



Nature Guelph

invites you to hear

Dr. Shoshanah Jacobs

for her presentation on the marine mammals of the Arctic,
their lives, their challenges, their relationships with Arctic People.



BENEATH THE ICE:

THE SEA MAMMALS OF THE ARCTIC

Thurs.

7:30 pm

March 12

2015



U OF G
ARBORETUM CENTRE
EVERYONE WELCOME

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<http://natureguelph.ca/>

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE — Jenn Bock

Does all of this cold weather have you wishing that you had flown south like a broad-winged hawk? Or curled up to hibernate like an eastern chipmunk? It’s already impressive enough that our endothermic (warm-blooded) critter neighbours can make it though this tough season, but what about the ectotherms (cold-blooded creatures)? How on earth do they survive? We know that all reptiles and amphibians hunker down under the muck until the snow and ice melts, right...? Wrong!!! Enter, the MUDPUPPY!

The mudpuppy (*Necturus maculosus*) is a large aquatic salamander that lives right here in Ontario. They can be found in lakes, rivers, streams and other large bodies of water. They are mostly nocturnal and tend to stay hidden under cover during the day. They can grow up to 50cm in length, can live up to 30 years and are Canada’s only completely aquatic salamander. While the list of amazing Mudpuppy facts is long, my personal favourite is that these little ectothermic hunters manage to stay active all year long!! That’s right – mudpuppies are out there under the ice right now, catching worms, invertebrates and small fish! Watch out ‘polar plunge’, you’ve got nothin’ on these little guys!

While this cryptic amphibian is rarely seen, it’s actually thought to be fairly common throughout much of its range. Unfortunately, like many aquatic critters who like living on the bottom, mudpuppies don’t do very well when development projects lead to over-siltation of waterways. They also aren’t big fans of water pollution... So let’s keep our water clean and protect this weird example of wonderful winter wildlife!! (Photo: Todd Pierson, “[Necturus maculosus: Mudpuppy](#)” licensed under CC BY 2.0.)



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 (May/June) to [Susan Atkinson](#). The deadline is April 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.

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. 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 March 12 — "BENEATH THE ICE: THE SEA MAMMALS OF THE ARCTIC" Dr. Shoshanah Jacobs, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Integrative Biology, University of Guelph.

Surviving polar climates presents unique challenges to wildlife. Millions of years of evolution have resulted in astounding diversity and adaptation. Join Dr. Shoshanah Jacobs for her presentation on the marine mammals of the Arctic, their lives, their challenges and their relationships with the Arctic People.

Thursday April 9 — "THE ROLE OF THE MODERN ZOO IN CONSERVATION" Dr. Kevin Kerr, Curator of Birds & Invertebrates, Toronto Zoo. Zoos have a centuries-old history, but their role as conservation centers has only evolved in recent decades. While attitudes toward zoos remain variable, the growing consensus is they have a responsibility toward the preservation of species and public education.

Nature Guelph Says Farewell to Joan Budd

Joan Budd, a long time stalwart supporter of Nature Guelph, died Saturday, February 14, 2015 at the age of 103. Joan was a member of the Ontario Veterinary College Class of 1950 and the first woman veterinarian to hold a faculty position at OVC. She became the secretary of her class her first year and remained so for the next 60 plus years. After graduation, she completed graduate work in virology at the University of Wisconsin, then joined the OVC faculty the following year. During her career, she made a number of important contributions to the study of diseases in fur-bearing mammals.—**some text courtesy of the [OVC website](#)**

Nature in the City 2015

Welcome Spring with Nature Guelph! We will once again be hosting a series of free and fascinating nature-themed presentations for audiences young and old. Each presentation will be 40-50 minutes in length and will be held in the Guelph Public Library (Main Branch) on Saturday afternoons from 2:00 to 3:00 pm. These presentations will be followed by a 1 to 1.5 hour guided hike on Sunday at 1 pm. The series is aimed at relative nature novices and newcomers to Guelph, but everyone is welcome!

Leader	Topic	Talk date (Sat)	Walk date (Sunday)	Site of walk
Jenn Bock	So you want to be a birdwatcher?	April 11	April 12	Starkey loop
John Prescott/Tamara Anderson	Amazing mammals of Guelph	April 18	April 19	Arboretum
Kyle Horner	Slime and scales: snakes, frogs and salamanders	April 25	April 25, 7pm (Saturday evening)	Arboretum
Judy Brisson	Beauty in our midst: Wildflowers in Guelph	May 2	May 3	Starkey loop

Ontario Nature Report – by Mary Ellen Pyear

Ontario Nature is urging its members, members of all local naturalist clubs, and all concerned citizens in the province to interact with the Ontario government on climate change issues. The province recently released a document entitled Climate Change Discussion Paper. It can be accessed online at www.ontario.ca/environment-and-energy/climate-change-consultation. Town Halls will be held across the province to discuss this very important topic. Let your voice be heard by attending the Town Hall in Guelph on **Wednesday, March 18th** at the Arboretum, University of Guelph campus, from 6-8 p.m. **Mark it on your calendar today!**

One of Ontario Nature's greatest achievements for 2014 was to purchase an additional 100 acres of prime wetland and mature forest in the Gananoque area. This accomplishment will now link two other larger parcels of land on the Lost Bay Nature Reserve. The addition of this valuable property will secure precious habitat for at least 24 species-at-risk. The list includes cerulean and golden-winged warblers, Blanding's turtles, gray ratsnakes, broad beech ferns and more. This spectacular reserve is a part of a vital ecological corridor linking the boreal ecosystems of the Canadian Shield to the forests of the Appalachian and Adirondack mountain ranges, thus providing a vital north-south migration route for wildlife.

In collaboration with First Nations, Ontario Nature published a ground-breaking report, Beyond the Fields: The Importance of Forest and Freshwater Foods in Northern Ontario. The document highlights the many healthy, environmental and socio-economic values of forest and freshwater foods. Twenty workshops were attended by more than 550 people in Northern Ontario. Ontario Nature also developed a forest food e-guide application for smartphones, which foragers can use when in the wild.

Ontario Nature is hosting their 84th Annual Gathering and this year it is very close to Guelph! The event will be held on Saturday, May 23, at rare Charitable Research Reserve in Cambridge. The Day on the Grand will feature a flintknapping workshop, a solar home tour, a bird banding demonstration and several guided hikes. To ensure your attendance at this annual ON one-day event, please register online at www.ontarionature.org.

Nature Guelph Outdoor Activities – Marnie Benson

Sunday March 15, 3pm - Social hike at Preservation Park with gathering afterwards at the Fat Duck on Kortright. Part of our regular series of social hikes on the third Sunday of the month where we have a casual (unguided) hike to explore nature on a local trail and meet at a local establishment for a social gathering afterwards. Meet in the parking lot across from the trail on the north side of Kortright between Edinburgh & Scottsdale.

Sunday March 22, 2pm - Tree Life Cycles by Snowshoe in the Arboretum. Jessica Tartaglia will lead us on a hike through the Arboretum looking at the reproductive cycle of trees, how coniferous trees have adapted to live through the winter, and more. If snow cover allows, we will have snowshoes available for loan; otherwise it will be a winter hike. Meet at J.C. Taylor Nature Centre.

Sunday April 19, 3pm - Social hike along the Speed River. Meet in the parking area adjacent to Goldie Mill Park (next to the Guelph Youth Music Centre on Cardigan St.) We can explore the river trail then head to the Woolwich Arms on Woolwich St. afterwards.



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 for information about all GRCA family programs



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YOUNG NATS ADVENTURES — A PHOTO JOURNAL BY MARILYN SWABY

Tracking and an Owl Prowl

Our first session for the year began Jan 31. The weather was perfect as we had fresh new snow from the night before and we were blessed with the sun peeking out. We not only saw our own tracks but

other mammals too. It was so great to see our returning families and meet some new ones too.



Because of the frigid temps the night of our owl prowl (Feb 14), we

shortened the outdoor part of the programme. To hide from the wind we wove our way to the chickadee tree and called for owls under a very clear sky with Jupiter beaming down



on us. No luck. So we went to the rise overlooking the lake and howled for the coyotes until we were frozen solid.



They wouldn't even come out of their dens. So we warmed up with hot chocolate to

dissect owl pellets and watch slides on owls.



News from Nature Guelph Wildflower Society

PLANT OF THE MONTH

Bloodroot

Bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*) blooms in early spring in rich woods, growing 15-25cm high in large clumps. Each flower emerges wrapped in one scalloped, grayish green leaf which unfurls as the flower blooms. The bright white flowers with 8-10 petals and yellow stamens each last only one to two days but the leaf is attractive and continues to grow until midsummer, often reaching up to 20cm across in large clumps. The plant goes dormant with the heat and drought of summer.

All parts of the plant leak a bright reddish-orange sap when cut; this sap was used medicinally and for dye by First Nation peoples. Modern herbalists also use the roots for skin diseases and in toothpaste. Health Canada and the FDA have warned against its use because the sap is caustic with reports of serious skin disfigurement following use. It may cause precancerous lesions on oral mucosa when used in dental preparations.

Bloodroot is one of many plants spread by ants. The seeds have a fleshy attachment called an elaiosome which is attractive to them. The ants carry the seeds to their nest, eat the elaiosomes, and put the seeds in their debris chamber. The seeds then germinate in the debris-enriched medium. I have found Bloodroot easy but slow to grow from seed. The seed capsules can be collected in late Spring just as they start to split. Seed should be not be allowed to dry; I store them in moist vermiculite or in a moist paper towel in a plastic bag. Seeds will need 90 days of warm, moist stratification, followed by 120 days of cold, moist stratification. Plant into seed trays and some will germinate upon return to the warm. Full germination may take another warm/cold cycle, so keep ungerminated seed trays moist and warm for the summer, then overwinter in a protected spot and you will likely see germination the next spring. Bloodroot self-seeds readily, but you may find seedlings at some distance from parent plants thanks to the ants.

Easy in cultivation, Bloodroot has few diseases or pests and will spread to form large clumps in rich woodland garden soil and semi shade. The flowers reflect the March and April sunlight as do the leaves, so it is no wonder that many think of the plant as a sure sign of spring.

--Judy Brisson

-Photo by Ryan Hodnett, Bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*) licensed under CC BY 2.0



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Please Visit www.grandriver.ca for



All about the birds and the bees!

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TRACKING CLUB — Tamara Anderson

CECIL THE SOLSTICE WEASEL

The latest Tracking Club outing to the Bruce Trail in Orangeville can best be described by this seasonal poem:

'Twas the day before Solstice and all through the field,
There were tracks, trails and stories being revealed.
All the trackers were walking with observant care,
In the hope that short-tailed Cecil might be there.
Then, what to our wondering eyes should appear,
A trail heading east, made by a white-tailed deer,
Something crossed its path with a galloping habit,
I knew in a moment, it must be a rabbit!
After the quick rabbit, a coyote trail came,
Then we saw another trail that wasn't the same.
A red fox was hunting near a rock pile,



Tracking Club (Bruce Trail, Orangeville, December 2014)

"Cecil the weasel was here!" I said with a smile.
We saw four tiny tracks and a tail print on snow,
Where the weasel had waited, crouching down low.



Short-Tailed Weasel Track with Tail Imprint in Snow (Bruce Trail, Orangeville, December 2014)

Down a hole, he had been with a leap and a bound,
Cecil must have been hunting and doing his rounds,
Preying on deer mice, meadow voles and short-tailed shrews

A glossy-coated hunter on a night-time cruise.
The fox attempted to thwart his fiendish ways,
Culminating in an exciting, high-speed chase.
From across the field, we heard a raven chorus.
We followed Cecil's trail to the edge of the forest.
Here, there were mystery tracks on the snow surface,
Made by a small mammal exploring with purpose.
The width of her trail was much smaller than Cecil's
Could it be? Were these the tracks of a Least weasel?
Her surface walk and rope-like scat confirmed the truth.
Looking across the field we rose with gratitude,
For the gift of stories, fresh air and warm sunlight.
Happy Solstice to all and to all a good night!

The Tracking Club will continue all year. If you would like to be on the contact list, please email Tamara at 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.

WILDFLOWER SOCIETY MEETINGS

Wed, March 18

Seed Workshop: Useful Native Plants. Plant and take home a tray of Native Plants used for food, fibre or healing
Call 519-824 9476 or e-mail judybrisson@rogers.com for time and location
Free admission for members, \$20 for non members

Wed, April 15, 7:30pm:

Plants for Pollinators and Pollinators for Plants. Evergreen Seniors Centre:
Master Gardener Julia Kron will discuss the co-evolution and co-dependance of plants and pollinators, their importance to the ecosystem, threats and how we can help.
Free to the public.

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

Monday March 30: Heidi and Kelly: photographs of local birds

Monday April 27: Bonnie Weaver: Lyme Disease

OUTDOOR:

All hikes leave from Wild Birds Unlimited parking lot. For all hikes we will have lunch at local restaurants. Please dress for the weather. Contact: staniforth.larry@rogers.com

Wed. Mar. 18, Aylmer - Tundra Swans 8am all day

Wed. Mar. 25, Ruthven - Nanticoke, 8am all day

Wed. Apr. 15, Long Point, 7am all day

Sat. Apr. 25, Long Point, 6am all day

Wed. Apr. 29, Hullett/Mitchell, 6am all day

TRACKING CLUB MEETINGS

Sunday March 22

Spring Awakenings Tracking Hike

Meet at the Guelph Lake Nature Centre at 10:00am

Outing will run until approximately 12:00pm.

Sunday April 19

Mammal Tracking at the Guelph Arboretum

Meet at the main Arboretum Parking Lot at 1:00pm. Outing will run until approximately 2:30pm. This hike is part of the Nature in the City series

NEARBY NATURALIST CLUBS' MEETINGS

K-W FIELD NATURALISTS See www.kwfn.ca

Monday, March 23, 7:30pm

Foraging by Peter Blush

Monday, April 27, 7:30pm

Significant Elements of Biodiversity within the Grand River Watershed by Tony Zammit.

Outings:

March 21st, 8:00am. Birding trip to Long Point with the Burrells.

HALTON NORTH PEEL NATURE CLUB See www.hnpsc.com

Tuesday March 10, 7:30pm,

Biomimicry with Richard Aaron

HAMILTON NATURALIST CLUB See www.hamiltonnature.org

Monday March 9, 7pm – 9pm

Brad Gautreau Topic: History and experience of FOTEK

RARE See www.raresites.org

Wednesday April 22, 6:30pm

Celebrate Earth Day: a rare Clean-Up

Sunday April 26 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm

Spring Awakening: Streams & Flowers & Birds Arise!

GUELPH LAKE NATURE CENTRE, see www.grandriver.ca/Events/

April 25th, 9:00am- 2:00pm

Rotary Forest/Earth Week Tree Planting.

HELP SELECT CANADA'S NATIONAL BIRD!

Did you know that our country doesn't have a national bird? Canadian Geographic is presently running a National Bird Project to help designate an official bird for Canada by the year 2017 (our sesquicentennial). People can go online and vote from a pre-chosen list of candidates or even suggest a new potential national bird. Go to <http://www.canadiangeographic.ca/nationalbird/default.asp#scrolldown>, to vote for your favorite. So far the common loon is in the lead by a beak with the snowy owl in second place!

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Nature Guelph

NG CALENDAR – UPCOMING EVENTS AT A GLANCE

Thur March 12 Indoor MeetingBeneath the ice: The sea mammals of the Arctic.....7:30 pm..... Arboretum
Sun March 15..... Outdoor EventSocial hike at Preservation Park3 pm..... Preservation Park
Sun March 22..... Outdoor EventTree Life Cycles by Snowshoe in the Arboretum.....2 pm..... Arboretum
Monday March 30.....Indoor Bird Wing Meeting.....Heidi and Kelly bird photos 7:30 pm Ellington Residences
Thur April 9 Indoor MeetingThe Role of the Modern Zoo in Conservation.....7:30 pm...Arboretum
Sunday April 19 .. Outdoor EventSocial hike along the Speed River.3 pmMeet near Goldie Mill
Park

“In the spring, at the end of the day, you should smell like dirt.”

Margaret Atwood, *Bluebeard's Egg*