



# Nature Guelph

invites you to hear  
songbird biologist

## Mike Cadman

### WHAT'S HAPPENING TO OUR AERIAL INSECTIVORES?

Describing the situation and discussing  
the research being undertaken to explain  
the decline.

## Thurs.

## 7:30 pm

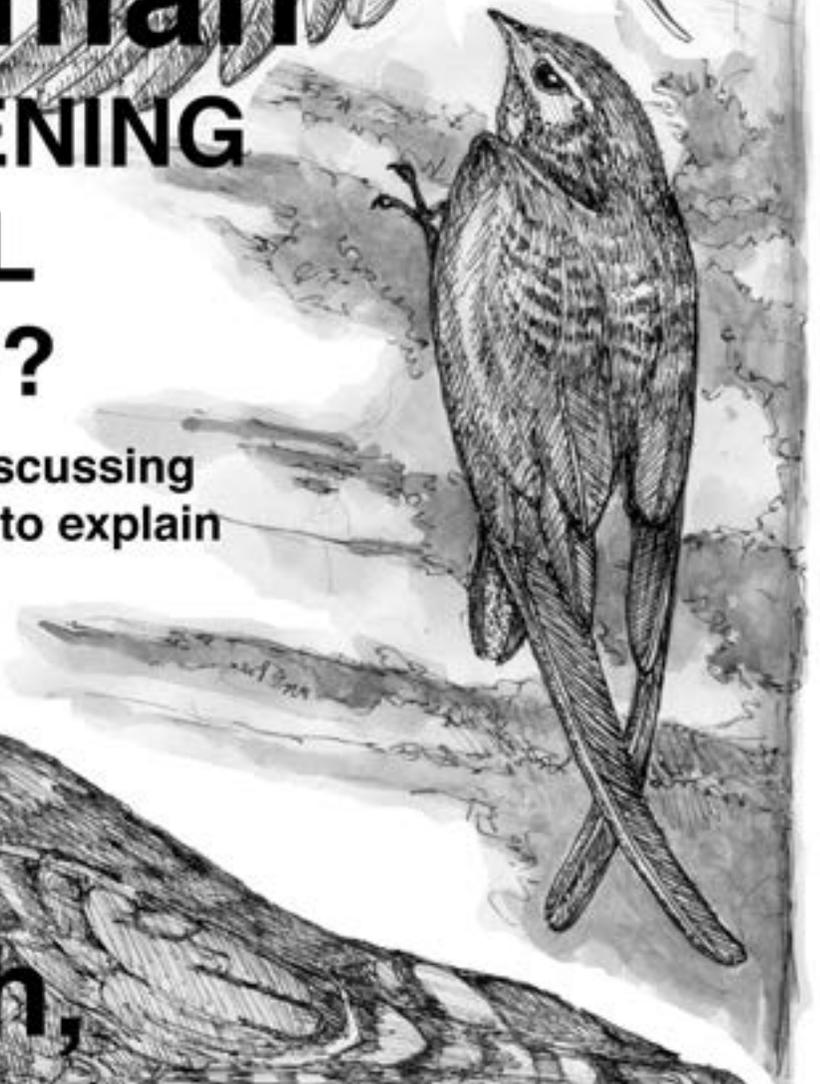
## January 8th,

## 2015

U OF G  
ARBORETUM CENTRE  
EVERYONE WELCOME

Vol 45, #3  
Jan/Feb 2015

<http://natureguelph.ca/>



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**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE — Jenn Bock**

*“But what can I do to help save our planet?”*

What a wonderful question! As nature lovers, I'm sure you've all heard it before. Whether it came from a friend, grandchild, student or a stranger on the street, it's so important to be prepared to provide an inspiring answer that will encourage the questioner to ACT. Here are some of my favourite answers:

1. The standard “stuff you can do around your home” answer. We all know about the simple, small differences that can be made by turning the water off while you brush your teeth, selecting groceries with minimal packaging and planting a pollinator garden, but sometimes people (especially young people) might need to be reminded about the very real positive impact their choices can make.

2. Citizen science! As I write this, we're right in the middle of Christmas Bird Count season – the 43rd. Guelph CBC was a huge success and the 4th Guelph CBC 4 Kids is sure to be a blast! And while there are certainly plenty of opportunities to volunteer for special events like the CBC, doing citizen science can be as simple as making a list of the things you observed while out on a nature walk. Professional scientists simply can't be out studying all of the natural

spaces all the time! But as luck would have it... keen nature lovers are already out there!

I also love the idea of using citizen science as a new way to engage young people. Turn a walk through the woods into a science quest, or a boring breakfast into a feeder watch challenge! Another benefit of doing citizen science with kids – they probably understand the data submission program (eBird, the Ontario Nature Herp Atlas app, the new EDDMapS invasive species reporting app, etc.) better than we do!

3. My very favourite... BE EXCITED ABOUT NATURE! When it comes to the next generation, I really don't think anything can have a greater impact than simply encouraging them to be excited about nature. Love it. Care about it. Tell their friends about how awesome frogs are...

I take every chance I can get to remind young people that if every kid in the whole city (or better yet, the whole province or country!) could see how AMAZING nature is, our world would be a better place in a few short years. I truly think this is our big chance. We need to build an army of young nature lovers and that starts with sharing as many enjoyable, engaging nature experiences as possible with the young people in our lives!

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**NEWSLETTER — Sandra MacGregor and Susan Atkinson**

The newsletter is published five times a year – every two months except July and August. Please send all contributions for the next issue (March/April) to [Susan Atkinson](#). The deadline is February 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

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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 January 8th — “WHAT’S HAPPENING TO OUR AERIAL INSECTIVORES?” Mike Cadman, Songbird Biologist, Canadian Wildlife Service.**

The aerial insectivores (swallows, swifts and nightjars) are showing the largest decline of any bird group in Canada, and the reason is a mystery. This talk describes the situation and examines the research to explain the decline.

**Thursday February 12th — “A WALK ON THE WILD SIDE: THE BIOLOGY OF MANGROVE FORESTS” Andy Turko, PhD Candidate, Department of Integrative Biology, University of Guelph.**

Andy's talk will cover the biology of New World mangrove ecosystems. Mangrove forests are important nursery grounds for many commercially important fishes (such as snapper and grouper) and also provide important habitat for many reptiles, birds, and mammals.

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## Nature Guelph Welcomes the Wildflower Society — Renuited at Last!

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We are thrilled to report that the Guelph Wildflower Society has now officially joined Nature Guelph. The Wildflower Society was actually formed several decades ago when a group of Guelph Field Naturalist members particularly interested in botany decided to form their own group. They are now (re)joining Nature Guelph as a distinct—but integrated—part of our membership, with their own meetings (which all are invited to attend) and newsletter items. We are happy to have the Wildflower Society with us and we are sure they will have much to contribute to our group.

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## Letter to Nature Guelph from Naomi Foran, one of the two youths sponsored by Nature Guelph (with the Reinder Westerhoff Memorial Fund ) to attend the Biodiversity Conference in September

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I want to thank you for sponsoring me to attend the 2014 Ontario Nature Youth Summit. This was a fantastic experience for me because of all the new people I met and all the information I gathered.

I learned about many different aspects of nature through some excellent workshops. My first workshop on Saturday was Bee Box building where we learnt about the habitats being taken away from bees and the pesticides that threaten bees. My next workshop was Foraging Foods from Forests. I learnt how to identify edible wilds and some of their lookalikes. My last workshop was Lets Get Wild, where I got to see a kestrel and learnt that, other than the humming bird, kestrels are the only birds in Ontario that can “hover” without any wind. We then met a Red Tailed Hawk and discovered that when they circle they are actually spiraling up a thermal vent. We also saw a Turkey Vulture, which we learnt evolved from a stork. The last bird we met was a Great Horned Owl and I was surprised to learn they have the strongest talons of birds (to scale).

The first workshop on Sunday was Maps that Croak, Peep and Slither where we got to be hands-on and catch salamanders and leopard frogs. My last workshop of the weekend was DIY Terrariums, where we filled our terrariums with different plants and moss that we collected from the wild. Also on Sunday we had a presentation by Adria Vasil, the author of *Echoholic Body*. She told us about some harmful ingredients that are in the products we use daily, such as micro beads in face cream. Thank you for the fantastic weekend!

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## Ontario Nature Report – by Mary Ellen Pyear

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On November 1, Jenn Bock, Peter Kelly and I attended the Ontario Nature regional fall meeting at Laurel Creek in K-W which was chaired by Lisa Richardson of ON. The highlights were as follows:

An announcement was made of an upcoming ON Webinar which happened on Nov. 26th when 44 naturalists and other members of the conservation community joined the inaugural webinar on the Greenway Program hosted by Josh Wise and Sarah Hedges. If you would like to join future webinars, contact the ON office in Toronto at [www.ontarionature.org](http://www.ontarionature.org) or call 416-444-8419 to register. Ontario Nature has joined several environmental groups across northern and eastern Ontario to oppose the Energy East pipeline. TransCanada Pipelines will use existing lines, which previously carried natural gas to now transport diluted bitumen over 4,400 kilometers, from southern Alberta to New Brunswick. ON reports this corporation's safety record has not been good; they have had 13 explosions since 1992 and at least 64 spillage incidents since 2000. For further information, to watch a video and/or to sign a petition, visit Nature Network News at [www.ontarionature.org](http://www.ontarionature.org).

In May 2014, the Youth Council of ON delivered more than 1200 signed postcards to Queen's Park asking the Premier to restrict the use of neonicotinoids, which have been severely affecting bee populations worldwide. On November 25th, the provincial government announced a plan to reduce neonicotinoid use on corn and soybean

crops by 80% by 2017. While ON reports that some farmers are apprehensive about making changes this quickly, most farmers across the province are willing to try to meet the bold targets set out by the Liberal government. The province also announced the Pollinator Health Action Plan to help Ontarions understand and address the causes of pollinator decline.

Staff at ON have provided the following information/links for Nature Guelph members to become more informed about this very important issue.

Immediately below is the link to the Environmental Registry (within which there are links to the government's proposal etc.):

<http://www.ebr.gov.on.ca/ERS-WEB-External/displaynoticecontent.do?noticeId=MTIzOTE5&statusId=MTg2ND A3&language=en>

The deadline for public comment is January 25. ON is encouraging as many people as possible to respond. The message is very simple: express full support for the government's proposal to create a Pollinator Health Action Plan and reduce the use of neonicotinoid pesticides in Ontario by 80% by 2017.

A link to the Globe article from the ON website: [http://www.ontarionature.org/media/media\\_template.php?n\\_code=699](http://www.ontarionature.org/media/media_template.php?n_code=699)

And here's the link to the ON press release when the government announced its proposal: [http://www.ontarionature.org/media/news\\_template.php?n\\_code=690](http://www.ontarionature.org/media/news_template.php?n_code=690)

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## CANADA'S BOREAL CARIBOU UNDER THREAT

In its second annual review of the governments' efforts to conserve Canada's boreal caribou, the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS) declared the government is not doing enough to protect the species.

CPAWS' findings are supported by news from the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada. The committee predicts more than a 30% decline of Canada's boreal caribou population in the near future because, much of its habitat has been degraded by human activity and industrial development. Visit the CPAWS website at <http://cpaws.org/news/threats-outpacing-caribou-conservation-cpaws-annual-review>.

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## Huron Fringe Bird Festival May 22 - 25 & May 28 - 31, 2015

The "Huron Fringe" along the Lake Huron coastline, offers birders, naturalists and photographers unique opportunities to discover nature in the early spring. Programs are available Jan 15 and registration begins Feb, 1.

For more information, please check <http://friendsofmacgregor.org/page/huron-fringe-birding-festival> or call 519-389-6231 or email [birdfest@rogers.com](mailto:birdfest@rogers.com)

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## TRACKING CLUB — Tamara Anderson

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### AYE THERE'S THE ANTLER RUB! — NOVEMBER'S ADVENTURE AT GUELPH LAKE

In Shakespearian times, shepherds forecasted rain when mists arose on the surface of ponds and then ascended to the hilltops. True to the forecast, the tracking club was indeed misted with liquid sunshine (as my Scottish kinfolk affectionately like to call "rain") during the November outing at Guelph Lake.

Upon discovering numerous vole highways across the trail, I could not help thinking, "O Wonder! How many goodly creatures are there here?"

We noted zigzag pathways into the goldenrods, made by cottontail rabbits. Deer tracks headed west into the adjacent farm field. The deer moved from a walking gait into a gallop, dew claws registering, endeavouring to move quickly through deepening snow.

At the edge of the farm field, we picked up a skunk trail. The trail led us up and over snow drifts. After determining that the skunk was intent to wander, we abandoned his trail near some browsed Sumac

tall Maples. Shakespeare wrote, "*When I bestride him, I soar, I am a hawk: he trots the air; the earth sings when he touches it*" in reference to riding a horse but I can see a parallel with tracking a coyote as well.

At the back pond, we found a crayfish chimney. As the crayfish burrows down into a water-filled tunnel, it uses



*Antler Rub on Sumac (Guelph Lake, November 2014)*

its legs and mouth parts to bring up pellets of mud to the surface--much like a brick layer laying bricks--until the chimney is complete. We then ascended the top of the Rotary Forest hill. We found another antler rub on an Oak tree and enjoyed a glorious view of the buck's domain. We returned to the beginning of the route by following deer tracks and chickadee calls.

The Tracking Club will continue all year. If you would like to be on the contact list, please email Tamara at [frogforest@hotmail.com](mailto:frogforest@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.



*Deer Track (Guelph Lake, November 2014)*

trees. While appreciating the velvety texture of the Staghorn Sumac branches, something caught our attention, "Aye! There's the rub!" A male deer had shredded the bark of the nearby trees by rubbing his antlers and forehead on the trunk. Bucks do this to deposit their scent and to relieve itchy antlers during the rut.

A coyote trail pulled us further into the young forest, towards the back pond. A rough-legged hawk observed us from her perch before heading eastwards to a line of

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### Young 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 visit <http://www.natureguelph.ca/kidsprograms.html>

or contact the Guelph Lake Nature Center at 519-836-7860.

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## News from Nature Guelph Wildflower Society

### SAVE SEEDS

Save seed for our annual seed workshop on March 18. The theme for the workshop is USEFUL PLANTS: native plants that are useful to humans. Think about edible, medicinal, fibre and agricultural uses. Bring your seeds to any meeting.

### SUPPORT NATIVE POLLINATORS

Show your support for pollinators by commenting on the Ontario Pollinator Health Proposal by **January 25**. The Ontario government recently announced a proposal to help Ontario's pollinators., which is a major step forward for pollinators in Ontario and across North America. Featuring two main parts, the goal is to decrease the amount of corn and soybean seeds treated with neonicotinoid pesticides ("neonics") by 80% and to increase the health of pollinators, with an emphasis on honeybees. The paper also acknowledges the importance of native pollinators.

It is critical that the government recognizes how important this topic is to the environment and their constituents (you, the public). Comments on the proposal are being accepted until **January 25, 2015** through the Environmental Registry. Go to <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/pollinator/discuss-paper.pdf> to read the paper, comment via e-mail to: [pollinatorhealth@ontario.ca](mailto:pollinatorhealth@ontario.ca).

### PLANT OF THE MONTH

*Dicentra eximia*, Fringed Bleeding Heart

Fringed bleeding heart is a natural for February. A small woodland plant native to northeastern North America, *Dicentra eximia* carries small pink heart-shaped blooms on long leafless stems in 30cm high clumps from late spring to early summer. It is not an Ontario native but is found along the south shores of Lake Erie and Lake Ontario. Unlike the non native garden bleeding hearts (*D. spectabilis*) the fernlike leaves of *D. eximia* remain on the plant all season. In cooler years, fringed bleeding heart may bloom sporadically during the summer or rebloom in the fall.

White flowered relatives, which are Wellington county native plants, include Squirrel Corn, *D. canadensis*, and Dutchman Breeches, *D. cucullaria*. These two plants are spring ephemerals disappearing from the woods by June. The leaves of all the native *Dicentra* resemble those of the non native and invasive Herb Robert (*Geranium robertianum*) but there is no confusing the flowers as Herb Robert has a daisy-like, five-petaled flower.

*Dicentra eximia* is easy to start from seed. It requires 60 to 90 days of warm, moist stratification, followed by 60 to 90 days of cold, moist stratification and will germinate on return to warm.



**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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We are recognized locally and part of pollinators.



### Nature Guelph Annual Financial Statement

Category	2013-2014	2012-2013	Comment
<b>TD Bank, Chequing Account</b>			
Balance forward	9883.68	8772	
+Total income	9512.32	10093	
-Total expenses	10093.06	9030	
Transfer to petty cash	56.41	48	
Transfer to ING account	2750	-	
Actual	6496.53	9883	
ING Investment Account	Land acquisition and stewardship;	not operation expenses	
Balance forward	21111.57	20687	
Transfer from TD account	2750	-	
Interest	221.08	214	
ING Investment Account	24082.65	21081	
Petty cash	55.5	48	Membership; Treasurer
Total Assets	30579.18	31012	
<b>INCOME</b>			
Category	2013-2014	2012-2013	Comment
Membership & donations	4557.38	3814	Membership (and donations)
Donations (at meeting)	297.57	330	
Advertising	300	300	
NATS&NITS & donations	2700.31	2975	
Grants	-	700	GRCA (Young Nats)
Fundraising	1657.06	1203	Loblaws tapes; Bird Studies Canada
Reinder Westerhoff Edu Fund	-	771	
Total	9512.32	10093	
Investment income	221.08	214	ING Direct
Total Income	9733.4	10307	
<b>EXPENSES</b>			
Category	2013-2014	2012-2013	Comment
Admin	778.37	772	PO Box; photocopying, constitution change; name tags, name board, etc
Newsletter	564.29	933	Fewer mailings 2013-2014
NATS and NITS	2952.9	2439	
Indoor program speakers, coffee	756.02	1264	
Arboretum rent	1859.9	1719	Pre-paid 2014-15/catch up 2011-2012
Outdoor program	94.37	-	
FON membership/ insurance	1017.24	992	Insurance a major cost
Publicity	91.90	80	
Miscellaneous	1128.07	831	Unusual items: New website, new logo, name change costs
Westerhoff Fund	600		Two attendees at Ontario Youth Summit
Donations	250		Ostrander Point
<b>TOTAL</b>	10093.06	9030	

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## WILDFLOWER SOCIETY MEETINGS

**January 21, 7:30pm:** Orchids of the Bruce. Walter Muma will share his pictures and knowledge of orchids on the Bruce Peninsula. Evergreen Seniors Centre, Woolwich St Guelph. Free to the public

**February 18, 7:30pm:** Invasive Species in the Credit River Watershed  
Alastair Biscaia from Credit Valley Conservation will discuss CVC projects to combat the spread of invasive species and to protect the environment and biodiversity of the Credit River watershed. Evergreen Seniors Centre,

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## TRACKING CLUB MEETINGS

Nature Guelph Tracking Club outings are open to anyone 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).

### **Sunday February 22**

Luther Marsh

Meeting time: 9:00 am - 1pm (approximately)

Meet at the Guelph Lake Nature Centre at 9:00am to carpool.

Bring snowshoes if you have them. We will have a trailside lunch at the Marsh. Bring your lunch and a warm thermos with your favourite beverage.

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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 Jan 26:** Bill James "GISS of some common Southern African birds, with slight emphasis on big birds, like vultures, recorded by a pocket camera from a car window."

**Monday Feb 23:** Scott Ferguson: "Caribbean Birding"

### **OUTDOOR:**

**In Search of Snowies with Larry Staniforth** (contact: [staniforth.larry@rogers.com](mailto:staniforth.larry@rogers.com)), **Sunday, Jan. 11, 10am.**

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 to purchase lunch. We will try to be back in Guelph for 4pm. Please dress for the weather. It can be very cold and windy in this area. Meet at the Canadian Tire Parking lot at Woodlawn and Hwy 6, and we will car pool from there.

**Jan 7, 7 - 9pm:** Owl Prowl Meet at the WBU parking lot. Dress warmly. Outing is canceled if temperature is below -15C and/or wind is more than 25 KPH.

**Jan 14, 11am - 4pm,** Owls and Hawks - Linwood/Hawkesville area. Meet at the WBU parking lot. Dress warmly. Bring refreshments.

**Feb 25, 9am:** Eagles, Hawks and winter birds, Fisherville area. Meet at the WBU parking lot. Dress warmly. We will stop for lunch at a local restaurant in Selkirk.

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## Arboretum Bird Window Collision Project

Many of you will remember the fascinating and somewhat sad presentation in the spring given by Paloma Plant, the program coordinator at Fatal Light Awareness Program (FLAP). Paloma sought to raise awareness of the plight of migratory birds, which are dying in disturbing numbers due to their attraction to light in large cities and subsequent fatal collisions with tall buildings. She also drew our attention to another alarming statistic, the high incidence of bird-window collisions every day throughout North America due to reflective/translucent surfaces appearing to show clear flight paths to flying birds. Paloma highlighted a few areas of concern around the U of G campus including the Arboretum. Although it is difficult to give exact numbers due to scavengers carrying off dead and injured birds, Chris Early was able to send a list of fatalities he had personally witnessed, including: mourning dove, hermit thrush, black-throated blue warbler, white-throated sparrow, belted kingfisher (at least two), American robin, American goldfinch, cedar waxwing, ruby-throated hummingbird and downy woodpecker (Dec 2014).

At the beginning of the fall season, volunteers from Nature Guelph met with Ric Jordan, the Arboretum Manager and Michael Mesure, FLAP's Executive Director. A cursory survey by Mike and some inside information from Ric highlighted 10 large windows in the arboretum, which are hazardous to flying birds. It would appear the windows must be treated in some way to allow the birds to discern the difference between glass and their light path. The trick is to find a compromise that deters birds, while retaining much of the aesthetics of the building. Through much research, it would appear the best solution is to coat the outside of the glass with opaque vinyl dots, squares or stripes. Initial estimates to treat the windows concerned are from \$1300 upwards, depending on which pattern is applied and whether the project can be accomplished by volunteers or requires skilled help. We are hopeful that we can work with the Arboretum to reach a solution. Since the vinyl can only be applied when the temperature is above 10 C, the trials will have to wait until early spring. The most cost effective way to do this would, of course, be with the use of volunteers, if this is practical. Once we have a project costing, we can look at ways to fund this. It would be fantastic if we could have the whole project completed before the start of nesting season 2015.

If you would like to offer your spare time to apply the vinyl on a warm weekend in the very early spring, we are putting together a list of volunteers right now. Drop Gordon an e-mail at [gaaitken@rogers.com](mailto:gaaitken@rogers.com) or talk to a committee member to be included in any updates.

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# Nature Guelph

## NEARBY NATURALIST CLUBS' MEETINGS

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

**Monday Jan 26, 7:30pm** – The Importance of Ecological Corridors by Ken Dance

**Monday Feb 23, 7:30pm** – Waynco Rehabilitation Project: Restoring & Managing Waterloo Region's Prairie & Savanna Heritage by Graham Buck, Wayne Buck, Pat Deacon, Larry Lamb

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

**Tuesday Jan 13, 7:30pm** – David Lamble, Snow Buntings

Tuesday Feb 10: TBA

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

**Monday Jan 12, 7pm**

Planning for Nature – How and When to Get Involved in the Planning Process

**Monday Feb 9, 7pm** – The Young and the Restless: Exploring the Universe's Most Spectacular Explosions with Light Echoes

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

**Sunday Jan 18, 1pm** – No Guardians at the Gate: The Elmira Water Crisis

**Thursday Feb 19, 7pm** – Gardening for Pollinators