



A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Welcome to the 2007-2008 season for the Naturalists' Club. We have some very interesting speakers lined up for this year including some more insect themed presentations. I think everyone will be on the edge of their seats for these talks.

I'll be looking forward to speaking with all of you about trips taken this summer.

Dan Whittam



The Carden Plain



The Carden Plain is a unique and largely unknown area of South Central Ontario. Located between Lake Simcoe and Balsam Lake the Carden Plain features North America's most accessible alvars. The abundance and variety of grassland bird species, which are now in serious decline throughout the continent, is the main attraction for nature lovers. However, visitors to the area will also find an amazing variety of butterflies, dragonflies and rare or unusual alvar plant species. In the spring and early summer Carden is carpeted with expanses of wildflowers.

The Plain is comprised primarily of grassland, shrub-land and alvar and features an extensive network of provincially significant wetlands. According to Bird Studies Canada the Carden Plain is one of the very best birding areas in North America. In 1999 it was designated as a Nationally Significant Important Bird Area (IBA).

Alvars are globally rare habitats. Ecologically, they are harsh and inhospitable environments which support an extraordinary diversity of hardy but rare plants, animals and invertebrates. The Carden Alvar is located in the northern half of the Carden Plain and hosts a marvellous variety of wildflowers and other plants including species such as Prairie Smoke. The plants and shrubs must be able to withstand a very harsh environment. Spring flooding occurs when winter snowfall melts; the water may lie on the limestone bedrock for months, until evaporation creates virtual drought like conditions.

In June a male Loggerhead Shrike was found tending a nest on the Carden Alvar. This presents additional evidence for the success of a sophisticated captive-breeding and release program that has been implemented recently to help bolster wild populations of this endangered songbird in eastern Canada.

This is the third captive-bred shrike so far that has been known to successfully learn to migrate south in the fall, successfully over-winter in the U.S., successfully migrate back north to Ontario, and actually be found again breeding in the wild. With the entire known, wild, breeding population in Ontario now numbering only 20-25 pairs, these results offer hope that the release program can help forestall further declines. There are 10 wild pairs (including the released male) to date on the Carden Plain — an increase over the seven pairs found in 2006.

Excerpts from Ontario Nature and Bird Studies Canada

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Naturalists Club
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President: Dan Whittam
Vice President: David Whitehead
Treasurer:Carolynn Fishleigh
Secretary: Lyn Barnett
Past Presidents: Greg Lutick and
Adrienne Jex

Schedule



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

Huronian Joint Meeting
Wednesday September 12, 2007
7:30 P.M. Orillia

Colonial Waterbirds
Thursday September 20, 2007 7:30 P.M.

Christian Island
Saturday September 22, 2007 10:00 A.M.

Wye Marsh Festival
Saturday September 22, 2007

Birds of Prey
*Special date Thursday October 25, 2007

Torrance Barrens
October 27, 2007

Ducks Unlimited
Thursday November 15, 2007

**Christmas Pot Luck and 108th Audubon
Bird Count** Saturday December 15, 2007

Plants of Christian Island
January 17, 2008 7:30 P.M.



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.*

Help Wanted

Your newsletter needs a chair of the committee!
The are a friendly group, and the work is not
heavy. We only meet 2 or 3 times per year. If you
are interested, please contact one of the Commit-
tee members.

The Lilypad is now in its 7th year! But we need to
have a new chair if it is to survive. Please consider
giving a bit of your time to help.

News Flash

Some fall migrants are already on the move, and will be passing through urban and rural areas in increasing numbers in the weeks to come. There are many ways to make windows at your home or business more visible to birds, which will help to reduce bird fatalities from hitting windows. Collisions with windows kill up to a billion birds each year in North America. Visit the **Fatal Light Awareness Program website** to read about their top 10 recommendations for making glass less of a hazard for birds.

Upcoming events around our region

Wye Marsh Festival is Sept. 22 this year. The title of this event and activities has evolved over the years, but the festivals core concept of providing family entertainment has not changed. This year will feature: music by Backroads, an Irish Jig by the Kempencelts, Woodcarvers Demonstration, Wildflower Gardeners Display and much more. Go to www.wyemarsh.com or call 526-7809.

The Beaches World Tour 2007 takes place October 9th to 11th in Toronto. This is a conference on best practices and key issues at beaches and coastal areas around the world. Please see Carolynn Fishleigh for more info, or visit www.blueflag.ca for details.

The AGM of the North American Native Plant Society will take place on Saturday, October 13, 2007 in Markham, for a discussion on water conservation. Some may wonder what water conservation has to do with native plants but native species are the ultimate in xeriscaping! A sale of locally native plants and Seed Exchange is included, as well as refreshments. Admission is free. Contact: 416-631-4438 or <http://www.nanps.org>

MPFNC has been invited to participate in the Community Living Annual Craft Show again this year on November 13th from 1-5 pm at their building on Olive Street. We will be selling our beans and would like donations of any sellable craft or knickknack items the membership may have. Used is OK. One suggestion is that we could recycle former Christmas Auction purchases that people may be ready to re-donate. The items can be given to Wayne or Carolynn Fishleigh at our October meeting.

Justin Trudeau will address delegates at the 14th annual A.D. Latornell Conservation Symposium November 14 to 16, 2007 in Alliston. The theme of this year's Symposium - Your Watersheds, Our Great Lakes - will look at how our actions impact the quality and supply of this important (and limited) natural resource. More info, including keynote speakers is available on the website, www.latornell.ca.

In the news

Lake Simcoe Protection Act announced for Lake Simcoe

Premier McGuinty announced on July 6 that his government will implement a Lake Simcoe Protection Act. By adopting the recommendations from the Lake Simcoe Environmental Management Strategy (LSEMS), the Province thus ensures the healthy recovery of the lake over time.

Preparing for the 2007 Election

On October 10th, the voters of Ontario will head to the polls to elect a new government. Given the elevated public and political interest in the environment, Ontario Nature is working to ensure the environment is at the forefront of party platforms. Under the Priorities for Ontario banner, Ontario Nature has joined forces with 13 conservation organizations to challenge Ontario's political leaders to make protection of the environment their number one priority. Visit www.prioritiesforontario.ca for more information. Ontario Nature and its members and member groups have developed four election priorities that we feel all political parties should adopt in their election platforms and that the new government should then address and resolve after the election. These priorities are the creation of an interconnected greenway across southern and eastern Ontario, protection of the boreal forest, increased funding for government's natural heritage protection mandate and increased environmental education in the school curriculum. We'll be sending out the election priorities toolkit to our member groups.

U.S. West Nile Virus Study Released

The paper "West Nile virus emergence and large-scale declines of North American bird populations" was published in the May 17 issue of Nature. The study analyzed 26 years of data from the Breeding Bird Survey, and focused on 20 common bird species. The authors found that since the 1999 emergence of West Nile Virus, there have been significant declines in the populations of seven species: American Crow, Blue Jay, Tufted Titmouse, American Robin, House Wren, Chickadee and Eastern Bluebird. The American Crow population had the largest decline. By 2005 only two of the species had recovered to pre-1999 levels.

Excerpts from Ontario Nature and Bird Studies Canada newsletters. If you have an issue you would like to see in the Lilypad, please contact one of the committee members. Get involved!

CLUB NEWS



May Field Trip. Greg and Adrienne, Dot and Sid, and Pat Taylor paid a visit to the Cheltenham Badlands on a warm, sunny day. The area was easy to find with a map and easy to spot from the road. The bare red shale stands out from the surrounding green woods, like a piece of Mars got misplaced. The actual area of erosion is quite small; Mother Nature appears to be taking it back. A milk snake in one of the gullies was an odd find. We enjoyed a hike along the recently resurfaced Bruce Trail, along the upper edge of the valley. After lunch we headed north to the Belfountain Conservation Area. The easy trails follow both sides of the Credit Valley, starting at a dam/waterfall. There were flowers and ferns on the damp valley walls, and another milk snake. These parks are heavily used and lacking in wilderness". They make an interesting, short stop on a longer trip.

Dream Come True. Many of you already know how wonderful Manitoulin Island is. My Dad had always wanted to see it; so I chauffeured him and Mom around for a few days. Near Espanola we saw our first wild Ontario moose. The rest of the trip continued on that high note. One evening was spent just watching the deer grazing behind our cabin at Gore Bay. Sandhill cranes, including a pair with 2 downy chicks, were abundant. Turtles, loons, ducks and a bald eagle were spotted. Flowers were a real treat, especially the prairie smoke and lady's slippers. The alvar landscape, clear water and wonderful food were much appreciated. My only disappointment was that the Misery Bay Interpretation Centre was not open (late May), although the trails were useable. All in all, we had a perfect, though too short, vacation.

Adrienne Jex

Midland-Penetanguishene Field Naturalists

2006-2007 Expense Statement
For the Year Ended July 16/07

INCOME

Memberships 80 \$1,200.00
Donations \$30.00
Festivals, Crafts, Beans \$842.05
Christmas Auction \$326.00
Bird Studies Canada \$37.50
Refund of Room Rental \$45.00
Bank Int. \$1.18

TOTAL \$2,481.73

EXPENSES

Program Printing \$81.47
Donations-Owl Fund \$326.00
Donations-MTM \$914.19
Liability Insurance \$325.00
Room Rental \$405.00
Post Box Rental \$116.60
Postage \$82.76
Speakers Gifts & Fees \$450.00
Bean Supplies \$201.27
Memberships \$75.00
Newsletter Printing \$95.87
Festival Expenses \$73.88
Bank Charges \$4.50

TOTAL \$3,151.54

Opening bank balance June 26/06 \$2,797.22
Income \$2,481.73
Expenses \$3,151.54
Add back re-imburement for Float \$6.00
Actual Bank Balance at July 16/07 \$2,133.41
Add back float \$74.00
Actual Balance at July 16/07 \$2,207.41

Carolynn Fishleigh