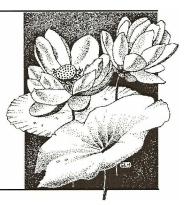


NEWSLETTER

of the

NORFOLK FIELD NATURALISTS



April 2009

Adam pointed out that Al Gore is a politician, not a climatologist and, therefore, not limited to discussing the results of <u>real</u> observations. He also emphasized that there are gaps in the available data. Recording stations at Hagersville, Port Dover and Long Point were separate, and, climate stations are just now becoming automated.

In some cases, readings were found to differ suddenly from previous readings, the most likely reason being that an instrument had been re-located; these differences had to be considered in that context.

What the records do indicate is that, in this area, the temperature has increased 1.15° C (14%) and precipitation has increased 0.04 mm/day (<2%) from 1876 to 2008.

Climatologists build histories of climate extremes. They look, e.g., at precipitation frequency (13% more in past 70 years), precipitation intensity (it rains a little harder now) and extreme hot days - 3 in a row-which now show 6 more periods per year (50% more). Several times, 1988 was cited as the high for the past 130 years, including the extreme hot days and the 3-day maximum precipitation measurement. Extreme cold days are now 2.5 fewer per year (36% less) and 1918 was the coldest winter in the past 130 years.

Some other conditions being watched are:

- "Southern Pine Beetle Killing Days" cold days that will kill the beetle have reduced ~13 days in past 130 years, another 13 anticipated by 2100; beetle infestation is spreading and it is here now. This measurement could reach the point where there are no days cold enough to kill the beetle.
- "West Nile Virus " risks the higher the temperature the more efficient the transmission but data is only available from 1999 when it appeared in New York. The estimate was that there might be ~34 more high risk days by 2100 but there also appear to be immunities emerging.
- "Warm-Season-Crop Growing Season" (has increased 5% in the past and is expected to increase 30% by 2100, making new crops possible in the area.)

Meeting Notes

February 10, 2009 Meeting

Announcements:

Mike McMillan will be the official NFN Birdathoner again in 2009. He requested support for his Birdathon.

Bernie Solymar announced that a local chapter of Kids for Turtles would be launched at the Wildlife Festival during March Break. (See article in this issue.) The project, initiated by Bob Bowles and Michael Greenspoon in Orillia, is now expanding. The Biosphere Reserve will carry out administration for the group and requested NFN partnership in the endeavour. Endangered Species Calendars, available at the meeting, were provided by Kids for Turtles.

Audrey Heagy requested that members interested in serving on the NFN Board let her know of their interest. New Board members are needed to fill vacancies. (See Page 3 of this issue.)

Recent winter sightings included Killdeer and Northern Mockingbird.

February Speaker

An audience of 67 members and guests heard Adam Fenech of the University of Toronto speak on the subject "How the Climate of Long Point has Changed in 65 Years and What the Future Holds".



Photo credit: Alan McKeown

Global Climate Models are being built to assess the impact of CO₂ emissions based on forecasts and projections of population, energy sources and the type of economy. However, in summary, over the past 130 years, the changes have been marginal and those that have occurred have appeared in the last 70 years.

Projections based on the findings are best guesses (considering the missing data and other factors that should be measured and incorporated into the model). They suggested that, by 2100: temperature will increase 3.8°C, precipitation will increase 0.3 mm/day, there will be 33 more "dog days" (very hot summer days) and 2.5 fewer brutally cold winter days. In closing, Adam amused the audience by saying he doesn't expect to be around in 2100 to be challenged about these forecasts.

March 10, 2009 Meeting

March Speaker

In March, about 40 NFN members were treated to a fascinating account by Dr. Daniel J. Merrill of "The Ivory-billed Woodpecker: the Search for Evidence in a Flooded Wilderness". Dan's primary interest in cavity nesters (esp. wrens and chickadees) led to his involvement with the ivory-bill search. Dan uses long-term remote recordings as a passive strategy for monitoring the behavior and ecology of rare and endangered birds. He helped pioneer development of

an Acoustic **Location System** (ALS) capable of triangulating the position of free-living animals based on the sounds they produce. Recordings from his searches are analyzed at the Mennill Sound **Analysis Laboratory** at the University of Windsor.



The Ivory-billed Woodpecker was the second-largest woodpecker in the world and the largest in North America. Its habitat was flooded forest where water levels fluctuate around (cypress) trees and its main food was large grubs in the wood of freshly dead

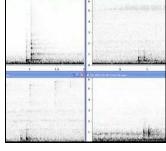
trees. It was found in the swamps of the southeastern states but by the 1850s, once roads and railways penetrated the forests and much-prized hardwood had been harvested, the habitat was seriously restricted. In the early 1900s, ornithologists, realizing the scarcity of ivory-bills, shot them to collect specimens (no optics in those days) and decimated the remaining population. The last agreed observation of the bird was in April 1944 - a female, sketched in life, in a tract being cleared for wood.

Since 1944, sightings have proven to be of the similar Pileated Woodpecker which does not have the defining characteristics of white on the back (Pileated is white on front) and most particularly, the white trailing edge of the wings. A 1971 polaroid photo was dismissed as a hoax and the claimed rediscovery that made headlines in 2005 was unsubstantiated - the primary evidence was a short videoclip which was judged to be not definitive.

On May 21, 2005, two grad students on the Choctawhatchee River in Florida, in an area of forest untouched for 120 years, heard the distinctive double-knock rap of an ivory-bill and saw a large bird fly with a white trailing wing edge. On May 27, the bird was seen again, the white trailing edge was confirmed and an all-black crest was seen - a marking of the female ivory-bill (all pileateds have red crests). Dan was called to join an expedition to record evidence of the double-knock rap and the distinctive "kent" call described as a nasal sound "between a sax and a tinny trumpet".

Dan set up mikes for students who lived in the swamp from Dec. 2005 to April 2006. Because of the apparent failure of the 2005 expedition, the 2006 search was done quietly with no publicity. In 2007, 19 full-time researchers were engaged in the search and some have lived in the swamp from Dec. To June each year since. In addition to mikes, they made heavy use of GPS for routes taken through the swamp and watched large cavities late in the day.

Dan's lab has 45,000 hours of recordings of which 41,000 have been scanned. His group has isolated 210 sounds consistent with historical recordings of the call and 99 sounds consistent with written descriptions of the



double-knock, some of which he played during his presentation.

Four lines of evidence are being pursued - sightings & sounds; sound recordings, and locating large cavities and feeding trees. More than 3,000 cavities need to be watched and scaled trees (indicating possible ivory-bill feedings) have been found. What is most essential to confirm their existence is photographic evidence, so far not obtained. December 2005-6 sightings had only a poor photo; possible sightings in 2006 included one of two birds in the same tree, in January 2008 two possible sightings occurred 20 seconds apart but - no photos. In total, there have been 23 sightings by competent birders without definitive photographic corroboration.

The jury is officially still out as to whether Ivory-billed Woodpeckers exist today, but, Dan's persuasive talk left his audience much less skeptical than before hearing his convincing arguments and in hope that funding will be found to continue the search.

Butterfly Platter Project

Marguerite Larmand

I moved to Simcoe in March of 2008. In addition to my artistic work, I am creating a butterfly garden at Fieldstone, my property in Simcoe. As an artist, my work often includes forming temporary communities to participate in the process. The Butterfly Platter Project is one of these community-forming projects.

The goal for the Butterfly Platter Project is to encourage others to join me in raising awareness for native butterflies through a butterfly-watch in their own gardens. Between now and September 2010, I will make 64 Butterfly Platters that will form an installation at Fieldstone and be part of a dual-site exhibition with Norfolk Arts Centre........



Butterfly platter

Photo credit: P Singer

New directors needed!

Would you like to get more involved with the Norfolk Field Naturalists organization? We currently have some vacancies on the Board of Directors and are in need of:

- Field Program Coordinator
- General Secretary and
- Directors-at Large.

We are also looking for a representative for the Long Point Causeway Improvement Committee.

No experience needed. Will provide training and assistance.

The Board of Directors generally meets once a month on the 4th Tuesday at 7 pm. Full terms are just one year, September to September. Current vacancies can be filled at any time.

For more information contact Audrey Heagy

Email: aheagy@kwic.com Phone: 519-586-9464

.......The platters are ceramic, about 18" in diameter and weigh about 15 pounds. All will be glazed white with dark oxide 'shadows of hovering butterflies' randomly placed over the surface.

They are shallow and the glaze is deliberately toothy so as to retain minute water droplets and form a good landing pad. They are intended to be installed on the ground in a sheltered place.

The under foot enables the platter to hang on a wall in the out-of-season months. Each platter will be \$200.00 with a \$100.00 deposit in September 2009 and the rest in September 2010 when it is picked up.

Directions will be given for placement, water, nectar or food. Each participant will be asked to report observed butterflies for the 2011 season to me so I can consolidate the community findings and write them to CD.

If you would like to be part of this Butterfly Platter Project, please contact me for complete particulars:

Marguerite Larmand,

112 Evergreen Hill Road, Simcoe ON N3Y 4K1 marguerite@margueritelarmand.com

NFN Winter Tree Hike

Terri Groh (Article and photos)

The Norfolk Field Naturalists Annual Winter Tree Workshop led by Dolf Wynia, was held on Saturday, February 21st at Backus Heritage Centre. The number of people who attended was down from past years, likely due to the impending winter storm, which began in earnest during the hike. In spite of the weather about 25 people braved the elements.



We began the workshop in the warmth and comfort of the centre classroom where Dolf had numerous samples of tree branches which he used to teach the basics of tree identification. Dolf shared many helpful insights of the specific characteristics of differing tree groups and then allowed participants time to view and touch the samples and, of course, ask questions.

Then, heading out onto the trails of the Backus Conservation Area grounds, the group began walking down past the mill and along the pond edge. As we walked the air was a cold – 15 C with gently falling snow.

In the distance we could hear the gunshots and cannons from re-enacters who were spending the weekend at Backus training for summer events. At one point we found ourselves amongst the practicing Militia who were very friendly and made for a colourful sight in the falling snow.



As we walked, Dolf shared much information about the common forms of trees found in this area. We saw excellent examples of mature Carolinian species such as Tulip trees and Hackberry trees. He pointed out certain diseases and a lively discussion ensued concerning the benefits of harvesting trees before they succumb to disease as well as the harvest potential of certain trees and their value.

We then proceeded North along the creek and west along Concession 3 and out to the turkey release site. The walk then continued around one of the trail loops of Backus Woods where we saw many more examples of mature trees. By the time we returned to the centre about 3 cm of snow had fallen. The hike lasted over two hours and was very informative and interesting.

Tundra Swans March 2009

This was a disappointing year for swan viewers (as your editor can confirm). After the first influx, very few stayed in the area and low numbers were seen because they continued north without staying.



Photo: Alan McKoewn

A Riddle For You Nature Network News

What Am I?

I can be quite hard I can be quite soft I can be down low I can reside aloft

I gently kiss leaves
I strongly bend trunks
I firmly push rocks
I boldly toss and dunk

I can be firm as bone
I can be smooth as honey
I can be still as stone
I can be swift and runny

My power's seen most every day I've moved the earth in many ways

(Look for the answer in this issue - it's hidden!)

Long Point World Biosphere Reserve Foundation Launches Kids for Turtles Chapter

Bernie Solymár

The Long Point World Biosphere Reserve Foundation has announced the launch of a Long Point-Norfolk Chapter of KIDS FOR TURTLES Environmental Education, an educational and outreach organization with existing chapters in Simcoe County, Muskoka and now Long Point-Norfolk. Committees in each area work with children, their families and extended families, seniors and all members of the community to bring a better understanding and stewardship to the environment around us.

The Long Point-Norfolk Chapter was launched at the Wildlife Festival in Simcoe on March 14th. The focus of the local KFT chapter will be to engage youth in nature and conservation based activities, and promote youth-led volunteer activities that help protect our air, water, soil, and biodiversity. Specific projects being discussed are a nature festival, butterfly and dragonfly surveys, installing turtle crossing signs along the Causeway, and a possible Ontario curriculum-based turtle presentation to offer to local Grade schools.



The organization's founder, well-known naturalist and environmental expert Bob Bowles from Orillia, started **Kids for Turtles (KFT)** after receiving a letter from Sydney Tanzola, a 12-year-old girl from Washago, Ontario in May 2006. She was concerned about the number of turtles that were hit by cars on her road.

Mr. Bowles initially formed the organization to help protect the turtles killed crossing local roads. The program has since expanded into focusing on species at risk, invasive species and healthy water systems.



The formation of a local **KFT** chapter in Norfolk County is particularly timely in light of the recent attention on wildlife mortality issues along the Long Point Causeway. Today, the Causeway is known as the fourth deadliest road for turtles in both Canada and the United States. Studies by the Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) over the past 30 years have shown that vehicles also kill hundreds of snakes, and thousands of frogs each year. These include species at risk such as the Blanding's and Northern Map Turtles and the Eastern Fox and Eastern Hog-nosed Snakes.

The next Kids for Turtles event will celebrate Earth Day and will take place at the Backus Heritage Education Centre on Saturday, April 18th from noon until 4 P.M.

For more information on events, memberships or to volunteer with Kids for Turtles please contact Colleen Dale or Bernie Solymár at 519-410-8878 or kidsforturtles@lpwbrf.ca, or visit www.longpointbiosphere.com

Did You Know?.....

The Oxford Junior Dictionary has removed many nature terms such as blackberry, heron, magpie, otter, chestnut, etc. These terms have largely been replaced by tech terms and other "socially important" terms like Blackberry, voicemail, bungee jumping, etc. Ironically, "endangered" has been added. Oxford University Press justifies the deletions due to the "reduced presence of nature in children's lives."

Canadian wildlife artist and conservationist Robert Batemen, whose Get to Know Program has inspired children to go outdoors and "get to know" their wild neighbours, said the changes are telling kids that nature just isn't that important. He commented that "This is another nail in the coffin of human beings being acquainted with nature"

After Earth Hour - What?

Now that the token observation has been made again, keeping the momentum going should become a primary objective. The Toronto Sun points out that the most effective way to reduce greenhouse gas omissions is to reduce energy use and suggests ongoing energy savers such as these:

- Lower your themostat (even by just one degree) particularly when no one is home.
- Install a programmable thermostat and use it (an estimated 20% are unused)
- Launder with cold water and line-dry clothes.
- Caulk and weatherstrip doors and windows.
- Use power bars for TVs, DVD players, etc. And turn them off when not in use (to eliminate "phantom" usage).
- Upgrade to energy-saving appliances.
- ❖ Be water wise. Pumping water can require up to two-thirds of a municipality's power usage. The answer to the riddle on page 4 is "Water".
- Educate yourself. Visit powerwise.ca and look for other information on conserving power.

Plant Diversity and Growing a Native Garden

Ontario Nature IMBY

While backyard habitats cannot take the place of large wilderness areas, they can foster the diversity of wildlife populations in urban areas. The greater the number of plant species you have in your yard, the greater the variety of animal life that will find it attractive. And the more species there are, the less likely it is that any of them, such as pest insects, will get out of hand.

The greater the diversity in a given area, the greater the natural balance, and the less tending is needed, in other words, the less feeding, watering, cultivating and pest control. Encourage a variety of plant life and you will encourage a variety of animal life.

Resources are available at:
North American Native Plant Society www.nanps.org
Evergreen – Home Grounds
www.evergreen.ca/en/hg/hg.html
Wild About Gardening www.wildaboutgardening.org

Working with your friendly native wasp?

Invasive pests arrive in our communities often without any warning and settle in for long destructive stays. These pests include Dutch elm disease, purple loosestrife, zebra mussels, and most recently the emerald ash borer (beetle). Successful management of any introduced pest depends on early detection. ..forewarned is forearmed!

The beetles are virtually undetectable ...at least until it is too late. Larvae feed beneath the bark of our native ash trees and only emerge as adults (high in the tree's canopy) during summer. The larval feeding eventually girdles and kills our ash trees.

An initiative to get a jump on this most recent pest beetle is the new 'Wasp Watcher Program' working to spot new infestations of the emerald ash borer beetle before it can establish itself as a serious pest.

A native ground-nesting wasp, *Cerceris fumipennis*, is providing a handy solution to our beetle detection problem. This wasp will prey on the adult emerald ash

borers (as well as related native beetles) and carry them, paralyzed, back to its burrow. The paralyzed beetle is then stored underground as food for the wasp's larva.



Monitoring for the emerald ash borer is now as simple as watching the wasps return to their nests with prey. The wasps, with prey in 'hand', quickly inform us if the destructive emerald ash borer beetles have arrived.

An equally convenient aspect of this wasp's behaviour is that it won't sting humans, even when handled. So, provided we find the needed nests, *Cerceris fumipennis* is a valuable colleague in the search for pest beetles.

Just as volunteers do feeder watches, marsh monitoring, loon surveys, and butterfly counts, you can now become a **wasp watcher**, searching for and observing the *Cerceris fumipennis* wasps in your area. This provides us all with an early-warning system for emerald ash borers and other destructive beetle pests.

As colonies are located, program members will adopt a local colony and be helped to monitor the sites through the summer months.

This may entail spending about an hour a week at the adopted colony,. For more information visit www.cerceris.info

Help NCC Green Norfolk County! Sat. May 02 / 09, 9:30am - 3pm



Spend the day planting trees to help restore a 23-acre (9-hectare) property in Walsingham to its natural habitat. Located in the Southern Norfolk Sand Plain, this area has the highest level of intact forest cover in southwestern Ontario and provides a critical stopover site for migratory landbirds and waterbirds.

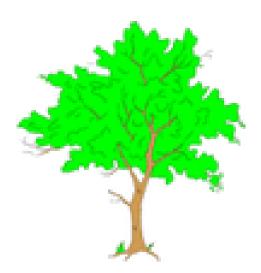
By planting trees, you'll assist in building ecological connections to other nearby NCC properties. Species at risk that will benefit from this restoration project include Hooded Warbler and Eastern Hog-nosed Snak

Visit <u>www.conservationvolunteers.ca</u> to register for this event and learn more about other events going on across Ontario. Conservation Volunteer events will occur between April and October and include tree planting, invasive species removal, seed collection and biological inventories. Space is limited for all events, so sign up today!

Annie Benko The Nature Conservancy of Canada Toll Free: 1 800 465 0029

Fax: 416 932 3208

www.natureconservancy.ca



Carolinian Canada Species at Risk Almanac

Carolinian Canada Species at Risk Almanac is an upcoming publication that will inspire and guide habitat action in urban and rural communities. We are seeking useful and interesting stewardship tools, facts, seasonal recipes and crafts, best practices, gardening tips, eco-friendly day trips (and more) focused on everyday actions that can benefit rare species or Carolinian ecosystems.

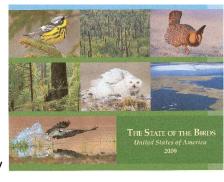
Almanac Challenge #1: We are creating a top-ten wish list of natural places to visit or habitat-friendly actions to take before we die.

We want to know: If you could recommend one thing someone should do or visit within the Carolinian Life Zone before "kicking the bucket" what would it be?

Send your ideas for the monthly challenge, learn how you can contribute or submit your concept to woodland@carolinian.org. Details available here.

State of the Birds

An article published March 22nd in the Toledo Blade discussed the newly released "State of



the Birds" report and highly recommended it. Only 36 pages in length, it, not surprisingly, sounds an alarm about habitat loss and declining bird populations; but, it also talks about successes such as the recovery of the Bald Eagle. It encompasses over 40 years of research by wildlife agencies and conservationists. The columnist went on to discuss his concerns about western Lake Erie.

On ONTBIRDS, Mike Street reported that "Anyone concerned about bird populations at the west end of Lake Erie and elsewhere, as well as raptors, should read this article. So should anyone who thinks that wind turbines are benign."The article is at: http://toledoblade.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/200 90322/COLUMNIST42/903220306/-1/NEWS04

The report itself can be downloaded in PDF format from: http://www.stateofthebirds.org/

Next Meeting

Tuesday, May 12, 2009

The Long Point Causeway Improvement Project Rick Levick, Coordinator LPCIP The Causeway, a 3.5 km stretch of road linking the mainland to Long Point has an annual death toll of reptiles, amphibians, mammals and birds that is one of the worst in the world. Its impact on herptile communities extends outward to an area of at least 1000 ha, due to seasonal movement, home range sizes, and regional population demographics. Rick will speak on Causeway history, progress made over the last 2 years, and plans and challenges for future improvements to reduce wildlife mortality, improve hydrological function and mitigate human safety concerns.

Upcoming NFN Outings

Wed., Apr. 15 / 09 6:00 p.m. Amazing Amphibians Colleen Dale Backus 519-586-2201 \$2 per person Family-friendly

Sun., Apr. 26 / 09 1:30 p.m. Wildflowers at Rowanwood Matt Brock 519-586-9157 Family-friendly

Sun., May 3 / 09 9:00 a.m. Arthur Langford Nature Reserve

Peter Carson 519-586-3985 Family-friendly

Sat., May 9 / 09
All Day
Baillie Birdathon
BSC 519-586-3531 or
www.bsc-eoc.org

Tue., June 9 / 09 7:00 p.m. Big Creek Marsh Audrey Heagy 519-586-9464 Family-friendly

Sat., June 20 / 09 10 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Canoeing on Big Creek Audrey Heagy 519-586-9464

NFN Meetings

Norfolk Field Naturalist meetings are held the second Tuesday of the month from September to May. The election of Directors takes place at the September meeting.

Meetings take place at the Simcoe Seniors Centre on Pond Street. They are free and visitors are always welcome. Doors open at 7:15pm; program begins at 7:30pm.

Next issue of Lotus:

June 2009

Input cutoff date:

Fri. May 29, 2009

Club Mailing Address

Norfolk Field Naturalists PO Box 995, Simcoe, ON N3Y 5B3

About the NFN

Norfolk Field Naturalist members participate in meetings and frequent field outings, many of which are family-friendly. Membership fees, due in September, are \$20-Individual and \$30- Family; donations are eligible for income tax credits; Charitable Registration #0620070-52-14.

Guest speakers present programs on interesting and relevant natural history and conservation topics.

Club members receive the Lotus newsletter with articles on local natural history and club activities. It is published bi-monthly from October to June by volunteer club members. Copies of the Lotus are available at meetings but will be mailed (free of charge) to members if not picked up. Articles published in the Lotus reflect the views and opinions of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the NFN. Visit the NFN website at:

www.norfolkfieldnaturalists.org

birdyanne@gmail.com

timpf@nornet.on.ca

2008 - 2009 NFN Directors with Contact and Project Information

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		all 519-	
President	Audrey Heagy	586-9464	x243 aheagy@bsc-eoc.org
Past Pres. + Natural Areas	Peter Carson	586-3985	gartcar@kwic.com
Vice-President	Tara Crewe	586-3531 x	232 tcrewe@bsc-eoc.org
Treasurer	Lynda Kosalle	426-0826	kosalle@amtelecom.net
General Secretary	(position current	tly vacant)	
Board Secretary	(position current	ly vacant)	
Membership	Diane Salter	586-7775	dianesalter@execulink.com
Field Events	(position current	ly vacant)	
Speaker Program Be	ernt (Bernie) Solyma	r 426-7124	solymar@nornet.on.ca
Publicity	Nina Cameron	586-8785	ninac@execulink.com
Sanctuary	Matt Brock	586-9157	greenheron99@hotmail.com
Environment (position currently vacant)			
Dir. + Lakeshre 2ndary Plan (position currently vacant)			
Director-at-large	Colleen Dale	586-9726	cdale22@yahoo.ca
Director-at-large	Shirley Rothery	586-9535	shirleyrothery@hotmail.com
Honorary President: Al Robinson Honorary Directors: Harry Barrett, Jim Harlow			
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Anne Davidson

Doug Timpf

Lotus Editor

Butterfly Counts