



*Cultivating an appreciation of nature  
through learning and action*

# THE HERON

**FALL 2018**

Newsletter of the  
York Simcoe Nature Club

*Proud member of*



*Turkey Tail fungus, Welsh Tract, Simcoe County Forest  
Photo by Paul Cray*

## **President's Message**

*By Jeanne Bénéteau*

Welcome back to a new season at the York Simcoe Nature Club. As we emerge from an unusually hot summer, it is nice to turn our focus to fall activities. Our autumn guest speakers are all lined up. The first general meeting speaker was Cori Crawford, from cleanFARMS Inc. It was quite informative and I'm glad there is such an organization whose objective is to manage the waste and plastics of farms. This is something that I had never considered before to be a problem! This is an example of the type of information our presenters can bring to our members and guests which we may never stop to think about during our daily lives. Our next presentation will be another out of the ordinary topic that many people may know little of. Paul Cray, a club member, will introduce the soil food web for us. He will help us understand what is going on in "dirt". Finally in November, Dan Strickland, from Algonquin Park, will have a presentation on the Gray Jay.

The transition to the new meeting hall in Queensville Holland Landing United Church was smooth. It is bright and spacious and will accommodate our needs. The

church has a screen which we can use, which negated our need to purchase a new one. As the church caretakers requested we return the hall to its previous state at the end of the night, our members quickly chipped in and it was back to normal in no time.

This year, the executive members decided to have a BBQ and pot luck in October for our members along with a walk afterwards. Sylvia Bowman will be hosting it at her home. Thank you, Sylvia. We will also have the Christmas Carolling in the Elements in December, and the Wine and Cheese in February. Doug Jagger will be continuing with the monthly walks as well. Doug enjoys bringing people to the various trails in the area. He has found the attendance greatest on Saturdays, but varies the day of the week as well.

**I would also like to extend once again an invitation to our members to join our executive team.** This is an opportune time to join being the beginning of the new season. At the moment, there are 3 positions open: membership secretary, recording secretary and treasurer. **I would like to stress the importance of having new executive members on the team.** New members offer new ideas and different skills and perspectives which help keep the club fresh and moving forward. Please consider joining the team.

I am looking forward to an exciting new season with guest lecturers, along with the camaraderie of our members. It is nice to be back.

### **Next Meetings**

- |                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| Tues. Oct. 9 –  | The Soil Food Web and What It Means to You<br>Paul Cray |
| Tues. Nov. 13 – | The Gray Jay<br>Dan Strickland, Algonquin Park          |
| Tues. Dec. 11 – | The Ontario Greenbelt Alliance<br>Debbie Gordon         |

Meetings are held at Queensville Holland Landing United Church and start at 7:30 p.m.

## Club News

### YSN Membership

By Sheila Gick, *past membership secretary*

The Club ended the 2017/18 year on May 31, 2018 with 46 memberships, and following the September general meeting we have 28 memberships so far for the 2018/19 year. A heartfelt welcome to new members.

For returning members, you can renew at our general meeting on Tues. Oct. 9 or mail it in if you prefer. The address is c/o York Simcoe Nature Club, P.O. Box 1464, Bradford, ON L3Z 2B7. The fee is \$40 for a single membership and \$45 for a family membership. Thanks for embracing the need for a fee increase, renewing and thereby supporting all the good work we do as a club.

Each month we are raffling two beautiful, matted paintings of birds to help with the rental fees. The paintings, generously donated by member Amy Watts, are displayed at the membership table; the tickets are \$2 each or \$5 for 3 tickets. Helen Johnson and I were the two winners at the first raffle in September! Win-win for the Club and for the lucky members.

The Ontario Nature Youth Summit was held Sept. 22-23, 2018. In the spring, after no internal candidate was put forward by members, the executive sent a letter to appropriate staff of the six EcoCertified high schools in our region, seeking an interested candidate from amongst their students. We found an enthusiastic candidate, Isabella Fiore, from Sir William Mulock Secondary School in Newmarket and now we look forward to her presentation to the Club at our October meeting. Congratulations, Isabella, and we hope you learned a lot and had a good time at the Summit.

The Club has chosen sponsoring a student for the 2019 Summit as our main fundraising project for this year. This will be our fourth year sending a student. Donate what you wish to the colorful "Summit" can on the membership table.

Notice of member-only events are sent to members by e-mail and mentioned in our e-mailed newsletters, so be sure to read these and join in the fun --- walks, food, work parties, speakers . . . and always friendship.

Please note that **the Club is seeking a new membership secretary** to sit on the executive. I have served for two two-year consecutive terms (2014-2018) and made the decision last year not to reoffer. It is a wonderful group to work with and I hope one of you will fill my place at the executive meetings once a month. As for the monthly general meetings, several members have agreed to help at the desk so that part of the job can be shared and scheduled accordingly. I have agreed to maintain the database and train the new person at their convenience over the coming year. It is not onerous and

you get to learn a new and simple skill. Please speak to me or Jeanne at the Oct. 9 general meeting.

It is YOUR club --- make it great in your own way.

### Nature Walks

By Doug Jagger

Since our June 2018 newsletter, York Simcoe Nature Club has conducted two walks. The June walk was held in the evening of June 19 at Cawthra Mulock Nature Reserve. Although it was a beautiful evening without too many biting insects, only four people attended. We walked the loop comprising the red and yellow trails. On our walk we saw a number of birds including Eastern Towhee and Rose-breasted Grosbeak. The highlight was listening to the ethereal song of a Wood Thrush hidden somewhere in the woods. There were numerous flowers along the trail which attracted some interesting butterflies.



*Nokiidaa Trail, Sept. 12  
Photo by David Eaton*

There was no walk in July or August. The next walk was in the morning of Sept. 12 along the Nokiidaa Trail from Green Lane to the boardwalk at 2nd Concession. It was a beautiful sunny morning. However, we were harassed constantly by hordes of hungry mosquitoes. These bugs were supposed to be around in June and not September! Generally, there were only a few birds around which is also unusual for mid-September. We were treated to a male Belted Kingfisher sitting on an overhead wire then diving into the river to catch a fish. There were plenty of fall flowers along the trail, including Stinging Nettles which we wisely avoided. We saw several Monarch Butterflies which seem to be more plentiful this year and a Woolly Caterpillar.

Please watch your e-mail for notification of fall hikes. Hopefully you will be able to join us on these informative outings.

## Cawthra Mulock Nature Reserve

### Stewardship Report

By Judy Ritchie, Stewardship Liaison to Ontario Nature and Rick Berry, Stewardship Coordinator

#### Ontario Nature Activities

*Tree maintenance* -- Over the course of the summer, Ontario Nature had an arborist come and remove the remaining Ash trees due to the Emerald Ash Borer.

*Trail maintenance* -- There was significant work done in clearing the Red and Yellow trails of overgrown grasses to make them more accessible for hiking. The Green Trail remains barely passable. Users of the trail need to be mindful of the slope accessing the trail as it continues to be slippery. The Red Trail from the Dufferin Street entrance has been closed and the path is now very overgrown, making access to the open Yellow trail and remaining open Red trail a hazard.

*Road maintenance* -- Some work was done on the road leading into the Reserve, especially around the water hazard and pot holes. Although there is some improvement, it remains problematic until the parking lot can be moved to the front. No word on that so far as application for grant monies is ongoing.

*Programs* -- Ontario Nature has held several programs at the Reserve, such as Fitness Walks, Landscape Painting workshops, Salamander Hunting and Pollinator Watching.

#### YSN Stewardship Team

The stewardship team continues to provide support to the club stewardship agreement with Ontario Nature. To date in 2018 we have:

- carried out and reported on 12 site inspection visits
- built and replaced six birdhouses due to the efforts of Doug Jagger
- carried out two periwinkle pull events in cooperation with Ontario Nature and King Township -- the total amount of periwinkle removed to date is 746 kg
- contributed 120 volunteer hours

As the stewardship work-year draws to a close, it is time to extend a big “thank you” to the 16 club members who have worked to make the Reserve a better place for all to enjoy.

Use this wonderful reason to get out and immerse yourself in nature. Please contact us for more information at [yorksimoenatureclub@gmail.com](mailto:yorksimoenatureclub@gmail.com).

### Summer Insects at Cawthra Mulock



White Admiral butterfly, June 26  
Photo by David Eaton



Shamrock Orb Weaver spider, Aug. 16  
Photo by Jeanne Bénéteau



Sept. 18  
Photo by David Eaton

## Conservation News

*By Sylvia Bowman*

### Ontario Nature

The Huronia Regional Meeting is on Sat. Nov. 3 in Georgina, hosted by the South Lake Simcoe Naturalists. A reminder that every club member is invited to attend these meetings, which usually include a guest speaker and an afternoon hike, as well as presentations by other clubs in our region.

### Land Conservation

#### Nokiidaa Trail

In September I attended the official opening of the Nokiidaa trail extension in Newmarket, going west from Holland River Blvd. to Yonge St. This is the part that several years ago the club wrote a letter of support about for the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority when they were applying for grants to buy that portion of land along the river. There is also a new wetland area.

#### Bruce Peninsula National Park

Parks Canada is set to finalize the purchase of the Driftwood Cove property in Bruce Peninsula National Park. This 1,300 hectare purchase is a significant step toward the protection of biodiversity, species at risk and their habitat in southern Ontario. Parks Canada will be making the purchase with financial support from the Bruce Trail Conservancy.

### Waste Reduction

#### Ghost Gear

Canada has signed on to the Global Ghost Gear Initiative (GGGI), an initiative of World Animal Protection. Ghost gear is found in every sea and ocean on the planet, including along Canada's coastlines, and is a major contributor to ocean plastics. It traps, injures, mutilates and kills hundreds of thousands of whales, seals, turtles and other sea animals every year.

The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) plans to protect sea animals by tagging fishing nets. Once the marking is implemented, the tags will help authorities trace ghost gear back to their owners, which will help tackle illegal dumping.

#### Plastic Waste Crisis

In June, Ontario Nature signed on to a request by a broad spectrum of 43 organizations calling on the federal government to devise a national waste reduction strategy. It should harmonize performance standards, measurement protocols, and definitions from coast-to-coast-to-coast, and get Canada to zero plastic waste by 2025.

In Canada, nearly 90% of plastics end up incinerated, or in our landfills, lakes, parks and oceans. Once in the environment, they contaminate ecosystems, kill wildlife, and leach toxic chemicals. It's time for Canada to deal with its plastic production, waste, and pollution problem.

Less than 11% of all plastics are recycled in Canada. Voluntary, industry-led initiatives aren't doing the job. As long as making new plastics from fossil resources is cheap, the costs of collecting and recycling plastics is high, and dumping plastics into the environment is "free", the problem will get worse. Canada needs strong waste policies that hold producers responsible, keep problematic plastics out of Canada, and dramatically increase the reuse and recycling of plastics.

To read the complete submission, see the Ontario Nature blog of June 3, online at <https://ontarionature.org/plastic/>.

### Endangered Species

#### Snapping Turtles

This spring a snapping turtle found in Hamilton's Cootes Paradise was confirmed to have been infected with ranavirus. This is the first time a Canadian reptile has been infected. This highly infectious virus is known to infect amphibians, fish and reptiles. It can be transmitted through food, feces, water and handling by humans. Reptiles are most vulnerable during their juvenile stage, so turtles are often infected in late summer and autumn. Unfortunately, ranavirus may persist in the environment for months if conditions allow.

The snapping turtle population in Ontario is very fragile as it is already a species of Special Concern. Currently, there is no ranavirus vaccine or treatment. Quarantining infected animals and sterilizing equipment are the best defences against the spread of ranavirus.

If you find a turtle or another species that is displaying symptoms, please contact the Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative (CWHC), online at [http://www.cwhc-rcsf.ca/report\\_submit.php](http://www.cwhc-rcsf.ca/report_submit.php). For more information, see their factsheet online at [http://www.cwhc-rcsf.ca/fact\\_sheets.php](http://www.cwhc-rcsf.ca/fact_sheets.php).

#### "Bee" Careful What You Buy

Based on testing conducted by Friends of the Earth Canada, flowering, ornamental plants from some major retailers in Ontario (such as Canadian Tire, Home Depot and Rona) contained residues of "Class 9" cosmetic pesticides, including at least one bee-killing neonicotinoid (neonic). Class 9 pesticides have been banned for cosmetic use in Ontario for nearly a decade

because of their potential to cause harm to human health, especially to children, as well as the environment.

Ecojustice urged Ontario's Minister of the Environment to launch an investigation into garden centres carrying plants that contain a harmful class of pesticides, but this call was rejected. That is why the case against the federal government for failure to properly regulate these pesticides is so important.

### **Boreal Caribou**

In Ontario and nationally, Boreal Caribou are classified as threatened. The Boreal Caribou is also considered an umbrella species. This means protecting their habitat benefits a wide range of other plants and animals that rely on boreal forest ecosystems. Science shows caribou need vast tracts of old conifer forest to avoid predators. But forest fragmentation, primarily caused by resource extraction and associated access roads and corridors, remains a key threat to the Boreal Caribou's survival in managed, that is to say logged, forests.

Despite this, forestry lobbyists have sowed seeds of doubt about the science, resulting in stalled recovery measures. They deny the problem exists by suggesting that Boreal Caribou shouldn't be listed as a species at risk, disregarding assessments by scientific experts, deny their responsibility by questioning whether logging is linked to caribou decline, and claim that the problem is too costly to resolve.

Click on this link to read the peer-reviewed journal article online, co-authored by Julee Boan of Ontario Nature: [\*From climate to caribou: How manufactured uncertainty is affecting wildlife management.\*](#)

### **Porcupine Caribou Cross-Border Herd**

Every spring one of the largest land migrations in the world takes place as Porcupine Caribou cross Canada's Yukon and Northwest Territories to their calving grounds, located in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska. U.S. President Trump wants to open up the refuge to drill for oil and gas that will threaten the calving grounds of the Porcupine Caribou herd. It is also the main livelihood of the Gwich'in people, whose traditional territory also straddles the border. Many voices have been raised in both countries to try to kill this threat to an area that was previously protected from oil and gas development before it kills the caribou forever.

## **Environmental Legislation**

### **Carbon Pricing and Climate Change**

In late July the Ford government introduced Bill 4, the *Cap and Trade Cancellation Act, 2018*, which is at the second reading stage in the Legislature. The Bill aims to

repeal Ontario's *Climate Change Mitigation and Low-carbon Economy Act, 2016* and dismantle Ontario's climate change mitigation plan and greenhouse gas emission reduction targets. What is worrisome is that the government has done so without a plan to introduce a replacement policy for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The province expects to be paying out \$5 million in compensation as it leaves the joint carbon-pricing auction, a sum critics warn is unrealistically low. Ontario Environment Minister Rod Phillips said the moves should help the Progressive Conservatives fulfill their campaign promise to reduce gasoline prices by 10 cents a litre and could save the average family \$260 a year.

Cap and trade brought in \$1.9 billion annually to the provincial treasury, with all proceeds going toward environmental programs such as retrofitting schools and homes and subsidizing electric cars. Those initiatives have already been cancelled. The Ford government also announced it will join Saskatchewan in a costly lawsuit on carbon taxing against the federal government.

Ecojustice, in partnership with Greenpeace, announced they were suing the Ford government for breaking the law when it cancelled Ontario's cap and trade program. In its haste to dismantle the province's climate legislation and gut a program designed to reduce greenhouse gas pollution, the Ford government did not fulfill its responsibilities under the *Environmental Bill of Rights (EBR)*.

Hours after the lawsuit was filed, the government opened up a public comment period. Now's your chance to voice your concerns. The Clean Economy Alliance, which includes Ontario Nature, has written to Premier Ford asking for a climate change plan for Ontario. You can read the letter in the Ontario Nature blog of Sept. 14, online at <https://ontarionature.org/missing-a-climate-change-plan-for-ontario/>.

### **Fisheries Act and**

### **Canadian Environmental Assessment Act**

This summer the House of Commons passed two environmental law bills, which are now under review by the Senate.

Bill C-68 proposes amendments to the *Fisheries Act*, largely fulfilling the Trudeau Liberal government's election promise to restore legal protection of fish habitat removed by the previous Harper Conservative government.

Bill C-69 proposes replacing the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (CEAA)* with a new *Impact Assessment Act*, and replacing the *National Energy Board Act* with a new *Canadian Energy Regulator Act*. It also proposes amending the *Navigation*

*Protection Act.* Bill C-69 includes important reforms such as emphasizing sustainability and a single-agency approach to assessing resource projects, eliminating rules restricting public participation in hearings, and establishing a legislative framework for conducting regional and strategic impact assessments. Thanks to submissions by many environmental groups, the committee stage successfully added several helpful amendments to Bill C-69. The government's mandate in administering the Act is expanded to include respect for commitments to the rights of the Indigenous peoples of Canada, and to exercise powers to adhere to principles of scientific integrity, honesty, objectivity, thoroughness and accuracy.

### Canadian Environmental Protection Act

Despite being regularly reviewed, the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act* (CEPA) has not been substantially updated in almost 20 years. The current review period for amendments to CEPA has come to an end and the minister has announced that there will be no bill to amend CEPA until a future parliament.

However, the recommendations of many environmental groups and individuals have been acknowledged. The House of Commons Environment Committee's report, tabled last year, included 87 substantial recommendations to improve the Act and its implementation. The response by the federal Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, Catherine McKenna, also recognized that Canadians want to see the right to a healthy environment enshrined in federal law and policy, and committed to further study the issue during the next two years. Click on these links for the online versions of the [Environment Committee report](#) and [Minister McKenna's response](#).

### Your Executive for 2018-2020

#### Elected Positions

**Jeanne Bénéteau**, President  
**Judy Ritchie**, Vice President  
**Doug Jagger**, Past President  
**Linda Gilkes**, Past Treasurer  
**VACANT** - Recording Secretary  
**VACANT** - Membership Secretary

#### Appointed Volunteer Positions

**Rick Berry**, Executive at Large  
**Sylvia Bowman**, Conservation Director and Speakers  
**Linda Gilkes**, Archives  
**Jay Gutteridge**, Internet Director  
**Judy Ritchie**, Stewardship Liaison to Ontario Nature  
**Melissa Rosato**, Advertising Director  
**Flo Sparling**, Refreshments  
**Janet Thompson**, Newsletter Editor

## Summer Birding

*Photos by David Eaton*



*Great Egrets  
McKenzie Marsh, Aurora, July*



*Black-crowned Night-Heron  
McKenzie Marsh, Aurora, July*



*Trumpeter Swan  
Aurora Arboretum, July*

*Editor's note: Dave Eaton has just published a book of his many fine photos taken at Cawthra Mulock. He will be bringing a copy to the meeting if you'd like to see it and order one for yourself.*

## Field Notes

### Hungry Hawk

By Bridget Vogan



*Sharp-shinned Hawk*  
Photo by Bridget Vogan

This Sharp-shinned Hawk was an unwelcome visitor to our backyard bird feeders for a couple of days in late September. Unfortunately, he was not eating the sunflower seeds! He was obviously accustomed to hunting at feeders. He was adept at pushing the frightened birds into our window. In this shot he was taking a break in our silver maple. He was so still you hardly could find him . . . the empty feeders gave him away.

### Special Spider

By Jeanne Bénéteau



*Cross Orb Weaver Spider*  
Photo by Jeanne Bénéteau

This Cross Orb Weaver Spider was outside my window all summer.

### Funky Fungi in Kirkus Woods, Simcoe County

Photos by Paul Cray



*Lion's Mane fungus*



*Icicle fungus*



*Dead sapling with Turkey Tail fungus on top (see p. 1)*

## Marvellous Monarchs

*Story and photos by Janet Thompson*

This summer for the first time, I had the joy of watching the monarch life cycle on milkweed plants in my garden.



This female monarch is gripping the top surface of the leaf while hovering to lay her eggs on the underside.



After hanging for a while, the caterpillar sheds its skin to become a pupa and a chrysalis hardens around it.



The growing caterpillars eat large semicircles in milkweed leaves (but not the leaves of other plants!).



The metamorphosis is almost complete – you can see the dark shape of the butterfly inside.



When a caterpillar is ready to turn into a pupa, it hangs in a J shape from the underside of a leaf (of any plant).



The adult butterfly has emerged and the chrysalis is empty.