

TORONTO FIELD NATURALISTS' CLUB

Number 286

November, 1974

Visitors Welcome

NOVEMBER MEETING

Visitors Welcome

Monday, November 4, 1974, at 8:15 p.m.
at
252 Bloor Street West.

Entrance on the west side of the building via covered walk from Bloor Street (midway between the two exits (St. George and Bedford) of the St. George subway station). To park, enter from Prince Arthur Avenue, under the building (parking fee 50¢).

SPEAKER: Mrs. Mary Ferguson, Fellow Photographic Society of America.

SUBJECT: Nature Near and Far. An illustrated talk on the variety of flora, insects and mushrooms from Ontario to British Columbia and other places.

DATE of next meeting: Monday, December 2, 1974.

REMINDER of the AUDUBON WILDLIFE FILMS: - Eaton Auditorium - 8:15 p.m. Tickets \$2.25
Thursday, October 31 - "Kentucky Out-of-Doors" - Steve Maslowski
" December 5 - "Wild Scandinavia" - John Bulger
" January 9 - "Wild Animals" (Africa) - San Schipper & Henk Kegel
" February 13 - "Outback Australia" - Eben McMillan

"Coastline California" was 'super' and the other evenings promise to be just as fascinating. How about circling these dates on your calender and getting your friends and neighbours interested? The number to call: 364-6487.

CLUB FEES are now due. These may be paid at the November meeting, or you may fill out and mail the coupon below.

-----detach-----

TO:

MRS. E. HANSON, Membership Secretary
Toronto Field Naturalists' Club
83 Joicey Blvd., Toronto, Ont. M5M 2T4

DATE _____

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

() Single \$7.00 () Family (adults) \$10.00 () Life \$100.00
() Corresponding (living more than 30 miles from the Royal Ontario Museum) \$3.00
() Full-time student (aged 16 or over) \$2.00.

Senior Citizens, 65 and over:

() Single \$4.00 () Family \$6.00 () Corresponding \$2.00

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

Postal Code _____

JUNIOR CLUB SATURDAY November 2 9:30 a.m. NOTE: due to the Chinese Exhibit at the Museum, the time for the November meeting has been changed as shown. (9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.) Meeting will be held in the Royal Ontario Museum, 100 Queen's Park. The Herptology Group will be in charge. Special speakers, Bruce McBride and Grant Ankerman. A feature film will be shown on the "Wonders of the Deep". Director - Lyn Scanlan- 488-8321 (after 5:30 p.m.)

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE Wednesday November 13 8:00 p.m. Meet at St. James Bond United Church on Avenue Road, just north of Eglinton Avenue. Regular monthly meetings are scheduled for the season on the 2nd Wednesday of the month. All Club members are invited to join in the discussions. Chairman - Henry Fletcher (421-1549)

BOTANY GROUP Tuesday November 19 8:00 p.m. All members of the Ecology, Environmental Committee and Bird Group are invited to join the Botany Group for a special program with the Committee who have been working on the Metro Toronto ravines. This will be an opportunity to learn the various kinds of birds and botany which are in the ravines close to your homes. Jack Cranmer-Byng will be one of the speakers. The talk will be illustrated with slides. Location - Hodgson Public School, Davisville Ave., just east of Mount Pleasant Road. Entrance to the school is in the new addition at the east end; go down stairs on your left to the cafeteria for the program. To park in the school yard, enter from Millwood Road, one block north. Chairman - Wes Hancock (757-5518)

BIRD GROUP Wednesday November 27 8:00 p.m. This meeting promises to be truly exciting and educational. Clive Goodwin has for many years been connected with ornithological acceptance of species for check lists. Come hear how and why a bird is accepted or rejected as a sighting. Mr. Goodwin will also explain what to look for in bird identification. A new movie will be shown to top off the evening. Chairman - Red Mason (621-3905)

SPECIAL Saturday November 2 Joint meeting of the Club with the Royal Canadian Institute at Convocation Hall. Dr. Donald Gunn will show his marvellous slides on "Orchid Hunting Across Canada". See page 3 for time. Don't miss this great evening.

Meetings held
rain or shine!

OUTINGS FOR NOVEMBER, 1974

Visitors
Welcome.

- Saturday
November 2
9:30 a.m. LAMBTON WOODS AND WESTERN LAKESHORE - Birds Leader: Mr. John Kelley
Meet in James Gardens parking lot (off Edenbridge Road, east of Royal York Road). Lambton Woods trip will be followed by a tour along the Waterfront between Mimico Creek and the Downtown area. Bring lunch.
- Weekend
Nov. 8- 11 FEDERATION OF ONTARIO NATURALISTS Niagara Regional Gathering. For information phone: 444-8419 (business hours).
- Sunday
November 10
1 - 4 p.m. OPEN HOUSE AT CLAIRVILLE DAM - Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Authority event. For information phone: 630-9780.
- Sunday
November 17
9:50 a.m. EASTERN LAKESHORE - Birds Leader: Jo-Ann Murray.
Meet at the Pickering GO Station (GO train leaves Union Station at 9:13 a.m.) From Toronto drive east on Hwy 401 to New Brock Road exit, east of the Liverpool Road exit WHICH IS CLOSED, then go south on Brock to Base Line (Bayly), then right and proceed to GO parking lot. Bring lunch.
- Saturday
November 23
9:30 a.m. GLENDON HALL - Birds Leader: Mr. Gordon Bellerby
Meet in parking lot at bottom of hill behind Glendon Hall. Entrance on east side of Bayview, south of Lawrence. Morning only.

COMING EVENTS

- ROYAL CANADIAN INSTITUTE - at Convocation Hall, University of Toronto, 8:15 p.m.
- November 2 - "Orchid Hunting Across Canada". - coloured slides - Dr. Donald R. Gunn, President, R.C.I. A joint meeting with the Toronto Field Naturalists and the Federation of Ontario Naturalists.
- November 9 - "Money: Whence it Came and Where it Went". Prof. John Kenneth Galbraith, Harvard University.
- November 16 - "The Truth, the Whole Truth ... ". Dr. Ralph S. Mills, Immediate Past-President of the R.C.I.
- November 23 - "The Iceland Volcanic Eruption, 1973". Colour slides and a movie. Dr. Maurice B. Lambert, Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, Ottawa, Ontario.
- November 30 - Joint meeting with the Toronto Centre of the Royal Astronomic Society of Canada. Dr. Peter M. Millman, Research Council of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario.

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

On Saturday, October 5th approximately 75 Club members assembled at the Jim Baillie Nature Reserve for the first annual picnic of the Toronto Field Naturalists' Club. The weather was ideal and the fall colours set the mood for an enjoyable day. We ate lunch together amongst the remnants of an old stone fence situated on the hills at the back of the recently acquired section of the Reserve. From this vantage point we had a panoramic view of most of the Reserve. Spread across the landscape below us was a colourful display of red maples, interspersed with the yellow of the poplars and birches and the soft green of the tamaracks, spruces and other conifers. Vesper sparrows, Savannah sparrows, and a lone Meadowlark busily gathered food on the open hills as we finished our lunches. After lunch seven groups headed into the wooded section of the Reserve to explore the extensive trail network that has been established for the members of our Club. Each group was led by a current or recently retired member of the Board of Directors. Our Reserve is so large and the trails so carefully arranged that the group which I was leading never encountered or even heard another group all afternoon! Saucy chickadees greeted us at every turn. Bluejays warned the woodlot inhabitants of our presence. Yellow-rumped warblers (alias Myrtle Warblers) darted from branch to branch in the canopy, stuffing themselves with nourishment for the next lap in their migration. Ruby-crowned kinglets cautiously noted our presence.

We did not leave at the end of the day with an extensive bird list for the area, nor did we note any rare plants. Further, the trails were uncomfortably wet in places, as they always are. But we did leave having enjoyed a beautiful day together in a tranquil setting, knowing that the abundant wildlife that does exist there is protected from the ever-advancing squeeze of civilization.

I hope that this annual event continues. Some have suggested that we make it a twice-yearly event, having a similar gathering in the spring. I, personally, thoroughly enjoy spending a day with others who are interested in all aspects of nature. Our Club and the Jim Baillie Nature Reserve provide that opportunity for all of us.

The parking problems at the Reserve should soon be part of the past. The Nature Reserve management committee, headed by John ten Bruggenkate, met with a local contractor in the early morning preceding the Club picnic to discuss the construction of an access road and parking lot in the north-west corner of the Reserve. It appears that we can afford the construction costs, so the committee is pursuing the matter further. I'll let you know the outcome, after the Board of Directors has officially considered the matter.

..... Bill Andrews

REMINDER

... next Audubon Wildlife Film - October 31

... "Kentucky Out-of-Doors" - Steve Maslowski

... Eaton Auditorium - 8:15 p.m. Tickets \$2.25

BIRDING ON LAKE ONTARIO

by J. E. "Red" Mason

"There is no way you can get 200 people to go out and look for birds on a boat" they said but after listening to many ardent birders who attend our regular winter bird group meetings, I knew that all we needed was a boat, one that would accommodate that number of people and not capsize when someone hollered "Jaegar" off the port side.

The "Mariposa Belle" was chartered for Sunday, September 23rd. Announcements of the trip were carried in both the Toronto Field Naturalists' bulletins.

They came from Windsor, Oshawa, Hamilton, Oakville, Barrie and Metro Toronto to board the boat at 7:00 a.m. Harry and Eileen Kerr met me there at 6:30 a.m. They had taken on the task of ticket selling. Already there were people on board to be checked. "You cannot get on board without a name tag", called out volunteer Betty, passing out the "P" to "Z" tags. "Where's Hattie?" someone inquired, "she is going to miss the boat". Eight did, even after half an hour delay when the canteen girl advised the Captain that someone had stolen the coffee during the night.

Don Perks asked when the official count was to start. It was decided it was to be as soon as the boat started moving forward. Joanne Murray called "Mallard" on the starboard side as the Captain eased the throttle forward. Going through "The Gap", everyone was high in anticipation of seeing at least a Jaegar or maybe a Red Phalarope or a rare gull.

The weather was perfect for boating but the cry went up "Red, where are the birds?" All of a sudden someone called "Jaegar" at 9:00 o'clock. The boat keeled over as everyone rushed over to the port side, but alas, it was not a Jaegar but a Marsh Hawk flying low over the water. Kestrel off the bow - "what is he doing here?" someone inquired.

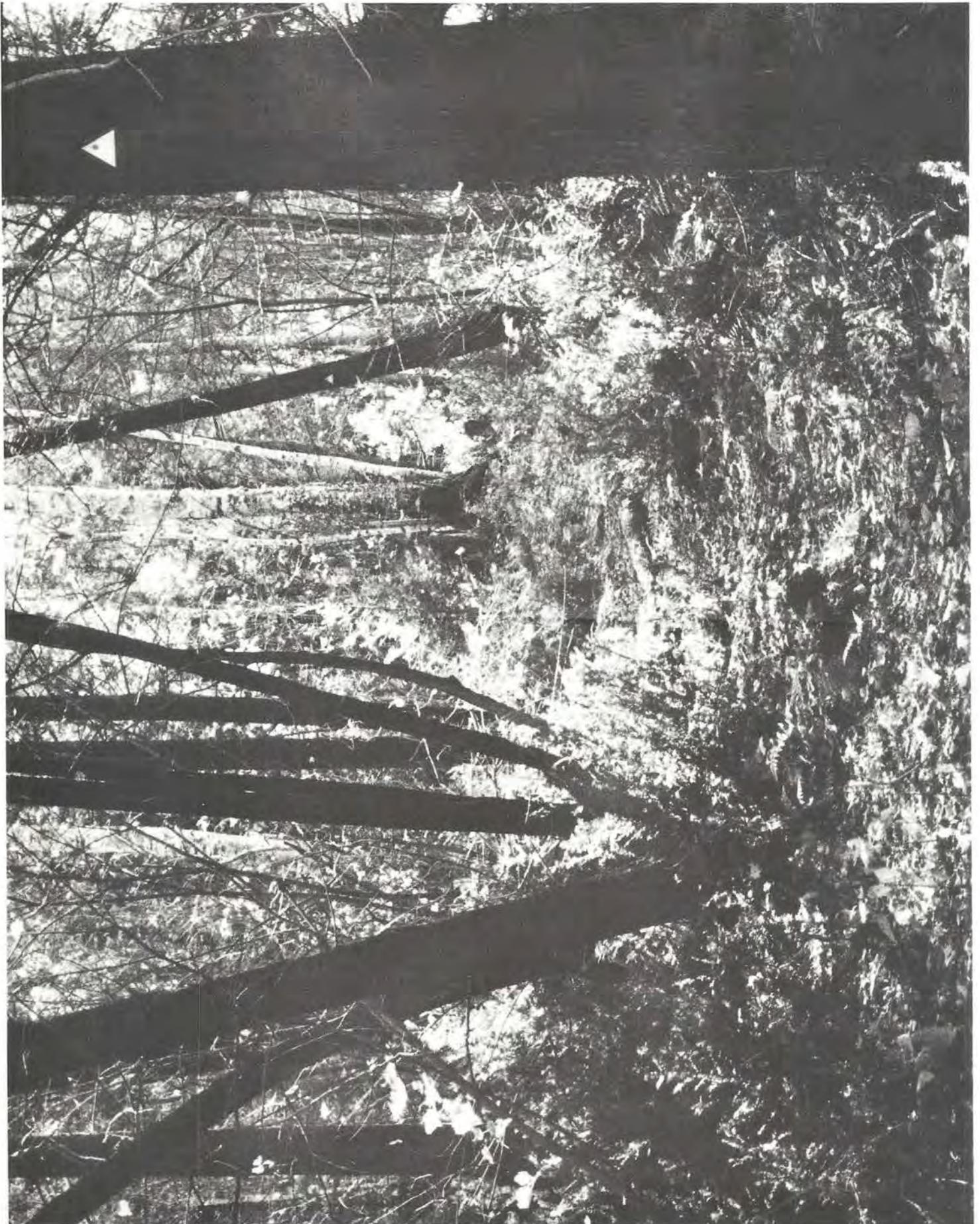
Now we are turning back, disappointed, when someone calls "Cormorant overhead". This turned out to be our best bird of the day. Sharp-eyed Alex Gray spots a Hummingbird as it passes the boat. As we approach the dock, Peter Whelan asks for numbers for his news articles. Someone calls a flock of Canada Geese crossing from left to right. They have to veer to miss the boat - just "people watching" I presume. Dr. Jim Wilson tells his son "If we had seen it today Jim, that species would no longer be a lifer for us".

The boat pulls into the slip. Everyone jumps off - or up --- next year it will be better. This year's count was twenty-seven.

This was our first venture in this type of outing. Next year we hope to profit by this year's experience, maybe in a different area and probably using a faster boat.

Let me know your ideas on such an outing in lots of time as boats with the capability of handling this type of excursion are hard to find.

HELP ... The Editor's mail bag is now empty ... he would welcome contributions from any of the members.



← THIS IS OURS

The picture facing was taken on the yellow triangle trail of the original 60 acres in the Jim Baillie Nature Reserve

The property is bounded on the east by Uxbridge Brook. A cattle farm is to the west. The 30-acre addition lies between the original 60 acres and this farm. It is a drier, more open habitat than the original property providing a lovely place for visitors to picnic. We are building a fence to keep out the cattle and hence protect our investment.

THIS PROJECT MERITS YOUR SUPPORT!

HELP US TO CLEAR THE MORTGAGE BY THE YEAR-END

SEND IN A DONATION TODAY AND AID THE FUND-RAISING
CAMPAIGN IN REACHING ITS OBJECTIVE.

(official receipt will be mailed for income tax purposes)

----- detach -----

TO: Stuart Corbett
52 Haileybury Drive
Scarborough, Ont. M1K 4X5

1974, November

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

Postal
Code _____

METROPLAN GIVES US AN OPPORTUNITY

by Henry Fletcher

The recent threat to extend Lawrence Avenue through the Don Valley at Bayview, and the rapid action which the Environmental Committee was forced to take to express the Club's opposition to the project, should have some lessons for the future. Some of them are obvious - we need more people, we need to be better prepared with ecological data, we have learned something of the political process. But from a strategic point of view, there is another lesson; the proposal could come up again at any time in the future, because it is shown in the present Metropolitan Plan. If we want to rest easy about the Don Valley, or about any other natural feature of Metro which we cherish, we need to ensure that protection of that feature is written into the official plan in such a way that it has the force of legislation.

Fortunately, we have an opportunity at the present time. Metro Council is now in course of preparing a new official plan for Metropolitan Toronto, and the public is being invited to contribute to framing this new plan. Both as individuals and as a Club, we now have a chance to tell the planners what we want to see done (or not done) with Toronto's ravines, the waterfront, the islands, and open space or green areas in general.

METROPLAN, which is the name of the plan preparation program, aims at producing proposals for the future of Toronto at the end of the century - which sounds awfully far ahead, but it's only 25 years. In about 12 months time, a series of alternatives will be presented to Metro Council, each describing one possible way in which Toronto could be developed. Council will then have to decide which of these alternatives it wants, and this will become the basis of the new official plan.

It is important to us as naturalists to make sure that this plan includes policies to protect our natural resources, so that our children still have something to enjoy 25 years hence. The way to do this is to tell the planners and politicians what we want, before the decisions are made. In METROPLAN we are able to do this - anyone can - and we need to put the naturalist point of view as forcefully as possible, in order to counteract the people who think in terms of development and dollars. The more people who do this, the better chance there is of getting some sensible conservation policies written into the plan. This is where we want YOUR help.

What can you do? Quite simple. Write to METROPLAN at 335 Bay Street, Toronto, M5H 2R3. Tell them that you are concerned about preservation of Toronto's natural features (waterfront, parks, ravines), and what you would like to see done to protect them (no roads, sewers, pipelines or whatever). Tell them anything else you are concerned about. Ask for information. Generally take an interest in the future of our city. Make sure that environmental planning is given proper weight in the discussions. The Club will also be taking part officially in the program, but don't leave it all to others - individual voices count too. METROPLAN gives us an opportunity - let's make sure we use it!

CONSERVATION CONVERSATION FOR NOVEMBER, 1974

I have 450 bluebird nesting boxes in various parts of North America. By the end of June there were 200 in Mono Township alone and these yielded 52 good nestings. Many large fields have yet to be finally checked and the debris cleared from the houses, but any change in the number of good broods will be to our advantage.

It seems normal for Sialia sialis to raise young in September. Hazel Bird of Harwood has reported it and Hugh Halliday has found five species of birds with young in their nests in September. Here is my story ... On the 30th of August I was cleaning out

boxes on the north slope of the Hockley Valley, west of Airport Road and north of Sideroad 20. I came to box 234 and found three blue eggs in a nest of grass. I thought there was some warmth in the eggs but was not sure. Not having the heart to throw out the eggs, I left them alone. This past weekend, with the two children from the farm, Wayne and Lorie Haddock, the box was opened (all my units are now battened shut with two strong Robertson screws), and we found a clean nest with just a few slivers of egg shells in the nest. This would mean baby birds leaving the box about the 15th of September. It may be a record.

I had about 420 boxes erected in Ontario and got 87 good nestings. The people who put up my boxes in Saskatchewan report three good nestings. The contact I have in Oregon reports two good nestings and I have been sent photographs of Western Bluebirds at my own boxes.

The man who got the Mountain Bluebirds for me is Stuart Houston, a radiologist at University Hospital in Saskatoon and he has just written a book "TO THE ARCTIC BY CANOE" to be published by McGill-Queen's University Press on October 15th, 1974. Price \$17.50.

Bob Rife wrote a story about me on June 5th in the Globe and Mail. Zena Cherry had a short piece on August 5th about me being the first person to get three species of bluebirds in my own structures in one season. About 60 letters resulted, mostly requests for plans, and I think all were answered.

Richard Alexander phoned: he is the science teacher at King Edward Public School. With two other teachers and 20 boys and 4 girls they set out 45 boxes in Caledon and got one good box of bluebirds. Last week I went down to this school and met the principal, Don Parrish, and the woodwork teacher, Bruce Gordon. Their design is absolutely awful, with the bottom sliding out. This would prevent checking except by destroying.

More good news. Aikenheads are going to support my project with nails, screws and metal sheet.

..... Leo A. Smith

SCARBOROUGH BIRD NEWS

About fifteen Broad-winged hawks circling about over the house, two small batches of Jays, the odd Flycatcher and Warbler, all headed Southwest through our yard, reminded us that we had not yet reported on our Spring of '74 bird harvest.

Last year we identified fifty-five different birds seen in or from our yard, and promised that we would try a little harder this spring, or rather from March 1st to June 1st. This year the total was seventy-two. If we were to add to this eleven birds seen last year but not this year, this would make a total of eighty-three. Very reluctantly we must also admit, that if positive identification of all the birds seen could have been achieved, the total might be closer to one hundred.

The season opened with our youngest son running into the house saying: "Dad, there's a funny-looking bird with a flat head and a long beak, under one of the spruce trees." Sure enough, it was a woodcock seeking refuge from a late winter storm.

Apparently our robin did not survive the winter, but there is a new one just two doors away, so new that he has not mastered his song, even though he has practiced at length.

The installation of a bird feeder on the back lawn of the neighbours' yard has resulted in attracting some of the following new birds: Bluejay, cardinal, fox sparrow, goldfinch, rufous-sided towhee and possibly some of the thrushes. Along with the robin we were fortunate to identify, veery, hermit, grey-cheeked, olive-backed and wood thrushes. When we say 'fortunate', we mean just that for at least three of these were discovered while searching with our binoculars through the semi-leafed trees for other birds. They would be perfectly still with the odd movement of the head, not uttering a sound. In fact, we do not recall having heard one sound from any of the thrushes, with the exception of the robin which had already reached its nesting grounds. We feel that the presence of the many birds at the feeder allowed us to add red-tailed and sparrow hawks to our lists.

One of our jackpines played host to two pairs of yellow-bellied sapsuckers for about two weeks. First the female would arrive and make a delicate pattern of perforations in the bark in several places, generally just below major junctions in the tree. Possibly two days later the male bird would arrive and feast at these same spots on the mites, etc., trapped in the sap. These birds would stay so long at the same spots that we had to discourage neighborhood cats that would lie in wait for them, or that would move in closer when the birds would shift to a new position behind the tree limb.

Whether or not the following indicates that our neighbourhood is being bugged, our last list includes, cliff swallow, barn swallow, nighthawk, a great number of swifts, and the following fly-catchers; wood peewee, phoebe, least, yellow-bellied and great crested. The yellow-bellied is to be considered to be our first sighting within the last twenty years. Another first sighting is a yellow-throated vireo, identified along with the red-eyed, and Philadelphia vireo. The yellow-throated being normally found in and around the Turner tract near the Niagara Escarpment.

The warblers, as usual, came in three waves approximately a week apart. Birds in the first, (May 12th), and second, (May 18th), were fairly easy to identify, but by the third wave, (May 25th), the leaves made things very difficult. (One blessing was our northern Catalpa tree, practically bare to June 1st which seemed to be like a magnet to the flycatchers). Last year we had a total of twenty warblers, they came in great numbers covering the open jackpines and the tops of the spruces. This year they seemed to keep to the thicker foliage and were far less numerous. Magnolia, Orange-crowned, Redstart, Bay-breasted, Black-throated blue, and green, Blackburnian, yellow, Wilson's, black and white, yellowthroat, Swainson's, Canada, Tennessee, pine and Black-poll were seen, a total of only sixteen.

Most of our nesting birds were back this year in their usual places and according to his song, we also had a Rose-breasted Grosbeak taking up housekeeping very close at hand. The presence of both Catbirds and Cardinals into early July would indicate that they are also nesting in the vicinity. The most colourful moment of the spring occurred when two Orioles used our Spruce trees as obstacles in their pursuit of one another.

We were also treated to a very odd liaison, when for two whole days a male Magnolia Warbler and a female Blackpoll Warbler, teamed up to clean one of the honeysuckle bushes.

We are presently going over our notes, made through the years, to determine the total number of birds that we have seen in or from our yard since we first took up residence over twenty years ago. The house was then being built on what had been a field of grain the year before, and a Bluebird nested in an old apple tree, long since uprooted for an apartment building on the corner of Victoria Park Avenue and Lynvalley Crescent.

***** Rita and Bas Wigglesworth.

IMPORTANT - If you have contributions to make to the December Newsletter, please let me have them before the end of the month. After that time, please send material direct to Hattie Beeton, 1164 Broadview Ave., Toronto, M4K 2S5 before November 8th.

WHAT BIRDS HAVE YOU BEEN SEEING?

by Clive E. Goodwin

Toronto birders are being short-changed. Although we have the Club's Migration Chart to guide us as to when a bird may be expected around the city, we do not have details of the earliest and latest dates, frequency of occurrence, regularity of breeding and the mass of other details on bird distribution that other cities have available.

The Toronto Ornithological Club does have a system of record-keeping but it is not available to persons who are not T.O.C. members, and only includes birds reported by their members. These records are not continuously updated, either, so even the T.O.C. does not know the latest date on which a Blackburnian Warbler occurred in the fall, for example, and it would be quite difficult to find out!

A joint T.O.C.-T.F.N.C. Committee has now been formed in an attempt to co-ordinate bird records in the Toronto region. So far two meetings have been held, and the Committee hopes in time to provide birders in Toronto with a systematic reporting scheme which will serve a number of functions:

- 1) Maintain a composite list of bird records which will detail extremes of date, occurrence of rarities, breeding information and so on.
- 2) Publish a quarterly account of sightings in each period, probably in the T.F.N. Newsletter.
- 3) Provide for documentation of sightings of rare birds, and review documented reports received.
- 4) Provide details on noteworthy birds seen in each season to the Ontario editor of American Birds, the journal that records seasonal changes in bird distribution across North America.
- 5) Provide formal liaison with the Ontario Ornithological Records Committee, which performs a similar function for the Province as a whole.
- 6) Provide T.F.N. members with a system which they can use for their own bird sightings.

The joint committee consists of persons from both Clubs (in fact, most of the committee are members of both) who have a particular interest in bird records. It includes the T.O.C. Records Committee, which has three members, and four other experienced bird watchers in our area. The writer has been acting as Chairman, at least during the preliminary period. No one regards the membership as fixed, and its selection was mostly based on known interest in the topic.

Bird records serve several purposes. One of these is to let other birders know what has been seen and by whom -- a news function, if you like. But a good system of bird records does many other things. It provides information about bird movements, about changes in bird population, about bird distribution in Toronto. This is not very exact information -- at best, it is a pretty crude measure -- but there are a lot of bird sightings and they are all we really have in many cases. To use them for these other purposes, however, it is important that they be as accurate as possible. This is the reason for the request for documentation on rarities: identifying birds is not easy, as anyone who has tried to hang names on a group of small brown shorebirds can testify. Even the experts can make mistakes, or have their off-days!

page xx of Peterson"; the account should detail what you actually saw. An explanation of how you identified the bird helps, as do comparisons with similar or adjacent species. Don't forget that going into details in the report about how sure you were in your identification is not necessary, as you would not be writing the report if you were not sure. Why you were sure is important, and that may include some details about your experience with the bird, or with similar species with which it may be confused. Always remember the report will be judged on its own merits, and it is necessary to eliminate possibilities that would be out of the question if the bird was actually there. For example, pipits and palm warblers have some superficial similarities -- maybe you would not confuse them, anymore than any experienced birder would, but a report has to first make clear why the bird was a pipit or a warbler and not something else.

To give a better idea of the needs in a documented report, there follow two actual reports which have been reviewed by the Ontario Ornithological Records Committee, one accepted and one rejected. These two have been selected because neither follows a fixed format, and because they both illustrate the importance of giving an outline of exactly what was seen. The rejected report could easily have been expanded slightly to make it acceptable to the committee -- as its Chairman, the writer was well aware of its requirements -- but the idea is to provide an accurate statement, not to get it accepted. The Thick-billed Murres were rejected, incidentally, because viewing conditions made confusion with some plumages of the razorbill a hazard. This emphasizes the committee's role: it does not sit in judgement on whether birds were seen or not, but simply assures that the records of rarities seen would be convincing to any knowledgeable reviewer. At the end a standard form is provided for reporting, but when using it always remember that the details of the bird seen are the really important things, not the supplementary details.

This is an ambitious programme, and one which demands the co-operation of all T.F.N.C. birders to make it work. Similar programmes are already working in other Ontario centres, but getting them started is always a challenge. Success in making it work makes everyone's birding a little more interesting and stimulating, and the cumulative information suddenly becomes useful for a number of worthwhile purposes.

We hope we have now provided the tools. Will you help us use them?

SPECIES REQUIRING DOCUMENTATION IN ALL CASES.

- 1) All birds not shown on the Royal Ontario Museum Toronto check list.
- 2) All birds marked with a dagger, as very rare, on the check list.
- 3) The following species:

Eared Grebe	Western Sandpiper	Gray Jay
Western Grebe	Hudsonian Godwit	Boreal Chickadee
European Widgeon	Red Phalarope	Tufted Titmouse
Barrow's Goldeneye	Northern Phalarope	Carolina Wren
Harlequin Duck	Franklin's Gull	Bohemian Waxwing
Golden Eagle	Black-legged Kittiwake	Prothonotary Warbler
Gyr Falcon	Forster's Tern	Blue-winged Warbler
Peregrine Falcon	Thick-billed Murre	Kentucky Warbler
Bobwhite	Hawk Owl	Connecticut Warbler
Gray Partridge	Barred Owl	Yellow-breasted Chat
Turkey	Boreal Owl	Hooded Warbler
King Rail	Red-bellied Woodpecker	Orchard Oriole
Yellow Rail	Black-backed Three-toed	Hoary Redpoll
Piping Plover	Woodpecker	LeConte's Sparrow
Willet	Northern Three-toed	Sharp-tailed Sparrow
Purple Sandpiper	Woodpecker	Lark Sparrow
		Harris' Sparrow

EXAMPLE OF AN ACCEPTED REPORT

GANNET at Point Pelee

TIME: noon, Nov. 25, 1973, last seen at 12:05 p.m.

LOCATION: at the point at Point Pelee National Park, Essex Co., Ontario.

Other observers: Joe Kleiman, Jim Wilson, his son Jim and a friend, Allen Valade.

Viewing conditions:

- 1) no precipitation, visibility clear to the horizon
- 2) heavy cloud cover blocking direct sunlight but providing bright non-directional lighting
- 3) bird was observed in flight, with 7 x 35 binoculars
- 4) closest view was when bird flew nearly overhead 50 feet up

Observations:

- 1) when I first saw the bird it was gliding toward us from the west side of the point. With little or no flapping it moved overhead and out over the water on the east side of the point. Then it flew closer to the water surface and went north parallel to the shoreline about 100 feet out.
- 2) It was a large bird, larger than the herring gulls that were harrassing it. Its body length and wingspread were on the order of 25% larger than the corresponding dimensions of the herring gulls, at least but perhaps more.
- 3) The color was pale mottled grayish above and below except for a white or whitish area at the base of the tail. The underside of the body was uniformly colored from chin to tail. The upper side of the wings was this same color and showed no contrast with the back.
- 4) The general shape of the bird was easily seen when it flew over. It had very long, narrow, pointed wings. The body was "pointed at both ends", with the wings extending from the center. That is, the tail extended as far behind the wings as the bill extended in front of the wings.
- 5) The tail was pointed.
- 6) I studied the bill carefully for a second or two at the bird's closest approach. It was pale, smooth, tapering from a heavy base to a long straight point, just the way a booby bill is supposed to look.
- 7) When it reached the east side of the point and dropped closer to the water, the bird began banking and gliding on stiff wings in a style that resembled the flight of shearwaters or albatrosses.

Previous experience with species:

I have seen gannets on three previous occasions always at a long distance over the ocean. Most recently I saw them on Dec. 28 and 29, 1972, with a telescope at half a mile or more. I was able to study their body shape and manner of flight and also the generally uniform coloring of the immature birds.

Comments:

This was an immature gannet. I feel that the size, general appearance, and shape of the bill eliminate any confusion with other families of birds. The large size and uniformity of coloring of the undersides additionally eliminate confusion with any of the boobies.

Jeffrey A. Greenhouse.

EXAMPLE OF A REJECTED REPORT

THICK-BILLED MURRES - 2 at Squires Beach, Pickering, Nov. 3, 1973, approx. 3:00 p.m.

A very windy day with heavy cloud and passing sun. Light fair generally, but declining. Good in the sun. Viewing very difficult: cold, high waves, wind blowing 'scope over.

Birds S. and slightly E. of me, 3-400 ft. est., moving outwards and finally lost.

Watched 45 minutes - 1 hour. 30x Bausch & Lomb 'scope, 10x40 Trinovid binoculars.

Description: Two small chunky birds, seemed comparable to Hooded Merganser in size but "bulkier". Although called as alcids on first view, the difficult conditions led to a long period of uncertainty.

Birds initially very immobile, heads seemingly tucked down on breasts (not turned over back). Uniformly very dark bodies above (black or blackish), no sign of white, except on front (couldn't see lower sides clearly). Crown and hind neck also very dark, but chest and foreneck pure white, shining in the sun and seemingly as white as a W. Grebe.

On heads finally moving, bills were narrowish, not duck-like, seemingly a rather odd shape and with a distinct line or pale area at base. Part of the head appeared white, extending up from the foreneck. Necks average, certainly not slender as in Grebe.

One brief glimpse of a tail looked dark, shortish, rounded. Seemingly it blew up in the wind; this was happening to nearby Mergansers and their tails looked proportionately bigger. One bird rose up and flapped. White underparts, dark stubby wings, looked typical alcid.

Other species nearby: loon, horned grebe, goldeneye, red-breasted merganser.

All ducks eliminated by both shape and colouring; loons and grebes by shape.

Size (too big or too small); alcids except razorbill, murre by size, colouring, Common murre by bill, Razorbill by bill and gape mark.

Life bird, but know other alcids from Europe, E. and W. Coasts.

Consulted Robbins, Peterson on spot, all standard texts since. Only confirmed initial diagnosis.

C. E. Goodwin.

TORONTO FIELD NATURALISTS' CLUB

TORONTO ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB

RARE BIRD REPORT FORM

1. SPECIES: _____ 2. NUMBER SEEN: _____
3. LOCALITY: _____

4. DATE SEEN: _____ 5. DATE OF REPORT: _____
6. TIME: _____ 7. DISTANCE: _____ 8. HOW MEASURED: _____
9. LIGHT CONDITIONS(eg. Sunny, Overcast): _____

10. POSITION OF OBSERVER AND BIRD IN TERMS OF 9: _____
11. OPTICAL EQUIPMENT USED: _____ 12. WATCHED HOW LONG? _____

13. WHAT HABITAT: _____

14. WHAT WAS IT DOING (flying, feeding, etc.): _____

15. DID YOU CONSULT A GUIDE ? WHICH ? _____

16. HAVE YOU CONSULTED ONE SINCE ? WHICH ? _____

17. HAVE THEY INFLUENCED YOUR IDENTIFICATION ? HOW ? _____

18. HAVE YOU SEEN THE SPECIES BEFORE ? (When and where) _____

19. HAVE YOU SEEN SIMILAR SPECIES ? _____

20. DID ANYONE ELSE SEE AND IDENTIFY IT INDEPENDENTLY ? WHO ? _____

21. DESCRIPTION OR BIRD:

22. ADJACENT SPECIES USED IN COMPARISON:

23. SIMILAR SPECIES ELIMINATED (2 REASONS):

24. NAME AND ADDRESS:

SEND TO:

Mr. John A. Kelley,
2309 Lakeshore Blvd. West, Apt. 305,
Toronto 14, Ontario.