

# THE BLUE HERON



THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE BRERETON FIELD NATURALISTS' CLUB

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## A Message from your Editor

Dear Readers,

Here's wishing you all a very Happy New year, with lots of special moments out in our beautiful countryside.

Let's take a minute to reflect on our learnings & achievements from 2017.

The lesson, I think, that we have all had to learn, this year, is that we need to stay ever vigilant as to what proposals are being submitted to our City Council. As in all communities, there are all types of folks with varying agendas, wants and wishes. It is our club's responsibility to advocate for nature and we all have a part to play. If you see or hear a suggestion or rumour of any nature related proposal, please make it known to other club members, so that as a group we can make our concerns known. (I should also say at this point, that it does not mean you will have to stand up in front of a crowd to make your voice heard. There are members in this club who will gladly step up in this capacity).

The following are a few examples of nature related topics, that are up for debate at present:

The Barrie Advance listed the proposed bylaw change. I don't know if it only applies to residences, but "openings and holes in buildings and chimneys will need to be screened or sealed".

Does that mean the Chimney Swift "chimneys", present and future, could need to be screened?

We may need that clarified and inform the owners of active chimneys. This is probably a case where the impact on our Swift population may have not even been considered. In all likelihood, the person who put this proposal out there does not even know what a Chimney Swift is.

And again, on a similar topic, there is the impending destruction of the Barrie Central Collegiate (BCC) Chimney.

Al McNair has been handling this, on our behalf. City staff are now aware of the issue and have been in touch with both the developer and MNR. The BCC owner has been advised of the importance of this chimney and MNRF understands that the owner has hired an environmental consultant to assist with the SAR requirements.

In another such case the MNRF Minister Kathryn McGarry announced August 23 that the Ontario Tree Seed Plant in Angus was closing in a year. This was a bolt out of the blue and a total shock to the organizations and businesses that work to preserve and increase the number of trees on our landscape. There had been zero consultation. This is an industry that plans on a multi-year cycle, not one year ahead. AWARE Essa and the Friends of the Utopia Mill and Park have started a petition. They're aiming for 10,000 signatures to get McGarry's attention. Please help! Sign and share with your networks. (*see p.22*)

And as you all are probably aware by now there is a proposal to build a baseball diamond on the city waterfront property. (*see p.24*)

If you have not done so already, there is a forum to express your views and vote for the submitted concerns, called [barie.uservoice.com](http://barie.uservoice.com)].

A couple of projects that have been helped by our club this past year are also worth a mention.

1. The Mayers Marsh platform was rebuilt with financial assistance from our funds



*Photo courtesy of Judy Watson*

2. Some of our club members volunteered with seed collection for the establishment of Kirtland Warbler habitat just North of Barrie (*see P.26*)

A busy year for sure.

And now let's all look forward to what's in store for 2018.

I hope you enjoy this issue of the Blue Heron.

If you would like to contribute an article or share your photos, don't hesitate to contact me.

[clareholden5@gmail.com](mailto:clareholden5@gmail.com)

## Your Board of Directors

### 2017-2018 Club Executive, Directors, Committee Chairs & Representatives

Position	2017/2018	Home	Mobile	email
<u>Executive</u>				
President	Alex Mills	705-739-1094		
Vice-President	Dorothy McKeown	705-735-0767	705-817-9572	dorothy.mckeown@gmail.com
Past President	Chris Evans		705-722-1136	chrisgevens55@gmail.com
Secretary	Jim Coey	705-252-0277	705-543-1866	jamescoey37@gmail.com
Treasurer	Ormie Van Alstyne		705-717-3336	ormiev@hotmail.com
<u>Directors</u>				
Conservation	Al McNair	705-737-3388	705-331-5743	alcappella@rogers.com
Education and Displays	Gwen Petreman	705-722-5377		gwenpetreman@gmail.com
Field Trip Coordinator	Jim Coey	705-252-0277	705-543-1866	jamescoey37@gmail.com
Meetings Program	Cay Mills	705-739-1094		caymills17@gmail.com
Membership	Judy Watson	705-984-4866		
Newsletter Editor	Clare Holden	705-722-6447		clareholden5@gmail.com
Ontario Nature	Chris Evans		705-722-1136	chrisgevens55@gmail.com
<u>Committee &amp; Project Chairs</u>				
Publicity	Paul Forde	705-725-0750		58Forde@gmail.com
Social	Christine Beggs	705-721-6842		christinecarterbeggs@gmail.com
Welcoming	Claude Cox	705-737-2272		c.cox@sympatico.ca
Project SwiftWatch	Phyllis Tremblay	705-737-2580		petremblay@rogers.com
Bluebird Trails	Dorothy McKeown	705-735-0767	705-817-9572	dorothy.mckeown@gmail.com
Christmas Bird Count	Chris Evans		705-722-1136	chrisgevens55@gmail.com
<u>Club Reps &amp; Liaisons</u>				
LSRCA & Barrie Creeks Project	Gwen Petreman	705-722-5377		gwenpetreman@gmail.com
MTM Conservation	David Eales	705-721-8174		eales@sympatico.ca
North Simcoe Rail Trail	Lisa Levez Bordeleau		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 *Jan. 2018 - April 2018*

**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.

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](http://www.bfnclub.org)

### *Jan. 19 Friday 2018 Birds of the Galapagos Islands*

*Location:* North West Barrie United Church (NWBUC)

464 Ferndale Drive North, Barrie

*Time:* 7:00pm.

*Speaker:* Justin Peter (speaker at 7:30pm.)

The Galapagos Islands are often touted as a laboratory of evolution by natural selection, and some of the archipelago's birds are among the best-studied organisms anywhere. In this talk illustrated with photographs from his three expeditions there, Justin will help us get acquainted with some of these birds. We'll see what they look like, how they behave and interact with fellow Galapagos denizens, as well as gain insights into their origins through some of the latest research findings stemming from decades of research.

### *Feb. 16 Friday 2018 Bird Banding In Africa*

*Location:* North West Barrie United Church (NWBUC)

464 Ferndale Drive North, Barrie

*Time:* 7:00pm.

*Speaker:* Courtney Shaw (speaker at 7:30pm.)

Courtney has been attending Brereton events with her parents Nigel and Jackie since she was a little girl. She has evidently inherited her father's interests, and she recently went with him on a bird banding mission in Africa. Courtney will relate her part in this adventure, showing us numerous images of the birds they caught and the things they were able to find out.

### *March 16 Friday 2018 Using bird droppings to evaluate pesticide exposure*

*Location:* North West Barrie United Church (NWBUC)

464 Ferndale Drive North, Barrie

*Time:* 7:00pm.

*Speaker:* Tehmeena Chaudry (speaker is at 7:30pm.)

For most people, bird droppings are little more than a messy nuisance. But there's information in those droppings! Tehmeena Chaudry, a graduate student at York University, studies the most significant pesticide of the modern age, known in brief as "Neonics". These chemicals remain widely used in North America and elsewhere, and there is great concern about the impacts they have on wildlife, despite the claims of the manufacturers. Tehmeena's focus is grassland birds, a group showing severe population declines. Her ultimate goal is to determine whether such contaminants may be a factor in grassland bird declines.

## Coming Events - Meetings (Cont.) Jan. 2018–April 2018

### April 20 Friday 2018 Annual General Meeting and Pot Luck

**Location:** North West Barrie United Church (NWBUC)

464 Ferndale Drive North

**Time:** 6:00 pm. Eat at 6:30pm.

To show pictures, please contact:

Cay Mills at 705-739-1094

or caymills17@gmail.com

For potluck queries, please contact:

Christine Beggs at 705-721-6842

Bring a dish for our “most delicious” Potluck supper & share with your friends. Help provide a table full of interesting delights.

If you are able to contribute an item for our silent auction, it would be most welcome.

The business portion of the meeting will take place after dinner.

Please bring your own plates and cutlery. Don't forget to “Lug-a-Mug”

## Coming Events - Field Trips Jan. 2018–April 2018

**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](http://www.bfnclub.org)

### Jan 6 Saturday 2018 Christmas Bird Count for Kids (CBC4K)

**Location:** Tiffin Centre for Conservation, Utopia

**Time:** 9:00am. to 12:00 pm

**Leader:** Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Reps

**Pre-registration is required.** ([nvca.on.ca](http://nvca.on.ca))

A \$5 fee per person covers parking and hot chocolate.

Children under four are free.

The Christmas Bird Count for Kids is a fun, family-friendly bird-watching event that contributes to scientific bird count data.

Come prepared for the weather and bring binoculars and a field guide if you have them.

Additional binoculars and guides will be available for use at the event.

### Feb.3 Saturday 2018 Minesing Raptors

**Location:** Departs from LLPL

**Time:** 8:30am.

**Leader:** Brian Gibbon 705-721-4599

Take a trip through the flats around Minesing to look for Snowy Owls, Rough-legged Hawks, Northern Shrikes, and other raptors, as well as flocks of Snow Buntings.

*Driving outing usually ends by 1:30 pm. Bring a snack & drink.*

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## Coming Events - Field Trips (Cont.) Jan. 2018 – April 2018

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### March 10 Saturday 2018 *Horned Larks and Pancakes*

*Location:* Departs from LLPL

*Time:* 8:30am.

*Leader:* Brian Gibbon 705-721-4599

*Kitchen:* **Chefs required**

There is a small charge for this event, to cover our costs. Please bring your own dishes & cutlery.

Horned Larks are the first songbirds to return to Simcoe County in spring. We will search the Minesing Flats for them and late winter birds (perhaps a Snowy Owl and Snow Buntings, e.g.). We will then go to Tiffin Conservation Area for pancakes and sausages for lunch.

*Driving and standing. Usually ends by 2-2:30pm.*

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### April 7 Saturday 2018 *Spring Birds in the Minesing Floodlands*

*Location:* Departs from LLPL

*Time:* : **7:45 AT LITTLE LAKE PARK.**  
**8:15 AT MCKINNON ROAD**

*Leader:* Chris Evans 705-722-1136

**THIS IS A COMPLICATED ITINERARY SO PLEASE BE ON TIME AT YOUR CHOSEN MEETING PLACE FOR DETAILED INSTRUCTION.**

The Minesing Wetlands are a great basin into which melted snow flows each spring. Forests are inundated, as are many of the farms located around the perimeter of the swamp. This is a magnet for thousands of migrating waterfowl. Northern Pintail, Tundra Swans, Sandhill Cranes are likely sights, and perhaps a few early songbirds too, such as Tree Swallows.

BRING RUBBER BOOTS, Scopes, Binoculars & dress for the outdoors.

*Driving and standing. Usually ends by 1-2pm.*

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### April 11 Wednesday evening 2018 *American Woodcocks*

*Location:* Departs from LLPL

*Time:* 7:30pm.

*Leader:* Ian Cook 705-727-4004

Displaying American Woodcocks at dawn and dusk are one of the earliest signs of spring in Simcoe County. Join Ian Cook to learn more about their calls and behavior. Bring RUBBER BOOTS, BUG REPELLANT & FLASHLIGHT

*Moderate difficulty walking conditions, ends by 9:30pm.*

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### April 21 Saturday 2018 *North Simcoe Rail Trail Cleanup*

*Location:* Departs from LLPL

*Time:* 10:00am.

Alternatively meet at Minesing Station Park Pavillion on Hwy 26, 400 meters west of Golf Course Rd. at 10:15am.

*Leader:* Lisa Levez Bordeleau 705-329-7059

Celebrate Earth day and the spring migration while cleaning up the rail trail.

Hot dogs will be served at lunch.

Earn high school community service hours.

*Easy walking. Ends by noon.*

## Trip Reports

### Sept 16 Exploring Springwater Provincial Park - Brian Gibbon

We entered the park off Hwy 26 approx. 2 miles from the Hwy 26 & 27 junction.

The weather was bright and sunny with a very light breeze 19C or 68F.

In attendance –were 10 people who joined the walk including two OFO Junior members.

At the Little Lake parking area we saw 3 American Crows, and 4 Blue Jays.

At Springwater Park we saw a House Wren, Blue Jays, Eastern Towhee, Eastern Wood-Pewee, American Goldfinches, Chipping Sparrow, Eastern Phoebe, Pileated Woodpecker, Ruby and Golden-crowned Kinglets, Black-capped Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, American Redstart, Red-breasted Nuthatch, American Robin, Nashville Warbler, Turkey Vulture, Pine Warbler, Coopers Hawk, Common Raven, Broad-winged Hawk and Canada Geese.



*American Redstart by Jim Charlebois*

A total of 23 species. Although the species count was not high there were plenty of birds about. By 10:30 am the bird activity dropped right off and by 11:00 am there was nothing moving.

### Sept. 23 Wilkins Walk / Hewitt's Creek Ravine Trail - Paul Forde

We set out that morning from Walnut Street, onto the pathway that would lead us to the mouth of Hewitt Creek at Lake Simcoe, with about 7 people.

There were a few less birds this year and it was clear that the fall season had not really kicked in yet, at this time of year.

By the first bridge on the trail, we had already seen and heard a few regulars like a Downy Woodpecker, House



Wren, a Cardinal, a Blue Jay, a Nuthatch and of course the ubiquitous Chickadees. Most of our sightings and sounds were found on the other side of Big Bay Point Road and towards the lake area. They included Killdeer, Kingfisher, Phoebe, Pileated Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, American Goldfinch, Robins and Crows. There were at least 2 Monarch Butterflies along our route and I saw a mink run across the trail behind us but no one else saw it.

Getting into the area around the mouth of the creek, there were many gulls floating on the breeze, in the air and on the water. 8 Ringbills, 3 Herring Gulls, 21 Bonaparte Gulls and were visible as well as many Canada Geese and Mallards on the water.

We had some new people on the trail with us, this year, which helped to make it special, as they had not really been aware of this trail at all on the south side of Kempenfelt Bay.

This really is one of Barrie's truly charming nature walks.

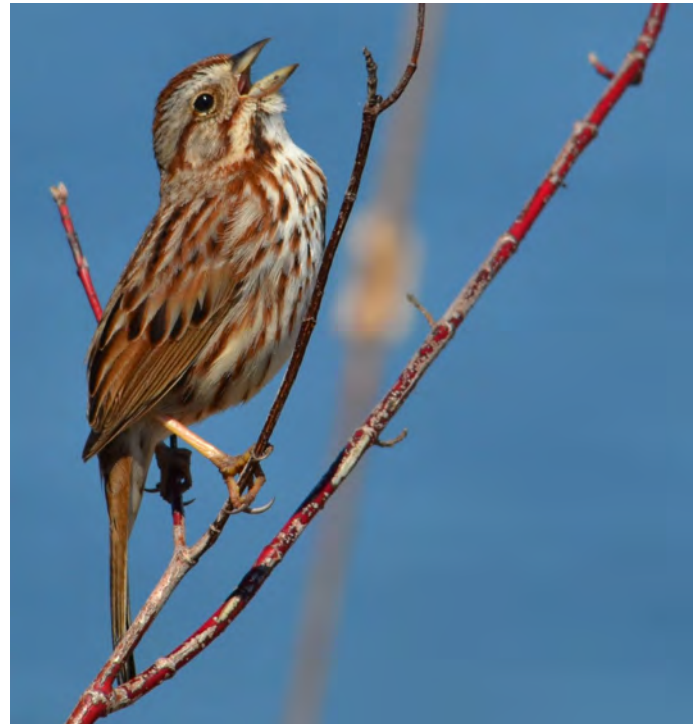
**Oct. 1 North Simcoe Rail Trail - Brian & Lynne Gibbon**

We entered the trail off Hwy 26 where the Trail crosses the highway at the kiosk. 6 people enjoyed the walk. The weather was bright and sunny with no wind, at 7:00 am it was 4C warming up to 16C by noon hour. A fairly heavy frost, the first of the year, was on the ground and roof at 7:00 am.

At Little Lake parking lot we saw a Great Blue Heron and American Crows, despite a heavy fog on Little Lake.

On the Rail trail, there were not many birds at first until it started to warm up then we had Canada Geese, another Great Blue Heron, Hairy Woodpecker, Song Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Pileated Woodpecker, Black-capped Chickadee, Downy Woodpecker, Rusty Blackbirds (6-8), Turkey Vulture, Night Heron and Am. Goldfinches.

Total of 13 species was not bad this late in the season and with it being so cool, birds did not start to really show themselves until around 10:00 am.,



*Song Sparrow photo credit to Jim Charlebois*

**Oct. 14 Birding Simcoe shores / OFO Kempenfelt Bay - Jim Coey**

Around 32 people joined this walk, about evenly split between OFO and our Brereton (Barrie) Field Naturalist members.

The walk started at the end of Dock Rd., on west side of Kempenfelt Bay, Lake Simcoe and by the end of the outing we had worked our way around to the east side of the Bay.

The weather at 9:00 am. was 12C, heavily overcast, threatening rain with a light wind. By 11:00 am. it was clearing and the sun was breaking through.

Kempenfelt Bay on Lake Simcoe is a major loon staging area and is worth a visit. With many Red-necked Grebes, Bonaparte's and Little Gulls and later in the fall ducks and the larger gulls, it is a local hotspot.

**Birds:** White-throated Sparrows, Black-capped Chickadees, Ring-billed Gulls, Canada Geese, Mallards, 2 Black Ducks, and one Redhead, 300+ Double-crested Cormorants, European Starlings, American Robin, Mourning Doves, House Sparrow, 100+ Common Loons, 1 Cooper's Hawk, 1 Downy Woodpecker, 20+ Red-necked Grebes, Common Merganser, 5+ Little Gull, 300+ Bonaparte's Gull, 1 Common Raven and 5 American Crows. 1 Pacific Loon.



*Photo credits to Jim Coey & Paul Forde (Gull)*





## Nov. 18 Lake Simcoe Migrants - Chris Evans

The meeting location was at Dock Road Park at 9am. In attendance: Paul Forde, Susan Murtha, Richard Pick, Donna Miller, Darcy Murray, Alex Mills, Phyllis Tremblay, Christine Beggs, Chris Evans (Leader). The weather was overcast, 3-5 degrees, with slight drizzle and dim light.

At Tyndale Park, 9:40 to 10:15, the second stop on our Barrie Waterfront field trip. There were 8 people. The weather was overcast.

At Minet's Point Park, 10:26 to 11:00 Our third stop, 9 people comprised of Brereton Field Naturalists' Club (BFNC) members and Burke Korol. The weather was still overcast but reasonably bright, with one nice sunny break.

At the Rotary Fish Habitat, 11:10 to 11:30 our fourth stop, there were 6 people. Now the weather was still overcast but reasonably bright.

Centennial Beach, 11:36 to 11:50 & the City of Barrie Marina & Spirit Catcher, 11:55 to 12:18, were our fifth sixth stops with 5 people present. The weather conditions were similar.

Kempfenfelt Park, 12:30 to 12:45 was the seventh and final stop.

Earlier forecasts for lots of rain evaporated and we had very comfortable weather for our tour. Early in the evening, the Santa Claus parade was not so fortunate. Ruthie got soaked on the Barrie Concert band float. It appeared that the calm weather had also encouraged the birds to spread out. This made for excellent opportunities to study and discuss the natural history and biology of several species. For example, at Tyndale Park, while there weren't large numbers of any particular waterfowl, there was a nice close-in grouping of all three merganser species along with some Buffleheads, Common Goldeneyes and Red-necked Grebes. While there weren't any male Red-breasted Mergansers or female Hooded Mergansers, it was excellent to be able to observe and compare the others directly.

Centennial Beach had a large group of Ring-billed Gulls, 5 Herring Gulls and a 1st winter Bonaparte's Gull. Again we could make close observations and discuss and compare species. While we didn't observe any Little Gulls, we were able to spend some time with the field guide looking at the field marks of the Little Gull in comparison to the Bonaparte's Gull we were observing. Overall, a very enjoyable outing.

Here is our checklist of species:

### Birds:

Canada Goose x30, American Black Duck x2, Mallard x49, Long-tailed Duck x5, Bufflehead x35  
Common Goldeneye x231, Hooded Merganser x29  
Common Merganser x44, Red-breasted Merganser x6  
Common Loon x103, Pied-billed Grebe x1  
Horned Grebe x2, Red-necked Grebe x239  
Double-crested Cormorant x6, Bonaparte's Gull x7  
Ring-billed Gull x195, Herring Gull x65  
Great Black-backed Gull x4, Rock Pigeon x36  
Mourning Dove x3, Belted Kingfisher x1 (heard only)  
Downy Woodpecker x4, Northern Flicker x1  
American Crow x1, Black-capped Chickadee x28  
White-breasted Nuthatch x2, European Starling x8  
Golden-crowned Kinglet x1, Song Sparrow x2  
Northern Cardinal x2, American Goldfinch x2  
House Sparrow x2

### Mammals:

American Mink x1, Eastern Gray Squirrel x1  
Red Squirrel x1

### Insects:

Gnat sp. x12



*photo credit to Chris Evans*

Dec.9 Barrie Lakeshore - Jim Coey



About 35 hardy souls braved the cold to explore the Kempenfelt Bay shores in Barrie to see what bird life would present itself. The temperature hovered around -2 to 0 and it was quite bitter in exposed locations. A light snow started about mid-morning eventually becoming heavy enough to reduce visibility considerably and the walk ended around 12.30pm.

Many thanks to all for coming out and for everyone's help. Highlights included a White-winged Scoter, a late American Coot, a Pacific Loon, a Glaucous Gull and Iceland Gull. There were large numbers of Red-necked Grebes and many rafts of Common Mergansers. This must be a major staging area for this species. Does anyone have any information regarding this?

There were two active mink along the shore line and 1 Black Squirrel.

Thanks to Chris Evans, Kevin Shackleton, John Watson and Paul Forde for data, pictures and support.

**BIRD LIST:**

- Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*) 300 estimate only as birds were very active
- Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*) 50 estimate as birds were very active
- American Black Duck (*Anas rubripes*) 2
- Greater/Lesser Scaup (*Aythya marila/affinis*) 1 one single male individual
- White-winged Scoter (*Melanitta fusca*) 1
- Long-tailed Duck (*Clangula hyemalis*) 1
- Bufflehead (*Bucephala albeola*) 20 There were a number of small flocks and individuals around the bay
- Hooded Merganser (*Lophodytes cucullatus*) 30 There were a number of small flocks in several locations
- Common Merganser (*Mergus merganser*) 300 Many birds and very active
- Red-breasted Merganser (*Mergus serrator*) 1
- Arctic/Pacific Loon (*Gavia arctica/pacifica*) 1 This bird has been reported in this location since early November.
- Common Loon (*Gavia immer*) 1
- Red-necked Grebe (*Podiceps grisegena*) 70
- Ring-billed Gull (*Larus delawarensis*) 40
- Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*) 20
- Iceland Gull (*Larus glaucoides*) 1
- Glaucous Gull (*Larus hyperboreus*) 1
- Great Black-backed Gull (*Larus marinus*) 17
- Mourning Dove (*Zenaida macroura*) 22
- Downy Woodpecker (*Picoides pubescens*) 1
- Blue Jay (*Cyanocitta cristata*) 1
- American Crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*) 3
- Black-capped Chickadee (*Poecile atricapillus*) 5
- Brown Creeper (*Certhia americana*) 1
- European Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) 5
- Song Sparrow (*Melospiza melodia*) 1
- American Goldfinch (*Spinus tristis*) 1



Photos credit to Paul Forde

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**Thank you from the Ontario Nature Youth Summit**

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On September 22-24, 2017, environmental leaders throughout the province came together at YMCA Geneva Park in Orillia for Ontario Nature's eighth annual summit. The event, partnered with the Youth Council, allowed 98 youth from 50 communities to participate in a number of workshops including:

Pollinators and youth action, Amphibian surveys, Discovering nature, Power to affect change, Protected areas and making youth voices count, Building bee boxes, Medicinal plants of Ontario, Strengthening Ontario's environmental laws, Freshwater life, Climate change campaigning, Birds of prey, Nature photography, Leadership insights and Exploring the link between humans and the wild.

Other memorable moments included morning activities like canoeing, bird watching and a swim in Lake Couchiching and an evening campfire with stories and songs to bring everyone together. The Great Group Challenge had teams facing off in fun challenges and participants met with other leaders in their areas in the Regional Networking Forum. Kale Black, keynote speaker from Burlington Green, inspired youth to be the change and consider their actions and how they would impact their environment.

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A condensed thank you from Ontario Nature's Youth Council representative, Silvia Chong.

Dear Brereton Field Naturalists,  
Thank you for your support of Ontario Nature's 2017 Youth Summit for diversity and environmental leadership. By sponsoring one or more students, to attend, you gave young people across the province the opportunity to participate in an extraordinary event where we learnt how we can contribute to the conservation movement in our communities and on a provincial level.

And a big Thank you from our sponsored students:

To: Brereton Field Naturalists

My name is Leanne Godlington. I am a student at Innisdale High School, grade 12, from Barrie Ontario and I would like to thank you again for the amazing opportunity to participate in this year's Ontario Nature Youth Summit. I have been very interested in the environment and environmental issues for the last 2 years and have enjoyed the knowledge and expertise the summit offers on such issues. I love the summit because it

makes me feel more hopeful about the future by being around so many amazing people that care about the future of our planet. At this year's at the Youth Summit I attend a workshop on conservation areas where I learned about the project to get 17% of Ontario to be conservation areas by the year 2020 Ontario Nature is working on. I attended a photography workshop where I learn to appreciate nature by capturing beautiful pictures. I learned more about the bee issues and what is being done to save them. And lastly, I wrapped up the summit by learning about leadership and how to apply the leadership qualities learned to environmental activism within my community. I also enjoyed listening to stories around the campfire and being victorious in the Great Group Challenge. The knowledge and understanding I take away from this year's and last year's events has really affects my future career aspirations. Ontario Youth Summit is such an amazing experience and it is because of sponsors like Brereton Field Naturalists that so many people are able to go.

Sincerely,  
**Leanne Godlington**

## Thank you from the Ontario Nature Youth Summit (cont.)

Dear Brereton Field Naturalists,  
I am so grateful that you sponsored me to go to the Ontario Nature youth summit once again! This year, I was very lucky to attend with my best friend Natasha, as she too was sponsored to go through her local nature club. I honestly feel every single workshop gave me knowledge and tools to advocate for nature in my own community. I really enjoyed spending the weekend with my best friend learning about nature and meeting other like-minded youth. This weekend impacted my life once again, and I left feeling empowered and refreshed, all thanks to your generosity.

Again, Thank you so much!

**Hannah Stockford.**



Dear Brereton Field Naturalists' Club,  
Thank you for sponsoring me to attend the 2017 Ontario Nature Youth Summit! I learned so many new things, and met people who have impacted my thoughts on some important issues in the world today. I attended workshops throughout the weekend that were extremely interesting, such as one titled Children in the Woods. It was lead by Skid Crease, who was extremely passionate about the environment, and education surrounding nature. We hiked on the trails through Geneva Park, and looked for various animals and plants. Another workshop that I participated in was learning how to build a bee box. This encourages the bee population, which in turn helps plants that need pollinating. Throughout the weekend I connected with members of the Youth Council, which was really inspiring as they are all around my age and doing some really great things in their schools and communities. Along with the workshops, we had the option of birding or canoeing in the morning. I opted for canoeing, which was gorgeous, as Lake Couchiching was calm and it was not too cold. It allowed us to get to know the area better, as well as finding freshwater life closer to shore. Overall it was a fantastic weekend of meeting new, interesting people and learning about the environment that we live in. Thank you so much for enabling me to have this amazing experience.

Sincerely,

**Maren Campbell**

## Monitoring Reports

### Dec. 16 2017 Christmas Bird Count

This year's Christmas Bird Count (CBC), in the Barrie area turned out to be a lovely day, cold, sunny and lots of fluffy snow, in which to walk.

Overall individual numbers were down from last year with a tally 10,460 birds. This was a reduction in numbers of 5,023. It was certainly an unusual year with low numbers overall, yet an all-time diversity high of 76 species.

More volunteers, than in previous years, allowed for better coverage with more Owls reported and some interesting finds like a Wilson's Snipe.

Lots of people attended the pot luck and the food was assessed as the best ever!



# Monitoring Reports

## 2017 Christmas Bird Count Data

SPECIES	TEAM NUMBER									All Team	Previous Year		
	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	#9	Count	Count	Change	
<b>DUCKS, GEESE &amp; SWANS</b>													
Snow Goose													
Brant													
Cackling Goose										CW			
Canada Goose	216		84		1			52	289	642	2042	-1400	
Canada Goose (small races)													
Trumpeter Swan								3		3	17	-14	
Tundra Swan													
Wood Duck											1	-1	
Gadwall													
American Wigeon	1										1	1	
American Black Duck			41					31	10	82	70	12	
Mallard	430	3	505					715	218	1871	1806	65	
Black Duck/Mallard			1						1	2	9	-7	
Blue-winged Teal													
Northern Shoveler													
Northern Pintail													
Green-winged Teal			3							3		3	
domestic duck sp.													
Canvasback													
Redhead									1	1		1	
Ring-necked Duck			1					(1)		1		1	
Greater Scaup								12		12	1	11	
Lesser Scaup													
Scaup species											1	-1	
Common Eider													
Harlequin Duck													
Surf Scoter											1	-1	
White-winged Scoter										1	1	1	
Black Scoter													
Scoter species													
Long-tailed Duck			7					5	5	17		17	
Bufflehead								10	8	18	19	-1	
Common Goldeneye	34		5					88	145	272	241	31	
Hooded Merganser	8		10					20	8	46	126	-80	
Common Merganser	366		470		1			30	68	935	2257	-1322	
Red-breasted Merganser			1					1		2	3	-1	

# Monitoring Reports

## Christmas Bird Count (cont.)

SPECIES	TEAM NUMBER									All Team Count	Previous Year	
	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	#9		Count	Change
Ruddy Duck duck sp.	4									4	6	-2
<b>GROUSE &amp; TURKEYS</b>												
Ring-necked Pheasant												
Ruffed Grouse		1				1				2	2	
Spruce Grouse												
Wild Turkey			5	5	35	8	101	65	2	221	198	23
<b>LOONS</b>												
Red-throated Loon												
Common Loon			5							5	3	2
<b>GREBES</b>												
Pied-billed Grebe									1	1		1
Horned Grebe	CW									CW		
Red-necked Grebe								3		3	30	-27
grebe sp.	1									1		1
<b>CORMORANTS</b>												
Double-cres. Cormorant	2		1							3	8	-5
<b>HERONS &amp; BITTERNS</b>												
Great Blue Heron			1							1		1
<b>VULTURES</b>												
Black Vulture												
Turkey Vulture												
<b>HAWKS &amp; EAGLES</b>												
Golden Eagle												
Northern Harrier												
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1				1					2	6	-4
Cooper's Hawk		CW	1		1	1	1	1	1	6	11	-5
Northern Goshawk												
Accipiter sp.					1					1	1	
Bald Eagle			1	1	2			1	4	9	3	6
Red-shouldered Hawk								1		1		1
Broad winged Hawk												
Red-tailed Hawk		1	4			2	2	4	2	15	28	-13
Rough-legged Hawk							1		1	2	5	-3
Bueto sp.											1	-1
hawk sp.												

# Monitoring Reports

## 2017 Christmas Bird Count (cont.)

SPECIES	TEAM NUMBER									All Team Count	Previous Year	
	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	#9		Count	Change
American Kestrel												
Merlin												
Gyr Falcon												
Peregrine Falcon												
falcon sp.												
<b>RAILS &amp; COOTS</b>												
Virginia Rail												
American Coot								2		2	4	-2
<b>PLOVERS</b>												
Killdeer												
<b>SANDPIPERS</b>												
Wilson's/Common Snipe								1		1		1
<b>GULLS &amp; TERNS</b>												
Little Gull												
Bonaparte's Gull												
Ring-billed Gull			30			1	3			34	134	-100
Herring Gull	50	14	242			4		5	24	339	342	-3
Thayer's Gull												
Iceland Gull			2					2	1	5	1	4
Lesser Black-backed Gull			1							1		1
Glaucous Gull			4			1		5		10	7	3
white-winged gull sp.												
Great Black-backed Gull	6		34		1			10	1	52	41	11
gull sp.		11	1					40		52	134	-82
<b>PIGEONS &amp; DOVES</b>												
Rock Pigeon	57	133	145		13	12	8	28	40	436	454	-18
Mourning Dove	12	123	23	13	82	81	138	130	95	697	877	-180
<b>OWLS</b>												
Barn Owl												
Eastern Screech-Owl						3		1		4	1	3
Great Horned Owl											2	-2
Snowy Owl								CW				
Barred Owl							1		1	2		2
Great Gray Owl												
Long-eared Owl												
Short-eared Owl												
Northern Saw-whet Owl												

# Monitoring Reports

## 2017 Christmas Bird Count (cont.)

SPECIES	TEAM NUMBER									All Team Count	Previous Year		
	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	#9		Count	Count	Change
owl sp.													
<b>KINGFISHERS</b>													
Belted Kingfisher						1				1	3	-2	
kingfisher sp.													
<b>WOODPECKERS</b>													
Red-headed Woodpecker													
Red-bellied Woodpecker		1	CW	2	5	2	2	1	5	18	12	6	
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker													
Downy Woodpecker	6	17	6	4	1	31	10	14	20	109	70	39	
Hairy Woodpecker		8	2	3	6	7	5	4	1	36	39	-3	
Three-toed Woodpecker													
Black-backed Woodpecker													
Northern Flicker													
Northern (Yellow-shafted) Flicker									1	1		1	
Pileated Woodpecker	1	1	1			5	1	1	1	11	18	-7	
woodpecker sp.							2	1		3	3		
<b>SHRIKES</b>													
Loggerhead Shrike													
Northern Shrike			1					1		2	2		
Shrike sp.													
<b>CROWS &amp; JAYS</b>													
Gray Jay													
Blue Jay	5	19	10	20	27	18	78	16	4	197	221	-24	
American Crow	12	20	32		2	14	13	17	18	128	335	-207	
Common Raven		2	3	3	5	1	3	1	4	22	15	7	
<b>LARKS</b>													
Horned Lark											CW		
<b>CHICKADEES</b>													
Black-capped Chickadee	35	99	31	56	63	138	115	75	128	740	1011	-127	
Boreal Chickadee													
<b>NUTHATCHES &amp; CREEPERS</b>													
Red-breasted Nuthatch		2	3	8	6	1	1	2	7	30	41	-11	
White-breasted Nuthatch	5	10	4	3	1	14	8	4	19	68	132	-64	
Nuthatch species													
Brown Creeper		CW	3	2		1		2		8	3	5	
<b>WRENS</b>													
Carolina Wren													



# Monitoring Reports

## 2017 Christmas Bird Count (cont.)

SPECIES	TEAM NUMBER									All Team Count	Previous Year	
	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	#9		Count	Change
Winter Wren											1	-1
<b>KINGLETS</b>												
Golden-crowned Kinglet			2	4	1	12		2	1	22	1	21
Ruby-crowned Kinglet												
<b>THRUSHES &amp; STARLINGS</b>												
Eastern Bluebird						7				7	6	1
Hermit Thrush									1	1		1
American Robin	1		1			4			2	8	55	-47
Gray Catbird						1				1		1
<b>THRASHERS</b>												
Brown Thrasher												
<b>STARLINGS AND MYNAS</b>												
European Starling	21	279	763	5	3	23	12	158	148	1412	2764	-1352
<b>WAXWINGS</b>												
Bohemian Waxwing											3	-3
Cedar Waxwing	200					13	71			284	54	230
waxwing sp.												
<b>WARBLERS &amp; TOWHEE</b>												
Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) Warbler												
Eastern Towhee												
<b>SPARROWS</b>												
American Tree Sparrow		18	24	8	36	49	11	4	2	152	191	-39
Chipping Sparrow								1		1		1
Field Sparrow												
Le Conte's Sparrow												
Song Sparrow		CW	8			3				11	1	10
Lincoln's Sparrow												
Swamp Sparrow						2				2		2
White-throated Sparrow		2	2					1		5	4	1
White-crowned Sparrow											CW	
sparrow sp.												
Dark-eyed Junco												
Dark-eyed (Oregon) Junco												
Dark-eyed (Slate col) Junco	17	76	24	45	18	63	59	35	33	370	459	-89
Lapland Longspur												
Snow Bunting		50	200			5	75	8		338	415	-77

# Monitoring Reports

## 2017 Christmas Bird Count (cont.)

SPECIES	TEAM NUMBER									All Team	Previous Year	
	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	#9	Count	Count	Change
Northern Cardinal		11	4	3	3	14	4	6	18	63	79	-16
Rose-breasted Grosbeak												
<b>BLACKBIRDS AND ORIOLES</b>												
Red-winged Blackbird					1	1				2	1	1
Eastern Meadowlark												
meadowlark sp.												
Rusty Blackbird												
Common Grackle											1	-1
Brown-headed Cowbird												
blackbird sp.												
Baltimore Oriole												
<b>FINCHES</b>												
Pine Grosbeak											2	-2
Purple Finch												
House Finch	3	9				6		8		26	38	-12
Red Crossbill												
White-winged Crossbill			2							2		2
Crossbill species												
Common Redpoll												
Hoary Redpoll												
redpoll sp.												
Pine Siskin						6			2	8		8
American Goldfinch	29	43	14	6	6	108	16	38	47	307	465	-158
Evening Grosbeak												
finch sp.							23			23	3	20
<b>IMPORTS</b>												
House Sparrow	2	60	20		13	9	15	89	3	211	142	69

The above data is correct at the time of publication with a total # of 76 species and a total individual bird count of 10,460. Numbers were down by 5,023 from last years count.

There is still a little confusion as to exact numbers of the species listed below due to area overlap: Bald Eagle, Long-tailed Duck, Northern Shrike, Iceland Gull & Glaucous Gull. For more detailed info. on these species numbers please call Chris Evans.

*The Bluebird Report - Dorothy McKeown*

It is amazing to me how much has been achieved by the Blue Bird Nest Box trails in just 8 years since Brereton took on this project.

Eastern Blue Birds were rare in Ontario, as late as 1996 after several severe winters. Probably, largely due to the work of the Ontario Eastern Bluebird Society, they have rebounded and are no longer listed on a COSEWIC report.

Tree Swallows, also, are no longer listed as birds of concern. They also profited from the nest box trails of the Bluebird Society. Their numbers had declined 49% between 1966 and 2014, according to the North American Breeding Bird Survey, due to the use of insecticides, and a lack of nesting cavities.

In 2010 Brereton had just a dozen or more boxes just East of Tangle Creek Golf Course, just off Side Rd 25/ MapleView Drive.

In 2010 there were 3 Bluebird nests, and 13 fledged young birds, and 9 Tree Swallow nests and 38 fledged birds.

By 2017 we have increased the number of nest boxes to 84, with 3 more trails, Oro Ski Trails Road, old 2nd Line, and Barrie Hill Farms.

In 2017 we had 19 Blue Bird nests, with 68 fledged young birds, and 36 Tree Swallow nests with 169 fledged birds.

So we went from successfully helping 51 young to 237 young birds, in just 8 years! That's almost 5 times as many. Isn't that amazing! It goes to show that our work can make a difference!



*Tree Swallow photo by John Wright*

Of course, I got to build on the success of those before me. Thanks to Phyllis Tremblay and other presidents for

encouraging the project over the years. And of course, thanks to Rob Cook and Pat Duncan who headed the project, until they moved to Coldwater last year.

Thanks to our volunteers who drive many kilometers, one to three times a week to monitor the birds. The nest boxes are outside of the city, on farmers private properties.

Nest Box monitors also have to clean out the boxes, make paper nest box liners and deal with meal worms to feed the parents and chicks, to give them a better chance of survival.

This year we had Clare Holden and Lane Henderson who covered 14 nest boxes near Barrie Hill Farms and also kept the meal worms for us in an outdoor fridge.

Jean Wilson covered the other Barrie Hill Farms nest boxes.

Kyle Regeling covered the Tangle Creek nest boxes, even though he was working near Creemore.

Robin Craig covered the old Second Line boxes and also added 4 more to private properties.

He was so successful, by the time he had returned to his truck, after installing the nest boxes, there were male bluebirds checking them out.

Don Scanlon and his grandkids covered 10 boxes on Oro Ski Trails Road.

I covered the rest of Oro Ski Trails Road. Ironically, I was the only one who did NOT have any Bluebird nests this year.

Several people have told me about areas they have seen Bluebirds, and want to put up boxes.

And in the case of Tiny Marsh I noticed Bluebirds near there, when I helped at their annual bio Blitz.

So my next report will be about expanding our nest box areas, though I will act more in a supportive role, since the areas are too far outside Barrie.



*Bluebird photo by Jean Wilson*

## Ontario Swiftwatch report – Bird Studies Canada (BSC)

Chimney Swifts have officially moved on to warmer weather down south! The last Chimney Swift eBird sighting in Ontario was a straggler reported in Whitby, Ontario, on October 25.

The last known active roost was in London, ON, and was monitored nightly by London SwiftWatch Volunteers! This roost emptied out by October 11. (Note: there were likely other active roosts in southern Ontario during October that were not monitored).

A whopping 85 chimneys were surveyed during at least one night of spring roost monitoring this year! Thanks to everyone who made this possible. These data are used to track swift numbers year-to-year in Ontario, and are shared with Canadian Wildlife Service to help track the size and health of the Canadian population.

Overall, participants tallied almost 26,000 individual swift observations across the 6 nights of monitoring. Of course, the same swifts might have been counted during repeated nights.

Mark Your Calendar! If you like to plan things early, be sure to mark your calendar with the 2018 spring roost count dates:

**May 17, May 23, May 27, May 31, June 4**



*Data Logger retrieval  
Photo credit to Ruth  
Noland-Flores*

## Nature Notes

### Oct 28 Tree Planting at Willoughby Park – Gwen Petreman

In spite of the continuous drizzle on Saturday, October 28th, we managed to have a successful tree planting.

About 20 dripping wet but enthusiastic volunteers including yours truly, successfully planted about 200 potted native saplings including Silver Maples, Cedars and Sumacs. We also hammered in 200 live Willow and Dogwood cuttings at the edge of the small expanse of wetland at Willoughby Park, at Firman and Little, here in Barrie.

This park used to contain a baseball diamond and a manicured lawn area.

As the neighbourhood expanded with more and more houses, the rainwater started draining into the parkland creating a swamp.

As the lawn area became too soggy for hiking and other activities, the city decided to turn it into a woodland.

So on Saturday we made a great beginning in creating a forest that will provide food, protection and shelter for wildlife, including our feathered friends, in years to come.

As well, planting trees are the easiest, least expensive and most effective way to mitigate the devastating effects of climate change, which is the first global crisis ever to affect all of us.

Partnering on this event were our Brereton Field Naturalists, Barrie Chiropractic, and the City of Barrie.

Thank you very much for your participation! If you haven't already, please join the LSRA mailinglist and be the first to find out about upcoming tree planting events.

*Photo credit to Andrea Gynan*



## Pacific loon draws Simcoe County birders to Barrie shoreline



This interesting article & photo was shared by members attending our October meeting and is reproduced here for your enjoyment, with kind permission from **Janis Ramsay**, a reporter with the **Innisfil Journal**.

Armed with her binoculars, Gilford's Linda Crome avidly watches Lake Simcoe for a rare sighting of the Pacific loon. "I've counted up to six coming through here. Most birders don't get to see them," Crome said. "The species spends their winters on the Pacific and the rest of the time they are all over Canada."

Canadians love their loons, she added. Raised in England, Crome has been a bird watcher since she was a child and gets excited on the hunt for exotic species.

As a member of the Brereton Field Naturalists, she gets out about four hours a week, but spies the skies when making social visits too.

The key to birding is dressing for the weather and being respectful of private property.

Crome's vision isn't what it was a decade ago, but technology has brought the hobby a long way, with telescopes to see better, digital photography to capture species and cellphone apps to identify birds.

"In the beginning, I probably only got 12 to 15 emails a week about bird sightings. Now, I get over 30 a day," Crome said. "There's more of a community now."

Once, she learned a scissortail flycatcher was spotted in Luther Marsh. A local group decided to make the drive. "We turned the corner and there were 30 cars (already) there. I got out and asked if anyone had seen him." Crome noted the hobby is growing and to her point, three other birders came looking for the Pacific loon on Lake Simcoe within an hour.

"This is probably the best place in southern Ontario to see the (Pacific) loon," Long Point resident Adam Timpf said. "In recent years, it's become known they are pretty regular here in the fall."

Unlike the Pacific loon, area bird watchers are concerned some species are dwindling. Chimney swifts and barn swallows are two examples.

"I kayak in quiet spots and when I go under bridges, I used to see dozens (of barn swallows). This past year, I saw only a few," Crome said. "It's due to neonicotinoids. We're unfortunately in an area where there's a lot of farming and birds eat the insects."

## Ontario Nature updates

### Neonicotinoid Court Action to Proceed

In an unexpectedly quick decision, Federal Court Case Management Judge Mandy Aylen has ruled that the ON Nature court action to protect pollinators from neonicotinoid pesticides should proceed. This July, a hearing was held to determine if the court action that ON Nature, Wilderness Committee, David Suzuki Foundation and Friends of the Earth Canada had brought against the Pest Management Regulatory Agency for its continued registrations of 2 neonicotinoids should be heard by the courts. They are pleased with the outcome of that hearing, and will keep you informed on how the action proceeds.

### Wetland Conservation Strategy

Good news! With its new Wetland Conservation Strategy for Ontario, the Province has confirmed that provin-



cially significant wetlands and Great Lakes coastal wetlands will continue to be off limits to development. Current policy protections will be upheld as the government develops a new wetland offsetting policy. Though ON Nature is disappointed with some aspects of the final strategy, it is an improvement over the draft version. Thank you to all who raised your voice for wetlands. It really does matter.

## A visit from a Giant Swallowtail—Christine Beggs



*Photo Credit to Rick Cavasin*

When we had the very warm summer (in 2012, I believe), I had Giant Swallowtail butterfly and larvae on my Rue plant. When I looked it up at that time it seemed the most northerly report previously was at the Oak Ridges Moraine. Its range is generally reported to be southern Ontario and South. It also feeds on citrus trees.

This year, on Sat Oct 21, I found 2 caterpillars on my Rue plant in my garden. They were very sluggish, so I brought them in and fed them Rue. One was quiet for about 5 days before it started to eat. They have both at least doubled their size and this photo is of the first to



become a chrysalis - today, November 2. The second one has lost its extra water and will likely attach itself to the branch and form its chrysalis after 3 or so days.

This butterfly is the largest in North America. It will pupate over the winter and emerge in the spring. Previously, using the info from the internet, I kept the pupa in the garage to protect it from the coldest weather and it emerged just fine the following spring.

*Photo & article provided by Christine Beggs*

## Save the Ontario Tree Seed Plant - Kate Harries

The MNRF at its plant in Angus, performs a vital task in its forest seed collection (skilled), processing (delicate) and storage (carefully monitored). It ensures that seed provenance is tracked so that trees planted in one of the province's 34 zones are grown from seed collected from that zone. This key genetic link to local conditions gives trees the best chance for health and survival.

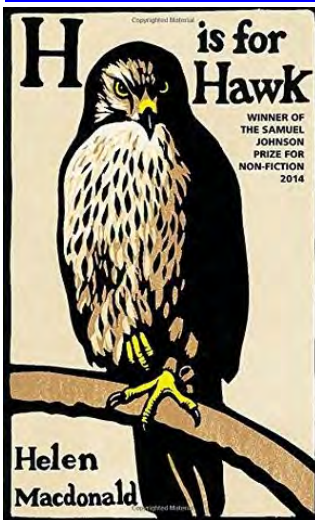
The province says the facility costs too much - \$500,000 - \$1 million a year. The experts say that's a small price to pay for a vital public service. The province's plan is to privatize the tree seed plant's function, to whatever businesses might want to take it on. This raises fears of cost-cutting and lack of monitoring. Ignoring Ontario seed zones in planting will make for much less healthy forests; even worse would be if the forests are planted

or replanted with seedlings grown from seed imported from outside Canada.

MNRF Minister Kathryn McGarry announced August 23 that the Ontario Tree Seed Plant in Angus was closing in a year. This was a bolt out of the blue and a total shock to the organizations and businesses that work to preserve and increase the number of trees on our landscape. There had been zero consultation. This is an industry that plans on a multi-year cycle, not one year ahead.

A petition -- <https://www.change.org/p/kathleen-wynne-save-the-ontario-tree-seed-facility> -- started by AWARE Essa and the Friends of the Utopia Mill feel she has no idea of the implications of the closing. Please help! Sign and share with your networks.

## Book Review - H is for Hawk by Helen Macdonald



Helen Macdonald, *H is for Hawk*. New York: Grove Press, 2014.

This book follows the academic Macdonald's grief over her father's death while unfolding her intense relationship with a goshawk. Along the way she interacts with the novelist T. H. White's experience with a goshawk, as presented in *The Goshawk* (1951).

*I wanted to read this book and did so a few months ago — saw it in the library of a cruise ship! One learns from it a whole lot about these raptor birds, the complexity of dealing with and taking care of one and one person's journey through the loss of a beloved parent. Recommended.* - submitted by Claude Cox

Heart-wrenching and humorous, this book is an unflinching account of bereavement and a unique look at the magnetism of an extraordinary beast, with a parallel examination of a legendary writer's eccentric falconry. Obsession, madness, memory, myth, and history combine to achieve a distinctive blend of nature writing and memoir from an outstanding literary innovator. — *Goodreads*

## Curious Critters - The Goldenrod Crab Spider

*Misumena vatia* is a species of crab spider.

In North America, where it is the largest and best known flower spider, it is called the **Goldenrod Crab Spider**, because it is commonly found hunting in Goldenrod sprays in the autumn.



Young males in the early summer may be quite small and easily overlooked, but females can grow up to 10 mm (excluding legs). These spiders may be yellow or white, depending on the flower on which they are hunting. Younger females, may hunt on a variety of flowers such as daisies and sunflowers and may change color at will. In North America they are most commonly found on Goldenrod, a bright yellow flower which attracts large numbers of insects, especially in autumn. These spiders change color by secreting a liquid yellow pigment into the outer cell layer of the body. On a

white base, this pigment is transported into lower layers, so that inner glands, filled with white guanine, become visible. The color similarity between the spider and the flower is well matched with a white flower. If the spider dwells longer on a white plant, the yellow pigment is often excreted. This takes about six days. However, it will take the spider much longer to change to yellow, between 10 and 25 days, because it will have to produce the yellow pigment first. The color change is induced by visual feedback. Spiders with painted eyes were found to have lost this ability.



## Nature Notes

### Proposed Baseball diamond on the waterfront - Al McNair

On October 12 Our Conservation chair, Al McNair, wrote to the city Mayor Lehman and Members of Council, on our behalf, the following letter.

*Our Waterfront parkland is often called Barrie's jewel. It needs to be looked after and protected for all the people, not built over for a stadium and paved over for parking to service it or to charge us admission to enter our own parkland.*

*Our City's population is targeted to grow from just over 141,000 (2016 census) to 253,000 by 2041. That means more than 110,000 additional residents in less than 25 years!*

*Just to be able to stroll or cycle through our waterfront parkland, to absorb the restorative peace and calm of the open green and wooded natural areas and the views and vistas of Kempenfelt Bay, is a major reason why people want to live in Barrie. Even the drive-by vista from Lakeshore Drive eases our minds and makes us want to get out and walk nearer to the water's edge.*

*Our public waterfront green space will be sorely needed to maintain and enhance our individual and collective mental health as Barrie absorbs all these newcomers in the coming years. We are so fortunate that past Barrie City Councils purchased this waterfront over time and have preserved it as open green space. And remember the uproar that was created when the last Council briefly considered selling off a portion of Bayview Park (now Sam Cancilla Park) to assist a proposed waterfront condo project!*

*Nothing should be developed on our waterfront parkland which would fence off any part of this precious and scarce resource from free and open use by the citizens of Barrie at any time of the year. A baseball stadium would fence off and wall off this area of our waterfront from free public access all year round.*

*The City has already invested heavily in building the Barrie Community Sports Complex at Midhurst, including Coates Stadium, nine other illuminated ball diamonds and seven soccer fields, for many of the same uses as are being suggested for this waterfront stadi-*

*um. Perhaps the owners and operators of the Barrie Baycats (which is a private commercial business) should consider providing shuttle bus service for Barrie residents as part of their ticket prices, in order to attract more fans to the apparently underused 1500 seat Coates Stadium.*

*The proposed 3-4000 seat baseball stadium may or may not be needed somewhere in Barrie, but it does NOT belong on Barrie's waterfront. 20,000 square feet of commercial concessions in the stadium would not likely benefit existing businesses in the Downtown or along Essa Road. Stadium visitors would be unlikely to walk the necessary distance to support these commercial areas. Once back in their cars, they can then drive anywhere in the City, or out of it, if they intend to spend on meals or other entertainment.*

*The Brereton Field Naturalists' Club participated actively in the development of the Waterfront and Marina Strategic Plan approved by Council in 2015. We will continue to advocate for the maximum open accessible green space along our City's waterfront. We note that this Waterfront Strategic Plan illustrates wooded green space to the east of the passive landscape features identified as Military Heritage Park. There is no suggestion in the strategic plan of any structure like the proposed baseball stadium on the waterfront, nor should there be!*

*The lengthy extent of Barrie's waterfront green open space embracing Kempenfelt Bay is far more desirable, more to be envied by other communities and more 'iconic' than any stadium will ever be.*

*Please say "Thanks, but No Thanks" to pursuing this project. Our Waterfront jewel will not be improved by adding this diamond!*

If you would like to add your thoughts to the discussion regarding this project, please talk or write to your local councillor or to the city.

Every voice helps in protecting our natural surroundings and keeping Barrie Beautiful.



## Nature Notes

### *MilkweedWatch—A New Citizen Scientist Project*

MilkweedWatch, an online platform to track the presence of milkweed throughout Canada, launched Oct. 9 by a team of researchers at Wilfrid Laurier University and the University of Ottawa. The citizen science program will help Canadian scientists track milkweed, a plant that provides critical habitat for the endangered monarch butterfly.

Laurier researchers are asking Canadians to enter their observations of milkweed plants using the mobile friendly website [milkweedwatch.ca](http://milkweedwatch.ca). Milkweed plants are easily spotted in fall by looking for their distinctive seedpods that burst open to release hundreds of black seeds on silky parachutes.

Monarch butterflies, which migrate annually between Canada, the southern United States and Mexico, are an endangered species. One of the key reasons is a decline in the availability of milkweed along their migration routes, on which the butterflies lay eggs and monarch caterpillars feed. The aim of MilkweedWatch is to raise awareness about how critical milkweed plants are as a habitat for monarchs and other pollinator species, and to help gather data for Canadian scientists studying the relationship between milkweed and monarch population health.

MilkweedWatch was developed with support from Environment and Climate Change Canada and the non-profit organization Ontario Nature. "Milkweed plants are key to the future survival of the monarch butterfly," said Robert McLeman, associate professor in the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies at Laurier. "Milkweed is becoming increasingly scarce in many parts of North America due to the growing use of herbicides and land use change. We need the public's help in tracking and preserving milkweed wherever it is found, and MilkweedWatch provides a simple way of doing so."

Five different species of milkweed are commonly found across Canada. MilkweedWatch guides users with photos and plant descriptions, and collects observations through a user-friendly interface. Participants are also able to enter their observations, and learn about the lifecycle of monarchs and the relationship with milkweed.

"MilkweedWatch is a powerful tool for raising awareness about the ecological importance of the milkweed plant, and will encourage the general public to help conserve monarchs in a fun, easy way," said Smera Sukumar, a conservation scientist with Ontario Nature. "Farmers and rural landowners can use it to track the health of pollinator patches on their land throughout the summer."

MilkweedWatch is the fifth citizen science program launched under the NatureWatch project, operated by Laurier and the University of Ottawa in association with the David Suzuki Foundation and Nature Canada. It joins Frogwatch, Plantwatch, Icewatch and Wormwatch.

McLeman has also led RinkWatch, a citizen science project that tracks the skating conditions of more than 1,400 Canadian outdoor rinks and ponds.



## Nature Notes

### Recovery Strategy for the Kirtland Warbler – Alex Mills

#### Description:

The adult is a small songbird, but it is relatively large for a warbler. They are sharp looking: a bluish gray face and back and a yellow throat, chest and belly. There are black stripes down the sides, two white wing bars, white crescents above and the below eyes and the bird constantly pumps its tail. The immature bird is similar to the adult female but duller and with black spotting across chest.



#### Kirtland's Warblers (*Setophaga kirtlandii*),

IUCN Conservation Status: **Near Threatened**, are rare birds of the Michigan jack pine forests. They are dependent upon fire to provide the small trees and open areas that meet their rigid habitat requirements for nesting. The jack pine requires fire to open its cones and spread its seeds. The warbler first appears in an area about six years after a fire when the new growth is dense and is about 1.5 to 2.0 meters (5.0-6.5 feet) high. After about 15 years, when the trees are 3.0 to 5.0 meters (10.0 to 16.5 feet) high, the warbler leaves the area. Fire suppression has led to a decline in suitable habitat for nesting. Nest parasitism by Brown-headed Cowbird has caused further population declines.

The female Kirtland's Warbler is more selective than the male in her choice of habitat, and the best areas attract more females than males. The last residents of a tract that is getting too old are always unmated males. The oldest recorded Kirtland's warbler was a male that was at least 9 years old when he was recaptured during banding operations in Michigan in 1949. These birds feast on Insects and small fruits. The nest is an open cup of grass, sedges, pine needles, and pieces of leaves, lined with rootlets, plant fibers, and hair. It is placed in a depression in the ground, often with an overhanging

tuft of grass.

Recently, Kirtland's Warblers have been reported at three locations in central Ontario. A single singing male was detected on an automated recording device in Algoma District in June 2012 (Holmes et al. 2015), a singing male was heard and seen in Georgian Bay Township of Muskoka District in both 2014 and 2015 (Burrell and Charlton 2015) and a pair of Kirtland's Warblers was observed in Parry Sound District in June 2015 (AECOM 2016).

The federal recovery strategy for the Kirtland's Warbler provides a description of the known population and distribution of the Kirtland's Warbler in Ontario up to 2006. Although there had been singing males observed in Ontario in the breeding season, minimal observations have been reported since a somewhat ambiguous report from Simcoe County in 1945 reported fledged young (Environment Canada 2006). In 2007 this changed when a Kirtland's Warbler nest was discovered on Department of National Defence lands in Garrison Petawawa (formerly Canadian Forces Base Petawawa) in Renfrew County (Richard 2008). Since then, additional nests have been found and the population there has persisted (Richard 2013a, 2013b, Environment and Climate Change Canada 2016).

Just recently, the grounds called the Simcoe Barrens, just North of Barrie behind the Simcoe County Museum, have been identified as suitable habitat for this little bird. An effort is presently being undertaken to return this area to its natural state, managed for jack pine, in the hopes that we can entice this warbler into our area and thus increase its numbers.

*Photos & copy provided by Alex Mills*



# Members Photo Gallery



*Seed Collection by Chris Evans*



*Milkweed seeds by Ruth Noland-Flores*



*Hewitt's Creek by Paul Forde*



*Photo credit to Paul Forde*

## 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)**



**Visit us on our Facebook page! “Brereton Field Naturalists’ Club” (public group)**