



THE BULLETIN

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE RICHMOND HILL NATURALISTS

November 2009 — No. 484

INSIDE THIS ISSUE...

Getting ready for the
2009 Christmas Bird
Count

On the trails: winding
our way along
Richmond Hill's Beaver
Creek trail.

Book Review: Birds of
Toronto...

Book Review: Why we
disagree about Climate
Change...

On planting, growing,
watering and cutting a
lush green lawn...

News from the Dunlap
Observatory front

Mouse Ears: an
acquired taste from the
forest floor?

Meetings and outings
for the coming month...

Leonids light up the
skies and news from
the RHN Astronomy
Group



Calling All Bird Feeders!

*Red-headed woodpecker
Photo: Gene Denzel*

With the 110th Annual Christmas Bird Count taking place this year on December 19, the Richmond Hill Naturalists are looking for people with bird feeders to open up their back yards for the Bird Counters. Bird Counters would visit volunteering households ONCE between 8am and 4:30pm on December 19. They will check the yard to count all the birds and bird species that may be seen there for just a few minutes – maybe longer if your yard is particularly exciting at that particular moment! You may also choose to count the birds and bird species in your yard yourself on December 19th and report your results.

The Richmond Hill Naturalists are just one group among thousands participating in the Christmas Bird Count throughout the western hemisphere. The count began in 1900 as an alternative to the then-traditional practice of the Christmas Side Hunt, in which sportsmen and women signed on to teams which then went out and vied to see which team could kill the most birds and other animals

in the allotted time. An officer of the fledgling Audubon Society, ornithologist Frank Chapman started the new and less lethal tradition of the Bird Census. 27 birdwatchers in 25 cities (including Toronto) participated in that first count; last year more than 50,000 counters in 19 countries from Antarctica to Alaska took part.

In Richmond Hill, each year groups of birdwatchers of all levels of expertise disperse to their assigned sections; each group taking note of every bird and every species that they see in their area. The groups meet at the end of the day for the annual Chili Dinner, where their findings are totalled up. The club's results in turn are submitted to Bird Studies Canada, which works with the Audubon Society in the US and elsewhere to analyze the data.

If you wish to be a counter or to volunteer your back yard please leave a message with Gene Denzel at 905-889-7888 or email lezned@yorku.ca



The Bulletin is published 9 times per year, from September to May inclusive, by the Richmond Hill Naturalists, and is mailed free to members. The Bulletin is the official publication of the Richmond Hill Naturalists, a non-profit organization the objectives of which are to stimulate public interest in natural history and to encourage the preservation of our natural areas.

Address Correspondence to:
Richmond Hill Naturalists, P.O.
Box 32217, RPO Harding,
Richmond Hill, ON, L4C 9S3

Deadlines: The editor encourages submissions from any member on any topic related to nature or conservation, and in particular, any issue that might be of interest or concern to members of this club. e-mail: editor@rhnnaturalists.ca Deadlines are the 2nd Thursday of each month.

Bulletin Advertisers have been selected because of their relevance to member interests. Members are encouraged to patronize our advertisers and please mention that you saw their ad in our Bulletin.

Change of Address: Any change of email or street address should be sent to Mike Turk who prints the envelopes for the Bulletin mailing.

Denise Potter, Bulletin Editor:
editor@rhnnaturalists.ca

647-504-4586
Mailing Address: 128 Pugsley
Av, Richmond Hill, ON

Mailing Database: Mike Turk

Distribution: Athena Antiochos

Visit our Website at
www.rhnnaturalists.ca

See the Executive List for
additional contact information.

2008 / 2009 RHN Executive

President.....	Marianne Yake (president@rhnnaturalists.ca) 905-883-3047)
Past President.....	Natalie Helferty
2nd Vice President.....	Position Available
Secretary.....	Position Available
Treasurer/Secretary.....	Gene Denzel (treasurer@rhnnaturalists.ca)
Field Trips.....	Joe Agg (trips@rhnnaturalists.ca)
Environment.....	Position Available
Publicity.....	Position Available (publicity@rhnnaturalists.ca)
Bulletin Editor.....	Denise Potter (editor@rhnnaturalists.ca)
Membership.....	Mike Turk (membership@rhnnaturalists.ca)
Events.....	Position Available
Ontario Nature Rep.....	Marianne Yake
Website Admin.....	Rod Potter (webmaster@rhnnaturalists.ca)
Chair of AstroNats.....	Heidi DeBond (astronomy@rhnnaturalists.ca)

MEMBERSHIP IN RHN

The Membership Application Form, is available at each General Meeting from Mike Turk, or in our club brochure, available from any executive member. You may also sign up or renew by clicking on the Membership link at: www.rhnnaturalists.ca



New Members
Adam Socha, Stan and
Gillian Butcher

SAVE A TREE OR THREE Get the Bulletin by Email!

If you have internet access, and are currently getting the Bulletin by "snail mail", please get yourself on the email list. Enjoy the full-colour pictures, clickable links and more. Please email editor@rhnnaturalists.ca if you would like to receive the Bulletin in your In-Box instead of your Mailbox.



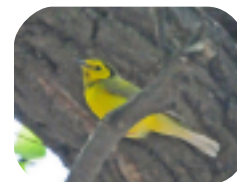
SIGN UP! For Richmond Hill The Richmond Hill Naturalists and community groups such as the DDO Defenders and Observatory Hill Homeowners Association continue to advocate for the complete protection of the David Dunlap Observatory and Park. Please call your local councilor (905-771-8800), write a letter and/or buy a sign. Tell Town Council you want LEADERSHIP & ALL Dunlap Parklands protected! If you support the community drive to preserve the entire Dunlap Observatory property, please purchase one of our beautiful lawn signs. Our volunteers will be happy to deliver a sign to your door. Buttons and T-Shirts also available.



Coming Events



Thursday, November 19, 2009. 7:30pm. Annual Joint Meeting with West Humber Naturalists and Richmond Hill Naturalists - Professor Bridget Stutchbury will be speaking on her recent ground-breaking research on tracking the routes and destination of individual songbirds in migration. Richmond Hill Presbyterian Church, Wallace Hall. 10066 Yonge St., North of Major Mackenzie Dr., West side. For info contact Marianne Yake at 905-883-3047, or visit www.RHNaturalists.ca.



Friday, Nov 20 – 7:30pm – RHN Astronomy Group meets at Bayview Hill Community Centre – Boynton Room. Speaker - Pat McDonald - American Association of Variable Star Observers "Citizen Science with Epsilon Aurigae".



Saturday November 21, 2009. 9am. Beaver Creek Walk Part 3 – 2.5 KM walk on good path to explore Beaver Creek - Leader: Joe Agg. Meet at 9am sharp at Leslie and 16th, southeast corner. Parking is available in the commercial area on the north side of 16th Ave. The walk will be held snow or shine.



Saturday November 28 - West Humber Naturalists - Niagara River. Join Kevin Shackleton for the West Humber club's annual excursion to the Niagara area. The Niagara River hosts a wide variety of gull species in winter while the surrounding area can be good for Carolinian songbirds, various waterfowl, and even some birds of prey. Pack a field guide, lunch, binos, and a scope if you have one. Be prepared for cold, damp weather and bring enough lunch to get you through the day; there is likely only one stop at Tim's in the morning and then nothing until late afternoon. To car pool, meet at Vellore Hall at 7:00 a.m. on Saturday, November 28th. Those who want to go directly to the Falls area should head for the parking lot at the greenhouse south of the falls for 8:30. Stops will include the area around the barge, the interior pond, and Chippewa for Carolinian species. After that, we can stop for coffee at Tim's and work our way downstream to Niagara-on-the-Lake. If time allows, a visit to Van Wagner's Beach on the way home is possible. Call Kevin at 905-853-6959 if you require further information prior to the trip.



Saturday, December 5, 2009 – 8am – all day - Toronto Ornithological Club Jim Baillie Memorial Walks – Waterfowl and Winter Birding: West Toronto Lakeshore & Beyond. These outings are aimed at the intermediate birder but beginners are also welcome. Free to the public. Leader: Dave Milsom. Meet in the parking lot at Humber Bay Park East. Bring a lunch. Carpool if necessary



Monday, December 7, 2009 12:30pm Botany Group - meeting at the home of Muriel Farrant 123 Woodward Ave, Thornhill. This month's topic is wildflowers.



Tuesday December 8, 2009. 7:30pm. RHN Executive Meeting. Location: McConaghy Centre. The Executive is still looking to fill a number of positions. If you would like to join us, please contact Marianne Yake (president@rhnaturalists.ca).

Please note: Richmond Hill Naturalists welcomes anyone to volunteer as an outing leader. Contact trips@rhnaturalists.ca if you would like to organize or promote an outing.



Events Past

Bird Study Group

October 14 - Swainson's and Gray-cheeked Thrushes

The Richmond Hill Naturalists Bird Discussion Group met on 14 October at the Denzel's. Present were long-standing members Mike Turk, Theo Hofmann, Muriel Farrant, Gene and Charlene Denzel, and Barbara Thompson, joined by new players Athena Antiochos, Joe Agg, Joandice and Tony Marshall. Sorely missed was Harold Farrant, who passed away last Spring. The topic for the day were the detailed behaviour and description of two Catharus thrush species: Gray-cheeked (minimus Lafresnaye) and Swainson's (ustulatus Nuttall). After enjoying refreshments prepared by Charlene, we got to work. Various people covered different aspects of the two birds, with Theo giving a comparison of field marks and identifiers at the end. These two birds are normally only seen in our area during migration, with Swainson's being far more common than Gray-cheeked, so it was good to learn more about them. After this, we were presented with a very tough quiz prepared by Barbara, leading to much scratching of heads.

November 11 - Red-Bellied Woodpecker, Northern Flicker and Yellow-Bellied Sapsucker

The bird study group convened at 7:30 Mike Turk's home on Wed, 11 Nov. We were geared up to discuss three species of woodpecker type birds which occur in our area: Red-bellied Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. Attending were Mike Turk, Joe Agg, Susanne Stark, Muriel Farrant, Athena Antiochos, Barbara Thompson, Martin Chen, Theo Hofmann, and Gene Denzel. The group was trying a different way of dividing up the responsibilities for reporting from the traditional approach, with a few people doing all the aspects on one of each species, rather than assigning a particular set of characteristics for all of the birds to an individual. In any event, after enjoying the refreshments provided by Mike, we

had a lively discussion of the characteristics of each species, with most of those attending learning something new. Then we were presented with a quiz devised by Athena, which once again provided most of us with some real problems. (Why is it that the more recent members produce the hardest questions?). Our next session will be at Theo Hofmann's home on 9 December, to discuss details of the Pine Siskin and American Goldfinch.

York Region Environmental Alliance Meeting – Nov 5

YREA held a meeting on November 5 at the York Region building in Newmarket. Attendees were representatives of different environmental groups from across York Region – and some from Durham; business people trying to make a living in a more environmentally-sensitive way; and citizens. People only have so much time and energy, and each group does what it can in its little area. The goal of the YREA is to bring environmentally-conscious people together to share ideas, awareness of each other, and making a difference by putting all our weight together. At the meeting were people as diverse as a landscaper trying to provide a more eco-conscious service -- when customers allow; a representative of LEAF, a non-profit organization getting people to plant native trees in their yards; a transportation planner; and people who have been committed to saving some precious places such as the Lands not Landings group fighting the airport in Durham Region. YREA is now organizing a "Shop like the Planet's Watching" campaign. Visit their website at www.yrea.org for more information.

Protect Markham's Food Belt – Nov 9

Ratepayers in Markham are gearing up for a battle to save what they can of their remaining green lands as York Region prepares to approve the Official Plan on December 9. The region's draft official plan proposes a 50% increase in Markham's population by 2031 and a 7.3 square

kilometre (7.3 million square metre) increase in sprawl onto Markham's irreplaceable farmland and greenspace. Citizens from various groups including several Richmond Hill Naturalists converged at a meeting at the Markham Civic Centre on November 9 to discuss their reactions to the proposed plan. Called together by Jim Robb of the Rouge Duffins Greenspace Coalition, the diverse group unanimously opposed this part of the York Region draft Official Plan – although they didn't all agree on everything else. After much discussion, Robb put together the following conclusions that all could agree on:

1. Ask York Region to refrain from passing the Regional Official Plan (Growth Plan - Dec. 09 Approval currently planned) until further public consultation has occurred to protect Markham's residents and future;
2. Work with other levels of government to limit Markham's population growth to less than 25% over the next 22 years;
3. Place a 10 year moratorium on Urban Expansions to protect Markham's rural heritage, foodland and greenspace;
4. Expand the Greenbelt to protect 75% of Markham's "whitebelt" lands as a permanent Foodbelt and Natural Heritage System;
5. Fully support the creation of a 40,000 acre Rouge National Park;
6. Better protect residential communities from over-intensification by enacting height restrictions (e.g. 6 storeys) near existing residential communities and by directing intense development to transit, transportation, employment and mixed-use nodes.

On Saturday November 21, 2009, at 10 am, people are invited to meet at the Tim Horton's on the SW corner of McCowan Road and Hwy 7 and then split into two groups to drop flyers in Cornell and north of Milne Park.

Beaver Creek Walk Part 2



Another beautiful, fall day greeted Joe Agg's Beaver Creek Walk Part 2 on October 17. Joe guided a good crowd along the Beaver Creek trail from Weldrick and Spadina to Leslie Avenue. Following the creek through willow groves and thickets, the trail is one of Richmond Hill's few parks....but how lovely it was, with the leaves still hanging on and hiding the massive homes that gird the edges.

In former days as Joe pointed out, the creek went through farmland and wasn't really accessible to most hikers. Now we urban dwellers benefit from a symbiotic relationship: the creek protects the parkland from development, since water must go somewhere and people generally don't want it going through their homes or offices, and the park protects the creek and filters the runoff giving the

creek a chance to provide a home for at least some types of fish and other creatures. As a kid, Joe explored the creek and found turtles and frogs and fish and all kinds of interesting insects. Few species are left but some hang on and some, given time and cleaner water, may come back.

The beaver dam area at the end of the trail close to Leslie Street is the most productive part of the whole park for wildlife. In constant battle with the Town, beavers have built a solid dam and a couple of lodges that just about qualify as huts. Even in mid-October there were still a good number of birds including a

couple of warblers in cryptic fall plumage, a kettle of turkey vultures, hermit thrush, flocks of returning dark-eyed juncos flashing their white tails; gold finch, house finch, cardinals, song sparrows, fox sparrows, white-throated sparrows, and robins.

On the third and final Beaver Creek Walk, Joe will take us through a part of the creek that is facing more obvious challenges, yet still provides a home for wildlife, as he'll show us. Beaver Creek Walk – the Finale – starts at 9am sharp at the southeast corner of Leslie St and 16th Avenue on Saturday, Nov 21 – rain, snow or shine!



Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Ontario

Help support bird habitat and research in Ontario over the holidays. The definitive atlas of Ontario birds has now been reduced in price by 35%. See www.birdsontario.org for details. Glowing praise for the atlas from Margaret Bain, Ontario Regional Editor for North American Birds:

"This is a huge, beautiful book, packed with information interesting to birders, but also fascinating to anyone caring about the natural world and the changes we are seeing in it in our lifetimes, specifically in Ontario. It was published in late 2007, the second such Breeding Bird Atlas, the first having been produced exactly 20 years ago, so not only does it give a picture of the current status and distribution of the birds of the province, but it permits quite precise quantification of both increases and decreases in bird populations as well as advances and retreats in their Ontario range across the last two decades."



Books

Books is a new feature in the Bulletin. If you've recently read a Nature-related book and want to recommend it (or otherwise!) please submit your review to editor@rhnaturalists.ca. Please keep reviews to a maximum of 250 words!

Birds of Toronto

You may be interested in an excellent new booklet "Birds of Toronto" just introduced by the City. This 45-page publication covers history, breeding birds, migration, winter birds, etc. plus a list of good birding locations.

It has many colour photographs and artwork by Barry Kent McKay and Robert Bateman. Birds of Toronto introduces readers to many of the bird species found in Toronto, including breeding birds, migrating birds and winter birds. The book also shows readers where to find exceptional bird-viewing locations in the city and it outlines a typical year for birds in Toronto. Making the city safer for birds enhances the natural biodiversity of our urban environment and helps reduce the decline in bird populations. Many of North America's birds are facing significant population decline. At least 62 of the 162 species of birds found killed by collisions with Toronto buildings are threatened.

Copies may be picked up free from any Toronto Public Library branch (while quantities last).

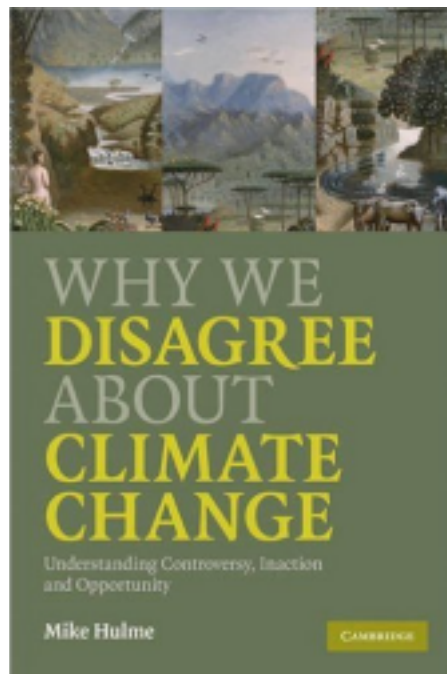
The Forces That Shape Our Responses to Global Climate Change

Mike Hulme (2009), *Why We Disagree About Climate Change: Understanding Controversy, Inaction, and Opportunity*. Cambridge University Press

Book Review by Gwen Potter

For environmentalists, it can be frustrating and difficult to understand why the reality of climate change

does not command more urgency; Canada's persistent failure to act on our Kyoto obligations and our less than constructive contributions to the negotiations leading up to the upcoming climate conference in Copenhagen this December are a case in point. Why, despite the scientific consensus that anthropogenic climate change is occurring and will seriously affect human well-being as well as the world's ecosystems, do our policy-makers continue to resist taking any action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions? In *Why We Disagree About Climate Change: Understanding Controversy, Inaction, and Opportunity* Mike Hulme, a professor of climate change at the University of East Anglia, attempts to answer this question by exploring the many forces that shape our individual and collective understanding of climate.



The book has a broad focus, and this is both a strength and a weakness. Hulme discusses how humans relate to climate and think about climate change, how science is performed, how risk is communicated, the problem of development, and how we have attempted to govern our activities to prevent climate change. Placing climate change within multiple frames allows Hulme to show how attitudes, economics, science, and politics all shape the

decisions we make about climate change. *Why We Disagree About Climate Change* forces the reader to think about far more than the vested economic interests that have historically worked to discredit the theory that greenhouse gas emissions lead to global climate change. Chapters 8 and 9, "The Challenge of Development" and "The Way We Govern", are particularly valuable.

However, the breadth of the book means that Hulme often goes into little depth, and is less familiar with some topics than others. For example, chapters 4, 5 and 6 ("The Endowment of Value", "The Things We Believe", and "The Things We Fear") are concerned with how our individual attitudes and perceptions shape our behaviour and our beliefs about climate change. There is a significant body of social psychology research that explores the social and individual factors that influence environmental attitudes and behaviour, but Hulme does not discuss these findings. This is an unfortunate oversight, given that *Why We Disagree About Climate Change* is concerned with many of the same questions that environmental psychologists have asked. While Hulme's arguments in these chapters are interesting, they are less convincing than the later chapters that are concerned with the challenges of developing an international framework for reducing carbon emissions, which is more clearly his area of expertise.

Despite this shortcoming, *Why We Disagree About Climate Change* is a thought-provoking book. This is not a book about climate science that works to identify and explain the scientific controversies; rather, it is an exploration of how we think about and apply our understanding of those controversies. Hulme argues that climate change should not be understood as a problem that demands solutions, but as a phenomenon that may force us to reconsider how we relate to the world. While this argument itself will be controversial, given the failure of our attempted solutions thus far, it is worth some consideration.

Mouse Ears

by Susanne Stark

If you have looked under the conifers in your neighbourhood lately, it is very possible that you could have seen some gray carpets surrounded by similarly coloured 2-3 cm bumps coming out of the duff. Believe it or not, you are looking at a profuse fruiting of a mushroom that isn't found until after several frosts. Is it edible?

This past-the-end-of-the-season mushroom is now named *Tricholoma myomyces*, but used to be known as *T. terreum*. "Mouse Ears" hasn't been changed though and a little mouse hiding under a cap would be well camouflaged. It's a very common fungus and when a source is found, it doesn't take long to collect a

large quantity. So, is it edible?

Well, yes if you get the right one. There are several poisonous species with similar habitats that are very similar looking to *Tricholoma myomyces*. It is often "not

recommended' as an edible. You should be a very knowledgeable picker or have expert advice before you decide to consume this one. You may not like its taste; it's different.



Astronomy Group: Leonids light up the Skies this month

By Heide DeBond

The evening skies in November are still graced with the majesty of Jupiter reigning brightly due south, clearly the brightest object in the night sky. Look for the red planet Mars as it rises late evening in the east.

Our winter constellation friend Orion the Hunter wakes from his summer sleep, rising early evening in the east. The famous Orion nebula can easily be seen with the naked eye in his sword, hanging below the three stars in his belt. Look for the "blurry star" second last star in his belt. The Orion nebula is approximately 1400 light years distant from Earth. One light year is approximately 1 trillion kilometers.

Mid-November brings the Leonid Meteor Showers. These meteor

showers are caused by the Earth passing through debris ejected by Comet Tempel-Tuttle in 1533. Meteors may be seen the evening of Nov 16 through 17th with peak activity in the early morning at approximately 2:25am and at 4am. Predictions of activity range from 30 to 200 per hour.

Speakers Night

Friday, Nov 20, 7:30pm – Bayview Hills Community Centre – Boynton Room. The Richmond Hill Naturalists Astronomy Group will present: Pat McDonald – American Association of Variable Star Observers "Citizen Science with Epsilon Aurigae". This star changes brightness every 27 years. Pat will guide you to find this star, measure its brightness and submit the measurement to professional astronomers. This is your opportunity to participate



in one of the largest citizen science projects in history.

The Richmond Hill Naturalists Astronomy Group — the AstroNats — is the newest arms of the our club. Heide has been organizing a series of star nights and informative talks ranging from Galileo to radio astronomy, with a focus on citizen science. For more information, please contact astronomy@rhnaturalists.ca. Join us!

A Secret Conversation...

As we rake and bag our leaves, let's listen in on this secret transcript of a conversation...

VOICE 1: Francis, you know all about gardens and nature. What in the world is going on down there on planet Earth? What happened to the dandelions, violets, thistles and stuff I started eons ago? I had a perfect no-maintenance garden plan. Those plants grow in any type of soil, withstand drought and multiply with abandon. The nectar from the long-lasting blossoms attracts butterflies, honey bees and flocks of songbirds. I expected to see a vast garden of colours by now.

But, all I see are these green rectangles.

VOICE 2: It's the tribes that settled there, Lord. The Suburbanites. They started calling your flowers 'weeds' and went to great lengths to kill them and replace them with grass.

VOICE 1: Grass? But, it's so boring. It's not colourful. It doesn't attract butterflies, birds and bees; only grubs and sod worms. It's sensitive to temperatures. Do these Suburbanites really want all that grass growing there?

VOICE 2: Apparently so, Lord. They go to great pains to grow it and keep it green. They begin each spring by fertilizing grass and poisoning any other plant that crops up in the lawn.

VOICE 1: The spring rains and warm weather probably make grass grow really fast. That must make the Suburbanites happy.

VOICE 2: Apparently not, Lord. As soon as it grows a little, they cut it - sometimes twice a week.

VOICE 1: They cut it? Do they then bail it like hay?

VOICE 2: Not exactly, Lord.



Most of them rake it up and put it in bags.

VOICE 1: They bag it? Why? Is it a cash crop? Do they sell it?

VOICE 2: No, Sir, just the opposite. They pay to throw it away.

VOICE 1: Now, let me get this straight. They fertilize grass so it will grow. And, when it does grow, they cut it off and pay to throw it away?

VOICE 2: Yes, Sir.

VOICE 1: These Suburbanites must be relieved in the summer when we cut back on the rain and turn up the heat. That surely slows the growth and saves them a lot of work.

VOICE 2: You aren't going to believe this, Lord. When the Grass stops growing so fast, they drag out hoses and pay more money to water it so they can continue to mow it and pay to get rid of it.

VOICE 1: What nonsense. At least they kept some of the trees. That was a sheer stroke of genius, if I do say so myself. The trees grow leaves in the spring to provide beauty and shade in the summer. In the autumn, they fall to the ground and form a natural blanket to

keep moisture in the soil and protect the trees and bushes. It's a natural cycle of life.

VOICE 2: You better sit down, Lord. As soon as the leaves fall, the Suburbanites rake them into great piles and pay to have them hauled away.

VOICE 1: No! What do they do to protect the shrub and tree roots in the winter to keep the soil moist and loose?

VOICE 2: After throwing away the leaves, they go out and buy something which they call mulch. They haul it home and spread it around in place of the leaves.

VOICE 1: And where do they get this mulch?

VOICE 2: They cut down trees and grind them up to make the mulch.

VOICE 1: Enough! I don't want to think about this anymore. St. Catherine, you're in charge of the arts. What movie have you scheduled for us tonight?

VOICE 3: 'Dumb and Dumber', Lord. It's a story about....

VOICE 1: Never mind, I think I just heard the whole story from St. Francis.

General Interest

Nature Conservancy –
Gifts of Nature
<http://www.giftsofnature.ca/>

It's only a few weeks until Christmas...check out the Nature Conservancy for gifts for that hard-to-buy-for loved one on your list. Gifts are tax-deductible too!

Great Backyard Bird Count
Save the Dates: GBBC is Coming!

The next Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) takes place Friday, February 12 through Monday, February 15, 2010. Bird Studies Canada, the National Audubon Society and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology are calling on everyone to "Count for Fun, Count for the Future!" During last year's count, participants turned in

more than 93,600 checklists online, creating the continent's largest instantaneous snapshot of bird populations ever recorded. We hope you'll join us again and help spread the word, since the success of the count depends on people tallying birds from as many locations as possible across the continent.

Project FeederWatch
Season Has Begun
The 2009-10 season of Project FeederWatch began November 14, though you can sign up at any time. FeederWatchers keep track of their birds through the winter and report their tallies each week. This helps scientists track changes in winter bird populations from year to year.

For more information on FeederWatch visit Bird Studies

Canada's web site at <http://www.bsc-eoc.org/volunteer/pfw/> or call (888) 448-2473.

Bird Observations

Immature Golden Eagle soaring south over BORC (Kirby Road west of Highway 27);

Blue-headed Vireo, Mourning Warbler, kettle of Turkey Vultures seen on Joe Agg's Beaver Creek Walk Part 2

Juncos and Nuthatches are back in town for the winter. Fox sparrows have been passing through.

Please report bird observations to Gene Denzel at lezned@yorku.ca or leave a message at 905-889-7888.



Visit ValerieKent.Com



Please support our sponsors...

News from the Dunlap Observatory Front

RHN members and DDO Defenders have been spreading the word about David Dunlap Observatory to local residents at the Waldorf Organic Market.

In mid-November, the developer began plowing many of the open pastures on the Dunlap property and removed up to 100 trees. Dozens of upset residents phoned and emailed the Town of Richmond Hill and York Region to seek an explanation. Individuals raced to photograph and film the tree removal and quickly posted material on the web for others to see.



According to the Richmond Hill Liberal "Town forestry and bylaw officers are investigating and measuring fallen trees removed yesterday as a result of Metrus' Phase 2 archeological assessment of the disputed land."

Also quoted was Richmond Hill's deputy mayor,

Brenda Hogg: "This act was an act of vandalism in the extreme".

Metrus was provided with no tree removal permit ahead of its assessment, director of planning



*Deb Chute minds the RHN table at the Waldorf Centre.
Photo by Gwen Potter.*

Patrick Lee told The Liberal. If the Town's tree bylaw has been violated, the developer could face a \$100,000 fine.

Final DDO Planning 'charette" December 1

The final DDO Open House and Planning "charette" will take place at the Langstaff Community Centre on December 1, 7pm. This will provide a hands-on opportunity for local citizens to interact with Richmond Hill planners and consultants to describe the kinds of future uses they would like to see take place on the Dunlap lands.