



# TORONTO FIELD NATURALISTS' CLUB

Number 296

January, 1976.

## JANUARY MEETING

Monday, January 5, 1976, 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. Allan Wainio, District Biologist, Ministry of Natural Resources, Fish and Wildlife Branch.

**SUBJECT:** "Habitat Improvement for Wildlife"  
This extremely interesting and timely subject will be illustrated with colour slides. An evening a naturalist won't want to miss.

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**NEXT MEETING DATE:** Monday, February 2, 1976.

**NEXT AUDUBON WILDLIFE FILM:** Thursday, January 22 .. Eaton Auditorium, 8:15 p.m.

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Due to the recent mail strike and the difficulty experienced in getting the Newsletters to members, the cut-off time for membership dues has been extended another month. Should you not have renewed for the coming year, won't you clip and mail the following form with your remittance?

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  
January 17  
10:00 a.m.

NOTE: Change in date! Meet in the Royal Ontario Museum, 100 Queen's Park at 10:00 a.m. The Mammal Group will be in charge. A member of the Toronto Humane Society will be the guest speaker. He will illustrate his talk with a special film.

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

ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP - Monday

January 19  
8:00 p.m.

Meet at St. James Bond United Church on Avenue Road, just north \* of Eglinton Avenue. We would like to see you at this first meeting of the New Year. Come along!

Chairman - Henry Fletcher (421-1549)

BOTANY GROUP

Tuesday  
January 20  
8:00 p.m.

Miss Gale Hoy of the Botany Department, University of Toronto, will present the second lecture in our series on "Tree Identification". Miss Hoy will deal with various "shrubs".

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  
January 28  
8:00 p.m.

Meet at St. James Bond United Church (see above for directions) \* John and Janet Foster will tell us of the 'trials and tribulations' of making a nature series for TV .. illustrated with colour slides. Copies of their latest book "To the Wild Country" will be available. A wonderful opportunity to have your copy autographed!

Chairman - Red Mason (621-3905)

OUTINGS FOR JANUARY, 1976

Saturday  
January 10  
8:30 a.m.

LAMBTON WOODS - Birds Leader: Dave Broughton

Meet in the parking lot of James Gardens. (Royal York bus from subway to Edenbridge Drive and walk east 0.4 mile). Outing will continue along the Lakeshore and in High Park in the afternoon. Bring lunch.

Sunday  
January 18  
10:00 a.m.

VIVIAN FOREST - Birds Leader: Ed Franks

Meet at the crossroads in Ballantrae (north-east corner). This is a hamlet on Hwy. 48 about 11 miles north of Markham. Bring lunch.

Saturday  
January 31  
9:30 a.m.

REAR OF BOYD CONSERVATION AND WOODBRIDGE AREA - Birds

Leader: Peter Wukasch

Meet at north end of Pine Valley Road. Drive west from Hwy. 400 on Hwy 7 for 1.9 miles. (1 mile east of Woodbridge). Turn north and go 2 miles to top of this road. Park on side road. Bring lunch.

Sunday  
February 8  
10:00 a.m.

DAVID BALFOUR PARK AREA - Nature Walk Leader: Helen Juhola

Meet at the Nature Trail sign on the north side of St. Clair Avenue East at Avoca. (0.2 mile east of Yonge Street). Walk will follow the ravine south to Bloor Street and will last about two hours. Public transportation would be practical.

Chairman - Harry Kerr (481-7948)

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

My New Year's report is a pleasant one, indeed. At a time when labour disputes and inflation threaten to undermine our society, it is refreshing to reflect on the accomplishments of our Club during the past year. Working together we managed to raise the many thousands of dollars that were required to discharge the mortgage on the Jim Baillie Nature Reserve. I know that many of you who are on fixed pension incomes made personal sacrifices so you could donate to the Reserve Fund. Others spent countless hours raising money for the fund. I feel that I should report one example of fund raising to you. At the General Meeting on December 1, Jack Gingrich, a past president of our Club, presented to the Nature Reserve fund a cheque for \$125.00. Jack and his family had raised this money entirely by collecting bottles and cans from the roadsides! Can you think of a more fitting way to raise money for a nature reserve? As we reflect on the fact that we no longer owe any money, we should, once again, thank the Canadian National Sportsmen's Show for its donation of \$2500.00. This gift provided the impetus for our successful fund-raising drive this past year. And a special thank-you to Stu Corbett for coordinating our fund-raising project.

Financially our Club is in fine shape. Even more important is the fact that our Club is in fine shape in all other respects. Attendance at the General Meetings continues to grow. I will soon have to bring my binoculars to see those who are sitting at the back of the auditorium! Volunteers are always forthcoming for all new projects and activities that we undertake. Thanks to Harold Taylor, chairman of our Public Relations Committee, and Henry Fletcher, chairman of our Environmental Committee, our voice is being heard more frequently and with increasing impact in Metropolitan Toronto and beyond. Membership is increasing and a surge of vitality continues to permeate our Club.

I do have one fear for the future. As we grow larger, we could become more impersonal. But you can stop this from happening. Join a special interest group; stay after the General Meetings to share your knowledge and experiences with new members at the front of the auditorium; attend outings; volunteer for special projects. No matter how large we grow as a Club, we can still serve nature and get to know one another by participating in the small group activities within the Club.

..... Bill Andrews  
President.

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WANTED: POSTER ARTISTS!

The appeal, at December's general meeting, for persons to work on displays was answered by two volunteers. We appreciate their willingness and think you will be seeing and hearing their contribution as we look forward to an active spring of using displays to tell more Torontonians about our Club.

The Public Relations Committee still needs one or more members who are skilful with poster pen or brush. Don't hide your talent under a paint pot. Instead, call .....

Harold Taylor, at 225-2649

and join our display team!

## SOME REFLECTIONS ON CHRISTMAS AND CENSUSES

..... by Harold Taylor

As I write, muffled sounds of parcels being wrapped come from closed rooms. The card list, untouched, eyes me accusingly. And in the kitchen, the bustle with recipes promises festive surprises from the oven. Christmas is coming.

Perhaps this will reach you before the great day. If not, Christmas 1975 will be a memory and another Audubon bird count will be in the record books from the Toronto area, which was in at the beginning of the censuses 75 years ago.

For it was in Bird-Lore, in December 1900, that editor Frank Chapman proposed "spending a portion of Christmas Day with the birds and sending a report of the 'hunt' before retiring that night. Such reports should be headed by the locality, hour of starting and returning, character of the weather, direction and force of the wind, and the temperature, the latter taken when starting." He was suggesting an alternate activity to the Christmas "hunts" on which hundreds of birds were shot during a single hunt.

In that first year, there were 27 observers taking part on 25 counts from two provinces and 12 states. Toronto recorded 4 species. In 1974 Toronto had 65 species and was one of only three original areas still reporting.

As well as recording trends in bird populations across North America (including Middle America, the West Indies, and Hawaii there were 1102 counts involving 27,184 observers in the 1974 census), the annual Christmas tally is a memorial to Frank Chapman, a skilled and concerned ornithologist.

In his autobiography, Ernest Thompson Seton, recalls his first meeting with Chapman. The year was 1887, before Chapman became the Curator of Birds in the American Museum of Natural History in New York. "We found kindred spirits in each other," wrote Seton, "and worked together for some fifty years afterward." Seton was the illustrator of several of Chapman's books.

One of them, "Bird-Life: A Guide to the Study of Our Common Birds," published in 1897, is in good reading today. In the section on learning to identify birds Chapman first recommends that the student learn the names of the parts of the bird. Then he suggests placing a plate of a land bird twenty-five to thirty feet away. The student is given one minute in which to write a description of the bird. After that, he traces through Chapman's key, similar to a botanical key, to locate the bird he described.

Chapman's comment, "You must see it definitely to identify it," is as true as it was 80 years ago. To help visitors to the museum to become more proficient in identification he arranged "Birds of the Month" displays. For more than 25 years these were changed each month to show the birds likely to be seen in and around New York.

Describing this program in his slim volume, "What Bird is that?" Chapman wrote, "In January, therefore, we have not to consider the birds of June, nor need we be concerned with winter birds in summer. The season of occurrence thus gives us an important clue to a bird's identity."

Every year since 1900, Christmas census-takers have carried on Chapman's wish to "spend a portion of Christmas Day with the birds" (if not always on the day

itself). From Newfoundland's Gros Morne National Park to Fairbanks, Alaska and from Hawaii to the West Indies they have walked, ridden in cars, boats and snowmobiles, and kept watch at backyard feeding-stations in their desire to know more about the birds. And all the while, the observers, themselves, have been willing to be counted on the side of those who are concerned.

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#### WINTER FLOWERS

K. L. McIntosh and S. M. McKay

December the first is usually an exciting day for birders, but a bleak day for botanists. When birders are thinking of beginning their winter lists, it doesn't seem as if there's much hope for the plant lister. After all, it's winter: - the frost has "laid waste" most of the greenery, the first snowfall has come, and everyone knows that you can't find flowers in Toronto in the winter. However, a quick glance through many Toronto gardens will convince you that Chrysanthemums, Marigolds, Snapdragons and Sweet Alyssums are still blooming, and if you look closely in overgrown gardens, lawns, cracks in sidewalks, and other weedy habitats in the city, you may be able to find many of the following species of plants (growing without cultivation) still flowering:

<u>Brassica nigra</u> (L.) Koch	Black Mustard
<u>Capsella bursa-pastoris</u> (L.) Medic	Shepherd's Purse
<u>Cerastium vulgatum</u> L.	Mouse-ear Chickweed
<u>Erysimum cheiranthoides</u> L.	Wormseed Mustard
<u>Galinsoga parviflora</u> Cav.	Galinsoga
<u>Lepidium virginicum</u> L.	Virginia pepper-grass
<u>Malva neglecta</u> Wallr.	Common Mallow
<u>Matricaria matricarioides</u> (less.) Porter	Pineapple-weed
<u>Poa annua</u> L.	Speargrass
<u>Polygonum aviculare</u> L.	Prostrate Knotweed
<u>Senecio vulgaris</u> L.	Common Groundsel
<u>Sisymbrium officinale</u> (L.) Scop.	Hedge-mustard
<u>Sonchus asper</u> (L.) Hill	Spiny-leaved Sow-thistle
<u>Stellaria media</u> (L.) Cyrill	Common Chickweed

A search of nearby ravines or woodlots may also reward you with the sight of the pink blossoms of Herb Robert (Geranium robertianum). In all, we found almost 20 species of plants which were in bloom on our December first census.

The slightly warmer and more protected environment of the city and, in particular, the mild weather this autumn may have contributed to the prolonged growth and flowering of some species. While the plants in the above list are definitely less showy and decorative than other flowering plants, they are quite common and can readily be found blooming at least until November. However, some of the hardier of the species, eg. Shepherd's Purse, Pepper-grass, and common Groundsel, will usually survive the first frosts and continue flowering until late December. In fact it's not unusual to see Common Groundsel flowering amidst the snow. But when these flowers finally succumb to the ravages of winter, don't despair. In just 90 days (from 1 Dec.) the Skunk Cabbages will be melting the surrounding snow and the first flowers of Silver Maple will herald in the spring.

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## 200 BIRDS IN TWO WEEKS?

..... by Clive Goodwin

It didn't set out to be an epic birding trip. We wanted to spend a week at Point Pelee in May, and then I found I had a meeting at Thunder Bay -- the second week of the month. Why not combine the two, and take the opportunity to visit some of the people who send us bird records each season, and also look at some of the migration concentration points we are always writing about? So the idea started, and so we planned our trip. We would go down to Pelee for a few days, perhaps visit the Kelleys who collect the Pelee area records, then go on up through Michigan to the Upper Peninsula and Whitefish Point, back into Ontario and straight to Thunder Bay, and then back through Manitoulin and the Bruce.

At that point we speculated about how many birds we might see. We knew that four or five persons had spent a month or so at Pelee and had mustered 200 species or more. We would cover much more territory, but we would be heading north and we would only have two weeks. Besides, we're not epic listers, although our regimen at Pelee is fairly strenuous. Anyway, we were really more interested in the contrasts we would experience between these very diverse places.

The perennial attraction of Point Pelee is that you never really know just what you are likely to see. One year I recall it poured down every day, and got steadily colder -- I drove home in a snowstorm. Some years rarity follows rarity, other years some quite commonplace birds provide a memorable experience, like the forty red-headed woodpeckers on the Point one day. So it is always with a sense of anticipation that we set off in late afternoon for Leamington. This year it was May 3.

The common birds mark the flow of migration through the Point. And so Saturday was a Yellow-rumped Warbler and White-throated Sparrow day -- Yellow-rumps hurrying through the tree tops and White-throats scratching in the thickets. It was not a day of great variety, but like all days at Pelee the unexpected came. Driving away from the nature centre, Joy said 'what's that?' and a small dark woodpecker with a ladder back flew off into the campground, the Northern Three-toed that had excited birders at Pelee in the winter, but now amazingly late.

Later the cry went out for a Virginia's Warbler down near the Point, so we started to walk down, only to meet a gang of self-satisfied looking birders (where do they all appear from?) on the way back. They had seen it, we didn't. But while checking over the warblers a brownish female yellow-rumped turned to reveal a yellow throat, an Audubon's Warbler, my first-ever in Ontario, and the first-ever at Pelee! By the end of the day we had seen Chat, Golden-winged and Cerulean Warblers and a Mockingbird, but missed on a Little Blue Heron which was playing hide and seek in the marsh.

We visited the Point daily until the seventh. Typically, every day had a quality all its own. Sunday was foggy, with flocks of late juncos foraging along the road and birds looming out of the fog looking twice their normal size. Monday was one of those crystalline days -- sparkling blue sky with the delicate green buds traced against it, and a strong north-west wind lashing the lake. Birds were in ones and twos -- but there! A dazzling flock of warblers flycatching from the cedars on the east beach, with first one and now another displaying its brilliance against the dark green. A succession of hawks fighting their way

up the point, and finally at dusk, the elusive heron. In all, a surprising 120 species, the best count of the trip.

Tuesday was our catch-up day for rarer warblers -- a Worm-eating as we walked back from the Point, a Kentucky while Joy was cooking lunch -- which as usual, vanished before she could see it -- and another Worm-eating in Tildens, where we also finally found a White-eyed Vireo.

Wednesday was a short day -- a rainy dawn with a Blue-winged Warbler in it, before visiting the Kelleys in Michigan and admiring their wildflower garden, watching for fox squirrels at their feeders and listening for Tufted Titmice in the woodlot.

Thursday brought our last day. Not much had moved in, but the dawn brought a Surf Scoter off the Point, a Leconte's Sparrow found by Bill Smith on the walk back, and Forster's Terns at Steens Marsh in the afternoon. All were newcomers, and they brought our five-and-a-half day total to 168 species. We had experienced no massive groundings, and apart from the Audubon's Warbler -- now only a race of the Yellow-rumped -- had seen no exceptionally rare birds. What we had experienced was a typical spring week at Pelee. An ever-changing panorama of birds and weather, the early spring woods with bellworts and violets in bloom, with Carolina Wrens carolling lustily from vine thickets, redbirds glowing in the old orchard and flocks of mergansers and Bonaparte's Gulls restlessly on the move across the Point.

Two days later and we were cooking breakfast among Trailing Arbutus, sheltering from a bitter northwest wind in the evergreens of Whitefish Point. There were no floods of warblers here -- only a handful of earlier species and one confused Gnatcatcher, an unexpected echo of the Pelee woodlands. A steady procession of loons crossed the tip of land but there were no vast flocks of mergansers or gulls -- just a Solitary Red-breasted and the odd Herring Gull.

Soon a huge movement of migrants started pouring down the Point: Blue Jays and Starlings, Evening Grosbeaks and Chickadees, with flock after flock of blackbirds, until the sky above the final shrubs was often filled with groups of birds milling around, calling excitedly, but unwilling to plunge out over the inhospitable expanse of Lake Superior.

By 9:30 a.m. hawks were moving, Sharp-shins at first in ones and twos, but then a steady procession of Rough-legs and Red-tails flying low over the tops of the conifers. Finally Broad-wings, their numbers building as the individual birds moved to the Point and circled back, forming a vast pinwheel with its centre a Sandhill Crane dwarfing the soaring hawks like a Monarch butterfly in a cloud of gnats. It circled with neck and vast wings outstretched, and as we stood watching, Whitefish played its final card -- a superb adult Peregrine Falcon moving well beneath the flock, flying just above the treetops with the effortless power of its kind.

With the bustle of Sault Ste. Marie behind us we found ourselves driving through an increasingly winter landscape. Snowbanks hung on in the forests, ice still covered much of the colder lakes, and birds were few. A Gray Jay was our first new sighting, and we quickly supplemented our Whitefish ravens with Canadian birds. At Wawa a Boreal Chickadee called near the cabin in the early morning and Evening Grosbeaks were often heard. We supplemented our Pelee duck list with winterers such as Goldeneye and Common Merganser, added migrant Rough-legged Hawks to the Pelee raptors, and Hairy Woodpeckers and Pine Siskin joined the collection of check marks.

Thunder Bay did not cooperate at all. The motel strip precluded even off-.. minute birding, and meetings were the order of the next two days. Afterwards Keith Denis did his best to turn something up for us in the hour or two prior to leaving, but the birds had other ideas. Harris's Sparrows and Marbled Godwits -- both much more likely in Thunder Bay than Toronto -- were missing, but at least we had a Western Meadowlark on the airport and a Least Sandpiper on the sewage ponds.

Really it was the weather that was not cooperating -- days of beautiful, but cold, weather do not provide good viewing. What birds there are moving go on to their destination, the rest hang around in the south waiting for something better to turn up. And as we returned along that glorious northshore we found that many birds had moved in.

The change was quite remarkable. We were only three days later, but the huge ice packs of Nipigon Bay had largely vanished, the birches and aspens were flushed green and the woods rang defiantly with the songs of Ruby-crowned Kinglets and Winter Wrens. Lakes had their loons, Goldeneye or Ring-necked Ducks, and at Neys a Ruffed Grouse performed for us from the side of the road. In Lake Superior Park, Lincoln's Sparrows ignored the text books and sat around on the tops of the bushes soundly scolding us, and on Wawa sewage lagoons we watched migrant shorebirds.

But Ruby-crowned Kinglets were the birds of the north shore in mid-May. Everywhere their songs could be heard, and indeed the Kinglet song was the most pervasive bird sounds of our trip. We listened to Ruby-crowns in the Sassafras of Pelee, in cedars at Whitefish, throughout the forests of Superior, through the second growth of Manitoulin and the Bruce, and Ruby-crowns welcomed us home. Only Red-breasted Mergansers came close to them in this huge range of distance and time, and Red-breasts were to water birds what the Ruby-crowns were on land.

When we drove down to Gordon's Motel in its idyllic setting on Gore Bay late on May 15 we already had some Manitoulin and Lake Huron specialties in bluebird, Upland Plover and Brewer's Blackbird. But rain and fog in our trip from Wawa had curtailed our sightings, and our list -- if we had counted it up -- offered little more than a dozen or so birds on our Pelee totals.

(concluded in February Newsletter)

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AUDUBON WILDLIFE FILMS - Eaton Auditorium - 8:15 p.m.

Thursday, January 22, 1976 - "Wildlife Safari to Ethiopia"

" February 19 - "Bermuda - Land and Sea"

" March 18 - "The Vanishing Eden"

Good seats still available ..(Student tickets purchased the night of the showing are only \$1.25). The more seats sold, the more revenue for the Club.

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For your holidays or just week-end trips, check with the following:

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

AND

Environmental Experiences Club - Ed O'Connor, 2 Nursewood Road, Apt. 11,  
Toronto, M4E 3R8 (699-9211 after 6 p.m.)

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Comments on monthly meetings:

The increased attendance at the Bird Group meetings leads me to believe that members are receiving the entertainment and education they are looking for. The first meeting of the season was attended by just under one hundred. On the second meeting night in November, the rain did not deter over a hundred turning out (without the help of the Newsletter -- 'detained' in the mails!). It is difficult to know what is the best type of program most attractive to the majority. We do have what we consider other good programs coming up -- watch the Newsletter for details. Please feel free to bring a friend along. If you have an idea for a program, let me know and I will see if we can work it in. I am pleased to see some of our best birders in attendance. Our meetings can be enjoyed by pros and amateurs. Birders are wonderful BUT so are the birds -- let's get together.

Don't forget to join us in tabulating our winter group list this year. Come to the meetings and let us know what you have seen between December 1st and February 29th.

Meetings are held in the auditorium of St. James Bond United Church on Avenue Road (2 blocks north of Eglinton Avenue) every fourth Wednesday of the month at 8:00 p.m. Mark the date on your calendar and plan to attend.

Red Mason, Chairman, Bird Group (621-3905)

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COMING EVENTS:

ROYAL CANADIAN INSTITUTE

-- Information: 922-2804

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

January 17 - "The Hospital for Sick Children -- The First One Hundred Years".

Dr. J. Harry Ebbs, former Senior Staff Physician, The Hospital for Sick Children; Professor of Pediatrics and Dean of Physics and Health Education, University of Toronto. (slides)

January 24 - "Energy and the Future" - Dr. Irvine I. Glass, Prof., Institute for Aerospace Studies, University of Toronto. (slides)

January 31 - "Fish Aren't Fowl" - Dr. John M. Anderson, President and Vice-Chancellor, University of New Brunswick, Fredericton -- "The potential of Aquaculture" (slides)

ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM - Sunday Family films Sundays at 2:30 p.m.

January 4 - Sunburst -- flowers; insects and woods; The String Bean; In the mire - bogs and balance of nature; A Life.

January 11 - Arrow to the Sun; The Invisible Universe -- radio astronomy; A trip to the moon; Mars: the search begins -- discoveries of Mariner 9.

January 18 - Colter's Hell - geysers of Yellowstone; Pompeii: Once there was a City; The Heimaey Eruption: Iceland 1973 - Volcano Eldfell.

January 25 - Undercurrents - the underwater world; Secrets of the underwater World -- tidal waters; 28 degrees Above-Below: below the ice at Resolute Bay; Sunken Treasure: - Jacques Cousteau.

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With great sadness we report the passing of Alfred Bunker of Pickering, so well known by members of the Club, who died suddenly on Sunday, December 7th. We extend sincere sympathy to his family.

NOTE: The Editor is still pretty short of material for the next Newsletter. All stories, book reviews, reminiscences, hike reports welcome. Dead line for the February issue is January 7th.

Newsletter Production:

EDITOR: Elmer Talvila

Hattie Beeton, 1164 Broadview Ave.  
Toronto, Ont. M4K 2S5 (422-4830)

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

## CURRENT NEWS OF RAVINES

..... by Jack Cranmer-Byng  
(for the Environmental Committee)

### 1) CEDARVALE -

The old Bathurst bridge has been demolished and at the time of writing (early December, 1975) the new bridge is partially completed. The whole of the ravine is a muddy mess, and restoration won't be able to start until the early summer of 1976. The watercourse has been preserved and still crosses the ravine in a number of places as previously. The level of the bottom land at the northern end of the ravine (adjoining the Cedarvale Arena Park) has been raised considerably in order to cover the subway. But in most of the ravine the bottom land is flat and remains at about the same level as before.

### NORDHEIMER -

This part of the ravine from St. Clair to Spadina has already been sodded and some trees and shrubs planted. A pathway of limestone screenings (very fine-stone chips) now winds through it. Some marshy areas remain on the sides of the bottom land. The level of the floor of the ravine has been raised considerably at the St. Clair end as a result of subway construction.

### 2) HUMBER VALLEY - THISTLETOWN AREA -

As you may have seen from the newspapers recently, there is a likelihood of a high-rise-condominium complex being built in the southwest quadrant of the intersection of Islington Avenue North over the Humber valley. About 12 acres of land immediately south of Islington Avenue are involved. Members of the Environmental Committee have visited this area and talked with representatives of the Thistletown Residents' Association in order to get an idea of the effects that so many people living so close to the Humber River would have on the semi-wild area immediately to the south. A letter has now been sent from the Club to the authorities in Etobicoke Borough stating the reasons for the Club's opposition to rezoning this strip of land for high-density housing.

### 3) TFNC'S RAVINE SURVEYS -

Study No. Two - Brookbanks Ravine was completed at the end of 1974. A third survey is nearly ready for xeroxing in the same format as Study No. Two. This has been compiled by Clive and Joy Goodwin and is devoted to the Chapman Valley Ravine in Etobicoke, which runs from Royal York Road, under Scarlett Road and joins the Humber a little north of Eglinton.

Another survey, that of the East Don Valley -- Wigmore Park area is well advanced. A preliminary survey of the West Don Valley from Bayview Bridge to the bridge in Sunnybrook Park (near the riding stables) has been made and will be continued during 1976 until it is considered reasonably complete. During 1975 a preliminary survey was made of the West Pond-Rennie Park ravine, and as soon as the inventories of plants and birds identified in that ravine are considered adequate, it can be issued as another survey in this series.

### 4) SHORT RAVINE REPORTS -

During 1975 a format for compiling a short ravine report (say 4 - 6 pages) was established (see back page of this Newsletter for a copy). This has been tried out by the North York Ravine group and stimulated an encouraging response from members and their friends and neighbours.

The following ten short reports have now been received:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>
Moccasin Trail Park	Don Valley Parkway and Lawrence
Addington Ravine	Bathurst and Sheppard
Vyner Greenbelt	Leslie and 401
Windfield Park	York Mills and Bayview
Timberlane/Westgate	Bathurst and 401
Moatfield Park and E. Don	Leslie and 401
Newtonbrook/Revcoe	Yonge and Cummer
Wellesbourne	Leslie and Steeles
Toryork Greenbelt/St. Lucie Park	Weston Road and Finch
Ross Lord Park Ravine	Dufferin north of Finch

5) PHOTOGRAPHS AND SLIDES -

Since the last note on this subject, the following items have been received as gifts to the Club:

<u>Donor</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Place</u>
1) Helen Yemen	BW photos	Rowntree Mill Park & Don River at Sunnybrook
2) Margaret Knight	colour slides	West Pond and Rennie Park
3) Alan Valiunas	colour slides	West Pond and Grenadier Pond
" "	colour photos	West Pond
4) Dick Saunders	colour slides	Burke Ravine (between Sunnybrook Hospital and C.N.I.B.)
5) Ed Waltho	A collection of colour slides & some BW photos	(being sorted)
6) Nancy Bellerby	Colour slides	Black Creek, Ross Lord Ravine, Newtonbrook Ravine
7) John and Joan Thomson	colour slides	Wigmore Park
8) Bruce Cruickshank	colour slides	Newtonbrook ravine; Westgate; Windfield Park; Addington Ravine; Wellesbourne; Wigmore; Brookbanks; Moatfield; Vyner; Toryork.

On behalf of the members of the Club, many thanks for these photos and slides. We now have the beginnings of a highly useful collection.

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H E L P !

Bruce Cruickshank

Do you live on a ravine, or do you walk regularly in a ravine? If so, you are the person to whom this plea is directed.

The previous article by Jack Cranmer-Byng reviews what has been accomplished by the "raviners" of the TFN during 1975. This has involved time-consuming observation over considerable periods of time in order to compile lists of the various plants and animals which either live in or visit the ravines. It also involves observation of the activities of one particular species, Homo sapiens, for these activities may affect the natural state of the ravines more than those of any other species.

All of these observations require people -- people like you and me. Many members of the TFN are reticent about becoming involved in this work, arguing that they do not have enough expertise. It does not need much expertise to identify a trail-bike or the wholesale destruction of a ravine, such as occurred in Newtonbrook last winter. When expertise is required to identify a tree, a flower or a bird there are experts available at the other end of a telephone.

Studies of the "quality" of a ravine may not seem as interesting as a bird-walk or an evening at OISIE, but they are essential if we are to conserve these areas. There are unexpected bonuses for the "raviner" such as a collection of more than 100 photographs of wildflowers all taken within a few hundred yards of the Don Valley Parkway or the discovery of many hitherto unknown places to walk.

The North York Ravine Group, under the leadership of Rae Abernethy, has been working with the North York Parks and Recreation Department for the last two years. This has resulted in the production of reports on 11 ravines. Many more areas could have been visited if more than 15 people had been involved. Studies of this kind are going ahead in the City and in Etobicoke: there has been no start yet in other boroughs.

There is an urgent need for more members of the TFN to become involved in these projects, not only in the suburban boroughs but also in the City. Growth and development in the suburbs will affect the ravines of all of Metropolitan Toronto. If this work is to be meaningful it must be ongoing: just because an area is in good condition now does not mean that it will always be so. Show your interest now by filling in the tear-off and sending it to one of the following:

- Rae Abernethy, 65 Eilerslie Ave., # 254, Willowdale, M4N 1Y1 (223-6144)
- Jack Cranmer-Byng, 190 Glengrove Ave. West, Toronto M4R 1P3 (488-3262)
- Bruce Cruickshank, 14 Hockley Place, Don Mills M4N 2S4 (444-4372)

Ravines cannot talk -- YOU can!

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NAME \_\_\_\_\_ Phone No. \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Ravine(s) or river valley \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

FORMAT FOR SHORT RAVINE REPORTS

REPORT ON \_\_\_\_\_ Ravine

Compiled by \_\_\_\_\_  
for the Environmental Committee of the Toronto Field Naturalists' Club

\_\_\_\_\_ month and year \_\_\_\_\_

NAME OF RAVINE \_\_\_\_\_

LOCATION \_\_\_\_\_

STATUS What authorities own it/what is privately owned  
\_\_\_\_\_

MAP (if possible)

POINTS OF ACCESS \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

TOPOGRAPHY & ECOLOGY (short description by sections)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

BIOLOGICAL INVENTORIES (or remarks on some of trees, plants, mammals, birds)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

HUMAN USES (how is it being used -- suggestions for best use)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

RECOMMENDATIONS AND/OR COMMENTS  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
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