

The Orchid



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Know • Appreciate • Conserve Nature in All Its Forms



Rare Bird Stirs up Excitement in Local Birding Community

Read all about the Yellow-crowned Night-Heron sighting inside. Photo: Cathy Douglas

Inside: Suggestions for Nature Activities and Places to Explore
 Drew Monkman's Spring Almanac for May
 Book Review: The Sound of a Wild Snail Eating
 Extolling the Virtues of Burnham Woods
 A Visit to the Monarch Sanctuary in Mexico

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Welcome new PFN members!

- Karen Hartley & Ed Heuval
- Megan & Michael Sterpin & Juniors
Wallace Sterpin and Vance Sterpin
- Deb Oxford



Woolly Bear caterpillar (Isabella tiger moth larva).
Photo: Heidi St. Thomas



Great Blue Heron. Photo: Steve Paul



Wood Ducks. Photo: Ken McKeen



Mourning Cloak butterfly. Photo: Ken McKeen

Outings

Submitted by Sue Paradisis

Sadly, outings continue to be on hold. We had planned to focus on wildflowers and birds in May and, although we can't get out together, here are some of my suggestions for places for you to go on your own.

Wildflowers

For close to town, you can't beat Mark S. Burnham Provincial Park. It is closed until the end of April due to COVID-19, but hopefully will reopen before the flowers are finished.

Just twenty minutes from town, The Warsaw Caves Conservation Area is great for flowers and birds. Also currently closed, if it reopens in May, I recommend walking the road from the day-use parking lot to the boat launch. Wildflowers are all along the edge of the road. Closer to the boat launch, a small stream goes under the road. Pishing around there can turn up numerous Warblers and usually includes a Northern Water Thrush. Veerys and Wood Thrushes are frequently heard.

There are also trails through the little woodlot at Fleming College. Access is from Dobbin Road.

Farther from town, Kawartha Land Trust properties excluding Chase are open to the public. I like Ingleton Wells near Viamede Resort on Stoney Lake. In addition to wildflowers, there are great vernal pools here. The parking lot is located at 105 Reid's Road.

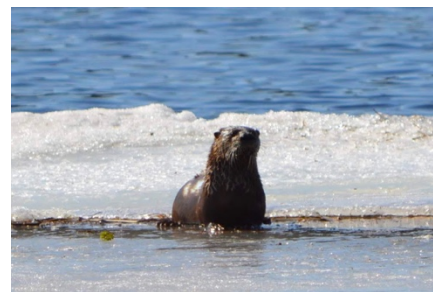
For those of you who are learning to recognize plants, I have found the following website very useful. <http://www.ontariowildflowers.com>. The "Seek" app by iNaturalist is also good to have if you have data on your phone.

Birding

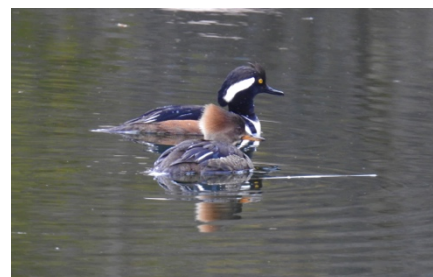
We are fortunate to have a large network of trails in and around Peterborough. The Peterborough-Lang-Hastings section of the Trans Canada Trail, The Rotary-Greenway Trail from Peterborough to Lakefield and the Omemee Rail Trail/Great Trail from Jackson Park to Lindsay immediately come to mind. All these trails pass through a variety of habitats.

There are several spots along the Rotary Greenway Trail that I find productive. Immediately north of Trent at Lock 23, there is a parking lot with access to the Rotary-Greenway Trail and to Promise Rock. Both the trail through the wetland and the trail through the cedar woods are good to explore. Another area I frequent is at Lock 24. I turn on to Centre Rd. and go north on the trail where it goes through a wetland and then through thickets with a good variety of birds.

West of Peterborough, The Victoria Rail Trail passes through a big wetland at Mt. Horeb Road south west of Omemee. With any of these



River Otter at Lock 23 in late March. Photo: Reem Ali



Hooded Mergansers at Westview Village pond in Peterborough on March 29. Photo: Rene Gareau



Ball of mating Garter snakes in Keene yard on April 21. Photo: Steve Paul



Greater Yellowlegs at the Keene Road pond on April 18. Photo: Steve Paul

trails, seek out different sections to optimize what you can find. One can also find hotspots identified on eBird.

In the city, I frequently start out at Beavermead Park because I live nearby, but there are lots of trails within city limits that I have yet to visit. I hope to get to some new-to-me areas soon.

Harper Park is a quiet respite from living in the city. It's great for birding, especially in the spring. Should you go there, be sure to report your sightings on eBird or on iNaturalist to the "Harper Park" project. There are Black-legged Ticks so be sure to spray and check afterwards. For more information on how to protect yourself from the nasty creatures and what to do if you are bitten, go the Peterborough Health Unit website. Choose Your Health, scroll down to Insects, Rodents and other Pests, and go to the link for Ticks and Lyme Disease.

For more great ideas, go to Drew Monkman's website at www.drewmonkman.com and go to the Columns page. In June of 2018, Drew wrote a three-part series of articles entitled "Nature Viewing Destinations in Peterborough", "Nature Viewing North of Peterborough" and "Nature-viewing to the South of Peterborough". Then go the Resources page and find maps of "Popular Nature Destinations in Peterborough" and also "Popular Nature Destinations in the Kawarthas" [These articles and maps can also be found in the following issues of The Orchid: Dec. 2017, Jan./Feb. 2018 and Mar. 2018.]

Nature in the City: Chimney Swift Roosts

We had to cancel this outing, but you can go on your own anytime to the King St Parking Garage, located between George and Aylmer Streets.

In early May, Chimney Swifts start returning to their downtown roosts in the City of Peterborough. From the roof of the King Street parking garage, you have a great view of the swifts gathering in the sky and then entering their roosts in one of several downtown chimneys. The largest concentrations of approximately 80 to 100 birds happens annually from mid-May until early June. Once breeding begins, they disperse to chimneys throughout the city.

Should you decide to go watch, plan on arriving around 8:30 p.m. The birds start gathering around sunset and enter the chimneys at dusk. Bring a lawn chair and binoculars, dress appropriate for the weather and enjoy nature in the city. Parking is normally free after 8:15 p.m. but with COVID-19 restrictions, there is no charge in City parking lots. Of course, COVID-19 physical distancing should be practiced.

You may contact Chris Risley beforehand if you have any questions by email (risleych@gmail.com) or phone (705-743-9707).

Another outing we had planned was to Hooton Drive. Martin has submitted the following article so you can head out on your own.



Ken McKeen took this photo of a Great Horned Owl sitting on its nest in an old Willow tree during his visit to London in early March.



One doesn't always get to see the ruby crown on a Ruby-crowned Kinglet. This photo was taken in Jackson Park on April 22 by Heidi St. Thomas.



A European Starling dives for cover as a Pileated Woodpecker arrives at a feeder in early April. Photo: Marilyn Hubley

Places to Explore: Hooton Drive Through Cavan Swamp

Submitted by Martin Parker

Cavan Swamp is a major wetland west of Peterborough. Most of the lands are privately owned within the wetland complex but fortunately significant tracts are owned by the Otonabee Region Conservation Authority resulting in a significant level of protection for this wetland complex.

Cavan Swamp is the remnant of Lake Jackson, a large lake which formed west of Peterborough at the end of the last glacial period. This lake drained when Jackson Creek broke through the drumlin barrier to reach the Otonabee River. The deep valley within Jackson Park was carved by the rushing water from Lake Jackson as it drained to the current level.



A Sora in the Fairbairn wetland area on April 19. Photo: Steve Paul

There are several roadways which pass through Cavan Swamp. The one I personally enjoy is Hooton Line. Hooton Line crosses the southern end of the swamp. This road is not paved, and traffic is minimal. In the spring, the Municipality of Cavan-Monaghan closes Hooton Line due to the potential of flooding of the roadway. This period of closure provides an excellent opportunity for naturalists to walk along the roadway through the swamp listening and looking for wildlife without having to watch for vehicles.

I personally enjoy visiting this site during April and May. An evening visit in mid to late April will introduce one to a wonderful chorus of frogs. The main species are Spring Peepers, Wood Frogs and Leopard Frogs with some Midland Chorus Frogs. The evening sky will be filled with the courtship display sounds of Wilson's Snipe and American Woodcock.

An early morning trip in the spring will introduce you to many calling birds. On a visit in early April this year, the woodpeckers were active with more than six males heard drumming. In early May, the open areas will mainly contain singing Swamp Sparrows and Common Yellowthroats. As one walks along Hooton Line from east to west, the variety of birds will change. The more open areas will have marsh species such as Swamp Sparrows. As the habitats off the road change to woodlands, the main singers become Winter

Wren, White-throated Sparrows, Hermit Thrush and Red-eyed Vireo.

Each visit and walk through Cavan Swamp on Hooton Drive will introduce you to some interesting aspects of our natural world.

Directions: Take Lansdowne Street west to County Road 28 (traffic lights). Cross the county road and continue west on Maple Grove. At the stop sign, turn left onto Preston Road and then right onto Hooton Line. Follow Hooton Drive for approximately 4 kilometers until you start to descend a slope. You will be overlooking the Cavan Swamp. At the bottom of the hill, park and walk along the road westward through the swamp.

Hopefully you will share some of your experiences with other members by submitting a write-up to Kathryn at orchid@peterboroughnature.org for the next issue. The deadline is usually around the 20th of the month.



Heidi St. Thomas sent in this photo of some very large, strange-looking things she saw floating on the edge of Lily Lake. Martin and Kathy Parker identified them as roots of a water lily which might have been dug up by a muskrat.

Spring Nature Activities for the Whole Family

By Drew Monkman

If there is a bright side to the COVID-19 crisis, it is the gift of time that we've been given. Why not use it to reconnect with nature and, in the process, celebrate the 50th anniversary of Earth Day? With schools now closed, many families are looking for ideas to keep the children entertained and hopefully learn something, too. To help, I have pulled together some simple nature activities you can enjoy in your own backyard, at nearby parks, or maybe on a nearby local rail-trail. Most of what I've chosen involves birds, but I've also added a few more general activities that can be done on any outing or even at home.

Learn Backyard Bird Songs

Have you ever wondered what all those boisterous backyard birds are really singing about? Well, if their melodies could be translated into English, it would be something like this: "I'm a healthy male looking for a mate so together we can raise a family." Once the female has been swept away by her suitor and nesting has begun, the male's song means something different. It's now meant to warn other males of the same species not to get any ideas. It might translate as something like "Hey! This piece of real estate and the female residing here are already taken, so back off buddy!"

Knowing common bird songs and calls provides a great deal of satisfaction. It's wonderful to hear the expected birds, in the expected habitat, at the expected time of year. And, with just a little practice, the songs are easy to learn. For me, the easiest way to remember bird songs is by using a "mnemonic" or memory aid. I like the English translation variety. The American robin, for example, sounds like it's singing "Cheerily...cheer-up...". The words suggest the number of syllables and the general tone. Other kinds of mnemonics compare a given song to something else such as a creaking door or rusty clothesline. You can find mnemonics online by Googling "Fernbank mnemonics" or even make up your own.

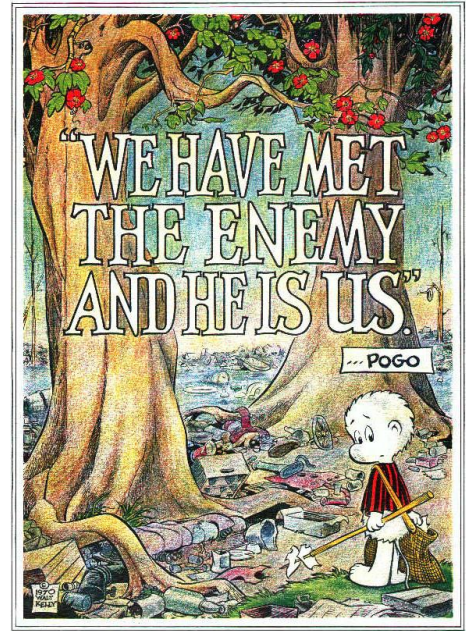
To get started, I suggest downloading the free Merlin bird app, which provides photos, descriptions, range maps, and vocalizations (songs and calls) of all of Canada's birds. Two other excellent resources are allaboutbirds.org and YouTube. Also, if you go to birdscanada.org, you can create a photo guide of common birds in any region of Canada at a given time of year. Just click on "Discover Birds" and then "Birds in Your Region". A fun and easy family activity is to play a given bird song and challenge each other to name which bird is singing.

You might also want to record a series of songs from your computer onto your phone, using the voice recorder. You can then listen to them regularly and try to name them. When you are outside, try to track down the bird and watch it as it sings. You can also record a bird singing with your phone and use the recordings at All About Birds or on Merlin to identify it.

Birds don't only sing, of course. They also make calls. Just remember that songs tend to be longer, more complex, and generally more musical. They are associated with territory and courtship. Calls, on the other hand, serve purposes such as danger warnings or keeping members of a flock in contact. A chickadee's call is the somewhat harsh "Chick-a-dee-dee", while its song is a mellow, whistled "Fee-bee-bee" or "Hi-sweet-ee". Here's some more mnemonics of common April birds to get you started.

Mourning dove: "There's nothing to do" (slow, deep and descending)

American goldfinch: "Chip-chip-chip-chickaree" (bright, fast)



Pogo cartoon by Walt Kelly from the first Earth Day on April 22, 1970

White-throated sparrow: "Sweet Canada-Canada" (slow, high whistle)

Northern cardinal: "Cheer! cheer! birdy-birdy-birdy-birdy" (loud, lots of variation)

Song sparrow: "Maids-maids-maids-put-on-the tea-kettle-ettle-ettle" (jumbled and complex)

Chipping sparrow: A long series of mechanical chips, sounding a bit like a sewing machine.

Red-winged blackbird: "Konk-er-eee" (tinny)

A Non-Identification Bird Walk

Rather than worrying too much about names, it can be fun for kids to simply focus on bird movement, location, behaviour, size, and colour. This approach is more like a scavenger hunt. All you'll need is a pencil and a checklist. Some items for the list could include a bird walking, hopping, soaring, flying in a straight line, swimming, perched in a tree, perched on a wire, perched on a building, in a flock, singing or calling, and eating. You might also want to add: a small (sparrow-size) bird, a medium (robin-size) bird, a big (crow-size) bird, a bird that's all one colour, a bird with spots, and a bird with stripes. The possibilities for the checklist are endless.

Camera Fun

Ask your kids to see how many different birds they can photograph, maybe using a smartphone or a point-and-shoot camera. Show them how to zoom in. If a bird is singing, they could make a short video. Who can come back with pictures of the most species or videos of the most different songs? Let the kids try to identify the species in each other's pictures and videos.

Be a Bird Magnet

Wouldn't it be wonderful, if just like the Pied Piper, you could call birds like chickadees and nuthatches to come to you – maybe as close as a metre away? Here's how you do it. Whenever you hear chickadees or other small birds calling – even in your own backyard – position yourself near some trees and begin to make loud "pishing" noises. Pishing consists of taking a deep breath and making the sound "shhhh" but adding a "p" in front of it. You simply repeat "pshhhh" nine or ten times in a series, stop to catch your breath, and then do it again. Be patient, because you may need to keep it up for a minute or two before you get a response. You may also want to try increasing or decreasing the volume of your pishing. Chickadees, nuthatches, warblers, and woodpeckers are especially receptive to these sounds, but be patient. Why pishing works so well with some species but not others is still a bit of a mystery. Suffice it to say that some birds are just curious. To see and hear my own pishing in action – and the huge response – go to YouTube and search "Pishing in fall warblers".

Engage Your Senses

Spring is a wonderful time to "plug in" to nature through our senses. This is our green conduit – a powerful way to connect children to nature.

1. **Rainbow Colors:** Cut up a variety of paint color samples – especially greys, browns, yellows, oranges and greens – into smaller pieces. Hand out 5 to 10 pieces to each child. Ask them to try to find natural objects (e.g., grasses, rocks, buds, lichens, bark) that exactly match the colour of each paint sample.
2. **Smell Cocktail:** You will need some small cups and twigs. As you hike or walk around the yard, encourage everyone to selectively harvest tiny "bits" of nature and place them in the cup: a bud, some conifer needles, a flake of bark, some pine gum, etc. When you have four or five items, stir them with a twig. This is your smell cocktail! Give your creation a name – perhaps "springtopia" – and let everyone smell each other's concoction.

3. **Sound Maps:** Cut out 4- by 6-inch cards and grab some pencils. Choose a site and time of day – morning is best - that offers a variety of natural sounds. Place an X in the middle of the card. Tell the kids that the card is a map, and the X is where they'll be sitting. Each time they hear a sound, they should mark its location (direction and distance from the X) and represent it with a simple symbol (e.g., a musical note for bird song, a number after the note for each different bird). Show the kids how to cup their hands behind their ears to amplify distant sounds. Have them listen and mark their cards for 5 to 10 minutes, depending on age. Afterwards, discuss what they heard.

4. **Touch Bag:** Give everyone a small paper bag. Ask them to find five or so familiar objects (e.g., different conifer needles, bark, moss, etc.) and to place them in the bag. Taking turns and using only their sense of touch, challenge the kids to identify the objects in each other's bags.

A Head Start on Spring

Can't wait for the greenery and blossoms of spring? Try cutting some 8- to 12-inch twigs for forcing indoors. Many shrubs and trees (e.g., forsythia, willow, dogwood, apple) are just waiting for warm weather to leaf out or even burst into bloom. Just put the twigs in a vase of water and set them in a sunny window. Within a few days, you should see leaves and sometimes flowers emerging. Be sure to watch closely to see what comes out of each bud – a leaf? a flower? both?

A Spring Scavenger Hunt

Kids love scavenger hunts. Here is an easy one for late April and May. Remind the kids that all the items must be in nature.

- ___ Three flowers of different colours
- ___ Buds opening on a twig
- ___ Tree seeds like a cone or maple key
- ___ Lichen or moss on a tree
- ___ New plants poking through the soil
- ___ Three leaves of different shades of green
- ___ A leaf that has been partly eaten by insects
- ___ A worm
- ___ The smell of soil
- ___ The smell of decaying leaves
- ___ The smell of fresh grass
- ___ Something soft or smooth
- ___ Something rough
- ___ An ant
- ___ A squirrel
- ___ A bird flying over
- ___ A bird chirping or calling
- ___ A robin

Peterborough Birding Hotspots - The Top Dozen

Submitted by Martin Parker

eBird is an online bird observation database created by Cornell Lab of Ornithology and coordinated in Canada by Bird Studies Canada. Individuals can submit their individual observations to this database. Birders from Peterborough have been contributing their records since eBird was created. Many have contributed historic records as well.

Within the eBird system there are specific locations called “hotspots”. These are locations where many birders have submitted their observations or checklists and, over time, an extensive database of observations for the specific location has been gathered and summarized.

The eBird database has extensive information on each of these hot spots, including an illustrated checklist for each one. This checklist shows the abundance trend of each species over the course of the year. These charts are based on observations by contributors. One can also view the most recently submitted checklists for each hotspot and the County as a whole.

To explore eBird for Peterborough County:

- Google ‘ebird canada’ or ‘ebird’
- On the opening page click on the ‘Explore’ tab at the top
- On the Explore introduction page in the Explore Regions space, type in ‘Peterborough, Ontario’ and press the enter/return key.
- The next page to come up is the summary page for Peterborough County.
- On the Peterborough County page, the left half of the page is a summary of the species observed in the county. It can be sorted by last seen, first seen, or highest count.
- The right side of the page has several groups: the initial one is the most recently submitted checklists, followed by the Top eBirders and then Top Hotspots. If one clicks on any of the hotspots then a similar page appears for each hotspot.
- Look for the tab at the top which says ‘illustrated checklist’. These checklists provide a wealth of information.

The following table is a summary of the top dozen hotspots in Peterborough County.

Hotspot	# of Species	# of Checklists
Lakefield-- Sewage Lagoon	216	2,661
Peterborough -- Trent Rotary Trail Area	188	3,066.
Peterborough -- Beavermead Park	187	1,575
Peterborough -- 300 Water Street to Mark Street Loop	177	1,308
Miller Creek Conservation Area	167	587
Rice Lake -- Hiawatha Herkimer Point	167	164
Peterborough -- Trent University Wildlife Sanctuary	166	403
Havelock -- Sewage Lagoon (no access)	163	170
Peterborough -- Little Lake	163	1,127
Otonabee Gravel Pit Conservation Area	162	341
Peterborough -- Loggerhead Marsh	153	570
Peterborough -- Trent University Canal Nature Area	151	244



American Wigeon at Little Lake on March 15. Photo: Heidi St. Thomas

In this time of self-isolation, take the time to explore eBird and discover the range of information available on the site. If you want to contribute your own sightings, just register and start entering. On the home page of eBird there is information on how to participate.

A review of the eBird data may identify new birding areas you may wish to explore. Please remember that the Lakefield Sewage Lagoon is closed at this time.

A Spring Nature Almanac for May

By Drew Monkman

A variety of interesting butterflies are already on the wing as May begins. These include the Compton tortoiseshell, the eastern comma and the mourning cloak. Try Charlie Allen Road off County Road 507, north of Flynn's Turn.

The yellow-gold flowers of marsh marigolds, also called cowslips, brighten wet habitats throughout the Kawarthas.

The first ruby-throated hummingbirds usually return to the Kawarthas on about May 5, so be sure to have your feeders ready to greet them. To prepare nectar, mix 1 part sugar with four parts water and boil for one minute. Extra sugar water can be stored in the fridge.

The long, fluid trills of the American toad can be heard day and night. They are one of the most characteristic sounds of early May.

Drooping in tassel-like clusters, countless thousands of tiny yellow flowers decorate sugar maples. The female flowers will produce plump, paired keys.

The damp morning air is rich with the sweet, pungent fragrance of balsam poplar resin. The scent originates from the sticky sap that oozes from the buds as they open.

Mid-May is the peak of songbird migration with the greatest numbers of warblers, vireos, thrushes, orioles, flycatchers and other neo-tropical migrants passing through. Mild, damp mornings usually provide the best viewing conditions. In Peterborough, try Beavermead Park.

Rose-breasted grosbeaks often show up at sunflower feeders this month. Stunning indigo buntings may also make a guest appearance.

Sounding remarkably like birds, gray treefrogs serenade us with their slow, musical trills.

The blossoms of white trilliums blanket woodlots throughout the Kawarthas. A closer look will reveal numerous other wildflowers, too, like yellow trout lily. Ties Mountain Road north of Nogies Creek provides a great wildflower display.

The last frost in the Kawarthas usually occurs about May 18.

Wild columbine is now in bloom on rocky hillsides and along roads and trails. The flowers, a beautiful blend of red and yellow, hang in a bell-like fashion and are often visited by hummingbirds.

A blizzard of elm and silver maple seeds spin to the ground.

The showy, yellow and black Canadian tiger swallowtail butterfly appears by month's end and adds an exotic touch to our gardens.

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron: First Record for Peterborough County

Submitted by Matthew Tobey

On the evening of April 17 at around 8:00 p.m., Jalynn Riches was driving along Preston Road in Cavan when a heron flew across the road in front of her car. Preston Road lies on the eastern edge of a large wetland complex that includes the Cavan Swamp Wildlife Area, so a heron is not an unusual sight in this area. However, this bird looked very different than the Great Blue Herons Jalynn was used to seeing, and she decided that it warranted a closer look. Luckily, the bird had come to rest no more than 15m from the edge of the road, allowing Jalynn to take a “record shot” through her binoculars with her iPhone. She sent the photo to her mother, Amy Elliot Riches. Amy identified the bird as a Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, but began to question her identification after looking at a map of this species’ expected range. That night, she posted the photo to the Peterborough Ontario Birds Facebook group asking for confirmation of her tentative identification.



Yellow-crowned Night-Heron in Cavan Swamp. Photo: Steve Paul

I received a notification from Facebook of the sighting and immediately knew where I would be the following morning. While the photo was distant and dimly lit, it left no doubt as to the bird’s identity. By 6:30 a.m., I was driving up and down Preston Road, joined at one point by Jalynn’s parents, who were also determined to relocate the bird. I narrowed down the search to a section of road where the bird was most likely to have been based on the habitat in the background of the picture taken the night before and the habitat preferences of the species – a section of road about 500 m south of Jackson Creek that had swamp on both sides. Unfortunately, the temperature that night had dropped below freezing, and a layer of ice had formed over the standing water in the swamp. After a couple hours of searching, the layer of ice had not yet melted, so I decided the heron was either roosting somewhere, waiting for the ice to melt and its hunting prospects to improve, or it had moved on.

I returned to Preston Road at 6:50 p.m. The ice had melted, and Northern Leopard Frogs, Wood Frogs, Western Chorus Frogs and Spring Peepers were calling in abundance. It only took about 5 minutes to find the heron in the same location Jalynn had photographed it the night before, feasting on Wood and Leopard Frogs. I quickly got the word out on eBird and the Ontario Birds discord server. Within half an hour, a number of local birders had arrived. When Jalynn and her family returned to look for the bird at 7:30 p.m., they were astounded to see that a small congregation had gathered to see their bird!

Resident populations of Yellow-crowned Night-Herons occur along coastal Central and South America to the West Indies and southern Florida year-round, but a portion of the Mexican and West Indian populations migrate north during the breeding season. The majority of the migratory population breeds along the Gulf and Atlantic coasts from east Texas to New Jersey, as well as inland along the Lower Mississippi and the Red River Basin. However, there is an established pattern of vagrancy in these migrant populations, with individuals of this species having occurred throughout the eastern United States as well as southern Ontario, Quebec, and the Maritime Provinces. While this species takes two full years to acquire its definitive basic (adult) plumage, most extralimital records from the spring migratory period are adults. Inversely, most extralimital records from the fall migratory period are hatch year birds (in first basic plumage). The record from Preston Road was an adult bird and thus fits this pattern.

According to the latest Ontario Bird Records Committee annual report, there have been 59 previously accepted records of Yellow-crowned Night-Heron occurring in Ontario. However, only two of these previous records have come from Central Ontario according to eBird data, both of which were spring

records of adult birds, remarkably both from the hamlet of Minett, Muskoka District (one in 1995 and one in 2002).

The Yellow-crowned Night-Heron on Preston Road is the first record for Peterborough County, bringing the total number of bird species observed within the county to 305. So far, the bird has been reported on eBird by 49 different people, though doubtlessly more than 50 people have come to see the bird.

At the time of this writing, the Yellow-crowned Night-Heron was last observed on the evening of April 23. Several parties searched for the heron on the 24th, but their eBird checklists indicate that no one was able to relocate the bird. It seems likely that it has moved from its regular haunts along Preston Road but, given the extensive swampland to the east, it could still be in the area and easily avoid detection.

While there are a number of experienced naturalists who record observations within the county of Peterborough on a daily basis, this bird was found by an individual with a limited background in wildlife identification who recognized that they were looking at something different and felt compelled to record their sighting. The take-home message is that regardless of your level of expertise, it can be fun, rewarding, and oftentimes very valuable to report your nature sightings to an online database such as eBird, iNaturalist, or to The Orchid Diary (Submit your interesting observations to mparker19@cogeco.ca).

Book Review: The Sound of a Wild Snail Eating by Elisabeth Tova Bailey

Submitted by Marilyn Freeman

During a vacation in the Alps, a virulent flu sweeps the small town and the 34-year-old author gets felled with a bizarre virus that completely incapacitates her. Against all odds she barely makes it back to the US where all she can do is breathe. It's not Lyme, it's not fibromyalgia but it is changing her mitochondria, making her so weak she can't move.

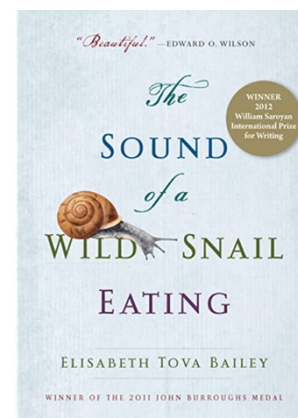
While bed-bound and convalescing, a friend brings her a flower pot filled with some earth, some field violets and a snail. That small snail becomes the world to Elisabeth Bailey. Because all she can do is observe, she discovers the world of snaildom through rapt attention and, when feeling up to it, research about gastropods.

After having the snail transferred to a woodland terrarium built in a fish tank, she combines close observation with well researched science and even philosophy. The reader learns, among other things, that snails have around 2,640 teeth arranged in rows of 33 backward pointing teeth in about 80 rows like a rasp. In a snail, this arrangement is called a radula. As the front row of teeth wears down, a fresh row is added at the back and gradually the radula moves forward over a period of 4 to 6 weeks. As Bailey says, "With only thirty-two adult teeth, which had to last the rest of my life, I found myself experiencing tooth envy toward my gastropod companion."

And then there is snail mucus. Snails secrete a special kind of mucus for locomotion called pedal mucus. They basically create their own kind of carpet that allows them to travel with wave-like contractions over any surface, even over a knife-edged one. Pedal mucus is incredibly adhesive, which is why snails can travel upside down.

It also seems that snails are capable of group action that suggests communication and intelligence. To this end they can combine their strength and skills to effect an escape from a box, for example, before becoming escargot!

During summer months when it becomes too dry or hot or if food supplies are limited, the snail will go into a kind of dormancy called estivation. The snail will seal up its door, an epiphragm, with a different kind of



mucus. This state can last for as long as it needs to last. Bailey wishes she could go into an estivated state and wait until science has caught up with a cure for her disease.

Snails are hermaphroditic. They can decide whether to be male or female when mating time comes around. Snail mating can take up to 7 hours involving 3 phases. First there is a lengthy courtship. Then, if they like each other, they embrace in a spiral direction and mate. Most bizarrely, they can also shoot “love darts” comprised of calcium carbonate with a harpoon shape that transmit slime with special pheromones that may improve the storage of the partner’s sperm.

While this book has much surprising information, the beauty is in the writing. This is a journey of survival and resilience. It shows the reader “how a small part of the natural world illuminates our own human existence and provides an appreciation of what it means to be fully alive.” This book is a small gem and would make a wonderful gift to anyone interested in the natural world.

Peterborough Library: 594.38

ISBN: 978-1-56512-606-0

El Rosario Sanctuary – A Monarch Butterfly Experience

Submitted by Lynn Smith

My husband, Larry, and I spent a week in March with friends who had recently settled in their new home in Chapala, Mexico. One of our many adventures that week was a trip to El Rosario Monarch Sanctuary, definitely on my bucket list!

We booked a hotel in the historic city of Morelia. This was our jumping off point to the monarchs. When we arrived at the hotel, the staff at the information desk gave us many reasons why we shouldn’t drive ourselves to the Monarch Sanctuary. It would be a long three hour drive, some poor roads, not well marked, we didn’t speak Spanish and the price to hire a guide was very reasonable.

The next morning our driver & guide, Raymond, met us at the hotel and we piled into his car. We were getting a *private* tour for the day. Immediately, we knew we had made the correct decision to have an experienced driver lead us on this adventure. As he drove, Raymond regaled us with Mexican history, stories, advice, news and trivia. Raymond knew the stops for snacks, shortcuts and how to best manoeuvre our way to the site.

Finally, we arrived at the El Rosario Monarch Sanctuary, situated in the Sierra Madre Mountains in the state of Michoacán. This spot was like a mini town with a huge parking lot, places to eat and many vendors selling their goods and souvenirs. It was also the place to start the climb with a designated Sanctuary Guide to the final 3500 metre altitude where the butterflies were located. A Sanctuary Guide provides information and directs tourists to ensure that they keep to the trails and respect the area. We had decided to ride horses up the steep climb so Raymond communicated that to our guide. Our guide would meet us further up the mountain.

The horseback ride up the steep incline was an experience in itself. Each rider had a guide who walked behind but held a long rope attached to the bridle to control and direct the horse. At times the guide pushed the horse into a trot and he ran behind, in the high altitude, over steep, rough and eroded terrain. I was more than a little impressed. However, one safety issue presented itself very glaringly, as at times, we encountered guides cantering their horses back down the same steep, rough, eroded hill that we were going



El Rosario Monarch Sanctuary. Photo: Lynn Smith

up. I did experience a momentary feeling that “my life passed before me” as my horse wanted to move in front of the oncoming horses, greet them and then turn to join them going down the hill. Amazingly, it was only a close call. My guide was smiling like, “Was there a problem? There was never a problem.” I had already decided that I was walking down the mountain :-)

Once we dismounted, Raymond found our sanctuary guide. Raymond was indispensable for interpreting instructions and relaying information as our guide spoke Spanish only.



Butterflies everywhere!
Photo: Lynn Smith

We then made our way to the butterflies. It was a surreal, unforgettable experience. The day was warm, sunny and thousands upon thousands of butterflies were flitting here and there in the meadow on the edge of the forest. We walked into the forest of oyamel firs and were greeted with huge clusters of butterflies attached to the branches and many more butterflies flying about. Also, many dead butterflies were scattered on the ground. We learned that it was mating season and once mating is done, the male dies. The female will start her migration north. We spent about 1 ½ hours enjoying the mystic scene. We were reluctant to leave, but more tourists were in line to also have their turn.

We had a leisurely walk back down the mountain. Our sanctuary guide helped me with some plant identification. To complete our trip, we had a Mexican lunch, bought souvenirs and headed back to Morelia.

A trip to El Rosario Monarch Butterfly Sanctuary in March is a magical experience as millions of overwintering monarchs reawaken from hibernation, mate and begin their trek north to the United States and into southern Canada. By August/September and 3 to 4 generations later, the great or great-great grandchildren of these butterflies begin a 5000 km migration south. By late October/November over 90% of the monarch population east of the Rockies funnels down to the oyamel fir forests of Mexico.

In 1986, the Mexican government created a Monarch Butterfly Biosphere Reserve and in 2008 it was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site with boundaries including 56,289 hectares. The reserve extends from the mountainous forests of eastern Michoacán to western Mexico State 100 km northwest of Mexico City. Within this biosphere there are only about 12 places where the monarchs cluster into colonies and spend 5 months of the winter. El Rosario Sanctuary contains one of these colonies.

Monarchs prefer the oyamel fir forests. Oyamel firs grow at high altitudes between 2400 and 3600 meters where a moist and cool environment exists, even during Mexico's hot dry season. Butterflies cluster vertically around the 12 m height within the crown of the tree. This provides a unique microclimate of consistent temperature and humidity with protection from wind, rain, freezing and hot temperatures. Over the 4 to 5 months that they hibernate, their energy reserves are preserved until the spring migration. There is no doubt that the oyamel fir ecosystem is vital for the survival of the monarch butterfly population.

The population size of the Monarchs is estimated by measuring the area that the clustering butterflies inhabit. In 2020, eleven colonies were located which occupied 2.83 hectares, a 53% decrease from the previous season (6.05 ha) and a decrease of 80% over the last few decades.

Monarchs are negatively impacted by the degradation and loss of their habitat, pesticides, climate change, vehicular collisions, invasive species, predators and disease.

There is collaboration between various partners in Canada, United States and Mexico to mitigate some of these impacts. The survival of the monarch will depend on the success of these mitigations and the resilience of this important icon.

It was an honour to experience the Monarchs at the El Rosario Sanctuary. It's hard to come up with all the appropriate adjectives to describe it. You'll have to take a trip there!

From the Archives: Burnham Woods & PFN

Nature Notes, October 1955

Parks Committee to Meet Re: Burnham Memorial Park

The members of the Parks Committee of the Nature Club have been invited to meet with the Officials of the Dept. of Lands & Forests of Ontario to discuss the future development & management of this proposed new Burnham Memorial Park. It is expected that this meeting will take place within the next week or ten days.

Nature Notes, May 1956

Burnham's Woods to Become Provincial Park

We are delighted to read that Burnham's Woods, 1 mile east of the city on Highway #7, is to be developed as a Provincial Park under the able management of the Dept. of Lands & Forest of Ontario. We are proud to have Mrs. Burnham and her sister Miss A. Erskine as very interested members of the Peterborough Nature Club [now Peterborough Field Naturalists].

This far-sighted and generous offer of their property for the enjoyment and edification of future citizens of our community in this wonder is deserving of our full appreciation. We sincerely hope and trust that this excellent woodland area, 100 acres in extent, will be so developed & managed by the Dept. as to preserve the many forms of [plants and] wildlife which live therein.

Burnham Woods Today

By Sue Paradisis

One of the most difficult aspects of dealing with COVID-19 for me is not being able to go to my beloved Burnham Woods, especially this time of year when the spring ephemerals are poking their heads up from the forest floor. For a long time, it has been my go-to place to unwind, relax and be at peace. I have become more familiar with its features, inhabitants, and character through the seasons over the last few years. Much like those of you who return to your cottages every year, I have gotten to know this place well. Burnham has become very special to me.

I came across Mike Henry and Peter Quinby's book *Ontario's Old-Growth Forests* purely by accident and found the section describing Mark S. Burnham Provincial Park very interesting. I bought the book and have since read it many times thus learning the many characteristics of old growth that are found in Burnham. According to Henry and Quinby, there are maples and hemlocks in the park between 200 and 460 years old. My two favourite trees are a White Ash and a Yellow Birch, both the largest of the species I have ever found. Both show all the characteristics of very old trees: big buttresses at the base, gnarled canopies, mossy bases, very tall and bark that has changed after reaching 100 years old. Entering the cathedral grove of old hemlocks down in the valley is like a religious experience for me. I sit on the bench, breathe in the scent of the forest, look to the canopy and marvel at the age of the trees around me.

In recent years I have become more and more interested in plants. Five years ago, as part of the 75th anniversary of the PFN, Mike McMurtry and Roger Jones led a wildflower walk through Burnham Woods when spring ephemerals were at their peak. That set me off on a mission to really learn my plants. There is a great variety throughout the year, but May is spectacular. The nice thing about the flowers is they will be in



Very old and large White Ash being measured by Carling Dewar of Ancient Forest Explorations and Research. Photo: Sue Paradisis

the same place year after year. This is the time when I like to visit a couple of times a week as each visit brings different flowers blooming as spring progresses.

Last fall, we were fortunate to have Susan Chow and Radek Odolczyk lead a group of PFN members to the park to learn about some of the many fungi found there. Old growth forests generally have a great variety of mushrooms and Burnham Woods is no exception. Lots of species were found along with Eastern Garter Snakes, two varieties of salamanders, a toad and three varieties of frogs. It was a beautiful warm sunny October day and the park was magnificent in its fall colours.



Red Trillium. Photo: Sue Paradisis



Very old and large Yellow Birch. Photo: Sue Paradisis

Over the years, I have been privileged to meet some of the wildlife who call the park home. For a long time, a porcupine lived in the hollow base of an old snag right beside the path. Eventually the dead tree toppled to the ground and the poor guy had to move. His new home was in a hole high in a tree but with the mound of scat at the base it was easy to find. The top of that old trunk also snapped, and I do not know where the animal lives now.

Adding to the memories of my many visits have been sleeping raccoons in trees, a silent Barred Owl, Ruffed Grouse high in the branches of a tree and frequent encounters with Pileated Woodpeckers.

I often think about the Burnham family with gratitude for their great foresight in leaving their woodlot intact. That the descendants that donated the forest were members of PFN is not surprising. They obviously shared our love of the natural world and I am thankful for their generosity.

While every visit is different, what is always the same is the tranquility and timelessness of such a magnificent little forest. I always leave feeling more content than when I arrived.

Note: On April 25, the Government of Ontario and Ontario Parks announced that the closure of all Ontario parks has been extended until May 31. This includes day-use parks.

The Peterborough Field Naturalists are celebrating their 80th anniversary this year. The lapel pin shown here has been produced in honour of this momentous occasion. They are being sold for the reasonable cost of \$5 each, and will be available at our next monthly meeting - whenever that may be!



A Fairy (Shrimp) Tale

When scanning the leaf litter in this vernal pool, your eyes investigated
Waves of motion on my thorax, and stalked, dark compound eyes.
Observing more closely the rhythmic flow of my phyllopodia,
You discern my slowly moving body - now, I have you captivated.

I'm the most primitive, strange but graceful crustacean you've ever seen.
You'll find my kind in depressions filled with meltwater and rain.
We need freshwater almost devoid of impurities and predators like fish.
We are somewhat safe living here, but that's not always the way it's been.

For over five hundred million years we fairy shrimp lived in the sea.
Then our nemesis, the fish, arose, forcing us into short-term freshwater.
We still face various predators - small fish, salamanders and insects,
But living in a fast-drying pond helps keep us somewhat predator-free.

We mate in late winter or early spring; some eggs begin to grow.
Others sink into the sediments, become cysts, and future breeding stock.
In years when a dry spring's pools may not last long enough,
This is Nature's insurance to compensate when that year's crop is low.

Those same gracefully flowing swimming legs transfer food to my bill
After filtering tiny particles of bacteria, spores, and detritus.
I carry my precious eggs in paired brood pouches to be fertilized
While Male's trunk-like second set of antennae hold me still.

~Female Fairy Shrimp Storyteller via Murray Arthur Palmer, 2019



Photo: Murray Palmer

Fairy Shrimp Meets Photographer

Hey! C'mon, where did my world go?
Branches above and leaf litter below!
Suddenly scooped up, poured into a white basin;
Everything just vanished, set my nerves racin'.
Monster looms over me; something held to its face
Moves up and down if I stay in one place.
Now we're eye to eye, pond fairy and ogre,
But my rhythmic paddling has won it over.
Looks nothing like a fish, our archenemy -
Forced us to vernal pools from ancient homes at sea.
Here our larvae survive as cysts in pond sediments
Through dry, hot and cold seasons' impediments
To become breeders after our ponds fill anew.
Let our 500 million years as water fairies continue!
Some cysts remain buried to develop much later;
Nature gave us this reserve stock regulator.
We're filter feeders of algae, plankton, detritus ...
Our ten pairs of swimming feet relay this to us.
Now your time's up; put us back in our pool!
To desecrate our living beauty would be cruel.

Murray Arthur Palmer, 2019



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 or phone 705-745-4750

Migration continued and the warmer weather encouraged exploration of the natural world. The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in solitary isolation but naturalists still discovered things. The decline in human activity resulted in some interesting observations in the City.	
Mar. 21	A male Northern Shoveler was located at the Briar Hill Bird Sanctuary by Steve Paul & Laurie Healey and seen by many until March 23.
Mar. 23	Phil Shaw reported hearing the American Woodcocks in the Marsdale area this evening. Courtship flights occurred nightly for the balance of the week.
Mar. 24	Dave Milsom had a Cackling Goose on the Briar Hill Bird Sanctuary Pond. A Common Loon was found on Little Lake initially by David Britton and reported by multiple observers for the next week.
Mar. 25	Andrew Brown & Olivia Mallet had a Cackling Goose on the river between Lock 22&24. Warren Dunlop had 5 Tundra Swans on the Blind Channel, northern Pigeon Lake.
Mar. 26	A Red-breasted Merganser was on Little Lake, reported by David Britton. Luke Berg had an Eastern Phoebe on the Ingleton-Wells trails on the north shore of Stoney Lake.
Mar. 27	Rene Gareau walked the Lang-Hastings Trail from Cameron Line with highlights being 2 Turkey Vultures , 1 adult Bald Eagle , and a Ruffed Grouse drumming. David Britton had 1 Double-crested Cormorant on Little Lake. John Davey had an American Coot on Rice Lake off 5 th Line of Asphodel. Luke Berg had a Rough-legged Hawk fly over the Parkhill Rd - George Street area and 4 Gadwall within the rafts of ducks off Hall's Landing. Donald Sutherland had a Wilson's Snipe along the Centre Line of Smith.
Mar. 28	Scott Gibson reported an Osprey was sitting on the nesting platform along Cty Road 2 west of Keene. By the end of the period, birds have been seen on many of the platforms along County Road 2. In the area of the Kawartha Nordic Trails, Ben Taylor observed an orange & black butterfly (probably a Compton's Tortoiseshell). A Fox Sparrow visited the feeders of Mike V.A. Burrell east of the City -- many reports during the month of April. Natasha Carr observed a Mink in her yard in the Parkwood Circle area.
Mar. 29	Matthew Tobey observed a Mourning Cloak (butterfly) in the SW section of the City.
Mar. 30	Dorothy McCord had an American Woodcock visit her yard in the Westmount area. A late Glaucous Gull was in the field with other gulls opposite Pinecrest Golf Course by Martin Parker. Luke Berg & others found 3 Short-eared Owls along the Lang-Hastings Trail between Redmond & Drummond.
Mar. 31	Dorothy McCord had an Eastern Towhee in her yard. David Britton found a Horned Grebe on Little Lake - seen by many others. Scott McKinlay had a Bonaparte's Gull off Pengelly Point, Rice Lake. One or more present in area throughout the period. Luke Berg had a Blue-winged Teal on a meltwater pond along Baseline Road.

Apr. 1	Marilyn Freeman was biking along the Providence Lane north of Hwy 7 and heard Spring Peepers calling. The Coltsfoot was also in bloom. She also had 3 orange & black butterflies. Over her backyard, Marilyn had a kettle of 21 Turkey Vultures and a resident Merlin . Martin Parker observed many small bees feasting on the early flowers in his garden. Sarah McGuire had a Yellow-rumped Warbler along the Lang-Hastings Trail. Iain Rayner had a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker in his yard near Lakefield.
Apr. 2	Rene Gareau visited the Cavan Swamp observing 14 species of birds including 8 Wood Ducks and 1 Belted Kingfisher . Keegan McKitterick reported a single Spring Peeper was calling north of Burleigh Falls. Ken McKeen photographed a Morning Cloak in the Buckhorn area. Barbara Saunders reported a friend observed a Mourning Cloak in the Woodview area. Marilyn Hubley reported that Spring Peepers are calling in the Edgewood Park area off Mount Pleasant Road. Sue Paradisis reported that both Spring Peepers & Western Chorus Frogs were calling in the wetlands at the intersection of Woodland Drive and Cty Road 28 on the Trent U. Campus. There was probably a Leopard Frog calling as well. Sue Paradisis also observed a Painted Turtle basking in a pond at Griffin's Greenhouse. Phil Shaw heard Spring Peepers calling in the Marsdale area, east side of the City. Bill Crins heard Spring Peepers calling off Redmond Rd at Lang-Hastings Trail. Cathy Douglas had 3 Cackling Geese on the pond along Johnston Drive. Andrew Brown had 1 Swamp Sparrow in the Keene area.
Apr. 3	Along the Lang-Hastings Trail from Cameron Line, Linda Sunderland observed a Mourning Cloak , Compton's Tortoiseshell and another smaller butterfly. Basil Conlin reported that along the trail from the Nassau Mills Parking Lot north to the Promise Rock (Trent U.), Spring Peepers , Western Chorus Frogs , Leopard Frogs , and Wood Frogs were calling. He also observed at least 15 Blue-spotted Salamanders .
Apr. 4	Marilyn Freeman heard Western Chorus Frogs calling from a vernal pond off the Centre Line of Smith. Ben Taylor reported Spring Peepers were calling at Pinecrest Golf Course. Sue Paradisis had a Yellow-rumped Warbler in her yard. At the Marsdale wetland, Sue Paradisis & Phil Shaw had Common Snipe & American Woodcock . Cathy Douglas had 5 Tundra Swans on Chemong Lake off Frank's Hill Road. Luke Berg had 2 Field Sparrows along Lang-Hastings Trail from Blezard to Cameron. Matthew Tobey had a Hermit Thrush off Airport Road. Jim Watts observed 12+ Turkey Vultures soaring north over Parkhill Rd at Chemong Rd.
Apr. 5	Scott Gibson had a Savannah Sparrow along Hannah Road. A Red-necked Grebe was located by Linda Sutherland west of Hastings. Pine Warbler was observed in the Catchacoma area by Tomas Tamblyn.
Apr. 7	Bruce Kidd reported that the Red-bellied Woodpecker which has been visiting his feeder in the Douro area since last fall has now been joined by a second individual, He noted Wilson's Snipe are calling in his fields Luke Berg had a Greater Yellowlegs in a flooded field off Blezard Line 3 Barn Swallows were seen at Wolf Island Prov. Park by Patrick Kramer Scott Kendall had a Chipping Sparrow in his yard in the City
Apr. 9	A Red-necked Grebe was seen on Thompson Bay of Trent Canal by Rebecca Taylor & Brody Crosby and later by others.
Apr. 10	Donald Sutherland had a Bonaparte's Gull off the Birdsall Wharf, Rice Lake.
Apr. 11	Bill Crins spotted a Carolina Wren in the Middlefield Road area of the City.

	Scott Gibson reported the first Brown Thrasher in the Norwood area. Carl Welbourn saw an Eastern Phoebe & 2 Sandhill Cranes at Hall's Landing.
Apr. 12	David Britton had a Red-necked Grebe and Great Black-backed Gull off Pengelly Point, Rice Lake. He also had a Vesper Sparrow along the Lang-Hastings Trail, Blezard area Chris Risley & Erica Nol had a Virginia Rail in the Fairburn Street wetland -- seen by many other observers regularly since. Dan Williams had a Caspian Tern in the Maria Street area.
Apr. 15	Mitch Brownstein had 22 Cedar Waxwings in his yard, feeding on Highbush Cranberries and few days earlier had an Eastern Towhee at the feeder. Mike Barker reported that there were thousands of Tree Swallows flying over the Lakefield Marsh and feeding on a large emergence of midges.
Apr. 17	Marie Duchesneau spotted 2 Caspian Terns on a rock off Auburn Reach Park.
	Yellow-crowned Night-Heron At 8 p.m. on April 17, Jalyynn Riches found a Yellow-crowned Night Heron off Preston Road, Cavan Swamp area. It was re-located by Matthew Tobey on the afternoon of April 18. Tobey notified the local birding community and this individual was seen by many. It is the first observation of this species in the County. See separate report and photos in this issue of The Orchid
Apr. 18	Both Sora and Virginia Rails were heard calling by many observers in the area of Preston Road by the people going to see the Night-Heron. A Broad-winged Hawk was observed in the Keene area by John Davey.
Apr. 19	On April 4, Kathryn Sheridan observed 3 Northern Ravens on the CHEX TV towers. On April 19, she rechecked the area and observed a Northern Raven fly up to a nest on one of the towers. Donald Sutherland had an American Bittern in Cavan Swamp of Preston Road.
Apr. 20	Sue Paradisis reported Western Chorus Frogs are still calling at Woodland & Cty Rd 28. At the Lakefield Marsh there were lots of Leopard Frogs calling, Carp were at the water's surface, and lots of Tree Swallows were feeding. Jeff Stewart had a Northern Goshawk in the Millbrook area. A Carolina Wren was observed on Gilmour Street by Chris Risley and in the Middlefield Road area by Bill Crins. A Lesser Yellowlegs was found in the Darling Wildlife area by Connor Thompson.
Apr. 23	Bonaparte's Gulls were reported on Rice Lake south of Keene by Dave Milsom and off Pengelly Landing by Paul Frost. John Davey had a House Wren along Lang-Hastings Trail at Blezard Line. Marty Obbard had a Redhead in the Buckhorn area.
Apr. 24	Marilyn Freeman saw and heard an American Bittern in a stream near the Chemong Road Sobey's.

Orchid submissions are encouraged!

The submission deadline for the next issue is Friday, May 22

Send submissions to Kathryn Sheridan via email: orchid@peterboroughnature.org

or post mail to: PFN, PO Box 1532, Peterborough ON K9J 7H7

Solo outing/sighting reports of up to 300 words would be appreciated for the next Orchid.



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Birding at Home Challenge

The Ontario Field Ornithologists is excited to announce OFO's Birding at Home Challenge!

This fun initiative will give you the opportunity to bird while doing your part by staying home during these extraordinary times. Birders of Ontario -- we want to help you discover the rewards of birding from your yard, balcony or even your window!

Staying close to home does not mean that you have to miss spring migration. While you may not be able to visit your usual hotspots this spring, you can take this opportunity to enjoy the birds around you. You might be surprised at how rewarding an experience it is. And, by recording your observations in eBird Canada you will be making an immense contribution to the understanding of birds in Ontario.

For more details, please visit: www.ofo.ca/birdingathome/content/birding-at-home-overview



Mnemonics in Bird Song

Submitted by Martin Parker

Spring is the season of bird song. Singing males enable one to determine which species are present. Distinguishing between songs allows one to quickly determine the range of species present in an area. Here are three tricks to remembering bird songs and calls:

1) Acoustic Analogy:

Rusty old pump ----- American Bittern

2) Translation:

English Canada ----- 'Oh, sweet Canada, Canada, Canada' ----- White-throated Sparrow

New England ----- 'Old Sam Peabody, Peabody, Peabody' ----- White-throated Sparrow

3) Species to Species Association:

Sounds like a robin with a sore throat. ----- Scarlet Tanager

Quiz: Identify the bird from the given hint.

- A Sounds like a small, toy horn. _____
- B 'Drink your teaeeee' _____
- C 'Sweet, sweet, sweet, sweeter than sweet'. _____
- D 'Teacher, teacher, teacher' _____
- E Sounds like a robin that has taken voice lessons. _____
- F 'Vee-ur, vee-ur, veer, veer' _____
- G Sounds like a glorified House Sparrow _____
- H 'Pleased, pleased, pleased to meet you.' _____
- I 'Here I am, Where are you? Here I am. I'm up here.' _____
- J Sounds like ping-pong ball bouncing on a table as it comes to a rest. _____

Quiz Answers

<i>Red-breasted Nuthatch</i>	<i>HN</i>
<i>Eastern Towhee</i>	<i>BB</i>
<i>Yellow Warbler</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Ovenbird</i>	<i>CB</i>
<i>Rose-breasted Grosbeak</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Veery</i>	<i>LT</i>
<i>Evening Grosbeak</i>	<i>BJ</i>
<i>Chestnut-sided Warbler</i>	<i>HN</i>
<i>Red-eyed Vireo</i>	<i>J</i>
<i>Field Sparrow</i>	<i>J</i>

Birds on Buckhorn Lake

Submitted by Enid Mallory

A strong current in Lower Buckhorn opens the water here while other Kawartha Lakes are held fast in ice. Early in April, migrants appear hungry from their flight and giddy with springtime, feeding in the shallows around the islands, flying in and out of the bays, bobbing in courtship displays. Groups of Hooded Mergansers making soft croaking conversation, rafts of Buffleheads, Common Mergansers elegant in pairs, Goldeneyes lifting off with whistling wings. Dressed in their brightest designs, they are a springtime gift to birders and photographers and, especially this year, an exuberant symbol of normal, natural life.



From left: Male Goldeneye performing courtship display, a pair of Common Mergansers, and a male Ring-necked Duck. Photos: Enid Mallory

A Special Visit to the ROM

The call went out last month via The Orchid and Facebook asking members to write in about their personal outings since we can't have group outings for the time being. One response was from PFN member, Maxwell Matchim. Maxwell has volunteered at the Royal Ontario Museum teaching kids and other members of the public in the Hands-on Biodiversity Galleries. Earlier this year he toured the ornithology collection with Mark Peck, and got to see a wonderful variety of materials, including a Rose-breasted Grosbeak collected by John James Audubon, and a number of extinct taxa including Ivory-billed Woodpecker, Northern Curlew, Passenger Pigeon, Great Auk, Heath Hen, and Carolina Parakeet.



From left: Maxwell holding an Ivory-billed Woodpecker, Black-throated Green Warbler study skins, Passenger Pigeon, and Northern Curlew at the ROM. Photos: Maxwell Matchim

Membership Application Form

Memberships may be obtained by mailing this completed form to:

Peterborough Field Naturalists
PO Box 1532
Peterborough Ontario K9J 7H7



PETERBOROUGH FIELD NATURALISTS

Contact Information:

Name(s):

Phone(s):

Address:

Email(s):

I would like to receive The Orchid by (Pick One): ☐ Mail Delivery ☐ E-Mail ☐ Both

Membership type and fee schedule:

Notice: Membership fees provide only a small part of the funds required to operate the Peterborough Field Naturalists. Donations from members like you help us offer a diverse range of programming for everyone. Please consider including a donation with your membership so that we can continue to serve you and the Peterborough community. **Please make cheques payable to Peterborough Field Naturalists.**

I have included a donation with my membership fees:
☐ Yes or ☐ No

If Yes amount:

\$ _____

1. Single Adult \$25 ☐ 2. Single Student \$15 ☐ 3. Single Child (5 – 12) \$10 ☐ 4. Family \$30* ☐

***Please give the names and ages of children wishing to enroll in the Junior Field Naturalists:**

Name:	Age:	Name:	Age:

◀◀ New Member Information ▶▶

Main interests:

- ☐ Natural Environment ☐ Reptiles and Amphibians ☐ Botany
☐ Birds ☐ Aquatic Life ☐ Geology
☐ Insects ☐ Astronomy ☐ Mammals
 Other: _____

How do you hope to participate:

- ☐ Outings
☐ Citizen Science
☐ Meetings
☐ Junior Naturalists

Volunteers are always needed. Do you have interest in any of these activities:

- ☐ Join the PFN board ☐ Sit on research or conservation committees ☐ Help with the Orchid publication
☐ Assist with meetings ☐ Work on field projects ☐ Lead an outing
☐ Help the Junior Naturalists ☐ Give a presentation

Liability Waiver (New and Returning Members):

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 my underage children

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____