

# TORONTO FIELD NATURALISTS' CLUB

Number 315

April 1978

Visitors welcome!

## April Meeting

Monday, April 3, 1978, at 8:15 p.m.

at 252 Bloor Street West

(between Bedford Rd. and St. George St.)

Topic: A SURVEY OF ONTARIO'S BREEDING BIRDS

Speaker: Dr. George Peck

Dr. Peck is a veterinarian and is a research assistant in the Department of Ornithology at the Royal Ontario Museum. He is in charge of the Ontario Nest Records Scheme. His address will be illustrated with slides and will concentrate on the distribution of Ontario's breeding birds including some of our remote breeding species. Did you know that the White Pelican and the Great Grey Owl are residents of Ontario?

May Meeting: Monday, May 1, 1978

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Junior Club This meeting will be presented by the Fossil Group. Meet in the Theatre of the Royal Ontario Museum. Membership is open to boys and girls from 8 to 16 years of age.  
Saturday April 1  
Chairmen: John Martin (265-2818), Mary Nickle (221-7124)

Waterfront Waterfront Issues: the Naturalist Viewpoint with Bill Freedman talking about Birds and Plants of the Leslie Street Spit; Peter Feteroff, Group about Muggs Island; Linda Cardini, about Planning; and David Broughton, Thursday about the Toronto Bird Observatory. Meet at Huron Street Public April 6 School, 541 Huron St. (north of Bloor St., west of St. George St.) 8:00 p.m. Secretary: Melanie Milanich (924-0338)

Bird Group Propagation of Peregrine Falcons with Russ McMurray and Local Nesting of Accipiters with Ulrich Waterman. Meet in St. James Bond United Church on Avenue Rd. just north of Eglinton Ave.  
Wednesday April 26  
Chairman: Red Mason (621-3905)

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## MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION AND PUBLICATION SALES

83 Joicey Blvd., Toronto, Ont. M5M 2T4 or call 488-7304

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For information about outings in April, May, and June, see Toronto Field Naturalists Spring Outings 1978 booklet. Listed are 45 outings, 32 within Metro Toronto and 5 bus trips. As well as the usual Saturday and Sunday outings and Tuesday and Thursday evening walks, this year we have organized a series of walks for Wednesday mornings.

REPORT OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE

During the 1977-78 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 1978: Henry Fletcher  
Sheila McKay  
Mac Smith

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

Directors due to retire in 1980: Linda Cardini  
Joan O'Donnell  
Bill Freedman

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 1978-79:

President: Wes Hancock

Vice-President: Helen Juhola

Director to serve for one year, taking

Helen Juhola's place in the group to retire in 1979: Laura Greer

Directors to retire in 1981: Brian Gray  
John Riley  
Mary Smith

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

NOTE: Material for publication in the May Newsletter must be delivered to the Secretary on or before April 1, 1978.

William A. Andrews  
Chairman, Nominating Committee

(Secretary: Carole Parsons, 65 Havenbrook Blvd. T.H. 1, Willowdale, Ont., M2J 1A7)

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

"We need the tonic of wildness, to wade sometimes in marshes where the bittern and the meadow-hen lurk, and hear the booming of the snipe; to smell the whispering sedge where only some wilder and more solitary fowl builds her nest, and the mink crawls with its belly close to the ground". Walden

After our winter dormancy we embrace those special places from which our spring tonic issues forth. Binoculars and hand lenses clenched firmly we merrily pursue the sights and sounds heard before but not forgotten. Cherished smells and views once imprinted are now recalled in a quiet glade or breezy pinnacle. Spring has returned. Browns and greys are supplanted by greens and yellows and newly formed vivid floral patterns.

You can heighten your delightful spring experiences by sharing them with other club members. This year's Spring Outings Booklet is your passport to many exciting excursions. I hope you enjoy the wide variety of trips and walks prepared by our Outings Committee.

Other activities are planned at this time. The TFNC, FON, and the Civic Garden Centre are jointly sponsoring a unique film on the Harpy Eagle. This one-of-a-kind film documents the life of the most powerful eagle in the world in its unique habitat in South America. Please join us at the Civic Garden Centre's Floral Hall on Tuesday, April 11 at 8 p.m. Tickets will be available only at the door and are \$2.00 each.

The TFNC is also involved with the FON and other federated clubs in a conservation lottery in aid of the FON Save Our Streams Project. We hope you will support this worthwhile endeavour. We hope you win.

The TFNC's Bird Group is again sponsoring participants in the Jim Baillie Birdathon, but this year the count will be done locally. This fund-raising project provides assistance for ornithological projects in Ontario and for the first time part of the proceeds will go to the continuing development of the TFNC Jim Baillie Nature Reserve. I know that Red Mason and Jerry and Bruce White would appreciate your encouragement.

It is my earnest hope that you will be able to partake in the sights, smells, and joys of spring.

Ron Thorpe, President (484-1807)  
217 Greer Road  
Toronto, Ont. M5N 3N5

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Don't forget we need all the support we can get at the Ontario Municipal Board Hearings set for April 17 to April 21 at 180 Dundas St. West when TFNC presents its case against destruction of ravine land in East York.

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REPORT FROM THE "BIRDERS"

It was Sunday and the "birders" were all freezing waiting for the Great Cormorant to fly off the light at the end of the pier at the foot of #10 highway when Red Mason reappeared to announce that Dave Fidler had just seen a Gyrfalcon at the elevators next to the harbour police station. The result was an exit of cars for downtown Toronto. Sure enough, the bird was still there. As of February 8, both these birds are still in our area. (As of March 6, a second Great Cormorant has joined the first.)

Bird migration is now well underway. A number of us will be spending as many hours as possible in the field during the next few weeks looking for birds. Some will look just long enough at each bird to identify it and put a mark on the check-list; others will still be trying to identify the bird as it flies away.

If you want to know more about birds and enjoy bird-watching, relax and take your time. Study each bird when you see it. Watch it for a while. Why is the bird there? Is it migrating? Is it on its territory? Is it looking for a mate? Study its movements and what it is doing. In this way you may learn some of the basic facts about birds. This will start you on your way to getting more enjoyment out of that wonderful activity — bird-watching — a most relaxing hobby and one that we can all afford. The relaxation it provides may add years to your life.

The Long Point Bird Observatory (LPBO) is conducting another Birdathon, this year with a different twist. It has requested that affiliated clubs hold counts in their own areas. We have agreed to participate. In return, we will receive 25% of the receipts which we can put in our Jim Baillie Nature Reserve Fund; the LPBO will receive 50%; and the Jim Baillie Scholarship Fund 25%. (This fund financially assists bona fide bird projects and will help better our environment.)

Jerry and Bruce White will be representing the TFNC in the area between Frenchman's Bay and Whitby to see how many species of birds they can identify between 5 p.m. on Friday April 21 and 5 p.m. on Saturday April 22. They hope to match the 125 species seen last year. Let's all sponsor them for as much as we can. Complete the form provided below and mail it to them as soon as possible.

Anyone may choose an area and obtain your own sponsors. How about covering Toronto Island, the west end, a conservation area, your own backyard? If you are willing to participate this way please call me.

Red Mason (621-3905)

**BAILLIE BIRDATHON**

To: Jerry and Bruce White,  
8 Monterrey Drive,  
Rexdale, Ont. M9V 1S8

Yes, I will sponsor you at the rate of \_\_\_\_\_ for each species of bird you observe in the Jim Baillie Memorial Bird Count. If you wish an income tax receipt:

Print name: \_\_\_\_\_

Check box:

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

NEWS FROM THE TORONTO BIRD OBSERVATORY

The past several months have been active ones for the Toronto Bird Observatory committee. Reports and briefs have been presented, permits obtained, and perhaps most important, permission has been obtained from the Metro Toronto Parks Department to begin operations this spring in the Toronto Island Wildlife Sanctuary.

We hope to begin our activities by the end of March. The banding and migration-monitoring program will be sporadic during the first few weeks, but we hope to operate on as many days as possible from mid-April to early June.

I would like to repeat my call for volunteers. While we're rapidly approaching our limit of bander-trainees, we have many other tasks that need doing.

Bird-watchers are needed to census the area of the observatory each day and to help explain the presence of the observatory to naturalists who visit the Wildlife Sanctuary.

Some carpentry needs doing. Anyone who is good with tools may want to take on a small project (part of which can be done at home).

Our study of bird mortality at man-made objects has several volunteers, but we could use more. All that is required is an early-morning visit to a selected site on as many days as possible during the spring and fall. Full directions will be provided to volunteers.

Another interesting project is the recording of all man-induced bird mortality (at windows, by cats, etc.) on a residential street over a year. People on good terms with their neighbours may find this easy to do.

If you would like to help, please get in touch with me (preferably by letter).

David Broughton (489-7444 7-9 p.m.)  
 Chairman, Toronto Bird Observatory  
 4 Heddington Ave.  
 Toronto, Ont. M5N 2K3

TORONTO ISLAND WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

The Toronto Bird Observatory is beginning a long-term banding and migration-monitoring program this spring in the Wildlife Sanctuary at Toronto Island. This is a joint project with the Toronto Field Naturalists and the Ontario Bird-Banding Association under the authority of the Canadian Wildlife Service and with the permission of the Metro Toronto Parks Department. All work will be carried out under the supervision of licenced, experienced banders.

A mist-netting program will take place in a relatively small area of the Wildlife Sanctuary. The area will be sign-posted, and we are asking that naturalists do not go into this area. (We have situated our site so that you can easily go around.) This is important for several reasons. The efficient operation of the bird observatory will be hampered if we have to devote the energy which should be going to processing the birds, to answering queries from unscheduled visitors. People wandering between the mist nets will cause the birds unnecessary stress. Well-meaning, interested naturalists should contact the Toronto Bird Observatory chairman and arrange a visit if they want to learn about the work of the observatory. We hope to have some sort of "open house" in May.

David Broughton

SING A "SONG" FOR NUT TREES

The Society of Ontario Nut Growers, SONG, is a very suitable name for the Society which provided me with such fun in April 1977. The "Spring Nut Auction" was held last April at the Arboretum of Guelph University. SONG's news bulletin described the event as follows: "Members are invited to bring for sale items such as nursery-grade nut trees of all kinds, samples of nuts, nut receipt books, nutty baked goods, handicrafts, woodworkings and related items of horticultural interest..." I was intrigued. I had never been to a "Nut Auction". I planned to go.

April 15 I set off for Guelph's Arboretum and a new experience. I arrived like many others empty-handed, but others arrived carrying little trees (and not so little trees), nut samples, and bushes. In time each item was tagged for auction.

SONG's president was the auctioneer and had the original owner of each item describe the name, age, growing details, etc. of each item to be auctioned. I had decided not to buy very much at all when I set out for this event, but alas, I was carried away with enthusiasm and bid, and bid, and bid! I learned a lot that evening about nuts and growing nut trees as my purchases accumulated by my side. I bought three little Hartnut trees, two three-year old Black Walnut trees, two Filbert trees (two years old), 25 sample butternuts, ten Hartnuts, ten Filberts — all for \$18.50!

April 16 was a "Nut tree planting day" at Virgil, Ont., and a beautiful day it turned out to be. The Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA) wanted to make a six-acre "nuttery" at Virgil and SONG members were invited to help. The purpose of the "nuttery" is to determine the very best nut-bearing species which can survive in the Niagara peninsula so that superior cultivars can be developed for future nut growers. The plan called for the planting of as many as 315 outstanding and named cultivars encompassing all of the nut-bearing species known to survive in the area — and it was hoped that about 500 seedling trees would be planted during the day.

About 200 members and friends of SONG gathered at Virgil with rubber boots, spades, buckets, and enthusiasm. The NPCA was well organized with the holes, scattered over six acres of field, already dug (thank goodness, for the soil was quite heavy), and each hole labelled with the seedling variety to be planted in it. There were big piles of peat moss and bone meal and little trees all labelled, and more shovels and more buckets. Instructions on how to plant little trees followed, and off we went in two's and three's. My threesome carried our selected tree to an appropriately labelled hole and began planting. Two hours later my threesome had planted three little trees and helped to plant two more and I for one was exhausted. By that time all the other little trees had been planted and all the holes were filled. Our efforts and those of the NPCA were commemorated by the unveiling of a plaque and then we joined in the unveiling of another plaque on an adjoining property to mark the planting of a Tulip Tree by the enterprising NPCA to commemorate the Silver Jubilee Year.

Our day did not end there — the NPCA had invited all planters to supper at the local St. David's Lion's Club, and about 200 of us, hot, dirty, very hungry and thirsty set off for the clubhouse. We were royally entertained with an excellent meal and good Niagara Peninsula wines served to us by the local ladies — a lovely ending to a very happy and memorable day.

I can hardly wait for SONG's 1978 Nut Auction.

Barbara Edwardes-Evans

## GREAT LAKES BEACHED BIRD SURVEY

If you like to walk beaches and identify birds, you can do both and help the Great Lakes Beached Bird Survey. Sponsored by the Long Point Bird Observatory, the survey will monitor Great Lakes bird mortality using information collected by volunteers on monthly beach walks. It is the first such survey for an inland lake region, and should provide many interesting insights into bird life (and death) on the Great Lakes.

The project is designed to help us learn about the effects of pollutants on birds, and more importantly, will compile long-term records on natural bird mortality. This information will help us learn about the causes, seasonal changes and location of bird die-offs, and allow us to make mortality comparisons between lakes and between years. It will also document occurrences of uncommon species like jaegers, seaducks or other pelagics on the lakes.

Participants are needed on the Canadian and American shores of all five of the Great Lakes and on Lake St. Clair. You should have a basic knowledge of bird identification and be willing to walk a one or two mile stretch of beach of your own choice, once a month. On the way, you will count, identify, age (where possible) and record on the forms provided, all the dead or dying birds encountered. Commitment to walk a beach each month for a year is preferred, so that long-term data can be collected, but you don't have to do the walk when the lake is frozen, and the monthly dates can be varied somewhat. Results from the survey will be published in an annual report to be sent to all beach walkers.

Now is the time to register for the 1978 survey. Thirteen different beaches are currently being walked and many more walkers are needed, particularly on Lakes Huron, Michigan, Superior and St. Clair. Individuals or club groups are welcome to participate. If you are interested in taking part, write to

Chris Risley, Great Lakes Beached Bird Survey, Long Point Bird Observatory,  
P.O. Box 160, Port Rowan, Ont. NOE 1M0.

## ONTARIO HERONRY INVENTORY

Do you know the location of a heronry? If so, the Ontario Heronry Inventory needs your help.

The Inventory is a new province-wide survey, launched as a joint project of the Long Point Bird Observatory, Canadian Wildlife Service (Ontario Region) and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. Its objective is to compile a catalogue of all known heronries in Ontario.

Heronries are the colonial breeding sites of herons. Many are traditional sites occupied year after year for as long as anyone can remember. In Ontario, heronries are made up primarily of Great Blue Herons, but there are some with Black-crowned Night Herons, and Great Egrets and Cattle Egrets may also be found.

As fish-eaters, herons are vulnerable to all the ills that pollution can cause, and are therefore good indicators of environmental change. Also, their habitat and traditional nest sites are often under pressure from man. It is important that we know where these sites are before they are threatened, and that we have the ability to assess changes in heron populations. The Heronry Inventory is designed to do this.

The inventory depends on volunteers — naturalists, hunters, fishermen, conservation officers, wildlife biologists and the general public for information. If you know the location of a heronry in Ontario, please write and tell us where

it is (address below). We will send you forms requesting more details about the site, and if you are in a position to check the heronry in the 1978 breeding season, we will tell you how to do this with minimum disturbance to the birds. Even if the heronry's location is the only information you can contribute, we will very much appreciate hearing from you, as it will help to make the Inventory as complete as possible. Don't assume that someone else has already reported your site. Heronry locations will be kept confidential, if you so request.

To report heronry locations and to obtain further information and data sheets, please write to the following. Thank you for taking time to respond.

Philip Taylor, Heronry Inventory, c/o Long Point Bird Observatory,  
P.O. Box 160, Port Rowan, Ont. NOE 1M0.

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Hawk Watching. Volunteers are required to participate in a hawk count at Beamer Point near Grimsby. If you are interested in this project, please call Eric Single at 595-6164 (work) or 531-4256 (home), or call Dave Copeland (364-0875). Watchers are needed particularly for April 3 to 9 and April 24 to 30. Although the greatest number of species may be seen earlier in April, a greater number of "broad-wings" may usually be observed later in the month. To see as many hawks again in one day you will have to wait for the fall migration which takes place in greatest numbers from September 15 to October 10. Birds are usually most active on clear, sunny days following stormy weather.

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Don River Day. Saturday, April 15, 1978 is the sixth annual canoe tour of the Don. For more information, phone George Luste at 534-9313 or Bruce Bolin at 531-1847.

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Applications for the Junior Conservationist Award, for students aged 16 to 19 who are actively involved in nature or conservation activities, may be obtained from the Director, Conservation Authorities Branch, Ministry of Natural Resources, Toronto, Ont. M7A 1W3.

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Membership in Friends of the Spit may be obtained by sending your name, address, telephone number, and \$2.00 to Friends of the Spit, 174 Balsam Ave., Toronto M4E 3C1.

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"Tommy" Thompson will be showing slides of Africa at the Annual Meeting of the Civic Garden Centre, 77 Lawrence Ave. East, Wednesday, April 19, 1978 at 8 p.m. Visitors are welcome.

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Annual Meeting and Auction of SONG (see page 6) on Saturday, April 22, 1978 at 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Civic Garden Centre, 77 Lawrence Ave. East.

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Free lecture series continues at Royal Ontario Museum on Thursdays at 8:00 p.m. in the Planetarium Lecture Room. April 6 - On a Feather; April 13 - On a Cockroach.

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Individual or couple wanted to take over mailing of TFNC Newsletter. Please call Ron Thorpe (484-1807) if you are interested. A place is needed where volunteers can stuff envelopes etc.

OUTINGS REPORT

Thompson Park (Nov. 27, 1977). Twenty-eight participants enjoyed a walk through a manicured park, and then a wild area. As well as a few birds they saw a few historic sites — St. Andrews Presbyterian Church, an old cemetery, and a few houses about 150 years old. Weather was cool and breezy.

McCowan Ravine (Dec. 4, 1977). Again 28 people explored Highland Creek's ravines. Part of the area had been a landfill site (now replanted) which contrasted sharply with another part which is forested richly with very old cedars and many other species of native trees.

Leslie St. Spit (Dec. 10, 1977). Ten people were on this outing under sunny skies and temperatures about  $-4^{\circ}\text{C}$ . A large flock of geese were seen as well as a few ducks and gulls.

Earl Bales Park (Dec. 11, 1977). An overcast day greeted ten people on this trip. Crows, Blue Jays, Goldfinches, Evening Grosbeaks, Downy Woodpeckers, and a Red-tailed Hawk were seen.

Coboconk Christmas Bird Count (Dec. 18, 1977). Report published in the February issue of "The Naturalist" (Oshawa). Available from the editor of this newsletter.

Toronto Christmas Bird Count (Dec. 26, 1977). Reported in the February issue of this newsletter.

Winter Waterfowl Count (Jan. 8, 1978). See page 10.

Kew Beach Park (Jan. 15, 1978). Eighteen people enjoyed a sunny, cold trip afield. Many ducks were seen as well as eight Herring Gulls. Very interesting oaks were found in this area.

Edwards Gardens (Jan. 28, 1978). There were sixteen species of birds seen on this trip. The highlight was a Piliated Woodpecker which gave the sixteen people on the outing quite a thrill. Chickadees and nuthatches made quite a fuss over a Screech Owl in a tree nearby.

Chapman Creek (Feb. 12, 1978). See page 11.

Thompson Park (Feb. 19, 1978). Two robins were seen on this trip, as well as Cardinals, Chickadees, Crows, etc. Ten inches of snow and a cold clear day with 19 members participating. Many older cedars along the slopes of the ravine. Some trees with identification labels.

High Park (Feb. 25, 1978). There were fourteen people on this walk. The birds were not very plentiful. A male Wood Duck stole the show at the north end of the pond. A Northern Shrike passed over and managed to disappear before many could see it. Despite the snow coming down we all made it back to the cars. Some of us drove to the south end of the pond where we saw a female Ring-necked Duck, Shoveller, Bufflehead, Goldeneye, Mallard, Black Duck, and Scaup.

Herb Elliot

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See the Globe and Mail, Sports and Recreation Section, on Wednesdays for current news on bird-watching around Toronto (by Alan Wormington). Watch also for W.C. Mansell's column on "Birds", and Mary Kibblewhite's column on "Walking".

TORONTO ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB  
 Mid-Winter Waterfowl Inventory - January 8, 1978.  
 Compiled by: Clive E. Goodwin.

ROUTE NUMBER	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	TOTALS
Common Loon				1				1
Horned Grebe					2			2
Mute Swan						9	4	13
Canada Goose	60	196	20	105	933	119	388	1821
Snow Goose							1	1
Mallard	202	357	403	204	1562	605	506	3839
Black Duck	36	134	24	14	139	119	208	674
Gadwall			33		73	99	59	264
Pintail			1				1	2
Shoveler					1			1
American Wigeon						15	4	19
Wood Duck					2			2
Redhead			11	18		52	9	90
Ring-necked Duck					1			1
Canvasback				32	1			33
Greater Scaup	21	54	1	1819	588	500	552	3535
Lesser Scaup						5		5
Common Goldeneye	50	34	16	21	88	51	118	378
Bufflehead	25	10	15	93	190	40	35	408
Oldsquaw		331	836	359	693	82	27	2328
Harlequin Duck					1			1
Hooded Merganser					1			1
Common Merganser	514		473	26		24	1	1038
Red-breasted Merganser						1	1	2
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>908</b>	<b>1116</b>	<b>1833</b>	<b>2692</b>	<b>4275</b>	<b>1721</b>	<b>1914</b>	<b>14459</b>

ROUTES AND OBSERVERS: 1. Whitby to Rouge River: J.M. Speirs, S. Price.  
 2. Rouge River to Coatsworth Cut: F. and M. Bodsworth, B. Parker, R. Barclay.  
 3. Leslie St. to Cherry Beach: G. Fairfield.  
 4. Toronto Islands, E. Gap: J. Kelley.  
 5. Parliament St. to South Humber mouth: G. and N. Bellerby, M. Melcher, K. Moores  
 6. Humber to Watersedge Park: D. Perks, J. Lamey. P. Leyman  
 7. Clarkson to Bronte: C.E. and J.E. Goodwin, A. Dawe.

TIME AND WEATHER: 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Steady rain, at times heavy, 5°C., Lake average swell and waves, Light wind. Fog on most routes. Visibility poor to fair. Gaps and most of bay open, rivers and lagoons frozen except mouths.

WINTER SUNDAY AFTERNOON AT CHAPMAN CREEK

February 12 was set as the most likely day for the river ice to be solid enough to walk on — the valley is most exciting when seen from the river, summer or winter. We had beginner's luck. It was frozen — almost solid — and a foot thick. A two-inch crust of snow formed during the week resulted in a loud crackling that warned off the wildlife as we progressed downstream. We could see the stream rushing over the variable bedrock bottom at some holes in the ice. As the banks got higher, different layers of limestone and shale are exposed until the banks are well over head height. The stream as it meanders has cut down into the rock layers incising them. The banks are fairly stable except where the ubiquitous main sewer is buried. A little way upstream from Scarlett Road we found a frozen blue-ice waterfall — perfect to slide down. We followed the trail back. It was very cold and breezy in the manicured park section, and we had a view of the original Scarlett family home across the creek. Originally the creek was called Sturgeon Creek; however, it became Humber Creek on the engineers maps, and now it is called Chapman Creek for the convenience of the parks personnel who can read road signs. (Chapman Road runs along the top of the ravine on the side where maintenance crews enter.) Is history so important? (Who can tell anyway once all the names are changed enough times?)

We admired the associations of floodplain and slope forests: beech on a warm slope (not yet showing the damage from tidying operations), black cherry, white pines (obviously the worse for the fill which was placed in 1977), in the bottomland some hemlock, yellow birch, and some ironwood of heritage stature. We saw the controversial two houses whose owners had the slope and bottomland forests removed, one for a concrete swimming pool, and the other for a new regular planting of lollipop trees in sod. (I knew someone once who bought a forested lot so he could grow vegetables.) We saw the 1977 landfill site which had been waiting for a swimming pool permit but instead was purchased, I believe, by the Borough of Etobicoke as the first instalment in making Chapman Trail a public obligation.

Other people in the valley were either just out for a walk or kids out for adventure. We acquired a Husky dog along the way and ended up at Marie Simpson's for tea. During the week, the area provides a favourite shortcut to school with the chance of getting wet feet at the several wading crossings. After a rain everyone goes via the street and the creek roars and spouts — for a day. The watershed begins near the airport, but the creek is underground for much of its length except from Islington Avenue to the Humber River.

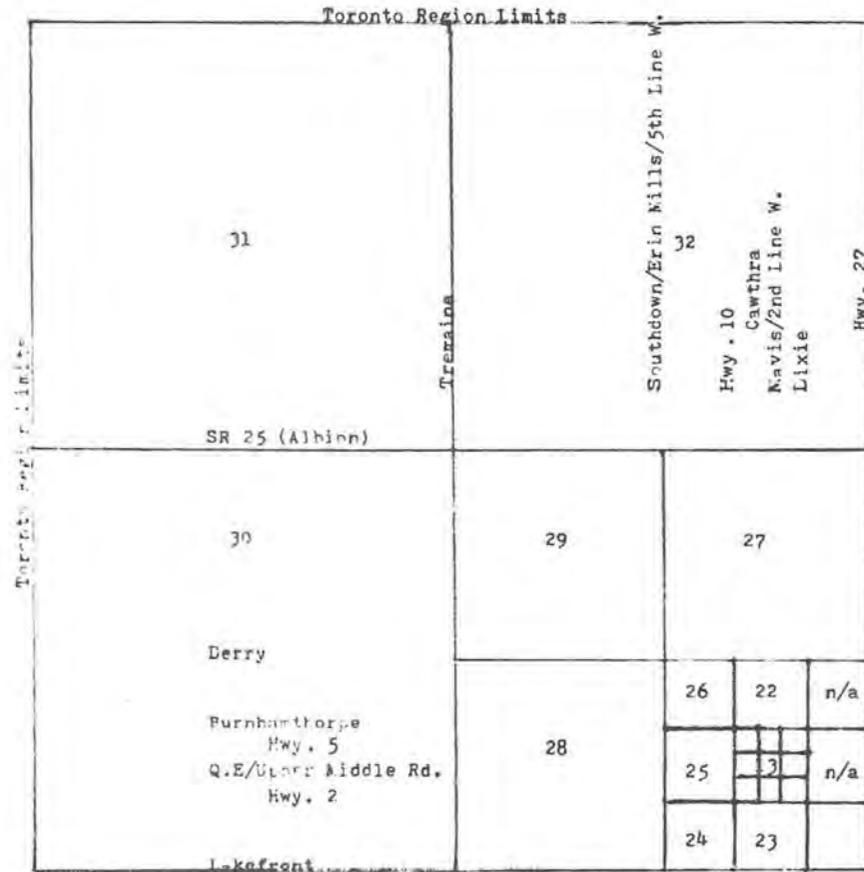
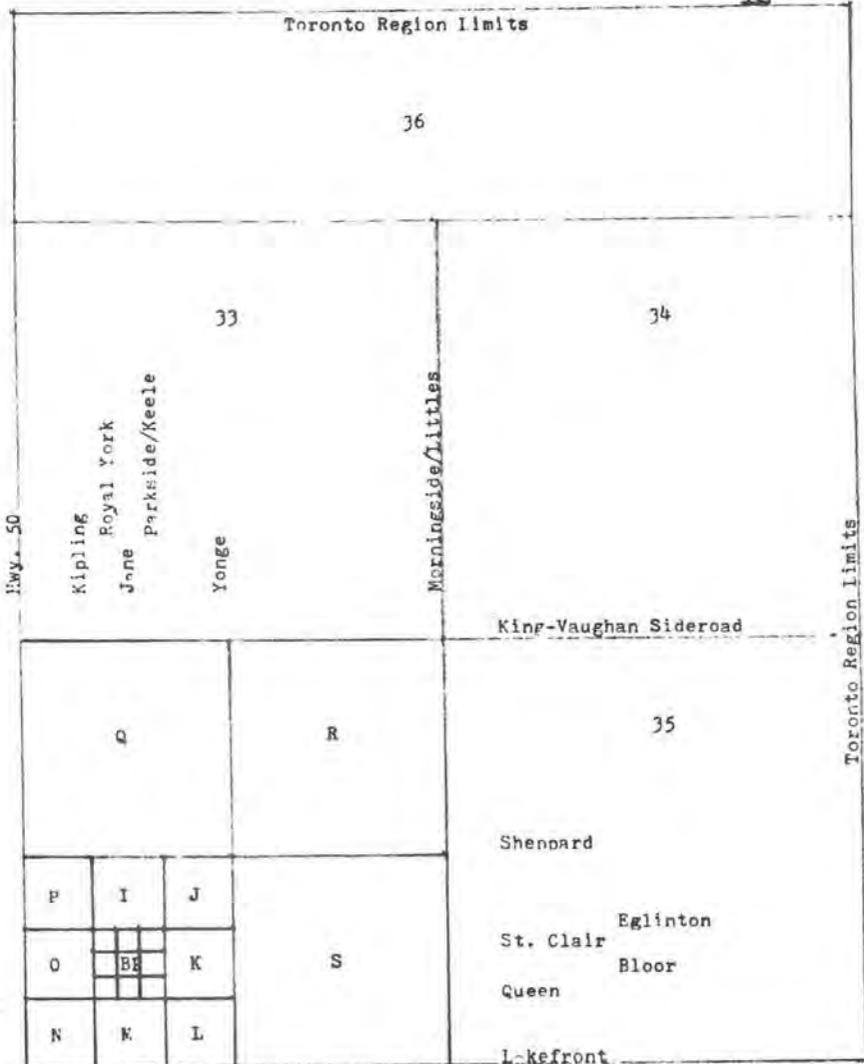
The most unusual feature we saw was the chimney of ice standing below a long galvanized runoff pipe. As water drips from the pipe a column of ice forms, but it is not solid. When there is a wind the water blows out and freezes, but when the wind stops blowing the water drops straight down.

We are planning to go back in the summer, and hope to find a geologist to tell us what we are looking at.

Mary Smith (231-5302)

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Copies of the Niagara Escarpment Commission's Preliminary Proposals (including Schedule A and B maps) and resource material may be examined at the Ont. Government Building (corner of Bay and Wellesley). Individuals and groups are encouraged to comment on the Proposals before a formal proposed Plan is prepared.



ANALYSIS BY AREAS OF "LIFE LIST"  
by W.C. Mansell

Toronto Region (excluding Peel and Halton Counties)

BP	86
B	1
D	12
E	14
J	6
L	3
M	48
P	1
Q	2
S	10
333	1
34	1
35	4

189

Mississauga

16	1
22	2
24	3
27	2
28	6

14 203

Huntsville Region

SF	29
U	3
7	17
8	2
10	2
12	2

55

Mountsberg

2

Rest of Ontario

26 286

British Columbia

36

Manitoba

1

New Brunswick

2

Quebec

3 328

U.S.A.

Florida	20
Maryland	1
New Jersey	16
Ohio	1
South Carolina	12

50

North American Total: 378

## ANATOMY OF A "LIFE LIST"

Combine the inherent curiosity of a naturalist and the peculiar attributes of a statistician and there is bound to be born either a study which proves nothing or one which is highly informative. Hopefully, this treatise falls into the latter category. It began when I wondered what particular locality had made the greatest numerical contribution to my "life list" of birds. I also pondered the chance of duplicating my success now.

It was not difficult to define and delineate the various "birding" localities. In 1943 I had devised a notekeeping system in which the locations where I did almost all my "birding" were divided into a gridwork pattern. This system arose from my dissatisfaction with the several that had been used during the first ten years of recorded observations. To preserve conformity, those years were rewritten, the whole being compacted into a system promoting quick reference.

To facilitate allocation of observations my first premise was that most field trips would be undertaken near my residence, and that the farther away a locality, the less likely I would visit it often. So I established two cores — one, my home; the other, the family cottage. Fortunately, both were near the geometric centre of a square bounded by concession lines and sideroads. Around each of these squares, both slightly imperfect, I laid out eight more squares (each one more or less the same size as the original). One was on each side, one off each corner. Then around this large square, which was nine times the size of the original, I laid out eight more, and so on.

In the beginning, the layout about my home was confined to York County, but since then I have expanded it to include all the Toronto region (a circle having a 30-mile radius with the Royal Ontario Museum as its centre — according to the system of the late James L. Baillie. The major reason for this particular expansion was that I moved from York County to Peel County.

The layout about the family cottage, Sunset Farm, Rebecca Lake, was also expanded in later years to include all of the Huntsville region; that is, a circle having a 15-mile radius with Huntsville's town hall as its centre. Part of the reason for this expansion was the increasing ease in driving about Muskoka. When this grid plan was set up in 1943 the use of the automobile for pleasure driving in that district received scant consideration. In addition, there was enough to explore and enough privacy about Rebecca Lake to outweigh any incentive to go farther afield.

My study of birds began on April 9, 1933, when I lived at 62 Baby Point Crescent, near the geometric centre of a square bounded by Jane and Bloor Streets, Royal York Road and the projection of St. Clair Avenue which was effectively the Canadian Pacific Railway. The Baby Point promontory forces the Humber River into a broad curve with a varying amount of flat land on each side of the river bed. The scrub willow, which grew so profusely on the flats and provided shelter for many forms of wild life, was drastically reduced when the Metro Toronto and Region Conservation Authority took over about 1960. On the north side of the promontory a small wood, variously known as Baby's Bush, Magwood Park, and Warren Park, was once host to myriads of migrating birds, but it has been ruthlessly thinned and migrants nowhere approximate their former numbers. A "bay" across the river from the point was and still may be a good "bird spot" as it has been thinned but slightly. Fencing, however, defies closer examination. North of Baby's Bush were market gardens where species associating with farm fields could be found. It is now the residential community of Warren Park.

In the angle formed by Royal York Road and Dundas Street were many grassy fields — a joy to walk through in June. The conversion of this area to houses took place in the forties and fifties, extirpating grass-haunting species from the area.

For the first ten years I kept records I lived in the Baby Point area. The Humber Valley was certainly a migration route and the river itself showed little if any signs of pollution. The result was that the Baby Point area was by far my most productive area for bird watching. I saw 86 species of birds for the first time there. Most were woodland birds, of course, but a surprising number were ducks (3), waders (12), and other birds (2) associated predominately with water. Notable in this list are the Little Blue Heron, the Purple Sandpiper, Tufted Titmouse, Bohemian Waxwing, Golden-winged Warbler, Louisiana Waterthrush, Hoary Redpoll,<sup>and</sup> although it no longer enjoys specific distinction, the Oregon Junco.

Baby Point is now so different that one could no longer expect to see, except as storm-blown "accidentals": Soras, Common Gallinules, and six species of shorebirds, all of which can still be found in certain parts of Toronto and the surrounding counties. The common woodland species undoubtedly still pass through on migration and could still be seen in the trees atop the promontory itself, but in greatly reduced numbers. The trees are still visited by rare warblers and arboreal finches and the many feeders still attract an occasional vagrant titmouse. However, water pollution has meant that most ducks and shorebirds have become rarities in the area.

Sunnyside was nicely included in a square bounded by Royal York Road on the west, Parkside Drive on the east, and the Canadian National Railway on the north. My introduction to most of Ontario's waterfowl, shorebirds, gulls, and terns took place there. Sunnyside has changed over the years but to a much smaller degree than any other part of the City of Toronto. Still, thirty and forty years ago, it offered solitude, so that more individuals of the less common water birds could be seen. I believe, though, that all the species I met there still occur, although a meeting with them now would be much more fortuitous than in my early birding years. Shorebirds may be more reluctant to spend time there now because of the increased human traffic along the shore; while the small pools back from the water and the scattered areas of long and short grass, both wet and dry, disappeared some years ago, again I suppose, in the interests of "conservation". I defy anyone to find dozens of Pectoral Sandpipers there now. Among the 48 species contributed to my life list by Sunnyside are: Red-throated Loon, Double-crested Cormorant, Harlequin Duck, Surf Scoter, American Golden Plover, Black-legged Kittiwake, and although now considered a colour phase, Blue Goose. More recent records include: Smew, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Franklin's Gull, and Little Gulls. Only two land birds were met there: Snowy Owls and Lapland Longspurs.

One of the longest, unbroken stretches I ever spent on Sunset Farm was in 1933, my first summer of recording birds. Yet, because I lacked a tutor, my life additions were about half what they should have been as the area included deep and shallow waters, clear and muck-bottomed lakes, wooded, marshy and sandy shores, cultivated fields and pastures, wooded swamps and marshes, and woods of every description though chiefly hardwoods. Yet of the 29 species seen there for the first time in my life, only 20 were seen in 1933. The Farm has not been worked since 1945, its fields are overgrown, Rebecca Lake is full of boats, yet birds are still numerous — although changed conditions have resulted in a slightly different composition. Notable contributions made by

the farm are: Whistling Swan, three of which dropped down on Rebecca Lake one October; Spruce Grouse, near its southern limit here; Brewer's Blackbird, a fairly recent record; and Clay-coloured Sparrow. The other 25 species are what one would expect to and still find almost everywhere in Muskoka.

Life additions from the area which includes Pen Lake and Tanglewood Cottage on its east shore, a family holding since 1900, numbered 17, 14 of them in May 1933. Most of these were picked up close to the cottage or the lakeshore. The Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker and a summering Red Crossbill were the only extraordinary contributions. Except during May, 1933 and the six years from 1946 to 1951, my visits here were brief — part of a day to as much as an extra long weekend. Birding along the beach known as Sprinside is good but cannot be conducted comfortably except in certain seasons of the year. Not many cottagers like to see someone staring (apparently) into the privacy of their cottage. To go farther afield involves both a tiring climb to hardwood-lined roads and a long trek to marshes and small lakes.

The area in which I lived for eight years beginning in 1943 is bounded by Bloor and Queen Streets, Royal York Road and the South Kingsway. It includes the lower Humber River, which then had eight marshes. The few still in existence are almost worthless due to pollution. The market gardens that were off the west side of the river valley began "sprouting" homes in the mid-forties, while the housing along Riverside Drive on the east spread into the valley in the fifties. I did not regularly include this area in my peregrinations until 1935, but did enjoy it for fifteen years or more before it lost all semblance of wilderness. Its 14 species, most of which attest to the popularity of its marshes, include: Eurasian Widgeon, Turkey Vulture, King and Yellow Rails, Whimbrel, Carolina Wren, Yellow-breasted Chat, and Summer Tanager. Except for the Water Pipit and Greater Yellowlegs, the remainder will visit the residential gardens at least on migration.

The area bounded by Bloor and Queen Streets and South Kingsway and Parkside Drive includes all of High Park and Grenadier Pond. The park has lost much of the undergrowth that proved so popular with migrating warblers while its human content is much greater now than it used to be. However, one can still expect to see any of the 12 species I saw there for the first time. They include: Least Bittern, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher and Cerulean and Hooded Warblers. My first Gadwall was seen on the pond on the west side of Ellis Avenue at a time when the bird was very rare in Toronto.

One of the greatest inland marshes in southern Ontario was Ashbridge's Bay. Had I lived in the east end of Toronto the area bounded by Yonge Street, Morningside Avenue, Sheppard Avenue and Lake Ontario would have given me many firsts. As it was it provided 10 including: King Eider, Piping Plover, Red Knot, Western Sandpiper, Hudsonian Godwit, and Connecticut Warbler. My first Mockingbird was seen in Moore Park. The long, man-made spit at the foot of Leslie Street seems to have replaced Ashbridge's Bay to a large extent, but it is doubtful if it will attract typical marsh birds as did Ashbridge's.

The area bounded by Sheppard and Eglinton and Keele and Yonge Streets is now an integral part of the city. If my memory serves me well, the entire stretch of Wilson Avenue between Dufferin and Bathurst Streets was a sea of waving grass interlaced with car and cart tracks — for horses were not unknown in the mid-thirties. Five of the six life additions to my list from this area occurred in the long-grass prairie, none being birds every found easily in Toronto. They were Upland Sandpiper, Short-eared Owl, Short-billed Marsh Wren, and Grasshopper and Henslow's Sparrows.

The large area bounded by the King/Vaughan Road, Sheppard Avenue, Highway 50, and Yonge Street contributed the Northern Three-toed Woodpecker (at Humber Summit); while the equally large area that stretches from the Morningside Avenue/Little Road line to the perimeter of the Toronto Region contributed the Western Grebe (north of the mouth of Duffin Creek). A very large orchard ended about 100 yards from my present home until in the early sixties when all pretence at fruit-growing ceased as its future as a residential area was assured. With the cessation of spraying, insect life became rampant and birds increased accordingly. Even the unkempt ground proved attractive as a Dickcissel found its way there one May. The garden shrubbery reached a point attractive to birds about ten years ago with a growing number of migrants meaning the increasing possibility of rarities. Part of Etobicoke Creek is still good for birding although ominous red-topped stakes suggest that only the most fortunate will be able to duplicate my luck and see therein a Boreal Chickadee and a Harris' Sparrow. The area containing Clairville Reservoir and Conservation Area should prove productive for years to come. The danger, of course, is the trend to convert Conservation Areas to glorified picnic grounds. But there should remain the possibility of recording birds similar in status to the Buff-breasted Sandpiper and Sharp-tailed Sparrow I picked up there. The area running from Southdown Road and Erin Mills Parkway to Tremain Road and from Derry Road to the lake is still mostly farmland, cut with many river and creek valleys. It gave me six species: Golden Eagle (Oakville Harbour), Gyrfalcon (Milton), Hawk Owl (near Streetsville), and during an FON convention near Glenorchy, Peregrine Falcon, Great Horned Owl, and Field Sparrow. I found my first Northern Phalarope and Western Tanager in the Mountsberg zone which with its Conservation Area seems destined for the same fate as other Conservation Areas.

Of the remainder of Ontario, the stretch of Highway 11 between Holland Landing and Orillia was noteworthy in that when it was the only highway link with Muskoka, it provided Loggerhead Shrike, Eastern Meadowlark, Red-winged Blackbird, and Brown-headed Cowbird. The latter three had been known to me for years and were easily identified from a moving car. Point Pelee with its large contingent of southern species is the most popular locality in the rest of Ontario having contributed: Common Egret, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Prothonotary Warbler, Orchard Oriole, Blue Grosbeak, and Le Conte's Sparrow. The waters about Hamilton are next in popularity with four species including the Stilt Sandpiper. Some quite common birds were picked up in widely separated Ontario localities in my early years, but subsequently rarities, were found too including: White Pelican (Lake of the Woods where it may still be found), Gray Partridge (Mount Albert), Long-billed Dowitcher (St. Williams), Arctic Tern (Moosonee), Blue-winged Warbler (Rondeau, a popular locality for it), and dubiously, Cattle Egret in the form of a deserted egg only at Luther Marsh. A bird in the flesh was seen the following year in the U.S.A. For the rest of Canada, British Columbia has been the most productive as so many of its birds are characteristically western, not to be expected in the east. Nor was anything unexpected added in New Brunswick, Quebec, or Manitoba. While Florida leads the states in the U.S.A., the number added there would have been closer to 50 had not New Jersey and South Carolina been visited first. A surprising number of southern species come up the Atlantic coastal plain to New Jersey. These separate and prior visits had the same effect as driving to the Sunshine State. When you fly, your roadside bird count tends to be low! Additions made in the various states were: Curlew Sandpiper at Wildwood, N.J., a notable sighting; and the Painted Bunting, that rival of Joseph's coat of many colours, when I had it under lengthy observation in the most accidental fashion at Pawley's Island, S.C.

## PLANT COLLECTING IN HALIBURTON

In the summer of 1975 my husband and I were free at last to follow that urge building up in us for several years — to study plant life in earnest, in the wilds. Being already fond of Haliburton's woods and lakes and streams we chose that area as our hunting ground, and a most satisfying choice it has been.

Our first happy discovery was that assistance and encouragement were available from the University of Toronto Herbarium and its very knowledgeable staff, Dale Hoy and John Riley. Here we found the necessary guidance to the selection of books and maps, techniques for collecting, and direction for study. They have also pulled us out of many a boggy mire of identification problems.

It was soon evident that for us the most rewarding (and pleasurable) activity was collecting for the Herbarium and particularly in collaborating with Dale in preparing a check-list of the Vascular Plants of Haliburton. Dale owns a little piece of Haliburton and already had the project well under way.

July 1975 on Haliburton Lake had given us a short introduction to the flora of that area. Six weeks in the summer of 1976 in the same locality were spent exploring a larger territory and making a modest collection — all a trial run for more serious things to come.

From May 20 to Oct. 10, 1977 we were housed on Soyers Lake (between Minden and Haliburton Village) and with this longer time for exploring it was possible to catch the flowering and fruiting stages of quite a long succession of plants. Our list to date numbers about 500 species. The plants were tentatively identified and pressed soon after collection. During the winter months they have been mounted and labelled and have had their identification reviewed before being checked in to the Herbarium. Now they lie in the company of over 200,000 specimens collected through the past 141 years by ardent naturalists and professional botanists, one of the earliest being a certain Brome Grass (Bromus secalinus) collected in 1837 by Wm. Hincks who later became Professor of Natural History at University College.

The summer of 1977 had peculiarities which might not occur again. In June it was hot and dry (great for ridding us of blackflies and mosquitoes). Then came the rains, first at reasonable intervals and then in August and September closer and closer together. This did remarkable things for the plants. Some which almost perished in the drought took heart and burst forth, and up to Thanksgiving growth was lush, many plants I suspect enjoying an extended season. The Canada Violet (Viola canadensis) for one was found occasionally in spring-like bloom into October. Open hillsides had the appearance of manicured golf courses — but the fall maples were a disappointment to the artists.

There were times during the season when collections went into the pot as well as the press. It was discovered that Wild Canada Plums (Prunus nigra), wild apples (species unknown), and Common Elder (Sambucus canadensis) made mild but pleasing jams and jellies, but High-bush Cranberry (Viburnum opulus var. americanum) produces a jelly with a beautiful colour but an odour like manure.

The most exciting finds were the plants which were not supposed to be there; that is, they were either out of their usual range or had just not been previously noted. It was an interesting diversion to speculate as to how the former came to their locations — migratory birds? (Skyline Ridge looked a likely stopping place), railway cars? (there were strange finds down by the Village freight yards), building materials? (trucks bringing in these may have come from some distance), and of course cars, people, and pets could have brought their share.

Some of these plants of particular interest were: Narrow-leaved Gentian (Gentiana linearis), White Adder's Mouth (Malaxis monophylla), Umbrella-wort (Oxybaphus nyctagineus), Hedge Hyssop (Gratiola neglecta), Wild Chive (Allium schoenoprasum), Feverwort (Triosteum perfoliatum), Narrow-leaved Hawkbeard (Crepis tectorum), Galingale (Cyperus diandrus), Beak-rush (Rhynchospora capitellata), Smartweed (Polygonum careyi).

These were not all as beautiful as the Painted Trillium (Trillium undulatum), the Blue Marsh Violet (Viola cucullata), the Round-leaved Orchid (Habenaria orbiculata), or the Moccasin Flower (Cypripedium acaule), but they all had their own charm and interest for the collector.

Our season will begin in mid-April this year as we wish to catch the early catkins and the earliest bush flowers — which reminds me that it is about time to start packing.

Eleanor Skelton

#### ANNUAL MEETING OF THE FEDERATION OF ONTARIO NATURALISTS

Where? Thunder Bay, Ont.

When? May 26, 27, 28, 1978

Accommodation? at the Alpine Motor Hotel

Rates? Single \$21, Double \$14 each, Triple \$11 each, Four to a room \$8.25 each

Food? \$28 (covers Friday evening, Saturday, and Sunday)

Registration? \$15 (includes Sunday trips)

Program? Friday: Barbeque on Mt. Mackay and meet Sig Olson

Saturday morning: business

Saturday afternoon: Urban Entomology with Dave Barr, Polar Bear Prov. Park with Harry Lumsden, Nuclear Energy with F. Blackstein of Chalk River and Ralf Torrey of Energy Probe, Raptors with Gerry McKeating, Woodland Caribou with Tim Timmerman and Barry Snider of MNR, etc.  
Photo Salon, Film of Robert Bateman and his work by Norm Lightfoot

Saturday evening: Dinner with David Iank speaking about "The America that vanished"

Sunday: Nature trips include:

Insects to photograph and study with Dr. Frutag

Mt. Molly hiking trip

Black Bay birding with John Rider (to Gull colonies)

Whitefish Lake Bog with Claude Garten

Forestry

Qimmet Canyon, Sibley Prov. Park, Silver Islet Bus Tour

For application form and further information, contact Carolyn Turnbull 444-8419 at the FON office, 1262 Don Mills Rd., Don Mills, Ont. M3B 2W8

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