

TORONTO FIELD NATURALIST

Number 549

September 2007



Black Walnut by Mary Anne Miller

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IT'S YOUR NEWSLETTER!

We welcome contributions of original writing, up to 500 words, of observations on nature in and around Toronto, reviews, poems, sketches, paintings, and photographs of TFN outings (digital or print, include date and place). Include your name, address and phone number so submissions can be acknowledged. Send by mail or email. Deadline for submissions for October issue: Sept. 7, 2007.

NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

Jenny Bull (co-editor), Eva Davis, Karin Fawthrop, Nancy Fredenburg, Elisabeth Gladstone, Mary Lieberman, Joanne Lynes, Ruth Munson, Marilyn Murphy, Toshi Oikawa, Wendy Rothwell (co-editor), Jan Sugerman.

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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)	Ruth Munson
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	Barry Mitchell

MEMBERSHIP FEES

\$30 STUDENT, SENIOR SINGLE (65+)
 \$40 SINGLE, SENIOR FAMILY (2 adults, 65+)
 \$50 FAMILY (2 adults – same address, children included)

No GST. Tax receipts issued for donations. Send membership fees and address changes to the TFN office.
Please note: TFN does not give out its membership list.

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Poison ivy and Virginia creeper growing together among grasses, Taylor Creek Park, 1986.
 Drawing by Diana Banville.

TFN MEETING

Sunday, September 9 at 2:30 pm

Adventures in a Paleontological Hinterland Tropical Reefs, Giant Trilobites and Big White Bears of the Southern Hudson Bay Basin

*David Rudkin, Assistant Curator (Palaeobiology), Department of Natural History,
Royal Ontario Museum and Lecturer, Department of Geology, University of Toronto*

VISITORS WELCOME!

SOCIAL: 2:00 - 2:30 pm

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

2:30 – 2:45 pm

Presentation of Financial Report; Election of the Board

Room 001, Emmanuel College, University of Toronto, 75 Queen's Park Cres. East

Emmanuel College is just south of the Museum subway station exit (east side of Queen's Park). Enter at south end of building, down a few steps on outside stairwell. **Wheelchair entrance:** Second door south on Queen's Park (no automatic opener). Elevator inside to the right. Room 001 is one floor below street level.

For information: call 416-593-2656 up to noon on the Friday preceding the lecture.

Upcoming TFN Monthly Meetings Fall Lecture Schedule

- Oct. 14 Protecting the Canadian Boreal Forest
Anna Baggio, Director, Conservation Land Use Planning,
Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS)
- Nov. 4 Migratory songbirds – canaries in the coalmine?
Bridget Stutchbury, Professor of Biology, York University
- Dec. 2 Toronto Waterfront Projects and Natural Habitats
Brenda Webster, Project Manager – Planning and Design,
Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation

NOW AVAILABLE

Toronto Field Naturalist 2005 Index

For sale at TFN monthly
meetings (\$1.00)

Electronic copy sent by e-mail
(free)

Hard copy sent by regular
mail (\$2.00)

TFN OUTINGS

- TFN events are conducted by unpaid volunteers.
- The club assumes no responsibility for injuries sustained by anyone participating in our activities.
- Children and visitors are welcome at all TFN events. Children must be accompanied by an adult.
- If you plan to bring children in a stroller, be aware that there may be steps or other unsuitable terrain.
- Please do not bring pets.
- To get to outings on time, check TTC routes and schedules by calling 416-393-4636.
- Outings go rain or shine: check the weather by calling 416-661-0123 so you will know what to wear.
- Wear appropriate footwear for walking on trails which may be muddy, steep or uneven.

- Saturday,
Sept. 1
10:00 a.m.
+
Saturday,
Sept. 1
10:15 a.m.
- SCARBOROUGH BLUFFS – Birds and Insects**
Leader: Bob Kortright
Meet at the southwest corner of Chine Dr. and Kingston Rd. Bring binoculars.
- WARDS ISLAND – Nature Arts**
Leader: Mary Taylor /Joe Bernaske
Meet at the ferry docks in time for the 10:15 ferry. Bring money for ferry, lunch, camera, and art materials you need for the morning. There will be a nature walk on the island after lunch.
- Tuesday,
Sept. 4
10:00 a.m.
- HUMBER BAY PARK EAST – Birds**
Leader: Doug Paton
Meet at the Humber Loop (south of the Queensway), accessible by the Queen streetcar or the bus from Old Mill subway station. Bring lunch and binoculars.
- Wednesday,
Sept. 5
11:00 a.m.
- SWANSEA PONDS – Nature Walk**
Leader: Roger Powley
Meet at Runnymede subway station, Runnymede Rd. exit. Bring binoculars.
- Tuesday,
Sept. 11
8:00 a.m. –
5:00 p.m.
- ROSETTA McCLAIN GARDENS – Hawk Watch and Count**
Leader: Frank Butson
2121 Kingston Rd., east of Birchmount Rd. (bus from Victoria Park subway station). This is not a regular TFN walk. We have been invited to join Frank Butson. Come when you like and stay as long as you like. (Prime viewing expected between 11 a.m. – 2 p.m.) Bring a lawn chair and a snack. Washrooms and drinking water are on site. Free parking available.
- Saturday,
Sept. 15
10:30 a.m.
- ASHBRIDGES BAY – Nature Walk**
Leader: Boris Mather
Meet on the south side of Lake Shore Blvd. E. at Coxwell Ave. Explore Ashbridges Bay, the Boardwalk and Beach parks. Bring lunch and binoculars.
- Sunday,
Sept. 16
2:00 p.m.
- HISTORIC AIR POLLUTION – Lost Rivers Walk**
Leader: Richard Anderson
Meet at the southwest corner of Berkeley St. and Front St. E. Walk on city streets and discuss historic landscapes, air pollution sources and refuges. This is a joint outing with Toronto Green Community.
- Tuesday,
Sept. 18
10:30 a.m.
- HUMBER ARBORETUM – Birds**
Leader: Carol Sellers
Meet at the Humber Arboretum behind Humber College (on Humber College Blvd. between Finch Ave. W. and Hwy. 27). Bring lunch and binoculars.

- Wednesday,
Sept. 19
11:00 a.m. **MOUNT PLEASANT CEMETERY – Trees for Beginners**
Leader: Roger Powley
Meet at the Davisville subway station exit. Bring lunch
- Saturday,
Sept. 22
10:00 a.m. **EAST DON PARKLANDS – Nature Walk**
Leader: Phil Goodwin
Meet at Second Cup in plaza at the southeast corner of Steeles Ave. E. and Laureleaf Rd. S. Duration about 2 1/2 hours. We will visit the old forest, East Don River, German Mills Creek and restoration projects.
- Sunday,
Sept. 23
1:30 p.m.
+ **TAYLOR MASSEY CREEK – Nature Walk**
Leader: Melanie Milanich
Meet at the Victoria Park subway station exit. Bring binoculars. A circular route returning to starting point.
- Sunday,
Sept. 23
2:00 p.m. **DON VALLEY WOODLANDS – Lost Rivers Walk**
Leaders: Peter Hare and John Routh
Meet at the southwest corner of Pottery Rd. and Broadview Ave. To celebrate National Forests Week (Sept. 24 – 30), we will visit the Todmorden Mills Wildflower Preserve, the Beechwood Wetland, Don Valley Paper Mill site and Crothers's Woods to discuss past, present and future of the Toronto Forest. Moderate difficulty. Joint outing with Toronto Green Community.
- Tuesday,
Sept. 25
2:00 p.m. **ROUGE VALLEY – Nature Walk**
Leader: Orval White
Meet at the Rouge Valley Conservation Centre (Pearse House), 1749 Meadowvale Ave., north of Sheppard Ave. E. A 2–3 hour loop through hilly terrain.
- Saturday,
Sept. 29
10:00 a.m.
+ **CHAPMAN VALLEY – Nature Walk**
Leader: Ken Cook
Meet at Weston Wood Rd. on the east side of Royal York Rd. (south of Lawrence Ave. W.). A circular route ending at starting point.
- Saturday,
Sept. 29
+ **TFN NATURE RESERVES**
Leader: George Bryant
See details on page 18.
- Sunday,
Sept. 30
2:00 p.m.
+ **WOODLANDS ALONG CASTLE FRANK BROOK – Lost Rivers Walk**
Leaders: Susan Aaron and Peter Hare
Meet outside Eglinton West subway station. This is a second walk to celebrate National Forests Week. See the new wetland meadow in Cedarvale Ravine, older forest wetlands in the Nordheimer Ravine, and much more. A moderately easy walk. Joint outing with Toronto Green Community.
- Sunday,
Sept. 30
1:30 p.m. **E.T. SETON PARK – Nature Walk**
Leader: Margaret McRae
Meet at stairs to parking lot on south side of Eglinton Ave. E. at Leslie St. Bring binoculars. We will view the work on the re-routing of the West Don and visit the wetlands.

Secretive sparrow
Senses some southerly shifting
September storms soon.

Alliterative Haiku by Roger Powley

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

In anticipation of the election of directors at the Annual General Meeting on September 9th, I am pleased to report that we have two new nominees for the board, Bob Kortright and Peter Money.

Some of you will know Bob as an outings leader who shares his fascination for and extensive knowledge of birds. You may not know that the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority named the Kortright Centre after Bob's grandfather, Frank. It was recently announced that the Earth Rangers building at the Kortright Centre will house the World Green Building Council, an international resource for green building practices. As well as being an avid birder, Bob is also interested in conservation issues and has long been an active member of many organizations that support the preservation of natural heritage.

Peter Money is also familiar to many of you as an outings leader and as a lecturer at our monthly meetings. A retired, well-travelled geologist, amateur naturalist and photographer, Peter has entertained and educated us with slide shows of flora and fauna from the many exotic places he has visited.

I hope you are planning to attend the AGM and the lecture, following the meeting, by David Rudkin from the ROM.

Thank you to those who completed the survey along with your membership renewal. This information will give us a good indication of what your particular interests are, what you are willing to do to sustain them and the TFN in general, and it will likely confirm what we suspect about our demographics! We are grateful to

those who have volunteered and will be contacting you in the near future.

The summer is often a time when people go out of the city to enjoy the sights and sounds of nature. I took great pleasure (as I know some of you did as well) in attending the Ontario Nature AGM and Conference in Peterborough, and the following weekend, the Carden Alvar Festival at Dalrymple. However one of the



Belted Kingfisher by Diana Banville.

highlights of the summer was learning that there are some special things even in my own backyard. Imagine my surprise when a fellow TFN member identified the mystery bird I've been hearing as a Belted Kingfisher. This was a good reminder to look, listen and expect the unexpected, even in Toronto.

Pinky Franklin

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

The Nominating Committee presents the following slate of nominees to the Board for the year 2007-2008:

President:	Pinky Franklin
Vice President:	Wendy Rothwell
Secretary-Treasurer:	Corley Phillips
Directors: due to retire in 2008:	Nick Eyles, Ruth Munson, Corley Phillips
due to retire in 2009:	Gail Gregory, Barry Mitchell, George Bryant
due to retire in 2010:	Alexander Cappell, Bob Kortright, Margaret McRae, Peter Money

Earth Sciences for Society – 2008 is International Year of Planet Earth

Better go grab that hammer. You're about to hear a great deal about the science of geology in the next months, and several events are coming up that will be of interest to TFN members. The International Year of Planet Earth has been proclaimed for 2008 by the UN. It is sponsored and organized by the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS) which represents about 250,000 Earth scientists in 117 countries. These men and women constitute the largest source of information about the past and present status of planet Earth that has ever existed. At a time of heightened environmental awareness and increased realisation that long-term human sustainability is ultimately dependent on finding adequate natural resources and meeting the challenge of global geologic changes, the program is designed to raise awareness of how Earth's systems impinge on our daily lives. Locally, two events are planned for Canada.

Canada's Geologic Journey: first the book...

By the time you read this, *Canada Rocks: The Geologic Journey* by Nick Eyles and Andrew Miall of the University of Toronto should be in bookstores. It tells the story of the events of the last 4 billion years that forged a larger Canadian landmass out of smaller crustal pieces that, like its peoples, have all come from some place else. Much of maritime Canada was formerly part of Africa, much of southern Ontario was added during a collision with South America and much of British Columbia and the Yukon were actually made in China. Canada has waltzed around the surface of the planet promiscuously picking up new partners and changing shape as it goes, growing ever larger. There have been several notable divorces en route as North America found itself on the inside, imprisoned, within several supercontinents eventually breaking free. The oldest rocks on the planet (just over 4 billion) occur near Yellowknife. One of the largest known meteorite impact craters surrounds Sudbury. The earliest known multicellular life forms are found in Newfoundland where the evidence for continent collisions and ocean closing and re-opening is also most spectacularly seen. Canadian geologists have played a key role in figuring out how Earth 'works' today and how we can use this information to reconstruct ancient worlds. The measurement and probing of the enormity of geologic 'deep time' owes much to Canadian technical ingenuity in dating rocks.

The book also fittingly takes a look at challenges for the future posed by hazards, natural resource depletion and the growth of large urban areas and concludes with a chapter on how geology has helped make a distinct Canadian identity, from the cultural icons of the Canadian Shield and its artists and poets, locating its capital, attracting immigrants and how the political growth of the country reflected the development of mining (note the ancestor of today's NHL started in mining camps). Niagara Falls was once at the centre of the Victorians' science world; the incremental retreat of the falls provided a yardstick for the age of the gorge it left behind, throwing into question biblical estimates of the age of the earth. A hundred years later the seminal work of the Ontarian Tuzo Wilson was to also dramatically alter our own worldview.

....and now the TV series

On Sunday, Sept. 9 at 7 pm CBC (with the Discovery-Science Network) will be showing *A Geologic Journey* narrated by David Suzuki. Four years in the making, the five-part series showcases the geological development of the Great Lakes, the Rockies, the Maritimes, Appalachians and the Shield. Selected episodes will be shown at IMAX theatres at various Science Centres across the country. Nick Eyles was the principal scientific advisor during the making of the series and appears in several episodes in locations ranging from deep underground to the snowy heights of the Columbia Icefields.

The series starts with the Great Lakes episode with stunning aerial footage of Niagara Falls, dramatic underground pictures of huge caverns in salt mines below the city of Detroit and Ontario, the watery world of the 30,000 islands near Parry Sound, and underwater footage at Fathom Five Marine Park. Much of cottage country across the Shield comprises the roots of Himalayan-scale mountains formed by colossal tectonic collisions 1 billion years ago. Once proud mountains were worn down and then covered 400 million years ago by giant tropical seas full of marine life, now recorded by the limestones that underlie much of mid-continent. Recent glaciations of the last several million years scoured the landscape, cut the Great Lakes basins and moved rocks from northern Ontario, Quebec and Labrador to southern Ontario, leaving a calling card of thick glacial sediment. Earthquakes in mid-continent are reminders that the geologic journey still continues.....

Canada Rocks: The Geologic Journey

by Nick Eyles and Andrew Miall, 560 pages, full colour, Fitzhenry and Whiteside, \$60

A portrait of the incredible "construction project" that gave shape to the continents, mountains and oceans of planet earth and created the world's second largest country - Canada. See www.fitzhenry.ca

SOME SUMMER OUTINGS

EXTRACTS FROM LEADERS' OUTINGS REPORTS – MAY TO JULY

Nature Arts, Rouge Valley, May 13. Leader: Joe Bernaske. We were given a tour of the basement of Pearse House and saw some fossils, skulls and a large wasp nest. After the tour we walked along a trail behind Pearse House and saw white and red trilliums, rue anemone, Solomon's seal, toothwort and horsetail. Also, a dragonfly, a viceroi butterfly and a spring azure butterfly; and a chickadee, a cardinal, a Mourning Dove, Red-winged Blackbirds and lots of Barn Swallows. We then joined the Rouge Valley Wildflower Photography Walk.

Nature Walk, Scarborough Bluffs, May 26. Leader: Ken Cook. We talked about the glacial till and moraines of the area and questioned how it could be known that glacial ice was 3 km thick here. It was explained that the study of the shorelines of Lake Iroquois, Admiralty Lake and present day Lake Ontario showed how water flowed in and out of the basin due to melting ice, glacial damming and glacial rebound; thus giving clues as to how the surface was deformed and how much ice was required to do this. We also talked about native vs introduced trees and saw examples of native bass-wood, birch, beech, white pine,



Gray Catbird. Drawing by David Andrew White.

sugar maple, and black cherry. The problem of introduced species was brought home by finding a Norway maple sapling thriving in a naturalizing place beside a sugar maple with no seedlings visible. We also looked at the problem of garlic mustard, swallow-wort and Japanese knotweed. We saw a pair of Eastern Kingbirds, a lone

Brown-headed Cowbird, a pair of Swainson's Thrushes, a Gray Catbird, Song Sparrows, and several Yellow Warblers (this place has had many of these for several years now). We noted that the usual abundance of Bank Swallows was not evident, probably due to the bluffs beginning to stabilize and not affording as many good nesting sites for them now. For several years there has been a huge patch of poison ivy in the centre of the lower meadow. This is now spreading to the edge of the bluff. Having told everyone to be careful, I was not so fortunate and contracted a mild case of poison ivy rash the next day – probably from my socks and pant cuffs!

Nature Arts, Todmorden Wildflower Preserve, June 2, 2007. Leader: Melanie Milanich. We made this outing into an event to honor Diana Banville for her past many years of contributions to the Nature Arts Group. Barry Mitchell drove Diana to Todmorden Mills. Joe Bernaske bought an art card with forget-me-nots that we all signed. Diana enjoyed the outing very much, as it was the first time in two years that she had joined the group "out in the field." We had lunch together and people shared their artwork, photos, sketching and watercolour painting, then viewed an art exhibition in the paper mill and topped it off with ice cream cones at the Dairy Queen.

Great Rivers of North York Series, Upper Wilket Creek, June 26. Leader: Sandy Cappell. Where not buried, the creek was a dry ditch, with garbage in it in several places, especially where it goes under the 401. There are many black walnut trees growing wild along the banks of the creek. Every year we do this walk, there are more and more high-rise condos looming. We saw immature fruit of serviceberry, curled dock, climbing nightshade, apple, dogwood, and staghorn sumach. In flower were false spirea, black elderberry, tree-of-heaven, and sulphur cinquefoil.

Nature Arts, Cherry Beach and more, July 7.

Leader: Yoshie Nagata. Following Nature Arts, we walked from Cherry Beach along the Martin Goodman Trail, and some side paths, to the Leslie St. Spit Meadow. There was extensive fencing along the trail where the sports field will be constructed, and so many bikers and rollerbladers that pedestrian paths are needed. Abundant



Daisy fleabane
by Louise Hertzberg.

wildflowers were blooming along the trail which pleased the photographers. The wildflowers were mostly introduced species but there were also common milkweed, silverweed, and fleabane. We saw Baltimore Oriole, Gray Catbird, Double-crested

American Robin, House Sparrow and Rock Pigeon. Invertebrates included butterflies (monarch, black swallowtail, cabbage white, mourning cloak, red admiral and skipper), lady bug, bumblebee, ant, fly, mosquito and snail.

Nature and Heritage, Lavender Creek and Black Creek, July 10. Leader: Madeleine McDowell. where Lavender Creek is

naturalized, we went north following the stream. The stepping stones were submerged so we took an alternate route over the bridge On the way back we met a building superintendent with his bicycle, who described a mockingbird to us, which we helped him to identify. He was pleased to take a TFN pamphlet! We saw many wildflowers in flower, as well as monarch, sulphur, white cabbage and red admiral butterflies; spotted dragonflies and blue damselflies; and Japanese beetles. There was a large chorus of frogs; one dead garter snake (probably encountered a mower); a ground-hog; red, black and grey

squirrels; several robins, a kingbird, grackles, Mourning Doves, Red-winged Blackbirds and Black-Crowned Night-herons, and Mallards with ducklings.

Birds and Butterflies, Leslie St. Spit, July 28.

Leader: Ann Gray. Since the trail through the west baselands is overgrown and filled with mosquitoes, we led the group along the roadway south. Part way along we switched to the new secondary trail along the east side of the Spit, and many favourable comments were made by members of the group regarding this new pedestrian path with the side verges starting to fill in with native grasses and flowers. At Embayment D, four Great Egrets and one juvenile Black-crowned Night-heron were studied through the telescope. We continued along the new secondary trail by Cell # 1 when one member of the group found a dead "caterpillar hunter" – a beautiful large beetle with red margins. We had lunch at the two lookouts near the pedestrian bridge. With the additional new lookout there is plenty of room for a large group to sit,

watch the colonial water birds through the scope and enjoy lunch while socializing. After lunch we went to Triangle Pond where the Spotted Sandpipers walked among the lily pads.

The new pathway into Peninsula C and the shoreline of Embayment B were explored.

Most of the night-herons have fledged but several hundreds of cormorants are at the nest sites, and the shoreline of Peninsula B is black with the cormorants near the water. We walked back to the pedestrian bridge and travelled by TRCA van back to the starting point. A fun-filled day with lots of camaraderie and looking for birds and butterflies en route! Special emphasis was given to learning the common songs of the breeding species.



Black-crowned Night-heron by Diana Banville.

KEEPING IN TOUCH

I am so very pleased that TFN exists. I continue to enjoy a few walks every year, and each one is unique. It is amazing that something new always turns up, and often several "somethings" new are pointed out.

To mention just one of many delightful 2007 outings, the recent Rouge Late Spring Flowers with Peter Money allowed me to see my first orchid. What a joy! I even asked if he'd be doing the same walk in 2008; poor soul, he's only just finished this one! But he and his gracious wife gave me such a wonderful outing I couldn't wait for the next one. This magical walk will be a permanent memory. Thank you, Peter!

And in 2006 I was introduced to the egg of the monarch butterfly on a TFN walk, and found several in my own garden. It was amazing to care for them right through the cycle. Photographing each stage brought hours of joy to me and my friends. It was a big responsibility to keep fresh milkweed pods available daily as well as keeping the container clean. The droppings grew in volume, from minute to "massive" in direct correlation to the growth of the caterpillars.

One butterfly hatched in my neighbour's back yard so all could watch. I even took a caterpillar to a dinner date in Claremont so I could see it go into the chrysalis. I left it there so my friends could experience the hatching, and their German visitors delayed an outing for a few hours so they could see the chrysalis open and the beginning of the unfolding. Thank you, Carol Sellers. I wouldn't have missed all this for the world.

I continue to enjoy reading the newsletter; the colour issues are a pleasure. Thanks for everything.

Anne Leon

Wild Companions in a Wildlife Corridor

On a cloudy, cool afternoon in late May, Taylor Creek Park was fairly deserted except for passing bicycles. I was walking my dear old dog along the paved trail beside the creek when one of the few other pedestrians pointed up the hillside as he passed us and said, "Deer!" Sure enough there was a full-sized white tail deer 8 to 10 metres away in the brush beside us. We watched in awe as the deer picked his way through the shrubbery and small trees and seemed to disappear as he blended into the landscape heading in a westerly direction. I had already enjoyed spotting some blue jays and my first chipmunk of the season, so I happily added the deer to my outing list and carried on with the

walk. As we walked slowly along I located the deer again still picking his way through weeds and cattails, then pausing a bit under a clump of trees to my left. So it went for our entire passage along the creek. As we approached the mowed hillside near the Taylor Creek parking lot I wondered what the deer would do. I certainly didn't want to frighten him and send him into the streets of East York, so we waited beside the creek to watch. The deer stopped at the edge of the bushes and peered out at the open lawn at the base of the hillside. Seeing no threat, he then lowered his head and pranced quickly across to the safety of the next clump of trees. We headed up the hill to our path home, but not without adding a cottontail rabbit to our list of wild companions.

Gail Gregory

A Butterfly Tree

Our front yard is taken up with a small-leaved basswood tree which was blooming at the end of June this year. The pale yellow-green flowers are not spectacular to view, but I spent a lot of time watching this year as I noticed dozens of butterflies (Monarchs, Red Admirals and Mourning Cloaks) feeding at the blooms. The butterflies were darting everywhere, along with bumblebees and various other flying insects, so I ran for the digital camera. Unfortunately my attempts to capture the picture were very frustrating. They all seemed to fold their wings up as soon as they settled to drink, essentially disappearing in the foliage! As I continued to observe their behaviour I realized that their folded posture may have been to help protect themselves. Numerous birds had gathered at surrounding perches and swooped into the tree from time to time, so I guess I wasn't alone in noticing this amazing gathering of butterflies.

Gail Gregory

Deer sighting

On June 23 I saw a white-tailed deer in the Lower Don Valley. I stayed down in the valley after our birding walk and encountered the deer between the Leaside Bridge and the Forks of the Don. He was within 30 feet of me. We spent about 20 minutes observing each other while he was periodically eating from the trees, then went our separate ways. You will find my photo of the deer at:

www.flickr.com/photos/margmc/631228033

Margaret McRae

The Grass Battle

It seems everyone has been convinced that city houses must have a front lawn. How many new homes come on the market with something other than grass? I believe in promoting native plants. With the world becoming smaller, every lawn on the planet seems to look the same. Even in tropical places like Florida the apartment buildings have landscaping almost identical to what you find in Scarborough. Ontario's forests are one of the most beautiful in the world. Why do we want to look exactly like Europe?

Grass does not normally grow under trees. Grass is a prairie plant that grows where trees don't. The grasses that make up these turf lawns are all alien. Mostly they are Kentucky blue grass (not even an American native), creeping red fescue, perennial rye, and annual rye grass. Not only are these grasses not native, but they have been selectively bred for the purpose of forming sod. They require much more water and maintenance than our native types of ground cover. These lawns also have other alien plants which grow on mown grass such as prostrate knotweed, black medic, white clover, common plantain, mouse eared chickweed, pineapple weed, dandelions, ground ivy, shepherd's purse, etc. Non-native birds like House Sparrows, starlings and Rock Pigeons love these man-made European environments.

Legal battles are common because there are laws on the books which prohibit people growing so-called weeds. Many of these "weeds" are beautiful native wildflowers. These laws were made for farmers in the rural areas and do not reflect the problems of urban life. They are used unfairly against city dwellers who do not like the typical turf lawn and alien plants. The plants that grow on lawns and gardens are the true weeds, not goldenrods or bracken.

Roger Powley

Am sharing my TFN journal entry for Wednesday, June 13....Walking with Jenny Bull we saw the Queen City Yacht Club beaver feeding and Jenny told us the current status....original den in lagoon bank caved in when sailors walked overhead....and Parks and Rec had to fill dangerous hole in ...now it seems beaver has taken up home beneath one of the Club's docks....get the picture??? I thought TFN members might enjoy the story and my journal entry.

Susan Weiss

This is the location where a dog was bitten by a beaver when swimming in the lagoon. The dog likely swam too close to the beaver's boathouse "lodge". Ed.

Poison Ivy

Karin Fawthrop sent a news clipping from the Sunday Star (July 22) that reported from www.sciencenews.com that poison ivy is now growing faster and bigger and producing more toxic oil because of increased levels of carbon dioxide in the air. Karin noted "This is not good news for those of us presently covered with poison ivy rash." Ed.

Ontario Cougar?

Peter and Frances Money sent in an item from the Globe & Mail (May 26) reporting that DNA testing done by the Ministry of Natural Resources confirms that cougar are in Ontario. They were last seen in Ontario in 1884. For further information see: www.ontariopuma.ca and www.rom.on.ca/ontario/risk.php Ed.

Pollination Project

Pleasance Crawford emailed a link to Pollination Canada, a new citizen science program aimed at education on and conservation of pollinators through monitoring of insect populations. By observing pollinators in gardens or local parks and sending in these data, you can help scientists better understand the crucial relationships between pollinators, ecosystems, plant diversity, and human activity. To find out more and to participate, see www.pollinationcanada.ca. If you don't have a computer at home, try your local library. Ed.

News from the Island

Mink were seen this summer on Toronto Island. Resident Sean Tamblyn took some great photos from his kayak and kindly agreed to let us use one (see next page).

Jenny Bull



Continued on next page.



One of a pair of mink seen on Toronto Island.
Photo courtesy of www.seantamblyn.com



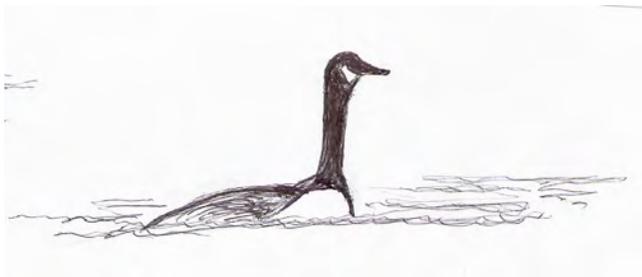
During the summer several TFN members sent in photographs.

Norah Jancik photographed the Killdeer (above left) and dragonfly (below right) at Rouge Valley Conservation Area., and the nesting grebe (above right) at the foot of Bronte Creek. Mary McColl and Ed Boucher sent the photo of the Great Egret (top right) taken at High Park. Helen Juhola photographed monarch butterflies on goldenrod (bottom left) last fall.



KEEPING IN TOUCH *continued*

Nature in the City



Sheridan College complex and behind these buildings, at the bottom of a flight of steps, is a man-made lake which is getting larger every year. On its left, hidden behind the tree-line, is Steeles Avenue, with its endless hum of traffic. Straight ahead, across the waters, are the distant towers of Shoppers' World. To the right, the lake is enclosed by College grounds which meander into public parkland. A soggy path rambles around the lake, which is lined by enormous elderly willows whose leaves kiss the waters. There are also conifers and, on this glorious spring Sunday (when I have the place to myself), the young maples are in crimson bud. There are the bright stalks of red osier dogwood and a ground cover of the pale yellow skeletons of last year's goldenrod, grand mullein, teasel and evening primrose.

There is also much wildlife, currently dominated by Canada Geese – if Canada Geese can still be called wild. This stretch of water seems to be a stop-over point on their journey south - given that they still make that yearly trek. Much as people dislike them in parks, Canada geese are impressive creatures: they manage, after all, to exude a massive dignity while waddling, and the majesty of a married pair on an afternoon outing puts much human behaviour to shame. Now and again, a tremendous honking and flapping of wings indicates that someone, on land or water, has trespassed upon another's real estate but, after a brief vocal encounter, all returns to normal with no harm done. At 2:30 precisely all the geese plodded landwards for some serious browsing, the equivalent, one might suppose, of afternoon tea. Several of them came to within a couple of yards of me, keeping a wary eye on this immobile alien. At 3:00 precisely they all plodded back to the lake.



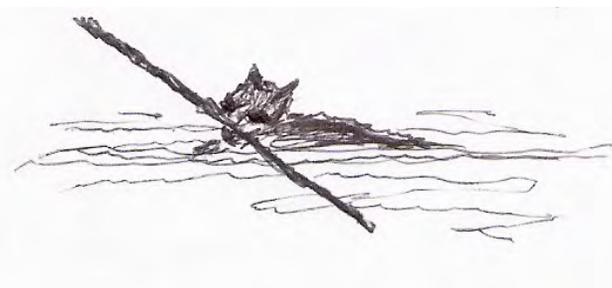
Geese apart, there were a couple of mallard pairs sedately plying the waters. A Cabbage White flew by, a Sulphur, and even a Mourning Cloak. A lone dragonfly. A tireless small sparrow-sized bird kept up an afternoon litany of sharp clicks – a Chipping Sparrow? The resident muskrat persistently swam past to an ancient, water-logged tree trunk into which she would burrow, then run, within a couple of yards of me, back to her lair, her mouth full of something precious.

A marvellous afternoon, with the lives of the world going about their business irrespective of the "Dominant Species!"

Eva Davis

One of the compensations of age is that, whereas you used to stride through the forest attempting to absorb everything within sight, sound and smell, you now settle in a salient spot and nature comes to you.

I live on the west side of McLaughlin Road, a much-traveled north-south corridor into the heart of Toronto. On the east side of McLaughlin is the



Continued on next page.

KEEPING IN TOUCH *continued*

Remembering Jean Macdonald

The TFN's first "cover girl," Jean Macdonald (President 1984-86) died this past spring just a few months short of her 90th birthday.

Jean was a very active member of the club, serving on the Board from 1979-1988 and on the Editorial Committee from 1979-84. Her first love was birds, but this was closely followed by her enthusiasm for mushrooms and photography. The club has many of her photos of wildflowers. She also took a great interest in environmental issues, writing letters and speaking effectively whenever required. During recent years she continued to be an active volunteer with other organizations as well: the FON, the CNIB and Osteoporosis Canada. On looking through the newsletter indexes, I was reminded of the many subjects she wrote about, often illustrating her own articles.

Helen Juhola



"What about me?" Cover drawing from TFN #336, December 1980, by Jean Macdonald.

Remembering Valerie Allen

On May 1, 2007 Val succumbed to stomach cancer, about a year and a half after the diagnosis. She lived her life fully and her only regret was that she was leaving earlier than she would have liked.

Val was good at one-to-one relationships - she had many friends of long standing - but she also loved groups. There was the sailing group, the cycling group, the wine-tasting group . . . and of course the TFN. She was the kind of person you were always happy to see on a walk: upbeat, competent and interesting. She was glad to lead walks and came on as many as she could.

Val had a great sense of work/life balance. After a bout with cervical cancer in 1993, just after the death of her husband Bob, she tilted the balance firmly toward living and worked only enough to meet her financial obligations. She formed a new relationship with Don Walker whom she'd known for years as a friend and fellow group member. Together they took some marvellous trips while continuing to join "The Group" for sailing, cycling and other outdoor activities.

But Val always made time for TFN and TOC outings when she was in town. She really liked birdwatching and she was good at it. And she also liked catching up on the news from people she saw regularly on outings.

One of Val's strengths was her ability to accept things as they were, both people and situations. So when the second diagnosis of cancer came she accepted it and dealt with it calmly.

She is already missed.

Carol Sellers

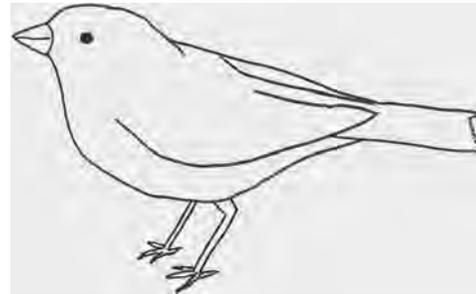
MAKING GREAT FIELD NOTES

By Ann Nightingale, reprinted with permission from *The Victoria Naturalist*, newsletter of Victoria Natural History Society

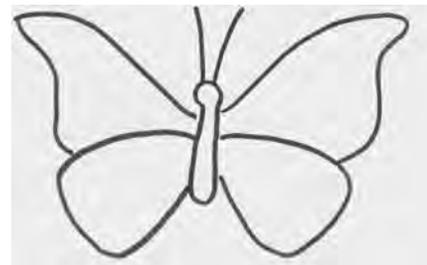
Field notes are useful for identifying plants and animals that are not familiar to you, whether they are rare or common. Writing the notes for plants can be a little easier, since they tend to sit still a little better than birds or other animals, but the principles are the same.

- **Write on what you have at hand.** While it's handy to have a notebook or journal for your records, don't let the absence of one stop you from taking notes. A scrap of paper, the back of an envelope, or even a paper napkin will do in a pinch!
- **Write what you observe.** Start with the general, and then go for the details. Pretend you are describing your subject to someone who has never seen one of these before. Use comparisons rather than precise measurements, unless you are very good at your estimates. Don't worry about sounding silly. Write what comes to your mind.
- **Write what you don't observe.** If you have looked for a feature, and it is absent, be sure to note that as well. A note that says that a bird didn't have wingbars or that an insect didn't have an exposed proboscis could be helpful in identification.
- **Look for key features.** For birds, this includes things such as the colour of the various body parts, including the beak and the feet. For plants, it includes the shape of the leaves and the pattern of the veins on them. For insects, the features of the wings and type of antennae may be clues to identification.
- **Make notes about habitat.** Often the habitat can offer some suggestions to the identification of your subject. Most plants and many animals are limited to certain environments.
- **Count.** It's important to note the number of wings on an insect, the number of wingbars on a bird, and the number of petals on a flower.
- **Compare.** Even on an individual subject, it's possible to make comparisons. Are the butterfly's upper wings larger or the same size as the lower wings? Are all of the petals on the flower about the same size, or do they vary? Do the bird's wings reach halfway down the tail when they are folded, or are they shorter?
- **Use all your senses.** Well, almost all of your senses. Don't forget to note a scent or texture if it is present. Use caution for taste, though! Don't eat anything that you have not identified. Smell is often as diagnostic as taste. Describe any sounds the subject was making, and the source if you can determine it. For instance, was it a vocal noise, or the sound of wings flapping?

- **Be sure to note behaviour, even for plants!** Were there tendrils that wrapped around adjacent plants, or was the flower facing toward the sun? Did the bird walk or hop? Did the insect hover, fly in a straight line or zigzag through the air? What kind of posture did your subject have?



- **Draw a sketch.** It needn't be a work of art, but it will help remind you of the features you saw in the field when you get a chance to go back to your guides. If you have no sense of scale, you can always carry around "generic" line art of your usual subjects, and fill in the details.



- **Keep going.** If your subject stays around, keep refining your description until you can't find any more to write about.
- **What can you reject?** If you have eliminated a similar species, make a note of why you eliminated it. This may be important later if someone asks how you knew it wasn't the other species.
- **Consult the field guides or other naturalists.** Other naturalists may be able to narrow your options based on your description. If you can find your subject in the field guides based on your notes, you are well on your way!
- **Practice, practice, practice!** Writing great field notes is something that improves with practice. Try writing field notes for birds, plants, insects or other animals that you know well. You might surprise yourself with what you learn!

FROM THE ARCHIVES

BOTANY IN HIGH PARK by Emily Hamilton first appeared in TFN Newsletter no. 273, February 1973.

High Park is of considerable interest to botanists as it is the last remaining area of Prairie-Oak-woodland habitat in Toronto. There, growing beside plants which extend to the sub-arctic, are trees which are associated with the more southern Carolinian Life Zone.

On the western side of the park there are fine specimens of Black Oak (*Quercus velutina*) which are growing at their most northerly limit. Sassafras may be found as small trees and also as an understory shrub, covering a large area of the hillside east of Grenadier Pond. Also on the west side of the park are trees more typical of the Toronto area, namely Red Oak, Red and Sugar Maples, Yellow and White Birch, Black Cherry, White Pine, and one lone Red Pine (*Pinus resinosa*). Down by the stream Balsam Poplars and Speckled Alders live with Manitoba Maples. The main shrubs found along the nature trail are Round-leaved Dogwood, Choke Cherry and Beaked Hazelnut; and down by the stream Red Osier Dogwood forms a tangle with willows and a few Common Elders. The low shrubs on the slopes are Huckleberries (*Gaylussacia baccata*) and Blueberries (*Vaccinium vacillans* and *V. angustifolium*) and a very low species of Juneberry. Dotted among the stands of these shrubs are patches of Sweetfern, New Jersey Tea, and Bush-honeysuckle (*Diervilla lonicera*), with here and there a clump of Dwarf Prairie Willow (*Salix tristis*). The herbaceous flora under these trees is not very rich, understandably as the slope is quite steep and the soil very sandy. In the early spring a few Hepatica and Wood Anemones appear, followed by Downy Yellow Violets, while among tufts of grasses (*Festuca ovina*) a few Northern Downy Violets (*Viola fimbriatula*) struggle to survive. In late spring come Starry Smilacina, Bastard Toadflax, the Baneberries and Columbine. Early summer brings a few Canada Anemones and Thimbleweeds; the Avens and Cinquefoils; and the Dwarf Carolina Rose, which is at its northern limit here. Growing among the low shrubs the interesting Low Bindweed is found (*Convolvulus spithameus*), and down by the stream Purple Flowering Raspberry is in bloom.

Summer is the season for the Legume family and High Park is quite rich in these plants - the lovely blue Wild Lupine which used to cover the slopes is still present in a few places among the low shrubs. The Silvery and

Hairy Bush-clovers (*Lespedeza* spp.) stand tall on the grassy slopes, and the Rabbit-foot Clover creeps among the short grass. The Canada and Pointed-leaved Tick-trefoils are also in the park, and the American Vetch is found on the west side grassy area; here also are two Rock Rose family plants which are at their northern limit—Frostweed (*Helianthemum canadense*) and Pinweed (*Lechea intermedia*). Late summer brings two sunflowers—the Rough Woodland and the Ten-petalled Sunflowers. One must learn to distinguish them by their leaves, as the latter does not always have ten petals!

Taking a look at Grenadier Pond in summer we find remnants of a much more extensive flora. Broad-leaved Cat-tail predominates the northern marshy area, while on the west bank the interesting but peculiar-looking Sweet Flag (*Acorus calamus*) grows among the Yellow Irises. Out in the water a few plants of Swamp Loosestrife (*Decodon verticillatus*) flower in late summer, while on the bank Purple Loosestrife is abundant and colourful. Along the path edging the pond may be found Water-horehound, Bugleweed, Skullcap, Creeping Buttercup and plenty of Jewelweed. Swamp Candles and the Tufted Loosestrife are also found here. At the southwest corner may be found the Flowering Rush (*Butomus umbellatus*), Water-arum, Broad-leaf Arrowhead, and the rare Bulblet-bearing Water Hemlock.

The east side of High Park has an interesting change in flora. To find it you must follow the narrow paths on the bank above the Spring Road stream. There among the shrubs in spring are Yellow Clintonia, Canada Mayflower, False Spikenard, Fringed Polygala, Bunchberry, Starflower and Wood Betony.

Woody plants on this bank include Partridge Berry and Wintergreen; and the blueberries here are a northern species—the Velvet-leaf Blueberry. The shrubs here include Witch-hazel and Alternate-leaved Dogwood. The trees are predominantly Red Oaks but include some Hemlock, Mountain Maple and Bech.

Throughout the park early fall plants are interesting with two tall grasses, Turkey Foot and Indian Grass (*Andropogon gerardii* and *Sorghastrum nutans*) standing up in clumps in open areas, while under the trees are species of Asters, notably the Sky-blue Aster

From the Archives *continued*

and Heart-leaved. Later blooming are the Heath and New England Asters. The park is rich in goldenrods too—the Early, Field, and Hairy Goldenrods grow in open wooded areas on the west side; the Stout on banks in the east, while Rough-leaved (*Solidago patula*) is to be found on the Wendigo Stream bank.

High Park has some little "secret pockets" where interesting plants grow. Among these remnants are

Goldthread, Indian Cucumber Root and Buffaloberry. It comes as a delightful surprise to find these plants.

This park is not very rich in ferns as most of these plants do not care for such a sandy soil. Down by the pond Sensitive Fern grows abundantly, and on the open hillsides bracken comes up among the low shrubs. On the east side beside the stream is a stand of Cinnamon Fern, while under Parkside Drive there are a few wet areas in which Lady Fern and Marsh Fern are to be found.

High Park Today

As a frequent visitor to High Park, I will be interested to see how many of the plants observed by Emily Hamilton in 1973 can still be found there. Regrettably, some of these species may have been lost. However, here is some good news arising from High Park’s restoration program during the past 15 years.



In the 1990s it was recognized that the park’s valuable black oaks were not regenerating,

due partly to the absence of periodic fires which, historically, would have removed competing understorey vegetation, allowing young oaks to thrive. For



this reason, **controlled burns** have been conducted each spring since 1997. These have also prompted a dramatic

comeback of the **wild blue lupine**, which Emily Hamilton sadly records as almost disappearing in 1973. Having watched the seemingly destructive fires around Hawk Hill last April, it was amazing for me to witness the transformation when I returned in May and gazed at masses of these beautiful flowers.

Purple loosestrife, which Emily Hamilton describes as “abundant and colourful,” had become a serious problem by the 1990s, taking over the marsh area and banks of



Grenadier Pond. Cutting and hand-pulling failed to eradicate this prolific invader which was forcing out native plants. In 1998, the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority began a bio control program using two non-native leaf-eating beetles that feed on purple loosestrife. This has proven effective in

controlling it, though I’m pleased that a few remain because it is indeed colourful.

Another aspect of the restoration program is the naturalization of the shores of Grenadier Pond, replacing

concrete curbs and manicured turf grass with many varieties of wildflowers. These include the rare native **cup-plant**,



notable by its absence in Emily Hamilton’s article.

A PADDLE THROUGH TFN RESERVES

Between Leaskdale Sideroad and Fowler Road, four kilometres north, the meandering Uxbridge Creek flows a distance of over six kilometres. Three of our TFN reserves are accessed by this creek—almost half of this section has reserve property on one or both sides of the creek. Indeed it has been claimed the only way to see two of them is from a canoe, as the terrain is too swampy to permit other access. The topographical map shows that the creek is surrounded by marsh or swamp. No roads, trails, dwellings or even cow pastures reach or cross the creek for the entire stretch. Is it really possible to have an untouched wetland so close to Toronto?

Four of us in an armada of kayaks and canoe set off to find out on July 26, 2007. We put in from the Leaskdale Bridge and followed the currents northwards. It was a hot sunny afternoon but the breeze and water made it delightful.

Within 100 metres we rounded a curve and penetrated an extensive marshy flood plain dominated by two grasses—reed canary and Canada blue joint. This beaver meadow-like terrain was the major habitat traversed by the creek for most of our route. As we approached Fowler Road, the creek entered a valley with cedars lining the river on both sides.

On this sunny warm afternoon, dragonflies were the most obvious wildlife. River Jewelwings (gorgeous black-winged, emerald-bodied damselflies) were common. Two striking black-and-white dragonflies—Common Whitetail and Widow Skimmer—were frequent. Living up to its name, the occasional Stream Cruiser patrolled a section of the creek.

Generally the deepest part of the river was about one metre and the width two metres. The river took sharp turns about every 100 metres, so the scene was

constantly changing. As we rounded the corners, Green Frogs squeaked and plopped into the water, basking Painted Turtles slid off their logs and advancing ripples gave evidence of fleeing sunfish or bass.

The creek is too large to be dammed by beavers.

However, we noted their paths

frequently at

the shore, as well as many freshly-cut alder, floating alder branches, and three beaver lodges at one-kilometer intervals. A beaver slipped into the water ahead of us creating a long wake of air bubbles.

I was pleased to hear birdsong (I always think of July 12 as the end of the birdsong season) — Song Sparrows, Swamp Sparrows, Red-winged Blackbirds and Red-eyed Vireos. As we departed, we were serenaded by a Northern Cardinal and, on our return, we observed an Indigo Bunting singing on the wire above the bridge.

During our passage we flushed Belted Kingfishers several times— whether it was one or several individuals we could not tell.

We also flushed a Great Blue Heron twice, Green Heron three

times, one Wood Duck and a family of Mallards. On dead snags near the water's edge were fly-catching Eastern Kingbirds, Cedar Waxwings and a female Rose-breasted Grosbeak. The



Green Frog drawn by Diana Banville.



Green Heron by Diana Banville.

AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLORE TFN'S NATURE RESERVES NEAR UXBRIDGE

On Saturday, September 29, George Bryant will lead a walk in the Jim Baillie Reserve. The group will also look at the Emily Hamilton and the Helen and Aarne Juhola Reserves and drive to inspect the George Fell Reserve. Bring your own picnic lunch.

If you would like to participate, please contact the TFN office as soon as possible to register – deadline September 24. (Phone: 416-593-2656. Email: office@torontofieldnaturalists.org) Let us know if you require transportation or can offer a ride to others, so car pooling can be organized.

most unusual birds were a pair of drake barnyard Mallards. Almost black in plumage and too plump to fly, they preceded us for about half a kilometer before they mustered enough nerve to swim past us. We wondered if they knew their way home or whether they were about to join their wild kinfolk.

The variety of wildflowers we encountered would surely satisfy any botanist. The shores were lined with Joe-Pye-weed and various arrowhead and bur-reed species. In little bays we observed pickerelweed and white and yellow water-lilies, the latter two being southern varieties much larger than those growing farther north. There were virtually no weeds and blessedly only two clumps of purple loosestrife. There was one towering umbellifer—the introduced and uncommon giant cow parsnip. A single cardinal-flower illuminated the base of a shaded cedar tree near the north bridge. In a way the most remarkable plants were the many species of pondweeds which filled the waterway for most of the length, occasionally being so thick as to impede our passage.

As we progressed north, the creek gradually widened with little tributaries joining in. On three occasions we had to push aside deadfalls, but were never forced to portage. Once we encountered some rapid-like swift



Water-world by Steve Varga.



Arrowheads by Eva Davis.

water but navigated it without difficulty. A few hundred meters above the Leaskdale bridge, the creek changed character. The deep mud bottom was replaced by stony shallows. A little wading was required in the crayfish-filled water. For the only time during our trip we also encountered a few biting insects—deer flies.



Bur-reed by Diana Banville.

After a delightful expedition of three hours, we reached the Leaskdale Rd. To my surprise and pleasure, the only man-made feature we encountered was a snowmobile bridge near the end of the trip. To pass under this, we had to lie right down and in so doing our noses came within inches of a Phoebe nest on the girder. The entire watercourse is remarkably pristine. We saw no evidence of human disturbance for the entire voyage—not even a Tim Horton's cup!

For half the expedition we passed through or beside our own property—TFN nature reserves. All the land is considered “environmentally sensitive” so is more or less secure from development. We own four lovely nature reserves close to Toronto. Wouldn't it be grand if we could acquire even more of the land along Uxbridge Creek?

George Bryant

Butterflies galore!

An amazing 60 species of butterflies were identified in this summer's count for the Sunderland region north of Uxbridge (where our Nature Reserves are located). They included a new one for the area – the black dash, a small orange and black skipper common in the U.S. Midwest.

See: <http://newsdurhamregion.com/news/opinion/article/83319>

THE “BIG PIPE” AND THE ISSUE OF GROWTH

There were a number of excellent resolutions passed at Ontario Nature’s Annual General Meeting in Peterborough in June; some addressed local issues, others addressed on-going and all too familiar issues such as the boreal forest, light pollution, and ATV use in conservation lands. But it was the motion requesting the Provincial and Federal Governments to require a comprehensive Environmental Assessment for the York Durham Sewage System expansion (aka the “Big Pipe”) that revealed most starkly the most significant threat to nature in Southern Ontario.

The motion states that the twinning of York Region’s existing Big Sewer Pipe threatens “the aquifer system underlying the Oak Ridges moraine and the Rouge Park systems to the detriment of streams, wetlands, rural wells and fish and wildlife habitat”. It adds that the existence of the new Big Pipe “will encourage urban sprawl into valuable green space at the cost of vanishing habitat for Ontario’s endangered ecosystems”. As the rationale for this second Big Pipe, York Region cites “...the need to increase the capacity of the ... trunk sewer to meet the planned growth within York Region to 2026 and beyond...” This estimate of “planned growth” comes from the 2005 provincial report *Places to Grow* which states that by 2031 there will be 3.7 million more people in the Greater Golden Horseshoe area.

I attended a public consultation meeting in Markham on June 27 which focused on a “recommended route” for the southeast portion of the Big Pipe. A number of concerned community groups expressed eloquently their concern about the environmental impacts in their area. But the genie is already out of the bottle. The engineers and planners who represented the Region’s staff and consultants explained their efforts to mitigate the anticipated impacts of a project that is, for all intents and purposes, a “done deal”.

So, who are the villains here? The Province can point to Federal studies forecasting national population increases, the Region can say it is building infrastructure to meet the needs of people that the Province has told them will be coming to their area, and the planners and engineers can claim with some justification that they are doing their best to minimize the danger to the environment.

But, the Big Pipe is just the tip of the iceberg. Once the Big Pipe is in place, development of homes,

schools, local industry, retail space, health services, etc. will all be built on space that is presently green. There will also be an immediate need for better transportation in these areas and, in fact, in anticipation of the approval of the Big Pipe the task of adding and widening roads is already well underway. In Durham, for example, the widening of Altona Road to five lanes, when it only leads to an area that is supposed to be protected from urban development, illustrates well the provision of infrastructure without a defensible rationale. This may explain the provincial government’s exemption of the Big Pipe project from an individual comprehensive Environmental Assessment that could examine the effects of long distance piping of sewage and water between watersheds or through drinking water aquifers.

Most TFN members are familiar with Ontario Nature’s Greenway Plan, an extension of the protection of the province’s Greenbelt to additional lands that stretch across southern Ontario from Windsor to Ottawa. The Greenway would contain urban sprawl, buffer climate change and provide core natural areas and green corridors so that animals, plants, and yes, even humans, can move on the landscape, and adapt to global warming. The objective is to prevent growth from continuing in an unchecked and unplanned manner, to stop development from sprawling all over Ontario’s green spaces. Right now, our best farmland is being bought up by developers at a fast pace and added to their land banks for development. Whenever a municipality, or indeed even the province, looks for a route for a new road, sewer pipe or hydro line, the first choice is green space.

Now that global climate change has finally hit the headlines, people are becoming more aware of the environmental consequences of newly-prosperous populations of China and India seeking the same standard of living that we have taken for granted for decades. The Big Pipe project is a reminder that we too are addicted to growth and the perceived benefits it brings. We can decry the filling in of this stream, the bulldozing of that woodland, but we have not yet convinced our elected representatives that we want them to re-think the current strategy of growth and protect our green spaces. In my view, unless we achieve this, we are the villains.

Barry Mitchell

ESCAPE CLAUSE

WHY IS AN ECOLOGICALLY DESTRUCTIVE INDUSTRY LIKE MINING EXEMPT FROM ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTS?

Adapted from an article by Jen Baker, Ontario Nature's boreal campaign coordinator, in *ON Nature*, Summer 2007.

In 2009, if all goes according to plan, Ontario will have the dubious distinction of being an exporter of diamonds for the first time in the province's history. The environmental impacts that will result from the approved DeBeers Canada Victor diamond mine, located near Attawapiskat in the James Bay Lowlands, range from habitat destruction to air and water pollution to altered waterways. The mine will adversely affect 5,000 hectares of wilderness and will create a 2,575 square km "cone of depression" caused when water is pumped out of the ground and the soil there caves in. Remarkably, Ontario does not require such an enormous project to be fully examined through a comprehensive environmental assessment. No federal or provincial body ever undertook a complete review of all aspects of the Victor mine and their potential environmental impacts, despite repeated requests from conservation groups and scientific experts to do so.

The Victor diamond mine is symptomatic of a much bigger problem. More than 41,000 mining claims have been staked throughout the province. The federal environmental assessment (EA) process is triggered if a mining project or any parts of it will require federal permits, funding, land or authorization under a variety of federal laws, most notably the Fisheries Act and the Navigable Waters Protection Act. As a general rule, however, federal departments review only those aspects of a proposal that require a specific permit (e.g., bridge construction) and not the entire project. The federal government assumes that the province in which the mine is proposed reviews the potential impacts of the mine itself. In Ontario though, a provincial EA of a mine rarely takes place because of a little-known and poorly understood temporary exemption, Declaration Order MNDM-3/3 in place since 2003, which exempts from the provincial EA

process the granting (or renewal) of mining approvals on Crown land.

Mining proposals undergo uncoordinated and piecemeal EAs that are overseen by independent and unrelated government departments, none of which is responsible for reviewing the full array of potentially destructive impacts a mine might have. The Victor mine was given permission to pump 100,000 cubic metres of water out of the Attawapiskat River every day and has sought approval to construct roads, build a new electricity transmission corridor, divert a river and create a large landing in James Bay. Various provincial agencies assessed each of these elements separately. This piecemeal approach also means that components of the mine that could have significant adverse environmental impacts may proceed before even the limited environmental assessment process is complete.

Ontario Nature has called on the provincial government to close this loophole. We support the request by a coalition of conservation organizations, including CPAWS-Wildlands League, MiningWatch Canada and Sierra Legal, that the ministers of the Environment, Natural Resources and Northern Development and Mines undertake a review of the need for a thorough assessment of the environmental impacts of proposed mining projects under the Mining Act and the Environmental Assessment Act. Any future EAs must take into account the ecological footprint of the entire mining project before granting any approvals. While the existing policies are being reviewed and reformed, all approvals of mining projects in northern Ontario should be halted until comprehensive land-use planning legislation is enacted and an appropriate and comprehensive EA regime is implemented.

AN OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE HIGH PARK

High Park conducts walking tours on Sunday afternoons in the winter and Tuesday evenings in the summer – some designed to appeal to families with children. They are looking for volunteers to serve as walk leaders or hosts. If you would like to help with this program, please contact Diana Teal at 416-392-1748 or Diana@hpcharity.org.

If you have any questions concerning these financial statements, please contact the Treasurer, Corley Phillips at 416-923-6363 or cphillips6363@rogers.com

TORONTO FIELD NATURALISTS
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AS AT JUNE 30, 2007

	2007	2006
	\$	\$
Assets		
Current		
Cash - operating fund	5,009	17,729
Cash - nature reserve fund	247	250
Accounts receivable	1,792	1,028
Prepaid expenses	2,984	2,818
	<u>10,032</u>	<u>21,825</u>
Other assets		
Inventory (Note 2c)	2,300	3,453
Reference library (Note 2f) (Note 5)	10	10,500
	<u>2,310</u>	<u>13,953</u>
Investments (Note 2e)		
Investment - special projects	68,920	55,968
Investment - nature reserve	142,111	130,248
	<u>211,031</u>	<u>186,216</u>
Property (Note 2f)	<u>281,702</u>	<u>281,702</u>
Total assets	<u>505,075</u>	<u>503,696</u>
Liabilities and Fund Balances		
Current		
Accounts payable and accruals	2,000	2,167
Prepaid membership fees	9,612	10,010
	<u>11,612</u>	<u>12,177</u>
Fund balances		
Nature reserves fund (Page 5) (Note 2a)	424,066	412,200
Special projects fund (Page 5) (Note 2a)	69,397	79,319
General fund (Page 4) (Note 2a)	-	-
	<u>493,463</u>	<u>491,519</u>
Total liabilities and fund balances	<u>505,075</u>	<u>503,696</u>

APPROVED BY THE BOARD:

Rob Franklin Director

Ray Keys Director

The accompanying notes form an integral part of these financial statements.

AUDITORS' REPORT

**TO: The members of
Toronto Field Naturalists:**

I have audited the statement of financial position of Toronto Field Naturalists as at June 30, 2007 and the statements of general fund operations and nature reserve fund operations for the year then ended. These financial statements are the responsibility of the Organization's Board of Directors. My responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on my audit.

Except as explained in following paragraph, I conducted the audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Those standards require that I plan and perform an audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by the Board of Directors, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation.

In common with many non-profit organizations, income received is, by its nature, not susceptible to satisfactory audit verification. Accordingly, my verification of income was limited to a comparison of recorded receipts with bank deposits.

In my opinion, except for the effect, if any, of any adjustments that might have been required had I been fully able to verify income as referred to in the previous paragraph, these financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Toronto Field Naturalists as at June 30, 2007 and the results of its operations for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles.

Byron Bulmer

Byron Bulmer
Chartered Accountant
Licensed Public Accountant

**TORONTO FIELD NATURALISTS
STATEMENTS OF NATURE RESERVE FUND &
SPECIAL PROJECTS FUND
FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2007**

	2007	2006	2007	2006
	\$	\$	\$	\$
TORONTO FIELD NATURALISTS				
STATEMENTS OF NATURE RESERVE FUND & SPECIAL PROJECTS FUND				
FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2007				
NATURE RESERVE FUND				
Revenue				
Memberships fees	23,096	23,367		
Publications	404	399	11,862	9,246
Investment income	427	12	-	300
Miscellaneous income	100	2,955	500	500
Donations	11,438	4,164	-	-
G.S.T. rebate (Note 2d)	<u>1,126</u>	<u>1,152</u>	<u>12,362</u>	<u>10,046</u>
	<u>36,591</u>	<u>32,049</u>	496	559
Expenses				
Property taxes and maintenance			11,866	9,487
Excess of revenue over expenses for the year			<u>412,200</u>	<u>402,713</u>
Fund balance, beginning of the year				<u>412,200</u>
Fund balance, end of the year			<u>424,066</u>	<u>412,200</u>
SPECIAL PROJECTS FUND				
Funds received				
Investment income			(3,795)	8,223
Bequests			<u>6,481</u>	<u>200</u>
			<u>2,686</u>	-
Expenses				
Computer	379			3,133
Outing		1,330		1,525
Special mailing				835
Newsletter			1,722	-
Slide inventory project			<u>1,242</u>	-
			<u>3,343</u>	<u>5,493</u>
Excess of revenue over expenses for the year			(657)	2,930
Transfer from operating fund			(9,265)	1,330
Fund balance, beginning of the year			<u>79,319</u>	<u>75,059</u>
Fund balance, end of the year			<u>69,397</u>	<u>79,319</u>

The accompanying notes form an integral part of these financial statements.

The accompanying notes form an integral part of these financial statements.

**TORONTO FIELD NATURALISTS
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2007**

1. OPERATIONS

The Toronto Field Naturalists is a registered non-profit charity. The purpose of the organization is to stimulate public interest in natural history and to encourage the preservation of our natural heritage. For income tax purposes the organization qualifies as a not-for-profit organization which is exempt from income tax under the Income Tax Act.

2. SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The organization follows accounting principles generally accepted for not-for-profit organizations.

(a) FUND ACCOUNTING

The accounts of the Toronto Field Naturalists (TFN) are maintained in accordance with the principles of fund accounting. This method of accounting is used by most not-for-profit organizations. Resources for various purposes are classified into funds. The activities or objectives of each fund are specified by the donors or by direction from the Board of Directors.

- Operating Fund: Reflects the income and expenses associated with the TFN's program delivery and administration activities. This fund is set to zero at the beginning of each fiscal year. Any excess (loss) of income over expenses is transferred to the Projects Fund.
- Nature Reserve Fund: Reflects the income and expenses relating to the Nature Reserves and also provides for future purchases. This is a restricted fund.
- Projects Fund: Reflects the income and expenses relating to special events or purchases that are outside the normal day to day activities. This is an unrestricted fund.

(b) REVENUE RECOGNITION

Donations and bequests are recorded when received. Donations and bequests which are designated for the Nature Reserve are recorded in that Fund. All other donations are allocated to the Operating Fund and all other bequests are allocated to the Special Projects Fund.

Membership fees are recorded for a specific fiscal year and are amortized over the number of months remaining in the fiscal year at the time the monies are received. Membership fees received in advance are included in deferred revenue. All other income is recorded when received.

(c) INVENTORIES

Inventories are valued at the lower of cost and net realizable value.

(d) REBATES

The TFN applies for, and has received in the past, rebates for 50% of GST paid and 40% of that portion of the Office Rent that is considered property tax. The rebates are accrued for in the period in which they are incurred.

(e) INVESTMENTS

Investments are recorded at cost. Adjustment for a lower market value will only be made if the Board decides that the lower value is considered to be other than temporary.

(f) CAPITAL ASSETS

- The furniture and fixtures in the office, including the computer equipment, are considered to have been expensed at the time of purchase or donation.
- Nature Reserve Property is recorded at cost.
- Reference Library is recorded at the lower of cost or net realizable value.

(g) USE OF ESTIMATES

The preparation of financial statements in accordance with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements, and the reported amounts of revenues and expenses during the reporting period. Actual results could differ from managements best estimates as additional information becomes available in the future.

(h) FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

The organization's financial instruments consist of cash, investments, accounts receivable and accounts payable. Unless otherwise noted, it is the Board's opinion that the corporation is not exposed to significant interest or credit risks arising from these financial instruments. The fair value of these financial instruments approximate their carrying values, unless otherwise noted.

(i) CONTRIBUTED SERVICES

The Organization depends heavily on the use of volunteers to provide services. Because of record keeping and valuation difficulties, these contributed services are not recorded in the accounts.

3. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

A statement of cash flows has not been prepared as it would not provide any additional meaningful information.

4. COMMITMENT

The organization entered into a lease agreement for office space, at a cost of approximately \$13,000 per year. The lease will expire February 28, 2009.

5. REFERENCE LIBRARY

The Reference Library consists of an estimated twelve thousand 35-mm colour slides, focussing on Toronto valleys, watercourses, shorelines, plants and animals and on TFN properties and activities. The collection, which began in the early 1970's, continues to expand by photo donation from members and others.

LOU WISE AND THE TFN SLIDE COLLECTION

The summer 2007 issue of *ON Nature* includes "The View from Up Here," Allan Britnell's profile of aerial photographer Lou Wise. Wise became a pilot with the RCAF during the Second World War. Now 86, he began documenting Ontario from the air in 1980 when Charles Sauriol—as a director of the Nature Conservancy of Canada—commissioned him to photograph the province's waterways. Six examples of Wise's oblique, low-level, bird's-eye views, which effectively reveal patterns of sprawl and urbanization, accompany the article.

Not mentioned is the TFN's significant collection of Wise's aerial photographs. Beginning in 1987 when the TFN commissioned him to document the Rouge River—which he did in a series of 70 colour slides—Wise has shot nearly 800 slides for the organization. One group records changes to Toronto's Lake Ontario shoreline, from west to east, between 1991-1992 and 2004. Another shows the length of Steeles Avenue, from the west to the east boundaries of Toronto, at the turn of the 21st century. Another captures the beauty of the TFN nature reserves in 1990, 1998, and 2003.

As part of our ongoing work on the slide collection, all of Wise's slides are now stored in the archival-quality protectors that are starting to fill the new file cabinets in the office. We still need volunteers who can enter the slides in a database.

Pleasance Crawford and Helen Juhola

FOR READING

Exploring an Urban Forest: Owen Sound's Heritage of Trees

Bruce-Grey Plant Committee, Owen Sound Field Naturalists, 2007

Well, the Owen Sound Naturalists have done it again! Another fine publication, the seventh in a series about various aspects of the natural history of their region. This 80-page booklet which took five years to complete contains descriptions of 87 species of native and introduced species of trees and their locations in the city. Also included are maps and directions for two tree tours. Anyone planning to visit the Bruce Peninsula would find this a delightful book to have. Copies of all the club's publications can be purchased from Ginger Press, 848 Second Avenue East, Owen Sound, Ontario N4K 2H3 (telephone 519-372-1685).

Raven's End

Ben Gadd, 2001

A story about a raven living in the Canadian Rockies.

Pigeons

A. Blochman, 2006

All sorts of information about our relationships with these "common" birds.

An Obsession with Butterflies

S.A. Russell, 2003

Wonderful facts about butterflies and caterpillars and even some information about moths.

A Walk Around the Pond

Gilbert Waldbauer, 2006.

All about aquatic insects.

Wildflowers in the Field and Forest

S. Clemants and C. Gracie, 2006

A field guide to the Northeastern United States, but this includes much of eastern Canada and uses the same classification system and names as the ROM's *Wildflowers of Ontario* (2004), but includes more species.

Letters from Inside: The Notes and Nuggets of Margaret Marsh

Emily Jane Hills Orford, Baico Publishing Consultants Inc., 2006

Available in the TFN office (Margaret Marsh was the wife of the Bishop of the Yukon and a TFN member).

Helen Juhola

WEATHER (THIS TIME LAST YEAR)

September 2006

September brought a steady cooling trend, and thus an earlier autumn than has been the norm in recent years. The cooling trend began on the heels of the record heat at the beginning of August and has not really looked back. The cause for the relative coolness was a typical one a couple of decades ago: a trough over the Great Lakes and a ridge over western North America.

The month was very cloudy and unsettled with frequent frontal passages and light to moderate rains. It opened with the remains of Tropical Storm Ernesto and closed with a chilly air mass with daytime temperatures in the 12° – 15° range. The month did not attain 30° and attained the mid-to-upper twenties on

only a few occasions. The result is that the summer of 2006 had a total of 20 days with maxima in the 30°+ range (at Pearson Airport), mostly in early-to-mid-summer. This indicates a warmish summer but one that fell far short of the record-breaking 41 such days in 2005.

September was the coolest since 1995 downtown, with a mean of 16.3°, 0.7° below normal. Rainfall was near normal because there were no torrential events, but sunshine was way down, by about 60 hours. The total sunshine of 130.8 hours was the lowest since 1977, which was the cloudiest September on record with 108.3 hours.

Gavin Miller



Canada goldenrod at base of eastern white cedar in Wilket Creek Park. Drawing by Geraldine Goodwin.

Now is the time that Great Egrets are dispersing from their breeding colonies.

Canadian and US government researchers are asking for birders to look for Great Egrets with red bands with white letter-numbers above the “knee” of the left leg and the traditional aluminum band above the “ankle” of the right leg. The band code on the red band can usually be read with a spotting scope as the letter-numbers are nearly an inch high. On June 13th this year, 25 Great Egrets were banded at Motor Island on the Niagara River, and an additional 125 nestling Great Egrets were banded in a similar manner at Georgian Bay this June. These birds as well as egrets banded previous years are now spreading into various locations in New York and Ontario.

If you see any, please record the date, location, number of other egrets with them, and, if possible, the letter(s) and number(s) of the banding code, so we can better document the dispersal pattern of these egrets. Report all sightings of Great Egret with red color bands to: D. V. Chip Weseloh, Canadian Wildlife Service-Ontario Region, 4905 Dufferin Park. St., Downsview, Ontario M3H 5T4. Phone: 416-739-5846. Email: chip.weseloh@ec.gc.ca

COMING EVENTS

Jim Baillie Memorial Bird Walks – Toronto Ornithological Club

- Sat., Sept. 8, 8:00 am - noon. Fall Migration – Lambton Woods. Leader Don Burton. Meet in the parking lot at James Gardens (access from Edenbridge Dr.).
- Sat., Sept. 15, 8:00 am – noon. Fall Migration – High Park. Leader Steven Favier. Meet in the parking lot inside the Bloor St. entrance at High Park Ave.
- Sat., Sept. 22, 8 am (all day). Shorebirds and Other Migrants – Leslie Street Spit. Leader Bob Kortright. Meet at the foot of Leslie St. Bring lunch.

Rouge Valley Hikes

1:30 pm. (approx. 1.5 to 2 hrs.) Walks go rain or shine. Donations welcome. Information: 416-282-8265

- Tues., Sept. 11. Trees and Shrubs. Start at Pearse House, 1749 Meadowvale Rd., Scarborough (bus 85B from Don Mills subway; 86A from Kennedy subway; 85A from Rouge Hills GO station).
- Sun., Sept. 30. Nature walk in south/central Rouge. Start at Glen Eagles Vista, Sheppard Ave. E. and Twyn Rivers Dr.

Ian Wheal Walks

- Sat., Sept. 8, 10 am. Whitby walk. Meet at Union Station, GO concourse, east side, to take 10:13 am GO train to Whitby (must buy ticket by 10 am). The walk will proceed to Waterfront Trail and we will walk east about 7 km to Thickson's Point and Woods. Bring lunch, water and binoculars.

Thickson's Woods

- Sat., Sept. 15, 9 am – 4 pm. Birds, Beavers & Butterflies Nature Festival at Thickson's Woods Nature Reserve. Adults \$5, Kids \$2, Families \$10. From Hwy 401 in Whitby, take Thickson Road to the Waterfront Trail south of Wentworth St. Follow signs.

Humber Heritage Committee – Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe Expedition

- Sat., Sept. 22, 9:30 am. Re-enactment of the first day of Simcoe's 1793 journey up the Toronto Carrying Place. Meet at 8 South Kingsway (west side of South Kingsway, north of the Queensway). Commentary by Madeleine McDowell.

The Nature of Climate Change: Forum 2007

- Oct. 26, Carolinian Canada Coalition, London, Ont. Visit www.carolinian.org for a draft program and registration details.

High Park Walking Tours

Information: 416-392-1748 or 416-392-6916, or www.highpark.org

TD Canada Trust Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup

Every September, Canadians from all walks of life take action to restore the health of their local shorelines. Be part of the solution. Cleanup supplies provided. Information: 1-877-427-2422 (toll free) or www.vanaqua.org/cleanup

Toronto Field Naturalists

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Publications Mail
Registration No. 40049590



Uxbridge Creek at TFN's Emily Hamilton Nature Reserve. Photo: TFN Collection