

Biological station open house brings steady stream of visitors

By Therese Shevchenko
For The Review-Mirror

"Have you ever seen a hummingbird's nest?" said Kit Muma, researcher at the Queen's University Biological Station (QUBS). "Take a look in the telescope. She weaves her nest from spider webs and then glues on lichen"

Sunday was open house at QUBS, and Muma, who normally researches moths, discovered this Ruby-throated Hummingbird's nest only the day before.

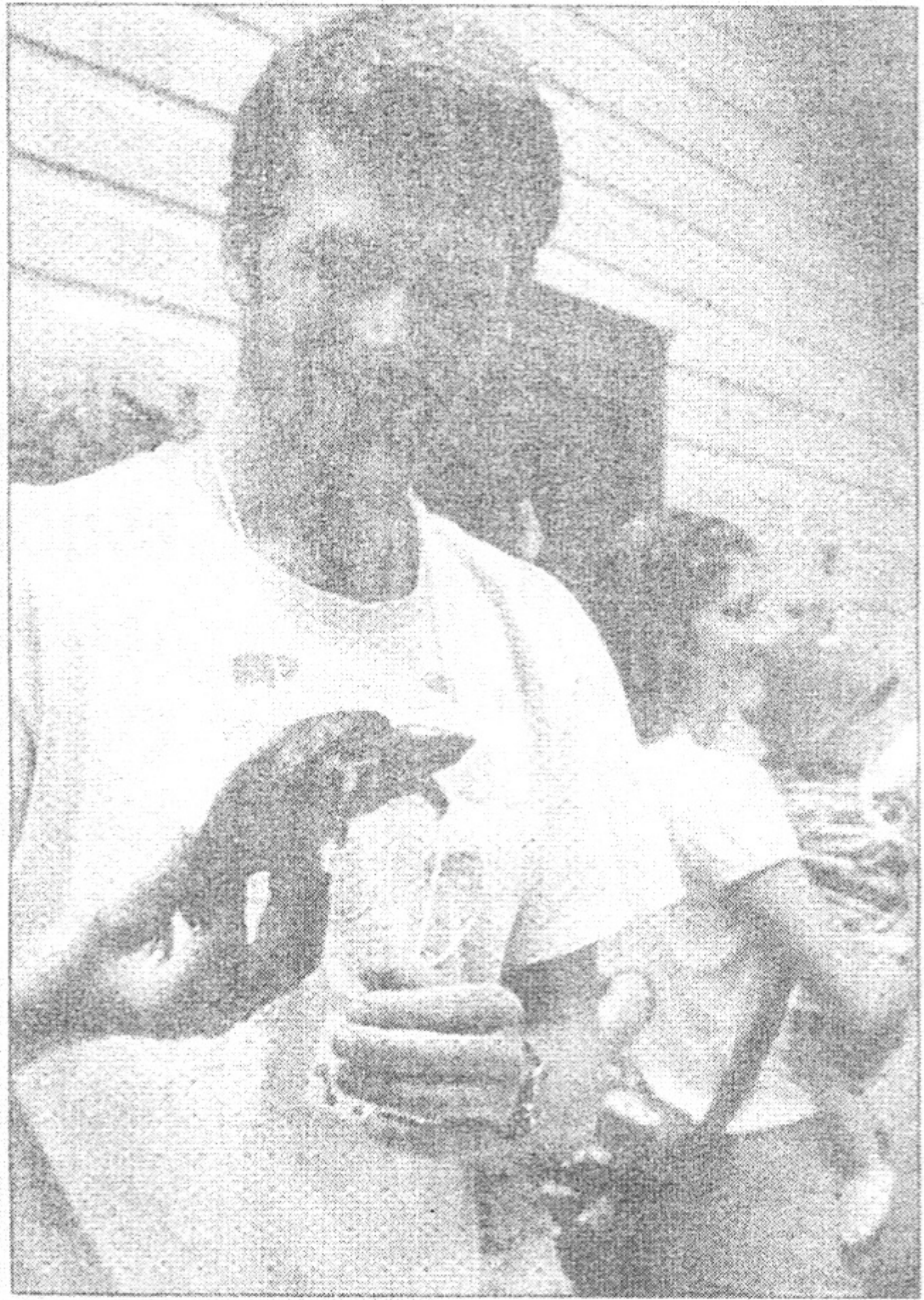
"I was lucky, just in time for the open house," said Muma. "She must be incubating eggs because she sits there for hours at a time."

A constant line-up of visitors waited at the telescope for the rare chance to see a nesting hummingbird. The bird oblivious to all the attention, sat in a nest difficult to spot with the naked eye.

Between 12 p.m. and 3 p.m. Sunday, staff and researchers of QUBS, hosted interpretive displays of current research topics and gave tours of the facilities to interested visitors. Enthusiastic researchers answered questions on birds, snakes, turtles, fish, moths, and zebra mussels.

The site, approximately 2000 hectares on the shores of Lake Opinicon, provides research opportunities for Queen's University students as well as students from other institutions including, Carleton University (Ottawa), University of Toronto, and Ithaca College (New York). Researchers have been studying flora and fauna here since the 1940s.

QUBS has several species at risk living with-



Greg Bulté, from the turtle display, held a musk turtle out of the water so visitors could get a good look.

the water," said Bulté.

Loud chirping at the bird displays, did not only come from the many birds flying around, but also from speakers set out on the grass. Some of the speakers had decoys or replicas of specific species on them in order to entice the birds to fly into a net.

Jean Humphries, a field technician in the American Redstart research project explained how taking a blood sample from the birds upon their return to Canada, reveals whether they spent the winter in a wet or dry climate. The birds, hearing their call from the speakers, fly into a net and researchers then band them for identifica-

development in the their over-wintering habitat.

"We're finding that development down south, like resorts and holiday complexes are diminishing the amount of available habitat for Redstarts to spend the winter," said Humphries.

The open house on Sunday was the only one scheduled for this season.

For more information on the QUBS and current and past research projects visit <http://biology.queensu.ca/~qubs/>