

Field Trip Report

Photography/Fungi Field trip at Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area.

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In spite of dire predictions about rainy weather for Sunday September 24, 2006, the skies began to clear the morning of the field trip led by Barry Hanna at the Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area in pursuit of finding, identifying, and photographing fungi. Eight people gathered together at the Kingslake Plaza, from there we car-pooled down to the Conservation Area. Barry, who has sharp eyes for spotting fungi, had scouted out some trails during the week before the field trip. Barry led us from the Interpretive Center down Trail 5 across the footbridge over the marsh. In no time at all we were finding several species of mushrooms on either side of the trail. Recent wet weather had brought out an abundance of fungi. As we leisurely wandered along the trail 6 more people caught up with us, bringing the total number of participants to 14. With our field guides in hand (mainly George Barron's "Mushrooms of Ontario and Eastern Canada and the Audubon Society's Field Guide to North American Mushrooms) we set about trying to identify the species of fungi that we were finding. Barry demonstrated how to hold a mirror beneath the mushroom in order to check the gill structures without harming the plants. Jackie Bartnik, the most knowledgeable of the group in plant identification, helped to pinpoint the name of most of the species we observed. For those that we weren't quite sure of, we simply borrowed a term from our fellow birding enthusiasts and classified them as "L.B.J.'s" (Little Brown Jobs).

From Trail 5 we meandered off down Trail 1, past the area where the "Bee Tree" grows. In the woods beside the trail in this section we enjoyed the sight of many very large Fly Agaric (*Amanita muscaria*). Groups of these colourful classically-shaped mushrooms were scattered throughout the woods in all stages of growth, bringing to mind images of Beatrix Potter stories and other childhood fairytales. Further into the woods beside a marsh we found some *Lactarius indigo*, a lovely powder blue mushroom with deeper blue showing on the inside of a broken piece.

The windy, on-and-off cloudy-to-bright-sun weather conditions didn't provide us with ideal photographic opportunities. Mushrooms tend to grow in shady areas, and are frequently surrounded by other kinds of foliage. This was the case with most of the fungi we were finding, but in spite of the few chances of getting a good clear shot many of us crouched and knelt on the wet ground and managed to take a few pictures.

Our lunch break was spent at the outside picnic tables by the interpretive center, where we were entertained by the passing parade of families with dogs, all there to take part in a Humane Society event. After lunch most of us headed off in all directions, some having to leave for other commitments, some wandering off down the trails to search for more fungi or just to enjoy an afternoon walk in the woods.

Species list:

..... White Pine Bolete <i>Suillus americanus</i> Fly Agaric <i>Amanita muscaria</i>
..... Gilled Bolete <i>Phylloporus rhodoxanthus</i> Ornate-stalked Bolete <i>Boletus ornatipes</i>
..... Destroying Angel <i>Amanita virosa</i> Yellow Patches <i>Amanita flavoconia</i>
..... Common Laccaria <i>Laccaria laccata</i> Pear-Shaped Puffball <i>Lycoperdon pyriforme</i>
..... Orange Jelly <i>Dacrymyces palmatus</i> Pestle-Shaped Puffball <i>Calvatia excipuliformis</i>
..... Turkey Tail <i>Trametes versicolor</i> (No common name) <i>Boletus subglabripes</i>
..... Slippery Jill <i>Suillus salmonicolor</i> Indigo Milky <i>Lactarius indigo</i>
..... Blackening Russula <i>Russula nigricans</i> Horsehair Mushroom <i>Marasmius rotula</i>
..... (No common name) <i>Russula emetica</i> Pine Cone Mushroom <i>Baeospora myosura</i>