TORONTO FIELD NATURALISTS

NEWSLETTER

Number 319 November, 1978

Is this West Don Valley plant unique in Toronto? See Page 19

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION AND PUBLICATION SALES

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

TFN MEETINGS

VISITORS WELCOME

GENERAL MEETINGS

Monday, November 6, 1978, at 8.15 p.m.

252 Bloor Street West (O.I.S.E. Bldg.)
(Between Bedford Road and St. George Street)

BLUE GROUSE - Dr. James Bendell
Faculty of Forestry, University of Toronto

December Meeting -- Monday, December 4, 1978, at 8.15 p.m.

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GROUP MEETINGS

Bird Group
Wednesday — From the Andes to the Amazon
November 22 — with Barry Ranford, well-known nature photographer
8.00 p.m.
Location: St. James Bond United Church
Avenue Road, just north of Eglinton

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Botany Group
Tuesday — By their seeds ye shall know them
November 14 — with Dr. Richard M. Saunders
8.00 p.m.
Location: Hodgson Public School
Davisville Ave., just east of Mt. Pleasant Road

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Junior Club
Saturday — Registration continued.
November 4 — Botany and Ecology Group in charge of meeting,
10.00 a.m. sharp — under the leadership of Allan Greenbaum
Location: Planetarium Auditorium (building immediately south
of the Royal Ontario Museum)

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Ravine Group
Tuesday — The Rosedale Ravine Study Carried out in the
November 21 — Summer of 1978
8.00 p.m. — Mr. Geoffrey Kaiser
Location: Auditorium (Room 635), Board of Education
155 College Street (College and McCaul Streets)

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Waterfront Group
Wednesday — Learn More About the Leslie Street Spit and
November 22 — the Islands
8.00 p.m.
Location: Essex Street Public School
98 Essex Street (one block north of Christie subway station)

UPCOMING TFN OUTINGS

RAIN OR SHINE | EVERYONE WELCOME!

Sunday
Nov. 5
2.00 p.m.
ETOBICOKE CREEK - Ravine Walk
Leader: Paul McConnell
Meet at Sir Adam Beck Public School - Horner Avenue just west of Brown's Line, Etobicoke. (Horner bus from Islington station to Brown's Line - walk west.)

Wednesday
Nov. 8
10.00 a.m.
LAMBTON WOODS - Nature Walk
Leaders: Doreen Laird, Mary Smith
Meet at the parking lot of the James Gardens on Edenbridge. (Royal York bus from subway to Edenbridge Drive, and walk east 0.4 miles.)

Sunday
Nov. 12
10.00 a.m.
LAKESHORE AND HUMBER - Birds
Leader: Herb Elliott
Meet at Lakeshore and Parklawn. (Queen street car to Humber Loop. Transfer to Long Branch car and go west to Parklawn). Bring a lunch to carry. Wear waterproof footwear as it may be muddy.

Wednesday
Nov. 15
10.00 a.m.
WILKET CREEK - Nature Walk
Leader: Jean Macdonald
Meet at entrance to Civic Garden Centre. (Lawrence East or Leslie bus from Eglinton subway station to Lawrence Avenue.)

Saturday
Nov. 18
10.00 a.m.
JIM BAILLIE NATURE RESERVE - Work Day
Leader: John Lowe-Wylde
For details see "Work Day", page 11. Anyone wishing to go who would like a ride, call John Lowe-Wylde (284-5628). See September Newsletter for directions for getting there.

Sunday
Nov. 19
2.00 p.m.
WARDEN WOODS - Nature Walk
Leader: Bill Dibble
Meet at the south-west corner of Warden and St. Clair. (Bloor subway east to Warden station.)

Sunday
Nov. 26
2.00 p.m.
ROSEDALE RAVINE - Nature Walk
Leader: Helen Juhola
Meet at Castle Frank subway station. This is a two-hour ravine walk, beginning at Castle Frank and ending at the Rosedale subway station.

COMING EVENTS ...

Civic Garden Centre

If a sufficient number of people express interest, the Civic Garden Centre will arrange a bus tour to Niagara Falls to look at birds along the Niagara River on Tuesday, November 28, 1978. The cost will be approximately $12.00 per person.

If you would like to participate in such a trip, please call the Civic Garden Centre, 445-1552.

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Royal Ontario Museum Exhibitions

October 19-December 3 — "X-Ray Vision: Radiographs of Lower Devonian Fossils"
Location: Lower Rotunda, Royal Ontario Museum

October 1-November 30 — "Take Two Trilobites and Call Me in the Morning" A light-hearted exhibition that explores the roles of fossils in folk-medicine and mythology.
Location: ROM Showcase, Museum Subway Station

October-January 21, 1979 — "The Canadian West: The Land and the People" Oil paintings, watercolours, sketches and prints depicting overland journeys to Canada's Pacific Coast in the 19th century.
Location: Canadiana Building, 14 Queen's Park Cres. W., Toronto

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Royal Canadian Institute Lectures

All lectures at Convocation Hall, University of Toronto. Admission free.

Saturday November 4 8.15 p.m.	"Underwater Wilderness" Dr. Alan Emery, Associate Curator, Ecology and Herpetology, Royal Ontario Museum
Saturday November 11 8.15 p.m.	"Modern Genetics - Utopia or Dystopia" Dr. Louis Siminovitch, Department of Medical Sciences, University of Toronto
Saturday November 18 8.15 p.m.	"The Alberta Oil Sands and Cold Lake" Mr. R. F. Routledge, Imperial Oil Company, Calgary, Alta.
Saturday November 25 8.15 p.m.	To be announced Mr. John Parkhill, Director of Metropolitan Toronto Library Board

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

When I wrote my October message I was a long way from home. We are now home again after three months and 9,500 miles of travelling. We crossed Canada to British Columbia, then down the Pacific Coast to California. We returned by Nevada, Utah, Idaho, Wyoming, Montana, and into Alberta, then home across Canada.

We visited alpine meadows, rain forests, redwood groves, Pacific coast beaches, deserts, the Great Salt Lake, and Yellowstone hot-springs. We saw many kinds of trees, wildflowers, birds, and mammals that were new to us; some we identified; others are still a mystery to us. One of the highlights was watching a sea otter cracking shell fish with a stone on his chest at Jade Cove in California. We also found a few small pieces of jade in the same area.

While Helen and I enjoyed our holiday, many TFN members were busy providing a very interesting program. Diana Banville has given our newsletter a fresh new look with her artwork. With Muriel Miville and Laura Greer in charge of our booth at the exhibition and so many volunteers to help, our display was a great success. Muriel Miville also spent a lot of time checking and answering questions asked at the booth.

All our chairmen worked hard during the summer. As a result we have an interesting outing program, an Audubon program, and all our other activities ready to go for the fall and winter season.

Now to repay the hard work of all our committees, we hope that our members will participate in as many of our programs as possible.

We regret that it was necessary to drop the category of corresponding membership due to our increased costs of running the organization and mailing our newsletter.

I am indebted to our Vice-president, Helen Juhola, for taking over my responsibilities while I was away on vacation.

Wes Hancock

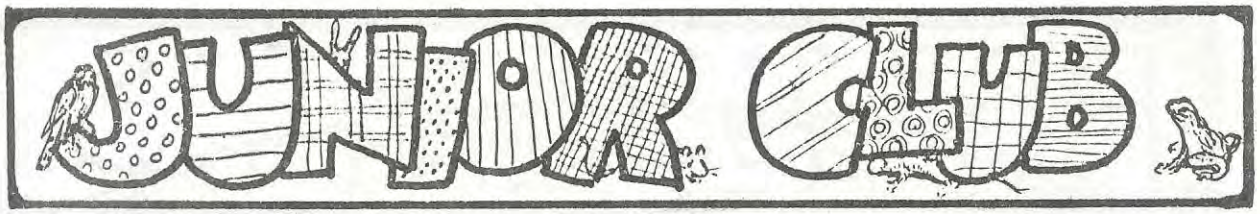
AUDUBON WILDLIFE FILMS

Tuesday November 14
8.15 p.m.

"Migration Mysteries"
Walter J. Breckenridge

Location: O.I.S.E. Auditorium
252 Bloor Street West, Toronto.

Tickets -- $2.75 each, available at the door.



The Toronto Junior Field Naturalists Club is sponsored by the Toronto Field Naturalists, and is affiliated with the Federation of Ontario Naturalists.

There are general interest groups for children between 8-10 years, and 8 special interest groups for those 10-16. At 16, they are encouraged to join the senior group. The special interest groups include:

BIRDS
BOTANY AND ECOLOGY
INSECTS
OSTEOLOGY
FOSSILS
MAMMALS
MINERALOGY
REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS.

Our club is looking forward to a great year. We have new leaders and dedicated former leaders, a new location, new plans, and best of all, a group of bright and enthusiastic members.

Our project for this year will be a display to be presented for the first time to our parent club, the TFN; then on to the Sportsmen's Show and the C.N.E. The aim is to make the senior club members and adults in general aware of the important resource and hope for the future which exists in our youth.

We also hope to gain more support in the form of leadership and personal involvement from the senior group. Interest groups are flourishing under capable and eager direction from dedicated naturalists, many from the TFN. However, a few of our popular groups are still lacking qualified leaders and, as a child looks to a parent for help, so we come to you for leadership. This involves one Saturday morning monthly and is certainly for a worthwhile cause. Please call me if you are interested.

Starting next month, there will appear in this Newsletter an article, drawing or literary work from some of our young members. You may be surprised, as I have been, at the quality of these efforts.

We hope to reach the point shortly when we see more seniors at junior programs (as leaders or visitors) and more juniors at senior field trips, and will be able to say that the TFN and the TJFN are once again family.

For any information or voluntary offers, please call --

Tyna Silver 636-4812

May 2 Glendon Campus - Walter Hutton - 42 people - bright but very cool. Eighteen species of resident birds were seen, and the spring wild flowers made up for the paucity of migrants.

May 3 Garland Park - Helen Juhola and Mary Smith - 7 people. A nature walk was held in a shallow valley which had been farmland, as shown by the old apple trees, Rocky areas by the West Humber River contain fossils. An old stream contained a few snails and water striders but no frogs. A grass snake was seen. Wild flowers were identified on the slopes and some fine examples of old trees - ironwood, sugar maple and bitternut hickory. Twenty species of birds migrating along the valley included 3 black-crowned night herons and 4 broad-winged hawks.

May 6 Don Valley Brickyard and Scarborough Bluffs - Walter Tovell and Gwynneth Collishaw - 40 people - cloudy and damp. At the brickyard we saw the dark grey marine sediments which outcrop along Chapman Creek, overlaid by the glacial deposits we associate with the soils of southern Ontario. At the bluffs the shoreline of Lake Iroquois can be seen near the top of the bluff adjacent to the road running into Bluffers Park. Further along, just west of Highland Creek, a forest of red oak, ironwood, blue beech and serviceberry is successfully holding the land from slipping into the lake - for the time being! Undercutting at the base of the cliff is the major cause of the spectacular erosion forms, but inappropriate land use on the top is aggravating the problems by initiating gulley formation.

May 7 Leslie Street Spit - Pat Temple - 10 people - warm and sunny. Too early for flowers other than coltsfoot and dandelion, but other species were identified by leaf or stem characters. Courtship or nesting behaviour was observed in several bird species, and we were surprised to see the families of Canada geese that had already hatched. Other geese were sitting on nests anywhere and everywhere along the headland. Horned larks were "larking"; tree and bank swallows were investigating potential nest sites (?) and thousands of ring-billed gulls had already started nesting. Winter visitors, spring migrants and summer residents combined to produce a bird list of 36 species.

May 7 Norval - Don Baldwin - 45 people. Valerie Pringle of Radio CFRB interviewed several members for a broadcast May 14th on bird watching. 38 species of birds were seen.

May 9 Nordheimer Ravine - Brian and Rosemary Gray - 21 people. Beginners were pleased with the robins and cardinals which were singing in abundance. For the more jaded bird watchers there was a brown thrasher, white crowned sparrow, sapsucker and a water thrush (unfortunately not seen by everybody). White throats were seen and heard. Several other species were heard and flirted away with no positive identification.

We all got a good look at a black and white warbler which played about in front of us. We saw about 5 brown creepers and a song sparrow. At the end a rainbow came out. 20 species in all.

May 11 Lambton Woods - Emily Hamilton - 14 people. The season was late and many plants usually in bloom were not found. There were several delightful patches of yellow trout lilies, and a few blooms of the white were observed. There were many scattered patches of Douglas' purple cress in bloom. The trail was very muddy as the walkways were not repaired last winter. 93 species of plants were seen, 26 of them in bloom.

May 13 Elora Gorge - Mike Singleton and Jack Gingrich - 66 people (two buses) - drizzle to pouring rain. The history of the gorge, both ancient and modern was discussed. Many people for the first time touched and held an eastern garter snake, and saw chorus frogs. Various warblers, cardinals, jays, grouse, cottontail, and redbacked salamanders were seen. The vegetation was about two weeks late: cedar, white pine, white birch, yellow birch, white and black ash, maples, dogwoods, balsam, white spruce, elder, highbush cranberry, maidenhair spleenwort, interrupted fern, polypody, various mosses and lichens. One bus with a "green" driver sank first one wheel and then another into the soft shoulder of the entrance to the Conservation Area. We were rescued an hour and a half later.

May 14 Jim Baillie Memorial Bird Walks - rained out!

May 16 Glen Stewart Ravine - Fred Bodsworth - 30 people - lovely, clear evening. 29 species of birds were seen.

May 17 Woodbine Boardwalk - Laura Greer - 10 people - strong, cold wind with drizzle. The new spit east of the Leslie Street spit is now sodded and treed, with gravel walks. There are two bays which should be good places for ducks and shorebirds. Sixteen species of birds were seen, including the Caspian tern, ruddy turnstone and a red-headed woodpecker.

May 18 Crothers Woods - Pat Temple and Helen Juhola - 17 people. It is a relatively undisturbed maple-beech woodland located on the west side of the Don River just south of the Leaside Bridge. Trilliums were in full flower, carpeting the forest floor. Other spring flowers were Jack-in-the-pulpit, toothwort, baneberry, blue cohosh, early meadow rue, leafy yellow violets, blue violets, and kidney leafed buttercup. Some of the trees in this woods appeared to be 80-100 years old, and both the beech and sugar maples are regenerating, indicating that this forest would perpetuate itself, if left undisturbed. Everyone on this field trip enjoyed a pleasant walk through a springtime forest located so close to the centre of downtown Toronto.

May 21 Lambton Woods - Emily Hamilton. Very wet due to overnight rain. The paths were impassable in some places. Early blooming plants were past their best; others were still delayed in leafing out. Skunk cabbage is extending right onto the paths and seven species of ferns were seen unfolding their fiddleheads. 108 species of plants were seen, 41 of them in bloom.

OUTINGS REPORTS - Continued

May 22 Toronto Island - George Fairfield - 70 people - sunny, breezy. The group was split and Jake Smythe took half. Interesting observations were: 2 nighthawks perched on branches about 30' above the ground; a sharp shinned hawk chased by a barn swallow; and a scarlet tanager that sat in the grass where we had lunch. There were good views of all the common warblers in the large willows east of the wilderness area.

May 23 High Park - Gordon Bellerby - 27 people. A pleasantly relaxed walk above Grenadier Pond. Eight warblers were seen by most of the party, but all had a good look at a great crested flycatcher and a pair of scarlet tanagers. Olive-backed thrushes were most numerous, but despite careful looks not one could be turned into a grey cheek.

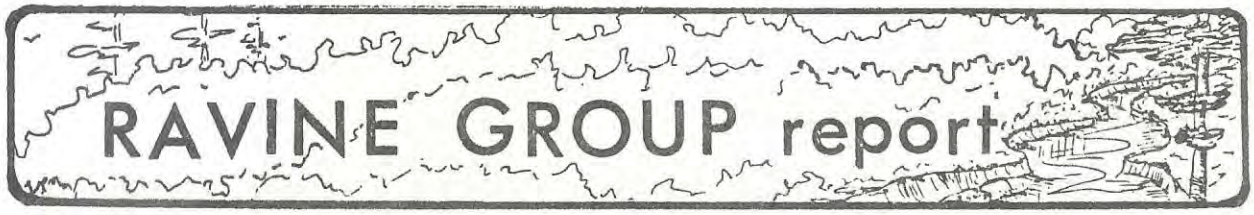
May 24 High Park - Emily Hamilton - 12 people. Nature Trail above Wendigo Stream. 28 species of plant were seen in bloom and 51 others, making 71 species identified. Patches of wood anemones, and a few plants of northern downy violet were still present. High park "specials" were seen on the banks - the sweet fern in flower. At the pond a sora rail and a large snapping turtle and several painted turtles were observed. The walk included a visit to the "Wild Garden".

May 25 Morningside Park - Stu Corbett - 15 people. 46 species of plants were identified, including red and white trilliums, marsh marigolds, foam flower, and two-leaved and cut-leaved toothworts. A very pleasant evening.

May 27 Pickering Conservation Trail - Bill Dibble - 16 people - 28°C. A strenuous five-mile hike. This ravine is in very good condition and worth the effort. Between Lake Ontario and Clarks Hollow 58 species of birds were seen, including every bird group except the sea birds and owls.

May 28 Cootes Paradise and Hendrie Trail - Emily Hamilton and Herb Elliott - 34 people - hot. Skunk cabbages have taken over what used to be the wildflower area and it was so hot we retreated to the lilac garden and down to the water at Cootes Paradise. The carp were coming in to spawn. Wood betony and May apples were in full bloom. About 40 species of birds were identified, among them, spotted sandpiper, brown thrasher, veery, yellow warbler and indigo bunting.

May 31 Prospect Cemetery - Helen Juhola and Mary Smith - 14 people. This is where we can see what a good site can produce in the way of trees in 90 years. Some are much older, and were left when the cemetery was established. A monster white oak stands near the east boundary, and some magnificent red, green and fernleaf beech remind us of English Gardens. Prospect holds many surprises for the tree hunter and extends north from St. Clair Avenue in three sections, to Eglinton Avenue.



PRESERVATION OF RAVINE LANDS, BOROUGH OF YORK

The Planning Department of the Borough of York has prepared a report on the preservation of ravines. The Borough's approach is similar to that taken by the City of Toronto and is also based on private legislation. Public meetings were held in September and written submissions from organizations such as ours were solicited.

The recommendations of the Planning Report together with a supplementary report covering the public meetings and submissions will be dealt with by the York Planning Board at its meeting on November 23, 1978.

Members living in the Borough are urged to encourage their aldermen and mayor in their efforts to "protect and enhance natural features such as ravines for the benefit of the residents of the Borough of York".

For the TFN policy on the protection of ravines, see page 30 of Toronto the Green.

In response to questions from members of the TFN Ravine Group, Mary Smith, Landscape Architect, has prepared the following list of "do's" and "don't's" regarding development of Metro's valleys and ravines.

Slope stability is affected and landslides occur when vegetation holding a slope is disturbed. Deep-rooted, long-lived plants like oak trees are much more effective than shallow-rooted species at holding slopes. Interlocking roots over the whole length of a slope are very important. (If your neighbour replaces trees with grass, YOUR slope is in danger of sliding.)

Never burn or rake out the forest leaves on slopes and remember that garden clippings en masse smother tree roots and trunks and may eventually kill trees.

The brow or rim of a slope can be overloaded when fill and/or structures are placed there. They may cause a strain which results in cracks in the tableland. Runoff now infiltrates; frost widens the cracks (and so does drought); thaw greases the slip plane; and the brow slips downhill in the spring or after heavy rains.

Next time you walk in a Metro valley or ravine, watch for characteristic curved-parallel cracks along the brow of slopes, especially along foundations and near damaged or dead trees and behind or in mounds of earth and near swimming pools.

Hoses left on overnight and pumping out pools after a rain help the process of overloading slopes and also cause surface erosion and vegetation washouts as well as valley siltation and gullying of slopes.

Note leaning vegetation and fences. These indicate that soil is creeping downhill.

In Etobicoke, if damage to slopes is observed — particularly where the cause can be identified — such as where a home-owner has pushed piles of garden refuse over the rim, please call Mr. Butler, Planning Department at 626-4161. Be sure to note the address of the house in question.

WORK DAY

Saturday, November 18, 1978 at 10 a.m.

Meet at the reserve parking lot at approximately 10 a.m. Trail sponsors please try to assemble work parties for your trails. As well as people to work on the trails, we will need a small group to patrol the perimeter fence to check on the No Trespassing signs and to clear away any obscuring vegetation. There are other jobs too, so if you would like to assist in any way, please call John Lowe-Wylde at 284-5628. Also, if you need a ride, we may be able to provide you with one.

ONTARIO BIRD FEEDER SURVEY

Copies of the full Second Annual Ontario Bird Feeder Survey (21 pages) may now be obtained for 50¢ each from the Long Point Bird Observatory, P.O. Box 160, Port Rowan, Ont. NOE 1MO.

The Observatory is particularly anxious to have more participants in far northern and eastern Ontario (Trenton-Cornwall-Pembroke) as well as in very southerly areas (Windsor-Sarnia-Niagara).

Toronto and Hamilton are over-represented at present, but TFN members may be interested in reading the results of the survey; for example, several notable changes in bird populations from those of the previous winter were obtained. Both years Blue Jays were the species most commonly found at feeders, visiting 95% of them at least once during the season. In 1976-77, the House Sparrow was the most abundant species; however, in 1977-78, that distinction was held by Common Redpolls.

ILLUSTRATIONS WANTED FOR NEWSLETTER	
Drawings:	Black and white; maximum width 6½". Shading with lines, dots, cross-hatching, etc., reproduces better than solid black. Cover-illustration size: 6¼" wide x 6½" deep.
Photos:	Even though photographs do not reproduce well in our printing process, prints of any size are acceptable for subsequent rendering as a drawing. Clear photos with a variety of tone-values are best.
Subject-matter:	Preferably of local interest and informative (i. e. - "lesser-known" category or highlighting "frequently-overlooked" facet of the commonplace.)

Colonization by Gulls and Terns of the Eastern Headland, Toronto Outer Harbour. H. Blokpoel and P. M. Fetterholf. Reprinted from 'Birdbanding', Volume 49, No. 1, Winter, 1978

The U. S. publication, 'Bird-Banding' has printed a report on larids on the Leslie Spit and it is available in pamphlet form. It traces the gradual colonization of gulls and terns since The Spit's beginnings in 1967 - up until 1976. The Common Terns were first to nest there - 1970 or 1971 - and by 1976 their nests numbered in the thousands. The Ring-billed Gulls were unsuccessful in their first attempts in 1973 but by 1976 were the biggest colony of nesting birds - mostly at the tip of The Spit - running into the tens of thousands. There were only a few nests of Herring Gulls and Caspian Terns reported in 1976. The Spit as it stands now provides the basics of conditions important to larids in general - the immediate vicinity of water, ample food supply, low levels of disturbance by pedestrians and mammalian predators, suitable nesting substrates (sand, soil, gravel and rock), sparse and low vegetation and unobstructed view in nearly all directions. Available food is suitable, too, for these fish-eaters (e. g. rainbow smelt, Osmerus mordax and alewife, Alosa pseudoharengus). It turns out that The Spit is very important as a nesting site in the Lower Great Lakes Basin (Lakes Erie and Ontario) for two larids: the Ring-billed Gull - supporting more than 10% of the total nesting population, over 10,000 of the 95,000 nests; but most of all for the Common Tern - supporting 40%, at last count around 1500 of the 3800 nests in the Basin! (If you'd like to read more facts and figures, the Editorial Committee has a copy on hand.)

LESLIE STREET SPIT FEATURES IN "READERS' DIGEST" (CANADA) JULY 1978

Fred Bodsworth's article entitled "The Lure of the Birds, the Zest of the Birder" gave a graphic account of the excitement of birding on the Eastern Headland when a rare bird was sighted there - in this instance a Red Phalarope. The rest of the article is about the sport of "birding"— its fun, its disappointments, and sometimes its competitiveness (check-list mania).

Congratulations, Fred, on an excellent article! Two keen sailing men met on the Headland during the weekend, July 8-9, when the TFN hosted the Spit. They spoke of the article with admiration and even a suspicion of envy, as though they could hardly believe that "birding" was such an engrossing recreation that gave so much pleasure. Well worth reading.

Jack Cranmer-Byng

TERNS AND GULLS—THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE LESLIE SPIT

"How the birds took over Leslie Spit" by Hans Blokpoel and Gerald T. Haymes, appeared in the Canadian Geographical Journal, April-May, 1978.

While working for the Canadian Wildlife Service in 1977 for a project to conserve fish-eating birds on the lakes, biologists Hans Blokpoel and Gerald Haymes conducted studies to determine the ecological requirements of gulls and terns on the Leslie Spit. In this article they describe the four major nesting species on the Leslie Spit: herring gulls (50 pairs), ring-billed gulls (20,000 pairs), Caspian terns (11 pairs) and common terns (1,500 pairs). They point out the breeding, nesting and migratory patterns as well as giving physical descriptions of these birds.

The significant question that they raise in their article is: "How important are the Leslie Spit colonies in relation to the Great Lakes populations as a whole?" The answer becomes clear in the results of their studies. By identifying banded birds that have come to the Spit, they have determined that the ring-billed gulls have come from most of the major colonies on the Great Lakes. This indicates, they feel, that other colonies are over-crowded and that the Spit offers one of the few good nesting sites on the Great Lakes with adequate food supply still available—fish, insects, earthworms. The Leslie Spit also offers its inhabitants greater chance for reproductive success. Herring gulls, common terns, and Caspian terns all were found to have better reproductive success at the Spit than at other colonies on Eastern Lake Ontario where high toxic chemical levels have been associated with reduced success in reproduction. For the common terns the Spit has been critical for their continued existence, since 2,000 nests were destroyed on Toronto Island Airport in 1966. Were it not for the construction of the Leslie Spit, they probably would not be nesting anywhere in the Toronto area.

In addition to the information on the bird colonies, this article is useful in providing a clear background history with its political implications of the Leslie Spit from 1959 to the formation of the Friends of the Spit. Excellent colour photos also contribute to the appeal this article will have to TFN members.

Melanie Milanich

QUICK QUIZ

Did anyone recognize the Moore Park Ravine and the Leslie Street Spit in Margaret Atwood's novel, "Lady Oracle"?

COALITION ON THE NIAGARA ESCARPMENT (CONE)

For over ten years a seemingly endless series of studies, reports and proposals on the future of the Niagara Escarpment have been issued by various commissions and ministries of the Government of Ontario.

However, a series of recent events cast serious doubts on just how serious the Government really is on the matter of Escarpment protection:

1) the sad spectacle of confusion and disarray over the McKessock Bill
2) the hasty rearrangement of the planning area of the Niagara Escarpment
3) a lack of funding for land aquisition
4) landowners closing a long section of the world famous Bruce Trail

Now concern over these events has resulted in the formation of a coalition of conservation groups including the Federation of Ontario Naturalists, the Federation of Ontario Hiking Trail Associations, Pollution Probe, and the National and Provincial Parks Association of Canada and interested citizens to urge protection of the Niagara Escarpment.

The Coalition will endeavour to increase public awareness of the natural features and scenic value of the Escarpment. (How many people realize, for instance, that the Escarpment contains 72 unusual geological formations, 68 waterfalls, 806 archeological and historic sites, 169 scenic vantage points, 70 wildlife habitats, and 100 special-interest kinds of plants?)

The Coalition will also support the Act and urge the implementation of programs that will result both in effectively meeting its objectives and in ensuring fair and equitable treatment for landowners.

Anyone interested in joining CONE
is urged to write the FON at
1262 Don Mills Rd. Suite 76,
Don Mills, Ont. M3B 2W8
or call Lynn MacMillan 485-5821
or Ron Reid 444-2412

Meanwhile, a mass public meeting has been scheduled for

Tuesday, November 21
at the St. Lawrence Centre.

Please mark the date on your calendars and spread the word.

Nature Travel Service (formerly Ontario Nature Tours), led by Gus Yaki and Ron Burns, have just issued their new Catalogue of Tours. Besides trips throughout Canada, the U.S.A., and in fact, almost anywhere in the world, there are many local trips which may be of interest to members of the TFN. These include Niagara River Birding, Dec. 8-10; Birding for Beginners, Toronto, Jan. 6, 7, 1979; Bruce Winter Camping, Feb. 2-3, 1979. Costs and details of these trips as well as a new catalogue of tours may be obtained by contacting:

Nature Travel Service, 246 Queen St. East, Toronto, Ont. M5A 1S3
or calling 363-6394.

Some Familiar Plants

1. Green Amaranth
2. False Solomon's Seal
3. Pigweed or Lamb's-quarters
4. Bull Thistle
5. Baneberry

....drawn by Mary Cumming

BACK-GARDEN BIRDING

Sheila McCoy writes to us of her door-yard birding at her suburban home which she calls her "Scarborough Strawberry Box". Apparently the property was once part of an orchard and the birds have not forgotten it. Some attractions are a specimen or two of black-currant, lilac, honeysuckle and fir - but Sheila feels the tamarack and birch contribute greatly to the variety of bird-life in her small garden which measures only 40' x 55'. She adds three or four feeders during the winter. Following in her mother's footsteps (who attracts blackbirds and other thrushes right into the house, back in Britain) Sheila relieves the monotony of housework through bird-watching breaks. Here are some of her very worthwhile observations.....

The common species provide the most interesting natural history for me. The grackles on returning from the south congregate in groups of four and six, like a regular construction crew, to build each other's homes. I rate them in the 'high-intellect' range. Their babies seem to take much longer to rear, but they get some very concentrated training from the parents. The males take turns in keeping watch while the females feed their young, and if a crisis arises, they call in the rest of 'the boys' to help. How many other birds hold their food and tear at it (like an eagle) or soak crusty bread in water before feeding it to their young, or just peck out the 'saddle' part of a worm?

The Mourning Dove may be a little wary of grackles at meal times, but woe betide a grackle who invades a Mourning Dove's time-consuming bathing procedure! The 'courting' process seems to be encouraged by the female grackle, usually involving a nonchalant male who proffers an exchange of 'kisses', but only when he feels like it. My viewing of this courtship process during my lunch hour was interrupted by my son reminding me I had to return to the office. Whichever way the courting ended, it resulted in yet a further addition to the local colony being proudly displayed by the parents on the tree outside my window!

Over the years I've discovered that the sparrows are the news-broadcasters - they twitter and chatter in loud, excited tones as soon as food is found. A whole chorus announces the fact to other species as well. The pecking-order must then be followed.

Redpolls....those 'cute little guys' with the pink tummies and feather leggings practically down to their toes.....aren't so 'cute' if you're a regular House Sparrow - 'vicious' is the word!

Over the years I've managed to give assistance to robins, Mourning Doves, grackles and kinglets and to date, unfortunately for me, I've buried some five or six birds who came to an end trying to fly through the windows.....it's not really the way I want to get a close-up look at distinguishing features. I'll let you in on a secret - we're the only house on the street with funny bits of white paper scotched to the centre of our windows.....the birds know why, but don't tell the neighbours; I'm keeping them guessing!!

....Sheila McCoy

The NEWSLETTER would be interested in any other observations of bird-behaviour. Such information may be useful to have in the archives. Sheila has been observing only since 1972, as she was formerly an apartment-dweller. It goes to show you that a comparative beginner can make a contribution while enjoying bird-watching as a hobby. The important thing is to keep detailed field-notes - not merely a list.

BACK-GARDEN BIRDING - SOME RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STARTING YOUR OWN OPERATION

A good summer vacation project for children is making bird boxes/tables/feeders, following instructions available from many sources (e.g. public libraries; Boy Scouts' kit - also available from Lewiscraft - simple for children; 'Mr. Chips'). Use new wood and do not paint - the birds don't like the smell. Every one should have a martin house - so says Simpson's-Sears catalogue - since one martin devours 2,000 mosquitoes a day.

Feed Recommended: Wild bird-seed mixture available from supermarkets at over $2.00 for 5-lb. bag - but much cheaper from your local nursery in 50-lb. bags for around $10.00; bacon fat (frozen in foil tart-cups); suet from your butcher. Seed bells are good for use by apartment dwellers - they don't drip on the balcony below. For hummers, honey-and-water mixture in a suspended vial - with something red attached.

Once you've laid the 'bait', you sit back and watch. The birds become quite used to the procedure and begin to rely on the food-supply you provide....which brings us to the 'don'ts'.....

Don'ts: Do not fool the birds into false security by feeding them daily and then failing to do so when the weather gets really cold. This is rule number one in feeder-operation. If you live in an apartment building, do not throw crumbs on the lawn below as it attracts mice to the building and may make you unpopular.

Books Recommended:
"A Field Guide to the Birds" - Roger Tory Peterson
"Birds of North America" - Golden Field Guide
National Geographic Guides: Garden and Song Birds (with record)
Game Birds and Raptors

Of course, once you really get into this, you have no problem deciding what you would 'really like for Christmas' - still another bird-guide, a better pair of binoculars, an SLR camera with telephoto lens. Your friends are NEVER out of ideas what to give: Brooches (of birds), carvings (of birds), place mats (of birds), playing cards (of birds) paintings (of birds), sculptures (of birds) - even records (of bird songs). What they CAN'T give you is the pleasure you get from watching and recording the species and habits of the birds who pay you the honour of a visit.

.....Sheila McCoy

LIST OF BIRDS OBSERVED IN SHEILA'S GARDEN 1973-1978 - AND OVERHEAD

R-t. Hawk
R-n. Pheasant
R-b. Gull
Mourn. Dove
Night Hawk
Chimney Swift
R-t. Humm. Bird
Y-s. Flicker
Y-b. Sapsucker
G. C. Flycatcher
Horned Lark
Blue Jay
Common Crow
B.-c. Chickadee
Brown Creeper
W-b. Nuthatch
House Wren
Catbird
Br. Thrasher
Amer. Robin
Wood Thrush
Veery
G-c. Kinglet
Water Pipit
Starling
Phil. Vireo
Vireo spp
Black-throated Green Warbl.
Worm-eating Warbler
Tennessee Warbler
Yellow Warbler
Chest.-sided Warbl.
Pine Warbler
Palm Warbler
Canada Warbler
Warbler spp
Eastern Meadowlark
Red-winged Blackbd.
Common Grackle
Br.-headed Cowbird
Cardinal
Rose-br. Grosbeak
Common Redpoll
Hoary Redpoll
Pine Siskin
Amer. Goldfinch
Ruf.-s. Towhee
Dark-eyed Junco
Tree Sparrow
Chipping Sparrow
Song Sparrow
White-crowned Spar.
White-throated Spar.
House Sparrow
Escapee: White collared turtle dove in flock of Mourning Doves.

A NATURALIST'S CODE OF ETHICS

The following is a copy of an attractive sign in Plitvice Jazera Nacionalni Park, Yugoslavia. Obviously it is a translation, but it is interesting to note that this sign appeared only in English. From our point of view, it is too wordy and confusing with its mixture of positives and negatives, and could be simplified. No doubt at some time all the restrictions mentioned have been committed. It does not offend (or restrict liberty) to say that certain wrong things are forbidden.

The last sentence is the most important. In Canada, the beauty of the Plitvice Lakes would not be especially noted since we have so much beauty, but in a somewhat barren, dry country it is indeed a "phenomenon and a treasure".

> While Visiting the National Park of Plitvice visitors are requested to follow these instructions:
>
> Not to wash their cars by the lakes and stream, not to drain oil, to drive slowly and carefully, to follow the directions or instructions given by the keepers and other staff, to produce their admission cards on request. Visitors are not permitted to swim in the lakes, to walk off the paths, to carry arms, to take or lead dogs with them, to fish or to shoot in the reservations, to cause damage to trees, shrubs, flowers or other growing plants, to break off or attempt to break off stalactites in the caves or to tread on the turf at the barriers, to light fires except in places specially indicated for this purpose. It is not allowed to use motor-boats. We thank you for your visit and for the contribution you have made towards the upkeep and preservation of the Plitvice National Park by purchasing these admission cards. The Plitvice Lakes in the Plitvice National Park are a rare and wonderful natural phenomenon of world repute, the pride of our country and a treasured possession of our people.

Edith Cosens

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Our enjoyment of the outdoors is diminished when we visit areas where others have left litter or vandalized living trees or behaved inappropriately. We would like to prepare a list of "do's" and "don't's" — a sort of outdoor ethic — which would serve as a guide to persons enjoying the outdoors.

Have you seen signs about how to behave in parks and wildlife sanctuaries that you think are interesting or particularly good? Or do you have photos that might be used for this purpose, or suggestions for appropriate wording? If you have any ideas for this project, please contact Emily Hamilton, 49 Lawrence Ave. West, Toronto. M5M 1A3.

HAVE YOU SEEN THE PLANT SHOWN ON THE COVER?

Great St. Johnswort (Hypericum pyramidatum), a plant rare in Ontario — and perhaps unique in the Toronto area—is flourishing in the valley of the West Don River. We are wondering if anyone has found it growing elsewhere in Toronto.

This tall, yellow-flowered herb is only one of several hundred interesting plants that have been identified in the West Don Valley and listed in the TFN's latest ravine survey.

A N N O U N C I N G . . . . .

The publication of Toronto Field Naturalists Ravine Survey, Study Number 8 - West Don River Valley.

Ravine Survey #8 covering the West Don River Valley has been published and will be displayed at the November meeting.

You can buy your copy at the meeting or order it from the TFN by sending in the order form below.

.....

TO: Toronto Field Naturalists,
83 Joicey Blvd., Toronto, Ont. M5M 2T4

DATE: .....

Title	Number	Unit Price	Total
Survey #8 - West Don River Valley		$2.00	

TOTAL $

PLEASE ADD for postage & handling - ( ) items @ 25¢ each ..... $

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED ..... $

PLEASE SEND ORDER TO:

Name: .....

Address: .....

..... POSTAL CODE: .....

NATURE CHRISTMAS CARDS

FON/CNF Christmas cards will not be sold at the November general meeting, but samples will be on display along with order forms. We hope you will consider these cards when you are thinking about your Christmas card list.

1979 nature calendars will not be sold at our meetings this year as these are available at almost all bookstores.

Newsletter Editorial Committee

Ms. Diana Banville - 536-1396
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Miss Mildred Easto - 488-0962
#416, 28 Broadway Ave., Toronto M4P 1T5
Mrs. Helen Juhola - 924-5806
#112, 51 Alexander St. Toronto M4Y 1B3
Miss Jean Macdonald - 425-6596 (OUTINGS)
88 Parklea Dr., Toronto M4G 2J8
Miss Florence Preston - 483-9530
#203, 368 Eglinton Ave. East, Toronto M4P 1L9

Articles and/or drawings for the Newsletter will be welcome and must reach a member of the Editorial Committee by the first day of the month. Articles may be anywhere from one or two sentences to 1500 words in length.

HAVE YOU RENEWED YOUR MEMBERSHIP?

The following is your FINAL renewal notice.

THE ANNUAL FEE IS DUE IN SEPTEMBER, but new members may join at any time. Those who join after March 1st are enrolled to September of the following year.

. . . . . .

TO: Toronto Field Naturalists (488-7304)
83 Joicey Blvd., Toronto, Ont. M5M 2T4 Date .....

I/We would like to ( ) join, ( ) renew, or ( ) give a membership to--

NAME: . . . . . Tel.: (home) .....

(work) .....

ADDRESS: . . . . . Postal Code .....

REGULAR

( ) Family (husband and wife) $14.00; ( ) Single $10.00; ( ) Student $6.00.

SENIORS (65 or over)

( ) Family (husband and wife) $8.50; ( ) Single $6.00.

LIFE ( ) $150.00.

CORPORATE ( ) $150.00.

Are you a member of Federation of Ontario Naturalists? ( ) YES ( ) NO

Are you a member of Canadian Nature Federation? ( ) YES ( ) NO