

TORONTO FIELD NATURALISTS NEWSLETTER

Number 326

October, 1979



Call the leaves by name.....Toronto's Oaks and Beech.

See page 31

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION AND PUBLICATION SALES
83 Joicey Blvd., Toronto, Ont. M5M 2T4
or call 488-7304



UPCOMING OUTINGS

TFN



RAIN

OR SHINE

EVERYONE WELCOME!

- Saturday BRONTE PROVINCIAL PARK - Birds
Oct. 6
9.35 a.m.
Leader: Peter van Dyken
Meet at the Bronte GO station. GO train leaves Union Station at 8.43 a.m. and arrives in Oakville at 9.20 a.m. Change to GO bus which arrives at Bronte GO station at 9.35 a.m.
Cars. West on the QEW to the Bronte Road turnoff. Turn south on Bronte Road. Immediately south of the QEW turn east, to the Bronte GO station. Bring lunch.
- Sunday CEDARVALE RAVINE - Ravine/Nature Walk
Oct. 7
2.00 p.m.
Leader: Paul Smith
Meet at the Heath Street exit of the St. Clair subway station.
Cars. Park on Heath (which is one block north of St. Clair).
- Monday TORONTO ISLAND - Birds
Oct. 8
9.00 a.m.
Thanks-
giving
Leader: George Fairfield
Meet at the Island Ferry Terminal at the foot of Bay Street to take the first ferry available. Bring your membership card and carry a lunch.
- Wednesday WIGMORE PARK RAVINE (EAST DON)
Oct. 10
10.00 a.m.
Leader: G. Comper
Meet in front of Sloane Avenue public school. (Eglinton East #34 bus to Sloane, then Woodbine #91 bus $\frac{1}{2}$ mile north to the school).
- Saturday CRANBERRY MARSH - Bird Banding Workshop and Demonstration
Oct. 13
7.50 a.m.
Leader: Dave Broughton
Meet at the Pickering GO station. GO train leaves Union Station at 7.13 a.m.).
Cars. East on Hwy. 401 to Exit 64, then go south on Liverpool Road. Turn left immediately on to Bayly (Base Line), then left again into GO parking lot.
- Saturday PARK DRIVE AND MOORE PARK RAVINES - Fall Colours
Oct. 13
10.00 a.m.
Leader: Paul Scrivener
Meet at Roxborough and Mt. Pleasant. (Rosedale #82 bus from Rosedale subway station - get off at the corner of Crescent Road and Mount Pleasant.) Walk north on Mount Pleasant (down the hill) and meet at the ravine entrance. Morning only.
- Sunday DOWNSVIEW DELLS PARK (BLACK CREEK)
Oct. 14
2.00 p.m.
Leader: Joan O'Donnell
Meet at the park entrance on Sheppard Avenue West about half way between Keele and Jane. (Sheppard West #84 bus from Sheppard subway station to the park.)

OUTINGS - Continued

- Saturday TORONTO ISLAND - Birds
Oct. 20 Leader: Chip Weseloh
7.45 a.m. Meet at the Toronto Island Ferry Terminal at the foot of Bay Street, to catch the 8.00 a.m. ferry. (Subway to Union Station, Bay bus south to the terminal.) Morning only.
- Sunday JIM BAILLIE NATURE RESERVE - Work Day
Oct. 21 Leader: John Lowe-Wylde (248-5623)
9.30 a.m. Cars. People wishing to go should phone John between Oct. 15 and 18. Can you give a ride; or do you need one? What "tools" could you bring? Take Hwy. 401 to the Brock Road (Interchange 64A). Brock Road to Uxbridge. Continue north on Durham Regional Road #1 about 7 miles to Leaskdale, then a further 2.5 miles to Stevenson Side Road on the right. Note TFN sign. Drive 0.5 miles to parking lot on south side of road. Bring lunch.
- Sunday DON VALLEY - Bicycle Nature Tour
Oct. 21 Leader: Wally Platts
10.00 a.m. Meet inside the gate of Mount Pleasant Cemetery on Yonge Street north of St. Clair. Ride will begin and end here. Bring a snack. Pace will be slow but there will be some STEEP hills.
- Wednesday BROOKBANKS RAVINE - Nature Walk
Oct. 24 Leader: Charlie Crosgrey
10.00 a.m. Meet in front of Brookbanks Public School. (York Mills #95 bus from York Mills station to Fenside.) Walk south on Fenside one block to the school.
Cars. From the Don Valley Parkway and York Mills go east on York Mills to first stop light, at Fenside. Turn south on Fenside one block to school.



STANDARD TIME RETURNS

- Sunday WARDEN WOODS - Nature Walk
Oct. 28 Leader: Helen Juhola
2.00 p.m. Meet at the south-west corner of Warden and St. Clair. (Bloor subway east to Warden.)
- Saturday MORNINGSIDE PARK - Nature Walk
Nov. 3 Leader: To be announced.
10.00 a.m. Meet in the first parking lot immediately west of Morningside Avenue by the pavilion. (Eglinton East #34 bus.)
Cars. Take 401 east to Exit 61, then go south on Morningside one mile.

AUDUBON WILDLIFE FILMS

Mon. Oct. 22 Return to the Tetons
8.15 p.m. - Charles Hotchkiss
Location: O.I.S.E. Auditorium
252 Bloor Street West, Toronto.
Tickets -- \$3.00 each, available at the door.

S E M I N A R

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. Further details may be obtained by calling the Centre, 445-1552.

Wed. Oct. 24 Native Trees and Shrubs that have a Future in
8.00 p.m. Canadian Gardens
- Dr. R. Hilton, Guelph Arboretum

Oct. 12-15 Sale of Fall Bouquets and House Plants

Plans are being made by the Civic Garden Centre for an all-day birding trip by chartered bus to Niagara on Monday, November 12. Please call the Centre, 445-1552, if you are interested in such a trip.

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Royal Ontario Museum

A course in Astronomy will be offered at the ROM for adults and high school students, commencing October 15, for nine consecutive Monday evenings, from 7.30 to 9.30 p.m. The course will introduce basic astronomy and current developments in our knowledge of the earth and moon, sun, planets and stars. Cost, \$50.00, with reduced rates for students and senior citizens.

From September to December the program at the McLaughlin Planetarium will be: Reflections on the Nile; Astronomy of the Pharoahs.

The current exhibition at the Canadiana Building, 14 Queen's Park Crescent West, is: The Artist's Niagara -- A Visual Account of the Falls from the 1690's to the 1890's. This is a display of water colours, oil paintings, prints and rare books that record the changing face of the falls and the surrounding area.

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ASAP

The ACTION SEMINAR ON ACID PRECIPITATION (ASAP) will be held at the downtown Holiday Inn, Toronto, Friday and Saturday, November 2 and 3, 1979. Scientists, politicians, industry representatives, bureaucrats and members of the public will come together to learn the causes and effects of acid rain from the ground up, to zero in on the status of negotiations and current legal and technological handles.

Further information about the ASAP conference may be obtained from ASAP, c/o Federation of Ontario Naturalists, 355 Lesmill Road, Don Mills, M3B 2W8.

BIRD BANDING DEMONSTRATION

A bird-banding demonstration will be held at the Mountsberg Conservation Area, Campbellville, at 9 a.m. on Saturday, October 13. Participants will be given an opportunity to observe banding & trapping techniques for small birds and waterfowl and will be allowed to handle birds themselves under supervision. Please note: The demonstration will probably continue for several hours, but will be cancelled in the event of rain.

From Toronto take Exit 38S from Highway 401 (sign-posted Guelph Line, formerly Campbellville Road), 500 yards south turn right (west) in Campbellville just before the pond, go 4 miles and turn right. The entrance is a further half mile. All turns are sign-posted. Meet in the parking lot near the Nature Centre. There is a small admission charge to the area.

For enquiries contact David Brewer, (519) 824-4342. Do not call the Conservation Authority.

David Brewer
Ont. Bird Banding Assoc.



Strange relatives - both in the order Gruiformes - the hemipodes (meaning "half-footed") and the long-legged cranes. Show here are the Plains Wanderer of Australia with our Sandhill Crane.

people

ISABEL SMALLER - the new Chairman of the Botany Group

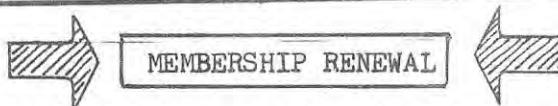
Isabel Smaller is a retired teacher of music in the public schools. In this connection, toward the end of her career, she conducted recorder classes and still continues teaching recorder privately at her home.

She took advantage of the U of T free courses for senior citizens to take a course in Systematic Botany under Dr. John Greer. Lab. sessions were assisted by John Riley and Paul Catling, and Isabel was so fascinated by what she learned that she has continued to pursue the study as a hobby.

Besides her interest in Botany, Isabel is a keen photographer of nature and is a member of the Toronto Guild for Colour Photography which has within it a botany group.

Because of her great zeal for Botany, Isabel felt that many interesting topics could be introduced to TFNers and agreed to take on the task of Chairman to share her knowledge and enthusiasm.

An interesting time is ahead for the Botany Group.



Deadline for renewal of TFN membership is October 1. After that date, persons who have not renewed will not receive further issues of the Newsletter.

Life Members and members paid up to September 1980, please ignore this notice. (Those who have joined since March 1, 1979, are enrolled to September 1, 1980.)



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

Date _____

I wish to join, renew, give a membership to: **
PLEASE PRINT
Name (s) _____

Address _____

Postal Code _____

Telephone Number(s) _____

Cheque or money order enclosed, payable to Toronto Field Naturalists:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> \$14.00 Family (husband and wife) | <input type="radio"/> \$10.00 Single |
| <input type="radio"/> \$8.50 Senior Family (husband & wife 65+) | <input type="radio"/> \$6.00 Senior Single |
| <input type="radio"/> \$6.00 Student | <input type="radio"/> \$150.00 Corporate |
| <input type="radio"/> \$3.00 Junior (8-16 years of age)
(Junior Newsletter only) | <input type="radio"/> \$150.00 Life |

** If gift, name of donor: _____
(A gift card will be sent)

'TIS THE LITTLE THINGS

Standing at the edge of a broken-down bridge (due to late disastrous floods of the Don River) I watched a mouse - plenty of them around if you look for them. The owls always do. But this one was a little different....

A fifteen-foot gorge had been ripped out of the other side of the bank. The mouse was confused. This, to him, was a vast mountain-side of wet earth. He could not at all make headway. He would take a run to support a climb, only to roll back again. Many times he did this, often nearly to his end, as more than once he fell to the edge and was nearly whipped away by the current. He would go one way, only to be stopped by a little trickling rivulet; then into a hole and soon out, partly drenched. In my mind I spoke to him, directing him to the easiest way out - to the top of the "cliff", to fields of grass, his native habitat. But he could not hear me. Oh, what a struggle he had! Then, after a while, I think my silent rooting for him must have been rewarded in some way. He found the only spot that would lead to safety - and over the top, through the grass, and away to Mouseland - probably to tell his pals of his adventure.

He made it - but how many poor souls did not through this tragic week-end?



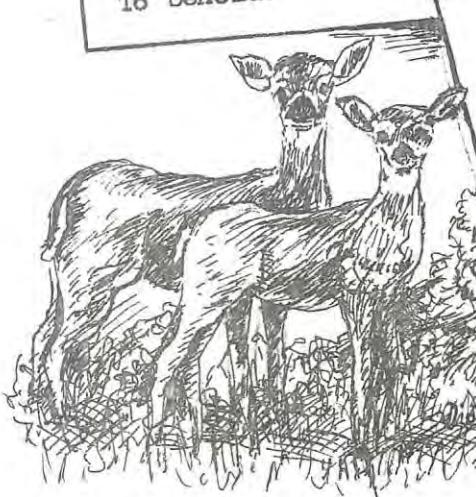
Ralph Knights
Toronto, Glendon Hall
October 16, 1954

(This October marks the 25th anniversary of "Hurricane Hazel".)

AGAWA

This paragon of autumn glory,
Nature's patchwork of hues -
And gold!

This challenge to the rainbow,
Far from gothic structures built by hand,
Turns one's thoughts to silent worship -
Sermons untold -
To behold!

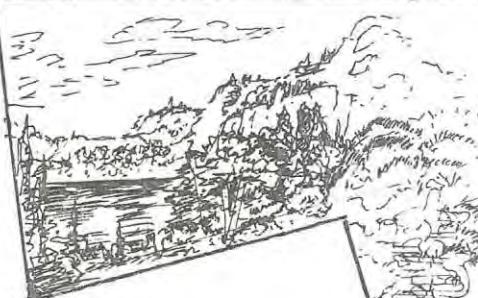


PURPLEVILLE

Scenting danger, ears erect,
Like statues at the forest's edge,
Stands doe with full-grown fawn beside,
Facing us at eventide.

Satisfied that we are friends,
She coughs and quietly turns her head,
And flags adieu, as two white specks
Fade into the forest depths.

R. Knights





Man's Impact on Point Pelee National Park by J. G. Battin and J. G. Nelson now available from the National and Provincial Parks Association of Canada, #308, 47 Colborne St., Toronto M5E 1E3. 175 pages including maps and photographs. The changing natural landscape, role of man and factors leading to the establishment of the National Park are described. \$4.95

Wildflowers of the North by Ruby Gibbins Bryan and Muriel E. Newton-White, (Highway Book Shop, Cobalt, Ontario, 1978, 215 pages, hardcover.) Reviewed in the Canadian Geographic, April/May, 1979, 9" x 7" format. Illustrates and describes about 380 wildflowers from Northern Ontario. \$12.00

South Grey County Environmentally Sensitive Areas - a report produced by Saugeen Field Naturalists documenting the current information on the natural history of southern Grey County as well as twenty-one sensitive areas. Available from Saugeen Field Naturalists, P. O. Box 81, Tiverton, Ontario, NOG 2T0. \$ 8.00

Inside The Animal World, An Encyclopedia of Animal Behaviour by Maurice and Richard Burton, MacMillan, 1977. 43 colour photos, 150 line drawings. Leo Smith recommends this book for the serious amateur naturalist. He borrowed it from the Yorkville Library and was reluctant to take it back.

Hinterland Who's Who by Canadian Wildlife Service. Available from Distribution Section, Canadian Wildlife Service, Department of the Environment, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0E7. French or English. Subjects as advertised on TV and many others. For list of species covered in the 124 folders, request order form from foregoing address. Individuals may order up to ten different folders. Schools, libraries and natural history organizations may order complete set, if on letterhead of organization. Most are on subject of one or two species. Appearance and adaptations, range and habitat, mortality, population fluctuations, movements and activity, food and habits, courtship, young, relation to man and a reading list are covered. A folder on bird feeders is included in the set as well as one on nest boxes, the latter with diagrams. ...Free

Don't forget to listen for Harold Taylor's Nature Notes on John Bradshaw's program on CFRB Saturday mornings from 10 to 11 a.m.

Also, watch for Gerry Bennett's column "Birds" in the Sports/ Recreation section of the Wednesday Globe and Mail.

As well, Barry Kent Mackay has a nature column in the Sunday edition of the Toronto Star.

WILD, WILD WESTERN PLANTS

The plants mentioned in cowboy songs have seemed, from my childhood, to be of the legendary or mythical sort. I have never quite got over the romance of it all. Do you remember? "Oh, I long to be in Texas where the bloom is on the sage....." Well, I was there in late March — a bit too early to see this particular display. I was astonished to learn, however, that not only is "sage" in the familiar Mint Family, but it is in the genus Salvia! The species the cowboy sang about in this particular instance might well have been S. farinacea mentioned in my Texas field guide — to 3-1/2 ft. with spikes of blue flowers. There are a number of other sages in the West, some with inconspicuous flowers. The popular garden flower is Salvia splendens Sello but it comes from Brazil. However, Texas has a scarlet sage too, S. coccinea.

"There's silver on the sage tonight....." This time the cowboy is likely singing about "sagebrush" which is in an entirely different family of plants. In fact the genus Artemisia in the Composite Family embraces the sagebrushes; they are simply wormwoods after all. Some western species are shrubby, like Big Sagebrush, A. tridentata (to 10 ft.) with bluish-silvery wedge-shaped leaves, with panicles of fragrant flower-heads stretching for miles over deep, dry soils. It is not very colourful but probably reflects beautifully all that silver "sprinkled by the moon above...." Then there are the herbaceous ones such as Western Mugwort, A. ludoviciana var. graphalodes (p. 374 Peterson/McKenney guide).

".....Drifting along with the tumbling tumbleweed." Didn't drift quite far enough west to see it — Amaranthus albus; neither have I seen the eastern species, A. graecizans. (page 386 Peterson/McKenney guide). There is a peppergrass, Lepidium densiflorum, often seen rolling about Toronto streets, which I have always thought deserves the name, too, (Gray's Manual, p. 703)

Then there is the song about the honest cowpuncher who came to grief. "All through the long night they trailed him," says the song, "through mesquite and thick chapparral....." Now the oft-mentioned Mesquite turns out to be one more member of the huge Pea Family. It is Prosopis juliflora and is everywhere in South Texas — so graceful and delicate-looking with its weeping branches of feathery leaves and dainty racemes of yellow flowers — but like the cowboys it is TOUGH. It is the most common tree (to 30 ft.) in the sandy, dry country, its secret being that its roots descend to 60 ft.! It has spread much due to destruction of other plants. "Chapparral" (pronounced with a hard "ch" as in "church") is a community of plants. There is a Spanish word "chaparra" which means "brush oak" or "scrub". Strictly speaking, the term "chapparral" applies to low evergreen oaks (e. g. Gambel Oak, Quercus gambeli) and resinous woody plants (e. g. "Manzanita" which turns out to be nothing other than familiar Bearberry, Arctostaphylos uva-ursi — see p. 38 Peterson/McKenney guide). Chapparral is a habitat typical of the coast of the southwest. However, the term is used liberally for the scrub growth of Texas (which the Mexicans call simply "monte" meaning "scrub") but it is very different, comprised mostly of legumes, including the Mesquite, as well as black brush acacia (typical of the endangered Tamaulipas forest) and other species, some very thorny, some with no leaves and completely green, thus amply supplied with chlorophyll despite the lack of leaves. (See illustration in Golden Field Guide, Birds of North America, page 218, showing Verdin's nest. We saw such a Verdin's nest in a junco bush, pronounced "hoonco" at Santa Margarita Ranch.) Other shrubs which are components of

this habitat are a Leucophyllum with whitish-green leaves and "coyotillo" (coyote-food).

"Soon the yucca blooms will grow and the desert winds will blow...." goes a later song. Yucca is, of course, of the Lily Family and Y. treculeana was the most common in the so-called chapparral. My Texas field guide gave a flowering date for this species as April and May, but to my delight I found it everywhere in bloom in the chapparral, a "lily-tree".

Maybe some will remember the "Cow-cow Boogie" and the line that goes... "He was raised on loco weed." I'd like to have seen this famous plant but was not in the right habitat. Actually, it's only a name for those vetch plants of the genus Astragalus which are poisonous to cattle; those that are innocuous are known as "milk vetch". (See p. 152 Peterson/McKenney guide for the yellow A. canadensis.) My Texas field guide illustrates one which has purplish flowers, A. mollissimus, Woolly Loco, which grows in the Trans-Pecos and Panhandle — in the "far north" of Texas.

"I'm just like a prairie flower — growing wilder every hour...." That's a line from the song extolling the versatility of the cry, "Wahoo!" You do feel like using it when you see those prairie flowers growing profusely in riotous colour on every roadside (encouraged by the Highways Department). Such garden annuals as Gaillardia (two species) and Lantana are native to Texas. The Prickly-poppies are to be remembered forever — the white, Argemone albiflora, yellow, A. senea and the red and pink, A. sanguinea. There are great arrays, too, of Pink Evening Primrose, Oenothera speciosa, which my niece referred to as "pink buttercup" because Texans also call their yellow evening primrose, O. triloba, "buttercup" (the latter favouring damp limestone soils further north). I saw only one Common Dandelion, Taraxacum officinale, while in south Texas, and actually met a young man quite knowledgeable on botany who asked me what it looks like. The Texas-dandelion, Pyrrhopappus multicaulis, looks quite different with its red achenes. To contrast with all the brilliant colours there are vast expanses of a beautiful lupine, "Bluebonnet", Lupinus texensis, thriving in calcareous soils which must be plentiful in south Texas. Scarlet Paintbrush, Castilleja indivisa, is mostly referred to as "Indian Paintbrush" by Texans, but is a different species from that which grows on the Bruce, C. coccinea (p. 230 Peterson/McKenney guide). Perhaps the name "Scarlet" was assigned to distinguish it from three other species which also grow in Texas, some purplish and some yellow.

Texas Prickly Pear, Opuntia lindheimeri Engelm. is prevalent in the chapparral; it is a different species from that which grows on Pelee, O. humifusa (See p. 100 Peterson/McKenney guide). The Texas species grows to 10 ft., the flower being yellow, orange or red — Mexicans call it "napaletto". It was the only cactus I saw, except for a tiny barrel-type of an inch or so which was not flourishing. I think one has to go further west to see a few more Opuntia species and an Echinocactus. The Ocotillo, Fouquieria splendens, can also be seen in west Texas (of the Candlewood, not the Cactus Family). But I did not get far enough west in Texas to see these plants nor to do something else I dreamed of doingto "walk out on the streets of Laredo....."

Diana Banville

Field Guides:

Roadside Flowers of Texas by Wills & Irwin, U. of Texas Press, Austin
A Field Guide to Wildflowers by Peterson & McKenney, Houghton Mifflin, Boston
Birds of North America by Chandler Robbins et al., Golden Press, New York

THE ONTARIO FIELD BIOLOGIST

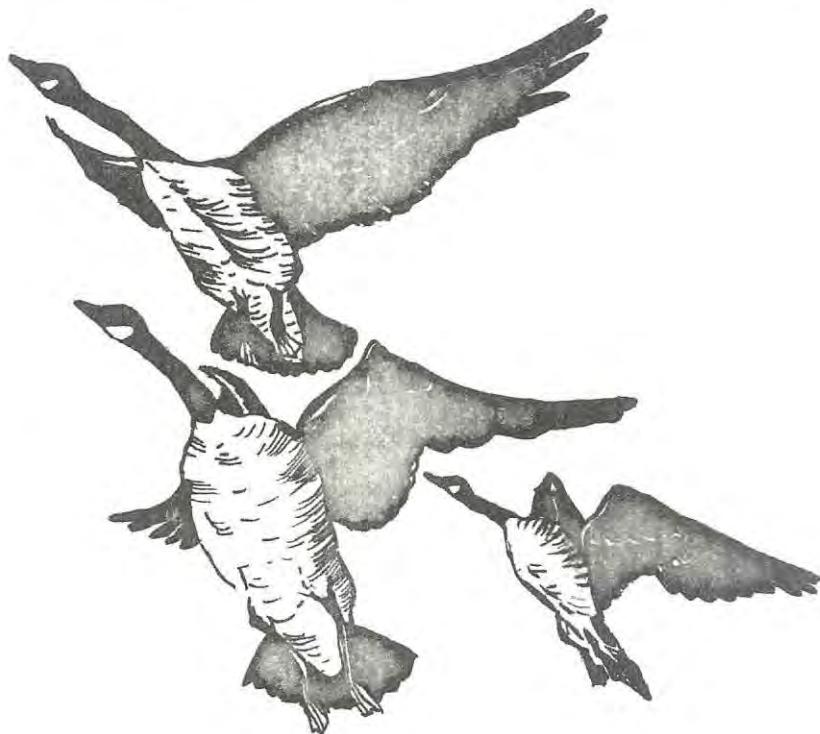
Newer members of the TFN may be interested to know that THE ONTARIO FIELD BIOLOGIST began life in 1947 as THE INTERMEDIATE NATURALIST, an excellent and substantial journal written and published annually by a group of exceptional young people known as the Toronto Intermediate Naturalists' Club. With maturity, in 1955 the group changed its name to the Toronto Field Biologists' Club, and continued to produce the journal, now in scholarly format, as THE ONTARIO FIELD BIOLOGIST. In spite of increasing involvement in studies and in launching careers which often took them far afield, the members never failed to produce the annual issue for the next fifteen years.

In the fall of 1970, the Toronto Field Biologists' Club became a study group within the Toronto Field Naturalists, and so continued for several years. They brought their journal with them, and for the past nine years THE ONTARIO FIELD BIOLOGIST has been TFN's responsibility, staffed by dedicated, capable volunteers. Since 1974 it has been published twice yearly.

From its beginning, the journal has attracted the attention and respect of eminent biologists. Regular subscribers now include most of the major universities and museums in Canada and the northeastern United States, federal and Ontario government wildlife agencies, and hundreds of amateur and professional naturalists. While most of its circulation is naturally in Ontario, it travels to every province (except P.E.I.) and as far abroad as England, Germany, Belgium, Colombia, and Poland.

The maintenance and extension of THE ONTARIO FIELD BIOLOGIST is an important work of which the TFN may be proud. If you would like to become involved, see page 16 of this Newsletter.

Mary Robson



THE ONTARIO FIELD BIOLOGIST

Articles on widely varied fields of interest and location characterize the June 1979 issue (Vol. 33, #1) of THE ONTARIO FIELD BIOLOGIST as will be seen from the following list of contents:

- Notes on the flora of the Canadian portion of the Niagara frontier..... Karen L. McIntosh and Paul M. Catling
Bird populations in short jack pine woodlands of western Parry Sound district..... Ross D. James
Insects reared from galls on white oak caused by *Callirhytis clavula* (O.S.) and on bur oak caused by *Disholcaspis mamma* (Cresson) at London, Ont..... William W. Judd
Ontario Ornithological Records Committee report for 1978..... Clive E. Goodwin
Birds of the Geraldton district David E. Elder
Tremblay's salamander (*Ambystoma tremblayi*) in Algonquin Park Daniel F. Brunton and Wayne F. Weller
Toronto's 54th Christmas bird count, 1978 Harry Kerr

Copies of this issue may be obtained for \$2.00 at TFN meetings or by using the coupon below. We would draw your attention also to the index of available back issues on page 13 of this Newsletter. For a limited time only, we are offering back issues (regularly \$1.50) at a special price of \$1.25 each to new subscribers.

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

Date _____

A. Please send me the June 1979 issue of THE ONTARIO FIELD BIOLOGIST (price \$2.00)

\$ _____

B. I would like to subscribe to THE ONTARIO FIELD BIOLOGIST (2 issues a year) for _____ years at \$4.00 a year

\$ _____

C. Please send me back issues as checked:

Vo. 32, #2 _____; 32, #1 _____; 31, #2 _____; 30, #1 _____

\$1.50 each, OR (until Dec. 31) \$1.25 with a new subscription

\$ _____

D. Please send me _____ copies of Special Publication #1:
John L. Riley's GUIDE TO THE VASCULAR PLANTS AND WILDLIFE OF THE ROUGE RIVER VALLEY at \$1.50 per copy

\$ _____

I enclose payment \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

INDEX OF AVAILABLE BACK ISSUES OF THE ONTARIO FIELD BIOLOGIST (FALL 1979)

GN - General Note

- Alison, R.M. History of the black duck in Ontario, 30(1):27-34; Late snowstorm causes woodcock mortality, 30(1):51-52 (GN)
- Andrle, Robert F. Ruby-crowned kinglet breeding in regional municipality of Niagara, Ontario, 32(1):43-44 (GN)
- Ankney, C. Davison. Snowy owl exploits duck hunters, 32(2):59 (GN)
- Bain, Margaret. First sighting of a black skimmer on Ontario, 32(2):33 (GN)
- Blomme, Chris. Albino red-winged blackbird at Burwash, Ontario, 32(1):47 (GN)
- Bondrup-Nielsen, Soren. Arrival dates and status of birds near Kapuskasing, Ontario, 30(1):39-50
- Campbell, Craig A. and Anne Innis Dagg. Bird populations in downtown and suburban Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario, 30(1):1-22
- Eagles, Paul F.J., et al. Monitoring census of winter birds in the regional municipality of Waterloo, Ontario, 31(2):29-40
- Francis, G.R. Road transects to record occurrence of frogs and toads in Wilmot Twp., Waterloo region, S. Ontario, 32(1):1-12
- Goodwin, C.E. Ontario Ornithological Records Committee report for 1975, 30(1):35-38; 1977, 32(1):13-16; ... W. Freedman and S.M. McKay, Population trends in waterfowl wintering in the Toronto region, 1929-1976, 31(2):1-28
- Haymes, Gerard T. and Hans Blokpoel. Reproductive success of larids nesting on the eastern headland of Toronto outer harbour in 1977, 32(2):1-17
- Humphreys, G.B. and F.F. Mallory. Colour preferences of the pond slider and the spotted turtle, 31(2):41-44
- James, Ross D. First nesting of the great gray owl in Ontario, 31(2):55-56 (GN); Nesting of the house finch in Ontario, 32(2):30-32
- Judd, William W. Praying mantis trapped in a spider web, 30(1):53-55; Insects associated with flowering hawkweed (*Hieracium pratense*) and cinquefoil (*Potentilla recta*) at Dunnville, Ontario, 32(2):24-29; Long-eared owl and its food at St. Thomas reservoir, Elgin County, Ontario, 32(2):34-35
- Kerr, Harry. Toronto's 51st Christmas bird count, 1975, 30(1):23-26; 1977, 32(1):37-42
- Lee, Dann. Annotated list of the birds of Big Trout Lake area, Kenora district, 32(1):17-36; ... and J.M. Speirs, Breeding bird censuses at Big Trout Lakes, 1975, 31(2):48-54
- Richards, James M. Summary of nesting records for ruddy duck in Ontario, with particular reference to regional municipality of Durham, 31(2):45-47; Black-crowned night heron nesting in the regional municipality of Durham Ontario, 32(1):45-46 (GN)
- Stewart, William G. Smaller whorled pogonia, an orchid new to Canada, 31(2):57-58 (GN); Cryptogamic flora of Elgin County, Ontario, 32(2):18-23

ISSUES---

SAVE THE LOWER ROUGE RIVER!

The Lower Rouge River Valley in Scarborough is a marsh and forest area of some 625 hectares that contains diverse natural habitats like climax maple/beech forest, oak/pine associations, a large wetland marsh, and a natural beach area on Lake Ontario. In total, there are some 626 kinds of vascular plants present, 411 of them native, 12 of which are considered rare in Ontario and five rare nationally. (See John Riley's GUIDE TO THE VASCULAR PLANTS AND WILDLIFE OF THE ROUGE RIVER VALLEY — order form on page 12.) Also numerous are birds such as mallards, blue-winged teals, Canada geese, common gallinules, green herons, and American bitterns. As well, Virginia and sora rails possibly nest in the Lower Rouge River marsh.

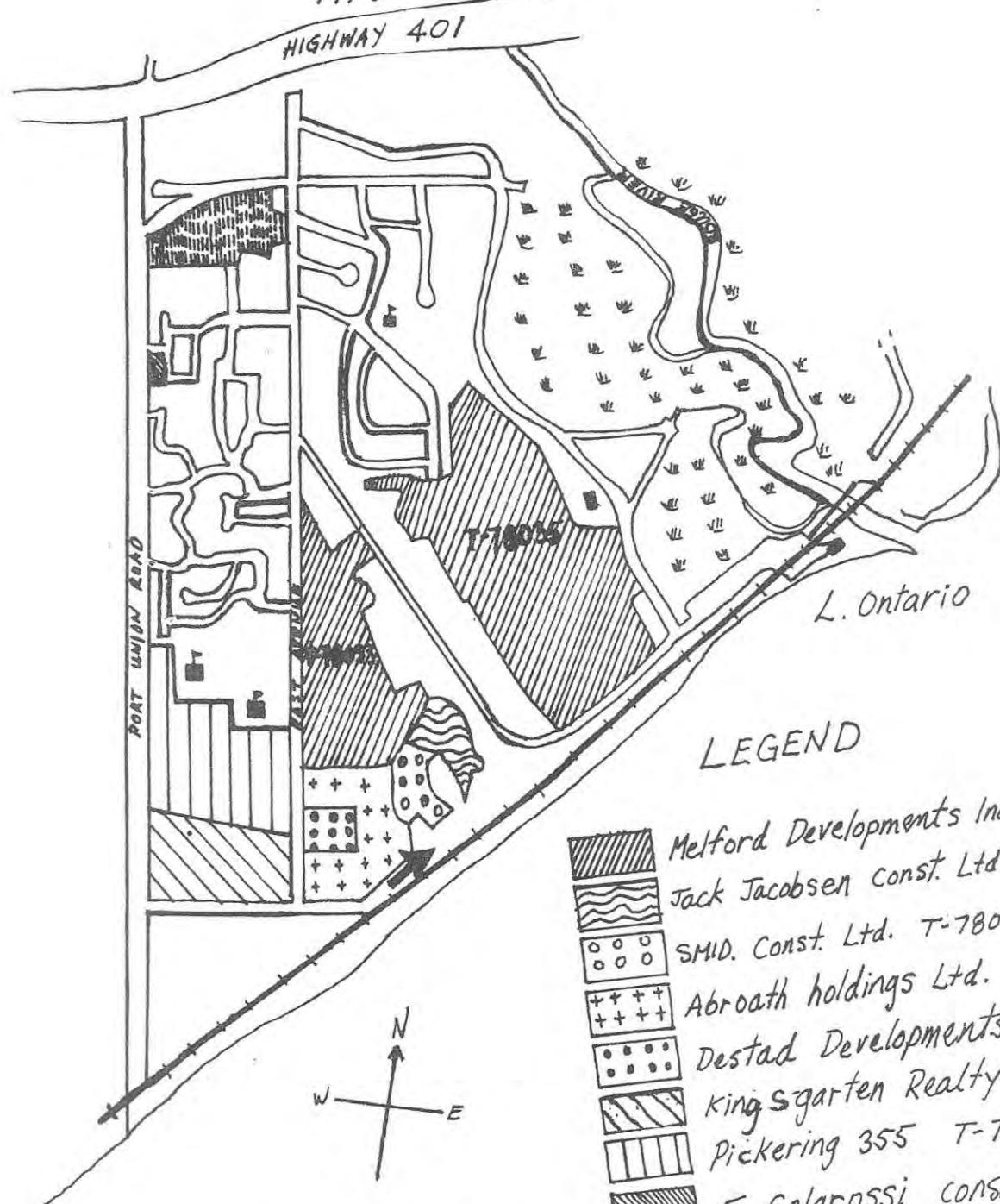
A recent decision by the Ontario Municipal Board (June 1979) worries local residents and knowledgeable naturalists. In the West Rouge area of Scarborough, Melford Developers (see map on page 15) have received permission to proceed with their plans for a large housing development for some 9,400 people in mixed family dwellings (including townhouses). Originally, in 1974, the Scarborough Official Plan Amendment 460 contained a proposal that development for the area should proceed for a maximum population of 5,600 in single-family dwellings. Unfortunately the OMB decision seriously changed Amendment 460 despite objections. A presentation by Mr. Allan Dobb of Save the Rouge Valley System and a letter by J. Murray Speirs (concerning the birds of the area and stressing sound environmental planning for this unique wetland and beach) were not mentioned in the OMB decision.

The effects of high density urbanization adjacent to valleyland areas is well-known in Metro Toronto. The once beautiful and relatively untouched Highland Creek area in Scarborough has been reduced to a Metro park known for its periodic spring and fall high water level storm sewer flooding. The presence of wide paved roads, parking lots, washroom facilities, and paved and hard-packed, bare-ground foot and bicycle paths have all also helped to reduce the diversity of plants and animals.

In spite of warnings at the Metro Toronto and Region Conservation Authority Meeting #19 in 1975 that development should not occur in the West Rouge without extensive consideration being given to storm sewer abatement into the Lower Rouge wetland, the OMB has seen fit to allow this increase of population from 5,600 to 9,400 without any hydrologic (water discharge) and environmental considerations.

As well, the Ontario Municipal Board has recommended keeping a proposal for an extension of Lawrence Avenue in plans for the area. Undoubtedly the effects of an extension on the sensitive wetlands cannot be overemphasized. The construction associated with an extension would necessarily lead to irreparable disturbance of plant and animal communities including bird nesting sites. Uncontrollable use by an increased population in the area would destroy valuable rare plants in and around the marsh and on the eastern beach. Tampering with the natural beach and bar estuary, the most effective and aesthetic dissipator of wave energy from the lake, could affect sediment transport in the river mouth causing silting and infilling at unnatural rates later. Although the OMB maintains that there is no great rush to delete such a Metro road proposal, it must be clear to everyone that sound early action is imperative. The OMB also argues that leaving the Lawrence Avenue extension proposal in the Plan does not in any way make development necessary. However, it effectively prejudices any plans for the area and its possibility attracts

MAP OF WEST ROUGE AND LOWER ROUGE
RIVER WETLAND.
adapted from. SCARBOROUGH PROPOSED
PLAN OF SUBDIVISION SCHEDULES
1978 April, 1979.



LEGEND

- Melford Developments Inc.
- Jack Jacobsen Const. Ltd. T-78038
- SMID. Const. Ltd. T-78036
- Abroath holdings Ltd. T-78022
- Destad Developments T-78023
- Kingsgarten Realty Ltd. T-78037
- Pickering 355 T-78017
- F. Colarossi const. Ltd. T-77033
- Wetland marsh and beach.
- J. Mandel (IN TRUST) T-78018
- Proposed site of Lawrence ave. extension
So. of R.R. across mouth of the Rouge River.

development interests like a magnet. In view of the fact that no one directly affected by a Lawrence extension wants it and its negative effects on the environment, an OMB decision to retain it seems irresponsible.

Finally, the root problem is that the Metro Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, the Metro Parks Dept., the Borough of Scarborough, the Municipality of Metro Toronto, and the Region of Durham all have jurisdiction over aspects of the area. They should be encouraged to cooperate with each other and propose a sensible conservation policy for the area.

The Save the Rouge Valley System and the Johns Manville Co. Ltd. are submitting separate briefs to the Ontario Cabinet to contest different parts of the OMB decision; however, only the sincere concern of all the citizens of Metro Toronto voiced in many ways can ensure that the unique and valuable natural aspects of the Lower Rouge River area are preserved for future generations. Please help in any way you can.

Paul Harpley

Help !

We are looking for someone to help with the Ontario Field Biologist.

I have enjoyed acting as secretary for the past nine years, but now wish to use my spare time in other ways.

Someone is needed to:

- 1) Address and mail the journal to subscribers twice a year. At present there are about 500 subscribers.
- 2) Maintain and extend the subscription list by sending promotion letters or whatever other means your fertile mind can devise. This is very important!
- 3) Attend to new and renewal subscriptions as they arrive in the mail, and keep subscriptions filed and records up to date. There is a little invoicing and correspondence from time to time.

Desirable qualifications are:

- a background of clerical and/or advertising work
- the ability to write good promotion copy aimed at serious naturalists, librarians, and other professional types
- the enthusiasm and initiative to work independently and to constantly devise ways and means of winning and holding new subscribers
- a typewriter, desk or table, and space to store several cartons of magazines and envelopes

The work could be done by one individual or split between two people, one doing the promotion work and the other attending to the clerical end. A husband and wife team (perhaps retired) would be ideal.

The Ontario Field Biologist is getting better all the time under Barbara Wilkins's competent editorship. But to remain successful it must circulate — get out of the printer's cartons and into the hands of appreciative readers. This is a challenge for someone. Will you take it?

Mary Robson
481-0260 evenings and weekends

LATE WINTER BIRDING IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

This account will serve as a guide for any group of four or five people who wish to plan a two-week mid-March birding vacation in southern California (starting from San Francisco and ending in Long Beach).

Our travel arrangements were worked out well in advance, using AAA and ACSC (Automobile Club of Southern California) maps. The AAA Tour Book is an essential publication for names and addresses of motels and information on various places of interest which can be visited during the trip. A recent issue (March, 1979) of the National Geographic has an eight-page tear-out showing the location of U. S. National Wildlife Refuges, major animal orders present, best seasons for wildlife observation and recreational facilities available. Other essential publications are:

- A Birder's Guide to Southern California by James Lane
- The Bird Watcher's America by O. S. Pettingill
- A Guide to North American Bird Clubs by J. E. Rickert
 - (particularly useful for enquiries about outings by local clubs)
- Birding, quarterly of the ABA (American Birding Association) - inserts

A ten-seater van, such as the Dodge Sportsman or Ford Clubwagon allows ample seating for passengers with uninterrupted views, adequate space for baggage and ready access to telescopes. To avoid disappointment, remember to reserve your van ahead of time and that it may not get you to all locations.

Other details which experience has shown to be important are:

1. Plan to have one major birding period per day.
2. Try to get more than one opportunity to see new species, particularly for shy, hard-to-identify and uncommon birds.
3. Take a check-list and make it up daily. ABA publishes a "Traveller's List" with spaces for at least 11 entries per species.
4. Avoid frequent long journeys - 200 miles is a long journey on this type of vacation.
5. Avoid frequent one-night stop-overs.
6. Make reservations in advance or you may have to curtail your field activities just when they get really exciting.

Richardson Bay Audubon Sanctuary

You do not really have to leave San Francisco to reach Richardson Bay for it is as close to the city as Sausalito, just across the Golden Gate Bridge. It is a major wintering area for water-associated birds. However, it was the resident male Allen's Hummingbird which created the first real excitement of the trip with a display flight from a perch close to the entrance - a "lifer" for all members within moments of starting! A short visit on a heavily overcast day gave us 49 species, including the only sighting of Purple Finch and Lawrence's Goldfinch. Great numbers of Western Grebe could be seen, often at great distance, with the pure white neck and breast standing out against the grey water.

Monterey Harbour

There are no pelagic trips in March but the piers and breakwaters at Monterey and the shore at Pacific Grove were productive of the three species of cormorant which were to become commonplace (Double-crested, Brandt's and Pelagic), two contrasting gulls (Mew and Heermann's) and the Black Oystercatcher as well as over 40 other species. Three Marbled Murrelets obligingly showed up. This was also our best chance to watch Sea Otters eating crabs in their unique dining position. The "butterfly trees" at Pacific Grove were disappointing, partly because of the poor light but also because the Monarchs had already begun to move north.

Point Lobos State Reserve

The drive south from Carmel to Lucia is some 50 miles of the most spectacular coastline imaginable. Punta Lobos de los Marininos (Point of the Sea-wolves) enables one to get closer to the sea than many places along this coast and it has a rich flora as well as its fauna to attract the naturalist. The birding was good - another day with close to 50 species. Rough-winged Swallows were around, eight days before the "official" day for arrival at San Juan Capistrano; indeed those who went to San Juan were unlucky this year. We had the interesting view of Rock Doves in their original habitat, on ledges on off-shore rocks.

Plan to drive the Big Sur road from north to south in order to get the best views - and hope to get a good day. The sun shone for us.

Lake Piru

This is the alternative site to the Sespe Sanctuary from which to look for a California Condor in the winter-spring period. The two sites are quite close to one another and less than 50 miles from Los Angeles. The problem at Sespe is that the road to the observation site tends to wash out and the last five miles must be done on foot or in a four-wheel-drive vehicle. All would-be visitors are advised to call the Ojai District Ranger Station (805-646-4348) before driving to Sespe at this time of year. Our regular vehicle was quite unsuitable for the roads and its passengers unprepared for a rough hike, so we opted for Lake Piru which can be reached by a paved road. The clouds were well down on the mountains and there was intermittent rain; we were disappointed in not seeing the condor. However, the day was not completely wasted for we made good use of taped song to call out a delightfully inquisitive pair of Wrentits - "lifers" for the entire group. Rock Wrens too were seen only here.

Upper Newport (Back) Bay

There was continuous sunshine on both occasions when we visited the Back Bay and neighbouring areas. The Bay is one of the largest tidal marshes in North America. It is surrounded by residential areas but separated from them by sandy banks up to 100 feet high - and there is a little-used, paved road at the foot of the bank. It is a fabulous birding location for water and shore birds. Fifty or more species of grebe, heron, duck, rail, plover, sandpiper, gull and tern can be observed in a short visit. At nearby Corona-del-Mar we picked up one of our "most-wanted" species, the Wandering Tattler, if only for a brief sighting. Close to the Back Bay are Bolsa Chica and Seal Beach Lagoons, the latter beside a U.S. Naval Weapons Depot; indeed the depot and wildlife refuge are named on the same large board!

During these visits we began to realize that parts of Lane's book are out of date. Development around Irvine has made it all but impossible to find the San Joaquin fresh-water marsh. Do not attempt the "Santa Ana Mountains loop", except for a visit to the Tucker Wildlife Sanctuary in Modjeska Canyon where hundreds of hummingbirds "swarm like bees around the feeders" in the summer. Anna's and Costa's were the resident species in March; an inch-long juvenile Anna's was being hand-reared in the office. The rest of this area has been greatly altered and a major highway is under construction which may further limit the birding.

San Diego

The San Diego Loop, as described by Lane, contains some excellent birding spots with a variety of habitats - rocky cliffs, sea-shore, scrub, salt-marsh and river bottom. The best locations were the Cabrillo National Monument (Whimbrel, Brown Pelican, Surfbird and California Thrasher were seen only there; the Wandering Tattler was seen clearly), South Bay Marine Biological Study Area (a stretch of mud flats where most of the ducks and shorebirds are fairly close - Black Brant and Elegant Tern were the new species), Imperial Marsh (a large salt marsh) and the adjacent Tia Juana River Valley (Tricoloured Blackbirds eluded us there as in every other suitable location, but this is a spot where many rare sightings have occurred.)

At the 1800-acre Wild Animal Park at Escondido, some 30 miles north of San Diego in the San Pasqual Valley, African and Asian species are kept in large, open compounds. Both there and at the world-famous San Diego Zoo in Balboa Park there are large free-flying bird houses. Close to the Zoo is the San Diego Museum of Natural History which has some fine displays of local birds as well as some poorly mounted, faded specimens!

The Low Desert

An Interstate Highway crosses the mountain ranges between San Diego and El Centro at the southern end of the Imperial Valley at sea level. Most of this ride was undertaken in a heavy rainstorm but sunshine on the desert floor in the early evening enabled us to enjoy two highlights of the trip - a sudden stop and back-up to see two pairs of Burrowing Owls at their burrow within six feet of the highway, followed by six skeins of 15-30 White Pelicans directly overhead.

The following day should have provided 20 additional species at the southern end of the Salton Sea but the unusually prolonged rains made dirt roads impassable during the preceding two weeks. We had to settle for a flock of many hundreds, if not thousands, of Yellow-headed Blackbirds, the single Roadrunner of the trip, a pair of Virginia Rails called to within ten feet by tape-song and the only Cactus Wrens of the trip.

The High Desert

This habitat is well seen in Joshua Tree National Monument which can be approached from the south or the north. At the southern end of the Monument is part of the low desert and there is a continuous climb for nearly 40 miles. The northern entrance is on the east slope of the Little San Bernardino Mountains at 2500 feet. Lane describes a loop which can be accomplished in a day but it is 180 miles long and does not give time for adequate stops at Big Morongo Wildlife Reserve, Cottonwood Springs and the Monument Headquarters.

The loop is a scenic drive with fascinating rock landscapes and interesting plants as well as birds, so there are many short stops for photography. Both Big Morongo (which is outside the Monument) and Cottonwood Springs have long checklists, but only some 25 of the more than 200 listed species are either abundant or common in winter. Nevertheless we had Lewis's, Williamson's and Ladder-backed Woodpeckers in minutes at Big Morongo. Be prepared for cold weather and snow at the highest point.

Mountains

Our only time in the mountains was a single day in the San Jacinto Range just west of Palm Springs. We had seen the area covered with heavy and constant clouds during the previous two days and had encountered lingering snow above 4,000 feet in the Joshua Tree National Monument. Even this did not really prepare us for the sight at and above 5,000 feet in the mountains - a good foot of snow had fallen so that the choicest birding spot, Humber Park at Idyllwild, would have been accessible only with chains! Several species were lost here but we got Steller's and Pinyon Jays.

Conclusion

This was a good trip, if sometimes frustrating, yielding a total of 173 species. Given good weather in late February, with a pelagic outing, it should be possible to get close to 200 species, particularly with a four-wheel-drive vehicle. The most satisfying sightings for the members of our group were Black-necked Stilts, Wandering Tattlers, Western Bluebirds and Burrowing Owls. Only two of the four were life birds, which just goes to show that meeting up with an old friend can be just as satisfying as making an exciting new acquaintance.

Bruce Cruickshank

NEW TFN PUBLICATION

A Birdfinding Guide to the Toronto Region by Clive Goodwin is a recent publication of the TFN. It contains general sections on the birds of the Toronto region; the Toronto year--things to look for by months; 134 numbered areas; 3 maps, and a systematic list of species showing their relative abundance by season.

Buy your copy at the monthly meeting for \$2.00 or order it from the TFN for \$2.50 (to cover cost of handling and postage).

CHANGING YOUR ADDRESS?



Please advise us of change of address
in writing to our Membership Secretary,
Mrs. Ida Hanson, 83 Joicey Blvd.,
Toronto, Ontario, M5M 2T4.

A CHECK-LIST OF REPTILES OF SOUTHERN ONTARIO

SNAKES

Black Rat Snake or Pilot Black Snake (<i>Elaphe obsoleta obsoleta</i>)	constrictor	to 8'
Eastern Fox Snake (<i>Elaphe vulpina gloydi</i>)	constrictor	to 6'
Blue Racer (<i>Coluber constrictor foxi</i>) (Pelee) not a constrictor		to 6'
Eastern Milk Snake (<i>Lampropeltis triangulum triangulum</i>)		to 3.5"
Eastern Hognose Snake (<i>Heterodon platyrhinos</i>)		to 3'
Eastern Garter Snake (<i>Thamnophis sirtalis sirtalis</i>) (has melanistic form)		to 3'
Butler's Garter Snake (<i>Thamnophis radix butleri</i>) (rare; W.L.Erie)		to 2'
Northern Ribbon Snake (<i>Thamnophis sauritus septentrionalis</i>)		to 2.5'
Queen Snake (<i>Regina Septemvittata</i>)		to 2.5'
Northern Water Snake (<i>Natrix sipedon sipedon</i>)		to 4'
Lake Erie Water Snake (<i>Natrix sipedon insularum</i>)		to 4'
Eastern Smooth Green Snake (<i>Ophiodrys vernalis vernalis</i>)		to 20"
Northern Ringneck Snake (<i>Diadophis punctatus edwardsi</i>)		to 18"
Brown Snake or DeKay's Snake (<i>Storeria dekayi dekayi</i>)		to 15"
Northern Red-bellied Snake, (<i>Storeria occipitomaculata occipitomaculata</i>)		to 12"
Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake (<i>Sistrurus catenatus catenatus</i>)		to 3'

(All above are non-venomous colubrids except for the rattler which is a crotalid or "pit-viper".)

TURTLES

		adult carapace
Midland Painted Turtle (<i>Chrysemus picta marginata</i>)	(most common)	6-7"
Spotted Turtle (<i>Clemmys guttata</i>)	(rare)	3-5"
Wood Turtle (<i>Clemmys insculpta</i>)	(rare)	8-9"
Blanding's Turtle (<i>Emydoidea blandingi</i>) (endangered - but not "rare")	10"	
Map Turtle (<i>Graptemys geographica</i>) (lesser-known but not rare)	5-10"	
Musk Turtle or Stinkpot (<i>Sternotherus odoratus</i>) (not uncommon; secretive)	3-5"	
Eastern Spiny Softshell Turtle (<i>Trionyx spinifera</i>) (endangered; W.L.Erie)	14-18"	
Snapping Turtle (<i>Chelodryna serpentina</i>)	(fairly common)	to 16"

(Four families of turtles are represented.)

LIZARD

Five-lined or Blue-tailed Skink (*Eumeces fasciatus*) (Pelee)

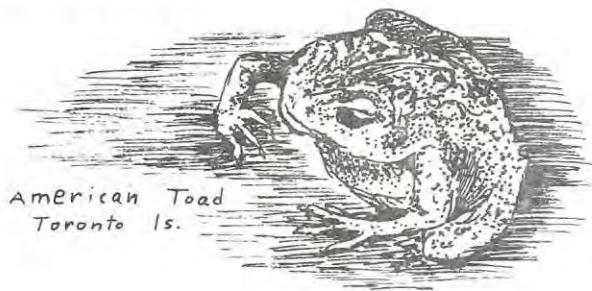
(This skink is our only Ontario lizard.)

All above species, except lizard, are described in Barbara Froom's booklets available from Ontario Government (published by Lands & Forests) - when last checked only 50¢ each. Most are illustrated in colour in Golden Guide "Reptiles and Amphibians", around \$2.00. In Toronto, Midland Painted Turtle is often seen in our ravines along the watercourses and in ponds. Snapping Turtle is seen at Grenadier Pond and Lake Ontario. Wood Turtle has been seen at least once (West Don). If you have seen this rare turtle or any of the other species mentioned around Toronto, please contact the NEWSLETTER Editorial Committee or Emily Hamilton, 488-0677. If you know of any additions or corrections to this list, please notify us.

A CHECK-LIST OF AMPHIBIANS OF SOUTHERN ONTARIO

FROGS

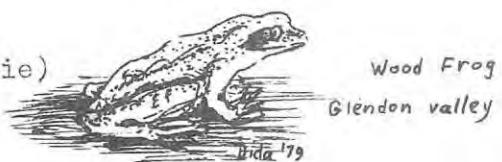
Green Frog	(<i>Rana clamitans</i>)
Bullfrog	(<i>Rana catesbeiana</i>)
Leopard Frog	(<i>Rana pipiens</i>)
Wood Frog	(<i>Rana sylvatica</i>)
Mink Frog	(<i>Rana septentrionalis</i>)
Pickerel Frog	(<i>Rana palustris</i>)



American Toad
Toronto Is.

TOADS

American Toad	(<i>Bufo americanus</i>)
Fowler's Toad	(<i>Bufo woodhousei fowleri</i>) (Lake Erie)



Wood Frog
Glendon valley

TREE FROGS

Northern Spring Peeper	(<i>Hyla crucifer</i>)
Eastern Grey Tree Frog	(<i>Hyla versicolor</i>) (also called Common Tree Frog)

CHORUS FROG

Western Chorus Frog	(<i>Pseudacris triseriata</i>)
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SALAMANDERS

Mudpuppy	(<i>Necturus maculosus</i>)
Blue-spotted Salamander	(<i>Ambystoma laterale</i>) (also called Jefferson S.)
Spotted Salamander	(<i>Ambystoma maculatum</i>)
Small-mouthed Salamander	(<i>Ambystoma texanum</i>) (also called Texas Salamander)
Red-spotted Newt (Red Eft)	(<i>Notophthalmus viridescens</i>)
Red-backed Salamander	(<i>Plethodon cinereus</i>)
Four-toed Salamander	(<i>Hemidactylum scutatum</i>)
Northern Two-lined Salamander	(<i>Eurycea bislineata</i>)

(All of the above species - except for the Mink Frog - are illustrated in the small Golden Guide, "Reptiles and Amphibians", at around \$2.00, available at most book stores.) (List based on Ont. Provincial Park Checklists.)

"A North American Directory to Bird Programs" is being compiled as a chapter in a book on birdwatching being written by Stephen W. Kress of Cornell University. Anyone interested in making suggestions as to possible submissions should contact:

Stephen W. Kress
Laboratory of Ornithology
Cornell University
159 Sapsucker Woods Road
Ithaca, New York 14853

OUTINGS REPORT

Aug. 1. Park Drive Ravine - Helen Juhola - 25 people. Some cloud, calm and warm. Birds: cardinal, blue jay, wood pewee, great crested flycatcher. A deep quiet ravine with signs of flooding from the previous night's storm. Flowering plants: wild carrot, chickory, helleborine orchid. One small toad.

Aug. 8. Highland Creek (Colonel Danforth area) - Donna Knauber - 9 people. Slightly overcast; hot. A walk enjoyed by all. Indigo buntings were seen including an immature. Families of downy woodpeckers, northern orioles, blue jays were seen. A white-breasted nuthatch, spotted sandpiper and kingfisher were seen as well as 8 other species. Thirty-eight species of plants were seen, most in flower.

Aug. 15. Rountree Mills Park - B. Bridgman - 15 people. Cool and windy; cloudy with some sun. A productive walk with 62 species of plants recorded, 39 in flower. Other items of interest: 14 birds including a great blue heron; crayfish chimneys in the mud; a black maple 11½ feet in circumference; bur oak, amur maple, outstanding clumps of very old willows; pink yarrow and swamp milkweed.

Aug. 22. Moore Park Ravine - Mollie McEwen - 17 people. Sunny. Warblers were migrating, juncos, rose-breasted grosbeaks, orioles and goldfinches also seen. Milkweed and monarchs and a Himalayan balsam were noted. A Heritage Tree (cucumber tree) was found by Mary Smith and Emily Hamilton.

Help Wanted

STATISTICIAN

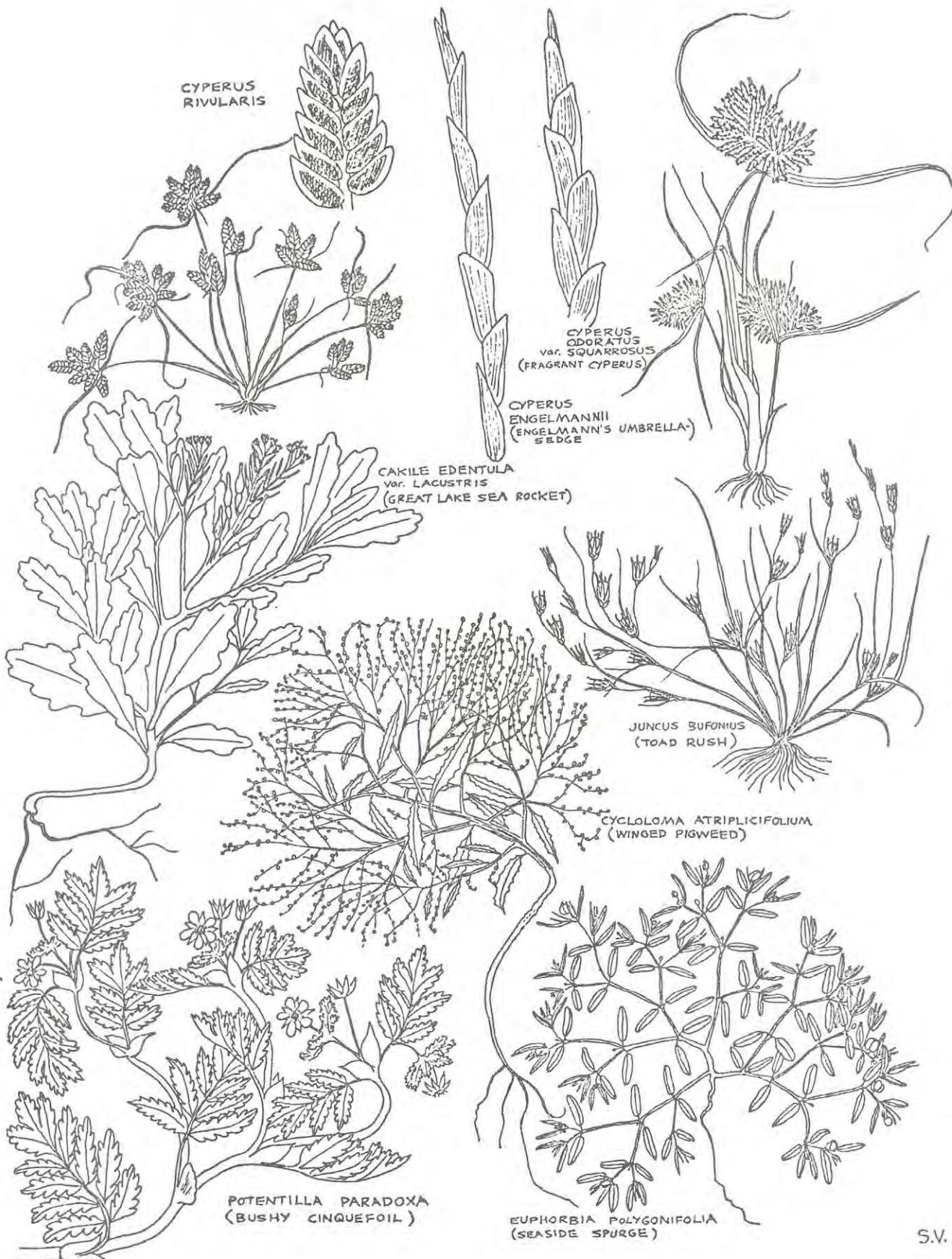
Outings Reports often contain long lists of birds and plants, or other observations concerning the areas visited, which cannot be included in the summaries because of space limitations. It would be very valuable as a record of our natural areas if this information could be tabulated and a report issued, perhaps yearly. The job would take some time to set up and would require large sheets of paper, but weekly entries would take only a few minutes.

Would anyone with a statistical turn of mind like to undertake this task?

Please get in touch with one of the members of the Outings Committee.

BEWARE !

The duck hunting season is now under way and will continue throughout November. Please be very careful when visiting the Jim Baillie Nature Reserve, particularly alongside the brook. Some unsporting hunters have been known to shoot at sitting ducks -- and if you happened to be behind those bushes watching the same sitting ducks, then...!



S.V.

RARE PLANTS ON THE TORONTO ISLANDS

Beach Strands

Next time you head over to the bathing beaches on the Toronto Islands, you should take a close look at some of the inconspicuous plants you are stepping on. Three of these beach-strand plant species are rare for Ontario and three are rare or uncommon for the Toronto Region. The two best beach strands are the one on the south-eastern part of Ward's Island and the one at the western part of the Island Airport. You can also find some good strands along the Leslie Spit. The best time to see the beach strand community is from late August to early October.

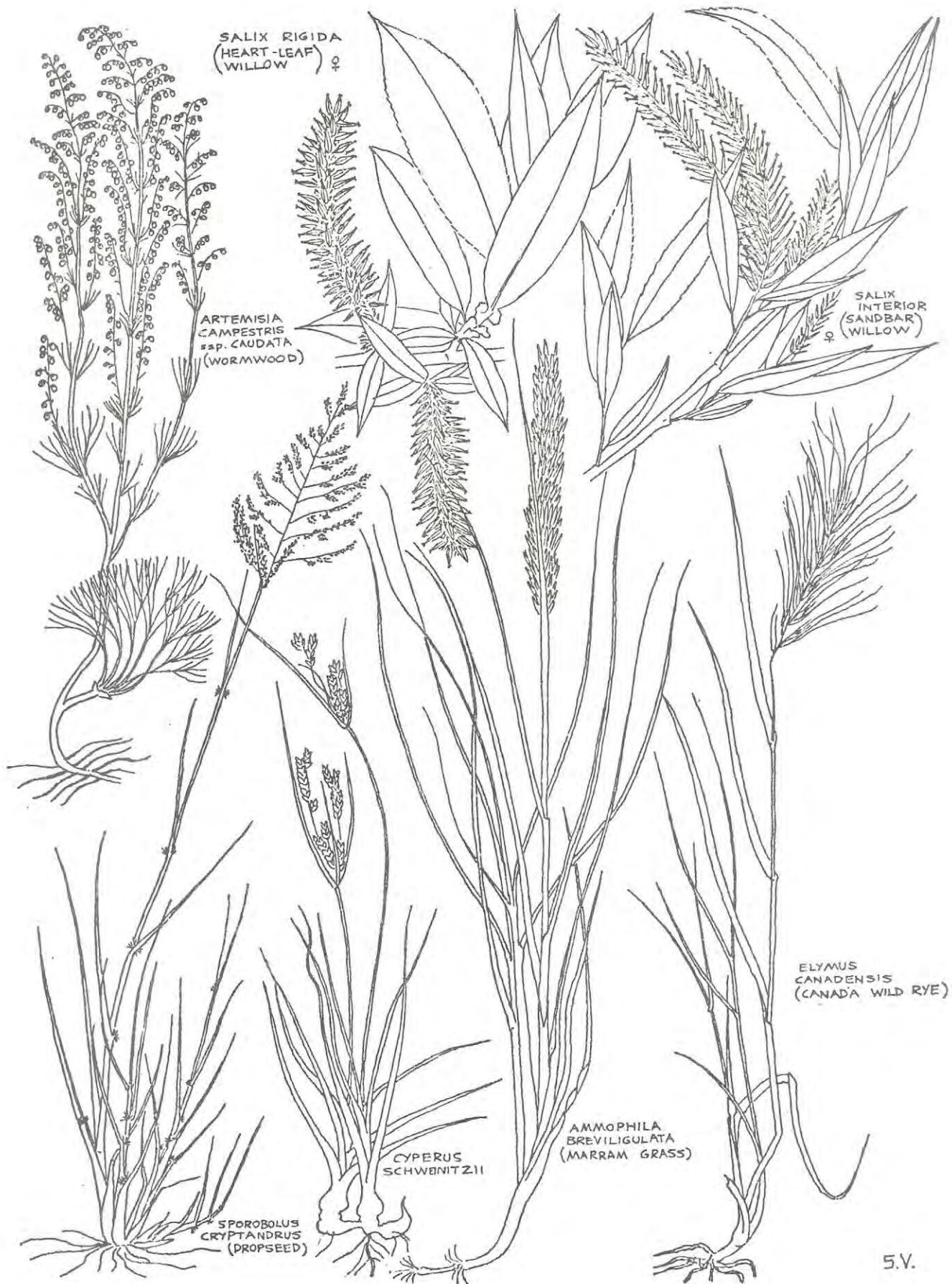
On the moister parts of the beach strands you will find three Cyperus species (members of the sedge family). Two which are rare for Ontario and Canada are Engelmann's umbrella-sedge (Cyperus engelmannii) and fragrant cyperus (Cyperus odoratus var. squarrosum). These are small plants having linear leaves arranged in three vertical ranks on a triangular stem. The species are distinguished from each other by their flowers (small scale-like bracts) which are grouped into elongated clusters. For example, in Engelmann's umbrella sedge the scales do not overlap on the same side of the cluster while on fragrant cyperus, they do. Among these Cyperus species you will find a small clumped rush called toad rush (Juncus bufonius). All these species occur most abundantly along the edges of ponds on the beach strands where they rapidly colonize the moist sands as the ponds shrink in size during the late summer.

The drier parts of the beach strands contain a completely different assemblage of plants of which four species are rare to some extent. The most dominant member of this community is bushy cinquefoil (Potentilla paradoxa) -- a species rare in Ontario. It is easily distinguished by its bushy appearance, its highly dissected leaves, and its five-petalled yellow flowers. The winged pigweed (Cycloloma atriplicifolium) -- a plant uncommon for our Region -- also occurs in this community. This plant resembles a tumbleweed and, in fact, during the fall the dead plant breaks off at the base and is tumbled around by the wind.

Finally, this community contains two regionally rare species: sea rocket (Cakile edentula var. lacustris) and seaside spurge (Euphorbia polygonifolia). Sea rocket is a succulent mustard with four-petalled white flowers and a distinctive two-parted fruit of which the basal part stays on the plant after it dies and from which a dense clump of sea rockets will be produced the next spring. Meanwhile the distal part of the fruit breaks off the plant and is blown around by the wind and waves. The following spring these seeds germinate along the drift lines to form a linear band of sea rockets. Seaside spurge forms a flattened mat on the sand. It has opposite leaves and contains a milky juice.

Beach strand communities are strongly affected by annual changes in lake levels. For example, the slightly lower lake levels during the spring of 1979 caused the bands of bushy cinquefoil to increase in width from 3 feet to 15 feet.

Steve Varga



RARE PLANTS ON THE TORONTO ISLANDS

Dunes

After a 15-minute ferry ride from downtown Toronto, you will find the only vegetated sand dunes along the western part of Lake Ontario. The Toronto Islands contain a large dune system stretching from Gibraltar Point to the Island Airport and a smaller dune ridge just behind the Ward's Island beach (see map in TFN Newsletter #325, Sept. 1979). The best time to see the dune plant communities is from late August to early October.

The open dunes are a tough environment for plants. To survive they have to adapt themselves to drought, the full force of the sun, wind breakage, and shifting sand. Once established these pioneer plants will grip loose sand, binding it, and stabilizing it. This enables less hardy plants to colonize the dunes, eventually resulting in a succession towards an eastern cottonwood (Populus deltoides) forest.

One of the first colonizers of the open dunes is Marram grass (Ammophila breviligulata). In fact, it does best on areas of shifting sand. Only on these sites will it produce seeds. Elsewhere the grass reproduces vegetatively. It is characterized by long leaf blades that have prominent ridges along the inner surface. It has adapted to the shifting sands by growing new lateral roots as sand piles up around it. Over the years this can produce a tap root which may reach 15 feet into the sand. In addition, its leaves actually roll up during dry periods to conserve moisture. It should be noted that Marram grass is not known to occur elsewhere along the western shores of Lake Ontario.

A common associate with Marram grass is wormwood (Artemisia campestris ssp. caudata). It is easily distinguished by its silvery grey colour and its deeply dissected leaves. If you look closely you will notice that the odd colour of this plant is produced by a dense mat of silvery hairs. These hairs act as insulators by reflecting intense sunlight.

Two other grasses are commonly found on the dunes: Canada wildrye (Elymus canadensis) which has very long spines extending out from its seeds and the regionally uncommon dropseed (Sporobolus cryptandrus) which is easily distinguished by the presence of hairs at the base of its leaf blades.

Two other important sand-binders on the Island dunes are sandbar willow (Salix interior) and heart-leaf willow (Salix rigida). Salix rigida is distinguished by its wider leaves and the presence of stipules (small leaf-like structures) at the base of each leaf blade. Finally, the dunes contain a regionally rare sedge called Cyperus schweinitzii. It has a triangular stem, is about 25 cm tall, and has linear leaves arranged in three vertical ranks.

Recently the largest dune along the western part of the Islands has been damaged by a 20-foot wide swath cut through it to make way for a 12-inch wide Consumers' Gas pipeline. At the present time city planners are proposing to protect some natural areas on the Islands by designating them as Environmentally Sensitive Areas. Unfortunately none of the Island dunes will be included in any of these.

Steve Varga

TFN at the C.N.E.

Many thanks to the 122 people who made our display at the Exhibition possible this year. Everyone seems to have had a good time, and I have already received a few names of volunteers for next year.

If you saw our booth as part of the passing crowd or if you worked at it, please let us know your thoughts or impressions about it — good or bad. We are already planning for next year. We are amateurs and need advice.

To those of you who did not spend a 4-hour shift in the booth — do try it next year. You will find that the people who stop to chat are very pleasant and sympathetic to our aims. Most are not knowledgeable about nature and usually ask very simple questions. It is also a good way to meet fellow TFN members — there are always two people on each shift.

We want more volunteers. We can fill the roster by telephoning, but as it requires 9 calls to fill one spot (people are out, on holidays, working in the garden, etc. etc.), we are trying to make a list of possible workers. If you think you might like to work in our booth next year, don't wait to be telephoned — volunteer now. (Let us know when is the best time to reach you.) It commits you to nothing. We'll phone about a month before the display and you can make up your mind then. Think of the hundreds of calls you will save us.

Laura Greer (691-4888), 28 Neville Park Blvd., Toronto, Ontario M4E 3P6

ON FINDING A DEAD BAT

There it lies on the grass, its once perfect little body battered where it was hit with a broom. Two little bat forearms with wings attached, held up as though asking for mercy.

Look closer. How human-looking and intelligent the face with those beady eyes, large ears, and mouth with many teeth. See on its chest, two tiny nipples. It is now August; in June it gave birth to twin helpless babies which were suckled on those minute nipples. The ears are large; because the eyesight was so poor it relied on the supersonic sounds it made, and listened to the re-bounds from objects to guide its path in flight.

Yes, the bat is perfectly adapted to its environment of dark caves, inside trees and buildings, and flying at night. It can fly in absolute darkness such as is found only in deep caves. At night it eats numerous insects, a habit which is beneficial to our environment; it also provides manure.

The only harm this little female did was to dare to venture into a building occupied by Man. She was screamed at, chased and knocked down with a broom, killed and tossed out here on the grass, where she lies, a symbol of Man's arrogance.

Bats lived in this area in trees long before man ventured this way to chop down the trees in order to build dwellings. I think, by rights, the bat was here first and should be allowed to live, or am I bats?

Joy Pocklington

THE 1979 TORONTO REGIONAL BIRDATHON

TORONTO AREA NATURALISTS COME THROUGH AGAIN!

Toronto area naturalists, in particular, and Ontario naturalists, in general, have a reputation for raising funds that is recognized across Canada. When we were living in Alberta, prior to 1977, we learned of the TFN's purchase of the Jim Baillie Nature Reserve from membership fund-raising and we turned green with envy! The financial results of the 1979 Toronto Regional Birdathon - part of the Baillie Birdathon - show that Toronto area naturalists have not lost this reputation.

The Birdathon, held on May 5, 1979, was conducted by 15 registered "counters", although one person was unable to participate due to illness. They came from the TFN, the Pickering Naturalists and the Durham Regional Field Naturalists. The 17 counters had enlisted the sponsorship of nearly 600 supporters. They were sponsored for a total of over \$52.00 per species, and the number of species identified per counter ranged from 30 to 100. The total number of species seen was approximately 140. Interestingly enough, those counters who were sponsored for greater than average sums (over \$3.28/species), also saw a greater than average number of species (65). If keenness prevails in one it must prevail in both!

The amount of money pledged for the Toronto Regional Birdathon totalled approximately \$4,400.00. This is nearly a four-fold increase over last year's Toronto Birdathon total - surely the inflation rate can't be that high! This makes us second only to Long Point Bird Observatory as the largest contributor to the Baillie Memorial Fund, a fund set up to support "amateur" bird study in Ontario. The rest of the money goes back to the participatory clubs, and to Long Point Bird Observatory, the organizing body of the Baillie Birdathon. The TFN donates its share of the money to the Toronto Bird Observatory, a TFN affiliate.

The Toronto Regional Birdathon had a very fitting ending to its count day last May. The count coincided with the FON Annual Meeting and many of those in attendance were most assuredly Birdathon sponsors. Birdathon awards - "Super-Birder" T-shirts - announced that evening (as none of the 1979 winners were present) went to: Peter Papp for the best performance by someone under 16, Dave Broughton for the best performance by someone over 16 and to Rob Nisbet of the Pickering Naturalists for the best performance by a club representative. The awards are based on the number of species seen, the number (not the amount) of sponsors, and in the case of Club awards, the size of the participating club. Red Mason (who was in attendance) and Clive Goodwin (who wasn't) received "G-1000 Birdathon" T-shirts for each having raised more than \$1,000 in a previous Birdathon. Dr. Murray Speirs, the TFN Celebrity Birder was the most highly sponsored counter at \$9.43/species, supported by 84 sponsors. He saw 91 species and raised over \$600.00!

It is not too early to be thinking about "Birdathon - 1980". The planners will start meeting about December or January. Counters will be after your sponsorships by March and by late April or May it will be Birdathon time again. Let's double our 1979 showing - 34 counters, \$8,700.00. Unfortunately we'll not be able to get 250 bird species! Remember, if you like Christmas Bird Counts - you'll love the Baillie Birdathon!

- Chip and Linda Weseloh
Toronto Regional
Birdathon Organizers

A NATURALIST'S CODE OF ETHICS

As mentioned in previous NEWSLETTERS, the TFN would like to prepare a code of ethics for persons who enjoy the outdoors. Suggestions for this project will be welcomed, and may be sent to Miss Florence Preston, 368 Eglinton Ave East, Apt. 203, Toronto, M4P 1L9.

The following "Bird Trip Etiquette for Groups" was prepared by the New Jersey Audubon Society, Scherman Wildlife Sanctuary, Bernardsville, N.J.

At all times:

- Be considerate of the group; the welfare of the group comes before the welfare of the individual.
- Wear dark clothing, i.e., browns, greens, khakis, etc.; no bright colors or neons.

Walking field trips:

- Talk as little and as quietly as possible; birdwatching is largely bird listening; when leader is talking to group, individuals should keep quiet.
- Raise arms slowly when using optical equipment; sudden and quick movements scare birds.
- When walking in wooded or brushy areas, do not step on sticks; loud, sudden noises scare birds.
- Always stay behind the leader but with the group; if you can go off on your own, do so -- but then don't join a group field trip.
- Do not "squeak" or use tape recorders or other equipment without the leader's knowledge.
- When "squeaking" is being done to attract birds close by, stand or sit still and keep arms still; DO NOT WALK AROUND.

Caravan trips:

- Close car doors quietly; DO NOT SLAM THEM. Get out of cars only when leader does.
- Never stop because you see a bird, thereby disrupting that part of the caravan behind you; a leader cannot possibly see every bird (if you don't need a leader, don't join a group caravan trip!).
- Always begin a day's trip with a full tank of gas.
- Always double up -- at least 4 persons to a car -- so there are as few cars as possible -- every individual car wastes minutes of the group time. This includes VW's and other small cars. If you have to drive alone, please do not attend group caravan trips.
- Always engage your directional arrow as soon as the car in front of you so indicates.
- Never leave a caravan trip for any reason for any period of time without so informing the leader (the leader always keeps a count of cars).

- Pass the word to those behind you if a bird is identified or pointed out near the beginning of the caravan.
- If the leader stations himself near the middle of the caravan when stopped, please follow him so that you know what is going on; do not string out from beginning to end of caravan.
- Please -- no jockeying for positions near front of caravan when starting up.

Contributed by Peggy Lehmann

"CALL THE LEAVES BY NAME - TORONTO'S NATIVE OAKS AND BEECH" - See cover.

Note: Shapes vary. These are "typical" leaves.
Look at several leaves on a tree to identify species.

- (1) White Oak (Quercus alba) - Note many rounded lobes (7-9) with deep recesses.
- (2) Red Oak (Quercus rubra) - Note many sharp-pointed lobes (7-11).
- (3) American Beech (Fagus grandifolia) - Note rather long, slender, pointed shape with curved teeth, straight veins.
- (4) Black Oak (Quercus velutina) - Note comparatively few sharp-pointed lobes (5-7). Very broad recesses.
- (5) Bur Oak (Quercus macrocarpa) - Note shallow recesses between lobes at upper end of leaf, deep recesses at lower end.

Other oaks are more southern and western. They may have very deep or very shallow recesses - squarish, very narrow, few or no lobes at all - or they may resemble beech but with rounded teeth. Only one or two closely resemble our oaks but are far out of range. American Chestnut (Castanea dentata) is also in this family (no relation to familiar Horsechestnut). The leaf resembles American Beech but even longer and narrower. It is just out of Toronto range and exists mainly as stump shoots, due to blight. European Beech (Fagus sylvatica) is often planted, including "bronze" and "purple" varieties; its leaves are short and oval. Oak/Beech Family is "FAGACEAE".

- Where to look in Toronto: (1) Streets, lawns, parks, ravines, e. g. Glen Stewart Ravine; (2) Ravines, parks, etc., our most common oak; (3) Ravine slopes; (4) Sandy areas, e. g. High Park (northern extremity of range); (5) Bottomlands, e. g. Etobicoke Creek, Humber River, Wilket Creek.

NEWSLETTER EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

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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.

TFN MEETINGS



GENERAL MEETINGS

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

Monday, October 1, 1979, at 8.15 p.m.

RATTRAYS MARSH - Mrs. Valanne Glooschenko

Mrs. Glooschenko has done a biological study of Rattrays Marsh and will present an illustrated talk on the Marsh, which currently supports 33 species of breeding birds, 25 species of reptiles, amphibians and small mammals. The Marsh is an aesthetic resource for the thousands of visitors who use it each year.

November meeting -- Monday, November 5, 1979, at 8.15 p.m.

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GROUP MEETINGS

Bird Group

Wed. Oct. 24 Ecology of the Common Loons in Ontario

8.00 p.m. - Mr. Jack Barr, outstanding nature photographer

Location: St. James-Bond United Church

Avenue Road, just north of Eglinton

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Botany Group

Tues. Oct. 16 Ontario's Arctic Flora

8.00 p.m. - Mr. John Riley, U. of T. Botany Dept.

Location: Hodgson Public School

Davisville Ave., just east of Mt. Pleasant Road

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Environmental Group

Thur. Oct. 18 Presentation of Members' Slides.

8.00 p.m. Anyone having slides of environmental interest
is asked to call Melanie Melanich, 924-0338,
so that the program may be arranged.

Location: Huron Street Public School

541 Huron St., 1 block west of St. George subway station

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

Sat. Oct. 6 Birth of a Mine

10.00 a.m. - Mr. Eric Blunden, Ontario Ministry of
Natural Resources

Location: Planetarium Auditorium (immediately south of
Royal Ontario Museum)

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