

DW^{The} Wood Duck

Volume 64 Number 2

October 2010



Autumn is definitely here and the leaves are well on their way to glorious colour change! Autumn is the perfect time to get outside and explore our local natural areas. For some great walk ideas, see our Upcoming Events on page 47 or refer to the guide you received in last month's Wood Duck.

Photo: Ruslan Sushko

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Life Membership	\$750.00
Single Membership	35.00
Senior Single Membership	30.00
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Student Joint Membership	35.00
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Junior Naturalists - first child	65.00
Junior Nats - additional children	55.00
Honorary Life Member	None

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The Hamilton Naturalists' Club promotes public interest in the study, conservation and appreciation of our natural heritage. Meetings are held monthly September to May inclusive and field events are scheduled throughout the year. Visitors are welcome. The Hamilton Naturalists' Club is a registered charity and all donations as well as membership fees are tax deductible.

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Directors' Reports 2009 - 2010

Past President

by Jim Stollard

I have enjoyed another busy year as Past President (PP) and am looking forward to continuing in the role in the 2010 – 2011 year.

Once again I supervised the Volunteer of the Year selection process. We have selected some very deserving award winners whose accomplishments will be celebrated when the Volunteer of the Year Awards are presented at the November 8th Monthly Meeting.

Another important duty of the PP is to chair the Nominating Committee which proposes a slate of members to become the incoming Board of Directors for the next year. This slate is elected by a vote of the members present at the October AGM.

Our Club's bylaw calls for proposed Board members to be nominated by contacting the Nominating Committee at least two weeks prior to the AGM. Accordingly, a notice of positions available on the Board was published in the September Wood Duck and in the Club's August E-Newsletter. This year's Nominating Committee consisted of Elaine Serena, Jean Stollard and I. The committee has contacted many club members as we worked to recruit a new Vice President and to replace retiring directors Kelly Pike, Roger Benson, Kevin Wright and Tara Nelson. We thank the incoming directors who have agreed to join the Board and help run our club.

I continue to lead the Club's participation in the Nature Counts Two Natural Areas Inventory (NAI) of the City of Hamilton. The NAI is off to a slow start due to a funding shortfall for the early work; however, thanks to a generous grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, we were able to hire our Project Coordinator, Tawnia Martel, at the beginning of July. Limited work was performed this summer but full field seasons are planned in spring and summer of 2011 and 2012. You will be hearing about volunteer opportunities to help with this vital project many times over the next 3 years.

The Sanctuary Land Trust Committee and the Conservation Committee are two very important activities in our Club. I have attended a number of meetings of both to help with land securement as well as natural area protection. I have taken a particular interest in fighting to secure an addition to the Eramosa Karst Conservation Area (still in doubt) and in the successful fight by Protect Our Dundas at the Ontario Municipal Board to prevent construction of a self storage facility at 201 King Street in Dundas.

For those things that were accomplished, I had a ton of help from other Board and club members. I thank everyone who assisted me in the past year. Now, let's all get behind the Nature Counts Two NAI and make it another HNC success!

Vice-President

by Kelly Pike

Some members jokingly say that the role of the Vice-President is a dull one, that there is not much to do in this position. On the contrary, I found the year to be quite fulfilling. I dealt with renewal of Club insurance and harassed members so that I could update our inventory. I wrote my first letter on behalf of the Club and chaired my first monthly meeting. I brought forward issues of concern and helped to arrange hikes. On a more personal level I met wonderful people, chased birds, held snakes and learned about dragonflies.

When I agreed a year ago to become Vice-President, I committed to a three-year term that would see me through the Presidency and then on to Past-President. Sometimes life throws us curves balls, and I guess you could say that is what happened to me. A while ago I found myself in a position where I could no longer lead the Club, and it was with deep sadness that I had to resign. However, I know that the Club remains in capable hands and I look forward to future successes.

I thank everyone in the Club that has helped me over the years. I will continue to help out in other capacities whenever I can. And who knows, maybe in future I'll get another chance to stand on the podium. Until then... see you in the woods!

Treasurer

by Jim Heslop

Wow. Where has the last year gone? My new Club Treasurer duties sure have kept me busy and caused time to fly by. I would like to thank past Treasurers Janis Forster and Jim Stollard for their considerable and patient help bringing me up-to-speed on the Club finances, policies and procedures. I am especially grateful to Jim for covering for me while I have been off on extended birding trips.

One of the most significant changes in the past year has been the addition of the volunteer Bookkeeper position. Marion Fletcher jumped in and has done a superb job keeping the club books (and Treasurer) in order. Thank you Marion!

The audited Club's Financial Statements and Auditor's Report were printed in the September 2010 Wood Duck. A more detailed report will be part of the 18 October Annual General Meeting. Suffice it to say the Hamilton Naturalists' Club remains a vibrantly healthy organization with a strong balance sheet. On the other hand, the continuing generosity of club members remains a critical component of the club finances, as your donations make possible our many and varied activities, including the maintenance of our growing number of fantastic nature sanctuaries.

One might not fully grasp just how active the Club and its members really are until one sorts and delivers Club mail to its directors, coordinators and volunteers. Having done this for the past year, I can certainly attest to the staggering variety of correspondence.

This retiree has found the Treasurer experience both enlightening and rewarding. If you are not already doing so, whether you have a lot of free time available or just a little, I recommend

you seriously consider volunteering to help in some part with club activities, as you will most certainly find the experience fulfilling.

Director-at-Large

By Gord McNulty

The Confederation Park Master Plan. The Dundas Eco-Gateway Plan. The Niagara to GTA Corridor study. Monitoring these and other issues, while maintaining close communications with Ontario Nature, produced another busy year from my perspective. I attended two public meetings on the Hamilton Conservation Authority's Master Plan for Confederation Park, designed to guide the future development and management of this valuable lakefront resource over the next 10 to 20 years. In my view, it appears the plan does a good job of balancing the need to refresh the park while ensuring that its green space and natural areas will remain intact and improved.

The idea of a hotel, which wasn't well-received, has been removed by the Authority from the plan, which has now been sent to Hamilton City Council. It is regrettable that some people have harshly criticized Council's 2009 decision to remove the park as a possible Pan Am Games/Tiger-Cat stadium site. A stadium, with its attendant parking lots and roads, would severely damage the natural features of the park and also result in losing an opportunity to improve a brownfield site.

Productive discussions were held on the Dundas Eco-Gateway Plan, proposed by the Authority, the RBG, and the City, to rehabilitate the former Velduis Greenhouse property. It offers an exciting vision for restoration of natural areas and trail linkages along the Desjardins Canal, and will strengthen the Cootes to Escarpment Park System.

The Niagara to GTA Corridor study remains a major environmental concern. While the original proposal for a highway from Burlington/Ancaster to Fort Erie has been shelved, new environmental challenges emerged with a proposed highway between Highways 403 in Ancaster and 407 in Burlington, and/or widening 403 through Hamilton. I have assisted with the HNC's ongoing efforts to oppose these proposals.

In April, the HNC hosted the successful Carolinian East Regional Meeting of Ontario Nature. I presented Ian Hendry of the RBG with a copy of the *Birds of Hamilton* on behalf of the HNC in appreciation of the RBG providing the Nature Centre as the venue.

I attended Ontario Nature's 79th AGM and the Carolinian Canada Coalition's 2010 Forum and 4th AGM at Sarnia, May 28-30. With emphasis on celebrating 2010 as the International Year of Biodiversity and exploring our watersheds, it was an informative, highly enjoyable weekend. Ontario Environmental Commissioner Gord Miller made a strong presentation. He voiced concern that demands for new highways, aggregate expansion, and agricultural drainage invariably seem to "trump," as he put it, relevant provincial legislation to protect the environment.

Positive news included the elimination of Ontario Nature's \$357,688 deficit in 2009. A \$152,679 surplus budgeted for 2010. Increases in donations, grants, and investment income helped to produce this encouraging turnaround.

These are among the highlights of the past year. I have enjoyed working with my colleagues on the Board and I look forward to another rewarding year.

Program Director

by Diane Greene

It was a pleasure to put on the program events for the club this past year. I had the opportunity to meet many highly skilled speakers, starting with Brian Mishell who gave us an in-depth photographic travelogue of the Galapagos Islands. Tom Mason from the Metro Zoo provided us with an expert overview of the spiders of Ontario, with many insights on this fascinating group of arthropods. Rob Manten described his experience with Lyme disease, a growing public health issue and one of particular importance for naturalists.

Sean Fox from the Guelph Arboretum gave an excellent talk on rare trees and shrubs of Ontario. Brenda Van Ryswyk provided an overview of the fun hobby of dragonfly hunting also known as odging. Peter Kelly gave a fascinating talk on the remarkable ancient cedars of the Niagara Escarpment and Jeremy Woodley rounded out our season's programme with a presentation on coral reefs drawing from his long experience teaching and doing research in Jamaica. Finally a great big thank you to Stu Mackenzie who stepped in to replace our scheduled speaker for last month, Mike Cadman who was unable to join us due to illness.

Thank you to all of our speakers for sharing your knowledge and enthusiasm for nature with our club and thank you to our volunteer reporters, Louise Unitt, Gord McNulty and Jim and Jean Stollard, for your summary accounts of speakers talks for the Wood Duck, and thank you to Dolf DeJong who in his role as previous Program Director, developed last year's program of talks. I look forward to this upcoming season as Program Director.

Publicity Director

by Rob Benson

I have had an enjoyable year and attended the monthly meetings of the board. The board decided that Publicity was to be undertaken while not spending too much of our funds.

My efforts have included the setting up of the monthly display boards at our meetings through last winter. Also displays at events including the "Steel City Safari" at Mohawk college last November (an Annual event worth visiting) to the Ruthven Birding festival last weekend this September. The board decided not to advertise in the Waterfall Guide this year partly due to a timing issue.

I did use the media to promote the club with the inclusion of Nature Walks in the Hamilton Spectator Monday issues in the "Too good to miss", part of the GO section" and on TV in the Channel 14 channel of Shaw Cable. These have resulted in larger attendance at our Field Events.

I am stepping down from this role on the board and taking a break.

My replacement Lindsay Burtenshaw will find this rewarding and enjoyable activity.

Field Events

by Elaine Serena

Last fall we had beautiful weather to enjoy a variety of outings led by some of our favourite and long standing hike leaders, starting with an evening nature walk in the Dundas Valley with Frank Morley, followed by a botany hike along the RBG North-shore trails with Dr. Jim Pringle, then an early morning birding hike with Bob Curry, looking for fall migrants at Woodland cemetery. Alan Ernest introduced club members to our

Lands Inlet project in Hamilton's industrial north end, organising a special event planting milkweed there for our Monarch butterfly project and showing us the work that the club has been undertaking to restore this wasteland to a pleasant neighbourhood green space with native plants and trees. Another day Mary Gartshore took us to see the restoration work that has been done in the Red Hill Valley after construction of the new highway.

The most exciting event of the fall was our HNC 90th Anniversary party at Liuna Station, a most suitable setting for this historic occasion, which was organised by Margaret Troy and her team of helpers. It was a memorable evening, including a silent auction of fabulous items generously donated by many local businesses, individuals and club members. There were displays of the club's history, good speeches and delicious refreshments.

Part of our club's history has been the tradition of holding bird counts in late fall, at Christmas, and the Niagara Hawk Watch in March. More recently, members have also participated in butterfly counts and odonate counts in the summer. Dean Gugler has been leading botany hikes every summer, fall and winter for our club for many years, they are leisurely and fascinating and his lists of wild flowers seen each month are incredible! The club has been much involved in field work for many other projects, including natural area inventories for Hamilton and Halton and more recently making new inventories of our nature sanctuaries. We have held field trips to Spooky Hollow, Short Hills and Cartwright during the year to introduce members and others to our beautiful protected lands.

Bill Lamond led another of his popular winter excursions to look for waterfowl in the Long Point area with our waterfowl expert, Kevin McLaughlin, who

has also treated club members to a fall birding excursion for more than 30 years. Another favourite winter excursion is looking for hawks and owls in Haldimand in February with Ken and Angie Williams. The number and variety of raptors seen on this outing is amazing and most appreciated by all the participants. April heralds the spring and then our field events really get going with Wednesday evening walks and many weekend events right through the summer to early September. These are too numerous to describe in detail: this year I have commented mostly on winter events, but we have enjoyed a wonderful summer and all sorts of different excursions with our dedicated hike leaders, who give freely of their time and share their expertise, making each excursion a special memory. Many thanks to all of you.

It has been a pleasure and a privilege to serve on the HNC board again this year as your Field Events Director.

Wood Duck Editor

by Tracey Conley

My interest in nature led me to contact the Hamilton Naturalist Club about one year ago this month. After finding out what the club was all about, it seemed like a good fit!

It's been a busy and challenging first year as Editor of The Wood Duck as well as a learning process. I've enjoyed all the wonderful submissions I've received from dedicated members and it's always satisfying to get each issue out to all of you. I look forward to receiving many new and interesting articles and encourage all members (of all ages!) to think about contributing to the Wood Duck sometime in the coming year.

My goal is to make the Wood Duck interesting, informative, visually pleasing and something that you look forward

to each month. I couldn't accomplish this without the help of the Publications Committee or our Printer; a warm and appreciative thank you goes out to both.

Look for new features in upcoming Wood Ducks; specifically the opportunity to win copies of beautiful and useful books related to nature and the outdoors. In fact, the first appears in this issue!



RBG HAPPENINGS OCTOBER

TWO SEASONS IN TIBET

Friday, October 15; 7 to 9 p.m. at RBG Centre. Members: \$27.50; Non-members: \$30

Join plant hunter John Mitchell as he reveals the amazing sights – and plants – he has uncovered in this intriguing and difficult to access country.

MUSHROOMS: THE MAGIC OF FUNGI

Sunday, October 17; 1 to 4 p.m. at Nature Centre. Members: \$10 (family membership rate \$25); Non-members: \$12 (family rate \$30)

Daniel Morreale introduces you to the world of fungi and their fruits, commonly called mushrooms.

AN EVENING WITH E.O. WILSON

Saturday, October 23, 2010, 7 p.m. at RBG Centre

Tickets purchased by October 20: RBG members: \$10; non-members: \$12 (all tickets \$15 after October 20)

Book online at www.rbg.ca, or by calling (905) 527-1158 ext. 270 (10 a.m. to 3 p.m. weekdays).

Two-time Pulitzer prize winner and legendary biologist, E.O. Wilson, will be presenting an evening lecture. Widely considered the father of the modern environmental movement, Dr. Wilson was named one of America's 25 most influential people by TIME magazine. To minimize the carbon footprint of this event, Dr. Wilson will be speaking by live, interactive videoconference including a question and answer period. This event has been made possible through the support of Environment Canada, Ontario Power Generation, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and the Biodiversity Education and Awareness Network.

BEAVERS OF GRINDSTONE CREEK

Sunday, November 21; 2 to 4 p.m., at RBG Centre. Members: \$8 (family membership rate \$20); Non-members: \$10 (family rate \$25)

Join Melissa Fuller and search for signs of beaver lodges, dams and feeding.

Local Astronomer Wins Award

By Mario Carr



This month, I would like to congratulate founding Hamilton Amateur Astronomers member Doug Welch professor of astrophysics at McMaster University for winning the prestigious McNeil Medal from the Royal Society of Canada.

The award is given to individuals who have demonstrated outstanding abilities to promote and communicate science to students and the public. Now Doug joins ranks of past winners, which include David Suzuki, Jay Ingram and Bob McDonald.

If you haven't caught a glimpse of Jupiter yet there is still time. The king of the sky is extremely bright this month. If you look at it through binoculars something else appears. You will see four of its moons orbiting the planet and it will look like a miniature solar system. Think of what Galileo thought as he pointed the first telescope towards the planet and discovered these moons. Io, Europa, Ganymede and Callisto are known as the Galilean moons. Since Galileo's time, 63 moons have been discovered orbiting Jupiter.

At the beginning of October, Comet Hartley 2 will pass through the constellation Cassiopeia and move south towards Gemini later in the month. Before mid October, it can be seen in the north east nearly all night. Later in the month it can be seen after 11:30 p.m. but best before dawn.

It was discovered in 1986 by Australian Astronomer Malcolm Hartley, who calculated its orbit around the sun to be

about 6.5 years. This is his second comet discovery. It wasn't discovered until Jupiter's gravitational influence shifted its orbit closer to the Earth. It could be bright enough to be seen by your unaided eye on Oct. 20 when the comet will be about 17.7 million km away from the earth.

In 2007, NASA spacecraft Deep Impact fired a projectile at the comet to study it.

Here are some important dates for October sky gazers.

Oct. 6 — Moon at perigee or nearest to the Earth.

Oct 7 — New Moon

Oct 14 — First Quarter Moon

Oct. 15 – Hamilton Amateur Astronomers meeting at 7:30 pm, Hamilton Spectator Building, 44 Frid St., Hamilton

Oct 18 — Moon at apogee or farthest from the Earth.

Oct. 21 – The Orionid Meteor shower won't be as spectacular as in previous years. The best time to see the meteor shower will be 1-2 hours before dawn. However, there will be a waxy gibbous moon, which will wipe out all but the brightest meteors. This type of moon means it is not quite full yet.

Oct 22 — Full Moon which is called the Hunter's Moon since it is in October.

Oct 30 — Last Quarter Moon

For more information, please see the Hamilton Amateur Astronomers web site at www.amateurastronomy.org or call (905) 627-4323.

Mario Carr is the director of public education, Hamilton Amateur Astronomers. He is also a member of the Hamilton Naturalist Club and can be reached at mariocarr@cogeco.ca.

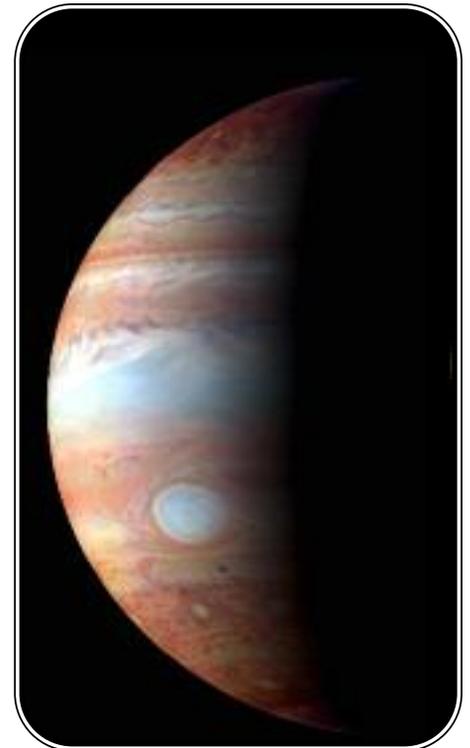


Photo: Jupiter- NASA images

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Hamilton Naturalists' Club - Oct. 5, 2009

By Joyce Lister

1. Call to Order

The Annual General Meeting of the Hamilton Naturalists' Club was called to order at 7:50 p.m. on Monday, October 5, 2009 at the Royal Botanical Gardens Centre auditorium.

2. Appointment of Chairperson and Secretary

It was moved by Jim Stollard and seconded by Elaine Serena that Bill Lamond act as chairperson and Joyce Litster act as secretary for the meeting. Motion carried.

3. Quorum

Notice having been given to all members by means of The Wood Duck and there being at least 30 members present, the Chair declared that the Annual General Meeting was duly constituted.

4. Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting

It was moved by Michael Fischer and seconded by John Fisher that the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on October 6, 2008 be accepted as published in the September 2009 issue of The Wood Duck. Motion Carried.

A summary of the Club's activities for this past year appeared in the October issue of The Wood Duck. There being no questions concerning those activities or about Club activities in general, the balance of the meeting was confined to the legal requirements of our Annual General Meeting.

5. Treasurer's Report

a) Financial Statements

Acting Treasurer, Jim Stollard, presented

the Financial Statements for the fiscal year starting May 1, 2008 and ending April 30, 2009. It was moved by Jim Stollard and seconded by Gord McNulty that the Treasurer's Report be accepted as distributed and published in the September 2009 issue of The Wood Duck. Motion carried.

b) Appointment of Auditors

It was moved by Jim Stollard and seconded by Jack Broxholme that Antony Polzer, Chartered Accountant, be nominated as auditor of this Corporation for the fiscal year ending April 30, 2010 at a remuneration to be fixed by the Board of Directors, and that the Board be hereby authorized to fix such remuneration. Motion carried.

6. Omnibus Motion

It was moved by Michael Fischer and seconded by Bruce MacKenzie that all resolutions, acts, contracts, by-laws, proceedings, appointments, elections and payments enacted, made, done and taken by the Board and Officers of the Corporation since the date of the last Annual General Meeting to this date, as set out or referred to in various Minutes of the meetings of the Board of Directors, or in the financial statements submitted to this meeting, be approved, ratified and confirmed. Motion Carried.

7. Nomination Committee Report

No further nominations having been received by the Secretary prior to October 1, as required by the Club by-laws, it was moved by Jim Stollard and seconded by Margaret Troy that the following list of persons, who had previously consented, act as Directors of the Corporation until the first annual meeting of the Corporation, or until their successors have been elected

or appointed, subject to the provisions of the by-laws of the Corporation and the Business Corporations Act of Ontario 1982 namely:

Bill Lamond
Terry Carleton
Kelly Pike
Tara Nelson Membership
Jim Heslop
Elaine Serena Field Events
Joyce Litster
Michael Fischer Sanctuary
Jim Stollard
Diane Green Programme
George Holland Bird Study Group
Gord McNulty Dir. at Large
Roger Benson Publicity

Motion Carried.

It was moved by Jim Stollard and seconded by Elaine Serena that the following persons hold office in the Corporation for the coming year or until their successors are elected or appointed, namely:

President Bill Lamond
Vice-president Kelly Pike
Treasurer Jim Heslop
Secretary Joyce Litster
Past-president Jim Stollard

Motion Carried.

8. Adjournment

On a motion from Kelly Pike, seconded by Warren Beacham, the Annual General

Meeting was adjourned at 8:25 p.m..

We certify that the above are the true minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Hamilton Naturalists's Club held on October 6, 2009.

Bird Study Group Meeting Summary

April 2010 - Members' Night

By Michael Rowlands

Photo: Burrowing Owls by
Beryl Comons



The April meeting of the Bird Study Group has lately been devoted to showcasing the birding pictures of our own members. As the birders prepare for lots of time in the field through the spring and summer seasons, it's good to see where some of our fellow members have been on birding trips.

George Holland opened the meeting with some topical announcements and the annual appeal for suggestions on what we could improve and what we could drop at our monthly meetings. Members of the organizing committee are always open for your input, so don't be shy! He also thanked Helene and Barney Dutka for bringing the refreshments to our monthly meetings. They are stepping down after many years of service so we will have a new volunteer or two taking on this chore starting with the September meeting.

Our first presentation was on the Burrowing Owls of Cape Coral, Florida by Norma DiGiandomenico. She and husband Sam spent time there in the winter of 2008 and were fortunate to have many good close-up shots of these tiny, yellow-eyed, white-chinned beauties. Weighing only about four ounces, standing nine inches tall and having a wingspan of about 21 inches, the Burrowing Owls make their homes in sandy soil in freshly cleared lots. They eat small rodents, beetles and crickets and are the only owl that will hunt in the daytime. They are protected by the state from mid-February to mid-July and are classified as a species of special concern.

The next presenter was Jim Heslop who described his birding in Israel in 1998 when he and his wife Linda took a two-week trip there in late March during his and Israel's 50th birthday! They did a clockwise tour of the country, logging about 1700 kilometres on their rental car. He showed us pictures of dozens of species that are unfamiliar to Canadian birders and had lots of anecdotes about how he got to see some of them – such as taking a ski lift in the Golan Heights area and nearly freezing to death when a blizzard set in. The rarest bird he saw in Israel was a male Gray Hypocolius, a slim shrike-like bird in the waxwing family. If you want to see a lot of life birds, Jim's advice was not to listen to the sometimes disturbing news about Israel but just to go!

Bob Stamp was next with his pictures from a November 2009 trip with Jim Heslop and George Bryant to southeast Brazil. Sadly he noted that more than 90% of the rainforest that was formerly in this area is now gone. But there are still dozens of brightly coloured, exotic birds to be seen there and he showed us many of them, such as Maroon-bellied Parakeets, Red-legged Seriemas and Chestnut-bellied Euphonias. Next year Bob has a trip to Australia planned so we hope he doesn't forget his camera!

The final member to present his bird photos was Barry Cheriére, who showed us his wonderful DVD of warblers, complete with a soundtrack. Thirty years in the making, the DVD is a collection of his shots of 36 different warbler species and the two hybrids

(Lawrence's and Brewster's warblers), mostly photographed in the Point Pelee area. When you put in the hours behind the lens as Barry has, you will invariably come home with some spectacular pictures and this DVD is evidence of just that – it could be used as a field guide or a training program for spring birding!

After a refreshment break, we were treated to an identification session on swallows with Ezra Campanelli, one of our junior members and the latest Ross Thompson Trophy winner (he saw 172 species of birds in 2009). He clearly and concisely reviewed the field marks and descriptions of Barn, Cliff, Northern Rough-winged, Bank and Cave Swallows for us.

Our evening ended with a few last announcements and local sightings, then everyone dispersed for the mid-year break of the Bird Study Group, some to go camping at Point Pelee National Park, others to watch falcons in downtown Hamilton or at the Lift Bridge, and some lucky ones to fly away to foreign lands for more distant birding adventures. We hope everyone had good birding experiences wherever they were and we look forward to a new season of meetings starting this fall at the Burlington Seniors' Centre.

Make Your Legacy Last Forever

By Jen Baker

The HNC set up the Head-of-the-Lake Land Trust program a few years ago to protect land in the Hamilton Burlington area. To date over 300 acres of land have been permanently protected through purchase, donation and conservation easement. We need to care for (steward) the environmental features on the HNC's nature sanctuaries, forever. We have been commended for our stewardship work to date by conservation experts, scientists, naturalists, and the provincial government.

Ten years ago we were fortunate to receive a large bequest from HNC member Jesse Townson which established the Habitat Preservation Endowment Fund at Hamilton Community Foundation and creates a green legacy. The Head-of-the-Lake Land Trust program depends on the income from the Habitat Preservation Endowment Fund to steward the nature sanctuaries. Stewardship activities include developing and maintaining trails, conducting biological inventories, monitoring rare and unusual species, and controlling invasive species.

Building the Habitat Preservation Endowment Fund will allow us to continue to properly steward our nature sanctuaries. Bob Crockford, long-time HNC member and donor, recognizes the importance of stewardship and is contributing \$5,000 to the fund. We invite all HNC members to join Bob in contributing. The goal is to raise a minimum of \$20,000 by Christmas which may then be matched through a special initiative of the Ontario Land Trust

Alliance (OLTA) and Community Foundations of Canada (CFC), making a \$40,000 contribution to the Habitat Preservation Endowment Fund! Together we'll be playing a unique and long-lasting role in protecting land in our community.

The HNC's new Amaolo Nature Sanctuary needs your donations to the Habitat Preservation Endowment Fund to allow us to create important wildlife habitat in an abandoned field. Mr. Amaolo worked to enhance wildlife habitat on his property by planting thousands of trees and creating a vibrant wetland. Through the Habitat Preservation Endowment Fund the HNC will be continuing with this work.

Make a holiday gift to the Habitat Preservation Endowment Fund and join other donors who are building on Jesse Townson's green legacy. To make your donation, please contact Jen Baker at (905) 524-3339 or land@hamiltonnature.org.

WIN A COPY OF BIRDS OF CANADA

The Wood Duck has a beautiful hard cover copy of "Birds Of Canada" from Lone Pine Publishing to give away to one lucky member. Simply answer the following question:

In the September Wood Duck, there was a review of the book "Birds of Canada". Name one of the Authors of the book.

Send your answer to wood_duck@bell.net by October 22, 2010. Winner will be randomly drawn from all correct entries.

GOOD LUCK!



Volunteers Needed at Third Hamilton NAI

By Jim Stollard



This summer, the third Hamilton Natural Areas Inventory (NAI), called Nature Counts Two, began. This important undertaking is a joint project in which the HNC, The City of Hamilton and the Hamilton Conservation Authority are lead partners, supported by the Royal Botanical Gardens, Conservation Halton, the Grand River Conservation Authority and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. The project will re-inventory the 108 Environmentally Significant Areas (ESAs) in the City of Hamilton last examined in the 2003 Hamilton NAI plus any new areas which are considered candidates to be designated as new ESAs. The data produced by NAI projects is important information which becomes the backbone of efforts to protect these ESAs against unwise development and pollution.

Over the next 3 years, there will be many opportunities for Club members to volunteer to help with this project in 3 areas: a) Volunteers will be needed to help with the NAI studies with such tasks as data entry and report proof reading. b) Volunteers will be needed to help with the publishing of a revised Atlas of the Reptiles and Amphibians of Hamilton. Experts will be needed on a committee which will help with writing up species accounts and volunteers will be needed to help with proof reading. c) Volunteers will be needed to help with the production of a revised Naturally Hamilton: a Guide to the Green Spaces of Hamilton and area. Again, a committee will be formed to produce this guide to hiking, walking and nature watching

in Hamilton. There will be opportunities for volunteers to do writing, donate photos, and do proof reading and editing. If you are willing to help with this very worthwhile project, please send an e-mail to the NAI Project Coordinator, Tawnia Martel, at Tawnia.Martel@conservationhamilton.ca and indicate what tasks you can help with. You can also phone Tawnia at 905-525-2181 ext158. I encourage you to get involved with this project. I'm sure you will find your involvement with this project quite rewarding!

Join the Burlington Sustainable Development Committee

Tuesday October 19th in Centennial Hall, Central Library at 7pm to hear Andrew Heintzman speak about his newest book *The New Entrepreneurs: Building a Green Economy for the Future*. Free admission.

In *The New Entrepreneurs*, author and venture capitalist Andrew Heintzman introduces us to the innovative business leaders who are at the forefront of the green economy. From forestry, water, and energy to transportation and agriculture, Heintzman profiles the enterprises that are developing cutting-edge, clean-tech products and innovations for export to a vast and rapidly expanding global market.

*Andrew Heintzman is a co-founder of Investeco and the Chair of the Premier's Climate Change Advisory Panel for the Province of Ontario. He sits on a number of corporate boards, including Lotek Wireless, Triton Logging and Horizon Distributors. In addition, he is on the board of directors of the Tides Canada Foundation, and the Steering Committee of Sustainable Prosperity. Andrew was co-editor of *Fueling the Future: How the Battle Over Energy is Changing Everything*, *Feeding the Future: From Fat to Famine*, and *Food and Fuel: Solutions for the Future*, all published by the House of Anansi Press. Before Investeco, Andrew was a co-founder and publisher of *Shift Magazine*.*

Exploring the Ecology of Migratory Birds at Long Point

By Louise Unitt



When scheduled speaker Mike Cadman fell ill and was unable to attend the September 13th HNC meeting, Stuart Mackenzie came forward and saved the day. His topic was no surprise to anyone, as few people are better qualified to discuss the Long Point Bird Observatory (LPBO). A former Landbird Programs Coordinator at Bird Studies Canada (parent organization of LPBO), Stu began volunteering there at age 15, and retains a hands-on involvement, as will be described further on. He holds a B.Sc. in Zoology from the University of Guelph, and is now completing an M.Sc. degree at the University of Western Ontario. This impromptu visit was not Stu's first presentation to the HNC, for he was guest speaker at the Bird Study Group in February 2006. (see Michael Rowlands' article, "A Big Banding Year at Long Point," in the April 2006 issue of *The Wood Duck*.)

Stu began by outlining the Observatory's history, before proceeding to a description of the present-day project he is currently working on. Long Point is situated along the northern shore of Lake Erie, in one of the most rural locations in southern Ontario. When the Ontario Bird Banding Association founded the LPBO in 1960, Long Point was still owned by the Long Point Company (a private hunt club), which acquired the land in 1866. The Long Point Company donated about half of its holdings to the federal government in 1978, with the stipulation that it remain completely wild. Long Point has since been declared a U.N. World Biosphere Reserve and a Globally Important Bird Area.

The Observatory comprises three migration monitoring stations. The most remote--appropriately named the Tip--is situated where the sand spit juts into Lake Erie. Breakwater is farther up the peninsula, and Old Cut, the newest field station, opened in June 1981. Located near the base of the Point, Old Cut is the central hub of all LPBO operations.

LPBO has been monitoring bird migration longer than any other field station in North America. Banding data from the Migration Monitoring Program, which operates each spring and fall, has charted population trends for nearly 200 species that breed in Canada and go south for the winter. Unexpected visitors stop by too: Western Wood-pewee and a flock of Whistling-Ducks were recent highlights Stu mentioned. A recent technological advance, the mini-MRI, has helped streamline the processing of birds at the lab. After being measured, weighed, and banded, subjects now undergo a mini-MRI exam which estimates their fat content, their chief source of energy.

The long-running Long Point Tree Swallow project has been monitoring this bird's nesting performance since 1977. Over the years, the LPBO has launched new research projects. For example, data from breeding bird censuses and vegetation monitoring are being used to analyze breeding bird abundance and vegetation recovery in response to the reduction of the White-tailed Deer population in the area. And each fall, thousands of butterflies are recorded on the Monarch Butterfly census. Stu showed us a slide featuring a congregation of 10,000 Monarchs which

he recently observed. Long Point has been identified by the federal government as an International Monarch Butterfly Reserve.

During his teen years, Stu participated in the LPBO's Young Ornithologists' Workshop. Established in the mid-1970s, the workshops led to the development of a student internship program. The Latin American Training Program includes workshops at Long Point and on-site workshops in a trainee's home country. Students from 14 countries have participated so far. Designed to foster homegrown initiatives, the program grew out of a collaborative research project in Cuba, which ran from 1987 to 1995.

Under the co-supervision Dr. Chris Guglielmo of the University of Western Ontario and Dr. Phil Taylor of Acadia University, Stu is currently exploring the stopover ecology of banded migratory songbirds in the Long Point area. Stopovers provide an opportunity to refuel between migratory bouts; they are vital for satisfying a bird's nutritional needs over the course of its travels. Long Point is ideally situated to welcome weary, hungry migrants that have freshly swept in off Lake Erie. While critical to bird survival, stopovers are not without hazards, such as predators, intemperate weather, or lack of food. Stu is examining how birds 'decide' where to land, and what factors--weather and body condition, for example--might be influencing their choices. Sites have their pros and cons: if a bird presses as far inland as Old Cut, a plentiful food supply is tempered by the threat of predators lurking

in the woods. If however, storms ground a bird near the open area at the Tip, predators are easily spotted, but food is scarce.

Stu's methodology incorporates ground searches and LPBO migration monitoring data with a sophisticated new tool -- radio telemetry. Since its introduction at Long Point, telemetry has proven extremely effective. Hermit Thrush, White-throated Sparrow, Swainson's Thrush and White-crowned Sparrow were selected as target passerine species for the study. Individuals were fitted with digitally encoded radio tags which provide 24/7 monitoring of their movements. The tags, weighing less than a gram and costing \$200 apiece, transmit signals at five to ten-second intervals and last about three weeks. The tags' life spans could be extended by lengthening the intervals, but it would be at some sacrifice of detail. The Long Point peninsula is covered by three sampling towers mounted with 12-kilometre-range antennae, installed in fall 2008. The towers are located at the Tip itself, in the National Wildlife Area west of the Tip, and in the provincial park at the base of the Point. The scope of research has since been expanded beyond the Point to include inland locations, and there is a fourth tower at Bird Studies Canada's Port Rowan headquarters. Broadening the range of the radio-tracking study has shown that the temporal and spatial scales of migratory stopovers are considerably larger than was known.

To illustrate the refinement of data collected through telemetry, Stu drew our attention to the degree of detail plotted on a graph generated for a Swainson's Thrush. The graph provided an extremely refined record of the sites the bird occupied during its 12 days in the Long Point area,

Radio telemetry has shown that birds frequently visit more than one site per

stopover. In fact, 35 – 65% of flights are non-migratory relocation flights. Relocations appear to be an important part of a bird's survival strategy. A bird's sudden absence

could signify migration departure, relocation within a stopover, or even death. The capability of radio telemetry to deliver highly detailed tracking information allows for a more accurate interpretation of an individual's fate than was possible before the technology.

Masters of concealment, Northern Saw-whet Owls are difficult to detect by sight, making them prime candidates for tracking by radio telemetry. Although owl relocations had been strongly suspected, they could not be confirmed until radio-tracking furnished the proof. Stu showed us a telemetry-generated chart that recorded the sites occupied by one Saw-whet during a 13-day stopover at Long Point. After one day at the Tip, the owl went on to spend seven days farther up the Point, followed by five days still farther inland. Young owls have been shown to remain at a site twice as long as their elders.

While it is often impossible to visually identify Saw-whets skulking amid dense White Cedar foliage, their presence can be detected using telemetry. It turns out that the Northern Saw-whet Owl is a more abundant species than formerly thought. Its numbers in Ontario are surpassed only by the Eastern Screech Owl.

The value of radio telemetry is not limited to the avian realm: at Long Point, the method has been expanded to track Silver-haired Bats, which migrate past Long Point in the thousands. There are two pulses of southbound migration, in late August and mid-September, with more adults participating in the second wave. Bats seldom linger at a stopover for more than a night or two, although rain can lengthen their stay. Some will

cross Lake Erie, the rest preferring to follow the shoreline. Torpor-assisted migration is a great boon to a bat: by slowing down various physiological processes, torpor greatly reduces a bat's energy expenditure.

Stu's lecture was highly informative, casting light on exciting modern technologies that are already advancing our understanding of the avian world. Moreover, Stu's willingness to step in on such short notice was greatly appreciated!

Visit Plan B organic farms Sat. 23 October at 10 am

Tour our local community based organic agriculture cooperative. Alvaro will guide you around this 25acre property, showing you some of the natural features and will explain how the cooperative works.

Leader; Alvaro Venturelli
info@planborganicfarms.ca
(905) 659-2572

Directions:

From the QEW/403 Hamilton, you take highway 6 north (guelph direction) and turn left onto the 5th Concession West, just past the dinosaurs at the patio furniture place town of Millgrove, then continue about 10kms on 5th Concession until you reach #1377 just past westover road.

DO NOT use our postal code or google maps, WE ARE NOT IN BRANCHTON.

From Dundas you can come up highway 8, then just past peter's corners lights take the first immediate right onto Westover Road, then turn left at 5th Concession west.

Noteworthy Bird Records - April 2010

by Rob Dobos



Total number of species recorded in the HSA during 2010 to April 30: 185. Underlined species or dates require documentation by the Hamilton Bird Records Committee. Capitalized species require documentation by the Ontario Bird Records Committee. For species marked with “#”, all reported records are listed. For all other species, only highlights are listed. Note that the species order follows the most recent American Ornithologists’ Union checklist and supplements.

Observers: David Brewer (DBr), Jacob Bruxer (JBr), George Bryant (GBy), Barb Charlton (BC), Helen Colvin (HC), Mark Cranford (MCR), Robert Curry (RC), Martin Daly (MD), Kip Daynard (KDa), Rob Dobos (RD), Andrew Don (AD), Dave R. Don (DD), Dave K. Donn (DKD), Cheryl Edgecombe (CE), Gavin Edmondstone (GE), Denise Fell (DF), Lev Frid (LFr), Nancy Furber (NF), Jim Heslop (JH), Kyle Holloway (KH), Tim King (TK), Cody Law (CL), Rick Ludkin (RL), Doug Mannen (DMn), Arlene McCaw (AMC), Jim McCaw (JMC), Ian McGovern (IMG), Kevin McLaughlin (KM), Bll Morden (BMo), Loretta Mousseau (LMo), Ken Newcombe (KN), Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch (NPH), Wayne Renaud (WR), George Sims (GSi), Glenda Slessor (GS), Paul Smith (PS), Robert Stamp (RS), Chris Street (CS), Tom Thomas (TT), Marian Thorpe (MT), Josh Vandermeulen (JV), Rob Waldhuber (RW), Jim Watt (JWa), Gavin Wells (GWe), Angie Williams (AWi), Ken Williams (KWi), Alan Wormington (AW), Brian Wylie (BW), many observers (m.obs.).

Legend:

* - first occurrence for the year
F - first occurrence for the migration
L - last occurrence for the migration
HSA - Hamilton Study Area
terr. - territorial bird
SM - singing male

Plumages, etc.:

m. - male
f. - female
ad. - adult
ba. - basic
alt. - alternate
imm. - immature
juv. - juvenile
1st yr. - first year

Counties/Regions/Cities:

Brant [BR]
Haldimand [HD]
Halton [HL]
Hamilton [HM]
Niagara [NG]
Peel [PL]
Waterloo [WT]
Wellington [WL]

Cackling Goose#: Five at Valens C.A. [HM] Apr 2 (RD,BC,JBr).

Tundra Swan: Four at Ruthven Park, Cayuga [HD] Apr 12 (RL); one past Beamer C.A., Grimsby [NG] Apr 17 L (NPH).

American Wigeon: Four at Valens C.A. and eight at Dundas Hydro Pond [HM] Apr 2 (RD,BC,JBr); five at Grimsby Sewage Ponds [NG] Apr 3 (RD *et al.*); five at Dundas Marsh [HM] Apr 12 (DKD).

Blue-winged Teal: Two at Dundas Hydro Pond Apr 2 * (RD,BC,JBr); two at Great Lakes Blvd & Creek Path Stormwater Pond [HL] Apr 9 (CE,DD); six at Dofasco Trail & 10th Rd E [HM] Apr 17 (RD *et al.*).

Northern Shoveler: Seven at Grimsby Sewage Ponds Apr 3 (RD *et al.*); 50 at Princess Point [HM] Apr 10 (RD,BC,DD); eight at Dundas Marsh Apr 17 (DKD).

Northern Pintail: Two at Rockton Berry Farm [HM] Apr 2 (RD,BC,JBr); three at 5th Rd E N of Green Mt Rd [HM] Apr 17 (RD *et al.*); one m. at Dundas Marsh Apr 24 (MD).

Green-winged Teal: Six at Grimsby Sewage Ponds Apr 3 (RD *et al.*); nine at Middletown Rd S of Conc 4 [HM] and four at Ofield Rd & Conc 4 [HM] Apr 5 (RD); 10 at Dundas Marsh Apr

17 (DKD); 10 at Rockton Berry Farm Apr 18 (RD *et al.*).

Canvasback: 250 N past Woodland Cemetery [HM] Apr 2 (RD,BC,JBr); one f. at Valens C.A. Apr 14 (JV).

Redhead: Two at Grimsby Sewage Ponds Apr 3 (RD *et al.*).

Ring-necked Duck: 65 at Cooper Rd S of Safari Rd [HM] Apr 2 (RD,BC,JBr); 10 at Valens C.A. Apr 14 (JV); 10 at Mountsberg C.A. [HM/WL] Apr 18 (RD *et al.*).

Greater Scaup: 700 N past Woodland Cemetery Apr 2 (RD,BC,JBr).

King Eider#: Two 1st yr. m. + one f. off Fifty Rd [HM] Apr 11 (KM), and one 1st yr. m. + two f. there Apr 13 (KM).

Surf Scoter: 220 off Grays Rd [HM] Apr 13 (KM).

Common Goldeneye: One on Harbour off LaSalle Marina [HM] Apr 24 (MD).

Hooded Merganser: Four at York Rd Pond, Dundas [HM] Apr 2 (RD,BC,JBr); six at NE Shore of Harbour [HM] Apr 3 (RD); six at Green Mt Rd Quarry [HM] Apr 10 (JBr *et al.*); a pair nesting at Conc 11 E, Flamborough [HM] Apr 18 (HC).

Ruddy Duck: 12 at Valens C.A. Apr 2 (RD,BC,JBr), and 15 there Apr 18 (RD *et al.*); 20 at Princess Point Apr 10 (RD,BC,DD); 660 at Windermere Basin [HM] Apr 11 (KM); one

f. at Ruthven Park Apr 13 (RL); 25 at Mountsberg C.A. Apr 18 (RD *et al.*).

Ruffed Grouse#: Up to five at Westover Rd N of Conc 8 [HM] Apr 1-26 (PS); two terr. at Lafarge Trail N of Conc 8 [HM] Apr 18 (RD *et al.*); one terr. at Hyde Tract [HM] Apr 27 (KWi,AWi).

Wild Turkey: Up to six at Westover Rd N of Conc 8 Apr 6-30 (PS); one at Grays Rd at Lakeshore [HM] Apr 13 (KM).

Red-throated Loon#: One off Green Rd [HM] Apr 3 F (RD *et al.*); one past Fifty Rd Apr 28 (KM).

Common Loon: One ba. off LaSalle Marina Apr 21 (RD,CE).

Pied-billed Grebe: Two at Fifty Point C.A. [HM/NG] Apr 3 (RD *et al.*); four at Green Mt Rd Quarry and one at Grimsby Sewage Ponds Apr 10 (JBr); one at Windermere Basin Apr 11 (KM); one at Great Lakes Blvd & Creek Path Stormwater Pond Apr 12 (CE,DD,BC); three at Valens C.A. Apr 14 (JV); two at Dundas Marsh Apr 15 (DKD); four at Mountsberg C.A. Apr 18 (RD *et al.*); one terr. at Safari Rd Wetland [HM] Apr 27 (KWi,AWi).

Horned Grebe: Birds on Apr 3: 12 –Van Wagners Beach [HM], 30 –off Green Rd, 13 –Fifty Point C.A. (RD *et al.*); 25 off Grays Rd Apr 13 (KM).

Red-necked Grebe: Birds on Apr 3: 30 –Van Wagners Beach, 225 –off Green Rd, 11 –Fifty Point C.A. (RD *et al.*); three off Shoreacres [HL] Apr 6 (RD,CE); 140 off Bronte [HL] Apr 9 (CE,DD); 300 off Fifty Rd Apr 11 (KM).

American Bittern#: One terr. at Safari Rd Wetland and one terr. at Conc 8 E of Westover Rd [HM] Apr 26 * (CE,DD).

Great Egret#: One at Dundas Marsh Apr 15 * (DKD), and one there Apr 27 (DKD); one at Valley Inn Apr 21 (KN).

Black-crowned Night-Heron: One ad. at Shoreacres [HL] Apr 12 (CE,DD,BC); 15 ad. at NE Shore of Harbour Apr 19 (RD); one at Ruthven Park Apr 26 (RL).

BLACK VULTURE#: The following sightings likely pertained to the same bird (which was determined to be a different bird than the one in Mar): Cameron Ave, Dundas [HM] –Apr 11 (GWe), Dundas Escarpment –Apr 20 (RW), Valley Inn –Apr 21 (KN), High Level Bridge [HM] –Apr 24 (JBr), Old Guelph Rd [HM] –Apr 24 (MD), Beamer C.A. (flying east) –Apr 27 L (NPH).

Turkey Vulture: Birds at Beamer C.A.: 1564 –Apr 1, 538 –Apr 2, 677 –Apr 3, 901 –Apr 4 (NPH).

Osprey: Two at Beamer C.A. Apr 1 * (NPH); two on a nest at Badenoch [WL] Apr 11-30 (MT; RD *et al.*).

Bald Eagle: 26 counted at Beamer C.A. Apr 1-30 (NPH); one ad. at Valens C.A. Apr 2 (RD,BC,JBr); one ad. at Dundas Marsh Apr 16 (DKD).

Northern Harrier: 13 at Beamer C.A. Apr 1 (NPH); one terr. pair at Dofasco Trail & 10th Rd E Apr 10 (RD,BC,DD).

Sharp-shinned Hawk: Birds at Beamer C.A.: 233 –Apr 1, 242 –Apr 2, 397 –Apr 3 (NPH).

Cooper's Hawk: One f. on nest at Burloak Woods [HL] Apr 11 (RD,CE).

Red-shouldered Hawk: 52 at Beamer C.A. Apr 1 and two there Apr 23 L (NPH).

Broad-winged Hawk: Birds at Beamer C.A.: 7 –Apr 10 *, 1 dark morph –Apr 13, 414 –Apr 20, 894 –Apr 21, 305 –Apr 22, 405 –Apr 23, 272 –Apr 30 (NPH); one terr. at Conc 8, Beverly Swamp [HM] Apr 18 (RD *et al.*).

Rough-legged Hawk: One at Ruthven Park Apr 11 L (RL).

Golden Eagle#: Birds at Beamer C.A.: 1 –Apr 4, 1 2nd yr. –Apr 11, 1 –Apr 21 (NPH).

Merlin#: 10 counted at Beamer C.A. Apr 1-30 (NPH); one at Middletown Rd & Conc 5 [HL] Apr 11 (BC).

Peregrine Falcon#: One juv. at CCIW [HL] Apr 14 (RD); three at Beamer C.A. Apr 27 (NPH).

Virginia Rail#: One at Hendrie Valley Apr 26 * (IMG); one terr. at Safari Rd Wetland Apr 27 (KWi,AWi).

Sora#: Two terr. at Safari Rd Wetland Apr 12 * (CE,DD); one terr. at Dundas Marsh Apr 13-17 (DKD); one terr. at Safari Rd Wetland Apr 27 (KWi,AWi).

Common Moorhen#: One at Dundas Marsh Apr 14 * (DKD).

American Coot: Three off LaSalle Marina Apr 1 (RD); two at Valens C.A. Apr 2 (RD,BC,JBr); five at Grimsby Sewage Ponds Apr 3-6 (RD *et al.*); two at Dundas Marsh Apr 12 (DKD).

Sandhill Crane#: Birds at Beamer C.A.: 2 –Apr 1 F, 3 –Apr 3, 1 –Apr 29 (NPH); one terr. pair at Blue Lake [BR] Apr 2-6 (GSi); one over Dofasco Trail & 10th Rd E Apr 3 (RD *et al.*); one at Sideroad 20 & Puslinch Townline [HL] Apr 18 (MT); two at Ruthven Park Apr 29 (NF).

Spotted Sandpiper: One at Confederation Park [HM] Apr 16 * (RD,CE).

Greater Yellowlegs: Five at Dofasco Trail & 10th Rd E Apr 2 * (CE,DD; KWi), and seven there Apr 15 (CE,DD); six at Powerline Rd & 5th Rd E [HM] Apr 10 (RD *et al.*); 11 at Westover Rd N of Safari Rd [HM] Apr 12 (CE,DD,BC); three at Abingdon [NG] Apr 13 (AW); three at Dundas Marsh Apr 24 (MD).

Lesser Yellowlegs: One at 5th Rd E N of Green Mt Rd Apr 1-2 (TK; CE,DD).

Upland Sandpiper#: One at Dofasco Trail & 5th Rd E [HM] Apr 17 * (RD,DD); two at Green Mt Rd E of Tapleytown Rd [HM] Apr 18 (JBr); two at Grassie [NG] Apr 28 (AW).

Pectoral Sandpiper: Six at 5th Rd E N of Green Mt Rd Apr 1-2 (TK; CE,DD), and eight there Apr 17 (RD *et al.*); up to 20 at Dofasco Trail & 10th Rd E Apr 2-10 (CE,DD; m.obs.).

Dunlin: Two at Red Hill Expressway & QEW Stormwater Pond [HM] Apr 2 * (CE,DD); two at 5th Rd E N of Green Mt Rd and two at Dofasco Trail & 10th Rd E Apr 18 (JBr); one at Dofasco Trail & 10th Rd E Apr 24-28 (AD; m.obs.).

Long-billed Dowitcher#: One at Dofasco Trail & 10th Rd E Apr 24*-28 (AD; m.obs.) provided only the third spring record for the HSA.

Wilson's Snipe: 36 at 5th Rd E N of Green Mt Rd Apr 3 (RC,GS), and 15 there Apr 17 (RD *et al.*); three at Clappisons Corners Wetland [HM] Apr 3 (TT); one terr. at Grimsby Sewage Ponds Apr 6 (RD,DF); one terr. at Middletown Marsh [HM] Apr 11 (BC); five at Kimbo [NG] Apr 12 (AW).

American Woodcock: One at Shoreacres Apr 21 L (WR).

Little Gull#: Three ad. off Fifty Rd Apr 16 * (KM).

Bonaparte's Gull: Four at Van Wagners Beach Apr 3 * (RD *et al.*); 10 at Princess Point Apr 10 (RD,BC,DD); 40 past Fifty Rd Apr 9 (KM), and 70 there Apr 16 (KM); 40 past Fifty Point C.A. Apr 11 (DD); 35 off Arkendo Park, Oakville [HL] Apr 13 (JWa); two past Beamer C.A. Apr 22 (NPH).

Iceland Gull: One imm. at CCIW Apr 1 (RD); five off Green Rd Apr 3 (RD *et al.*); one 3rd alt. past Fifty Rd Apr 9 (KM), and one 1st alt. + three 2nd alt. + one 3rd alt. there Apr 28 (KM); one ad. at Bronte Harbour Apr 18 (GE).

Lesser Black-backed Gull#: One ad. at Bronte Harbour Apr 18 (GE).

Glaucous Gull: One imm. off Green Rd and one imm. off Fifty Point C.A. Apr 3 (RD *et al.*); one ad. off Arkendo Park, Oakville Apr 13 (JWa).

Caspian Tern: Four at NE Shore of Harbour Apr 3 (RD).

Common Tern: One past Fifty Rd Apr 9 * (KM) provided a record early date for the HSA; two at Dundas Hydro Pond Apr 11 (DKD) provided a new second earliest date for the HSA; two past CCIW Apr 14 (RD).

Forster's Tern#: Three past Casablanca Rd [NG] Apr 27 * (AW).

Chimney Swift: Four at Grimsby [NG] Apr 30 * (CL).

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: Five at Bronte Apr 9 (CE,DD).

Northern Flicker: 13 at Woodland Cemetery Apr 2 (RD,BC,JBr).

Pileated Woodpecker: One at LaSalle Park Apr 21 (RD,CE).

Least Flycatcher: One at Shoreacres Apr 30 * (CE).

Northern Shrike#: One at 5th Rd E N of Green Mt Rd Apr 1 (TK); one at Dofasco Trail & 10th Rd E Apr 3 L (CL).

Blue-headed Vireo: One at Shoreacres Apr 26 * (CE,DD); one SM at Hyde Tract Apr 27 (KWi,AWi); one at Beamer C.A. Apr 29 (NPH); one at Sherwood Forest Park [HL] Apr 30 (AMC,JMC).

Warbling Vireo: Two at N Shore of Cootes Paradise [HM] Apr 27 * (DKD).

Common Raven#: One at Hwy 407 & Appleby Line [HL] Apr 3 (KDa); one at North Waterdown Wetlands [HM] Apr 14 (PS); one at Brock Rd & Conc 5 [HM] Apr 17 (BC); one at 10th Rd E & Dofasco Trail Apr 17 (RD *et al.*); four at Beamer C.A. Apr 20 (NPH); two building a nest at Fletcher Creek Ecological Preserve [WL] Apr 18 (MT; RD *et al.*); one pair at Arkell [WL] Apr 23 (DBr).

Purple Martin#: One at Beamer C.A. Apr 11 * (NPH).

Tree Swallow: 25 at Dundas Hydro Pond Apr 2 (RD,BC,JBr); 50 at CCIW Apr 8 (RD); 300 at Bronte Apr 9 (CE,DD).

Northern Rough-winged Swallow: One at Clappisons Corners Wetland Apr 3 * (TT) provided a record early date for the HSA; one at Head St, Dundas [HM] Apr 5 (RW) is the third earliest date for the HSA; 12 at Bronte Apr 9 (CE,DD).

Bank Swallow: One at Shoreacres Apr 12 * (CE,DD,BC).

Cliff Swallow: Three at Dundas Marsh Apr 17 * (DMn,DKD).

Barn Swallow: One at Beamer C.A. (NPH) and one at Dundas Hydro Pond (RD,BC,JBr) Apr 2 *.

Tufted Titmouse#: One at Woodland Cemetery Apr 2 (RD,BC,JBr); one at Ruthven Park Apr 12-22 and two there Apr 28 (RL).

Red-breasted Nuthatch: Two at Shoreacres Apr 19 F (RD).

Brown Creeper: One at LaSalle Park Apr 1 F (RD); eight at Edgelake Park [HM] Apr 15 (RD,CE).

House Wren: One at Ruthven Park Apr 20 * (LMo).

Winter Wren: One at Edgelake Park Apr 3 F (RD *et al.*); one SM at Lafarge Trail N of Conc 8 Apr 18 (RD *et al.*).

Golden-crowned Kinglet: Five at LaSalle Park Apr 1 F (RD); 12 at Burloak Woods [HL] Apr 9 (CE,DD); 15 at Woodland Cemetery (RD,BC,DD) and 20 at Shell Park (GBy,JH,RS) Apr 10.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: One at Edgelake Park Apr 3 F (RD *et al.*).

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: One at Ruthven Park Apr 16 * (LMo); one at Beamer C.A. (BCh) and three at Dundas Marsh (DKD) Apr 17; one pair building a nest at Shoreacres Apr 24 (DD).

Eastern Bluebird: Four at Courtcliffe Park [HM] Apr 4 (AMC,JMC).

Veery: One at Shoreacres Apr 30 * (AD).

Hermit Thrush: One at Vinemount Swamp [HM] Apr 3 F (RC,GS); four at Van Wagners Ponds [HM] Apr 8 (TK); seven at Sherwood Forest Park and three at Burloak Woods Apr 11 (RD,CE).

Wood Thrush: One at Ruthven Park Apr 26 * (RL).

Brown Thrasher: One at Ford Dr & QEW [HL] Apr 3 * (MCr); one at Middletown Marsh Apr 4 (BC).

American Pipit: One at Abingdon Apr 1 F (AW).

Nashville Warbler: One at Shoreacres (CE; AMC) and one at Ruthven Park (RL) Apr 30 *.

Yellow Warbler: Two at N Shore of Cootes Paradise Apr 27 * (DKD); one at Shoreacres Apr 30 (CE; AMC).

Yellow-rumped Warbler: Seven at Bronte Apr 9 F (CE,DD); 22 at N Shore of Cootes Paradise Apr 27 (DKD).

Black-throated Green Warbler: One m. at Burloak Woods Apr 10 * (TT,CS) provided the second earliest date for the HSA; one at Shoreacres (CE) and one at Sherwood Forest Park (AMC,JMC) Apr 30.

Pine Warbler: One SM at Dundas Valley C.A. [HM] Apr 6 F (JH,RS) provided a record early spring date for the HSA; one at Bronte Bluffs Park [HL] Apr 9 (CE,DD); two at Shell Park Apr 10 (GBy,JH,RS); two at Edgelake Park Apr 15 (RD,CE); five at LaSalle Park Apr 20 (TT).

Palm Warbler: Three at Dundas Marsh Apr 17 * (DKD) tied the second earliest date for the HSA; four at N Shore of Cootes Paradise Apr 27 (DKD).

Black-and-white Warbler: One at Shell Park Apr 30 * (CE; AD).

Ovenbird: One at Shoreacres Apr 30 * (CE).

Northern Waterthrush: One at Shoreacres (CE; AMC) and one SM at Westover Rd N of Conc 8 (PS) Apr 30 *.

Louisiana Waterthrush#: One at Canterbury Hills, Dundas Valley [HM] Apr 26 * (BW); two at Crawford Lake C.A. [HL]

Apr 27 (LFr,KH).

Eastern Towhee: One m. at Middletown Marsh Apr 4 (BC).

American Tree Sparrow: One at Middletown Marsh Apr 30 L (CE).

Chipping Sparrow: One at Sumac Dr, Aldershot [HL] Apr 4 (CS).

Clay-colored Sparrow#: One at Sumac Dr, Aldershot Apr 29*-30 (CS) was record early for the HSA.

Field Sparrow: Birds on Apr 11 *: 1 –Beamer C.A. (NPH), 3 SM –Middletown Rd N of Conc 4 [HM] (BC), 1 –Fletcher Creek Ecological Preserve (MT).

Vesper Sparrow: One at Clappisons Corners Wetland Apr 3 * (TT).

Savannah Sparrow: One at Grimsby Sewage Ponds Apr 6 F (RD,DF); two at Great Lakes Blvd & Rebecca Stormwater Pond Apr 12 (CE,DD,BC).

Fox Sparrow: Seven at Bronte Apr 9 (CE,DD); one at Courtcliffe Park Apr 29 L (AD).

Swamp Sparrow: Two at Fifty Point C.A. Apr 3 F (RD *et al.*).

White-throated Sparrow: One at Dundas Valley C.A. Apr 6 F (JH,RS).

White-crowned Sparrow: One at Ruthven Park Apr 25 F (RL); two at N Shore of Cootes Paradise Apr 27 (DKD).

Lapland Longspur#: 30 at Abingdon Apr 12 and 18 there (AW); eight at 5th Rd E N of Green Mt Rd and 16 at 10th Rd E & Dofasco Trail Apr 17 (RD *et al.*).

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: One at Shell Park (CE,DD) and one SM at Westover Rd N of Conc 8 (PS) Apr 30 *.

Bobolink: One at Ruthven Park Apr 26 * (RL) tied our second earliest date for the HSA.

Rusty Blackbird: 50 at Vinemount Swamp Apr 3 (RD *et al.*).

Brewer's Blackbird#: One at Shellard Sideroad N of Reg Rd 97 [WT] Apr 9 * (JV).

Baltimore Oriole: One at Fulton [NG] Apr 29 F (AW); one m. at Shoreacres Apr 30 (CE,DD).

Purple Finch: Six at Jeanette Dr, Oakville [HL] Apr 8 * (BMo); three at Westover Rd N of Conc 8 Apr 10 (PS); two at Moffat [WL] Apr 10 (MT); two m. at Sunrise Cres, Dundas [HM] Apr 11 (RD); seven at Vinemount Swamp April 17 (RD *et al.*).

Please send your bird records for May 2010 by Nov 10 to: Rob Dobos, 21 Sunrise Cres., Dundas, Ont., L9H 3S1; ph: (905) 628-0297; e-mail: rdobos@cogeco.ca

Trumpeter Swan Survey

by Mario Carr

Every five years, the North American Trumpeter swan survey is carried out by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Canadian Wildlife Service to assess the health of these birds. The 2010 survey will be conducted sometime this fall.

If you have spotted a Trumpeter Swan, you can help by sending a report of the sighting to stewardship@wye-marsh.com. The report should include your name, phone number, email address, home address, date, time, location, tag number, colour, number of adults and cygnets and any other comments you think are important. An official report will be available in 2011.

Adults swans are white with a solid black beak, legs and feet, weighing up to 30 lbs. with a 7 ½ - 8 ft wing span and can live up to 35 years in captivity. They are the largest waterfowl in North American and the largest swans in the world. Young swans under a year-old are called cygnets and are brownish/grey with a pinkish beak and legs. For more information www.trumpeterswansociety.org





Charles Drew sends us these two lovely shots of a Jefferson Salamander and says,

“I took at the cottage on Miller Lake on the Bruce Peninsula. He was running a few inches ahead of my lawnmower when luckily I spotted him. I caught him and took his picture and returned him to the clump of cedars that he was headed for.”

Thank you for sharing! Please send your nature photographs to wood_duck@bell.net

Membership Renewal Time

From The Membership Director

It is now time to renew your membership for the 2010-2011 season. You may do this by mail, or at the membership table at the November Monthly Meeting, using the renewal form sent to you with the September Wood Duck (or mailed to you if you read the Wood Duck online). You also can renew online from our Club web site using PayPal or by printing the membership form from the web site and mailing it in. Remember those who have not renewed by late November will not receive a December Wood Duck. So don't delay. Please do it now.



Life Membership	\$750.00
Single Membership	35.00
Senior Single Membership	30.00
Student Single Membership	30.00
Senior Joint Membership	35.00
Student Joint Membership	35.00
Family Membership	40.00
Junior Naturalists - first child	65.00
Junior Nats - additional children	55.00

HNC Monthly Meetings - Speakers 2010-2011

September 13, 2010 - Mike Cadman

Canaries in the Coal Mine: What are Ontario's Birds Telling Us?

Our avian friends often serve as the proverbial “canaries in the coal mine”. Many species of birds are exquisitely sensitive to what most people would consider minor changes in habitat or climate. Given the already-in-progress phenomenon of climate change, and that much of southern Ontario’s land-use is in flux, the value of tracking changes in bird populations is clear. While some species are increasingly at risk, others are increasing. The two bird atlas projects provide a detailed record of how bird populations have changed over a 20 year span since the early 1980s, and serve as a comparison point for measuring future population changes.

Mike Cadman has been a life-long student of birds. He received his Master of Science degree from the University of Toronto in 1980 based on studies of the American Oystercatcher. Mike, a Songbird Biologist with the Canadian Wildlife Service, is best known as the driving force behind the first and second Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas, both monumental projects. The new atlas was published in fall 2007. He has taken a lead role in many important survey programs designed to monitor Ontario’s bird populations including the Forest Bird Monitoring Program, and Marsh Bird Monitoring Program. Mike is currently chair of the Canadian Breeding Bird Atlas Committee and co-chair of the Aerial Insectivore Working Group. In recognition of his extensive contribu-

tions to ornithology, he received a Distinguished Ornithologist Award from the OFO in 2007.

October 18, 2010 - John and Mary Theberge

Thinking Big About Ecosystems, Evolution and Life

The “mystery of mysteries” is how life has persisted for almost 4 billion years on such a restless and changeable planet, staying within what astronomers call the “Habitable Zone.” The secrets of success revolve around mechanisms that convey self-organization, apparent at each level of increasing complexity from DNA/RNA to ecosystems and even beyond to the biosphere itself. Fully explored in John and Mary’s new book “The Ptarmigan’s Dilemma: an Exploration of How Life Organizes and Supports Itself”, their evening presentation (illustrated) uses their extensive field experience in wildlife ecology in wild places across a span of several decades to highlight some key ideas and concepts, which are particularly relevant to an environmental ethic.

Wildlife ecologists John and Mary Theberge are internationally known for their research into the ecology of wolves and their prey. They are known across Canada for their work in parks and wildlife conservation. John was until his recent retirement a professor of ecology and conservation biology in the Faculty of Environmental Studies, University of Waterloo, where he taught since 1970. Mary is an educator, and wildlife illustrator and co-partner in their joint

research. They have collaborated on many scientific and popular articles and appeared together in numerous lectures and television programs. They were jointly recognized with several awards: the Equinox Citation for Environmental Achievement, the Harkin Award of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, and the Earthroots Award for Lifetime Wildlife and Wilderness Conservation Achievement. They are authors of several books including *Wolves and Wilderness*, *Kluane: Pinnacle of the Yukon*, *Legacy: A Natural History of Ontario*, and *Wolf Country: Eleven Years Tracking Algonquin Wolves*. They currently live in the southern interior of British Columbia.

November 8, 2010 - Nick Eyles

Ontario's 3 billion year geologic journey

In its long and rocky past, the place we call Ontario has traveled across the equator, been peppered and pockmarked by meteorites, seen the rise and decline of towering mountains, and gave rise to some very strange and now extinct organisms. In fact, what seems like a changeless landscape was once covered by vast seas and huge, continent-wide ice sheets which measured 2 kilometres thick, leaving in their wake, the Great Lakes. Come hear Dr. Eyles speak on the fascinating 3 billion year long story of Ontario's geological evolution, from its beginnings as part of an early landmass called Arctica, its incorporation into enormous supercontinents, through to the repeated ice ages and abrupt climatic changes of the last few thousand years.

Nick Eyles is a former board member of the Toronto Field Naturalists and Scientific Advisor to the CBC production *Geologic Journey*. Dr. Eyles holds a Ph.D. and D.Sc. and is Professor of Geology at the University of Toronto. He has worked at the universities of Leicester, Newcastle upon Tyne and East Anglia in Great Britain, at Memorial University in Newfoundland and has been at Toronto since 1981 when he was awarded an NSERC University Research Fellowship. He has authored more than 150 publications in leading scientific journals on ice age geology and environmental geology in urban areas and has conducted geological fieldwork from the Arctic to the Antarctic, including work on Ocean Drilling Program onboard the drill ship *Resolution*. Recent sabbaticals have been held in Brazil and Australia where he continues to work on unravelling why planet Earth experiences glaciations. He is the author of the best selling *Ontario Rocks* (2002) and *Canada Rocks: The Geologic Journey* (co-authored with Andrew Miall) published in 2007. Nick is host of the new CBC series 'Geologic Journey-World' to air on the *Nature of Things* late Fall 2010.

December 13, 2010 - Bridget Stutchbury

The Bird Detective

In her new book on the social lives and sexual antics of birds, Dr. Bridget Stutchbury explains why some birds readily "divorce," why parents don't treat their sons and daughters equally, why females sneak in quick sex with neighbouring males and why some adults forgo breeding altogether. Bridget writes about the territorial nature of birds and describes their nesting habits, revealing why some species prefer to live in overcrowded groups. Perhaps most important, she illuminates how climate change and other pressures of the modern world are forcing birds to change their habits as

they fight for their very survival.

A Yale-educated professor of biology and a GG finalist for *Silence of the Songbirds*, Bridget Stutchbury roams forests studying the social lives and sexual antics of birds, sharing with us the curious reasons for their strange behaviour, bright colouring and elaborate songs. Are birds truly faithful to their mates? Dr. Stutchbury explains the science behind the surprisingly sophisticated and often amusing habits of birds, drawing on examples from around the world.

January 10, 2011 - Peter Kevan

Insects and Pollination

For 40 years, Dr. Kevan a respected expert on pollination, has been spreading the message that the busy workforce of bees, flies, beetles, butterflies and other pollinators such as hummingbirds and bats, is critically important to us and to the health of the planet. Many of these creatures are now threatened and Dr. Kevan notes that without them, food sources for humans and animals could be severely impacted and many other plants would be unable to sustain themselves resulting in soil erosion and loss in nature's nutrient cycle.

Dr. Peter Kevan has been recognized for his many contributions to the study of insects, particularly interactions between insects and plants and pollination ecology. He has published more than 150 peer-reviewed articles covering such topics as conservation, behaviour and learning, physiology, soils, flower colour and colour vision. His doctoral work led to a career-long interest in pollination biology, mostly involving bees but also flies and other insects. Starting with work in blueberry fields in New Brunswick, Dr. Kevan has pursued that interest across the Maritime provinces and into forests in Quebec and Ontario. His studies have confirmed that human

activities — notably pesticide use in forestry and on farms — disrupt pollinator populations, research that has contributed to reductions of insecticides applied in woodlands. Dr. Kevan was named to the U.S. National Research Council expert panel on the status of pollinators and has also studied insect vision and flower colour — work that took him to Europe on a German fellowship to study with neurobiologists, including Humboldt Prize laureate *Randolf Menzel* at the Free University of Berlin.

February 14, 2011 - Brian Wylie

Life of Amphibians

Brian will look at their life processes, habitats, predators, and threats to populations.

Past president of the HNC, and an accomplished birder, oler and herpetologist, Brian has enthralled his audiences with stories of dangerous critters and has published fascinating reports on his travels to Arizona in the *Wood Duck*. Brian has led many field hikes for the HNC and was also a contributor to the important *Birds of Hamilton* project. As HNC Coordinator for the Junior Naturalists' Club, his astute powers of observation are helping to educate the next generation of young naturalists.

March 14, 2011 - Terry Carleton

Mosses, Mooses and Mycorrhizas, or, beware of where you tread

Unlike vascular plants, mosses have no thickened supporting tissue and never exceed more than one foot in height. Also, unlike "higher" plants, mosses have no seeds and they rely on external water for sexual reproduction. Consequently they tend to be found in moist areas. Nevertheless, mosses occupy numerous habitats in nature and many species occur in Ontario. Mosses have no roots and, with the exception of one

group, cannot conduct water internally. Despite this they often show very distinctive affinities for specific substrates and many can survive periods of drought stress. The forest floors of our northern evergreen forests are covered in extensive moss carpets and they appear to be intimately involved in the processes of nutrient recycling which facilitate the growth of the trees and other forest plants.

HNC Conservation and Education Director Dr. Terry Carleton teaches at the University of Toronto where he specializes in forest vegetation and ecology. Terry is also an experienced field botanist. His research interests include quantitative analysis of ecological data, forest stand structure, forest plant community composition along environmental gradients, and forest stand dynamics. His interest in mosses started as an undergraduate student, when he first grew a dark brown beard, and has continued into the grey beard stages of life.

April 11, 2011 - Fiona Reid

Tasmania: Under Down Under

Fiona Reid will present a talk based on a trip she led to this unique island in February 2010. In addition to Tasmania's amazing landscapes, flora and birdlife, Fiona will pay special attention to its diverse and abundant mammals. Unlike continental Australia, Tasmania has not (yet) suffered the depredations of introduced placentals such as Red Fox, therefore species such as Echidna, Duck-billed Platypus, and even Tasmanian Devil can still be observed in the wild. Taking a virtual journey around this island, we'll learn about its more unusual inhabitants and you may be tempted to go and see for yourself what Tasmania has to offer.

Fiona Reid is a Departmental Associate in Mammalogy at the Center for Biodiversity and Conservation Biology at the Royal Ontario Museum, in Toronto. She has been leading nature tours since 1987, showing ecotourists the mammals and other wildlife of diverse lands from Brazil to Indonesia, and Alaska to Venezuela (www.fionareid.ca). Fiona studied biology at Cambridge University in England, and went to graduate school at Stony Brook, Long Island.

After illustrating several children's books and a series of Neotropical mammal books, she decided to embark on writing and illustrating her own book on Central American mammals. This evolved into a crusade to find all the small mammal species and draw them directly from life. The book took much longer to complete than she had originally intended, but did enable her to develop her love and knowledge of obscure furry creatures.

Fiona spent many years capturing small mammals and drawing them from life for her book: *A Peterson Field Guide to Mammals of North America*. She has written and/or illustrated numerous guides, including *A Field Guide to the Mammals of Central America and Southeast Mexico*, *The Golden Guide to Bats of the World*, *Bats of Papua New Guinea*, and *Mammals of the Neotropics* (volumes 1-3).

May 9, 2011 - Bill McIlveen

Fungus Diseases of Insects

Bill's presentation will deal with the relationships between fungi and arthropods. On the one hand, for a long time, insects have exploited fungi for habitat and food. But various fungi have turned the tables and now some fungi

utilize insects and other arthropods in specialized ways for their own nutritional requirements as well as for their own dispersal. The role of fungi in keeping insect populations in check has not been fully appreciated because it has not been extensively studied. But science is starting to realize that in addition to biological control, there also some potential application of the byproducts of the insect/fungus interaction for medical and other uses.

Bill has diverse interests that cover almost every aspect of the natural environment. His formal education was based in the field of Plant Pathology as he obtained a B.Sc. and M.Sc. from the University of Guelph and a Ph.D. from the Pennsylvania State University. He worked with the Ontario Ministry of the Environment for 25 years and has been involved in environmental consulting for the past 10 years. He is very active in many naturalist organizations and in many volunteer environmental monitoring projects. Throughout his career, he has gained more and more insight into and appreciation of the complex ways in which all living forms interact and evolve.



Mourning Doves

by June Hitchcox



The pair of Mourning Doves that built an unusually tidy nest on the top edge of the cedar hedge which surrounds our patio were not successful the first time around.

One day there were no eggs, shells or adult. A huge maple tree is high over head and from there, it would be easy to spot the nest. However, they tried again, using the same nest. From above, it would be now difficult to see the nest, the hedge having grown up a foot or so.

Because the passage way to the back garden is about 6" from the nest, the adults and I have become quite friendly. We look each other in the eye as I pass through and I say "Hello". They aren't concerned, just stay perfectly still.

The male Dove incubates the 2 white eggs during the day and the female at night. I have never heard them calling at night - perhaps they do - but from dawn to dark, the female, her turn off the nest, is regularly sending different messages. Her "co-ab, coo., coo, coo" seems to me to be telling her mate that all is well. Her "oh^oh", (up and down) when someone is close to the nest appears to be saying "Keep watch, someone/something is near that may be trouble."

Both parents, as in all Doves and Pigeons, have evolved a neat way to feed their "squabs" (their young). Both the females and the males produce "crop milk", held in a storage pouch in the gullet. This milk is like a thick yogurt, very full of protein. When the squab is hungry, it sticks its bill down the adult's throat and sucks up the milk. After 3-4

days, small seeds and insects are introduced into the milk to soften.

I was amazed when looking at the parent - seemed to be just a few days - to see a squab beside her, almost the same size. Not long after that, all were gone.

The squab would be somewhere nearby, fluttering its wings to become strong enough to fly, learning how to perch and eating seeds brought by the parents - then would be on its own.

There was still one white egg in the nest and the weather very hot. For parts of the day, a parent would come and go and always be on the nest at night. Now the male is there all day. Did Mom lay more eggs? Or is she hoping that the second egg will hatch? They breed from March to September, so we will have to wait and see.

I was away from August 4 to 12. When I returned, the adults happened to be off the nest, making it easy to see the one squab (baby) in the nest, about half the size of an adult. It seems logical to me that this squab was the second egg of the two that had been laid several weeks ago and it had finally hatched - a few days after its sibling had left the nest!

By August 15, I could see the baby in the nest, sitting in front of its father, both looking at me, unafraid. By August 17, all had left the nest. That evening, there were two Doves in a nearby tree, perched close together - one slightly smaller than the other. Both shivered from time to time and twined their heads

around each other. They were probably going through a mating ritual but the smaller one looked like the dark baby that was in the nest and I have not found any information to confirm which it might be. They finally flew off, both good flyers.

In just a few days, the adults were back to their nest and had started a new family! The hedge badly needs a trimming, but will have to wait until the Doves stop having families. The area where the nest is, well-hidden now by the summer growth of the cedars, won't be trimmed because I would like to see if they come back to it next year and it will be still hidden as it is now. If they find it, chances are that it is the same pair. After all, we have become good friends by now!



Photo: Mourning Dove by Ken Thomas

Regular Meetings

Monday, October 18, 7:30 p.m.

“Thinking Big About Ecosystems, Evolution and Life”

John and Mary Theberge

The “mystery of mysteries” is how life has persisted for almost 4 billion years on such a restless and changeable planet, staying within what astronomers call the “Habitable Zone.”

Fully explored in John and Mary’s new book “The Ptarmigan’s Dilemma: an Exploration of How Life Organizes and Supports Itself”, their evening presentation (illustrated) uses their extensive field experience in wildlife ecology in wild places across a span of several decades to highlight some key ideas and concepts, which are particularly relevant to an environmental ethic.

Wildlife ecologists John and Mary Theberge are internationally known for their research into the ecology of wolves and their prey. They are known across Canada for their work in parks and wildlife conservation.

NEXT MONTH:

Ontario’s 3 billion year geologic journey with Nick Eyles

Sanc. Land Trust Committee

Join us at an informal monthly meeting to find out about the activities of the land trust program to protect land in our area and to steward our nature sanctuaries. All are welcome! We meet the evening of the 3rd Tuesday of each month. Contact Jen Baker, land trust coordinator, for details (905) 524 3339 or land@hamiltonnature.org.

Bird Study Group

Monday, October 25, 7:30 p.m.

Location: Burlington Senior’s Center
2285 New Street,
Burlington

7:00-7:30: Decaf shade-grown coffee and snacks

7:30-9:30: Meeting, Auditorium B.

Contact: George Holland
905 945-3962

This is an informal meeting featuring a discussion of recent bird sightings, an identification session and a workshop or slides about some aspect of birding. If you are a beginning birder, come out to learn more about birds. If you are an experienced birder, come out to share your knowledge and enthusiasm.

This month: TBA



All of our hike leaders are volunteers who give their time and expertise freely. Participants are encouraged to share their knowledge and enthusiasm. Remember to bring along items you might need such as water, field guides, binoculars, insect repellent, etc. Some walks will be more rigorous than others, so please assess your ability and check with the hike leader if unsure.

No dogs please, as they startle wildlife, damage nests and plants and interfere with the enjoyment of other participants.

The Hamilton Naturalists’ Club accepts no responsibility for injuries of any kind sustained by anyone as a result of participating in any of these events.

Upcoming Events

Sunday, October 10 at 10am

BRUCE TRAIL HIKE WITH JACK BROXHOLME

Celebrate the holiday by hiking the Bruce Trail at Webster’s Falls. This hike is not considered strenuous. Meet in the Optimists’ parking lot on East Brock Rd., Greensville at 10 am

Call for further info: (905) 336-5107

Sunday, October 16 at 7:30 am

SPOOKY HOLLOW NATURE HIKE WITH FRANK MORLEY AND SANCTUARY FALL WORK DAY

Meet at The Egg and I Restaurant (Hwy 52 and Hwy 2) for breakfast before heading out to the Sanctuary. Bring a picnic lunch. Explore the forest; some members will be doing maintenance work.

More info: Sanctuary Director Michael Fischer at (905) 526-0325 or Leader: Frank Morley at (905) 575-0668

Sunday, October 31 at 1:30 pm

LATE WILD FLOWERS WITH DEAN GUGLER

The warm waters of Hamilton harbour keep the flowers blooming longer than one might expect. Dean Gugler and Fleur-Ange Lamothe have led botany hikes here for many years. Join them for an interesting afternoon. Meet at the larger parking lot at Princess Point, 1:30 pm.

Leader: Dean Gugler (519) 647-2371

Sunday, November 7 at 1:30 pm

FALL BIRD COUNT

This will be the 37th annual count. Join experienced birders who will be making a count of all different species of birds in a 25 mile radius of Dundurn Castle.

Call Bill Lamond to sign up or confirm your count area: (519) 756-9546



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