



TORONTO FIELD NATURALISTS' CLUB

Number 302

November, 1976.

Visitors welcome!

NOVEMBER MEETING

Visitors welcome!

Monday, November 1, 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: Jo Lucas

TOPIC: "Quick Before It Melts"

Joe Lucas, the Superintendent of Education at the Metropolitan Toronto Zoo, will give an illustrated talk on the birds and mammals of Antarctica. He has worked on Polar Bears for CWS, with the London Zoo, and at the Swiss Zoological Institute, etc.

* * * * *

NEXT MEETING DATE: Monday, December 6, 1976.

AUDUBON WILDLIFE FILM: Thursday, November 25 ... "Pacific Shores" with Norm Wakeman.

NOTE: Material for the Newsletter should be submitted to the editor, Helen Juhola, 51 Alexander St., Apt. 112, Toronto, Ont. M4Y 1B3, by the first day of the month preceding the month in which the sender wants the submission to appear. Articles should be no longer than 1500 words.

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CLUB FEES ARE NOW DUE. These may be paid at the November meeting, or you may fill in the following form and mail 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
November 6
10:00 a.m.
The Club will hold its November meeting in the Theatre of the Royal Ontario Museum. Special presentation by the Reptile Group, followed by an interesting film.
Director - Lynn Scanlan, 488-8321 (after 5:30 p.m.)

BOTANY GROUP
Tuesday
November 16
8:00 p.m.
Dr. Richard M. Saunders will present a talk, illustrated with his colour slides, on the "FLOWERS OF THE WET LANDS". This should assist us in identifying flowers found in bogs, marshes and on the margin of streams and ponds. Location: Hodgson Public School, Davisville Ave., just east of Mount 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 24
8:00 p.m.
Meet in St. James Bond United Church on Avenue Road, just north of Eglinton Avenue. Mr. Garry Bortolotti, a student at the University of Toronto, will speak to us about a study of Bald Eagles, which was conducted recently in northern Saskatchewan. His talk will be accompanied with colour slides. Chairman - Red Mason - 621-3905

Outings held
rain or shine!

OUTINGS FOR NOVEMBER, 1967

Visitors
welcome!

Saturday
November 6
9:00 a.m.
LESLIE LAND FILL (EASTERN) - Birds Leader - Dave Broughton
Meet at Gate entrance across from Garden plots, at south corner of Leslie Street. Bring good footwear. Lunch optional.

Sunday
November 7
CLAIREVILLE - OPEN HOUSE - Claireville Dam 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
For more information call: Metro Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (416) 661-6600.

Sunday
November 21
9:00 a.m.
LAMBTON WOODS - Birds Leader: Jack Sherrin
Meet in the parking lot of James Gardens (Royal York bus from subway to Edenbridge Drive and walk east 0.4 mile. Morning only.

Sunday
November 28
9:30 a.m.
CLAIREVILLE CONSERVATION AREA - Birds Leader: Ross Harris
Meet at the corner of Albion and Islington (near Donut Shop) Wear rubber boots. Bring lunch.

Sunday
December 5
HUMBER RIVER HIKE, BOYD TO KORTRIGHT 10:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.
For more information call: Metro Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (416) 661-6600.

Sunday
December 12
10:00 a.m.
GLENDON CAMPUS - Birds Leader: Ed Franks
Go west on Lawrence Avenue east from Park Lane Circle (east of Bayview Avenue). Turn left at the bottom of the hill into the parking lot. Meet here. (Pedestrians walk down through the Campus from Baview and Lawrence). Morning only. Chairman - Herb Elliott - 763-4869

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

There are several items worth mentioning. I hope you find them of interest.

The Environmental Committee has decided to discontinue its monthly meetings. Instead individual task forces will be organized to respond to environmental issues as the need arises. Many thanks to Henry Fletcher and his dedicated Committee who produced our fine publication "Toronto the Green". Coordinating the Club's environmental activities will be the responsibility of two members of the Board of Directors, Helen Juhola and Wes Hancock.

Enclosed in this issue of the Newsletter is a significant letter from the Borough of Etobicoke. Our Club has been recognized as a group of responsible citizens who can instruct and inform Municipal Governments in the effective use and protection of natural areas. It is very encouraging when governments support our ideas. Through your efforts (time and expertise) we may be able to assist in the preservation of the urban landscape for future generations. I'm convinced we can do it!

I recently received a call from John Swaigen of the Canadian Environmental Law Association (CELA) to enlist our help. John and his group have been supporting our stand against hunting of ducks in Point Pelee. Now he needs our support for the Elora Gorge Project. His letter giving information about the Elora Gorge Defence Fund will be available at the next Club meeting. If you have visited the Gorge, I'm sure you can understand why we must support CELA.

The Board of Directors has approved the construction of a picnic shelter at the Jim Baillie Nature Reserve. This project has been in the planning stage for several years but could not be constructed until the parking area and trail program were completed. We are now ready. The Nature Reserve Committee which recommended the location and design of the shelter will present a picture of the shelter at the next meeting. We hope you like it.

In the last Newsletter I asked for a volunteer to fill a very important position. Almost immediately the position of Program Chairman was filled. Many thanks to Norah Stuart who has agreed to organize the speakers for the monthly meetings at O.I.S.I.E.

..... Ron Thorpe

CHAPMAN VALLEY RAVINE STUDY PRESENTED TO ETOBICOKE COUNCIL

On September 20th Joy and I met with the General Committee of Etobicoke Council to present the study on Chapman Valley Ravine. We had asked for 10 to 15 minutes, but Council members showed considerable interest in the Report, and in all we had half an hour.

We introduced the subject briefly -- the Report itself had been pre-circulated and we were pleased to find most members seemed to have read it -- and gave a very short slide presentation before summarizing our recommendations. The General Committee was positive about protecting the valley, and we were encouraged by the support of Dr. Brereton, President of the local ratepayers, who also desires the valley to be preserved.

The matter is now referred to Etobicoke's Parks Department to study our recommendations further and report back to Council within a month.

..... Clive Goodwin

B O R O U G H O F E T O B I C O K E
C I V I C C E N T R E - E T O B I C O K E , O N T A R I O M 9 C 2 Y 2

CLERK'S DEPARTMENT

TELEPHONE: 626-4574

FILE NO. 76-G-106
Reply attention of
D. Barrett

October 4th, 1976

Mr. R. Thorpe,
President,
Toronto Field Naturalists' Club,
217 Greer Road,
Toronto, Ontario
M5M 3N5

Dear Mr. Thorpe:

Re: "Toronto The Green" - A Publication of the
Toronto Field Naturalists' Club

Council at its meeting on September 27th, 1976 adopted the following recommendation of its General Committee with respect to "Toronto the Green", a publication of the Toronto Field Naturalists' Club:

THAT a report dated September 15th, 1976 from the Commissioner, Parks and Recreation Services, wherein it is recommended that the report "Toronto the Green", a publication of the Toronto Field Naturalists' Club dated 1976 be supported in principle and considered during the ongoing studies of open space and valley lands and wherein a more natural regeneration of plants in selected areas of Etobicoke valley lands is outlined, be adopted.

The report of the Commissioner, Parks and Recreation Services, concerning this matter is appended for your information.

Yours very truly,

R. S. Gillespie

R. S. Gillespie, A.M.C.T.,
Deputy Borough Clerk.

Attach:
DB:sds



CC-HJ

A NEW HIKING TRAIL

Developed in 1975, the NORTH PICKERING HIKING TRAIL follows the West Duffin Valley for 4.5 miles. (Actual walking distance is about 8 miles.) The trail, which is located between Green River in the north and Camp Pidaca in the south, bisects the 25,200 acre North Pickering site. For more information, including a map and key to the interpretation points along the trail, send for the brochure and supplement for the North Pickering Hiking Trail to:

North Pickering Development Corporation, Ministry of Housing, Queen's Park, Toronto.

ANYONE SEEN THE MASSASAUGA RATTLESNAKE (*Sistrurus catenatus catenatus*)?

Please report any sightings of this interesting and rapidly vanishing species to:

Mr. Bruce Mackenzie, 120 Edinburgh Road S., # 505, Guelph, Ont. N1H 5P7.

include the exact location (and habitat), the date, and general weather conditions.

BOOKS OF INTEREST

What to do till the Garbage Man Arrives: A Miser's Craft Manual by Ruth Johnson, published by Gage Publishing of Toronto in 1976.

A well-illustrated hard cover book which shows the reader how to use many objects normally thrown out. Included are instructions on how to make bird houses out of discarded cans, milk cartons, and plastic jugs. Contents lists kinds of objects produced; index is according to objects to be recycled. An interesting book for anyone concerned about waste.

Wild Plants in the City by Nancy M. Page and Richard E. Weaver, Jr., published by Quadrangle/The New York Times Book Company of New York in 1975.

Illustrated throughout with black and white photographs of plants in the urban environment. Although Boston is the setting, the text is valid for urban plants almost anywhere in North America. A short bibliography is included as well as an index listing the English and Latin names of all plants described.

The Turtles of Canada by Barbara Froom published by McClelland and Stewart Limited of Toronto in 1976, 120 pages, 16 colour plates, 33 black and white pictures

This attractive and readable book gives a short introduction and provides a ready reference to all the turtles of Canada. Some four pages are devoted to each of the 14 species that have ever been found in our country. The species accounts discuss the distribution, appearance, food and behaviour. Each turtle is illustrated in clear colour plates as well as black and white pictures. Five chapters are included on general topics: Origin of turtles, Myth and Legend, Physical characteristics and adaptations, Turtles as pets, and Conservation of Turtles.

Barbara Froom is well known to many Club members as an excellent naturalist and editor of the Canadian Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Society (CARCS). She is author of another attractive book, The Snakes of Ontario, and two Province of Ontario publications: Turtles of Ontario and Snakes of Ontario. This little reference book on turtles will be a worthy companion to these predecessors on my book shelf. (Reviewed by Elmer Talvila).

NATURE RESERVE NEWS

This fall a worthwhile addition will be added to the facilities at the Nature Reserve: a picnic shelter. It will make your visits to the reserve more comfortable during inclement weather. The cost will be in the neighbourhood of \$3,000. and will be borne, at least in part, by Mrs. Helen Baillie, who some time ago donated a substantial amount of money especially for this purpose. With this splendid gesture we are indeed very fortunate. The Reserve was named after her late husband, Jim Baillie, well-known ornithologist and President of our Club in 1952-1953, who had passed away shortly before our purchase of the initial 60 acres of the Nature Reserve in 1970.

Mrs. Baillie and the Board of Directors, have given approval for the erection of the shelter as planned and proposed by the Reserve Management Committee. It will be built in the south-west open field area of the Reserve on the high ground beside the old stone fence where we usually sit for our picnic lunch. The shelter will be 28 feet long by 16 feet wide, with a minimum of 8 feet headroom; it will be a galvanized steel building of pole barn type of construction, with a baked-on enamel exterior, 3-sided, with the open side facing the north-east overlooking the Reserve. The walls are to be dark brown, the roof soffit and window trim a tan colour. The floor will consist of crushed gravel, while there will be a couple of windows (slide open) in the rear wall. We hope to have the building ready for use next spring.

A steel building was chosen because of its low maintenance requirements and long life expectancy, as well as for its resistance to fire and vandalism. The proposed location was selected for the view over the Reserve property (particularly beautiful and rich in colour at this time), and its elevation puts it beyond most of the mosquitoes and black flies -- except a few really hungry ones!

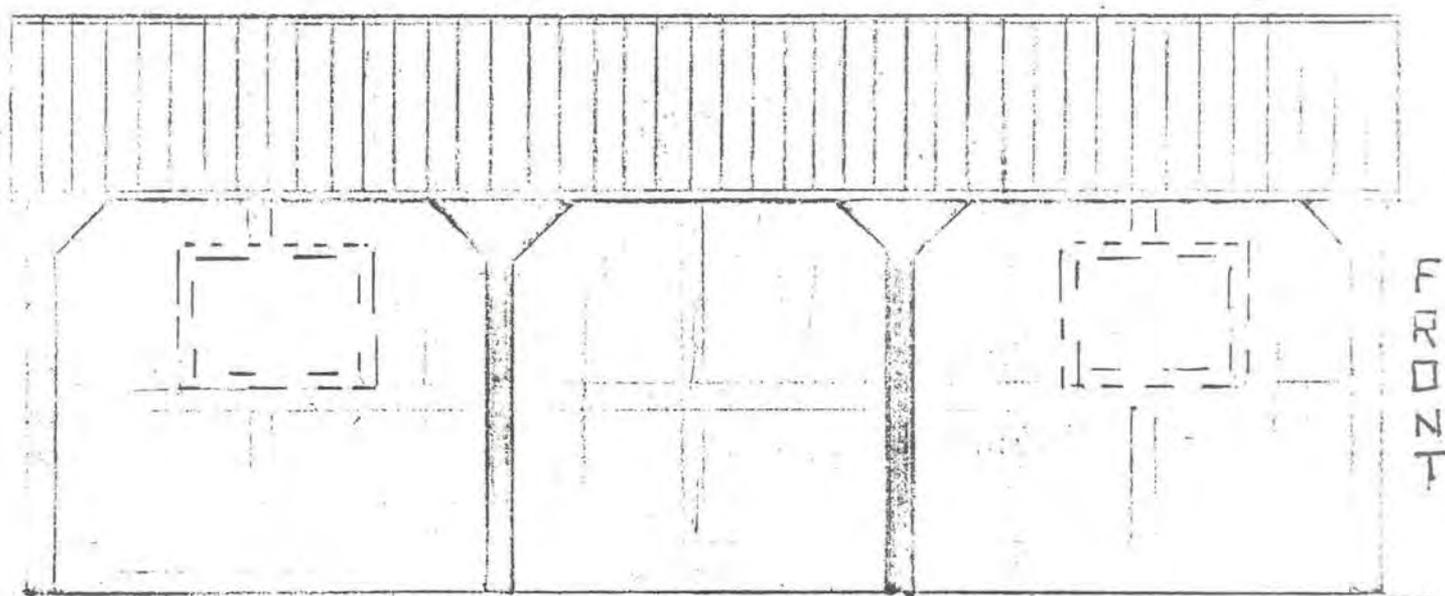
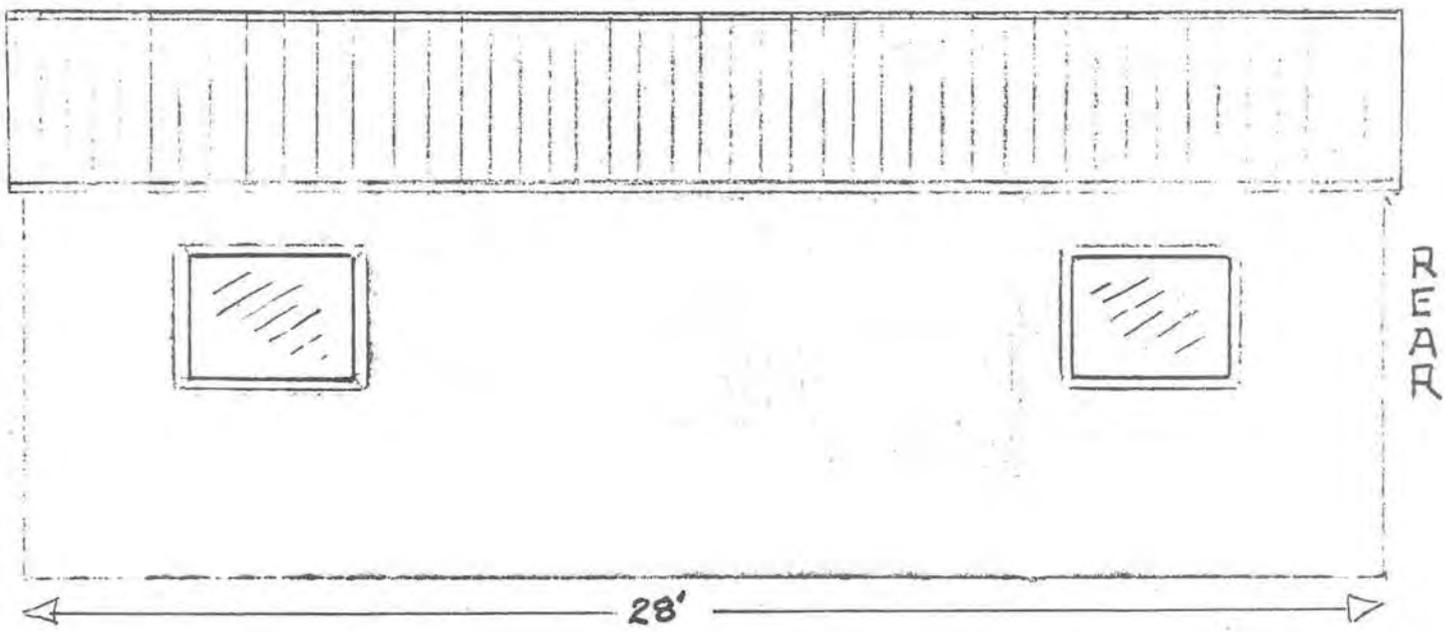
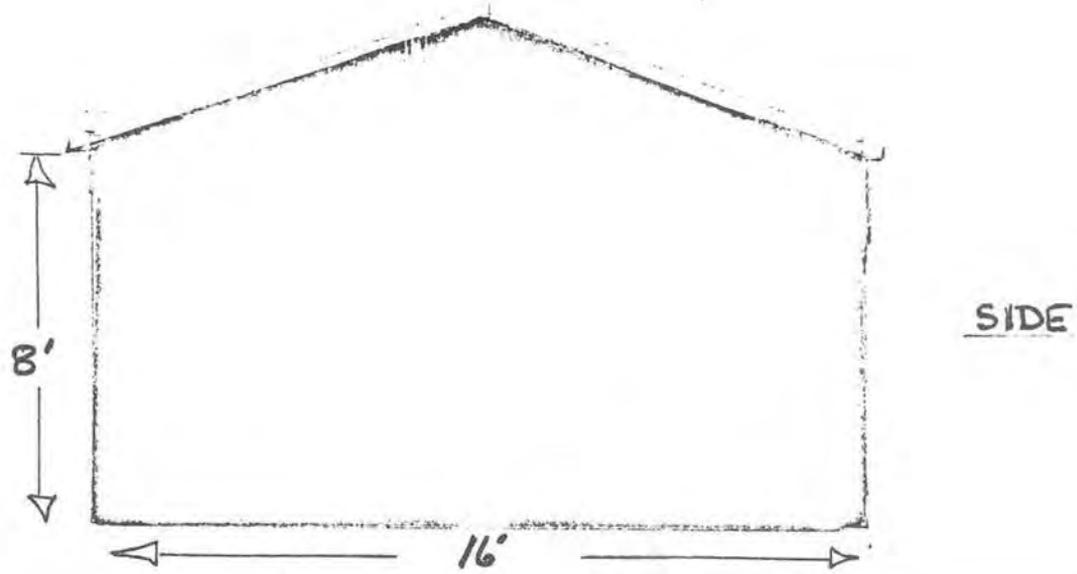
In charge of and quite busy with this project is John Lowe-Wylde, Deputy Chairman of the Management Committee for the Jim Baillie Nature Reserve. Other Committee members are Bill Andrews, Jack Gingrich, Ed O'Connor and the writer. This Committee's function is to preserve the natural state of the Reserve as much as possible, while providing and maintaining access and facilities for Club members visiting the Reserve. Specialized work such as fence erection and parking lot construction are done by local workers as a rule, as will be our shelter; while surveying, trail blazing, marking and maintenance of trails, erection of signs as well as tree planting and provision of toilet facilities are carried out by volunteers from our Club.

Next spring we intend to plant more trees in selected areas along the perimeter fence at the western boundary. We had a rather poor survival rate amongst the young seedlings we planted in 1975 due to the prolonged dry spell right after planting time. On order for May 1977 are 1,200 trees, consisting of White Pine, Red Pine, Jack Pine, and Scotch Pine, White Spruce, European Larch, Carolina Poplar and Black Locust.

Presently in preparation and to be published next spring is A Guide to the Jim Baillie Reserve, which will contain such items as general information, maps, plant and bird lists, and history.

As this is the ideal time to visit our Nature Reserve, may I take this opportunity to invite you to pick a nice day and visit those very fascinating 90 acres north of Uxbridge.

..... John ten Bruggenkate



ANNOUNCING THE ONTARIO BIRD FEEDER SURVEY

A co-operative survey of the kinds and numbers of birds using bird feeders in the winter has been organized for Ontario by the Long Point Bird Observatory. We invite your participation in this joint effort, as the more helpers we have across the province, the clearer a picture we can get of the food preferences, movements and perhaps total numbers of our winter visitors. Like Christmas Bird Counts and Breeding Bird Surveys, we depend on the help of dedicated amateur naturalists to obtain our data.

All that is required of participants is that they be able to identify common winter birds (e.g. to distinguish Hairy from Downy Woodpeckers), that they feed birds regularly, and that they be willing to make and record regular observations. Many participants will find their pleasure in feeding birds enhanced by the realization that their observations will be pooled with others to document trends not visible at a single feeder. Those taking part will receive a brief annual progress report, and more detailed analyses will be printed in Long Point Bird Observatory publications.

Participants in the Survey will record the highest number of each species seen at their feeder at any one time during two-day observation periods. Continuous watching is not necessary. The two-day periods fall on every second weekend from mid-October to mid-April, but if the weekend is missed, observations can be made on any two consecutive days in the following week.

Whether you live in country or town, forest or urban area, feed Redpolls or House Sparrows; we would like to have you join us. To obtain additional instructions and record forms, or for further information, write to:

Feeder Survey, Long Point Bird Observatory,
P.O. Box 160, Port Rowan, Ontario, NOE 1M0.

BIRDING ON LAKE ONTARIO

They came from a 200-mile radius to participate in the finest birding boat trip ever organized in the Toronto area. Under the leadership of Jerry White, 186 people boarded the Cayuga on October 3rd to spend seven hours chasing birds on Lake Ontario. Lifers to many; what would you pick as your best bird out of these the top 60 birds seen: Sabine's Gull, Parasitic Jaeger, 2 Red Phalaropes, 3 Northern Phalaropes, 3 Black-legged Kittiwakes, 1 Red-necked Grebe ?? Will a trip go next year ?? You bet !! It will be difficult to get a ticket as so many showed so much enthusiasm for another trip next fall.

Thanks to Jerry and Bruce White and Bob Currie for your wonderful outing.

..... Red Mason

LOOKING FOR A WORTHY ORGANIZATION TO GIVE MONEY TO ?

This month your Club has received pleas for money from the following:

The Owl Rehabilitation Research Foundation, R.R. 1, Vineland Station, Ont. LOR 2E0
The Canadian Environmental Law Association, Suite 303, 1 Spadina Crescent, Toronto, Ont. M5S 2J5, for the Elora Gorge Defence Fund.

PERUVIAN AND ANDEAN BIRDS

by R. D. James and K. Day

Between 28 September and 21 November, the Royal Ontario Museum will be hosting an exhibit of gold pieces manufactured in Pre-Columbian Peru. Many of these pieces have never been exhibited outside Peru and the gold itself would be well worth a visit to the museum. However, a number of other departments in the museum will be setting up exhibits of complementary materials. Of particular interest to readers of the Newsletter is an exhibit of birds from South America.

The Inca and their predecessors all used brightly colored plumage in various ways. Ponchos made of cotton or wool were often covered with feathers arranged in geometric patterns. Plumes were added to head-dresses and staffs or standards of royal or military groups. Such brightly colored birds as macaws, spoonbills, toucans, hummingbirds, motmots, jacamars, tanagers and the brilliant Andean Cock-of-the-rock, used in such costumes, will be featured in this exhibit.

Although the most elegant featherwork was the exclusive property of the nobles, the work was done by craftsmen drawn from the common people. One member of the court was the official supplier of feather mantles. He probably was responsible for the acquisition of birds and the manufacture of their feathers into garments.

Because of the variety of colored feathers used, it is likely that birds were brought to the craftsmen from throughout Peru and perhaps beyond. Birds were sought in jungles, coastal valleys and mountain forests. When Spanish Conquistadors first opened the Imperial Inca storerooms, they found that some were filled with dried birds. In one case the Spanish reported that 100,000 birds were in a single store-room, so great was the demand for feathers. The Andean region of South America has perhaps the richest anifauna in the world both in terms of the number of species and the variety of plumage colors. Interesting birds such as the hoatzin, thick-knees, trumpeters, tinamous, the boat-billed herons, curassows and flamingos, which exhibit a variety of plumage colors from this region, will be part of this complementary display.

Birds were frequently depicted in ancient Peruvian ceramics and modelled in clay to adorn the facades of buildings. Birds were woven into textile designs and modelled on sheet gold. Owls, ducks, herons, cormorants, vultures and parrots, also part of this display, were among the more easily identified birds depicted or drawn by the Incas.

HARBOUR COMMISSION GRANTS ACCESS TO EASTERN HEADLAND

by Clive Goodwin

As a result of discussions with Mr. Griffiths, General Manager of the Toronto Harbour Commission, and Mr. Cornish, Chief of the Harbour Police, permission has been granted for Club members to visit the Eastern Headland (Leslie Street Spit) on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays. The arrangements are these. A limited number of the Club's members now have keys to the two gates on the Headland. These members will meet other Club members who want to visit the Headland at the second (inner) gate. Members visiting the Headland this way must sign a release form and have their membership cards marked, and will be told the approximate time the gate will be reopened for leaving. To find when -- and whether -- members will be visiting the Headland on any given weekend, call Eileen Kerr (481-7948) on Friday evenings.

These arrangements meet several concerns of the Commission. The Commission is con-

cerned about liability, and emphasizes that the Headland is still under construction and that the surrounding waters fall off very sharply; it has had serious problems with vandalism, and wants the area locked at all times; and it does not want large numbers of automobiles on the Headland, for obvious reasons. As it stands, only Club members holding keys will be allowed to take cars out on the Spit, although bicycles will be allowed.

We must emphasize that visiting the Headland at times other than those arranged in the manner outlined will constitute trespassing and you may be ordered off by the Harbour Police. The fact that you are a TFNC member will be irrelevant, and indeed may jeopardize the permission we have now obtained. So please, follow the simple procedures we have outlined, and we can hope that the TFNC access will continue indefinitely.

These arrangements should provide reasonable access for Club members to the area for the rest of the fall and during next spring. At that time the Commission will reassess the situation, and it is very much up to us to make this privilege work. We will keep an open mind on the arrangements and try to change anything that seems to be causing problems. The Club does owe a debt of gratitude to the Harbour Commission for allowing TFNC members this access.

ROLE OF THE TFNC IN TORONTO'S WATERFRONT PLANNING

by Linda Cardini

Because Toronto's waterfront is popular with naturalists (for birding and botanizing), the Club was invited to participate formally in the land use planning underway for that portion of the waterfront from Exhibition Place to Aquatic Park (the Leslie Street Spit), all south of the Gardiner Expressway.

Planning is carried out by the Central Waterfront Planning Committee, a group made up of representatives from government (City, Metro, and Provincial), and business and industry, ratepayer groups, and recreation groups including the TFNC. The Club's representatives have been Dave Morin and Henry Fletcher. The Committee meets one evening a month to review work by City of Toronto Planning Board staff assigned to the Committee, to discuss issues concerning the waterfront, and agree on positions and responses needed about various activities.

As is usual with most large committees, the real day-to-day work of the Committee is carried out in smaller committees.

Port and Outer Harbour Task Group. The Club representative is Doug Gardiner. This group deals with an area which includes Cherry Beach and the Leslie Street Spit. The TFNC submitted proposals on keeping a natural area on the Spit as part of plans to develop an Aquatic Park there, and is trying to convince officials that the Spit is an interesting recreational resource just as it is, with no maintenance costs or expensive facilities.

Bayfront Area Task Group. The Club was represented by Diana Banville, but at present is not represented. The area studied by this group extends from just west of the port to Bathurst Street, and hence includes the Federal Government's Harbourfront Park site. Although of no special significance to naturalists, the area has potential for wildlife which the TFNC should be bringing to the attention of the planners.

Islands and Exhibition Place Task Group. The Club has no representative on this important committee. The future of the Island Airport, protection of the Island Wildlife Sanctuary, and development of a vegetation management policy for Island Parks are just some of the issues the task group is involved with. Shouldn't the Club have a voice in the plans for these vital natural areas?

The task groups meet about one evening a month and consist of no more than ten to fifteen people. In November and December, members of these groups will be busy digesting the environmental reports recently completed for the waterfront and discussing ways to incorporate current knowledge of the environment into plans for the waterfront. The reports cover wildlife, vegetation, water, physical geography, climate, air quality, and noise of the waterfront. Each TFNC representative has a set of the reports and can tell you how to obtain your own.

There will be a final environmental "synthesis" report prepared by Ian McHarg's environmental planning firm. This report should be available in early December and will be presented to the public in mid-December. Check the December Newsletter for an announcement of the time, place, etc., of the presentation.

Because planning is nearing the final state, now is the time for the Club to make its recommendations known. Please contact your representatives if you have ideas or if you would like to be on one of the task groups.

Doug Gardiner: 461-9081 (work) or 493-2807 (home)

Dave Morin: 965-3198 (work) or 766-5865 (home)

MORE CLUB ACTIVITIES

Aquatic Park (Leslie Street Spit)

This is a major project of the Club. See Doug Gardiner's article in the October Newsletter. "It is our belief that Aquatic Park should look like no other Metropolitan Park ... the park is still in its planning stage (therefore) it is not too soon for us to collect information concerning flora and fauna which is currently present and monitor these as time progresses. If each of us would take a few minutes of time to record what we see when we visit this area, it will provide invaluable information to your representative on the C.W.P.C. and P.O.H.A.T. committees."

Please send lists of birds seen to :

Doug Gardiner, 69 Grove Park Crescent, Willowdale, Ontario. M2J 2C7.

The Toronto Birdfinding Guide - to be revised

Ravine Studies - For more information, contact Jack Cranmer-Byng at 488-3262.

The following studies are in progress or under consideration:

CITY

Burke Brook Ravine
Glen Stewart Ravine
Sherwood Park

Gerrard Ravine
Magwood Park

West Don Valley (Rosedale Golf Club to Sunnybrooke Park) - Diana Banville
481-3221

Ravine studies continued

East York

Nesbitt Drive Ravine, Nesbitt Drive and Bayview Extension - Helen Juhola, 924-5806

Woodbine Bridge Ravine, Woodbine and O'Connor Drive - Linda Cardini, 924-5008

North York

Black Creek
Newtonbrook Creek
Wellesbourne Ravine

Mocassin Trail
Vyner Ravine
Windfield Ravine

Scarborough

Crooked Creek Park Ravine, Highland Creek - Phil Pyatt, 482-6008

St. Clair Ravine, north of St. Clair, east of Warden - Mel Whiteside, 425-6578

Warden Woods

Woodgrove/Beachgrove Ravine, Highland Creek near Lake Ontario - Bill Dibble, 261-7955

COMING EVENTS

ROYAL CANADIAN INSTITUTE at Convocation Hall, University of Toronto - 8:15 p.m.

November 6 - "The West Indies as we Knew Them" - illustrated with slides,
A.S.L. Barnes, Executive Secretary, Quetico Foundation, Toronto.

November 13 - "Revolution in the Earth Sciences" - illustrated with colour slides,
and motion pictures - J. Tuzo Wilson, Director General, Ontario
Science Centre, and Distinguished Lecturer, University of Toronto.

November 20 - "The World Turned Upside Down: The Transition to an Information
Society" - illustrated with slides - Gordon B. Thompson, Manager of
Communications Studies, Bell-Northern Research, Ottawa.

November 27 - "Choosing Canada's Future" - illustrated with slides - Omond M.
Solandt, Senior Consultant, Institute for Environmental Studies,
University of Toronto.

ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM - 100 Queen's Park

to November 21 - Some Birds of Peru - Ornithology Gallery, 3rd Floor
(Ed.Note: See article "Peruvian and Andean Birds")

to November 21 - Insect Design - 3rd Floor - Rotunda Alcove

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

Thursday, November 25 - "Pacific Shores" with Norm Wakeman

" January 20, 1977 - "Wildlife by Day and By Night" with Steve Maslowski

" February 17 " - "Papua New Guinea; Twilight of Eden"
with Greg and Linda McMillan

" March 17 " - "Bird Islands of the North Atlantic"
with Stephen Kress

* If you are not signed-up for season tickets ... why not make a note of these evenings on your calendar. Come and bring your friends. The more tickets sold, the more revenue for the Club.

CLOTHING FOR THE TRAIL

by Ed O'Connor

Most of us know how to dress for a field outing but with new members joining us all the time, it might be well to go into this for their benefit.

You may find it hard to believe that I took part in a hike two years ago where three of the ladies - bless them - turned out in dresses, long coats, high-heeled boots and carrying purses. Unfortunately, it was fall and light snow covered the ground, making it a bit slippery on the hills. The result was that I found myself with one of the ladies on each arm, trying to tow them up the hill and fighting for my own balance. When one of the 'terrible trio' suddenly decided to sit down on the packed snow it took some ten minutes to get her upright again. When I'd get her up so far her feet would shoot out in both directions and she'd start to giggle. Believe me, high heels are not for the trail. You're right - the purses wound up in a backpack.

Hiking boots, or something similar, are your best bet in footwear. They should be waterproof and feel comfortable.

Nothing will give you blisters quicker than those synthetic socks. Wear a wool sock, or at least wool combination. These will keep your feet warm and dry.

Pants (not dresses, ladies) should be of durable material and comfortable. Jeans, if new, will run your legs raw. The stretch pants may hinder circulation.

These fall days it's best to wear a shirt and sweater under your jacket, or a couple of light sweaters. If you get too warm, slip one off and replace it when needed.

No matter if the sun is out now - take some raingear. A light raincoat or poncho adds little weight to your pack and could be a lifesaver in a sudden downpour. For the same reason, wear a hat or kerchief or carry one with you.

Wear a jacket, not a full length coat. With warm pants you don't need the extra length and certainly don't need the weight. The type of jacket will depend on the time of year and temperature.

For carrying lunch, field guides, etc., some use a shoulder bag. These can be a bit of a nuisance if you're ducking under branches, but are okay otherwise. A small backpack is a little better.

If you follow these suggestions you should be comfortable all day and see an improvement in your checklist of birds or plants. It's just a bit difficult to concentrate when your feet are wet and you feel miserable.

A REMINDER THAT ...

OPEN AIR BOOKS AND MAPS, 10 Adelaide Street East, Toronto (363-0719) may just have that book you are wanting to buy for yourself or as a gift.

ONTARIO NATURE TOURS offer a wide variety of trips for your enjoyment. Contact:
Gus Yaki, 6372 Montrose Road, Niagara Falls, Ontario ... or
71 Thorncliffe Park Dr., #511, Toronto, Ont. M4H 1L3 (416) 421-4537

ENVIRONMENTAL EXPERIENCES CLUB offer weekends in January and February, 1977 for snowshoeing, etc., as well as other outings. Contact:
2 Nursewood Road, Apt. 11, Toronto, Ont. (416) 699-9211

FOR THE BIRDS

by Uno Hoo

We arrived in the dark and the drizzle, but I was bursting with happiness and enthusiasm. At last, I, personally, was present at the famed Point Melee. Not really at the point--there seemed to be an impenetrable woods between me and the point. The sky began to lighten and I could see them, hundreds of them, with multi-coloured plumage and as diverse in their size, attitude and behaviour as could be imagined. And that was just the birders--massed on the point as if to repel an invasion. On the other hand, it also suggested Lemmings who couldn't stand cold water and refused to go in. I could have imagined I was back on the subway, the same close packing, the same ignoring of one's neighbours, except no one was reading a newspaper.

Hopeless, even Superman would have had trouble seeing through that mass. I moved back out of the crush and climbed a tree, disturbing some Pairula Warblers as I did so. I know they were Pairulas since there were two of them. From the top of the tree I could see the point.

The gulls were there, even a Black-backed. It could have been oil on it, but I counted it anyway. Then an Arctic Tern. That was definite, it was shivering. Then a Little Gull, it was standing still, not turning at all, but I bet most of the horde took it for a Common Tern anyway. Having all the "lififers" I needed from there, I climbed down and headed away from the point.

Immediately I saw a Worm-eating Warbler. The uninitiated may have mistaken the object in its beak for a piece of straw, but not me, I knew it was a worm rigid from the night cold. Next a McGillivray's Warbler, that was a sound shot, it had a definite Scottish burr. Noticing some excitement up ahead, I hastened to see what was going on. I joined the circle around a fellow, stethoscope about his neck, doing something to an object on the ground. It was hidden from me by his hands so I turned to my left and whispered "What's going on?"

"A Connecticut Warbler", was the whispered reply, "the doctor is doing open heart massage, hoping to get a flicker of life so that we can count it."

I quickly noticed a flicker of life, counted it, and moved on leaving them there.

Mosquitoes were coming to life, followed closely by birds and I quickly got all the Flycatchers and the Blue-gray Gnatcatcher. They were so obviously catching flies that I didn't even have to use the glasses. Then a Hummingbird, its flight was diagnostic, similar to that of a slow bullet.

Idly I scanned the sky. Back towards the point there seemed to be some specks in the air so I put the glasses on them. Obviously warblers coming in, but what kind? Let's see now, by my estimate they must have been very close to the point and therefore couldn't have been anything other than Promontory Warblers. "What are they?", a couple of beards with humans attached asked.

"Starlings", I replied. We birders are very competitive.

Continuing my ramble, I mused on why so many birders wore beards, male birders that is. The only conclusion I could come to was that they must have figured that they were in a hunting blind and the birds wouldn't be as startled by them as if they had been clean-shaven. It couldn't have been laziness or they wouldn't have gotten up at such ungodly hours. Also they kept the girls away so they wouldn't be distracted from birding.

Being a bit weary by this time, I sat down as soon as I came to a suitable log. Almost instantly a herd of birders went trampling past me and I stared after them. Very soon they came rushing back. As I continued to sit there they went rushing back and forth, each time getting a bit farther away from me, the weaker ones dropping out and being replaced by new recruits.

"Amateur eh?", he said, sitting down beside me.

I looked at my new companion. He was a parks employee. I resented his remark. "I'm not an amateur, just a sane professional."

He replied with a smirk, "professionalism in birding and sanity are mutually exclusive. Why aren't you tracking down the rare warblers with the rest of them?"

"You will note," I said, "that they keep passing back and forth in front of me, so if they are really tracking down some rare ones they will have to fly past me and I have a much better chance than they of seeing them."

He looked at me intently and shook his head. "You haven't a chance of seeing them. You will notice that they are getting farther away with each traverse."

I nodded agreement. He continued, "I like you, maybe you actually are a sane birder so I will let you in on a secret. You see the government has cut our budget and at the same time wants us to do a lot of clearing here, so we have come up with a devilishly clever scheme." He chuckled, "We have tape recordings of the rare warblers and we have two employees with tape recorders in the woods here. One of them plays his tape for fifteen seconds and all the birders rush to him. Then the other plays his, and the birders rush back. Then the first fellow takes five steps forward and plays his again, and that's the way it goes. The birders keep rushing back and forth." He sat there, looking smug.

I was perplexed. "What good does that do you?" I asked. "Well", he replied, "it has been our experience that a herd of birders in full flight can clear out everything up to trees of four inches in diameter. On a good day we can clear ten to twelve acres."

What a diabolical scheme. "But surely you've still got a problem. Even if all the trees are knocked down, you still have to clear them up and haul them out?" That should put him in his place.

"Nope", he replied, "no problem at all. All we do is post signs saying that fallen trees are not to be used for firewood, and you know what happens?"

"No, what?"

"They haul every blessed one to the beach and use them for firewood. It gets cold in the middle of the night you know. Even birders are flesh and blood."

So now you know. Until this time I haven't breathed a word about this to a soul. That was our agreement. He in turn let me listen to the tapes, and you wouldn't believe how many "lifers" I got.

The only other thing of note that happened that day was that I met Gus Yaki as I was leaving.

"How many did you get?" he asked.

"Only four hundred and ninety-five." He fainted, so he didn't hear my last remark, "But that's metric."

FAREWELL

This is my last Newsletter for the Club. Now I'm off to Vancouver to wrestle with the computer problems of the British Columbia Government. When you read this, that's where I'll be -- with my family who are there already and have been patiently (?) waiting for me.

It's been lots of fun and some agony as well to serve as Newsletter editor for the past 11 years, but the enjoyment has far exceeded the pain. I haven't always been able to do my best for the Club. Regrettably many of my plans and dreams for the Newsletter never came true as my job and "the world" kept interfering. I hope your new editor -- Helen Juhola -- will have the good fortune and the time to reach all of her objectives. The Club members will support her in her efforts, I'm sure, as you have me by writing frequently and making the editor's lot a happy one.

I expect to write to the editor also from time to time and tell you what impact a new environment like the Pacific West Coast is making on us. And I hope someday to be back again to take an active part in the Club. Anyway I'm staying a paid-up member so I can get my Newsletter.

Thanks to all who have helped me so generously over the years. Kind regards.

Elmer Talvila

P.S. My new address is: 3435 West 37th Avenue, Vancouver, B.C. V6N 2V5
My telephone number is (604) 261-6736

Do drop in or phone if you're ever on the west coast. I should have all the birds spotted, the plants keyed, and the minerals chipped out, and would be happy to give you "The Grand Tour".

ATTENTION: EAST YORK RESIDENTS

On the following page is a petition protesting destruction of a valuable natural area in the Woodbine-O'Connor area south of Taylor Creek Park. We need the immediate help of East York residents in opposing this redevelopment proposal because East York Council and Metro Council will be much more open to the views of East York residents than to the Club as a whole. The Club has registered an official protest, but much is up to you, the people who would be most directly affected by the loss of this important natural area.

We would like you to take the petition around to your neighbours, and once complete, return to the address listed below. Please note that this won't be submitted as a TFNC petition; it is strictly from East York residents. For more information consult your October Newsletter, or call:

Helen Juhola (924-5806) or Linda Cardini (days: 367-7611; evenings: 924-5008)

Please mail completed petitions to:

Helen Juhola, 51 Alexander Street, Apt. 112, Toronto, Ont. M4Y 1B3.

EDITOR: Helen Juhola, 51 Alexander Street, Apt. 112, Toronto, Ont. M4Y 1B3.
Phone: 924-5806.

P E T I T I O N

Protesting Subdivision: 1) 728 and 730 O'Connor Drive
2) 36 and 40 Taylor Drive and 726 O'Connor Drive

Whereas

The lands on the two sites are natural, wooded areas of tablelands and steep, wet slopes with hardwood trees, including many over 100 years old;

and,

The lands provide habitat for many species of birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians;

and,

The lands contain a diversity of vegetation associations, plant species, and habitat types, all of which are not common in the urbanized Toronto area;

and,

The lands are a portion of the last wooded area in private ownership which has minimum-impact uses on the site (large-lot, single-family homes);

and,

The lands are adjacent to Taylor Creek Park and would make an excellent addition to the park system if the existing minimum-impact use cannot be retained;

We, the undersigned residents of the Borough of East York, hereby state our opposition to any redevelopment of the lands in question and request government officials to take action immediately to ensure that the lands remain in their current state or be dedicated to natural area parkland use.

Name

Address

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____

HELP WANTED !!

Many people have asked me what membership in the Toronto Field Naturalists' Club gives them. My usual answer is "a monthly general meeting, monthly special interest meetings, 8 newsletters a year, an opportunity for outings every weekend from September 1st to June 30th, and reduced rates for the Audubon lectures".

Of course, we all know there is much more to it than that! The Club provides us with an opportunity to meet others of similar interests, keeps us informed about issues we are concerned about, and gives us an opportunity to use our own special talents.

That's when the fun begins! What can you do for the TFNC? For example, do you take photographs or make notes on the flora and fauna observed on your outings around Toronto? Your photos and lists may be needed! Anyone interested in participating more in the Club's activities, please complete the following form and return it to the person listed as responsible for that activity or to the editor of the Club Newsletter.

Are you willing and able (without much guidance) to do any of the following?

- identify plants _____ birds _____ other _____
- lead outings _____ assist _____
- lead a group such as the Junior Club _____
- form a new group _____ arrange for speakers at Club meetings _____
- prepare maps for ravine studies _____
- do research _____ edit _____ write _____ type reports _____
- stuff envelopes _____ man booths _____
- report on group outings _____ review books of interest _____
- clip articles of interest to the Club from newspapers _____
- take photographs for Club projects _____
- represent the Club at meetings during the day _____ the evening _____
- maintain trails at the Reserve _____ do occasional construction work at the Reserve _____
- other _____
- help with publicity _____ printing of Club publications _____ mailing _____
- NAME _____ Phone: days _____
- ADDRESS _____ evening _____
- _____ Postal code _____
- Borough _____