The Changing Face of NDN

North Durham Nature's New Logo

by James Kamstra

North Durham Nature has been in existence since 2013, but did not adopt an official club logo until 2019. The logo chosen depicts a Baltimore Checkerspot butterfly with the letters words "North Durham Nature" forming a circle around the image. The logo design was first sketched in rough by James Kamstra and drafted in fine detail by Dave Wysotski, an artist from Oshawa.

North Durham Nature started largely as a birding club and there were some members who felt that a bird would be a more fitting image to represent NDN. However, the club has diversified to include a broader range of interests in natural history. We believe that the Baltimore Checkerspot is a very appropriate species to represent North Durham Nature.

Although not as well-known as the Monarch, the Baltimore is a distinctive and beautifully patterned butterfly on both the upper and lower sides of its wings. A row of orange-red scalloped spots form a rim around the wing, with several rows of white spots as well as larger orange-red spots on a black background. The logo contains only three colours: red, black and white. It copies well in black & white, where the red becomes gray.

It is not a rare butterfly provincially, but it is not very common either. The Baltimore Checkerspot is surprisingly numerous within North Durham, particularly in the extensive wetlands associated with the Beaver River, Pefferlaw Brook, Nonquon Wetlands and Uxbridge Brook. The butterfly rarely strays away from its meadow marsh habitat and sometimes occurs in dense colonies of up to 100

individuals. Surprisingly, the Baltimore is rare in the southern portion of Durham, rarely encountered on or south of the Oak Ridge Moraine. Moreover the Sunderland Butterfly count, which covers a substantial part of Brock and Uxbridge Townships in North Durham, has recorded the highest totals of Baltimore Checkerspot of any Ontario butterfly count for the past seven years (approximately 30 counts each year). Even more impressive, on three of those years (2014, 2015 and 2016), Sunderland had the highest Baltimore count of any North American Butterfly count (among about 400 counts each year). Consequently this butterfly is a special species in our area making it an appropriate candidate to represent North Durham Nature.

The New Board of Directors

by Derek Connelly

In order to keep our club active and engaged it's vital we welcome new members and new Directors. Our Directors have a two-year term which can be renewed. This year we lost one director but gained another one.

Fortunately Geoff Carpentier, while stepping down as Director, has stayed on as Editor of our newsletter. Geoff's role as a Director will be missed as he is a founding member of the club and he knows how to run a meeting efficiently and correctly - something to which we all hope to aspire. As a member of Scugog's and Durham's Environmental Advisory Committees and other nature clubs in the area he has kept us up to date on conservation matters. As an ecoguide and nature book reviewer he has kept us in tune with world nature concerns and successes. Humour - ahh no more Geoff puns … how will we survive? Clearly he will just have to lead more walks in North Durham, if only we can lure him away from the exotic places of the world!

Brenda Near is our new Director. A recent NDN member from Zephyr, she is also on the board and is Editor of the East Gwillimbury Gardeners which is creating a pollinator garden in Mount Albert. She has planted a native plant garden and is interested in bees and bee habitat too. She has had past experiences banding birds at Long Point, helping turtles at the Kawartha trauma centre, and is a veterinarian technician and avid runner. In Uxbridge she and her husband Neil have helped out on the trails on cleanup and Phragmites removal. We welcome Brenda to the team!

Now for the Director position shuffle! There are four named positions on the Board two of which can be renewed every two years. These are Secretary and Vice-President. Two other positions must be relinquished after four years - President and Treasurer. Derek is stepping down from the President's positon and Cara Gregory takes over as President. James Kamstra has taken over as Vice-President from Cara. Derek will remain as a Director along with three other Directors. Please welcome Cara and James to their new positions on the Board.

Birdathon 2019

Please consider sponsoring Geoff in the 2019 Birdathon fundraiser. Derek sent out the backgrounder and link recently, but here's the link again if you don't have it:

https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/bird-studies-canada/p2p/birdathon19/page/carpentiers-201-birdathon/

By the way, some species are always hard to find such as Red-headed Woodpecker, and any hawk or owl nest. If you know

where any are and are willing to share the location, please let Geoff know privately at Geoff.carpentier@gmail.com. Rest assured he won't disturb the bird or harass them in any way. Thanks!

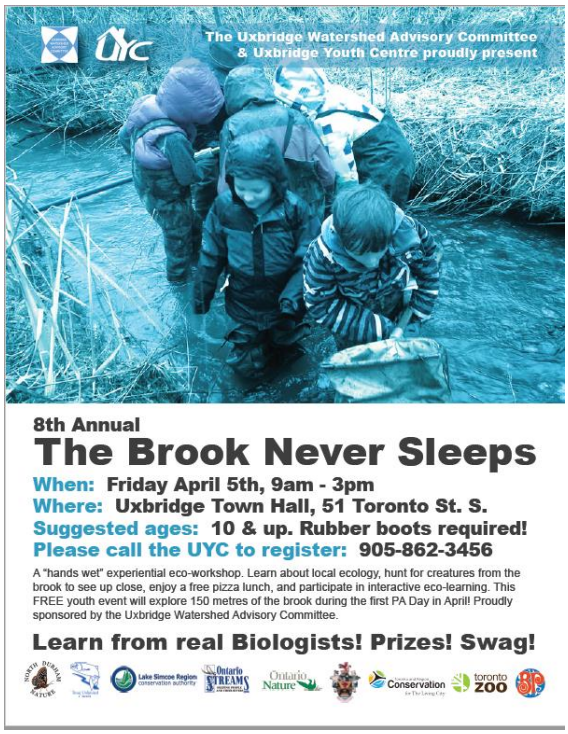
The Brook Never Sleeps

by Mark Stabb

Like many Southern Ontario streams, Uxbridge Brook provided the early waterpower that attracted people to settle and build grist mills, sawmills and streamside developments. Earlier, indigenous people enjoyed the brook's fish and its clear, cool waters. But today, the personal connection has waned. People pass by the brook daily, but rarely explore this living and still-healthy habitat in their backyard.

Staff and volunteers from the Uxbridge Youth Centre wanted to change this. They reached out to the former Uxbridge Watershed Advisory Committee, a group with expertise and an interest in youth outreach. The result: *The Brook Never Sleeps!* – a free event that connects local youth with biologists and conservation specialists to learn about stream ecology. The event includes stream sampling sites, animal identification stations, ecology activities and presentations.

An evolving network of partners (see the logo line on the poster) now annually delivers this day-long, hands-on, outdoor-based eco-awareness program. It was first offered during March Break – with the (successful) idea of showing that creeks were alive with critters year-round. A highlight is the in-stream sampling of aquatic invertebrates and other creatures – a real eye-opener for the hundreds of participants who have enjoyed the day.



The event is run only once a year (so far!) but has caught the attention of conservation groups who have awarded the event with The Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Foundation Education Award, the Oak Ridges Moraine Environmental Heroes Award and a Durham Region Environmental Achievement Award. It is

also profiled on the international #NatureForAll website.

But the greatest reward is the smiles and laughter, the exclamations when a minnow or interesting aquatic insect is caught, and remarks like "I thought this would suck, but it's actually pretty cool!" It has also spun off into other projects such as tree planting, riparian buffer creation and stream clean-ups in the area.

North Durham Nature has supported this event for years, and we highly recommend it to your friends and family members. It is designed for youth aged 10 and up, and runs rain or snow or shine. This year it will take place on Friday, April 5.

Preregistration is required. Please call 905-862-3456 for more information!

Conservation News

by Derek Connelly

(1) Is Dodder, an invasive plant, already in North Durham? It has been reported to be but not yet confirmed. Stay tuned! The Ministry of Agriculture and Food has indicated it is sending out an expert to confirm identification.

(2) Uxbridge has a new municipal committee. The former Watershed Advisory Committee has been renamed the Environmental and Sustainability Committee. Derek has signed on and will report back.

(3) Countryside Preserve Bird Houses: Eight of the 24 bird houses fledged Tree Swallows, Eastern Bluebirds and a Chickadee, while House Wrens appeared in seven houses. Changes in habitat continue as shrubs and trees grow along the edge of the meadow further making it less suitable for the Tree Swallow and Eastern Bluebird. Thanks to our volunteers who assist in the monitoring. Anyone interested in helping out with the bird houses and learning more about our cavity-nesting birds contact Derek Connelly 905 -852-5432 or ndnature7@gmail.com

Bill 66

by Geoff Carpentier

NDN has never been an advocacy group, but we do have a strong voice, valuable expertise and a desire to keep Ontario green and healthy. To this end, we now find ourselves moving in that direction as the need arises. We do this willingly, carefully and with the support of our members. We will continue to do so as time progresses, but only when we feel the value can be felt locally as well as provincially or globally.

Recently we sent correspondence to the Provincial government encouraging them to repeal part of Bill 66. You will recall this was a bill to permit the enhancement of business development in Ontario. The public, including us, felt that the way it was written fundamentally hindered the ability of local authorities and individuals to be effectively heard. We are delighted to say that the Province listened and did repeal the section of concern.

We will continue to speak out on your behalf on such matters as we deem appropriate.

Secret Garden

Talbot River

Text and photos by James Kamstra

Do you know what forms the northern boundary of the Durham Regional Municipality? It's the Talbot River that snakes along in a sinuous arc from the northeast corner of the Region to Lake Simcoe, separating Durham from Simcoe County. The headwaters lie about 80 km to the northeast near Head Lake in the City of Kawartha Lakes. The entire watershed of the Talbot encompasses 370 km^2 but only about 10% of that lies in Durham Region. The Durham stretch of the river was greatly altered by construction of the Trent Canal in the late 1800s. A 5.5 km long dredged canal diverts water from the river in a channel with three sets of locks that allow boats to bypass the unnavigable lower section of the Talbot to reach Lake Simcoe. A dam was constructed which separates the lower stretch of the Talbot from the canal. Above and to the east of the dam, the Trent Canal lies within the original Talbot River channel up to Canal Lake where the two waterways separate again. The 6 m high Talbot Dam effectively disconnects the lower reach of the Talbot from the upper, at least as far as fish and other aquatic organisms are concerned. The dam diverts some of the water through the canal but enough is still allowed to flow through the river which meanders and riffles for 12 km to the west before emptying into the lake. At one point approximately 1.5 km upstream from the mouth, Talbot River actually crosses and flows through the Trent Canal channel. The two systems do not join however and have separate outlets into the lake.

The Talbot River is the most important Yellow Walleye (otherwise known as Pickerel) spawning area for all of Lake Simcoe. The fish swim up from the lake in spring but can only get as far as the dam and therefore are confined to this 12 km stretch to lay their eggs. Lake Simcoe no longer supports a very large walleye population, probably in part because only a relatively small section of the Talbot is available to them. Nevertheless this walleye run is still impressive and well-known to fish enthusiasts who come to Gamebridge in the early spring to watch schools of them as they swim neck to neck upriver.

Most of the Durham section of the Talbot flows through farming country, and is

bordered by a narrow band of woodland, often no more than 50 m wide. Nevertheless this treed band is important to prevent erosion of the banks and it forms a wildlife corridor in an otherwise deforested landscape. However a 150 ha deciduous swamp occurs along the lower stretch of the river - the portion west of Highway 7. This swamp is a favourite haunt of the Great Blue Heron, Wood Duck and Belted Kingfisher. The offshore waters of Lake Simcoe near the mouth support great stands of emergent marsh dominated by Hardstem Bulrush. Unlike cattails or other emergent graminoids, bulrushes grow over summer but completely break down over winter, so are not visible in spring. Large numbers of waterfowl congregate here during spring and autumn migration. Cormorants as well as both Common and Caspian Terns are regular visitors in summer.

Two reptiles that are rarely seen in Durham can be found in the Talbot River: Map Turtle and the Northern Water Snake. I have seen Map Turtles at the mouth, from the bridge in Gamebridge and near the Talbot Dam. Water Snakes are sometimes seen plowing along through the placid waters of the swampy lower stretch.

Public access is limited since the Talbot River flows mostly through private land and restricted road access. The river can be seen in the village of Gamebridge, the Talbot Dam, and where Shore Line Road crosses the mouth. If you go in to the Trent Talbot Marina you can catch a glimpse of the river as it flows through the large deciduous swamp. Centennial Park along Lake Simcoe is a good place to check out the emergent bulrush marshes.

Bluebirds at LaFarge Pit

by John Fisher

2018 was an interesting year as 24 Eastern Bluebirds and 96 Eastern Bluebirds fledged, compared to 40 and 76 in 2017.

A concern in 2018 was the number of dead birds and abandoned eggs discovered during the December clean-out inspection. In the central zone, there were 3 bluebird nests with a total of 6 dead bluebird young and another nest where 4 sparrow eggs were abandoned. When you consider there are only 12 boxes in this zone, to have 4 boxes with dead or abandoned eggs is quite significant. In the east zone, we had 3 dead wrens (young) in one nest and 2 bluebird eggs abandoned in another.

Red-necked Grebe Rescue

By Richard Johnstone
with photo by Thalia Johnstone

While walking their dog in the main tract of Durham Forest, near Uxbridge on Sunday February 10th Thalia Johnstone and her husband David Couglin found a strange bird on the ground that seemed to be in distress. It was unable to take off and was being inspected and harassed by dogs. She called me, her dad, for advice and sent an image. I identified the bird as a Red-necked Grebe and told her it could not take off easily from dry land. Although it is a good swimmer with the legs far back on the body, it is ungainly on land and needs a run across the water to get airborne.

I knew there was some open water in Elgin Pond in Uxbridge and urged her to catch the bird and meet me at Elgin Park. There we transferred the bird from her coat to a cardboard box and took it to a gap between a foot bridge and the roadway over the creek leading into the pond. The bird seemed completely unhurt so we released it into the water and it dove almost immediately.

Over the next several days, my wife Carolyn Bather and I observed the bird diving frequently, perhaps catching minnows. This species prefers a shallow, fresh water habitat and Elgin Pond, fed by a cold water stream that never completely freezes, is exactly that. During a severe snow storm a few days later the grebe disappeared, but we spotted it on the pond about a week later diving and behaving normally. It was a great thrill, for us all, to encounter this beautiful wild bird and perhaps give it a second chance.

Fun at home

by Geoff Carpentier

Interested in a new board game all about birds? Here's a new one that seems to be taking the market by storm. It's called Wingspan and was developed in the USA. The concept is simple: "Wingspan" players take on the role of bird enthusiasts aiming to attract avian visitors to their wildlife preserve. The heart of the game is its deck of 170 illustrated bird cards, each depicting a North American species. Up to five players take turns placing these cards into their appropriate habitat, collecting food, laying eggs, or drawing new cards, with each action unlocking new resources.

Want to read more, visit:
https://www.audubon.org/news/birds-star-one-years-hottest-board-games-wingspan?ms=digital-eng-social-facebook-x-20190300_fb_link&fbclid=IwAR3CRjI_q2_XBGxrcrrHhiU1dVXu-Dd5L5VNM_ZBKH7AP0PiuL1ka4pSNmQ

And while you're there maybe you'd like to download this free app for your cell phone to learn all about birds:

https://www.audubon.org/app

Our Green Footprint –

Let's do our best to make it smaller

by Geoff Carpentier

I just came back from a vacation in Mexico on the Mayan Riviera – gorgeous! But what I saw shocked me … plastic was everywhere. Small bits of broken drink glasses, entire glasses floating in the surf, straws, cellophane, water bottles, pieces of beach chairs, etc. And amidst and among this were scattered signs in restaurants and lobbies warning of the dangers of sea-borne plastics. Particularly of interest here were the turtles that annually nest on these beaches. Recent studies show that EVERY marine animal tested had some form of micro-plastic in its system. And it's easy to see why when we walk any beach in the world.

It is well documented that marine animals can and will ingest plastics as they feed or scavenge in our oceans. Sharp objects can cause injury to animals as they ingest pieces of formed rigid plastic in their diet.

If you live near a river or ditches that flood and eventually flow to a larger lake or the seas, the litter is carried with the fast moving water. Paper and other compostables will eventually break down, but larger objects such as lawn chairs, plasticized rope, plastic bags and tarps can damage large areas of habitat.

But the biggest threat seems to be small plastics and microplastics that get into our environment in the millions of tonnes. In the news today, we speak about single use plastic straws and the impact they have. And we get excited and want to do something, which is a good thing.

Turtles, seabirds, large fish, porpoises and dolphins and myriad others are being killed annually by plastics. One source estimates that over 700 marine species are in danger of extinction primarily due to abandoned plastics. Reportedly, marine plastic pollution has impacted at least 267 species worldwide, including 86% of all sea turtle species, 44% of all seabird species and 43% of all marine mammal species

Costa Rica has just announced that they want to pass legislation to ban single use plastics, but details are not available yet. At the most recent G7 Summit the nations banded together to condemn single use straws and will discuss the matter but no action has yet been taken. the British Prime Minister promised to eradicate plastic waste by 2042! – Wow, that's more than two decades from now. In December, almost 200 nations agreed to limit plastic pollution in the oceans, warning it could outweigh fish by 2030. Well, these are all good steps. But maybe we don't need baby steps, we need true affirmative action.

Canada has yet to take a position, even though the Prime Minister promised to lead the charge at the G7 Summit. What are we waiting for?

But what about the hundreds of millions of plastic beverage containers that are floating in the ocean now? It is estimated that a mass of plastic three times the size of Texas is now adrift in the Pacific Ocean. We've known about this for decades and yet we've done nothing to alleviate it. We still make disposable bottles and we still throw them by the wayside. One company has developed a machine to collect and shred the plastics, and bring them back for reuse. This is a great initiative.

So what can you do? Here are 21 ideas that locally can have a global impact:

1. At hotels, avoid use of small plasticized soap and shampoo packages
2. Go to a bulk food store to reduce excess packaging impacts
3. Buy items in cardboard containers rather than plastic
4. Avoid using plastic drinking straws
5. Buy eggs in cardboard cartons instead of plastic clamshell or Styrofoam cartons
6. Pack your lunch in reusable containers and bags
7. Encourage your place of employment to reduce its use of plastics
8. Avoid using disposable items (e.g. use a non-disposable razor with replaceable blades instead of a plastic disposable razor)
9. Use reusable wraps instead of plastic wrap for food items
10. Don't use disposable plastic utensils from take-out restaurants
11. Check packaging to see if it is compostable or if made from recycled materials
12. Avoid buying pre-packed foods (e.g. salads) – make your own
13. Use reusable non-plastic produce bags and reuse milk bags as sandwich or freezer bags
14. Use Twix-it clips instead of twist ties
15. Avoid single-serving plastic cups
16. Use empty egg cartons to line your green box; it is not necessary to buy those bio-degradable liners as they take energy and resources to make just so we can throw them away.
17. When buying small items don't get a plastic bag if you don't need it
18. Reuse Styrofoam packaging peanuts and bubble wrap the next time you need to ship or store something
19. Don't use envelopes with plastic windows
20. Organize a litter cleanup in your local park or natural area. Encourage your friends, family and neighbours to join you. Why not adopt a road – my wife and I did!
21. Ask your MP, MPP and municipal Councillor to introduce plastic reduction measures and regulations in your community.

A Neat Local Connection

by Zane Stait-Gardner

When I was working, the business I ran required visiting Bermuda 4 or more times a year, for board meetings of subsidiary companies. One year, I asked my birding cousin, Inga, to join me for a week's holiday after the business meetings. I asked locals for suggestions on bird-watching in Bermuda. A lawyer who worked for our companies gave me the name of David Wingate. We spent a few days with David and his wife, helping the few Bermuda Petrels that he had found survive, nest, etc. These birds were all on an uninhabited island (Nonesuch Island) and we put out rat traps, made signs for locals, monitored nests, cleaned up trash. The project has now proven to be successful, as you can see if you read the attached article.

Here is an excerpt from the Handbook of the Birds of North America:

Perhaps the world's most storied seabird, Bermuda Petrel (*Pterodroma cahow*) or Cahow, as it is called on Bermuda was little more than legend until its rediscovery and description in the twentieth century, more than 300 years after it had vanished from human experience.

When Cristóbal Colón sailed past Bermuda in 1492, an estimated half million pairs of Bermuda Petrel nested throughout the Bermuda archipelago. But within a few decades, owing to human exploitation and to the introduction of hogs by Spanish seafarers, the birds had become scarce, their nesting limited to remote cliffs and offshore islets. With the advent of permanent English colonists in the early 1600s, rats, cats, hogs and dogs had eliminated most petrels nesting on the main islands, and continued human exploitation of the petrels for food also took a heavy toll on the species. In 1614, rats (apparently from a captured Spanish ship transporting grain) devoured so much of the settlers' crops and provisions that Bermuda's governor, Richard Moore, evacuated the colonists to Cooper's Island, which still had abundant bird resources (and sea turtles), so that they might avoid starvation. Many of the breeding petrels there were consumed. During the next breeding season, the birds were so rarely encountered that the islands' new governor, Daniel Tucker, urged public restraint in eating the petrels—the famed "Proclamation against the spoyle and havocke of the cahowes". But by 1620, the bird was no longer seen and was presumed extinct.

Glimmers of the persistence of Bermuda Petrels into modern times began on 22 February 1906, when Louis L. Mowbray,

Director of the Bermuda Aquarium, found a live gadfly petrel in a crevice on Gurnet Rock, a stack lying off Castle Island. The bird was subsequently identified by ornithologist Thomas Bradlee as what we now call Mottled Petrel (*Pterodroma inexpectata*) and was published as such later in the year. A decade later, R. W. Shufeldt compared the bones of Mowbray's bird to abundant fossil bones of gadfly petrels collected by Mowbray at Bermuda's Crystal Cave—and determined that they

were of the same species. And so Mowbray, with John T. Nichols, described "*Æstrelata cahow*" to science in 1916, indicating that this specimen was indeed of the long-lost gadfly petrel called Cahow that once was so abundant in this location.

Hoping to rediscover the species in life, William Beebe of the New York Zoological Society searched Bermuda in spring 1935, without success. However, on 8 June 1935, Beebe was given a specimen of an unfamiliar seabird that had struck the St. David's lighthouse and sent it to Robert Cushman Murphy of the American Museum of Natural History in New York—who identified it as a newly fledged Bermuda Petrel. Six years later, in 1941, Mowbray received a live Bermuda Petrel, found by a member of the Bermuda Volunteer Rifle Corps that had collided with a radio antenna tower (or wires) in St. George's. The bird was rehabilitated and released two days later. And in 1945, at the close of the Second World War, U.S. Army officer Fred T. Hall found the remains of several gadfly petrels at St. David's, including the corpse of an adult on 14 March, and notified biologists at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. Again, these proved to be the bird described by Mowbray and Nichols, and later Beebe, as Bermuda Petrel.

At last, in January 1951, a scientific expedition was organized to search for the bird, led by Louis S. Mowbray (son of the 1906 discoverer) and by Robert Cushman Murphy and his wife, Grace E. B. Murphy. During a careful survey of the islets around Castle Harbor, they found seven nesting pairs of Bermuda Petrel, and the news of the discovery quickly spread around the world through the news media with rare fanfare, at least for a seabird.

Accompanying Mowbray and the Murphys on the expedition was a local Bermudian schoolboy, David B. Wingate, who was present when the first petrel was found, on 28 January 1951. Just two years later, the young Wingate acquired a specimen of Bermuda Petrel from an antique dealer; it proved to be from the 1800s, from the collection of John Tavernier Bartram, a naturalist who searched for the species without realizing he had a specimen in his possession. After graduating from Cornell University in 1957, Wingate returned to Bermuda to work on petrel conservation, under the auspices of the Bermuda Aquarium. He would become Bermuda's Conservation Officer and the birds' outspoken champion over the next five decades.

During that time, the tiny population of petrels was nearly lost again, first to a terrible nest-site competition with White-tailed Tropicbirds (*Phaethon lepturus*), first noted in 1951, and then to egg-shell thinning caused by DDT. Wingate reduced, and then eliminated the tropicbird problem by constructing tropicbird-excluding baffles on active petrel burrows, by digging and constructing artificial burrows, which the petrels accepted, and later by a successful campaign to supply tropicbirds with artificial nest "igloos," placed away from petrel nesting areas.

In recent decades, over-washing of nest burrows during frequent episodes of hurricane surge has resulted in petrel mortality and in the destruction of nest burrows, prompting Wingate and Bermuda's new Senior Terrestrial Conservation Officer, Jeremy Madeiros, to commence a program in 2002 of translocating young petrels to artificial burrows on higher ground, on Nonsuch Island, which Wingate has reforested to its precolonial state over the past 50 years. As

of spring 2013, with a total of 105 nesting pairs of Bermuda Petrel (12 of these on Nonsuch), there is guarded optimism for the survival of this striking seabird.

Nature Quiz

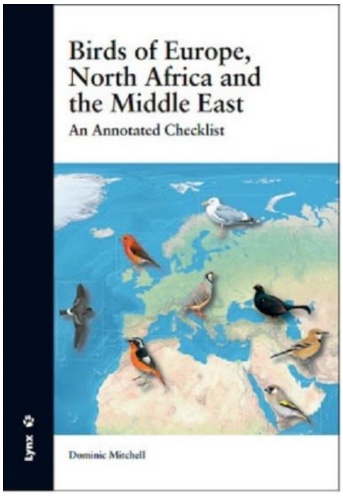
Okay this is a tough quiz. Obviously these are animal tracks and presumably they were photographed in North Durham, so let's work from there. A clue is that this is a small-sized animal that has bigger feet on one end than the other.

Book Reviews

by Geoff Carpentier

An Annotated Checklist to the Birds of Europe, North Africa and the Middle East. by Dominic Mitchell. Lynx Edicions, Barcelona, Spain. 2018. 28.00€. 335 pages, hardcover. **ISBN:** 9-788494-189296.

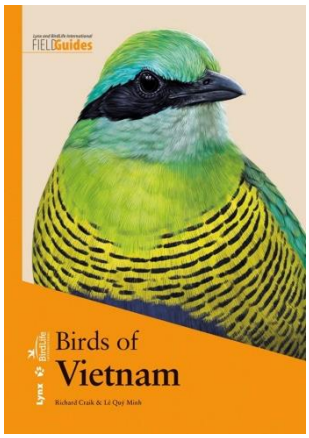
First of all you should know this is not a field guide but rather a concise summary of all the attainable bird records for species that have occurred in the region described in the title of the book. An annotated bird checklist is simply that – a checklist that gives detailed information on the status of birds in a region. Species are presented in systematic order and each species entry includes scientific and English names, taxonomic notes and distribution and range/vagrancy occurrences within the region. In addition to the main list of almost 1,150 species, appendices detail regionally endemic and extinct birds. This book replaces the last annotated list that was published about 2 decades ago. A lot has happened since then.



So what might you find in this book. Let's look at two examples – the Common Snipe and the Dark-eyed Junco. The first breeds in the Western Palearctic region covered by the book and the latter is a vagrant. For the snipe, the author tells you where it is found as a breeder and/or a migrant, the number of subspecies recognized, and any special notes of interest. For the junco, it identifies it as a vagrant with only a few records from the Azores, Great Britain, Denmark, the Netherlands, Ireland, Norway, and Poland. This is clearly not a book for everyone but any scientist or serious ornithologist will want it whether they study North American or European species. It is really quite amazing how many of our birds made it onto the list!

Birds of Vietnam. by Richard Craik and Lê Quý Minh. Lynx Edicions, Barcelona, Spain. 2018. 50.00€. 400 pages, softcover. **ISBN:** 9-788494-189296.

In the continuing emergence of great field guides, Lynx has produced another



excellent addition to available guides. This one deals with a region I visited years ago and was most disheartened to see I didn't have a good field guide available at the time. How I wish I had this one at my disposal. It is compact, fact-filled and covers all the birds I had hoped to see on my journey. Like other Lynx Edicions book, it is meticulously researched and presented, with helpful and accurate information on every species to be found in Vietnam. One thing I absolutely loved about his book was the inclusion of QR codes for every species. It worked flawlessly and allowed me to look up much more additional information online instantly - sound, behaviour, field marks, etc. Great technological advance. As I was reviewing the book, I "accidentally" got a life bird. Years ago in India I photographed a mystery bird and as I was looking at the points in this book I found the Rock-thrush that had escaped me for years – bonus!

Answers to Quiz

Okay so we've eliminated a whole bunch of critters just because I told you it was a small mammal and you can see it's not a deer, rabbit or anything like that. So we're left with mice, voles, squirrels, moles, shrews and their kin. The one thing to be aware of here is that the two prints in the front are actually the hind feet as this animal lopes along bringing the front feet to the ground then pulling the hind ones past them and springing forth with each step. We can clearly see this animal has some kind of claw or toenail, so any cat is eliminated as well. Any shrew would have five toes on both feet but this animal has 4 on the front and 5 on the back, so it's not a shrew.

Moles have strange broad feet so this delicate print doesn't come from them. To identify this as a mouse, vole or squirrel can be done, but it would be helpful to know how big these are. There is no clue in the photo. However, voles don't jump or lope as I've indicated here so their tracks would look more like four separate footprints rather than this jumble of tracks.

White-footed or Deer Mice usually leave tracks where the hind foot on each side lands on top of the forefoot on that same side, unlike here and often a tail drag mark can be seen. So let's presume this is a squirrel of some kind. Again scale would help, but we don't have that. Frankly that's about as close as we're going to come.

I can tell you this – it is an Eastern Chipmunk, but I only know that because I watched it make these tracks.

For more information about NDN

NDN Board of Directors

Cara Gregory– President
James Kamstra– Vice –President
Derek Connelly – Past President
Mark Stabb – Secretary
Kim Adams - Treasurer
Jay Thibert – Director-at-Large
Carol Apperson – Director-at-Large
Patricia Baldwin – Membership
Brenda Near – Director-at-Large

Newsletter Editorial Board

Geoff Carpentier – Editor

John McLean, Nancy Melcher, Cara Gregory & Derek Connelly - Proof-readers

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

Visit Us On Facebook and our website
www.northdurhamnature.com

Spring is almost here … have faith

Spring Peeper

Green Frog