

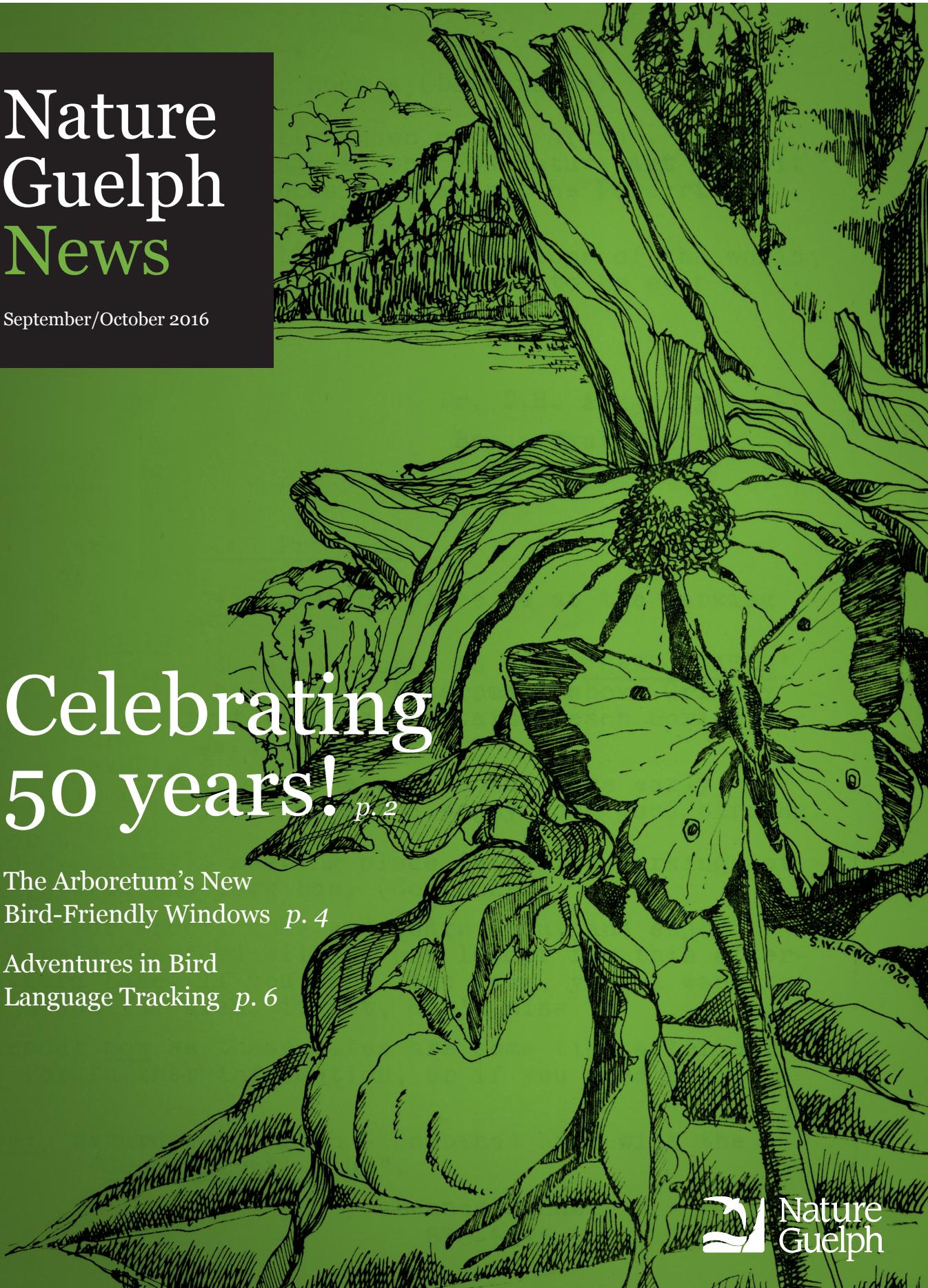
Nature Guelph News

September/October 2016

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Nature
Guelph

The Last 50 Years

President's Message

By Jenn Bock

Can you believe it's our Golden Jubilee!?

This club has definitely come a long way and made a big impact in our community in many, many ways. Here are a few wonderful highlights from the past 50 years.

1974

Published comprehensive checklists of birds and plants of Wellington County.

1981

Established Special Reserve Fund – \$20,000 set aside for conservation activities and land acquisition.

1993

Designed and planted a native plants garden on either side of the covered bridge at York Road Park near The Boathouse.

1999

Worked with the Kitchener-Waterloo Field Naturalists to complete a wildlife survey along the proposed Hwy. 7 corridor to Kitchener.

2004

Plant Branch special interest sub-group established.

2006

Assisted with the construction of 150 metres of boardwalk at Hanlon Creek.

2013

Nature in the City program initiated. This City of Guelph Library partnership series aims to inspire new nature enthusiasts in our city.

2016

Raised the funds and facilitated treatment of windows at the U of G Arboretum Centre to make them 'bird friendly.'

1966

The Guelph Field Naturalists were re-organized. Before that, naturalist groups existed in the area under different names, but without the same consistency.

1968

The GFN Young Naturalists Program was initiated and we started delivering programs to inspire young nature enthusiasts.

1988

Participated in the Peregrine Falcon Release Project in Guelph.

1991

Made a three-year financial commitment to the City of Guelph to support the Trees for Guelph program.

2001

Took over management and stewardship of the Nature Conservancy of Canada's Agnew Property.

2002

Bird Wing special interest sub-group established.

2008

Won a bid to research and design 'Trails Take Flight' brochure (a Ministry of Health initiative) highlighting birding opportunities at 20 local trails.

2011

Started annually sponsoring two high school-aged students to attend the Ontario Nature Youth Summit.

It was really tough to create a shortlist that could all fit on one page! We sincerely hope that you'll join us at our 50th Anniversary Party on Sunday, October 16th to celebrate our impressive past, and to look ahead to the amazing community impacts we'll have in the next 50 years. Thanks to each and every one of you for being a part of this awesome journey!

Ontario Nature Report

By Mary Ellen Pyear

On Saturday, May 7th, Peter Kelly, Jenn Bock, and I drove to the regional Ontario Nature (ON) meeting hosted by the Huron Fringe Field Naturalists. The meeting was held at the Wawanosh Nature Centre located near Wingham/Blyth and the facility is used as an education centre for local classrooms and groups. Besides representation from Nature Guelph, the following groups also had attendees: the host group – Huron Fringe Field Naturalists, Waterloo Region Nature (formerly Kitchener-Waterloo Field Naturalists), Owen Sound FNs, Stratford FNs, and Saugeen FNs.

Lisa Richardson of Ontario Nature and Peter Kelly, Great Lakes West Regional Director, opened the meeting by inviting all six groups to share their clubs' recent projects/happenings. Following these reports, Erin Dalmage gave an introduction to the Wawanosh Nature Centre and its activities. Afterwards, Rachel White, Program Manager, talked about her position with the Huron Stewardship Council. The Council's three main area of focus are as follows:

a) Land stewardship which involves keeping up local trails, sustainable management of private woodlands, maintaining an updated list of the trees of Huron County, and the planting of 23,000 trees following the tornado that hit the Goderich area in August 2011;

- b) Species at risk research, which mainly focuses on the Queensnake Project and the release of Snapping Turtles; and
- c) Outreach to communities, and especially to youth which involved a Bioblitz in 2014 and an upcoming one in June 2016 as well and involvement with the Huron Perth Ag and Water Festival. Rachel ended her presentation by showing a video about the lower Maitland River produced by the Lower Maitland Stewardship Group – lmsg.huronstewardship.ca/video.

In the afternoon, Lisa Richardson gave updates on what was happening at the provincial level. Work has been continuing on the following projects across Ontario: the Wetlands Conservation project, the Spring Bear Hunt, the Reflected Light and Bird Strikes project, and the Pollinator Health Action Plan. All these projects can be reviewed in greater detail on the ON website – www.ontarionature.org.

Lisa also talked about the upcoming 85th Anniversary Event – the weekend retreat called The Bruce Beckons – that ON was hosting in early June at the Evergreen Resort (this will be reported on in the next Nature Guelph newsletter). Lisa updated people about ON's newest land purchase – the Sydenham River Nature Reserve in southwestern Ontario. The river flows through or near towns/areas such as Wallaceburg, Dresden, and

Strathroy, and the territory of Walpole Island (Bkejwanong First Nation) and eventually empties into Lake St. Clair. While the area is mainly wooded, the river flows through prime agricultural land planted mainly with corn and soybeans. It has documented 37 species of mussels, many of which are listed as at risk provincially, nationally, and even globally. In the Spring 2016 issue of the ON magazine, Caroline Schultz, President of Ontario Nature, states, "What makes the Sydenham River even more important is that its watershed is the only significant one located entirely within Ontario's Carolinian Zone" (p. 27). Lisa went on to explain ON's project on Biodiversity Offsetting which began in July 2013 with support from the Metcalf Foundation. This involves engaging developers in compensating for environmental damages resulting from development projects in the province. ON's primary goal with this project is to ensure that the natural world benefits into the future as biodiversity offsetting moves forward in Ontario. The Fall 2016 meeting of the Great Lakes West Region of ON will be hosted on November 5th by Nature Guelph. ●

All about the birds and the bees!



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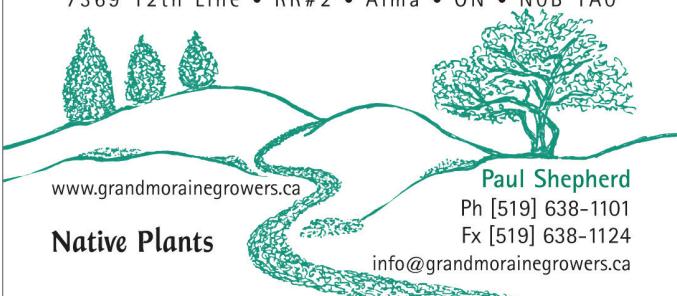
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Clear Passage

Nature Guelph helps Arboretum display bird collision window treatment



With the help of Nature Guelph, the University of Guelph Arboretum has just installed "FeatherFriendly" treatments to 10 large plate glass windows where fatal bird collisions have occurred. The windows now have outside "spots" that birds can see and reduce collisions by interfering with the reflection that can make the windows look like safe greenery.

The inspiration for this initiative came from Paloma Plant, founding member and project coordinator for Toronto-based Fatal Light Awareness Program (FLAP). At the May 2015 talk to our club, Paloma challenged us to do something about the periodic bird strikes on the large glass windows at The Arboretum.

Gordon Aitken took up the challenge and met with The Arboretum staff including Chris Earley as well as Michael Mesure, FLAP's Executive Director. They highlighted 10 large windows hazardous to flying birds. The challenge was to find a compromise that deters birds, while retaining much of the aesthetics of the building. (All those wedding photos!) The Executive got behind the project, and John Prescott worked with Gordon on fundraising. The Gosling Foundation matched member donations to the project for \$1,500, and TD Friends of the Environment made a major donation to the project. We have a small surplus for the project that can be applied to other hazardous windows in Guelph.

The focus of fundraising was not just to help The Arboretum bird-proof its known hazardous windows, which might be seen as just an Arboretum problem, but rather to have a publically accessible demonstration site in Guelph that can be visited by the large number of residents who've experienced bird strikes and don't know what to do about it. We are supporting the demonstration site with handout materials pointing people to sources of effective bird-proofing materials and resources. We're pleased that The Arboretum has agreed to be a demonstration site in the Guelph area for this simple technology.

Although it is difficult to give exact numbers due to scavengers carrying off dead and injured birds, Chris Earley told us that he has witnessed strikes 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.

"We are thrilled with the windows, and have had nothing but positive feedback from visitors; people are really interested in the dots!" says Shelley Hunt, Director of the Arboretum. "We're grateful to Nature Guelph and the TD Friends of the Environment, as well as the Gosling Foundation and Grand River Conservation Authority, for taking this

initiative. People who've had bird strikes on their windows can come and see how unobtrusive this is."

We had the following note from Paloma Plant: "Right now, the smile on my face is a mile wide! You have made my day! That is absolutely brilliant news... and, thanks so much for the photos! With your permission I would like to share them on our social media. We would also like to include a small article about it in an upcoming newsletter too... perhaps it will inspire others! I am really thrilled that Nature Guelph stuck with this. Please convey our thanks to all who persevered and made this happen." ●

Nature Guelph is grateful to the TD Friends of the Environment for major funding, to the Gosling Foundation, The Arboretum and the Grand River Conservation Authority. Donations came from the following members and supporters: Gordon Aitken, Susan Atkinson, Karen Bateman, Ursula Bock, Kristyn Ferguson, Celia Gibbs, John Hart, Marlene Hart, Bev Healey, Carol Koenig, Linda Lehman, Leslie Lougheed, Elizabeth Miller, John Near, John Prescott, Mary Ramotar, Susan Rietschen, Nina Spzakowski, Elizabeth Taborek, Richard Tofflemire, Bill Wong, Judy Brisson and Bryan Wyatt.



Bryan Gilvesy

The Multi-Functional Farm

Where Agriculture, Biodiversity and Wild Spaces Co-exist

Nature Guelph Speaker Series

September 8, 2016 – 7:30pm

The Arboretum Centre, University of Guelph

Everyone welcome

Bryan will discuss his growth as an agro-ecological farmer and the influence the ALUS program has had on the Y U Ranch since 2005. As Executive Director of the new ALUS Canada not-for-profit, Bryan will discuss its success, rapid growth and the importance of this new innovative model for conservation.



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www.natureguelph.ca

Red Wings in the Rain

Adventures in Bird Language Tracking

By Tamara Anderson



It was 7 degrees Celsius and windy this morning during a chilly 7:00am bird sit at Guelph Lake. The rain drizzled for the first two periods of the sit and then tapered off for Periods 3 and 4. Moments after the intrepid birders, Ben, Carolyn, Ann and Tamara had found sit spots on the hilly shoreline, the Red-Winged Blackbirds began a chorus of "Deet" calls. After about 3 minutes, they stopped. This shock wave of alarm eased into "Aujourd'hui (Conk-a-ree)" songs and territorial claims along the high waters of the lake front.

Carolyn was seated near tall Pine trees and she watched a pair of robins fly from the trees to the edge of the lake and back again. She noticed that both robins carried nesting material to the trees. Aside from Period 1, these two birds were very quiet, working in secret to build a shelter for their soon-to-be family. A Great Blue Heron flew across the sky from the Southeast to the Northwest, its long legs trailing out from behind the pterodactyl-like bird. Ben noted some Black-Capped Chickadees near the forest. Tree swallows darted along the shoreline, catching insects on the wing. We were amazed at the diversity of loud songs from a male Northern Cardinal during Periods 1 through 4. He sang; "Pretty, Pretty, Pretty" and "Fire! Fire! Where? Where?" and "Look here! Quick, Quick

Quick." Carolyn shared her understanding that male cardinals appear more attractive to the females when they have a variety of songs. After reviewing songs on the Bird Language website – birdlanguage.com/resources/bird-voices-audio-library/vocalizations-list – I learned that some male cardinals add a "chrrr" call at the end of their "Look here! Quick, Quick, Quick" song. This "chrrr" call is thought to be a very difficult sound to make and it indicates physical fitness – an attractive quality that females look for.

An osprey hovered above the lake during Periods 3 and 4. Its feet were outstretched and positioned for a dive, in anticipation of catching a fish. The song birds did not seem to mind this aerial predator. A Canada Goose appeared at the edge of the lake. It waddled uphill, passing us on its way, to dine on a buffet of grass at the top of the hill. A diving duck appeared at the shoreline and dove underwater, not to be seen for the rest of the bird sit. A pair of song sparrows, like the robins, worked quietly and secretly at the edge of the lake near some cedar trees. One carried nesting material to the ground while the other remained on-watch nearby. At the end of the sit, we wondered about the variety of calls and alarms given by the Cardinals and Red-Winged Blackbirds. One sound

that puzzled us was the "Check" calls by the Red-Winged Blackbirds. Are these contact calls or alarms? We also noted the quiet behaviour of the nest-building robins and song sparrows – two birds that are normally quite vocal. We understood the intent of this behaviour as not wanting to draw attention to their nesting sites.

Throughout the bird sit, the seemingly carefree goldfinches flew overhead in flocks, singing about "Potato-Chips" and "Chocolate Chips." Ann shared her understanding that the goldfinches will wait to nest until the thistle plant is ready to provide food and nesting material in the late summer. Ann also shared a delicious apple, blueberry, rhubarb crisp. We wrapped up the bird sit wondering about the staggered nesting times of birds and feeling in awe of the intricate symbiotic relationships between birds, plants, insects and nesting times. ●

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 discoveries on the blog: natureguelphtracking.wordpress.com or natureguelph.ca under Programs/Outdoor.

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.

September 8, 2016 – 7:30 pm

The Multi-Functional Farm:
Where Agriculture, Biodiversity and Wild Spaces Co-exist
Bryan Gilvesy

October 13, 2016 – 7:30 pm

Challenges for Conservation and Management of Species at Risk
Dr. Tom Nudds,
Dept. of Integrative Biology,
University of Guelph
Science, Art and Advocacy

The Arboretum, University of Guelph
College Avenue East, Guelph

The entrance to The Arboretum is on College Avenue just west of Victoria Rd.

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

For confirmation and updates,
visit www.natureguelph.ca.

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

NATURE GUELPH WILDFLOWER SOCIETY

September 21, 2016

Plant Identification Workshop
Drumlin Farm
4565 Watson Road South, Puslinch

Bring along samples of drought tolerant plants (leaves, flowers) and your field guides to practice identification and keying skills. Extra field guides will be available.

For a map to Drumlin Farm:
www.drumlinfarm.ca/locationmap

To carpool, meet at 21 College Ave. West at 7:15 pm.

October 19, 2016

Native Plant Restoration and Gardens
Stefan Weber, Manager, St. Williams Nursery and Ecology Centre

St. Williams is Ontario's largest native plant nursery. It specializes exclusively in native seed and plants for biodiversity conservation of Ontario native wild-type plant genetics.

Location and Time: TBA

NEARBY NATURALIST CLUB EVENTS

Waterloo Region Nature

September 26, 2016 – 7:30–9:30 pm

Bats: A World of Science and Mystery
Brock Fenton

October 24, 2016 – 7:30–9:30 pm

Reed It and Weep: Invasive *Phragmites Australis* in a Great Lakes Coastal Marsh

Knox Presbyterian Church Hall
50 Erb Street West, Waterloo

Hamilton Naturalists Club

September 12, 2016 – 7:00 pm

Biomimicry: Learning from Nature's Designs
Richard Aaron

Royal Botanical Gardens
Plains Road West, Burlington

rare

September 29, 2016 – 7:00–8:30 pm

Grand River Wildlife
Paul Gains

October 13, 2016 – 7:00–8:30 pm

The Wildlife Trade and Protecting Endangered Species
Jason Bracey

rare ECO Centre
Admission \$8. Must pre-register online.

Halton/North Peel Naturalists Club

September 13 – 7:30 pm

Invasive Plants in Ontario
Colin Cassin

St. Alban the Martyr Anglican Church
537 Main Street
Glen Williams (Georgetown)



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Celebrate 50!

Please join us for Nature Guelph's 50th Anniversary – a tribute to our past achievements and a celebration of the nature in and around our great city!

Sunday, October 16 from 1:00–4:00 pm
River Run Centre, 35 Woolwich Street, Guelph

All past and present Nature Guelph members are invited to attend this Open House event. No pre-registration or tickets are required. *Light catered lunch.*



Thank you to our event sponsors:

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Missing Members?

Do you know how to reach any previous Nature Guelph/Guelph Field Naturalists members who have since moved away and may not know about our upcoming 50th anniversary celebrations? If so, please contact Brett Forsyth at info@brettforsyth.com or Susan Atkinson at 519-837-9470. We'll let them know!

New Mailing Fee Coming

Members who wish to continue receiving a printed version of the newsletter will be required to pay an annual \$12 fee in addition to their membership dues, to help cover the high cost of printing and postage.



Nature Guelph

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Check us out on Facebook and Twitter.

Nature Guelph News is published five times a year – every two months except July and August. Please submit all contributions for the next issue to Sandra MacGregor by email on or before October 20, 2016.

Thank you to all our contributors.

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