President's Message

The relatively carefree days of summer are over and with the cooler days we return to a more serious time of year. While I am always sad to see summer end, there is much to look forward to in the autumn. There is a freshness in the air and a beauty to behold as the maples, oaks and poplars take on the brilliant hues of orange, red and yellow. This spectacle is perhaps nowhere better enjoyed than in north-eastern North America, including north Durham. Boreal nesting birds can be seen, often in our yards, as they stop to forage in the local area before migrating to more southern lands. To me, one of the great joys of this season is to search the forest floor for peculiarly shaped forms of life - the mushrooms. They can be found in so many shapes, patterns and colours. Some fungi can be eaten but it is better to simply identify those that you can and otherwise inspect and appreciate the rest of the variety of unfamiliar life forms.

I am also happy to say that we are able to join together and meet in person again. June was our first in-person meeting in well over two years. The September and November meetings will be at the Port Perry Library while October will be on Zoom. From the questionnaire that was sent out to the membership earlier this year, 10% of members preferred that all meetings be on Zoom while 33% desired all to be in person. The rest (57%) liked to have some combination of the two. Both have their advantages. It is important to be able to interact, share experiences and see the speaker face to face at a 'real' meeting. On the other hand, Zoom meetings have the advantage of securing more distant speakers and saving us having to drive out on blustery evenings. For now, we intend to carry on with a mix. Come on out when you can!

James Kamstra – President, North Durham Nature

Upcoming Events – October to December 2022

Meetings (September and November meetings will be at the Port Perry library and on Zoom)

September 27, 2022 – Peter Rasberry - **Gaia: A Photographic Celebration of Flora & Fauna**

October 25, 2022 – Emily Conger - **Adirondacks to Algonquin Collaborative**

November 22, 2022 – Mark Peck, Royal Ontario Museum - **Ethics of Wildlife Photography**

Outings

September 17, 2022 – Nature by Canoe on the Scugog River - Bev and Jay Thibert will lead this outing to a few of their favourite spots through the extensive wetlands along the Scugog River, located about 3 km east of the village of Valentia.

October 2, 2022 – Mushrooms and Lichens - This fall fungi hike led by James and Lynda Kamstra will also explore the strange world of lichens.

October 15, 2022 – Life in the Wetland - Join Cara Gregory, for an autumn hike in the breathtaking wetlands of the Nonquon Provincial Wildlife area.

November 13, 2022 – Lake Simcoe Waterfowl - Join Mark Dorriesfield for a late autumn visit to Lake Simcoe, where we'll look for water birds such as loons, grebes, ducks and other waterfowl that stage here before heading further south for the winter.

Watch for more details on the Christmas Bird Counts as December unfolds.

When is shoreline maintenance a bad idea?

Lost Sandbar and a lost opportunity – Rouge National Urban Park

Story and photos by Rosemary Oliver

Editor's Note: A recent outcry from the birding community about proposed changes to the mouth of the Rouge led to a letter writing campaign that resulted in the project being delayed but not abandoned. The delay was to facilitate the breeding of a few pairs of Common Terns that were nesting on the sand spit at the mouth of the Rouge this summer. Once the nesting was done, the Parks people resumed their plan to remove the spit. Here is the perspective of one of the persons monitoring the actions by Parks Canada. The views expressed in the article are those of the author and not necessarily NDN.

Rosemary Oliver writes: Despite pleas from biologists, scientists and environmentalists to allow the mouth of the Rouge River to flow and form naturally as it always has, Parks Canada has decided that the existing sandbar, home and resting place for many water birds, is an inconvenience to their plans for the Park. They have used an excavator, a dump truck and a bulldozer to completely remove the sandbar and have redistributed the sand to enlarge the Rouge Beach.

Instead of using this as an educational opportunity to show visitors how a river mouth is constantly changing due to water levels, currents, wind and waves, they have decided that a pristine sand beach is more important.

Parks Canada's mandate is to, *"To protect, as a first priority, the natural and cultural heritage of our special places and ensure that they remain healthy and whole."*

Not only is their action damaging to this natural environment, it is also an unacceptable use of our tax dollars. They will soon find that the sandbar will return, in some form, as it always does. Will this be an ongoing astronomical expense to taxpayers, or will they realize that we should not fight nature and that we should be able to look to Parks Canada to protect our land, not to damage it?

Going, going – Gone!

Pollinator Garden – Uxbridge Countryside Preserve

Text and photos by Derek Connelly

Given the relative success of our previous plantings of native grasses and wildflowers in 2017 in the Preserve, we decided to add another plot but with a revised approach. We had rototilled the ground first in 2017 but this had resulted in two years of White Sweet Clover dominating the entire area. This time we did not rototill the plot. In the fall of 2021 we cleared a small area

(20 x 20 ft.) of raspberry canes and other non-native plants by hand, and then covered it with cardboard and 3-4 inches of tree mulch. On May 29th, we planted 25 native wildflowers and about 40 native grasses in the plot. Further southwest, we identified a dry sparsely planted vegetated area and planted 30 additional native grasses there. In June, Uxbridge Township and I brought up water and watered both areas. No other watering took place in this hot dry summer. The native plants were purchased from Claremont Native Plant Nursery and the costs shared with Township of Uxbridge Parks and NDN.

On September 11th a count of surviving plants was taken and the results were very promising - 90% of the wildflowers were doing well and 81% of the grasses were present in both locations. The grasses appeared more successful in the prepared plot. I also weeded this plot of the raspberry canes in September which were the dominate invaders in the plot. We were delighted that Common Milkweed self-populated the area with over 50 plants counted.

Lessons learned:

- Not rototilling, using cardboard and mulch and weeding helps planting success
- Clearing an area helps milkweed and other native plants re-establish
- Watering is necessary in first few months

Table of Results:

Planted Sunday May 29th	Sunday Sept 11th Assessment
Wildflowers - planted	**Surviving plants**
Black Eyed Susan – 5 plants	5
Mountain Mint – 5 plants	5
Hoary Vervain – 5 plants	5
Hairy Beardtongue – 5 plants	5
New England Aster – 5 plants	5
Showy Tick Trefoil – 5 plants	5
Wildflowers – 90% survival rate	
Grasses - planted	**Surviving plants**
Big Blue – 8	5
Little Blue – 6	4
Indian – 5	3
Switch – 6	7
Rye - 9	4
Grasses – 81% survival rate	

Thanks to Norine Blyth, Mark Humphrey, James Kamstra, Brenda Near, Neal Pearson, Willa Worsley and Uxbridge Parks.

Big Blue Stem grass (left) and Black-eyed Susan and Common Milkweed

Focus on Nature

Oshawa & Sunderland Butterfly Counts - 2022

Text and photos by James Kamstra

The two butterfly counts were conducted in Durham Region in early summer of 2022. Both are 24 km (15 mile) diameter circles with Oshawa centred on the four corners of Raglan and Sunderland centred on Udora village. Participants in groups tallied all the butterflies that they saw and identified on count day. Oshawa, in its 29th year, took place on July 10. It was originally scheduled for June 26th but due to poor weather, it was postponed for two weeks. Sunderland, in its 26th year, was completed on July 3rd.

Eleven counters in five parties recorded 42 species in the Oshawa circle. The highlight of the count was Black Dash, which had not been previously recorded on that count. This is a southern species, quite rare in Durham that is specialized to sedge marshes. Tom Mason spotted two individuals in a sedge patch in the Osler Marsh on the east side of Lake Scugog. Dion Skipper is another sedge specialist that is rarely encountered at Oshawa. Both Tom Mason and James Kamstra found five between the two of them.

Eastern Tiger Swallowtail were less numerous than usual on the butterfly counts

Meanwhile, 47 species were documented on the Sunderland count which was attended by 18 participants in ten parties. Butterfly numbers were found to be the lowest in the history of both counts. The paucity of butterflies was particularly apparent at Sunderland where 34 species were found in numbers less than half of the long term average, while 15 of those were less than one-fifth of the average. Only two species, Silver-spotted Skipper and Northern Cloudywing were in numbers greater than the long term average. At Oshawa, 23 species were in lower numbers than the long term average. Butterfly numbers fluctuate from one year to another but normally some species may have higher numbers than usual while others are lower. In 2022, most species were below average. The reason for low numbers is not known, perhaps a drier spring, pesticides in the environment or an undocumented disease. Hopefully the lower numbers are a temporary drop and not a long term trend.

The results can be found in the following table and the hard-working participants are listed below.

	Oshawa	**Sunderland**
Butterfly Species	**July 10**	**July 3**
Black Swallowtail		1
Eastern Tiger Swallowtail	6	10
Mustard White	66	38
Cabbage White	211	304
Clouded Sulphur	41	21
Bronze Copper		5
Harvester		1
Acadian Hairstreak	11	9
Banded Hairstreak	5	
Striped Hairstreak	1	1
Eastern Tailed Blue	5	11
Summer Azure	20	45
Great Spangled Fritillary	53	32
Meadow Fritillary		7

Pearl Crescent	1	6
Northern Crescent	60	117
Baltimore Checkerspot		58
Question Mark		4
Eastern Comma	9	7
Gray Comma	1	3
Polygonia sp.		4
Mourning Cloak	1	2
Compton's Tortoiseshell	6	1
American Lady	2	3
Red Admiral	1	1
White Admiral	13	9
Red-spotted Purple	2	
Viceroy	8	4
Northern Pearly-Eye	11	8
Eyed Brown	81	116
Appalachian Brown		1
Little Wood Satyr	7	9
Common Wood Nymph	99	24
Inornate Ringlet	1	52
Monarch	58	41
Silver-spotted Skipper	20	17
Northern Cloudywing	1	14
Least Skipper	10	20
European Skipper	197	319
Peck's Skipper	2	28
Tawny-edged Skipper	6	35
Crossline Skipper	1	11
Long Dash Skipper	13	42
Northern Broken Dash	8	11
Little Glassywing		5
Delaware Skipper	24	18
Hobomok Skipper	4	11
Broad-winged Skipper	1	
Dion Skipper	5	5
Black Dash	**1**	
Dun Skipper	13	13
grass skipper sp	7	
TOTAL SPECIES	**42**	**47**
TOTAL INDIVIDUALS	**1093**	**1504**
No. of Participants	13	18
Km. on foot	28.5	52
Km. by car	131	190
Hours on foot	27.75	53.5
Hours by car	3.25	3.8
Total Hours	31	57.55

Participants

Oshawa: Geoff Carpentier, Ann Couch, Andrea D'Silva, James & Lynda Kamstra, Steve Laforest, Tom Mason, Pat Mohr, Jude Pelley, Maria Prisciak, Kate Thompson

Sunderland: Kim Baker, Dennis Barry, Margaret Carney, Derek Connelly, Paul & Debra Harpley, Brian Henshaw, Simon Henshaw, James & Lynda Kamstra, Steve LaForest, Craig Lloyd, Tom Mason, Brenda Near, Ed Poropat, Willa Worsley, Bob & Karen Yukich.

Fact or Fiction?

Text by Cara Gregory & photos by Geoff Carpentier

YELLOW JACKET WASPS DON'T EAT MEAT.

BABY TURTLES CAN OVERWINTER IN THEIR NEST CAVITIES.

What do you think? Please see page 11 to find out if these statements are fact or fiction.

Nature Quiz

Text by Geoff Carpentier and photos by Kim Lendvay

I am alien looking creature that seems to have biting mouth parts, interesting colours and strange little dots all over me!

I don't seem to have any legs, eyes or ears!?!?

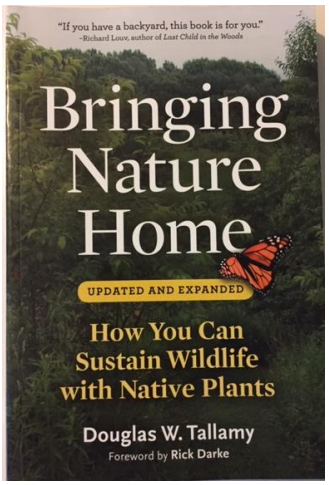
Apparently I'm a sloppy eater as you can see by the "crumbs" on my mouth! If that is my mouth by the way!

What can I be?

Book Reviews

By Kenneth Oldfield

Bringing Nature Home. Douglas W. Tallamy. 2009. Timber Press, Inc. 133 S.W. Second Avenue, Suite 450, Portland, Oregon 97204-3527. Paperback. 358 pages. $57.59. ISBN – 13:978-0-88192-992-8.



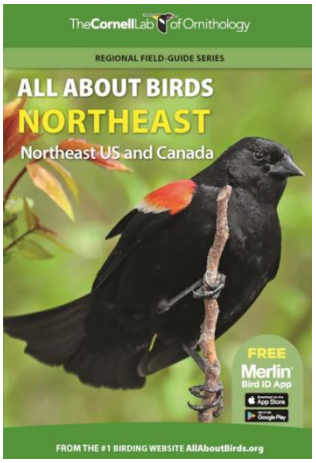
If you are looking for more reasons to "go native" in your own back yard then this is the book for you! Doug Tallamy is professor and chair of the Department of Entomology in Newark, Delaware. Chief among his research goals is to better understand the many ways insects interact with plants and how such interactions determine the diversity of animal communities. In this book, Tallamy makes an eloquent and convincing case as to why we should seriously think about abandoning some manicured lawns and showy alien plants, shrubs and trees in favour of restoring native plant communities. To me, the science in this book is undeniable; it clearly demonstrates that the number of species a native ecosystem can support far exceeds that of the neat and tidy designer gardens we have come to favour. In other words, more native plants get you more bugs which means more food for birds and other animals. In Chapter 13, "What Does Bird Food Look Like", you will find a fascinating breakdown of the many types of insects that can be found in North America and their incredible diversity. For example, did you know that it is home to 1827 species of leaf beetles, never mind 900 species of long-horned beetles, 762 metallic wood-boring beetles, etcetera, etcetera, etcetera? Then you have the staggering number of moth and butterfly species coming in at nearly 12,000!! Another big bonus in this book is the number of beautiful colour photographs of all kinds of bugs, many of which, though quite common, you have likely never seen!! In all, this book would be a great addition to any nature library.

By Geoff Carpentier

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology Regional Field Guide Series. 2022. Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 08540. Softcover. $24.99 US each of 7 volumes.

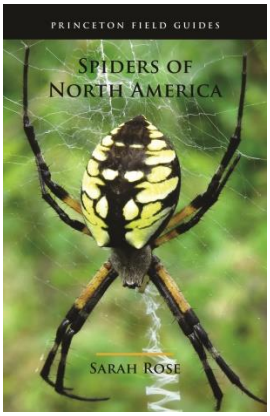
A new and exciting series was just released by Cornell that speaks to all the birds of North America, north of Mexico. This series comes forward in 7 volumes – Texas & Oklahoma, Midwest US & Canada, Southeast US, Northeast US & Canada, California, Northwest US & Canada and Southwest. So in these seven volumes you can expect to find a great deal of information about a lot of birds. Each geographic area was chosen because of its unique features and species. There will undoubtedly be some overlap in species and that's fine as one doesn't need to own all the books. If you live in California you might choose to only buy that volume or perhaps the one or two that cover adjoining areas.

Inside each book is a plethora (yes I just used that word!) of information, including tips on birding 101 - an intro to birding, bird photography, birdscaping your yard, feeders, birdhouses, citizen science and tips to helping birds on a global scale. This is a most concise and quite thorough introduction to these fascinating subjects. What I didn't find helpful is that these are regional guides but there does not seem to be any "regional" flavour in the information provided in all the introductory pages mentioned above. Even though the information might be universally similar across the continent, I think that the images used to support the birds should've changed regionally. The balance of each volume is dedicated to detailed accounts of all the species found within that region, including great photos from the McCauley Library, maps, ID features and tips, habitat, biology and habits.



So consider buying the set but unless you plan to travel extensively within each region, one or two of these may be invaluable to add to your library.

Spiders of North America. Sarah Ross. 2022. Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 08540. Softcover. 624 pages. $35.00 USD. ISBN:



We all know them – we've all seen them – but you are about to learn a lot about them! This new book has 624 pages of facts and photos. Be prepared to see over 2800 photos and 508 maps that illustrate this incredible new book. It would be very hard to tell you everything about each species in the world, let alone the 4000 species found in North America, but Ms. Ross takes a great stab at it, as she explores over 500 species in this book. She breaks the book up into guilds, because that is how one describes the types of spiders based primarily on how they hunt. So we will learn about many types of weavers, ambush hunters, active hunters and more which are detailed in this book. Within each group several species and families are described, with accompanying photos and maps.

The sample below shows the level of detail one will find in the book as this is one of the pages dedicated to some of the orb weavers. There's not a lot more I need to say at this time, except if you buy this book be prepared to spend LOTS of time skimming and reading its pages – fascinating!

Fact or Fiction – Answers Revealed

Text by Cara Gregory
Photo of wasps downloaded from web & Snapping Turtle baby by Geoff Carpentier

YELLOW JACKET WASPS DON'T EAT MEAT.

This is **FICTION.** Yellow Jacket adult wasps do feed on foods rich in carbohydrates such as plant nectar and fruit, but workers also search for food high in protein like insects and fish. These proteins are chewed and conditioned and then fed to the larvae in the nest. The larvae in turn produce a sugary substance that is eaten by the adult wasps. So don't be surprised if you are enjoying a BBQ chicken outdoors, and a wasp lands on your plate and begins to chew a section of the meat with his sharp mandibles, and then awkwardly flies away with the small cut section of meat in its mouth!

BABY TURTLES CAN OVERWINTER IN THEIR NEST HOLES.

This is **FACT**. Turtle hatchlings can emerge in the fall or overwinter in the nest and emerge the next spring. It is believed by many scientists that hatchlings can sense environmental cues when in their nest cavities which may dictate when they emerge. There are some advantages to overwintering in the nest. Food sources in the springtime would be on the rise instead of on the decline, there would be fewer predators in the spring, and predation on the nest decreases with time. The disadvantage is that they are risking exposure to below freezing temperatures potentially causing death, or running out of energy stores and dying from energy depletion or drowning from nest flooding. Midland Painted Turtles are the Ontario turtles that will most commonly overwinter in their nest, but hatchlings of Northern Map, Blanding's and Snapping Turtles (in decreasing order) are also known to occasionally overwinter in their nests. Midland Painted Turtle hatchlings can tolerate their body tissues freezing at temperatures above -4°C for short periods and are able to supercool their bodies to temperatures as low as -12 °C without actually having their body fluids freeze.

The 3rd Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas Update

Photo of used Eastern Kingbird nest and text by Geoff Carpentier

Well year 2 of the atlas is just about in the record books. We can still confirm a few things by finding used nests or talking to friends who can tell or show us what they found. Don't underestimate this latter source of information. Just because you didn't see it doesn't mean it didn't happen. Just recently someone showed me a lovely photo of some baby loons in an area where nesting had not been confirmed – jackpot! If you are in doubt when someone tells you something err on the side of caution or give me a call or email and I will assist. Thanks to all of you for your great efforts this year and last! See y'all next season which starts January 1st – really it does!

Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas (birdsontario.org)

Nasty & Nice Nature News

Compiled by Geoff Carpentier

Palm oil plantation - Honduras

A new and safer alternative to palm oil? A new study out of the University of Guelph has shown that the saturated fats that make palm oil so useful can be mimicked using a process called glycerosis that turns liquid vegetable oils into solid fats. Cottonseed and peanut oils were examined and treated to produce solid fats that have the right structure and texture to replace some of the palm oil uses. This is great news! (Source: Portico Magazine, U. of Guelph)

Domestic cat an alien invasive species. The Polish Academy of Sciences reported in July that they have added the domestic cat to their national database as an alien species due to the devastating impacts it has on wildlife. The negative outcry from the public was immediate, which just again shows that the public cares more about their own amusements than about nature and how we continue to negatively impact it. (Source: Associated Press)

Wildlife markets a haven for viruses. A study out of the University of Sydney in Australia has shown that, of the 12+ species of mammals studied, 71 viruses were detected, 18 of which could be harmful to humans. It also showed that the spread of viruses between mammalian species included human transmitting viruses back to other non-human mammalian species. The ongoing zeal for exotic mammals as food and aphrodisiacs encourages the trade in wild animals. The outcomes can never be good for us or the mammals. (Source: Straits Times - www.straitstimes.com)

Neonic treated milkweed an ecological trap for monarchs. Studies out of the University of Guelph found that monarchs may actually prefer to feed on neonicotinoid treated milkweed than on untreated plants. The neonics are not deliberately used to control the milkweed but are used on corn and soybeans and may incidentally be taken up from the soil by the milkweed. The outcome is devastating for monarchs and most other pollinators that feed in agricultural areas. The Monarch was recently listed by the IUCN as threatened and is in serious decline. (Source: Portico Magazine, U. of Guelph)

Answers to Nature Quiz

Well you probably figured out by now that I must be some kind of bug and I seem to be legless so maybe I'm a nematode or worm or something like that. But the colour should give you a clue that I don't belong to those

families. So maybe a caterpillar! Bingo! [Editor's note: I didn't mention this before but this is a large caterpillar over 2.5" long.] Being big and green there aren't a lot of choices. You will have to scour the books a bit but the choices become apparent. It would have been helpful if the Editor had mentioned I was feeding on a tomato plant! As such I am a Tomato Hornworm.

When you see me in my full glory, I'm pretty attractive, but still a bit scary looking. When I grow up I will be a moth (see inset to the right (photo by unknown party)

Nature's Pretty Side

Yellow Garden Spider (left) - photo by Kim Lendvay and Giant Golden Orbweaver (right) by Geoff Carpentier

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