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# TRAIL & Landscape

A PUBLICATION CONCERNED WITH  
NATURAL HISTORY AND CONSERVATION

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BOTANICAL GARDEN



# Trail & Landscape

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## The Ottawa Field ~ Naturalists' Club

— Founded 1879 —

### President

E. Franklin Pope

**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, a quarterly devoted to reporting research in all fields of natural history relevant to Canada; TRAIL & LANDSCAPE, providing articles on the natural history of the Ottawa Valley and on local Club activities five times a year; and THE SHRIKE, a bimonthly newsletter on birdwatching in the Ottawa-Hull area, available by separate subscription.

**Field Trips, Lectures** and other natural history activities are arranged for local members; see "Coming Events" in this issue.

**Membership Fees:** Individual (yearly) \$17

Family (yearly) \$19

Sustaining (yearly) \$40

Life (one payment) \$400

Subscriptions to Trail & Landscape (libraries and institutions) \$17 per year (Volume)

Single copies of recent issues \$3.50 each.

### Membership application, correspondence:

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Ottawa, Ontario K1Y 4J5

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Second Class Mail — Registration #2777

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# TRAIL *&* Landscape<sup>©</sup>

Vol 20 No 1

Published by  
The Ottawa Field - Naturalists' Club  
Box 3264, Postal Station C  
Ottawa K1Y 4J5

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# President's Message

In a club which was founded in 1879, one's term of office as President seems but a moment, yet it is an honour to be on the list of those who have served in this position. The President has the privilege of sharing in the accomplishments of many members and he thereby gains a particular perspective on events during his term of office. Here is a list of the activities that come to mind as I reflect upon the past two years.

I am especially proud of our core activities: the publication of *The Canadian Field-Naturalist* and *Trail & Landscape*, and the program of excursions and lectures. We tried our best to protect the natural heritage, deriving satisfaction from a new initiative on the preservation of Alfred Bog, the hiring of a staff environmentalist by the Federation of Ontario Naturalists, the Ontario Wetland Guidelines, and the proposed new provincial parks for Ontario.

We were dismayed at the precedent set by the Council of the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton when it approved an urban subdivision in the Carp Hills, land we had considered protected by the Official Plan for the Region. Staff reductions in the Canadian Wildlife Service and the National Museum of Natural Sciences were also distressing.

On the other hand, the part of the Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas assigned to the Club has been completed in style. A "bird hot-line" has been established at last. A revised edition of *A Birder's Checklist of Ottawa* was printed. A set of guidelines for excursions was developed. The field trip program organized for the annual conference of the Canadian Nature Federation was well done. The new leaders for the Macoun Club are functioning well. A pricing policy was developed for items the Club has for sale. Initiatives toward new special publications have had mixed success. Then there is our registered alternate name: Ottawa Field Naturalists. Finally, it was a pleasure to present awards to a number of deserving members.

Reflecting upon these activities brings to mind the people responsible for them. I am especially appreciative of the time devoted to Club activities by our editors, Francis Cook and Joyce Reddoch, and also by Ellaine Dickson, Bill Cody, Bill Gummer and Robin Collins. Contributions by the Vice Presidents and committee chairmen should also be recognized. Committee members and other volunteers for specific projects have been a great help. Those who wrote letters in response to appeals for

action, offered suggestions or simply encouraged our efforts by their enthusiasm were also appreciated. My job as President was made significantly easier by the competent work done by Barbara Martin, the Recording Secretary, and Dorothy Liddiard, who did the typing.

Thank you all.

In a volunteer organization, most of us seem to become so involved doing things that we forget to plan, recruit and train new volunteers. There is much work to do. If you see something that needs doing and you think you can do it or learn to do it - volunteer. Otherwise it probably will not get done. Service with the Ottawa Field Naturalists can be challenging and satisfying, and it is appreciated.

Frank Pope

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## Welcome, New Members

### Ottawa Area

Margaret Benson  
G. Clay & family  
Mary Hale  
Karen J. Hossack

Barbara Lambert & family  
Kim Lemky  
Richard C. Monk  
Kenneth & Brenda Niles

### Other Areas

Jeff Warren, Oshawa, Ontario.

October, 1985

Barbara Campbell  
Chairman,  
Membership Committee

# Council Report

Bill Gummer

## Resignations from the Council

The Council has suffered two recent resignations. Art Martell (Corresponding Secretary) has resigned and left Ottawa for the west and north; he will be Acting Director of the Pacific and Yukon Region of the Canadian Wildlife Service. Bill Arthurs, (Vice President) has also resigned from the Council and the Vice Presidency, but will continue to make himself available to Club members in other ways, including fern walks. Both resignations were accepted with regret.

## Alfred Bog

The subject of Alfred Bog is active again. In the last issue of *Trail & Landscape* we mentioned that discussions were underway with Wildlife Habitat Canada and the Nature Conservancy of Canada. Arising from these discussions a meeting was held in Ottawa on October 23rd at which delegates from 13 organizations were present to discuss ways and means of protecting the bog. The 13 organizations included the provincial government, several naturalist clubs and nature foundations. The meeting, jointly chaired by President Frank Pope of The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club and Charles Sauriol of the Nature Conservancy of Canada, centred around an information package prepared by the Conservation Committee. It was agreed to set up a Steering Committee to develop a plan for specific actions aimed at ultimate purchase and management of the bog. A Lead Agency was nominated and when confirmed will officially assume responsibility for accepting title to the land and for whatever management is required.

The bringing together of the 13 interested parties and their agreement on how to proceed introduces new optimism into the fight to save the bog.

## New Members Night

The Club is a large organization with over 1200 memberships of which some 800 are local. At monthly meetings attendance is usually somewhere between 40 and 100 persons, many of them being regularly present. At the Annual Soirée numbers tend to be between 150 and 200. The Annual Picnic may see 50 to 60 people. Field trips bring many other people together. Thus opportuni-

ties for all members to meet do not exist, and are not really feasible. Realizing this, and putting some emphasis particularly on the new members joining the Club in the current year, the Council has given strong support to a move to hold a "New Members Night". The first of these, arranged by the Membership and Excursions and Lectures Committees, was held on November 22nd in the Salon at the National Museum of Natural Sciences, and will be reported on separately at a later date. The Council hopes that this new social activity will introduce new members more efficiently both to the operations and working structures of the Club and to some of the officers and Honorary Members. With success, the practice should become an annual affair.

#### Canadian Nature Federation Conference

As most readers are aware, the Club assisted the Canadian Nature Federation in the Federation's annual meeting held in Ottawa in July. A very laudatory letter was received from Cam Seccombe, Managing Director of the Canadian Nature Federation, on behalf of the Board of Directors and members of the Federation, thanking the Club and particularly those who were personally involved in organizing and leading field trips, and other efforts. The Council thought the Club's participation was useful and productive, and looks forward to further cooperative ventures with the Federation. □

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## *Trail & Landscape Deadlines*

<u>Date of Issue</u>	<u>Deadline</u>
March-April 1986	January 4
May-August	March 1
September-October	June 28
November-December	August 30
January-February 1987	October 25
March-April	January 3

Material intended for these issues must be in the Editor's hands before the deadlines for consideration. Long articles and articles that will be refereed must be submitted at least two months before the deadlines indicated.

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# Collections of the National Museum of Natural Sciences: Another Resource in Jeopardy

M. Brock Fenton  
Department of Biology  
Carleton University  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1S 5B6

In a short time, 17 technical support staff (about 50% of the manpower in this category) will be cut from the roster of the National Museum of Natural Sciences. The people in these positions have been working on contract (in some cases for more than 11 years) and have performed duties including:

- collecting, preparing and documenting specimens,
- maintaining collections of specimens,
- providing information about collections to scientists and the community at large,
- arranging to lend specimens to researchers within and outside Canada,
- providing an identification service for scientists and the general community.

In short, the work of the people who had filled these positions was vital to maintain adequately the National Resource represented by the collections of specimens in the National Museum of Natural Sciences. Their work also made these collections accessible to both the general public and the scientific community, ensuring full use of this irreplaceable resource.

To put these staff changes in perspective, it is noteworthy that between 1984-85 and 1985-86 the number of Management (Executive) person years in the National Museums of Canada has increased from 36 to 45 (an increase of 25%), while the number of person years in scientific and professional categories increased from 101 to 110 person years (an increase of 8.9%). These changes are even more noteworthy when the time frame is extended back to 1982-83 when there were 11 Management (Executive) person years and 100 scientific and professional person years. Attrition at the National Museums of Canada is clearly focused.

These positions are part of the cuts instituted by the Progressive Conservative Government. The positions were lost when the contracts on which the people had been hired were declared illegal since the work should be done by permanent staff. There has been no commensurate increase in the permanent staff responsible for the duties outlined above, so the net effect of the cuts is a drastic reduction in the operations associated with the collections. This in turn means fewer



resources for some Canadian researchers and for members of the general public interested in learning more about the natural heritage of their country.

To maintain the existing collections will require more of the time of the professional and scientific staff and result in a reduction in their research activity. Shortly, the collection-based operations of the National Museum of Natural Sciences will be reduced to a caretaker situation. Further attrition could jeopardize the future of this irreplaceable National Resource. This situation will mean a severe attenuation of levels of essential research on the biota of Canada by the National Museum of Natural Sciences. The work involved includes further research based on expanding the collections, as well as publication of the results of research which could be pivotal in environmentally sensitive areas of Canada. Since publications from the National Museum of Natural Sciences are used as the basis of exchange with other institutions, the library collections of the National Museums of Canada will suffer accordingly.

The collections of the National Museum of Natural Sciences are used by biologists from around the world. The Museum is the custodian of a resource that should be accessible to the international biological community, but the aforementioned reduction in manpower will reduce this accessibility. By its actions, the National Museums of Canada have set Canada apart from the many countries that consider natural history collections an important part of their heritage, a resource for their citizens and for others throughout the world.

PLEASE EXPRESS YOUR CONCERN BY WRITING ABOUT THIS MATTER  
TO:

The Right Honourable Brian Mulroney,  
Prime Minister of Canada,  
House of Commons,  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0A6.

No postage is required.

**PLEASE HELP THE MUSEUM - EVERY LETTER COUNTS** □

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# The Comet Has Come

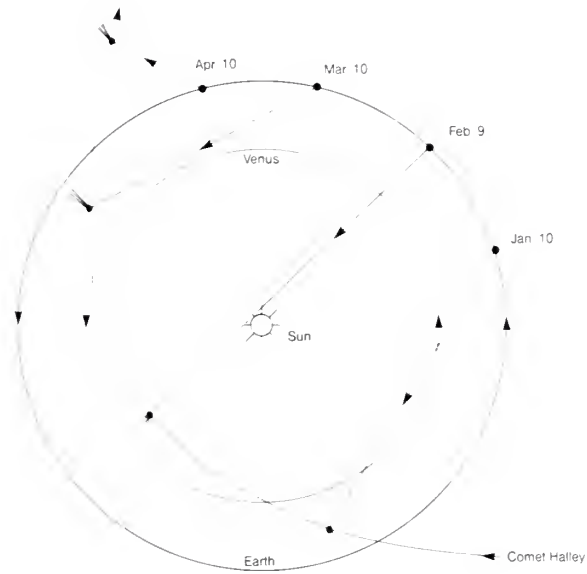
Allan H. Reddoch

Halley's comet, the most famous of all these celestial travellers, has returned on schedule, bringing with it information overload and sales pitches for everything from T-shirts to telescopes. Unfortunately, it does not bring the promise of a great spectacle. While astronomers can predict the position of a comet quite accurately, estimates of the brightness and the size of the tail can easily turn out to be wrong. The present predictions are that Halley's comet will not be very bright. It will not be as bright as the previous Comets Bennett, West or Kohoutek, or as any of the seven stars of the Dipper. To make matters worse, when it is at its brightest, it will be near or below the horizon as seen from Ottawa.

Before we discuss looking for the comet, some background may be of interest, starting with the name. In astronomical circles, the more formal style is Comet Halley, but the form Halley's comet is also used. This comet is named after a contemporary of Sir Isaac Newton, Edmond Halley, who showed that the comet returned regularly at intervals of about 76 years. Until then it had not been realized that comets could return. Those who claim to know seem to agree that the name is not pronounced like Hailey, in spite of the musicians. Most would have the name rhyme with valley, although there is the occasional suggestion of Hawley or holly.

Halley's comet seems to have been recorded either in Europe or in China on every visit since 239 B.C. While we may be amused at the superstitious fears of earlier times, it is true that this comet has seen a number of notable events in human history. Perhaps the best known is the Battle of Hastings in 1066 because it was recorded on the Bayeux Tapestry. It was also recorded in 11 B.C. in connection with the death of the Roman statesman, Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa. Its 66 A.D. appearance was cited by Josephus in connection with the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 A.D. Another Roman victory was marked by the 451 A.D. visit when Attila the Hun was defeated at the Battle of Chalone. Halley also served as a more peaceful omen in 1301 A.D., when the painter Giotto incorporated it in a nativity scene which he painted in Padua.

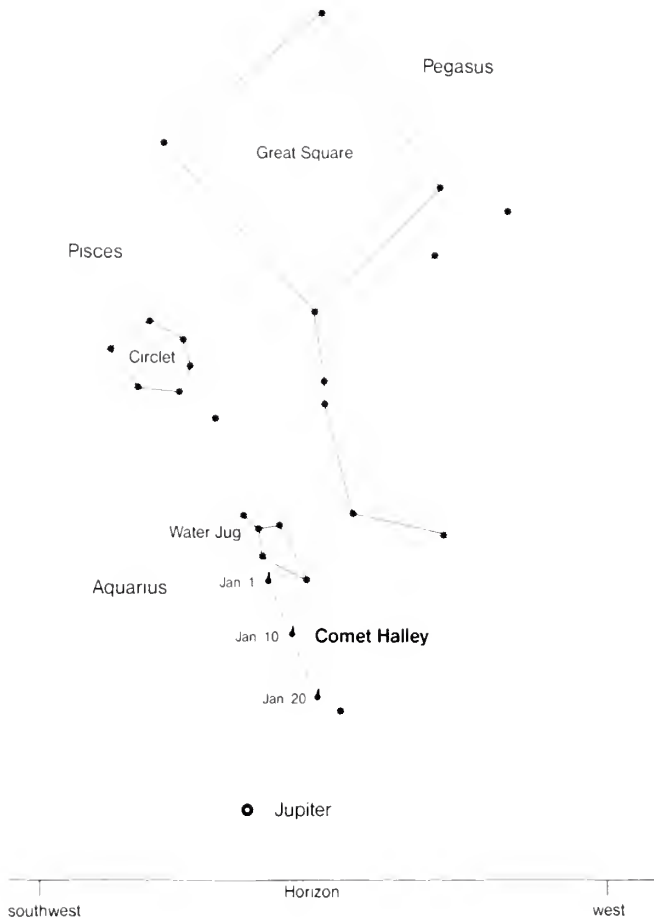
Scientists describe comets as "dirty snowballs". Since they are a few kilometres in diameter, Ottawans might prefer the image of a flying snowdump. Basically, comets are a mixture of ice and mineral dust. As they approach the sun and become warmer, the ice starts to evaporate and the dust gets carried off. It is this dust which forms the characteristic tail that is seen by reflected sunlight. The sunlight also pushes the dust parti-



Positions of Earth and Halley with Sight Lines

cles away from it with the result that the tail can be stretched out almost in the direction that the nucleus of the comet is moving. Thus, the tail is not always being left behind like the smoke from a steam locomotive but can sometimes even precede it. It has been suggested that on its last visit in 1910 Halley lost some two metres of ice and dust from its surface. If so, then this faithful visitor could make a few thousand more passes before it has all evaporated.

The Figure above showing the orbits of Halley and the earth may help to understand the show. In 1948, Halley was beyond the orbit of Neptune and starting back toward the sun. By the autumn of 1984, it was heading almost directly for the earth. In late November, it passed within 90 million kilometres, and then the earth and the comet headed for opposite sides of the sun. Thus, on February 9th when the comet is closest to the sun, we will be on the other side and will not be able to see it in the glare. By this time the sun's heat will have caused the tail to grow, and as we approach again in March and April, this feature should be at its best. The closest approach this time will be 60 million kilometres. By May, the show will be almost over. As you can see from the Figure above, the earth on this visit will be as far away as possible when the comet is nearest the sun and at its brightest. This great distance means that the comet will, in fact, appear quite dim. The geometry is the worst possible, and this will be Halley's least spectacular show in recorded history.



### Comet Halley in January

Since the comet will not be very bright, good viewing will require dark skies. This means that one must be away from city lights and other forms of light pollution. Try looking at the Dipper. If it is hard to see all seven stars, then it will be harder to see Halley, and a darker observing site must be found. One author suggested that unless you can see the Milky Way you will not have much luck. The need for dark skies also means that the moon will interfere. This winter and spring, the full moon is in the last week of each month, making these weeks bad times for comet viewing. Thus there is a series of windows for observing, centered on the second week of the month. Because the sun will be in the way in February, the remaining windows are in the early parts of January, March, April and May. In April, however, the comet will be below our southern horizon part of the time.

In January, Halley should just be visible to the naked eye in a dark sky. Soon after sunset it will appear above the western horizon below the Great Square of Pegasus, as shown in the sky chart opposite, moving lower toward the sun each day. At this time, Jupiter will be even closer to the horizon and will serve as a marker as long as it is not mistaken for the comet. It is in this window that the Club outing to the Museum of Science and Technology takes place (see *Coming Events*).

In early March, Halley should be brighter and have its longest tail. It will appear near the constellation of Capricornus low in the southeast before sunrise. In April it may be slightly brighter, although the tail should be starting to decrease, and it should be looked for in the south in the morning hours. It will start the month below Scorpius and by mid-month will be moving through Centaurus before turning upward through Hydra. From about April 5 to April 14, however, it will be below our southern horizon, although possibly its tail might still be visible. Obviously, going south would improve the view. About 300 km should bring it just above the horizon, and the scene should improve all the way to South America. Followers of *Doonesbury* will remember that some students at Baby Doc Medical School enrolled at that Caribbean institution to get a better look at Halley. Finally, in May it will be slowly rising higher in the sky in the early morning but will probably have faded beyond naked eye visibility.

As for optical equipment, binoculars are the best choice for finding and viewing Halley's comet. Small telescopes may be useful but will not be as good. These instruments are described by their magnification and the diameter of their objective lens in millimetres. The ideal instrument would have a value of 5 to 7 when the diameter is divided by the magnification. This magic number is the diameter of the human iris when it is wide open in the dark. Many people can make 7 mm, although some older eyes may not open quite so wide. A good choice would be 7x50 binoculars, the old World War II night glasses. Nowadays, 7x35 seems to be more common and would also be good. However compact binoculars such as 7x28 are not good for star and comet gazing. Similarly, the familiar bird watching scope at its lowest power is rated at 15x60 and would not be great. The above guidelines are aimed at seeing the brightest image. Another point is that the tail is a large object covering possibly 20° to 30° of the sky. The narrow field resulting from high magnification is another reason to use binoculars of modest magnification instead of a telescope. For this reason, the large telescope at the Museum may not be used during the coming Club outing. The fact that the comet will be low in the sky would require that the telescope be almost horizontal, with the result that the eyepiece would be inconveniently high, another reason why this large scope may not be very helpful.

Before looking for faint objects, you should stay in the

dark for 20 to 30 minutes, since the eye needs at least this much time to adapt to the dark. Also, the eye is more sensitive to faint lights when it is not looking directly at them. This peripheral vision means that you can locate dim comets better by looking  $10^{\circ}$  to  $20^{\circ}$  away from where they should be.

Probably the first people to see Halley's comet in Ottawa were amateur members of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada, who located it in August using a large telescope. At that time, its brightness seemed to follow the predictions, but by early November there was some suggestion that it may turn out to be a little brighter than expected. I managed to find Halley on November 8th through the light pollution of north Gloucester with binoculars and with a 15x60 telescope. The comet could be described as a small, faint, formless blob of light. It would not have been possible to locate it by scanning an area of the sky. It was only because detailed charts enabled me to look at the exact position and then study that area of the sky that I was able to succeed. A larger telescope did not improve the view, but the higher magnification allowed me to watch the comet's motion over one hour.

For those who want more details and background, the October issue of *Astronomy* magazine was devoted to Halley's comet. Perhaps the November issue of *Scientific American* will be easier to find. It contains a short but quite good article on the subject. Detailed charts can be found each month in *Astronomy* and in *Sky and Telescope* ▢

\* \* \*

#### HELP WANTED FOR *THE SHRIKE*

*The Shrike*, the birding newsletter of the Club, would appreciate the assistance of some experienced birders to write bimonthly Sightings once or twice a year.

Please telephone the Editor, John Sankey, at 748-0317, if you are willing to help.

\* \* \*

#### VOLUNTEER NEEDED TO FILL BIRD FEEDER

This year the Club has taken over the maintenance of the National Capital Commission feeder on the Dolman Ridge in the Mer Bleue Conservation Area. If you can help keep this feeder filled during the winter months, call Gordon Pringle at 224-0543.

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# What About Planting Someone Else's Wildflower Seeds?

Bill Gummer

This note is concerned with a situation that is not new but that has recently been given a new "push". The situation is the interest of gardeners in buying seeds of plants that are not native, and the "push" is the commercial side, with many garden catalogues listing packets of seeds of "eastern wildflowers", "Rocky Mountain wildflowers", and so on. The attraction is natural - have an unusual flower, have a conversation piece, add to the attraction of a flower bed, gain a feeling of experimentation, provide a new goal of "how many species ..." and so on.

However, this is a two-sided situation. A number of botanists are concerned about the uncontrolled distribution of species, and the other side is that by introducing flora from elsewhere we raise the real risk of interference with our native (a dangerous word, since so many of the flowers we have come to think of as "ours" have already come from somewhere else!) or existing species. If introduced flowers "take" in the garden, and then spread into surrounding areas, damage to existing wildflower species may result by plain crowding out, by development of incompatibility, by changing the pattern of food available for other life, by destroying ecological associations and perhaps by destroying the very nature of unusual habitats. Water Hyacinth and Frog's-bit are two well-known examples of nasty introductions; there are many others. Not every introduced plant does this, of course, but it only takes one.

The "should I / shouldn't I?" question has no easy answer. Gardeners have been buying seeds and plants of all sorts of different species and from many parts of the world, probably since the first gardener produced - in front of her cave? - a splash of colour to show off to the neighbours. However, because of growing concern about endangered species of plants, and the difficulty of controlling the spreading of one that turns out to be a mistake, we should think twice before we leap into the excitement of planting someone else's wildflowers in our gardens, and remember that we may start something that is hard to stop.

This is one person's expression of concern. What do you think about it? ▣



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# Ice Ferns

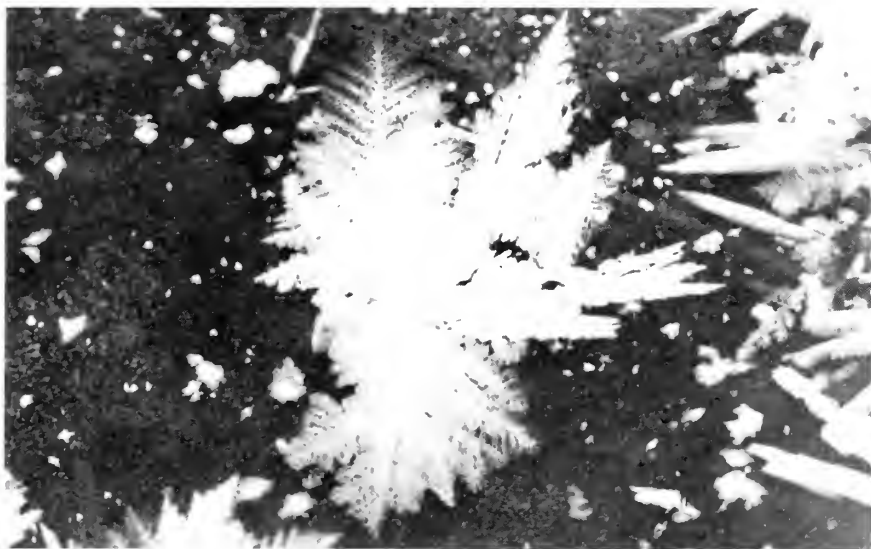
Bill Gummer

These curious little growths are often found on ice surfaces, perhaps on very thick ice. It takes a close look to see the delicacy of the structures that result from the natural growth of ice crystals under some specific conditions. Reminiscent of the patterns seen in snow flakes, and the "fern leaves" on frosted windows, these tiny ice fronds have a consistent symmetry built around a central major growth axis, with side-growths angling up at  $60^{\circ}$ . The dendritic clusters are three-dimensional; the "fronds" do not lie flat on the ice but have grown upwards and outwards. The simple elongated growths, also visible in the photographs, and mostly lying on the ice surface, appear to be bundles of needles. Their long direction is probably a different crystallographic direction than the stems of the fronds, and there are no side branches.

In the photographs, the black background is clear and smooth pond ice several centimetres thick. The clusters of fronds shown were about five centimetres across.







An interesting question is, why do these crystalline clumps form in the first place? They are not loose but can often be freed with little effort. They have grown on top of a smooth ice surface with no sign of holes or cracks through which moisture could escape from below. They must have formed from water vapour in the air.

Published information on the formation of ice under various conditions of temperature and humidity indicates that these two factors are both important. The crystal habit (that is, whether plate-like or prismatic) is determined mainly by the temperature, whereas the rate of growth and the development of more complicated crystal features (that is, dendritic growths like the "fern leaves") are determined mainly by the degree of saturation of water in air.

Laboratory studies have also shown that needles tend to form at warmer temperatures than do dendrites. In the photographs, both bundles of needles and dendritic growths are present, and the more complicated forms appear to overlie or grow on the simpler forms. This probably means that the needles formed first, not far below  $0^{\circ}\text{C}$ , and the dendrites later, as the temperature fell and supersaturation of the air with respect to water increased. The dendritic clusters may have formed at  $-15^{\circ}\text{C}$  or so.

None of this explains what caused crystals to grow where they are. There must have been some point of nucleation, whether of ice or some other substance, to initiate growth.

A useful reference: Hobbs, P.V. 1974. Ice Physics. Clarendon Press, Oxford. ▣

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# Winter Wildflowers at Shirleys Bay

Ross Anderson

One of the best trails we know for combining skiing and nature lore close to home follows a meandering loop of four to six kilometres through the rocky meadows, marshes and patchy woods at the edge of Shirleys Bay. Because you can ski across a marsh and even walk on the bay, if you choose the right season (or have enough faith), the winter trail is longer than the summer trail and, of course, better for winter wildflowers.

It would take an observer more expert than I am to confirm that the area is unique, but certainly it contains attractive weeds we never find in our daily excursions around Clyde Woods in west Ottawa. The species we encountered in January and February 1985 may not be exceptional, but we found them both curious and attractive:

- Elecampane, a Raggedy Ann flower, yellow in summer, crinkly golden-brown in winter, standing a metre or so above the snow;
- Moth Mullein, with round, brown, nut-like seed pods on the end of each flower stalk appearing so clearly along the upper path by Highway 17 that we found them first by moonlight;
- Thimbleweed, with flower heads blown into feathery puffs of floss dotted with seeds;
- Blue Vervain, not at all blue now, of course, but easily recognized with its candelabra stalks tipped with rows of seeds like plantain;
- Deptford Pink, with the elegant name, a small flower, pink in summer, that shows up on the hummocks where the snow has blown thin.

We also collected an unexpected harvest and certainly did not intend to sketch it: Beggarticks. Hundreds (it seemed like thousands) of tiny Beggarticks stuck to our knickers and woollen socks, mitts and dog! Lauren Brown writes: "You will more often find the little pods stuck to your clothes than you will ever see the whole plant." How right she is. There must be none left at Shirleys Bay. We brought them all home.

A reference worth repeating, to be carried in your pack:

Brown, L. 1977. Weeds in Winter. Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston.



Elecampane  
*Inula helenium*  
Shirley's Bay February 1985.

*Elecampane, Inula helenium*  
Yellow in summer, crinkly golden brown in  
winter, a sort of Raggedy Ann among flowers.



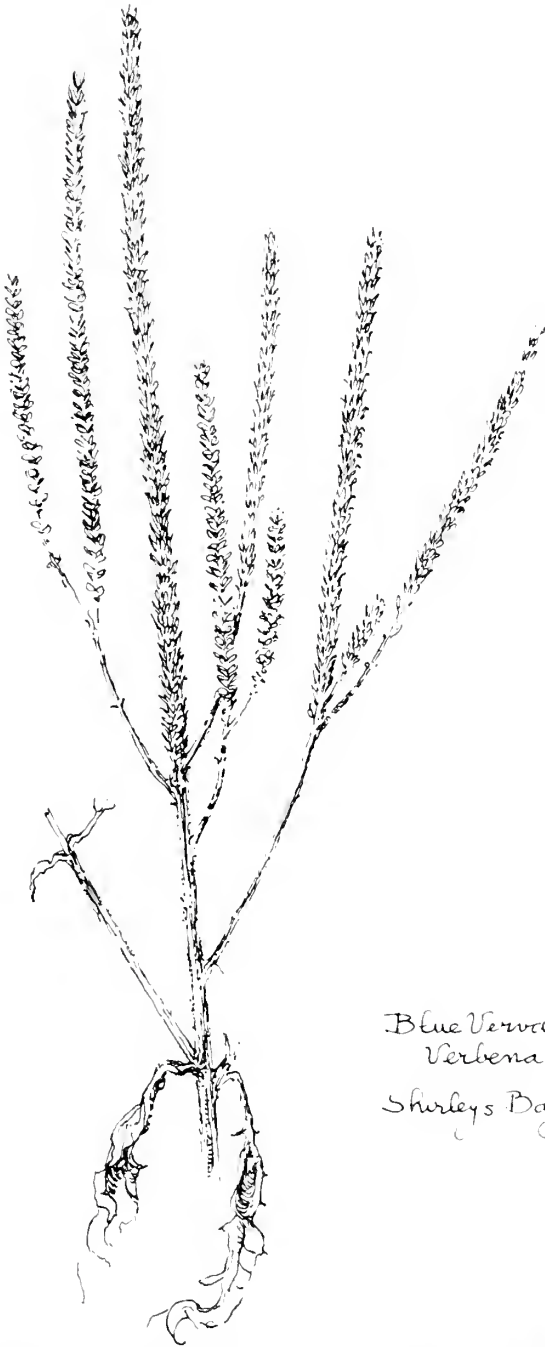
Moth Mullein  
*Verbascum blattaria*  
Shirleys Bay, Feb. 1985

*Moth Mullein, Verbascum blattaria*  
Related to the common mullein, the stamens of  
this wild flower are said to resemble the antennae  
of a moth.



Thimbleweed  
*Anemone* sp.

*Thimbleweed, Anemone sp.*  
*This common wild flower looks more like*  
*candy floss than a thimble in winter.*



Blue Vervain  
*Verbena hastata*

Shirleys Bay January 13, 1985

*Blue Vervain, Verbena hastata*  
The genus name is Latin for "sacred plant."  
Vervain used to be considered a heal-all.



Deptford Pink  
*Dianthus armeria*

Shirley's Bay, Jan. 13, 1965

*Deptford Pink, Dianthus armeria*

*An introduced wild flower which used to be cultivated around Deptford, England, according to the Audubon Field Guide.*



*Beggars ticks, as it appears in summer. We brought them home but not to sketch!*

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# The Reappearing Helleborine

W.G. (Bill) Dore

That alien orchid, Helleborine (*Epipactis helleborine*), has arisen again in my backyard garden! In late June, 1985, a stout leafy shoot erupted through the soil, not exactly in the same spot as it did five years earlier, but this time about four metres away in the space between the rhubarb, a patch of Astilbe and an old clump of Gayfeather. The shoot grew directly into a tall, densely flowered stem of those non-descript, greenish-purple blooms.

At that point, well before seeds were formed, it was completely dug out to the depth of about 25 cm by the kind efforts of Stephen Darbyshire, who then photographed the thing as I held it up in front of the shed door (opposite page). The plant was then pressed dry and deposited in the herbarium of Agriculture Canada (DAO) under "Darbyshire 2733".

Helleborine first appeared in Hortus Carlylensis (my garden at 60 Carlyle Avenue, Ottawa) in 1964, among the radishes. It appeared again in 1968 in a row of carrots (Dore 1968), again in 1969 in the same spot but now in a new planting of strawberries, and in 1976 in the garden path about 2½ metres away (Dore 1977), but in 1985 it came up somewhat removed. I am confident that such a conspicuous weed could not have passed my attention at other times; each time it was dug out by the roots and before any seeds had formed. The respective specimens, now in DAO, bear my collection numbers 20988, 23883 and 24579.

Much has been written about the local occurrence of this strange species ever since its first appearance near Syracuse, New York, in 1879, possibly as the result of an intentional planting. As an entrance to the literature one should consult Doyon and Cayouette (1966) for Quebec, and Soper and Murray (1985) for Ontario. Next to the aquatic Flowering-rush and European Frog's-bit, Helleborine is perhaps the best-documented invader of the American flora. However, to me the fascinating thing about the Helleborine is why it should appear again, after a period of a few years, in the same place, as mature plants, even after the whole plant had been dug out; they are not mere seedlings from wind-dispersed seeds. One may think of some other odd or rare plants which behave similarly: Phantom Orchid, Three-birds, Red Pinesap. Such plants have their roots replaced by a thickened and knotted mass of mycorrhiza, massed root-plus-fungus tissue, and we say that the two organisms benefit from the association in the state of symbiosis.

But a third organism may enter the picture. Bill Illman has noted on a specimen of Helleborine from his lawn on Caton





*The author and  
his Helleborine*  
Photograph from  
a slide by Stephen  
Darbyshire

Street that fine roots of his Red Oak tree pass through the mycorrhizal mass and there appears to be a nutritional connection with them, the oak being the supplier. A few fine roots, presumably of the Red Maple or Burr Oak trees nearby, entered the Helleborine mycorrhiza of the present plant but did not seem to have any physiological connection.

Well, I hope to hang around to see if this mysterious pest rears its nefarious head again, and, as I wait, I will continue to wonder if some of those rare species rated as "extirpated" or "extinct" are not truly viable but bloom only when nobody is around to see them.

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# The Macoun Field Club

Bill Gummer

The Macoun Field Club Committee, under the chairmanship of Don Fillman, has been reviewing the state of the Macoun Field Club. As has been pointed out previously (Darbyshire 1984, Gummer 1985), there have been problems in finding volunteer leaders and assistants. There is concern that there might be a reduction in the capabilities of the Club. Founded in 1948, the Macoun Field Club has been in operation for 36 years, with successful use of volunteer leaders and assistants. This article has been prepared to remind readers of the value of the Macoun Field Club.

Several articles on the Club and its activities have appeared in *Trail & Landscape* over the years; a number of periodic reports were written by Macoun members themselves. W.K.W. Baldwin, who wrote the most recent review only seven years ago (Baldwin 1978), was instrumental in the founding of the Macoun Field Club. Macoun alumni recall the success of the early days and are troubled that the Club may be having some difficulties in maintaining a consistent and high level of activity. It has been pointed out that the Macoun Field Club has gone through previous cycles of ups and downs, and it is encouraging to learn that the Junior group has grown back towards 30 members. It is from this group that the more mature seniors will mostly come. However, young members need the motivation and direction that can be provided by dedicated leaders willing to volunteer time and knowledge.

We have many fine examples of Macoun alumni who have gone on to careers as naturalists - Loney Dickson, Vice President of The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club in 1981, winner of the 1983 Conservation Award, now in Alberta with the Canadian Wildlife Service, author of one of the review articles (Dickson 1973); Stephen Darbyshire, who led the Macoun Club almost single-handedly for several years, winner of the 1984 Service Award, now with the Biosystematics Research Institute, Agriculture Canada; Gordon Hamre, until recently Recording Secretary of the OFNC Council, now in Yellowknife with Parks Canada; Francis Cook, leader of the Macoun Field Club in 1961-62, first alumnus to join the staff of the National Museum of Natural Sciences, now heading the Herpetology Section, and Editor of *The Canadian Field-Naturalist*. These are only four of the recent or current Council members, and my apologies to all the others who have a similar history of Macoun Field Club training and who have gone on to careers in research and in teaching. Obviously the Club has encouraged many young people to develop in these directions, and the co-sponsors of the Macoun Field Club from its inception - The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club and the National Museum of Natural Sciences - should be proud indeed of this record.

The other side of the picture is that successful activities have always depended on the high calibre of leaders, requiring people who have personal interest in the aims of the Macoun Field Club and in seeing young people develop their understanding of nature and the environment. We have been very fortunate over the years in the leaders who have come forward and set up programs and meetings for the three age groups - junior, intermediate and senior.

Home base for the Macoun Field Club has always been the Victoria Memorial Museum, except for a brief period of renovation, and it is difficult to imagine a more suitable location. The Club had developed its three levels of members by the third year of its operations, 1951. The location of the Club in Ottawa has made access to study areas easy, even in the days of streetcars, and Ottawa's concentration of scientists in many disciplines has been a powerful source of speakers and advisors. Indoor programs include talks by invited speakers, reviews of their own trips, and preparation of reports and exhibits. Members have learned some of the skills of speaking formally to others, including review presentations at OFNC annual dinners or soirées. The Macoun Field Club has a useful library which includes some valuable copies of older publications. *The Little Bear* has been published since 1951, providing an instructive vehicle for the members to prepare. A complete file of *The Little Bear* is maintained by the National Museum of Natural Sciences Library. Finally, some other cities have profited from the advice and experience of the Macoun Field Club in setting up their own similar clubs.

The past year has seen the Macoun Field Club continue its activities under the careful leadership of Robin Collins and his assistants, Martha Camfield, Fenja Brodo and Connie Downs. However, the Macoun Field Club Committee is anxious to hear from other OFNC members and friends who feel that they can offer time and experience to help train our younger affiliates to appreciate and understand nature in any of many subject areas. Those interested should call Don Fillman, Chairman, at 838-2720 (home) or 998-4693 (work), or any other Council member.

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# Recent Bird Sightings



Val Bernard Ladouceur

## Rare Birds?

The difference between seeing a rare bird and missing it can often be moving yourself quickly to see it. Birders aren't crazy or impatient when they run to see a bird. They know it can fly away, and, if they take their time, it *will* fly away. Of course, if they do see the bird, it will probably choose to hang around for the next two weeks.

I've missed Connecticut Warbler by 20 minutes and Harlequin Duck by 3 minutes, and I've identified Marbled Godwit and Tricoloured Heron (at Point Pelee) as they were flying away.

I know of one person (who will remain nameless) who missed a - excuse me, *the* - Gray Kingbird because he stopped to have a coke. (My apologies and condolences to Doug McCrae, who really isn't nameless). I suppose that's the all-time Coke Classic.

Speed can be crucial.

This autumn it was different. While there were no really spectacular finds (again), there were plenty of interesting birds around. It was the Sunday birders' paradise. "Birding in the Slow Lane" has arrived.

I haven't had much time to bird this fall. In August I missed 200 Hudsonian Godwits, five Buff-breasted Sandpipers, three Great Egrets, and a Whimbrel. But on September 3rd, a Whimbrel obligingly flew low over Somerset St. and Bayswater Ave. near my office. On September 1st, yet another Buff-breasted Sandpiper was found, this time at Green's Creek, and it was there for me to see the next day.

A Great Egret appeared at Shirleys Bay the same weekend, and a Long-billed Dowitcher turned up at Ottawa Beach on September 18th. Both birds were seen on September 22nd at Shirleys Bay, and a Sharp-tailed Sparrow was found later the same day at the Richmond Sewage Lagoons. Not a bad day for a Sunday birder. (The Great Egret stayed until October 2nd.)

A Franklin's Gull was first seen on September 7th, and a second bird appeared on September 18th. Both were seen regularly at dusk at Ottawa Beach, from late September to mid-October.

This is the longest stay in Ottawa for this species. I was in Texas for most of this stretch, but when I came back on October 14, I checked the bird hot line (744-4704) to catch up with what was going on. I went out to look at a Hudsonian Godwit (finally!) lingering at the Richmond Sewage Lagoons, and while I was there one of the Franklin's Gulls flew over. This bird wanted to be seen! Not only that, there were now two Long-billed Dowitchers lounging at the Munster Lagoons. (The final Ottawa District tally was six Long-billed Dowitchers and eight Hudsonian Godwits between mid-September and mid-October.)

Now, I didn't see everything. I missed a Red Phalarope on October 5th and a Forster's Tern on October 13 at Shirleys Bay, but I had a good excuse, I wasn't here. I did miss a Purple Sandpiper on October 29th at Shirleys Bay, and a Carolina Wren in early September, but I didn't try for them, and besides, the year isn't over yet.

A Bald Eagle found in late October at Shirleys Bay was there for me to see on November 2nd. (I know that November 2nd is not within the period being discussed, but I didn't want to leave you worrying about whether or not I saw it.)

I think I've made my point using my own experience as an example. The unusual birds of the fall of 1985 were unusually visible and unusually cooperative.

The best find of the period was a Laughing Gull which appeared to one person for 20 minutes at Ottawa Beach. This is a fairly rare bird, and rare birds are rarely visible and rarely cooperative.

#### Summer Leftovers

The Glaucous Gull which summered at Nepean Dump was seen into September.

On September 8th, Bruce Di Labio, Richard Brouillet and I participated in the Fifth Annual Seedathon (see page 30). We didn't see much because the day was just too nice. Birders call these days "Bluebird Days", meaning a nice day to look at a bluebird but not much else to see or do. It turned out to be the bluebirdiest day in history as we counted 56 Eastern Bluebirds near Dunrobin.

#### Fall Migration

Notably absent this fall were Oldsquaw, Surf Scoter and Black Scoter, with a few large flocks reported but few sightings otherwise. Common Merganser and Red-breasted Merganser numbers were low too. Ring-necked Duck and American Wigeon were common,

with numbers along the Ottawa River building up to 2500 and 600, respectively, by mid-October.

An unbanded, adult Peregrine Falcon (unbanded indicating a truly wild bird) seen a number of times at Shirleys Bay was noteworthy.

Wilson's Phalarope was reported at both Shirleys Bay and Richmond Sewage Lagoons the first week of October. This species is usually gone by the second week of September.

In late October, a Northern Mockingbird appeared at Deschênes.

Warbler migration was pretty quiet, but there were a few good days for landbird migration - lots of Golden-crowned Kinglets, Brown Creepers, Yellow-rumped Warblers, and especially White-throated Sparrows (as many as 500 per day) and White-crowned Sparrows (as many as 200 per day).

#### Signs of Winter

A Lesser Black-backed Gull and a Thayer's Gull were a Nepean Dump on October 17th. There should be more later this Fall. Black-backed Woodpecker reports started in late September. Evening Grosbeaks have been abundant since August. (Look out, feeder watchers!) In October, there were numerous reports of Common Redpolls, as well as Purple Finches, American Goldfinches, and lesser numbers of Pine Siskins. Pine Grosbeaks started to move in the last four days of October. (Crossbills were virtually absent.) Will this be another finch winter, or are they just passing through?

#### Western Kingbirds

There were two reports of this species this fall; neither was within the 50-km radius of the Ottawa District. Mark Gawn, Tony Beck, and Colin Gaskill had one at Morrisburg, Ontario, on September 2nd. On October 19th, Tony, who is relatively new to birding, had another Western Kingbird at Calumet Island, Quebec. How lucky can you get? Note: there is only one Ottawa record for Western Kingbird.

#### *Acknowledgment*

My thanks to Bruce Di Labio, who compiled the dates and numbers for this period. ▢



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# Another Victim of Burdock \*

Bruce M. Di Labio

On September 1, 1985, Douglas Craig found a dead Ruby-throated Hummingbird (*Archilochus colubris*) caught on a burdock plant at Shirleys Bay, near Ottawa. One wing was entangled in the hooks of a burr. That the hummingbird had been dead for some time was evident from the dried-out condition of the body. It probably had come to feed on the flowering burdock plant, but while feeding had accidentally touched a burr. Perhaps in struggling to free itself, the wing became more imbedded in the burr. The hummingbird must have died finally of starvation, shock or exhaustion.

The specimen has been deposited in the collection of the National Museum of Natural Sciences. I would like to thank Douglas Craig for kindly informing me of his unusual find.



*A Ruby-throated Hummingbird caught by the burrs of a burdock at Shirleys Bay Photograph from a slide taken by Bruce Di Labio*

\* See Roger Taylor and Allan Cameron's article, Burdock Claims an Avian Victim in the September-October, 1985, issue of Trail & Landscape. ▣

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# The Seedathon Bird Count

Bruce M. Di Labio

The Fifth Annual Seedathon was held on September 11, 1985. Again only one party, consisting of Bruce Di Labio, Richard Brouillet and Bernie Ladouceur, participated this year. In 16½ hours the group covered 480 km and recorded 115 species. The day (actually night) started at the Ramsayville Marsh at 3:30 a.m. There was very little activity; however, a few migrating birds could be heard overhead. Owling continued until dawn as we checked Leitrim Road, Nepean Dump and Sandelee Road near Munster and took a quick drive up to St.-Pierre-de-Wakefield before light. This effort produced one individual of each of three species: Great Horned Owl, Screech Owl and Barred Owl. A few Common Loons were heard calling near Lac Saint Germain.

The morning was slow-moving for land birds with only a few pockets of warblers found. By late morning, hawks were observed soaring, and at Thurso eight species were recorded including two Merlins and seven Turkey Vultures. The afternoon, which was spent checking sewage lagoons in the southeast, paid off in ducks. A total of 15 species was observed. The most unusual finds were three male Ruddy Ducks at Casselman. The Ottawa



*Bernie Ladouceur, Bruce Di Labio and Richard Brouillet during the Seedathon*



River was high as were the sewage lagoons, making shorebird-watching difficult. During the last hour of daylight, in the Dunrobin area, 56 Eastern Bluebirds were observed along the ridge (reflecting a successful breeding season); three Black-crowned Night Herons, 10 Virginia Rails and three Marsh Wrens were found where Constance Creek goes under the Thomas Dolan Parkway.

At 7:30 p.m. we called it a day and headed back home. Because the Seedathon was on an early date, we might have expected to see many more birds, but the weather was just too nice. Many birds had no reason to stay and, instead, had migrated further south.

We would like to thank all the sponsors whose contributions will benefit the continued activities of The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club, and we would like to encourage more participation from other Club members in the future. This activity is a challenge and fun for everyone.

#### BIRDS RECORDED ON THE FIFTH ANNUAL SEEDATHON

Common Loon (7)	Northern Harrier (10)
Pied-billed Grebe (3)	Sharp-shinned Hawk (3)
Double-crested Cormorant (14)	Cooper's Hawk (1)
American Bittern (3)	Northern Goshawk (1)
Great Blue Heron (12)	Red-shouldered Hawk (3)
Green-backed Heron (1)	Broad-winged Hawk (1)
Black-crowned Night Heron (3)	Red-tailed Hawk (12)
Canada Goose (27)	American Kestrel (9)
Wood Duck (13)	Merlin (2)
Green-winged Teal (4)	Gray Partridge (1)
American Black Duck (110)	Ruffed Grouse (2)
Mallard (825)	Virginia Rail (10)
Northern Pintail (8)	Common Moorhen (2)
Blue-winged Teal (160)	American Coot (2)
Northern Shoveler (16)	Black-bellied Plover (4)
American Wigeon (3)	Semipalmated Plover (3)
Ring-necked Duck (4)	Killdeer (38)
Lesser Scaup (11)	Lesser Yellowlegs (9)
Common Goldeneye (4)	Spotted Sandpiper (8)
Hooded Merganser (2)	Semipalmated Sandpiper (7)
Common Merganser (2)	Least Sandpiper (16)
Ruddy Duck (3)	Baird's Sandpiper (1)
Turkey Vulture (11)	Pectoral Sandpiper (4)
Osprey (1)	Dunlin (2)

BIRDS RECORDED ON THE FIFTH ANNUAL SEEDATHON, continued

Common Snipe (1)	American Robin (33)
American Woodcock (1)	Gray Catbird (7)
Ring-billed Gull (3500)	Water Pipit (17)
Herring Gull (245)	Cedar Waxwing (32)
Rock Dove (375)	European Starling (1400)
Mourning Dove (39)	Warbling Vireo (4)
Eastern Screech Owl (1)	Philadelphia Vireo (2)
Great Horned Owl (1)	Red-eyed Vireo (11)
Barred Owl (1)	Tennessee Warbler (4)
Belted Kingfisher (8)	Nashville Warbler (1)
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (16)	Chestnut-sided Warbler (1)
Downy Woodpecker (2)	Cape May Warbler (1)
Hairy Woodpecker (3)	Yellow-rumped Warbler (22)
Northern Flicker (45)	Black-throated Green Warbler (3)
Eastern Wood-Pewee (8)	Bay-breasted Warbler (9)
Eastern Phoebe (2)	Blackpoll Warbler (3)
Eastern Kingbird (6)	American Redstart (2)
Horned Lark (4)	Common Yellowthroat (16)
Purple Martin (3)	Scarlet Tanager (3)
Tree Swallow (2)	Rose-breasted Grosbeak (2)
Barn Swallow (7)	Chipping Sparrow (42)
Blue Jay (62)	Savannah Sparrow (14)
American Crow (45)	Song Sparrow (27)
Common Raven (7)	Swamp Sparrow (32)
Black-capped Chickadee (36)	White-throated Sparrow (36)
Red-breasted Nuthatch (2)	White-crowned Sparrow (1)
White-breasted Nuthatch (6)	Bobolink (24)
Brown Creeper (5)	Red-winged Blackbird (3000)
Winter Wren (1)	Common Grackle (140)
Marsh Wren (3)	Purple Finch (32)
Golden-crowned Kinglet (4)	American Goldfinch (48)
Eastern Bluebird (56)	Evening Grosbeak (65)
Veery (1)	House Sparrow (130)
Swainson's Thrush (40)	

*Acknowledgement*

Many thanks to Louise Damant, who typed the manuscripts of my three articles in this issue. ▣

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# Club Bird Feeders

Gordon Pringle

The program of public bird-feeding stations that the Club has supported for some years is in the middle of another year of operation. The year starts in September with the purchase of a bulk order of sunflower seed with funds derived from the Annual Seedathon. At this time, we must guess what the winter bird-scape will look like. Who can forget last winter, which started slow but ended with the unprecedented invasion of finches of all kinds? Clouds of finches, grosbeaks, siskins and crossbills made their way through one tonne of sunflower seed and several hundred kilograms of wild bird mixture. This year we have purchased another tonne plus a bit.

This year we are operating five feeding stations. They are at Pink Road in Quebec, and, from west to east in Ottawa-Carleton, Hazeldean Woods, Jack Pine Trail, Davidson Road and Rockcliffe Park. The Pink Road Feeder is manned and partly stocked by the Club des ornithologues de l'Outaouais. In addition, Club volunteers are involved in maintaining the National Capital Commission feeder on the Dolman Ridge Road in the Mer Bleue Conservation Area, which was in danger of closing since the interpretation centre is no longer staffed. An additional volunteer is needed to help with this station. Please call Gordon Pringle at 224-0543 if you can help.

We wish to thank the faithful volunteers who make this operation possible: Roy Millen, Stephen Darbyshire, John Sankey, Bill Miller, Bill Holland, David Easton and George McGee.

## Locations of Club Bird Feeders

Maps for finding the Pink Road, Jack Pine Trail (Moodie Drive) and Davidson Road feeders may be found in the November-December, 1983, issue of *Trail & Landscape*, page 269.

The Hazeldean Woods station is a new addition this year. It may be found in Kanata in the city park off Kakulu Road 1 km west of Eagleson Road in Katimavik. Go south about  $\frac{1}{2}$  km into the woods from Kakulu Road.

The Rockcliffe Park station is located below The Rockeries and near the tennis courts. Parking is available in a widened section of the Rockcliffe Driveway near the canoe Club. ▣

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# Fall Birding from Morrisburg to Cornwall

Bruce M. Di Labio

This year's excursion was again a success. On September 14, 1985, at 7 a.m., 17 birders left Ottawa for a day's birding along the St. Lawrence River. The convoy of cars followed Highway 31 down to the Morrisburg Marina. From this spot, we observed a few Great Black-backed Gulls and Double-crested Cormorants along the river. The next stop was at the Morrisburg Sewage Lagoon, where, unfortunately, shorebird-watching was poor because the lagoon was full of water. A small flock of Tree Swallows and a lone Cliff Swallow fed on insects over the lagoon. Overhead, Blue Jays streamed by in small flocks, and occasionally as many as 40 could be seen at once.

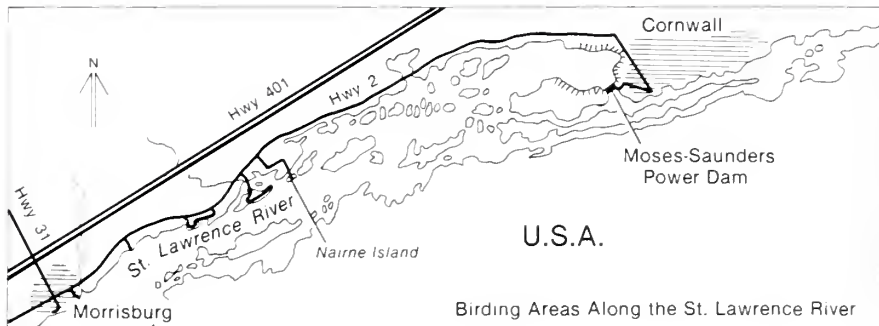
The next stop was near Riverside Heights on an access road which leads to the river. As we walked along the trail, we heard Swamp Sparrows and Common Yellowthroats chipping in the cattails. On the mudflat, a few Black-bellied Plovers, Greater Yellowlegs and Killdeer were feeding. A surprise for the group was a Merlin perched on a dead tree. While watching the Merlin, we also saw an Osprey and two Red-tailed Hawks.

By 10 o'clock, we had reached Chrysler Park where over 300 Canada Geese were feeding along the road. Four of the geese were sporting yellow neck bands with a code inscribed in black. (Anyone observing geese with a neck band should record the inscription and report it to the Canadian Wildlife Service.)

Continuing east along Highway 2, we stopped just west of the Ault Island turnoff to check two lagoons which are easy to overlook along the road. This stop produced 14 Redheads, 1 Lesser Scaup and a Solitary Sandpiper. Along the Ault Island causeway, there were Gadwall, American Wigeon and Wood Ducks in small numbers. The mudflats that usually can be seen from the causeway were still under water. On Ault Island were a small number of warblers, including Blackpoll Warbler, and Eastern Wood-Pewees were still singing.

As usual, lunch was at Nairne Island. This year, the weather was nice, and very few birds were seen except for a small number of Canada Geese. But as noted earlier, Blue Jays were still migrating, and by then we had sighted over 300 of them. After lunch, an Osprey flew overhead as we checked the causeway at Nairne Island.

As we headed towards Cornwall, we made an unexpected stop near Ingleside to check out a hawk overhead. The hawk turned out to be Sharp-shinned, and, in addition to it, we observed a few Red-tailed Hawks, an Osprey and a Broad-winged Hawk. While watching a large group of over a hundred Double Crested Cormor-



ants feeding along the river, we heard a finch singing across the road from us, but due to the traffic noise we could not identify it. On crossing the road, we found that the finch was an immature male House Finch. A lifer for some of the group. By 1:30 p.m., we reached the Moses-Saunders Power Dam at Cornwall.

After a brief wait for the security guard to open the gate, we drove over to the viewing area. As usual, most of the birds were on the American side, the majority being Ring-billed and Herring Gulls. We also observed over a hundred Bonaparte's Gulls, four Little Gulls (three adults, one immature), and a small number of Great Black-backed Gulls. A few Common Mergansers were feeding along the edge of the river. By 2 p.m., everyone finally had got a look at one of the Little Gulls; due to their small size and the distance involved, one had to have lots of patience.

The next stop, at Hoople Creek, was disappointing. The mudflat, which usually hosts many birds, was dry. Only three Killdeer, one Semipalmated Plover, 12 Water Pipits and two American Kestrels could be found.

Our return trip was via the Casselman Sewage Lagoon along Highway 417. Ten species of ducks were present, including American Black Duck, Northern Pintail, Northern Shoveler, Ring-necked Duck and Hooded Merganser, none of which we had found along the St. Lawrence.

We had a total of 65 species between Morrisburg and Cornwall and an additional six species at the Casselman Sewage Lagoon for a grand total of 71 species. ▢

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# Birding Trips to Cuba

Canadian birders have a chance to participate in the first-ever birding tours to Cuba and to give Cuban conservation efforts a big boost - both at once this March, 1986.

Writer/birder Graeme Gibson, who was writer-in-residence of the University of Ottawa this past fall, had visited Cuba last year and was taken on a very exciting birding trip near the Bay of Pigs. His guide was Orlando Garrido, a first-rate ornithologist (and former tennis great who played at Wimbledon six times and represented Cuba in the Davis Cup). Their conversation about the need for conservation and the positive role that nature-oriented tourism could play in demonstrating to the Cuban government the economic value of its precious wildlands led to the development of four, week-long birding tours this March.

The travel arrangements are handled by Unitours, who have been ferrying sun-and-fun tourists to Cuba for over a decade, and also are now branching out into these trips for birders.

Dates are March 1, 8, 15 and 22.

Cost is \$999.00 from Toronto, flying Air Canada and including all flights, lodging, meals, and the continuous services of Sr. Garrido and his assistant.

For the March 1st trip, the Canadian liaison person will be Marylee Stephenson, who lives in Ottawa. She is a long-time birder and a nature writer, having written a guide to Canada's national parks, articles on tourism in the Galapagos Islands (which she has visited three times), and on bogs, her favourite habitat.

Cuba has a birding "lifelist" of 388 species, with 31 endemics. The group - no more than 15 people per trip - will be through the swamps of the Zapata National Park, its canals and woodlands, and to neighbouring places rich with birds. The month of March means our own migrants are still passing through, to add to the multitude of local and very exotic birds.

For more information, contact Unitours through your local travel agent, or call Marylee Stephenson at 613-230-3937. ▣

# Coming Events

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arranged by the Excursions and Lectures Committee  
Philip Martin (729-3218), Chairman

*Times stated for excursions are departure times. Please arrive earlier; leaders start promptly. If you need a ride, don't hesitate to ask the leader.*

Tuesday	ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING
7 Jan.	Meet: Auditorium, National Museum of Natural Sciences, Metcalfe and McLeod Streets
8:00 p.m.	The formal business meeting will be followed by an opportunity to learn more about Club activities in an informal setting. Pick up a dessert and coffee and join one of the following discussion groups. They have been formed from committees of the Council. <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Awards, Education and Publicity, Macoun;</li><li>2. Birds, Excursions and Lectures;</li><li>3. Conservation;</li><li>4. Finance, Membership, Publications.</li></ol> Your questions, comments and suggestions will be most welcome.

Wednesday HALLEY'S COMET

8 Jan. Leader: Allan Cameron (232-5292)

6:30 p.m. Meet: National Museum of Science and Technology  
2380 Lancaster Road (St. Laurent Boulevard at Russell Road)

With the weather and comet's cooperation, this will be a chance to see a once-in-a-lifetime phenomenon. (See page 8 of this issue.) A talk and/or movie will be provided by the staff of the Museum. The Museum's telescope will be aimed at some interesting heavenly body (other than the comet, for which its field of view is too narrow). For the outdoor viewing of the comet, dress warmly and bring binoculars, the best optical instruments for observing the comet. Those wishing to go should register as soon as possible by telephoning the Club number (722-3050). This excursion will be limited to the first 50 people to register. If poor weather should prevent viewing of the comet, the Museum staff will provide the information needed to find the comet for yourself on the next clear evening.



Sunday WINTER BIRDING IN THE LOW-POLTIMORE AREA  
19 Jan. Leader: Bruce Di Labio (729-6267)  
7:00 a.m. Meet: National Museum of Natural Sciences, front  
entrance, Metcalfe and McLeod Streets  
We hope that last year's very successful outing can  
be duplicated. Ravens frequent the Low-Poltimore  
area, as do Boreal Chickadees and winter finches such  
as the crossbills. Bring binoculars, a lunch and a  
hot drink for this all-day outing. Dress warmly.  
Transportation will be by private car.

Sunday TOUR OF CARLETON UNIVERSITY GREENHOUSES (ELBA)  
26 Jan. Leader: Bill Illman  
2:00 p.m. Meet: at the greenhouses; parking is available in  
Lot 3 across from the greenhouses in the  
southeast section of the campus opposite the  
Administration Building. (Follow the main  
university entrance road from Bronson Avenue  
keeping left at the fork.)  
What better way to escape the Ottawa winter for a few  
hours? This popular tour under Professor Illman's  
enthusiastic guidance will feature an interesting  
variety of plants from different habitats around the  
world.

Tuesday	OFNC MONTHLY MEETING
11 Feb.	SOUTH AMERICA FROM ECUADOR TO CHILE
8:00 p.m.	Speaker: Frank Bell
	Meet: Auditorium, National Museum of Natural Sciences, Metcalfe and McLeod Streets
	Frank lived for 13 years in the area of his talk, first in Bolivia and then Peru. His work took him into many parts of these two countries as well as Ecuador and Chile. His slides will depict an amazing variety of habitats from the world's driest deserts, to some of its highest mountains (including snow-cov- ered volcanoes), to the Amazon jungle. The peoples and the agriculture of this fascinating region will also be featured.



Saturday  
22 Feb. MADAWASKA WILDERNESS SKI TRIP FOR INTERMEDIATE-  
ABILITY CROSS-COUNTRY SKIERS  
Leaders: Sheila and Harry Thomson (234-0845)  
Participants need not be marathoners for this all-  
day outing. Skiers probably will be divided into two  
groups, one to cover five to six kilometres and the  
other about 15 kilometres. To register for this en-  
joyable day of winter wilderness exploration, tele-  
phone the Club number (722-3050) by February 19th.  
This outing will take place whether the forecast is  
for sun or cloud, snow or rain. There is always  
something to see and lots of fun along the way.  
Dress appropriately.

Sunday  
23 Feb. WINTER WEEDS  
9:00 a.m. Leaders: Frank Bell and Ellaine Dickson  
Meet: National Museum of Natural Sciences, front  
entrance, Metcalfe and McLeod Streets  
This outdoor workshop is designed to increase your  
enjoyment of winter hikes. *Weeds in Winter* by Lauren  
Brown will be used as a reference book. See the  
articles on winter wildflowers by Ross Anderson in  
the January-February 1983 and 1984 issues of *Trail &  
Landscape* and in this issue (pages 16-21). Dress  
warmly and bring a lunch for this half-day outing.

Sunday  
2 March WINTER BIRD BUS TRIP TO THE KINGSTON AREA  
7:00 a.m. Leader: Tom Hanrahan (230-5290)  
Meet: National Museum of Natural Sciences, front  
entrance, Metcalfe and McLeod Streets  
Cost: none  
The outing will probably include a visit to either  
Amherst Island or Wolfe Island to observe owls and  
hawks. Dress warmly; bring binoculars and a hearty  
lunch. The bus should return to Ottawa by 6 p.m.  
Register early by telephoning the Club number (722-  
3050). The Dinobus will be provided free of charge  
by the National Museum of Natural Sciences.

#### NO POINT PELEE TRIP IN 1986

It has been decided not to run the Point Pelee trip again  
until we can get overnight accomodation much closer to the park  
than either Windsor or Chatham. It is hoped that arrangements  
can be made for May of 1987.

## GASPE TRIP

The Excursions & Lectures Committee is planning on running an 8-day bus trip to the Gaspé between June 25th and July 5th, 1986. Cost for an individual on a full bus will be about \$400 for surface transportation and double occupancy accomodation. Food and boat charter for whales will be extra.

Trip highlights will include the crossing of the St. Lawrence River near Tadoussac (whales), spending one whole day examining the boreal flora and fauna (cariboo and Spruce Grouse) of Gaspésie Park and 3 days in the Percé area concentrating on Bonaventure Island and Forillon National Park (seabirds and whales). A whale boat charter, probably in the Forillon area, is also planned.

Those interested must send a \$50. deposit with name, address and telephone number to The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club, Box 3264, Postal Station C, Ottawa K1Y 4J5 no later than February 15th. Bookings will be made on a first come, first served basis. We must have 40 paid reservations or the excursion will not take place. Further information may be obtained at the February Monthly Meeting or from Jeff Harrison (230-5968) at home.

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## Attention All Members:

1986 membership fees are now due. Please renew promptly; late renewals entail extra work and add to your Club's expenses.

Members who have not renewed their membership by February 1st will not receive any more issues of *Trail & Landscape*. Missed copies will be available to those who renew late at a cost of \$1.00.

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**DEADLINE:** *Material intended for the March-April issue must be in the Editor's hands before January 4 at the latest.*



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# Alfred Bog Painting to be Raffled

GET YOUR RAFFLE TICKETS

FOR

ALETA KARSTAD'S ORIGINAL OIL PAINTING

*ALFRED BOG*

Tickets for the painting, at \$2.00 each, will be available at Monthly Meetings and the Soirée.

The painting will be on display at Monthly Meetings, the Annual Business Meeting, and the Soirée.

The draw will take place at the Soirée in early May. All proceeds will go to the Alfred Bog Fund.

*Would you like to sell some raffle tickets to your friends and fellow workers? Then call Philip Martin (729-3218) or Lynda Maltby (997-2392).*

ISSN 0041-0748

TRAIL & LANDSCAPE

published by

THE OTTAWA FIELD-NATURALISTS' CLUB

Second Class Mail - Registration Number 2777  
Postage paid in cash at Ottawa

Change of Address Notices and undeliverable Copies:  
Box 3264 Postal Station C, Ottawa, Ont.  
K1Y 4J5  
Return postage guaranteed

~~HAMILTON NATURALISTS' CLUB~~ C2 CFN-083208  
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