



A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENTS

Our winter outings were not well-attended. Hopefully the warm weather will encourage you to get out and enjoy Nature. Use the May and June meetings to suggest to the executive outings and speakers you would enjoy. Consider organizing something yourself, as a member of the executive or just to help out. We need people to make the club work, but it's not hard work when everyone helps.

Adrienne & Greg



Fishers are back!

Fishers are small but aggressive mammals which have recently expanded their normal range, in the boreal forest, to come down to our neck of the woods. They prefer mature conifer forest, preferably near water. Their lovely thick fur makes them a beautiful animal. Fishers are primarily nocturnal. They are mainly carnivorous, and are opportunistic in what they eat—even porcupines are taken!

There have been reports of fishers in back yards across our region, notably in Lafontaine. Scientists have begun to find a link between the return of these animals and habitat quality, so we should be pleased that fishers have graced us with their presence.

So keep an eye out for these creatures in your back yard, around dusk or dawn.

Dorothy Harper

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Co-Presidents: Greg Lutick and
Adrienne Jex
Treasurer:Carolynn Fishleigh
Secretary: Shirley Tilson
Past President: Joanne Scott

Editorial

Ontario Nature, formerly known as the FON, has a number of important issues for which they are advocating at the present time. Two of these are Species at Risk in Ontario, and motorized vehicles in Ontario's parks. There is legislation pending on both of these issues, and you can make a difference by letting your views be heard to government officials. To find out more on how you can help, go to www.ontarionature.org Be active!

Dorothy Harper, editor

In Memory of Helen Burns

We were saddened to learn of the death of Helen Burns on April 7, 2006. Helen had been a resident of Midland since she and Joe moved here in 1974 so Joe could take a position with the new Aquarobic Sewage Treatment System company in Penetanguishene after a long career with Galt Bros. Both Helen and Joe were raised in Streetsville. They had two children, Donald and Karen.

Helen was active in many community groups like St. Paul's United Church, Midland Horticultural Society, Wye Marsh Wildflower Club and Midland Penetanguishene Field Naturalists Club.

Helen was a gracious lady who enjoyed gardening, nature and her family. She had a quiet personality and was always a pleasure to be around. I'm sure all those who knew her will miss her as we will at the MPFNC.

Sandy Agnew



OUR MISSION STATEMENT

*To study and appreciate nature.
To protect and preserve wildlife and
the environment.
To stimulate public interest in, and
promote protection and
preservation of
nature.*

Schedule



Here are the club meetings for the rest of the season. Check the brochure for more information.

WARBLER WALK
Saturday May 20

PELEE ISLAND TRIP
May 27-28 fully booked

75th ON AGM
June 2-4
Greenways & Waterways

POT LUCK AND MEMBERS NIGHT
Thursday June 15
Tiny Marsh
Walk 5:30 p.m.
Dinner 6:15 p.m.



CLUB NEWS

On Saturday **December 17**, 2005 the 106th Audubon Christmas Bird Count was conducted in our area. 35 people took part on a slightly overcast but at times very windy day. They were divided into 12 different count areas to observe and tally our feathered friends. There were 47 species and 3,133 individuals spotted. Thanks to all who took part. The day was complete with a potluck and auction at the Wye Marsh Centre where \$300 was raised for the McKeever Owl Foundation. Great day all around!

David Schandlen

January 19 Barbara Tyrell, Nancy Hunter and our own Verna Ives presented a history of the Wildflower Gardeners of the Wye Marsh. Slides showed all the hard work that made the gardens into the welcoming showpiece that they are today.

Adrienne and Greg

January 21, started off a new year for outings with a crisp and clear day. Several members strapped on snowshoes and reacquainted themselves with the birds and trails of the Wye Marsh. Down at the lean-to we encountered Marsh staff tending a bonfire and providing bannock dough for roasting on a stick. This unexpected treat fuelled our way to the swan pond, where we saw 30 swans, several Canada geese and 1 mallard. Back at the Centre cardinals, hairy and downy woodpeckers, chickadees, mourning doves, a tree sparrow and white-breasted nuthatch were observed. Hot chocolate was the reward on our return.

Adrienne Jex

Feb. 18 A small number of cinephiles got together to watch Winged Migration, a film about bird migration which is truly amazing. We ran out of time to see the "how it's made" part of the DVD, but it is available for rental. You'll be surprised at how they did it! Popcorn was enjoyed by all.

Dorothy Harper

March 16 We are grateful to Sandy Agnew for filling in for our original speaker. Sandy showed us how damaged land was first assessed, and then landscaped and replanted to restore it to the natural state.

Adrienne and Greg

March 18 On a cold, bright morning, a small group of enthusiastic naturalists arrived at the country home of Helen and Brian Malloy, for a guided walk around their wooded property. We were warmly welcomed by our hosts and immediately set out on an informative outing. Helen showed us the variety of trees that grew in different locations on her land. She pointed out animal tracks and told us about the animals and birds that she has spotted. When we returned to the house, we were treated to a hearty lunch of soup, sandwiches, dessert and hot drinks. To finish off the day, we watched a large flock of wild turkeys arrive in their backyard, to be fed. What a great day! Thanks again, Helen and Brian.

Joanne Scott

April 20 Our guest was Ron Reid of the Dorset Environmental Science Centre (Ministry of the Environment). Ron first explained the Centre's role in protecting and conserving lakes in Central Ontario. He then talked enthusiastically about his crayfish study and how these little animals are used to monitor the health of the lakes.

Adrienne and Greg

Huronion Region Spring Meeting



The meeting began at 10:00 on Saturday, May 6, with a welcome and introduction by our new Regional Co-ordinator, Barbara MacKenzie-Wynia. Each Club rep had an opportunity to talk about the speakers, events and activities of their Clubs. Then Barbara gave an update of the happenings at Ontario Nature. After lunch, Wendy Francis, Ontario Nature's Conservation and Science Director, talked about the Species At Risk registry and the need for the government to immediately update this registry. Wendy was followed by Al McNair, the Huronia Regional Director, who asked for resolutions to be brought to the AGM in June. The day ended with a guided nature walk, led by Bob Bowles. Bob took us along the rail trail near the Regional Hospital where we spotted a pair of nesting ospreys, a yellow warbler, a muskrat, a red-tailed hawk and a Canada goose nesting on a beaver lodge. For a complete outline of the day's discussions, please see the Nature Network News on the display table at the next meeting.

Joanne Scott



RECIPES!

Campfire Rice Pudding

Pour into a resealable container: 1 cup instant rice, 1/2 cup instant dry milk, 2 tbsp. sugar, 1/4 tsp. cinnamon and 1/4 cup raisins. At your camp, bring 1 1/2 cups water to boil and add mix. Return to a boil, stirring, then remove from fire and let stand, stirring occasionally. Depending on how well-stocked your camp kitchen is, you could substitute or add: other fruits, butter, coffee creamer, evaporated milk, sweetened condensed milk, maple sugar/syrup or chocolate.

Adrienne Jex

Six-Mile Lake Conservationists Club



The fledgling naturalists' club at Six-Mile Lake, organized by Anne Lewis has been doing great work. They originally started to protect sensitive habitat at the north edge of the lake, and have continued a program of protection, education and appreciation of nature. Winter and summer outings, lead tackle exchange, GPS study, twig furniture making and vernal pool studies are examples of their projects. Keep up the great work!

Save these Dates!

This year the Macgregor Point Huron Fringe Birding Festival is **May 26-29 and June 1-4**. Participate in a variety of hikes, presentations and workshops -- each designed to help you celebrate spring along this part of Lake Huron. Go to www.friendsofmacgregor.org for more information, or call 519 389-6231.

June outing to Carden Alvar. Sid and Dot Hadlington will lead a trip to view bluebirds, prairie smoke and other rare sights on Wednesday, June 7. Bring your lunch and car-pool from Ebenezer Church (corner of Ebenezer and Ron Jones Roads). We have to leave by 9:00 AM for the best viewing. Call Adrienne 526 3042.

AND don't forget our Pelee Island trip!!



TRIPS!

Visiting Chile

We spent the month of March in Chile this year, a wonderful destination. Chile is a stable, safe, democratic and peaceful country with an amazing variety of habitats to visit. We spent time in the desert, the subarctic, the central lake and volcano district, the wine valleys and coastal regions. The desert region in the North, called Atacama, is the driest place on earth. In some places rain has never been recorded. The barren, mineral-rich rocks and earth are an astounding array of colours and textures. Some plants do grow here, and llamas and vicunas can be seen frequently, munching on the sparse pickings. Surprisingly, birds abound here, the highlights being the flamingoes and stilts grazing on the toxic salt flats. Chile has a very long coastline, and here seabirds, seals and otters can be seen. The central regions have active volcanoes, and beautiful trails through the National Parks of the lake district. The highlight however was our time in Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego, a windswept area of grasses, lakes, grazing sheep and massifs, coupled with historic waterways like the Straits of Magellan and the Beagle Channel. In the Beagle channel, we marvelled at glaciers creeping down from the Darwin mountains and calving into the sea. On the plains of Patagonia we saw guanaco, llamas and deer. Here too, magnificent birds like the Andean condor and other vultures are commonly seen. Altogether we saw 119 species of birds, without a professional guide. We highly recommend Chile as a natural destination. The people are friendly and helpful, costs are reasonable, and the scenery is truly spectacular. *Dorothy and Colin Harper*

If you've been on an interesting trip, send us in an account, and we'll print it here.