



Hart's Tongue Herald

The Newsletter of the Owen Sound Field Naturalists Winter 2010

Box 401, Owen Sound, ON N4K 5P7

Website: owensoundfieldnaturalists.ca

Volume 23, Number 3

Editor: Lorraine Brown



Migrating Sandhill Cranes in a field near Shallow Lake in November (Willy Waterton) A decade ago a Sandhill Crane was a rare sighting. Now, they are commonly seen (and heard) in Grey and Bruce. According to the Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Ontario, "The range of the Sandhill Crane has expanded substantially since the first atlas, so much so that the species now can be expected almost anywhere in Ontario where suitable extensive open wetland habitat exists." Near Shallow Lake and Meaford this past fall, flocks of up to 350 birds were seen, to the delight of area birders.

OSFN and the Future

On a cool Saturday in late September the executive of the club met at the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority for a strategic planning session. This get-together was to review what the club has accomplished over the years, assess its present form and consider new actions that would see it move into the future. Clive Card led us through the day. It was a day of surprises, a day of intense and collegial discussion and a day of exciting decisions. What does it all mean for the club?

Firstly, Clive had us review what the club has accomplished over the years. The list generated covered activities from programs (indoor and outdoor) to projects ranging from constructing boardwalks and observation towers to undertaking surveys and assuming stewardship of properties. It documented the links the club has with other groups and its role in supporting the Young Naturalists. Based upon this exercise we got a picture of what the club has been in the past and is presently. Drawing from that list the group distilled the essence of all OSFN activity to three words: "*Knowing Nature Better.*" Before lunch that had been added to with a fuller statement of the club's mandate. It reads "*The Owen Sound Field Naturalists advocate and nurture the appreciation, understanding and conservation of our natural world.*" These two statements become a lens through which all executive decisions affecting the club will be examined and assessed.

They represent a commitment to the continuing education of members and the public through our programs. They represent a responsibility to use the knowledge of the club, in its members, to make representation at hearings, respond to requests for input regarding local planning issues and undertake local conservation projects. They represent a commitment by the club to ongoing stewardship. As Gandhi once said

"We must become the change we seek in the world."

In the afternoon, the executive went on to outline ten goals for action. These are now in the first stages of consideration and action planning. Over the next months, actions designed to achieve the goals will be developed and put in place. As members, you will be kept informed as to what is happening. This will be done with reports at indoor meetings. There will be lots of opportunity to become involved as part of the planning process, by joining one of the task groups as they are structured. The idea is really to strengthen the club through a series of actions that will provide more continuity and accountability for the executive process that guides the club, while providing creative ideas for improving the programs offered and attracting more people to become active in the club and its affairs.

It was a great day spent with a dedicated and creative group led by a perceptive skilled and able leader. I thank all those of the executive who partook, and Clive for his donation of time and skills to guide us through the process. It promises to be an exciting time of renewal for the club. Stay tuned and be ready to roll up your sleeves, if asked.

Peter Middleton, President



Have you seen any Trumpeter Swans?

Every five years, the North American Trumpeter swan survey is carried out by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Canadian Wildlife Service to assess the health of these birds. The 2010 survey will be conducted this fall.

If you have spotted a Trumpeter Swan, you can help by sending a report of the sighting to stewardship@wyemarsh.com. The report should include your name, phone number, email address, home address, date, time, location, tag number, colour, number of adults and cygnets and any other comments you think are important. An official report will be available in 2011.

Adults swans are white with a solid black beak, legs and feet, weighing up to 30 lbs. with a 7 ½ - 8 ft wing span and can live up to 35 years in captivity. They are the largest waterfowl in North American and the largest swans in the world. Young swans under a year-old are called cygnets and are brownish/grey with a pinkish beak and legs. For more information www.trumpeterswansociety.org

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A Prickly Encounter

In September, while visiting my stewardship property on the Bruce Trail, I had a memorable encounter with a young porcupine. I also had an interesting "conversation" with it. No, I'm not kidding, and I am not losing my marbles. For years I have been aware that soft moans are basically the only audible communication used by these gentle mammals. They often react to imitations.

When I first saw the young animal waddling toward me down the trail, I stopped and allowed it to approach. I gave several soft moans. It stopped and responded with moans of its own. Then it moved closer to me (within two metres) stopped and we "conversed" a couple more times. Suddenly it recognized that I was not what it assumed me to be. Now fearful, it did a quick turn around and I was faced with the legendary spread of quills. A couple more moans and the quills relaxed and the small animal rambled off into the woods. It was in no hurry to depart. Twice more it moaned as it departed.

It was one of those special moments on the trail, an interesting encounter with a young animal that I expect, had, only recently, become independent. It was a rare and engaging glimpse into a natural world we rarely experience.

Peter Middleton

Glenda Clark joins Park Advisory Committee

OSFN member Glenda Clark moved from Owen Sound to Tobermory last summer and immediately began to get involved in her new community. Glenda has joined the Bruce National Park and Fathom Five National Marine Park's Park Advisory committee. She promises to keep OSFN members aware of events going on at the park.

OSFN BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2010

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Knowledge Forums. The forum sounds intriguing. Entitled Dark Skies, Bright Minds, it will focus on air and sky, the issues that affect them, and the life that lives in them. There will be sessions on light pollution, bat ecology, fireflies, the effects of unwanted light on wildlife, and the Bruce's status as an official dark sky preserve. Program details will be coming early in 2011. Meanwhile, you might want to save those dates.

We send hearty thanks to Glenda for serving as OSFN's Ontario Nature rep for several years. She attended the regional meetings, reported on OSFN activities to other clubs in our region (Great Lakes West) and brought us ideas from those other clubs. Thanks Glenda. And thanks to our past president Fred Jazvac for offering to stand as our new ON rep.



Volunteers required for program committee

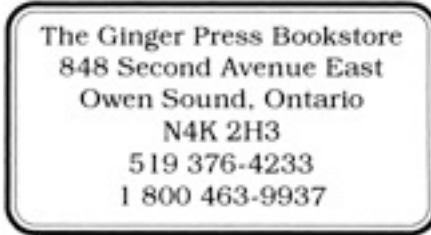
OSFN's executive and especially the program co-ordinator bring us a great indoor and outdoor program each year. The program is a very big job, and we could use some help with it.

In 2011 we plan to re-organize the program committee into two separate sections for indoor and outdoor programs. We want to involve more people from the club, and spread out the work. We need committed volunteers who would be ready to undertake the many tasks involved in setting up and running our excellent program.

Would you be willing to help? There is no experience necessary, just a willingness to work reliably until the job is done. If you think you'd like to join the new program committee, please contact the program co-ordinator, Andy Koshan, (519) 372-9480 or akoshan@yahoo.ca.

Lorraine Brown

Meeting and Field Trip Reports



Bruce Peninsula: Alvars and Fens with Dian Wood and Peter Middleton

On Saturday, Sept. 25th, nine intrepid naturalists, both young and old, met at Tim Horton's in Wiarton for a briefing before exploring the unique geology and botany of alvar and fen ecosystems found on the Bruce Peninsula. An alvar is a biological ecosystem situated on a limestone plain that has been scoured clean by glacial action, leaving little or no soil. Alvars are plentiful on the Bruce Peninsula, and so we often assume that alvars are common in our world, but they are not! Alvars are only found in southern Sweden, northwest Estonia, and around the Great Lakes in Michigan, New York, Ohio, Ontario, and Quebec. Of the 120 alvar sites in Canada and the U.S., Ontario contains 75% of North American alvars!

Our first stop in understanding the geology of the Bruce Peninsula began at Spirit Rock-- at the base of the Niagara Escarpment along the shoreline of Colpoy's Bay. There Peter explained about the geology of the Michigan Basin and with the aid of a cross-section diagram of the Bruce Peninsula, showed how the dolostone (a sedimentary rock formed from coral reefs that grew in an ancient shallow tropical sea that covered our area about 400 million years ago) is layered. As the inland tropical sea began to dry up, the minerals dissolved in its water became more and more concentrated. The limestone absorbed magnesium before it

lithified, producing a harder, slightly different sort of rock, called dolostone, which is the "caprock" of the Niagara Escarpment. Just west of Mar on our way across the Peninsula, we stopped to study a drumlin. We drove over a series of higher and higher drumlins until we reached the south edge of Sky Lake. Again we parked to examine a secondary escarpment located beside the river exiting Sky Lake. There we discovered Herb Robert, Canada goldenrod, crystallized coral in the rocks, and *Achillea millefolium* (yarrow) and ferns tenuously growing in minute rock clefts on the face of this secondary escarpment.

A super example of an alvar is St. Jean Point, about 1 kilometre north of Howdenvale. This lovely nature preserve is owned by Grey Sauble Conservation. Alvars can be classified as alvar shrublands, alvar grasslands, alvar savannas, alvar pavements, and alvar woodlands. St. Jean Point has a mixture of several of these types of alvars on what is known as the Guelph Formation of bedrock.

Alvars contain not only uncommon plants, but are also known for their rare snails and butterflies. On our walk, we located several unique plants: Hill's Thistle, low calamint which amazed everyone with its tiny, intensely peppermint scented leaves, peppermint, Kalm's lobelia, purple gerardia, swamp rose boasting bright red hips and flaming leaves, hoary willow, silky and red osier dogwoods, several asters (calico, panicked, smooth, frost weed), and different types of goldenrod (Ohio, bog, gray). Closer to the shore, the Guelph formation becomes more and more pitted, due to water mixing with the carbonate in the rock, creating a weak carbonic acid as it sits on the rock. A beautiful gneiss erratic boulder and several granitic erratics were noted as we walked out on the Boulder Trail.

Several blooming flowers surprised us: Bird's eye primula, field chickweed, and Indian Paint Brush, now known as Scarlet Paintbrush. In the woodland alvar section while hiking the Monarch Trail, we found some Spotted Touch-Me-Not-- the juice from leaves and stems reputed to be an antidote for poison ivy rash... but one of our members said it does not work!

Petrel Point, a nature preserve owned by Ontario Nature, was our next stop. It is an example of a fen or coastal meadow marsh. Along the parking area were several flat-topped white asters, while in the ditch we were fortunate to discover three Nodding Ladies' Tresses in bloom (an orchid), small fringed gentians, and Indian grass. Along the boardwalks, we identified sticky false asphodel, tufted clubrush, three square bulrush (chair maker's rush), and spike rush which was now lying flat. Two other orchid species were also identified by their leaves: showy ladyslipper and bog orchid. Carniverous plants such as the crimson pitcher plant, narrow- and round-leaved sundews were discussed. Did you know that the pitcher-shaped leaves of the pitcher plant have two zones? When rain water collects in the pitcher, insects are attracted and drown because the leaf zone below water is very smooth and slippery, while the upper half has stiff, downward pointing hairs that prevent the insect from climbing out. Digestive enzymes in the slippery section of the leaf digest the insect, adding nitrogen to the plant's diet. Mmm-mmm!

Our tour of Bruce Peninsula alvars and fens concluded at the Oliphant Fen Boardwalk. There Dian led the group down the ditch, to show another provincially rare plant-- the low nutrush (*Scleria verticillata*). (continued, next page...)

Meeting and Field Trip Reports

This diminutive plant is only about five centimeters (2 inches) tall and sports tiny white "nutlets" or protuberances on its stem. On the roadside were a number of glaucous white lettuce plants. A walk around the boardwalk revealed a tuberous Indian plantain in bud and seed at the same time. The walk also illustrated how environmentally sensitive the fen is. The tracks of an ATV, which were made more than five years ago, are still evident on the fen.



This tiny plant is low nutrush, (*Scleria verticillata*) a provincially rare occupant of fens. It grows in the Oliphant fen. (Dian Wood)

The Bruce Peninsula contains globally significant alvars, and rare coastal meadow marshes known as fens. We have the responsibility to conserve these environmentally sensitive areas and specialized ecosystems. Learning about them is one step in the right direction!

Karst Topography of the Bruce

Oct. 16th was a sunny, somewhat warm day on the northern Bruce Peninsula. A fine morning for 12 of us to meet up with local geologist and karst expert Daryl Cowell at the intersection of Highway 6 and Little Cove Road.

Before we set out to explore the St. Edmund's karst system, home of the longest known active river cave system in Ontario, Daryl explained that karst topography landscapes are those shaped by the dissolution of soluble bedrock such as limestone or dolostone by mildly acidic surface waters. The landscape we were to explore included sink streams, sinkholes, caves, and the subterranean drainage network flowing into Georgian Bay near Little Cove. The fact that much of the peninsula has dolostone bedrock

has meant that surface water searching for the path of least resistance, has over thousands of years, chemically eroded and carved out underground rivers, caves, and caverns, sometimes reemerging as springs or streams.

Our hike began about halfway down Little Cove Road where we bushwhacked our way north to an impressive disappearing sinkhole stream and then to the cedar cloaked entrance of Museum Cave, which most people would identify as a larger than average crevice with a deep and steep entrance. Daryl told us of an experiment he conducted here some 20 odd years ago. He released dye into the stream passage inside Museum Cave anticipating that it would possibly emerge at Little Stream Cave (some 2 km away) situated just east of Little Cove. Sure enough the dye appeared, confirming a vast underground karst network of flowing water that empties into Georgian Bay.

Daryl then guided us to Leopard Frog Cave approximately 190 m northeast of Museum Cave. We edged closer to the precipice of a slippery furrow at the bottom of which was a square black hole surrounded by fallen leaves. A

grate has been placed just inside the hole by spelunkers, as a safety mechanism to

stop people from falling into the vertical void that is metres deep and leading to more than a kilometre of barely penetrable, dangerous passages and cavern pools. Only very experienced troglodytes should attempt entry into this menacing cave.

We paused for a beautiful shoreline lunch where the path meets the beach at Little Cove. Hiking east along the shore we passed exquisite rock formations, the formidable Bear's Rump Island bluffs watching from the northeast. We were led to the large entrance of Little Stream Cave, a great example of karst erosion through dolostone. A small stream emerges from this scenic cave, which provides a periodic roost for little brown bats. Little Stream Cave is difficult to access and hikers should be aware of tight spaces, slippery moss and rocks, and delicate plant life along the way.

Many thanks to Tobermory resident Daryl Cowell for a very educational day as he readily shared his years of geological experience and knowledge with the group.

Andy Koshan

Meeting and Field Trip Reports



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Left: Naturalists gather at Little Stream Cove, at the end of their hike. Our leader, Daryl Cowell, is on the right.

Right: Unusual rock formations at Little Cove, thought to have been caused by a catastrophic sub-glacial meltwater pulse that raced across Georgian Bay at the end of the Ice Age.

(Andy Koshan)



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Meeting and Field Trip Reports

Birding Around the Bay, November 7

Twenty people participated in this year's Birding around the Bay event. We saw 39 species of birds. A worthwhile diversion from our normal route took us to see the Cattle Egret, a rare bird to our area, found at a farm near Leith.

There were some surprises, like when the Black-bellied Plover dropped by at Leith to rest on a shoal for a few minutes. The bird gave us a look and then took off again. We also saw too briefly, a probable Barn Swallow at the elevators that had forgotten that November was here.

Then there was the disappointment of not seeing the hundreds of Sandhill Cranes near Shouldice that were there 2 days ago. We missed out on some waterfowl like Scoters, Horned Grebe and Red-throated Loon, but then again knowing that they are there or coming soon keeps you returning to the bay.

Thank you all for making this a successful day.

Fred Jazvac

- Common Loon
- Pied-billed Grebe
- Red-necked Grebe
- Cattle Egret
- Great Blue Heron
- Canada Goose
- Snow Goose
- Mallard
- American Black Duck
- American Wigeon
- American Green-winged Teal
- Redhead
- Ring-necked Duck
- Long-tailed Duck
- Common Goldeneye
- Bufflehead
- Hooded Merganser
- Common Merganser
- Red-breasted Merganser

- Cooper's Hawk
- Red-tailed Hawk
- Northern Harrier
- Wild Turkey
- American Coot
- Black-bellied Plover
- Bonaparte's Gull
- Ring-billed Gull
- Herring Gull
- Great Black-backed Gull
- Rock Pigeon
- Downy Woodpecker
- Blue Jay
- Common Raven
- American Crow
- Black-capped Chickadee
- Snow Buntings
- American Tree Sparrow
- American Sparrow



Birders scan the water at Leith for fall waterfowl. Above: the Cattle Egret (Stew Nutt)

State of the World's Waterbirds 2010 report

Wetlands International recently released this publication that analyzes changes in the status of waterbird populations between 1976 and 2005. According to the report, the rate of decline of waterbird populations has slightly decreased over the last three decades. However, 47% of the waterbird populations are still declining, and only 16% are increasing. The status of waterbirds is improving mainly in North America and Europe (regions where strong conservation legislation has been implemented), while it is least favourable in Asia. Long-distance migrants in particular appear to be vulnerable. To learn more, visit the BirdLife Community website.

Huron Fringe Birding Festival 2011

Planning is well underway for the 2011 Huron Fringe Birding Festival that takes place over two four day weekends next spring (Friday May 27 to Monday May 30 and Thursday June 2 to Sunday June 5) at MacGregor Point Provincial Park. The program is finalized and will be released to prior participants and the general public in early February, 2011.

There will be over 80 hikes and events including a bus tour geology event, wildflower events, photography events and of course lots of birding events led by experts from near and far. A new feature of the HFBF is an off-site banquet on Saturday evening May 28 in the hall at Piper's Glen Golf Club, just east of Port Elgin.

There will be a chicken buffet dinner supplied by a local caterer, followed by a unique presentation featuring **Ethan Meleg, John Haselmayer and Mark Wiercinski** in an entertaining discussion of their Baillie Birdathon, where together they recorded 174 species in a 24 hour period.

Each year, many OSFN members take part in the Festival as event and hike leaders and as participants, as well as having roles on the organizing committee.

Complete Festival passes, weekend passes and single event tickets will be available. Pre-registration is preferred and forms will be available on the Friends of MacGregor Point Provincial Park website Feb. 1, 2011.

www.friendsofmacgregor.org

For more information send e-mail to birdfest@rogers.com or fompp@bmts.com. Or call the park at 519-389-6231 or 519-389-6232. Write to HFBF, Box 290, 525 Highland Road West, Kitchener, ON N2M 5P4

The Huron Fringe Birding Festival is organized by a committee of the Friends of MacGregor Point Park. We look forward to seeing you at the Festival.

Jim Duncan, co-chair, HFBF

Erratum

In the fall issue we mentioned that Nels Maher had found the Small Round Leaved Orchis in the Long Swamp. We should have written that it was discovered by Joe Johnson, on the occasion when Nels first took Joe into the swamp.



The Huron Fringe Birding Festival isn't just about birds. OSFN life member Joan Crowe, at left above, led a plant hike at last year's festival. If you haven't yet participated in the the HFBF, please consider it for 2011. It's a great event to learn about nature, right in our own back yard!

(Doug Pedwell)

Let's go paper-free!

As you know, for some time now we have been providing the OSFN newsletter, the Hart's Tongue Herald, in either hard copy or electronic copy that is e-mailed to our members. The electronic copies range between 2 and 3 MB, so are small enough even for people on dial-up internet service.

Production and mailing of the newsletter is the club's biggest expense. We are committed to reducing the number of copies we have to print, and hope you can help with this.

We have already asked you once, but we're asking again now. If you would be willing to receive the newsletter electronically only,

please e-mail me (lorraine@apropos.ca) and I will add your name to the electronic newsletter list.

If you still want to receive the hard copy for a while that's fine, but please bear in mind that we'd like you to consider switching over to the electronic form. You can always print it out as soon as you get it, then what's the difference between that one and the one you would receive in the mail? No difference!

The other nice thing about the electronic version is that you get our excellent photos in colour.

Lorraine Brown, HTH editor

The Winter Program

Indoor Program Thursday, January 13

India: Temples, Tigers and Peacocks

As one considers the second most populous nation in the world, conjured images of India rarely turn to diverse landscapes and fascinating wildlife. It is an ancient land teeming with people and intriguing cultures, but it also possesses a wonderful array of wild creatures and spectacular birds. Peter Middleton will take us on a tour to this spellbinding sub-continent and some of its remarkable parks. If winter is getting to you, this program will be the perfect antidote.

Sunday, January 16, 2011 Snowshoeing Harrison Park with Andy Koshan

Join our new program director, Andy Koshan, on a snowshoe hike to experience the joys of winter. With a little luck it will be a sunny, clear, cold day. We'll follow up with hot chocolate at the Harrison Park Inn. Meet at the Inn at 1 pm. Limit: 15 participants Register with Andy, 372-9480 or akoshan@yahoo.ca.

Saturday, February 12 or 19, 2011

Signs of Winter Wildlife

Trapper Verle Barfoot will lead us on a search for signs of winter wildlife in The Glen Conservation Area near Copper Kettle. This trip will take place either Feb 12 or Feb. 19, depending on the conditions.

Bring snowshoes or skis, and meet at The Glen parking area at 10 am.

Bring binoculars, a snack and thermos of hot drink. Limit: 20

Register with Lorraine:
519-372-0322 or
lorraine@apropos.ca.

Indoor Program Thursday, February 10

Friends of Oliphant Coastal Environments

Donna Stewart, the Chair of FOOCE, will introduce us to this relatively young conservation group. Their goal is to preserve the unique aspects of ecology to be found along the Oliphant shorelines, in balance with recreational uses. Donna will share the impressive work that the group has already accomplished and its plans for the future.

Sunday, March 20, 2011 Hot Spathes and Sinkholes

Or we could call it skunk cabbages and sinkholes. It's early spring in the Beaverdale Bog north of Markdale, The bog forms the upper reaches of the Saugeen River Watershed. Water from the bog also escapes down sinkholes into the Beaver Valley. We will visit a couple of GSCA properties in the bog, watching for early plants responding to the melt.

This will be a four hour tour by car and on foot - be prepared for wet conditions. For details and meeting place, call 538-4368 or fboyd@bmts.com.

Indoor Program Thursday, March 11

From the Andromeda Galaxy to a Spider's Eye

Steve Irvine is a photographer of note: stars, galaxies and macro views of nature are his subjects. His photos have appeared in National Geographic, Natural History, Science and several astronomy magazines. Steve will share some of his best nature shots, including some images taken on the ceramic pinhole camera he made.

Sunday March 27, 2011 Cambridge Butterfly Conservatory Trip

Join the young naturalists on this bus trip to one of Ontario's premiere nature attractions. Costs for admission and bus fare will apply. For details contact Andy, 372-9480 or akoshan@yahoo.ca.



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The Winter Program

Sunday, April 24 Ephemeral Ponds of Spring

In early spring, ephemeral ponds appear on the forest floor as the ice and snow melt away. We'll join up with the young naturalists for this outing to Hibou Conservation Area to look for the invertebrates found in ephemeral ponds. Dress warmly and wear rubber boots. Meet in the parking lot at the first Hibou entrance as you come from Owen Sound, on the right-hand (east) side of the road.

Limit: 20 adults, plus young nats. Please register with Andy 372-9480 or akoshan@yahoo.ca.

Indoor Program Thursday, April 14

On the Reefs in the Philippines

Local teachers, Deane Atherton and Dawn Hollyer, spent April and May 2010 in the Philippines documenting reef life. Following two intensive weeks of training in which they learned to identify 50 genera of fish, they spent six weeks actively surveying reefs. Deane will share this adventure illustrating the talk with his photographs.

OSFN Members in the News

John Newton was named Owen Sound's senior of the year for 2010. John was recognized for his volunteer work with Grey Bruce Health Services, Big Brothers of Owen Sound, Meals on Wheels, the Georgian Bay Symphony (John plays violin) and the Owen Sound Field Naturalists. Congratulations John on this significant recognition.

And OSFN member Dorothy Crysler has had another book published. This one is a delightful little children's book called Harvey Ham in Beaver Valley. Harvey is a pig who farms in the valley.. Now past 90, Dorothy is obviously still full of ideas.

Finally, congratulations to Merle Gunby who received Bayshore Broadcasting's Malcolm Kirk award for his years of involvement in environmentally-related volunteer work.

Young Naturalists are having fun!

In the past few months, the young nats have been hiking on the Bruce Trail, geocaching, and building chickadee houses. In the coming months, they'll be snowshoeing and enjoying a campfire and games at Bognor Marsh, building a quinzhee, and in March, they're planning an outing to the Butterfly Conservatory in Cambridge, Ontario. Does all this sound like fun? If so, why not join the young naturalists? It's open to kids 8 to 12 years old. Activities take place the last Sunday of the

month. For more information, go to owensoundfieldnaturalists.ca and follow the links to the young naturalists newsletter.

Welcome New Members

Anderson, Sandra
Card, Clive
Clipsham, David
Droine, Linda & Bob
Durst, Glen
Fisher, Janice
Irvine, Jacqueline
Knight, Dennis
Mitchell, Donna
Norris, Joan
Rice, Bob (and family)
Siebert, Sue
Sinclair, Scott
Taylor, Sarah & Brian Robin
Wagler, Paul & Joy
Laliberte family



Evening Grosbeaks (Stew Nutt)

A few members have reported Evening Grosbeaks at their feeders this fall. Ron Pittaway's winter finch forecast predicts that we'll see lots of redpolls this winter. He doesn't predict on Evening Grosbeaks, but points out that their numbers have declined in recent years because of the lack of spruce budworm outbreaks. To see Ron's current and past forecasts, go to <http://www.neilyworld.com/neilyworld/pittaway-new.htm>.



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NCC is buying on the Bruce (and they need our help)

The Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) Canada's leading national land conservation organization, is working to protect critical habitats on the Northern Bruce Peninsula by placing ecologically significant lands in conservation ownership. NCC has an exciting opportunity to protect an additional 544 acres (220-hectare) of high priority habitat in the Stokes Bay area on the western side of the Northern Bruce Peninsula. The west side of the McClennan 2 property is adjacent to over 600 acres (243 hectares) protected by NCC several years ago, now owned by

Ontario Parks and managed in conjunction with Black Creek Provincial Park. Once secured, the new property will become an extensive 1186-acre Conservation Reserve.

This property is part of the provincially significant Stokes Bay-Gauley Bay Wetland complex and contains important coastal fen wetlands and inland wet meadow marshes, habitat that is being lost in the region due to development. The fens contain a wide range of interesting plant life, including Pitcher Plant, Stiff Yellow Flax and orchids such as Rose Pogonia, Loesel's

Twayblade and various Ladies' Tresses. This area also supports migrating waterfowl including the Common Goldeneye and Lesser Scaup. The northern portion of the property is within the Miller Lake - Bruce County Forest provincial Area of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI), where there is a large area of undisturbed coniferous forest which Black Bears roam and where Gaywing and Twin Flower carpet the forest floor.



The shoreline at the McClennan 2 property near Stokes Bay. NCC needs just \$32,824 to save this property from development.

The McClennan 2 property provides a home for many at-risk species such as Eastern Ribbonsnake, Hill's Thistle and the Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake. Their populations require undisturbed tracts like those on Gauley Bay to survive.

World-renowned for its diversity of orchids and ferns, the Northern Bruce Peninsula ranks second highest for global biodiversity significance amongst all ecodistricts on the Canadian side of the Great Lakes basin. This remarkable area supports alvars, sand beaches and meadow marshes, as well as habitat for eleven globally rare species, such as Lakeside Daisy, Eastern Prairie-fringed Orchid and Ram's-head Lady's-slipper. The Bruce also

provides habitat for wide-ranging mammals such as the Black Bear and Fisher, which require large, connected tracts of intact habitat. Property by property, the area protected on the Northern Bruce is growing, and our goal is that it will become the largest wilderness protected area in southern Ontario.

With approximately 90% of the Northern Bruce Peninsula still under natural cover, its ecological systems are

remarkably intact. However, this area is facing the potential for dramatic changes in the coming years, particularly in coastal areas, due to the demand for residential development and the use of recreational vehicles.

NCC still needs to raise \$32,824 to secure and meet their funding needs for the McClennan 2 project.

If you are interested in donating to this extraordinary project please contact Ria Nicholson at 1-800-465-0029 ext. 235 or ria.nicholson@natureconservancy.ca.

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The Winter 2010-11 Program at a Glance

Indoor Programs

All indoor meetings take place in the auditorium of the Owen Sound and North Grey Union Public Library at 7:00 p.m. The speaker of the evening will present at 7:30, followed by a social time, club business, sightings and announcements.

Thursday, Jan. 13 - India: Temples, Tigers and Peacocks

Thursday, Feb. 10 - Friends of Oliphant Coastal Ecosystems

Thursday, Mar. 10 - From the Andromeda Galaxy to a Spider's Eye

Thursday, Apr. 14 - On the Reefs in the Philippines

Outdoor Programs

The outdoor programs of the Owen Sound Field Naturalists are designed for OSFN members to discover new areas of natural interest, add to their knowledge of natural history, or simply enjoy a walk in the woods with like-minded people. Note that each trip has its own specific time and meeting place. Registration is required for most outings. Please call the contact person about a week before the outing.

Sunday, Jan. 16 - Snowshoeing Harrison Park with Andy Koshan

Saturday, Feb. 12 or 19 - Signs of Winter Wildlife with Verle Barfoot

Sunday, Mar. 20 - Hot Spathes and Sinkholes with Freeman Boyd

Sunday, April 24 - Ephemeral Ponds of Spring with Andy Koshan

Membership Application and Renewal Form

Name.....

Address.....

Telephone..... E-mail..... Check here if renewal.....

(for OSFN e-bulletin and last minute notices)

Membership Category: Single (\$20)..... Family (\$30) Donation for Conservation Projects.....

Return with cheque to:

Owen Sound Field Naturalists, P.O. Box 401, Owen Sound, ON N4K 5P7

By signing this form, I am agreeing that OSFN may contact me by phone or e-mail.

We hereby confirm that e-mail and mail lists will not go beyond the OSFN. (See privacy policy at osfn.ca)