

## It's Time to Renew Your Membership.

Complete the form on page 10 and mail your cheque to the DRFN address.

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# THE NATURALIST

DURHAM REGION FIELD NATURALISTS  
CONSERVATION THROUGH EDUCATION

www.drfn.ca      drfn1955@hotmail.com

## President's Message

Well! This is all a different start to a new season for DRFN. 2020-2021 will certainly be not what we are used to. And this year will be full of uncertainties as COVID-19 progresses and wanes. As I write this, our venue at Oshawa Civic Complex is closed to us at least until January. So unfortunately, we will be having our meetings via ZOOM for the foreseeable future. Not all of our invited presenters may be willing or able to talk to us via ZOOM so setting up programmes will be challenging. We hope you can join us. If you are not a ZOOM user and need some help let us know.



As restrictions have relaxed some during the summer, we have been able to conduct a few outings. In keeping with COVID-guidelines and laws we will continue to do so throughout the coming seasons.

In May we had a successful COVID-19 ZOOM AGM. Thanks to those who were able to participate.

The roster of executives for 20/21 includes: President, Lois Gillette; Co-president, Kristen Osborne; Programmes, Otto Peter; Membership, Diane Peter; Newsletter, Nancy and John Muzik; Outings, Don Docherty; Ontario Nature Contact, Maria Prisciak; Conservation, Rayfield Pye; Publicity, Lois Gillette; Treasurer, Ted Crichton; and Secretary, Satu Pernanen. I am sure they will all continue to do a great job. Please offer them your support, input and comments so that we may all make DRFN the best club we can for all its members. You may notice that I listed Kristen as Co-President not Vice President. Kristen has offered to take on more of the responsibilities of President as I ease out of the position. You will be hearing more from her in the coming year.

**Lois Gillette**

## 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 28, 2020**

Jean Iron

“The Nature of Arctic Birds”

### **October 26, 2020**

Owl Foundation

“The Owl Foundation a Fly by Night Organization”

### **November 30, 2020**

Martyn Obbard

“How Black and Polar Bears Prepare for Winter”

## Newsletter

## Submissions

Please submit your pictures and articles for the November newsletter no later than November 15, 2020.

Email all submissions to Nancy Muzik at

john\_nancy\_m@rogers.com

## Future Outings

### Upcoming Outings and COVID-19 Guidance

These are challenging times due to COVID-19. DRFN will follow the guidance, laws and regulations of Canada, Ontario and local municipalities to limit the spread and minimize the danger. Although we have resumed outings, limits on group size and social distancing will still apply. 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. Bring your own drinks, and food since restaurants may not be available.

### **Saturday, September 26 at 10 AM**

#### **Darlington Generating Station Parkland**

Leader: Don Docherty

Meet at the parking lot to the SE of the pond at Darlington Generating Station. (From the 401 East-bound, take the Courtice Road exit, go east on Megawatt Dr east (changes to Energy Dr W) and south on Park Rd to the second parking lot on the right-hand side.

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.

Difficulty: Light walking on excellent trails.

Bring water.

### **Saturday, October 17 at 10:00 AM**

#### **Durham Forest Fall Forest and Mushroom Appreciation Walk**

The fall brings a chill to the air but fall colours and mushrooms add beauty and a pleasant aroma to the woods. Bring your binoculars or a camera to see what nature has in store for us.

Durham Regional Forest is 596 hectares (1,473 acres) of forested property. Much of this forest consists of land that was reforested in the 1920s to prevent soil erosion. It also provides outstanding recreational opportunities and wildlife habitat.

The forest is located between Concession Road 7 and Lake Ridge Road. It is just 1 KM south of Goodwood Road. A small parking lot is located on the west side of Concession Road 7 just west of the microwave towers.

Difficulty: Check the weather forecast and dress accordingly. Casual walking on sandy trails with a few slopes will be required.

Bring water.

**Saturday, November 07 at 10 AM**

**Lake Ontario Marshes**

Meet at the entrance to the south trail off Hall's Road in Whitby. (Take Victoria Street in Whitby to get to Hall's Road.)

We'll start at the south platform for a pleasant normal view of the marsh. Next, we'll walk south around the lake side of the marsh. We'll check the marsh for ducks and other late migrants. We'll finish with a trip to Pumphouse Marsh. Rain or shine the Chickadees want to be your friend.

Difficulty: Light walking.

Check the weather forecast and dress accordingly.

**In the event of a forecast of bad weather, an email will be sent to those on the DRFN distribution list on the evening before a trip with trip cancellation or re-scheduling information. If you are not on the list, you may check the DRFN website or call the outing leader.**

*Don Docherty*

## Past Outings

**Butterfly walk- afternoon of July 1- Heber Down Conservation Area**



Viceroy by Rayfield Pye

The highlights were White Admiral, Viceroy, Monarch, Mourning Cloak, Great Spangled Fritillary, and Silver-spotted Skipper.

*Rayfield Pye*

This was the first outing since the COVID 19 shutdown. Ten people the legal limit at the time showed up for the outing. It was a very hot and sunny afternoon.

Because of the hot and dry summer, the fields next to the parking lot had almost no butterflies. When we moved closer to the Iroquois shoreline the number of butterflies increased.



Submitted by John Muzik

## **August 29, Nature Walk - Long Sault**



Submitted by John Muzik

With the night's rain past, our walk was dry with an abundance of fresh air. Nine attendees walked the Blue Bird Trail with a short off-shoot up the hill to see an excellent Spring birding area with magnificent views. (Next May, consider this area to see Blue-winged Warbler, Mourning Warbler, Field Sparrow, Eastern Towhee and a variety of others who will be heard calling, like Ovenbird and Wood Thrush.

The commonly heard birds were Blue Jays and Wood Peewees. Few birds showed themselves except for when we encountered a couple of feeding flocks. Amongst the Black-capped Chickadees were Black-throated Blue, Black-throated Green and Pine Warblers. Both species of Nuthatch, a Flicker and a White-throated Sparrow were

also seen. The trail was in fine condition. At other times, there were many ferns and wildflowers to be identified. The trail was in fine condition, so consider a trip as we enter Fall for beautiful colours and mushrooms.

***Don Docherty***

## **Ontario Nature Report**

### **A message from Anne Bell:**

#### **An invitation to Ontario Greenbelt Alliance meeting September 29, 7 pm.**

I'm reaching out on behalf of the Ontario Greenbelt Alliance (OGA) as a member of the steering committee, to invite you to the upcoming OGA meeting on Tuesday, September 29th at 7 pm. The meeting is for OGA members and other groups who might be interested in joining the OGA (<https://greenbeltalliance.ca/members>). The focus of the meeting will be a presentation and discussion of the draft strategic plan that will guide OGA activities in the upcoming months. The goal of the plan is to create public support to stop sprawl and grow the Greenbelt, and to encourage the Government of Ontario to adopt these objectives as part of its COVID recovery plans. This meeting is open to anyone who cares about Ontario's Greenbelt, protecting the natural spaces and farmland in and around the Greenbelt, and smart and sustainable urban growth. The two-hour member meeting will take place by Zoom and you must register to attend. We would welcome your participation at the meeting and feedback on the plan before we finalize it.

#### **Speaking Up Against Provincial Zoning Orders**

Together, we demanded transparency and successfully held the government to account. Over 4,000 Ontario Nature supporters like you signed our petition to stop the provincial government from bypassing public participation in determining the future of greenspace in the Greater Golden Horseshoe. After we spoke up, the government acted by posting these orders in Bradford West Gwillimbury, Brampton, Toronto, Vaughan, the town of Whitchurch-Stouffville and the City of Markham on the Environmental Registry of Ontario. Thank you for raising your voice! If you haven't already signed, it's not too late!

<https://ontarionature.good.do/mzo/email/>

Stay informed on issues, receive action alerts, subscribe to “Loon Call,” or read Ontario Nature Magazine’s latest edition by going to Ontario Natures website. You can also follow us on Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram.

***Maria Prisciak***

## Summer Wildflowers in My Garden



Butterfly Weed by Lois Gillette

During this COVID-19 summer I finally got to hug my loved ones and continued to enjoy my garden. My summer garden looks as wild as the flowers growing in it. I like it that way whether it is out of a certain aesthetic or just plain laziness.

I try to grow wildflowers that are of benefit to insects and birds, flowers that will draw them to my garden.

One of my new favourites is Butterfly Weed, *Asclepias tuberosa*, aka Butterfly Milkweed. I introduced this beautiful, bright orange uncommon native and member of the Milkweed (*Asclepiadaceae*) family to my garden three years ago. It has expanded into a large clump and has

produced a plethora of seedlings which I am happy to donate to other gardens. Butterflies love it!

Another member of the Milkweed family that is happily growing in my garden is Common Milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*). It has light rose purple 5-petalled flowers in clusters typical to this family. Not only are the plants sought after by Monarch Butterflies and their caterpillars but you are also rewarded by their divine scent. Tiger Swallowtails are also attracted to this plant as I found during a trip to Balsam Lake P.P. this summer. Unfortunately, the butterfly was missing its tail.

A late summer bloomer is Purple Coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*). This native flower of fields and open areas is well adapted to growing in your garden and even enjoys our drier summers. Butterflies and birds are attracted to its nectar and seeds. This summer I found two Fritillary butterflies frequenting a planting of Purple Coneflowers, not in my garden but at a cottage we rented near Bancroft. I am not exactly sure of the species, but I would hazard a guess at Great Spangled Fritillary (*Speyeria cybele*). I have also found Goldfinches feeding on this plant’s seeds.



Echinacea with butterfly by Lois Gillette

Not a wildflower but a very useful plant to have in your garden is parsley. Mine were actually last year’s plants that managed to over-winter then produced flowers. We found three Black Swallowtails (*Papilio polyxenes*) caterpillars and one adult on them. My grandchildren were excited to find them and were especially enthralled when one stuck out its orange “forked gland”, called the osmeterium. According to Wikipedia “when in danger,



Black Swallowtail Caterpillar by Lois Gillette

the osmeterium, which looks like a snake's tongue, everts and releases a foul smell to repel predators.” Of course, at that point it was wise to let the caterpillar be.

That’s just a few of the wildflowers growing in my garden this summer.

For more info on wildflowers of Ontario visit

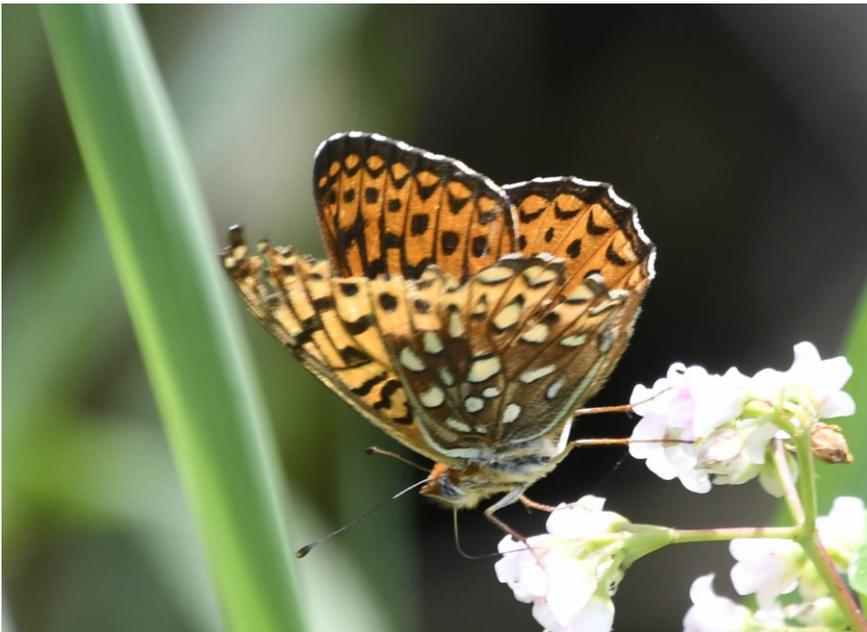
<http://www.ontariowildflowers.com/>

And for more about butterflies of Ontario visit

<https://www.ontariobutterflies.ca/>

*Lois Gillette*

## Durham Region Butterfly Counts IN 2020



Atlantis Fritillary by Rayfield Pye

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in the cancelling of so many events this year including about one-third of the butterfly counts in Ontario. I did not see the need to cancel our two counts however since small groups (often two people) cover their respective areas without need to contact others, and social distancing could be easily accomplished. Normally all participants meet up at a restaurant at day’s end to tell of their butterfly adventures and go through the species tally. Those had to be cancelled this year.

Butterfly counts entail a noble attempt to count all of the butterfly individuals within a 25 km<sup>2</sup> on the count day, similar to a Christmas Bird Count. The Oshawa count extends from the north side of Oshawa to north of Port Perry, while the Sunderland count includes parts of

Uxbridge and Brock townships in north Durham, and part of Georgina township in York Region. This was the 26<sup>th</sup> year for Oshawa and the 24<sup>th</sup> year for Sunderland.

During the Oshawa count held on June 28, 41 species were recorded, slightly less than the average of 45. Meanwhile 52 species were tallied on the Sunderland count on July 5. This is close to the long-term average of 54 for that count.

The counts are able to contribute to documenting population trends both at a local and regional scale but it is especially exciting when a new discovery is made. Rayfield Pye encountered and photographed an Atlantis Fritillary near Blackwater, which not only was a new species for the Sunderland count, but it had not been previously recorded anywhere in Durham Region! Atlantis is quite similar to the two other large fritillaries, Great Spangled and Aphrodite, but it has a black rim on the wing upper sides. It is a more northern species that occurs regularly just a short distance to the north in Kawartha Lakes and Simcoe County and throughout most of the province north of there. There are also historic records from York Region immediately to the west, so its confirmation in Durham was long overdue.

Although the Baltimore Checkerspot is common in north Durham and has been tallied on every Sunderland count, it is quite rare in the southern part of the Region. The 6 recorded by Tom Mason on Oshawa is the 5<sup>th</sup> time and highest count in 26 years. Interestingly, every Baltimore recorded on the Oshawa count was always in the vicinity of Lake Scugog at the north end of the circle. Margaret Carney caught sight of a hairstreak near Raglan. She thought it was a Gray Hairstreak which would have been an exceptional find. Unfortunately, her brief glimpse of the fast flying gossamer was not sufficient to conclude its identity.

The migrant species were very low in number this year, including Red Admiral and Painted Lady. Only a single Question Mark was seen at Oshawa and none at Sunderland, the first time in the 24 years of the count. American Ladies were not present on either count. Monarchs were found in lower than average numbers on both counts, and far below those of the past two years. They average about 90 for Oshawa and 123 for Sunderland.

Sunderland recorded a record high Tiger Swallowtail count of 169, well above the previous high of 100 in 2017.

Our understanding of Tiger Swallowtail taxonomy is changing causing confusion and an identification challenge. Until recently it was assumed that since both Canadian (*Papilio canadensis*) and Eastern Tiger Swallowtails (*Papilio glaucus*) are present in Durham Region. The Canadians being a smaller, single-brooded early flying species with a forewing yellow band, while Easterns are larger, double brooded and the underside of the forewing border is a yellow row of spots. Most of the swallowtails seen on counts were assumed to be Easterns since they appear large and freshly emerged. Current thought however, is to label these larger later season butterflies as Midsummer Tiger Swallowtails, since they are single brooded, fly later than Canadians and earlier than the second brood of Eastern Tigers. The Midsummer swallowtails appear to be hybrids since they are midway in size and in the yellow border pattern. There is some evidence that they may be another species distinct from Canadian and Eastern. It seems now that the true Eastern Tiger Swallowtails may be a more southern species that do not occur in Durham. To be consistent with previous years counts, however the Midsummers will be considered Easterns for this report until research on the taxonomy is more conclusive.



Midsummer Tiger Swallowtail by James Kamstra

The results of the two counts are shown on the table below and the participants are listed below that.

## BUTTERFLIES OBSERVED ON THE DURHAM COUNTS IN 2020

SPECIES	Oshawa	Sunderland
	June 28	July 5
Black Swallowtail		5
Canadian Tiger Swallowtail	12	
Eastern Tiger Swallowtail	37	169
Mustard White	20	64
Cabbage White	93	332
Clouded Sulfur	13	588
Orange Sulfur		7
American Copper	4	5
Bronze Copper	5	24
Coral Hairstreak		9
Acadian Hairstreak		22
Banded Hairstreak		3
Striped Hairstreak		9
Hairstreak sp.	1	
Eastern Tailed Blue	1	6
Summer Azure	4	105
Silvery Blue	17	5
Blue sp.		2
Great Spangled Fritillary	28	72
Aphrodite Fritillary	1	
<b>Atlantis Fritillary</b>		<b>1</b>
<i>Speyeria</i> sp.		3
Silver-bordered Fritillary		2
Meadow Fritillary		17
Pearl Crescent	57	18
Northern Crescent	777	799
<i>Phyciodes</i> sp.	40	
Milbert's Tortoiseshell		3
Painted Lady		2
<b>TOTAL INDIVIDUALS</b>	<b>2247</b>	<b>4258</b>
<b>TOTAL SPECIES</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>52</b>
No. of Participants	14	21
No. of Parties	7	9
Km. on foot	47.5	75
Km. by car	146	151.5
Hours on foot	38.5	65.75
Hours by Car	5	3.5
Total Hours	44	69.5

SPECIES	Oshawa	Sunderland
	June 28	July 5
Red Admiral	3	11
White Admiral	57	38
Red-spotted Purple	5	3
Viceroy	6	18
Northern Pearly-Eye	58	17
Eyed Brown	56	285
Appalachian Brown		15
Little Wood Satyr	60	21
Inornate Ringlet	72	37
Common Wood Nymph	6	91
Monarch	24	49
Silver-spotted Skipper	93	<b>50</b>
Northern Cloudywing	5	22
Juvenal's Duskywing	1	
Dreamy Duskywing	2	
Least Skipper	10	60
European Skipper	590	519
Peck's Skipper	9	137
Tawny-edged Skipper	5	107
Crossline Skipper		17
Long Dash Skipper	37	160
Northern Broken Dash		11
Little Glassywing		4
Delaware Skipper	2	86
Hobomok Skipper	16	17
Broad-winged Skipper		4
Dion Skipper		7
Dun Skipper	3	53

### Participants

Oshawa: Dennis Barry, Susan Blayney, Dan Bone, Margaret Carney, Geoff Carpentier, Cathy Galberg, James Kamstra, Steve LaForest, Tom Mason, Greg Moon, Brenda Near, Rayfield Pye, Bev & Jay Thibert.

Sunderland: Dave Bishop, Susan Blayney, Dan Bone, Jon Boxall, Brian Henshaw, Simon Henshaw, Jim Hopkins, James & Lynda Kamstra, Steve LaForest, Thom Lambert, Craig & Kathryn Lloyd, Tom Mason, Greg Moon, Brenda Near, Dave Paddock, Ed Poropat, Rayfield Pye, Bob & Karen Yukich.

***James Kamstra***

# Not All is Lost

Sometimes when I read about all of the sad news about the loss of biodiversity especially birdlife, I despair that we will get to a time when it is too late to halt the destruction. But then I realize that not all is lost when I read the new quarterly copy of Birdlife Life International magazine. It tells me that there is an amazing amount of work that has been going on since the late 70's around the world to identify, document and protect the places of greatest significance for the conservation of the world's birds through Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBA's). There are over 13,000 IBA's in over 200 countries of the world both on land and in the sea. There are almost 600 IBAs in Canada. About 33% of IBAs around the world lack formal protection and another 45% are only partially protected. It is not possible to protect every last bit of nature, we can at least throw our energy and collective influence behind saving those that will have the greatest impact to the persistence of biodiversity on the planet. Here are just a few examples of what has happened recently.

- Inner Gulf of Thailand: Much of the mangrove forests in the expanse of the mudflats were destroyed to create salt pans. These man-made salt pans were used by large populations of shorebirds in need of rest and refreshment during migration. Unfortunately, these salt pans are no longer profitable and were being sold for aquaculture activities threatening the shorebird habitats. However, generous donors were found to purchase a major very diverse site that is now a nature preserve, optimizing the conditions for the shorebirds, pelican and eagles.
- Messina Strait Italy: The strait is an important migration route, especially for raptors which flow down through Italy to the narrowest sea crossing to Sicily causing a bottle neck. This bottle neck was a hotbed for poaching where 1000's of raptors were illegally shot down each year. Birdlife's Italian partner set up volunteer based anti-poaching camps to watch over the birds and stop the illegal activity. Along with community awareness and law enforcement poaching has been drastically reduced saving over 85,000 Honey Buzzards as well as other Harriers and Falcons.
- Harapan Rainforest Indonesia: This rainforest home to over 300 bird species and Sumatran Tigers was being threatened with illegal logging, agricultural encroachment and mining activities which all imperiled the ecosystem and the livelihoods of the indigenous peoples. Through Birdlife's Indonesian partner they were able persuade the government to allow private organizations to manage logging concessions to restore the ecosystem. It is hoped that this legal framework can be used by other partners.
- Mutulunganga woodland Zambia: This sizeable mopane woodland is filled with birds, hippos and elephants. Two companies were given the concessions to log over two thirds of the reserve, threatening the biodiversity and making the local communities vulnerable to floods, erosion and grassland fires. The logging project was finally rejected after community petitions, objections by several NGO's and Birdlife's Zambia partner convinced the government that this was a bad project.
- Rila Mountains Bulgaria: The towering Rila mountain range is the source of Bulgaria's longest rivers. They flow past glacial lakes and through verdant, centuries old forest. Tourism, especially ski resorts risked destroying habitats. Ski lifts were started and after 10 years of advocacy Bulgaria was at fault for not fully designating the site as a Special Protection Area under the EU Habitats Directive. The site is now formally protected with an expanded buffer zone in the foothills.

As you can see there are many activities going on around the globe to try to stem this tide of loss of biodiversity.

***Otto Peter***

## Great Canadian Birdathon 2020

In late May, Otto and I participated in Bird's Canada annual fundraiser for the 23<sup>rd</sup> year. We visited our usual places including Carden Alvar and met no one, so social distancing wasn't a problem.

Our bird tally this year was 123 species, a little lower than hoped for. Our duck and shorebird numbers were very low because of timing and lack of access to key habitats. We had no unusual sightings either.

I am still taking pledges if you would like to support me this year. Below is the link for my web page for on-line donations. <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/bird-studies-canada/p2p/birdathon20/page/diane-peter-help-the-birds-and-our-future-naturalists/>

You can also mail a donation to me at the DRFN mail box. (see Membership page for address).

Thank you to everyone who has already made a donation and supported me and Birds Canada. Our club receives back 25% of what I raise from Birds Canada which we use to sponsor young people to attend Ontario Nature's Youth Summit every September. Because of Covid-19 ON held an on-line summit this year for 4 consecutive Saturdays in August. Since the cost per participant was lower, we were able to sponsor 7 youth. Hopefully next year there will be an in-person summit. We will have the funds to sponsor 4 participants.

***Diane Peter***

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### Membership Application Form

Please check the appropriate area to indicate membership type.

For Family membership please indicate the number of family members.

Individual (\$25) \_\_\_\_\_

Family (\$35) \_\_\_\_\_ # of People \_\_\_\_\_

Life Member (\$300) \_\_\_\_\_

Family Life Member (\$450) \_\_\_\_\_ # 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 54031, 8 King St. E., Oshawa ON, L1H 1A9

Do not send cash by mail.

Revenue Canada Charitable: No. 891631574RR0001