



*Cultivating an appreciation of nature
through learning and action*

THE HERON

FALL 2019

Newsletter of the
York Simcoe Nature Club

Proud member of
**Ontario
Nature**

President's Message

By Jeanne Bénéteau

We started the new season with a wonderful General Meeting celebrating our 20-year anniversary. We had a lovely cake and a special edition of *The Heron* for members. The local community paper *Snapd* was there for photos. I hope you have a chance to get a copy of the paper! Peter Wukash eloquently said a few moving words about the Club. If you missed September's and October's meetings, a copy of the newsletter will be sent to you in the mail.

We have some excellent guest speakers lined up for you this year. The September speaker, Mary-Kate Whibbs from the Toronto Zoo, had a very interesting and informative topic on freshwater mussels. I found her presentation fascinating! This October, our own member Sue Sherman shared with us her experiences with wildlife in Kenya. November's topic will be on the effects of neonicotinoids on migratory birds. We will also have a short presentation from Paryse Reed, whom we sponsored to go to the Youth Summit. Come December, Doug Jagger will do a presentation of the nature in the South American Cone. We have many great leads for speakers for the new year also.

As a special project, we will continue to fundraise to send a student to the September 2020 Youth Summit. Any moneys left over at the end of the year will be sent to another nature-related organization. If you have a



*Trumpeter Swans, McKenzie Marsh, Aurora, Sept. 21
Photo by David Eaton*

suggestion of an organization, please let us know. We welcome your input in the club's activities.

As stewards, we are continuing the inspections at the Cawthra Mulock Reserve. Thank you to the members who are volunteering to do this. The fall periwinkle pull has been cancelled due to construction and will resume in April. We are working on getting high school students to join us in the task.

I hope you enjoy this issue of *The Heron*. Please let us know your thoughts. We appreciate your feedback. Happy reading!

Club News

YSN Membership Report

By Janet Thompson and Linda Gilkes

Happy Anniversary!



We celebrated our 20th anniversary with cake on Sept. 10



Photo of executive and long-time members courtesy of snapd

*Front: Sylvia Bowman, Amy Wright, Sharon Hamilton, Cathryn Rees, Jeanne Bénéteau, Sheila Gick
Back: Doug Jagger, Janet Thompson, Linda Gilkes, Bill Cormode
Not shown: Peter Wukasch*

Membership Fees Due

Membership fees are due at the beginning of the fiscal year on June 1. So far, we have received renewals for only 24 of the 42 memberships we had last year.

If you have not yet done so, please renew as soon as possible. Fees are \$40 for a single membership and \$45 for a family. Your money pays for renting the hall, booking the speakers, buying insurance, and other costs.

Without you, there is no club. Thank you for your support.

Social Activities

On Oct. 5, Sylvia and Al hosted our second “Pot Luck BBQ” at their place in Holland Landing. Again, we enjoyed lots of tasty dishes and desserts. Al worked his wonders on the BBQ, flipping hamburgers and veggie burgers.

Sylvia led us on a hike through her property to the Rogers Reservoir Meadow Restoration Project located beside the Nokiidaa Trail. Lori McLean oversaw this project that was implemented by the Lake Simcoe Conservation Authority.

Many thanks go out to Sylvia and Al for hosting this event and Lori for sharing information with us about the meadow restoration.



Next Meetings

- Tues. Nov. 12, 2019** --- Tehmeena Chowdry
“Exposure of Migratory Birds to Neonicotinoids in Natural and Agricultural Nest Sites”
- Tues. Dec. 10, 2019** --- Doug Jagger
.....“Nature of the South American Cone”
- Tues. Jan. 14, 2020** --- Paul Harpley
“Climate Change”

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

Cawthra Mulock Nature Reserve

Stewardship Report

By Rick Berry

A major step forward has been taken to make the Reserve more accessible to people of all abilities, including those requiring visual or mobility access. Ontario Nature secured funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation to construct an accessible trail and move the parking lot up to the area of the gatehouse just off Bathurst Street.

During the month of September, the trails were closed to the public and a contractor brought in heavy equipment to clear the way for the new trail and install a compressed limestone surface.

While work remains to fully complete the trail, the Reserve is now open to the public once again. The new trail begins at the relocated parking lot.



New kiosk, parking lot and trail entrance

This is a real accomplishment in making nature more accessible to everyone. It has the added benefit for our club of eliminating the difficulties we had with the old parking lot and narrow access road.

Ontario Nature Trail Tour

By Janet Thompson

On Oct. 19, Ontario Nature invited the club's Stewardship Team and other guests to have a "sneak peek" at the new trails. It was a lovely day to be out and the walk was enjoyed by everyone.

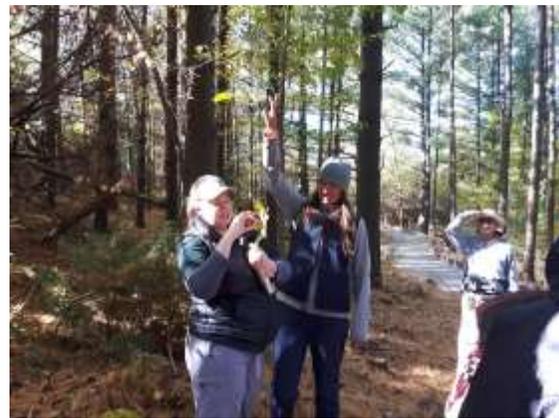
Staff from Ontario Nature and one of the trail builders gave very interesting insights into the construction of accessible trails, including drainage, slope and design. The new trails form a closed loop and go through a scenic wooded area. They are laid out in curves rather than straight lines for more interest, and include both hand ropes and foot boards to alert people with visual impairments to where the edge is. In places where the hand rails switch from left to right, there is a rubber grid

embedded in the gravel to indicate the change. As for drainage, they discovered a blocked weeping tile under the old access road which is why it flooded all the time. They have corrected this with a rocky swale.

The old access road is still open for those on foot to allow them to reach the old trails. The next stage of construction is to refurbish some sections of those existing trails. The south section of the Green trail around the pond will be closed.



Dave Naulls (at right) of Diggin' the Dirt, a contractor to Treadscape Trail Design



Tanya Pulfer (left) and Kirsten Dahl (centre) of Ontario Nature



Conservation News

By Sylvia Bowman

Many of the issues in the news since our last newsletter in June are very important and we need to pay attention to them. There are so many important issues --- local, national and global --- it is difficult to know which ones to draw to your attention.

Think Globally, Act Locally

One Earth, One Vote

Now that the federal election is over, our government faces increasing challenges. In the next five years, Canada and the world will face critical decisions. With the twin global crises of species loss and climate change looming, we must act urgently to uphold environmental protection and ensure a safe future for all.

The world hit a scary new record this summer, with researchers reporting that global temperatures in July 2019 officially made it the hottest month ever recorded. This past spring, the Canadian government released its Changing Climate Report, which found that, between 1948 and 2016, Canada warmed 1.7°C, double the global rate. In the North, the temperature is changing even faster, at three times the global average. This rapid change already harms Canadians' health, security and well-being. Furthermore, these impacts disproportionately affect people living in the North, Indigenous peoples, seniors, people living in poverty, those with chronic health conditions, and other vulnerable members of society.

Ontario Nature has suggested the following seven priorities for the federal government:

1. Commit to increasing climate emission reduction targets so that they meet Canada's obligations under the Paris Climate Agreement and are in line with preventing a global temperature rise of more than 1.5°C.
2. Commit to protecting at least 17% of Canada's lands and inland waters by 2020, in accordance with our international obligations as a party to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity.
3. Next year, Canada and other parties to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity will be renegotiating a new global target for protected areas. Champion a global target of protecting at least 30% of land, freshwater and ocean by 2030 and adopt these in Canada.
4. Ontario has gutted its Endangered Species Act. Protect Canada's at-risk plants and animals by using the federal Species at Risk Act to step in where provinces are failing to protect species facing imminent threats.
5. Commit to operating in a manner that is consistent with Canada's commitment to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as well as the "calls to action" of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.
6. Neonicotinoid pesticides are known to negatively impact pollinators, causing direct mortality and impairing navigation, learning, food collection, resistance to disease and reproduction. Implement an immediate ban on all neonicotinoid pesticides, and support farmers to transition to safer alternatives.
7. Almost all Canadians believe that Canada should recognize the legal right to a healthy environment, as is the case in more than 150 countries worldwide. The right to a healthy environment results in stronger environmental laws, better enforcement of those laws and a greater public role in environmental decision-making. Introduce legislation to create a federal Environmental Bill of Rights.

National News (Good)

New Federal Money for Conservation

In August the federal government announced a massive injection of new funding for conservation projects across the country aimed at helping Canada meet its commitment to protect 17% of terrestrial areas by 2020. The government committed \$175-million to help support 67 conservation projects over four years as part of the Nature Fund Challenge.

Whales and Dolphins

In June the federal government passed Bill S203 banning the captivity of whales and dolphins for entertainment.

Plastics Update

Recent news stories have focused on the amount of microplastics — up to 121,000 plastic particles — the average person consumes each year. We have also seen the damage plastic can do to our rivers, lakes and oceans, killing wildlife and damaging our ecosystems. Canada's recycling system is also broken, with only 9% of the 3.2 million tonnes of plastic waste generated each year in Canada being recycled. The rest — almost 2.8 million tonnes of waste — ends up in Canadian landfills.

Last year, on behalf of several environmental organizations from across Canada, Ecojustice submitted a legal request to the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change asking that she use Canada's primary pollution law, the Canadian Environment Protection Act (CEPA), to crack down on plastic pollution. They asked

that the Minister add single-use plastics, microplastics, and plastic microfibers to the Priority Substance List under CEPA, which would then require a thorough assessment of these substances' impact on the environment and human health. Despite a legal requirement to respond to their request within 90 days, over a year has gone by without a response.

Ecojustice appeared before MPs on the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development in Ottawa to advocate for using CEPA to obtain a healthy environment for all Canadians, free from the dangers of plastics. The Standing Committee produced a strong report and made a number of recommendations, including:

- the federal government should commit to banning single-use plastic;
- Canada should meet the goal of zero plastic waste by 2030;
- producers should be responsible for the plastic that they produce; and
- the Department of Finance Canada should eliminate fossil fuel subsidies which go to producing plastic.

On June 10, following the Standing Committee's report, the federal government announced that it plans to ban single-use plastics as early as 2021.

Provincial News (Bad)

More Homes, More Choice Act

In June the Government of Ontario passed the More Homes, More Choice Act, a law that opens critical wildlife habitat to sprawl development through amendments to the Endangered Species Act, 2007 (ESA). The amendments give new powers to the Minister to delay, limit and remove protections for at-risk species. Further, it creates numerous, overlapping pathways for developers and industrialists to dodge critical requirements. In the face of growing opposition to the proposed law, the provincial government chose to ram the bill through the Legislature, curtailing debate and ignoring the serious concerns of:

- 86 scientists
- 50,000-plus letters and phone calls opposing Schedule 5 of the bill
- 28 authors, musicians, Indigenous Peoples, businesses and environmental organizations
- resistance from municipalities
- three opposition parties and a developer

The gutting of the ESA does not reflect the values or long-term interests of the people of Ontario. The haste

with which the government proceeded ensured that Ontarians would have no say in the outcome and eliminate future opportunities for public input under the Environmental Registry of Ontario.

Increased Hunting of Wolves and Coyotes

In September the Government of Ontario proposed to open up hunting of wolves and coyotes across the north. They claim that it's to address the declining moose populations. But the evidence doesn't add up.

Scientists already agree that this strategy does not work. Coyotes don't consume moose in significant numbers to begin with. Changes to hunting rules and practices have arguably had the greatest impact on moose populations. Wolves, coyotes and moose have lived together in a complex predator-prey relationship for thousands of years. This relationship naturally regulates itself, benefitting each species and the ecosystems they rely on.

The government's proposal is lacking in any scientific justification or evidence. There are no population management targets and no rationale for the proposed increase in hunting. Read Ontario Nature's [latest blog](#) to learn more about the reasons why this proposal should not go forward.

Boreal Caribou

A key threat to boreal caribou is the loss of habitat needed to provide enough space for mating, rearing young and evading predators. Some residents of forestry-dependent communities and their elected officials have expressed opposition to caribou recovery planning, as they fear it will result in job losses, mill closures and a reduction in the industrial tax base. Ontario Nature recently released a joint report, *[How Can We Protect Critical Caribou Habitat and Support Forestry Jobs in Ontario?](#)*, that explores how we can protect critical caribou habitat while addressing the concerns of forestry-dependent communities.

International News (Ugly)

Fires

Since August, fires in the Amazon rainforest have been raging out of control. The cause: farmers and loggers illegally slashing and burning trees for cattle ranching and other crops. The rainforest is home to an estimated 10% of the total biodiversity on the planet. With over 10,000 fires burning, threatening thousands of animals, some species may never recover.

Now there are also fires in Indonesia, all for more palm oil plantations that threaten the remaining orangutans. The government there finally is beginning to act to put the fires out after an international outcry and disruption of flights in the area.

Overconsumption

Every year, scientists calculate the date at which we've consumed more natural resources than the planet can regenerate. This year it's July 29. Barely 25 years ago was it October 21. It gets earlier every year. It means we are pumping out carbon and chewing through nature faster than the Earth can handle. The planet is finite — it cannot handle never-ending, unlimited growth.

Be Informed

There are many ways to get information on the issues. There are several links embedded in parts of this report. They contain a wealth of information from short articles to lengthy government and United Nations reports.

There are many organizations with great websites, such as Ontario Nature, Nature Canada, World Animal Protection, Ecojustice, Environmental Defence, Rescue Lake Simcoe Coalition, Lake Simcoe Watch, Greenbelt Coalition and AWARE Simcoe, that have great information on local, provincial and national issues. Many of them have newsletters to which you can subscribe.



*Moose family, Rock Lake, Algonquin Park, Sept. 30
Photo by Al Bowman*



*White Coral Fungus, Cawthra Mulock Nature Reserve, Sept. 27
Photo by Rick Berry*

Your Executive for 2019-2020

Elected Positions

- President.....**Jeanne Bénéteau**
- Vice President..... Vacant
- Treasurer.....**Linda Gilkes**
(and archives)
- Membership Secretary.....**Janet Thompson**
(and newsletter editor)
- Recording Secretary.....**Sylvia Bowman**
(and conservation, speakers, and Ontario Nature liaison)
- Past President.....**Doug Jagger**

Appointed Volunteer Positions

- Executive at Large.....**Rick Berry**
(and Stewardship Coordinator)
- Internet Director.....**Jay Gutteridge**
- Refreshments.....**Flo Sparling**



*Egret, McKenzie Marsh, Aurora, Sept. 14
Photo by David Eaton*

Field Notes

From Jeanne Bénéteau



Black Swallowtail caterpillar, Aug. 24 (note shed skin)

Janet Thompson's Garden



Eastern Tiger Swallowtail, July 27 (note striped body)



Painted Lady, Sept. 25



Meadowhawk dragonfly, Aug. 3



Common Buckeye, Sept. 25



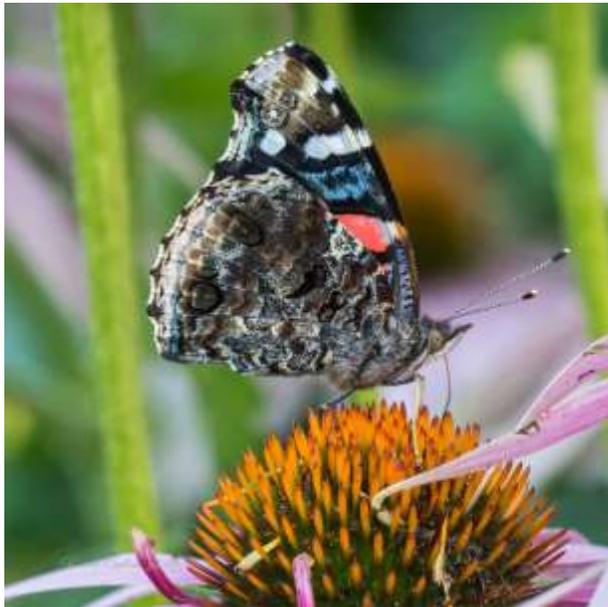
Diurnal Firefly, July 2

Dave Eaton's Garden

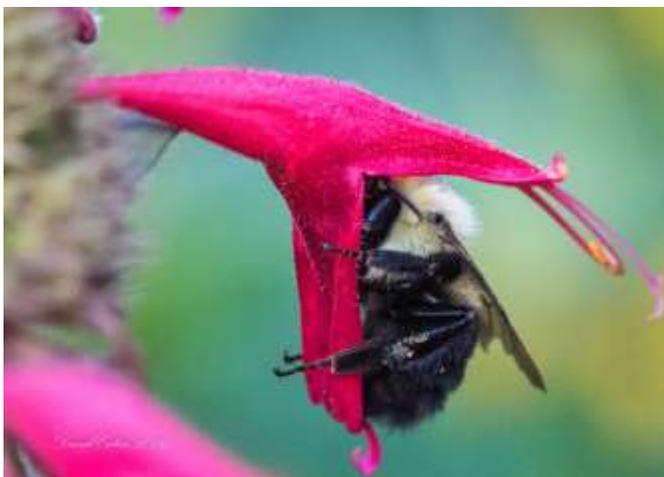
Dave Eaton's Trip to Newfoundland



Hummingbird Moth, Aug. 18



Red Admiral, Aug. 18



Bumblebee, Aug. 18



Northern Gannets, July 11



Puffins, July 14



Red Fox, July 13