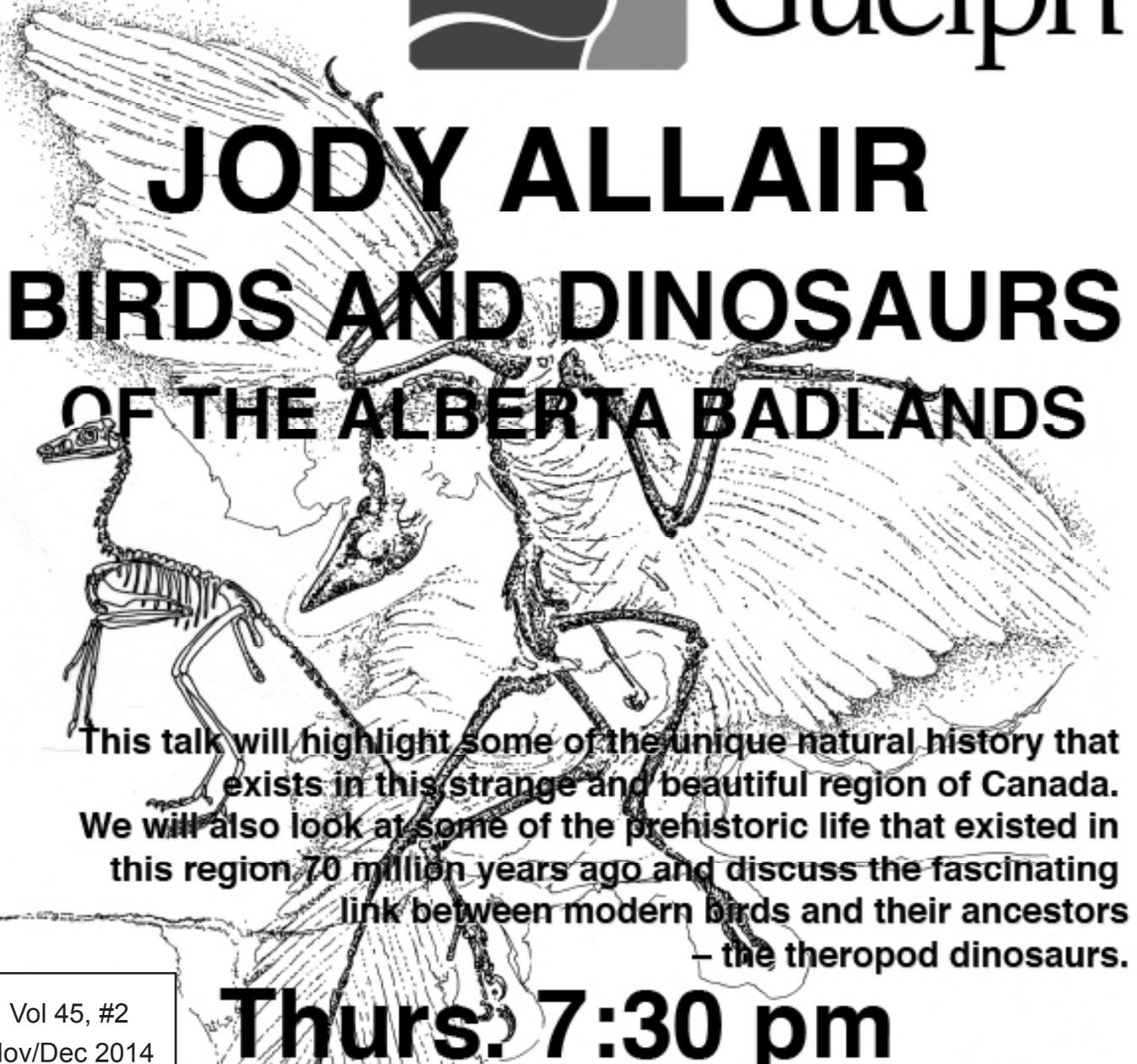


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**JODY ALLAIR**  
**BIRDS AND DINOSAURS**  
**OF THE ALBERTA BADLANDS**

This talk will highlight some of the unique natural history that exists in this strange and beautiful region of Canada. We will also look at some of the prehistoric life that existed in this region 70 million years ago and discuss the fascinating link between modern birds and their ancestors – the theropod dinosaurs.

Vol 45, #2  
Nov/Dec 2014

**Thurs. 7:30 pm**

**November 13th 2014**

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<http://natureguelph.ca/>

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## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE — Jenn Bock**

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While trying to decide what to write about this time, it occurred to me that the recent wet, chilly weather has been keeping me inside a little more than usual, and I'm sure I'm not the only one! I have a theory that if people let the dipping temperatures get to them now, they might be more likely to hunker down and hibernate indoors until warmer weather returns in the spring.

So, in order to combat a naturalist's potential cold-weather blues, I would like to propose a "get up and get outside" challenge! I've come up with a fun list of activities that you can aim to complete over the next few months:

Join a group hike/attend a guided hike – This would be an awesome way to explore a new area, learn something new and make some great new friends! Obviously, I'd like to suggest any of the Nature Guelph outdoor programs, but there are also many others offered by groups like the Guelph Hiking Trail Club, other local naturalist clubs, etc.

Explore a new natural area – The city of Guelph has SO MANY wonderful natural areas to explore! Have you been to Preservation Park? The Yorklands? Starkey's Hill? The Guelph Lake Conservation Area? Why not try to find a new place to explore!?

Relax in nature – This is one that I often overlook, but taking a little time to relax in your favourite spot, whether it's deep in the woods or on a peaceful park bench, can have enormous benefits! Why not put on a warm sweater, fill your thermal mug, grab a book (perhaps a field guide) and take a little time to unwind outside?

Try nature photography – Searching for a new way to enjoy nature? Why not use your camera (or the camera function on your Smartphone) to look at simple natural things from a whole new angle. Photograph a pretty landscape or a neat spider web and share it with your friends!

Borrow or purchase a new field guide – If you're feeling the cold and making excuses to stay inside, a new guide might be just the boost you need to keep at it! Why not swing by the library or the bookstore to look for something new? Maybe you've never looked closely at moths, winter tree ID or fungi... What better time than now?!

So, Nature Guelph, I'm hoping that you'll dive in with me, try some of these fun, new ways to enjoy nature and beat the cold weather blues!

See you out there!!

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## **NEWSLETTER — Sandra MacGregor and Susan Atkinson**

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The newsletter is published five times a year – every two months except July and August. Please send all contributions for the next issue (Jan/Feb) to [Susan Atkinson](#). The deadline is December 20th. Thank you to all contributors. Stephen Lewis is our front page artist — thank you 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 Susan if you have anything to sell or there is something you want to acquire.

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## INDOOR PROGRAM — Peter Kelly

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.natureguelph.ca](http://www.natureguelph.ca). 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.** We ask that you do not use perfumes out of respect for people who are allergic to them. The entrance to the Arboretum is on College Avenue just west of Victoria Road. For a map see: <http://www.uoguelph.ca/arboretum/thingstosee/printmap.shtml>

### **Thursday November 13th — BIRDS AND DINOSAURS OF THE ALBERTA BADLANDS, Jody Allair, Biologist and Science Educator, Bird Studies Canada**

Join Bird Studies Canada biologist Jody Allair for a look at the amazing world of the southern Alberta badlands. This talk will highlight some of the unique natural history that exists in this strange and beautiful region of Canada. We will also look at some of the prehistoric life that existed in this region 70 million years ago and discuss the fascinating link between modern birds and their ancestors – the theropod dinosaurs.

### **Thursday December 11th — POTLUCK AND MEMBERS' NIGHT, 6PM**

This is the meeting when members show us pictures from their recent trips. Please let Peter Kelly (our past president/indoor programs coordinator) know if you have a presentation to make so it can be fit into the schedule. Come for a delicious potluck dinner, and stay for our members' presentations which will begin at about 7:15 pm.

\*\* Please note early start time of 6:00 pm for this event

For the potluck, please bring a dish that corresponds to the first letter of your last name. Each dish should feed about six people.

A-H ~ a main dish (casserole, lasagna . .)

I-P ~ a salad (leafy, bean . .)

Q-Z ~ a dessert (pie, squares, cake . .)

Don't forget a plate and cutlery, and a cup and something cool to drink if you wish! The usual coffee, tea, and hot chocolate will be provided. If you can't bring food, bring yourself anyway. There will likely be spare dishes available too.

### NATURE GUELPH EXECUTIVE POSITIONS AVAILABLE

Several executive members have retired so some positions are open. If you are interested in any of them, please let any current members of the executive know. It is a fun group to work with, and of course you know your volunteer time goes towards spreading the word about Nature to our community.

- Vice President
- Outdoor Program Coordinator

You can find details of what each position entails by asking the current holder, or obtaining a copy of our bylaws and procedures.

### Nature Guelph Membership

The annual memberships are now overdue. You may renew your membership (if you haven't already done so) online through our website [www.natureguelph.ca](http://www.natureguelph.ca) and click on "Memberships"; By mail to Nature Guelph, Box 1401, Guelph, Ontario, N1H 6N8; or in person at any monthly meeting.

There are now only Regular Memberships \$25 and Student Memberships \$10. (N.B. The Newsletter Application form from the Sept/Oct issue was incorrect.) Sorry for any confusion this causes.

D. J. Churchill  
Membership Coordinator, Nature Guelph

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## TRACKING CLUB — Tamara Anderson

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### TWILIGHT TRACKING — SEPTEMBER — KIERA'S FOREST, GUELPH

The tracking Club took a brief pause during the summer months and started up again in September for two evening tracking programs in Kiera's Forest, near the Guelph Lake Nature Centre.

After crossing Conservation Road and heading into the wilds of Kiera's forest, we encountered a "snake board". We did not find any snakes underneath but we saw signs of Northern Short-Tailed Shrews. We noted a well-used shrew trail dug into the soil and signs of chewing made by tiny incisor marks carving into the corner of the board. Underneath a second board, we discovered the remains of a bird and a broken egg shell.

After finding several vole highways across the trail and looking for evidence of vole scat and vole nests, we wandered over to Deer Hoof Pond. This pond is a great spot to look for leopard frogs and deer prints. We saw the tracks of a mother doe and her fawn moving across the muddy shore of the pond. The trail contin-

The trail descended close to the forest. Suddenly, we noticed a deer out in the grassy field – in grey and brown winter colouring. As our eyes adjusted, we saw 3 more deer grazing. A brown bat circled overhead and a quick movement to our Northside, revealed a woodcock flying over the wildflowers and into a Maple tree nearby. Then another shape flew by, to the South of us. It flew low



*Signs of American Woodcock Feeding*



ued to meander up the hill towards the Memorial forest grove and we paused to look closer at potential signs of the American Woodcock. We noticed beak marks probing into the soft soil beside the muddy laneway – a woodcock in search of worms most likely.

At the top of the hill, we enjoyed a glorious view of purple, gold and white asters in full, fall colour. Near the lookout, a clear deer print pointed like an arrow, eastward towards the adjacent farm fields and we decided to follow it. At this point, twilight began to settle in and we walked parallel with a line of old maples, ever watchful of the nearby fields.

and quick, heading Northward with narrow wings and a long tail. It was a Nighthawk! These amazing birds flash white patches out past the bend of each wing as they chase insects. I learned that Nighthawks are not hawks but instead, are closely related to Nightjars. Nighthawk numbers are also unfortunately, declining. I read that they have one of the longest migration routes of all North American birds – migrating as far as Chile, where they spend their winter months in South America.

While returning to the cars, we enjoyed listening to the chorus of crickets, grasshoppers and toads trilling. Sleeping birds rustled in the branches as we walked past their evening roost. I was content watching and hearing the sparrows and goldfinches gather during the last light of the day. They must have been eager to share the day's news with one another and reconnect – just like us! I am grateful for the Canadian twilight in September and as always, for fun friends to go tracking with.

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The Tracking Club will continue all year. If you would like to be on the contact list, please email Tamara at [frog-forest@hotmail.com](mailto:frog-forest@hotmail.com). Find dates of future Tracking Club activities and follow the discoveries on its blog: <http://natureguelphtracking.wordpress.com/> which can also be found on our website under Programs/Outdoor.

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## NEARBY NATURALIST CLUBS' MEETINGS

**K-W FIELD NATURALISTS** See [www.kwfn.ca](http://www.kwfn.ca)

**Monday, Oct 27, 7:30pm**

80th anniversary of KWFN, Speaker Mary Ann Vanden Elzen

**Monday, Nov 24, 7:30pm**

Redefining Our Relationship To Nature with Brendon Larson

**HALTON NORTH PEEL NATURE CLUB** See [www.hnpnc.com](http://www.hnpnc.com)

**Tuesday Nov 11, 7:30pm,**

Damselflies and dragonflies with David d'Entremont, Terrestrial Ecologist, Royal Botanical Gardens

**HAMILTON NATURALIST CLUB** See [www.hamiltonnature.org](http://www.hamiltonnature.org)

**Monday Nov 10th, 7:00pm**

Gardening for the Bees and Butterflies with Brenda Van Ryswyk

**Monday, December 8th**

Native Plant Gardening in the Golden Horseshoe with Paul O'Hara.

**RARE** See [www.raresites.org](http://www.raresites.org)

**Thursday Nov 13th, 6:30pm**

Bugs and Food Plants in a Naturalist Garden with Anne and Alan Morgan

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## ONTARIO NATURE HOLIDAY CARDS FOR SALE

Once again Ontario Nature has produced a beautiful Holiday/Christmas card. Wish your family and friends a festive holiday season with these exclusive 2014 holiday cards featuring a photo of the evening grosbeak and a nature-inspired message. These cards come in packs of 10, and their purchase benefits both Ontario Nature and Nature Guelph. They will be available at the November 13th and December 11th general meetings. Please see the website for more details ([http://www.ontarionature.org/give/other\\_ways\\_to\\_give/holiday\\_cards.php](http://www.ontarionature.org/give/other_ways_to_give/holiday_cards.php))



**Evening Grosbeak**

The gregarious evening grosbeak is a must-see on every bird enthusiast's list. It breeds across northern Ontario to the southern edge of the Canadian Shield. Often feeding in flocks, the evening grosbeak's diet varies from fruits and seeds to larvae and caterpillars. Watch for this charismatic bird in northern Ontario in the summer and central and southern Ontario in the winter.

Proceeds from the sale of this card are used to further Ontario Nature's conservation programs.  
Photo: Robert McCaw

## AUTUMN SYMPHONY — A Poem by Tamara Anderson

This prelude begins with dreams of animals.  
I wake up, surrounded by a chorus of coyotes.  
I listen to the soft sounds of the owls -  
As they call to each other in a romantic duet.

A dusting of frost coats the landscape.  
The concert begins with gentle yellows warming the earth.  
Apples glow red in the crisp air where the red squirrels have cached them.  
Merlins fly overhead and the wind commences.

Hawks and vultures ride thermals, elevating them into the blue sky.  
Monarch butterflies dance in the wind towards tree-lined mountains.  
The Darner dragonflies follow them southwest along the waterways.  
Blue Jays and crows announce their presence as the animals gather.

Robins sample the purple, red, yellow and orange berries that are ready for harvest.  
Caterpillars roll colourful leaves into cocoon sleeping bags.  
Young caramel-coloured goldfinches beg for seeds from patient parents.  
Chickadees use quiet, acrobatic movements to hunt for bugs in the cedars.

Red maple leaves crunch under my feet.  
When the wind blows, orange pine needles fall like snow onto the forest floor.  
Along the river, I see osprey heading southwest and a coot dabbling along the shore.  
The tiny creatures are preparing for winter too – going deep into the oxygen-rich water.

We are stacking firewood, and then planting trees to continue the cycle.  
We pause to snack on wild cranberries that are mildly fermented by the frosts.  
Wood smoke sweetens the cold air.  
It is time to head home for thanksgiving.

Sparrows sing solos in the gloaming as the sun bathes the fields in orange light.  
Toads trill quietly in accompaniment to the approaching evening.  
Crickets provide the strings and grasshoppers provide percussion for the night-time orchestra.  
Nighthawks soar above feeding deer as twilight sets in with a graceful, musical finale.



**Guelph Lake Nature Centre**  
Sunday June 22nd 11am-3pm  
**Party In The Park**  
A day of fun with critter shows, games, etc.

Please Visit [www.grandriver.ca](http://www.grandriver.ca) for  
information about all GRCA family programs



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**YOUNG NATS ADVENTURES — A PHOTO JOURNAL BY MARILYN SWABY**

## Bugs and Caves

*To start off our new season of sessions, we had our bug hunt on a perfect September autumn day. We found 43 bugs. Praying mantis and woolly caterpillars were stars, of course. We are so delighted with our group this year. The few new kids*



*easily became part of the group. And the enthusiasm of the kids and parents made the morning so interesting and fun.*



*In October we went out to investigate caves. We (kids and parents) had a perfect fall day to crawl through three caves, look for salamanders and scamper around the river's edge. It was a 1 km hike in to the caves at Rockwood Conservation and then back again but we enjoyed it!*



### NATS AND NITS

Nature Guelph runs two programs for young nature lovers: the Young Naturalists (ages 6-10) and the Naturalists in Training (ages 11-16), affectionately known as the NATs and NITs. They are offered in two sessions: fall and winter. NATs is sold out but NITs still has some places available: For more information, please contact Guelph Lake Nature Center at 519-836-7860.

\*\$40.00/child for fall session

Saturday November 1 – Survival Skills (1 – 4)

Saturday December 6 - Bird Banding with Dave Lambie (9-11)

Saturday December 20 – Solstice Celebration (10 – 12)-families welcome for potluck lunch 12 -1pm

\*\$50.00/child for winter session

Saturday January 31 – Owl Prowl (7 – 9pm)

Saturday February 28 – Predator Prey Game with the Young Nats (10-12)

Saturday March 14 – Animal Tracking (1 – 4pm)

## REVENUE CANADA TAKES AIM AT BIRDERS

Recently Revenue Canada sent the Kitchener-Waterloo Field Naturalists, a registered charity, a warning about political material on their website. The group was told that such material runs a serious risk of contravening tax rules that limit political or partisan activities.

According to a recent story on *CBC News*, the Kitchener-Waterloo Field Naturalists received a "stern missive that says the group must take appropriate action as necessary "including refraining from undertaking any partisan activities," with the ominous warning that "this letter does not preclude any future audits." For more on the story, visit the *CBC News* website at, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/revenue-canada-targets-birdwatchers-for-political-activity-1.2799546>

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## TRACKING CLUB MEETINGS

The Nature Guelph Tracking Club is up and running again. These outings are open to anyone and everyone interested in identifying animal tracks – all skill levels are welcome. Please bring water and a lunch for the Sunday tracking programs, and dress for the weather. If you have questions, contact Tamara Anderson at [frogforest@hotmail.com](mailto:frogforest@hotmail.com). The following dates and locations are scheduled for this fall:

### **Sunday November 23**

Meet at the Guelph Lake Nature Centre  
9:00am - 1:00pm

### **Sunday December 21**

Meet at the Guelph Lake Nature Centre to carpool to Orangeville.  
9:00am - 1:00pm (approximate finish time)

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## BIRD WING INDOOR MEETINGS & OUTDOOR HIKES

### **INDOOR:**

Meetings are the last Monday of the month from September thru May in the basement common area at the Ellington Residences, 168 Metcalfe St. at 7:30 pm. Entrance is via the covered ramp on the north east end of the building. Anyone willing to give a presentation is asked to contact Bruce Weaver at 519-824-9052/ [b.weaver@rogers.com](mailto:b.weaver@rogers.com)

**Monday, October 27:** Kelly Balkom, Local Birds

**Monday November 24 :** Dave Brewer, Bird Quiz

**Monday December 29 & Jan 26:** TBA

### **OUTDOOR:**

**In Search of Snowies with Larry Staniforth** (contact: [staniforth.larry@rogers.com](mailto:staniforth.larry@rogers.com)), Sunday, Dec. 21, 9 am. We will visit the St. Jacobs/Hawkesville area in search of Snowy Owls, Roughlegged Hawks, and other raptors and winter birds. Bring some snacks and refreshments, as there are few places in this area to purchase lunch. We will try to be back in Guelph for 2 pm. Please dress for the weather. It can be very cold and windy in this area. Meet at the Canadian Tire Parking lot (HWY 6 and Woodlawn), and we will carpool from there.

**Niagara Gull trip** led by Dr. David Brewer Sunday, Dec. 7, 8 am. Meet at Wild Birds Unlimited parking lot at 8 am, we will carpool from there. Dress for the weather. We will stop for lunch/warmup at a local restaurant in Niagara.

**Hamilton Gull trip**, Wed, Dec 10 Hamilton Area 9 am. Meet at the WBU parking lot. Dress warmly. We will have lunch at a local restaurant in the Hamilton area. We will be searching for wintering Waterfowl, and other winter birds. Likely back in Guelph by 4pm.

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## A BIRDER MURDER — John Prescott

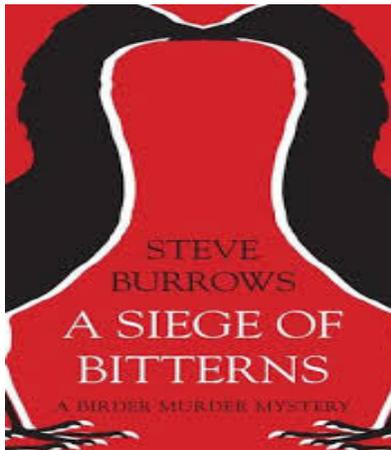
A SIEGE OF BITTERNS: A BIRDER MURDER MYSTERY, BY STEVE BURROWS. DUNDURN PRESS, 2014, 352 PP., C15.99.

Canadian-born Chief Inspector Dominic Jejeune is a rising star detective and good birder, recently recruited to work in North Norfolk in the United Kingdom.

The birding mind and culture is well portrayed, in part through the constant distraction that Norfolk birds provide to Jejeune as he investigates the murder.

In this first of what I hope will be many birder murder mysteries, Jejeune investigates the bizarre murder of a local birder, TV celebrity naturalist, and self-proclaimed warden of the important marshes of this UK birding hotspot.

Jejeune is an enigma to his soccer-loving colleagues, and to this reader, but the book leaves you wanting to learn more about him. Although Jejeune was turned onto birding in Ontario, the book is firmly set in England and in English society, seen through the eyes of the police.



There's an eccentricity of birders running through the story that gives it wonderful authenticity.

Would a birder actually murder another birder to stop him getting the county birding record? Seems unlikely, but it appears to be Jejeune's first thought about motive. It's a nasty

thought. The plot twists and turns, littered with clues and false leads, and the murder is finally solved by a deep knowledge of birds and bird behavior.

This is a delightful birder murder mystery novel with a slightly Canadian flavour.

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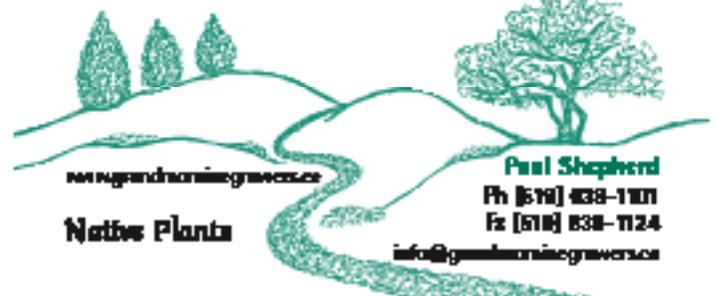
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Guelph, ON N1H 6N8

Our website address

[www.natureguelph.ca](http://www.natureguelph.ca)



# Nature Guelph

## NG CALENDAR – UPCOMING EVENTS AT A GLANCE

Thur Nov 13	..... Indoor Meeting	..... Alberta Badlands Birds and Dinosaurs	7:30 pm	..... Arboretum
Sun Nov. 23	..... Outdoor Meeting	..... Tracking Club Guelph	9:00am - 1:00pm	..... Guelph Lake Nature Centre
Thur Dec 11	..... Indoor Meeting	..... Potluck and Members' Night	6:00 pm	..... Arboretum
Sun Dec 21	..... Outdoor Meeting	..... Tracking Club Guelph	9:00am - 1:00pm	..... Meet at the Guelph Lake Nature Centre to carpool to Orangeville
Mon Oct 27	..... Indoor Meeting	..... BirdWing, Kelly Balkolm, Local Birds	7:30 pm	..... Ellington Residences
Mon Nov.24	..... Indoor Meeting	..... BirdWing, Dave Brewer, Bird Quiz	7:30 pm	..... Ellington Residences

*“Autumn...the year's last, loveliest smile.”*

William Cullen Bryant