



The Peninsula Naturalist

Volume 205

Newsletter of the Peninsula Field Naturalists Club

October 2004

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

- October 2004 -

This is my last message to you as the President, for I am stepping down this November following the completion of my two-year term. I also served as Acting President for about half a year after Betty Oka moved out of her home in Niagara. Prior to that I had been on the Executive, primarily as Outings Coordinator, since November of 1999. My tour of duty, however, won't be completed until the next president retires, as I'll be helping out as the Past President.

I'm pleased to say that several current Executive members have agreed to have their names put on the ballot again for the next election. We do, however, need more members to volunteer for the various tasks that must be undertaken if the club is to continue offering its full programme of outings and speakers and to contribute meaningfully to at least several of the numerous worthwhile environmental committees and projects that are out there.

We have not attracted many new, younger members to the club over the past few years and as a consequence are now left with few people (who haven't done it, been there...) to carry on with the



jobs that need to be done if the club is to survive in its present form. It's a pity that I have to say that, so soon after our 50th Anniversary celebrations. It's not too late, however – with help, your help, our next President and his fellow executive members can make a thrust to revitalize the club. If we can attract new members during this bridge period there should be enough people to take over the responsibility of running the club several years down the road.

- Roman Olszewski -

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Peninsula Field Naturalists Club's Election of Officers will take place, as part of the Annual General Meeting on Monday, November 22/04, 7:30 p.m., Mountainview United Church, 150 Glendale Avenue, St. Catharines. As specified in the Constitution, a slate of candidates will be submitted by a Nominating Committee. Anyone wishing to stand for election should advise the President. Nominations will also be accepted from the floor at the AGM.

The positions of President, Vice-President, Membership Chair, and 3 Directors will be open for election for a 2-year term; 1 Director position is open for a 1-year term.

The current Secretary and Treasurer, and 2 Directors at mid-term, will continue in their offices.

TALKIN' BIRDS



I've finally found out what common grackles are good for! After years of watching these guys raid my birdfeeder (accompanied usually by a brace of cowbirds or redwings), or hearing them descend en masse onto my lawn in chattering squawking hordes just prior to their southerly migration, I've wondered whatever use they could be. It stands to reason that Nature had some purpose for such a raucous crew. At least so I thought (although I've also wondered whatever use there could be for yellowjackets and hornets - but that's another story). Other than being a possible inspiration for an old Alfred Hitchcock movie, I just assumed that they might be feeding on insects prior to flocking.

Anyway, the mystery is now solved. A few days ago, a garble of grackles arrived ('garble' is my personal inclusive term for a huge number of grackles). While looking out my windows to verify what the racket was about, I noticed that on all sides of the house, the roof seemed to be shedding quantities of leaves - this in spite of the fact that the weather was completely calm, no wind at all. My curiosity aroused, I watched the eaves of the house, and noted a grackle landing at the edge of the roof. Hopping onto the rim of the eavestrough, he began madly flinging leaves overboard, while pecking intermittently at something in the depth of the trough.

Other grackles soon joined him, and a real shoving match ensued as they jostled for the best position on the rim. Presumably the grackles' intent was to seek out bugs or grubs in the litter of the eavestrough. However, from my perspective, the garble of grackles all busily seeking bugs in my rain-gutters were doing me the favour of saving me a climb onto the roof to clean out the debris! So now that I understand the benefits of a garble of grackles, I've resolved to view them in a more kindly frame of mind.

- the Editor -

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT - PLANS

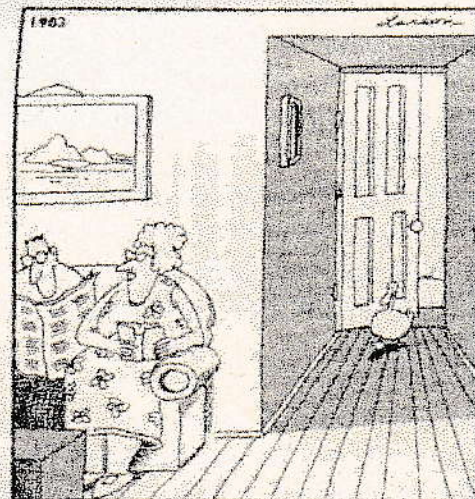
Join us for the 50th Christmas Bird Count in the St. Catharines area, all day on Sunday, December 19. You can bird for 1 hour or be like the crazy ones (owling pre-dawn to dusk). The most important thing is to have fun!!! The next important thing is to get as many birders in the field as possible!!!

I need to know who, when, and where, so please call me to register for an area or a feeder watch. Contact Marcie Jacklin at 905-892-3108 or mjacklin@brocku.ca

Have a look at <http://www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/> for details of Christmas Bird Counts from previous years.

And last but not least is the famous round-up party. To continue this wonderful club tradition, I need at least **one person to organize the party, a location to have the party and people to bring food!!** You don't need to participate in the count to bring food to the party and enjoy our tales of triumph and the occasional woe! I guess I think of the round-up as the club's Christmas Party, so **helping out in any way would be great! Call me - 905-892-3108.**

- Marcie Jacklin -



"Here he comes, Earl. ... Remember, be gentle but firm. ... We are absolutely, positively, not driving him south this winter."

ECOLOGICAL GIFTS, CONSERVATION EASEMENTS & LAND TRUSTS

Giving your property away may not seem very satisfying, but to an increasing number of Canadians the gift of their land to a perpetual owner was one of the most satisfying acts of their lives. The trick is - who do you give the property to, and under what conditions? In fact, you may be able to realize a tax benefit from land that you've arranged to give to someone else. How so?

First, you should know a bit about land trusts. A land trust is: A private, nonprofit conservation organization formed to protect natural resources such as productive farm and forest land, natural areas, historic structures and recreational areas. Land trusts purchase and accept donations of conservation easements. They educate the public about the need to conserve land; some provide land use and estate planning services to local governments and individual citizens. Ontario Nature is a land trust, as is the Nature Conservancy of Canada.

Now, how about that tax benefit question? The answer lies in what are known as 'ecological gifts' or 'ecogifts'. Some of the common forms of ecogifts are bequests, conservation easements, title donations, and covenants.

Bequests take effect through your will. Quite simply, you can name a specific beneficiary to receive specific assets from your estate or a portion of your estate. The Foundation for Ontario Nature suggests this as one way of setting up a planned giving program with Ontario Nature as the beneficiary. Other ways of giving to the Foundation in a planned giving program include donations of stocks, securities, mutual funds or other capital property. You can also arrange to establish Charitable Gift Annuities or Charitable Remainder Trusts, which allow you to receive a regular income during your lifetime from your donation. For more, see the Website: www.foundationforontarionature.org

Ecogifts in the form of conservation easements, title donations, and covenants can provide a financial benefit for you during your lifetime, as well as securing your property in perpetuity. Through the Canadian Wildlife Service agency of Environment Canada, an Ecological Gifts Program has been in operation since 1995, to assist landowners to take advantage of the *Income Tax Act* of Canada. A provision in the *Income Tax Act* allows donations of property on a voluntary basis to qualify as ecological gifts and to provide the donor with an official donation receipt and an enhanced tax benefit. Such a donation can be protected in perpetuity, with conditions mutually agreed by the donor and the recipient. The value of the donation can be used against 100 percent of the donor's annual income, for income taxation purposes; only 25 % of any deemed capital gain has to be declared as income. The recipient may be a qualified charitable conservation organization, an incorporated municipality, or the Crown (Parks Canada, Canadian Wildlife Service, etc). The donor may continue to live on the property through a life tenancy agreement. If the agreement is a conservation easement, the donor still owns the property during his/her lifetime, and may sell it if (s)he chooses.

Naturally, there are qualifications to such an arrangement. In Ontario, the land must meet at least one of 30 criteria established for lands to qualify as ecogifts. For example, a property designated as nationally or provincially significant, or which provides an ecological link in the landscape or provides local wildlife habitat, may qualify for consideration as an ecogift. In Ontario, Environment Canada certifies the ecological sensitivity of the land donation, the fair market value of the donation, and that the recipient of the donation is qualified to accept the gift. When a conservation easement is attached to a property, it becomes a perpetual attachment to the land-title, so all future owners of the land are bound by it. For more, see the Website: www.on.ec.gc.ca/ecogifts

- the editor -

PROWLING SIMCOE

PFN's 2004 annual spring weekend outing

The PFN's Spring Weekend Outing almost always turns up a few memorable surprises; the 2004 edition did not disappoint the participants. This year's outing occurred on the weekend of June 11-13, for which fine weather was promised.

The doughty wanderers on this year's excursion included Moira Davidson, Lorraine Desjardins and friend, Don Dimond, Elaine Dimond, Elaine Gillesby, Mary Potter, John Potter, Karin Schneider and Kay Smith, led by the intrepid Brian Calvert. The destination, in general, was the Midland / Wasaga Beach area of Simcoe County, which turned out to be remarkably diverse in its ecological delights. Following the notion that the journey is also the destination, Brian directed us through a rambling cross-country route which led us past Rattlesnake Point and Mount Nemo, through the Hockley Valley and eventually toward Stayner. The contrast of the Halton Hills with the lowlands around Stayner was striking; Regional Road 42 from Hockley to Stayner changes elevations as frequently as any rollercoaster.

The Wasaga Beach area, as Brian explained, includes Wasaga Beach Provincial Park which harbours the largest parabolic (crescent) sand-dunes in Ontario. It came as no surprise to find that poison ivy was rampant. However, we were surprised to find, under the pines and oaks, a healthy cover of bracken fern, as well as bluebead lily, yellow ladyslipper orchid, moccasin flower and one clump of orange puccoon, one of our botanical highlights. Ant-lion sand-traps were prevalent, blueberry shrubs likewise. Adjacent swampy areas yielded Canada anemone and blue-eyed grass.

Trekking onward, we stopped at Tiny Marsh Provincial Wildlife Area for sustenance and some serious birding. We had seen Canada geese browsing in farm fields before arriving at the Marsh; the geese welcomed us in the parking-lot. The boardwalks and observation areas of the Marsh had something for

everyone - wetland plants like blueflag iris, horsetail and sensitive fern, assorted terns and ducks for the shore-birders, and cedar waxwings for all. Tiny Marsh is a strong contender as one of my favorite stops on the trip. ('Tiny', as Brian explained, is not a comment on the size of the Marsh, but rather the name of the Township, named after one of Lady Simcoe's pet dogs.)

For those of us who resisted the temptations of the Kings Inn Motel in Midland, the sleep-over point was to be Awenda Provincial Park. This was *terra incognita* for most of us. However we quickly found, while setting up camp, that like many Parks, Awenda has its resident raccoons. Rocky's first visit was enough warning to alert us not to leave tasty treats within smelling distance. Possibly because of Awenda's large size (1900 ha), the park was not crowded and campsites were unusually large and refreshingly well-spaced.

Saturday morning's tour was a walk around Kettle Lake (aka Second Lake), a scenic ramble through woods and across wetlands. For the birders, orioles and tanagers quickly appeared; botanists discovered patches of squawroot, a new sight for some. Frogs and turtles were easily seen in the clear water of a stream, butterflies flitted about, and a close flypast by a loon gave everyone something to relish. (Some still think we saw an osprey flapping upstream). Through it all, Don plotted our progress around the lake with Elaine's new GPS unit, neatly mapping the trail as we proceeded.

Following a Chinese buffet lunch in Midland, our afternoon was dedicated to a tour of the Wye Marsh Wildlife Area. As it turned out, the weather had become hot, inducing a general lethargy in the birdlife of the Wye. Trumpeter swans and ducks were about, and assorted warblers and swallows zipped from tree to tree or poked their heads out of nestboxes. Sadly, however, the consensus was that late afternoon was not the best time for birding. Consequently the party retreated to the motel in Midland for another favorite form of recreation, the

annual wine-and-cheese (+ goodies) nosh. Those of us who were tenting at Awenda completed the evening with a climb to the top of the Nipissing sand bluff, to catch the Georgian Bay sunset and to gaze across Nottawasaga Bay in the general direction of Christian Island and Collingwood.

Sunday morning, Brian proposed prowling the bays and inlets along the south shore of Severn Sound, with an eventual destination being the Big Chute ANSI and Marine Railway. The prowl proved to be a good choice, with Hogg's Bay and Sturgeon Bay producing good birding including swamp sparrows and an extended view of a nesting green heron. On the botanical side, showy tick trefoil and a find of wild coffee at Sturgeon Bay were of special interest. Following a stop at Waubashene Beaches Prov. Nature Reserve to inspect the dune formations, we motored up to Big Chute, arriving just in time to watch the transfer of some pleasure craft from the Severn River into Gloucester Pool. Unfortunately, before we had time to explore the ANSI, the clouds that had been threatening all morning let go with a cold rain which convinced most of the party to call it a weekend and head home. The hardy few opted for a side-trip to Matchedash Bay Provincial Wildlife Area, where we spotted herons and a turkey vulture overhead and watched turtles drifting lazily in the North River.

In summary, for anyone who has never explored the natural habitats of Simcoe County, GO! Beware of poison ivy, but go. We suggest you do the Wye Marsh Wildlife Area in the morning, and definitely budget a few hours for Tiny Marsh - you will not be disappointed.

(Editor's Note - the Summer 2001 issue of Seasons included an informative article on the Wasaga Beach dunes and their inhabitants.)

For those who like to keep score:

Locations:

Wasaga Beach - Blueberry Plains trail; Tiny Marsh; Awenda Prov. Park - Kettle Lake trail;

Wye Marsh Wildlife Centre; Awenda Prov. Park - dunes; Hogg's Bay marsh; Sturgeon Bay marsh; Waubashene Beaches Prov. Nature Reserve; Big Chute Marine Railway & ANSI; Matchedash Bay Prov. Wildlife Area (near Coldwater).

Birds Seen:

Cedar Waxwing; Common Tern; Black Tern; Caspian Tern; Baltimore Oriole; Scarlet Tanager; Ruby-throated Hummingbird; Common Loon; Swamp Sparrow; Swamp Wren; Green Heron; Great Blue Heron; Yellow Warbler; Common Yellowthroat; Black-and-white Warbler; Redstart (♀); Kingbird; Trumpeter Swan; Tree Swallow; Canada Goose; Mallard; Turkey Vulture

Birds Heard:

Red-eyed Vireo; Veery; Flicker; Chickadee; Red-bellied Woodpecker; Mourning Dove

Plants Seen:

Blue-eyed Grass; Canada Anemone; Bluebead Lily (Clintonia); Moccasin Flower; Puccoon; Yellow Ladyslipper Orchid; Bracken Fern; Squaw-root; Cinnamon Fern; Ostrich Fern; Sensitive Fern; Scouring Rush; Horsetail; Wild Coffee; Showy Tick Trefoil; Silvery Cinquefoil; Wood Betony; Blueflag Iris; Gaywings; Reindeer Lichen; Clubmoss; Hog Peanut; Sarsaparilla; Black Cohosh; White Baneberry; Swamp Milkweed; White Lettuce; Gall-of-the-Earth; Carrionflower; False Solomon's Seal; Solomon's Seal; Starry False Solomon's Seal; Meadowrue; Perfoliate Bellwort; Sweet Cicely; Blueberry; Herb Robert; Jack-in-the-Pulpit; Trillium;

Insects:

Yellow Swallowtail; Red Admiral; Mourning Cloak; Alfalfa Butterfly; Ant-lions

Higher Animals:

Muskrat; Raccoon; Leopard Frog; Green Frog; Common Toad; Snapping Turtle; Painted Turtle

- *The Group of Eleven* -

PFN PRESIDENTIAL TRIVIA

Since 2004 is the 50th Anniversary year of the Peninsula Field Naturalists, and presidential doings are in the news elsewhere, a few memories about the Club's Presidential personnel seemed to be in order. Hence the following skill-testing questions:

(Answers on page 9 - no peeking!)

- 1) Name the first President of the PFN?
- 2) Name the only PFN President to have held this office in each of three successive decades?
- 3) Which PFN President was hugely responsible for the initiation of the Bruce Trail through Niagara, and mainly determined the route of the local Trail?
- 4) Which PFN President served the greatest number of consecutive years in office?
- 5) How many PFN Presidents have served in parts of three (or more) consecutive years?
- 6) Which PFN President went on to become the Chairman of the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority? (Bonus points if you know which years he was PFN President, and during which period he served with the NPCA).
- 7) Name the President in the year when the PFN hosted the FON Conference?

THE BIG BOG

Muskeg got its name from an Algonquin word for 'grassy bog', an apt description for the boggy vegetation-supporting terrain that characterizes large areas of Canada's northern landscape. This peatland is extremely important for wildlife, and consists of dead plants in various stages of decomposition, ranging from fairly intact sphagnum peat moss or sedge peat to highly decomposed muck or muskeg. Experts believe Canada may have more muskeg (1.3 million square kilometers) than any other country in the world. As many as 600 species of moss and lichen thrive in Canada's polar north.

CONTINUING EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY

The following is a new course being offered by:

Org.: Brock University Continuing Education:
Niagara Exposure Series

Title: Dabblers and Divers: Duck Watching along the Niagara River

Each fall thousands of ducks congregate on the Niagara River. Observe up to twenty different species, most of them in their spectacular breeding plumage. During the first session of this interactive course, you will learn the basics of duck feathers and identification in flight. Then, during session two, you will practice your new skills, as the class convoys to key locations along the Niagara River. With some luck, you might also see a Bald Eagle, or a Tundra Swan! Rain date to be provided.

Instructor: Marcie Jacklin has been birding for 15 years. She has travelled to Manitoba, Newfoundland, Venezuela, Ecuador and Costa Rica to birdwatch. Marcie is also the Science Librarian at Brock University.

Includes one in-class session and 1 field trip

Cost: \$69/\$65 (seniors) plus GST

Date:::Time:::Locations

Thu. November 11, 2004 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM
Rodman Hall Arts Centre

Sat. November 13, 2004 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM
Field Trip

Illustration Credits

- P.1 - lichens on tile - 'Lichens of North America'. Brodo et al., Yale Univ. Press.
- P.2 - Common grackle (*Quiscalus quiscula*). Peterson Field Guides, Eastern Birds, p. 254.
- P.2 - 'The Far Side'. G. Larson, 1983.

KILLER MICE THREATEN SEA-BIRDS

Gough Island in the South Atlantic Ocean, a World Heritage Site, is probably the world's most important seabird breeding area. But Richard Cuthbert, the first professional ornithologist to spend a year there, has found that the common house mouse, introduced to Gough Island during the 18th and 19th centuries, is eating alive defenceless albatross and petrel chicks on their nests.

Initially, during 2000/2001, Cuthbert and his field assistant, Eric Sommer, couldn't understand the extremely poor breeding success rate or distribution of several species on the island. Summer-breeding birds (Atlantic Yellow-nosed Albatross, Sooty Albatross, and Great Shearwaters) appeared to be doing okay, but the winter breeders - like Atlantic Petrels and the Tristan Albatross - were "getting hammered". Then they discovered that the common house mice on Gough - dubbed "super mice" because of their size - eat bird chicks, including young Tristan Albatrosses, an endangered species.

Atlantic Petrels breed in burrows, and Cuthbert and Sommer checked a number of 'study burrows' every four or five days. They noticed that healthy chicks found in burrows were just skin-and-bone, or dead, five days later. In one case Cuthbert saw a live chick with wounds around its rump; later that day it was dead with mice feeding on it. At that time it seemed improbable that mice could be major predators. Later in the year, the two researchers made a total count of Tristan Albatross chicks, and their breeding success was appalling.

Because Gough's seabird species evolved over thousands of years with no natural predators at their breeding sites, the chicks have no defence mechanism against the mice, and are literally eaten as they sit on the nests waiting for their parents to return to feed them. The albatross chicks are described as big spherical balls of fat covered in down; because of their shape, they can't defend themselves. Two students, Ross Wanless and Andrea Angel, from the

University of Cape Town, managed to get video footage of mice attacking the defenceless chicks, confirming that Atlantic Petrel and Tristan Albatross chicks are killed by mice.

Cuthbert knew that rats, brought by sailors, have had a major impact on seabird populations around the world, particularly on islands. It was known that the Gough Island mice were introduced by sealers. But the ornithologists thought that mice normally eat insects and seeds, so they believed that mice weren't a problem. Cuthbert noted it's been recorded that Storm Petrel eggs have been taken by mice, and possibly their chicks as well. But a Storm Petrel weighs only 25 or 30 gm, while a Tristan Albatross chick can weigh 10 or 12 kg. So a 50 or 60 gm mouse attacking something that is over 10 kg is unprecedented. The Gough Island bird predators are known as "super mice" for good reason. In terms of body size, they're the largest house mice anywhere in the world, about twice the size of a normal house mouse in Britain. This is because of a scientific rule that mammals get progressively bigger as the latitude gets higher - that is, moving towards the poles and as the climate gets colder.

Given the current rates of mortalities, are any bird species actually at risk of extinction because of mice? For example, the Tristan Albatross is now extinct at its original breeding ground on Tristan da Cunha, and Gough Island is home to some 99.8% of the remaining population. Apparently the Tristan Albatross is also at risk from long-line fishing, as well as from the mice. While there is no record of Atlantic Petrels getting caught by fishing boats or long-line boats, their current level of breeding success is not sustainable. The one advantage for albatrosses and petrels is that they are very long-lived. Cuthbert doubts that anything will go extinct as a direct result of the mice in the next five years or so, but it's a big conservation concern, longterm.

(Based on original article by John Yeld, September 9, 2004, The Cape Argus, Cape Town, South Africa; submitted by D. Woodard.)

Peninsula Field Naturalists' Club

Statement of INCOME AND EXPENSES

January 1, 2003 to December 31, 2003
(with comparative numbers for 2002)

INCOME	2003	2002
Membership Fees	\$1,011.00	\$1,536.00
Donations	766.00	958.00
Pot Luck Raffle	166.55	170.00
Coffee Donations	120.65	96.92
Bank Interest	164.63	163.19
Bird Study	<u>147.28</u>	<u>145.63</u>
	<u>\$2,376.11</u>	<u>\$3,069.74</u>

EXPENDITURES	2003	2002
Insurance	\$355.00	\$355.00
Room Rental	510.00	612.41
Newsletter Printing	306.46	155.94
Donations	500.00	490.00
Postage	192.17	415.38
Honoraria	150.00	415.00
Supplies	133.40	39.18
Post Office Box	77.04	77.04
Membership Cards and Forms	74.35	91.45
Membership	190.00	150.00
Outings Expenses	31.52	44.85
Pot Luck Expenses	0.00	28.14
Travel Expenses	0.00	60.00
Photocopies	0.00	25.74
Address Labels	0.00	34.48
Christmas Cards	0.00	230.00
Advertising	0.00	10.00
Purchase GIC	<u>0.00</u>	<u>89.15</u>
	<u>\$2,520.24</u>	<u>\$3,323.76</u>
Capital-Projector	<u>\$276.92</u>	<u>\$0.00</u>
	<u>\$2,797.16</u>	<u>\$3,323.76</u>
Cash Deficit	<u>\$421.05</u>	<u>\$254.02</u>

PENINSULA FIELD NATURALISTS OUTINGS AND FIELD TRIPS FOR 2004-2005

"LOWER" PLANTS OF NIAGARA - A SECOND LOOK
Saturday, October 30, 2004, 10:00 a.m. With the Niagara Falls Nature Club.

A repeat of last year's look at the mosses, lichens and ferns in Louth Conservation Area. Only the upper part of the Area was covered and we saw the plants in the wet condition. If it's dry for this year's walk, most of these plants will look completely different! Bring boots and a magnifier if you have one. Meet at the parking lot.

From Eighth Avenue, Town of Lincoln, go north on Staff Road for about 700m. The parking lot entrance is just where the road bends to the left.

Leader: Roman Olszewski 905-732-9955

ST. CATHARINES CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Sunday, December 19, 2004

See October 2004 Newsletter, page 2, for details.

Coordinator: Marcie Jacklin 905-892-3108

DUCK COUNT FOR MNR

Sunday, January 9, 2005

Limited participation.

Call Maggie Smiley at 905-468-1790 by January 4 for details.

4TH ANNUAL MAPLE SYRUP FEST

Saturday, March 5, 2005, 10:00 a.m.

Join other club members for a walk through a section of Short Hills Provincial Park, followed by a maple syrup pancake lunch at the White Meadows farms. Meet at the Roland Road entrance parking lot.

NIAGARA FALLS NATURE CLUB OUTINGS AND FIELD TRIPS FOR 2004-2005

LOUTH CONSERVATION AREA

Saturday, October 30, 2004, 10:00 a.m.

Joint outing with the PFN; Roman Olszewski will help us examine the lower plants, lichens & mosses. Meet at Louth Conservation Area parking lot. (More details above).

GULLS GALORE

Sunday, December 5, 2004, 9:30 a.m. At this time of the year the concentration of gulls on the Niagara River can be spectacular. Dress warmly, bring a lunch and join us for some interesting gull watching. Meet at the control structure above the Falls.

KAYO ROY (905-892-4433)

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Monday, December 27, 2004 This annual bird census surveys the distribution patterns and numbers of birds wintering over in Niagara. We encourage everyone to participate in this very important field work.

KAYO ROY (905-892-4433)

WATERFOWL ALONG THE NIAGARA RIVER

Sunday, January 30, 2005, 9:00 a.m. Come and view thousands of ducks, geese and swans that are found in the river during the winter. Bring a lunch and meet at Niagara Square near the Cinemas.

GISELE MILLS (905-892-3973)

ST. JOHN'S CONSERVATION AREA

Sunday, February 27, 2005, 1:00 pm. Enjoy a leisurely winter walk along the nature trails. Dress warmly and meet at the parking lot gate.

RICK YOUNG (905-734-6226)

PFN PRESIDENTIAL TRIVIA

ANSWERS:

- 1) Francis Goldring - 1954-1955.
- 2) Harold Lancaster - 1956-1957, 1963-1964, 1975-1976.
- 3) Bert Lowe - 1961-1962. He was honoured this year (2004) by the Bruce Trail Association for his work in the Niagara Bruce Trail area.
- 4) Maggie Smiley - 4 years (1997-1998-1999-2000).
- 5) Five - Frank Kingdon 1968-1969-1970; Peter Peach 1977-1978-1979; Mary-Ellen Fraser 1986-1987-1988; Maggie Smiley 1997-1998-1999-2000; Roman Olszewski 2002-2003-2004.
- 6) Francis Goldring - 1954-1955. He became Chair of the NPCA in 1959 and served until 1984.
- 7) Carla Carlson - 1991-1992.

HERBACEOUS PLANTS (PLUS SHRUBS) OBSERVED AT CAVE SPRINGS CONSERVATION AREA
PFN OUTING – MAY 29, 2004

Common Polypody	<i>Polypodium vulgare</i>	Polypodiaceae	
Bulblet Fern	<i>Cystopteris bulbifera</i>	Polypodiaceae	
Woodland Jack-in-the-Pulpit	<i>Arisaema atrorubens</i>	Araceae	leaves & flowers
Jack-in-the-Pulpit	<i>Arisaema atrorubens</i>	Araceae	
Red Trillium	<i>Trillium erectum</i>	Liliaceae	leaves & flowers
Wild Lily of the Valley	<i>Maianthemum canadensis</i>	Liliaceae	leaves
Large Flowered Bellwort	<i>Uvularia grandiflora</i>	Liliaceae	leaves
Carrion Plant	<i>Smilax herbacea</i>	Liliaceae	
False Solomon's Seal	<i>Smilacina racemosa</i>	Liliaceae	leaves
Smooth Solomon's Seal	<i>Polygonatum biflorum</i>	Liliaceae	leaves
Wild Ginger	<i>Asarum canadensis</i>	Aristolochiaceae	leaves
Curled Dock	<i>Rumex crispus</i>	Polygonaceae	leaves
Sharp-Lobed Hepatica	<i>Hepatica acutiloba</i>	Ranunculaceae	leaves
Kidney Leaf Buttercup	<i>Ranunculus abortivus</i>	Ranunculaceae	leaves
White Baneberry	<i>Actaea pachypoda</i>	Ranunculaceae	leaves & flowers
Columbine	<i>Aquilegia canadensis</i>	Ranunculaceae	leaves & flowers
Blue Cohosh	<i>Caulophyllum thalictroides</i>	Berberidaceae	leaves
Bloodroot	<i>Sanguinaria canadensis</i>	Berberidaceae	leaves
May-Apple	<i>Podophyllum peltatum</i>	Berberidaceae	leaves
Common Moonseed	<i>Menispermum canadense</i>	Menispermaceae	leaves
Celandine	<i>Chelidonium majus</i>	Papaveraceae	
Garlic Mustard	<i>Alliaria officinalis</i>	Cruciferae	leaves
Dame's Rocket	<i>Hesperis matronalis</i>	Cruciferae	leaves and flowers
Hairy Rockcress	<i>Arabis hirsuta</i>	Cruciferae	leaves
Prickly Gooseberry	<i>Ribes cynosbati</i>	Saxifragaceae	
Agrimony	<i>Agrimonia</i> sp.	Rosaceae	leaves
Wood Sorel	<i>Oxalis montana</i>	Oxalidaceae	leaves
Herb-Robert	<i>Geranium robertianum</i>	Geraniaceae	leaves & flowers
Wild Geranium	<i>Geranium maculatum</i>	Geraniaceae	leaves & flowers
Poison Ivy	<i>Rhus radicans</i>	Anacardiaceae	leaves
Running Strawberry Bush	<i>Euonymus obovata</i>	Celastraceae	leaves & flowers
Bladdernut	<i>Staphylea trifolia</i>	Staphyleaceae	
Jewelweed	<i>Impatiens capensis</i>	Balsaminaceae	leaves
Long-spurred Violet	<i>Viola rostrata</i>	Violaceae	leaves
Sweet Cicely	<i>Osmorhiza claytoni</i>	Umbelliferae	leaves & flowers
Alternate-Leaved Dogwood	<i>Cornus alternifolia</i>	Cornaceae	
Nightshade	<i>Solanum dulcamara</i>	Solanaceae	leaves & flowers
Squawroot	<i>Conopholis americana</i>	Orobanchaceae	leaves & flowers
Rough Bed Straw	<i>Galium asprellum</i>	Rubiaceae	leaves
Cleavers	<i>Galium aparine</i>	Rubiaceae	leaves
Honeysuckle	<i>Lonicera</i> sp.	Caprifoliaceae	leaves
Wild Coffee	<i>Triosteum aurantiacum</i>	Caprifoliaceae	
Common Burdock	<i>Arctium minus</i>	Asteraceae	basal leaves
Common Fleabane	<i>Erigeron philadelphicus</i>	Asteraceae	leaves
Zig-Zag Goldenrod	<i>Solidago flexicaulis</i>	Asteraceae	
Rattlesnake Root	<i>Prenanthes alba</i>	Asteraceae	leaves
Gall-of-the-Earth	<i>Prenanthes trifoliata</i>	Asteraceae	leaves
Purple Boneset	<i>Eupatorium perfoliatum</i>	Asteraceae	leaves

- Recorded by R. Olszewski - (Who also led the outing - Thanks, Roman! Ed.)

BRAIN FOOD

Sometimes a little gem of information lies right under our noses, just waiting for its moment to be re-discovered. Such is the case with two soft-cover wire-bound books that have been lounging around on my bookshelves, being dragged out occasionally as references and then set aside again. The moment seemed over-due for these little workhorses to receive greater recognition - so here they are!

The first is titled "Head-of-the-Lake Pocket Nature Guide", written by Laurel McIvor, and published (2003) by the Hamilton Naturalists Club. A cast of many individuals and several organizations were involved in the production of this Guide, which focuses on the fauna and flora of the Hamilton area (as you might expect). The cover has an eye-catching color illustration of a white water lily by Gayle Hutchings. Packed into its 106 pages is a wealth of information about the Hamilton-Burlington area, including suggestions on how to avoid injury while out in the field, and where to look for various species of interest. I particularly like the arrangement of biological information in the section 'Nature to Notice', where species (trees, flowers, birds, mammals) are categorized by season; i.e., what to look for in Autumn, Winter, Spring, Summer. These sections include anecdotal information on species (such as the story of fledging Peregrine Falcons on the Sheraton Hamilton Hotel). With its aim at youth leaders and educators, Appendices 1 and 2 list organizations active in environmental projects, and the sites where outdoor education is happening. Appendix 3, 'Species Checklists and Status Guide' is an extensive (altho' not exhaustive) listing by scientific and common name, with the local, Provincial and National (COSEWIC) rankings of abundance or rarity. Printed on 100% recycled paper. Cost: \$8 (or so I was told - the book does not specify a price. Check with the Hamilton Naturalists Club for latest quote).

The second book is "The CARE Package - Creating And Restoring Environments", written by

Kiera Newman, and published (1997) by The Friends of Malcolmson Park. As with the previous book, this one is a locally-produced group effort, although its focus is directed toward the process of hands-on naturalization. The book uses Malcolmson Eco-Park in St. Catharines as an example and case-study, while introducing the principles of how to go about a naturalization project. Suggestions on planning a restoration, natural and human components to consider, and public involvement are included. Since the emphasis of the book is on plant life, the Appendices concentrate on listing trees, grassland and savannah plants and wetland species. A welcome addition is an Appendix of Invasive Exotic plants common in Ontario. The Appendix I, Sources of Native Plants and Seeds, is perhaps a bit dated now, but still a useful reference for those trying to source some of the more unusual species, particularly tallgrass plants. Printed on recycled paper. Cost: \$10. Available through The Friends of Malcolmson Eco-Park, c/o St. Catharines Recreation and Community Services, 320 Geneva St., St. Catharines L2N 2G6.

CANADA'S SMALLEST NATIONAL PARK

At only eight square kilometers, St. Lawrence Islands National Park in Ontario is Canada's smallest national park. It encompasses about twenty-one of the Thousand Islands, which are scattered along the St. Lawrence River in the general vicinity of Kingston, and a park at Mallorytown Landing on the mainland. The Park is home to a great variety of amphibians and reptiles. The black rat snake (*Elaphe elaphe*), the biggest reptile in Canada, is found here as well as numerous species of frogs, toads and salamanders. Ducks and geese overfly the islands during the spring and fall migrations, and great blue herons and kingfishers are regular inhabitants.

Our largest national park? That would be Wood Buffalo National Park, straddling the Alberta - Northwest Territories border, measuring 44,807 square kilometers (an area larger than Switzerland).

NOTABLE UPCOMING EVENTS

Wednesday, Nov. 17/04, 7:00 p.m., Niagara Falls
Public Library, 4848 Victoria Avenue, Niagara Falls

The **Niagara Falls Nature Club** will be hosting a presentation by Don McLean from Environment Hamilton. Don will speak about a project called 'Trees Count' which has been happening in Hamilton over the last few years. This project is an inventory to determine the health of the urban forest, based on the *Neighbourwoods* program developed by Andy Kenney (former FON Woodlands Coordinator). The project involves citizen volunteers to collect data on the health of urban trees (street and yard), providing an opportunity to advise on recommendations for tree planting and maintenance. Volunteers of any age or physical condition can be involved; forestry experience is not a prerequisite. The PFN Executive are enthusiastic about introducing this project to our members, and encourage anyone interested in urban trees to attend this presentation.

PENINSULA FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Monday, November 22/04, 7:30 p.m., Mountainview
United Church, 150 Glendale Avenue, St. Catharines

Andrea Klose (Brock University student) will present a History of Short Hills Provincial Park, an area known to many of our members for its birding and terrain - come and hear how this area was settled and became a Park. Andrea is also the author of a book about Short Hills - do you have a copy?.

This will also be our **Annual 'Bring a Friend' and Dessert Night** - spoil your friend with goodies!



The Peninsula Field Naturalists Club

A non-profit organization started in 1954 with the objectives to preserve wildlife and protect its habitat, to promote public interest in and a knowledge of the natural history of the area, and to promote, encourage and cooperate with organizations and individuals having similar interests and objectives. Affiliated with the Federation of Ontario Naturalists and the Canadian Nature Federation.

P.O. Box 23031, 124 Welland Ave., St. Catharines, ON. L2R7P6

The Peninsula Naturalist Newsletter

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The Editor welcomes written articles or artwork on any natural history topic. Handwritten articles will be accepted, and if possible, please submit typewritten articles, or computer disks containing your file. All pieces of artwork will be accepted, although line drawings are preferable, as they are better suited to photo copying.

New ideas and constructive criticism are always welcome.

Editorial Staff: John Potter

Labelling/Mailing: Kay Smith

- please send submissions to the above address -

Deadlines for submissions 2005:

Jan. 28; May 20; Sept. 30

2003/4 PFN EXECUTIVE

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Vice-President	Kelly Grant
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