



THE HERON

WINTER 2015

Newsletter of the
York-Simcoe Naturalists



Awards presentation November 2014
Photo by Melissa Rosato

President's Message

By Doug Jagger

Happy New Year – a little belated but still relevant as we manage our way through the winter months. For most nature lovers this is the dormant season unless you travel to warmer, more southern areas. We know you as Snow Birds.

Speaking of birds, we certainly have those species which linger through our winter to brighten our spirits. Just listen for that hearty but joyful “chickadee-dee-dee” or the raucous call of the Blue Jay or the soft pecking of a Downy Woodpecker. Yes these are just a few of the birds which you might encounter on a winter walk through the woods. These are also birds you may have at your feeder stations. Club members are reporting this year that some feeders are quite busy while other members say there is a paucity of birds.

Some of our members participated in the annual Christmas Bird Count for our area on December 29. On that day there were 45 species of birds identified. The fact that Lake Simcoe was not frozen meant that ducks and geese were still around. And oh yes, there was a sighting of a Common Loon. The Snowy Owl is present again in our area. If you are interested in seeing this owl,

one of the most reliable areas is the marsh from Ravenshoe Road and Yonge Street in Keswick.

This fall/winter we have had some great speakers on interesting and timely topics. Laura Bowman gave us an update on the Invasive Species Act in November. Our December speaker Geoff Shore did a show and tell on fossils that can be found in certain rocks in our area. If you ever thought about or have been to Costa Rica, you will likely be anxious to go there after Ken Vogan's presentation in January. We had 39 people attend the January meeting. There are more great speakers on interesting topics scheduled for the winter/spring which you do not want to miss. See the insert for details.

In November, the club presented awards to Doug Osborne, Sharon Hamilton and Kevin Shackleton for their contributions to the club. See p. 3 for more details.

I thank you for your ongoing support of the York-Simcoe Naturalists and look forward to seeing you at our meetings.

Winter/Spring Meetings

Tues. Feb. 10

Andrew McCammon from the
Ontario Headwaters Institute

Tues. Mar. 10

Cindy Cartwright from
Hummingbirds Ontario

Tues. Apr. 14

Phyllis Tremblay from
Brereton Field Naturalists on
Chimney Swifts

Tues. May 12

Peter Wukasch on
Sounds of the Swamp

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

Club News

Changes to the Executive

By Doug Jagger

Rick Berry was elected as Recording Secretary to replace Kimberly Murphy. Kim was not attending meetings and not responding to communication from the executive since June last year. Thus it was necessary to replace her to maintain a functioning executive.

The other executive change was for refreshments. Flo Sparling has graciously agreed to take over from Jeanne Beneteau. We thank Jeanne along with her supporting husband George for looking after refreshments at our meeting for the past few years.

YSN Membership

By Sheila Gick

Welcome to 2015! The club is steadily increasing its memberships. As of the January meeting, we have 42 memberships. Of these, 18 are family and 24 are single memberships. This means that, in fact, we have 60+ members! And many of these are active members coming to our meetings, as the numbers on a frigid night in January showed. The speaker and topic of Costa Rica was no doubt a big draw in mid-winter, but attendance has been great. The majority of the members are returning members with some new ones as well. We need both for a mix of experience and of new ideas and contributions.

Every year the club supports a cause with donations given at our monthly meetings, and this year our cause is our very own Cawthra Mulock reserve. These funds will allow us to continue with trail maintenance and many other improvements to the property. When you pick up and return your name tag at the meetings, drop some change in the decorated can at my table. No amount is too small for the cause. As of the January meeting, we had \$138.00 donated, wonderful.

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

Cawthra Mulock Nature Reserve

By Doug Jagger

York-Simcoe Naturalists is the steward for the reserve and Mike van den Tillaart is our representative with Ontario Nature. Our role includes maintenance, site visitations, annual work

plan development and implementation, sign erection and reporting.

In December Mike filed the 2014 report on the reserve to Ontario Nature. We have extended our Stewardship Agreement with Ontario Nature until December 31, 2015.

Based on a meeting in September with Ontario Nature, they are finalizing the 2015 work plan. The plan was delayed until Ontario Nature had received a decision on funding. Last year the club was prepared to initiate improvements to the access road off Bathurst Street. However, based on the cost of this work and recent garbage dumped along the access road, we are recommending that the parking area be relocated to near the house. A decision on the matter is still pending.

We have alerted Ontario Nature to a stability problem with the new bridge. Some trail maintenance was carried out in December. As well the orange trail will be closed until a boardwalk is constructed through a wet zone.

The feeder tray by the parking lot is a great success not only from the birds using the station but people adding seed to the tray.

Please let Mike or one of the executive know if you see any problems on the reserve or if you have ideas to enhance the reserve. Your donations at the meetings will go towards the reserve.

Gatehouse Update

The Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust is the new tenant of the gatehouse, a group that has long cooperated with Ontario Nature.

Located north of Green Lane/Miller's Sideroad between Bathurst and Dufferin streets, this 108-hectare hidden gem was donated to Ontario Nature in 2003 and has been under the stewardship of YSN since 2007. It is open to the public.



Photo by Rick Berry

Conservation News

By Sylvia Bowman

Rouge National Park

All the proposed amendments to the bill were defeated at the committee stage of second reading. The Liberals and the NDP both voted against the bill at final reading recently, as being inadequate when it comes to protecting the ecological integrity of the park. The groups involved in presentations and joint press releases were: Ontario Nature, Nature Canada, Friends of the Rouge, Environmental Defense, David Suzuki Foundation, CPAWS and STORM.

Local Groups

Strawberry Island

An emerging issue in the Lake Simcoe Watershed is a proposal in Ramara Township to develop 120 condominiums on Strawberry Island. Carden Field Naturalists have a petition going on this topic. See the November issue of Nature Network News for more details.

North Gwillimbury Forest

YSN signed onto support of Jack Gibbon's fact sheet on LSRCA's wetland policy. They will be doing a presentation to the LSRCA board in March or April about their wetland development policy and the improvements needed to prevent development in wetlands. For more information see their website.

Ontario Soil Regulation Task Force (OSRTF)

It appears the government is coming closer to looking at provincial legislation on the movement

of soil. OSRTF are continuing to meet with MPs to promote this idea.

Ontario Nature

Monarch Butterfly Campaign

YSN did a submission in support of Ontario Nature's suggestions for improvement of the provincial government's Monarch butterfly recovery plan. It was rather vague re timelines and areas of responsibility.

Pollinators Campaign

The pollinators campaign spearheaded by the Ontario Nature Youth Council has resulted in new legislation being proposed on restriction of neonicotinoid insecticide use.

Your Executive for 2014 -- 2016

Elected Positions

Doug Jagger, President

Jeanne Bénéteau, Vice President

Rick Berry, Recording Secretary

Sheila Gick, Membership Secretary

Linda Gilkes, Treasurer

Appointed Volunteer Positions

Sylvia Bowman, Conservation Director, Speakers

Linda Gilkes, Archives

Jay Gutteridge, Internet Director

Melissa Rosato, Advertising Director

Flo Sparling, Refreshments

Janet Thompson, Newsletter Editor

Mike van den Tillaart, Stewardship Liaison to Ontario Nature

YSN Awards 2014

Photos by Melissa Rosato



Doug Osborne
for contributing funds towards
the Cawthra Mulock bridge



Sharon Hamilton
for long-term service
on the club executive



Kevin Shackleton
for donating proceeds from
the Baillie Birdathon to the club



TRAILS WALKS 2015 Feb to Sept 2015

Date	Event	Location	Meet
Feb 9:00am	Trail Walk	Brownhill Regional Forest tract	Parking lot on McCowan Rd south of Ravenshoe Rd
March 9:00am	Trail Walk	Anchor Park	Parking lot in Anchor Park off Doane Rd north side in Holland Landing
April 9:00am	Trail Walk	Zephyr Regional Forest tract	Parking lot north side of Holborne Rd east of Highway 48
May 9:00am	Trail Walk	Holland River Trail Green Lane	Parking lot on north side of Green Lane between 2 nd Conc. and Leslie St
June 9:00am	Trail Walk	Vivian Creek Centre St	Parking lot in park east side of Centre St in Mt Albert
July 9:00am	Trail Walk	Cawthra Mulock Nature Reserve	Parking lot east side of Dufferin St north of Miller Side Rd (extension of Green Lane west)
Aug 9:00am	Trail Walk	Holland River Trail	end of Holland River Blvd in Holland Landing, park on road
Sept 9 time TBA	Special event	Simcoe Trail 400th anniversary of Samuel de Champlain's arrival in Ontario	Queen's Court south side of Queensville Side Rd west of Yonge St

Like us on facebook so you can be updated on our upcoming events

Editor's note: East Gwillimbury Trail Walks are on the first Saturday of every month.

See also the schedule for walks in York Region forests at

<http://www.york.ca/wps/portal/yorkhome/environment/yr/forests/outdooreducation/yorkregionalforestwalksandevents>.

FAMILY FUN DAY



Monday, February 16th, 2015
 Nature Centre - 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

kicksled outings * Arrive early to reserve your kicksled.
guided nature hikes
scavenger hunt • **games**
bonfire • **indoor crafts**

• No pre-registration is required. • \$10 per vehicle; no charge with annual pass
 • For more information please contact Wanda Black at: 905-895-1281x222

Scanlon Creek – A Destination for Natural Inspiration



Scanlon Creek Conservation Area
 2450 9th Line
 Bradford West Gwillimbury

Scanlon Creek Conservation Area
 is owned and operated by:



Huron Fringe

Birding Festival

May 22 - May 31, 2015



**One of North America's
Premier Birding &
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