TORONTO FIELD NATURALIST

Number 367, November 1984

Toronto's Sesqui Squirrel...

See pages 24 - 25

President's Report

Another season has begun for the TFN. This means a new series of outings and a new series of programmes. Helen Juhola is chairman of the Outings Committee; Billie Bridgman is arranging the programmes for the monthly meetings. Ideas are always welcome; if you have a suggestion call Helen (any reasonable time) or Billie (mornings, never on Thursday!) and pass it on. Our special interest groups, Birds, Botany, Environment and the Junior Club are again under way for those who wish to participate.

As I write today, the cabin is open for the last time this year. Thanks to all the volunteers who greeted the public throughout the season. Without you, we could not continue this project in public relations. Thanks also to the volunteers who obtained the volunteers! We have the impression that some visitors to the park are not quite comfortable--are hesitant to step inside the cabin. We are trying to find ways to encourage them to come in.

The Scarborough Transportation Corridor Study is a review by the City of Scarborough of the corridor which was incorporated in the official plan more than twenty-five years ago. Circumstances have changed and the City is examining the best ways in which the land can now be used. It is very encouraging to find certain ravines defined (both in the text and on maps), undertakings for additional parks, and a commitment to preserve a stand of thirty to forty red oaks. We are writing to the City to express our approval of their attitude.

It has been suggested that our general meetings start at 8.00 p.m. rather than at 8.15 p.m. as has been the case for many years. Some of the members have to leave before the meeting ends to catch a GO train and an earlier start would help them. Others might be happy simply to get home fifteen minutes earlier. The "coffee hour" can still be as long for those who enjoy the opportunity to socialize. If anyone has very strong feelings either for or against this change I would appreciate hearing from you.

Jean Macdonald
(425-6596)

Hurt no living thing,
Ladybird, nor butterfly,
Nor moth with dusty wing,
Nor cricket chirping cheerily,
No grasshopper so light of leap,
Nor dancing gnat, nor beetle fat,
Nor harmless worms that creep.

seen on a quilted piece of material about 14" square with all the insects etc. mentioned created by Jane Selbie, Box 501, Haliburton, Ont. 457-2586
submitted by Elna Whiteside

Although November is still technically fall, the weather more often than not says winter. Despite the cold and seeming inactivity there is still much of interest for the keen observer.

The flocks of diving ducks are still at their peak. Humber Bay Park and the Leslie Street Spit (Tommy Thompson Park) are two rewarding spots to see waterfowl at this time of year. For all intents and purposes migration is over, but rare purple sandpipers and red phalaropes may be seen. Some of Metro's winter birds -- owls, northern shrikes, tree sparrows and snow buntings -- begin to appear by this time.

If you think all the blossoms are gone check areas of dry sandy soil in open oak woodlands and on drier slopes for witch-hazel. They have a curious flower, each with four twisted yellow petals. This is a peculiar shrub in many respects and is worth investigating.

This is a good time of year to study the different strategies plants have for seed dispersal. "Hitchiker" seeds such as those from burdock, bidens, avens, and enchanter's nightshade have hooks to catch onto clothing or the fur of animals. Milkweed, goldenrod, asters and black swallowwort hang their seeds from parachutes to be carried by the wind.

With all the leaves gone, galls are more easily spotted. Look for them on goldenrods (as elliptical or spherical balls) and willow branches (they look like pine cones). Galls are caused mostly by insects and the larva provides some over-wintering birds such as downy and hairy woodpeckers with food.

If one of your fall rambles takes you by a marsh, check over the cattails. Most of the seed heads will be bursting and falling apart but you may notice a few that are not. Carefully pick the seed-head apart and you will find the larva of the cattail moth; the larva has bound the seed head together with silk. This is its winter home.

Phil Joiner

Saturday November 3 -- JUNIOR MEETING (see page 31)

Sunday Nov. 4 10 am to 3 pm	LESLIE STREET SPIT - birds Leader: Howard Battae Meet at the foot of Leslie Steet. Walk south from the corner of Queen Street East and Leslie to parking lot. Bring lunch.

Monday November 5 -- TFN GENERAL MEETING (see page 31)

Wednesday Nov. 7 10:30 am	PROSPECT CEMETERY - nature walk Leader: Aarne Juhola Meet on the south side of Eglinton Ave. West at the entrance to the cemetery (between Dufferin and Caledonia) to walk south to St. Clair.

Thursday November 8 -- Botany Meeting (see page 31) FULL MOON

Saturday Nov. 10 10 am	GALLERY HOPPING Leader: Mary Cumming Meet at the Bay subway station at Bellair exit. Lunch in the mall. Bring your sketches. Everyone welcome -- with or without sketches.

RAIN or SHINE | **Everybody Welcome!**

UPCOMING OUTINGS (cont'd)...

Sunday Nov. 11 1:30 pm
HUMBER BAY PARK EAST - birds
Leader: Beth Jefferson
Meet at the park entrance on the south side of Lakeshore Blvd. at Park Lawn Rd.

Saturday Nov. 17 10 am to noon
MOSSES - 625 Rushton Rd.
Leader: Robert Muma
This will be an "inning" with the possibility of a short outing. Call Helen Juhola (924-5806) if you plan to attend.

Wednesday Nov. 21 10:30 am
ONTARIO SCIENCE CENTRE - sketching
Leader: Mac Brown
Meet at entrance on Don Mills Rd. south of Eglinton Ave. East. Entrance fee $4.00 each; senior with ID free. Everyone welcome.

Wednesday Nov. 21 -- Bird Meeting (see page 31)

Thursday Nov. 22 -- Environment Meeting (see page 31) DARK OF THE MOON

Saturday Nov. 24 1 pm
HUMBER ARBORETUM
Leader: Phil Joiner
Meet at large bus shelter on street at entrance to Humber College (west of Hwy 27 on Humber College Blvd.) A staff member will tell us about the arboretum and take us on a nature walk. Coffee will be served.

Saturday December 1 -- JUNIOR MEETING

Sunday Dec. 2 1:30 pm
WILKET CREEK - nature walk
Leader: Phil Joiner
Meet in the first parking lot off Leslie St. just north of Eglinton Ave. East. Parking lot is beside park entrance.

Tuesday December 4 -- TFN GENERAL MEETING (see page 31)

If you have a suggestion for an outing or would like to lead one, please contact any member of the outings committee:

Howard Battae (225-9780); Sandy Cappell (663-7738); Phil Joiner (282-6438) Helen Juhola (924-5806); Ann Reynolds (484-6911); Mary Smith (231-5302)

All outings are accessible by public transit. For directions, call the TTC at 484-4544. Free route maps (Ride Guide) are available at subway stations.

For other events and outings, see pages 30 and 31.

She stands! The Norway Maple,
with curled-into leaves,
as if she is able
to rule and protect herself
from seasons' excesses.

Kathleen Roe-Maclean

Bickford Park, June, 1984

Trees and Towns by Dave Harper, Suite 704, 1112 West Pender St. Vancouver, B.C. V6E 2S1, 1976 (copies available from author for $5.00 each)

This 30-page booklet on trees describes what B.C. is doing about valuable shade trees: the roles of trees in communities, causes of tree losses, how to protect community trees, how to develop a tree program -- its costs and how to get started.

As well as appendices on tree evaluation, heritage tree registration procedure, tree inventories and tree protection policies, there is a useful bibliography and good ideas about development control.

In 1976, B.C. was ahead of where we are now ... in 1984!

Mary Smith

A Killing Rain by Thomas Pawlick. Published by Douglas and McIntyre, 26 Lennox St., Third Floor, Toronto, Ontario. M6G 1J4. 1984. 206 pages, with an index, bibliography and further sources of information for Canada, the U.S.A. and elsewhere.

Discussed are: Reduction of the problem of acid rain by conservation methods; the role of Ontario Hydro; the effects on trees and tree roots, and the classic symptoms of acid damage in individual trees and in the forest as a whole; the effects on Ontario fish species, on water weeds; the effects on roof catchment drinking water systems, especially in areas with polluted groundwater; why lime treatments and the use of scrubbers are only stopgap solutions to the problem of acid rain; how Alzheimer's disease comes into the picture of acid rain; corrosion of sandstone and limestone by acid rain; warning symptoms in the animal population; acid rain in relation to tourism; the recent warning to Dorset area residents in Ontario; permanent central nervous system damage to children from lead, and how this relates to acid rain; "existing small scale dams that could be rehabilitated represent an energy output equivalent to 100 nuclear reactors" . . .; and much more.

This is a fascinating book. An eyeopener!

There is also a discussion of Kidd Creek Mines Ltd., one existing good example of what can be done about acid rain, and employer-employee relations as well.

(The only obvious mistake I could find in this book is the assumption on page 152 that it would be a good thing to acidify rock phosphate from the Cargill deposit near Kapuskasing, Ontario, for use as a fertilizer. In fact, the finely-ground phosphate is a better fertilizer by itself.) Other uses need to be found for the sulfuric acid reclaimed by stack scrubbers.

Mary Smith

Great Country Walks Around Toronto by Elliott Katz. Published by Great North Books, P.O. Box 507, Station Z, Toronto, Ontario. M5N 2Z6. 63 pages with maps. $2.95.

A Walk in Toronto's High Park - Follow the Trails to Discover 37 Tree Species. 44 pages, illustrated. Free from Mr. H. Pirk, Commissioner of Parks, City of Toronto, 21st Floor, East Tower, City Hall, Toronto, Ontario. M5H 2N2. Telephone 947-7251.

TFN LIBRARY report

BOOKS IN TFN LIBRARY - PART V - NATURALISTS

The World of Roger Tory Peterson by John Devlin and Grace Naismith, New York Times Books 1977. 258 pages plus index. Personal life and career, illustrated with photos and reproductions of Peterson paintings.

The Naturalists, Pioneers of Natural History by Allan C. Jenkins. Mayflower Books, NY 1978. 200 pages including chronology, 'Who's Who' and Index. Illustrations in colour and black and white - photos, paintings, drawings by naturalists through the ages.

In our resource files we have about eight articles on well-known naturalists and the 19-page booklet, Some Canadian Ornithologists, 1981. Published by The Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, U. of T. On naturalists generally we have a 9-page article,'A Sample Survey of the Expenditures of Naturalists' by M. T. Myres, Dept. of Biology, U. of Calgary - "with a glance at the future of the Naturalists' Movement" (comparing naturalists with sportsmen).

BOOKS IN TFN LIBRARY - PART VI - NATURAL HISTORY GENERAL

Canadian Wildlife Almanac by Darryl Stewart. Lester & Orpen Dennys 1981, 133 pages. Text accompanied by old woodcuts and new drawings by the author. Quaint design, entertaining.

Forgotten Pleasures, A Guide for the Seasonal Adventurer, by Ruth Rudner, 1978. (outdoor activities, including some natural history) Viking Press NY.

Poems of Nature and Wildlife BY Edmund J. Sawyer, 74 pages, published by the author 1930, illustrated in black and white by the author.

The Walker's Guide to Nature by Connie and Arnold Krochmal, 1977, Drake NY. (See review TFN (349) 23, S 82.)

Walt Disney's Worlds of Nature "A Treasury of True-Life Adventures", by Rutherford Platt and Walt Disney Studio Staff, in colour, Golden Press NY 1957.

Hammond's Nature Atlas of America (See TFN (362) 12, M 84.)

ACQUISITIONS

We wish to thank members for their donations of material...

Rose Evans - for Canadian Endangered Species by Darryl Stewart, Gage Toronto 1974, 172 pages, including glossary and bibliography, contents list including listing of 94 species and races, many photographic plates and line drawings.

Emily Hamilton - for Vascular Plant Flora of Peel County Ontario by Jocelyn Webber (See TFN (365) 30, S 84.)

Dorothy Dow - for CEE Report Vol. 1 No. 1, published by the Center for Environmental Education, Washington, DC (aim - protection of marine populations) 8 pages;plus other clippings and pamphlets on sea turtle, manatee, conservation, and animal welfare organizations, Gulf of Mexico wildlife.

Vera Irving - for Birds of Jamaica by Lady Taylor, MacMillan London 1954, 99 pages plus systematic list, index, black and white drawings by William Reeves. Also for her Jamaica field notes, newspaper clippings on birds of paradise and the "fish precipitation" phenomenon.

TFN LIBRARY REPORT - continued

Beth Jefferson - for Legacy Vol. 12, No. 3, Environment Ontario Summer 1984 - on water treatment in Ontario

Jacques Gravel (encore une fois) - for a guide to Riverside Nature Trail, Pinery Provincial Park, an assortment of bird literature in English and en français, including bibliographies on several species and Cahier de Biologie No. 101 - Les Oiseaux Migrateurs abattus au Canada... 1978 (plus que 4 millions) 45 pages - statistiques - also available in English from Canadian Wildlife Service.

Helen Juhola - for "Wild in London" from International Wildlife March 1984. "Why urban ecologist David Goode is searching for dumps, cemeteries and old railroad beds"; and for "The Thin Green Line" from BBC Wildlife May 1984. "The job of protecting natural Britain from political and economic Britain is entrusted to an under-manned quango with an annual budget no greater than that of the Royal Opera House. But the Nature Conservancy Council soldiers on." A report by Stephen Mills. "It costs £800 million a year just to mow the UK's so-called unproductive parks and verges. The whole NCC has to operate on a budget of £13 million." - David Bellamy. And for Less is More - Naturalising Parkland, a 6-page report clipped from the Ontario Shade Tree Council newsletter. About planting native trees and shrubs in municipal parks, with a view to decreasing maintenance costs and providing suitable milieu for unstructured outdoor recreation. (Helen is collecting articles on urban natural history projects for TFN library. Some have come via Mildred Easto and Jim Hodgins. If you come across any material in this vein, we'd appreciate a clipping or photocopy.

United Church of Canada - Issue 30, Energy - The Choice is Ours, published by the Office of Church in Society, Division of Mission in Canada. 8-page statement of United Church policy on the energy issue. Also A statement on Acid Rain, a 9-page pamphlet published by United Church and National Council of Churches (U.S.)

If you wish to borrow any TFN library material, call 690-1963.

DB

The roaches are widely known, at least by reputation. There are over 1000 kinds. I like the spirit in which Sutherland views these none too well-liked creatures: "If the test of nobility is antiquity of family, then the cockroach that hides behind the kitchen sink is the true aristocrat. He does not date back merely to the three brothers that came over in 1640 or to William the Conqueror. Wherever there have been great epoch-making movements of people he has been with them heart and soul, without possessing any particular religious convictions or political ambitions. It is not so much that he approves of their motives as that he likes what they have to eat. Since ever a ship turned a foamy furrow in the sea he has been a passenger, not a paying one certainly, but still a passenger. But man himself is but a creature of the last twenty minutes or so compared with the cockroach, for, from its crevice by the kitchen sink, it can point its antennae to the coal in the hod and say: 'When that was being made my family was already well-established'."

from Field Book of Insects by Frank E. Lutz, G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1948

Keeping in touch . . .

Dear Helen, August 3, 1984

I am enclosing a photocopy of an article from the Globe and Mail, July 30, 1984 "Views sought to set ethics for research" by Joan Hollobon.

I know that this is not, strictly speaking, a concern of the Toronto Field Naturalists as an organization; but I think we are all animal lovers, and these are the most helpless and defenseless animals of all. It is rare that one is invited to voice opinions on important issues like this. In this case one can state one's views to the committee chairman as private individuals, not as TFN members.

Lily Quack

Ed. Note. The article announced that a national committee writing new guidelines for medical researchers wants concerned citizens to contribute their opinions on the ethical questions raised by such research. Fields of concern are the use of animals for research as well as research into different human conditions. Concerned citizens can send their letters to the committee at the Medical Research Council, Ottawa, K1A 009.

Dear Dida: Esopus, NY, September 1, 1984

"...The jewel weed is in full bloom - a sight I would love you to see. Many trees are beginning to show signs of fall coming. Birds are flocking and going through manoeuvres for the trip south. Come soon on your annual migration... I enjoy...(the TFN newsletter) so much. Again, I read it from cover to cover. Your cover sketch was really fine. I still feel a certain affinity for frogs. I guess I'm still emerging. I got the funniest feeling last evening when sitting by the pond behind the hockey pond - that I was being observed by amphibians. Twice, I saw a pair of eyes peering at me out of the water. It made me understand why their eyes bulge. When I walk around, I always have the sense that I am observing nature, but lately I am getting the sense it goes both ways. This sense was heightened yesterday by the experience at the pond as well as twice when I heard that deer snort/squeal/scream warning the herd that there was an alien and hostile presence to beware..."

Peg (Sr. Margaret)

"We need wilderness areas for their scientific interest as natural ecosystems...
We need them for their aesthetic value as unscarred landscapes...
We need them for the opportunities they offer in physical and spiritual recreation...
We need them just for the sake of knowing that they are there -- untouched by development of any kind."

These words were spoken by Mr. D.P. Ackerman, a former Secretary for Forestry, in 1977 to explain the Department's reasons for creating the highest form of conservation protection for the unique and fragile mountain ecosystems of South Africa.

from Veld and Flora, Vol. 70, No. 2 R2, June 1984

contributed by Joy Pocklington

SOUTH WEST AFRICA -- ONE DAY IN TIME

Saturday, March 10, 1984. In mountainous country of low rainfall, we travelled to Twyfelfontein (translated "Doubt Fountain"). I could see that we were going through what had been great, broad, lush river-valleys millions of years before the climate changed. Now the valleys were more than half-filled with sand and debris and if the hot, dry climate continues another million years, the land will be level. The rocks are sandstone, basalt, granite and dolomite -- cracked and weathered into many shapes.

At Twyfelfontein we climbed to view many of the bushmen paintings of game -- artistic and quite delightful. It is estimated there are three thousand 500-year-old paintings in this area. But today neither the game nor the bushmen are to be found. Instead bright orange, red, and blue lizards came out from behind the rocks and bobbed their heads at us. One family of Damara Africans had drifted into the valley and were eking out a living below the rocks in a few huts. The women wear huge patchwork dresses, and headdresses.

We travelled on some distance to see the petrified forest. Here were some huge logs, now stone, said to be 180 million years old. Fascinating to think that when these were growing trees, dinosaurs roamed the swamps. Geologists have a theory that these particular logs came from Central Africa, and through some quirk of nature became exposed in this scrubby area. Alongside the stone logs, the amazing welwitschia plants grow in the sand, each from a bark base. They have only two leaves which can grow to many feet, and because often gnawed by animals, tend to have weird shapes; they are waxy for protection from the sun, but pores open up to absorb dew after which they wax-over again. The male and female plants are separate and were at one time thought to be two species. The female is cone-bearing; fertilization is probably by wind. As you will gather, this plant is very ancient. The guide-book says "known in the time of Christ", but I think it is much older than that; the actual plants themselves are hundreds of years old. (See Ed. Note.) Welwitschia are found only in Angola and South West Africa, and are protected by law.

We drove on then through more valleys where huge dolomite rocks were standing alone. Millions of years ago liquid elements of dolomite are said to have welled up through the Earth's crust and filled the cores of extinct volcanoes. The volcanoes have weathered into dust and only the hard dolomite rocks remain. These formations are actually seen all over South Africa and are known as "koppies" (kopjes).

It is said people meditate in these areas and experience a feeling of timelessness. All day I found myself thinking of time, grasping at an appreciation of the eons.

Joy Pocklington

Ed. Note: Age of the species Welwitschia mirabilis can probably be expressed in millions of years. It is a gymnosperm like the conifers but has some features of the angiosperms (flowering plants).

First snow -
The cat is inclined
To stay home.

haiku by Christine Hanrahan

JIM BAILLIE NATURE RESERVE REPORT

Two work parties were held at the Jim Baillie Nature Reserve this fall -- one on Sept. 1 with 14 workers; and one on Sept. 22 with 12 workers. The reserve now has about 200 feet of duckboard (boardwalk) installed so that members can get from the parking lot to the picnic shelter and the white circle trail with dry feet.

Other news is that the time has come to revise our "Guide to the Jim Baillie Nature Reserve". We need to hear from members who have visited the reserve and used the guide. Have you names to add to our lists of the flora and fauna? We would like to include lists of mammals and amphibians and reptiles as well as birds and plants in the next edition. Please send your comments, additions (and/or deletions) to any members of the TFN editorial committee before January 1, 1985.

These were some of the workers' rewards...

gray goldenrod

and

fringed gentian

Jim Baillie Nature Reserve

ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP REPORT

Bill Draper, Senior Environmental Planner for Ontario Hydro's Land Use and Environmental Planning Department, was our guest at the September meeting. Bill's background includes full-time work for the Federation of Ontario Naturalists. This makes him a good interface between the TFN and Hydro. He gave a slide/talk presentation that he prepared, illustrating Ontario Hydro's planning approaches to transmission lines as they relate to rare plants, wildlife habitat, cultural (man-made) landscapes and right-of-way management.

By use of his slides Bill pointed out a number of ways that Hydro is becoming more sensitive to environmental concerns. One case involved the small whorled pogonia, a very rare species with only one Canadian stand. In order to avoid destruction of this rare plant, Hydro modified the route of a planned transmission line from Nanticoke to London. Another instance involved the West Virginia white butterfly, the only insect protected by the Endangered Species Act. In order to protect the two-leafed toothwort, the source of food for this rare butterfly, a transmission line through a maple forest was elevated by towers with extensions and cutting was minimized and selectively done. From these examples, Bill stressed the importance of identifying rare species or significant breeding habitats during the critical planning stages. Information from naturalist organizations or other sources is essential.

Another way in which Hydro is taking into consideration the design and location of transmission towers is in their installation in rural farm areas. Planning now takes into consideration not only soil condition and drainage, but also how well the tower is integrated into its surroundings (cultural landscape). Farmers tend to prefer locating transmission lines along remaining forest cover rather than along planted crop acreage.

The meeting provided an opportunity for TFN members to express a number of concerns they have about the protection of natural areas. One in particular was the extent and frequency of spraying. Although spraying in some circumstances is a necessary evil to control woody vegetation, we questioned "overkill" methods and urged more frequent use of alternative methods, particularly near inhabited areas.

TFN members also related specific instances - both positive and negative - of Hydro's effect on Toronto's ravines and other natural areas. Suggestions for further cooperation were made.

Melanie Milanich

It's just a ploughed field
With some persistent grasses.
Yet I look again.

haiku by Diana Banville

Toronto Region BIRD RECORDS

for the period Aug. 15 to Sept. 15/84

Contributors: Howard Battae, Andrea Beatson, Sandy Cappell, Glenn Coady, Mike Delorey, Wendy Hunter, Beth Jefferson, Helen Juhola, Bruce Parker, Jim Rising, Jim Sharron, Rudi Strange, Bob Yukich

Four COMMON LOONS were sighted flying west along the lake Sept. 12 (BJ). GREAT BLUE HERON and several BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERONS spent many days fishing at Grenadier Pond (GC, MD, BJ). A BRANT goose was seen at Leslie St. Spit Aug. 19 (JR). 250 BLUE-WINGED TEAL were seen diving Sept. 1 at Holland Landing (BP). One was seen at Grenadier Pond Aug. 27 and Sept. 3. Four NORTHERN SHOVELERS were at the same spot Sept. 3 (GC, MD, BJ).

On Toronto Island, Sept. 5, 50+ SHARP-SHINNED HAWKS, a COOPER'S HAWK, RED-TAILED HAWK, RED-SHOULDERED, BROAD-WINGED HAWK and AMERICAN KESTREL were observed (BY). Many people have seen OSPREY this past month: at Corner Marsh Aug. 22 (BP), at G. Ross Lord Park Sept 2 (SC), at Grenadier Pond Sept. 3 and 4 (GC, MD, BJ) and Sept. 15 (RS). A MERLIN was spotted on Leslie St. Spit Sept. 2 (GC). A WOODCOCK was observed on Toronto Island Sept. 14 (JR).

Participants on a TFN outing Aug. 27 observed a SOLITARY SANDPIPER, GREATER and LESSER YELLOWLEGS, LEAST and SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPERS in Grenadier Pond. Twenty HUDSONIAN GODWITS were at Frenchman's Bay Sept. 9 (BP).

An immature FORSTER'S TERN was seen at the mouth of the Humber Sept. 9 (JS).

Migrating COMMON NIGHTHAWKS were observed: 100+ along Royal York Road Aug. 28 (BJ); 20 were hovering over the Summerhill subway station on Sept. 13 (HJ).

Large numbers of RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRDS have been reported: Grenadier Pond Sept. 3 (GC, MD, BJ); Cranberry Marsh Sept. 8 (AB, WH); the ROM Sept. 8 (HJ).

A family of RED-HEADED WOODPECKERS was observed in High Park Sept. 1 and 3 (GC).

A YELLOW-BELLIED FLYCATCHER was banded on Muggs Island Sept. 14 (JR). A WILLOW FLYCATCHER was seen on Toronto Island on Sept. 5 (BY).

A HOUSE WREN was observed at the Thackeray Landfill site Aug. 13 (SC).

A stunned GRAY-CHEEKED THRUSH was rescued and released Sept. 14 by students at a school in Long Branch (BJ).

Several BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHERS (more than usual for the fall) were sighted by Bob Yukich on Toronto Island Sept. 5 and in High Park Sept. 6.

Also banded on Muggs Is. Sept. 14 was a PALM WARBLER (JR). A NORTHERN WATER-THRUSH was seen by a number of people on a TFN outing Aug. 27 on the north west side of Grenadier Pond. WILSON'S WARBLERS were seen in High Park on Sept. 3 and 4 (GC).

A "murmuration" of 50 GRACKLES was observed at Yonge and Wellesley Sept 15 (HJ).

Unusual behaviour was noted with normally herbivorous birds fly-catching: Glenn Coady reported many CEDAR WAXWINGS in the willows on the northeast corner of Grenadier Pond acting like flycatchers; adult MALLARDS in eclipse plumage were snatching newly emerged caddisflies from the air above the lake in New Toronto Sept. 11 (BJ).

Please send your sightings to:
Beth Jefferson, 41 Lake Shore Dr., Apt. 404, New Toronto M8V 1Z3
or call 251-2998 between 6 and 10 pm

Beth Jefferson

Strange Sightings

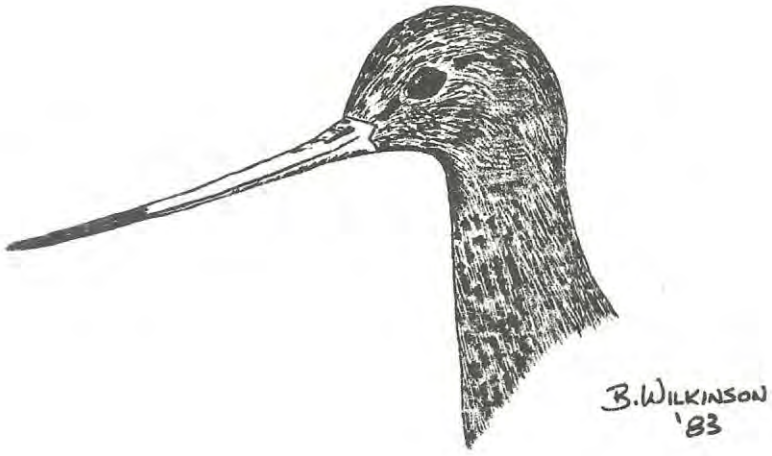
No bears in town. And no urban wildlife, it seemed, was attracted to the delicious berries in our raspberry patch. Cottontails, squirrels, raccoons, skunks, and numerous birds were paying them no attention. (Our saskatoons, on the other hand, were hardly allowed to ripen each day before being devoured.) Then one day as I was eating raspberries in the garden and noticing, for the first time, that some of the berries were only half there, I heard a very strange THUMP!...pause...THUMP!...pause...THUMP THUMP!... Eventually I located the source: A cardinal was challenging his reflection in the rearview mirror of the truck parked on the driveway. The THUMP was caused when the bird crashed into the mirror; the pause when he hopped on to the top edge of the mirror and looked around for his vanished opponent. An examination of the mirror disclosed the muddy marks of repeated thumpings, with red streaks among them; could they be blood, or the colour coming off those red feathers? Just then I noticed, on the top corner of the mirror, two raspberry seeds!

This morning the cardinal is patrolling closer as I finish the day's supply of berries.

Mary Smith

Ants at picnics are an institution, but why is it that, in Toronto, we find those yellow-jacket wasps coming around when we are having our lunch? (By the way, I don't recall this "problem" occurring in the days of my youth.) On our sketching outing at Kew Beach - September 8, 1984 - the wasps provided some measure of interest. They must have had a great liking for liverwurst, since they swarmed around me more than the others. At last one of them got into my lunch bag and in being extricated became our only casualty. As its carcass lay pathetically on the ground, along came another wasp which began sampling it as a meal - not unusual since cannibalism in insects is often observed. However, the surprise came when it picked up its fallen comrade/meal and FLEW OFF with it! Well, I had seen insects carrying loads bigger than themselves while walking - which is amazing enough; however, they do at least, in these cases, have some help from gravity in anchoring themselves - but in flight? Obviously it is quite possible so must happen often enough - sometimes I wonder where I've been all these years.

Diana Banville



"Twenty Hudsonian Godwits were at Frenchman's Bay September 9."

LANDMARK PRESERVATION PLAN UNDER STUDY

Are there any exceptional natural phenomena or natural wonders out there you would like to see protected and preserved? Are they perhaps small or unusually located so that they fall through the cracks of Parks Canada aquisitions? If so, maybe you already know a candidate for a new federal initiative called the Canadian Landmarks System.

Some superior examples of natural features do not fit the requirements for park status. They might measure an acre or a few square miles and might even be found within an urban area. Spectacular canyons, forest stands, fossil sites, meteor craters or mineral springs might qualify, to name but a few.

Until recently, there has been no federal policy for preserving such places. If implemented, the new system would change all that by protecting nationally significant sites under the broad categories of geology, ecology, landforms, vegetation and wildlife.

Before the system can be implemented Parks Canada must reach an agreement with provincial and territorial governments, after which a document for comment and a public review process will be undertaken.

Already, however, environmental groups and others have taken note of the new initiative. According to Ian McNeill of the National Parks Branch, many letters have been received suggesting sites for inclusion as landmarks, including Robson Bight in British Columbia. McNeill feels this input is useful for the kind of nationwide inventory work currently being done, but he cautions that the system is still being developed. Decisions on identifying sites, quantities and funding are as yet undetermined.

The intent, however, is clear, Canadian landmarks will be pure, almost elite examples in given categories of natural features, or the last surviving samples of their kind in Canada.

Enquiries and ideas can be directed to:
Mr. P.A. Thompson, Director, National Parks Branch, 2nd Floor, 10 Wellington St., Les Terrasses de la Chaudiere, Hull, Quebec

from Ottawatch, No. 7 published by Friends of the Earth

ON LISTENING...

Most people can only stand short periods of complete solitude and silence. Too long, and these things begin to act like a poison instead of a vital tonic. But for those who are trying to acquire an oasis of calm within themselves while living in everyday surroundings, they will find that short periods of isolation in a silent countryside will be of great help, because an outer silence and absence of busyness helps one to discover an inner silence and serenity.

(from THE BECKONING LAND by Rowena Farre, Victor Gollancz Ltd., London, 1969)

IN EXCHANGE

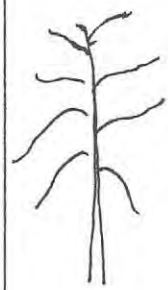
A GUIDE, WITH RANGE MAPS, TO THE NATIVE RED OAKS OF WESTERN LAKE ONTARIO

Oaks are divided into two subgenera, red and white. White oaks have rounded lobes and mature fruit in one season. Red oaks have pointed lobes and mature fruit over two seasons. The fruit of the former have white flesh and are edible. The fruit of the latter have yellow flesh and are inedible. White oaks have pale bark which tends to scales. Red oaks have dark bark which tends to ridges. It is wise for beginners to start in October with mature fruit and leaves. Choose leaves for studying from fruiting branches. Be aware that oaks are notorious hybridizers; you won't be able to call them all until you have studied them for years. Oaks have clustered end buds. Choose the terminal buds on vigorous fruiting twigs from September to April for study.

Diagnostic points underlined

SUBJECT	Red Quercus rubra	Black Quercus velutina	Scarlet Quercus coccinea	Pin Quercus palustris	Hill's Quercus ellipsoidalis	Shumard's Quercus shumardii
FRUIT - N.B. Right half is cut away to show degree of cup involvement. Acorns are scaled to each other about half life size.	 Smooth and brown shallow cup.	 Upper scales loose. Encloses half the nut.	 Shiny brown. Encloses half the nut.	 Shallow cup on flattened nut	 Finely gray hairy. Encloses one third of the nut.	 Finely gray hairy. Shallow cup.
TWIGS AND BUDS	 Sharp, red, over 3/16" = 5 mm. Naked twigs stout	 Sharp buffy hairy over 5 mm. Twigs stout, may be hairy.  Pentagonal viewed on end = diagnostic	 Rounded over 5 mm. Upper half hairy. Twigs slender.	 Sharp under 5 mm. naked, red, Twigs slender and persistent	 Sharp under 5 mm. Each bud scale hairy fringed. Twigs slender and gray hairy when young.	 Sharp brown. Naked under 5mm.

NATIVE RED OAKS (cont'd)

SUBJECT	Red	Black	Scarlet	Pin	Hill's	Shumard's
BARK	Smooth gray when young. Smooth gray ridges between cracks.	Square black blocks. "Alligator skin"	Gray to brown square blocks	Smooth pinkish gray gradually cracking in old age.	Intermediate between pin and black but more like pin	Smooth gray, eventually scaly ridges (Shows red in cracks)
FORM	Oval crown. Ascending branches 	Broad oval crown. Main branches ascend at 45 degrees. side branches droop at 90 degrees. 	Formless, sprawling Usually no leader 	"Christmas Tree" shape. Lower branches drooping and persistent. Numerous persistent dead "pin-like" twigs 	Narrow oval crown. Ascending branches. Good leader.	Oval crown. Ascending branches.
HABITAT	Throughout	Well drained soils	Dry sand and gravel	Swamps and other poorly drained soils.	Well drained soils (Also pond shores)	Poorly drained soils
BEST EASILY-ACCESSIBLE SPECIMEN	North side Grand Ave. School Grimsby (This magnificent example predates European settlement) or ubiquitous	Woodland Cemetery Burlington N.B. Do not trust R.B.G. labels on R.B.G. property !!!	Beamsville Post Office, Lincoln, Ontario	In front of Grimsby or Ridgeville High Schools.	Waterloo-Brant County Line just east of Hwy. 24 (south side)	North side of Line 9, St. David's Niagara-on the-lake.

NATIVE RED OAKS (cont'd)...

SUBJECT	Red	Black	Scarlet	Pin	Hill's	Shumard's
LEAVES (Terminal on fruiting branches in October.)	DULL 9 - 11 lobes. Shallow sinuses less than ½ way to midrib. Nil hair tufts. Leaf obovate	Shiny 7 lobes, dark olive top. Light olive bottom- may be hairy Leaf elliptical.	Shiny 7 - 9 lobes. Bright green both sides. Nil to little hair tufts in axils. Bottom two pairs of lobes seem parallel. Second pair from bottom is widest part of leaf	Shiny 5 (7) lobes. Medium hair tufts.	Shiny 5 - 7 lobes Medium hair tufts.	Shiny 7 - 11 lobes Medium hair tufts. Leaf is "top heavy" Obovate i.e. top pair of lobes is widest part of leaf
FALL COLOUR	Yellow brown to bright red	Yellow or brown	Bright red, scarlet or burgundy	Yellow, brown, to bright red	Yellow, brown, Tinge of red	Yellowish brown to bright red

In addition to the six preceding native red oaks, interested persons may view the following eastern American red oaks at the author's residence:

southern red oak (Quercus falcata)
shingle oak (Quercus imbricaria)
laurel oak (Quercus laurifolia)
water oak (Quercus nigra)
bear oak (Quercus ilicifolia)
bluejack oak (Quercus incana)
blackjack oak (Quercus marilandica)
willow oak (Quercus phellos)

and a most unusual, as yet unnamed, hybrid of scarlet and shingle oaks (Quercus coccinea X imbricaria).

George A. Meyers (416) 945-4217
7 Bedford Park Drive, Grimsby, Ontario L3M 2S1

Diagnostic points underlined

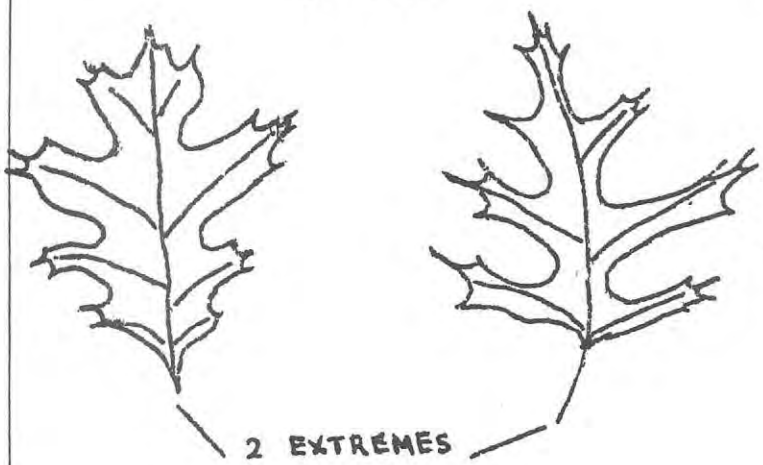
Reprinted from THE WOOD DUCK, Vol. 37, No. 9, May/84
(Hamilton Naturalists' Club)

NATIVE RED OAKS (cont'd)

RED

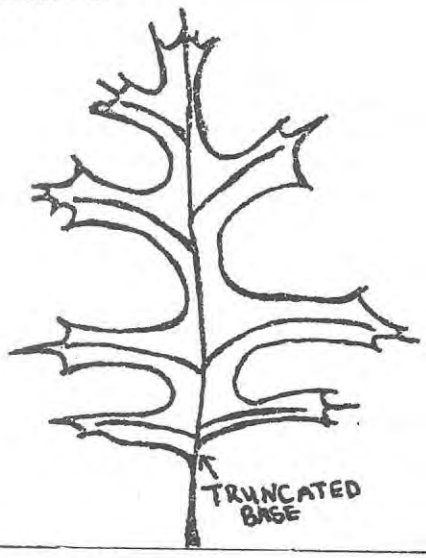
Range map for Red Oak not shown since its range is ubiquitous.

BLACK

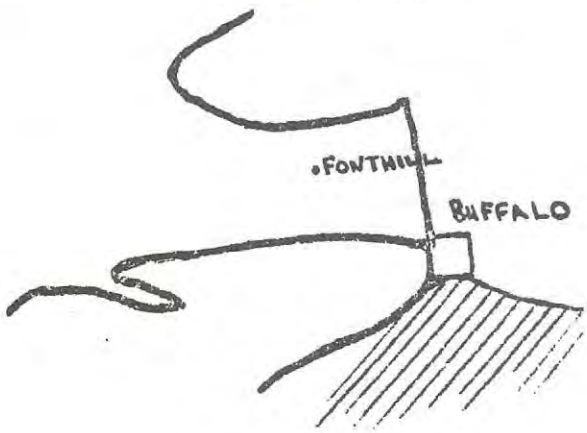


BLACK

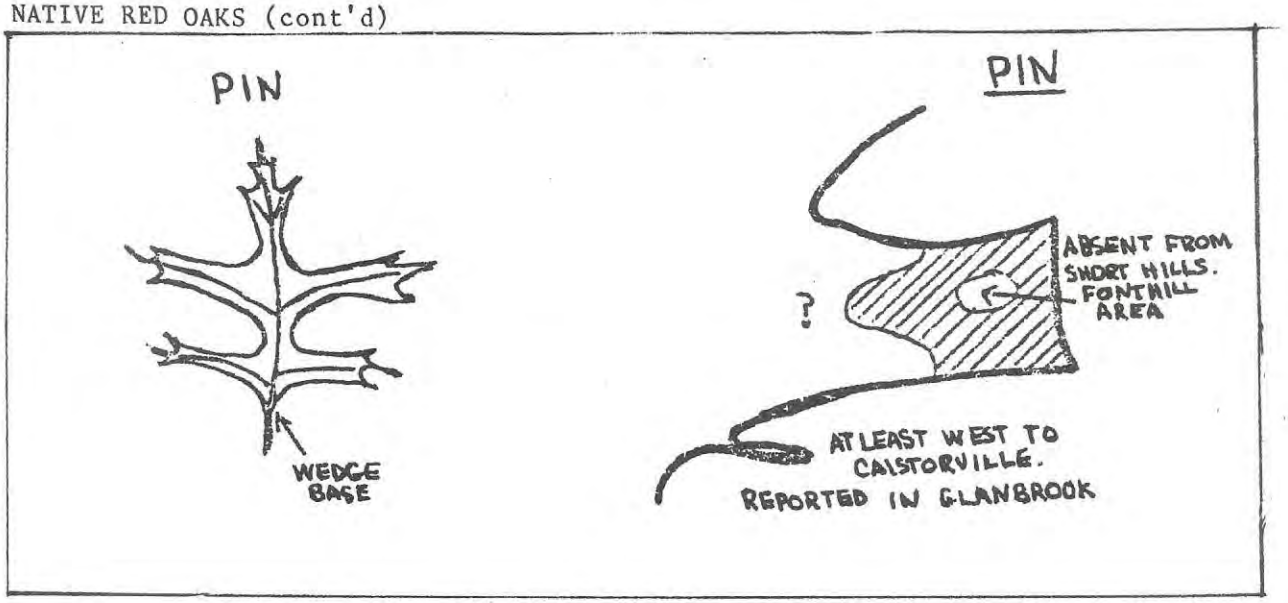
SCARLET

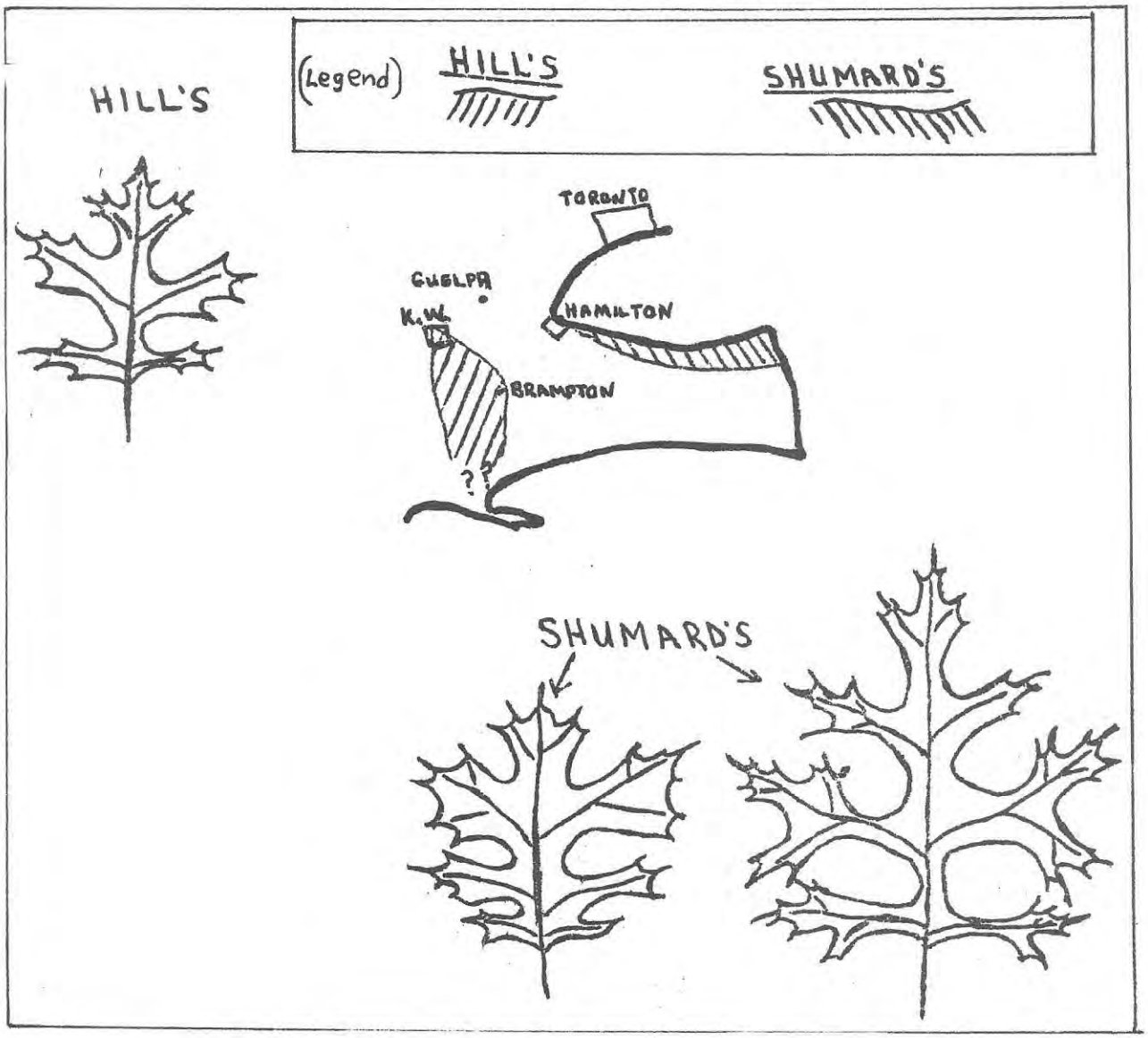


SCARLET



NATIVE RED OAKS (cont'd)





IN EXCHANGE (cont'd)...

REMEMBER THE SPARROW, THE STARLING, THE PIGEON

The following two notes by Dave Ruch are copied from The Naturalist, Vol. 30, No. 6, Sept. 1984 (a publication of the Durham Region Field Naturalists, Oshawa, Ont.)

GUINEA FOWL: Those big black gallinaceous birds you may be seeing around the countryside recently are tufted Guinea Fowls (Numida meleagris) according to The birds of Britain and Europe by Heinzel, Fitter and Parslow. The birds are native to Morocco and Southern France, but they are apparently often domesticated. They're a little smaller than turkeys, about two feet tall (63 cm), fat, black, quail-like birds with white specking. They have small, white turkey-like heads with red "wattles" and crest. They're rather vocal with a variety of cackling calls, as anyone who's encountered them knows.

My first encounter with them was last summer at Lynde Shores Conservation Area when my mother and I noted two noisily walking along the edge of the woods, bobbing in and out of the vegetation. At first I thought they were "wild" turkeys, but it soon became apparent that they were different. We were able to approach these tame or foolish birds to within a few feet and they appeared unconcerned. When I got home, I went through several books until I found a picture of them in the above-mentioned guide.

Mother later called the Brouwer Garden Centre just west of Lynde Shores knowing that they had quite a flock of various game birds. They informed her that indeed they had a pair of tufted guinea fowls, but they often flew out and the staff were reluctant to clip the wings.

The Lynde Shores birds were often seen and heard until early winter. I feared that a bird that was native to the Mediterranean might not fare too well in an Ontario winter. Their food is a mixture of seeds, fruit and small invertebrates obtained by scratching the ground like chickens according to The International Wildlife Encyclopedia. They eat many pests, but also may damage some crops.

It's not known how the Lynde Shores pair fared, but recently a small flock has appeared at a farm north of Cranberry Marsh, presumably brought in by the farmer. Also, four or more birds were regularly found on the Oak Ridges Moraine near Purple Woods Conservation Area during March. They seemed to survive adverse weather, so they should nest this year. Typically nests are located in scratched-out hollows in grassy fields and may contain up to 20 eggs. The birds are highly "moral", being totally monogamous, thus making them inefficient to raise for eggs.

They do fly as I can testify, but they prefer to run from danger. Will these birds become a regular part of our local fauna? Watch and see. Remember the ring-necked pheasants aren't native to North America.

MUTE SWANS NEST IN SCUGOG: Speaking of Purple Woods and introduced species -- on April 12th of this year, Peter Tumey found and showed me a pair of mute swans, apparently nesting near the conservation area. The pair had been on a farm pond north of the Tenth Concession, East of Simcoe St. On the 12th, one was observed pulling at weeds and dead cattails surrounding the pond with its bill and seemingly putting them into the beginnings of a nest on the edge of the pond a few feet away. As the pond is north of Concession 10 this places the nest in Scugog Township (or old Reach Township) which is I believe a first for the municipality and the first local nesting away from the Lake Ontario marshes. Unfortunately, the big birds are aggressive towards other birds.

IN EXCHANGE (cont'd)...

DID YOU SAY "A BALD BLUE JAY"?

The strange saga of the bald-headed bluejays concludes this issue of Nature Notebook. The first call came Aug. 7 from Sandy Pt. Rd. Mrs. Day reported a bluejay with no head feathers carrying on an otherwise normal life at the feeder. I put it down to just one of those things -- until I got a second call Aug. 16. Mr. Montague in Westfield had a couple of jays with no neck feathers and another with a bare head. This time I stumbled through the possibilities, dismissing one bird pecking another and nutritional problems almost... immediately wondering a little longer if jays had some weird moult pattern (but not really able to see how they could afford, heatwise, to lose all the head feathers at once), and finally supposing some sort of skin or feather parasite could be at work on the bluejays of southern New Brunswick. When thee third call came in, Aug. 20 from Shirley Foren in St. Martins, I decided to call on the experts. David Christie wasn't answering the phone in Mary's Pt., so I called the Canadian Wildlife Service in Fredericton, and explained the problem to Dan Busby. I nearly dropped the phone when he exclaimed that, he too, had a bald jay at his feeder! As I had with the first call, he had been mildly curious but thought it an individual oddity. With reports on half-a-dozen birds from Saint John, though, he was determined to get to the bottom of it.

As he did. Calls to parasitologists at U.N.B. and Memorial University in Newfoundland, resulted in the expert opinion that a particularly heavy infestation (probably favoured by the hot, humid weather this year) of mite or tick was responsible for denuding the jays. The birds are not able to preen the parasites from their heads, making the effects most noticeable there. All birds carry a healthy complement of external parasites at the best of times, and to tell whether the baldies are suffering from a mite or tick is impossible without examining an infected jay. Those who know say the parasites are often very host specific -- meaning those that like jays wouldn't touch a robin, for instance -- so whatever it is is unlikely to sweep through other birds at the feeder.

Since then we have had reports of two more affected bluejays at Musquash, leading us to conclude that bird brains they may be, but feather-headed they are definitely not!

from "Nature Notebook" by Gayl Hipperson in the Saint John Naturalists Club newsletter, September 1984

from Gilbert White's Natural history and Antiquities of Selbourne

It has been my misfortune never to have had any neighbours whose studies have led them towards the pursuit of natural knowledge; so that, for want of a companion to quicken my industry and sharpen my attention, I have made but slender progress in a kind of information to which I have been attached from childhood.

SESQUICENTENNIAL REFLECTIONS

A bear on Bay Street, wolf packs in the Don Valley, and fever relief on the Island. These are just a few of the episodes in Toronto's past that are worth recalling in this, the city's Sesquicentennial Year.

Torontonians, hurrying with heads down in the Bay Street financial wind tunnel, may arrive at their offices out of puff. But at least they don't have to worry about meeting bears. Probably few of these commuters are even aware that Bay Street used to be Bear Street. (Nothing to do with the stock market.) Rather it was because of the time in Muddy York (which became Toronto in 1834) when a bear, chased out of the nearby woods, tried to escape by fleeing to the safety of the lake by this route. Later, Bear Street was renamed Bay Street. Writing about the change of name, Dr. Pelham Mulvany, in his book Toronto: Past and Present, had this comment: "It is a pity that by the stupidity of municipal Dogberries, stone-blind to the picturesque, this street should ever have lost a name so characteristic of our city's early history." Another bear was killed on downtown George Street in 1809 by an army officer who took his sword and cut off the animal's head. As well as bears, other wild animals familiar to Toronto's first settlers included the gray wolf, the wolverine, and the lynx. In his book, published in 1884, Dr. Mulvany writes about the gray wolf (Canis lupus), "the howling of whose hunting parties used, in living memory, to be heard in the valley of the Don".

The Don Valley was mentioned frequently in the diary of Elizabeth Simcoe, wife of Upper Canada's first lieutenant-governor. On July 30, 1793, they and their party had sailed into the harbour at York after crossing the lake from Niagara. The water in the Bay, she wrote, "was beautifully clear and transparent". In September of that year she described a six-mile boat trip up the Don River to Coons, "a farm under a hill covered with Pine". She remarked on "fine Butternut trees" and noted that the party found the river "very shallow in many parts and obstructed by fallen Trees". At one, the men rowing had to stoop their heads to get under. The one bird she mentions on this trip was a bald eagle that "sat on a blasted Pine on a very bold Pt. just above the fallen Tree".

Eagles and wolves are no longer part of the Don Valley. Toronto Island, too, is much changed from when Mrs. Simcoe raced her horse there in 1793. On September 23 she "rode on the Peninsula". (Not until the great storms of 1858 cut out the eastern gap would the Peninsula become the Island.) "My horse had spirit enough to wish to get before others. I rode a race with Mr. Talbot to keep warm. I gathered wild grapes, they are pleasant but not sweet." From the Peninsula she watched loons on the lake whose call "was like a Man hollowing (sic) in a tone of distress."

The Island today is a place where we can go to see Ring-billed Gulls and Black-crowned Night-Herons and to look for Fringed Gentians and Nodding Ladies'-tresses. The air we find so bracing has long attracted residents of Toronto. Some of us can remember the mad Monday-to-Friday summer afternoon dashes from hot downtown offices to the ferry dock. Fortunate indeed were those city-dwellers going to spend their summer on the Island.

SESQUICENTENNIAL REFLECTIONS (cont'd)...

When Mrs. Simcoe arrived she found that the local Indians regarded the Island, with its healing breezes, as the place to go when they were ill. So, too, did the white settlers in the years that followed. On the Island they found relief from the fevers that were a part of life in early Toronto.

In winter the frozen waters of the Bay were a giant playground for Torontonians. Skating and iceboating were popular. For skaters there was a course stretching from Blockhouse Bay in the west to the eastern end of Ashbridge's Bay, a distance of between five and six miles. An account of iceboating on the Bay in 1853 noted that, "In these boats ladies frequently enjoy a sail, free from the terrors of sea-sickness."

Perhaps the skaters and boaters were watched, from open patches of water, by Oldsquaw. Among our most interesting winter bird visitors today, they may well have been coming here before there was a Toronto. Feeding on fish the Oldsquaw are very deep divers; they have been found entangled in fishermen's nets at depths of 180 feet and more. And the down they leave behind in their Arctic nests rivals eider down in quality. It has been suggested that the Oldsquaw,* sometimes called Old Wife or Old Granny in the north, were named by the Cree Indians. The story is that the birds' noisy chatter and yodelling whistles reminded the Indians of a constantly complaining squaw.

Just a few miles east of the Bay are the towering sand castles that mark the source of much of the land that forms the Island. Elizabeth Simcoe wrote about them too in her diary. Within a week of her arrival in York she was in a small boat being rowed along a shore that she described as "extremely bold (with) the appearance of Chalk Cliffs but I believe they are only white Sand. They appeared so well that we talked of building a summer Residence there and calling it Scarborough." As we know, the Simcoes did not build their summer home there. Instead they selected a site on the brow of a hill above the Don River near what is now Bloor Street. They named their summer retreat after their son, Francis, who was a babe in arms when they came to Canada in September 1791. Today an historical plaque and a nearby street and subway station remind us of the Simcoes and their Castle Frank.

In 1984 Mrs. Simcoe would still recognize Scarborough Bluffs, although nearly 200 years of wind and water have changed their face. And she wouldn't need to take a boat to see them; she could just ride down Brimley Road to Bluffer's Park.

Harold Taylor

Literature cited:

Toronto: Past and Present, C. Pelham Mulvany, M.A., M.D., 1884.
Ontario Reprint Press, 1970.
Mrs. Simcoe's Diary, edited by Mary Quayle Innis,
Macmillan of Canada, 1965.

Ed. note - From material prepared by Harold Taylor for his TFN nature notes for Art Drysdale's 10 AM Saturday broadcasts on CFRB.

*called "Long-tailed Duck" in the Old World.

TORONTO REGION MAMMAL RECORDS

Let's find out about...

THE EASTERN GREY SQUIRREL

Sesquicentennial Year is waning, but not so the "sesqui squirrel"! At this time of year it is very active and coming into fine pelt for mid-winter mating. Though the eastern grey squirrel (Sciurus carolinensis) was chosen as Toronto's mascot for our 150th anniversary, it hardly seems that sufficient advantage has been taken to acquaint ourselves with this now-daring now-wary little mammal. An article was written for NEWSCIENCE, March, 1984 issue, entitled "Squirrel Talk" which describes it as "a very successful city-dweller, used to high-rise living, dodging traffic and the general rodent race..." Indeed there is a larch with a squirrel-drey near its summit which is conveniently viewed from my 7th floor high-rise balcony. On January 4, 1984, I watched as two squirrels ran in and out of it (a grey-phase and a black-phase) with twigs, apparently repairing it. Later, however, I saw no evidence that they were using it as a nest; I hope they decided on a tree-cavity for the sake of the hairless new babies who would be arriving - if they were serious about this thing - not later than March. Though I read that squirrels sometimes use the dreys for raising young, I'm assuming this would be more likely to happen with the second brood in mid-summer, or as a second nursery for those born in early spring, after the first nest has become fouled.

Why is it that we so seldom see young squirrels? While they are very small, they of course remain in their tree-cavity home for about 36 days. Only once in my life have I seen the infant squirrels. It was in the 50's in High Park where I watched a squirrel whom I thought was a marauder carrying a little grey naked blob in her mouth, from one high tree-cavity to another some hundred meters distant. But soon I realized these were her own babies whom she was transferring one by one, in such a methodical, purposeful way. I later read that squirrels will transfer their young to a safer location, once threatened. On only one other occasion did I see the slightly older young - again in the days before I kept field notes, about 1970 - at the stage when they come out of the nest to exercise in the trees. This time it was in Parkdale. They were black phase, about half the size of an adult with proportionately shorter and less bushy tails, rotund and round-faced, appealingly Disneyesque as they frolicked. I marvelled and wondered why I had not witnessed such a scene before. Nor have I since. Just another case where we think of an animal as "familiar" but, in fact, how much do we really know about it? We can be grateful for the literature that is available but cannot expect that it will not at times be ambiguous or even misleading. There is no substitute for study of populations in a given area.

If you have a garden or lawns with large trees, or like to walk in parks or ravines, why not be a squirrel-watcher? If you should see young grey squirrels, write down the date and estimate the size - particularly if there is an adult present with which to compare them. Record their activities. Observe adults too. The "mating chase" should be happening in January and February, according to the literature, but I have records of chases in October and November - just practising? My favourite such record is October 6, 1982, at Riverdale Park when three totally distinct colour-phases were involved, chasing up and down a Norway maple - one black, one grey and one rufous with white underside, the last-mentioned looking like a giant red squirrel. Now, if they too were serious about it, young could be born in November - which might explain that pregnant-looking grey female I saw in Metro Zoo grounds November 16, 1983 (her tail was not quite so bushy as those of most grey-phase individuals).

THE EASTERN GREY SQUIRREL...continued

The tendency of the rufous colour to manifest itself in the eastern grey squirrel population in our area within the last twenty years or so could be a help in studying the animal (no need for banding nor ear-tagging when the individuals are already colour-coded!). However, we have to take into account, while we're watching, seasonal colour changes. The fulvous (more like rufous in our local populations) is supposed to be evident in the summer, but I see I have an entry on November 6, 1982, for Rushton Road, of a black squirrel with rufous tail and a wash of rufous on the flanks. Someone who is very intrigued by this colour phenomenon might like to keep a colour chart of the eastern grey squirrel in Metro region - with headings of date, location, numbers observed, and predominant colour. Squirrels of predominant colours of grey (grizzled), black, rufous, dark grey, dark brown, and white have been seen in the area. Another column could be headed "variegated" with room for remarks to describe the combination of colours in the individual's pelage. (The fulvous or tawny colour is usually, if not always, present in the "grey" phase, but is subdued by the white tips of the guard-hairs, for a grizzled effect. Sometimes, however, a dark animal may have a fulvous belly rather than whitish.) But if you'd rather just ignore all the "aberrant" colours, it would be useful to keep a record of black phase vs. grey phase. In my early youth I used to think a grey squirrel a novelty, the black being, it appeared, about 90% of the population in that area ("Garrison Creek" as we call it on our outings). There were no other colour phases in my memory. Counting up the entries in my field notes for the past eight years, slightly over half were black-phase, one-quarter grey-phase, and the other quarter of other colours or combinations. By the way, our race of this species is called Sciurus carolinensis leucotis. "Sciurus" means "shade-tail", "carolinensis" is often given to species in temperate, eastern North America (it ranges to the Gulf coast, middle west, and east to New Brunswick, north to the Ottawa River), "leucotis", applying only to our northern race, means "white-eared", yet I have only one entry for this feature - February 17, 1983, Alexander Street. (The back of the ears is supposed to turn white in winter in the grey phase; this one did at least.)

If you recognize the species of tree on which you find an eastern grey squirrel, why not record that too? Which trees have cavities which seem to interest them? Which provide food (nuts, acorns, winged seeds - anything else?) Notice what they forage for on the ground - mushrooms, bread and cake crumbs - anything else? In fact any observations you may make of this species will be welcome for our study. Any project which might inspire one to start noticing this animal more is bound to be rewarding. The eastern grey squirrel deserves to make the pages of the Toronto Region Mammal Records in this newsletter more often.

Diana Banville

Ref.: MAMMALS OF THE GREAT LAKES REGION by William H. Burt
THE SQUIRRELS OF CANADA by S. E. Woods
A FIELD GUIDE TO THE MAMMALS by Burt & Grossenheider
THE ILLUSTRATED ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF ANIMAL LIFE Vol. 3, Drimmer et al.
(These books are all in TFN Library - 690-1963)

This Month's Cover "Eastern Grey Squirrel" by Mary Cumming.

Since squirrels scamper too much to qualify as models, Mary had to rely on a mounted specimen in the National Museum of Natural History in Ottawa as subject for her sketch. Still she caught that audacious attitude which both frustrates and amuses.

projects

THE JAMES L. BAILLIE MEMORIAL FUND

The James L. Baillie Memorial Fund for Bird Research and Preservation invites applications for grants in amounts up to $1000 to support projects on Canadian birds in 1985. The Fund's aim is to encourage field studies by amateur naturalists and to support projects which increase or disseminate knowledge of birds in their natural environment and/or contribute to their preservation.

Two types of grants will be offered in 1985:
(a) Project Grants - Projects which have a volunteer component and meet the Fund's objectives. Applications due by December 31, 1984.
(b) Ontario Atlas Fieldwork Grants - Partial support for travelling expenses to remote central and northern areas for fieldwork on the Ontario Atlas of Breeding Birds. Applications due by February 28, 1985.

All applications should be submitted on forms obtainable from the Secretary, The James L. Baillie Memorial Fund, c/o Long Point Bird Observatory, P.O. Box 160, Port Rowan, Ontario. NOE 1MO.

COLOUR-MARKED COMMON TERNS

The Canadian Wildlife Service, Ontario Region, is continuing its program of colour-marking Common Terns at two colonies in the lower Great Lakes to determine their post-breeding dispersal, migration routes and winter range.

In 1984 several terns tagged as adults in previous years were back at the nesting colonies. In addition, a few immatures tagged in 1981 returned to nest as adults. In 1984 white tags (with a red trim and red lettering) were put on adult Common Terns and yellow tags (with black lettering) on chicks.

When you observe a tagged tern would you please report the date, location, colour of the tag, and, if possible, the number/letter combination to: Banding Office, Canadian Wildlife Service, Headquarters, Ottawa, Ontario. K1A 0E7. All reports will be acknowledged.

WOULD-BE WILDFLOWER GARDENERS SOUGHT

Jim French of Unionville is asking those interested in growing wildflowers to help him found the Canadian Wildflower Society, whose aims would be to study, cultivate and preserve wildflowers, encourage conservation efforts, and provide an organized voice on such matters. He can be reached at 35 Bauer Crescent, Unionville, Ontario, L3R 4H3.

ONTARIO BREEDING BIRD ATLAS

Plans are starting now for the final atlassing season - February to August, 1985. Information is especially needed on owls, rails, accipiters, whippoorwills, nighthawks, Henslow's sparrow, warblers. People familiar with bird songs are being sought, also people with wilderness experience for northern fly-in and canoe trips which are funded by the Project. Watch for coverage on the CBC series THE NATURE OF THINGS. There will be an atlassing meeting at Trent University, Peterborough March 22-24, 1985. If interested in any aspect of atlassing contact Judith Kennedy at 444-8419 or 449-2553.

THICKSON'S WOODS HERITAGE FOUNDATION

This Foundation was formed to purchase and thus protect the Thickson's Woods which had been threatened for development. There is a large mortgage on the purchase and it is hoped that the National Parks Centennial Citizens' Committee may assist with fund-raising. However nothing is likely to come of this until the end of 1985. The naturalists in the Whitby/Pickering/Oshawa area are having various fund-raising projects in an attempt to reduce the mortgage. Anyone wishing to help in this worthwhile project might send a donation to: Thickson's Woods Heritage Foundation, P. O. Box 541 Whitby, Ontario, L1N 5V3.

ONTARIO LAKES LOON SURVEY

A number of facts appear to threaten the continued existence of loons on Ontario's 250,000 lakes. Disturbance of nests by human activity may prevent eggs from hatching or chicks from growing up. As motorboats and cottages increase, such disturbance becomes more likely and more threatening, but with proper education and protection practices, such threats can probably be avoided. More serious threats are posed by such pollutants as mercury and acid rain; factors which hamper egg hatching and threaten the loons' food supply.

The Ontario Lakes Loon Survey is an ongoing project of the Long Point Bird Observatory. Its objectives are (1) to establish status (2) to establish effects of lake acidity on the common loon. Volunteers have reported on over 700 lakes. Analyses of their data have shown the success rate of nesting to be substantially higher on high alkilinity lakes. The fact that acid rain causes the alkalinity of lakes to decrease suggests that lake acidification may cause loon productivity to decrease; this is possibly a result of diminished food resources associated with acidification. If you would like to participate in the survey, contact Dr. Martin K. McNicholl, Long Point Bird Observatory, Port Rowan, Ontario NOE 1MO. Phone (519) 586-2909.

Directory to Cooperative Naturalists' Projects in Ontario, obtainable from Long Point Bird Observatory, P.O. Box 160, Port Rowan, Ontario. NOE 1MO.

Each project listing includes the aims of the project, requirements of volunteers and the name of the person to contact in order to take part or to obtain further information. A second purpose is to improve communication between project organizers and to encourage the organization of new projects. Most project organizers welcome enquiries from people interested in starting related projects, as do the Editors of this Directory (45 Larose Ave., Apt. 103, Weston, Ontario. M9P 1A8).

The Cherokee Indians, when seeking herbs, gathered only "the fourth plant" in any stand of a single species; thus only a quarter of the available harvest was ever gathered and the survival of the species was ensured.

Submitted by Gwyneth Brandett
Kitchener-Waterloo Field Society

Help !

LETTERS NEEDED

According to At Last Count...an assessment of natural areas in Scarborough, Part 2 published by the City of Scarborough Works Dept. June 1983, the area known as the Centennial Forest and Swamp fulfills four criteria,any one of which qualifies it as an environmentally signficant area.

"The swamp and associated wetland forest serve as a water storage area."

"The area is a significant stopover or concentration point for a great variety of migrating waterfowl and shorebirds. This is probably due to its proximity to the Rouge Valley and the lakeshore environment. The area also contains significant food resources."

"The pure red maple stand is an uncommon vegetation association for the Metro Toronto region. This concentration of red maple, and the fact that it is regenerating extensively, makes this high quality stand significant."

"The area provides habitat for the nationally rare bog twayblade and the regionally rare fringed gentian (Gentiana crinata)."

The following paragraphs are from one of a number of presentations to Scarborough's Planning Committee and Council by the Toronto Field Naturalists.

"As stated in the description of the Centennial Forest and Swamp, the area contains three major habitat types. One of these is the only known red maple forest in Metro Toronto. As such it is of regional significance not only as an education resource and for its recreation potential, but as an important local source of seeds for this species. Another habitat is the pond or swamp which, according to TFN's amphibian and reptile study, is in the best condition of any pond in Metro. It provides habitat for seven species of amphibians and reptiles: the American toad, leopard frog, wood frog, painted turtle, milk snake, little brown snake and garter snake. As well, this site provides an important resting and feeding area for migrating waterfowl in the spring and fall. The adjacent meadow and regenerating woodlands are needed as a buffer zone to protect these more sensitive habitats from the impact of the surrounding urbanized lands.

Because this site is unique in Metro Toronto, we would like to see Scarborough consider development of it as an education and recreation resource.

Areas such as the Centennial Forest and Swamp can only increase in value as urbanization continues. Although we can construct an artificial park, we can not recapture the unique character of a flourishing natural area. We must take steps now to protect, husband, and enhance the remaining natural areas within Metro Toronto so that future generations can enjoy the same natural heritage that exists today."

Unfortunately, Scarborough politicians and planners have decided to drain (or fill) the swamp and replace it with a subdivision. This may or may not destroy the red maple forest by changing the drainage patterns in the area.

Surely the citizens of a city the size of Metropolitan Toronto can find some way to afford to save such a significant remnant of Toronto's natural heritage!

Helen Juhola

IT CAN BE DONE!

The following is extracted from a story "Being 'long on tenacity' does the trick for rescuers of High Park ravine lots" by Bill Schiller of the Toronto Star, Sept. 20, 1984.

"People power is still alive and well and living on Waller Avenue near High Park. A loosely knit, unnamed, leaderless group of tenacious citizens battled [a] developer's right to build on a small lot at the end of their quiet cul-de-sac ... and won. The spoils, a small, sloping lot which backs on to a ravine and measures 28 metres (93 feet) by 18 metres (60 feet), go to the victor, the neighborhood. To the vanquished [developer] go the bills. The lot will return to its natural state. How did [the rescuers] succeed? Tenacity, and along the way neighbours called on the resources of their group which included housewives, an architect, a civil engineer, school kids, a lawyer, a botanist and people from various walks of life who assisted in numerous presentations to the city's planning department. And they used the media to get the story out into the wider community. After this week's announcement that the city would buy the property from the developer to end the dispute, neighbors here are elated. The group ultimately convinced city hall they had made a mistake, that the development was not in the best interests of the neighbourhood and the city, and that the homes should not be built [that were going to be]. What had infuriated the residents most was that despite the street being designated as ravine space, somehow the developer had managed to get in under the wire and get a building permit. Now the neighborhood is applying for its own permit -- for a street celebration sometime in October."

THE WEATHER THIS TIME LAST YEAR

City of Toronto, November 1983.
Winter got a head start this year as a snowstorm covered Toronto on the 4th. This surprise attack gave us 8 cm, the heaviest fall for so early in the season since October 1969. After some hazy Indian summer weather, a strong surge of Arctic air came on the 11th, producing a 7 cm snowfall and plunging temperatures. For the first time in many years, the Santa Claus parade was set in appropriate weather; on the 13th there was snow on the ground and the high was -2° C. No more unusual wintry weather followed, but slushy stuff later in the month contributed to a snowfall total of 18.3 cm, the snowiest November since 1958. The snowfall was higher than that of January or February this year.

November was quite rainy also, with 85.1 mm. Total precipitation was at 103.7 mm. November had 11 hours less sun than normal, the least since 1977. But still this makes autumn '83 the sunniest since 1963.

November was slightly below normal in mean temperature, but by only 0.4° C. The latter part of the month was rather mild, and so was the 6th - 10th.

Gavin Miller

> It has been said that Art reshapes nature; in any case it alters the human being's capacity to see and apprehend nature.

Prince Eugen of Sweden, painter
(from "Mystic North" exhibit, AGO)

COMING EVENTS

Royal Ontario Museum

From November 17 to January 2 the ROM will feature an exhibition of 53 mid-19th century acquatints from John James Audubon's famous work on native birds. Telephone 978-4972 for details.

McLaughlin Planetarium

The show, "The Once and Future Moon" continues until December 9.

"Autumn Stargazing", a one-evening workshop for beginners will be offered in the Planetarium Auditorium Monday, November 26, 7.00 - 9.00 p.m.

For Planetarium information call 978-8550.

Royal Canadian Institute

The following lectures will be given Sundays at 3.00 p.m. in the Medical Sciences Auditorium, University of Toronto. Admission free. Call 979-2004 for more information.

Oct. 28	The Streets of Toronto (Sesquicentennial Lecture) - Ken Greenberg
Nov. 4	The Ontario Science Centre: The Delights of Science Revealed - Dr. J. Tuzo Wilson
Nov. 11	Banting after Insulin: The Strains of Heroism - Professor Michael Bliss
Nov. 18	Memoirs of a Mountain Man - Andy Russell
Nov. 25	The Search for Extraterrestrial Life - Professor Robert F. Garrison
Dec. 2	Arctic Wildlife - Stewart MacDonald

Kortright Centre

From October 6 to November 25, the Kortright Centre will have a display of 25 works of Frank de Matteis, wildlife artist and naturalist.

The Kortright Centre is on Pine Valley Drive, west of Hwy. 400, south of Major Mackenzie Drive, near Kleinburg.

Telephone 661-6600.

Nature Travel Service

A list of Gus Yaki's trips 1984/1985/1986 is available from Nature Travel Service, 127A Princess St., Kingston, Ontario K7L 1A8. Telephone (613) 546-3065.

Wenona Lodge

A special Muskoka Fall Weekend is being offered - October 26, 27, 28, 1984. This weekend will explore the late flora and fauna of the Muskoka Region with Bob Bowles of the Muskoka Field Naturalists. double $120.00 per person, single $135.00, 2 nights, 6 meals included. If interested, contact Wenona Lodge, Sparrow Lake, Severn Bridge, Ontario, POE 1NO. (705) 689-6072.

TFN MEETINGS

VISITORS WELCOME

GENERAL MEETINGS

Board of Education Centre, 6th Floor Auditorium
155 College Street, at McCaul

Monday, November 5, 1984. 8.15 p.m. (Coffee at 7.30)

Everything You Always Wanted to Know About the American Goldfinch, but were afraid to ask.
- Dr. Alex L. A. Middleton, Associate Professor, Department of Zoology, University of Guelph.

Dr. Middleton has made a long-term study of the American Goldfinch, the bright little bird which is sometimes called "Wild Canary", and has made some unique discoveries about its mating system. His talk will be illustrated with slides.

Tuesday, December 4, 1984. 8.15 p.m.

Hardwood Swamps - Arthur Boissoneau, Ministry of Natural Resources.

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GROUP MEETINGS

Bird Group
Wed. Nov.14 Swans and Geese
7.00 p.m.
Location: Room 251, Education Centre, 155 College Street, 1 block west of University Avenue at McCaul.

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Botany Group
Thur. Nov.8 Significant Natural Areas in Metropolitan Toronto
8.00 p.m. and York Regions - Slide talk by Steve Varga
Location: Room 6-7, Botany Bldg., University of Toronto, northwest corner of College and University.

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Environmental Group
Thur. Nov.22 Inventory of East York Natural Resources compiled
7.30 p.m. during the past year - Gavin Miller
Location: Huron Public School, 541 Huron Street, 1 block west of St. George subway station.

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Junior Club
Sat. Nov. 3 Contrasting Wildflowers of the Rockies and Prairies
10.00 a.m. with those of Ontario -- Paul McGaw
Location: Planetarium Auditorium, immediately south of Royal Ontario Museum.

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ALL MEETINGS LISTED HERE ARE FREE. COME AND BRING A FRIEND.

TORONTO FIELD NATURALIST

published eight times a year by the Toronto Field Naturalists, a charitable, non-profit organization, the aims of which are to stimulate public interest in natural history and to encourage the preservation of our natural heritage.

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Members are encouraged to submit notices, reports, articles up to 1500 words in length, and illustrations at least six weeks before the month in which the event is to take place or the material is required to appear.

Other Publications

	Price
TORONTO FIELD NATURALISTS' CLUB: ITS HISTORY AND CONSTITUTION by R.M. Saunders, 1965	$ .50
CHECKLIST OF PLANTS IN FOUR TORONTO PARKS: WILKET CREEK, HIGH PARK, HUMBER VALLEY, LAMBTON WOODS, 1972	.50
TORONTO THE GREEN, 1976	2.50
AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES OF METRO TORONTO, 1983	2.00
TORONTO REGION BIRD CHART, 1983	2.00
FIELD CHECKLIST OF PLANTS OF SOUTHERN ONTARIO, 1977 ..... 5/$1.00 or	.25 ea.
TORONTO FIELD NATURALISTS' RAVINE SURVEYS	2.00 ea.
Survey #1 – Chatsworth Ravine, 1973	
Survey #2 – Brookbanks Ravine, 1974	
Survey #3 – Chapman Valley Ravine, 1975	
Survey #4 – Wigmore Ravine, 1975	
Survey #5 – Park Drive Ravine, 1976	
Survey #6 – Burke Ravine, 1977	
Survey #7 – Taylor Creek-Woodbine Bridge Ravines, 1977	
Survey #8 – West Don Valley, 1978	
A GUIDE TO THE JIM BAILLIE NATURE RESERVE, 1977	1.25
INDEX OF TFN NEWSLETTERS (1938-1978)	10.00
ANNUAL TFN INDEX, 1979, 1980, 1981, 1982	.25 ea.

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$10.00 Student
$15.00 Senior Family (2 adults 65+)
$10.00 Single Senior
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