



Owen Sound
Field Naturalists



Hart's Tongue Herald

The Newsletter of the Owen Sound Field Naturalists Summer 2012

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Editor: Norah Toth



A Message from the President

It has been a magnificent summer, albeit without much rain to this point. So much has happened recently that I wanted to share a couple of things with you. In the late spring the Provincial government introduced their now "famous" budget Bill 55. Embedded in this bill were significant changes to the Endangered Species Act.

They were:

- Removing the requirement to ensure that new resource or development projects result in an overall benefit for species at risk. This rule allowed for responsible forestry, mining and other projects while ensuring a future for endangered species. Under Bill 55, the Minister of Natural Resources can simply sweep aside species needs in favour of short-term economic gains.
- Removing the requirement to protect the habitat of endangered species on large areas of pri-

vate land, despite the fact that most of Ontario's endangered species are found in Southern Ontario where land is 90% privately owned.

• Removing the deadline for developing recovery plans for species at risk listed before 2007. With no deadline, what are the chances that action will be taken to save these species?

Ontario Nature asked that we as individuals, and as organizations, get involved by sending letters and making phone calls to our MPPs and to the Premier himself. Many did and because of those efforts these parts of Bill 55 were removed. However, it is expected these clauses will be reintroduced this fall in a new effort to change the Act. Please visit Ontario Nature's web site <http://www.ontario-nature.ca> for updates. Here you will also find ways to get involved. A letter sent soon to encourage the Premier to not change the Endangered Species Act would help. I will post the letters that I sent on

our web page (<http://www.ow-ensoundfieldnaturalists.ca>).

Thank you to Ontario Nature for their leadership on this issue.

I welcome our new executive. They are an interesting group who bring individual skills and a team focus to Owen Sound Field Naturalists. New to the executive this year are John Dickson, Barbara Fidler, Bob Rice and Rob Kearns. We also have Bill Moses and Norah Toth supporting the board. As we begin our new year, please offer suggestions and encouragement to your executive. A list of the executive and their responsibilities is found later in this newsletter.

Our program for 2012 and 2013 is completed and the brochure will be available by mid-August and posted on our web site. Thank you to Andy Koshan and those who assisted him. A special thanks also to Nancy White for completing the brochure. Stewart Nutt

Ontario Nature Comments on MNR's Strategic Plan for Invasive Plant Species

By John Urquhart, Ontario Nature

Ontario's Ministry of Natural Resources recently unveiled a strategic plan for tackling the province's invasive plant species. In it they propose the strengthening and better enforcement of current laws, as well as improving scientific research. John Urquhart, Ontario Nature's Conservation Science Manager, praised the plan as being "well-thought out, well-researched and scientifically valid" during interviews with CBC Metro Morning and CBC TV. To read more media coverage on the strategic plan, visit <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/story/2012/07/04/wdr-ontario-invasive-species-plan.html>

Trip Report—Birdwatching with Alfred Raab

By Fred Jazvac

On May 20, 2012, hike leader Alfred Raab led a morning hike for OSFN. It was a warm, sunny day with light winds. We visited Greig Settlement Road (by the quarry), Boat Lake, Isaac Lake, Mar Lake Road and Sky Lake. Alfred knows his birds. In total we found 73 species including Red-headed Woodpecker, Green Heron, Ruffed Grouse, Sandhill Crane, Black Tern, Chimney Swift, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Swamp Sparrow, and Marsh Wren. Thanks Alfred for a great day and Stewart for keeping track of the birds for us.

Cover Photo: This Black Bear was seen near Crane Lake during a Bruce Birding Club trip on the Bruce Peninsula. Credit: Karen Punnett, Port Elgin.

Fall Program

Saturday, September 8, 2012
8:15 - 11:00 pm
Stargazing with John Hlynialuk
(Limit: 12)
Register with John Hlynialuk at
stargazer@wightman.ca

Indoor Program
Thursday, September 13, 2012
The Miraculous Timid Turkey Vulture—Chris Hamilton

Chris Hamilton is a long-time Burlington resident with a passion for the Niagara Escarpment and its preservation. Since childhood, he has been hiking the trails and exploring the caves at Mount Nemo Conservation Area; and it is there his interest in turkey vultures peaked. He has researched and observed these unique birds since 2004 and considers himself fortunate to have spent a season observing and photographing a venue of vultures in 2006.

Saturday, September 29, 2012
10:00 am - 3:00 pm
Hiking Kinghurst Forest Nature Preserve with Clarke Birchard
(Limit: 12)
Register with Clarke Birchard at
clarkeb@eastlink.ca

Indoor Program
Thursday, October 11, 2012
Wolves and Coyotes in Ontario: Population Status and Recent Research—Dr. Brent Patterson

In conjunction with the release of the "Strategy for wolf conservation in Ontario" in 2005 the province launched a comprehensive research program to better determine the distribution, abundance and ecological roles of wolves and coyotes in representative ecosystems across the province. Dr. Patterson will provide an update on the present status of Ontario's wolves and coyotes and will also highlight some interesting findings from the recent research.

Sunday, October 14, 2012
1:00 - 5:00 pm
Exploring the Shoreline of Malcolm Bluff Ontario Nature Preserve with Andy Koshan
(Limit: 12)

Register with Andy Koshan at
519-372-8480 or
akoshan@yahoo.ca

Sunday, October 21, 2012
10:00 am - 3:00 pm
An Exploration of the Wodehouse Karst System in the Beaver Valley with Daryl Cowell
(Limit: 12)

Register with Andy Koshan at
akoshan@yahoo.ca or 519-372-8480

Indoor Program
Thursday, November 15, 2012
Following in the Footsteps of the Group of Seven Painters—Sue & Jim Waddington

Sue and Jim Waddington have located some of the wild places that inspired the Group of Seven painters. They particularly like to search for sites that can only be reached by canoe and on foot. Their talk will compare photographs of some of the 270 painting sites they have found with the corresponding artwork. They will discuss how they find the painting sites and what they have learned about the painters and their choice of site. Naturalists will be particularly interested in how the landscape has changed in the past 90 years.

Sunday, November 18, 2012
10:00 am - 2:00 pm
Waterfowl Around the Bay with Fred Jazvac
(Limit: 12)
Register: Fred Jazvac (519) 797 3332

Indoor Program

Thursday, December 13, 2012

Members' Night Hosted by Jim Ansell

A potpourri of OSFN members' slides, displays, art, collections and compositions focusing on the natural world. A limit of 10 slides and 10 minutes of presentation time is preferred. Register your presentation with Jim Ansell at 519-376-2775 or jansell@sympatico.ca

Grey-Bruce Coming Events

Bluewater Association for Lifelong Learning series about the War of 1812 begins September 6, 2012

Cabot Head Research Station of the Bruce Peninsula Bird Observatory, Open House September 8, 2012

Wild for the Arts, MacGregor Point Provincial Park September 15 & 16, 2012

Grey Bruce Children's Water Festival September 24—26, 2012

2012 Ontario Nature Youth Summit for Biodiversity and Environmental Justice, Orillia—September 28—30, 2012

Bruce Grey Forest Festival October 16, 18 and 19, 2012

Bruce Peninsula Bird Observatory Fundraising Dinner November 17, 2012



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PRIORITY GIVEN TO APPROVED OPA GROUND-MOUNT PROJECTS IN ORDER TO MEET MAY 2011 DEADLINE.

What's the difference between a coyote and a flea?

One howls on the prairie and the other prowls on the hairy.

Butterfly Counts

Two North American Butterfly Association (NABA) Counts are held each year in Bruce County. The butterfly census which includes MacGregor Point Provincial Park was held on July 15. It was coordinated by Matthew Cunliffe. Bruce Peninsula National Park's census was held on July 28 with Jenna McGuire as the count coordinator. These censuses rely on volunteers from the naturalist community and, as a result, a number of their local volunteers are from the OSFN. Thank you to all our members who participate in some type of citizen science. Your participation is greatly valued.

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We welcome the following new members:

Dianne Ackert and Alan MacDonald, Steve and Erica Jean Bognor, Helen Boyd, Russell Horning and Jan Pugsley, Lorraine Adderley.

Christmas Bird Counts, 2012

Watch the e-Herald for the dates and count contact information for Christmas Bird Counts in Bruce Peninsula National Park, Cape Croker, Owen Sound, Meaford, Kincardine, Saugeen Shores, Hanover/Walkerton and Wiarton. These citizen science events are scheduled between December 14, 2012 and January 5, 2013.

Thank you to the members who have provided content for this newsletter or who have proof read. Unfortunately, I've misplaced the contact information for several people who were willing to help with proof reading. If you contacted me before and are available to help next time, please let me know. Norah Toth ntoth@rogers.com

The History of the Bruce-Grey Plant Committee

by Joan Crowe

The formation of the Plant Committee is a good example of serendipity. In 1994, the Owen Sound Field Naturalists (OSFN) was in its formative years, Lorraine Brown was very active and Orris Hull was president. In July, Lorraine and Orris had a discussion about producing a plant checklist. Lorraine knew that Bob Gray (the local Ministry of Natural Resources ecologist) had commissioned Joe Johnson in 1990 to author "A Vascular Flora of Three Regions Comprising Bruce and Grey Counties, Ontario - with Emphasis on Rare Taxa" which separated the Bruce Peninsula from the southern parts of the two counties and which would provide the basis for the checklist. She also must have known that Walter and I had just retired from Lakehead University where I had been curator of the herbarium and had recently published a revision of Claude Garton's checklist of plants for Thunder Bay District. Thus, in 1995 when Bob was able to hire Julie Ottewell as a summer student to work on this project, I was asked to supervise. Julie did a good job on computerizing the list from Joe's document. At one point, she consulted Mike Oldham of the Natural Heritage Information Centre and he suggested annotating the species with p, b, g to give some idea of their distribution in the three areas of the counties and using upper case letters to indicate rarity. We also checked the herbaria at the universities of Guelph, Waterloo and Lakehead. Mac Kirk provided us with some new records. Nels Maher was the authority on ferns in this area and we had some help on their distribution from Professor Don Britton of Guelph U. Funding for this first project was provided by the OSFN and the Saugeen Field Naturalists who shared the inventory. Mac Campbell was the representative of the Saugeen club.

The printing was done at Stan Brown's under the expert supervision of Nels. The first edition came out in November 1995. It has been revised several times and the 4th edition appeared in 2010. A total of 1500 copies has been printed.

Another project was already being considered by this time so we decided to create the plant committee. All the members involved in the checklist became part of it and Ellen and Orris Hull joined us. This group provided the core over the years but, for each new project, other people would be recruited. The next project was dear to Bob's heart. In 1977 when he became head naturalist for the provincial parks in Grey and Bruce counties, he soon realised that this was a unique area for wild orchids so he commissioned the manuscript for an orchid book to cover the Peninsula. There had been a fire at Cyprus Lake and all their nature slides were lost. Dr. Donald Gunn, who was a brilliant amateur nature photographer, owned property nearby. When he heard about their loss he offered to replace it with copies of his slides. Naturally, his pictures were to be used in the orchid book. Unfortunately, there never was any funding from the M.N.R. so it was shelved. We decided to take the manuscript and expand it to include the whole of the two counties. In 1996, Doug Bulgin was hired by Bob as an MNR summer student. He computerized the text for the orchid book, researched additional species, organized the illustrations and was invaluable in readying the document for publication. Dr. Gunn had died but we were able to access his pictures which had been donated to the Royal Botanical Gardens in Hamilton. Funding for this project was a problem. The cost to print 2000 copies was

just over \$13 000.00. We tried various organizations for a grant, with no success. Ontario Nature donated \$1000.00 and were repaid with 100 books. OSFN lent us \$5000.00 which was repaid in 1999 and used to help finance the acquisition of part of the Long Swamp by the EBC. The remainder was lent by the core members of the committee who chipped in \$1000 or more and were repaid gradually as the money came in. The book came out in the spring of 1997. Fortunately, it was a best seller from the start so it did not take long to start to pay off our debts. There have been three printings of just over 5000 copies. The nomenclature was revised in 2005 in conformity with the Flora of North America Volume 26. We are about to reprint 500 copies.

Naturally, with Nels on the committee, the next project had to be a fern book. We decided to follow the format of the orchid book but with the addition of distribution maps based on the townships. This involved doing some field work in the southern parts of the two counties, since they had not been investigated as thoroughly as the Peninsula. In 1998, Bob hired Ian Sinclair as a summer student and he spent a good deal of time with me on this fieldwork and, later, did some more areas unsupervised. He was also responsible for creating the index for the book. Nels basically wrote the text which was checked by Joe Johnson and edited by me. Most of the photos were supplied by Nels, too. Another remarkable feature of this book was the photographic silhouettes of each species which are extremely useful in identification. Nels, who was a professional printer, had created these over the years and used them to stimulate interest in local ferns.

One important feature of the plant committee was that (starting with the orchid book), when the text was completed, every member of the committee was given a copy to review. We would then hold an editorial meeting, usually taking best part of a day, when we would sit down together and go over the book line by line. Anyone could point out errors or make suggestions for improvements. In other words, this was a truly cooperative process. After the book was finally set up and went to the printers several members would go over the proofs. Ellen and Orris were particularly helpful in this. The result was that very few errors can be found in any of our publications. The money coming in from our first two publications was not yet sufficient to cover the cost of printing 2000 fern books so the members of the committee chipped in again. For later publications this was no longer necessary as sufficient money was coming in to cover all costs.

Our fourth project was initiated by June and Ralph Krueger who were collecting asters and goldenrods and planting them in their garden near Clarksburg. They were having difficulty identifying local species. John Semple's guides to Ontario species are excellent but we only have about half the species covered by those books so we needed something simpler. A lot of members contributed to this book and they are listed in the acknowledgements. Judith King and Kathy Parker worked on the goldenrods, while June and Ralph worked on the asters. Dorothy Kings pointed out that many people confuse fleabanes with asters so we decided to include them. This book was published in 2000. It was not very expensive as we decided to use only black and white illustrations. Colours vary so much in these groups that photographs can be quite misleading. One feature of all our books has been to have systematic descriptions of all the features needed in identification and that was particularly

important with this group. Sadly, Ralph died just before the book came out.

Bob had yet another project on the back burner! He had started to produce fact sheets about rare species which could be distributed to land owners and make them aware of the necessity for preservation. Lorraine had worked with him on this but, again, it quickly fizzled out due to lack of funding. We took these documents and used them to create "The Rare and Endangered Species of Grey and Bruce Counties". A different group of people assisted with this book. We also strayed into zoology since we included vertebrate animals. We drew the line at invertebrates and non-vascular plants for which identification is much more complex. We printed 1000 copies of this book in 2001 and 500 copies of a reprint in 2005. We have just under 100 copies remaining but we do not plan to reprint because the designations are constantly changing and there is much more information available today than there was when we first undertook this project.

Bob had yet another enterprise up his sleeve and that was the production of a Geology book. He knew that Grey-Bruce is a fabulous area for variety in bedrock and landforms. Many sites have been identified as earth science ANSIs (areas of natural and scientific interest). Much information was available but not in a form accessible to the general public. This book was first seriously discussed in 2002. For this project the group morphed into a Geology committee and Bob recruited a group of real experts in different aspects of the subject. Daryl Cowell, Torben Hawksbridge, Victor Last and Bob Gray were the authors of the main sections but many other people played a major role. We were particularly fortunate to have Phil Kor, senior conservation geologist for Ontario Parks review the manuscript. The GIS staff from the MNR assisted with prep-

aration of the maps for book. Bob also hired Amber Knott as a Summer Experience Program Student who worked with us in 2003. This book was published in 2004. The first 2000 sold in three years, 1000 more were printed and we are getting close to needing another reprint.

It was around this time that Nels recruited a group to locate Heritage Trees around Owen Sound, this was an on-going project for several years. In 2005 we finally decided to hand over the wholesale marketing of the books to the Ginger Press. Up to then members of the committee stored and distributed the books. Many book stores in this area sell them and a number of universities also use them in their courses. Nels was particularly good at selling the books to the many groups that he led on field trips but he had not been well for some time and, sadly, passed away one week after we took the books to the Ginger Press. As a tribute to Nels, it was decided to create a book on the trees of Owen Sound which would be based on his Heritage Tree survey. Another ad hoc group formed with Merle Gunby, who had worked closely with Nels on the survey, and his wife Sheila who computerized and edited the document. Brian Murray was another participant who co-authored part of the book. Long term members of the plant committee, Bob Gray, Ellen and Orris Hull and myself contributed in various ways. Eventually, it was decided to entitle the book "Exploring an Urban Forest" because that is what you see when you look at Owen Sound from the surrounding escarpment. This book includes descriptions of many introduced species as well as native ones. In addition, there are four walking tours outlined showing where specific tree species can be located. This book was published in 2007.

Orris Hull had been an important member of our group. He was responsible for the accounting and, also, for the inventory



until we handed over to the Ginger Press. It was largely at his urging that we took this step. Sadly, we lost him in 2011. There are very few members of the original committee left. However, for the time being, we do intend to keep the Orchid, Fern and Geology books in print. For this reason, the committee account is being kept open. A few years ago, \$11 000 of our profit was put in a G.I.C. in order to earn some interest. We were not sure at that time if we would be undertaking another book. It was always our intention to give any final profit to the OSFN to be used for environmental preservation projects. Now that the OSFN has set up a fund for this purpose we are handing over \$15 000 to that fund. Eventually, the chequing account will also be handed over to the club.

The Long Swamp Nature Reserves

by Joan Crowe

There seems to be some misunderstanding as to the location of the Mac Kirk Nature Reserve in the Long Swamp. The Long Swamp is about 15 km long and, in places, as much as 2½ km wide. It cuts across Highways 6 and 21. This whole area was divided into rectangular 100-acre lots in the early 19th century survey. The lots are mostly about 1 km long, north to south and 500 m, east to west. The lots in the swamp were allotted to settlers and were not suitable for anything much except logging so the road allowances were never opened. One came up for sale in 1970 when Mac Kirk was manager of the Conservation Authority and he persuaded the FON (Ontario Nature) to purchase it, as it had some interesting natural features including a stand of the rare Small Round Leaved Orchis. It is part swampy forest and part fen and is completely landlocked, only an old, flooded, logging road gave access across private property. There are four lots between it and Highway 6. In 1997, the lot opposite our house came up for sale. There was a possibility of some development on the drumlin adjacent to the road (the Keppel-Derby Townline) so we bought it to prevent that. Then the opportunity to buy the two lots which would link our lot with the Mac Kirk Reserve came up. The Barwells were anxious for the area to be preserved so they asked a very reasonable price. By donating our lot to the Nature Conservancy, the Conservancy was able to obtain a matching grant. This provided the funds for the Conservancy to buy the Barwell lots. That created a 294-acre block which included the logging road, thus giving access to the Mac Kirk Reserve (6-acres of our lot had been developed prior to our purchase).

Since then the Escarpment Biosphere Conservancy, with help from the Owen Sound Field Naturalists, bought a 50-acre lot on the west side of Highway 6. Unfortunately, the 170 acres between this reserve and the 394-acre block to the west is privately owned by someone who wants \$1000 per acre for it, even though it is totally landlocked, with no road access and is mostly provincially significant wetland that cannot be developed! Three lots on the other side of the Barwell property have recently been put on the market by Grein Lumber who want an even higher price! These are adjacent to Highway 21. Two lots to the west and south of the Mac Kirk Reserve are privately owned by a family that is interested in environmental protection. The Escarpment Biosphere Conservancy also owns two lots on the east side of Highway 6 and is working on a severance on the south side of Highway 21. I believe there are some sections to the north of Highway 6 which are owned by the Conservation Authority. This still leaves a lot of the swamp under private ownership. In fact, the township recently gave permission for a house to be built within the protected area. This could be considered an example of how people try to bend rules designed to protect areas that play important roles related to water filtration and maintaining the level of the water table on which many wells depend. Unfortunately, the drumlins, which form islands within the wet areas of the swamp, are scheduled "rural" in the county official plan so they do not have the same protection as the actual swamp areas, which are classified as Provincially Significant Wetlands. This opens up the possibility of some form of development.

Extreme Spring Weather Event has broad impact in Grey Bruce

by Freeman Boyd

This spring, Ontario experienced a quite extreme weather event – a combination of a freak warm spell and some killing frosts. Unlike, say, the tornado that devastated Goderich, there were no terrifying moments, no news-reels of destroyed buildings, no injuries or deaths – and yet, once the accounting is done, it will be the most destructive extreme weather event in Ontario in decades.

Anatomy of the event: On March 21, Ontario broke the high temperate record for March with 28.8 C. Owen Sound catalogued 14 consecutive days with highs of 14C or more, peaking at 27C.

April brought winter back. Twice, parts of Southern Ontario were buried under snow, but much more damaging than the heavy snows were the sub zero temperatures. Grey Bruce recorded killing frosts (below -2C) on April 1, 7, 18 and 29. On April 18, temperatures dropped below freezing by 4pm, bottomed out at -6C, and did not return to positive values for 22 hours!

These temperature fluctuations hardly count as extreme weather events and yet they did so much damage! The heat wave in March brought many plants and insects out of dormancy. Trees like apples do not actually flower until well into May, but their buds began to swell in the warm March weather. Even so, these buds might have survived to bear fruit except for the deep and repeated frosts in April. All of the consequences and costs of this weather event may never be catalogued – but the short survey below gives some indication of the range of impacts.

Cataloguing the damage:

March: The heat wave brought the maple syrup season to an abrupt halt. In Grey and Bruce, syrup operators reported production at about half of a normal year.

April: Early spring flowers, including daffodils, tulips, irises and alliums had their buds and leaves frozen. Early flowering trees and shrubs were also severely affected: choke cherries, pin cherries, hawthorns, magnolias, wild plums, lilacs, honeysuckle. Tent caterpillars hatched earlier than usual too. Many of their tents were dead, or

only lightly active, by the time their host shrubs began to leaf out in May

May: For the first time in memory, the Beaver Valley did not turn white and fragrant with apple blossoms. Losses are estimated at between 80 and 100% of normal yield. For many apple producers, there will be no harvest at all this year! Across Ontario, many fruit tree were similarly affected - hardest hit were cherries, apricots, plums, nectarines, pears, and peaches.

Bee hives came through the mild winter in Grey Bruce stronger than they have in years. They too broke dormancy in the March heat wave. Bee losses due to starvation began before blossoming really got under way. Beekeepers missed out on income from pollination services provided to apple growers, even while they had to feed the bees until June when the late spring cohort of flowers finally opened. No doubt the many species of native pollinators, including the bumblebees, also struggled.

June: Yield on the first cut of forage crops is down by about 30%. Alfalfa yields, along with some of the earlier grasses, are particularly affected. The lack of early tree fruit, like choke cherries, made it tough on small mammals and birds like cedar waxwings.

Fall: The failure of the apple crop will be an estimated \$15M hit to farm gate receipts in Grey County alone. This will reduce employment in both the harvest and processing sector. Supplies of Ontario cider, juice, sauce, sliced and dried apples, as well as table apples will all be greatly reduced.

Winter: There will be no haws for waxwings, and no apples and pears for the deer and turkeys

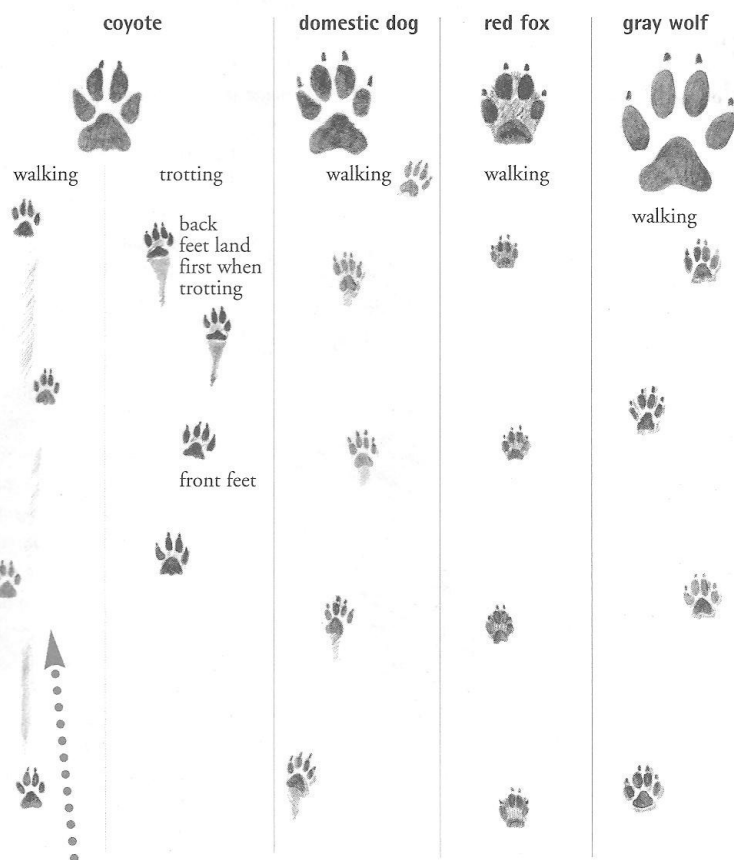
Long term: Will there be long term damage from this weather event? No one knows yet.

While damage to agricultural enterprises will be documented because of their economic impact, damage to wildlife may go unnoticed. If you have an observation about the impact of our extreme spring weather event, please contact Freeman Boyd: boydsproduce@gmail.com 519-548-4368

Junior Naturalist's Corner

(from Season's Children's Supplement Summer, 2002)

Coyotes and many other animals leave tracks in the mud when walking, running or trotting. Often you can find tracks near streams, riverbanks or at the edge of ponds where many creatures go for a refreshing drink. The coyote's tracks may, at first sight, resemble those of a dog. If you look closely, you will see that different members of the canine family have different tracks and walk very differently. Try to match the tracks with the word descriptions below.



Most wild members of the canine family walk with their back paws almost or completely aligning with their front paws, so they only leave what appears to be one set of tracks.

1. Prints of this large canine have claws separated from the toe pads.
2. Tracks of this medium-sized dog relative have claws attached to the middle toe pads.
3. Like its Arctic relative, this small canine's toes have fur on the bottoms.
4. This mammal drags its feet while trotting.
5. This canine often leaves a drag mark in the snow from its long furry tail.
6. Tracks often wander curiously something its wild cousins can't afford.

Answers: 1—gray wolf; 2—coyote; 3—red fox; 4—coyote; 5—coyote; 6—domestic dog



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New Bird Documented for Grey Bruce

By Lynne Richardson

On Friday April 20th a friendly chat with a fellow diner in the Ferndale Crossroads Café led to her describing a bird at her feeder unlike any bird resident or migratory throughout Grey-Bruce.

As it turned out, she was on the Board of the Bruce Peninsula Bird Observatory and had already alerted fellow BPBO members who had dropped by the previous evening and confirmed its identity as a **Western Tanager**. The Grey Bruce Birds Record Committee has no previous records of this bird occurring in the two counties. It occurs rarely in Ontario.



Credit: Rod Steinacher, President Bruce Peninsula Bird Observatory

We were graciously invited to drop by and have a look. The bird was a striking male, with a yellow body, black wings and a bright red face (not that it was at all embarrassed that it had wandered far from its home in western Canada or the US!).

This occurrence has been well documented and will appear in the next edition of the Checklist of Birds of Grey-Bruce, which will be produced within the next year.

If you happen to see any birds in Grey-Bruce that are not on the current checklist, or are listed as rare or accidental, please let the OSFN know!

Nature Conservancy Volunteer Opportunities

The Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) has a variety of projects that as a club or as individual members the Owen Sound Field Naturalists could volunteer to help with. These include property-specific projects, with a range of needs from the group/individual, and a couple more regional projects.

Projects might include:

1. **Volunteer Property Steward** – The duties of a volunteer steward require at least one thorough visit to the property each year to assess any trespassing damages or other mischief. Multiple visits are encouraged. A volunteer steward is also encouraged to undertake other activities at a property (often with NCC staff). This might include biological surveys (birds, plants, mammals) to increase the basic knowledge of the property or activities to monitor rare and/or invasive species.
2. **Species Inventory/Monitoring** – These could be annual activities monitoring known species-at-risk or invasive species populations at NCC properties. They would be carried out by OSFN stewards or as a special event designed to increase general species inventory of a group (or groups) of creatures at any property. Ideally, a volunteer survey group would have a range of skill-sets, with some 'experts' mixed in with interested non-experts. For a group project, NCC would provide a pre-event workshop to get participants up to speed on the main target species.

Continued on Page 11

The Ginger Press Bookstore
848 Second Avenue East
Owen Sound, Ontario
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519 376-4233
1 800 463-9937

3. In order to map as many invasive species (such as knapweed, *Phragmites*, Garlic Mustard) populations as possible, basic surveys need to be carried out. Coastal surveys of *Phragmites* is a top priority; especially occurrences of both native and non-native *Phragmites* in places like Stokes Bay and Cape Hurd. A set of motivated volunteers would be trained in invasive species identification and directed to survey sites by NCC and partner staff.
4. The study of the road ecology of the Northern Bruce Peninsula is a three-year project. It is designed to monitor certain roads for reptile and amphibian activity and general road-kill. Volunteers would be trained to identify reptiles and amphibians. The survey itself would be carried out on side roads and would ideally be carried out by experienced cyclists as it is considered a dangerous project. The roads involved would include Dyer's Bay, Dorcas Bay and Cape Hurd roads. Survey data from the roads would be compared with data derived from habitat use models which predict where the top animal crossing spots might be based on the preferred habitats adjacent to the roads. Once road-kill hotspots are discovered, a set of traffic-calming tools (such as signs and rumble strips) would be installed. The hotspot areas would be resurveyed to determine if traffic-calming tools have any effect on the number of killed animals. This is a three year project.

People interested in these volunteer opportunities should speak to Stewart Nutt. He will pass your information on to designated Nature Conservancy staff.



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Fall 2012 Programs 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 pm. The speaker of the evening starts just after 7, followed by a social time, club business, sightings and announcements.

If an indoor program is cancelled due to weather, notice of cancellation will be posted on local radio stations, through the e-Herald, on our website and on the library bulletin board.

Thursday, September 13, 2012 – The Miraculous Timid Turkey Vulture with Chris Hamilton

Thursday, October 11, 2012 – Wolves and Coyotes in Ontario: Population Status and Recent Research with Dr. Brent Patterson

Thursday, November 15, 2012 – Following in the Footsteps of the Group of Seven Painters with Sue and Jim Waddington

Thursday, December 13, 2012 – Members' Night hosted by Jim Ansell

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 one week before the outing. If a program is cancelled due to weather, the person with whom you registered for the program will contact you.

Saturday, September 8 - Stargazing with John Hlynialuk (Limit 12)

Saturday, September 29 - Hiking Kinghurst Forest Nature Preserve with Clarke Birchard (Limit 12)

Sunday, October 14—Exploring the Shoreline of Malcolm Bluff Ontario Nature Preserve with Andy Koshan (Limit: 12)

Sunday, October 21— An Exploration of the Wodehouse Karst System in the Beaver Valley with Daryl Cowell (Limit: 12)

Sunday, November 18 - Waterfowl Around the Bay with Fred Jazvac (Limit: 12)

Membership Application and Renewal Form

Name.....

Address.....

Telephone..... E-mail..... Check here if renewal.....
(your e-mail will be used for OSFN e-bulletin, last minute notices and digital receipt of the newsletter)

Membership Category: Single (\$25)..... Family (\$40)..... Student (\$15).....

Donation for Conservation Projects..... Donation to Conservation Trust Fund.....

Return with cheque to: Owen Sound Field Naturalists, P.O. Box 401, Owen Sound, ON N4K 5P7

Or pay on-line using our Paypal option.

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)