

TORONTO FIELD NATURALISTS' RAVINE SURVEY

STUDY NO. FOUR

WIGMORE PARK RAVINE

by David Kelly and Allan Greenbaum



TORONTO FIELD NATURALISTS

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WIGMORE PARK RAVINE

1975

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THE TORONTO RAVINE SURVEY : AN INTRODUCTION

Urban biology is, unfortunately, a neglected study in our time. Only rarely do professional botanists, ornithologists, or ecologists treat the city as anything other than lost, and yet the urban environment desperately needs the preservation, and often the restoration, of any natural areas that remain within its boundaries. This is a task in which the informed amateur field naturalist can play an important part.

To a considerable degree natural areas still survive within Metro Toronto because of a fortunate natural legacy -- a series of steep-sided, deep ravines running from north to south across the city into Lake Ontario. To understand this legacy of ravines, it is necessary to go back a long way in time, to the last glacial period in Eastern Canada, about 10,000 years ago. All of Southern Ontario was then covered by ice. Later, as the ice retreated northward, the basic structure of the present surface landscape was left behind, including the numerous ravines which are a unique feature of Metro Toronto.

The first survey in this series, that of Chatsworth Ravine, was printed in October 1973, at the time of the Toronto Field Naturalists' Golden Jubilee. It was well received by the local residents' association and by the City of Toronto Parks Department, which undertook certain remedial work in the ravine, including the planting of more trees. Thus encouraged we have moved on to survey other areas. We believe that basic biological and ecological information on ravines is needed if the case for their preservation in a sound natural state is to be made clear to the public and to political bodies. The survey which follows is another in what we hope will be a continuing series of reports on Metropolitan Toronto's ravines.

NOTE OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Toronto Field Naturalists' Club appreciates the permission of the North Rosedale Ratepayers' Association to include this study of the Park Drive Ravine in its series of ravine surveys. A study which the authors originally prepared for the North Rosedale Ratepayers' Association. Close cooperation between the Club and local residents' associations is one of the most effective ways of preserving Toronto's ravines in a sound ecological state, both now and in the future.

Stewart Hilts,

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Toronto Field Naturalists

TORONTO FIELD NATURALISTS

RAVINE SURVEY # 4

WIGMORE PARK RAVINE - 1975

Prepared by: David Kelly and Allan Greenbaum

LOCATION: Wigmore Park is shown in green on most Metropolitan Toronto road maps. It is approximately 0.7 of a mile in length; 0.6 of a mile in width and has as its southern boundary the Eglinton Bridge (known as the Harvey O. Rose Bridge) bordering the northern edge of Flemindon Golf Course. The area is about 110 acres in extent.

The east branch of the Don River and the CN Railway tracks, whichever is most westerly at any given point, has been arbitrarily chosen as the western boundary. This encompasses the major ecological communities within the park and follows the real park boundary (which is not quite so straight forward) fairly accurately.

The most northerly point of the ravine is the CP Railway trestle over the east branch of the Don River near Railside Road.

The eastern boundary of the area surveyed follows the contours of the park.

This location, the Wigmore Park Ravine, was chosen for survey because it includes most of the vegetation and animal life typical of the Don Valley lowland region. The park is one of the few large and generally undisturbed ravines lining the Don River.

STATUS: Wigmore Park is a public area owned by North York and maintained by the North York Park's Department. The eastern edge of the park abuts on private houses on the streets at Sundial Crescent, Sulkara Court, Sweeney Drive, Anewen Drive, Elvaston and Ecclestone Drives. Flemindon Golf Course and Wynford Apartments own land adjacent to the southern and western boundaries respectively and a CP Railway line bisects the ravine from north to south.

ACCESS: Public access to Wigmore Park is obtained on Anewen Drive near the entrance to Comet Court. A wide gravel footpath leads down from the southern end of Anewen Drive to the heart of the ravine. Farther east, at the corner of Anewen Drive and Woodthorpe Avenue, an asphalt pathway offers similar access to the park. Sloane Avenue Public School on Sloane Avenue is just north of Elvaston Avenue. Wigmore Park

is just beyond the playground. This schoolground can also be entered by going straight down Elvaston or Wigmore Drives from Sloane Avenue and walking right or left respectively. An asphalt path leads from the east bend of Pitcairn Crescent into the playground as well. Another entrance is located at Wigmore and Ruscica Drive: a wide dirt road runs directly into the ravine. Finally, an asphalt road leads into the western section of the ravine just north of the Wynford Apartments on Wynford Drive.

TOPOGRAPHY: There are five distinct regions in the park (see map).

1. Section 1 is the narrow section of land between Anewen Drive and Ruscica Drive. The eastern half of this section is a bottleneck shape, with a thin lowland stretch of cut grass, about 25 feet across, running through the centre. On either side the slopes are steep, approximately 40 feet high. They are thickly covered with apple trees and Black Swallow-wort to the north and mixed (mainly coniferous) forest to the south. At both ends of this bottleneck the Parks' Department has planted several Silver, Red and Sugar Maple trees, most of which are in healthy condition. A few planted Red Pine have grown fairly large here, too.

Beyond this bottleneck is a cut-grass slope that drops approximately 75 feet from Anewen Drive. It is used primarily for tobogganing in the winter. South of it an equally large slope rises up to Ruscica Drive and this is partially covered with a mature, mixed forest of predominantly Hemlock, White Pine, Beech, Sugar Maple and White Ash. A network of well-used paths provide access into this area. Farther up the slope, a small field yields several varieties of goldenrod, a few Lombardy Poplars and Red Pines.

Through the entire width of this section, a small stream once flowed into the Don River. About three-quarters of it was put underground in storm sewer pipes and sodded over quite successfully during 1965, but the last quarter of the stream is above ground and furnishes an excellent open-scrub habitat. On the slope down from Anewen Drive is a gravel road that follows the hill down from the street, turns right at the bottom and winds along the base of the steep slopes that rise up to Ruscica Drive and Pitcairn Crescent, eventually emerging in the playground behind Sloane Avenue Public School.

TOPOGRAPHY
(con'd)

2. The playground behind Sloane Avenue Public School constitutes Section 2. It is a cut-grass region, approximately rectangular in shape with Elvaston and Wigmore Drives forming north and south boundaries respectively. A great deal of level, open space here attracts gulls and robins and the area is on fairly high ground (about level with the surrounding streets).

Three baseball diamonds are strategically placed here so that three games can take place at one time. One of these has spectator benches. Other facilities include a small soccer field, two sets of children's swings, a slide, two monkey gyms, a drinking fountain and a few park benches. A well-kept flower garden decorates the entrance by Wigmore Drive.

The trees are all planted ones. They include such native species as Silver Maple, Sugar Maple, Red Maple, Black Cherry and Red Pine. Most of these are saplings but they are faring well despite school children's activities. There are far more Silver Maple and Red Pine than anything else. Aside from the native trees there are also several Weeping Willows and an Austrian Pine.

The asphalt paths in this section are all located at the west end. A narrow path crosses the park from Elvaston Drive to Pitcairn Crescent. Bisecting this, a dirt (eventually to be gravel) path leads into the western part of the ravine. This runs into the gravel road that winds up to the Anewen Drive entrance.

3. Section 3 is bounded entirely on the west by the east branch of the Don River. The small stream running west of Section 1 forms a division line between Sections 3 and 4. Section 3 is north of it. A great deal of the ravine's mature, deciduous forest lies on the steep slopes in this 3rd section of the ravine.

Virtually all of the slopes behind Sundial Crescent, Sulkara Court and a small portion of Sweeney Drive contain mature stands of Sugar Maple, Beech, White Birch, Black Cherry and White Ash. Fields lie below all of these slopes except the northern edge of Sulkara Court which has a sheer cliff about 75 feet down into the river. This cliff holds little vegetation aside from grasses and Poison Ivy. By the edge of each field at least one small, narrow grove of Manitoba Maple, Balsam Poplar and Black Willow line the Don River. Staghorn Sumach is abundant in the area by the edge of the forest.

TOPOGRAPHY
(Con'd)

3. (continued)

The fields in section 3 support not only several types of grasses but a very dominating plant, Black Swallowwort. Three small groves of mature, mixed forest are interspersed along the edge of these fields and one of these supports a consistent population of White Trilliums every April. Aspen, Hawthorn and Apple grow in the fields as well.

From the field below the southern edge of Sweeney Drive east, there is a change in both elevation and vegetation. A slope rises 30 feet to a tableland above and is at a perpendicular angle to the streets. This tableland (slightly below street level) extends over the entire remaining part of this section, although forested slopes drop sharply to the water level at all points facing the river or Section 4. These slopes are covered with a mature, mainly deciduous forest. This includes some species of Oak, the Maples, the Ironwoods, Ash and Cedar. The tableland however is open with mostly young White Ash or apple trees. Near Section 1, an old apple orchard extends over more than an acre and yields a heavy crop once a year. The ground vegetation here is mainly thick, uncut grass or Black Swallowwort. The area is interspersed with well-used trails.

4. Section 4 includes the area south of the stream near Section 1 and east of the Don River. As in Section 3, there is a tableland but along its northern half. It is about 50 yards wide and 40 feet below street level. It follows the contours of Ruscica Drive and Pitcairn Crescent to the opening at the west end of Section 2. The slope up to it from the stream is covered with a mature, mixed forest of Eastern Hemlock, White Pine, Beech, Red Cherry, several Dogwoods and the Maples. At the confluence of the stream and the Don River, the slope becomes almost perpendicular to the river. This cliff which rises 60 feet from the river is partially covered with vegetation in the form of grasses, saplings (mostly Oak and White Ash) and Cedar. The tableland is entirely covered with apple trees and long grass from this point south. The road from Anewen Drive, running through it has a mud base with gravel. It is in poor, eroded condition.

West of this plateau and about 40 feet below, lies a small half-moon-shaped field. Two sides of it are enclosed by Willow and Manitoba Maple thickets lining the Don River. The field contains a small, intermittent pond with a surrounding marsh. Cattails, smartweeds,

TOPOGRAPHY 4. (continued)
(con'd)

Beggarticks and most of the other moist-ground plants thrive here, although the western side of this field is dry and supports such plants as Wild Carrot and Milkweed.

The southern part of this field ends up as a steep slope which rises up to Ecclestone Drive. This slope extends from Section 2 along the entire length of Ecclestone Drive and perpendicularly cuts both the plateau and the field short. It is covered with a mature, mainly coniferous forest of Eastern Hemlock, White Pine and Cedar. The lower level contains some Ash, Willow, Beech and Maple with several types of shrubs including Dogwood. In two places along it, long, narrow strips of dry grass field extend from the top down to the river, dividing the forest into three distinct sections along the slope.

At the end of Ecclestone Drive, this slope opens onto a large field which extends south to Eglinton Avenue. Apple trees have been planted from this field up the eastern slope to Ecclestone Drive. A Manitoba Maple and Willow thicket line the river and Black Swallowwort grows profusely all over the field.

5. Both parts of Section 5 are west of the Don River and east of the CN Railway tracks. The two parts are here handled separately.

The first area is located just south of the CP Railway trestle. The northern half is lowground, close to the river-level and contains a thick forest growth, almost entirely consisting of Manitoba Maple, Black Willow and Balsam Poplar. The ground vegetation is likewise restricted to Burdock, Joe-Pye weed and most abundant, Black Swallowwort. The paths here are well-defined and used mostly by apartment dwellers. A large field farther south is elevated 30 - 35 feet above the forest. It slopes gradually down to the river at the far southern point where there is a small grove of Balsam Poplar and Manitoba Maple. An open wood within the field contains Jack Pine, Hawthorn, Red Pine and young European Larch. Staghorn Sumach grows near the northern edge of the field.

The second area of Section 5 is located opposite Section 1 on the west bank of the river. It is almost entirely surrounded by a wide bend in the river and is relatively remote from the streets and human activity. It is mostly near river level and contains a great variety of woods.

TOPOGRAPHY
(Con'd)

5. (continued)

These include Basswood, Beech, the Maples, the Oaks, White Cedar, Eastern Hemlock, White and Red Pines. Because much of this area is quite open woodland, the ground vegetation is thick and difficult to traverse. The plants include a great many shrubs, vines, golden-rod and several smaller, herbaceous flowers. A large percentage of the ravine's ferns also thrive in this moist environment.

This region would be well worth protecting as a sanctuary. Slightly south of it a small field slopes down from the CN Railway tracks to a beach and a narrow grove of Balsam Poplar and Willow.

GENERAL SOIL TYPE: The general soil type of the Wigmore Park area is a clay-loam, usually mixed with coarse sand and gravel. The stream beds of the region all have a sand-base with large concentrations of small to medium-sized rocks at fast-flowing sections of the streams. Bare cliff faces usually contain alternate layers of the clay-loam, ; mineral, iron and sand.

Where vegetation is thick, an A-1 layer of up to 6 inches of fertile humus soil may have built up over the clay or sand base.

WATERCOURSES:

The main watercourse bisecting the entire ravine is the Don River. Being a relatively old river it follows a meandering path from north to south. The riverbed is composed mainly of sand or sand loam with several sections of rock-strewn rapids. In places, the river is barely ten inches deep but where the flow is sluggish, the depth may reach four or five feet.

The main substance affecting the clarity or purity of the water in the Don River is a heavy concentration of suspended mud particles. A slightly above normal level of ammonia is present and coliforms are quite high as well, but phosphate levels do not exceed acceptable standards. (note: from information supplied by the Ministry of the Environment based on their 1975 chemical analysis of the Don River). Oxygen is insufficient in the river to support most game fish although some Black Suckers, about 10 - 12 inches long, have been caught.

No maintenance of the Don River has been carried out in this Ravine. The natural watercourse is about 40 feet

WATERCOURSE:
(con'd)

wide and its volume of flow at one point in the river is approximately 18 cubic feet of water per second.

Five small streamlets feed the river from various points along the eastern bank. They range in length from 100 yards to a few feet; usually the shortest are the most polluted. Each of them flows from sewer pipes located underground and most of these pipes are storm sewer openings on the surrounding streets.

A great many substances flow into these streamlets other than pure rainwater. Large amounts of gasoline (from cars), detergents and litter all eventually flow into the Don River. The second streamlet north of Eglinton Avenue and below Ecclestone Drive has been observed to contain detergent suds four feet high above water level during the spring and early summer months. The Don River receives its greatest percentage of chemical pollution from these streamlets.

Flooding in the Don River occurs within a few hours of most heavy rainstorms. The waterlevel is sometimes five or six feet above normal during spring melt and heavy downpours; the fields lining the Don River are often partially submerged by the very rapid flowing waters. The water colour during these floods is usually a uniform mud-brown whereas, during normal flow, the colour can vary from green (from predominant algal growth) to deep brown.

In places where there are wide, regularly-flowing rapids, narrow islets often form from build-up of soil and debris. A single storm can dissipate these small islets to rubble. On the other hand, development of one can take place in the span of a few weeks. During their existence, they often have their shape considerably changed by the river as well. This ravine has two such regions in the river where islets of this nature appear. Their vegetation consists mainly of grasses, Smartweed, Cocklebur and Bur-Marigold, although one of them supports some willows.

Solid litter in the river usually consists of large objects shopping carts, a car (notably one that was dumped with considerable effort a year ago, after being ridden through the valley) or large logs and poles. Other materials are normally taken downstream during heavy floods.

HISTORY:

Mrs. Patricia W. Hart in her book Pioneering in North York wrote that the Don River was, in 1793, named after the Don in Yorkshire, England. The various Indian tribes knew it by other names; it was one of the rivers by which they travelled to Fort York for trade.

HISTORY
(Con'd)

This particular ravine, Wigmore Park, has bordered farmlands belonging to many people over the past century. The ravine's land was in many areas cleared and planted with apple. These trees remain throughout the Don Valley network. The Coulson family who farmed this area during the 1920's probably planted some of the apple trees growing in this ravine today. They had their farm on the corner of what is now Sweeney Drive and Victoria Park Avenue (formerly Dawe's Road). In 1905 the Canadian Northern Railway Company constructed the line bordering the western edge of Wigmore Park. Later on the Canadian National Railway took over this track and began using it mainly to transport cargo in and out of the city. Passenger cars are minimal, even today.

It was not until 1954 that the Don Mill's Development Company laid plans for the "first planned community in Canada." Over the next four years the streets were added throughout Don Mills; luckily Wigmore Park was established after Hurricane Hazel (1954).

The wildlife just before this development began was abundant. Deer and fox were numerous in Wigmore Park and about 10 years' ago two wolves were seen in the area. One of these was killed on the Don Valley Parkway.

Trout and other game fish were frequently caught in the Don River.

FACILITIES:

Public facilities for the park have been set up almost entirely in Section 2. (see the write-up for that section for a detailed list of the facilities there). Also a gravel path three yards in width was constructed two years' ago from Anewen Drive through the ravine to Section 2 and a staircase leads up to Ruscica Drive at the far eastern end of Section 1. A public skating rink is constructed in the wintertime behind Sloane Avenue Public School.

MAINTENANCE:

Much of Section 1 is mown by the Park's Department during the warmer months, about once every four weeks. About twice a year the field in Section 4 below Ruscica Drive is also mown by the Department's employees. Section 2 has been maintained as school playground with short cut grass and a well-kept flower garden.

The saplings planted there are maintained in a healthy condition.

MAINTENANCE: The streamlet below Section 1 is contained by high gabion walls for the first few yards and these are, on occasion, replaced or added to.
(Con'd)

USES: Section 1 is actively used for several purposes. In the summertime, the area is used by many people to walk their dogs. Motorcyclists occasionally ride through the ravine despite signs specifically outlawing them and school children use the ravine for jogging and hikes. The area is used as a short-cut from Anewen Drive to Ruscica Drive by them as well. Tree forts are built on the surrounding slopes; some of these have remained for five or six years without much decay in their structure. Local Cub/Brownie groups occasionally enter the ravine in the evening, but very few naturalists in Toronto apparently know this ravine.

In the wintertime the long slope in Section 1 is used for tobogganing and skiing. The occasional person walks their dog or cross-country skis through the area.

Sections 3 and 4 contain the majority of the tree forts which are usually built in the summertime. School children, naturalists and dog walkers also use the area and on weekends the place is often quite populous.

Few people walk through these sections in the wintertime except for some naturalists. Often when the ice is thick, skaters will travel up the Don River, which makes an excellent half-mile long rink. Cross-country skiers mostly use the open areas like Section 1, but occasionally venture into other parts of the ravine. Ski-doors have been known to use the field in Section 4 below Ruscica Drive, but rarely, and these sections are usually quite wild with the few people visiting them.

Section 5 being enclosed on all sides by either the Don River or the CN Railway tracks is rarely visited by people at any time of the year. The far northern corner of the section has a deeply marked trail used sometimes by motorcyclists during summer afternoons, the majority of whom seem to live in Wynford Apartments, but normally only the occasional naturalist enters the area.

GENERAL VEGETATION: The most distinctive tree within the Don Valley network is the Apple Tree. In the last century, the ravine land was of little use to local farmers and the slopes were simply planted with apple to provide an extra crop during harvesttime. The trees have continued to prosper and the apples are still quite edible during late September and October.

GENERAL
VEGETATION:
(con'd)

Hawthorns are also open-wood trees that tend to grow throughout the ravine.

The coniferous trees that thrive in the area are Hemlock, Cedars, Red and White Pine. The latter species is usually found on the top edge of slopes and only in Section 5 do they appear to be in healthy condition. Beech, Sugar Maple, White Birch and White Ash complete the list of dominant forest tree species. These normally grow on steep ravine slopes behind residential streets.

Invariably, where there is very low land (compared to river level) there is a grove of Manitoba Maple, usually interspersed with Black Willow, Balsam Poplar and occasionally, Alder. These regions provide a vital habitat for several birds such as Wilson's Warblers, Catbirds, Brown Thrashers and to some extent, Mallards on the river. Behind these groves there are often fields. Most of these fields sustain a high concentration of an alien plant - Black swallow-wort. This plant is a dominating growth in the Don Valley network in Toronto. Other field plants include Wild Carrot, Yarrow, several species of goldenrod and asters as well as Ox-bow Daisy, Sunflowers and Common Mullein. The Appendix has a complete list of herbaceous plants.

The most common shrubs found in this ravine are Staghorn Sumch, Common Privet and Highbush Cranberry. Poison Ivy and Northern Bush Honeysuckle are also found throughout.

BIRDS:

The populations of various species of wild life in an area often indicate the state of health of that area - the carrying capacity of the types of organisms that have their breeding range over the region. This is especially true of birds; they can move out of an area that does not suit them with far greater ease than can a mammal.

This ravine is relatively healthy. At least one pair of Kingfishers have both nested and wintered here for the past three years, proving that an adequate source of food exists in the Don River for them. Northern Shrikes have been seen during the winter months over several years, and Kestrel Hawks are seen regularly. Mice runs have been observed in the winter, and the presence of mice may account, in part, for the visits of these two species of predators. The one hundred species of birds recorded in Wigmore Park are listed in Appendix 3.

This list includes several birds that have, at one time over the past five years, been abundant during the spring of one year and then have been partially or completely absent over

BIRDS:
(Con'd)

the next few years. An example would be the Pine Siskin which migrated through the ravine in very large numbers four or five years ago and then has not been noticed since. The same thing has occurred with Pine Grosbeaks and Scarlet Tanagers (although in the latter case it was just an increase and decrease in numbers not a total disappearance). Such variances are probably due to several factors not the least of which would be the availability of food. Aside from these, the ravine supports apparently stable populations of various species. Chickadees, Juncos, Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers return every winter in approximately the same numbers. Summer birds as well have very regular populations. In Spring and Fall the migration of Warblers, Wrens and White-throated Sparrows is normally quite heavy and 20 - 30 species a day can usually be seen at these times. Thus Wigmore Park is a valuable resting place for thousands of migrants every year.

MAMMALS:

Aside from the domestic mammals, cats and dogs, the most abundant animal in the ravine is the Grey Squirrel. They are extremely clever and probably feed themselves during the late Fall and early Spring at bird feeders which they are highly adept at reaching. Garbage cans are nightly raided by a number of raccoons, some of which have been known to use attics for winter headquarters. Chipmunks, Cottontail Rabbits and Groundhogs complete the list of terrestrial mammals but several Muskrat inhabit the Don River as well. Little Brown Bats appear during warm evenings in fairly large numbers. The writer's cat (now dead) once brought home a large Black Rat two years ago and a species of White-footed Mouse (probably a Deer Mouse) was seen in 1975. A mole (likely a hairy-tailed) was also observed briefly. Dead voles have been found on several paths throughout the ravine.

In 1974, a fox was observed by several people including the writer but has not been noticed since. This deserves further investigation. Finally, four years ago, a family of Striped Skunks was observed although they have not been seen recently.

Cats and dogs in the area pose a threat to many of these other native mammals and certain areas would probably benefit if dogs were outlawed from them. Some birds have declined in numbers from the incessant hunting of the neighbourhood cats.

REPTILES
AND
AMPHIBIANS:

Two species of snake have in the past years, been numerous; the Dekaye's Snake and the Eastern Garter Snake. In 1975, only two Garter Snakes and one Dekaye's Snake were seen. This decline in numbers is probably in part due to the destruction of habitat.

REPTILES
AND
AMPHIBIANS
(con'd)

The American Toad was fairly common during May, 1975, in Wigmore Park, but it too may be declining in numbers. Leopard Frogs and some Tree Frog species have also been seen or heard during the spring.

FISH:

During 1975, some people were fishing in the Don River. They periodically came up with large Black Suckers, about 10 to 15 inches long, or Creek Chub - as many as 8 or 9 at one session. Minnows have been observed in the shallow sections of the river and it is assumed this is what the Belted Kingfisher has subsisted on for three years. They are normally one to three inches long.

SUMMARY
AND
CONCLUSIONS:

Thousands of ecological communities exist within Wigmore Park that are delicately attuned to take advantage of all the opportunities for growth. The field supports stinky plants that have, over centuries adapted to an environment that takes in a lot of radiation from the sun and very little moisture. Meanwhile such plants as the Trout Lily thrive in completely opposite conditions. Competition is apparent within all of these communities. Usually the plant or organism that has adapted best to its physical environment becomes most prominent in its community. Such is the situation when the Sugar Maple, a shade tree, restricts the growth of smaller trees under its canopy. Wigmore Park contains several of these 'winners' that have become over-abundant in several communities and are restricting the very existence of other organisms which would create a greater diversity. Often these 'winners' are alien to the ravine.

Black Swallowwort, an alien plant, has become very prominent throughout the ravine since its introduction. It crowds out many of the ferns that once existed here (such as Christmas Fern which is found nearby) since it grows not only in fields but in the forest as well. Where it is present, small wildflowers such as any of the lily family cannot grow and a greater variety of ground vegetation would exist if it were absent.

Cats and dogs are a particular nuisance at times. The ravine holds a few caged dogs that bark incessantly at passers-by from the top of the slopes. Cats are hunters during the bird migration periods and one cat can usually bring down one bird a day or more during these times. It is desirable that ways be devised for keeping dogs and cats out of the wilder parts of the ravine in order to safeguard wild animals and birds. (Recommendations No. 6 and 8 refer)

SUMMARY AND
CONCLUSIONS
(con'd)

Wigmore Park contains several large regions where the grass has been cut very closely. Although in Section 2, (the school ground) and the lowland parts of Section 1, this procedure is necessary, neither the slopes nor the fields in the other parts of the ravine require this maintenance. The fact that this is being done is probably one of the reasons for the declining numbers of snakes in the ravine. Longer grass would also hold water runoff more efficiently and thereby control erosion. Although Wigmore Park is a North York public park, it should also be appreciated as an example of a semi-wild environment fast becoming rare in Metropolitan Toronto.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Grass-cutting should be restricted to Section 2 and the lowland parts of Section 1. Other regions do not require this maintenance.
2. An investigation of the source of the detergent suds at the sewer culvert below Ecclestone Drive would be helpful. These suds flow straight into the Don since the sewer culvert is only a short distance from the river.
3. The ban on motorcycles should be enforced in the ravine.
4. No new maintenance facilities should be set up in the ravine. This ravine is one of the few relatively large, wild parks of Toronto.
5. Further studies need to be made on fish, insects, mosses, fungi, small mammals and algae.
6. Cats and dogs should be controlled and/or restricted from certain areas of the park. The effect they have on the ravine should be examined more closely.
7. Population studies should be made for birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians. Valuable information would probably be obtained about their relationship to this ravine's flora and other fauna.
8. Section 5 (south) should be kept untouched as a small wild-life sanctuary.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

Special thanks must go to Mr. Mike Singleton, Mr. Bruce Parker, Mr. Bill Lawrence of the Works' Department of North York and Mrs. C. Johnson for their time and information given for this survey.

Dr. Bruce Cruickshank edited the report; it was typed by his Secretary, Mrs. Barbara Mildon.

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NOTE:

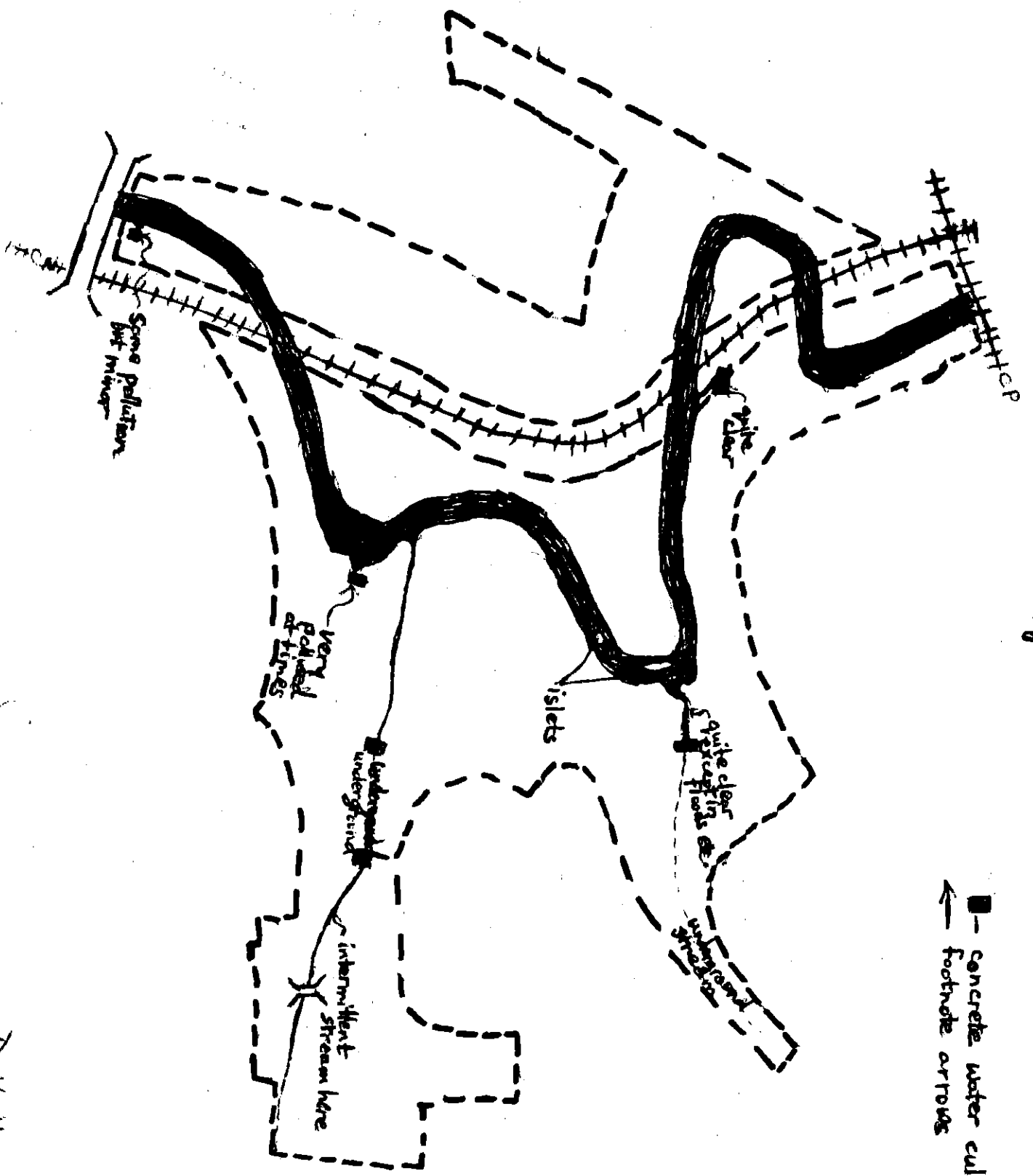
A small collection of colour transparencies showing different sections of this ravine, is available to illustrate talks on this and other ravines.

Toronto

December, 1975.

Wignamore Park: Its Watercourses!

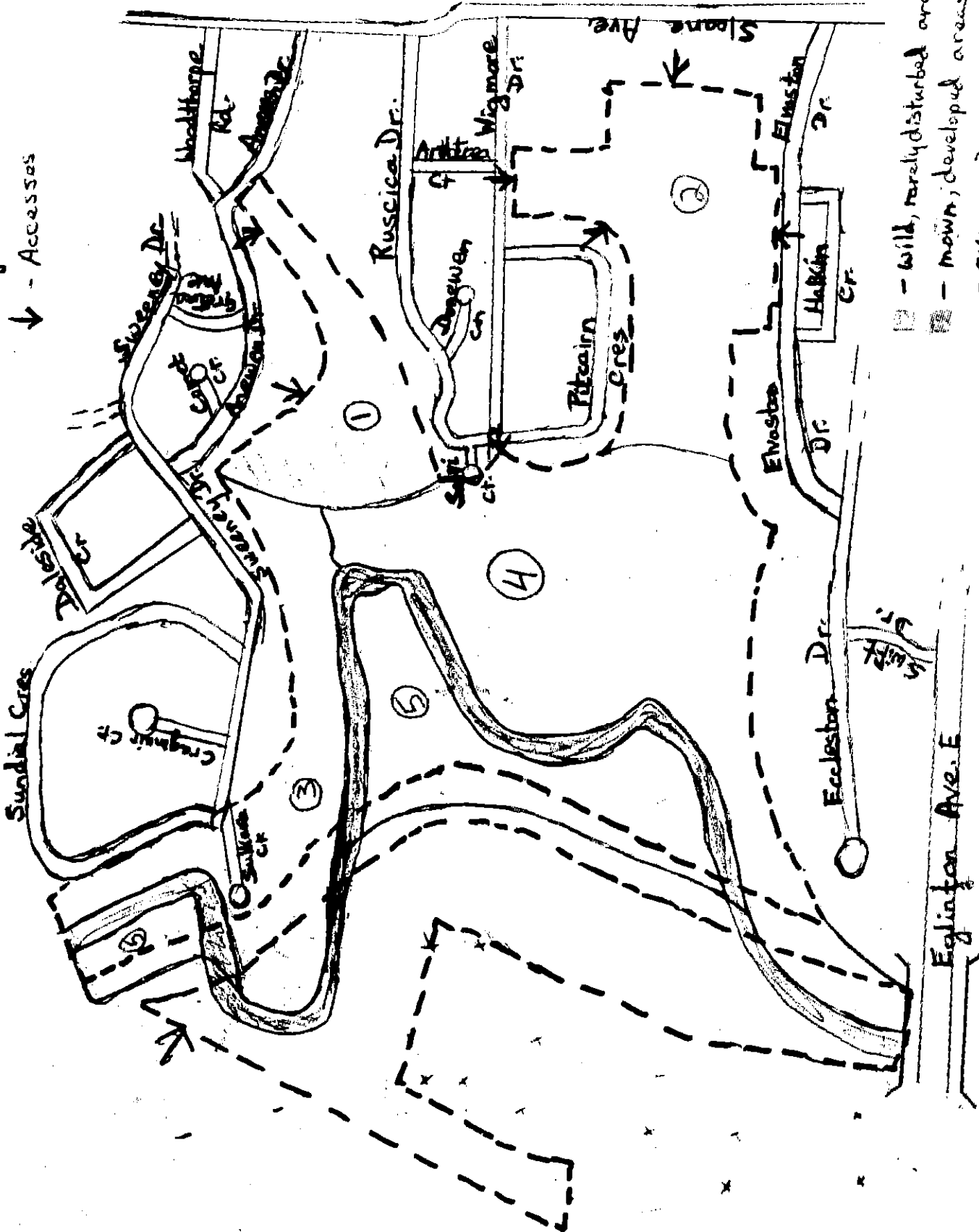
- - concrete water culverts
- ← - footpath arrows



D. Kelly

Wigmore Park: Sections, Surrounding Streets, and Accesses

↓ - Accesses



- ▨ - wild, rarely disturbed areas
 - - mown, developed areas
 - - - average Den Valley usage in these areas.
- D. Kelly

CHECK-LIST OF THE PLANTS FOUND IN WIGMORE PARK RAVINE

A. TREES, SHRUBS AND WOODY VINES

PINE FAMILY (PINACEAE)

Red Pine	<i>Pinus resinoides</i>
White Pine	<i>Pinus strobus</i>
White Cedar	<i>Thuja occidentalis</i>
Eastern Hemlock	<i>Tsuja canadensis</i>
European Larch	<i>Larix decidua</i>
Jack Pine	<i>Pinus banksiana</i>

WILLOW FAMILY (SALICACEAE)

Black Willow	<i>Salix nigra</i>
Sandbar Willow	<i>S. interior</i>
White Willow	<i>S. alba</i>
Weeping Willow	<i>S. babylonica</i> (or var.)
Cottonwood	<i>Populus deltoides</i>
Lombardy Poplar	<i>P. nigra</i> (var. <i>italica</i>)
Trembling Aspen	<i>P. tremuloides</i>
Balsam Poplar	<i>P. balsamifera</i>
Silver Poplar	<i>P. alba</i>

FAMILY JUGLANDACEAE

Butternut	<i>Juglans cinerea</i>
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HAZEL FAMILY (CORYLACEAE)

White Birch	<i>Betula papyrifera</i>
Blue Beech	<i>Carpinus caroliniana</i>
Ironwood	<i>Ostrya virginiana</i>
Smooth Alder	<i>Alnus serrulata</i>
Speckled Alder	<i>A. rugosa</i>

BEECH FAMILY (FAGACEAE)

Beech	<i>Fagus grandiflora</i>
Red Oak	<i>Quercus rubra</i>
Bur Oak	<i>Q. macrocarpa</i>
Chestnut Oak	<i>Q. prinus</i>

ELM FAMILY (ULMACEAE)

White Elm	<i>Ulmus americana</i>
Red Elm	<i>U. rubra</i>

ROSE FAMILY (ROSACEAE)

Hawthorn	Crataegus sp.
Black Cherry	Prunus serotina
Choke Cherry	P. virginiana
Red Cherry	P. pensylvanica
Domestic Apple	Pyrus malus
Multiflora Rose	Rosa multiflora
Purple Flowering Raspberry	Rubus odoratus
Red Raspberry	R. strigosus
Black Raspberry	R. occidentalis

PEA FAMILY (LEGUMINOSAE)

Black Locust	Robinia pseudoacacia
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CASHEW FAMILY (ANACARDIACEAE)

Poison Ivy	Rhus radicans
Staghorn Sumach	Rhus typhina

BITTERSWEET FAMILY (CELASTRACEAE)

American Bittersweet	Celastrus scandens
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MAPLE FAMILY (ACERACEAE)

Silver Maple	Acer saccharinum
Red Maple	A. rubrum
Sugar Maple	A. saccharum
Manitoba Maple	A. negundo

VINE FAMILY (VITACEAE)

Virginia Creeper	Parthenocissus quinquefolia
Riverbank Grape	Vitis riparia

LINDEN FAMILY (TILLIACEAE)

American Basswood	Tilia americana
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DOGWOOD FAMILY (CORNACEAE)

Red Osier Dogwood	Cornus stolonifera
Round-leaf Dogwood	C. rugosa
Rough-leaf Dogwood	C. drummondii
Red-Panicle Dogwood	C. racemosa

OLIVE FAMILY (OLEACEAE)

White Ash	<i>Fraxinus americana</i>
Lilac	<i>Syringa vulgaris</i>

HONEYSUCKLE FAMILY (CAPRIFOLIACEAE)

Highbush Cranberry	<i>Viburnum trilobum</i>
Northern Bush - Honeysuckle	<i>Diervilla lonicera</i>

NIGHTSHADE FAMILY (SOLANACEAE)

Bittersweet Nightshade	<i>Solanum dulcamara</i>
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B. FERNS

HORSETAIL FAMILY (EQUISETACEAE)

Field Horsetail	<i>Equisetum arvense</i>
Meadow Horsetail	<i>E. pratense</i>
Scouring Rush	<i>E. hyemale</i>

FERN FAMILY

Lady Fern	<i>Athyrium filix-femina</i>
Bulbet Bladder Fern	<i>Cystopteris bulbifera</i>
Sensitive Fern	<i>Onoclea sensibilis</i>
Ostrich Fern	<i>Matteuccia struthiopteris</i>
Bracken Fern	<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>
Fragile Fern	<i>Cystiotes fragilis</i>

C. HERBACEOUS PLANTS

CATTAIL FAMILY (TYPHACEAE)

Narrow-leaved Cattail	<i>Typha angustifolia</i>
Broad-leaved Cattail	<i>T. latifolia</i>

ARROWHEAD FAMILY (ALISMATACEAE)

Broad-leaved Arrowhead	<i>Sagittaria latifolia</i>
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LILY FAMILY (LILLIACEAE)

Yellow Trout Lily	<i>Erythronium americanum</i>
Starry False Solomon's Seal	<i>Smilacina stellata</i>
White Trillium	<i>Trillium grandiflorum</i>

NETTLE FAMILY (URTICACEAE)

Stinging Nettle	<i>Urtica dioica</i>
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BUCKWHEAT FAMILY (POLYGONACEAE)

Curled Dock	<i>Rumex crispus</i>
Pennsylvania Smartweed	<i>Polygonum pensylvanicum</i>
Pale Smartweed	<i>P. lapathifolium</i>

GOOSEFOOT FAMILY (CHENOPODIACEAE)

AMARANTH FAMILY (AMARANTHACEAE)

PURSLANE FAMILY (PORTULACACEAE)

PINK FAMILY (CARYOPHYLLACEAE)

Bladder Campion	<i>Silene cucubalus</i>
Bouncing Bet	<i>Saponaria officinalis</i>

BUTTERCUP FAMILY (RANUNCULACEAE)

White Baneberry	<i>Actaea pachypoda</i>
Canada Anemone	<i>Anemone canadensis</i>
Tall Buttercup	<i>Ranunculus acris</i>
Marsh Marigold	<i>Caltha palustris</i>

MUSTARD FAMILY (CRUCIFERAE)

Wormseed Mustard	<i>Erysimum cheiranthoides</i>
Sweet Rocket	<i>Hesperis matronalis</i>
Field Mustard	<i>Brassica rapa</i>
Wild Radish	<i>Raphanus raphanistrum</i>

SAXIFRAGE FAMILY (SAXIFRAGACEAE)

ROSE FAMILY (ROSACEAE)

Field Strawberry	<i>Fragaria virginiana</i>
Wild Rose	<i>Rosa carolina</i>
Rough-fruit Cinquefoil	<i>Potentilla recta</i>
Silverweed	<i>P. anserina</i>
Tall Cinquefoil	<i>P. arguta</i>

LEGUME FAMILY (LEGUMINOSAE)

Hog Peanut	<i>Amphicarpa bracteata</i>
Black Medick	<i>Medicago lupulina</i>
White Sweet Clover	<i>Melilotus alba</i>
Yellow Sweet Clover	<i>M. offinalis</i>
Red Clover	<i>Trifolium pratense</i>
White Clover	<i>T. repens</i>
Panicled Tick Trefoil	<i>Desmodium panicula</i>
Alsike Clover	<i>Trifolium hybridum</i>
Cow Vetch	<i>Vicia cracca</i>
Crown Vetch	<i>Coronilla Varia</i>

WOOD SORREL FAMILY (OXALIDACEAE)

Yellow Wood Sorrel	<i>Oxalis stricta (europaea)</i>
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GERANIUM FAMILY (GERANIACEAE)

Herb Robert	<i>Geranium robertianum</i>
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TOUCH-ME-NOT FAMILY (BALSAMINACEAE)

Orange Jewel-Weed	<i>Impatiens capensis</i>
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ST. JOHN'S WORT FAMILY (GUTTIFERAE)

Common St. John's Wort	<i>Hypericum perforatum</i>
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VIOLET FAMILY (VIOLACEAE)

LOOSESTRIFE FAMILY (LYTHRACEAE)

Purple Loosestrife	<i>Lythrum salicaria</i>
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EVENING PRIMROSE FAMILY (ONAGRACEAE)

Common Evening Primrose *Oenothera biennis*

PARSLEY FAMILY (UMBELLIFERAE)

Queen Anne's Lace *Daucus carota*
Spotted Water Hemlock *Cicuta maculata*

PRIMROSE FAMILY (PRIMULACEAE)

Fringed Loosestrife *Lysimachia ciliata*
Moneywort *L. nummularia*

DOGBANE FAMILY (APOCYNACEAE)

American Dogbane *Apocynum androsaemifolium*

MILKWEED FAMILY (ASCLEPIADACEAE)

Common Milkweed *Asclepias syriaca*
Marsh Milkweed *A. incarnata*
Black Swallowwort *Cynanchum nigrum*

BORAGE FAMILY (BORAGINACEAE)

Viper's Bugloss *Echium vulgare*
True Forget-me-not *Myosotis laxa*

VERVAIN FAMILY (VERBENACEAE)

Blue Vervain *Verbena hastata*
White Vervain *V. urticifolia*

MINT FAMILY (LABIATAE)

Mint *Mentha arvensis*
Heal-all *Prunella vulgaris*
Common Bugleweed *Lycopus uniflorus*
Motherwort *Leonurus cardiaca*
Catnip *Nepeta cataria*

FIGWORT FAMILY (SCROPHULARIACEAE)

Turtlehead *Chelone glabra*
Common Toad Flax *Linaria vulgaris*
Great Mullein *Verbascum thapsus*
Long-leafed Speedwell *Veronica longifolia*

PLANTAIN FAMILY (PLANTAGINACEAE)

Broad-leaved Plantain	<i>Plantago major</i>
English Plantain (ribgrass)	<i>P. lanceolata</i>

CUCUMBER FAMILY (CUCURBITACEAE)

Wild Cucumber	<i>Echinocystis lobata</i>
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COMPOSITE FAMILY (COMPOSITAE)

Common Yarrow	<i>Achillea millefolium</i>
Coltsfoot	<i>Tussilago farfara</i>
Tansy	<i>Tanacetum vulgare</i>
Common Ragweed	<i>Ambrosia artemisiifolia</i>
Common Burdock	<i>Arctium minor</i>
Heart-leaved Aster	<i>Aster cardiofolius</i>
Large-leaved Aster	<i>A. macrophyllus</i>
New England Aster	<i>A. novae-angliae</i>
Red-stemmed Aster	<i>A. puniceus</i>
Smooth Aster	<i>A. laevis</i>
Small White Aster	<i>A. vimineus</i>
Bur-Marigold	<i>Bidens laevis</i>
Beggar Ticks	<i>B. frondosa</i>
Canada Thistle	<i>Cirsium arvense</i>
Bull Thistle	<i>C. vulgare</i>
Common Fleabane	<i>Erigeron philadelphicus</i>
Daisy Fleabane	<i>E. strigosus</i>
Ox-eye Daisy	<i>Chrysanthemum leucanthemum</i>
Joe-Pye Weed	<i>Eupatorium maculatum</i>
Boneset	<i>E. perfoliatum</i>
White Snake-Root	<i>E. rugosum</i>
Chickory	<i>Cichorium intybus</i>
Black-eyed Susan	<i>Rudbeckia hirta</i>
Elecampane	<i>Inula helenium</i>
Tall Sunflower	<i>Helianthus giganteus</i>
Common Sowthistle	<i>Sonchus oleraceus</i>
Dandelion	<i>Taraxicum officinale</i>
Dwarf Dandelion	<i>Krigia virginica</i>
Meadow-Goat's Beard	<i>Tragopogon pratensis</i>
Cocklebur	<i>Xanthium chinense</i>
Canada Goldenrod	<i>Solidago canadensis</i>
Early Goldenrod	<i>S. juncea</i>
Late Goldenrod	<i>S. gigantea</i>
Tall Goldenrod	<i>S. altissima</i>
Showy Goldenrod	<i>S. speciosa</i>
Zig-Zag Goldenrod	<i>S. flexicaulis</i>
Grass-leaved Goldenrod	<i>S. graminifolia</i>
Blue-stem Goldenrod	<i>S. caesia</i>

CHECK-LIST OF THE BIRDS OBSERVED IN WIGMORE PARK RAVINE

NOTE: The following observations were made during the period 1971-1975.

HERONS AND BITTERNS (ARDEIDAE)

Great Blue Heron Ardea herodias

SWANS, GEESE, DUCKS (ANATIDAE)

Canada Goose Branta canadensis
Mallard Anas platyrhchos
Black Duck Anas rubripes

HAWKS, HARRIERS (ACCIPTERIDAE)

Red-tailed Hawk Buteo jamaicensis
Marsh Hawk Circus cyaneus

FALCONS (FALCONIDAE)

Sparrow Hawk (Kestrel) Falco sparverius

QUAILS, PHEASANTS, PEACOCKS (PHASIANIDAE)

Ring-necked Pheasant Phasianus colchicus

PLOVERS, TURNSTONES (CHARADRIIDAE)

Killdeer Charadrius vociferus

WOODCOCK, SNIPE, SANDPIPERS (SCOLOPACIDAE)

American Woodcock Philohela minor
Spotted Sandpiper Actitus macularia
Solitary Sandpiper Tringa solitaria
Common Snipe Capella gallinago

GULLS, TERNS (LARIDAE)

Herring Gull Larus argentatus
Ring-billed Gull L. delawarensis

PIGEONS, DOVES (COLUMBIDAE)

Rock Dove Columba livia
Mourning Dove Zenaidura macroura

CUCKOOS (CUCULIDAE)

Yellow-billed Cuckoo *Coccyzus americanus*

OWLS (STRIGIDAE)

Great Horned Owl *Bubo virginianus*
Barred Owl *Strix varia*

GOATSUCKERS (CAPRIMULGIDAE)

Common Nighthawk *Chordeiles minor*

SWIFTS (APODIDAE)

Chimney Swift *Chaetura pelagica*

HUMMINGBIRDS (TROCHILIDAE)

Ruby-throated Hummingbird *Archilochus colubris*

KINGFISHERS (ALCEDINIDAE)

Belted Kingfisher *Megaceryle alcyon*

WOODPECKERS (PICIDAE)

Yellow-shafted Flicker *Colaptes auratus*
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker *Sphyrapicus varius*
Hairy Woodpecker *Dendrocopos villosus*
Downy Woodpecker *D. pubescens*

TYRANT FLYCATCHERS (TYRANNIDAE)

Eastern Kingbird *Tyrannus tyrannus*
Great-crested Flycatcher *Myiarchus crinitus*
Eastern Phoebe *Sayornis phoebe*
Acadian Flycatcher *Empidonax virescens*
Least Flycatcher *E. minimus*
Eastern Wood Peewee *Contopus virens*
Olive-sided Flycatcher *Nuttallornis borealis*

LARKS (ALAUDIDAE)

SWALLOWS (HIRUNDINIDAE)

Tree Swallow	<i>Iridoprocne bicolor</i>
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
Purple Martin	<i>Progne subis</i>
Bank Swallow	<i>Riparia riparia</i>

JAYS, CROWS (CORVIDAE)

Blue Jay	<i>Cyanocitta cristata</i>
Common Crow	<i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i>

TITMICE (PARIDAE)

Black-capped Chickadee	<i>Parus atricapillus</i>
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NUTHATCHES (SITTIDAE)

White-breasted Nuthatch	<i>Sitta carolinensis</i>
Red-breasted Nuthatch	<i>S. canadensis</i>

CREEPERS (CERTHIDAE)

Brown Creeper	<i>Certhia familiaris</i>
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WRENS (Troglodytidae)

House Wren	<i>Troglodytes aedon</i>
Winter Wren	<i>T. troglodytes</i>

MOCKINGBIRDS, THRASHERS (MIMIDAE)

Catbird	<i>Dumetella carolinensis</i>
Brown Thrasher	<i>Toxostoma rufum</i>

THRUSHES (TURDIDAE)

Robin	<i>Turdus migratorius</i>
Wood Thrush	<i>Hylocichla mustelina</i>
Hermit Thrush	<i>H. guttata</i>
Swainson's Thrush	<i>H. ustulata</i>
Veery	

KINGLETS (SYLVIIDAE)

Golden-crowned Kinglet	<i>Regulus satrapa</i>
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	<i>R. calendula</i>

WAXWINGS (BOMBYCILLIDAE)

Cedar Waxwing Bombycilla cedrorum

SHRIKES (LANIIDAE)

Northern Shrike Lanius excubitor

STARLINGS (STURNIDAE)

Starling Sturnus vulgaris

VIREOS (VIREONIDAE)

Yellow-throated Vireo Vireo flavifrons
Red-eyed Vireo V. olivaceus

WOOD WARBLERS (PARULIDAE)

Black and White Warbler	Mniotilta varia
Blue-winged Warbler	Vermivora pinus
Parula Warbler	Parula americana
Yellow Warbler	Dendroica petechia
Magnolia Warbler	D. magnolia
Black-throated Blue Warbler	D. caerulescens
Myrtle (yellow-rumped) Warbler	D. coronata
Black-throated Green Warbler	D. virens
Blackburnian Warbler	D. fusca
Chestnut-sided Warbler	D. pensylvanica
Bay-breasted Warbler	D. castanea
Blackpoll Warbler	D. striata
Ovenbird	Seiurus aurocapillus
Yellowthroat	Geothlypis trichas
Wilson's Warbler	Wilsonia pusilla
Canada Warbler	W. canadensis
American Redstart	Setophaga ruticilla

WEAVER FINCHES (PLOCEIDAE)

House Sparrow Passer domesticus

MEADOW LARKS, BLACKBIRDS, ORIOLES (ICTERIDAE)

Eastern Meadowlark	<i>Sturnella magna</i>
Red-winged Blackbird	<i>Agelaius phoeniceus</i>
Baltimore Oriole	<i>Icterus galbula</i>
Common Grackle	<i>Quiscalus quiscula</i>
Brown-headed Cowbird	<i>Molothrus ater</i>

TANAGERS (THRAUPIDAE)

Scarlet Tanager	<i>Piranga olivacea</i>
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GROSBEAKS, FINCHES, SPARROWS,
BUNTINGS (FRINGILLIDAE)

Cardinal	<i>Richmondia cardinalis</i>
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	<i>Pheucticus ludovicianus</i>
Indigo Bunting	<i>Passerina cyanea</i>
Purple Finch	<i>Carpodacus purpureus</i>
Pine Grosbeak	<i>Pinicola enucleator</i>
Common Redpoll	<i>Acanthis flammea</i>
Pine Siskin	<i>Spinus pinus</i>
American Goldfinch	<i>S. tristis</i>
Vesper Sparrow	<i>Poocetes gramineus</i>
Slate-coloured Junco	<i>Junco hyemalis</i>
Tree Sparrow	<i>Spizella arborea</i>
Chipping Sparrow	<i>S. passerina</i>
White-throated Sparrow	<i>Zonotrichia albicollis</i>
Fox Sparrow	<i>Passerella iliaca</i>
Song Sparrow	<i>Melospiza melodia</i>