



TORONTO FIELD NATURALISTS' CLUB

Number 294

November, 1975.

Visitors welcome!

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NOVEMBER MEETING

Monday, November 3, 1975, at 8:15 p.m.

at

252 Bloor Street West

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

SPEAKER: Mr. Ken Carmichael, a member of our Club, and one of the foremost bird photographers and ornithologists in Ontario.

SUBJECT: 'Birds of Churchill'. As an added bonus 'Birds in your own backyard'.

NEXT MEETING DATE: Monday, December 1st. **Speakers:** Dr. and Mrs. Walter Tovell.

SPECIAL NOTE: In the event of a postal strike and we are unable to deliver your December Newsletter, check page 4 of the October Newsletter for phone numbers. Copies of the Newsletter will be available for you to pick up at various locations throughout the city. If you have any questions, phone the Secretary at 422-4830.

A REMINDER THAT CLUB FEES ARE NOW DUE. These may be paid at the November meeting, of you may fill out and mail the coupon below with your remittance.

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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 or 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 1
10:00 a.m.

The Junior Field Naturalists will meet in the Theatre of the Royal Ontario Museum, 100 Queen's Park at 10:00 a.m. The Herpetology Group will be in charge under the co-leadership of Bruce McBride, Gary Longmuir and Grant Ankenmen.

Director - Lynn Scanlan (488-8321, after 5:30)

ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP

Monday
November 10
8:00 p.m.

Meet at St. James Bond United Church on Avenue Road, just north of Eglinton Avenue.

"Toronto the Green" is the theme of the evening. Come and help us compile this report on Toronto's natural features.

Chairman - Henry Fletcher (421-1549)

BOTANY GROUP

Tuesday
November 18
8:00 p.m.

Dr. Ron Ayling, of the Dept. of Forestry, University of Toronto, will present the first lecture in our series on "Tree Identification". He will deal with the DECIDUOUS (BROADLEAFED) TREES.

Location: Hodgson Public School, Davisville Avenue, just east of Mt. Pleasant Road. Enter the school at the east end, or if you park in the school yard, the centre rear door is open, entrance to the yard is from Millwood Road, one block north of Davisville Ave. We meet in the cafeteria in the basement.

Chairman - Wes Hancock (757-5518)

BIRD GROUP

Wednesday
November 26
8:00 p.m.

An evening not to be missed! Ron Tozer and Jim Richards, authors of BIRDS OF THE OSHAWA - LAKE SCUGOG REGION, ONTARIO -- will tell us what prompted them to write this book. They will illustrate their talk with colour slides.

The book will be on sale and the authors will autograph for you.

Now is the time to buy your books for Christmas. Books will be on display and may be purchased before and after the meeting. ** (a pleasant reminder! there is NO tax on books).

Location: St. James Bond United Church on Avenue Road, just north of Eglinton Avenue.

Chairman - Red Mason (621-3905)

** What a selection to choose from !

REMINDER !

CLUB FEES ARE NOW DUE !

MEMBERSHIP ORDER FORM ON REVERSE !

OUTINGS FOR NOVEMBER, 1975

Sunday
November 2
8:50 a.m. EASTERN LAKESHORE - Birds
Leaders: Bruce and Jerry White
Meet at the Pickering GO Station, (south parking lot). GO train leaves Union Station at 8:13 a.m. From Toronto drive east on Hwy. 401 to Exit 64, then go south on Liverpool Road, turn left immediately on Base Line (Bayly), then left again into GO parking lot. Bring lunch.

Sunday
November 2
10:00 a.m.
4:00 p.m. MOUNTSBERG PARK GAME FARM
Members of the Toronto Field Naturalists' Club have been cordially invited to spend a day with members of fellow clubs in the Federation of Ontario Hiking Trail Association.

Bruce Trail displays, slides and movies will be shown and weather permitting, a hay ride will be held.

Our hosts will be the Halton Region Conservation Authority. Bring lunch.

Take Hwy. 401 west to Interchange 38, (Campbellville Road). Go south approximately 0.5 mile to main intersection of Campbellville (Campbell Avenue). Turn right (west) and drive approximately 2 miles to town line, turn right again and proceed to Game Farm on left, (beside railway crossing).

Sunday
November 9
10:30 a.m. Bruce Trail Hike - 8½ miles
Leader: Gord Thompson
Meet at the Terra Cotta Inn, in the village of Terra Cotta. From Victoria, (7 miles northwest of Brampton on Hwy. 10), go southwest 5 miles to Terra Cotta.

The walk will be brisk and will include a climb up the Escarpment. Gardening gloves are recommended to hold on to the cable. Be prepared for plenty of exercise! Guests welcome. Bring lunch. Sturdy hiking boots recommended.

Saturday
November 15
9:00 a.m. LAMBTON WOODS AND WESTERN LAKESHORE - Birds
Leader: Don Burton
Meet in the parking lot of James Gardens. Royal York bus from subway to Edenbridge Drive and walk east 0.4 mile. Lunch optional.

Saturday
November 29
9:00 a.m. CLAIREVILLE CONSERVATION AREA - Birds
Leader: Ross Harris
Meet on Barkwin Avenue, at Islington Avenue, just north of Albion Road. (Finch bus or Islington bus).
There might be an admission charge. Lunch optional.

Saturday
December 6
10:00 a.m. WILKET CREEK-SERENA GUNDY-SUNNYBROOK AREA - Birds
Leader: Doug Gardiner
Meet at the first parking lot entrance, on Leslie Street, just north of Eglinton Avenue East.
Eglinton East, Lawrence East or Leslie bus. Lunch optional.

Chairman - Harry Kerr (481-7948)

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Once again the hunting season has opened at Point Pelee National Park. Waterfowl are being shot, in spite of the fact that the government "is quite aware that duck hunting in Point Pelee is contrary to National Parks principles and infringes upon bird watching and other naturalist activities." (The quote was taken from a letter written to me on June 10, 1975 by the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs.) Why is this happening? Why can a minority of 150 or so hunters cause so much trouble when the vast majority of the park users, numbering in the hundreds of thousands, are naturalists who detest hunting in that park?

I wrote the Minister on March 10, 1975 to request an end to this hunting. Many of you did the same thing. On June 15, 1975 representatives from the National and Provincial Parks Association, the Federation of Ontario Naturalists, the Canadian Nature Federation, the Canadian Environmental Law Association, and myself (representing the Toronto Field Naturalists' Club) met with the Deputy Minister and other staff in Ottawa. These government officials were all clearly opposed to the hunting, as is the minister himself. Then why don't they end it? The Minister wrote me on June 20, 1975 and said that "it is our publicly-announced intention to end the hunt as soon as we are able to do so." He said, further, that "a decision will be reached within the next few weeks."

How long is a few weeks? Why are the hunters still in Point Pelee? One can only surmise that the hunters have, once again, intimidated the government. They have spoken louder and longer than have naturalists.

I was at a meeting recently where 3 or 4 hunters overwhelmed and intimidated the 40 or 50 naturalists and neutral people present with a verbose and pompous display that typifies the person who kills for pleasure. This angered me. But, quite frankly, it is our fault that the hunting continues. And it will continue until all naturalists act on the issue. We have let a few dedicated individuals carry the ball for us against the hunters' highly organized political machine. That simply isn't going to do the job.

At the General Meeting on October 6, I asked those present to write a protest letter to the Minister. Over 200 people indicated their intention to do so. It was gratifying indeed to see these people stand up in unison to protest the government's inaction on this matter. If our entire Club of 1500 members stood together in like fashion, I doubt that the hunters could match such a show of strength. So, let's do it! Let us, each one, write a letter today to the Minister to express our disappointment with the fact that hunting still continues in that park. Don't assume that someone else will write so you don't have to. That is precisely why the hunters have been able to show greater strength than naturalists.

Please write now to:

The Honourable Judd Buchanan
Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs
Parliament Buildings
Ottawa, Ont.

Let's make this the last year that people can kill for pleasure in a National Park that, supposedly, was set aside as a sanctuary for wildlife.

..... Bill Andrews
President.

METROPOLITAN PARKS DEPARTMENT

September 10, 1975.

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE

Subject: Toronto Field Naturalists' Recommendations
respecting the Development of the G. Ross
Lord Park

I am in receipt of a communication (July 24, 1975) from the Metropolitan Toronto Clerk requesting a report to your Committee on the ravine study and recommendations submitted by Mr. T.H.G. Fletcher, Chairman, Environmental Committee, Toronto Field Naturalists' Club.

The report (Report on a Ravine and a Section of the West Don River in the G. Ross Lord Park) submitted by the Club concerns itself primarily with the small ravine running southward from the University of Toronto Aerospace Studies Centre to the Reservoir proper, and the section of West Don River valleyland running from Steeles Avenue to the Reservoir proper. These two areas are recognized by the Toronto Field Naturalists' Club as important habitat zones for birds, animals and wild plants which should be safeguarded from the general public use of the park. Accordingly, the Club recommends that the small westerly ravine should be allowed to remain in a natural condition for contemplative recreation use and that public access into the area should be limited to visual access from a narrow perimeter trail around the top edge of the ravine.

With respect to the West Don River valleyland, it is recommended that the area should be set aside as a wildlife refuge for birds and animals. Views into this area are proposed from the westerly rim of the valley wall, with no internal access through the property. Finally, the Club urges its co-operation in the further development of these recommendations and to produce a brochure for use when walking the trails.

Preservation of the ravine and valleyland flora and fauna has always been the utmost concern to this Department in the development of a master plan for the property. When the master plan was presented to the Parks and Recreation Committee on October 4, 1973, a detailed inventory of the natural attributes of the property was also presented. This master plan, as adopted by Council on November 27, 1973, attempts to provide a balance between natural passive parkland uses and more active uses, based on the ability of the property safely to support such pursuits. The small westerly ravine is intended to serve as a wildlife interpretation area with parkland maintenance gauged accordingly to preserve these features. The West Don valleyland is also intended to function as a wildlife area with access being limited to a pedestrian/bicycle trail similar to the Wilket Creek trail in the Central Don Parkland. Because of the steeply sloping nature of the valley wall in the main valley, and the absence of abutting rim land as defined by the property boundaries, it is not possible nor feasible to implement the type of trail proposed by the Club.

Therefore I recommend that:

- (1) the Toronto Field Naturalists' Club be commended for their work in inventorying the natural features of the G. Ross Lord Park, and their offer to produce a nature brochure for use when walking on the trails; and

(2) the Club be advised that it is the intention of the Corporation to retain the two above-noted areas in a near wilderness state.

FEK:mm

(sgd) T. W. Thompson

No. 3081.

Metropolitan Parks Commissioner.

BIRDING IN TRINIDAD

... By Bas and Rita Wigglesworth

(continued from October Newsletter)

Just before sundown the water-birds started to arrive at their roosts situated in small isolated mangrove islands for protection from marauders. We could not positively identify some of these as we had to stay some distance away, at the boundary of the bird sanctuary. There were assembled at this point, about twenty boats, some carrying fifty or more people. First came flocks of Cattle Egrets and large White Herons. These occupied the lower levels of the green trees. The Scarlet Ibises then started to arrive in small flocks of twenty to thirty individuals. They would roost in the higher branches. Our position in the water was such that as the birds turned in their "V" formation preparatory to landing they would be fully illuminated by the sun and their brilliance was dazzling. Wave after wave, and each succeeding group would still draw "ohs" and "ahs" from the assembled watchers. It was truly an unforgettable sight.

Another of the highlights of our vacation was a visit to Springhill cave. This cave is situated on the grounds of the Asa Wright Centre and is one of the reasons for its foundation. A substantial contribution from the World Wildlife Association allowed the establishment of the Centre in 1967 under a trust company. The main purpose was to protect the Oilbird Colony in this cave.

We were accorded a special visit by the custodian taking into consideration the length of our journey. The Guacheros or Oilbirds, so-called because the people who caught the fat young birds rendered them down for oil, were a soft brown colour with bluish white spots and soft red eyes. Alarmed by our arrival they screamed and snarled, but when settled down on their nests, they looked very appealing with their large eyes. In flight they emit clicking sounds and so can navigate in the darkness of the cave by echo-location. They are large birds with a forty inch wingspread, completely nocturnal, feeding on fruit taken from trees on the wing.

On meeting Lawrence for our guided mountain "safari" we expressed the hope of seeing some Trogons and Manakins. He took us directly to their mountain locations. The first new birds we encountered were also the noisiest: Rufous-Browed Pepper-shrike and Rufous-breasted Wren.

It seems that one of the "secrets" of great importance on the trails is to know and use the call of the Ferruginous Pygmy Owl. As many as forty birds of eleven different species have been known to gather to the attack on hearing this call. It is a very simple call, a light continuous hoo-hoo-hoo. The results would surprise you. Lawrence used the call to remarkable advantage.

Shortly after its use we were visited not only by two Violaceous Trogons but a White-tailed Trogon came to rest about ten feet above us on a branch. He was gone before we had time to get the camera focussed. Lawrence pointed out that we would have to be extremely lucky to see all three trogons on the same day, as it was practically unheard of at this time. One mile further along the road about a hundred yards away on an exposed branch in the bright sunlight sat the beautiful male Red and Green Collared Trogon.

Trogons sit upright and have a habit of turning their heads when calling, so that if you are any distance away it is practically impossible to locate them, as the calls seem to come from different locations.

Trinidad is home to two Manakins, the Golden-headed, and White-bearded; a third, the Blue-backed, is found on Tobago which we also visited. Although we did see the Golden-headed on their display perch it was located about forty feet in the air and largely obscured by foliage. We saw as many as eight coming and going on this bare branch, but their regular display procedure, complicated aerial manoeuvres, were not discernible. However, we did stand within one foot of the display grounds of the White-bearded Manakin watching their various mating displays which constitute 90% of the daylight activity of the male. This display continues throughout the year.

We approached the area very carefully stopping every few feet so as not to alarm the birds. Finally after a minimum of disturbance, Lawrence pointed to a "window" in the bush advising us to approach stealthily and stand quietly.

This communal display ground seemed to contain up to twenty "courts" and activity ranged from ground level to about 6 feet from the forest floor. Each black and white male controls a "court" about two feet square, which is a patch of ground made absolutely bare. The display is carried out on the small saplings in, and bordering upon, this court. There is constant motion from perch to perch and up and down the saplings. Calling is also continuous and a noise just like the snapping of a dry twig is made by the wings. Their preoccupation and great racket allowed our close approach. When a female appears all activity is heightened to attract her attention for mating. Each male will defend his court fiercely and males without courts at a display ground will practice on outside courts while waiting to win one at the communal ground.

The Tanagers we recorded on this outing and others included: Silver-beaked, Bay-headed, Speckled, Turquoise, Blue-capped, White-lined, White-shouldered, Palm and the Red Crowned-Ant Tanager. We felt very good in pointing out to Lawrence the first Swallow Tanagers of the season, both male and female. The male, bright blue with a black mask and throat, the female, bright green to match the light foliage, practically impossible to spot without movement on that background. The beautiful Blue-gray Tanagers were as common as our sparrows throughout both islands.

We recall a trip to southern Texas when our most prized sighting was the Great Kiskadee to find that in Trinidad they are as common as our starling and just as noisy. Other flycatchers added to our list including Boat-billed, a kiskadee with a fatter bill, Forest and Yellow-bellied Elaenias. A greater variety was recorded on Tobago.

Some of the larger and more spectacular recorded included the Yellow Oriole, Moriche Oriole, Cacique, Channel-billed Toucan, Carib Grackle, Greater and Smooth-billed Anis, Red-breasted Blackbird and one impossible to overlook, the Bearded Bellbird. This lovely black and white bird filled the mountain valleys with his great voice. His more musical call resembles the striking of an anvil with a hammer.

While on one of the mountain roads we heard a call just like our robin. We finally located the source, a White-necked Thrush. Other thrushes seen were Cocoa, Yellow-legged, Bare-eyed and the Black-necked Ant-thrush.

Some of the more colorful small birds included the following: both Violaceous and Trinidad Euphonias, Blue Dacnis, Green Honey Creeper, Bananaquit, Ruddy-breasted and Lined Seedeaters. Barred Antshrikes were common on both islands, the male barred black and white all over, and the female a bright solid cocoa shade. The male, when singing, would shake the entire branch on which he was perching.

Various Swifts, Swallow, Doves, and Pigeons were common-place and easily added to our list along with three types of Grassquits which were like our sparrows. Three types of woodpeckers were seen including the Golden-olive which was at one time placed on the vermin list and then re-instated as a protected species saving it from being exterminated. It was suspected of destroying cocoa pods, but proven innocent; a remarkable achievement for the local naturalists.

A stroke of luck allowed us to spot a rare Gray-headed Kite while observing the antics of a pair of Moriche Orioles. A strong gust of wind uncovered his perch in the top of a tree. He was in plain sight from the northern view but a branch protected his southern flank; this was blown to one side, leaving him silhouetted against the sky.

Several trips took us from Maracas Bay in the Northeast to Manzanilla Bay and Pleasance on the east and south, to Pitch Lake in the southwest. Our greatest disappointment was with Pitch Lake, a sorry-looking place which certainly did not live up to our preconceived notion of a world wonder.

An excerpt from an information sheet printed and distributed by the Asa Wright Nature Centre reads as follows: "The continental origin and proximity of Trinidad to South America, as well as the multiplicity of habitats, has resulted in an unusually diverse fauna. The species lists are impressive: 108 Mammals, 400 birds, 55 snakes and lizards, 25 amphibians and 617 butterflies." While we ate lunch at one spot in the mountains we saw 10 different butterflies which included one light blue with a black outside border on top and completely black on the underside; it measured at least eight inches from tip to tip. In Queen's Park Savannah in the heart of Port of Spain we saw at least 4 varieties of lizard from 6 inches to 24 inches in length.

We believe that we could not have chosen a better time for our visit as most of the trees were in the blossom stage, with a minimum of leaves to obscure the vision. The trees, were very colorful even without blossoms. Quite a few had leaves green on one side and red on the other; this made bird-watching very difficult. The fact that most of the birds remain in the same place for the entire year would allow guides such as Lawrence to ascertain the very branches on which they would normally perch. Anyone on their own would find it very difficult. You would expect a beautiful orange and blue bird like the White-tailed Trogon to stand out, but with this colorful background, he is barely visible at any distance. Bromeliads, Alocasia, Ginger, Heliconia and Orange Trumpet vines grow throughout the multi-colored Cocoa, Coffee and Citrus Trees.

Even though there were flowering trees on every side, we decided to visit the Botanical Gardens in Port of Spain. This was originally the grounds of the Governor-General, liberated along with the people during a turnover of power. It proved to be a little run down and did not have even one name plate on any tree. We did "manage" to pick up a guide who gave us the grand tour.

The Amherstia, or Orchid Flower tree had just come into full bloom and was a sight to behold. Among the other specimens were the Kapok, Poui, a so-called sausage tree because of the shape of its fruit, Gourd tree, Cabbage Palms, Cinchona tree a native of Peru, the source of quinine, a Tropical Laurel tree from Ceylon, which produces cinnamon from its inner bark, a Nutmeg Tree, a magnificent Cannonball tree and a Brazil nut tree of the same grand proportions. Not having seen or even bothered to consider it, we were surprised to find the fruit of this tree to be the size and shape of a medium orange breaking up eventually into segments recognizable as Brazil nuts.

Even though the inhabitants seem to be having identity problems and may not be as friendly as they should, we believe that we would visit the islands again as there are still many birds to be seen and natural wonders to uncover.

JIM BAILLIE NATURE RESERVE

A combination padlock has been installed on the gates to the nature reserve. This will discourage, to some extent, possible misuse of the access road and parking area.

TO OPEN - The combination is:

- 1) Turn RIGHT two or more whole turns and stop at 24
- 2) Turn LEFT one whole turn past above number and stop at 30
- 3) Turn RIGHT and stop at 4, then pull shackle open

TO LOCK -

Push the shackle all the way in.

It is suggested that you copy the above on the back of your membership card for future reference.

Any problems, contact: John ten Bruggenkate at 425-6096 or ...
John Lowe-Wylde at 284-5628.

W A N T E D

Trail workers for maintenance of the existing trails at the Reserve.

Invigorating and personally satisfying work.

Try it, you might enjoy it !

If interested, phone ...

John Lowe-Wylde at 284-5628.

FALL SHOREBIRDS REPORT

... by Elmer Talvila

Hasn't this been a glorious fall for shorebirds? I can't remember having had a better year. Perhaps it's the low water levels revealing more mudflats and beaches or maybe it's a bumper crop in the Arctic or maybe just that I've been going out more frequently. Whatever the reason I've managed to see some 26 species of shorebirds this year with the vast majority spotted from August on. Even at that I missed a few such as Upland Plover, Knot and Northern Phalarope, all of which I saw last year.

My favourite haunts have been Whitby, Corner Marsh, Leslie headland and Dundas Marsh. The Leslie headland is a delightful place not only for the birds but its sense of wildness and isolation so close to the city and the lovely fall colours of the weeds growing there quite profusely now. I particularly enjoy the scarlett 'fruits' of the Russian thistle, the creeping cinquefoils and the long lines of poplar saplings following the waterline everywhere.

Dundas Marsh at the far west end of Cootes Marsh in Hamilton is hard to beat for shorebirds or any birds for that matter. This year 'the willows' stretch way out into the open water and the long sand and mud spit is nearly always covered with gulls and shorebirds.

All of the shorebirds are a delight to watch. They appear so interested in their own affairs and so usually allow a close approach. This year I've had my new telescope with me and it's revealed the full beauty of their plumage as never before. I hope the memory of their beauty and the delight they have given stay with me as 'a joy forever'.

Here are a few of these memories:

August 30 - Corner Marsh. Stood within a few dozen yards of a marbled godwit feeding unconcernedly in the water at the south end of the marsh. This was my first Ontario record. I saw two more at Dundas Marsh in September and October. A beautiful bird.

August 30 - Whitby Harbour. On the east side of the harbour near McNamara's boatworks. Water streaming from my eyes as I painstakingly watch every move and scrutinize every feather of a dowitcher through my scope. After half-an-hour of watching I'm convinced it's a long-billed dowitcher, a new life bird. What set it off immediately from the dozen or more other dowitchers was its very long bill and its noticeably larger size. I also noticed its buffier colour, its different feeding area (deeper water), the barring on the sides, and the sharp cut-off of buff at the belly. I hope these are all marks of the long-billed dowitcher. If they are not, please don't tell me - I want to live with my illusions!

August 31 - Leslie headlands. Spent an enjoyable Sunday morning hunting for some buff-breasted sandpipers. With the help of Jack Cranmer-Byng, Gord Bellerby, my son Erik and some other birders, we managed to find four of these lovely birds near the end of one of the long gravel ridges. We flushed them several times and saw them close up in the dry lagoon and on the beach also. A rare and lovely bird. Apparently as many as nine have been seen on the headlands and two at Hamilton this fall.

September 13 - Dundas Marsh. Made a special trip to see the four American Egrets and saw them almost at once from the observation tower. Stayed on that tower a long time despite the blustery wind and the rain, as thousands of broadwings started to fly over from Bull's Point. Counted over 3000 and gave up.

Also counted over 200 sharpshin, 3 osprey and some kestrels before heading to 'the willows' for shorebirds. Saw my second ever marbled godwit and two Baird's sandpipers. The Baird's have been very common this fall and I've seen a total of fifteen five different trips. Today the hawks stole the spotlight from the shorebirds.

September 14 - Leslie headland. Not much shorebird activity except for some Baird's sandpipers and the numerous sanderlings and black-bellied plovers. I had reached the end of the spit wherethe buff-breasted sandpipers usually were without seeing anything except hundreds of pipits when I saw it -- a small peep with a remarkably long curved bill. My first thought was a midget dunlin -- but then I remembered the western sandpiper which I so rarely see that the memory of it is dim indeed. The bird was alone, very interested in some driftwood which it pecked at incessantly so I had an excellent 10 minutes to observe it. Once it flew and returned calling like a least sandpiper. Legs were black, head and breast gray, crown and wings rufous. A western sandpiper for sure -- well, almost certain!

October 4 - Dundas Marsh. That news about the 61 Hudsonian godwits in Wednesday's Globe really whetted my appetite. So here I was at 'the willows' with Alf Epps and Kevin McLaughlin looking at godwits all around me. I've been a terrible 'list hound' this year, so I counted them carefully -- 48 birds, by far the largest flock I've ever seen. Even beats those Long Island flocks! One marbled godwit was easy to pick out by its larger size. White-rumped sandpipers and Baird's and nearby a hundred pectoral sandpipers were also noted. What a great spot to spend the day! After many long looks I reluctantly left and was only two hours late getting home.

October 11 - Dundas Marsh. Here I was again! I couldn't stay away from those godwits. This time there were 25 Hudsonian godwits and no marbled. Other interesting sights were 2 stilt sandpipers and 2 golden plovers. The Hydro marsh nearby was full of teal and widgeon. Again I was two hours late getting home. I should stop making promises.

The following delightful letter from Mrs. Dennett came accompanied with a photograph of the travelling-bag nest. Page four of the letter also had a muddy raccoon print and a note that Dennis and Clara, this year's orphans, had just arrived for a 5 a.m. breakfast. This interesting menagerie has piqued my curiosity and I hope to take up Mrs. Dennett's kind invitation in the last paragraph of her letter ...

"Dear Mr. Talvila -

This year our Carolina wren took himself a wife and raised two broods of children. Nine in the first and four in the second.

There were five eggs in the second batch, but I let Chris Harris take one for the R.O.M. as apparently this is a housekeeping first for Simcoe County.

A chap called Leo Smith came here yesterday and suggested that you, as Editor of the T.F.N.C. newsletter, would like to hear about the wrens.

We live in the bottom left-hand corner of Adjala Township and have 32 acres of glorious tangly, jungly second-growth woodland -- black ash, all kinds of poplar, cedar, birch, elderberries, chokeberry, dead, dying and growing elm -- the whole lot welded into a homogeneous mass by every vine you can think of. We also have a small branch of the Nottawasaga River crossing one corner. Our house, garage and one small barn sit on a large sandbank over-looking this wild-life Nirvana.

Daddy Carolina arrived June/July, 1974, and, as you can imagine, made his presence known by his fog-horn voice. The song is very variable, but I've never yet heard him say 'Tea-kettle', as R. Tory Peterson suggests he does.

He spent a happy winter here, singing through all kinds of ugly weather, making occasional forays to the fat on the bird-table, but mostly picking around window frames and the balcony (spider cocoons?)

There was one ridiculous day when the foghorn was booming louder than usual -- I tracked it down and found him sitting on my desk upstairs, singing his fool head off. I had to rescue him manually that time but he bore no ill-will.

We discovered the nest in June, in an old canvas travelling-bag hanging in the barn. Not nearly as neat as a house-wrens, it's large, open and mostly made of dried grasses, lined with a few feathers and dog hair. I managed to contact some official bird-people after the first lot had been successfully launched and Cliff MacFayden took several pictures of the bird brooding and the eggs of the second batch.

I've encountered the wrens as a group several times since then -- I was soundly cursed by them the other day when I interrupted them as they were working on the horrible lace bugs which are murdering our Boston ivy. Another time I found them helping a miscellaneous group of birds to swear at a long-eared owl who was trying to snooze in a cedar tree.

The way we are situated here, we are incredibly lucky, not only in having unusual birds around but in being able to have a sort of back-door view of the private lives of our various denizens. Last summer, for instance, I watched a bemused-looking white-tailed deer crossing an open patch of field. Firmly attached to her ear was a red-winged blackbird, who was screaming every foul word at her. As soon as she reached the edge of his territory he left her, but when she returned an hour later, he pounced on her ear at the same spot and escorted her back at the top of his voice.

You'll be pleased to know that our red-headed and pileated woodpecker population is increasing every year -- I've seen three pileateds at once on the same dead elm and we managed to photograph one on the bird-table last winter. The red-heads behave like king-birds when there's a hatch of flying insects -- hurling themselves from the tops of the dead trees at each new cloud that rises.

One winter a field sparrow and a white-throated sparrow stayed with us who appeared to be inseparable friends. It was a 'whithersoever thou goest I will go' sort of arrangement. There was another winter when the flock which nearly sent us to the poorhouse, was not Evening Grosbeaks, as is usual, but a mixed one of pine grosbeaks and red crossbills. We have photographs of that lot, too.

Then there's the mystery of the Grackles' Nest. They decided to build in an elder bush at the foot of our sandhill. All the time they were working they were being harried and badgered by a pair of furious robins. I went down one day to see how things were going and there were two grackle eggs in the nest. A few days later I went to check. There were two grackle eggs and two robin eggs. A robin flew off the nest. A couple of days later I looked again. There were five eggs. Two grackles, two robins and one egg I do not know. It was not a cowbird's. Robin size, shape and colour with heavy reddish-brown speckling at the blunt end, tapering off towards the sharp end. Three days later I went to look again. All that was in the nest was one robin's egg. This was duly hatched and raised -- by the robins.

Other interesting things I've discovered for myself this year -- Mrs. Cardinal sings almost as well as her husband -- baby cuckoos (never can remember which kind) are most extraordinary to see. Crimson gape with white code-spots, indigo skin and legs with white fluff on body.

We have quite a large flock of rose-breasted grosbeaks this year -- nearly two dozen -- they and vast quantities of waxwings are very busy with our monumental elderberry crop. I've noticed that the rose-breasted and cuckoos are also very fond of woody nightshade berries -- they work hard at the jewel-weed when it's in pod, too.

I'm delighted to see a pair of red-breasted nuthatches working at the bird-table this fall -- haven't seen them for a few years. They were part of the long-eared owl curse-in the other day, too.

I've been amongst birds and beasties all my life, both here and in England.

At Home, I used to raise song thrushes, missel thrushes, jackdaws, crows. Here we've had skunks (one for 10 years!) 'coons, wild rabbits, field voles, grackles, robins and, according to dear-old Roy Ivor, I was the 3rd person in the world to raise a brood of chimney swifts -- I forget the exact formula, but it was a revolting concoction of coddled eggs, rice pablum and squashed ants' eggs!

I'm delighted to tell you I have seen timber-wolf in our area in the last year. I'd seen brush wolf tracks in our woods in winter, but this was an actual sighting of timber.

Beaver have also moved into our stretch of river, more's the pity -- I wish they'd move on, they're playing hell with our poor poplars.

The big fall warbler fly-through is on just now, but I am no warbler expert, especially this time of year. How they love our birch trees -- they're full of leaf miners.

If you know of any genuine wildlife lovers who would be interested in seeing our peculiar set-up here, our specific address is : Part lot 25, conc. 5, 1/4 mile south of 25th line, Adjala Township.

Sincerely,

(sgd) Pam G. Dennett

(Mrs. L. J. Dennett) "

TORONTO FIELD NATURALISTS' CLUB -- WHO'S WHO - 1975-76

(page 4 of the October Newsletter)

The following should be added to the list of Committee Chairmen:

Public Relations Committee - Mr. Harold Taylor - 225-2649.

COMING EVENTS

ROYAL CANADIAN INSTITUTE

Information: 922-2804

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

- November 1 - President's Night: "Science you can see and hear". Elton Lent, President; Mr. Errol Weiser and George Vanderkuur, Education Officers, Ontario Science Centre. Demonstrations.
- November 8 - "Solar Energy, Fact and Fantasy" - colour slides. Donald A. Urquhart, Corning Glass Works, New York (son of a former president of the R.C.I.).
- November 15 - "Life and Death of a Seal" - colour slides and sound effects. Prof. K. Ronald, Dean of the Biological Science Dept., University of Guelph.
- November 22 - "Changing Climate and World Affairs - colour slides. Prof. F. Kenneth Hare, Director, Institute for Environmental Studies, University of Toronto.
- November 29 - "Diagnosis of Disease in Ancient Man" - colour slides. Dr. Gerald D. Hart, Dept. of Haematology, Toronto East General Hospital and University of Toronto.
- December 6 - "Charles Darwin, Who he was and what he did" - slides. Dr. W.E. Swinton, Prof. Emeritus, Dept. of Zoology, University of Toronto and Sr. Fellow, Massey College.

ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM

- Sunday Family Films

Sundays at 2:30 p.m.

- November 9 - 'Killer Whales; In Search of the Bowhead Whale'
- November 16 - The wild dogs of Africa (Jane Goodall); Tuktu and his Eskimo Dogs
- November 23 - Charlotte's Web
- November 30 - Kangaroo; Wandering Albatross; Backpack to Nature (on the Bruce Peninsula).

AUDUBON WILDLIFE FILMS - 1975-76

- Eaton Auditorium - 8:15 p.m.

- Thursday - November 27, 1975 - "Adventure High Arctic"
- " - January 22, 1976 - "Wildlife Safari to Ethiopia"
- " - February 19 " - "Bermuda - Land and Sea"
- " - March 18 " - "The Vanishing Eden"

Should you not have signed up for the series, there are still good seats available... Make a note on your calendar to see these films. The more seats sold, the more revenue for the Toronto Field Naturalists. A reminder for the students: tickets purchased the night of the showing are only \$1.25.

If you are planning your holidays or just week-end jaunts, check the following:

Ontario Nature Tours - 71 Thorncliffe Park Dr., #511, Toronto, M4H 1L3 (421-4537)
- 6372 Montrose Road, Niagara Falls, Ont. - Gus Yaki

- Nov. 22 - 30 - Southern California Tour
- Dec. 5 - 7 - Niagara River Bird Life
- Dec. 21 - Jan 3/76 - Hawaii Calls
- Dec. 25 - Jan 3 - The Everglades and South Florida and many more

Write or phone for further information and copy of Release No. 6.

AND

Environmental Experiences Club - offer ...

- Jan 30 - Feb 1, 1976 - Dorset Winter Weekend No. 1
- Feb. 27 - 29 " - Dorset Winter Weekend No. 2
- March 12 - 14 " - Winter Camping (Algonquin Park) and more ... contact:
Ed O'Connor, 2 Nursewood Road, Apt 11, Toronto M4E 3R8 (699-9211 after 6 p.m.)

NOTE: The Editor is still pretty short of material for the next Newsletter. All stories, book reviews, reminiscences, hike reports welcome. Deadline for the December issue is DECEMBER 14th.

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Toronto, Ont. M4K 2S5
(422-4830)

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Elmer Talvila
12 Cranleigh Court, Islington Ont.
M9A 3Y3 (231-1064)

TIME...



There's Not Much Left

1975 is drawing to a close

So is our campaign for funds

The Jim Baillie Reserve is most deserving of our best conservation efforts. Your response to our October appeal was swift and encouraging. We have passed the \$17,000. mark on our way to \$22,500.

Could you send us \$15. by the end of this year? We do need your support! **BE COUNTED!**

----- detach -----

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

1975, November

I enclose a cheque/money order made out to the TORONTO FIELD NATURALISTS in the amount of \$ _____ as a donation to the JIM BAILLIE NATURE RESERVE.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

Postal Code _____

(official receipt will be mailed)