



TORONTO FIELD NATURALISTS' CLUB

Number 299

April, 1976

APRIL MEETING

Monday, April 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 Ave., under the building. (parking fee 50¢).

SPEAKER: Audrey E. Wilson.

SUBJECT: "Wild Animals and Birds I have Known"

Audrey Wilson is Senior Outdoor Education Consultant for Northumberland and Durham Board of Education. You won't want to miss her colour slides. Mark the date on your calender ... bring your friends.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Monday, May 3, 1976.

Junior Club Meet in the Royal Ontario Museum, 100 Queen's Park at 10:00 a.m.
Saturday The meeting will be under the leadership of Dr. P. Von Bitter and
April 3 Michelle Jacobs.
10:00 a.m. Director - Lynn Scanlan, (488-8321, after 6:30 p.m.)

Bird Group Meet at St. James Bond United Church on Avenue Road, just north of Eglington Avenue. This promises to be a very interesting evening.
Wednesday Dave Taylor and Don Clement will have a slide program illustrating April 28 their talk on 'The Art of Presenting a Program'. We will learn 8:00 p.m. how the use of different equipment and multi-projectors enhances a program. Chairman - Red Mason, 621-3905.

Botany Group No meeting in April. Chairman - Wes Hancock, 757-5518.

Environmental Group Date not set for April. Chairman - Henry Fletcher, 421-1549.

NOTE: The next issue of the Newsletter will be the last one of the 1975-76 season. Anyone wishing to make a contribution to this issue ... and these are always welcome ... should try to get it to the Editor by Saturday, April 3rd.

EDITOR: Elmer Talvila, 12 Cranleigh Court, Islington, Ont. M9A 3Y3 (231-1064)
Newsletter Production: Hattie Beeton, 1164 Broadview Ave., Toronto (422-4830)

REPORT OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE

During the 1975-76 year, the Board of Directors of the Toronto Field Naturalists has consisted of the following persons:

President: William A. Andrews
Vice-President: Ronald Thorpe
Immediate Past President: Rosemary Gaymer

Directors due to retire in 1976: Leila Gad
Harry Kerr
Harold Taylor

Directors due to retire in 1977: Wes Hancock
Barry Ranford
Norah Stuart

Directors due to retire in 1978: Henry Fletcher
Sheila McKay
N.H.M. (Mac) Smith

The Nominating Committee, consisting of the Club's three most recent Past Presidents, recommends the following slate of nominees to the Board for the year 1976-77 :

President: Ronald Thorpe
Vice-President: Wes Hancock

Director to serve for one year,
taking Mr. Hancock's place in
the group due to retire in
1977: Joan O'Donnell

Directors due to retire in 1979: Helen Juhola
John Lowe-Wylde
Reta McWhinnie

The Club's By-Law No. 1, Section 3(c), provides that "nominations may be proposed in writing to the Secretary, by any three members of the Corporation" (i.e. the T.F.N.C.) "accompanied by the written consent of the nominee. Such nominations shall be published in the May issue of the Newsletter, and the names of such nominees shall be added to the list of candidates submitted by the Nominating Committee and shall be presented to the Annual Meeting" for election by ballot by those members present at the meeting.

NOTE: Material for publication in the May Newsletter must be delivered to the Secretary on or before April 2, 1976.

Rosemary D. Gaymer,
Chairman, Nominating Committee.

(Secretary: Hattie Beeton, 1164 Broadview Avenue, Toronto, Ont. M4K 2S5)

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

My message this month concerns the fate of Oshawa Second Marsh. In my opinion, its future depends largely upon how strongly naturalists are willing to urge the authorities to preserve it.

Second Marsh, as it is called, comprises approximately 220 acres of ideal wetland habitat. It is probably the most important marsh for wildlife between Toronto and Kingston. Over 250 species of birds use it as a staging area. It is also the home of many species of mammals, reptiles, and amphibians. Fish and other freshwater organisms breed and feed in it. Many species of plants add to the diversity and biological importance of the marsh. It is among the top five duck-banding sites in North America.

In spite of the obvious biological importance of this marsh, the Oshawa Harbour Commission (OHC) has embarked on a scheme to justify the need for expansion of harbour facilities, for which the marsh would be required. The OHC has kept its scheme secret. In fact, it has taken a very belligerent and arrogant stand against any person or group that questions its actions. The OHC has, further, refused access to the marsh to naturalists and conservationists; it has stopped duck-banding programs; it has halted nature study in the marsh by educational and public groups; it has even refused entry to the marsh to personnel from the provincial government. (The OHC is under the Federal Department of Transport).

I believe that you should write to the appropriate people (listed below) and make some or all of the following points:

- (a) The unnecessary destruction of this unique non-renewable resource must not be allowed to take place.
- (b) The OHC should be compelled to conduct and make public studies on the economic, social, and environmental impact of the new harbour it proposes.
- (c) The OHC should be forced to explain publicly why a harbour that is not now being used to full capacity requires expanding.
- (d) The marsh should be open to all persons interested in the natural history of the area, whether the main purpose be environmental studies, bird-watching, bird-banding, botanical studies, or nature education. Only then can interested groups collect data that might counter the OHC's findings.

Some groups that are urging preservation of Oshawa Second Marsh are:

Canadian Wildlife Federation
Canadian Nature Federation
Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters
Federation of Ontario Naturalists
Many local nature and sports groups
Ministry of Natural Resources (Ontario)
Ministry of the Environment (Ontario)
Canadian Wildlife Service (Federal)

... continued

Please write a letter expressing your concerns to:

- 1) The Honourable Otto Lang, Minister of Transport,
House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario.
- 2) Premier W. Davis,
Legislative Buildings, Queen's Park, Toronto, Ontario.
- 3) Your M.P.
- 4) Your M.P.P.

NOTE: Your letter will likely have more impact if you do NOT identify yourself as a member of the Club.

..... Bill Andrews.

CURATOR APPOINTED FOR COLLECTION OF SLIDES AND PHOTOGRAPHS

Mark Sawyer, a member of the T.F.N.C. who is also a professional photographer has agreed to act as the Club's first Curator of its slide and photograph collection. He intends to catalogue them and develop an indexing system so that if members of the Club wish to borrow photos/slides related to a particular area or topic, Mark will be able to show them what the Club owns. This will be particularly useful when a member wants specific slides/photos for an exhibition or for a talk, or the presentation of the Club's point of views at a public hearing.

Any member of the Club who is willing now, or in the future, to donate slides or photos to the T.F.N.C.'s collection would he or she please contact Mark. If you would prefer to loan them for copying this would be fine, but in case of color prints and black-and-white photos it would be better to loan the negatives. When donating or lending slides/photos please let Mark have the following information for each one:

Subject; approx. date taken; location; name of photographer.

When a slide/photo has been donated to the Club, or loaned for copying, it is understood that if these are reproduced in print at any time this will be only for Club use and that these slides/photos will not be printed for any commercial use.

Mark Sawyer's address is: 11 Shallmar Blvd., #508, Toronto, Ont. M5M 1J6
Phone: 782-3116.

VOLUNTEERS WANTED FOR CANADIAN NATIONAL EXHIBITION - August 18 to Sept. 6, 1976

Your Club has been invited again this year to put on a display in the
Arts, Crafts and Hobbies Building

Volunteers are needed to greet visitors to our booth. If you can help, please call: Muriel Miville at 422-4830 (days)
925-0549 (after 9:00 p.m., even to 11:00 p.m.
and on weekends)

"IDENTIPOINTS" FOR BEGINNING BIRDWATCHERS

(Some of the things to focus on!)

by Rosemary Gaymer

The check-list that follows developed as an aid for the bird study courses I have been giving for the Continuing Education division of Sheridan College in Oakville.

So many beginning birdwatchers become frustrated at either one or the other of two difficulties - either they feel there is so much to learn that they will never master it; or else they see a bird, but can recall none of the important details, because they don't look at it. The key to learning bird identification is knowing what to look for as well as knowing what not to worry about. Those who feel there is too much information need to have a way of organizing all the facts; while the others have to train their eyes - and ears - to be observant - and especially not to take one long look at a bird, but to take a number of mini-looks, to focus and refocus rapidly on a number of different factors.

Anyone should be able to think up some more points to be added to the list - the ones given here are just for starters. The check-list is offered to the new birders in the Club in the hope that they will find it useful.

<u>SIZE</u>	- smaller than	House sparrow
	- same size as	Starling
	- larger than	American Robin
	- How much smaller/larger?	Blue Jay
	- Relative lengths/sizes of:	Crow
		Mallard
		Head:Body
		Bill:Head
		Wing Length: Tail Length (at rest)
		Neck:Body
		Tail:Body
		Legs:Tail (in flight)
		Wings:Body (in flight)

SILHOUETTE/BODY SHAPE

Next to colour position, perhaps the most useful factor to be aware of, to train your eyes to observe rapidly.

- Slim/Average/Heavyweight
- Flight outlines - from below
 - side view
- Deportment! Angle of body when standing/perched/running, etc.
Angle of head and bill on ground/perched/in flight
How wings and tail held--dropping, raised/still/active ... etc.

MOVEMENT (Other than flight)

- Walking Even keel/wobbling/dignified/otherwise/slow/fast/stop-and-start/other
- Hopping
- Scratching at leaves/earth to find food
- Climbing Up/down/headfirst/tail-first/straight/spiralling/by feet only.
with tail support
- Swimming Body still when swimming/head jerking/wings or tail flicking
- Diving Long/short duration
Type of dive - slow sinking/"clean" dive/splashing dive
- Activity Very quiet movements/hyperactive/wing flashing/tail wagging

BILLS/HEADS/NECKS

- | | | | | |
|--------------|--------|---|-------|---|
| <u>Bills</u> | Colour | - one colour
- base/tip variation
- banded/ringed
- upper/lower mandible variation | Shape | - thin/thick/medium
- (sharply) pointed
- conical
- short/medium/long
- very/slightly hooked
- dagger shaped
- "standard" duck bill or otherwise
- curved up/down
- heaviness of head |
| <u>Heads</u> | colour | - solid colour
- contrast to neck
- stripes - median
- above/through/below eye
- whisker
- bare
- patches - forehead
- crown
- nape
- lores
- cheek
- chin/throat | Shape | - long/thin
- rounded
- flattened
- higher in front/back
- crested - how?
- large/small of body |
| <u>Necks</u> | | - short and thick (round shouldered?)
- "Standard"
- medium/long
- colour in one with head or contrast
- " " " " breast " "
- " " " " back " "
- stripes on front/side-back of neck | | |

- LEGS AND FEET - long/average/short
 - thick/medium/thin
 - colour of tarsus/toes/webs if any
 - bare/feathered
 - lobed/semipalmated-webbed
 - toe arrangement
 - how held in flight
 - length relative to tail if stretched out in flight

TAILS AND WINGS

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <u>Tails</u> | <u>Wings</u> | <u>Both</u> |
| - (very short
- medium
- long
- fan-shaped
- rounded
- squared
- tapered
- wedge-shaped
- notched
- forked
- pointed
- solid colour
- patterned
- "tipped"
- barred - how many?
- variations upper/underside
- outer tail feathers
- how held when walking/perched | - short
- medium
- long
- narrow
- broad

- rounded
- pointed

- tapered
- angular
- solid colour
- "mantle" effect
- primaries
- secondaries
- speculum
- bars - how many?
- shoulder
- patches of colour - wings folded
- leading edge
- trailing edge | combinations of shapes (important)

Relative length of wings/tail tip at rest |

TAILS AND WINGS (continued)

Tails

Wings

Both

- wing tips
- under surface
 - flight feathers
 - wing lining
- wrist
- axillars

COLOUR

General overall impression - black/brown/white/green/blue/yellow/grey/red/etc.

Contrasts/Distribution of colour

Impression above/below

Detail of - legs/feet

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - chin/throat - flanks/sides - forehead/crown/nape/neck - eye/eye ring/eye stripes - wing details (folded/flying- - tail above/below - solid colour - plumage dull/shiny-glossy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - breast/belly - under tail coverts - lores/cheeks/whisker,etc - bill upper/lower/tip - back/rump/upper tail coverts - stripes/bars/spots - speckles/"scaled" |
|--|---|

FLIGHT CHARACTERISTICS

Wing beats - deep/shallow

- rapid/medium/slow
- stiff/relaxed
- even/uneven speed
- "flap and glide"

Flight path - steady/erratic/jerky/zigzag/"bouncing"

Wings - silent/noisy/musical

Flight - strong/weak

Flying - low/high/"dropping" from perch/take off level or upwards

Speed - slow/medium/fast

Hovering

Soaring - wings held flat (horizontal)/bowed (up or down)/dihedral(V-shaped)

Take off - abrupt spring } water or land

- running }

SONGS, CALLS AND ASSOCIATED BEHAVIOUR

Song - Pitch - high/medium/low/even/ascending/descending

- Duration - short/medium/long
- Rapid/slow/accelerating/decelerating/crescendo/decrescendo
- Single/repetitive/trills
- Clear/"slurred" or "buzzy"/harsh/hoot
- Single/compound unit
- One/several characteristic songs
- Much/little variation in tone
- Basic song type without/with variation
- Soft/noisy/chattering/warbling/whistling/squeaky
- Loud and "carrying"/medium/quiet

Singing - On ground/low in bush or tree/medium height/high tree or other perch

- In open/concealed
- In flight - with/without special display
- Attitude/deportment while singing
- What time of day

Call Notes - Quality

- Tone
- Single/multiple
- Communicating within flock/tomate/to young/talking to itself
- Alarm

NESTS AND EGGS

Time of year	
Solitary/communal	
Location	- high trees - medium trees/high bushes - medium/low bushes - low undergrowth - holes - banks/trees/buildings/natural/excavated/constructed shape - meadows - on ground/attached to plants - marshes - at water's edge/on or in reeds
Shape	- small/medium/large - neat/untidy - basic material - lining material - strong/weak construction - hanging/balanced/strapped on - "standard" or domed with entrance hole
Eggs	- number - shape - colour - basic - decoration - all over/zoned - decoration - spots, blotches, lines, zigzag markings
Young	- bare/helpless/blind at hatching (altricial) - down covered/active/out of nest immediately after hatching (precocial)

MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES PUBLICATIONS

Several copies of the following booklets will be available at our publication desk at the April meeting:

- 1) Rocks and Minerals Information 1976 - An up-to-date listing of publications available from the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Geological Survey of Canada. Includes maps, reports, yearbooks, etc.
- 2) Toronto's Geological Past - an Introduction - A fold-out showing geological strata, fossils, maps and a glacial history of the Toronto area.

"AT THIS PARTICULAR MOMENT"

This is a slightly different approach to Nature Study based on the premise that out door exercise and the enjoyment of the environment in all it's ramifications is the main purpose. I believe from reports of club-member activity there is a tendency to think in terms of "the gross national product" by producing a tally of species observed which surpasses the tally of other members. I should add that I look forward to, for example, the Annual Christmas Census and the report of this scientific study.

In my early years of "the pursuit of happiness" through observing this wonderful world of natural things, bird watching was the focal point of my attention but I discovered so many others of equal interest. A tree which has a reddish bark in some way appeared different than all others previously seen by me. Is it? Or perhaps AT THIS PARTICULAR MOMENT the slant of the sun's rays produced the effect. I stop, not just to identify the wood species. Two Goldfinch, males in changing color plumage, are clinging precariously to the top of a weed,

feeding on the seeds. I stop, for AT THIS PARTICULAR MOMENT, the background of white glistening snow through which the plant protrudes and the wooded area in the near distance is a "picture no artist can paint".

It was an artist who stimulated my interest in the title of this article. He suggested that I "carry with me a printed card" AT THIS PARTICULAR MOMENT and exercise it's use not only in nature walks but in all walks of life. "Search, look for these special situations which will never occur exactly the same in our lifetime". I have found that the adoption of this attitude has added a new dimension to life.

May I share with you one of these special situations taken at random from my notes. At this season of the year perhaps it is timely.

March 12, 1972

CROWS

Nothing particularly nice about the Crow. A nuisance to the farmer and a villain so considered by bird watchers for his depredations. He is, however, the "real harbinger of spring". Driving north through the Hockley valley area I stopped at the top of one of the high hills which overlooked farmland of rolling hills, a stream and wooded areas spotted in the background. Several crows obviously paired and seeking nest sites were flying slowly and gracefully over this scene. Heads extended, looking from side to side, quietly intent on their mission and oblivious to anything else. I thought AT THIS PARTICULAR MOMENT -- It's Spring!

..... Harold Garner

A GENERAL SURVEY OF HERPTILES IN RENNIE AND HIGH PARKS

Summary of an article by William Tough (*) from the Newsletter of the Canadian Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Society (CARCS). The Newsletter is available at our publications desk.

1) West Pond (or Catfish Pond) in Rennie Park.

On June 16, 1970, a large quantity of toxic pollutants was accidentally released into the pond. There is no information available as to whether any species of fish have survived but the City of Toronto is doing a study to find out. Before that the pond had a large population of Nisei goldfish.

Other than toads the pond has no frogs or other amphibians or turtles or other reptiles.

2) Grenadier Pond in High Park

No amphibians other than toads although various species of frogs were present 10 years ago.

The frogs and turtles probably disappeared when the Parks Department made their 'improvements' on the eastern shore line and destroyed large areas of swamp and reed beds and lined the water's edge with stones.

3) Lower duck pond, s.e. corner of High Park

Contains a considerable population of snapping turtles but no other amphibians or reptiles. Quite a few fish present including Nisei goldfish, carp, pumpkin seed sunfish and black crappies (calico bass).

4) Upper duck pond, north of lower duck pond, High Park

No amphibians, but a small colony of painted turtles present.

..... Elmer Talvila

* NOTE: William Tough wrote an informative article on "The Fishes of Grenadier Pond" for the special issue of our Newsletter published for the F.O.N. Annual Meeting of April 1969. This issue contained many articles about the natural history of Toronto. Copies might still be available; see Hattie Beeton at the publications desk.

HAMILTON NATURALISTS' CLUB FALL HAWK WATCH

(data taken from The Wood Duck, V.29, No. 7, March 1976)

Lucky birders were able to observe a spectacular broadwing hawk flight, September 12 to 14th last fall. On the 13th, I was perched on the observation tower in Dundas Marsh and observed about 1,500 in a few hours. Counts from Hamilton Stations were as high as 2,300 and 1,355. But the big day was the 14th when some 10-15,000 were seen in Toronto and 12,346 by Bill Smith and Dave Copeland in Hamilton.

Other highlights in September included: a golden eagle, a high of 87 sharpshins on the 14th, 15 kestrels on the 12th, 2 merlins, 2 bald eagles, and osprey throughout the month with at least 8 present on the 7th.

October sightings were a bit disappointing but included 43 red-shouldered hawks, another bald eagle, and 2 goshawks.

Fall totals: Turkey vulture - 27; Goshawk - 3; Cooper's - 22; Sharpshinned - 342; red-tailed - 129; red-shouldered - 43; broad-winged - 15,181; rough-legged - 5; golden eagle - 2; bald eagle - 3; marsh hawk - 25; osprey - 20; merlin - 2; kestrel - 136; unidentified - 114.

If this has whetted your appetite for hawks, come out to the outing at Grimsby Point on April 11th. Directions are in the Spring Outings Booklet, 1976, enclosed with this Newsletter.

..... Elmer Talvila

"AN ARCTIC ADVENTURE ON THE COPPERMINE"

You are invited to attend a special slide presentation by Ingmar Remmler, of Fort Erie, Ontario on ...

"A Float Trip down North America's Last Frontier" on Wednesday, April 14th, 1976 at 8:00 p.m. at St. James Bond United Church, just north of Eglinton Avenue on Avenue Road. Come and bring a friend. Complete details on this wonderful trip, to take place on July 18-29, 1976 available from Ontario Nature Tours, phone (416) 421-4537

A YEAR IN JAMAICA

by Gerald Vincent Helwig

For the school year 1974-75 I had a job teaching at York Castle High School in Brown's Town, Jamaica, and I spent a good deal of time after school and on weekends photographing birds and trying to get recordings of bird songs. Brown's Town is a small country town inland about 8 miles from the North coast at an elevation of about 1100 feet. This is a note on some of my experiences.

Lisa Salmon's bird sanctuary at Rocklands, Anchovy, about 3 miles from Montego Bay is one of the best places to see and study birds. This sanctuary has been mentioned before in the Club's Newsletters. There are feeding stations in the patio of the house, flowering and fruit trees in the garden and water set out in the woods for the birds. Lisa's Sanctuary is supported by the fees paid by visitors. A visit to Rocklands is a popular tourist excursion in the winter months. Lately Lisa has had an annex built to her quarters with housekeeping facilities. These are available at moderate cost to bird students and bird lovers.

In the winter months there are some migrants from the North to be seen: Warblers, the Ovenbird, the Catbird. I have seen an Indigo Bunting in the Montego Bay area. Summer migrants include: the Black-whiskered Vireo and the Gray Kingbird. Local birds are described in James Bond's Field Guide to Birds of the West Indies. The names I will use are the common names given in his book. Among the local birds seen at the sanctuary were: the Ground Dove, the White-winged Dove, the White-crowned Pigeon all of which occur in Florida or the Florida Keys. Seen also were the Streamer-tail and Jamaican Mango Hummingbirds both confined to Jamaica. The Streamer-tail and Mango get very tame in the sanctuary and will perch on a visitor's finger to feed from a nectar bottle. The Vervain is also seen. It is slightly larger than the Bee Hummingbird of Cuba which is probably the smallest of all birds. Of special interest is the Jamaican Tody, a very small bird with green back and scarlet throat. Last spring a pair were working at making a tunnel in a bank behind Lisa's house. They make their nest at the end of such a tunnel - like the Kingfisher. It sings a great deal and has several quite different songs. Other local birds seen were the White-bellied Dove, the Ruddy Quail-Dove which is getting rare in Jamaica, the Mockingbird, the White-chinned and the White-eyed Thrushes, (the latter shy and somewhat rare), The Bananaquit, the Grassquit, the Saffron Finch, the Orangequit, the Jamaican Euphonia, the Jamaican Oriole, the Loggerhead Flycatcher, the Jamaican Woodpecker. This is certainly not a complete list of birds that can be seen at the sanctuary.

In Brown's Town I lived in a private home which took paying guests. Growing in the garden fence there was a kind of strangler fig, a large tree bearing a small red fruit which becomes purple when ripe. Birds are very fond of the fruit which does not ripen all together, the ripening season lasts a month or more and during this time I could almost always see some birds feeding in the tree. From the house verandah I have seen in it, Mockingbirds, Thrushes, Orangequits, Euphonias, Bananaquits, Orioles, Loggerhead Flycatchers, Striped-headed Tanagers. A pair of Parakeets began excavating for a nest in the large termite nest in the lower forks of the tree, but gave it up as too exposed a locality perhaps.

The fig tree was festooned with vines of a climbing cactus (*hylo-cereus triangularis*). For several weeks in the rainy season (November-December) these plants produced a succession of beautiful large and fragrant white flowers. They opened

at night and closed early in the morning. A bloom lasted only one night and a short time in the morning, long enough for me to get photos in daylight with my telephoto lens. To get a good close-up I found a tree seven miles away with vines hanging near to the ground. One afternoon when I saw a bud ready to open at night, I decided that it was well worthwhile for me to motor that distance later. I got some good flash-photos of the bloom that night.

The fruit of the cactus is a kind of prickly pear, as big as a medium sized orange. It is red in colour and turns purple when ripe; then it is edible and is also very highly esteemed as food by birds. Though the vines had produced over fifty blooms, only two fruit formed and matured, and these were immediately consumed by the birds. On a rainy day, when I observed one of the fruit ripe I was able to get some photos of it with a bird enjoying a banquet. The light was poor and the photo not as good as I would have liked, but there were no other chances. The birds finished off the fruit in a day.

Brown's Town lies in a hilly area. Some hill tops are still clothed in native forest and substantial woods remain even on the hills with homes and gardens on their sides and tops. When sitting on a verandah or in a garden one often could see and hear a flock of Parakeets or Parrots flying overhead. The Parakeets may come nearer to feed on the buds of the "quick stick" (*glericidia sepia*) and if one is lucky one might see Parrots feeding on fruit of the seville orange trees. Game birds highly esteemed by sportsmen have had a happy holiday from being hunted. To combat criminal violence in the Island the government has called in all guns - sporting guns included. Due to the respite the numbers of doves of all kinds has increased substantially, especially the numbers of the White-crowned Pigeon. These can often be seen on the wing or even perched in trees in gardens which bear berries they like to eat, though they are shy birds.

Flocks of large white Cattle Egrets fly in formation in the late afternoon on their way to their roost by the coast. One well-known roost which I visited was a clump of large mangrove trees on a small island just off the shore line. Thousands of birds must have roosted in the trees. These birds can now be seen in cattle pastures all over the island. The first migrants must have arrived in Jamaica in the fifties. In recent years a large fire-fly that used to be common, no longer is seen at nights, no doubt exterminated by these egrets.

There is a Jamaican Crow, a wary bird, which has extended its range in the Island. In Brown's Town it is often to be seen and heard on the wing or when perched at a distance. It is much noisier and more varied in its calls than the Canadian Crow. Its vocalizations are aptly described by the local name Jabbering Crow.

Bird nests were found in private gardens. There were several nests of Mockingbirds. An attempt was made to get a photographic study of fledglings in one of these nests which was in a fairly low bougainvillea bush. Unfortunately a predator, probably a Sparrow Hawk (American Kestrel) took the young fledglings. A White-chinned Thrush's nest, well hidden in the close foliage of a juniper was found. There were nests of the Bananaquit which often builds near wasps' nests for protection, no doubt. A streamer-tailed Hummingbird was photographed brooding in its nest in the lower branches of a tree a few feet away from a window of a home.

Places near Brown's Town which yielded interesting birds and good photos were: lagoons surrounded by mangroves, reefs off seaside homes on the North shore, and a small deep fresh water lake near Discovery Bay, half a mile or more inland from the sea side. This lake appears to have an underground channel to the sea as its

level rises and falls with the tide. Here Pied-billed Grebes, Common Gallinules, Jacanas, and Green Herons were seen. The reefs were visited by Blue and Green Herons and by the Yellow-crowned Night Heron. In the lagoons there were Stilts, Plovers, Willets, Ducks and Sandpipers. A Snowy Egret was photographed from a car when it was feeding in the sea near the road. So much for the North side of the Island.

There are other places I visited which are well worth the trouble getting to, starting from a base in Kingston, the capital, on the South side. There is the area near Hardwar Gap, elevation 4000 feet, about 20 miles north from Kingston, also Clydesdale further away beyond the Gap. There are government maintained hostels for hikers at both places. Both are centres for hiking in the high mountains. Whitfield Hall is a private hostel from which visitors can take off to walk to the highest peak, Blue Mountain Peak (over 7000 feet). Beds, bedding, cooking utensils, crockery and cutlery are provided. Visitors must bring in their food. Some hardy motorists are able to make it to Whitfield Hall by car. The journey involves a river fording and a steep winding track for the last four miles or so that ordinarily can be negotiated only by land rovers or jeeps with four-wheel traction.

The birds of the high mountains include most of those to be found at lower altitudes and some rarely or never seen at low elevations: the Rufous-throated Solitaire whose haunting fluting fills the woods in spring and summer, the Jamaica Blackbird which feeds on creatures that live at the base of bromeliads, the Crested Quail-Dove (Mountain Witch is one of the local names) and a Mountain Pigeon which I have not found listed in Bond's book (1947 edition).

I am not ashamed to exhibit many of the bird slides which I took in Jamaica. My bird song recordings are mostly poor in quality.

Finally I must mention the Gosse Bird Club of Jamaica which I have joined. It pursues the same objectives as many other bird clubs; the study of local birds, bird banding, organization of meetings and excursions, and the publication of periodical broadsheets. The club is named for Philip Gosse, an Englishman who studied birds in Jamaica more than a century ago, while resident in the Island. I am fortunate to have in my possession a copy of "Birds of Jamaica" by Gosse which was published in 1847.

DID YOU KNOW? - For those not attending Red Mason's monthly Bird Group, you may find his "Did you Know" items of interest. Here are a couple:

An old Chinese and Indian method of catching ducks and geese was to stand in the water up to their necks with a water plant camouflage on their heads. When birds came in to eat off the grass, they just grabbed their feet, pulled them under water till they drowned and they had their dinner.

Re-nesting of ducks is abnormal if their first clutch is successful, but if their brood is destroyed just after hatching they will re-nest.

Water birds clean their nose by putting their beak under water and expelling air through their nostrils.

Mute swans will wipe their feet on the other leg to dry it before putting it up under their flank feathers, when you see them standing on one foot.

BOOK REVIEWS

- 1) Petite flore forestiere du Quebec. (Pocket Forest Flora of Quebec) by Quebec Ministry of Lands and Forests, 1974, 216 pages, \$3.75, soft cover. 10½ cm x 17½ cm.
- 2) Les plantes sauvages printanieres. (The Spring Wildflowers), by Quebec Ministry of Communications, 1975, 247 pages, \$4.50, soft cover. 10½ cm x 17½ cm.

Reviewed by James L. Hodgins.

Fortunately for francophones, unfortunately for non-francophones, both books are entirely in French. Nevertheless, as general guides for field identification of Eastern Canadian flora, these, so far, are unsurpassable. The authors have utilized to fullest effect, the adage 'A good picture is worth a thousand words.' Both books have either full page or half page colour photographs for each species.

Petite flore - surveys the common forest flora, including lichens, mosses, ferns, herbaceous and woody plants. Only one or two species are depicted on each page, thankfully avoiding the clutter and annoying overlap, which typifies many field guides. The colour photo of each plant has a plain, white background, facilitating simplicity and thus, identification. Two entire pages are given to each tree species, showing bark, leaves, twigs and sometimes fruit and flowers, if they are salient.

A blue linear metric scale lies directly below each photo. The scientific name with each plant photo, will allow non-French speaking readers to use this guide. A multi-coloured map in both books illustrates clearly the floristic regions of Quebec.

Les plantes - is the first volume in a series of natural science books being published by the Quebec government. This book concentrates on the flowers and shoots of spring. The full page colour photos of each species, in their natural habitat, are esthetically pleasing. It is a pity, though, the printing process creates an undeserved flatness for the flowers. The same uncluttered two pages for each species as in Petite flore ... typifies Les plantes.

The text provides all the English common names, an omission which is inexcusable in Petite flore. Six different symbols are used to head information on etymology of plant name, gross description, habitat, range, edibility, and medicinal value, respectively. It is odd that the more expensive of the two books, Les plantes, has a cheap, flimsy cover, while the less costly one has a durable cover.

Despite several minor complaints, both pocket guides have set a new high standard for field identification books. Ontario and other provincial governments would do well to emulate Quebec's example of bringing botany closer to people.

TIME TO MARK THESE DATES ON YOUR CALENDAR

Saturday, April 10 - Fifth Annual Meeting of Long Point Bird Observatory in Port Rowan. Full details from P.O. Box 160, Port Rowan, Ont. NOE 1MO.

June 11-12-13 - Federation of Ontario Naturalists' Annual Meeting, Erindale College, Mississauga, Ont. Further details in May Newsletter. For details contact: FON, 1262 Don Mills Road, Don Mills, Ont. (416) 444-8419.

A SHORT APPRECIATION OF BELLA LAKE AND THE BRUCE PENINSULA, ONTARIO.

Many years ago the F.O.N. held their summer camp at Billie Bear Lodge near Huntsville on Bella Lake. It was there when I first came out from Britain that I had my first real introduction to the flora and fauna of Ontario. A delightful introduction it was. I fell in love with the whole environment. Names like Red Pine Point, Picnic Point, and Brothers Dam bring back a whole flood of memories. Memories of early morning bird song, sultry summer afternoons with mosquitos buzzing, and a certain fellow who growled and masqueraded as a bear in the bushes at dusk when we came back from the thrush walks. We always knew who it was but our adrenalin would flow just in case it was a real bear. If I say Red Pine Point and shut my eyes, I can remember the coolness under the trees, the pine needles underfoot, a certain pleasant smell, and a vireo calling see - see - see see sou.

When the F.O.N. forsook Bella Lake for Red Bay in the Bruce Peninsula, I was reluctant to enjoy the Bruce. I chuntered around saying 'Wish we were back at Billie Bear'; this didn't last long. Much water has flowed in and out of Boat Lake, and has gently swayed the waterlillies and the pickerel weed. On a sunny day in a boat there is no where more charming. I now love every grey pitted rock in this rocky peninsula. There is an immensely varied flora vying for attention. Around the shores many spotted sandpipers plaintively call out to mates and young. The many Herring Gulls over the lake, some with raucous voices, remind me of my childhood on a distant shore. I now have a special feeling for Bella Lake and The Bruce.

..... Joy Pocklington.

Canadian Nature Federation - Annual General Meeting will take place at Carleton University, Ottawa, Ontario, May 20 to May 24, 1976. Further information from: CNF, 46 Elgin Street, Ottawa Ont. K1P 5K6.

Algonquin Waterways Wilderness Trips - Four trips are planned with naturalists and/or photographers in mind. Commencing June 27 to July 24. These four trips will be held in Algonquin and Killarney Parks.

For these and other trips scheduled by Algonquin Waterways Wilderness Trips, contact them at 271 Danforth Ave., Toronto, Ont. (phone: 469-1727).

Wildlife talk - Bert Olsen, naturalist, will give a free talk entitled: "Enjoying the Wildlife of Local Ravines". He will show his award winning film "Near Horizons" and a Dan Gibson nature film. He is also a carver of birds for the teaching of natural history and for ornamental purposes.

Wednesday, April 28 Time: 8:30 p.m.

Place: Morningside Public Library, Morningside Plaza
(at Kingston Road, Scarborough, Ont.) free admission.

REMINDER:

Will you be able to help us man the booth at the C.N.E.?

August 18 to September 6, 1976

see page 4 for phone numbers.

BACK-YARD BIRDING

by

Wm. C. Mansell

For some time I have been polishing and re-typing old field notes of 43 years for the benefit of posterity and the T.F.N.C., submitting copies to John A. Kelley. John, or any other reader, is sure to get the impression that a great deal of my birding took place about my various homes, so frequently are they the locale of some sighting.

Such is not the case, nor has any of my homes been particularly attractive to birds. A bird bath and a feeder have always been more than garden decorations, but I have seen many feeding stations attended by a greater variety of species. The fact that I was my own boss, privileged to leave for the office late and return early, accounts in no small measure for the plenitude of house records, assisted by eyes long trained to catch bird movement.

It is not my intention to inflict on T.F.N.C. members a checklist of bird visitors to my gardens nor to set down some figures on the assumption that they top anything found in Guiness' incomparable volume. Doubtless there are many garden lists superior to mine, and one was that of the late Bill Emery who, through a picture window, could see marsh wrens, waterfowl, herons, coots, gallinules and rails in the 8th Humber Marsh, which almost touched his back fence.

The point of this review is more to show what can enter a normal suburban garden and to encourage the most indolent birder to both observe and record.

The immediate surroundings of my first house (in York Township) have changed not at all since I left there in 1943. It is but a stone's easy throw from the Humber Valley which, when I lived there, was a wilderness regularly travelled by all Ontario's softbills. The efforts to conserve by the Metropolitan Conservation Authority have had such a deleterious effect on the Valley's wildlife that I seriously doubt I could now compile a list of the 93 species seen there in the decade beginning 1933.

Life in the next two houses began by approaching that of a gentleman farmer, only to see the aspect change in four or five years as urbanization crept in inexorably. The district occupied by the earlier one (Etobicoke Township) has so changed that I have difficulty in relocating the building or even the street.

During the eight years ending in 1951, 92 species were seen about house #2. The district about the present house (Mississauga) is now just as urban as any other away from Toronto's core. A hydro right-of-way at the rear affords some relief, but as the grounds started life as a sandy waste, bird life was very scarce until planting approached its present proportions. During the 23 years spent here, exactly 100 species have been accounted for, including a green-winged teal (in the yard!), woodcock and northern shrike.

Fifty-one species are common to all three lists which not unexpectedly include birds such as: Baltimore orioles, chipping sparrows, chickadees, downys et al. Yet some species are surprisingly absent. Feral pigeon, sapsucker, crested flycatcher, house wren, thrasher, bluebird and cardinal, for example, are present on only two lists.

Hawks quickly entered the lists of the second house and not only because of the open character of the vicinity at the beginning. There was strong evidence that

some sort of flyway ran over our street as small but conspicuous flights were a regular fall feature. The broadwing went undetected at the present house until some 200 materialized one September afternoon in 1974, more than making up for its long absence.

The second and third houses lie a half-mile or more from the nearest water, yet great blue, green and night herons are common to all three lists. The house by the Humber had, of course, the best record of waterfowl, with 7 species passing over. Three vireos, 4 warblers and 5 sparrows and finches appear on only one list; 11 warblers and 2 fringillids are on two; while 2 vireos, 7 warblers and 8 sparrows are common to all three.

Some of the more exciting sights have been: Black-bellied plover, whimbrel, yellow-billed cuckoo, screech owl (two lists), Bohemian waxwing, both shrikes, yellow-throated vireo, orange-crowned warbler (two lists), mourning warbler, indigo bunting, pine siskin and, although it no longer stands on its own feet, Oregon junco, twice in the same yard.

If you can approach these figures, write to me care of Sports, The Globe and Mail, 444 Front Street West, Toronto, Ont. M5V 2S9.

GENERAL REMINDER :

- April 14 - St. James Bond United Church "An Arctic Adventure on the Coppermine"
... see Page 10
April 28 - Morningside Public Library "Enjoying the Wildlife of Local Ravines"
... see page 15
April 10 - Long Point Bird Observatory Annual Meeting, Port Rowan, Ont.
... see page 14
May 20-24 - Canadian Nature Federation Annual Meeting, Ottawa, Ont.
... see page 15
June 11-13 - Federation of Ontario Naturalists Annual Meeting, Mississauga, Ont.
... see page 14
Aug. 18-Sept 6 - T.F.N. booth at the C.N.E. ... see page 4

WEEKENDS AND TRIPS

- Ontario Nature Tours, 71 Thorncliffe Park Dr. #511, Toronto, M4H 1L3 (421-4537)
Environmental Experiences Club, 2 Nursewood Road, # 11, Toronto M4E 3R8
(699-9211, after 6:00 p.m.)
Algonquin Waterways Wilderness Trips, 271 Danforth Ave., Toronto (469-1727)

BIRD SEED - Bernie Wardle, at 225-8381, will be glad to talk to you on your requirements.

It is with a deep sense of loss that we report the death of Erna Lewis on Wednesday, March 17th. Erna was a long-time member of the Club and will be remembered for her knowledge of the flowers and trees.

SUITABILITY OF AVAILABLE BOOKS AS A FIELD GUIDE TO THE HERBACEOUS
WILDFLOWERS OF ONTARIO ---- compiled by James L. Hodgins, 1976

No.	Title & Publisher	Price	Pages	Good Points	Bad Points
1	A Field Guide to Wildflowers Houghton Mifflin	H 7.00 S 5.00	420	colour key plant Family symbols clean layout	non Ontario species sparse information several Families, genera absent
2	Wildflowers and Weeds Van Nostrand Reinhold	13.00	144	extensive photos fairly complete	sparse data non Ontario species some poor photos
3	Wildflowers of E. North America A. Knopf	20.00	275	excellent photos " layout " drawings	too large for field non Ontario species photos and text are separated
4	Native Wild Plants of Eastern Canada Ryerson Press	5.00	193	layout fair photos fair Family groupings	few photos sparse data no colour key range too wide
5	Wildflowers of Eastern Canada Collins Publishers	3.00	90	Beautiful drawings	few species sparse data
6	American Wildflowers Western Publishing Company	10.00	252	many photos	poor photos sparse text poor layout too large for field
7	Wildflowers of America Crown Publishers	20.00	400	drawings excellent	too large for field non Ontario species incomplete genera
8	Michigan Wildflowers Cranbrook Institute	7.00	468	data complete species complete drawings good	no photos no colour key
9	Wildflowers in Colour Harper and Row	9.00	144	good photos good layout	genera incomplete range too wide
10	American Wildflowers	20.00	601	excellent drawings species complete	no colour photos sparse data
11	Michigan Flora Cranbrook Institute	7.50	488	good drawings species complete	few colour photos too much data 3 volumes
12	Petite flora forestiere du Quebec Quebec gov't.	3.75	216	includes metric linear scale clean layout all colour floral zones map	few Carolinian spp. no English names not extensive in no. of species
13	Les plantes sauvages printanieres Quebec gov't.	4.50	247	full page colour photos edibility and medicinal data	only in French flimsy cover only spring flowers