

The Orchid

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Bulletin of the Peterborough Field Naturalists

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An engaged community that is inspired to learn about, appreciate and conserve nature in all its forms



An unusually colourful winter scene thanks to a Golden-crowned Kinglet flitting around in a white cedar. Photo: Marilyn Hubley

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Welcome new PFN members!



- Kaitlyn & Tom Nimigon & family
- Cass Stabler & family
- Linda Humphries
- Megan Miller & Ian McBain
- Megan Miller & Ian McBain
- Julie Sokolowski



Clockwise from above: Adult Red-tailed Hawk eating an Eastern Cottontail on this year's Peterborough Christmas Bird Count. Photo: Ken Morrison. Photos from Marilyn Hubley: American Kestrel on Nicholson on Dec. 11, Eastern Coyote, and Eastern Cottontail.

PFN Coming Events	
<p>Dates and times to be announced</p>	<p>Nature Appreciation Walks</p> <p>Last winter’s Nature Appreciation Walks were a hit, so we are setting them up again this year. <i>We still have lots of room and we would love for you to join us!</i> If you are new to the PFN, you may be curious to know how they are different from our regular outings. Basically, we are looking to collect a list of people that are interested in getting together on more short-notice. These walks pop up based on the weather and leaders’ availability. Many times, they are great reasons to get out and enjoy nature with others without a topic or agenda. Getting out in the fresh air, exercising, and socializing are great for our physical and mental health.</p> <p>If you are interested in joining these nature walks, send us an e-mail. If there are topics you are very interested in, mention that in your response. If you might be interested in leading an outing, please identify that in your e-mail response as well. We will keep a list and - when the weather presents an opportunity - will send out an invitation. The time and day of the week will change as will the location and degree of difficulty. If you can’t attend, just ignore the e-mail. If you want to attend, just respond to the instructions in the e-mail. To register for being on this list, please send an e-mail to Steve at stevepaul70@gmail.com</p> 
<p>Saturday, Jan. 4 2 to 3:30pm Ecology Park 1899 Ashburnham Road (Beavermead parking lot)</p>	<p>UPCOMING JUNIOR NATURALIST EVENT</p> <p>Kids’ Christmas Bird Count</p> <p>The Christmas Bird Count (CBC) is North America’s longest-running citizen science project and now includes more than 2,000 locations and tens of thousands of volunteers just like you! It started way back in 1900.</p> <p>This is an important opportunity for our Juniors to help with scientific research and learn more about the birds who winter in Peterborough. It’s also lots of fun! For more information, check out https://www.birdscanada.org/bird-science/christmas-bird-count-for-kids .</p> <p>To register, contact Shelley at juniors@peterboroughnature.org Children must be accompanied by an adult.</p> 
<p>Saturday, Jan. 4 Back-up date: Jan. 5</p>	<p>Petroglyphs Christmas Bird Count</p> <p>If interested in taking part, please contact Colin Jones at cdjonesmclark@gmail.com</p>
<p>Thursday, Jan. 9 5 to 8 p.m. The Canadian Canoe Museum</p>	<p>Monthly Meeting: An Evening at The Canadian Canoe Museum</p> <p>The Peterborough Field Naturalists will celebrate 85 years in 2025 and to start the year off, The Canadian Canoe Museum has been booked for the January PFN Members’ Meeting! (canoemuseum.ca/visit/)</p> 


PFN Coming Events

<p>2077 Ashburnham Drive, Peterborough Peterborough Transit: 7 Lansdowne (Eastbound), Marsdale at Ashburnham stop</p>	<p>For those of you who have registered, you are invited to come early (beginning at 5 p.m.) to tour the museum’s Exhibit Hall and join PFN members for social time and displays. Upon arrival, please sign in at the Event Hall on the second floor and enjoy appetizers, sweets and beverages catered by the Silver Bean Cafe (alcoholic beverages can be purchased downstairs at the café). At 6:45 we will begin the PFN meeting with remarks from the President and dignitaries followed by a presentation from MJ Proulx, the Exhibits Project Coordinator. MJ will outline the museum’s approach to collaborative relationships with indigenous communities and commitment to the environment in caring for the museum’s new campus.</p> <p>For those who have not registered, a zoom invitation will be sent soon so you can join us at 6:45 for the presentations and the speaker.</p>
<p>Thursday, Feb. 13 Doors open 7 p.m. Meeting at 7:30 p.m. Hybrid meeting Camp Kawartha 2505 Pioneer Road</p>	<p>Monthly Meeting: Ontario Turtle Conservation Centre: Where Community and Conservation Connect</p> <p>With assistance from live education ambassador-turtles, Lisa Browning will highlight the important work the OTCC conducts as a native freshwater turtle rehabilitation centre, and how it operates as a registered charity. As all eight species are listed as a species-at-risk federally, she will discuss the threats turtles face due to human activity and demonstrate how individuals can be involved in their protection. Learn how community effort is crucial in giving turtles a chance to carry-on their valuable role in our environment.</p> <p>Lisa Browning is the Education Coordinator with the Ontario Turtle Conservation Centre (OTCC), leading educational events to spread awareness on freshwater turtle conservation. Having started as a volunteer at the OTCC, she developed a passion for Ontario’s turtles and is delighted to share this passion with others.</p> 
<p>Sunday, Feb. 23 1 to 3 p.m. 15 participants Kawartha Nordic Ski Club 7107 Highway 28, North Kawartha</p>	<p>Winter Wonders: Snowshoeing & Winter Insect Observation</p> <p>Bundle up and join this event for a winter experience that combines the thrill of snowshoeing with the fascinating world of cold-weather critters. Whether you're a seasoned explorer or a first-timer, this event promises fun, learning, and a deeper connection to the wonders of nature.</p> <p>Erin McGauley will lead everyone in exploring the Heartlands Loop, a 3 km trail closest to the chalet, and will stop for a rest at the sugar shack warm-up cabin.</p> 

PFN Coming Events

	<p>Don't miss this unique opportunity to explore the magic of winter landscapes and uncover the secrets of nature's smallest wonders. Details:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guided snowshoe trek: Traverse picturesque snowy trails with a guide leading the way. Bring your own snowshoes or rent a pair. • Cost: Participants will need to purchase a snowshoe pass for \$13 + HST. If you aren't bringing your own snowshoes, you can rent them onsite for \$15 per day (limited quantities, call to reserve). • Winter insect observation: Discover the hidden world of winter insects. Learn how these tiny creatures adapt and thrive in cold environments with a naturalist-led discussion and (hopefully!) some hands-on exploration. • Warm-up station: Relax and recharge at the sugar shack by the fire. Bring along a hot beverage if you wish. <p>Space is limited, so sign up early! Register by e-mailing ekmcauley@gmail.com beginning February 1.</p>
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Date, time and location TBA	<p>PFN Annual General Meeting and Guest Speaker in March</p> <p>Please check the PFN website and social media for announcements. More information will follow in the March edition of <i>The Orchid</i>.</p>
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June 16 to 19 Presqu'ile Provincial Park	<p>PFN's Third Annual Camping Trip</p> <p>Please see advert on page 7 for more information. Camping reservations can be made for this trip starting on January 19.</p>	
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Note: Most 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.

How can you get more involved with the PFN? Consider leading some outings!

Is there a wonderful spot that you would like to share with others? Are you always looking at wildlife, birds, plants or scenery while you are out walking? If you are passionate about nature and love sharing with others, we would love to hear from you! We are always looking for outing leaders. If you have any ideas for an outing, but feel you would like some support to get started, please e-mail Linda at linda.sunderland@gmail.com or Steve at stevepaul70@gmail.com and we can connect you with experienced outing leaders to make sure you are comfortable with this new role.

Other Events of Interest

2 nd Tuesday of month 7:30 p.m. at the Publican House 294 Charlotte St.	<p>Conservation Café</p> <p>Trent University's Conservation Café presentation series shares research about topics connected to conservation with the public. The Conservation Café typically takes place on the second Tuesday of each month upstairs at The Publican House at 7:30 p.m. Admission is free, and all are welcome! Follow @TrentConserve on Twitter to stay up to date on all Conservation Café events.</p>
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Other Events of Interest

<p>Saturday, Jan. 25 1 to 3 p.m. Fenelon Falls Capacity: 24</p>	<p>Black History Month Hike</p> <p>Another popular event back this year! In celebration of February’s Black History Month, Kawartha Land Trust (KLT) and Diverse Nature Collective (DNC) will host an informative guided hike through the snowy terrain. The guided hike, facilitated by Patricia Wilson, will shine light on Black contributions to the environmental movement both past and present and give insight into what the future of conservation will look like with more diverse voices at the table. Depending on snow conditions you may want to bring snowshoes. We will have some extra sets available if you do not have your own and would like to try snowshoeing! Otherwise, please dress for the weather and being outside for a couple of hours. To register, go to: https://kawarthalandtrust.org/events/</p> 	
<p>Sunday, Feb. 16 10 a.m. to noon Camp Kawartha Environment Centre, Peterborough Capacity: 30</p>	<p>How to Be a Winter Wildlife Detective</p> <p>Want to know what’s happening in the woods when you’re not around? During this family-friendly event, we will examine signs of local wildlife and learn about their relationships to the land and each other through games and storytelling. Jamie Williams has been working as an outdoor educator and nature-based mentor for over 10 years. To register, go to: https://kawarthalandtrust.org/events/</p>	

Messages from the PFN Board

National Ribbon Skirt Day



The Board of Directors is committed to understanding our treaty responsibilities and role in Truth and Reconciliation. We have identified a need to learn more about the values and beliefs of our indigenous neighbours and show our respect and support. Throughout the year, there are dates important to the Anishinaabeg which we will share through *The Orchid*.

The first in the calendar is National Ribbon Skirt Day, which is observed every January 4. Much like Orange Shirt Day, Ribbon Skirt Day arose from racism. Isabella Kulak, a member of Cote First Nation, was shamed for wearing her handmade ribbon skirt to a formal wear day at her elementary school. These skirts are traditionally worn by First Nations and Métis women and girls as a symbol of identity, resilience, and survival and represent a direct connection to Mother Earth. Isabella’s story reminds us of the enduring injustices, racism, and discrimination faced by First Nations, Inuit, and Métis in Canada every day, and on the importance of the role we all must play in reconciliation.

Membership Renewals

Just a friendly reminder that it's time to renew your PFN membership for 2025. Please go to our website <https://peterboroughnature.org/membership/> and click the "Join Online" button. Once your application form has been submitted, you can either pay your membership fees through Canada Helps by clicking on the "donate" button on our website or by going to your bank account to e-transfer your payment to

payments@peterboroughnature.org In the comment section of the transaction please indicate "Membership Payment." Should you have any questions regarding the renewal process, please contact our membership team at membership@peterboroughnature.org

2025 AGM Online Auction Fundraiser

It's never too early to start planning! As you switch over from warm season to cold season interests, keep in mind the PFN's annual online auction. Held in conjunction with our Annual General Meeting in the spring of each year, the auction is PFN's sole fundraising event, with proceeds of the auction supporting the general operations of the PFN, including administration costs, production of PFN's newsletter, *The Orchid*, events and special projects. Items must be new or previously owned in good condition, suitable to rehome. Contact Fiona (fcmckay@peterboroughnature.org) to discuss any possible donations.

PFN's Third Annual Camping Trip Will Take Place June 16 to 19 at Presqu'île Provincial Park

Submitted by Colleen Lynch



Presqu'île Provincial Park is located in southeastern Northumberland County on the north shore of Lake Ontario. This park offers a variety of settings from shoreline to forest including:

- Swimming: 2.5 km sandy beach 🏖️
- Hiking: 16 km of trails and paths along shorelines and through woodlands and meadows for butterfly 🦋
- A birding hotspot in spring and fall: 338 bird species recorded with 130 breeding species 🐦 🦉 🦅
- 1 km marsh boardwalk trail accessing the largest protected marsh on the north shore of Lake Ontario
- Two visitor centres; Nature Centre open daily in summer and the Lighthouse Centre open daily in summer and on weekends in the spring and fall
- Second oldest operating lighthouse in Ontario
- Biking 🚲

Arrival: Monday, June 16 on or after 2 p.m.

Depart: Thursday, June 19 on or before 2 p.m.

Leaders: Colleen Lynch & Don McLeod

Reservations website: <https://reservations.ontarioparks.com/>

Each member is responsible for booking their own campsite. The west end of "Trails End" campground or East end of "Elmvale" campground is recommended. Trails End campground has almost all electrical campsites. This former farm field is now treed with a young forest and shrubs and most sites are nicely

screened. Vault toilets and water taps service this campground. Elmvale campground has mostly non-electrical sites with a few having electrical service. Three sites are situated directly on the lakeshore. Most sites are in mature forest, with the ones nearer the lake being more open.

Tents and trailers (RVs) are welcome. This park also offers the rental of a cabin or roofed accommodations which feature canvas tents covered by a steel roof, equipped with beds, a table and chairs and propane BBQ. Visit the Ontario Parks Presqu'ile Provincial Park website for more information: <https://www.ontarioparks.ca/park/presquile>



You should book 5 months in advance to get a site. (e.g., *Plan to make your campsite booking on January 19 at 7 a.m.*) If unable to obtain a campsite, you can receive alerts when sites become available by clicking the "Notify Me" button on the reservation site.



E-mail Colleen Lynch at clynch166@gmail.com or call/text Colleen at 705-868-4262 with your intention to attend, campsite number and permission to share your e-mail address with other campers so you can be kept up to date on details and bookings. Accessibility: moderate.

Community Project Grant Awarded to Riverview Park and Zoo

Submitted by Legacy Grant Committee

The PFN has provided a small grant to the Riverview Park and Zoo of Peterborough in support of a project aimed at improving the life of specific species within the zoo. The work is being carried out with the assistance of two biology students at Trent University. They will be observing both the Squirrel Monkeys and Slender-tailed Meerkats to determine changes in seasonal behavior. They will also be observing the Two-toed Sloths to determine interactions during the night. As well, they will try to determine why the camels are biting metal components of their enclosures. The funds provided by the PFN will permit the purchase of a video-capturing trail camera.

This application was reviewed by the Legacy Fund Grant Committee consisting of Martin Parker, Chris Risley, Pamela Martin and Sue Paradisis who made a recommendation to the Board. The Board approved a grant of \$260 for this application. Funds for this grant come from the annual payment received by the PFN from the PFN Legacy Fund, an endowment fund managed for the PFN by the Community Foundation of Greater Peterborough.

"Kids With Cameras" Junior Naturalist Outing

Submitted by Saima Sarfraz

On a chilly Saturday, November 23, nine Junior Naturalists with their parent(s)/ grandparent(s), gathered near the play area in Jackson Park where leaders Shelley King and Jennifer Lennie briefed all participants about the basics of photography using different camera angles and perspectives to capture photos.

The Juniors couldn't wait to get started and began taking shots right away. Immediately, a hut built from branches drew special interest. Moving forward, squirrels caught everyone's attention. Unfortunately, they weren't appreciative of being photographed without permission and kept running away; however, the enthusiastic paparazzi still managed to click a few. We then stopped at the bridge



Photo: Ismail Sarfraz



Photo: Naomi Lennie

over Jackson Creek, where Jennifer gave the young photographers beautiful DIY frames with instructions to the kids about how to use the frames to focus on the subjects they want to capture in their photos.

Our group also came across two Trent University students sampling water and insect larvae for their project. The students generously shared their findings and allowed children to take pictures of the larvae. While still in the forest, Shelley drew the kids' attention to unique features of trees, such as the patterns on logs created by insects and insect larvae, as well as noting the complexity of tree roots grasping onto rock or even growing on top of another tree. We ended the event with hot chocolate and hot apple cider to warm ourselves and socialize with all the participants. It was a great way to share the afternoon with other Junior Naturalist families.

Honouring Frank Morris: A Legacy of Nature and Literature

Adapted from Frank Morris's obituary in the *Canadian Field Naturalist*, with present-day notes in italics by Lou Smyrlis

Do you know why our newsletter is called "The Orchid"? It wasn't always so. When the first issue was published back in March of 1950, it was called "Peterborough Nature Club News", using the initial name of our club. In February 1956, however, it was renamed "The Orchid" in honor of Frank Morris, a founding member of the club with a passion for orchids. Morris, who was also an honorary president of the club, had passed away in 1949.

Frank Morris wasn't just a nature enthusiast, he was a teacher, writer, and scholar with a lifelong passion for the natural world. His connection to orchids was particularly special, cemented by his co-authorship of *Our Wild Orchids*. Described as a "literary gem," the book combined insightful observations about each species with the charm and gentle humor that marked all of Morris's writings. The name *The Orchid* reflects both his love of these exquisite flowers and his broader contributions to natural history.

Born in 1869 near Crieff, Scotland, Morris's early years were steeped in the natural beauty of the Scottish countryside. His comprehensive obituary in the *Canadian Field Naturalist* mentions that as a boy, Morris was captivated by flowers, birds, insects, and fossils. After moving to London following his father's death, Morris continued his explorations, taking countryside trips with friends and collecting fossils from the chalk pits near Croydon. His fascination with living nature deepened alongside his growing interest in Darwinism and evolutionary theory, sparked by discussions at school and a family friend's passionate advocacy for the ideas of Charles Darwin.

At Oxford University, Morris's love for nature merged with his literary pursuits. He immersed himself in the classics, English literature, and evolutionary works, while finding inspiration in the works of English Romantic poet William Wordsworth, whose verses echoed his own feelings about the natural world.

In 1894, Morris emigrated to Canada, where his career as a teacher allowed him to explore and share his passion for nature. He began identifying plants and learning about Canadian flora under the guidance of Dr. William Brodie, a close friend and mentor. During his time teaching in Smiths Falls, Perth, and Port Hope, Morris inspired students to engage with nature, even founding a field club to encourage young naturalists.

During his time in Port Hope, he developed a fascination with beetles. What started as a project to help his students identify insects turned into a personal obsession. He eventually became an expert on "long-



Frank Morris

horned" beetles, contributing essays on the subject to *The Canadian Entomologist* and serving as president of the Entomological Society of Ontario from 1921 to 1923.

In 1913, Morris moved to Peterborough to teach at Peterborough Collegiate Institute, where he headed the English Department until his retirement in 1936. His dual expertise in literature and natural history was evident in his work, which often blended scientific observation with lyrical prose.

Morris's love for orchids blossomed during his time in Peterborough. His partnership with Edward A. Eames, a photographer of wild orchids, led to the creation of *Our Wild Orchids*, which captured the beauty of Canada's native orchids through vivid descriptions and stunning photographs. Even after its publication, Morris continued his orchid fieldwork, delighting in finding rare and lesser-known species.

Beyond orchids, Morris's writing encompassed essays, booklets like *Our Wild Flowers* (a call for conservation), and poetry inspired by Victorian greats. Most of his verse is unpublished but two poems "The First Hepatica" and "Life" are included in Professor Alexander's *Shorter Poems* (1924) which was used for a whole generation in Ontario's high schools.

Three quarters of a century after Morris's passing, "The Orchid" continues as a fitting tribute to his legacy. Every issue of "The Orchid" reflects his belief in the beauty of nature and the importance of understanding and protecting it – a vision that continues to inspire us today.

** Martin Parker notes that Peterborough Field Naturalists had prepared two albums containing a selection of glass negative prints of the photographs from "Our Wild Orchids." Over time the two albums unfortunately disappeared. In 2022, however, one of the albums was relocated and carefully restored by Dorothy McCord. It will be on display at the Canoe Museum at our special members meeting kicking off our 85th anniversary year on January 9.*

Peterborough Christmas Bird Count - Preliminary Results

Submitted by Martin Parker, Count Compiler

The annual Christmas Bird Count for this year was held on Sunday, December 15. Many birders covered the area contained within the count circle of 7 ½ miles, which was centered on Chemong Road and Sunset Blvd. The participants drove roadways, walked trails and unopened road allowances, and scanned the river and Little Lake; and many submitted a count of birds which came to their feeders. The count follows the protocol established by the National Audubon Society.

At the current time, the final results of the count are still being tabulated. A full summary will appear in the next issue of *The Orchid*.

Highlights include:

- Greater White-fronted Goose on the Otonabee River south of the city - 2nd time on count. First time was last year
- Hybrid Canada/Graylag Goose on Little Lake - a very interesting hybrid goose
- Double-crested Cormorant on river near Lock 25 - 1st time on count
- Great Blue Heron in Chemong Lake area
- Northern Saw-whet Owl in area west of Jackson Park
- Belted Kingfisher - several reported
- Eastern Bluebird - a group of 8 west of Jackson Park
- American Robins - many were reported by groups throughout the count circle
- Hermit Thrush - good numbers recorded, probably a new count high



Hermit Thrush on count day.
Photo: Dave Milsom

Cankers: How Tiny Pathogens Take on Nature's Giants

Submitted by Lou Smyrlis

Cankers manifest as sunken, discolored, brown-to-reddish lesions on the trunks and branches of trees, sometimes oozing moisture and emitting a foul odor. These unsightly blemishes, called tree cankers, are the outward signs of an inner battle, where microscopic pathogens take on nature's seemingly invincible giants.

At their core, cankers are dead patches of bark, the first victims in this microscopic invasion. If the infection spreads deeper – into the tree's water-conducting vessels – it can cut off the flow of water and nutrients, killing the tree from the inside out. Even if the cankers don't outright kill the tree, they leave it weakened and open to further attacks from insects, bacteria, fungi, or even windstorms snapping off fragile branches.

In our forests, these canker-causing pathogens go after both deciduous and coniferous trees. Oaks battle *Strumella*, maples contend with *Eutypella*, and spruce, pine, poplars, and willows fall prey to *Cytospora*. No matter the species or the attacker, all cankers share one trait: they take advantage of a tree's weakness.

A tree's bark is its first and most important line of defense. It is tough, protective, and nearly impossible for most pathogens to penetrate. But once the bark is broken – whether by a snapped branch, animal scratches, or insect damage – the door is open for infection. Trees that are already stressed by drought, extreme temperatures, or other environmental challenges are especially vulnerable.

Once inside, the pathogens bide their time. Fall and winter are their prime seasons, as trees are dormant and defenses are down. Come spring and summer, healthy trees fight back. You'll often see the bark split between diseased and healthy areas as the tree forms callus tissue around the infection, almost like scabs on a wound. This battle can go on for years.

Fungal cankers often give themselves away with tiny black or colored bumps embedded in the bark – these are the fungi's fruiting bodies. When wet weather hits, the spores ooze out of these bumps and spread to other parts of the tree or nearby trees, hitching rides on wind or insects.

Early on, cankers can be easy to miss – just a slightly sunken patch of bark. Over time, though, they often grow into large, target-shaped scars. These might look alarming, but they're a sign the tree is holding its own. Target-shaped cankers move slowly, giving the tree a chance to survive.

Diffuse cankers, however, are a different story. They're harder to spot, usually appearing as shallow depressions with subtle discoloration at the edges. But they're fast movers, spreading through the tree's tissues even during the growing season. Trees attacked by diffuse cankers rarely have time to respond and can die within a single season.

Cankers might not grab your attention on a forest walk, but they're a glimpse into the challenges even the tallest and strongest trees face in their fight to survive.



Target-shaped, elongated wounds on trees are called cankers and the deformities they cause on the outside reflect the inner battle waged by pathogens on the inside.

Photo: Lou Smyrlis

Book Review: The Race to Save the Lord God Bird by Phillip Hoose

10th anniversary edition. Originally published in 2004

Submitted by Stewart MacDonald

As a birding enthusiast, I have followed the story of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker for many years. Numerous articles and books have been written about the subject of whether it continues to exist. I read the original version of this book several years ago and re-read the 10th anniversary edition, which is the subject of this review.

The Ivory-billed Woodpecker's story is well known to birders. A bird of river bottom old growth forests in the southern United States, the author describes in detail the rapid loss of this species from our planet. (There is (or was) a Cuban sub-species of the bird which is described in the book.)

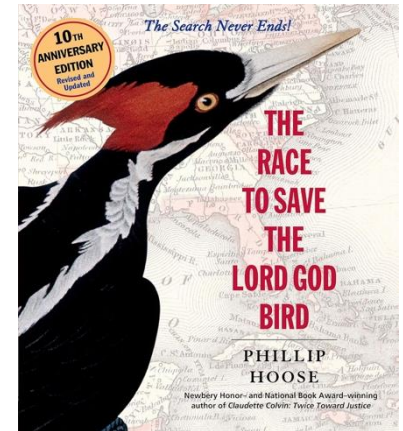
The clear-cutting of forests to make way for suitable habitat for pioneer settlements delivered a devastating blow to bird species in North America and is discussed in the book. The Passenger Pigeon was one such casualty along the way. In 1871, the Great Chicago fire occurred and one result was the need for wood to re-build. Since much of the forests of the Great Lakes basin had been mostly clear cut to make way for farms, the Lumber Companies looked southward for new places to plunder.

The Ivory-billed Woodpecker subsisted on grubs that it was able to scavenge from dying trees. With its powerful bill, it was able to strip the bark off trees to find the grubs more efficiently than other avian competitors. It had its own private buffet! But it needed giant trees on their last legs, and there were plenty of them until the lumber companies arrived in the late 1800s.

The author details some of the other problems faced by the "Lord God" Bird. Milliners in the late 1800s were paying premium dollars for the skins and feathers of "exotic" birds to meet the fashion demands for ladies' hats. The Ivory-billed Woodpecker fell into this category. In 1900, one out of every 83 Americans was employed in the hat-making business. In 1903, an ounce of plumes, requiring the death of four birds, was worth twice as much as an ounce of gold! The author describes the fight to save birds from extinction and the formation of Audubon societies across North America in this regard. Birds were also "collected" and the skins sold to wealthy individuals. Some of these collections exist in museums today.

The Ivory-billed Woodpecker became scarcer to find at the turn of the 20th century due to all of these factors. But one of the most beloved ornithologists of the 20th century, Professor Arthur Augustus Allen, entered the picture. He taught America's sole course in the study of ornithology, at Cornell University, and was determined to try and save it! The story then leads us to the journey in the 1930s to the "Singer Tract" in Louisiana, by Professor Allen's Cornell team. Their mission was to record the bird's call with very innovative technology and take photographs of the bird. The "Singer Tract" was owned by the Singer Sewing Machine Company and was considered one of the last refuges of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker. The story introduces the reader to James Tanner, a student of Dr. Allen, who becomes the "expert" in the Ivory-billed Woodpecker and eventually spends three years researching the bird in this forest. The Book contains lovely photographs of the Bird, which were taken by Tanner. Much of the Singer Tract was sold off and most of the trees eventually fell to the chainsaw and axe. And the Ivory-billed Woodpecker basically "disappeared" with mostly "unconfirmed" sightings. Is this how the story ends?

Several months after the first edition of this book was published in 2004, it was announced to great fanfare that the Ivory-billed Woodpecker had been re-discovered in Arkansas! (See June 5, 2005 issue of *Science* magazine.) In the 10th anniversary edition of his book, Hoose then describes the search for "concrete" evidence over the years after the announcement and the skepticism of "unconfirmed" reports without



reliable photographic evidence. Most sightings were of birds flying through the canopy. "Experts" claimed that people were seeing Pileated Woodpeckers, despite the fact that many of the sightings were made by experienced birders.

However, I feel that my book review, would not be complete without an update on the Ivory-billed Woodpecker. In May 2023, a peer-reviewed paper written by the collaborative research group called "Project Principalis," headed up by Dr. Steven Latta of the National Aviary in Pittsburgh, PA, was published in the *Ecology and Evolution* journal. The paper detailed significant circumstantial evidence that the Ivory-billed Woodpecker was still alive and living in Louisiana. Naturally, the paper received the usual amount of criticism. But, the Ivory-billed Woodpecker is "currently" no longer listed as "extinct" but rather "critically endangered" by the US Fish & Wildlife Service. So perhaps, the Ivory-billed Lives On! Perhaps the race to save the Lord God Bird will be won!

I highly recommend this book to avid birders and to persons who admire the fighting spirit of a creature to survive, despite the odds!

"When the last individual of a race of living things breathes no more, another heaven and another earth must pass before such a one can be again." William Beebe (1906)

Stewart MacDonald is an avid birder and has birded in over 20 countries for over 30 years. He enjoys being a bird guide and outings leader and is a member of the Carden Field Naturalists, Peterborough Field Naturalists, Waterloo Nature Club and the Ontario Field Naturalists. He can be reached by e-mail at stewjmacdonald@aol.com

January Nature at a Glance

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

Bald Eagles winter in the Kawarthas. Small numbers of Common Goldeneye and Common Mergansers spend the winter here, as well. Great Horned Owls are becoming increasingly vocal. A flight of "winter finches" occurs most years, and northern owl species are always a possibility.

A number of species including beavers, foxes and coyotes mate during January. Male Moose and White-tailed Deer lose their antlers. Deer "yard up" in northern parts of our area. Black Bears give birth to two cubs.

Amphibians and reptiles are in hibernation. Occasionally you will see a mink, otter or duck surface with a hibernating frog in its mouth.

Many fish such as bass, bullheads and carp are essentially dormant and may even partly bury themselves in the lake bottom. Species that remain active such as Yellow Perch and Walleye provide great ice fishing.

Insects can be found overwintering in all stages of their life cycle: as eggs, larvae, pupae (cocoons) and adults. Blackfly larvae, for example, are easy to find in open sections of winter streams. The galls of the Goldenrod Gall Fly are a common sight.

Herbaceous evergreen plants such as Wintergreen and Christmas Fern stand out in snow-free areas. Pines are shedding their cones. This is a good time to learn how to identify trees by the characteristics of the twigs and buds.



Bald Eagle having a meal on the Otonabee River. Photo: Robert DiFruscia

The daily maximum temperature averages about -4°C and the minimum about -15°C . At mid-month, the sun rises around 7:45 a.m. and sets at about 5:00 p.m. We quickly become aware of the increased daylight in late afternoon.

The Winter Six – Orion, Taurus, Gemini, Auriga, Canis Major and Canis Minor – rule the January sky. The Big Dipper is upright, low in the northeast. Watch for the Northern Lights. They are most impressive in winter.

February Nature at a Glance

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

Horned Larks and American Crows return to the Kawarthas. They are traditionally the first migrant arrivals of the year and mark the coming of “pre-spring.” Great Horned Owls are calling and sometimes on their eggs by month’s end. Bird song begins once again with cardinals and chickadees leading the chorus.

Male skunks emerge from their dens to find a mate. Their tell-tale scent is one of the first “datable” events of the new year.

Male White-tailed Deer reform their bachelor groups. Deep snow can make this the most difficult time of year for deer. Mating time begins for squirrels, wolves, raccoons and minks, and will last until the end of March.

Burbot, also known as Ling, spawn under the ice in “writhing balls.”

Snow Fleas can be common on woodland snow on mild, sunny days. Watch for what looks like spilled pepper!

Winter is a great time to become acquainted with lichens; on mild days, they actually photosynthesize and grow. The tan, papery leaves still clinging to young American Beech trees are a common winter sight.

Groundhog Day, February 2, marks the mid-point of winter. The first week of the month is, on average, the coldest week of the year. The average daily temperatures for the month are a maximum of -2°C and a minimum of -14°C . The increased daylight becomes very noticeable in February. In mid-month, the sun is up by about 7:15 a.m. and sets by about 5:40 p.m. Days now are almost as long as in October.

Orion, Taurus, Gemini, Auriga, Canis Major and Canis Minor continue to dominate the southern and southwestern sky. The Big Dipper stands upright, low in the northeast.



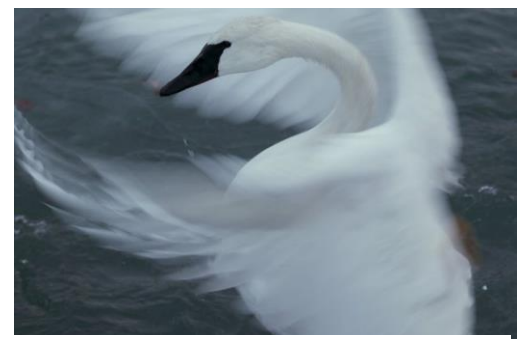
Horned Lark. Photo: Laurie Healey

Volunteers Needed for Five-Year Trumpeter Swan Survey

Submitted by Steve Paul

The Trumpeter Swan Conservation Ontario (TSCO) 5-Year Trumpeter Swan Survey is a tool used to gauge the sustainability of the Trumpeter Swan restoration efforts and to identify changes in their habitat in Ontario.

In 2025, the one-day survey will take place on Saturday, February 1 with Sunday, February 2 as a backup date. The sighting locations



Trumpeter Swan photo by Kim Stevenson from TSCO.

are throughout Ontario and are focused on the wintering locations for the swans. There are approximately 156 locations.

The survey relies solely on voluntary participation coordinated through Trumpeter Swan Conservation Ontario. Volunteers are confirmed as observers for specific locations by the TSCO. The observers will be instructed by TSCO on how to safely perform and accurately document the observations. A liability waiver must be signed by the observer. The observers will document their sightings in a web-based TSCO database. TSCO members will be available throughout the day to provide guidance and support.

If you or anyone you know would like to volunteer to take part in the survey around Peterborough and surrounding area, please send an e-mail to Steve at stevepaul70@gmail.com. You will be sent a link to fill out a "2025 Trumpeter Swan Census Counters" form.

Steve's Swan Sightings

Submitted by Steve Paul

Another Cygnet Rescued on Lake Scugog

On November 11, I began corresponding with several residents on Lake Scugog about a Trumpeter Swan cygnet that was not flying. Over the following week, I received confirmation that it had tried to fly, but was not able to get airborne. It was decided that it should be looked at, because with winter approaching, cygnets usually travel with their parents to their wintering grounds.

Trying to come up with a plan to capture an otherwise healthy swan or cygnet is very challenging. They can usually move faster and manoeuvre quicker than a kayak or canoe, and you either chase them around in a motor boat to tire them out (which is very stressful for them), or you try to gain their trust through food. Luckily, we were able to find the normal spot the family would preen and nap while they were growing up.

My amazing Port Perry contacts, Sherrill Nesbitt and Tricia McCourt, who were both instrumental in capturing L77 and recovering the dead cygnet off the Port Perry causeway (see December 2024 edition of *The Orchid*), offered to help again. Arrangements were made for Sherrill and Tricia to meet up with local Seagrave resident Al Tufts on November 24 to survey the area to come up with a plan on how to woo the cygnet onto land and try to capture it before ice freeze-up.

At 2:17 p.m. on November 24, I received a text from Sherrill. "Guess who's in the carrier?" It turns out that when Sherrill and Tricia both arrived, the cygnet was already on land. Shortly after, with four people and three blankets, they were able to corral and capture the cygnet without fuss. Sometimes the best plans are the ones that unfold right in front of you. Later that afternoon, the cygnet was transferred to Shades of Hope for examination.

The following day I learned that the cygnet had an old injury in which somehow it lost the tip of one of its wings. Because of where the injury occurred, it will never re-grow its wing feathers and is permanently flightless. Because the cygnet is healthy, conversations are now happening to try and find a permanent home for this bird. There are a lot of government regulations and requirements, so this process will take some time. I will provide future updates on the cygnet as they become available.



Rescued Trumpeter Swan cygnet.
Photo: Al Tufts

Swan Rescue on Rice Lake on December 3

December 3 was amazing and truly an example of caring, compassion and collaboration. Late on December 1, I received a message from Trumpeter Swan Conservation Ontario (TSCO) about a potentially injured swan on Rice Lake. With only minimal details, I reached out and chatted with Theo Alempakis, a local resident that was concerned because the swan had been out on the ice for over 24 hours, and it couldn't really walk and may have a broken wing.

Our first thoughts were how to rescue a swan safely without putting anyone at risk? A suggestion came in from Kyna Intini and Beverly Kingdon at TSCO to call the local firehouse. Perhaps they would help. I made a phone call to Asphodel-Norwood fire chief Daryl Payne, who said they weren't trained for water rescue, but he in turn connected me with Trent Hills fire chief Shawn Jamieson. Shawn agreed to help, and within one hour, three firefighters showed up in Asphodel Heights to help.

Based on the first distant photo I received through e-mail, it was presumed to be a Trumpeter Swan, but seeing it from the shore it was clear that it was a Mute Swan. Because the swan was only 30 feet offshore, a single firefighter went in the water to rescue it. He was in a wetsuit and was tied off with a rope for security, and continued to break through the ice until he was able to reach the swan. After securing the swan and thanking everyone for their help, I made the three-hour round trip to Shades of Hope in Pefferlaw.

Just after Christmas, I received a message back from Shades of Hope that the swan was diagnosed with spinal trauma and some frostbite on its metacarpals (digits on foot). They were suspicious that the injuries may have the result of a predator attack. Medication and fluids were administered to make the swan more comfortable, but unfortunately its condition deteriorated to the point that it had to be humanely euthanized. Everything that transpired may sound like a lot of work, but it was 100% worth it. Even though the outcome was not what we hoped for, the swan was well cared for and was not left to die on the ice.

I would very much like to thank Theo, Kyna, Beverly, fire chiefs Randy and Shawn, the three firefighters Paul Dawson, Terrence Jarvis and Alec McDowell, everyone who noticed and raised alarm bells, and of course, the amazing staff at Shades of Hope. They are all a real example of people who care about wildlife. Please consider a donation to Shades of Hope, because of their unwavering dedication and commitment to helping sick and injured wildlife.



Firefighter rescuing swan. Photo: Steve Paul

From the Archives - Minutes of Founding Meeting

Submitted by Martin Parker

From the program for the 20th anniversary celebration on Saturday, May 18, 1940

On Saturday, May 18, 1940, a fifth annual outing of the Peterborough and visiting naturalists was taken this time to home of Mr. and Mrs. Gordon K. Fraser, near Burleigh Falls. Approximately one hundred and sixty were present.

After a very pleasant and educational ramble directed by Messrs. Frank Morris, H.H. Graham, and John Hooper, along the bridle paths in the woods on the estate, a basket lunch was enjoyed by all. Tea and coffee served by our hosts added to the occasion.

After supper with Mr. H.H. Graham acting as Chairman of the meeting, short reports and addresses were given by Mr. Morris, John Hooper, Mr. Fraser and Prof. R.M.C. Taylor of Toronto University. Mr. C. Bruce Murray of Toronto was then asked to take charge. After a few explanatory remarks he proceeded with the organization of a Peterborough Nature Club. Mr. Henry read a proposed constitution, which was adopted. The following Officers, members of the Executive and Chairmen were elected.

- Hon. President: Frank J. A. Morris
- President: H. Graham
- Vice-President: Mrs. Gordon Fraser
- Secretary-Treasurer: A. J. Madill
- Directors and Chairmen -- Mr. V. R. Henry, Dr. J. A. Bannister, Miss Margaret Eastwood, Mr. R. G. Lawler, Mrs. C. S. Thompson

Archivist Notes: At the time of the meeting, Gordon K. Fraser was the Member of Parliament for the riding of Peterborough West, which became the Peterborough riding in August 1953. He was in office from March 1940 to May 1960. He represented the National Party initially which became the Progressive Conservative Party. His wife was the first Vice-President.

At the time of formation, the group was called the Peterborough Nature Club. In the mid 1960s, it was changed to the Peterborough Naturalists Club. On the advice of the lawyer during incorporation in 1971 the word "club" was dropped and the name "Peterborough Field Naturalists" was adopted.

End-of-Year Message from the Kawartha Land Trust

From an e-mail sent to KLT supporters

As the year comes to a close, all of us at Kawartha Land Trust want to express our heartfelt gratitude for your support in 2024. Thanks to you, we've been able to steward and protect more of the land you love in the Kawarthas.

This holiday season, we're celebrating the incredible achievements we've accomplished together. In the photo, our team is holding wrapped gifts to symbolize the protected lands we've announced this year.

We started 2024 with the historic announcement of the 1,400 acre Hammer Family Nature Preserve, KLT's largest protected property to date.

Then we continued the year with news of the protection of the Roussel-Steffler Memorial Sanctuary, Wittek Property, Found Property, O'Leary Family Wetland, Roscarrock CEA, Crescent Trust Property, Plant CEA, Zeidler Property, and Jeffrey-Cowan Forest Preserve Extension.

All of these natural spaces were protected because of your generosity and support. Because of you, more of the Kawarthas' natural heritage will be safeguarded for generations to come. Thank you for all that you make possible every day!

We wish you a joyous holiday season and a new year filled with peace, happiness, and the beauty of nature. We look forward to continuing this important work together in 2025!



End-of Year Message from the Ontario Turtle Conservation Centre

Excerpts from OTCC's December newsletter

The Long Road to OTCC's New Home! With the kindness of Mary Young and Gerry Young, who gifted the land to build on, and with the help of so many generous people such as yourself, we have met our goal. Construction of our purpose-built facility is now complete! We will now be able to expand the important conservation programs we carry out, and ensure that we will become a destination 'Where community and conservation connect.'



We could not have accomplished this without a *lot* of support; thank you to those who donated, whether in the form of funds, services, materials, equipment, or time. Without this overwhelming support, the budget no doubt would have put this out of reach for us, and for the turtles. We are so excited to be expanding programs that will enable us to help turtle conservation even more.

Ecopassages for turtles allow them safe passage *under* roads, therefore preventing road mortality. OTCC is teaming up with Animex International and Eco-Kare International to help stop road mortality.

Parks Canada has partnered with OTCC to help to spread awareness about turtle conservation. With their help, we formed the **Ontario Turtle Conservation Network**, to connect those carrying out conservation initiatives in Ontario. Parks Canada has also constructed a wonderful ecopassage educational display that is going to be a prominent feature in our new education centre.

2024 Stats

- 2,300 admissions to our hospital so far this year! ... Not including the *thousands* of hatchlings still hatching!
- OTCC released 5,011 turtles back to their home wetlands. That's over 5,000 turtles that would have been lost if not for *your* help!!
- We incubated almost 9,000 eggs this season. These were retrieved from turtles admitted to the hospital.
- Our hotline staff fielded over 10,000 calls this season, helping turtles get help and answering the public's questions.
- 12,000 people took part in our education events; no small feat considering we were also moving!
- Our 1,500 Turtle Taxi volunteers drove a total of 271,542 km in 2024 to ensure that turtles received immediate care. That's equivalent to almost seven times around the world! (Note that people combine turtle trips with their planned personal trips whenever possible.)

What does it take to care for the 2,000 turtles overwintering with us?

\$17,000 worth of UVB lights per year

\$115 worth of worms per week

\$1,000 worth of commercial turtle food per month

\$3,000 worth of electricity per month!

\$15,000 worth of medical supplies per season

\$25,000 worth of microchips per year

PLUS! 6,640 volunteer hours from 116 volunteers!!

...To see them released back into the wild? *Priceless!*

As a charitable organization, we rely on the support of people like you to continue our mission. Your contribution, no matter the size, makes a real difference. Together, we can give Ontario's turtles the chance they deserve. With thanks for all your support - past, present and future!



This adult Blanding's Turtle was admitted with a severe fracture of the upper shell, or carapace. On the left you can still see the orthopedic wires that were placed surgically, as well as the initial tape that is used to secure the pieces until surgery is carried out. On the right, you can see the wires have been removed and you can barely see the fracture! He will be released in the spring. He can't wait!

Can Mushrooms Fly?

Submitted by Marilyn Freeman

Last summer I discovered bird's nest fungus growing on mulch in my garden. I'd seen these very cute fungi before but never so close to home! Bird's nest fungus resembles a very small bird's nest with tiny eggs inside the bowl. To give you a sense of size, two of these eggs would fit on your thumbnail. Fungi have different ways of spreading their spores and the bird's nest fungus uses another aspect of nature in a very cool way: the kinetic energy of a raindrop.

The 'eggs', called peridioles, hang out in the nest until a raindrop hits the cup, washes up the side up the cup, usually a 60 to 70 degree slope, and rebounds back down the slope into the peridiole, launching it out of the nest. The peridiole is tethered by a thin filament called a funiculus, which is made of hyphae. The funiculus stretches until it breaks and lands on a leaf or whatever is around. The end of the funiculus is tacky and anchors the peridiole to what it lands on. Then the peridiole is positioned to take a journey through the poop machine known as a herbivore. In this way, the fungus can spread itself both near and far.

By using the kinetic energy of a raindrop for dispersal, the bird's nest fungus can save its own energy for growing, defense and other reproductive needs. Imagine how this natural technique might be used, for example, in seed dispersal for forest regeneration. I can see a clear cut full of cups waiting for the energy of raindrops to plop into them and launch seeds out onto the earth. Maybe?

Paste this url into your search engine to see a youtube video of this action:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_EBipTLgPUw&t=25s

Orchid submissions are encouraged!

The submission deadline for the next issue is Thursday, February 20.

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.

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





The Orchid Diary



A summary of noteworthy observations by PFN members and others in Peterborough County. Information compiled from eBird's rare bird sightings, Drew Monkman's Sightings website and individual submissions. Please submit your interesting observations to orchiddiary@peterboroughnature.org

Nov 22	A young male Summer Tanager , initially spotted by Helena Cymbaluk and then confirmed by Dave Milsom and Leo Weiskittel at Stornoway Place, Peterborough. This bird was seen by many PFN members over the week.
Nov 23	<p>The Greater White-fronted Goose seen throughout October continued to be seen on Little Lake.</p> <p>Angela Mattos noticed a Cackling Goose among Canada Geese on the Otonabee River between Locks 22 and 23.</p> <p>A female Gadwall was spotted by Kale Worman at the Lakefield Sewage Lagoons. It continued to be seen well into December with Mallards.</p> <p>Don Sutherland saw a male Northern Pintail on Beloporine Marsh, Cty Rd 46.</p> <p>Continuing Double-crested Cormorants were seen by Kale Worman north of Lock 22 on the Otonabee River by Jonah Bergquist-Best at Auburn Reach Park and by Don Sutherland at Hammer Family Nature Preserve.</p>
Nov 25	<p>A Bonaparte's Gull was seen by Robin Morgan at the causeway by Ennismore.</p> <p>Jeff Stewart heard a Northern Saw-whet Owl calling, followed by a (hungry?) Barred Owl, from his Millbrook area home. Jeff continued to hear the Saw-whet Owl well into December.</p> <p>A young Golden Eagle was seen by Pam Martin from her Lang yard.</p>
Nov 26	Marilyn Hubley and Cathy Douglas saw 21 Bonaparte's Gulls from Pengelly Landing, Rice Lake.
Nov 28	At least 2 Cackling Geese were spotted by Jake Nafziger in Little Lake. He also spotted 5 Ruddy Ducks at Pengelly Landing, Rice Lake.
Dec 1	<p>At Pengelly Landing, Rice Lake, Drew Monkman and Brian Wales observed a huge flock of an estimated 500 Redheads, along with 2 Ring-necked Ducks, 20 Greater Scaup and 2 Lesser Scaup.</p> <p>Ian Sturdee also noted a flock of 9 Ring-necked Ducks on Cordova Lake.</p> <p>Martin Parker saw 2 Cackling Geese with Mallards on Otonabee River between Locks 24 and 25.</p>
Dec 3	<p>A female Lesser Scaup was noted by Dan Chronowic on Little Lake.</p> <p>Don Sutherland spotted a Snowy Owl from the Hammer Family Nature Preserve on a shoal at the north end of Pigeon Lake.</p>
Dec 4	<p>Don Chronowic noted a male Gadwall on Little Lake near the Mark Street boat launch.</p> <p>While observing the continuing Bonaparte's gulls and Ruddy Ducks at Pengelly Landing, Rice Lake, Martin Parker and Matthew Tobey spotted a Common Grackle.</p>

Dec 6	<p>A Carolina Wren was seen by Sue Paradisis in her Beavermead area yard.</p> <p>Tony Barrett spotted a Fox Sparrow and a Common Grackle at his feeder on Whitfield Road. The sparrow continued at the feeder through much of December.</p>
Dec 7	<p>A Rough-legged Hawk was seen by Erica Nol and Chris Risley near Warsaw on County Rd 4.</p> <p>Wendy Hogan had a flock of 34 Evening Grosbeaks at her home at the north end of Mississauga Lake.</p>
Dec 8	<p>Another Ring-necked Duck was seen by Alexander R and another birder on the Otonabee River south of Lakefield.</p> <p>A Harlequin Duck was initially reported by Robin Morgan to iNaturalist, then seen and identified by Kale Worman and seen by many others, on the Otonabee River south of Lakefield.</p> <p>A flock of 18 Sandhill Cranes was seen flying west by Mike Burrell on Providence Line.</p> <p>The Double-crested Cormorant between Locks 23 and 24, Otonabee River was observed by Cathy Douglas who confirmed that it is continuing.</p> <p>Sarah Jamieson encountered a Snowy Owl flying over a field and a Short-eared Owl flying across the road down near the end of Bensfort Road.</p>
Dec 9	<p>Matthew Tobey saw 6 Ring-necked Ducks from the Gifford Driver boat launch on Chemong Lake.</p> <p>Dave Milsom and Brian Wales spotted a Double-crested Cormorant at Young's Point that they suspect may be injured.</p> <p>Jeff Stewart is continuing to hear the Northern Saw-whet Owl near Millbrook.</p>
Dec 10	<p>Jake Nafziger spotted a Greater Scaup on the Otonabee R south of Lakefield.</p>
Dec 11	<p>A Red-breasted Merganser was seen by Dan Chronowic on Little Lake.</p> <p>Randy Smith observed a Red-necked Grebe north of Lock 23 on the Otonabee River.</p> <p>A Northern Saw-whet Owl was heard on Fourth Line, Otonabee-South Monaghan by Marilyn Hubley.</p>
Dec 12	<p>Cathy Douglas encountered 4 Red-breasted Mergansers from Pengelly Landing, Rice Lake.</p> <p>A late Wilson's Snipe was spotted by Amy Semple feeding in the ditch along Whitfield Rd.</p> <p>Wendy Hogan saw an American Goshawk soaring across Cty Rd 36 near Buckhorn Quarry.</p> <p>Another Snowy Owl was seen by Don Sutherland on a fencepost from Hwy 28 near the Kawartha Downs.</p>
Dec 13	<p>Another female Red-breasted Merganser was seen by Leo Weiskittel and Dave Milsom at Chandos Beach.</p> <p>Olivia Maillet and Andrew Brown spotted a Short-eared Owl, surprisingly flying through Lakefield parallel to the river. Meg Heft flushed another Short-eared Owl out of the brush at Corrigan Hill.</p>

Dec 14	A Hermit Thrush was seen at the Trent University Wildlife Sanctuary by Griffin Lepage.
Dec 15	<p>Matthew Tobey spotted a Greater White-fronted Goose at Whitfield Landing, Otonabee River. Another Northern Saw-whet Owl was heard by Scott Gibson on Stockdale Road.</p> <p>A Ruby-crowned Kinglet was seen by Dave Milsom, Jax Nasimok and others doing the Christmas Bird Count at the Trent University Drumlin Nature Area.</p> <p>Three sightings of Hermit Thrushes today included 3 individuals seen by Daniel Riley in Ennismore, 1 heard then seen by Chris Risley at Cavan Swamp, and 1 seen by Noelle Deane at the Johnston Drive Ponds.</p> <p>White-crowned Sparrows were seen by Iain Rayner on Fifth Line, Selwyn and another by Matt Tobey on Brown Line, north of the airport. While there, Matt also encountered a Red-winged Blackbird.</p> <p>Leo Weiskittel also found a Red-winged Blackbird with European Starlings at the Avery Ave Ponds.</p> <p>Two Brown-headed Cowbirds were seen by Marilyn Hubley, Chris Risley and Jane Kroes on Edgewood Pk Rd.</p>
Dec 17	<p>Jake Nafziger saw a female Ring-necked Duck and a Lesser Scaup on Little Lake.</p> <p>A group of 4 Eastern Bluebirds was spotted by Marilyn Hubley on Hooton Dr, Cavan.</p>
Dec 18	A Black-backed Woodpecker was seen by Kim Bennett and Mike Coyne at Petroglyphs Provincial Park.
Dec 19	Scott McKinlay noted a Snowy Owl in a corn field along Tapley Quarter Line.

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 PFN is now on Blue Sky @PtboNature

Book Review: Canadian Wildflowers by Catharine Parr Traill (Illustrations by Agnes Fitzgibbon)

Submitted by Mary Anne Young

Published in 1868 and most recently reprinted in 2003, this charming book describes herbaceous flowering plants common to the authors near their homesteads in eastern Ontario. The 30 species described will still be well known to field botanists today, from Indian turnip (*Arum triphyllum*) – better known today as Jack-in-the-pulpit (*Arisaema triphylla*) – to spring beauty (*Claytonia virginica*). The plants are described thoroughly, with text describing habitat, growth habits, and identification cues and 10 lithographic prints to add visual interest to the book. There are also interesting notes on potential medicinal, cultural, or commercial uses that give the reader some insight into how the natural world was viewed in Ontario in the 1800s.

The text author, Catharine Parr Traill, was an Englishwoman who emigrated to Canada in the 1830s and wrote to supplement her husband's income. She is distinct amongst other authors of the era for her focus on naturalist and botanical topics. The illustrator, Agnes Fitzgibbon, was Catharine Parr Traill's niece and the daughter of Suzanna Moodie who is another well-known Ontario author from the 1800s. Each lithograph, which is a print made from a stone etching, is a compilation of between one and four plants. Every original first edition copy of the book – a run of 500 copies – was individually hand-coloured, which was a monumental effort by the artist.

I appreciate this book on several levels. The first is that my copy was given to me by my late grandmother who grew up in Lakefield near Parr Traill's original homestead, and whose love of plants inspired first my mother then me as gardeners and naturalists. She included several newsletter clippings about a first edition now owned by the Lakefield Historical Society, a book which I hope to see one day. As an artist, I enjoy the illustrations, which are both botanically accurate and artistically well styled. I also appreciate reading the descriptions of the natural world that are similar to yet different from our modern reality. For example, regarding spring beauty, Parr Traill writes:

"Canada has few of these sunny flowers, and no March days like those that woo the hive bees from their winter dormitories. And April is with us only a name. We have no April month of rainbow suns and showers."

When I read this, I consider recent April days in the upper 20 degrees Celsius. Next, regarding pitcher plant (*Sarracenia purpurea*):



Pitcher plant.
Illustration: Agnes Fitzgibbon

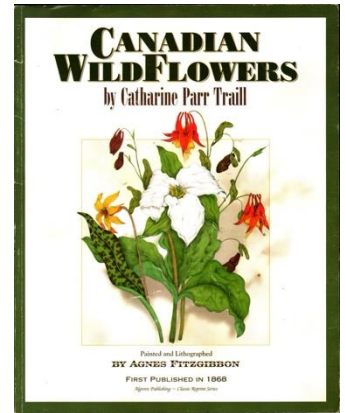
"The Pitcher Plant is by no means one of those flowers found singly and in inaccessible bogs and dense cedar-swamps, as are some of our rare and lovely orchids. In almost any grassy swamp, at the borders of low-lying lakes, and in beaver-meadows, often in wet spongy meadow, it may be found forming large beds of luxuriant growth."

And when I read this, I like to think how novel it would be to consider pitcher plant a common plant! I like to ponder what the authors would think about modern day Ontario's natural areas, and how much they may have changed since their day.

As can be expected with historical texts, there is some outdated language and attitudes which can be somewhat uncomfortable to read. In particular, mentions of Indigenous peoples are dismissive and demeaning, such as references to "the unlettered Indians", but I find these references less prominent than in other books by Parr Traill and Moodie that describe their homesteading experiences. This outdated language does not, however, take away from the botanical observations which are unbiased and accurate.

This is an interesting and easy-to-read book that will be interesting to field botanists, naturalists, and historians alike. I recommend it if you're looking for some light reading to supplement your shelf of field guides.

Editor's note: Originally published in the "Ontario Plant Press", The Newsletter of the Field Botanists of Ontario, Volume 36(4).



Small cranberry, larger blue flag, larger yellow lady's slipper, and smaller lady's slipper. Illustration: Agnes Fitzgibbon

Membership Application Form

Memberships may be obtained by mailing this completed form to:

Peterborough Field Naturalists
PO Box 1532
Peterborough Ontario K9J 7H7



PETERBOROUGH FIELD NATURALISTS

Contact Information:

Name(s):	Phone(s):
Address:	Email(s):

I would like to receive The Orchid by (pick one): Mail Delivery Email Both

Membership type and fee schedule:

Notice: Membership fees provide only a small part of the funds required to operate the Peterborough Field Naturalists. Donations from members like you help us offer a diverse range of programming for everyone. Please consider including a donation with your membership so that we can continue to serve you and the Peterborough community. **Please make cheques payable to Peterborough Field Naturalists.** For E-Transfer go to <https://peterboroughnature.org/membership/join-online/>

I have included a donation with my membership fees:

Yes or No

If yes, amount: \$ _____

1. Single Adult \$30 2. Single Student or Youth \$15 3. Family \$40*

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

Name	Age	Name	Age

◀◀◀ New Member Information ▶▶▶

Main interests:	How do you hope to participate?
<input type="checkbox"/> Natural Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Reptiles and Amphibians <input type="checkbox"/> Botany <input type="checkbox"/> Birds <input type="checkbox"/> Aquatic Life <input type="checkbox"/> Geology <input type="checkbox"/> Insects <input type="checkbox"/> Astronomy <input type="checkbox"/> Mammals Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Outings <input type="checkbox"/> Citizen Science <input type="checkbox"/> Meetings <input type="checkbox"/> 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: _____