



Owen Sound  
Field Naturalists



*Celebrating 20 years 1989-2009!*

# *Hart's-Tongue Herald*

The Newsletter of the Owen Sound Field Naturalists  
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*Editor: Cindy Cartwright*



Young Naturalists enjoy an outing to Bob Gray's sugar bush in March 2008

**Owen Sound Field Naturalists:  
The Past, the Present and the Future**  
*Fred Jazvac*

It was the fall of 1988 and a shiny, new poster made its way to the streets of Owen Sound. "Calling all Naturalists!" it shouted and thus began the search for members to join a new organization that would be known as The Owen Sound Field Naturalists. An interim committee was struck in November to get things started and by January 1989 the first meeting was held in the Library Auditorium. Doug Larson was the first speaker and Lorraine Brown was the Founding President. Lorraine has remained in a leadership role on the executive ever since. In tribute to years past and in celebration of our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we have invited Doug Larson back once again to speak – this time at our potluck in June 2009. His topic will be "The Historical Significance of Trees. Doug's return will unite our present with our past.

As a President looking at our organization, I see that we have much to be grateful for and many to thank for our success. **Thank you to:**

- ✓ the members who do not come to our meetings but continue to support our organization with their membership fee which in turn supports our vision of promoting an understanding and appreciation of nature.
- ✓ the 40- 50+ members who look after our stewardship program, keep our archive, run the website, get out the Hart's Tongue Herald, clean up the roadside, represent us at Ontario Nature, C.O.N.E., Rankin Resource Management Committee, the GSCA Arboretum Alliance, Grey County Forest Stewardship Network, the Grey Bruce Community Foundation, and the Greenway project.
- ✓ the members who publish our books (the Plant Committee), authors who write the books, people who help sell them, guardians participating in the endangered Piping Plover project, audit our financial books, nominate our executive, run the Young Naturalist Program and support us at the Baillie Birdathon.
- ✓ the experienced executive who perform many complex tasks that keep this organization running.

- ✓ AND MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL ...thank you to the members who come to our meetings on Thursday nights, because without you, there would be no OSFN.

In the next 20 years, where will we be? The post-boomers will be in charge and to that generation, the internet is part of living. They read their newspapers online and get information on the internet instead of visiting the library. In keeping with their experience, electronic messaging will become an integral part of OSFN's vision. We will have the option to get our HTH by email to save trees, pay our membership fees on line, get e-messages reminding us of speaker meetings, outings and volunteer needs. The public will be able to use an interactive OSFN website to seek and leave information on nature topics that will mimic some of our publications or find out the latest in local sightings, and children will use our website to research some of their school projects. We may form specialty sub groups within our organization by having plant and bird study groups that meet separately, a book club specializing in nature and environmental topics and publishing book reviews in the HTH.

What won't change? There will always be a market for our OSFN publications and the HTH will continue to be published in some format. Our outdoor hikes and indoor programs will carry on along with the sightings, snacks and good fellowship that are part of our evening meetings. And what will never change. The smile that comes to your face when you spot a wildflower, a young fledged bird learning about the world, an insect on a leaf, a butterfly meandering by or a turtle sunning itself on a log. Of course, along with that will come protecting them from the people that don't know they exist.

\*\*On that first interim committee where OSFN was born, were Dean Atherton, Lorraine Brown, Mark Cressman, Nels Maher, Dawn McCulloch, Jean Young and Bill Venn.

\*\*Thank you to Lorraine Brown for the historical and organizational information that contributed to this article.

## Adopt-a-Highway Roadside Clean-up

Congratulations and thanks go to the following OSFN members who participated in the roadside clean up of Highway 6 from Springmount to Wilcox Side Road 6 on April 19, 2008:

Anne Cathrae, Stan Cathrae, Joan Crowe, Walter Crowe, Karen Saliwonchyk, Jan Middleton, Peter Middleton.

The next highway clean-up will be planned for late September or early October, 2007. Our former coordinators, Lis and Trevor Falk would like to pass on the reins to a new coordinator.

If you are interested in taking over, the job involves only a few hours work in the spring and fall. The coordinator's role is to set the 2 dates, gather a group of OSFN volunteers and have up both sides of Highway 6 cleaned in our area of responsibility. Supplies are provided by the Ministry of Transport.

For more details, please call Lis at 519-794-0889. Notify someone on the executive if you are considering taking over this important task.

*editor's note:*

And a special thank you to Lis and Trevor Falk who coordinated this environmental project on OSFN's behalf.



## New Format for Speaker Presentations

The executive voted unanimously to change the format for the speaker sessions in our June board meeting. The sessions will start as normal at 7:00 P.M. with the speaker going first. This will be followed by a break with food, drinks and socializing and then followed by announcements and sightings.

There was concern that having the announcements first sometimes ran the presentation too late. In the May meeting we had 8 announcements that went on too long and the speaker was rushed and did not finish until late. Also, one of our speakers in an other session finished late and faced a long ride home (3 hours) in winter conditions. The question of, was it polite to keep the speaker waiting was brought up as well. The speaker has priority and for those reasons, the format was changed.



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# The Fall Program

**Thursday, Sept. 11, 2008**

**UNDERSTANDING THE SPOTTED TURTLE:  
PROTECTING ENDANGERED REPTILES  
IN BRUCE COUNTY with Megan Rasmussen**

Spotted turtles blend in surprisingly well considering they are decorated with stunning yellow dots on their dark shell. This presentation will follow the lives of Bruce County spotted turtles with the help of radio transmitters and amazing volunteers. Learn how the spotted turtle and other reptiles at risk can benefit from the efforts of a single individual

**Saturday, September 13, 2008 10 – 12 A.M**

Visit Lorraine and Andrew's butterfly garden and 8-year-old Ontario tall grass prairie.  
**Register with Lorraine Brown: 519.372.0322**

**Sunday, September 14, 2008 1:00 – 4:30 P.M.**  
(rain or shine!)

**NATURE TREK:** Joe Johnson will lead us on a general nature outing with the main emphasis on wildflowers, from St. Jean's Point at Howdenvale south to Oliphant. Bring rubber boots! **Limit of 12.**  
**Please contact Joe at 519.534.2736.**

**Saturday, October 4, 2008**

**KINGHURST FOREST NATURE RESERVE HIKE**

In 1998, Howard Krug of Krug Brothers Furniture Co. of Chesley bequeathed this remarkable mature maple-beech forest to Ontario Nature. Some of the trees are 250-300 years old and tower over 100 feet in height!  
Meet at **10:00 A.M.** at the west entrance - rural # 175195 Conc. VI, Sullivan Township (just north of the intersection with Sideroad 9A). From Dornoch on Highway # 6, go west 5.2 km to Concession VI then north 1.95 km, OR, from Chesley, go east on Grey County Rd. # 25, cross Grey County Rd. # 3 and continue on Sideroad 9A to Concession VI (total distance of about 12.8 km). Bring lunch.  
**Leader:** Clarke Birchard of Chesley, a reserve steward.

**Sunday, October 5, 2008**

**SAUBLE SKI TRAIL HIKE** for the whole family with Peter Middleton, scouting  
for efts, salamanders, tree frogs, and surprises.  
**Please contact Peter: 519.376.3242**



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**Thursday, Oct. 9, 2008**

**WILD PLACES, WILD HEARTS: Nomads of the Himalaya**  
Professional Canadian artist/writer Allen Smutylo will show slides, artwork & his book based on his travels with the Tibetan Buddhist nomads in central Himalaya (Ladakh) over the last 7 years.

**Sunday, November 9, 2008**

**AROUND THE BAY WATERFOWL OUTING**

Join Fred Jazvac for the annual waterfowl tour around the Bay. With winter approaching, waterfowl are on the move. Target species are loons, grebes, scoters and flotillas of other diving ducks. Meet at the Harry Lumley Bayshore Arena main (south) parking lot at 10:00 am for this 4 hour outing. Dress appropriately for a waterfront environment. Bring lunch and drinks. **Please register with Fred at 519.797.3332 or by email: [jazvacfb@bmts.com](mailto:jazvacfb@bmts.com)**



**Owen Sound  
Field Naturalists**

*Welcome new members*

**Thursday, Nov. 13, 2008**

**GEORGE'S FANTASTIC BIRD EVENING**

Author and ornithologist George Peck will provide us with an evening of spectacular photography based on his field trips across North America and his extensive collection of photographs of all the birds of North America.

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and tripods*

**Thursday, Dec. 11, 2008**

**MEMBERS' NIGHT**

A potpourri of OSFN members' slides, displays, art, collections and compositions. Register your entry ahead with **Joan Crowe [crowe@log.on.ca](mailto:crowe@log.on.ca) or phone 519.371.8193.**

OSFN Award Winners at the 2008 Bluewater District School Board's Science Fair:

'Light Pollution' by Carter Trask  
Meaford Community School

'Monarch Butterflies' by Christina Illman  
St Peter's School, Durham



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**Young Naturalists**

The Young Nats will be starting the 2008-09 program in September. The Youngs Nats, for children ages 7 – 12, meet on the last Sunday of the month at 2:00 pm at the Grey Sauble Conservation Administration Centre, 237897 Inglis Falls Road, Owen Sound. For further information please contact Krista McKee, 519 376-3076 ext 224 or Stephanie Hargrave. 519 376-8571

## Turtles In A Perilous Time

*Adapted from a longer article by Matt Ellerbeck*

Turtles are survivors. They have been on Earth for well over 200 million years, even before the dinosaurs. They have managed to survive while countless other species have disappeared around them.

Today however, turtle are living in a perilous time. Around 70% of the world's turtle species are now on The World Conservation Union's Red list of threatened species. For some turtles it is already too late. Several species have already gone extinct. Many more are being pushed to the brink.

For many people, the term 'endangered species' conjures up images of exotic animals far from home. However, the decline of turtle populations can be seen right in our own backyards. In Ontario, all eight turtle species are in decline. The Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) lists six of them as species at risk. This is an unsettling fact as the turtles' current state is almost completely due to the actions of people!

Several factors are contributing to the endangerment of the world's turtles. The biggest is the loss and fragmentation of their habitat that is being degraded and destroyed at an alarming rate. Wetlands are drained, forests are destroyed, and waterfronts are developed. Turtles are literally losing their homes.

The increase of human activities on the water and beaches also negatively affects turtles and their nests. Waterfront developments restrict turtles from prime basking and nesting sites. Pesticides, oils, chemicals, sewage runoff and industrial pollution contaminate turtles' habitats and their prey.

Recreational activities on the water can also have devastating affects on turtles. Many are killed or severely injured when hit by boats or personal watercraft. Fishermen often kill turtles in the belief thatthey prey heavily on game fish. Hunters kill them because they eat ducklings.

Where good habitat does still exist, roads are another threat. Countless turtles die on roads when looking for sites to lay their eggs. This is particularly detrimental to populations because not only does it lead to the death of a large portion of the breeding females, but the next generation is also killed off when the eggs are destroyed.

Even if the female turtles do successfully find nesting spots and lay their eggs, the baby turtles only have a very minimal chance of reaching maturity. Nests are destroyed by raccoons and skunks. Human activities have helped increase these predators.

Turtles, including rare and endangered ones, also suffer from being harvested from the wild. Turtles and their eggs are collected for the pet trade, food markets or to be used in traditional medicines. Sometimes the turtles and their eggs are captured right off nesting sites.



Certain turtles, especially snapping turtles, are often the victims of direct killings by people. Many people believe snapping turtles are dangerous to swimmers and will kill them on site. In truth, snapping turtles are not dangerous if left alone. Witnesses

have observed people shooting turtles for "sport" and studies have shown that many times people will purposely hit turtles they encounter on roads.

When all the factors above are combined, it accounts for a massive decline in these ancient animals. Turtles are extremely long-lived and it takes them many years to reach maturity; hence, they cannot easily rebound from drastic population declines. Many species are simply not equipped to deal with the many hurdles that people have created for them. Hundreds of species are unlikely to survive without assistance.

If we do not reverse our detrimental actions towards turtles, we could lose one of our oldest and most successful creatures. If this happens, what hope do other species really have?

*editor's note:*

Articles, photos, sketches, poems, etc. from members or other sources are appreciated. Articles should be 1 page in length, Times New Roman font 12, unformatted - submit by email to [pom@bmts.com](mailto:pom@bmts.com). Photos should be sent in jpeg.

### Shared Accomodation Avian Style

Don Rawls provided these excellent photos of a Great-crested Flycatcher and a House Wren sharing a Purple Martin house.

Don stated in his email:

*"We have had the flycatchers here for quite a number of years but this is the first time they have used the Martin house. I will be looking out for the young to emerge, an event which judging from previous years will be accompanied by much Weeep, Weeep, Weep from the parents and so will be hard to miss.*

*The Wrens have also been nesting here for years and are multiplying each year, this year we are aware of at least 3 pair. One is nesting in a decorative stump by the garden, another sits just outside the front door in the pear tree and "sings" his stuttering song all day. Whilst I have a number of nesting boxes around I suspect the Martins house may have been a house of last resort. I shall have to make some more this winter and try and find a spot to put them."*



## Our Boreal Nursery

*paraphrased from Jennifer Baker's notes*

### Boreal & Carbon

"The Boreal is to carbon what Fort Knox is to gold." We should do everything we can to ensure that the carbon in these storehouses is not released.

- The global boreal is the world's largest terrestrial storehouse of carbon, storing 22% of the total carbon stored on earth, almost 2x as much as tropical forests.
- only effective if kept as an intact and functioning ecosystem

Birds are already facing huge challenges in the face of global warming.

- Forest conservation is not meant to be a substitute for drastic reductions of emissions, both are needed
- Need to maintain functioning ecosystems in the face of climate change
- Protection of these large areas should help to protect people and species from impacts of global warming

### Boreal & Birds

- North America's boreal region is the single most important breeding ground for birds across all of the Americas. This is why it's being called the "Bird Nursery" Birders have often been concerned with the wintering grounds of migrating birds but we also need to be concerned with their breeding grounds in the boreal forest.
- Boreal forest is home to birds of all sizes and types such as the majestic Tundra Swan

The boreal forest is also home to some of the most beautiful songbirds of the boreal forest...

- Yellow-rumped Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Cape May Warbler, Black and White Warbler

The vast boreal forest of North America supports about half of the continent's bird species (that's about 325 species). And, in Ontario, over 200 of our 300 breeding bird species rely in whole or in part on the boreal forest. These are the birds so many of us enjoy seeing on migration - Ring-necked duck, yellow warbler, white-crowned sparrow, chestnut-sided warbler

Just how significant this boreal is to birds was highlighted recently in a major report published in 2005, entitled "The Boreal Forest Region: North America's Bird Nursery". And the birds that nest in the boreal forest spread south after they breed and raise their young - sometimes far south.

Number of Boreal Birds for North America's Boreal Forest

- 7 million shorebirds
- 14 million waterbirds
- 26 million waterfowl
- 2 billion landbirds (includes songbirds)

Supports 100% of global population for:

Bonaparte's Gull  
Palm Warbler  
Short-billed Dowitcher

Supports over 80% of global population for:

Great Gray Owl  
White-winged Scoter  
Rusty Blackbird

For Ontario, over a quarter billion breeding birds and 90% are migratory

### Industry

- big 3 industrial activities in the commercial boreal forest – logging, mining and hydro-electric development

### Conservation Action calling on provincial government to do:

We want the province to implement comprehensive conservation-based land use planning for northern Ontario before it is carved up with roads, hydro lines, clear cuts, and more open pit mines. Ontario's planning act applies only to southern Ontario. There are no rules to control where development occurs or to make sure that it unfolds in an orderly fashion. There are extraordinary values in the north that make it globally important and worthy of a world-class planning regime.

**Do you want to protect migratory birds in Ontario?**

**Sign the petition to Save Our Boreal Birds and their breeding grounds in the Boreal Forest.**

**Click here to sign the petition and learn more about Boreal birds >**

**<http://www.saveourborealbirds.org>**

## Area Events

**New event - On August 13, 2008 at 7 pm, St. Andrew's Green Team** will hold the second in a series of lectures related to the environment. St. Andrew's 'green team' was formed to explore how church could become a better steward of the environment. One of their goals is to raise awareness of environmental issues with church members, elected officials and the broader community. The first lecture in June focused on health risks related to chemical pesticide use. The second lecture will feature hummingbirds. Cindy Cartwright is the founder and project coordinator of the Ontario Hummingbird Project. Cindy will provide information about the hummingbird study, including the impact of human activities on hummingbirds. She will also provide practical advice about what each of us can do to help these remarkable little birds. St. Andrew's is located on Albert Street in Southampton. Admission by donation.

The **Evening for Conservation 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Dinner and Auction** will be held on **Friday, September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2008** at the Harry Lumley Bayshore Community Centre in Owen Sound. Proceeds support the Grey Sauble Conservation Foundation. Tickets are available at the GSCA Administration Office or by calling 519-376-3076

The **3<sup>rd</sup> Youth Outdoors EXPO** will be held on **Saturday, September 13<sup>th</sup> 2008**, at the Sydenham Sportsmen's Association Clubhouse near Rockford. Open to children ages 10-14, the event is free and includes a BBQ lunch. Preregistration is required and spaces are limited. **If interested please contact Jason at 519-371-8468.**

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## Young Naturalist Contest Winner



Abby Woodhouse, age 9, wrote the winning essay in the Young Naturalists contest held in May this year. Her essay "*Why is Nature Important?*" will be available on our website [www.osfn.ca](http://www.osfn.ca)

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## Happiness is Piping Plovers Nests

*Cindy Cartwright*

Following last year's first successful nesting of Piping Plovers in the lower Great Lakes region in over 40 years, everyone was anxious to see if the pair or any of their young would return to Sauble Beach again this year. A group of dedicated volunteers started checking the area beaches in April, watching hopefully. One evening in early May, I heard the call of a Piping Plover as it flew over the beaches near the flag in Southampton. The following morning, Doug Pedwell located "our" plovers at Sauble Beach. HURRAY! The team of volunteers quickly moved into action.



Visitors share the beach with the plovers, staying well back from the enclosure and protected area.




photos by Peter Middleton

But there was more excitement to follow. Shortly afterward one of our youngsters, Maverick, was reported at Wasaga Beach! His progress as he competed with another courting male was followed with great interest. And then, Piping Plovers reported at Oliphant in early June! What more could we wish for? A nest was located and another enclosure erected. Let the fun begin!

There have been ups and downs this breeding season as eggs were lost to crows, chicks were lost and relocated, and one adult male had the misfortune to become a raptor meal. Too many volunteers to mention have spent time on the beaches monitoring the plovers, the nests, and finally the young chicks. Thank you everyone!

As I write this article, the chicks are preparing to leave on their southward journey to the wintering grounds. We hope to see them again next year.

*Fall 2008*



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Male brooding chicks

## Plover Watch

In honour of Stewart Nutt, Project Co-ordinator,  
who has done so much for the Piping Plover.

Stillness surrounds  
gently,  
punctuated  
by soft flutings  
we protect.

The piping plover  
runs:  
mystic,  
ghostly beach dweller.



The nests:  
vulnerable, hidden cups,  
cradle sand-dappled eggs:  
evolution's  
cryptic trompe l'oeil  
painted upon  
the canvas of a beach.

Chicks hatch,  
mere mites,  
to encounter  
a world of oceanic scale:  
unlikely survivors  
facing daunting challenges:  
dainty, doughty, chimeras  
held  
aloft  
on  
impossible  
stilts,  
racing, scurrying  
in search of life  
across seas of sand.

The beach pulses:  
wind,  
wave,  
crystals,  
move inexorably.

So too,  
the seiche -  
a flowing, ebbing palpitation:  
the sustaining, menacing,  
heartbeat  
of the lake  
laid bare.

Skies drift:  
drama written large,  
subtle hued,  
benign, belligerent, bellicose,  
measuring days,  
marking seasons,  
reflecting planetary passages.

Below,  
elfin wraiths  
thrive.

In time,  
if stars align,  
fragile scales,  
lightly sculpted airfoils  
will lift new life  
skyward

- freedom -

to course  
celestial realms  
we cannot comprehend.

Suddenly  
the beach is silent,  
deserted,  
somehow, forlorn:

notes,  
that sweetened summer's passing,  
no longer heard.

*Charadrius melodus*  
tiny, improbable beach voice  
has gone!

has triumphed!

flying boldly now  
above  
a continent.

With it,  
goes a part of us.

Farewell,  
Godspeed.

*Peter Middleton, Oliphant, Summer 2008*

# The Fall 2008 Program at a Glance

**Indoor Programs** All indoor meetings will take place in the auditorium of the Owen Sound and North Grey Union Public Library at 7 pm. Following a social time and announcements, the speaker of the evening will present at 7:30.

<b>September 11</b>	Understanding the Spotted Turtle
<b>October 9</b>	Wild Places, Wild Hearts
<b>November 13</b>	George's Fantastic Bird Evening
<b>December 11</b>	Members' Night

**Outdoor Programs** The outdoor program is designed to help members discover new areas, add to their knowledge of natural history, or just to enjoy a "stroll 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 indicated about a week before the outing.

<b>September 13</b>	Butterfly Garden and Tall Grass Prairie
<b>September 14</b>	Nature Trek
<b>October 4</b>	Kinghurst Forest Nature Reserve Hike
<b>October 5</b>	Sauble Ski Trail Hike
<b>November 9</b>	Around the Bay Waterfowl Outing

## OSFN BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2008- 09

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Young Naturalists help plant trees for Arbour Day at Grey Sauble Conservation Arboretum in April.