



Owen Sound
Field Naturalists



Celebrating 20 years 1989-2009!

Hart's-Tongue Herald

The Newsletter of the Owen Sound Field Naturalists
Box 401, Owen Sound, ON N4K 5P7
ISSN 1911-7183

Spring 2009
Volume 22, Number 1
Editor: Cindy Cartwright



Long time OSFN
members
Dorothy Crysler,
our first
Newsletter Editor
and her son
Mark Wiercinski,
a Past President of
the club.

Important Announcement

Change of location for monthly meetings

The library auditorium is not available for our indoor presentations. The children's section of the library is being renovated and the books will be relocated to the auditorium during this time. As a result, our indoor meetings will be moved nearby to St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, which is just north of the library on the same side of the street. Although, the front of St. Andrews is located at 865 Second Avenue West, it can be easily accessed from First Avenue West by a driveway. Use the same parking as previously for meetings.

The room we are holding our meetings in is a rugged-in area that seats 150 people and has a welcoming look to it. It also provides us with ample hospitality room. Coffee mugs will not be available, so please bring one from home.

OSFN would like to sincerely thank St. Andrew's for making this inconvenience a minor one.



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Ellen and Oris Hull, shown receiving their certificate from Joan Crowe, were honoured with life memberships at the March meeting.



Remember that membership renewals are due in September each year. Please renew your membership at the next indoor meeting, or use the membership form included with the Fall newsletter and send a cheque to:

Owen Sound Field Naturalists
Box 401
Owen Sound, N4K 5P7

In The Beginning...

by Ernie Johns

When I saw Judy Armstrong at the Reference desk in the local library recently (February 18) I said to her, "We are being reminded in the Owen Sound Field Naturalist Club that this is our 20th Birthday Year. Whose idea was this anyway to have a Naturalist Club? Do you remember?"

As for myself, I began bird watching in 1965 in order to spend activity time with a nine year old daughter. We were charter members of the Sarnia Naturalist Club which began the next year composed mostly of birders. When living in Richmond Hill, my family joined a club with much wider interests for it had members who worked at the Ministry of Natural Resources headquarters there.

One of the ardent birders in the Richmond Hill club was Dave Fidler who moved to Owen Sound in the year ahead of our coming here in 1984. He put me put in touch with Tom Murray and he and I began a friendship which sent us up the Bruce Peninsula together watching birds on many occasions until his health gave out.

Through Tom and the Audubon Christmas Bird Count he organized at the time, I met Joe Johnson, Nels Maher, Peter Middleton, Bob Gray and other people in the Grey-Bruce area with like interests.

I learned along the way from these friends that there had once been a local naturalist club, but it had disbanded many years before. I certainly missed the interest group fellowship Fidele and I known for about eighteen years.

One day on listening to a CBC phone in program out of Toronto interviewing a park naturalist on local birds, I realized I could answer all the questions people were asking. This gave me the idea I could write a bird column for the local paper, the Sun Times. When I called into the office to inquire, the editor, Robert Hull, was unavailable, but I talked it over with the reporter John Walker. He suggested I write a couple of sample columns and turn them into the editor, which I

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did. Mr Hull accepted a column for every two weeks as long as I wrote on the broader subject of nature, not just birds. My column began in June, 1986.

I had been doing this for over two years when Judy Armstrong told me she was organizing evening programs in the library auditorium and she asked if I would speak on bird watching in the Grey Bruce. I told her I could talk on birds, but I had never photographed them and I felt certain it would go over better with someone who had pictures. She suggested I get in touch with Bob Gray of the local office of the Ministry of Natural Resources who at that time was beginning a 10-week course at the Georgian College introducing bird watching. Together, we planned a program and Judy advertised it with a library poster as I did in my column of September 17. In the planning, the subject of Naturalist Clubs came up and I believe it was Judy who suggested we ask the attendees if they had any interest in forming a local club again.

It was heart warming to have a full house on October 4th, 1988, and I remember it was Judy who broke into the question and answer period following my talk, assisted by Bob with pictures and comments, with the inquiry about interest in forming a club. I invited all such persons to stay after the meeting closed and then we set a date to meet again on November 16, 1988, for planning purposes. Judy advertised this with another poster and I mentioned it in my column of November 12.

At the November meeting, we formed a steering committee to plan for our first official meeting in the New Year. This group continued meeting, working and planning through the winter months and by April, after four monthly programs held in the library, our first newsletter announced we had 94 members representing approximately 200 people. Our first Executive Board was elected on May 11, 1989 and the rest of our history is on record in the Hart's Tongue Herald.

editor's note: Jean Maher has an almost complete set of HTH in our archives.

20 Years Ago...

The first meetings of the newly formed Owen Sound Field Naturalists covered a variety of interesting and informative topics.

January – Doug Larson spoke on 700+ year old cedar trees on the Niagara Escarpment

February - Winter Behaviour of Mammals by Martin Parker

March – Bruce Peninsula National Park – an update with Don Wilkes and Mark Wiercinski

Outdoor programs in that first year included bird banding, mushrooming, trees and shrubs, skiing, astronomy and a boat trip.



Boat trip May 13, 1989



Slush stroll led by Scott Parker, Dec. 2, 1990

Founding OSFN executive, as reported in the winter 1989-90 issue of the HTH

President – Lorraine Brown
Vice-President – Jane Young
VP back-up – Dawn Hollyer
Secretary – Kathy Rothwell
Treasurer – Tim Thompson
Membership – Joan Blake
Hospitality – Audrey Armstrong
Indoor Programs – Bill Proud
Outdoor Programs – Deane Atherton
Newsletter Editor – Dorothy Crocker
Phoning – Kay Gibson
Publicity – Ernie Johns
Conservation – Ann Brindle
Environment – Mike McKenna



John Morton and Nels Maher pause while building the Oliphant Fen Boardwalk. The official opening of the boardwalk, built to allow visitors to enjoy this habitat without trampling delicate plants, was held in June 1991.

In 1990, the OSFN were welcomed into the Federation of Ontario Naturalists, now Ontario Nature.

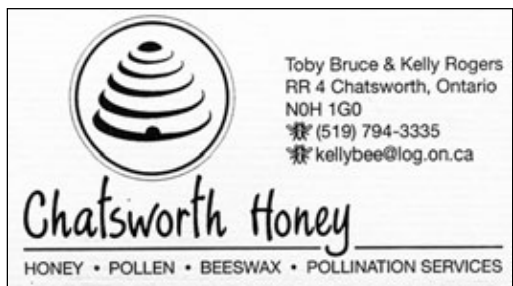
In 1991, the OSFN and SFN co-published the *Checklist of the Birds of Grey-Bruce*.



The bird viewing tower at Baie D'Or, another joint project between the OSFN and SFN was constructed during the summer of 1992. Above, Dave Fidler and Sam Miller look at a model made by Larry Ker.



Mother's Day paddle on the Rankin River 1992



Other indoor programs included:

1991

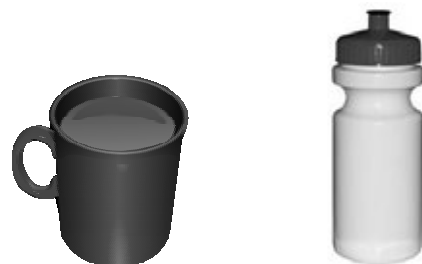
- January – Flora and Fauna of the MacKenzie Mts
- May – Long Point Bird Observatory
- June – Blooming Estacy
- October – Brazilian Fossils in Canada
- December – Life in Ontario Above the Tree Line

1992

- January – Threatened Turtles in Ontario
- April – The Rise and Fall of the Great Lakes
- May – Deer in Grey and Bruce
- September – Mushrooms and More
- November – Wandering with a Naturalist

1993

- February – Black Bears of Chapleau
- April – Attu Birding
- May – Wildflowers; Four Views
- October – Landscaping with Nature
- December – Ontario Parks Program



Remember to bring your own mug or refillable water bottle to all meetings



15 Years Ago...

Indoor programs included:

1994

April – Places Out of Time

June – Banding Hawks at Hawk Cliff

September – The Draw-down at Bognor Marsh

November – Cave Explorations on the Peninsula

1995

January – Superior Naturally

March – Ethics and the Naturalist

June – Identifying Orchids

September – Comets Impacting Planets

October – Paddling in Grey and Bruce Counties

December – Natural History of Butterflies

1996

February – Storms and Lightning

April – Mundane and Mythical Use of Plants

June – Spirit Rock a Century Ago

September – FON's Nature Reserves

October – Journey to Antarctica

1997

January – Go South with Us

February – Two Shores

April – Monitoring Birds Across Canada

June – Insects of BPNP and FFNP

September – Portrait of a Photographer/Naturalist

November – The Cultural Heritage Landscape

1998

June – John Muir's Years in Canada

October – Spotlight on the Meaford Tank Range



Dr. Tovell leads a geological hike on the peninsula

The Junior Field Naturalists started on October 23, 1994. Their first meeting was “Skeletons, Spiders and Spooks”. Kate McLaren and Nancy White were the coordinators for the new group.

OSFN member Connie Kitney offered to lead the first overnight program on the Niagara River's gulls in November 1994.

The *Checklist of Vascular Plants of Grey and Bruce* was published jointly by the OSFN and SFN in 1995. The Bruce-Grey Plant Committee was inaugurated in November 1995 to continue the work started by the ad hoc group that worked on this checklist.

In 1996 Dorothy Crysler published *Birding Beaver Valley* and slides used by Malcolm Kirk were made into the 30 minute video *Along the Niagara Escarpment in Bruce and Grey Counties*.

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The OSFN Natural and Cultural History Exhibit at the Meaford Tank Range – completed in 1995.

Lorraine Brown became Newsletter Editor starting with the Fall 1996, Volume 9, Number 2 issue.

The first annual OSFN butterfly count was held at MacGregor Point Provincial Park on July 6, 1996. This is another OSFN activity that still continues.



Butterfly count tally at MacGregor Point PP in 2000.



Krissy Dobbyn and Bella Waterton collect garbage during the June 1997 Roadside Clean-Up. This is an OSFN tradition that still continues today.

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10 Years Ago...



Joan Crowe gives Harriet Nixon some tips on orchids at Petrel Point Fen in June 1998.



Artist and naturalist George McLean shows OSFN members some on his “evocative” wildlife paintings following a tour of his farm in May 1998.

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Indoor programs:

1999

January – On the Waves of Lake Huron

April – Sustainable Forestry

May – The Plight of the Herptiles

October – Nature’s Paint Brush

December – Distant Destinations

2000

April – Fatal Light Awareness Program

May – Foreign Plant Invaders

October – The Unseen World of Microorganisms

2001

January – Eclipse Over Turkey

September – Floristic Exploration of Grey/Bruce

December – Drastic Ecological Changes in Africa

2002

January – Huron Wind, Ontario’s 1st Wind Farm

February – Badlands and Big Trees

May – CONE and the Niagara Escarpment

November – Ontario Wetlands

2003

April – Queen Snakes and Wood Turtles

June – Conservation Lands in Trust

September – Flying Squirrels in Grey and Bruce



OSFN members measure trees in the OSFN forest monitoring plot at the Outdoor Education Centre near Oliphant as part of the Escarpment Biosphere Reserve monitoring program.



Young Naturalists learn skills like how to make and use birch bark snowglasses during an outing to the Meaford Tank Range in February 2000.



Audrey Heagy gives a banding demonstration to OSFN members during an outing to the Cabot Head Research Station on the northeastern tip of the Bruce Peninsula in spring 2000.

A Guide to the Ferns of Grey and Bruce Counties was released by the Bruce Grey Plant Committee (OSFN) in June 1999.


Joan and Walter Crowe donated 38 hectares to the Nature Conservancy of Canada in 1999 to help protect the Long Swamp near Owen Sound. The OSFN also donated \$5,000 to NCC toward the purchase of 200 acres next to the Malcolm Kirk Nature Reserve in the Long Swamp.

The Bruce Grey Plant Committee published two new guides in 2001 - *Asters, Goldenrods and Fleabanes* and *Rare and Endangered Species of Grey and Bruce Counties*.

Many members of the OSFN participated in the 2nd Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas. Two of our members were also Regional Coordinators - Cindy Cartwright in Bruce Region 8 and Lynne Richardson in Grey Region 9.

The OSFN website www.osfn.ca first debuted in 2002. Member Steve Patterson designed the original website.

The OSFN built and erected Purple Martin houses at the Harry Lumley Bayshore Arena in 2002 in the hopes of helping these declining aerial foragers by providing safe nesting spaces.



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In Recent Years...

Geology and Landforms of Grey and Bruce Counties was released by the Bruce Grey Plant Committee in the fall of 2004.

OSFN took a lead role in the Greenway Conservation and Stewardship Vision for Grey and Bruce Counties.

Cindy Cartwright became Newsletter Editor with the Winter 2006, Volume 19, Number 3 issue.

The Bruce Grey Plant Committee's latest publication, *Exploring an Urban Forest: Owen Sound's Heritage of Trees* was released.



Peter Middleton examines a deer tree stand during an outing to the Bognor Marsh in early 2008.



The OSFN display at the Big Tub Lighthouse in Tobermory in 2003.



The Young Naturalists plant trees for Arbor Day.



Bob Gray explains Maple Syrup making to the Young Nats during their trip to the sugar bush.

Editor's Note: As I worked through the archives several names came up over and over – Lorraine Brown, Dave Fidler, Nels Maher, Joe Johnson, Joan Crowe, Peter Middleton, Dorothy Crysler – as board members, trip leaders, committee members... I'm sure there were other members who worked equally hard but quietly in the background whose names didn't appear in the newsletters. These people formed the core of the OSFN from the beginning and helped to make it the great club that it is today. On behalf of the OSFN, THANK YOU!

The Spring Program

Thursday, April 9, 2009

KAYAK JOURNEY: Marathon to Thornbury, Ontario

On a paddle and a prayer: a 53 day solo kayaking pilgrimage through middle-age and the landscapes of Lake Superior and Georgian Bay with Brian Goodings. Learn how to prepare for a long-distance kayak trip and see nature at its best.

Monday Night Nature Walks at Fidler's Green April

20th, 27th, May 4, 11, 18, 25 starting at 6:00PM

No reservation required. Directions: Hwy 21 to Jackson, turn North to the T intersection, turn West to Old School Road and go approx 1 Km on Old School Rd to Fidler's Green on left.

Saturday, May 9, 2009

MOREL HUNT with Lorraine Brown. When the may apples are up, and oak leaves are the size of a squirrel's ear, it's time to get out there and look for morels. We'll begin at Hibou, then head for the Sauble Ski Trails. Limit: 10 participants.

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

Thursday, May 14, 2009

ORCHIDS OF THE BRUCE with Scott Currie

Scott Currie, naturalist with Bruce Peninsula National Park and resident orchid expert, will introduce us to the beauty and diversity of orchids on the Bruce. This program will prepare us for an outing to Flowerpot Island with Scott on June 13.

Saturday, May 30, 2009

SLOUGH OF DESPOND with Bob Gray.

Come discover the origins of the name Slough of Despond, one of northern Grey County's hidden gems. This is one of Ontario's best examples of an extensive, abandoned baymouth bar/beach and lagoon complex formed during glacial Lake Algonquin some 10,000 years ago. **Contact: Bob Gray kemblemt@log.on.ca 519-371-9128**

Sunday, May 31, 2009

HUMMINGBIRD BANDING with Cindy Cartwright

Hummingbirds are back in good numbers now. Join Cindy Cartwright for a hummingbird banding demonstration. Register with Cindy, pom@bmts.com, (519) 797-1313.

Thursday, June 11, 2009, 6 pm

ANNUAL POTLUCK Dinner, at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, (Bring your own plates & cutlery.)

Doug Larson, Canada's pre-eminent authority on the ancient vegetation clinging to Niagara's limestone cliffs. In 1989 Doug Larson gave OSFN's first indoor presentation about surprising new discoveries along the escarpment in Milton. Those discoveries led to wider and wider discoveries in the subsequent 20 years culminating in three books, over a hundred research papers, a whole whack of science-meets-the arts rock and roll songs, and even an actual guitar. In this talk, Doug will deliver the 'Greatest hits' of the Cliff Ecology Research Group which is closing down this month after 25 years of activity. The talk should be of interest to both young and old, and both tree huggers and lumbermen.

Saturday, June 13, 2009

ORCHID TRIP TO FLOWERPOT ISLAND

with Scott Currie. Park naturalist Scott Currie will lead us on a tour of the orchids of Flowerpot. According to Scott, the 'showy stuff' is at Dorcas Bay, but the 'rare stuff' is at Flowerpot. We'll car pool up to Tobermory and take the Blue Heron II over to Flowerpot. Cost per person will be in the range of \$32 to \$37. If weather prevents us from getting to the island, we'll focus on Dorcas Bay instead. If we have time, Scott will take us to Dorcas Bay after we return from Flowerpot. Limited to 10 people. Please register with **Dian Wood:** saublebeach@hotmail.com or **519-422-1514.**

Saturday, July 4, 2009 1:00 – 4:30 P.M.

CHIEF'S POINT CIRCUIT HIKE and OLIPHANT FEN

BOARDWALK TOUR with Joe Johnson, rain or shine, for a general nature outing with emphasis on wildflowers. At Chief's Point we should see a number of provincially rare plants like Heart-leaved Alexander. **Limit 16 people.** Bring rubber boots! **Contact Joe at 519-534-2736.**

The Spring 2009 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.

April 9	Kayak Journey
Monday Nature Walks	April 20th, 27th, May 4, 11, 18, 25
May 14	Orchids of the Bruce
June 11	Potluck Dinner

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.

May 9	Morel Hunt
May 30	Slough of Despond
May 31	Hummingbird Banding
June 13	Orchid Trip
July 4	Chief's Point

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Mark Wiercinski holds a Black Rat snake at an indoor program in 2006.