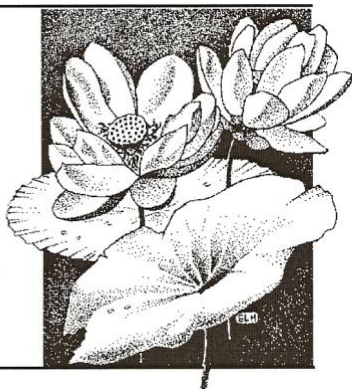


Lotus

NEWSLETTER

of the

NORFOLK FIELD NATURALISTS



APRIL 2023



The Nature of Norfolk — “Henry Enjoys the Long Point Region Conservation Authority Tour”

By Harry B. Barrett (June 18, 1975) [reprinted with permission]

Your scribe was invited to join the annual tour of the Long Point Region Conservation Authority recently and it proved a most informative journey. We visited many of their properties and viewed current projects throughout the watershed. Our first stop was at the Waterford lakes which are man-made and expanding as gravel is removed from well below the water table for that area. They are very popular during vacation time, the newest “lake” to be acquired being to the north of the Thompson Road is obviously a favourite fishing hole.

Because these excavations are supplied with cold water from springs feeding into them, the resultant habitat is ideal for trout on a put and take basis. For the same reason we were told by Authority manager, Dick Hunter, it discourages survival of other species that require water of a warmer temperature. A visit to a modern well planned and equipped workshop followed where John Scott and his crew maintain equipment under superintendent Tom Haskett. The countless attractive signs on red cedar, to be seen on authority properties, are all produced here. We also learned that you and I and every other taxpayer in the watershed collectively spent about \$7,000 last year replacing vandalized property. That is property supplied to make the enjoyment of nature and the out of doors generally available to all of us.

If you wonder why a picnic table or toilet has not been available, or a garbage container supplied at your favourite picnic spot or fishing hole the vandal in our society is the reason. He is a highly mobile, secretive and does his greatest damage under cover of darkness when chances of being caught red-handed are minimal. Should he be caught the sentence levied is rarely a meaningful deterrent.

One has to wonder what is wrong with our society anyway, if at a time when we never had more facilities

provided for our enjoyment than now, we also have a greater apparent disrespect for them and the agencies that are making these amenities available to us? This all led to a philosophical discussion with Elmer McDonnell on the biggest “problem species” nature has had to deal with yet: MAN. We agreed that as kids were not perfect either, but we did not get away with destroying property as the hoodlum element seems to be doing today. We also agreed that the most successful species in point of the period of time they existed on earth were the now extinct dinosaurs. Of course, as Elmer pointed out “They had a very small brain”. At the rate man is going presently, he will not come even close to the dinosaurs ‘record.



Drawing by Liz
Barrett-Milner

Travelling along the second concession of Windham was the next enjoyable part of the tour with wood lots on both sides of the road and the trees and shrubs typical of those found in a damp to swampy hardwood bush. Such areas are “nature’s rain barrels” and essential to maintaining water table levels for prosperous neighbouring farmlands.

Our next stop was at “Bottomless” Lake Hunger, purchased from John Malcolm and more recently named Little Lake. It is about thirty acres in area and is now

Cont’d. on P.6

Why Do Birds Look Different Throughout the Year?

Have you ever wondered why birds look different throughout the year, or how you can spot breeding behaviour? Learn the answers to your questions before the migration season begins!

To learn more from Dr. Kevin McGowan, a renowned ornithologist, go to this [webinar](#).



Goldfinch (male) - Winter Plumage

The 2022 Audubon Photography Awards: Top 12 Videos

The Audubon Photography Awards video category has opened a whole new world to viewers. Here are the top 12 of the most exceptional videos from the hundreds of stunning submissions. [Watch the Top 12 Videos](#).



Northern Flicker – Photo from Wikipedia

Dance Moves for Ducks:

How to Recognize Courtship Displays

See courting ducks in action. These displays are key mating behaviors to look for.

Mallard Head-Pumping: Males and females rhythmically bob their heads. This display is often repeated and followed by mating.

Mallard Head-Up-Tail-Up: With a loud whistle, the drake pulls his wings and tail up, shows off his purple-blue secondaries and compresses his body. This is a quick gesture, often given by males in a group to impress the female.

King Eider Pushing-Reaching: Male places the bill tip close to water with chin close to breast then thrusts head forward.

Common Goldeneye Head-Throw-Kick: Male thrusts his head forward, then lowers head backward with his bill pointed up and utters a single call. Afterward he thrusts his head quickly forward, sometimes kicking water with his feet.

Red-breasted Merganser Salute-Curtsy: Crest is quickly lowered and head dropped to just above water, then neck is stretched up forming a straight line; chest and neck then dropped into the water and tail is tucked under.

To see these moves, watch a short video [here](#).



Mallard (male)

Spring Insect Quiz



Answers on Page 8

Grow Me Instead – Invasive Plant Species

To help stop the spread of invasive plants, there is a guide that describes both the invasive species of a plant, plus the recommended native plant alternatives. This information has been prepared by the Horticulture Outreach Collective, a committee of the Ontario Invasive Plant Council. This really good resource covers groundcovers, wildflowers and grasses; trees and shrubs; vines; and aquatics. See this informative guide [here](#).



Periwinkle

Mottled Duskywing Butterfly

Over the past decade, many populations of Mottled Duskywing have disappeared across Ontario and those remaining are thought to be in decline.

Nature Conservancy of Canada is working to restore them to their historical range by monitoring, initiating a captive rearing program, and reintroducing to new areas. This includes NCCs Backus Block in Norfolk County.

Emily Trendos is an NCC Weston Family Conservation Science Fellow studying the Mottled Duskywing.

To learn more about this research and watch a short video, go [here](#).



Photo from Cambridge Butterfly Conservatory

Why Chickadees Grab Seeds and Go

When watching the birds at your feeder, you might notice that some birds, like Black-capped Chickadees, typically grab a seed and fly to a nearby perch to enjoy it. Other birds like finches tend to stay and eat. Find out more about birds and their feeder strategies [in this video](#).



Photo by Jan Grincevicius

Can Trees Actually Talk to Each Other? New Research Suggests an Alternative Idea

In recent years, naturalists all around the world have fallen in love with the “wood wide web” — a vast network of mycorrhizal fungi that attach to the roots of trees.

Proponents of the hypothesis believe these mycorrhizal fungi networks facilitate the exchange of nutrients and water between multiple trees — sometimes across species — in a forest ecosystem.

But in a recent paper published in the journal *Nature Ecology & Evolution*, researchers shatter the most popular claims underpinning the wood wide web, saying they are “largely disconnected from evidence.” Further, the researchers believe existing scientific literature is biased toward citing the positive effects of such mycorrhizal networks.

To read more, go [here](#).



Photo by Jan Grincevicius

Species in Focus

Pumpkinseed (*Lepomis gibbosus*)

Part of the sunfish family, the Pumpkinseed is native to eastern North America.

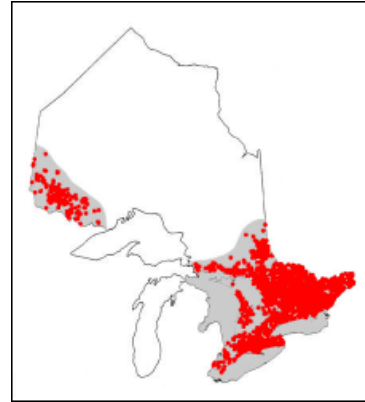
Identifying Features

The Pumpkinseed is a very deep-bodied, laterally compressed, almost disk-like fish. The fish's breast and belly are orange to red-orange, and its back and sides are brown to olive. Its sides and back are speckled with orange, yellow, blue, and emerald spots. Length: 18-23 centimetres (7-9 inches); weight: 0.2 kilograms (0.4 pounds)



Ontario Range

Widespread and abundant, north to Lake Temagami.



Habitat

The Pumpkinseed is usually found in quiet, slower moving streams, in the waters of small lakes or ponds, and in the shallow weedy bays of larger lakes. It prefers clear water and areas with submerged vegetation or brush. Pumpkinseeds can be found in large aggregations and often make up the largest portion of the fish population in small, warm bodies of water.

Feeding

The species consumes amphibians and small fish. The diet of these fish is flexible.

Reproduction

Spawning season is May to August with nursery habitats being lacustrine (in a lake) or riverine (in a river).

Learn to Identify 35+ Warblers by Song

Learn how to identify 37 Warblers by song with tips and mnemonic devices. These are the most common warblers you will encounter in the Central and Eastern United States and Ontario. Badgerland Birding does a great job.

Go [here](#).



Kentucky Warbler Photo by George Pond

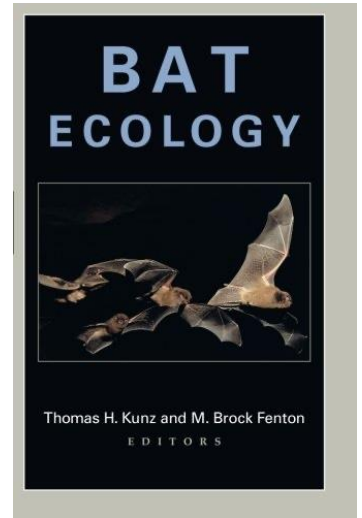
One of My Recent Favourite Readings

by Jeffrey Hiebert

Bat Ecology – Thomas H. Kunz and M. Brock Fenton, Editors. Published by University of Chicago Press, 2003

Bats are fascinating, and I learned a lot about them from this book. Because of the book's focus on Ecology, there was no real overview of Bats as a group which would have been nice for myself to have some sort of general idea before diving into specifics. Not a fault of the book, just something to note if you're unfamiliar with bats from a scientific point of view. The chapters are each written by different authors and cover a wide range of topics, and as such there were excellent and enjoyable chapters (for myself the chapter on Roosting sites and the chapter on Pollination were particularly fascinating) and some chapters that were less so. Not a fault of the book, but my personal point of view and knowledge base left me struggling through the chapters on Sperm Competition

and Patterns of Range Size. Those two chapters in particular felt like specific scientific studies rather than reviews of a subject area which the other chapters felt like. In summary, while my feelings on the book are mixed (partly because of the multi-author design), the interest I have in Bats has been increased by reading this book and I have certainly learned a lot about some of the diverse ecologies that bats have around the world, while still wanting more.



“Henry Enjoys the Long Point Region” cont. from p.1

known to be about forty-five feet deep. Next came Teeterville, the Lehman dam, Deer Creek and then Abigail Becker Park. Lunch was enjoyed on the verandah of the beautifully restored Backus home to the gentle drumming of raindrops overhead. A curious bluebird looked us over as we wrestled with our succulent repast. Highlight of this stop was the first official turning of the newly installed water wheel at the historic Backhouse Mill.

Though a warm, gentle rain continued throughout the afternoon, it failed to dampen the spirits of the group. We visited the Port Royal Waterfowl Sanctuary which is over 600 acres in extent, the Fisher property of 143 acres and the Vittoria mill pond property with the trout and salmon spawning beds. These three areas are of special significance to the naturalist as they preserve the natural habitat for ducks and geese at Port Royal, trout and upland game at Fisher's and fish spawning habitat at Vittoria. Any of the areas visited are worth an hour to a day-long sojourn for anyone interested in the out of doors.

My thanks and congratulations to Chairman, Roy Smith, and to Myrna Rutherford, Tom Haskett and Dick Hunter, who organized the tour so efficiently to say nothing of providing me with a topic for this

week's meanderings. My regular artist/illustrator Liz Barrett is back on the job with the “Backhouse Bluebirds”.

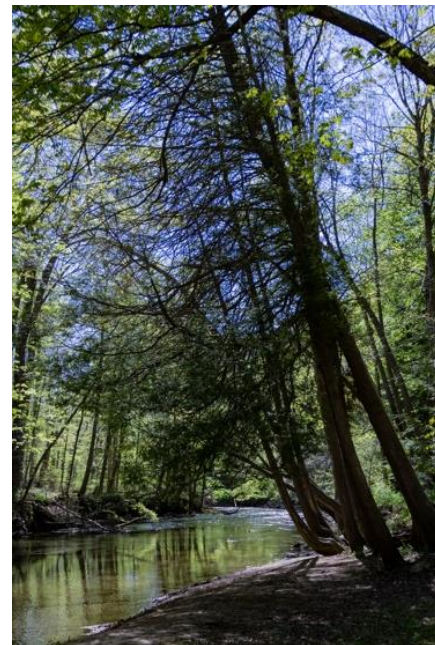


Photo by Jan Grincevicius

Protecting Lands and Waters

Canada is one of the 189 countries committed to protecting 30 percent of our lands and waters by 2030. To reach these targets, we all need to work together and with urgency, especially in Ontario, where less than 11% of land and water is protected.

Watch this [video](#) to see what Ontario Nature is doing to protect land across Ontario.

Youth Council Member Earns Environmentalist Award

Clara Brown, a member of Ontario Nature's Youth Council, was recognized as one of 2022's Top 25 Environmentalists Under 25 from Starfish Canada. Clara is the sixth Youth Council member to be recognized with the award, which celebrates and rewards young leaders creating positive change in their communities. Among other things, Clara is a youth advocate, coder, artist and STEM ambassador. She has been on the Youth Council for two years and has received several awards for her leadership, advocacy, teamwork and volunteer service.

View all the winners [here](#).

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

ontarionature.org

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, Mike McMillan

and George Pond

Thank you!

Thank You!

From Norfolk Field Naturalists to

Will & Morgan Partridge

Guardian Computing

For hosting our website

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

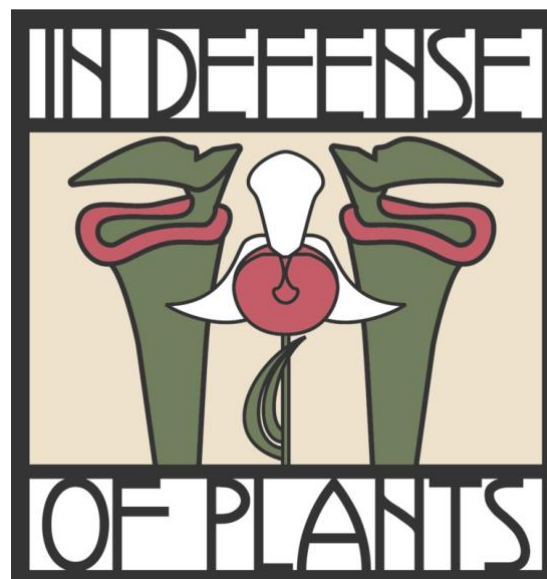
The next BoD Meeting will be held on April 18, 2023. The report from this meeting will be in the Summer issue of the Lotus.

In Defense of Plants Podcast

Matt Candeias, PhD. is an ecologist, author and podcaster.

He was born and raised in the forests of northeastern North America. His earliest days were spent exploring the woods, looking for fossils, and trying to raise fish and insects. Then one day he discovered the amazing world of plants and that was it. Realizing that plants set the foundation for all forms of life on this planet, he has dedicated his life to understanding and conserving them.

His research largely focuses on the myriad dynamics that shape the abundances and distributions of plants and the communities they comprise. Specifically, he aims to do work that can help improve plant conservation efforts. Growing and propagating plants is a true passion of his and he tries to involve these activities in both his professional and personal life as much as possible.



To listen to the podcasts, go [here](#).

Upcoming NFN 2023 Spring Events

Details for each event will be emailed about two weeks in advance.

April 14 at 6:30 p.m. —

Timberdoodle Hike

April 29 at 8:30 p.m. —

Astronomy Night

Folk in the Forest Fridays

April 28 at 8:00 a.m. — Early

Birds at Backus

May 5 at 9:00 a.m. — Signs

of Spring at Backus

May 12 at 8:00 a.m. —

Spring Migrants at Backus

May 26 at 10:00 a.m. —

Ephemeral Wildflowers at Backus

June 2 at 10:00 a.m. —

Nature Hike at Trout Creek

June 23 at 10:00 a.m. —

Butterfly Safari at Delhi

Waterfowl Centre

Spring Insect Quiz Answers:

1. White-margined Burrower Bug (*Sehirus cinctus*) – Photo from Wikipedia
2. Firefly Larva (Lampyridae) – Photo by Melvyn Yeo
3. Woolly Alder Aphid (*Paraprodipylus tessellatus*)
4. Small Honey Ant (*Prenolepis imparis*) – Photo by Greg Hume
5. Modest Masked Bee (*Hylaeus modestus*) – Photo by M. Veit
6. Mining Bee (Subgenus *Melandrena*) – Photo by Kurt Hennige
7. Rove Beetle (*Philonthus*) – Photo by M. Erbland
8. Raspberry Cane Borer Moth (*Pennisetia marginata*) – Photo by Maryam Sultan

NFN Meetings

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

Meetings take place at the **Simcoe Recreation Centre, 182 South Drive, Simcoe**. 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 2023
Input deadline:
Friday, May 26, 2023**

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

2022 - 2023 NFN Executive with Contact and Project Information

Email: info@norfolkfieldnaturalists.org

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Vice-President

Peter Carson

Sanctuary

Peter Carson

Past President

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Luke Haze

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