

November 2010



The Heron

KITCHENER-WATERLOO
Field Naturalists

What's Inside

KWFN Contacts	2
Info for everyone	3
Christmas Bird Counts	4
Membership Report	5
Native Plant Nuts	6
Ontario Nature	7
Outings	8
Winter Finch Forecast	10
Natural Areas Recap	12
Waterloo Stewardship	13
President's corner	14
Month at a Glance	15
Update Board of Directors	

Next Club Meeting:
November 22, 2010 at 7:30PM
Wing 404/Rotary Centre, Dutton Dr., Waterloo

Butterflies as Indicators in the Urban Landscape of Waterloo Region - A Master's Thesis

Jessica Grealey

Conservation biologists have long recognized the value of monitoring select biological indicators to measure and monitor changes in biological diversity. Due to their rapid response to environmental change, monitoring changes in the abundance and diversity of butterflies has the potential to indicate changes in overall ecosystem health and biodiversity. This can be used to help guide conservation management decisions and land-use planning. The research presented includes data on butterfly abundance and diversity monitoring at 15 sites across a variety of urban settings in the Region. This data was collected to examine how different urban land uses are impacting butterfly communities and if Regional Environmentally Sensitive Policy Area designations are effective at protecting biodiversity.

**Coffee and Tea Available
at the Meeting**



**Please remember to bring
Your Mug!**

KWFN Contacts for the 2010/2011 Season

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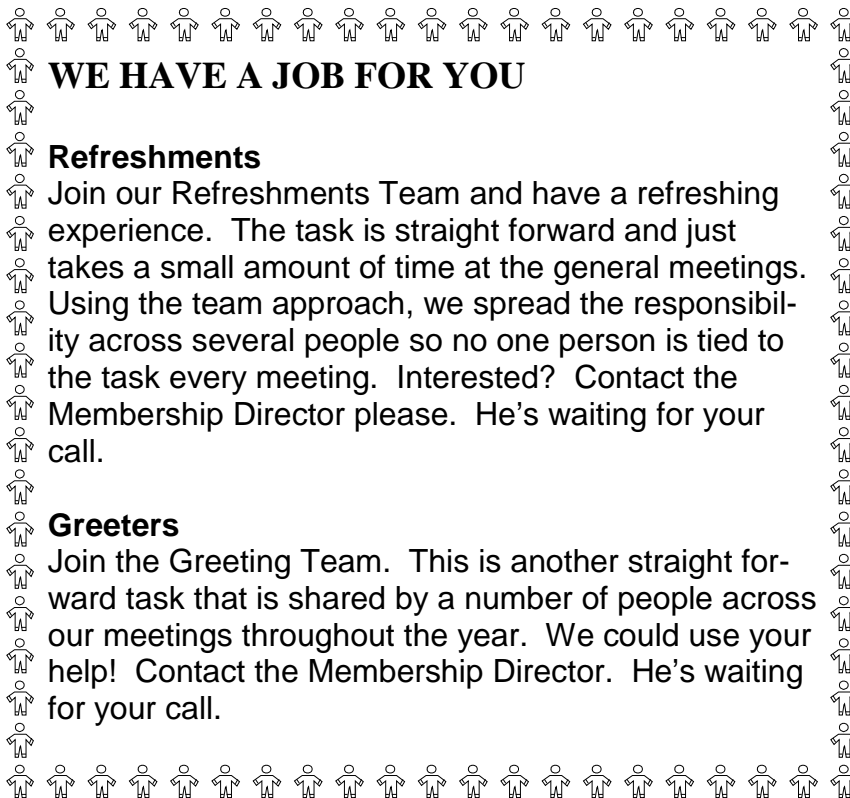
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WE HAVE A JOB FOR YOU

Refreshments
Join our Refreshments Team and have a refreshing experience. The task is straight forward and just takes a small amount of time at the general meetings. Using the team approach, we spread the responsibility across several people so no one person is tied to the task every meeting. Interested? Contact the Membership Director please. He's waiting for your call.

Greeters
Join the Greeting Team. This is another straight forward task that is shared by a number of people across our meetings throughout the year. We could use your help! Contact the Membership Director. He's waiting for your call.

Information for everyone

Nominations for Conservation Award

This award acknowledges the contribution(s) made by an individual or group, organization, corporation or office toward the conservation/preservation of the natural environment of the Region of Waterloo.

The nominee shall have participated in or instigated or increased public awareness of (an) endeavour(s) that has/have contributed to the conservation/preservation of the natural environment of the Region of Waterloo.

Nomination for this award shall be made in writing by any member of the KW Field Naturalists and submitted to the president. Prospective nominators should contact the president to receive a copy of the award criteria prior to submitting a nomination. Nominations must be submitted in writing by January 31.

Nominations for Honorary Life Membership Award

This prestigious award acknowledges the valuable and exceptional service made by an individual to the Kitchener-Waterloo Field Naturalists.

The recipient must be a longtime KWFN member who has demonstrated outstanding personal service and made a significant contribution to the organization, over a long period of time.

Prospective nominators should contact the president to receive a copy of the award criteria prior to submitting a nomination. Nominations must be submitted in writing by January 31.

BEREAVEMENT

We note with sympathy that Karen Buschert's mother, Betty Ellen Buschert, passed away on October 5, 2010. A card from the Board of Directors and the membership of KWFN has been sent to Karen and her family.

Winter Weather Notice to Members:

In the situation where a winter storm may arise, please tune to 105.3 Kool FM or 99.5 KFUN for meeting cancellation notices.

Weather cancellations should also be provided on their websites. Information will also be available on our website, www.kwfn.ca

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More Information for everyone

76th annual Kitchener Christmas Bird Count

- To be held Saturday, December 18, 2010
- New participants welcomed and encouraged to attend one of Neil Taylor's training workshops
- Please confirm your availability by email to Mike Burrell before December 1
- Feeder watchers also encouraged!
- For more information contact Mike Burrell
- 519-410-3895 (cell)
- 519-586-9726 (home)
- mike.burrell.on@gmail.com

5th Linwood Christmas Bird Count

- Date TBA
- New participants welcomed!
- For more information or to stay informed contact Mike Burrell

Cambridge Christmas Bird Count

- Sunday, December 19th, 2010
- Potluck dinner at Wrigley Corners Outdoor Education Centre to follow (2366 Spragues Rd. Ayr, Ontario).
- New participants welcome. Long-standing participants are encouraged to bring along someone new to the CBC.
- If you would like to participate or simply want more information please contact Levi Moore.
- lcmoore_04@yahoo.ca
- Home: 519-747-2080
- Cell: 519-501-4031

FROM THE MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR
submitted by Larry Hamel

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Our thanks to all who have heard the call and responded positively. As of October 15, 2010 we have received 90 renewals and 11 new memberships for a total of 101 memberships for 2010-11. We ended 2009-2010 with 158 memberships. Soooooo, we have a ways to go to surpass last year's number. Talk with your friends and colleagues who have yet to renew and encourage them to do so. Also, talk with others you know and encourage them to join. We must have a great organization. After all, you are a member!

RENEW AT THE OCTOBER 25TH MEETING OR BY MAIL

Take advantage of the Membership table at the back of the hall. We have a form for you and will be pleased to take your money. After October 25th, if you can't find the Membership Form that was sent with the September issue of The Heron, go to our web site www.kwfn.ca and download a copy or contact the Membership Director for fast and courteous service.

RENEWAL DEADLINE

Check your mailing label on The Heron. If it shows an "R" on it at the lower right side, you need to renew your membership.

November 15, 2010 is the deadline for Membership Renewal. Following this date, the Membership List will be revised and only paid up members will remain on the active list and receive The Heron for December/January and beyond. A mailing will be sent to all who did not renew by November 15th. Help us to save money and time by renewing NOW please!

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS FOR 2010-2011

Look for and help us welcome the following individuals on October 25th and at subsequent meetings. Their name tags will help you recognize their names.

Bonnie Frizzell, Deborah and Ritch Swindrovich, Geisla Neumann, Dan Weiler (a former member), Paul Schnarr, Sarah Brown, Krista Straus, Robert Dick (a former member), Sandra Dick, Mira Furgoch, Alvan Buckley, Mary Thorpe.

New members, you in particular, are encouraged to seek out the Directors and Other Resource People listed on the contact page in The Heron to get whatever information you need and to offer assistance in areas of interest to you when you are ready.

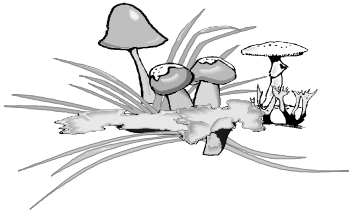
DONATIONS

We express appreciation to the following members and nonmembers who have made a donation to one or more of our Special Funds: Operating, Sanctuary and/or Young Naturalists since last June.

Thelma Beaubien, Mary Pare, Alisha McClurg, Marco and Donna DeBruin, Jo-Anne Harris, Grant Greenfield, Julie Trip, Don and Janet Roberts, Gord and Daphne Nicolls, Robert Fraser, Mark Dorfman, Helga Hartman, Elaine LaRonde, Curtiss and Faye MacDonald, Ruth Kroft, Marg Dickson, Lynne Elliot, Doug and Su Morton, Dale and Nina Ingrey, Paul and Pat Bigelow, Wil and Marilyn Prudham, April Morrissey, Fred and Jane Schneider, Michael Frind, Clay and Christine Morgan, Robert and Ann Bean, Jim and Joanne Lackenbauer, Graham and Margaret Macdonald, Cameron Bates, Marlene Krebs, Randy and Deborah Fowler, Krista Straus, Susanne Pennington, Walter and Brenda Zimmerman, Jennifer Clayfield, Robert Oswald.

NAME TAGS

If you can't find your name tag on one of the green blankets at the side of the room, please notify the Membership Director so he can have one there for you at the next meeting.



Native Plant Nuts

By Wayne Buck

There is Something in the Autumn

You can't help but notice what a marvelous fall we are having. The colours of the leaves on the deciduous trees are peaking just now. Climatologists tell us that the brilliant colours are due, in part, to the warm summer we just experienced which helped the trees produce an abundant supply of sugars that is necessary for the production of the red pigments. They will have faded somewhat by the time you read this.

Some of the oaks in the region have produced a huge number of acorns this year; namely the Red and Black Oaks. I have not found this to be true of Bur Oaks. If we were to be able to go back to the 1800's, I'm sure we would be amazed at the size of the flocks of the now extinct, Passenger Pigeon, as they passed through the region on their way south.

We are told that there were so many of these birds that the limbs of some of these massive trees their weight would crack and break. If you lived near a forest with oaks, you would hear the crash of branches all night long. The flocks were so extensive they would block the sunlight for hours at a time as the flocks passed. It's hard to imagine numbers like that. Even harder

to imagine that there is not a single member of the species left; the last one dying in 1914. And the asters! They are so colourful this year. Every time I walk or drive past a field (meadow?) I am struck by the colour and beauty of these plants. I am reminded of the line from the Bible that is paraphrased; "Consider the *asters*; (italics mine) of the field; They toil not, neither do they spin. Yet Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these."

One of the most common along the roadside is the Lance-leaved aster, with its masses of white blooms; looking rather like a fried egg with the white outer petals and the bright yellow centre.

Then we have the royal purple of the New England Aster, also a resident of the open fields. Some I have noticed are leaning more towards of a shade of pink. The bumble bees seem to love these.

Along the edges of woods and in openings in the forest we have been seeing the beautiful pale blue of Heart-leaved Aster, with the deep notch in the leaf at the stem end from which its name is derived. The trails in the Sudden Tract are lined with a profusion of these. In more shaded areas of the forest we frequently come

across Large-leaved Aster, similarly coloured but easily distinguished by its larger basal leaves.

If you are fortunate enough to have been driving in the Cambridge area, you may have noticed one of several native prairie asters; one being the aptly named Sky-blue Aster. It is a delicate shade of light blue as opposed to the mauve of the previous two. In dry sunny stretches and fields and along roadsides you may see Heath Aster, distinguishable by its white blooms and small leaves. It is a lower growing aster than any of the aforementioned. I recently saw some beautiful specimens in the meadows at the Huron Natural Area.

My companions and I have been seeing many fields that contain the white Arrow-leaved aster in the Collingwood area as we hike that section of the Bruce Trail. The centre of the flower starts out a brilliant yellow but soon changes to a deep purple. It is distinguishable by the wings on the stems of the leaves.

The native asters make a wonderful addition to the native plant garden, providing a rainbow of colour and a succession of bloom into the fall season.

Ontario Nature-Great Lakes West-Fall Regional Meeting

The Upper Credit Field Naturalists will host our next Regional Meeting on Saturday November 6, from 10:00 to approximately 3:00 in Alton. This is an excellent opportunity to learn a little more about Ontario Nature's Regional structure, hear about the activities of other clubs in our region and be updated on Ontario Nature activities. It's a great chance to meet other naturalists and share ideas among our network. Four members of the KWFN Board plan to attend the meeting with me.

Biodiversity Charter for Ontario

Submitted by Lisa Richardson, Ontario Nature

Ontario Nature has been protecting and advocating for biodiversity for 80 years. We believe that the loss of biodiversity is one of the most important issues facing us today. That's why we're ending 2010 with a special campaign, a 20/20 vision for biodiversity in Ontario. If you forgot to add your name last month, please join our efforts, and add your signature to the campaign at www.ontarionature.org/protect/campaigns/biodiversity_2020_vision.php.

Nature Guardians Youth Council Conference Call

Submitted by Sarah Hedges, Ontario Nature

If you have youth in your family, they may be interested in connecting with this new Ontario Nature initiative. Recently, ten interested youth from all over Ontario participated in a conference call to discuss the formation of an Ontario Nature Youth Council. We talked about expectations for one another, what the Council would like to accomplish, and ideas for an upcoming Youth Leadership Workshop. For more information, visit us on our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=513969097#!/pages/Nature-Guardians/134532333223731?ref=ts.



FESTIVE POT LUCK MONDAY DECEMBER 6, 2010 from 6:00 – 8:30 pm

This will be an informal social gathering for all members and a wonderful opportunity to join in some festive fellowship.

Tea, coffee, punch and dinner rolls will be provided. The rest is up to you! We rely on members and guests to contribute a dish and suggest surname A-H = Salad, I-P = Dessert, P-Z = Entree

In order to reduce waste, we ask that you bring your own plates, mugs and cutlery.

We always appreciate any assistance with this event, so if you are able to help out in any way (setting up tables, decorations, clean-up etc.) or provide musical entertainment (piano available) please sign the Small But Vital Task List or contact Janet Ozaruk at 519-893-0490, or email janeto@golden.net

Outings Schedule



By Mary Voisin

Birding in the Dumfries Townships

Tuesday, November 2nd, 2010, 9:00 a.m.

Rain date: Wednesday, November 3rd, 2010 9:00 a.m.

Neil Taylor 519-893-6469

Meeting Time/Place

9:00 am - Car Park at 401 and Fountain Street (south of Homer Watson) for car pool.

Join Neil for this tour of some great birding in areas seldom visited by club members. This may include some visits to private properties and certainly to ponds with a variety of ducks as well as Trumpeter Swans. While this will be a road birding trip, Neil plans on some hiking in search of more elusive birds. This will be a full morning outing.

Montgomery Wildlife Sanctuary

Monday, November 8, 2010

Marco DeBruin

519-658-5372

Meeting Time/Place

9:30 am at the Montgomery property, drive 9km west from New Dundee on Bridge Street, to the bridge over the Nith River. The property is on your left, just before the bridge.

This 18 acre property was purchased by Kitchener-Waterloo Field Naturalist as a nature sanctuary in 1973. It was named in honour of Fred Montgomery who taught at K-W Collegiate Institute and the Ontario Agriculture College. He was a founding member of KWFN and was involved in assessing the natural features of the property. As you explore this area with Marco, you will discover that the ecological features are bountiful, as there are four distinct zones to the property: Forested Floodplain, Riparian Zone, Flood Channels and Upland Forest. Birds can be found on the property in all areas and in all seasons. The 1.2 km loop trail is marked with blazes and has 11 numbered posts. Descriptions and information about what is seen at each of these posts is found in The Montgomery Trail Guide. (available through KWFN) Wearing boots is recommended if it has been rainy recently.

Huron Natural Area (HNA)

Wednesday, November 10th, 2010

Neil Taylor 893-6469

Meeting Time/Place

9:00 am at the Pavilion area – 801 Trillium Park Dr. Directions – Take Strasburg Rd. south from Bleams Rd. to Trillium Drive . Turn west (right) about 1 km. to

the parking lot on south side (left).

Once again, Neil will lead this hike through a very valuable wildlife area in the City of Kitchener that contains an amazing representation of this area's biodiversity. This regionally significant 107 hectare (360 acre) park is the city's largest park. It contains a cold water stream that supports a population of brook trout flows through the site. There is a diverse habitat including Class I Provincially Significant Wetlands, kettles, ponds, upland maple/ beech forest, cultural meadows, as well as pine plantations. Significant species breed here and the ponds are visited by migrants. It has been said that there are more than 400 different plant species, and 18 different vegetation zones. While the wildlife is quieter at this time of year, we may encounter surprises. Join Neil for this fresh air experience and learn about the more than 100 wildlife species, including dragonflies, butterflies, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals. Some of these species are regionally and provincially significant. This will be about a 3 hour hike, but anyone may leave if they have a time constraint.



Dickson Wilderness Area and Bannister Lake
Tuesday November 16, 2010.
Marco DeBruin
519-658-5372

Meeting Time/Place
9:30 am in the carpool parking lot at Fountain St (Homer Watson) and the 401. Fountain is Homer Watson on the Kichener side of the 401

Dickson is a 98 acre property originally bought by KWFN and donated to the GRCA. The property encompasses two ponds and provides a home for a variety of birds, plants, fungi etc. The boardwalks through the wetland are good locations for bird watching and seeing chickadees and nuthatches up close. Don't forget your camera, binoculars and seed to feed the birds!

If time permits, we will also visit Bannister Lake to see any remaining waterfowl. Sandhill cranes have been seen here in the past.

Drynan Regional Forest
Saturday, November 20
Valerie Hill
518-578-8113
Cell 519-841-3228

Meeting Time/Place
9:00 a.m. for car pool at parking lot at Highway 401 & Homer Watson Road, otherwise meet at the Drynan Tract parking lot 9:30 a.m. Located on Concession 8, east of Dumfries Road, south of Greenfield Drive .

The Drynan Tract is a 45 hectare site located in North Dumfries , a rolling forest with rugged topography and low lying marsh as well as several small lakes. This Carolinian forest provides habitat for several significant species.



Christmas Bird Count – Learn the Basics – Part I
Saturday, December 11th, 2010
Neil Taylor 893-6469

Meeting Time/Place:
9:00 a. m. Parking lot of Doon Presbyterian Church (with permission) at 35 Roos St., Kitchener, (off Old Mill Rd. in Doon).

The annual Christmas Bird Count for Kitchener will take place later on December 18th. New participants are needed to complete this census and make it successful. If you would like to take part in the count but are unsure of what's involved, then join Neil to learn the basics and gain self-confidence to volunteer for this year's CBC. Dress warmly and bring your binoculars, field guide, notepad, and pen/pencil. To volunteer, see the notice elsewhere in this month's Heron or see the Web Page for contact information. Neil confesses that he is also using this outing as a means of scouting out his area for rare birds in advance of the count itself. You may and really should register for the CBC in advance of this event. Sturdy hiking footwear is suggested. (3 hours)

Christmas Bird Count – Learn the Basics – Part II
Sunday, December 12th, 2010
Neil Taylor 893-6469

Meeting Time/Place
1:00 p. m. Parking lot of Pioneer Memorial Tower. From Fairway Rd., take King St. E. past Riverbank Dr. and Highway 8. Turn right onto Deer Ridge Dr. and follow to the end, ignoring Pioneer Tower Road. Turn right onto Lookout Lane and proceed to the parking lot.

This is a repeat of the December 11th outing, but in a new location in the area of Doon Pioneer Tower. See the earlier information.




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WINTER FINCH FORECAST 2010-2011

This winter's theme is that some finch species will irrupt into southern Canada and the northern United States, while other species will remain in the north. As an example, Common and Hoary Redpolls will move south whereas Pine Grosbeaks will stay in the north. See individual finch forecasts below for details. Three irruptive non-finch passerines are also discussed.

KEY FINCH TREE CROPS

Key trees in the boreal forest affecting finch abundance and movements are white and black spruces, white birch, and mountain-ashes. South of the boreal in the mixed coniferous/deciduous forest region, white pine and hemlock are additional key finch trees. Other trees play a lesser role, but often boost or buffer main seed sources. These include tamarack (American larch), balsam fir, white cedar, yellow birch and alders.

SPRUCE: White spruce cone crops are very good to excellent across the northern half of the boreal forest in Canada, except Newfoundland where crops are poor. However, spruce crops are much lower in the southern half of the boreal forest and poor in the mixed forest region of central Ontario such as Algonquin Park. Spruce crops are generally poor in the Atlantic Provinces, New York State and New England States.

WHITE PINE: Cone crop is spotty with scattered good to excellent crops across Ontario. White pine crops are low in Atlantic Canada, New York and New England States.

HEMLOCK: Cone crop is poor in Ontario and elsewhere in the East.

WHITE BIRCH: Crop is poor across the boreal forest of Canada and in central Ontario, but birch crops are much better in southern Ontario south of the Canadian (Precambrian) Shield. **MOUNTAIN-ASH:** Berry crops are generally excellent across Canada and Alaska, but poor in Newfoundland.

INDIVIDUAL FINCH FORECASTS

Forecasts apply mainly to Ontario, but neighboring provinces and states may find they apply to them.

PINE GROSBEAK: The Pine Grosbeak breeds in moist open habitats across northern Ontario. It is most common in northeastern Ontario which receives more precipitation than northwestern Ontario (Peck and Coady in (ABBO)). Most Pine Grosbeaks should stay in the north this winter because the mountain-ash berry crop is generally excellent across the boreal forest of Canada and Alaska, except for a poor crop in Newfoundland. The feeders at the Visitor Centre in Algonquin Park usually attract Pine Grosbeaks even in non-flight winters. If Pine Grosbeaks wander into southern Ontario they will find good crops of European mountain-ash berries and ornamental crabapples.

PURPLE FINCH: This finch winters in the north when the majority of deciduous and coniferous seed crops are abundant, which is not the case this year. Most Purple Finches will migrate south of Ontario this fall. A few may frequent feeders in southern Ontario. Purple Finch numbers have declined significantly in recent decades due in part to a decrease of spruce budworm outbreaks since the 1980s (Leckie and Cadman in (ABBO)).

RED CROSSBILL: This crossbill comprises at least 10 "call types" in North America. Each type has its particular cone preferences related to bill size and shape. These crossbill types may be at an early stage of evolving into full species and some may already qualify for species status. They are exceedingly difficult to identify in the field and much remains to be learned about their status and distribution. Types 2 and 3 and probably 4 occur regularly in Ontario (Simard in (ABBO)). Most Red Crossbill types prefer pines, but the smallest-billed Type 3 (sitkensis subspecies of AOU Check-list 1957) prefers the small soft cones of hemlock in Ontario. It will be absent this winter because hemlock crops are poor. Type 2 may be the most frequently encountered Red Crossbill in the province. Some Type 2s should be found this winter where white pine crops are very good such as northeastern Algonquin Park and along Highway 69 north of the French River in Sudbury District. Possible

Courtesy of Ron Pittaway and Jean Iron (with permission) and edited by Neil E. Taylor

this winter are other Red Crossbill types associated with red pine, which has some locally good crops. **WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL:** High numbers of White-winged Crossbills are currently concentrated in southern Yukon where the white spruce cone crop is bumper. These may remain there this winter. This crossbill's highest breeding abundance in Ontario is in the spruce dominated Hudson Bay Lowlands and adjacent northern Canadian Shield (Coady in (ABBO)). Most Ontario reports this past summer came from this area where the white spruce cone crop is heavy. Some were singing and presumably nesting. They might remain in northern Ontario this winter if seed supplies last. Some may disperse southward as spruce seeds run low and could appear in southern Ontario and northern United States. However, they will be rare or absent this winter in traditional areas such as Algonquin Park where spruce and hemlock cone crops are very poor. Unlike the Red Crossbill, the White-winged Crossbill has no subspecies (monotypic) or call types in North America. Its nomadic wanderings across the boreal forest mix the populations and allow gene flow, which inhibits geographical variation and the formation of subspecies. **COMMON REDPOLL:** Redpolls should irrupt into southern Canada and the northern United States this winter. The Common Redpoll's breeding range in Ontario is mainly in the Hudson Bay Lowlands from the Manitoba border southeast to southern James Bay (Leckie and Pittaway (ABBO)). Redpolls in winter are a birch seed specialist and movements are linked in part to the size of the birch crop. The white birch crop is poor across much of northern Canada. Another indicator of an upcoming irruption was a good redpoll breeding season in 2010 with double and possibly triple broods reported in Quebec. High breeding success also was reported in Yukon. Samuel Denault of McGill University has shown that redpoll movements at Tadoussac, Quebec, are more related to reproductive success than to tree seed crops in the boreal for-

est. Redpolls will be attracted to the good birch seed crops on native white birch and European white birch in southern Ontario and to weedy fields. They should be frequent this winter at feeders offering nyger and black oil sunflower seeds. Watch for the larger, darker and browner "Greater" Common Redpolls (rostrata subspecies) in the flocks. It is reliably identified by its larger size and proportionally longer thicker bill and longer tail in direct comparison with "Southern" Common Redpolls (nominata flammae subspecies).

HOARY REDPOLL: The breeding population in northern Ontario is the most southerly in the world (Leckie and Pittaway in (ABBO)). Careful checking of redpoll flocks should produce a few Hoary Redpolls. There are two subspecies. Most Hoaries seen in southern Canada and northern United States are "Southern" Hoary Redpolls (exilipes subspecies). During the last large redpoll irruption in 2007/2008, several "Hornemann's" Hoary Redpolls (nominata hornemanni subspecies) were found and supported by photographs. Hornemann's Redpoll was previously regarded as a great rarity south of the Arctic, but it may be more frequent than formerly believed. Hornemann's is most reliably identified by its much larger size in direct comparison with flammae Common Redpolls or exilipes Hoary Redpoll. Note that white birds loom larger than life among darker birds and size illusions are possible.

PINE SISKIN: Similar to the White-winged Crossbill, there are currently high numbers of siskins in southern Yukon attracted to a bumper white spruce cone crop. They could stay in Yukon for the winter. Siskins show a tendency for north-south migration, but are better considered an opportunistic nomad (Pittaway in (ABBO)). Banding recoveries show that siskins wander from coast to coast searching for conifer seed crops. They were uncommon this past summer in Ontario and the Northeast. Some might winter in northern Ontario where the white spruce crop is heavy. However, siskins are currently uncommon in the Northeast so there are potentially only very small numbers that could irrupt south in eastern North America.

EVENING GROSBEAK: Highest

breeding densities in Ontario are found in areas with spruce budworm outbreaks. Current breeding and wintering populations are now much lower than a few decades ago mainly because large spruce budworm outbreaks have subsided since the 1980s (Hoar in (ABBO)). If some come south this winter, they will find large crops of Manitoba maple (boxelder) seeds and plenty of black oil sunflower seeds at feeders waiting for them.

THREE MORE IRRUPTIVE PAS-SERINES

BLUE JAY: This will be an average flight year with smaller numbers than in 2009 along the north shorelines of Lakes Ontario and Erie. Beechnut crops are poor to none. Acorn crops are spotty, but considerably better than last year. More Blue Jays will winter in Ontario than last winter due to caches of acorns and other mast crops.

RED-BREADED NUTHATCH: This nuthatch is a conifer seed specialist when it winters in the north, thus its movements are triggered by the same crops as the boreal winter finches. The southward movement, which began in the summer, signaled the generally poor cone crops on spruces, balsam fir and white pine in the mixed coniferous/deciduous forest region across Ontario and in Atlantic Canada, New York and New England States. Red-breasted Nuthatches will be very scarce this winter in central Ontario such as Algonquin Park. White spruce crops are excellent in the northern half of the boreal forest, but it is uncertain how many Red-breasted Nuthatches will winter that far north.

BOHEMIAN WAXWING: Most Bohemians Waxwings will stay close to the boreal forest this winter because mountain-ash berry crops are excellent across Canada, except in Newfoundland. Some should wander south to traditional areas of eastern and central Ontario such as Ottawa and Peterborough where planted European mountain-ashes and ornamental crabapples are frequent. If you get the opportunity to visit northern Ontario this winter, you may see Bohemian Waxwings and Pine Grosbeaks feeding together on mountain-

ash berries. The grosbeaks eat the seeds and discard the flesh whereas the waxwings swallow the entire berry and sometimes eat the fleshy leftovers of the grosbeaks. The similar coloration of Bohemian Waxwings and female Pine Grosbeaks may be functional, perhaps reducing inter-specific aggression when they feed together.

WHERE TO SEE FINCHES

A winter trip to Algonquin Park is a birding adventure. The park is a three hour drive north of Toronto. Finch numbers will be low in Algonquin forests this winter, but the feeders at the Visitor Centre should attract redpolls, Evening Grosbeaks and Pine Grosbeaks. Gray Jays frequent the suet feeder and sometimes Pine Martens and Fishers feed on the suet and sunflower seeds. A high observation deck overlooks a spectacular boreal wetland and black spruce/tamarack forest. Eastern Timber Wolves (Canis lycaon), which until recently was a subspecies of the Gray Wolf (C. lupus), are seen occasionally from the observation deck feeding on road-killed Moose put out by park staff. The Visitor Centre and restaurant at km 43 are open on weekends in winter. Arrangements can be made to view feeders on weekdays. For information, call the Visitor Centre at 613-637-2828. The Spruce Bog Trail at km 42.5 near the Visitor Centre and the gated area north on the Opeongo Road are the best spots for finches, Gray Jay, Boreal Chickadee, Spruce Grouse and Black-backed Woodpecker.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: I thank staff of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources from across the province and many others whose reports allow me to make annual forecasts. (Editor's note: For a list of Acknowledgements see the Ont Birds website.)

LITERATURE CITED: Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Ontario, 2007 (ABBO) by editors M.D. Cadman, D.A. Sutherland, G.G. Beck, D. Lepage and A.R. Couturier.

<http://www.birdsontario.org/atlas/index.jsp>

Ron Pittaway, Ontario Field Ornithologists, Minden, Ontario - 23 September 2010

Larry Lamb – The Special Natural Areas of Waterloo Region

Recap by Michael Frind

Waterloo Region is well-known for its bustling cities contrasting with rolling farm fields. But there are also many hidden gems: exquisitely unique environmentally fragile areas that are home to rare species of plants and animals. Larry Lamb, a seasoned botanist and ecologist, provided a wonderful overview of the hidden treasures that await the birdwatcher, hiker, naturalist, and photographer.

Larry noted that, during his years as instructor in the Ecology Lab at the University of Waterloo, he regularly visited his favourite natural areas and always found something new and intriguing each time. He especially loves Northwest Waterloo and North Dumfries, two areas (designated as Environmentally Sensitive Landscapes by the Region) where extensive forests and wetlands intermingle.

Larry has been visiting the forests and wetlands of Waterloo Region for decades now, and he has seen the changes that have taken place over the years. He described the heavily grazed Petersburg Tract, a standard Maple-Beech forest now showing signs of erosion from off-road bicycles. Meanwhile, the Forested Hills ESPA is also showing signs of increased human usage—a direct consequence of encroaching subdivisions. And, Hidden Valley is losing plants as a result of intensive dirt-bike incursions.

Larry lamented the ubiquitous marketing of the suburban lifestyle: “live in Carolinian Ridge”, “close to nature like no other”, and “live in the woods”. Developers invariably view forests and ESPAs as something that enables them to charge extra for adjacent lots.

Larry showed photos of the tremendously valuable linkages that rivers form. The Grand River is the most obvious example, but even a simple railway (such as the Branchton Rail Line) is helpful. These areas provide refuges for Bobcat, Coyote, Barred Owls, Porcupines, and other rarely seen animals. Some areas, such as the limestone cliffs of the *rare* (Cruickston Park) reserve, are diffi-

cult for humans and mammals to access, and thus are especially attractive to nesting birds. Other areas, such as the Sudden Tract, have Silver Maple swamps with chest-deep mud—an ideally secluded location for a heronry.

Years ago, Larry was part of a small group of ecologists who was asked by the Region to evaluate lands to see if they deserved special protection.

Larry gave the diversity example of Hidden Valley: cedar thicket, marsh, Maple-Beech forest on ridge (creates diversity), and meadow as well. The same area also has Black Spruce, White Spruce, Bignut Hickory, and Big Bluestem (a tall prairie grass). He noted that this one area alone has Iowa, Muskoka, and Piedmont (North Carolina) all together!

Waterloo Region is also blessed with a number of bogs. These acidic, peat-based landscapes are noted for their unique fauna. Larry's favourite is Sudden Bog, a classic floating bog that, when visited, makes one feel as if one is in a Canadian Shield bog. One may spend hours with a macro lens, recording all the intriguing little plants that make their home here. Spongy Lake also harbours a bog system.

The FWR Dickson Wilderness Area is home to lush forest, ponds, and a creek, as well as a tallgrass prairie and a swamp carr (a shrub-thicket wetland which is not quite wet enough to discourage trees from trying to grow there). Larry noted that carr areas are valuable because many birds, including Cardinals, Catbirds, Woodcocks, and Goldfinches, need shrubs for nesting.

Larry gave examples of how landscapes are continually changing, and how the pace of change may be accelerating—even if urban sprawl is contained. The aforementioned *rare* reserve, so revered for its palette of habitats, is also threatened by change. The alien invasive Emerald Ash Borer is only 2 miles away.

One of Larry's favourite habitats

within *rare* is the dolostone (magnesium-rich limestone) cliffs along the Grand River. These cliffs are home to some of the rarest plants in the Region. And, the flat expanses of limestone result in alvars—another very special habitat type. Two creeks spilling over the cliffs give majestic waterfalls, thus creating a moist habitat whose inaccessibility provides small animals with protection from predators.

Other intriguing geologies can also be found locally. Marl, a crumbly earthy deposit that looks like wet chalk and consists of calcite or dolomite, is very alkaline. The resulting high-calcium water can petrify tree roots and bark. This can be seen at Grandview Woods.

Meromictic lakes are another fascinating area to study. These lakes are notable for their abyssal deepness and their abrupt, steep sides. They have no turnover (in contrast to shallow lakes, which turn over twice annually), and so their deep waters remain anoxic and untouched. These lakes are extremely rare: the only local examples are Sunfish Lake and Crawford Lake.

Larry is familiar with innumerable examples of wetlands and other ecologically vulnerable areas being destroyed by construction projects. Some road extensions, such as Cheese Factory Road and River Roads, proved ecologically disastrous.

Larry summed up his time in the natural landscapes as “magic moments and sublime depression”. The dispiriting moments include habitat loss, species decline, alien invaders, and environmental change. But these are counterbalanced by the magic moments include pristine photo opportunities of rare birds and plants, and landscapes perfectly framed by colourful flowers or majestic trees.

Special thanks to Larry Lamb for his penetrating insight into what makes our natural areas so ecologically valuable and unique.

Neil E. Taylor
KWFN Representative
Waterloo Stewardship Network
October, 2010



Waterloo Stewardship Network

"providing Waterloo Region with knowledge necessary to continue responsible stewardship of the natural resources we all share"

This is a brief report to update KWFN members of some of the highlights of recent activities and some future plans of the Waterloo Stewardship Network (WSN). The report is an extrapolation from the most recent minutes of WSC meeting. Suggestions, comments, etc. are invited from members of the KWFN. The Waterloo Stewardship Council (WSC) is always looking for quality projects. If you have project ideas that you feel the WSC could help with, please let me know.

- **Trees From Seed Update** - Trillium application will not be moving forward at this time. There were many questions that created uncertainty. These questions will be addressed in the coming months. It is anticipated that the program will run on a scaled down version this season with a similar number of classrooms. Volunteers like Peter Wilhelm and UW ecology students may be helpful with maintaining this programme.
- **Drynan Forest Progress** - Drynan Forest has had buckthorn treated. It will soon be under control, The plantings have been growing well with a high survival rate. Trails were completed by the Ontario Stewardship Rangers (OSRs) with the exception of a short distance that needs wood chips. Arbour guard will be sprayed this fall to protect the young trunks.
- **Commemorative Grove of Trees** – A plaque is ready to be placed on a rock. Individual plaques for members will be added. Tree species selection: Nannyberry, Oaks, Alternate Leaved Dogwood (spring), Witch Hazel, Cherry, Bitternut Hickory, serviceberry, bur oak, sugar maple, red maple, white pine, white cedar.
- **Envirothon 2011** - A training day for secondary students will be held on October 22nd at Drynan Regional Forest. Students will be learning about forestry.
- **Bolender Park** - A work day is scheduled for October 16th. Bioengineering an eroding bank and planting trees and shrubs are part of the programme on that day.
- **OSRs 2010** - Many projects were completed of varying types. This was an exceptional crew that was very motivated, professional, and really accomplished their tasks above expectations. They did work in Waterloo, at Drynan, Waynco, Kissing Bridge Trailway, Elmira, and many the locations.
- **Prairie Project Progress** - Seed collection is ongoing. Seed will go into Waynco this fall or next spring on sites previously tended. Branchton Swamp will possibly have a prescribed burn in the spring of 2011. Invasive species work will take place this fall/ winter. There is budget for this through a Species At Risk stewardship grant.
- **Environmental Sensitive Landscape Roadside Project** - Fall planting is expected in late October/early November. Landowners and members of ESL Stewardship Committee made this project happen along with financial support from the Region.
- **Prairie Garden Tour Update** - Thanks to Larry Lamb and the crew for organizing an excellent tour. All of the sites had something different to offer and were well-selected and used native prairie plants to great advantage
- **Doon Demonstration Forest** - Buckthorn has been treated. Signs are ready and harvest/thinning of the plantations is scheduled to take place this fall/winter season. This should provide an opportunity for a spring unveiling of the demo forest site.
- **Account Updates** - The GRCA is no longer our banker and the balance from that account will be transferred to the TD account in the short term until other banking arrangements are made. This change was due to the new provincial accountability legislation. This legislation is going to require the council to look into its options for becoming or affiliating with a "legal entity".
- **rare Proposal** – A proposal for the garden/arboretum is supported, except it was identified that there are other sources of funds as well. The Region's ESL Stewardship Fund is a prime source that should be supportive. Moved by Neil Taylor and seconded by Peter Kyle to support the *rare* application in the amount of \$4500 to be used as leverage dollars to help obtain the complete budget for the proposed project. Abstention: Larry Lamb. Carried.

Respectfully submitted,

President's Corner

By Mary Ann Vanden Elzen

To the Market

Everyone knows the little piggy went to market. The question is, how did it get there?

There's lots of ways of getting to the Kitchener Farmers' Market.

For most, it begins as a pleasant drive on Saturday morning roads. Once in the vicinity, you scan the street for a parking spot. If you're early or lucky, you insert the car into a vacant space, grab your bags, and walk the short remaining distance to the market. If you're not, you continue on to the underground parking garage. Down into the open maw you go, threading your way – up and down – until a spot is found.

If you're unlucky, you head to the overflow lot just a block away. That's where you see "the jeep" - a big black cab perched atop four monster truck tires. The woman inside towers above everything. Like a bull in a china shop, she is road rage in the parking lot. Seeing a car emerge from a coveted spot, she races ahead, only to be confounded by a vehicle already in position to slide right in. She then sees another spot opening up behind. She grinds into reverse, almost grazes you, and finds herself too big for the narrow spot. In the next row, a car emerges. She blasts forward to claim it...too late. And so it goes.

She's not having a good day!

If you live close by and your grocery list is short, walking is the ideal transportation. A steady flow of people moves down the

sidewalk. Amongst them, Tom. He goes every Saturday. For him, the market is a profoundly spiritual place. "Like going to church," he says. He's living his values of buying locally, of supporting the farmers who grow his food, of meeting and interacting with people. He drops a coin into the open guitar case - his "offering" - for a song. He's sure to meet friends or strangers and invite them to join him for brunch on the upper level. Sharing a meal - that's his "communion." He returns home spiritually refreshed and invigorated.

For the three fairer seasons of the year, I'm most likely to arrive by bicycle. While locking it into place, I notice some kids standing on the large grated vent. With giggles and laughter, they thrill to the steady upward blast of air that sets their hair standing on end.

I rest for a minute at the outdoor tables. The bicycle next to mine catches my attention. It has all the signs of a well used traveller's bike – downward curving handlebars taped for grip, "Long Haul Tracker" written on the crossbar, faded words missing a letter or two, well weathered leather seat, two water bottles, a bicycle pump...

Just then Joe arrives. I ask about his bicycle. Looking to be in his 70s, he bicycles here every week to get his groceries. He has his own favourite vendors. "The peach man isn't here today." Included on his grocery list are pork hocks. "I'm going to make some French Canadian pea soup. It's absolutely delicious."

And, yes, Joe's bicycle *has*

taken him all over the world. Usually with a touring group. His favourite place, he tells me, were the mountains of Kerala, India. He has travelled solo in the U.S. but regrettably, "...not so much in Canada." He meticulously stuffs his purchases into the 6 panniers and begins the one hour ride back to home.

And here comes Brad pulling a bicycle trailer. Normally, it's intended to carry a baby or toddler or two. But there's no baby! Brad manoeuvres it through the teeming market crowd stopping here and there to chat, question, taste, inspect, purchase. He emerges, the trailer stuffed with produce – enough to feed his young family until next week's visit.

Up at the main door entrance to the market is a Gio rider. He is absolutely delighted with his little electric scooter. "It's fun," he gushes. "A 12 cent charge takes me 50 km." He *could* take his bicycle, he admits, but he's just cut the entire lawn and deserves a reward. He lifts the seat and places a portion of his purchases in the storage compartment. The remainder he puts in the trunk at the rear. When he gets home, the e-scooter is plugged in and will soon be ready for the next adventure.

Gripping a "Buy Local Buy Fresh" cloth bag, a young woman makes her way down the sidewalk. But hers is, *by far*, the most unusual mode of transportation I've yet seen to the market. She's being carried. By her boyfriend. Piggyback. In the rain.

Romance, too, it seems, finds its way to the Kitchener Farmers' Market.

November Outings at a Glance - refer to page 8 of this Heron for full outing details

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
	1	2 Dumfries 9:00 am	3 Dumfries raindate	4	5	6
7	8 Montgomery Property 9:30 pm	9	10 Huron Natural Area 9:00 am	11	12	13
14	15	16 Dickson Wilderness Area 9:30	17	18	19	20 Drynan Re- gional Forest 9am
21	22 KWFN meet- ing	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

Cut this calendar out (or photocopy it) and hang somewhere for a quick reference!

Update from the Board of Directors

At the most recent Board meeting, the following items were discussed:

- All volunteers, including non-board responsibilities, will be formally appointed to their positions at the June Board meeting.
- Soliciting ads for the Heron.
- Membership update.
- Website update.
- Young Nats program.
- KNAP representative changes.
- Management Plan for the Founders' Property.

The Board will meet again Monday, November 1. The minutes of the October meeting will be approved then. Once they are approved, they are filed in the Library, so they can be viewed at the KWFN general club meeting. Alternatively, you can receive the minutes by email by contacting Katharina Walton.



Kitchener, ON N2M 3W6
317 Highland Road East

Kitchener-Waterloo Field Naturalists

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Membership Fees September to August (After Feb.1/11 - 1/2 price*)

* new members only
(senior = 60 yrs)

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\$35.00

Senior Couple
\$30.00

Adult Individual
\$30.00

Senior Individual
\$25.00

Student \$25.00

18 and under Free

Bring payment for membership to the next meeting or mail to KWFN at 317 Highland Rd E Kitchener N2M 3W6

Objectives of the KWFN

- to acquire and disseminate knowledge of natural history
- to protect and preserve wildlife
- to purchase and hold appropriate parcels of land for the advancement of conservation
- to support public interest in nature and its preservation by supporting the enactment of wise legislation and by other means as falls within the scope of the Corporation

General Information

Meetings are held monthly from September to May, on the fourth Monday of the month with the exception of December. Our meetings are free and visitors are always welcome. Outings are scheduled almost every month.

KWFN is a registered charitable organization. Membership fees and all donations are tax deductible. KWFN is affiliated with Ontario Nature (FON) and Nature Canada (Canadian Nature Federation)

www.kwfn.ca



"The Heron" is the official publication of the Kitchener-Waterloo Field Naturalists' Club and is produced by volunteer members of the club. It is published nine times yearly from September to June, except for December.

Copies of "The Heron" are available at meetings but will be mailed (free of charge) to members if not picked up.

Articles reflect the views of the authors and are not necessarily the views endorsed by the KWFN club.

Pesticides in Ontario It is KWFN's policy not to use pesticides on any club property or during any club activity. (November 2000) In April 2009 the use of pesticides for commercial reasons was banned in the province of Ontario. This ban overrides all municipal by-laws. The main exceptions are for agriculture, human health and safety, golf courses, sports fields (though not parks), forestry, and in some instances to protect natural resources. Any pesticide identified as Class 9 is not allowed for residential or cosmetic use. To report non-compliance with the ban please contact the Guelph OMNR office at (519) 826-4955. For more information go to: <http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/en/land/pesticides/>