

***Great Canadian
Birdathon 2015***

On May 24 and 25, I went out with two of my birder friends and started the adventure to find as many species of birds as we could in a 24-hour period. We began in Algonquin Park on the 24th at 1 p.m. You may recall that the weather was pretty cool that weekend so we had some trouble finding birds since almost nothing sang. Good news was that the bugs were hiding

as well! A huge part of the success of a venture like this is to hear the birds so that you don't have to spend time looking for them – they find you! Suffice to say that we missed most of the target birds, but did manage to



see 5 Gray Jays and an Olive-sided Flycatcher, two target species. Spruce Grouse, Boreal Chickadee and Black-backed Woodpecker eluded us.

About 4 p.m. we gave up on this locale and headed south to the Carden Alvar near

Kirkfield. This is a unique habitat that hosts many rare and even endangered species. One road in particular is sought out by birders from around the world. Wylie Road is a small dirt road that is about 7 kms. in length. We spent several hours on this one small stretch finding almost every bird we sought. Included were the very rare Loggerhead Shrike and Golden-winged Warbler. Sandhill Cranes bugled and Nighthawks and Woodcocks “peented” from the meadows. Upland Sandpipers broadcast their “wolf whistle” calls from fence posts, while Grasshopper Sparrows buzzed in the fields. Bluebirds, Meadowlarks and Bobolinks serenaded

from Mullein stalks.

Riding the crest of this success, we left Carden and spent the night looking for marsh birds and owls, eventually finding several. At dawn on the

25th, we were at Darlington Provincial Park and Oshawa's Second Marsh. It was at these locations that things started to go really well. We have hoped to see an uncommon sandpiper called a Whimbrel that migrates during a narrow window in late May. Well see them we did – over 600

birds in several flocks. Mixed in were several other types of sandpipers, ducks and Brant (a small coastal goose). From here we travelled to Thickson's Woods in Whitby and added several migrant warblers, vireos, thrushes and flycatchers. Stops elsewhere in Durham, including Cranberry Marsh, Glen Major, Walker Woods and Long Sault yielded more ducks, sandpipers, a Thayer's Gull, terns, woodpeckers, Northern Mockingbird, a few hawks and falcons, more warblers, bluebirds, sparrows and finches ... The day finished at 1 p.m. at Nonquon sewage lagoons near Port Perry, where we added our last species of ducks, shorebirds, a Coot, Osprey and the Black Tern. All said we found 171 species of birds on our Big Day – not quite a record (missed by one) but an amazing day nonetheless.

Some obvious misses included – Trumpeter Swan, Pied-billed Grebe, Great Horned Owl, Horned Lark, Hermit Thrush, Scarlet Tanager, Pine Warbler (they nest in my yard - eek!), Northern Waterthrush, any accipiter, Northern Harrier, Hooded Warbler, Green Heron, Least Bittern, etc. – So 180 was certainly possible.

But to top it off, I raised over \$2000 (so far) thanks to the generosity of people like you!

There's still plenty of time to donate, so if you care about our birds and would like to make a donation, please email me at avocetnatureservices@gmail.com or go to my personal Birdathon website and you can make a secure donation online - <http://birdscanada.kintera.org/birdathon/geoffcarpentier>.

Remember that 25% of the money I raise goes to North Durham Nature to help fund our own local nature-based projects including events for kids. So please consider this worthwhile cause. I look

forward to hearing from you and having you help me help our birds!!

Thanks to all of you who have already donated!



Upland Sandpiper

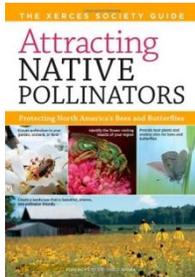
“Bee” a Friend to Pollinators

Buzzing Gardens is a new initiative to help offset the plight of our declining pollinators – from bees to wasps to butterflies to moths, almost every species is in jeopardy, due to disease, habitat loss, parasites, weather and pesticides to name a few. To encourage us to establish pollinator gardens, big or small, they are offering free seeds to grow pollinator friendly flowering plants. Contact them at www.beesmatter.ca for your free seeds.

The City of London, Ontario is considering declaring themselves a pollinator friendly municipality at the urging of their local Environmental Advisory Committee. The essence of the designation is that the City could then embed bee-friendly policies in their Official Plan and could encourage

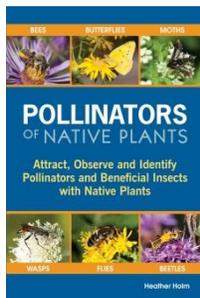
developers to think about pollinators when determining how best to design subdivisions and parks. Maybe we should be looking at getting our own municipalities interested in this locally?

More on pollinators and native gardens – suggested reading from Paul Laporte our June speaker:



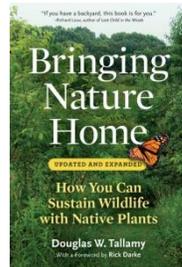
http://www.amazon.ca/Bringing-Nature-Home-Wildlife-Expanded/dp/0881929921/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1430356093&sr=8-1&keywords=Douglas+Tallamy

http://www.amazon.ca/Attracting-Native-Pollinators-Conserving-Butterflies/dp/1603426957/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1430356306&sr=1-1&keywords=attracting+native+pollinators

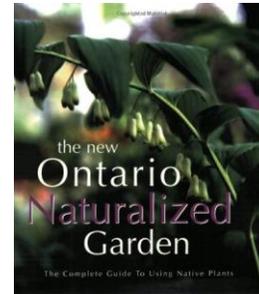


<http://www.amazon.com/Pollinators-Native-Plants-Identify-Beneficial/dp/0991356306/conservgarden-20>

<http://www.amazon.ca/Easy--Native-Plants-Canadian->



[Gardens/dp/067930987X/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1430356017&sr=8-1&keywords=lorraine+johnson](http://www.amazon.ca/Gardens/dp/067930987X/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1430356017&sr=8-1&keywords=lorraine+johnson)



http://www.amazon.ca/New-Ontario-Naturalized-Garden/dp/1552852008/ref=sr_1_5?ie=UTF8&qid=1430356017&sr=8-5&keywords=lorraine+johnson

Finally, highly recommended is www.illinoiswildflowers.info as it is a very informative website about native plants (most of which are also native to Ontario).

Colombia – Be Part of This Trip of a Lifetime

January 2-17, 2016

Join our own Geoff Carpentier as he travels to the wilds of Colombia, searching for its birds, mammals and reptiles on this once in a lifetime adventure. Colombia has only recently been opened up to eco-tourism, so be amongst the first to sample its wonderful wildlife.



North Durham Nature recommends this unique opportunity to its members and friends. The tour planners have extended members and friends of North Durham Nature a special price and itinerary for this custom design tour – made with you in mind. The pace will be easy to moderate and the excitement high as we join our expert guide, Andres, from EcoTurs Colombia, who will lead us along our itinerary, showing us the wondrous sights and sounds of Colombia!

There are only ten spaces available, so it truly is first come/first served - please consider this now and book your seat before it is too late.

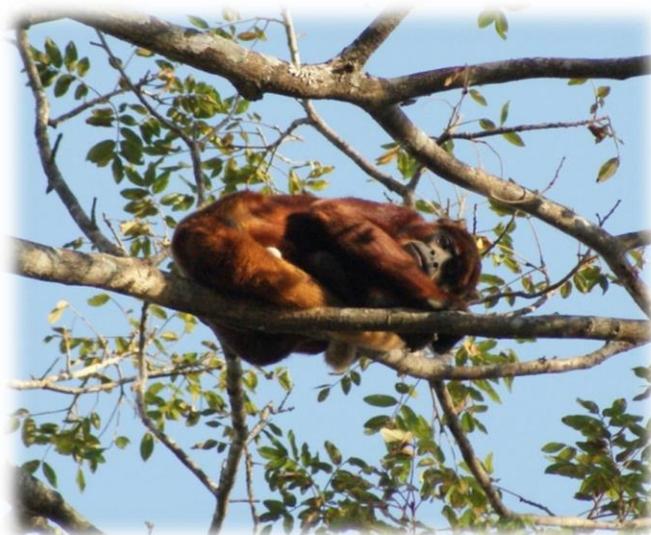
Not just about birds, we will be looking for all types of wildlife - butterflies, mammals and reptiles and much more.

Geoff promises to help you prepare and plan for this trip by offering excellent advice on field guides, planning and packing, gear to take, travel tips, etc. He has even designed a customized checklist for your use on the trip – it's yours to have and keep for FREE.

EcoTurs Colombia has been in business since 2006 and is now the leading eco-tour company in Colombia

EcoTurs Colombia Website

<http://www.ecoturs.org/?lang=en&page=birdingtours>



In a pioneering initiative, Fundación ProAves and EcoTurs Colombia have teamed up to offer high quality and safe birding and nature tours with 100% of profits going to conservation in Colombia. EcoTurs Colombia aims to promote environmentally-sensitive ecotourism of Colombia's fauna and flora working with local communities and conservation NGOs. EcoTurs Colombia aims to contribute to the protection of habitats through providing alternative incomes for local communities. EcoTurs Colombia also aims to develop and market ecological tourism both within and outside Colombia, to bring greater benefits to conservation of Colombian biodiversity.

What's included and what's not ...

The price includes:

1. All accommodation
2. All meals
3. All ground transportation
4. Internal flight tickets
5. Local guide (Andres)
6. Entrance fees

Excludes:

1. Tips
2. Additional services (phone calls, laundry, room services, mini bar...)
3. Medical insurance (you must travel with international medical insurance)
4. Overweight bag charges in the internal flights.
5. Airfare to Bogota and return

For only \$3735 USD/per person from Bogota you can experience this trip of a life-time. Single supplement is an additional \$486 USD.

Deposit & Cancellation policy:

1. Spaces are subject to availability at time of acceptance of the offer. (A deposit is not mandatory to make the confirmation)
2. The first deposit (30%) to confirm the tour must be 4 month before the beginning of the tour (September 2nd)
3. Second deposit (30%) must be made 2 months before the beginning of the tour (November 2nd)
4. Cancellations are accepted until the date of the second deposit. After this date 100% of the bookings will be charged.
5. Balance (40%) is due 1 month before the beginning of the tour (December 2nd)

Questions or to reserve a spot, call or email Geoff at: 905-852-2011

Geoff.carpentier@gmail.com

Update - Five spots
already sold!



(Photos supporting in this article: Blue and Yellow Macaw, Red Howler Monkey & Heliconia Butterfly)

News Flash

Toronto health authorities have recently advised the public that the Black-legged Tick is now being found in Toronto, particularly in Rouge Park. These little guys are new to Ontario's fauna and arrived likely from eastern Canada or the northeast US. The issue is that they can carry Lyme Disease. For more information check out:

<http://www1.toronto.ca/wps/portal/contentonly?vgnextoid=f4f52d6855e02410VgnVCM10000071d60f89RCRD&vgnnextchannel=aa276c836bd32410VgnVCM10000071d60f89RCRD>



Photograph by Michael Patnaude, U of Florida

More about ticks from Rouge Park staff ...

Being Tick Smart ...

Where are ticks found?

Ticks usually live in woods or tall grasslands. Ticks cannot fly – they hang onto small bushes or tall grasses and are usually found close to the ground. They wait for an animal or person to pass nearby and when they make contact, the tick will climb on and attach itself to the skin to feed.

Who's at risk?

Anyone who spends a lot of time outdoors (hiking, camping, birding, fishing, etc.), especially in grassy or wooded areas may be at risk. Ticks will attach themselves to wildlife and domestic pets too.

What you can do to stay safe:

Stay on official trails – ticks are often found in long grasses. Wear protective clothing to prevent ticks from attaching to your skin. Wear closed-toed shoes, long-sleeve shirts that fit tightly around the

wrist, and long-legged pants tucked into your socks or boots.

Use insect repellents containing DEET. Apply to both clothes and skin. Always read the label and follow instructions for use.

Wear light-colored clothing to help you find any ticks more easily. Check for ticks

on and under clothing, especially after being in areas where ticks may live. A daily skin inspection greatly reduces the risk of infection as ticks may take several hours to two days to attach to the skin and feed.

Wash clothes promptly and put them in the dryer with heat to help kill any ticks that may remain.

Shower or bathe within two hours of being outdoors to wash away loose ticks.

For more info on ticks, Lyme disease and what to do if you get bit, please visit Health Canada's website:

<http://www.healthycanadians.gc.ca/diseases-conditions-maladies-affections/disease-maladie/lyme/index-eng.php>

For regional info about ticks in the Rouge, Lyme disease, what to do if you get bit and how to submit ticks for testing, please visit:

Durham Region Public Health:

<http://www.durham.ca/health.asp?nr=/departments/health/lymeDisease/index.htm>

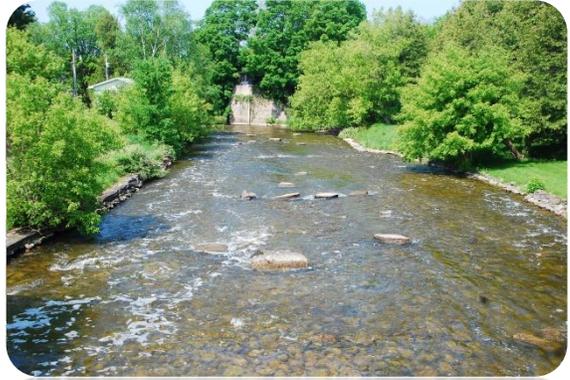
Secret Garden

The Talbot River and its Map Turtles

by James Kamstra

The Talbot forms the north boundary of Durham Region, separating us from Simcoe County to the north and therefore is worthy of a closer look. This small river is actually less mighty than it once was for construction of the Trent Canal in the late 1800s has literally changed the course of its history. The Talbot begins its meandering course near Norland, approximately 40 km northeast of its outlet into Lake Simcoe. Its present configuration has been altered by the hand of man.

The most challenging section of the Trent Canal to construct was the stretch between Lake Simcoe and Balsam Lake. The Talbot River which flows through this area, was too shallow for navigation so it was dammed about 6 km east of the lake to raise the water level, and a straight channel was excavated, bypassing the lower section of the river. Three locks were installed between the dam and Lake Simcoe. Other locks were installed upstream creating two lakes in the process, now known as Mitchell and Canal Lakes. Interestingly water flowing downstream is partly diverted through the canal and partly over the dam (a drop of 3 m) through the original river channel. The Talbot River actually crosses through the Trent Canal about 1 km before emptying into Lake Simcoe. Engineering this canal was state of the art for the time period (Trent Canal



opened in 1907) and maintaining sufficient water depth for navigation in the canal is now dependent on a highly complex process of water level management of a large numbers of lakes and creeks that flow into or have been diverted into the Trent.

The lower section of the Talbot River, (i.e. from the Trent Canal dam to the mouth) and the adjacent area of Lake Simcoe supports the only population of Northern Map Turtle (*Graptemys geographica*) in Durham Region. According to the Ontario Reptile and Amphibian Atlas that is coordinated by Ontario Nature, Map Turtles are not known to occur anywhere else on Lake Simcoe. Map Turtles typically hibernate under water where high oxygen levels occur so their presence here is likely because of the flowing waters of the Talbot River can sustain the turtles over winter.

I have seen up to 30 Northern Map Turtles at a time in this area. There are limited areas to look for them since most of the shoreline is privately owned. There is public access at Thorah Centennial Park situated where Thorah Concession Road 9

hits Lake Simcoe. The park is very small and manicured but has a parking area and allows views of the lake. The offshore waters are shallow with scattered patches of emergent aquatic vegetation. It is best to park and walk along Shore Line Road just north of the park and scan any offshore rocks or logs for sunning turtles.

Northern Water Snake also occurs here; another reptile that occurs in very few

places in Durham Region. Another good place to see the Map Turtles is at the mouth of the Trent Canal, about 1 km to the north on the Simcoe County side.

Map Turtles are 'big water' turtles occurring mainly in lakes or larger rivers, not ponds and small streams. They are sociable and spend a lot of time soaking up the rays from their favourite perches, often in groups. As a result they can be more reliably viewed than most reptiles. They like exposed rocks or logs adjacent to fairly deep water so they can make a quick getaway into the depths if danger approaches. They are one of the shyest of turtles so are normally difficult to approach. The ones at the Trent Canal mouth, however have grown accustomed to

frequently passing pleasure craft and therefore are less wary than Map Turtles at most places I have seen. Map Turtles can be recognized by yellow striping on head, a thick pale upper lip and a keeled ridge on top of the carapace (shell). Male and females vary considerably in size.



Males only attain a carapace size of about 15 cm but the females can be more than 25 cm. Map Turtles do not end up as roadkill as frequently as most other turtles because they rarely

wander away from their watery haunts and females nest on locations close to the water.

The apparent absence of Map Turtles from elsewhere in Durham Region or on Lake Simcoe is curious, especially when the number of turtles near the Talbot River mouth is substantial. Did they disappear from other areas of the lake due to development or historic land use, and have they only been able to persist near the Talbot or have the Map Turtles colonized this area in relative recent times? Have the historic alterations of the Trent Canal somehow improved the habitat conditions for Map Turtles? Interesting questions indeed.

Close to Home

Hunters in Your Neighbourhood

by Nancy Melcher

What animal hunts on the wing, has relatives from dinosaur times, comes in many iridescent colours and has six legs and huge compound eyes? If you answered, “Dragonflies!” you’d be correct. They are dazzlingly acrobatic, able to turn on a dime, hover, climb and dive and can achieve a top speed in excess of 100 body lengths per second!

These aerial assassins may eat up to one-fifth of their body weight in prey per day, consuming mosquitoes, blackflies, butterflies, moths, flies and a wide variety of other insects. Small snacks are consumed while in flight: larger prey items are subdued with a bite to the head and then they are carried to a nearby perch. Here the wings and legs are discarded and the prey is ingested, usually head first. Their larvae are also voracious, feeding on almost any living thing smaller than they are. Dragonfly larvae are aquatic and eat other insect larvae, tadpoles and small fish.

Dragonfly larvae are dull brown or gray in colour. Depending on the species, they may live in the water from two months to five years, moulting their tough exoskeleton between six and fifteen times. When it’s time for their final moult, they climb out of the water onto a reed, branch or pole. The skin begins to split at a weak spot behind the head. The adult emerges from the larval skin and pumps fluid into the wings. It rests to let everything harden and to get used to breathing air.

The striking jewel tones of dragonflies are created by both pigmentation as well as light refracting off the tissue structures of their bodies. Most species have two pairs of clear wings with black veins. At rest the wings are usually flat and perpendicular to the body. Each wing can move independently, controlled by its own set of muscles. The long, thin abdomen acts as a stabilizer in flight. Similar, more slender cousins, are the damselflies. Their bodies are smaller, their flight is slower and more “flappy”. At rest they hold their wings folded together above the abdomen.

These insects are very successful predators that have been around for eons. Preserved in amber or sedimentary rocks, dragonfly fossils have been found from 325 million years ago. Some of them had wingspans of 750 mm!! Dragonflies are found on every continent except Antarctica, from sea level to mountains up to 3700m in height. They are just about everywhere!



Enjoy these jewel-like beauties that are cleverly disguised pest controllers.

Club Outings & Talks

Early May Birding in Brock Township

by John McLean

Uxbridge Nature's first birding venture into Brock Township took place on the second weekend in May right in the middle of spring migration. A week either side of May 9th would have yielded a very different list of birds – more ducks and gulls a week earlier, and more warblers and shorebirds a week later. As it turned out, we saw a good mixture of all of those species as we identified close to sixty kinds of birds. Our intention at the outset was to visit a variety of habitats – marshes, woodlands, lagoons, open grasslands and, of course, Lake Simcoe. Our three and a half hour adventure didn't allow for much dawdling as we rushed from one site to another.

Lingering birds, mostly found in lagoons in Cannington and Beaverton, included a variety of ducks – Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Ring-necked Duck, Northern Shoveler and Wood Duck. We also saw a selection of shorebirds in the lagoons including Lesser Yellowlegs, Semipalmated Plover, Killdeer and Semipalmated and White-rumped Sandpipers. Lake Simcoe produced other aquatic species including Caspian and Common Terns, Double-crested Cormorants, Scaup and Trumpeter Swans. Ospreys were seen near the shore of Lake Simcoe sitting on well-established nests at the top of hydro poles.

No spring migration would be complete without a smattering of warblers. We were able to enjoy a small number that included Common Yellowthroat and Yellow, Black-and-White, Chestnut –sided and Yellow-rumped Warblers. Baltimore Orioles, Brown Thrashers, Gray Catbirds and Eastern Kingbirds added to the spring palette.

Many thanks to Margaret Almack, Coral Benton, Stephen Cluff, Terry Munn and Julia Ott for their contributions and for making this an enjoyable day for my wife, Karen, and myself. Brock turned out to be a wonderful venue for birding and would be a positive experience for novice and experienced birders in the future.

Birding Glen Major East Duffins Creek Hotspot. May 24th 2015

by Derek Connelly

Wow! Despite a predicted morning temperature of 4 C that might have scared away both birds and people, the opposite seemed the case for the birds. Ten of us gathered in the parking lot at East Duffins Headwaters and found 25 species before the walk actually started! One of our target birds included the Blue - winged warbler which Dave Mudd heard as he got out of his car....beeeBuzzz. Dave was very helpful this morning his enthusiasm, knowledge of bird calls and keen ear carried the group to a record 43 species. The weather was perfect; the sun warmed us up and highlighted the colours: the yellows of the Blue -winged Warblers, the red of the Scarlet Tanager, the beautiful blue of the Indigo Bunting. A Grasshopper Sparrow

provided us all with a close view right at the trailhead. Many of the birds however were more secretive but their calls were distinctive and Dave pointed out his tricks to remember them which definitely helped. If you are looking for a good birding spot in the spring this is it.

**Wildflowers of the Uxbridge
Countryside Preserve May 28, 2015**

by Derek Connelly

Eight of us braved the cool wet morning for a walk into Uxbridge's Countryside Preserve. The dew emphasized the greens, whites, yellows, blues and reds. We travelled counter clockwise from the parking lot taking advantage of the new narrow trail that leads you into the woods behind the old tennis court then past the ponds, meadows and woods again. As the calls of the Great Crested Flycatcher and Ovenbird spoke to us, we observed a variety of flowers and other plants including:

Bedstraw, Canada Mayflower, Horsetail, Anemone, Hawkweed, Sarsaparilla, Virginia Creeper, False Solomon's Seal, Coltsfoot, Wild Phlox, Virginia waterleaf, Goatsbeard, Baneberry, Columbine, Sensitive Fern, Woodland Fern, Ostrich Fern, Basswood, Dogwood and Invasive Dog Strangling Vine.

Knowledge was shared and field guides and internet used to confirm identification although there were still more to identify and there will be more flowers on the way to help with that as the summer progresses. We hope others will venture out on the trails and look closer at our wildflowers as they show their beauty through the seasons. Thanks to Barb for leading us there.

For an up-to-date and complete listing of all events and outings, please visit our website.

Quiz: Who am I?



Look for me only at night – fluttering around or sitting on flat surfaces. I'm always near forested areas ...

I often have 400 to 600 brothers and sisters so the dining room is crowded. Our favourite meal includes hickory, sycamore and walnuts.

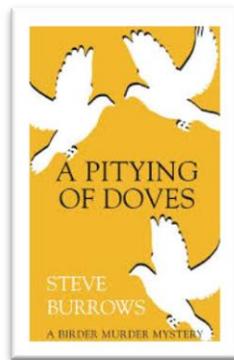
I am a member of the Saturnids and don't have any mouth parts as an adult so I can't eat! I only live about a week to breed – gotta run – time's a-wasting!

Local Author Wins Prestigious Award



Steve Burrows of Durham Region has been awarded the Arthur Ellis award given by the

Crime Writers of Canada for the Best First Novel for his book "A Siege of Bitterns". His second book "A Pitying of Doves" has just been released.



Answer to Quiz:

I am a Luna Moth



For more information about NDN

Visit our website at:

www.northdurhamnatureclub.com

Newsletter Editorial Board

Geoff Carpentier – Editor

John McLean – Proof-reader

Nancy Melcher - Proof-reader

Note: All photos and text by Geoff Carpentier unless otherwise stated

Board of Directors:

Derek Connelly – President

Cara Gregory– Vice-President

Alan Wells - Treasurer

Mark Stabb – Secretary

***Geoff Carpentier – Newsletter
Editor***

John McLean – Director-at-Large

Jay Thibert – Director-at-Large

James Kamstra – Director-at-Large

Carol Apperson – Director-at-Large