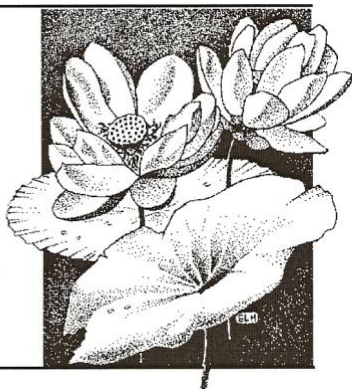


Lotus

NEWSLETTER

of the

NORFOLK FIELD NATURALISTS



APRIL 2022



Species in Focus Salamanders

Salamanders should never be handled with bare hands as skin oils and even soap residues will damage them.

The three salamanders covered in this article have an aquatic stage in their development are considered mole salamanders as opposed to woodland or Plethodontid which breath through their skin.

Yellow-spotted Salamanders

Yellow-spotted salamanders are our largest species of salamander. They are readily recognizable by their black colour and pattern of bright yellow or orange spots. They reach a length of 20 cm (8 in.). The head, body and tail are dark grey to blue-black. Their belly and sides are lighter blue-grey. Along the back, tail, sides, head, and legs are two uneven rows of up to 54 bright yellow spots.

These salamanders range over much of North America.

These salamanders live in deciduous and mixed forests are the preferred habitat, especially those located near woodland ponds for breeding. Smaller habitats created by leaf litter, logs and rocks are used for foraging and shelter.

Adults spend most of their day hiding underground or beneath rocks and logs and come out at night to eat



Photo by Member, Leanne Lemaich

spiders, insects, snails, slugs, earthworms and beetles. The juveniles will eat snails and immature aquatic insects.

When threatened, spotted salamanders secrete a mild sticky toxin from their backs and tails that dissuades predators such as skunks, raccoons, turtles, chipmunks, squirrels, opossums, and snakes from eating them.

Breeding occurs on rainy nights in March/April when they migrate to their breeding wetlands. Spermatophores, which are similar in size to a grain of rice, are attached to objects on the bottom of the pond. Females will collect the spermatophores to fertilize their egg sacks. Up to 300 eggs, in two to four jellylike masses, are then laid underwater. The eggs are attached to pond plants, submerged sticks or other vegetation. After four to seven weeks, the eggs hatch into aquatic larvae. The larvae will then develop into terrestrial juveniles before the end of the summer. For males, sexual maturity is reached between ages three and six. For females, sexual maturity is reached by age seven. Adults may only breed once every two to three years. Once breeding season is over, adults will spend most of their time underground in burrows and cavities. This is a long-lived species, reaching 30 years of age or more in the wild.

Find additional information [here](#).



Egg Mass — Photo
by Jan Grincevicius

Cont'd. p.8

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT — FISHERVILLE

Report by: Linda and Alan Thrower

The Fisherville CBC was held on December 28th, 2021—Records always have highs and lows no matter what the weather and here they are.

- Horned Grebe's were seen in the 2nd highest number since the start of the count with 112
- Cormorants came in with the highest number ever recorded at 82
- Red-Headed ducks were in the highest numbers since 1998 with 6 spotted in 1998 -14 were found this year.
- Ring Neck Ducks highest number 6 since 1998
- Greater Scaup 2891 highest number since 2014
- Buffleheads the highest at 429 since 2012
- Bald Eagles were in their lowest number ever at 2
- Northern Harriers in their highest number since 2010 at 53
- Red Shouldered hawks were on the count for only the second time with 2
- Mourning Doves their highest since 2013 at 633
- A first on the count a Barred Owl
- Red-bellied woodpeckers highest number since 2014 at 45
- Common Ravens highest count at 11
- Black-capped Chickadee highest number since 2015 at 229
- Tufted Titmouse Highest number at 16
- Red-Breasted Nuthatch highest number since count began at 32
- White-Breasted Nuthatch highest number since 2016 at 57
- Winter Wren highest number for count at 5
- Eastern-Blue Birds highest number since 2016 at 41
- Hermit Thrush ties the highest number ever at 4
- Gray Cat Bird 5th time on the count at 1. In 2008 there were 3
- Starlings were at their highest number recorded 5435 since 1999 when there were 10,205
- Swamp Sparrow highest number since 2000 at 22
- White Throated Sparrows highest number since 2006 tied at 25
- Yellow shafted Flickers were seen at the 3rd highest at 13
- Brown-Headed Cowbirds at the 4th lowest since 1999 at 44
- Only the 2nd time on the count Pine Grosbeak 17 last seen 2 in 1995
- Purple Finch highest number for this count at 25
- House Finch lowest number ever recorded at 47
- White-Winged Crossbills 4th time on the count with 3 birds
- House Sparrows with the lowest number ever recorded 442



Hooded Mergansers

Photo by Alan McKeown

Here is the rest of the data:

Weather: 0° C; winds light; snow dusting; cloud cover 15%; visibility 25 km. Water was open.

Total parties: 11, total hours by car: 63.19; total kilometres by car: 894.49; no owling; feeders: 5; feeder hours: 28.

Now all the birders who were nice enough to be out counting the birds, pandemic or not:

Don Arthur	Jennifer Rogers
Pam Arthur	Cody Rowe
Cody Bassindale	Wanda Rowe
Judy Boone	Jeff Skevington
Mike Boone	Richard Skevington
Adam Crawford	Diane Slater
Rick Dowson	Greg Slater
Mary Galli	Rob Smuck
Jerry Guenther	Richard Squires
Audrey H	Alan Thrower
Hugh McArthur	Linda Thrower
George Pond	Randy Wilson
Beth Powell	Jacob Wever
Bill Read	Julia Wever

Thank you one and all for all your effort!



Snow Buntings

Photo by Jan Grincevicius

Cont'd p.6



1

SPRING QUIZ

Photos from Wikipedia
Answers on p.7



2



3



4



5



6

Controlled Burning of Natural Environments Could Help Offset Our Carbon Emissions

Planting trees and suppressing wildfires do not necessarily maximize the carbon storage of natural ecosystems. A new study has found that prescribed burning can actually lock in or increase carbon in the soils of temperate forests, savannahs and grasslands. To read more, go [here](#).

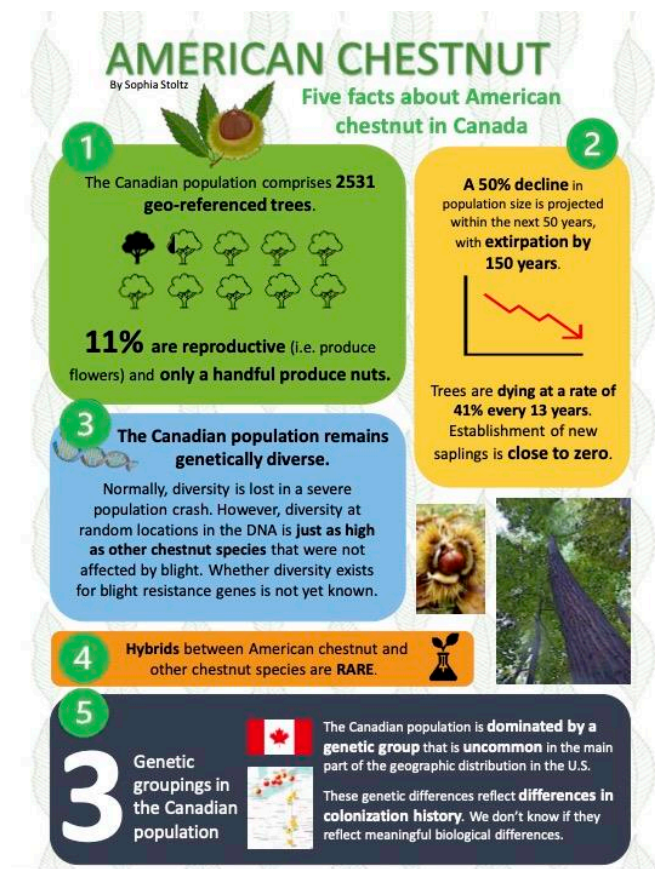


Five Facts About the American Chestnut in Canada

By Sophia Stolz (with permission)

Sophia Stolz, (Ph.D. candidate, University of Guelph.), is interested in the genetic and ecological factors affecting the ability of populations to recover following a severe population decline. Her PhD research focuses on genetic diversity and its implications for evolutionary rescue and restoration of the endangered American chestnut. To address this topic, Sophia used a variety of approaches from modelling the recovery of these populations in a theoretical context, to range-wide population genetic structure analyses, and gene expression experiments. Sophia has summarized her findings regarding the DNA analysis of the American Chestnut in Southern Ontario in a one-page summary / infographic.

To learn even more about the American Chestnut, watch a Learn Your Land video [here](#).



Alaska's Tongass National Forest

Understory: A Journey Through the Tongass is a 40-minute-long film from Audubon Alaska that takes us deep into Alaska's Tongass National Forest, the largest remaining temperate rainforest on the planet.

The story follows Elsa Sebastian, a young local fisherman who grew up "off-grid" in a remote village surrounded by the vast, ancient forest. When Elsa learns that the United States government is axing environmental protections for 9-million acres of the Tongass, she is driven to action; first fixing up an old sailboat, and then setting sail on a 350-mile expedition along the coastal rainforest.

To learn more and watch the video, go [here](#).



BIRD CROSSWORD

1	2				3		4		5
				6					
7									
			8			9			
10								11	
						12			
13			14	15					
		16					17		
18									
						19			

Solution on page 9

ACROSS

1.	Home for certain swallows and owls
6.	A species of warbler or goose
7.	Mourning Dove's greeting
8.	Kingfisher's favourite accessory?
10.	Kentucky Warbler to a scientist using the bird code
12.	A Sora's favourite mode of transportation?
14.	Distinctive aspect of an eider's plumage
17.	A descriptor for some crossbills
18.	A seabird that enjoys the surf
19.	A chick's home

DOWN

2.	"American" shorebird with a long, upturned bill
3.	The distinctive part of our most common hawk
4.	Blue bully at backyard feeders
5.	A tail-twitching warbler species
8.	Eagle's preferred hair style?
9.	Bird from the Caspian Sea?
11.	Birds that may have red eyes or white eyes
13.	An obsessive tally for some birders
15.	Shape of domed nest of a thrush-like warbler
16.	Sly sparrow species?

Why Birdwatching has Become the Hot New Hobby for Seniors

Globe and Mail Article

Entering retirement and seeking safe activity outdoors during the pandemic has drawn many seniors to a new hobby — the joys of birdwatching.

Birds Canada reports that the online bird checklist platform, eBird Canada, saw a 30 per cent jump in people submitting data between 2019 and 2020, says Jody Allair, the organization's director of community engagement. The number jumped another 14 per cent to 31,961 users in 2021, he says.

In Canada, the spring migration, which begins in February and March with waterfowl species and continues through May, when colourful songbirds such as warblers arrive, is a highlight of the birdwatching season. Some of the outstanding places in Canada to do birdwatching are Point Pelee, Long Point, Rondeau and Pelee Island on Lake Erie.

To read the whole article, go [here](#).



Chipping Sparrow at Pinery PP

Photo by Jeff Hiebert

The Species Counted were as follows:

Horned Grebe	112	Herring Gull	36	Eastern Bluebird	41
Double-crested Cormorant	82	Gr. Black Backed Gull	2	Hermit Thrush	4
Great Blue heron	4	Rock Dove	330	American Robin	7
Canada Geese	3812	Mourning Dove	633	Gray Cat Bird	1
Am. Black Duck	22	Eastern Screech Owl	1	Northern Mockingbird	6
Mallard	358	Great-horned Owl	3	European Starling	5435
Northern Pintail	3	Snowy Owl	1	American Tree Sparrow	137
Ping Neck Duck	6	Barred Owl	1	Field Sparrow	1
Red-headed Duck	358	Long-eared Owl	1	Song Sparrow	13
Greater Scaup	2891	Short-eared Owl	1	Swamp Sparrow	22
Lesser Scaup	24	Belted Kingfisher	1	White-throated Sparrow	25
Long-tailed Duck	1	Red-bellied Woodpecker	45	Slate-colored Junco	212
Bufflehead	429	Downy Woodpecker	56	Snow Bunting	150
Common Goldeneye	208	Hairy Woodpecker	8	Northern Cardinal	102
Common Merganser	199	Northern Shrike	3	Eastern Meadowlark	2
Red-breasted Merganser	531	Blue Jay	304	Northern Flicker	13
Bald Eagle	2	American Crow	149	Common Grackle	1
Northern Harrier	53	Common Raven	11	Brown-headed Cowbird	44
Sharp-shinned Hawk	5	Horned Lark	2	Pine Grosbeaks	17
Cooper's Hawk	6	Black-capped Chickadee	229	Purple Finch	25
Red Shouldered Hawk	2	Tufted Titmouse	16	House Finch	47
Red-tailed Hawk	117	Red-breasted Nuthatch	32	White-winged Crossbill	3
Rough-legged Hawk	17	White-breasted Nuthatch	57	Common Redpoll	5
Am. Kestrel	36	Brown Creeper	3	American Goldfinch	229
Wild Turkey	89	Carolina Wren	6	House Sparrow	422
Bonaparte Gull	47	Winter Wren	5		
Ring-billed Gull	165	Golden-crowned Kinglet	15	Total Species	79
				Total Individuals	18,494

Meet The Latest Threat to Ontario's Forests — And It's Lurking Just Offshore

It's quiet, it's deadly, and it's half a kilometre from the Canadian border. And to hear forestry experts tell it, it's a dire threat to Ontario's oak trees.

Oak wilt has been found in Belle Isle, Mich., about 500 metres from the Canadian border. It can infect and kill off every species of oak, says Richard Wilson, a recently retired forest program pathologist with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources.

And no one really knows how to stop it.

To read the rest of the story, go [here](#).



Ontario Nature welcomes a new group to the Nature Network: the [Escarpment Biosphere Conservancy](#). This new member group brings a deep knowledge of the Niagara Escarpment and surrounding areas, and a strong commitment to protecting the region's wildlife and habitats through public outreach and the creation of nature reserves.

Spring edition of [ON Nature](#) is Hot Off the Press

Watch a webinar on nature-based climate solutions hosted by Ontario Nature's Boreal Program Manager, Dr. Julee Boan, and Nature Reserves Manager, Smera Sukumar. They provide an extensive discussion and coverage about climate change solutions. Go [here](#).

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

NATURE

*In nature we never see anything isolated,
but everything in connection with
something else which is before it, beside it,
under it and over it.*

~ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Answers to the Spring Bird Quiz

- ① Eastern Bluebird, ② Osprey, ③ Yellow-rumped Warbler, ④ Pine Siskin, ⑤ Wood Duck, ⑥ Redhead Duck

BOARD OF DIRECTORS' REPORT

The next Board of Directors Meeting will be held on April 26, 2022. The report from this meeting will be in the Summer issue of the Lotus.

The Norfolk Field Naturalists

wishes to recognize with gratitude
the participants in

The Great Canadian Birdathon

for their fundraising efforts on behalf of NFN.

**Betty Chanyi, Peggy McArthur,
Mike McMillan, George Pond, Lisa Timpf,
Anne Wynia**
Thank you!

Welcome New NFN Members

2021 - 2022 Season

Luke and Cindy Haze

Lenora Sawyer

We look forward to meeting you and hope you will participate in and enjoy all the NFN indoor presentations and field outings, once COVID restrictions allow.

Thank You!

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

Salamanders cont'd.

Blue Spotted Jefferson/Complex Salamander

The Blue-Spotted Salamander is a small to medium-sized salamander that has a narrow head and dark black body with bright blue flecks. The long, laterally compressed tail makes up nearly half of the total body length, which ranges between to 5 inches. The blue-spotted salamander can be distinguished from the similar-looking young Jefferson salamander by its narrower head and larger spots. It also uses vernal pools with organic debris. Eggs are deposited singly or sometimes in clusters underneath leaves or at the base of tussocks. It feeds on insects, slugs, worms, and other small invertebrates.

The Jefferson Salamander is a large, gray to brownish-gray salamander with fine markings of light blue to silvery flecks on the limbs, lowers sides, and tail. Adults measure 4–7 inches in total length. The tail is laterally compressed (especially in sexually active males) and is approximately the length of the body. It has distinctively long toes and a stocky build. Males tend to be smaller than females. Larvae have bushy, external gills, and a wide head. They inhabit mature deciduous and mixed deciduous-coniferous forests and woodlands. Vernal pools and shrub swamps are used for breeding and creating egg masses.



Blue-spotted/Jefferson Complex Photo by Leanne Lemaich

Both the Blue-Spotted and the Jefferson Salamanders are members of an intricate group of salamanders known as the *Ambystoma jeffersonianum* complex. The complex consists of two bisexual species, Jefferson Salamander and Blue-spotted Salamander. The unisexual *Ambystoma*, whose populations almost always consist entirely of females, co-occur with local populations of genetically pure Jefferson Salamanders and Blue-spotted Salamanders, and can perpetuate through complicated reproductive mechanisms involving the use of sperm from males of either of those two species. The resulting offspring are unisexual who almost always consist entirely of females. They co-occur with genetically pure Jefferson and Blue-spotted Salamanders and can perpetuate through complicated reproductive mechanisms involving the use of sperm from males of either of those two species. Where the two species overlap, biologists consider

all to be hybrids and that genetic testing is required for true identification. Unisexual *Ambystoma* are very similar in appearance to pure forms of Jefferson Salamander and Blue-spotted Salamander.

Find additional information on the Blue-Spotted/Jefferson Complex salamander [here](#).

Eastern Red-Spotted Newt

The usual life cycle of this species includes three distinct post-hatching stages: (1) aquatic larva, (2) terrestrial (juvenile) eft, and (3) aquatic adult. It frequents small lakes, ponds, and streams or nearby wet forests. It has a lifespan of 12 to 15 years in the wild, and it may grow to 5 in in length.

Egg clusters of 200-400 are attached to submerged aquatic vegetation or fallen leaves in the water. The eggs typically hatch in two to four weeks. In late summer or early fall, aquatic larvae develop into terrestrial juveniles (efts).

Efts have slightly rough, dry skin and are bright orange or red, and sometimes even brownish, in color. After two or three years, the eft completes the second metamorphosis to become aquatic adults, with skin that is dull olive green dorsally, with a dull yellow belly, but retains the eft's characteristic black-rimmed red spots. These spots, and the eft's coloration, are warnings of toxic skin secretions.

The newts can live up to 15 years in the wild.

Find additional information [here](#).



Red-spotted Newt:

Photo by Leanne Lemaich



Salamander Larvae:
Photo by Leanne Lemaich

A video provided by member, Leanne Lemaich, is attached to the email or can be found [here](#).

Upcoming NFN 2022 Spring Events

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

Amazing Parks in the Long Point Biosphere Region

This film is part of the series "Amazing Places" and was filmed and produced by WorkCabin Creative. The Long Point Biosphere Region engaged the services of WorkCabin Creative for a seven-month period to create the cinematic storytelling series at locations across the biosphere region.

To see this video, go [here](#).

The Insane Biology of the Dragonfly

The remarkable biology of the dragonfly makes them incredibly agile in pursuing prey and evading predators. This has to do with having direct flight muscles that allow them to fly in any direction at any time. Despite being considered relatively primitive insects, dragonflies possess some of the most unique and spectacular flight adaptations of any animal, allowing them both to reach fast aerial speeds and be incredibly agile. ... Being able to switch between such a wide variety of flight behaviors and aerial acrobatics is what makes dragonflies such efficient predators when hunting flying insects as well as when evading predators of their own. Want to see fantastic photography which demonstrates this agility, go [here](#).

Crossword Solution

ACROSS: 1 Barn, 6 Canada, 7 Coo, 8 Belt, 10 KEWA, 12 Rail, 14 Down, 17 Red, 18 Scoter, 19 Nest

DOWN: 2 Avocet, 3 Tail, 4 Jay, 5 Palm, 8 Bald, 9 Tern, 11 Vireos, 13 List, 15 Oven, 16 Fox

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.

**CURRENTLY, MEETINGS
ARE HELD ON ZOOM**

NFN Mailing Address

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

Next Lotus Issue:

**Summer 2022
Input deadline:
Friday, May 27, 2022**

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

2021 - 2022 NFN Executive with Contact and Project Information

Email: info@norfolkfieldnaturalists.org

President	Bernie Solymár
Vice-President	Peter Carson
Sanctuary	Peter Carson
Past President	Inga Hinnerichsen
Treasurer	Peter Vaughan
Secretary (Interim)	Inga Hinnerichsen
Director/Membership	Jan Grincevicius
Director Speaker Program and Field Events	Len Grincevicius
Director Publicity	vacant
Director Environment	Cindy Presant
Director-at-large	Judy Boone
Director-at-large	Bernd Mueller
Director-at-large	Madaline Wilson
Lotus Editor (appointed)	Jan Grincevicius
Website Coordinator (appointed)	Lisa Timpf
Butterfly Count (appointed)	Adam Timpf
Christmas Bird Counts (appointed)	Adam Timpf - Woodhouse Count
	Linda Thrower - Fisherville Count
Honorary President	George Pond
Honorary Directors	Anne and Dolf Wynia