



# TORONTO FIELD NATURALISTS' CLUB

Number 308

May 1977

Visitors welcome!

## MAY MEETING

Monday, May 2, 1977, 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: Mr. Roger Chittenden

Topic: Appalachian Region

Mr. Chittenden was at one time the leader of the Botany Group of the Toronto Field Naturalists' Club. In this presentation of the Appalachians he will illustrate how all life forms, plants and animals, are influenced and controlled by geology — his primary interest. The human element will not be forgotten as he shows us Williamsburg, Old Salem, and the mountain settlements as well as more remote regions.

September Meeting: Tuesday, September 6, 1977

Program Committee Chairman:  
Mrs. Norah Stuart 485-5824

Everyone welcome!

Rain or shine!

Jim Baillie Nature Reserve  
Saturday, May 14, 1977  
10:00 a.m.

All members of the Toronto Field Naturalists' Club are invited to attend the official dedication of the picnic shelter at our reserve. After a small ceremony at 10:00 a.m. at which Rosemary Gaymer will speak, field trips will be taken throughout the property. Don't forget your picnic lunch and waterproof footwear. Enjoy the area and get acquainted with more of your fellow club members. A bus will be leaving from the corner of Yonge and York Mills at 8:30 a.m. and returning in the late afternoon. Parking in our own lot for those taking cars.

➔ Please note in your "Guide to the Jim Baillie Nature Reserve" booklet on page (i): Combination of lock to property — To open, turn right two or more whole turns and stop at 16; turn left one whole turn past above number and stop at 2; turn right and stop at 28; then pull shackle open. To lock, push the shackle all the way in.

Junior Club Meet in the Theatre of the Royal Ontario Museum from 10:00 a.m. to  
 Saturday 12 noon. Membership is open to boys and girls from 8 to 16 years of  
 May 14 age. This will be a general meeting.  
 10:00 a.m.

Saturday Meet at the Royal Ontario Museum to board buses for a general field  
 May 28 trip to Hilton Falls Conservation Area in Halton County. Any seniors  
 9:00 a.m. are welcome to attend this outing. Bus fare for non-members is \$3.00.

Director: Lynn Scanlan (488-8321)

Botany Group No meeting in May. Chairman: Wes Hancock (757-5518)

Bird Group No meeting in May. Instead let's take part in the Annual Jim Baillie  
 Bird Walk on Sunday May 15th. The details are on page 4.  
 With all the owls I have shown you this spring, how about some slides  
 for the bird collection?  
 A "Baillie Birdathon" is to take place May 7. I have agreed to  
 participate. Will you sponsor your chairman? Please call, or  
 write me a note. I will be looking for 100 birds. See page 18.  
 J.E. "Red" Mason, 265 Markland Dr. Apt. 205, Etobicoke M9C 1R5

Chairman: Red Mason (621-3905)

Ravine Group For information about ravine groups and possible outings in your  
 area, call Jack Crammer-Byng (488-3262) who is the Chairman of the  
 Ravine Group, or Ruby Rogers (789-9612) who is the Secretary of the  
 Ravine Group.

Chairman: Jack Crammer-Byng (488-3262)

## OUTINGS

For complete information, consult your "Spring Outings 1977" booklet.

Terra Nova This outing will involve strenuous hiking. Good boots and back packs  
 Saturday are essential as participants will be expected to walk about 5 miles  
 May 28 in a circular route over hilly terrain to look at bluebird boxes.  
 10:00 a.m. (Anyone wanting to look into the boxes should bring a Robertson red  
 screwdriver with them in their backpack.) Don't forget your lunch.

Luther Marsh This trip will be through the marsh in canoes by special permission  
 Saturday of the Ministry of Natural Resources and is limited to 6 canoes.  
 June 11 Anyone intending to join this outing must call Leo Smith at 654-2856.  
 10:00 a.m. Participants must bring and be prepared to wear life jackets. To get  
 there drive west on Hwy 401. (The trip takes about 2 hours from Toronto.)  
 Turn west on Dixon Road and drive until it becomes Airport Road. Go  
 as far as Hwy 89. Drive west on Hwy 89 through Primrose and Shelbourne.  
 Continue as far as Keldon Village General Store (about 12 to 15 miles  
 west of Shelbourne). Go west 2 concessions on Hwy 89, turn south and  
 drive for 2 more concessions to Monticello and continue through to  
 the Park.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

In this last issue of our club's newsletter before the summer I would like to thank all of you who liberally contribute your time and expertise for the good of the club. And, in particular, I want to extend my personal thanks to the Vice-president, the Board of Directors, our new editor, newsletter mailer, and secretary, our treasurer, committee representatives, group chairmen, and the many other people who assist in keeping our club active, involved, and productive.

After looking back over the year's events, I can vividly recall the first busy months. I was naturally filled with some uncertainty and trepidation, partly because I am a relatively new member who did not know too many people in the club. However, as I have come to know and meet more and more of you, my fears have quickly dissipated. Fortunately I am part of an exceptional organization composed of diligent people who work on the club's behalf largely without recognition. On many occasions I have had to rely on many of you for advice or assistance. I am truly amazed how easily problems are solved and how work is done without hesitation. There is always a willing hand to help no matter what the situation. It is certainly evident to me that the strength of our club lies in the willingness of our members to become involved in club projects, programs, and outings. How about you? Are you involved? If not, plan to get better acquainted with us by participating in some of our spring outings. In particular, don't forget to attend our shelter dedication ceremony on May 14 at the Jim Baillie Nature Reserve.

I would like to take a moment and recall some of the events of the past year: publication of Toronto the Green, The Ontario Field Biologist, our monthly newsletter, our Spring Outings 1977 booklet, A Guide to the Jim Baillie Nature Reserve, and two more Ravine Surveys; first-class mailing service for our newsletter; Audubon films; involvement in aquatic park and waterfront planning; access to Amos Pond; objections to redevelopment of lands adjoining Taylor Creek Park; political survey; a strong Junior program; a new shelter at the Jim Baillie Nature Reserve; our bird, botany, and ravine group programs; TV, radio, and newspaper publicity; an increase in membership; the list seems endless.

Before I close for the season, there are a few items of interest. Because of renovations to the Eaton Auditorium, the Audubon Film Program will resume on Thursday, October 18, 1977 at a new location. Films will be shown at the OISE theatre at 252 Bloor Street West. The seating is limited, so order your tickets early. Don't forget the FON Annual Conference which takes place at the University of Guelph on April 29, 30 and May 1 and features an excellent program with Pierre Berton as the special guest.

Non-refillable containers have been in the news again. Once more you are urged to write to the government and state your views about this important environmental issue. Write to:

► Hon. George Kerr, Minister of the Environment, 135 St. Clair Ave. W, Toronto M4V 1P5

I look forward to see you in the fall, but in the meantime, have a delightful summer.

Ron Thorpe (484-1807)

▷ Publication of "A Guide to the Jim Baillie Nature Reserve" was paid for by the TFNC Life Membership Fund.

Many long-time naturalists will be saddened to learn of the death of Mr. Joseph Amos, aged 91 years, on April 5, 1977. Mr. Amos, a resident of Picton, Ont., planted all the willows in the area now known as Amos' Pond.

## SEVENTH ANNUAL JIM BAILLIE BIRD WALK

Take a walk with us to see the birds in your city during spring! Members of the Toronto Ornithological Club are ready to help you find and identify birds at the four best locations that can be reached either with or without a car. The date is Sunday, May 15. All walks begin at 8:30 a.m. except the Toronto Island Walk which begins at 9:00 a.m.

Following are the locations and meeting places. Each walk lasts for about three hours. The pace is slow (about one mile an hour).

- ▷ Toronto Island. Meet at the Ferry Docks at the foot of Bay Street to take the first available ferry. The Island is the resting place of migrating birds crossing the lake from the south. Many exciting birds have been found there.  
9:00 a.m.
- ▷ High Park. Meet in the first parking lot on West Road which is on your right as you enter from Bloor Street West at High Park Avenue. (Subway to High Park). High Park is one of Toronto's largest and most easily accessible parks and is a rewarding place to look for birds.  
8:30 a.m.
- ▷ Belt Line Ravine. Meet at the northeast corner of Moore Park at Moore Avenue and Welland Avenue. This eastern part of the site of the former Belt Line Railway has grown back so that its trees and shrubs provide a haven for migrating birds. Sixteen species of birds have been found to breed there. Other natural and scenic features are the magnificent heights of Chorley Park and the revealing excavation of the Toronto Brick works quarry where Toronto's geological past has been laid bare.  
8:30 a.m.
- ▷ Wilket Creek Park. Meet in the parking lot off Leslie Street opposite the Inn on the Park. This park is part of a chain of parks which includes Serena Gundy, Edwards Gardens, and Ernest Thompson Seton Parks in the valley of the West Don River. These provide varied cover for many birds.  
8:30 a.m.

This unique day of "bird walks" is the seventh annual outing dedicated to the late James L. Baillie, dean of Toronto field "birders" and inspiration to at least two generations of enthusiasts. Jim showed the way for the city dweller to find joy in the vibrant birdlife at our doorstep. Come along and meet us; park that polluting gas monster; stretch your legs; and enjoy the city's green areas. You'll discover a new world.

Herb Elliott (763-4869)  
Outings Chairman

### AMOS' POND

Amos' Pond, located on the northeast corner of Finch Avenue and the Scarborough/Pickering Township Line, is considered by many to be an interesting place to watch birds and study vegetation. It is a wet, deciduous woodland area which includes a pond created many years ago when gravel and topsoil were excavated from the area.

If you are planning to visit Amos' Pond this spring, don't forget to carry your TFNC membership card. Access to the property will not be granted unless you can identify yourself as a genuine member of our club.

To reach Amos' Pond, go north on Meadowvale Road past the Metro Zoo and past Finch Avenue to Plug Hat Road. Turn right and proceed to Beare Road. Turn right (south) on Beare Road and go to Finch Avenue. Then turn left (east) on Finch Avenue and proceed to the Pickering Town Line.

BAILLIE BIRDATHON

The Jim Baillie Memorial Bird Count ("Baillie Birdathon") has been organized by the Long Point Bird Observatory to raise funds for bird research and preservation and to help support the program of the Observatory.

The Baillie Birdathon will provide financing for the James L. Baillie Memorial Fund for Bird Research and Preservation. The Fund will make grants for projects which increase knowledge and promote preservation of Ontario birds in their natural environment, with emphasis on the interests of naturalists and birdwatchers.

Long Point Bird Observatory is a non-government, non-profit organization devoted to conservation, education and research related to birds and the environment. The Observatory's program includes:

- monitoring bird populations and studying bird migration at Long Point on Lake Erie
- holding 4-day Bird Study Workshops for teenagers and teaching outdoor classes for Grades 4-6
- publishing the Directory to Co-operative Naturalists' Projects in Ontario
- organizing the Ontario Bird Feeder Survey

The main count takes place in the Long Point area (Norfolk County) on Saturday May 7, 1977.

J.E. "Red" Mason has volunteered to represent our club. He will be trying hard for 100 birds. If you want to be a volunteer too, contact Red Mason. It is not necessary to go to Long Point. You can count birds in your own backyard or favourite area. Get sponsors and create your own count. This is a good way to help worthwhile bird projects.

An official receipt for income tax purposes is available upon request for amounts over \$5.00. How much will you donate for each species observed? See page 18.

Red Mason (621-3905)

GULL AND TERN BREEDING COLONIES ON LESLIE STREET SPIT

Again, gulls and terns are nesting on the Leslie Street Spit. The Harbour Commission has agreed to establish barriers to try and prevent people and dogs from disturbing the colonies during nesting season. However, permission has not been granted to protect all areas with fences, ropes, and signs.

These are the largest breeding colonies on the Great Lakes. Let's keep it that way. Would you please help? Keep out of the breeding areas yourself. Should you see anyone disturbing the birds, be courteous and explain to them why these areas are vulnerable.

Mr. Hans Blockpoll and Jerry Haymes of the Canadian Wildlife Service and Peter Federoff of the Zoology Department (University of Toronto) are doing a breeding census of the spit. They will furnish a report at the end of the season. They are also preparing a brochure explaining the project. I will have copies available for distribution to your friends and those you encounter while birding on the spit. The area will be open to the public on Sundays starting June 5th.

Red Mason (621-3905)

OUTINGS REPORT

Lambton Woods (Jan. 15, 1977). A Cooper's Hawk was the highlight of this winter walk. The bird flew back and forth along the nature trail giving the 21 people on the outing a rare chance to see this rather elusive woodland hawk. Small birds were scarce, but an Iceland Gull and Harlequin Duck were found along the Toronto waterfront.

Toronto Lakeshore (Jan. 30, 1977). This outing was called off because of very cold temperatures (-40 F) and a lack of open water. Thirteen people did arrive at the meeting place though.

High Park (Feb. 26, 1977). A partly sunny, windy day met the 21 members who came on this walk. Because of icy hills, the group stayed on the roads. A Cardinal singing loudly and a mixed flock of ducks in the open water at Grenadier pond made this walk worthwhile.

Owl Hunt (March 6, 1977). Yes, they came — 200 people wanting to see owls. After some doubling up, 67 cars left the parking lot, but not before the crowd was treated to a close-up view of a Snowy Owl and a Great Horned Owl. These birds had been trapped at the Toronto International Airport as part of the program for removing raptors from the area. We also saw the banding and release of an immature Red-tailed Hawk that had been taken from a trap at the airport. Once on our way, our first sight was a Great Horned Owl sitting on her nest and a male guarding the area. Within a hundred yards of these birds was a pair of Red-tailed Hawks working on their nest. Next the "owlers" visited a grassy area to see a Short-eared Owl, and then a swampy area to see a Long-eared Owl. At this point many missed seeing a Saw-whet which was down a long, icy hill. Jerry and Bruce White had been unable to find any Saw-whets at Clairville although we had seen eight there along with a Boreal two weeks earlier. Next we went to Leslie Street to see if we could see a Snowy Owl, but no luck. The bird had also taken off for the north. Then we headed for Oshawa. Everyone was given explicit instructions on how to get to the meeting place. Sure enough, when we got there a Hawk Owl was seen on the top of a tree exactly where it was supposed to be! This was a "life-bird" for 60 of the "birders" on the outing. Then we headed for Edwards Gardens to see if we could find a Screech Owl — and sure enough, there it was — sitting in its hole waiting for us. Then home for dinner happy. Later we heard that those who had not gone to Oshawa had seen a Saw-whet Owl. (Thank you Jerry and Bruce White for all your help. Red Mason)

Mount Pleasant Cemetery (March 13, 1977). This outing for trees brought 80 people to this walk. Many new and different trees were studied on this outing. Also twigs, buds, needles, fruit, and bark were discussed.

Lambton Woods (March 19, 1977). Thirteen people went on this walk. A Common Goldeneye and Red-tailed Hawk were seen at close range, also ten species of waterfowl at High Park, and the Harlequin Duck at Mimico.

Walmsley Brook Ravine (March 20, 1977). Eight people attended this Ravine Group Outing which was terminated rather suddenly by a blinding snowstorm and one loud clap of thunder. Before that we inspected what is left of one of the tributaries of the West Don River and a beech forest on the neighbouring tableland. The brook apparently had its source at what is now the corner of Bayview and Eglinton, but has been put underground and most of its valley filled. Although the remaining valley contains few large trees it obviously provides suitable habitat for plenty of rabbits and birds. Reta McWhinnie (421-4537) is doing a ravine study of the area which is near the corner of Thorncliffe and Overlea. Anyone who lives nearby and is interested in learning more about the ravine should contact Reta.

Long Point (March 26, 1977). Three busloads of club members and their friends left Toronto at 8:00 a.m. The first stop was to see ducks and coots on the way out to the Interpretive Centre. The second stop was lunch at the point where everyone enjoyed the warm sunshine and the sight of Lake Erie frozen solid. Then the game wardens reported that a flock of swans had arrived in Long Point Bay (which was not frozen). After a good look at about 200 swans in the bay and six flying overhead, we went to Brown's Conservation Farm and were treated to the sight of hundreds of Canada Geese and one Barnacle Goose (the first sighted in the region for 25 years). This was a "life-bird" for 99% of the people on this excellent outing. Forty-two species of birds were observed during the day which ended when the buses arrived back in Toronto at 5:30 p.m.

Black Creek Valley (March 27, 1977). Another outing of the Ravine Group. This time to the valley of Black Creek between Steeles and Finch. Anyone living near the area is urged to contact R.J. Sky-Segal (661-5705), Gwyneth Jones (663-1385), or Madeline Webb who are doing a ravine study of the area. Eleven people enjoyed sunshine, bird songs and sights, and a last look at winter twigs and buds of trees and shrubs. The area contains many signs that it was farmed until recently — apple trees and lilac bushes. It also contains a good variety of native trees including black walnut, white pine, American beech, and blue beech.

Herb Elliott (763-4869)  
Outings Chairman

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#### REPORT OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE

During the 1976-77 year, the Board of Directors of the Toronto Field Naturalists' Club has consisted of the following persons:

President: Ronald Thorpe

Vice-President: Wes Hancock

Immediate Past President: Bill Andrews

Directors due to retire in 1977: Joan O'Donnell, Barry Ranford, Norah Stuart

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

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

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 1977-78:

President: Ronald Thorpe

Vice-President: Wes Hancock

Directors due to retire in 1980: Linda Cardini, Joan O'Donnell, Norah Stuart

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 TFNC) "accompanied by the written consent of the nominee. Such nominations shall be published in the April 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: I erred in not having this notice in the April Newsletter. If you have nominations to submit, please call me (425-4607) and I will pick up your nomination form for presentation at the Annual Meeting.

William A. Andrews  
Chairman, Nominating Committee

PUBLICITY NEWS

Following are some of the activities of the Public Relations Committee during the past year.

Many of you may have heard "Nature Spots" on the radio this spring. These were written by Harold Taylor, our Public Relations Committee Chairman, who sent them to about 12 radio stations in the Toronto area. Each "Spot" lasts about 30 seconds and informs the public about some aspect of nature and includes our club's name.

For several years now Margaret Thomas has been sending announcements of our monthly meetings and special interest group meetings to several radio and TV stations and newspapers in the area.

When Jeannine Dykstra went to Australia on a teacher exchange at the beginning of the year, Owen Fisher took charge of our displays. Anyone wanting to assist Owen with exhibits is invited to call him. His home number is 444-7190. He prepared the "Toronto the Green" display showing in the main East York Public Library and is getting ready to set up the club's exhibit at the FON Annual Conference in Guelph.

Sandra Berkowitz and Adrian Trembling are producing and distributing posters for a number of downtown locations to draw attention to some of the club's activities and concerns. If you would like to take part in this project, please call Sandra at 781-8855.

Harold Taylor  
Chairman, Public Relations Committee

"CONSERVATION" ITEMS

The Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Authority is undertaking a full review of its flood control and water conservation programs and policies. This includes flood control lines, structures (bridges, dams, channels), floodland uses, etc. A full updated mapping program is now underway as well.

The MTRCA in 1976 began a "Watershed Environmental Monitoring Program" in order to predict the impact of flood and erosion control works (dams, channels, etc.)

Both programs should be of major concern to naturalists. I have recently been appointed to the Flood Control and Water Conservation Advisory Board of MTRCA. My influence will be limited, but I am interested in hearing your views on the preceding matters and other MTRCA practices and policies. Call me at 741-5346.

Luciano Martin (741-5346)

CAMP ALLSAW

Located in the Highlands of Haliburton, this is a natural science camp for boys (July), boys and girls (August) of 7 to 15 years of age. The program features environmental experiences, fitness philosophy and practice, conventional resident camping skills and experience. A congenial, well-qualified staff helps campers to help themselves. For a brochure, apply to:

► Sam G. Hambly, Director, 9 Calais Ave., Downsview, Ont. M3M 1N3 (249-4517)

READING OF INTEREST

recommended by Leo Smith: The Hunting Hypothesis by Robert Ardrey  
 recommended by Mrs. Ruth Sachert: The Secret Life of Plants by Peter Tompkins  
 "Does the City Have You Bugged? Our Six-Legged Neighbours Outnumber Us" by David Barr  
 from the Rotunda, Spring 1977, Vol. 10, Number 1, pp. 24-32

NEWS FROM SCARBOROUGH

Lois James (439-3995) of Save the Rouge Valley System reports that 147 acres of the Brookside golf course have been rezoned on the Rouge watershed.

Bill Dibble (261-7955) has been appointed to the Scarborough Environment Advisory Committee.

IN THE NEWS

"Lowly snapdragon may halt dam — project affects Quebec, N.B." by John Picton  
 (Globe and Mail, March 30/77)

A \$533-million U.S. dam project that would affect lands and waterways in Quebec and New Brunswick may be scrapped — all because of the lowly furbish lousewort...Last year, as part of an ongoing series of environmental studies, a scientist came across 200 specimens of an unfamiliar plant on the banks of the St. John River...It was the furbish lousewort, a species of Maine snapdragon that was thought to be extinct... Now the (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers) is trying to transplant the two-foot-high lousewort to see if it will grow elsewhere — an occurrence that is thought to be unlikely because of its complicated root system. "In the next two or three weeks we should know if the attempt was successful...if it is not, we'll list it as an endangered and threatened species."...The lousewort would be among the first of 14 plants to make the list...When so designated, they will be protected under the Endangered Species Act, the terms of which forbid federal funding of any action that would jeopardize the existence of a listed species. So far, 637 animals, insects, fish and reptiles are covered by the act in the U.S.

Meanwhile in Ontario, eight new species have been added to our endangered list. The Endangered Species Act was passed by the Ontario Legislature in 1971 to protect any native species of flora and fauna threatened with extinction in the province. The 12 species which presently constitute the list are mainly threatened with extinction because of loss of habitat through urbanization, intensive agricultural practices, recreational development and the draining of wetlands.

from the News Letter of the Thunder Bay Field Naturalists, February 1977, Vol. 31, #1  
 Public interest in natural history and environmental problems has influenced many governments to issue a multitude of postage stamps with illustrations of an interesting variety of plant and animal life; and these have been popular with collectors. This catering to the people does not ensure that ruling officials have any real concern about the effects of pollution, fish and wildlife mismanagement or extinction of rare species. However the popularity of this type of stamp reveals an increasing appreciation of nature and politicians are becoming aware of the demand for environmental controls and conservation. Hopefully the end result will be beneficial. Canada's first stamp portrayed the beaver. Over a hundred years passed before our country issued another wildlife stamp. Since 1953 forty natural history subjects have decorated our mail. The Postmaster General has announced 1977 issues will illustrate native wildflowers, trees, and an endangered species — the Eastern Cougar.

BIRD NOTES

The later winter continued quiet for birds, although there were no less than three Boreal Owls sighted. One was in a cemetery on Jane Street and found by Harold Taylor on January 31. Four days earlier Paul Sherval had found one sitting on the sill of his apartment window at Bayview and Highway 401. The last was in Clairville on February 19 and gone the next day, as most of the birders in Toronto found to their frustration. Many saw it on the Saturday it was found, and Jerry White located no fewer than eight Saw-whet Owls in the same general area.

It has been a good year for hawks, but a really unexpected one was reported by Red Mason on January 21, when a Broad-winged was trapped at Malton Airport. Not surprisingly, it was in poor condition — in fact, it is amazing it had lasted that long!

Helen Juhola saw a Hermit Thrush in the Ontario Government MacDonal Block quadrangle on January 27, and the bird was still there at the end of February. We have had several Hermits reported this winter, but that was certainly the strangest place for one.

There have been few Bohemian Waxwings anyway over the period, but Chris Owen sent in a good account of one in Prospect Cemetery on March 17. Other March sightings already in are 65 Whistling Swans at Bronte on the 12th by Geoff Morgan, and a huge movement of 10,000 Snow Buntings at Thornton (really a little out of our area) by Arnold Dawe on March 5. The Mockingbird at Arnold's feeder survived the winter and is still around.

Some older reports that have come in and are too interesting not to note are a Glaucous Gull on the Eastern Headland on August 21, 1976 (Bill Martin) and a Purple Gallinule on April 24, 1976 in Duffin Creek (Jim Blakelock).

Your editor asks what happens to these reports once they are in. They form part of the body of information on Toronto records, of course, but they are also used in the seasonal summaries in American Birds. This is a magazine published six times yearly by the National Audubon Society in the U.S., and it has quarterly summaries of bird movements across the whole of North America. At one time these were all it had, and they made rather dull reading unless one was a real enthusiast. Now, however, it has a range of other articles as well and is a must for the serious birder. It costs \$10.00 a year and can be obtained from 950 Third Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022. My own role is to prepare the season summaries for Ontario.

This brings up the question of the kind of records needed and the matter of documentation. We need information on things that are different: an Oldsquaw in Toronto Bay on January 31 is to be expected, but the birds above were not, and hence are noteworthy. How do you know what is noteworthy and what is not? The Bird Migration Chart is an excellent guide for this purpose. Generally speaking anything not shown in a solid line is worth reporting, and anything on a date outside the dotted lines needs a rare bird report, as does any bird not listed. Exceptional numbers are also noteworthy; for example, Jerry White's report of eight Saw-whets.

I mentioned rarity reports, and the idea of these seems to scare some contributors. But all we are looking for is a straight-forward account of what you saw and how you identified it. Rarity reports do two things: they provide a permanent record of a rare bird sighting, and they give assurance that the observer — who may be unknown to the people who look after records — had eliminated any confusing species and really did know what he or she was looking at. Really, special forms are not

necessary for a rarity write-up, and the forms we have are to act as guides, not as hindrances!

Some members have asked for clarification on the value of routine records. For the reasons noted above, random records of common birds seen on dates and in places they usually occur are not of value. What is of value are daily counts of specific areas — even your own garden — during migration seasons. Observations giving the approximate numbers of each species seen over consecutive days, even if they do not cover the whole season, are most valuable as they allow a picture to be built up of the pattern of migration. Diana Hasley and Jack Satterly are the only persons in Toronto supplying such information at present.

A word on acknowledgements. It would be wonderful to be able to acknowledge every report received, but each quarterly summary entails a 4,000-word essay using the observations of up to 500 observers gathered in a 6-inch stack of paper! Editors from other cities do a preliminary summary for their areas, and everyone works to very tight publication schedules. All of this is a volunteer, spare-time effort and it is quite impractical to acknowledge every reporter individually. What I, and most others involved with records, try to do is acknowledge contributions through citations of the kind above, supplemented by periodic phone calls or letters. We are involved because we believe we are helping the club, or birders generally, and we hope contributors approach the effort in the same spirit. Fortunately I believe most people do.

Finally, this corner seems a good place to publicize and invite help for a new birding activity in the Toronto area — a spring roundup. One was tried in a preliminary way last year, but this year 22 routes have been worked out that should give everyone a good mix of habitats, and with five exceptions also give everyone a piece of lakeshore.

The roundup will be on Saturday May 21 and the roundup period will be from midnight to midnight. If you would like to help — and help is certainly needed — then call Murray Speirs (282-0911) for routes 1 to 12, and Arnold Dawe (851-0874) for routes 13 to 22.

All the routes are in the 30-mile radius Toronto region, and the east and west routes are really strips running north from the lakeshore. The routes and their major landmarks are:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Whitby Township   | 12. Whitchurch and Markham Twp. west of Highway 48                    |
| 2. Pickering Beach and north, including Glen Major                             | 13. King Twp.   |
| 3. Ajax and the east side of Duffin Creek                                      | 14. Vaughan Twp.  |
| 4. The Corner Marsh and the west side of Duffin Creek                          | 15. Malton, Claireville, Toronto Gore, to Albion County Road 4        |
| 5. Frenchman's Bay   | 16. Humber Bay, High Park and Cedarvale                               |
| 6. Rosebank and the Rouge Valley   | 17. The Humber River  |
| 7. Highland Creek to Vivian, and the Bluffs east of Highway 48                 | 18. Lakeshore between the Humber and Hwy 10 and area north to Hwy 401 |
| 8. the Bluffs west of Highway 48 and Metro parks in the east, north to Hwy 401 | 19. Peel County west to routes 15 and 18                              |
| 9. The Eastern Headland from the Inner Gate                                    | 20. Halton County from the County line west to County road 3          |
| 10. Central Lakeshore, including the Gaps and Ashbridges Bay, the Don Valley   | 21. County road 3 to Hwy 25, Halton Co.                               |
| 11. The Islands  | 22. Halton Co. west of Hwy 25, and Bronte Creek Park                  |

The precise boundaries of some of the routes remain to be worked out, but the above will give a fair guide.

Clive Goodwin

## CITY ACTS TO PRESERVE RAVINES

City Council has passed a controversial piece of legislation that is a major victory in the continuing battle for the preservation of Toronto's ravines. A historic move of considerable interest and significance to naturalists, this official plan ammendment, which has been approved by City Council, enables the city to pass by-laws that would prevent landowners around ravine edges from carrying out various activities on their own lands that would alter the wild or natural character of the ravines.

Specifically it would prevent the cutting of trees, removal of vegetation, dumping of rubble, or any filling or excavating that would alter land contours on the rear portions of private lots where lots begin to slope downward and become part of the natural ravine topography.

The restrictions will be applied individually, ravine by ravine, and the first one was the Kimbark/Coldstream Ravine (see TFNC Newsletter #304, January 1977). Now the first one in the east end of Toronto is Glen Stewart Park Ravine which runs southward from Kingston Road in the Beaches area of east Toronto. Glen Stewart is one of the best preserved ravines in Toronto and one well known to naturalists. Because of its proximity to the lakeshore, a migratory flyway, it attracts many birds during spring and autumn migrations, and will be the scene of a TFNC bird walk on May 3. Over the years I have seen more than 100 species of birds there. It also contains what is probably the last surviving colony of trailing arbutus in Metropolitan Toronto and one of the city's last stands of sassafras trees.

At a meeting of involved landowners on March 8 at nearby Balmy Beach School, the proposed legislation and how it would apply to Glen Stewart was explained in detail by city officials and local aldermen, Tom Wardle and Pat Sheppard. Opposition to the bylaw was expressed by some of the landowners who called it a form of "expropriation without compensation", but most approved of the by-laws's intent, and their main concern was that the ravine's topographical boundaries be delineated in a manner that would apply the restrictions equitably for all the landowners affected.

Both aldermen said they were in favour of the concept of limiting traditional landowner rights for the purpose of ravine preservation, but stressed it must be done equitably. Alderman Sheppard called it just another form of the zoning control which has been widely applied and accepted as an essential feature of urban life.

This is a battle of vital concern to naturalists. The fate of many city ravines will be determined by whether the by-law is passed or rejected for each ravine. Inevitably there will be further landowner opposition and lobbying. Write to your aldermen — the only address required is City Hall, Toronto — and tell them to get in there and fight for your ravines.

Fred Bodsworth

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Ed. note. Al Valiunas attended a meeting about the Windermere/South Kinsway Ravine in the west end of Toronto. Although Alderman Elizabeth Earys tried to explain the situation to local landowners, opposition was strong.

The following background information has been supplied by David Goyette (367-7187) of the City of Toronto Planning Board.

The initial City work (concerning the protection of ravine lands) began in the late 1950's, the beginning of Toronto's development boom era, with a report entitled Natural Parklands (1960). Both that report and its refinement Report on Ravines (1973) dealt with the changing character to the original form of the ravine system (some 24 named ravines in all) and the potential threat of continued infilling and other man-made modifications. Substantial portions of the original ravine systems in the vicinity of one third of these lands had already been developed by the early 1970's.

The affirmation in the City's Official Plan (1969) of some of these ravines as "Open Space" remains intact, but the achievement in 1971 of special City ravine control legislation, believed the first of its kind in Ontario, was the hallmark of the effort currently underway to retain the remaining lands in their natural state.

David P. Goyette  
City of Toronto Planning Board

#### HARP SEAL STUDY GROUP

Did you know that:

the harp seal population in the Western Atlantic is at least 20% below its maximum sustainable yield, yet the "harvest" continues?  
during the last four "hunts", the number of animals killed exceeded the "quota", 41,000 above the number specified by the government in 1976 alone?  
in spite of the overkill in 1976, the "quota" for 1977 was increased?  
the present population is less than 25% of what it was in the early fifties, and the pup production is steadily decreasing?  
almost all the pelts go to Norway to then supply the "fashion" and key-chain industries?  
the pups are killed solely for their pelts?  
it is illegal to save the life of a seal?  
this same herd is hunted again in the Arctic and Greenland?

Do you know:

how the "quota" is established?  
where most of the proceeds of the "hunt" go? (Hint: it is not Newfoundland.)  
why the recommendation (by the Special Advisory Committee on Seals and Sealing) to phase out the "hunt" by 1974 and impose a six-year moratorium was not adopted?

As naturalists, I feel it is our duty to examine the whole issue. This means getting the facts and informing the public. To this end I am trying to organize a fact-finding committee that will tie-in available information into some sort of guideline scheme that can be endorsed by naturalists and professional scientists. I intend to base any proposals on "facts and figures" supporting them with documented evidence. If you can contribute in any way (literature searching, clipping newspapers, giving advice or ideas, typing, etc.), please contact me.

► Andrew Rubaszek, 79 Bow Valley Drive, Scarborough, Ont. M1G 3J4 (439-7365)

Andrew Rubaszek

#### COMING SOON

TFNC Ravine Survey, Study Number Six — Burke Ravine 1974-76  
TFNC Ravine Survey, Study Number Seven — Taylor Creek Ravine 1976

## FROM THE METRO VALLEYS

The river valleys and ravines within Metropolitan Toronto are our most accessible sites for nature observation, enjoyment, and study. Many of us have been deeply concerned about their degradation. A few have done something about it. "Toronto the Green" is a good example.

The purpose of a Metro Valleyland Study, started last year and mentioned in this newsletter (see "Valley Alert", TFNC Newsletter, February 1977), is to produce prototype policies to control the future of the valleylands. The study represents "official" action by Metropolitan Toronto, the local municipalities, several provincial ministries, and the conservation authority (MTRCA). The TFNC, FON, and many other groups as well as interested individuals are participating in the study as members of the non-government committee.

Background. The study was officially launched by Metro Council in January 1976. While pressure had been building up for some time, the final push came as a result of a detailed resolution submitted to the Metro Planning Committee in 1975 requesting such a study, giving the reasons for it, and listing suggested participants. The resolution was just one of over thirty briefs and submissions (including a petition by about 1000 households) made on behalf of the Thistletown Regional Residents Association in opposition to developments severely encroaching on the valleys in general and the Humber River Valley in northern Etobicoke in particular. These submissions had to be directed to Etobicoke's Planning Board and Council, Metro Parks and Planning Departments, MTRCA, six provincial ministers, and to Premier Davis. As a result much has been learned during the past two years about the vulnerability of valley resources to damage with so many agencies involved. Thistletown residents are even fighting one issue at the Ontario Municipal Board.

The Study's Progress. The original resolution asked for an "outside" chairman and direct participation by clubs and interested individuals. Metro Toronto settled for an "in house" study. Two committees (one municipal, the other provincial) are studying and reporting. The non-government work committee is being "consulted". We have been given the role of responding to the preliminary reports of the other two groups. We are trying to do more than simply react. We are optimistic that this will not be merely a "whitewash" study.

To date we have received reports from the Provincial Committee, the Canadian Environmental Law Association, MTRCA (on a pilot study area — the Humber Valley from Hwy 401 to Steeles), and an "open space" document which was prepared by the Metro Toronto Planning Department outside the terms of reference of the study. The municipal report is expected soon.

Our group's task now is to analyze these reports and to try to have adequate policies included in the final report. The next step will be to get them implemented in the Metropolitan Toronto Plan and in the official plans of the various municipalities within Metro Toronto.

If you care about the future of our valleys and want to participate in this important task, please call me at 741-5346.

Luciano Martin (741-5346)  
Chairman, Non-government Work Group  
Metro Valleyland Study

TORONTO NATURAL HISTORY

The following notes refer chiefly to the birds of Toronto, Ontario, although there are some references to occurrences in other parts of the Province.

Since the senior author published his article "Birds of Toronto, Ontario," twelve years ago, there has been much change in conditions affecting bird-life near Toronto. The land birds have not been seriously affected. The ravines, especially those of the Don and Humber Rivers, form decided obstacles to the expansion of the city and still contain wooded tracts which provide shelter and food for many migrants. However, the Humber River is now flanked by an automobile road and since the completion of the Bloor Street Viaduct the ravines of the Don Valley, already cut up by railroads, will soon be absorbed in the ever-growing city.

There has been a large aerial training camp on the banks of the Don, from which aeroplanes have been flying in scores for the past three years, but they did not drive away the smaller birds. Large hawks and gulls have been seen, pursued by the cadets in their aeroplanes, and fleeing in terror before such huge adversaries. This camp is now closed and the original birds of the air may resume their travels in peace.

The most important changes from an ornithological point of view are those on the water-front. Ashbridge's Bay, once the haunt of many rare species of shore-birds and water-fowl, is all but converted into a cement-walled turning basin for freight vessels, and large areas of the marsh have been filled and the reclaimed section is being rapidly built up with factories. Even a street-car line runs across a portion of it.

Toronto Bay is no longer seriously polluted by sewage. In 1913 two interceptors were put in service which cross the city from east to west and convey all but storm sewage to a Disposal Plant at the north-east corner of what was once Ashbridge's Bay. Here the sewage is sedimented, and the liquid portion carried 2900 feet off shore into Lake Ontario by an outfall sewer. The separated sludge is drained and air-dried in large open beds.

This series of changes in the water-front has had and will continue to have a considerable influence on bird life. The harbor, being free from sewage, provides a safe haven for water-fowl, for they are protected there at all times. There is probably little food there now, but there may be more as the water becomes purer.

As little unsedimented sewage is emptied into the harbor or lake the number of gulls must decrease as many depended on this source of food especially in the winter. Through the field-glasses gulls may be seen feeding over the point in Lake Ontario where the outfall sewer discharges, so evidently enough solid material escapes after sedimentation to provide food for some birds.

The sludge beds at the sewage disposal plant provide food for many waders. The sludge often swarms with the larvae of a fly and with an annulid worm and fairly large flocks of shore-birds stop there on migration. They are safe and inaccessible while on these sewage beds, in fact, only an ardent ornithologist would stay to observe them. Considering all these points we can be sure that the marsh-birds, the waders, and the water-fowl will not visit us in anything like their former numbers, and those that do come, to the marsh particularly, will not remain long.

from "Ontario Bird Notes" by J.H. Fleming and Hoyes Lloyd, originally printed in the Auk, Vol. XXXVII, 1920.

contributed by Jack Cranmer-Byng

## THE NUMBERS GAME

Access to the interior of Quetico Provincial Park restricted? Controls on the number of people allowed a wilderness experience in the 1750 square miles that sprawl across the Ontario-Minnesota border? That was front-page news recently.

Short months ago conservationists were lined up on behalf of Quetico against Queen's Park and the large-scale lumbering interests. Now, it seems, Quetico has a new foe: people.

Last spring the FON cancelled its popular annual birdwatching weekend at Point Pelee. The reason: too many birders at one time in a small fragile habitat. (Veterans amongst the returning birds were puzzled by the low "people-count".)

We have, it seems, quite a paradox. Organizations most concerned about the preservation of natural environments have become so popular that they can do considerable damage.

Many members of our own club give freely of their time and talents. Some lead outings. Others work to save habitats needed by birds and plants. Our publicity spreads the good word. We ask the public to share our concerns, and we petition politicians to act responsibly towards the environment. We strive to add more members. How, then, do we control our enthusiasms when they threaten to press too hard?

Part of the answer may be in the very numbers that cause difficulties. In our large membership we have many people qualified to instruct the rest of us in birding and botanizing. Let's schedule some familiarization sessions. More of us then will feel confident to go out in three's and four's. Instead of 200 people setting out on a Sunday to look for owls, we could have many smaller groups going out over several weekends.

Awareness of the impact we have on wildlife can also be a helpful restraint. Such awareness does not always come easily. Around the end of January I happened upon a Boreal Owl in a small cemetery north of Toronto. Beneath the dozen or so cedars around the perimeter, the snow had been packed down by the boots of many birders seeking out the Saw-whets and Long-eared Owls previously found there.

On that Sunday afternoon a glittering sun did little to blunt the bitter west wind. In the lee of a cedar trunk the tiny owl sat impassively in my presence. I stood only a long-lens length away — the Boreal is very approachable — but it made no move to end our encounter. In fact, it rather impolitely indicated it would rather sleep.

Although I returned several times during the following weekend, I did not see the owl again. Had it been driven away by the more aggressive Long-ears? Had it paid the loser's price in the fight for food? Hunting for mice beneath the snow must have been a hard night's work. Had my trampling made it even more difficult? I can only wonder.

The technology we all enjoy sometimes trips us up. Many of us are taking pictures of wildlife. Several years ago Barry Ranford had a fine piece in the Newsletter on the need to be careful and concerned when photographing. Perhaps the Editor can reprint it.

Along with the camera we now have the tape recorder. The readily available pre-recorded cassettes are an excellent aid to learning bird songs and calls. But listen to this ad for a cassette in the Canadian Nature Federation's Bookshop brochure a few months ago:

"...includes a booklet telling how you can study birds more closely by playing their songs to them on their breeding territory."

Perhaps the copy writer did not know that a phoebe might bring food to its nest over 800 times a day, or that a house wren might make nearly 500 trips to its young every 24 hours. What an expenditure of energy! Let's not force the birds to use it investigating and repelling tape-recorded invaders.

If we can remember to respect Nature in all our contacts, we will minimize our impact. Respect will encourage us to raise the competence of our members so that they will enjoy getting out on their own. And respect will help keep technology in its proper place.

We don't have to lose the numbers game!

Harold Taylor

### ACCLIMATIZATION

The Acclimatization Institute announces a special workshop for all of those in Ontario who love the out-of-doors and would like to share their feelings and understandings with others. The leader is to be Steve Van Matre who is known for his two Books "Acclimatization" and "Acclimatizing" which are widely adopted as college texts in outdoor and environmental education, camping and recreation. The session is being held at Camp Wanapitei, Temagami, Ontario (60 miles north of North Bay). The workshop starts at 7:00 p.m. on Sunday, August 28 and ends at noon on Tuesday, August 30. The fee is \$95.00 per person. For further information write to:

► Camp Wanapitei Co-ed Camps Ltd., 7 Engleburn Pl., Peterborough, Ont. K9H 1C4

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