

Trumpeter Swan

Cygnus buccinator

Photo courtesy of John Wright



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A Message from your Editor

Are you all ready for a fantastic spring?

There is an awesome wealth of nature related events happening in the next couple of months. Something for everyone's taste and ability. So lace up your boots and get out in the great outdoors.

I'll attempt to list a sampling of what is to offer. Some the activities are advertised in this issue and all can be chased down on the web, for more information. Let's start with our own club. There are some really exciting local trips, led by our own band of experts. You can see these listed, starting on p4. We'd also love to have some new volunteers sign up for one or both of our monitoring projects. Barrie SwiftWatch and the Bluebird Trail. Both these activities require little physical effort and people with limited mobility can be accommodated.

Ontario Nature is holding two meetings in our area this year. The regional meeting on April 22 is being hosted by the York-Simcoe Naturalists (see p.13) and their Annual General Meeting is right here in Barrie at the Kempenfelt Center, on the weekend of June 2-4. (again see p13)

The Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority (NVCA) is encouraging you to come out and plant trees with them around Minesing, on May 13-14 weekend, starting 9am. (More details can be found on their website). They are also looking for help with their BioBlitz, on June 3 (see p. 11)

Tiny marsh is alive with birds and critters just waiting to be discovered. There is a waterfowl viewing day on April 22 and a BioBlitz on June 24. The Elmvale Maple Sugar Festival is inviting you to Lalonde's sugar bush where you can take a nature walk to discover spring flowers.

If volunteering is your blood and you'd like to make a difference. There's an invasive species pull at Tiny marsh on the May 27-28 Weekend.

You could even start up your own group as some folks in Angus are doing. Ambitiously they are trying to inventory the new trail park into The Angus town forest. Other interesting places to discover are the Copeland forest property and don't forget to check out the Couchiching Conservancy's passport to Nature.



It goes without saying that none of these events would happen without tireless folks working in the background, planning, organizing and advertising all the above. Some do it for a living, some do it on a volunteer basis. But all do it because of their love of nature and their desire to pass on this legacy to the next generation. So please think about getting out, supporting and enjoying some of the above.

Most importantly and with the same thought I would like to say thank you on the club's behalf to those club members who have been stepping up this past year and pulling double duty, in the absence of both a president and a vice. They have done a terrific job. We all know who they are and I hesitate to name names in case I miss someone.

However, a great big thank you, is owed to Cay Mills for stepping up and guiding us through this past year. Thank you Cay, and thank you to all who helped pull us through last year.



Have a great summer.
Your Editor,
Clare Holden

clareholden5@gmail.com

Your Board of Directors

2017 Club Executive, Directors, Committee Chairs & Representatives

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<u>Executive</u>				
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MTM Conservation	David Eales	705-721-8174		eales@sympatico.ca
North Simcoe Rail Trail	Lisa Levez Bordeleau	705-329-7059	705-309-1528	theearthshiring@gmail.com
Helen Emery Award/ Georgian College	Lynne Gibbon	705-721-4599		lgibbon@sympatico.ca

Aims of the Club

- To acquire and disseminate knowledge of natural history
 - To protect and preserve wildlife
 - To stimulate public interest in nature and its preservation
- For membership details see back page*

Coming Events - Meetings *May 2017 - Sept 2017*

MEETINGS are held at the NORTH WEST BARRIE UNITED CHURCH (NWBUC) 464 Ferndale Drive North on scheduled, Friday nights unless otherwise stated. **Please bring your own coffee mug to help reduce garbage.**

NON MEMBERS are welcome to participate in our activities. However there is a nominal charge of \$5. By becoming a member you will receive The Blue Heron Newsletter and support club activities and Ontario Nature through our Federation club status.

Please note that if you have questions regarding any outing or event, check the website. www.bfnclub.org

At time of press we currently have no meetings scheduled. Next meeting will be in September. Please check the website for date & time of this event.

There are, however, many field trips planned for your enjoyment. Check out the schedule below to find your favourite outing.

Coming Events - Field Trips & Events *April 2017 – Sept 2017*

FIELD TRIPS The Meeting point for all FIELD TRIPS will be Little Lake Parking lot (LLPL). Take Duckworth St. North-bound to just past Hwy. 400 where there is currently a lot of confusing construction. Make a right hand turn onto J.C.Massie Way after the lights. (if coming along Cundles then make a left turn). This becomes Little Lake Road. (*see web site for map*).

NO pets please on these outings. Dress for the weather, bring sunscreen & bug repellent. Pack a lunch & water. On many trips, it is advisable to carpool to the rally point. This makes it easier for site parking & for the leaders to keep track of the participants. **FOR ALL OUTINGS PLEASE CHECK THE WEBSITE FOR CANCELLATIONS OR CHANGES!**

NON MEMBERS are welcome to participate in our activities.

Please note that if you have questions regarding any outing or event, please call the trip leader or check the website. www.bfnclub.org

April 22 Saturday North Simcoe Rail Trail Cleanup - CANCELLED

May 3 Wednesday (evening) The Gables

Location: Departs from LLPL

Time: 6:00pm.

Leader: Phyllis Tremblay 705-737-2580

Alternative meeting spot at the Gables parking lot at 6:20pm. 250 Tollendale Mill Road at Hurst Drive

This 43 acre urban wilderness park, within the City of Barrie, has many attractive features, including a forested shoreline on Kempenfelt Bay, a hardwood forest, pine plantations, native wildflowers and naturalized spring bulbs such as Yellow Anemones and spring Squill.

It also a great spot that attracts spring migrant birds.

Easy walk on trails. Ends by 8:00pm.



Coming Events - Field Trips & Events (Cont.) May - Sept. 2017

May 11 Thursday Little Lake Area

Location: Departs from LLPL

Time: 8:00am.

Leader: Phyllis Tremblay 705-737-2580

This will be a two part walk in the 600+acres of city parkland around Little Lake

We will spend about 45mins. birding in the South portion of the park, near the parking lot. Then we will drive to the North side of the lake, for a 2 1/2-3hr. hike to observe mid-spring wildflowers and forest birds.

Medium difficulty walking. Ends by noon.

May 13 Saturday Spring migration at Tiny Marsh

Location: Departs from LLPL

Time: 7:00am.

Leader: Don Scanlon 705-726-6591

Tiny Marsh Important Bird Area, in Tiny Township, might be the richest spot for birds in Simcoe County.

The marsh is a giant wetland with a great diversity of migrating and nesting birds. Surrounding the marsh are various swamps & woods which play host to many birds such as warblers, vireos, flycatchers and waterfowl.

Migration peaks in mid-May and this is a great chance to see many species.

Pack a lunch. Easy walking. Ends by noon.

May 27 Saturday Birding Barrie

Location: Departs from LLPL

Time: 7:00am.

Leader: Alex Mills 705-739-1094

Barrie is now a sizeable city with lots of forests, open country and wetlands, plus 2 waterfronts. We will celebrate the biodiversity of the city by visiting a few of these spots, seeking a diversity of habitats to maximize our findings. We will watch for both breeding birds and migrants, as well as other interesting organisms.

Wear solid footwear and bring sunscreen and bug repellent

June 3 Saturday Celebrate Barrie

Location: Downtown Barrie

Time: All day

Leaders: Gwen Petreman 705-722-5377



The club has a booth at the Celebrate Barrie event each year. The purpose is to publicize the club and it's activities and hopefully encourage new members to join.

Volunteers are needed to tend the booth during the day. Also additional help will be needed to set up and take down the displays. If you are able to help with this event please contact Gwen.

Celebrate Barrie

...Our Community Festival

Coming Events - Field Trips & Events (Cont.) May–Sept. 2017

June 3 Saturday Oro-Medonte Rail Trail Flora and Fauna

Location: Departs from LLPL

Time: 8:30am.

Leaders: Brian & Lynne Gibbon 705-721-4599

Join Brian & Lynne for one of their delightful Lake Country Oro-Medonte rail trail strolls. Breeding birds are in their territories and the first dragonfly and butterflies are just making their appearance.

Easy walking, bring a snack and water. Ends 1-2:00pm.

June 10 Saturday Birding in the Carden Alvar

Location: Departs from LLPL

Time: 7:30am.

Leaders: Brian Gibbon 705-721-4599

Alternative meeting area at Tim Hortons at the SW corner of Memorial Dr. & Hwy12, Orillia at 8:00am.

Alvars are a rare kind of landscape, places where limestone flats are near the surface creating conditions for a specialized flora and wonderful bird habitat. Carden Alvar Important Bird Area (about an hour's drive from Barrie) is a great place to view a rich diversity of birds.

Driving and easy walking. Bring lunch & drinks.

Ends at 3-4:00pm.

June 24 3rd. Annual Tiny Marsh Bioblitz

Location: Tiny Marsh

Time: All day.

Guided walk times can be found on their website
Cost: \$20 per adult; youth 16 & under are free

Registration prior to June 1 is \$15

Participants can go on any or all outings.
A BBQ lunch will be available.
Register before June 1 to be sure of getting a t-shirt.
To register or for more information visit
www.mtmconservation.org or email

Come out and enjoy this day long event celebrating the biodiversity of Tiny Marsh. A bioblitz is a series of 1-3 hour walks where, with the help of knowledgeable naturalists, you count all the species (birds, insects, pollinators, plants, dragonflies, mammals, etc.) found during each outing.

This family friendly event is a great opportunity to explore and learn about the natural world found within this marsh.

May 13-14 The Creeks Project—Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority

Location: The location will be a return to the Loon Avenue watershed at 99 Loon Avenue

Time: 10am to 12 noon.

(Please note that at the time of going to press I have not had confirmation regarding date & time of this event . So if you plan to attend please contact LSRCA , either by their website or Gwen Petreman)

The BFNC is a community partner of LSRCA 's "the Creeks Project".

Tree planting will take place at 99 Loon Ave.

Gloves, shovels, water, and snacks will be provided.
LSRCA is currently working out the details in requesting a service club to provide a barbecue lunch.

REMEMBER: Trees are the most effective and least expensive way to mitigate the devastating effects of climate change!

Please Contact Gwen Petreman for more details

Trip Reports

Jan 7 2017 Christmas Bird Count for Kids (CBC4K)



Christmas Bird Count For Kids!

8 BFNC volunteers, 2 NVCA volunteers/staff, 23 kids + 23 adults participated in the 4th Annual Barrie NVCA/BFNC CBC4kids. We divided into two parties, led by Bruce Wilson and Chris Evans.

It was quite cold under blue skies and sunshine with temperature starting at -15 C and rising to -11 C with light winds increasing to 9 km/h for a fairly steady wind chill of -17 C. There was snow depth of 30 to 40 cm, but trails and roads were packed and cleared for excellent mobility.

Chris Evans led his group on a modified Route around the Jose Centre bird feeders and east on Maple Valley Trail (southern east/west segment of red trail) to the Hydro Corridor and south to Hawk Trail and back to the Jose Centre feeders, where all of the birds for this group were observed and recorded, some with the help of a mobbing call. Bruce Wilson led his group around another route and likewise used the mobbing call to enable accurate counting and good viewing and identification opportunities of their birds, for the group.

The fresh snowfall made for interesting tracking, as the Maple Valley / Hawk Trails hardwood forest was completely bereft of birds. Red Fox, Eastern Gray Squirrel tracks and mouse tracks were also observed. An Eastern Gray Squirrel (black morph) and a Red Squirrel were observed and identified.

After the count, all participants were treated to hot chocolate and a game of BIRDO (a kids bird bingo game), devised by Naomi Saunders, which was enjoyed by all, while the results were tallied.

We would also like to extend our thanks to the sponsor of the bird food, Wild Bird Unlimited.



SPECIES	Evans	Wilson	Gross Total	Net Total
GULLS				
gull sp.		1	1	1
PIGEONS & DOVES				
Mourning Dove	8	1	9	8
WOODPECKERS				
Downy Woodpecker		2	2	2
CROWS & JAYS				
Blue Jay		1	1	1
American Crow	2		2	2
CHICKADEES				
Black-capped Chickadee	10	32	42	42
NUTHATCHES & CREEPERS				
Red-breasted Nuthatch		3	3	3
White-breasted Nuthatch	3	3	6	6
Brown Creeper		2	2	2
TOTAL # of Birds	24	44	68	67
# of Species	5	7	9	9

Trip Reports

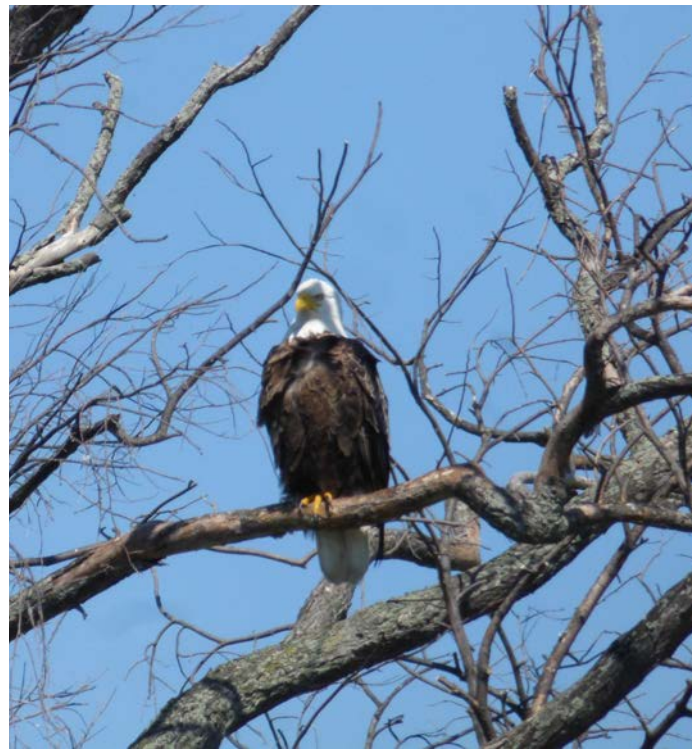
Feb 4 2017 Minesing Raptors—Brian Gibbon

The weather was cloudy for most of the day with a few sunny intervals. The temperature was -10C at 8:00 am rising to -2C by noon with a light north east wind.

Twenty hardy souls made up the tour group including two ladies from Bracebridge and an OFO Junior Birder. We went counter clock-wise around the wetlands starting out in Minesing and ending at McKinnon Rd in Angus. This was only the second time in over twenty years that we failed to find a single snowy owl, however, the mature Bald Eagle on South Glengarry partially made up for it.

BIRDS: American Crow (30+), Black-capped Chickadee, Red-tailed Hawk (2), Rough-legged Hawk (3), Bald Eagle, Blue Jay, Mourning Dove, Rock Pigeon, American Tree Sparrow, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, American Goldfinch, European Starling, and White-breasted Nuthatch.

I would like to thank everyone for coming out and Brian Backland for shepherding the rear of our convoy.



March 11 2017 Horned Larks & Pancakes - Brian Gibbon

Weather conditions were not good for this outing, temperature -13C stayed around that all day, very fine light snow made it appear like fog obscuring long distance viewing, very light wind in the morning but getting stronger later in the day. Road conditions were snow covered and slippery, in some places it was hard to see the road.



Photo credit to Ruth Noland-Flores

We had approximately 18 people in the convoy. Unlike the February, outing we were quite successful with the Snowy Owls and hawks. Ken MacDonald and his wife joined us from the Midland Club.

Birds: – Am. Crows (18), Am. Tree Sparrow (8), Black-capped Chickadee (3), Blue Jay (3), Canada Goose (350), Am. Robin (1), Northern Cardinal (3), Dark-eyed Junco (3), Downy Woodpecker (1), Hairy Woodpecker (2), Red-bellied Woodpecker (2), European Starling (18), Hooded Merganser (2), Horned Larks (2), Mourning Dove (9), Red-winged Blackbird (14), Rough-legged Hawk (4), Red-tailed Hawk (2), Snow Buntings (6), Snowy Owl (3), Pileated Woodpecker (1), White-breasted Nuthatch (1), Am. Goldfinch (2). Species – 23.

Mammal: Eastern Gray Squirrel (1)

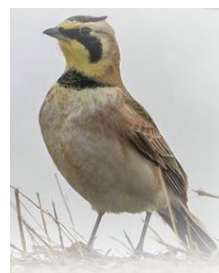


Photo credit to Arni Stinnissen

Thanks to Chris Evans for his listing and for leading the group up McKinnon Rd. when I missed the turn and Phyllis Tremblay for her list of birds collected around the Little Lake parking lot.

A large thank you again this year to John Williams of Williams Farm near Wyebridge for his generous maple syrup donation.

Trip Reports - (Cont.)

April 1 2017 Spring Birds in the Minesing Floodlands - Chris Evans

5 hours meeting Apr 1, 2017 @ 7:45 AM, departing LLPL @ 8:15 and returning @ 1:20 PM

Thank you to all who came out and made this trip fun and interesting! Special thanks to:

Ruth Noland-Flores, my beautiful assistant and driver,

Brian Backland who did a great job as sweep for our caravan and website and email communications

Paul Forde for fabulous promotion and checking the meeting spots for second wave participants

I learn so much every time I lead this trip. It is wonderful to connect with so many people interested in our natural and cultural history. We had a peak of 35 people and 19 vehicles. Those starting at Little Lake Park clocked over 80 km round trip in just over 5 hours.

Thank you to all who carpooled, conserving fossil fuel and minimizing our carbon footprint. As a reminder to passengers, at a modest \$0.50 /km, this trip cost your driver approximately \$40 in vehicle expenses. The offer of an appropriate portion of this expense to the driver is a considerate and gracious thing to do.



Photos credit to Paul Forde

We set off at 8:15 AM, 21 people in 8 vehicles, from as far as Toronto, Mississauga and Orillia, bound for McKinnon Road, our second meeting place. Along the way some of us saw a Belted Kingfisher S of CR90 at the 8th line of Essa.

The sun shone upon us, though the early morning cold 0 degrees C north wind greeting us at McKinnon Road @ 8:40 AM was challenging for some. Here we were joined by 14 more people in 11 cars from places like Horseshoe Valley, New Lowell, Creemore and the hills of Mulmur. A 2nd year Bald Eagle did some low fly-overs and an aristocratic flock of Northern Pintails gave us some good views on the ground and in the air.



A few distant Rusty Blackbirds added to our species diversity. There was comparatively little flooding despite the fact that the 2nd concession was flooded over. It appeared that the early spring had invited the throngs of waterfowl further north, leaving far fewer numbers and species than usual. Ervin's feeders were not terribly productive, either. However, a fortunate few were treated to the sweet song of a Brown Creeper. Further grace lifted us all as bugling from two pair of Sandhill Cranes filled our ears and we observed them against blue sky and white clouds. The Bald Eagle gave us another fly over and we left McKinnon Road to warm up at Tim Horton's and McDonald's in Angus around 10:00 AM. This was a little later than planned and a busy time, but an essential stop.

Hannah and her sister had a close encounter and fortunate near miss with a Wild Turkey crossing CR10 on the way to the 6th Concession Sunnidale.

Trip Reports - (cont.)

Minesing Floodplains Spring Migrants - Chris Evans (cont)

Nothing of note along the 6th, but at the east end we did observe a flock of Canada Geese, a distant Red-tailed Hawk and even more distant juvenile Bald Eagle soaring above the eagle nest, which we presumed to be the same eagle we saw on McKinnon Road. We took the time to survey the wetlands as I pointed out and described the geography and some of the natural and cultural history of the place.

Moving north on 15/16 Sdrd, east on the 7th Conc. and north again on 18/19 Sdrd we stopped to find about 36 Sandhill Cranes foraging over a km away in the barely flooded fields. In the same vicinity, a Rough-legged Hawk was observed kiting and hovering in typical Roughy fashion as befits their summer tundra hunting style. Some observers were treated to the tinkling calls and surging flight of a few Horned Larks. Sherman captured a distant Common Raven on his camera. Strongville Road yielded some good views of an American Kestrel for a few people. Highway 26 gave some drive by looks at a Red-tailed Hawk on a hydro wire at Edenvale. The only action apparent on the Notty was a flock of about 50 gulls on the bank on the NE side. Glengarry Landing Road South halfway to Marl Creek sprung a pair of American Kestrels. Another American Kestrel showed very well on Ronald Road at Fralick Road.

Another welcome bio break and refreshment stop at Four Cedars Café and Convenience in Minesing around noon. We saddled up and walked on down to the NVCA Willow Creek Canoe Corral for some good looks at Herring Gulls and Ring-billed Gulls in their crisp breeding plumage finery. We basked gratefully in the sun, the temperature now balmy 8 degrees C! Woohoo! A pair of Killdeer (*Charadrius vociferus*) signaled our departure as a Turkey Vulture waved us off,

back to our meeting places. We were safe and sound back at Little Lake at 1:20 PM.

I didn't diligently record every individual of a species, but I tried to record all of the species encountered.

Birds:

Canada Goose x72,
Swan sp. x10,
Am. Black Duck x1,
Mallard x31,
Northern Pintail x50,
Bufflehead x1,
Wild Turkey x1,
Rock Pigeon x2,
Mourning Dove x2,
Sandhill Crane x40,
Killdeer x4,
Herring Gull x5,
Ring-billed Gull x50, Turkey Vulture x4, Bald Eagle x2 (possibly 1 individual), Red-tailed Hawk x2,
Rough-legged Hawk x1, Belted Kingfisher x1,
Downy Woodpecker x1, Pileated Woodpecker x2,
Am. Kestrel x4, Eastern Phoebe x1, Blue Jay x1,
American Crow x10, Common Raven x1, Horned Lark x1, Black-capped Chickadee x1, Brown Creeper x1,
American Robin x5, European Starling x1, House Sparrow x1, American Goldfinch x1, Song Sparrow x1,
Northern Cardinal x1, Red-winged Blackbird x2,
Rusty Blackbird x3, Common Grackle x1



For a Google Map of our route and sightings, please follow this link...

https://drive.google.com/open?id=1WcF0jtfCP-bD_Z5ZVi7JLq4_Elk&usp=sharing



Parks
Canada

Parcs
Canada

As part of Canada's 150th celebration, Parks Canada is offering a free pass into their facilities for 2017.

If you visit the Parks Canada website, you will find the information and the form to fill out.

Trip Reports - (cont.)

April 12 2017 American Woodcocks - Ian Cook

Twelve naturalists met in the waning light for BFNC's annual Woodcock walk. At least two-thirds of the participants had never seen one of these interesting, nocturnal birds before, so the pressure was on to produce!

The weather was not ideal. Temperatures hovered just above freezing, it was overcast and breezy. The group was in the field in Midhurst, just northwest of Little Lake, shortly after 8 p.m. and by about 8:20 the first Woodcock was heard, giving his characteristically nasal "peent" call from the ground at the edge of the field. In moments he was in the air, his high spiraling flight producing a melodious twittering sound as air rushed through his outer primary wing feathers. Then he descended, zigzagging and banking while singing a liquid, chirping song. We were able to observe this bird perform several of these flights, and were able to locate him on the ground, getting as close as 15 meters away. We caught a glimpse of one other bird, and

heard perhaps a total of three.

Other than the Timberdoodles it was a very quiet night. Spring Peepers could be heard in the distance.

The Field Sparrows heard the evening before were nowhere in sight. We were back in our vehicles with the heaters on by 9 pm.

Thanks to all who attended.



Nature Notes

Minesing Wetlands BioBlitz

Date: Saturday, June 03, 2017

9:00 AM - 6:30 PM

**Location: Edenvale Conservation Area,
Springwater Township**

Join the [Friends of Minesing Wetlands](#), [NVCA](#), the [Nature Conservancy of Canada](#) and [Ducks Unlimited Canada](#) for the first annual Minesing Wetlands BioBlitz!



What is a BioBlitz?

A BioBlitz is a volunteer-based biological inventory of a natural area. Participants include local scientists, professional naturalists, amateur enthusiasts and members of the general public.

The goal of the BioBlitz

is to identify as many species as possible in a set amount of time. Guided walks, canoe trips, workshops and other educational activities are among some of the activities being planned.

Do I need to be an expert to participate?

Absolutely not! This is an all-ages, all-skill-levels event. As a volunteer, you will have a hands-on opportunity to learn more about the natural world while contributing to citizen science and environmental stewardship.

How do I get involved?

Visit Minesing Wetlands BioBlitz [registration page](#) to learn more.

Nature Notes

Copeland Forest Update - Dave Lord

This is a brief update on the activities of the Copeland Forest Friends Association (CFFA) Initiative.

To recap, the Copeland Forest is a huge tract of land almost 4 square miles in total area approximately 25 kilometres north of Barrie.

It is the highest quality of mature upland deciduous forest in the region and contains the headwaters of three major watersheds that drain into Georgian Bay.

In October 2015 the Copeland Forest Friends Association formed a Non-Profit Corporation, signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the MNRF, and began offering memberships. The organization has been structured to ensure that all the major recreational user groups are equally represented.

The CFFA held their second AGM in February this year and we are gratified that we now have over 140 members! We have two standing committees one for Ecology, and the other for Trails. The Ecology Committee has been testing the water in the forest in various areas, and so far so good.

The Trails Committee has produced a map of the forest with the single-track trails, which is now available from our website. There is also now signage for these trails.

This year the Trails group will be focussing on a review of the single-track trails. **VOLUNTEERS ARE REQUIRED!!!** There is an important workshop on April 26. You can contact me for details at 705-835-6642 (or email davelo@sympatico.ca)

We have had two fall events which many of our members have attended, and there will be another one this year

An item of concern is the potential decommissioning (for safety reasons in view of its proximity to the CPR main line) of the Ducks Unlimited Pond which is located near the third line, at the north end of the forest. The "Friends" will support both groups (MNRF and DU) and try to preserve as much open water as possible.



On a personal note I do an annual Forest Bird Monitoring Program for Environment Canada. Twice in both May and June I enter the forest around 5:30 in the morning and record the different species of birds heard at 5 stations, over 200 meters apart. The more interesting birds heard include the melodic Wood Thrushes and Hermit Thrushes, both species are in decline. An interesting new bird that has been found in the forest, is the Louisiana Water Thrush, which has been seen in the same area for the past 3 years.



Nature Notes



April 22- Ontario Nature's Regional Huronia Meeting

Saturday April 22nd, 2017 10 am.
Riverdrive Park Community Centre,
20 Oak Ave, East Gwillimbury

This is great place to meet and share our nature ideas with friends from neighboring clubs.

A Special Presentation will be made by Jessica Isaac, Senior Policy Advisor, Environmental Commissioner of Ontario (ECO), who is the province's environmental watchdog.

Jessica will share information on the tools of the Environmental Bill of Rights (EBR) and how to use them effectively to the benefit of the environment.

Also on the agenda is a presentation called Historical Bird Sightings: We need your help! Guest Speaker: Mike Cadman, Bird Studies Canada

Mike will share information about their new initiative called canBird. canBird's goal is to create as complete as possible an archive of Canadian bird records within

the eBird database through a network of dedicated volunteers. The database will be widely used for scientific analysis and will preserve and recognize the contributions of Canada's distinguished ornithologists and birders.

12:00 – 12:45 Lunch (bring your own lunch and mug)

12:45 – 1:00 York Simcoe Naturalists Club Programs and Projects. Jeanne Beneteau, YSN President and Judy Ritchie, YSN Rep

1:00 - 1:30 Club Highlights

1:30 – 2:00 Ontario Nature . "Nature Network UPDATE" Barbara MacKenzie-Wynia, Regional Co-ordinator

2:00 – 4:00 Hike Nokiidaa trail with Sylvia Bowman

Green Lane to Roger's Reservoir, see new boardwalk, wetlands and the site of the new club barn swallow nesting structure.

A warm thank you to Judy Ritchie and the York Simcoe Naturalists

June 2-4 Ontario Nature's Annual Gathering

Ontario Nature's 86th Annual Gathering
June 2 – 4, 2017

Kempfenfelt Conference Centre, Innisfil

Enjoy a weekend reunion on Kempfenfelt Bay along Lake Simcoe to celebrate another year of protecting wild species and wild spaces in Ontario. Participate in a weekend full of activities, expert-run nature workshops and field trips while learning about some of Ontario Nature's accomplishments and pressing conservation issues. In addition to our Annual General Meeting, the weekend will also feature a ceremony honouring eco-heroes at the annual Conservation Awards.

Workshop Descriptions

Nature Workshops run twice on Saturday, June 3rd, so you will have the opportunity to participate in two workshops. The morning session runs from 10:00 to 11:45 a.m. and the afternoon session runs from 1:15 to 3:00 p.m.

How You Can Help Win the War Against Invasive Plants

What Lies Beneath the Waves? Dipping into Lake Simcoe to Find Fish, Mollusks and Arthropods

Retire Your Lawnmower! Learn to Garden with Native Mosses

Dive into the Fascinating World of Freshwater Mussels

Reptiles and Amphibians of South Lake Simcoe

Back to Nature: Learn About Natural Restoration Projects in Barrie

Field Trip Descriptions

Field trips run on Sunday, June 4th from 9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. Participants will be picked up and dropped off at Kempfenfelt Conference Centre.

Hike the Minesing Wetland

Discover the Plovers of Wasaga Beach

The Butterflies of Carden Alvar

In Search of Trumpeter Swans at Wye Marsh

Bruce Trail Interpretive Hike

Tiny Marsh Events And Bioblitz

3rd annual Tiny Marsh BioBlitz

On Saturday June 24,

MTM Conservation Association will once again be hosting a BioBlitz at Tiny Marsh.

With over 600 hectares of wetland and 300 hectares of forest and fields to explore, join our experts and naturalists in a series of guided 2 to 3 hour walks to discover the many species of birds, butterflies, plants, mammals, reptiles and amphibians that make this wetland their home.

This family friendly event is a great way to learn about the biodiversity found in this wildlife area and to participate as a 'citizen scientist' by helping to count how many species can be found within Tiny Marsh.

The walks start at 6am for those interested in birds and waterfowl when they are most active.

Continuing from 10am is a series of two hour outings each focused on an aspect of the abundant life at the marsh. The day finishes around 4:30pm with "a big sit" – a listening circle at the nature centre focusing on hearing, and seeing, birds and insects in a given space.

Registration prior to June 1 is \$15 and covers the whole day – or you can take in just one or two walks. Included is a free BBQ lunch and an optional free t-shirt. No charge for children under 16 accompanied by an adult. The fee is \$20 after June 1.

(T-shirts may not be available after June 1st).

For a schedule of all the walks and to register, visit

tinymarshbioblitz.eventbrite.ca

Come and celebrate Canada's 150th anniversary by experiencing nature in one of our renowned local natural wonders. Bring your family and friends.

Tiny Marsh "Plant and Pull"

on Saturday May 27 and

Sunday May 28 from 9am to 5pm.

Every May, volunteers have been diligently pulling Garlic Mustard from various spots found within Tiny Marsh.

This year we continuing with our efforts but are adding an exciting new dimension!

As we remove the unwanted weed, we will be replacing it with flowering native perennials that will provide much-needed pollen and nectar for native pollinators – bees, butterflies and other insects. There are over 400 different species of native bees in Ontario (the honey bee is not one) and many populations are stressed for lack of floral resources and habitat.

The focus planting area will be just west of the Nature Centre, where we will be planting 1500 pollinator-friendly plants to replace, and help choke out the remaining Garlic Mustard.

The plant species being planted will include goldenrods, Asters, Black-eyed Susan, Oswego Tea, Spotted Joe-Pye Weed, Pearly Everlasting, Meadow Sundrops and others.

Originally from Europe, Garlic Mustard is a highly invasive weed which spreads quickly and suppresses the growth of many of our native plants and hardwood tree seedlings. This aggressive herb can quite comfortably grow in sun or shade, forests or roadsides. Each flower spike can produce hundreds of seeds which when dispersed can remain in the ground for 20+ years and still be able to germinate. Animals, humans and dogs that walk through affected areas easily disperse the seeds.

Anyone wishing to help and can offer up a couple of hours in either the morning or afternoon may contact Anne McArthur at aemcarth@rogers.com.

Tools are limited so it would be appreciated if you could bring your own shovel. Gloves, long sleeves, long pants and closed footwear as well as bug spray are recommended.

Waterfowl Viewing Day

On Saturday April 22 from 10am to Noon

There will be two groups heading out to view waterfowl. One along the dyke and the other out along the boardwalk to Mole Mountain.

David Eales will be on hand to lead the Childrens walk and possible dip netting if the weather is warm enough. This is a good opportunity to shake off the winter blahs and get out in nature with some knowledgeable folks.

Monitoring Reports

Barrie SwiftWatch 2017—Phyllis Tremblay

It's time to think about becoming a Citizen Scientist

Come out, have fun and help count the Swifts.

A great way to spend a warm evening.

Brereton Field Naturalists' Club (BFNC) objective for 2017, as participants in the Ontario SwiftWatch Project, is to continue to monitor known nest and roost sites as well as identify new swift sites. Volunteers are encouraged to monitor roosts consistently, over all six blitz nights in the spring. Bird Studies Canada (BSC) will work one-on-one with stewards and landowners at known chimneys of high conservation importance.

Bird Studies Canada's (BSC) priority for 2017:

Participate in the National Population Roost Monitoring Blitz May 14, 18, 24, 28, June 1 & 5, especially at the key roost sites.

In addition, BSC recommends:

Reporting first and last sightings of the season.

Spot-checking previously identified chimneys to determine if they are still active with swifts.

Conducting Presence/Absence Surveys* for new nest/roost chimneys.

Keeping an eye out for potential natural habitat sites (old hollow trees with a 50cm diameter at breast height or larger), and nesting sites in barns if the opportunity arises.

Holding a "Swift Night Out" to educate and engage others in the community.

Submitting all data from both new and past identified chimneys to BSC.

Barrie SwiftWatchers' Action Plan:

April 23 - May 5 Observe & report chimney swift (CHSW) sightings anywhere in Barrie.

May 14, 18, 24, 28, June 1 & 5 National Population Roost Monitoring Blitz

Every Tuesday Evening Starting June 13, cooperate with Barrie SwiftWatchers to spot-check previously occupied chimneys, regularly monitor roosts & identify


potential chimneys.

Location: Meet at Barrie City Jail, 114 Worsley St.

***Presence/Absence Surveys** are conducted during various stages of the chimney swifts' seasonal behaviour. Just before sunset, participants find and track nesting/roosting locations and count the numbers of chimney swifts dropping into the chimneys to nest or roost for the night.

For more information and to volunteer:

www.bfnclub.org



National Population Roost Monitoring Blitz

Count Chimney Swifts entering chimneys

May 14, 18, 24, 28, June 1 & 5

Before and after sunset 8:15 - 9:30 P.M.

Barrie Sites contact: Phyllis petremblay@rogers.com
PH: 705 737 2580

<http://bfnclub.org/>

BRERETON FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB
BARRIE, ONTARIO

2017 Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) Results

Thank You For the Biggest GBBC Ever

Once again participants from around the world set new records for the number of species identified during the four days of the Great Backyard Bird Count, for the number of checklists submitted, and the number of estimated participants. These numbers are based on totals taken on the afternoon of March 3 and they are impressive. The amount of increase is based on a comparison to 2016 count figures:

Total checklists: 173,826 (2016 final total: 162,052)

Total species: 5,940 (2016 final total: 5,689)

Estimated participants: 214,018 (2016 final total estimate: 163,763)

Here's how the Top 10 provinces in Canada performed, followed by the Top 10 states. An asterisk denotes a new state or province checklist record.

Province	Number of Spe-	Number of Checklists
Ontario	158	7,158*
British Columbia	206	2,227
Quebec	120	2,215*
Alberta	91	869
Nova Scotia	135	748*
Manitoba	63	566
Saskatchewan	68	405
New Brunswick	94	303
Newfoundland &	75	184
Prince Edward Is-	63	145*

Data totals as of March 3rd 2017.

The undisputed winner for number of species reported is Colombia with a whopping 955, followed by India with 801, and Mexico with 774 species.

State	Number of Species	Number of Checklists
New York	181	7,191
Pennsylvania	147	6,983
California	370	6,891
Florida	309	6,024
Texas	360	5,696
Virginia	196	5,190
Ohio	139	4,584
Washington	215	4,252
North Carolina	213	4,220
Michigan	140	4,197

Country	Number of Species	Number of Checklists
United States	671	113,117
Canada	258	14,908*
India	801	11,008*
Australia	552	1,675
Mexico	774	1,190
Spain	291	696*
Costa Rica	648	645*
Portugal	220	480*
Taiwan	267	451*
United Kindom	190	396*

NVCA Birds of a Feather Flock Together – Kyra Howes

The Minesing Wetlands Conservation Area is a wildlife haven. Every year, avian visitors—and their human fan club—flock to this area during the spring flood as a stopover on the North American flyway. But the habitat benefits of this seasonal flooding last long after the waters recede. The flood waters soaked up by the wetlands slowly release throughout the season, keeping creeks and rivers flowing and aquatic habitat thriving.

But over the past few years, a number of breaches along the Mad River at the Minesing Wetlands Concession 2 access, the location of the wildlife viewing platform, have allowed water to flow into the nearby Nottawasaga River, resulting in the Mad River being almost a trickle throughout the drier summer months. Fish and other aquatic species dwelling in the 12 km of the Mad River below the breach have been negatively affected by this lower water flow.

To remedy this, during the dry summer and fall of 2016 the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority (NVCA) and its partners undertook two major projects in Minesing Wetlands at Concession 2 access point.

NVCA staff worked with contractors and engineers to plug breaches in the Mad River in an attempt to keep the water flowing down the river in its historic channel. Not only will repairing these breaches increase the flow of water in the Mad River throughout the year, but it will keep more water on fields in the wetlands, particularly during the during spring waterfowl migration.

Along with repairing the breaches, NVCA, with the support of Ministry of Environment and Climate Change’s Wetland Habitat Fund, Ducks Unlimited Canada, and Nature Conservancy of Canada, created several brood ponds. These ponds will retain water throughout the spring and provide wetland habitat on what was previously fallow field owned by the authority.

To further increase the habitat potential of the area, Ducks Unlimited provided several duck nest boxes and NVCA staff and volunteers have been and will continue to plant native shrubs around the ponds.

Take some time this spring to stop by the wildlife viewing tower and view the visitors to these new ponds!

Article & photos submitted by
Kyra Howes, Manager, Lands & Operations



Above: fallow field north of Conc. 2 & west of the Mad River prior to construction the new ponds.

Below: the new ponds at this location after construction.



Below: repairing one of the breaches in the Mad River bank north of Sunnidale Concession 2

Naturalists have Answers at Lalonde's—Kate Harries

Saturday April 28 10am-3pm.

The group that organizes the Tiny Marsh BioBlitz has volunteered to provide nature identification at Tim Lalonde's sugarbush – with reinforcements from the Midland Penetanguishene Field Naturalists Club and Brereton Field Naturalists in Barrie.

It's something that Tim thought was needed because when visitors come out at festival time, he's always fielding questions about what's flowering, or flitting about, or sheltering under a log – and while he knows many of the answers, the Tiny Marsh group is more than happy to provide backup.

Tim's bush is in fact rich in biodiversity and there is a lot to discover as the spring ephemerals burst into bloom to take advantage of the spring sunshine that will soon be blocked as the maples leaf out into a thick canopy. The lovely wildflowers of these deciduous forests include the familiar Trilliums as well as Hepaticas, Blue Cohosh, Trout Lily, Jack in the Pulpit. There are also many interesting species of native grasses and ferns.

If the timing is right, the rare Leatherwood shrub will be in bloom; its delicate yellow flowers bursting out of

bare twigs are the epitome of spring.

And there will be birds – some year-round residents, some back from migration and some passing through, many going about the serious business of nesting.

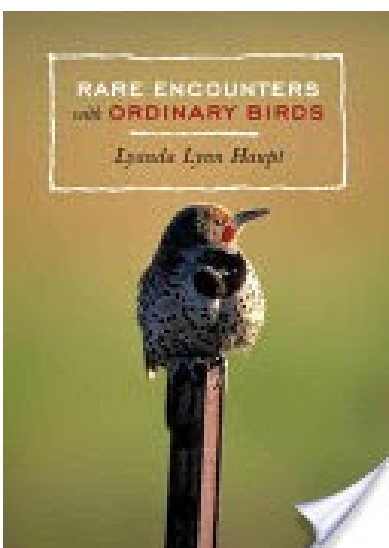
The naturalists will be on hand from 10 am to 3 pm. A guided walk will leave the sugar shack at 10:30 am, and another at 1:30 pm.



Book Review - Rare Encounters with Ordinary Birds

by Lyanda Lynn Haupt

One of my favorites; read by the Midland Penetang Field Naturalists Book Club, is "Rare Encounters with Ordinary Birds" by Lyanda Lynn Haupt.



Lyanda created and directed education programs for the Seattle Audubon Society. She has worked in raptor rehabilitation in Vermont, Peregrine Falcon reintroduction in Minnesota, and seabird research in the remote Pacific. Her writing has appeared in Wild Earth Journal, Open Spaces, Bird-watcher's Digest, and the Prairie Naturalist.

She has traveled the globe in search of prize avian sightings, but in this book she makes the argument for sticking close to home.

Rare Encounters with Ordinary Birds is a collection of seventeen thoughtful essays on birds which capture the sense of wonder and connection people have for these marvelous creatures. She muses on the tarnished reputation of the starling, the sexed-up antics of male woodpeckers, and the mysterious behavior and startling population explosion of crows in her hometown. She writes with humor, insight, and entertaining historical background. Through the eye and voice of this talented writer, birds provide a fascinating point of contact with the natural world at large. It was thoroughly enjoyable to read and learn about common species of North American birds, and her family's encounters with them.

Submitted by Dorothy McKeown

Curious Critters - Volvox



Volvox are balls of green cells that swim in the waters of spring puddles. Each Volvox sphere is a colony of tens of thousands of individual cells. Each is a single-celled alga. When living solo, these cells whip a pair of flagella back and forth to move, especially toward light.

Things are different when solo cells like these come together by the thousands to create a Volvox. Each is cemented permanently in a matrix that holds the entire globe together. If the Volvox is to move purposefully, the beating of as many as 100,000 flagella has to be coordinated. That is accomplished by orienting each cell slightly differently, according to where it sits on the globe's surface, and also altering the way the flagella beat. The cells have anterior eyespots that enable the colony to swim towards light, as they live by photosynthesis.

It works to perfection: as the globe moves through the water, it rotates slowly. If it were coming straight at you, it would be turning patiently clockwise.

You might wonder how each cell would know exactly how to modulate the stroke of its two flagella to coordinate with all the others. It doesn't have to: the movement is ensured by its position and orientation. Pluck one of these single cells out of the colony, release it on its own and it will beat its flagella frantically. But it will only spin in place. It is no longer capable of life on its own — it's a colonial being.

But there is more to Volvox: it has two kinds of cells, reproductive and sterile. The reproductive cells generate new, mini-Volvoxes that swim inside the parent colony until their release. The cells that propel the beast, the thousands embedded in the surface, have forsaken reproduction altogether.

It's assumed that colonies like this have some sort of advantage over single cells. It could be that their increased size eliminates some of the predators that would have hunted them. Or it could be that the colony can swim faster and access light more efficiently.

But Volvox is also remarkable because it hints so broadly at one of the first crucial steps towards multicellular organisms: independent cells coming together to be part of something bigger.

Talking Turtle

Decision on Regulation from the Environmental Registry:

- No open season for Snapping Turtles across all of Ontario.

Based on public feedback, there was significant opposition to maintaining any open season for snapping turtles. Snapping Turtle is a long-lived species that reproduces slowly and is subject to other significant stressors such as road mortality. The Ministry has closed the Snapping Turtle season to help maintain populations of this species into the future.

The Ministry received a total of 13461 comments: 12877 comments were received in writing and 584 were received online.



Photo credit to Jim Charlebois

Members Photo Gallery



Snow Bunting photo credit to Sue Forde



Christmas bird count for Kids

Eastern Phoebe photo credit to Ken McDonald



Swan photo credit to Paul Forde



Christmas Bird Count

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



[Www.BFNCLUB.ORG](http://www.BFNCLUB.ORG)



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