



TORONTO FIELD NATURALISTS' CLUB NEWSLETTER

Number 274

March 1973

Visitors Welcome!

MARCH MEETING

Visitors welcome!

Monday, March 5, 1973, at 8:15 p.m.
at the
ONTARIO INSTITUTE FOR STUDIES IN EDUCATION
252 Bloor Street West

Subject: THE METROPOLITAN TORONTO ZOO

Speaker: MRS. SUSAN PORTER, Public Relations Officer, Metropolitan Toronto
Zoological Society

also ZOOS OF THE WORLD, a National Geographic film, in colour

A modest donation of \$100 has been made from Club funds towards the new zoo, as it is anticipated that many of our members will wish to make their own personal contributions. An opportunity will be provided at the meeting to pledge or donate to this exciting development.

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March Outings

Spring has begun in the bird world, whatever we may think of the weather. Our outings program is "stepping up" accordingly. Please see page 2.

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- A case for binoculars was inadvertently left in the car of someone attending the January outing, by Mrs. Mary MacPherson (483-8657). Mrs. MacPherson would be very happy to hear from the owner of the car.

- Now that the outdoor season is approaching, it is time to tack a TFNC badge on your sleeve and renew that tired old TFNC decal on your car window. Available from the secretary at the March meeting. Badge \$1.25. Decal 50¢.

- If you do not subscribe to the AUDUBON WILDLIFE FILMS series, be sure to attend the final showing on Tuesday, March 13, 8:15 p.m., at Eaton Auditorium. "The Land No One Wanted," presented by Buzz Moss. Tickets \$2.00 from Eaton's Box Office.

- Volunteers are still required for work at the environmental exhibit at the Canadian National Sportsman;s Show, March 16-25. If you can offer help on one or more of these days, please see details on page 9 of the last (February) Newsletter, or phone Mr. or Mrs. Harry Kerr (481-7948).

March Outings - BIPDS - Mornings only

Transit details may change. Call TTC, 487-2424.

- Saturday WESTERN LAKESHORE Leader: Mr. Henry Fletcher
March 3 Meeting in the parking lot opposite the Seaway Hotel, on the south
9:00 a.m. side of Lake Shore Blvd. West opposite the foot of Windermere Avenue.
(QUEEN streetcar to Windermere or RUNNYMEDE SOUTH bus from subway.)
- Sunday LAMBTON WOODS Leaders: Mr. Red Mason, Prof. Richard Hoffmann
March 4 Meet in the parking lot of James Gardens. (ROYAL YORK bus leaves
10:15 a.m. subway at 9:45 a.m. Get off at Edenbridge Drive and walk east 0.4 mile.
- Saturday HIGH PARK Leaders: Mr. Jack Sherrin, Dr. Margaret Knight
March 10 Meet in the first parking lot on West Road, which is on your right
9:00 a.m. as you enter from Bloor St. at High Park Ave. (Subway to HIGH PARK)
- Sunday MORNINGSIDE PARK Leaders: Mr. Gordon Lambert, Mr. Norman Avis
March 11 Meet in the first parking lot, immediately west of Morningside
10:15 a.m. Avenue, by the pavilion. Drivers take 401 east to exit 61, then go
south on Morningside Ave. 1.0 mile. (Take YONGE NIGHT bus north to
Glen Echo loop (city limit), from where YORK MILLS bus leaves at 9:15
a.m. Get off at Morningside Ave.; walk south 0.5 mile.)
- Sunday KING CAMPUS, SENECA COLLEGE (EATON ESTATE)
March 18 Leaders: Prof. Jack Cranmer-Byng, Mr. Andy Harjula
9:30 a.m. Meet on Doncliffe Drive, immediately behind the Glen Echo bus loop on
Yonge Street (at city limit), 0.7 mile north of Lawrence Avenue.
(Take YONGE NIGHT bus.) We then drive to the campus (which is on the
west side of Dufferin St., 1.6 miles north of the King City sideroad)
arriving about 10:30 a.m. You may bring a lunch.
- Saturday DAVID BALFOUR PARK
March 24 Leaders: Mrs. Barbara Wilkins, Mr. Douglas Wilkins
9:30 a.m. Meet on the north side of St. Clair Ave. E. opposite Avoca Ave.,
0.2 mile east of Yonge St. (Park in garage on Pleasant Blvd.)
- Sunday WILKET CREEK PARK Leader: Mr. Fred Bodsworth
March 25 Meet in the first parking lot on the west of Leslie St., just north
9:00 a.m. of Eglinton Ave. E. (Take YONGE NIGHT bus to Eglinton, then EGLINTON
EAST or LAWRENCE EAST or LESLIE bus.)

(Saturday and Sunday/Federation of Ontario Naturalists event)
(March 31-April 1/ LONG POINT spring weekend. Information 444-8419)

TFNG Outings, Charles Chaffey, 752-2897

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ATTENTION! TFNG is having a party.

WHY? It's our Golden Jubilee. WHEN? October 27, 1973.
WHERE? The Four Seasons-Sheraton Hotel, Queen St. West (opposite City Hall).
WHO? Guest speaker will be Mr. Lister Sinclair, Vice-President of CBC.

Mark in on your calendar now and watch your Newsletter for more information.

JUNIOR CLUB
Saturday
March 3
10:00 a.m.

Children between 8 and 16 attend the Toronto Junior Field Naturalists which meets in the theatre of the Royal Ontario Museum. Leaders are urgently required; please see page 11 of this Newsletter. The March meeting will be presented by the Fossil and Invertebrates Group (leader, Mr. Ross Underhill). Theme: "Invertebrate Communities-- Present and Past". Visitors welcome.

President - Miss Elizabeth Schell (741-0371)
Director - Mr. Mike Singleton (447-4197)

FIELD
BIOLOGISTS'
GROUP
Thursday
March 8
8:00 p.m.

Meet in St. James-Bond United Church, on Avenue Rd. just north of Eglinton Ave. West. Program details available from the chairman, Mr. Donald Burton (222-6467).

BOTANY GROUP
Thursday
March 15
8:00 p.m.

Meet in the library of Hodgson School, Davisville Ave. just east of Mt. Pleasant Rd. To park in the schoolyard, enter from Millwood Rd., the first street north. Topic: "Nature Photography is Fun", by Joan and John Powell. Colour slides of spring flowers growing in Southern Ontario woods, with a few helpful hints for the photographer. All TFN members welcome.

Chairman - Mr. Wes Hancock (757-5518)

BIRD GROUP
Thursday
March 22
8:00 p.m.

Meet in St. James-Bond United Church (see Field Biologists' Group above). The speaker will be Mr. Ulrich Waterman. His topic: collecting raptors at Toronto International Airport and gyrfalcons in the Arctic.

Plan to attend and enroll for the Owl Hunt (no guns). The number attending will be limited as too many birders scare the owls and no one sees them. We will be looking for six-plus species.

Chairman - Mr. Red Mason (621-3905)

ECOLOGY GROUP
Wednesday
March 28
8:00 p.m.

Meet in Room 378 of The College of Education, 371 Bloor St. West at Spadina. Topic: "Ecology of the High Arctic Islands" - illustrated with slides. Speaker: Mr. Alex Caron.

Chairman - Mr. Ron Thorpe (759-2948)

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WELCOME to the following new members:

Miss Solange Aldaya, Mr. & Mrs. Jim Birnie, Prof. & Mrs. Peter Brock, Mr. & Mrs. A. Cook, Miss Barbara E. Gias, Mr. & Mrs. Chris. Glaser, Mrs. Betty Greenacre, Mr. & Mrs. Tony Johnson, Mrs. J. W. Kennedy, Miss Ruth McWhinnie, Mrs. Elnora Montgomery, Miss Brigitte Mulner, Miss Veronika E. Nadas, Mr. John Newdick, Mr. George Nicholl, Miss Esther Pilkington, Mr. Donald Pope, Mr. G. Reedy, Mr. Harold Richards, Miss Lynn-Marie Scanlan, Miss Elizabeth Simpson, Mrs. Helene Snell.

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President - Miss Rosemary Gaymer

Secretary - Mrs. Mary Robson,
49 Craighurst Ave.
Toronto, Ont. (481-0260)
M4R 1J9

Dead as Dodos?

The following report on Toronto ravines is important to all of us. Read it carefully and then go to the meetings and make yourself heard. Say that:

- we want wild flowers and wild birds in our ravines
- we don't want developments, roads and parking lots
- we want our ravines to survive in their natural state so that we can survive as naturalists in the midst of a concrete bulldozer world.

For without wild nature to observe there will be no more naturalists and no more nature clubs either.

Dead as dodos - or Great Auks. That is the fate of the flightless birds who quietly waddle about and get quietly clubbed to death.

GO TO THE MEETINGS AND SQUAWK - AT LEAST!

E.T.

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Public discussions on measures to protect ravines in the City of Toronto.

The City of Toronto Planning Board has announced that it will hold three public meetings to discuss proposed legislation concerning the designation of ravine lands in the City of Toronto Official Plan. These will be held as follows:-

1. February 27, 1973. Runnymede Public School, 357 Runnymede Rd.
2. March 1. Lawrence Park Collegiate, 125 Chatsworth Dr.
3. March 6. Eastern Commerce School, 16 Phin Avenue.

All meetings will start at 8:15 p.m.

Briefly the situation is this:-

- 1) In 1971 certain new legislation concerning ravines was passed under the City of Toronto Act of that year. The legislation enables the City to pass by-laws protecting the natural vegetation and contours in areas designated as ravines in the City's Official Plan.
- 2) The City of Toronto Planning Board has prepared a report on the areas to be designated as ravines as a first step towards carrying out the new legislation. This report was approved in principle by the Board at its meeting of November 21, 1972, for purposes of public discussion and comment.
- 3) Brochures summarizing the report will be distributed to property owners and tenants directly abutting onto the ravines about three weeks prior to the public meetings. In addition the Environmental Committee of our club has four copies of the plan, together with detailed maps, available for consultation.
- 4) (a) The area covered by the meeting on 27 February is mainly from the Humber valley south of Bloor eastwards to include the High Park-Ellis Avenue area, and includes Rennie Park.

(b) The area covered by the meeting on 1 March is mainly from Avenue Road eastwards to Bayview and south of Lawrence, and includes Ramsden Park with Rosedale Ravine, Park Drive Ravine and Moore Park Ravine - all leading into the Don Valley; Lawrence Park Ravine and Sherwood Park; Nordheimer Ravine (from St. Clair at Bathurst to Russell Hill Road. just north of Dupont).

(c) The area covered by the meeting on 6 March is mainly from Woodbine east to Victoria Park Road, and south of Danforth, and includes the Glen Davis and Glen Stewart Ravines.

5) The important sections dealing with ravine policy in the City's Official Plan are contained in Section 5, and can be summarized as follows:-

PERTINENT PARTS OF SECTION 5 RELATING TO RAVINES

Section 5.1

The Lakeshore, the Toronto Islands, the ravines and the escarpment north of Davenport Road are the chief natural features of the City. It is Council's policy that the use and development of these areas shall not prejudice their use for public recreation and enjoyment.

Section 5.2

It is Council's policy that the Lakeshore, the Toronto Islands and the ravines, together with the other areas designated as open space on the Generalized City Plan Map form the major parks system of the City, containing regional parks and systems of district and local parks.

Section 5.8

It is the policy of Council that the ravines owned by the City remain in their natural state, and that Council encourage other public agencies owning other ravines in the City, to maintain them in their natural state, with such clearing, extension and improvement as is necessary for public recreation use.

Section 5.9

Private lands in the ravines will be acquired as necessary for parks or the attainment of the policies set out in Section 5.3. Due notice of Council's intention to acquire such land will be given to the owner thereof.

Section 5.10

Construction of roads and the undertaking of other public works in the ravines will be approved only where essential, and the design of such works will be such as to detract as little as possible from the appearance and recreational use of the areas affected.

6) Any members of the T.F.N.C. who are concerned that the ravine areas should be retained in their natural state are strongly urged to attend one or more of these meetings, and to make our own concern for the natural environment heard. It is also very important for all of us to be involved in taking part at a local community level in public discussions arranged expressly for this purpose by the City Planning Board, and to gauge the state of public opinion so that we can decide how best to influence the protection of these ravines in their natural state in the future.

Please get involved if you feel concerned over the future of these ravines, and try to influence your neighbours in the right direction.

If you want advice or information please phone one of the following members of the T.F.N.C. Environmental Committee:-

Rae Abernethy 223-6144
Jack Cranmer-Byng 488-3262

Henry Fletcher 421-1549
Harold Taylor 225-2649

AN URBAN WILDLIFE AREA - LAMBTON WOODS

by Harold Taylor

"Have you seen the wren?"

This question is likely to be put to anyone reporting a visit to Lambton Woods this winter and is part of every conversation between birders on the trails there. An affirmative answer is given with a smile; this is not just any wren but a Carolina wren, unusual in the woods at this time of year.

In all seasons Lambton Woods supplies considerable pleasure for nature-watchers. Jim Simon describes in the accompanying article the trees, shrubs, and ferns that he found on a winter's walk.

For birders, the woods are of special interest. A bright January sun was my first companion on a recent visit. We were joined by a brisk wind that bent the birches and polished the freshly frozen trails, making walking a slippery business.

Woodpeckers, hairies and downies, were busily at work while chickadees flitted about as though life was too short to waste any of it sitting around. No brown-caps, though.

Lambton Woods are just south of James Gardens. From the corner of Eglinton Ave. and Jane Street travel west across the Humber to the first traffic light, Scarlett Road; go south to Edenbridge Drive (first light) and turn west. The James Gardens parking lot is about three-quarters of a mile along Edenbridge. There is bus service up Royal York Road from the Bloor subway. Alight at Edenbridge Drive and walk east less than half a mile.

A young Red-tailed hawk sunning itself on a prominent branch seemed to know that my intentions were honourable. Although it never took its eyes from me it remained long enough for me to take pictures from several angles.

I was watching the hawk when two other birders came along the trail. One reported two Great blue herons down on the riverbank while the other told of a Great Horned owl seen in the woods two weeks earlier. He also relayed a reported sighting of a goshawk.

The wood-chip trail wound among the trees, many of which held aloft nests of other years. Probably present but less conspicuous was the nest of a Mourning warbler and a tree-hole made by a Red-headed woodpecker. I wondered whether they will be back to raise a new generation.

At the edge of the dirt torad that runs down from the corner of Edgehill Road and Royal York Road are signs prohibiting snowmobiles. Even here, in the city, it is necessary to keep out these vehicles that surely were intended to be used in open country many miles from urban parks.

It was on this road that I met Ed Godward.

Since last November Ed has pilgrimaged by street car, subway, and bus to the woods with shopping bags filled with seed, suet, and fruit for the feeders he has erected.

With Ed leading the way we picked our way between the trees to an open clearing. When the feeders has been replenished the chickadees were the first at the table. A

hairy and a downy found the suet log that contained an extra delicacy, orange halves stuffed into its holes. At one time both birds were on the log. Their energetic probing turned it slowly carrying the woodpeckers through hemispheres of sunlight and shadow.

Ed and I had not been sitting on a fallen log very long before we heard the soft peurr alarm note of the Carolina wren. Almost immediately the bird appeared, hastening towards the clearing. In full view, this largest and reddest of the wrens, with the line above the eye and buffy underparts, left no doubt as to its identity. My first Carolina wren!

Its presence did not surprise Ed. He regarded the wren as a regular visitor attracted, perhaps, by the food he had scattered on the ground containing dried insects.

Like the cardinal and the mockingbird, and as its name suggests, the Carolina wren is a visitor from the south that has stayed. W. Earl Godfrey (The Birds of Canada) says that the first recorded Ontario nesting was at Point Pelee in 1905. The earlier writer, P. A. Taverner, in his Birds of Canada, noted their fluctuating cycles in which they extended their ranges in favourable years and retracted them when conditions turned against them.

The idea of birds being attracted to feeders in a woods may seem to be an intrusion into the natural world; unnecessary, some might hold. But to many people, including I suspect, Ed, it is an opportunity to study and to feel part of the Nature that is in all of us.

Resting quietly on a fallen tree, warmed by the winter's sun and by the pleasure of the birds, what better way in which to feel in tune with something that is beyond understanding.

"Have you seen the wren?"

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We are indebted to Jim Simon, formerly a member of our club for the following authoratative account. Jim, now a member of the South Peel Club and very active in the Metropolitan Toronto Region Conservation Authority will be remembered for the outings that he led to Lambton Woods.

H.T.

James Garden and Lambton Wood
through the Botanist's eye

by Jim Simon

Lambton Wood, as it was known to many of the old T.F.N. members has become greatly reduced in size due to building activities. On a winter walk through the remaining area the following trees, shrubs and ferns were seen. Entering the James Garden parking lot there are the following trees and shrubs, mostly planted: catalpa, apple, weeping willow, European willow, Carolina Poplar, Silver Maple, Birches, White Spruce, Euonymus and Red and Yellow Osier Doogwood and many cultivars.

The trail goes south from the parking lot into the open field. On the west side, at the base of the hill is a stand of cat tails and some native Tamarack. Crossing the bridge the trail enters the wood. Here a rock elm and butternut are growing. The wood is broken more or less into three sections.

In the first section, following the wood chip path, the following plants may be seen:

Black cherry - tall black slender trees with the adult bark broken into small plates

Choke cherry - its bud scales with a light border, seldom reaching tree size

Manitoba maple - with green branchlets becoming a tree

Mountain Maple - with greenish red branchlets, often a more or less prostrate shrub

Yellow Birch - the intermediate bark coming off in thin narrow strips seldom more than an inch wide

White Birch - bark comes off in larger sheets

Basswood - its red terminal bud sitting off at an angle

Hemlock - its short flat needles, cones coming down to the lower branches

White Pine - its needles in groups of five

Beech - seedlings to full grown trees. The buds have long tapering light brown scales coming to a needlepoint. The bark at tree stage is silver gray and smooth

Blue Beech - a small under storey tree with smooth blackish bark, the shape of the trunk and main branches often resembling muscles

Hop Hornbeam - similar to blue beech, both having slender branches but the latter has rough bark which is split into narrow strips

White Ash - some large trees there; can be identified by the bark which splits into long narrow furrows and the branchlets which are in opposite, stout pairs

Two evergreen ferns were seen, Marginal Shield Fern and Spinulose Wood Fern, both having their leaves cut into leaflets. The Marginal Shield Fern has no visible teeth on the small sections of the leaflets (pinnules); on the Spinulose Wood Fern the teeth are sharp and can be seen.

Two plants bearing red fruit were seen. One is a vine, Climbing Bittersweet Nightshade; the other a shrub, Highbush Cranberry.

Red Oak - the trunk and main branches are rough, the branchlets are smooth and green

White Oak - trunk and branches out to the tips are rough and scaly

The path comes out into the old pasture field which has been overgrown with hawthorn, staghorn sumach and nannyberry. The other two sections of the wood are similar in habitat and many of the plants are found in all three. In a two hour walk through the wood the following were seen: Yellow Birch, White Birch, Butternut, Red Elm, White Elm, American Beech, Blue Beech, Hop Hornbeam, Red Oak, White Oak, Red Maple, Mountain Maple, Manitoba Maple, Norway Maple, White Ash, Alternate-leaved Dogwood, Red Osier Dogwood, Round-leaved Dogwood, Beaked Hazelnut, American Hazelnut, Black Cherry, Choke Cherry, Pin Cherry, Speckled Alder, White Pine, White Cedar, Hemlock, Balsam Poplar, Large-toothed Aspen, Trembling Aspen, Witch-hazel, Staghorn Sumac, Nannyberry, Maple-leaved Viburnum, Highbush Cranberry, Hawthorn, Buckthorn, Bramble Raspberry, Black or Pussy Willow, River Bank Willow. The remains of Lady, Ostrich, Sensitive, Marginal and Spinulose ferns, Cattails, Rushes, Asters, Goldenrods etc. could be identified.

Spring Flowers

As Metro Parks have made a number of plantings one may find plants growing which should not be found in that habitat. Skunk Cabbage, Water Cress, Clintonia, False Solomon Seal, Foam Flower, Mitrewort, Partridge Berry, Wintergreen, Gaywings, Trailing Arbutus, Violets (Yellow, White, Blue), Golden Ragweed, Trilliums, Spring Beauties, Toothwort, Spring Cress, Gold-thread Lopseed etc.

The Soil

The hillsides are of yellow sand overlaid with black muck. Springs emerge from the base of the hill and in one or two spots small springs have exposed the shale below.

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Other than the routine month-to-month administrative matters which occupy the Board of Directors, most of our attention during the past two months has been turned towards the implications for the future of the Club's very rapid growth; planning for our Jubilee year; and continuing response to various environmental issues.

Members who were at the January meeting already know of the special occasion that took place on that day, when the present president had the honour and the great pleasure of dining with a stellar assembly of past presidents of the Club. Those present were: Mr. and Mrs. Clive Goodwin (our immediate past president); Mr. and Mrs. Jack Gingrich (1968-70); Dr. and Mrs. Peter Peach (1966-68), who came all the way from St. Catharines; Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Norman (1964-66); Mr. Fred Bodsworth (1960-62); Mr. and Mrs. Alan Outram (1959-60) and 1950-52); Dr. and Mrs. Walter Tovell (1957-59); Mr. and Mrs. John Mitchele (1955-57); Mr. and Mrs. Frank Darroch (1954-55); Dr. and Mrs. Fred Ide (1936-38); and Mr. and Mrs. Colin Farmer (1931-33).

I should like to extend my special thanks both to Mr. Outram for having initiated the occasion, and to Mr. Ronald Norman for organizing everybody.

Jubilee News

1. Our Golden Jubilee Dinner will be held on Saturday, October 27th, 1973, at the Sheraton-Four Seasons Hotel. There will be a very special speaker. For the afternoon preceding the dinner, a programme of interesting events is being planned, to take place at the same location. It is expected that there will be multiple outings, all in the Metropolitan Toronto area, for the following day.

2. GET YOUR CAMERAS OUT!

There is to be a Nature Photography Competition - full rules and details will appear in the April Newsletter. This is advance warning, so that you can start getting busy. Categories will include 35mm colour slides as well as black-and-white; and there will be chances for the novice as well as for the experienced photographer.

You will be reading elsewhere of another photographic project connected with the Bird Group.

3. We need all sorts of VOLUNTEERS (in addition to that call for the Sportsman's Show). Some of you we have note of already, but many new members have joined the Club since we circulated our last questionnaire, and we should like to hear from you, too.

We particularly need;

- a) people with Public Relations/Publicity experience;
- b) people who would like to help organize events and contribute more clerical work,
- c) people who like working with children, and are prepared to make a regular, reliable, once-a-month commitment (please see the detailed request elsewhere in this Newsletter from the Director of the Junior Club).
- d) Librarians, and others who could do some research work for us.

And the president in particular would like to hear from someone who could take on a special project: "spotting" on a Metro Toronto map just where all our members live.

There will be other calls for your involvement from time to time! Please give or send your name, address and telephone either to myself or to our Secretary, Mrs. Mary Robson.

- Rosemary Gaymer

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COMING EVENTS

ROYAL CANADIAN INSTITUTE

Information: 922-2804

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

March 3 - Joint meeting with the Toronto Field Naturalists' Club and the Federation of Ontario Naturalists.

"The Smallest and the Most - A World of Insects", illustrated with colour slides. Mrs. Helen A. Sutton, biological photographer, lecturer and research assistant, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto.

The insect world is a vast and fascinating one, Insects have evolved over an endless period of time in such divergent ways that they exhibit design and colour that is impossible to match. Their life habits run the gamut of simple to complex. This illustrated lecture covers a small spectrum of these living forms, showing some life histories and behaviour patterns, with an emphasis on aquatics. This work is accompanied with live material and, in many cases, at high magnification.

March 10 - One Hundred Years of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police: Commissioner Higgitt

March 17 - One Hundred Years of Engineering Education in Canada: James Hamm, U. of Toronto

ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM

Information: 928-3690

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

March 4 - Shoreline sediments; Greek sculpture

March 11 - Across the great salt desert; a naturalist's journey in Ethiopia; the way of the Chinese brush; Primer of the Universe; Buckminster Fuller illustrates how we learn about nature.

March 18 - Fragile est notre Monde; Is man destroying himself in destroying the biosphere?; The God within.

Nature: Cosmic and Earthbound

Free Wednesday night lectures in McLaughlin Planetarium at 8:30 p.m.

March 7 - Cambrian Geography - the geophysical distribution of early life:
Dr. Rowell, U. of Kansas

March 14 - Search for extraterrestrial intelligent life: Dr. Drake, Cornell U.

March 21 - Computer simulation of forms in nature: Dr. Raup, U. of Rochester.

Metro Toronto Parks:

Information: 367-8176

Walking tours with Commissioner Tommy Thompson.

Sunday, March 11 - walking tour through lower Humber Park - 10:00 a.m.

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WANTED!

JUNIOR CLUB GENERAL INTEREST LEADERS

AMATEUR? GENERALIST? INTERESTED IN NATURAL HISTORY? ENJOY WORKING WITH CHILDREN ...
...Please read on.

The Toronto Junior Field Naturalists' Club, with a membership of approximately 200, is designed primarily, to stimulate members' interest in the world around them, and secondarily, to broaden and deepen their understanding of natural history. To this end, members 8, 9, and 10 years old join a general interest group, of ideally 10-12 members and one leader, with whom they explore a different aspect of natural history each meeting. Since this is a club, and is intended to stimulate interest and emphasize individual participation, the group size must be kept low, and the staff must serve as leaders rather than lecturers. Our best general interest leaders are themselves amateurs and generalists who enjoy sharing their own interest in nature with children. Interested? Our charge for your training - one morning mer ponth - sharing your interest with a group of eager young naturalists. Please telephone the director - Mike Singleton = 447-4197.

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A JUNIOR CONSERVATIONIST REPORTS

by Nancy Bellerby

I was very fortunate to be chosen to participate in the Junior Conservationist Award Program, an educational job sponsored by the Ministry of Natural Resources. It is a seven week course, designed to help a group of interested high school students from all over Ontario become more aware of their environment, its problems, and the solutions to these problems.

When I read that I had the job, I immediately started planning what to take. I am seventeen years old, so my mother was somewhat horrified to see me when I was about to leave. "You aren't going like that, are you?" "What do you mean?" I asked innocently, glancing in the mirror. There, staring back at me, was the typical teenager: denim jeans, work shirt, leather work boots, denim jacket, knapsack, and a "used-to-be" white tennis hat. Oh yes, I suppose I should mention that I am a girl!

To apply, you must be between the ages of sixteen and nineteen. You must be recommended by an organization involved in conservation, such as a naturalists club, or 4-H club, boy scouts, girl guides, even your high school. Application forms

are available from:

Mr. A. D. Latornell,
Lands Division, Conservation Authorities Branch,
880 Bay Street,
Toronto M5S 1Z8

Selection takes place in mid-May, but applications must be in by mid-April. Last summer, thirty-two students were chosen from places all over Ontario, such as Fort Frances, Thunder Bay, Sudbury, Midland, Wiarton, Sarnia, Hamilton, Toronto, Peterborough and Belleville. Students from rural backgrounds are also chosen, so there is a well rounded group by the time the selection is complete.

The program lasts seven weeks. The first week-and-a-half is spent visiting different places in Southern Ontario that are involved with conservation. We visited several places including the Canada Centre for Inland Waters, at Burlington; the Southern Research Station at Maple; the Kortright Waterfowl Preserve and Niska Research Centre near Guelph.

The next five-and-a-half weeks are spent in one of the Conservation Authorities, preparing a report on a river in the Authority. Our group of thirty-two was divided into four groups of eight people. There were eight girls, and we were stationed in the Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority, near Hanover. The boys were stationed in three groups: the Grand River Conservation Authority, the Mississippi River Conservation Authority, and the Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Authority.

The report involves taking an "ecological inventory", including plants, flowers, trees, animals, birds, fishes, etc.; soil and water quality tests; pollution tests; an accurate mapping of the river; and the use of land in the area. The report is written by the groups themselves under the supervision of their leader, a University student, and is published by the Ministry of Natural Resources. In due time, each participant receives a copy of his own report.

I feel I should mention one of the high points of the Program. In the middle of the work on the river, everyone takes a break and goes on a canoe trip in Algonquin Park for several days. Canoes, tents, paddles and food are supplied. All you need to bring is a sleeping bag and, of course, a knapsack. It is a very enjoyable break from the work on the river, and you still receive your pay.

The last weekend of the Program is spent together again. Each group presents a report to the other groups about what they had accomplished, and their recommendations for improvement of the area they had studied.

I found this Program to be a very rewarding experience and not only from a dollars and cents point of view (pay, by the way, is \$30.00 a week). I learned a lot about my environment, and made several lasting friendships. It was a terrific summer for me and I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the executive of the Toronto Field Naturalists' Club, who sponsored me for the program.

One added bonus from the Program was to have my name and picture appear in three newspapers, including the Toronto Globe and Mail. To anyone reading this, who also read the article on August 17th, I am the girl in the white tennis hat! Our group received a great deal of publicity because we were living in a hundred year old farmhouse, without the 'conveniences of home'.

All in all, to anyone interested in doing something interesting, fun, and different, I recommend you apply for the Program. I did, and I'm glad I did!

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THE BIRD GROUP

This group is set up to handle the bird program of our Club. A meeting is held on the fourth Thursday of each month from September through May. The theme is education in bird recognition and bird watching. Check lists and where to find the birds is one highlight of the program. A speaker with illustrated slides is another. Rare and unusual bird sightings are reported through this group. Special walks with top birders are organized to assist the participants in this wonderful pastime. to identify birds.

Special projects regarding birds, projects that become part of the T.F.N. program, will be handled by this group.

The group has a chairman and an assistant who handle the meetings and set up the programs. A bird walk co-ordinator takes care of the outings. Members are asked to participate in a telephone and letter system notifying members of upcoming events. Notices are also carried in the newsletter.

All members are welcome to participate in our program. The last meeting, for example, gave us an outstanding insight into the problems of taking care of injured and sick owls. Mr. and Mrs. Larry McKeever of Vineland who run an 'owl hospital' showed us slides and spoke on their project.

Please report any unusual bird sightings as soon as possible to the chairman who will pass the information along to allow as many birders as possible the opportunity to go out and look for these birds.

J. E. "Red" Mason, Chairman (621-3905). Mrs. Jo-Ann Murray, Assistant
Mr. John Foster, Bird walks.

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BIRD GROUP JUBILEE SLIDE LIBRARY PROJECT

One of the projects that our group is taking on for our Jubilee anniversary is compiling a 35mm slide library of Ontario birds. The collection will be available as a reference for bird identification and as aids in meetings, talks, educational projects etc.

The slides will be mounted in sealed mounts. All will carry credit to the donor. No copying of slides will be permitted.

We are appealing to everyone. Will you help us? We would be pleased to receive copies of your favourite bird slides - any number would help us get started on the project. Do not be afraid of duplication as yours may show a different plumage or other interesting features.

Credit for all slides received will be published in this Newsletter.

Send your contributions to the chairman: J. E. "Red" Mason, Apt. 205,
265 Markland Dr.,
Etobicoke, Ont.

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Conservation Conversation for March 1973

by L. A. Smith ,

Bluebird box #250 has been made but is not yet in position. On the weekend of 3rd and 4th of February I managed to erect ten boxes in Mono Township and 5 boxes in King Township. We can reasonably expect sixty breeding pairs from the nesting units that will be in the rural areas by May 1st.

I saw a letter in the Star from a lady biologist in Chattanooga, Tennessee and wrote to her begging for some acorns and berries of Southern varieties of North American trees and shrubs. She has sent me some hickory nuts, some chestnut oak acorns and some dogwood berries and some pine cones. If any botanist thinks these should not be planted let him speak up now or hold his peace for ever more.

Driving through Mono Township, last summer, I was horrified to see a large bank of blow sand. Getting curious as to how these areas are contained, I phoned the University of Toronto. They advised using leaf mould, kitchen waste and then large pieces of cheese cloth to hold the compost down. When grass and other plants take hold the cheese cloth will rot and the area will become stable and an unsightly wound begins to heal.

The Township Council gave me written permission and I have spread many loads of leaves from Toronto lawns onto the sandy hills. Sometime this spring we shall try to sow seeds of Crown Vetch because this is supposed to be the fastest method of protecting worn-out farmlands.

I now have my eye on a bank of clay and if I take a liking to this work, may decide to approach many more local authorities, particularly in the Townships west of Collingwood.

Some of the seeds from Tennessee would, of course, be used here.

In a quiet region north-west of our city we have noticed trail bikes scouring the grassy hillsides on private land, where they are not welcome. This is a large tract of wild country with thorn apple trees that are so beloved by cedar waxwings and indigo buntings and scarlet tanagers and many others. Obviously the noise and fumes from this new breed of predator must annoy them. I have been thinking of offering my services to landowners to build strong fences to keep these pests out. Shall we call our group "Stamp Out Stinkmobiles" ?

DOFASCO has delivered 710 pounds weight of galvanized sheet to wrap around my posts under the bluebird boxrd. Perhaps 500 units can be protected now. All this was free. Have you written any good begging letters lately....?

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JANUARY OUTING - Glenon Campus, York University

It was a cold dull Sunday morning as we gathered behind Glendon Campus at Lawrence and Bayview for our bird hike. There was a great deal of foot stamping and shuffling around to greet old friends and new acquaintances. Our illustrious leader appeared and perhaps he was somewhat dismayed at the crowd which had turned up, but nevertheless we made a good find.

There were the ever popular Chickadees twittering in the trees. The Shrike on its perch at the top of trees caused some argument as to whether it was a Loggerhead or Northern - various experts having different opinions as to which wintered where. It was not such a perfect light for viewing the distinguishing stripes. It was finally agreed upon to be the Loggerhead on the mere assumption that the Loggerhead is more common than the Northern. (Ed. note: It was probably a Northern Shrike. Loggerheads are rarely seen in Ontario from November to February when they are deep in the heart of Texas. The only months when both species might be present are October, March and April. One year I saw a Northern Shrike on March 30 along the Humber and a Loggerhead on March 31 singing beside Grenadier Pond. A useful guide to take along on any bird hike is the T.F.N.C. Bird Migration Chart - 50¢ from Mary Robson.) We saw evidence of the Shrikes work - a Brown Creeper stabbed on a thorn tree branch ready for eating.

The delight of the day was the Pileated Woodpecker working upon a dead stump about five feet above the ground, throwing the large wood chips far and wide. We stood poised, hardly breathing, glasses raised. Then some stalked slowly forwards hoping to get a photograph. We were allowed to approach quite closely before he took off in majestic flight. A thrill for all - a first for many.

The surprise for the day was a flock of robins. We thought robins went south in the winter. Aren't they one of the first signs of spring? Well, there they were.

Other species sighted were equally enjoyable and included: a Hairy Woodpecker.. look over there, glasses raised simultaneously a Blue Jay...what are those people looking at over there? Nuthatch...look up there! - a Red-tail Hawk, soaring majestically ...and over there - a Towhee and then a Cedar Waxwing.

In all it was a successful outing and I hope that in the future can be enjoyed by more.

- Sharon Mulholland

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Donations large and small are still needed to reach our objective of \$20,000 for the Jim Baillie Nature Reserve Fund. If you would like to help, please use the coupon below. Our Club is a Registered Charitable Organization, 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 Toronto Field
Naturalists' Club in the amount of \$ _____ as a
donation toward the JIM BAILLIE NATURE RESERVE FUND.
Mr./Mrs./Miss _____

REACTION TO "JACK MINER AND PREDATORS"

Many of you have probably received an article titled "Jack Miner and Predators", written by Manly F. Miner of the Jack Miner Migratory Bird Foundation Inc.

This article exploits Jack Miner's reputation as a conservationist in a vain attempt to add credibility to an incredibly one-sided, non-scientific, and, at times, totally ludicrous case for predator control and extermination. In the article Mr. Miner belittles ecologists, displays ignorance of and disrespect for the principles of ecology, and presents an out-dated and selfish interpretation of conservation.

He reveals his lack of ecological knowledge by stating flatly that he would be doing humanity a service by exterminating the Canada thistle, the house fly, and a number of other living things. He apparently is ignorant of the fact that many species of birds use the thistle down as nesting material and the thistle seeds as food. He is also obviously unaware of the important role of fly maggots in the breakdown and recycling of organic wastes which would accumulate in massive piles if flies were eliminated. Indeed, the Jack Miner Bird Sanctuary would be one of the first places to notice this effect!

At one point Mr. Miner states that his interpretation of conservation is "to conserve for man's use and control". Later he says "Our policy is to reduce the timber wolf, stop shooting does and fawns, and let the deer increase for tourists to photograph in the summer and the hunters to harvest the increase of bucks in the fall." He ends the article by stating: "I am a Conservationist to conserve species for future generations to see and for the hunters to hunt to harvest the increase and not a pack of wolves."

Clearly Mr. Miner is not a conservationist, even in the loosest interpretation of the word. On the surface he may appear to be a deer conservationist who has simply been reading Little Red Riding Hood too seriously. But even this is not true. Will hunters single out and kill the weaker members of a deer population? Not likely! They will pick the largest and best, if possible. This leaves the genetically deficient deer to reproduce and sustain the population. Thus, as the years go by, the deer population consists of poorer and poorer specimens. Wolves, on the other hand, lacking the guile and weapons of human hunters, must resort to killing the weaker members of the deer population. The strong are left to reproduce and sustain the deer population. In the long run, then, wolves help to produce better quality deer.

Mr. Miner's greatest error is in ignoring the fact that most of us view conservation of wolves as being equally as important as conservation of deer. They, too, are interesting to photograph and study. I, personally, was surprised and shocked to see anyone in this day and age defining conservation in terms of man's desires. Such a narrow, selfish, and thoughtless view has no place in today's world.

The host of grammatical errors in the article, combined with Mr. Miner's cynical and confusing attempt to belittle all who disagree with him, made this article difficult to read and evaluate. Nonetheless, the main message is clear: If Mr. Miner favours a particular species of animal, then conservation means killing any animal that preys upon it. Is this your view of conservation? If it isn't, let Mr. Miner know. Write to him at the Jack Miner Migratory Bird Foundation, Inc., Kingsville, Ontario.

- W. A. Andrews

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"AROUND HOME"

A Rainy February Day

by Christina Hulbert

When the draperies were opened this morning, there was our cock pheasant perched on the garden fence. There is a drenching rain falling, and the pheasant is a sorry sight: a bundle of miserable, sodden plumage. He is the latest visitor to our garden, and cleans up the seed under the feeders which has been scattered on the ground by other birds. When he is sitting on the fence in such heavy rain rather than taking shelter under the hedge is a mystery.

While watching the peasant, a blue jay arrived, scolding. He had a good look at the pheasant, and then went to one of the feeders. The next arrival was a female cardinal. She flew to the roof of a feeder, hopped down to the food, then flew to the other side of the feeder away from the driving rain. The next arrival was our mockingbird. He was sounding his call note in the crabapple tree. I watched him as he preened his plumage, but he soon gave that up, and flew to the refuge of the brushy hedge. He has been sheltering there all winter, eating the berries of this multiflora rose hedge, and frozen crabapples.

The chickadees will probably not appear today. On cold days, we have a small flock--one or two of which will come to hand for peanuts. They do not show up on a mild, dismal, rainy day like today. Evening grosbeaks were short-term visitors, disappearing as suddenly as they had arrived. There was a lone white-crowned sparrow feeding with the house sparrows until the cold snap after Christmas. I hope it left for a warmer climate, and did not succumb to the blizzard.

Our home is near the lake on Scarborough Bluffs, and we get many bird visitors to our garden, especially during the spring and fall migrations. Every year we have a new species to add to our list.

The pheasant has been feeding, and has now stalked majestically away, his bedraggled tail quills trailing through the puddles. He has disappeared into the hedge, a thorny abomination to us, but a comfortable source of refuge and food for our visitors.

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NOTE: To those of you who wrote recently - and not so recently - and expected to see your article in print this month - SORRY! We simply ran out of space and couldn't fit any more in. Look for it next month.

To those of you who intend to write - please do! But I must receive your material by March 7th if you wish it printed in the April Newsletter.

Phone: 231-1064

Elmer Talvila, editor
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