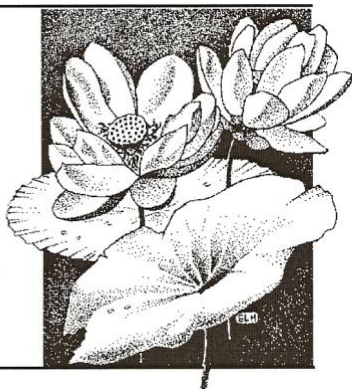


Lotus

NEWSLETTER

of the

NORFOLK FIELD NATURALISTS



FEBRUARY 2021



Christmas Bird Count — Woodhouse Report by Adam Timpf

A big thank you to everyone for their efforts on this day and for finding a safe way to participate despite the difficult circumstances.

These are the results of the 34th Woodhouse Christmas Bird Count held on Sunday, December 20th, 2020. The Woodhouse CBC is centred 7 km east of Simcoe, at the crossroads of Highway 3 and Cockshutt Road at Renton, and roughly covers from Port Dover to Waterford and just west of Simcoe to east of Jarvis. It was mostly a grey, cloudy affair, with light winds and drizzle on and off throughout the day. Temperatures varied between +2 and +4 degrees Celsius and it was mostly a pleasant day to be outside despite some ominous looking forecasts. 37 field birders covered the count area split between 17 groups, plus 2 feeder watchers.

We tallied 94 species on the day, which is the third highest species total ever, and the highest since the record of 99 was set in 2006. There were two additional count week species recorded on the day before the count: a Snow Goose had been hanging around in the park in downtown Simcoe, and an American White Pelican was briefly seen off Port Ryerse. This pelican was recorded on the Long Point Christmas Bird Count and as of January 2nd, 2021 is still being seen in Long Point bay.



Hairy Woodpecker
by Larry Monczka

Total Species: 94, + 2 count week species

Average for the last 33 years = 85. Average for the last 10 years = 88.

Total Individuals: 18,689

Average over all 34 years = 26,141. Average for the last 10 years = 21,000.

Three new species were recorded that hadn't been seen on any previous Woodhouse count:

1 Marsh Wren at Silver Lake

1 Rose-breasted Grosbeak coming to a feeder in Simcoe, and

1 Broad-winged Hawk near Waterford.

New count highs:

41 Hooded Merganser (33 in 2012)

4 Merlin (4 in 2014)

26 Yellow-shafted Flicker (16 in multiple years)

66 Red-breasted Nuthatch (60 in 1999)

27 Brown Creeper (21 last year)

35 Carolina Wren (14 in 2005)

2 Common Yellowthroat (1 on 3 previous counts)

23 Field Sparrow (13 in 1993)

Other notable sightings:

4 American Wigeon (1st since 2011)

2 Northern Shoveler (1st since 2015)

2 Long-tailed Duck (1st since 2016)

1 Ruffed Grouse (1st since 2009)

1 Killdeer (1st since 2012)

1 Glaucous Gull (1st since 2016)

1 Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (1st since 2017)

1 Ruby-crowned Kinglet (2nd in last 10 years)

1 Gray Catbird (1st since 2013)

2 White-winged Crossbill (1st since 2011)

Cont'd. on page 2

Low counts:

0 Horned Lark (first time missed in 34-year history)

0 Great-horned Owl (last missed in 2007)

2 Northern Harrier (lowest since 1 in 2002)



Bald Eagle

by George Pond



Trumpeter Swans

by Jan Grincevicius

Below is the full species list:

Horned Grebe	3	Ruffed Grouse	1	Hermit Thrush	1
Great Blue Heron	5	Wild Turkey	16	American Robin	34
Mute Swan	4	Killdeer	1	Gray Catbird	1
Trumpeter Swan	6	Bonaparte's Gull	27	Northern Mockingbird	2
Tundra Swan	42	Ring-billed Gull	532	European Starling	2136
Canada Goose	5438	Herring Gull	85	Cedar Waxwing	10
Cackling Goose	3	Glaucous Gull	1	Myrtle Warbler	3
Mallard	2257	Great Black-backed Gull	26	Common Yellowthroat	2
American Black Duck	209	Rock Pigeon	534	American Tree Sparrow	305
Mallard/American Black Duck	4	Mourning Dove	614	Field Sparrow	23
Gadwall	42	Eastern Screech-Owl	4	Song Sparrow	38
American Wigeon	4	Belted Kingfisher	6	Swamp Sparrow	37
Northern Shoveler	2	Red-bellied Woodpecker	47	White-throated Sparrow	11
Redhead	2	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	1	White-crowned Sparrow	26
Greater Scaup	435	Downy Woodpecker	98	Slate-colored Junco	815
(Scaup sp.)	200	Hairy Woodpecker	24	Lapland Longspur	1
Common Goldeneye	164	Yellow-shafted Flicker	26	Snow Bunting	67
Long-tailed Duck	2	Pileated Woodpecker	4	Northern Cardinal	231
Bufflehead	147	Northern Shrike	1	Red-winged Blackbird	3
Hooded Merganser	41	Blue Jay	370	Rusty Blackbird	1
Common Merganser	237	American Crow	486	Brown-headed Cowbird	38
Red-breasted Merganser	567	Common Raven	2	Purple Finch	6
Bald Eagle	8	Black-capped Chickadee	515	House Finch	185
Northern Harrier	2	Red-breasted Nuthatch	66	White-Winged Crossbill	2
Sharp-shinned Hawk	3	White-breasted Nuthatch	91	Common Redpoll	150
Cooper's Hawk	14	Brown Creeper	27	Pine Siskin	131
Broad-winged Hawk	1	Carolina Wren	35	American Goldfinch	231
Red-tailed Hawk	72	Winter Wren	6	Evening Grosbeak	13
Rough-legged Hawk	10	Marsh Wren	1	Rose-breasted Grosbeak	1
American Kestrel	9	Golden-crowned Kinglet	48	House Sparrow	610
Merlin	4	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1		
Ring-necked Pheasant	1	Eastern Bluebird	39	Total	94 Sp

Take a Walk on the Wild Side

(Not an Official NFN Event)

Article by Inga Hinnerichsen

Snow or no snow, it is a very good idea to get out for some exercise and fresh air. By now we all feel the pressures of lock-down and isolation. It can lead to general irritability, anxiety and even depression. There are ways that you can deal with all this nastiness. Practising any kind of meditation and physical activity will ease the darkness in your mind and refresh the body. Something as simple as going for a walk has great benefits. Walking is one of the best cardiovascular exercises readily available to anybody at no cost. We are so fortunate to live in an area rich with possibilities for outdoor activities. Walking is suitable for any fitness levels. You may just like to take a short stroll around the block, if you live in an urban community, or stretch your paws along a country road or along the many nature trails in our area.

Perhaps you have seen people using Nordic walking poles on their outings. This practise was developed in the Scandinavian countries as an alternative to cross country skiing during times when there is no snow cover. It quickly gained great popularity, as it also provides some upper body toning exercise. Let me explain some of the dynamics of Nordic walking. Before I continue, I just want to give you my credentials as a coach: I'm an active member of the Canadian Ski Instructors' Alliance and the Canadian Ski Coaches' Federation. I have several years of experience in teaching both Alpine and Nordic skiing.

Walking with poles is an easy transition from cross country skiing. It is suitable for any age, any fitness level and any speed. Basically, you want your arms to move diagonally to your legs striding along, just like your arms swinging naturally as you walk. The right arm swings forward as your left leg steps ahead, repeat on the opposite side. This diagonal action helps stabilize your upper body and prevents rotation. Now you add poles to this action. The poles become a second pair of legs that will help you balance on uneven or slippery ground, keep an even pace and also propel you forward. This activity, like most other athletic endeavours, requires a little practise to master. The best way to learn the proper technique is to have someone show you how. — Anyone interested? I'd be happy to give you a few helpful pointers — no charge! This time I'd limit a group to maximum 3 or 4 because of COVID protocol. Call me at 519-875-5601 to arrange for a convenient time!

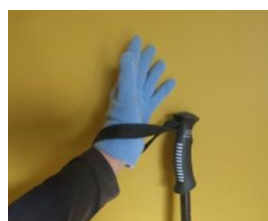
Some of the most common mistakes I've noticed:

- Too short poles. When standing, they should reach almost up to your armpits. Adjustable poles are available at most sporting goods stores.
- Wrong grip on the poles. This needs to be demonstrated to do it right.
- Using only one pole. This is lopsided and doesn't really help you at all.
- Incorrect placement on the ground and angle of the poles. Again, this is best to be demonstrated. With an incorrect technique the poles only become cumbersome accessories that you carry around and will not benefit you in any way.
- Beware of photos and videos on the internet! There is lots of incorrect information available.

You can advance this method to any level you want to reach. A couple of years ago I did a 19.4 km hike in New Zealand over the Tongariro volcano. It took me 7 hours 15 minutes to complete, including a long lunch break and many stops to take photos. The poles were of great help along the trek. I trained along the roads in Norfolk. The 12 km distance from our house to Port Rowan took me 2 hours 5 minutes. Happy walking!



A couple showing good Nordic walking form
(Google photo)



Michael Bradstreet

Appointment to the Order of Canada



On December 30, 2020, Her Excellency the Right Honourable Julie Payette, Governor General of Canada, announced 61 new appointments to the Order of Canada.

Created in 1967, the Order of Canada is one of our country's highest honours. Presented by the governor general, the Order honours people whose service shapes our society; whose innovations ignite our imaginations; and whose compassion unites our communities. All nominations from the public are researched by the Chancellery of Honours and presented to independent advisory councils and committees throughout the year. The advisory bodies consider nominations and recommend to the governor general to appoint or award.

Michael S.W. Bradstreet, who earned a bachelor's degree in zoology from New College (University of Toronto), was named a Member of the Order in recognition of his leadership in the protection of natural habitats and for his innovative bird conservation initiatives. Bradstreet has written extensively about northern birds and mammals. Michael is a biologist who spent 14 years working across the Arctic from Greenland to the Beaufort Sea.

He became Executive Director and then President of Long Point Bird Observatory and Bird Studies Canada until 2004 when he moved to the Nature Conservancy of Canada, eventually becoming Senior Vice President, Conservation. He retired in 2020. Michael has served on the boards of provincial, national, and international conservation organisations, including BirdLife International.



Congratulations, Michael.

Which Species Are These?



on the outer tail feathers of the smaller bird. Can you name the smaller and larger member of this prodigious pair? (Photo from The Cornell Lab of Ornithology.)

Answer on page 9

A birder in Ontario recently captured an extraordinary moment that highlights several key differences between two common woodpecker species. Take a close look at their overall size, each bird's bill length relative to its head, and the black spots

Grow Native Plants

Click the link below to find out about a great initiative by Carolinian Canada to learn about the ecological value of native plant gardening and how to register your garden as part of "Canada's biggest wildlife garden."

**YOU CAN HELP GROW
Canada's Biggest
Wildlife Garden**



<https://caroliniancanada.ca/itz/canada-biggest-wildlife-garden>

Canadian Bat Box Project

Article by: Karen Vanderwolf, PhD Student, Trent University

If you have a bat box, I want to know about it!

Bats in Canada face multiple threats from habitat loss and disease. As towns and cities expand, the large old trees that bats call home are being cleared, and bats are losing their roosts. Bats need a warm and secure place to roost during the day in the summer. A bat box is a simple and effective way to provide additional roosting habitat for bats, but little is known about bat box use in Canada. This is especially important as three bat species in Canada are listed as endangered: little brown bats, northern long-eared bats, and tricolored bats. Bats now face additional persecution due to worries about COVID-19, but bats in North America do not have the virus that causes COVID-19 <https://cwf-fcf.org/en/about-cwf/faq/faqs/should-i-be-worried-bats.html?src=blog>

Which bat species use bat boxes?

Of the 18 bat species that are regularly found in Canada, 13 have been documented using bat boxes, although these data come from studies farther south in the United States. Current recommendations on bat box design are based on research in the United States, especially Texas, and in Europe. Since the box design bats prefer varies by region and species, more information on bat boxes in Canada is urgently needed. There is very little previous research about which bat species prefer which bat box designs in Canada. Little brown bats are known to use bat boxes throughout Canada, big brown bats use boxes in some parts of Canada, and Yuma bats use boxes in British Columbia.



This bat box on the side of a house in New Brunswick houses little brown bats and their pups during the summer.

Photo by Karen Vanderwolf

How you can help!

Our research seeks to determine which bat species use bat boxes across Canada, what box designs are preferred by bats, and which temperatures bats prefer for roosting in our northern climate. To accomplish this, we need to know where bat boxes are located in Canada, the physical characteristics of the boxes, and whether they are being used by bats! Participants will be sent temperature loggers to install in their box and supplies to collect guano (bat poop), as bat species can be identified from guano.

If you have a bat box and would like to participate in this study, please fill out this online multiple-choice survey with questions about your bat box.

https://trentu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_86og8C3MIgO2ff7

This project is in partnership with the Wildlife Conservation Society and the Canadian Wildlife Federation <https://wcsbats.ca/Our-work-to-save-bats/Batbox-Project/BatBox-Project-Canada-wide>

More information about which box designs bats use in Canada will help bat conservation by providing recommendations for improving bat box design and placement in our northern climate.

Why install a bat box?

Installing a bat box gives bats an alternative to roosting in your house, and since all bats in Canada eat only insects, you may even notice a decrease in the insect population around your house! Bats eat a variety of insects, including agricultural and forestry pests. You can watch bats swooping around your backyard at dusk catching insects in midair.

How do I tell if bats are using my box?

You can tell whether your box is being used by bats by searching for guano underneath your box and watching your box at sunset in June to count bats as they emerge for an evening of eating insects. You can watch an example of bats flying out of bat boxes in Prince Edward Island here.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NqZbyjhC0XI&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR1qGaCvi6uebCdgaJkTES2O517H1uzhTbGeqAN6Srf_oLGrYmPH4TPj5L0

You can also shine a light up into the box during the day to see if there are bats inside from May to October in Canada. The boxes will be too cold for bats during the winter.

Cont'd. on page 6

Bat Box continued from p. 5

How do I get bats to use my box?

Not all bat boxes will be occupied in the first year after installation. Occupancy depends on many factors, ranging from the period in which it was installed to the fact that bats are very selective and might need a little time to familiarize themselves with your bat box. There are no lures or attractants, such as guano, that can attract bats to a bat box, although larger bat boxes with multiple chambers more commonly attract bats than smaller boxes.

Bat boxes are most successful when attached to houses or poles as opposed to trees. Trees shade the box and can block access to the box entrance. If bats are not using your box after two years, try moving the bat box to a new location.

Like tree hollows, bat boxes need to have temperatures that bats like. Bats like hot temperatures, but even in Canada some bat boxes get too hot during the summer, which can increase bat mortality. Temperatures of over 40°C in bat boxes is too hot, and temperatures in some bat boxes in Canada have been recorded over 50°C!

Our research group measures the temperature inside bat boxes using temperature loggers that can take a reading every hour over the whole summer. One way to ensure that bats can choose their preferred roosting temperature is to install multiple bat boxes as they will vary in temperature depending on how much direct sunlight they receive.



Little brown bats in a bat box in the Maritimes.

Photo by Jordi Segers.

Video – Identify Your Backyard Birds

Real video examples of 80 common Backyard Birds. Identified by a combination of sights and sounds.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pEXX6Oyuj4k&feature=youtu.be>



American Robin

Photo by Dolores Duke

Songbirding Podcasts with Rob Porter

Immerse yourself in birdsong in this relaxed pace acoustic exploration of natural spaces in mid-western and southern Ontario. Whether you're an emerging or veteran birder looking to test and build upon your birdsong identification skills or someone who appreciates the natural world, this unique series will bring you as close as you can get to birding in the field without going anywhere.
<https://www.listennotes.com/podcasts/songbirding-rob-porter-ZY03tgWef7V/>



St. Williams Conservation Reserve

Some areas and trails at the Turkey Point Tract in the St. Williams Conservation Reserve will be temporarily closed this winter as logging operations will be starting there shortly.

Signage will be posted around the perimeter of the affected area and trailheads. The posted area and affected trails are shown in orange. (See map.)

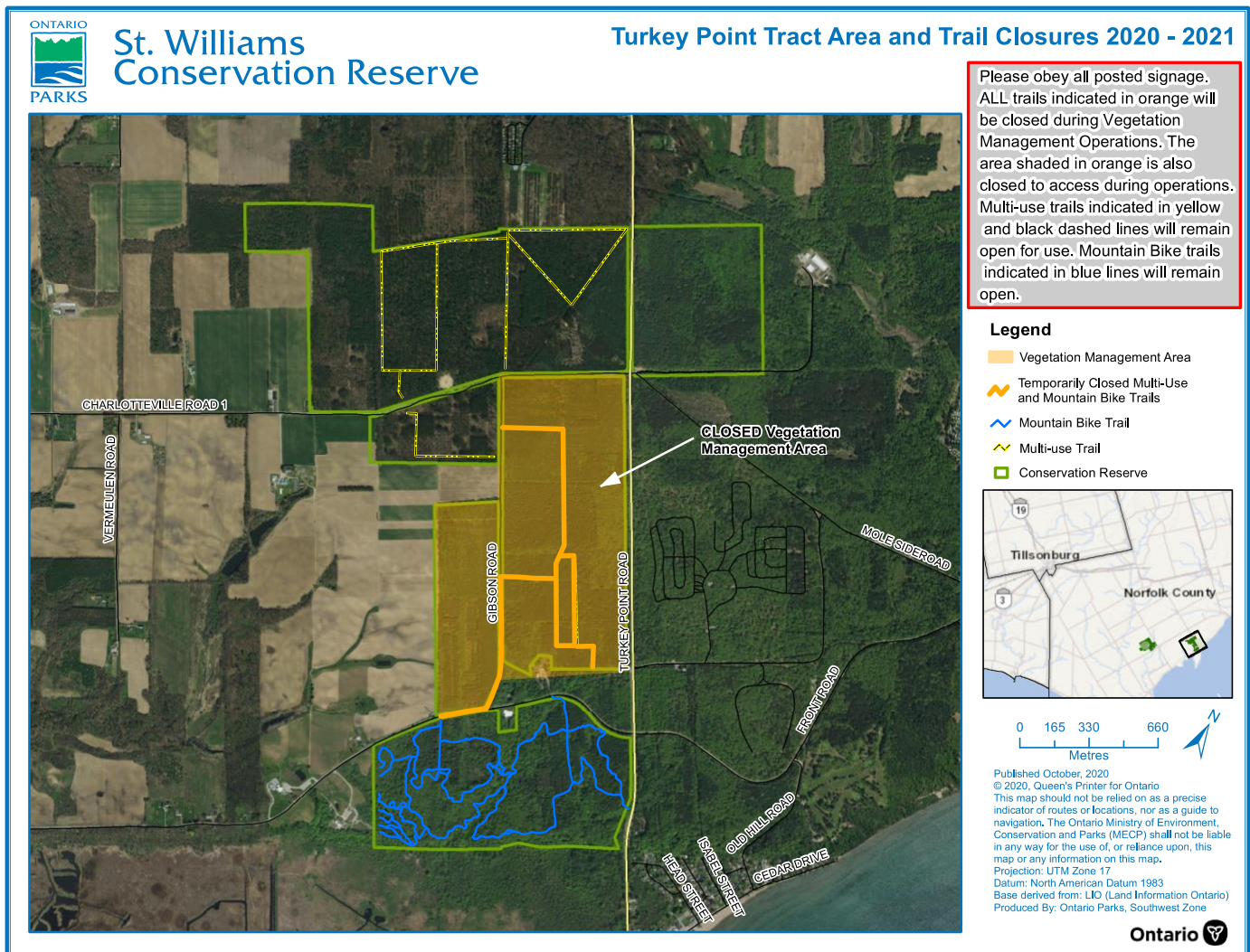
For the safety of the CR users and the logging operators, the trails and the posted area will be closed to ALL users until the logging operations are completed (anticipated re-opening in April 2021). Once the operation is complete, the signs will be removed and website (www.swcr.ca) will be updated.

- Please obey all posted signage.
- ALL trails indicated in orange will be closed during Vegetation Management Operations.

- The area shaded in orange is also closed to access during operations.
- Some of the multi-use trails (see yellow and black dashed line on map) will remain open for use.
- Some of the mountain bike trails (indicated in blue lines on map) will remain open.

Questions about the closures can be directed to either:

- Audrey Heagy, Coordinator, St Williams Conservation Reserve Community Council, email: coordinator@swcr.ca
- Jeff Pickersgill, Manager, St. Williams Conservation Reserve, Ontario Park. Email: Jeffrey.Pickersgill@ontario.ca or 519) 426-3229 ext. 227



BOARD OF DIRECTORS' REPORT

by Inga Hinnerichsen, President

- **Winter issue of ON Nature magazine:**
<https://view.publitas.com/on-nature/winter-2020/page/1>
- **2019-20 Annual Report:**
https://view.publitas.com/on-nature/annual_report_2020/page/1
- **Ontario Turtle Field Guide:**
<https://ontarionature.org/programs/citizen-science/reptile-amphibian-atlas/species#turtles>
- Members are the heart and soul of Ontario Nature. The virtual **AGM** was held on Saturday, November 14th, 2020. Caroline Schultz spoke about the collective achievements from the past year and ON's vision for the year ahead. See her very interesting presentation at <https://ontarionature.org/events/annual-gathering/>



To receive selected information by email, you can sign up:
ontarionature.org

Welcome New NFN Members

2020 - 2021 Season

Tony Jovan and Peter and Lynn Post

We look forward to meeting you when COVID allows and hope you will enjoy all the NFN presentations.

Thank You!

From Norfolk Field Naturalists to

Will & Morgan Partridge

Guardian Computing

For hosting our website

I hope this issue of the Lotus will find you all safe and healthy.

The Board of directors have dealt with emerging issues by phone and/or email to comply with the Covid protocol. We are planning on a meeting in person in April when the weather is warm enough for us to be outdoors with proper distancing. — On the lighter side, our Treasurer, Peter Vaughan, suggested (tongue-in-cheek!) that we might consider a meeting in January. That would keep it very short and sweet!

Speaking of Peter V.: He has been in touch with the Lawyer appointed Executor of the Will of one of our former members, who passed away last year. This Will names the NFN as one of the beneficiaries to the estate. It will be divided into equal parts between four recipients, all not-for-profit organizations. It will likely still be until next year before the estate has been legally settled. At this point we don't know, even approximately, the amount of this inheritance. Regardless, we feel deeply grateful for this endowment.

At our April meeting we will discuss this matter and decide where it would be best to keep it. Most likely, it will go to our Securement and Protection Fund, which presently is very low due to many large donations in the past few years.

Our total assets as of November 30, 2020, is \$49,751.20 (down a little from the previous year at \$52,749.99) There has been more membership renewals since then — Thank you all!

We also received a very generous donation for the Harry B. Barrett fund. As you know, we only channel these donations to the Norfolk Community Foundation, which manages all their funds.

There is a possibility of field outings with only small groups, 4 or 5 maximum. I would like to discuss this further with the Board of Directors. We will keep you posted.

The days are getting longer, only a few weeks and another winter will be behind us. Stay active, bundle up and go for a walk — fresh air and exercise will keep your mind and body in good shape.

Upcoming NFN 2021 Winter Events

**All events are postponed
until further notice.**

Answer — Which Species Are These?

On left — Downy woodpecker.

Here's more info —

https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Downy_Woodpecker/overview?utm_source=Cornell+Lab+eNews&utm_campaign=14a5cf94b2-Cornell-Lab-eNews-December-2020&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_47588b5758-14a5cf94b2-325249228#

On right — Hairy woodpecker. Here's more info —

https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Hairy_Woodpecker/overview?utm_source=Cornell+Lab+eNews&utm_campaign=14a5cf94b2-Cornell-Lab-eNews-December-2020&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_47588b5758-14a5cf94b2-325249228#

A Winter Eve

by Irwin Mercer

The crunching snow beneath my feet
Breaks the silence of the winter eve.
I hear the patter of beginning sleep
On my evening stroll, as others sleep.
In the moonlight, the fresh snow
glistens.
A snowy owl stops and listens.
A scampering mouse becomes his meal
As I head for home, off in the distance.



Snowy Owl Photo by Len Grincevicius

NFN Meetings

Norfolk Field Naturalist meetings are held the second Tuesday of the month from September to May.

Meetings take place at the **Vittoria Community Centre, 35 Oakes Blvd., Vittoria.** The meetings are free and visitors are always welcome. Doors open at 7:15 pm, programs begin at 7:30 pm.

**POSTPONED UNTIL
FURTHER NOTICE**

NFN Mailing Address

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

Next Lotus Issue:

**April 2021
Input deadline:
Friday, March 19, 2021**

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

2020 - 2021 NFN Executive with Contact and Project Information

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