

# The Orchid

November 2015  
Volume 61, No. 8

[peterboroughnature.org](http://peterboroughnature.org)

## Bulletin of the Peterborough Field Naturalists

Published nine times yearly, Publication Mail Agreement #4005104

Know • Appreciate • Conserve Nature in All its Forms

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Blanding's Turtle, TransCanada Trail west of Atkinson Road, September 23<sup>rd</sup> ~ Submitted by Kate Siena

INSIDE: 'Reptiles at Risk' are Coming to Peterborough!  
PFN Pledges to Help Save Boyd Island  
Register for the 64<sup>th</sup> Annual Christmas Bird Count  
Ron Pittaway's Winter Finch Forecast  
Pollinator Garden at Warsaw Caves Conservation Area  
Sneak Peek at PFN's January Annual General Meeting

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Snow Goose, Blue Morph, Briar Hill Bird Sanctuary,  
October 11<sup>th</sup>  
~ Submitted by Dave Milsom  
See October 11<sup>th</sup> Trip Report on page 7

## Welcome New Members!

Pat Bryan

Michael Colley

Jackie Donaldson & Lyn Jones

Jan Thornhill



Eastern Milk Snake

~ Submitted by  
Joe Crowley

See 'Reptiles at Risk'  
announcement on  
page 10

Coming Events	
<p>Sunday November 1<sup>st</sup></p> <p>8:00 am</p> <p>Country Style Restaurant Junction of Old Keene Road and Highway 7</p>	<p><b>Birding at Presqu'ile Provincial Park</b></p> <p>Jerry Ball will lead a day-long trip to view migrant birds at Presqu'ile Provincial Park, with other stops of interest on the way. In particular, expect to see many interesting waterfowl. Bring a packed lunch, binoculars and, if you have them, rubber boots (not essential). Meet at 8:00 am at the Country Style at the junction of Old Keene Road and Highway 7, east of Peterborough. We will likely carpool, so bring a contribution for gas and the entry fee to the park.</p>
<p><b>Note date change:</b> <b>Tuesday, November 10<sup>th</sup></b></p> <p>7:30 pm</p> <p>Peterborough Public Library</p>	<p><b>Monthly Meeting: Exploring the link between well-being, fitness, and connections with nature</b></p> <p>Rodney Fuentes is a wellness mentor, personal trainer, ecotourism guide, and a passionate naturalist. Rodney will share revelations from his personal travels as well as his insights as owner of <i>Explore Origins</i>, an ecotourism company focused on nature connectedness as a path to improving people's fitness and well-being.</p> <p><b>* The November monthly meeting is scheduled on Tuesday, November 10<sup>th</sup>, as the Public Library is closed on November 11<sup>th</sup> in honour of Remembrance Day.</b></p>
<p>Sunday, November 29<sup>th</sup></p> <p>1:00 pm</p> <p>Tim Horton's at Canadian Tire/Sobey's Plaza Lansdowne Street West</p>	<p><b>Wave Riders of Rice Lake</b></p> <p>Join Martin Parker and Luke Berg for this traditional Grey Cup afternoon exploration of sites along the northwestern shore of Rice Lake. We will be looking for the later migrating ducks and other birds. Highlights will be the rafts of ducks riding the waves of Rice Lake and the scenic vistas overlooking the lake. Bring binoculars, telescope if you have one, and clothes suitable for the weather forecast for the day.</p> <p>The trip will last until the late afternoon and CFL fans will be home in time for the Grey Cup game.</p>
<p>Saturday December 5<sup>th</sup></p> <p>7:00 am</p> <p>Tim Horton's at Canadian Tire/Sobey's Plaza Lansdowne Street West</p>	<p><b>World's Greatest Concentration of Gulls</b></p> <p>This day trip will be a birding outing to the Niagara River, a designated Important Birding Area due to the variety and number of gulls which utilize the river in the late fall. More species can be observed in a day than anywhere else in the world. There will be thousands of gulls consisting of ten or more species. Besides the gulls there will be other waterbirds, and southern specialties such as Tufted Titmouse. The leaders for this outing will be Martin Parker and Matthew Tobey.</p> <p>The trip will start from Peterborough with a secondary gathering location at the Adam Beck Generating Station Lookout at Queenston. If you are planning to meet the group at Queenston please advise Martin (705-745-4750) in advance.</p> <p>Bring a packed lunch, binoculars, and telescope if you have one. A camera may be handy as well. Wear clothes suitable for the weather forecast for the Niagara River area for the day of this excursion. This outing will end in the Niagara Region in the late afternoon.</p>



## Coming Events continued

<p>Wednesday December 9<sup>th</sup></p> <p style="text-align: right;">7:30 pm</p> <p>Peterborough Public Library</p>	<p><b>Monthly Meeting: Members' Slide Show Night</b></p> <p>The members' slide show at our December meeting is an annual PFN tradition! Show fellow PFN members your photos of a recent trip. Display those great nature moments or wildlife encounters that you've recently experienced. This is your night to "show and tell"! Don't delay...contact Jim Young at <a href="mailto:jbyoung559@gmail.com">jbyoung559@gmail.com</a> or phone 705-760-9397 to add your name to the list. Sharing your photos and your narrative makes for an interesting and educational evening for all.</p> <p>Sharing some Christmas baking is also part of the December PFN tradition, so please don't feel shy about bringing a goodie or two.</p>
<p>Sunday December 20<sup>th</sup></p> <p style="text-align: right;">all day</p>	<p><b>64<sup>th</sup> Peterborough Christmas Bird Count – A Christmas Tradition</b></p> <p>The Peterborough Christmas Bird Count (CBC), now in its 64<sup>th</sup> year, is the longest running wildlife survey in Peterborough County. Plan to participate in this Christmas tradition! It is an excellent way to learn more about our wintering birds. An unexpected species or two will highlight the day.</p> <p>Notify Martin Parker as soon as possible if you would like to participate, as pre-registration is required. Martin can be reached by phone at 705-745-4750 or by e-mail <a href="mailto:mparker19@cogeco.ca">mparker19@cogeco.ca</a>. More details to follow in the next Orchid.</p>
<p>Friday January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2016</p> <p>Peterborough Naval Club</p>	<p><b>PFN Annual General Meeting</b></p> <p>Our annual general meeting is scheduled on Friday, January 22<sup>nd</sup> at the Peterborough Naval Club. Arnold Zageris is the keynote speaker whose featured talk is "On the Labrador". Arnold is a world renowned nature photographer. He has made sixteen expeditions to Northern Labrador since 1984 (occasionally alone), to document, through his words and photographs "...the harsh and stunning beauty of the Labrador landscape, and the strength of the people who reside within its perimeters".</p> <p>More details to follow in the next issue of The Orchid!</p>

## PFN Junior Field Naturalists (ages 5-12)

The Peterborough Field Naturalists have been invited to a special presentation from **Reptiles at Risk** at the Camp Kawartha Environment Centre (2505 Pioneer Road in Peterborough, near Trent University) on **Saturday, November 14th from 1pm to 4pm**, and the Juniors group has been invited to join in the fun.

**Reptiles at Risk** is a partnership between Scales Nature Park, Laurentian University, and the Canadian Herpetological Society. The project is funded through the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry's Species at Risk Stewardship Fund to provide free educational programming about reptiles at risk throughout Ontario. Their goal is to increase appreciation and conservation of Ontario reptiles through outreach and hands-on interactions with live reptiles. Hope to see you there!

## Other Events of Interest

<p>Saturday November 14<sup>th</sup></p> <p>1:00 to 4:00 pm</p> <p>Camp Kawartha Environment Centre</p> <p>2505 Pioneer Road, Peterborough</p>	<p><b>Reptiles at Risk are Coming to Town!</b></p> <p>A free, interactive workshop about Ontario reptiles will be held on Saturday, November 14<sup>th</sup> at the Camp Kawartha Environment Centre, located at 2505 Pioneer Road, Peterborough (just off Nassau Road, south of Trent University).</p> <p>The workshop will feature live reptiles such as the Grey Ratsnake, Eastern Foxsnake, Eastern Milksnake, Snapping Turtle, Blandings Turtle, Spotted Turtle, and more. After a presentation about reptiles and reptile conservation there will be a hands-on session. You will have the opportunity to get up close and familiar with these reptilian visitors!</p> <p>This is a kid-friendly, family-friendly workshop, so please come out and enjoy meeting some reptiles at risk! Any questions? Please email <a href="mailto:info@peterboroughnature.org">info@peterboroughnature.org</a>.</p>
<p>Fourth Wednesday of each month</p> <p>7:30 pm</p> <p>Peterborough Public Library</p>	<p><b>Peterborough Horticultural Society Monthly Meetings</b></p> <p>The Peterborough Horticultural Society meets on the fourth Wednesday of each month. Meetings take place at the Peterborough Public Library, 345 Aylmer Street North. Doors open at 7:00 pm for socializing and a 7:30 pm start. All are welcome and you don't have to be an experienced gardener. Annual membership is \$20 individual, \$25 family. Visit <a href="http://www.peterboroughgardens.ca">www.peterboroughgardens.ca</a>.</p>

PFN Officers and Directors				Other Volunteers		
President	Lynn Smith	<a href="mailto:smithfam@nexicom.net">smithfam@nexicom.net</a>	944-5599	Ecology Park Feeders	JB Jaboor & Don Finigan	745-4750
Vice President, Fisheries Council	Kim Zippel	<a href="mailto:kimzippel@nexicom.net">kimzippel@nexicom.net</a>	740-0587	Orchid Diary	Martin Parker	745-4750
Secretary, Archives	Martin Parker	<a href="mailto:mparker19@cogeco.ca">mparker19@cogeco.ca</a>	745-4750	Orchid Mailout	Mary Thomas	
Treasurer	Don Pettypiece	<a href="mailto:don.pettypiece@gmail.com">don.pettypiece@gmail.com</a>	750-1145	Orchid Editor	Marla Williams	874-5653
Membership	Jim Young	<a href="mailto:jbyoung559@gmail.com">jbyoung559@gmail.com</a>	760-9397	Jr. Naturalists	Lara Griffin	749-3639
Program (indoor), Stewardship Council, Fisheries Council	Phil Shaw	<a href="mailto:pshaw78@hotmail.com">pshaw78@hotmail.com</a>	874-1688	Miller Creek Management Area	Jim Cashmore & Jim Young	
Program (indoor)	Marie Duchesneau	<a href="mailto:Duchesneau13@hotmail.com">Duchesneau13@hotmail.com</a>	874-5739	Municipal Planning Committee	Jim Cashmore, Jim Young, Lynn Smith, Martin Parker, Ted Vale	
Program (outdoor)	Paul Elliott	<a href="mailto:paulelliott@trentu.ca">paulelliott@trentu.ca</a>	740-0501			
Special Projects	Rene Gareau	<a href="mailto:rene.gareau@sympatico.ca">rene.gareau@sympatico.ca</a>	741-4560			
Webmaster, Jane's Walks	Chris Gooderham	<a href="mailto:webmaster@peterboroughnature.org">webmaster@peterboroughnature.org</a>	740-2081			
Ontario Nature Representative	Ted Vale	<a href="mailto:tedandmarion@sympatico.ca">tedandmarion@sympatico.ca</a>	741-3641			



### Membership Renewals:

PFN memberships expire on December 31<sup>st</sup> each year but Orchid deliveries will continue until March. After August new memberships are valid until the end of the following year. A tax receipt is issued for memberships and donations.

### Orchid Submissions Wanted!

Submission deadline for the December issue is **Wednesday, November 25<sup>th</sup>**.

Send submissions to Marla Williams via email: [orchid@peterboroughnature.org](mailto:orchid@peterboroughnature.org) or post mail to: PFN, PO Box 1532, Peterborough ON K9J 7H7



### NOTICE: November Monthly Meeting Date Changed

Attention PFN members! The November monthly meeting will be held on **Tuesday, November 10<sup>th</sup>** at the Peterborough Public Library. Please mark November 10<sup>th</sup> on your calendars, and we look forward to seeing you soon.

### Peterborough Field Naturalists Pledge \$1,000 to Help Save Boyd Island Submitted by Lynn Smith

Boyd Island is considered a jewel of Pigeon Lake. It is the largest undeveloped island in Southern Ontario. At over 472 hectares, and with 10 kilometres of natural shoreline, Boyd Island is home to a great variety of species of wildlife, fish, and plants.

First Nations people used this island as a meeting place over 10,000 years ago. In more recent times it was owned and farmed by the Boyd family who were early Bobcaygeon settlers. Since then the Island has had several private owners, some of whom planned to develop the island for residential and commercial purposes.

Environmentalists and nature lovers will be encouraged by the news that the current owner has decided to donate the island to the Kawartha Land Trust (KLT). However, there is one stipulation: the KLT must raise \$1,000,000 by November 30, 2015. This amount would be held in trust in order to generate enough annual revenue to support the ongoing upkeep and stewardship of the island.

The PFN's pledge of \$1,000 is a contribution that enables the KLT to move one more step toward accepting the offer of Boyd Island.

The October issue of The Orchid included an announcement from the KLT. For more details about Boyd Island, and to consider an individual, family or corporate pledge, please visit the KLT website at [www.kawarthalandtrust.org](http://www.kawarthalandtrust.org).

Joined in an appreciation and respect for natural spaces and species: PFN members at the Garden Hill Conservation Area, October 11<sup>th</sup>  
~ Submitted by Jim Young



## **PFN Trip Report: Sunday, October 11<sup>th</sup>**

### **Submitted by Marla Williams**

The 'early birds', relatively speaking, gathered at the Riverview Park & Zoo on a crisp, cool Sunday morning. Before the group left on their explorations, several species of birds were observed around the north parking lot (Canada Goose 2, Mallard Duck 4, Ring-billed Gull 4, Rock Pigeon 6, Eastern Phoebe 1, Blue Jay 1, American Crow 2, Black-capped Chickadee 6, European Starling 10, Dark-eyed Junco 4, White-throated Sparrow 20, and Pine Siskin 1).



Driving past the wetland on University Road, some of the members spotted 2 Red-winged Blackbirds and a Common Grackle. On 4th Line Road, south of Bailieboro, keen eyes observed a Red-tailed Hawk, 15 American Crows, and 20 European Starlings. We stopped at Hall's Landing on Rice Lake where the scopes came in handy to spot the following: Canada Goose 1, Wood Duck 5, Mallard Duck 40, Green-winged Teal 15, Common Loon 2, Double-crested Cormorant 159 (one flock of 150 plus several singles), Ring-billed Gull 2000 (give or take a few!), Mourning Dove 6, Hairy Woodpecker 1, Blue Jay 6, American Crow 4, Black-capped Chickadee 3, White-breasted Nuthatch 1, American Robin 6, European Starling 2, Cedar Waxwing 5, Chipping Sparrow 2, Red-winged Blackbird 3, Common Grackle 1, Brown-headed Cowbird 1, House Finch 2, and American Goldfinch 2. Photo at left is Luke Berg at Hall's Landing with his trusty scope.

The next stop was further west at Pengelly Landing, where some keen eyes spotted 23 Bonaparte's Gulls, one Herring Gull, a couple of Double-crested Cormorants, 20 Ring-billed Gulls and an American Crow. On to Hannah Road, west of Scriven Road, southeast of Bailieboro. Observations included the following: Ring-billed Gull 3, Blue Jay 4, American Crow 1, American Robin 1, European Starling 20, Cedar Waxwing 2, White-throated Sparrow 15, Red-winged Blackbird 8, and Rusty Blackbird 20.

Our arrival at the Grist Mill Road Pond, in Campbellcroft, signalled the departure of a few species. Some PFN members managed to catch glimpses before it was too late, and the list included 2 Canada Geese, 3 American Black Ducks, 5 Northern Mallards, 1 Turkey Vulture, 1 Belted Kingfisher, 1 Blue Jay, 2 American Crows, 2 Black-capped Chickadees, 1 American Robin, 8 European Starlings, 25 American Pipits, 15 Dark-eyed Juncos, and 1 Song Sparrow.

One of the highlights of the morning occurred at the Garden Hill Conservation Area, just off County Road 9 in Elizabethtown. A Hudsonian Godwit was spotted amongst the hundreds of birds in the mudflats and shallow water of the pond! The group was also treated to a clear distinction between Greater Yellowlegs and Lesser Yellowlegs (see photo at right, courtesy of Dave Milsom), and the arrival of three Trumpeter Swans. Here is a list of the species:

Canada Goose 450, Trumpeter Swan 3 (2 adults 1 juvenile), Common Gadwall 5, American Black Duck 2, Mallard 60, Blue-winged Teal 1, Northern Pintail 1, American Green-winged Teal 35, Double-crested Cormorant 2, Great Blue Heron 2, Turkey Vulture 12, Golden Eagle 1 (subadult), Red-tailed Hawk 2, Killdeer 25, Greater Yellowlegs 15, Lesser Yellowlegs 12,





Hudsonian Godwit 1, White-rumped Sandpiper 16, Pectoral Sandpiper 3, Semipalmated Sandpiper 1, Wilson's Snipe 1, Ring-billed Gull 100, Herring Gull 2, Mourning Dove 8, Belted Kingfisher 1, Hairy Woodpecker 1, Blue Jay 15, American Crow 6, Black-capped Chickadee 2, White-breasted Nuthatch 1, Ruby-crowned Kinglet 2, American Robin 12, American Pipit 35, Dark-eyed Junco 2, White-throated Sparrow 1, and Red-winged Blackbird 6.

Two more Lesser Yellowlegs were seen at the Millbrook Conservation Area. About 250 Canada Geese were also at the Millbrook Pond, as well as 2 Mallards, a Common Loon that flew south overhead, 50 Ring-billed Gulls, 5 Rock Pigeons, 2 American Crows, 3 Black-capped Chickadees, 1 Yellow-rumped Warbler, and 20 Rusty Blackbirds.

The Briar Hill Bird Sanctuary was next on the list, which is located on County Road 21, just west of County Road 28. The group was treated to the sight of 3 Snow Geese, 2 of which were white, and 1 a blue morph. Three more Trumpeter Swans were observed, as well as a male Ruddy Duck; the first of the year for Peterborough County! Two hundred more Canada Geese, 2 Turkey Vultures, 6 Mallards, 4 American Crows, 6 Ring-Billed Gulls, 4 American Robins, 30 Red-winged Blackbirds and 10 Rusty Blackbirds completed the list.

A few members of the group continued to an abandoned field at the end of Dafoe Drive, in Peterborough, and observed a Ring-billed Gull, 5 Dark-eyed Juncos, and a Northern Cardinal. Many thanks to Dave Milsom for organizing and leading this rewarding outing.

### **Juniors' Event Report: Pollinator Garden at Warsaw Caves** Article and photos submitted by Lara Griffin

A huge thank you is extended to the PFN Juniors who helped to plant a pollinator garden at the Warsaw Caves Conservation Area on Sunday, October 18th. It was a cold day, but that didn't slow down the Juniors as they planted 74 plants to benefit pollinators such as moths, bees, and butterflies. This new garden is one of ten butterfly way stations being planted by the Otonabee Region Conservation Authority (ORCA) this year.



Plants included the following species: Nannyberry, Bush Honeysuckle, Winterberry, Swamp Rose, Joe Pye Weed, Monkey Flower, New England Aster, Coreopsis and Common Milkweed. Next time you are visiting Warsaw Caves, check out the garden near the gatehouse to see how it has grown! ORCA will be installing interpretive signage at a later date. This project was part of the National Conservation Plan, with financial support from the Government of Canada. Thank you very much to Meredith Carter and Jason Solnik of ORCA for teaching us about the importance of pollinators and sharing this fun opportunity to get involved.



### **Announcement from Bird Studies Canada: Project FeederWatch**

The 29<sup>th</sup> season of Project FeederWatch begins on November 14! Please join our team of thousands of volunteers across North America, and turn your bird feeding hobby into research for bird conservation. Your counts will help scientists monitor changes in winter feeder-bird populations. You choose how much time you want to spend counting. New participants receive a kit with a handbook, a bird identification poster, a calendar, and an instruction booklet. Results are published in *BirdWatch Canada* and *Winter Bird Highlights* – the FeederWatch magazine. You can also explore maps and charts online to see what others are reporting.



Anyone with an interest in birds and nature is invited to join Project FeederWatch and become a Citizen Scientist. To learn more or to sign up, visit our website ([www.birdscanada.org/volunteer/pfw](http://www.birdscanada.org/volunteer/pfw)) or call 1-888-448-2473. Your \$35 donation defrays the cost of the materials and data analysis (participation is free for members of Bird Studies Canada). Project FeederWatch is a joint program of Bird Studies Canada and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

Bird Studies Canada is pleased to welcome Armstrong Bird Food as a national sponsor of Project FeederWatch in Canada. Our new partnership aims to inspire more Canadians to discover the fun of FeederWatch and the importance of Citizen Science.

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### **Notice to PFN Members – Nominations for Directors** **Submitted by Lynn Smith, PFN President**

The affairs of the Peterborough Field Naturalists are managed by 12 members who comprise the Board of Directors. The Nomination Committee annually prepares a slate of Directors for approval at the Annual General Meeting in January.

Currently there are vacancies on the Board which the Nominations Committee must fill. The normal term of a Director is three years. If you are interested in serving on the Board, or would like to suggest a member who may be interested, please advise Jim Young at [jbyoung559@gmail.com](mailto:jbyoung559@gmail.com) or phone him at 705-760-9397.

The PFN needs (and appreciates) your talents, time and thoughts. Please consider volunteering as a Board Member.

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### **From the Archives: Fall Migration by E.W. Calvert (Lindsay), Volume V, No. 6 – October 1960** **Submitted by Martin Parker**

Many naturalist's stress the Spring rather than the Fall migration, chiefly through force of circumstances, as the former is much more in evident to those who take only a passing interest in bird life. More advanced students are the ones usually pursuing the latter migration as altered plumages and lack of adequate notes (songs) makes rendering the correct identification vastly more difficult.

Small flycatchers are especially difficult to recognize without their characteristic notes since their plumages are very similar. Birds in immature plumage, such as the Chestnut-sided Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler and others, are so totally different from the adult they are almost unrecognizable. However the Myrtle Warbler (now called Yellow-rumped Warbler), Wilson's and Black-throated Blue have distinctive markings in any plumage, and the Redstart and Yellowthroat are known by their actions as well.

Birds possessing special moults have entirely different Fall plumages. Noted examples are Scarlet Tanager, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Bobolink, Goldfinch, Indigo Bunting as well as many waterfowl. The latter lose its flight feathers as well as bright plumage and hides during this period for added protection.

September and October seem to be the best months to observe the Fall migration, but some birds are on the move during July and August. Experienced naturalists will agree that two consecutive seasons are never alike.

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## 64<sup>th</sup> Peterborough Christmas Bird Count – A Christmas Tradition

Submitted by Martin Parker



Song Sparrow & insect species,  
Lakefield Marina, August 16<sup>th</sup>  
~ Submitted by Fred Bakker

The Peterborough Christmas Bird Count (CBC), now in its 64<sup>th</sup> year, is the longest running wildlife survey in Peterborough County. This year the CBC will occur on Sunday, December 20<sup>th</sup>. The Peterborough CBC participants cover an area contained within a circle with a diameter of 24 kilometres, centered on the intersection of Chemong Road and Sunset Boulevard. This total count area is divided into smaller areas and a team of participants is assigned to each area.

The participants spend the day visiting various habitats within their area and record both the number and species of birds observed. At the end of the day all the parties will gather at a local dining establishment, and after swapping stories the final results of the count will be compiled. All area parties will be led by one or more experienced counters.

Plan to participate in this Christmas tradition! It's an excellent way to learn more about our wintering birds. An unexpected species or two will highlight the day.

Martin Parker has agreed to take over the compilation of the Peterborough CBC; he compiled the Peterborough count in the early 1970s.

Pre-registration is required, so contact Martin as soon as possible if you would like to participate. Martin can be reached by phone at 705-745-4750 or by e-mail [mparker19@cogeco.ca](mailto:mparker19@cogeco.ca). More details to follow in the next Orchid.

## Reptiles at Risk are Coming to Town!

In case readers missed this announcement in the "Other Events of Interest" section, please note that a free, interactive workshop about Ontario reptiles will be held on Saturday, November 14<sup>th</sup> from 1:00 to 4:00 pm at the Camp Kawartha Environment Centre, located at 2505 Pioneer Road, Peterborough (just off Nassau Road).

The workshop will feature live reptiles such as the Grey Ratsnake, Eastern Foxsnake, Eastern Milksnake, Snapping Turtle, Blandings Turtle, Spotted Turtle, and more. After a presentation about reptiles and reptile conservation there will be a hands-on session. You will have the opportunity to get up close and familiar with these reptilian visitors!

This is a kid-friendly, family-friendly workshop, so please come out and enjoy meeting some reptiles at risk! Any questions? Please email [info@peterboroughnature.org](mailto:info@peterboroughnature.org).

Eastern Hog-nosed Snake

~ Submitted by  
Joe Crowley



## **New This Fall: PFN's "Volunteer Corner"**

### **Submitted by Martin Parker**



Consider Volunteering with the Doug Sadler Library Inventory!

The Peterborough Field Naturalists established the Doug Sadler Library, located at the Camp Kawartha Environment Centre, on the campus of Trent University. A major component of the PFN Library consists of the books donated by the Estate of Douglas Sadler, a long-term PFN member and volunteer with the PFN, and award-winning naturalist and writer. Additional books have been donated to the library by other members and non-members. The PFN will be thrilled to have a complete inventory of all the books within this collection!

Hence, the search begins for a willing volunteer to complete a digital inventory of all the books in this important collection. The work should take less than 8 hours, including time at the Camp Kawartha Environment Centre.

If you are interested in this meaningful contribution to the PFN, please contact either Lynn Smith or Martin Parker. Their contact information is listed on page 5.

## **Squirrel Meets Slinky**

### **Submitted by Murray Palmer**

Let it not be said I was up to anything kinky  
 When I decided to buy an Original Slinky ...  
 I was plagued with peanut thieves dressed in grey and black;  
 It was high time to give this Slinky idea a crack.  
 I feed chickadees, cardinals and sometimes woodpeckers, too.  
 Their cheerful sounds and colour make the world less blue,  
 But the local squirrels had become the bane of my existence.  
 Any attempt to thwart them seemed to raise their persistence.  
 Who knows how many times I ran to the back door  
 To prevent these tree rats from pilfering more!  
 A greased pole and stovepipe baffle were easily scaled,  
 But now I thought I might have the plunderers nailed ...  
 The Slinky hangs down around the pole nearly four feet.  
 When a naive squirrel climbs it, the spectacle is sweet.  
 The coil stretches, dropping the perp more than three feet,  
 Only to be yanked back up again, and fall away in defeat.  
 Now the squirrels only eye the hanging food tray above -  
 They're smart but beatable when push comes to shove.

Murray Palmer, 2015

## **Winter Finch Forecast 2015-2016**

### **Written by Ron Pittaway**

**General Forecast:** This winter, spruce seed specialists such as White-winged Crossbills and Pine Siskins should be concentrated in eastern and western North America where cone crops are heaviest. Northwestern Quebec and Ontario have the least spruce cone abundance with only poor to good crops. Conifer crops including on ornamentals are heavier in southern Ontario and could attract finches. Common Redpolls may move into southern Ontario because birch seed crops are low to average in northern Canada. A small flight of Evening Grosbeaks is expected in the East because of increasing numbers due to expanding spruce budworm outbreaks in Quebec. Pine Grosbeaks also should move south in small numbers because the mountain-ash berry crop is below average in northern Ontario. Expect a scattering of Red Crossbills across the East this winter. See individual forecasts for the details.



**Individual Forecasts:** Forecasts apply mainly to Ontario and adjacent provinces and states. Three irruptive non-finch passerines whose movements are often linked to finches are also discussed. Follow finch wanderings this fall and winter on eBird.

**Pine Grosbeak:** This largest of the finches should move south in small numbers to Algonquin Park and probably farther south. A small flight is indicated because the native mountain-ash berry crop is below average across the boreal forest in Ontario and the crop may become depleted forcing grosbeaks southward. If Pine Grosbeaks come south they will find plenty of European mountain-ash berries and ornamental crabapples in southern Ontario and elsewhere. They relish sunflower seeds at feeders.

**Purple Finch:** Many (not all) should migrate south out of Ontario this fall because cone and deciduous tree seed crops are generally low in northern Ontario. Purple Finches winter in numbers in the north only when the majority of tree seed crops are bumper. An easy way to tell Purple Finches from House Finches is by checking the tip of the tail; it is distinctly notched or slightly forked in Purple and squared off in House Finch. Purples prefer sunflower seeds at feeders.

**Red Crossbill:** Expect a scattering of Red Crossbills in the East this winter. Red Crossbills comprise at least 10 "call types" in North America. Some may be full species, but most types are normally impossible to identify without analyzing recordings of their flight calls. Matt Young (may6@cornell.edu) at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology is studying Red Crossbills and he will identify types if you send him your recordings. The following summary is from Matt who reports "a nice sprinkling of Types 1 and 2 Red Crossbills in central New York State. Type 2s appear to be more common this year across much of the East. Type 10s are occurring from the Great Lakes across the Adirondacks and northern New England into the southern Maritime Provinces. An early September report of Type 3 in the Great Lakes area makes it the first in more than two years after the massive Type 3 irruption in 2012-13." Red Crossbills, probably Type 2, were seen this summer in the "pine belt" of northeastern Algonquin Park. Look for Type 2s in White Pines in Algonquin along the Barron Canyon Road accessible from Highway 17 west of Pembroke.

**White-winged Crossbill:** This crossbill moves back and forth like a pendulum across the boreal forest looking for bumper spruce cone crops and irrupts south only in years of widespread cone crop failures. They will be scarce in most of Ontario because cone crops are low. They should occur this winter in Atlantic Canada including Newfoundland, which has a heavy spruce cone crop. It is hoped that White-winged Crossbills will move into the northern New England States and New York State's Adirondack Mountains where spruce cone crops are very good.

**Common Redpoll:** Similar to last winter, expect a southward movement because birch seed crops are low to average across the boreal forest. Birch crops are much better in southern Ontario south of Algonquin Park so watch for redpolls in birches, in European Black Alders, and in weedy fields. At feeders redpolls prefer nyger seeds served in silo feeders. Redpolls are difficult to study in the field because they are so flighty, but much easier to study at feeders. Watch for the rare "Greater" Common Redpoll (*rostrata*) from Baffin Island and Greenland. Greaters are larger, browner, longer tailed and bigger billed.

*Editor's note: On November 2nd, 15,790 redpolls were reported passing the Tadoussac Bird Observatory, located 212 km northeast of Quebec City. This is the largest movement of redpolls ever recorded at the observatory.*

**Hoary Redpoll:** Hoaries occur mixed in with flocks of Common Redpolls. The "Southern" Hoary Redpoll (nominate subspecies *exilipes*) breeds south to northern Ontario and is the usual subspecies seen. "Hornemann's" Hoary Redpoll (subspecies *hornemanni*) was formerly considered a great rarity south of the tundra. There is an old specimen from southern Ontario in the Royal Ontario Museum, and more recently it has been documented by photos with 10 accepted records by the Ontario Bird Records Committee.

**Pine Siskin:** Expect very few siskins in Ontario this winter because White Spruce crops are generally low. Siskins likely will be concentrated in western Canada which has heavy spruce cone crops. There were high numbers of siskins in southern Yukon in early September. They also should occur in New York's Adirondack Mountains, the northern New England States, and the Atlantic Provinces which have very good spruce cone crops. Their wheezy calls are the best way to identify siskins flying overhead. At feeders they prefer nyger seeds in silo feeders.

**Evening Grosbeak:** Breeding numbers have been building in Quebec linked to a greater food supply from increasing outbreaks of spruce budworms, so a small southward flight is likely. Tyler Hoar recently saw small flocks of Evening Grosbeaks roaming in widely separated areas of northern Ontario and western Quebec. Tyler reported that "central Ontario feeders may hold these birds from coming south in sizable numbers." However, this spectacular grosbeak should be watched for in eastern Ontario, the Adirondacks and northern New England. The feeders at the Visitor Centre in Algonquin Park usually have grosbeaks in winter. Evening Grosbeaks prefer black oil sunflower seeds.

**Three irruptive passerines:** Movements of these three passerines are often linked to the boreal finches.

**Blue Jay:** The flight of jays is fairly strong this year along the north shorelines of Lakes Ontario and Erie. The strength of annual flights appears to be linked to the size of acorn, beechnut and hazelnut crops. Acorn crops were good in some areas and poor in other areas of the province. The beechnut crop failed in most areas and the hazelnut crop was average in 2015.

**Red-breasted Nuthatch:** This nuthatch is not moving south in numbers this year indicating that White-winged Crossbills and Pine Siskins also won't irrupt southward. A heavy cone crop on Balsam Fir in many areas may explain why this nuthatch is more sedentary this year. Dennis Barry told me years ago that when fir cones disintegrate in the fall it causes millions of seeds to become lodged in the dense upper branches. These lodged seeds provide an abundant winter food for nuthatches and probably finches.

**Bohemian Waxwing:** Expect a moderate southward and eastward flight this winter because mountain-ash berry crops are average in the boreal forest. Bohemians should get east to St. John's, Newfoundland, where mountain-ash (dogberry) crops are excellent. Bohemians now occur annually (historically more infrequently) in southern Ontario, southern Quebec, northern New York State, and elsewhere in the east. Their more regular winter occurrence now may be related to the abundance of introduced buckthorns (*Rhamnus*) which produce large berry crops almost every year. If they venture south, Bohemians will also find large crops (some bumper) on European Mountain-ash and ornamental crabapples in many areas.

**Where to see finches:** Algonquin Park is an exciting winter experience about a 3.5 hour drive north of Toronto. Cone crops are very poor in the park so finch numbers will be very low to absent. However, feeders at the Visitor Centre (km 43) should attract Common Redpolls (watch for Hoaries), Evening and Pine Grosbeaks. The Visitor Centre and restaurant are open weekends in winter. On winter weekdays, the facility is open, but with limited services (no restaurant is available, but snacks and drinks are available for purchase). Birders can still call ahead to make arrangements to view feeders by calling 613-637-2828. The bookstore has one of the best selections of natural history books anywhere. Be sure to get *Birds of Algonquin Park* (2012) by retired park naturalist Ron Tozer. It is one of the finest regional bird books ever published. The nearby Spruce Bog Trail at km 42.5 and Opeongo Road at km 44.5 are the best spots for finches and other species such as Gray Jay, Boreal Chickadee, Spruce Grouse and Black-backed Woodpecker.



Left: American Toad,  
Millbrook Valley Trails, September 27<sup>th</sup>  
~ Submitted by Jim Young

Right: Snow Geese,  
Briar Hill Bird Sanctuary, October 11<sup>th</sup>  
~ Submitted by Dave Milsom





## The Orchid Diary



A summary of noteworthy observations by PFN members and others in the Peterborough Region.

Please submit your interesting observations to Martin Parker at [mparker19@cogeco.ca](mailto:mparker19@cogeco.ca) or phone 705-745-4750. Observations submitted to e-bird and/or ptbosightings will also be consulted.

Sept 23	A <b>Blanding's Turtle</b> was spotted crossing the Peterborough to Omemee section of the Trans Canada Trail, west of Atkinson Road by Kate Siena. Photo has been submitted (see front page).
Sept 25	A <b>Cackling Goose</b> was observed flying over in the area of Parkhill Road and George Street by Luke Berg. This goose species is a new species which although is similar to a Canada Goose has differences and breeding in the tundra, further north than the Canada Goose. It is not included in many older field guides. A single <b>Virginia Rail</b> in the Johnston Drive area by Matthew Tobey. A <b>Great-blacked Gull</b> at Pengelly Landing on the north shore of Rice Lake by Iain Rayner. <b>Indigo Bunting</b> in the area of Hannah Road and Hwy 28 by Iain Rayner.
Sept 27	Four <b>Broad-winged Hawks</b> passed over in the Parkhill Road/George Street area by Luke Berg. Mike McMurtry's PFN AM outing was to Millbrook Valley Trails and pond; noteworthy observations included <b>Virginia Rail</b> , <b>Solitary Sandpiper</b> , <b>Lesser Yellowlegs</b> , <b>Great Crested Flycatcher</b> .
Sept 28	Two <b>Black-crowned Night Herons</b> (adult and juvenile) along the Otonabee River in the vicinity of the London Street bridge by Iain Rayner.
Sept 29	A <b>Great Black-backed Gull</b> on Little Lake by Iain Rayner. A late <b>Ruby-throated Hummingbird</b> by Dan Chronowic at Trent University, East Bank. <b>Rose-breasted Grosbeak</b> at Barnardo Park by Iain Rayner. Female <b>Black Swallowtail</b> butterfly at Chandos Lake by King Baker.
Sept 25 to 30	Multiple observations of <b>Wilson's Warblers</b> at variety locations in the city by Matthew Tobey, Luke Berg, Iain Rayner and Daniel Williams.
Sept 30	Late <b>Rose-breasted Grosbeak</b> at the Lakefield Lagoon by Donald Sutherland and at Ashburnham Park by Basil Conlin.
Oct 1	<b>Northern Saw-whet Owl</b> banding commenced for one month at the Trent University Oliver property at the north end of Pigeon Lake. Coordinated by Tianna Burke. Summary of efforts to appear in future issue of the Orchid.
Oct 2	Single <b>Lapland Longspur</b> at Douro South Park by Donald Sutherland.
Oct 4	Single <b>Nelson's Sparrow</b> in the Havelock area by Luke Berg. In Jackson Park, Graham Yates saw an amazing spectacle of thousands of <b>Common Grackles</b> . The noise was deafening. Jerry Ball on PFN AM outing had a mixed flock of <b>Red-winged Blackbirds</b> & 12+ <b>Rusty Blackbirds</b> near Buckley Lake. In the afternoon on Hannah's Road Jerry Ball had <b>Lincoln's Sparrow</b> & <b>Indigo Bunting</b> , on Scriven Rd a <b>Merlin</b> , and <b>Common Loon</b> on Rice Lake.
Oct 5	First report of <b>Trumpeter Swan</b> at the Briar Hill Bird Sanctuary (Cty Rd 21, west of Cty Rd 28). Up to four individuals have been present daily until October 23. Observed by multiple observers. Late <b>Eastern Wood Peewee</b> in the area of Edgewater Road and CP Railway bridge.
Oct 6	Eastern <b>Wood Peewee</b> still present at Edgewater Road and also in Millennium Park by multiple observers. <b>Northern Parula</b> along Water Street by Iain Rayner.
Oct 7	<b>Dark-eyed Junco</b> arrived at Bill Snowden's feeder in Ennismore. Now at many feeders.
Oct 8	First report of <b>Snow Geese</b> at the Briar Hill Bird Sanctuary off Peterborough Cty Road 21, west of Cty Road 28. Up to four individuals were present until October 23 by multiple observers. One of the birds was a blue phase. <b>White-rumped Sandpiper</b> on the Lakefield Lagoon by Michael Colley and Tianna Burke. <b>Eastern Towhee</b> at Drew Monkman's feeder.
Oct 9	Late <b>Red-eyed Vireo</b> in Beavermead Park by Iain Rayner. <b>Tennessee Warbler</b> in the Dafoe Road area by Luke Berg & Dave Milsom and in Ashburnham Park by Basil Conlin. <b>Fox Sparrow</b> at Drew Monkman's feeder.
Oct 10	2 <b>Great Egrets</b> on small pond on Brown's Line west of Airport Road by Matthew Tobey and Martin Parker, <b>Osprey</b> on the Norwood Mill Pond by Luke Berg.



Oct 11	<b>Osprey</b> flyover in area of Parkhill Road and George Street by Luke Berg. <b>Lesser Yellowlegs</b> still present on the Millbrook Mill Pond by Luke Berg. <b>Ruddy Duck</b> at Briar Hill Bird Sanctuary by Luke Berg & Dave Milsom. Present until October 22.
Oct 12	One <b>Tundra Swan</b> and 9 <b>Trumpeter Swans</b> on the Norwood Mill Pond by Luke Berg.
Oct 14	Single <b>Swainson's Thrush</b> at the Kawartha Land Trust Ingleton-Wells property on north shore of Stoney Lake by Bill Crins and C. Douglas. Two <b>Pine Grosbeaks</b> were seen by Bill Snowden at his home in Ennismore. Both appeared to be female or immature.
Oct 15	<b>Red-necked Grebe</b> at Briar Hill Bird Sanctuary by Martin Parker. Still present on October 16 by Kim Clark. <b>Orange-crowned Warbler</b> on the Rotary Trail at Trent U. by Donald Sutherland. <b>Clouded Sulphur</b> (butterfly) still flying at the Lakefield Lagoons by King Baker & Martin Parker. <b>Trumpeter Swan</b> on Chemong Lake north of Fowler's Corner by Jerry Ball.
Oct 16	<b>Eastern Towhee</b> in Kathy Parker's yard. A <b>Peregrine Falcon</b> was observed along Johnston Drive in the city by Jerry Ball.
Oct 17	Nine <b>Tundra Swans</b> in the Cardova Lake area by Ian Sturdee. Dead <b>Mink</b> on Hwy 28 just north of Young's Point and a <b>River Otter</b> on Katchewanooka Lake at Young's Point by Martin Parker.
Oct 18	<b>Dunlin</b> at the Lakefield Sewage Lagoon by Chris Risley. Thirteen <b>Common</b> Redpoll at Trent Rotary Trail and a flock of 2 and then a flock of 16 <b>Sandhill Cranes</b> over the Lakefield Sewage Lagoons by Luke Berg, Drew Monkman and PFN Sunday AM outing. Single <b>Red Crossbill</b> and 5 <b>Pine Siskins</b> at Petroglyphs Provincial Park by Donald Sutherland and others.
Oct 19	A sunny <b>Eastern Garter Snake</b> was in Burnham Wood Provincial Park by Meredith Clark & Susan Paradisis. Along the Millennium Trail in the city Cathy Dueck found two hatchlings <b>Common Snapping Turtles</b> heading for the open waters of the river.
Oct 21	<b>Blue-headed Vireo</b> at Lakefield Lagoon by Bill Crins. <b>Tennessee Warbler</b> in Ashburnham Park by Basil Conlin. Two <b>American Tree Sparrows</b> at Drew Monkman's feeder.
Oct 23	<b>Red-shouldered Hawk</b> over Peterborough Golf Course by Iain Rayner. <b>Blue-headed Vireo</b> & <b>Swainson's Thrush</b> in Beavermead Park by Iain Rayner. A record number of 20 <b>Northern Saw-whet Owls</b> were banded at the Trent University Oliver Centre on the north end of Pigeon Lake according to Erica Nol. One night record number. Jerry Ball had a <b>Pied-billed Grebe</b> at Briar Hill Bird Sanctuary.
Oct 23	Don MacLeod reported the following mammal observations are from Frank Hill Road area, of southern Chemong Lake. <b>Eastern Cottontail</b> numbers are back to normal after an explosion of successful breeding during spring & summer. Many of the youngsters have dispersed to find new territories and food supplies. <b>Eastern Gray Squirrels</b> are engaging in "high risk behaviour" to ensure adequate food supplies for the winter. Squirrels have been observed carrying walnuts in their mouths, running across a busy highway and in the open along streets for distances of 300m as they transport their food closer to winter den areas. <b>Muskrats</b> have been busy making lodges/dens as they prepare for winter. One lodge has recently appeared close to Frank Hill Rd; look for a cone-shaped pile of mud and cattail.
Oct 25	Highlights of the PFN outing with Jerry Ball along the eastern shore of Pigeon Lake include 1 <b>Surf Scoter</b> , 3 <b>Bald Eagles</b> , 1 <b>Horned Grebe</b> , & late <b>Chipping Sparrow</b> .



Canada Geese, Snow Geese, Blue Morph Snow Goose and Trumpeter Swan;  
Briar Hill Bird Sanctuary,  
October 11<sup>th</sup>

~ Submitted by Marla Williams



# PETERBOROUGH FIELD NATURALISTS

[www.peterboroughnature.org](http://www.peterboroughnature.org)

## membership application form

Memberships may be obtained by mailing completed form and cheque to  
Peterborough Field Naturalists  
PO Box 1532, Peterborough, ON K9J 7H7

### CONTACT

Name (s):		Home Tel:	
		Work Tel:	
Address:		Receive Orchid by:	<input type="radio"/> snail mail <input type="radio"/> e-mail <input type="radio"/> both please
		Email(s):	

### MEMBERSHIP TYPE & FEE SCHEDULE

Please make cheques payable to *Peterborough Field Naturalists*

1. Single Adult \$25 ☐ 2. Single Student \$15 ☐ 3. Single Child\* (age 5-12) \$10 ☐

4. Family (couple or family with children\*) \$30 ☐

\*Please give the name(s) and age(s) of the children you wish to be enrolled in the PFN Junior Naturalists

Name	Age*	Name	Age*

### MAIN INTERESTS

<input type="radio"/> Birds	<input type="radio"/> Butterflies/insects	<input type="radio"/> Botany (Wildflowers/trees/shrubs)
<input type="radio"/> Astronomy	<input type="radio"/> Aquatic Life	<input type="radio"/> Geology <input type="radio"/> Field Trips
<input type="radio"/> Hiking	<input type="radio"/> Conservation	<input type="radio"/> Other (specify)

I (name \_\_\_\_\_) am knowledgeable in the following areas \_\_\_\_\_ and would be prepared to

☐ lead an outdoor session ☐ give a presentation ☐ prepare an article for The Orchid

### I am interested in the following:

☐ Joining the PFN Executive ☐ Sitting on research or conservation committees ☐ Working on field projects  
☐ Helping with refreshments at meetings ☐ Please have a member of the executive call me

### AGE GROUP

This information helps us to understand the needs of our members. If a family membership, please check for each adult

☐ Under 20 ☐ 20-29 ☐ 30-39 ☐ 40-49 ☐ 50-59 ☐ 60-69 ☐ 70-79 ☐ 80< over

### DONATIONS

Membership fees cover the general operating costs of the club while other sources of revenue are needed to fund special projects such as ecological restoration. You can assist the club by making a donation to help further our work in such areas. The PFN is a registered charity and issues receipts for income tax purposes. All donations are gratefully received and any member of the executive will be happy to speak to you concerning the use of such funds.

### LIABILITY WAIVER

In consideration of the Peterborough Field Naturalists (PFN) accepting this application, I hereby for myself, my heirs, executors, administrators and assigns forever release and discharge the PFN, their officers, directors, servants and agents from any liability whatsoever arising from my participation in PFN activities, whether by reason of negligence of the PFN or its representatives, or otherwise. I affirm that I am in good health, capable of performing the exercise required for field trips or other activities in which I participate, and accept as my personal risk the hazards of such participation. As a member of the PFN and/or as a parent/guardian of a member under 18 years of age, I have read and understood the above, and accept its term on behalf of all of my underage children.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_