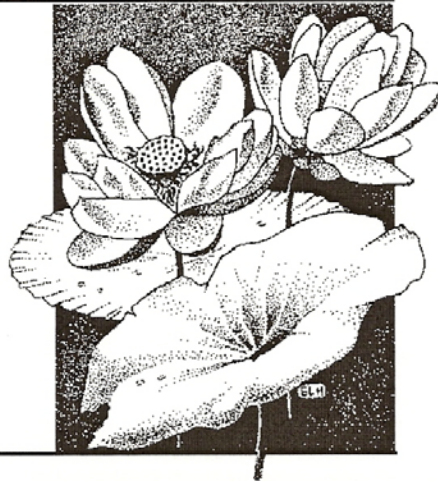


Lotus

NEWSLETTER
of the
NORFOLK FIELD NATURALISTS



FEBRUARY 2013



REPORT ON THE WOODHOUSE CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Submitted by: David Okines

The Woodhouse CBC (Christmas Bird Count) is centered 7 km east of Simcoe, at Renton, in Norfolk County and roughly covers from Port Dover to Waterford and just east of Simcoe to Jarvis.

The weather on December 16th, 2012, was good, it was mostly cloudy with occasional light showers on and off all day. The temperature ranged from +6 to +12 with a light southwesterly wind. All water was open but some ice was seen around the edges of ponds.

Total species: 91 + 2 Count Week
(Average for the last 25 years = 78.5,
average for the last 10 years = 84)

Total individuals: 28,623
(Average for the last 25 years = 26,816,
average for the last 10 years = 24,429)

Number of participants: 42

NEW SPECIES TO THE COUNT

Peregrine Falcon 1 (CW)

RECORD HIGH - (previous high)

Trumpeter Swan	9 (5)
Gadwall	81 (29)
Canvasback	250 (86)
Bufflehead	828 (427)
Hooded Merganser	33 (25)
Red-breasted Merganser	3499 (1215)
Bald Eagle	13 (9)
Red-bellied Woodpecker	34 (34)
Common Raven	2 (1) (2nd record)
Common Grackle	101 (25)
Pine Siskin	259 (109)

RECORD LOW - (previous low)

Goldeneye	27 (31) average 167
Rough-legged Hawk	3 (3) average 12
Merlin	1 (= lowest)
Yellow-shafted Flicker	1 (3) average 9

COUNT WEEK SPECIES

Hermit Thrush	3 (seen the next day)
Peregrine Falcon	1 (new for count)

... Continued on page 2



Peregrine Falcon (photo: Google)

... Continued from page 1

SPECIES WELL ABOVE
AVERAGE - (25 year average)

Canada Goose	5760 (3170)
Wood Duck	2 (0) 7th record
Northern Shoveler	14 (0)
Lesser Scaup	505 (230)
Coopers Hawk	9 (4)
Red-tailed Hawk	131 (102)
Wild Turkey	139 (30)
Ring-billed Gull	3674 (1719)
Rock Pidgeon	773 (581)
Eastern Screech Owl	46 (14)
White-breasted Nuthatch	80 (67)
Brown Creeper	12 (5) 2nd highest total
Carolina Wren	12 (4) 2nd highest total
Eastern Bluebird	54 (32)
Northern Mockingbird	4 (2)
American Pipit	80 (6) 8th record and 2nd record over 5 birds
Fox Sparrow	2 (0) 6th record
Swamp Sparrow	14 (7)
Slate-coloured Junco	1038 (868)
Northern Cardinal	206 (152)
Red-winged Blackbird	158 (24)
Common Redpoll	122 (59)

SPECIES WELL BELOW
AVERAGE - (25 year average)

Black Duck	61 (95)
Common Goldeneye	27 (107)
Common Merganser	90 (342)
Northern Harrier	5 (12)
Rough-legged Hawk	3 (12)
American Kestrel	23 (35)
Bonaparte's Gull	52 (162)
Herring Gull	88 (222)
Great Black-backed Gull	9 (18)
Mourning Dove	342 (613)
Great Horned Owl	2 (7)
Yellow-shafted Flicker	1 (9)
Blue Jay	221 (305)
Horned Lark	12 (128)
European Starling	1095 (2882)
Purple Finch	8 (26)
House Finch	163 (674)
House Sparrow	759 (1377)

NOTABLE ABSENTEES

Ruffed Grouse	4th miss ever, 3rd year running
Winter Wren	4th miss ever
Snow Bunting	2nd miss in last 8 years

ALSO WORTHY OF MENTION

Common Loon	1 (5th record)
Turkey Vulture	1 (6th record)
Snow Goose	3 (7th record)
Wilson's Snipe	1 (6th record) same spot as the last 3 years
Wood Duck	2 (7th record)
Ring-necked Duck	2 (6th record)
Red-tailed Hawk	131 (5th highest total)
Eastern Screech Owl	46 (3rd best year)
Eastern Towhee	1 (8th record)
Chipping Sparrow	1 (7th record)



Wilson's Snipe (photo: Google)

FULL SPECIES LIST AND TALLY

Common Loon	1	Lesser Scaup	505	Wilson's Snipe	1
Great Blue Heron	6	Scaup Spp	714	Bonaparte's Gull	52
Turkey Vulture	1	Common Goldeneye	27	Ring-billed Gull	3674
Mute Swan	2	Bufflehead	828	Herring Gull	88
Trumpeter Swan	9	Hooded Merganser	33	Great Black-backed Gull	9
Tundra Swan	59	Common Merganser	90	Rock Pigeon	773
Canada Goose	5760	Red-breasted Merganser	3499	Mourning Dove	342
Cackling Goose	1	Ruddy Duck	5	Eastern Screech-Owl	46
Snow Goose	1	Bald Eagle	13	Great Horned Owl	2
Wood Duck	1	Northern Harrier	5	Belted Kingfisher	5
Mallard	1309	Sharp-shinned Hawk	4	Red-bellied Woodpecker	34
American Black Duck	61	Cooper's Hawk	9	Downy Woodpecker	83
Gadwall	81	Red-tailed Hawk	131	Hairy Woodpecker	14
Northern Pintail	2	Rough-legged Hawk	3	Yellow-shafted Flicker	1
Northern Shoveler	14	Peregrine Falcon	CW	Pileated Woodpecker	2
Canvasback	250	American Kestrel	23	Northern Shrike	3
Redhead	2327	Merlin	1	Blue Jay	221
Ring-necked Duck	2	Wild Turkey	139	American Crow	821
Greater Scaup	68	Killdeer	1		

continued on page 3...

... continued from page 2

Common Raven	2	European Starling	1095	Northern Cardinal	206
Horned Lark	12	American Pipit	80	Red-winged Blackbird	158
Black-capped Chickadee	581	Cedar Waxwing	66	Common Grackle	101
Eastern Tufted Titmouse	1	Eastern Towhee	1	Brewer's Blackbird	1
Red-breasted Nuthatch	19	American Tree Sparrow	733	Brown-headed Cowbird	448
White-breasted Nuthatch	80	Chipping Sparrow	1	House Finch	163
Brown Creeper	12	Field Sparrow	3	Purple Finch	8
Carolina Wren	12	Fox Sparrow	2	Common Redpoll	122
Golden-crowned Kinglet	30	Song Sparrow	30	Pine Siskin	259
Eastern Bluebird	54	Swamp Sparrow	14	American Goldfinch	324
Hermit Thrush	CW	White-throated Sparrow	20	House Sparrow	759
American Robin	14	White-crowned Sparrow	14		
Northern Mockingbird	4	Slate-coloured Junco	1038	Total:	91 Sp + 2 Count Week

THE ROWANWOOD STORY COMPLETED

By: Ross Bateman, Past President

Editor's note:

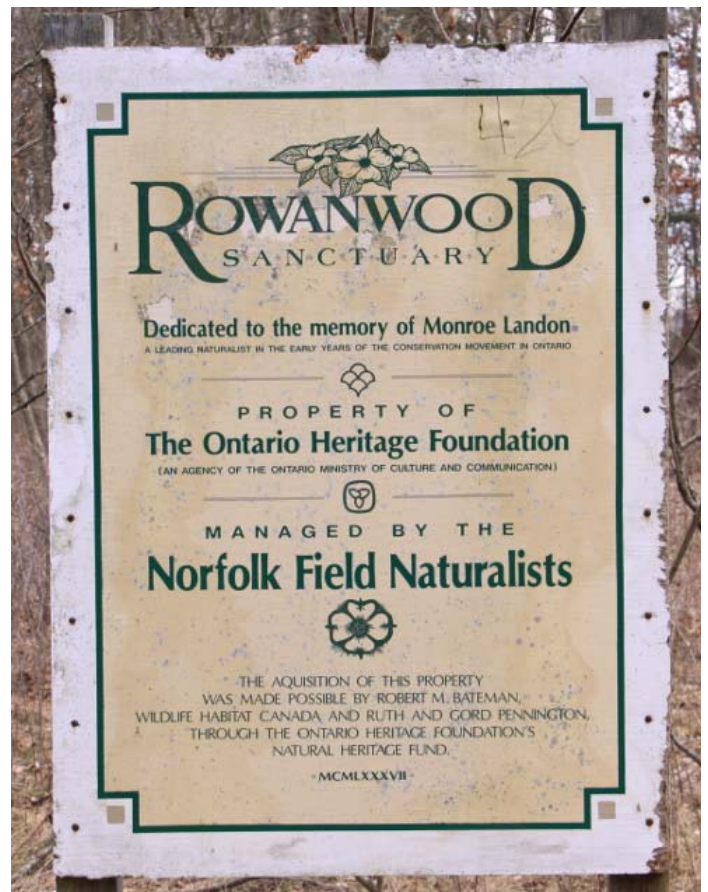
The following passages are copied directly from an email by Ross Bateman to Anne Wynia and Bernie Solymár on October 21, the day after the 50th Anniversary Gala

Dear Anne & Bernie:

I took the Lotus (*the special 50th Anniversary edition*) upstairs with me last night for bedtime reading, and naturally read it all, including the history of Rowanwood. The whole truth of Rowanwood is a bit longer and a bit more interesting, and I'll just touch on a few highlights as I remember them. I still have my Rowanwood file, weighing a few pounds, and a quick review of some of the scribblings, documents, and articles brought back some memories.

Long before I had joined the Naturalists in the early '70's, Helen Straith had kept a small bank account for the purpose of getting a sanctuary for the club, as the Hamilton Naturalists had done at Spooky Hollow. This was largely forgotten and moribund, but nonetheless an interesting (if seemingly hopeless) niche within the club.

One day I was leading a Canadian Nature Tours canoe trip down Big Creek, when who should be waiting for us as we passed under a downstream



The Rowanwood sign (Photo: Inga Hinnerichsen)

bridge? Gord Pennington, the owner of a nearby property. A geography teacher at Simcoe Composite School, he had owned the place for a few years, and had intensively reforested the open "blue bird meadows" with densely planted white pines as well as some Christmas trees.

Continued on page 4 ...

The Rowanwood Story

... continued from page 3

He shouted down to the canoeists that he was looking for someone to buy his woodlot, and I said sure, I'd look around and see what I might come up with. Not long after, I began to send up trial balloons with the NFN. Would the executive and club be amenable to owning and/or caring for a sanctuary if the money was available to make the purchase? At the same time, I was learning about a possible new initiative of the Ontario Heritage Foundation (within the Ministry of Culture) in the possibility of its taking ownership of natural areas, and not just historic buildings as had been past practices. Working with Brian Howard and Steve Price of the Foundation, the possibilities were beginning to gel.

I asked Mary Gartshore and Don Sutherland what single sanctuary-worthy property would be first on the list if I were to find the money to buy it. I still have my notes from a final phone call with Mary, in my attempt to get a sound recommendation. "...we have exceptional areas, but the best examples are already protected... Pennington not as good as the ten best areas... but on a par with or slightly inferior to the twenty best areas..." Many of her recommendations were places such as Backus, or Landon Woods, or Trout Creek, or Turkey Point Park: protected or not-for-sale. In the end according to my interpretation of Mary's opinion, Pennington's was the best candidate for a sanctuary that was actually available.

The deal that I had gathered from the Heritage Foundation was that Wildlife Habitat Canada (WHC) would donate half the monies toward the purchase, and my brother Bob (who was on the board of WHC) would personally match that. Pennington would receive less than the appraised value and get a tax receipt for the difference (as a gift to the Crown). I had that verbal deal "in my pocket" when I went to an executive meeting and made my pitch. It was accepted with, I think, some skeptical pleasure. (I remember a slight smile on Michael Bradstreet's face.)

Next was the naming, at the same meeting, I think. I came up with eight names, each with a paragraph of pros-and-cons:

Oakwood; Hazelwood; HazelTree; SouthWood; Rowan Mills; Rowan Wood; Rowan Woods; Rowanwood.

You know which one won, but it was probably not unanimous.

My paragraph for the winner:

"The "Rowan" comes from the historical name, the nearby Rowan Mills, and the nearest town: Port Rowan. The "wood" comes from the fact that it is primarily a forest. ("wood" is singular to avoid a sibilant effect when followed by the word "sanctuary"). "[This name] has several advantages: it is apparently a unique name; it does not mean anything else but this place; it is a single word that cannot be shortened or changed in the emphasis of one word over another; it looks like it enunciates, smoothly, as one word; it has a mellifluous, well-rounded, poetic sound, a classy look. Joining them as one word de-emphasizes the importance of each in the creation of a new word; it means nothing else than what it is."

I wrote the Draft Management Plan, which was later modified and finalized by President Jim Harlow. The splashy headline in the Brantford Expositor announced that the agreement, that the Ontario Ministry of Culture had for the first time taken ownership of a natural area, was signed at the FON annual meeting in Port Dover in May, 1987. With the NFN as legal custodians, of course.

We've been SNAP'd!

11 photos from our January meeting are posted on www.snaphn.com or pick up a free copy of **SNAP** at an outlet near you

SEND US YOUR BEST SHOT!

We would like to share our Members' nature / landscape photos in the next issues of LOTUS

Email to: daveinga@live.ca
Email subject line: Photos for LOTUS
(to avoid being deleted as junk mail)

KEY NOTE SPEECH
AT THE
50TH ANNIVERSARY GALA
BY: **JOHN RILEY**
Senior Science Adviser for
Nature Conservancy of Canada
PART 1

Editor's note: Due to its length this presentation will be published in 3 parts in the February, April and June LOTUS issues. Maps, photographs and other illustrations, which were part of this presentation are not included here, but will be part of John Riley's book - see below.

John Riley:

"It is so nice to be in the Deep South to celebrate this auspicious occasion with you.

The Metcalf Foundation and the Nature Conservancy of Canada encouraged me to write a book about the natural history of the greater Great Lakes region, with an emphasis on its history. The idea is to look back to the earliest records, both indirect archaeological and paleoecological records, and the reports of explorers, settlers, tourists and others. McGill-Queen's Press will publish *The Once and Future Great Lakes Country* next year.

- The stories from Norfolk are only dissimilar in degree from those across much of the southern half of Great Lakes country, both in Canada and the U.S. – That the Nature around us has changed almost totally – multiple times – over the past 400 years. The landscapes seen by the Loyalists who were forced north by the *Confiscation and Attainder Laws* of the 13 rebel Provinces, and by the settlers flooding in from Europe after the potato famines of the mid-1800s, were landscapes totally different from what we see now. In turn, the landscapes seen by the earliest visitors, in the 1660s, were totally different again.

These massive changes in Nature are, of course, almost invisible in the lifetime of an individual unless that individual is observant and takes note of what has changed on their watch. The changes are worth reflecting on. This place will be totally different again in 2100.

Some of the changes I will touch on only briefly. Ecologically, the most traumatic were the by-products of introduced European diseases, the earliest and most virile of our invasive species, and introduced European weapons, which together ended the lives of more than three-quarters of Native residents of the region, and entirely displaced the remainder from southern Ontario, ending a millennium of profound Native land care, which had kept the place farmed, open, inhabited with towns and villages, and rich in wildlife.

The manufacture of land itself, its survey, its roads, its land sales, and the investments by hardy pioneer families on almost every 100-acre parcel of the landscape, had as its goal the changing what the early visitors called an "Earthly Paradise" into a New Jerusalem, a new and improved Europe. Of course, this put an end to a major Native land-care tool, the prescribed burn. Fire suppression, arguably, has done more to change the ecology and composition of Nature in Great Lakes country than anything else, other than the land survey and plough.

There have been massive changes in our wildlife. The native ungulates – the elk, passenger pigeon, turkey, greater Canada goose in particular here – were taken out completely. The influence of superabundant wildlife on the landscape, through grazing, seed distribution, predation and supplying food, is made abundantly clear in the early literature.

continued on page 6 ...



Key Note Speaker John Riley (Photo: George Finney)

KEY NOTE SPEECH

... continued from page 5

Since European contact, this landscape has been the recipient of intentional and of accidental introductions of species worldwide. In fact, it was the pride of the European Empires of the 19th century – the British especially – that the world was a better place through the homogenization of our distinctive ecologies and our shared use of beneficial species. Today, when we look around us, almost the entire biomass that we see consists of non-native species. If anything, the pace of biological homogenization – through globalization of trade – is increasing. The patterns are especially evident in the invasive forest pathogens that are changing our landscapes entirely.

First, from Europe, the Chestnut blight and the Dutch Elm disease, and then more slowly, the Beech bark blight, removed five hardwood species. Then, more recently, from China, the Butternut blight, the Emerald Ash Borer, and now the anthracnose that is on the Flowering Dogwood. From the same direction is coming the Hemlock adelgid beetle, and the Asian Long-horn Beetle. I mention here only the “terminator invasives” that knock out entire species or genera.

I don't have time to even speak of the modern syndromes of urban development, population growth, climate change, and the apparent turning-away-from-Nature that afflicts the majority of citizens.

What I want to do is give you two or three snapshots of times past, and then muse a little about how we might set our sights on the Nature that we want to have around us in the future.

- It was the French who learned first about the Great Lakes. This is Champlain's great map of 1632. He had personally visited and mapped the Atlantic coast south to Cape Cod, the St. Lawrence and Ottawa Rivers, Lake Champlain, Georgian Bay and Lake Ontario. He had inserted Etienne Brule as a child into Huronia, and had reports from Brule and other un-named and *courier de bois*, and from Natives, so that his map, two years before his death, included most of Great Lakes country other than the southwest, which remained unmapped.



An appreciative audience (Photo: George Finney)

- Huronia was mapped in detail. This 1650 map was completely out of date the day it appeared, because that was the date that the Iroquois Five Nations came north and completed the destruction and displacement of the Huronia – and of the Tobacco and Neutral confederacies as well. Norfolk was Neutral country, of course, and their population was estimated before 1650 at least 30,000, already depleted by disease by then. The land went wild. By wild, I mean that Native land-care ceased. The Huron had cleared their uplands almost entirely, and maintained it in farm and fallow, and burned off both annually to keep the land open and stimulate fresh forage for wildlife, and to discourage biting insects and bring on earlier spring planting dates, in other words, for the same reasons that European settlers cleared the forests that faced them.

Gabriel Sagard, in 1625, was careful to distinguish between the Huron's crop fields, their fallow meadows or *prairies*, and forested areas. He noted how he became lost more frequently in the corn fields than in the *prairies*, and he described how the Huron “set fire” to both their *prairies* and their crop fields. This was the same Native land care extended to their lands by the Neutral nations of Niagara, Haldimand, Brant and Norfolk.

- This is Sanson's map of 1656. The Jesuits had got to Sault Ste. Marie, Lake Michigan and Green Bay by then, and knew about the Mississippi. In 1640 the Jesuit Brebeuf visited Neutral country, and the Neutral towns he visited are on Sanson's map, as is Niagara Falls. Still, the Lake Erie area was fuzzy. The first European to narrate a voyage to all five Great Lakes was Bréhant de Galinée, and it was an accidental voyage. And as you may know, he spent the winter of 1669 in Norfolk.

continued on page 7 ...

KEY NOTE SPEECH

... continued from page 6

Galinee's narrative has been published twice in French and once in translation, in 1903, by James Coyne, the historian from St. Thomas. This is Mr. Coyne's personal copy of his book, replete with a letter of congratulations from the Premier of Ontario.

Galinee was from a line of French nobles and crusaders. He studied theology, mathematics and astronomy, and arrived in New France in 1668 at the age of 23. He learned to speak Algonquin and was assigned to an outing that was to be led by Dollier de Casson, another soldier-turned-priest, and the Sieur de La Salle, a nobleman setting out on his first failed exploration. He did himself credit later in life but this was first outing. The goal was the Ohio and the Mississippi. Galinee was asked to keep an eye on the still suspect La Salle and to map the trip for the authorities, who would not fund the trip, leaving that to La Salle.

A mixed crew of French, Natives and a Dutchman set out in more than 10 canoes from Montreal, taking advantage of a recent peace treaty forced on the Five Nation Iroquois after the French burned five Mohawk towns. Even with a peace treaty, it was dangerous country.

They coasted the south shore of Lake Ontario and visited Seneca country, which he wrote of as "beautiful, broad *prairies*, on which the grass is as tall as myself...Where there are woods, these are oak plains, so open that one could easily run through them on horseback. This open country, we are told...[extends] west and south...so far that its limit is unknown." They spent time at the mouth of the Niagara River, and went on to Burlington Bay, where they paused.

La Salle soon came down with a "fever" and fled back to Montreal. But, as Galinee wrote facetiously, QUOTE "Some say it was at the sight of three large rattlesnakes he found in his path...that the fever seized him." Whatever the reason, Casson and Galinee were left behind, and they decided to try for the Ohio anyway and, to that end, portaged up the Native highway through

Ancaster to the upper ford on the Grand River (later Brant's Ford, or Brantford). They had only three canoes for 12 men, and it was low water at the end of September. It took them three weeks to wade, walk and canoe their way down the river and along the coast to Port Dover. Three men deserted, but the rest wintered at Port Dover. They raised a cross to claim the west for France, and set out in the spring for the Ohio but almost immediately lost one of their canoes and all their religious gear in Lake Erie. They changed plans, and set out to return home by way of Lake Huron.

- This is a simplified version of Galinee's map, based on his own observations. Not bad. Lake Ontario, Erie and Huron are clear. His was the first – overestimated – map of Long Point. I'll quote Galinee on his winter at Port Dover, and then we'll look at his map in more detail. Remember that he had already described Seneca country, so he did not have to repeat much about the overall lay of the land, which was similar.

The Norfolk sand plain, he said, was a "*paradis terrestre*," an Earthly paradise, and QUOTE a "great hunting ground" for elk, deer, bear, cats, racoon and beaver. The land was "watered by rivers and rivulets filled with fish and beaver...[and] we saw there at any one time more than a hundred deer in a single band, herds of fifty or sixty elk, and bears fatter and of better flavor than the most savory pigs of France."

TO BE CONTINUED IN THE APRIL ISSUE OF LOTUS

NFN needs your help!

no experience required
(only a healthy dose of enthusiasm)

Dedicate max. 3 - 4 hours a month to help with various tasks assisted by other Board Members.

ALSO WANTED: 2 persons to replace our retiring Refreshment & Treats Servers at our monthly indoor meetings

Get involved with your club, it is a greatly rewarding experience!

Contact any Director - See the back page

Upcoming NFN Spring Events

Owl Prowl at Hay Creek

**Saturday, February 23, 2013
7.30 pm**

Listen to owl calls during a moonlit hike. Dress warmly and bring a flashlight. Meet at the entrance to the hiking trail at Hay Creek

Backus Woods Winter Hike

**Saturday, March 2, 2013
1.00 pm to 3.00 pm**

Join NCC staffers Tom Bradstreet and Brett Norman on a winter walk in the South Tract of Backus Woods to learn how to identify trees in winter. Meet at the parking lot on 3rd Concession Road at 1.00 pm

Meeting & Presentation

**Tuesday, March 12, 2013
7.30**

**Simcoe Seniors Centre
Butterfly Conservation
and Management**

Speaker: Deanna Lindblad

Learn how Zoos, Natural History Museums, Botanical Gardens, etc. are helping to advance local conservation efforts

Meeting & Presentation

**Tuesday, April 9, 2013
7.30 pm**

**Simcoe Seniors Centre
The Physiology and Ecology
of Flight and Refuelling in
Migratory Birds and Bats
Speaker: Chris Guglielmo,
Western University**

NFN meetings

Norfolk Field Naturalist meetings are held the second Tuesday of the month from September to May. Meetings take place at the Simcoe Seniors Centre at 89 Pond Street.

The meetings are free and visitors are always welcome. Doors open at 7:15 pm, programs begin at 7:30 pm.

NFN Mailing Address

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

Next Lotus issue:

**April 2013
Input dead line:
Monday, March 25**

About the NFN

Norfolk Field Naturalists members participate in meetings and field outings, many of which are family-friendly. Membership fees, are \$20 Individual and \$30 Family. Donations are eligible for income tax credits. Non-profit registration # 119058691

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. Copies of the Lotus are available at meetings, by mail or by email and posted on the NFN web site. Articles published in the Lotus reflect the views and opinions of the authors, but not necessarily those of the NFN.

www.norfolkfieldnaturalists.org

2012-2013 NFN Executive with contact & project information

		<u>All 519-</u>	
President	Bernie Solymar	426-7124	solymar@nornet.on.ca
Vice-President,	Peter Carson	586-3985	gartcar@kwic.com
Sanctuary/Natural Areas			
Treasurer/Past President	Audrey Heagy	586-9464	aheagy@bsc-eoc.org
Secretary	Colleen Dale	512-0240	cdale22@yahoo.ca
Membership/Publicity	Diane Salter	586-7775	bigcreek@kwic.com
Field Events	(vacant)		
Speaker Program	(vacant)		
Environment	(vacant)		
Director-at-large	Shirley Rothery	586-9535	shirleyrothery@hotmail.com
Director-at-large	Barb Hawke	586-8375	bhawke@kwic.com
Director-at-large	Alan Ladd	426-8504	
Director-at-large	Rick Dowson	426-9774	mrrick@bellnet.ca
Director-at-large,	Inga Hinnerichsen	875-5601	daveinga@live.ca
Lotus Editor (appointed)			

Butterfly Counts: (appointed) Doug Timpf (deceased) Adam & Matt Timpf 586-9964

Christmas Bird Counts: (appointed) David Okines - Woodhouse Count 519-586-9464
Linda Thrower - Fisherville Count 905-774-1230

Honorary President: Al Robinson **Honorary Directors:** Harry Barrett, Jim Harlow