

# TRAIL & *Landscape*

A PUBLICATION CONCERNED WITH  
NATURAL HISTORY AND CONSERVATION



# TRAIL & LANDSCAPE

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- Founded 1879 -

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Objectives of the Club: To promote the appreciation, preservation and conservation of Canada's natural heritage; to encourage investigation and publish the results of research in all fields of natural history and to diffuse information on these fields as widely as possible; to support and co-operate with organizations engaged in preserving, maintaining or restoring environments of high quality for living things.

Club Publications: *THE CANADIAN FIELD-NATURALIST*, devoted to publishing research in natural history. *TRAIL & LANDSCAPE*, a non-technical publication of general interest to local naturalists.

Field Trips, Lectures and other natural history activities are arranged for local members.  
See inside back cover.

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Published by

THE OTTAWA FIELD-NATURALISTS' CLUB  
Box 3264 Postal Station C,  
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OFNC members can hardly be unaware that in a few more years our club will be one hundred years old. We hope there is at least another century before us! We fully concur in Joyce Reddoch's plea (T&L 10:1) that our Centennial be an occasion to look ahead. We invite other members to consider the coming years and tell us their hopes for OFNC's future.

Yet, as 1979 approaches we all wonder about that first century; surely our character is strongly influenced by 1879 and all that. When we try to change that character (as it seems we must), an awareness of how we got here may prove helpful in seeing clearly those established customs by which we must not "let ourselves be encumbered".

There is good entertainment in our records, too. T&L will bring you glimpses of the past from time to time. These accounts are being put together by an enthusiastic club member who is burrowing into the Archives, tracking bits of history wherever they lead, and mining the memories of longtime members. (To the latter who haven't been contacted yet: we'd like to hear from you.) Here is the first result of her continuing effort; where better to begin than with (A H)

## The Very Beginning

by Sally Pawley

It seems a fitting sign of the times that the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club should have been formed in 1879. This was a very growing time in Ottawa's history.

Only 22 years before, the little frontier town, then called Bytown, had been proclaimed the seat of Government for the united Province of Canada by Queen Victoria. Renamed Ottawa, the little lumber and market

town changed its complexion overnight. Then just 12 years before the formation of the club, Ottawa became the capital of the new federal Dominion of Canada.

These changes in status along with two new railways, the Intercolonial and the Canadian Pacific, brought new life to Ottawa in the 1860's and '70's: new people, money, attitudes and ideas.

Perhaps it was this influx of newness which created in Ottawa's residents a desire to record the old and to study the natural history of the day. With a growing population of over 20,000, nothing was going to remain the same for long. For whatever combination of reasons, the Naturalists' Club was formed on an evening in March, 1879. The meeting was opened by the enthusiastic James Fletcher, a man with enough driving force to interest 40 men in attending the formation of the club.

This driving force of the "founding father" grew from a great love of and interest in both the natural environment and his fellow man. Mr. Fletcher gave his time and interest quite freely for he felt:

"... The best companion in the country must be a naturalist, who can point out objects of interest and explain their beauties and wonders. No one looks upon the world so kindly as he does; no one else gives so much attention to, or takes so much enjoyment from, the country as he does, and he holds a more vital relation to nature, because he is freer, and his mind is more at leisure."

He also believed:

"... a stick, a piece of straw, a leaf or a stone, it matters not what, if properly examined and understood, they are all wonderful and lovely."

Less philosophical business, however, had to be attended to on the evening of the first meeting. A long discussion took place as to whether or not the club was to be connected with the Literary and Scientific Society.

(An earlier Natural History Society formed in 1863 had merged with the OL&S Society in 1869). Finally it was decided that in return for the duplicate specimens that the club would "gladly contribute to the museum of the OL&S Society and thereby revive its present dormant condition", the club would request that they be "... under the auspices of the Said Society and may be allowed the use of the museum for the purpose of holding such meetings as may be necessary for their proceedings".

Lt. Col. White became the club's first President with James Fletcher as First Vice-President and Professor W.F. Riddell as Second Vice-President. There was a council of five. These were dedicated men -- within the next two months they were to hold six council meetings and two general meetings!

At the second general meeting on April 8, 1879, it was decided "the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club" would be the official name and "its object be the study of the natural history of this locality". This end was to be effected by summer study excursions into the field and winter "soirees" when lectures on natural history topics would be delivered to members.

"Previous to 1879", H. Beaumont Small pointed out in a later address to the club, "natural history in Ottawa ran at random ... very little work of any local value had been handed down to us; no effort had been made to study the resources of this neighbourhood; there had been no practical working parties, no co-operation of forces; each student followed his own bent, and in many cases trod an unencouraged and unsympathetic path". The formation of the club, then, was an effort to unite these poor "unencouraged students" under one sympathetic roof.

Other governings were carried out at the second general meeting:

"Ladies and Gentlemen desiring to join the Club shall send a written application signed by the applicant and two members..."

and

"The annual membership fee shall be 50 cents payable in advance.... and no member in arrears shall be entitled to any of the privileges of the Club..."

and

"... special tickets for non-members who may wish to join an excursion may be granted... under such limitations as the Council may prescribe..."

The club's first planned excursion aroused great excitement. Two council meetings were spent discussing this coming event and the topic created much interested discussion at the general meetings. Should prizes be awarded at the end of the day for specimens? How would the day be "laid out"? What time should the bus leave?

The excursion was to be held at "Kingsmere", Township of Hull. Tickets were 40 cents each. A post card was printed and sent to each member:

"I beg to inform you that the first Excursion of the Field-Naturalists' Club will take place on Thursday 22nd... The Club trams will leave the rooms of the Ottawa Literary and Scientific Society 106(?) Sparks Street at 8:45 punctually. Members can obtain tickets for themselves and friends... Members to provide their own provisions."

At a general meeting on the 19th of May, three days before the Kingsmere trip, plans for the coming day completely took up the meeting agenda. Proposed resolutions were:

- that there would be no reduction in cost for children
- that as many vans as could be filled would leave from Sandy Hill (Mr. Anderson's house)
- that if a bus load can be got up to start at 1 p.m. tickets may be sold especially marked for that purpose
- that regular buses should leave for home at 5 p.m., and
- that the committee should not do anything in the way of providing boiling water for tea making.

The resolutions were passed and the meeting adjourned. The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club was under way.

# FOOD TREES OF THE BEAVER

Charles Billington

While working in the forests of the Carp Hills last summer, I was constantly reminded of the presence of the other workers there. These relative newcomers to the hills were rarely seen in the flesh although they left ample evidence of their existence. The smoothly-chiselled stumps, the lodge, the dam and pond left no doubt that beaver had set up shop.

Those beavered stumps were most interesting to me since they represented an obvious form of disturbance to the forest. As a result, I walked around three beaver ponds and, at regular intervals, recorded the size and species of the closest beavered stumps.

Around the ponds that I studied, the trees most often harvested were, in order of preference: red maple, sugar maple, alder, white birch, elm, poplar, and young oaks. But it is difficult to say which tree is really the favourite because it is not only a matter of the number of cut stems of each species (which is the basis of the above list), but also the number of available stems of each species. For instance, of the 480 sampled stumps, 101 were red maple, but that species was also the most abundant in the surrounding, undisturbed forest. It would be expected that this species would rank highly as a beaver food simply because it is readily available. Poplar, on the other hand, ranks fourteenth in abundance in the surrounding forest but jumps up to sixth in the list of preferred beaver foods. It seems that beaver selectively cut poplar trees whenever they are found in a suitable location and size class. Which then is the preferred food, the tree which is very abundant and cut often as a staple diet item, or the less abundant but almost never-left-standing poplar?

Around other ponds in the hills, there was an abundance of poplar. I have seen large poplar groves virtually clear-cut by beaver, with the surrounding red maples left untouched. This ability to switch from the use of one species of tree as the primary food source to another, gives the beaver a great advantage when spreading into areas only marginally suitable for them, as they are now doing in the Ottawa area.

A Carp Hills beaver pond



Joyce Reddoch

Beaver in the Carp Hills appear to be opportunistic and very adaptable in terms of diet. Besides the seven most favoured species listed above, ash, willow, cedar, ironwood, basswood, cherry, bitternut hickory, juneberry and hawthorn were harvested by beaver for food and building purposes.

It is little wonder that beaver can establish themselves so quickly in a new area with such a variety of acceptable food items available.

by D. E. McAllister and B. W. Coad

TADPOLE MADTOM      *Noturus gyrinus* (Mitchill)

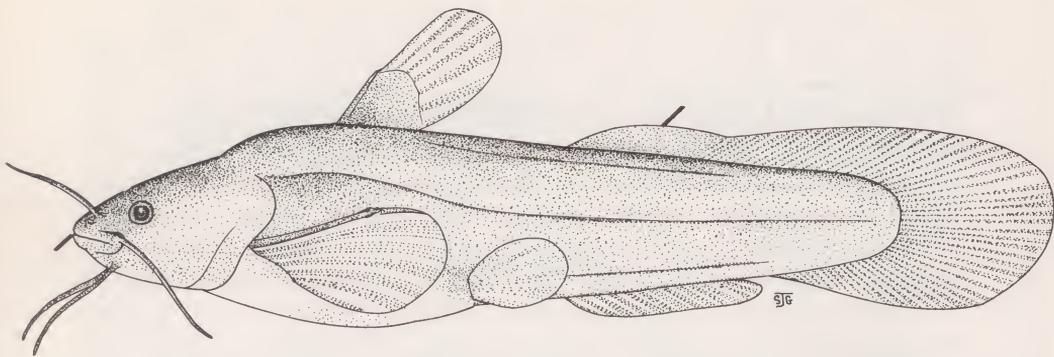
Distinguishing features      This small, stout-bodied catfish has a continuous fleshy adipose fin, connected to the tail fin. Pectoral spines are sharp, pointed, and lack saw teeth on hind edge. Upper and lower jaws are about equal in length. No lateral extensions are present on the premaxillary band of teeth.

Description      Body deep anteriorly and tadpole-like in general shape. Depth of body enters standard length 3.2-4.8 times, anal fin base enters 5.1-6.6 times, and caudal peduncle enters 5.8-7.8 times. There are 5-8 dorsal rays including short dorsal spine. There are 12-15 soft anal rays, 6 or 7 gill rakers. Color uniformly gray or brown on back and sides, and white on belly. Chin barbels light gray. There is a distinct black line along side, with branches clearly defining muscle segments. Maximum length found in the area is 3.4 inches, elsewhere in Canada to 4.3 inches. Described from 17 specimens.

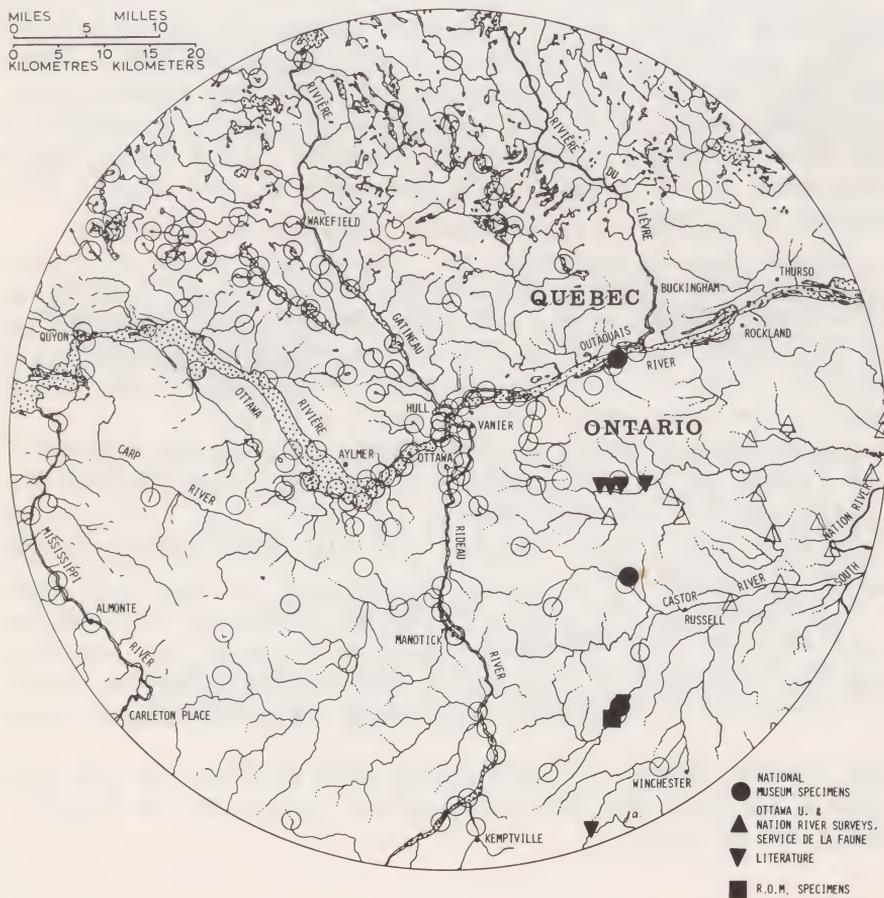
Origin      The tadpole madtom probably entered the area from a Mississippian refugium via the St. Lawrence River.

Biology      This is a species generally found in smaller streams. It prefers quiet waters with dense aquatic vegetation and muddy bottoms. In an Ohio lake food consisted of cladocera, ostracods, amphipods, chironomids, and debris. In Manitoba it was found to be relatively sedentary in a small stream where it was studied. Little is known concerning its reproduction. They are thought to spawn about the last week in July in Michigan and to lay 50-100 eggs. Madtoms attain an age of 2 years. They possess a gland at the base of each spine containing a toxin which is capable of immobilizing predatory fish such as northern pike. (Peter Rubec)

Source: The National Museum of Natural Sciences of the National Museums of Canada. Reproduced by permission of Information Canada and N M N S



MILES            MILLES  
 0            5            10  
 0            5            10            15            20  
 KILOMÈTRES    KILOMÈTRES



# BIRDS OF JANUARY AND FEBRUARY 1976

Brian Morin

Because of the generally harsh conditions that prevail during January and February, and as food supplies dwindle to their lowest ebb, the number of species as well as the number of individuals tapers off as winter draws to a close. By the middle of February, one may be hard pressed to locate 15 species of birds on an afternoon outing. Feeder watchers will note, too, that their lingering waifs, such as Whitethroats, Robins and Blackbirds, rarely come through the winter unscathed. They may fall victim to a predator, or they may simply die from the cold. Even the regulars are down in numbers by the time spring finally rolls around. It's small wonder that many of us prefer to spend more of our winter hours inside than out.

The big news of the season hails not from the immediate Ottawa area, but from points east and south of us. However, due to the large numbers of Ottawa birders that endeavoured to add these exotics to their lists, they are worth noting here briefly:

- a Fieldfare (very rare European thrush) was frequenting a feeder at Rigaud, Quebec, 75 miles east of Ottawa from January through March.
- 3 Ivory Gulls were regulars at the Beauharnois Power Dam near Montreal.
- a Phainopepla was seen in London, Ont. This bird hails from the desert U.S.
- a White-winged Dove was spotted in Port Hope.
- a Townsend's Solitaire turned up in Toronto.

The rash of rare bird sightings was getting to the point that a flip-of-the-coin was almost required to decide where to go next.

Except for the usual hardy Blacks, Mallards, Goldeneye and Common Mergansers, few other duck species were recorded for the period. Both the Barrow's Goldeneye and the Harlequin, noted in the previous issue of T&L, were still around, but the Harlequin disappeared on January 17. Single appearances were recorded for Scaup, Oldsquaw, Bufflehead and Canada Goose on January 1 but not again. Only an early Lesser Scaup, observed on Moodie Drive January 23 to 26, and up to 9 Canvasbacks plying the waters between the Champlain Bridge and Britannia, served to improve the duck scene in Ottawa this winter. Outside the city, another Canvasback wintered with the Mallards at Manotick and a Red-breasted Merganser was located at Black Rapids February 8.

As usual, few hawks were reported, reflecting the slim pickings of our Ottawa winters. The Pine Road area behind the airport was the most productive location, with Red-tail, Kestrel, Goshawk, Rough-legged Hawk, and a surprise appearance from a Red-shouldered Hawk on January 31 -- a very rare winter find. A Merlin spotted at the Nepean dump on February 8 was the only other sighting of note.

Winter's snows make searching for Ottawa's elusive Pheasants more practical. In addition to the regulars at Green Valley, individuals were seen in Blossom Park and surprisingly, North Gower as well. Hungarian Partridge have also been observed in scattered flocks throughout the area.

Successive warm periods in late February brought the first returning gulls: a Great Black-backed on February 18 and a Herring on February 22. Visitors to the Cedarview Road area on January 1 got quite a shock when they saw an incredible flock of 150 Mourning Doves. In parts of Southern Ontario, winter flocking is not uncommon but here in Ottawa it was quite a treat. The flock was seen on several occasions afterwards, as were individuals in other parts of the city.

Most northern owls were conspicuous by their absence, as only one Great Gray was reported, and it was unconfirmed. Snowies put on a pretty good showing, though, and one observer was able to tally 10 individuals on the afternoon of January 18. One of the most promising areas for a variety of owl species seems to be south of the Ottawa River from Shirley's Bay to the Harwood Plains. Long-eared (Feb. 8), Short-eared (Feb. 15) and Great Horned Owls were all reported from a woods behind Shirley's Bay. In the Cosntance Lake region, Barred Owls were very co-operative, being regularly spotted along roadsides or obligingly squeaking in. The only Screech Owl reported was one of the Billings Bridge birds on February 24.

It is questionable whether a Flicker is capable of passing through a complete winter in this harsh environment, so it is not unexpected that we record the last date of the one in south Ottawa as January 15, just about the time we were all shivering from the cold. On the other hand, Three-toed Woodpeckers are used to our winter weather and a few holdovers from the minor invasion of the fall were still around. One Northern was seen January 25 at Munster and one February 3 at Aylmer. Black-backs were numerous, with scattered reports generally.

A few Gray Jays were still present: 2 at the Moodie Drive feeder, a third was a roadkill. Ravens were regular in Quebec, particularly in the north around Poltimore (20), but the bird spotted February 16 at



Red-shouldered Hawk  
Brian Morin/G. C. Bayly

Dunrobin was interesting. Another straggler from fall migration, a Robin in Manordale, perished in late January.

A few Boreal Chickadees were seen at the north end of the Champlain Bridge around The Country Club up to February 3, and the Carolina Wren was still present on Fraser Street January 3 (photographed). Unfortunately, no Mockingbirds to report but there were good sized flocks of Bohemian Waxwings (60 Jan. 4; 95 Feb. 15). Migrant Redwings began to appear February 22, a little after the Horned Larks and Crows. Little did these species realize that winter wasn't going to give up its hold on us so easily. The other blackbird species were present as stragglers, mostly at feeders: one Grackle January 4; 2 Rusty Blackbirds (one for the entire period); and a couple of Cowbirds in Glen Cairn, January 28 and Lucerne, January 15. The flock in Stittsville February 29 was probably migrant.

In any winter, there will be an abundance of some finches and an absence of others. This year there was a good number of Pine Grosbeaks and a fair number of Evenings but an almost complete lack of Crossbills and Purple Finches. Only the Redpolls were present in very good numbers, and it was possible on most days to see large flocks of them. Predictions for Hoary Redpolls made in the previous issue of T&L paid off, because there were probably around 25 individuals seen over the course of the winter in and around Ottawa. When the birds remained mainly in the fields early in the winter, identification was pretty difficult, but as more and more began frequenting feeders, it became a matter of patience rather than skill. Cardinals were still around in the strong numbers noted on the Christmas Bird Census. Several Juncos were seen among flocks of Tree Sparrows, mostly at feeders, while 2 individuals of both White-crowned and White-throated Sparrows spent some time at feeders as well. Most either didn't remain for or survive the winter. Snow Buntings were reported in somewhat smaller numbers than usual but a flock of 200 was observed on January 24 at Lucerne. A single Lapland Longspur ushered in the new year January 1.

In the last issue we neglected to mention a Chipping Sparrow that was seen at a feeder on the Christmas Census. This was an extremely good winter find.

MORE

# SCRAMBLED EGGS

Rearrange letters in the totally misleading egg-words to form correct current names of Ottawa birds.

damp pleas  
melt VIREO

example: I sink  
SNIPE

P I N E   S I S K I N

LOON law:  
spare ship

LARK with  
a deed

one good  
SWIFT there

a red KNOT;  
a real SMEW

GANNET irks  
bride

grim, chained  
FALCON

CROW will  
cheat fly

OSPREY, or a  
cold crawl

need DUCK  
or JAY?

last great  
CRANE

ROBIN chewed  
bad word

## THE FIRST OTTAWA FIELD-NATURALIST

Three centuries ago, late in July, 1623, several parties of Hurons at intervals of a few days passed upward over the portage by the Falls of the Chaudiere, on what was then often called La Riviere des Prairies... Dispersed among the Indians were three followers of that great nature lover, St. Francis of Assisi -- Fathers Joseph le Caron and Nicholas Viel, and Brother Gabriel Sagard-Theodat, with eleven Frenchmen...

Sagard, as he is commonly called, was the chronicler of the expedition. His Grand Voyage au Pays des Hurons is a fascinating story. It was published in 1632....

In his book, Sagard relates that in passing the Falls -- "the most admirable, dangerous and terrifying of all he had seen"-- he noted that the rocks were covered with what seemed to be small stone snails (petits limas en pierre). "I am", he says, "unable to account for this, unless it is owing to the nature of the stone itself, or that the result had been produced by mist from the falling waters." His uncertainty as to the origin of fossils, abounding now as then in the vicinity, is not surprising in view of the state of natural science at the time. Da Vinci's conjectures were doubtless unknown to him; and John Ray and Martin Lister's correct theories as to the origin of fossils were not advanced until half a century afterward. Sagard mentions also that he found "at this place" -- along the portage, no doubt -- "plants of a scarlet lily which had but two flowers on each stalk." ...

The lily noticed by Sagard at the Chaudiere is known botanically as Lilium philadelphicum... It has persisted there since Sagard's time... A few plants may still be found among the red cedars south of the Aylmer Road, and on Lemieux Island; and it abounds on thin soil over limestone along the Canadian Pacific Railway west of Stittsville.

Champlain had previously (1613) noted the occurrence of the red cedar on the islands at Les Chats; but Sagard is better entitled to be considered the first Ottawa Field-Naturalist. -- F. R. Latchford

from THE CANADIAN FIELD-NATURALIST, Vol 38 No 7 (1924)

# WATER MOULDS

A. Maureen Aubin, ELBA, Carleton University

The next time you're on a nature walk, fill a 250-milliliter jar with water - pond, river, stream, or even ditch water will do. What do you see? Bits of debris, sand particles, perhaps some algae floating on the surface. But add a couple of flax seed halves and in two or three days a whole unnoticed sector of aquatic life appears before your eyes - the world of the aquatic fungi.



dense hyphal growth of Achlya sp.

Plentiful in Ottawa waters, the water moulds or aquatic phycomycetes exist as motile, microscopic zoospores in the absence of a suitable substrate. When an adequate food supply is found and temperature and other physical parameters permit, the zoospore encysts and hyphal strands begin to grow out from the nutrient source. These hyphae are visible to the human eye and range in appearance from fuzzy grey masses, to clear distinct strands, (see photo) to round white pustules on fruits. Within three to five days, examination of the fungi under a dissecting microscope or under the low power lens of a compound microscope should reveal an interesting variety of reproductive structures both asexual and sexual. These features are used as the main distinguishing factors in phycomycete keys. For example, Saprolegnia turfosa is unique in its oogonial wall structure - its thick, heavily pitted walls are striking under low power as illustrated by the accompanying figure.

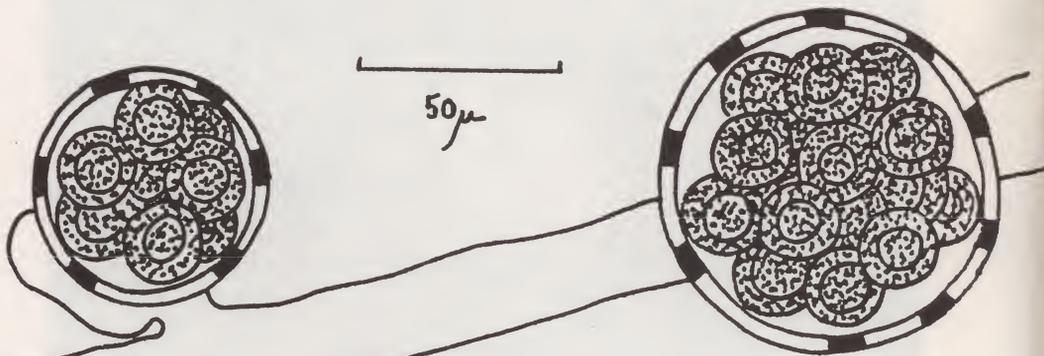
To collect these fungi requires little equipment. Filamentous forms are retrievable by simply collecting water samples and adding a couple of flax seed halves to the jar. Sometimes it is profitable to transfer the water samples to shallow dishes to allow for better aeration. Within two days you should notice the white



Achlya flagellata showing numerous oogonia

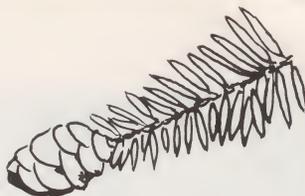
filaments growing on the seed and you can examine their progress from there. The best way of retrieving the greyish Monoblepharidales organisms and the non-filamentous forms is by a direct baiting method. Small bags of flexible fibre-glass screening can easily be fashioned by cutting strips of appropriate sizes (about 20 x 10 cm) and stapling the sides together. Attach a strong string (nylon fishing line is good) or light wire to the bag, and fill the bag with "bait" - substrata likely to be colonized by the water moulds. It's good to include bits of water-logged birch or ash twigs, along with small, hard skinned fruits (I have found crabapples to be the preferred diet of several of these fungi). Deposit the bags in a chosen body of water and secure the other end of the line firmly and invisibly on shore. In four weeks retrieve the bag and some of the forms should be visible on the bait. Another method is to simply collect debris directly from the water - twigs, floating fruits, dead insects and fish - and examine for fungi.

The water moulds are most plentiful in spring and early summer, while waters are fresh, aerated and less likely to be contaminated by other organisms that might compete for suitable nutrient substrata. You'll find them in any body of water around Ottawa - so far, they have been found in waters ranging from a greenhouse tank at Carleton U. to the fast flowing Ottawa River, and from a stagnant pond to the Mer Bleue sphagnum bog. Look for them - they're too unusual and fascinating to miss!



Oogonia of Saprolegnia turfosa  
with heavily pitted walls

## THE FORESTS OF GATINEAU PARK



THE FORESTS OF GATINEAU PARK is a recent, bilingual, publication from Environment Canada. This fold-out brochure is crammed with useful and attractively presented features. Predominant is a large (1:50,000 scale) map of the park color-coded to twelve land and forest types. Nine forest types are described - hardwoods, mixed woods, and softwoods - each on dry, moist and wet sites. Each forest type is illustrated by two color photographs, one an inside view of the woods, the other an overview. There are, in addition, color photographs of the three other categories which are mapped: dry open land, wet open land, and open water. (The color shown for the code for dry open land is misprinted as yellow instead of white as this land type is represented on the map.)

Additional useful information is contained in the drawings of characteristic features of the 25 most common species of native trees which grow in the park (out of a total of 34 species found there).

A concise vegetative history of the park is given; also presented is a brief discription of size, rainfall, elevation, temperature and soils.

THE FORESTS OF GATINEAU PARK gives us a surprisingly detailed view of the park's vegetative cover. Concise descriptions of forest types combine with well-chosen photographs to show what the different kinds of woods are really like.

And, the publication has an added bonus. It's free. You can obtain a copy from

Publications Distribution,  
Forest Management Institute,  
396 Cooper Street,  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0W2

Joyce Reddoch

# HISTORICAL BOULDERS

Joyce Reddoch

Last fall Ewen Todd received this memo from Bill Baldwin, a former president (1955, 1956).

"Subject: Inscriptions on OF-NC markers at McKay Lake

"The first marker is near the bridge at the outlet (north end) of the lake. It is a boulder (granitic glacial erratic?) on the south (lakeshore) side of the road (Hillsdale), near the west end of roadside fence to the rear of a post. One face of the stone has been flattened and inscribed:-

THE AGE OF MCKAY LAKE  
DATES FROM THE CLOSE OF  
THE OTTAWA VALLEY MARINE  
SUBMERGENCE. KINGSMERE  
AND MOST OTHER LAKES IN  
THIS REGION DATE FROM AN  
EARLIER EVENT. - THE END OF  
THE GLACIAL PERIOD.

(\*) OTTAWA FIELD-NAT. CLUB

"The first boulder is upright, although partly obscured by a fence post, and the bottom line of text (\*) is buried.



The first marker is easily read from the edge of the road.



The inscription on the second marker is obscured by the mottled nature of the rock. photos by Joyce Reddoch

"The second marker is a few chains northeastward from the bridge where the road has curved to the north. It lies at the edge of a small grassy field a few steps down from the east side of the paved road touching the stump of an elm tree that was sawn down probably within the 1975 growing season and has about 42 annual rings.

"Inscription on second stone reads:-

THE LEVEL OF MCKAY LAKE  
STOOD AT AROUND THE LEVEL  
(\*\*)  
OF THIS MARKER A FEW THOU-  
SAND YEARS AGO. THE WHITE  
MARL FORMED AT THAT TIME  
WITH ITS FRESHWATER SHELLS  
MAY BE SEEN A FEW RODS  
SOUTHEAST OF THIS POINT  
OTTAWA FIELD-NAT. CLUB

"I saw no sign of marl bed. Someone told me that it had been worked commercially. It may have been buried by landscaping. The marker may have been moved.

"The second boulder appears to be a little larger (30" dimension) than the first. The surface of the stone was likewise flattened. This marker has been tilted, possibly by growth of the tree now represented by cut stump. The inscription is clear except for some chipping (at the letter A in MARKER) (\*\*).

"The second marker is on National Capital Commission property, I believe, but I am not sure what corporation is responsible for the roadside verge where the first one stands."

Intrigued, a group of us went over to McKay Lake to see the markers for ourselves. We wondered when the markers had been put there, and by whom. The markers

looked old, although how old was old?

The Club's early history is well-documented in The Canadian Field-Naturalist and its predecessors Transactions of The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club (1879-1886) and The Ottawa Naturalist (1887-1919). So the idea was to begin at the beginning and see what could be found on the subject of marl beds at McKay (Hemlock) Lake.

It quickly became obvious that the marlbeds were well-known to early Ottawa residents. The beds were mentioned in the Geological Survey of Canada Report for 1845-46. In 1887 H. M. Ami wrote of using the marl to make white brick. R. W. Ells included the beds in a list of 23 marl deposits in Ontario in 1901.

Over the years numerous excursions were arranged by the Club to look for freshwater shells and to examine the sand and gravel strata there. Here are excerpts from the report of a 1910 outing which will also give you some idea of how excursions were organized then.

"MCKAY'S LAKE. - The excursion to McKay's Lake was held on Saturday, May 28th. The weather was delightful, and in spite of the fact that very few were able to be present, the afternoon proved to be an exceptionally profitable one. In the absence of the President, Mr. Kingston was in charge of the party, which assembled at the Bridge at 3 p.m. Two delightful hours were spent in the woods and on the shores of the lake, and at 5 o'clock all assembled at the appointed place, to compare notes, and to hear the short addresses which were given by the Leaders of the various branches.

".... Mr. Wilson was then called upon to give an account of his afternoon's studies in geology. Those particularly interested examined the marl deposits on the shores of the lake, finding there many things of engrossing interest. These deposits are of considerable thickness, varying from one to ten feet, as seen in recent exposures. They are fifteen feet or more above the present water-level in the lake, and show that it formerly stood at a higher level, and occupied a larger area than it now covers. The marl is composed of fresh water shells, many of which are in a perfect state of

preservation. Eight species, belonging to six genera, were collected and identified, viz.: - Planorbis campanulatus, P. bicarinatus, P. parvus, Physa heterostropha, Limnaea galbana, Valveta tricarinata, Amnicola porata, and Pisidium abditum. These shells are all abundant except the last named. Besides the species here enumerated there are a few rare ones which have been collected at this place, but were not found on Saturday. Below the marl beds there is in most places, a bed of coarse gravel, and under this several feet of pure sand bedded in layers of varying thickness. Some of these layers illustrate "false bedding"; the layers being composed of a number of laminae lying at a steep angle, while the main beds are horizontal. It was pointed out that the tilted layers were probably laid down on a sloping bank by a swift current, and that this was followed by a period of still water, when the horizontal bed was deposited on top. It is interesting to note that this sand contains marine shells, indicating that an arm of the sea invaded this area when it was deposited. Attention was directed to the cut terraces surrounding the lake, and also to the gully cut by the present outlet, which has reduced the water to its present level."

The marl beds are at the southeast corner of the lake, the other side of the lake from where the markers were placed. Marl is a deposit of calcium carbonate which is formed on lake bottoms over the centuries. It is composed of a large proportion of shell remains in a matrix of very fine powder which may be of bacterial and algal origin. E. J. Whittaker studied the fossil marl fauna of McKay Lake and published his results in 1918. He collected specimens by the thousands by soaking blocks of marl in pails of water. As the marl disintegrated the shells floated to the surface and were collected in a sieve. He stated that the fresh water shell remains were the most recent in the area and were from the late Pleistocene or early Recent periods. Indeed, he found many descendants of these early forms still living in the lake.

On to 1931, and there, in the 52nd Annual Report (for 1930), Item 7 reads

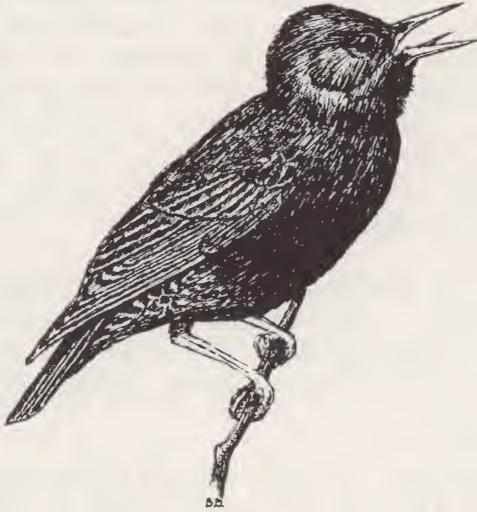
"ROAD-SIDE MARKERS. - The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club has undertaken to point out to the public by means of Road-side Markers, some of the interesting changes which have accompanied the geological development of the district. In this connection two markers were placed on the Government Driveway by permission of the Federal District Commission, adjacent to Mackay Lake. This was done through the personal efforts of Dr. E. M. Kindle. These stones were made by Messrs. C. M. Sternberg and A. Miles. We extend the grateful thanks of the Club to these gentlemen."

In 1930 Dr. Kindle was president and Dr. Sternberg was first vice-president. Dr. Kindle was a geologist remembered for his pioneering work north of the Arctic Circle. He died in 1940 but his family continues to live in the Ottawa area.

Dr. Sternberg joined the Club in 1914 and was made an Honorary Member in 1971 in recognition of his contributions in Palaeontology, particularly his fossil finds in Alberta and the dinosaur collection in the National Museum. Dr. Sternberg is probably the Club's oldest member. He lives in Ottawa and was happy to share some of his memories of the Club's earlier years. At the time the markers were put in place the streetcar line ran out through Rockcliffe Park and turned around on the flats north of the lake. The view towards St. Laurent Boulevard was across open fields. There were no houses on the east side of the lake.

Dr. Sternberg also recalled that Mr. A. Miles was an artist with the Palaeontology Section of the Geological Survey who drew specimens for Mr. Lambe. At that time, the majority of Club members were employees of the National Museum.

Needless to say, we will make the National Capital Commission aware of the existence of these historical markers. Hopefully, the markers will survive for many more decades, and maybe, this time, their presence and past history will not be forgotten by members of the Club.



# On Behalf of the Starlings

by Brian Morin

illustration: Bob Bracken

They've been condemned as a nuisance, and yet, they are much like us. Highly adaptable, they can survive under the most absurd conditions, flourishing where no others could (or would want to).

The Starling is certainly one European import that has made it big on this continent, but no one seems to be raving on its behalf, unless you qualify those that are raving mad. From 0 to 3 billion in less than a

century and still going strong. That's a pretty good indication of how they've fared in this land that offers opportunity for all. But are they all that bad? I guess it depends on whom you talk to. You'll never hear a kind word uttered for them by a Bluebird, Red-headed Woodpecker or any of a dozen other species whose tree nest homes have been seized. "Send them back where they belong", they would cry, but to no avail. The Starling is here to stay.

They must be good for something. Well, the folks in Washington don't seem to think so, what with tens of thousands of the little critters roosting on the very seat of government. The idea! Just think, if they could talk, the stories they might tell. They're pretty good at doing impressions, though. While I've never heard one do any noteworthy political personages, I've surely been taken aback by the cry of a Killdeer, Whitethroat or Pewee in mid-January.

Sanitation departments can thank them for helping to keep our cities clean, and we should all give them a hand for doing their prat to introduce biological controls to agriculture. Granted, they will never win a beauty contest, but they might walk (or fly) away with the bird equivalent of a Nobel prize for sheer ingenuity. What other species would think of making its home in almost every conceivable nook, from street lights to eaves troughs, to be fed on the leftovers of a throw-away society, and still be able to increase in number year after year?

I guess only man could be put in the same class. We are definitely as numerous as the Starling and there's no sign of any cutbacks in the immediate future. We certainly do eat a lot of garbage, and judging by the appalling conditions in which we allow the people of Third World countries to live, we humans are capable of surviving almost anything.

The next time you swear at a Starling, stop for a moment and think, because it was man that made the Starling what it is today. And yet, is it not very much like us all?

FIELD TRIP PROGRAM FOR  
THE CANADIAN NATURE FEDERATION  
ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The following trips have been arranged for the CNF Annual Conference. The Presqu'ile excursion is limited to 42 people; all others are limited to 85. Conference attendees will be given priority until May 10. After that date OFNC members can fill any vacancies. All trips depart from and return to Carleton University. If you wish to go on any of these trips send a postcard to the following address, noting (1) you are an OFNC member, (2) trips you are interested in, in order of preference, (3) your telephone number. Do not include payment. - Canadian Conference for Nature, Box 155, Station "B", Ottawa, Ontario.

PRESQU'ILE PROVINCIAL PARK

Wednesday May 19/  
Thursday May 20

Overnight excursion. Departs 8:00 a.m., returns 6:30 p.m. Cost \$35 (includes accommodation and box lunch on Wednesday).

GATINEAU PARK HIKE

Sunday May 23

A 9 mile hike from Champlain Lookout to Luskville Falls. Depart 8:30 a.m., return 6:00 p.m. Cost \$6.00 (with box lunch).

BOTANICAL OUTING

South March Highlands and Constance Bay area. Depart 8:45 a.m., return 5:30 p.m. Cost \$4.00 (with box lunch).

OTTER LAKE

Monday May 24

An exciting lake area near Kingston. Excellent birding and botany. Depart 8:00 a.m., return 8:00 p.m. Cost \$12.00 (with box lunch).

GATINEAU PARK HIKE

A hike to study the natural history of many of the park's habitats. Depart 9:00 a.m., return 6:00 p.m. Cost \$4.00 (with box lunch).

BIRDING TOUR

A tour of many of Ottawa's most productive birding areas. Depart 6.00 a.m., return 6.00 p.m. Cost \$10 (with box breakfast and lunch).

THE OTTAWA FIELD-NATURALISTS' CLUB

# Summer Program

arranged by the Excursions and Lectures Committee  
Roger Taylor (731-9270), Chairman

Tuesday  
11 May

OFNC MONTHLY MEETING  
SOME ASPECTS OF GATINEAU PARK MINERALOGY  
Speaker: Dr. D. Hogarth  
Meet: Auditorium, Ottawa Public Library  
Laurier and Metcalfe Streets  
Time: 8:00 p.m.

Saturday  
15 May

A MINERALOGICAL EXCURSION IN GATINEAU PARK  
Leader: Dr. D. Hogarth (741-4202)  
Meet: Supreme Court, Wellington Street  
Time: 9:00 a.m.  
A morning trip; bring a snack.

## BIRD WALKS AT VINCENT MASSEY PARK

An introduction to the basics of bird identification

Saturday

1 May Leader: Brian Morin (824-8606)  
8 May Leader: Arnet Sheppard (722-0991)  
15 May Leader: Roger Taylor (731-9270)  
29 May Leader: Steve O'Donnell (737-5270)  
Meet: Vincent Massey parking lot by  
Heron Road bridge  
Time: 7:30 a.m.

## BIRD WALKS AT RAMSAYVILLE MARSH

Sunday

2 May Leader: Steve O'Donnell (737-5270)  
9 May Leader: Brian Morin (824-8606)  
16 May Leader: Roger Foxall (745-7791)  
Meet: Anderson Road at CNR tracks north  
of Russell Road  
Time: 7:00 a.m.

Walks last till noon. Bring waterproof footwear.

MAY EVENING WALKS

Informal walks of general interest. Meet at 6:30 p.m., weather permitting. Insect repellent may be useful.

Wednesday OTTAWA-CARLETON CONSERVATION AREA  
5 May Leader: Hue MacKenzie (226-1997)  
Meet: parking lot, west side Moodie Drive  
north of Jack Pine Trail

Thursday BRITANNIA  
13 May Leader: Arnet Sheppard  
Meet: Britannia Filtration Plant

Tuesday PLEASANT PARK WOODS  
18 May Leader: Joyce Reddoch (749-5363)  
Meet: Pleasant Park School parking lot on  
Pleasant Park Rd. near Lynda Lane

Wednesday MACOUN CLUB STUDY AREA  
26 May Leaders: Members of the Macoun Field Club  
Meet: United Church,  
Richmond Road/Moodie Drive

CANADIAN NATURE FEDERATION FIELD TRIPS

Wednesday 19 May, Sunday 23 May, Monday 24 May. Details p. 76

Saturday SPRING WILDFLOWERS  
29 May Leader: Don Lafontaine (829-7273)  
Meet: Supreme Court, Wellington Street  
Time: 9:00 a.m.

Bring lunch and insect repellent.

Sunday BIRDING AROUND SHIRLEY'S BAY  
30 May Leader: Monty Brigham (777-1675)  
Meet: parking lot at river, Shirley's Bay  
Time: 7:00 a.m.

Late migrants and breeding species (including Bluebirds)

Sunday ORCHIDS AND OTHER THINGS  
6 June Leader: Jim Wickware (225-2658)  
Meet: Loblaws, Carlingwood Shop. Centre  
Time: 8:00 a.m.

All day trip to Rideau Lakes district. Bring Lunch  
and insect repellent.

Tuesday  
8 June

OFNC MONTHLY MEETING  
BIRD ROUND-UP

Meet: Auditorium, Ottawa Public Library  
Laurier and Metcalfe Streets

Time: 8:00 p.m.

An informal gathering at the end of the spring migration.  
Slides very welcome.

Saturday  
12 June

BUTTERFLIES

Leader: Don Lafontaine (829-7273)

Meet: Supreme Court, Wellington Street

Time: 9:00 a.m.

Bring lunch and insect repellent.

Sunday  
13 June

EXPLORATORY BREEDING BIRD WALK

Leader: Roger Foxall (745-7791)

Meet: Loblaws, Carlingwood Shop. Centre

Time: 5:00 a.m.

A working, but fun, excursion to investigate the birds  
breeding in an area that we know little about. Be  
prepared for wet habitats; old clothes are recommended.  
Bring lunch and lots of insect repellent.

Sunday  
20 June

BOTANICAL TRIP: CREEK VALLEYS, LAROSE FOREST

Leader: Albert Dugal (821-2586)

Meet: Elmvale Shopping Centre,  
St. Laurent Blvd. at Smyth Road

Time: 9:00 a.m.

A multitude of ferns among other things.  
Bring lunch and insect repellent.

Saturday  
26 June

GENERAL EXCURSION TO THE GATINEAU HILLS

Leader: Ewen Todd (225-4316)

Meet: Supreme Court, Wellington Street

Time: 9:00 a.m.

Bring lunch and insect repellent.

Sunday  
4 July

GENERAL EXCURSION TO THE LIMERICK FOREST

Leaders: to be arranged

Meet: Loblaws, Carlingwood Shop. Centre

Time: 9:00 a.m.

Bring lunch and insect repellent.

Saturday  
10 July

GENERAL EXCURSION TO THE CARP HILLS  
Leader: Arnet Sheppard (722-0991)  
Meet: Loblaws, Carlingwood Shop. Centre  
Time: 9:00 a.m.  
Bring lunch and insect repellent.

Sunday  
25 July

A WETLANDS FIELD TRIP-SEMINAR  
Leader: Isobel Bayly (827-2369)  
Meet: Supreme Court, Wellington Street  
Time: 10:00 a.m.  
Wear suitable footwear. Bring snack, insect repellent.

Saturday  
7 August

INSECT OUTING  
Leader: Monty Wood  
Meet: Loblaws, Carlingwood Shop. Centre  
Time: 9:00 a.m.  
Bring a snack.

Saturday  
28 August

FALL MIGRANTS AT SHIRLEY'S BAY  
Leader: Rick Poulin  
Meet: Britannia Drive-In Theatre  
Time: 7:00 a.m.



*Have a happy summer!*

O F N C PUBLICATIONS

available in the "Boutique" at  
the National Museum, McLeod St.

- |   |          |
|---|----------|
| A Guide to the Geology of the<br>Ottawa District - Wilson           | \$1.50   |
| A Guide to the Geology of the<br>Gatineau-Lièvre District - Hogarth | \$1.50   |
| Checklist of the Birds in the<br>Ottawa-Hull Area (1970)            | 2 for 5¢ |

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