

THE BLUE HERON

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Brereton Field Naturalist's Club Diamond Jubilee

2011 marks the 60th Anniversary of the founding of the Brereton Field Naturalists' Club. To mark this historic occasion the club will be holding of week of activities that will be open to both club members and the general public. This promises to be a great time for all and I hope you will join us.

February 1951 (the exact date is not recorded other than it was a Thursday) the Brereton Field Naturalists' Club of Barrie was formed by thirty-five people meeting at the Community House. It was noted "that besides serving hobby and conservation purposes the club would perpetuate the memory and work of the late Dr. E. L. Brereton, distinguished Barrie naturalist, who gave encouragement to many of the members in their pursuit of this interest.

Over the 60 years since the club was founded, BFNC members have gone on many trips and carried out numerous studies that have met the ideals of the founding members. It is perhaps best summed up in our Mission Statement: "*Our aims are to acquire and share knowledge of natural history, to protect wildlife, and to stimulate public interest in nature and its preservation*".

The BFNC advocates the protection of significant green spaces and corridors in the planning process for our

high-growth region. Little Lake, a provincially significant wetland, is also a high priority. We monitor and advise the city on the management of its woodlands bordering Little Lake.

In addition, we work with the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority to manage Minesing Wetlands, an international Ramsar site and provincially significant wetland complex; support MTM Conservation Association in managing provincial wildlife areas at Marl Lake, Tiny Marsh and Matchedash Bay (another Ramsar site); and support local Rails-to-Trails organizations.

ONE WEEK, 60 YEARS OF NATURE

The 60th Anniversary Committee has put together an outstanding week of events to celebrate our big occasion.

If you have any questions about our 60th Anniversary events click the link to [send us an email](#). Or you can call Brian Gibbon 705-726-8969 or Lynne Gibbon 705-721-4599

Gala Dinner

The highlight of the week will be a Gala Dinner to be held in the Georgian College Dining Room. We are pleased to have Michael Runtz join us as our guest speaker for the occasion. Michael is a well-known nature photographer, film-maker, educator, and natural history author and currently is a faculty member at Carleton University where he teaches natural history and ornithology. Michael is an engaging speaker who will share his enthusiasm for the outdoors and his rich experience in it.

Tickets for the dinner are now available. [Click here to download the reservation form](#) and send with your payment. Only 100 tickets will be available so do not delay.

Field Trips

Ian Cook and Alex Mills have put together a great program of outings for the week. PLEASE NOTE: ALL EVENTS WILL START AND END IN THE

PARKING LOT AT THE BASE OF THE SPIRIT CATCHER AT THE BOTTOM OF MAPLE STREET ON BARRIE'S WATERFRONT. Events will take place rain or shine. Please dress appropriately for the weather. Hiking shoes or boots required. Bring sunscreen, insect repellent, water and a hat. Car-pooling will be arranged and encouraged where needed.

Tuesday May 24th

Morning: Bird Banding, Little Lake (south shore) 7:00 am to 10:30 am

One method by which naturalists have learned about bird migration is through (licensed) banding, where birds are harmlessly captured in nets, identified, and supplied with a tiny, numbered aluminum band. May is a time of much migration, and we will try to capture one or more birds to demonstrate the technique and to see individuals up close.

Mid-day BFNC Diamond Jubilee Noon

Mayor's proclamation and flag raising ceremony –
Barrie City Hall

Evening: Downtown Swiftwatch 7:30 pm to 9:00 pm

One of the fascinating behaviors of the Chimney Swift is its tendency to gather in large flocks circling a chimney at sunset before rapidly entering a roost for the night. Brereton Field Naturalists' Club members have been monitoring this "Species at Risk" in downtown Barrie and will be on hand to introduce you to the sights and sounds of this unique bird as we watch a significant, downtown roost.

Wednesday May 25th

Morning: Little Lake (north shore) Hike 9:00 am to Noon

One of Barrie's jewels is Little Lake Park. Under the canopy of deciduous trees, we will be observing late spring wildflowers and forest birds on a 2½ - 3 hour walk. This will be a sampling of a small part of the 600 + acres of city parkland around Little Lake. If time allows, a visit to the Heronry in Oro-Medonte Township will be included.

Evening: The Gables 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm

Barrie's Gables Park is a 20 hectare natural park with maple/beechn woodlands, old pine plantations, open spaces and lakeshore. In this varied habitat we hope to see migrating and breeding birds. Naturalized spring bulbs such as Spring Squill and carpets of Yellow Anemones along with our early North American native

wildflowers can be viewed along the numerous walking trails.

Thursday May 26th

Morning: Ferndale Wetland 9:00 am to Noon

This wetland complex within Barrie city limits includes marshes, ponds, woods, and a convenient path and boardwalk system allowing exploration of these diverse habitats. Marsh nesting birds, dragonflies, and other wildlife exist here, surrounded by urban landscapes. We expect to view some of this wildlife during this walk.

Evening: Gala dinner – Georgian College Dining Room

Cash Bar 6:00pm Dinner 7:00pm

Our gala dinner will be held at the Georgian College Dining Room and is featuring Michael Runtz, well-known nature photographer, film-maker, educator, and natural history author.

Friday May 27th

Morning: Mayer's Marsh Walk, Minesing 9:00 am to 11:30 am

The BFNC was one of the parties that helped to establish the North Simcoe Railtrail in Springwater Township during the 1990s. This has become a favourite stroll for local naturalists. We'll visit that part of the trail that goes through Mayer's Marsh, a rich wetland with many plants, birds, and other wildlife which are found in great diversity during May. This is an easy, level walk.

Evening: Hunter Russell Trail, Midhurst 6:30 pm to 9:00 pm

This is a short, easy to moderate evening walk on the Hunter Russell Trail in Midhurst. Willow Creek meanders right through this small community, and the trail follows its course, crossing the creek a couple of times. The deep valley offers a variety of tree species, good cover for birds and other wildlife, and a variety of wildflowers. There are also some nice views of the creek.

Saturday May 28th

Morning: Matchedash Bay Trip 7:00 am to 2:00 pm

Celebrate spring at Matchedash Bay, a large marshland complex near Waubaushene and Coldwater. The group will be looking for a variety of wildlife, but our main target will be the great diversity of birds found in the area--waterfowl, marsh birds, shorebirds, and songbirds.

Part of the trip will be a walk through the oak savanna to a beaver pond. Bring a lunch.

Sunday May 29th

Morning: Waterfowl viewing day at Tiny Marsh 7:00 am to 2:00 pm

Once drained for market gardening, Tiny Marsh near Elmvalle was reclaimed for nature and is now a giant ecosystem of marsh, swamp, meadow, and forest. There are many routes through the system, including footpaths in the woods, dykes through open water, and boardwalk through marshland, as well as viewing platforms. And, there is always a diversity of wildlife to observe. Bring a lunch.

THE 60TH. ANNIVERSARY COMMITTEE

The above program of events has been organized by a dedicated group of volunteers. The celebration of our anniversary does not just happen, Committee Members spend a lot of time planning and organizing all of the activities you see listed above. Please join me in expressing our gratitude for all their hard work and show our appreciation by coming out and getting involved in the activities and enjoy this excellent program.

Your anniversary committee is comprised of the following members: - Inga Brinkman, Ian Cook, Rob Cook, Pat Duncan, Al McNair, Alex Mills, Phyllis Tremblay, Bruce Wilson.

Thank you one and all for your work
The Editor

Chimney Swift Project 2011

Once again our club will be conducting chimney swift surveys in downtown Barrie during the evenings around sunset from May - September.

Participants find and track nesting locations (chimneys), and count the numbers of chimney swifts flying into chimneys to nest or roost for the night. During the 2011 season, the Chimney Swift Teams will focus on a 500 metres x 500 metres square in the streets around Bradford, Dunlop, Owen and The Lakeshore. They will also monitor some of the chimneys where chimney swift activity was observed in the 2010 season.

For more information about the Chimney Swift Monitoring Program called SwiftWatch, visit www.birdscanada.org/research/speciesatrisk/chsw

To join The Barrie Team, call Phyllis 705-737-2580.

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

Nov.13/10

Nottawasaga Bay Migrants



Weather, 0C at 7:30 am, rising to 12C by 3:00pm. Very heavy fog in the morning from Barrie to Wasaga (where we met Beryl) then headed out for the

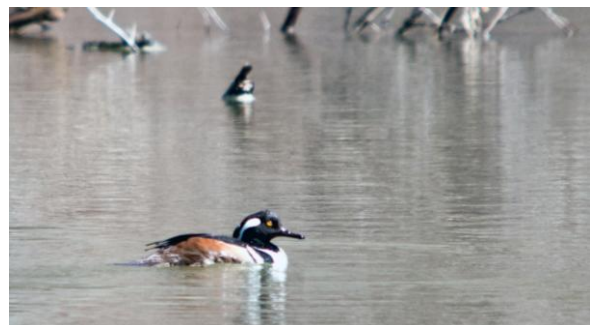
Bay around Collingwood. The fog had lifted by 10:00am. Highlights of the day a pair of Gadwall and 30 American Coots in the Harbour.

12 Participants – Beryl Lougher, Phyllis Tremblay, Elizabeth Gillan, Chris Evans, Don Scanlon, Caleb Whyne, Dale Allan, Dave Lord, Brian Gibbon, Brian Backland, Richard Bick, Linda Crome.

Birds - Number of species 34 – Common Loon, Horned Grebe, Double-crested Cormorant, Mute, Tundra, & Trumpeter Swans, Canada Goose, American Black Duck, Gadwall, Mallard, White-winged Scoter, Long-tailed Duck, Common Goldeneye, Bufflehead, Common & Hooded (F) Mergansers, Sharp-shinned & Coopers Hawk, American Coots, Great Black-backed Gull, Herring & Ring-billed Gulls, Mourning Dove, Rock Pigeon, Downy Woodpecker, Black-capped Chickadee, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Blue Jay, American Crow, Common Raven, Northern Cardinal, American Goldfinch, Dark-eyed Junco, European Starlings.

Brian G. on his way back to Barrie observed 16 Wild Turkeys.

Beryl Lougher



Mar.19/11 Horned Larks & Pancake Lunch

Happy Pancake Flippers

Thirty plus individuals, many for the first time joined the outing in a tour around the Minesing Wetlands to observe very early migrants. The weather was clear and sunny but with a cold wind when out in the open. Only a few Horned Larks were seen and the number of birds over all was rather low.

A great lunch of pancakes, sausages, and baked beans, with coffee, tea, and hot chocolate awaited the participants at the Tiffin Centre all cooked up by a dedicated crew of Club chefs. - Bruce & Jean Wilson, John Doll, Linda Crome and Chris Evans. Tour leader – Brian Gibbon.

Birds – Number of species 27 Amer. Crow, Bufflehead Duck, Canada Geese, Goldeneye Duck, Ring-necked Duck, Horned Larks, Snow Bunting, Common Merganser, Hooded Merganser, Mallard Duck, Amer. Kestrel, Killdeer, European Starling, Common Grackle, Red-winged Blackbird, Sandhill Crane, Blue Jay, Rock Doves, Amer. Robin, Pin-tailed Duck, Rough-legged Hawk, Downy Woodpecker, Black Duck, Morning Dove, Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull, Black-capped Chickadee
Brian Gibbon



Happy Pancake Eaters

Apr.2/11 SPRING BIRDS IN THE MINESING FLOODLANDS

Weather conditions were great and 15 people, some new, joined us. Water levels seem low to what I've encountered in previous years, and in some areas the birds were distant making identification difficult.

Note that the water level was somewhat higher than two days earlier so perhaps conditions will improve with the warm weather (and rain).

(On my earlier trip I saw additionally Meadowlark, and Cowbird)

The feeders at the end of Mackinnon Road need replenishing;- hence the absence of finches in this report. (I believe the owner is away)

Highlights included 6 Rough-legged Hawks, and great views of 4 drake Wood Ducks.

Birds – Sandhill Cranes, Swan (sp), Canada Goose, Mallard Duck, Wood Duck, Ring-necked Duck, Common Goldeneye Duck, Bufflehead Duck, Turkey Vulture, Rough-legged Hawk, Killdeer, Ring-billed Gull, Rock Pigeon, Mourning Dove, Horned Lark, Tree Swallow, Blue Jay, Amer. Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Amer. Robin, European Starling, House Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle, Amer. Tree Sparrow, Song Sparrow.

Dave Lord

BOOK NOOK

The Map That Changed the World. William Smith *and the Birth of Modern Geology*. Simon Winchester, 2002

William Smith was a trained surveyor and worked first in the English coal mines and later as a “canal digger” laying out some of the great canals that carried coal and other raw materials across England to feed the new industrial revolution. He was also one of the key people responsible for the draining of huge wetlands allowing for agricultural advancement that saw the great enclosures take place that changed English farming from its feudal past.

Smith's greatest achievement however was the recognition in 1793 of the rock strata in the ground beneath our feet. By tracing the placement of fossils that he uncovered during his early mine surveys and later during canal excavations he could follow layers of rocks as they dipped, rose and fell all the way across England and as he correctly predicted, across the world. His Great Map unlike anything ever produced before not only documented his findings but finally laid out in a scientific manner the earth's crust and became the model that all geological maps are based on to this

day. William Smith an apprenticed surveyor, not a graduate of one of the great English Universities, was to become known as the founding father of a whole new science – Geology.

This biography follows his life as he first struggled to put some order to what he was seeing, produce a map and have it published and be recognized as the author. Several tried to steal his ideas and pass them off as their own. It is a fascinating story of not only a brilliant man recognized late in life but also of life in England during his era. Well written and easy to read, the reader is not expected to have a vast understanding of geology, nor is it required.

Brian W. Gibbon

 Dragon Hunter, Roy Chapman Andrews and the Central Asiatic Expeditions, Charles Gallenkamp, 2001.

If you have enjoyed settling back into your couch and watching an Indiana Jones movie then you will enjoy the biography of the man many feel that Jones was patterned on – Roy Chapman Andrews. Andrew's was once considered the equal of Lindbergh and Shackleton for his exploits in the Gobi Desert of Outer Mongolia.

This book is very entertaining; following the life of a man that always had to see over the next hill and could not stay put in his office in the American Museum of Natural History in New York City. The author recounts stories of ambushes by bandits and blinding sand storms that lasted for days. Although the focus of the book is the three expeditions Andrew's led on behalf of the Museum into Outer Mongolia during the period of 1919 to shortly before World War II it also covers other exploits and discoveries made by Andrews that helped set the relatively new Museum in the forefront of scientific achievements.

This is the story of the man that envisioned and led the most celebrated fossil-hunting expeditions of the twentieth century. "These expeditions' uncovered unimagined scientific wonders: Mongolia's Flaming Cliffs, dinosaur eggs, the first skeleton of *Velociraptor* of Jurassic Park fame and a fossil treasure trove of other dinosaurs and extinct mammals."

The War and the following Cold War put an end to Western explorations in the area but today Canadian Scientists are partnering with Chinese and Mongolian scientists to expand upon the original discoveries and are advancing our understanding of these little known creatures.

Brian Gibbon

Craigleith Provincial Park



On November 13, 2010 Beryl Lougher took us to Craigleith Provincial Park (Craigleith P.P.) as part of her outing that day. The Park is located on Hwy 26 just outside of

Collingwood on the way to Thornbury.

Craigleith P.P. is an interesting area, located on the shores of Georgian Bay its shoreline is made up of layers of shale which contain the fossils of invertebrates 455 million years old. The majority of these fossils are Trilobites of which we found several partial fossil remains.

The shale in this area is known as the Collingwood/Blue Mountain formation and is part of the Utica Shale. The other major shale formation in Ontario is the Marcellus Shale extending up from Pennsylvania and New York State, the majority of which lies under Lake Erie. Shale, a sedimentary rock is one that is composed of layers of primarily fine clay minerals deposited in layers in water and can build up to a considerable depth over time. We are used to seeing gray shale but it can be found in several colours, blue green and brown. Some shale when struck against other rocks will throw off coloured sparks depending upon the type of rock struck. The sediment layering trapped and preserved animal and plant remains, and shells fine detail over time and are discovered today when the layers are carefully split apart.

"Trilobite, subphylum of the phylum Arthropoda that includes a large group of extinct marine animals that were abundant in the Paleozoic era. They represent more than half the known fossils from the Cambrian period. The trilobite body was generally oval and flat and was divided into three roughly equal sections; the head, thorax, and tail. The name *trilobite* refers to a pair of furrows along the length of the animal that divided the body into three longitudinal regions. The body was covered by a mineralized shell. Because the dorsal, or upper, shell was thicker than the under shell, it became the part best preserved in fossil form. Trilobites were abundant inhabitants of the Cambrian and Ordovician geological periods. They declined thereafter, possibly because they became food for cephalopods and later fish, and became extinct in the Permian period. Trilobites are most closely related to the chelicerates, which include the horseshoe crabs and spiders."

NATURALIST'S NOTES

"trilobites" The Columbia Encyclopedia, Sixth Edition. 2008

Some additional facts there are over 20,000 species of trilobites divided into ten orders. Trilobites were probably bottom-feeding scavengers and predators. Their great diversity made them an important Paleozoic guide fossil. They could be from 1/32 of an inch to 15 inches long and their bodies could contain up to forty-four segments.

Time frame: the Paleozoic era was from 230 million years ago back to 600 million years. This era was subdivided into seven periods and again working backwards, the Permian, the Pennsylvanian, the Mississippian, the Devonian, the Silurian, the Ordovician, and the Cambrian 500 to 600 million years ago. Since our shale is 455 million years old that would place our trilobite in the Ordovician period and would likely be of the Flexicalymene order. This order was common in Europe and North America with a maximum length about 2 inches.

Brian W. Gibbon



Trilobite posterior

2010 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

The 2010 Christmas Bird Count was held on December 18, 2010 and coordinated by Alex Mills.

A total of 33 people made up nine teams and we had two feeder watchers. The count day started at 6:30 am and ended at 4:30 pm. A total of 703 km was covered by car and 25 km by foot and 8 km by snowshoe for a total of 736 km.

Weather – temperature ranged from -8C to a high of -4C, wind velocity 6.2 km/hr. Snow depth ranged from 11.7 to 15.6 cm. Moving water was open and still water was partly frozen. There was cloud cover for the entire day.

The final count as submitted to Bird Studies (BSC) Canada will differ from our own recorded count since we count birds such as Gull Species and Waxwing Species but BSC will only count actual

identified species – Ring-billed Gull or Cedar Waxwing.

The official BSC numbers are 12,797 birds comprising 70 species plus 5 count week species. The Club count is 12,833 birds comprising 77 species. Please see attached charts.

Alex noted that we have only hit 70 species or better twice since 1997, once in 2002 and again in 2005 (see attached charts)

2010 BFNC Barrie CBC Participants

Area 1 - Lyn Pope – Volker Brinckmann, Marilyn McKnight, Linda Crome, Chris Evans

Area 2 – John Doll –Beth Doll, Phyllis Tremblay, Elizabeth Gillan, Serge Moiseev

Area 3 – Peter Mills—Alan McNair, Nathan Beaulne, Kelly Roussy, Giselle Sarvis

Area 4 – David Lord – Morris Gervais, Anthony Taliana, Dave Nicholls

Area 5 – Don Scanlan –Dave and Judy Adams, Rebecca Trott, Alex Mills

Area 6 – Dave Fewster – Wayne Simkin, Abby and Jean-Marc Roy, Katherine Jones

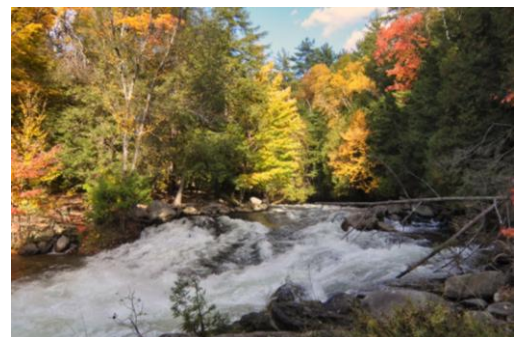
Area 7 –Brian Gibbon—Rick Irvin, **Bob Mayes**,

Area 8 – Burke Korol—Brian Pfrimmer, Ian Cook

Area 9 – Nigel Shaw – Bruce Wilson, Jean Wilson, Wade Hodgson, Jennifer Howard



Chimney Swift entering Queen's Hotel Chimney



Fall in Minden Hills