

The Orchid



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Know • Appreciate • Conserve Nature in All Its Forms



Cedar Waxwings in a Mulberry Tree. Photo: Reem Ali

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A Tale of Two Muskrats
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Welcome new PFN members!

- Olivia Bettencourt
- Lucy Martin-Johnson
- Hugh Aldis & Susan Beckworth
- Mary Gushe & Gordon Gushe
- Bruce Harris
- Heather McGrath
- Nathalie Leblanc



PFN member, Dave Milsom, has seen a lot of different bird species in Ontario this year. Here are a few of the special birds he has seen. From top right: Purple Gallinule in Oshawa on November 8 and a female Mountain Bluebird on November 26 on 3rd Line (his 319th Ontario bird species). Above left: Beaver at Otonabee Gravel Pit Conservation Area (Marilyn Hubley)

| PFN Coming Events | |
|---|--|
| Dates and times to be announced | <p>Nature Appreciation Walks</p> <p>One of the main reasons for attending outings is spending time with like-minded individuals. Getting out in the fresh air, exercising, and socializing while appreciating nature never gets old. With winter coming, it is more difficult to find “topics” to offer for outings. That doesn’t mean we can’t get together. For many of us who have been PFN members for a long time, we have found friends to go for walks with regularly. If you are interested in joining others for nature walks, send me an e-mail. If there are topics you are very interested in, mention that in your response. I will keep a list and - when the weather is kind - will send out an invitation. The time and day of the week will change as will the location and degree of difficulty. Sometimes there will be a theme depending on the leader I am able to recruit. Sometimes it will just be a nature appreciation walk. When you can attend, just respond to the e-mail I send out. To register, e-mail sueparadisis@hotmail.com</p> |
| Dates and times to be announced | <p>Wildlife Tracking Outings</p> <p>PFN member, Don McLeod, will once again lead members on one or more outings during the months of December to March focusing on tracks and other wildlife sign. These outings will be scheduled when weather conditions permit. The place and time will be announced by e-mail shortly before each outing. Anyone interested in attending should send an e-mail to Don McLeod at donaldmcleod.com@gmail.com so he can add you to an e-mail distribution list. If you signed up for previous outings, you would automatically receive an e-mail to confirm.</p> <p>Accessibility: Moderate to somewhat challenging. These outings will all involve walking in snowy conditions.</p>  |
| <p>Thursday, Dec. 8 7:30 p.m.</p> <p>Virtual Meeting on Zoom</p> <p>Invitations e-mailed to members</p> | <p>PFN Monthly Meeting: Environmental Inequity in Nogojiwanong/Peterborough</p> <p>(Slideshow night cancelled)</p> <p>Michael Classens and Stephanie Rutherford will talk about their new partnership with Community Race Relations Committee of Peterborough (CRRC) and Kawartha World Issues Centre (KWIC), which aims to document environmental inequality and resilience in Peterborough City and County. Michael and Stephanie will talk about what a justice lens brings to environmental questions, describe the broader project, and offer some reflections on the preliminary results of this research.</p> <p>Stephanie Rutherford PhD is an associate professor in the School of the Environment at Trent University who thinks and writes about environmental justice, animal studies, and the environmental humanities. She is the author of <i>Governing the Wild: Ecotours of Power</i> (2011), and <i>Villain, Vermin, Icon, Kin: Wolves and the Making of Canada</i> (2022).</p> |

| PFN Coming Events | |
|--|--|
| | <p>Michael Classens PhD is an assistant professor in the School of the Environment at University of Toronto. His work is broadly concerned with issues of social and environmental justice, with a specific focus on these dynamics within the context of food systems.</p> |
| Sunday, Dec. 18 | <p>2022 Peterborough Christmas Bird Count</p> <p>Please see article on page 7 for more information.</p>  |
| <p>Thursday, Jan. 12 7:30 p.m. Virtual Meeting on Zoom Invitations e-mailed to members</p> | <p>PFN Monthly Meeting: Understanding and Conserving the Endangered Small-mouthed Salamander Complex on Pelee Island</p> <p>Thomas Hossie is an Assistant Professor in Biology at Trent University, broadly interested in population and behavioural ecology. His research focuses on two areas: the ecology and evolution of predator-prey interactions, and amphibian ecology and conservation. He is currently a member of the Amphibians and Reptiles Specialist Subcommittee for COSEWIC. Since 2015, he has led a long-term study of an endangered <i>Ambystoma</i> salamander complex on Pelee Island which continues to provide exciting new insights into the population and behavioural ecology of this unique system.</p> <p>The salamanders on Pelee Island are unique in many ways, but until recently we knew very little about this population. The island is home to Canada's only population of the small-mouthed salamander (<i>Ambystoma texanum</i>), as well as blue-spotted salamanders (<i>A. laterale</i>), and a third kind of salamander known as unisexual <i>Ambystoma</i>. Unisexuals are an all-female lineage that are reproductively-dependent on sperm from males of other <i>Ambystoma</i> salamander species in order to reproduce. On Pelee Island, they have DNA from both small-mouthed and blue-spotted salamanders and may have anywhere from 2 to 5 sets of chromosomes, although they are not 'hybrids' in the traditional sense. Small-mouthed salamanders, and the associated unisexuals on Pelee Island, face a number of significant threats on the island and are now listed as endangered under federal and provincial legislation. Until recently, conservation efforts have been limited by insufficient data, however, our research has helped to fill in these gaps while also learning about the peculiar ecology and evolution of these unisexual complexes. In this talk, Thomas will share some of what he has learned about these amazing animals, and how he and others are working to help ensure their long-term persistence.</p>  <p>Small-mouthed Salamander on Pelee Island in March 2022. Photo: Thomas Hossie</p> |
| Sunday Jan. 15 | <p>Tentative date for PFN Juniors' Christmas Bird Count</p>  |
| <p>Note: Recordings of past PFN Zoom meetings can be viewed on PFN's YouTube channel at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCAgbbqgr4ujZ16qba23LTQQ under the playlist menu.</p> | |

PFN Junior Field Naturalists Announcement

Thank you to the members who responded to the call for volunteers to resume activities for PFN Junior members. The PFN is pleased to announce that it will once again be holding Junior Field Naturalist events after a hiatus due to the pandemic.



Planning is underway for a Christmas Bird Count for Kids (CBC4Kids) tentatively scheduled for the afternoon of Saturday January 14, 2023. Inspired by the well-loved, traditional Christmas Bird Count, the CBC4Kids engages new generations of young birders across North America! While we work to finalize arrangements for the PFN Juniors, you can check out the information available at birdscanada.org.

As PFN memberships are renewed, families are reminded to give the names and ages of children wishing to enroll in the Junior Field Naturalists. Activities are geared to ages 5 to 12, but kids of all ages are welcome (parents stay and participate). Events are led by PFN members and individuals from other organizations in our community who volunteer to share their knowledge and skills with us.

PFN Junior Field Naturalist events will be posted on the PFN website Events listings (<https://peterboroughnature.org/junior-naturalists/>). Details will be shared by e-mail to parents of Junior members. Additional information can be obtained from Board of Directors Liaison, Anda Rungis at secretary@peterboroughnature.org.

Volunteer Corner

Call for Board Members

The Board of Directors is responsible for making all the good things happen that you enjoy as a PFN member. We organize meetings, outings and programs; and carry out advocacy to protect the environment that we love.



Are you interested in helping to manage the PFN as it faces the challenges of the next year, which include:

- a return to live services after the COVID-19 epidemic fades;
- continuing our transition to the world of digital communications;
- advocating to protect our natural environment in the face of pressures from development and climate change;
- involving more young people in PFN objectives and activities.

If so, the Board is looking for new members to join our group of volunteers committed to the PFN. We are anticipating two vacancies this year and would like to bring the Board up to full complement. If you are interested, please contact Ted Vale, the Chair of the Nominating Committee at treasurer@peterboroughnature.org.

Call for Outing Volunteers

Do you have a strong interest in a particular aspect of our natural world and have above-average knowledge? Outing leaders are needed, and there are members wanting to learn while meeting others from the PFN. Training is provided as is a comprehensive manual. If you would prefer to ease in gradually, you could assist an experienced leader. For those new to our club, this is an excellent way to meet other members.

If you have a property that you know well and would be willing to take us on a tour accompanied by another leader, please consider volunteering. I can be reached by phone at 705-559-2061 or e-mail at sueparadisis@hotmail.com

2023 Membership Renewals

The PFN is now accepting membership renewals for 2023. You can now renew by mail or online.

To renew by mail, fill out the form on the back of The Orchid (or download it from the website) and mail it along with your cheque to PO Box 1532, Peterborough ON K9J 7H7.

To renew online, go to the PFN website, click on "Join Today", then "Join Online". Fill out the form, submit it, and then click on "Submit".

Membership fees are: Student/Youth \$15, Single \$30, or Family \$40. You may pay by credit card or PayPal through Canada Helps, or by e-Transfer through your financial institution. Please be sure to fill out and submit the membership form as well as the payment as we need this information to stay in touch with you and send you your copy of The Orchid. We look forward to having you with us in 2023.

2023 PFN Annual General Meeting Online Auction!

WE ARE LOOKING FOR ITEMS TO AUCTION

Due to the success of last year's online auction, PFN will again be hosting this event in conjunction with our AGM. Do you have any nature-related/outdoors or otherwise items in your attic, bedroom, basement, or garage that need a new forever home? We are seeking new or gently used items. Help us make this auction another great success. All proceeds go towards supporting the PFN in its operations and sponsorship/granting programs.

For more information, contact Fiona McKay at fcmckay@peterboroughnature.org.

Christmas Gift Ideas from the PFN

Nature in the Kawarthas

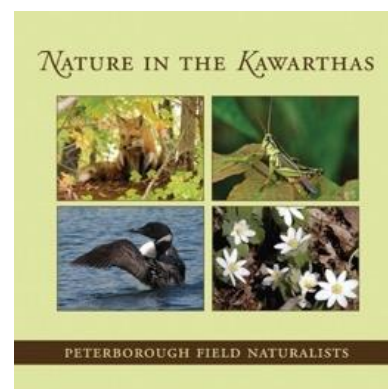
If you are looking for a Christmas gift which focuses on the natural history of our region of the province, *Nature in the Kawarthas* is the book to purchase. *Nature in the Kawarthas* was written by PFN members and published in 2011 by Dundurn Press. It contains articles on the landforms of the region and how they were formed, along with chapters on various groups of plants and animals. There is a summary of places to visit in the region. The book contains multiple colour photographs taken primarily by PFN members. It makes a memorable gift to someone new to the region.

This PFN book can be purchased from the following retailers in Peterborough:

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

As well, limited quantities of three other PFN publications are available. Please contact Cathy Douglas at cddouglas77@gmail.com if interested.

- *Mammals of Peterborough County* by Geoff Carpentier, 1987
- *Birds from the Ground: The Record of Archaeology in Ontario* by Douglas C. Sadler and Howard G. Savage, 2003
- *Our Heritage of Birds: Peterborough County in the Kawarthas* by Douglas C. Sadler, 1983



PFN Club Logo

Mark's Work Wearhouse 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.



Next time you are out shopping be sure to check out the new location for Mark's Work Wearhouse at 1230 Lansdowne St. West, Peterborough.

- 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 PFN logo embroidered on it.
- You will receive 10% off the cost of the clothing (probably some exceptions here)
- 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!

71st Peterborough Christmas Bird Count - A Christmas Tradition

Submitted by Martin Parker

PFN Citizen Science Project: Sunday, December 18 - all day

The Peterborough Christmas Bird Count (CBC), now in its 71st year, is the longest running wildlife survey in Peterborough County. Organization of this year's Peterborough count has commenced, and members and friends of the PFN are invited to participate. If you are unable to participate in one of the field parties you can still assist by registering your feeder and counting the birds that visit during the day. Some participants will contribute by walking their neighbourhood. Others walk unopened road allowances. There are many ways to participate and learn more about our winter birds.

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 count area will be subdivided by the area leader in order to enhance coverage. A map showing the count circle and areas is available on the PFN website www.peterboroughnature.org

The areas and confirmed area leaders are as follows:

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



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. The area leaders can be contacted directly as well.

This is the 123rd year Christmas Bird Counts are being held across North America. Join this Christmas birding tradition.

Backgrounder:

Each year, Birds Canada and the National Audubon Society help coordinate and support the efforts of more than 2500 counts throughout the Western Hemisphere. Christmas Bird Counts are run across Canada and the United States, as well as in Latin America, the Caribbean, and some Pacific Islands. Data collected during the Peterborough count includes details on the number of birds of each species seen or heard within a local 24-km diameter circle. Surveying this circle year after year contributes valuable long-term information on how winter birds are faring, both in your locale and across the country.

The Christmas Bird Count took root over a century ago when 27 birders in 25 localities from Toronto, Ontario to Pacific Grove, California, led by ornithologist Frank Chapman, proposed a conservation-oriented alternative to the traditional 'side hunt,' a Christmas Day competition to hunt the most birds and small mammals. This alternative initiative to identify, count, and record all the birds found on Christmas Day 1900 has turned into one of North America's longest-running wildlife monitoring programs.

For more information about the Christmas Bird Count, or to find the location of additional counts, visit Birds Canada's website at birdscanada.org/cbc.

2022 PFN Research Grant Winners

The Peterborough Field Naturalist (PFN) Research Grant initiative was created to support Trent University Undergraduate Students in a research project which will add to our knowledge of the natural environment in Peterborough and the Kawarthas.

These grants would not be possible without the generous bequests and donations from our members which have been deposited in the PFN Legacy Fund, managed by the Community Foundation of Greater Peterborough. This is an endowment fund which provides an annual income for the PFN. The Board has allocated part of the annual income to support undergraduate students in their thesis project.

This year, four deserving students have each been awarded \$400 to help with the expenses of their work. Olivia Bettencourt hopes to obtain a better understanding of the Pentatomidae (stinkbug) species richness and distribution across the Trent Nature Areas. Emma Byers is studying details of predation of dead birds under windows. Jenna Knight is studying the spatial scale of habitat selection in white-tailed deer. Maela Kaminski is examining the possible changes in sex ratio of Tree Swallow nestlings in response to environmental conditions (rainfall, wind speed, precipitation, etc.).

Thank you to committee chair, Martin Parker, and committee member, Chris Risley, for their work in finding these excellent students and reviewing their projects.

Congratulations, students! We look forward to hearing more upon completion of your theses.

Orchid submissions are encouraged!

The submission deadline for the next issue is Friday, December 23

Please send submissions to Kathryn Sheridan at orchid@peterboroughnature.org
or mail submissions via post to: PFN, PO Box 1532, Peterborough ON K9J 7H7

Submissions can be articles, photos, anecdotes, nature book reviews, poems, outing reports, nature news, recommendations, interesting things you've learned or observed about nature etc.

Outing Report for October 22: Otonabee Gravel Pit Conservation Area

Submitted by Steve Paul

I was super excited to share this little-known spot with some of our members for the first time, even though we were past the peak of fall migration. With 192 species recorded on eBird, this birding hotspot ranks third all-time highest for number of species recorded in Peterborough County. You have a chance to see some great birds, and it is well worth visiting various times throughout the year.



Pectoral Sandpiper photo by Don McLeod

The total size of the Otonabee Gravel Pit Conservation Area is approximately 119 acres (48 hectares). There is a 2.8 km walking trail all around the property, as well as a walking path between the main gravel pits in the centre, which in total are just under 40 acres (16.1 hectares) in size. It is a great spot to see various species of waterfowl and migrating shorebirds. It even plays host to a resident beaver.

Jessie James, Conservation Lands Programs Manager for Otonabee Conservation, was very helpful in providing an overview of the general history of the gravel pit from the time Otonabee Conservation took ownership of the property:

“Otonabee Conservation acquired Otonabee Gravel Pit Conservation Area in 1977. Otonabee Conservation acquired Otonabee Gravel Pit Conservation Area for several reasons. The goal was to manage the property to protect and conserve the section of wetland shoreline along the Otonabee River. There was also a need to secure a local source of road gravel for the Township of Otonabee-South Monaghan. The gravel pit also presented Otonabee Conservation with the opportunity to generate revenue through the sale of aggregates. By 2004, the aggregate reserves were largely depleted and today the property operates as a conservation area.”

This being the weekend after Thanksgiving, there was still some great fall colour around; and being a warm fall day (temps between 11 °C and 16 °C), we had a great walk. Although we didn't get a chance to see the juvenile Black-Bellied Plover which had been regularly seen pretty much every day in the weeks before, we had a chance to get great views of a Pectoral Sandpiper, a beautiful little Northern Ring-necked Snake, as well as several Eastern Garter Snakes out basking in the morning sun.

Laurie Healey recorded the eBird list – we were very fortunate to see 29 species on this outing:

Canada Goose (76), Mallard (2), Mourning Dove (1), Killdeer (5), Pectoral Sandpiper (1), Ring-Billed Gull (75), Turkey Vulture (3), Northern Harrier (1), Downy Woodpecker (1), Northern Flicker (1), Merlin (1), Eastern Phoebe (1), Blue Jay (5), American Crow (2), Common Raven (2), Black-Capped Chickadee (16), Ruby-Crowned Kinglet (4), Golden-Crowned Kinglet (9), American Robin (15), American Pipit (2), American Goldfinch (2), Dark-Eyed Junco (5), White-Crowned Sparrow (1), White-Throated Sparrow (8), Song Sparrow (1), Red-Winged Blackbird (30), Common Grackle (20), Yellow-rumped Warbler (5), Northern Cardinal (1) and duck sp. (6).



Photo: Don McLeod



Above: Eastern garter snake.
Below: Red-bellied snake.
Photos: Steve Paul

Outing Report for November 13: The Miniature World of Lichens

Submitted by Joanne Sutherland

On a cold Sunday afternoon, 14 members gathered in the Kawartha Highlands Signature Park to study lichens. What a beautiful and ideal location it is! Thanks to Sue and our field guides, we found and identified at least 21 species.

Lichens appear in one of three growth forms: crustose - attached to the substrate, foliose - with unattached leafy parts, and fruticose - shrub-like.

Two examples of the crustose lichen we found are: the frilly Mapledust Lichen on a branch and the unique Concentric Boulder Lichen on rock. In the foliose form, just to name a couple, there was a lot of Cumberland Rock Shield on the exposed rock and a large patch of Many-fruited Pelt on the ground. We were excited to find all three species in the fruticose growth form that have bright red apothecia (spore - producing structures). They are: Lipstick Powderhorn, British Soldiers, and Red-fruited Pixie Cup.

There were many intricate miniature lichens to keep us all engaged and interested. Thank you, Sue, for organizing and leading this awesome outing!



Mapledust lichen photo by Sue Paradisis



From left: Red-fruited pixie cup, mealy pixie cup, and lipstick powderhorn lichens. Photos: Ann Elliott

Outing Report for November 18: Waterfowl at Lakefield Marsh and Sewage Lagoons

Submitted by Drew Monkman

Ten members of the Peterborough Field Naturalists, led by Drew Monkman, enjoyed a cold but mostly sunny morning to search for late fall waterfowl.

Looking out over Katchewanooka Lake from the Lakefield Park and Campground, a small flock of male Common Mergansers treated us to a close fly-by as the sun glistened off their feathers. We also watched several Hooded Mergansers and a lone River Otter frolicking in the water. Don McLeod pointed out fresh mouse tracks in the snow and explained the key identification features. Another highlight was a large flock of agitated chickadees that flew in quite



Photo: Don McLeod

close in response to a screech owl recording. They were accompanied by a pair of White-breasted Nuthatches and a Hairy Woodpecker.

The Lakefield Sewage Lagoons was our next destination. Duck numbers were higher with 70 Buffleheads, 64 Mallards and one American Black Duck. The Common Goldeneye and Lesser Scaup that were present the day before had moved on. We took time to look at the features that help distinguish the Black Duck from the somewhat similar female Mallard. As for the Buffleheads, the vast majority were females and immature males. Although duck diversity and our total species count (15) were low, I think all would agree that the fresh air, exercise, and camaraderie made for a very pleasant couple of hours.

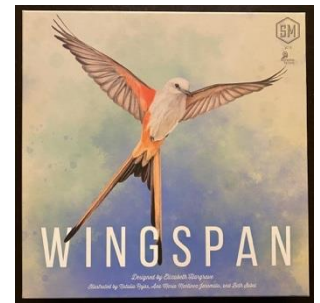


Top: Two Mallards with female Black Duck on right. Bottom: Two juvenile Buffleheads with female in middle. Photos: Don McLeod

Board Game Review: Wingspan

By Stephen Motyer

Are you a birder? Do you and/or your friends and family enjoy board games? If you answered yes to both of those questions, then Wingspan might just be the perfect board game to add to your collection. First published in 2019, it was a collaboration between Elizabeth Hargrave, an amateur birder, and Stonemaier Games, a publisher in the U.S. (I recommend looking at other games Stonemaier has published as well.)



Wingspan is all about collecting birds to add to your personal playmat that has three habitats: forest, prairie and wetlands. During your turn, you can collect food, lay eggs or get new birds. Each time you play a bird on your mat their abilities may help you to do these three things better. At the end of the game, points are awarded based on things like number of eggs laid, the value of individual birds on your mat, and round goals that were looking for things like a certain kind of nest or number of birds in a certain habitat. The player with the most points wins.

The rules are quite easy, though it does take about 20 minutes to first learn (and probably one game to really get the hang of it). If you don't like reading rulebooks, there is a nice succinct explanation on YouTube on a channel called "How to Play". You just have to search "Wingspan - How to Play" and it will be the first to come up. You can also learn some interesting facts about birds and practice your identification while you play.



What I love about this game is that it has beautiful artwork and nice quality game components: large wooden dice, colourful eggs, player mats and even a fun little dice tower that looks like a bird feeder. For the price, I think it offers a lot more components than other games in its range. Speaking of price, it retails for \$65 to \$80 depending on where you buy it. You can find it at any local board game store (I recommend the Boardwalk Lounge in Peterborough), Chapters or Amazon. This

game has become a staple in my family and we always play it when we get together. The game also now has several expansions adding even more birds and new mechanics, with the latest expansion coming out this December. It also features a solo mode for when you can't get enough friends together to play. Hope you get the chance to try it!

Quick Facts:

- Number of Players: 1-6
- Game Length: 40-70 mins
- Designer: Elizabeth Hargrave and Stonemaier Games
- Difficulty: Medium

Stephen Motyer is a certified teacher, board game inventor and (very) amateur birder. He is also a long-time collector and player of board games of all different types.

Board Game Review: Arctic Survival

By Aaron Lippincott

As the days grow colder and us humans take to the warm indoors, I find comfort in a game that is easy to learn, quick to play, and captures the winter theme. Arctic Survival is one such game that, despite its relatively simple mechanics, can provide a lot of replay value for you and your friends. Designed and illustrated by former Camp Kawartha staff, this duel of wits between foxes and lemmings can be played with 2 to 4 players and, though the rules remain essentially the same at either player count, the mere fact that you must work with another person to make decisions on your turn completely changes the experience. Similarly, as previously mentioned, there are two different roles to take on in this game. Will you choose to play as the lemmings, moving under snow tiles, searching for food, and trying to avoid the predators above? Or perhaps you prefer the role of hunter and join the side of the foxes, sniffing out their prey.



Arctic Survival uses a combination of dice and hidden movement to create a strategic arena for players to compete. The unique and calming art style combined with educational elements about the world outdoors make this game a great choice for almost any age and especially fun for any nature enthusiasts. The designer, Stephen Motyer, has done a good job of capturing both sides of this hunt by using both sides of what are called “tundra cards.” These cards depict the snowy landscape upon which the game is played and have one side depicting footprints whereas the other side does not. As the lemmings move around the board, burrowing under the snow, they may move under spaces with footprints. Any time this occurs, they must flip the card over to its snowy side giving information to the foxes about their location. It is the interplay of hiding and tracking provided by the flipping of these cards that is at the center of Arctic Survival’s gameplay, and a mechanic that makes it quite unique in the gaming world. Packed with allies like the beetle and polar bear, special powers provided by adaptations such as wings or a shell, four different roles to play, and powerful natural events like “shifting snows” to shake up the board, Arctic Survival has more than enough going on to justify its \$30 to \$35 price tag. After only a couple plays, you will come to find that Arctic Survival is just as much a game about human nature as it is a game about the natural world. It is available for purchase at The Boardwalk Lounge, Camp Kawartha, and Chapters Peterborough.

Quick Facts

- Number of Players: 2-4
- Game Length: ~20 minutes (may be longer as lemming players become more cunning)
- Designer: Stephen Motyer with Forge Foraged
- Art by: Mackenzie Talenko
- Difficulty: Easy

Book Review: *Desert Solitaire* by Edward Abbey

Reviewed by Marilyn Freeman

Many decades ago, my family and I would take off every year in our VW camper for five weeks of travelling around North America. It was stimulating, educational and deeply satisfying for one who had been raised on yearly road trips (me). One time we decided to head to the deserts of Utah and New Mexico. In preparation for this trip, I decided to read *Desert Solitaire* by Edward Abbey, first published in 1968. I was hooked.

This first reading was in the 1990s. I decided to reread this book that had taken such a hold of my imagination this year to see if it still had that power. The version I read has an introduction by British writer, Robert Macfarlane, written in 2017, the year Trump eviscerated the Environmental Protection Act and in 2018 shrunk both Grand Staircase-Escalante and Bear's Ears National Monuments (Utah) by 84% - the biggest rollback of public federal land protection in US history. Edward Abbey would be turning in his grave.

Desert Solitaire is located in Arches National Monument: 33,000 acres of natural arches, holes in rock, windows in stone. Some are big enough to walk through; others are big enough to contain the dome of the capitol building in Washington DC. They're formed by the weathering of sandstone fins via rain, melting snow, frost and ice aided by gravity. The colours change with the time of day and the weather. They're absolutely spellbinding.

This book is part adventure, part ecology, geology, philosophy, storytelling, poetry and polemical diatribe. Pure Abbey. (If you've ever read his novel, *The Monkey Wrench Gang*, you'll know what I mean.) His descriptions are very evocative. He writes, "Sometimes it rains and it fails to moisten the desert - the falling water evaporates halfway down between cloud and earth. Then you see curtains of blue rain dangling out of reach in the sky while the living things wither below for want of water."

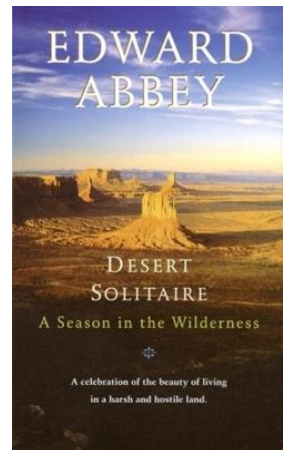
Abbey's knowledge of desert flora is vast, detailed and interesting. He jokes that, in reading this, the reader might visualize Arches as more of a jungle than a desert. Not so. It's really more of a fascinating rock garden as three-quarters of the land is sand or sandstone.

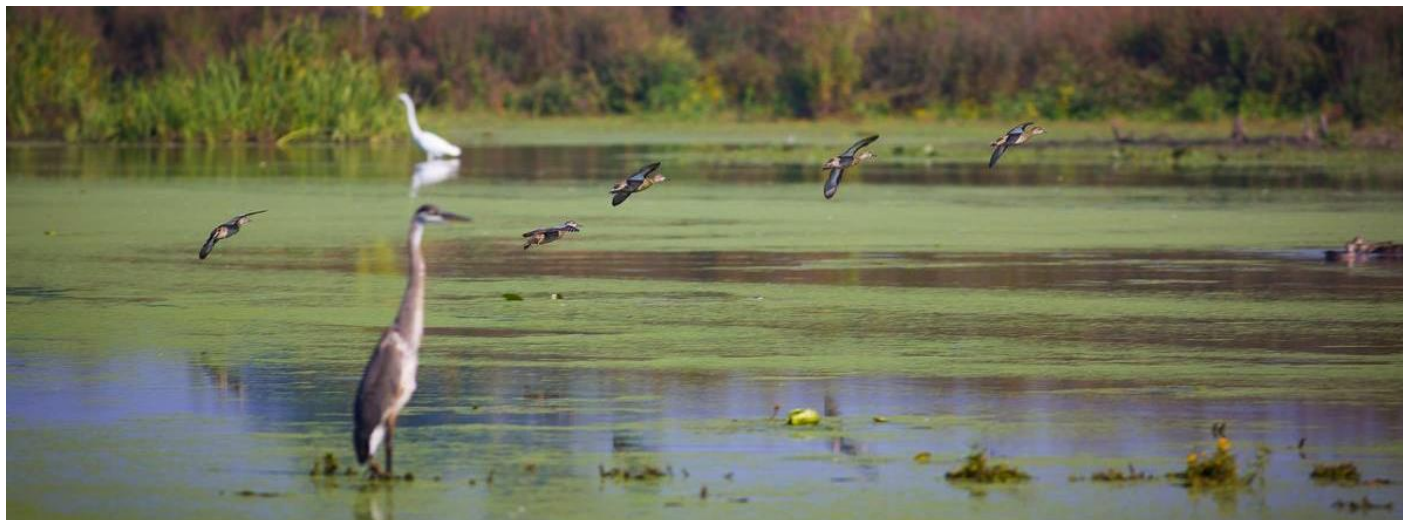
Abbey is opinionated. His view of industrial tourism is scathing. While old foot trails get neglected and back country ranger stations are left unstaffed, money can always be found for roads. "Parks are for people" but people want roads, especially loop roads. "Parks are for people" really means for people in cars. He follows this up with an excellent list of suggestions on how to change this.

As mentioned, *Desert Solitaire* was published in 1968. Certain political attitudes from the 1960s have not stood the test of time. There is some ableism, sexism and casual racism in the book. For example, Abbey writes that all park rangers are men who want to get away from their wives. He uses the expression "squaw fire" for a small campfire. Another aspect of Abbey's politics is shown through his regard of the wilderness as a refuge against the tyranny of authoritarian governments - a place from which to resist. In spite of these examples popping up, Abbey's thinking on conservation and wilderness was way ahead of its time, especially concerning trophic cascades and the importance of predators, especially coyote.

He wrote, "We need wilderness whether or not we set foot in it...We need the possibility of escape as surely as we need hope; without it the life of the cities would drive all men [sic] into crime or drugs or psychoanalysis."

Abbey's desert descriptions still rock my soul - as do his exhortations to get out of the car! As he says, "All living things are kindred."





Lynde Shores Conservation Area © Paul Howard CC BY-SA 2.0

Bill 23 Spells Disaster for Farmlands, Conservation Authorities, Wetlands and Natural Heritage

From Ontario Nature website: ontarionature.good.do/bill-23

With Bill 23, the More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022, the Government of Ontario is proposing sweeping changes to the province's natural heritage and land use planning legislation and policy. This omnibus bill would amend many laws (e.g., the Planning Act, the Conservation Authorities Act), removing and weakening environmental protections and cutting out the public from meaningful involvement in land use planning and decisions affecting their communities (refer to Schedule 2 and Schedule 9 – ERO# 019-6141 and ERO# 019-6163).

Ontarians of all political stripes should be deeply concerned by proposed legislative or regulatory changes that would:

1. Remove requirements regarding public meetings on certain planning matters.
2. Remove your right to appeal planning decisions (e.g., Official Plans, zoning by-laws, minor variances).
3. Remove the power of conservation authorities (CAs) to regulate or prohibit development that negatively impacts wetlands, rivers or streams.
4. Prohibit CAs from entering into agreements with municipalities to provide expert review of planning applications.
5. Limit CAs right to appeal land use planning decisions.
6. Require CAs to identify conservation authority owned or controlled lands that could support housing development.
7. Eliminate the role of seven regional municipalities (Simcoe, Durham, Halton, Peel, Niagara, Waterloo and York) in planning matters, thereby compromising coordinated efforts to protect farmland and natural areas, determine optimal locations for development and infrastructure, and efficiently deliver municipal services.

At the same time, intensifying but separate from Bill 23, the government is proposing several significant policy changes that would exacerbate the profound and devastating impacts of the bill on Ontario's natural heritage:

1. A drastic overhaul the Ontario Wetland Evaluation System, ensuring that very few wetlands would be deemed provincially significant in the future and that many if not most existing Provincially Significant Wetlands would be vulnerable to losing that designation, leaving them open to destruction. (ERO# 019-6160)
2. Replacement of the Provincial Policy Statement, which provides strong protections for Ontario's farmland and natural heritage with a new planning policy instrument that would remove or streamline existing policies to facilitate development. (ERO# 019-6177)
3. Creation of a natural heritage offsetting policy that could lead to widespread and extremely risky trade-offs, where existing natural areas are sacrificed on the highly questionable premise that they can be recreated or restored elsewhere. Greasing the wheels of destruction would be a "pay to slay" natural heritage compensation fund, which would allow developers to destroy wetlands, woodlands and other wildlife habitats as long as they pay into the fund. (ERO# 019-6161)

The provincial government frames all the above changes as addressing the housing crisis, obscuring the fact that Bill 23 satisfies first and foremost the interests of developers, delivered on a silver platter. You can read more in our blog: Bill 23 – What You Need to Know.

As Ontario's Housing Affordability Task Force explained in its 2022 report, we do not need to sacrifice environmental protection to address the housing crisis. That's because the shortage of land for housing is a myth: "But a shortage of land isn't the cause of the problem. Land is available, both inside the existing built-up areas and on undeveloped land outside greenbelts. ... Most of the solution must come from densification. Greenbelts and other environmentally sensitive areas must be protected, and farms provide food and food security." (Housing Affordability Task Force report, p.10)

Please join Ontario Nature in opposing the changes proposed and demanding that 1) all amendments likely to weaken the protection of farmland and natural heritage be withdrawn; and 2) the role of the public, CAs and regional municipalities in environmental planning and decision-making be retained and upheld.

A Letter From the PFN Board of Directors

Dear Peterborough Field Naturalists,

Bill 23, the "More Homes Built Faster Act," tabled by the Government of Ontario proposes numerous legislative and policy changes regarding the environment. These changes will undermine environmental protection across the province and constrain our collective ability to engage in municipal planning decisions. Wetlands, forests, conservation lands and the Greenbelt are all under threat!

Background information and analysis regarding the Bill 23 proposals has been prepared by Ontario Nature, Environmental Defence, the Canadian Environmental Law Association and Conservation Ontario. Please check the websites of these environmental organizations.

The Peterborough Field Naturalist (PFN) Board of Directors is working to review the changes and provide input on behalf of the membership. However, it is also important that PFN members individually read about the proposals and voice concerns.

You can call or write directly to your local Member of Provincial Parliament. The Action Alerts on Bill 23 set up by Ontario Nature and Environmental Defence are an easy way to add your name and send environmental messaging by e-mail. Thank you, in advance, for your help in raising awareness about the Bill 23 proposals and speaking up for environmental protection in Ontario. The more people that speak out, the greater the chance the proposals will be modified.

~ Peterborough Field Naturalists Board of Directors

A Tale of Two Muskrats

Submitted by Steve Paul

At 7:45 p.m. on Saturday, November 12, I received a message from Ann Brokelman, a friend of mine who volunteers for many organizations such as the Toronto Wildlife Centre, Shades of Hope and CoyoteWatch Canada. She wanted to let me know that there was a pair of muskrats trapped inside a local lock, but she didn't know the exact location. I was the closest person Ann knew because of my involvement rescuing two Trumpeter Swans this year. The original call went to Edwards Animal Sanctuary in Uxbridge by someone in Peterborough, because that person wasn't able to connect with anyone locally to help rescue them. After speaking with Jen Edwards from Edwards Animal Sanctuary, I learned it was a local lock that had been dewatered for repairs, and that the muskrats had been trapped between the locks for a week. I agreed to go check out the location and evaluate the muskrats the next day.



Two muskrats trapped in lock. Photo: Steve Paul

My wife Laurie and I arrived at the lock on Sunday around 9:30 a.m. and, sure enough, there were two muskrats huddled together in a raised patch of leaves in one of the corners. They weren't moving, but you could see them breathing, so it was hard to tell what their overall condition was. The lock was completely dewatered and, although there was about eight to ten inches of water at the lowest point of the locks close to the muskrats, we didn't see any food or a place for them to hide. There was an opening to get out of the lock doors to the south, but a wall of stop logs used to hold the water back prevented the muskrats from getting out. We knew we needed to do something to help.

On a Sunday in November, of course no one is directly available to take calls at Parks Canada, which makes sense given the time of year. I sent out a lot of messages out to my birding and naturalist friends looking for connections, and was eventually able to speak with Valerie Minelga, the Environmental Services Manager for Parks Canada. She was *great* to talk to, and after giving her all the information I had, she said they would send over a team on Monday morning. Laurie and I returned later Sunday afternoon and dropped down some apples (recommended by Shades of Hope), to provide some food for the muskrats if they needed it.

Monday was a day of evaluation from Parks Canada. The muskrats weren't seen and must have been hiding because of the activity around the lock repair. It was agreed upon that there was no way for them to get out on their own. With the colder temperatures and snow heading our way later in the week, it was decided that live traps would be set Tuesday. The good news was that checking the locks both Monday and Tuesday mornings showed the apples were gone, so we knew the muskrats were eating.

Early Tuesday afternoon I received a text that the live traps were set, and they would only be left out for the day, as they didn't want to leave the traps out overnight with the colder temps coming in. The food of choice used in live traps for muskrats, according to Shades of Hope, is typically tuna or cat food which being quite smelly is irresistible to them. Sure enough, the food worked. At 7:09 p.m., I received a text that late in the afternoon both the muskrats were captured. They were assessed onsite, determined to be alert and of healthy weight, so both were safely and successfully released back into the nearby lake. Everyone was ecstatic as I shared the news Tuesday night. What a happy ending!

What I want to share from this experience is how important collaborations between multiple organizations are to achieving success. Everyone was eager and willing to help once we were able to make the proper connections. It definitely proves that so many people truly care about nature. Of note, Kawartha Wildlife Centre was very helpful and willing to take in the muskrats if required, but their scope of focus is on

helping wildlife once rescued, not in doing the rescue itself. This is why I was very willing to get involved. What I am also excited about is after a debrief call on Wednesday with Valerie, there will hopefully be opportunities for Parks Canada and the Peterborough Field Naturalists to work closely together in the future. This continues to drive me to reach out to other groups far and wide and make important connections, as these contacts will create great educational and volunteering opportunities for our membership, as well as allow for quicker response for future rescues if we need them.

Nature in December: The Sun Stands Still

From the Book *Nature's Year in the Kawarthas* by Drew Monkman

Despite what the calendar might say, December 1 heralds the beginning of winter, a season of unadorned fundamentals. The half-hearted sun casts a pale light as it traces its lowest trajectory of the year through the southern sky. With nights as long as June days, it's no wonder that ancient peoples feared the sun's total disappearance. So it was with great joy and relief that they celebrated the winter solstice, the day that the sun literally "stands still" and stops its march southward. For the next six months, the days will grow longer. In fact, the first spring bird song is a mere eight weeks away.



Red squirrel at entrance of snow tunnel in Otonabee yard on February 5, 2022. Photo: Steve Paul

With the arrival of December, naturalists look forward to the camaraderie and friendly competition of the Christmas Bird Count. Spending an entire day outside simply counting and looking for birds is the ideal antidote to the pressures, excesses and mad rush of the holiday season.

As attractive as our holiday decorations may be, nature itself provides the most enduring Yuletide adornments: festive Winterberry Holly fruits, radiant cardinals, fluffy chickadee baubles, hoar-frosted windows, and shimmering icicles. The Christmas tree, symbolic of life's vigour in the face of winter, fills our homes with the resinous fragrance of the northern forest. Nature also supplies its own array of sounds for the festive season: the cracking and rumbling of ice forming on the lakes, the shrill scolding of Red Squirrels, and the croaking of ravens patrolling the Shield.

Although December sees the year come full circle, it is neither an end nor a beginning. Like every other month, it is simply part of an indivisible whole.

From the Archives

Submitted by Martin Parker

Special Public Presentations of the PFN

In the 1990s, the PFN arranged a number of public presentations by leading naturalists from across the province. The following are several of these special presentations.

Friday, April 21, 1989 - Brock Fenton

JUST BATS: an appreciation of bat behaviour and ecology.

Whetung Theatre, Brealey Campus S.S.F.C.

Tickets - \$3 in advance, \$3.50 at door

Friday, May 17, 1991 - R.D. Lawrence

Speaking on 'Living with Wild Animals' and 'What to Do with Stray Animals When They Are Found'
Whetung Theatre, S.S.F.C. Brealey Campus
Tickets - \$5

May 14, 1993 - Arthur Black
Writer/Broadcaster: narrations, orations, opinions, wit & whimsy.
Tickets: \$8 per person

Friday, November 25, 1994 -- John and Janet Foster
In a slide/music/chit-chit/question presentation on West Coast filming experience in Clayoquot Sound, the Khutzeymateen River (Grizzly Bear Sanctuary) and the West Coast Trail, plus images of Canada. At the Wenjack Theater, Trent University.
Tickets: Adult - \$8, Student \$6. Under 12 - \$2

Friday, April 29, 1994 - Michael Runtz
Algonquin Seasons, a natural history of Algonquin Park. Well-known seasonal naturalist at Algonquin Provincial Park, Noted wildlife photographer and author. P.C.V.S. Auditorium
Tickets: Adult - \$6, Children - \$2

Steve's Swan Sightings: A First-time Family for Sadie and Chip

Submitted by Steve Paul

During the two years I have been reporting Trumpeter Swan sightings in our area, my love and appreciation for Trumpeters continues to grow every day. As some of you recall, my fascination started in March 2020 when I started following R39, a tagged adult male swan that spent a couple of weeks near Trent University. I did some research, learned he didn't have a name, and went ahead and had him named Trent. This year in 2022, I have written two articles about my first Trumpeter Swan rescues: one about an adult male swan (successfully released, tagged Y97 and named Cooper), as well as another about rescuing a cygnet that later had to be euthanized after battling a deadly fungal infection called Aspergillosis. These highs and lows are all part of the cycle of nature. All of these events have allowed me to become better educated, and they have connected me to a lot of great people that have been key players in helping protect and conserve Trumpeter Swans in Ontario.

In March 2021, a pair of Trumpeters showed up in Peterborough for their first time. The cob (male swan) did not have any tags or bands, but the pen (female swan) was tagged X66 on her left wing. By reviewing records online, I determined her name was Sadie. She was born on Sturgeon Lake on 2019 to parents H80 Garfield and J89 Outcast, and had five other siblings, all tagged X65, X67, X68, X69 and X70 in November 2019 as they overwintered at LaSalle Park in Burlington.

The pair spent most of 2021 on Thompson Bay in Peterborough. Sadie's untagged, unbanded partner was nick-named Chip, as he had a chip out of his bill. It was exciting to have them around for most of the year although, at three years of age, Sadie was not quite mature enough to start a family. As winter and the ice closed in, Chip and Sadie moved away from Thompson Bay, and spent most of the winter along the open water on the Trent system up towards Lakefield, and even up as far as Young's Point.

Depending upon how the weather warms up in March before the spring thaw, most pairs return to their "home" ponds in March or April. Trumpeter Swans usually lay eggs in April or early May. The average



Sadie on the nest on May 28.
Photo: Steve Paul

clutch sizes vary between three and eight eggs, with eggs being laid every other day until the clutch is complete. The female is the one that incubates the eggs. She only starts incubating the eggs once the last one is laid, so that all the cygnets will hatch within a 24-hour period. Incubation lasts on average around 34 days, and most of the hatching happens through late May all the way up to mid to late June, depending upon the temperature and the geographical location.

It turns out that Sadie and Chip liked Peterborough so much that they returned in April 2022, spending time at their favourite spots along Thompson Bay. But over a two-week period after coming back, they were moving around checking out a couple of other ponds in the area. They ultimately settled on one location and started building a nest on top of an old muskrat lodge. Now, nearing four years old, Sadie was ready to lay her first eggs. She started sitting on the nest in early May, and I started stopping by each day to check their progress. There really wasn't much to see, because she only got off the nest for brief periods to feed or bathe, while Chip faithfully guarded the nest.



Parents with five cygnets on June 14. Photo: Steve Paul

On June 10, I was able to get my first glimpse of cygnets. When Sadie started fussing about, I was able to see two little fluffballs moving around. On June 12, the family moved off the nest for the first time, and I was able to capture photos of five little cygnets. Trumpeter Swans are born precocial, which means they are able to start feeding right away. I could see them pecking away at the surface.

So, what happens to a family growing up on a pond? A lot of growth and development, of course, but it takes a long time. Overall, I learned that as Trumpeter Swans start growing, they stay close to the nest for protection, which makes sense, but as they get bigger they seem pretty lazy and don't move very much. There were many days I didn't see them, especially as the cattails started getting taller. As I was working full-time it was hard to see them out and about on a regular basis, so I started spending more of my time watching them on weekends.

As Trumpeter Swans are the largest native waterfowl in North America, with most swans averaging between 11 and 15 kg (24 to 33 lb), and standing 1.2 m (4 ft) tall, it takes almost four months for them to grow large enough to start flying. On average, only about 50% of cygnets make it to three months of age, and only about 25% make it to three years. In the case of Sadie's family, between July and September they lost two out of the five cygnets, and in early October all of the cygnets were flying.

On Sunday, October 16, I only saw one cygnet touring the pond with the parents, and shortly after I found that the other two cygnets decided to cross a busy road, just to see what was on the other side. Without enough clearance for takeoff, they would have to cross the road again. I spent six hours waiting for them to return, and successfully stopped traffic both times, even getting help from drivers to make sure the cygnets got back to their family without getting killed.

On November 18, just before finishing this article, the family was spotted together on Chemong Lake. Where they will settle this winter remains to be seen. I will continue to monitor them, and update everyone on their travels. It is my hope that over the winter we will be able to tag the cygnets and track them through their development into adulthood, see who they pair up with as mates, and where they decide to raise families of their own. And, of course, I look forward to seeing Sadie and Chip return to the same pond to raise another family next year.



Parents and three cygnets on October 23 on Thompson Bay. Photo: Steve Paul

My goal over the last two years has developed from increasing my personal knowledge on Trumpeter Swan biology and behaviour, making important connections, collaborating with other groups and educating the public, towards conducting important rescues in our area and aiming to be the main go-to contact in Peterborough and the Kawarthas. As I continue to help monitor reproduction and migration in our area, I also hope one day to further conservation and research efforts by becoming licensed to help band and tag Trumpeter Swans across the province as needed.

Lake Ontario North Fall Regional Meeting Report

Submitted by Fiona McKay



Twenty-four representatives from nine field naturalist clubs attended Ontario Nature's Lake Ontario North Fall Regional meeting on Saturday, October 22. This was the first in-person meeting since the start of the pandemic. It was hosted by the Willow Beach Field Naturalists (WBFN) at the Alderville Black Oak Savanna (ABOS) Ecology Centre in Alderville. The ABOS is located on the Alderville First Nation on the Rice Lake Plain. It has the largest intact tract of native grassland in Central Ontario. It was a beautiful day and the savanna was the perfect setting for the meeting, informal outdoor gatherings of people catching up, and a picturesque and informative walk through the grounds in the afternoon.

The regional meetings are always a combination of presentations/lectures and Ontario Nature/club updates. This meeting was no exception. The audience was treated to two very informative presentations: "Ecology at Wesleyville" by Jenny Jackman of the WBFN, and "Protecting Lake Ontario: A National Marine Conservation Areas (NMCA) Initiative" by Samantha Cava, Nature Canada's Nature Network Organizer.

Ecology at Wesleyville

This is a joint effort between the WBFN and Northumberland Land Trust. Their goal is to improve conservation of the natural heritage at Wesleyville. Wesleyville consists of about 1100 ha of rural land located in the southwest corner of Northumberland County. Big industry (Cameco, Hydro One, Remington, Ontario Power Generation) owns a significant portion of it; the balance is owned by local landowners.

This highly diverse area has over 500 ha of woodlands and old growth forest including the provincially Significant ANSI Wesleyville Ravines - one of the oldest stands in Ecodistrict 6E13. It also has more than 45 ha of barrier beach wetlands and marsh, including a Provincially Significant Wetland, a Regionally Significant ANSI, and unevaluated wetlands. Wesleyville Creek and its watershed sport an important spring-fed, coldwater creek with brook trout and other fish species, approx. 6 ha Chrysler Point Bluffs (Regionally ANSI), ~53 ha grasslands with tall grass prairie indicators, >100 ha regenerating woodlands and thicket that provide important transitional habitat, and ~700 ha of interconnected natural areas with a large diversity of habitat. For more information on this important initiative, visit the WBFN website: <https://willowbeachfieldnaturalists.org/wesleyville/>

Protecting Lake Ontario: A National Marine Conservation Areas Initiative

This presentation described Nature Canada's efforts to protect the Great Lakes by establishing National Marine Conservation Areas (NMCA), starting with Lake Ontario. Even though the economic, cultural, and ecological values associated with the Great Lakes are indispensable, they remain largely unprotected. The effort is focussing on collaboration between the federal and provincial governments, in close partnership with First Nations, to advance the establishment of new National Marine Conservation Areas in the Great Lakes. NMCAs are protected under the Canada National Marine Conservation Areas Act, which is administered by Parks Canada. They protect marine ecosystems and key features, while ensuring sustainable use of marine resources. There are currently five NMCAs across Canada, two of which are in the Great Lakes: Fathom Five and Lake Superior NMCA.

The following outlines highlights of the campaign, what's been done to date, and what can be expected soon.

- Protection of 25% of land and water by 2025 and 30% by 2030
- Create 3 new NMCAs in the Great Lakes, starting with Lake Ontario!
- New 2022 report: "Protecting the Lake of Shining Waters. The need to establish a National Marine Conservation Area in Lake Ontario"
- The Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, signed on April 15, 1972, supports 50 years of Great Lakes recovery, provides the opportunity to learn more about the lakes, and fill in research gaps
- Other areas of focus include: species & habitat protection (species at risk, recovering fish populations, Important Bird Areas (IBAs), etc.)
- Stewardship and research investment: under-researched issues, site inventory, collaborations, restoration
- Safeguarding indigenous rights
- Safeguarding cultural heritage
- Government outreach: provincial (MECP & MNRF), federal (ECCC & Parks Canada), MPPs, MPs & Mayors, letter from federal minister
- Next Steps: Feasibility assessment announcement by end of 2022, First Nations outreach, stakeholder outreach (i.e., fisheries, tourism, etc.)

Club representatives provided updates on club activities over the late spring, summer and early fall. Several clubs have returned to in-person gatherings or outings. Most clubs are continuing a hybrid format of virtual and in-person for club meetings. Some of the highlight activities include:

- **Friends of Second Marsh** received a \$35,000 provincial grant from the Great Lakes Local Action Fund in support of Year 4 of the "Let's De-Phrag the Marsh!" project. (Goal: To eradicate invasive phragmites from Oshawa's Second Marsh, as well as its adjacent property, McLaughlin Bay Wildlife Reserve, and their watersheds.
- **Durham Region Field Naturalists** is working with Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority (CLOCA) for Bluebird training to install boxes and subsequent monitoring at Lynde Shores C.A.
- The **Kawartha Field Naturalists** have published their book *The Flora of Kawartha Lakes: an Illustrated Checklist of the Flora of the City of Kawartha Lakes* by Dale A. Leadbeater and Anne M. Barbour, with plant portraits by John J. Vandenberg.
- Along with Bird Friendly Peterborough, the **Peterborough Field Naturalists** has provided funding to the Peterborough Public Library in support of their Nature Bag/Ontario Park Day Pass program. The 'Bag' kit includes a backpack, nature guides including bird, mammal and plant identification, colour maps of places to go, binoculars and other goodies. Six 'bags' are available to sign out of the library on a first come, first served basis.
- **Thickson's Woods Land Trust (TWLT)** is building a new pond with the assistance of CLOCA. They are also increasing the size of their pollinator garden. Unethical, rude and destructive behaviours by some photographers have caused TWLT to have on-site monitoring by volunteers during peak seasons.
- **North Durham Nature** has undertaken some Prairie plantings projects and are constructing and monitoring bluebird boxes.

Other notable mentions:

- **Friends of Second Marsh** was nominated as 'Charity of Choice' by Greater Oshawa Chamber of Commerce. They continue to work to establish community partners.
- The **Willow Beach Field Naturalists** newsletter has moved to a bi-monthly colour edition.

The next Lake Ontario North Regional Meeting will be held in April with the date to be confirmed. It will be hosted by Durham Region Field Naturalists, Thickson's Wood Land Trust and Pickering Field Naturalists, with a field trip to Thickson's Woods. More information will be posted closer to the date. The meeting is open to all members of PFN, so stay tuned to this column if you are interested.

So, You Want to Walk in the Woods!

One spring day in '76 a fine, young buck walked an inviting forest path.
He chanced upon a wizard of the woodland, unleashing its awful wrath.
The morning sun dappled the forest floor, and the woods were bursting with song.
This idyllic, sylvan environment comforted him as he found his way along.
Via coded percussion the sapsuckers held discussion over territorial matters;
Every singing bird chose a niche to be heard amidst whistles, trills, chips and chatters.
The 'Teacher, teacher, teacher' song of the ovenbird rang out as it hid away,
And the red-eyed vireo scarcely let up with its 20,000 songs a day.
Suddenly the buck became aware of an unearthly, electric buzzing whine.
Caught off-guard, he froze in his tracks, and glanced about for sign ...
What was this weird, hair-raising sound? Its effect was almost stupefying.
Was it coming from the air or ground? Its source was mystifying.
Then he felt his shins being struck repeatedly by a small, brown-feathered fury.
After briefly strutting with tail fanned, it folded it, and scampered off in a hurry.
A glimpse of a camouflaged, downy chick as it ran for nearby cover
Told the buck what had happened, allowing his frayed nerves to recover.
The young buck was awed by this valiant, little ruffed grouse hen –
His composure never ruffled by one so small in deer knows when!
If an under two-pound bird confronts a large beast, it needs a little more than luck,
But its adversary was only me, that slow, outwitted, wide-eyed, young buck.
Would a wild animal be dissuaded from committing acts predaceous?
Could it actually be deceived by such a wily bird gallinaceous?
Sometimes a grouse waits until approached, then explodes on strong wings blurred,
Prompting us to revere the guile of this, the crafty, 'heart attack bird'.

Murray Arthur Palmer, 2012



Ruffed Grouse photo by Ken Morrison



The Orchid Diary



A summary of noteworthy observations by PFN members and others in Peterborough County. Information compiled from e-bird, Drew Monkman's Sightings website, PTBO Sightings and individual submissions. Please submit your interesting observations to Marilyn Hubley at orchiddiary@peterboroughnature.org (Note: new Orchid Diary e-mail address)

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|---------|---|
| Oct. 17 | "On October 17, I was excited to see a Red-bellied Woodpecker in a dead ash tree at the end of our lane. It stayed for 15 minutes and made several calls as well. Its presence is one small piece of evidence of climate change. I have lived here in Bridgenorth for twenty years and had never seen this bird before." Kevin and Nancy Johnston, Bridgenorth |
| Oct. 18 | "On October 18 on the Millbrook Trail, I came across a huge river otter . It kept grunting at me and pacing back and forth in the water. There was also a second one, but I couldn't see it well. It was near where a beaver made a dam years ago." Sylvia Arsenault, Millbrook |
| Oct. 19 | 1 Chukar , Bridgenorth, seen by Eva Kennedy, has photo. |
| Oct. 20 | "I am pretty sure I have located at least a pair of Varied Thrush in the woods on the east side of High Street, just south of the water tower where a path leads to the old GE parking lot. It was along the south side of the path and close to High Street in trees with a lot of berries and crabapples. I saw the first bird on October 20. I don't have a great pic (zoomed in with my iPhone from 100ft). It was robin-like in size and stance but had an orange chest with a prominent black collar. And today, October 22 at the same spot, I saw what looked like a female (no pic) with lighter plumage and a band / bar above the eye. I am not an avid birder but fairly good spotter and just like seeing different things on my daily run." Bruce Roxburgh |
| Oct. 21 | 1 Eastern Phoebe , Otonabee Gravel Pit, seen by Jane Kroes, Susan Paradisis, Marilyn Hubley. 1 Eastern Phoebe , Corrigan Hill, seen by Tim Haan, been here all fall. 1 Pectoral Sandpiper , Otonabee Gravel Pit, seen by Marilyn Hubley, Susan Paradisis, Jane Kroes - especially dense streaking on the breast that ends abruptly at the white belly. 1 Field Sparrow , Lakefield-Sewage Lagoons, seen by Donald A. Sutherland. 1 Yellow-bellied Sapsucker , Matt's yard, seen by Matthew Garvin, hanging around for a couple of weeks. 1 Blue-headed Vireo , Trent University Nature Area, seen by Scott Gibson. 2 Swainson's Thrush , Gilmour Street, seen by Erica Nol & Chris Risley. 1 Gray-cheeked Thrush , Gilmour Street, seen by Erica Nol. 1 Snow Goose , Briar Hill Bird Sanctuary, seen by Jane Kroes & Marilyn Hubley. 1 Yellow-bellied Sapsucker , Mathison, seen by Ian Brown. 1 Black-bellied Plover , Otonabee Gravel Pit, seen by Erica Nol & Chris Risley. |
| Oct. 22 | 1 Eastern Phoebe , Raymond and Cochrane Park/Towerhill Trails, seen by Colin Jones. 1 Canvasback , Pigeon Lake, West end of Edenderry Line, seen by Donald A. Sutherland. 1 Blue-headed Vireo , Lakefield Road, Iain Rayner. 1 Pectoral Sandpiper , Otonabee Gravel Pit, seen by Michelle Young. 2 Pectoral Sandpiper , Otonabee Gravel Pit, seen by Soren Coulson. 1 Swainson's Thrush , High St., seen by Drew Monkman. 1 Eastern Towhee , backyard, seen by Ken Fulsang. 2 Northern Goshawk , Nephton Ridge, seen by Dave Milsom, Ben Taylor, Ian Valentine, Chris Risley and Cathy Douglas - diving at each other. 100 Brant , Nephton Ridge, seen by Dave Milsom, Ben Taylor, Ian Valentine, Chris Risley and Cathy Douglas. Estimate: large flocks of all dark geese, flying in loose cluster, smaller than CANG, (groups of 60, 40). 1 Nashville Warbler , Otonabee Gravel Pit, seen by Tim Haan. |

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| | <p>1 Red-shouldered Hawk, Otonabee Gravel Pit, seen by Tim Haan - called consistently for a few minutes to the south. Sounded like it was being mobbed by crows as well. Didn't see it.</p> <p>1 Nashville Warbler, High St., seen by Chris Risley.</p> <p>2 Red-necked Grebe, Pigeon Lake, seen by Donald A. Sutherland.</p> <p>1 Eastern Phoebe, Otonabee Gravel Pit, seen by Amy Semple.</p> <p>1 Common Yellowthroat, Lakefield Sewage Lagoons, seen by Donald A. Sutherland - responded to pishing.</p> <p>1 Gray Catbird, Otonabee Gravel Pit, seen by John Bick.</p> <p>2 Eastern Towhee, yard, seen by Angela Mattos, 2 heard around the yard midday. 1 male foraging under the apple tree at close range.</p> |
| Oct. 24 | <p>1 Golden Eagle, Hwy 7 between Television Road and Hwy 28, seen by Mike Burrell - juvenile flying fairly low.</p> <p>1 Eastern Towhee, Ecology Park, seen by Susan Paradisis - called at length, also seen.</p> <p>1 Eastern Phoebe, Montgomery St., seen by Talon Stryker.</p> |
| Oct. 25 | <p>1 Eastern Phoebe, Ecology Park, seen by Dan Chronowic.</p> <p>1 Red-shouldered Hawk, home yard, seen by Angela Mattos - typical migrant this time of year.</p> <p>1 Eastern Towhee, Scollard Drive, seen by Dave Milsom, male.</p> |
| Oct. 27 | <p>1 Savannah Sparrow, Quaker Oaks River Trail, seen by Jamie Crossley.</p> <p>1 Cackling Goose, Maria Street, seen by Daniel Williams.</p> |
| Oct. 29 | <p>Maris Lubbock in Selwyn wrote: "I was excited to see a flock of Evening Grosbeaks at our feeders this morning, October 29, in Selwyn. They didn't visit here at all last winter and they've been here a couple of times in the last week. I hope they make return visits. I caught a few images of them up in our maple tree. They certainly have a distinctive voice."</p> |
| Oct. 30 | <p>1 Eastern Towhee, Carveth Drive, Millbrook, seen by Jeff Stewart. Distinctive "chewinking" heard while bringing recording gear in (7:30 a.m.), bird not seen.</p> <p>5 Barn Swallows, Arnott Dr, Selwyn, seen by Katelyn Metheral, flew over field in a group.</p> <p>1 Black Scoter, Arnott Dr, Selwyn (Chemong Lake), seen by Katelyn Metheral.</p> |
| Oct. 31 | <p>1 Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Peterborough, seen by Matthew Garvin - couple lingering for the past week, good looks, no doubt.</p> <p>"We've been seeing Evening Grosbeaks at our feeders since the end of October. They are sporadic with their visits and are in smaller flocks than we have seen them in the past. We also get Wild Turkeys on a regular basis. The turkeys can be as frustrating as the squirrels!" Dennis Johnson, Northey's Bay, Stoney Lake</p> |
| Nov. 1 | <p>2 Gadwall, Lakefield Sewage Lagoons, seen by Bill Crins.</p> <p>1 Ruby-crowned Kinglet, at home, seen by Angela Mattos.</p> <p>1 Boreal Chickadee, Kawartha Highlands Provincial Park, seen by e-Birder - heard the distinctive raspy call, then got eyes on it. Brown Cap.</p> |
| Nov. 2 | <p>1 Gray Catbird, Trent Rotary Rail Trail, seen by Luke Berg.</p> <p>1 Boreal Chickadee, Trent Rotary Rail Trail, seen by Luke Berg, first heard calling west side of trail, last seen at Douro 9th Line making its way south.</p> <p>1 Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Trent Rotary Rail Trail, seen by Cathy Douglas and Dave Milsom.</p> <p>1 Swainson's Thrush, High Street, Peterborough seen by Dave Milsom & Cathy Douglas.</p> |
| Nov. 3 | <p>1 Pectoral Sandpiper, Otonabee Gravel Pit, seen by Dave Milsom.</p> |
| Nov. 4 | <p>1 Osprey, Indian River, Hope Mill to Lang, seen by Pam Martin, hanging out south of Hope Mill conservation area, fishing.</p> <p>1 American Woodcock, Carveth Drive, Millbrook, seen by Jeff Stewart.</p> <p>1 Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Trans-Canada Trail - Lily Lake, seen by Drew Monkman.</p> <p>1 Red-headed Woodpecker, Cavan Wood Drive, Peterborough, seen by Scott McKinlay.</p> <p>1 Gray Catbird, Peterborough, Trent Rotary Rail Trail, seen by Trevor MacLaurin.</p> |

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| Nov. 5 | <p>1 Chipping Sparrow, Peterborough, seen by Luke Berg.</p> <p>1 Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Corrigan Hill, Peterborough, seen by Tim Haan.</p> <p>1 Eastern Meadowlark, Lakefield – Sewage Lagoons, seen by Amy Semple, heard singing at the back corner of sewage lagoon (south east corner) in farm field area.</p> <p>1 Osprey, Peterborough, seen by Sascha Dho, Osprey has been regularly perched in tree and feeding from the river.</p> <p>1 Golden Eagle, Kawartha Highlands Provincial Park, Anonymous e-Birder.</p> <p>2 Tree Swallow, Lakefield – Sewage Lagoons, seen by Jamie Crossley.</p> |
| Nov. 6 | 1 Red-necked Grebe , Peterborough – Inverlea Park, seen by Cassandra Hill. |
| Nov. 7 | <p>3 Fox Sparrow (Red), Trent Rotary Trail (Trent to Duoro 9th), Peterborough, seen by Luke Berg.</p> <p>1 Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Gilmour St. Peterborough, seen by Chris Risley.</p> <p>1 Bay-breasted Warbler, Corrigan Hill, Peterborough, seen by Tim Haan.</p> |
| Nov. 8 | <p>1 Common Grackle, Peterborough, seen by Wendy Hogan.</p> <p>1 Fox Sparrow, Whitfield Road, Otonabee-South Monaghan, seen by Tony Barrett.</p> <p>1 Common Grackle, Whitfield Road, Otonabee-South Monaghan, seen by Tony Barrett.</p> <p>1 Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Peterborough, seen by Matthew Tobey.</p> <p>16 Sandhill Cranes seen flying over Oakwood by Gavin Hunter.</p> |
| Nov. 9 | <p>1 Common Grackle, Cavan, seen by Marilyn Hubley.</p> <p>“On November 9, we had a visit at our feeder from a female Pine Grosbeak. She was the first ever that we had on our lot; too early for the winter list, but perhaps she’ll be back.” Michael Gillespie, Keene</p> |
| Nov. 10 | <p>1 Tundra Swan (Whistling), Otonabee Gravel Pit, seen by Luke Berg, adult flying over with TRUS, high pitched calls and two thirds the size of the TRUS.</p> <p>2 Red-necked Grebe, Pigeon Lake – Sandy Point, seen by Donald A. Sutherland.</p> |
| Nov. 11 | <p>1 Osprey, N Lang Road, Peterborough, seen by Sascha Dho.</p> <p>1 Redhead, Norwood Millpond, seen by Cathy Douglas.</p> <p>1 Cackling Goose, Beavermead Park, Peterborough, seen by Linda Sunderland.</p> <p>1 Gadwall, Little Lake (Mark Street Boat Launch/Rogers Cove) Peterborough, seen by Dan Chronowic.</p> <p>2 Tundra Swan, south end Duncan’s Line, Otonabee South Monaghan, seen by Cathy Douglas.</p> <p>3 American Wigeon, Rice Lake – Pengelly Landing, Peterborough, seen by Iain Rayner.</p> |
| Nov. 12 | <p>10 Common Grackle, Trent University Wildlife Sanctuary Nature Area, Peterborough seen by Luke Berg.</p> <p>1 Cackling Goose, Peterborough Landfill Wetland Project, seen by Andrew Brown & Trevor MacLaurin.</p> |
| Nov. 13 | <p>2 Black Scoter, Pigeon Lake – Sandy Point, Peterborough, seen by Donald A. Sutherland.</p> <p>100 Redhead, Rice Lake – Pengelly Landing, Peterborough seen by Andrew Brown & Trevor MacLaurin.</p> <p>5 American Wigeon, Rice Lake – Pengelly Landing, Peterborough seen by Andrew Brown & Trevor MacLaurin.</p> |
| Nov. 14 | “I came across a native Beetberry plant (<i>Blitum capitatum</i>) on November 14 while hiking in the Jeffrey-Cowan Forest Preserve on Stoney Lake.” Bet Curry |
| Nov. 15 | <p>220 Redhead, Rice Lake – Pengelly Landing, Peterborough, seen by Dave Milsom.</p> <p>1 Gadwall, Peterborough – Little Lake (Mark Street Boat Launch/Rogers Cove) seen by Dan Chronowic.</p> <p>1 Double-crested Cormorant, Water St to Mark St Loop, Peterborough, seen by Iain Rayner.</p> |
| Nov. 16 | 2 Fox Sparrow (Red) , LHT Drummond Line to Heritage Line, seen by Luke Berg. |
| Nov. 17 | 370 Redhead , Rice Lake - Pengelly Landing, seen by Dave Milsom. |






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| Nov. 18 | 1 Double-crested Cormorant , Nassau Mills Road, Peterborough, seen by Drew Monkman. 4 Redhead , Rice Lake – Hall Landing, Peterborough, seen by Marilyn Hubley & Sue Paradisis. 1 Little Gull , Rice Lake – Pengelly Landing, Peterborough, seen by Cathy Douglas. |
| Nov. 19 | 1 Fox Sparrow , Bailieboro – Bensfort Corners, Peterborough, seen by Luke Berg. 1 Canvasback , Rice Lake – Pengelly Landing, Peterborough, seen by Olivia Maillet, Trevor MacLaurin, and Andrew Brown. |
| Nov. 20 | 1 Fox Sparrow , Scollard Drive, Peterborough, seen by Dave Milsom. 1 Savannah Sparrow , Engleburn Ave., seen by Hilary Dickson. 1 Fox Sparrow (Red), Douro Eighth Line, seen by Mike Burrell. |
| Nov. 22 | 1 Common Grackle , Highway 7, Peterborough, seen by Luke Berg. 15 Bonaparte's Gull , Rice Lake – Pengelly Landing, Peterborough, seen by Dave Milsom & Cathy Douglas. 4 Canvasback , Rice Lake – Pengelly Landing, Peterborough, seen by Cathy Douglas & Dave Milsom. 1 Wood Duck , Peterborough – Beavermead Park, seen by Tim Haan. |
| Nov. 23 | 1 Little Gull , Rice Lake – Pengelly Landing, Peterborough, seen by Andrea Kingsley. 1 Bonaparte's Gull , Pigeon Lake – Sandy Point, Peterborough, seen by Dave Milsom and Cathy Douglas. 1 Marsh Wren , Imagine the Marsh (Lakefield Marsh), Peterborough, seen by Iain Rayner. 1 Wood Duck , Imagine the Marsh (Lakefield Marsh), Peterborough, seen by Iain Rayner. 1 Wood Duck , Peterborough – Little Lake Cemetery, seen by Trevor MacLaurin & Andrew Brown. |
| Nov. 24 | 1 Double-crested Cormorant , Trent University, Peterborough, seen by Jax Nasimok. |

PFN OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Memberships may be
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PETERBOROUGH FIELD NATURALISTS

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2. Single Student or Youth \$15 ☐

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

| Name | Age |
|------|-----|
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| | |

| Name | Age |
|------|-----|
| | |
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<<< 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: _____



An assortment of stellar photos submitted in the last year. Red Admiral on Oct. 22 (Steve Paul), Eastern Screech Owl on May 30 (Don McLeod), male American Redstart in August (Marilyn Hubley), Solitary Sandpiper (Reem Ali), Northern map turtle near Deer Bay Reach Road on Apr 25 (Ken McKeen), Bohemian Waxwings (Marilyn Hubley), Sandhill Cranes at Crowes Landing in July (Rene Gareau), Red-bellied Sapsucker (Don McLeod), Snowy Owl on January 4 (Cathy Douglas), and Least Bitterns (Marilyn Hubley)