

# The Lady's-slipper





## PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

The formation of a naturalists' club is both an exciting yet anxious event. It is exciting because people with similar interests are able to share their enjoyment of native flora and fauna; yet, at the same time, there is a little anxiety as one cannot predict the level of interest that will be shown in the club and whether that interest will carry over into the years to come.

Well, it is quite obvious that presently, with a membership approaching 200(!) individuals, the interest is certainly here for a naturalists' club. With an exciting variety of guest speakers and field trips lined up, retention of interest will not be a problem.

The club was formed with several goals in mind. A number of us with many years of experience in 'naturalizing' this area were well aware of the incredible richness of natural history present. We felt that it was important to share these treasures with others who might also find enjoyment in them. We also recognize the need for preservation of sensitive areas, so prone to development and destruction. And last, we hope to arouse an interest in the younger generation, so that continued interest and enjoyment will be ensured for years to come.

The name of the club, The Macnamara Field Naturalists' Club, was chosen in memory of Charles Macnamara, a prominent Canadian naturalist who lived in Arnprior from 1880-1944. Because of a demanding job as accountant/bookkeeper for McLaughlin Bros., Macnamara often had only one day a week to devote to his demanding love of nature. It can be said that he paved the way for this club, for the areas he discovered and explored have been meticulously documented in his photographs and diaries.

Our club is fortunate for many reasons. We are blessed with an exciting area to explore: once covered by inland seas, this area is now a blend of north and south, with plants and animals from both regions present; a most interesting geological record of past life is also readily visible. Each season brings its own unique life forms, and as a club we shall explore each one through frequent field trips.

We have access to some of the most prominent naturalists in Canada, who are willing to come and share their knowledge with us.

I can recall my early years -- now more than two decades ago -- of searching for birds in this area. How I longed for others with which to share my enjoyment of each unusual find, and how I appreciated those more knowledgeable from whom I could glean information. Our club will fulfill the need for sharing and communicating knowledge -- not just of birds, but of all aspects of natural history.

We can look forward to a most exciting and rewarding association in the Macnamara Field Naturalists' Club.

Good naturalizing!

*Michael Runtz*

Michael W.P. Runtz  
President



AN IMMIGRANT'S VIEW

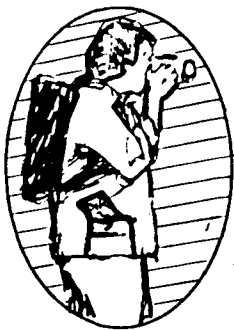
by Sylvia Williamson, Kinburn

Arriving in Canada for the very first time can be a real shock to the system and, on departing Ottawa Airport to take up our new life, I must say our first impression was one of huge, fast cars and never-ending highways. That is until we discovered the REAL Canada!

The 'real' Canada to us is a mental picture consisting of wide open spaces and an abundance of wildlife. If you're lucky, you might see 'for real' the Canada Goose in full flight. This was a familiar scene on the TV screen at home, but to see this bird in the wild becomes somewhat of an ambition to nature lovers. You can imagine then the thrill of first hearing and then spotting our first sight of the Canada Geese flying in a perfect 'V' over our own rooftop! The sighting of the Geese has now become an annual ritual and something to look forward to in the l-o-n-g Canadian winter. It's indeed a welcome reminder that Spring is finally on it's way.

## BIRD IDENTIFICATION

by Eric Ridgen, Vice-President



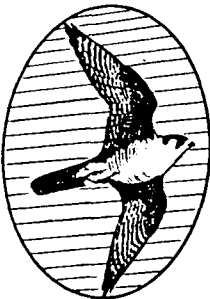
Accurate identification requires careful observation and usually a lot of practice in the field. A few useful hints are given here and, with a minimum of equipment, you will be able to confidently identify a surprising number of common birds.

### Equipment

- . eyes and ears (most experienced birders will "spot" as many birds by song or call as they will by sight)
- . field reference book
- . notebook
- . binoculars (more will be said about choosing binoculars and telescopes in a future newsletter)
- . old clothing, waterproof shoes or boots, insect repellent in the summer

### What to look for

- . SIZE -- make a comparison with another common bird
- . COLOUR -- look for bright colour patches; remember that a bird's colour appears to differ greatly depending on the light; when looking into treetops, it is often impossible to see any colour even with binoculars
- . SHAPE OF BILL -- is it long and slender or thick like a grosbeak, duck-like, hawk-like, down- or up-turned?
- . EYES -- look for an eye ring, a median line through the eye or an eye "brow"
- . WINGS -- are there wing bars (1 or 2) or none? Wings of water birds may have (a) patches (b) stripes (c) solid colour or (d) black tips
- .TAIL -- watch for a band at the tip, bands across the tail, white sides or spots in the corners
- .RUMP -- is there a conspicuous rump patch?
- .HEAD -- are there stripes or a patch on the crown? Is there a crest?
- .BREAST -- is it plain, striped, streaked, or spotted?
- .ACTIONS -- are its actions quick or slow; does it hop or walk? Is the flight undulating, erratic, in a straight line, gliding, or soaring? Does it hover like a humming bird or a kestrel?
- . FEEDING -- on what does it appear to be feeding?
- . ASSOCIATION -- is it alone or with other birds?
- . LOCATION -- is the bird in dry woods, swamp, pasture, etc?
- . DATE -- try to detail some or all of the above features, along with the date of the sighting in your notebook



### When to look

- . early morning is best because, by the time the sun is well up in the sky, bird activity has slowed down and does not resume until late afternoon. Marsh birds are most active near dawn or early evening. Ducks, waterfowl, and hawks may be seen throughout the day.

## Where to look

- . the best places are in moist woodlands or at the edge of a wooded swamp. Young scrubby woods are better than nature forests. Wood margins are good, especially during migration.

## How to look

- . birds are frightened by rapid movement. Try sitting quietly in a likely spot and let the birds come to you. Cover different areas -- woodland, marsh, field, river bank, and lake shore. Birding is a year-round activity.

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## ONTARIO BREEDING BIRD ATLAS

by Kevin MacDonald, Treasurer

How many species of birds do you think nest in the area within 5 km of your home? In a few years, we should be able to tell you -- and everyone else in Ontario. The Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas is a five-year project co-sponsored by the Long Point Bird Observatory and the Federation of Ontario Naturalists. The project started in 1981 and the data-gathering phase will be over next year. The objective is to map the distribution of all the province's breeding birds and to publish the results in the form of an atlas, which will contain detailed range maps for each species. The publication is expected to go on the market in 1987.

To obtain the data, volunteering birders are asked to visit one or more 10 km<sup>2</sup> block (or "square") of territory several times during the breeding season to record evidence of breeding for any bird species encountered. In most instances, this can be done without closely approaching nests or young, or otherwise disturbing the birds.

The breeding evidence consists of three levels: possible, probable, and confirmed. The aim is to find evidence to confirm as many species as possible, although lesser levels are acceptable. To confirm a species, the volunteer must see such things as a nest with eggs, adults carrying food for the young, adults entering and leaving the nest site, and fledged young birds.

This means a volunteer must spend some time watching birds to observe their behaviour. I found that this makes birdwatching that much more enjoyable, as it is interesting to see how different species act when tending and protecting their young. The Killdeer puts on a "broken wing" display to draw your attention away from the nest while the Tree Swallows "dive bomb" if you are anywhere near a nest.

The Atlas is not simply a bird-finding tour-de-force, but will be useful. It can be used as baseline data to document future changes of breeding range. It can also pinpoint previously unknown haunts of rare species and identify areas with particularly rich or unusual breeding bird faunas which are worthy of protection.

The Ontario Atlas is modelled after completed atlases of breeding birds of New Zealand, Britain and Ireland, and France, and on atlases presently underway in 16 other European countries and 12 American states. The British effort involved over 15,000 volunteer birders and resulted in a fascinating and readable book packed with maps and species accounts.

There are approximately 1,500 volunteers taking part in the Ontario project. In the Ottawa area alone, over 50 people are spending a good deal of their spare time "beating the bushes" for the glimpse of an elusive bird. During the first three years of data-gathering, the Ottawa group has turned up a total of 164 species with 143 species confirmed. The local "Atlasers" are myself, Adolf Vogg, Eric Ridgen and Sloan Watters. If any club member wishes to help with this project, any member of the Arnprior group would be pleased to hear from you.

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It's For the Birds  
by John Gill

A Reply to "It's For the Birds"  
by Mrs. Robert Aitken nee  
Josephine Hartford Emes  
- an 88-year-old Westerner -

Oh Mr. Runtz, pray come at once!  
What's out there, on the water?  
Is it a seal, a blue-winged teal  
Or merely an otter's daughter?

My eyes are dim but it's still my whim  
To know one when I see one:  
A flock of geese from a pair of "meese",  
A widgeon from a pigeon.

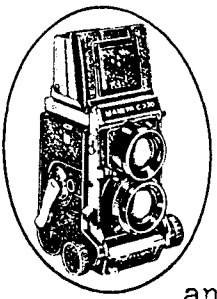
Is it worth the pain, the toil and strain  
The starin' and the swearin'  
To stand at dawn in an icy pond  
Just to watch the heron pairin'?

In the mist and fog I sit on a log  
While passing ducks and honkers  
Ask: "Why are you here, far from your beer?  
You surely must be bonkers!"

Let him who follows outdoor trends  
Go out and watch our feathered friends  
And stand knee-deep in icy water.  
I much prefer the water hotter,  
A cozy chair, the cup that cheers  
And nice soft music to my ears.  
Let him go watch the "heron pairin'".  
I'll stick to my rockin' chairin'.

## CAMERA CORNER

by Emerson Raddatz



"How was the field trip today, Honey?" The question was just another way of saying "Hi, I see you're back." "Fantastic, would you believe we saw a Calypso Bulbosa -- Fairy Slipper to you -- and while we were admiring it, a Black Swallowtail came and rested on the flower!" "Sure, sure, and I sipped iced tea with three little green men after they landed their flying saucer on our back patio." "All right Smarty pants, I'll prove it to you. I had my camera along and got some beautiful shots."

Nature lovers and cameras seem to belong together. Even though we thrill at the sight of some of Nature's exquisite beauties, a photo of the same can prolong the pleasure during long winter evenings from September to June.

It has been said that you cannot be really good at something until you understand it well. So one should learn as much as possible about one's cameras, lenses, filters, films, etc. In this article we will consider camera care. The first and foremost rule is KEEP IT CLEAN. Use a paint brush to clean dirt and dust from the camera body. Use a hand blower to clean lenses and mirrors, then moisten a clean piece of lens cleaning tissue with a good brand of lens cleaner and gently swab the surface of the lens, front and rear, until fingerprints and smudges are gone. Wipe in a circular motion from the centre to the outside. A one-to-one ratio of ether and alcohol makes a good lens cleaner. Q-tips are excellent for cleaning eye lens and range finder windows and mirrors.

It's a really good idea to keep a UV (ultraviolet) haze filter screwed into the front of your lens -- cheaper to replace if broken, keeps lens clean, and cuts down haze in pictures.

More and more cameras are going electronic so batteries are becoming more important than ever. They should be changed at least once a year and NEVER left in the camera for an extended period of time. When the battery compartment is empty, clean the contacts with a lead pencil eraser.

Cameras and sand seem to have a clandestine love affair. Even if you can't see any openings where sand could enter the "works", sand can find a "freeway". One grain of sand in the right (wrong) place can stop a camera from working. So if your field trip takes you to a beach, keep your camera in a plastic bag -- even an A&P grocery bag will do.

Happy shutterbugging!

## ORCHIDS OF THE ARNPRIOR AREA

by Michael Runtz, President

Orchids -- the term usually evokes visions of steamy jungles with exquisite jewels of flowers dangling overhead. This image is partly accurate, for most of the 15,000 species of orchids are found in the tropics and subtropics. However, 29 species of native orchids plus one introduced species can be found right in our "backyard." Many of them are rather plain in colouration and petite in size, making them easy to overlook. However, a few have outstanding character and colour that equals any tropical species.

The orchid family is a diverse group so far as habitat is concerned. Some grow in cold bogs, rich hardwood forests, others in open meadows, limestone plains, or at swamp and river edges. As we have all of these habitats in our area, we are well represented with a variety of these fascinating plants.

In this area, orchids can be found from mid-May right into late August. However, the peak time for many is mid- to late-June, which is also the prime time for mosquitoes. It may well be that many of our local species are far more numerous than generally believed just because those "guardians of the orchids" tend to keep most humans out of the damper areas where many species thrive.

The orchids of our region have been sought out for almost 80 years now. Charles Macnamara of Arnprior and Edna Ross of Pakenham both took particular interest in this group of plants, and each made important contributions to our knowledge of the occurrence of orchids in our region. Macnamara explored primarily the Nopiming Game Preserve (Arnprior to Marshall's Bay) while Edna Ross travelled the Pakenham Hills and other areas of Lanark County close to Pakenham.

Many of the orchid sites they discovered (in Macnamara's case, up to 70 years ago) are still extant today, and with renewed interest many new locations have been discovered in recent years.

The following is a brief description of the major orchid habitats in our region, the orchid species one may encounter there, the flowering dates of the orchids. A status of rare implies 3 or less sites; uncommon 3-8 sites; and common more than 8 sites.



## Rich hardwood forest

- . Showy Orchis (Orchis spectabilis)-- prefers low, moist areas. Mid- to late-May. Rare.
- . Spotted Coralroot (Corallorhiza Maculata)-- often near hemlocks in maple-beech woods. Late-June to July. Uncommon.

## Coniferous forest

- . Pink Lady's-slipper (Cypripedium acaule)-- prefers pine woods. Early- to late-June. Common.
- . Small Yellow Lady's-slipper (Cypripedium calceolus var. parviflorum)-- prefers moist areas. Mid- to late-June. Common.
- . Early Coralroot (Corallorhiza trifida)-- prefers moist areas. Early- to mid-June. Common.
- . Heart-leaved Twayblade (Listera cordata)-- prefers low, mossy areas. Early- to mid-June. Rare.
- . Calypso (Calypso bulbosa)-- prefers edges of cedar swamps. Late-May to late-June. Rare.
- . Blunt-leaf Orchid (Platanthera obtusata)-- prefers cool, moist areas. Late-June to mid-July. Common.
- . Round-leaved Orchid (Platanthera orbiculata)-- prefers mature cedar woods. Late-June to mid-July. Rare.
- . Striped Coralroot (Corallorhiza striata)-- prefers dry cedar woods. Early- to late-June. Uncommon.
- . Hooker's Orchid (Platanthera hookeri)-- prefers drier, open woods. Mid-June to early-July. Uncommon.
- . Frog Orchid (Coeloglossum viride)-- grows along edges. Late-June to mid-July. Rare.
- . Tall Green Bog Orchid (Platanthera hyperborea)-- grows in a variety of conditions from deep shade to openings. Late-June to mid-July. Common.
- . White Adder's-mouth (Malaxis monophyllos)-- prefers moist woods. Late-June to early-July. Common.
- . Green Adder's-mouth (Malaxis unifolia)-- prefers slightly drier situations, often at edges. Late-June to mid-July. Common.
- . Showy Lady's-slipper (Cypripedium reginae)-- prefers moist openings, particularly cedar swamps. Early- to mid-July. Common.

- . Large Yellow Lady's-slipper (Cypripedium calceolus var. pubescens)  
-- prefers drier openings. Mid- to late-June.
- . Fen Twayblade (Liparis loeselii)-- prefers moist openings. Mid-June to early-July. Common.
- . Ram's-head Lady's-slipper (Cypripedium arietinum)-- prefers open limestone flats; may also grow in cedar swamps. Late-May to early-June. Uncommon.
- . Dwarf Rattlesnake Plantain (Goodyera repens)-- prefers slightly moist coniferous woods. Early- to late-June. Uncommon.
- . Checkered Rattlesnake Plantain (Goodyera tessellata)-- prefers dry coniferous woods. Early- to late-July. Uncommon.

#### Spagnum bogs/fens

- . Dragon's-mouth (Arethusa bulbosa)-- prefers wet fens. Late-June to mid-July. Rare.
- . Grass-pink (Calopogon pulchellus)-- Late-June to mid-July. Rare.
- . Rose Pogonia (Pogonia ophioglossoides)-- prefers wet fens. Early- to mid-July. Rare.
- . Tall White Bog Orchid (Platanthera dilatata)-- Late-June to mid-July. Rare.

#### Open meadows

- . Slender Ladies'-tresses (Spiranthes lacera)-- prefers rocky upland meadows. Mid-July to early-August. Uncommon.
- . Nodding Ladies'-tresses (Spiranthes cernua)-- prefers moist meadows. Mid- to late-August. Uncommon.
- . Hooded Ladies'-tresses (Spiranthes romanzoffiana)-- prefers wet meadows, borders of ponds. Mid-July to early-August. Rare.

#### River and swamp edges

- . Purple-fringed Orchid (Platanthera psycodes)-- Mid-July to early-August. Rare.
- . Wide-leaved Ladies'-tresses (Spiranthes lucida)-- Late-June to early-July. Rare.

One introduced species, Helleborine (Epipactis helleborine), is spreading quickly and can be found in almost all habitat types except for bog/fen. Early-July to early-August. Common.

In addition to the above species, several more are likely to be found in this area and are to be looked for:

- . Ragged-fringed Orchid (Platanthera lacera)
- . Large Purple-fringed Orchid (Platanthera grandiflora)
- . Case's Ladies'-tresses (Spiranthes caseii)
- . Southern Twayblade (Listera australis)
- . Broad-leaved Twayblade (Listera convallarioides)
- . Tubercled Orchid (Platanthera flava)
- . Downy Rattlesnake Plantain (Goodyera pubescens)
- . Club-spur Orchid (Platanthera clavellata)

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The Lady's-slipper is the official newsletter of the Macnamara Field Naturalists' Club. Contributions are welcomed, and may be given to any member of the executive.

To those who contributed to this, the first issue, thank you. Comments and suggestions are welcome from the members.

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