



# The Orchid

**Bulletin of the Peterborough Field Naturalists**

"Know ♦ Appreciate ♦ Conserve Nature In All Its Forms"

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

Regular monthly meetings are held the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wed. of the month in the downstairs auditorium of the Peterborough Public Library at 345 Aylmer Street N.

## COMING EVENTS

<p>Sundays           Sept 6<sup>th</sup>          to          Oct 25<sup>th</sup>           8:00 a.m.           Meet in the          Ptbo Zoo          Parking Lot</p>	<p><b>Sunday Morning Wildlife Walks</b>          Take the chance to explore local habitats, led by one of our experienced members. Unless otherwise noted, the outings will last around 3 hours. By starting the walks earlier in the season this year, we hope to encounter a greater range of migrating bird species. Meet at the Peterborough Zoo parking lot at 8.00a.m., from where we will car pool. In most cases the destination will be confirmed on the day. Please bring change to contribute for gas and remember your binoculars. Everyone is welcome.          The scheduled walk leaders are:          Sept. 6<sup>th</sup> Jerry Ball                      Sept. 13<sup>th</sup> Tony Bigg          Sept. 20<sup>th</sup> John Bottomley            Sept. 27<sup>th</sup> Tony Bigg          Oct. 4<sup>th</sup> Jerry Ball                        Oct. 11<sup>th</sup> TBD          Oct. 18<sup>th</sup> Jerry Ball (this will be a whole-day outing to Presqu'ile Provincial Park - more details next month)          Oct. 25<sup>th</sup> TBD</p>
<p>Wednesday          Sept 9<sup>th</sup>          7:00 p.m.           Ptbo Public          Library</p>	<p><b>PFN Monthly Meeting: "Alfred Russell Wallace: a naturalist between worlds"</b>          Speaker: Dr. Chris. Wilson, MNR          Best known for jointly discovering natural selection with Charles Darwin, Wallace's work in the Amazon and Indonesia established the foundations for biogeography. A self-made man in an age of gentlemen naturalists, his many contributions to the natural and social sciences profoundly influenced the scientific and social landscape of Victorian times.</p>

Don't forget to visit the club's website at [www.peterboroughnature.org](http://www.peterboroughnature.org)

## COMING EVENTS continued

Sept 12	<b>Prairie Day</b> at the Alderville First Nation Black Oak Savannah. See page 3 for more information.
Sept 12	<b>Dragonflies and Migration:</b> a day-long NatureWorks Program at Presqu'île Provincial Park. See page 4 for more information.
Sept 19	The Peterborough Horticultural Society will hold its annual <b>Fall Plant Sale</b> , on Saturday, September 19th, from 9:30 - 11 AM at St. Alban's Church, 567 Monaghan Road. A great way to get a start on next year's garden with a wide variety of perennials. The sale will run rain or shine.
Sept 23	<b>Peterborough Horticultural Society's</b> hosts their <b>monthly meeting</b> on Wednesday, September 23rd at the Peterborough Public Library, 345 Aylmer Street N. at 7:30 PM. Doors open at 7 for socializing and refreshments. Guest speaker, Martin Galloway, a teacher at Seneca & York University, as well as former presenter/writer on the Canadian television series Harrowsmith Country Life and The Secret World of Gardens will talking about "Bugs in the Garden".
Sept 29 to Oct 2	<b>Fabulous Fall Fungi:</b> Spend 2½ days learning about mushrooms and other fungi with naturalist and fungal aficionado Richard Aaron. All levels welcome, from beginner to advanced. The emphasis will be on developing hands-on identification skills, enriched by discussions on ecology, natural history, and uses. Dates: Sept 29 to Oct 2, 2009. Cost: \$295; covers tuition, meals, accommodation, use of lab space & microscopes. Location: Queen's University Biological Station. For details & to register: <a href="http://www.queensu.ca/biology/qubs/events/fungi.html">www.queensu.ca/biology/qubs/events/fungi.html</a> . Richard can be reached at: <a href="mailto:natureteacher1@gmail.com">natureteacher1@gmail.com</a> .

## JUNIOR FIELD NATURALISTS

Sunday Sept 27 <sup>th</sup>  2:00 p.m.  Camp Kawartha	<b>Birding Platform at Camp Kawartha</b> For the first JFN outing come join Neil & Dan at Camp Kawartha on Sunday Sept. 27th to help Dan finish a platform that he is building to monitor birds of the alvar. We can also check out the nearby wetlands. Meet 2:00pm in the camp parking lot. The camp is found on Birchview Rd. off of HWY 28N just north of Lakefield. New folks are especially invited. See you then! Neil & Dan	
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# **PRAIRIE DAY - SEPT. 12**

**COME OUT FOR A DAY OF FAMILY FUN AND ENTERTAINMENT  
FEATURING LIVE MUSIC AND ENTERTAINMENT, DISPLAYS,  
TOURS, VENDORS AND PRESENTATIONS**

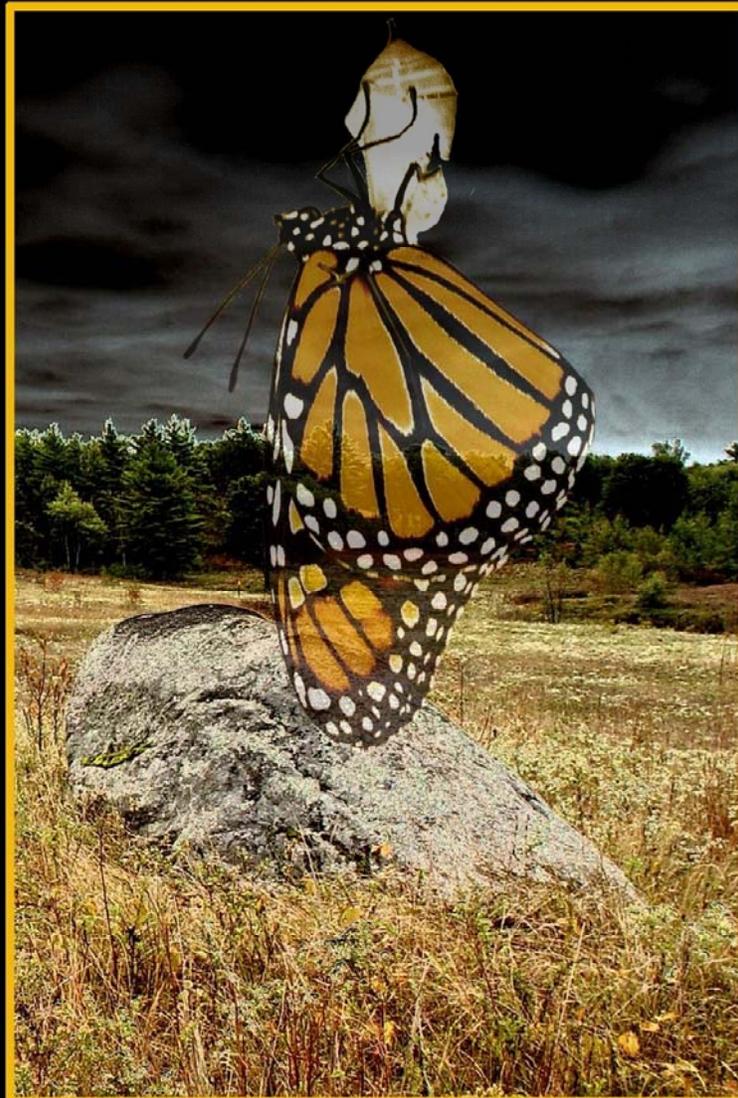
**WASHBOARD HANK**

**THE FUNKY MAMAS**

**JIM BOB AND THE  
SWEETGRASS BAND**

**SCIENSATIONAL  
SSSNAKES**

**KIDS' JUMPING CASTLE**



**PRAIRIE TOURS**

**BIRD BANDING  
DEMONSTRATION**

**MONARCH BUTTERFLY  
PRESENTATION**

**TRADITIONAL NATIVE  
FOODS**

**TEPEE SET-UP**

**DISPLAY BOOTHS FROM:**

**ALDERVILLE BLACK OAK SAVANNA  
NATURE CONSERVANCY OF CANADA  
KAWARTHA TURTLE TRAUMA CENTRE  
OAK RIDGES MORAINÉ FOUNDATION  
TALLGRASS ONTARIO  
LOWER TRENT CONSERVATION AUTH.  
ONTARIO PARKS**

## **ALDERVILLE BLACK OAK SAVANNA**

**ALDERVILLE COMMUNITY CENTRE,**



[www.aldervillesavanna.ca](http://www.aldervillesavanna.ca)



# NatureWorks

Workshops for the Naturally Curious !

at Presqu'ile Provincial Park

## Dragonflies and Migration

Saturday, Sept. 12, 2009

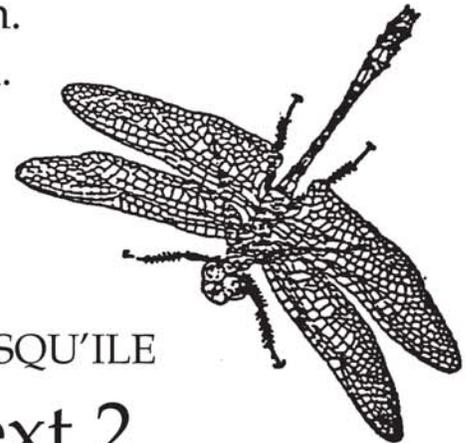
Discover the amazing world of **Dragonflies**. Find out how to find them, catch them, identify them and then let them go. In particular Presqu'ile can be a hotbed of migration in fall, with huge flocks of darners present. If conditions are right we will seek these out.



This 6 hour course will consist of both inside and outside adventures. Bring binoculars and dragonfly (butterfly) nets if you have them. Some nets available for use. Bring a lunch.

Fee \$15 per person  
(park admission is included.)

**Registration is required.**



CALL THE FRIENDS OF PRESQU'ILE

**(613) 475-1688 ext 2**

TO REGISTER FOR THIS WORKSHOP



This NatureWorks program is brought to you through the co-operation of Ontario Parks and the Friends of Presqu'ile Park.



## ORCHID SUBMISSIONS WANTED!

**Deadline for submissions for the Oct issue:  
Friday, September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2009**

Please send all submissions to: **Rebecca Zeran,**  
PFN, PO Box 1532, Peterborough, ON, K9J 7H7 or  
via e-mail to: [rebecca.zeran@mail.mcgill.ca](mailto:rebecca.zeran@mail.mcgill.ca)



*Small Yellow Lady's Slipper (Cypripedium parviflorum) in boggy wetland near Woodview, Twp of North Kawartha. May 25, 2009. Photo by Michael Butler.*

## Peregrine Falcon in Peterborough

*- Rick Stankiewicz, 17 July 2009, 8:25 a.m.*

I have only twice in my career had the opportunity to come across an endangered species while on my way into work. The first time was about 17 years ago while driving to the East Gate of Algonquin Park and driving up to a Peregrine Falcon standing on the roadway, right on the centerline. Then, this morning as I walked towards the MNR building in downtown Peterborough, I looked up at the historic Clock Tower in Peterborough Square and saw another peregrine falcon! This time I got the pictures to prove it. What a way to start the day. Keep looking up!





## ***Volunteers needed! Prairie Day Sept 12.***

This event can only be a success with your help! Volunteers are needed to help with the children's activities, directing traffic, selling tickets for the door prizes and generally helping to keep everything running smoothly. If you have a little time to spare that day, please call the Alderville Band Office at 905-352-2011 and leave your name & phone number and tell us if you would prefer to help in the morning or the afternoon or both.

## ***Volunteer Day Sunday September 20, 10:00am - 2:00pm.***

Fall is the time when all the seeds of the grasses and wildflowers are ripe and ready to be collected. We are very proud that the restoration at the Black Oak Savanna has been accomplished with seeds collected on the site. You can help! Join us on one of our volunteer days and spend a few hours renewing your connection to nature.

Please register so we can contact you if the weather forces us to postpone and so we have enough supplies for everyone. Register by calling the Alderville Band Office 905-352-2011 or email [savannatours@eagle.ca](mailto:savannatours@eagle.ca).

### **PFN Officers and Directors**

President	John Bottomley	<a href="mailto:johnbottomley@sympatico.ca">johnbottomley@sympatico.ca</a>	742-1524
Treasurer	Jim Young	<a href="mailto:jbyoung@persona.ca">jbyoung@persona.ca</a>	292-5444
Secretary	Emily Pettypiece	<a href="mailto:donem.pettypiece@sympatico.ca">donem.pettypiece@sympatico.ca</a>	750-1145
Membership	Don Pettypiece	<a href="mailto:donem.pettypiece@sympatico.ca">donem.pettypiece@sympatico.ca</a>	750-1145
Newsletter Editor	Rebecca Zeran	<a href="mailto:rebecca.zeran@mail.mcgill.ca">rebecca.zeran@mail.mcgill.ca</a>	743-2660
Program (indoor)	Roger Jones	<a href="mailto:rjones@trentu.ca">rjones@trentu.ca</a>	742-0132
Program (outdoor)	Paul Elliott	<a href="mailto:paulelliott@trentu.ca">paulelliott@trentu.ca</a>	740-0501
Jr. Naturalists	Neil Fortin	<a href="mailto:nkfortin@sympatico.ca">nkfortin@sympatico.ca</a>	292-6185
Special Projects	Mike McMurtry	<a href="mailto:michael.mcmurtry@sympatico.ca">michael.mcmurtry@sympatico.ca</a>	748-5353
Webmaster	Chris Gooderham	<a href="mailto:webmaster@peterboroughnature.org">webmaster@peterboroughnature.org</a>	740-2081
Member @ Large	Janine McLeod	<a href="mailto:janine@sdf1.net">janine@sdf1.net</a>	778-1479

### **Other Volunteers**

Book Sales	Anne Storey	743-0345
FON Rep	Rhea Bringeman	742-1035
Orchid Diary	Tony Bigg	652-7541
Orchid Mailout	Bob Quinn	
JFN Trip Leader	Neil Fortin	



## Common Mergansers

- by June Hitchcox, for *The Apsley Voice* ([www.apsleyvoice.com](http://www.apsleyvoice.com))

We couldn't believe our eyes, that first summer in Haliburton Forest Campground, when one female Common Merganser sailed by our trailer site on MacDonald Lake with 20 or more ducklings paddling hard to keep up with her. With a bit of research, we found that several broods are often left with one C. Merganser nursemaid. We saw one looking after about 50! What discipline those nursemaids had. We constructed a dock for our canoe and boat - and as it turned out, it also became a resting place for the various duckling groups. A low croaking quack from the female and she, with all the ducklings, would hop up onto the dock for a siesta. When nursemaid Merganser was ready, another soft quack and all would jump back into the lake. The females have rusty-coloured heads, with a feathered crest that looks as if in need of combing. We never did see the handsome males - resembling, somewhat, male Mallards, with their smooth green heads. The males do their mating duties, help find a nesting spot, then disappear for the summer, leaving the females to finish the nest with soft down - in tree holes, old logs, among rocks, and in nest boxes - where 9-12 eggs are laid. There are 3 species of Mergansers - all "Diving Ducks": Common, Red-breasted and Hooded. All have serrated bills meaning that their long, narrow bills have pointed teeth inclined backwards, making it easy to seize slippery fish. MacDonald Lake was perfect for them - quiet, not many people, surrounded by forest. We certainly enjoyed them as we did the Hooded Mergansers on Jack Lake that took up residence in the duck nest box that Bob made.

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## Sandhill Cranes

- by June Hitchcox, for *The Apsley Voice* ([www.apsleyvoice.com](http://www.apsleyvoice.com))

Betty, from the Apsley area, was in touch in July about the exciting news that they had watched a family of Sandhill Cranes - 2 adults + 2 chicks - walking up their road toward their pond. This couple, from their trips to Florida, recognize the calls of these Cranes - low, loud, musical rattles that carry for over a mile - and have been hearing them on their property for a couple of years but this was the first sighting. They are very difficult birds to see - very secretive, very sensitive to human disturbance, long-lived birds that return year after year to the same nesting spot - preferring a marshy area for the nest with tall vegetation to hide it; with plants and invertebrates to eat; and, after spending the day in nearby fields, eating insects, grain and small mammals, they can return to the safety of the water at night. They are Heron-like wading birds, with the same long legs and neck, but the adults have gray feathers with a splash of red on the head. When they fly, their legs, head and neck are stretched out, unlike the Heron that doubles back its neck with the head against its shoulders. The young stay with the parents until the following Spring, then the parents chase them off their territory and they flock with other youngsters for 2 to 7 years until they mate. It was intriguing to research this Crane's history: fossils of the exact same bird have been found that are 10 million years old! Sandhills used to breed all over Ontario until disturbed by colonists who hunted them and drained their marshes for farmland. This limited their range to western and northern Ontario. About the 1970's they began to move eastward and now are being spotted over most of Ontario - probably needing more territory with their increase in population. Of interest, they have been used successfully as surrogate parents for the endangered Whooping Crane. In the future, we should all be seeing more of this beautiful bird.

## Ontario Herpetofaunal Atlas Program Observations Needed

- Submitted by Joe Crowley, to Ontario Nature Network News, July 15, 2009

Submit your observations of reptiles and amphibians to Ontario Nature's new Ontario Herpetofaunal Atlas! The goal of the atlas program is to improve our collective knowledge of the distribution and abundance of Ontario's reptiles and amphibians. We are looking for observations, past or present, of all reptile and amphibian species (not just the rare ones) from anywhere in Ontario. Observations can be submitted via an online reporting form, a printable data card or an Excel spreadsheet. Observation reports should include your name and contact information, the species name and identifying features, the date, a description of the location and geographic coordinates, when possible. Please try to accompany your observations with a photograph to help verify the identification.

Please visit our website [www.ontarionature.org/herpetofaunal\\_atlas.html](http://www.ontarionature.org/herpetofaunal_atlas.html) for more information about the program and to submit your observations! To book a presentation or a hands-on training workshop for your group, please e-mail the atlas project coordinator at [joec@ontarionature.org](mailto:joec@ontarionature.org).



*Gray Treefrogs. Photographs by Rebecca Zeran.*

## Turtles

- by Dr. Paul Keddy for the Mississippi Valley Field Naturalists, Ontario Nature Network News, July 15, 2009

June has come and gone. The nesting turtles are back! March is for maple syrup, in April the ice melts away, in May the leaves come out and in June its turtle time!

Every one of these annual events reminds us where we live; the previous statement could not be made in Paris or Los Angeles. Of course, if you are a high rise building dweller who rarely ventures outside the big city, you may not appreciate my point. Here in Lanark County, every June, many turtles crawl out of their ponds and streams and start crossing the highways looking for nesting sites. Elsewhere, tourists might pay a fortune, say, to travel to South Africa for lions, or British Columbia or Quebec for whales, but here the wildlife comes to visit us!

Most of the time turtles are rather secretive - hibernating nearly half the year on the bottom of lakes and ponds. Much of the rest of the year they swim around looking for dead things to eat and occasionally taking a break to warm up in the sun stretched out on a log. Overall, turtles are harmless, and in fact do some good since they are efficient scavengers that clean up dead animals from our water supply. All of our turtles - even the large snapping turtle - are opportunist feeders. They eat whatever they can conveniently find, which is mainly insects and dead fish. Biologists have spent many years studying turtle diets - by counting the items in their stomachs - and have this well-documented. Even large snapping turtles, which get blamed for eating ducks or game fish, rarely have any of these items in their stomachs. They too eat carrion. Yes, snapping turtles will snap at you -- when on land -- particularly if you let your dog frighten them, or if you poke them with a stick. Many people would do the same.

Let me mention, too, that every part of the world has its own set of turtles. If you were lost, and someone gave you a list of local turtles, you could pin down almost exactly where you were. North

America has just over 50 species in all. Some places, like the west coast, are impoverished, having just one species. Other places, like Louisiana, are blessed with turtles - more than 30 species. Lanark County has exactly five. In approximate order of size, beginning with the smallest, they are musk turtle (or stinkpot), painted turtle, map turtle, Blanding's turtle and snapping turtle. All but the painted turtle are now considered species at risk - that is, they are declining. Two, the musk turtle and the Blanding's turtle, are officially considered threatened species. The decline has two main causes, (1) death on roads and (2) destruction of wild places.

### **Nesting time is a dangerous time**

So, for nearly 50 weeks each year turtles are rather quiet, inoffensive neighbours, who pretty much keep to themselves. In this way, they might set a good example for human neighbors, like the ones with the loud stereos and motorbikes ... but I digress, I was asked to write about turtles. My point is that, finally, after 50 weeks of peace, all hell breaks loose in mid June! All the females of reproductive age climb out of the water and begin the laborious task of hiking around to find a nesting site. It is probably terrifying for them to leave the familiar water and venture onto land, but the nesting urge is too strong to resist. Once they find just the right location, they dig a hole, bury their eggs and leave. That is the end of motherly care. The eggs are heated by the summer sun and then in September baby turtles, about the size of a walnut, half dig their way up to the surface and somehow find their way back to water.

This means that without fail, near the middle of each June, we are treated to a parade of female turtles wandering around our roads and properties trying to nest. They have been doing this for about 200 million years, more or less. Turtles existed before the dinosaurs, and they even survived whatever it was - an asteroid collision? - that eliminated the dinosaurs. Despite their long history, turtles just have not had time to learn to adapt to two new things: cars and roads. That tiny brain has no idea that a road means danger. And so increasingly we are losing our

turtles as the reproductive females (and often the eggs they contain) are killed on highways.

Biologists have calculated how important certain types of individuals are to their species survival, i.e. their "reproductive value". New baby turtles have low reproductive value because only a few ever survive –skunks, raccoons, crows, fish and even bullfrogs eat them. This high mortality rate for babies is natural for turtles. However the reproductive value of the adult female turtle is extremely high. Once she has made it to 20 years old she has the capacity to make up for the high mortality rate of the babies by laying from 10 to 30 eggs every year for decades. The turtles being killed on our roads are usually the adult females – with the highest reproductive value. When a female is killed – it means the loss of hundreds of offspring she might have produced over future summers. These losses cannot be replaced. As a result, turtles that were present in my childhood, like musk turtles and Blanding's turtles, are now uncommon. Not only do turtles just cross roads, they are actually attracted to roads. The warm sand and gravel along the road side makes a perfect nest site. So turtles will come long distances to climb onto the shoulder and lay their eggs. If drivers are careless, the highway becomes a ribbon of death.

### So what can we do?

1. The first is to accept and even appreciate this annual event. Just as the maple syrup flows in March, so do turtles flow across our roads in June. We might even build an annual tourist event around the nesting week. We could put up some highway crossing signs at critical locations, or better still, plan ahead and build small underpasses when roads are being reconstructed. And, of course, we have to protect critical nesting areas from subdivisions. More urgently there is the immediate issue of death on the roads.

2. Drive carefully. Turtles are slow-movers, so it really does take a complete idiot to hit one with a car.

- Don't tailgate (which your driver training instructor no doubt told you anyway), as you may run over a turtle that the car in front just missed.

- Help them out. Stop, and carry the turtle the rest of the way across the road – in the direction she was headed, of course. Yes, some will not appreciate your help, and might try to scratch or bite, so keep a pair of gardening gloves handy and perhaps a shovel to help lift. A big snapping turtle is heavy, so I would recommend extreme care – probably best to simply act like a shepherd.
- Alert other drivers. Yes, you can stop your car and let other people know that a turtle is crossing the road. Not a good idea at 100 kilometers per hour, perhaps, but certainly feasible on many side roads.
- Let them nest in peace. If one arrives in your yard, keep the pets away, and let the children watch quietly from a respectful distance more than ten feet away. Think about the respect we give to pregnant women, and give the pregnant turtle the same courtesy.

One of the joys of living here is the annual spectacle of the June turtles. If you still think you must drive so fast that you ignore the crossing turtles, may I respectfully suggest you consider moving to downtown Phoenix or Las Vegas or Toronto, or one of our other larger urban centers where you won't have to be inconvenienced by other living creatures. Learning to share the landscape with wild animals is part of what it means to live here. We might start with courtesy to turtles, and then extend it to frogs, birds, butterflies, bears and all the other animals that lived here long before our ancestors decided to settle in North America.

Not everyone can personally save a blue whale, or a black rhinoceros, but everyone can drive responsibly, and, like a good boy scout, help the occasional turtle across the road.

*\*This article on turtle nesting season was prepared by Dr. Paul Keddy for the Mississippi Valley Field Naturalists. Dr. Keddy, is an MVFN member and scientist and author of many articles and books on wetlands and wildlife including Earth, Water, Fire: An Ecological Profile of Lanark County and can be reached at [drpaulkeddy@gmail.com](mailto:drpaulkeddy@gmail.com). For more information on identifying Lanark County turtles, please visit a local bookshop or consult the Toronto zoo's adopt-a-pond website [www.torontozoo.com/adoptapond/turtles.asp](http://www.torontozoo.com/adoptapond/turtles.asp).*



# PETERBOROUGH FIELD NATURALISTS

www.peterboroughnature.org

## membership application form

Memberships may be obtained by mailing completed form and cheque to

Peterborough Field Naturalists  
PO Box 1532, Peterborough, ON K9J 7H7

### CONTACT

Name (s):		Home Tel:	
		Work Tel:	
Address:		Email(s):	

### MEMBERSHIP TYPE & FEE SCHEDULE

Please make cheques payable to *Peterborough Field Naturalists*

1. Single (one adult or one child\*) \$25   
 \*Membership with the PFN automatically includes membership in the Junior Naturalists

2. Family (couple or family with children) \$30   
 Please give the names and ages of the children you wish to be enrolled in the PFN Junior Naturalists

Name	Age	Name	Age

### MAIN INTERESTS

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

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

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

### I am interested in the following:

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

### AGE GROUP

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

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

### DONATIONS

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

### LIABILITY WAIVER

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

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