

The Guelph Field Naturalists

Vol 43, #4
Mar/Apr 2013

Invite you to hear

Dr Alex Smith

further on,
in the wood down there,
they've got no names

Thurs.
March 14th
7:30PM

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ARBORETUM CENTRE
EVERYONE WELCOME
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www.guelphfieldnaturalists.org

2013



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE — Peter Kelly

I love snow. For those of you who know me, this will not come as a surprise. I love walking in it, I love staring at it and to me nothing is more magical than watching light dance off of it. Think about it...tiny frozen crystals that float into our world from the unknown above us. I sometimes feel a hint of sadness watching a snowflake melt as it descends upon my car window, a perfect architectural wonder forged in the heavens above that after a long and tumultuous descent into our world, is gone in an instant, defeated by the artificial warmth of the four-wheeled metal box in which I'm sitting.

I even love shovelling snow (well for the first hour anyhow). Sure, like everyone else I have a couple of white-knuckled drives every winter that I could do without but I don't let that get in the way of appreciating snow's pure aesthetic. No matter how dreary the day, snow makes things brighter, lighter, happier.

This was particularly evident during the winter of 2011-12 when snow decided to take a holiday and make room for its decidedly warmer cousin, rain (although moisture in any form disappeared for that winter's second half). White blankets of snow gave way to shrouds of brown vegetation and mud. A dark, cloudy day last winter was truly a dark day indeed. I can't help but feel that on occasion even the most hardened chionophobe (I just found this out, a chionophobe is afraid of snow!) must have missed snow's brilliance last winter. Also, from a purely human-centric point of view, snow creates possibilities in our lives while rain simply takes them away. Look at the realm of possibilities that a fresh snowfall creates! In the right conditions, it's as if we are surrounded by modelling clay. Who would like to build



a snowman or snow fort? We can write our names in the snow with our feet! Let's head out cross-country skiing, or we'll grab our snowshoes and go for a trek through the forest. Have toboggan, will travel! What opportunities are created by a downpour? What does rain offer our soul? We can now...what? Go outside and flop around like a fish?

Of course, I disparage rain with tongue planted firmly in cheek. As naturalists, we know the importance of rain not just to our food systems but to our flora and fauna as well. However, rain has its place during the year as does snow. It's a disturbing trend of late that the amount of time in the year that precipitation falls in the form of rain is encroaching significantly on the number of weeks when we would normally be expecting snow. A snow-covered ecosystem is important for the biota of Southern Ontario. Snowmelt in the spring feeds our aquatic systems and snow is an insulator that traps heat for small mammals under snow cover.

Temperatures remain close to zero here even when the air temperatures are bitterly cold.

Don't get me wrong, summer is still my favourite season (winter's days are just too short) but I feel snow itself is underappreciated by most people. Sometimes I wonder if some of our aversion to snow is fed by the media and our television weather personalities who gleefully announce that today's sunny and snowy -8°C day will change for the better tomorrow with a forecast of $+4^{\circ}\text{C}$ and rain. Exactly, how is that better?

Perhaps when I'm older I will rue the day I loved snow but so far it has been almost 50 years and I've seen no signs of that day coming yet.

NEWSLETTER — Margaret Hull

The newsletter is published five times a year – every two months except July and August. Please send all contributions for the next issue (May/June) to Margaret Hull. The deadline is April 1st - please note earlier date. Jessica has moved on to a higher calling as Outdoor Coordinator so we need a volunteer for Newsletter Assistant. Please contact me, and many thanks Jessica

for past help. 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 me if you have anything to sell or there is something 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 Mar 14th, 2013 — FURTHER ON, IN THE WOOD DOWN THERE, THEY'VE GOT NO NAMES: A BIODIVERSITY SCIENTIST'S EXPLORATION OF OLD PROBLEMS AND NEW TOOLS

Dr. Alex Smith, Biodiversity Institute of Ontario, University of Guelph
Most life on our planet weighs less than a gram, is smaller than a centimetre, experiences the world through smell and taste, and in all likelihood is unknown to science or to you. Alex's research is designed to study species identifications and concepts and the biodiversity of landscapes in such understudied taxa using an integrative approach that includes molecular ecology (including DNA barcoding), morphological taxonomy, field ecology and high resolution panoramic photography (GigaPans).

Thursday Apr 11th, 2013 — DON'T FORGET FOOD: THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF OUR FOOD CHOICES

Kelly Hughes, Local Food Officer, Metro Toronto Convention Centre

We recycle, try to buy greener products, and take transit, but how many of us know the environmental impact of the foods we buy? As a chef, local food, and sustainability professional, Kelly will share some simple ways to ensure what we choose to eat does not negatively impact the environment. From industrial agriculture, to meat production, palm oil and fracking, Don't Forget Food is a call to cook with consciousness.

NOMINATIONS FOR EXECUTIVE POSITIONS

| | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| President: | Pete Kelly |
| Vice-President: | Jenn Bock |
| Secretary: | Candice Talbot |
| Treasurer: | John Prescott |

If there are any other nominations for these positions, they can be sent to Carol Koenig or made in writing or verbally at the AGM. Each requires a nominator and a seconder and the agreement of the nominee.

NOTICE OF MEETING

The 2013 Annual General Meeting of the Guelph Field Naturalists will be held on Thursday May 9th, 2013, at the Arboretum Centre at 7:30 pm.

NOTICE OF MOTION

The following motion will be proposed at the 2013 AGM of the GFN:

...that Guelph Field Naturalists change its name to Guelph Nature.

WANTED — MEMBERSHIP CO-ORDINATOR

Marnie Benson will be taking a year's leave of absence, beginning in September, 2013, so we will need someone to take over for the 2013-2014 Membership year. The job description is:

- Attend all general meetings and Executive meetings.
 - Collect fees and register new members & renewal memberships both at meetings and via the mail. Recent newsletter to be available at each meeting.
 - Maintain an up-to-date list of members' addresses, phone numbers, and membership status, with total # of members. Include a list of past members as well. This is now done using a spreadsheet. The list of past members is maintained using a "deleted" sheet for each year.
 - Provide mailing labels to newsletter people.
 - Send e-mail copies of bi-monthly newsletter to members wishing to receive it electronically.
-

YOUNG NATURALISTS and NATURALISTS IN TRAINING — Ann & Tamara

For information please see the [Naturalists in Training brochure](#) and the [Young Naturalists brochure](#) on the Guelph Field Naturalists website, www.guelphfieldnaturalists.org or phone the Guelph Lake Nature Centre at 519-836-7860.

LUTHER MARSH NIT OUTING SUNDAY FEBRUARY 10TH

The day began in an auspicious way, with the air still and a full sun gleaming on a fresh, thick blanket of snow. The blanket was so thick that, as we would later learn, it kept many animals from leaving their burrows and nests. Not all, however, and a sharp-eyed group of NITS would find quite a lot of evidence of recent passages over the next three hours of exploring.

A flock of snow buntings fluttered by as we neared the gate of the Luther Marsh Wildlife Management Area, where park superintendent Bob Bell greeted our group. He shared a few tales of the unique ecology and occupants of the marsh (really a stagnant lake with marsh characteristics, as he would explain). No fewer than 152 bird species have been recorded here, and enigmatic bobcats were last observed 17 years ago. Bob would gladly have told more stories from his 28 years of service with GRCA at the property, but it was time to find some stories that the animal tracks could tell!

Soon after setting out, we found some fresh tracks of snowshoe hares and cottontail rabbits, along with dogwood they had just munched (confirmed by the tidy 45 degree angle of the stems left behind). Out on the ice edge, a beaver lodge and a dome shaped muskrat pushup were found nearby. Ann did her best impression of a burrowing mink, whose tunnels we spotted next to this spot (see collage image upper left). Entering the forest, we crow-called to summon the group to discoveries of tracks such as ruffed grouse and porcupine. We soon heard a grouse in flight and saw a lone porcupine in its customary perch atop a cedar tree. Other sightings included deer antler-scratched saplings, junco tracks near a plentiful supply of goldenrod seeds, cynipid wasp galls, and traces of the frosty breath of a mystery creature in a well-concealed burrow.

Though the bobcat tracks seen years ago were not to be found today, the tracks we did find told a story of thriving wildlife here, even in the depths of winter.

Thanks to all the NITS and their families for venturing out.

*Sandy
Clipsham*

*Photo collage
by Sandy
Clipsham*



YOUNG NATS GRANT

We are very grateful to the GRCA who have given us a grant of \$750 for the Fall Nats program. *John Prescott, Treasurer*



OUR FIRST SESSION FOR 2013 WITH THE YOUNG NATURALISTS

"We had campfire stories and games, roasting marshmallows while our blueberry pies were baking, and then..... eating our campfire cobbles, Yum! The weather was spring-like but dry. Yeah!" *Flora*

*All photos except as noted
by Marilyn Swaby*



NATS SNOWSHOEING OUTING REPORT



We couldn't have asked for better timing with the snowstorm....it made a perfect day for snowshoeing....best in years! Nobody whined this day!



ATTENTION PARENTS AND KEEN TEEN BIRDERS!

The Long Point Bird Observatory is looking for keen teen birders to apply for the 2013 Doug Tarry Natural History Fund - Young Ornithologist Workshop to be held from Saturday August 3 to Sunday August 11. Participants will receive hands-on training in field ornithology including bird banding, monitoring, field identification, birding trips, preparing museum specimens, guest lectures, and more! Six of Canada's most promising ornithologists between the ages of 13-17 will be selected to attend, and will receive the Doug Tarry Bird Study Award to cover all on-site expenses. For those traveling long distances, special grants may also be available to help offset air travel costs. Applications are due April 30, 2013. For more information and an application form, contact us at lpbo@birdscanada.org, or visit www.birdscanada.org/lpbo



Photograph of White-breasted Nuthatch taken by one of our young Nats, Gavin McKinnon

SUMMER JOBS IN ALGONQUIN PARK

This is an annual call for applicants to serve as Seasonal Park Naturalists at Algonquin Park for the summer 2013 interpretive season.

The available jobs provide successful applicants with the opportunity to practice creative presentation techniques in both indoor and outdoor settings, while allowing for the polishing of field skills.

For more information see also the following website:
http://algonquinpark.on.ca/visit/park_management/ontario-parks-employment-opportunities.php#naturalist

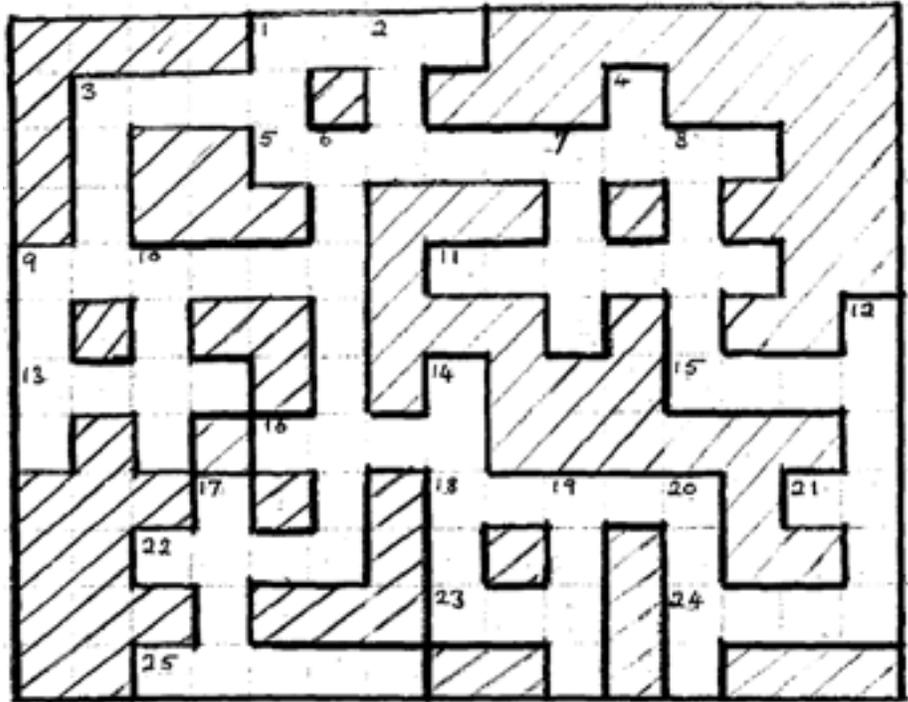
ORNITHOLOGICAL ACROSTIC *submitted by David Brewer*

It occurred to me that now that GFN members have had more than two months to recover from the effects of the epidemic of hypermeleagriphagy that tends to sweep Canada in late December each year, they might be interested in some intellectual stimulation (well, not that intellectual), so I present an Ornithological Acrostic. Don't worry if your knowledge of ornithology is somewhat wanting; what will be of most help is a taste for trivia and absolutely dreadful puns!

Forward solutions to me at adavidbrewer@yahoo.ca to be eligible for our valuable prizes. First prize is a week's holiday in Hamilton; second prize is two week's holiday. Enjoy!

Clues across

1. Small European shearwater frequently seen off the Maritimes. (4)
3. Rather inept and very dead. (4)
5. Done to death by superannuated sailor. (9)
9. (See 1 down). ...then flatten it with a European species. (6)
11. Smokin' alcid? (6)
13. Bunting or goose. (4)
15. Newfoundland for a murre. (4)
16. Hawaiian bird with trinocular vision. (4)
18. Wife of 7 down, active in rural politics. (5)
21. Another very short Hawaiian bird. (2)
22. Famous West Indian ornithologist, licensed to kill. (4)
23. Moping and complaining in Stoke Poges. (3)
24. *Branta sandvicensis*, or a river in eastern England. (4)
25. Caught by members of the genus *Empidonax*. (5)



Clues down

1. Cut the lawn with a New Zealand bird? (3)
2. Coulter-XXX, Scottish name for 11 across. (3)
3. HAWO's little brother. (4)
4. Episcopal exclamation in Hawaii, now extinct. (2)
6. Mendacious Australian bird? (8)
7. Very uneven shorebird. (4)
8. Miserly sandpiper? (5)
9. Discoverer of a gull and a sea, but not a goose. (4)
10. Canadian equivalent of *Eurystomus orientalis*. (4)
12. Ptarmigan's complaint. (6)
14. I am green, though my eyes may be red or white. (5)
17. Elegant, and sings charmingly sweet. (4)
19. Favourite prey of the Grey Heron. (4)
20. The White-tailed Eagle. (4)

WINGS & WEATHER FESTIVAL - WEDNESDAY MAY 1ST

After the successful "Butterfly Festival" last May, the Kitchener Waterloo Field Naturalists are pleased to offer the second presentation in the Wonders of Nature lecture series.

Featured Speakers:

- David Hobson - Gardening Columnist, as Master of Ceremonies
- Jim Burrell - "Bird Sightings - What's Happening Locally with the Northern Migration"
- Ken Dance - "How Birds Respond to Changing Weather and Climate"
- Don Davis - "One Year Later: What's Happening with Butterflies in Ontario?"
- John Wilson - "Weather Forecasting: - the Challenges to Getting It Right"

Marketplace - field guides, nature and weather books **Mounted displays** of butterflies, hawks and owls
6:30 pm to 9:30 pm (doors open at 6:30 pm) at the **Albert McCormick Community Centre**, 500 Parkside Drive, Waterloo. Admission \$5 at the door. Proceeds to the Young Naturalists Program of the KWFN. For more detailed information, visit the notices page on <http://www.kwfn.ca/>

ENVIRONMENT REPORT — Charlie Cecile

Since my last report, no new development applications have come forward in the City that impact Guelph's Natural Heritage System. However, there are other environmental issues that we need to be aware of and concerned about.

CHANGES TO THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

The Ontario government is proposing changes to the Endangered Species Act that would significantly weaken the protection for Ontario's endangered species. You can read more about these proposed changes at the Ontario Nature website: www.ontarionature.org/media/media_template.php?n_code=583

SCIENTISTS MUZZLED

The Canadian government continues to muzzle its scientists from speaking in public without authorization from Ottawa. The latest example is that of government scientists working in the Arctic. They are not permitted to publish their results of studies measuring the reduction of summer and winter ice formation resulting from global warming. Bob McDonald of CBC's Quirks & Quarks, provides more information at:

www.cbc.ca/news/technology/quirks-quarks-blog/2013/02/loss-of-arctic-ice-loss-of-scientific-integrity.html

Please become informed about these issues and make your views known to our MPP Liz Sandals and MP Frank Valeriote. You might also write to the new provincial Minister of Natural Resources, David Orazietti and the federal Minister of the Environment, Peter Kent.

NEW HIGHWAYS FOR GUELPH AREA

A local issue that we need to be concerned about is a City of Guelph staff report written by Rajan Philips, the City's manager of transportation and development engineering. As reported in the Guelph Tribune (Feb. 19, 2013), the report suggests that a new 400 series highway should be built to the east of Guelph somewhere between the City and the Niagara Escarpment, that would connect to the 401 and the proposed GTA West highway. Such a new highway would have very significant impacts on natural heritage features in both Halton Region and Wellington County. This area contains many forests, swamps and other wetlands that provide habitat for wildlife of which many are rare species. The Niagara Escarpment could be significantly impacted. And a new crossing of the Eramosa River would be necessary.

The proposed new four lane divided Highway 7 between Kitchener and Guelph that would connect to the Hanlon Expressway would apparently result in a significant traffic increase along the Hanlon from an expanded Highway 401. The city staff report indicates that that would be unacceptable. This would suggest that constructing a new 400 Series Highway 7 is not in the best interest of Guelph. And I think this is definitely true if a new highway would be needed to the east of Guelph through some of the most environmentally sensitive lands in the area. To read the Tribune article, see the February 19th issue at:

<http://www.guelphtribune.ca/news/six-lane-hanlon-concerns/>

GROWING THE GREENBELT - GLENORCHY LANDS (OAKVILLE) AND URBAN RIVER VALLEYS

The Ontario government has recently announced the approval of the first amendment to the Greenbelt Plan and Greenbelt area boundary regulation. This amendment allows for the addition of the Glenorchy lands in Oakville to the Greenbelt while the Urban River Valley designation allows urban municipalities to consider making proposals to add land to the Greenbelt and permanently protect sensitive lands. This designation could be applied to Guelph's river valleys if approved by City Council. We will monitor the City's response to this announcement and report in a future newsletter.

The Urban River Valley designation promotes:

- Protection of natural heritage and hydrologic features and functions along urban river valleys;
- Provision of a gateway to the rural landscape of the Greenbelt; and
- Provision of a range of natural settings on publicly owned lands for recreational, cultural and tourism uses including parkland, open space land and trails.

For more information, see: <http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/Page187.aspx>

Notes for Novices #5 — What Is A Field Naturalist? by Kathleen Brown

A few decades ago, this club changed its name from Guelph Naturalists to Guelph Field Naturalists, fearful of being mistaken for a nudist club. What exactly is a field naturalist? If you see a person staring intently at something, who is wearing a battered Tilley hat (the more battered, the more expert), scruffy clothing and has several things hanging about the neck — binoculars, hand lens, camera, etc. — you have found one. Definitely confirmed if seen to consult a field guide. Such folks are mystifying to hikers who cannot imagine why anyone would stand on the same spot for ages, looking at the same thing — or taking complex close-up photos — but never seem to get anywhere.

Have you noticed two types of field naturalists — the specialist and the generalist? The specialist has a narrow field of interest with great depth of knowledge. The generalist, as you would expect, knows a little about many things, lacks depth but can join more conversations.

Specialist field naturalists represent a vast array of topics.

Here are a few identification hints. Bird watchers stare skywards most of the time, ignoring whatever grows around their feet or runs past them. They go out in all weathers and seasons, and you can tell where they fit

within the birdwatching hierarchy by their equipment; the one with opera glasses is a beginner. Mycophiles, on the other hand, stay on their couches for most of the year, venturing out when the weather is cool and moist, generally in the fall, hoping to find mushrooms that will not kill them.

Herptile fiends are also seasonal, going out on dark, spring nights, with strong lights, to find out which toad or frog is singing. Botanical types, hand lens at the ready, look down to see which plants are in bloom. Orchid hunters can be identified by the rubber boots and long poles they use to probe for the bottom in swamps and bogs. They depend on a GPS to find their car. Butterfly enthusiasts, wielding long handled nets, emerge on hot sunny days.

Generalist field naturalists, by contrast, go out in all seasons and weathers to look at whatever nature may present. Their heads are on swivels, looking every which way. It is useless to carry a field guide that will always be the wrong one. Instead, they have a whole library in the car to consult later. They

adjust their accoutrements to the weather — no point in taking a mushroom basket in winter or a butterfly net in the rain.



The Field Naturalist, by Stephen Lewis

Programs at the Guelph Lake Nature Centre

Sat Mar 9 Hoot & Howl 7-9pm

Sat Apr 13 Frog Frolic 8-10pm

Sat Apr 20 Guelph Rotary Forest Earth Day

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. **Note:** during the month of May hikes will go weekly on Thursdays. Please note there will be no Wednesday hikes during March, April and May as Mr. Salvadori is to be out of the country during that time.*
- *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.*

Thurs. Mar. 7th - **Long Point** - 8 am
Thurs. Mar. 21st - **Ruthven/Rock Point PP** - 8 am
Thurs. Apr. 4th - **Long Point** - 7 am
Thurs. Apr. 18th - **Hullett/Mitchell** - 7 am
Thurs. May 2nd - **Long Point** - 6 am
Thurs. May 9th - **Hamilton** - 6 am



Black-capped chickadee photo taken by one of our young Naturalists, Gavin McKinnon

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. Mar. 25th - TBA

Mon. Apr. 29th - **Warbler Workshop**

Bring your Field Guides

Marilyn Swaby Rock Art Painting

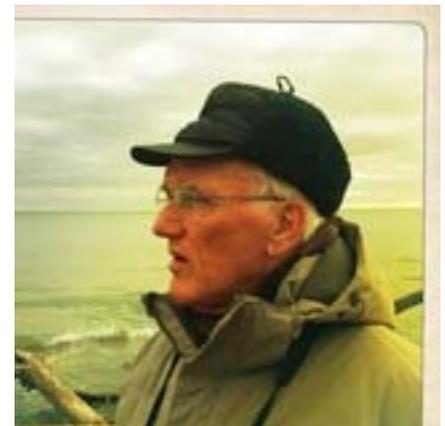


Marilyn has been creating lovely painted rocks as gifts for our outdoor presenters, and now you can have a specially commissioned one for yourself for only \$35!!

Contact Marilyn at p.m.swaby@rogers.com

REINDER WESTERHOFF 1943-2013

We have lost a long-time active member of the club. Reinder co-ordinated Guelph's efforts on behalf of the Bird Atlas, and he and Larry Staniforth were responsible for the "Trails Take Flight" brochure project set up by the GRCA. Reinder was passionately dedicated to lifelong learning and kindled this enthusiasm among his many students, friends and colleagues through intense discussion and cheerful provocation. An explorer in many respects, Reinder went far afield in both his intellectual pursuits and his travels, visiting historical and natural wonders across the world. His love of the outdoors was clear to anyone who knew him, as he spent much of his time walking in the woods, camping and canoeing in Algonquin and other parks, and birding with his dear friends. Reinder lived his life with great integrity and inspired many to do the same. He was a steadfast friend and loving father. His guidance and support as a teacher, scholar, mentor and spirited instigator will be deeply missed.



REINDER WESTERHOFF EDUCATION FUND

We are very pleased to announce that the club has received \$523.75 in donations in memory of Reinder. We have set up an education fund in his name in support of nature education for youth for these and for future donations to the Fund. Thank you to all donors. *John Prescott, GFN Treasurer*

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES — Jessica Klawunn

SATURDAY MARCH 16TH — RIFFLE POOL AQUATIC INSECT EXPLORATION

Come join expert entomologist Dr. Stephen Marshall from the University of Guelph for an exciting look into the lives of aquatic insects! Meet at the Scout Camp Parking Lot on Stone Road East at 10 am. From there we will explore the river and see what we uncover. You might be surprised to find how many insects are still active in the winter months. Bring a pair of rubber boots, appropriate clothing and a sense of discovery! If the weather is unsuitable on this day then Sunday March 17th at 10 am is the rain date.

SATURDAY MARCH 23RD — BEAMER'S POINT NIAGARA HAWKWATCH

In spring, the cold waters of Lakes Ontario and Erie do not produce thermals and the birds of prey migrating north into Ontario must go around these two bodies of water. The two lakes create a funneling effect, so that large numbers of birds of prey fly directly over the Niagara Peninsula. Beamer Memorial Conservation Area, located on the top of the escarpment overlooking Grimsby, is an ideal observation point for hawk enthusiasts. Meet leaders John Prescott and Candice Talbot in the OVC Main Building parking lot (corner of Gordon St. and College Ave.) at 11 am, bring lunch. Cancelled if raining; we'll leave Beamer's by 3 pm.

SUNDAY APRIL 14TH — VERNAL POOL STUDY

Springtime in Canada gives us some of the most beautiful and fleeting transformations that nature has to offer. Some of the most amazing transitions take place in our own backyards. A vernal pool is a temporary puddle of water that forms in the spring. The appearance of these pools signals a mass emergence of organisms that have been dormant throughout the winter months. Join Outdoor Program Coordinator Jessica Klawunn for a look into the fascinating world of these spring treasures.

Meet in the Arboretum parking lot by the East Residence Townhouses at 11 am

GFN EXECUTIVE POSITION CHANGE

The GFN would like to thank Kyle Horner for his outstanding work as Outdoor Program Coordinator since 2011. Kyle is passing the Outdoor Programs position over to Jessica Klawunn so he can concentrate on other activities in his life including his new position as an Interpreter at the Royal Botanical Gardens. We appreciate Kyle's efforts to schedule two outdoor events a month for the GFN membership, not an easy task! Jessica has already hit the ground running with three outdoor events scheduled for you, see above for details. Come on out!

GFN TRACKING CLUB

The Tracking Club outings are an opportunity to get outdoors and find some interesting tracks and signs of Ontario wildlife. Please bring a lunch, water and a tracking field guide (Mark Elbroch's *Guide to Mammal Tracks* is excellent). Dress to be outdoors!

Sunday March 17 Cumnock Tract Meet at 10am

Sunday April 14th Luther Marsh Meet at 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
frogforest@hotmail.com

NEARBY NATURALIST CLUBS' MEETINGS

KITCHENER/WATERLOO

Monday Mar 25th, 7:30 pm

Battle to Save Canada's Great Bear Rainforest
(from proposed oil pipeline and supertankers)
Documentary Film + Q&A Opportunity

Monday Apr 22nd

Mammalian Friendships and Giraffe Studies by Anne Dagg

See www.kwfn.ca

HALTON NORTH PEEL

Tuesday March 13th, 7:30 pm

Canada's katydid of the bogs: boreal love calls and elastic energy by Glen Morris

Tuesday April 10th, 7:30 pm

Silence of the Songbirds by Bridget Stutchbury
See www.hnpsc.com

HAMILTON

Monday March 11th, 7:30 pm

The Travels of a Young Naturalist by Matt Timpf

Monday, April 8th, 7:30 pm

Fungi: Friend or Foe? by Kyle McLoughlin

See www.hamiltonnature.org

BAD NEWS / GOOD NEWS — *Marnie Benson*

I have two stories about wildlife and wild places to share with you. One is a good news story, the other... not so good. I figure I will share the bad news with you first, so that we can end on a good note.

RULING IN BIRD COLLISIONS CASE - NOVEMBER 2012

Environmental groups and animal rights advocates lost a landmark lawsuit recently in the long struggle to curb fatal bird collisions with buildings. More than two years ago, Ontario Nature and Ecojustice, an environmental law firm, launched an unprecedented action against Menkes Developments in Toronto, claiming more than 800 birds were killed or crippled after crashing into its Consilium Place property between 2008 and 2009. The high rise towers in Scarborough were long considered Toronto's deadliest building complex for bird strikes. The prosecution had argued that reflected light deceives birds into believing that the building's windows are continuous sky. According to the non-profit Fatal Light Awareness Program (FLAP), which has tracked bird collisions in the GTA since 2003, more than 7,000 birds slammed into Consilium's windows between 2000 and 2010. FLAP has estimated at least one million birds die in Toronto-area building collisions each year as they fly northward on popular migratory paths over Lake Ontario. The judgment, issued by provincial court ruling, dismissed three charges against Menkes leveled under the federal Environmental Protection Act and the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act. While the judge acknowledged that it is indisputable birds are dying at Consilium Place, he maintained that Menkes could not be held responsible for the natural discharge and reflection of sunlight — and made no active effort to harm birds.

Since being made aware of the magnitude of the loss, the building's owners have made attempts to fix the problem. Working with FLAP, Menkes retrofitted the towers with an outer-layer film designed to steer birds away. The company also established "bird action sta-

tions" to assist FLAP volunteers in their efforts to collect and tag bird strike victims, and obtained a federal permit to salvage dead birds on site. These efforts have been successful as the number of collisions is down dramatically, though Ecojustice lawyers are adamant that legislative action is needed.

Ecojustice lawyers are expecting a federal court ruling soon in a similar suit against another property owner in Toronto, Cadillac Fairview Corporation. Let's hope this ruling turns out more favourable for our feathered friends.

AND NOW FOR THE GOOD NEWS...

The Québec government recently announced the creation of the largest provincial park in Canada. One of the largest protected natural areas in the world, Tursujuq Park covers 26,000 square kilometres and permanently protects a significant proportion of the Nastapoka watershed. Located on the eastern coast of Hudson Bay in Nunavik, near the Inuit village of Umiujaq, the park will permanently protect many exceptional ecological and cultural features.

The Nastapoka is home to the world's only population of landlocked freshwater harbour seals and the only salmon population on the eastern side of Hudson Bay, is an important sanctuary for endangered beluga whales, and is a culturally significant traditional meeting place for aboriginal families.

This announcement was the result of years of effort on the part of local Inuit and Cree, the Kativik Regional Government, and a write-in campaign initiated by the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society. To see some of the stunning photos of this new park, check out:

<http://snapqc.org/en/index.php/communiqués/quebec-creates-its-largest-park>

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GFN CALENDAR – UPCOMING EVENTS AT A GLANCE

| | | | | |
|-------------|-------------------|-----------------------|----------|-----------------------|
| Thur Mar 7 | Bird Wing Hike | Long Point | 8:00 am | WBU |
| Thur Mar 14 | Indoor Meeting | Biodiversity | 7:30 pm | Arboretum |
| Sat Mar 16 | Outdoor Activity | Aquatic Insects | 10:00 am | Barber Scout Camp |
| Sun Mar 17 | Tracking Club | Cumnock Tract | 10:00 am | GLNC |
| Thur Mar 21 | Bird Wing Hike | Ruthven/Rock Point PP | 8:00 am | WBU |
| Sat Mar 23 | Outdoor Activity | Hawks | 11:00 am | OVC |
| Mon Mar 25 | Bird Wing Meeting | TBA | 7:30 pm | Ellington |
| Thur Apr 4 | Bird Wing Hike | Long Point | 7:00 am | WBU |
| Thur Apr 11 | Indoor Meeting | Food | 7:30 pm | Arboretum |
| Sun Apr 14 | Tracking Club | Luther Marsh | 9:30 am | GLNC |
| Sun Apr 14 | Outdoor Activity | Vernal Pools | 11:00 am | Arboretum Parking Lot |
| Thur Apr 18 | Bird Wing Hike | Hullett/Mitchell | 7:00 am | WBU |
| Mon Apr 29 | Bird Wing Meeting | Warbler Workshop | 7:30 pm | Ellington |
| Thur May 2 | Bird Wing Hike | Long Point | 6:00 am | WBU |

CANADIANS VALUE PROTECTION FOR SPECIES AT RISK From *Bird Studies Canada* 21 December 2012



White-headed Woodpecker. G. Bartley

According to a new Ipsos Reid poll released today, Canadians overwhelmingly support a strong federal government commitment to protecting species at risk in Canada – no matter where they are found, and regardless of their status in other countries. The poll, which was commissioned by the Canadian Wildlife Federation, indicates that 97% of Canadians view protecting Canada's endangered animals and plants as an important issue. A large majority (85%) also agree that federal laws protecting species at risk are essential to the diversity and abundance of wildlife, which in turn are crucial to our economy and health. Visit www.cwf-fcf.org