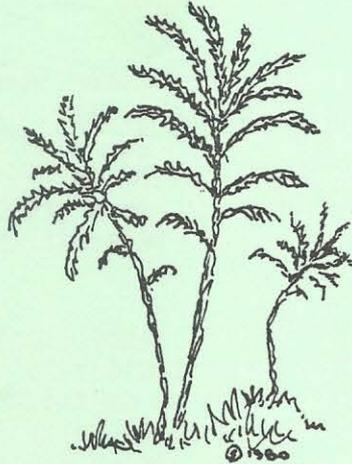


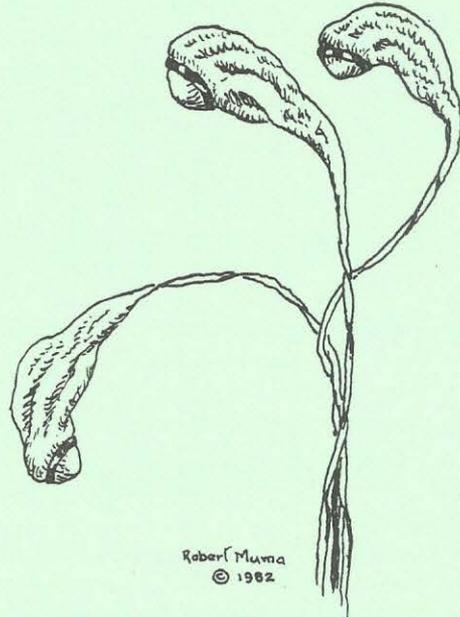
TORONTO FIELD NATURALIST

Number 353, February 1983



Climacium dendroides
The TREE MOSS

© 1980
Robert Muma



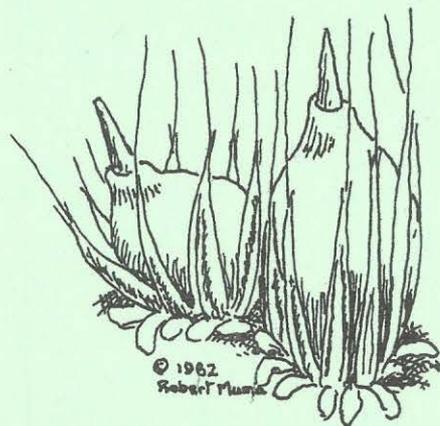
Funaria hygrometrica
CORD MOSS

Robert Muma
© 1982



Brachythecium sp.

Robert Muma 1982



Diphyseium foliosum
GRAIN OF WHEAT MOSS

© 1982
Robert Muma

This Month's Cover

"Four Ontario Mosses" - by Robert Muma

All four mosses shown on the cover of this issue may be encountered in our area ...

Top left is Climacium dendroides or TREE MOSS. (Dendroides means "tree-shaped".) It stands 4-6 cm in height and grows as separate plants, spreading underground by primary rhizome-like stems as well as by spores. The sporophytes, when they occur, extend vertically, in groups from the top of the plant like a fountain above a fountain. You will find this moss growing in small scattered groups in swampy woodland soil. It occurs intermittently along the trails of the Jim Baillie Nature Reserve.

Upper right is Funaria hygrometrica or CORD MOSS. Funaria means "rope-like" and refers to the twisting habit of the setae which bear exquisitely sculptured spore cases (shown here about 10x natural size). "Hygrometrica" refers to this moss's sensitivity to humidity changes which cause the setae (stalks of the spore-cases) to twist and untwist. This is a very common moss which often grows in profusion around old campfire-sites.

Lower right is Diphyscium foliosum, sometimes called GRAIN OF WHEAT MOSS. This is not a common moss anywhere but is scattered throughout Ontario and is one of the thrills of discovery we keep hoping for. The spore-cases shown here are scarcely larger than a grain of wheat and are light green in colour with bright green strap-shaped leaves around the base. The long leaves tapering to long, bristle-like tips are called "perichaetal leaves" and are brown and beige in colour. I found this strange moss once in Nova Scotia where it was growing in clusters forming crusty scabs on an otherwise bare woodland mound. It seems to thrive especially in trampled areas.

Note that the above three mosses are all growing as individual upright plants and are called acrocarpous. (Acros = "high"; carpos = "fruit".)

Lower left is an example of the pleurocarpous mosses which are recumbent on the substrate. (Pleuro = "side".) Some of them grow a new layer each year to form mats. One of the largest and commonest groups of this form are the Brachythecaeae which grow in our backyards on soil, wood, and stone, or in the woods or swamps or along streams. They are often difficult to distinguish as species, even with a microscope. So this drawing is devised as a common denominator of the genus by which you may be able to say, "Ah, this is a Brachythecium!" Note the irregularly to subpinnately branched growth; the typical leaf showing costa (midrib), serrate edges in upper half, and plicate (folded), spoon-shaped surface, sometimes decurrencies (wings) embracing the stem. The short, stubby, horizontal, non-symmetric capsule is also characteristic.

The best months for studying mosses in our area are April, May, June, September and October.

Robert Muma



Upcoming TFN

OUTINGS



Tuesday February 1 TFN General Meeting (see page 37)

RAIN or

SHINE

Wednesday ALLAN GARDENS - Greenhouses

Feb. 2 Leader: a staff member (City Pk. Dept.)

10:00 am Meet at the greenhouses. (#506 Carlton car to Sherbourne St.)

Saturday February 5 Junior Club Meeting (see pages 21 and 37)

Feb. 6 to 11. TIME TO RESERVE A PLACE ON THE BUS OUTING TO MOUNTSBERG on Feb. 20 by phoning Emily Hamilton at 484-0487. Confirm by sending your cheque for \$9.00 payable to "Toronto Field Naturalists outing" to Miss Emily Hamilton, 3110 Yonge St. #407, Toronto M4N 2K6. Cheques must be received by Feb. 15.

Sunday MARIE CURTIS PARK - birds

Feb. 6 Leader: Ralph Speak

12:15 pm Meet on the east side of Etobicoke Creek, south side of Lakeshore Blvd. (#507 Longbranch car from Humber loop (501 car to loop) to Etobicoke Creek or GO train to Longbranch -- which arrives at 2 min. past each hour. Short walk to meeting place. We may have a car pool from here to Rattray Marsh.

Saturday ART GALLERY OF ONTARIO - sketching

Feb. 12 Meet at the entrance. Bring your own sketches and a stool. Entrance fee \$2.00. (Dundas car #505 to McGill St.)

Sunday CEDARVALE RAVINE - birds - beginners welcome

Feb. 13 Leader: Bruce Parker

1 pm Meet at the Loblaws parking lot on the north side of St. Clair Ave. W., just east of Bathurst Street.

Tuesday February 15 Bird Group Meeting (see page 37)

Wednesday February 16 Botany Group Meeting (see page 37)

Sunday BUS OUTING TO MOUNTSBERG WILDLIFE CENTRE

Feb. 20 Leader: provided by the Centre

10:00 am You must have reserved a place on the bus between Feb. 6 and 11.
to 4 pm The bus will leave from the York Mills subway station on northeast corner of Yonge and York Mills. Bring lunch. Raptor displays, films, nature walks. Bus will arrive back at York Mills Station about 4 pm.

Wednesday WEATHER LABORATORY - Environment Canada research lab

February 23 Leader: Jean Schlenkerich (from the lab)

10 am Meet at entrance to 4905 Dufferin St. This outing is limited to 10 people. To sign up call Emily at 484-0487 on Feb. 21 or 22. From Wilson Subway station take #105 bus. If transferring from Finch West #36 bus and you just miss the northbound 105, it would be quicker to walk as 105 runs only every 24 minutes (1 km n. of Finch)

Thursday February 24 Environmental Group (see page 37)

Sunday HUMBER BAY PARK - birds

Feb. 27 Leader: Beth Jefferson

1:00 pm Meet in the parking lot in the east half of the park. (#507 Long Branch car from Humber loop to Park Lawn Road. Walk into the parking lot on east side of Mimico Creek.) Cars: drive in from the foot of Park Lawn Road at Lakeshore Blvd.

The annual SWAN outing will be held March 19. See next newsletter.

Everybody Welcome!

Keeping in touch...

November 12, 1982.

Dear Editorial Committee:

I would like to comment on Roger Powley's letter commenting on "The New Birder"...

Of course we should reprint articles like "The New Birder" because there are always new people coming along and old naturalists need constant reminding. Why this continual carping at hunters and fishermen?? Seems to me that good naturalists and good hunters and fishermen have much in common and this should be promoted...I go back a bit and it seems to me that the hunting and fishing clubs were putting their money where their mouth is long before the naturalists' clubs. For example, the Sportsmen's Show puts money into naturalists' activities - Ducks Unlimited would be another.

It isn't necessary to continually criticize, but I think we should continually remind members of the ethics and good manners that are required. For instance, I think it would be well for leaders to mention the do's and don't's at the beginning of hikes and reminders during the walk. This is seldom done.....Leaders come to mind who speak up and expect proper conduct on walks...In our eagerness to see new flora and fauna, we all get carried away from time to time. Some of the greatest offenders I have seen have been in responsible positions. For instance, one (nameless for now), carried away with his prime interest, birds, plunged off a path and trampled hundreds of trilliums and other wild flowers in a protected area in Hamilton. Many listers provide a great amount of information, but many listers are unintentional (to be charitable) fools. I have seen both at ABA conventions...

R. W. Eakin

To Whom it May Concern,

November 24, 1982

Having been a member of TFN for more than 20 years I feel qualified to pass on some compliments. I studiously read each copy of the newsletter, which not only provides me with (information on) matters of interest but also a criterion of the range and scope of the Toronto Field Naturalists.

Looking back over the years, I do not recall one in which a change occurred to provide a sudden thrust forward. In my language TFN has followed a course of steady, healthy, growth and development. This is unusual in clubs, associations, etc., or in the business world, and suggests the aims, purposes, and objectives have not been overlooked by personal ambitions of members.

The newsletter is excellent, for it speaks in layman-language and yet retains a professional approach to all matters. The use of the occasional haiku provides interesting diversion and the sketches add colour. The inclusion of these suggests imagination.

There are so many projects which are and have been pursued that many young, dedicated members have been motivated and encouraged by the older more experienced members. The professional approach to the various government levels and the follow-up requires a tenacity, to contest the obvious lack of concern for the preservation of "green" areas.

Rather than encumber this letter further, perhaps I should close with my sincere thanks to Toronto Field Naturalists for the many unguided hikes which I have taken in various ravines in Metropolitan Toronto and guided trips to the Spit, Toronto Island, etc., and for the knowledge I garner from association and from the newsletter...

Harold W. Garner

Dear Jean:

November 29, 1982

Again I was appalled to read of a killing of a bird on behalf of a group consisting of the cream of Ontario birders. I have never understood why it is thought that proving an identity is worth ending a life. If a rare Temminck's Stint had been the victim, I suppose a handful of "the cream of Ontario birders" would have been ecstatic.

Maybe one of these strange people who kill, to enable an object to be identified, would be delighted to have the same thing happen to them. Just imagine how it would be if someone saw one of them from a distance and being unable to absolutely recognize them decided to "collect" one of them. At least it would be a way of reducing the number of collectors!

Is it so important to be a bird lister or to collect for a museum to take a life? Even the life of a little sandpiper? I find this rationale difficult to understand and impossible to explain.

Ethel Day

Reprinted from Peninsula Naturalist (newsletter of Peninsula Field Naturalists, St. Catharines, Ontario) No. 128 Nov/Dec/82:

OPINION: Concern is being expressed by many naturalists and birders about the growing number of irresponsible people who call themselves bird-watchers. These people have neither care nor concern for the birds they seek; their only motive is to tick off one more name on their list.

A recent article in the Toronto Field Naturalists newsletter suggested that rules should be formulated in an effort to guide such people, but, I wonder, would rules do any good? I doubt it. When you have people who lack even the rudimentary instincts of thoughtfulness and consideration in the achievement of their goals, is it likely they would meekly accept the strictures of others? They, more than anyone, would take the attitude that rules are made to be broken.

This particular phase of the problem may be new, but the problem itself is an old one. Since about 1600 when the white man began extensive voyages of exploration, more species of bird, animal and plant life have become extinct than at any other time in recorded history. Even Audubon is said to have contributed to the scarcity of some species because of the amount of birds he shot in his quest for perfection in his paintings. But in those days, perhaps the land, and its flora and fauna, really did seem endless. These days we know, or should know, better. What can we do about the thoughtless ones amongst us?

Education is of course the answer, and friendliness is surely the best form of education. Some of these people behave as they do because they don't know any better, and a friendly and patient attitude will, hopefully, achieve the desired results. Rules, by all means, for those who want them, but I still maintain that people who are willing to sit down, study and abide by a list of rules are people with common sense enough not to be too terribly in need of them in the first place. With those at the other end of the scale, some very straight talk may be the only way.

I feel very strongly though that we all have to become more guarded in our willingness to share knowledge of sightings and locations with others, unless and until they are very well known to us. It is an attitude that I very much regret having to take, but some of us have already learned that such caution is advisable.

Audrey Barnsley

Dear Sir or Madam,

December 1, 1982

This is to respond to your request for opinions about the article (on) "Who will Watch the Birdwatchers", pg. 13, TFN 350, and the letter from a reader in TFN 352, pg. 5. It seems to me that the article about the abuses to the environment by naturalists was reasoned, practical and intelligent. I firmly believe such articles are useful to the cause of conservation. To also further the cause, may I submit the following excerpt from Yorke Edwards' short article, "Wilderness with Gasoline" in the Ontario Naturalist, December 1970. (His message may apply to urban naturalists who use their polluting, private cars for birding and nature study close to public transportation.)

"We want easy wildness. As we go about getting it, we go about destroying it. We object to the logging of forests, yet accept lives filled with the wasteful use of paper. We object to the rivers of automobiles, we fight the spread of asphalt, and we protest oil pollution and the smog from our traffic, yet few people use the family car more than naturalists seeking places to indulge their hobbies. Most of us are in the more affluent half of our affluent society, and so more guilty are we than most of insulting nature in many ways.

"There are naturalists who think they have the solution, and perhaps they have. Most of us, however, seem to be more mixed-up than the rest, for what we say and what we do are not even remotely related. We need some clear thinking on what we stand for. Only if we sort out our own confusions have we much hope of leading others."

Helen Hansen

Dear Helen,

December 3, 1982

I am responding to the request in the December newsletter for reaction to the Temminck's Stint incident, or, more particularly, the reporting of it. These are my own thoughts and not an official stand of the Club, although I have discussed the matter with several birders and Club officials...

I was distressed to encounter in the December Toronto Field Naturalist a totally biased treatment of the collecting of an unusual Semi-palmated Sandpiper in Ottawa. I am particularly concerned that the Editorial Committee did not take the time to find out whether the circumstances surrounding the collection were reported correctly, and that even if the Committee decided that controversy was interesting to perpetuate, it did nothing to make sure both sides were presented fairly. The results of these omissions are that readers, especially those who have never thought of the subject before, will be badly misinformed of the scientific procedures necessary for gathering ornithological information, and they will be incited unfairly to write uninformed letters to Dr. Henri Ouellet, the highly respected Chief of the National Museum's Vertebrate Zoology Division.

Regarding the collecting of the bird, it is quite incorrect to say that the birders "hoped they had killed a Temminck's Stint...". Richard Poulin of the

Museum's staff informed the birders assembled at Shirley's Bay that he would not collect this bird if it were a Temminck's Stint. Richard, along with a dozen or so Ottawa birders including Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club President, Dan Brunton, and Past President, Roger Taylor, examined the bird carefully through binoculars and scopes to try to determine its identity over the course of several days and concluded that it did not have the definitive markings of a Temminck's Stint. Efforts to net the bird (and then release it after examination) failed, and so, as a last resort, it was shot. The bird proved to be a Semi-palmated Sandpiper of unusual size and plumage which had never been recorded before. Thus this collection was scientifically useful in adding to our knowledge of this common little shorebird. No useful photographs were taken which would have contained this information.

The bird was not collected to satisfy "mere curiosity". Intellectual curiosity is the cornerstone of scientific progress. How much of Birds of Canada or the field guides used by your members do you think could have been written without the collections to base them on?

To create a controversy of what Ottawa birders, at least, consider a definite non-event, is certainly to the detriment of the goals and energies of naturalists. Naturalists' time would have been much better spent writing to ensure that tall buildings and towers are equipped with lights designed to deflect migrating birds, or to Alan Pope, Minister of Natural Resources, encouraging him to designate 245 new parks for Ontario and to resist resource extraction in parks. I would guess that more birds are killed by running into tall buildings and towers, and by loss of habitat caused by development of natural areas, than by all the museum staffs in the world since the beginning of the science of ornithology.

I think you owe your readers an apology for giving them such a one-sided exposure to an issue (if indeed it is an issue), and a very considerable apology to Dr. Ouellet for making him the target of an uninformed writing campaign.

Joyce M. Reddoch
 Editor, Trail & Landscape
 Ottawa Field Naturalists' Club

(Ed. Note: On November 23 a letter was written to Dr. Ouellet requesting his point of view on the subject of collecting. To date we have not had a reply. If one is received it will be printed in full.)

A similar request was made to Dr. Ross James, Associate Curator, Ornithology, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto. Dr. James responded as follows:

On Museum Collecting

December 14, 1982

When I received a copy of the TFN Newsletter, and the indication that I would be asked to comment on museum collecting, my inclination was to ignore the whole issue. For this argument has been raised many times and the reasons for collecting are rather well known (see report of the A.O.U. Committee on the scientific and educational use of wild birds - Auk 92(3) suppl. 1975). Despite another heated controversy not much will be solved. For the controversy about collecting is largely one of emotion and not of reason. For while the practical reasons for collecting have been explored thoroughly perhaps the emotional aspects have not. I do not intend in what follows to blame anyone for what they do, to make fun of anyone, nor to try to justify collecting, but to attempt to present a different perspective on the subject.

Pitifully few birds are killed by museum collectors compared to other causes of

mortality, and despite numbers you may have heard there are all too few birds in museums at present. Many birds in public museums were taken by professional collectors at a time when collecting was a permitted occupation. The birds were purchased mainly by individuals with private "museums" and subsequently donated to public museums. This wholesale and often indiscriminate killing of the past is over. But methods of study change. The data or method of preparation of older specimens may be totally inadequate today. Everyone who has tried to find a sample of specimens for statistical analysis for example has found that numbers are inadequate. However, despite this, in terms of numbers alone, we could replace all the specimens of all species in all North American museums accumulated in more than 100 years from all parts of the world, by the Mallards (one species) shot each and every year in the continental United States alone. We could fill our museums 30 times over every year with the numbers of birds shot in North America every year.

Should we stop all hunting? Not even realistic conservationists could agree to that. If all animals were allowed to live full lives the world would be completely overrun with them in one year. Predators are a natural part of the scheme of things. Death is an everyday phenomenon in the wild. Natural mortality far exceeds human induced causes of mortality. But man has become the predator in many instances where he has destroyed the natural predators. But whether by man or by other animals, death is a normal and everyday occurrence in the wild populations. Do animals think of death in the way humans do? Does the death of a lone bird cause any remorse among others of the species? I doubt it. Certainly the death of dependent young affects parent birds. But does it affect them in the same way that it would a human parent?

Even if animals do not feel the way we do is no justification for killing them. For if we are to have dominion over the world ~~then~~ we must be keepers as well as killers. But does the death of a few birds killed by museum collectors matter among the countless animals that die each day from other causes? In terms of practical numbers it certainly doesn't, but in terms of emotions perhaps it does. Museums do kill birds and do in some way affect the lives of animals.

However, even those who cry out against museum collecting contribute to the deaths of many birds. We all watch television, we have hydro in our homes, we drive cars, we do our banking with major Canadian banks, and we live in homes with windows. Again, we could more than fill all North American museums each year with birds killed striking windows, smoke stacks, T.V. towers and tall buildings, or fill our museums 15 times over with the birds killed on our highways each year. And how many of those who dislike killing birds also keep cats in their homes? We could fill our museum six to eight times over with the numbers of birds killed by cats each year if each cat killed only one bird a year. Shall we go back to living in caves?

Are those who argue against collecting blind, refusing to admit that they are contributing to the death of birds? Perhaps not, but only saying that museums are directly going out to kill, while others are only inadvertently killing. Well a dead bird is a dead bird, isn't it? Does it matter how the bird dies? The end result is the same. Museums at least are selecting birds for specific reasons and avoiding anything which might be endangered. But what selection is there by cars or T.V. towers or cats?

Today we can use written reports to accept the occurrence of most species in the

province, because we now have good descriptions of species in field guides because we have collected birds in the past. Everyone who uses a guide is making use of museum specimens. But even today we do not know all there is to know about the plumages of many species. Anyone who watches birds realizes that they vary from season to season and that we cannot always identify everything in the field. We do not have adequate descriptions of some plumages that vary with sex or age or season. And only when we get more specimens for descriptive studies will we be able to adequately describe this variation. Are museum collectors and field ornithologists irrational then in wanting a few more specimens now so that in future our guides will better enable us to identify birds in the field without collecting?

Species which appear far from their normal range have always been of interest. In past years it was accepted that if a bird was to appear on the provincial list, there had to be a specimen. Museums are the repositories of such specimens, irrespective of how those specimens were obtained. And from my own familiarity with them I can assure you that only a very small proportion of these unusual records were actually shot by museum collectors. And it seems to me that these so called "rarities" are of the greatest interest to the bird watchers, for they are of comparatively little value scientifically. I have, therefore, left it to those most interested in adding additional species to the provincial list to document these wandering birds in any way they wish. But fifty years from now, when conditions have changed, if there are no specimens to verify the identity of some confusing species, should they be surprised if their records are not accepted? Even museum collectors with specimens make mistakes.

Photography has advanced considerably over what it was early in this century. And for many species this is a very acceptable way to provide documentation. For example, if someone brought me a set of eggs and said they were those of a Connecticut Warbler, I would want a long and detailed document outlining how the eggs were identified. But a photograph of a bird on a nest could identify the species at a glance. But even the best photographs cannot identify some species. If people wish to identify everything they are going to have to collect some things. The museums will store the birds, and keep the records, and hence be blamed for the collecting. But are museums in many instances relatively innocent agents or even victims for the desires of many others?

Those who for emotional reasons abhor the death of even a single bird, should they not also decry the death of other animals? Do they also wish to take issue with fishermen for example? Are fish not animals? What about insects? Do they not count? Where do we draw our artificial lines of acceptability? It cannot be based on beauty, for what is beautiful to one may be ugly to another. And are those who are arguing against collecting all 100% vegetarian in their diets? Or are they perhaps contributing to the deaths of farm animals? Does it matter whether an animal is raised in a pen or in a forest? Do domestic animals have fewer emotions than wild ones? Are farm animals not losing their lives the same as wild animals - for human use? Again, where do we draw our artificial lines? The point is that we all kill animals whether we like it or not, whether we do it directly or not. Those in museums kill because they can see some reason for doing so. I do not, and I am sure the rest do not, kill because I like to see animals die or because I get a big thrill from firing a gun, but because I can see that from the study of a dead bird we can all learn something. If others cannot see this then I cannot help them.

Did we need one certain shorebird in a museum? I didn't, but a number of others (most of them not museum people) thought so. Does the death of one shorebird matter? Does it matter any more than the death of one turkey at Christmas? To some obviously it does. But, if your reasons for not wishing to kill a bird are practical, i.e., that you can see no reason for doing so, then I think you must allow those who can see a reason to continue to collect, and leave it to their consciences to decide whether what they are doing is reasonable. Nobody will ask you to do it. If your reasons for not wishing to see a bird killed are emotional then I believe you must realize two things. First, you are not innocent, and second, your emotions seem to me to be narrowly directed if you do not consider all animals equally. I realize this world is not perfect. It is not perfect because we have to deal with people. I do not like many of the things other people do either, and I suppose I will try to change things I don't like. This is our privilege in a democratic society. But in a democracy we must also consider the point of view of others. Frankly, I can see many, many far more urgent problems to be concerned about in the world than museum collecting. Perhaps if we took the time to try to get a better understanding of the nature of life and death, including human life and death, we could all see the answers more clearly.

R. D. James

To the Editorial Committee:

(received Dec. 7/82)

I find it rather disconcerting when Mr. Powley condemns the article "The New Birder" TFN (350) 13,082 as being silly and divisive. Surely the code of ethics suggested by the National Audubon Society and mentioned in the above article are common sense rules and merely endorse guidelines established by many naturalists' groups, including the TFN.

Frankly, I find much of what he says misleading and uninformed. To insult the average dog-walker who scares birds by comparing them with the person who harrasses and blinds owls with flash equipment is irresponsible and not worthy of him.

On the question of unity, we must beware of glossing over issues that embarrass us by doing battle with the implacable foe, the hunter. Such a course would not add one member to our cause and leave us open to cynicism and ridicule by the public at large, whose support we badly need. Furthermore, we must as a concerned group be prepared to do a little soul-searching when the occasion demands and I wish to thank the editorial committee for their publish-and-be-damned attitude.

Personally, I see no necessity for bird-finder guides and hot-lines. The former, with one notable exception, are in my opinion, of limited value and probably reflect in some small way the all-pervading malaise present in today's society and like fast foods they sustain rather than satisfy. Indeed, if more birders took part in the current atlasing project, we would all benefit and be justly proud of the best bird-finding guide for Ontario published. As for hot-lines, one must question the logic of forming loose-knit, unorganized groups as a means of observing rare species. Unfortunately, and too often, the bird fares badly and ends up as a worthless statistic in a spurious competition. To the birdwatcher who takes pleasure in walking quietly through the woods enjoying what is most surely the most gentle of pastimes, this is both alien and demeaning.

Perhaps Audubon is right; saner minds will once more prevail and birds will be seen by all as creatures of beauty and amazing diversity. Personally, I am not quite so sanguine. Surely the only course we can pursue is to be more resolute in getting our political masters to strengthen our pallid bird-protection laws; on this Roger and I will concur with enthusiasm.

Roy Baker

Dear Sir and Ladies!

December 12, 1982

I have been a member of the TFN for four years now and have read the newsletter from cover to cover, with interest, enjoyment and admiration. I have learnt a great deal from the articles and a little from the koos! However, I have not yet responded to any of the former nor tried to emulate the latter! So perhaps it is about time that I made a contribution; and just as I was beginning to consider doing so, along came the November and December issues, with requests for comment on mammals in Toronto, with remarks about bird-watchers' manners which seemed to me to call for a reply and with an Ethics and Issues page, on which you asked for readers' opinions... (excerpted: paragraphs containing mammal report; see "Toronto Region Mammal Report" in this issue, pages 24-25).

To turn to more serious - at least for the victims - matters. When binoculars were not so good and cameras not so well equipped with telephoto lenses, it was necessary to kill ("collect") in order to identify; many early naturalists were ex-hunters and we owe them a great debt. Personally, however, I can see no justification for killing a bird (or, indeed, any other form of wildlife) in order to prove a point. I simply cannot imagine anyone being sorry that the bird they had killed was a common sandpiper, rather than a rare (and it would have been just that much rarer) Temminck's Stint. The use of the euphemism "to collect" instead of the verb "to kill" may perhaps make the action seem less final or more scientific to the collector/killer. For myself, I feel that it is not worth killing a bird, to prove that I have seen it.

Finally, I should like to reply to Roger Powley's letter in the December Newsletter. Several of the points can in no way be disputed. Of course, human beings have an adverse effect, however, small, on their natural environment, although many of those who use our magnificent park system in Toronto do our best to keep this adverse effect to a minimum; of course, "listers" provide much scientific information which is of use in many ways (see the article on Amateurs, Experts and Professionals in the November issue); of course, foxes and raccoons "scare the heck out of birds" - but only by mistake - otherwise, they eat them! The point with which I cannot agree is that the listers and fanatics who overrun private property, frighten birds on their nests and damage habitat do no more "harm than the average dog-walker". Speaking as an average dog-walker, I take exception to being classed with the "over-zealous (who) cause unnecessary duress". It is entirely possible to observe all kinds of natural activity, without creating any harmful disturbance, while at the same time walking four dogs through Toronto's parks, both wild and "tame". I feel that watching, photographing, listening, learning are all marvellous activities, but that any one of them, taken to extremes, is to be deplored.

That's it. Your request for comments, answers and what-have-you certainly came at the right time!.

Anne R. Thompson

December 16, 1982

To the Editor:

In the December newsletter "Ethics have become issues" the "October Incident" in Ottawa involving the collecting of one "poor little sandpiper" has been brought up as a question of ethics. Christine Hanrahan is quoted: "the real issue is not the death of one shorebird but...", then why the emphasis on this one incident? Why not address the collecting of biological specimens on a theoretical level?

Mrs. Hanrahan's statement about museums and university departments being full of countless study specimens of all species is presumptuous if not entirely naive. What is her basis of "enough"?

In the case of this poor little sandpiper, over fifty highly skilled amateurs and several professionals were unable after hundreds of hours of observation and debate to reach a conclusion as to its identity. Later all of the "many fine photographs" proved useless. Stint/sandpiper identification is a fine art that is still in its infancy. The Semipalmated Sandpiper killed in Ottawa was a perfect opportunity to compare a specimen to copious field notes, their interpretation, and photographs. It was a perfect way to evaluate and refine field identification criteria with a known entity. The inescapable conclusion from this incident is that indeed we do not know "enough" about the field identification of a very common bird -- Semipalmated Sandpiper.

Is the identification of a bird so important that collecting is justified? Yes (!) if you use a field guide? Yes (!) if you expect that field guide to be accurate and up to date? All field guides are based either on specimen directly or on papers using specimens in one way or another. Field identification is a dynamic ongoing branch of avian research. It is necessary to base conclusions on fact not speculation. Thus the continued need to collect specific so called "rarities".

Where would modern science be if it were not for man's insatiable thirst for truth. One can empathize, but does this put facts into our journals?

Bruce M. DiLabio (Ottawa)

P.S. This letter is solely the views of the writer and not necessarily those of the National Museum.

continued on following page...

bot-inanities

by Joyce Cave



December 20, 1982

TFN:

I was surprised and disappointed to see Roger Powley arguing in the last TFN newsletter that naturalists ought not to criticize other nature lovers even when they act in ways which are harmful to nature, because criticism, even when warranted, might weaken the cohesion of the naturalist movement. As a rule I avidly read and enjoy Roger's contributions, but I think he forgot to put his thinking cap on when he penned that particular piece.

I really cannot agree with his assumption that criticism of another person's actions has to imply a holier-than-thou attitude on the part of the critic. Roger is surely right in saying that all of us sometimes act in ways which hurt the environment. To me, that means that we all occasionally make mistakes which need to be pointed out to us. How does it help the environment if we agree to keep quiet about each other's sometime thoughtlessness or wrongheadedness for the sake of some abstract "unity"?

Perhaps Roger meant to suggest by his 'holier-than-thou' reference that most of us find it rather easy to see other people's faults, but rather harder to see our own. All the more need, then, for others to criticize us if some action of ours contradicts our stated concern for nature and the environment! Perhaps the harmful effect of a particular action had never occurred to us. How are we to find out if no one tells us? One hopes, of course, that the criticism would be presented constructively, not as a personal attack, and one also hopes that one would receive it in the same spirit.

But to refrain from criticism where it is called for is to do both nature and our movement a great disservice. Are we not to criticize egg collectors because they honestly consider themselves naturalists? Is it not valuable to draw attention, as two people did in the last newsletter, to the excesses of birders who consider the identification of a bird so important they will kill it to be sure? Has Roger himself not criticized -- and very wittily at that -- the misguided parks bureaucrats whose idea of preserving green space is to manicure it into a state of near-lifelessness?

There is unfortunately no question that thoughtless 'nature-lovers' can and do cause great harm to the naturalist movement. We all know that sections of the Bruce Trail are now closed at least partly because of the actions of irresponsible hikers. And we can be sure that birders who trample flowerbeds are not winning any friends for us either. It is our duty to combat such harmful actions, and also to make it clear to the general public that we disapprove of them. We also have a responsibility, to ourselves and to each other, to think and analyze clearly, to exchange, discuss, and debate ideas freely and frankly, and to stand up for what we honestly believe is right. Doing so can make us stronger and help us move forward, while artificially submerging disagreements and controversy would only weaken us in the long run.

Ulli Diemer

COALITION ON THE NIAGARA ESCARPMENT (CONE)

CONE will continue to act as "watch-dogs" for the Escarpment. The year ahead will be a busy one, and we need your support. The more members (membership \$10.00) we have, the stronger will be our voice. Your generous support in the past has enabled us to appear at hearings, hire consultants, engage legal counsel, and pay for our office staff and expenses.

(CONE, 355 Lesmill Road, Don Mills, Ontario, M3B 2W8)

THE 58TH TORONTO CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT, DECEMBER 26, 1982

Great Blue Heron	7	Short-eared Owl	1
Mute Swann	74	Saw-whet Owl	1
Canada Goose	2526	Belted Kingfisher	8
Barnacle Goose	3	Common Flicker	5
Snow Goose	1	Pileated Woodpecker	4
Mallard	2652	Red-bellied Woodpecker	2
Black Duck	898	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	3
Gadwall	796	Hairy Woodpecker	37
Pintail	2	Downy Woodpecker	177
Green-winged Teal	5	Horned Lark	1
Northern Shoveler	2	Blue Jay	278
American Wigeon	33	Common Crow	338
Wood Duck	5	Black-capped Chickadee	1411
Redhead	49	White-breasted Nuthatch	139
Ring-necked Duck	2	Red-breasted Nuthatch	28
Canvasback	1	Brown Creeper	42
Greater Scaup	3190	Winter Wren	2
Lesser Scaup	14	Mockingbird	1
Common Goldeneye	622	American Robin	32
Bufflehead	522	Hermit Thrush	1
Oldsquaw	6405	Golden-crowned Kinglet	64
White-winged Scoter	2	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1
Ruddy Duck	1	Cedar Waxwing	193
Hooded Merganser	1	Northern Shrike	9
Common Merganser	291	Starling	5440
Red-breasted Merganser	14	Yellow-rumped Warbler	2
Coshowk	3	House Sparrow	2382
Sharp-shinned Hawk	2	Red-winged Blackbird	9
Cooper's Hawk	3	Rusty Blackbird	4
Red-tailed Hawk	90	Common Grackle	2
Rough-legged Hawk	12	Brown-headed Cowbird	10
Bald Eagle	1	Cardinal	218
Marsh Hawk	4	Rose-breasted Grosbeak	1
American Kestrel	44	Evening Grosbeak	70
Ruffed Grouse	27	Purple Finch	12
Ring-necked Pheasant	51	House Finch	2
American Coot	1	Common Redpoll	4
Killdeer	1	Pine Siskin	3
Glaucous Gull	22	American Goldfinch	569
Iceland Gull	5	Dark-eyed Junco	616
Great Black-backed Gull	103	Tree Sparrow	320
Herring Gull	2450	Field Sparrow	2
Ring-billed Gull	2973	White-crowned Sparrow	1
Rock Dove	2449	White-throated Sparrow	17
Mourning Dove	973	Swamp Sparrow	13
Screech Owl	5	Song Sparrow	50
Great Horned Owl	11	Snow Bunting	26
Snowy Owl	1		

The status of the Barnacle Goose is uncertain pending a decision by the Ontario Records Committee.

Species 95, Individuals 39,900. Twenty-eight routes were covered by 128 observers within a 48 km. radius of the Royal Ontario Museum.

Compiler Harry Kerr

AREA	NAMES OF PARTICIPANTS
1	D. Broughton, J. Rising, J. D. Ackerman, G. Coady, S. Rowe.
2	J. Lamey, L. Fazio, R. Jasiuk, Ann Mous, M. Kalores, Anita Schwab.
3	M. Mulcahy, J. Mulcahy, Shirley Mulcahy, Nancy Dawson, M. Dawson, J. Cranfield, Lillian Tye.
4	G. Fairfield, Pat Woodford, J. Woodford, W. Hewitt, F. Stokes, W.A. Smith.
5	C. Goodwin, Joy Goodwin, A. Dawe.
6	J. Bateman, W. McLellan, C. Brigden, Agnus Brigden.
7	W. Hutton.
8	June Smith, M. Smith, T. Stevens, S. Stevens.
9	H. Kerr, Eileen Kerr, Barbara Kalthoff, Joan Wineeris.
10	B. Falls, Ann Falls, R. Tasker, Mary Tasker, T. Levere.
11	J. Saythe, W. Morris, D. Vasudeva, Jocelyn Russell.
12	M. Dalorey, J. Stevens, J. Dales.
13	D. Pace, J. Slinger, R. Carrano, B. Westland, J. Reynolds, K. Reynolds.
14	H. Currie, K. Konze, T. Gooch, Coryn Gooch, Susan O'Neall, O. Moorehouse.
15	C.I.P. Tate, P. Hardy, B. Corbett, J. Coles, Penny Coles, Mitzie Rogers.
16	D. Newton, J. Thompson, Joan Thompson, S. Harrison, T. Harrison.
17	P. Wukasch, I. Ward, J. White, K. Kubitz, C. Spytz.
18	G. Bennett, Mureen Hawkrigg, S. Inoh, Helen Imsh.
19	D. Fidler, M. Fidler, Barbara Neale, T. Farley, H. Barnett, Fren Barnett, D. Love, Ann Love, R. Ross, S. Price.
20	D. Burton, N. Bull, R. Harris, E. Johns, D. Troy.
21	F. Bodsworth, Margaret Bodsworth, J. Bend ² R. Hannah, Nancy Hannah.
22	J. Kelley.
23	D. Perks, J. Keenlyside.
24	Peg Lehmann.
25	R. Knudsen, Art Smith, D. Langford.
26	K. Carmichael, S. Kelly, G. Bellerby, K. Moors.
27	J. ten Bruggenkate, P. Harpley, R. Strenge, Elfi Strenge, R. Bowers, J. Fairchild, S. Fairchild, Margaret Shearman, E. Howe.
28	M. Speirs, D. Maughan, E. Sansom, B. Harrison.

TORONTO'S 58TH CHRISTMAS BIRD CENSUS 1982

The Toronto Christmas Bird Count was held on Boxing Day, 26 December 1982. The customary 28 routes were covered by 128 observers within an area enclosed by Clarkson (west), Pottageville (north), and Whitby (east). See page 14.

Ninety-five species and a total of 39,900 individuals were recorded. Two new species were seen this year: Barnacle Goose (3) and a Rose-breasted Grosbeak, which brings the total number of species recorded in the past 58 years to 164. (The Barnacle Goose status is uncertain pending a decision by the Ontario Records Committee).

The following species were seen in record numbers (previous highs in brackets):

Mute Swan	-	74	(	56	-	1981)
Gadwall	-	796	(	778	-	1980)
Bufflehead	-	522	(	395	-	1972)
Glaucous Gull	-	22	(	11	-	1959)
Great Black Backed Gull	-	103	(	85	-	1978)

Species noticeably down in numbers were:

Canada Goose	-	2526	(	3618	counted in 1981)
Mallard	-	2652	(	7878	counted in 1981)

The Bald Eagle wintering at the Toronto Island was the first recorded in 24 years.

Winter finches were scarce possibly due to the abundance of food in the north. It was apparent local food supplies were plentiful as the smaller birds such as House Finches deserted the feeders to feed naturally on census day.

The weather was mild, in the 8°C range. There was no snow on the ground, streams and rivers were free of ice and flowing fast. It was like a spring day.

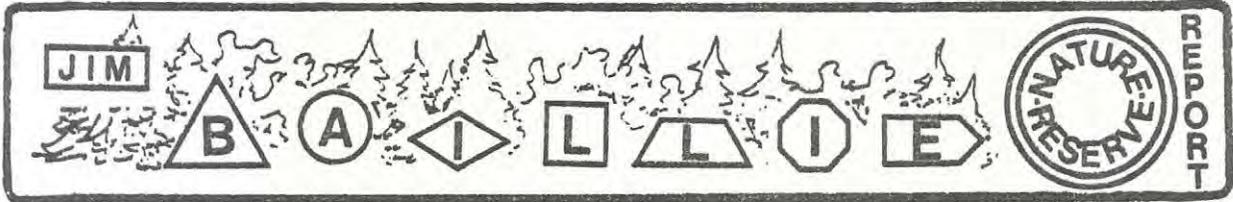
Once again, we wish to thank members of the Toronto Field Naturalists and others who made the count a success.

Compiler: Harry Kerr

LONG POINT BIRD OBSERVATORY

The 1983 edition of the Directory of cooperative Naturalists' Projects in Ontario is now being compiled. Examples of projects in the 1982 Directory include Christmas Bird Counts, inventories of natural areas, and county plant and bird checklists. Though most projects were bird studies, there have been a substantial number on other subjects and we would particularly like to include more of these non-bird projects.

If you are undertaking a project which you think may benefit from inclusion in the Directory, please write to: Directory to Co-operative Naturalists' Projects, 11 Westbank Crescent, Weston, Ontario, M9P 1S4, and ask for a project description form.



November 7, 1982: Sunday at the Jim Baillie Nature Reserve. Sunny and mild with southwest breezes. Tamaracks are shedding yellow. Streams in the nature reserve, lively from recent rains, swirl through beds of vivid watercress. Somewhere, beyond the now-spindly trees, blue jays are yelling at each other. Liese and I finish up some work on the duckboards which improve access to the trails from the parking lot: no more very wet feet, just damp ones. Check a few trails, note deer tracks but no signs of bear. (Talking to our neighbour at the reserve late this summer heard rumours of a bear having been seen in the vicinity by a local, as well as the herd of 40 long-horned cattle which escaped and 4 of which are still missing. Bears last reported circa 1968.) Trails are in good shape and bridges have been repaired. Thanks to D. Schram, L. Rendulick, Tim Wallner, and my Greg, for their valued help in the management of the reserve. For the past five years I have been the reserve caretaker, it is time for some other member to replace me in this capacity. Please volunteer; only fair that others share the workload involved in the TFN activities. Not for you? Well, try this one! We need three large signs for the nature reserve, each one approximately 18" x 36" x 1" thick, wood or exterior grade plywood. These are required for March 1983. Cost of materials will be reimbursed. Call me for details. This is one way you can contribute more than just your subscription.

J. Lowe-Wylde 284 - 5628



"For the artist, the dialogue with nature is the *conditio sine qua non* of his work."

Paul Klee

ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP REPORT

Bill Granger, arborist for North York Parks and Recreation Department, and John Wilson, field worker for the Department, shared with us their experiences related to regeneration of trees and protection of natural areas.

Bill outlined the historical background that led to the elimination of rich oak, butternut and hickory forests. The early settlers spread the ethos of the tree as an enemy to be feared and destroyed, and the extensive development of sawmills also brought destruction. Now only the valleys hold the remaining lands in a natural state.

During the rapid development of North York in the past 20 years, the number of mistakes in the conventional parks management system have had their impact on the land. Emphasis had been placed on developing areas for active recreation sports with little concern for natural areas as a place to walk and enjoy. "Manicured" urban parks have been developed with a very limited number of species that did not allow for habitat for wildlife or migrating birds. Highways also have split up the natural habitats.

Other problems have been evident with the use of tree paint, fences and benches that destroy roots, planting in wrong areas, removing entire undergrowth, lawn mower damage to the base of the trees, inappropriate use of herbicides and damage by soil compacting. Slides illustrating these problems were shown.

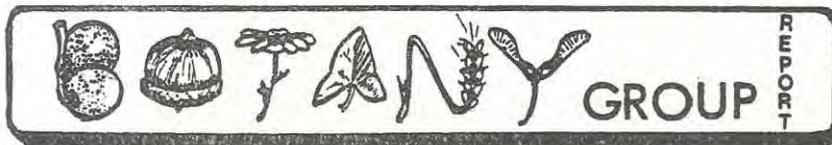
Bill has been working towards creating regeneration of woodlots with natural undergrowth. He described to us the successful Arbor Day program he helped organize last February involving students at Driftwood Community Centre. Slides from the program showed the enthusiasm of the students as they planted 1000 seedlings of sugar maple, white ash and dogwood. An excellent descriptive brochure for the Arbor Day program, entitled "Trees For My City" was distributed for our information. Bill would like eventually to see a corridor system of regenerated tree woodlots along Black Creek.

John Wilson showed slides of wildlife and food for wildlife to be found in the area. His pictures included raccoons, squirrels, barn owls, honeysuckle, Russian olive, hawthorn, buckthorn. He is working with data gathered last summer to plan regeneration and natural growth.

Bill and John answered questions about attitudes of the public, political support, problems with the Public Works Department and site engineers, educational programs, and the efforts of the Boy Scouts. We all enjoyed a very informative evening.

Melanie Milanich

To publicize the Garden Club of Toronto wildflower project at Humber Arboretum a postcard has been produced showing Small White Ladies-Slipper. They may be purchased for 20¢ each or 6 for \$1.00 or order by the hundreds at \$15.00 a hundred from: Postcards, Garden Club of Toronto, 777 Lawrence Ave. East, Don Mills M3C 1P2



The first meeting of the Botany Group for this year was held On November 17, 1982, in the Botany Building at the University of Toronto, with Steve Varga as the new chairman and also the speaker of the evening. There were 19 people present. Steve paid tribute to Mrs. Isobel Smaller who had been chairman of the group for the past four years.

Steve's topic was the Prairie Grasslands. First, we were shown the areas under discussion on a map; herbarium specimens were available for viewing, and then Steve showed us slides of the general views that demonstrated topography, and close-up views of interesting areas. Excellent slides of some of the plants and Latin and common names and discussions of relationships were very informative. There were 30 Astragalus or vetch species found in these grasslands. Penstemon or beardtongue was another genus that had more species than we have in Ontario.

Manitoba has very little tall grass prairie left and yet in Ontario we have Ojibway Prairie near Windsor and Walpole Island in Lake St. Clair. In Alberta there is a mixed grass prairie in the neighbourhood of Dinosaur Provincial Park. In the United States the grassland areas have been irrigated, but in Canada the mixed grass prairie is in the original state.

Saskatchewan has a Grasslands National Park south of Swift Current and the Trans Canada Highway and near Val Marie. There is a danger that if the land is not purchased quickly by the government, people will try to farm because recently there is more moisture in this area.

Another formation that is seen in these areas is the Badlands which have been created by glaciers. These areas have little moisture so trees are scarce. A third habitat is the sand dunes that have two predominant plants, Sand Dock, Narrow-leaved Psorelia, neither of which we see in Ontario.

Steve also included slides of reptiles, birds and mammals. He recommends mid-June as the best time to explore as there are more herbs at that time. The Trans Canada Highway is the most boring part of the prairies; it is necessary to get off and travel the little roads.

Some excellent books are available on prairie plants:

- The Flora of Alberta. 1959. E. H. Moss.
- Wild Plants of the Canadian Prairies. 1957. A. C. Budd.
- Budd's Flora of the Canadian Prairies (revision of above book). 1979. J. Looman and K. Best.
- Wild Flowers Across the Prairies. 1977. F. R. Vance and J. R. Jowsey.
- Wild Flowers of Alberta. 1977. R. G. H. Cormack.
- The Prairie World (General natural history). 1969. David Costello.

The next meeting will be held Thursday, January 20, 1983, at 7.30 p.m. in the Botany Building. The topic will be Identification of Plants, and laboratory facilities and fresh plants will be available for those who are interested.

Winifred Smith

OUTINGS REPORT

September 1982

Gavin Miller - Pine Hills Cemetery - Sept. 1 - 18 attending

The walk started in the St. Clair Ravine where the seepage slope plants were observed; turtlehead was in bloom with several species of goldenrods and asters, and chairmaker's rush and other sedges were found. Many insects and spiders were found, as well as chimney crayfish in this ravine. The walk continued into the cemetery where ornamentals such as Katsura tree, field maple and oakleaf mountain ash were seen. Lots of fall warblers, and a red fox was seen by one member.

Mildred Easto and Mary Pannell - Kew Beach - Sept. 2 - 12 attending

The evening was stormy and wet but the rain did not deter some shorebirds and a monarch butterfly. The walk ended with a beautiful double rainbow.

Helen Juhola - Warden Woods - Sept. 8 - 19 attending

A perfect fall day, with asters and goldenrods in abundance as well as blue jays, crows, goldfinches and white-throated sparrows.

TFN picnic - Jim Baillie Nature Reserve - Sept. 11 - 60 attending

It was a fine mild day for this picnic. The 40 participants who went up by bus divided into groups to go birding (which was rather poor this day) or to look for plants along the trails, or to sketch. The north field has been very wet this year and a well-organized work-party did valiant work on making duck-boards so that everyone went home dry-shod.

Diana Banville - Taylor Creek Park - Sept. 15 - 9 attending

The principal activity was to visit the hanging fen where fringed gentians were in bloom though closed due to the cloudy day. Also in bloom were great lobelia, nodding ladies'-tresses and turtlehead. Variegated horsetail and marsh fern were also examined. Several species of resident birds were seen, and on the way out of the area some plants of gumweed and a small snapdragon were found.

Emily Hamilton (botany), Roger Powley (birds) - High Park - Sept 18 - 21 attending

The birding group saw 33 species of birds including an osprey which flew over. The various asters and goldenrods of the area were seen and the fern-leaved false foxglove was found to be holding its own, near Spring Road, by the botanists.

Mel Whiteside - Wilket Creek Park - Sept. 21 - Beginning Stars

5 people attended and talked about stars though it was too cloudy to see any.

Helen Juhola - Taylor Creek Park - Sept. 22 - 11 attending

The goldenrods and asters were colourful and some of the trees had changed to fall colours. A flock of 12 Canada geese flew over and many of the more common birds were seen.

Howard Battae - Burke Ravine - Sept. 26 - 30 attending

A lovely fall day on which the plants proved to be as interesting as the birds to the participants.

Eric Lewis - Todmorden Mills - Sept. 29 - 15 attending

The flowers were mostly asters and goldenrods, but the very large leaves of butterbur were also found. White-throated sparrows, blue jays, and a red-tailed hawk were seen. A few members continued up the valley to look at a large bur oak.

Roger Powley

PUBLICITY

Our Open House at the log cabin in Wilket Creek Park was a great success. A constant stream of visitors dropped in to see what was inside the cabin. Many stopped to visit and to hear more about the Toronto Field Naturalists, or to pick up free maps and other material. The cabin was especially busy during September and volunteers found it difficult to close up and get home to dinner. Members of the Metro Toronto Parks who helped us move the display were delighted with the response and pleased that the cabin was being used.

Our "Gingerbread Display" has been in four Scarborough libraries. The librarians have been very favourably impressed with the display. People are taking our free newsletters and membership forms. The display is beginning the year at Riverdale Library.

TFN member Harold Taylor is now writing nature notes for presentation by Art Drysdale on CFRB, Saturdays some time during the hour between 10:00 and 11:00 a.m.

THANKS... to the people who have volunteered help

- . The many people who were on duty at the cabin during the summer holidays especially those who had keys and were responsible for unlocking the padlock: Emily Hamilton, Sally Sturgeon, Joyce Cave, Helen Juhola, Jean Macdonald
- . Joan Pettit who undertook to handle the Gingerbread Display unit for three months at the Scarborough libraries. (Joan did an excellent job!)
- . Sheila McCoy who helped Joan Pettit
- . Harold Taylor and the cooperation of Art Drysdale and Peter Head on CFRB
- . Mary Smith who arranged to have membership folders placed in all metro libraries and to Mary, Bruce Parker, Sheila McCoy and Jean Macdonald who delivered the folders to the borough library headquarters.
- . Beth Jefferson who has sent notices of our meetings to The Globe and Mail, The Toronto Star, The Sun and to CBC Radio AM and FM

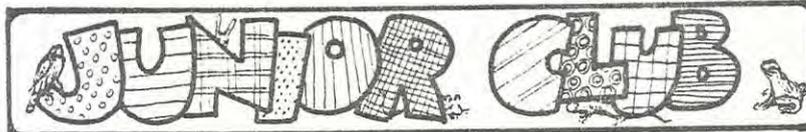
Help Wanted setting up the Gingerbread Display

A car able to carry panels 40 x 48", and two people - similar or assorted sexes. Commitment for about three months.

Transport the display to the location, set it up (we will help the first time) be responsible for its "upkeep", (one or two visits at each location), dismantle it and transport it to the next location.

We would like to put it into Toronto or Borough of York libraries during the next few weeks. Someone might like to make these arrangements for us.

For further information or to offer help please call Jean Macdonald, 425-6596.



An Invitation to TFN Members from the Junior Club

Members of the TFN are reminded that they are welcome to attend Junior Club activities and to bring other interested adults and young people. The next Junior Club meeting is on Saturday, February 5 (for details, see page 37).

The Club, founded in 1931, is for children, 8 to 16 years. Non-members, including children under 8, may, and do, take part in activities, but only members receive a newsletter of coming events and participate in special projects like the annual magazine and the Display Day of their own work (which, this season, is on Saturday, March 5, and to which you are also invited - details in the March TFN Newsletter).

The Club meets the first Saturday of each month from September to May at the Museum (ROM), and in May there is also a picnic excursion to a nature area. In December, a typical meeting, a herpetologist from the Metro Toronto Zoo spoke, with slides, about reptiles and amphibians in the Toronto area. Then the children divided into groups for special activities with their adult leaders. The 8 and 9-year old group visited the Botany Department greenhouses at the U. of T., and the 10-year olds went to High Park. Above 10, the groups are based on interest, not age; the astronomy group observed the sun and built a Foucault pendulum at the ROM Planetarium, the bird group looked for winter finches in Wilket Creek Park, and the mineral group studied streaks in minerals at the Museum. Other groups can be formed if members request it and if there are knowledgeable leaders available. In the past, there have been groups such as botany, ecology, and mammals. TFN members who wish to volunteer or recommend others as leaders or for other duties with the Juniors are welcome to do so.

For more information about activities, membership, and volunteering, phone Alexander Cappell at 663-7738 (home).

ONTARIO BREEDING BIRD ATLAS PARTICIPATION

"Recruits" are being sought for atlassing in Northern Ontario. There is some financial assistance available, if you like rugged camping...

ALGONQUIN PARK, northwest corner. A variety of habitats, some accessible by road and some only by canoe or on foot. The James L. Baillie Memorial Fund will pay most of the gas money and up to \$5.00 a day living expenses. If interested, call without delay.

REMOTE AREAS. Boreal forest, muskeg, tundra. In July and August, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources will fly participants from rendezvous points several miles north of Toronto into the areas being atlassed. There has already been considerable response to this offer, which has been printed in a U.S. publication, so call soon if interested.

Phone: Assistant Co-Ordinator, Anne Nash, 444-8419.

Toronto Region BIRD RECORDS

Two Common Loons were still at Jack Darling Park on Nov. 30 (WM); a Red-necked Grebe which was there on the same day (WM) was the only one reported this fall. Pied-billed Grebes continue to be scarce; the last of the year was one at Grenadier Pond on Nov. 7 (HK). A flock of 50 to 60 Brant were seen in flight at the Humber Bay Park on Nov. 13 (GM). The traditional fall concentration of Northern Shovelers at Grenadier Pond occurred again this year; the 60 reported on Nov. 7 (HK) had increased to 100 by the end of the month. A Marlequin Duck which was noted occasionally during late November at Humber Bay Park was usually associating with the large flocks of Greater Scaup.

A Goshawk invasion during November included an exceptionally tame individual at Lambton Woods on Nov. 29 (RE). An eagle which frequented the Eastern Headland for most of the month was usually identified as a Golden Eagle though some observers called it an immature Bald Eagle -- since no one submitted any notes on the eagle the bird must be considered as "an eagle, species unknown" -- Toronto observers are extremely lax in writing even the briefest report in support of the identification of exceptional birds.

As many as 16 Great Black-backed Gulls were at Jack Darling Park on Nov. 30 (JM). The first Snowy Owl of the fall was reported at Sunnyside on Nov. 29 (RE) and Nov. 30 (GC). Two Short-eared Owls were at the Eastern Headland in mid-November.

A Carolina Wren at Oakville in mid-November (ES) was the only wren reported this month. Two Eastern Bluebirds at James Gardens on Nov. 17 (LH) were late. A minor invasion of Northern Shrikes developed with birds being reported throughout the region including one harassing a Kestrel in the Don Valley north of Bloor Street on Nov. 14 (JM).

Very few vireos are found in the Toronto Region after the end of September but occasionally a Solitary Vireo may appear for a day or two as much as a month after all other members of the family have left the Province. Late Solitary Vireos were at Thicksen's Woods on Nov. 7 (HK) and Pine Point on Nov. 11 (MK, CS). It is likely that this vireo's ability to glean dormant insects enables them to stay later than other vireos. The only late warblers were a Common Yellowthroat at Pine Point on Nov. 16 and a Yellow-rumped Warbler on the following day (MK). An exceptionally late Rose-breasted Grosbeak was a regular 'feeder visitor' at Pine Point until Nov. 21 (MK). The only 'northern finches' reported were a White-winged Crossbill at Ellesmere and Military Trail in Scarborough on Nov. 2 (DR) and a few Purple Finches throughout the month. A late Chipping Sparrow was at Pine Point on Nov. 17 (MK).

Contributors: Glen Coady, Lex Hanson, Harry Kerr, Mark Kubisz, William Mansell, John McDonald, Cora McEvoy, Roger Towley, Dave Ruch, Pat Smith, Chris Spitz.

Everyone is invited to contribute his/her observations of birds in the Toronto Region. Please send your reports to Bruce D. Parker, Th 66, 109 Valley Woods Road, Don Mills M3A 2R8, or phone 449-0994.

Bruce D. Parker

Special Request Report.

In the last issue of the Toronto Field Naturalist (No. 352) I made a special request for reports of House Finches and Screech Owls in the Toronto Region. The House Finch population is beginning to increase and is expected to increase quite dramatically in the next few years -- it is not clear if the Screech Owl population is very low or if they are being overlooked or just not reported. Information supplied in response to this special request will assist in our understanding of these species.

House Finches in the Toronto Region, November 1982.

A few House Finches were reported during the spring and early summer but most of the birds disappeared by mid-summer. Mary Smith reported that the House Finches in her neighbourhood (Stobicoke) raised two broods this summer and in mid-November there were 5 males and 4 females coming to her feeder (Nov. 12). Eleanor Beard (O'Connor and St. Clair area) noted House Finches in late spring but none were seen again until late Oct. On Nov. 18 she reported 3 males and 4 females. At the Governor's Bridge (Beltline Ravine) Molly Bain reported a pair in late spring and early summer which returned in mid-November and were regular feeder visitors for the remainder of the month. In Leaside (Bayview and Eglinton) Jane McLaughlin saw a male and a female on two days in July and a male in mid-November.

Total House Finches reported in November: 10 males and 9 females.

Screech Owls in the Toronto Region, November 1982.

Only one Screech Owl was reported in November; this was found by Mark Kubisz at Pine Point Park on Nov. 22.

Special Request: For the next year I would like to hear about any sightings of Screech Owls and House Finches in the Toronto Region so that we may be able to clarify the status of these species in our area.

Bruce D. Parker (449-0994)

QUESTION BOX ?

While birding at Corner Marsh in October I noticed peculiar marks in the mudflats near the shore. They were long, straight lines of large "castings" made, presumably, by some creature living in the mud who poked his snout up through the mud to the surface. About every foot there was a new upheaval of mud: . Might these have been made by a muskrat or frog? Perhaps our readers have observed these strange markings and know what causes them.

Paul R. McGaw

Anybody out there who can help Paul? Get in touch with someone on the Editorial Committee.

TORONTO REGION MAMMAL RECORDS

Late October and throughout November proved to be productive for mammal-viewing in Metro (day and night). Here are some reports received for this period, 1982. (Send your reports to Editorial Committee.)

SUNNYBROOK HOSPITAL GROUNDS

In addition to being a member of the TFN, I am also a volunteer for the CNIB, and the two merged in an intriguing way at the beginning of November. At that time, a blind man recovering from a stroke was admitted to Sunnybrook Hospital, with his leader dog, a (very) large Malamute-German Shepherd cross called "Jocko". I undertook to walk Jocko every night - "night" being any time between 8:30 PM and midnight. Just at that time came Helen Juhola's article on Toronto mammals, with her request for further reports, in detail. So:

Location: All sightings took place in Sunnybrook grounds, in front of or behind K Wing.
Weather: Appalling. Rain every night for the first ten and bitter cold for the next eleven; two nice nights to finish with!
Time: All sightings were made after 10:00 PM.

All sightings were made simultaneously (fortunately, since I am only 10 lbs. stronger than Jocko!) by me and Jocko.

Species observed: Raccoon, Striped Skunk, Eastern Cottontail.
 Evidence of Groundhog.

1. October 29 - in pouring rain - one large raccoon.
2. November 1 - more rain - by smell only - one recent skunk.
3. November 4 - cold, no heavy rain - one cottontail.
4. November 6 - cold and rain(!) - a skunk the size of a spaniel.
5. November 9 - cold, no rain - our second cottontail.
6. November 12 - a nice night - our second skunk, also large.
7. November 13 - cold - under steps to D Wing, found entry and exit of groundhog-burrow.
8. November 15 - very cold and late - smell only - skunk around.
 - in the bushes on the east side of Bayview, Sunnybrook property - apparent traffic victim - a dead raccoon.
9. November 17 - lovely night - our last cottontail.

Jock is now up at St. John's Convalescent Hospital, terrorising the wildlife!

PS - There is also an Eastern Chipmunk who lives in my garden wall.
 (Lawrence Park area).

Anne R. Thompson

WILKET CREEK PARK

In late October Jean Macdonald saw a Red Fox running from the parking-lot area in the direction of the shrubbery behind the log-cabin. About 10 AM.

G. ROSS LORD PARK

Period: October 27 to November 30, 1982

Numbers: If not otherwise indicated, the reference is to one individual.

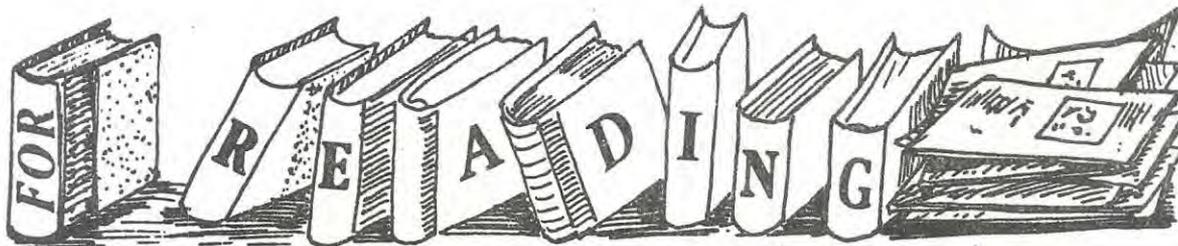
1. Red Fox: Nov. 15, 16
2. Raccoon: I haven't seen a raccoon since Oct. 1, but have seen tracks, most recently on Nov. 25, apparently fresh.
3. Red Squirrel: Oct. 27, Nov. 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 19, 23.
4. Grey Squirrel: Now that the groundhogs are gone for the winter, Grey Squirrels are the most abundant mammal, and also easy to see since the leaves have fallen. While in the summer I estimated that the black ones outnumbered the grey ones by 10 to 1, now it looks like 3 or 4 to 1. The two colours associate and even socialize with each other. On Nov. 17, I saw a grey and a black squirrel sitting cheek-to-cheek on a branch, but they modestly separated when they noticed me. Some of the "black" ones are actually dark grey, and some of the grey ones have noticeably light bellies like a red squirrel. Some of both black and grey have red hairs as well.
5. Eastern Chipmunk: Oct. 27, Oct. 31, Nov. 11
6. Meadow Vole: Nov. 17, on footpath in wooded area, apparently freshly dead, no wounds on body.
7. Muskrat: Oct. 31 - two muskrats in a stagnant lagoon.
Nov. 10 - two muskrats in same lagoon, partly covered with thin ice. They swam under the ice and bashed through it with their heads. Whether this was for fun or not, I couldn't tell.
Nov. 16 - two muskrats in a brook
Nov. 25 - muskrat in a brook.
These muskrats saw me and seemed not to mind my presence. I approached to within 15 ft. of the Nov. 25 muskrat. Then it came to within 5 ft. of me, eating grass from time to time in the brook before submerging. My impression in the summer, by contrast, was that muskrats hid when they noticed me.

Sandy Cappell

OF HISTORICAL INTEREST

According to "Survival by Consent: The Elk" by J. David Taylor in Seasons, Autumn, 1981, the Wapiti known as the Ontario Elk or Eastern Elk (Cervus canadensis canadensis) ranged widely in the east, including southern Ontario, and this seems to have included our area (though we have found no record to date for Toronto area specifically). When the Europeans arrived they found the "elk" to be the most widely spread member of the deer family. Elk were rare by 1850 and disappeared early in this century. They were re-introduced (a western subspecies) starting in 1932. An estimated 50 survive in Burwash area and perhaps 10 at Chapleau. If anyone knows of a wapiti record in the Toronto area, be it ever so early, please let us know.

Editorial Committee



- ** Urban Natural Areas: Ecology and Preservation, edited by W. A. Andrews and J. L. Cranmer-Byng, 1981. Available from the Institute for Environmental Studies, University of Toronto, Toronto M5S 1A4. \$12.50 plus \$2.00 postage and handling.

This valuable handbook is intended as a guide to the understanding of urban natural areas and to provide useful information for studies and action aimed at the preservation of green space within cities. It is an excellent resource book for such groups as naturalists, residents' associations, university students and high school classes, and should also be recommended (or preferably given!) to journalists, local politicians and their staff. The ten chapters are written by fourteen people from the University of Toronto together with an environmental lawyer and two field naturalists.

The handbook starts with a number of excellent chapters of a fairly general nature, covering such topics as the use and history of urban open spaces, strategies for legal and political action on environmental issues, the identification of environmentally significant areas, and the critical evaluation of environmental impact assessment reports. These are followed by chapters describing the characteristics of various subsystems and methods for studying them (climate, soils, hydrology, vegetation, wildlife, invertebrates, fish, and socio-economic factors). On the whole, these chapters provide much helpful and relevant information, although at times the amount of technical detail provided could be overwhelming to an amateur. However, one important area of concern in studying natural areas which is frequently mentioned but does need more detailed discussion is the question of identifying and understanding current impacts of human activities, and predicting and evaluating potential ones. The final chapter on writing up a field study provides some essential information on the presentation of technical results to make a credible case for your point of view. It would have been helpful to include sample tables of contents and discussion of illustrations, maps, data tables, etc. required for a typical study of a natural area and a survey of ESA's (environmentally significant areas).

All in all, this book should be considered essential reading and a standard reference book for anyone seeking to protect urban natural areas, as well as for those involved in activities which may affect them.

Suzanne Barrett

- F.O.N. Speakers' Roster, compiled by the Federation of Ontario Naturalists, 1979, 77 pages soft cover, \$5.00 (includes postage).

This publication is a bit out-of-date but still very helpful if you are looking for a lecturer on almost any nature subject. It lists alphabetically 147 speakers, all but two of them in Ontario, many in the Toronto area, with address, telephone number, and list of prepared talks, almost all with slides.

It is stated if the host must supply equipment (such as a slide projector, for example) and whether the speaker requires a fee, travel expenses, or accommodation. A brief biography of the speaker is given.

An easy-to-use 17-page subject index, organized under 35 subject headings, directs the reader to a specific talk by a specific lecturer. A sampling of subject index headings, to hint at the range of topics covered, is: Art, Botany, Environmental Management, Government Controls, Invertebrates, Oceanography/Limnology, Research, Threatened Species.

The Roster can be ordered from the F.O.N. at 355 Lesmill Road, Don Mills, Ontario M3B 2W8 or by phone at (416) 444-8419.

Alexander Cappell

** Environmental Sourcebook, a project of the Ontario ENGO* network, September 1982

The Sourcebook is produced by the U of T anti-nuclear group (UTANG). As its title suggests, the publication gives sources for anyone needing information or speakers on the issues of "acid rain", "conservation", "energy" and "toxic substances". Printed materials such as papers, pamphlets, magazines, kits, are listed, some free, some with a price. The Toronto Field Naturalist is in the section "conservation".

Audio-visual materials such as films and slides are listed. TFN's Toronto the Green slide show appears here.

Many sources for speakers are given. One example picked at random is "Operation Clean Niagara" at Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Two sections give sources for information on Environmental Policy and on Law and Environmental Control Committees. A list of groups involved, with addresses, completes the Sourcebook.

*Environmental Non-governmental Organizations

J.M.

Birdfinding in Canada, published six times a year by G. Bennett (Gerry to most of us), is a 20-page newsletter packed with information on birds from coast to coast. In the current issue a two-page article on Ross' goose tells where it has turned up in accessible places on migration. This is one article in a series on most-wanted birds. Another series entitled 'Birding the Trans-Canada Highway' gives good spots near, but off, the highway. The November issue covers part of P.E.I. and part of N.B. Readers are encouraged to send in their sightings and statistics, some of which are published, and one reader offers to help birders who are passing through his prairie province. A chapter on nomenclature brings us up-to-date.

Cost \$10.00 per year. P.O. Box 519, Kleinburg, Ontario L0J 1C0.

Emily Hamilton

** available from TFN library 690-1963

THE MISCELLANY

Clippings, pamphlets, magazines received for TFN Library. If you wish to read any of them, call 690-1963...

"Taddle Tale", reprinted from University of Toronto Alumni Graduate. A short history of Taddle Creek which flowed through the University of Toronto campus a hundred years ago - and earlier, through much of what we now call "downtown Toronto". 5-page article (by Ian Montagnes) was submitted by Eva Davis.

The Raven, 4-page bulletin of Algonquin Provincial Park. Recent issues have been donated by Margaret Cook. Often include life-histories of familiar (but not so well-understood) species. 12 issues each summer. A complete set can be picked up at the Park Museum or write (Box 219, Whitney, Ontario K0J 2M0.)

Children's Nature Magazines advertising matter - If you would like to know more about what's available in this line, please let us know. Chickadee (for up to 8 years), Owl (for over 8) are published by The Young Naturalist Foundation, 51 Front Street East, Toronto, Ont. M5E 1B3. Your Big Backyard (for pre-schoolers) and Ranger Rick's Nature Magazine (for 5-12 years) are published by the National Wildlife Federation, available from Canadian Wildlife Federation, 1673 Carling Ave., Ottawa, K2A 3Z1. (Note: These "wildlife federations" are organizations of hunting and fishing groups. However, if you are anti-hunting, you may still wish to support any efforts they make which are strictly conservation-oriented.)

"Immigration and Recruitment of Ring-billed Gulls and Common Terns on the lower Great Lakes", by Hans Blokpoel and P.A. Courtney. Progress Notes No. 133, November 1982, Canadian Wildlife Service. (Not to be confused with Canadian Wildlife Federation mentioned above, Canadian Wildlife Service is an office of Environment Canada.) A 12-page paper, with maps, charts, and tables, on the growth of populations of these two species at "the spit" up to about 1979.

The Animal Welfare Institute Quarterly, Vol. 31 No. 3, Summer 1982. A 12-page bulletin on humane and conservation issues published by the Animal Welfare Institute, PO Box 3650, Washington, DC 20007. Informative on subjects of commercial whaling, laboratory animals, handling of farm animals, songbird hunting, and other such issues.

Seasons. Edith Cosens has kindly donated some copies of recent issues of this periodical, published by the Federation of Ontario Naturalists. Articles on parks, flora, fauna, environmental issues of Ontario. Book reviews.

"Travels with Emily", a 4-page article in Beautiful British Columbia Summer 1982. The author, Kerry Dodd, retraced by less rugged means the journey of Emily Carr in 1912 up the coast to the Queen Charlottes. Photographs by Peter Tasker show that at least one location is much as it was at that time but others have been obliterated by bush.

Eldershostel Canada. Tabloid describing reasonably-priced courses and lodging available at universities across North America and in Europe for people over 60. A number of these courses are of interest to naturalists and in settings conducive to field-study. You can be placed on mailing-list free by writing Eldershostel Canada, PO Box 4400, Fredericton, NB, E3B 5A3. (Or contact Sheridan College.)

"Showers and flours", an amusing clipping submitted by Mary Cumming, from the London Evening Free Press Apr. 5/77. Photograph by Bill Ironside of a London Ontario man dressed in raincoat and hat made of recycled bread-wrappers, etc. Short caption.

people

William Mansell, Author and Naturalist

William Mansell was born in Toronto and has been interested in wildlife since he was a small child. He has written a number of articles on natural history for publication in the United States and England as well as Canada and, through the years, has also participated in many sports and has played in dance bands and composed music. He was the first editor of Canadian Nature magazine, which later became Canadian Audubon, and then Nature Canada.

Mr. Mansell's book, American Birds of Prey, was published in 1980, and he hopes to have a sequel to this in 1983.

Mr. Mansell has six grandsons, all of whom have inherited his love of birds. He hopes to continue with field work even when he is relegated to a wheelchair, and to continue adding to his life list.

FP



Canadian
Nature
Federation

The CNF has sent the TFN "Action requests" on two issues:

75 Albert Street, Suite 203, Ottawa, Canada K1P 6G1

Wolf Control in the Yukon - by poison (strychnine), trapping and shooting from helicopters - because of predation near Whitehorse. The control will cover an area of 30,000 sq km (11,580 sq mi). There seems to be conflicting evidence about the need for this programme (involving moose and caribou populations). You can write to Mr. Howard Tracey, Minister, Department of Renewable Resources, Yukon Government, Box 2703, Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 2C6; or to Editor, Whitehorse Star, 2149 Second Avenue, Whitehorse Y1A 1G5; or Editor Yukon News, 211 Wood Street, Whitehorse Y1A 2E4.

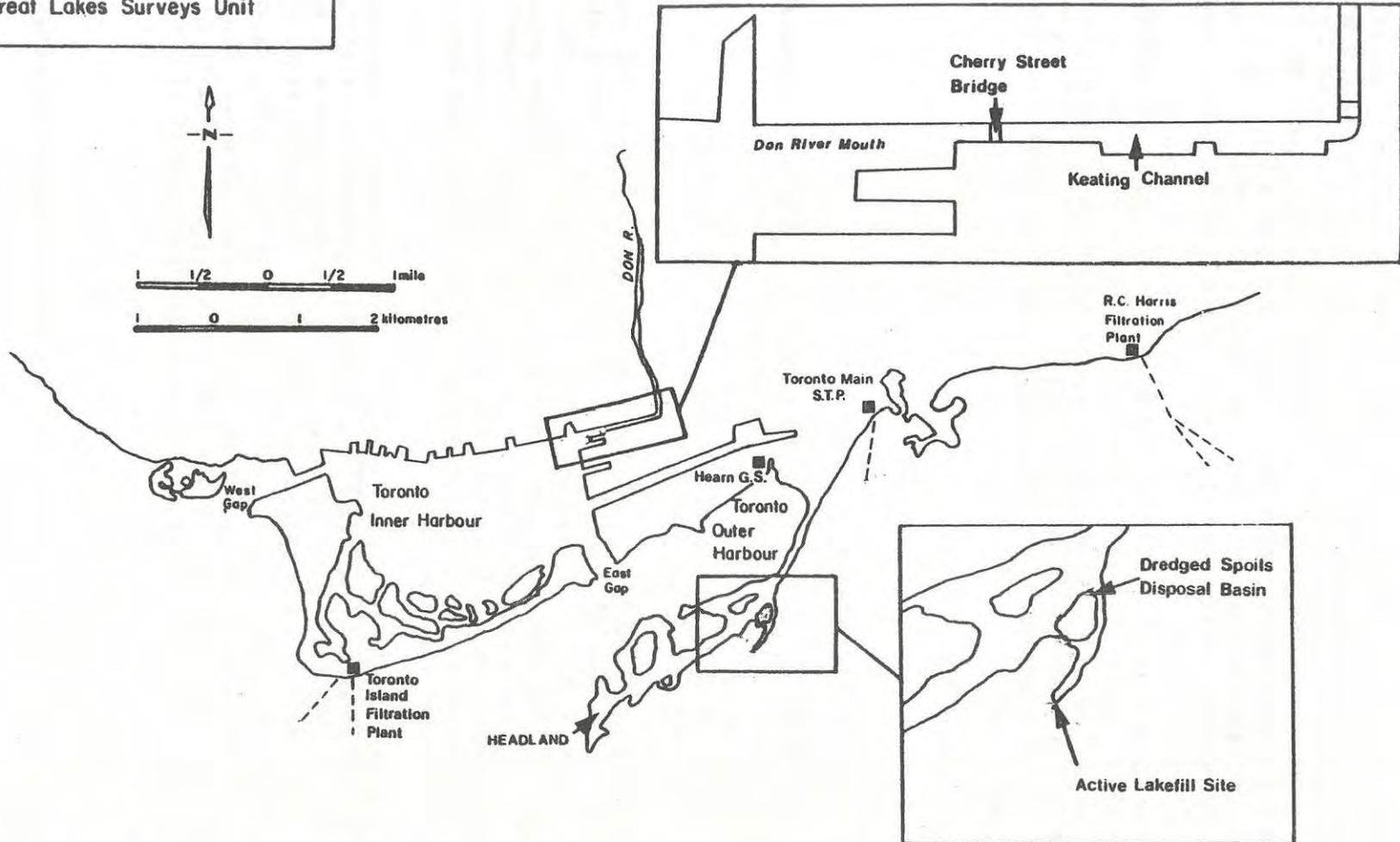
Pacific Rim National Park (that isn't) In 1970 a letter of agreement was signed by the governments of Canada and British Columbia to establish the park. Now in 1983 this is still dragging on because of delays in acquiring private land within the proposed park boundary. There is danger that logging will go ahead, or that the area will be reduced in size as the reserve has not park status. You can write to The Honourable Anthony Brummet, Minister, Lands, Parks and Housing, Parliament Buildings, Victoria, B.C. V8V 1X4; or The Honourable John Roberts, Minister of the Environment, House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6.

Write your local paper.

Before writing get full details by calling Jean Macdonald (425-6596) or writing to the CNF.



Ministry Of The Environment
Ontario Great Lakes Surveys Unit



Adapted from MOE document (reference 6)

THIRSTY, ANYONE?

Lake Ontario has been labelled the "Forgotten Great Lake" by Audubon magazine, November 1982. "Lake Ontario, its waters vital to the lives of ten million Americans and Canadians, has become the most endangered of all." (1)

In its first report on the Great Lakes in more than four years (August 1982), the International Joint Commission (IJC) reported that "... Lake Ontario in particular, has 'serious problems' with (toxic) pollution, much of it originating from the Niagara River area but spreading lake-wide. The Commission 'has noted no activity' by either government (USA or Canada) to review the list of toxic substances or develop programs to curtail their release into the lakes." (2)

Record dioxin levels were found in fish by the Ontario Environment Ministry (MOE) at Port Credit, April 1982. (3) Dioxin is one of the most toxic chemicals known to man. One two-hundredth of a drop can be fatal.

A map from the US Environmental Protection Agency, based on IJC reports, shows Toronto as one of the most serious sources of toxic pollution in the Great Lakes contributing PCB's, mirex, and heavy metals. (4)

The Inner Harbour of Toronto has been found to have quantities of PCB's, lead, oil and grease greater than that of the Niagara River Basin (March 1982). (5)

In a study in 1980, the dredgeate from the Keating Channel, "did not meet Ministry of the Environment open water disposal guidelines for oils and greases, total phosphorus, PCB's and heavy metals such as lead, zinc and cadmium..." (6)

Keating Channel is located at the mouth of the Don River where it enters the Toronto Harbour. (see map) It is the location of ship berths and an area subject to the accumulation of sediment which is claimed by some to affect the flood levels of the Don River. Dredgeate from here is taken by barge to a containment area on the south side of the Leslie Street Spit, right between the intake pipes for the drinking water of the City of Toronto at the R.C.Harris and at the Island Filtration Plants.

This containment area is an open basin surrounded by armour stone and landfill. It is posted so that small boats are not to enter. If they capsized, what might happen to someone swimming in these toxic waters?

The Globe and Mail has noted evidence that the dredging of Keating Channel stirs up "hazardous deposits of phosphorus, nitrogen, mercury, lead, zinc, chromium and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB's)". (7) In fact, the Acres study of the Keating Channel dredgeate found "concentrations of PCB's (to be) statistically no different than the sediments in the Niagara River Basin of Lake Ontario". (8)

One storm (1858) was responsible for separating the Toronto Islands from the mainland, and Lake Ontario is known by sailors to be one of the most unpredictable bodies of water in the world. Therefore, how can one guarantee that the containment area will be secure, that no contaminants will get into the drinking water supply for the City of Toronto? We are told that this is being studied. But why are contaminated sediments being dumped at Leslie Street Spit before a full Environmental Assessment has been done of this?

There is another aspect to the contamination of Lake Ontario at Leslie Street Spit. Last year 180,000 truckloads of fill were disposed of at the Spit, the Toronto Harbour Commission charging \$10 each 14 tonne load for this privilege. (9) The Globe and Mail also noted, "The savings that accrue to developers who dump fill and rubble from downtown building sites into Lake Ontario are

enormous." (10) "Nobody bothers to check the exact contents of each load, but a series of spot checks by Environment Canada in 1980 found that 16 per cent of the samples tested contained mercury, lead, iron, chrome and nickel in levels exceeding provincial guidelines for open water dumping" (11) "... most of the truckloads (of fill) are barred entry to the Spit by a man in a small tower whose job it is to peer at the fill and sniff its contents for contamination". (12) "According to an internal Environment Ministry briefing document on the dredging program written in 1980, the Harbour Commissioners "consistently failed to live up to their promises to prevent undue contamination of the lake". (13)

Environment Canada reported in August 1982: "the visual and/or olfactory inspections of the Toronto Harbour Commission were not effective in preventing contaminated materials from gaining access to the Leslie Street Spit and possibly Lake Ontario". (14)

Spillage from the dredges has also been noted by the Ministry of the Environment. Plumes of 2 km X 500 m originating from the lakefill/spoils disposal site were observed during high winds of 20 km/h (Nov. 1981). However, sampling was not done during storms with higher winds. (15)

During the frequent winter storms the plumes of noxious chemicals could easily reach the drinking water intakes for the City of Toronto. We are told by the MOE that our water meets the present Water Quality Objectives for the Province. (16) But what we are not told is that these objectives are just concerned with bacteria.

A TFN member and former director, Laura Greer, who worked as a chemist at the Island Filtration Plant, explained that these plants do an excellent job of removing bacteria, but that they were not built to take out chemicals such as PCB's. The R.C.Harris Plant is using activated charcoal on top of its filters now, "hoping" the carbon will absorb some of the noxious chemicals.

As Laura has pointed out in two presentations to the City of Toronto, "If they looked over all of Ontario, a worse place for a disposal site could not have been found than the location of the Leslie Street Spit right between the two intake pipes. No matter which way the wind blows, one of the pipes will get some of the noxious plumes."

Yet another discouraging note about Toronto water was in The Globe and Mail, November 17, 1982. "Toronto's Humber sewage plant has been partly broken down for a year and is also releasing excessive amounts of phosphorus". (17) One wonders what other chemicals are being released as well.

This past summer The Globe and Mail also reported that the "... MOE is worried about the future effects of undue concentrations of heavy metals ... We can't guarantee that as a result of these contaminants getting to the fish, there isn't some long-term problem building up in the food chain." (18)

Dr. Ross Hume Hall of McMaster University, in a lecture to the Royal Canadian Institute last spring, noted that 70% of the white suckers in Lake Ontario have a cancer on their dorsal fins.

Mortality rates of herring gulls and terns on the Great Lakes have been increasing according to the movie "The Cry of the Gull" (1979) shown at the past May General Meeting of the TFN.

Members of the TFN were noticing an increase in the number of dead gulls and ducks along the waterfront during 1981. Last summer, 1982, the number of dead birds at the Humber Bay Spit was so alarming that I telephoned the Ministry of

the Environment and was eventually told to speak to the Ministry of Natural Resources. Having also been contacted by another concerned TFN member, Bob Yukich, the MNR sent the ducks to Guelph for an autopsy. I was told in August that botulism might be the cause and that it took a long time for results to get back from the lab -- maybe three weeks. It sure does take a long time! Four months later, and I can't count how many telephone calls to try to contact the one man in charge, and still the results aren't back. Now chemicals (cutrine and reglone A) approved by MOE to kill the algae are the suspected culprits because they were applied twice during the summer. Did that much have to be added because of the increased phosphorus from the partially functioning Humber Sewage Treatment Plant?

Besides dead gulls, ducks and swans, I have also observed dead mammals, for example, muskrat. These incidents are in just one section along the several miles of the Toronto waterfront. I wonder how many other birders have noticed similar trends? Long Point Bird Observatory is conducting a survey of beached birds along the shores of the Great Lakes, but I gathered, when I applied to do a mile of the Humber Bay Spit, that there were only 2 or 3 reports being sent in from the Toronto waterfront where the contaminants are so serious.

No study has been performed to determine the precise accumulative effects of the contaminants in the food chain. Since PCB's, oil and grease in the inner Toronto harbour are equal to those of the Niagara River basin, into which the Love Canal empties, what effect will the bio-concentration of these have on humans? Will there be similar carcinogenic effects? I agree with Laura Greer when she points out, "We may not be sure of the effects of these chemicals, but we can't wait until the next generation gets cancer to find out. Once a mistake is made there can be no turning back. Think of all the gallons of water that we drink in a lifetime. If a small amount of noxious chemical is in each and this is stored in our body each time, what will be the effect of its accumulation?"

Beth Jefferson

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References:

- (1) Michael H. Brown, "The Forgotten Great Lake", Audubon, Nov. 1982, pp.88-95
- (2) Robert Sheppard, "Politics, budget tie its hands as Lakes poisoned, IJC says", The Globe and Mail, Aug. 18, 1982
- (3) Jack Ferguson, "Record dioxin level discovered in trout from Lake Ontario", The Globe and Mail, Apr. 2, 1982
- (4) Michael Keating, "Great Lakes now fresher but chemicals proliferate", The Globe and Mail, Oct. 11, 1980
- (5) Acres, Keating Channel Environmental Assessment, March 1982
- (6) Ontario Ministry of the Environment, A Summary Report on the Effect of Dredging, Dredged Spoils Disposal and Lakefilling Activities in the Toronto Waterfront, Aug. 15-Nov. 29, 1980, Nov. 1981, page 3
- (7) Ross Laver, "Fear of business flak stalls bid to monitor lake spit pollution", The Globe and Mail, July 21, 1982
- (8) Acres, "Lower Don River - Keating Channel Studies, Appendix B", page 54
- (9) R. Laver, op. cit.

- (10) Ibid.
- (11) Ibid.
- (12) Ibid.
- (13) Ibid.
- (14) Environment Canada, Lakefill Quality Study Leslie Street Spit, Aug. 1982 page 9
- (15) Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Nov. 1981, Op. cit. page 16
- (16) Ibid. page 39
- (17) Michael Keating, "Experts see no way to clean up Hamilton Harbour", The Globe and Mail, Nov. 17, 1982
- (18) R. Laver, Op. cit.

All the references listed are available from the TFN library if you want further information.

BEACHED BIRD SURVEY GREAT LAKES

Participants needed! You walk and report on a one-mile strip of the shoreline once a month. If you are interested, contact:

▷ Great Lakes Beached Bird Survey, c/o Long Point Bird Observatory,
P.O. Box 160, Port Rowan, Ontario. NOE 1MO

SAVING METRO'S "LAST GREEN DOOR"

The Finch Avenue Meander area of the Rouge Valley System is described as "Metro's Last Green Door" in a land-use report published by the People or Planes Organization (POP) in 1979. Thousands of acres of prime agricultural land lie just beyond this section of the Rouge Valley. Expropriated in 1972, this land has been under Minister's Orders, and only this year has there been a sign that the Government is ready to release the land to local municipal planning processes.

POP has worked successfully up to now in holding thousands of acres of land for agricultural use. But as the Borough of Scarborough and the Town of Markham begin to enter the planning picture, there is serious consideration of the formation of a land-conservation group called POP II -- a Peoples' Organization to Protect "Metro's Last Green Door". Such an organization would concern itself with the immediate Metro Toronto and Markham frontier lands that serve as a buffer zone to the Green Door.

For a \$2. membership fee, members would be notified of relevant OMB hearings so they may help with letters and personal presentations.

contact Lois James at 284 - 6409

IN THE NEWS

MILLIONS FACE DRINKING WATER HAZARD: In a hard-hitting report, the International Joint Commission announced in early August that at least 400 different toxic chemicals have been identified in the Great Lakes. It said that past levels of surveillance were inadequate and human health is being jeopardized by budget cuts in the United States. The report said that while individual chemicals such as dioxin were monitored to some degree, no attention was paid to what happens when various chemicals interact in the water. The fact that the three Americans on the Committee are conservatives, appointed by President Reagan, gives the report added impact. Greenpeace plans to focus on the Niagara Falls area, where over 100 toxic waste dumps now exist. Of particular interest to Greenpeace is the Hooker Chemical, responsible for a large number of these dumps, including Love Canal and Hyde Park. Hyde Park contains almost 2,000 pounds of dioxin, one of the deadliest known chemicals. The IJC report states that it would be "both short sighted and potentially dangerous" not to, at the very least, maintain current levels of research and surveillance. Greenpeace believes this to be an understatement. If something is not done to deal with this problem, 20 million people will find themselves drinking from a toxic toilet.

WHAT CAN I DO? Individuals often approach Greenpeace asking for help to solve local environmental problems. We would like to be able to respond to every problem. We do our best to provide support and information, but we are a growing organization with a limited amount of resources available. When you become aware of an environmental issue in your area, there are several things you can do to help bring the matter to public attention:

1. Talk to as many people as you can about the issue.
2. Write letters to the editor of your local newspaper in the hope that the media will highlight the problem.
3. Write letters expressing your opinions to elected officials on the municipal, provincial and federal levels.
4. Donate your time, energy and money to environmental organizations such as Greenpeace.

We have often found it a long and frustrating fight to bring an issue into the public arena. The power of citizens working together should not be underestimated. Eleven years ago, a small group of volunteers got together to try to stop an atomic test in Alaska, and that attempt was the seed from which Greenpeace sprung.

(The above two items are taken from GREENPEACE CHRONICLE, Fall 1982)

"Accentuate the positive and eliminate the negative. At all times, make it clear that you are FOR some legitimate goal rather than AGAINST any particular person or corporation. Frame all submissions and statements in terms of your goals and make it clear that you are "against" someone only to the extent that his activities impede the accomplishment of your legitimate social goals."...from How to Fight for What's Right by John Swaigen, 1981 (Lorimer & Co. publishers, Toronto).

COMING EVENTS

COMING EVENTS

Civic Garden Centre

The Civic Garden Centre, 777 Lawrence Avenue East, Don Mills, will present a four-week course commencing Wednesday, February 9, at 8:00 p.m. on "Gardening with Wildflowers". For further information, telephone 445-1552.

Royal Ontario Museum

An exhibition of paintings by Robert Bateman, entitled "Images of the Wild" will be held at the ROM from January 29 to April 3.

Royal Canadian Institute

The following lectures will be presented in the Medical Sciences Auditorium, University of Toronto, on Sunday afternoons at 3:15. Admission free. For further information, call 979-2004.

- Feb. 6 - Roy Thomson Hall, The Art and Science of Designing Great Sound. Ted Schultz, Architectural Acoustics Designer of Roy Thomson Hall.
- Feb. 13 - Death and Rebirth of the Tallgrass Prairie. Stephen Bracker, Computer Specialist, U. of T.
- Feb. 20 - The Discovery of Insulin: What Really Happened. Professor Michael Bliss, History Department, U. of T.
- Feb. 27 - Lead Poisoning and the Decline of the Roman Empire. Dr. Jerome Nriagu, Canada Centre for Inland Waters.

Kortright Centre for Conservation

From February 4 to 27, an exhibition of Wildlife Works of Glen Loates will be held at the Centre. On February 26, 7:30 p.m., an Owl Prowl will be held at the Centre. The Kortright Centre is on Pine Valley Drive, just south of Kleinburg. Telephone 661-6600.

Three \$600.00 B. Harper Bull Conservation Fellowship awards are available to encourage and assist University and College students residing or studying in the Metropolitan Toronto Region, and wishing to broaden their knowledge of conservation through study, travel and practical experience. For further information and applications write before February 18, 1983, to: Waneeta Robertson, The Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Foundation, 5 Shoreham Drive., Downsview, Ont. M3N 1S4

SALE OF ART. If you are re-decorating or looking for a wedding present, you may just find what you need among the works of TFN members. You can get an idea of what is available at OISE Bldg., 252 Bloor W., between 7:30 and 8:15 PM, Feb. 1, before the TFN General Meeting. 25% commission on any work sold will go to TFN. Members who have paintings, drawings, prints, photographs for sale, please bring your portfolios to OISE Bldg. before 7:30 PM Feb. 1.

TFN MEETINGS

TFN 353



GENERAL MEETINGS

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

Tuesday, February 1, 1983, 8:15 p.m. (Coffee at 7.30 p.m.)
Urban Ecosystems and Island Biogeography: A Conservation Strategy - Tony Davis, Associate Professor, Department of Geography, University of Toronto.

Professor Davis is a biogeographer with research interests in natural environmental change, and in human impact, past and present.

The principle of Island Biogeography can be loosely applied to urban ecosystems. The application can be part of a comprehensive conservation strategy that accommodates diverse group activities. This slide-illustrated lecture will explain how parks, ravines and vacant lots in the city are isolated islands connected only by corridors along roads, railways, etc. Being islands will affect the diversity of plant and animal species that are found in these urban habitats.

Tuesday, March 1, 1983, 8:15 p.m.
Photography in Alaska - J. David Taylor

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GROUP MEETINGS

Bird Group

Tues. Feb. 15 Bird Migration - Dave Hussell
8:00 p.m.
Location: Education Centre, Auditorium, 155 College Street,
1 block west of University Avenue.
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Botany Group

Wed. Feb. 16 Flora of Haliburton - Eleanor and Emerson Skelton
7:30 p.m.
Location: Room 007, Botany Building, University of Toronto
nw corner of College and University.
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Environmental Group

Thur. Feb. 24 Janice Palmer, Grade 12 and 13 teacher of
7:30 p.m. Environmental Studies at North Toronto C.I., will
speak on using high school students for community
involvement projects. Illustrated.
Location: Huron Public School, 541 Huron Street, 1 block west
of St. George subway station.
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Junior Club

See also page 21.
Sat. Feb. 5 Aquatic Mites - Dr. David Barr, Department of
10:00 a.m. Entomology, ROM
Location: Planetarium Auditorium, immediately south of ROM.
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TORONTO FIELD NATURALIST, a newsletter, published eight times a year by the Toronto Field Naturalists, 83 Joicey Blvd., Toronto, Ontario M5M 2T4

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Material for the newsletter (notices, reports, articles up to 1500 words in length and illustrations) should be submitted at least six weeks before the month in which the event is to take place or the material is required to appear.

MEMBERSHIP FEES:	Family (Husband and Wife) -	\$20.00
	Single -	\$15.00
	Senior Family (Husband and Wife, 65+) -	\$15.00
	Senior Single -	\$10.00
	Student -	\$10.00

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All TFN Publications are for sale at monthly General Meetings.

ISSN 0820-683X