



TORONTO FIELD NATURALISTS' CLUB NEWSLETTER

Number 271

December 1972

Visitors welcome!

DECEMBER MEETING

Visitors welcome!

Monday, December 4, 1972, at 8:15 p.m.
at the
ONTARIO INSTITUTE FOR STUDIES IN EDUCATION
252 Bloor Street West

SPEAKER: Dr. James E. Cruise

SUBJECT: "Urban Biology--Plants in the Big City"

Dr. Cruise is associate dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, University of Toronto. At our December meeting he will describe and illustrate some of the kinds of plants, both native and introduced, which are able to survive in a downtown city area, and will discuss means by which they thrive in spite of, or even because of, man's activities.

January meeting: As the first Monday in January falls on New Year's Day, kindly note that we shall meet on TUESDAY, JANUARY 2. Dr. Douglas H. Pimlott will speak on the topic for which he is best known--"Wolves and Men".

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CLUB FEES were due in September. After the December meeting we shall regretfully remove from our mailing list those who have not by then paid their 1972-73 fees.

To: Mrs. H. C. Robson, Secretary,
Toronto Field Naturalists' Club,
49 Craighurst Avenue, 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 Royal Ontario Museum) \$2.00
() Full-time student (aged 16 or over) \$1.50

Name _____

Address _____

We are very pleased to welcome the following new members:

Mrs. George Avis, Mr. & Mrs. Fred Barrett, Mr. S. Barty, Miss B. Baxter, Mr. Nicholas Bekesch, Mrs. Tamara Bekesch, Miss Edra M. Best, Mrs. Sally Blayney, Mrs. A. Bishop, Mrs. Ruth E. Booth, Mrs. R. Cameron, Mrs. Miriam Campbell, Mrs. L. M. Cathcart, Mrs. W. G. Collins, Mr. & Mrs. Blair Collins-Kerrigan, Mr. & Mrs. J. H. Crang, Mr. Bruce E. Day, Mr. Bruce Duncan, Miss J. Esberry, Mrs. Lorna Evans, Miss Angela Fiore, Mr. & Mrs. John Foster, Mrs. Ainlay Gamble, Mrs. E. Gibson, Dr. A. Greenaway, Miss Alberta Grosse, Miss Barbara Hankinson, Miss Rosalind Harley, Mr. Barry G. Hart, Dr. R. S. Jerath, Miss Susan Kersak, Mr. Bob Johnson, Mr. & Mrs. A. O. Juhola, Mrs. M. L. Kay, Miss Dale Leadbeater, Mr. J. A. N. Lee, Miss E. A. Lewis, Mr. & Mrs. D. C. McDermott, Mrs. H. R. McGregor, Mr. Bill McKenzie, Mrs. Esther McKinnon, Miss Pauline Marie Mann, Miss Margaret Meredith, Miss Clara G. Miller, Mr. & Mrs. Ken A. Moores, Mr. Kurt Neiman, Mr. & Mrs. M. Obbard, Mr. & Mrs. J. Ohera, Mr. & Mrs. M. Pettigrew, Miss Ruby Rogers, Miss Pauline Sawyer, Mr. Paul Scanlon, Mrs. Garnette Shaw, Mr. Herbert Staples, Mr. & Mrs. Carl Tobias, Mr. & Mrs. Douglas Valteau, Mrs. R. Wheeldon, Mr. & Mrs. H. L. Williams, Miss Rita Williams, Mr. William Woodworth, Miss Jean E. Zimmer, Miss Valentina Zupeuc. And a special welcome to Mrs. E. Frankel, with our apologies!

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WE WISH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS, AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR!

And you can send holiday greetings to the Club in the form of a donation for the Jim Baillie Reserve Fund.

Through hundreds of donations, both large and small, this fund has now reached the \$16,000 mark. We take pride in this demonstration of loyal support.

But we are still \$4,000 short of our objective. A donation (or, if you have given before, a further donation) would help to close this gap.

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

To: Mr. A. D. Fry,
250 Martin Grove Rd.,
Islington, Ontario/

Date _____

I enclose cheque/money order made out to the "Toronto Field Naturalists' Club in the amount of \$_____ as a donation toward the JIM BAILLIE NATURE RESERVE FUND.

Mr./Mrs/Miss _____

December Outing

Please see Bird Group announcement below.

Outings Chairman - Dr. Charles Chaffey (752-2897)

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JUNIOR CLUB The boys and girls will meet in the theatre of the Royal Ontario Museum.
Saturday Visitors from our Club are always welcome.
December 2
10:00 a.m. Director - Mr. Mike Singleton (447-4197)

FIELD Meet in St. James-Bond United Church, on Avenue Rd. just north of
BIOLOGISTS' Eglinton. For details of the program please telephone the Group
GROUP Chairman, Mr. Donald Burton (222-6467).
Thursday
December 14
8:00 p.m.

MAN AND There will be no group meeting in December. However, committees are
RESOURCES actively functioning and anyone wishing to learn more about this pro-
STUDY GROUP ject with a view to becoming involved in it may telephone the Group
Chairman, Mr. Henry Fletcher (421-1549). Watch the January Newsletter
for further announcements.

ECOLOGY Meet in Room 378 of The College of Education, 371 Bloor Street W.,
GROUP at Spadina. Topic: "What is Ecology?--An Introduction". Close to
Wednesday Christmas though it is, this is an important meeting for all who
December 20 want to embark on a study of this vital subject.
8:00 p.m. Chairman - Mr. Ron Thorpe (759-2948)

BOTANY GROUP There will be no meeting of the Botany Group in December. Meetings
will be held on January 18, February 15, and March 15. Our aim is
to assist members to identify plants and trees. We intend to present
programs that are both interesting and informative. When possible we
will have field trips to follow up the program subjects. All members
of the Toronto Field Naturalists are cordially invited to attend.
Chairman - Mr. Wes. Hancock (757-5518)
Past Chairman - Miss Florence Preston
Program Committee - Miss Erna Lewis,
Miss Emily Hamilton, Mrs. Helen Hancock,
Mr. Stuart A. Corbett

BIRD GROUP In place of our usual indoor meeting we will hold a Winter Bird
Educational Walk on Saturday, December 30 (time to shake off that
Christmas lethargy!). Leaders will be on hand to point out identifying
features of any birds we locate. Meet at Lakeshore parking lot, across
from the Seaway Tower, at 9:00 a.m. Organizer, Mr. John Foster (266-3886).
FLASH!!! In addition to the "Winter Birds" topic at the November 23
Bird Group meeting, Mr. Chip Wesloh of Calgary will present some slides
and discuss markings of gulls. Mr. Wesloh is currently carrying out
a study of this subject in the Toronto area.
Chairman - Mr. Red Mason (621-3905)

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President - Miss Rosemary Gaymer

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

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Most of the Board of Directors' efforts during the last three months have been concerned with the general administration of the Club. The most pressing matter has been - and continues to be - our efforts to develop a wider range of responsibilities and a more in-depth organization, to reflect the size of our ever-growing membership and to provide more opportunities for members to serve the Club in various ways.

Golden Jubilee. One great occasion is facing the Club, and promises interesting and exciting involvement - and a lot of work - for many people. Our Golden Jubilee Year will cover the 1973-74 season. Basic planning is already under way, and you will be hearing a great deal in the next few months about ways in which you can help, both in organizing events and joining in the many projects that are contemplated.

The actual Jubilee date is October 29, 1973 - 50 years after the first public meeting of the Club in 1923 - but that date will on a working day, so we have decided on a major celebration for Saturday, October 27, 1973. Reserve the whole day, and especially the evening!

Canadian Nature Federation. Another matter that should be brought to members' attention is that the Club has taken out membership in, and given a donation to, the Canadian Nature Federation which, as many of our members will be aware, is the name of the national organization formed last year in place of the former Canadian Audubon Society.

In addition to a common interest in nature study, our members - you - are expressing ever growing interests in conservation, and in the importance of the environment to society at large. It is to serve all these interests more thoroughly at a national level that the new Canadian Nature Federation has been formed, not merely to reaction to issues of importance as they arise, but to work together with organizations across the country, and with various professional people, to identify matters of concern long before they become crises. In other words, preventative conservation, rather than negative reaction.

The Canadian Nature Federation must have a strong and large membership, individuals as well as organizations. We urge individual Club members to join if they have not already done so, and to receive the satisfaction of knowing that they are assisting in the most worthwhile work. Our own immediate efforts have to be local. We are part of the Federation of Ontario Naturalists so far as provincial issues are concerned. Now we can also play our part nationally.

Write for information to: Dr. Ted Mosquin, Executive Director,
Canadian Nature Federation, 46 Elgin Avenue, Ottawa K1P-5K6.

Jim Baillie. Many new members, new to Toronto or new to the bird watching world, have been asking us: "Who was Jim Baillie, and why was the Nature Reserve named after him?" It has, we realize, been an oversight on our part, and we apologize. But it is also, in a way, a comment on the pervasive nature of Jim Baillie's personality that has stayed with us. He was such an essential part of the scene, that those of us who knew and loved him still find it difficult to conceive that there are many members of the Club who did not know him.

Jim Baillie died at the end of May, 1970, just before his retirement from the Royal Ontario Museum where he had worked for 48 years, latterly as Assistant Curator of Ornithology. He had been president of the Toronto Field Naturalists' Club in 1952-53, and on the Board of Directors of the former Canadian Audubon Society. He was the most popular and instructive leader of outings. For longer than many of us can remember, he was the ultimate authority on birds as such, on birds of the Toronto region, and on the birds of Ontario. But the very special thing about Jim was that he was responsible, single-handed, for introducing so many people - young

and old, but especially young - to the joy of birds and birding, of natural history in general, and thence to the principles of conservation. His door was always open, and he welcomed amateurs who brought their identification problems to him in his Bird Room at the Museum. His patience with beginners was phenomenal and endless. His inspiration was behind many a fine career. His knowledge was boundless - not only of his beloved birds, but of plants as well. Very many people who never met him knew Jim through his Bird Column, written for 29 years in The Toronto Telegram.

The naming of our Nature Reserve in honour of Jim Baillie was, the Club felt, the most appropriate action we could have taken in his memory.

Fund Raising. GIVE A DONATION IN A FRIEND'S NAME FOR CHRISTMAS!

We are doing well in our drive towards the completion of the fund raising for the Jim Baillie Nature Reserve, but we have not yet achieved our goal.

The property is now owned outright by the Club, BUT we are still about \$4,000 short of our target of \$20,000. We need to recover the full amount in order to regain the financial position that we were in before the purchase of the Reserve - in other words, to have enough cash in the bank to be able to contemplate further possible property acquisitions in the future. No donation is too small or too large, and all donations are tax deductible. At the time of going to press (the end of October), the amount raised to date was \$16,034, from 707 separate donations. A lot of these have represented two or more people through family memberships; a number of people have multiple donations; and many gifts have come from non-members.

Ladies and Gentlemen, let's put on a big effort in our final drive to raise the money - PLEASE HELP TO PUT US OVER THE TOP BEFORE OUR GOLDEN JUBILEE YEAR!

Rosemary D. Gaymer.

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TORONTO FIELD NATURALISTS - BOTANY GROUP

Chairman - Wes Hancock, 757-5518

Past-Chairman - Florence Preston

Program Committee - Erna Lewis, Emily Hamilton, Helen Hancock, Stu Corbett.

Meeting location - Hodgson Public School, Davisville Ave. east of Mt. Pleasant Rd.

Meeting dates - November 16, January 18, February 15, March 15.

Our aim is to assist members, interested in botany, to identify plants and trees. We intend to present programs that are both interesting and informative. When possible we will have field trips to follow-up the program subjects.

All members of the Toronto Field Naturalists are cordially invited to attend the Botany Group meetings.

MUSHROOMS IN WILKET CREEK PARK

On Sunday, October 22, following Dr. Gunn's interesting talk on Mushrooms and Fungi, 8 members met in the Wilket Creek Park to search for, and identify, any mushrooms they could find. Within a half-mile area we identified 17 species and others which we saw but could not identify.

Those identified were:- 1. Tricholoma Irinum - edible; 2. Pholiota Aurivella - edible; 3. Hygrophorus Punicus - edible (or called Scarlet Wax-gill); 4. Coprinus Comatus - edible (also called Shaggy Mane); 5. Multi-zoned Polystictus; 6. Schizophyllum Commune; 7. Trogia Crispa; 8. Hairy Stereum; 9. Clavaria Stricta - (straight Coral Fungus); 10. Clammy Celocera; 11. Dead Man's Fingers; 12. Artist's Fungus; 13. Rusty-hoof Fomes; 14. Brown Lenzite; 15. Marasmius Rotula; 16. Wood-loving Lycogalas; 17. Nectria.

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FLYING SOUTH

by Esther L. Pendergast

When those of us lucky enough to live near the major flyways watch the passage of migrants in spring and fall, we are aware that the birds are coming from or going to areas far to the south. Rarely, though, do we really grasp just what such journeys entail, and even less often do we have the chance to see the migrants at other way-stations along their route. From 1964 through 1971, I was lucky enough to be able to see many of "our" birds in another of their homes in British Honduras, some 1800 miles south of Toronto. By spending part of each year in this small country nestled between Guatemala and the Caribbean at the base of the Yucatán Peninsula and then returning to Toronto for the remainder of the year, I could often watch a visitor to the tropical bush as he headed northward early in the year, and see the same species in the "bush" around Toronto during the fall migration southward. This fortunate situation was created by my involvement in the Royal Ontario Museum archaeological excavations directed by my husband at Altun Ha, British Honduras.

Our field camp stood at the edge of the central plaza of the ancient city, and just a few yards from our door was the dense second-growth forest which clothes the coastal plain. With the bush so close by, we could enjoy a daily serenade of bird songs from the first light of dawn until long after dark. Our stay at the camp began each year with the start of the dry season in January, and lasted until the onset of rains in June. With this chance for long-term daily observation of many species, I was able to catalogue arrivals and departures and spy on feeding, courtship, nest-building, and the rearing of young. What a treat it was to see our familiar birds in different settings: the Yellow Warbler searching for insects in a palm tree, the Parula Warbler foraging in a cecropia or a wild papaya, the Kentucky Warbler, the Yellowthroat, the Ovenbird and others flitting amongst the philodendrons, epiphytes and vines of the tangled understorey. The jungles were filled, too, with parrots, toucans, tanagers, motmots, and manakins, and even the ancient buildings became, after excavation, favourite haunts of the birds. Temple rooms frequently served as nesting-places for motmots and hummingbirds, who were joined by Ringed Kingfishers resting between forays to the many ponds and swamps hidden beneath the canopy of trees.

British Honduras, soon to be called Belize, is an emerging nation which has not yet suffered the severe pangs of "progress". As a result, birds are still present in large numbers in the country, and much remains to be learned and recorded there, including new species reports. Fortunately a local Audubon Society has been formed, and interest in conservation is high. In the four years of its existence, the society has managed to bring about the creation of three nature reserves, to have the Jabiru Stork and many hawks and falcons placed on a Protected Species list, and to make the general populace aware of the need for action while the species are still there to be saved.

Partly to lend support to local Audubon efforts and partly to give northerners a chance to see familiar and unfamiliar species in a tropical setting, the Florida and Canadian Audubon societies organized a joint tour to British Honduras, led by Donald H. Baldwin, in 1970. The tour was so successful that it was repeated in 1971,

and now Don and I plan to lead an extended version in 1973. Departing Toronto on March 16th, the thirteen-day tour will include three days of birding in British Honduras and visits to a number of points in Guatemala, including Tikal National Park and the Lake Atitlán area of the highlands. Those interested in seeing tropical birds in their native habitat and migrants on their way north should contact Don Baldwin, 47 Duggan Avenue, Toronto, or call him at 488-7769.

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COMING EVENTS

CBC-TV, Dec. 10, 8:00 p.m. - A visit to Kortright Waterfowl Park.

Royal Ontario Museum

Information: 928-3690

Free Sunday Films - at 2:30 p.m.

Dec. 3 - Glass; The wandering albatross; Intirumi - Inca civilization.

Dec. 10 - Family Day: includes Dan Gibson's Nature Family.

Free Lectures on China by Dr. Joseph Needham, Cambridge University.

Nov. 30 - Archaeology and Science in Modern China.

Dec. 2 - Alchemy and early chemistry in East and West.

Dec. 5 - Botany in Classical China.

Gallery tours and Wednesday night films continue as usual.

Royal Canadian Institute

Information: 922-2804

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

Dec. 2 - "Controls on the exercise of power" (Ontario law reform). - Hon. James C. McRuer.

Dec. 9 - "The Red Cross - Humanity's Bridge" - J. C. M. Wilson

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New Publications

The following publications are available from the Information Branch, Ministry of Natural Resources, Parliament Buildings, Toronto:

GEOLOGY AND SCENERY, North Shore of Lake Huron Region, by J.A. Robertson and K. D. Card. Ten maps, 147 photos, 70 in colour, 240 pages. Price: \$2.00
A geological guide book for rockhounds, travellers and geologists.

RAINBOW TROUT IN THE GREAT LAKES, by Dr. Hugh R. MacGrimmon, with 76 pages, outline maps, four colour plates. Price: \$1.00

BIRDS OF ALGONQUIN PROVINCIAL PARK, by Russ Tutter, illustrated with 33 bird drawings by Howard Coneybeare. Lists 213 species; 40 pages. Price: 50¢

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In spite of the damp and penetrating cold some fifteen to twenty would-be botanists met at Albion Hills at 10 a.m. on October 15.

After driving through a few snowflakes in Toronto, we were not too surprised to see snow filming the more sheltered parts of the conservation area.

Our original leader, Stu Corbett, whose outing to Vandorf Bog is a real spring highlight, could not make it because of pressing business elsewhere. Luckily the young naturalist Roy Bittle was able to act in his stead. An expert on the local topography, he took us through a variety of habitats without ever taking the wrong turning, and, believe me, there are many.

Few flowers had survived the killing frost of the week before, so we concentrated on other things. We compared the stubby suede buds of the butternut with those of the bitternut, slender, yellow and aromatic; the showy red berries of the Japanese Silverleaf (*Elaeagnus umbellata*), planted to give more forest "edge" for wildlife, with the porcelain-blue berries of the native Silky Dogwood (*Cornus amomum*), sometimes called Kinnikinnik; the frost-killed Sensitive (*Onoclea sensibilis*) and Ostrich (*Pteretis pensylvanica*) ferns with the evergreen Marginal Shield (*Dryopteris marginalis*) and Spinulose Shield (*D. spinulosa* var. *intermedia*) ferns.

Many of us have seen the leaves of the wild leek (*Allium tricoccum*) early in spring, some of us the flowers that appear later on when the leaves have gone. This was the first time most of us had seen its fruit - an umbel of small shiny black spheres, each set in a frilly beige cup.

We also experienced the excitement of coming upon two species that are far from common in this region. One was the glade Fern, better known as Narrowleaved Spleenwort, (*Athyrium pycnocarpon*). Drained of colour through the fronds were, the herringbone pattern of brown sori was plainly visible on the back of the fertile ones. The other was the Sweet Coltsfoot (*Petasites palmatus*) with its large and handsome leaves.

A bonus was the splendid view of rolling hills and fall colours spread before us whenever a trail passed over high open ground. All in all, the expedition was well worth while in spite of rain, chill winds and frostbitten plants.

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THE SHORTAGE OF URBAN WILDLIFE AREAS

by Harold Taylor

As a boy, the late Jim Baillie often rode a streercar to High Park to watch birds. Probably many of us were introduced to the world of wildlife in a Toronto park. And, as adults, some of us may do most of our nature-watching along the edge of Grenadier Pond, on one of Toronto's islands, or in the ravines that crease the face of our city.

It seems that in our enjoyment of the parks we have plenty of company. When the Bureau of Municipal Research was preparing its Spring 1971 Civic Affairs Bulletin: Urban Open Space - Luxury or Necessity? it asked 244 persons in 12 different parks an open-ended question, "What do you like about this park?" "Nature," was the spontaneous reply of 43%.

Where does Toronto rank with the other centres in the amount of parkland? Not at all well, according to the Bureau's report. On the basis of 3.35 acres of public parkland per 1,000 population (1970 statistics) the City of Toronto was ninth in a list of 10 cities (not metropolitan areas) that was headed by Regina and Kitchener. Only Windsor was below us.

Within Metro Toronto four areas - the city and the Boroughs of York, Etobicoke, and North York - fall below the so-called Metro Toronto Official Plan Standard of 5 acres per 1,000 population.

So our parkland is well below the amount that is deemed desirable, even necessary, for a high quality of urban living.

The situation of wildlife areas in Metro is even more critical. Recently we have seen some of the wild areas of Wilket Creek Park destroyed by paved roads and parking lots. Nordheimer Ravine, at one time an attractive stretch of wildlife habitat in the centre of the city, has been largely spoiled as a result of sewer construction..

The latest area that seems certain to disappear is at the southwest corner of Eglinton Ave. and Jane St. on the Humber River. For the past two summers there has been a nature day camp there. The varied habitat provided a valuable contact with nature for many children of York Borough. But no more. Another golf course is slated to occupy the area.

Are we likely to see significant increases in the amount of Toronto's public parkland? Except for rumours that a park will be created out on the lake and the waterfront plans of the Metro Toronto and Region Conservation Authority there has been little indication that we can look forward to more parks. Now the Federal Government has entered the picture with its plan to purchase 86 acres of land on the waterfront between Bathurst and York Sts. Reports that this will be a recreation-type park with sports facilities, bandshells and the like do not suggest that it will be a habitat for much wildlife.

Certainly the City of Toronto has not considered the acquisition of parkland as having a high priority. In 1969, for example, more money was allocated for sidewalks than for parks and recreation. The Bureau of Municipal Research Bulletin points out that from 1956 to 1971, a period in which land prices rose substantially, the annual appropriation for acquiring parkland remained at \$500,000. In effect there was really less money each year for increasing the total park acreage. The annual appropriation has since been doubled but it may well be a case of too little, too late.

The Bulletin suggests that had the city actively sought out suitable areas rather than waiting for them to come onto the market it might well have acquired more parkland. Perhaps some persistent prodding by Toronto's naturalists will convince Toronto's politicians that a more aggressive policy is long overdue.

There is, it is true, much green on the map of Toronto. However, when the golf courses, public and private, the cemeteries, and the manicured, "civilized" areas are subtracted it is obvious that wildlife areas are in short supply.

These urban wilderness areas are needed, not only by wildlife but by man himself. He is, after all, a part of nature.

In future Newsletters we will be visiting some of the areas still left to us; areas that we may have to defend against further encroachment.

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The crimson forest - no more?

Miss Honora Cochrane wrote in a short note to me that "the leaves are dying before they fall and that none have shown the normal colouration...and each year for the last four autumns the deterioration has been worse." Why?

I really can't be very reassuring, Honora, having just chopped down a dead maple tree from my own front lawn. Its leaves just withered up into brown corpses

last year and dropped off without showing any of the usual hectic fall colours. Mine died of the maple wilt - a virus disease which has become quite common.

It might be the lack of a good frost or some other weather condition that's doing it. I know that many white pines around Toronto and Georgian Bay suddenly turned brown this summer. They got needle blight which is caused by a sudden change in weather particularly when extremes of temperature and rainfall are involved.

Or it might be the road salt used in winter as suggested by the newspaper article you quoted.

I just hope it isn't the Los Angeles or the Sudbury or the Tokyo disease. Many California redwoods are slowly dying of smog. And we all know the moonscapes around Sudbury where the vegetation has died from sulphur dioxide. And now I read that Tokyo's air pollution is slowly killing off the trees on the Tokyo plain and all the vegetation will be wiped out within 50 years if nothing is done about it. And then as you said, 'we face calamity indeed'.

So I guess all this is not very reassuring. I just hope it's the weather.

- E. Talvila

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MUSKRATS AND NOTES ON A POND

by Gwyneth E. Moolenburgh

High in the Mono Hills, there is a pond fringed with grasses and bulrushes, where some muskrats make their home. Sometimes we would see a small Vee of ripples break the surface of the water, nothing more. Then one day the muskrats felt safer and showed themselves. They would swim from one end of the pond to the other, then return with special grasses stuffed into their mouths; sometimes with huge bulrushes trailing behind or sticking up like a periscope. This house building and stocking went on at a terrific pace. At last the "old man" had had enough. He came out onto the dyke, behind the grasses which fringed this side of the pond, out of sight of his mate, and stuffed himself with some choice buttercups, while Mom finished the job.

One day the young were routed out to go for a swimming lesson. One parent started off for the other side, the two little ones close behind. After a few yards, the youngsters turned back. Teacher looked around to see how they were getting along. No pupils! Back she went, routed them out and again started off. Again they turned back. That pond was just too big! Three times this happened. Finally they all made it across to the other side.

Last year all of them disappeared. I miss their antics very much, but they did make the pond very dirty as it has a muddy bottom, and they insisted on making holes in the dyked part,

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The great blue heron stalks around the pond sometimes or ducks spend the night resting on it. The Kingfisher is very unhappy as the huge elms have gone and with them his vantage point. One spring a robin built a nest in a dying elm. The nest was exposed to wind and rain and hot sun and predators. How they must have suffered!

The swallows wait for us each spring to open the door to the basement, which looks like a barn, where they have one nest only. The phoebe followed suit and somehow managed to build on a one-inch plastic pipe, through which water gurgled every time

we turned on a tap. Grackles built on a propane tank which had a neat metal cover over it. The only catch was that it had to be opened every week to turn on the gas! They survived that, but later were demolished by an unknown predator.

There is always something of interest, and I am very thankful for the gift and the opportunity to enjoy nature, from frog egg-laying day, dragonfly emergence day, or the the day when I rescued a Monarch butterfly from the jaws of a frog.

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THE ASTEROIDS: MINOR PLANETS IN SPACE

by John F. Foster

The Asteroids are a cluster of planetoids which are spread out in a general orbit lies between Mars and Jupiter. There are approximately 50,000 of these small worlds according to astronomers. Generally, they fall into two groups, the first group plies the orbit between Mars and Jupiter whilst the second group uses highly eccentric orbits which swing outward as far as the orbit of Saturn.

Back in the 1800's astronomers began a search for a fifth planet from the Sun to fill the gap between Mars and Jupiter. In 1801 an astronomer by the name of Piazzi discovered the first Asteroid which is now called Ceres. Ceres is also the largest of the Asteroids and possesses a diameter of 480 miles. The next three to be discovered were Pallas, Juno and Vesta. New bodies were discovered every year and so many of them are now known that astronomers no longer search for new Asteroids. Today amateur astronomers use telescopes with attached cameras on equatorial mounts to study them. Ceres, Pallas, June and Vesta are the most studied of the planetoids. With the aid of an ephemeris, 1600 other known Asteroids can be studied for six weeks at the time of their opposition with Earth.

Physically the Asteroids possess too little gravity to keep an atmosphere. Without an atmosphere they are therefore exposed to the cold of space and to all the radiations which are moving through it. We do not know the composition of these bodies since in all telescopes they are nothing more than spots of light. Perhaps when observatories are established on Mars man can then see surface features on the largest Asteroids. We could never land a spacecraft on any of them because of the feeble gravity. The gravity is so very low on some, that a man could launch himself into space by leg-power alone. The Asteroids vary in their ability to reflect light. The most easily seen planetoid is Vesta whose maximum stellar magnitude is between 5.9 and 6.5 depending on the time of year. The reflectivity of each planetoid also has a great deal to do with its respective shape since most of them are highly irregular in outline.

Planetoids of the eccentric group are a vagabond lot since their orbits are highly elliptical. In 1937, Hermes approached to within 500,000 miles of the Earth. In a contrast of distances, Hidalgo reaches far out to Saturn on its apogee while Icarus comes within 20 million miles of the Sun in its perigee. Recently it was discovered that one of these eccentric bodies has a wave orbit which brings it alternately within the gravitational spheres of Earth and Venus every 12,000 years.

With respect to their origin the Asteroids were once believed to be the wreckage of a planet which astronomers named Asteroidia. Now scientists believe that the Asteroids are merely space junk that did not coalesce properly to form a tenth planet. It also is now believed that the moons of Mars, some of Jupiter, Saturn, and Uranus may be captured planetoids - bodies which came too close to these planets and were caught in their gravitational fields. Someday manned spacecraft may visit the Asteroid belt for observation, exploration and mining purposes but the Asteroids should never constitute a major hazard to space travel. Already man has penetrated the belt with the fly-by of the Jupiter probe of Pioneer 10. The Asteroids are the neighbours of the planets, the comets and meteors. They will always be regarded as the Sun's minor planets in space.

THE HEAVENS ABOVE - November and December

- Nov. 30 - Full Moon
Dec. 2 - Sunrise at 7:33 a.m.; Sunset at: 4:41 p.m.
Dec. 13 - Geminid meteors. Strong shower of 50 meteors per hour. Lasts about 3 days.
Dec. 20 - Full Moon.
Dec. 21 - Winter solstice begins at 1:13 p.m.

Note: McLaughlin Planetarium: Theatre of the Stars
Vagabonds in Space - to Nov. 26
What are the asteroids and where do they come from?
The Christmas Star - begins Nov. 29
The origins of and the history surrounding the Star of Bethlehem.
Programs - Tues. to Fri. 3, 8 p.m.; Sat. 2, 3:30, 7:30, 9 p.m.;
Sun. 2, 3:30, 5, & 7:30 p.m.
Phone 928-8550.

- John F. Foster

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WOMEN'S LIB - IS IT FOR THE BIRDS?

by Howard Huggett

Ever since that wave of the future, Women's Liberation, broke upon a startled and unready world a question has been battling around in my head - has the female revolution now sweeping human society anything to offer to the feathered kingdom?

In many ways birdland is well ahead of us in granting equal rights to females. Every hen bird has a job outside the home, and at equal pay rates too. That is something that we haven't achieved yet. However, there are some areas where the male chauvinist flyers have the best of it. Take this business of building the nest. It seems very likely to me that the females do the most of that because the male birds have to knock off and "do their thing", to sit upon a bough and sing their song. Singing is a way of defining territorial rights, and it is the cock birds that stake out the territory in the spring. Maybe some of our readers have some information on this subject. The bird books don't have much to say about this, possibly because they are usually written by men!

The point I would like to make is that singing is in a sense a creative occupation and more appealing than finding material for a nest or chasing down something to eat. Next spring, when you hear a male songster warbling away merrily, ask yourself what his mate is doing. After all, female birds are not noticeably smaller and weaker than their mates and they are capable of defending themselves. Anyone who has seen two kingbirds driving off a crow can vouch for that. So why does it have to be the male birds who do the vocals?

There is also the matter of plumage. Among many species of birds it is the cock birds who wear the bright colours, and this suggests that they are the dominant sex. Presumably the bright plumage is to make their wearers more attractive to the female, and probably this is a device of nature to encourage sexual competition. It has always seemed to me that it would be better if the male birds had to win their mates by putting together a neat and sturdy nest, or rounding up a five course meal in a hurry. It would be a more sensible arrangement, but then love and logic seldom mix.

There may be some connection between the colouring of the male birds in many species and a need to draw the attention of enemies from the nest. This certainly seems to be the case with two Arctic species, the Rock and Willow Ptarmigans. Although both species are white in winter time, the females have a barred or speckled plumage during the Arctic summer, idea for sitting on a nest. The male birds in both species have a lot of white even in summer, and they therefore are much easier to spot.

According to my information, sitting on ptarmigan nests is a purely feminine occupation.

On the other hand, male Arctic Terns do their share of sitting on the nest, and with this species there does not seem to be any variation in plumage between the sexes. It would be interesting to know what the nest-sitting pattern is for those species in which there is little or no sexual differences in colour - owls, crows, herons, gulls and most hawks, to mention only the larger birds. There also many kinds of small ones who do not go in for differences in plumage between the sexes, for instance chickadees. In this species there is no difference between young birds and adults, or between male and female.

It is intriguing to speculate on this situation in relation to the recent tendency towards unisex fashions in some parts of the human world, and even to what might be called uni-generation fashion. Not only do both sexes wear their hair at the same length and dress in almost identical clothing, but children tend to dress like their parents, or vice versa. This is happening at a time when women are achieving greater equality and leaving behind the days when "women's place is in the home". As a result men are finding themselves doing more of "women's work", housework, baby-sitting and so on. Are we just catching up to the chickadees?

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BOOK REVIEW

"LARGE 'BLACK DEVIL' PANTHERS
ROAMING THROUGH NEW BRUNSWICK
BUSHLANDS KEEP SMALL COMMUNITY IN TERROR,
CHILDREN SCREAM IN NIGHT AS
PANTHERS TERRORIZE NEW BRUNSWICK VILLAGE"

If one young panther could raise such a furor it would seem fortunate that only 100 of these "devis" exist in Eastern North America. Fortunately the Eastern Panther (*felis concolor*) has an adequate defender in Bruce Wright, author of The Eastern Panther: a question of survival (Clarke, Irwin and Company Limited, 1972, \$6.50)

Both the biology and behaviour of the eastern panther is revealed through account after account of sightings, told in a fascinating anecdotal fashion. While examining the evidence for recognition of the panther in New Brunswick, Mr. Wright also convincingly dispels tales of the panther's viciousness as exemplified in the Star article above (Nov. 23, 1953).

Many sightings have involved hunters and the author points out that it is the boldness and curiosity of the panther that often leads to its death. The threat of disturbance and ultimate extinction, is made more pertinent by the present development of New Brunswick's wilderness areas - making the interior and the panther more accessible to man.

It is therefore imperative that the eastern panther be placed on a protected species list in all of Canada's Eastern Provinces, at least until population structures are known. It would seem even more realistic to set aside a large tract of relatively undisturbed land for both the panther and its favorite prey, the white-tailed deer. The problems of management are well outlined by Mr. Wright - either ensure an adequate supply of deer or tolerate the eastern panther where there are high deer densities.

Such tasks are impossible as long as provincial authorities refuse to even recognize the existence of this animal (supposedly until a freshly killed specimen is identified).

This timely book is illustrated with sketches of little value and there are too few pictures. It would have added considerably to the author's case if photo and footprint comparisons of lynx, bobcat, and panther had been included. The author might also have included a map of the actual sighting localities to give the reader some perspective on range and territoriality. An excellent addition is the extensive bibliography that enables the reader to seek out further information.

You may be assured that the eastern panther does exist along the East coast of North America. "The Eastern Panther" allows us to share in the thrill of investigation and rediscovery of an endangered species in New Brunswick. Those with any interest in conservation will enjoy this readable book.

- Bob Johnson

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A STORY WITHOUT AN ENDING

by Hazel Angus

Six o'clock and almost the end of a perfect day in the Haliburton Highlands - time to shove off in my canoe to drift down the River to the bend into the Lake and explore the shoreline. About two hours before sunset, the reflections from the forest into the mirrorlike water can create the most beautiful and mysterious images. Particularly in the driftwood areas one sees tropical birds, deep sea creatures and everything imaginable, reflected below the driftwood, a cameraman's paradise.

This particular evening the current carried me and my canoe into the heart of a swamp with tall trees on either side, woodpeckers busily pounding the trees, grosbeaks and dozens of other species noisily preparing for the night. Finally the channel became so narrow I had difficulty maneuvering the canoe back down stream to the Lake. The current carried us swiftly back through this paradise as though anxious to be rid of the intrusion and as we rounded a bend, there was Rick, a fine young lad who has on several occasions taken us on birding and botany expeditions through the surrounding forest. As we were chatting, suddenly I spied the TURTLE sitting over a large cavity which she had scooped out in the sand. Needless to say, I scrambled out of the canoe onto the sand bank to see one of Nature's phenomena. She had dropped about a dozen eggs already into the deep cavity and each time an egg would drop, she would slowly extend one hind leg and carefully place the egg in a desired spot into the nest. There would be one, two and sometimes three eggs click down at a time; there were so many we lost count after about thirty or so.

Suddenly Rick had the urge to share our thrilling experience with some of his family and dashed off into the woods to tell them, and returned accompanied by two other campers and we continued to watch, sitting beside the turtle on the sand. We were so intent on the proceedings, that I did not notice
..... Somehow Hazel I haven't the heart to print the rest of the story. It took me a while to erase the memory of the 'bird lover' with his gun and his big boots. So I'm going to leave the picture frozen in my memory: that turtle is still dropping its eggs into the cavity and you and Rick are still sitting beside it on the sand sharing a thrilling experience. I hope you had other perfect days on the River which ended perfectly too.

The editor,

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Secretarial Mutterings

Can it be pure coincidence that in our Club we have several Martins, a Mr. Jay, a Miss Wren, a Miss Crow, and a Mr. Peacock? And then there are the Goslings, and Mr. Hedges, and Miss Bird, and a Mrs. Bird (who lives on Oriole Parkway). Mr. Ash, Mrs. Bush, Miss Heather, Mrs. Rose, Mr. Hedges, Mr. & Mrs. Bean, Miss Bracken, and Miss Boggs really should get together some time. So should Miss Brook, Mrs. Marsh, and the Pikes. The fact that we also have Miss Marten, a family of Fishers, and more than one Fox, illustrates the breadth of our interests.

In addition to Briar Hill, Fern, Spruce, Beach, Elm, Finch, Willow and Silverbirch Avenues, Heath St., and Oriole Parkway, our membership files are thickly sprinkled with more imaginative addresses, for example, Red Cedarway, Robintide Court, Redwood Ave., Killdeer Cres., Holly St., Falcon Lane, White Pine Ave., Botany Hill Rd., Cloverleaf Gate, Otter Cres., Wildlark Hill, White Oak Blvd., Huckleberry Lane, Paperbirch Dr., Laurel Ave., Trillium Terrace, Thistledown Blvd., Chestnut Park Rd., Marmot St., Bobolink Dr., Waxwing Place, and Primate Rd. Dare we also include Milmink St.? Be that as it may, we cannot overlook the fact that one TFN couple recently moved to Wolf St., in Victoria, B.C.

Such thoughts break the monotony of pulling cards out, marking them paid for 1972-73, and filing them back By the way, have you sent in your fees?

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