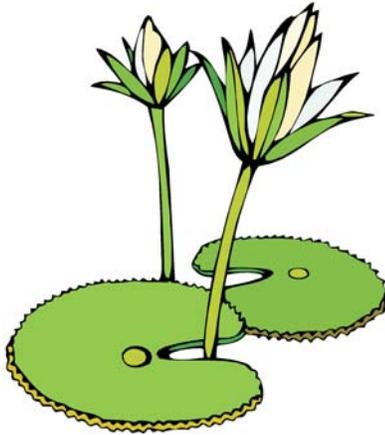


The Lilypad

Volume 10, Issue 1, winter 2010



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.

A Message from the President

Best wishes for a happy and healthy New Year to everyone.

It's hard to believe our programme year is half over already.

Attendance at our meetings and outings has increased substantially. The Christmas auction set an all time record with the total donations and bids of \$608.00 for the McKeever Owl Foundation.



I am really looking forward to the upcoming speakers and outings. 2010 promises to be interesting, educational and lots of fun.

Liz Schandlen

110th 2009 Audubon Christmas Bird Count



On Saturday December 19th, 2009, 38 members of the Midland Penetanguishene Field Naturalist Club split into 12 groups and took part in the 110th Annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count.

The day was clear and cold with less than a foot of snow on the ground. The lakes were frozen by the shoreline. The day was successful again with 41 different species and a total count of 3,122 individual birds seen.

After the count, the group gathered at the Wye Marsh for a pot luck dinner and a report on their findings. The gift auction capped off the evening with lots of laughter and over \$600 raised for the McKeever Owl Foundation.

Thanks to all who took part and made the day a success. Mark your calendars for next years count on Saturday December 18th, 2010.

Dave Schandlen

Club News

A Hike to Kettle's Lake

On a splendid October morning we joined Jack Scott and a group of club members for a short hike to Kettle's Lake in Awenda Park. Jack provided an interesting historical overview of the park and the pioneer families that once farmed the area. I was surprised to learn that the "Kettle" of "Kettle's Lake" refers to the family who once farmed the area and not a form of lake. The morning ended with cookies and conversation at the Scott's beautiful lakeside home. GB



Photo by Liz Schandlen

The Humming Bird Project: On November 19 we were treated to a presentation by Ms. Cindy Cartwright describing the Ontario Hummingbird Project of which she is project coordinator and prime mover. She discussed, among other things, the geographic range, migration, identification and feeding habits of Ontario hummingbirds. As many know my now I am no birder but Ms. Cartwright kept me wide awake during my usual nap time. Check out hummingbirds@bmts.com for details.



Gerry Bennett

Schedule

WYE MARSH

Saturday January 23, 2010
10:30a.m. - Feeder Birds with Sid
1:30p.m. - GPS workshop \$12.00 per person
Contact: Joanne Scott 549-7091

PIPING PLOVERS

Thursday February 18, 2010, 7:30 p.m.
Suzanne Robinson, biologist with the Ministry of Natural Resources, will speak on the local Piping Plover program.
Contact: Greg Lutick 526-3042

SPRINGWATER PARK

Saturday February 20, 2010
Enjoy winter trails your way, with a chili lunch in a warm cabin afterwards.
Contact: Morley Bath 526-8692

NATIVE PLANTS

Thursday March 18, 2010, 7:30 p.m.
Scott Martin from WILD Canada will speak on the use of native plants to create backyard habitats.
Contact: Irene Berry 361-2500

SIGNS OF SPRING IN MINESING

Thursday March 25, 2010
Join Sid on an outing to Minesing
Contact: Sid Hadlington 526-0482

WYE MARSH SWEETWATER FEST

March 27&28, 2010

BIRDS AND NATURAL HISTORY OF AKIMISKI ISLAND, JAMES BAY

Thursday April 15, 2010, 7:30 p.m.
Jean Iron will speak on her participation in a MNR study of shorebirds in 2008.
Contact: Irene Berry 361-2500

MTM CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION April 2010

Waterfowl Viewing Day-Tiny Marsh -

ON HURONIA REGIONAL MEETING April 2010

Contact: Joanne Scott 549-7091

GREY HIGHLANDS

Thursday April 22, 2010
Explore the natural landscapes of the Grey Highlands.
Contact: Morley Bath 526-8692

HOLLAND MARSH

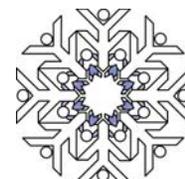
Thursday May 20, 2010, 7:30 p.m.
Matthew Valk will speak on the history and development of the Holland Marsh.
Contact: Greg Lutick 526-3042

Midland-Penitanguishene Field Naturalists Club

Box 393
Midland, Ontario L4R 2J8
www.csolve.net/~mpfnc
President: Liz Schandlen 526-8320
Vice President: Kate Harries 322-2545
Treasurer: Carolyn Fishleigh 549-0827
Secretary: Lyn Barnett 549-3857
Shirley Tilson (winter) 526-6816
Past President: Dan Whittam 527-5360



Please submit any comments, complaints, articles, pics etc to Gerry Bennett: bengerbet@rogers.com. Ph. 526-1650



Try Dorothy's "super porridge" on a cold winter morning.

Hot apple oatmeal

4 cups milk, and maybe more
2 cups rolled oats, not instant
1 cup dried cranberries
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
2 cups chopped apple
2 tablespoons butter
raw or brown sugar to taste

Combine milk, oats, cranberries and salt. let stand for 1 hour, or cover and refrigerate overnight.

When ready to cook, add more milk if necessary, and transfer to a saucepan. Add rest of ingredients, cook stirring over low-medium heat until oats are tender, 5-7 minutes. Serve with additional sugar if desired.

Dorothy Harper

White Magic

Marching fence posts with white berets tilted jauntily to one side
Long woolly caterpillars
Ascending the height of each tree trunk giant cotton balls delicately balanced
On slender branches. winter is here!

Small fir trees masquerading as little old men
Huddled with backs to the wind stands of long-legged pines
With snowballed stockings
Spruce laden with snow candles
In celebration of this long-awaited day winter is here!

Winter - calling out the skiers
Skiers gliding through the pines and over the swamp
Leaving herring-bone tracks up the hill to the hardwoods
Where stumps resemble giant mushrooms winter is here - its white magic
Holding the promise of yet another spring and morels!

By Muriel Prior

COMMUNITY NEWS

SITE 41 UPDATE

We are letting our politicians know that we are not going away.



The Site 41 Peaceful Protesters, individually, or in groups are now monitoring the Municipal and County meetings within Simcoe County. Their findings are being co-ordinated by our own Vice President Kate Harries at www.water-watch.ca. As well, information from all sources, including newspapers, is being posted to www.stopdumpsite41.ca. To date the Certificate of Approval is still attached to the site and we are making every effort to see that it is rescinded. You can help by sending an email to communications@simcoe.ca, directing that you want the C of A to be rescinded and that this request be communicated to every Councilor at Simcoe County. Carolyn Fishleigh

Realizing Lithuania

by Greg Lutick

Adrienne and I, my sister and my brother and his girlfriend took a trip to Lithuania in May to make acquaintances with relatives and to see the country that my grandparents on my Dad's side emigrated from in 1910. The Soviet Union controlled the country for much of recent history except between WWI and WWII, and since 1990. Germany occupied it during WWII. When I was growing up all I

knew about Lithuania was that the people seemed to be having trouble and that my grandmother received requests for assistance. I also gathered that this assistance would have been difficult to accomplish, and I don't know if any help was able to be given. My grandfather died before I was born, and my dad and grandmother died when I was still

quite young. However, my grandmother did pass on important things to her grandkids. She passed on a love of nature and gardening. She made sure that the grandkids were given a small plot in her garden to plant and take care of, and we often went fishing and searching for mushrooms with her. We also learned a few words of Lithuanian.

My brother had made a trip to Lithuania a year or so ago. He had an old letter that my grandmother had received postmarked from a certain town in Lithuania, and went to that area to check the gravestones to see if one might mark that of our great grandfather. He actually found one that he thought might be it. While he was looking at the grave a man came up and said that he saw that my brother was looking at the grave of a dear friend of his. From there, he was introduced to members of the family, and we all decided to visit this year.

Lithuania seems to be “recovering” from the Soviet era of occupation and control. The country had gone through periods when literature written in Lithuanian was banned and when Lithuanian could not be taught in schools, when the majority (165,000) of the Jewish population and 35,000 other Lithuanians were killed during German occupation in WWII, when about 350,000 people were sent to Siberian labour camps after the war, and when the Soviets seem to have less regard for nature and environment than most of the Lithuanian populace. Despite this, Lithuanians seem to have kept their sense of national pride, their love of nature, their culture and language. They seem to be working hard to restore what they are proud of. In the capital of Vilnius, we could see that a tremendous amount of work had been done to repair and improve historical buildings. Our relatives pointed out that pollution had been reduced in their rivers. The country’s nuclear plant (Chernobyl style) is scheduled to be mothballed shortly even though it supplies 83% of the country’s energy.

Lithuania is a small country about the size of southern or south-central Ontario – with a somewhat similar climate. It has about 3.5 million people (expected to be about 2.8 million by 2050). The people are well educated and have the same literacy rate as Canada. Their per capita GDP is about a fifth of Canada’s.

The central and west portions of the country seem to be mostly flat agricultural lands while the outer fringes of the country have low rolling hills with more forest. At 33%, Lithuania seems to have the same proportion of forested land as Canada. Most of that forest seems to be plantations of pine. They have a few sizable rivers, lakes, marshes, bogs and about 100 km of shoreline on the Baltic Sea. Searching for mushrooms is a favoured outing.

We visited the Vilnius area where we saw numerous cultural buildings and archaeological features, the Plateliai area where we experienced some of the natural features of the lakes district, and the Klaipeda/Nida area where the seacoast was the main attraction. One of the natural features that seemed

most impressive to us is the Curonian Spit, which encompasses half of the total seacoast. It consists of massive sand dunes partially stabilized by pine forests (a number of old fishing villages have been covered by the shifting dunes). Amber, fossilized pine tree resin, can be found washed up along the Baltic beaches. A walk on the sand produces a musical sound with each step. Along the lagoon side of the spit, what are probably Water Rails (or some kind of crane – never actually seen), railed at us from each little patch of reeds. Mute Swans, Black-headed Gulls and Hooded Crows were common sights along the boardwalk on Nida’s waterfront. Swifts and Swallows (and/or Sand Martins and House Martins) darted above the rooftops in the evening. The women who run the little motel and who ran out onto the street to offer us a place at their establishment when they saw we were asking around about a place to stay, worked industriously to paint the doors and stairwell.

A bus ride back along the spit from the town of Nida took us to a spot outside of Juodkrantė where there is a huge colony of Great Cormorants. There used to be a large colony of Gray Herons there which is now much reduced because of the cormorant pressure. Since both species are protected it is pretty much a laissez-faire attitude taken by the powers that be. Not far from these colonies are beautiful paths through the pine woods with an undergrowth of bilberry. The paths are host to a fantastic array of odd creatures and people turned into wood.

Throughout Lithuania, but especially in the lakes area of Plateliai and in the farm areas on the lagoon portion of the seacoast (opposite the spit) we saw lots of White Storks and the occasional Crane. The storks seem to prefer to live adjacent to peoples’ houses or on them. Lucky for them, the residents consider them good luck. Other large birds we saw were White-tailed Eagles and various Harriers. Other interesting birds observed in different areas were the Common Cuckoo, Wood-Pigeon, Great Crested Grebe, Fieldfare, Great Tit, Sky Lark, White Wagtail and Chaffinch.



Wildlife sightings also included very large snails, deer, beaver and muskrat. We didn’t get to see the Wild Boar, European Bison (we think erroneously called Aurochs) that were reintroduced, the

European Moose, Capercaillie or owls, but I guess we can save that for another trip. If you go to Lithuania take time to look at all the wood and stone carvings throughout the country.