

Gordon MacKenzie

The

This is Young Naturalist Year: 1966-67
Do you have a Young Naturalists Club in your school?

Young Naturalist



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The Native Cats of Canada

Part 2—Concluding article

In the United States and in bordering parts of Canada there is another kind of lynx — the Bobcat. It has a reddish coat, and its little bob-tail is barred. It has much smaller feet and legs than the Lynx and sinks in the snow. The Bobcat's coat is short so that in winter it may look smaller than the Lynx but it is usually bigger. Ontario has the record in size for Bobcats, a seventy-pound animal reported by the early naturalist, Dr. Garnier, of Lucknow. There are quite a few bobcats in Rainy River, around the Soo and in the Manitoulin area, and a scat-

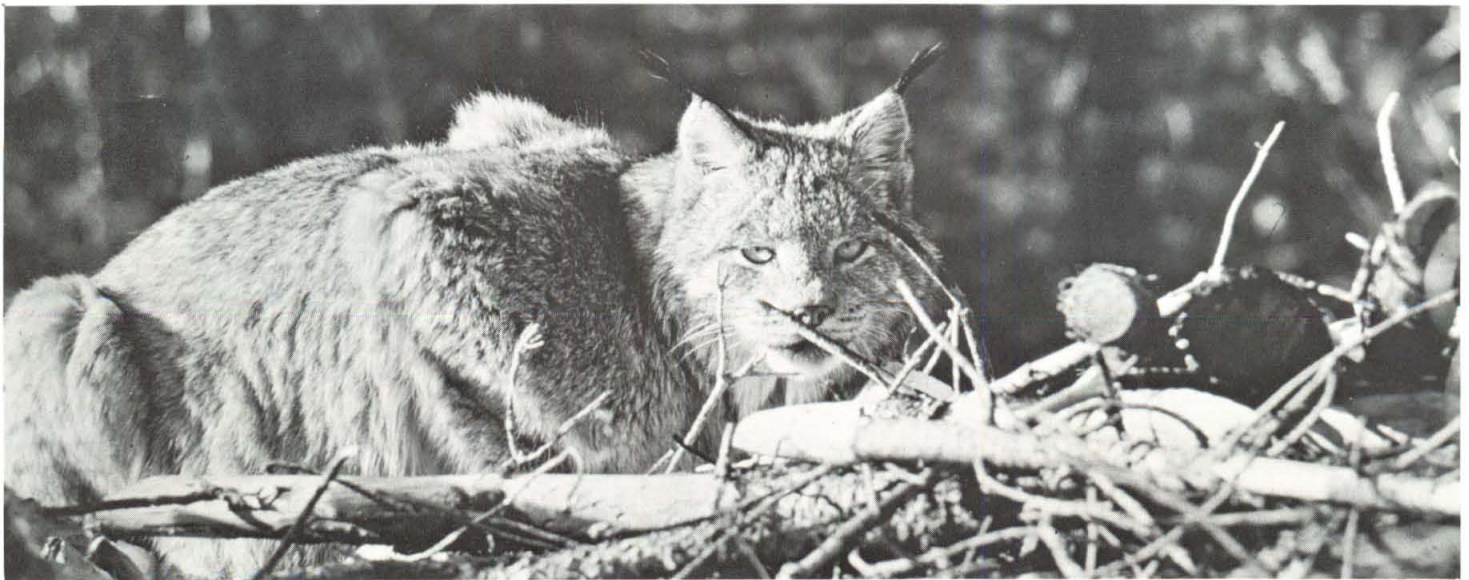
tering across southern Ontario. I have seen tracks not far from Toronto, and a dog I owned had her face laid open by one in Bruce County.

The skins of Puma and Bobcat are worthless, but the silky Lynx is "fine fur". At the end of the First World War, fur prices were very high, trapping was uncontrolled, and the Lynx became a rare animal over a wide area. Now, a fur-management program has done away with competition on traplines, so that it pays a trapper to use restraint. As a result the Lynx has

regained its ancient ground and most of its ancient numbers.

Early records showed the Puma in all parts of North America where there are deer. At a later date Pumas were presumed to have been exterminated east of the mountains in Canada and most of the United States, but now there are records of them in all provinces except Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland. Fortunately, most of these reports have been substantiated by plaster casts of footprints rather

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J. C. Holroyd/National Museum of Canada

The Canada Lynx, shown here, has a pelt that is valuable, but the skins of the Puma and Bobcat are worthless.



The Old Squaw Duck concentrates in certain waters, particularly where the bottom is composed of limestone rocks. The Canada Goose regularly winters in Ontario, but the Blue Goose, shown below, is uncommon in winter.

WINTERING WATERFOWL IN ONTARIO

PART II — (concluding a two-part Series)

The distribution of ice is not the only thing that influences the distribution of some species of ducks during the winter in Ontario. The Old-Squaw Duck concentrates in certain waters, particularly where the bottom is composed of limestone rocks. The species is particularly abundant around Prince Edward County but is found elsewhere in Lake Ontario. It is absent from most of the St. Lawrence where precambrian rocks form the bottom of the river and its bays.

The Goldeneye, another common wintering species, is not affected by such considerations and is found over both limestone and precambrian rocks. It is possible that the availability of favourite foods is the reason for such patterns of distribution.

Three other species of diving ducks

can be found commonly in Ontario in winter. They are the Redhead, Bufflehead, and Common Merganser.

Of particular interest to the winter bird watcher is the rare appearance of such northern species as the King Eider or wanderers such as the Harlequin and Barrow's Goldeneye. Still other species which may be common in summer are rare in winter but are usually seen somewhere in the Province. They include Red-breasted Mergansers, Hooded Mergansers, Ring-necked Ducks, and Scoters.

Since most of the marshes suitable for dabbling ducks freeze up during the winter, relatively few of these ducks remain with us. Hardy Black Ducks and Mallards can be found in small parties throughout southern Ontario, but their numbers seldom exceed a

combined total of 11,000.

Although common during the autumn migration, very few Pintail, Baldpate, Wood Duck, Gadwall, Green-winged Teal and Shovelers stay for the winter. It is, however, worth watching for these.

The only species of Goose that winters regularly in Ontario is the Canada Goose. Winter counts have shown that between 2,000 and 8,000 stay in the Province. Most of these birds remain in Essex County in the vicinity of the Jack Miner Sanctuary. Over the years a few Blue Geese and Brant have been recorded in Ontario during the winter, and sometimes a flock of Whistling Swans remains on Lake Erie.

H. G. LUMSDEN



Club News



December was Christmas Bird Count month, and all over the province junior and senior naturalists' clubs spent a day counting the birds in the countryside near by.

In Toronto, the Bird Group of the Toronto Junior Field Naturalists' Club chose the last day of the year, December 31, for their ninth annual count. As in former years, two areas were covered. Five members of the group, under the leadership of Mr. Donald Burton, spent the day in High Park and Sunnyside, and counted an impressive total of thirty-six species of birds. Some of these were birds rarely found in winter in the Toronto region — a Virginia Rail, a Shoveler, a Gadwall, an American Widgeon, an Oregon Junco, a grackle, some redwings and Rusty Blackbirds — and a Red-headed Woodpecker!

The second party of eight members under the leadership of Mr. Elmer Talvila, toured Wilket Creek Park, Glendon Hall, Sunnybrook and Edwards Gardens, all in north Toronto, and found twenty species of birds. Some of their outstanding finds were a Pileated Woodpecker, two Black-backed Three-toed Woodpeckers, a Northern Shrike, three Robins and a Winter Wren. Who says there are no birds to be found in winter!

BARBARA WILKINS

Many boys and girls have organized a natural science club in their school or classroom. If you have such a club, you are invited to share your experiences with others by reporting your activities in this column. We would be pleased to have pictures of your outings and projects. Be sure to describe your activities fully, giving the names of the leaders and assistants. Write to Mrs. Barbara Wilkins, Editor of Club News, 213 Rosedale Heights Drive, Toronto 7, Ontario.

Our Chairman Retires

Mr. R. V. "Pat" Whelan, Chairman of *The Young Naturalist* Committee, recently announced his retirement from this volunteer position. Mr. Whelan's interest in the magazine goes back to its first issues. His contribution to *The Young Naturalist*, and to young people interested in natural science, has been outstanding.

Mr. Whelan was Supervisor of Conservation Information with the Department of Lands and Forests until his retirement two years ago. He

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than by killing the animal. One would hate to see anything so rare killed. New Brunswick, where there are a lot of records, has to its credit protected the Puma. There are reports in Ontario every year. Some are obviously false but occasionally the reporter describes something that he could not possibly have seen in a book or known about unless he actually saw the animal. However, no one has made a plaster cast and, officially, the last Puma in Ontario was killed at Orangeville in 1885.

Weird noises in the woods at night are often attributed to native cats, but in my experience most of these banshee wails come from owls. However, all the cats do make cat calls, and I have heard a loud, hoarse call from the Puma, and once heard a caged Lynx making a noise exactly like the roar of an African lion except that it could not be heard more than fifty feet.

C. H. D. CLARKE

did a great deal in that position to interest young people in nature, and his work with the Federation of Ontario Naturalists and *The Young Naturalist* extended his influence. Readers of *The Young Naturalist*, as well as many other persons, are grateful to Pat for his splendid contributions.

The Colours of Stars

It is commonly believed that all stars are white in colour and differ only in brightness. This is not true, however, as any serious student of the stars knows. Stars may have literally any colour in the rainbow from red to yellow, green, white, or blue.

The colours indicate the temperatures of the stars' surfaces. For example, the Sun is a yellow star and has a surface temperature of about 10,000°F. The colours and corresponding temperatures of stars are as follows:

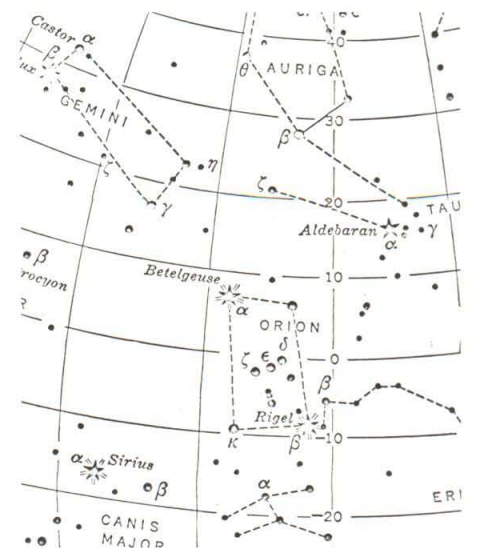
Colour	Temperature
blue	15,000-100,000°F
white	12,000
yellow	9,000
orange	7,500
red	5,000 and lower

The most common stars in the universe are the relatively cool red stars. Most of these are too faint to be visible to the naked eye and as a result the yellow, white, and blue stars are the ones with which we are most familiar.

It is quite easy to distinguish the colours of the brighter stars and well worth the effort to do so. The most familiar winter constellation is *Orion* which dominates the southern sky during January and February. Two of its brightest stars are at opposite ends of the colour scale: Betelgeuse, one of the largest stars known, has a rather low temperature and a deep red colour; Rigel, also very large, is very hot and has a distinct blue colour. Like many similar stars, Betelgeuse is variable in light output but the variation

is too small to be detected with the naked eye.

DOUGLAS P. HUBE



WOODLORE FOR THE NATURALIST

— John Macfie —

Clothing for Winter Hiking

Take a winter hike in the forest and you will find a quiet, mysterious world that may be new to you. A good-size Southern Ontario woodlot or swamp will do, as long as it takes you beyond the sight and sound of "civilization." Even a short excursion into a forested area that you may have visited often in other seasons, will bring you a totally new experience.

Look for those hardy winter birds down from their far northern summer ranges. Study the tracks of deer, rabbits, squirrels, mice, and other animals. Try to discover where these animals were going, and why they took the route that they did. Remember that the movements of animals are usually purposeful.

While it might not matter much what you wear in other seasons, the choice of clothing is important in winter. Basically, winter clothing should be loose-fitting, preferably in several layers, for insulation and ven-

tilation. Your needs will vary with the weather conditions: wet, dry, cold or merely cool, sunny or snowing, windy or calm. In recommending the following dress, I have in mind a temperature range from freezing point down to zero. When it is much colder than zero, or on windy days near zero, hiking is not recommended.

For footwear, I like lace-up rubber boots with room for two pairs of heavy wool, or wool and nylon socks. Moccasins and insulated leather boots are fine for hiking in *dry* snow.

You will need long underwear, a pair of drawers and a T-shirt being a good combination. Polo pajamas are a very good substitute for long underwear. Wool trousers of the mackinaw type are best. Cotton is a poor insulator and it soaks up moisture readily, but some kinds, such as heavy denim, are windproof and quite satisfactory as long as you wear substantial underwear. Windproof "stretch" ski pants

are acceptable as well, but don't make the mistake of trying to hike in ski boots.

A long-sleeved cotton shirt, a loose sweater, and a wool bush coat or quilted nylon ski jacket will keep your upper body comfortable. For headwear a toque or a cap with ear flaps will serve satisfactorily. Wear heavily-lined leather mitts or leather mitts with inner wool mitts, *never* gloves.

If you plan to be in the bush more than a couple of hours, carry a small haversack containing an extra jacket or sweater. The haversack will also be handy for carrying extra clothing that may be shed if you become overly warm.

If there is more than a foot of loose snow on the ground you will need snowshoes, or if the bush is not thick, skis will do. And be sure to remember that darkness falls early in winter—start early and return home early.



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