



THE HERON

FALL 2014

Newsletter of the
York-Simcoe Naturalists



Trumpeter swans

Photo by Allan Bowman

President's Message

By Doug Jagger

I hope that you all had a healthy and enjoyable summer despite the sometimes cool and wet conditions. Maybe you experienced something special to create a new memory --- perhaps a beautiful flower, a particular bird, an animal or a walk in the woods. Regardless, autumn is a great time to enjoy nature.

The club has started the fall and winter schedule of events. There is a line-up of great speakers as shown on the enclosed list. We are in the process of organizing some outings. Stay tuned.

As well, we are engaging more fully with Ontario Nature to ensure upgrades such as access road improvement, signage and boardwalks are completed more expeditiously than in the past at the Cawthra Mulock Nature Reserve. Trail maintenance is an ongoing issue at the Reserve.

These undertakings require money. To help with the funding we have designated our special donation program this year to the Reserve. There is a decorated can that Sheila has on the membership table in which to put your donations.

This fall edition of the newsletter contains many interesting and informative articles on the club. I hope you enjoy reading them. Yet, just as important, I hope that you continue to come to the meetings and maybe bring a friend.

Fall/Winter Meetings

Tues. Nov. 11

Laura Bowman on the Proposed
Invasive Species Act

Tues. Dec. 9

Jeff Shore on Fossils

Tues. Jan. 13

Ken Vogan on Costa Rica

Tues. Feb. 10

Andrew McCammon from the
Ontario Headwaters Institute

7:30 p.m., River Drive Park Community Centre
20 Oak Avenue, north of Queensville Sideroad
River Drive Park, East Gwillimbury

Your Executive for 2014 -- 2016

Elected Positions

Doug Jagger, President

Jeanne Bénéteau, Vice President

Kimberly Murphy, Recording Secretary

Linda Gilkes, Treasurer

Sheila Gick, Membership Secretary

Appointed Volunteer Positions

Jeanne Bénéteau, Refreshments

Sylvia Bowman, Conservation Director, Speakers

Linda Gilkes, Archives

Jay Gutteridge, Internet Director

Melissa Rosato, Advertising Director

Janet Thompson, Newsletter Editor

Mike van den Tillaart, Stewardship Liaison to Ontario
Nature

Club News

June Outing

By Doug Jagger



Scanlon Creek outing Photo by Melissa Rosato

At 6:30 p.m. on June 10, 17 club members met at the shelter in Scanlon Creek Conservation Area for a picnic and walk. The weather fully cooperated. Our nature walk incorporated sections of road and trail to form a loop from the picnic shelter. Members pointed out various species including a few Monarch Butterflies and approximately 12 bird species. The plan for a campfire and marshmallows at the end of the walk was abandoned thanks to the hordes of hungry mosquitoes. It was a good idea. Thanks to all who were able to participate in this outing.



Spotted at Scanlon Creek
Left: Indigo Bunting; Right: Monarch Butterfly
Details of photos by Melissa Rosato

Help Wanted

By Doug Jagger

Yes, you read it correctly. The executive is seeking a person or persons to organize the refreshments at our monthly meetings. Jeanne and George, who have looked after refreshments for several years, would like to “retire” from the position. Please consider our request as we do need your help. You can contact me, Jeanne or any of the other executive.

YSN Membership

By Sheila Gick

Thanks to Sharon Hamilton’s hard work and enthusiasm over the past many years, the YSN club finished the year 2013/14 with a membership of 40 people! She met her target, no surprise to me. So, as your “newbie” membership person on the executive, I would like to set a new goal of 50 members for the 2014/15 year. The membership year runs from May 2014 to April 2015. After the Sept. 9 meeting, we had 29 members paid up, so a very good start.

The club has been able to hold membership fees to the level of last year --- \$25 per Single Membership and \$30 for a Family Membership. For this, a member gets informative speakers each month at a lively meeting where there are displays, free materials, delicious refreshments and the comradeship of like-minded people from many surrounding communities. As well, there are many other organized activities as well as the ongoing stewardship of the Cawthra Mulock Nature Reserve.

Over the past few years we have, as a group, joined in the support of a recognized association working for the maintenance and support of local wildlife --- the Owl Foundation, the Turtle Trauma Centre, and Shades of Hope. This year, the executive have decided to collect donations to our own stewardship program for the Cawthra Mulock Nature Reserve. There is much work to be done there and it takes funds to do so. There will be more discussion on the projects for the year at future meetings. Drop a loonie or toonie in the decorated can on the membership desk when you pick up your name tag. Thanks for making change possible.

Get involved in your Club, in all the activities and opportunities, **and** bring out a friend to introduce them to our wonderful club! A guest may attend a couple of times before joining, so that they get a taste of the wonderful club we are.

Looking forward to seeing you at the “desk” and getting to know you.



Scanlon Creek outing Photo by Melissa Rosato

The Carrot Festival

By Jeanne Bénéteau



Photo by George Bénéteau

This past August, YSN participated at Bradford's Carrot Festival for the first time with the goal of bringing more awareness of our club to the public and to try to recruit more members.

When I applied to the Town of Bradford for a booth, I was made aware that 25% of the display had to incorporate the carrot theme. My first thought to this challenge was for the members attending to wear an orange T-shirt and have a green tablecloth. But I didn't think this would keep the carrot police happy. I decided to do a bit of research on the wild carrot, a.k.a. Queen Anne's Lace. I typed out some of my findings and displayed them next to the club's information on the display panels. I also went out to gather the most beautiful flower heads of Queen Anne's Lace I could find, and made a lovely bouquet for the table.

The day started out with nice weather, but ominous clouds began to loom. George and I set up the booth and our vendor neighbours assured us that no amount of terrible weather would keep the people away. They were right! Many people arrived, young and old, from all corners of the region and beyond. To our delight, since we were not selling any goods, the bouquet of flowers attracted many people to come and see what we were all about. (I felt a little sorry for my bouquet, however, when a nice lady discreetly told me, "they really aren't very nice flowers, are they. . .").

Many people showed a lot of interest in the club, and also praised us for the work the club was doing and for bringing environmental awareness and issues to the people. I was surprised that some people had not heard about us and that they had wanted to join a nature club like ours. Many people did not know about the Cawthra Mulock Nature Reserve either. A

couple of people were relieved to know we were naturalists, and not naturists. I was relieved myself. *Not* that there is anything wrong with naturists . . .

Later on, Bridget and Ken Vogan came to relieve us. Unfortunately, that's when the rain started to come down, but they came prepared with their gear. Through the rain, they talked to more people about the club. Alas, the rain began to be unrelenting and even though carrots were probably happy, it was time to call it a day.

What I learned about this day is that there are a great many people who are concerned about the environment and love nature. Even though they are very busy and cannot attend our meetings, they do find clubs like ours worthwhile and important.

And did you know the wild carrot root is very sweet, is used to sweeten pudding in some cultures, and can be used as a vegetable in soups and stews? It is also, in my opinion, very pretty.



Photo by George Bénéteau

Holland Landing Library Wellness Festival



Photo by Christine Kalan-Tidman

YSN also had a booth at the second annual wellness festival held on June 21 at the Holland Landing branch of the East Gwillimbury library. YSN members Donna and Christine were at the table and helped to spread the word about the club.

Conservation News

By Sylvia Bowman

Rouge National Park

The federal government has come out with their proposed legislation for a Rouge National Park. There are much weaker protections in the proposed Act than those governing the rest of the national parks. Stakeholder groups recently met with Brad Duguid, the provincial minister responsible for the park. He has agreed not to hand over provincial lands to the federal government unless they meet or exceed provincial standards as previously agreed to in a joint memorandum of understanding. Minister Aglukkaq replied that they thought they had great standards in effect and if the province doesn't hand over the lands they will go it alone with the federal lands they own. In the meantime Ontario Nature, Friends of the Rouge, Eco-Justice, CPAWS, Environmental Defense, and STORM are working jointly on proposed amendments to Bill C40 and hope to influence the government to make changes.

Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority (LSRCA)

Maskinonge River Recovery Project

On Sat. Oct. 25 they are holding a planting event in Keswick at the Glendower Pond from 9:00 a.m. to noon. To pre-register contact Brittany Ballagh at b.ballagh@LSRCA.on.ca.

They are also holding two fall workshops focusing on things you can do on your own property to enhance the environment whether you live on a watercourse or not. One is in East Gwillimbury at the Ross Family Complex in Mount Albert on Wed. Nov. 12 from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., and the second one is on Sat. Nov. 15 from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. at the Presbyterian Church on Woodbine Ave. in Keswick. You must pre-register for these as above with Brittany. You will receive a package of info and a potted Christmas tree you can plant in your garden.

Friends of Scanlon Creek

They continue to hold events at Scanlon Creek. They held a very successful fund-raising run on Sept. 19. This is a sanctioned run and attracted many serious runners. They hope this will be an annual event. Their next event is a bird-watching workshop on Sat. Oct. 18 from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Local Groups

Ontario Greenbelt Alliance

They held a meeting on Sept. 12. They are working on their submissions on the 2015 review of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, Niagara Escarpment Plan and the Greenbelt Plan. They have the top five concerns they want addressed. They have a set of questions to ask municipal politicians during the election.

Save the Oak Ridges Moraine (STORM)

STORM is also working with a collaborative made up of Eco-Spark, Earthroots and Ontario Nature to do outreach to citizens on the moraine to raise awareness that there are still issues to be addressed in the three plans in the 2015 review. They recently held an event at Purple Woods Conservation Area on the moraine on Sept. 28. This group will also be doing a submission to the 2015 review.

Ontario Soil Regulation Task Force (OSRTF)

This group also has a set of questions for municipal politicians, and are soliciting municipal support for provincial legislation on movement of soils in Ontario. SLAPP suits are also an issue for this group as some of them are being sued because of working on fill issues in their communities.

Ontario Nature

Report on Aggregate Extraction

In addition to the items mentioned above, Ontario Nature has also recently released the report, Bioregional Planning for Aggregate Extraction in the Townships of Uxbridge and Scugog. It outlines a project to be undertaken for comprehensive gravel pit rehabilitation of a large number of pits in that area. This report was sent to you if you want more information.

Huronian Fall Regional Meeting

It was held on Oct. 4 in Muskoka hosted by the Muskoka Field Naturalists at Walkers Point Community Center near Hardy Lake Provincial Park. The guest speaker was Peter Sale of the Muskoka Watershed Council. This area does not have a conservation authority. This group tries to fulfill the role that a conservation authority does in other areas to protect the local watershed. People were reminded how important it is to participate in

the upcoming municipal elections and ask the candidates questions about issues in your local area. One issue that was highlighted by Paul Harpley from the South Lake Simcoe Naturalists is the emerging issue of runoff from fields that have had treated sewage waste used as fertilizer applied to them. This year's heavy rain events have caused faster than normal runoff in creeks in Georgina that

showed up as greasy slicks. They are having testing done of these slicks. This material has high bacterial counts and oils and residual pharmaceuticals in it. This may be happening in other areas as well. In the afternoon we took a mushroom foray in Hardy Lake Provincial Park. Remember all club members are welcome to go to Ontario Nature's spring and fall regional meetings.

Field Notes

Swift Watch



Chimney Swift

Photo by Melissa Rosato

Over several weeks in May and June, Melissa, Jeanne, George and Doug went looking (and listening) for chimney swifts. This photo was taken on June 3 at dusk and shows the chimney of the parish offices of St. John Chrysostom church on Main Street in Newmarket. Up to seven swifts were spotted flying at a time and three came in to roost.

Baillie Birdathon

By Doug Jagger

On May 22, Ken Vogan, Peter Wukasch, John Schnelefske and I headed north to Tiny Marsh Provincial Wildlife Area to start our Baillie Birdathon at dawn. Dawn in May is 5:30 a.m. Dawn did not turn out as planned. The marsh was enshrouded with a thick fog which significantly reduced our bird sightings. The highlight at the marsh was a close-up view of a Virginia Rail.

Undeterred, we continued to Wasaga Beach Provincial Park. Fortunately the fog had lifted. However, except for a Piping Plover the shorebirds which we were hoping for were absent. Oh well. It was onto Collingwood Harbour where we were rewarded by another 15 species including some of the ducks we missed at Tiny Marsh. By late morning we had obtained permission to enter into

the Stayner Sewage Lagoon area. The lagoons yielded our shorebirds, some more ducks and our highlight which was a Sora. Our total was now over 100 species.

Under clear skies and warm temperatures, we drove east and north through Orillia to the Carden Plain where we finished the day to the late evening call of the Common Nighthawk. It was a tired band of birders that returned home around 11:00 p.m.

Our accomplishment was 123 species and about \$1,600.00 raised for Bird Studies Canada, of which the club will receive about \$400.00. Thank you to the club members that supported us.

Would we do it again? See you next year!

Summer Insects

Photos by Melissa Rosato

