



TORONTO FIELD NATURALISTS' CLUB

Number 303

December 1976

Visitors welcome!

DECEMBER MEETING

Monday, December 6, 1976, at 8:15 p.m.

at

252 Bloor Street West

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

SPEAKER: Bill Andrews

TOPIC: The Changing Seasons

An immediate past president, Bill Andrews is Professor of Environmental Studies at the Faculty of Education at the University of Toronto. He will give an illustrated talk on the plants and animals found on a 135-acre section of land in southwestern Ontario throughout the seasons. This land is managed as an ecology preserve by the speaker. The theme is ecology-oriented, with emphasis placed upon the relationship between the climate of each season and the life present during the season. (Wild flowers, birds, mammals, and insects will be shown.)

NEXT MEETING: Monday, January 3, 1977

To: Mrs. E. Hanson, Membership Secretary
Toronto Field Naturalists' Club
83 Joicey Blvd., Toronto, Ont. M5M 2T4

Date _____

I (We) wish to renew membership in the TFNC and enclose a 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 _____ Telephone _____

Address _____

Postal Code _____

MEETINGS FOR DECEMBER

JUNIOR CLUB The Club will hold its December meeting in the theatre of the Royal
 Sat. Dec. 4 Ontario Museum. Director: Lynn Scanlan (488-8321 after 5:30 p.m.)
 10:00 a.m.

BOTANY GROUP No meeting in December. Chairman: Wes Hancock 757-5518

BIRD GROUP No meeting in December, instead join one of the Christmas Bird Counts
 taking place in the Toronto area. For assistance in joining one of
 these groups, please call Jerry or Bruce White at 741-2363. You will
 join up with some of the best Toronto birders.
 (Buy your Christmas presents at the book counter at the December
 meeting.) Chairman: Red Mason 621-3905

OUTINGS FOR DECEMBER

Outings are held rain or shine. Visitors are welcome!

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

December 5 TAYLOR CREEK Nature Walk, leaders: Helen Juhola and Linda Cardini
 2:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m.
 Meet at the corner of Woodbine Ave. and O'Connor Drive.
 For more information, see the article about the formation of a
 ravine group.

Sunday GLENDON CAMPUS Birds, leader: Ed Franks
 December 12 10:00 a.m.
 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 Bayview Avenue and Lawrence. Morning only.

Chairman: Herb Elliott 763-4869

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

As the year draws to a close the sounds of ice tinkling along the shore chime the arrival of frozen lakes and fragile sounds. In the oak woodland you can hear the sharp, dry rustle of withered oak leaves. This is the voice of the wood now. The noticeable absence of many birds and mammals leaves the wood comparatively still. It would be more dreary here if it were not for the few leaves that tenaciously cling to icy branches or for the occasional squirrel in search of hidden treats.

At this most joyous time I trust you will be enjoying the cold, crisp air and the beauty that comes of snow and trees, shadow and light. It is my wish for you this winter's night that you enjoy nature's changing faces throughout the coming year. Perhaps these aspirations can be suitably expressed by Frost's poem "Dust of Snow".

The way a crow
Shook down on me
The dust of snow
From a hemlock tree

Has given my heart
A change of mood
And saved some part
Of a day I had rued.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

Ron Thorpe

PROGRAM COMMITTEE REPORT

Arrangements for the monthly meetings for the rest of the season have now been completed. I am sure you will all want to make a note about the following dates.

January 3, Alex Hall, The Continental Barrens and the Subarctic Woodlands: the land and its wildlife

February 7, Mrs. Mary Ferguson, Wild Plants in the Great Smokies

March 8, Dr. Peter Peach

April 4, Robert Bateman, The Disappearing World

May 2, ANNUAL MEETING, also Roger Chittenden, A River in all Seasons and Appalachian Region

Chairman: Mrs. Norah Stuart 485-5824

PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

Display Team Busy

During the past year Jeannine Dykstra, Hattie Beeton, and Muriel Miville have combined to produce a number of informative displays that attracted wide attention. At the Spring Flower and Garden Show, at the Federation of Ontario Naturalists' Annual Meeting, during Scarborough's celebration of Environmental Week, and at the Canadian National Exhibition many visitors stopped to look at pictures illustrating some of our activities, and take away reading material and membership applications.

Jeannine volunteered to succeed Leila Gad, our previous convenor. She and Hattie worked on assembling and putting up the displays — a big job. Hattie, because of her previous involvement at the C.N.E., was able to quickly put together this year's booth when the wall material from the 1975 show couldn't be found at the site.

Muriel has been an expert at arranging for Club members to "take a turn" manning the exhibits. Over 70 have participated including five new members. Junior Clubbers assisted, too. Doug and Bobby Wickson were especially prominent at the C.N.E.

Muriel would like to build up our list of volunteers. A number of members took four and five shifts at some of the shows. This would not be necessary if we had more names on our roster.

If you can help or would like more information from Muriel, she will welcome your call. The number is 925-0549 (after 9:00 p.m. — even to 11:00 p.m. and on weekends.)

Chairman: Harold Taylor 225-2649

OUTINGS REPORT

Did you ever wonder what was seen on the outing you wanted to attend and couldn't? Perhaps you have never attended one of the Club outings? This column is going to be a regular feature of our Newsletter -- maybe not every month, but often enough that some of your questions about outings will be answered.

Eastern Lakeshore (September 4). This outing was spent under sunny skies with a keen group of birders. Noteworthy sights were a Connecticut Warbler seen by two people, 10 species of shorebirds, and 13 species of warblers. Green Herons were prevalent in the marsh area. Altogether 83 species were observed.

Wigmore Park and Don Valley (September 5). Few birds were seen, but many plants were in flower. A good nature walk.

Lambton Woods (September 11). A large group of 33 people enjoyed a morning walk through the Lambton Woods and fields. Asters and goldenrods were in full bloom in the open fields.

Leslie Street Headland (September 12). Shorebirds were the highlight of this trip with 20 species identified. Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Hudsonian Godwit, Marbled Godwit, Wilson's Phalarope, and Baird's Sandpiper. Also a Brant and Forster's Tern were sighted. Sixty-five species were seen.

Toronto Island (September 18). Hawks were very much in evidence. About 250 Sharp-shinned Hawks passed over as well as 2 Ospreys, Broad-winged Hawks, Red-tailed Hawks, and Kestrels. An immature Peregrine Falcon and a Whip-poor-will were also seen.

Warden Woods (September 19). This nature walk was attended by 55 enthusiastic naturalists who discovered a new area in which to enjoy nature in the city. Hawks soared over, and fringed gentian bloomed in the valley of Taylor Creek.

High Park (September 26). A number of mushrooms were found on this morning trip. The group of 30 people who attended also found some bracket fungi on trees.

Moatfield Farms (October 2). This group followed the trail in the left side of the bridge. Many native plants and trees were found. Daisies, ragweed, and milkweed were seen in the open field. A wooded area farther back near 401 proved very interesting.

Wilket Creek (October 3). This outing was held from the Sunnyside Park "log cabin". A large group saw the cabin and went on a nature walk.

Hendrie Trail (October 9). This bus outing was spent under rainy skies. The fall colours were most rewarding. Many of the group found walnuts on the ground. An Osprey and a cormorant were seen off the bay. The Visitors' Centre proved very interesting.

Toronto Island (October 10). Many Sharp-shinned Hawks, Hermit Thrushes, and kinglets were observed. One Saw-whet Owl was found in the nature area.

East Don River (October 16). This general nature walk turned up 26 species of birds. An interesting walk in this area.

Taylor Creek (October 17). Fall colours were at their best in spite of cloudy skies. This "environmental concern" walk was attended by 25 people including a reporter from the Toronto Star and one from the Globe and Mail. Participants saw for themselves what development at the edge of ravines involves in the form of complete destruction of trees and natural topography. (Stories about the area appeared in both newspapers the following week.)

Toronto Lakeshore (October 23). A good number of birds were seen on this outing. The male and female Harlequin Ducks were seen at Pier #4. Six Snow Geese as well as scoters, Oldsquaws, Buffleheads, and many other ducks were seen.

Mount Pleasant Cemetery (October 24). Some interesting trees were found here within the cemetery: ginkgo, European hornbeam, northern catalpa, magnolia, Siberian elm, and many other exotic species.

Did you know that since 1970 the TFNC has had 46 outings to the Toronto waterfront, each attended by an average of 32 people?

Chairman: Herb Elliott 763-4869

WATERFRONT NEWS

On December 16 at 8:00 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chamber a public presentation will be made of an unusual departure from typical urban planning. The results of a two-year study of the environment of the central waterfront will be shown, demonstrating how future planning will take place incorporating environment opportunities and constraints. This is one of the first applications of environmental planning applied to a major city or urban centre and should be of great interest to all who are concerned about the quality of life in the city and the best use of limited resources.

The Central Waterfront Environment Information Base report which provided the background data for this presentation is available for \$7.50 from:

Central Waterfront Planning Site Office	<u>or</u>	City of Toronto Planning Board
235 Queen's Quay West		Information Services
Toronto, Ont. M5J 1A6		East 20th, City Hall, Toronto

This is an important meeting! Everyone is welcome to attend. The TFNC provided much of the material in two of the reports: Vegetation and Wildlife. By continuing to submit your lists of birds and plants seen at the waterfront to the Club's representatives, you will be helping in the planning of Toronto's waterfront.

PROPOSAL FOR A RAVINE ACTION GROUP

Linda Cardini

The TFNC Ravine Studies completed and underway are a major accomplishment of our club and provide a major contribution to the store of information about Toronto's natural areas. These studies have been well-received by politicians and civil servants who do not have the interest or expertise to carry out such studies. The studies, therefore, have the potential for influencing decisions about proposals for development and alterations of natural conditions in ravines.

One only needs to pick up the newspaper to learn how often ravines are slated for redevelopment. The battle for the Woodbine Bridge ravine area goes on; a fight to stop filling in and clearing away undergrowth in a North York ravine simply because it has been described by someone as "dangerous and unhealthy" is just beginning.

It's not enough to study ravines; club members frequently find themselves launching protests against plans to destroy the very area they were so carefully studying. Wouldn't we all benefit by sharing the knowledge we've gained through our studies and efforts to save ravines?

It is proposed that a Ravine Group be formed as an outgrowth of our publication "Toronto the Green". The group would coordinate ravine studies, and succeed the club's former Environmental Committee. Some of the tasks this group might perform include the following:

-) coordinate ravine studies: report on individual studies, share study techniques with others, give advice to people doing studies, hold field trips to various ravines under study

-) coordinate actions needed to protect ravines
-) act as a watchdog, alert club members to activities or proposals threatening ravines

Rather than operate as a typical committee, it is suggested that the group do most of its work "in the field" by visiting ravines under study and offering assistance to people responsible for the study. Meetings could be held when necessary to write up reports, stuff envelopes, etc. People who completed the "Help Wanted" sheet (see November Newsletter) could assist the group with the tasks they volunteered to do.

Does this proposal sound workable? If you're interested and have ideas about this, why not join us on our first field trip, a hike in the Woodbine Bridge ravine area in East York? The hike will begin at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday December 5 and participants are to meet at the corner of Woodbine Avenue and O'Connor Drive.

CIVIC ELECTION PARTICIPATION

In June this year the TFNC sent all Metro politicians a copy of "Toronto the Green". Now we have sent each of them a questionnaire asking if they have read the book and their attitude toward our recommendations. We are also sending a copy of the book and questionnaire to all new candidates for municipal offices.

Watch for newspaper stories about this. You will be sent the results in a separate mailing before the election. Since municipal politicians have control over the future of many of the natural areas in Metro, we feel it is important for all politicians and potential politicians to be aware of the value of natural areas and our recommendations re their existence and management.

SEEN ANY GOOD BIRDS LATELY?

Clive Goodwin

About two years ago a committee made up of a few members of the TFNC and the Toronto Ornithological Club reported on a new form for recording birds seen in Toronto. This seemed the time to encourage more people to send in their records.

The original article spent a lot of time explaining how to report rarities, and a form similar to the one at the end of this Newsletter was provided to help people report the identification of a rarity. "Help" was the key word, by the way. Writing up a rarity need not be a complicated business, just a description or rough sketch describing or showing what you saw, and the features that you used to identify the bird are all that are needed. The form at the end is no more than an aid.

Although most of the birds we see are not great rarities, they are interesting for all that. We would like to hear about them. From time to time in this Newsletter we'll try to summarize who has been seeing what around Toronto.

Please send reports to me:

Clive Goodwin, 11 Westbank Crescent, Weston, Ont. M9P 1S4

Your records will not only help build a picture of birdlife in the Toronto area, but will contribute to the picture of birdlife in Ontario each season, and indeed across the Continent as a whole. Your accumulated records are reported to "American Birds", a journal of bird observations published six times a year by the National Audubon Society. Let's hear from you!

Last year we were writing about bird trip lists, but our most intriguing trip this year was not for birds but for whales. To tell the full story would take more space than we have, but as last year's trip seemed to interest some readers, perhaps this one will too.

For some years now the Canadian Zoological Society has been organizing whale-watching trips on the St. Lawrence, but we had never been able to participate in one until this year. At the end of September we were in Montreal, the departure point of the tours, and found that a trip was scheduled on the weekend of Sept. 25.

For several reasons the trip appealed to us. First was the possibility of seeing up to three or four species of whales — perhaps even an endangered species, the Blue Whale. But the notion of the Goodwins going anywhere and not watching birds is a laughable one, and sure enough we also hoped to see pelagic birds. Whatever food sources attract whales could attract birds too we reasoned. Besides, where do the migrating pelagic birds on the Great Lakes come from? It's no secret we believe they come overland from the south of James Bay, but not everyone agrees. Besides, what happens then? Do they head off down the St. Lawrence, or do they make another long overland hop to the East Coast? A trip on the St. Lawrence would no solve these intriguing questions, but it would be interesting to see what birds occurred in these tidal waters.

At Riviere-du-Loup the river is over 11 miles wide. We were told that the north shore of the river was a place of great mixing. The cold Labrador Current moved down that shore and mixed with the St. Lawrence waters, there some 1000 feet deep. Coming down from the north to enter the St. Lawrence at Tadoussac was the Saguenay, itself 800 feet deep and rich in nutrients. It is the rich supplies of food produced by this tremendous mixing of waters that attract the whales. Would it also attract pelagic birds?

Our boat left Riviere-du-Loup at 8:30 a.m. and before we were very far from land we began to see ducks. The first hour or so the boat passed scattered Surf Scoters, but surprisingly no other scoter species were seen. Toward mid-river we began to see scaup in the distance ahead, and two small shorebirds with white wing bars and grey backs took off the water just to one side — Red Phalaropes.

There had been quite heavy west-bound migration along the shoreline at Riviere-du-Loup but we had seen no land birds since sailing, and indeed did not really expect to see any. Judge our surprise when we were passed by several small flocks of Horned Larks and Lapland Longspurs flying strongly just above the surface of the water and heading not for land but due west down the middle of the estuary!

Gradually Tadoussac grew closer, and the gulls we could see patrolling the river became more distinct. These were no Herring or Ring-billed Gulls — they were too light and graceful; and indeed in a few minutes a small group flew nearer and the dark wing pattern of immature Black-legged Kittiwakes could be seen. A short while later and we were among them, and all at once things began to happen! Suddenly ahead a dark bird with the fast purposeful flight of a jaeger cut across the bows, and on the other side of the boat someone called a whale sighting.

We found ourselves coasting through smooth waters with an almost oily quality to them, and floating masses of kelp marking a mixing zone. But we did not need to

look at the water: swimming in noisy flocks were dozens of kittiwakes; groups of eiders took off ponderously as the boat approached; and jaegers patrolled and chased, and chased and patrolled. Then the Belugas started to appear, first white backs breaking the water in the distance, and then all around with one appearing almost under the ship's stern.

When the excitement had died down we found we had floated out of the zone of birds and whales and we started to move again, downriver this time and about a mile offshore. Kittiwakes flew steadily past the boat and jaegers were rarely out of sight. Once a flock of five Parasitics swung across the boat's path. Occasionally Black Guillemots took off clumsily, looking very white in their winter plumage; and a pair of Razorbills appeared. Ducks were few — the odd flock of scaup and a pair of Pintails were the only ones we saw. Finally the boat turned back to head for the Saguenay while we had picnic lunch on deck.

On the way back flocks of Ruddy Turnstones and Golden Plovers passed and we were intrigued to note that these birds seemed to be flying across river. By now a breeze had developed and viewing was more difficult. We met no more concentrations of birds until just off the mouth of the Saguenay where huge flocks of kittiwakes again marked the turbulent mixing zones. This time Bonaparte's Gulls and a single Little Gull were among the flocks; and a Red-necked Grebe and odd loons could be seen.

The Saguenay itself was beautiful, but quiet after the open waters of the St. Lawrence. Once away from the mouth only a pair of scaup and a solitary raven could be seen in an austere landscape. Finally we turned again, to cross an estuary now choppy with wind, and to watch kittiwakes playing effortlessly over the waves as the boat lumbered back to Riviere-du-Loup with the sun setting.

Was the trip a success? We thought so, although those who were interested exclusively in whales had only the one brief period with the Belugas. But even they seemed satisfied; and we had logged 24 species of birds over the day with only three land birds in the count. We suspect Tadoussac could be one of the unrecognized bird-watching centres of Canada. As we passed the harbour, kittiwakes were cruising about as Ring-billed Gulls do here, and three jaegers played from one side of the river to the other. We found that even the south shore at Riviere-du-Loup was a migration pathway of note for land birds — there were huge flocks of Starlings and robins moving — and the north shore should be even better. Whales can be watched from shore there, we were told; and pelagic birds should also be visible. So the little town could gather birds from three sources: migrants moving down the Saguenay, southbound land birds halted by the St. Lawrence, and the pelagics.

The future of whale-watching trips on the St. Lawrence seems a little uncertain. We understood that the Zoological Society of Canada has had some trouble in making arrangements from year to year. The main objective of the trips is to stimulate interest in the conservation of these fascinating mammals, and in this the trips are most successful. If you do plan a trip — or any pelagic trip for that matter — some common sense precautions are in order to assure a pleasant outing. The St. Lawrence can be very cold, so go prepared for winter weather even in mid summer. Waterproof footwear is another reasonable precaution; and if you are a good sailor then gravel taken before and during the trip may be unnecessary, but you will be grateful for it if the weather does turn a little rough. Such precautions can make these trips fun and the very special events they really are.

THE GALAPAGOS -- THE ANDES -- THE AMAZON

Next May Dr. "Bev" Scott, former Associate Director of the Royal Ontario Museum and Curator of the Department of Ichthyology and Herpetology, will lead a ROM Natural Science tour to Ecuador, land of infinite variety and contrast. For more information please call 978-6209 (ROM) or 483-6742 (Barbara Wilkins).

For a preview come to the Planetarium Lecture Room at 5:30 p.m. November 30, 1976 for words and pictures describing the trip of a lifetime.

ONTARIO NATURE TOURS

A wide variety of trips led by competent naturalists is offered for your enjoyment. For further information contact:

Gus Yaki
6372 Montrose Road
Niagara Falls, Ont.
L2H 1L6

ENVIRONMENTAL EXPERIENCES CLUB

Outings offered include weekends in January and February for snowshoeing. For brochure contact:

Ed O'Connor (416) 699-9211
2 Nursewood Road, Apt. 11
Toronto, Ont.
M4E 3R8

ROYAL CANADIAN INSTITUTE

Meetings consist of illustrated lectures given Saturday evenings at 8:15 p.m. in Convocation Hall on the campus of the University of Toronto. The public is welcome.

December 4 Manganese Nodules, a New Resource, illustrated with colour slides, John L. Shaw, President, Ocean Management, Incorporated; Director, Ocean Mining Development, INCO Limited

December 11 Breaking the Wilderness, illustrated with colour slides, Paul L. Aird, Associate Professor, Faculty of Forestry and Landscape Architecture; Programme Co-ordinator of the School of Continuing Studies; Associate of the Institute for Environmental Studies; University of Toronto

HELP KEEP TORONTO GREEN!

Petitions from East York residents are still needed re Taylor Creek Ravine edge development. If you don't live in East York, perhaps you have friends who do. Ask them to circulate the petition from your November Newsletter and return by December 15, 1976 to Helen Juhola, 51 Alexander St. Apt. 112, Toronto, Ont. Every signature counts!

READING OF INTEREST

Toronto's Geological Past - an introduction prepared by E.B. Freeman, Ministry of Natural Resources, Ont. 1976 (Ont. Div. Mines, Misc. Publ.)

This illustrated pamphlet about the glacial history of the Toronto area describes selected points of interest and contains a good list of references for further reading. Can be obtained from the Ontario Government Bookshop at 880 Bay Street.

Discover Your Neighbourhood Heritage by Ian Scott, published by Learnxs Press of Toronto in 1976. (57 pp., maps and photos, \$3.95)

Part of a kit containing "Ontario Historic Sites, Museums, Galleries and Plaques" booklet; Ontario Archives "Visitors Information" brochure; and Toronto Board of Education "Historical Collection (Archives)" fact sheet.

Designed for public schools throughout the province, but gives precise current information on how and where to find historic information. Examples are given for Toronto.

One chapter entitled "Sources" explains the kind of information each source provides and tell where old maps may be obtained. Other chapters of interest are "Architecture and Cemeteries", and "Oral History". A bibliography and list of archives and historical societies in Ontario appear in the appendix. Could be useful for anyone involved in preparing a Ravine Study for the club.

Newsletter Exchange

As a result of a newsletter exchange with other clubs, miscellaneous issues of the following are available for club members to read. Anyone interested in borrowing any of these publications please call Jirina Jelinowicz at 636-8138.

- Mycological Society of Toronto: "The Mycelium"
- The Conservation Council of Ontario, Toronto: "The Bulletin"
- Ministry of Natural Resources, Ont: "Newsletter", "The Wigwam"
- Metropolitan Toronto Zoological Society: "Zoo", West Hill, Ont.
- Canadian Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Society, Mississauga, Ont.: "Newsletter"
- Richmond Hill Naturalists, Richmond Hill, Ont.: "The Bulletin"
- South Peel Naturalists Club, Port Credit, Ont.: Newsletter
- The Oshawa Naturalists' Club now the Durham Region Field Naturalists, Oshawa, Ont.: "The Naturalist"
- Ontario Bird Banding Association, Hamilton, Ont.: "Newsletter"
- Hamilton Naturalists' Club, Hamilton, Ont.: "The Wood Duck"
- Peninsula Field Naturalists' Club, St. Catharines, Ont.: "Peninsula Naturalist"
- Niagara Falls Nature Club, Niagara Falls, Ont.: "Bulletin"
- Long Point Bird Observatory, Port Rowan, Ont.: "Newsletter"
- The McIlwraith Field Naturalists, London, Ont.: "The Cardinal"
- Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club, Ottawa, Ont.: "The Canadian Field Naturalist", "Trail and Landscape"
- Canadian Wildlife Federation, Ottawa, Ont.: "Pipeline Update", "Ottawa Report"
- Thunder Bay Field Naturalists, Thunder Bay, Ont.: "Newsletter"
- The Province of Quebec Society for the Protection of Birds, Montreal, P.Q.: "Newsletter"
- The Royal Bank of Canada, Montreal, P.Q.: "Monthly Newsletter"
- The Natural History Society of Prince Edward Island, Charlottetown, P.E.I.: "Newsletter"
- Saskatchewan Natural History Society, Yorkton, Sask.: "Newsletter"; Regina, Sask.: "Blue Jay"
- American Birding Association, Austin, Texas: "Birding"

OWLING by Elmer Talvila

Owling is not for everyone, including me. I have hunted for owls now for 25 years and have rarely seen any. Last year however, I had remarkable success: 30 live owls of 6 species, 1 dead owl, 1 half dead one, and one imposter. This record is nothing much for the wizard owlers like Red Mason who probably see as much or more — on any Saturday morning. But for me it was remarkable.

There are many ways of finding owls and we owlers all have our favourite approaches. Let me tell you about some of them and perhaps help you to find owls on some future trips of your own. My most successful method is not to go looking for owls at all. I set off on my birding trips firmly determined not to look for or at owls or even to think about them. This indifference frequently brings results. Owls pop up from bushes; they look at me longing for a look. Some even hoot plaintively. But I don't give a hoot! I just pretend to be looking for a chickadee or examining mouse droppings. I have trouble hiding my glee as I check off another owl on my list.

More often — alas! — I take a positive attitude: I set out firmly determined to get an owl. Then success is more difficult. One method I've used is the following. I seek out a likely owl haunt and plunk myself in the middle of it. Then I start spinning slowly like a chicken on a spit. As I spin I keep looking through my binoculars gradually moving from ground level to the very tops of the trees. The usual result? Vertigo!

A much better approach is the name and address one. First find a birder who has seen an owl in broad daylight in a resting position and can accurately describe where he saw it. Then all you have to do is go to the address and stare at the owl. I can remember vividly how successfully five of us used this method many years ago to add one screech owl to our New Year's Day list. We pulled up in front of a quiet tree on a quiet street in Oakville and tumbled noisily out of the VW. Then a quick count of trees and branches and there was our owl: in the fourth tree from the corner, second branch up on the right side. The lady peering at us in astonishment from behind her curtains quickly pulled down the blinds; we hurried off before she could put the dog on us.

But the best approach and the one which I recommend is the psychological one. Turn yourself mentally into an owl. Think like an owl and act like an owl and you're bound to find other owls doing the same. You become a birdbrain, so to speak. One of my birding friends is remarkably successful at it. Why I remember last October on the Islands when he turned himself mentally into a Saw-whet Owl. He headed straight for the centre of a low bush where I had no trouble at all finding 3 of his fellow Saw-whets. Using this method we discovered 12 Saw-whets that morning on the Islands. It's not an easy technique; I've always had trouble with the pellets.

Now to finish off, here is a short owler's guide to help you locate and identify your owl. (It can be used by tall owlers too.)

Short Owler's Guide

1. Saw-whets are impossibly small owls even when they are large. They are usually found in migration in low bushes about five feet off the ground and are most readily located using the "birdbrain" approach.

2. Great Horned Owls always appear to be calling noisily "caw-caw-caw". However, don't be fooled — it just a symbiotic relationship between owls and crows. And that's the best way to find crows: locate your owl, and crows will gather around it in flocks.
3. Screech Owls are impossible to find but once found are impossible to miss. They are always at the same address except on Christmas Census Days or when you are trying to show off your owling skills. They can be easily lured with a tape recorder. I have tried "wailing" in Lambton Woods but have had no success except for two stray dogs and a policeman.
4. Snowy Owls If you see a large lump of snow on a fence post it is very likely a Snowy. If the lump flies off, it's almost certainly a Snowy unless you're a very poor birder when it will turn out to be a Herring Gull.
5. Barred Owls only have voices and hence are called 8-hooters. They rarely materialize into bodies but when they do they are found in such unlikely places as the College St. Y.M.C.A. and the Ford Automotive Plant.
6. Short-eared Owls are always found keeping company except once when the bird was obviously lost. They are sort of communal farmers and are never far from fields except once when the bird was flying over Lake Ontario and was obviously confused.
7. Long-eared Owls are always in evergreens. They love company too. To find them use the psychological approach but at a higher plane — usually 10 feet up the tree.
8. Boreal Owls are always dead and when they are not they're never here or even there.
9. Hawk Owls Who?
10. Great Gray Owls Impossible.

JUNIOR FIELD NATURALISTS' CLUB LOOKING FOR NEW DIRECTOR

The JFNC has been affiliated with the TFNC since the early 1930's. Approximately 300 children between the ages of 8 and 16 meet one Saturday morning a month from October to April in the Royal Ontario Museum to learn about such topics as birds, botany, ecology, fossils, mammals, mineralogy, and reptiles. The May meeting usually consists of a bus trip to a natural area outside the city. Each month the children are issued a newsletter, and in May they receive a magazine summarizing the year's accomplishments. Now Lynn Scanlan, who has been its very able director for the past three years, is looking for someone else to take over as director of this worthwhile organization in September. Are you interested? Call Lynn now and get involved. She will have you trained by September. Call Lynn Scanlan at 488-8321 after 5:30 p.m.

THANK YOU, VOLUNTEERS!

If you haven't been contacted already, you will be soon. There's lots to be done and lots to learn. If you've forgotten to complete the "Help Wanted" page from the November Newsletter, it's not too late. Send your completed form to Muriel Miville who is keeping the file of volunteers.

Muriel Miville, #1511 - 35 Charles St. West, Toronto, Ont. M4Y 1R6 (925-0549)

WONDERING WHAT TO GIVE YOUR FAVOURITE NATURALISTS FOR CHRISTMAS?

Books, particularly bird books, will be available at the book desk at the next monthly club meeting.

How about a small backpack for outings, or a thermos?

How about a nature calendar or diary?

Bird Song Records are always welcome.

A bird feeder, bird food, a bird bath?

A Toronto Field Naturalists' Club pin?

For the children, a subscription to OWL? Ten issues for \$6.00 or 20 issues for \$11.00 — a nature magazine for children.

OWL
59 Front Street East
Toronto, Ont.
M5E 1B3

For adults or a family, a membership to the FON or CNF? Six issues per year; Senior Citizens and Students \$6.00; individual \$12.00; family \$14.00. Articles and news about nature throughout Ontario (FON), Canada (CNF)

Federation of Ontario Naturalists
1262 Don Mills Road
Don Mills, Ont.
M3B 2W7

Canadian Nature Federation
46 Elgin Street
Ottawa, Ont.
K1P 5K6

HAVE YOU RENEWED YOUR MEMBERSHIP TO THE TORONTO FIELD NATURALISTS' CLUB?

Club fees are due. These may be paid at the December meeting, or you may fill in the form on page 1 of the Newsletter and mail it in with your remittance.

SUBMISSIONS TO NEWSLETTER

Material for the Newsletter should be submitted to the editor 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.

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

TORONTO FIELD NATURALISTS' CLUB

TORONTO ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB

RARE BIRD REPORT FORM

1. SPECIES: _____ 2. NUMBER SEEN: _____

3. LOCALITY: _____

4. DATE SEEN: _____ 5. DATE OF REPORT: _____

6. TIME: _____ 7. DISTANCE: _____ 8. HOW MEASURED: _____

9. LIGHT CONDITIONS (eg. Sunny, Overcast): _____

10. POSITION OF OBSERVER AND BIRD IN TERMS OF 9: _____

11. OPTICAL EQUIPMENT USED: _____ 12. WATCHED HOW LONG? _____

13. WHAT HABITAT: _____

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

15. DID YOU CONSULT A GUIDE ? WHICH ? _____

16. HAVE YOU CONSULTED ONE SINCE ? WHICH ? _____

17. HAVE THEY INFLUENCED YOUR IDENTIFICATION ? HOW ? _____

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

19. HAVE YOU SEEN SIMILAR SPECIES ? _____

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

21. DESCRIPTION OR BIRD:

22. ADJACENT SPECIES USED IN COMPARISON:

23. SIMILAR SPECIES ELIMINATED (2 REASONS):

24. NAME AND ADDRESS:

SEND TO:

Mr. C.E. Goodwin
11 Westbank Crescent
Weston, Ont.
M9P 1S4