

THE SPRING MIGRATION OF BIRDS AT FISHERMANS ISLAND, TORONTO, 1910.

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The eastern portion of the sandbar to the south of Toronto, enclosing Ashbridges Bay, with its wide expanse of marsh and weedy lagoons and called collectively Fishermans Island, has been known for many years by the local ornithologists as one of the best vantage points in the province from which to study the ever interesting bird migration. The vast area of marsh now rapidly being reclaimed for commercial purposes, the once clear lagoons, poisoned by sewage, and the rows of cottages on the former feeding ground of Godwit and Curlew, are indications that the old order of things is fast giving way to a less beautiful if more utilitarian industrial era, with its attendant ills of reeking chimneys and crowded docks. As the locality is changing so rapidly, a short topographical description will be necessary.

There is a more or less authenticated tradition to the effect that many years ago a ridge of pine and hardwood extended from where the eastern channel is now cut through for several miles eastward. Black squirrels, mink, foxes and hares were plentiful. No trace of this ridge, said to have been twenty or thirty feet high, now remains.

The present beach, for the most part perfectly flat, has in several places an elevation of about two feet above the surface of the lake, and is sparsely covered with seedling poplars and willows. Between the Eastern Gap on the west and Coatsworths Cut on the east, the beach extends for about three miles, and is about four hundred yards wide at the widest part. At both the eastern and western ends of the beach many summer cottages have been built. Between the two settlements there is a park reservation about one mile long. This is the only portion of the sandbar that retains its natural features.

In the lake, in front of the cottages at the west end of the beach and about fifty yards south of the beach proper, a long narrow sandbar has recently been piled up by natural causes, forming a wide pond, where several species of marsh weeds have taken root. Many records were made beside this "Beach Pond", and it was on the narrow sandbar that the Herring Gulls, of which a record follows, congregated all summer.

Near the western end of the sandbar there is a wooden breakwater and a roadway running north and joining the island to the city. The breakwater also serves to separate Ashbridges Bay and Toronto Bay. Along the southern portion of the roadway there is a considerable growth of willows and balm of gilead.