

THE BLUE HERON



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Beginner Birder at Incredible Carden

We had a good turnout at Carden last year and hope for the same again this year. The date is Saturday 8, June 2013. Please see our website for trip details.

The day there is an exceptional opportunity to learn more about the unique region known as the Carden Alvar. Located between Orillia and Lindsay and just north of Kirkfield, this area is familiar to many naturalists across Ontario for its variety of bird species.

The Carden Alvar has been designated by Birdlife International as an "Important Bird Area." Plant life is abundant as well and one can explore the rare alvar plants like the mosses and lichens.



The Carden Plain offers globally rare alvar habitat supporting an abundance of grassland birds, including the endangered Loggerhead Shrike and the rare Golden-winged Warbler plus Osprey, Black Terns, Sedge Wrens, Yellow Rails, Upland Sandpipers, Bluebirds and Eastern Towhees. Indian Paint Brush, Prairie Smoke, Tufted Hairgrass, False Pennyroyal, Fragrant Sumac and Shrubby Cinquefoil are typical alvar plants.



The day there starts with a short hour drive east from Barrie. My wife (Sue) and I were relatively new to birding and the Brereton Field Club -so did not know what to look for or expect.

Our first impressions of Carden involved driving down the narrow tree lined back dirt roads that surround the different fields. Right along the roadway you are hearing and seeing uncommon birds. We had our ibird app on and used it to identify some of the sounds. This helped a great deal when the bird was shy to show itself.

Once we started on the walk out into the actual field areas, we were with the main group and quite fortunate to have some birders with us who could identify birds at a distance purely by their sounds and then focus in on where they were. These were very knowledgeable people with good birding skills and we were in awe.

Bring a friend out to Carden with you and let them be introduced to this excellent place. Once they can experience how a practised naturalist-be it a birder or horticulturalist can help identify and appreciate the natural world, their life will be richer for it.

Photos Courtesy of Paul Forde

Upcoming Field Trips

Chimney Swifts - Wednesday 05 June 2013, 08:15pm

Location: Meet at parking lot SW corner of Mulcaster and Collier in Barrie.

Chimney Swifts return to Barrie each spring from their winter range in the Andes, with the intention of nesting in suitable chimneys. Like many "aerial insectivores" Chimney Swifts have seriously declined in Canada, and our club has undertaken a monitoring role in town.

In town and easy walking. Contact Inga Brinckmann 705-727-9071



Birding Carden Plain - Saturday 08 June 2013, 07:30am

Location: Little Lake Parking Lot. Second Meeting Place: Tim Hortons in Orillia SW corner of Memorial Drive and Highway 12. 8:00 am. Ends 3-4:00 pm

The Carden Plain "Important Bird Area" offers globally rare alvar habitat supporting an abundance of grassland birds as well as an assortment of interesting plants. Poison ivy is abundant along the roadsides and some trails in the area. Wear appropriate footwear and clothing. Contact Dave Lord 705-835-6642



Oro Rail Trail with focus on Dragonflies and Butterflies

Saturday 22 June 2013 08:30am

Join Brian and Lynne for one of their delightful rail trail strolls. Chris Evans plans to join them, with a hope to explore some prime dragonfly and butterfly territories with the aid of nets for capture, identify and release.

Contact Brian & Lynne Gibbon 705-721-4599 and Chris Evans 705-722-1136



Vespra Trail - Saturday 06 July 2013, 08:30am. Ends 1-2:00 pm

This pleasant walk is primarily under the cool forest canopy, not out in the hot sun. Enjoy wild flowers, herbs and plants that are abundant at this time of the year as well as butterflies, dragonflies and moths.




Swift Night Out

Join Us Wednesday June 05
(Rain Date: June 06)
Municipal Parking Lot, corner of
Collier & Mulcaster Streets, Barrie
8:15 - 9:30pm

Raising awareness and counting Chimney Swifts
Meet biologists, community bird enthusiasts,
and learn about species at risk

 Brereton

For more info contact Inga Brinckmann
705-727-9071

The Piping Plover Guardian Coordinator at Wasaga Beach Provincial Park is looking for volunteers to help with their program. Last year the Piping Plovers expanded their territory to a different site and thus they need double the number of volunteers to provide full coverage at both sites. If you would like to volunteer, contact Patricia Davidson at speciesatrisk@wasagabeachpark.com

The Common Loon (northern North America) can dive more than 250 feet below the water's surface.

The hummingbird is the only bird that can fly backwards.



Brereton partners- Huronia Trails and Greenways has recently changed its name to Simcoe County Trails. This group is comprised of people from local governments, local trail user groups and interested people. They have been asked to join the Copeland Forest group to help put together a management plan. They have a Trillium Grant to ensure that our trails become well GPS'd, measured and photographed. This will enable them to put a truly accurate and interactive map of all trails on the internet.

They are also teaching people about the benefits of trail use. The term "Nature Deficit" has been used to explain many ailments that modern society now has due to the removal of man from nature.

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**North Simcoe Rail Trail Cleanup
Saturday April 27th. Trip Leader, Chris Evans**

It poured rain, until we met at Minesing Station Park at 9:30. Then the sun shone and we all had a great walk out in nature doing our bit to help clean up for Earth Day.

**EARTH DAY
2013**



It turned into a beautiful spring day. The most rewarding thing was that there was very little litter along the trail, and a good portion of that was recyclable. Each year there seems to be less trash, despite the fairly high use of this trail. The worst litter occurs at road crossings.

I didn't get many reported sightings from other groups, except a reported African Lion dragonfly sighting and they brought the specimen in for the group to see. On close examination of the 5cm specimen, we concluded it was likely an exotic escaped species and should be donated to Goodwill and not included in the official trip count. My group of Peter, Rose, Ruth and I did the South 3.6 km section from Sunnidale Road to Pinegrove Road.

We heard and observed several grassland species of birds including Eastern Meadowlark, Field Sparrow and Song Sparrow. Of course there were Black-capped Chickadees, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, American Crows, American Robins, Northern Cardinals, Swamp Sparrows, Chipping Sparrow, Pine Warblers, Turkey Vultures, Great Blue Herons, Common Grackles, Red-winged Blackbirds, Rusty Blackbirds, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, Blue Jays, Northern Flickers and Downy Woodpecker. While driving we saw a flock of Dark-eyed Juncos.

Back at the Minesing Station Park, I saw and heard what I think was a Philadelphia Vireo by its brief song, dark (not red) eye and slightly yellow throat and breast, but I am not absolutely certain. I didn't get a really good look at it and though I'm familiar with Blue-headed, Yellow-throated, Red-eyed and Warbling Vireos, I'm not familiar with Philadelphia Vireos. Rose saw a rabbit.

The Brereton Field Naturalists' Club Members there that day were dedicated and need to be named! Gwen Scott – cleaned 3.2 km section from Hwy 26 south to George Johnston Road with Marilyn, Stan & Ruth, Marilyn Kyer, Ruth & Stan Sunohara, Lyn Pope – cleaned 3.2 km section from Old Orchard Road to George Johnston Road with KC Patterson. There was also Ruth Noland-Flores and John Doll was the Facilitator and Transportation/Logistics Support that day. Thank you all.



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**The Gables Trail
Wednesday May 1st. Trip Leader, Phyllis Tremblay**

This was the year to see the "garden escapes" at their best in this 43 acre city park in the middle of Barrie! Drifts of brilliant blue Spring Squill, Glory of the Snow and the paler blue Stripped Squill contrasted with the carpets of bright Yellow Anemones.

Our native Trout Lily, Sharp-lobed Hepatica, Blue Cohosh, Red Trilliums and white Wood Anemones added a subtle beauty to this majestic woodland. The White Trilliums were budded & should be showy for 3 weeks.



Photo by Janet Sauve



Photos by Paul Forde



Al McNair highlighted the park's history before the 28 participants set out to identify and photograph the plants & birds on this easy 2 1/2 hour walk. Clare Holden took GPS coordinates recording the location of Garlic Mustard. Of the seventeen bird species that were noted, a Pileated Woodpecker gave the best view.

Other Plants Observed: Black Raspberry, Canadian Yew, Celadine plants, Common Dandelion, Common Lilac, basal leaves of Dame's Rocket, Early Meadow-rue, False Solomon's Seal, Forget-me-not, Wild Carrot, Forsythia, Garlic Mustard, Hairy Solomon's Seal, Lesser Periwinkle, basal leaves of Motherwort, Poison Ivy, Red-berried Elderberry, Riverbank Grape, Staghorn Sumac, Two-leafed Toothwort, Virginia Waterleaf, Ural False Spirea, Wild Ginger, Wild- Lily-of-the-Valley, Wild Leek & Wild Red Raspberry.

Birds Noted: Canada Goose, Common Loon, Bufflehead, Common Merganser, Herring Gull, Northern Flicker, Pileated Woodpecker, Blue Jay, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, American Robin, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Pine Warbler, Chipping Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, Red-winged Blackbird and American Goldfinch.



Trillium Photos by Chris Evans



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**Ardagh Bluffs, West Creek Trail
Saturday May 5th. Trip Leader, Chris Evans**

We headed out on the West Creek Trail, first taking the short side trail to Bear Creek.

This marshy area is within a small pocket of boreal forest with many wildflowers, birds and wetland plants and trees. We carried on up the trail, hearing and sighting birds and recording wildflowers and ferns as we went.

We also retrieved litter from the woods, placing it on the trail to pick-up on our way back to the car. It was quite cold and windy, so we were glad we were warmly dressed and not too surprised we didn't see many people out and about.

*Black and White Warbler,
Photo Courtesy of Chris Evans*

We were delighted with the birdsong and natural wonders which graced our eyes and warmed our hearts.

Winn surprised us by arriving at about 11:15am and picking up most of the litter we had put on the trail by the time she met us just as we were heading back.

Encouraging was the fact that most of the litter was recyclable and that there wasn't that much considering the fairly heavy traffic this trail appears to carry.

There was a significant amount of Garlic Mustard growing along the main trail and the unopened Harvie Road allowance water main roadway. This should be controlled before it overruns this precious ANSI forest area.



Common Dog-Violet



Water Horsetail



Jack in the Pulpit

Photos courtesy of Chris Evans

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**Ardagh Bluffs, West Creek Trail
Saturday May 5th. Trip Leader, Chris Evans**

Bird Sightings: (We heard and/or sighted these at Ardagh Woods or Bear Creek Wetlands or from the car along the way)
 Canadian Geese with goslings, Mallard, Hooded Merganser, Turkey Vulture, Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull, Rock Pigeon, Mourning Dove, Belted Kingfisher, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Hairy and Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Pileated Woodpecker, Great Crested Flycatcher, Blue-headed Vireo, Blue Jay, American Crow, Tree Swallow, Barn Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, American Robin, European Starling, Yellow Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Pine Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, Ovenbird, Chipping Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle, Brown headed Cowbird, American Goldfinch


Rough Horsetail

Garlic Mustard

Poison Ivy

Hardworking Field Naturalist

Plant list: (Ardagh Bluffs – West Creek Trail)

Not yet in bloom: Wild Columbine, Poison Ivy, Wild Lettuce, Clintonia, Wild Carrot, Bird's Nest or Queen Anne's Lace, Tamarac, Pagoda Dogwood, Clintonia, Pipsissewa or Prince's Pine, Partridgeberry, Sweet Woodruff, Common Plantain, Common Cinquefoil, Virginia Waterleaf

Just beginning to bloom: Canada Mayflower or Wild Lily-of-the-Valley, White Baneberry or Doll's Eye, Hairy Solomon's Seal, Feathery False Solomon's Seal, Wild Sarsaparilla, Mayapple or Mandrake, Two-leaf Toothwort, Goldthread, Garlic Mustard, Field Pussytoes.

In full bloom: Marsh Marigold or Cowslip, Dandelion, Wild Strawberry, Red Elderberry, Jack-in-the-Pulpit, Fading bloom: White Trillium, Red Trillium

Past bloom: Trout Lily, Coltsfoot

Ferns:

Rough Horsetail or Scouring Rush, Dwarf Scouring Rush or Dwarf Horsetail, Water Horsetail, Bracken Fern, Oak Fern, Sensitive Fern

Herps:

Common Garter Snake, Midland Painted Turtle

All photos this page courtesy of Chris Evans





Little Lake, Wednesday, May 15th. Trip Leader, Phyllis Tremblay

T R I P R E P O R T S

The 9 participants were initially faced with an early morning shower and a temperature of 6 C. Eventually, during this 4 hour hike to visit both the south and north sides of Little Lake Park, the day warmed to 21C. The profusion of wild flowers and numerous forest birds enhanced our outing. A major botanical highlight was the masses of White Trilliums on the north side of Little Lake carpeting the slope as far as one could see. The ovenbird was a delight with his vibrant "teacher-teacher-teacher" song.

52 plant species were identified. Some of these were Solomon's-Seals:- False, Giant, Hairy & Starry False; Small Jack-in-the-Pulpit, Red-osier Dogwood, Spotted Touch-me-not (seedlings), Spreading Dogbane, Staghorn Sumac, Swamp Buttercup, Tall Meadow-rue, Trout Lily, Two-leaved Toothwort, and Wild Sarsaparilla. Large swaths of non-native invasive plants such as Garlic Mustard and Buckthorn are a concern and Clare Holden took GPS co-ordinates of these invasive plants.

We were fortunate to observe 52 species of birds. Some of these were the Double-crested Cormorant, Osprey, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Least Flycatcher, Eastern Phoebe, Great Crested Flycatcher, Warbling Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Barn Swallow, House Wren, Wood Thrush, Ovenbird, Black-and-white Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Yellow Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Baltimore Oriole, Pine Siskin and American Goldfinch.

Tiny Marsh, Saturday May 18th. Trip Leader, Don Scanlan



Dot-Tailed Whiteface Dragonfly
Photo courtesy of Chris Evans

Seventeen people gathered for this walk. The weather was sunny and warm. We started at Con 3 west end and we were rewarded with eleven Warbler species: Nashville, Yellow Rumped, Black-poll, Ovenbird, Northern Waterthrush, Common Yellowthroat, Black and White Warbler, American Redstart, Yellow, Black Throated Blue and a few Tennessee at the visitor's centre.

Three Black Crowned Night Herons flew overhead. We also heard a Ring-Necked Pheasantcrow in the woodland. West of the visitors centre we found a Blue Grey Gnatcatcher alongside the canal.

From the tower we watched as 3 Sandhill Cranes glided gracefully into the marsh west of us. A female Hooded Merganser was sitting atop a nesting box. Common Gallinule and Pied Billed Grebes were present. A Trumpeter Swan was north of the tower.

All in all, quite an enjoyable outing.



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**Bluebird Nestbox Trails
Wednesday May 15th. Trip Leader, Pat Duncan**

For a number of years BFNC has maintained and monitored bluebird nest box trails in an effort to increase the local population of Eastern Bluebirds in the area. A number of club volunteers partake in the monitoring and maintenance of the boxes on three bluebird nest box trails in the Barrie area

Pat Duncan is our coordinator for this project with the BFNC and if you are interested in volunteering, please join the BFNC and contact Pat nmv Duncan. On Wednesday evening of the 15th of May, Pat led a number of people on the back roads around our area to show them what is going on with the project this season. This is her report on that field trip. . .



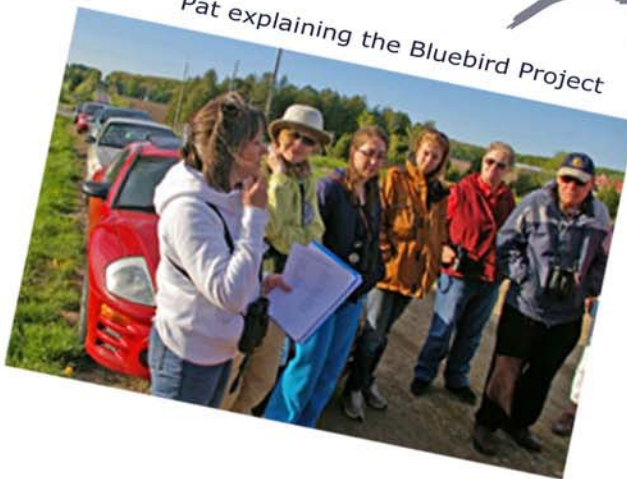
Bluebird mother feeding her chick mealworms that were left for them.



Pat showing the Bluebird nest with the eggs.



Pat explaining the Bluebird Project



Bluebirds female and male



What a great field trip we had as the Brereton Field Naturalists' Club headed out to Essa Township to take a walk down the BFNC Bluebird nest box trail. 15 people joined us (Pat Duncan and Rob Cook) on an interesting walk.

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T R I P R E P O R T S

Bluebird Netbox Trails Wednesday May 18th. Trip Leader, Pat Duncan

...continued from page 8

As we walked down the trail we saw many different grassland species including Tree swallows, Savannah sparrow, Bobolink, Red-winged blackbird, Killdeer and Eastern meadowlark. We also spotted Barn swallows, Canada goose, Mallard ducks, European starling, and we may have heard an American Woodcock.

We peeked into a number of nest boxes and viewed a variety of nest types at different stages. We saw Tree Swallow nests with eggs. We checked out a nest box containing 5 Bluebird eggs. Mealworms were put onto a feeding station and the male and female bluebirds promptly attended it and started feasting on the mealworms.

We learned about the other types of nests that might be encountered along a nest box trail, including house sparrow, house wren and chickadee nests. All in all it was a great field trip.



Matchadash Bay Saturday May 25th. Trip Leader, Dave Lord



The weather was bright and sunny with some brisk winds from the North-West this day and we had a good crowd of 15 people including 6-8 from the Orillia Naturalist Club.

We met at the Coldwater exit off of the 400 and then drove from the parking lot through Coldwater, turning left onto Lawson Line. Stopped at the farm of Diane Fletcher and then from there we continued down to Kinnear Side Road. Turning left, we arrived the parking area for Matchedash Provincial Conservation Area.

On this day some of the birds we observed were the Yellow Warbler, Warbling Vireo, Common Yellow-throat, Eastern Kingbird, Upland Plover, Farm Bluebird, Ovenbird, Red-eyed Vireo, Veery, Northern Waterthrush, Golden-winged Warbler, Caspian Tern, Osprey (on nest) Gray Catbird, Bobolink, Redstart (H), Rose-breasted Grosbeak, White-throated Sparrow. Northern Harrier, Amer. Bittern, Brown Thrasher, House Wren(H), Blue-winged Warbler, Nashville Warbler(H) Rough Grouse, Green Heron, Great Blue Heron (on nest), Broad-winged Hawk, Swamp Sparrow, Belted Kingfisher, Great Crested Flycatcher, Baltimore Oriole, Towhee (H), Wood Ducks, Eastern Phoebe, Eastern Wood Pewee, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, American Kestrel and Yellowlegs.

We also had numerous sightings of Midland Painted Turtles sunning themselves on logs. All in all, 59 species in total were recorded this day.



Brereton Field Naturalists Club Membership

Annual fees:

- Family - \$30
- Individual - \$25
- Student - \$10
- Corresponding - \$15

Memberships run from January 1st to December 31st. Members get into meetings at no charge, are eligible for discounts at local nature stores and have access to "Members Only" content of the web site.

To join the BFNC, please come to one of our meetings or complete **downloadable application form from our website and send with your payment.**

WWW. BFNCLUB.ORG



Photos
Courtesy
of
Chris Evans

Hooded Merganser
(Male)

May 11, 2013
Ardagh Bluffs West
Creek Trail, Barrie,
BFNC Field Trip



Hooded Mergansers find their prey underwater by sight. They can actually change the refractive properties of their eyes to improve their underwater vision. In addition, they have an extra eyelid, called a "nictitating membrane," which is transparent and helps protect the eye during swimming, like a pair of goggles. - The Cornell Lab of Ornithology