

**Renew Your Membership – reduced to \$10.00 for 2021-2022** see page 10 for details

# THE NATURALIST

DURHAM REGION FIELD NATURALISTS  
 CONSERVATION THROUGH EDUCATION  
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## Executive Committee

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## President's Message

Hello DRFN members,

Often when winter rolls around we want to spend it inside, cozy under a blanket and hibernate the winter away like so many of our animal friends. But the winter is still a great time to get outside and explore. When we think of birdwatching, we generally think of the spring and the influx of warblers and other birds returning from their winters down south. But the winter can be a great time for birdwatching as long as you prepare for the winter weather. Winter brings the ducks, gulls, and owls!



If you want to experience some winter birdwatching, we have you covered! Join us on Sunday November 28<sup>th</sup> for a trip to Niagara Falls to search for gulls. The Niagara River is one of the best places to search for gulls in November and December. Over 14 species of gulls have been found along the Niagara River! If you would rather stay close to home, then consider joining us for the 67<sup>th</sup> Oshawa Christmas Bird Count this December. We spend the day searching for birds all around Whitby, Oshawa and Bowmanville. It is a great way to get outside for some winter birdwatching and you never know what you might discover. Last year we found 92 species of birds across Whitby/Oshawa/Bowmanville. Can we beat that number this year? Join us and find out!

The UN Climate Conference (COP26) is now over, and the politicians have flown home on their private jets. So, what was accomplished? Was it enough? As nature lovers we can see the impacts climate change is having and the fact that we need to act now, but it can be frustrating when our politicians don't act with that same urgency.

Some will say that this conference is a waste of time and that nothing significant is accomplished through it. But at the very least the world is talking about climate change through this conference and not completely ignoring the issue. The world must come together to solve this global emergency and we as the people need to continue to push our governments and elected officials to do more. The time to do nothing is gone, we need to act now.

There are many great organizations out there already engaged in these conversations with our government leaders:

Ontario Nature      <https://ontarionature.org/take-action/advocate-for-nature/> Environmental Defense

## 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**

### November 29, 2021

**Kaelyn Bumelis** - "Bank, Cliff and Tree Swallows"

In this talk, Kaelyn will give a general overview of aerial insectivores, why they might be declining, and some of the ongoing work that seeks to improve our understanding as well as the conservation of this fascinating group of birds."

### January 31, 2022 - TBA

## Newsletter Submissions

Please submit your pictures and articles for the Jan. newsletter no later than Jan. 15, 2022. Email all submissions to Nancy Muzik at [john\\_nancy\\_m@rogers.com](mailto:john_nancy_m@rogers.com)

<https://environmentaldefence.ca/about-us/>  
David Suzuki Foundation <https://davidsuzuki.org/>

Do you have an idea for DRFN? A way we can continue to grow and reach people of all ages? We are looking for members to join the Executive Committee and that could be you! If you are interested in learning more about the different roles on the Executive Committee, please reach out to me or Lois and we would be happy to share more.

**Kristen Osborne**

## Welcome New Members

A special welcome to Durham Region Field Naturalists new members. We hope to see you online at our meetings and in person at one of our outings.

Katrina Dabrowski  
Neil and Ann Gray  
Glenda Jones  
Pat Schleiffer

Jennifer Deacon  
Christine Greenlaw  
Aidan St. John and Tait Griggs

## 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 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. Bring hand sanitizer and a mask to be worn if you're within 6' of others.

### **Sunday, November 28 at 10 AM**

#### **Niagara Gulls**

Leader: Rayfield Pye

Niagara Falls is a common destination for gulls in late fall and winter. A variety of interesting birds have been seen in the past including Lesser Black-backed, Slaty-backed, and California Gulls; Black-legged Kittiwake; Brant; Purple Sandpiper; Red Phalarope, Canvasback; Common Loons; etc. As of mid-November, a Black-bellied Whistling-Duck was regularly seen where we meet. Will it linger?

Meet at Dufferin Islands in Niagara Falls (6345 Dufferin Isle Rd, Niagara Falls, ON L0S 1A0.) Basically, take the 401, 427 and QEW to Niagara Falls. Exit at McLeod Road (49) then turn left on Burning Springs Hill Road. Drive until you reach the parking spots just south of the Niagara Parkway. Your GPS, Google Maps, etc. may have you take a different route so check a map so that you're comfortable with the route you take. The drive to Niagara Falls should take approximately 2 hours.

Difficulty: It can be very cold, wet and/or snowy beside the Niagara River. (It can also be warm and dry...) Dress to stay warm and dry. Wear layers of clothing for flexibility. Casual walking on sidewalks will be required.

Bring water and a lunch or prepare to dine at Tim's in Chippawa. A mask is required for entry. If you plan to eat in the restaurant, you will have to show proof of vaccination. (Pick up and drive through do not have this requirement.)

**Sunday, December 19**  
**Durham Christmas Bird Count.**

Contact Rayfield Pye to participate @ 905-436-7998 or raypye@interlinks.net.

Check for weather forecast and dress accordingly. 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.

If you plan to stay home, you can participate by reporting on activity at your feeder(s). Check your email for a reporting sheet and instructions.

**Saturday, January 15 at 9:00 AM**  
**Annual Winter Bird Feeder Tour and Lunch**

Each year is different. We'll try to see bird visitors from the north and local residents eating to survive at the best feeders.

This year, we're adapting to the current COVID-19 situation to enable the outing in a safe, simple manner. We'll meet in Greenwood then drive our route to see the best feeders at some familiar places.

Meet at Valley View Public School parking lot in Greenwood at 3530 Westney. This will allow us to form our group safely off the road before we start. We will not be car-pooling.

When we finish, participants may choose to return home or go for a lunch at the Portly Piper in Ajax which is located at 235 Bayly St W, Ajax, ON L1S 3K3 (just east of Westney.)

Dress for the weather conditions!

***Don Docherty***

## Past Outings

**Darlington Generating Station Parkland-September 25**  
***Don Docherty***



De Kay's Brown Snake John Muzik

The temperature for our outing was fine but it was a little windy at times. We had a positive start as I saw an American Kestrel on a power line on Megawatt Drive just west of Crago Road as I drove to the outing. We all saw numerous migrating Blue Jays flying west in groups of up to 50 birds. One of the best places to see birds in the area is the collection of trees near the parking lot. While waiting for everyone to arrive, most of us saw a Cape May warbler, Song sparrows and a Northern Mockingbird. We also had success by a willow where wild grape attracted the attention of a Catbird, Yellow-rumped Warbler and a Swainson's Thrush.

We continued on toward the pond and observed a De Kay's Brown Snake sunning itself on the path. Aside from turtles basking in the sun, there was little activity on the pond. We did see some Shaggy mane mushrooms by the trail. As we walked, 8 different species of butterfly were observed.

Normally, the path north provides lots of migrating birds but the windy conditions kept many out of sight. A Phoebe and a Golden-crowned Kinglet were in the willows by the path. A juvenile Peregrine Falcon perched for a short while on a small tree midway up the berm.

The north side of the trail was extremely quiet. In truth, this has generally been the case since the trees that used to be beside it were removed. We did find a dead mole by the path that had not attracted the attention of a vulture or land scavenger.

The east side of the path was a bit livelier but the vegetation is quite dense. We saw migrating White-throated Sparrows here.

Given the variety of different species that we saw, this certainly was a naturalist outing.



Group on the trail John Muzik



Monarch John Muzik

## **Stephens Gulch Mushroom Walk October 25**

***Otto Peter***

On the dull dreary cool morning of Saturday October 25, 12 DRFN members met at Stephens Gulch north of Bowmanville for a mushroom ID outing. Ostensibly it was led by me but other members such as David Bradley and Maria Prisciak helped greatly. The late summer and early fall had seen a lot of rainfall and we expected that there would be a large number of mushrooms. We were not disappointed. No one kept count but I expect that we saw at least 50 different species many of which we could not positively identify. Unfortunately identifying many fungi species is difficult and getting to the Genus is considered to be a success. One of the reasons is that with new DNA analysis methods, many fungi have been renamed and moved from one family to another. However, some fungi are so common that even beginners can identify them, such as True Turkey Tail, Morels, Chanterelles, Death Angels to name a few. The new edition of the Lone Pine "Mushrooms of Ontario and Eastern Canada" by George Barron is probably the best one for anyone interested in identifying fungi in our region.

We started going north and immediately found many species in leaf litter under the cedar trees. One of my favourite early mushrooms was the small Gem Studded Puffball (see photo) which at first glance did not look like a puffball but actually was one. An unusual parasitic mushroom (see photo) was spotted in some pine litter growing on top of another mushroom. Once in the hardwood forest we discovered a number of new species such as Birch Polypore, Artist's Conk, Dunce Cap and Saddle mushrooms. Our group tended to split up because there were so many different species of fungi being spotted. Most of us saw, Slime, Bracket, Toothed, Jelly, Sac fungi along with many other Boletes and Gilled mushrooms. We set out to find fungi and were we ever successful.

One sad part was encountering a man who was illegally foraging in the Conservation area who had two bags filled with mushrooms including 2 huge Oyster mushrooms, some Honey mushrooms and edible Russula. I jokingly admonished him for taking all of the Oyster Mushrooms leaving none for our group to see. He was very unrepentant which is not unusual for people who forage taking everything in sight. Luckily, we saw many other beautiful species of fungi making it a wonderful outing.



**Birch Polypore John Muzik**



**Gem-studded Puffball John Muzik**



**Chanterelle Maria Prisciak**



**Blue Stain Fungus Maria Prisciak**



Scalycaps Kristen Osborne



Powder Cap (parasitic mushroom) Maria Prisciak

## Cranberry Marsh Hawk Watch- up to Nov 15, 2021



Red-tailed Hawk and Northern Harrier Ray Pye

This is our 32<sup>nd</sup> year counting migrating hawks at the south platform of Cranberry Marsh. This year we had several periods with south winds and above normal temperatures. The best flight conditions for the lakeshore watches are north-west winds.

Turkey Vultures set a new seasonal high. In the first 7 years of the count the seasonal average for Turkey Vultures was 1175. The Bald Eagle count is our 2<sup>nd</sup> highest.

Turkey Vulture- 7873, Osprey- 55, Bald Eagle- 176, Northern Harrier- 168, Sharp-shinned Hawk- 1218, Coopers Hawk- 71, Northern Goshawk- 3, Red-shouldered Hawk- 40, Broad-winged Hawk- 1528, Red-tailed Hawk- 753, Rough-legged Hawk- 7, Golden Eagle 5, American Kestrel- 436, Merlin- 27, Peregrine Falcon- 11

Total- 12423

Hours- 212

Counters: Charmaine Anderson, Jerry Ball, Jean Iron, Jim McKnight, and Rayfield Pye

**Rayfield Pye**

# Ontario Nature Report

Stay up-to-date and join in the fight to protect our natural areas. Check Ontario Nature's website, Facebook, blog etc. to keep up-to-date on Doug Ford, and his conservative governments' plans to pave over Ontario's precious green spaces with the 413, and Bradford bypass.

Save the date! November 30th is Giving Tuesday, a day for Canadians to give to the causes that mean the most to them. This year Ontario Nature will be dedicating our Giving Tuesday efforts towards our Nature Guardians Youth Program. Learn more: [ontarionature.org/giving-tuesday](http://ontarionature.org/giving-tuesday)

Wish your family and friends a festive holiday season with our exclusive Ontario Nature greeting cards. We have eight designs to choose from. Get yours today before they are sold out! [ontarionature.org/greeting-cards](http://ontarionature.org/greeting-cards)  
Photo: Red crossbills greeting card



Ontario Nature membership makes a great Christmas gift that will keep on giving to the environment throughout the year.

'Tis the Season for Christmas Bird Counts. This year, the counting will take place between Dec. 14 and Jan. 5, and the results will inform long-term studies of bird migration and population trends.

Join a count near you: <https://bit.ly/3DrHVmb>

***Maria Prisciak***



**Ray I think you need a bigger net! John Muzik**



**Spotted this "horse" on our walk today. Perhaps the arborist injected Botox into the lips. John McFeeter**

# Birding The Great Clay Belt

*Anne Hide*



Hilliardton Marsh

A few years ago in early September, on our way home from visiting Don's family at their cottage near Timmins we made a stop at Hilliardton Marsh which is about 30 km north of New Liskeard. It was September and as we walked the pathways between the different cells we saw and heard sandhill cranes flying overhead. We decided to get in the car and see if we could follow them to where they were landing. It didn't take long for us to find them in a grain field that had recently been harvested. It was quite the sight as there must have been in excess of 1,000 cranes in that field and a moment we fondly remember. We have returned a couple of times at the same time of year but have only been lucky enough to see a small number of cranes.

This year, after Labour Day Don and I spent a few days in Algonquin Park and decided to complete our short break with another visit to Hilliardton Marsh. We drove from the park to Temagami where we ate lunch by the Lake and then on to New Liskeard where we stayed for 2 nights. New Liskeard is a very pleasant base to explore the area. It sits on the shore of Lake Timiskaming and is very close to the Quebec boarder. The town has done a great job building and maintaining a pleasant lakefront with a 2km boardwalk, beaches, picnic tables and benches, along with some very attractive plantings.

Beforehand I contacted a local birder and he invited us to their morning banding session at Hilliardton Marsh Research and Education Centre. We were very fortunate as the mist nets were very active that day and we got to hold and release a number of birds including – Nashville, Wilsons, Tennessee, Magnolia, Yellow, Blackpoll, Palm and Yellow-rumped Warbler, Philadelphia Vireo, White Throated Sparrow, Ruby and Gold Crowned Kinglet, Brown Creeper, Common Yellow Throat, Alder Flycatcher Swainson's Thrush and Purple Finch

We were interested to learn that they use the French names for the warblers as the banders think they are more



Philadelphia Vireo and Wilson's Warbler in Don's Hands

relevant to the identification of the birds. Below is a list of some of the warblers and their French equivalent so you can decide whether you agree! (The translation field is blank if it is the same as the English version.)

We were very impressed with the facility especially the Butterfly/Hummingbird Garden – it definitely proves that you can grow many species of native plants in Northern Ontario. We then spent some time exploring the Marsh and saw Wood Duck, Pied-billed Grebe, American Coot, Sandhill Crane, American Bittern, Northern Harrier, Merlin and Common Raven



At the recommendation of one of the banders we then went in search of the pond outside Hill's Lake Fish Hatchery near the town of Charlton – an interesting area to drive around as it is in Mennonite country with the horse and buggies, and the women and children in their long dresses and bonnets. If you miss seeing Kestrels on the wire, drive around this area as they are almost as common as mourning doves in Southern Ontario! On the Pond we saw a loon, mergansers and an assortment of ducks. To finish our day, we took a pleasant drive. This area is part of the Great Clay Belt and there are numerous well-kept farms growing mainly produce, grain and corn which attracts a variety of birds. And finally, no trip to this region would be complete without a visit to the dairy at Thornloe for a well-deserved magnificent ice cream.

English Name	French Name	French Translation
Ovenbird	<i>paruline couronnée</i>	<i>crowned warbler</i>
Worm-eating warbler	<i>paruline vermivore</i>	<i>vermivorous warbler</i>
Louisiana waterthrush	<i>paruline hochequeue</i>	
Northern waterthrush	<i>paruline des ruisseaux</i>	
Golden-winged warbler	<i>paruline à ailes dorées</i>	
Blue-winged warbler	<i>paruline à ailes bleues</i>	
Black-and-white warbler	<i>paruline noir et blanc</i>	
Prothonotary warbler	<i>paruline orangée</i>	
Tennessee warbler	<i>paruline obscure</i>	<i>dusky warbler</i>
Orange-crowned warbler	<i>paruline verdâtre</i>	<i>greenish warbler</i>
Nashville warbler	<i>paruline à joues grises</i>	<i>gray-cheeked warbler</i>
Connecticut warbler	<i>paruline à gorge grise</i>	<i>gray-throated warbler</i>
Mourning warbler	<i>paruline triste</i>	<i>sad warbler</i>
Kentucky warbler	<i>paruline du Kentucky</i>	
Common yellowthroat	<i>paruline masquée</i>	<i>masked warbler</i>
Hooded warbler	<i>paruline à capuchon</i>	
American redstart	<i>paruline flamboyante</i>	<i>flaming warbler</i>
Kirtland's warbler	<i>paruline de Kirtland</i>	
Cape May warbler	<i>paruline tigrée</i>	<i>tiger warbler</i>
Cerulean warbler	<i>paruline azurée</i>	
Northern parula	<i>paruline à collier</i>	<i>collared warbler</i>
Magnolia warbler	<i>paruline à tête cendrée</i>	<i>ashy head warbler</i>
Bay-breasted warbler	<i>paruline à poitrine baie</i>	
Blackburnian warbler	<i>paruline à gorge orangée</i>	<i>orange-throated warbler</i>
Yellow warbler	<i>paruline jaune</i>	
Chestnut-sided warbler	<i>paruline à flancs marron</i>	<i>brown-sided warbler</i>
Blackpoll warbler	<i>paruline rayée</i>	<i>striped warbler</i>
Black-throated blue warbler	<i>paruline bleue</i>	<i>blue warbler</i>
Palm warbler	<i>paruline à couronne rousse</i>	<i>red-crowned warbler</i>
Pine warbler	<i>paruline des pins</i>	
Yellow-rumped warbler	<i>paruline à croupion jaune</i>	
Yellow-throated warbler	<i>paruline à gorge jaune</i>	
Prairie warbler	<i>paruline des prés</i>	<i>meadow warbler</i>
Black-throated grey warbler	<i>paruline grise</i>	<i>gray warbler</i>
Townsend's warbler	<i>paruline de Townsend</i>	
Hermit warbler	<i>paruline à tête jaune</i>	<i>yellow-headed warbler</i>
Black-throated green warbler	<i>paruline à gorge noire</i>	<i>black-throated warbler</i>
Canada warbler	<i>paruline du Canada</i>	
Wilson's warbler	<i>paruline à calotte noire</i>	<i>black-crowned warbler</i>
Painted redstart	<i>paruline à ailes blanches</i>	<i>white-winged warbler</i>

# Nature FYI

## Wild Pigs in Claremont

I imagine all of you were quite surprised to hear on the news that a sounder of wild pigs was spotted in Claremont. DurhamRegion.com reported that there was a confirmed sightings of 14 pigs. The term wild pigs refer to any member of the pig species that is roaming outside their enclosure. Pigs are particularly good at escaping captivity. It is believed the Claremont wild pigs are wild Eurasian Boar that were born in captivity.

The city of Pickering is working closely with the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry (MNFR), which is in the process of trapping the pigs so they can be removed. They are also warning residents that cats should be kept indoors and dogs on leashes and not to approach them for your own safety.

Wild pig sightings are not new to Ontario and there have been sightings of small groups in southern, eastern and central Ontario. This is a new potential invasive species problem in Ontario. Eurasian wild boars are considered one of the most damaging invasive species in the United States. They have a high reproductive potential which means that populations can increase in number and spread rapidly, making their impacts more severe. Ontario is making it illegal to farm this species in 2022.

Wild pigs are particularly destructive to our natural environment. They prefer deciduous forests, crop and pastureland, and especially like wetlands and shoreline areas. They damage sensitive habitat by trampling, wallowing and rooting. Although wild pigs mainly eat, crops, tubers, acorns and other nuts they also readily eat arthropods and small vertebrates. They are also known to eat eggs of ground nesting birds and kill young deer and livestock. In addition, wild pigs also spread disease and impact water quality. They are also highly aggressive.

Citytv has posted on YouTube a great interview and video taken by Mary Delaney, a home owner in Claremont. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g\\_1eOqIh9uI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g_1eOqIh9uI)

What do you do if you spot a wild pig? Note its location and call the hot line that has been established 1-833-933-2355 or email at [wildpigs@ontario.ca](mailto:wildpigs@ontario.ca).

A wild pig trail camera detection protocol was set up by the OFAH this spring. To view their protocol and learn more about wild pigs visit <https://www.ofah.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/WildPigProtocolweb.pdf>.

*Nancy Muzik*

## Membership Renewal Time

**Reminder: For the 2021/2022 season only, there will be a flat rate of \$10.00 for both single and family memberships.**

A cheque payable to Durham Region Field Naturalists may be mailed to: **Box 290, C/O The UPS Store #51, 1300 King St E, Unit 27, Oshawa, ON, L1H 8J4.** You can find a membership form on the website <http://drfn.ca/membership/>

You may also pay your membership by **e transfer** to [treasurer.drfn@gmail.com](mailto:treasurer.drfn@gmail.com).

If you have changed your address, phone number or email address please notify Diane Peter at [opeter@rogers.com](mailto:opeter@rogers.com).