



# TORONTO FIELD NATURALIST

Number 570, March 2010



American kestrel photographed at Colonel Samuel Smith Park by Lynn Pady on February 7, 2010

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*Toronto Field Naturalist* is published by the Toronto Field Naturalists, a charitable, non-profit organization, the aims of which are to stimulate public interest in natural history and to encourage the preservation of our natural heritage. Issued monthly September to December and February to May. Views expressed in the Newsletter are not necessarily those of the editor or Toronto Field Naturalists. The Newsletter is printed on 100% recycled paper.

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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 April issue:** March 5

### NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

Jenny Bull (co-editor), Karin Fawthrop, Nancy Fredenburg, Elisabeth Gladstone, Mary Lieberman, Ruth Munson, Toshi Oikawa, Wendy Rothwell (co-editor).

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### 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.*

### Toronto Field Naturalists

2 Carlton St., # 1519, Toronto M5B 1J3

Tel: 416-593-2656

Web: [www.torontofieldnaturalists.org](http://www.torontofieldnaturalists.org)

Email: [office@torontofieldnaturalists.org](mailto:office@torontofieldnaturalists.org)



Toronto Skyline from Colonel Samuel Smith Park, photographed by Pam Raiken, January 10, 2010

# TFN MEETING

**Sunday, March 7, 2010 at 2:30 pm**

## Towards a Bar-coded World

*Paul Hebert, Project Leader, Canadian Barcode of Life Network and Director, Biodiversity Institute of Ontario explains the technology behind DNA bar coding and its importance for the conservation of endangered species and habitats.*

**VISITORS WELCOME!**

**SOCIAL: 2:00 – 2:30 pm**

**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. 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

April 11 *Disturbing the Disturbed: Using Biological Control to Recover our Invaded Forests*

Sandy Smith, Professor, Faculty of Forestry, University of Toronto and international expert on biological control

May 2 *The Appalachians and Their Margins*

Peter Money, TFN member, retired geologist, enthusiastic nature photographer and amateur naturalist

### Carden Nature Festival – Enjoy and Help the TFN

Many TFN members have enjoyed the unique natural attractions of the Carden Nature Festival in the past (google Carden festival). Based in the town of Lake Dalrymple about 2 hours drive northeast of Toronto, the festival is scheduled for June 4-6 this year. Registration for the festival is now open and slots for activities and accommodation are filling up, so if you intend to go, do not delay. If you do register, please provide the TFN's group number 0210. If at least 12 members register with the TFN group number, the TFN will receive a donation of \$6.25 per person.

## 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 ([www.ttc.ca](http://www.ttc.ca) or 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.

- Wednesday  
Mar. 3  
10:00 am
- CENTRAL RAVINES – Nature and History**  
Leader: Ed Freeman  
Meet at Davisville subway station, southwest corner of Chaplin Cres. and Yonge St. We will walk through Mount Pleasant Cemetery, the Moore Park Ravine, Park Drive Reservation, and David Balfour Park, ending at the St. Clair subway station. Bring binoculars, lunch optional. Duration: 2 ½ to 3 hours.
- Saturday  
Mar. 6  
10:30 am
- A.G.O. AREA – Nature Arts**  
Leader: Susie Weiss  
Meet at the southwest corner of Dundas St. W. and McCaul St. outside the A.G.O. View area architecture and Grange Park. Bring what you need for sketching, photography or writing. Visit the free access areas of the A.G.O. on the inside lower level. Lunch at nearby food court. Those who wish can pay admission to the gallery in the afternoon for more viewing and pencil sketching. (No pens, no photography in the gallery.)
- Sunday  
Mar. 7  
2:30 pm
- LECTURE: Towards a Bar-coded World**  
Speaker: Paul Hebert, Project Leader, Canadian Barcode of Life Network, and Director, Biodiversity Institute of Ontario  
Emmanuel College, 75 Queen's Park Cres. E. See page 3.
- Wednesday  
Mar. 10  
10:00 am
- COLONEL SAMUEL SMITH PARK – Birds**  
Leader: Anne Powell  
Meet at the southwest corner of Lake Shore Blvd. W. and Kipling Ave. Bring binoculars. Morning only.
- Saturday  
Mar. 13  
10:00 am
- HIGH PARK – Trees and Birds**  
Leader: Joanne Doucette  
Explore High Park's trees and birds. Meet at the main entrance to High Park at Bloor St. W. and High Park Ave. Bring lunch, binoculars, field guide. Hills, some stairs. Washrooms on site.
- Thursday  
Mar. 18  
10:00 am
- PORT UNION WATERFRONT TRAIL – Nature and Birds**  
Leader: Karin Fawthrop  
Meet at Lawrence Ave. E. and Port Union Rd. Parking on Port Union Rd. Bring binoculars, lunch optional.
- Saturday  
Mar. 20  
10:00 am
- LESLIE STREET SPIT – Birds**  
Leader: Bob Kortright  
Meet at park entrance at Leslie St. and Unwin Ave. Bring lunch and binoculars. Dress warmly.
- Sunday  
Mar. 21  
2:00 pm
- WATER AND ENERGY – Lost Rivers (World Water Day, March 22)**  
Leaders: John Wilson and Helen Mills  
Meet at the northeast corner of Queen St. W. and University Ave. Follow the *Water and Energy* walk described at [www.thirstycitywalks.ca](http://www.thirstycitywalks.ca) and discover the close relationship between water consumption and energy use. A joint walk with Toronto Green Community and RiverSides.

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Thursday Mar. 25 10:00 am	<b>HUMBER BAY PARK EAST – Birds</b> Leader: Wendy Rothwell Meet at southwest corner of Lake Shore Blvd. W. and Park Lawn Rd. Bring binoculars. Morning only.
Saturday Mar. 27 10:00 am	<b>PINE HILLS CEMETERY – Trees</b> Leader: David White Meet at the cemetery entrance on the northeast corner of St. Clair Ave. E. and Birchmount Ave. Bring lunch.
Tuesday Mar. 30 1:00 pm	<b>SHERWOOD PARK – Urban Issues</b> Leader: Janice Palmer Meet at the main entrance to the park at the east end of Sherwood Ave. TTC bus # 103 from Eglinton subway stops at Sherwood and Mt. Pleasant Rd. The park is 200 m to the east. Limited on-street parking and in a small lot outside the park. We will look for evidence of uses and abuses and actions taken or contemplated to protect the natural heritage of this park. Ice grippers helpful. Bring binoculars. Duration: 2 hours.

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## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I am happy to report that the Toronto Field Naturalists has recently received a generous bequest from the estate of Margarita O'Connor. A TFN member from June 1965 until her death in 2009, Margarita participated in outings, attended lectures and regularly made generous donations. This gift augments a previous substantial bequest from the estate of Arthur Dvorak, announced in the December 2009 newsletter. Such unexpected and significant gifts are heart-warming, as they demonstrate how past members have valued their participation in the TFN.

These bequests open up opportunities for us to do things previously beyond the realm of possibility. At the same time, we are challenged to use the money wisely and productively, honouring the confidence people have placed in us. With this in mind, the TFN Board recognizes the need to plan carefully for the effective use of these and any future bequests. I'm grateful to Barry Mitchell for getting us started in this process.

At times like this, we are prompted to intentionally consider the purpose and objectives of our organization, to see if there are things we could be doing better or new initiatives we could undertake. In our brochure we say: *Since 1923, TFN has been promoting a love of nature in Toronto. This charitable, non-profit organization stimulates public interest in natural history and encourages the preservation of our nature heritage.* To what extent are we fulfilling this mandate?

- Our outings, lectures and newsletter are designed to stimulate interest in and appreciation of our natural heritage, educate people about nature and promote the protection of Toronto's ravines, parks and waterfront. Could these be made more effective?

- We try to stay abreast of proposed development and restoration projects in the GTA, advocating for the protection of natural habitats. Could we be more active and vocal in these endeavours?
- We own nature reserves for the purpose of preserving environmentally sensitive forest and wetlands. Should we consider other similar projects?
- In the past we had a junior naturalists' club. Are there ways for us to reach out to young people in today's very different society?
- Is there a particular role for the TFN at this time when environmental concerns are so prominent in the media?

On January 28, ten people (board members and individuals serving the TFN in other capacities) gathered for a brainstorming session – the first step in identifying effective ways to make use of the monies entrusted to us. This was a stimulating and positive meeting, and I was impressed that over 45 good ideas were brought forward for consideration. Each of the following categories was well represented.

**Conservation:** projects to assist in preserving threatened species, controlling invasive species or protecting natural habitats.

**Education:** initiatives to help educate ourselves and the public about nature.

**Promotion of Nature:** by words and actions, helping to preserve Toronto's green spaces and kindle public awareness of their importance.

**Youth:** ways to communicate to young people (from

## MONTHLY MEETING REPORT

### Toronto's Urban Forests

Sunday, February 7. Dr. Andy Kenney, Faculty of Forestry, University of Toronto

Dr. Kenney held a large audience rapt on Sunday when he shared with us interesting data about our own urban forests. His talk ranged from our local neighbourhoods to international facts – did you know that in India, 25% of the population lives in an urban environment, which translates into 310 million people!? In contrast, 85% of Ontarians live in an urban environment where the urban forest is the day-to-day interface between these Canadians and their natural environment.

As the pie charts, graphs and figures flew by me with dizzying speed, I did gather some interesting points. Urban forests provide many benefits. They improve air quality, conserve energy, improve water quality, reduce noise pollution, improve wildlife habitat, increase property value, improve appearances and enhance psychological wellbeing.

Although canopy cover is relatively easy to measure, it does not consider tree size nor does it account for species variation or tree condition. The mechanisms involved in producing the benefits are directly and indirectly related to the leaf area of a tree; therefore, the bigger the leaf area, the better the benefit and the bigger the tree, the more leaf area there is. A variety of species is important to enable the forest to withstand stress. Knowing the condition of our trees allows us to maintain them; keeping a large tree alive is more beneficial to our environment than planting several small ones.

It is interesting to note that most of the available growing space is on private land. Boulevard trees, managed by municipalities, account for only about 10-

20% of the trees. These trees are constantly disrupted as streets are torn up over and over again for various repairs and service upgrades. The tree roots usually do not win the competition below ground. It is difficult to grow big trees on boulevards.



European linden in Mount Pleasant Cemetery, 2001, drawn by Mary Anne Miller. Often planted in Toronto, this tree is the same genus as our native linden – basswood.

All of this considerable data is being constructively used to involve local people in caring for the trees where they live. The community-based urban forest stewardship program trains lay people to inventory their own trees, compiling consistent, technically correct data. The university then analyzes the data which results in a strategic plan for management of the local trees. Once the information is in a database, queries can isolate situations for specific actions. Dead trees can be assessed for hazards but otherwise left to be habitat for other living things; relatively small trees can be identified so that trained volunteers can prune

and shape them instead of planting new trees.

For more information on the delightfully-named Neighbourhoods Inventory Protocol, see [www.forestry.utoronto.ca/neighbourhoods/](http://www.forestry.utoronto.ca/neighbourhoods/) web. To ask about training courses, e-mail [a.kenney@utoronto.ca](mailto:a.kenney@utoronto.ca).

Andy's academic work has provided field naturalists everywhere with a concrete tool that we can use to benefit our natural environment. Thank you, Andy.

Corinne McDonald

**President's Report**  
*continued from page 5*

small children to university students) the joy of experiencing nature, and the knowledge and motivation to help preserve it.

**Member benefits:** improving the effectiveness of existing programs or finding more efficient ways to deliver them.

**Promoting TFN:** This includes everything we do which will attract new members and keep existing members. We do this, not just for the pleasure of seeing our club grow and flourish but so, also, that we will be able to continue fostering a love of nature and working for its preservation. If we are seen to be doing this effectively, that in itself will attract like-minded people who wish to share in our activities. We also need to consider ways to make the TFN visible and appealing.

The next step in this process is to evaluate suggestions in terms of their merits and feasibility. We need to consider not only the financial costs involved, but also the availability of volunteer participation – whether our members have the motivation, time and appropriate talents to bring projects to fruition. In some cases it may be advantageous to work in conjunction with other nature-related groups. Hopefully we will, over time, be able to proceed with one or two projects in each of the above categories.

In setting priorities, we want to take into account the preferences of our members, so we would appreciate

receiving your feedback. We are eager to have additional ideas from you. Hopefully, as you have read this report, thoughts have come to your mind of projects we might undertake. Or perhaps you have suggestions for improving our current programs. Most important, would you be willing to volunteer in any of the above categories of projects? I see this process as an opportunity for open discussion among our members and for enthusiastic involvement in exciting new undertakings. **Please send your ideas and comments to the TFN office (see page 2 for mailing and e-mail addresses).**

Wendy Rothwell



Please **MARK YOUR CALENDAR** for  
**THE SECOND ANNUAL  
ONTARIO NATURE GREEN TEA**  
**April 8, 2010**

Come **CELEBRATE** the International Year of Biodiversity with acclaimed Canadian writers and naturalists, Margaret Atwood and Graeme Gibson.

Ms. Atwood and Mr. Gibson will remind us of the once-rich diversity of life in our city and talk about our generation's opportunity to protect the wild species and wild spaces that are essential to our own health and survival.

**THURSDAY, APRIL 8, 2010**  
4:00-6:00 pm  
**The Granite Club, 2350 Bayview Avenue**  
\$50 (\$400/table)

Presented by Ontario Nature in partnership with  
the Toronto Field Naturalists  
and hosted by the Granite Club Nature Series.

**Register Today!**  
[www.ontarionature.org](http://www.ontarionature.org)  
email: [kirans@ontarionature.org](mailto:kirans@ontarionature.org)  
Phone Kiran Singhachaudhuri:  
416-444-8419 ext. 234



**Ontario Nature** 



## EXTRACTS FROM OUTINGS LEADERS' REPORTS

**Ashbridge's Bay Park, Birds and Trees, Jan. 5. Leader: Bob Kortright.** ...Coatsworth Cut was almost completely frozen, but a kingfisher was found at the storm sewer outlet at Coxwell and Lakeshore...

**Leslieville, Route of Leslie Creek and Tree Identification, Jan. 9. Leader: Joanne Doucette.** We identified nearly 50 species of trees. We began at Lesliegrove Park...making a loop that gives a sense of the lower part of the Leslie Creek watershed and checking out the diverse assemblage of trees in the park. Then up Jones to a laneway that gives a really good view of the remnants of the Leslie Creek ravine plus an interesting view of the sweat lodge behind a native-owned and run housing complex.... We passed a giant silver maple (*Acer saccharinum*) on Marjory. Turning into a laneway, a man told us about the magnificent and healthy example of an American elm (*Ulmus americana*) in his back yard. It has a lovely vase form, is large and appears to be in good shape. At Holy Blossom Cemetery I discussed the history of the cemetery and we stopped for a small quiz with donated prizes: maple syrup, highbush cranberry jelly



and cedar jelly. People enjoyed the quiz but said it was too easy.... Continuing to Boultee Ave., we saw a great "armed" honey locust (*Gleditsia triacanthos*) with a truly impressive armament of thorns, unlike the "unarmed" cultivars we had seen on the Blake St. boulevard planting.

**Lower Don, Nature and Heritage, Jan. 16. Leader: Margaret McRae.** ...Stopped at the forks where West Don enters East Don and Taylor Massey Creek enters East Don. Explained the elevated wetlands and discussed Charles Sauriol... Saw one male wood duck... The great blue heron I had seen on my pre-walk wasn't there.

**Ashbridges Bay, Birds, Jan. 19. Leader: Anne Powell.** The highlights of the day were a rare sighting of a coyote chasing a gull across the ice and viewing a ruddy duck in the harbour area.

Left: Checking out the ruddy duck in the field guide, photographed by Norah Jacik.

**Colonel Sam Smith Park, Birds, Jan. 23. Leader: Anne Powell.** On this cloudy dull and windy day we had good sightings of 3 harlequin ducks (1 male and 2 females), 2 American coots and a kestrel along with 15 other species.

**Downtown Toronto, Historic Churches, Jan. 27. Leader: Anne Scott.** In spotting mammals, it was fun to see huge sculpted orange bears in the Sculpture Garden! There were beautifully healthy holly trees with lots of berries along a Ryerson U building....



Northern mockingbird photographed by Augusta Takeda, TFN outing Jan 30, Humber Bay Park East, leader: Bob Kortright.

## THE SOUND OF ONE HAWK FLAPPING

(In a previous issue, I talked about Hawk Hill. Here's what happened next.)...Most of us love watching hawks soar. This type of hawk is known as a *buteo*. It was a revelation to me when I learned about the more abundant accipiters or hunting hawks. On seeing my first from Hawk Hill, I grabbed my bird book (an old fashioned form of Googling for the younger reader) and looked up the sharp-shinned hawk, the Cooper's hawk, and the northern goshawk, all of which were seen flying over High Park the first day I helped out. Accipiters are built for stealth to catch mostly other birds mostly in wooded areas. On the migration, the first give-away that a hawk is an accipiter is that it flaps its wings (thus the title – sorry). I made a note to keep a look-out for an accipiter on my next walk. I had an idea of where some might be found.

One of my favourite fall bird watching places is West Dean Park (Mimico Creek south of Eglinton). It attracts fall warblers. My theory is that it funnels a more than normal number of warblers coming south crossing the airport, as this park is one of the first treed valleys they encounter in this area. Historically, the valley was on one of the fall migration routes of the passenger pigeon. It was a place where they fed on hickory nuts (you can find some of the trees still there) before their hop across Lake Ontario. I've heard that Mimico meant 'resting place of the wild dove' to the native inhabitants. The stories of the inhumane treatment they received are chilling, although it is hard to imagine what we would do today if several hundred million birds landed in our neighbourhood...it would make Hitchcock's movie look tame...but enough of this.

I was in West Dean shortly after the High Park venture, watching kinglets feeding in a shrub at the edge of a wooded area. "Isn't nature wonderful?" I thought as I studied their markings. "Elegant little birds free for the watching." Then!... have you ever had the feeling that you're being watched... like from over your shoulder? I turned slowly and looked up and, about 20 ft. away, an accipiter, a sharpie, was watching the same scene, ignoring me! It must have been quite hungry. As I looked into its eyes I imagined *it* thinking: "Isn't nature wonderful? A buffet of bite sized lunch snacks free for the eating." As the motion of a loose feather gave away a slight breeze, I could see little twitches in its

talons and a tiny rocking of its head as it made minor optical corrections keeping a keen focus on the kinglets. Long pencil-thin yellow legs with the diagnostic raised ridge (the "sharp shin") were the give-away that it was a sharp-shinned hawk. (I would hate to see a kinglet eaten but, obeying the "prime directive," I froze.)

It soon became clear that he wasn't going to venture into the bush. Of course he wasn't; he was waiting for one of his would-be prey, to break out of the bush and head for the open. Fortunately for the kinglets, kinglet evolution was working, and the flock stuck together. Our sharpie was foiled. Then I witnessed something I will never forget. A thrush flew through, then landed in a small clearing in the wooded area behind. I saw what can only be called an accipiter blast off... whoosh... our sharpie headed after the thrush. With unbelievable speed, it veered to the left, then to the right, pulled up, then flew under one branch and over another. There is a series of movies called "Star Wars."

In one of the episodes, some of the characters use hovering space scooters. They fly through the woods at breakneck speed drawing the audience in and holding them spellbound as they avoid all obstacles, with a series of death-defying flight manoeuvres. The director of that scene, without a doubt, knew accipiters. In a futile attempt I tried to keep up but I lost sight of both the thrush, which I think avoided capture, and the sharpie. But I did get a look at accipiter evolution, as the hawk's slender body with broad rounded wings and long tail allowed it to seemingly defy the science of flight as it twisted unerringly, and relentlessly, through a formidable obstacle course... (West Dean Park, west side of creek, west of path, first trees south of Eglinton. The first time I was there was two years after hurricane Hazel – quite a change since then.)

I went back to watch the accipiter luncheon layout (the kinglets) with a different perspective on nature. A week later I was at a different birding venue (Colonel Samuel Smith Park) and experienced another very interesting encounter... but that will be for another newsletter.



Sharp-shinned hawk, drawn by  
Geraldine Goodwin

## THANK-YOU, EVA!

Eva Davis has been a member of the TFN newsletter committee for decades – since the days when it used to meet in Helen Juhola's home. After moving to Brampton, and even beyond the age of 90, Eva has made the arduous journey each month to assist in proof-reading. Over the years she has been one of our most prolific contributors, sharing her rich talents as both artist and writer. Her enthusiasm for nature, particularly fungi, is contagious, and her delightful sense of humour always evokes a smile or a chuckle. Thank you, Eva, for all you have given and, though we will miss your company at our editorial meetings, we have no doubt you will continue to send us engaging articles and drawings. Below are two recent letters from Eva.

Jenny Bull and Wendy Rothwell

My dear old friends (and I'm not referring to age!)

Thank you so much for your Get Well wishes. They cheered me up enormously. However, I'm also being forced to face a fact of life: at 90 I don't travel as well as I used to. If it were a case of one bus to Toronto, it would be no problem. But it's an hour on the bus, a half hour on the GO train to Union Station, a walk from Union to the subway up to College and a collection of stairs and ramps to the Great Outdoors. It's these last six steps up to the street! I've been getting my Fifth Wind by stopping for air halfway up, and Torontonians (Toronto is eminently a civilized city) have been asking me for years if I'm "all right."

It's also time I moved over – the TFN has an abundance of talent and new ideas. And think: I will now read each edition of the newsletter from cover to cover with new delight.

So, my good friends, please accept my resignation from the Editorial Committee and my best wishes to my successor.



Eva Davis (at right) with Editorial Committee members in 2008, photographed by Jenny Bull

Dear Editor,

Now that I have retired from the Editorial Committee of the TFN, I can say it!! Our monthly newsletter is one Class Production!

Just take February's edition: front page and back page alone. Augusta Takeda's delightful photograph of our old friend, the groundhog. When I lived up north they

used to pop up all over the place and my children had a great time trying, of course, without success, to catch them. And Margaret McRae's back page shot of the sheer majesty of Mount Pleasant's snow-bound conifers. Then there are the samples from the Nature Images Event in East York: the lovely blue stars of chicory, the small, but still majestic, golden throat of an argiope spider, the strange entity that is a praying mantis. I once had one attach herself to my shoulder while I walked. Why she favoured me I have no idea, but I felt honoured. Then the fading trillium. "Woods white with trillium" (in Wales they would be woods dark with bluebells). I recall asking my fellow travelers what "those white flowers were called" when I first saw them from the windows of the train taking me from our landing port of Montreal to Toronto. Of course, nobody could tell me! Then there's the striking beauty of Lynn Pady's capture of ice-coated red-osier dogwood! The Impressionists never achieved anything more beautiful. And Malcolm D. Silver's fascinating account of how other creatures survive a Canadian winter. I don't know about winter, but in summer the humbug snails used to make walking in Brampton's ravine system a tricky business. They were everywhere, slithering slowly from one grass verge to another.

And then there was Brampton's Moment of Glory: the visit of the famed phainopepla! This I missed due to bronchitis and living in the wrong end of town. Dian Bogie is much to be praised in her role as the bird's publicity agent.

Of course all this information and enjoyment is the consequence of endless fighters for the preservation of Toronto's green spaces. In my time it has been Helen Juhola, confronting politicians and public alike. I recall with what delight we all used to meet in her living room to put together the next month's edition.

I regret I can no longer be part of the Newsletter's production team, but I can still, with infinite pleasure, enjoy the end product. Bless you all.

## FOR READING

### ***Wind: How the Flow of Air Has Shaped Life, Myth, and the Land***

by Jan Deblieu

Published by Mariner Books, 294 pages

*Wind* won the (U.S.) John Burroughs Medal for nature writing in 1999. It's an extraordinary little book, at the same time both literary and fact-filled. It covers wind from every conceivable angle: patterns, myth, religion, climate, landscape, pollution, world exploration, as well as its effect on and use by mankind, animals, insects and plants.

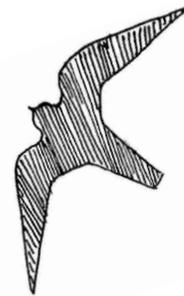
Carefully researched, the book has an underlying personal narrative and is at times poetic. For example "To birds and insects, wind is a chariot to be ridden, a compass to be read." It exposes the reader to many old and newer discoveries about wind without ever boring, at the same time pointing out how much we still have to learn. For example:

- Near the equator, winds blow from the east for 12-15 months, then abruptly reverse for 13-16 months (the "quasi-biennial oscillation"). We don't know why.
- The Biblical story of the parting of the Red Sea may be true - but it was probably the Gulf of Suez, not the Red Sea.
- Mount Washington, Vermont, is the windiest place in the world, with gusts up to 231 mph.
- Many birds and insects relocate by riding currents of air, where they may fly as high as 20,000 ft. or "tack" miles out of their way.
- Windborne spores and seeds can be important food sources. Spiders can be found at 22,000 ft. on Mount Everest, where they feed on springtails which survive on wind-borne foods.
- Crops such as corn are planted in rows perpendicular to prevailing breezes and in patterns to improve pollination and reduce erosion.
- Rain-forest plants have showy flowers to attract pollinators because the tree canopy blocks potential pollen-distributing breezes at ground level.
- Trees have evolved ways to avoid being uprooted in high winds: tulip poplars tightly curl their leaves, while white oaks clump theirs flat together.
- The Portuguese man-of-war jellyfish has an inflatable crest it uses to sail against or with the wind.

- Mankind has a long history of exploiting wind to create energy; for example, it was used in 7th century Sri Lanka to power iron-smelting furnaces.

Altogether an easy and fascinating read for many ages, though maybe not for the expert! You can find it at your local library.

Mary Lieberman



#### **DARK-EYED JUNCO**

Got up in his slatey blacks  
and lickety-split tail whites,  
he wears a hood  
that is half of himself  
and plays mystery man  
in April.

The busy trill that warmed  
its way through winter  
has paid off.  
Now he clinks his coins  
for a lady who laughs, beckons  
and pecks haughtily at loose change,  
while every feather in her dark mask  
eyes him.

by Heather Cadsby

## ASIAN CARP CLOSE TO GREAT LAKES

Extracted from websites and press releases from National Wildlife Federation ([www.nwf.org](http://www.nwf.org)); Great Lakes United ([www.glu.org/asiancarp](http://www.glu.org/asiancarp)); Asian Carp Management, Invasive Species Coordination ([asiancarp.org](http://asiancarp.org)); Circle of Blue ([www.circleofblue.org](http://www.circleofblue.org)); Ontario government ([www.news.ontario.ca/mnr/en/2010/01/ontario-supports-american-bid-to-protect-great-lakes](http://www.news.ontario.ca/mnr/en/2010/01/ontario-supports-american-bid-to-protect-great-lakes)); and Michigan's attorney general ([www.stopasiancarp.com](http://www.stopasiancarp.com))

DNA evidence suggests that invasive Asian carp, specifically the silver and bighead carp species, are within 6 miles of Lake Michigan, having breached an electric fence in the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal. This unnatural link between Mississippi River and Great Lakes watersheds has become a pipeline for invasive species.

Seven species of carp native to Asia have been introduced into North America, but the term "Asian carp" has come to include only the four carp species most recently introduced: bighead carp (*Hypophthalmichthys nobilis*); black carp (*Mylopharyngodon piceus*); grass carp (*Ctenopharyngodon idella*); silver carp (*H. molitrix*). The other three are common carp (*Cyprinus carpio*); goldfish (*Carassius auratus*); and crucian carp (*Carassius carassius*)

Introductions of Asian carp are combined results of stockings directly by or authorized by various agencies, unauthorized stockings by private individuals, and unintentional escapes from university research facilities, federal and state agency facilities, and private aquaculture operations. Silver carp are not presently cultured in the United States, largely because of their jumping habits and poor handling qualities during production, harvest, and transport. Bighead, grass, and silver carps have all established reproducing populations in the United States.

Asian carp can grow to up to 4 feet long, quickly dominating a waterbody due to their size. Bighead and silver carp are large filter-feeders that out-compete native fish for food and habitat. Bighead carp grow to 100 pounds, have no stomach and eat up to 40% of their bodyweight every day, eliminating food supplies for native fish and causing their populations to crash.

The carp were introduced into the Southern United States in the 1970s to help clean man-made fish farms. They escaped into the Mississippi River during flooding two decades later. In some parts of Illinois, Asian carp now make up more than 90 per cent of the fish population. In 2004, Ontario banned the buying and selling of live Asian carp.

In January, an attempt to force the closure of the locks that connect the Great Lakes to the Chicago's Waterway System failed when the U.S. Supreme Court rejected a motion brought by Michigan's attorney general and the attorneys general in Indiana, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Wisconsin and Ontario. This emergency measure was to buy time to develop a permanent solution to the problem – the most drastic of which would entail a complete return to the original separation of the Great Lakes and Mississippi River watersheds. Both the Obama administration and the state of Illinois opposed the motion.

On February 8, Obama administration officials held a "carp summit" at the White House resulting in a pledge of nearly \$80 million for alternative preventive measures including increased DNA sampling in the water, a third electric barrier in Chicago-area waterways, land barriers to keep carp from getting past the electric barriers during flooding, chemical treatments if the barriers fail, and further research. Michigan's governor does not believe this proposal, known as the Asian Carp Control Strategy Framework, adequately addresses the Great Lakes governors' concerns.

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River system has been invaded by over 185 non-native aquatic plants and animals.

### TFN BOARD NOMINATIONS INVITED

TFN is looking for people with initiative who are willing to devote time to working as members of the Board of Directors. Please send your suggestions to the Chairman of the Nominating Committee, c/o TFN, #1519, 2 Carlton St., Toronto, ON M5B 1J3. The Committee's report will be published in the May newsletter.

## ! TFN MARCH TO MAY VOLUNTEERS NEEDED !

**Call the TFN office 416 593 2656 to reserve your shift**

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**Event: TFN Booth at CANADA BLOOMS**

When? **Wednesday, March 17 to Sunday, March 21**  
10:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Where? Direct Energy Centre, Exhibition Grounds

What? 6 Volunteers needed each day to work a 3.5 hour shift  
FREE ADMISSION if you volunteer to help staff our booth, share your enthusiasm for the TFN and sign up new members.

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**Event: TFN Booth at GREEN LIVING SHOW**

When? **Friday, April 23 to Sunday, April 25**  
10:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Where? Direct Energy Centre, Exhibition Grounds

What? 6 Volunteers needed each day to work a 3.5 hour shift  
FREE ADMISSION if you volunteer to help staff our booth, share your enthusiasm for the TFN and sign up new members.

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**Event: TFN Booth at INTERNATIONAL MIGRATORY BIRD DAY**

When? **Saturday, May 8**  
9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Where? Toronto Zoo

What? 4 Volunteers needed to work a 3.5 hour shift (am or pm)  
FREE ADMISSION if you volunteer to help staff our booth, share your enthusiasm for the TFN and (hopefully) sign up new members.

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**Event: TFN Booth at TOMMY THOMPSON PARK SPRING BIRD FESTIVAL**

When? **Saturday, May 8**  
7:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Where? Leslie Street Spit

What? 2 Volunteers needed  
FREE ADMISSION  
Share your enthusiasm for the TFN and sign up new members.

## BIRD OF THE MONTH – RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH

Watch for red-breasted nuthatches in Toronto any time of the year. They are noticeably smaller than their cousin, the white-breasted nuthatch which also lives here. Nuthatches are easily recognized, often moving down a tree trunk head first. Both species have bluish grey backs and quite appropriate names. The white-breasted nuthatch has a snowy white face and breast while the “red” has a heavy black line through the eye and a cinnamon breast, paler in the female than in the male.

The *Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Ontario 2001-2005* reports breeding of red-breasted nuthatch throughout the Greater Toronto Area and most other parts of the



Red-breasted nuthatch and (below) the larger white-breasted nuthatch, photographed by D.R. Gunn, TFN photo archive



province except “extreme southwestern Ontario where conifer plantations and woodlots are scarce . . . and in the extreme north, perhaps because there are few coniferous forests of adequate stature.” Further-more the atlas also confirms significant southward expansion in this species’ breeding areas, probably as a result of “the increase and maturation of conifer plantations.” The three highest records for this species on the Toronto Christmas Bird Count were in 1997, 2003 and 2006. Depending on cone crops, the birds may remain in the same area all year or seek food farther south in fall and winter. Roughly every couple of years irruptive red-breasted nuthatch

migrants from the north add their numbers to our area’s over-wintering resident birds.

As W. Earl Godfrey in *The Birds of Canada* points out, “the name ‘nuthatch’ comes from the habit of inserting nuts in bark crevices and hammering them with the bill until the shell is broken.” Since their main natural winter food is seeds, red-breasted nuthatches frequent bird feeders. On walks around the city’s parks, ravines and cemeteries, we spot them searching tree bark for insects, including eggs and larvae, which they consume all year and in summer this becomes their primary food source. They tend to move more quickly over trunks and branches than do white-breasted nuthatches. The Cornell Lab of Ornithology website mentions that red-breasted nuthatches store food in bark crevices, “often covering them with pieces of bark, lichen and pebbles.”

These little dynamos can be quite aggressive at feeders and around their nests. On April 5th last year in Mt. Pleasant Cemetery I was drawn by their incessant calls and found a very agitated pair trying to eject a white-breasted nuthatch from a tree which they clearly considered their private territory. As the “white,” a giant by comparison, worked its way up the tree, one of the little “reds” periodically swooped at it and amidst a little tussle, occasionally dislodged it, though only temporarily. The “white” would alight briefly on a nearby branch, only to return and carry on with his business. This process was repeated several times while I watched and the “reds” called endlessly. Finally I left them all to it and later consulted the *Atlas of Breeding Birds of Ontario*, finding that indeed nesting begins “in March or early April. Excavation is started by the male but primarily completed by the female while the male aggressively defends the territory.” Another detail mentioned in the Atlas was that, “unique to cavity-nesting passerines in North America, the red-breasted nuthatch smears conifer resin around the cavity opening, apparently a tactic to deter potential nest predators.”

We are lucky that, with their numbers apparently increasing in Toronto, so are our opportunities to observe these very spunky and clever creatures.

Marilynn Murphy

Note: For further information, see the above-mentioned books and the following websites: [allaboutbirds.org](http://allaboutbirds.org) and [birdsbent.com](http://birdsbent.com)

## IN THE NEWS

### Doris Speirs Award 2009

Extracted from *Northumberland News* (Sept. 23, 2009); [www.willowbeachfieldnaturalists.org](http://www.willowbeachfieldnaturalists.org); and [www.library.utoronto.ca/fisher/collections/highlights](http://www.library.utoronto.ca/fisher/collections/highlights)

Last September, former TFN member Clive Goodwin was awarded the Doris Huestis Speirs Award by the Society of Canadian Ornithologists (SCO). He was nominated by the Willow Beach Field Naturalists for his outstanding contribution to Canadian ornithology.

Goodwin has written numerous papers and articles on birds, nature and the environment, including *A Bird Finding Guide to the Toronto Area* published by TFN in 1979, and *Bird Finding in Cobourg* and *A Bird-Finding Guide to Ontario* in 1995. After moving from Toronto to Cobourg he was involved in management or master plans for Presqu'ile Provincial Park, Presqu'ile Beach, Cobourg Harbour Development, Lone Pine Marsh, and Presqu'ile Important Bird Area (IBA) and was environmental advisor to the Town of Cobourg. Goodwin was an executive director at Conservation Council of Ontario.

Doris Speirs was a life member of TFN; her husband Murray was a founder. Their notebooks are in the Thomas Fisher Rare Books Library ([www.library.utoronto.ca/fisher/collections/highlights](http://www.library.utoronto.ca/fisher/collections/highlights)). The award is the most prestigious award given by the SCO.

### TFN in Spacing magazine

TFN was mentioned and Helen Juhola, past newsletter editor, was quoted in the winter 09-10 edition of Spacing magazine which recently received the Magazine of the Year Award. The 80-page issue covers many aspects of Toronto's Urban Wild Life.

### All time low numbers of monarchs overwintering in Mexico

From a press release from the Monarch Butterfly Fund Conservation of the Migration at [www.monarchbutterflyfund.org](http://www.monarchbutterflyfund.org)

A report by Wildlife Fund-Mexico indicates the number of overwintering monarchs is at an all time low. The annual December census of the total colony area occupied by overwintering monarch butterflies in Mexico for the 2009-2010 season is 1.92 hectares (ha) (4.74 acres), the lowest on record. Monitoring over the past 16 overwintering seasons recorded a maximum of 21 ha in 1996-1997, and prior to this year, a minimum of 2.19 ha, with an overall average of 7.44 ha per year. This year, of 16 areas known to have overwintering sites in the past, nine have no monarch colonies, three have less than a tenth of a hectare each, and only three

have colonies occupying more than 0.50 hectare.

Reasons for the current all-time low are very likely a combination of reduced survival during last year's winter (2008-2009) and limited breeding success in the US and Canada over the spring and summer of 2009. The likely reduced winter survival during December 2008 to March 2009 is almost certainly a consequence of illegal logging over the past decade that has either destroyed overwintering forests or degraded them so that they can no longer provide adequate microclimatic protection for the butterflies. If there is another killer storm such as occurred in January 2002, it could degrade the migratory phenomenon to a possibly unrecoverable level. See also January 2010 article in *The Globe and Mail*, at [www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/monarch-butterfly-count-at-a-record-low/article1435827/](http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/monarch-butterfly-count-at-a-record-low/article1435827/)

### Construction of new Don Valley trail

Extracted from an article by Nicole Miller in *Leaside-Rosedale Town Crier*, Jan. 2010

Partly funded by a developer's "community benefit" contribution, a new/improved trail will be constructed following the Don River from Wynford Drive to Lawrence Avenue East. It is hoped the 3-metre wide trail will preserve the natural environment by concentrating human activity. Benches, a rest station and a spur trail to Moccasin Park are also part of the project.

### City approves more off-leash parks for dogs

Extracted from a Jan. 28 article by Brendan Kennedy in *Toronto Star*.

After a 2 year review, the City has approved 29 new parks for off-leash dog-walking out of 53 applications, including Col. Sam Smith Park and Humber Bay Park West.

### National Geographic Traveler features Brick Works

The Brick Works was one of ten finalists in the second annual Geotourism Challenge, a competition sponsored by the National Geographic Society. Judges selected finalists based on innovation, social impact and sustainability/viability. The Evergreen Brick Works is described as "an adaptive re-use of the heritage structures at the Don Valley Brick Works, converting the city's abandoned ravines into a much respected public park and nature exploratory center." ([geotourism.changemakers.com/fr/node/23438](http://geotourism.changemakers.com/fr/node/23438))

In the News *continued on next page*

In the News *continued from previous page*

### FrogWatch Review

Extracted from an article by Julia Phelps, Adopt-A-Pond Coordinator, in *Amphibian Voice*, Fall 2009, Toronto Zoo

2009 has been a great one for Frog Watchers across the province! In Ontario the project is run by Adopt-A-Pond in partnership with Environment Canada's Ecological Monitoring and Assessment Network (EMAN) and the Ministry of Natural Resources' Natural Heritage Information Centre (NHIC). To date, observations have been made in 840 locations across the province, with 67 added in 2009. Data help scientists track critical wetland habitats that support amphibian wildlife and determine the distribution of declining species.

Frogs and toads (and all other amphibians) are a primary indicator of environmental degradation because they easily absorb pollutants through their porous skin, and because they have both aquatic and terrestrial life stages. Frog and toad species are declining world-wide and in Ontario one frog and one toad species have already been classified as species at risk. 2009 species counts are:

Spring Peeper 291  
 Green Frog 261  
 American Toad 221  
 Wood Frog 111  
 Gray Treefrog 101  
 Western Chorus Frog 72  
 Leopard Frog 69  
 Boreal Chorus Frog 51  
 Bullfrog 51  
 Mink Frog 10  
 Fowler's Toad (Threatened) 7  
 Cricket Frog (Endangered) 2  
 Unknown Species 207  
 Non-native Species 26 (e.g. Oregon Spotted Frog)

### Ontario Turtle Tally

Extracted from an article by Julia Phelps, Adopt-A-Pond Coordinator, in *Amphibian Voice*, Fall 2009, Toronto Zoo

Thanks to unprecedented participation and support, the Adopt-A-Pond Wetland Conservation Programme has collected more information on the status of Ontario's turtle populations in 2009 than in any other year! More than 10 turtle sightings were submitted for each day of the Tally!

Seven of Ontario's 8 native species of turtles are deemed at risk of becoming extinct by provincial and federal wildlife conservation agencies COSSARO (Committee on the Status of Species at Risk in Ontario)

and COSEWIC (Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada). 2009 species counts are:

Painted Turtle (not at risk) 1811  
 Northern Map Turtle (Special Concern) 1114  
 Snapping Turtle (Special Concern) 608  
 Blanding's Turtle (Threatened) 117  
 Spiny Softshell (Threatened) 63  
 Spotted Turtle (Endangered) 31  
 Stinkpot Turtle (Threatened) 11  
 Wood Turtle (Endangered) 10  
 Unknown Species 37  
 Red-eared Slider (non-native species) 56

This year 118 turtles were helped across the road during nesting season and 162 nesting locations were recorded. Road mortality poses a major threat to the sustainability of turtle populations in Ontario, but every turtle assisted increases the potential for future generations. Sightings of dead turtles help too, providing valuable information on road mortality hotspots or habitats in need of protection.

Data collected through Turtle Tally are shared with biologists to create range maps of species distributions across the province and help to identify critical turtle habitat.

**For information on how you can help protect amphibians and turtles email [aap@torontozoo.ca](mailto:aap@torontozoo.ca) or visit [www.torontozoo.com/adoptapond](http://www.torontozoo.com/adoptapond). For turtles click on Ontario Turtle Tally; for frogs and toad click on Frog Watch Ontario.**

### Earth Hour 2010

The World Wildlife Fund ([wwf.ca/earthhour](http://wwf.ca/earthhour)) is again inviting everyone to switch off lights for one hour at 8:30pm on Saturday, March 27.

### 2010 Ontario Nature Conservation Awards

Nominations deadline: March 5.

Ontario Nature Conservation Awards recognize excellence by honouring individuals, groups, government agencies and corporations who have worked to protect Ontario's nature.

Awards are published in the autumn issue of *ON Nature*. For descriptions of the ten awards and nominating procedures, see [www.ontarionature.org](http://www.ontarionature.org) or e-mail [info@ontarionature.org](mailto:info@ontarionature.org) or phone 416-444-8419.

## FROM THE ARCHIVES

### TORONTO REGION Amphibian and Reptile Report

From Toronto Field Naturalists' Club Newsletter, number 402, March 1989

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

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

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

It is also possible that the turtles were washed downstream during a period of heavy rains and simply collected in this area where the current was not as strong. Having found a nice pool they remained as the water subsided. In this case, it is likely that some of the turtles would eventually migrate upstream where they

would disperse along the banks in search of food and resting areas.

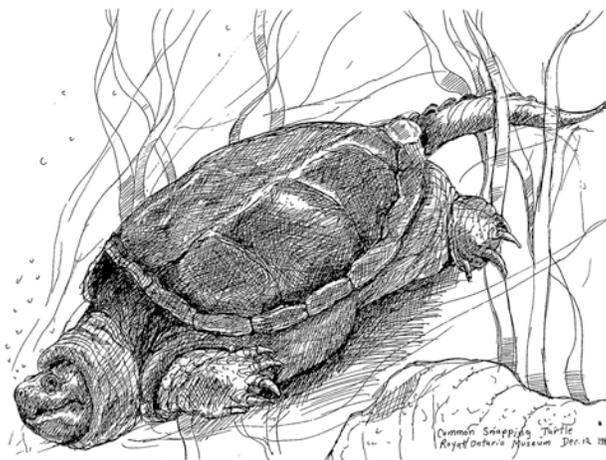
Given the very dry summer, it is also possible that the turtles were simply forced to retreat to this pocket of deeper water as the river level fell. In fact, these turtles may have been experiencing some stress because they were so closely packed together in their watery refuge. Or perhaps both turtles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

A month after her first observation, Sandra found a group of snapping turtles still occupying the area of the dam.

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

Although we were not able to give a definite answer to all of Sandra's questions, her observations have added one more piece to our picture of amphibian and reptile distribution and behaviour in Metro Toronto

Bob Johnson



Snapping turtle, drawn by Diana Banville

**Along the highways  
twiggy looking salt-pruned trees  
a warning to us**

Haiku by Helen Juhola

## COMING EVENTS

If you plan to attend any of the following events, we recommend that you contact the organizing group beforehand to confirm time and place.

### Canada Blooms

Mar. 17-21 (Wed. to Sat. 10 am – 8 pm, Sun. 10 am – 6 pm). Direct Energy Centre, CNE Grounds. Adult \$18, Senior/student \$16.

### Toronto Entomologists' Association (TEA)

Sat. Mar. 27. Student symposium. Location TBA. Information: [www.ontarioinsects.org](http://www.ontarioinsects.org)

### Mycological Society of Toronto

Mon. Mar. 15, 7:45 pm. Decades (and Decades) of Eastern Canadian Fungi, Dr. David Malloch, Museum of New Brunswick, Auditorium of the Toronto Botanical Garden, Leslie St. and Lawrence Ave. E.

### High Park Walking Tours

2nd and 4th Sundays of each month, 10:30 am - noon. Meet at the benches across the road south of Grenadier Restaurant. Donations welcomed. Information: 416-392-1748 ext. 5 or [walkingtours@highpark.org](mailto:walkingtours@highpark.org) or [www.highpark.org](http://www.highpark.org)

- Mar. 14. Discover the park through archival photos, Terry Fahey.
- Mar. 28. The Mayor's Walk, Mayor David Miller.

### Science on Sundays

Royal Canadian Institute, J.J.R. Macleod Auditorium, Medical Sciences Building, University of Toronto, 1 King's College Circle. Free. Information: [www.royalcanadianinstitute.org](http://www.royalcanadianinstitute.org) or 416-977-2983.

Mar. 7, 2:30 pm. Let's Talk Science, event for kids aged 6-12

### East York Historical Society

Tues. Mar. 30, 7:30 pm. Toronto's Underworld: The Don River Valley as a "Repository for Undesirables," Jennifer Bonnell S. Walter Stewart Library, 170 Memorial Park Ave. at Durant. Info: [www.eastyork.org/eyhs.html](http://www.eastyork.org/eyhs.html).

### Rouge Valley Guided Nature Walks

Sun. Mar. 28, 1:30 pm. Meet at Rouge Valley Conservation Centre, 1749 Meadowvale Rd., east on the Toronto Zoo on-ramp. Information: [www.rougevalleynaturalists.com/upcoming\\_events](http://www.rougevalleynaturalists.com/upcoming_events) or 416-282-8265.

### The Market Gallery

Until March 13, 2010. The St. Lawrence Ward – a pictorial view of Toronto's oldest neighbourhood. South St. Lawrence Market, 2nd floor, 95 Front St. E. Free. Gallery closed Sundays, Mondays and holidays.

### Lost Rivers Walks

- Sat. Mar. 6, 2 pm. Historic Community Gardens in Toronto (in honour of International Women's Day). Meet at southwest corner of Lansdowne Ave. and College St. Led by Helen Mills and Ian Wheal.
- Sat. Mar. 20, 2 pm. Asylum Creek runs hot and cold. Meet on south side of Queen St. W. at Gladstone Ave. Led by Ian Wheal.

### Ian Wheal Walk

Sat. Mar. 13. Toronto Islands. Meet at ferry docks, foot of Bay St. and Queen's Quay at 1:00 pm for the 1:30 ferry. A 3-hour walk. Bring money for ferry.



Drawing by  
Diana Banville

## WEATHER (THIS TIME LAST YEAR)

### March 2009

March was mild, sunny, and snow-free. Pearson Airport had only 0.6 cm of snow, the third lowest on record (1953 had 0.3 cm and 1946 just a trace). Downtown had just a trace of snow. Rainfall, however, was above normal at 68.0 mm, the most since 1998. Total precipitation of 68.8 mm at Pearson and 62.8 mm downtown was slightly above normal. Temperatures were slightly above normal with a mean of 0.8° at Pearson and 2.1° downtown.

Most of the month's weather occurred in the first 11 days with a strong warm-up following a very cold

beginning. Temperatures rose from -14.8° on the 3rd to +17.4° on the 6th. Rain followed off and on to the 11th.

There was a long period of dry, mostly sunny weather with slightly above-normal temperatures (starting from a brief cold period) lasting until the rains of the 29th. It was this period that was responsible for the high sunshine values and overall tone of the month. Lack of snow cover and abundant sun made the month spring-like. Chorus frogs were singing in marshes around the edges of the city by the 28th.

Gavin Miller

## TORONTO MEMORIES

Continuing series of quotes from historic sources about life in Toronto, submitted by Joanne Doucette:

From The Diary of Mrs. John Graves Simcoe:

*Wed. 19th This is the month for making maple sugar; a hot sun and frosty nights cause the sap to flow most. Slits are cut in the bark of the trees, and wooden troughs set under the tree, into which the sap a clear, sweet water runs. It is collected from a number of trees, and boiled in large kettles till it becomes of a hard consistence. Moderate boiling will make powder sugar, but when boiled long it forms very hard cakes, which are better. I saw a number of trees slit to-day as I rode with Mr. McGill to his farm.*

*In a month's time, when the best sap is exhausted, an inferior kind runs, of which vinegar is made. Cutting the trees does not kill them, for the same trees bear it for many years following. Dr. Nooth at Quebec, showed me some maple sugar which he had refined, and it became as white as West India sugar. The sap of birch trees will make vinegar.*

Simcoe, Elizabeth Posthuma. Edited by J. Ross Robertson. Toronto: William Briggs, 1911, p. 219



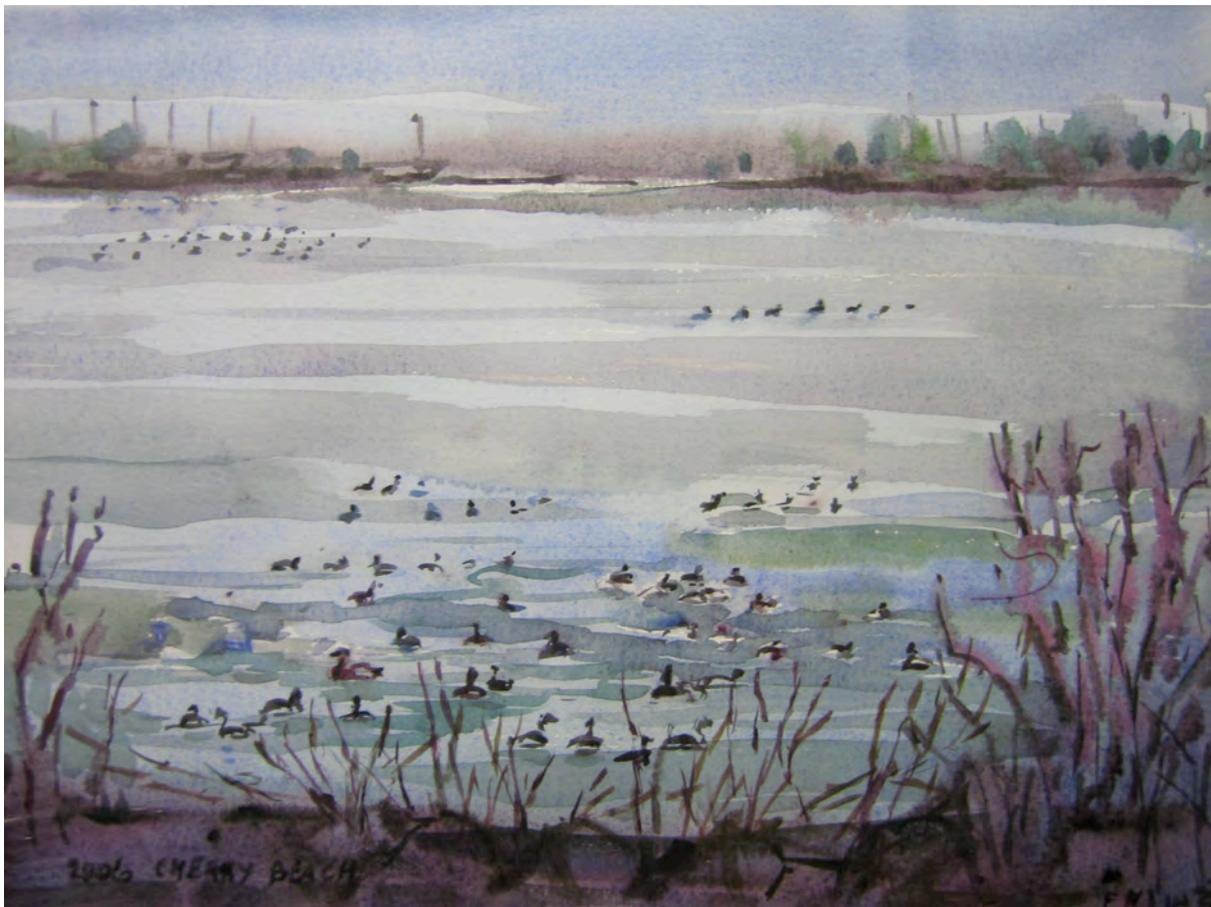
Collecting maple sap at Toronto Island Natural Science School, photographed by Jenny Bull

**Toronto Field Naturalists**

2 Carlton St., #1519  
Toronto, Ontario M5B 1J3

**Publications Mail**

Registration No. 40049590



The Lake at Cherry Beach, watercolour by Eric Lin