



Owen Sound
Field Naturalists



Hart's-Tongue Herald

The Newsletter of the Owen Sound Field Naturalists

Box 401, Owen Sound, Ontario N4K 5P7

Spring 2006
Volume 19, Number 1

Editor: Lorraine Brown



Dave Tannahill caught this terrific photo of a red-breasted nuthatch with a sunflower in its beak at the feeders at the Visitor Centre in Algonquin Park. Visiting in early March, Dave reports that birds were hard to come by in the park, other than at the feeders.

John Macoun - First Dominion Botanist - in Owen Sound and Area

John Macoun was born in Ireland and came to the Belleville area with his family at the age of 19 in 1850. He became a farm worker but he was soon fascinated by the abundance of unfamiliar wildflowers and, with the help of a local farmer, started to learn their names. He must have had some education in Ireland because, in 1856, he was able to make his first career move and take three weeks teacher training - summer school presumably - and was immediately hired to teach in Brighton for \$14.00 per month.

One advantage of his new job was that he had time to take a serious interest in Botany. In his first year of teaching, he collected and named 256 species of flowering plants. Three years later, he could afford to go to Normal School in Toronto where he studied Botany for five months. In 1860 he returned to Belleville to another teaching post where, in 1862, he married Ellen Terrill, daughter of a local Quaker.

He continued with his study of Botany and joined the newly-formed Botanical Society of Canada which was located not too far away in Kingston. This established him as an important figure in botanical circles so that, in 1868, he accepted the position of Chair of Natural History at Albert College, a private school in Belleville.

His first foray beyond the Ottawa-Kingston area came that same year when he joined a private expedition botanizing from Lindsay to the headwaters of the

Trent River. In 1869 he sailed from Collingwood to Lake Superior, collecting plants at every opportunity. Then, in 1871, he accepted an invitation to visit Mr. and Mrs. Roy at Royston Park in Owen Sound. Mrs. Roy was also well known in botanical circles, especially as a collector of mosses and ferns. Together they scoured the Owen Sound area, although Mr. Roy accompanied them and was allowed "to carry a basket"! This visit was so successful that he returned in 1874 after having, in 1872, completed a marathon trip across Canada with Sir Sandford Fleming's survey expedition for the CPR rail line. It was these collecting expeditions which led to John Macoun being offered the post of Botanist to the Geological Survey of Canada in 1881 at the princely annual salary of \$1500.

He went on from strength to strength until 1912 when he had a stroke and his son James Macoun succeeded him. However, in retirement on Vancouver Island he continued collecting and presented 826 specimens to the Natural History Museum in Victoria in 1917. He was working on his autobiography when he died in 1920 at the age of 89.

Considering the tough conditions of those early expeditions, the enormous distances he travelled year after year, the organization involved in bringing his collections back to Ottawa, and the unending work of processing and cataloguing his collections, he must have

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been a very active and healthy person. He was also, apparently, a very pleasant man and especially helpful to young botanists. He had a long and happy marriage and a thriving family. He is a very good example of how opportunities arose in the developing economies of the nineteenth century, especially in science, of which capable people from humble backgrounds could take advantage.

Thanks to the generosity of the Phoenix Book Store in Owen Sound, I was recently given a complete set of Macoun's Catalogue of Canadian Plants published in seven parts from 1883 to 1902. From these records it is possible to trace the locations that he visited with Mrs. Roy in this area. It has to be remembered that he only cited precise places if the species was fairly uncommon. Locally, this is the case for 19 ferns and fern allies and 144 flowering plants, including 31 members of the sedge family and 21 grasses. Quite often he would say "widespread across central Ontario" so it is impossible to make a complete list of what he found here.

A few records were actually from Royston Park which was an orchard operation at the time but, nevertheless even today, has a good expanse of natural hardwood forest. Spice Bush (*Lindera benzoin*) was recorded in "low woods". Pale Touch-Me-Not (*Impatiens pallida*) was there and Nipplewort (*Lapsana communis*), an introduction, was already to be found "on the edge of a spring". Both Jones Falls and Indian River were readily accessible from Royston Park. Canada Waterleaf

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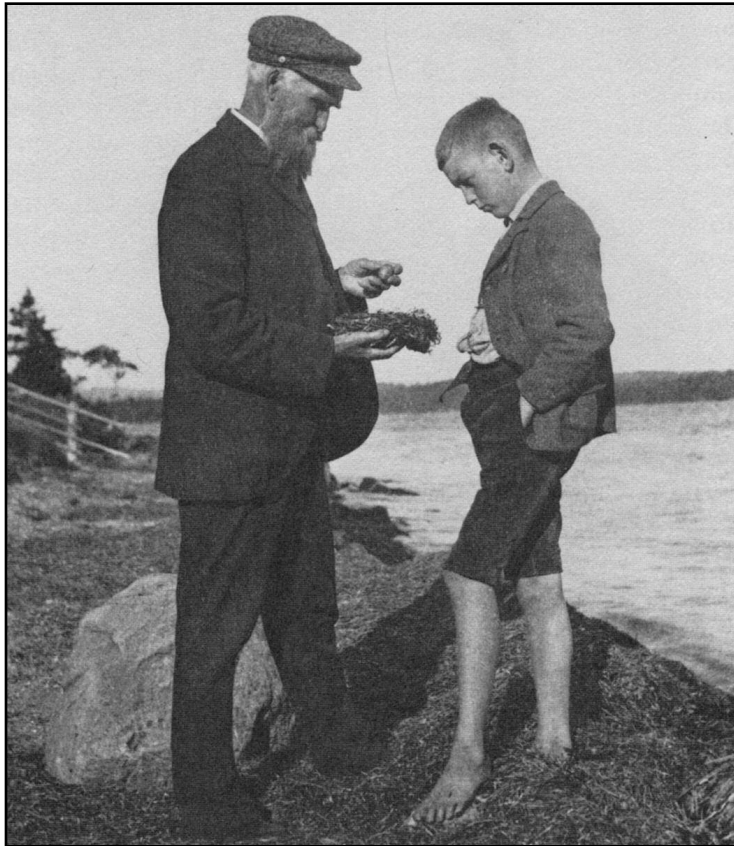
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(*Hydrophyllum canadense*) was recorded in woods at Jones Falls as well as a number of mosses. Brookweed (*Samolus valerandi* var. *americanus*) was collected along Indian River.

(*Nasturtium officinale*) in ditches, and Comfrey (*Symphytum officinale*) along the streets of Owen Sound. Some species that are now rare in this area were also recorded. Climbing Fumitory (*Adlumia*

fungosa) which he called Cypress Vine was one, found in "burnt woods". The Calypso orchid (*Calypso bulbosa*) was in "mossy bogs" in Owen Sound. In this area today it is found only in the

The Sydenham River all the way from above Sydenham Falls (now Inglis Falls) right down to the mouth of the harbour was thoroughly searched and produced many species including Green Spleenwort (*Asplenium trichomanes-ramosum*). Water Milfoil (*Myriophyllum heterophyllum*) was stated to be "abundant" at the mouth of the Sydenham River. Probably it is no longer there, as it is now listed as rare in Grey County. Leatherwood (*Dirca palustris*) was common "around Owen Sound", which is interesting as it is an early invader of young regenerating forest, an indication that in just thirty years of settlement logging had already had an impact. The town of Owen Sound also yielded a number of introduced species such as Common Cow Herb (*Vaccaria hispanica*) in "gardens and waste places", Water Cress



John Macoun with a young naturalist in the Maritimes in the late 1890s. (Courtesy of the Canadian Museum of Nature)

northern Bruce Peninsula. Two other orchids occurred, Spotted Coralroot (*Corallorhiza maculata*) and Heart Leaved twayblade (*Listera cordata*) from a swamp near Owen Sound. Even more amazingly, Ginseng (*Panax quinquefolia*) was present in rich cool woods in Owen Sound, although he does state that it is "rather rare". It is almost certainly extinct there now!

They also explored further afield to Colpoys Bay where Purple Stemmed Cliffbrake (*Pellaea atropurpurea*) was found and, at Wiarton, Ground Cherry (*Physalis grandiflora*). From there they crossed to Lake Huron recording a number of species from the Fishing Islands. One example is *Cnicus pumilus* which is a synonym for the rare Hill's Thistle (*Cirsium hillii*). Another is Mermaid Weed (*Proserpinaca palustris*) also



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found at Sky and Isaac Lakes. Red Bay seems to have been a favourite spot, especially during his second visit in 1874. Among species listed were Rock Sandwort (*Minuartia michauxii*), two species of Grass of Parnassus (*Parnassia glauca* and *Parnassia parviflora*), Sundew (*Drosera anglica*), Butterwort (*Pinguicula vulgaris*), Ohio Goldenrod (*Solidago ohioensis*) and Houghton's Goldenrod (*S. houghtonii*) now designated as a rare species and only present on the other side of the Bruce Peninsula. In addition there were Pale Spiked Lobelia (*Lobelia spicata*), Birdseye Primrose (*Primula mistassinica*) and Painted Cup (*Castilleja coccinea*) Interestingly, this was the common name he used, not Indian Paintbrush. From the orchid family come Hooded Ladies Tresses (*Spiranthes romanzoffiana*) and Slender Ladies Tresses (*Spiranthes lacera*). Two gentians are mentioned which were probably Bottle Gentian (*Gentiana andrewsii*) and Smaller Fringed Gentian (*Gentianopsis virgata*) although there is some confusion with the Latin names. This was not uncommon as often North American and European species were not clearly distinguished at that time.

The other location frequently cited is Chicken Bay on the Bruce Peninsula. This is something of a mystery as it is not on any map, old or new. Linear Leaved Sundew (*Drosera linearis*) is said to be at Chicken Bay and Oliphant. Frequently a species is found at Chicken Bay and Red Bay. It could be Little Red Bay but he often mentions a marsh or swamp so it seems more likely he was referring to the fen area north of Oliphant, especially as Indian Plantain (*Cacalia plantaginea*) is one of the species listed, as well as Grass Pink (*Calopogon pulchellus*), "on the shore of Lake Huron" and Rose Pogonia (*Pogonia ophioglossoides*) from "swamp and marsh". All three are found in the Oliphant Fen to this day. Small Purple Fringed Orchis (*Platanthera psychodes*) was on the shore of Chicken Bay at that time and Bladderwort (*Utricularia intermedia*) in the marshes. Dwarf Lake Iris was recorded from both Red Bay and Chicken Bay as well as at Southampton by Dr. Thomas Burgess from London. However, the only Lady's Slipper mentioned is the Queen

(*Cypripedium reginae*). One can only suppose that this was due to the fact that his visit was at the height of the summer. The leaves and probably the fruits of species such as Dwarf Lake Iris would still be visible but only the later blooming orchids would be recorded.

Undoubtedly, there have been many changes in the local flora since Macoun's visits, not least the massive burn that took place on the Peninsula in the early 20th century. Nevertheless, it is amazing that so many of the species he recorded are still to be found in the same places today. To some extent, this is an accident of fate. The Bruce Peninsula has been somewhat isolated from the intensity of development experienced by many parts of Ontario but it is becoming more vulnerable as population pressures increase. It is up to all of us to guard the integrity of this area in which we are so fortunate to live. Projects such as the Greenway initiative being sponsored by Ontario Nature are essential if this is to be achieved.

References:

Hallworth B. & Jackson, M. 1985. Pioneer Naturalists of the Rocky Mountains & Selkirks. Calgary Field Naturalists
 Pringle, J.S. 1989. Botanical Exploration of the Canadian Watershed of Lake Huron during the 19th Century. R.B.G. Macoun, John. Catalogue of Canadian Plants. Vols. I to VII. 1883 to 1902. Government of Canada.

Joan Crowe, RR5 Owen Sound, ON
 N4K 5N7 January 27, 2006

Lights Out for Migrating Birds!

It's that time of year again – the migration season, when hundreds of millions of migrating birds fly into lighted office towers in big cities and fall to their deaths. The lights confuse and disorient the birds. Ten thousand birds die in Toronto's financial district alone!

There's some good news and some bad news on the fatal light situation. The good news is that some cities are finally turning off the lights. Chicago has taken action with a program called Lights Out Chicago! which will reduce bird mortality while also saving energy costs and CO2 emissions.

Toronto is finally starting to take some action too, thanks to the efforts of FLAP – the Fatal Light Awareness Program. On April 14, 2005, Toronto City Council passed a motion to protect migratory birds as they fly through the city. The motion includes a commitment to reduce bird collision deaths by at least 50%. The city is beginning with its own buildings first. Lights in the Metro Hall building are now turned off at night.

The bad news is that there's still such a lack of understanding about this situation. I heard an architect on CBC's Radio Noon program recently, explaining that the lights were left on so that the birds could see where the buildings were, and not fly into them!

Lorraine Brown



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 Peter Allemang & Family
 Pamela Edwards
 Bob Knapp
 Donna McLeod & Ian Harper
 Carol Winter, George and Drew Hume
 Marlene & Ray Rothenbury
 Lyle Rae



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The 2006-2007 executive

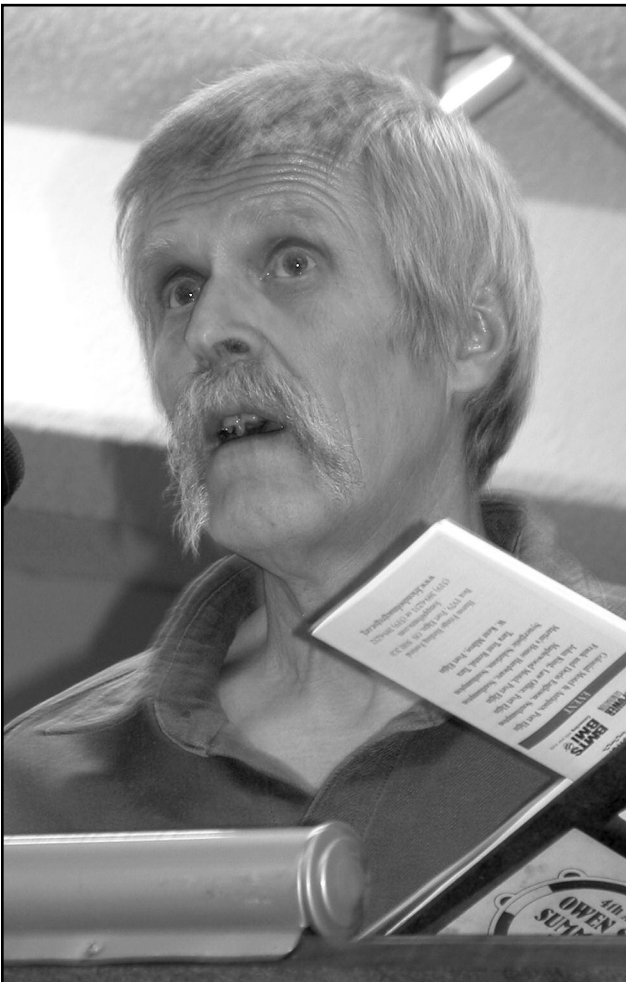
OSFN held its annual general meeting on Thursday March 9. Most board members are staying in their positions, but there are a few changes.

Freeman Boyd is stepping down after two years as president (his second term in the history of the club). Vice-

president Eimie Tekutis now takes over as President. Freeman will be past president, and Don Willmott will leave his position as past president. Jim Duncan replaces Blain Horsley in Publicity.

There is a vacancy (first ever in the history of OSFN) for the position of vice-president. We hope all members will take a moment and think about whether he or she would enjoy taking on this position. In doing so, you would help to ensure that OSFN continues to be a solid, well-established and well-run club. If you are interested, please contact Eimie or anyone else on the board.

Our new president, Eimee Tekutis, grew up in England and Montreal, and spent most of his life in Toronto. He worked for IBM for 40 odd years, in technical and educational roles. He retired 8 years ago and moved up to the farm property near Markdale which he and Linda have owned since



New OSFN president Eimie Tekutis took over on March 9th at the AGM.

1987.

Eimee lived in cities most of his life, but has always loved the outdoors. He has no specific "field naturalist" background, but has been curious about the natural sciences all his life.

OSFN VOLUNTEERS 2005-2006

Following are the names of members who helped on committees in the past year:

- Archives – Nels & Jean Maher
- Adopt a Highway Committee – Anne & Stan Cathrae
- Hospitality – Anne & Stan Cathrae
- Web Site Committee – Steve Patterson, Lorraine Brown
- FON Rep – Glenda Clarke
- CONE Rep – Joan Crowe
- Rankin Resource Management Committee – Merle Gunby
- GSCA Arboretum Alliance – Merle Gunby
- Grey County Forest Stewardship Network – Dave Taylor
- Plant Committee – Joan Crowe, Joe Johnson, Nels Maher, Bob Gray, Orris and Ellen Hull, Clarke Birchard (various others have assisted with individual books)
- Nominations Committee – Don Willmott, Jean Maher, Monica Starr
- Auditor – Hector Lazarotto
- Hart's Tongue Herald Mailing Committee – Lorraine Brown, Monica Starr, Jim Ansell
- Junior Naturalists – Bob Fletcher

OUR THANKS TO ALL!

Freeman Boyd is now Freeman Boyd, Ph.D.

Our past president, Freeman Boyd, completed his Ph.D. in agricultural ethics at the University of Guelph this past December. His thesis received rave reviews from the University of Michigan professor who was part of the team evaluating it. Freeman's thesis, entitled "The Search for an Agricultural Ethic", is available from the National Library in Ottawa, the Philosophy Department at the University of Guelph, or from Freeman himself, who is willing to lend out his bound copy. Following is the Abstract:

This work begins with the assumption that we need an alternative to the industrial model of agriculture. Part 1 argues that 'ecological agriculture' is not a suitable alternative. Its precepts, drawn from the study of wild ecosystems, are too negative, focussing almost exclusively on what not to do in agriculture. Part 2 attempts to develop a more positive model of agriculture. It draws on a 2500 year long caucus on agriculture and civilization, labelled the agrarian canon. It presents agrarianism not as a political philosophy, as it is usually understood, but as a theory of human nature. It establishes a rural landscape, a place for agriculture, which differs from either wild nature or built environments. In it, farmers are neither conquerors of the biotic community, nor plain citizens in it. Instead, agriculture is understood as a unique and encompassing partnership between nature and humans. That partnership entails a different set of duties and privileges than either conservation or exploitation.

Congratulations, Dr. Boyd!

Volunteers Needed for BPBO Weekend Workshops

The Bruce Peninsula Bird Observatory is running four workshops this coming year to help raise funds to operate the Observatory. (see the ad on this page). Please consider taking part in one or more of these workshops and pass the word along to your friends.

We're also looking for volunteers to help on these weekends. Duties would include shuttling people from the main road into the research station, helping serve meals and cleaning up after them, and showing participants to their quarters and generally making them feel welcome.

If you are interested, please call Lorraine at 372-0322 or e-mail her at lorraine@apropos.ca.

BPBO Annual General Meeting Sunday April 30

Join BPBO members for their AGM at the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority. The day begins with a birding hike around the Inglis Falls Conservation Area at 10, followed by a light lunch, a bird quiz, the formal AGM meeting and formation of new board, and a talk by John Haselmayer on "Peru, Land of Mystery".

2006 Weekend Workshops at Cabot Head



Light & Composition

Photographing Nature

Leader: Rob Cotton, May 5 – 7

Hitting the Peak

Spring Migration on the Bruce

Leader: Ted Cheskey, May 12 – 14

Feathers & Fauna

Watercolour Workshop

Leader: Lin Souliere, May 26 – 28

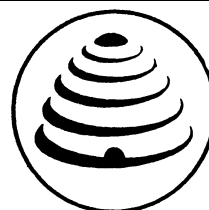
Hunting & Cooking Wild Mushrooms

Leader: Lorraine Brown, Sept. 29 – Oct. 1

\$250.⁰⁰ all inclusive

Location: Cabot Head Research Station at the tip of the Bruce Peninsula. Operated by the Bruce Peninsula Bird Observatory.

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The Spring Program

Indoor Program

Thursday, April 13
The Loggerhead
Shrike Recovery
Programme with
Robert Wenting

The Loggerhead Shrike, once considered a fairly common breeding bird from Manitoba through Ontario, has suffered a serious decline and has been on the endangered species list in Canada since 1991. Robert Wenting, Chair of the Loggerhead Shrike Recovery for the Canadian Wildlife Service, will reveal the reasons for the shrike's decline and show us what recovery actions the Loggerhead Shrike Recovery Team is implementing to support the remaining populations.

Sunday, April 30, 2006 **Spring Peepers with** **Freeman Boyd**

An evening of spring frog song as the local wetlands come alive with froggies in love! Limit 20. Car pool. Register by calling Freeman: 538-4368.

May 5-6 Group Camping **at Point Pelee**

We are planning an overnight camping outing at Point Pelee, which has very limited tenting spaces for Field Naturalists' clubs.

For more information and to register, contact program co-ordinator, Dian Wood. (See page 6, Board of Directors listing for her contact information.)

Sunday, May 7, **2006**

Wildflower
Walk, 1:30 pm

Don and Judy have been gradually developing walking trails through their 30 acres of scenic bush in the Klondike Hills. They continue to add to their extensive list of woodland flowers and ferns found on their property and are pleased to share this diverse natural area with other nature enthusiasts. To see a preview of their trails, lists, and their Managed Forest plan go to <http://users.auracom.com/drawls> and click on Woodland Pages. Register with Don & Judy Rawls: RR#3 Chatsworth. Ont. Sullivan Side Road 3. Fire code #782358. Phone 519 794 0561 Limit 25 people.

Driving Directions: From Chatsworth (Hwy #6) take County Road 40 west. Take second left first right. We are at the top of the hill. From Springmount take the bypass south DO NOT turn at the gas bar but continue south till you cross County Rd 40. Take first left after crossing 40. We are at the top of the hill

Indoor Program

Thursday, May 11, 2006
Land Protection by
Rob Leverty

Rob Leverty is the Programme Director of the Ontario Historical Society and a former Executive Director of CONE (Coalition on the Niagara Escarpment). Rob has a Conservation Easement on his own Niagara Escarpment property in the Beaver Valley. He provides a fascinating and humorous account of achieving permanent protection for his property against the possibility of future development. A remarkable story of learning by doing.

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on the south side.

Wednesday, May 17, 2006 **Evening Wildflower Walk** **with Orris and Ellen Hull**

On Wednesday evening, May 17, meet Ellen and Orris Hull at 6:30 PM (sharp) in the Farmers' Market parking lot (behind Owen Sound City Hall). We shall drive a short distance and then take a leisurely walk on the West Rocks to see spring woods land wildflowers. Wear suitable shoes - paths are rocky in places but the walk will be on flat ground (no hills). No registration. Information: The Hulls (376-6106)

9th Annual Huron Fringe **Birding Festival** **May 26 to June 4, 2006** **MacGregor Point** **Provincial Park**

Our own local birding festival, run by the Friends of MacGregor Point Park just keeps getting bigger and better every year! If you haven't attended yet, you're in for a treat. The festival runs over two weekends with several events during the week in between. It takes place during the height of the spring migration. Of course, everyone knows that MacGregor Point can be as good, sometimes even better, than Point Pelee for migrating birds, and you don't have to fight the crowds that Pelee brings (at least, not yet!).

For information, call the park at (519) 389-6231 or visit the Friends of MacGregor Point website (www.friendsofmacgregor.org)

Indoor Program

**Thurs. June 8, 2006
Pot Luck Dinner
with Guest
Speaker:
Dr. George Peck
on Birds**

Our end-of-the-season pot luck dinners are very enjoyable events. The food is amazing. This year, George Peck will be our after dinner speaker. For many years George has run the Ontario Nest Records Scheme in conjunction with the Royal Ontario Museum. George's photos of birds on the nest are truly magnificent.

Another thing that will make this year's dinner enjoyable is the venue. The dinner will take place at the Community Centre in Harrison Park (not the Harrison Park Restaurant, but the charming old stone building located further south in the park). To get there, don't turn left at the Harrison Park Restaurant, but continue past it and watch for the little old stone building on the left.

It's not necessary to register for this event. But you must bring a dish (either a main dish, or a vegetable or salad, or a dessert - make it your best) and bring your own plates, glassware and cutlery. We'll provide tea and coffee.

Tuesday, May 23 Spring Butterfly Count, MacGregor and Inverhuron Parks

Join Mary and Tony Rapati as they venture out to look for spring butterflies. We are likely to see Elfins, Spring Azures and Tortoiseshells. If anyone has questions and to sign up please contact Tony and Mary Rapati at birdfest2006@bmts.com or by phone at 832-2494.

Thursday, June 15, 2006 Evening Bird Walk at 6:30 with Judy Duncan

Join Judy for an evening of birding in Harrison Park. Meet at the Harrison Park Inn at 6:30 p.m. The walk will last approximately 2 hours. No registration required. Contact: Judy Duncan (376-4616).

Saturday, June 17, 2006 Birding at Luther Marsh with Lionel Gould

Luther Marsh Wildlife Management Area is a 12,000 acre wetland near Mount Forest. It is designated as an Important Bird Area. On this full day outing, we will carpool to the bird sanctuary where 139 species have been identified with 75 confirmed nesting. Lionel Gould has lived near the Marsh and done an annual breeding bird survey for a number of years.

Limit 24. Register by phoning Blain: 986-4839

Got an idea for a speaker or outdoor program?

Please contact Dian Wood, program co-ordinator (see page 6 for her e-mail and phone number).

Provincial Park. Bring lunch, net and books (if you have them). Dress for the weather, and wear good walking shoes. Cost: \$5.00.

June 7 - 9, 2006 Pinery Explorations

Last year, 19 OSFN members travelled to Pinery Provincial Park, just south of Grand Bend, for a shared discovery of this unique and wonderful place. This year, trip leader Peter Middleton is offering the opportunity for others to share the experience.

The park contains a unique and fragile combination of sand dunes and oak savannah. The latter once covered 13 million hectares of North America. Today the 1,500 hectares of oak savannah found in the Pinery represents 50% of what remains in North America.

Participants will arrive at the Pinery between 4:00 and 6:00 pm, having had supper on the way. A member of the park staff will provide a welcome, or we may enjoy a simple campfire. The next day is the core of the outing with an early morning walk followed by breakfast and hikes on some of the park's extensive trail network. Following lunch, we will explore other trails, finishing off about 3:30. This will allow participants some free time for a swim, paddle, cycle, or catch-up snooze. Following supper, we will try to locate Whip-poor-will and Southern Flying Squirrels. Sunday will allow participants to do what they want, or they can join Peter to explore other areas of the park, before wrapping up the trip at lunch. Five meals and accommodation in the park are included, for a total of \$88.00.

To register, please call Peter at 376-3242.

We're Ordering OSFN Name Tags

You may have noticed members wearing small aluminum name tags with the OSFN logo at our meetings and programs.

Are you interested in getting one for yourself? The name tags are around \$10. Please contact Lorraine to order one. (see page 6 for contact details).



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July 8, 2006 NABA Count

The North American Butterfly Association annual count will be held on Saturday July 8 with a rain date of July 9. Meet at 9:30 at the Visitor Centre at MacGregor Point

Signs of Spring

As I put together this spring newsletter, it's the March 11-12 weekend. While outside, enjoying the early spring sunshine and removing dozens of broken branches from trees and shrubs that succumbed to the ice/rain/snow of the February 4-6 storm, I heard robins, red-winged blackbirds and killdeers.

But what about more subtle signs of spring? My personal favourite is the splotches of yellow that appear on the otherwise dun-coloured goldfinches around this time of year. What's yours?

Please send me your favourite signs of spring and we'll publish them in the 2007 spring newsletter. You can e-mail them to me at lorraine@apropos.ca, or use snail mail (Lorraine Brown, Box 100, Leith, ON N0H 1V0).

Recall of the Wild

If some days you can't remember
Things you truly thought you knew,
And you can't remember figures,
Facts or names of you-know-who,
And you're seeking consolation
From the world outside your door,
Well, forget it. Game is over.
No excuses any more.
For a hummingbird called rufous
Has a tiny little brain,
Which is just one-7,000th
Of the one we humans claim,
Yet it keeps a mental record
Of each flower on each trip
And of when that flower's nectar
Will be once more fit to sip.
All the scientists are startled
By its memorizing feats.
What they thought was human-centric
Is a test the rufous meet.
That's "not bad." says Andrew Hurly,
Who's a prof at Lethbridge U,
And who marvels that the rufous
Can recall each scent and cue.
So the next time you are searching
For the glasses you've misplaced
Or attempting to remember
On what fact a statement's based,
Give a thought to dear old rufous
Who, though very, very small,
Has a big, prodigious power to
humiliate us all.

Put Green Space First: A Greenway Conservation and Stewardship Vision for Grey & Bruce Counties

Note: OSFN can send 4-6 members to this event. If you are interested, please call Freeman Boyd, 519-538-4368.

Friday, April 7, 2006

9:00 to 9:30 am Registration & Grey Bruce Conservation Mapping Review

9:30 to 10:00 am Welcome and Update from Ontario Nature
Wendy Francis, Director of Conservation and Science, Ontario Nature
Wendy will provide a brief Greenway overview and definition, as well as a description of Ontario Nature's reserves in Grey and Bruce Counties. In addition, Wendy will describe the hierarchy of mechanisms for protecting public and private protected lands.

10:00 to 10:15 am BREAK

10:15 to 10:50 am Presentations
– Christian Farmers Federation
– Bruce Peninsula National Park

10:50 to 11:00 am BREAK

11:00 to 12:00 pm Grey Bruce Conservation Mapping
The mapping committee will present the conservation maps for Grey and Bruce Counties. We will consider the underlying data and discuss whether any additional elements need to be mapped. We will then discuss the features present on the map as well as the obvious linkages between core areas.

12:00 to 1:00 pm LUNCH

1:00 to 2:30 pm Discussion

Potential topics for discussion include:

- * developing a vision, goals, objectives and priorities for the initiative. This will include developing a name for the project and potentially for the committee
- * creating a plan to achieve the goals
- * discussing the results from the conservation mapping which may show high value conservation lands without protection, the missing links highlighted on the maps and the connections that could be made between natural areas
- * developing ideas for communications and outreach materials

2:30 to 3:00 pm Wrap Up and Next Steps

3:00 pm Date and Location of Next Workshop

Directions to Sydenham Sportsmen's Clubhouse

Go north on Highway 6/10 towards Owen Sound and turn left onto County Road #18 (at the Rockford lights). Go past the first road on your right that will be a T-intersection heading to Inglis Falls, and continue on County Road 18 until the next intersection (Town and Country Nurseries will be on your left) and turn left. Go past the nursery and over the hill until you come to the first intersection. To your right will be the Lincoln Park trailer park and to your left will be a sign that reads Sydenham Sportsmen's Club Association turn left to the club house and you will arrive at their hall.

Amphibians at Risk

The world's amphibians are experiencing tens of thousands of years worth of extinctions in just a century. Worldwide, there are 5,743 known amphibian species, including frogs, toads, salamanders and caecilians. Thirty-two percent of them are threatened with extinction. (By comparison, 12% of birds and 23% of mammals are at risk.) For another 1300 amphibian species, the data is insufficient to assess their status. Scientists believe most of them are also probably at risk.

Amphibians are like the canary in the coal mine; their highly permeable skin is very sensitive to environmental change. They are one of nature's best indicators of overall environmental health. And since they rely on fresh water and feel the effects of pollution before other forms of life, their rapid decline is an indication that freshwater ecosystems, the world's most critical life support system, are breaking down.

Recent research on amphibians is making scientists even more certain that climate change and increased ultraviolet B radiation are responsible for the dramatic decline in amphibians. Researchers in Oregon have found evidence that changes in rainfall patterns due to global warming are stressing moisture-sensitive amphibians, leaving them susceptible to pathogens. They built boxes to anchor toad eggs at difference distances below the surface of

a lake. Those in shallower water (the conditions of a low snow fall year) were exposed to more ultraviolet light and were more susceptible to disease.

In another study, salamander embryos that were not shielded from a source of UV-B either died or hatched with deformities. Almost all of the embryos protected by radiation filters were normal.

Closer to home, a study of amphibians in New York State found a connection between changes in the calling dates of frogs and changes in local air

temperatures. Four species of frogs (spring peeper, wood frog, gray treefrog and bullfrog) are calling 10 to 13 days earlier, while two (green frog, American toad) have not changed their earliest calling dates.

We may have to start holding our spring peeper outings earlier!

Lorraine Brown

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Article on Nels Maher in Globe & Mail

Nels was honoured on Monday, February 27, when a story on his life appeared in the "Lives Lived" column. The writer was Rudy Platiel, a friend of Nels and Jean's who once wrote a column on First Nations issues for the Globe.

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Celebrating 100 Years!

The Spring 2006 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 7:00 pm. Following a social time and announcements, the speaker of the evening will present at 7:30, followed by club business, sightings and reports.

Thursday, April 13 – The Loggerhead Shrike Recovery Program

Thursday, May 11 – Land Protection

Thursday, June 8 – Pot Luck Dinner with Speaker George Peck

Outdoor Programs

The outdoor program of the Owen Sound Field Naturalists 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.

Sunday, April 30 Spring Peepers

May 5 – 6 Group Camping at Point Pelee

Sunday, May 7 Spring Wildflower Walk

Wednesday, May 17 – Evening Wildflower Walk

Thursday, June 15 - Evening Bird Walk

Saturday, June 17 - Birding at Luther Marsh

Plus three more programs not run by OSFN, but of interest to our members:

Tuesday, May 23 - Spring Butterfly Count

May 26 to June 4 - Huron Fringe Birding Festival

Saturday, July 8 - NABA Annual Butterfly Count

Membership Application & Renewal Form

Name.....

Mailing Address.....

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

Membership Category: Single (\$18).....Family (\$25).....

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

Membership cards can be picked up at indoor meetings. Check here if you want your card mailed to you.