

Essex County
FIELD NATURALISTS'
CLUB

VOL.6, NO.4
DEC.1989

THE EGRET.



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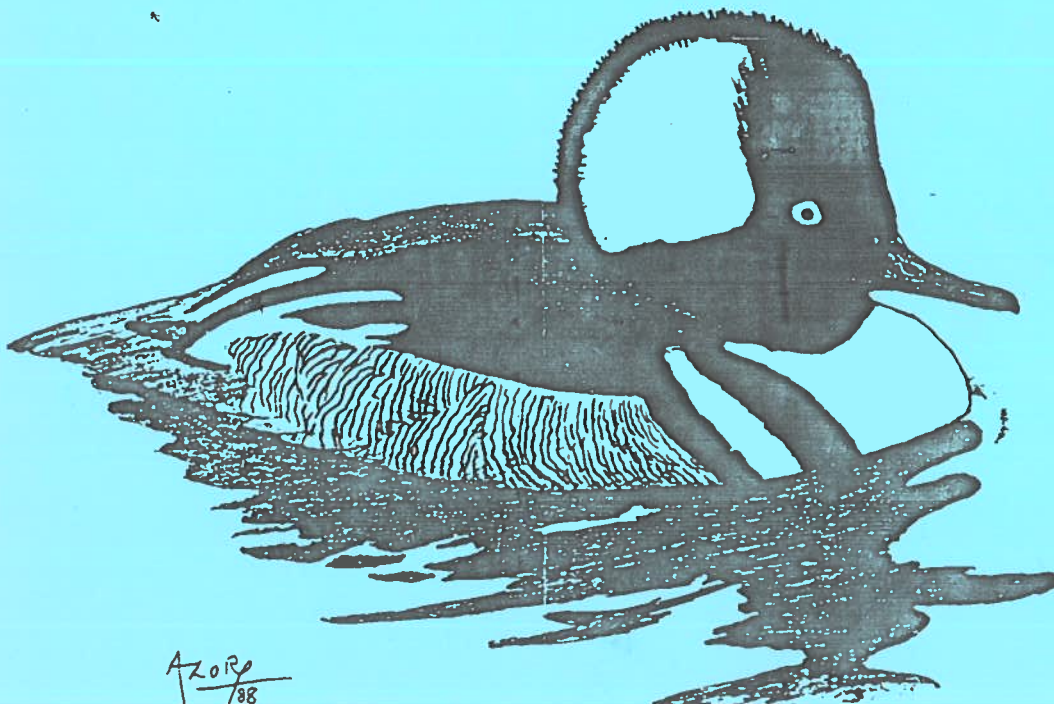
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Consider writing an article for our next newsletter. Your contribution is welcome at any time. The deadline for the March 1990 issue is February 15, 1990. Many thanks to those who submitted articles to this issue.

ESSEX COUNTY FIELD NATURALISTS' CLUB

1990 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

POSTAL CODE _____ PHONE _____

INTERESTS _____

Please enter / renew my membership in the E.C.F.N.C. in the following category:

Individual membership - \$ 15.00 per year _____

Family membership - \$ 20.00 per year _____

Sustaining membership - \$ 25.00 per year _____

Life membership - \$100.00 per year _____

Junior Egret - \$ 5.00 per year _____

Please make your cheque payable to the ESSEX COUNTY FIELD NATURALISTS' CLUB and mail to: Essex County Field Naturalists' Club, P.O. Box 3421, Tecumseh, Ontario N8N 3C4.



The Essex County Field Naturalists' Club is an incorporated, non-profit organization open to anyone with an interest in nature and conservation. Club objectives are to promote the appreciation and conservation of the diverse natural heritage of Essex County and surrounding region; to provide the opportunity for people to become acquainted with and to better understand

the natural environment; to promote the identification, preservation, maintenance and restoration of natural areas of high quality for living things; to co-operate with and support other organizations with similar objectives.

Indoor meetings with guest speakers and slide shows are held monthly from September until June, on the second Wednesday of each month at the Marlborough Community Centre at 7:30 p.m.

Field trips and other activities are held throughout the year. Our club newsletters, The Egret and Junior Egret, are published quarterly and mailed to all members.

WILFRED BOTHAM, NATURALIST1908 - 1989

It was always an interesting adventure to be in the field with Wilfred Botham as Wilf touched on natural history, human history and philosophy.

A letter I received from Wilf shortly after he had been honoured for his many contributions, most notably "Plants of Essex County: a preliminary list", says more about Wilf Botham than anything else I can think of.

With Wilf's death, we have lost a dear friend and ardent naturalist. We shall miss you Wilf.

-- Jim McAllister

30 Sep. 1985.

Dear Jim:

My heartfelt thanks to you, the members of The Essex County Field Naturalists' Club, for the awards presented to me on the occasion of your annual meeting and banquet.

I was so overwhelmed that I could hardly speak, but I could not help but remember what Konrad Lorenz had written in his book, "On Aggression" (1966): (Lorenz was a student of animal behavior)

When my unforgettable teacher, Ferdinand Hochstetter, at the age of seventy-one gave his valedictory address at Vienna University, the then Chancellor thanked him warmly for his long and inspired work. Hochstetter's answer put in a nutshell the whole paradox of value and not value of natural inclination. He said, "You are thanking me for something for which I deserve no gratitude. Thank my parents, my ancestors who transmitted to me these and no other inclinations. And if you ask me what I have done throughout my life in the fields of research and teaching then I must honestly say: I have always done the thing which, at the moment, I considered the greatest fun!"

I am in much the same situation. I did it because it is fun, never for one moment dreaming that I would some day receive an award for having all that fun. All of you are naturalists so you know that the hobby of natural history is fun. Added to all the fun I have had I now receive these awards. I know that this evening's events will be a high point in my long life. I thank you all most warmly.

When I read over the list of favors you granted me I am distinctly impressed. For the record, here they are:

An engraved plaque.

A scroll done in script.

An honorary life membership in The Essex County Field Naturalists' Club.

Two banquet tickets for my wife and me.

A most flattering account of me in your club magazine "The Egret".

I love and hug you all!

Sincerely,

THE EARTH

Brendon Larson

Created over four billion years ago, in the primordial chaos of the cosmos, I alone have witnessed all. From the formation of the continents to the eruptions of pyrotechnic volcanoes and from the passing of the seasons to the ebb and flow of the tide. Every snowflake, every storm--each of these I have felt.

Encompassed by a life-supporting membrane, I have watched a rare and profound miracle called life arise, and I have nurtured it, as it alone is of real import.

I have seen the mutability of life, creatures existing for a short time before being lost, as the inexorable path of evolution unfolds. I watched eagerly as the life forms proceeded from fish to reptiles, birds and then mammals. Born in life-nurturing surroundings, which only I could adjust, the animals thrived in a land of lush, living vegetation.

Yet there was never a shock greater than when a new life form evolved: one which had the ability to think and to learn. It was the climax of evolution, and humanity came to accept me, the earth, as home.

Chairperson, honourable judges,
fellow contestants, ladies and
gentlemen, "The Earth."

Humanity has only existed for a very brief period of my history. If my entire lifespan was compressed into the past year, they would only have arisen about six hours ago. Though they are a new phenomena, the changes induced by their actions are momentous and of increasing concern.

In order to understand how these changes affect me, one must first realize that I am a delicate system, composed of many parts which are essential to the function of the whole. If any part of the system or of a cycle is disrupted, the results can be disastrous.

For a long time, humans acted much the same as the other animals; but, as they continued to evolve, they began to lose sight of where they had come from and that

they are a part of the ecosphere. They decided to proceed on their own route of life, independent of the natural environment which had wrought them, and of the other creatures which share my surface.

Consequently, they became desensitized to the earth--their birthplace and only home. They turned to a stifling deity called Technology, which beckoned with open arms. The resulting Industrial Revolution has polluted the water they drink, the air they breathe, killed innumerable fellow inhabitants of their home-sphere and led to the destruction of natural ecosystems--forests and streams--over the entire globe.

And, just as quickly, the subtle balances of life which I have been forming for millenia, are crumbling. Too many "life-forces" have been weakened, and I am now an ailing system, a body with a broken heart.

The fate of the earth now lies with humanity! They have only thirty years in which to unite. Otherwise, all four billion years of my development will have been in vain and it will require another planet, another time, for the miracle of life to fully develop.

There is hope, as many of them realize. What would it require? A profound global understanding and consensus that the treasures of this planet are utterly priceless and irrevocable once lost. Endowed with thought, humans are the caretakers of an age-old legacy and must look for a solution.

The greatest problem is that humans must overcome their general apathy towards me. They long ago lost respect for me as a friend, that they are inherently and inextricably interlinked with, and utterly dependent upon.

Also, many humans, and especially the policy-makers, live sequestered in a fantasy where only personal comfort and luxury are of concern. The scale of the earth's heritage is beyond their faculties, they are too short-sighted to foresee an impending crisis, and they don't care! They are links in a vicious cycle wherein short-term gains are the rule and my impoverishment is the means.

Worst of all, few can see the imminent deleterious effects of what they are

doing--there are no flashing lights. Even though vast rain forests are being consumed, gaps are forming in the protective layer of my skin and species are passing down the vortex of extinction, they don't act! They cling to a hope that their figurehead of Technology will quell these dilemmas, too naive to realize that these are deep-rooted problems, which are far beyond the ken of human enterprise and which have reciprocating effects for themselves. Unless they soon perceive that this planet has intrinsic worth and is not solely a reservoir of resources for their inane Progress, my heritage, and theirs, will come to an end.

In order to survive, they must leave the grasp of the joint demi-gods of Progress and Technology, and at least partially revert to a symbiotic existence with the earth. It would be a radical and difficult step, but our mutual survival depends on it.

I do have hope for them! Though there is little time, they are slowly coming to their senses. An eloquent portrayal of the direction in which human motives must shift, was formulated by and for humans, as a well-adopted maxim for their species, in stating, "We have not inherited the earth from our parents, we have borrowed it from our children."

Editor's note:

Brendon presented "The Earth" during the 1989 Essex County Secondary Schools' public speaking contest. "The Earth" earned Brendon second place in the senior prepared speech division. Brendon attends Harrow Secondary School and is an E.C.F.N.C. member.

SAVING THE ROUGE

Members of the E.C.F.N.C. executive and the Clear Water Alliance met on October 28, 1989 with two of the "Save the Rouge Valley System" volunteers. The meeting included a slide presentation and a discussion concerning how the Rouge Valley system is at risk as a natural area. Please read the articles from "Probe Post" that appear in this Egret and then write letters to the persons listed on page 14, urging that the Rouge Valley be established as a Provincial Park.

If you have visited the Metro Toronto Zoo, you have been in a part of the Rouge River Valley System.

PELEE ISLAND NATURE TOUR

Betty Learmouth

Nineteen enthusiastic naturalists joined Paul Pratt on September 30, 1989 for a one day nature tour of Pelee Island. After an enjoyable ferry crossing during which we observed Bonaparte's Gulls, Double-crested Cormorants and Greater Black-backed Gulls, we docked at the hamlet of Scudder and drove along the West Shore Road to the Fish Point Nature Reserve.

We halted our procession of five cars in front of Tiessen's Bed and Breakfast home and looked at one of the pound nets used by fishermen to capture fish along the Pelee Island coast. Double-crested Cormorants were resting on each piling of the pound net. Paul pointed out the various Canadian and American islands visible from this location and also called our attention to a flock of migrating Yellow-rumped and Palm Warblers in a nearby poplar tree.

As our caravan approached the pheasant farm, some lucky naturalists glimpsed a Fox Squirrel, a large red squirrel found only in Canada on Pelee Island. We paused at the pheasant farm for a view of the birds due to be released later in October for the annual fall hunts.

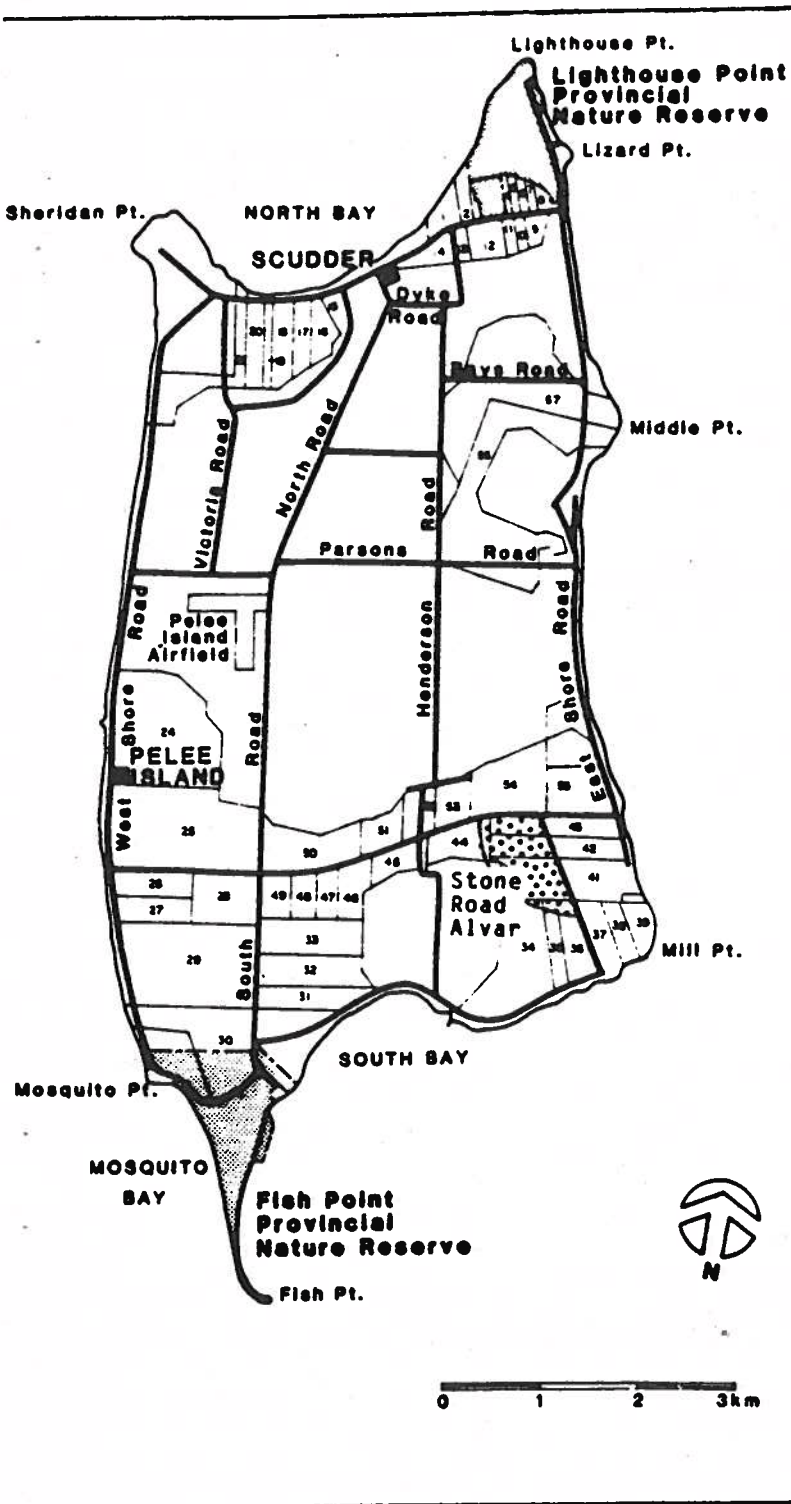


Figure 1. Pelee Island, Essex County, showing the nature reserve areas. (Figure courtesy of Ministry of Natural Resources.)

At the Fish Point Nature Reserve, our group walked along the picturesque trail that leads past the pond to the Lake Erie shoreline. Upon entering the woodlands, we stopped to listen to numerous small migrating birds such as the Black-capped Chickadees, Red-breasted Nuthatches, Nashville Warblers and Golden-crowned Kinglets. The tree vegetation surrounding us was still lush, but many of the early blooming plants had withered. We did notice the dark blue fruit of the Wild Leek.

Kory Bilinski, Nick Bilinski and Anne Barbour were among those who were carefully turning over logs along the path to seek out any creatures in those hiding places.

There were some lucky finds such as a small melanistic Eastern Garter Snake. These black snakes with white throats and chins are fairly common at Point Pelee and on Pelee Island.

A special treat was the numbers of Red-spotted Newts which we were fortunate to encounter. Red-spotted Newts are members of the Salamandridae family. One larger specimen (approximately 3" long) was in the transforming stage or even an adult in non-breeding condition of its development. Its dark olive back was speckled with red spots and its belly was a remarkable brilliant yellow. Other individuals we found were smaller and somewhat duller. Altogether we tallied fourteen of these amphibians, which are only at this one pond in Essex County.

Red-spotted Newts have a complex life history and the individuals we examined had transformed from the larvae to the eft or terrestrial stage of their lives. After a period of one to three years on land, these newts will return to the water and change into aquatic adults.

As our group stood by the pond's shoreline, we heard the hard clucking call of a Northern Waterthrush, observed a Belted Kingfisher fishing near the centre of the pond and saw a flock of Rusty Blackbirds. Three Water Pipits whirled overhead and the first two Dark-eyed Juncos observed this fall flew over the pond. A male Northern Cardinal flashed by. During the time we searched about the pond for other birds, we saw the glistening carapaces of at least fifty basking Midland Painted Turtles.

The area of the nature reserve between the Lake Erie shoreline and the pond is always an excellent spot to seek out "herps." Our intrepid searchers were able to locate a young Lake Erie Water Snake. This specimen, about six inches long, was pale-coloured, nearly uniformly gray on its back with intricate darker markings along its sides. More small Red-spotted Newts were found, as well as a tiny Snapping Turtle and an American Toad.

Two insects were found that our group thought intriguing. A Woodland Cockroach, brown and shiny, was spotted under a log and a Chinese Praying Mantis was the centre of attention until it chose to fly off into a tangle of nearby grape vines.

As we left the nature reserve, our diligent searchers located several camel crickets and a Smallmouth Salamander. These salamanders are unique to Pelee Island within our county and are hybrids with the Blue-Spotted Salamander, displaying the colouration expected of the Blue-Spotted Salamander but having the characteristic short head of the Smallmouth Salamander.

Following a lunch break, our group proceeded to the Mill Point shoreline. Everyone expects sandy shores along our county, but at Mill Point one finds a ridge of limestone or dolomite extending into Lake Erie and on to Pelee Island itself. Glacial striations left by a retreating glacier are visible. A newly introduced species to the Great Lakes, the Zebra Mussel, was found clinging to the larger shells of the fresh water clams which littered the limestone outcropping.

Turning away from the shoreline, we walked along a newly constructed road which is opening the area to cottage development. We could see where bulldozers had pushed the thin soil away from the limestone. Paul explained that such an area with its thin soil over limestone is called an "alvar." Many of the plants found on the Pelee Island Mill Point alvar are rare. At nearby Stone Road, two nature preserves are protecting this fragile and unusual habitat.

We wish to thank Paul for sharing his enthusiasm and expertise with us on Pelee Island, Essex County's naturalist's paradise.

THE DEMPSTER, AND OTHER HIGHWAYS OF THE NORTHWEST

by Jim McAllister

We always envy those who take birding trips into Yukon and the Northwest Territories, especially those who do it via motor vehicle.

Jim McAllister, of Windsor, Ontario, made the 16,000 km (10,000 miles) round trip in June and July of 1987, by car and trailer. He has passed along many of his impressions and experiences to be shared with our readers.

We'll skip his car trouble misfortunes, and other adventures from Windsor to northwestern Alberta, and start our quotes from his letter, at the Peace River area.

Here's Jim.

"Once you reach the Peace River area, the country begins to change dramatically as mountains make their appearance. There is a "wilder" look to your surroundings. Between Fort St. John and Fort Nelson, habitation is scant, and chances of seeing wildlife improve. In this stretch, we saw Black and Grizzly Bears, Moose, Coyote, Golden Eagle and Northern Goshawk. The road leaves much to be desired. There are some long stretches of loose gravel that make driving incredibly dusty and somewhat dangerous.

There are some good stretches of road west of Fort Nelson but it soon deteriorates again. Now, you're in more mountainous country and there are endless twists and turns. Cracked windshields are a foregone conclusion. We kept windows up, and covered everything in the trunk with plastic, but still the dust got in. What increases the annoyance and potential danger are the many large RV's that travel in convoys making it almost impossible to pass, plus the trucks that speed by, throwing gravel and laying down a thick blanket of dust that doesn't dissipate before more trucks come along.

Despite any shortcomings, the road offers some glorious scenery and excellent birding. There are a few provincial parks along the way, and a few motels with dining rooms.

I would recommend doing the Alaska Highway in easy stages, taking at least a week from Dawson Creek, B.C. to Whitehorse, Yukon. Liard Hot Springs is a "must" stop. It's a wonderful place to relax and the birding is good. The woods have lots of warblers, seven possible species of woodpeckers, and much more.

Some good news about the Alaska Highway is that plans are to pave and straighten it in 1992, the road's 50th anniversary.

Once you reach the Yukon, although there are some gravel stretches, by and large, the road is quite good. The scenery is gorgeous and truly spectacular. Just inside the Yukon border, we saw our first pair of Pacific Loons on a small lake.

Upon reaching Whitehorse, a visit to the Yukon Conservation Society can be quite rewarding. In addition to picking up books on the Dempster, trail maps, and Robert Frisch's book, "Birds of the Dempster Highway," you can obtain names of the area's birders. It was most surprising to discover how few of the local people I talked to, had ever been on the Dempster.

Whitehorse is quite an interesting and bustling community. It has many good hiking trails close to town, with a variety of habitat providing a diversity of birdlife. Finlay's book, "A Bird-Finding Guide to Canada," was most helpful here as it was throughout our trip.

Most of the traffic, especially the RVs, heads for Fairbanks, Alaska so the Klondike Highway to Dawson is noticeably less travelled. It is a good road with a few short stretches of gravel. Part of the road to Carmacks follows a valley with mountains and long lakes on both sides of the road.

North of Carmacks, Willow Ptarmigan, Spruce Grouse and Blue Grouse are seen along the road and Merlin fly overhead.

Dawson City is an interesting town and a good place to stock up before starting up the Dempster Highway. The Top of the World Highway, which goes from Dawson into Alaska, is an unforgettable drive, with vistas of tundra and forest-covered mountains that stretch endlessly.

You fill up with gas at Dempster Corners, just before heading up the highway. Once you're on the Dempster, the first and only gas station is at Eagle Plains, a distance of 353 km (220 mi.) and it's 756 km (472 miles) to Inuvik. At km 72 is Tombstone campground, surrounded by the South Ogilvie Mountains. This campground, like all those we saw in Yukon, has fine sites and lots of free, dry firewood. Nature programs are available on weekends and we found them very good. The naturalist was very well informed on both flowers and birds of the area.

Following her instructions, we made an all day hike up into the mountains to see some of the birds Frisch talks about, like Rosy Finch, Golden-crowned Sparrow and, hopefully, Surf-bird. We quickly learned a number of lessons. What looks from below as fairly uninteresting tundra, proves to be quite another proposition. Its "front lawn" appearance in reality is tussock grass with dips and rises interspersed with gullies thick with brush too high to see over. Landmarks that seemed minutes away are more like an hour off. The changeable mountain weather - one minute sunshine, the next rain showers - in shirtsleeves now, sweater and jacket the next minute - keeps you alert, to say the least. Add to this, very real and threatening Grizzly Bear signs, what started out as a carefree romp in the hills can be a much more serious project.

We found the tundra everywhere hard to traverse both because of the boggy nature of footing and the bugs that can be truly fearsome, especially when it's warm. The many streams are ideal for catching Arctic Grayling. Otters play in these rivers and, occasionally, Golden Eagles are spotted. We saw Gyrfalcons once we were north of the Arctic Circle.

I was surprised to find that, even at these northern latitudes, there were tall stands of White Spruce and Aspen on the better drained soils. Stunted Black Spruce and tundra were dominant as we began the climb to Eagle Plains, and from there to Inuvik. Eagle Plains, just south of the Arctic Circle, is called, "The Oasis," for good reasons. It has a restaurant, motel, bar, showers, laundromat, a campground and a small store as well as a fully equipped gas station. There are other campgrounds at Engineer's Creek and another about an hour's drive north of Eagle Plains.

Just beyond The Circle was a large colony of nesting Long-tailed Jaegers - probably the most brazen bird I have yet encountered. Just stepping out of the car to take a picture was enough to start them divebombing, missing my head by inches.

There are two ferries to board - first at the Peel River, and next at Arctic Red River. These get you across the Mackenzie. Between the ferries is a beautiful campground run by the Northwest Territories. Here, my wife, Claire, on a late evening stroll, decided to give her best owl call. Her call most closely resembled that of a Barred Owl, which brought more than a little laughter from me. However, it was no joke, as a pair of Mew Gulls, came flying at us, squawking, and harassed us for the next half-hour, following us along the road.

It is possible to buy groceries and gas in Fort McPherson, which is about 15 km north of the second ferry landing. From here, to Inuvik, the land is fairly flat and boggy. Its many lakes and ponds usually have ducks or loons - both Pacific and Red-throated. Barrow's Goldeneye was the common duck. Red-necked Phalaropes were numerous.

Inuvik has fine restaurants, offering northern cuisine - Arctic Char and Caribou, for example. There is also fine shopping. The road ends at Inuvik. The tree line phases out just north of the town.

HOLIDAY BEACH CONSERVATION AREA

All over Canada, there are birding areas well deserving of "Hot Spot" status, that are continually ignored by birders or, at best, visited only by a "faithful few." Usually, these areas derive their comparatively lowly status either because nobody publicizes them, or they are overshadowed by some more renowned location nearby.

A perfect example of this type of birding spot is Ontario's Holiday Beach Conservation Area - (H.B.C.A.), on the shore of the western end of Lake Erie. Some of the most sensational migration watching in North America occurs at this point which is 32 km (20 miles) south of Windsor/Detroit and about 42 km (26 miles) west of Leamington/Point Pelee.

This area received some publicity in the Spring, 1986 edition of "American Birds," pages 32 to 34, thanks to an informative article by Allen Chartier of nearby Inkster, Michigan, entitled, "Holiday Beach Provincial Park, Ontario, Canada." At that time, the location was an Ontario Provincial Park. Since then, management has been taken over by the Essex Region Conservation Authority.

One might expect that the area's proximity to Point Pelee and Pelee Island would automatically stamp it in the minds of birders as having great potential in spring migration. And, it has. But, species-hungry birders, influenced by Point Pelee's long-held reputation, and tradition-oriented as such creatures usually are, continue to swarm into the Kingsville/Pelee/Wheatley sector. More and more, in recent years, the spring migration of birders, not birds, has become a Pelee problem, especially in mid-May. If you have become disenchanted with parking problems, crowded birding areas and so on, we suggest you might be pleasantly surprised by spending some birding time, just a half-hour's drive west along Lake Erie, sampling the Holiday Beach scene.

It is in fall migration that Holiday Beach excels, and in some ways, takes second place to no other location in North America. Would you be impressed by seeing 50,000 Broad-winged Hawks, 400 Ruby-throated Hummingbirds and 15,000 Blue Jays in one day? In recent years, peak days in September have produced in excess of these numbers, plus spectacular numbers of additional raptors and other day-flying migrants. Of course, one would have to be lucky enough to be there on one of those sensational fall migration days to see that kind of numbers. But, even on an average day, there is plenty to see.

Holiday Beach is on the north shore of Lake Erie, where Big Creek empties into this sector of the Great Lakes system. The estuary is about 1 km across, and is mainly open water with cattail marsh fringes. Summering birds include Great Egret, Green-backed Heron, Virginia Rail, Sora, possibly King Rail, Common Moorhen, American Coot, Eastern Screech-Owl, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Marsh Wren among a total of about 75 breeding-season species. The fact that it is just above the 42nd parallel of North Latitude - the same as the Oregon/California boundary - emphasizes the possibility of finding Carolinian birds, both in spring migration and in summer. A pair of Bald Eagles is a feature of the summer scene.

Although a day's birding list will reflect a fine cross-section of the area's checklist potential, it is the fall migration of raptors that has generated concentrated attention on the H.B.C.A.

Because of its proximity to Michigan, birders from that state became the first established "core body" of Holiday Beach observers. The Holiday Beach Migration Observatory was founded. An ambitious and thorough migration study is carried out. By 1988, a 40-foot tower was constructed as an aid to observing migration. The H.B.M.O. publishes a quarterly newsletter called, "The Northwind." Latest we have
(Continued on Page 11)

To fly up to the Arctic coast, based on 1987 arrangements, Aklack Airways and Ken Baren Airways offered the best deals. The cost was \$85.00 round trip. You could leave in the morning and return in the afternoon or evening. Charter flights cost the same but allowed only a one hour stay in Tuktoyaktuk. To fly to Herschel Island was \$250.00 (1987) for a same-day return flight.

These flights take you over part of the Mackenzie Delta, one of the largest such physiographic formations in the world. The countless lakes and pingos (large mounds caused by upswelling permafrost) and the sheer vastness of the landscape is an awesome sight. The Arctic Ocean, with its glass-like surface was more like Lake Erie than what we expected of an ocean.

In the town of Inuvik, there were Lapland and Smith's Longspurs, and Snow Buntings, already in fall plumage, even in mid-July. Redpolls and White-crowned Sparrows abounded. We were surprised to find both Cliff Swallows and Bank Swallows along the coast.

To see birds like Red Phalarope, Yellow-billed Loon, Parasitic Jaeger, Sabine's Gull, one is advised to go either to the Arctic Islands or more remote parts of the coast.

Once up in the Arctic, you are pretty much on your own as very few people know anything about the birdlife. In all, I saw 87 species between the B.C./Yukon border and Inuvik. I missed quite a few I'd expected. (Ed.Note: What's new?)

I definitely plan to return to the north. The emptiness and wildness of the landscape has a very strong personal attraction."

 Wethank Jim McAllister for this folksy and informative account of what was obviously a most enjoyable and rewarding trip. Doesn't it make you want to leave as soon as possible? Maybe -- some day --!

Holiday Beach Conservation Area - Continued from Page 10.
 on membership cost is \$8.00 U.S. per year. Send remittance or inquiries to Carl Sibert, 14220 Brentwood, Livonia, Michigan, U.S. 48154.

In the 1986 fall season, almost 700,000 birds were observed, representing 172 species, of which 84,135 were raptors and 323,000 were Blue Jays.

At the end of 1988, raptor statistics were published, showing the following:

<u>Species</u>	1988 <u>Total</u>	15-year <u>Average</u>	<u>Peak Dates</u>
Turkey Vulture	12,365	5,240	Oct.1st to 21st.
Osprey	97	83	Aug 30th to Oct.3rd.
Bald Eagle	37	24	Aug.30th to Nov.12th.
Northern Harrier	1,006	701	Sept.2nd to Nov.28th.
Sharp-shinned Hawk	16,158	13,903	Sept.12th to Oct.9th.
Cooper's Hawk	903	562	Sept.15th to Oct.28th.
Northern Goshawk	14	32	Oct.1st to Nov.20th
Red-shouldered Hawk	1,111	914	Oct.10th to Nov.20th.
Broad-winged Hawk	27,240	39,762	Sept.12th to 20th.
Red-tailed Hawk	7,494	6,777	Oct.9th to Nov.22nd.
Rough-legged Hawk	106	145	Oct.28th to Nov.28th.
Golden Eagle	35	27	Oct.17th to Nov.21st.
American Kestrel	3,571	3,309	Sept.2nd to Oct.9th.
Merlin	42	20	Sept.13th to Oct.17th.
Peregrine Falcon	15	15	Sept.19th to Oct.6th.

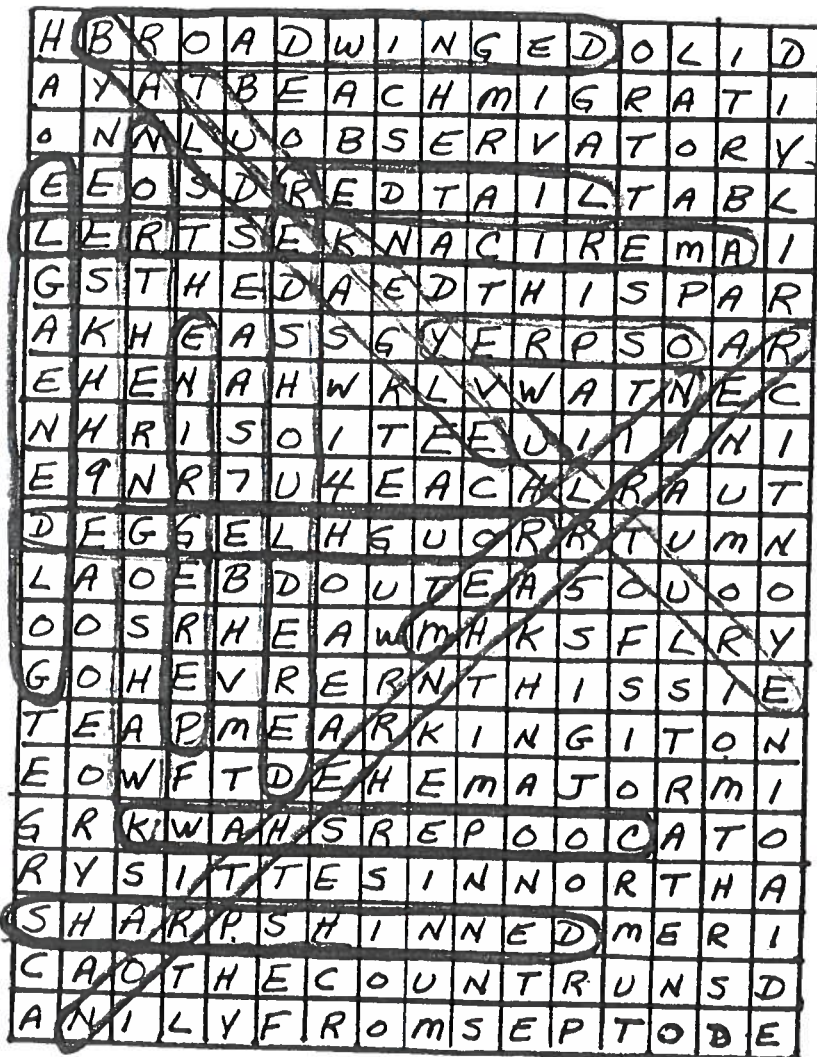
To reach Holiday Beach, follow Highway # 18 to Malden Center, turn south on County Road 50 and follow this to the entrance. There may be a small fee.

We thank Robert Hawker, of Chatham, Ontario, Canadian Director of Holiday Beach Migration Observatory, for most of the information in this article.

SEARCH for the RAPTORS

by Anne Barbour

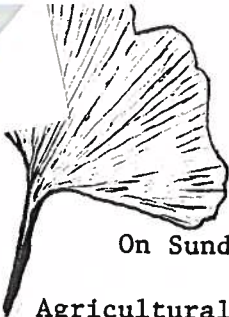
ANSWERS:




SECRET MESSAGE:
 Holiday Beach
 Migration
 Observatory
 established this
 park as a hawk watch
 site in 1974. Each
 autumn about 50,000
 hawks fly over this
 site making it one
 of the major
 migratory sites in
 North America. The
 count runs daily
 from Sep to De.

FIELD TRIP TO THE HARROW AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH STATION

Don G. Bissonnette



On Sunday, October 1, 1989 an E.C.F.N.C. field trip was held at the Harrow Agricultural Research Station. Sunny, mild weather greeted the 15 field trippers.



A tour of the grounds was conducted by Don Bissonnette, a contract employee with the station. The group was introduced to a wide variety of vegetation. Uncommon native trees such as Butternut and Kentucky Coffee Tree were found. Non-native specimens were also discovered such as Korean Evodia and Ginkgo. Special attention was paid to trees and shrubs which attract wildlife.

There was a brief, but interesting tour of the weather station. The highlight of the day seemed to be the courtyard, a beautifully landscaped space with an assortment of trees, shrubs, vines and flowers.

Nuts and seeds were collected by most of the field trippers. Obviously, some are hoping to establish their own forests for future E.C.F.N.C. field trips!

DONATIONS TO ERIE WILDLIFE RESCUE

The following items are always needed by the foster parents on Erie Wildlife's raccoon team.

- HEAVY PLASTIC "PIG FEEDERS" - These are available at the Co-op, and are similar to self-dispensing rabbit feeders, except that they come in a much larger size.
- LARGE WIRE OR PLASTIC TRAYS - Erie Wildlife use the kind breadmen carry to make in-store deliveries. They fill them with straw and use them as litter pans.
- STURDY BABY TOYS, FOOTBALLS, - Various toys really take a beating when played with
SOCCER OR BASKETBALLS by mischievous raccoons.
- LONG "BARBECUE TYPE" EGG
TURNERS OR HAND HELD, - These make ideal "Pooper Scoopers".
FIREPLACE SHOVELS
- OTHER ITEMS: WELDING GLOVES and LEATHER LINERS --- ROASTING PANS (for raccoon food)
--- OLD FASHIONED METAL WASH TUBS

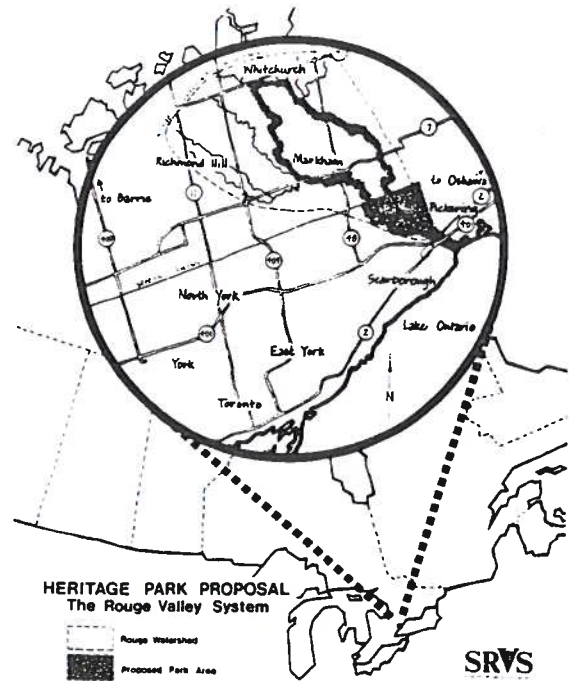
DOG FOOD DONATIONS of \$10.80/per bag may be made to Erie Wildlife Rescue, R.R. #4, Box 72, Amherstburg. N9V 2Y9. Income tax receipts will be issued.

Donations of the following would be appreciated: BLANKETS -- DISH SOAP -- LAUNDRY DETERGENT -- BLEACH -- SCOTT TOWELS -- KLEENEX -- GREEN GARBAGE BAGS -- NAILS -- WOOD -- FENCING -- SUNFLOWER SEEDS -- ACORNS -- BEEF HEART -- FRUIT -- HUSKED WALNUTS -- CAT FOOD -- CORN -- FISH -- BIRD SEED

If Essex County Field Naturalists' Club members wish to make donations, please bring in items to our next meeting and a donation box will be available.

Why is the Rouge of National Importance?

Areas within the proposed Rouge Provincial Park have been designated by the World Wildlife Fund of Canada as "Critical unprotected natural areas". The Rouge, the last significant wildlife area remaining in Metropolitan Toronto, is home to: white-tailed deer, coyotes, beaver, porcupine, otter, mink, 78 species of breeding birds (including cooper hawks, red-tailed hawks, woodpeckers, screech owls, and great-horned owls), over 35 species of fish (including rainbow, brown trout and 2 nationally rare species), over 440 native plant species (including 3 nationally rare species), 63 identified archaeological sites (some of national and international significance, and some 9,000 years old), heritage farms, Metropolitan Toronto's largest continuous forest, and last remaining class II wetland. This priceless inheritance is accessible by public transit to everyone in the Greater Toronto Area. All of this is endangered by proposed urban development, highways and garbage dumps.



You can help Save the Rouge Valley System by:

- 1) Writing the following important people and urging them to save this national wildlife treasure by establishing the proposed Rouge Valley System Provincial Park:

Premier Peterson	Room 281, Main Building, Queen's Park, Toronto, M7A 1A2
John Sweeney	Minister of Housing, 777 Bay St., 10th floor, Toronto, M5G 2E5
Lyn McCleod	Minister of Natural Resources, 99 Wellesley St. W, Rm 6301, Toronto, M7A 1W3
Bill Wrye	Minister of Transport, 77 Wellesley St. W, 3rd floor, Toronto, M7A 1A2
Chris Ward	Minister of Government Services, 77 Wellesley St. W, 12th floor, Toronto, M7A 1N3
Jim Bradley	Minister of Environment, 135 St. Clair Ave. W, 15th floor, Toronto, M4V 1P5
Alan Tonks & Metro Councillors	c/o SRVS, Rm 11, 280 Manse Rd, Scarborough, M1E 3V4

- 2) Expressing your opinion publically and writing letters-to-the-editor to:

Toronto Star	The Editor, 1 Yonge Street, Toronto, M1V 1W3
Toronto Sun	The Editor, 333 King St. E., Toronto, M5A 3X5
Globe & Mail	The Editor, 444 Front St. W., Toronto, M5V 2S9

- 3) Advertising the Rouge - SRVS "Wild in the City" sweatshirts or t-shirts make great gifts, and help spread the message.
- 4) Become a member of the SRVS. Every new member helps us send a stronger message to the government.

SRVS MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Save the Rouge Valley System

Enclosed is my \$15.00 membership fee to help Save the Rouge Valley System. My membership fee includes a subscription to the newsletter "NEWS OF THE ROUGE". If I can assist the SRVS in volunteer activities, I have listed my skills/profession/hobbies and time available in the section below.

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

City/Prov.: _____ - Postal Code: _____

Skills: _____ Avail(hrs/wk): _____

Please make cheque payable to: **SAVE THE ROUGE VALLEY SYSTEM**

And send to: Membership Director
76 Sir Lancelot Drive

(P) Markham Ontario L3P 2J2

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BATTLE FOR THE ROUGE

You don't have to be a topnotch environmentalist to appreciate the importance of greenspace, especially when you live in and around Canada's largest city and notice the greenspace around you disappearing with the passing of time. And you certainly don't have to be an expert environmentalist to fight city hall to try and put a halt to that disappearance.

The battle for the Rouge River Valley System is an inspiring example of how people have rallied to the defense of one small valley system. The Rouge Valley System enters Lake Ontario on the eastern border of Metropolitan Toronto and extends north through Markham into its headwaters north of Whitchurch-Stouffville and Richmond Hill. The Rouge — as the area is commonly called — survives as a spectacular green oasis on the edge of a concrete jungle. This last significant tract of greenspace in Metropolitan Toronto contains a species diversity and richness found in few other places in Ontario (see first sidebar).

On November 2, 1987, the Save the Rouge 

by CATHY GREGORIO and GLENN DE BAEREMAEKER



Valley System (SRVS) saw the culmination of a coordinated effort to preserve the Rouge crystallize before its eyes. More than 1,200 people attended a City of Scarborough council meeting that was called to determine the fate of the environmentally significant valley system, and their support was the determining factor that swayed the council's decision in favour of preservation.

But this is not where the battle to preserve the Rouge began. In what was a typical grassroots beginning, SRVS started in 1975 with a meeting of 17 people representing various communities. They felt an increasingly pressing need to band together to save the Rouge Valley System and to ensure its preservation for future generations to enjoy. According to Lois James, one of the founders of the group, "Someone has to take responsibility. Once the Rouge is destroyed no one will ever be able to bring it back."

Over its 13-year history, the group has experienced its share of setbacks, including the loss of a number of the valley system's wildlife areas, but this didn't stop members from continuing their efforts.

In May 1987, the City of Scarborough's planning department released its Northeast Scarborough Land Use Study. The purpose of the study, which began in 1984, was to determine the fate of approximately 2,000 hectares of some of the most environmentally and archaeologically sensitive regions of the Rouge Valley System.

The study listed four "concepts" for the Rouge area, all of which failed to protect the Rouge Valley System for future generations.

While the Scarborough planning committee rejected the report as inadequate, environmentalists suspected that future reports would be heavily biased in favour of developers unless the community expressed its support for saving the Rouge.

SRVS volunteers and members immediately set to work planning a rally to encourage public awareness and participation in the preservation

of the area. A flyer was created and distributed, press kits were sent out notifying the media about the rally, and information kits with covering letters were delivered to politicians, government officials, environmental groups, and community groups.

The rally was held on July 18, 1987, only three weeks after volunteers received copies of the land use study. It was held in the heart of northeast Scarborough on the banks of the Rouge River, in a renown natural area called the Finch Meander. The setting, which is one of the most beautiful in the Rouge Valley, was a constant reminder of the kind of wildlife habitat rally participants were there to discuss.

A podium sat amidst the group of approximately 100 interested participants, who braved scorchingly high temperatures that day. Fourteen guest speakers came to talk about the value of the Rouge.

James Garratt, SRVS chairman at that time, started off the rally by summarizing just some of SRVS's concerns. "Our position is that the primary rural, natural, archaeological, and historic characteristics of the land will be adversely affected by urban development," he explained. "It will cause storm runoff, which in turn will pollute the river and increase erosion. The sudden increase in population by 20,000 will put pressure on the environmentally sensitive areas of the Rouge."

Other speakers at the rally included: Kevin Kavanagh of the Botany Conservation Group at the University of Toronto, explaining the importance of northeast Scarborough as a Carolinian Life Zone; Jim Savage of the Pollution Probe Foundation, describing the area as Toronto's South Moresby; Scarborough Controller Joyce Trimmer and Alderman John Mackie (Ward 9), both showing their support by speaking on behalf of the Rouge Valley System's preservation and the need for careful planning; and Don Snow, associate coordinator of geography and outdoor education for the Scarborough Board of Education, discussing the area's educational importance.

According to Snow, the Scarborough board takes 15,000 students through the valley system on interpretive hikes each year. "Kids from a concrete jungle need a place to explore and expand," he said.

After the rally, participants stringing green or white balloons were invited to walk through a symbolic green door (actually a large green gate with a banner titled "Metro's last green door"

PHOTO BY ALAN DOBB



THE ENVIRONMENTAL WEALTH OF THE ROUGE VALLEY SYSTEM

The environmental wealth of the Rouge is mind-boggling. It is the last significant wildlife area remaining in Canada's most heavily populated city. It is home to: white-tailed deer, red foxes, coyotes, screech owls, porcupines, beavers, bats, 78 species of breeding birds (18 of which are regionally rare species), 35 species of fish (including nine regionally rare species), 16 species of mammals, 15 species of reptiles, 37 species of aquatic invertebrates, and 440 native species of plants (including 92 regionally rare species).

The Rouge is also a breeding area for the red-shouldered hawk, a nationally rare species as identified by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC). As well, the area contains spawning grounds for two nationally rare fish species, the red-sided dace and the central stone-roller, as identified by COSEWIC, and contains more than 10 nationally rare plant species.

Also found in the area are: 16 environmentally sensitive areas as designated by the city; archaeological sites ranging in age from 300 to 5,000 years, Metro Toronto's largest continuous forest; the only naturally exposed portion of the 420-million-year old Whitby Geological Formation; Metro's last Class II wetland; Metro's cleanest river system; and Metro's cleanest beach.

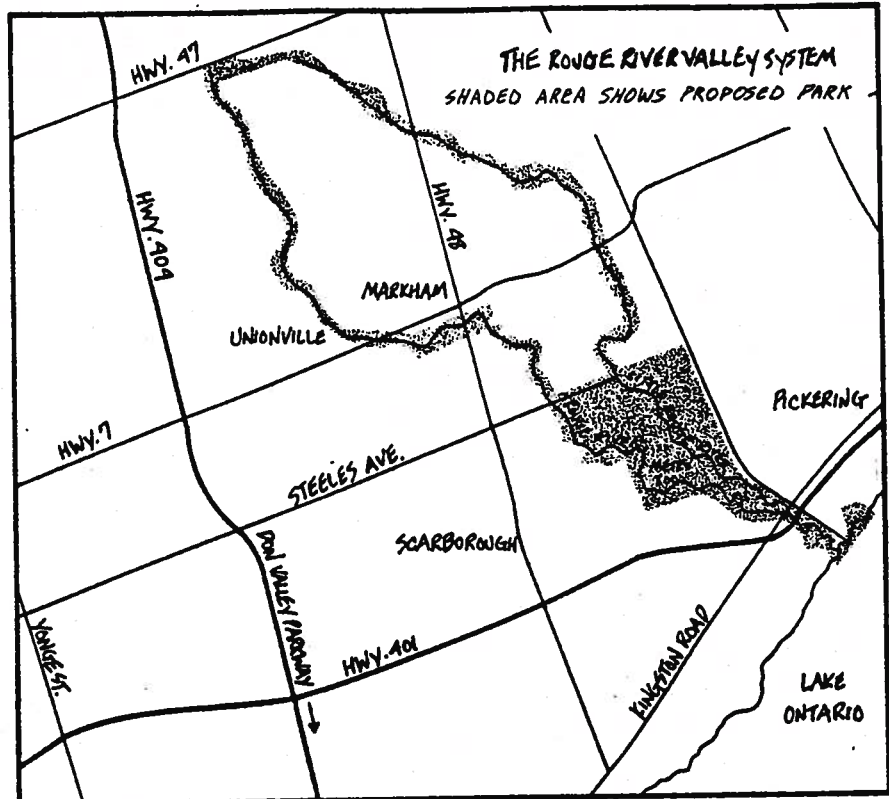
stretched above it) to express their concern. This gesture provided an appropriate photo opportunity for the media. SRVS volunteers set up information displays and passed around a petition addressed to Scarborough council requesting the preservation of the Rouge, environmentalists led nature walks through the beautiful surrounding area, and spokespeople for the rally answered questions from the media.

SRVS volunteers formed a committee to meet on a regular basis. They set to work implementing a strategy aimed at combining community participation with involvement in the decision-making process. A "phone tree" was established for notifying SRVS members, other environmental groups, key officials, and community groups during crisis events. Flyers explaining the issue and suggesting courses of action were distributed. Interested individuals were encouraged to write letters expressing their concerns to appropriate government officials. Copies of the petition were distributed throughout the community and later collected. Nature walks for the public were given on the last Sunday of each month, and a general out-reach program was established to give presentations to educational groups, community groups and other environmental groups.

As a result of all this activity, in August the Scarborough planning department released a new land use report listing seven concepts. It included five different housing concepts, one recreational concept and one concept that would see the valley system not changed at all. While some SRVS members originally preferred no change at all, it was soon realized that this concept did not guarantee long-term environmental protection because it left the door open for future rezoning. A consensus was then quickly reached that the recreational concept, concept 2, provided the best protection.

This concept was seen by SRVS as an acceptable compromise that would allow people to have access to the area, yet, at the same time, provide long-term protection of the valley system. It also supported a Metropolitan Toronto 10-year concept plan for recreational needs, approved in principle by Metro council, which recommended that the Rouge area be used for recreation only.

The report was presented at a City of Scarborough planning meeting on September 3, 1987. SRVS volunteers and members managed to encourage 250 concerned people to come out to that meeting to hear discussions about the report. SRVS, among other groups, made a



statement supporting concept 2. At the end of the meeting, the planning committee voted to recommend concept 2 to Scarborough council for approval.

By the time the planning committee's recommendation was presented at a meeting of the Scarborough council on September 21, SRVS had managed to get 800 individuals to attend the meeting and show their support for the preservation of the Rouge. It was the largest publicly attended council meeting in the history of the City of Scarborough. More than 30 environmentalists, community group representatives and individuals queued up to speak on behalf of the area. The response threw Scarborough council off guard, and they decided to adjourn leaving a final decision on whether or not to accept the recreational concept until a special meeting, on November 2, when the remainder of the speakers could be heard.

After attending the September 21 meeting, Ron Moeser, president of the West Rouge Community Ratepayers Associations, set to work forming a coalition of Scarborough community associations to help preserve the Rouge. His community had expressed an interest in the preservation of northeast Scarborough, and Moeser decided that it was an interest that warranted immediate action. He organized a meet-

ing of every registered ratepayer group in Scarborough in October, where he presented the idea that communities have to make decisions regarding the quality of life they will accept and the values that are important to them. He presented the views expressed by SRVS and other interested groups, stressing the importance of the Rouge as a unique natural habitat on the outskirts of urbanization.

He managed to gain the support of all 46 ratepayers associations in Scarborough, representing approximately 220,000 people. He was elected chairman of the newly formed Coalition of Scarborough Community Associations and immediately set about working with SRVS by setting up meetings to communicate with the appropriate government officials involved and with community service groups. He later gained the support of other ratepayer coalitions in and around Metropolitan Toronto.

As the November 2 council meeting drew closer, SRVS held a number of events to increase public involvement in the issue. A nature walk was organized for the public, information display booths were set up at special events, including the Markham Fair, a Ride-A-Thon was held to raise funds, and a tree-planting ceremony was held for the public, with Eddie Benton-Banai, Grand-Chief of the Three Fires Society native

heritage group. Further, a Markham chapter of SRVS was formed, and volunteers sold hundreds of Save the Rouge Valley System sweatshirts with the "Wild in the City" slogan, which made the battle readily recognizable across the city.

One hour before the November meeting was to begin, people arrived to find the 250-seat gallery already full. Chairs, hundreds of chairs, were being set up outside the fishbowl-shaped chambers. The air was filled with excitement as hundreds of people recounted stories of memorable times in the valley system.

Some remembered wildlife sightings, others Hurricane Hazel, a few their first date, and still others their favourite swimming holes or swamps. Each person had a memory, each person had a story to tell about this politician or that politician. Each gave a rundown on their local alderman and on how it would never be their alderman who would destroy the Rouge. "Not mine," said one, "I went over to his house this morning just to make sure he knew my family was coming."

These people had come for a reason. If any local politician dared vote to destroy the Rouge, they wanted to be there to witness it. One frail woman in her mid-80s said to those around her, "I saw my alderman on the weekend and asked him if he remembered me. He said, 'Yes, you're the woman at the senior citizens' home who didn't eat any cake at our party there.' I said, 'That's right, and how you vote on the Rouge will determine how I vote for you in the next election.'" The circle of people chuckled. "And I'm just here to congratulate him when he votes the way he said he would," she said. More warm chuckles. As these conversations continued, a sea of people engulfed the council chambers. In all, more than 1,200 people would cram the chambers and surrounding halls. It was the largest gathering of people at a council meeting in the history of Scarborough, breaking the previous attendance record set by Rouge supporters at the September 21 council meeting.

One alderman commented on his way into the council chambers, "Geeze, even my own daughter is here, and she didn't come to my swearing-in ceremony." Another alderman said, "My four-year-old niece phoned me today and told me to save the Rouge and to make sure I wasn't late for the meeting."

Speaker after speaker after speaker supported preservation of this important environmental area. The outpouring of concern made a lasting impression on the Scarborough aldermen. The

WHAT PEOPLE HAVE SAID

The Developers Have Their Say

There are only two developers - who between them own about two percent of the area in Northeast Scarborough - that oppose the idea of the province using this publically owned land to create a park. Joe Lebovic, the largest and richest developer in Scarborough says, "This land is too valuable to be conserved for the environmental people." He is in favour of building estate homes because the Scarborough planning staff have identified a shortage of millionaires living in Scarborough. Further, he has told Scarborough council that, "If you don't allow housing in this area I'm going to put up a sign saying, 'if it weren't for the white-tailed deer you'd be home by now.'" Of the 17 people who sit on council only one, Mayor Gus Harris, agreed with Lebovic. Harris told a group of 800 people, "It's the asphalt jungles that pay taxes...so that people can look at reindeers, blue herons and wild canaries." He also said, "Anyone who wants 5,000 acres as a place for reindeer and white-tailed doves to fly around is impractical."

The Environmentalists Have Their Say

Every major environmental organization has expressed its support for preserving the Rouge. For example, Steven Price of the World Wildlife Fund stated, "The Rouge River Valley System is important to all of Canada." And Marion Strebick of the Federation of Ontario Naturalists asked Scarborough council, "Why in the world wouldn't we want nature left here so we don't have to watch it on T.V.?" As well, Linda Ervin of the Sierra Club of Eastern Canada stated, "This is the last chance any council in Metro will have to set aside space for future generations."

vote was taken five minutes before midnight: 16 to one in favour of preserving the Rouge Valley System by allowing only recreational uses in the area.

Thirteen years of work had finally paid off. The city voted to create legislation that would protect the valley system forever.

Before the dust settled from the victory in the Scarborough council chambers, SRVS volunteers were preparing for the next round of the fight. Volunteers knew that developers would continue to lobby for estate housing in the area. As the Rouge is located in Canada's most heavily populated city, private developers stand to reap millions of dollars in profits if they can convince the provincial government, which owns almost 90 percent of the land, to sell it to them. As far as they are concerned the land is being wasted. Since the province owns most of the land, volunteers knew that the Ontario cabinet would have the final decision on the fate of the Rouge Valley System.

Deer, porcupines and beavers don't make money. Joe Lebovic, one of the two developers in the Rouge - who between them own about two percent of the area - stated at one meeting, "If you don't let me build I'm going to erect a sign saying 'If it weren't for the white-tailed deer you would be home by now.'" The lawyers

for the other developer, Runnymede Development Corporation, have repeatedly told Scarborough council that they intend to build in the Rouge.

SRVS members and local community groups realized that the local legislation was not enough to ensure preservation of the Rouge - especially since people speculated that the provincial government might take the unusual step of overturning this municipal decision. After careful consideration and study, SRVS decided that even stronger legislation must be put into place to protect the Rouge in perpetuity. Stronger legislation means a formal park designation at the provincial or national level.

After extensive consultation with numerous individuals, experts and organizations, SRVS created a proposal for a Rouge Valley System Canadian Heritage Park. The proposed heritage park included 4,330 hectares of the 330-square kilometre watershed. This represents a small but essential tract of land which will ensure permanent protection of the river system from its headwaters to its mouth at Lake Ontario. This concept would mean that municipal, provincial and federal legislation would designate the Rouge lands as a park. According to the proposal, the park "will protect for future generations what our native people have protected for over 10,000 years."

The heritage park is conceived to be a joint venture between the federal and provincial governments in cooperation with local municipalities. Organizers requested federal involvement for two main reasons. First, the area contains numerous nationally and provincially rare wildlife species which need to be protected for the well-being of our nation. The second reason is that the Rouge is the last remaining wildlife area within Canada's most heavily populated city. If this large block of voting public is denied access to a wildlife area, many of its citizens may never have the chance to view nature and thereby develop a conservation ethic. Such an ethic is vital from a national perspective if citizens are to make well-informed decisions regarding the environment.

Requesting federal involvement was a risk the SRVS environmentalists feared. If the federal government rejected the park proposal or denied the national importance of the area, the park concept could be quickly squashed. Nevertheless, the request for federal involvement was sent to Environment Minister Tom McMillan. Several nervous weeks passed with no response. Then came a phone call from one official which gave the environmentalists a glimmer of hope. The official was astounded at the extensive documentation contained in the proposal. "I can't believe this, it's incredible; they should be paying you guys for this stuff," he stated. Not much else was said.

A few weeks later, another government official phoned in awe: "I lived in Toronto for 25 years and had no idea this place existed. Are you sure this is in Toronto?" SRVS staff were sure. Then at a meeting with Pauline Browes, parliamentary secretary to McMillan, an even brighter ray of hope broke through. Browes stated: "You know I see a lot of issues cross my desk, and this one jumps out as needing attention. I can't believe anyone would want to destroy this area." She promised to bring the matter to the attention of the minister and to attempt to arrange a meeting.

A meeting was arranged for mid-April 1988. The tour that day visibly impressed the minister. At one point he removed his T-shirt in order to change into a "Wild in the City-Save the Rouge Valley System" sweatshirt in front of the delighted guides. McMillan commented to one reporter, "I'm tremendously impressed. It's reminiscent of some of the finest wilderness I've seen in the country. It's much more rugged than I had expected. The wilderness is more majestic

than I would have imagined."

The minister also expressed shock that this publicly owned area was in danger of being sold to private developers. "There are ecological features there that are not just of local importance, but of national and indeed international significance, and I would hate to see such splendor just levelled for private gain," he said. "Surely the public interest has to be factored into the equation."

Another step forward had been taken. McMillan promised to follow up saying, "I'm going to explore every forum and instrument at the federal level to see how we can be of assistance to those who want to save the Rouge Valley."

As of mid-1988 the consensus continues to grow. Ironically, it is the Ontario provincial government - which originally designated a large part of the Rouge as a regional park in 1974, but

then never implemented its own decision - which is now considering selling the land to private developers and allowing the construction of million-dollar mansions in the middle of the valley system.

In the battle for the Rouge, where the grass-roots are pitted against vested financial interests, SRVS feels that there is only one path that will lead to environmental protection and victory: that path is citizen action. The only way the Rouge Valley System will be protected is if people take action. It is crucial that this be done as soon as possible since a decision on these lands is likely to be made in 1988. It is citizen action, and only citizen action, that convinced Scarborough politicians that the Rouge was important. Similar action must now occur at the provincial level.

Only two futures are possible for the Rouge Valley System: one as an incredibly rich environmental area protected forever; and one as a manicured subdivision of expensive houses.

Each person reading this article has a personal choice to make. Take action, by writing letters and making phone calls, and thereby help to see this unique and spectacular area preserved for future generations. Or, take no action, and hang your head in shame when future generations ask why there is nothing left.

Perhaps the battle for the Rouge was best summed up by Eddie Benton Banai, Grand Chief of the Three Fires Society, at the November 2, 1987, council meeting. While speaking in support of the efforts to protect the Rouge, he said, "Ultimately, it is the earth - which has supported us and loved us and caressed us - that we must now stand up for, for she is under the gravest danger ever in the history of man."

(Save the Rouge Valley System urges people to phone or write to: Premier David Peterson, Room 281, Legislative Building, Toronto, M7A 1A1 (416) 965-1941; Vincent Karrio, Minister of Natural Resources, 6th Floor Whitney Block, 99 Wellesley St. W., Toronto M5G 2E5, (416) 965-1301; and Richard Patten, Minister of Government Services, 77 Wellesley St. W., 12th Floor, Toronto M7A 1N3 (416) 965-1101. For further information, contact SRVS at 2239 Lawrence Avenue East, Scarborough M1P 2P7 (416) 288-8730.)



Cathy Gregorio is the executive director of Save the Rouge Valley System. Glenn De Baeremaeker is the researcher for the group.

DEVELOPERS STALL ROUGE PARK

Although Ontario Premier David Peterson has repeatedly stated his government's commitment to save the Rouge River Valley System, strong pro-development lobbying efforts have so far blocked any announcement of a proposed Rouge provincial park. In fact, a year has passed since the federal government offered \$10 million to the province to help establish such a park.

Proponents of urban sprawl are increasing the pressure on the Ontario government to exploit the publicly owned greenspace surrounding the Rouge for a highway, a garbage dump and dozens of subdivisions. "Powerful developers expect taxpayers to foot the enormous economic, social and environmental costs of destroying one of Toronto's most significant wildlife areas while they collect windfall profits from their speculative rural land holdings," says Cathy Gregorio, the volunteer coordinator of the Save the Rouge Valley System (SRVS).

Developers Apply Pressure

Developers have many ways of influencing urban planning. Official records on the latest municipal elections in Metro Toronto indicate that more than 75 percent of political campaign contributions were made by developers. Developers also attend many political fundraising functions that provide them with friendly access to government decision makers.

Some developers appear to have an even closer and more disturbing relationship with the Ontario government. "The recent scandals that have rocked the Peterson government may reveal just the tip of the iceberg in terms of developers and government ties," says SRVS volunteer David Bailey.

In one case, Peterson's top political aide,

Gordon Ashworth, resigned after admitting he had accepted a refrigerator and home improvements from a company related to Tridel, a major development corporation.

Another scandal involves allegations that influential developer Marco Muzzo received inside information and special attention in his efforts to obtain a lucrative billion-dollar contract to dispose of Metro Toronto's garbage. According to the *Toronto Globe and Mail*, Muzzo attempted to recruit members of Peterson's family into his firm, which is bidding for the Metro garbage contract.

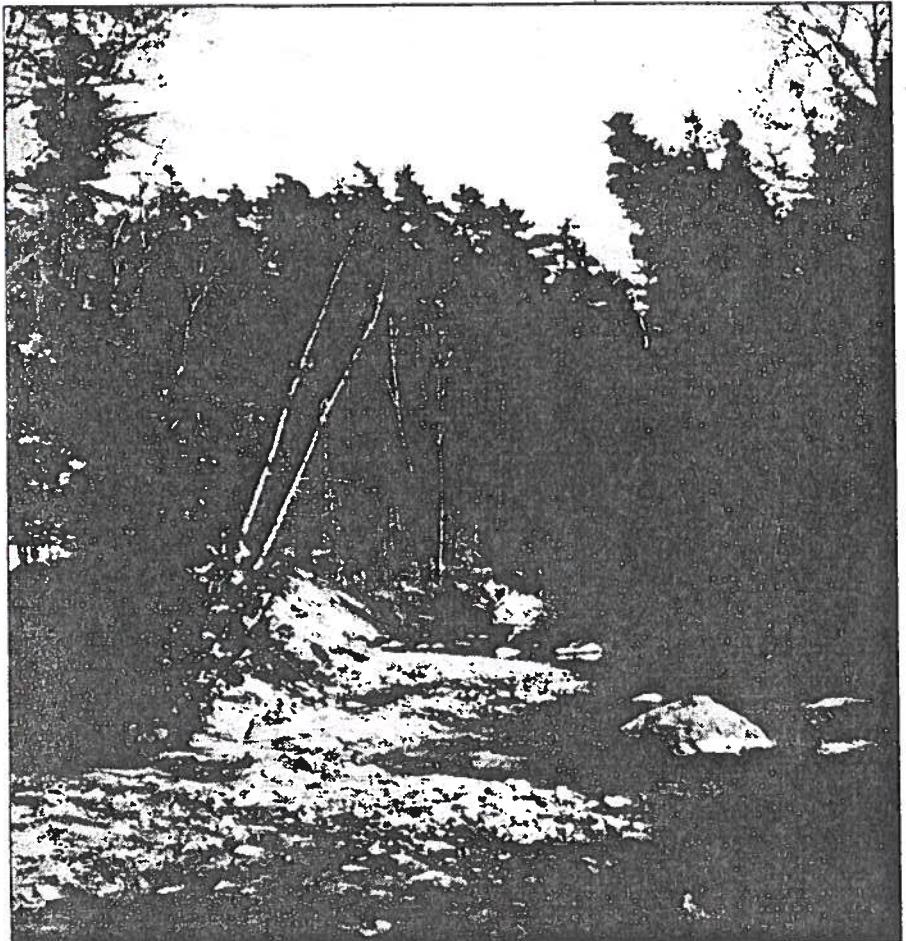
Articles in Toronto newspapers also indicate that Muzzo donated more than \$100,000 to the Ontario Liberal party during the last election, and that he was involved in securing a loan for the multimillion dollar purchase of the premier's family electronics business.

"Mr. Muzzo and several other influential developers have acquired large land holdings around the Rouge Valley System, and they are pressuring the Ontario government to service these properties with roads and sewers," says Steve Marshall, head of the Markham chapter of SRVS.

The Public Fights Back

Thousands of citizens from all walks of life have joined the battle to save the Rouge. These citizens are determined to counteract the influence of developers.

And, in response to the overwhelming expression of public concern for the preservation of the Rouge, Scarborough council voted unanimously on July 11, 1988, to zone 5,000 acres of Rouge Valley and surrounding table-



by JIM ROBB and
GLENN DE BAEREMAER

More than 15,000 Metro Toronto students study environmental science at the Hillside Outdoor Education Centre, located by the Rouge River.



PHOTO BY JIM ROBB

lands for "natural environment and rural" uses only.

Although this decision buoyed the spirits of Rouge supporters tremendously, and despite support from the federal government and from the municipalities of Scarborough, Markham, Pickering, and Whitchurch-Stouffville, all of which have voted unanimously to support the provincial park concept, a comprehensive conservation strategy for the Rouge is still lacking.

The area's survival depends on provincial plans for the more than 12,000 acres of Rouge woodlands, wetlands and farmlands that were expropriated by the federal government in the mid-1970s. Much of these lands were originally brought into public ownership for the establishment of a regional park and an agricultural buffer zone around the proposed Pickering airport development.

Several options for the future of the Rouge area have been presented to Premier Peterson and the Liberal cabinet.

One option is to establish the provincial park, an idea proposed by SRVS. The 10,760 acre park would protect 12 percent of the Rouge watershed. Approximately 75 percent of the proposed park area is already publicly owned.

The other options involve the establishment of a "token" park that would be surrounded by various combinations of a proposed six-to-eight-lane highway, a proposed 18-million-

tonne Metro Toronto garbage dump, and proposed housing subdivisions.

Provincial Highway

The most imminent threat to the Rouge is a 17-year-old plan to bulldoze a multilane "East Metro" highway through the proposed park area. The Ontario Ministry of Transport (MTO) wants the highway to serve as a Metro Toronto bypass for truck traffic, a catalyst for the development of housing on provincial lands around the Rouge, and a possible access road for any revived plans to build a new airport in North Pickering.

The proposed alignment of the highway along the west shoulder of the Rouge Valley would diminish the recreational, educational and wildlife value of five provincially designated Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs) and nationally significant Carolinian forests.

The salt spray, exhaust fumes, light, and noise from the highway would have irreversible impacts. The continued survival of the Rouge's white-tailed deer herd, two nationally rare hawks, 12 nationally rare plants, and more than 100 regionally rare forms of wildlife would be threatened.

The Rouge is currently Toronto's cleanest river and is a very good and accessible location for catching trout, salmon, bass, and a dozen

other game fish. Highway construction would trigger erosion and produce polluted runoff that would devastate the Rouge's urban "fishery" and further endanger the river's two nationally rare fish species.

Scarborough council has acknowledged the environmental destruction that would be caused by the East Metro highway by deleting it from their official plan. Although provincial officials are adamant that the highway must go through the Rouge, urban transportation planners in Scarborough and Markham believe there are viable alternatives. For example, five high-capacity railway corridors currently connect Metro with the growing towns of Markham, Stouffville and Pickering. Two commuter trains an hour in each of these rail corridors could carry more commuter traffic than the East Metro Highway.

All in all, improved and expanded public transit, innovative urban planning and upgraded arterial roads would provide a more efficient and environmentally sound means of handling interregional traffic than would bulldozing a highway through the Rouge.

New Dumpsites Possible

In 1988, engineering consultants evaluated several potential dumpsites in the Greater Toronto Area (which includes the five main

regional governments in the vicinity of Toronto) and reported to Metro council that the two proposed locations beside the Rouge were the least appropriate sites, based on seven out of eight environmental, social and safety criteria.

The report indicated that locating a dumpsite near the Rouge would negatively affect the Metro Toronto Zoo, the Hillside Outdoor Education School, two adjacent churches, dozens of rural homesteads, designated areas of special biological and cultural significance, and the water quality of the Rouge River. After careful deliberation, Metro council voted 23 to 11 to remove the Rouge locations from the list of potential garbage dumps.

Despite this decision, the new Metro council and the provincial government are again considering plans to dump millions of tonnes of garbage on Metro's last major tract of tableland greenspace. Some Metro politicians support the proposed Rouge dumpsites because they would generate millions of dollars in waste disposal "tipping fee" revenues.

Together the two proposed Rouge dumpsites cover an area of almost two square kilometres that contains: 21 homes (two historical); centuries-old forests; a regionally significant wetland; two provincially designated ESAs; more than 100 acres of fertile farmland; and significant archaeological finds.

In March of this year, the provincial government and the five Greater Toronto Area (GTA) regional chairmen announced a waste management strategy that would circumvent the objective analysis, comparison and ranking of waste disposal sites which is required under a full provincial environmental assessment. One of SRVS's founding members, Lois James, says, "Save the Rouge supporters are confident that a full environmental assessment would reveal the Rouge sites to be totally inappropriate for a garbage dump. Unfortunately, the GTA's plan to circumvent the provincial environmental assessment process could result in Metro dumping garbage beside the Rouge while a more appropriate garbage site is being underutilized."

Housing

Some developers and their allies in the provincial bureaucracy are arguing for the exploitation of the Rouge area under the guise of providing much needed affordable housing. "However, land speculation, not greenspace preservation, is more responsible for Toronto's

affordable housing problem," says Gregorio. "The Rouge area is poorly suited for affordable housing because it is remote from public services and job opportunities."

The high cost of servicing the park tablelands of the Rouge, both in environmental damage and taxpayer expense, would actually benefit the developers of estate homes, not the average citizen. The public would subsidize the construction of the new roads, sewers and affordable homes while the developers would profit from using the newly constructed infrastructure to service estate housing developments on their surrounding rural land acquisitions.

The construction of new roads, sewers and subdivisions would sever traditional wildlife corridors between the Little Rouge and Rouge River valleys, disrupt groundwater flow to the Rouge forests and streams, and desecrate a number of the ancestral villages and burial grounds of Canada's native peoples.

When Will Peterson Follow Through?

Premier Peterson has replied to questions regarding a park in the Rouge by stating, "We are going to save the Rouge, there's no question about that." Yet, despite this public pronouncement, the fate of the Rouge still hangs in the balance.

Recently, former Toronto mayor, David Crombie, endorsed the proposed Rouge park and described it as a crucial step towards wise water resource management in the Greater Toronto Area. In the interim report of his Royal Commission on the Future of the Toronto Waterfront, Crombie indicated that locating a major dumpsite or highway next to the Rouge would be repeating the costly mistakes that have polluted Toronto's Don and Humber rivers and fouled beaches and drinking water.

If Peterson's government approves a major highway, a new dumpsite or urban development within the Rouge area, it will be yielding to the vested interests of developers. Alternatively, the government can take an important step towards a brighter environmental future by establishing a provincial park.

The public eagerly awaits Premier Peterson's decision on the Rouge. ☹

Jim Robb is the chairman of Save the Rouge Valley System. Glenn De Baeremaeker is a researcher for the group.



pollution probe

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1989

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Reminiscence by
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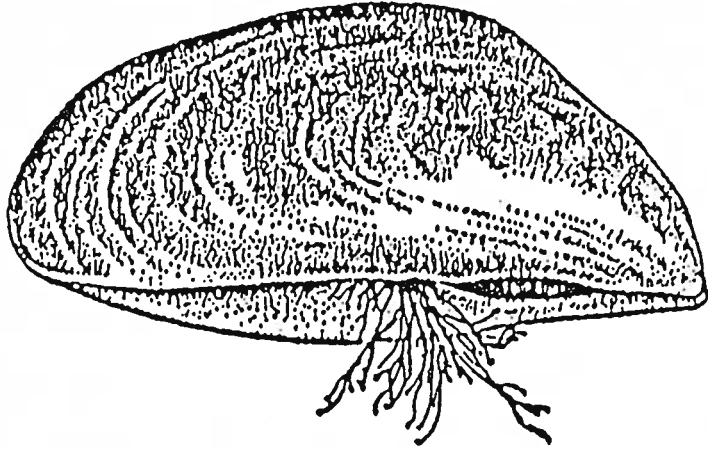
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THE ZEBRA MUSSEL - A NEW INVADER OF THE GREAT LAKES

Joe Leach



Line drawing of zebra mussel showing byssus threads used for attachment.

The zebra mussel (Dreissena polymorpha), a small bivalve mollusc native to Europe, has become established recently in the Great Lakes system. Initial colonization may have occurred in 1986, likely from larvae discharged in ballast water, but mussels were not observed in Lake St. Clair until June 1988.

Current distribution includes

Lake St. Clair, the Detroit River and Lake Erie. Several were found recently in Lake Ontario at the mouth of the Welland Canal. Dispersal is aided by a high fecundity - an adult female can lay from 30,000 to 40,000 eggs per year. The eggs hatch into motile veliger larvae which are carried by currents. The mussels attach to any solid substrate with the aid of byssus threads and, therefore, can be easily transported upstream by boats or to inland lakes by wildlife. In fact, a few specimens of the mussel have been reported from Green Bay in Lake Michigan, Duluth Harbour in Lake Superior and Cornwall in the St. Lawrence River. Boat traffic from Lake Erie is the suspected vector. All of the Great Lakes and other water bodies in North America are vulnerable to invasion. However, Lake Superior (and other northern lakes) may not be impacted severely due to limitations imposed by low water temperature and calcium content.

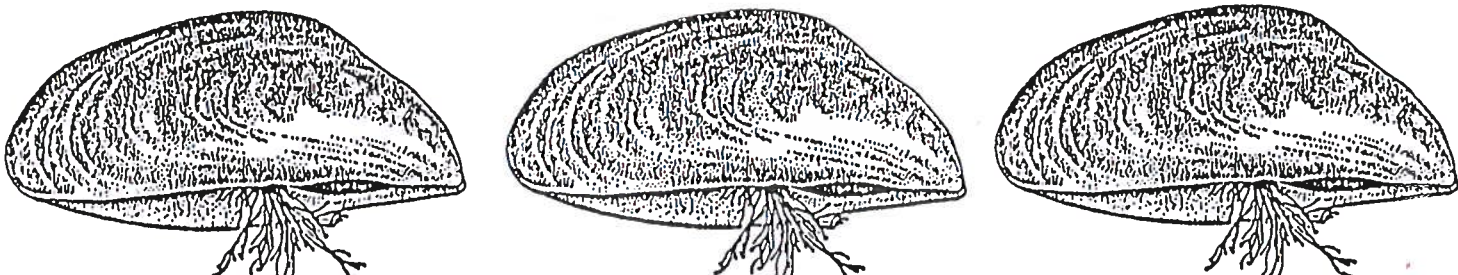
The zebra mussel is a serious pest in Europe and is rapidly becoming one in North America. One of the most harmful impacts is the colonization of intake cribs and pipes serving water treatment plants, power generating stations and industries. Many installations on Lake Erie and Lake St. Clair have already been colonized to the point where flows have been restricted. The costs involved in removing encrustations

and preventing infestations have been projected at many millions of dollars. Mechanical removal of mussels and chemical treatment (chlorination, etc.) of pipes are currently being applied. The menace is being considered in designs for new intake facilities but the added costs are considerable.

Commercial shipping and recreational boating will be affected by additional fuel costs and expenses associated with clean-up and prevention of fouling.

Impacts on the fishing industry may be substantial. Impoundment type fishing gear in Lake Erie is being encrusted during summer and fall and requires frequent lifting and cleaning. The hulls of fishing tugs require annual cleaning. Important spawning reefs for walleye in the western basin have been colonized by mussels - up to 30,000 per m² in some areas. The impact of this fouling on fish reproduction is not yet known but egg survival could be affected by high organic matter levels in the mussel shoals. Water clarity in the western and central basins of Lake Erie has doubled in 1989 over that of recent years, probably due to the filtering ability of the zebra mussel. The clearing of the water may seem to be a positive effect but there is concern about the long term effects of shifting so many food particles from the water column to the lake bottom. The zebra mussel is now the predominant invertebrate in Lake Erie and it is not yet known what effect this shift in energy will have on the invertebrate and fish communities. If the walleye population is affected the economic consequences could be substantial.

There are a few natural predators of the mussel - fish, diving and dabbling ducks, crayfish - but predation is not expected to reduce abundance substantially. If the zebra mussel population follows the usual growth curve for an invading organism we can expect future abundance to fluctuate down to some lower level. However, this pest will likely remain firmly established in the Great Lakes and we will have to learn to live with it.



E.C.F.N.C. Dinner Meeting and Auction November 11, 1989

The E.C.F.N.C. wishes to acknowledge the generous donations which the following persons and publishers have made to our dinner meeting. All the contributions were very much appreciated and ensured the success of our fifth annual dinner meeting.

BOOK DONATIONS

America's neighborhood bats, by Merlin D. Tuttle / donated by Scholarly Book Services Inc. (Toronto)

The Arctic wolf : living with the pack, by L. David Meech / donated by Voyageur Press Inc. (Stillwater, Minn.)

Best hiking trails in western Newfoundland, by Keith Nicol / donated by Breakwater (St. John's Nfld.)

A book of bees, by Sue Hubbell / donated by Random House of Canada Limited (Toronto)

Botany for all ages : discovering nature through activities using plants, by Jorie Hunken / donated by Thomas Allen & Son Ltd. (Markham, Ont.)

Classic architectural birdhouses and feeders, by Malcolm Wells / donated by Malcolm Wells (Brewster, MA.)

The Costa Rica traveler, by Ellen Searby / donated by Windham Bay Press (Juneau, Alaska)

Dancing on the shore : a celebration of life at Annapolis Basin, by Harold Horwood / donated by McClelland and Stewart, Inc. (Toronto)

Dragonflies of the Florida Peninsula, Bermuda and the Bahamas / written and donated by Sidney Dunkle (Scientific Publishers)

A field guide to Eastern forests, North America, by John C. Kricher / donated by Thomas Allen & Son Ltd. (Markham, Ont.)

A field guide to the moths of eastern North America, by Charles V. Cavell / donated by Paul Pratt

A field guide to wildflowers of the southern interior of British Columbia and adjacent parts of Washington, Idaho and Montana, by Joan Burbridge / donated by The University of British Columbia Press (Vancouver)

Galapagos : discovery on Darwin's Islands, by David W. Steadman / donated by Smithsonian Institution Press (Washington, D.C.)

Harps and hoods : ice-breeding seals of the Northwest Atlantic, by David M. Lavigne / donated by University of Waterloo Press

Introduction to Canadian amphibians and reptiles, by Francis R. Cook / donated by National Museum of Natural Sciences (Ottawa)

Jaquar woman, by Melanie Watt / donated by Key Porter Books (Toronto)

- Just bats / written and donated by Brock Fenton (University of Toronto Press)
- Landscaping for wildlife, by Carrol L. Henderson / donated by Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
- The mockingbird, by Robin W. Doughty / donated by University of Texas Press (Austin, Texas)
- The moth book, by W. J. Walland / donated by Paul Pratt
- My Serengeti years, by Myles Turner / donated by Penguin Books Canada Ltd. (Markham, Ont.)
- The natural history of wild shrubs and vines, by Donald W. Stokes / donated by Thomas Allen & Son Ltd. (Markham, Ont.)
- The nature of birds, by Adrian Forsyth / donated by Firefly Books Ltd. (Toronto)
- One man's owl, by Bernd Heinrich / donated by Princeton University Press
- Ontario's wildlife, by Dave Taylor / donated by The Boston Mills Press (Erin, Ont.)
- Photographing wildflowers : techniques for the advanced amateur and professional by Craig and Nadine Blacklock / donated by Western Producer Prairie Books (Saskatoon)
- Point Pelee, by William Reynolds / donated by Point Pelee National Park
- Reader's Digest Wild Australia : a recreational guide to all our National parks / donated by The Reader's Digest Association (Canada) Ltd. (Montreal)
- Reading nature's clues : a guide to the wild, by Doug Sadler / donated by Broadview Press (Peterborough, Ont.)
- Red pandas : a natural history, by Dorcas MacClintock / donated by Collier Macmillan Canada Inc.
- Seasons of light : images of Ontario, by William Reynolds / donated by the Friends of Point Pelee
- Silver highway : a celebration of the Trans-Canada Highway, by Wes Rataushk / donated by Fitzhenry and Whiteside (Markham, Ont.)
- Squandering Eden : Africa at the edge, by Mort Rosenblum / donated by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich (New York)
- To whom the wilderness speaks, by Louise de Kirilene Lawrence / donated by Natural Heritage/Natural History Inc. (Toronto)
- The white egret, by Shingi Itoh / donated by Raincoast Books (Vancouver)
- The whooping crane : a comeback story, by Dorothy Hinshaw Patent / donated by Clarion Books (New York)
- Wild birds of Canada, by Tim Fitzharris / donated by Oxford University Press (Toronto)
- Wildflowers of America, by William Reynolds / donated by W. H. Smith (New York)
- Wolf ecology / donated by Paul Pratt

Woodworking for wildlife, by Carrol L. Henderson / donated by Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

CALENDAR DONATIONS

Audubon Nature calendar 1990 / donated by Collier Macmillan Canada Inc. (Don Mills, Ont.)

Birds : Equinox 1990 nature calendar / donated by Firefly Books Ltd. (Toronto)

Canadian nature calendar 1990 / donated by Key Porter Books (Toronto)

Glen Loates 1990 natural calendar / donated by Prentice-Hall Canada Inc. (Scarborough, Ont.)

Roger Tory Peterson birds 1990 calendar / donated by Thomas Allen & Son Ltd. (Markham, Ont.)

Sherman Hines Canadian nature diary / donated by Summerhill Press Ltd. (Toronto)

Weatherwatcher's diary, by Carol Thiessen / donated by National Museum of Natural Sciences (Ottawa)

MISCELLANEOUS DONATIONS

Aloe plant and Christmas cactus / donated by Teddy Larche

Amaryllis bulb / donated by Norris Landscaping

Apricot jam / donated by Teddy Larche

Arrowhead neptitus and prayer plant (in flower) / donated by Colasanti's Plants

Bat boxes / donated by Bondy Tool

Bird seed / donated by Sandra's Pet Food

Bonsai tree / created by Martin Foley of "Second Nature"

Crab apple jelly / donated by Anne Barbour

Cyclamen / donated by Stephen's Flowers

Decorator rooster sculpture / created and donated by Louis and Teddy Larche

Deluxe bird feeder / donated by Pelee Wings, Kingsville

Fall wreath / created and donated by Pat Watson

Hand decorated writing paper / created and donated by Anne Barbour

Handmade fall wreaths / created by Bonnie Foley

Jar of maple syrup / donated by Cozy Cabin Maple Products, Klie Family, R.R. #1, Harrow

Light bulbs / donated by Brian Barbour



Common Mullein

Loon bank / donated by Anne Barbour

Mini-world Aquarium / donated by Pets Plus, 2303 Central Avenue, Windsor

"Ports" sweater / donated by Jim Watson

Picnic cooler / donated by Frank Wansborough's Camera

Premium bird seed / donated by Discount Pet Food, 1680 Tecumseh Rd. East, Windsor

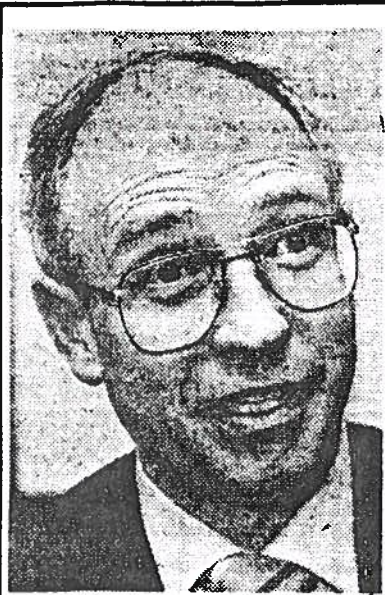
"Solitudes" cassettes and videotapes, created and donated by Don Gibson Productions Ltd. (Toronto)

Sweat shirts / donated by Frank Wansborough's Camera

Waterfowl post card collection / photographed and donated by Kit Breen Photography (Annandale, Virginia)

Wooden decorator tulip sculptures / handmade and donated by Louis Larche

Wren houses / donated by Bondy Tool



BROCK FENTON: Bat lover

Going batty on bats

By Sarah Sacheli
Star Staff Reporter

According to bat expert Brock Fenton, Aunt Mildred is a liar.

Aunt Mildred is the person who warns that bats intentionally look for hair in which to tangle themselves.

"Everyone's Aunt Mildred has had 20 in her hair at one time," Denton said. "But it's not true. It's just an old wives' tale."

Fenton dispelled this myth and others in a slide show at Essex County's Field Naturalists Club's fifth annual dinner Saturday at the Serbian Community Centre.

AN ANIMAL behavior professor at Toronto's York University and author of *Just Bats*, Fenton has travelled around the world studying the creatures, which he says suffer from a case of bad reputation.

Bats are perceived as rabid bloodsuckers who like Dracula seek out the porcelain-white necks of beautiful women.

But only three of the world's 900 species of bats are vampires. All three are found in South and Central America and would never leave their tropical environment for Canada's cooler climate.

"Think of them as souped-up mosquitoes," said Fenton, who explained they extract very little blood. "They give the rest of bats a bad name."

And he defended the honor of the 897 other varieties, which feed on insects, fruit and such.

As for rabies, bats are not carriers that are likely to infect great numbers of humans and animals. A rabid bat dies within a day or two.

THEIR SIZE IS also exaggerated. Among the most common bats found in Essex County and the rest of the country is the little brown bat which "barely fills the palm of your hand" and weighs the equivalent of a quarter and two dimes, Fenton said.

The largest species, New Guinea's fox bat, grows to a maximum of 1½ kg.

That old saying, blind as a bat, is equally false. Bats have functional eyes and better yet, they use a sophisticated system called echo location to steer themselves toward food at night. Like whales and some birds, they make sounds and listen for their echoes to sense the physical environment.

Vampire bats have an even more impressive means of finding food. In a piece of skin called a nose leaf, which makes the bat look like a unicorn, is an "infrared sensor" that lets them "know where the blood is closest to the skin," Fenton said.

In many ways, bats are superior to humans — especially reproductively.

Female bats, like female humans, give birth to one baby at a time. But bat babies at birth weigh one quarter of their mother's weight, Fenton said.

TREASURED MEMORIES OF A DEAR FRIEND, WILF BOTHAM

Collected by Anne Barbour,

November, 1989



From Paul Pratt:

As the smell of garlic wafted on the spring air at Point Pelee, Paul remembered Wilf telling him about the time he saw the first patch of garlic mustard in the park years ago. At the time, Wilf had thought to himself "Should I pull it up? No, I had better not; it has arrived here on its own." Now, with the intruder omni-present in the park, and plans underway to eradicate it, officials probably would have blessed Wilf's observant eye and ready hand.

* * * * *

From Peg Wilkinson:

On the spring, 1989 botany trip to Pelee Island, someone caught a large Wolf spider and Wilf wanted to identify it more closely. While most onlookers veered warily away from the hairy beast, Wilf pulled out his ever-ready magnifier and brought the creature within centimetres of his face. As Peg peered closely too, Wilf opened his hand to better view the spider, which immediately jumped onto Peg! She managed to keep calm, but, says she, "Had it been 10 years ago, I would have jumped 40 feet away!"

* * * * *

From Bev Wannick:

Wilf came for hikes with me several times when I lived near the Oxley Poison Sumac Swamp. Once, on a search for an orchid which Wilf thought would be in bloom we set off down the farm lane. The old apple tree was full of blossoms and the glorious fresh feeling of new spring growth was in the air. I was very anxious to find the orchid. Down the lane we crept, ever so slowly. Wilf was telling me the names of each of the plants we saw along the way. Politely I held back my anxiousness to get in the woods and find the orchid. After about a half hour and only a short distance from where we started, I mentioned to Wilf that all the plants he was naming were only weeds, and I'd really like to find the orchid. Well, Wilf looked at me with a smile and told me that these European emigrants were wildflowers in the places where they originated. I then felt very embarrassed. Even though to me these weeds were not very exciting, to Wilf, all plants were special and worth looking at.

* * * * *

From Thelma Walker:

Wilf remembered vividly the way things used to be: not just the good, or just the bad, but how it really was. Wilf's clear memory was honest, and he could compare and assess current events and methods with those of the past, and evaluate which were more beneficial or more harmful to the environment, for that was all important to him.



* * * * *



From Thelma Walker, Shannon Managhan and Anne Barbour:

Wilf's words: "There's never enough time to see and do all of the things I want to do and see."

* * * * *

From Ella Walker:

Wilf's humility was indubitable. He never flaunted his self-taught knowledge, but if someone asked him a question, he answered it to the best of his ability. The reason he was here was primarily to learn, and then to share what he knew with others who showed even the least bit of interest.

* * * * *

From Bev Wannick:

I'll never forget a discussion I had with Wilf about Latin names versus common names. Wilf, of course, knew all the Latin names of plants, and made no bones about being ignorant of their common names. He said that some plants had several different names and it was a waste of time to try to remember them all. One might just as well learn right off the universally accepted name so one could speak about plants with other botanists without confusion. On the other hand, I enjoy the common names because they are usually based on some characteristic of the plant which helps one to remember the name, and often provides interesting trivia to tell the children who come on school program field trips. I asked Wilf if Latin names were so much better, why he used the common names for birds instead of their Latin names. That made him stop momentarily and smile. He conceded to my point before saying that birding was a much more popular hobby than botany was, and the common names for birds were accepted worldwide, and there actually is a common name for all known birds; whereas the hobby of botany excites few people beyond the showy wildflowers, and therefore there are many, many plants that do not even have common names. I acknowledged his reasoning and admitted that I was one of those people who would be satisfied not knowing everything about all plants, so for me, common names were sufficient. For Wilf, however, the researcher 'par excellence', it was important always to be exact and precise.

* * * * *

From Betty Learmouth:

Two special plants for Betty will always be associated with Wilf. One, the Nodding Trillium, he first showed her at the Maidstone Conservation Area, in the spring of 1988. They walked to the deformed tree, then turned back somewhat and left the trail for the deep woods. There they were: a full circle of beautiful Nodding Trillium. After duly admiring them, Wilf, the dedicated botanist, of course had to count them. It was well that he did, for this year (1989) their numbers were down, showing obvious consequence of the spring drought of 1988.

The second special plant that will remind Betty of Wilf is the Miami Mist, a rare plant that, in Canada, grows only in the Stone Road Alvar on Pelee Island. On a spring 1987 trip to the island, Wilf guided a small group of naturalists to the Chinquapin oaks on the Stone Road Alvar under which a careful search soon uncovered the tiny blue flower with fringes on its delicate petals. Their minute size was exclaimed over, and everyone appreciated Wilf's knowledge of the locations of all the rare plants in the county.

* * * * *



From Bonnie Foley, Pat Watson, Shannon Managhan and Anne Barbour:

Wilf loved verse as much as he loved nature. After the first intensive bit of birding or botanizing, our rambles would slow to a more leisurely pace when Wilf would surprise one with an enchanting poem or shorter rhyme, that could be melancholic, cheerful or playfully witty.

* * * * *

From Bonnie Foley:

Each time Wilf saw her, he made a point of asking about her family. He always offered encouraging words and she knew he truly cared.

January 1st and the Detroit-River Christmas Bird Count just won't be the same without Wilf. Always punctual, he was there in the parking lot to greet her arrival. It was his company as much as the birding that she so looked forward to on that count. When he wasn't naming plants or calling birds, he was spouting some of his endless poetry. It made one feel so special to suddenly be the recipient of this shared pleasure.

* * * * *

From Wayne Wannick:

About 5 years ago, Mike Oldham, Wilf and Wayne travelled together to Red Bay on the Bruce Peninsula for a FON spring field trip. Since Wilf didn't travel much, he was very glad of the chance to go to this new area. All participants came back with grand memories of ferns such as the Ram's-head, Walking fern, Purple stem cliff brake, and of orchids like Northern and Striped coralroot, Lady slipper and Calypso bulbosa. Wayne, however, remembers that Wilf could be one of the guys, relaxing in the evening, sipping on a beer and talking.

* * * * *

From Anne Barbour, Betty Learmouth and Shannon Managhan:

Wilf was obstinate: although he made a point of saying that he couldn't hear a speaker or the discussion, he flatly refused to consider using a hearing aide. When mention was made that he think about it, his immediate reply was "I have thought about it!" and firmly he stood against the idea.

* * * * *

From Shannon Managhan:

When travelling to or from a field trip, Wilf would amuse her with hoots and calls of all kinds of birds, some of which he would name, others he didn't. Not the least bit inhibited, and of course encouraged by Shannon, Wilf let his boyish enthusiasm take over and produced sounds one wouldn't think possible from the human throat.

* * * * *

From Anne Barbour:

April, 1988 - Wilf and I walking through our bush when we spotted a hawk. Wilf identified it as a Red-tailed and thought it might be nesting nearby. The next minute, he threw back his head and let out a piercing cry that sounded just like the call of a Red-tailed hawk! More amazing: the hawk answered and landed nearby for us to observe.

May, 1989 - Neither Wilf nor I had ever been to Sinclair's bush in Kent County, though we had heard much about its flora. On the way there, Wilf pointed to the road to Shrewsbury, where he had worked on a farm before he was married. Through the course of a beautiful morning at Sinclair's Bush, Wilf was in his glory: exclaiming over, then identifying for me, plant after unusual plant, most of which were lifers for me.

I happily provided Wilf with plastic bags for an occasional specimen. Then, wonder of wonders, I was treated to Wilf's discovery of a lifer - a plant he had never seen before! Never satisfied until he'd seen it all, Wilf returned 4 more times to Sinclair's Bush in the next few months. In July, he proudly showed me the list of plants from Sinclair's bush that Mike Oldham had sent him with notations of additional plants Wilf had found that were not on the original list.

Metaphysical conversations with Wilf in the car on the way home from a day trip were more the rule than the exception with Wilf. He was always questioning and wondering aloud, which led to conversations about anything and everything.

Arriving back at his home in Cottam, we toured the yard looking at everything that grew. Wilf proudly showed off his plantings of wild flowers (including the Spiderwort I had given him), his garden, and the hop trees he had started from seed. As do all gardeners, Wilf shared some bulbs with me. Now, when spring arrives and the Star-of-Bethlehem twinkle up from the ground, I will smile back at the little 'Wilfs' who will remind me to get out and explore.

Walking along Point Pelee trails, Wilf was as inconspicuous as possible, but was recognized nonetheless by numerous park-goers. After one long stop to socialize with several out-of-towners who all said "Goodbye Wilf" as we parted, Wilf casually turned to me and said "Only my birding friends know me as 'Wilf'. My entire family calls me 'Wilfrid'".

The grin itching at the corner of Wilf's mouth as he asked after a day of spring birding at Pelee: "Well, Anne, how many lifers did you see today?"

Summer, 1987 - Sitting on the porch with Wilf and his friend Ernie from B.C., Wilf patiently explaining to me the difference between bedstraw and cleavers. Ernie happily showed me his list of lifers he'd seen in my bush.

Another time he came to explore our bush, Wilf brought Marie for a ride, and she sat in a lawn chair in the shade while we tramped through the woods. Then, while we all sipped on glasses of lemonade, Wilf pointed out a pair of flycatchers, unknown to me 'till then, and we watched as they flitted back and forth from dead branch tips, satiating their appetites on invisible bugs.

* * * * *

Anyone with a memory of Wilf to share, please contact Anne Barbour at 726-6560.



CLUB NEWS UPDATE

Our fifth annual dinner, attended by eighty-eight persons, was a great success. The dinner chairperson, Bonnie Foley, is to be congratulated for organizing such an enjoyable evening. Brock Fenton's talk and slide show was wonderful, and attracted media attention from CBE Radio and The Windsor Star. Peter Bondy, as a superb auctioneer, raised \$706.00, and the silent auction raised \$114.00. "Thank you" to everyone who assisted with the dinner and who made donations and helped to make this year's dinner such an outstanding success.

* * * * *

Anne Barbour again placed displays to promote the E.C.F.N.C. activities at the Main Library for the month of October. The four display cubes featured displays regarding our upcoming dinner, Brock Fenton and bats, the World Series of Birding in New Jersey and the trophy won by our local team, and the annual Christmas Bird Counts.

* * * * *

The E.C.F.N.C. again had a display at the Ojibway Nature Centre's Fall Open House. Eight hundred persons visited the Centre that day and several new members joined the E.C.F.N.C.

* * * * *

A cheque was received this fall from the Long Point Bird Observatory for \$266.21 as a portion of funds raised by local birders - Paul Pratt, Carl Maiolani and Betty Learmouth - during the Baillie Birdathon, May 1989.

* * * * *

Tom Hurst has constructed a large display panel for use at our meetings and any public events. It was used for the first time at our November dinner and made an attractive background for the dinner auction donations.

* * * * *

Thank you to our fall speakers - Anne Barbour and Vicky Johnston and to our fall trip leaders - Paul Pratt, Don Bissonnette and Bill Balkwill - for your contributions to our Club's programmes.

* * * * *

Congratulations are extended to the E.C.F.N.C. executive members for their efforts this past year as they looked after details of the Club's business which resulted in a full and busy year of activities. Several members will be resigning from the executive in December - Peter Bondy, Ella Walker, Bill Langlois and Shannon Managhan and we wish to thank them for their contributions to the activities of our club.

* * * * *

Best wishes to Shannon Managhan who is moving to the Clinton area and the Saugeen Conservation Authority to assume the position of Community Relations Officer, on December 11, 1989. Shannon assures us that she will "keep in touch" and will continue to contribute to the "Junior Egret".

* * * * *

Sally and Ian Wilson presented their slide show "Wild and Free" at Vanier Hall, University of Windsor, on November 26, 1989. Thirty-two persons attended and enjoyed the photography. The Wilsons' presentation featured wildlife of northern B.C. and Alberta and they do have other presentations of pioneer life for school children and another for seniors. Over the past three years, the Wilsons have given 300 slide shows. Our thanks to Tom Hurst who made all the arrangements.

* * * * *

ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

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

- Dec. 13 - E.C.F.N.C. Monthly Meeting
Our December meeting is traditionally our "Members' Night" when members share favourite slides or even Christmas cookies.
- " 16 - Cedar Creek Christmas Bird Count
This year will be the fourth year for this bird census. The compilation and supper will be held at Anne Barbour's home. Call Paul Pratt at Ojibway for more details.
- " 17 - Rondeau Christmas Bird Count
Contact: Keith Burke (676-2570)
- " 18 - Point Pelee Christmas Bird Count
Contact persons: Don Cecile, Point Pelee National Park and Al Wormington (326-0687).
Wheatley and Leamington residents with feeders, or knowledge of feeders, are asked to call and report upon these feeders and their birds on the census day.



- Dec. 18 - A light supper will be served by the Friends of Point Pelee at the (Cont'd.) Visitor's Centre. The compilation will follow supper.
- Jan. 10 - E.C.F.N.C. Monthly Meeting
Topic: White-tailed deer of Point Pelee National Park
Speaker: Bob Graham
- " 11 - Winter birding course
Ojibway Nature Centre - 7:30 p.m.
- " 13 - Winter birding field trip
- " 14 - E.C.F.N.C. Field Trip
A winter walk on the Spring Garden Road prairie
Meeting place: Ojibway N.C. parking lot at 2:00 p.m.
Leader: Jeff Larson
- " 21 - Winter Festival at Ojibway Nature Centre
Build a bird feeder or bluebird nesting box.
Enjoy cross-country skiing, skating and winter wanderings.
1:00 - 5:00 p.m.
- " 27 - Winter birding field trip
- Jan. 27 - White-tailed deer census at Point Pelee N.P.
Rain date Meet at Visitor Centre at 8:00 a.m. Lunch will be provided. If
Feb. 3 interested, please call Fred Michano 322-2365 Ext. 216.
- Jan. 31 - E.C.F.N.C. Executive Meeting
- Feb. 3 - E.C.F.N.C. Field Trip
Canada's Deep South in winter: a 1-1/2 hour hike along park trails
Meeting place: Visitor's Centre, Pt. Pelee N.P. - 9:00 a.m.
Leader: Vicky Johnston
- " 10 - Winter birding field trip
- " 14 - E.C.F.N.C. Monthly Meeting
Topic: National Wildlife Refuges and state parks of the lower Rio Grande Valley of South Texas
Speaker: Peter Bondy
- " 17 - E.C.F.N.C. Indoor Activity
Make your own plant print notepaper during a morning workshop conducted by Anne Barbour at Ojibway Nature Centre, 10:00 - 12:00 a.m. There will be a small charge for supplies. To register, call Anne at 726-6560
- " 24 - Winter birding field trip
- " 28 - E.C.F.N.C. Executive Meeting
- Mar. 14 - E.C.F.N.C. Monthly Meeting
Topic: Wildlife in Kenya
Speaker: Fred Israel
- " 28 - E.C.F.N.C. Executive Meeting
- Apr. 7 - Bird Box Workshop at E.R.C.A. Workshop, Essex Civic Centre - 2:00 p.m.
Call for details



The EGRET, Volume 6, Number 4, December 1989; newsletter of the Essex County
Field Naturalists' Club, P.O. Box 3421, Tecumseh, Ontario. N8N 3C4

Address correction requested.

Thomas Hurst,
R.R. # 3,
Cottam,
Ont
NOR 1B0