

## What's Inside

President's Message  
 Future Outings  
 Ontario Nature Report  
 Bird Collision Deterrents for Windows  
 Fowl Play  
 Spring Pics  
 Great Canadian Bird-a-Thon 2021  
 Book Review "Field Notes From an Unintentional Birder"  
 Nature FYI – Blackflies  
 Articles of Interest  
 Friends of Second Marsh – Let's De-Phrag the Marsh  
 In Memoriam -Les Sayer

## Executive Committee

President/Publicity: Lois Gillette  
 dlgill@sympatico.ca  
 Vice President: Kristen Osborne  
 kristen.osborne@hotmail.com  
 Secretary: Satu Pernanen  
 spernanen@gmail.com  
 Treasurer: Ted Crichton  
 tedcrichton@rogers.com  
 Programmes: Otto Peter  
 opeter@rogers.com  
 Membership: Diane Peter  
 dpeter@rogers.com  
 Outings : Don Docherty  
 annanddon@bell.net  
 Ontario Nature Contact: Maria Prisciak  
 Conservation: Rayfield Pye  
 raypye@interlinks.com  
 Newsletter: Nancy & John Muzik  
 john\_nancy\_m@rogers.com

# THE NATURALIST

DURHAM REGION FIELD NATURALISTS  
 CONSERVATION THROUGH EDUCATION  
[www.drfn.ca](http://www.drfn.ca)    [drfn1955@hotmail.com](mailto:drfn1955@hotmail.com)

## President's Message



Another COVID 19 season! I hope you are all holding up well. It's been very difficult for us lovers of nature. Having to stick close to home has been challenging. Derek and I have been spoiled having had opportunities to discover nature throughout the whole world. Now we are limited to nature programmes on the TV. And webinars! Many of these have allowed us virtual glimpses of nature beyond our back yards. Canadian Geographic, <https://www.canadiangeographic.ca> has had a series of webinars. You can watch recent ones through their website under Events. David Bird did one on Canada Jays, J.B. MacKinnon did one on rewilding (an interesting and hot topic nowadays) and Dr. Suzanne Simard did one on "Discovering the Wisdom of the Forest". Birds Canada has a series on Gardening for Birds <https://www.birdscanada.org/you-can-help/bird-gardens/>. Plus, if you go to their Facebook site and click on the Videos you can watch past webinars including the book launch of "Field Notes From an Unintentional Birder" by Toronto's Julia Zarankin (see Nancy's Book Review). Point Pelee National Park has had some wonderful webinars. If you missed seeing them live you can visit their Facebook site. Look under Videos. We enjoyed Sarah Rupert's "Warbler ID" and "Songbirds-Beyond Warblers". There are many more nature related videos out there.

This past year has been one of reflection for many of us. We have found that family and friends are very important to us. And just how important nature is! As we wait out this dastardly disease, threats to our environment and surrounding natural areas continue. It is worth fighting to keep them healthy and safe. To stay updated on issues affecting nature in Ontario visit Ontario Nature <https://ontarionature.org/campaigns/>

And speaking of videos, of course all DRFN meetings in the past year have been via ZOOM. Not ideal but it allows us to continue to have our great programmes. And if you missed the April meeting presentation by Dan Strickland entitled "The Triumph and Downfall of the Canada Jay" it was recorded so you can watch it on the DRFN Facebook site. Look under Events. Isn't technology great!

Unfortunately, outings were not always possible thanks to on and off and on-again lockdowns. But we did manage a few. Hopefully things will ease up for the summer.

## 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**

**May 31, 2021**

**AGM and members night.**

Geoff Carpentier: Breeding Bird Atlas

Brian Reid: New Pollinator Garden at Samuel Wilmot Nature Area

Annual Nature Quiz

**Sept. 27, 2021**

**Speaker: TBD**

## Newsletter Submissions

Please submit your pictures and articles for the Sept. newsletter no later than Sept. 15, 2021. Email all submissions to Nancy Muzik at [john\\_nancy\\_m@rogers.com](mailto:john_nancy_m@rogers.com)

The newsletter has carried on, excellent as always

I would like to thank all the members of the executive for making it an exciting and informative 2020/2021 season despite the many challenges. We look forward to seeing you all in person.

*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. When "Stay at Home" guidance is lifted, DRFN will resume outings but 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. Bring and wear a protective mask if you're within 6' of others.

**Saturday, June 19 at 8:00 AM**  
**Crow's Pass Conservation Area**

Leader: Otto Peter  
Difficulty: Easy walking.

This beautiful area has a wide variety of nesting birds that everyone wants to see after a long, locked down winter. Take Highway 12 to Scugog Line 2 (Chalk Lake Road); turn west and drive to Ashburn Road. Turn north onto Ashburn Road then west on Middle March Road. Continue west to parking area. (Caution: Watch for golfers where golf fairway crosses the road allowance.) Bring appropriate clothing and footwear based on the weather forecast.

**Saturday, July 03 at 1:00 PM**  
**Butterflies at Durham East Cross Conservation Area**

Leader: Rayfield Pye  
Difficulty: There may be a small hill or two but trail conditions should be dry/well drained sand.

Our annual butterfly outing. This location was picked because of the butterflies and it's likely to be a lot less congested than outdoor areas to the south. North on Durham 57 to Devitts Rd. East to the parking lot at 4560 Devitts Road.

Bring appropriate clothing and footwear based on the weather forecast. Bring water and insect repellent (just in case).

**Saturday, August 28 at 5:30 PM**  
**Beaver River Wetland Trail**

We'll be exploring an interesting area in north Durham. The flat, dry trail runs along a portion of an abandoned railway bed which was purchased by the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority in 1993.

Difficulty: Walking should be fine since it used to be a rail line. Bring appropriate clothing and footwear based on the weather forecast.

Commented [NM1]:

Drive north on highway 7/12 towards Sunderland. Once you pass Regional Road 13, park about 100 meters north of the light where the Beaver River and the rail trail crosses Hwy 7/12.  
Bring water and insect repellent (just in case).

***Don Docherty***

## Ontario Nature Report

You may have heard that the Government of Ontario has announced its intention to expand the province's protected areas. To this end, it appointed a Working Group to advise the Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks on specific opportunities for protection. The Working Group is to submit its recommendations to the Minister at the end of May. Although the announcement is welcome, unfortunately, there is no public process for providing input on where or how the protected areas should be established. Nor is there any mention of the steps that will be taken to consult with Indigenous communities. For this reason, Ontario Nature is working with several other non-government organizations to raise awareness about the government's announcement and create a more open process for providing input and for nominating places for protection.

Our first step will be to create a collective, interactive StoryMap showcasing some of the special places that the people of Ontario would like to see protected for future generations. The map will be presented to the government, its Working Group, and all the major political parties. For more information check our Ontario Nature website: <https://ontarionature.org/people-want-more-protected-places-blog/>

### **Opening session: Nature-based solutions for the 21st century - May 26, 2021 10:00am – 3:30pm**

Join Ontario Nature for the opening session of the 2021 Ontario Biodiversity Summit where we will discuss "Bending the Curve of Biodiversity Loss – a roadmap for a sustainable future." This engaging session will review recent assessments on the state of biodiversity at the global, national and sub-national level and also detail progress against corresponding biodiversity goals and targets. A panel session of experts will review and discuss opportunities for nature-based solutions to achieve multiple wins for biodiversity, climate change and for people. Registration is free. Sign up for 1 virtual session or all 15 sessions, May – September.

***Maria Prisciak***

## Bird Collision Deterrents for Windows

As naturalists and bird lovers we want to deter birds from striking our windows in our homes. There are many different methods tried by many different people including myself. Unfortunately, our house on a wooded ravine with a number of birdfeeders in the front and back has many windows which birds might think are open spaces they can fly through much to their dismay. Because I have tried at least different four methods I would like to tell you of my experience. We found that the best deterrent was leaving the curtains or blinds closed during daylight hours which resulted in zero bird strikes. However, that was not very pleasant since we couldn't look out into our yards. Relatives knowing that we are birders bought us a large number of wonderful translucent bird decals that supposedly were visible to birds making them a deterrent to bird strikes. Even with up to 8 decals per window we still had at least 2-4 bird strikes (that we knew about each year).

Then FLAP advertised a product called Feather-Friendly Marker Pattern tape. Using this tape, you apply a series of equally spaced white squares over the complete exterior surface of the window as a deterrent to bird collisions. I applied this system to the two biggest windows where most of the bird strikes occurred. Over the next two years we only had one bird strike that we knew about on those windows, which seemed to be excellent. The tape was not as easy to install as I thought it would be and it is hard to get even spacing since the tape stretches. It was also difficult at times to get the dots to transfer to the glass. See the attached picture.

However, because I had run out of tape and I was too lazy to purchase more I still had several windows where we kept the blinds closed. Then I saw a You Tube video from England that explained how a birder had used a

white liquid ink pen that was made explicitly for glass to apply a bird deterrent pattern on his windows. He showed how application of vertical white stripes every 2.5 inches across the window could stop bird strikes. Research showed that the pens would cost about one third as much as the Feather-Friendly tape would cost and was much quicker and easier to apply than the tape. I purchased a pen and applied the stripes to the rest of the deadly windows. By using a 4-foot-long level the stripes were easily marked on the windows at the right intervals since the width of the level was 2.5 inches. Care had to be taken not to smear the liquid ink by pushing the level across the window. It has been 18 months since the application of the paint stripes with no bird strikes. Personally, I like the look of the stripes better than the dot matrix. See the attached photo. I did find Windex removed the paint, but dish detergent did not when cleaning the windows. Reapplication is very easy by the way.

I would recommend either the Feather Friendly tape available at Urban Nature stores or on the web. The Uni Posca White PC-3M pen is available at Michael's for \$8. Both methods work very well at deterring bird collisions. I found the pen much easier to apply and much cheaper but it may need reapplication when it wears off.



Posca White PC-3M pen



Feather Friendly tape

**Otto Peter**

## Fowl Play

### Mallard Family

This story took place many years ago when we first began seeing Mallard ducks at our cottage in Fenelon Falls. They came in large numbers and nested in fire pits, flower beds, everywhere! A female made a nest and laid ten eggs in a flower bed right under my bedroom window. I talked to her often so she would get used to having us around. All went well until a ruckus woke me up one morning at 5:00 AM. Mama duck was frantic and when I looked out the window, I saw a cat standing near the nest. I yelled at it, and away it ran. When I went outside later, the mother duck was gone. I found that two of the eggs had been broken and the contents were missing. (I later asked a veterinarian friend if a cat would eat eggs and she said it would, if taught to do so by its mother.) We went out for a couple of hours and when we returned, I walked toward the back of the cottage just in time to see the mother duck flying away with an egg in her mouth! The nest was empty; she had taken all the eggs! Three days later, Mama came by proudly to show off her eight tiny babies!

### Goose Ritual

Late last summer while at the cottage, I glanced out the window and saw a group of Canada Geese floating in the shallows near the shore. I noticed that two or three were making their way up onto the grass. Not wanting a mess in the yard, I went out and chased them back into the water. Suddenly, two of the geese started to fight in the shallow water and the feathers were flying! While they were fighting, the rest of the geese (21) formed a tight circle around them and made a strange cooing sound. Once the battle was over, the circle opened to allow the victor to chase the defeated goose away, then closed again. Then a strange thing happened. In unison, the geese all stretched out their necks and lowered their heads, in what I always thought of as a threatening posture, towards the centre of the circle, creating a small ring with their beaks almost touching. I have wondered ever since what they were doing. Taking a vote? Discussing the fight?

*Iris Nash*

## Spring Pics



Ok so I put the hummingbird feeder up a tad early... Brian Reid



Service Berry Bud by Margaret Channon



Whippoorwill by Maria Prisciak



Hermit Thrush by Lois Gillette



Wood Thrush and Yellow Warbler by Lois Gillette



We had to cancel our outings this spring due to the Stay-At-Home Order. I was missing our annual Wild Flower walk at Stephen's Gulch. So, John and I ventured out to see the flowers and take some photos.



## Great Canadian Birdathon 2021

Otto and I are participating in Birds Canada annual fundraiser again this year. We will probably do our Birdathon in late May as that is the optimum month for species and we meet very few people where we go to observe the birds.

My goal is \$4,500 and currently I am over \$3,200. As a reminder DRFN gets 25% of the amount I raise. This money is used to sponsor students to attend Ontario Nature's Virtual Youth Summit in September. This year we hope to sponsor seven students since the registration fee is lower than in previous years.

We hope you will continue to support this very worth-while organization. I have attached the link to my web page for donations. <https://www.canadahelps.org/me/6GKvjcz>

If you would prefer to give me cash or a cheque or e-transfer, please contact me directly by email (opeter@rogers.com) or phone.

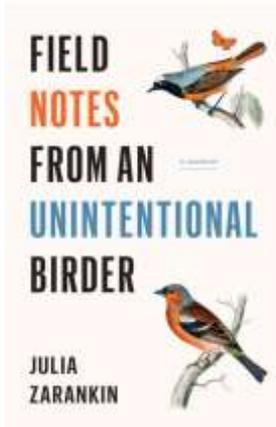
Thanks for your previous support and I hope you can support me again this year.

***Diane Peter***

## Book Review

### Field Notes from an Unintentional Birder

by Julia Zarankin



What is there to do in the winter under a stay-at-home order when the wind is howling and the snow is blowing? Well, being an avid reader, it was time to catch up on my must-read list. I had heard great things about Julia Zarankin's book, *Field Notes From an Unintentional Birder*.

Zarankin says, "The book recounts my unlikely transformation from total nature-novice to bona fide bird nerd. *Field Notes from an Unintentional Birder* also tells the story of the unexpected pleasures of discovering one's wild side and finding meaning in midlife through birds."

Zarankin's memoir is a very witty and humorous account of shopping for a hobby and stumbling into birding at a difficult time in her life. Her account as a complete beginner joining an Etobicoke bird watching group, learning the lingo of the birders made me laugh. I remember my first outing hosted by Friends of Second Marsh; I was equally as mystified by the lingo. What the heck is a MODO anyway?

Members would recognize many of the birding spots that Zarankin visited. During a visit to Thickson's Woods searching for the Great Horned Owl she borrowed Zeiss binoculars. This convinced her to invest in high quality

binoculars to pursue her passion.

Zarankin's quirky memoir is not so much about birds as it is about falling in love with the world and its everyday wonders. She says "she would like to develop the confidence of a Ross's Goose, the hairdo of a Cedar Waxwing and the wardrobe of a Northern Flicker." Right about now we all would like the hairdo of a Cedar Waxwing.

I thoroughly enjoyed reading this memoir and would recommend it to anyone, birder or not. Maybe you will get the twitch just like Julia Zarankin.

*Nancy Muzik*

## Nature FYI

### Black Flies Can We Live Without Them?

Well, it is that time of year again when we will be "bothered" by those pesky little creatures known as Black Flies. Anyone who has spent time out of doors in the spring and early summer anywhere north of Highway 7 knows what I am speaking about. Growing up in south-western Ontario as a youth I never encountered black flies; mosquitoes that were big enough to need refueling at Trenton were our nemesis. Imagine my surprise when I encountered them for the first time at my future father-in-law's cottage north of Kingston one day in May. I knew about them because I took a course in Entomology at Western, but I really did not understand how annoying and painful they could be. A few years ago, I read a highly informative article in the Ontario Nature Magazine written by Susan Grimby that I found to be highly informative.

About half of the 65 species of black flies in Ontario feed on mammals and the other half on birds. Just two species suck human blood. Only the females bite humans, whereas the males who feed on flower nectar are just "mating machines". Black flies come in close, attracted by the scent of human sweat and carbon dioxide we exhale. When biting they are stealthy, administering an anesthetic and anticoagulant so people may not realize they have been bitten until the itching starts and the blood is dripping.

As annoying as they might be, black flies serve a vital function in the ecosystems of the north according to Doug Currie, curator of Entomology at the Royal Ontario. "The black fly is essential to the health of our waterways and are barometers of good water quality. Taking them out of the equation would cause major consequences

for the productivity of streams. Black flies are elegantly adapted for their habitat” says Currie. The eggs a female lay in fast flowing streams hatch into larvae that become “champion filter feeders” who use their fan-like mouth to catch organisms and organic debris and feed on it. As Grimby states, “this is where the real marvel happens next”. The larvae absorb only 20% of the nutrients and excrete the rest as tiny sausage-like pellets after having recycled and repackaged the nutrients. These pellets nourish caddis fly larvae and other organisms that feed on water-suspended particles. One larva can produce 740 pellets in an average day. Since there could be up to one million larvae per square meter in favourable streams, these larvae also contribute to the food chain for the aquatic stages of stoneflies, dragonflies and damselflies as well as fish in the stream.

It is necessary for nature lovers to develop respect for this scourge. As Anne Bell, Ontario Nature’s Director of Conservation and Education notes, “that while black flies can bedevil us when out in nature you have to respect what you consider pests for their importance in nature”. I for one do not want to find out what nature might be like without black flies.



Susan Grimby, Ontario Nature Magazine summer\_2016/page22-23

**Otto Peter**

### Articles of Interest

Submitted by Samantha Miller are two articles of interest to our members. The first is an interesting article on changing exclusionary or harmful bird names. The article from the May 2021 Birdwatching, explains the American Ornithological Society’s support for the campaign Bird Names for Birds. A campaign started in 2020 to change exclusionary or harmful bird names. One example is the McCown’s Longspur named after John McCown, who was a prominent officer in the Confederate Army. It has recently been renamed the Thick-billed Longspur. Read the full article at [birdwatchingdaily.com/news/science/aos-commits-changing-exclusionary-harmful-bird-names/](http://birdwatchingdaily.com/news/science/aos-commits-changing-exclusionary-harmful-bird-names/). More information may also be found at [Bird Names For Birds](#).

The second article you may have seen May 6 in The Toronto Star. It is a review of the stretch of the Waterfront Trail that runs through the Second Marsh, [thestar.com/local-oshawa](http://thestar.com/local-oshawa). The article is a short review and trail map.

### Friends of Second Marsh – Let’s De-Phrag the Marsh

Friends of Second Marsh has a call to volunteers for their multi-year project to remove phragmites. This is a project to map and remove phragmites from the McLaughlin Wildlife Area and the Second Marsh. Currently, Friends of Second Marsh are looking for volunteers for the Mapping and Monitoring Phase of the project to be completed this summer. They are looking for: Volunteer Stewards (for the Day), Lead Volunteer Stewards and Let’s De-Phrag the Marsh Subcommittee members. Complete and submit this online form <https://forms.gle/eVsZkmGS4K55z67Q8>. See the poster below for more information.

# LET'S DE-PHRAG THE MARSH!

Become a Volunteer Steward with Friends of Second Marsh (FSM) as we begin Year 2 of our ambitious 8-10 year mission to eradicate Invasive Phragmites from the Second Marsh, nearby natural areas and contamination sources.



Help us identify, map and monitor Invasive *Phragmites*.  
Training, supervision, and tools provided.

Dates: **June 12-July 23** (estimated, COVID precautions and restrictions pending)

Second Marsh Wildlife Area is a large Lake Ontario coastal wetland in Oshawa, Ontario. Together with nearby Darlington Provincial Park and McLaughlin Bay Wildlife Reserve, Second Marsh Wildlife Area is 400 hectares of one of the largest publicly accessible waterfront spaces available in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). These natural habitats are under threat from aggressive monoculture stands of Invasive *Phragmites* which deplete resources for resident and migrating species. By Managing and Eliminating Invasive *Phragmites*, we preserve and increase the productive habitats for native plants, animals, birds, and insects.

Why Map and Monitor? Mapping and Monitoring the existing stands of Invasive *Phragmites* are only the first steps to Management. This allows us to track our progress, the decline or advance of Invasive *Phragmites*, all while giving us data to prioritize areas and determine the best Management Actions.

If you are interested in volunteering, please sign up here: <https://forms.gle/eVskmG54X5z67Q8>



Fresh Handmade Cosmetics



Invasive Species Centre  
Centre des espèces envahissantes



## Les Sayer

September 16, 1929 ~ May 13, 2021

It is with heavy hearts that we announce the passing of one of our members of the Durham Region Field Naturalists, Les Sayer. Les was a long-time active member of our club. He volunteered for the Hawk Watch for approximately 20 years. He also worked on the Butterfly garden for many years. Les also volunteered his time at the Thickson's Woods Fall Festival manning the nature toy booth.

Please click on the link for the official obituary:

<https://www.highlandparkfuneralcentre.com/obituary/Leslie-Sayer>