



THE HERON

FALL 2016

Newsletter of the
York-Simcoe Naturalists



*Rock Lake, Algonquin Park
Photo by Allan Bowman*

President's Message

By Jeanne Bénéteau

The summer always begins with the promise of fair weather. There is much to do, and I want to do it all. It is busy with flower gardens, vegetable gardens, boating, canoeing, camping, hiking, and the list continues. But what I enjoy the most is what nature has to offer. I have enjoyed the lovely flowers throughout the summer, my vegetable garden and especially my tomato plants which supplied the family with huge beefsteak tomatoes. One slice of these beauties made the perfect bacon and tomato sandwich! The little hummingbirds are still lingering as they continue to visit the scarlet runner beans which are twisted around the spindles of my deck. I have enjoyed white sulfur butterflies all summer. Had it not been for them, my summer would have been practically butterfly-less. Lastly, there was the singing of the crickets and the cicadas. The summer would not be complete without them.

Now fall is here and my gardens are looking tired. I start to think about the new season and its activities. I find that this gives me renewed energy and excitement: the colourful leaves, a new year at university for my daughter, Zumba classes, cooler nights and . . . YSN meetings!

This new season will be interesting for our club. Here are some of the YSN activities happening this fall.

First, we have exciting guests speakers lined up. We started the new season with an entertaining limnologist, Brian Ginn, who spoke to us about our Lake Simcoe. For October, we will have a representative from START (Saving Turtles At Risk). In November, Michele Williamson from the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change will be speaking on the decline of Ontario's hardwood trees.

Ongoing, there will be nature walks with Doug Jagger at various nature parks. For September, Doug has already brought a small group along a section of the Oak Ridges Moraine Trail through the King Campus of Seneca College.

Exciting news is that the money the club had collected last year for our special project has been used to send one of *our* very own members to Ontario Nature's Youth Summit. Lindsay van Vught spent the weekend of Sept. 23, 24 and 25 with other youths from Ontario. She will be sharing her experience with us at the October meeting. This year, for our special project, we will be collecting donations for Shades of Hope Wildlife Refuge. We will have a small presentation about this important organization at some point in the near future.

One last item to report is that Ontario Nature conducted a periwinkle pull at the Cawthra Mulock Nature Reserve on Sept. 24. They also planted native plants in the areas where the periwinkle has been removed. This complements our efforts in the control of the invasive plant.

So, as we have started the new season, I realize that there is a lot to do and to attend. I am excited and looking forward to our new adventures and not too sad about summer's waning. Having said this, however, I do plan on having one last swim in the warm waters of Lake Simcoe!

Fall 2016 Meetings

Tues. Oct. 11 Saving Turtles At Risk Today (START)

Tues. Nov. 8 Michele Williamson on The Decline of Ontario's Hardwood Trees

Tues. Dec. 13

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

Club News

YSN Membership

By Sheila Gick

Following the September meeting, the YSN Club has received 21 membership renewals as well as 1 new membership.

This club year we are promoting the theme "Membership Matters". We would like to have members fill out a short *satisfaction survey* at one of our meetings, probably November. These completed surveys will give us a picture of you, our current members, and your views of the club. We will use them to make sure we do our best to keep our loyal current members and also to plan how to attract a diversity of new members.

Membership fees are the same as last year, \$25 per Single Membership and \$30 for a Family Membership. We have not increased our fees in years and this encourages people to give a small donation when they can toward our Special Project for that year.

This past year was a bonanza! We collected \$350 to send a teen to the Ontario Youth Summit on the weekend of Sept. 23-25. Lindsay van Vught, daughter of family member Carol Gordon, was chosen to attend and will speak to us in October about her experience. In fact, members collectively donated \$568! We will be topping up the surplus \$218 with \$132 from our reserves to send another candidate in September 2017. It is never too early to promote this opportunity to a teen you know and get a name in to the executive.

This year, we are sponsoring the Shades of Hope Wildlife Refuge in Pepperlaw, Georgina and their director will do a short presentation at our November or December meeting. The donation can sit on the membership desk and every bit of change adds up. There is also a wish list of items they need, so take the list and bring in any of the items you may wish to donate. I will make a trip to Shades of Hope once we have a number of items collected.

Over the summer break, members of the club participated in three Farmers' Markets --- East Gwillimbury, Bradford and Newmarket. Members also worked on projects at the Cawthra Mulock Nature Reserve and you can read about those activities elsewhere in this newsletter.

I hope everyone enjoyed some nature adventures this summer and you are all eager to start a new club year.

In closing, let's all do our best to give our best and also to be on the lookout for more people like us --- interested/curious/adventurous --- to introduce to our club. In the words of Charles Dickens' insatiable character, Oliver Twist, "Please, sir, I want some more." Yes, we do.

Why I Am a Member

A new regular feature of *The Heron*

By Sheila Gick

I have been a member of YSN since its founding in 1999, with a lapse of a few years from 2010-2014 when there was no time. I was happy to return! I was encouraged to join by Nancy Colefield, a colleague of mine at Pickering College. She was one of the founders of the club and at the time owned The Backyard Birder store on Main Street in Newmarket. I had moved from New Brunswick in 1994 and wanted to make new friends who enjoyed the outdoors. I was an empty-nester who missed hiking with my sons. Also, early in my working life, I had been a high school biology teacher who loved field trips to both shore and forest in the Maritimes.

Over the 12 or so years I have been a member, I have served on the executive as both recording and membership secretary and in the volunteer positions of advertising, archives and refreshments. Some years I have just attended general meetings and activities without a particular responsibility and that way I have never burnt out or tired of the club.

I do think that taking a position makes you more friends and exposes you to all the environmental issues in a way that general membership does not. But everyone in a club contributes something --- friendship, knowledge, laughter, expertise, support, organizational skills, whatever. The whole is so much greater than its parts. I hope you feel this way too.

Every newsletter this column will appear, written by a different member each time. Will you be the next to share?

Your Executive for 2016 – 2018

Elected Positions

Jeanne Bénéteau, President

(vacant), Vice President

Doug Jagger, Past 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

Judy Ritchie, Executive at large

Melissa Rosato, Advertising Director

Flo Sparling, Refreshments

Janet Thompson, Newsletter Editor

Mike van den Tillaart, Stewardship Liaison to Ontario Nature

Nature Walks

Story and photos by Doug Jagger



Cawthra Mulock Nature Reserve

Since the last newsletter, the club has conducted three nature walks. On June 16, five people did the morning walk in the Cawthra Mulock Nature Reserve. Despite the time of year, the insects were tolerable. We were blessed with good weather as well. There was much to observe, including various butterflies, flowers, dragonflies and spiders. Most species we could not identify. However, we did comment on Canada Yew, the Cataba Tree and Eastern Hemlock. Everyone had a good view of Bobolink in the field. We saw an additional 14 species of birds.



*Sugar Maple
Bendor Greaves Tract
August 17, 2016*

There was no walk in July, but on Aug. 17 we spent the morning along trails in the Bendor Greaves Tract of the York Regional Forest. Birds were scarce, with only Hairy Woodpecker and Black-capped Chickadee seen and Pileated Woodpecker heard. The three of us on the walk commented on the beauty of the forest and terrain, including magnificent Tamarack and the many forest ferns.



Bluestem Goldenrod

On Sept. 14, four of us walked along the Oak Ridges Moraine Trail from Dufferin Street to the viewing platform overlooking Seneca Lake. We stopped to see various flowers, including Bluestem Goldenrod (pictured above) and Blue Bead Lily, and seven Trumpeter Swans on the lake. We were able to identify seven bird species in total, which was fewer than anticipated in view of the timing of fall migration. The massive extent of periwinkle, the numerous dead or dying Ash, and large Maple and Black Cherry trees caught our attention.



Oak Ridges Moraine Trail, Seneca College

It is our plan to continue the nature walk program. Check your e-mail for details, usually posted several weeks in advance. Hopefully more members can join us.

Cawthra Mulock Nature Reserve

By Sylvia Bowman

Ontario Nature held a number of events this summer at our local nature reserve, Cawthra Mulock.

Butterfly ID Workshop July 9

Mike attended this event led by James Kamstra. There were 15-20 attendees and they hiked the fields in the southern part of the reserve. There were relatively low butterfly sightings that day, but a lot of people were new to butterflies so it was good to have them introduced. See the Ontario Nature blog online at <http://www.ontarionature.org/connect/blog/tracking-pollinators-and-salamanders/>.

Nature Day Event July 24

Donna Lewis and I attended. I was particularly interested to see where the salamander boards were located. However by lunchtime it was pouring rain so the afternoon part was cancelled. They had about 70 people registered for the event but only about 30 showed up, probably because the weather was so threatening even early in the day.

Donor Appreciation Event Sept. 10

There was a walk in the morning to the pollinator planted area and a wonderful lunch prepared by Carolyn Schultz, ON executive director. In the afternoon we viewed one of the salamander board areas thanks to Donna Lewis. This time the rain held off, although it was again threatening weather. Unfortunately we didn't see any salamanders and the ground under the boards was very dry.

Periwinkle Pull Sept. 24

This was a follow-up to the periwinkle pull we organized in April, and again Rick helped to organize the event. Rick, Jeanne, Sheila, and Bob and Linda Hansen attended, along with Stephanie Muckle and Smera Sukumar of Ontario Nature and other volunteers.

A total of 12 participants removed 96 kg of plant material. If you add in the plants removed in April, we've pulled a cumulative total of 447 kg! As well as removing invasive plants, we planted 160 new wildflowers, grasses and shrubs in and around the cleared areas.



Photo by Smera Sukumar

Conservation News

By Sylvia Bowman

Maskinonge River Recovery Project

The "Up the River with a Paddle" event was held on Sept. 10. It highlighted over 20 projects completed on riverfront properties along the Maskinonge River in the past three years. People were able to paddle up the river and see that there is less duckweed in the river this year. River otters have been seen, also a sign of improved health in the river. The federal funding for this project ends in March 2017, but the committee is exploring ways to continue the work.

Ontario Nature

Proposed new regulations for hunting of the Algonquin wolf (formerly called the eastern wolf)

Scientists have determined that the Algonquin wolf is threatened with extinction. Yet the Ontario government intends to strip this species of the legal protection normally afforded under Ontario's *Endangered Species Act* (ESA). Astoundingly, the

government is proposing to allow the hunting and trapping of this threatened species in many areas where it occurs. It is still protected within Algonquin Park, but often moves outside the park where it is not protected.

Ontario Nature believes this proposal must not go forward for the following four reasons.

1. Hunting and trapping are the primary threats to Algonquin wolves.
2. Algonquin wolves have been confirmed in many places where hunting and trapping occur.
3. Ontario has a global responsibility to protect this species. Approximately 65% of the mature Algonquin wolf population resides in this province.
4. The proposal is contrary to the very purpose and intent of the ESA, which is to protect and recover species at risk. To recover, Algonquin wolves must safely be able to disperse to find mates and raise their young.

Ontario Nature and 622 others sent letters to the Honourable Kathryn McGarry, Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry, and the Public Input Coordinator of the Species at Risk Policy Division calling on the government to maintain existing protections for the threatened Algonquin wolf. Ontario Nature will continue to advocate on behalf of the Algonquin wolf and other species at risk.

You may be interested in the following Internet links:

- the [listeners guide to wolf howls](#) published in ON Nature magazine;
- a guest blog about [threats facing the fewer than 500 Algonquin \(formerly called “eastern”\) wolves](#) left in Ontario.

Huronia Regional Meeting

The next Huronia Regional Meeting of Ontario Nature is on Sat. Oct. 22 at 10:00 a.m. at the Marchmont Baptist Church, 3839 Town Line, RR #2 Orillia. It will be hosted by the Orillia Field Naturalists.

2015 Provincial Land Use Planning Review

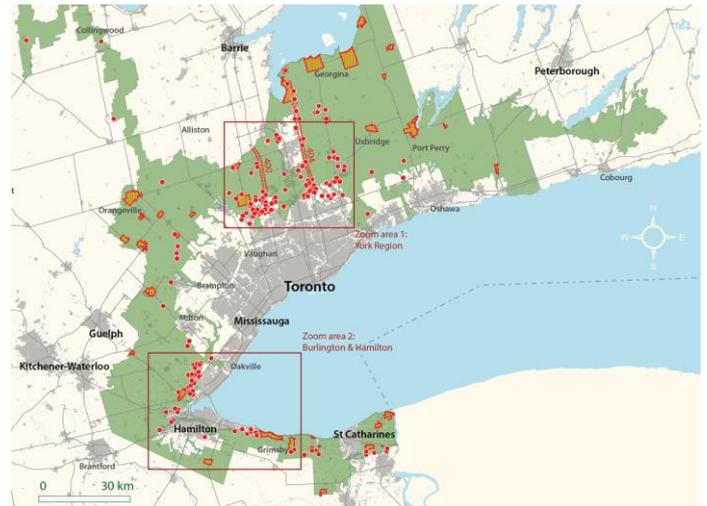
The deadline for comment has been extended to Mon. Oct. 31. The collaborative group of Ontario Nature, Earthroots, Eco-Spark and Save the Oak Ridges Moraine Coalition (STORM) will be doing a final submission. The Ontario Greenbelt Alliance (OGA) is also doing a submission.

One of the areas of concern is the number of applications submitted requesting over 650 areas to be removed from the Greenbelt. In October, the OGA released a map highlighting these areas, shown at right. In their press release, titled “New map reveals ‘death by a thousand cuts’ strategy by developers to destroy Ontario’s Greenbelt”, they wrote:

The map pinpoints just one-third of the 650 requests made by developers, land speculators and municipalities to remove protected lands from the Greenbelt. Just a fraction of the total requests, the portion mapped is almost 11,000 hectares (27,000 acres). The map also shows existing towns and villages in the Greenbelt that could be ringed with more sprawl subdivisions if developers get their way . . .

While most communities are embracing Smart Growth and the Greenbelt, more than two thirds of all removal requests come from one region --- York Region, where land speculators and municipalities are seeking to remove roughly 7,500 ha of land from the Greenbelt, including prime farmland, natural areas along highway corridors and sensitive areas around the headwaters of important creeks and rivers, including the Rouge and Don which flow to Lake Ontario, a source of drinking water for millions in southern Ontario.

Requests to Remove Land from Ontario’s Greenbelt



Requests within York Region





*Goldfinch eating seeds of woodland sunflower in my garden
Photo by Janet Thompson*

Field Notes

Ladybugs

Story and photo by Karen Stephenson



The ladybug is one of our most beloved insects. North America has over 450 native species of ladybugs, ranging in colour from red to orange, and under optimum conditions they can live up to three years. The number of spots on a ladybug's back depends on the species, not the age of the insect. For instance, if you count 12 spots you are looking at a convergent ladybug, whereas if it doesn't have any spots it is a polished ladybug.

Interestingly, ladybugs are born black and they develop their beautiful bright colouring and distinctive black spots in the first few weeks of life. As they age their spots begin to fade. Their colouring is not only beautiful but also protects them because bright colours such as blue, red and yellow usually signal that the insect or animal bearing the colour is poisonous. In addition to their bright colouring, ladybugs are able to defend themselves when attacked by playing dead and secreting a substance from behind their leg joints that will cause them to smell horrible to their predators.

A female ladybug will lay hundreds of eggs at one time. She will lay these eggs inside colonies of aphids or near other plant-eating insects. Within three to five days of hatching, the young are hungry and begin looking for food, which is why the female lays her eggs at a food source. On average it will take one week for a juvenile ladybug to reach adulthood.

Ladybugs do not migrate. They hibernate in warm, dry places throughout the winter months. Because they are cold blooded, they require a place where they can stay warm for the winter, and often this is inside buildings. Ladybugs will scour buildings in search of cracks and holes through which they can get inside. However, this is not a good location for them, because buildings lack a suitable food source to sustain them until they begin their hibernation. During hibernation, ladybugs rely on their fat reserves to last them until the spring.

Attracting Ladybugs to Your Garden

While aphids are their favourite food, the ladybug diet also requires pollen. There are specific types of pollen that ladybugs are especially attracted to. The most popular pollen comes from plants that have umbel-shaped flowers such as dill, cilantro, caraway, fennel, angelica, tansy, wild carrot and yarrow. Other plants that attract ladybugs include coreopsis, dandelions and scented geraniums. Keeping beneficial insects in your garden eliminates the need for insecticides.

Invasive Ladybug Species

Multicoloured Asian lady beetles, a ladybug species native to Japan, were introduced to North America in the 1970s to help native ladybugs control aphids that were damaging crops. Unfortunately, this created an infestation that is resulting in declines in the populations of our native species. Asian ladybugs have a faster reproductive cycle and are also able to withstand colder winters, which means fewer deaths during hibernation. These two factors combined have resulted in the Asian ladybug taking over as the predominant ladybug species in Canada.

The Asian ladybug is slightly larger than Canada's native ladybug species and varies slightly in colour. The invasive species typically ranges in size from six to ten millimetres long and ranges in colour from a mustard yellow to a dark, reddish orange. They do not have a consistent number of black spots on their wing covers like our native species, and some may not have any spots at all. Due to their bright colouring, birds and other animals are often reluctant to eat them.

Can Two Different Species Mate to Produce a New Species?

Ladybugs are typically "species specific". That means that they can only reproduce successfully with members of their same species. The male and female reproduction parts are termed "lock and key", which means that the male's aedeagus will only "fit" with the female of his same species.

What Animals and Insects Prey upon the Ladybug?

Some insect-eating birds such as martins, swallows, swifts and crows will eat ladybugs. Dragonflies, assassin bugs, parasitic wasps, and ants will also eat ladybugs. Other predators including tree frogs, anoles, parasites, fungus and mites also give ladybugs reason to run.

Other Interesting Facts

- A female ladybug can lay up to 1,000 eggs in its lifetime.
- These insects clean themselves after a meal.
- Ladybugs are actually beetles and are sometimes referred to as being Lady Beetles.