

Hart's Tongue Herald

The Newsletter of the Owen Sound Field Naturalists

Winter 2015

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Editor: Norah Toth



President's Report

As I compose this message for the winter issue, I am still enjoying the autumn colours. There have been some wonderful displays – my red and green cabbages, orange carrots, red potatoes, yellow, green and purple bean, red beets and green kale – my, what a palette! When we look around we see the beautiful red, orange and yellow leaves against the blue skies, while the orchards present their bounty of fruit in all the shades of scrumptious!

In November, the first week was amazing, featuring plenty of warmth and sunshine – eminently suitable for enjoying nature, whether birding, cycling or hiking trails. When I finally got out of Owen Sound on November 2, I discovered that my favourite fall features were well underway – the tamaracks had turned to gold against the green background of cedars and pines, while the sumacs were already a bright crimson.

As an added bonus Dennis Knight and I witnessed an intense double rainbow as we returned from a regional meeting of Ontario Nature member clubs.

The OSFN club events this fall have been wonderful opportunities to learn. Ray Robertson's Tour of Agricultural Initiatives of the 90s demonstrated effective methods that use nature's materials and human ingenuity to enhance water quality and control erosion. Freeman Boyd led and then fed us, while providing valuable instruction about wild mushrooms. Dennis Knight shared his keen interest in ferns, plus other plants, critters and geology, on an exquisite section of the Bruce Trail. To top it off, half a dozen garter snakes were sunning on a hillside within the woods.

Fred Jazvac gave insightful instruction on bird

Cover: Freeman Boyd explains the wonders of studying fungi.

Credit: Brian Robin

identification while Ducking around the Sound.

At indoor club meetings we learned about cryopreservation and invitro conservation techniques. We also learned just how much can be achieved when the youth of today harness their thoughts and their passions. We used this opportunity to honour all of the many people who initiated and then have nurtured our vibrant Young Naturalists Program for so many years.

We were fortunate to be able to present a Reptiles at Risk Workshop for many of you – a learning experience that won't soon be forgotten.

As we transition from autumn colours to a whiter wintry canvas, I look forward to your company at coming events where, together, we will get to *Know Nature Better*.

With a Song in My Heart,

John Dickson



Reflections on Lake Charles. Credit: John Dickson



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Club News

Sustainable Agriculture Initiatives Tour

Ten OSFN members joined Ray Robertson, from Grey Agricultural Services, for the Sustainable Agriculture Initiatives Tour on September 12. We visited eight demonstration areas along the Bighead River south of Meaford that had been established in the 1990s.



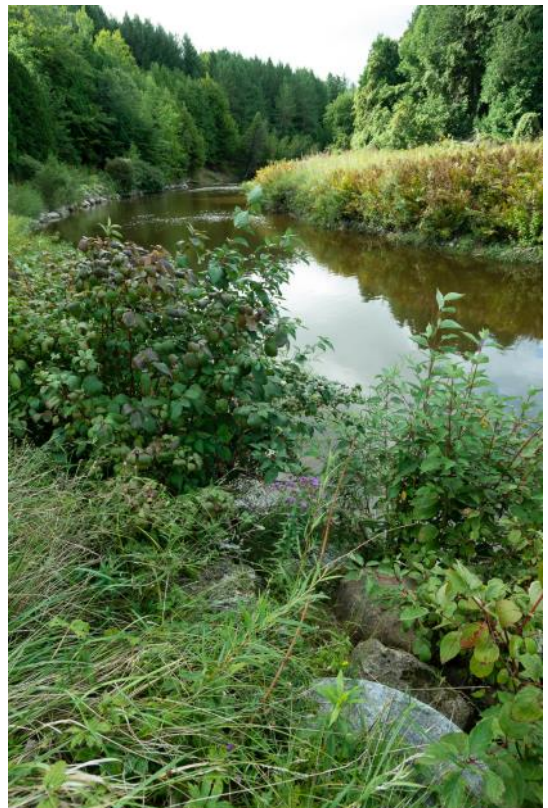
Ray discussing the Bighead River Project. Credit: Brian Robin

Ray coordinated the Bighead River Project when he worked for the Grey County Soil and Crop Improvement Association. The Wetlands/Woodlands/Wildlife Program of the Canada/Ontario Agriculture Green Plan and respective landowners provided funding. The main objectives of this project were to reduce sediment and nutrient loads in the Bighead River and to improve fish habitat in the river and its tributaries. Besides having the pleasure of seeing improved habitat for fish and wildlife on their property, the landowners benefited from erosion protection of their land and, in some cases, improved quality of the drinking water for their livestock. During the 3 years of the Bighead River Project, 123 individual projects were completed.

The tour gave us the opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness, over time, of remedial measures, especially since we could compare them against spots where nothing had been done. The soil along

unprotected banks was visibly exposed and continuing to erode. Protected areas were well-vegetated, stable and looked natural. If Ray had not been along to point them out, we would never have known that anything had been done! (Our only clue might have been the presence of large rocks along the streambank, something that is not normal along much of the Bighead River.)

We saw several examples of where the streambank had been lined with large rocks to protect the soil from the force of the water. Over time, the gaps between the rocks had filled with soil allowing diverse riparian plants such as willows, sedges, Joe-Pye weed and reed canary grass to become established. In some cases, the rocks



Healthy stream banks along the river. Credit: Brian Robin

Sustainable Agriculture Tour **continued**

narrowed the width of the stream to make the flow faster and more turbulent, keeping the water cooler while flushing sediment out of spawning beds.



Riffles and baffles. Credit: Brian Robin

One site demonstrated “bio-engineering”. Cedar trees had been cut, partially de-limbed and used to line the bank. The branches left on the logs both protected the soil and provided shade for fish. Again, the streambank looked natural. An even simpler and less expensive

technique was used at another spot. Unrooted willow stems were stuck into the ground. Because of the moist environment, they rooted quickly and are now 12 to 15 feet high, providing protection for the bank and shade for fish. We also saw a variety of approaches for restricting cattle access to the stream while, at the same time, providing an alternate source of drinking water.

The best indicator of the overall success of the Bighead River Project was the water itself. In spite of the heavy rains earlier that week, the water was clear and teeming with fish and other aquatic life. Ray noted that the Ministry of Natural Resources & Forestry has reported that fish populations in some parts of the watershed had increased by 300%.

Many thanks to Ray Robertson for organizing and conducting this interesting tour.

For a brief “virtual” tour of the sites we visited, go to Stewart Hilts’ website, <http://seasonsinthevalley.blogspot.ca/>. Look for Environmental Farm Tour in his September Archive.

Submitted by: David Morris

Mushroom Foray



Owen Sound Field Naturalist members demonstrate the attention to detail required for identification and examination of fungi.

Freeman Boyd, above, is a popular local fungi expert and recently led the group on a mushroom foray in nearby Marshall Woods.

Credit: Brian Robin

Is petting a snake still on your bucket list?

The OSFN provided a wonderful opportunity to pet a snake on October 29 at West Hill Secondary School where 35 members braved the damp autumn weather to attend a Reptiles at Risk presentation by Jeff Hathaway and his associate, Kelsey Crawford of Scales Nature Park in Orillia.

As promised, the presenters engaged the audience by discussing snake and turtle species found in Ontario, including how to identify them, where they live, what they eat, why they're in trouble and how we can help. Their detailed slideshow was interspersed with numerous questions from an attentive audience.

The knowledge shared by these very able presenters was significant. Here's an important take-away: reptiles and amphibians are experiencing global declines. In Ontario, 75 percent of reptiles and 35 percent of amphibians are listed as nationally and provincially at risk.

Six things you can do

1. Although Jeff neglected to make an overt pitch for his park, those wishing to learn more about reptiles, or to catch up on what they missed, are encouraged to make a day trip to visit Scales Nature Park. <http://www.scalesnaturepark.ca/> The park is now closed for winter hibernation but can be accessed by appointment until spring 2016. Be sure to check out their website for contact information and the date when it will re-open on a regular basis.

2. Check out Ontario Nature's comprehensive field guide about Ontario's reptiles and amphibians. It includes descriptions, habitat, biology, threats and trends, range maps, and current status and protection. <http://www.ontarionature.org/protect/species/>

reptiles_and_amphibians/index.php#turtles

3. Download the Ontario Nature app: http://www.ontarionature.org/protect/species/herpetofaunal_atlas.php Submit sightings of all reptile and amphibian species, not just the rare ones, for inclusion in the Ontario Reptile and Amphibian Atlas, a citizen science project that tracks distributions and spatial trends of



Kelsey Crawford with an Eastern Foxsnake. Credit: Aubrey Ferguson

reptiles and amphibians across the province over time. <http://form.jotform.ca/form/51593629121253>

4. Take injured turtles to the only turtle hospital in Ontario, Peterborough's Kawartha Turtle Trauma Centre <http://kawarthaturtle.org/blog/> The greatest threat to turtles is the risk of being run over while crossing roads. Recognizing that it is not realistic to expect concerned naturalists to

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Is petting a snake still on your bucket list?

Continued

drive halfway across the province to save an injured turtle, Jeff is leading an effort to open the Georgian Bay Turtle Hospital in Orillia. Confirmation of this opening is still one to two years away.

5. Appeal the legal hunting of Snapping Turtles. The hunting of Snapping Turtles continues despite the fact that they are a



The Snapping Turtle is a species of Special Concern. Credit: Aubrey Ferguson

species of Special Concern in Ontario. Snapping Turtles have a delayed sexual maturity with reproduction beginning at 20 years of age. Typically only seven of the 10,000 eggs laid survive to adulthood. This species is especially vulnerable and any increase in adult mortality has detrimental effects on a population.

In 2009, Ontario Nature members requested that MNR remove the Snapping Turtle from the game list under the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act; MNR did not take action. In 2010, under the Environmental Bill of Rights, Ontario Nature formally requested a policy review of the hunting regulation. In February 2011, MNR rejected the policy review request stating that the hunt was sustainable.

According to Jeff, authorities believe that few turtles are taken by hunters since most do not know they are entitled to hunt Snapping Turtles. However, the existence of this provision in the law does not help the sustainability of the species. The Snapping Turtle's existence is further threatened by poachers who drop multiple meat-baited lines in streams and ponds where turtles reside. Working in a catchment area up to two to three hours from the GTA, these law-breakers harvest turtles to use their meat in soup considered a delicacy by some cultural groups.

Submitted by:
Aubrey Ferguson

Joan Crowe Receives the Goldie Award

Joan Crowe was recently honoured with the Goldie Award at the Field Botanists of Ontario's Annual General Meeting; held this past September in Peterborough. The Goldie Award is presented annually to an individual who has made a significant contribution to field botany in Ontario. Joan's many achievements were noted, including her leadership in offering field trips and her numerous field guide publications. She was instrumental in bringing to press six books published by the Owen Sound Field Naturalists. She has also written "First Book of Ontario Wildflowers".

Congratulations, Joan!



Joan leading a winter exploratory trip through the Barwell Property. Credit: Stewart Nutt



PROGRAM LISTINGS



*Around the Bay participants.
November, 2015 Credit: Jim
Punnett*

The Owen Sound Field Naturalists (OSFN) advocates and nurtures the appreciation, understanding and conservation of our natural world as is exemplified in our motto—Knowing Nature Better. We were created in 1989 to provide Owen Sound and area naturalists with the opportunity to meet like-minded individuals and to share activities that would allow them to increase their understanding of natural history and conservation. Today, we have over 300 members and are a member club of Ontario Nature.

Indoor meetings are held on the **second Thursday** of the month, September to May in the auditorium of the **Owen Sound and North Grey Union Public Library at 7:00 p.m.** In June, the meeting starts at 6 p.m. with a potluck supper and it's held at St Andrew's Presbyterian Church. Guest presenters are chosen to provide a wide range of topics. Their expertise covers natural history subjects that may be local, provincial, national or international in scope. Indoor meetings are open to the public.

The OSFN also provides a full schedule of **outdoor activities** throughout the year. On these outings, members learn and share first-hand knowledge about the flora, fauna and geography of this region. Participation numbers are limited on most outings to ensure the quality of the experience and to reduce impact on the environments visited. Pre-registration is required for outdoor activities.

Please note that all programs and schedules are subject to change. To avoid disappointment, please check www.osfn.ca for updates (changes to dates, speakers, locations, etc.). We thank you for understanding.

www.owensoundfieldnaturalists.ca
P.O. Box 401, Owen Sound, ON N4K 5P7

Outdoor Programs

Enjoy the outdoors with like-minded people.

Pre-registration is required.

Participant numbers are limited on most outings to ensure the quality of the experience and to reduce the impact on the environments visited. Please call or email the listed contact to register.

December, 2015— Annual Christmas Bird Counts

Members are welcome to participate in and assist with counts in Grey and Bruce. The dates and count contacts for Owen Sound, Meaford, Saugeen Shores, Thornbury and Wiarton are found on page 13 of the Hart's Tongue Herald.

For more information: Lynne Richardson
lynnerichardson@rogers.com

January or February, 2016 (TBA) - depending on weather & snow accumulation

Snowshoe to the Grotto with Stew Nutt or John Haselmayer

Register: John Haselmayer, john.haselmayer@pc.gc.ca

Limit: 12 participants

Saturday, March 5, 2016 - 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Who Made Those Tracks and Why? An Interpretive Late Winter Tracking Hike with Jeff Kinchen

Register: Jeff Kinchen, bognors.finest@gmail.com or 519-372-7499 **Limit:** 12 participants

Friday, April 22, 2016 EARTH DAY (TBA)

Special Events During Earth Week with OSFN Executive Leadership

Wednesday, April 27, 2016 - 10:00 a.m. – Noon

Interpretive Hike at Neyaashiinigmiing with Lenore Keeshig

Location: Meeting place in Neyaashiinigmiing (Cape Croker)

Register: Lenore Keeshig, Lenore.Keeshig@pc.gc.ca

Limit: 12 participants

Saturday, April 30, 2016 - 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Inglis Falls Arboretum and Propagation Area with Bill Moses A perfect opportunity to see what's happening at the Arboretum.

Register: Bill Moses, bill.mosesos@gmail.com or 519-371-4559 **Limit:** 12 participants

Sunday, May 15, 2016 - 8:00 a.m.

Birding at Bayview Escarpment with Mark Wiercinski

Register: Mark Wiercinski, Mark.Wiercinski@forces.gc.ca or 519-379-0437 **Limit:** 12 participants

Thursday, May 19, 2016 - 6:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.

Listening along the Rankin River with Andy Koshan

Bring your own canoe/kayak (BYOCK)

Register: Andy Koshan, akoshan@yahoo.ca or 519-372-9480

Limit: 12 participants

Saturday, May 21, 2016 - 10:00 a.m.

Trees and Birds of a Typical Arran Township Farm with Jim

Coles Grassland, Upland Forest, Wetlands and a barn

with swallows. (rain date: Sunday, May 22)

Register: Jim Coles, jcoles@gbtel.ca or 519-934-0020 **Limit:** 12 participants

June, 2016 - mid-week (TBA)

Wildflowers, Herbs and More with Barbara Palmer

Register: Barbara Palmer, barbara_p@rogers.com

or 519-372-0355 **Limit:** 12 participants

Special EARTH DAY Presentation

Friday, April 22, 2016 — Location and time to be announced

SPECIAL GUEST

John Riley, Chief Science Officer for Nature Conservancy of Canada

THE ONCE AND FUTURE GREAT LAKES COUNTRY

John Riley is a well known author, botanist, geologist, ecologist and naturalist.

Indoor Meetings

Indoor meetings are held on the 2nd Thursday of the month from September to June. They start at 7:00 p.m. at the Owen Sound & North Grey Union Public Library, 824 1st Avenue West, Owen Sound. Remember, bring a coffee mug to meetings.

January 14, 2016 Mark Wiercinski

SPECIES AT RISK: BIRDS ARE LIFE!

Birds are much more than just fidgety little things that are hard to focus on and wake you up way too early in the spring. Birds are life .. the best and easiest link to nature. We see them and hear them everywhere. Mark also talks about Species at Risk and tells stories and shares his adventures, some funny, some inspiring and some downright embarrassing. And then there's the "Mark Factor".

February 11, 2016 Peter Middleton

THE SKY'S THE LIMIT: A PRIMER ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Peter will share a compilation of data and slides to provide the audience with a synopsis of the science on climate change and the possible impacts for the many species we care so deeply about.

March 10, 2016 Dr. Maurice Dusseault

THE GOOD AND THE BAD ABOUT HYDRAULIC FRACKING IN CANADA - RISKS, REWARDS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Maurice will look at hydraulic fracturing and natural gas development in a technical context, explaining the real risks. He will also pose a question to the audience: "Where do you want your energy to come from, at what cost, and why?"

April 14, 2016 Ray Robertson

GREY COUNTY ENVIRO-AGRICULTURAL UPDATE

Sustainability issues and the forces for good planning in Grey-Bruce. An excellent opportunity to follow-up on woodlot, wetland & fisheries enhancement projects from the 1990s to 2015. It's amazing how they have matured.

May 12, 2016 David McLeish

THE EVOLUTION OF AN ECOLOGY ETHIC

This presentation will explore the colonization of the planet, including land and water, by humans, in the context of our relationship with its finite resources, how we have chosen to exploit them and how our environmental and ecological ethics continue to evolve.

June 9, 2016 @ 6:00 p.m. SHARP ** Last meeting of the year**

ANNUAL POTLUCK SUPPER & PRESENTATION

Please note location is not at the Library:

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, 865 1st Ave. W, Owen Sound

Bring your own plates, cutlery and cup or mug, and bring a food dish, with serving utensils, to serve 8-10.

SPECIAL GUEST

Charles T. Mitchell, Organic Farm Inspector

SUPPORT WILDLIFE – EAT ORGANIC

Chuck Mitchell is an organic farmer in Meaford and organic inspector for farms and processors of organic products in the US and Canada. He has spent the last 40 years working internationally, promoting more sustainable agricultural methods. This presentation will highlight sustainable agriculture in Central America, Myanmar (Burma) and the Republic of Georgia, and will discuss why purchasing organic food is of benefit to wildlife.

Please note that all programs and schedules are subject to change. To avoid disappointment, please check www.osfn.ca for updates (changes to dates, speakers, locations, etc.). We thank you for your understanding in these matters.

RESTORING PEACE: Six Ways Nature in Our Lives Can Reduce the Violence in Our World

by Richard Louv | Aug 2, 2015 | From Columns by Richard Louv, THE NEW NATURE MOVEMENT (Reprinted with permission.)

One potential tool for reducing human violence is seldom mentioned.

Let me say right off that I don't pretend that nature is a paragon of peace. Writer Herman Melville once challenged the idea of nature as "the grand cure," as he put it, and asked "who froze to death my teamster on the prairie?" The violence of nature is a fact, but this is also true: by assaulting nature, we raise the odds that we will assault each other. By bringing nature into our lives, we invite humility.

"In our studies, people with less access to nature show relatively poor attention or cognitive function, poor management of major life issues, poor impulse control," says Frances Kuo, a professor at the University of Illinois, adding that humans living in a neighborhood stripped of nature undergo patterns of social, psychological, and physical breakdown similar to those observed in animals deprived of their natural habitat. "In animals, what you see is increased aggression, disrupted parenting patterns, and disrupted social hierarchies."

On the other hand, in some settings the natural world does have the power to heal human hearts and prevent violence. That statement isn't based on modern Romanticism, but on a growing body of mainly correlative scientific evidence, with a tight focus on the impact of nearby nature.

Here are six reasons why meaningful relationships with nature may — in concert with other approaches — bolster mental health and civility, and reduce human violence in our world.

1. Green exercise improves psychological health.

"There is growing . . . empirical evidence to show that exposure to nature brings substantial mental health benefits," according to "Green Exercise and Green Care," a report by researchers at the University of Essex. "Our findings suggest that priority should be given to developing the use of green exercise as a therapeutic intervention." Among the benefits: improvement of psychological well-being; generation of physical health benefits by reducing blood pressure and burning calories; and the building of social networks.

2. In some cases, greening neighborhoods may help reduce domestic violence.

In a Chicago public housing development, researchers compared the lives of women living in apartment buildings with no greenery outside to those who lived in identical buildings—but with trees and greenery immediately outside. Those living near the trees exhibited fewer aggressive and violent acts against their partners. They have also shown that play areas in urban neighborhoods with more trees have fewer incidences of violence, possibly because the trees draw a higher proportion of responsible adults.

3. Natural playgrounds may decrease bullying.

In Sweden, Australia, Canada and the U.S., researchers have observed that when children played in an environment dominated by play structures rather than natural elements, they established their social hierarchy through physical competence; after an open grassy area was planted with shrubs, children engaged in more fantasy play, and their social standing became based less on physical abilities and more on language skills, creativity and inventiveness. Such play also provided greater opportunities for boys and girls to play together in egalitarian ways.

4. Other species help children develop empathy.

We've known for decades that children and the elderly are calmed when domestic pets are introduced in therapy, or included in rehabilitative or residential care. We also know that children can learn empathy by caring for pets. Some mental-health practitioners are taking the next step: using pets and

natural environments as part of their therapy sessions. Cherie L. Spehar, a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and Play Therapist, who has served as executive director of The Child Abuse Prevention Center in Raleigh, N.C., recommends to therapists, "Bring nature play into your sessions, as it is a resource rich in opportunities for practicing kindness. Introduce them to every form of life and teach respect for it."



5. Greater biodiversity in cities can increase social and family bonding.

Scientists at the University of Sheffield in the U.K. report that the more species that live in a park, the greater the psychological benefits to human beings. "Our research shows that maintaining biodiversity levels is important . . . not only for conservation, but also to enhance the quality of life for city residents," said Richard Fuller of the Department of Animal and Plant Science at Sheffield.

In related work, researchers at the University of Rochester, in New York, report that exposure to the natural environment leads people to nurture close relationships with fellow human

Restoring Peace Continued

beings, to value community, and to be more generous with money. By contrast, the more intensely people in the study focused on “artificial elements,” the higher they rated wealth and fame. One of the researchers, Richard M. Ryan, noted, “[We’ve] found nature brings out more social feelings, more value for community and close relationships. People are more caring when they’re around nature.”

6. More nature in our lives can offset the dangerous psychological impact of climate change.

Professor Glenn Albrecht, director of the Institute of Sustainability and Technology Policy at Murdoch University in Australia, has coined a term specific to mental health: solastalgia, which he defines as “the pain experienced when there is recognition that the place where one resides and that one loves is under immediate assault.” Albrecht asks: Could people’s mental health be harmed by an array of shifts,

including subtle changes of climate?

If he’s right in suggesting this is so, and if climate change occurs at the rate that some scientists believe it will, and if human beings continue to crowd into de-natured cities, then solastalgia will, he believes, contribute to a quickening spiral of mental illness.

We are not powerless in the face of planetary or societal challenges. Granted, we will not be able to prevent every violent tragedy, but we can surely make our lives greener and gentler. And that positive influence may ripple outward in ways we cannot immediately measure or see.

“Simply getting people together, outside, working in a caring capacity with nature, perhaps even intergenerationally, may be as important as the healing of nature itself,” suggests Rick Kool, a professor in the School of Environment and Sustainability at Royal Roads University in Victoria, British Columbia. “Perhaps, in trying to ‘heal the world’ through restoration, we end up healing ourselves.”

First Record of Cave Swallow in Grey and Bruce Counties

On November 12 James Turland reported seeing three swallows along the Lake Huron waterfront in Kincardine. At this time of year, and particularly following periods of high winds, birders across the Great Lakes anticipate a minor “fallout” of Cave Swallows. These birds are native to southern Texas. As aerial insectivores they are vulnerable to being blown far off course in strong north easterly winds.

The day following James' sighting Shirley Harrison of Thornbury noticed a swallow flying around the shore in front of her place. I went over and sure enough it was a Cave Swallow! We watched it for about an hour, and got a number of pictures.

These are two terrific bird records for the Grey-Bruce checklist area. James' birds will be the first documented record for Bruce County and the Thornbury bird is the first for Grey County.

Submitted by: Lynne Richardson



A Cave Swallow in Thornbury.



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*The Owen Sound Field Naturalists has had a long history of youth engagement through the Young Naturalists program. Kate McLaren, Elaine Van Den Kieboom, Krista McKee and Peter Middleton are just a few of the people who have driven this program for the past 15 years. **Credit:** Brian Robin*

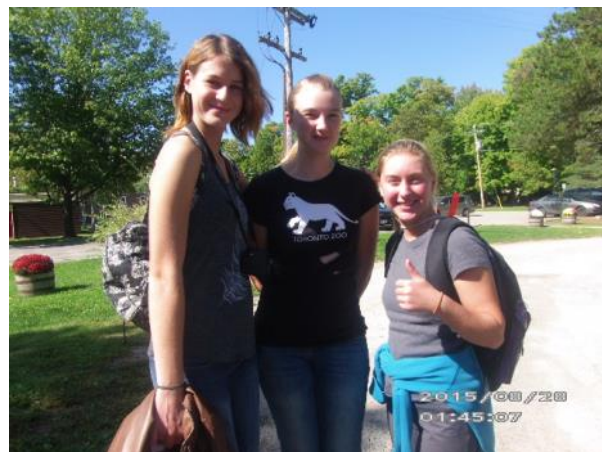
Ontario Nature Youth Summit for Biodiversity & Environmental Leadership, 2015

To the Owen Sound Field Naturalists Club

I'd like to thank you for sending me to Ontario Nature's Youth Summit for Biodiversity and Environmental Leadership. I had an amazing and inspiring weekend that has radically changed the way I see the world.

Since childhood I have adored the outdoors. Hiking, camping and adventuring in the woods are some of my fondest memories. Last year I joined the Envirothon team at my school and enjoyed learning about the science that is behind maintaining our forests, rivers and wildlife. When the opportunity to go to the youth summit came along I was very excited.

The youth summit was an amazing experience, as it is very rare to find a group of people (especially young people) who think and feel so similarly and so passionately. The summit and its workshops opened my eyes to just how much is wrong with the way we treat our planet and the environment. From general things like garbage and recycling to GMO and pesticide use, our comfortable lifestyle takes a heavy toll on the environment. The most shocking part of all this, is the complete ignorance of the populace to many of these things. What I found the most inspiring about the summit was not simply the motivational facts, but that there are so many things we can easily change in our daily lives to make a lasting change for our environment. We heard from great keynote speakers about how youth can cause change by making



Reanna with two new friends at the Youth Summit.

connections between our lives and the welfare of the environment. One of my most memorable workshops was "Be the Change". We spent the time hearing about ways our personal lifestyle is affecting the world around us and brainstorming with our peers on ways we can make a difference through our personal lifestyle. A more low-key and down to earth workshop I enjoyed was "Passionate about Pollinators". In this Workshop we learned about native pollinators and their role in ecosystems as well as agriculture. We learned about factors such as pesticides and habitat destruction that are affecting the decline of native bee populations. We made a nest for solitary bees and learned about other ways to help such as planting native flowers and shrubs.

Aside from the many things I learned about our world and the environment, I made some amazing friendships. These teens with whom I share this passion for the environment will hopefully encourage me to continue to find ways to change the way I interact with the environment and to fuel my drive for change.

Once again, I'd like to thank you for your support in sending me to the youth summit. I enjoyed the last Field Naturalist meeting and am planning on attending others as my schedule allows. Thanks.

Submitted by: Reanna Braeker

Grey Bruce Christmas Bird Counts

Started in 1900, the Christmas Bird Count is North America's longest-running Citizen Science project. Counts happen in over 2000 localities throughout the Western Hemisphere. The information collected forms one of the world's largest sets of wildlife survey data.

Each Christmas Bird Count is conducted on a single day between December 14 and January 5. Counts are carried out within a 24-km diameter circle that stays the same from year to year.

Wednesday, **December 16, 2015** Bruce Peninsula National Park Contact: John Haselmayer john.haselmayer@pc.gc.ca

Thursday, **December 17, 2015** Kincardine Contact: James Turland jaturland@gmail.com

Saturday, **December 19, 2015** Hanover/Walkerton Contact: Gerard McNaughton gmcaughton@wightman.ca

Saturday, **December 19, 2015** Owen Sound Contact: Freeman Boyd boydsproduce@gmail.com

Sunday, **December 20, 2015** Wiarton Contact: Jarmo Jalava jjalava@yahoo.com

Monday, **December 28, 2015** Meaford Contact: Lynne Richardson lynnerichardson@rogers.com

Wednesday, **December 30, 2015** Saugeen Shores Contact: Norah Toth ntoth@rogers.com

Don't forget! Bring your mug to indoor meetings!

Thank you to the members who have provided content for this newsletter or who have proofread. Submissions for the next issue can be sent to ntoth@rogers.com prior to February 15, 2016.

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Hospitality at Meetings

At each meeting, coffee and tea have been provided so that you have the chance to socialize. At this time, no one has stepped up to help with hospitality for the winter. If you are able to spend an extra hour prior to the meeting helping out the club by preparing and serving coffee and tea, please contact Norah Toth—ntoth@rogers.com

To help provide coffee supplies, a financial donation has been welcomed at the coffee table.

Join Ontario Nature today

Ontario Nature takes action every day protecting wild species and wild spaces in every corner of our province – from your backyard to the boreal forest and beyond. But birds, butterflies and badgers are not the heart and soul of our organization. People like you are. Will you join Ontario Nature today, and become a part of our growing conservation success story? For more membership information, please visit www.ontarionature.org/give/membership/index.php.

The Owen Sound Field Naturalists is a federated club member of Ontario Nature. Remember, that being a member of a local field naturalist club does not mean you are a member of Ontario Nature. Start, or renew, your membership with Ontario Nature today.

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Club News

Around the Bay—Waterfowl Outing

November 8, 2015

It happened on a Sunday. Twenty-seven people took part in the Around the Bay Waterfowl Hike. They shared their expertise, humour and fellowship. Friendliness, smiles and laughter were the order of the day. That seems to happen when you spend a day out with nature.

The group also visited the wetland near Shallow Lake for species that preferred smaller, shallower habitat over the magnitude of water found on the bay. We also stopped on Indian Acres Road to add to our total by picking up sightings of land birds. As the birding day ended, thirty-eight species of birds had been seen. That is a successful birding day, considering most of the day was spent looking for waterfowl. In spite of that success, the population of waterfowl present on the bay was low; that might be the result of the warm fall we have enjoyed. The lack of cold, winter-like days has probably held many of them back. No grebes or scoters were seen, and the shortage of waterfowl numbers caused many of the views to be distant.

An exciting altercation happened between a Merlin who was successfully bullying an American Crow. Bullying is a way of life for Merlins. The pursued crow soon had reinforcements arrive, and with the new support of several other crows, the intimidating Merlin

transformed into a panicked, fleeing bird. The one who was harassing and intimidating quickly turned into the one being harassed and pursued. Life is hard sometimes, even when you deserve it.

The birds seen were:

- Canada Goose
- Mute Swan
- Trumpeter Swan
- American Black Duck
- Mallard
- Blue-winged Teal
- Ring-necked Duck
- Lesser Scaup
- Long-tailed Duck
- Bufflehead
- Common Goldeneye
- Hooded Merganser
- Red-breasted Merganser
- Common Loon
- Double-crested Cormorant
- Great Blue Heron
- Bald Eagle
- American Coot
- Ring-billed Gull
- Herring Gull
- Rock Pigeon
- Mourning Dove
- Downy Woodpecker
- Hairy Woodpecker
- Merlin
- Blue Jay
- American Crow
- Common Raven
- Black-capped Chickadee
- American Robin
- European Starling
- White-crowned Sparrow
- Cedar Waxwing
- Snow Bunting
- Dark-eyed Junco
- Northern Cardinal
- Red-winged Blackbird
- American Goldfinch

Submitted by:
Fred Jazvac



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Around the Bay

Continued



From top left:

*Common Goldeneye. Credit: Bob Taylor;
Checking the shore. Credit: Jim Punnett;
Snow Buntings. Credit: Bob Taylor;
Long-tailed Ducks. Credit: Bob Taylor.*



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.....

For your ease and ours, pay on-line using our PayPal option at www.owensoundfieldnaturalists.ca

Or, 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.....

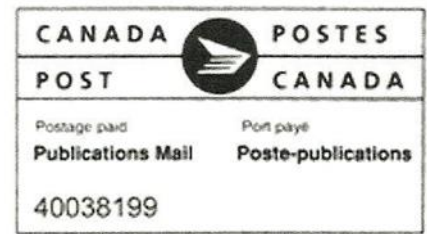
We hereby confirm that e-mail and mail lists will not go beyond the OSFN. (See privacy policy at owensoundfieldnaturalists.ca)

Membership is due in September each year and can be paid in cash or by cheque at any indoor meeting or by PayPal on the website. The OSFN Membership is current from September 1 to August 30 each year.

Please complete and detach this form. It should be submitted with your payment.



Box 401, Owen Sound, ON N4K 5P7



Knowing Nature Better

The Owen Sound Field Naturalists advocate and nurture the appreciation, understanding, and conservation of our natural world. We are like-minded individuals who enjoy programs and activities that help us increase our understanding of natural history and conservation in Grey-Bruce.



Note the size. Is it a fungus, a lichen or a slime mold? One of the mysteries from the Mushroom Foray. Credit: Brian Robin



The Northern Watersnake is not a species at risk; however, it is protected under the Fish & Wildlife Conservation Act. Credit: Aubrey Ferguson



Checking for fungi. Credit: Brian Robin