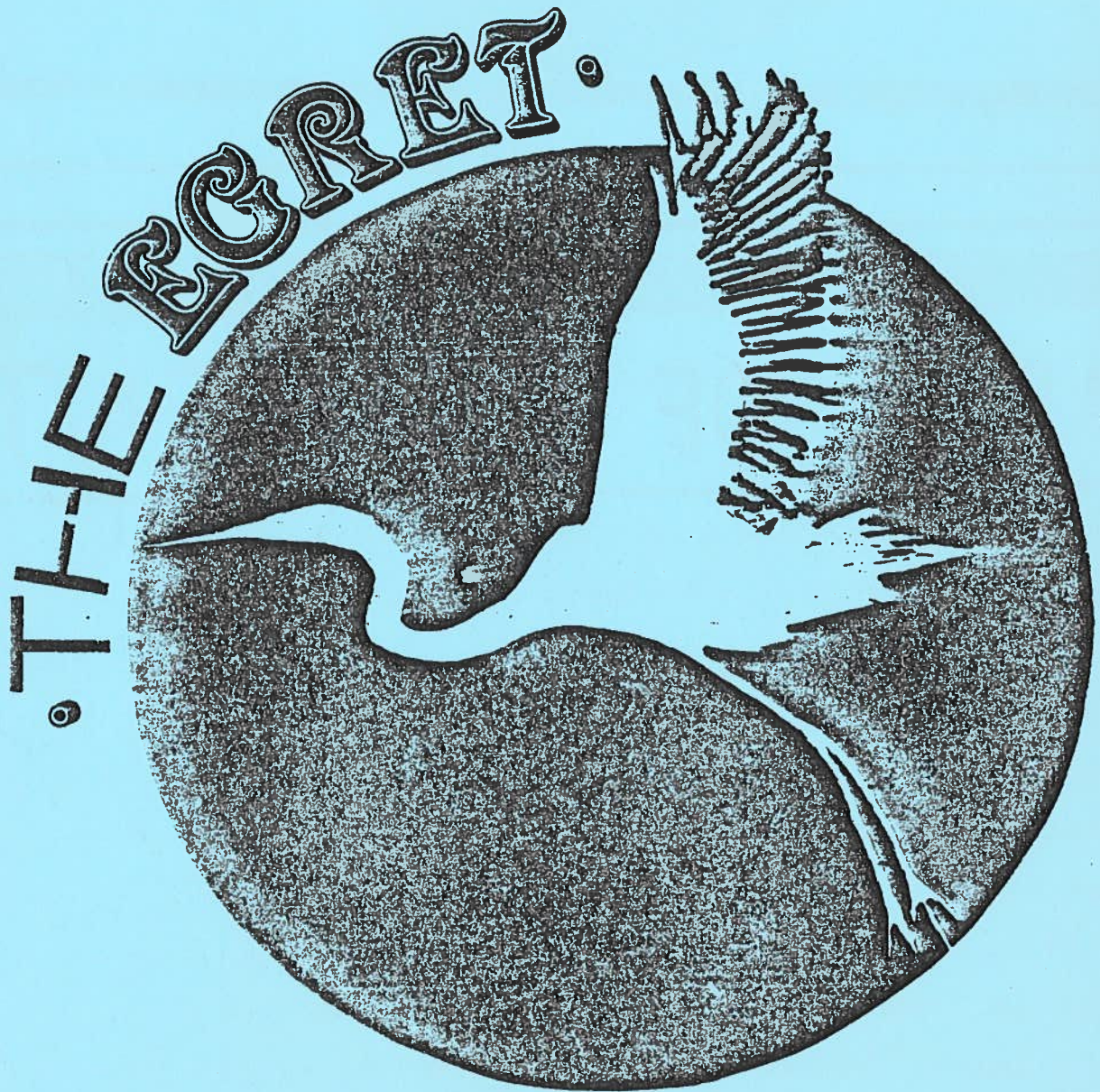


Essex County
FIELD NATURALISTS'
CLUB

VOL. 6, NO. 2
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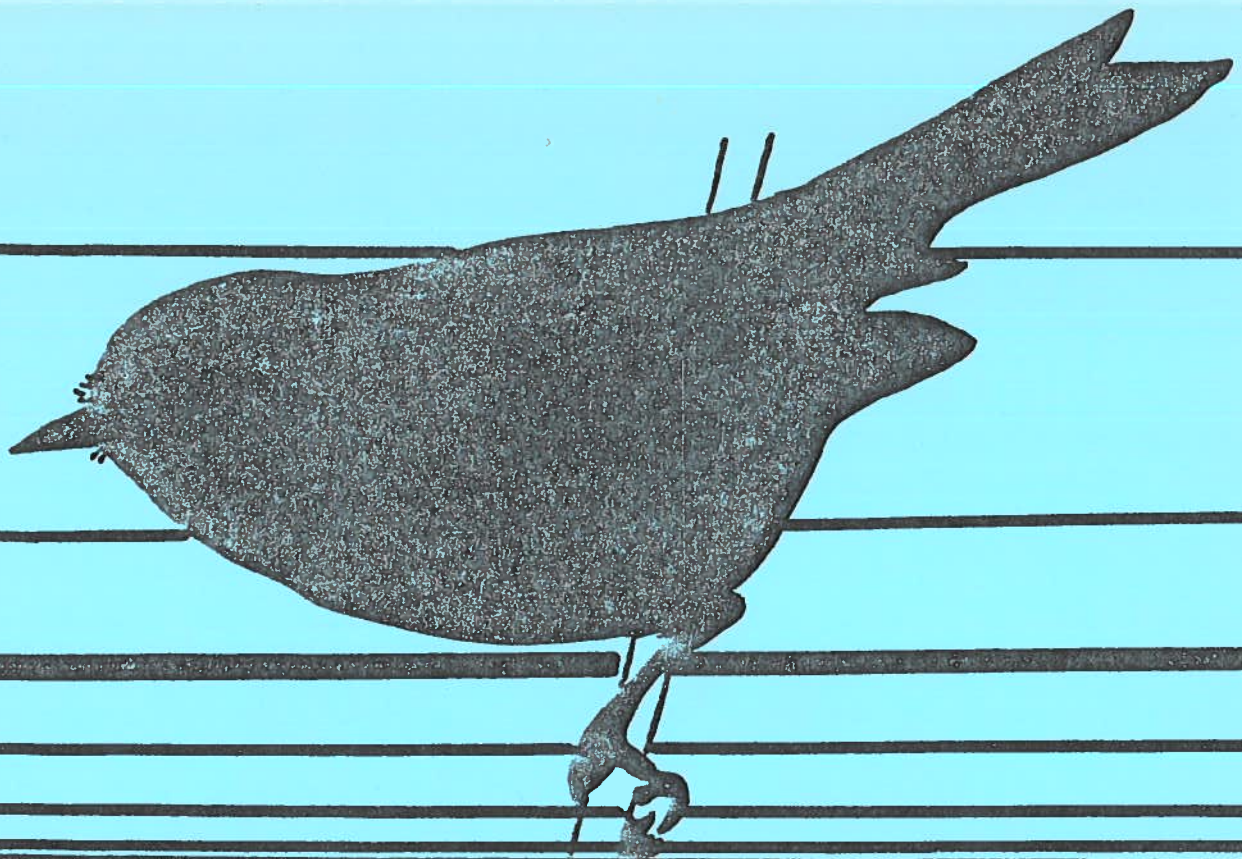


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A CHRISTMAS IN THE SOUTHWEST USAMike & Mireille Delisle-Oldham

This last Christmas, my parents left for a 6 months stay in Australia, and gave us the responsibility of keeping an eye on their almost brand new Volkswagon Camper. What a great responsibility! Mireille and I decided to make good use of it, and agreed on a journey to Texas and Arizona. This trip turned out to be one of the best Christmas holidays we've ever had.

We got the camper on Saturday, December 17th around 5 o'clock in Toronto. We headed back to London, and debated whether we should sleep at home and leave the next morning or not. The forecast for Sunday was for snow, so we decided to go while the going was good. By the time we were packed it was 10:30 p.m., which is when we left. Weather, road and traffic conditions were excellent, and we made good time. We had little trouble driving through the night, and saw the sun rise around Louisville, Kentucky. We continued driving through Sunday, December 18th, and entered Texas at 7:00 p.m. By that time we were starting to get tired, but decided to try and get past Dallas - Fort Worth before stopping for the night. At about midnight, we pulled into a highway rest stop, and slept. We had driven 2,275 km, virtually continuous driving, with stops only for gas and quick meals.

I awoke at 5:30 a.m., and unable to sleep any more, decided to drive again. Most of Monday the 19th was spent continuing west across Texas, and we got a first hand impression of how big Texas is! It was an interesting drive however, miles and miles of cotton fields, followed later by miles and miles of oil wells. We resisted the temptation to stop, and continued on to our first destination, Big Bend National Park, which we entered at 3:30 p.m., 800 km from the roadside rest stop where we slept. We visited the Visitor Centre, and proceeded to the Basin Campground, fairly high in the Chisos Mountains, for our first "real" camping night. It was about 5:00 p.m. when we got to the campground, enough light for a quick walk around the campground before supper and bed. We finally got our first taste of the type of birds we would be seeing for the next two and a half weeks: Black-crested

Titmouse, Cactus Wren, Pyrrhuloxia, Brown Towhee, Rufous-crowned Sparrow, and Gray-headed Junco.

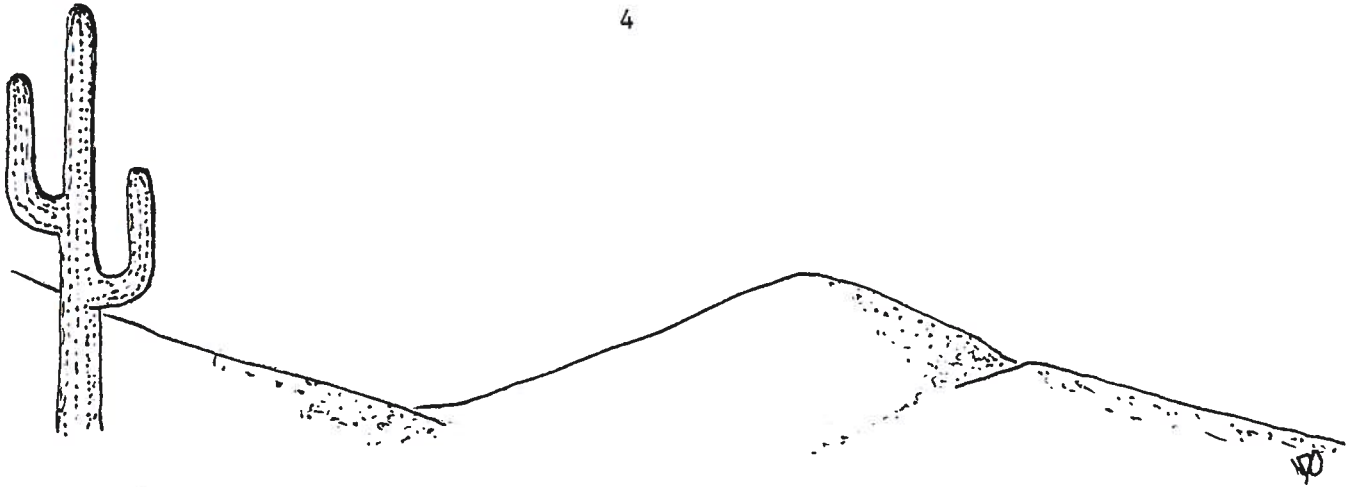
We spent all of the 20th and 21st in Big Bend, and left on the 22nd. During the two days, we tried to see as much of the park as possible (it's a huge park), and spent each night at a different campground in a different part of the park. The scenery is spectacular, very wild, mountainous, and desert too; perhaps the best scenery of the trip. Birding was great too: Acorn Woodpecker, White-throated Swift, Gray-breasted Jay, Bushtit, Verdin, Scaled Quail, Ferruginous Hawk, Harris Hawk, Roadrunner (eating a live Regal Ringneck Snake, which it refused to drop!), Golden-fronted Woodpecker, Ladder-backed Woodpecker, Black Phoebe, Say's Phoebe, Black-throated Sparrow, Inca Dove, Vermillion Flycatcher (a gorgeous male!), Bewick's Wren, Curvebilled Thrasher, Rock Wren, etc., etc. We saw some exciting mammals too: Collared Peccary (excellent looks at a herd of about 8), White-tailed Deer (a very small subspecies, O. v. carminis, found in the U.S. only in the Chisos Mountains), Rock Squirrel, Texas Antelope Squirrel, Coyote (heard howling each night, and very good looks at two during the day), Desert Cottontail, and Black-tailed Jackrabbit. The weather was sunny but cool, and the only herp we saw was being eaten by a Roadrunner.

On the 22nd we left Big Bend and headed west to Arizona. That day's highlight was undoubtedly the 5 or 6 small (2 to 12) herds of Pronghorn Antelope, which we saw along the roadside in the general vicinity of Marfa, Texas. Some were quite close to the road, and we had excellent looks. We drove into the night, almost 1,000 km. to southeastern Arizona, and camped at a KOA near Wilcox (our first and last night at a KOA!). On the 23rd we headed into the Chiricahua Mountains, and visited Chiricahua National Monument. The scenery was gorgeous, beautiful rock formations, and rugged mountains. The temperature was less inspiring, very cold (mid 20's F), windy, and much snow at higher elevations. We walked one of the trails, and saw very little wildlife, however a small flock of birds near the end of the trail included Olive Warblers and Bridled Titmice, exciting finds! We had planned on camping

here, and took a drive around the beautiful (but deserted) campsite. This was the only campsite open in the mountains, but it had no electric hook-ups (we had brought a small portable electric heater which we made frequent use of when we were at campgrounds that had electricity), and the previous night's low was 22 F. We reluctantly decided to leave the mountains of southeastern Arizona (where we had originally planned to spend several days), because of the cold temperatures and snow (which we had left Canada to avoid), and because many of the campgrounds and roads were closed. Instead we drove to Tucson, and spent the night at Tucson Mountain Park, just outside Saguaro National Monument. Once we got to the Tucson area, we didn't regret leaving the mountains. It was warmer (mid 60's to low 70's during the day, but down to below freezing at night), and real desert, complete with thousands of Saguaro cacti. We had time for a brief walk in the National Monument, where we added Gila Woodpecker, Gilded Flicker, and Phainopepla to our bird list.

On Christmas Eve we visited the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, which is really a zoo rather than museum. It is a wonderful place, with living examples of the various animals of the Sonora Desert, right down to the scorpions and tarantulas. They had excellent and informative exhibits, and we spent many hours leisurely taking it all in. After this we went to the other side of Tucson to visit Sabino Canyon, a nice stream and oak-lined canyon. In the evening we treated ourselves to a Christmas Eve dinner at a Mexican restaurant in Tucson. We camped at the beautiful Tucson Mountain Park.

Christmas Day saw us driving southwest to Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument. This is another beautiful desert park, famous for its Organ Pipe cactus, another large, columnar cactus, like the Saguaro. We spent the afternoon driving and walking some of the trails in the National Monument, and visiting Quitobaquito Springs, an oasis in the desert, and home of the Desert Pupfish (which we saw), a fish that occurs nowhere else in the U.S. Organ Pipe Cactus N.M. lies right on the Mexican border, and there is a road which goes through the park and south into Mexico, which we decided to take on the 26th. After getting car insurance (Canadian or U.S. insurance



is no good in Mexico) and a visa at the border, we drove south to Puerto Penasco on the Gulf of California. This is only a two-hour drive south of the border, and well-worth a visit. It was our first sight of the "ocean", and the coastline was rocky and beautiful. The birding was also excellent, and as we walked along the beach, we added lots of "lifers" and new birds for the trip: Brown Pelican (hundreds!), Snowy Plover, Wilson's Plover, American Oystercatcher, Willet, Whimbrel, Long-billed Curlew, Black Turnstone, Heerman's Gull (hundreds), Yellow-footed Gull, etc., etc. We were able to get very close to the shorebirds and gulls, and really study them closely. We did a little bit of touring (ie. bought a few souvenirs), and went to the port to buy fresh shrimp, red snapper, and flounder, which we cooked for dinner (excellent!). We were very tempted to stay for a couple more days, but since our insurance and visa were good only for a day, we reluctantly headed back to Organ Pipe.

On the 27th we left Organ Pipe and headed back towards Tucson. We stopped at Kit Peak, home of the world's largest observatory, and spent a fascinating few hours touring and learning about the huge telescopes trained on the sun, stars, and planets. We again spent the night at Tucson Mountain Park. The following day we headed north, en route to Petrified Forest National Park. On the way we stopped at Bryce Thompson Botanical Gardens which has a very impressive collection of different types of cacti. As we continued north, it got colder, more mountainous, and snow covered. After a half-day's drive, we regretted our decision to head north, but decided it was too

late to turn back. By nightfall it was well below freezing, and a foot of snow on the ground, so we treated ourselves to a motel night. On the morning of the 29th we reached Petrified Forest National Park, which was interesting, but cold and perhaps not worth a day's drive to get there. After a few hours in the park, we turned south again, this time in a south-easterly direction into New Mexico.

We again drove for most of the day, and by evening had reached Oliver Lee State Park near Alamogordo, New Mexico, where we camped. The following day we visited White Sands National Monument, an impressive area of pure white, gypsum sand dunes. Onwards in the afternoon towards Carlsbad, New Mexico. We spent the night at a campground near White City, just outside Carlsbad Caverns National Park. The last day of 1988 saw us touring the Carlsbad Caverns. We took the long, 3-mile, self-guiding loop through the caverns, and were very impressed. In the afternoon, we again hit the road, this time heading for the Texas Gulf Coast. We drove eastward into the night, arriving at Lake Corpus Christie State Park, outside Corpus Christie, by late evening.

As we awoke on the first morning of 1989, an unfamiliar bird was calling outside the van. We got up to find two Green Jays flying from tree to tree in the campground. We had excellent looks at this impressive south Texas specialty, what a way to start 1989! This first day of the year turned out to be Mireille's favorite day of the trip. The temperature here was warm (mid 60's to low 70's), and did not go much below 50 F at night. We drove the last few miles to the Gulf, seeing new birds such as White Ibis, White-fronted Goose (hundreds), Snow Goose (hundreds), Sandhill Crane, White Pelican, Roseate Spoonbill, Black-necked Stilt, Marbled Godwit, etc. On New Year's afternoon we took the Whooping Crane boat tour, which is a four-hour boat trip, and the best way to see the Whooping Cranes, on their wintering grounds at Aransas National Wildlife Area. The boat trip was fun, and allowed good looks at the Whooping Cranes (we saw 13), and other birds such as Eared Grebe, White and Brown Pelicans, many heron, egret and duck species, King Rail, Avocet, Long-billed Curlew, Royal Tern, etc. Also exciting were excellent looks at about 6 Bottle-nosed

Dolphins as they raced alongside the boat. Since it was New Year's Day we asked some locals to suggest a good seafood restaurant, and were directed to Charlotte Plummers, where we enjoyed an excellent New Year's seafood dinner. We spent the night at Goose Island State Park, where we saw the largest Live Oak in Texas, over 1,000 years old, and one of the few herp species of the trip: 8 Mediterranean Geckos on the washroom walls at night!

In the morning we drove to Aransas National Wildlife Area, and walked some of the trails. Wading birds and waterfowl were abundant, as we added Reddish Egret, White-faced Ibis, Black-shouldered Kite, and White-tailed Hawk to our trip list, as well as Armadillo (from 2 feet, and a lifer for Mireille), Alligator, Carolina Anole, and Red-eared Slider. After Aransas we went south to the northern tip of Padre Island National Seashore where we camped on the Gulf beach. This would be the most southerly point on our trip. On the 3rd we drove north again to Galveston Island State Park, along the coast, and enjoyed a good day's birding. The highlight was undoubtedly 3 Barn Owls at dusk.

The 4th was to be our last day before the long drive home. We proceeded north along the Gulf Coast to Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge. Waterfowl were abundant at the refuge, and we added Mottled Duck and Cinnamon Teal to the list. After Anahuac, we continued on to Sabine National Wildlife Area in Louisiana, where we added our final two bird species: Common Snipe and Sora. We drove on for a few more hours to Jackson, Mississippi, where we spent a motel night. January 5th saw us cover 959 km. to reach Oldham County (!), Kentucky, and another motel. On the 6th we covered the final 740 km. and arrived back at London about 5:00 p.m., 20 days and 11,787 km. after leaving.

Hopefully memories of the trip will make the remainder of the Ontario winter a little easier to take.

SHRUBS WHICH FEED BIRDS

Don Bissonnette

Hopefully this article will help you turn your backyard into a bird sanctuary! For the most part, your deciduous (leafy) shrubs have similar needs; the more sun they receive, the better they do. Also, the less wind they feel, the better growth and fruit production is.

Serviceberry (Amelanchier)

There are several types of serviceberry. Juneberry (Amelanchier arborea) and Saskatoon-berry (Amelanchier alnifolia) are probably the two most popular types.

Serviceberries are multi-stemmed shrubs. Most varieties can be pruned into small trees. Size depends on variety and habitat, but usually ends up between 6 feet and 15 feet. They can be pruned for size control.

This shrub is beautiful in May, covered in many small white flowers. The small purple berry ripens in June and July. The berries taste like blueberries and can be used in pies and preserves - if the birds don't eat them first!

In autumn, the serviceberry becomes a nice landscape feature. The leaves take on shades of orange and red. Saskatoon-berry is the best serviceberry for fruit production.

Dogwood (Cornus)

This is a large family, with many varieties, and more than 30 cultivars. Most are hardy and adaptive, doing well in shady spots. Most dogwoods are multi-stemmed shrubs, growing to 5 feet or more. A few varieties, such as Florida Dogwood and Kousa Dogwood are trees, which grow to 20 feet or more.

All Dogwoods produce small cream or white flowers in May and June. A few varieties have bracts. (Bracts are coloured leaves, like the coloured leaf on Poinsettias). Dogwood bracts are available in white, pink, red, or cream.

Depending on variety, the tiny berry can be red, yellow, white, or blue. The berries appear in clusters in summer and fall.

There are a few bush varieties that are variegated - that means the leaves

have attractive white lines. Unfortunately, most variegated dogwoods produce little fruit, or none at all.

The Yellow Twig Dogwood is a real benefit to birds. It flowers off and on, from May to September. And so, there is a constant, usually heavy, production of yellow berries. The Yellow Twig is a multi-stemmed shrub that can grow to 6 feet or more.

Dogwoods are beautiful in autumn, with shades of yellow, orange and red.

Autumn Olive (*Elaeagnus umbellata*)

This is naturally a bush that grows to 10 feet or more. With proper pruning, it can be turned into a small tree. The leaves are dark green above and silver-green below. The flowers appear in May and June. The fleshy red berries ripen in September and October. The fruit are small, but numerous. Inside the fruit is a tiny hard seed. The seed is not easily digested by birds. It's common to find young Autumn Olive bushes growing around your original plant.

This pruneable shrub is extremely adaptive and hardy. It produces a strong root system. In fact, Autumn Olive have been used in U.S. soil conservation projects. Few other shrubs tolerate drought, and salt contamination like Autumn Olive.

Russian Olive (*Elaeagnus angustifolia*)

This is a close cousin to Autumn Olive. However, it does not fruit as heavily as the Autumn Olive. Russian Olive fruit is yellow, and used to make sherbert in the Orient. The leaves are silver-green, making it an unusual touch in your landscape.

Red Mulberry (*Morus rubra*)

A native of Southern Ontario and most of the U.S.; it is very adaptable, doing well in sand, or clay soils.

There is a lot of natural variation with mulberries. A seedling may grow into a single stemmed tree, or more likely, a multi-stemmed bush.

Red Mulberries take pruning well. In fact, many home owners, pressed for space, prune their mulberry bushes into trees. The bushes can grow to 20 feet or more.

Trees can grow to 30 feet. Mulberries found in woodlots grow much larger. "Reaching for the light" has led a few woodlot mulberry trees to 60 feet tall.

The tasty fruit is dark purple, almost black. It's a favorite with birds, human beings, and other animals. The juicy berry resembles a miniature bunch of grapes, or, a long lumpy blackberry. The fruit gradually ripens, so there is usually a continuous three week supply, beginning in late June.

European Mulberry (Morus Alba)

Is also known as White Mulberry and Common Mulberry. It has been made into several cultivars, including the grafted weeping form so common in Windsor. Some of the cultivars are fruitless, or almost fruitless.

European Mulberry has larger, but fewer berries than the Red. It's hardy and adaptive. However, the Red Mulberry is hardier and less susceptible to insect and fungus problems.

Firethorn Bush (Pyracantha)

This disease resistant shrub does best out of the wind, in a sunny spot. It's a deciduous evergreen (that translates to, "it's a leafy bush that does not lose its leaves in autumn").

Tiny white flowers appear in May and June. Pyracantha in flower is a beautiful sight. There are usually many flowers, in clusters of 10 or more. The tiny, but plentiful green fruit turn orangy-red in September.

This shrub looks beautiful in late fall and winter. While everything loses its colour, Firethorn remains dark green with red berries. The berries are a favourite with birds. In fact, the berries are usually all consumed by late December.

This shrub tolerates pruning - in fact, it needs it. Often Firethorn grows sparse, open and floppy. Pruning will keep it full, and structurally strong. Firethorn is often used as hedge, or in espaliated form. (Get the dictionary out!)

Disease resistant, white flowers, red berries, evergreen - sounds too good. There's got to be a catch somewhere! Well, here it is - thorns.

American Elderberry (*Sambucus canadensis*)

There are several cultivars of this fast-growing shrub. Depending on habitat and cultivar, this elderberry may grow from 5 to 12 feet tall.

The fruit and flowers appear in cymes (cymes are round, flat arrangements). Queen Anne's Lace (Wild Carrot) also flowers in cymes.

White flowers appear in early summer. The fruit is ripe by August or September. The round berries are only $\frac{1}{4}$ " wide. They are usually dark purple, although a few cultivars have red fruit.

This multi-stemmed shrub usually becomes very dense. Birds like to roost in elderberries - especially on hot days because of the shade it provides.

Elderberries are one of the first plants to leaf out in the spring. Most cultivars are dark green, although one cultivar (Aurea) has interesting soft-yellow leaves.

There are a few other types of elderberry. Most grow much larger than the American Elderberry. The Scarlet Elder, for instance, can reach 25 feet tall.

The different types of elderberry have different ripening times. The European Red Elder ripens in early July. Although most varieties are not quite as hardy as the American Elder, it might be nice to have a few varieties. In this way, there is a continuous supply of food for the birds.

Yews (*Taxus*)

This is a large family of evergreens. Yews have needles much like spruce, although they are dark green, soft, and fleshy. There are tree forms and bush forms. Yews are available at most nurseries, in the form of dwarf and semi-dwarf bushes.

Yews are dioecious (Another new term!). That means, each plant is either a pollen-producing male, or a berry-producing female. So, when shopping for yews, try to get a few males and a lot of females. If a certain cultivar is said to be seedless, then you'll know it's a male.

Yews come in 4 basic shapes.



Columnar



Spreading



Globular



Pyramidal

Yews are hardy and very adaptable. They can grow in full sun or deep shade. They take pruning well. They can be used as a hedge.

One to four small, woody seeds are found in a bright red, fleshy coating, called an aril. Birds like the arils. Some pick away at the arils, leaving the seed. Some birds ingest the entire aril. The woody seeds are not digested. They pass through the bird, and a few may germinate and grow.

A good thing the seeds are not digested! The seeds, along with the leaves and bark, are toxic. Depending on the animal involved, and quantity consumed, Yew bushes can be deadly!

Cherries and Plums (Prunus)

This is a large family of bushes and trees found almost everywhere. According to "Native Trees of Canada", Essex County should have 4 types: Choke Cherry, Pin Cherry, Canada Plum, and Wild Plum (a.k.a. American Plum). If given a choice, birds prefer the wild varieties over the domestic varieties.

However, the birds have no trouble eating domestic cherries. Any cherry farmer will vouch for this!

The wild forms of Prunus are occasionally available at nurseries; the domestic varieties are always to be had. These domestic varieties can be a bit sensitive - they don't tolerate much wind, and they depend on pruning to keep them healthy and productive.

Most Prunus have pink or white flowers in spring. Black, pink, red, and orange cherries ripen in the summer. A few types are fruitless, such as the Kwanzan Cherry

and Fruitless Purple Sand Cherry.

Generally, Prunus are large bushes or small, spreading trees. A few, like the Black Cherry, can reach 60 feet. Most never reach 30 feet. For growers really pressed for space, the nursery industry has developed a Cherry-Bush. With pruning, this shrub can be kept under four feet tall. It is very productive, despite its size.

The European Bird Cherry (Prunus Padus) is a real asset to bird watchers. This hardy tree does well in Ontario. Bird Cherry is a real beauty in May. It is abundantly covered in white, fragrant flowers. The birds are quick to eat the small black cherries when they ripen in July and August.

Cotoneaster (Cotoneaster)

This is the most mispronounced shrub in the English speaking world! Cotoneaster is pronounced cotto-ne-aster. There are seven members in this genus, and many cultivars have been developed. The Latin name for cotoneaster is cotoneaster.

Most cotoneasters are semi-evergreen. This means that if they're in a protected spot, the branches will hold their leaves through the winter. These hardy shrubs can grow in sun or partial shade.

Cotoneaster comes in 2 forms: low creeping bushes, and upright bushes. Cranberry cotoneaster is one of the creepers. It can reach 2 feet in height and can spread to 6 feet across. Willowleaf cotoneaster is one of the uprights. This evergreen shrub grows to 12 feet or more.

Most cotoneasters produce small flowers of pink or white in spring. By early Autumn, the fruit is ripe. Most varieties produce shiny, red oval berries, $\frac{1}{2}$ inch long or less. The fruit holds to the twigs very well. Birds are quick to eat the fruit, and on many plants, the fruit is picked by December.

Cranberry cotoneaster (cotoneaster apiculatus) and Many-flowered cotoneaster (cotoneaster multiflorus) are environmentally significant. Both are heavy producers of red fruit, favoured by birds.

Oregon Grape-Holly (*Mahonia aquifolium*)

This shrub is a dead-ringer for true hollies. Actually, this shrub is closely related to grapes, than true hollies.

"*Mahonia aquifolium*" is a hardy shrub. It grows in sun or shade, but seems to grow better in shade. The less wind it feels, the faster it grows.

Bright yellow flowers appear, in grape like clusters, in early May. The fruit ripens in August and September. The fruit is blue, or black, resembling $\frac{1}{2}$ inch grapes. They are edible for humans, although the birds are likely to eat them before you do.

There are several cultivars. Most grow to 15 feet or more. Most cultivars tolerate pruning very well.

The holly-like leaves emerge orange, or bronze red. Gradually they turn to dark, shiny-green. The leaves have a two year life span. Before falling, they turn bright red.

This shrub is native to California and British Columbia, and of course, Oregon. It does well in Eastern Canada. It's rapidly becoming a favorite of landscapers and birders alike.

European Mountain Ash (*Sorbus aucuparia*)

"*Sorbus aucuparia*" is now a common landscape tree in Ontario. It is native to Europe and Britain. There it is known as the Rowan Tree.

It can grow to 40 feet or more. However in Southern Ontario they rarely reach 30 feet.

The flowers appear in late May, usually white. The fruit resembles a small, soft apple, $\frac{1}{2}$ inch to 1 inch wide.

Several cultivars have been produced. The fruit now comes in yellow, red, pink, and orange. Most varieties ripen in late August and September. They are quickly eaten by birds, especially the American Robin. One variety, *Edulis*, has been developed for human consumption. The large, numerous fruits are used for jams and preserves.

There are several other varieties of Mountain Ash. Most of these are not available at your average nursery. Some of these are large shrubs, or small multi-stem trees. Showy mountain ash (*Sorbus decors*) and American mountain ash (*Sorbus americana*) are native to Ontario.

Most mountain ashes are beautiful in autumn when the leaves take on shades of red, orange, and yellow.

CLUB NEWS UPDATE

E.C.F.N.C. members were saddened to learn of John Pilkington's passing on May 14, 1989 at his home. John's interest in natural history included birds, moths and butterflies and he shared his interest in travel with wonderful articles for "Egret" readers. Our sympathies are extended to Carol and the members of the Pilkington family.

Our members cleaned the beach at Tremblay Beach C.A. on April 9 and a follow-up wetlands cleanup was carried out on April 15 by the Cubs (and their mothers) from Comber. Shannon Managhan read a letter at our May 10 meeting from Mr. Ron DiMenna, E.R.C.A. chairman, expressing E.R.C.A.'s gratitude regarding our interest for the appearance of Tremblay Beach C.A.

Letter writing regarding the Sandwich West Woodlot has certainly heightened awareness of the plight of this area. An amendment regarding the proposed development is before the Ontario Municipal Board. A date has not been set for this hearing but it could be heard in the late summer.

Wilf Botham, a life member of E.C.F.N.C., was honoured for his contribution to the knowledge of Essex County natural history on May 12 by the Point Pelee Advisory Committee and the Friends of Point Pelee. Earlier that same day CBE Radio had broadcast all three hours of the programme "Morning Watch" from the Interpretive Centre. Many local birders were interviewed - Wilf, Peter Bondy, Paul Pratt, Tom Hince - as well as visitors to the park.

Our speaker at our May 10 meeting, Bob Graham, was presented with a framed pressed flower composition, beautifully created by Anne Barbour.

PROJECT FEEDERWATCH 1988-89

Anne Barbour

March is drawing to a close, accompanied by an early Easter. Spring is here, yes, but Feederwatch participants have their own way of knowing that winter is over: when the 2B pencil has been laid down for the last time and the "feeder forms" are in the mail!

For those of you who haven't heard of it, Project Feederwatch, in its second year, is a cooperative research venture of the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology and Canada's Long Point Bird Observatory. The project, which was conceived in Canada, attempts to monitor birdfeeding stations throughout North America from mid-November to March inclusive.

The data is collected on computer-readable forms, and already this spring, the prediction has been made that the Dark-eyed Junco will retain its place, established last year, as the species seen at most feeders (67%) continent-wide. Although House Sparrows have been seen at fewer feeders (60%), there have been more of them! (The feeders that had them, averaged 14.0 House Sparrows per week, and only 5.7 Dark-eyed Juncos.)

What's even more interesting to see are the large increases or decreases (at least 50%) that have occurred regionally, such as increases of White-breasted Nuthatch and Black-capped Chickadee in the central regions of the continent, while Northern Cardinal, House Finch, and Mourning Dove all decreased in the same area. In our northeastern region, as well as in the southeast, the only changes noted so far are decreases in the Pine Siskin and Evening Grosbeak. Further evidence shows that there has been a dramatic decrease continent-wide in Pine Siskins this winter.

Although it's interesting to know that a Feederwatch participant out there somewhere attracted a high of 52 species (87-88), or the most individuals per week (623), the Spring '89 edition of the FeederWatch News emphasizes that these superlatives are not the most important aspects of the project. Every participant's report is important, and the more participants, the clearer will be the picture of birdfeeder

use across the continent. By tabulating averages and comparing them from one year to the next, trends can be identified and even predicted.

To emphasize the importance of averages, one of the editors, Steven C. Sibley, went to the trouble of determining the "Most Typical Feeder in North America" or MTFNA. (This initialism was not chosen for its length, but more out of regret that his original choice "MT Feeder" had the wrong connotation when spoken aloud.)

Once Steven knew the average number of species seen per site (19) he found that 148 feeders matched this number. To break the tie, he decided to see how closely each of these sites matched the average weekly totals of the ten most widespread species. However being neither a fool nor a computer programmer, Steven delegated the job to coordinator Erica Dunn, and programmer Diane Tessaglia. The result was a true feat of computer-software-management-genius, (and a great test of the Feeder-Watch database), which quickly led Steven to find that the 1987-88 MTFNA was located in Ann Arbor, Michigan, at the Urban Retreat Bed and Breakfast. The owner used 10 feeders (3.2 more than average) and supplied 410 pounds of seed (58 more than average.)

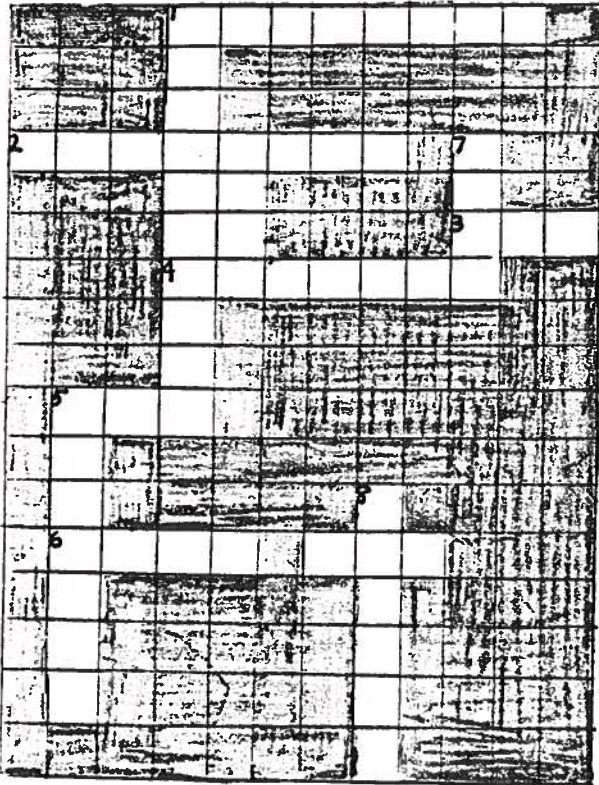
Where will the MTFNA for 1988-89 be located? With an increase of over 3,000 participants (from an original 4,000 the first year), the answer is one that only a computer knows for sure! Why not join the project, and see where you stand? Especially if you already put out birdseed in the winter, for only \$9.00 you will be guaranteed a great deal more pleasure for your effort. All it takes is a quick count whenever you can, throughout a 2-consecutive-day period every 2 weeks, and many people observe only before and after work.

Will you be counted amongst the 1989-90 Feederwatch participants? To join, write to:

Erica Dunn, Coordinator Project Feederwatch
Long Point Bird Observatory,
P.O. Box 160,
Port Rowan, Ont. NOE 1M0

Include your name and address, stating whether you wish to contribute observations from your feeder, or just to receive reports, and enclose your cheque for \$9.00 made payable to 'Project Feederwatch'. Please sign up right away to help them plan

how many forms to print and to avoid mailing delays. You will receive all materials and instructions just before the season begins in mid-November. But look out! Once you start, you may be hooked on 'Feederwatching'!



BIRD NAMES TO PUZZLE OVER

by Anne Barbour

ACROSS

1. murders a game animal
2. member of a royal family
3. as wise as an _____
4. to drink
5. a high church official
6. a Toronto baseball player (2 words)

DOWN

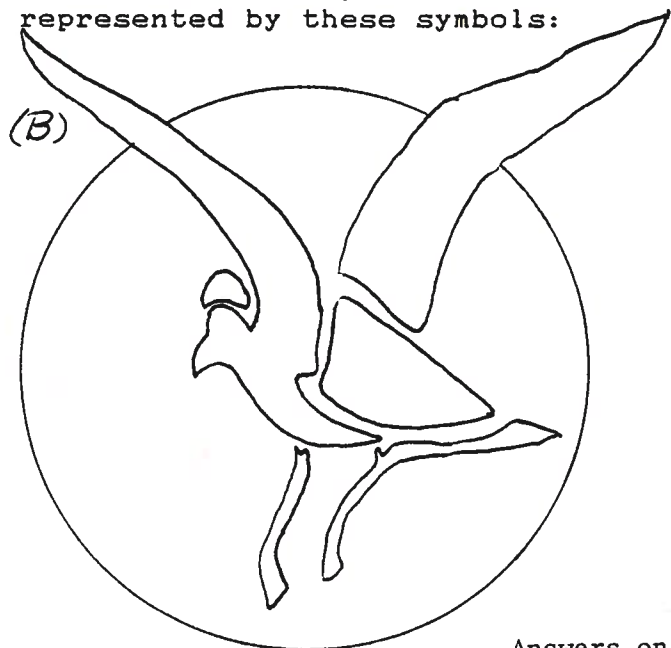
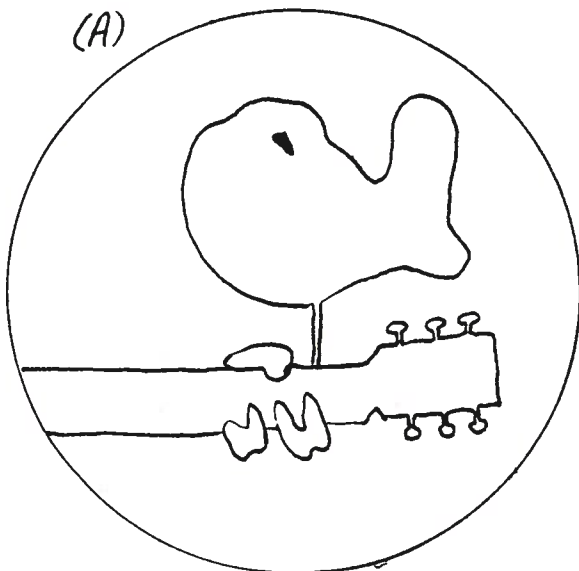
1. a regal angler
5. gives milk
7. the farmer's enemy
8. name of islands near Africa

Answers on page 25

MUSIC QUIZ FOR BIRDERS*
by Anne Barbour

*anyone with 10 or more correct answers is showing his age: somewhere near 40.

1. Whose album cover has a flamingo on it?
2. Who could "hide 'neath the wing of the bluebird as he sings"?
3. In what song does "the eagle fly with the dove"?
4. How high did the Byrds fly in their 1966 hit song by the same title?
5. What folksinger, originally from Orillia, Ont., wrote and sang these lyrics:
"There's a tiny bird that calls, and it calls round my window"
6. In what song does the lyricist exercise poetic license to create a new species "ruby-throated sparrow"?
7. Who would "rather be a sparrow than a snail"?
8. What group made hits of these songs: Take it easy, Lyin' eyes, and Peaceful easy feeling?
9. Whose album cover has a dove on it?
10. What song tells a bird "to spread your tiny wings and fly away;/ and take the snow back with you" and who is the Canadian artist who recorded it?
11. Fill in the blanks with the two birds that title the following song lyrics by John Denver:
"I am the _____ I live in high country
In rocky cathedrals that reach to the sky.
I am the _____ and there's blood on my feathers
But time is still turning, they soon will be dry.
And all those who see me, and all who believe in me
Care in the freedom I feel when I fly."
12. What group made the song Quantanamera a hit?
13. What Canadian artist wrote and sang:
"The way I feel is like a robin whose babes have flown to come no more
Like a tall oak tree alone and crying when the birds have flown and the nest is bare"
14. What 2 British groups each recorded a song titled Songbird?
15. Name any folksinger or group who sang The first time and "felt the earth move in my hand/ Like the trembling heart of a captive bird" (bird-banders: this one's for you!)
16. What 2 music festivals are represented by these symbols:



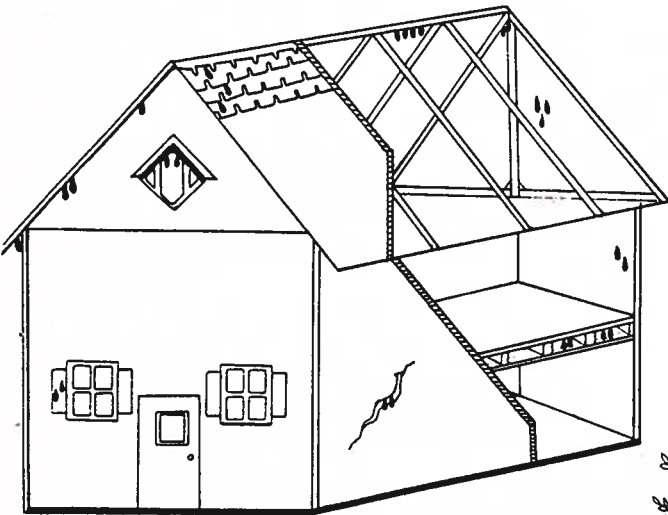
SIGNS OF SPRING - APRIL 16, 1989

Betty Learmouth

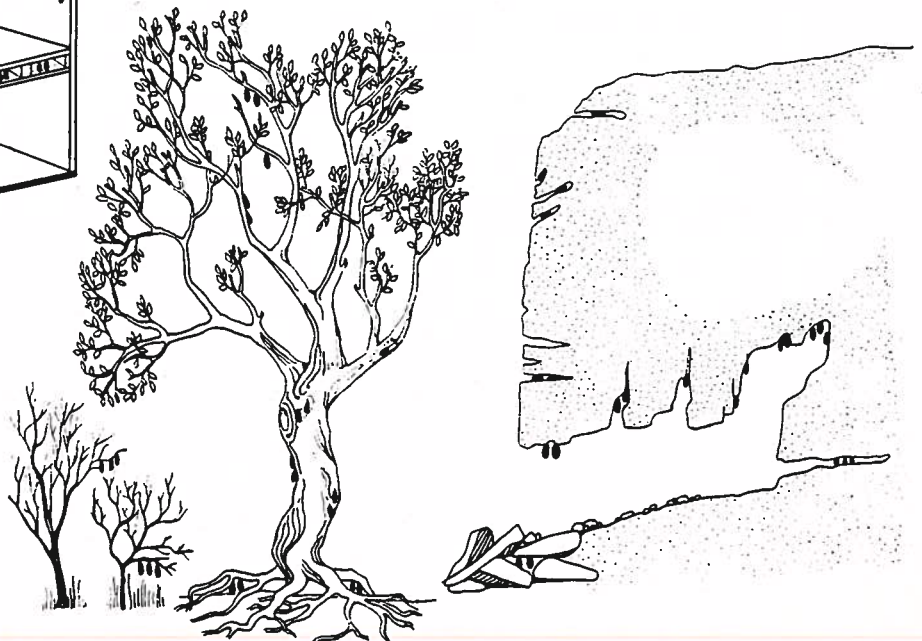
Signs of spring were all around as twenty-one naturalists accompanied Bill Balkwill on a tour of his Gosfield South Township woodlot. Despite the wetness of some areas of the woodlot, the first Spring Beauties and Trout Lilies were in bloom, urged on by the warmth of a particularly sunny Sunday afternoon.

There was much discussion about trees, but two outstanding specimens caught everyone's attention. A Shumard Oak, at the woodlot's centre, was the nesting site of a pair of Great Horned Owls. Our only glimpse of these fierce predators was of a fluffy beige shape, barely visible above the edge of the nest. The other outstanding tree was a magnificent Burr Oak, estimated at 150 years of age, pointed out to us by Bill.

The surprise find of the afternoon was a Little Brown Bat. This tiny mammal was hanging from a thin branch slightly below eye level. We had a good opportunity to observe its hands, fingers, ears and glossy fur.



These sketches show some of the places where one commonly finds roosting bats in the vicinity of buildings, rocks, and trees and other foliage. The bats, shown as small dark blobs, may be conspicuous or well hidden, and clearly exploit a wide range of roosts. Sketch by Connie L. Gaudet.



Upon observing the Little Brown Bat, Phyllis White quoted from Shakespeare's "The Tempest":

On the bat's back I do fly
 After summer merrily:
 Merrily, merrily shall I love now
 Under the blossom that hangs on the bough.

The resident group of Whitetail Deer fled upon our approach, their tails flashing alarm.

Everyone was delighted to see two Mourning Cloak butterflies flutter through the woodlot.

As we strolled about the woodlot, we observed a soaring Turkey Vulture, a Downy Woodpecker, a Fox Sparrow, A Purple Martin, and a Yellow-rumped Warbler, possibly the same bird that Bill had seen in January.

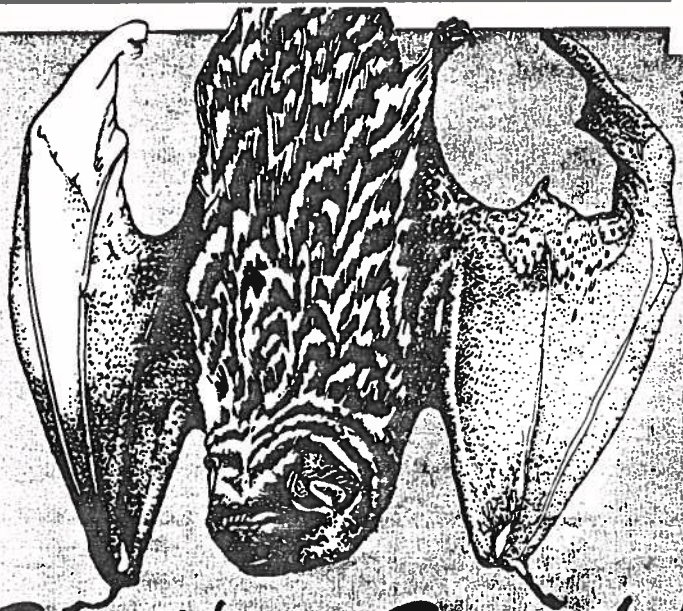
As an unexpected finale to our afternoon excursion, the resident Eastern Bluebirds returned to their nesting box. They were busily carrying nesting materials and ignored all the attention lavished upon them by the visitors.

Thank you, Bill, for sharing your woodlot and its wildlife with us. We will look forward to a fall walk with you.

ANSWERS TO BIRDERS' QUIZ:

1. Christopher Cross
2. First The Monkeys, then Anne Murray, in the song Daydream believer
3. Love the one you're with by Stephen Stills
4. Eight miles high
5. Gordon Lightfoot in The long river.
6. Judi Blue eyes by Crosby, Stills, and Nash
7. Simon and Garfunkel in El Condor Pasa (If I could)
8. The Eagles
9. Emerson, Lake and Palmer
10. Snowbird by Anne Murray
11. The Eagle and the hawk
12. The Sandpipers
13. Gordon Lightfoot in The way I feel
14. Fleetwood Mac and The Bee Gees
15. Peter, Paul and Mary; The Brothers Four; Gordon Lightfoot (and no doubt a multitude of others.)
16. (A) Woodstock Festival, held Aug. 15-17, 1969 in Bethel, N.Y.
 (B) Festival of Friends, held every summer for the past 15 years or so, in Hamilton, Ont.

April



Silver-haired bat

Build a Bat House

for Wildlife Week

Although bats have suffered from a poor reputation, more and more people are taking the time to learn about these intriguing flying mammals. Once you start to discover their amazing skills and interesting lives, you will see that there is nothing to fear and much to admire in these little creatures. A combination of increased human contact through the popularity of caving, use of pesticides, destruction of roosts and direct extermination is considered responsible for the decline of a number of North American and European species. Increasingly, people are responding to this problem by building bat houses where individual bats or entire colonies can roost and raise young. The following plans for your own bat house come from an article by Jay Heinrichs, printed in *International Wildlife* 16(3): 36-37, May-June, 1986.

Materials

*use rough wood - scratched or scored, free of preservatives and about 19 mm thick.

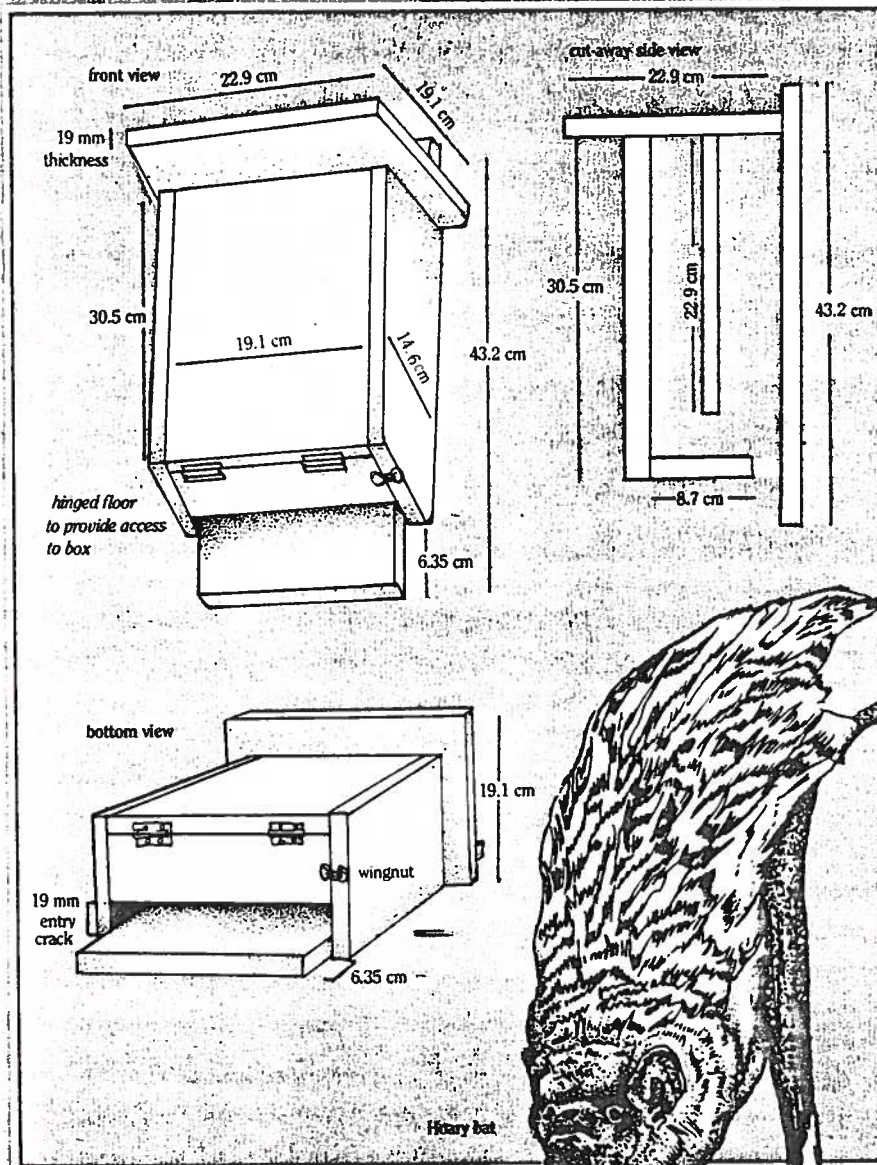
- 2 boards 14.6 cm x 30.5 cm for sides
- 1 board 19.1 cm x 30.5 cm for front
- 1 board 19.1 cm x 43.2 cm for back
- 1 board 19.1 cm x 22.9 cm for interior divider
- 1 board 19.1 cm x 22.9 cm for top
- 1 board 19.1 cm x 8.7 cm for bottom
- 2 hinges with screws
- 1 wing nut with screw
- nails
- hammer and screwdriver
- 3 long nails or screws for mounting

Tips

- 1) erect box as early in April as possible. It may take 1 or 2 years to become occupied, so be patient.
- 2) try to locate your box within 4 km of a stream, pond or marsh where insect populations (food source) are high
- 3) fasten your box to the side of a building or a tree trunk, 3.7 to 4.8 m above ground, facing south and away from the wind. Morning sun and afternoon shade is ideal.
- 4) young bats grow best in 26-32°C temperatures. A covering of tar paper on the house helps to absorb heat from the sun by day, and provides insulation at night.
- 5) paint or varnish may repel bats, at least until well cured.

In addition to building a bat house, you can help bats survive by telling other people that they are harmless creatures (contrary to popular belief, they almost *never* transmit rabies) and deserving of our respect.

For more information on bat houses, contact: Bat Conservation International c/o the Milwaukee Public Museum, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53233 USA.



Silver bat

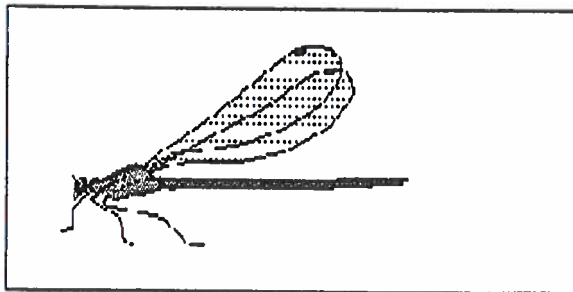
DRAGONFLIES (Order Odonata) Ojibway Nature Centre

Eighty-two species of dragonflies are known from Essex County, making it one of the richest areas in Canada for these beautiful and interesting insects. The Ojibway area around the southwestern edge of Windsor supports many ponds and ditches which attract a good diversity of damselflies and dragonflies.

The pond in front of the Nature Centre is a good place to observe about a dozen different kinds on a typical summer day. Sizes range from slim, delicate damselflies which skim the pond's surface to the robust Green Darners, often seen flying in tandem. Here is a short list of the more common and widespread species one is likely to encounter.

DAMSELFLIES

Damselflies are the small members of the odonata which fold their wings over their back at rest. They can easily be distinguished from all dragonflies by the equal width of their fore and hind wings. Dragonflies have the base of the hindwing much broader than the forewing.



Black-winged Damselfly, Agrion maculatum

This is a large damselfly of woodland streams. It is a black and metallic green species with black wings.

Spread-winged Damselflies, Lestes sp.

These moderate to large damselflies (9 species) are named after their habit of holding their wings partially open while at rest.

Bluets, Enallagma sp.

Over a dozen kinds of bluets are found in Essex County. They can often be found in large numbers along the edge of ponds, sewage laggons and streams. Most species are patterned with light blue and black.

Common Fork-tail,

Ischnura verticalis

This is the most common small damselfly in our region. The blackish males are easily told by the grassy green thorax and bright blue tip to the abdomen.

DARNERS

Darners are large (64 - 90 mm), clear-winged dragonflies with spear-shaped bodies marked in green or blue. They reach their peak abundance in late summer. Only a few species are common in our area.

Green Darner, Anax junius

This is the common large dragonfly of marshy areas, easily identified by the unmarked green thorax and length of about 8 cm. Unlike many pond skimmers they are often difficult to approach. Up to 1000 or more can often be seen flying along the beaches at Point Pelee in late August and September.

CLUBTAILS

Clubtails are easily identified by the prominent expansion to the tip of the abdomen and their widely spaced eyes. They are usually found along rivers and streams in late June. None are very common in Essex County.

GREEN-EYED SKIMMERS

These dragonflies are seldom encountered in Essex County. They are brownish to metallic bronze in colour, often with luminous green eyes.

POND SKIMMERS

Pond skimmers are the small to medium sized (30 - 55 mm.) dragonflies of marshes and small ponds. Most of the common and widespread species one is likely to encounter belong to this family. Unless otherwise noted, the wings are clear.

Ten-spot, Libellula pulchella
This species is easy to recognize by the boldly patterned wings (black and white patches on clear background).

Blue Pirate,

Pachydiplax longipennis

This is the most common species in our area. Males are of medium size with green & black striped thorax, bluish-white abdomen and tawny hint to wing bases. The females are less brightly marked and often stray far from open water.

Green-jacket,

Erythemis simplicicollis

Another common, medium sized species with plain blue-grey body (male) or grass green body (female).

Widow, Libellula luctuosa

The large basal dark patches on all wings are distinctive. Females have a narrow yellow stripe down the abdomen.

Common Saddleback,

Tramea lacerata

A large, active species with a large ragged-edged dark patch at the base of each hind wing. Large numbers can be seen along the Lake Erie shoreline in late August.

White-tail, Libellula lydia

The male has a broad dark band through the centre of each wing and prominent white abdomen. The female looks very similar to the larger female ten-spot.

Common & Little Red Skimmers,
Sympetrum rubicundulum & S. vicinum

Five species of red skimmers occur locally. All are small species with unmarked wings and reddish body. The Common Red Skimmer is widespread in July & August while the Little Red Skimmer is common in late summer and fall.

Common White-faced Skimmer,

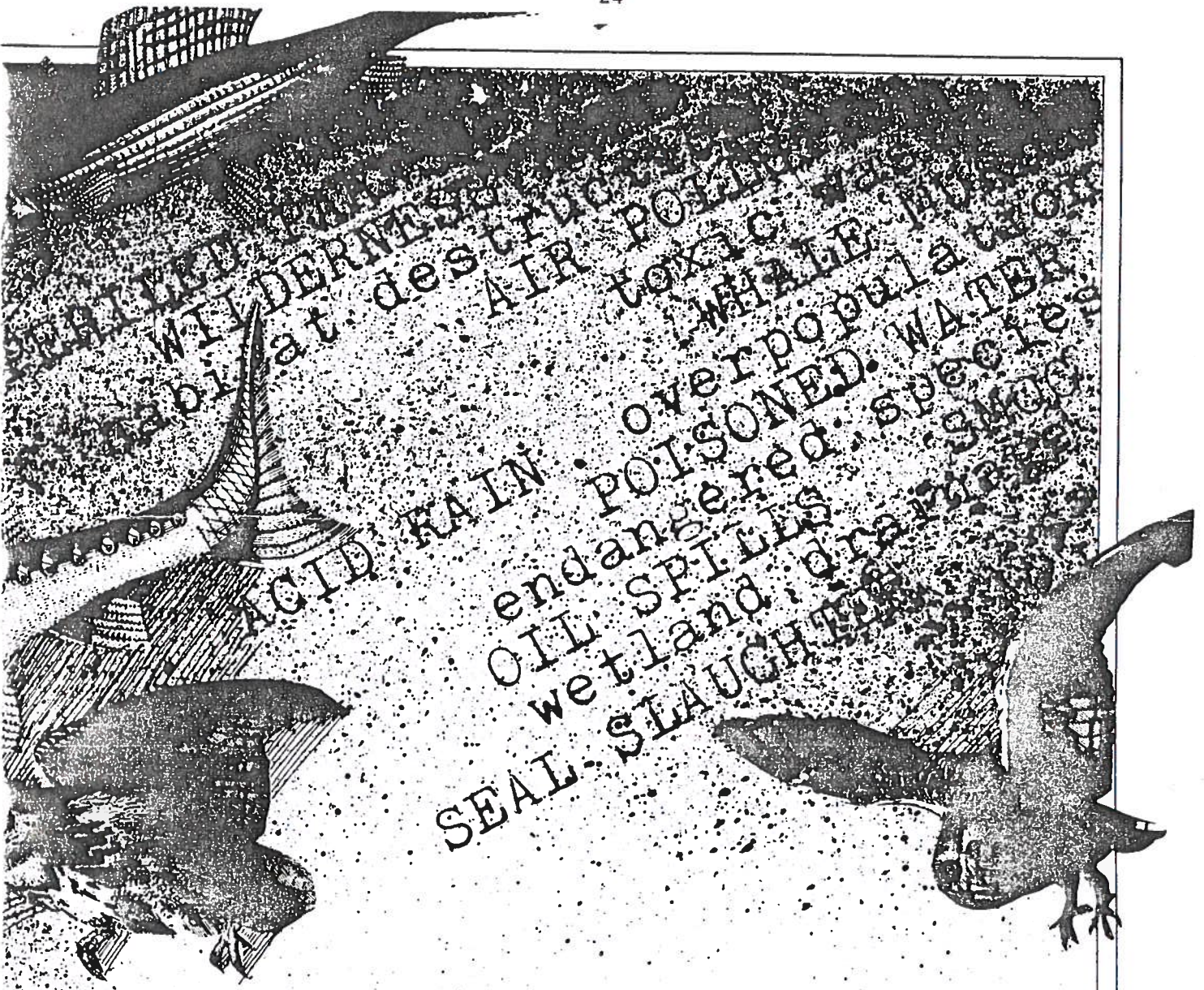
Leucorrhinia intacta

Another widespread, small species with black body and prominent white face. This species prefers to stay close to the water's surface.

TIPS ON OBSERVING DRAGONFLIES

1. The males of many species patrol a specific territory and repeatedly use the same perch. Observe their route and try to position yourself at an advantageous position. Refrain from sudden movements.

2. Search a variety of habitats, at different times of the year to observe a wide variety of species. Clear ponds, rich in aquatic vegetation produce the greatest diversity of dragonflies. Many species are found only along streams and rivers. Although most species will fly only in sunshine, a few species are crepuscular.



GAME OF LETTERS

If environmental abuses make you see red and feel blue, take heart! You can brighten up your life and the world with a letter. Here's how to do it. By Ron Reid

So you're upset with the government's record on protecting wilderness areas. Maybe they've just caved in again to yet another corporate polluter. And they will insist on building roads through our most scenic recreation areas. You want to do something to help change their ways, but the enormity of the task makes success look hopeless.

What can you do?

One of the most effective weapons, readily available and proven by the test of time, is simply a letter to the various Ministers responsible for protecting the environment. Such letter-writing can become a fine art, but most of us are a little uncertain just how to begin.

Do letters really count for anything? You bet they do! A senior Ontario Cabinet minister told a

Illustration by Nina Berkson

Creative hell-raising by writing letters should rank right up there with birding and photography as an invigorating sport. Give it a try.

group of us last year, "I look to letters to tell me how much people care about an issue." The implication is clear—if a Minister receives dozens of letters on one side of a subject, he has a measure of his constituents' feelings and a basis for action.

But why write a Minister, when he probably doesn't know anything about your particular gripe anyway? Well, for several reasons, depending on the circumstances. You may be unsure just who within the bureaucracy deals with your problem, and writing to the Minister is the best way to get it channeled properly the first time round. You might want to shake up some civil servants who have been unsympathetic or downright unhelpful in earlier dealings. Even though these same people may write the response for the Minister, his involvement can have a wondrous effect in changing their viewpoint. Often you may want to write a politician as part of an organized campaign, to demonstrate the strength of numbers holding your view. And finally, you can write because it's fun! Creative hell-raising by correspondence should rank right up there with birding and photography as an invigorating sport—a stimulating way to exercise your creative flair, often with environmentally beneficial results as a bonus!

But what if you're uncertain of all the technical complexities surrounding an issue? Not to worry. You probably know as much about

it as the Minister, and anyway those thousands of civil servants are supposed to be paid to help you understand the technical details. One of the biggest hurdles to effective letter writing is the groundless fear that you have to be an expert to discuss an issue, a fear all too often cultivated by civil servants.

Cast out such thoughts, and banish them forever! We live in a democracy where everyone has the right to set goals and to urge action towards these goals. The experts should be telling us how to get where we want to go, but they have no special claim on naming the destination. If you feel strongly that wildlife should be preserved, or the waters of Lake Erie made clean again, or whatever, feel free to speak up. The most important role of politicians is to set these goals, and decide their priority, and then to instruct, cajole, harangue, and bully the bureaucracy into accomplishing them. To do that they need your help, often for direction and moral support, but seldom for technical expertise.

What then should your letters contain? The contents vary according to their purpose, but in general they should be relatively short, forceful and to the point. Be as specific as possible without being tedious, and if you have the talent to be witty, a little humour never hurts. (Among other things, you can then fantasize how some anon-

ymous, grey civil servant will be sweating out how to respond without looking silly.)

If you can praise the Minister's record, even by suggesting that this particular action is out of character, do so. If you can link the subject of your letter to other government actions, policy stances or statements by other Ministers, be sure to suggest these links. Local examples are especially effective, because they convey the usefulness of your suggestions. ("If we'd only had this legislation when poor old Uncle Walt's well got poisoned back in '68...").

If you're uncertain of your technical basis, ask leading questions instead of making statements. In any case, be sure to put in questions so that the Minister has to respond.

Most important, be specific about what you want him to do. The most common weakness of letters to politicians is their failure to identify a specific request, to which he must react. Even if you are unsure of exactly what action is needed to correct your concern, try

One of the biggest hurdles to overcome is the groundless fear that you have to be an expert.

to force a specific response. (For example, you could ask what options the Ministry has examined to deal with this problem, and the advantage and disadvantages that they see in each option.)

How spiteful and vindictive should you be? On the first letter, especially if you are opening a new subject, I'd suggest that you give the Minister the benefit of the doubt. Be forceful but positive (I'm sure you agree that this kind of protective measure will benefit us

Answers to crossword puzzle:

Across

1. Killdeer
2. Kingbird
3. Owl
4. Swallow
5. Cardinal
6. Bluejay

Down

1. Kingfisher
5. Cowbird
7. Crow
8. Canary



all ... etc., etc.).

If your first response is particularly asinine, or if some nitwit Minister has a consistently bad record, a colourful hatchet job may be the only recourse. Creatively pouring all your venom into a political letter can be therapeutic, even though it's seldom especially effective. And you have to be prepared for the occasional backlash—one particularly vicious letter-writer got a fast response from the Minister inviting her to telephone and say those things in person!

What can you expect in response to a first letter? Undoubtedly, a long wait. Ministers are notoriously slow in answering mail. At the federal level, they now even acknowledge the receipt of your letter by an assistant so that you don't give up hope as the weeks roll by. If you hit a sore spot in the government's thick hide, expect either an unusually long wait, while they sort it all out, or a surprisingly short one, to try to fob you off quickly.

Minister's responses are usually of three varieties—affirmative, agreeing with your stance (seldom); zero, ignoring all your questions and saying absolutely nothing (tried fairly frequently); and bafflegab, when they swamp you with technical details and excuses (would probably be tried more often but too much work). The overwhelming odds are that your first response just won't be satisfactory.

Minister's live in the fond hope that you'll just go away. But don't give up, the fun is just beginning. Go back to your original letter, and pull out all the questions the Minister didn't answer. Point out inconsistencies between his response and others you have received on the subject. If you're lucky, there will be inconsistencies in the Min-

ister's letter itself—point those out too. Refute his arguments—there are always weak spots—and re-emphasize the desirability of your goals. If you're concerned about winning an issue, it's the second letter, and the third, that really count, because it makes the Minister and his advisors really look at what you're saying, rather than just fobbing you off. If you're writing mostly for entertainment, these subsequent letters give your creative genius a chance to really shine, responding to some of the incredibly silly things that politicians are wont to say when they're not paying close attention. Letter-writing is like a slow game of ping-pong—always try to keep lobbing it back to your opponents in their weakest spot.

One easy way to increase the effectiveness of all your letters is to copy them to other interested parties. After all, you don't want to waste all that creative genius on only one Minister. Send copies to the leaders or critics of both Opposition parties—it keeps them in-

**If you want results,
apply the three R's:
be right, reasonable,
and repetitive.**

formed, and sometimes they go after the Minister for you in the Legislature. If you are dealing with a split jurisdiction or you are quoting another Minister, send him a copy as well—nobody likes to be

embarrassed in front of his colleagues. If you are having trouble with a particular Minister, send a copy to the Premier, to keep him on his toes. If you're dealing with an issue of local interest, your newspaper editor will usually willingly print a copy of the letter. And if you're dealing with an issue of interest to a conservation group, send them a copy as well. It keeps their spirits up, and you might even get some free help.

If you are deadly serious about accomplishing results with your letters, the three R's apply: be right, reasonable and repetitive. But don't forget to have fun along the way.

Some budding authors sponsor letter-writing parties, to stimulate creative sparks and see who can come up with the wittiest letter. Others prefer the Lone Ranger approach, rising restlessly in the middle of the night to dash off a letter, or holing up in a favourite armchair with a writing pad and a bottle of gin.

But whatever the technique, an enthusiastic approach to letter-writing can create a new art form, and increase the effectiveness of us all in championing conservation causes. The pen is still mightier than the sword, and its cut and thrusts can be almost as painful if aimed in the right direction. (Anyway, it's tough to find good swords these days.) So dust off your favourite cause, pull up a chair, and make that paper sing—there are politicians by the dozens just waiting to hear from you! □



Published by the
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Naturalists**

355 Lesmill Road,
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M3B 2W8. Telephone:
(416) 444-8419.

To the Members,
Essex County Field Naturalists' Club,
Ontario, Canada.

ESSEX COUNTY FIELD NATURALISTS' CLUB

STATEMENT OF ASSETS

AS AT

DECEMBER 31, 1988

We have acted as accountants for the Club for the year ended December 31, 1988. Attached hereto are the following statements:

1. Profit & Loss Statement for 12 months ended December 31, 1988.
2. Balance Sheet as of December 31, 1988.

The above statements have been prepared from the records of Essex County Field Naturalists' Club and from other information supplied to us by the Company. In the preparation of these statements, we attempted wherever possible, through enquiry, comparison and discussion, to verify the information received. However, in accordance with the terms of our engagement, we have not performed an audit and consequently do not express an opinion on these Financial Statements.

CURRENT:

Cash on Hand	\$ 193.65	
Bank - #1	3,030.09	
	<u> </u>	
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		\$ 3,223.74

OTHER:

Organization Expense	\$ 170.05	
	<u> </u>	
TOTAL OTHER ASSETS		170.05
		<u> </u>
TOTAL ASSETS		\$ 3,393.79
		<u> </u>

H. W. DOWNS
MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS LTD.
TECUMSEH, ONTARIO

February 23, 1989.

H. W. Downs, C.G.A.

ESSEX COUNTY FIELD NATURALISTS' CLUB
STATEMENT OF LIABILITIES AND MEMBERS' EQUITY

AS AT

DECEMBER 31, 1988

ESSEX COUNTY FIELD NATURALISTS' CLUB

PROFIT & LOSS STATEMENT

For 12 Months Ended December 31, 1988

LIABILITIES:

CURRENT:

Accrued Expense	\$ 350.00	
	<u> </u>	
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES		\$ 350.00

MEMBERS' EQUITY

RETAINED EARNINGS:

Balance as of January 1, 1988	\$ 2,258.02	
Plus: Profit to December 31, 1988	785.77	
	<u> </u>	
BALANCE AS OF DECEMBER 31, 1988		3,043.79
		<u> </u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND MEMBERS' EQUITY	\$ 3,393.79	<u> </u>

INCOME:

Memberships	\$ 1,629.00	
Banquet	2,365.91	
Raffles	150.00	
Donations	10.00	
Miscellaneous Income	111.26	
	<u> </u>	
TOTAL INCOME		\$ 4,266.17

EXPENSES:

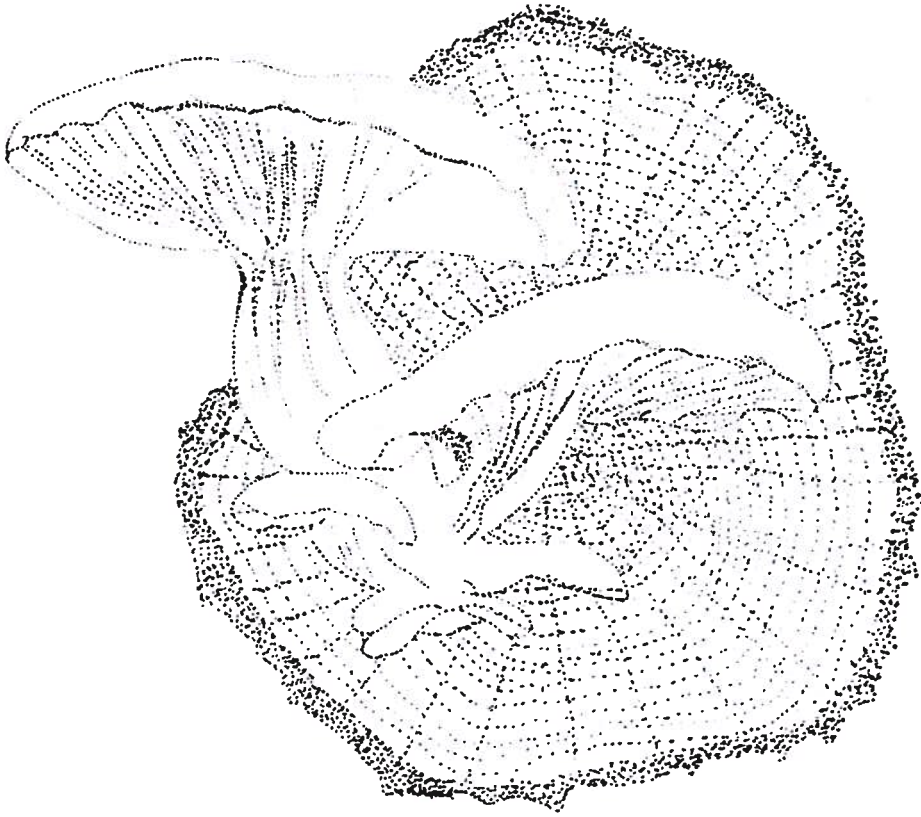
Advertising & Promotion	\$ 450.00	
Membership Fees	65.00	
Insurance	225.00	
Supplies	9.38	
Office Expense & Miscellaneous	395.14	
Banquet Expenses	1,358.32	
Accounting & Legal	375.00	
Rent	315.00	
Telephone & Telegraph	103.57	
Interest & Bank Charges	8.99	
Donations	175.00	
	<u> </u>	
TOTAL EXPENSES		3,480.40

EXCESS INCOME OVER EXPENSES

\$ 785.77

JOHN PILKINGTON, NATURALIST

Susan Morrison



Oyster Mushroom
Pleurotus sapidus

Susan 88
 Morrison

Fellow naturalist John Pilkington died at home on Sunday, May 14, 1989.

I was first introduced to "The Pilk" by Paul Pratt while out moth collecting one night at Arner Townline. As we set off on the circuit of baited trees, Paul and John exchanged information on the species they had collected the previous week. As I listened my respect grew for John's extensive knowledge and expertise.

John loved mushrooms of all kinds.

I remember one particular night John stood beneath a massive Shagbark hickory and gazed up into its branches heavy with moss. He turned on his head lamp and a grin spread like dawn across his face. There, winking in and out of the beam were glowing shapes of pink and rose. The night was filled with Catocala moths. With a voice lowered in awe he turned to me, eyes dancing and said "Magic, sheer magic." Being a newcomer to moths, I was hooked.

He was a skilled artist, and his deep love of our natural world showed in his artwork and descriptions of journeys past.

I felt very close to John and for those of us who came to know his sense of humour and gentle company, he will be sadly missed.

Continued from page 14

CLUB NEWS UPDATE

Our club birder for the Baillie Birdathon was our President Peter Bondy. Peter was joined by E.C.F.N.C. birders on May 13 who visited birding sites in Essex and Kent counties. Special guests were members of the Council of Outdoor Education of Ontario. One hundred and thirty-one species were tallied by Peter.

Mike Malone and Joan Walker have opened a new shop "Pelee Wings" in Kingsville for birders. They are offering birding accessories and books of interest to birders. Watch for their sign on Main Street, Kingsville.

Paul Pratt and Tom Hince and Michael Carlson of Detroit participated in the New Jersey Audubon Society's Biggest Day, the world series of birding on May 13 at Cape May, N.J. They won the out-of-region competition and took fourth place overall. The team spotted 195 different bird species, only six bird species behind the winning team. Our birders were highly organized as they set time limits for birding specific habitats. During the twenty-four hours of competition the team drove 590 miles to accomplish their remarkable feat.

The planning for the Hawk Watch Festival '89 at Holiday Beach C.A. is underway. The Festival will feature hawk identification and special presentations, including a talk by the Canadian Wildlife service regarding eagle hacking in Southwestern Ontario.

Our annual dinner is to be held Saturday, November 11, 1989 at the Serbian Centre on Tecumseh Road East. Mark you calendar now for this enjoyable event. Consider making a donation to our auction or to the door prize table.

A special "thank you" to our field trip leaders this spring. Bill Balkwill, Peter Bondy, Bonnie Foley and Brendon Larson gave of their time and expertise to make our trips varied and enjoyable.

Despite weather, park's bird festival a success

Despite the weather which hampered the movement of both bird and bird-watchers alike, Point Pelee National Park's birding festival was an unqualified success.

"We're delighted with the results.. despite the weather (of May 12, 13 and 14)," said superintendent Ross Thomson.

Thomson says the festival will be held again next year with more involvement planned from area community businesses.

The festival included a special exhibits from industries with products for birdwatching and local groups involved in area nature programs.

The exhibits were in a tent at the park's visitor centre, and two special commercial exhibitors included Bausch and Lomb, of California, manufacturer of binoculars, and Fuji Films.

"I know the corporate interests that participated were delighted, it exceeded their expectations," said Thomson.

The second weekend in May is traditionally the best birding period at Point Pelee, but this year poor weather delayed the expected bird migration, particularly on the first two days. The weather cleared on the Sunday and birding reports jumped as expected.

Last week's weather vastly improved, and with it the expected bird arrivals.

"This past week has just been fabulous," said Thomson.

At the park gate 10,000 people came through for the three day period, and for the month of May the number of visitors is expected to reach over 80,000.

Last year in May 86,000 birders visited the park.

Other displays at the festival included those from the Essex Region Conservation Authority, Friends of Point Pelee (FPP), and Windsor-Essex County visitor and convention centre.

Doug Pajot, chairman of the FPP explained it is embarking on a program to help protect the plant life at the park.

He said in the first phase the program will emphasize to park visitors the importance of visitors staying on trails within the park so plants are not injured.

In the second phase, to start this summer, volunteers will remove some of the plant species that are not indigenous to the park, and hampering the growth of unique species.

Two local people were also honored at the festival.

They were Wilf Botham, of Cottam, a noted botanist who has written a book entitled the Plants of Essex County.

Also honored was Wheatley birder Norm Chesterfield, who is the top birder in the world.



Botanist Wilfred Botham was honored for his efforts at highlighting the special plants in Pt. Pelee and Essex County.

THE LEAMINGTON POST — Tuesday, May 23, 1989

Local birding team among elite

By Stewart Bell

Star Staff Reporter

Paul Pratt is flying high.

The Windsor naturalist and his teammates won their category in the 21st-series of bird watching Saturday in Cape May, N.J., and set a new record for the competition.

"We blew them away," said an elated Pratt.

Pratt and his teammates, Tom Hince

of Parks Canada and Michael Carlson, a Detroit environmental consultant, spotted 195 birds during the 24-hour competition — more than any team from outside the Cape May region had ever spotted.

For that they won the Edwin Stern Cup for out-of-region teams and took fourth place overall, only six birds behind the winning Bausch & Lomb team.

A total of 133 bird-watchers from North America and Europe took part in the competition that required teams to identify as many species of birds as possible in a 24-hour period.

Competitors were given forms to fill out on every species spotted and had to defend any sightings questioned by the judges.

The local teams had a considerable advantage over Pratt's team because they were familiar with the Cape May area and its birds, said Pratt. Pratt, Hince and Carlson had only a day and a half to get to know the area before the competition.

"We did well because the three of us have a lot of experience together," said Pratt. "A lot of it is planning."

He said they knew their bird-calls and songs well, which helped them attract and identify birds.

Saturday's results topped Pratt's personal record of 180 birds, which he set at a bird-watching competition in Essex County three years ago.

Hince and Pratt were the first Canadians to ever enter the competition.

The three birders have also managed to raise \$3,000 in pledges. These will go to the Long Point Bird Observatory and the Ontario Federation of Field Ornithologists.

THE WINDSOR STAR

TUESDAY, MAY 16, 1989

SUMMER SKIN ALERT:

LYME DISEASE

The number of cases of Lyme disease, a potentially serious and extremely debilitating disease that can affect the skin, joints, nervous system, and heart, has increased dramatically. It was reported that there were more than 5,000 cases in 1988. The Northeast, upper Midwest, and Pacific states are the most heavily infected areas, but Lyme disease is now reported in 43 states.

In 1975, Dr. Allen Steere, a Yale rheumatologist, was studying an unexplained high frequency of arthritis in three small adjoining communities in Connecticut: Old Lyme, Lyme and East Haddam. The arthritis occurred in the summer and fall, and about 1/4 of the patients recalled having a skin rash. Steere described these findings as a new disease, Lyme disease.

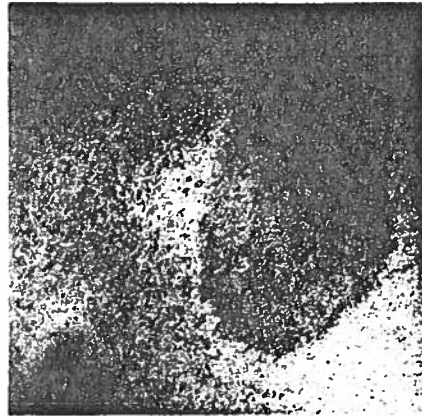
However, in 1909, Dr. Arvid Afzelius, a Swedish dermatologist, reported a similar rash following a tick (*Ixodes ricinus*) bite, but no associated arthritis. Several of Dr. Steere's patients recalled being bitten by a tick prior to the rash's onset. So he and his coworkers identified a new tick, a family member of *Ixodes ricinus*. The final piece in the puzzle was solved in 1982 by Dr. Willy Burgdorfer, who discovered the responsible infectious agent, a spirochete, in the *Ixodes* tick.

The ticks are found in tall grass and brush and attach themselves to animals (especially deer and mice—and more rarely, humans), feeding on their blood. It is with the tick's biting and feeding that spirochetes from an infected tick enter man and thereby cause Lyme disease.

Tick bites and resultant Lyme disease may occur any month, however, because of the tick's life cycle, most cases occur from May to November with the peak incidence of bites in June and July.

Three Stages of Lyme Disease

Stage I: The earliest stage, localized disease, occurs about three to fourteen



days after a tick bite and is manifested as an expanding round or oval shaped rash, which can be a few to many inches in diameter (photo). *Up to 85% of patients develop this characteristic skin rash and it is the most important clue to early diagnosis.* This rash occurs at the site of the tick bite and there is often a central punctum or mark from the original bite. The enlarging ring of redness is frequently elevated compared to the normal surrounding skin. About half of the patients will also develop additional skin lesions that are similar in appearance, but smaller in size. The rash usually disappears on its own in about four weeks, but in unusual cases may last up to a year. During this stage, many patients will also have a flu-like illness with fever, fatigue, headaches, a stiff neck, and muscle and joint pains.

Stage II: Early generalized disease occurs several weeks to months later in untreated patients. The principal manifestation is joint pain, which occurs in about 60% of untreated patients. It is generally a transient, asymmetric arthritis that may involve many joints, most preferentially the knee. Approximately 15% of untreated patients develop neurological disturbances which may include headaches, meningitis, paralysis of facial muscles, or other neurologic findings. Heart problems occur in about 8% of untreated patients

and may cause an irregular heart beat, dizziness or fainting.

Stage III: Late generalized disease is the most serious stage occurring in a small number of untreated patients month to years after the initial tick bite. It may consist of progressive arthritis, intellectual deterioration or psychiatric disease.

Diagnosis and Treatment

The proper diagnosis of Stage I Lyme disease is based upon recognizing the characteristic rash, and it is further facilitated when the patient remembers having had a tick bite or having been in an area experiencing a large number of Lyme disease cases. Blood studies to detect antibodies, a sign of exposure, are not reliable in the early stage of the disease. In Stages II and III of the disease, however, the antibody blood studies are almost always positive and serve to confirm the diagnosis.

Antibiotics are effective in treating Lyme disease. In early disease, oral penicillin or tetracycline derivatives are the treatments of choice. In later stages, intravenous antibiotics may be necessary.

Protecting Yourself

If you are living or traveling in an endemic area of Lyme disease, it is important to protect yourself from tick bites. Avoid wooded or grassy areas that are inhabited by deer. When you must enter such areas do not go barefoot or wear sandals. Wear long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and pull your socks over your pant legs so ticks cannot attach themselves to exposed skin. Commercial insect repellants containing DEET may be helpful. The ticks are very small, about the size of a pinhead, but after a meal of blood they may increase to many times their original size. Also shower after exposure and check your body for ticks. If you find any, promptly remove them with a pair of tweezers by grasping the tick as close to the mouth as possible and gently pulling it away from your skin. Also check your pets since ticks may attach themselves to them and then attach themselves to you.

Lyme disease is a very serious health problem and the principal defense is protection, and if exposed, early treatment. The skin rash is the earliest warning. If it appears, see your general physician or dermatologist promptly. ■

By David L. Ramsay, M.D., M.Ed.

Dr. Ramsay is Associate Professor of Clinical Dermatology, Head of the Education Section, Department of Dermatology, New York University Medical Center

Hotline 252-BIRD
E.R.C.A. 776-5209
Ojibway 966-5852
Point Pelee 322-2365

ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

- June 14 - E.C.F.N.C. Monthly Meeting
Marlborough C.C. - 7:30 p.m.
Speaker: Jeff Larson
Topic: Herptiles
- " 20 - Things-that-go-bump-in-the-night.
9:00 p.m - Ojibway Nature Centre
Learn a new group of insects this spring with this short programme on nocturnal insects.

Young Naturalist day camps.
Ojibway Nature Centre
Swamp walks, wildlife viewing, nature games and crafts for children aged 7 to 11. Day-long programmes are held every Wednesday in July and August.
- " 24 * - Welcome to Summer! - Film Festival
8:45 p.m. - Holiday Beach C.A.
- July 1,2,3 * - Canada Day Celebrations
Holiday Beach C.A.
- " 8 * - Feature Film Night
8:45 p.m. - Holiday Beach C.A.
- " 9 * - "What's Buzzing" - Insect Hike
2:00 p.m. - Holiday Beach C.A.
- " 9 * - The Homestead Games
10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
John R. Park Homestead
- " 15, 16 * - Annual Summer Festival
All day - Holiday Beach C.A.
- " 16 * - Antique Clocks
10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
John R. Park Homestead
- " 22 * - Feature Film Night
8:45 p.m. - Holiday Beach C.A.
- " 23 * - Aquatic Hike
2:00 p.m. - Holiday Beach C.A.
- " 23 * - Garden Party
10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
John R. Park Homestead
- " 29 * - Feature Film Night
8:45 p.m. - Holiday Beach C.A.
- " 30 * - Flower Hike
2:00 p.m. - Holiday Beach C.A.
- July 30 * - Steam & Sawmill Day
10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
John R. Park Homestead

June 29 - Reptiles and Amphibians
& July 6 7:30 p.m. - Ojibway N.C.
July 8 - 9:00 a.m. - Field Trip



- Aug. 5 * - Feature Film Night
8:45 p.m. - Holiday Beach C.A.
- " 6 * - Campfire at the Beach
8:00 p.m. - Holiday Beach C.A.
- " 5 - 7 * - Special "Visit 3 Museums, Pay One Price" Weekend
10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
John R. Park Homestead
Heritage Village (Co. Rd. 23)
Park House Museum (Amherstburg)
- " 12 * - Feature Film Night
8:45 p.m. - Holiday Beach C.A.
- " 13 * - Homestead Trivia Contest
10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
John R. Park Homestead
- " 19 * - Feature Film Night
8:45 p.m. - Holiday Beach C.A.
- " 19 & 20 * - Craft Fair & Blueberry Social
10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
John R. Park Homestead
- " 25 * - An Evening of Star Gazing
9:00 p.m. - Holiday Beach C.A.
- " 26 * - Candlelight Tours
8:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.
John R. Park Homestead
- Sept. 2 * - Feature Film Night
8:45 p.m. - Holiday Beach C.A.
- " 9 * - Annual Owl Prowl
8:30 p.m. - Maidstone C.A.
- " 13 - E.C.F.N.C. Monthly Meeting
Marlborough C.C. - 7:30 p.m.
Speaker: Anne Barbour
Topic: Astronomy
- " 15, * - Annual Festival of Hawks
16 & 17 All day - Holiday Beach C.A.
- " 30 * - Call of the Owls
8:15 p.m. - Devonwood C.A.
- Oct. 11 - E.C.F.N.C. Monthly Meeting
Marlborough C.C. - 7:30 p.m.
Speaker: Vicki Johnston
Topic: Ringbilled Gulls of Thunder Bay
- Nov. 11 - E.C.F.N.C. Annual Dinner
Serbian Centre, Tecumseh Road
Speaker: Mary Ellen Foley
Topic: Peregrine Falcons
PLEASE NOTE: Saturday evening

Aug. 17 - Warbler Migration Workshop
7:30 p.m. - Ojibway N.C.
" 19 - 8:30 a.m. - Point Pelee



Wild Oats *Avena fatua*

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Field Naturalists' Club, P.O. Box 3421, Tecumseh, Ontario. N8N 3C4
Address correction requested.

Thomas Hurst,
R.R. # 3,
Cottam,
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