



## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

I would like to wish everyone a happy new year and welcome you to a new year of meetings and outings. I was pleased to be able to go to our November outing and plan on going to a few more. We have some excellent speakers planned for this year and I encourage everyone to come to our meetings. You won't be disappointed. I hope to see everyone at the next meeting.

Dan Whittam

## ***Brant in Little Lake Park inspires our club poet laureate***



Betty Carter saw this goose, a rarity in these parts, as did a number of the birders in town. (By the way, one does not say "Brant Goose" just Brant.). Unlike the rest of us however, she was inspired to write an account of her encounter, and these lovely poems.

Atlantic Brant: *Branta bernicla* a small goose Length: 22- 26" Wing: under 12"

Breeding ground: High Arctic

Migration: Across Quebec to the Gulf of St. Laurence then down the Atlantic coast to Chesapeake Bay, Cape May and sometimes farther south. A usually quiet goose with rapid wing beats flying in small formations. "It is the swiftest of all geese in flight." Less vocal than most geese, makes a growling sound. In the fall single birds are identified on inland waterways occasionally.

Favourite food: eelgrass.

### The Brant in Little Lake Park

I saw him first in the middle of October. He/she (he or "you") to me was near the north end of the beach with another small goose in a group of gulls. A pair of Canadas floated just off shore. I thought they called to the young ones. The next day I could see that one of the small ones was bigger – and he was an immature Canada goose. Two adults were on the beach, one sprawled on the sand in a strange posture. The following day the adults and the young Canada were gone, the Brant alone being tolerated by the gulls. After that a short distance always separated him.

Never still, he constantly pecked in the sand, moving gradually south (a good sign?) farther

away, always alone, eating.

I saw him only on the beach for days, and then I moved closer than he liked. He went into the water and swam a tiny arc and right back onto sand. The next time I pressured him, he flew. When a flock of about six hundred Canada geese came near, standing or floating in shallow water, he never looked up from pecking but moved farther up, always distancing himself when any of them came up too.

I worried about whether whatever he found to eat (if that's what he was doing) nourished him. My notes say, "Can he digest what he finds? Whoops! He poops! Is that good?" One day he just walked over the fallen fence (he didn't seem to notice any difference) after which he spent most of his time on the grass, nibbling, distancing himself, though never hurriedly, from gulls, geese, crows, pigeons, me. He did not appear Nov. 19, 20, 21..... Betty Carter, continued on page 3....

Midland-Penetanguishene Field  
Naturalists Club  
Box 393  
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[www.csolve.net/~mpfnc](http://www.csolve.net/~mpfnc)

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  
Winter and Spring seasons. Check the  
brochure for more information*

### **Birding 101 continues**

Sat. Jan. 19, 2008

### **Gems**

February 21, 2008 7:30 P.M.

### **DNA Barcoding**

March 20, 2008, 7:30 P.M.

### **Fossils**

Sat. March 22, 2008

### **Wye Marsh Sweetwater Festival**

March 29-30, 2008

### **Dragonflies**

April 17, 2008, 7:30 P.M.

### **Port Severn Ducks**

Sat., April 19, 2008

### **Waterfowl Viewing Day at Tiny Marsh**

April 2008

### **ON Huronia Regional Meeting**

April 2008

### **Newfoundland**

May 15, 2007, 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.*



## 2007 Audubon Christmas Bird Count

On Saturday December 15, 2007, 36 members of the Midland Penetang Field Naturalists Club, split into 12 groups and took part in the annual Christmas Bird Count.

The day was overcast and cold, with lots of snow on the ground. The lakes unlike in 2006 were frozen solid.

The day was successful again with 49 different species seen with a total count of 5,257 individuals counted.

After the count the group gathered at the Wye Marsh for a pot luck dinner and to report on our findings.

The gift auction capped off the evening with lots of laughter and over \$300 raised for the McKeever Owl Foundation.

Thanks to all who took part and made the day a success. Mark your calendar for next year's count on Saturday December 20<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

*David Schandlen*



Wee Goose I Worry.

I've written a hundred poems  
to you of you for you  
in the month I've visited you  
and still you will not leave nor move on  
yet ever moving  
ever nibbling at something  
I cannot imagine and never see  
In wet sand and short grass.  
You are plucky lionhearted  
and ever alone.  
It gets colder every day  
your food whatever it is  
will disappear  
under a blanket of white  
and the water will freeze over  
and then what will you do?  
And what must I do?

Wee Brant

Little brant  
on the beach, the lawn,  
bound on isolation  
after early hanging out  
with tolerant gulls.

Today 100 Canadas  
seem concerned  
trying to talk you into joining them  
for the long flight to the sun  
and warm sand  
away from this snow, sleet  
or are they trying to chase you  
back where you came from  
to your own family  
somewhere far away.

Squirt

Willful wanderer wanton one  
wayfarer never at rest  
from Barren Land to barren beach  
your internal GPS not yet calibrated  
finding a haven in Little Lake Park,  
Midland, Ont.  
far from your family and friends  
far from Atlantic beaches and breakers  
at this inland pond, narrow beach  
pecking away in wet sand moving  
pecking  
moving pecking never at rest in snow  
sand  
feeding all your waking hours  
(it was a long, tiring flight with  
strangers)  
staying close to but never too close to  
gulls  
you run away from Canada geese who  
approach  
clinging to the beach for a week  
then discover the short park grass nib-  
bling nibbling.  
Finally you take to the daytime water  
alone;  
finally you take to the air, alone.  
The Canadas join you – sort of  
you move away but not far eating eat-  
ing  
It gets colder and wet; Canadas shelter  
in a quiet bay  
you cling to the beach alone  
moving away from geese, gulls, ducks,  
pigeons, me  
it's clear to me you want to be left  
alone.  
Hanging on at the edges.

You, Little Goose

Atlantic Brant  
little lost goose  
far from family  
if there are ordinates  
built into your brain  
from birth  
what help will they be  
if, in desperation,  
you try to fly south alone  
Canadas all gone.

(Was help offered?)  
Or are you just too stubborn  
in your lone meandering  
pecking nibbling  
to join strangers  
who know the way  
their co-ordinates in conjunction  
with their built-in route-maps?

You must be male  
With a tendency to wander.  
And a built-in inability  
to ask the way..

Sprout

Spooked  
geese near shore  
move as one up the beach  
Sprout in front  
twinkling little black feet and legs  
leading the flock  
a wave of Canadas 1000 strong  
flowing the length of the beach  
He keeps going  
distancing himself.

Spooked again almost instantly  
with the whistling rustle of 2000 wings  
the flock rises  
flies back over the water  
Sprout in their midst  
in the wealth  
of wings fast-flapping  
for seconds only  
realizing quickly that  
there's nothing to be afraid of.  
Settling again  
Sprite immediately  
Segregates himself.  
He ignores squabbles within the group  
and never joins the gossips,  
"It's nothing to do with me."  
Or so he thinks.

Betty Carter

# THE WEB (BACK) PAGE

Some internet information for you!

## Nature web sites

Here are some recommended web sites for naturalists:

### [www.whatsthatbug.com](http://www.whatsthatbug.com)

This site is really fun for those who love insects. People write in with their photos and questions, the site posts them and answers them.. And we get to see fabulous pictures of bugs!

### [www.organicgardening.com](http://www.organicgardening.com)

A page with lots of valuable information about gardening the organic way, as well as tips on feeding birds and other wildlife, tips on garden tools, etc. This is a recipe for feeding birds from this site:

#### Bird Seed Wreath

Sticky gelatine holds seeds to a cardboard base for a wreath that birds can peck away at for weeks. Save this project for winter: Unless temperatures are below or close to freezing, the gelatine may slide off the base. If your winter temps rise, you can substitute peanut butter for the gelatine to make a reasonable facsimile.

#### Materials

Piece of corrugated cardboard

Packet of clear gelatine

2 quarts of mixed seeds and nuts

Length of wire

Bow or cluster of California pepperberries (optional)

1. Cut a circle of corrugated cardboard to a diameter of 10 inches. 2. Mix packet of clear gelatine according to the package directions. 3. Pour 2 quarts of seeds and nuts into the gelatine. 4. Stir to coat the seed mixture. If the mixture is too loose and doesn't hold together when you squeeze a handful, add more seed. 5. Mold by hand onto the cardboard form. 6. Attach a loop of wire for hanging. Attach a bow or cluster of California pepperberries for decoration, if desired.

[www.grassrootsstore.com](http://www.grassrootsstore.com) For the green householder or traveller The Grass Roots Store in Toronto has 2 locations, at Danforth at Chester and Bloor at Brunswick. Their excellent web-site also sells a wide range of green products, from bio-degradable, disposable dinnerware to solar panel backpacks and household/office accessories.

Check out the links on these sites for more places to surf. Of course, don't forget the local web sites, our own ([www.csolve.net/mpfnc](http://www.csolve.net/mpfnc)), Wye Marsh ([www.wyemarsh.com](http://www.wyemarsh.com)) and the Simcoe Nature Board hosted by Bob Bowles (<http://www.b2g4.com/boards/board.cgi?user=SimcoeNatureBoard>).

Happy surfing! *Dorothy Harper*

Our own web-Site update Our web-master, Peter Tillson, has just revamped our web-site and added a new page. We can now easily add vacation reports, photos, outing details, maps and GPS coordinates, as well as cancellation or rain date announcements. We may also put The Lily-pad on the site for those who would prefer it that way. A tech-savvy helper for Peter would be appreciated, maybe a student who needs some community service hours. To contribute to the web-site or offer assistance contact Peter at 534 6396 or [pedrotee@infinity.net](mailto:pedrotee@infinity.net)

*Adrienne Jex*

