



TORONTO FIELD NATURALIST

Number 402, March 1989



Vera Irving

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TFN MEETINGS

Visitors welcome

General Meetings

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

Monday, March 6 at 8 pm - KOREA, an illustrated lecture by Art Drysdale about a recent trip he took there.

- + free coffee and social hour from 7 pm to 8 pm (+ mineral display by Eva Davis)
- + an opportunity to purchase TFN publications, hasti-notes, prints of selected newsletter covers, pins, decals and crests
- + free parking in the Board of Education garage on the west side of McCaul Street just south of College St.
- + easy TTC access (building is one block west of Queen's Park subway station)

Next General Meeting: Monday, April 3

Group Meetings

Wednesday, March 15 at 7:30 pm. BIRD GROUP MEETING. Dan Kozlovic will be talking about House Finches. Meet in Room 252, 155 College St.

Monday, March 20 at 7 pm. ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP MEETING. Linda Pim will talk about Food and the Environment. Meet in Room 252, 155 College St.

Tuesday, March 21 at 7:30 pm. BOTANY GROUP MEETING. Robin Powell will show some of the "Botany" pictures from the TFN photo library. Meet in Room 252, 155 College St.

NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

Helen Juhola (924-5806) 112-51 Alexander St., Toronto M4Y 1B3
Diana Banville (690-1963) 710 - 7 Crescent Place, Toronto M4C 5L7
Eva Davis (694-8928) 203 - 1080 Kingston Rd., Scarborough M1N 1N5
Eileen Mayo (445-4621) 405 - 44 Stubbs Dr., Willowdale M2L 2R3
Toshi Oikawa (425-3161) 1063 Pape Ave., Toronto M4K 3W4
Harold Taylor (225-2649) 264 Horsham Ave., Willowdale M2R 1G4

Please 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. Please include address and telephone number so submission can be acknowledged.

Send news clippings to Louise Herzberg, 59 Hillside Dr., Toronto, Ont. M4K 2M1.

 (NO DOGS)	Upcoming TFN OUTINGS	
RAIN <small>☔</small>	or  SHINE	Everybody Welcome!

MARCH

- | | | | |
|-------------|----------------------|---|--|
| | Wednesday
March 1 | BELTLINE - nature walk Toronto
Leader: Nancy Fredenburg
Meet at the southwest corner of Yonge St. and Davisville.
Walk will end at a different transit stop. | |
| OUT OF TOWN | Saturday
March 4 | KORTRIGHT CENTRE - maple syrup time Humber, Vaughan
Leader: Phil Joiner
Call Eileen Mayo (445-4621) if you want to attend. Confirm by sending a cheque for \$20.00 payable to TORONTO FIELD NATUARALISTS KORTRIGHT OUTING to Eileen at 405 - 44 Stubbs Dr., Willowdale M2L 2R3. Bus leaves from southeast corner of Yonge and Old York Mills Rd. (south exit of York Mills stn.) | |
| | 9:30 am to 4:45 pm | | |
| | BUS | | |
| | or | | |
| OUT OF TOWN | 8:30 am to 7:50 pm | LONDON, Ont. ART GALLERY - art exhibit west of Metro
Leader: Mary Cumming
Those wanting to see an exhibit of the paintings of Kate Taylor Cumming (mother of Mary Cumming) may meet at the bus station (Bay and Dundas) to take the Greyhound bus to London for the day. Bus leaves Bay Street at 8.30 am, arrives in London at 1:50 am; leaves London at 5:30 pm and arrives back in Toronto at 7.50 pm. (\$27.00 return fare.) | |
| | GREYHOUND BUS | | |
| | Wednesday
March 8 | WINDFIELD PARK - nature walk Wilket Creek, North York
Leader: Joan Patterson
Meet at the park entrance on the south side of York Mills just east of Bayview Avenue. | |
| | 10 am | | |
| | Saturday
March 11 | PARLIAMENT PUBLIC LIBRARY - nature arts (crafts) Toronto
Leader: Edna Mattos
Meet at the entrance to the library at Parliament and Gerrard St. East. "Craft Show and Tell"--Please bring any nature-oriented portable craft. Help develop new fields by either designing a card with theme of wildflower, bird, mushroom, fern, etc., or a line-drawing of wildflowers. Short demonstrations of making silk wildflowers followed by participants' brief showing of their contributions. | |
| | 10 am to 12:30 pm | | |
| | Sunday
March 12 | CEDARVALE RAVINE - birds Don, Toronto
Leader: Herb Elliott
Meet at the Heath St. exit of the St. Clair West subway stn. (at Bathurst). | |
| | 10 am | | |

MARCH OUTINGS (cont'd)

- Wednesday ROWNTREE MILLS - nature walk Humber, North York
 March 15 Leader: Billie Bridgman
 10:30 am Meet at the northwest corner of Islington Ave. and Finch West.
- Saturday U of T GREENHOUSES - botany Toronto
 March 18 Leader: Dr. Nick Badenhuizen
 10:30 am Meet at the south entrance to the U of T Botany Building, on
 the north side of College St., west of University Ave. and
 the greenhouses.
- Saturday TORONTO ISLANDS - birds Toronto, lakeshore
 March 25 Leader: Alvaro Jaramillo
 9 am Meet at the ferry docks at the foot of Bay St. in time to take
 the ferry at 9 am. The topic will be waterfowl behaviour.
- Wednesday PINE HILLS CEMETERY - nature walk Taylor Creek, Scarborough
 March 29 Leader: Eileen Mayo
 1:30 pm Meet at the cemetery entrance on the west side of Kennedy
 Road north of St. Clair Ave. East.
- Friday NORTHERN DISTRICT LIBRARY - nature arts (photography) Toronto
 March 31 Leader: Eva Davis
 10:30 am A projector and screen will be provided. Bring your favourite
 slides. Call Eva if you have questions. Meet in Room 224A.
- ...
- Sunday TINY MARSH - birds north of Metro
 April 9 Leaders: Phil Joiner & Ross Harris
 10 am Call Eileen Mayo (445-4621) if you want to attend. Confirm
 to 6 pm by sending a cheque for \$20.00 payable to TORONTO FIELD
 NATURALISTS TINY MARSH TRIP to Eileen at 405 - 44 Stubbs Dr.,
 Willowdale M2L 2R3. Bus leaves southeast corner of Yonge
 and Old York Mills Rd. (south exit of York Mills stn.).
 BUS Bring lunch and drinks. Washroom on bus.

OUT OF
TOWN

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- o Visitors and children are welcome on all outings.
- o Outings go whatever the weather.
- o All outings are accessible by public transit (TTC 393-4636, Ride Guides free)
- o Metro maps are available for a nominal sum. Do get one!
- o Walks are usually at a leisurely pace and begin and end at the same location unless indicated otherwise.
- o Note taking, sketching, photography and collection of litter are encouraged; the collection of specimens is not!
- o Please do not bring pets on outings. Dogs have been found to interfere with the environment, viewing and safety on the trail.
- o Useful numbers: Police 967-2222; Pollution complaints within Metro 965-9619.

President's Report

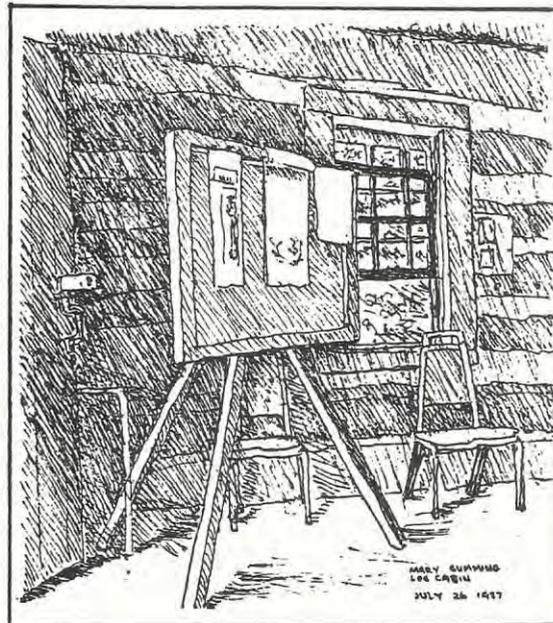
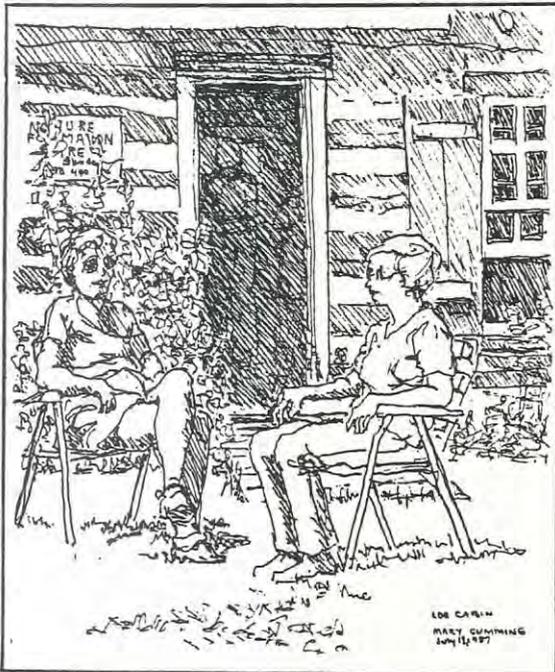
Planning has started for TFN activities in the spring and summer. The Nature Information Centre in Sunnybrook Park opens May 7. Volunteers are needed to staff the Centre on Sundays from 12 noon to 4 pm. Please contact Eileen Mayo (445-4621) if you would like to volunteer.

After an almost unbearable wait the Province of Ontario has finally approved TFN's application for support to pursue the publication of Bob Johnson's book "Familiar Amphibians and Reptiles of Ontario". We hope the publisher, Natural Heritage/Natural History Inc. will be able to distribute the book this spring.

TFN continues its participation in the Metropolitan Toronto Plan Review Process. Allan Greenbaum has submitted, with the approval of the Board of Directors, comments on Housing, Central Area Transportation Issues, and Parks and Open Space. In the Parks and Open Space submission he commented on: (1) the possible amalgamation of the Mining and Lands Commissioner and the Ontario Municipal Board, (2) the protection of Environmentally Significant Areas and other natural heritage features (a) within Metro Parks, and (b) elsewhere, (3) the protection of the Valley Impact Zone, (4) the retention of natural habitat along the waterfront, and (5) continuity of natural openspace corridors.

Robin Powell

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Keeping in touch

Dear Louise:

Dec. 6, 1988

...Do you notice an increase of mail from or for "worthy causes" in your letter box these days? I seem to get several every day and friends claim many more "pitches" for aid from organizations they never heard of before. This is also my experience.

In view of the fact that paper accounts for a very large proportion of our garbage, and our garbage problem, I have long wondered whether there might not be some other media than direct mail available or could be invented to achieve support that most of these organizations seem worthy of having. I seem to have a garbage bag mostly full of paper daily to pass along...Perhaps some TFN people might have some ideas for...a substitute to direct mail by letter etc.

Jean McGill

Comment: Peggy Love has provided us with the clipping shown. She says it works for eliminating some of the nuisance mail.

Deluged by UNSOLICITED MAIL?

Our hi-tech move was made with circumspection. We never trade or sell our mailing list to any business or organization. Trading/selling mail lists is one of the many ways unsolicited mail reaches you.

You can reduce that deluge of unwanted mail to a mere trickle by calling 391-2362 or writing to: **The Canadian Direct Marketing Association**, 1 Concord Gate, Ste. 607, Don Mills, Ontario, M3C 3N6

Ask this organization to place your name and address on their *Deletion File*. Your entry on this list means your name will be deleted from many direct mailings.

Dear Helen:

Jan. 5, 1989

My sister, who lives in Poland, has sent me [a newspaper clipping with] two photographs. The text reads in translation:

"Unbelievable, birds are able to experience despair! This was proven by a West German photographer, Manfred Danegger. He was observing a pair of swallows catching insects and bringing them over to their nests with young ones. They were repeating their flights all over again. Finally, when flying over a highway, one of the swallows was mortally wounded by a speeding car. The second bird started a desperate dance over the dead one. She hopped on the partner's belly, touching it rhythmically with her beak, as if trying to bring him back to life with "artificial respiration" or to encourage him to fly. This lasted for three hours. These tragic endeavours to restore life to its partner were filmed by the above

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KEEPING IN TOUCH (cont'd)

mentioned photographer."

To be sure, the ornithologists tell us that birds are unable to experience similar feelings, but are not they misled by any chance?

Irene Moty

Dear Newsletter Committee:

Jan. 9, 1989

I am a recent member of TFN and would like to commend you for preparing a very informative and interesting journal.

The reason that I am writing is to inform TFN members about the presence of a beaver (perhaps there is more than one?) in a residential area in Scarborough. Just immediately north of Kennedy and St. Clair there is a small ravine that has a creek running through it. The creek connects Pine Hill Cemetery to a small parkette on the northwest corner of Foxridge Drive and Kennedy Road.

I do not know if anyone has actually seen the beaver(s), however, there is much evidence of their presence as indicated by their teeth marks on trees and some trees which have been completely felled to the ground.

Friends of mine live in the area and they inform me that the neighbours are getting quite concerned about the damage being done to the trees. I would like to know if you know of anyone who could humanely trap the animal(s) and re-locate them to the wilderness? I would not like to see these beaver(s) harmed by anyone who is angered by their activities!

Steven Hughes

Comment: A beaver has, indeed, established itself along the banks of Taylor/Massey Creek at the north end of Pine Hills Cemetery. Members of TFN on an outing on Jan. 21 confirmed the evidence. We had already had a call about this animal the week before we received the above letter and had contacted the Toronto Humane Society. The advice of Barry Kent MacKay was to let the animal fend for itself. (They do not take well to being relocated.)

Anyone interested in examining a beaver house might also be interested in the one at Humber Bay Park East (at the mouth of Mimico Creek).

I wonder if beavers are desperate for habitat or if our creeks are not as polluted as they once were?

HJ

Dear Helen,

Jan. 18, 1989

The Smith-Gates thermostatically controlled water warmer (model 150-50A2), designed for chicken farmers, is effective in keeping birdbaths open through the winter. It is available from Berry Hill Limited, 75 Burwell Rd., St. Thomas, Ont., N5P 3R5 (519) 631-0480; ask for their "2T Water Warmer". Their price is \$49.95. (They told me that \$10 of that is because the warmers have to be individually approved by Ontario Hydro!) If you live in Toronto and order it C.O.D. by U.P.S., it will come to

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KEEPING IN TOUCH (cont'd)

\$61.95 (including P.S.T.). It's cylindrical, about 20 cm long by 3 cm in diameter; the manufacturer says it should be covered with 5 cm of water, and it needs a 3-prong outlet for safety. I have used one for several years in a large flower pot saucer, and, while I sometimes get some ice formation, the water has never frozen completely over.

Don Roebuck

Dear Toronto Field Naturalists:

Jan. 19, 1989

About 20 years ago, a graduate student in the Department of Zoology at the University of Western Ontario, Gail Robertson, carried out a survey of the relative numbers of black and grey squirrels (*Sciurus carolinensis*) in Southern Ontario. At that time a number of the naturalists' clubs kindly contributed information to the survey.

I am writing now to see whether any of your naturalists would be interested in participating in a second survey, the purpose of which is to determine whether changes in the ratio of black to grey squirrels have occurred over the twenty years in different parts of the province. An enclosed information sheet will, I hope, enlarge on details of the project. [See page 33]

I realize that squirrels are not always the favourite mammals of naturalists, particularly those maintaining bird feeders, but if there are squirrel watchers in your club, I enclose some information for them on urban squirrels which my own club, the McIlwraith Field Naturalists, was kind enough to print last year. [See page 34]

Although retired now, I retain my connection with the Department of Zoology at Western, and so any correspondence can be sent there or to my home address.

I would be most grateful for any observations, and, when completed, would be pleased to return results of the survey to interested persons.

Robert H. Stinson

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CARE Honduras staff are experts in watershed protection, which is essential to a safe water supply. A watershed is the area from which rainwater runoff will drain into a stream or river. Deforestation can damage watersheds. When no vegetation remains to stabilize the soil, especially in hilly areas, rainwater will carry silt and soil with it as it runs down slopes. This can wash out dams and pollute drinking water. In order to ensure a safe drinking water supply, people must protect their watersheds. In Honduras, CARE trains people in watershed management practices, including building live fences to protect the essential area, and reforestation techniques.

from CARE newsletter No. 2 1988

Beginnings

Our series continues this month with a contribution from Emily Hamilton. Emily is an ardent botanist; some of our members will recall how their understanding of plants blossomed on outings led by Emily. She brought her keen interest and extensive knowledge of plants to the task of co-authoring the studies of Chatsworth and Burke Ravines. On the administrative side, Emily has been an Executive Committee member, 1969-72; on the Outings Committee, 1976-84; and on the Editorial Committee, 1983-84.

HT

Life in Britain before the Great War was easy, leisurely, and without distractions. We walked along roads and down lanes without cars whizzing by; we walked to the village to get the newspaper--no radios! So as we lived in the country we were surrounded by nature; primroses and robins in the hedges, various trees and cushion-mosses in the woods; flowers and shrubs in the garden; and rows of cabbages, carrots and currant bushes in the kitchen-garden, just like the one Peter Rabbit got caught in.

Then there was the seaside nearby with tide-pools full of dark red sea-anemones, crabs small and green, large and brown, and shrimps darting about, and brown wrack on the rocks and green slippery seaweed below the barnacled rocks.

To get to know more about these things we had books called "Birds Shown to the Children", "Flowers Shown to the Children" and others on trees and seaside creatures. For items beyond our reach there were two volumes entitled "Marvels of the Universe", showing pictures of the moon and planets; highly coloured tropical fish, and enormous tropical plants.

When it was time for us to go to school we moved to a suburban area, which really was not disappointing as there was The Downs nearby--an open upland with hawthorns and shrubby areas, and rows of planted trees along the roads bisecting it. In school we had classes on nature study; in the early days we watched the sticky buds of horse-chestnut twigs slowly put out their leaves; tadpoles in a tank turned to frogs, and every year we brought in branches of wild roses. Later these classes became more sophisticated until we learnt botany. There were still the summer holidays at a different seaside where the sand-dunes had stout grasses growing on them, with the blue flowers of sea-holly and the pink of Rest Harrow to give colour. Or, we went to the moors to learn the cry of the curlews and find heather and eyebright and bilberries.

The move to Canada was almost a disaster nature-wise. In downtown Toronto I met my first American Robin, as big as a Song Thrush and it sang like one; it deserved the name of robin only because it had a red breast. Lake Ontario was so dull! no tide, no tide-pools, just cold, cold water on endless sandy beaches!

One day I was in a garden at the top of a ravine where I saw a red bird with a crest on its head. Thinking it was an escaped cage-bird I tip-toed into the house and asked if it belonged indoors? My host proudly said that it was HIS cardinal and it was nesting somewhere at the end of the

BEGINNINGS (cont'd)

garden. The "somewhere" was not a challenge to find it but a request not to disturb it, as the cardinals were new arrivals here. To this day I seldom look for birds' nests. Once I followed the crowd to see a rail's nest, but the water flowed over the top of my boots and that fixed me!

Nature Camp at Billie Bear (1961) under the leadership of T.F. McIlwraith was the best beginning for me. Here I found tiny dogwoods which I learnt to call Bunchberry; tiny tree-like plants called Tree Clubmoss; endless warblers which were hard to learn because I was using a First Edition of "Peterson". The trees I resolved to learn as I mis-identified an ash as a cherry! We keyed out buttercups and pyrolas. We studied the whole environment. Some people specialized in recognizing orchids and for others it was ferns--I enjoyed the latter as one could pick a frond, bring it home, study it and press it. Orchids have never really interested me, probably because we do not touch them. I learnt to recognize the common grasses and the frequently-seen birds. The evening thrush-walks were delightful--so full of song! In order to learn to distinguish between songs Helen Lawrence would teach beginners by pinching their arms at the right moment--the perfect way to pick out the right song. Leadership throughout the camp was excellent, and encouraged further study, recommending the evening course given by the University of Toronto Extension on trees, birds and botany--which I took, and found most helpful. What I liked best at camp was the discipline. On walks not a word was spoken by anyone except the leader. As "T.F." indicated those who wish to natter should stay at home--a discipline we could follow with advantage today.

Emily J. Hamilton

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Grass as high as my eye;
flowers in the field -
tiny, delicate, anonymous,
amidst the tall grasses;
birds startled,
rising in a rosy cloud,
mocker in ginkgo tree - show-off!
Crickets under the heap of straw -
heard but not seen.
Myriads of flying insects -
some respect my "OFF",
some don't.

Sr. Margaret Banville
Hudson Valley,
June 18, 1987

TORONTO REGION Amphibian & Reptile REPORT

Over the years that TFN members have been submitting sightings of amphibians and reptiles, snapping turtles have been seen moving under ice (Feb. 7, 1988), hibernating (Apr. 30, 1984), breeding (Apr. 17, 1987), laying eggs (June 18 & 26, 1984; June 12, 14 & 15, 1986; May 30, 1987; and June 14, 1988), hatching from eggs (Sept. 25, 1984; Oct. 22, 1985; Sept. 7 & 13, 1986; Sept. 2, 1987; and Sept. 5, 1988), climbing trees (summer of 1985), and covered in leeches (June 17, 1983).

Snapping turtles appear to be abundant in the Humber River system. In 1988, Sandra Richardson observed snapping turtles twice, on Aug. 10 and Sept. 5. Both times she saw many turtles together. She queried why, when she had rarely seen turtles at this location in the past.

In this part of the Humber, just south of Lawrence Avenue, a pool has formed below a dam across the river. It is possible that this has provided a micro-habitat for slow-moving fish or some other prey which the turtles were just exploiting as a readily available food source. It is also possible that some larger prey had died there and the turtles were simply attracted to the smell of the decomposing material. Snapping turtles are the "garbage collectors" of streams and lakes much to the surprise of the occasional fisherman who has left a catch of fish dangling on a stringer over the side of a boat.

It is also possible that the turtles were washed downstream during a period of heavy rains and simply collected in this area where the current was not as strong. Having found a nice pool they remained as the water subsided. In this case, it is likely that some of the turtles would eventually migrate upstream where they would disperse along the banks in search of food and resting areas. Migration is not at all foreign to snapping turtles. Studies in Algonquin Park have shown that females may move as far as seven kilometres to lay eggs.

Given the very dry summer, it is also possible that the turtles were simply forced to retreat to this pocket of deeper water as the river level fell. In fact, these turtles may have been experiencing some stress because they were so closely packed together in their watery refuge. Or perhaps both turtles and fish were trapped together as the river began to heat-up and dry-up. As the hot summer progressed, the fish population would have declined in the pool and competition for this resource would have become keen indeed. In fact, larger snapping turtles do not hesitate to make a meal of smaller turtles. In one study of snapping turtle diets, it was found that snapping turtles were preying primarily on other turtles rather than on the bird fauna of the area.

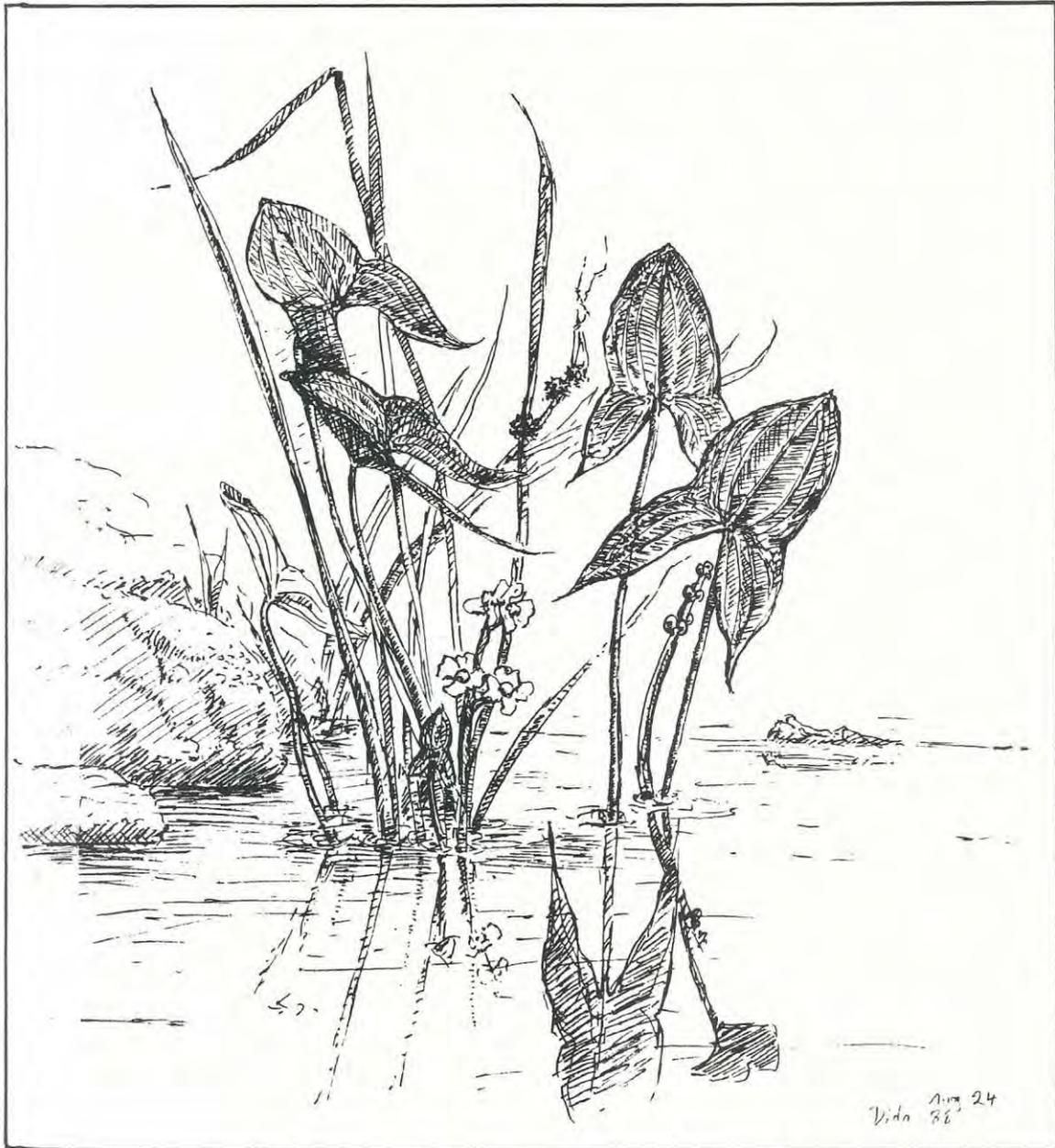
A month after her first observation, Sandra found a group of snapping turtles still occupying the area of the dam. However, this time the pond was also occupied by some very small turtles which, by her description, were obviously newly hatching snapping turtles. As a result of Sandra's fascination with the Humber and this new experience with turtles, we were able to add not only a new record for this part of Metropolitan Toronto, but we also had the only record of hatchlings for 1988 and were able to establish Sept. 5 as the hatching date.

AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES (cont'd)

Although we were not able to give a definite answer to all of Sandra's questions, her observations have added one more piece to our picture of amphibian and reptile distribution and behaviour in Metro Toronto. I am sure that Sandra's fascination with this resident will continue to bring her back to an inviting pool in the Humber River.

Bob Johnson

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BROAD-LEAVED ARROWHEAD grows in High Park and in the Rouge, Don, and Humber watersheds. Often both the terminal and basal lobes are very narrow, but those in this field-sketch made from a vantage-point on the rocks along the Moira River are living up to their name.

ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP REPORT

for January 16, 1989

"We're (yet) another agency and no one knows what it is we do!" complains Ed Mickiewicz, a planner with the Metro Toronto Planning Department (formed in 1953).

His agency's official land use plan, or Metroplan, addresses the valleys and waterfront as the basis of Metro's parks and open space system.

An information pamphlet states that the plan's "overall concept is that the system be an interconnected combination of parks and open space accessible to all Metro residents". It adds, "...a conservation-oriented philosophy is the first priority in the official plan".

During the meeting, Mickiewicz said the agency's philosophy is to support "passive activities, unless the area can accommodate a more active use".

What does this all mean?

It seems control of land use in Metro is fraught with difficulties. The problems include some overlapping authority between Metro Planning and, a provincial body, the Metropolitan Toronto and Regional Conservation Authority (MTRCA). This can create friction when there is competition for one piece of land. That is, who gets the permit--industry, housing, conservationists perhaps?

The muddled lines of authority also create problems when complaints need to be lodged or when reprimands to polluters are necessary. "Who is responsible?" is the oft asked question.

A further difficulty is in finding common ground between the planning department and the public. For instance, what defines "passive use"? Is a hiking trail passive or active? What counts as open space? Is a parking lot open space? (Agency trivia says that Metro has a ratio of 3.7 hectares of open space per 1,000 people, and this appears to be one of the highest ratios of parkland to people in the world's major cities.)

Mickiewicz stressed the need for more public involvement: voicing preferences in recreational facilities, pointing out environmental concerns.

One TFN member pressed Mickiewicz to comment on the role of the TFN in all this. Mickiewicz replied that the TFN is a highly respected citizen's group, whose views are considered.

Public submissions of ideas will be accepted until the end of February. Remember, if the Olympic Games are really on their way here, the time to have your say about land use is now! Send submissions to:

Metro Toronto Planning Dept., Policy Development Division,
East Tower, 11th floor, City Hall, Toronto M5H 2N1

Jennifer Low

Comment: TFN has made submissions (see page 5), but members are also encouraged to make their own submissions.

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TORONTO REGION FISH REPORT

The fishes have not played a large part in the activities of field naturalists. As an "interest", they have always been the preserve of fishing enthusiasts. But looking over our TFN records for the past year and a half, it looks like all that may change. Field naturalists don't as a rule pull the fish out of the water to identify them, but it is surprising how much one can establish by examining them closely through field glasses in the clearer and shallower locations of our watercourses and ponds.

Recently there have been sightings, but no formal reports, of .SALMON in rivers. There are two species - Chinook and Coho - which have been introduced into Ontario waters in the past, and perhaps others. There is an Atlantic salmon re-introduction project at present which we should get to know about as well. Meanwhile, a dead specimen of a fish in the same genus has been identified on the Rouge: .BROWN TROUT, a species which was long ago successfully introduced here from western Europe. This individual was lying on the bank of the Rouge and the middle section had been eaten; the flesh was very pale "salmon" pink. It had a very straight-ended dark brown tail-fin. (Nov.22/88)

There have been many references in outings reports and field notes from members to fish species and to "small fish" or "minnows". Of the true minnows, three species were reported:

- .CARP have been the most obvious - jumping, and digging in the shallows with their tails moving from side to side above the surface, and milling about in hundreds where food has been dropped into the water as under the bridge at Metro Zoo entrance. (June 25/87 & May 10/88)
- .REDSIDE DACE (found only in clear streams flowing into western Lake Ontario) were observed in Etobicoke Creek June 12, 1988, up to 10 cm or perhaps more in length, and Taylor Creek September 25, 1988, about 5 cm in length. In both cases they were eddying around among the stones at a shallow part of the creek. A clearly-defined bright scarlet band along the side was evident in the larger fishes in the former location; in the latter, the fishes which were light olive above, had only a little red evident above the black lateral stripe through the yellow of the sides, in the case of some of the individuals, and had deeply notched tails. With the help of the Scott guide, one can distinguish them from the redbelly dace which prefers acid waters and has been identified at the TFN's Jim Baillie Nature Reserve.
- .CREEK CHUB has been tentatively identified in Wilket Creek June 18/88. By the way that famous minnow, the goldfish, has not been reported lately in any situation where it might be considered "naturalized".

Of the catfish family, there has been one species reported:

- .BROWN BULLHEADS from hatchlings on July 31/87 to 25 cm in May/87, in both cases in the hundreds, with adults at Cranberry Marsh, and adults at Lynde Shores.

Toronto Region Fish Report - cont'd

In the sunfish family (which includes the "black basses"), two species were reported:

- .SMALLMOUTH BASS, July 16, 1988, in Black Creek. An individual was observed with black tail-markings.
- .PUMPKINSEED has been found dead on the shores of Grenadier Pond with its bright colours intact. An unidentified sunfish "with a spot on gill" was observed in Black Creek.

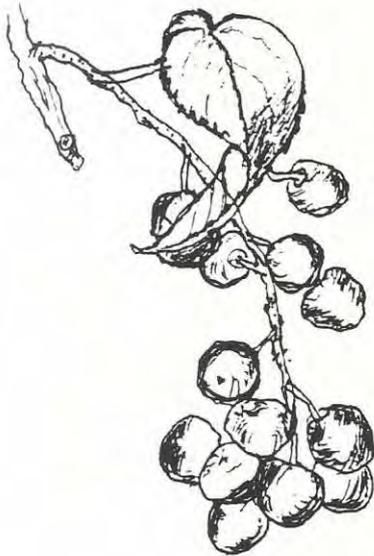
In the perch family, one species was reported:

- .WALLEYE (or yellow pickerel) at Snake Island lagoon, Toronto Islands. Pointed face and gold flecks could be detected with binoculars, and a black spot on one of the individuals.

By observing the fishes as much as possible we can gradually familiarize ourselves with our Toronto fishes in their varying sizes and colours. We have a checklist in the TORONTO REGION VERTEBRATE LIST published by TFN, and the field guide by W. B. Scott, FRESHWATER FISHES OF EASTERN CANADA, U. of T. Press, is of great help. This coming season, look into the shallows and meet some of Toronto's fishes. Send reports to me, 7 Crescent Place, Apt. 710, Toronto, Ontario, M4C 5L7. Diana Banville

PARTICIPANTS: Diana Banville, Molly Campbell, Helen Huggett,
Helen Juhola, Gavin Miller, Don Peuramaki

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When Betty Paul sketched these choke cherries on August 2, 1986, at the TFN Nature Reserve, cedar waxwings were in the tree, taking advantage of the fruit.

CHOKECHERRY
BETTY PAUL

Nature Reserve Report

It was warm enough to stimulate the very earliest of spring-breeding frogs to call, but very little else seemed to be active. It was a sunny day in the first days of April. Sunny enough to stimulate my daughter and me to explore the trails of the Jim Baillie Nature Reserve but, it seemed, not yet warm enough to stimulate activity in the residents of the reserve. Let me tell you how wrong I was and just what we encountered on that visit.

We pulled off the sideroad and into the entrance. As I got out of the car to open the gate my ears were filled with the sound of western chorus frogs and wood frogs calling from amongst the dogwood which grew in the flooded ditch across the road. These are the first species to breed in the spring and often may be heard calling together from the same pond. These species were not listed in the nature reserve checklist and despite several trips along the road I could not locate any calling from the reserve. I am sure that both species would forage in the woods of the reserve during the summer and most likely hibernate there as well. Despite the fact that I wanted to increase the amphibian checklist by two species, I could not at this time do so.

Back to the gate once again, for I had not yet even mastered the lock. As I walked to the gate, both my daughter and I saw the "tufts" of sediments stirred up by some creature darting along the bottom of the stream which filled the ditch on that side of the road. I have often seen green frog tadpoles darting through the water and stirring up sediments as they sought cover amongst aquatic plants or in the deeper water. Out with my dip nets and we waded into the cold water to catch ourselves a tadpole. This proved to be more of a challenge than we had originally anticipated.

I had never had this much trouble in the past as these large tadpoles usually come to rest after their short flight to deeper water. It became evident that we were not stalking a tadpole but a very fast fish. Now convinced that we were after a five-spined stickleback, we set off anew trying to catch the beast so that my daughter could see this delightful little fish with the five raised spines. During my university years I had kept this species along with some goldfish. They had to be separated after I witnessed the territorial and more aggressive sticklebacks using their spines to open wounds in the bellies of the startled goldfish.

After some time we were still unable to catch our elusive fish. In desperation I thrust my net up and under the long grasses which lined the banks of the stream. To my surprise I caught a fish, and was even more surprised to find that it was not a stickleback at all. Upon returning home we were able to identify our fish by recalling its distinguishing features: dark zig-zag bars along the flanks which were washed with a reddish-green iridescence, reddish-coloured fins, a lobed tailfin, and a dark stripe through the eye. We had found a central mudminnow (*Umbra limi*). It is supposedly distinguishable from all other fish of the area by a dark vertical bar at the base of the rounded tailfin. Of course, the fish which we had found did not display this feature although the fins were the characteristic reddish-brown of spawning males.

As the name implies, the mudminnow lives in soft-bottomed streams and vernal ponds. It will dive into the bottom mud to escape predators. It spawns in April, attaching eggs individually to submerged vegetation.

NATURE RESERVE REPORT (cont'd)

In keeping with the often temporary and stagnant nature of vernal ponds and springs, the mudminnow can gulp air at the surface when oxygen in these ponds is low.

Refreshed by this new discovery, we once again focussed our attention on the locked gate for, as you may recall, we had not yet even entered the driveway of the nature reserve.

We parked the car and before we had left the parking lot discovered the remains of whitetail deer bones weathering amongst some lichen. Upon reporting this discovery to Helen Juhola (fearing it was the handiwork of hunters), we were told that these bones had been weathering there untouched for two years.

The trails were littered with windfall branches and all our initial observations were of signs left by the resident wildlife: fox faeces on the white circle trail boardwalk, rabbit faeces scattered along the trail and telltale signs of rabbits having gnawed the branches of windfallen trees, dogwood slashed off by the teeth of whitetail deer, the hard pellets of deer forced to feed on winter foods, and everywhere along the yellow trail, the white-tipped droppings of ruffed grouse. Male grouse require logs on which to perform their wing-beating courtship displays, and these preferred sites are often identified by the droppings which accumulate there. The nature reserve obviously has a healthy population of grouse and we would hear the drumming of their wings throughout the day.

In the air we heard, and then saw, a pileated woodpecker casually drumming its presence on a series of dead, but important, tree-towers. On the sun-filled white circle trail we saw a mourning cloak butterfly testing its wings in the spring air. These attractive black butterflies (hence the origin of the common name "mourning") are unusual in that they spend the winter in the adult form and are aroused into flight by the first warm days of spring. Most other butterflies spend the winter as pupae in a cocoon spun under leaf litter or loose pieces of bark.

On the yellow triangle trail we found two other invertebrates: a seven-spotted ladybug (which had also spent the winter hibernating as an adult) and a small copper butterfly. We continued past the flowers of skunk cabbage just beginning to open along the white square trail. My daughter was amazed to feel the metabolic heat generated by the spathe which attracts flies seeking both the heat and the putrid smell generated by the flower. I recall seeing this heat used to good advantage by skunk cabbage in Morningside Park. The heat the plants produce had melted a hole in the ice and the flowers reached above the ice which surrounded them. Sure enough, these flowers along the white square trail had each attracted their own swirl of attentive flies which would serve as pollinators for the flowers.

As far as I am concerned, the best was left for the last. Upon reaching the Uxbridge Brook we sat down to have our lunch and bask in the sun on clumps of dried grass which lined the river. To my surprise, we found several leopard frogs hibernating in the soft mud which was laid down in the lee of a bend in the river. The frogs were still covered in sediments which had settled on them and they shared this mud bank with many large

NATURE RESERVE REPORT (cont'd)

river clams. There were signs that raccoons had been feeding on the clams within reach of the shore and undoubtedly the raccoons would consume any frogs that were also within their reach. I took several photos of the hibernating frogs which were able to move, ever so slowly, along the bottom of the brook. Within days these frogs would be calling from the edge of the brook to be followed shortly after by females and the deposition of their eggs among the grasses which lined this backwater.

As we circled back along the brook, my daughter was excited to find both beaver-gnawed wood and fresh tracks in the black mud. She took several photos so that she could show her school class the adventure she had been on, on that wonderful day.

All in all this was a most rewarding day. I still feel the excitement of my leopard frog discovery and my daughter, the thrill of the beaver tracks. The Jim Baillie Nature Reserve, a place to visit in all seasons.

As a postscript, Helen has informed me that a northern brown snake was found at the reserve this past fall. Given the type of habitat, one would expect to find brown snakes there, and this is the first such record for this species at the reserve.

Bob Johnson

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MARJORIE BLACKSHAW REMEMBERED

After a fall some weeks before, long-time TFN member, Marjorie Blackshaw, died suddenly on January 3, 1988. With her cheerful personality and interest in problem-solving, she had been active in the co-operative apartment project in which she lived. Marjorie participated in the East York Inventory of Natural Resources (Outside of Parks) in 1984, subsequently published by TFN. She was to be found among the volunteers at the TFN Nature Centre, the Sunnybrook log cabin. Known as an enthusiastic walker, Marjorie had lived long in Timmins, Ontario, where she could just walk out the door to be in the countryside on the Canadian Shield - in fact she liked to recall the great rock which protruded into the basement of the house. She enjoyed investigating ways of finding interesting wilderness in which to walk, which could be reached by train or bus, and wrote articles* for the newsletter about her adventures. She had chosen to be cremated privately and it seems fitting that her ashes lie in The Necropolis, an arboretum as well as a cemetery. A librarian, Marjorie served as library consultant to the TFN and, among other things, arranged for exchange newsletters which we receive from other clubs throughout the Province to be placed in the Roberts Library, Thomas Fisher Rare Books Section, an ongoing project. To field naturalists, this is an invaluable contribution and will remain for us Marjorie's memorial.

DB

*TFN:362:16-17 & 363:19 (1984)
TFN:378:34-36 (1986)

OUTINGS REPORT

BIRD OUTINGS 1988

175 species?! That's right. A grand total of 175 species of birds called, perched, fed, flew, sang, hopped, or waded their way into our senses and field notes on TFN bird outings in 1988.

This past year we organized a bird outing every other weekend, trying to alternate Saturdays and Sundays to accommodate people's various schedules. We added a few on long weekends, and on Tuesday evenings in May, for a total of 33 trips. Most of these were within TTC-accessible Toronto. The four out-of-town bus trips added some variety and introduced club members to other good birding areas and events outside Toronto.

In March we again made our traditional trip to Long Point for tundra swans. Some years our timing is perfect, and other years we arrive too early or late to catch the really impressive numbers. 1988 wasn't bad at all, even if it did rain--300+ swans and 14 other species of waterfowl. We travelled to Grimsby and the Beamer Point Conservation Area in April to view the spring hawk migration. This is another birding event that is highly weather-dependent, but I would have to say that 175 hawks of 10 species was a fine day. Although they can be frustratingly difficult to identify at times, hawks are lovely to watch and Beamer provided us with some beautiful views of turkey vultures, sharp-shins and red-tails flying over at treetop height. Two trips to Presqu'ile Provincial Park, at Brighton, east of Toronto, completed our 1988 bus outings. On May 14th, highlights included cormorants, ruffed grouse, a sora, all six Ontario swallows, marsh wrens and a hooded warbler! There weren't quite as many different birds on our September 10th visit, but we had quality--a bald eagle! Presqu'ile was excellent for the botanists, photographers and other naturalists that joined us too.

Of the 175 species tallied for the year, all but 23 of those were recorded on our 29 Toronto area outings. In fact, we counted over 100 on May outings alone! In all, we visited 17 different areas around TTC-accessible Toronto, from the Rouge Valley and Guildwood down east to James Gardens and Humber Bay Park in the west. We even "birded" the heart of downtown, around Queen's Park and the starling roost at the foot of the Don Valley Parkway. The Leslie Street Spit and the Toronto Islands were two of our favourite spots. If you had been able to join us on these nine hikes, you would have had the chance of seeing 134 different kinds of birds! We are lucky to have such handy and good birding areas in Toronto. Fred Carnrite and George Fairfield were our Spit and Island experts, respectively. Fred showed us 44 tundra swans in March here in Toronto, without going to Long Point, as well as a lovely snowy owl. Maybe he is our owl man--he located long-eared and short-eared owls also at the spit on Dec. 4th. George has led our popular May and Thanksgiving holiday-Monday trips to the Island for many years now. He had a gang on his hands this past May, though. 70 people showed up!

Speaking of participants, almost 800 took part on bird outings in 1988. That's if you add up the totals from each outing. About 25 was the

OUTINGS REPORT (cont'd)

average, but numbers ranged from the 6 who braved the cold and wind with Ilmar Talvila at Lambton Woods in February ("a trip for survivors", wrote Ilmar), to the 70 that greeted George and Dennis Duckworth in May on the Island. It rained on our birding parade only six times out of our 33 trips. We may have frozen, like some did at Humber Bay with Annabel Cathrall last December, and we may have wilted under the summer heat, but, hey, we didn't get wet very often! Poor Ilmar Talvila was our leader for the hottest trip too: 36°C on the Island last August. (Ilmar's comment: "I've never birded under hotter conditions--even in Trinidad!")

Highlights of the year? There were many, some of which I have already mentioned. They undoubtedly are different for each person who joined us. For some, it's the rarities, like the two singing male orchard orioles in High Park last May, or the very late turkey vulture that flew right overhead last December on the Spit. For others, it's seeing a favourite group of birds, like the hawks and owls, or all the warblers we saw on the Island last May. But just as often it's the more common birds that perhaps someone hasn't come across yet, like the beautiful male green-winged teal at the north end of Grenadier Pond last November that was a "lifer" for some and that fed in the open for as long as we watched. Or the learning a new field mark, or observing unusual behaviour, that opens new areas to explore. Or big numbers, like the thousands of starlings coming in to roost under the Gardiner Expressway. And maybe it's not even the birds. It's the white-tailed deer in the Rouge Valley last June, or the snapping turtle in the Humber Marshes in May. Or just being out on a nice day meeting people who share your love of natural history.

My sincere thanks to all the leaders of our bird outings in 1988, and especially to those who volunteered to lead several trips: John Barker, Howard Battae, Fred Bodsworth, Don Burton, Fred Carnrite, Annabel Cathrall, Don and Barbara Cavin, Dennis Duckworth, Herb Elliott, George Fairfield, Karin Fawthrop, Walter Frey, Allan Greenbaum, Verna Higgins, Phil and Gay Joiner, Joan Patterson, Don Peuramaki, Helen Smith and Ilmar Talvila. Thanks for sharing your knowledge and experience with us.

And a special thanks to all the participants for appreciating our efforts and making the outings so enjoyable. We hope that you had a good time.

Ross Harris

4

MARCH

*A pair of birds
tangoes between treetops,
as soil sighs the winter away.*

Louise Herzberg

OUTINGS REPORT (cont'd)

Botany Outings, May 1988

The month of May opened on a glorious note in 1988. It was sunny and warm (15°C) on May 1 as Dennis Clarke led 12 other enthusiastic field naturalists on a hike along the Rathburn Rd./Eglinton Ave. section of Etobicoke Creek. Botanical highlights were numerous: scattered clumps of delicate Dutchman's breeches (*Dicentra cucullaria*). Both species of spring beauty (*Claytonia virginica* and *C. caroliniana*), white trilliums, red trilliums, a Canada plum shrub in bloom, a fairly large population of twin-leaf (*Jeffersonia diphylla*), and wooded hillsides covered with fragrant, sun-warmed yellow trout lilies. Due to the warm sunny weather many bees and beetles were observed pollinating the flowers. Also, large numbers of brown snakes and garter snakes were seen. Interesting birds seen were a yellow-rumped "myrtle" warbler, a black-throated green warbler, and a red-tailed hawk being chased by a crow.

The second Thursday evening botany walk of 1988 took place on May 5 with Judy Hernandez taking 17 people through Cedarvale Ravine. The weather was overcast/sunny and 16°C. Observed flowering were yellow trout lily, Manitoba maple, and red elderberry. Trees noted were white pine, eastern hemlock, and yellow birch. A number of birds were seen: red-winged black-birds, mourning doves, cardinals, and one pair of mallard ducks.

A week later, on May 12, the weather was overcast and windless with a temperature of 17°C. as 17 TFN members spent the early evening hours exploring the west side of High Park under the knowledgeable guidance of Emily Hamilton. There were squirrels everywhere in the park and several substantial clumps of delicate wood anemone in bloom. Other plant species seen in flower were starry false Solomon's seal, white trillium, running serviceberry (*Amelanchier stolonifera*), pin cherry, round-lobed hepatica, common blue violet, downy yellow violet, ground-ivy, and late sweet blueberry (*Vaccinium angustifolium*).

Bill Granger led a small group of 5 others on Sunday, May 15 at the York University campus in North York. It was overcast and a pleasant 14°C. The experimental planting blocks (planted in 1981) were observed on the university campus, as well as many other native species of trees and shrubs (in leaf) in the wild areas. Flickers and cardinals were heard calling, and tame black and grey squirrels (both adults and juveniles) were seen.

The fourth Thursday evening botany walk was a chilling experience to say the least! On the evening of May 19 which was cold and foggy, a steady light drizzle fell as the intrepid Eva Davis led four other adults and one small child on a walk through Warden Woods in Scarborough. Such typical mid-May blooming wildflowers as jack-in-the-pulpit, wild ginger, celandine, white baneberry, wintercress, common toothwort, and wild strawberry were noted.

A week later, on May 26, Sandy Cappell led 14 people on the fifth and last Thursday evening botany walk through Earl Bales park in North York. The skies were clear and it was a pleasantly cool 16°C. The group started out at the northern end of the park and hiked down the west bank of the West Don River to Westgate Blvd. and then up York Downs Dr. to Bathurst

OUTINGS REPORT (cont'd)

St. Sandy reported that many of the spring flowers had finished blooming by this date, so they looked at developing seed pods. Also, many orioles were seen in the park.

May 29 was sunny and a very warm 25°C. This particular Sunday saw Emily Hamilton lead 26 people through the shrub walk (plot 24) in Mount Pleasant Cemetery, east of Mount Pleasant Rd. Many shrubs and trees were in full flower: golden currant (*Ribes aureum*), purple-leaf sand cherry, ornamental crabapple, pearl-bush (*Exochorda racemosa*), English hawthorn (*Crataegus* sp), caragana, redbud (*Cercis canadensis*), bladdernut (*Staphylea trifolia*), flowering ash (*Fraxinus ornua*), lilac, highbush cranberry (*Viburnum opulus*), and wayfaring tree (*Viburnum lantana*). Native trees in the narrow woodlot bordering the upper shrub walk were also examined. This walk was, without a doubt, the loveliest way for TFN plant-lovers to spend the last Sunday morning in the month of May 1988.

Dennis Clarke

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A pink variety of prairie plant, purple coneflower, at Pine Hills Cemetery wildflower garden. Ref.: F. Kershaw in WILDFLOWER Summer '86

CONSERVATION AUTHORITY UPDATE: GOOD NEWS AT LAST?

In the November 1988 TFN I reported on the Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Authority's plans to invite private entrepreneurs to develop some of its lands for public recreational use ("What are Conservation Lands", TFN 399, page 17). I suggested that conservation is likely eventually to take a back seat to profitability under such arrangements, however well intentioned the parties may be at the outset. The plan was, at least in part, a response to a provincial government report (the Burgar Commission) which recommended that conservation authorities should save money by concentrating on their traditional flood and erosion control mission, leaving municipalities and the private sector to take over some of their function of providing recreational facilities.

MTRCA retained a consultant to seek public input on what kinds of recreational developments it should invite. While this was an act of unprecedented openness on the part of the Authority, I was concerned that the policy decision was a fait accompli, and that the whole process was a distraction from the fact that, for naturalists, it was precisely in the area of its traditional mission that the Authority's actions were most questionable. Traditionally, MTRCA has seldom hesitated to spend public money and deface public lands in an attempt to bring engineering solutions to flooding and erosion problems, yet it usually has been either legally unable or politically unwilling to exercise control over the municipalities and private developers whose practices are largely responsible for those problems.

In the meantime, there has been some cause for guarded optimism. Naturalists will be heartened by the consultant's summary of the public input. According to this report, "public input shows that recreational developments on whatever scale must not be put in at the expense of the environment or at the expense of passive recreation interests". The public, it seems, gave priority to keeping "quiet, natural spaces", and voiced concerns about the Conservation Authority's ability to manage privatization.

Just as heartening is MTRCA's response to the consultant's report. "Overall, the scale and intensity of facilities has been reduced to a level that will not dominate a landscape." The Authority has dropped plans for golf courses in Boyd and Greenwood Conservation Areas, and may reconsider its plans for a resort lodge at Claireville and a water park at Petticoat Creek. The number of projected campsites in Greenwood Conservation Area has been reduced from over 300 to around 200, and there will be a greater use of vegetation buffers between heavily used and sensitive areas everywhere. Though many of the participants in the public input were sceptical, MTRCA has demonstrated good faith and deserves credit.

The other component of MTRCA's response to the provincial report was a comprehensive "Greenspace Plan". The plan, actually a policy statement, gives greater than ever recognition to the interrelationship of urban expansion, watershed management, and environmental issues. It takes an aggressive stance (at least on paper) in regard to the protection of headwater and recharge areas in the Oak Ridges Moraine, where the rivers in this region have their sources. It recommends that MTRCA acquire

CONSERVATION AUTHORITY UPDATE (cont'd)

regulatory jurisdiction over small creeks (presently, the Authority has jurisdiction only over streams draining more than 5 square miles). It even recommends that the Oak Ridges Moraine be subject to a plan similar to that in place for the Niagara Escarpment.

There seems to be a greater recognition on the part of the Conservation Authority that remedial works are no substitute for the prevention of hydrological problems through the regulation of development, and that the task of regulation cannot be entrusted to the municipalities, which do not have jurisdiction over the whole of the watersheds in which they are located and which are thus disinclined to make sacrifices for the benefit of their downstream neighbours. There is still a long way to go between this statement of good intentions and actual implementation. Implementation will require substantial initiatives, and probably new legislation, at the provincial level, at a time when the Province seems inclined to rein in the ambitions of the conservation authorities and is promulgating a more pro-development floodplains policy. We've heard impressive things from the Authority before.

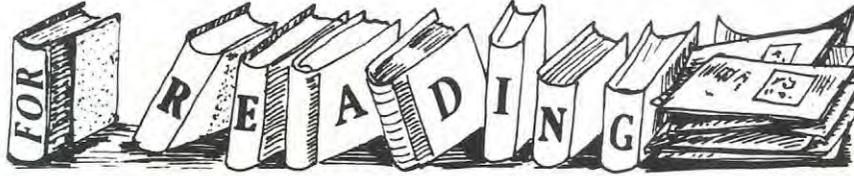
I also have reservations about the language of the plan itself. No doubt spurred by rising land prices, MTRCA plans to de-emphasize acquisition of flood-prone sites in favour of flood-proofing. The environmental implications of this change are not addressed. The Greenspace Plan is utterly uncritical of the Authority's erosion-control practices, such as the \$330,000+obliteration of Bellamy Ravine in Scarborough. MTRCA spent over 1.5 million dollars on erosion control last year and has budgeted nearly as much for this year. TFN members have seen enough slumping gabions to wonder how well this money has been spent. A thorough review of MTRCA's erosion control practices is overdue. Finally--a small point perhaps--is the over-use in the Greenspace Plan of the word "resource". There is virtually nothing that comes to the attention of the Plan which is not called a "resource" at every possible opportunity. This is not surprising, given that the Authority's legislative mandate is resource management. Nevertheless, it is striking that the authors of the Plan find it impossible even to refer to any entity or process without conceptualizing it as a potential object for human consumption or use. It may not affect the substance of what is said, but to the naturalist, to whom nature has value beyond human utility, it can make for depressing reading.

These criticisms aside, there may be some grounds for hope that conservation authorities can be made to live up to their potential. They are at a political turning point in Ontario. They can be reduced to irrelevancy or transformed into genuinely ecological agencies. No other administrative bodies or political units have boundaries of jurisdiction corresponding to the boundaries of natural systems. This in itself gives conservation authorities an inherent potential for ecological responsibility, albeit untapped at present, lacking in other levels of government.

Allan Greenbaum

Comment: See coming event for March 1
on page 42.

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PARKS FOR PROFIT by Leslie Bella published by Harvest House, Montreal. 216 pages, appendices and bibliography, \$12.95.

Leslie Bella has expertly chronicled the struggles to create and maintain many of Canada's national parks: struggles between people who saw parks primarily as money-makers, and others who wanted to preserve natural beauty, with profits strictly secondary. Man has been made the steward of nature's beautiful gifts. So in a book about Canada's land and resources, it is the people who stride across its pages over a period of 100 years who command our attention.

Especially notable are William Van Horne who, aided by the Federal Government, grasped control for the CPR of the access to the beauty and the extractive resources of south-western Alberta in the late 1800s; William Pearce, government surveyor and later CPR employee, an heir to Van Horne's "parks for profit" ethic; Arthur Wheeler, "a knight tilting for the cause of preservation". His lance was his pen and it was to cross many times with Pearce's; first Parks Commissioner James Harkin who, as the automobile replaced the train as the popular means of transportation, saw the national parks as autoparks; Mackenzie King who gave Saskatchewan its first national park and hoped it would help his constituents remember him; and, more than 60 years later, Jean Chretien pointing with pride to the framed five dollar cheque on his office wall: his winnings in a bet that he would establish 10 new national parks, surrounded by the pictures to prove it.

Leslie Bella also tells us about many others, most unnamed, who also helped shape the parks we now enjoy. Men and women like members of perhaps Canada's first environmental association, the Alpine Club, founded by Arthur Wheeler; provincial politicians, some almost begging for national parks and their economic benefits, and others refusing to cede any of their land to the higher authority; park residents, some more sensitive to the environment than others; World War I and II internees, especially Japanese-Canadians, conscientious objectors, unemployed men in the Great Depression, who all worked to build park facilities with their cheaply-paid labour; and men and women ejected from homesteads needed for parkland.

It's a fascinating tale that will give us new perspectives whenever we drop a line or climb a hill in one of Canada's national parks. Leslie Bella says not all of the problems are in the past. She describes four major continuing threats to the parks: federal budget cuts, erosion of park boundaries, pressure for multiple use of resources within the parks, and commercial tourism. The threats have not been long in coming: Nature Canada, Winter 1989 issue, reports new pressures on two of our oldest national parks, Banff and Waterton Lakes.

Leslie Bella's conclusion: "For a century Canada's national parks have been parks for profit. Now for the next century we need to move towards a broader and more popular vision of our parks as a lifeline that

FOR READING (cont'd)

stabilizes and anchors our future...These parks were created for profit, but their future purpose must be to preserve".

The future direction may well depend on what our legislators hear from well-informed, concerned citizenry. "Parks for Profit" supplies much of the information we need. Using it will help us to be better stewards.

Harold Taylor

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GEESE AND SWANS: TAKE A NUMBER AND PHONE!...

Winter waterfowl-watching at Toronto's lakefront provides many pleasures. One is the chance to jot down the numbers displayed on large bands worn by some of the birds.

Recently in the waters off Humber Bay East Park, a trumpeter swan cruised in stately fashion, admired by a large crowd of Sunday strollers. On the bird's yellow wing tag was the number 27. A telephone call the next day to the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources elicited the information that the swan was hatched at Cranberry Marsh, near Whitby, in 1987. It was one of the successful rearings in the Ministry's project to reestablish the trumpeter in Southern Ontario.

Canada geese are also birds that often carry numbered bands easily read with binoculars.

Birds are banded, of course, so that their movements can be recorded and perhaps their life span determined. The system relies on sightings of banded birds being reported to a central recording agency; an opportunity for amateur naturalists to contribute to professional studies.

In the Toronto area the Ministry of Natural Resources, Maple office, is always pleased to get a phone call. The call should tell the date and location of the sighting, the band number, and the band colour(s). The phone number: 416-832-2761.

Incidentally, a second generation of the Cranberry Marsh project may be in the offing. Trumpeters tagged with numbers 24 and 25 appear to have established a pair bond. Watch for them if you are along Lake Ontario east of Toronto. And if you see them, don't forget to make that phone call!

Harold Taylor

□

*Oh, for frigid wigeon-watching
upon the icy mere.
It beats for sure
those ijit pigeons
fidgetting near the pier.*

Louise Herzberg

RECYCLE...RE-USE...REDUCE...REJECT

SOME SIMPLE SOLUTIONS*

Here are some easy-on-the-environment alternatives to commercial cleaning solutions...

All-Purpose Cleaner

half-cup ammonia
half-cup white vinegar
quarter-cup baking soda
half-gallon water

Furniture Polish

one teaspoon lemon oil
one pint mineral oil
Mix. Apply with rag.
For quick polishing jobs
use plain mineral oil on damp
cloth.

Air Freshener

hot vinegar in dish on top
of stove (fish,
cabbage odours)
OR
baking soda (in fridge & garbage
can)

Anti-Static Static build-up is due to lack of humidity in dryer.
Dry clothes to damp-dry stage only.
If too late, insert wet towel for a few minutes
and remove static-free clothes.

Window and Glass Cleaner

soap and water
rinsed with vinegar and water

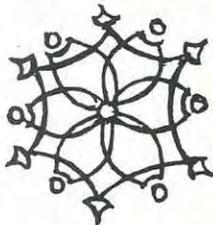
Chrome Appliance Polish

Soft cloth with
rubbing alcohol,
a little ammonia and water
OR
dry baking soda with dry cloth

Laundry Starch

cornstarch and water
Mix. Sprinkle on clothes before
ironing.

*Pun intended, no doubt, by Pollution Probe - above adapted from their
newsletter DO IT Summer/Fall 1988.



*Spring school-break promised
sunshine, biking and flowers.
Snow petal showers
and thread of weaving snow geese,
featherstitching blizzard bay.*

The 64th Toronto Christmas Bird Census December 1988

The 64th consecutive Christmas Count was conducted on Dec. 26, 1988. The 28 routes within a 48 km (30 mile) radius centred on the Royal Ontario Museum were covered by 135 participants. 46,650 individual birds were counted and 89 species seen compared to the previous year's 59,227 individuals and 96 species. More participants saw fewer birds this year.

A new species for the count was a purple sandpiper at the tip of the Leslie Street Spit, observed from 10 feet away. Documentation is to be submitted for the American Bird Records.

Single sightings were a red-throated loon, northern shoveler, harlequin duck, northern goshawk, red-shouldered hawk, merlin, purple sandpiper, snowy owl, yellow-bellied sapsucker, eastern phoebe (only seen once before, in 1937, also to be documented and confirmed), northern mockingbird, brown thrasher (last seen on the 1980 count), field sparrow (last seen in 1985), rusty blackbird and common grackle.

It has been 10 years since the red-headed woodpecker appeared on the count and 2 were observed this year.

Numbers of some waterfowl were lower in Toronto, but the South Peel count of mallards was higher this year. Greater scaup were also low on the Toronto count. Common goldeneye and bufflehead numbers were also down this year. Numbers were much higher in 1982. However, 1983 was a worse year as fewer were seen. This year there were more red-breasted mergansers than there have been in the past 10 years at Christmas. Oldsquaw numbers were up from last year (1239) by 961, but down from their record high of 6632 in 1968. Mute swans have continued to increase, most being seen in the west as is their winter migration pattern.

Red-tailed hawks were fewer compared to their 1975 high. Ring-necked pheasants are continuing a sharp decline; 6 were observed this year, way below their record high of 861 in 1963. Fewer ring-billed and herring gulls were also counted:

ring-bills 3733 (1988) vs 8180 (1987); herring 2422 (1988) vs 9670 (1986). Great black-backed gulls 81 (1988) were down over the past two years, (232 in 1986), but have increased on average over the 64 counts.

Fewer rock doves were noticed, 2487 (1988) vs 3010 (1987), but mourning doves continued their increase to a record high this year of 1557. Belted kingfishers also reached a record high of 19. The previous high was 14 in 1972. Downy woodpeckers have generally increased over the past few years as have American crows, but numbers have been higher.

Owls were very scarce this year and no long-eared or saw-whets were counted. Is this due to loss of suitable habitat? Only 8 golden-crowned kinglets were seen compared to last year's 55, but there were only 5 of these in 1983. The 64 year average is 25.

There appears to be a decline in tree sparrows over the past few years. Winter finches were extremely scarce, or are they late in arriving?

CHRISTMAS BIRD CENSUS (cont'd)

No redpolls or crossbills were seen. Pine siskins numbers 4 compared to their average of 126. A count of 8 evening grosbeaks is low; the average has been 70 over 64 years. Purple finches showed signs of beginning to appear in the northern parts of the count area. House finch numbers are skyrocketing: 557 (1988), 174 (1987), and 191 (1986).

Missed on the count were a sora at Grenadier Pond, seen the week before and the common raven that has taken up residence in south Etobicoke.

Low numbers cannot be attributed to the weather as it was a very pleasant day making counting easy. The temperature ranged from -6°C to -3°C . Winds were from the west northwest at 18, gusting to 28 km/h. Metro Toronto had no snow but the ground was covered farther north and light snow showers occurred around noon. Water was generally frozen except for fast moving streams and the lake.

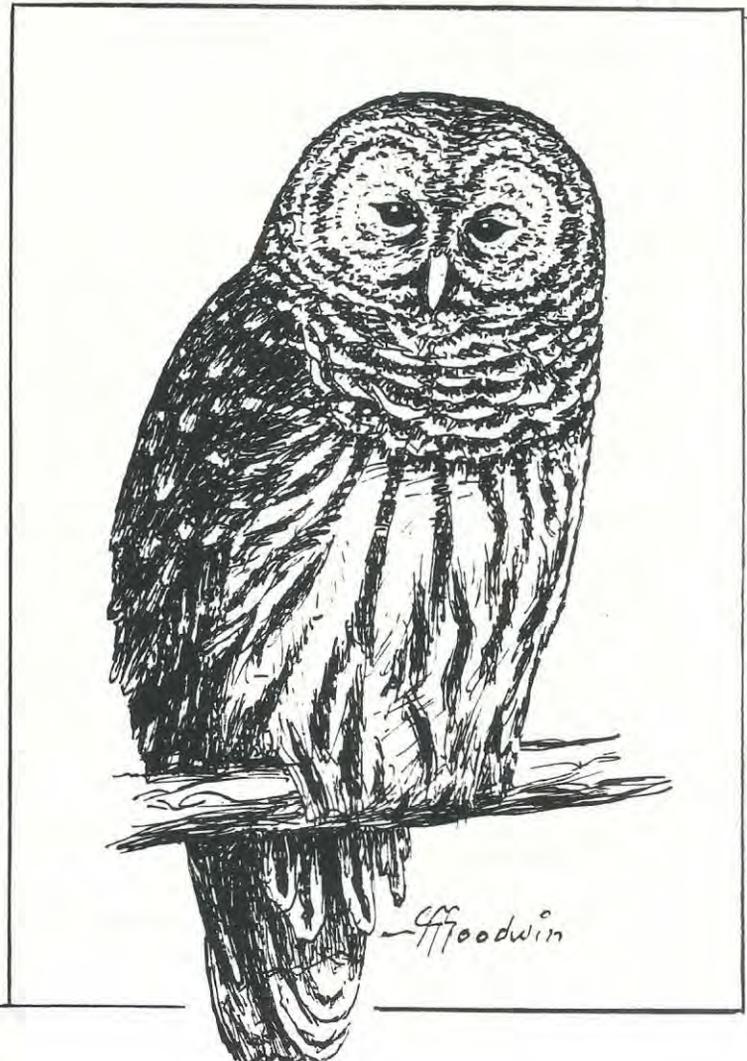
Much appreciation is extended to the members of the Toronto Ornithological Club, and especially to the members of the Toronto, South Peel, West Humber, Pickering, and Richmond Hill Naturalists' Clubs and to the many other interested birders who participated and helped in this count.

Beth Jefferson, Records Committee
Toronto Ornithological Club

Geraldine Goodwin's interpretation of this barred owl was from one of her own photographs taken on the occasion of the TFN outing to the owl rehabilitation centre of Kay and Larry McKeever in Vineland, Ontario, on October 25, 1987.

A species rare in Toronto Region, it may be sometimes be seen in migration and in winter.

(TORONTO REGION BIRD CHART)
by Bruce Parker



CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT (cont'd)

Red-throated Loon	1	Short-eared Owl	3
Great Blue Heron	4	Belted Kingfisher	19
Mute Swan	90	Red-headed Woodpecker	2
Snow Goose	3	Yellow-b Sapsucker	1
Canada Goose (large)	8,401	Downy Woodpecker	215
Wood Duck	2	Hairy Woodpecker	34
Green-winged Teal	4	Northern Flicker	7
American Black Duck	904	Pileated Woodpecker	8
Mallard	4,185	Eastern Phoebe	1
Northern Pintail	3	Horned Lark	24
Northern Shoveler	1	Blue Jay	396
Gadwall	556	American Crow	826
American Wigeon	40	Black-capped Chickadee	1,933
Canvasback	5	Red-breasted Nuthatch	43
Redhead	115	White-br Nuthatch	237
Greater Scaup	779	Brown Creeper	9
Lesser Scaup	7	Winter Wren	4
Harlequin Duck	1	Golden-crowned Kinglet	8
Oldsquaw	2,200	American Robin	139
White-winged Scoter	2	Northern Mockingbird	1
Common Goldeneye	262	Brown Thrasher	1
Bufflehead	199	Cedar Waxwing	243
Common Merganser	276	Northern Shrike	7
Red-br Merganser	55	European Starling	8,095
Sharp-shinned Hawk	8	Northern Cardinal	288
Cooper's Hawk	5	American Tree Sparrow	322
Northern Goshawk	1	Field Sparrow	1
Red-shouldered Hawk	1	Song Sparrow	41
Red-tailed Hawk	96	Swamp Sparrow	5
Rough-legged Hawk	12	White-throated Sparrow	12
American Kestrel	45	Dark-eyed Junco	668
Merlin	1	Snow Bunting	264
Ring-necked Pheasant	6	Red-winged Blackbird	35
Ruffed Grouse	11	Rusty Blackbird	1
American Coot	2	Common Grackle	1
Purple Sandpiper	1	Brown-headed Cowbird	2
Ring-billed Gull	3,733	Purple Finch	37
Herring Gull	2,422	House Finch	557
Iceland Gull	7	Pine Siskin	4
Glaucous Gull	13	American Goldfinch	939
Great Black-b Gull	81	Evening Grosbeak	8
Rock Dove	2,487	House Sparrow	2,604
Mourning Dove	1,557		
Eastern Screech-Owl	5	-----	
Great Horned Owl	13	# of Species	89
Snowy Owl	1	-----	
Barred Owl	2	# of Individuals	46,650
		=====	

A WILDLIFE REHABILITATION PROGRAM AT THE TORONTO HUMANE SOCIETY

People in Metropolitan Toronto share their urban environment with a rich diversity of wildlife. In this respect, Toronto is perhaps one of the most exciting cities in North America. Where else can you see such a variety of native birds, reptiles and mammals, all within a few minutes' driving time of a downtown city core? From beaver and woodchuck to foxes, bats and the ubiquitous eastern grey squirrel and raccoon, from kestrels, owls and nighthawks to waterfowl and warblers, a spectacular array of wildlife enriches our lives, adding a vital dimension to city living.

But people and wildlife in close proximity means, inevitably, problems for both. Home owners are not amused by "nuisance" animals--squirrels in attics and raccoons investigating garbage. Baby birds and squirrels fall from nests, juvenile cottontails are uncovered in spring yard clean-ups, animals are killed and injured crossing busy streets, snakes appear in basements, birds nest in chimneys and stove vents, and migrating woodcocks and warblers strike downtown office towers. The list goes on, humans and wildlife in collision in every possible way.

Many of these animals end up at the Toronto Humane Society shelter on River Street. In response to changing attitudes about urban wildlife, and a desperate need for some kind of rehabilitation facility to deal with the seemingly endless stream of sick, injured or orphaned wildlife, the T.H.S. initiated a pilot wildlife rehabilitation program in the spring of 1987.

This pilot proved a great success, handling over 5000 animals of 150 different species in the first year, including 750 raccoons, 500 squirrels, 32 raptors, 18 crows, 200 robins and 2000 other songbirds. This amounted to more than one quarter of all the animals brought into the shelter in 1987.

In 1988 the program handled over 6000 animals, a jump of 17% over the previous year; 1989 is already showing signs of being the busiest year yet.

The wildlife rehabilitation program provides quality care and treatment for sick, injured, dependent or displaced wildlife. It attempts to return these animals in good health and with the necessary survival skills, to the wild, or to find them alternative sanctuary. The program also acts to channel appropriate species to other organizations best suited to their care; it works in conjunction with the Society's efforts to educate the general public, to reduce the negative effects of human activities on wildlife, to offer humane solutions to wildlife problems, and to change public attitudes towards all living things.

The backbone of the rehabilitation department is a dedicated corps of volunteer workers, whose active participation enables the T.H.S. to handle such large numbers of wildlife.

While volunteers work in the program year round, efforts are concentrated in the busy months, April to October. Volunteers are involved in all aspects of providing a rehabilitation service, especially the labour-intensive daily schedules of feeding and cleaning. Volunteer work

WILDLIFE REHABILITATION (cont'd)

includes cleaning cages and washing dishes and utensils, preparing formula and a wide variety of specialized diets, folding newspapers and preparing bedding and holding containers. Volunteers feed very young birds and mammals; some assist by fostering wild animals at home. Others assist with shopping for supplies, transporting wildlife for pick-up and release, or moving animals to other rehabilitation centres. Word processing and computer skills, photography, telephone work, scrounging for recyclable materials, and supervising other volunteers are all skills useful in the program.

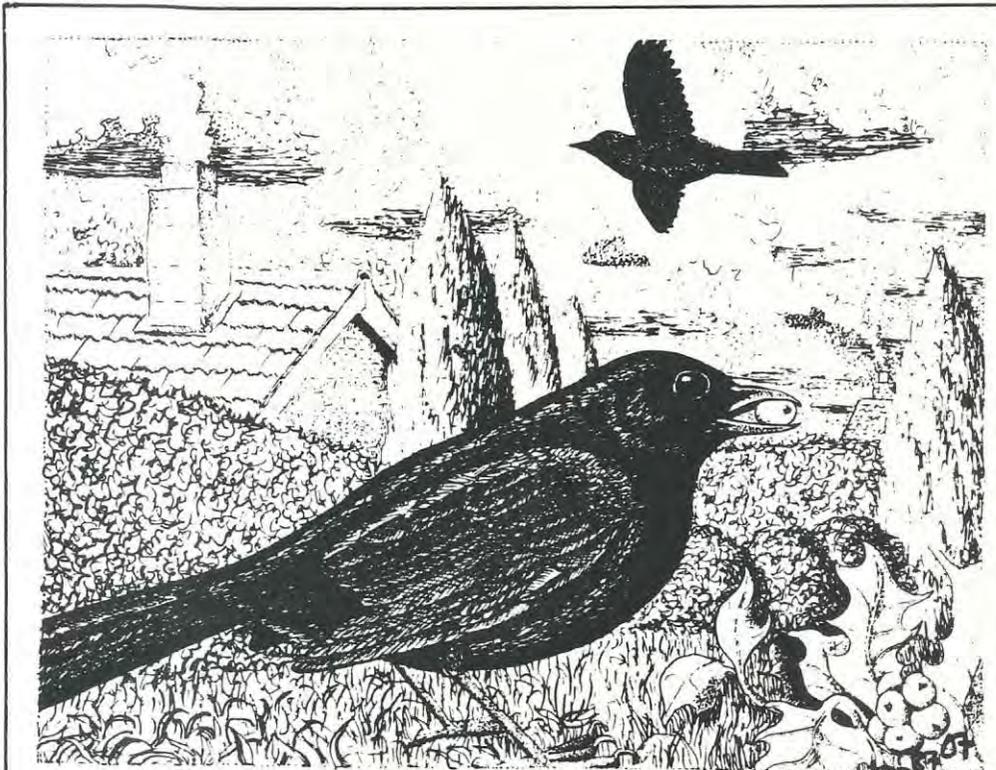
Hours during the busy season are from 8 am to 11 pm each day and volunteers are asked for a regular minimum of 4 hours once a week.

During April, May and June, workshops will be held to introduce new volunteers to the rehabilitation program. The work is hard and demanding, but very rewarding, and offers a chance to see and help a wide variety of fascinating furred, feathered and scaled creatures.

We are now gearing up for the spring wildlife explosion. If you want to get down and get dirty with urban wildlife, call the volunteer coordinator at the T.H.S., 392-2273, for further information.

Kip Parker

□



Blackbirds and Holly - Worthing, W. Sussex

The common blackbird (*Turdus merula*) of Eurasia and north Africa is, of course, not closely related to New World "blackbirds", but IS closely related to the American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*). In fact, the female common blackbird looks a bit like a dusky female American robin, there being a suggestion of rufous in the breast.

Illustration from an etching by Owen Fisher.

WHAT COLOUR ARE GREY SQUIRRELS?

Problem: Black/grey squirrels (*Sciurus carolinensis*) are mostly grey south of the Great Lakes, and frequently grey in some counties of Southern Ontario near the Lakes. The black or melanistic phase seems to increase as one goes north in Ontario.

Why does the colour change? Some biologists have suggested that it may be linked to other characteristics such as weight, reproductive ability, insulation, etc, and that it is one of these that is determining the colour distribution.

Survey question: Where does the colour change take place across Ontario? For example, in areas around London, Ontario, the ratio of black to grey is around four to one.

Survey method: Count the number of black and the number of grey squirrels in an area at any one time, or, if there are not many squirrels, over a period of time. It is useful if counts can be repeated on different days. It is also useful to have some description of the area, its nature and rough size (e.g. park, street distance if counting from a car), and location. In London, the highest counts occur in urban areas where there are large trees; they usually live in tree holes in the winter and leaf nests in the summer. They normally forage only during the day.

Colour phases:

Black: all hairs black on tail, upper and underparts (may be a few white-tipped, or a white patch, or a reddish cast to fur).

Grey: colour comes from a mixture of black, white and black/white/yellow banded hairs (may also be reddish patches).

Grizzled: In some areas black squirrels appear to have black hairs with yellow tips or bands, which gives them a somewhat grizzled appearance. If this type can be definitely identified, it would be useful to record such squirrels separately. If they cannot be clearly identified, they should be classified as black. One often has to be close to the squirrel to be certain.

Odd types: e.g. brown, or a cream colour on body and/or tail. These may be mutants or faulty moults. Almost nothing is known about squirrel genetics. Blacks and greys can occur in the same litter.

Moulting: They moult from head to tail in spring and from tail to head in fall. The moult pattern may be patchy, or as a line across the body. Winter fur is bushier, particularly the tail. The spring moult will probably not begin before April. The fall moult, which is not as marked, is usually over by October.

The following is a sample census form:

Date(s)	Number of each colour			Location/size of area	Remarks
	Black	Grey	Other		
.....		
.....		
.....		

Robert H. Stinson
224 Bernard Ave., London N6A 2M8

□

DOWNTOWN SQUIRRELS

"These squirrels eat better than some humans". The remark came from a Public Utilities Commission crewman in Victoria Park in London, Ontario, as we gazed at a row of decapitated tulips. We agreed that among the pounds of peanuts offered by park visitors, tree flowers and seeds, and the offerings of the scrap bins, the squirrels might have left the tulips alone. Much of the damage had occurred after the tulips came up and before they opened. The squirrels often snipped off the heads and chewed the stems, the inner parts of the unopened flowers, and the tips of the leaves. The damage seemed more severe to me this year. There had been a long dry spell in April and early May just as the plants were coming out of the ground. Were they eating them for the water?

To anyone who has offered a squirrel a peanut and then been subjected to repeated begging by a crowd, it does seem that squirrels never fill up. They are constantly alert for food. On a cold winter afternoon I have approached a single animal only to have six in a row come out of a hole in a nearby silver maple. Could they hear their colleague being fed outside? Or does one of them maintain a watch at the tree den entrance?

How a squirrel finds a nut is a puzzle to me. When one is thrown only a few feet away and appears to be in plain sight, a squirrel may not go directly to it, but rather search about with its head close to the ground, as if it cannot see what it is after. Frequently I have had to point out the nut to a searcher. On the other hand, sitting in the typical upright posture, squirrels seem able to recognize a handout 50 yards away. They are said to use a keen sense of smell in locating their food both on and under the surface of the ground, and can even distinguish an empty nut by smell alone.

How much does a squirrel need to eat? Estimates in the literature vary from one to two pounds a week (food unspecified). On a day in January at -10°C I fed a black squirrel 12 single peanuts in succession before it tried to bury the next two in the rock hard ground. At this rate it would need about six such peanut meals a day to reach even a pound a week. Unlike the red squirrel or the chipmunk, the black/grey squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*) normally does not store food in larders but buries it in a scattered and haphazard manner. Such supplies buried underground in the fall are not readily accessible in the winter. To add to the difficulty, squirrels apparently forget the locations of their burials after some 20 minutes.

The main source of natural food last winter seemed to be the seeds of the Norway and sugar maples, trees which usually drop their keys in the fall. In 1987 there was a heavy crop of seeds from the Norway maples. Trees retained these keys for several months, and they were still falling on top of the snow in January. Since it takes about seven of these seeds to weigh as much as a single peanut, a squirrel would have to eat some 500 of them a day to make one pound a week. One day I watched a black squirrel eating Norway maple seeds out of an eavestrough near my home. It ate 90 seeds in 15 minutes. So at this rate it would need only five to six such sessions to make its daily quota.

However, in Victoria Park seeds are not concentrated as they are in an

SQUIRRELS (cont'd)

eavestrough. And they run low by mid-winter. It was in late January that I saw a grey squirrel chewing bark, while another high in a silver maple looked to be eating the small buds that were beginning to form. It is then that human feeding probably saves lives. The scrap bins contain a few left-overs from students and others passing through, but much more is intentionally supplied by people. In the late afternoon I have often seen a man enter the south end of Victoria Park with a cloth bag filled with nuts over his shoulder. He is immediately surrounded. A woman, going diagonally from one corner of the park to the other, regularly threw nuts as she walked quickly along. At the weekends skaters and families appeared with more food. On the ground and paths, piles of walnuts, filberts, sunflower seeds and cracked corn would appear. Occasionally a load of stale buns could be seen in the northeast corner, and one day popcorn lay under many of the trees.

I wondered how many squirrels the park area of 15.5 acres did support. Counting them is difficult. In the trees they can be hidden by leaves in summer and dens in winter. This species is said to spend more time on the ground than in the trees, but without trapping and marking techniques, counting is highly speculative. Only during the moulting season of February to June, when moult patterns can become individualistic, could I be sure of identifying even a few individual squirrels. However, in order to get some idea of numbers, five to ten times in most months I followed the same path through the park and counted all the squirrels I could see on the ground. I found the time of day mattered. The literature suggested they have a daily cycle of activity, high in the early morning and late afternoon during mild weather, compressed into a mid-day peak in the cold. The two-peak cycle does seem to hold in the park in mild and hot weather, though it can be affected by human feeders. Probably the largest number of squirrels will be on the ground between 4 and 6 pm.

Over a period of 18 months (Dec. 1986 to May 1988), the lowest monthly average squirrel count occurred in both years in February: 15 per count in 1987 (6 counts) and 19 in 1988 (8 counts) at average temperatures of -0.3°C and -4°C respectively. (The highest and lowest counts were 39 and 0.) The highest monthly average was 72 squirrels per count in November 1987 (11 counts) at an average temperature of 7°C . (The counts ranged from 55 to 83.) The ground population rose steadily from February through the summer until November and then dropped quickly. In both winters the population low in February corresponded with the lowest average temperatures. The peak in November 1987 could represent the accumulating numbers from the spring and fall litters, and the subsequent drop in December could be due to dispersal of some of this high population out of the park, as well as to a response to colder temperatures. About all one could be sure of with respect to the total possible squirrel population was that in October and November, 1987, a maximum of between 80 and 90 squirrels could be seen on the ground on at least one occasion.

There was always the question whether these counts included migrants, coming and going for lunch or other reasons. I came to believe they were largely park inhabitants. I have seen them crossing the roads--one

SQUIRRELS (cont'd)

making it as far as Joe Kool's early on a Sunday morning--but there were very few kills on the busy streets. On several evenings I counted the squirrels as darkness came on. One evening, as the light declined below 20 foot candles, 69 of them vanished in 15 minutes between 5 and 5:30 pm when the park was practically ringed with traffic. There were no fatalities on the streets as far as I could see, so I assumed they remained within the park. There appeared to be only two overhead tree routes in an out, one on Central Avenue and the other on Wellington St. At no time have I seen either route carry heavy squirrel traffic.

Squirrels make their homes in tree dens during winter and spring, and in leaf nests during summer. By November, when all the leaves had fallen, 14 trees carried leaf nests, four of these with two nests and one large silver maple with three. Over the winter none appeared to be used, and all disintegrated. The tree dens are visible by their rounded and worn entrance holes located from 10 to 50 feet up. Beginning in October, I observed squirrels entering 13 such holes, occasionally carrying dead leaves and stripped basswood bark. A group of five grey squirrels occupied a den over several months in the northwest corner of the park, while at least 6 blacks would come out of a den in the south end. Still another den was occupied by a black and a grey together. However, I was not sure the dens were occupied all the time or that I had found all of them. In March a housing crisis must have occurred when the Public Utilities Commission cut down two old silver maples containing occupied dens, but where the occupants moved to I couldn't tell. Of the 13 dens observed, 11 were in silver maples, one in a sugar maple and one in a sycamore. None of the leaf nests was in any of these trees. Leaf nests occurred in the basswoods, the Norway, silver and sugar maples, a beech, and a Chinese elm on the Clarence Street boulevard. There are some 250 trees in the park including those on the boulevards. Of the total, over half are maples, and of these about half again are Norway maples, the commonest tree. Yet I found no tree dens in the latter. Since squirrels live in groups in the winter, there appeared to be sufficient housing to carry the numbers counted.

Both black and grey squirrels were found throughout the park with more of the latter in the north end, particularly beginning in the fall of 1987. From October 1987 to May 1988 there were four to six times as many blacks as greys. It appeared to me that the populations in the north and south ends (divided roughly by the bandstand) kept apart. For example, the several squirrels I could consistently recognize, like Redrump and Silver-tail, were always seen in the north end. To test this separation I once enticed Whitelips, a very aggressive female and a persistent peanut beggar, to follow me from the south end up into the north end, almost to the tank. Though still begging industriously (she would even climb my trousers), she seemed to become progressively uneasy the farther north we went. Finally, when a large grey came out to participate in the feeding, Whitelips ran up a small tree, watched with tail twitching, and then departed hastily for the south end.

I found squirrel watching fascinating and even addictive. Some squirrels are forward, some are shy. They often chase one another but seldom fight.

SQUIRRELS (cont'd)

Their rule of life seems to be "if you can't eat it, bury it". People with bird feeders attest to their problem-solving ability. I would be interested in hearing from any squirrel watchers who have witnessed feats of ingenuity. Some I have read or heard about seem incredible. One thing is for sure; they give a lot of pleasure to children and adults in Victoria Park.

Bob Stinson

Recommended reading:

THE WORLD OF THE GRAY SQUIRREL by F.S. Barkalow and Monica Shorten

SUCH AGREEABLE FRIENDS by Grace Spurch

SQUIRREL BOOK by Eugene Kinhead

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 KORTRIGHT AND KORTRIGHT

The controversy over the pole-trapping of raptors in the Kortright Waterfowl Park at Guelph appears to have confused some people who believed the activity was occurring at the Kortright Centre for Conservation near Toronto. Both locations carry the name of Frank Kortright, an ardent conservationist and founder of the Canadian National Sportsmen's Show. In his memory, this annual exhibition continues to donate large sums of money to conservation activities.

The two locations, however, are very different. The waterfowl park at Guelph contains most, if not all, of the species of Canadian waterfowl, plus many species from other parts of the world. The park is in the business of trying to increase the populations of threatened species. Because the birds at the park are not able to fly away it is an excellent place, especially for children, to see geese, ducks, and swans close up. For more information about the park call (519) 824-6729.

The Kortright Centre for Conservation is administered by the Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Authority. Throughout the year it invites the public to a wide range of programs: feeding birds in winter, owl prowls, making maple sugar, building bluebird houses, wildflower walks, gathering autumn fruits and leaves, and many more. The Centre is on Pine Valley Drive, south of Major Mackenzie Drive, west of Hwy. 400. For information on all activities call (416) 661-6600.

Harold Taylor

□

*Duck on a rock
in mid-stream, looks round at the world.
I'd do that too.*

haiku by Molly Campbell

 BIRDWATCHING IN MARCH

TFN has scheduled two birdwatching outings this month, but here are some suggestions for places to visit on your own. Around Toronto the best "birding" is along the waterfront where waterfowl and early landbird migrants will concentrate. Visit the Leslie Street Spit, Humber Bay Park, the Toronto Island and Grenadier Pond within TTC-accessible Toronto. Once the ice has moved out, visit the lakefront marshes: Rattray Marsh to the west and, especially good, the eastern marshes between Pickering and Whitby (Frenchman's Bay, Corner Marsh and Cranberry Marsh).

Presqu'ile Provincial Park near Brighton has waterfowl viewing weekends March 24-26 and April 1-2. Long Point is also excellent. (We will not be going to Long Point this year, but a bus trip to Tiny Marsh is planned for April 9.) If you go to Long Point, try to visit nearby Aylmer Wildlife Management Area) about 70 km from Long Point adjacent to the Ontario Police College on Elgin County Road 32, just north of Aylmer, 3 km east of Hwy 73). Often there are more swans here than at Long Point, or on the farm fields between Aylmer and Long Point.

If you really want to see ducks and swans, you will need to take a long drive to the Lake St. Clair area. It is reputed to be the most important waterfowl staging area south of James Bay. Drive the sideroads west of Chatham, south and west of Mitchell's Bay, Grande Pointe and Prairie Siding, viewing the fields and marshes along the east shoreline of Lake St. Clair. Especially good are (1) the Mitchell's Bay waterfront at the end of County Road 42 and (2) the St. Clair National Wildlife Area southwest of Grand Pointe. For more detailed directions, I recommend obtaining a copy of Clive Goodwin's A BIRDFINDING GUIDE TO ONTARIO. The best times for all the areas mentioned above are mid to late March for swans and into April for ducks.

For the spring hawk migration, be sure to visit Beamer Point Conservation Area along the escarpment at Grimsby. Leave the QEW at Grimsby on Christie St. south, continuing south up the escarpment (the road becomes Mountain St. here), and turning right at the top opposite the church. Follow this road, Regional Rd. 89 or Ridge Rd., west about 2 km to the conservation area entrance north along Quarry Rd., and right into the parking lot. The best hawk watching is from the parking lot itself, where the hawks fly over at treetop height. March is best for red-tails, turkey vultures and red-shoulders (the best time and place to see red-shouldered hawks in Ontario!). The most variety occurs in early to mid April, and the broad-winged flight peaks in late April. All these hawk movements are highly weather related. Time your visit for a day when there is warm air moving in, not a cold front.

Ross Harris

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I watched a raven
in effortless flight above.
It sensed me watching.

haiku by J. Kenneth Cook

TRAVEL AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The following statistics have been taken from an article by Tony Turrittin (National President of Transport 2000 Canada) which appeared in the Sierra's "Sanctuary" newsletter, December 1988.

"Construction of new highways requires about 20 acres of land per mile; rail requires about a third.

An automobile produces 9 times more ozone-depleting emissions (than does a train).

A fully loaded compact car requires 3.5 times more fuel (per 100 seat miles) than a modern train; a jetliner requires 7 times more.

Between 4.30-7.00 pm there are some 12 flights from Toronto to Montreal: 2 VIA trains could move the equivalent number of passengers.

One rush-hour GO train from Oakville to Toronto moves as many people as one lane of the QEW in one hour.

An average city bus line transports twice as many passengers in an hour as one lane of super-highway.

Light rail transit move the equivalent of 6 super-highway lanes of traffic. Yonge Street subway is equivalent to 16 rush-hour lanes of super-highway."

Such comparisons would seem reason enough for Government to put its financial resources and research not only into the preservation but the extension, of rail services. Such is not the case. Not only is urban transit underfunded and rural transit practically non-existent, but thousands of miles of railway line are being left to fall into disrepair, and VIA, although being Canada's third largest passenger transportation company, is failing due to lack of Government support. The Montreal-Ottawa-North Bay line, for example, is being reduced, and further cutting of passenger service is planned. (I was shocked, while in the Temagami region last summer, by the condition of the ties along the rail line servicing the Northlander.)

In contrast, Calgary is expanding its highly successful light-rail rapid transit. AMTRAK's increasing passenger load is leading the U.S. Government to consider a major order of new cars and engines (possibly to be built by Canadian companies), while AMTRAK's 125-mph service between New York City and Washington has superseded the airlines as the principal carrier on that route. In Europe, Japan and Australia passenger train systems are being supported by major government capital investment in technology.

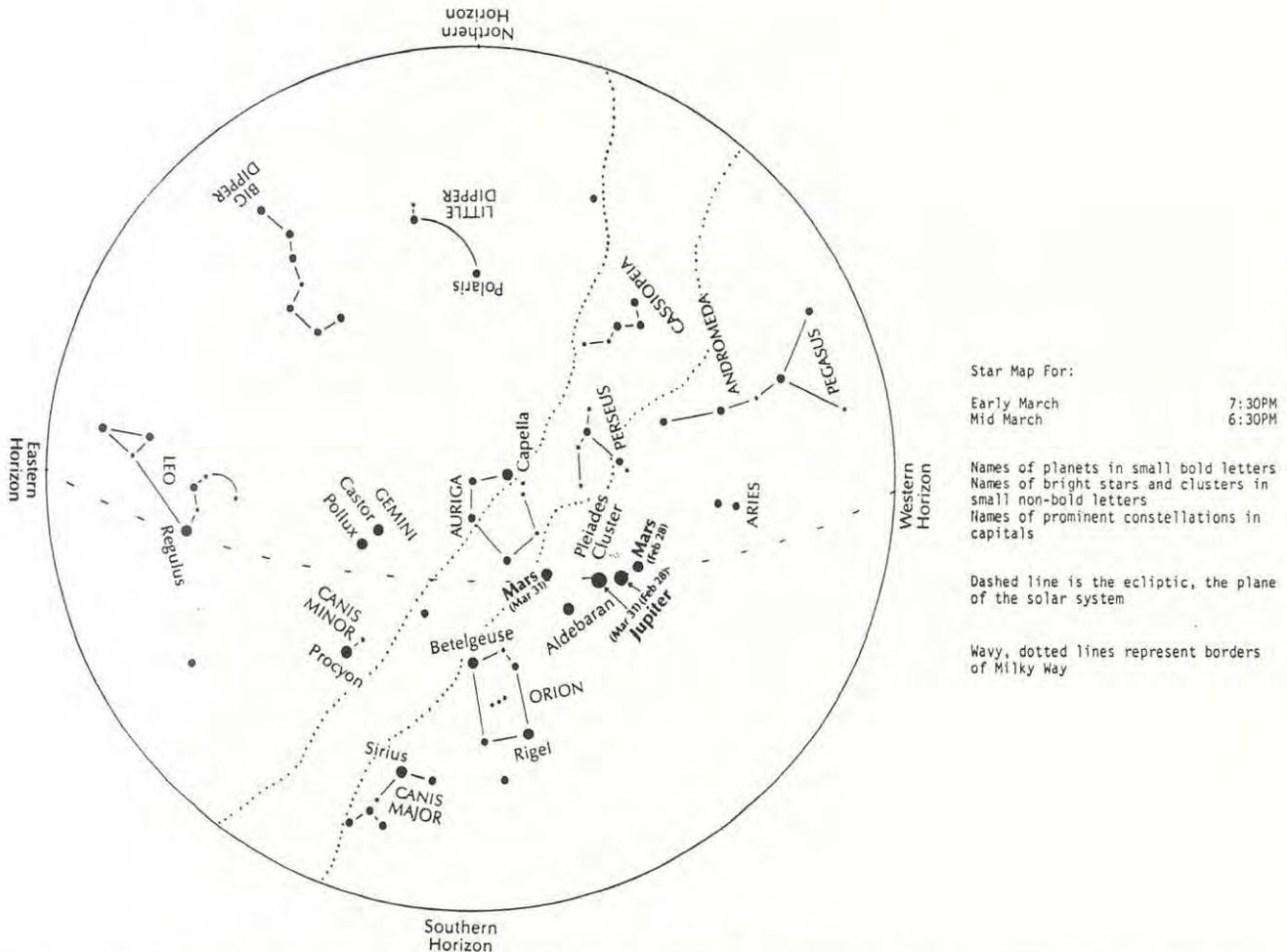
In Canada the powerful lobbies of development, truck, airline and construction are pressuring Government to build more roads and airports. That primary contributor to environmental deterioration, the private automobile, is being catered for at the expense of other more energy efficient and less polluting modes of travel. Although in 1987 almost 45 million people travelled by surface public transportation (three times the number that travelled by air), the majority of inter-city trips in Canada--a stunning 90%--are still undertaken by automobile. What price environmental sanity, on the part of Government and citizens alike?

Eva Davis

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Sky Notes

The Evening Sky - March, 1989



Following is my list of naked-eye astronomical highlights for the month, focusing as usual on the moon and planets:

- Jupiter is still the brightest star-like object in the sky.
- Mars, continuing to fade, is now dimmer than Aldebaran.
- Relative to the background stars, Jupiter moves about 5° eastward, Mars about 19° ; Mars overtakes Jupiter on the night of the 11th.
- The next evening, the two planets are joined by the five day old moon.
- New moon is on the 7th, 1st quarter on the 14th, full moon on the 22nd and last quarter on the 30th.

Easter, the Sunday after the first full moon of spring, can occur as early as March 22 or as late as April 25. This year, the timing of the full moon so close to the beginning of spring makes Easter on the 26th the earliest until March 23, 2008.

Jeff Nadir

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Help Wanted!

▷ The City of Toronto Department of Parks and Recreation wants interested and enthusiastic young people for summer jobs. Call 392-7278.

The weather this time last year

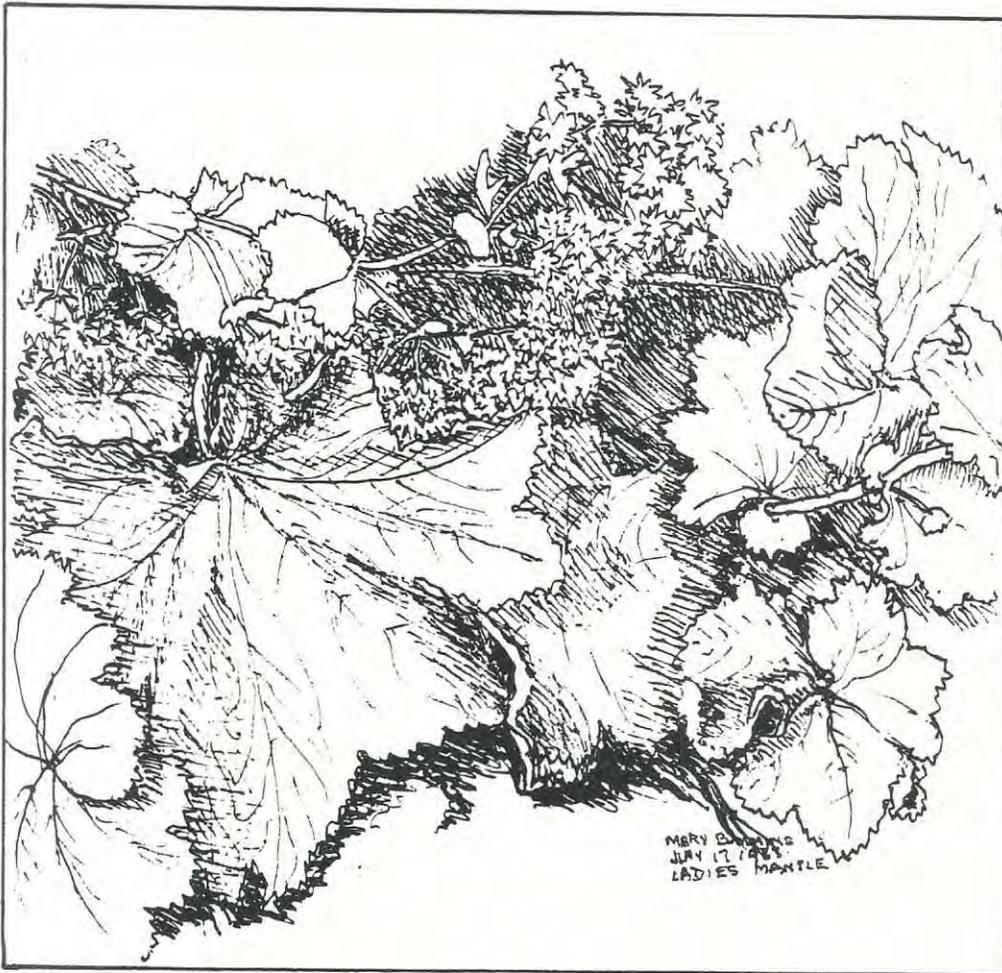
March, 1988, Toronto

March brought us seasonable but variable temperatures and a return to dry, snow-free conditions. Nothing outstanding really happened until March 19, when a strong cold front brought Arctic air into the region. A low of -14.9°C downtown on March 21 was the coldest, for so late in the season, since 1959. In a manner reminiscent of 1986, temperatures were close to 20°C , very shortly thereafter, on March 23.

March was also much sunnier than normal, and dry. Snowfall was only 6.2 cm downtown and 2.4 cm at the airport, the least since 1981 and 1953 respectively. Most of the significant rainfall was in the last part of the month.

Gavin Miller

□



LADY'S MANTLE (*Alchemilla*), in the rose family, is planted in the old-fashioned garden by the log cabin, Sunnybrook Park, the TFN Nature Centre. There are representatives of this genus in Quebec and Newfoundland as well as those naturalized from Europe, according to Fernald in *GRAY'S MANUAL OF BOTANY* 8th Edition. (Field sketch by Mary Cumming)

COMING EVENTS

COMING EVENTS

Wednesday, March 1 at 7 pm - a public forum to discuss how Ontario's Conservation Authorities are threatened by the recommendations of the Burgar Report at the Scarborough Council Chambers. (See pages 23-24.)

Wednesday, March 1 & 2 (10 am to 9 pm) and March 3 to 5 (10 am to 6 pm) - the Garden Club of Toronto's 1989 Flower Show "Show Stoppers" at the Civic Garden Centre. Admission \$5 or \$6 (proceeds to the renovation of the gardens of Casa Loma).

Saturdays, starting March 4 at 6.30 p.m., TVO will broadcast "On the Trail", a seven part series of journeys throughout Ontario with John and Janet Foster. Repeated Tuesdays at 7.30 p.m.

Sunday, March 5 at 1:30 pm - Planting for Wildlife at the Humber Arboretum. Call 675-5009 for details.

Sunday, March 5 at 3 pm - The Toronto Sky Dome, a Royal Canadian Inst. Lecture at the Medical Sciences Building, U. of T. (northwest of College and University). Free. Call 928-2096.

Saturday, March 11 at 7 pm & 8:30 pm - Screech Owl Prowl at Kortright. Call 661-6600 for reservations and information about admission fee.

Sunday, March 12 at 1:30 pm - A better place to live (bird houses) at the Humber Arboretum. Call 675-5009.

Sunday, March 12 at 3 pm - Sports Medicine, Royal Canadian Inst. lecture. See March 5.

Saturday, March 18 (10 am to 6 pm) and March 19 (11 am to 5 pm) - Willowdale Gem and Mineral Club 14th Annual Show at Armour Heights Community Centre (Avenue Road and Wilson). Free.

Sunday, March 19 at 1:30 pm - Small Planet (recycling, etc.) at the Humber Arboretum. Call 675-5009.

Saturday, March 25 at 1 pm - Toronto Entomological Association meeting at the McLaughlin Planetarium. Dr. Steven Marshall will talk about Diptera (flies).

Saturday, March 25 at 8 am - Birdwatching (waterfowl and early spring migrants) at Humber Bay with Bob Yukich of the Toronto Ornithological Club. Meet in the parking lot of Humber Bay Park East. Free.

Sunday, March 26 at 1:30 pm - Nature Walk (maple sugar time at Bruce's Mill) led by Jim Robb of the Save the Rouge Valley System. Call 288-8730 or 1-432-1346.

COMING EVENTS (cont'd)

Children's Summer Camps

Federation of Ontario Naturalists Young Naturalists Camp at South River for children aged 10 to 15 for \$225 (Aug. 20 to 27). Call Pamela Hickman at 444-8419 for application.

1989 Green Thumb Camp for children aged 8 to 11 at the Civic Garden Centre (July 31 to Aug. 4 or Aug. 14 to Aug. 18). \$65 or \$72 per child. Call 445-1552 for application.

Nature Holidays

Naturalists' Workshop at the Biological Station of Queen's University - May 20 to 27 (\$370). Write to Naturalists' Workshop, Queen's U. Biological Stn., P.O. Box 31, R.R. #1, Elgin, Ont. K0G 1E0.

Lyn Hancock is willing to organize a trip for naturalists to Sila Lodge, Wager Bay, near Rankin Inlet. You might see polar bears and peregrines. If you are interested, call Jean Macdonald (425-6596) and she will let Lyn know of your interest.

CONFERENCES

The Legal Challenge of Sustainable Development - Can. Inst. of Resources Law Conference May 10 to 12, Ottawa, Ont. For more information, contact the Conference Organizer, Can. Inst. of Resources Law, 430 Bio Sciences Bldg., University of Calgary, Calgary T2N 1N4 (403)220-3200.

Waste Not. Want Not. The Can. Alliance for Recycling and the Environment Conference March 19 to 21 at Ottawa/Hull. For more information, call Claire Morin, Exhibition and Conference Management Ltd. 514-288-8811 or 514-288-9125.

COURSES

Royal Botanical Gardens have an extensive course program. Call (toll free) 1-800-263-8450 or write Box 399, Hamilton L8N 3H8.

Bird study (beginners level). Contact Rosemary Gaymer, P.O. Box 152, Oakville L6J 4Z5 or call 416-844-8332.

Birds and flowers - short courses. Contact Clive and Joy Goodwin, 45 LaRose Ave. #103, Weston M9P 1A8 or call 249-9503.

High school students can earn a senior history credit at an archeological excavation of a prehistoric Indian village near Woodbridge (July 30 to August 19). For more information call (416)661-6600. □

This Month's Cover

TFN members viewing a rare spectacle-- a bald eagle under attack by migrating birds, in the marshes at Presqu'ile Provincial Park, September 10, 1988.

Vera Irving



SINCE 1923

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Survey #7 - Taylor Creek-Woodbine Bridge Ravines, 1977	
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