

Dec 2010 Jan 2011



The Heron

KITCHENER-WATERLOO
Field Naturalists

What's Inside

KWFN Contacts	2
Info for everyone	3
Native Plant Nuts	4
Ontario Nature	5
Outings	6
Web-site Manager Report	7
Turtles in Kitchener's Natural Areas	8
Fauna of New Zealand Recap	
Waterloo Stewardship	9
President's corner	10
Update Board of Directors	

Next Club Meeting:

January 24, 2011 at 7:30PM

Wing 404/Rotary Centre, Dutton Dr., Waterloo

An Introduction To and Exploration of Vernal Pools

Brenda Van Ryswyk

Natural Heritage Ecologist, Conservation Halton

Vernal pools are often overlooked on our landscape but are vital for our biodiversity! This presentation will give an introduction to what a vernal pool is, its traits and unique features. We will look at some examples of creatures adapted to living in vernal pools (such as salamanders, fairy shrimp, and daphnia), look at their life cycle and how this life cycle is designed to allow them to survive in these temporary wetlands. It will touch on some of the functions of these wetlands and why they are important and need our protection. It will close with an encouragement to go out and learn more about these interesting and unique ecosystems but to keep them intact and undisturbed.

REFRESHMENTS – A CHANGE

The Board, after some deliberation and consideration of past and current experiences in this regard, decided to discontinue the availability of tea and coffee service at our general meetings. This was a service that was used by few, if any of our members

Advance notice for February 28 program:

Wild Ontario will be bringing their new, live-animal, environmental education program to the KWFN! They will have birds of prey on hand to help illustrate their talk on raptor identification and adaptations and human impact. This presentation should be educational for adults and fascinating for kids, so we will run it at **7:35 p.m.** and encourage members to bring out their kids and grandkids.

KWFN Contacts for the 2010/2011 Season

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Submissions for the Heron need to be received by the 15th of the month.

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Our New Members

Keri-Lyn Fehrenbach
Betty Brechun

Spelling Correction
Deborah and Ritch
Swidrovich

Our Donors

Betty Brechun
Gord Cassidy
Kelly Holdaway
Michelle and John Tomins
Alan and Anne Morgan
Patti Leather

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

As of November 15, 2010 we have recorded 111 membership renewals, 12 new memberships and 4 Lifetime Memberships for a total of 127 memberships for 2010-11. Our membership total at the end of June 2010 was 158

Memberships can be renewed at the November 22nd meeting. Membership forms will be available. You can also renew by mail. Go to the Membership Page on the web site, www.kwfn.ca, and print a Membership Form. Follow the instructions at the bottom of the form please.

You can help with our membership situation by encouraging your member friends to renew their membership. You can also help by encouraging others to attend our meetings and become members.

Information for everyone

Members are reminded of the January 31, 2011 deadline for nominations for both the **Conservation Award** and the **Honorary Life Membership Award**. Please refer to page 3 of the November 2010 Heron for details.

BEREAVEMENT

We note with sympathy the passing of Catherine Vanden Elzen of Mount Brydges (just west of London ON), the mother of our President, Mary Ann Vanden Elzen and the mother-in-law of her husband Robert Bezeau. A card from the Board of Directors and the membership of KWFN has been sent to Mary, Robert and their family

Christmas Bird Counts:

Kitchener: December 18, 2010
Cambridge: December 19, 2010
Linwood: date TBA

For more information see page 4 of the November 2010 Heron

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

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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SUMAC

The brilliant red foliage of Staghorn certainly caught my eye as we drove along various back roads and highways throughout the region this fall. There are few trees or shrubs that can match the sumacs for the red colour. Sumacs are a member of the Cashew family, there being about 150 species of sumac around the world, in both tropical and sub-tropical regions. In his book, "Trees of the Carolinian Forest", Gerry Waldron tells us that the word for the scientific name of sumacs, *Rhus*, is thought to be derived from an Arabic word for a species of sumac found in the Mediterranean area. The red berries of the non-poisonous species can be steeped in water to make a tea that is rich in vitamin C. I remember as a teenager finding a recipe for cough syrup made from sumac berries in my aunt's home remedy book. We spent an afternoon collecting the red seeds heads and steeping them to make a bitter concoction. I don't remember if it was effective or not.

Others use the colour from the red berries as a dye. Many species of birds, including the Eastern Bluebird and American Robin depend on the fat in the seed heads of sumac that remain on the bushes to survive late winter storms upon their return in mid-March. First Nation people used to collect the colourful leaves in the fall, and, after drying them, they would mix them half and half with tobacco. This was the mixture that was characteristically smoked in the peace pipe, which, was often itself made of the branch of a sumac tree; the pithy centre being easily removed.

Native Plant Nuts

By Wayne Buck

The best known species of sumac is Staghorn Sumac (*Rhus typhina*); named for the felt-like hairs on the outer branches which make them resemble the velvet-like growths on the antlers of deer and elk. Waldron suggests that the name typhina may have come from the use of sumac in the treatment of typhoid fever. These trees are colony formers that spread by rhizomes to form colonies over 30 m across. Colonies begin to die out in the centre after about 25 years, allowing natural succession to take place. We planted some out near the road to attract bluebirds upon their return mid-March

I remember the first time I encountered Smooth Sumac, (*Rhus glabra*). We were hiking along an abandoned rail line on the Bruce Trail in the Dundas area when we encountered a colony of what appeared to be Staghorn Sumac but it had none of the aforementioned velvety growth on the twigs and branches. We were finally able to identify it as Smooth Sumac, which looks very much like Staghorn Sumac although the seed cluster in the pure strain is a brighter red in colour. Staghorn and Smooth Sumac frequently hybridize creating *R.x borealis*. We have 2 clumps of Smooth Sumac planted along the laneway.

A third member of the sumac genus that is found in Ontario is Shining or, the name preferred by the late Henry Kock, Winged Sumac, (*Rhus copallina*). I first saw this species near Turkey point about 15 years ago while looking for plants with our son, Graham and his friend Todd Farrell. From a distance it looks like the previous 2 species. But closer inspection of

the compound leaf reveals winged petioles along the stem of the main leaf stem or petiole. It spreads more slowly than Staghorn and Smooth Sumac, but it, too, is a colony former. We also have it along the laneway.

The shortest member of the sumacs found in Ontario is Fragrant Sumac, (*Rhus aromatica*). We have seen it growing abundantly at Pinery Provincial Park, where, according to Henry Koch in his recent book, "Growing Trees from Seed", it came back by the thousands after the first prescribed burn in the early 1990's. It seldom reaches 2 m in height, preferring to sprawl rather than form extensive colonies like the previous 3 species.

Probably the least common species, and that is fortunate, is Poison Sumac. Most scientists use the genus name *Toxicodendron* for this species. But some like the late Henry Kock still use *Rhus* as in *Rhus toxicodendron*. Poison Ivy, a close relative is *Rhus* (*Toxicodendron*) *radicans*. The fruit of Poison Sumac closely resembles the ivory white clusters of hanging berries of Poison Ivy. Poison Sumac grows in wet places and can be found right beside the boardwalk (currently closed) in the marsh area at the south end of the Sudden Tract. I always remembered Larry Lamb's colourful description of the properties of this plant when he said, "It makes Poison Ivy look like Skin So Soft." All parts of this shrub are poisonous. Contact with the skin can result in blisters and even blindness if it gets in the eyes. However, birds can eat Poison Ivy and Poison Sumac berries with no ill effect. In fact, some literature suggests that chemicals found in the berries help the birds rid themselves of intestinal parasites. I wouldn't doubt it!

Ontario Nature-Great Lakes West-Fall Regional Meeting

Four KWFN members attended the meeting hosted by The Upper Credit Field Naturalists on Saturday November 6, in Alton near Orangeville. During one segment of the meeting, Ontario Nature staff updated attendees on numerous ON initiatives including: The Provincial Policy Statement Review (see below), Reptile and Amphibian Atlas progress, Reptiles at Risk research at the Lost Bay Nature reserve, Malcolm Bluff Shores Nature Reserve (first of three parcels to be purchased in partnership with the Bruce Trail Conservancy-See ON Nature Autumn issue), Wind Farm policy, The Canadian Boreal Forest Agreement, and the Biodiversity Charter for Ontario.

Ontario Nature AGM

Ontario Nature's 80th Anniversary and AGM will be held at the Ganaraska Forest Centre from June 10-12, 2011. Further details will follow in the new year.

Giant Lilliputs in the Golden Horseshoe *Submitted by Paul Smith*

The Lilliput, a freshwater mussel native to southern Ontario, is thriving at the Royal Botanical Gardens. In fact, the speci-

mens found are of record size; twice as big as any found before in Ontario and bigger than any recorded in the literature. Prior to this survey, the Ontario Lilliput was found only in the Lake Erie-Lake St. Clair watershed.†

Provincial Policy Statement Review

The government is reviewing the Provincial Policy Statement, 2005 (PPS), a key provincial policy that sets the direction for land use planning and development across Ontario.

Outlined below is a list of Ontario Nature's key recommendations for PPS amendments.

1. Require municipalities to protect natural heritage systems. The current PPS recommends, but does not require that municipalities identify and protect natural heritage systems. As a result, the PPS is inconsistently applied across the province, and few municipalities have adopted the recommended systems-based approach to natural heritage planning and protection.

2. Protect regionally and locally significant natural heritage features and rare and imperiled habitats such as alvars, tallgrass prairies and savannahs. The PPS fails to specifically protect regionally and locally significant natural heritage features, weakening the ability of municipalities to restrict development that may

negatively impact these features.

3. Protect all remaining wetlands south and east of the Canadian Shield. Though wetlands play a critical role in water storage and filtration, carbon sequestration and habitat provision, they continue to be lost to development. Currently, the PPS protects only provincially significant wetlands.

4. Address the current imbalance between aggregate extraction and natural heritage protection.† Economically valuable aggregate deposits often occur in areas of rich natural heritage, such as the Niagara Escarpment, the Oak Ridges Moraine and the Carden Plain. Aggregate extraction creates significant long-term environmental and ecological disturbance, including destruction of habitat through removal of vegetation and soil, alteration of hydrological regimes and drainage patterns and changes to the slope of the land. Yet there is no requirement to prevent, minimize or mitigate environmental impacts to protect natural heritage and other provincial interests when siting pits and quarries. Nor is there any requirement to demonstrate need when considering pit and quarry applications or to recover and recycle aggregate resources to promote conservation. Aggregate extraction receives extraordinary priority over natural heritage protection in the PPS.

Outings Schedule



By Mary Voisin

From time to time, some members may schedule impromptu outings not advertised in the Heron. These additional last minute outings are posted on the Kitchener Waterloo Field Naturalists' website. Occasionally check the website for these outings by googling KWFN for details. If you would like to lead an outing, email mary-voisin@rogers.com.

**Searching For Gulls at Niagara
Saturday, December 4, 2010
Jim, Mike, and Ken Burrell
519-699-4696**

**Meeting Time/Place:
8:00 am Homer Watson Blvd.
Fountain Street 401 Carpool
lot**

Join Jim and sons Mike and Ken for this all day outing to the Niagara River in search of various species of gulls that congregate there for the winter. Rare species of gulls are sometimes present as well as other interesting waterfowl. The boys will head to Hamilton first then onto Niagara River and the Falls. It is always cold so wear layers of warm clothing and good boots. Bring a lunch, binoculars, scopes and field guides. Walky talkies may be useful, too.

**Huron Natural Area (HNA)
Wednesday, December 8,
2010 Meet, Greet and Explore
Meeting Time/Place 9:00 am at
the Pavilion area – 801 Trilium
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).**

Meet at the given location.
Greet your fellow naturalists.
(experienced and new) Guests
are always welcome.

Explore together. Share your
questions and knowledge as
you enjoy your hike together.

This valuable wildlife area is the City of Kitchener's largest park. It contains an amazing representation of this area's biodiversity. There is a diverse habitat including Class I Provincially Significant Wetlands, kettles, ponds, upland maple/beech forest, cultural meadows, as well as pine plantations.

**Christmas Bird Count – Learn
the Basics – Part I
Saturday, December 11, 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 12, 2010
Neil Taylor 893-6469**

**Meeting Time/Place
1:00 pm at the 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.

**Mill Run, Cambridge
Tuesday, December 14, 2010
Marco DeBruin
519-658-5372**

**Meeting Time/Place 9:30 at
the Mill Run Trail parking lot
where Clemens Ave. meets
Sheffield in Cambridge.
(Clemens Ave. can be ac-
cessed from Fishermills
Road. Fishermills Rd. is a**

continuation of Sportsworld Dr.)

Come for a leisurely walk along the Mill Run (Riverbank Trail), which follows the Speed River past a variety of habitats. This trail is fairly level and has some boardwalk along its length. A good variety of waterfowl frequent the area along with other birds. Beavers and muskrats might also be seen along this trail.

**Riverside Park, Cambridge
Tuesday, January 4, 2011
Marco DeBruin
519-658-5372**

**Meeting Time/Place
9:30 am at the entrance to
Riverside Park (off King
Street) in Cambridge, just
outside the gate, along the
wall**

Join Marco for a refreshing walk in Riverside Park in Cambridge. Weather permitting, this could be a good opportunity to see up close and photograph some of our winter birds. The terrain is fairly level with a good portion of boardwalk. Dress appropriately and don't forget your binoculars.

**Wellesley Winter Birding
Sunday, January 23, 2011**

**Jim and Ken Burrell
519-699-4695
Meeting Time/Place:
8:30 a.m. at the Beechwood
Plaza in the corner closest
to Erb and Fisher Hallman.
We should be finished by
noon.**

Join Jim and Ken for a morning drive around the countryside of Wellesley and Peel Townships, in search of winter raptors such as red-tailed and rough legged hawks. Some other possibilities are Snowy Owls, Snow Buntings and Horned Larks on this half-day outing.

**FROM THE WEB SITE
MANAGER**

Revised/New KWFN Web Site On-line

On October 22, www.kwfn.ca went on-line. If you haven't had a chance to have a look, please do so at your earliest convenience.

Neil Taylor has retired from his long held position as Webmaster for KWFN. We thank Neil for his many years (13 +) of conscientious service to our club and the community at large through his work with the web site.

Larry Hamel is now the Web Site Manager. He prefers this title, at this time, because he knows he has much to learn before he can claim to be a master of anything related to web site design, development

and management. Members of KWFN and others can be helpful to Larry by reviewing the web site and offering comments in relation to the current design and content, as well suggestions for changes/additions that might be incorporated into the next version of the site. If you find any aspect of the site that does not work properly, please advise Larry promptly. This will help us keep our site functioning efficiently and encourage others to visit it frequently.

If you use a browser other than Internet Explorer and you find anything that does not work properly with your browser, please advise Larry as to the nature of the concern and the browser you are using. He will adjust things as much as possible to accommodate a wide range of browsers. Contact information is available on the web site

submitted by Larry Hamel

and on Page 2 of The Heron.

Some Suggestions

Each time you visit the web site, please check the Notices Page. It is the page that is changed most frequently. The notices will also point you to other recent changes on the web site. Think of it as the web site's bulletin board. Check it regularly to keep current!

First time visitors are encourage to visit the Site Info Page. Among other things, you will find information that will help you navigate the site.

Check out the unusual bird sighting shown on the November Sightings Page. Maybe you can add to the information that is being shared there.

What's Happening at Your Bird Feeder, in Your Yard, on Your Street, in Your Neighbourhood? Close to home sightings/ observations are just as desirable as those made on a special outing. Send your information to Larry and help him make the Sightings Page a "happening place". Remember, the Sightings page has a broad focus. Anything to do with our natural world – animal, vegetable, mineral -



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Turtles in Kitchener's Natural Areas An Urban Turtle Conservation Project

Submitted by: Crystal Robertson, Jennifer McCarter and Josh Shea, City of Kitchener

With 7 of 8 turtle species in Ontario considered to be at risk of disappearing, especially in Southern Ontario where habitat destruction and urban sprawl continue to consume natural spaces, protecting our remaining turtle populations is a top priority. In April 2010, with support from the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources Species at Risk Stewardship Fund, Environment Canada's Habitat Stewardship Fund and the Region of Waterloo Environmental Stewardship Fund, The City of Kitchener launched an in depth research and monitoring project to better understand turtles (Snapping, Painted and Blanding's) and their habitat within the city.

Mark and recapture studies began in the Board of Education pond in the Huron Natural Area at the end of May, and over the course of the summer identified over two-hundred individual Painted turtles and six Snapping turtles. In July, we expanded our turtle study

to other sites within the City, including the Laurentian Wetland and Lakeside Park. Over one-hundred Painted turtles and seven Snapping turtles were located in the Laurentian Wetland. Several critical nesting areas were also identified within Lakeside Park thanks in large part to the support and assistance of local volunteers. Each turtle that was located and captured, was given a unique identification code by filing a notch in the outer area of the shell so that they could be identified when captured at a later date. To get a better idea of habitat usage, radio transmitters were attached to several turtles in each area. By tracking their movements through the season, we were able to estimate home range sizes as well as behavioral patterns and important habitat requirements.

Another component of this project was to engage community members in our work with turtles and educate them on Species at Risk. We held several public out-

reach events which were well attended and received positive feedback. The many people we encountered during our field work were interested in what we were doing and eager to find out more.

In 2011 we hope to continue our turtle work and expand our volunteer program to include Basking Turtle Surveys and Nest Protection opportunities. We are currently looking for people to report their turtle sightings to us so we may establish a database of turtle populations within the City of Kitchener. If you are interested in volunteering with this turtle project or any other project with Kitchener's Natural Areas Program, please contact Josh Shea (see Heron for contact information) for details and more information.

Thank-you again to the many volunteers from the Kitchener-Waterloo Field Naturalist for their assistance with this project, you are making a difference in helping to conserve our local natural heritage.

Dan Schneider – The Remarkable Fauna of New Zealand

Dan Schneider, a long-time outdoor educator and naturalist, travelled for an extended period of time in New Zealand to immerse himself in the unique combination of climate, landscape, and wildlife of this isolated island-rich country. He presented an exciting combination of photographs, experiences, and insights.

Dan began by noting that introduced species have caused problems around the world but New Zealand has a much longer history of introduced species, and thus has had much more time to deal with them.

Because New Zealand is fully surrounded by the Pacific Ocean this country is biologically isolated from other genetic reservoirs. The archipelago's splendid geographic isolation has enabled its birds to evolve over millions of years. The only

naturally present non-marine mammals were three species of small bats, thus enabling the birds to live without the need to evade terrestrial predators. But the status of birds changed abruptly a few centuries ago, when European settlers arrived and brought rats, mice, dogs, cats, skunks, opossums, and other mammals with them.

Since the ability to maintain flight and escape predators comes at a considerable biological cost, and given the absence of need to fly, many of the native birds had gradually lost their flight abilities. Perhaps the most dramatic example is provided by the Moas, a group of very large, herbivorous ostrich-like flightless land birds endemic to New Zealand. They had only one natural predator, the Haast's Eagle. The Moas became extinct due to hunting by the indigenous Māori peoples, along with habitat decline. They were considered to be already extinct by the time the Polynesians

Recap by Michael Frind

arrived 1000 years ago, and were certainly gone by the time the Europeans arrived several centuries ago.

The iconic New Zealand bird, the chicken-sized Kiwi, is structurally and behaviourally somewhat similar to the now-vanished Moas. The shy, nocturnal Kiwi is considered endangered, and is protected by an extensive array of conservation measures including diligent efforts towards eradication of invasive mammals. Some crucial habitat areas have been fenced off to provide additional protection. The high-stakes mammal-exclusion fight is intense: a 307-hectare island preserve was completed fenced at a cost of 1.2 million dollars.

Stewart Island, located 19 miles south of the southern end of New Zealand's South Island, with a mild climate, and just under 700 square

Continued on page 11

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



Waterloo Stewardship Network (WSN)

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

Project Updates

Roadside Plantings - Four diverse roadside corridor sites have been planted with native plants. One site is under a hydro line (no trees used). Another is on the landowner side of a fence and another is a narrow exposed strip. The Paradise Lake site includes a living snow fence portion, manicured lawn plant and a corridor along a pasture field/trail to a common area. Appreciation is given to the landowners and volunteers for their assistance and support and to the Region of Waterloo for financial support. We look forward to seeing these develop over the next few seasons.

Drynan Activities – A planting was completed by students who will compete in the Envirothon. They also participated in direct seeding, and the spread of wood chips. The parking area has been expanded and improved. Boulders at a commemorative grove are to be placed and fencing on south side of the property to keep the cattle out of the site more consistently. Screening on the north side of the parking lot could also be completed. A plaque is completed. Interpretive signs are ready to be installed.

Envirothon – A training day at Drynan has been completed with about 50 students. Neil Taylor assisted. The next session will be November 19th at Huron Natural Area. Josh Shea will assist with topics such as aquatics, wildlife, and soils.

Bolender Park - A bioengineering project will be taking place on about 30m of stream bank. There will also be trees and shrubs planted behind the bioengineering site after its completion.

Environmentally Sensitive Landscape Meeting - November 25th with speakers talking about invasive species and biodiversity at Camp Heidelberg from 6:30 to 9:00.

Prairie Projects - Waynco Branchton Swamp restoration will be ongoing to extend the savannah. Invasive control will be done this fall/winter. Seed collection was completed in late October. A wildfire management conference was held locally and toured sites including Waynco. This illustrated local research and the need to consider fall burning as well as spring events. The history of fire management in the area was covered.

Aquatic Renewal Workshops - Three of the four have been completed. Larry Mellors coordinated this project with the help of Trout Unlimited and three stewardship councils (Waterloo, Wellington, and Brant). Work is being done to possibly turn this into a university level course through the University of Guelph.

Rural Landowner Stewardship Guide - A workshop for rural non-farm landowners will be held on November 30th at camp Ki Wa Y at Paradise Lake. This will introduce landowners to the Rural Landowner Stewardship Guide.

rare Demonstration Trail - Larry Lamb informed the Council that about 1/3 of a demonstration garden is planted. More activity is planned for the spring.

Membership Drive Strategy - There is a need for more larger rural landowners. Several strategies to recruit people were discussed. Some of the best options that will be explored to include inviting selected people to future meetings and following up with a lunch with a few council members. Asking these people how we can help them will be part of the discussion to identify what they would get from the council and what they would offer our group. An updated package of information about the council, what it is all about and recent accomplishments will be ready for individuals invited to future meetings. To find these prospective members council members should forward names and contact information to Steve.

Neil

President's Corner

By Mary Ann Vanden Elzen

City of Kitchener's Park Master Plan

"...at the lower end..."

That was the conclusion reached by consultant, Fred Galloway, when asked to compare Kitchener's spending on parks compared to other Ontario municipalities.

According to a June 6, 2009 Record article, Kitchener now spends \$30 per capita on the operation and maintenance of its parks, natural lands and trails.

Some municipalities spend \$75 per person. The median is \$50.

It is clear that Kitchener has a long way to go to even catch up to this median spending figure.

The new 2010 Park Master Plan (PMP), authored by Galloway, discusses six core themes: Natural Areas, Community Trails, Grand River Corridor, Active Parkland/Outdoor Sports, Neighbourhood Parks, and En-

gaging the Community.

Upon first reading, the document contains numerous ideas which the Kitchener-Waterloo Field Naturalists would eagerly support. One of these is a recommendation to improve, expand and connect Kitchener's many trails and make them part of an active transportation system. Most exciting is a proposal for the creation of a Riverside Park - "a contiguous system of public parks and natural areas" all along the Grand River. Additionally, the PMP calls for a \$10 million increase in spending over 10 years.

However, the devil is in the details. Or lack thereof. Absent from the PMP were dollar allocations for many of its plans. Often missing, too, were timelines to achieve certain outcomes. And this question: as the population of the city continues to increase will the ratio of parks-to-people keep pace? The PMP was specific in proposing that, of the \$10

million in increased spending, nearly half (\$4.8 million) should go to one area alone - retrofitting sports fields with artificial turf.

These and other concerns were addressed by the KWFN, as well as by several members of the KWFN, both through written submissions and by appearing as delegations at council meetings.

In the end, the PMP was passed by Kitchener council with some modifications resulting from input received. First was a name change - from Park Master Plan to Park Strategic Plan. This is significant in that the plan now becomes a *living* document subject to regular input and alteration. Second, City staff was asked to consider appropriate benchmarking and ratios for the six theme areas. Third, staff is now required to report back to council in one year with an update on the implementation of the Park Strategic Plan and recommendations for future budgets.

Update from the Board of Directors

The Board met on November 1 and discussed the following topics:

- Interactive activities at events to promote the KWFN.
- The Board supports Young Naturalist Club (YNC) restructuring, which includes hiring a GRCA staff person to present the YNC programs and arranging for one or more new volunteers from the KWFN membership to act as liaison between the YNC and the KWFN Board.
- Filling Board positions.
- UW student proposal to write up a management plan for the Founders' Property.
- The Board decided to discontinue serving refreshments at club meetings.
- The Board accepted Neil Taylor's resignation from the position of Web Master and appointed Larry Hamel as the new web site manager effective November 1, 2010.

The minutes of this meeting will be approved in December and can be viewed in the KWFN library at club meetings, or you can request to receive a digital version from Katharina Walton. The next Board meeting will be held December 13.

Dan Schneider – The Remarkable Fauna of New Zealand (conclusion)

miles in size, and with rats having been successfully eradicated, it is prime Kiwi habitat.

In addition to the Kiwi, the Kakapo, the world's largest parrot (2 feet long and about 5-10 pounds), also does not take to the air. And, like the Kiwi, it is vulnerable to prowling predators such as cats and stoats. These imposing parrots, only a half kilogram less than our bald eagle, are primarily nocturnal, yet can be noisy and gregarious during the daytime.

The Kakapo provided food and feathers to the native Māori, whose hunters took advantage of its tendency to freeze whenever threatened. This characteristic, along with the flightlessness and strong scent, made it especially easy to track and capture. The clearing of forests, begun on a large scale by the European settlers in the 1840s, also made life difficult for the herbivorous Kakapo.

Today, the Kakapo continues to be critically endangered. New Zealand's North Island, appears to be entirely devoid of this bird. Meanwhile, the South Island was already down to 8 males and 18 females early in the 20th century. But the 84 known individuals a few years ago have grown to the current count of 122.

Invasive mammals figure prominently in New Zealand's history; rabbits, deer and mustelids (weasel family, including ferrets and stoats) have been introduced. Rabbits and deer had competed with the Kapakos for food, but far more destructive was the weasel group, which found the Kakapo easy prey. And, opossums (introduced as a fur source) plundered the Kakapo's ground-based nests.

Stoats, weasels, feral cats, rats, and opossums are regularly captured by conservation staff and disposed of. New Zealand's opossum population is estimated at 30 million, and opossum shootings are highly publicized events.

Not all of New Zealand's avians are flightless. The Kea, a large parrot that inhabits the forests and alpine regions of South Island, flies well and is omnivorous. The Kea is renowned for its boldness, curiosity, and intelligence. It has been observed opening beer bottles, removing rubber trim from cars, and pilfering passports (with unknown travel intentions).

New Zealand's unique fauna is not limited to birds. There are several species and subspecies of Tuatara, a lizard-like reptile that can reach nearly 3 feet in length, which have also suffered due to introduced predators. The Tuatara is especially vulnerable to ferrets, which seek out the underground nests and devour the young. Today, the total Tuatara population is estimated at between 60 thousand and 100 thousand, and is considered vulnerable. Several Tuatara breeding-and-reintroduction programs are underway, with focus on the islands where rats have been confirmed to be eradicated. The Tuatara is also being reintroduced to the mainland islands, in rat-proof fenced preserves.

New Zealand is also a paradise for landscape photographers. Mountain ranges, including the Southern Alps, provide spectacular scenery, as well as opportunities for long-distance hiking. Many New Zealanders enjoy hiking in the mountain ranges.

The coastal areas of New Zealand are also home to a fascinating variety of wildlife. The Yellow-eyed Penguin, whose current population is estimated at 7000, makes its home on South Island's Otago Peninsula, as well as on Enderby, Stewart, Auckland, and Campbell Islands.

Dan noted numerous other New Zealand birds, including the Royal Spoonbill, the Oystercatcher, various Petrels, various Shearwaters, and various species of Albatross. New Zealand is home to 21 Albatross species, of which 19 are considered endangered. The Wandering albatross has a wingspan of up

to 3.5 metres, and weighs as much as our Tundra swan.

Marine mammals also abound on the New Zealand coast. The second-largest toothed animal in the world (only an elephant tusk is larger) is the Sperm whale. Also intriguing are Giant and Colossal squids; the latter can be as long as 12-14 metres. This makes it the world's largest invertebrate. The remains of squid are often found inside the stomachs of Sperm whales, which eat octopus and fish as well.

The New Zealand Fur seal, which also dines on fish, squid, and octopus, is thrice the size of a seal. Their current population of 50,000 individuals appears to be increasing slightly. They are found on all coasts of South Island, as well as on the outlying islands.

The New Zealand Sea lion is about thrice the size of a fur seal. They dine on fish, squid, and octopus, as well as crabs and crayfish, and they consider the occasional penguin or fur seal a delicacy. They are considered vulnerable because of their limited breeding sites, slow reproduction, and the annual toll taken by squid-fishing bycatch (50-100 per year). The population is currently in decline, yet conservation efforts are being undermined by lobbyists from the fishing industry.

Marine mammals can be playful and friendly as well. Dusky dolphins are common all around New Zealand, and they enjoy swimming in close proximity to people and boats. The equally sociable yet endangered Hector's dolphin can be distinguished by its unique rounded dorsal fin, and it has a complex coloration that is only visible upon close inspection. Sadly, hundreds of New Zealand dolphins still die each year as bycatch in commercial gillnets and trawl-type nets.

Sincere thanks to Dan Schneider for taking us on a delightful virtual tour of the wonderfully varied wildlife and breathtaking vistas of New Zealand.



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Kitchener-Waterloo Field Naturalists

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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



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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/>