes. If this is not done, the view from one eye or the other will be partially or completely blocked off. DO NOT BUY BINOCULARS THAT DO NOT HAVE THIS FEATURE.
 2. Most binoculars have a central focusing wheel which focuses both eyes at once with one wheel. Some binoculars have a separate focusing arrangement for each eye. The advantage of separate focus is that it is easier to make the binoculars more rugged than with centre focus, and it is also cheaper. However, it takes considerable skill to twist both sides equally (usually in opposite directions); for bird-watching, the focus is being continually changed, and it is very difficult to learn to operate the separate focus binoculars properly. The result is that frequently only one eye gets properly focused, and the other one does not.
- For bird-watching, centre-focus binoculars are much preferable. For beginners, particularly, centre-focus is the only recommended type of focusing.
3. With centre-focus binoculars, there is usually an individual focus for one eye. This can be very important if your two eyes are not identical. This adjustment can then be set to accommodate the difference between your two eyes; this setting then remains unchanged, and the centre focus adjusts for both eyes together, always with the correct compensation for the difference between the two eyes.
 4. For best results in bird-watching, the focusing wheel should turn easily in all temperatures. Many binoculars become very stiff to focus in cold weather because of the lubrication used. Also, it should not require extensive turning of the focusing wheel to go from one extreme (infinity) to the other (close up). For bird watching the focus is constantly being changed over a wide range, and the faster that this can be done, the better. The other extreme, however, would make it very critical to focus, with a very tiny movement changing the focus radically.
 5. Something which is often overlooked in connection with focus is the minimum distance to which the binoculars can be focused. This is partly dependent on your own eyes. Occasionally in bird-watching you wish to observe a tiny bird which is situated quite close to you. Some binoculars will not permit such close viewing since they will not focus on objects so close.
 6. "Zoom" binoculars are available. The idea here is to have binoculars which can be adjusted over a range of magnification, for example from a magnification of 6 up to 12. Then, you can use the binoculars at the lowest power, 6, to get ease of finding things with a wide angle of view. Once you have located the object of interest, the magnification can be gradually increased to "bring the bird in closer" while the angle of view decreases. Thus there are two adjustments to contro, the focus and the magnification.

ZOOM BINOCULARS ARE NOT RECOMMENDED FOR BEGINNERS. Obviously, they are more expensive to buy and trickier to use.

7. Most binoculars now sold have lenses which are treated with anti-reflecting coatings; this reduces internal reflections from the surfaces of the various lenses, and thus gets more of the light into your eye. Coated lenses are recommended.

8. The weight of binoculars is important. It is sometimes said that binoculars should be heavy to make it easier to hold them steady. This is true for the higher magnifications, but for magnifications of 6, 7 or 8, this consideration is not important. Of much greater importance is the fatigue to neck and arms from using heavy binoculars for bird-watching where they are strung around the neck and raised frequently to the eyes, for hours at a time. The use of light-weight metals such as aluminum or magnesium in the frame of binoculars can significantly decrease their weight. This also increases the cost. However, for serious bird-watching, the light weight is very desirable, and worth the extra cost.

9. There are other aspects in the quality of binoculars which are difficult to assess; here you have to depend on the reputation of the manufacturer or the retailer. For example, the more expensive binoculars may have a more rugged construction such that the various prisms and lenses elements are held in accurate alignment in spite of rough use. Other cheaper binoculars may easily lose their alignment (with consequent eye strain or difficulty in viewing) from the occasional and inevitable shocks of binoculars being dropped or banged up against hard objects.

HELPFUL HINTS ON THE USE OF BINOCULARS.

1. The binoculars should be worn around the neck for bird-watching, not held in the hand at the end of arm, where it is too far from the eye to be raised quickly when suddenly needed (as, for example, when a Golden-winged warbler appears and quickly disappears again!). The strap should be adjusted to as short a length as convenient, so that when strung around the neck, the binoculars are not hanging down to your middle! If you have small children, and long straps on your binoculars, you will frequently strike their heads with your binoculars as you stoop to attend to their needs, or lift them into the car. The closer your binoculars are to your eyes, as they hang around your neck, the better you are able to get them into viewing position quickly, and the less likely they are to swing around and strike other objects.

2. When you first use a new pair of binoculars, adjust them for the distance between your eyes. The method used to do this is to look through them at a distant scene or object; if the distance is correctly set, the circles of view for each eye will appear to co-incide into a single circle. If the distance is wrong, you will see two circles either separated or overlapping. Swing them in and out (by bending at the hinge) until the two eyes see the same scene, and the two images coincide. Some people prefer to have the two images slightly separated; however, if they are too far separated, you are losing some of the light, and not seeing the brightest image.

Once this distance has been set, you can read off on a convenient scale (on most binoculars the actual distance, in millimeters, and remember this for future use. Then, whenever you pick up your own binoculars or others, particularly after someone else has used them, you can quickly get the right setting without going through the procedure again.

3. Determine the correct setting for the individual focus on centre-focusing binoculars, to suit your eyes. The method is to pick an object to focus on, and to adjust the centre focus until the object is exactly focused with the hand over the right objective lens so that only the left eye is being used. (This is assuming that it is the right eye which has the individual focus.) Once this focus has been obtained, do not touch the centre focus wheel; leave it where it is and now look through the binoculars with the right eye only by blocking the left objective lens with your hand. Look at the same object as before, and now adjust the INDIVIDUAL FOCUS on the right eyepiece until the

object is again in proper focus. Now carefully note and remember the setting. If your eyes are equal, the setting should be around zero. If one eye is different than the other, a setting of +1, or +2 may be required, or perhaps -1 or -2. Whatever it is, remember it. Whenever you use your binoculars, or any others, you should make sure that this individual focus adjustment is set correctly according to the results of this test. If one pair of binoculars is shared by several people with different eyes, each person must change the setting to his own particular number before using.

4. LEARN AND REMEMBER WHICH WAY YOUR BINOCULARS FOCUS. For example, they may require clockwise rotation of the focusing wheel to get set for close-up viewing, and counter-clockwise for distant viewing. This is very important for bird-watching. The most important reason for beginners failing to identify a bird is through lack of rapid focusing, and particularly through moving the focusing wheel the wrong way first, before finding the right way.

For example, suppose that your binoculars were last used at a fairly close distance, and that the focus has not been changed since the last use, and that they are hanging around your neck. Suddenly, someone shouts "mockingbird". This would be a "life bird" for you since you have never before seen a mockingbird. Therefore you excitedly raise your binoculars to look in the direction indicated by the others in your group; but just as you get the bird in view you realize that the focus is very bad (because the mockingbird is fairly far away). Without remembering which way to rotate the wheel for distant focus, you try one way which proves to be wrong, and make it focus extremely close. Now it is even more difficult to see the bird, and the focusing wheel must now be turned in the other direction almost all the way to the other extreme before it is in focus. Just as you get it almost in focus, the bird flies away, and cannot be found again! You may have to wait for 5 years before a similar opportunity occurs. You have missed seeing a life bird (which others in your group saw) simply because you could not remember one simple fact: which way to turn for distant viewing!

A person skilled in the use of binoculars not only knows which way to turn the focusing wheel, but also approximately how much. He is constantly aware, without really thinking about it, of the present setting of focus so that the instant something new appears, he knows instinctively which way to turn the wheel to bring the new object quickly into focus. It takes much practice to reach this stage of skill, but the starting point is REMEMBER WHICH WAY THE WHEEL TURNS FOR DISTANT & CLOSE-UP VIEWING.

5. Although in many cases it is best to raise the binoculars quickly so that a bird about to fly away can be seen before it does so, there are times when this is the wrong thing. If the bird is close, and belongs to a species which is quite wary, any sudden motion will cause it to depart in haste. A slow raising of the binoculars is then advisable so as not to scare the bird away. The advantage of short straps, and binoculars around the neck, is that they are close to the eyes, and must travel a minimum distance to get into viewing position.

6. Probably the most common difficulty beginners have with binoculars is finding the correct line of sight to get into view in the binoculars a bird seen with unaided eyes in a tree. Ideally, you should be able to keep your eyes pointing continuously and steadily at the bird while you bring the binoculars up to viewing position; if you are skilled at it, you will be able, on the first try, to get the desired bird somewhere within the view of the binoculars. If you do not, on the first try, get the bird in view, you may then move the wrong way, and it will be even farther out of sight.

7. If you normally use spectacles for viewing distant objects, it is best to keep them on while looking through the binoculars. Otherwise, you must constantly put the spectacles on and off as you use the binoculars. However, the spectacles prevent your eyes from being placed close enough to the eyepiece lenses of the binoculars, and as a result you do not have the full angle of view that the binoculars provide. To overcome this, special shallow eye caps can be obtained for your binoculars which allow the spectacles to be placed much closer.

In some cases, the normal eye caps can simply be removed by unscrewing them to permit the eyepiece lenses to be placed close to the spectacles. However, this often allows the metal around the eyepiece lens to touch the lens of the spectacles, and thus to scratch them. Tape, carefully cut to fit around the eyepiece lens, can be applied to the binoculars to prevent this.

8. Binoculars taken from a warm room or car into cold air may fog over because of the condensation of moisture. This will last until the binoculars cool down. At other times, your breath may cause fog to appear on the eyepiece lenses, particularly when viewing things almost directly overhead. You can reduce this tendency by holding your breath while viewing, and by interspersing viewing periods with breathing periods!

9. Experienced bird-watchers learn to look at things almost directly overhead without allowing their mouths to drop open. Birds overhead present somewhat of a hazard to anyone foolish enough to look up with an open mouth!

THE CARE OF BINOCULARS.

1. Keep the lens surfaces clean for best viewing. NEVER TOUCH THE LENS SURFACE WITH YOUR FINGER. The grease from your hand may remove some of the lens coating. When cleaning the lenses, brush or blow away dust and grit first to avoid grinding them into the lens with a cleaning cloth. A drop or two of lens cleaning fluid helps to remove grease. Wipe it away with a lens tissue or face tissue without excessive rubbing.

2. Keep the binoculars dry. Although good quality binoculars normally are sealed well enough to exclude moisture, it is best to avoid situations likely to allow moisture to enter. If the binoculars are used during rain or snowstorms, keep the rain or snow off the eyepiece lenses while they are hanging around your neck. A hand over them can be used, or a piece of cloth or leather can be attached to the straps to act as a cover. If moisture enters, the binoculars may fog up on the inside.

3. Avoid, as much as possible, dropping the binoculars or banging them up against hard objects. Good quality binoculars are built to be as rugged as possible, but they contain various elements of lenses and prisms which must remain in accurate alignment. The optical axes of the left and right parts must also remain exactly parallel. If not, each eye will see a different view, and this can cause severe eye strain as well as difficulty in viewing.

TESTS YOU CAN MAKE ON YOUR BINOCULARS.

1. The magnification of any binocular can be estimated fairly well by looking through one half of it with one eye while viewing the scene directly by the other eye. One eye should see things 7 times as large, if the magnification is 7.

2. The angle of view of two different pairs of binoculars can be compared by looking through them at a distant scene. The one which includes more in the view is the one with the greater angle of view.

Mr. DAVIS and the wolves

I thought the following exchange of letters between an F.O.N. member and Mr. William Davis, Ontario's Prime Minister, would be of interest to many of our readers. (Ed O'Connor sent me the copies. Thanks Ed!)

The Minister of Ontario,
Mr. William Davis,
Queen's Park, Toronto.

Dear Mr. Davis:

On several occasions I have written the authorities pleading for a change in law. The results were a form letter from Mr. Rene Brunelle's office, to assure me that the matter would be reviewed and given every possible consideration.

I wonder if he ever saw the letter, or for that matter if you should see this one.

.....

It has been my firm belief that the existing laws concerning the hunting and trapping of animals are archaic and demand a change if we are to preserve our wildlife. It should be obligatory for any professional trapper to be made aware of the new traps reducing cruelty through a sure rapid death and that he use these.

I believe that the wolf is a shy animal, quite unlike the dangerous, vicious beast portrayed in folklore and that he, along with the increasing number of potentially extinct animals should be given all the protection they need and we can afford.

By proclaiming herself a sanctuary for wildlife Canada will aid species struggling to survive "progress" which even now is encroaching on our own well-being. By so doing Canada would discourage the "American Airplane Hunter" who is, in effect, drawing from Canadian resources. We shall continue to hold our image as the fair-minded, peaceful people of North America in foreign lands. For this reason I am proud to be a Canadian and I feel we should preserve this admiration.

To find solutions is not as easy as to find fault but may I suggest that the lifting of the bounty be a first step.

.....

Dear Mr. Davis, I know you are plagued with a multitude of problems, but will you please, for the sake of our future co-habitants in this world, give us your aid in changing the present laws.

Sincerely yours

PRIME MINISTER OF ONTARIO

Toronto, Ontario,
October 22, 1971.

Dear -----

In reply to your letter with regard to the present policy of paying a bounty on wolves, may I first of all express my appreciation for your interest and concern in this matter. I would like to assure you that the Government of Ontario shares your concern.

There is a great deal of information available about wolves, much of it contradictory. Professional biologists in the Department of Lands and Forests are carrying on a continuing research and field study program to obtain more information to resolve some of the conflicts. As a result of this research we know that:

1. The present bounty system has not harmed the wolf population; it has remained at a remarkably stable level of 10,000 to 12,000 animals and is in no danger of becoming extinct in Ontario.

2. The bounty system has provided, through the years, some valuable information concerning the number of wolves in Ontario.

3. The significant factors limiting deer population are deteriorating winter range and deep snow conditions. Predation by wolves tends to complicate the situation. Where public funds are invested in deer range management it is necessary to undertake wolf control measures to ensure that the deer herds will have a chance to rebuilt themselves rapidly. This work is usually carried out by trained Lands and Forests officers.

4. There are documented cases where wolves have preyed on livestock in forest fringe areas causing economic losses to farmers. The greatest losses in this regard are due to coyote predation on sheep in open agricultural country, but even here the uncertainty is compounded by the probability that dogs, not coyotes, are the culprits.

From their work, the Department of Lands and Forests research staff have concluded that a selective control program is necessary and many alternative methods have been studied. From experience in other jurisdictions it has been found that when the bounty system has been terminated abruptly without providing an alternative control method, poisoning programs have been demanded. The use of poison is totally unacceptable to this government.

In the past two years we have taken legislative action to prohibit anyone from molesting any animal with a motorized vehicle and we no longer issue permits for aerial wolf hunts. We believe these two actions will substantially reduce the potential for abuses of the bounty system.

Research is still continuing on this program and if we believe further changes are warranted we will not hesitate to make them.

Thank you for writing to me on this matter. I hope these views and explanations are of assistance to you in your analysis of this complex and controversial subject.

Yours very truly,

William G. Davis.

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HOME ENVIRONMENT PROJECT

Recycling of kitchen waste is a method of soil improvement well known to many of our ancestors. It could be revived as a means of improving the home environment.

The Ecology and Conservation Group of the Junior Field Naturalists has undertaken a project to work out a practical method of using kitchen wastes to improve the quality of the soil in the flower beds and perennial borders of home gardens.

Since 1962 at Camp Allsaw, a summer camp in Haliburton, as a feature of the environment part of the program, the camp kitchen wastes and other camp organic refuse have been re-cycled by means of composting. Some of the composted material has been used for raising earthworms for fishing. Some has been put directly into the garden soil to produce organically grown vegetables and bloom as pasture for the Allsaw honey bees.

On November 20-21 the Ecology and Conservation Group Juniors spent the week-end at Camp Allsaw. On hikes to a variety of natural habitats they examined how, in Nature, refuse organic matter is broken down to provide rich sweet smelling loam for growing

plants. The Juniors tried their hand at shredding compost. Using a stereo microscope they examined the soil life of an active culture. Using their own week-end kitchen wastes, they set up in a box 12' x 14' x 8' a soil culture for recycling organic waste.

The problem now is to work out a kitchen waste recycling method in the home, acceptable to the parents and carried out by boys and girls. A colour slide record of this project will be kept up to date. It is hoped that there will be worthwhile results to report at a later date.

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BOTANY GROUP

A large number of people came to the meeting of the Botany Group in the Library of Hodgson Public School on November 18 to hear Dr. R. M. Saunders recount some experiences of a Naturalist in the Rockies. Dr. Saunders showed some beautiful coloured slides of western Canada's mountain scenery as well as plants and animals found in that area. His comments were extremely interesting and informative, and everyone present enjoyed the presentation and learned something from it.

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M E R R Y C H R I S T M A S

and a fervent wish for the NEW YEAR, may 1972 be a better year for us, the environment, the world.

from the NEWSLETTER Staff:

Elmer Talvila
Rosemary Wiggins
Catherine Cratchley
Mary Robson

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231-1064

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