

What's Inside

President's Message

Future Outings

Past Outings

Christmas Bird Count

Winter Birds Around Durham Region

Ontario Nature Report

Fun Bird Facts

Youth Summit Thank You Letters

Financial Report

Newsletter

Submissions

Please submit your pictures and articles for the March newsletter no later than March 15 to Nancy Muzik at john_nancy_m@rogers.com

THE NATURALIST

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

President's Message



Welcome to 2019! Will it be an improvement over 2018? We can only hope. There are many challenges on the horizon. We now have a provincial government set on destroying all the environmental gains and protections that were made by previous governments of all stripes. And due south of us is a leader who does not believe in Climate Change at a time when it is becoming more and more crucial for world leaders to actually lead us through into a brighter future.

I'm sure as Naturalists we are all doing what we can to reduce our carbon footprint. But like that leader to the south, there are still many among us who do not "believe" in Climate Change or Global Warming. Tricky word – "believe". Do we still believe the world is flat, that ships will fall off into the abyss if they sail too far? My grandfather did not "believe" that Man had landed on the moon. It was all a giant hoax. But we all know now that the Earth is roundish and humankind did indeed land on the moon. These are based on irrefutable scientific facts. As is Climate Change! Our planet is warming, undeniably. Some argue that it's cold where they live so there can't be global warming. But they fail to understand that our planet is huge and local differences in temperatures may not be dramatic.

Some say that there have always been climatic changes throughout the Earth's history. But these have taken millennia to occur. Unless the change happened by a sudden catastrophe such as a large meteorite strike. But this current change has happened within about 150 years. It can be traced back to industrialization. There is a direct correlation. This is based on a vast collection of data and observations that thousands of leading world climate scientists agree on. There are a handful who do not but those are ones who have been found to have ties to the petrochemical industries or other industries of the same ilk. In other words, they have a different agenda than the rest.

So, we live in a world that is on the edge of a major disaster, one that threatens the existence of mankind and civilization, with some world leaders who are either reluctant or unable to lead and a populous that, like in the Dark Ages, is somewhat distrustful of science and facts. We

Upcoming Meetings

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

Time: 7:30 p.m.

*Place: Civic Rec Complex, Bobby Orr
Room, 99 Thornton S., Oshawa.*

*Come a little early to enjoy
conversation and refreshments ('lug-a-
mug')*

January 28, 2019

Otto Peter

Eastern South Africa Trip

February 25, 2019

Rayfield Pye

Hawk Identification Workshop

March 25, 2019

TBA

are surrounded by denialists.

Keith Kahn-Harris is a sociologist who has a new book out titled *Denial: The Unspeakable Truth*. Dow Marmur in Opinion, Toronto Star, December 30, 2018 describes Kahn-Harris' book as "a powerful indictment of attempts in this, our 'post-truth' age, to distort evidence in the service of, for example, religious beliefs (defending the Biblical notion that the Earth is flat) or economic interests (seeking to distort the incontrovertible fact that the Earth's climate is changing for the worse, or even that smoking is not bad for you)."

In an August 3, 2018 article in The Guardian, *Denialism: what drives people to reject the truth*, <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2018/aug/03/denialism-what-drives-people-to-reject-the-truth>, Keith Kahn-Harris explains denialism and describes it as "dangerous". He also goes on to say "More commonly though, denialism's effects are less direct but more insidious. Climate change denialists have not managed to overturn the general scientific consensus that it is occurring and caused by human activity. What they have managed to do is provide subtle and not-so-subtle support for those opposed to taking radical action to address this urgent problem. Achieving a global agreement that could underpin a transition to a post-carbon economy, and that would be capable of slowing the temperature increase, was always going to be an enormous challenge. Climate change denialism has helped to make the challenge even harder."

So, what can we do to change these denialists' minds? Just keep trying to convince them of the facts, observations and science. Don't give up.

Lois Gillette

Future Outings

Saturday, February 23 at 10:00 AM

Amherst Island: Raptors

Leader: Don Docherty

Amherst Island has a very high rodent population this year and the hawks and owls have been attracted in large numbers. We'll drive the principal roads in search of raptors and, hopefully, northern finches and sparrows.

Dress warmly!

Consider a snack and something to drink since there is only a convenience store with high prices in Stella.

Washrooms are only available at the ferry docks and on the ferry so be prepared!

Meet to car pool at the old GO Station parking lot off Simcoe Street South near the Highway 401 on-ramp. Take exit # 593 from Highway 401, proceed south on County Road #4 (formerly Highway 133) to Millhaven on Lake Ontario - the ferry dock is 200m west on Hwy 33 (Bath Road). We'll take the 12:30 ferry to the island.

There is a ferry charge of \$9.00 per vehicle so carpooling saves a lot and minimizes the size of our car flock.

In the event of bad weather, we will go to Cranberry Marsh and Hall's Road for wintering Northern migrants and our inspiring winter residents.

Saturday, March 23 at 9:00 AM

Presqu'ile Provincial Park: Waterfowl

Let's visit Presqu'ile in search of waterfowl, other migrants and hardy winter inhabitants. This should be an excellent opportunity to see migrating ducks and a few lingering Northern species.

Meet to car pool at 9:00 AM at the old GO Station parking lot off Simcoe Street South near the Highway 401 on-ramp. Parking is available at the side farthest from the street. (Alternately, meet at the park gates at 10:00 AM.)

Bring water and lunch.

A spotting scope may be helpful although a few should be available.

Check the weather forecast and dress accordingly.

Vehicle permit fees apply: \$11.25 per car (seniors \$9.00)

Dress warmly!

Difficulty: Easy to moderate walking depending on the state of path/road clearing.

Don Docherty

Past Outings

Niagara Gulls

November 25, 2018

Our annual outing to Niagara with the Pickering Field Naturalists was well attended. The weather was dry but cool and windy.

We all met up at Dufferin Islands park nature area with the hopes of finding a tufted titmouse. Unfortunately, none were spotted this year. We did observe a group of cedar waxwings, the highlight of this stop.

We then moved on to the river. The water levels were high so the gulls were quite far out on the island. We were awarded with sightings of Glaucous, Iceland, and Lesser Black-backed gulls in amongst the more common gulls on the river. Other highlights were a large group of Tundra Swans in the distance and Canvasbacks.

At the barge area above the falls a Redhead duck was resting just a few feet from us and lingered the whole time we were there.



Submitted by Kristen Osborne



Submitted by John Muzik

After lunch we headed to the Adam Beck overlook but found fewer gulls than in the past and no new ones to our list.

We finished the trip at the overlook at Queenston Heights. Highlights at this stop were Long-tailed ducks, a Bald Eagle and after much searching and discussion Black Vultures. The vultures were roosting making identification difficult. Finally, we had one vulture showing off their light grey legs verifying the identification.

Thank you Rayfield for an enjoyable day.

Nancy Muzik

Oshawa Christmas Bird Count

December 22, 2018

Snow Goose-1	Cackling Goose-1
Canada Goose- 6424	Mute Swan- 40
Trumpeter Swan- 8	Gadwall- 21
American Black Duck- 48	Mallard- 520
Northern Pintail- cw	Redhead- 22
Greater Scaup- 2627	Lesser Scaup-1
Long-tailed Duck- 357	Bufflehead- 226
Common Goldeneye- 749	Hooded Merganser- cw
Common Merganser- 60	Red-breasted Merganser- 432
Ruffed Grouse-1	Wild Turkey- 142
Red-throated Loon- 5	Common Loon-1
Great Blue Heron-1	Black -crowned Night-Heron-1
Bald Eagle-1	Northern Harrier-1
Sharp-shinned - 3	Coopers Hawk- 8
Red-tailed Hawk- 31	Ring-billed Gull- 546
Herring Gull- 103	Iceland Gull-2
Great Black-backed Gull- 8	Rock Pigeon- 1320
Mourning Dove- 677	Eastern Screech- Owl- cw
Great Horned Owl- 8	Snowy Owl- 2
Barred Owl- 6	Long-eared Owl-1

Northern Saw-whet Owl- 1	Belted Kingfisher- 3
Red-headed Woodpecker-1	Red-bellied Woodpecker-13
Downey Woodpecker- 116	Hairy Woodpecker--30
Northern Flicker- 7	Pileated Woodpecker- 2
Eastern Phoebe-1	Merlin- 1
American Kestrel-2	Peregrine Falcon- 2
Northern Shrike-2	Blue Jay=- 104
American Crow- 220	Common Raven- 14
Black-capped Chickadee- 1005	Red-breasted Nuthatch- 65
White-breasted Nuthatch- 195	Brown Creeper- 3
Winter Wren-2	Golden-crowned Kinglet- 13
Eastern Bluebird- 2	Hermit Thrush- cw
American Robin- 63	Northern Mockingbird- 3
European Starling- 1986	Cedar Waxwing- 133
Yellow-rumped Warbler-1	American Tree Sparrow- 77
Chipping Sparrow-1	Fox Sparrow-1
Song Sparrow-7	Swamp Sparrow-1
White-throated Sparrow- 39	White-crowned Sparrow-1
Dark-eyed Junco- 458	Northern Cardinal- 256
Red-winged Blackbird- 8	Brown-headed Cowbird- 48
Purple Finch- 6	House Finch- 85
Common Redpoll-1	Pine Siskin- 63
American Goldfinch- 502	Evening Grosbeak-1
House Sparrow- 299	Pine Grosbeak- cw
Total Species- 83	Total birds- 22267



Submitted by Brian Reid

New for count: Eastern Phoebe

Record High Counts: Red-throated Loon, Red-bellied Woodpecker, White-breasted Nuthatch

Kms Driving- 754, Kms Walking- 115, Hours Driving- 40.5, Hours Walking- 65.5

Weather: -3 at 7 AM and warmed up to -2. Strong north-west winds with a wind chill of - 12 for most of the day.

Field Counters: Don Docherty, Kristen Osborne, Charmaine Anderson, Dave Worthington, Mary-Beth Worthington, Dennis Barry, Margaret Carney, Glenn Coady, Tony Crasto, Otto Peter, Diane Peter, Diane Pazaratz, Joan Ellis, Jim McKnight, Satu Pernanum, John Foster,

Maria Prisciak, John Muzik, Nancy Muzik, Brian Reid, John McFeeter, Brian Henshaw, Geoff Carpentier, Peter Hogenbirk, Tyler Hoar, Mike Ferguson, James Kamstra, Rayfield Pye, Alan Johnston, David Bland, Derek Gillette, Lois Gillette, Rob McIvor, Elaine Mendezino, Fiero Mendezino, and Jim Robinson

Feeder Counters: Judy Bryson, Dianne Pazaratz, M McVarish, Shirley Penny, Eve-Ann and Brian Reid, Bonnie Hyderman, Jake Munroe, Nancy Miller, Mike McEvoy, Craig McLauchlan, Irene and Ted Warren, Diane Peter, Judy Pell, John and Dianne McFeeters, Tyler Hoar, Yvonne Dodgson, Jackie McBain, Kim St. John, Tonya Dizhevski, and Cory Muzik.

Thank-you to Diane and Otto Peter for hosting the wrap up party.

Thank-you to Otto Peter for entering the data into the spread sheet.

The data will be entered into the Audubon Society web site.

Rayfield Pye

Bird Feeder Tour

Saturday, January 12

The annual bird feeder tour was held on Saturday, January 12. The weather was fine and a group of 20 participants surveyed half a dozen locations in North Pickering including Greenwood and some areas to the north and east as far as Kinsale Road.

We saw 20 bird species with highlights being Woodpeckers from Downy to Pileated and Red-bellied. With respect to raptors, some caught a glimpse of a Northern Shrike and/or a Bald Eagle as well. Healthy numbers of Goldfinch, Starlings and Cowbirds were found as well as Juncos and Crows but sparrows were generally in short supply. I expect that the lack of snow cover afforded more feeding opportunities in adjacent fields but a good storm will bring them back to feeders.

After a productive morning we returned to Mount Zion united Church for a well-deserved, delicious pot luck lunch.

Thanks to Judy Bryson for organizing, Kristen Osborne for entering our bird finds into eBird, and the ladies of Mount Zion United Church who laid out our delicious banquet.



Submitted by Kristen Osborne



Submitted by Brian Reid

A rare northern bird treat, Pine Grosbeaks, were reported 20 minutes north east of the church. Some of our participants drove there afterwards to see them. Keep vigilant, for they will come further south in search of food as the winter progresses.

Don Docherty

Winter Birds Around Durham Region

Ron Pittaway had predicted that this would be an irruption (flight) year for winter finches in the East. Cone and birch seed crops are poor to low in most of Ontario. As predicted uncommon winter finches and other birds have been reported in areas around Durham Region.

Pine Grosbeaks and a Boreal Chickadee reported at Darlington Provincial Park have excited both birders and photographers. As well Redpolls, Hoary Redpolls, Bohemian Waxwings and Horned Larks have been reported in fields in northern Durham region.



Pine Grosbeak submitted by Kristen Osborne



Boreal Chickadee submitted by Rayfield Pye



Copyright Mike McEvoy

In addition, a deceased Dovekie was found on the beach at Thickson woods December 26, 2018, by Caroline Van Goch. It is a rare interruptive species for the Great Lakes. It normally winters off the Northern Atlantic coast. It reportedly has been donated to the ROM for study.

Ensure your feeders are well stocked this winter as many birds will have difficulty finding natural foods. You may be rewarded with one of these infrequent visitors.

Nancy Muzik

Ontario Nature Report

Citizens groups across Ontario are up in arms about Bill 66, introduced in the Legislature on December 6th. Caroline Schultz, Executive Director, Ontario Nature has written what you need to know about this controversial bill:

1. It affects every municipality in Ontario. Bill 66 allows municipalities across the province to create “**open-for-business by-laws**” that would trump critical legal requirements to protect water, natural heritage, farmland and human health and well-being. These by-laws would take precedence over municipal official plans.
2. **It threatens drinking water** across Ontario. Open-for-business by-laws would override policies in approved source protection plans intended to protect existing and future sources of municipal drinking water from threats such as landfills, sewage systems and improper handling of fuel, manure and pesticides.
3. **It threatens wetlands, woodlands and habitat** for species at risk across Ontario. Open-for-business by-laws would circumvent protections for these important habitats and species set out in the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) under the Planning Act.

4. **It threatens farmland** across Ontario. Open-for-business by-laws would bypass agricultural protections set out, for example, in the PPS. This could lead to more urban sprawl.
5. **It threatens two million acres of natural areas** and farmland across the Greenbelt. Open-for-business by-laws would override protections for natural heritage and farmland set out in the Greenbelt Plan and the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan.
6. It threatens fresh water and the ecological health of the Lake Simcoe watershed. Open-for-business bylaws would trump requirements set out in the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan.
7. It would undermine efforts to make Ontario communities more livable, sustainable and resilient. Open-for-business by-laws would override PPS policies supporting active transportation, affordable housing, green infrastructure and climate resiliency.
8. It would compromise transparency and public engagement. Contrary to current legal requirements (Planning Act, Clean Water Act), the by-laws could be passed without any prior public notice, behind closed doors.
9. It would leave citizens without recourse. Community members would not be able to appeal open-for-business by-laws to the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal.
10. **It threatens human and wildlife** health through increased exposure to toxic chemicals. Bill 66 proposes to repeal the Toxics Reduction Act, which requires certain industrial facilities to consider ways to reduce the use and emission of toxic chemicals in their operations.

In a nutshell, **Bill 66** would turn back the clock on many years of good planning, community input and strong leadership from governments of all political stripes. It would sidestep laws and policies intended to protect the long-term health and resilience of our communities and would facilitate sprawling and unchecked development, threatening sensitive natural features and water resources upon which we all rely.”

Please help us stop Bill 66 by going to Ontario Nature online and add your name to this all-important petition. <https://ontarionature.good.do/schedule10/sign/>

Maria Prisciak

Fun Bird Facts



Submitted by Kristen Osborne

Cardinals (along with several hundred other bird species) sometimes cover themselves in crushed or living ants smearing them over their feathers, or allowing living ants to crawl on them. This is called anting. The bird may pick up the insects in their bill and rub them on the body (active anting), or the bird may lie in an area of high density of the insects and perform dust bathing-like movements (passive anting). While scientists still aren't sure what the purpose of "anting" is, some believe the birds use the formic acid secreted during their ant bath to help get rid of lice and other parasites. Another possibility is that formic acid acts as a sort of natural balm, soothing irritation.

Other theories put forward are that the birds are preparing the ants for eating. Rubbing the ants on their wings forces them to drain the acid making them safe to eat.

There is even a theory that anting produces euphoria and might even be addictive. It has been referred to as bird catnip.

The opinion is still out on anting behavior is it for cleanliness, food, or fun.

Nancy Muzik

Youth Summit Thank You Letters

Thank you so much for allowing me to be a part of the Ontario Nature Youth Summit of 2018. My name is Sofie Eklund and I am a grade 12 student at O'Neill CVI in Oshawa and I love playing rugby with my school, playing the trombone in band, reading, and listening to music. I was very excited when I heard about this summit as I am very interested in contributing to environmental change. I loved getting to hold snakes and turtles, learning about pollinators, native species, and making a difference as a young person. My favourite part of the weekend was making a traditional salve with an indigenous elder and I loved being surrounded by like minded students with similar interests to me. I am super excited to take back my new knowledge to my community and school to do my best to do our part to help the environment as well as join the Ontario Nature Youth Council! The first things I will try to do is start composting at my school and make it an official Canada Bee School. I have included some pictures below as well. Thank you again for this fantastic opportunity!



Hi! My name is Sarah Dykstra and I go to Centennial CVI in Guelph. I am writing to thank you for sponsoring me to attend the 2018 Ontario Nature Youth Summit. I've attended the summit for 4 years now and it's always one of the highlights of the year for me. This year, as a member of the youth council, I ran a workshop to teach other participants about the importance of pollinators, followed by the planting of pollinator-friendly flowers. I also attended a workshop to learn how to reduce the amount of plastic waste I produce, a workshop about invasive species, and a workshop where I learned about the aboriginal clan system and how leadership plays into it. At the end of that workshop we collected materials such as leaves, flowers, mushrooms, nuts, and twigs, and used them to create a painting based on a clan. My group was the marten group, and I've attached a picture of our painting below. One of the other parts of the weekend I really enjoyed was the Scales Nature Park presentation. During the first half of the presentation, the presenter held up different native reptiles and shared some facts about where they live, what they eat, and their behavior. During the second half, participants got to hold all of the reptiles, which I absolutely loved because I think snakes are really interesting. After that, several participants went for a night hike, and we ended up finding many red backed salamanders and a blue spotted salamander, which was really cool. Over the course of the weekend I met a few other people from Guelph, which I've kept in touch with, and hopefully in the spring we'll be able to work together to plan a planting event in the community. Overall, it was a very inspiring, productive, and fun weekend, so thank you for sponsoring me to attend it!



Financial Statement Dec 31/2018

Cash Balance as of Dec 31/2017 - \$2,530.63

ASSETS

Bird Studies Canada
Donation Received
Float In
Memberships
Raffle
Refreshments

\$1,008.75
\$130.00
\$200.00
\$2,555.00
\$285.00
\$00.00

LIABILITIES

Bank Fees
Communications
Donations Out
Dues
Float Out
Miscellaneous
ON Insurance
Rent
Speakers

\$133.38
\$214.70
\$800.00
\$00.00
\$200.00
\$36.46
\$907.20
\$827.33
\$450.00

TOTAL ASSETS

\$4,178.75

TOTAL LIABILITIES

\$3,569.07

$\$2,530.63 + \$4,178.75 - \$3,569.07 = \$3,140.31$ cash balance on hand as of Dec 31/2018

Investment: CIBC GIC (as of Nov27/2018) - \$2,341.89 @ 0.5500% Matures Nov 27/2019

Ted Crichton