



TORONTO FIELD NATURALISTS NEWSLETTER

Number 323

April, 1979



Announcing Spring Migration! Outings booklet ready .

See page 3.

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION AND PUBLICATION SALES

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

TFN MEETINGS



GENERAL MEETINGS

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

Monday, April 2, 1979, at 8.15 p.m.

POINT PELEE — Mr. J. Robertson Graham

Chief Park Naturalist, Point Pelee National Park
Mr. Graham will present an illustrated talk on various aspects of the park.

May meeting - Monday, May 7, 1979, at 8.15 p.m.

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GROUP MEETINGS

Bird Group

Wed. April 25 Barry McKay
8.00 p.m. "The Humanitarian Bird Watcher"
Location: St. James Bond United Church
Avenue Road, just north of Eglinton
: : : : : : : : : : :

Botany Group

No April meeting. See enclosed booklet for spring outings.
: : : : : : : : : : :

Junior Club (for children between 8 and 16 years of age)

Sat. April 7 Presentation by Mineralogy Group
10.00 a.m. (This date is the deadline for articles for
FLIGHT magazine.)
Location: Planetarium auditorium (immediately south of
Royal Ontario Museum)
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Ravine Group

No April meeting.
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Waterfront Group

No April meeting.
: : : : : : : : : : :

THIS MONTH'S COVER
"Brown Creeper on Maple - Wilket Creek Park, Toronto"
by Owen Fisher

President's Report

We have good news for our birders. Our "Bird Finder's Guide", which has been long overdue for revision and re-printing, is now nearing completion.

A great deal of travelling and research is involved in this project before the writing begins. As we realized this would be an expensive project, we applied to WINTARIO for a grant to help finance it. We received a grant of \$2,870.00 which we must match from our contributions and club funds.

Clive and Joy Goodwin agreed to undertake the research and writing of the new guide. They have travelled considerable distances and spent much time on researching material for the guide, and have prepared a rough draft. This rough draft is now being rechecked in the field.

We sincerely appreciate the work of Clive and Joy on this project. We will announce the publishing date as soon as we have it.

Wes Hancock

P.S. Enclosed with this Newsletter is a calendar of exciting trips planned by our Outings Committee. Hope to see you at some of these events.

UNUSUAL BIRD SIGHTINGS

It has been a good winter for the Northern Shrike in Toronto area. Several members have spotted it. There were two reports from Scarborough - from Charlie Crosgrey (Thomson Memorial Park) and Sheila McCoy (Arncliffe Cres.) An individual visited Sheila's garden, perched on her maple-tree and gave a good show, dive-bombing a sparrow, even though it missed, and taking off in rapid-flight on its short wings.

Ed O'Connor reports from The Beaches on the four loons which were swimming and diving among the ice of Lake Ontario February 15th.

Mrs. Phyllis Treloar (Braywin Drive, Weston) has had an exotic visitor at her feeder since last August - and it stayed during the winter. Clive Goodwin identified it as Paroaria cristata, the Brazilian cardinal.

You might find it in some works as P. coronata and it is sometimes called the "Red-crested Cardinal". Mrs. Treloar describes it as having a red head, being near-white below with a solid-grey back. It is a neotropical species often sold as a cage-bird. It is related Cardinal, but some authorities place it buntings. There was a report of such an escapee last year as well.



REPORT OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE

During the 1978-79 year, the Board of Directors of the TFN has consisted of the following persons:

President: Wesley Hancock
Vice-President: Helen Juhola
Immediate Past President: Ronald Thorpe
Directors due to retire in 1979: Laura Greer (1 year appointment
to fill vacancy)
Rita McWhinnie
John Lowe-Wylde
Directors due to retire in 1980: Linda Cardini
Bill Freedman
Joan O'Donnell
Directors due to retire in 1981: Mary Smith
Brian Gray
John Riley

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 1979-80:

President: Wesley Hancock
Vice-President: Helen Juhola
Directors due to retire in 1982: Laura Greer
Jean Macdonald

The TFN'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 TFN) "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 to the Annual Meeting" for election by ballot by those members present at the meeting.

Note: Material for publication in the May Newsletter must be delivered to the secretary on or before April 2, 1979.

Ronald Thorpe
Chairman, Nominating Committee.

Secretary: Carole Parsons
65 Havenbrook Blvd.,
Town House No. 1
Willowdale. M2J 1A7.
Telephone - 494-8487

REPORT FROM NEWSLETTER INDEXERS

Thanks so much for continued support for this project. Two complete sets of newsletters were received in February: one from Dr. R.M. Saunders, newsletter editor for 25 years, and one from Mr. O.E. Devitt, a member whose name appeared in issue #1! Thanks also to Ida Hanson for providing us with extra copies of many recent issues.

OUTINGS REPORT

Feb. 4. Rouge Valley - John Riley - 25 people. Snow squalls in the morning, sunny and cooling in the afternoon, estimated -5 to -8°C. A fine time was had by all - no bodies lost. Ages ranged from 5 to 55, with expertise accordingly variable. Birds seen included chickadees, blue jays, starlings, crows and a great horned owl. Participants concentrated more on their skiing difficulties than on their valley. For some it was their first skiing, for many it was their first TFN outing.

Feb. 7. Centennial Greenhouses, Etobicoke - Mary Suddon - 13 people - partly cloudy and cool. A most rewarding tour of the Etobicoke Parks Department greenhouses, opened in 1970. An obliging gardener showed us around the three houses. The centre one is warm and humid, for tropical plants. Noteworthy were the banana trees, lemon and fig trees, a dwarf pomegranate and several orchids. The north house is the cool one for the blooming plants. It was fragrant with wallflowers and hyacinths, and colourful with many plants such as rhododendrons, broom, fuschia, primulas and hanging lantanas. The south house is the hot, dry, desert atmosphere and contains a glorious collection of cacti and succulents. Most interesting was a cactus vine, Pereskia aculeata, from which all other cacti developed. It is the only leaf-bearing cactus. We saw its small lemon-like fruit, hence "lemon vine".

We were fortunate to be shown also the three growing houses in the rear, where seeds, cuttings, and bulbs are grown on tables, all to be transferred to the public greenhouses at the appropriate times.

Feb. 10. Wilket Creek Park - Bill Andrews - 10 people - 7.00 p.m. to 8.20 p.m. Sky very clear. -20°C; wind chill factor -38°C. Though bitterly cold, the clear sky allowed excellent viewing of Jupiter, Saturn, the moon and major stars (Sirius, Capella, etc.), as well as the constellations.

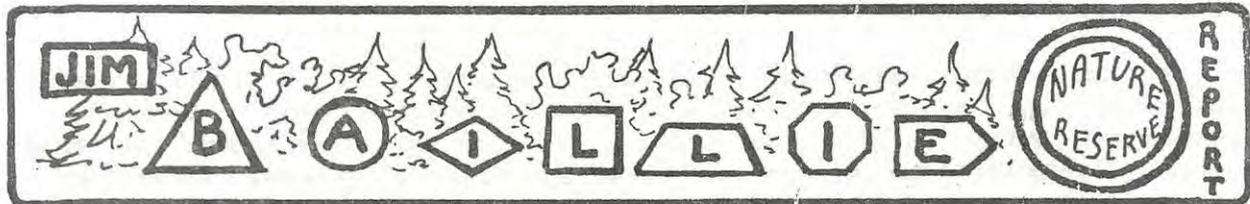
A fine time was had by all as we visited various possible animal habitats to assess their protective capacity. An open area was compared to a hemlock grove, a mature oak forest, and a poplar stand. Our most exciting time was experienced as we attempted to descend a hill as a short-cut on our return trip. Some members descended more rapidly than they intended!

Feb. 13. Black Creek Pioneer Village - Wes Hancock - Bright, sunny, temperature sub-zero! 77 members reserved for the 3 rides at 10.00, 10.30 and 11.00 a.m. The 34 people who arrived warmly dressed enjoyed the outing!

Feb. 15. Jim Baillie Nature Reserve - Ed O'Connor - 2 people plus leader! Bright, -14°C. We found conditions ideal for snowshoeing or skiing on the trails. Because of a powdery snow tracking was difficult but we did find tracks of deer, wolves (or dogs), fox, rabbit, squirrel and a member of the weasel family. Strangely a robin was seen on the trail, looking slightly confused but "perky" as you please. Cedar waxwings were seen near a berry tree and two grouse were startled from both sides of the trail at the same time. Our trees were in sad shape. Young ones were bent over and held fast by the snow, and older ones were snapped off. We're going to need volunteers in the spring to clear trails. Surprisingly, many of the streams showed open water and water plants in one looked quite healthy.

- Continued

Feb. 25. Thomson Memorial Park - Charles Crosgrey - 20 people - cloudy, windy -4°C. A good tour although rather short. Thaws had created pools which froze making footing slippery in several places. Birds were scarce. Twenty trees were observed including black walnut, American elm and hawthorns in several species. Eighteen species of plants were noted and two kinds of fungi - a canker on oak and Lentinellus ursinus on elm.



"The Jim Paillie Nature Reserve lies under a heavy blanket of snow", reported Ed O'Connor in mid-February. Ed is a member of our Nature Reserve Management Committee and visited the Reserve during the recent cold-spell. Some trees along the trails were bent over due to the weight of snow and despite the sub-zero (F) temperatures, a few streams were still flowing. The tracks of deer, fox, brush wolf, etc., seen by Ed indicated the Reserve is still performing its primary function as habitat for wintering wildlife species. The need to preserve wildlife habitat in an "untouched condition" was the prime concern of TFN Members when the Reserve was purchased in 1970. Apart from providing minimal access, basic shelter and sanitary facilities, the Reserve is still untouched, undeveloped, without the artificialities of nest boxes and feeding stations: It's alive and well and living naturally!

We already have lists of plants and birds at the JENR. A list of mammals has been started.....

Mole sp
Bat sp
Red Fox (Vulpes fulva)
Brush Wolf or Coyote (Canis latrans)
Raccoon (Procyon lotor)
Groundhog (Marmota monax)
Eastern Grey Squirrel (Sciurus carolinensis)
Eastern Chipmunk (Tamias striatus)
Field Mouse sp (Peromyscus sp)
Meadow Vole (Microtus pennsylvanicus)
Beaver (Castor canadensis)
Porcupine (Erethizon dorsatum)
Snowshoe or Varying Hare (Lepus americanus)
Whitetail Deer (Odocoileus virginianus)

If you have observations of mammals to report, please call John Lowe-Wylde, 284-5628.

.....John Lowe-Wylde.

RAVINE GROUP report

As well as exchanging newsletters with a number of natural history clubs, TFN has received copies of the following reports:

The Rosedale Ravines Study, 1977, a quantitative ecological study and zoological study of Rosedale Valley, Park Drive Ravine, Moore Park Ravine, and Burke Brook Ravine. 216 pp., maps and charts, in two parts

Two TFN members, Paul Scrivener and Dale Taylor, coordinated the work of three botany students and three zoology students from the University of Toronto to produce this report.

River Mosaic: a study of the landscape quality and visual character of the lower Don Valley, 1978, an Experience 78 report prepared by P. Crawford et al and coordinated by Professor William Rock, Junior; 97 pp., appendices, maps, photographs

Landscape Change in the Don Valley within Metropolitan Toronto, 1978, by John P. Monahan, University of Western Ontario, Geography Dept., thesis

YORK REGION PREPARES OFFICIAL PLAN

The Regional Municipality of York is in the process of preparing its Official Plan. The public participation program, which is designed to obtain public opinion regarding the Official Plan proposals, is to take several forms:

- seminars with key contact groups (Mary Smith represented TFN at a seminar in Aurora on February 10, 1979)
- general distribution of draft plan for public input
- public meetings
- presentation to Municipal Councils

Members owning property anywhere within the region — which is bounded by Metro Toronto on the south and Lake Simcoe on the north — should watch for notices about the public meetings.

METRO VALLEY LAND STUDY APPROVED

Since October 1976 a Valley Land Study Committee comprising representatives of the Area Municipalities, the Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (MTRCA), Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Natural Resources, Ministry of Housing, Toronto Field Naturalists, Thistletown Regional Residents' Association, Save the Rouge Valley System, and the relevant Metropolitan Departments have participated in the preparation of a report containing recommendations pertaining to the protection of the valleys of Metropolitan Toronto.

At a meeting of the Council of the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto on February 13, 1979, Council adopted the Metro Valley Land Study and its eleven recommendations.

Although further studies are required before implementation of all the recommendations is possible, a start has been made toward protecting Metro's valleys from the worst effects of development.



News from the Toronto Bird Observatory

The Toronto Bird Observatory is alive and well and preparing for an active 1979 program. This will include banding and migration-monitoring at two locations, instructional workshops on banding and censusing techniques, special projects, and a newsletter. We invite TFN members to participate in our program. Experienced birders are needed to help at our field locations, while a limited number of enthusiastic beginners can begin training. We could also use some help from the botanists in order to carry out quantitative botanical studies of the areas in which we operate.

In addition to participating, please consider helping the TBO in one (or more) of the following ways:

Join -- memberships are inexpensive (\$5 single, \$8 family), and entitle you to participate in the program and receive the newsletter. (Our current newsletter includes the 1978 annual report.) Send memberships to Warren Russell, 1291 Bayview Ave., Apt. 104, Toronto, Ont. M4G 2Z9

Save your Dominion Store cash register tapes -- we can use them to purchase equipment (through Dominion) for the observatory. Send them to Kathy Wilson, 58 Edgar Ave., Thornhill, Ont. L4J 1S6

Donate -- we are currently in need of many items that TFN members may have surplus to their requirements. These include filing cabinets, reference books (field guides, Godfrey's Birds of Canada, Robert's Manual for Identifying the Birds of Minnesota, etc.), stools or chairs, bicycles, a canoe, gasoline containers, camp stoves, Coleman lights, catalytic heaters, etc. etc. Please call David Broughton at 489-7444 between 7 and 9 p.m. if you can help in this area.

Support the Baillie Birdathon!

David Broughton

ON BLUEBIRDS

On the 11th and 12th of November 1978 the North American Bluebird Society held its first general meeting. This took place in Washington, D.C., and is to be an annual event. Canada was represented by Mrs. Norah Lane of Brandon, Manitoba, and her daughter, Mrs. Anne Buck of Toronto. In fact, Mrs. Lane spoke at the meeting and showed films by her late husband, John Lane, who worked for years with the Brandon Junior Birders in erecting bluebird boxes. After reading the report, one has a mental picture of lines of bluebird boxes stretching clear across Manitoba and Saskatchewan. We Ontarians must remember that this continent-wide organization is concerned with three species - the Eastern, the Western, and the Mountain Bluebird (and there has even been a hybrid reported!). They were lucky enough to have as a speaker at the Conference none other than Chandler S. Robbins, author of the popular field guide "Birds of North America." If you are interested in the "Return of the Bluebird" movement, get in touch with Leo Smith, 481 Vaughan Road, Toronto.

WATERFRONT REPORT

The Central Waterfront Planning Committee of the City of Toronto is now considering a proposal (by the City Planning Staff of the City of Toronto Planning Board) to designate a large section of the Leslie Street Headland as an Environmentally Sensitive Area. This designation would allow for protection and management of the site in ways which would preclude disruption of its natural values. Notably this designation would not eliminate certain low intensity uses of the site by people — apart from some restrictions during critical times such as the gull and tern breeding season.

The Headland is recognized by Ontario biologists and naturalists as having both locally and provincially significant biological values. Of special significance is the use of the site by breeding gulls and terns. In 1978 there were approximately 22,700 breeding pairs of ring-billed gulls, 1,310 pairs of common terns, 62 pairs of herring gulls, and 18 pairs of Caspian terns. For the common terns and Caspian terns especially, the colony is significant as it is by far the largest on the lower Great Lakes.

The site is also significant for wintering birds — up to one third of the waterfowl wintering in the Toronto area are found on or around the Headland as are numbers of snowy owls, snow buntings, Lapland longspurs, horned larks, and other species.

In addition, the site provides habitat for a great diversity of birds during both spring and fall migrations — over 200 species have been identified on the site.

A number of unusual plant species also exist there; and regionally rare plant communities such as dune, beach strand, and marsh are rapidly developing. The site has, of course, other biological attributes, but those mentioned are the most significant.

Because of these diverse and significant biological values, the site is worthy of protection, and biologists and naturalists in the Toronto region applaud its potential designation as an Environmentally Sensitive Area as a significant step forward for urban planning and conservation in Ontario.

As well, the solitude and natural beauty of the spit attract large numbers of the general public to visit and enjoy the site. It is a recreational area completely different from the technological and people-oriented atmosphere of Ontario Place, and the formal parklands of Centre Island. Even though the city is a few minutes away, here one can bicycle and hike along a three-mile, car-free roadway. Last year 18,000 visitors enjoyed this retreat from the city. Census work carried out by the Toronto Harbour Commissioners indicate that the majority of visitors wanted the site to remain in its present wild state.

Unfortunately, a number of other vested interests would like to see much of this habitat altered for other uses — principally the construction of boating facilities with car-access approval. This development would likely result in degradation of many of the biological values of the site. Thus a great need exists for a strong indication of public support for the proposed designation of the Environmentally Sensitive Areas on the Headland.

By writing a letter strongly commending preliminary plans which designate much of the headland as environmentally sensitive, you will be playing an

important role in helping to conserve this natural "parkland". Write to:
Central Waterfront Planning Committee, 235 Queens Quay West, Toronto M5J 1A6

Bill Freedman
TFN representative for
POWAT and CWPC

HALTON REGION CONSERVATION AUTHORITY CATALOGUING NATURAL PHENOMENA

The Wildlife Section of the Halton Region Conservation Authority is cataloguing all information on plants, animals and other natural phenomena within or near Halton County, with particular emphasis on H.R.C.A. properties. The information will then be used for management and education purposes. It will also provide a source of scientific information useful to groups in the area.

We would be most grateful for your co-operation in providing information on rare or unusual species or phenomena in the area. The participant should give species, date, location and other pertinent data. All information will be accredited to the observer.

For information of a confidential nature such as raptor breeding sites or localities for extremely rare plants, we plan to keep a separate file under lock and key, to be consulted only when the site is in danger of disturbance. As the Authority can wield some weight in the direction of protecting important sites, we feel that it is important to have such data readily available. In the event that you have information which you do not want to disclose, please indicate that the species may occur or breed in the area so that we are alerted to its presence.

We would be most grateful for any reprints of papers on the natural history of the area.

We plan to set up Road Call Counts in the spring to monitor spring migration and breeding of birds in or near Halton County. If you have a good ear for bird calls and wish to participate, we would be most grateful for volunteers. For those unfamiliar with the rules, Road Call Counts are begun one-half hour before sunrise and stops are made every half mile along a pre-designated route and number and species of each bird are recorded over a 3 minute period. 50 stops are made for 24½ miles. The count usually takes about 4 hours and is completed before 9:00 a.m. More information will be provided later for those interested.

We are interested in other activities which will appeal to the venturesome enthusiast such as botanizing trips, spring salamander hunts, etc. Your interest, help and suggestions are welcomed.

If you know anyone who may be interested in providing information or volunteering his or her services, please let us know. We will endeavour to aid natural history projects on Halton Region Conservation Authority properties, but we like to know about them in advance. Please feel free to contribute your own ideas and management concerns. All help and information will be welcomed and acknowledged.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Mary E. Dyer, Wildlife Technician
HRCA, Trafalgar Square, 310 Main St.
Milton, Ont. L9T 1P4 (878-4131)

Help Wanted!

Junior Club Assistants

The Junior Club is looking for adult leaders to participate in the monthly Saturday morning interest groups for children. This is not a demanding position and is quite rewarding. Several of our most active leaders are senior club members.

We are also looking for someone living in the North York area to serve as secretary to the Junior Field Naturalists Club. This position will begin as of September 1979.

Anyone interested please call Tyna Silver 636-4812.

* * * * *

Board Secretary

When I took over the position of secretary to the Board three years ago, I was not at all sure what the job involved - except taking the minutes of the monthly meetings of the Board of Directors! But I was not put off, because I wanted to become more active in the Club and my skills were secretarial rather than nature-oriented. I was delighted, however, to find the job much more interesting than the word "minutes" might suggest. The duties were not arduous - typing minutes, agendas, letters; selling publications at the monthly OISE meetings - and at the same time I was learning such a lot. I learned about and became involved in the workings of the Club through meeting the various leaders; I observed Club policies being formulated at Board meetings and came to respect the integrity of the Board; I became much more aware of the prestige which our Club possesses locally and which enables it to successfully voice naturalists' concerns within the Toronto area.

During my three years as secretary I have become ever more proud to be known as a member of the TFN and happy to boast to non-members of the Club's positive contribution to the Toronto community. I am, however, with regret resigning my position due to other commitments. If you feel interested in taking over from me next September, do talk to me at the next OISE meeting (at the sale table of Club publications) or call Muriel Miville at 463-8066.

Carole Parsons

British Reserves are supervised by wardens. At South Stack in Wales, Warden Ian Bullock faces a serious litter problem as the area is visited by tens of thousands of people. Among assorted rubbish - which Ian must persuade people to take home again - the most offensive item was a Volkswagen. The ever-resourceful Bullock not only persuaded its owners to pick up all its remains and take them away again, but also shamed them so much that they offered him stuffing from the car seats as "nest material for the birds".

- from "Birds", The RSPB Magazine, Sandy, Beds., England

BIRDATHON(S) - A Path through the Maze

The word has been in the vocabulary of naturalists since 1976 but it now seems to be collecting followers like the Pied Piper. As they all really are going in the same direction, this is a good thing. The following may help.

The first BAILLIE BIRDATHON was organized by the Long Point Bird Observatory as a means of raising money for its projects. The count was carried out in the Long Point area, and was highly successful in helping them to more than balance their budget.

In 1978 the TORONTO REGIONAL BIRDATHON was established. This made it possible for people to sponsor a birder locally, with the pledges collected being sent on to Long Point to be added to the Baillie Birdathon pledges.

The proceeds of the Birdathons are shared three ways, although not equally -- part going to the Long Point Bird Observatory, part to The James L. Baillie Memorial Fund for Bird Research and Preservation, and part being returned to the Toronto Field Naturalists (or other participating club).

Long Point Bird Observatory - It is an independent, non-profit organization devoted to conservation, education and research related to birds and to the environment. It was founded in 1960 and was the first station of its type in North America. The Headquarters is in the Backus Homestead near Port Rowan, Ontario. A small professional staff directs amateur birdwatchers and other volunteers. Two of the many facets of its programme are the study of bird migration through banding, and an Ontario Heronry Inventory with a view to ensuring the necessary protection.

The James L. Baillie Memorial Fund - It was established to aid groups with projects to do with Ontario birds. It is administered by the LPBO through a separate board of Trustees from the Observatory, and direct donations can be made to the Fund. Two of its recent grants were to the Owl Rehabilitation Research Foundation at Vineland, and towards a study of Yellow Rails near Ottawa.

Read the story following and choose how you will participate in the 1979 Birdathon - and "kill" three birds with one stone.

TORONTO REGIONAL BIRDATHON: Part of the 1979 BAILLIE BIRDATHON

The Toronto Regional Birdathon, a part of the 1979 Baillie Birdathon, is again being organized by the Toronto Field Naturalists (TFN). The Birdathon will be held on Saturday, May 5, 1979 with the count period extending from 5.00 p.m. May 4 to 5.00 p.m. May 5.

The Toronto Regional Birdathon will be conducted within the 30 mile radius circle centred at the Royal Ontario Museum - the same one used for the Christmas Bird Count.

The results of the Toronto Regional Birdathon will be tabulated at the Federation of Ontario Naturalists (FON) Annual Meeting, prior to the banquet May 5, so it will be possible to attend both the Birdathon and the FON banquet.

The Birdathon works like a walkathon, but contributions are determined by the number of species of birds identified rather than by the distance travelled.

There are three ways in which you can participate:

AS A SPONSORED BIRDER: Get your family, friends, neighbours, fellow naturalists and business associates to sponsor you for so much (5¢, 10¢ or whatever) per species identified in a 24 hour period. You don't have to be an expert. Anyone can take part as long as he/she knows a few common birds - robin, blue jay, chickadee, crow, mallard duck, Canada goose, etc.

AS A SPONSOR: If you cannot take part as a sponsored birder (or even if you can), share in the fun and success of the Birdathon by sponsoring another birder, either one of your own choice or the TFN's sponsored birder, Dr. Murray Speirs, a retired University of Toronto professor and well known Toronto area ornithologist for over 30 years.

AS A PARTICIPATING CLUB: Naturalists' or other outdoor-oriented clubs are invited to share in the proceeds by sending a club representative to the Toronto Regional Birdathon. A portion of the pledges the club representative earns will stay with the club.

The address for mailing sponsorships for Murray Speirs, and also for further information, Birdathon checklists, directions and pledge forms is c/o Baillie Birdathon, 1391 Mt. Pleasant Road, Toronto, Ontario M3N 2T7. Chairmen are Chip and Linda Weseloh at this address, or telephone them at (416) 485-1464.

The names of thirty-	D I C R T M A L L O W O P E A
one flowers can be	A B R I A R C L O V E R O C E
found among these	F F R I N G E D G E N T I A N
letters.	T B I A S O W F G N T U S M V
	D A I S Y U U O O F F M O P I
	O S A T H I N E R I U M N I O
See if you can	D I N E T T L E F T L Y I O L
find them.	D L C R D E W D R O P E V N E
	E C H I C O R Y U O I Y Y E T
	R A G W E E D S M U L L E I N
	V E T C H I C K W E E D F I N
	I B O N E S E T H E A L A L L
	G R E A T K N A P W E E D L Y
contributed by	O B U T T E R C U P U T A L L
Robert Neild	S K U N K C A B B A G E O R E

CANOE WEEKEND COURSE - Director: T.F.N. Member Larry Bagnell

The Y.M.C.A. is operating its annual canoe weekend course June 1, 2 and 3 at Camp Pine Crest. The Director again this year is Larry Bagnell.

If you would like a detailed outline and schedule of the weekend, write or phone Larry at the Y.M.C.A. Camping Service, 36 College Street, Toronto. Ontario M5G 1K8, Telephone 922-7474

MORE ABOUT THE LESLIE STREET SPIT!

The June 1977 issue of THE ONTARIO FIELD BIOLOGIST (now sold out) presented studies indicating the enormous potential of this man-made lakeshore formation on the eastern side of Toronto harbour as a wildlife sanctuary. Now — the December issue 1978 includes a 17-page report by Gerard T. Haymes and Hans Blokpoel on the nesting success of gulls and terns which confirms and extends these positive findings.

In addition, William G. Stewart continues his Cryptogamic Flora of Elgin County; W.W. Judd reports on insects associated with flowering hawkweed and cinquefoil and on his observations of a long-eared owl feeding near St. Thomas reservoir; and two Ontario birding firsts are recorded: the first nesting of the house finch, and the first sighting of a black skimmer.

Everyone interested in environmental concerns will want to have a copy of this important issue (Vol. 32, #2), available at the monthly meetings or by using the coupon below.

(Have you ordered your copy of John Riley's Guide to the Plants and Wildlife of the Rouge River Valley?)

To: Toronto Field Naturalists
49 Craighurst Ave.
Toronto, Ont. M4R 1J9

Date _____

- A. Please send Vol. 32, #2 of THE ONTARIO FIELD BIOLOGIST at \$1.50 each \$ _____
- B. Please send other available issues as checked, at \$1.50 each
Vol. 32, #1 _____; Vol. 31, #2 _____; Vol. 30, #1 _____ \$ _____
- C. I/We wish to subscribe to THE ONTARIO FIELD BIOLOGIST for _____ years at \$4.00 a year, beginning with Volume 33 (1979) (2 issues per year) \$ _____
- D. Please send _____ copies of John L. Riley's Guide to the Vascular Plants and Wildlife of the Rouge River Valley (Special Publication #1 of THE ONTARIO FIELD BIOLOGIST) at \$1.50 a copy \$ _____
- *1979 issues will be \$2.00 each. Payment enclosed \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

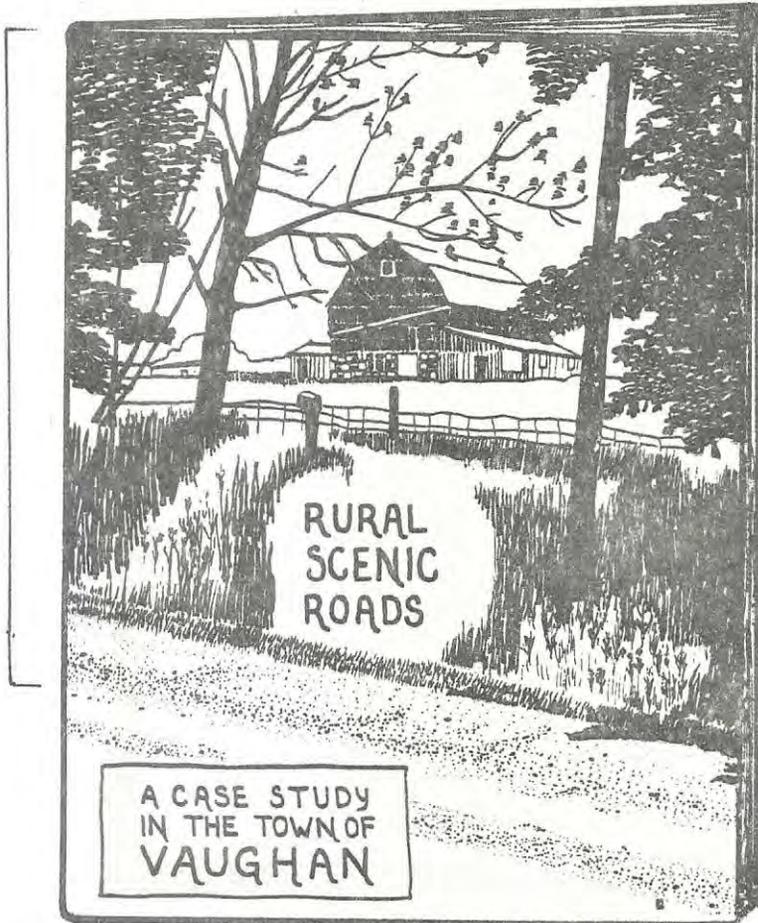
RURAL SCENIC ROADS

Over the years various roads have been named and labelled "scenic route", "heritage highway", etc. These roads are generally high-speed thoroughfares offering scenic lookouts or marking an historic travel route. But what of the quiet rural concessions lined with farm fields? These roads provide access to the landscape, an alternative to high-speed roads where drivers and others can observe their surroundings. Often nature is as close as the road-side, and these roads are of special interest to naturalists.

The Town of Vaughan is situated northwest of Metropolitan Toronto, immediately adjacent to the city. The area is still largely rural, and the many natural areas support a diverse wildlife population. Unfortunately development is threatening the rural character of the Town.

During the summer of 1978 a study of rural scenic roads was conducted in the Town of Vaughan. The project was initiated by Mary Smith of the TFN and sponsored by the Ontario Ministry of the Environment. Nine university students worked on the twelve-week project, and their efforts were co-ordinated by Paul McConnell, a member of the TFN. The report identifies the rural scenic roads in the Town, based firstly on their aesthetic appeal, and secondly on their environmental and historic features of interest.

Paul McConnell



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LAMENT FOR A SCENIC ROAD

Who cares what they're doing at City Hall?
Does "the plan" swing the road - or "the road" lord it all?
Where's the spring and the stream?
And the brush-wolf's call?
And what of those trees that turned red in the fall?
What is this silt-trap? What is "the plan"?
Where are the fish? And what kind of a man
Can blindly do this in the name of us all?

"What about that stream we have to drown?"
"Put it in a culvert; they'll soon simmer down.
Fill the hollows with the tops of the hills.
Do it quickly and quietly; then pay the bills.
Once done, it's finished; wait and you'll see -
Never mind the thousands; the Committee backs me."

Nothing for the future.
Nothing in "the plan".
We'll all be fairly treated -
Like sardines in a can.

If it's roads that you want, no doubt you all know
The Town Engineer can handle the show.
He knows all about it, the environmental thing.
He knows about a hornet, when he feels the sting.
He knows about gravel, clay and sand.
Does he know the topsoil; does he know the land?
Does he know the living, or only the dead?
I wonder what really goes on in his head?

Environmental conscience,
What's it all about?
Who's going to know
Till it's all ironed out?

If you're missing a beautiful road that you know
Was here, it seems, a moment ago,
Drive further and faster. Maybe that way
You'll find it some day.

Mary Smith

WORDS OF A FEATHER

As mentioned in a previous article, my associations with nature are often literary, an obsession resulting from a decade of teaching literature to assorted groups of, for the most part, unenthusiastic students. I have learned to keep this vice to myself while on TFN outings, but have revealed it on occasion when I felt I could contribute something, however irrelevant, to the conversation.

One incident that stays in my mind occurred on a trip to Hanlan's Point, when our guide identified a bird hovering (appropriately enough) over the Island Airport. It was, he announced, a sparrowhawk, or kestrel. I knew enough not to butt in when binoculars were in the raised position, but as we walked on, I said: "Isn't that bird also called a windhover?" "I think so," he replied, "but where did you come across that?" I mentioned it could be found in a poem by G. M. Hopkins where the bird figures as a symbol of Christ. While I was muttering something about "My heart in hiding stirred for a bird," they were off, to fresh fields.

The discovery of gentians on a subsequent Island walk prompted me to ask my companions if they knew of D. H. Lawrence's "Bavarian Gentians". No, they didn't, but I felt constrained to quote:

Not every man has gentians in his house
In soft September, at slow, sad Michaelmas . . .

This was a mild effort to gain some credibility after I had caused a slight ruction by losing touch with the main group who had disappeared into the underbrush in search of saw-whet owls. No owls were found, but we were all impressed by the sight of a hummingbird held in a man's hand (it had been caught in the nets near the banding station), a view of a blue heron, and a dramatic incident where we saw a hawk swoop down and almost grab a shorebird not more than 15 feet from where we stood.

The Rouge River produced a few more literary footnotes along with the flora and fauna. It was a lovely fall day as we ambled along the edge of the wood. "Here is some rue", observed a knowledgeable lady. "Fancy that", I said to the chap walking next to me, "With rue my heart is laden." "Oh, I remember that from high school", he replied, seemingly unperturbed by my non sequitur. "But how does it go on?" I could easily recall the third and fourth lines of the Housman poem:

"For many a rose-lipt maiden
And many a lightfoot lad . . ."

but neither of us could remember the second line. The best we could do was "De dum de dum de dum." Back home, I found the answer:

"For golden friends I had."

Later, we sighted a fair number of hawks and, while eating lunch, a turkey-vulture which I imagined had its eye on my cheese sandwich. I averred that by now, I could tell "a hawk from a handsaw," but John, our group leader, said he wasn't sure that came from Hamlet. - He mentioned he would have to look it up. (It's Act II, Sc. ii).

I'll pass quickly over such asides as "The crow makes wing to the rooky wood" (Macbeth, location, Rouge River), "The Wild Swans at Coole" (W. B. Yeats, Pickering) and, "He was as hot and lecherous as a sparrow" (Chaucer, Everywhere).

Art was finally outdone by nature on my last foray to the mouth of the Humber. Here, we were able to view at leisure a magnificent snowy owl, proud and unafraid, stationed on a rock near the lake. After it flew off, we found near its perch the remains of a freshly-killed gull. Only the wings were left. I felt, at last, that I might become a bit of a bird as well as word-watcher after all.

Al Baker

BIRD STUDY WORKSHOPS



One or two four-day sessions of ornithological training, each for up to six students aged 14 through 16, will be held at the Long Point Bird Observatory in late June, or late August 1979, or both (exact dates to be announced later). These workshops will include an intensive introduction to techniques of censusing, trapping and banding birds, preparation of specimens, and an introduction to bird identification and behaviour. All training will be under the direction of experienced ornithologists. The course is intended for young people who already have some knowledge of birds and have a serious interest in learning more about field ornithology and bird study. Successful completion of the course will help qualify students for positions at the Observatory as summer assistants.

The cost of the course will be \$35.00 including room and board at the Observatory Headquarters.

Because we hope the participants will have a genuine interest in working with birds, we require each applicant to write a letter stating name, age and address, and explaining the extent of his or her background and interest in birds. The letter should also give the name and address of an adult (preferably a teacher or naturalist acquaintance) who could provide a recommendation. Applications should be sent by May 1 to: Bird Study Workshop, Long Point Bird Observatory, P.O. Box 160, Port Rowan, Ontario NOE 1M0.

DIALOGUE DOWN AT LESLIE SPIT

Gull: Hello, Duck; how've you been keeping? How's the Homestead these days?

Duck: Well, not too bad. We got pushed around a few years ago - had to make two or three moves; things are settled down a bit now, but we're very worried on our side of The Pond - lots of talk, y'know.....

Gull: Too bad, what's the problem?

Duck: We're very worried about your Leslie Street Spit here - the Landfill Program - hear it's opening up again on April Fools' Day - we call it ALL Fools' Day on our side.

Gull: Yes, I know what you mean, but we've had some nice accommodations on The Spit, and a few interested humans come out and visit from time to time - they're much nicer than those heavy trucks rumbling up and down. But tell me, Duck, how will that affect you?

Duck: Well, on our side of The Pond we're pretty low-lying land, a few humans around, mainly undeveloped, stretches of good rushes, but every time someone dumps another load of fill into The Pond our water-line rises a bit more.....we're losing the cover of the rushes and our homes are getting much closer to the human group, which we're not too fond of. We'll probably end up being evicted again.

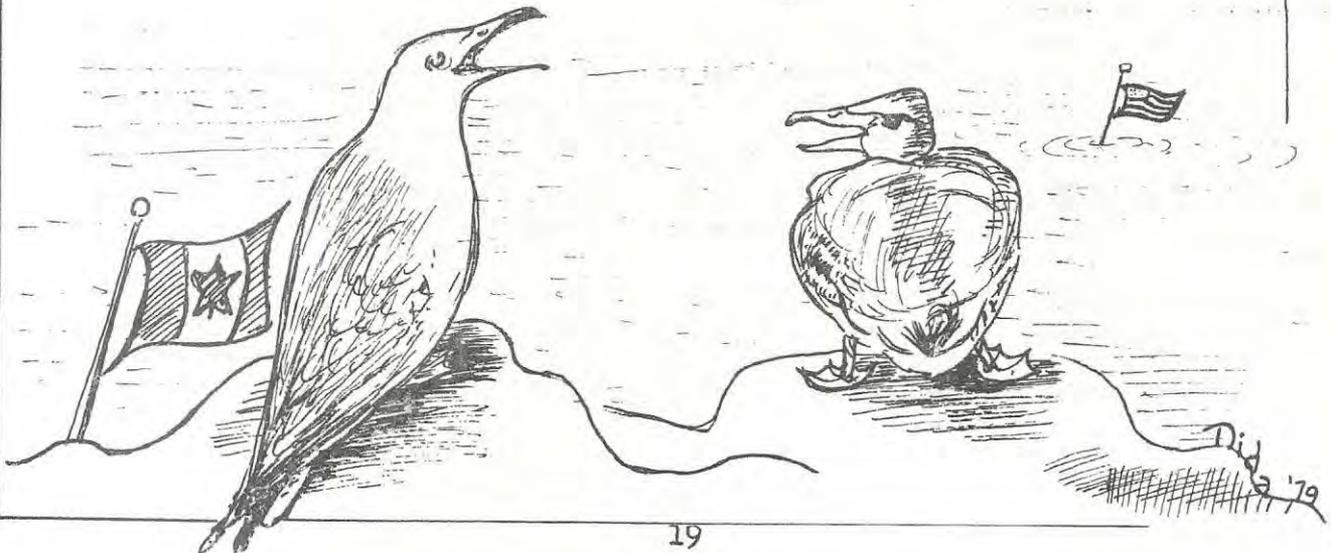
Gull: Say, that's too bad. Now, on our side we've just decided to invite some relatives over, since we'll be getting still MORE accommodation.

Duck: Well, y'know what they say, "you win some; you lose some" - but it looks like you chaps will win and we'll lose.

Gull: Look at things on the bright side - if a lot of the land hadn't been owned by the Mohawk Indians, you may never have had a home at all - it probably would have all been built up - like on our side.

Duck: Guess you're right. Trouble with those humans is they take something away from you; then try to give it back - and it's usually not as good. Well, nice to have met you; you must come over and visit us some time - that is unless the family and I have to move....

"Featherbrain"



I'M JUST LOOKING FOR A BLUEBIRD

I can count on one hand the number of times I have seen bluebirds, and because they are so lovely the occasions stand out like precious jewels in my memory. Except for the first time, when one was pointed out to me on a wire at Billie Bear Lodge near Bella Lake some years ago, it was a bedraggled, moulting specimen, and the sun was behind the clouds, so did nothing to enhance its colouring, I wondered then what all the fuss was about bluebirds.

A year later when we watched a family of bluebirds which were nesting in a fork of a tree near Hepworth, Ontario, I realized what all the fuss was about. They were brilliant and beautiful, reminding me of the bluebirds in Walt Disney's "Snowwhite." It was in a farming area with wooden fences, plenty of grass, and away from dense human habitation, in fact ideal bluebird terrain. The Eastern Bluebird likes to perch on a fence before flying after insects. These parent birds were very busy feeding young just off the nest.

In November of '75 I was fortunate enough to visit southern California where we had lunch one day in brilliant sunshine with a flock of bluebirds in front of the San Ray Mission. They were the western species, as the males had some blue at the throat, but just as lovely as the eastern. Later that day we saw Mountain Bluebirds at a higher elevation near Palomar Observatory. These are incredibly pretty birds of mid-sky-blue, no red; they were catching insects on the wing.

In April of '76, on a visit to Arizona, we stayed in Madera Canyon in the mountains at Santa Rita Lodge. In this birdwatchers' paradise we saw and heard so many exciting birds that the sweet whistle of the bluebirds keeping just ahead of us on the walks was just one more joy in keeping with this environment.

In '77, on a visit to Great Smokies Park in Tennessee, at Ocanaluftee visitors' centre, in a clearing in the mountains, I saw an Eastern Bluebird on the homestead farm fence. In the old pioneer days these lovely, gentle birds must have brought some cheer to the isolated homesteaders. It would have been the best sighting of our day, had we not seen a cattle egret in breeding plumage, which was a first for the park and caused some excitement.

That year in the fall at Hawk Cliff near London, Ontario, a group of beginner birdwatchers, led by Tom Hayman, saw a flock of bluebirds in migration. What beginners' luck! Maybe they have to thank Leo Smith from Toronto, who since 1970 has stalwartly pitted himself against vandals, starlings and porcupines to maintain his bluebird trail. This trail runs through Mono Township and ten other townships. It supports over 500 nesting boxes with a hole of $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch diameter, and I might add has been very successful.

Nineteen seventy-eight was a poor year for me. I didn't see a single bluebird, even though when I visited Hawk Mountain, Pennsylvania, in the fall I searched a meadow where a flock had been seen the year before; that was the nearest I came. It is now 1979 and I'm looking for a bluebird.

Joy Pocklington

U N I V E R S I T Y

E V E N T S

Civic Garden Centre

The following events will take place at the Civic Garden Centre, 777 Lawrence Avenue East, at Leslie Street. Telephone 445-1552.

March 25-April 16 — Two Exhibitions—

"Canadian Nature Art" and "Botanical Art"

April 18 - 8.00 p.m. - Horticultural Night

Dr. Don Gunn — Illustrated talk on Canada's Native Orchids

April 3, and following Tuesdays, at 8.00 a.m. — Bird Walks.

Meet at west end of parking lot.

Courses and Workshops—

Commencing April 14 — 10.00 a.m.; 8 weeks -

Landscape Art

April 23, 30, May 7 - 1.30 p.m. and 7.30 p.m.

Flower Arranging, using dried plant materials

Commencing April 25 and 26 - 1.30 p.m. and 8.30 p.m.; 6 weeks

Basic Flower Arranging

Commencing April 10 - 10.00 a.m.; 4 weeks

Basic Gardening

Commencing May 9 - 8.00 p.m.; 6 weeks

Photography

+ + + + +

Royal Ontario Museum

Sundays, April 1, 8, 22, 29, at 2.00 p.m., 3.00 p.m., 4.00 p.m.

SNAKES ALIVE - An unusual presentation of living snakes

+ + + + +

Ontario Ornithologists Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of Ontario Ornithologists will be held at York University, Keele Campus, Downsview, in Room D, Stedman Lecture Hall, Saturday, April 7 — 9.30-12.00 and 13.00-17.30.

Registration in the foyer from 8.30. Fee \$2.00 per person.

Further information may be obtained from David Fowle and

Ted Miller, 667-3456, or Gerald McKeating and David Euler, 965-4251.

+ + + + +

NATURE INTERPRETATION PROGRAMS - U. of GUELPH ARBORETUM

Don't forget about the nature trails at the Arboretum (one-third of which is woodland, swamp, fencerow and oldfield) open dawn to dusk seven days a week, admission free. We've just received the spring program. Some interesting guided walks coming up are "Slimy Songsters" on amphibians (Saturday, May 5, 5:30 p.m.); "Spring Warblers" (followed by slides and tapes of warbler songs), (Saturday, May 12, 8:00 a.m.); "Summer Bird Survey" (Saturday, June 9, 8:00 a.m.) Walks commence at J. C. Taylor Centre. For more information contact Alan Watson, J. C. Taylor Centre, U. of Guelph, Guelph, Ont. N1G 2W1. Phone (519) 824-4120, ext. 3932.

IDEAS ANYONE??????????



ARTWORK We welcome artwork from Members with some experience in drawing. These should be in pen-and-ink (avoiding solid black), conforming to the following stipulations:

1. Original work, basically from life and/or artist's own imagination
2. Original work, based on artist's own photographs
3. Work based on photographs or artwork of others, provided the TFN artist obtains permission in writing from the original photographer or artist (in which case credit would be given to both parties).

Field guides and other material should be consulted only as reference. In this way, the NEWSLETTER can avoid any accusations of "stolen" work.

See recent back copies of the NEWSLETTER for scale; if you prefer to work on a larger scale, reductions are a possibility.



CALENDAR We should like the Members' opinion on the possibility of TFN producing a moderately-priced calendar for 1980, to help pay for some of the expenses of the NEWSLETTER. The illustrations would be ink drawings donated by our Members (9" x 7", horizontal) and would be printed on quality tinted paper. Anyone feel inclined to submit preliminary material? Also, does any Member have experience in producing a calendar?



HAIKU

How many members,
These cold March nights, we wonder,
Are writing haiku?

This form of poetry is so suitable for a naturalists' publication. Any submissions, be they 5-7-5-syllable or free-style, would be welcome - in fact short nature-oriented epigrams or poems in any form....another thought for the calendar-idea - in conjunction with the illustrations.



ARTICLES Please remember, when submitting typed articles for the NEWSLETTER, they should be double-spaced.

.....Newsletter Editorial Committee

Newsletter Editorial Committee

Ms. Diana Banville	536-1396	#501, 1011 Lansdowne Ave., Toronto M6H 4G1
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Miss Jean Macdonald	425-6596	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.