

The Orchid



December 2020

Volume 66, No. 9

peterboroughnature.org

Bulletin of the Peterborough Field Naturalists

Published nine times yearly. Publication Mail Agreement #4005104

Know • Appreciate • Conserve Nature in All Its Forms



Virginia Creeper's autumn colour change reminds us that Christmas is around the corner.

Photo by Joanne Sutherland

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Welcome new PFN members!

- Marg MacLean





From top: Ladies dinner club: a Pileated Woodpecker and a Downy Woodpecker (Jim Cashmore); an Ermine in winter plumage near Buckhorn on Nov. 5 (Ken McKeen); and a nesting Ruffed Grouse (Enid Mallory).

About the Ruffed Grouse, Enid wrote: "This ruffed grouse made her nest on the edge of a cottage construction site. For weeks she sat there like Horton in the Dr. Suess book enduring the noise of hammers and saws and the roar and rumble of trucks and machinery. We were hoping to see baby chicks but at the end of June we arrived to find the nest empty, not even a bit of eggshell left. We don't know if the chicks hatched and scattered or if a predator took everything."



PFN Coming Events

Due to COVID-19, participation in PFN outings is limited to members and preregistration is necessary. Numbers are limited for the safety of leaders and participants. Physical distancing is required and masks are recommended.

<p>Thursday, Dec. 3 7 p.m. Virtual meeting on Zoom Invitations e-mailed to members</p>	<p>Monthly Meeting: Members' Slideshow Night</p> <p>We are excited to announce that this year, despite the circumstances, we will continue the tradition of hosting a members' slideshow night. And as with our members' meetings, this too will be held over Zoom. Our members' night is currently scheduled for Thursday December 3rd at 7 pm. If you are interested in participating, please contact Reem Ali at reemest@hotmail.com. Reem will then email you with further details about preparing your slideshow and will schedule a test-run via Zoom with each participant closer to the day of the event. She will also provide you with logistical support during members' night. Please note that you will need to have your slideshow prepared and ready by November 23 in order to allow for enough time to schedule test-runs with all of the participants. We look forward to your participation and submissions and hope that you'll be able to join us then.</p> 
<p>Saturday Dec. 5</p>	<p>World's Greatest Concentration of Gulls</p> <p>Cancelled due to COVID-19 levels in areas being visited.</p>
<p>Sunday, Dec. 13 10 a.m. - noon 10 participants</p>	<p>Petroglyphs Walk</p> <p>Since the park is closed at this time of year, we will be hiking into the park along the main access road from Northey's Bay Road. We will be looking for winter birds and wildlife as we hike along the access road. Social distancing should be easy as the access road is wide. The outing will last 1.5 to 2 hours.</p> <p>Register in advance by contacting Cathy at cddouglas77@gmail.com</p> <p>Accessibility: Easy to moderate depending on snow or ice conditions</p>
<p>Sunday, Dec. 20</p>	<p>69th Annual Peterborough Christmas Bird Count</p> <p>Please see article on page 14 for more information.</p>
<p>Sunday, Jan. 3 8 to 10 a.m. 6 participants</p>	<p>Winter Birds Around Little Lake</p> <p>Join Scott McKinlay and explore a few spots along the shores of Little Lake and the Otonabee River for winter birds such as gulls and waterfowl. Contact Scott at smckinlay59@yahoo.ca to register. More details will be provided closer to the outing date.</p> <p>Accessibility: Easy</p> 

PFN Coming Events	
<p>Wednesday, Jan. 13 7:30 p.m. Virtual meeting on Zoom Invitations e-mailed to members</p>	<p>Monthly Meeting: New Discoveries in Songbird Migration</p> <p>Guest speaker: Dr. Bridget Stutchbury, professor of biology and Canada Research Chair in Ecology and Conservation Biology at York University. She is also the author of the book "Silence of the Songbirds."</p> <p>Each fall, billions of songbirds leave Canada on an epic journey to their far-away wintering grounds in Central and South America where many live in tropical forests shared by toucans, howler monkeys, and jaguars. Dozens of species have experienced serious, long-term population declines that are driven in part by the threats that these birds face on migration and while in the tropics. But only recently has it been possible to track the migration of individual songbirds over part, or all, of their migration journey. Bridget Stutchbury, will talk about her research on uncovering the mysteries of songbird migration behaviour, and what this tells about the threats they face during their travels.</p>
<p>Wednesday, Feb. 10 Zoom meeting</p>	<p>Monthly Meeting</p> <p>Guest speaker: TBA</p>
<p>Wednesday, Mar. 3 7:30 p.m. Virtual meeting on Zoom Invitations e-mailed to members</p>	<p>PFN Annual General Meeting</p> <p>The meeting will consist of an update on PFN business and the election of the next PFN executive board members.</p> <p>Note: The AGM is being held later this year to allow time for PFN year-end reports to be circulated to all members. There will be no guest speaker, and no bucket draw or silent auction due to COVID-19 restrictions.</p>

President's Message

At this time last year, none of us could have foreseen the events that unfolded in 2020. At the PFN, we've had to adapt to the many challenges posed by COVID-19. I want to thank the members of our Board of Directors and all of our dedicated volunteers for helping the PFN to adapt to the challenges our club has faced. Our members' meetings via the Zoom platform with many interesting guest speakers have been very well received. We have managed to have a number of successful nature outings under new protocols. And more than ever, our Orchid newsletter has continued to provide an important lifeline to all of us. I also want to thank all of you, our loyal members, for your ongoing support and your appreciation of nature. Together, we will continue to "Know, Appreciate and Conserve Nature in all its Forms."

~Rene Gareau, President



Orchid submissions are encouraged!

The submission deadline for the next issue is Friday, December 25
Send submissions to Kathryn Sheridan via email: orchid@peterboroughnature.org
or post mail to: PFN, PO Box 1532, Peterborough ON K9J 7H7



Request for Volunteers and Board Members

Submitted by Lynn Smith



Please read completely as you may have the skills that are needed for your PFN Board to move forward into 2021 with productive efficiency!

Computer Skills

In 2020, the Board continued with its digital updating. We're working towards continued improvements of the website, including the opportunity for online membership payments, donations, data forms and working with the charity CanadaHelps. As well, our Club meetings are through the platform, Zoom. However, with that comes the need for assistance from those who are skilled in these computer areas.

Are you that person and could you spare some of your time and expertise?

Fundraising

The Board made some tough decisions around COVID-19 (as we all have). The number of outings and respective participants was reduced, club meetings and speakers are now being delivered through Zoom, and the 2020 membership payment has been extended to include 2021. Traditional means of fundraising have been cancelled.

The Board anticipates that assistance will be needed from someone with a passion and talent for fundraising and marketing COVID-style! Ideas might include perhaps organizing and hosting a virtual fundraising event, online auction, virtual walk/run with pledges... Put your fundraising creative juices to work!

Are you that person and could you spare some of your time and expertise?

Three Vacancies for the Board

The PFN Board of Directors is looking for nominations to fill three vacancies. The term of service is three years. Skills that would benefit the Board and help shape the future of the PFN include:

- Contributing to areas of governance & policy
- Advocating where needed
- Computer or fundraising skills as mentioned above.

Should you have any questions or need further details, we encourage you to contact:

- Ted Vale tedandmarion@sympatico.ca
- Reem Ali reemest@hotmail.com
- Lynn Smith smithfam@nexicom.net

Interpretive Signage at Alderville Black Oak Savanna

Submitted by Jacey Moore

The Interpretive Garden at the Black Oak Savanna will have more comprehensive interpretive signage with a Tour Guide featuring the Anishinaabe, English and Latin names for the native species featured in the garden beds. With gracious support from the Peterborough Field Naturalists, the team was able to offer an honorarium to local elders who assisted with the translation process. With these translations we will be able to offer an inclusive educational opportunity for Ojibway language speakers and English speakers. Being located on a First Nation, it is critical for the local language to be featured and included on all outreach materials.

Christmas Gift Ideas

PFN Club Logo

Mark's Work Wearhouse at 1230 Lansdown Street West has the PFN Club logo ready and waiting to be embroidered on any piece of clothing of your choice: perhaps a t-shirt, hoodie or hat.

- Choose a piece of clothing
- Take it to the desk at the back of the store.
- Tell the clerk that you would like to have the Peterborough Field Naturalists' logo embroidered on it.
- You will receive 10% off the cost of the clothing (probably some exceptions here)
- The cost to embroider is \$5.75. You or that special someone will become one of the elite "Peterborough Field Naturalists logo-wearing club members". It doesn't get much better than that!

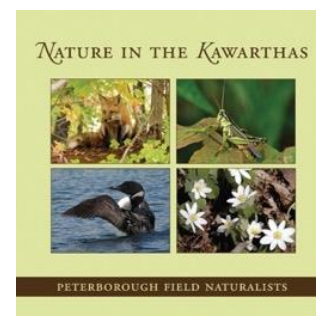


Nature in the Kawarthas

If you are looking for a Christmas gift which is unique to this part of the province, consider giving a copy of the Peterborough Field Naturalists' book *Nature in the Kawarthas*, published in 2011. It contains articles on the landforms, plants and animals of the Peterborough region written by members of the PFN. It is illustrated with outstanding photos from local photographers.

The following merchants in Peterborough stock the book for sale:

- Avant-Garden Shop, 165 Sherbrook Street
- Green-Up Store, 378 Aylmer Street



PFN 80th Anniversary Pin

The special pin, produced to celebrate the 80th anniversary of our organization, is still available for purchase.

If you wish to order a book or pin(s) please contact Cathy Douglas, PFN Sales Coordinator at cddouglas77@gmail.com

These two items would normally be available at meetings of the club but regular in-person meetings are not being held due to the current pandemic.



Update on PFN Legacy Fund and Projects

The PFN Legacy Fund (Fund) is an endowment fund of the Peterborough Field Naturalists managed by the Community Foundation of Greater Peterborough. The Fund was established through the bequest received from the late Rhea Bringeman. The Fund provides an annual grant to the PFN which the Board has been using for special projects. This year the grant received from the Fund was \$2,230.

This grant was utilized by the Board to fund the following projects in 2020:

1. The fees payable to the North American Butterfly Association for the participants of the Petroglyphs Butterfly Count and Fenelon Falls Butterfly Count.

2. Grant to the Peterborough Regional Science Fair. Normally this is for the four PFN awards for the top nature/wildlife/environment/projects at the Elementary and Junior level. Due to COVID-19, there was no Science Fair; however, the Board gave the grant in order to ensure the science fair continues in future years.
3. Two PFN research grants to fourth-year students at Trent University for work on their thesis projects: Electrofishing Study and Cytokins in Insects (i.e., how they create galls)
4. The balance of the funds was allocated towards the contribution of the PFN to the Nature Conservancy of Canada for the purchase of the Cedarhurst Alvar and the Kawartha Land Trust for the purchase of the Christie Bentham Wetland on Clear Lake.

Contributions to the PFN Legacy Fund

The PFN Legacy Fund is intended to provide an annual source of income to the PFN for the funding of special projects. The Fund is an endowed fund and, in accordance with federal tax regulations, the principal cannot be withdrawn but at least 3.5% of the value of the Fund is granted to the PFN annually to be used as the PFN Board determines. The funds for the past six years were used for special projects and initiatives.

Contributions and bequests to the PFN Legacy Fund will grow the capital in the fund and the resulting annual grant will support the objectives of the PFN into the future. Your contribution or bequest will be your continuing legacy to the PFN. All donations are tax deductible.

Donations to the PFN Legacy Fund can be made through the Community Foundation of Greater Peterborough at <https://cfgp.ca/project/peterborough-field-naturalists-legacy-fund/>

Outing Report for November 7: KLT Christie Bentham Property Tour

Submitted by Rene Gareau

On Saturday, November 7, eleven PFN members participated in an outing to the Clear Lake North Wetland property along with Patricia Wilson of Kawartha Land Trust (KLT) acting as our guide. It was a glorious day - unusually sunny and mild for mid-November - so it turned out to be an ideal day for our PFN outing.

The property, to be known as the Christie Bentham Wetland, is easily accessed from Kawartha Park Road off Highway 28 between Burleigh Falls and Young's Point. It's a very lovely spot with a rare undisturbed shoreline along Clear Lake. It has a Provincially Significant Wetland, a forest with lots of trails, vernal pools and interesting limestone ridges. It is also considered an important part of the Kawarthas Naturally Connected preferred scenario linking the Burleigh Falls area to Young's Point.

Due to its significance, KLT began an ambitious fundraising campaign in October to raise \$750,000 by November 20 to acquire the property and an additional \$250,000 for costs involved with the purchase and for stewardship. At the PFN, we recognize and appreciate the great work done by KLT to protect our natural areas, so we were pleased to present KLT with a cheque for \$1,000 toward the purchase of this property. On November 22, KLT announced that the fundraising campaign was successful, and the



PFN President, Rene Gareau, presenting cheque to Patricia Wilson, KLT Community Conservation Coordinator. Photo: Marilyn Hubley

purchase of the property has been completed. Fundraising continues for the stewardship fund should members wish to contribute.

Outing Report for November 21: Escape to the Forest – in the City

Submitted by Anda Rungis

On the afternoon of November 21, Sue Paradisis led a PFN outing of six participants to the Fleming College forest located at the south-east end of the Sutherland Campus in Peterborough. The focus of this outing was native plant identification and adding to the list of four bird species observed on the previous week's PFN visit to this natural area. With the tree leaves on the ground, the group considered the 3 Bs - branching, bark and buds - to identify the trees that were found in the forested network of trails. Among the many tree species, we took close looks at two species in the forest understory which both often share the common name "Ironwood." The distinguishing feature of Ironwood (*Ostrya virginiana*) is its plated, shaggy bark. This tree is also called Hop Hornbeam and is the hardest wood of any native tree species in Ontario. Blue Beech (*Carpinus caroliniana*), also called American Hornbeam, has smooth, hard bark and has a strongly ridged, sinewy appearance, resembling flexed muscle. It is said that pioneers used its wood to make bowls and plates. Focussed on looking at tree bark, we also couldn't help but notice the cankers on the trunks of the beech trees affected by beech bark disease. Native beech (*Fagus grandifolia*) trees in southern Ontario are attacked first by a beech scale insect burrowing into the tree and then further stressed by a canker fungus which eventually kills the tree.



This plant is a Snakeskin Liverwort or Snakewort. Found growing on the banks of the stream at Fleming, it is a non-vascular plant similar to mosses. Photo: Sue Paradisis



Red-eyed Vireo nest with a broken egg. Photo: Sue Paradisis

Along the section of trail that followed a small watercourse, Sue pointed out horsetail and dwarf scouring rush. These plants are found in mesic (reliably moist) habitats and are impregnated with silica. In days gone by, these native plants were very useful in cleaning and functioned as nature's "sandpaper." Throughout the forest, we identified other vascular plants still in green foliage including Sharp-lobed hepatica, Spinulose wood fern, and the lush fronds of the Christmas fern. Non-vascular plants observed included a species of liverwort, known as Snakewort.

At the crossroads of the forest and pasture loops of the trail network, the group heard a Pileated Woodpecker call and observed its distinctive silhouette as it flew through the canopy high above us. Here we also spotted a Hairy Woodpecker, which Cathy Douglas promptly added to the recorded observations of White-breasted nuthatch, Black-capped chickadee, Blue Jay and American Crow in eBird.

This outing was an excellent demonstration of how - with a smart phone and apps such as Seek, iNaturalist and eBird - it is possible to build knowledge in plant and bird identification without lugging around numerous, heavy field guides. Big thanks to Sue, for sharing her learning strategy and for introducing the group to another natural space in Peterborough. It was a wonderful walk in the woods.

Outing Report for November 22: Wave Riders of Rice Lake

Submitted by Martin Parker

The "Wave Riders" were on the waters of Rice Lake off Pengelly Point -- unfortunately there were more snowflakes in the air than birds on the water. Not a good day for looking for birds. In the days leading up to this outing, hundreds of waterfowl of many different species were being reported by Peterborough birders at Pengelly Point.

A group of ten members of the PFN gathered at the meeting location in Peterborough and travelled slowly to the shores of Rice Lake. Most spotted a Red-tailed Hawk perched in a tree on the grounds of the Peterborough airport.

At Pengelly Point, the open water of Rice Lake was scanned for waterfowl. They were there but were obscured by falling snow. The group determined there were 30 Canada Geese, 2 Mallards, 6 Lesser Scaup, 100 Hooded Mergansers, 50 Common Mergansers, 2 Bonaparte's Gulls and 5 Ring-billed Gulls present. Thanks to Cathy Douglas for submitting the trip list to eBird.

The groups then travelled on to Hall's Landing on a road that became increasingly slippery. The trip came to an early end due to the weather conditions. Hopefully next year the weather conditions will be more favourable for observing the wave riders of Rice Lake.



A small sampling of the many obscured wave riders on Rice Lake on November 22 which included 100 Hooded Mergansers, 6 Lesser Scaup, 2 Bonaparte's Gulls (and a partridge in a pear tree). Photo: Don McLeod

Donation of Birdfeeders Will Bring Normalcy, Joy to Residents of Hospice

By Aimée O'Reilly, Fundraising & Communications Coordinator, Hospice Peterborough

While Hospice Peterborough may not have gone to the birds, the birds will now be going to Hospice Peterborough.

In a heartwarming show of community collaboration, the Peterborough Field Naturalists, led by member King Baker, and local business The Avant Garden Shop came together to donate multiple birdfeeders and a pole to Hospice Peterborough.

The bird feeders, which seed was carefully chosen to support native species through the winter, were placed in the residence garden. A hummingbird feeder will be added in the spring.

The addition of bird feeders is normalizing and will bring joy and comfort to the private residence gardens at Hospice. If this pandemic has taught us anything, it is that - it's often the little pleasures, like watching birds that enriches our lives.

"The residents, their families, and even staff are going to receive such a healing distraction seeing the birds flit around outside their windows, especially in the upcoming months. Thank you to King, the Peterborough Field Naturalists, and Brenda and Clayton," stated Alison Casey, Manager of Development at Hospice, as The Avant Garden Shop owners, Brenda and Clayton Ibey installed the birdfeeder pole.



From left to right: the Avant Garden Shop owners, Clayton and Brenda Ibey, and Peterborough Field Naturalists members, King Baker, and Martin Parker.

The Peterborough Field Naturalists uses part of their annual income to fund projects chosen by members and approved by their board. King Baker, who was the driving force behind the donation, states he thought of Hospice Peterborough for this gift because of the meaningful nature of the work and how he believed it would truly make a difference to those who would watch the birds from their rooms.

Hospice Peterborough provides support to individuals and families who are at the end of life, facing a life-threatening illness, or grieving. If you or someone you know could benefit from their support, please visit hospicepeterborough.org or call 705-742-4042.

Editorial Note: Funding for this project was from the annual income received from the PFN Legacy Fund, an endowment fund administered by the Community Foundation of Greater Peterborough.

Book Review: *Blaze Island* by Catherine Bush

Submitted by Marilyn Freeman

Way back in 2001, I read *The Ingenuity Gap* by Thomas Homer-Dixon, a prof at the University of Toronto. He said, "We are amazingly ingenious, but we may not be ingenious enough to manage our world and prosper within it... We crisscross the sphere in our planes, cars, and ships, subordinating all its places and resources to our needs." We suffer from techno-hubris. We would rather look for after-the-fact solutions to the difficult problems we face than prevent the problems from becoming so difficult in the first place.



Skip ahead to 2020. Canadian author Catherine Bush has written both a fast-paced and lyrical novel called *Blaze Island*. Set on an island off the coast of Newfoundland (based on Fogo Island), climate scientist, Milan Wells, and his young daughter, Miranda, arrive as US refugees from death threats and hate mail due to the publication of dire climate modeling vis-à-vis global warming. Both characters are traumatized by the climate deniers and the not-so-accidental killing by car of Wells' wife and Miranda's mother. They set up a life on the island that is as carbon-free as possible. Miranda grows up being very in tune with weather and her natural surroundings. The topography, birds, plants, ocean, wind, rain and snow are beautifully described and are practically characters in the story.

The after-effects of hurricane Fernand ravaging the east coast of North America cut off communication to the island and on the island. However, that doesn't stop mysterious characters from showing up by plane to change the balance of everything in young Miranda's life. Unbeknownst to her, her father has not given up his climate modeling and secret activism. Wells has raised Miranda to be self-sufficient but now Miranda is 18 and is starting to have a mind of her own. As the tension of the story rises, she begins to question everything she's ever known about her father and his secrets. One stranger asks her, "Miranda, do you know what solar geoengineering is? Solar radiation management, does that mean anything to you?" This question rocks Miranda's narrow world view and begins a cascade of trust breakdown. The science in this story is solid. The explanation of solar radiation management is brief and understandable. It comes in the form of dialogue and it echoes the concern of Homer-Dixon in regards to our techno-hubris. We can't really control or predict what we might shoot up into the atmosphere. It might just make weather even more unpredictable and wilder. But the technology exists and it's alluring. It's also alluring to uber-capitalists, another twist in this story!

While this novel can be classed as an eco-thriller, Bush does introduce ways of thinking about responses to our predicament and what sacrifices might need to be made to stabilize our world.

As Miranda says, "Change is clear after it happens."

Wild at Heart

If I were a man with the means to choose,
I'd set off on a leisurely cruise,
Not in a sea-borne city plying the pelagic blue
But in a small craft offering an intimate view
Of a small forest or marsh-bordered river or lake,
Not caring what kind of fool Donald Trump himself will make.
I'd launch my canoe in the dawn of misted silhouettes.
Paddle slowly now; this tranquility is the best it gets.
No window, wall or roof to separate me;
To feel the breeze in my face is a delicacy.
A kingfisher plunges for a fish, returns to its perch, and throttles its prey;
A loon rolls on its side to waggle its foot in its odd way.
This is the wildlings' world few people care to explore,
Except as fair-weather intruders from a crowded shore.
I treasure the sights, sounds, and smells of Nature's art,
And recognize the power of connections forged with the heart.
This is the real world whose machinations control the health,
Where excessive meddling by mankind destroys the wealth
Of ecological and economic systems too precious to lose.
Merely by being in a wild place can I shed the blues.
You may hear Greig's 'Morning Mood' playing in your head,
But I long for the wild sounds of unspoiled Nature instead.

Murray Arthur Palmer, 2020

From the Archives

Submitted by Martin Parker

From a submission by Nan and Jack Luscombe in *The Orchid*, Vol. 25, No. 10, December 1980

We were happy to find this recipe for High Bush Cranberry Jelly in the *Outdoor Magazine*.
Each fall we canoe down the Ouse River to Rice Lake and pick those beautiful berries, usually after a frost.
They make a tasty jelly for fowl and cold meat and also a treat on toast. I have some juice in the freezer and will try the recipe and let you taste it on a cracker at the December meeting.

Highbush Cranberry Jelly

900 ml. (4 cups) cranberry juice strained through a cloth

1 package pectin crystals

Bring to full boil, and stir in 1017 ml. (4½ cups) of sugar

Return to the boil and boil hard for a full minute until consistency thickens

Pour into sterilized jars and seal with Parowax.

To Make the Juice

Strip the fruit from the stems, rinse in cold water, place in a large crock or kettle and pour boiling water over them, just to cover. This will soften the skins so that the next step will be less messy.

Let stand for a couple of hours, then strain off the juice first through a sieve, then through cloth for a beautifully clear liquid.

Sweeten to taste if you must with sugar or honey, then seal and store.

Martin's Note: There was no follow-up on the proposed tasting at the December meeting; however, over the next 40 years, the December PFN members' meeting has featured treats from members.

Nature Almanac for December

By Drew Monkman

December 21 marks the winter solstice, the shortest day of the year. The sun rises and sets at its southernmost points on the horizon. Sunrise is not until 7:46 am, while sunset is upon us by 4:37 pm. This translates into only eight hours and 51 minutes of daylight.

Clear December evenings make for excellent stargazing. Cassiopeia looms high in the north sky and resembles an "M." In the southeast, look for the "Winter Six": Orion, Taurus, Gemini, Auriga, Canis Major and Canis Minor. The Pleiades (Seven Sisters) star cluster adorns the eastern sky, while Orion looms over the southeast. The Big Dipper is low in the north.

Eastern gray squirrels are often seen high up in maple trees where they feed on the keys. Although we do have some gray individuals in Peterborough, nearly all eastern gray squirrels in southern and central Ontario are the melanistic (black) form.

The coat of the red squirrel becomes a brilliant russet. Muskrats continue to build piles of vegetation in holes they have broken in the ice. Before the snow gets too deep, try identifying and interpreting mammal tracks and various signs. "Nip twigs" on the ground below conifers are a sure sign of red squirrel activity.

Pregnant adult queen wasps overwinter in crevices in rocks and wood. You may inadvertently bring one into the house, tucked away in a piece of firewood.

Bird arrivals in late fall include northern shrikes, snow buntings, and American tree sparrows. All of these species breed in the Arctic.

Watch for wild turkeys. Their large, dark bodies are easy to spot in winter as flocks feed in fields.

Ducks lingering on local lakes and rivers until freeze-up include common goldeneye, buffleheads and both common and hooded mergansers. Some will remain on open water such as the Otonabee River all winter.

On lakes such as Buckhorn and Stoney, eagles are often seen sitting on the ice near open water. Watch for hawks and sometimes Snowy Owls in open fields.

Watch for evening grosbeaks at your sunflower seed feeder this winter, especially if you live north of Peterborough.

Between mid-December and early January, Christmas Bird Counts take place across North and Central America. Anyone with an interest in birds is welcome to participate in our two local counts. Contact Martin Parker at 705-745-4750.

Steve's Swan Sightings

Submitted by Steve Paul

As the snow starts to fly and we get ready for winter, most of the three swan species (Trumpeter, Tundra and Mute) have been on the move towards their wintering grounds. There continues to be a smattering of reports of sightings in the Peterborough and Kawartha Lakes area, particularly on shallower lakes like Pigeon, Chemong and Rice where food is easily accessible. I even saw a family of five Trumpeters off of Pengelly Landing on Rice Lake on November 21, but way too far to get share-worthy shots. You could make out the two white adults and three grayish cygnets, and they were MUCH larger than the Canada Geese that were cruising along beside them.

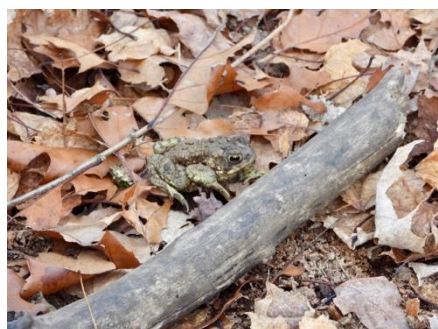


Trumpeter Swan at Whitby Harbour on January 13, 2019. Photo: Steve Paul

If you follow groups like "Ontario Trumpeter Swans" on social media, there are lots of great photos of families returning to wintering grounds like LaSalle Park in Burlington, Bluffers Park in Toronto, and Wye Marsh near Georgian Bay. I look forward to seeing these photos over the long winter ahead, and as always appreciate the efforts that group members put into tagging, tracking and protecting these beautiful creatures.

Please continue to send sightings information and photos to me at stevepaul70@gmail.com, and if you have any interesting stories about your interactions with any of the swan species that call Peterborough or the Kawartha Lakes area home - I would love to hear them.

Sightings information can be officially reported to the Ontario Trumpeter Swan Restoration group. There is also an online Google doc that can be filled out. For anyone who reaches out to me, I will share the link and help fill out the form if needed.



From left: American Toad, Hazel Bird Nature Reserve, and Painted Turtle. Photos: Marilyn Hubley

69th Annual Peterborough Christmas Bird Count – A Christmas Tradition

Submitted by Martin Parker

Sunday, December 20 – all day

The Peterborough Christmas Bird Count (CBC), now in its 69th year, is the longest running wildlife survey in Peterborough County. The Peterborough CBC participants cover an area contained within a circle with a diameter of 24 kilometers, centered on the intersection of Chemong Road and Sunset Boulevard. There are ten areas within the count circle, each which will be covered by a specific group of participants. The area party may divide into smaller field parties to cover the area. A map showing the count circle and areas is available on the PFN website www.peterboroughnature.org

The areas and yet-to-be-confirmed area leaders are as follows:

Chemong/Bridgenorth	Don McLeod
Miller Creek/Selwyn	Brian Wales & Drew Monkman
Lakefield/Otonabee East	Dave Milsom
Douro Wedge	Bill Crins & Mike Oldham
Burnham	Warren Dunlop & Janet Kelly
Stewart Hall/Landfill	Joan DiFruscia
Airport	Matthew Tobey
Cavan Swamp	Chris Risley and Erica Nol
Jackson Park	Jerry Ball
Downtown	Martin Parker



"I don't know about you, but when they're in their winter plumage, I'm damned if I can tell the difference."

Organization of the count has commenced and members and friends of the PFN are invited to participate in this year's count. If you are unable to participate in one of the field parties, you can still assist by registering your feeder and counting the birds which visit during the day. It is an excellent opportunity to learn about our winter birds.

Plan now to register and participate in this Peterborough birding tradition and citizen science project. To register contact Martin Parker (count compiler) as soon as possible by phone 705-745-4750 or by e-mail mparker19@cogeco.ca.

This is the 121st year that Christmas Bird Counts are being held across North America. Join this Christmas birding tradition.

Special COVID-19 Protocol:

In this pandemic year, we will have to take special precautions to ensure we do not spread COVID -19. Please review the Ontario Government Guidelines on How to Stop the Spread. In addition, please check with Peterborough Public Health for any additional local restrictions.

There may be six or more people assigned to a count area; however, if travelling by vehicle, all those in the vehicle should be from the same household bubble. While in the field, social distancing should be observed. We will continue to monitor Public Health guidelines and update you as they change. Each area leader will likely divide their area into smaller units.

The annual post-count dinner and compilation will not occur this year. Having all of us gather at a restaurant is not in keeping with Public Health guidelines. The method for submitting data for the compilation will be outlined before the count



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

The COVID-19 pandemic eliminated many outings and all in-person meetings, and reduced the sharing of information on our natural heritage.	
Oct. 26	Bruce Kidd reported ~40 American Pipits in the plowed field in which the participants of the October outing searched for birds, with no success.
Oct. 28	Kathy Parker observed two Green Frogs crossing River Road north of Lock 25 (heading to the river for the winter)
Oct. 30	<p style="text-align: center;">Evening Grosbeaks Arrived</p> <p>Bruce Kidd had several at his feeder near Douro. Mary-Lou Murphy had 7 at her house in the east side of the city. Not from our region: The Holiday Beach Hawk Watch near Windsor reported 300 migrating past the platform and heading south. There was a major outbreak of Spruce Budworms in Northern Quebec and NE Ontario this summer -- the caterpillars are fed to nestling Evening Grosbeaks. Now looking at a major movement southward.</p>
Oct. 30	<p>Erica Nol & Chris Risley had a Swainson's Thrush at their residence in the city Matthew Tobey & Dave Milsom had a Red-necked Grebe off Pengelly Point, Rice Lake; a Carolina Wren at the north end of Mill Road, Keene; and a Golden Eagle near Hastings. Andrew Brown & Olivia Maillet had 3 Brant at the western end of the Chemong Lake causeway.</p>
Oct. 31	Dave Milsom located a White-rumped Sandpiper at the Lakefield Lagoon - seen by many observers over the next two days.
Nov. 1	Paul Frost & Martin Parker had a Black Scoter at the western end of the Chemong Lake Causeway.
Nov. 2	<p>Continuing female Blue-winged Teal still present at the Lakefield Lagoons by John Bick. Dave Milsom & Matthew Tobey had a Golden Eagle at Fothergill Island, Pigeon Lake. Jerry Ball had a Northern Harrier on Scriven Road and a Rough-legged Hawk at the Airport.</p>
Nov. 5	<p>Ken McKeen photographed an Ermine (winter plumage weasel) near Buckhorn. In the last week he also observed a Great Blue Heron in the Buckhorn area; and at his feeders a Red-bellied Woodpecker, some Pine Siskins & 30 Evening Grosbeaks.</p>
Nov. 6 & 7	<p style="text-align: center;">Greater Yellowlegs</p> <p>On Nov 6, there were 3 along Land Road by Sascha Dho, 1 in Douro Park by Mike Burrell, 1 in Otonabee Gravel Pit CA by Connor Thompson & 3 at Landfill Wetland Project Pond by Connor Thompson. On Nov 7 - 1 in Keen area by David Britton, 1 at Landfill Wetland Project Pond by Steve Paul, and 2 on Rice Lake by Sasha Dho.</p>
Nov. 6	<p>Multiple observers spotted a Northern Saw-whet Owl in the Barnardo Avenue area. Luke Berg heard a Lapland Longspur flying over his yard in the City and 6 Tundra Swans on Pigeon Lake off Kerry Line. A Cackling Goose was observed off Beavermead Park by Bill Crins. At Sandy Point, Pigeon Lake, Donald Sutherland had 3 Black Scoter & 1 Red-throated Loon. Black Scoter present on Pigeon Lake until the end of month. At Pengelly Landing, Matthew Tobey & Dave Milsom had a Red-necked Grebe & 3 Gadwall. Red-necked Grebe seen next day by multiple observers. Mike Burrell had a late Turkey Vulture at Douro Park & five Red Crossbills in a single flock flying over his yard east of the City.</p>

	<p>Marilyn Hubley reported an Eastern Towhee in the Edgewood Park area of Cavan Otonabee Twp. Still present on Nov. 9.</p> <p>Donald Sutherland had a Red-shouldered Hawk over west end of City.</p> <p>Patrick Kramer had a Pectoral Sandpiper at Copper Lake in the Apsley area.</p>
Nov. 7	<p>Sarah McGuire had a singing Carolina Wren east of Hastings.</p> <p>Donald Sutherland had 5 Tundra Swans off Kerry Line, Pigeon Lake.</p> <p>Northern Saw-whet Owls -- 1 calling off Scollard Drive by Dave Milsom and 1 in Trent Nature Area by Luke Berg.</p> <p>Fox Sparrow reports: 1 in yard east of city by Mike Burrell, 1 in yard on Scollard Drive by Dave Milsom, 1 at Lakefield Marsh by David Britton, 1 in yard near Lakefield by Iain Rayner.</p> <p>White-crowned Sparrow reports: 1 by Dave Milsom in his yard, 1 by Chris Risley & Erica Nol on Gilmour St, 1 in yard near Lakefield by Travis Cameron.</p> <p>Common Grackle reports: 1 by Dave Milsom in his yard, 4 in Lakehurst area by Marty Obbard, and 3 by Matthew Tobey in Stenson Park.</p> <p>Jerry Ball had a flock of 100+ Common Redpolls on Lang-Hastings Trail between Cameron and Blezard.</p> <p>Patrick Kramer had a late Turkey Vulture at Rathbun Lake, Kawartha Highlands PP.</p>
Nov. 8	<p>Sarah Wyshynski and Glen Desy had a Red-necked Grebe at western end of Chemong Lake Causeway -- seen by others until Nov. 11</p> <p>Seven reports of Fox Sparrows on this date.</p> <p>Marty Obbard still had 3 Common Grackles in the Lakehurst area.</p> <p>Donald Sutherland had 2 Lapland Longspurs flying over at Kerry Line, Pigeon Lake.</p>
Nov. 10	<p>Andrew Brown & Olivia Maillet had a Red-necked Grebe on Pigeon Lake off Kerry Line (still present on Nov 12)</p> <p>Luke Berg had a Hoary Redpoll in the Trent Nature area.</p> <p>Fox Sparrows continuing with five reported for this date -- reported regularly to end of report period.</p> <p>Patricia Remy located a Big Brown Bat outside on the wall of her house. It was still present the next day and is currently being rehabilitated.</p>
Nov. 11	<p>Scott McKinlay heard Spring Peepers calling in the Cavan area, and he trapped a Short-tailed Shrew which was feeding on the bird seed in his garage in Cavan.</p> <p>Cackling Goose & Horned Grebe seen on Little Lake by Connor Thompson.</p> <p>Matthew Tobey & Dave Milsom had 4 American Widgeon on Pigeon Lake off Kerry Line.</p> <p>Eight reports of Redhead including 4 off Sandy Point by Donald Sutherland and others, 215 off Kerry Line by Matthew Tobey, and 3 off Pengelly Point by Dave Milsom & Matthew Tobey -- reports continued from eastern shore of Pigeon Lake until Nov. 20.</p> <p>Scott Gibson had a Greater Yellowlegs at Keystone Links Golf Course.</p> <p>Ben Taylor had a Greater Yellowlegs at Cold Lake, Kawartha Highlands PP.</p> <p>Bradley Howell had a late Eastern Phoebe at the Camp Kawartha Environment Centre on Pioneer Road.</p> <p>At the Lakefield Lagoon, Jerry Ball had 2 Clouded Sulphur (butterfly), 2 Familiar Bluet (damselfly), 1 grasshopper, 1 Woolly Bear caterpillar and 1 Leopard Frog.</p>
Nov. 12	<p>Drew Monkman had an American Widgeon on Lily Lake.</p> <p>Donald Sutherland had a Little Gull in a flock of Bonaparte's Gulls on Pigeon Lake off Kerry Line. Seen regularly in early morning until November 20.</p>
Nov. 13	<p>Cathy Douglas and Dave Milsom had 8 Redheads off Timberline, Pigeon Lake.</p> <p>Donald Sutherland and others had 2 Surf Scoters off Sandy Point - still present on Nov 19.</p>
Nov. 14	<p>Matthew Tobey & Luke Berg had an Iceland Gull on Pigeon Lake off Edenderry Line</p> <p>Jeff Stewart had a Golden Eagle in the Millbrook area.</p>

	Greater Yellowlegs still present at Landfill Wetland Project Pond by Steve Paul and along Rice Lake by Sasha Dho.
Nov. 15	Various birders visited Pengelly Point on Rice Lake and reported 2 Gadwall , 2 Canvasbacks and up to 100 Redheads -- continued to be reported until end of period. Henrique Pacheco & Hannah Dodington had a late Double-crested Cormorant off Sandy Point, Pigeon Lake.
Nov. 16	Cathy Douglas and others had a Snow Goose & a Cackling Goose at Briar Hill Bird Sanctuary - still present on Nov 20. Iain Rayner reported the number of Redheads at Pengelly Point increased to 280 -- continued at this number until the end of the period.
Nov. 17	Jerry Ball had 1 Belted Kingfisher & 2 Ruffed Grouse at Whitfield Landing.
Nov. 18	Mike V.A. Burrell observed 2 Sandhill Cranes passing over his house in Douro Twp.
Nov. 19	Tundra Swans were present on Pigeon Lake off Kerry Line & Edenderry Line by many observers with Donald Sutherland reporting a maximum number of 14. Drew Monkman had a Golden Eagle at Nephton Ridge. Jerry Ball had 2 Pine Grosbeaks in the Cardinal Road area, Ennismore. Late-departing White-crowned Sparrows -- 1 at Oliver Ecology Centre, Nogies Creek by Andrew Brown and others and 1 at Lakefield Lagoon by Dave Milsom. Hance Ellington & Erin Koen videoed a group of 157 Sandhill Cranes flying over Bridlewood Park. John Bick had a Golden Eagle on Harrison Road. Dave Milson had a Hoary Redpoll in the Kawartha Nordic Ski Trails area.

PFN Board of Directors				Other Volunteers	
President	Rene Gareau	rene.gareau@sympatico.ca	741-4560	Membership Secretary	Jim Young 760-9397
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Meeting Coordinator	Marie Duchesneau	duchesneau13@hotmail.com	874-5739	Ecology Park Feeders	JB Jaboor, Kathryn Sheridan
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Peterborough Field Naturalists, P.O. Box 1532, Peterborough, Ontario, K9J 7H7					

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 ☐ Email ☐ 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 \$30 ☐

2. Single Student or Youth \$15 ☐

3. Family \$40* ☐

*** 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. Are you interested in any of these activities?

☐ Join the PFN Board

☐ Sit on research or conservation committees

☐ Lead an outing

☐ Assist with meetings

☐ Work on field projects

☐ Help with the Orchid publication

☐ 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: _____