

Wings

Bird sanctuaries worth flocking to in Canada, U.S.

By IRIS SANDERSON JONES

If you think spring is for the birds, you should stand on the wet spring fields of Jack Miner's Bird Sanctuary in Kingsville, Ontario, when the Canada geese arrive.

They are flocking in now, in great winged clouds, circling down and stretching out their legs to land.

If you have ever seen photos of the Concorde landing at a major airport, you have seen a poor mechanical version of the Canada geese coming to a full screeching stop. The head stretches forward and the strong back legs take the momentum against the grass.

This bird experience is one of several available to bird lovers in nature centers and sanctuaries around southeast Michigan and lower Ontario this month.

Bird walks and owl prowls are scheduled in the Huron-Clinton Metro Parks, and a variety of programs are planned at the Kellogg Bird Sanctuary in Battle Creek and the Seven Pond Nature Center run by the Michigan Audubon Society in Dryden. The birds are also coming in to Point Pelee in Ontario.

THE MINER BIRD Sanctuary has played host to Canada geese since 1904



Wild Canada Geese at the Jack Miner Bird Sanctuary pause before resuming their northward flight to nesting grounds in Hudson Bay and James Bay. (Photo by Micky Jones)

in Kingsville, Ontario, which is on Highway 18, about 30 miles southeast from the Ambassador Bridge.

It was founded by Jack Miner and is now run by his sons, Manly and Jasper. "The birds were so scarce in 1904 that my father used decoys to lure them in," Manly said. "By 1908 we had eleven geese, by 1909 there were 32, by 1910 there were 350 and now they come in by the thousands."

About 15,000 geese have come into the sanctuary already, on their way north to nesting grounds in Hudson Bay and James Bay. They will be in full force through April 15, according to Miner, who predicts a count of 20,000 birds this year.

"The best time to be here is between three in the afternoon and dark," Miner said. "Sometimes they go to the lake during the earlier part of the day."

The sanctuary is open from daybreak to dark every day except Sunday, when the Miner family takes a day off. It will be open on both Good Friday and Easter Monday. There is no entrance fee. The sanctuary is supported by the Jack Miner Foundation, which accepts donations.

Although hunters have been known to wait in nearby woods during the fall

hunting season, the geese have learned to outwit them. They fly in high over the sanctuary and circle straight down to avoid the sound of guns.

"There has not been any excessive kill, so the flocks are still strong," Manly said.

"My father literally saved this bird from extinction. We have helped to start sanctuaries and nesting places in 110 places east of the Mississippi.

TWO MICHIGAN nesting places for Canada geese are Kensington Metro Park, which has a permanent year-round flock in the Huron River Valley and the Kellogg Bird Sanctuary in Battle Creek. Kensington Park Naturalist Pat Carlson says the migrants can be seen sometimes at the Nature Center and at the beach, although Kensington is on the edge of the flyway.

Kensington already has held its first public bird walk for the sighting of early songbirds and will hold a bird walk for beginners at 9 a.m. Sunday, April 29.

Additional bird walks are also planned for May. The park keeps a species list, which is available to the public, and records sightings by nature lovers who roam the park.

An Owl Prowl is the highlight of Stoney Creek Metro Park near Van Dyke and 20 Mile Road, which is also part of the Huron-Clinton Metro Park system.

This unique bird-watching experience begins at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, April 7, at the Nature Center, where naturalists Roger Bajorek and Bill Thomas will introduce the owl through a slide show.

Participants will then be taken to an area of the park where owl calls are played on a tape recorder, hopefully luring park owls out into the open.

"They will call back, and 90 percent of the time they will walk to within 30 feet of us," Bajorek said. "You can shine a flashlight in their eyes and they won't move."

Bajorek has a trained pet owl called Oscar, an active participant in the program. There is no fee for the owl prowls, but reservations are required.

The third metro park in the system, Oakwood Metro Park near Flat Rock, is a good place to see river ducks and egrets, under naturalist Bob Wittersheim's guiding.

Call the Detroit office of the Huron-Clinton Metro Parks for information about programs and the best time to see specific birds. The office is located at 3050 City National Bank Building, Detroit 48226; phone 961-5865.

Other bird experiences in the Michigan and nearby Ontario regions include:

- The spring bird migration spectacular at Point Pelee National Park, near Leamington, a few miles east of the Jack Miner Bird Sanctuary.

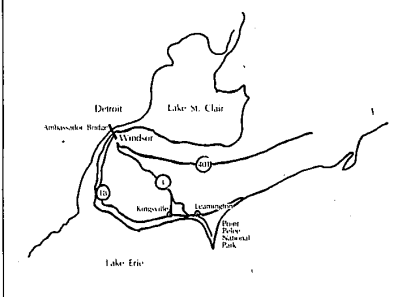
- The Kellogg Bird Sanctuary run by Michigan State University at Battle Creek.

- The Seven Pond Nature Center funded by the Michigan Audubon Society in Dryden, Mich.

- The area near Nankin Mills Nature Center, Edward Hines Park.

- Belle Isle, where bird-watchers have already seen a Red-Throated Loon and a Red-Necked Grebe this spring.

In short, the birds are making a welcomed return.



Miner's Bird Sanctuary is about 30 miles southeast from the Ambassador Bridge.

TRAVEL LOG of Iris Jones



A bargain-basement booklet on flying cheaply

"How To Fly For Less," a consumer's guide to low-cost air charters and other travel bargains, is the kind of booklet that is hard to review but hard to ignore when information is so valuable to the traveler.

It is published by Travel Information Bureau, P.O. Box 105, Kings Park, N.Y. 11754 by Jens Jurgens. It looks like he publishes and distributes it himself, which means that no trade publisher has put a stamp of approval on it.

I can't find Jurgens' name in any travel writers' list, and there is no way to check his credentials or the accuracy of the booklet, but it seems to be a reasonable first step for someone trying to find his way through the morass of travel bargains this spring.

The booklet describes various regular, discount and charter flights available and tells you who to contact for flights to destinations in the U.S. and abroad.

It does not contain all the information you need, because schedules and fares change too fast to trust anything in print, but it will help you do your homework and give you new ideas. Follow up with inquiries to the places listed, as confirmation.

Jurgens stresses low-cost charter flights and explains advantages and disadvantages, as well the precautions to take in this field.

Air travel, like any other major purchase, should be bought only after you have done some comparison shopping. Do it early so that you can act on your information well in advance of flight time. The guide includes information on scheduled flights at charter prices, public charters, last-minute bookings, special discounts, one-way trips, ticket combinations and other things. It includes a 1979 charter flight directory.

Area organizations listed include the Auto Club of Michigan; Elliott Tours, Inc.; Farmington Hills; Ethnic Charter Center; General Travel and Charters; Mastrogianni Travel; Travel Charters, Inc.; and VIP Travel Service, Detroit; Hamilton, Miller, Hudson and Payne Travel Corp.; and Sky World Holidays, Southfield; Renald Attard, Allen Park; Travel Age Inc., Warren; Travel and C., Inc., Dearborn.

It also includes intriguing names like Performing Arts Abroad in Kalamazoo and Great Places in Ann Arbor.

The guide sells for \$3.75. Another, called "1,001 Sources of Free Travel Information," costs \$4.50. Both sell by mail from the Travel Information Bureau address.

HAVE YOU EVER traveled on the Stella Oceanis, a

Sun Line ship that does an 180-mile navigation on the Orinoco River with Rand McNally geographers aboard?

We listed this among cruises available early in the year, and an area reader would like to "ask somebody who has been there." Call me at 356-3366 and I'll pass the information on.

It is the only way you can really evaluate a trip ahead of time, so I'm happy to help this reader do it.

CASPER CITRON PROGRAM, a feature of WQRS-FM (105.1), will have Tuesday at 12:30 p.m. writer Lois Reamy discussing her book, "TravelAbility," a guide for physically disabled travelers in the United States, with Berit Young, a tour guide who became blind from diabetes but continues to lead tours.

CHANNEL 56 begins a series called "WORLD" on Monday, April 9, with a documentary called "The Chinese Way." They cover Papua, New Guinea April 16, and "The Ngaba Connection," a look at both a Georgia and a Senegal peanut farmer, April 23.

"GREAT GOLF AND TENNIS" resorts is a booklet

published by American Airlines for sports travelers who want information about 19 different resorts in Arizona, California, Mexico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Jamaica, the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico.

The brochure designates each location as either a golf or tennis resort and details facilities. Ask your travel agent.

THE 1979 INDIANA festival map, a delight drawn by children, is now available from Hoosier Energy.

The theme of the map is festivals seen through the eyes of children. The ad agency art director responsible for this piece worked with a child consultant for each festival he listed, and the drawings were made by those 5-8-year-olds.

Their information officer says this process was "fueled with lots of pizza and soft drinks."

The map, showing weekend festival opportunities in Indiana, is available from the Indiana Department of Tourism or at service stations, motels and restaurants along main highways.

Or write to Hoosier Energy, P.O. Box 508, Bloomington, Ind. 47401. Mark it to the attention of Nora Westlake, information coordinator.



Badlands

Badlands National Park in western South Dakota provides plenty of open space to explore. There are several marked hiking trails, and park rangers conduct programs explaining the beauty of it all. For travel information, write to the South Dakota Division of Travel, Joe Foss Building, Pierre, S.D. 57501.

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