

October 2011



Next Club Meeting:
October 24, 2011 at 7:30 PM
Wing 404/Rotary Centre, Dutton Dr., Waterloo

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James Patterson

Reptiles and amphibians are a group of animals people love to hate. However, the 48 species of 'herpetofauna' that call Ontario home are fascinating, beautiful, and full of surprises. Join James to learn more about this incredible group, why they are in trouble, and how you can help. Learn to identify the species in your region and pick up tips on the best methods for observing this secretive group of animals. You will learn how to participate in the Ontario Reptile and Amphibian Atlas that is tracking the distribution and abundance of all species in the province. Participating in this program directly contributes to research and conservation, and is easy to do!

Bobolinks (previously printed in the Baden Outlook) by Dave Rogalsky and Ken Quanz

When was the last time you heard a Bobolink? The males are stunning when you hear them singing in a field of uncut hay, or on long grass pastures. The large yellow patch on the back of the male's head changes to white as the patch continues across the shoulders, then covers the back and rump making this one flashy bird. They summer and breed from the Rocky Mountains to the Atlantic Ocean on the northern American prairies and southern Canadian prairies. Then for the winter they fly all the way to central southern South America, the Chaco for those who know the area.

You can't remember when you last heard the sonorous trills? About 15 years ago a retired farmer in Perth County noted to me that he was seeing fewer and fewer of these grassland birds. At the time I wondered if it was just because he wasn't active on the farm anymore, living now in a village. But now reports are coming in that not only Bobolinks but many grassland birds' numbers have been dropping drastically

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Fall Raptor Migration at Hawk Cliff—Outing Recap

Submitted by Deb Fowler

Randy Fowler's annual outing to Hawk Cliff was scheduled for Tuesday September 13 but due to forecasted rain was postponed to Friday. The forecast was wrong, it did not rain on Tuesday but serendipitously a cold front came through and Friday was a great day for hawk migration. It was a beautiful day, 15 to 20 degrees with a moderate NW wind until noon. There were almost 50,000 Broad Winged Hawks going through as well as Osprey, Bald Eagles, Northern Harriers, Sharpies, Redtails, Kestrels, Merlin and even Peregrine. There was an absolute river of raptors from east to west with kettles easily visible to the naked eye. The great majority of the Broad Winged Hawks came through between 10am and noon (over 39,000 in those 2 hours!). All in all it turned out to be a great day at Hawk Cliff!.

Information for everyone

The 2011 Champion Tree Hunt of Waterloo is over!

The awards and commemorative tree planting ceremony will be at Huron Natural Area on Trillium Drive on Saturday, October 29 from 10:00 am until noon.



Winds Damage Trees in Homer Watson Park

Submitted by Neil E. Taylor

The high winds that tore through different parts of Kitchener on September 2nd, destroyed more than 50 trees in Homer Watson Park. While I have yet to visit the area, I am told that the results are quite devastating. We were lucky that an 80' spruce was snapped off between our 2 properties and barely damaged the roof. See the photo taken by my daughter-in-law.

We had frost in the low-lying areas last night; the first of the season. It's a tad early; Sept 27 being the norm. I could see the white on the grass out by the road when I got up this morning. I confirmed it was ice crystals when I went out to fetch the newspaper. Lynda wisely had us cover the tomatoes yesterday. Don't know yet if it hit the squash or not.

I'll close by sharing with you this poem that I remember from my school days (grade 8). I'm so old that I remember when Canada Geese actually migrated. My brother and I would see huge flocks numbering in the hundreds with V after V honking as they flew overhead as we delivered our morning newspapers. That used to give me shivers; and still does; just the wildness of it.

Wayne

SOMETHING TOLD THE WILD GEESE By Rachel Field

*Something told the wild geese
It was time to go,
Though the fields lay golden
Something whispered, "snow."*

*Leaves were green and stirring,
Berries, luster-glossed,
But beneath warm feathers
Something cautioned, "frost."*

*All the sagging orchards
Steamed with amber spice,
But each wild breast stiffened
At remembered ice.*

*Something told the wild geese
It was time to fly,
Summer sun was on their wings,
Winter in their cry.*

ANNOUNCEMENT:

New Bird Species - Courtesy of Neil E. Taylor

See this very interesting article on a new species discovered in the north-western Hawaii islands, the Bryan's shearwater (*Puffinus bryani*).

[http://nationalzoo.si.edu/
Publications/PressMaterials/
PressReleases/NZP/2011/
shearwater.cfm](http://nationalzoo.si.edu/Publications/PressMaterials/PressReleases/NZP/2011/shearwater.cfm)

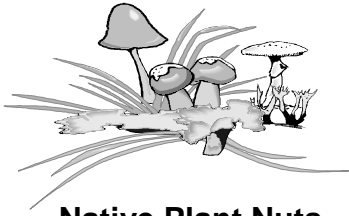
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Native Plant Nuts

Dean's Lake South Outing

On a hot Saturday in mid-July, 6 native plant nuts headed out to a forest south of Cambridge on West River Rd. adjoining the south shore of Dean's Lake. The group was resuming an outing that was interrupted by a terrific thunderstorm encountered one year earlier while exploring the north shore of this same Lake. Our leaders, Larry L. and Graham B. were anxious to see what goodies the Carolinian forest held for us, since records showed such things as American Chestnut growing there. It had been many years since Larry had visited the forest and none of the others had ever been there.

Our discoveries began in the parking lot on Homer Watson and Fountain St. While we were waiting for people to show up, Larry pointed out a small plant growing in the gravelly edge of the asphalt. It was about 10 cm tall, with soft light-green foliage and was called Jerusalem Oak. Larry pointed out that the name came from 2 small basal leaves that were the shape of an oak leaf. No one in the group had ever heard of it before. It's non-native.

The forest contained many tall trees, that including Hackberry, Shagbark and Pignut Hickory,

Native Plant Nuts

and some of the largest Sassafras (40 cm diameter) I have ever seen along with extensive groves of Witch Hazel in the understory. We did not follow the trails but rather split up into several groups in order to be better able to cover the area to see what was growing there.

To be sure, it was very dry; many plants wilting from the lack of moisture. Indian Cucumber seemed to grow everywhere. One of the more exciting finds from was the fern, Ebony Spleenwort that was not previously recorded in the area.. Other goodies found included: Carolina Rose, Summer Grape, Wild Licorice, Squawroot, American Vetch and Pale Wood Vetchling.

After regrouping, we headed down and explored the shore-

line of the lake which also revealed a few goodies such as Watershield (a species of water lily), Greater Water Dock, Water Arum, Leather Leaf, Dewberry, Goldthread, Turtlehead and Marsh Skullcap.

It was a large forest and a hot day, so after 4 hours of tramping through underbrush, the remaining group decided to call it a day and arrange to visit Grass Lake another day.

We found a fallen tree that had split open revealing the empty honeycombs of a wild hive of honey bees. I have seen bees entering and exiting hollow trees before but this was the first time I have ever had the opportunity to see inside. The attached photo was taken by Andrew Dean.





~ Fraser Gibson

Controversial Highway Development Halted *by Lisa Richardson, Ontario Nature*

The "asphalt arrow", a proposed 400-series highway linking the Niagara peninsula with the Greater Toronto Area, has been put on hold. The province decided in late July not to go forward with the planned highway development (from Fort Erie to Hamilton) which would have seen the degradation of a significant portion of the Niagara Escarpment. A warm round of applause for our Carolinian East Nature Network members and their partners who campaigned tirelessly to get this project stopped. Well done!

Rally for Nature! *by Kimberley MacKenzie, Ontario Nature*

Quite a number of you signed a copy of Ontario Nature's Biodiversity Charter earlier this year. More than 6000 signatures were gathered from across the province. On September 21, Ontario Nature organized a rally at Queen's Park in Toronto to present the 6000 signatures and to tell the government that the loss of wildlife and wild spaces in Ontario must be stopped. Ontario Nature told all of the candidates running in the upcoming provincial election that protecting species and habitat is one of the most important issues facing us today.

Melancthon Quarry *Fraser Gibson*

Many of you have expressed concern over the mega-quarry in Melancthon Township near Shelbourne Ontario. Your efforts may be paying off because in early September, Ontario's environment minister called for an extensive environmental review of the controversial proposed quarry.

The Highland Co. has purchased over 3000 hectares of prime potato land in Melancthon Township since 2006, and is now Ontario's biggest potato grower, packer and distributor. Unfortunately now that they have the land, they plan to mine a large portion of this area. Highland would have to pump 600 million litres of water a day from the quarry!

Bobolinks, continued from page 1

over the past 20 years. "Forty-two common bird species have steeply declined by 50% or more in the past 40 years, including Common Nighthawk, Eastern Meadowlark, and Loggerhead Shrike." (BirdWatch Canada, Summer 2010, Number 52, p.10)

Bobolinks nest on the ground in high grasses where they feed on grassland seeds; they also eat many insects. The cutting down of the hardwood forests by pioneers in the 1800s in southern Ontario increased the amount of prairie-like grassland habitat. The use of many horses on the farms increased the need for mature hay. These factors gave the birds a long enough season in which to breed and rear their young. The decreased dependency

on horses and the remarkable increase in dairy production which uses less mature hay and more alfalfa has resulted in much earlier first cuts of hay in Ontario. Any young which have not fledged do not survive this early cutting. Therefore, the change from two cuts of hay to three or four cuts has significantly reduced the chances for Bobolink survival. It is estimated that over 95% of hatchlings do not survive to make their first flight. The increasing range of non-grass crops such as soybeans and corn, as well as the use of pesticides has further limited suitable habitat for Bobolinks. Bobolinks are often killed in South America where they are viewed as an agricultural pest. This puts pressure on the species at both ends of their 19,000 km migration. We humans have been im-

pecting the species of birds around us for a long time!

To observe Bobolinks, watch for farmers still raising horses and growing hay for them, or go to long grass pastures. Watch the fence lines for smallish black birds: park, open the windows and listen. Get out the binoculars and look for the white back and the large yellow patch.

If local areas do not turn up the elusive Bobolink, try the rural hayfields of the Beaver Valley as the delayed growing season for hay seems to favour the birds. Spring/summer walks on the Bruce Trail in the Kolapore Uplands, especially along Fox Ridge Road just north of Duncan, have always produced many sightings of this wonderful bird and many other interesting species.

Outings Schedule



By Mary Voisin

If you are looking for new places to hike this fall, check the website Trails Take Flight. <http://www.grandrivercountry.com/trails>. You will find detailed trail maps and information about the 20 "hottest" birding trails in the Grand River Watershed.

Occasionally there will be a Meet, Greet and Explore Together outing. There is no designated leader for this outing. It's a shared experience!

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.

Note regarding guests – Please email me for waiver form for your guest to sign and drop the signed form off at the next meeting.

Lions Ring Trail, Elmira
Saturday, October 8, 2011
Derek Hitchens, 519 886 7379

Meeting Time/Place:
9:00 at 404 Wing or 9:15 at the parking lot on South Field Drive in Elmira.
(Corner of Union Street and South Field)

Join Derek and Shelagh on the newest part of the Lions Ring Trail. The trail is linear with the parking lot about two thirds of the way along it. We would walk the north part of the trail and back and then the south part which has a loop through the woods to rejoin the main trail. Total length

is about 4 km. There are some ponds along the trail which might contain waterfowl.

Dryden Tract (Alps Woods)
Tuesday, October 11, 2011
Marco DeBruin 519- 658-5372
Meeting Time/Place:
9:30 am at the at carpool parking lot at 401 and Homer Watson/Fountain St.

Join Marco for a morning hike through Dryden. The hills, mainly eskers and moraines, are covered in an impressive maple and beech forest. Several "Carolinian" or more southern species, occur here at their northern limits, such as pignut hickory and witch hazel. There is a lookout which will give us a really nice view of the countryside in its fall colours. Wear sturdy footwear as this area is quite hilly in spots. You may like to bring your binoculars, camera, and water.

Bechtel Park
Tuesday, October 18, 2011
Meet, Greet and Explore! A

shared experience!

Meeting Time/Place:
9:30 am by the playground at Bechtel Park. (drive past the soccer fields and tennis courts) The entrance to the park can be found on Bridge Street across from Tim Hortons just south of University Avenue.

The web site www3.sympatico.ca/tgrignon describes Bechtel Park as "composed mainly of upland maple-beech forest and wetland vegetation on the Laurel Creek floodplain. You can enjoy hiking in the summer or cross-country skiing in winter along the branching trail network within the 75-year-old woods. One of the more interesting sections of the trail parallels Laurel Creek where you can conveniently view waterfowl and other aquatic life. A bridge provides access to similar habitat on the other side. The floodplain is particularly colourful in autumn with an abundance of butterflies visiting the asters and golden-rods."



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2011-2012**



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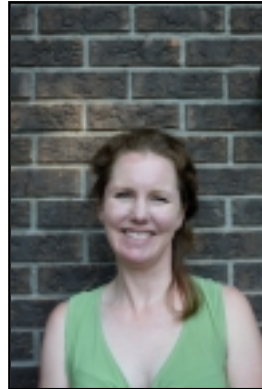
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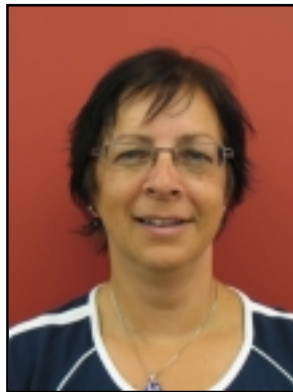
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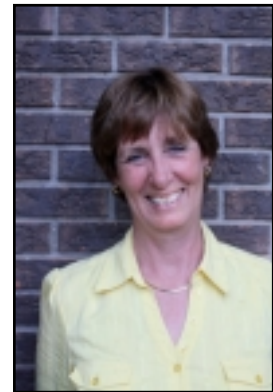
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FROM THE MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR

submitted by Larry Hamel

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

As of the end of June the records indicated 230 members represented by 161 memberships. As of the September 12, 2011 Board meeting we had recorded 16 renewals and 1 new membership for the 2011-12 year. Thanks to these early birds we have a good start towards **surpassing** last year's numbers!!

THE GUY IN THE CAT-IN-THE HAT'S HAT IS BACK

Renew Now Please – Its Soooooo Easy To Make Him Purrrrrrrr!

If you are reading this article at the September 26th meeting, and you haven't already renewed, unburden yourself tonight. Go see Guy in the Cat In The Hat's Hat at the back of the room. He or his helpers will be pleased to lighten your load. Forms and writing tools are readily available. **Cash** or **cheque** is acceptable. We're fast! We're efficient! Try us out!

Visitors at this meeting **are very welcome to join** the rush to get on the list of paid-up members the membership form as best you can, leave us with a little of your money and we'll send you a follow up **Welcome Letter** that tells you much of what you want to know about KWFN.

Unable to attend the September 26th meeting? No problem! Just use the form that came with your September edition of The Heron and follow the instructions at the bottom of the form. **Can't find the form?** (I understand this problem better each year.) **No problem!** Go to www.kwfn.ca. Click on the Membership button, the **Membership Form** quick link, the **Membership Form** link. Four easfor 2011-12. It is a painless process that will send you home feeling really good about yourself. Fill in y clicks takes you to a Membership Form that you can print, complete and send in! Or, you may contact the Membership Director (page 2 of The Heron or Contacts button on the web site) and arrange to get a copy.

Reading The Heron for the first time and you are thinking of becoming a member? No problem! Just contact the Membership Director. He will answer your questions and help you with the process.

How do I know if I need to renew? If the mailing label on your copy of The Heron shows an "R" in the lower right section, **you need to renew**. Officially you have until November 15th to do so. Why wait! Do it now! Make yourself and the Membership Director feel sooooo good! Avoid the need for the Membership Director to send you a reminder letter at the beginning of November.

If you have decided not to renew your membership this year, please call the Membership Director or send him an email and tell him why. Your feedback can be very helpful to us.

NAME TAGS

Help us mix and mingle at meetings. Please wear your name tag. If you were a member in June or you joined since then, you should find your name tag on the green blankets, left front corner of the room. Can't find your tag, **be sure to tell the Guy in the Cat in the Hat's Hat**. He'll fix the problem.

GET WELL AND BEREAVEMENT CARDS

Please notify the Membership Director regarding serious illness or bereavement details regarding our Members and their loved ones. A card will be sent on behalf of the KWFN. Thank you for your help!

Neil E. Taylor
KWFN Representative
Waterloo Stewardship Network
September, 2011



Waterloo Stewardship Network (WSN)

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

Project Updates

Ontario Stewardship Rangers 2011 - Many diverse projects included maintaining and planting plugs and trees at Waynco, the City of Kitchener, Drynan and other partner groups.

Prairie Tour 2011 – An excellent tour was held. Thanks to Larry Lamb and the other key members that helped organize and deliver this.

Roadside and Trees - Planting maintenance was completed this summer by the Rangers. Some of the sites were more successful than others. It looked like larger stock did much better than smaller material.

Aquatic Renewal - Workshop series is being completed by Trout Unlimited and University of Guelph. Accreditation is a probable outcome of this. In addition the restoration and adoption of a few local creeks is forthcoming. e.g. Laurel Creek, Forwell Creek and Strasburg Creek.

Prairie Program – A few thousand plantings were planted at Blue Lake, Waynco, Woodland Cemetery as a part of the Species At Risk stewardship program. A burn near the Waynco site is planned for next spring. Other burns at Branchton/Waynco sites are planned for this fall. Seed collection will also be undertaken.

Grow Native Program - Different grow trays and species will be used for this coming year. Larger drought resistant plants will be the new target. Several teachers are already interested.

School Support - Baden School requested native plants for the school grounds. The WSN will support Baden Public School to purchase plant material for their native plant garden to a maximum of \$200.

Envirothon - Training for this coming season is being planned. Of note the Ontario team finished in second place at this year's international event and the crew from the Grand River was close behind them at the provincial championships.

Youth Outdoor Opportunities - A day event was held at Luther Marsh with about 200 kids who visited several stations including fly tying and fly casting.

Trees for Woolwich - Two groups would like to plant 23,000 trees...one for each person in the township. They are energetic and are working towards a launch event on October 15th. They will plant at Woolwich Reservoir and in Bloomingdale this fall and more plans will evolve over the winter for spring plantings. Educational opportunities are also on the agenda for this group.

Incorporation discussion continues

Coming Events

Latornell - November 16-18 for more info visit www.latornell.ca/.

October 20th - Tour of Oxford stewardship sites.

Trees for Woolwich Launch - October 15th

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Neil'.

Me Holdum?

A walk with my young granddaughters to their nearby neighbourhood playground was not intended to be a nature walk. Along the way, an unfortunate ant happened to venture onto the sidewalk and soon received the rough treatment from the soul of a little shoe.

Why did the ant suffer so? Surely this was not something my granddaughters had been taught. As adults we possibly don't even notice the ants there. We have grown accustomed to the everyday sightings of spiders, worms and slugs and are in the habit of giving them little notice.

After a short time on the playground equipment we ventured to the uncut edge where overgrown grass and shrubs hid numerous rocks. We rolled a few over.

It is amazing what the enthusiasm, inquisitiveness and eagle eyes of a 3 year old can do to rejuvenate interest in more experienced eyes. Their curiosity helps us see details we have not noticed in years.

My granddaughters responded differently to the "everyday" crawlers found there. They were both very interested but the first words out of the 3 year old's mouth

upon spotting a creature were, "Me holdum? Me holdum?" and her hand was at the ready. The 5 year old did not have the immediate desire to be in such close contact with some of these previously unseen creatures. Holding it and letting it crawl upon her hand brought forth giggles, wide eyes and more questions. It was then released in a safe place to resume its life. Even watching the ants pursuing their endless activities held their attention. These young minds seemed to grasp the importance and decency of affording all these small creatures a safe place to live. The seed for respecting life and habitat had been sown.

This visit to the unkept section of the park offered an opportunity to capitalize on their interest and curiosity before they developed unwarranted fear and aggressiveness toward unfamiliar and less than cute creatures.

While we relish their excitement, we must be careful not to display negative values toward some creatures. Instilling the value of all life and habitat is a goal of mine and one I hope you can aim to cultivate in the life of a youngster close to you.

Get out there and roll some logs and share some enthusiasm with youthful eyes! Be sure to set a good example and preserve habitat by returning the logs to their previous position.

Back home and no longer thinking about our lesson in nature, the young eyes spot an ant on the kitchen floor. Stomp, stomp, stomp!

It must be extremely difficult for a youngster to make sense of the mixed messages to which they are exposed. Being an ant is tough! Another walk and more, "Me holdum?" time is necessary!



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October 2011 at a Glance - refer to page 6 of this Heron for full outing details

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8 Lions Ring Trail Elmira 9 am
9	10 <i>Thanksgiving Day</i>	11 Dryden 9:30 am	12	13	14	15
16	17	18 Bechtel Park 9:30 am	19	20	21	22
23	24 KWFN meeting	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

Update from the Board of Directors

The following topics were discussed at the board meeting on September 12th:

- Adoption of the updated Executive Guide version 4 as the official guide for the conduct of KWFN affairs

- Electronic version of Heron on the website

- Role of the Conservation Committee

- Guidelines of the Conservation and Honourary Life Membership Awards

- Retention Schedule for the KWFN records

The minutes of June 6th have been approved by the Board and the minutes from the September 12th meeting will be approved at the Board's next meeting on October 3.

The approved minutes can be viewed in the KWFN library at club meetings, or you can request to receive a digital version from the Secretary.



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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).

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/>