

Nature Guelph News

March/April 2017

Saving the Snapping Turtle *p. 4*

Nature in the City *p. 4*

Ontario Nature: The Year Ahead *p. 6*

Making a Difference Together

By Jenn Bock, President, Nature Guelph

“You make a living by what you get.
You make a life by what you give.”

– Winston Churchill

In this edition of the Nature Guelph newsletter, I'd like to give a very well-deserved shout out to our amazing executive committee. This group – currently comprised of 18 members – dedicates countless hours to ensure that our club runs smoothly and continues to grow and improve. It takes a lot to keep this wonderful ship afloat... here's a quick, simplified rundown of our roles/activities:

- **The usual suspects** – president, vice president, past president, secretary, treasurer. These people oversee things, run meetings, keep records and take care of the money (and legal stuff).
- **The communications team** – webmaster(s), social media, publicity, communications, newsletter editor, university student liaison. These people get the word out about club activities and keep everybody engaged.
- **Programming** – indoor programs, outdoor programs, young naturalists (Nats), naturalists in training (NITs), wildflower society. These people organize and facilitate the wonderful programs that you all know and love!
- **Membership** – takes your fees, keeps “the list” and greets everybody at meetings.
- **Ontario Nature Rep** – the liaison between Nature Guelph and our parent group.
- **Conservation** – the conservation committee works to ensure that NG is aware of local issues and provides formal comments when it matters most.

In addition to all of that, we attend monthly exec meetings, coordinate community events, sit on special committees (i.e., Cats & Birds) and so much more! It has been a total inspiration to be part of a group of individuals with such different ages, backgrounds and personalities who happily come together to dedicate themselves to making a difference in our community.

So here's to the Nature Guelph executive committee! You've really been kicking butt lately, and with this much dedication, initiative, creativity, compassion and love in one group, I can't wait to see how the next chapter unfolds! ●

David Galbraith, Head of Science, Royal Botanical Gardens

Botanical Gardens and the Conservation Imperative

Nature Guelph Speaker Series

March 9, 2017 – 7:30 pm – *Everyone welcome*
OAC Centennial Arboretum Centre, University of Guelph

David Galbraith will speak about the importance of plant conservation in achieving the global Sustainable Development Goals for 2030, and how it gives even more impetus to engaging botanical gardens in the conservation of biological diversity and its sustainable and equitable use.

 Nature
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www.natureguelph.ca

Snapping turtles at centre of hunting debate

Ontario's largest hunting group the OFAH does not support a shortened season – From CBC News, posted Feb. 13, 2017
www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/snapping-turtles-at-centre-of-hunting-debate-1.3976892

A species-at-risk biologist from southern Ontario says hunting for snapping turtles should stop in the province.

Scott Gillingwater, a past president of the Canadian Herpetological Society, says a proposal from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry to make the season for harvesting the turtles just one month long is not sufficient.

Early in 2017, the comment period for an Environmental Bill of Rights or EBR posting on snapping turtle harvest changes in Ontario ended.

The MNRF has proposed making the snapping turtle hunt just a one month season with a one turtle daily possession.

Under the current rules an Ontario resident with a fishing licence is allowed to take two snapping turtles a day with a possession limit of up to five turtles.

As well, it's presently a year round hunt for some of the northern wildlife management units while in southern regions it's a two month hunt between July 15 and September 15.

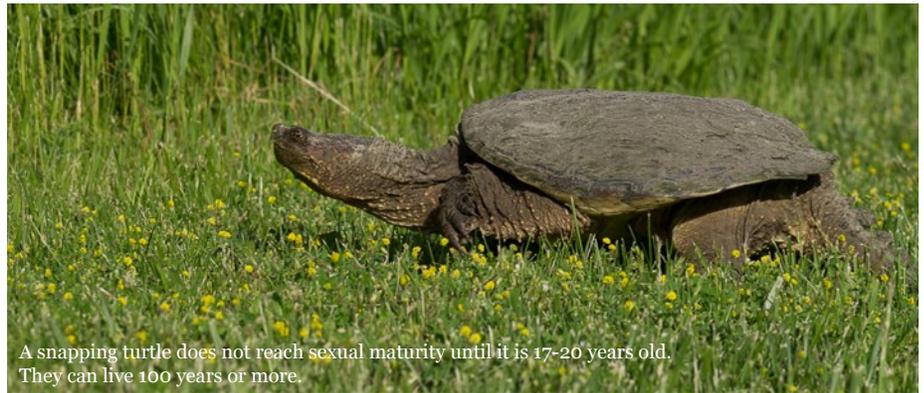
Gillingwater, who works for the Upper Thames Conservation Authority, said there is no room for any turtle harvest in Ontario because there are so many factors against turtles already.

"Even if it was a small take, we are still talking about extremely valuable old animals that should not be removed from the population," he said. "Turtles are unlike any other game species. They don't react the same way. They can't be managed the same way. As our rabbits. As our moose. As our deer. As our bear."

Gillingwater said Ontario and Saskatchewan are the only provinces that still allow snapping turtle hunting in Canada.

He said increased road building in remote areas has increasingly exposed snapping turtles to being run over by cars and trucks.

"These animals take anywhere from



A snapping turtle does not reach sexual maturity until it is 17-20 years old. They can live 100 years or more.

17 to 20 years to reach maturity," said Gillingwater. "And it may take many decades for them to replace themselves. They have evolved to live very, very long lives and when you suddenly decrease the adults in that population you cripple that population."

Many environmental groups, including Ontario Nature and the David Suzuki Foundation, have called for an outright ban on snapping turtle hunting.

Many environmental groups have called for an outright ban on the snapping turtle hunt including Ontario Nature and the David Suzuki Foundation.

The Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, a hunting and fishing lobby group with 100,000 members, does not believe snapping turtles are "at risk" in Ontario or Canada.

Dawn Sucee, who is a fish and wildlife biologist with the OFAH, said there is no scientific evidence that would warrant changing the rules around hunting snapping turtles in Ontario.

Sucee said the group did not support the recent proposal by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry to shorten the season and lower the bag limit.

Sucee said her group has supported the mandatory reporting of any turtle

harvest in Ontario. But she said none of that information was included in the ministries recent EBR posting about shortening the snapper hunt.

"That proposal was presented without evidence to support it," she said. "There is no harvest or data information included. No population assessment or distribution information."

Sucee said the OFAH will support what she called "conservation measures to carry out surveys and monitoring of snapping turtles."

She said the majority of the members of the OFAH do not hunt turtles, but that doesn't mean that there isn't room for an occasional harvest.

"Snapping turtles are frequently encountered by Ontario anglers and hunters," said Sucee. "The vast majority may not have interest in harvesting them, but there are Ontario citizens who legally harvest for personal consumption with their valid fishing licence."

Snapping turtles are generally harvested for their meat, to make soup, although some cultures use them for medicinal purposes. ●

Nature Guelph recently signed Ontario Nature's submission banning the hunting of snapping turtles.

2017

Nature in the City

A series of family-friendly talks and walks

FREE indoor talks at the **Guelph Public Library** followed by **FREE** guided outdoor walks. Join us inside, outside or BOTH!

Birdwatching 101

Identifying, understanding and attracting some of our favourite local feathered friends!

TALK: Sat. April 8, 1:00 pm

WALK: Sun. April 9, 1:00 pm

Wooden Covered Bridge near The Boathouse

Our Native Trees

Learn about the biology of our favourite woody giants (and not-so-giants).

TALK: Sat. April 15, 1:00 pm

WALK: Sun. May 14, 1:30 pm

Tree ID at The Arboretum (main parking lot)

Slime and Scales

Discover some of our most under-appreciated creatures – reptiles and amphibians!

TALK: Sat. April 22, 1:00 pm

WALK: Sat. April 22, 7:00 pm

Evening Frog Walk at The Arboretum (west entrance)

World of Wildflowers

Spring has sprung! Let's learn about the wide variety of wildflowers that grow in our city!

TALK: Sat. April 29, 1:00 pm

WALK: Sun. May 7, 1:00 pm

Wildflower Walk at Starkey Hill

Please join us. All are welcome!

For full program details: www.natureguelph.ca or info@natureguelph.ca



Young NATs and the Birds of Winter

Young NATs had their last session for the year and we certainly enjoyed the snow! The chickadees loved our visit and while we were leaving, the Cardinals swooped in for their share. Once Jean Luc showed us how, we all got busy building our feeders. It sounded like woodpeckers in Santa's workshop!



Calling All Young Birders!



OFO Young Birders for Ages 9–19

OFO runs field trips and workshops across the province for young birders aged 9–19. The only prerequisites are enthusiasm and curiosity about birds. These trips are a great way to meet other young birders who share your interests, as well as to learn more about birds and where to find them.

Please email Lynne Freeman at lynnef.to@gmail.com to get on the Young Birders email list.



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

Ontario Nature: The Year Ahead

From the Ontario Nature Blog www.ontarionature.org/connect/blog – Posted January 10, 2017

We had a banner year for nature thanks to the strong support of our members, sponsors, friends and followers. Now we're looking ahead! Here's a sneak peak at some of the work we'll be doing for nature in 2017.

- We will continue to push the government to add a "bluebelt" of land that protects important water sources along with a coalition of grassroots groups calling on the Province to Grow our Greenbelt!
- We will be heading to court to protect wild pollinators from a harmful class of pesticides linked to mass bee die-offs and declining pollinator populations.
- Ontario Nature's ambitious Youth Council will continue working to protect pollinators by helping municipalities and schools to adopt pollinator-friendly practices and policies, creating pollinator habitat through planting events, delivering pollinator workshops, and developing educational resources.
- We will launch our second version of the atlas smart phone app with many new features that will make reporting your reptile and amphibian sightings species a breeze!



- We will release a brand new online publication for the Ontario Reptile and Amphibian Atlas, which will include the history of the atlas, information about the species of reptiles and amphibians found in Ontario, an in-depth look at what over 20 years of records can tell us.
- We will hit the road across northern Ontario with our new mobile education unit. We will be focusing on expanding young people's understanding of reptiles and amphibians in the north, and filling gaps in the Ontario Reptile and Amphibian Atlas.

- We will work closely with Indigenous groups across Ontario on the basis of Free, Prior and Informed Consent, including advocating for Forest Stewardship Council certification. Building those relationships will help to protect the land we love, while respecting its original stewards.
- Undeterred by the dismissal of our appeal of a lower court ruling that puts already endangered species at further risk of extinction, we refuse to give up on endangered species. We have partnered again with CPAWS Wildlands League and pro-bono legal team to file for appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada with a request to hear our case.

Make nature a priority in 2017 by joining our e-news community! We'll keep you up-to-date on the latest conservation news and share easy ways that you can take action for nature when it needs you most. ●

Subscribe to Ontario Nature's **FREE Nature Network News!**
www.ontarionature.org/discover/member_groups/nature_network_news.php

Photo: Sam Demers

Join Nature Guelph! 2016–17 Membership Application

Choose One: New Member Renewal Update

Fill Out Your Personal Information:

Name: _____

Address: _____

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Phone: _____ Email: _____

I authorize Nature Guelph to communicate with me by email. (Required)

Yes No Signature: _____ Date: _____

I would like to volunteer! (How would you like to contribute?)

Select Your Membership:

Individual (\$25) \$

Full-Time Student (\$10) \$

Optional:

Newsletter printed, mailed (\$10) \$

Donation \$
Tax receipt issued for amounts over \$10, not including membership fee

Calculate Your Total: \$

Choose Your Payment Method:

Cash Cheque payable to Nature Guelph

Online at natureguelph.ca/membership

Upcoming Events

NATURE GUELPH MEETINGS & SPEAKER SERIES

Meetings occur on the second Thursday of each month. We begin with a brief business meeting, followed by a short break, then the speaker's presentation.

March 9, 7:30 pm Botanical Gardens and the Conservation Imperative

David Galbraith, Head of Science,
Royal Botanical Gardens

April 13, 7:30 pm Weather Gone Wild: The Capital Markets Must Consider the Contagion of Climate Change

Dr. Blair Feltmate, Head of the
Intact Centre on Climate Adaptation,
University of Waterloo

OAC Centennial Arboretum Centre,
University of Guelph
270 Arboretum Road, Guelph

Non-members are very welcome.
Goodwill donations gratefully accepted.

Visit www.natureguelph.ca for updates.

We ask that you do not wear perfumes out of respect for people who are allergic to them.

NATURE GUELPH OUTDOOR EVENTS

March 26, 10:00 am–3:00 pm Mountsberg Conservation Area

To carpool, meet 10:00 am at the
Wild Birds Unlimited parking lot OR
meet at the Mountsberg Discovery
Centre at about 10:45 am.

April 23, 1:00–4:00pm History in Rocks Walk

Dr. Laura Brown, Geographer

Meet at The Arboretum Centre parking
lot. Carpooling to various locations.

NATURE GUELPH WILDFLOWER SOCIETY

March 15, 7:30 pm Annual Seed Workshop

Take home a tray planted with native
plant species. Free for Nature Guelph
members, \$25 for others.

University of Guelph Potting Shed –
Go west on South Ring Rd. from
Gordon St. Drive past the greenhouses.
Park in lot P 59 on your left at the end
of the road. Look for a small building
to the right of the Biodiversity Centre.

April 19, 7:30 pm Milkweeds

Graham Buck, Species at Risk Biologist

The Library, John McCrae Public School
187 Water Street, Guelph



NEARBY NATURALIST CLUBS SELECT EVENTS

Halton/North Peel Naturalists Club hnpnc.com

March 14, 7:30 pm Owls

St. Alban's Anglican Church Hall
537 Main Street, Glen Williams
(Georgetown)

Hamilton Naturalists Club hamiltonnature.org

April 1, 10:00 am–2:00 pm Learn to ID Raptors: Hawkwatch Matt Mills, Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch Counter

Beamer Memorial Conservation Area
28 Quarry Rd., Grimsby

rare raresites.org

March 11, 1:00–3:00 pm Worm Science and Vermicompost Heather Cray

rare ECO Centre
768 Blair Road, Cambridge
Admission \$8 or \$3 with an Events
Discount card. Must pre-register online.

Waterloo Region Nature waterlooregionnature.ca

March 15, 7:00–8:30 pm Aerial Insectivores of the Avian World David Gascoigne

Kitchener Central Library
85 Queen St. North, Kitchener



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Early Blooms

By Judy Brisson

Many people think the eastern deciduous forest is at its most beautiful in the autumn when the tree leaves change to gold and red. I like the forest's subtle beauty in the spring when the spring ephemerals carpet the forest floor with pink, white and yellow blossoms. Spring ephemerals are temperate zone plants that literally "make hay while the sun shines." Growing deep in the shade of the forest, these plants must flower, set seed and store food while sunlight penetrates to the forest floor in the short six weeks between snow melt and tree leaf out.

Most of these early bloomers sprout from underground corms or bulbs which have stored energy from the previous spring. They keep a low profile for protection from cold winds and to be close to the ants and ground beetles that provide

pollination and seed distribution services. Having set seed, the plants race against the shade to produce enough starch to supply fuel for a quick "jump start" the following spring. Finally, as the trees leaf out and the available light diminishes, the plants retreat into the ground to rest until the next spring.

Spring ephemeral wildflowers are an experience unique to the rich moist soils of the eastern deciduous forest. Further south, where winters are milder, the spring show is centered on flowering trees, further north, the year long shade under conifers provides too little light for most flowers. March, April and May are the months to get out, wander the woods, crouch close to the ground, and experience these fleeting blossoms up close and personal— they'll be gone by June.

We Need Your Talent!

Copywriters:

Nature Guelph is looking for copywriters and copy editors to contribute to various communication initiatives including our newsletter and website. Spread the word!

Interested in volunteering with Nature Guelph? Please contact Christine Bowen: volunteer@natureguelph.ca

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Check us out on Facebook,
Twitter and Instagram.

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Thank you to all our contributors.

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