

South of 45 in '81: A Naturalist's View

The 1981 Canadian Nature Federation Conference held at the University of Guelph in early May was indeed a memorable one. Guelph, a city of 60,000 is located in a lush agricultural belt about an hour's drive from Toronto. Spring was just bursting forth with trees budding, grass greening, and amphibians and migrating warblers providing morning and evening choruses.

The emphasis of the conference was to introduce us to the 'Carolinian' elements of the flora and fauna of the region. Many of these Carolinian species are typical of areas much further south, and in Canada are found nowhere else than the southernmost part of Ontario. For several days before and after, field trips fanned out from Guelph to nearby ponds, woodlands and floodplains to let visiting naturalists meet first hand with local birds, animals, amphibians, reptiles, ferns, trees, wildflowers and geological features. Other excursions travelled further afield to places like the Elora Gorge, the Niagara Escarpment and Point Pelee.

The symposium presentations complemented well the field trip schedule. Various talks traced the development of Ontario's geological foundations, the establishment of present-day vegetation forms and the make-up of bird, mammal and herptile populations. A number of sessions focussed on problems confronting naturalists in their continuing efforts to preserve habitat for wildlife. Positive directions and roles were suggested for those concerned with strategies for preservation.

Other conference highlights included numerous displays and a Superb Nature Art exhibit featuring works by wildlife artist Robert Bateman. Conference proceedings climaxed with a banquet at which Robert Bateman showed a spectacular series of slides taken on a recent trip to the Falkland Islands and Antarctica.

At the annual general and special meetings new bylaws were adopted and a number of resolutions passed. (See elsewhere in this issue for a summary.) Diane Griffin stepped down as President after serving for two years. She was replaced by John Willms, a Toronto lawyer specializing in environmental law.

All in all the 1981 CNF Conference was a tremendous success. Those of you who missed it (as well as those of you who didn't) should begin planning now for next year's conference in Calgary during the first week of July 1982.

- by Winnie Cairns,
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