

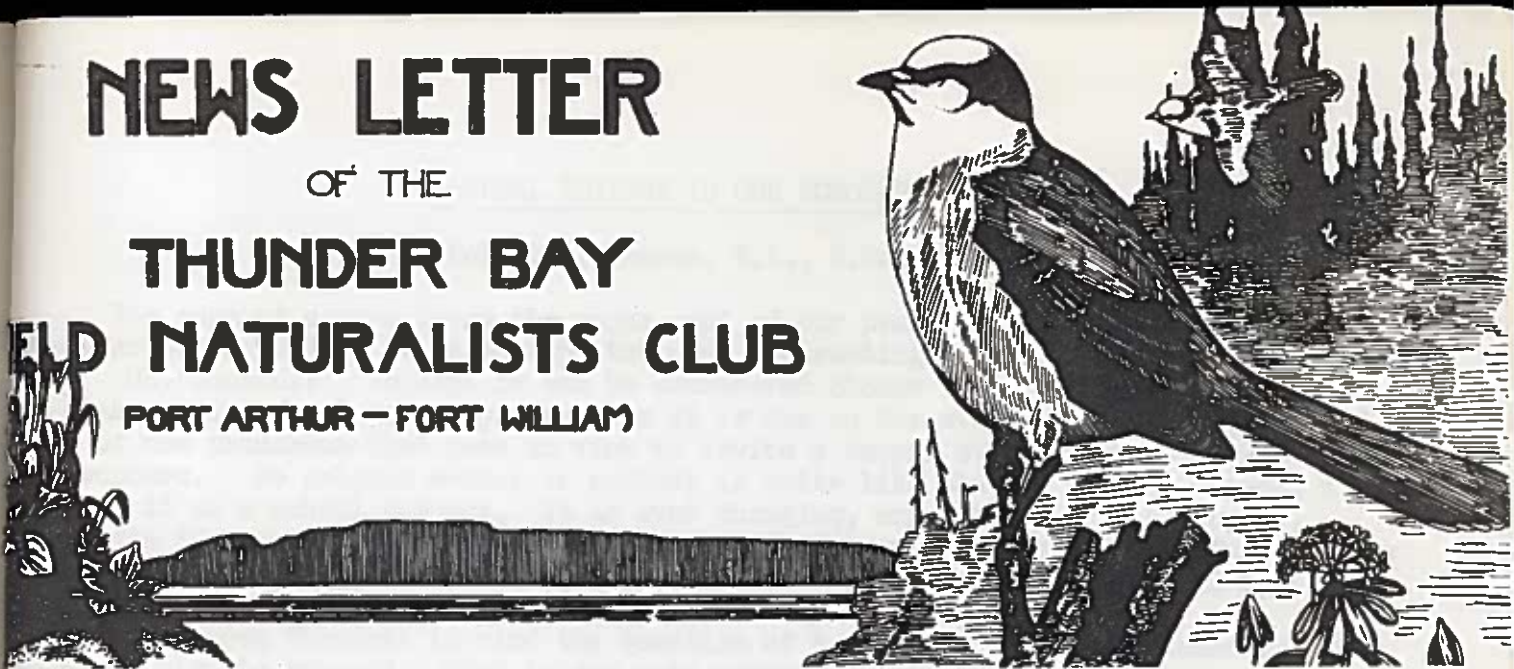
NEWS LETTER

OF THE

THUNDER BAY

FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB

PORT ARTHUR - FORT WILLIAM



October 15, 1955.
Volume IX, No. 4

317 Morse Street,
Port Arthur, Ont.

Dear Fellow Naturalists:

The hot, dry summer of 1955 has set some new weather records for the Lakehead area. It also provided district residents an opportunity to enjoy the outdoors to a greater extent than usual. Many local residents joined American tourists in visiting the Nature Museum at Sibley Provincial Park. The new Nature Trail along Joe Creek provided many items of interest to nature lovers. Over three thousand people were attracted by the opportunity to see the woodland plants and wildlife of the peninsula.

Unfortunately, those who visited the area found a reason to criticize the Ontario Government. Camping and picnicking facilities are sadly inadequate. Parking for more than two or three automobiles in trail areas is practically impossible, and little more space is found at picnic sites. There is a shortage of camp stoves and tables which irritated many visitors. Mosquitoes and black flies were not the plague they were in 1954 but in this instance the unusual weather was responsible, not the Department of Parks. Sanitary conveniences are primitive or lacking and clean water is not obtainable. Swimming and boating facilities need further development.

The contrast between the Lake Marie Louise campsite and those at Gooseberry and Interstate parks in Minnesota should aid in clarifying one reason the American tourist does not spend more time in this part of Canada. Gooseberry State Park, for instance, provides good roads leading to campsites where tents may be pitched on short grass on fairly level ground. The modern toilet facilities are housed in buildings constructed of rock and timbers. Hot and cold water are available and ice may be purchased once a day. Cook stoves indoors serve to ease the difficulties inclement weather brings. A meeting room with a large stone fireplace offers a place for singsongs when the weather is cool. Here strangers meet and find they have many interests in common. The camp area is sprayed to discourage insect life. Sufficient tables and benches and camp stoves are distributed over the area. No cabins or stores are within the camp area, but the courteous attendants can give you the exact mileage to the nearest ones up or down the highway. Those using the state-provided facilities must buy a State Park sticker for \$ 1.00 which is good for the year. In addition campers pay a small daily fee. Space is too limited to describe in full the excellence of Minnesota State Parks. The point is that to compete our Provincial parks must be their equal. Half-way measures are certain to look cheap and unattractive.

Your executive recently suggested to the Parks Division of the Ontario Government that a campsite be developed at Lake Marie Louise that would provide ample room for tents and trailers, with modern facilities in well-constructed buildings, and that similar buildings be built for the Park Museum and the attendants. Lands and Forests Department officials have advised that the original estimates for this work has been revised upwards. We hope the revision has been great enough so that the money to be spent will not be wasted by failing to meet the demands of the visiting public.

The first indoor meeting of the autumn season will be held at the Mary Black Public Library, Fort William, on October 25th, 1955, at 8.00 p.m. Mr. Charles Boyle will present a series of colourful slides of real interest. To whet your curiosity we will title them "WILDLIFE AND THE OUTDOORS IN SIBLEY PARK AND IN THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY".

Yours sincerely,
Keith Denis, President,
Joan Hebden, Secretary.

NATURAL SCIENCE IN OUR SCHOOLS

By Robert W. Hewson, B.A., B.Paed.

The saga of nature forms the major part of our programme of natural science in the elementary schools. It is perhaps the most interesting and unusual area of school study. Why unusual? Perhaps it can be considered closer to the child's out-of-school life than any in-school activity. Perhaps it is due to the ever changing seasonal parade of new phenomena that pass in view to invite a deeper study and participation in their wonders. No subject matter or content is quite like that of Natural Science if we regard it as a school subject. It is ever changing, expanding, and challenging. Last year's ideas may not hold true for this year; New view points supplant former ideas and even so-called facts become changed in the way they may be interpreted and applied.

With these thoughts in mind the question of teaching young people comes to mind. What do we wish to stress? What is our main purpose or aim in this programme. These and other questions assail the teacher and it seems that they can only be answered if the purpose becomes clear. After seeking the advice of my principal, school inspectors, and many nature enthusiasts, I reached the conclusion that my task was a very complex one indeed.

Here in summary form are some of the thoughts that finally made clear to me the purposes for which I should strive:

- a) The programme was to be child centred rather than subject matter centred.
- b) The work was to be accomplished by getting my students "doing" and participating rather than making notes or listing facts or learning ready-made material.
- c) I must strive to use English as a means to good science when notes were made, but guard carefully that my lessons would be science lessons using good English and NOT English lessons about science.
- d) Success and satisfaction would be positive qualities that must be experienced in some degree by every student even though everyone did not possess aptitude or interest in the same degree.

Thus I formulated my aims and purposes as follows:

- 1) To develop and foster in every student a participating and active interest in nature.
- 2) To have each student emerge from the study more curious, more interested, and more capable in the understanding of his natural environment than when he started at the first of the term.
- 3) To strive to lead students to relate the principles of nature to themselves and thus become happier, richer, and more respectful towards maintaining and preserving nature's gifts (Conservation theme)

From this beginning, the lessons were woven around the outline of topics for study. We usually began with the topic in which most interest was shown. Questions that indicated real problems in the minds of the students arose. Some of these were: What makes the sky blue? How does that caterpillar know how to build its cocoon since it never was shown how? What guides the birds when they fly back from the south? Do animals talk to each other? Where do worms go in winter? Why does a compass needle always point north? Why not put raw fruit in jars for winter rather than have to cook it? What causes rain? What makes a plant grow?

Such numerous questions need only direction and organization to start a real research programme. Now the "doing" is in progress; to find the best information on a problem and then to give a class report, to assemble a booklet, to make a 3-dimensional picture, to build a working model, or to tabulate your findings are tasks which the student finds richly rewarding under careful guidance.

Here are some of the things that students chose to do:

Bring in specimens both living and dead and give any information that can be obtained to the group.

Make booklets to illustrate such topics as Nature's Ploughman (the earthworm), Undersea Mysteries, Our Stick Story (a twig), Trees are Friends, Krabby the Crayfish, New Leaves for Old, Nature's Babies (seeds)

NATURAL SCIENCE IN OUR SCHOOLS - (Cont'd)

Set up and care for aquariums, vivariums, and terrariums in the classroom.

Collect and relate examples and specimens of leaves, wood, rocks, flowers, kind of roots, etc.

Make bird houses and keep a diary of their occupants.

Go on group bird hikes and list the various birds seen.

Construct built-up models to show Saving Our Soil, The Beauties of the Forest, Erosion Controlled, and many other suitable topics that relate to conservation.

To pool their resources to study a special unit such as pond water. Each student who owned a microscope made a short term loan to the Science Department so all could at some time make use of it,

Much of the study in Natural Science was sparked by staff members and by parents who often added specimens (and problems) to our Nature Museum. It seemed that the work of the teacher was to sell "curiosity" and to help direct and organize the activity. The various devices, hints and ideas that came from the students themselves as well as from others seemed more than adequate to carry our Nature Programme with a high degree of enthusiasm and interest that would result in a deep and abiding enjoyment in the beauty and wonders of the outdoor world.

Following are listed some of the things the students seemed to enjoy especially:

A group hike to observe a stream, wildflowers, kinds of trees, birds, under the title "Working and Playing in Nature's Laboratory".

Listening to recordings of birds songs and trying to find pictures of the birds recorded.

Planning and planting a landscape scheme for our new school.

Tabulating weather observations and then following these up by putting on experiments related to these observations (fog, rain, temperature, wind velocity).

Setting up experiments to show erosion of bare soil when water runs over its surface.

Editing a class column (based on the changing seasons, Nature News)

Making and caring for a winter garden sealed in an aquarium.

Bringing in specimens of various cones and needles from coniferous trees.

Indoor bulb growing in all its steps and growing seeds in flats for outdoor planting.

Caring for pets at home and in class.

Caring for wounded and sick birds brought into class.

Raising larva and bringing cocoons and chrysalises into class to watch moths and butterflies emerge.

Editor's Note: Mr. Hewson was a very successful science teacher at the Viscount Montgomery School and was recently appointed Vice-Principal at Prince of Wales School. Any comments concerning this article, or questions, will be welcome.

This article was originally published in The Wood Duck, Volume 8 Number 7.

March 1955.

ATIKOKAN OBSERVATIONS

May 21, 1955, Walter Kristjanson and I set out at 6.30 a.m. along the Atikokan river. The weather was fair and warm. A distance of 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ miles was covered in 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ hours. Birds observed:

Loon (1)	Black-capped Chickadee (6)	Chestnut-sided Warbler (1)
Marsh Hawk (1)	Red-breasted Nuthatch (1)	Ovenbird (12)
Ruffed Grouse (3)	Catbird (1)	Northern Yellow-throat (1)
Killdeer (2)	Robin (numerous)	American Redstart (1)
Herring Gull (25)	Veery (20)	Western Meadowlark (2)
Flicker (6)	Starling (25)	Bronze Grackle (10)
Phoebe (2)	Red-eyed Vireo (20)	Cowbird (2)
Tree Swallow (many)	Black & White Warbler (2)	Rose-breasted Grosbeak (1)
Barn Swallow (10)	Tennessee Warbler (many)	Purple Finch (1)
Canada Jay (8)	Yellow Warbler (6)	Chipping Sparrow (4)
Raven (10)	Magnolia Warbler (1)	White-throated Sparrow (6)
Crow (20)	Myrtle Warbler (10)	Song Sparrow (10)

TOTAL - 36 species.

In addition, on June 20, I observed two turkey vultures circling over the town dump about two miles out of Atikokan.

Ken Eoll.

ANNUAL FLOWER FIELD DAY

The Slate River Gorge was visited by about 40 club members on June 13, 1955. The day was cold and dull but a good variety of plants were collected and the group enjoyed examining the concretions and other geological formations in the gorge.

Plants identified were: clintonia, red baneberry, lungwort, twisted stalk, skunk currant, Joe Pye weed, New York Fern, oak fern, sensitive fern, ostrich fern, bracken, field strawberry, wood strawberry, shinleaf, side saddle pyrola, wild ginger, fireweed, rough-leaved aster, anemone riparia, Canadian anemone, Spirea ala, red-sheathed sedge, black-sheathed sedge, Houghton sedge, inflated sedge, fowl meadow grass, sand violet, club violet, spike rush, black snakeroot, Bebb's willow, naked mitrewort, sweet Cecily, early rue, tall rue, Canadian elder, pussytoes, twin flower, wild lily-of-the-valley, dogbane, daisy fleabane, Bicknell's geranium, golden groundsel, golden corydalis, bunchberry, sarsparilla, Scotch cap, mouse-earns chick-weed, hairy honeysuckle, high bush cranberry, rock cress, golden rod, red clover, alsike clover, Dutch clover, oxeyed daisy, hed straw, red osier dogwood, bindweed, sheep sorrel, shepherd's purse, brackeate green orchis American vetch, pale vetchling, starflower, abortive crowfoot, Northern swamp buttercup, wood meadow grass, mountain oat, timothy meadow grass, virgin's bower, false dragonhead, smooth wild gooseberry, mountain apple, red currant, dwarf raspberry, bush honeysuckle, wild rose, rosa blanda, American tree moss, liverwort.

NOTE BOOK

George Whitefield reported Horned Grebe, Scaup and Red-breasted Mergansers on Lake Helen on April 22. Canada Geese were observed migrating in great numbers on April 24. C. E. Garton saw 5 flocks, Edythe Denis noted 2 flocks, Hilja Rydholm watched 5 flocks at Vickers Heights, and 3 other flocks were seen.

J. Hammond Brown, who built the Outdoor Writers of America into one of the world's great conservation organizations, passed away on August 13th. Another great conservationist, Dr. R. W. Eschmeyer, died during the summer. Among the many posts he filled with distinction he was the executive vice-president of the Sports Fishing Institute though he will be better known to many as the author of the TRUE-TO-LIFE Stories. The series, including titles like Billy Bass and Tommy Trout, have introduced nature to many children.

The writer of the "Life Histories of North American Birds, Arthur Cleveland Bent, died on December 30, 1954, in his 88th year. Educated at Harvard he entered the manufacturing and public utilities fields successfully but found time to carry on his interest in ornithology. Commissioned to write his well-known series by the Smithsonian Institution, he saw twenty volumes published. Three more, partly completed, are still to come from the press.

Work was recently received that Morley C. Sabine, editor of the Wood Duck, passed away on August 27, 1955. A school teacher by profession, he was active in the United Church and in the Hamilton Nature Club.

An unusual number of Olive-backed thrushes have been seen during this year's fall migration but the usual waves of southward bound warblers have been missed. Shorebirds were noticed more readily than usual while Boulevard Lake was practically dry but have not been seen in numbers since the autumn rains raised the water level.

FIELD NOTES

May 5	Pine Siskin, F.W., Mrs. Murie	June 12	Indigo Bunting, Big Dog Lake.
7	Green-winged Teal, P.A., C.E.Garton		T.Tuominen
15	Whippoorwill (3 pair) Paipoonge Twp., Allan Oliver.	15	Woodcock, A.E.A.
17	Pine Warbler	18	Short-billed Marsh Wren, Allins
21	Scarlet Tanager, R. Robb	21	Black-billed Cuckoo, F.W., Mrs. F.Demude.
23	Alder Flycatcher, McGregor Twp. K.D.	22	Bald Eagle
27	Spruce Grouse, English R., A.E.A.	24	Mockingbird, Paipoonge Twp.L.S.;Dear
28	Black-capped Warbler- The Spiers, Olive-sided Flycatcher, C.E.G.	July 16	Long-earned Owl, L.S.Dear.
June 2	Mourning Warbler, A.E.A. Dragonfly Hatch, Sunshine, K.D.	28	Red-tailed Hawk, Dorothy Allin Blueberries ripe in many areas
	Many Swallowtail Butterflies	Aug. 6	White-winged Crossbill, A.E.A.
4	Philadelphia Vireo, Harstone, Dr. McLaren & Robbs.	24	Red Crossbill, Dorion, Murray Spiers
	Great hatch Mayflies, Slate R.	Sept. 11	Pied-billed Grebe, A.E.A.
5	Wood Peewee, Robbs & McLaren Duck Hawk	24	American Coot, A.E.A. Oregon Junco, A.E & David Allin.

AUTUMN MIGRATION RECORD

July 27	Lesser Yellowlegs (13, F.W., A.E.A.) Pectoral Sandpiper	Aug. 29	Crows in large flocks
Aug. 4	Least Sandpiper, P.A., N.Denis	31	Sparrowhawks numerous P.A. to Long Lac.
20	Geese (blues ?) flying, J. Hanton Shorebirds flying at night, Denis Greater Yellowlegs, P.A. Baird's Sandpiper Semipalmated Plover (4) Great Blue Heron	Sept. 1	Wild asters most noticeable flower Leaves of birch and poplar falling and no frost to date. Red-breasted mergansers absent from L.Helen where they were seen in August.
24	Dowitcher (6) K.D. Semipalmated Sandpipers Many White-throated Sparrows	2	Upland Plovers, P.A., The putnam's, C.E.G.
28	Great increase in whitethroats	3	Olive-backed Thrush (3) P.A., K.D.
29	Ovenbird (first seen or heard in 2 weeks) Many Myrtle Warblers Chestnut-sided Warblers(12) Bay-breasted Warbler (1) Black-throated Green (3 seen, many heard) Mourning Warblers (3) Many warblers not identified. Black & White Warbler Shorebirds were scarce this day Peeps flying over at night as usual Flock of 50 crows at Dorion, 100 near Red Rock.	4	Grey-cheeked Thrush, specimen. G. Whitefield. Many sparrows at Nolalu Flock 50 Bronzed Grackles, Pigeon R. Denis.
		5.	Mourning Dove, F.W., R. Robb. Olive-backed thrushes in large numbers Many Killdeer at Boulevard Lake. Whitethroats very numerous Many Song Sparrows Grey-cheeked Thrush, R.&.S. Robb. K.D. Palm Warblers Mourning Warblers Barn Swallows (9) McIntyre Twp. Denis. Rusty Blackbirds (12) Little Kam Grackles in Flocks Lapland Longspur, F.W., Robbs Horned Grebes (3) Hawks common but no migration noted Small warbler migration wave. Nighthawks (2) F.W., A.E.A.

Further Autumn Notes

Sept. 6	Slate-coloured Juncos numerous	Sept. 13	Nighthawk (specimen) A.E.A.
7	Wood Peewee, F.W., Robbs American Pipits, Mrs. Hogarth, Robbs immature Bluebirds, Mrs. Hogarth Golden Plover (2), P.A., E.&.K.D. Marsh Hawk (2), F.W., R. Robb	19	Cooper's Hawk, Sheba, G. Whitefield Golden-crowned Kinglets, P.A., K.D. Many Slate-coloured Juncos Few White-throated Sparrows Belted Kingfisher Tennessee Warblers (5) Myrtle warblers common again
10	Bank Swallow (1), P.A., N.&.K. Denis Red-tailed Hawk Black-bellied Plover, (4) Ring-billed Gulls (2 immature)	23	Fox Sparrow, S. Robb., K.D.
11	White-throated Sparrows numerous again Slate-coloured Juncos common Tree Sparrows Olive-backed Thrush Broad-winged Hawks (5) P.A., A.E.A. Killdeer (1 this date at Boulevard Lake where 16 to 30 were present for past two weeks) Myrtle, Palm & Mourning Warblers 24 Sparrowhawks counted between Intola and Strawberry Creek but no indication of migratory movement.	24	Red-eyed Vireo; McKenzie Philadelphia Vireo, Wild Goose Slate-coloured Juncos in large numbers Pectoral Sandpipers (3) P.A. Golden Plover Northern Horned Lark, F.W., Robbs Pigeon Hawk catching Lapland Longspur Sharp-shinned Hawk chasing pipits
		25	Hoyt's Horned Lark, Pearl, K.D. Harris Sparrow, F.W., Robbs
		26	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, P.A., K.D. Black-bellied Plover (lame) P.A. Robins in large flocks, R. Robb.

NOCTURNAL BIRD WATCH

An unofficial nocturnal bird watch was held on September 4, 1955, between 9.50 and 11 p.m. from the lawn of our vice-president, who was assisted by Sinclair Robb and Keith Denis. The moon and the birds co-operated - 19 birds flew across the face of the moon and 47 bird calls were heard during the same period. The notes of a starling with insomnia were ignored. The evening was cool but numerous strollers passed along the street. Some looked askance at the scope while others inquired if we were trying to determine what brand of cheese composed the moon. Robert Robb took the first turn on the telescope, then each took turns at watching, listening and recording.

<u>Time</u>	<u>Size to Tyko</u>	<u>Direction</u>	<u>Bird Calls</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Size to Tyko</u>	<u>Direction (Clock)</u>	<u>Bird Calls</u>
9.52	1½	7 - 3	10	10.21	½	7 - 3	3
9.53	1	8 - 2		10.23	1	8 - 4	
9.55	1	9 - 1		10.29	1	9 - 3	7
10.00	1½	5 - 7	4	10.33			3
10.03	½	7 - 5	5	10.39			1
10.06	2	9 - 1	2	10.50	½	9 - 4	
10.08			3	10.50	½	9 - 4	
10.11	1	9 - 4		10.51	¼	10 - 2	
10.12	1	10 - 5		10.52	2	8 - 3	
10.13	1	7 - 5	5	10.55	1	8 - 5	
10.17			2	10.57	½	10 - 5	
10.18			2	11.00	1	8 - 4	

BLUE GROUSE AT SIBLEY PROVINCIAL PARK

The Thunder Bay Fish and Game Association and the Ontario Department of Lands and Forests cooperated in the release of 21 blue grouse obtained from the British Columbia Game and Fish Department. Flown by T.C.A. to the Lakehead airport, the large grey birds were transferred to Sibley by auto and released under the supervision of George Whitefield, Wildlife Management Officer. George Hambley, President of the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, Bill Davidson, President of the local club, and several club members assisted. The birds were released in four, almost evenly-sized groups, on the Addison Lake Trail, the Lizard Lake trail, the Gardner Lake Trail, and another trail. All but one group included an adult female and four young of the year. Claude Garton, George Hambley and Keith Denis have all visited the release area since August 11th when the birds were freed; however the blue grouse have not been seen since they first wandered out of sight pecking at the red bunchberries.

Dr. C. David Fowle, who had studied these grouse, was contacted early in the year regarding the food of the blue grouse. The lists of plants collected by C.E.Garton in this area were sent to him and here are some of his comments on the abundance of blue grouse foods in our area. "Mr. Garton's list suggests that your area may be deficient in low plants bearing soft fruits similiar to those on the West Coast. Of this list I would think they would eat the following items: the fruiting heads of the club mosses; some ferns, including a fair amount of bracken; lilly fruits, such as those from flase Solomon's seal and wild lily-of-the-valley; willow buds; strawberries, raspberries, probably chokecherries, dwarf bunchberries (Cornus); most of any of the fruits of the blueberry group, and possibly some of the hawk weeds. I do not think there would be any difficulty about the winter food; if fairly sheltered locations were available. The winter diet is mainly composed of coniferous needles and buds of willows, aspen, etc. "Other foods include a few insects, especially grasshoppers".

It will be interesting to see how the blue grouse adapt themselves to this area. If the present flocks survive the winter the Thunder Bay Fish and Game Association plans to bring additional birds from the west next year.

MEMORANDUM TO CLUB MEMBERS RE F.O.N. RECORDS "SOUNDS OF NATURE"

Volume 1 "REPRESENTATIVE SONGS OF 25 COMMON SONGBIRDS OF ONTARIO" - \$3.95
 Volume 2 "A DAY IN ALGONQUIN PARK" - \$4.95

ENJOY these records and at the same time support this effort of the F.O.N.

DRYDEN FIELD NOTES

by Mrs. Egan Ray

March 18	Evening Grosbeaks	May 13	Nashville Warbler
31	Crows		Veery
April 4	Herring Gull		Pine Siskins
6	Juncos	14	Palm Warbler
10	Robins	15	Chipping Sparrow
11	American Goldeneyes		Chestnut-sided Warbler
	Pied-billed Grebe		Red-breasted Nuthatch
	Song Sparrow	16	Cape May Warbler
12	Flicker		Humming bird
	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	17	Black & White Warbler
	Red-winged Blackbirds	18	Blue Headed Vireo
	Tree Sparrows		Yellow Warbler
17	Sparrow Hawk	21	Magnolia Warbler
	Kingfisher		Bluebird
	Blue Herons	22	Rose-breasted Grosbeaks
	Golden-crowned Kinglet		Savannah Sparrows
	Brown Creeper		Pileated Woodpecker
	Marsh Hawks		Spotted Sandpipers
	American Crossbills		Ovenbirds
	Phoebe		Common Terns
24	Wilson's Snipe		Bank Swallows
25	Grackles (Bronzed)		Goldfinches
26	Sapsuckers	24	Wilson's Warbler
	Red-neck Grebes		Mourning Warbler
28	Tree Swallows		Redstarts
29	Purple Finch	25	Yellow Throat Warbler
	White throat Sparrows	28	Nighthawk
30	Bittern	29	Barn Swallows
	Horned Grebes		Chimney Swifts
	Myrtle Warbler		Northern Water Thrush
	Ruffed Grouse drumming		Black-throated Green Warbler
May 5	WhiteCrowned Sparrow		Olive-sided Flycatcher
8	Cowbird		Western Meadow Lark
10	Harris Sparrow	June 2	Black Tern
			Peewee,
			Cedar Waxwings
			Black-bellied Plovers

BIRD FEEDING STATION CONTEST

In line with our work among the youngsters of our School Area the Club this year tried a new venture - Bird Feeding Stations. As usual we worked through the School. Rules were simple, stations could be made by parent or child and prizes were awarded for each kind. We printed hints on how to attract birds and sketches of different types of feeders. We had 46 entries - the simplest a board on a tree; the most elaborate - one with window on top so that it could be seen through house windows. The most effective, a pie plate tied to a clothes line and sell stocked with suet and bread crumbs. Did they attract birds? Yes, over 75% had birds about when we visited them. The kinds - usual winter visitors, chickadees, Canada jays, grosbeaks, occasional woodpeckers and some English sparrows. You know the sparrows are wise down here, they migrate into the Mill in the winter and lead the "Life of Riley" being fed by the boyson shift. Our prizes, nine in all, awarded according to Grades, were subscriptions to Canadian Nature.

Fred Aaron,
Red Rock Fish & Game Club.

[Handwritten mark]