

Vol 43, #3
Jan/Feb 2013

The Guelph Field Naturalists

Invite you to hear



Kyle Horner An Island Apart:

The Stunning and Bizarre
Wildlife of Madagascar

Thurs. Jan 10th

7:30PM



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ARBORETUM CENTRE
EVERYONE WELCOME
DONATIONS APPRECIATED
www.guelphfieldnaturalists.org

2013

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE — Peter Kelly

As autumn slips into winter we bid good-bye to much of the natural world that we embraced during the warmer months. Much of our local fauna is in hibernation or torpor (periods of reduced body temperature and metabolic rate in between short spurts of activity) and herbaceous plants have left us until the spring. However, a reasonable number of bird species stay with us over the winter months. In fact, in some cases the only opportunity we have to see them is in the winter months.

One such bird is the Bald Eagle. Until recently, the Bald Eagle was rarely seen in our area. Bald Eagle nesting habitat was largely destroyed by the late 19th Century and Bald Eagles were persecuted by farmers who thought that they were eating their stock. The widespread use of DDT in the mid-Twentieth Century contaminated the fish population and through a process known as biomagnification, DDT moved up through the food chain to become more concentrated in adult eagles. The DDT affected the ability of Bald Eagles to metabolize calcium which led to eggs that were unstable or to adult birds that were infertile altogether. The Bald Eagle population however has been making a slow comeback into the Grand River watershed where they have been spending their winters in greater numbers since the late nineties. So much so that in 2009, the status of Bald Eagles in southern Ontario was upgraded from Endangered to Special Concern: good news indeed! The last few winters there have been periodic sightings of Bald Eagles in and around Guelph particularly along the Speed and Eramosa Rivers.

Much of what we know about winter populations of eagles in Southern Ontario has come out of a remarkable study that was conducted along the Grand River over the winter months between 1999 and 2010. This effort



was coordinated by Bill Wilson, Bob Scott and Guelph Ministry of Natural Resources biologist Art Timmerman. In those years, on every second Saturday morning between January and March, a group of up to 40 volunteers spaced themselves along the Grand River (and occasionally the Nith River) between Brantford and Kitchener. They coordinated timepieces and were in constant radio contact with each other. They broadcast all sightings of Bald Eagles including details about their ages, movements and perch sites. This was a classic example of Citizen Science in action! To appreciate the commitment involved, keep in mind that the observers were at their locations at dawn in January and barely moved from their spots for several hours!

It was only through this coordinated effort that the volunteers were able to determine how many different eagles were overwintering along the Grand, i.e. they weren't just seeing one eagle that kept flying up and down the river system all day! While there were only a handful of eagles spotted in the early years of the survey, by

the winter of 2007/2008 as many as 15 different Bald Eagles were observed during one Saturday blitz while 30 different eagles were observed on one morning the following year. Observations made outside the Bald Eagle blitz period indicate that the eagles arrive between mid-November and mid-December and leave the region anywhere between mid-March and the first week of April. A few Bald Eagle pairs do build nests and stay in southern Ontario during the summer months (particularly along the north shore of Lake Erie) but so far these are few and far between. Given the winter return of Bald Eagles back into the Grand River Watershed, will it be much longer before we have a nesting pair in the Guelph area? We can only hope.

NEWSLETTER — Margaret Hull and Jessica Klawunn

The newsletter is published five times a year – every two months except July and August. Please send all contributions for the next issue (Mar/Apr) to Jessica Klawunn. The deadline is February 20th. Thank you to all contributors. Stephen Lewis is our front page artist — many thanks Steve.

PERSONAL WANT ADS

As a service to members we run personal “want” ads or “for sale” ads of a nature theme at no charge. Contact either Margaret or Jessica if you have anything to sell or anything you want to acquire.

INDOOR PROGRAM — Kirsten Middleton

All meetings begin at 7:30 pm (December and June excepted) on the second Thursday of each month, and are held at the University of Guelph's Arboretum Centre. For confirmation and updates, please visit our website at www.guelphfieldnaturalists.org. We begin with a brief business meeting, followed by a 10 minute break then the speaker's presentation. **Non-members are very welcome and goodwill donations are gratefully appreciated - suggested contribution is \$2 per person.**

The entrance to the Arboretum is on College Avenue just west of Victoria Road. For a map see: <http://www.uoguelph.ca/arboretum/ArbOverview/Directions.htm> The path to and from the car park is unlit in places - bringing a flashlight would be a good idea.

Thursday Jan 10th, 2013 — AN ISLAND APART: THE STUNNING AND BIZARRE WILDLIFE OF MADAGASCAR Kyle Horner

Separated from mainland Africa by hundreds of miles and millions of years, Madagascar is home to some of the strangest creatures on Earth! And with an endemism rate of over 90%, it hosts countless species that can be seen nowhere else in the world. Our very own Kyle Horner will take us on a journey through the highlands of this unique country and highlight a selection of its strange wildlife, illustrated by original photos. *Plus — **Bucket Raffle** of nature-related items. Bring your donations and some spare change to bid on them.*

Thursday Feb 14th, 2013 — TBA *Please watch GFN website*

Marilyn Swaby Rock Art Painting



Marilyn has been creating lovely painted rocks as gifts for our outdoor presenters, and now you can have a specially commissioned one for yourself for only \$35!! Contact Marilyn at p.m.swaby@rogers.com

SHALL WE RENAME OURSELVES?

asks President Pete Kelly

The Guelph Field Naturalists are considering a name change and we are looking for your input on the idea. The GFN Executive has recently considered the possibility of a name change because we were wondering if 'field naturalists' is still an accurate description of our club membership. Of course, while we still have plenty of crack birders and naturalists amongst our group, we also have club members who may be interested in learning about the natural world and are concerned about our impact on the planet but do not necessarily feel the need to learn, for example, the taxonomic differences between Southern Ontario's goldenrod species. Our broad range of guest speakers certainly reflects the club's broadening interests in topics related to the environment and natural history but not strictly field identification. While there will always be field naturalists in our membership, we wonder if 'field naturalists' in our name might be intimidating to this latter sector of our community and dissuade them from joining. We have put forward possible names such as 'Guelph Nature' or 'Nature Guelph' to mirror our provincial naturalists' organization Ontario Nature. If you have any comments or suggestions, please contact Peter Kelly (pkellypics@gmail.com or 519-824-4965).

BUCKET RAFFLE JANUARY 10TH

Our popular fundraiser will be returning at the January meeting. Bring your nature related items you wish to donate (new or gently used) and, just as important, bring some cash to buy tickets and bid on whatever takes your fancy. This could be your lucky night!!

YOUNG NATURALISTS and NATURALISTS IN TRAINING — Ann & Tamara

The winter **Naturalists in Training (NITs) program** (ages 11-16) will include 2 two-hour sessions, 2 expanded sessions, plus an overnight camping trip. The winter program begins on Saturday, January 26, 2013, from 10:00 a.m. to noon, continues monthly through April 6th, and winds up with an overnight camping trip.

Please see the [Naturalists in Training brochure](#) on the Guelph Field Naturalists website.

The winter **Young Naturalists (Nats) program** (ages 6-10) will include 9 sessions, with two evening programs, one field trip, plus a Saturday night overnight camp-out. The winter program begins on January 12, 2013, from 10:00 a.m. to noon, and continues on alternate Saturdays through April 27th. It winds up with a family camp-out on May 18-19.

Please see the [Young Naturalists brochure](#) on the Guelph Field Naturalists web-site.

Visit www.guelphfieldnaturalists.org or phone the Guelph Lake Nature Centre at 519-836-7860 for information.

NOVEMBER 24TH YOUNG NATURALISTS PROGRAM

We went to Laurel Creek Conservation in Waterloo to see Steve Paterson and his flying squirrel, Scooter McGee. We learned a lot about flying squirrels and how important they are for a healthy forest. We also learned that cutting down forests contribute to their demise as they glide between trees - not fly. They don't cross roads or open spaces separating forests as they would have to run which is too risky for them.

SATURDAY YOUNG NATURALISTS PROGRAM

The morning wasbeautiful! Our first lovely snowfall. Because of this Ann and Tamara took us out animal tracking. Tamara asked the kids to make tracks like a squirrel and a raccoon. A father and son



used their new skills and got a bead on something!

That chickadee feeling was truly felt too! Finally we got to build our birdfeeders....three of the pictures are blurred in busy-ness. Then everyone could finally show off their creations!

We had a very active day with no time to fidget. We were all charged with excitement!

All photos by Marilyn Swaby

FINANCIAL STATEMENT	Tax Return 2011-2012	Fiscal 2011-2012	
TD Bank - Chequing Account			
Balance brought forward	\$ 7,418	\$ 7,418	
+ Total Income	\$ 10,010	\$ 10,010	
- Total Expenses	\$ 9,552	\$ 9,552	Inc. \$2283 from fiscal 2010-11
- Transfer to Petty cash	\$ 74	\$ 74	
TD Bank - Chequing Account - Balance	\$ 7,802	\$ 7,802	
ING Bank - Investment Account			
Balance brought forward	\$ 20,663	\$ 20,663	NB: For land acquisition and stewardship only. Funds can't be used for operational expenses of Guelph Field Naturalists
+ Interest	\$ 239	\$ 239	
- Transfer to TD Chequing Account			
ING Bank - Investment Account			
Petty cash	\$ 223	\$ 223	
Total Assets	\$ 28,927	\$ 28,927	
Total Liabilities			

TD CHEQUING ACCOUNT - INCOME & EXPENSES

Income Categories

GFN Membership	\$ 3,535	\$ 3,535	
Advertisements	\$ 400	\$ 400	
Donations	\$ 755	\$ 630	
Sales	\$ 789	\$ 789	Xmas/Note cards, T-shirts, Books, Bucket raffle
Fund raising	\$ 444	\$ 444	Baillie Birdathon
Young Naturalists	\$ 2,080	\$ 2,080	
Naturalist's in Training	\$ 565	\$ 565	
Grants	\$ 1,442	\$ 1,442	2012 -TD FEF, TO Zoo
Accrued income		\$ 125	Honorarium not cashed
	\$ 10,010	\$ 10,010	
Investment Income	\$ 239	\$ 239	
Total Income	\$ 10,249	\$ 10,249	

Expense Categories

	cash basis	Accrued basis	
Admin (PO Box, etc)	\$ 158.20	\$ 158.20	
Newsletter (Postage, Printing)	\$ 732.29	\$ 732.29	
Office supplies	\$ 78.66	\$ 78.66	
Young Naturalists	\$ 3,001.60	\$ 2,001.60	GRCA, Long Point Waterfowl Research & Education Centre
Naturalist's in Training	\$ 2,351.60	\$ 1,851.60	GRCA, Long Point Waterfowl Research & Education Centre
Indoor Program Speakers	\$ 1,005.00	\$ 880.00	\$125 not cashed
Indoor Program Expenses	\$ 60.62	\$ 60.62	
Outdoor Program Expenses	\$ 93.38	\$ 93.38	
Advertising	\$ 19.83	\$ 19.83	
FON Membership	\$ 150.00	\$ 150.00	
FON Insurance	\$ 1,609.20	\$ 826.20	2010-11 and 2011-12 cheques cashed this year
Misc Purchases	\$ 291.85	\$ 291.85	Cards, Books, T-shirts for resale
Donations Made		\$ -	Charities
Accrued expenses for fiscal 2010-2011		\$ 2,408.00	NAT's, NIT's, FON Insurance, Speaker Honorarium
	\$ 9,552.23	\$ 9,552.23	

NB: Fiscal year: July 2011 - June 2012

*All transactions relating to 2011-12 based on transaction date including accruals

Outstanding liabilities (cheques cashed after year end) include :

- FON insurance - \$783
- GRCA – Young Naturalists - \$1000
- GRCA – Naturalists in Training - \$500

ENVIRONMENT REPORT — Charlie Cecile

Over the last few months, two planning issues that involve natural heritage features are currently going through the planning process. Details of these and more can be viewed on the City website by clicking on 'Active Development Files' in the "Quick Links" menu at the top of the page. As well, visit the cultural heritage planning section under "Living" to view details of the proposed Brooklyn and College Hill Heritage Conservation District which could influence future restoration of the Speed and Eramosa Rivers at this location.

25 LEE STREET

The Upper Grand District School Board has applied for a zoning amendment for this property in the east end of the City to permit the development of an elementary school. This property is adjacent to Lee Street Park and several large undeveloped properties. A scoped environmental impact study has unfortunately concluded that a small headwater wetland that drained to Hadati Creek is not worth preserving. The City has given a site alteration permit to the school board to begin preparations for development. This has essentially destroyed

the small wetland. The environmental impact study will be reviewed by the City's Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) at its next meeting in January.

BROOKLYN AND COLLEGE HILL HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

City Council, at its Dec. 17 council meeting, adopted the city staff recommended plan and boundaries for this heritage district on the south side of the Speed River in the Old University neighbourhood. The Wellington Street Dam was excluded but the river itself including the impoundment and the surrounding riverscape and park lands were included. Because the dam was excluded, it may be removed in the future to comply with the City's River System Management Plan which proposes to restore and naturalized this area of the Speed and Eramosa Rivers. If this occurs, an environmental assessment will likely be conducted to consider all aspects affecting the river. On behalf of the GFN, I sent a letter to City Council supporting the exclusion of the dam from the heritage district. We will continue to monitor this issue in the future.

2012 YOUTH SUMMIT FOR BIODIVERSITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

The Guelph Field Naturalists have received a thank you letter from the fundraising chair of the Ontario Nature Youth Council, Skye MacKenzie, for sponsoring the Youth Summit this year by sending two participants. Altogether 75 youth from all over Ontario attended the camp held at Geneva Park on Lake Couchiching one weekend in September. They participated in a variety of outdoor activities and workshops on topics including: Medicinal Plants of Ontario, Ontario's Environmental Bill of Rights, Birds of Prey, Climate Justice and Energy Democracy, Reptiles and Amphibians. An inspiring keynote speech on the importance of perseverance and working together was delivered by Simon Jackson, founder of the Spirit Bear Youth Coalition.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT - Marnie Benson

Well, there seems to have been lots of excitement about the Guelph Field Naturalists this fall. We've had record attendance at indoor meetings, and a remarkable number of new members and donations made. Here are some stats for your enjoyment:

- 177 members are paid to date for the 2012/13 season
- plus an additional 10 complementary member-

ships, for a total of 187

- 22 members are new for 2012/13
- 48 of these members are parents of NIT/NAT kids
- 8% of members this year made an extra donation with their membership payment

A big welcome to all new members, and thank you to all those fine folks who have joined us again to share in a passion for nature, the environment and the outdoors!

Notes for Novices #3 — Plant Galls

On winter walks watch for plants with strange growths that may look like a small ball in the stem, a pine cone, a mossy clump or an unusual flower-head. They can be on any part of a plant: stem, buds, leaves or twigs. Small creatures — such as insects, mites, nematodes, fungi or bacteria — get plants to grow a place for their young to feed and develop. These surprising growths are called galls, and each gall-maker uses a unique design. A common one is the Goldenrod Ball Gall.

In June, a discriminating fly inserts her 200 eggs into many stems of just one species of goldenrod — the Canada Goldenrod. Young plants respond by enlarging part of the stem to enclose the invader in a two-centimetre ball. Use a sharp pocket knife to investigate some of these galls. Make a cut parallel to the stem, but off to one side. If the gall has not been parasitized or preyed on — both common events — you may find a one-centimetre, cream-coloured maggot in a little chamber. Warm it in your hand and it will become active. If you wait until March to examine a goldenrod ball gall, you will see that the maggot has changed into a pupa that looks somewhat like a grain of wheat. About half of the larvae will not survive to become flies. They are eaten by the young of other creatures that lay

eggs in their hideout. Downy woodpeckers, knowing how to find the maggot's little tunnel, insert their bills and snatch the maggot. You may see galls with open holes. If the maggot survives all the hazards, it will emerge next May as a toothless fly. Before that, the maggot must prepare an exit tunnel capped with a thin layer of gall tissue. Using a balloon-like structure between its eyes, the transformed fly pushes off the cap and flies away.

Why not take some unopened galls home? Stick the plant stems into soil in a big, large-mouthed jar. Cover with cheesecloth. Keep the soil slightly damp and away from direct sun or heat source. Galls collected in February ought to have emerging adults by late April.



Thanks to Kathleen Brown for Notes for Novices



*White-winged
Crossbill
Photo: Ron
Ridout*

*from Bird
Studies
Canada 21
December
2012*



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Programs at the Guelph Lake Nature Centre

Jan 3-5th: Winter Adventure Day Camps

Jan 13th, 2-4pm: Bigfoot Lives!!

Feb 10th, 2-4pm: Return of Bigfoot!

Please Visit www.grandriver.ca for more information about all GRCA family programs



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BIRD WING — Larry Staniforth staniforth.larry@rogers.com 519-767-2693

BIRD WING HIKES

- *Bi-weekly hikes are now held on Thursdays. See below for alternative Wednesday hikes.*
- *Most hikes are all day outings unless otherwise specified. Bring lunch and refreshments as necessary.*
- *We will usually visit a local restaurant for lunch, and stop for nature breaks where possible.*
- *Hikes usually depart from the WBU parking lot at Gordon and Kortright - check the departure time carefully.*
- *Go or NoGo will be determined at the WBU parking lot and depends on the weather at the target location. If the weather is not good there, we may decide to go somewhere else. Please dress appropriately for the weather.*

Wed. Jan. 9th - Owl Prowl	- 7 pm
Thurs. Jan. 10th - Metz-Arthur-Hawkesville	- 9 am
Thurs. Jan. 24th - Hamilton South Shoreline	- 9 am
Thurs. Feb. 7th - Hamilton North Shore	- 9 am
Thurs. Feb. 21st - Fisherville	- 9 am
Thurs. Mar. 7th - Long Point	- 8 am

Other Birding Opportunities

On alternate Wednesdays to the usual Thursday hikes, Toni Salvadori will lead hikes to local birding areas. All hikes leave from Wild Birds Unlimited parking lot.

- Wed. Jan. 16th** - 9 am
- Wed. Jan. 30th** - 9 am
- Wed. Feb. 13th** - 8 am
- Wed. Feb. 27th** - 8 am



BIRD WING MEETINGS

We have moved the monthly meeting dates one week later to the last Monday of each month from September thru May. All meetings will be held in the basement common area at the Ellington Residences, 168 Metcalfe Street at 7:30 pm. Entrance is via the covered ramp on the north east end of the building.

- Mon. Jan 28th** - David Brewer - "Across Central Asia by Portable Toilet - or - How I banded 1000 Birds in one day"
- Mon. Feb 25th** - Kirsten Martyn - "Tanagers, Trogons and Toucans: the Birdlife of Costa Rica"

TROUBLING NEWS ON THE STATUS OF WOOD THRUSH AND EASTERN WOOD-PEWEE

From Bird Studies Canada 7 December 2012

The status of two of eastern Canada's most common and widespread forest songbird species was assessed at



Eastern Wood-Pewee Photo: Ron Ridout

the fall meeting of the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) held in Ottawa from November 25-30. Owing to significant and persistent population declines that have been taking place over the past 40 years, COSEWIC assessed the Wood Thrush as Threatened in Canada, while Eastern Wood-Pewee was assessed as Special Concern. Wood Thrush populations in Canada have declined by as much as 83% since 1970. Pewees haven't fared much better, with populations having dropped by about 70%. For both species, assessments were greatly informed by examination of data gathered by many skilled volunteers engaged in a variety of Citizen Science bird monitoring programs.

Check out www.cosewic.gc.ca to learn more about the Wood Thrush and Wood-Pewee status assessments, as well as those for the other 40 species of flora and fauna that were assessed at the meeting.

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES — Kyle Horner

SATURDAY JAN 26 AT 1 PM — SOWING THE SEEDS: THE BEGINNINGS OF AN OLD GROWTH FOREST

At the Ignatius Jesuit Centre with outdoor programs coordinator Kyle Horner

Every old growth forest has to start somewhere, and the Plant an Old Growth Forest Project is growing one nearly from scratch. Join us for a casual hike through the project lands, and learn about the site history and what the project is doing to encourage the growth of a mature forest. In addition to learning about the project, we will be on the lookout for interesting wildlife and other natural features. Meet at the Arboretum Centre parking lot at 12:30 pm to carpool, or at the Ignatius Jesuit Centre labyrinth at 1 pm.

SATURDAY FEB 9 AT 8 AM — IN THE HAND: A BIRD BANDING DEMONSTRATION

At the Arboretum with master bander Dave Lamble

Bird banding is a technique used worldwide to study birds and their movement patterns. In this demonstration, Dave Lamble will erect nets in the Arboretum to catch some birds and show us how it's done! In addition to giving us an up-close-and-personal experience with the birds Dave will teach us how and why people band, and share with us some of the fascinating things that we can learn from it. This is a great event for all ages! Meet at the J.C. Taylor (Nature) Centre at The Arboretum at 8 am.

*****Important note!** *Strong winds, rain or heavy snow will prevent us from banding. If these conditions exist on the 9th, our rain date will be the 10th. If questionable weather occurs, please call Kyle at 519-835-0944 on Saturday morning to see if the event is running.*

NEW — A TRACKING CLUB FOR THE GFN!!

If you are interested in going tracking with a group of like-minded people, join the "Tracking Club." These outings will not be guided hikes, but rather an opportunity to get outdoors and find some interesting tracks and signs of Ontario wildlife with other "trackers." Please bring a lunch, water and a tracking field guide (Mark Elbroch's *Guide to Mammal Tracks* is excellent). Dress to be outdoors!

Sunday January 20th

Luther Marsh
Meeting Time: 9:30am

Sunday February 24th

Guelph Lake Conservation Area
Meeting Time: 10:00 am

Sunday March 17

Cumnock Tract
Meeting time: 10:00am

Sunday April 14th

Luther Marsh
Meeting time: 9:30am

Meeting Place

Guelph Lake Nature Centre parking lot. We will carpool to the tracking location. Outings will be between 2-4 hours depending on the location.

For more information contact Tamara Anderson

rare CHARITABLE RESEARCH RESERVE EVENTS

Most events are offered rain, snow or shine. Space is limited so please register early for events by calling 519-650-9336 ext 125 or by email at registration@raresites.org Cost for all events: \$8 (\$3 with *rare* discount card)

Thu Jan 10th, 6:30-8:30pm

Owl Prowl with Jason Bracey

Location: Lamb's Inn 1679 Blair Road Cambridge

Sun Jan 23rd, 7-8:30 pm

Species at Risk with Jillian Deman

\$8 (\$3 with *rare* discount card)

Location: Lamb's Inn 1679 Blair Road Cambridge

Sat Feb 2nd, 10am-1pm

Snowshoeing with Jason Bracey

Location: ECO Centre 768 Blair Rd. Cambridge

Sat Feb 23rd, 10-11:30am

Investigating the Underwater World

with Mark Pomeroy

Location: Lamb's Inn 1679 Blair Road Cambridge

NEARBY NATURALIST CLUBS' MEETINGS

KITCHENER/WATERLOO

Monday, Jan 28th, 7:30 pm

Amazing Arctic Adventures by Alan Morgan

Monday, Feb 25th

Archaeology in Kitchener's Huron Natural Area and

Surrounding Territory by Paul Racher

See www.kwfn.ca

ONTARIO NATURE — Mary Ellen Pyear

On Saturday, November 3, Marnie Benson, Pat Martin, and I attended the Ontario Nature Great Lakes West Fall Regional Meeting held in Kincardine. The morning session began with reports from individual clubs and ended with Lisa Richardson giving an overview and an update on Ontario Nature highlights. Bill 55 is now on hold due to the resignation of Dalton McGuinty and the proroguing of the Provincial Legislature. Schedule 19 which contained much of the nature based legislation had been pulled from the legislation before the legislature shut down, so no decisions will be made until Parliament resumes.

Ontario Nature reports good news with respect to their work with young people, and especially with the Nature Guardians Program. The third annual Youth Summit for Biodiversity and Eco-Justice in September was a great success with 75 high school aged teens attending the conference at Geneva Park in Orillia. Outdoor workshops and indoor talks grabbed the attention of these youth and hopefully they will return to their respective communities and get involved with nature related issues and projects. Many of these teens were sponsored by 24 nature clubs, including GFN who sponsored two individuals. Another successful project called City to Nature took place in August. Several urban youth from across the province enjoyed a weekend camping at Balsam Lake Provincial Park. These teens, recruited by ON and the YMCA, had little to no camping experience. They assisted members of the Peterborough's Kawartha Field Naturalists club in repairing trails at the nearby Altberg Wetland Nature Reserve.

With respect to the Birds and Buildings lawsuit, the Justice of the Peace ruled against ON and in favour of Menkes Developments for numerous fatal bird strikes at

their high rise office building in Scarborough. However, the owners sold the property this summer and the new owners are retrofitting the windows with a film treatment that, according to FLAP (Fatal Light Awareness Program) has already reduced the number of bird fatalities during the fall migration. ON is considering an appeal on this decision. On a happier note and although ON is not directly involved, they are pleased that the huge Melancthon Quarry project of Highland Companies near Shelburne has been defeated. For further information on this decision, please visit the following website: www.dauidsuzuki.org.

This coming summer, ON will host Wild in the County Gathering and the 82nd AGM to be held from June 7-9, 2013 at the Isaiah Tubbs Resort near Sandbanks Provincial Park. The celebration will also be hosted by the Prince Edward County Field Naturalists and will offer thought provoking workshops and eye-opening trips. Visit ON's website www.ontarionature.org and click on Ontario Nature News or e-mail Lauren Wright at laurenw@ontarionature.org if you are interested in attending. The afternoon session was a talk on social media by Victoria Foote, editor of the ON Magazine and communications director of Ontario Nature since 2008. She began by explaining how Ontario Nature, as a non-profit organization, uses social media and then she talked about how individual clubs across the province could benefit from getting more involved by using things like Facebook, Twitter, etc. Many of the clubs across the province are seeing their membership numbers decline due to an aging population, so they are reaching out through social media to involve more young people in their club activities.

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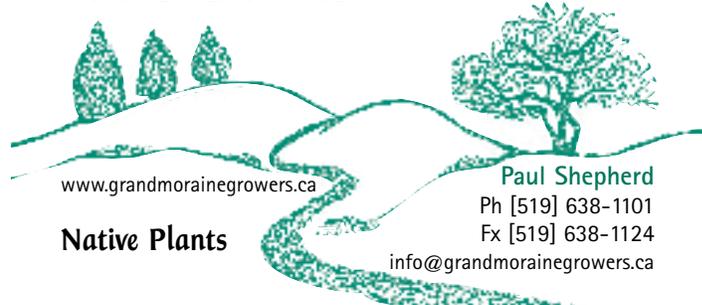


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A NEW WINDOW ON THE WATERSHED: GUELPH LAKE NATURE CENTRE

What does it take to inspire our children about nature? Many of us have had the exciting experience of taking kids out to Guelph Lake. Central to the interpretive programs is the Guelph Lake Nature Centre (GLNC), a former single family home that has seen up to 20,000 visitors a year over the past 30 years. The GFN's Young Naturalists and Naturalists in Training programs have also called the Nature Centre 'home' for many years.

The Nature Centre has reached the end of its lifespan, with prohibitively expensive maintenance costs and inadequate space to accommodate the exceptional program growth. After consulting with the Guelph community through workshops, the Grand River Conservation Foundation now has set off on a path toward a brand new facility.

The new Guelph Lake Nature Centre will be a showcase, purpose-built facility, designed by +VG Architects. It will be more than double the size, allowing up to five classes per day as well as having a larger multi-purpose room that can be used by community groups. It will allow



interpretive programs to grow, so that children, youth and adults in the Guelph/Wellington area can continue to be inspired by nature for many years to come.

The project will break ground when 75% of the \$3.3 million budget is pledged. Over the past year over half a million dollars has been raised in the Guelph community.

For a project of this scale, volunteer commitment and donations are the cornerstones to success. More is needed!

GFN members Sarah Lowe and Greg Meredith, a Senior Interpreter at GLNC, presented an update to the GFN at the October meeting. They asked for the support of members and the Club. Please consider this request,

and spread the word!

For donations or inquiries as to how you can get involved please contact Cam Linwood at the Grand River Conservation Foundation: clinwood@grandriver.ca or 519-621-2763X2251.

For more information visit www.grcf.ca/GLNC

2012 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT REPORT *from Mike Cadman*

We found 65 species on the day, which is about average for recent years. We might have hoped for more species given the mild weather lately and the great variety of winter finches found over the fall and early winter. The rainy conditions undoubtedly reduced the number of birds seen, although the total count of 19,562 birds was among the highest ever for the count, and the old saying rang true as it was indeed a good day for ducks, as shown in the record totals summarized below.

We had record numbers of:

- Canada Goose (5941, previous record 5888)
- Trumpeter Swan (9, previous record 2)
- Tundra Swan (1, previous record 1)
- Canvasback (1, previous record 0) **New to count!**
- Bufflehead (20, previous record 3)
- Hooded Merganser (9, previous record 8)
- Wild Turkey (101, previous record 91)

- Rock Pigeon (862, previous record 582)
- Common Raven (7, previous record 6)
- Barred Owl (3, previous record 2). *This doesn't include the Stephanie Park bird found recently by Mike Lepage.*
- Northern Shoveler (11, previous record 1)
- Orange-crowned Warbler (1, previous record 0) **New to count!**
- Yellow-rumped Warbler (1, previous record 1)

This may be a record number of record numbers – at least since the early days of the count!

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDED:

- Northern Pintail (5, previous record 11)
- Northern Mockingbird (2, previous record 3)
- Iceland Gull (2, previous record 4)

Thanks to everyone who took part, especially the group leaders for pulling it all together. Thanks, too, to Dave and Margaret Hull for their wonderful hospitality at the end of a rather soggy day.

GUELPH FIELD NATURALISTS — EXECUTIVE

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<p>Write to us at: The Guelph Field Naturalists P.O. Box 1401 Guelph, ON N1H 6N8</p>	<p>Our website address is: www.guelphfieldnaturalists.org</p> <p>Our Facebook link is: https://www.facebook.com/groups/152245588168708</p>	
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GFN CALENDAR – UPCOMING EVENTS AT A GLANCE

Wed Jan 9	Bird Wing Hike	Owl Prowl	7:00 pm	WBU
Thur Jan 10	Bird Wing Hike	Metz-Arthur-Hawkesville	9:00 am	WBU
Thur Jan 10	Indoor Meeting	Wildlife of Madagascar	7:30 pm	Arboretum
Wed Jan 16	Bird Wing Hike		9:00 am	WBU
Sun Jan 20	Tracking Club	Luther Marsh	9:30 am	GLNC
Thur Jan 24	Bird Wing Hike	Hamilton south shoreline	9:00 am	WBU
Sat Jan 26	Outdoor Activity	Old Growth Forest	1:00 pm	Arboretum parking lot
Mon Jan 28	Bird Wing Meeting	Bird banding in Asia	7:30 pm	Ellington
Wed Jan 30	Bird Wing Hike		9:00 am	WBU
Thur Feb 7	Bird Wing Hike	Hamilton north shore	9:00 am	WBU
Sat Feb 9	Outdoor Activity	Bird Banding	1:00 pm	JC Taylor C., Arboretum
Wed Feb 13	Bird Wing Hike		8:00 am	WBU
Thur Feb 14	Indoor Meeting		7:30 pm	Arboretum
Thur Feb 21	Bird Wing Hike	Fisherville	9:00 am	WBU
Sun Feb 24	Tracking Club	Guelph Lake Conservation Area	10:00 am	GLNC
Mon Feb 25	Bird Wing Meeting	Birds of Costa Rica	7:30 pm	Ellington
Wed Feb 27	Bird Wing Hike		8:00 am	WBU

EARTH DAY CANADA

The Earth Day Canada website www.earthdaycanada.ca has much to interest us. Under Resources you can subscribe to their free e-newsletter *Earth Tones* which comes out once a month. Their work includes research into emerging environmental issues, the development of resources for teachers, the spread of practical daily strategies that address environmental issues and financial help to get local projects off the ground.