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THE NATURALIST

DURHAM REGION FIELD NATURALISTS
 CONSERVATION THROUGH EDUCATION
www.drfn.ca drfn1955@hotmail.com

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President's Message

Welcome to the 2021-22 DRFN season. We can only hope that it will be better than the last. We may yet be able to meet in person. As it is we will not be doing so any time soon. COVID-19 Health Care protocols are still in effect for Ontario. So, we will continue to bring you programmes via ZOOM.

And those upcoming programmes look as interesting and informative as always. They will be recorded so if you missed a meeting, you will be able to watch the presentation at your leisure following the meeting. We will continue to have outings until such time that increased restrictions are introduced. Hopefully not again!

Aart Van Goch has taken on the position of treasurer. Welcome, Aart. Thank you, Ted Crichton, for your years of dedication to the position.

I mentioned in May that this would be my last year as president. This position has been mine since the 2012-13 season - 9 years. And this was not the first time I served as president. So, it has been more than enough and it is indeed time for someone else to take over. Over the last season I shared the position with Kristen Osborne which has been a great help. We continue to share the position for this season. Kristen is willing to continue but not as full-time president. This is your opportunity to step up and share the presidency with her. So please, please consider helping her out for our next season. Only half of the responsibilities!

Derek and I decided to do a big year of birding in this time of COVID. So, we have been restricted to Durham Region. It gave us something exciting to do close to home. I decided it was a good time to learn how to use the eBird app by The Cornell Lab. Things were busy during the spring migration but slowed down during the summer. We have 148 species to date. There have been 255 species of birds observed in Durham Region for 2021 so far. We have a lot more to go. Of the top 100 ebirders in Durham Region we managed to get up to 22nd. And there will be opportunities to increase our list as fall migration begins and our winter birds show up. The eBird app is also useful in that it provides hotspots in your area and rare bird alerts. We also use the Merlin app from The Cornell Lab. Very useful in helping to identify birds with both photos and calls. The two apps work together. And both are free. Our 7-year-old granddaughter has been using Merlin for several months now and loves identifying the birds she sees with it. Whenever we get to travel again it will be possible for us to download



Upcoming Meetings

Meetings: last Monday of each month except June-August and December

Time: 7:30 p.m.

*Place: **To be held via Zoom.***

Invitations to the video conference meetings will be sent by Otto Peter with instructions on connecting, via computer, tablet or phone including the URL and access code

September 27, 2021

Michael Runtz
“Wild Algonquin”

October 25, 2021

Neil Gray,
“Evolutionary Aspects of Hummingbirds”

November 29, 2021

Kaelyn Bumelis
“Bank, Cliff and Tree Swallows”

Newsletter

Submissions

Please submit your pictures and articles for the Nov. newsletter no later than Nov. 15, 2021. Email all submissions to Nancy Muzik at john_nancy_m@rogers.com

our Merlin app with birds of the area we are visiting. No more heavy birding guides! But we will take one anyway because we are still hard copy people at heart.

Hope to see you in person soon.

Lois Gillette

Future Outings

These are challenging times due to COVID-19. We all embrace nature and long to see our favourite wildflowers, birds, mammals, insects and other wildlife. DRFN will follow the guidance, laws and regulations of Canada, Ontario and local municipalities to limit the spread and minimize the danger. DRFN will continue offering outings and will ensure social distancing is observed as per our current regulations. We will not car-pool or share optics so bring your own. Be prepared that washrooms may not be as available as in the past. Bring hand sanitizer and a mask to be worn if you're within 6' of others.

Saturday, September 25 at 10 AM **Darlington Generating Station Parkland**

Meet at the parking lot to the SE of the pond at Darlington Generating Station. (From the 401, take the Courtice or Holt Road exit, take Megawatt / Energy Drive to Park Rd to the second parking lot.) Don't drive over the speed limit since photo radar warnings have been posted for Park Road.

Darlington is a great place to visit any time of the year. Migration will be in progress. We'll have to concentrate but there will be warblers and other northern nesters to be found.

Check the weather forecast and dress accordingly. Bring water.

Difficulty: Light walking on excellent trails.

Saturday, October 23 at 10:00 AM **Stephen's Gulch Mushroom Walk**

Leader: Otto Peter and our fungi folk

Stephen's Gulch is a small woodland jewel. Our plan is to observe all types of fungi without collecting them. Mushrooms are beautiful but, once taken, they won't be available for others to see. Although some are safe to eat, many are extremely poisonous. A number of deadly varieties look a lot like edibles. (Take only pictures. Leave only footprints.)

Difficulty: Easy walking.

Bring: appropriate clothing based on the weather forecast. Portions of the area may be slick and muddy depending on the weather so bring appropriate footwear, water. Weather permitting, consider bringing a lunch.

Meet at the Stephen's Gulch parking lot. Stephen's Gulch Conservation Area is located northeast of Bowmanville. To reach the Stephen's Gulch Conservation Area parking lot, following these directions:

If coming from the south: From Liberty Street North, turn east (right) on Concession Road 4, turn north (left) on Bethesda Road, turn east (right) on Stephen's Mill Road, proceed along Stephen's Mill Road to Stephen's Gulch Conservation Area parking lot.

If coming from the north: From Taunton Road (east of Liberty Street North), turn south on Bethesda Road, turn east (left) on Stephen's Mill Road, proceed along Stephen's Mill Road to Stephen's Gulch Conservation Area parking lot.

Niagara Gulls

Covid-19 permitting, we hope to return to Niagara in November.

Don Docherty

Past Outings

Crow's Pass Conservation Area – June 19



Blue Winged Warbler by Maria Prisciak

Our early start meant that temperatures were a little cooler and we only met about 5 people all morning. While waiting for attendees to arrive, we watched a fox family play on one of the fairways. The adjoining golf course was open so we were careful when crossing the path to the conservation area. From the beginning, it was obvious that the Gypsy Moth caterpillars were present in huge numbers. They covered tree trunks and posts or hung down from weblike lines.

Upon entry we quickly spotted Blue-winged Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler and Mourning Warblers. It helps to know the song to locate them since they blend in well with the vegetation. At times, you just have to wait for one to move to locate them but a quick glance may be all you get. Pine Warbler, Eastern Wood-Pewee and Red-eyed Vireo were also singing but not spotted in the canopy.

Another interesting bird that we saw was Eastern Towhee. In addition to a few adults, a youngster was also photographed.

Our group walked the main loop of the conservation area. It takes visitors through different habitats. As we walked, we saw Indigo Bunting, Scarlet Tanager and Ruby-throated Hummingbird. Some even saw two Barred Owls. We also Heard Brown Creeper, Ovenbird and Wood Thrush.

The caterpillars were a huge problem for the vegetation but, hopefully, most will recover next year. The birds enjoyed an incredible food bonus that should lead to more young fledging.

Don Docherty



Barred Owl by Maria Prisciak

Butterflies at Durham East Cross Conservation Area - July 03

Rayfield Pye lead a fantastic walk at Durham East Cross Conservation area. A small group of us found many butterflies in a few habitats, meadow, woods and marsh. Ray took this great picture of a very old Monarch. Notice the missing pieces in its wing. Maria had a grand time wading through the weeds to spot some of our uncommon species on the list.



Monarch Butterfly by Rayfield Pye

In addition to many species of butterflies was a very cross Spotted Sandpiper. We must have been a little too close to its young in the marshy area. We never saw the little ones so mom did her job.

East Cross butterflies:24 species found.

Highlights: Compton's tortoiseshell, Canadian Tiger Swallowtail, Eastern Tiger Swallowtail, White Admiral, Acadian Hairstreak, Mustard White, Silvery Blue, Little Wood Satyr, Hobomok, and Monarch

Nancy Muzik

Beaver River Wetland Trail - August 28



With Rayfield carefully monitoring the weather on his smart phone, and the rest of us scanning the skies warily, a small but committed group undertook an outing to the Beaver Creek Wetland Trail near Sunderland on Saturday August 28th. Fortunately, the severe storms that many areas received that evening did not materialize there- although there were certainly some interesting cloud formations to be seen!

Birds were not overly active, but we did spot and/or heard a kingfisher, cedar waxwings, large flocks of blackbirds and a flycatcher among others. Maria Prisciak helped us identify many different wildflowers and shrubs.

The Beaver Creek Trail is level and well maintained and appears to be widely used by both cyclists and hikers.

Check it out!

Thank you Rayfield for arranging and leading this outing!

Brian Reid

Ontario Nature Report

ON Nature Magazine for fall 2021, Allan Britnell writes about the amazing adventures of Spider-Woman, Maydianne Andrade, an expert on black widow spiders (and their many cousins). She reveals to us the myths about a misunderstood and maligned Ontario (yes, that is correct) species.

Recipients for 2020-2021 Conservation awards. Community involvement defines Ontario Nature's character and approach. Together with our member groups and individual members, we are the voice for nature in Ontario and are building a natural legacy for future generations. This year, the awards celebrated 11 inspirational and industrious winners. Please join us in congratulating and thanking the recipients for their vital contributions to nature conservation. You can read about this year's recipients on the Ontario Nature website.

Ecojustice, Environmental Defense and Ontario Nature are celebrating an important victory for the Provincially Significant Wetlands at Lower Duffins Creek following the release of a regulation by the Government of Ontario that revokes the Minister's Zoning Order (MZO) for the area. The area at Duffins Creek now returns to zoning laws applied by the City of Pickering and its status as an "urban reserve", with environmentally protective zoning, is restored. Dr. Anne Bell, director of conservation and education at Ontario Nature, said: "Using MZOs to fast-track the destruction of a provincially significant wetland or any other natural area is simply wrong. Ontarians understand the importance of protecting natural places as we strive to address the crises of biodiversity loss and climate change. This victory shows that when people stand up together, we can make a difference."

Maria Prisciak

Oshawa & Sunderland Butterfly Counts

James Kamstra

The two butterfly counts were conducted in Durham Region in early summer of 2021. Participants in groups tallied all the butterflies that they saw and identified on count day. This marked the 28th year for Oshawa and 25th for the Sunderland area counts.

Ten counters in six parties recorded 43 species in the Oshawa circle on June 27. The highlight of the count was Silvery Checkerspot, a rare species in Durham that had only been recorded on three previous counts. Both Rayfield Pye and Tom Mason spotted individuals. Overall, the numbers were lower than average for most species, particularly skippers, and it was the first time in 28 years that no Viceroy's were reported.

Meanwhile, the Sunderland count was attended by 23 participants in ten parties on July 4, producing 50 species.



Dion Skipper



Compton's Tortoiseshell

Butterfly numbers were considerably higher than on the Oshawa count with highest ever counts for Mourning Cloak and Delaware Skipper as well as very high numbers of over 700 Mustard Whites (highest since 1999), 160 Eastern Tailed Blue (second highest), and 64 Dion Skipper (second highest).

One surprise was Compton's Tortoiseshell that was found by all parties with a total of 41 individuals. It had only recorded on three previous counts in very small numbers. It was a bumper year for Compton's Tortoiseshell, as more Ontario counts than ever, recorded them. Black Dash is a sedge specialist that is rare in Durham. Monarch numbers were quite high during on both counts, but sadly the late summer numbers of this species were very low.

The results can be found in the following table and the hard-working participants are listed below.

	Oshawa June 27	Sunderland July 4
Black Swallowtail		3
Eastern Tiger Swallowtail	8	33
Mustard White	4	722
Cabbage White	215	565

Clouded Sulphur	21	254
Orange Sulphur	3	5
American Copper		2
Bronze Copper	4	17
Coral Hairstreak		6
Acadian Hairstreak		35
Banded Hairstreak	4	1

Striped Hairstreak	2	4
Eastern Tailed Blue	30	160
Summer Azure	17	130
Silvery Blue	5	
<i>blue sp.</i>	6	1
Great Spangled Fritillary	37	104
Silver-bordered Fritillary	1	
Meadow Fritillary		29
<i>small fritillary sp.</i>	1	
Pearl Crescent	14	29
Northern Crescent	463	353
<i>crescent sp.</i>	19	5
Silvery Checkerspot	2	
Baltimore Checkerspot		90
Question Mark	2	
Eastern Comma	6	5
Gray Comma	1	2
<i>Polygonia sp.</i>		3
Mourning Cloak	1	58
Compton's Tortoiseshell		41
American Lady		1
Red Admiral	11	22
White Admiral	19	9
Red-spotted Purple	2	1
Viceroy		5
Northern Pearly-Eye	13	42
Eyed Brown	22	295
Appalachian Brown	6	5
Little Wood Satyr	39	11
Common Wood Nymph	36	279

Inornate Ringlet	42	5
Monarch	86	141
Silver-spotted Skipper	16	16
Northern Cloudywing	1	21
Dreamy Duskywing	1	
Least Skipper	17	40
European Skipper	304	405
Peck's Skipper	4	82
Tawny-edged Skipper	3	60
Crossline Skipper	2	29
Long Dash Skipper	28	89
Northern Broken Dash	1	8
Little Glassywing		2
Delaware Skipper	11	156
Hobomok Skipper	12	15
Broad-winged Skipper	1	40
Dion Skipper		61
Black Dash		2
Dun Skipper	5	62
<i>grass skipper sp.</i>		14
TOTAL SPECIES	43	50
TOTAL INDIVIDUALS	1548	4575
No. of Participants	10	23
No. of Parties	6	10
Km. on foot	33.5	77.2
Km. by car	80	152.5
Hours on foot	30.75	67.25
Hours by car	2.5	4.25
Total Hours	33.25	71

Participants

Oshawa: Geoff Carpentier, Mark Humphrey, James & Lynda Kamstra, Steve Laforest, Tom Mason, Greg Moon, Maria Prisciak, Rayfield Pye, Anna Vogt.

Sunderland: Dave Bishop, Derek Connelly, Valerie Cranmer, Cara Gregory, Brian Henshaw, Simon Henshaw, James & Lynda Kamstra, Steve LaForest, Carolyn Mancey, Tom Mason, Greg Moon, Brenda Near, Ed Poropat, Maria Prisciak, Rayfield Pye, Rob Willson, Dianna Wolfe, Bob & Karen Yukich.

Thickson's Woods Reserve News

Otto Peter President TWLT

As you may know the Thickson's Woods Nature Reserve was closed this summer for a number of weeks. The Reserve is now open again with a number of changes. The Waterfront Trail was repaved with added shoulders east from Thickson Road past the main entrances to both the woods and meadow. There are new signs for visitors' information that spell out our protocols (see attached photo). To protect wildlife habitat and manage crowds, visitors are asked to enter and exit only at these locations, and to stay on marked trails instead of wandering off-path at will. Thanks to a keen group of Oshawa and Whitby high school volunteers, many of

these trails have been spread with wood chips to ensure that everyone will know where to walk. Many of the beaten down vegetation has grown back this summer so many of the side “trails” are no longer visible.



New cedar rail-and-post fencing has been installed at the Woods entrance, which were donated and installed by the Whitby Sunrise Rotary Club. Old sidewalk slabs were also installed by the Club along the north ridge to extend firm footing for physically challenged visitors.

This fall and winter you might notice some people wearing high visibility vests wandering around the Reserve especially in the meadow. These monitors will try to encourage visitors – especially the avid photographers – to stay on the trails. It would be appreciated if DRFN members kindly remind visitors of the rules. If they see others off trail, remind them that the reserve is private property and that if visitors continue to ignore the rules and do damage to the environment that it may well be closed to everyone.

If you are interested in helping maintain the Reserve you can come out on the following two dates. There are no permanent staff at Thickson’s Woods Land Trust, so everything depends on volunteers.

Saturday October 2: to scan for migrating raptors and work on trail maintenance.

Saturday November 27: to search for late migrants and start removing garlic mustard plants.

Nature FYI



Cecropia Moth by Karen Landers

On May 26, I had the privilege to see a true wonder of nature - my first Cecropia moth. It was resting on a fence in a parking lot north of the Oshawa airport.

What a magnificently stunning creature! The colours were spectacularly vivid - a very fat red and white-striped body with black spots, bright red, furry legs and large feathery black antennae. The body was actually more entrancing to me than the huge wings of many colours, lines and patterns including big eye-like dots and other shapes.

I believe it had just emerged, as it looked very fresh and bright, and every once in a while, it would move its wings and seem to stretch its body like we do in the yoga cat stretch.

I was so excited about the moth, I didn't even notice its empty cocoon just below it, but on the other side of the fence. The person who took the photos you see did, though, and she also took one of the empty cocoon - another indication it had just hatched and crawled slightly up the fence to pump fluids into its wings and body. Many thanks to Karen Landers for taking the photos

and allowing me to include them in the article.

Here's what I found out about the Cecropia moth on the internet - in case you didn't know:

Hyalophora cecropia, the Cecropia moth, is North America's largest native moth. It is a member of the family Saturniidae, or giant silk moths. Females have been documented with a wingspan of five to seven inches or more. Males are smaller.



To find a mate, the female emits pheromones which the male detects with its sensitive antennae. Male Cecropia moths can detect these pheromones from up to a mile away, although a male may fly up to 7 miles while searching for a female. Mating typically begins early in the morning hours and lasts until the evening.

After mating, the female will lay up to one hundred eggs. These eggs are a mottled reddish brown and are usually found on either side of a host leaf. The eggs hatch into tiny black caterpillars, which feed upon many common trees and shrubs including maple, birch, and apple. The caterpillars reach maturity in autumn and are about 4 to 4.5 inches long, changing colour as they mature to a bluish green. Then they spin large brown cocoons longways on trees or wooden structures, such as partially seen in the photo. They emerge as adults in the first two weeks of seasonally warm weather in early summer. Unfortunately, the Cecropia moth lacks functional mouth parts and a digestive system. Due to this, they survive approximately two weeks.

I will definitely be on the look-out next May and June, in hopes of seeing another Cecropia.

Dianne Pazaratz

Summer Fun Pics



We have seen brown-headed cowbirds before, but this visitor to our cottage birdbath was a bit of a surprise!



And then came the Black morph!

Brian and Eve-Ann Reid

What excitement! I had heard of this extremely rare moth species but never imagined I would be lucky enough to not just see one but have the good fortune to be able to capture a photo. Location - McLaughlin Bay. Here's proof it actually exists. The name Swan Moth gets its name from the two curved protrusions at its anterior that look extremely similar to the neck and head of its namesake. This specimen was spotted while resting on an unknown to me tree species.

John McFeeter





Maria Prisciak caught this beautiful Acadian Hairstreak at the DRFN Butterfly Garden

Juvenile House Wren in Lois Gillette's backyard and a Glossy Ibis taken at Cranberry Marsh.



I was hoping to get a shot of a Humming Bird coming to our Rose of Sharon. No Humming Bird, but I did get this shot of a pollen laden bumble bee.

John Muzik

In Memoriam

Alfhied Salamon: 1938 - July 19, 2021. Alfie was a long-time member of DRFN. She also supported Thicksen's Woods Land Trust.

Ken Ridge : August 7th, 1930 - August 19th, 2021. Ken was Past President of DRFN, Past President of Friends of Second Marsh and volunteered at Thicksen's Woods Land Trust.

Gerry Ernest : October 6, 1933 - September 7, 2021. Gerry was a long-time member of DRFN and the Oshawa Camera club.

Membership Renewal Time

Due to COVID regulations, restricting our meetings to Zoom last year, the Executive passed a motion to reduce the membership for the 2021-2022 season. For this season only, there will be a flat rate of **\$10.00** for both single and family memberships.

You may pay by cheque by completing the form and mailing the cheque and form to the address on the form. Please note the new address.

You may also pay your membership by e transfer to treasurer.drfn@gmail.com. If you have changed your address, phone number or email address please notify Diane Peter at opeter@rogers.com.

Diane Peter

Membership Application Form

2021-2022

Please check the appropriate area to indicate membership type.

For Family membership please indicate the number of family members.

Individual (\$10) _____

Family (\$10) _____ # of People _____

Kindly complete all sections of this information form in order that we can update our address & telephone records.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/Town: _____

Postal Code: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail Address: _____

The membership year is September to June. Memberships not renewed by November 30th are considered lapsed. Membership fees may be paid by cash or cheque at the DRFN General Meeting, or a cheque may be mailed, payable to: Durham Region Field Naturalists, Box 290, C/O The UPS Store #51, 1300 King St E, Unit 27, Oshawa, ON L1H 8J4 Do not send cash by mail.

Revenue Canada Charitable: No. 891631574RR0001