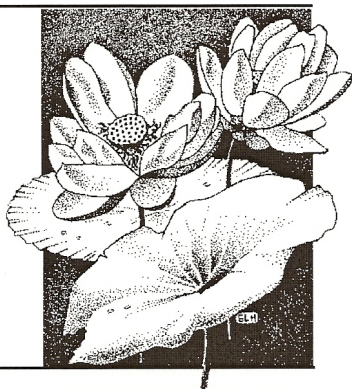


Lotus

NEWSLETTER

of the

NORFOLK FIELD NATURALISTS



OCTOBER 2018



Nature under the Midnight Sun

A travel journal by Inga Hinnerichsen
(photos by author unless noted)

Finland: The land of the Midnight Sun, thirty thousand lakes and five thousand islands. The land where people are born with cross-country skis on their feet. This is where I grew up. Last summer I travelled back for an overdue visit.

First a few geographic, geological and historical facts. From top to bottom Finland is approximately 1100 km long. It's hugged by two arms of the Baltic Sea in the south and west. It borders with Sweden and Norway in the north and with Russia to the east.

Compared to Canada, the southern edge is at the same latitude as White Horse and it stretches north to about Tuktoyaktuk. A thick glacier covered the entire country during the last ice age. The receding ice scoured away top soil leaving behind eskers and alvars, polished worn, striated granite and lakes, much like in northern Ontario. The thick ice shield weighted the earth's crust down and today it is still rebounding at a rate of about 1 cm per year. The proximity to the Baltic Sea and the warm Gulf Current that runs up along the west coast of Norway moderates the climate of this northern country.

Traditionally, forestry and agriculture were the main industries; pulp and paper and dairy products were the main exports. Following WW2, shipbuilding became a major heavy industry supplying freighters, icebreakers and luxury cruise liners worldwide. High-tech products followed in more recent years.

2017 marked 100 years of independence. After centuries as part of the Swedish Empire, Finland became the personal property of the Russian Czar after the Napoleonic wars in the early 1800's. When the realm of the Czars crashed during the Bolshevik Revolution, Finland saw the opportunity for independence in 1917. The Finn population and its language stayed isolated for centuries. Originally part of the Fenno-Ugrish tribe traced back to the Ural Mountains in Central Europe it is

only related to Hungarians and Estonians. Today Finland is cosmopolitan with a population about 5 million.

Besides Finnish and Swedish, the two official languages, English is widely spoken.

Long, warm days make midsummer high season for

visitors. In the capital Helsinki, the Esplanade and the waterfront parks buzz with activity: Al fresco restaurants, a large open-air market and an old market hall where a glass of



"Singing" Swans

wine and a gravlax sandwich are a must. Mute Swans, "Singing" Swans (much like our Tundra Swans) and Mallards paddle along the harbour front while House Sparrows, Rock Pigeons, black and grey Crows, Gulls and black Oyster Catchers pick for crumbs and grubs on land. While visiting my cousin's garden allotment, located in an oasis of several acres with small well-tended gardens and tiny cottages in the middle of the city,



Hedgehog

we observed a hedgehog. Although nocturnal, it appeared in the middle of the day. It is used to a treat of cat food whenever my cousin shows up. Once very common, these creatures are now endangered due to disease, road mortality and habitat destruction.

cont'd on p.2

A two-hour train ride through the southern farm country, where you might spot a grazing moose or two, takes you to the city of Turku in the south-west corner of the country, my old stomping grounds. My old high school in the centre of the city is now a microbrewery and pub called "The School". Nothing like downing a



Jackdaw

pint in the shady beer garden in the old school yard! Jackdaws (*Corvus monedula*) take care of leftover crumbs from your snack. Common in central Europe, these birds are a very rare protected species in Finland. A small colony is roosting and nesting in the bell tower of the old cathedral. Turku is the gateway to the archipelago of more than 5000 islands between Finland and Sweden. My brother lives on one of the larger islands on an old farm a stone's throw from a bay.

Early July is high nesting season for local birds. Barn Swallows, Käenpiika (*Jynx torquilla*, a small migratory bird of the Woodpecker family), and black and white Flycatchers (similar to our Phoebe)



Käenpiika

Photo - Wikipedia

were rearing their young under the eaves and in the nesting boxes around the farm. Cranes were calling on the nearby fields in the wee hours of the morning. It only gets dusky for a couple of hours in the middle of the night this time of the year. The forest edges, roadsides and ditches were ablaze with wildflowers: Red and White Clover, Oxeye Daisies, Queen-of-the Meadows, white and yellow Bedstraw, Fireweed and sedges, to mention a few. A rare orchid, the Greater Butterfly Orchid (*Platanthera chlorantha*) was in flower behind the barn. This orchid attracts moth pollinators at night with its exquisite perfume.



Greater Butterfly Orchid

A couple of days visiting my old friends at their cottage on a small island rounded up my visit to Finland. The smooth polished exposed granite is host to mosses and lichens;



Reindeer Moss

wind beaten pines cling to cracks in the rock; and, in moist pockets the low-bush blueberries were ripening. Ravens, Sea Eagles, Eiders, Gulls, Common Goldeneye



Thatch Roof

and other seabirds frequent the islands. Here also the pesky Phragmites is choking up shallows in the bays. Some creative people are using it as fake thatch on top of corrugated tin roofing. Only two species of snakes exist here: the non-venomous Yellow-eared Garter snake and the venomous Adder with its characteristic zigzag pattern along its back. Small rodents, Red Squirrels with their tufted ears, hares and various

mice are common. During the winter, moose, foxes and Raccoondogs cross over the ice to the islands. The Raccoondog (*Nyctereutes procyonoides*) is a more recent invader from Russia. Other recent introductions are Beaver a Brown Bear, Wolf, Wolverine, Lynx and Reindeer occur in the eastern and northern wilderness. Many food fish thrive in the brackish waters of the Baltic: Perch, Pickerel, Pike, Trout, etc. Smoked Baltic Herring is always a treat.



Raccoondog

Photo - Wikipedia

A real Finnish sauna after dinner and a skinny-dip in the chilly Baltic (+15C) make you feel alive.



Lamiatae Weed



Barn with Flowers

Autumn Quiz



Photos from Wikipedia

Answers on P. 6

BORNEO

A travel journal by George Pond
(photos by author)

I suppose my “Bucket List” desire to visit Borneo goes back to my public-school days of reading *National Geographic*. Here was a country still covered with pristine rainforest, where Head hunters once roamed the dense jungle; where herds of wild Asian pygmy elephants were common, Orangutans



Asian Pygmy Elephant

claimed their canopy territories, where troops of Long-tailed and Pig-tailed Macaques lived in groups of 20 or more animals, and strange looking Proboscis monkeys, with their funny noses lived in trees along the river valleys. Here eight species of Hornbills, birds with massive bills, would fly overhead or sit on exposed limbs of dead trees; and various species of hawks and eagles patrolled the rivers searching for whatever nature provided. A land of abundant wildlife.



Long-Tailed Macaques

Well, the head hunters have long disappeared as has most of the pristine rainforest, replaced by millions of acres of Palm Oil trees. In less than 100 years, only small patches of primary or secondary rainforest remain,



Proboscis Monkey (male)

mostly along the river courses or the steep mountain hills. Fortunately, they are now protected. Here can still be found some of the wildlife that I saw in those National Geographic books so many years ago

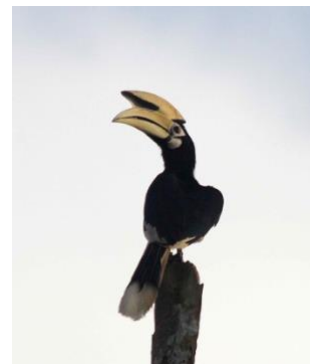
and here I was able to spend nearly a week in March 2018 with family members experiencing some of those boyhood dreams.

We stayed three nights at the award winning Sukau Rainforest Lodge, from which National Geographic and David Attenborough have filmed. Very early morning

boat rides (12 people in outboards) saw us cruising along the shores of the Kinabatangan River searching for birds, primates, including Borneo’s iconic Proboscis Monkeys and especially Orangutans, as well as the Borneo Pygmy elephants. We saw five of the eight possible species of hornbills and a number of different raptors. A kilometre-long covered boardwalk meandered through the rainforest and, although it was extremely hot and sticky, I found myself wandering on it looking for lizards, butterflies, birds and whatever else nature was willing to share. I was usually by myself, not like the hordes of people that had jammed the streets of China’s Beijing a few days earlier.

This was not a birding trip, nor was it designed as a nature trip (except for this little time at this wonderful tranquil lodge), but a trip that my daughter Heather put together that included China, Thailand and Borneo. I’m sure that an organized birding tour would see far more species than we, but I was certainly satisfied with our results.

We had previously visited an Orangutan and Sun bear (world’s smallest bear) rehabilitation centre in the town of Sandakan where we saw several of each and it was great to know that the country is doing what it can to rehabilitate injured or orphaned animals and protect what little is left of the once great rainforests of that country.



Pied Hornbill



Orangutan



Southeast Asian Water Monitor

Hummingbird Event – July 2018

Photos by Len Grincevicius



Make Bird Watching Greener

Bird watchers are usually careful about their carbon footprint, but these are a few tips to consider:

- Car pool when in a group
- Do as much birding on foot as possible
- Have respect for wildlife and their habitat as well as the broader environment
- If using a guide or company, hire one who demonstrates commitment to low impact green practices
- Use a thermos instead of bottled water
- Avoid taking highly packaged foods
- Plant native plants in your yard. They support bird populations.

Eight km of Bruce Trail & 3,272 Acres Will be Protected at Driftwood Cove

For more than 50 years, eight kilometres of the Bruce Trail have passed through the Driftwood Cove land, a stunningly beautiful stretch of the Bruce Trail, thanks to generous permission from the private landowners.

Parks Canada, with financial support from the Bruce Trail Conservancy, has reached an agreement to acquire the 3,272-acre Driftwood Cove property at the tip of the Bruce Peninsula.

Bruce Trail Conservancy Annual Report 2017-2018

To see this document full of pictures and info, go to:
https://brucetrail.org/system/downloads/0000/1198/BTC_Annual_Report_2018.pdf

Welcome New Directors!

Mary Caughill and Jan Grincevicius

We are thrilled to have you on board

HOW THE DEER GOT HIS ANTLERS

This story is a Native American legend that tells the tale of How the Deer got His Antlers. Various tellings of this story are available; this version is from a Cherokee Legend.

In the beginning the Deer had no antlers, but his head was smooth just like a doe's. He was a great runner and the Rabbit was a great jumper, and the animals were all curious to know which could go farther in the same time. They talked about it a good deal, and at last arranged a match between the two, and made a nice large pair of antlers for a prize to the winner. They were to start together from one side of a thicket and go through it, then turn and come back, and the one who came out first was to get the antlers.

On the day fixed all the animals were there, with the antlers put down on the ground at the edge of the thicket to mark the starting point. While everybody was admiring the antlers, the Rabbit said: "I don't know this part of the country; I want to take a look through the bushes where I am to run." They thought that all right, so the Rabbit went into the thicket, but he was gone so long that at last the animals suspected he must be up to one of his tricks. They sent a messenger to look for him, and away in the middle of the thicket he found the Rabbit gnawing down the bushes and pulling them away until he had a road cleared nearly to the other side.

The messenger turned around quietly and came back and told the other animals. When the rabbit came out at last they accused him of cheating, but he denied it until they went into the thicket and found the cleared road.

They agreed that such a trickster had no right to enter the race at all, so they gave the antlers to the Deer, who was admitted to being the best runner, and he has worn them ever since. They told the Rabbit that as he was so fond of cutting down bushes he might do that for a living hereafter, and so he does to this day.



1. Currently, only 10.7 percent of Ontario's lands and inland waters are officially protected! We still have a long way to go if Canada is to fulfill its commitment to the United Nations target of protecting 17 percent by 2020.
2. Protected places help mitigate climate change, provide us with clean air and water, support Indigenous knowledge and value systems, and are safe havens for wild species. Ontario currently has more than 200 species at risk, many of which are threatened by habitat loss.
3. Protected places make Ontario special – a place we're proud to call home.



Welcome New NFN Members

**Mary Caughill, Gerry Duncan,
Gord Pennington and Marilyn Smith**

**We look forward to meeting you and hope you will
participate in and enjoy all the NFN indoor
presentations and field outings.**

Fall Quiz Answers

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Praying Mantis | 4. New England Aster |
| 2. Dogbane Beetle | 5. Green Frog |
| 3. Red-Bellied Snake | 6. Kentucky Coffee Tree |

The report from the October meeting will be in the December 2018 issue of the Lotus.

❶ Niagara Region Threatened by Development

Natural areas in southern Ontario are now under greater threat of deforestation and eco-damage than at any time in recent history. Escalating house and condo prices in the GTA are the driving force behind runaway housing development throughout southern Ontario. The Niagara Peninsula is vulnerable to the resulting economic enticements because of its stagnant economy, high unemployment rate, and older demographic.

"Thundering Waters", a forested area of provincially significant wetlands, consists of some 500 acres within the urban boundaries of Niagara Falls. Niagara Falls City Council agreed to a proposal that one-third of this natural area should be rezoned for development.

Throughout the Niagara Peninsula, natural landscapes and historically important sites are being turned into condos and housing developments. Existing environmental and historical safeguards are not preventing this razing of nature, history and culture.

The Waverly Beach woodlands in Fort Erie, especially important for the spring songbird migration, is also at risk. Much of the 30-acre wooded site has been rezoned to allow for the development of a large residential complex.

For many naturalists, this is another sorry tale of moneyed interests trouncing historical and environmental safeguards.

Excerpts from an article by
Kevin Patrick McCabe

❷ If you haven't seen it, the Summer issue of *Ontario Nature Magazine* is available at
<http://view.publitas.com/on-nature/summer-2018/page/1>

❸ The Annual Report is an excellent resource to give everyone a deeper understanding of Ontario Nature and what was accomplished for nature in 2017/18. Go to:
<https://view.publitas.com/on-nature/annualreport2017/page/1>

For further info on these topics, and more, visit:
ontarionature.org

Thank You

From the Norfolk Field Naturalists to
Jane Thomson of Over the Moon
For designing the Brochure layout

Thank You!

From Norfolk Field Naturalists to
Will & Morgan Partridge
Guardian Computing
For hosting our website

The NFN is looking for a
Volunteer
to post and add events
on the NFN website

Contact Inga at:
519-875-5601 or daveinga@live.ca

The NFN is looking for some
DIRECTORS-AT-LARGE
Tasks: attending 4 Board Meetings and the
AGM

Contact Inga at:
519-875-5601 or daveinga@live.ca

VOLUNTEER WANTED!

Coordinator
Woodhouse Christmas Bird Count
(does not need to participate in Bird Count —
just organize)

Contact David Okines at:
(519) 586-9464 or davidokines@gmail.com

Upcoming NFN 2018 Fall Events

CANCELLED

**Saturday, October 20, 2018,
9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.**

Fall Outing to Springwater Conservation Area Near Aylmer

Springwater has an incredibly beautiful trail complete with old growth forest and a large pond. Expect to take about two hours for the walk and bring your lunch for afterwards. We will be carpooling from the north end of the Sobey's parking lot in Simcoe. Expect to return mid-afternoon. *Contact Len at 519-428-6796.*



Springwater Leaves in the Fall

Photo by Jan Grincevicius

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, 89 Pond Street.**

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

NFN Mailing Address

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

Next Lotus Issue:

December 2018

Input dead line:

**Friday, November 23,
2018**

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. Charitable registration # 11905869RR00001

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

2018 - 2019 NFN Executive with Contact and Project Information

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Director-at-large	vacant		
Director-at-large	vacant		
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Butterfly Counts: (appointed)	Adam Timpf	429-4147	
Christmas Bird Counts: (appointed)	vacant - Woodhouse Count		
	Linda Thrower - Fisherville Count	905-774-1230	
Honorary President:	George Pond		
Honorary Directors:	Anne and Dolf Wynia		