



[www.kwfn.ca](http://www.kwfn.ca)

## **The Heron** **Dec 2013 - Jan 2014**

**Upcoming Club Meeting:**  
**December 9, 2013 7:00 pm**

**Wing 404/Rotary Centre, Dutton Dr.,  
Waterloo  
VISITORS WELCOME**

### **January 27, 2014 Meeting**

#### **Speaker: Mark Nash, Director, The Canadian Peregrine Foundation**

The Canadian Peregrine Foundation is a Federally Chartered Canadian Registered Charity (a non-profit group) dedicated to the restoration and recovery of endangered and threatened raptors (birds of prey) here in Canada. Mark Nash will be talking about the Canadian Peregrine Foundation (CPF), the organization's humble beginnings, and some of the work that they have been doing over the past 17 years. Mark will discuss the Peregrine falcon's status here in Ontario and Canada, national recovery efforts, past and present and current status. He will also be bringing at least two live Peregrine falcons, (a young male named "Nova", and a young female named "Cheyenne" – (two of the 17 in-house CPF educational birds). He may also bring a very special visitor, (an eastern North American Barn owl, named "Shammy"), another one of CPF's feathered educators.

'Baby Nova'

### **Celebration of Nature** **December 9, 2013** **7:00 pm to 9:30 pm**

This will be an *informal* gathering highlighting nature and celebrating our common interests, our friendships and the beauty of our world!! This will be our chance to relax and socialize while looking at one another's collections.

This is not intended to be a dinner! We are asking our members to provide either a dessert or appetizer, only. I am encouraging our members to consider bringing a locally sourced dessert and/or appetizer. Also, fair-trade, bird-friendly, shade grown coffee will be provided! Tea and punch will also be available.

Do not forget to bring your own cutlery (forks, knives), mugs and cloth or paper napkins.

We will have access to 20-25 tables with which to display your nature related collections. So reserve your table ASAP!!

This can be anything from art, leaf presses, butterflies, insects, birds, literary collections, photography, nature related collections and environmentally responsible creations, you name it! We want to see it! You can either sign-up for a table on the reservation sheet (available at general meetings in October and November) or e-mail me your request to myself (April) : [amorrissey@golden.net](mailto:amorrissey@golden.net) or call 519-696-3677

**Everyone is welcome.**



### **Mark Your Calendars**

#### **January 27**

Mark Nash, Director, Peregrine Foundation

#### **February 24**

Peter Rasberry - slide show presentation highlighting the beauty and complexity of our fragile planet

#### **March 24**

David Brewer- Penguins

#### **April 28**

Sheila Colla, The Bumble Bee Decline

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Restrict submissions to a  
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<http://kitchener.ca/en/livinginkitchener/KitchenerNaturalAreasProgram.asp>

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## **K-W Field Naturalists 2013/2014 Young Naturalist Program**

### **Who Are We?**

We are a club sponsored by the K-W Field Naturalists to encourage kids to enjoy nature. It's a great place for kids (7-12 years of age) to get together, share exciting nature experiences and stories, and learn more about our amazing local environment. The programs will be held at the Laurel Creek Nature Centre, and will take place on Saturday mornings from 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon unless otherwise announced ahead of time.

**Contact: Shailyn Drukis at**  
[shailyn.drukis@gmail.com](mailto:shailyn.drukis@gmail.com)

**Sat Jan. 25 – Snowshoeing**  
**Sat. Feb. 22 – Shelter Building**  
**Sat. March 29 – Sugar Shack**  
**Sat. April 26 – Salamander Hike**  
**Sat. May 24 – Bats and Moths**

### **Winter Weather Notice**

In the situation where a winter storm may arise, please tune to 105.3 Kool FM or 99.5KFUN for meeting cancellation notices. Weather cancellations should also be provided on their websites. Information will also be available on our website [www.kwfn.ca](http://www.kwfn.ca).

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## Outings and Events Schedule

### December/January Outings

By this time of the year, the trees are bare and most southern migration is over. Some south bound birds will continue to straggle in; especially Snowy Owls. It is a good time to be out and enjoy clear, crisp air. I hope many of you avail yourselves of these volunteers; they make the club run.

#### Ontario Reformatory – Guelph Pond & Speed River

**Date:** Tues November 26 at 9:30 am

**Meeting Location:** Steve's TV in the Frederick St. Plaza in Kitchener (corner of Frederick and Edna St.)

**Leaders:** Jim Lackenbauer 519-893-2815 and Janice Bock – [traveljb@hotmail.com](mailto:traveljb@hotmail.com)

We will look for various waterfowl on the O.R. Pond and along the river on this new outing behind the Reformatory. We will circle part of the pond and walk along the Guelph Hiking Trail beside the river. Back in Kitchener by noon. **Dress for the weather.** RSVP to one of the leaders please.

#### Niagara and Area Gulls

**Date:** Sat November 30 at 8:00 am

**Meeting Location:** Fountain Street carpool area

**Leaders:** The Burrells 519-699-4695

Join us for an all day outing to the Hamilton and Niagara River area as we search for gulls and other waterfowl. It is always cold so wear layers of warm clothing and good boots.

Bring a lunch, binoculars, scopes and field guides. Walkie-talkies may come in handy also.

It will be a good day; lots of birds and tiring.

#### Christmas Bird Count – Learn the Basics

**Date:** Saturday, December 7<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 am

**Meeting Location:** Parking lot of Doon Presbyterian Church (with permission) at 35 Roos St., Kitchener, (off Old Mill Rd. in Doon).

**Leader:** Neil Taylor 519-893-6469

The annual Christmas Bird Count for Kitchener will take place on December 15<sup>th</sup>. New participants are needed to complete this census and make it successful. If you would like to take part in the count but are unsure of what's involved, then join Neil to learn the basics and gain self-confidence to volunteer for this year's CBC. Dress warmly and bring your binoculars, field guide, notepad, and pen/pencil. Neil confesses that he is also using this outing as a means of scouting out his area for rare birds in advance of the count itself. You may register for the CBC in advance of this event. Sturdy hiking footwear is suggested. (3 hours)

### 79th Kitchener Christmas Bird Count

The 2013 installment of the Kitchener CBC will be held **Saturday, December 14, 2013.**

Especially wanted are new feeder counters within the circle. New field participants are also welcome. Anyone interested in participating should contact Mike Burrell

([mike.burrell.on@gmail.com](mailto:mike.burrell.on@gmail.com)) as far in advance as possible. Regular participants should expect to be contacted in late November.

### Cambridge Christmas Bird Count

The 114th Christmas Bird Count (CBC) is quickly approaching. The Cambridge CBC will be held on **Sunday, December 15th**. Last year was a record breaker, but so were the two before that... what will this year bring? For those long time participants look to your email shortly for more information. If you enjoy watching birds and would like to participate, new volunteers are always welcome. If you are interested in participating please contact Levi Moore ([Levicmoore1@gmail.com](mailto:Levicmoore1@gmail.com)). For more information about what a Christmas Bird Count is all about check out: <http://birds.audubon.org/christmas-bird-count>"

### 8th Linwood Christmas Bird Count

The date for this Christmas Bird Count will be **Saturday, December 28, 2013**. Anyone interested in participating in this count, please contact Ken Burrell ( [kenard89@hotmail.com](mailto:kenard89@hotmail.com) )

#### Laurel Creek Nature Centre

**Date:** Sat January 11, 2014 at 9:00 am

**Meeting Location:** entrance to Laurel Creek Nature Centre on Beaver Creek Road in Waterloo

**Leader:** Dale Ingrey 519-884-3667

Join Dale for a leisurely Saturday morning hike through the fields and woods around the nature centre property. Last year we had 30 cm of fresh snow- who knows what this year will bring? We'll look for fresh animal tracks, try our hand at winter tree identification, and also do some winter birding. Bring some seed for the chickadees, your binoculars, field guides, and a drink for this approximately 2 hour outing. Be sure to dress appropriately for the weather. If time permits we'll check out the wooded area on the other side of Beaver Creek Road where the wild turkeys hang out.

#### Citizen Science at the F.W.R.Dickson – 20 years of studying Chickadees

**Date:** Sunday, January 19, 2014 at 10:30 am

**Meeting Location:** Parking lot of the Dickson Wilderness

**Leader:** Levi Moore [levicmoore1@gmail.com](mailto:levicmoore1@gmail.com)

Come to the Dickson for a morning of winter bird banding and hand feeding Black-capped Chickadees. The Dickson Chickadees have been colour banded for years, school groups use the colour leg bands to identify individuals and help study the birds' behavior. Why not join us at Dickson, hear about what we have discovered and learn how you can help?

#### Mill Run Trail Cambridge

**Date:** Wednesday, Jan. 22, 2014 at 9:30 am

**Meeting Location:** The Mill Run Trail parking lot where Clemens Ave meets Sheffield St in Cambridge. (Clemens Ave can be accessed from Fishermills Rd. Fishermills is an continuation of Maple Grove Rd which is an extension of Sportsworld Dr)

**Leader:** Marco DeBruin 519-658-5372

Join Marco for a Leisurely morning walk along the Mill Run (Riverbank Trail). This trail follows the Speed River past a variety of habitats. The trail is fairly level and has some boardwalk sections along its length.

We should be able to see a good variety of winter water fowl along with other birds. Beavers and muskrat have also been seen along this trail.

Some of the existing boardwalks have been improved, but, be prepared for some icy sections along the trail.

**Wellesley Birding Tour****Date: Sunday, January 26, 2014 at 8:30 am (We should be finished by noon.)****Meeting Location:** Beechwood Plaza ( corner closest to Erb & Fisher-Hallman )**Leaders: Jim & Ken Burrell 519-699-4695**

Join us for a morning drive around the countryside of Wellesley and Peel townships. We will be searching for over wintering raptors and whatever else flies in our faces.

The Huron Fringe Birding Festival is a birding and nature event which runs for two four-day weekends (between May 23 and June 1). Registration begins February 1, 2014 at

<http://www.friendsofmacgregor.org>

Follow our blog:

<http://huronfringefest.wordpress.com>



Peter Russell, former Curator of the Earth Sciences Museum at the University of Waterloo, explains the origin and composition of this boulder on the Baden Hills (kames) to fifteen field naturalists on our Oct. 17th outing.

Submitted by: Jim Cappleman



## Membership Report By Carol Foxall

As of November 10<sup>th</sup> 122 memberships, representing 181 individuals, have been renewed for the 2013-2014 membership year. 58 memberships have not yet renewed and have been sent renewal notices. Memberships not renewed by Nov 21<sup>st</sup> will be removed from our mail and email lists and will not receive the December/January issue of the Heron.

You can help enhance our membership numbers by encouraging your member friends to renew their memberships. You can also help by encouraging others to attend our meetings and become members.

### ***Welcome New Members!***

Larry and Doris Park  
Shayne Sangster  
Scott Slocombe  
and returning member Doug Brock

### ***Thank you to our Donors***

Brenda Bradley  
Jennifer Clayfield and Robert Oswald  
Jo-Anne Harris  
Valerie Hill  
Kelly Holdaway  
Marion Kelterborn  
Margaret Macdonald  
Marg Pare  
Jeff Schnurr  
Dilan and Meghan Singaraja  
Linda Sloka

## Board of Directors Meeting Update:

The following matters were discussed at the Board of Directors Meeting on November 4th:

- Update on 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary planning.
- Donation to the Bruce Trail Conservancy for the purchase of land
- Volunteer needed to write-up summaries for the club meetings
- Updates to program director procedures and responsibilities
- Young Naturalist club update
- Volunteers needed for the December meeting, club outings and other events.

### **SANCTUARY FUND -- Donation to Bruce Trail Conservancy Submitted by Graham Macdonald**

At the May 2013 KWFN Club meeting you, the members, overwhelmingly supported the Board's proposal to make a donation to the Bruce Trail Foundation (BTC). The land purchase campaign to be supported by KWFN was at the discretion of the Board. At the time, BTC were in the throes of fund raising for the purchase of the Cedar Highlands property, 40 acres of hardwood forest in the Hockley Valley. That property has since been secured.

The current fund raising is for the Nature Reserves Campaign 2013, consisting of three properties totaling 232 acres in the Owen Sound, Thornbury, and Singhampton areas of the Niagara Escarpment. Your Board has made a \$10,000 donation to this campaign from the KWFN Sanctuary Fund. An added incentive for this decision is the matching donation for the first \$200,000 by the Gosling Foundation, thus doubling the value of our donation.

Details of the properties can be found on the Bruce Trail Conservancy web site at this link: <http://brucetrail.org/pages/land-conservation/nature-reserves-2013>. We hope that our members will visit these properties in the years to come, as the Bruce Trail is routed through these areas.

A big "Thank you" to all who have donated to the Sanctuary Fund. Approximately \$15,000 remains uncommitted in the fund, plus the \$10,000 reserved for Hidden Valley, should an opportunity develop in the next few years.

## **The President's Corner By Graham Macdonald**

### **Are we under siege?**

There are times, more frequent as I age, that I think we are under siege by the Dark Side. No, not led by Darth Vader, but by the secretive denizens of global corporate and government offices. Every day I receive appeals to sign on to petitions: to save wolves, to prevent sonar from destroying sea mammals, to ban undersea arctic oil drilling, to plug pipelines, to ..... The list is endless. The difficulty is that usually neither side is telling the whole truth; only the convenient truth. To make an informed decision is incredibly time consuming, a situation that often leads me towards a response that is either emotional or idealistic, neither of which are necessarily logical. The result is often polarization of the issue and an inability of the two sides to discuss

rationally and negotiate solutions; black and white becomes the order of the day, leading to public protest, civil disobedience, more secrecy, more distrust.

The KWFN Board receives many of the same appeals for support – the most recent being the Enbridge Line 9 issue, the Ontario Nature campaign to restore the Endangered Species Act to its original strength, and the ruling by the OMB to overturn the Region's updated Official Plan in regards to densification of development. These are somewhat more local issues, but nevertheless they have wide ranging implications for Ontario, Canada and the planet, since they all will have an impact in one way or another on the quality of the environment, and dare I say it, climate change.

The Board has decided to support both the Ontario Nature ESA campaign and the Region's appeal of the OMB decision. We think the issues are relatively

clear-cut. The Board has not supported the Line 9 opposition because the technical aspects of the flow reversal and possible change of product are clearly insufficiently established (by either side), and the unfortunate fact remains that Canada's oil will get to market somehow. If it doesn't, we will have some very cold homes and dim lights. How to determine the least harmful way to satisfy our needs (and greeds?) is cause for my feeling of being under siege.

Regardless of our troubling times, which are really not so terrible compared to others in the world, I do wish you all a warm, safe and loving time with family and friends as the politically correct Holiday Season envelops us.

**Please join us on December 9<sup>th</sup>  
for the KWFN Christmas Social  
"Celebration of Nature".**

### **Ontario's Environmental Bill of Rights and You**

The Environmental Commissioner of Ontario has just published a guide to the Environmental Bill of Rights (EBR). Since 1994, this legislation has guaranteed Ontarians a degree of access to environmental information and a voice in environmental decision-making. It's an important tool for all of us: for environment and for democracy. People in Ontario have legal rights and formal procedures for participation. "Ontario's Environmental Bill of Rights and You" is a step-by-step guide to how to participate. It tells you what you are entitled to access, and how to do this, as well as how to make your voice known as an individual, or on behalf of a group like KWFN.

The guide has an overview of the EBR, a description of how the EBR works, including the Environmental Registry to which all environmental items requiring opportunity for public input must be posted. Another section informs the public about how to exercise EBR rights. There is a list of relevant postal, phone and web contacts, and sample documents. A further appendix has the application forms for environmental review and environmental investigation.

If you want to be more involved in the Ontario public process, then this is the guide for you! The process covers all items that should be on the Environmental Registry – Like matters about the endangered species act, Provincial Park Planning, forest management on crown lands. The Environmental Registry is at :

<http://www.ebr.gov.on.ca/ERS-WEB-External/>

Note, however, that this guide does not address municipal or federal matters, except where there is provincial involvement. Nor does it constitute a legal advice manual.

You can obtain a paper copy from the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario at 1074 Bay St. , Suite 605, Toronto ON M5S 2B1, or you can download a pdf file at:

<http://www.eco.on.ca/uploads/EBR%20Documents/The%20EBR%20and%20You%202013.pdf>



By Fraser Gibson

### Announcing Ontario Nature's Annual Gathering and AGM

Join old friends and meet new ones at Ontario Nature's Annual Gathering at YMCA Geneva Park on the weekend of June 20th – 22nd. Adopted as our logo 25 years ago to symbolize the environment, we will celebrate the common loon. The weekend will feature presentations, hands-on workshops and a guided tour of the largest of our nature reserves, the 470-hectare Altberg Wildlife Sanctuary. For more information, contact

[laurenw@ontarionature.org](mailto:laurenw@ontarionature.org)

### Report on the Great Lakes West Regional Meeting

KWFN was well represented at the recent meeting hosted by the Saugeen FN in Formosa. Graham and Marg Macdonald, David Gascoigne and Mary Ann Vanden Elzen participated along with myself at the meeting.

ON continues with its Nature Guardian program, enriching the lives of Ontario teens and fostering tomorrow's environmental leaders.

One of their events was a Nature Connections camping trip designed for secondary school aged youth who are relative newcomers to Canada. Approximately 28 youth camped in Rouge Park where they not only explored nature but also learned how to camp. The attendees represented eighteen countries/languages from across the globe.

The ON supported ALUS (Alternative Land Use Services) has spread from Norfolk into 4 new areas: Grey-Bruce, Bayham Twsp, Caledon and the united counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry.

ON is currently working on a Natural Heritage Systems Protection document. This municipal planning guide is being developed to help citizens encourage their local municipality to integrate Natural Heritage Systems planning into their Official Plans.

ON's Reptile and Amphibian Atlas staff have processed 180 000 records in 5 years which is more than twice as many records as available prior to the atlas launch. Their goal is to have all areas, especially in southern Ontario, well covered in the

next three years. One half of all data to date has been for Spring Peepers!

ON's Lost Bay Nature Reserve (NE of Gananoque) is currently two separate properties, totaling 388 acres, which are the home to at least 23 species at risk. Staff is working on the purchase of an additional 100-acre property that will join the nature reserve as one large unit. This new property is also very significant as it is the likely home of 18 species at risk! ON welcomes all donations.

Over the past summer, ON conducted a very successful Massasauga Rattlesnake Myth Busting program on the Bruce Peninsula. This misunderstood species is often killed along with its look alikes the milk and water snakes. The program successfully educated and changed public opinion on this maligned species.

Other clubs continue with important projects as well. Some interesting tidbits gained from other clubs follow:

- A new Grey-Bruce Bird Checklist will soon be available courtesy of a cooperative venture of the Owen Sound FN, Huron Fringe FN and Saugeen FN.
- Saugeen FN are holding their monthly meetings in different communities in an attempt to grow their membership.
- The Huron Fringe FN have been heavily involved for a number of years with both a Wood Turtle recovery program (52 young turtles were released this spring) and Queen Snake research, both on reaches of the Maitland River.
- The Guelph FN have officially changed their name to Nature Guelph.

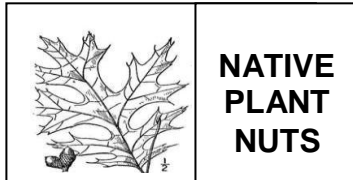
### New Mourning Dove Hunt in Ontario

The Canadian Wildlife Service quietly authorized a new mourning dove hunt in southern and central Ontario, beginning in early September and lasting until mid-November. The daily bag limit is 15 birds, while a hunter can have up to 45 in his or her possession at any one time. Ontario Nature is opposed to the hunt on the grounds that there was inadequate consultation with stakeholders and the rationale for opening the hunt, which has been closed since the 1950s, is weak.

### Sign a Petition to Save Ostrander Point

The Prince Edward County Field Naturalists have created a petition in response to the outrageous challenge by the Ministry of the Environment and Gilead Power Corp. to the Environmental Review Tribunal's decision to protect Ostrander Point's at risk species from industrial wind development. Stand up for Blanding's turtles and all of the South Shore's vulnerable species and habitats by signing the petition. [Click here to sign the petition](#)

## Our Native Holly By Wayne Buck



On November 6, 2013, I was hiking the Bruce Trail in the Owen Sound area near Inglis Falls with Ken and Fraser.

Inglis Falls and Jones Falls were truly spectacular sights with all of the rain we've had lately. I was hiking alone and watching for the many species of ferns known to grow in the area when I came across a shrub that took a minute for me to recognize in that I had not seen this species for some time. It was Oregon grape holly; (*Mahonia aquifolium*) which as I understand is not a holly but is in the *Berberidaceae* (barberry) genus and is named for its holly-shaped leaves; no doubt a garden escapee.

There are hundreds of species of holly (genus *Ilex*) world-wide with several native to North America, although most grow farther south. Species such as Possum Haw (*I. decidua*); Inkberry (*I. glabra*); and Serviceberry (Sarvis) Holly (*I. amelanchier*) are among the members of this genus. American Holly (*I. opaca*) which grows along the eastern coast of the U.S. is the only native holly that has the prickly spines on the tips of its leaves similar to the English Holly. English Holly (*Ilex aquifolia*), the one we associate with Christmas, has been introduced to N.A. from Europe and has become naturalized in Ontario along with the aforementioned Oregon grape holly.

There are 2 *Ilex* species native to Ontario: Winterberry (*I. verticillata*) and Mountain Holly (*I. mucronatus*). Both are listed as S5 meaning that they are not rare in Ontario although I personally know of only 2 populations of Winterberry and have never seen Mountain Holly in any of my travels. Winterberry likes to grow in wet areas or areas that are under water in the spring. It's one of the deciduous hollies, shedding its leaves in the fall, unlike some of the other hollies. As the leaves turn colour and fall, the pea-sized scarlet red berries become more visible. The berries are a favourite of birds. Any berries that are left at the end of winter are soon polished off by migrants returning in the spring when food is scarce. Mountain Holly is found from Newfoundland to Minnesota growing in cool, moist, rocky woods and bogs. It is an erect shrub 1.0 m to 3.0 m tall, bearing dull red pea-sized berries, and like Winterberry, drops its leaves in autumn.

Winterberry and Mountain Holly are unlikely choices for most native plant gardens, given their need for wet conditions, but the bright red fruit make them outstanding additions both as a source of colour and a source of food for birds in winter. If you plan to grow Winterberry or Mountain Holly, you will need at least two plants, preferably more because members of the Holly genus are dioecious bearing male and female flowers on separate plants. You will need a male plant to produce the pollen to fertilize the female's flowers so that the bright red berries will be produced. The flowers on the male plants are very small but are, nonetheless very attractive to the insects that carry the pollen in the spring. One male plant can produce enough pollen for 10 females. Bushes can grow to be 2-3m tall. They will grow in sun to light shade conditions and prefer moist to wet acidic soil. Winterberry is difficult to grow from seed, being doubly dormant or taking 2 years for the seeds to germinate after fall planting. I have grown only 2 plants despite planting many seeds but Ontario nurseries carry it although you would likely be getting a cultivar, not the native variety. It's such a beautiful shrub that I will keep on trying to grow it from locally collected seed.

## NORTHERN RIVER OTTERS at *rare* By Bill Wilson

On 27 October 2013, I observed a family (3) of Northern River Otter (*Lontra canadensis*) along and on the shoreline of *rare* Charitable Research Reserve about 300m upstream of the confluence of the Grand and Speed rivers. This sighting represents my first record of otter on the Grand River, specifically within a 3-km radius of the confluence where I have observed and documented wildlife observations regularly and frequently since 1971. I spotted the otters while I was observing and recording early arrivals of wintering waterfowl. Details of this sighting, together with comments and photo of site location are on record with MNR and *rare*.

No records of Northern River Otter were documented in *The Atlas of the Mammals of Ontario* (Dobbyn, 1994) for the entire Grand River Watershed. Campbell and Dagg (1972) and Campbell et al. (1997) cite historical records for both Waterloo and Wellington Counties – primarily the latter – including evidence from Wilmot Township about 1830. Otters were present in north Wellington into early 1900s. By 1923, well-known naturalist J. Dewey Soper, who had spent his early naturalist years in both Wellington and Waterloo Counties, considered Northern River Otter “very rare if still surviving” there (Campbell and Dagg, 1972; Dalton, 2010).

*Bill's article continues on Page 11...Editor*



### **Bald Faced Wasps (*Dolichovespula maculata*)**

**By Anne Morgan**

Now that our trees are bare, it is possible to spot the very large, often basketball sized, nests of the bald faced wasps (also called hornets). These nests high up in trees usually have twigs or leaves incorporated into them. They are enclosed nests with one or two entry points on the bottom.

Bald face wasps are large (2-3 cm long) black insects with pale yellow/white markings on their head and at the end of their abdomen. They are not aggressive unless the nest is disturbed. They are mostly predacious on other insects such as yellow jackets, caterpillars, and other insect larvae, although they also feed on nectar, tree sap and fruit pulp.

The mated queens emerge from their overwintering sites in early spring and start building the papery nest from chewed up wood mixed with starch in their saliva. This mixture is spread around with their legs and mandibles and dries into a papery substance which is actually a very beautiful material when seen in detail. Once a few cells are constructed the queen will lay some eggs and feed the larvae until a sufficient number of workers are developed and can take over food gathering and the care of the new larvae. The queen then continues to only lay eggs throughout the summer. In the late summer or early fall the queen will lay fertile female and male eggs. The mated females are the future queens and will search for overwintering sites while the rest of the colony will die off after frost. The nest is then left empty and no longer used, so there is little to be gained by destroying these nests in the summer unless they are close to areas where people may disturb them.



### **Waxing and Waning** **By Nicole Keshav**

My three house cats were lined up, looking out the window with rapt attention. A flurry of activity turned out to be a flock of elegant Cedar Waxwings feeding on the little blue berries covering a thirty-foot cedar out back. The birds' frenetic activity made it a challenge to take a picture, but the feeding frenzy was a reminder of how rare it is to see large numbers of a single species at a time. There were bluejays and starlings in the mix, I noted, but dozens and dozens of cedar waxwings dominated. With their sleek appearance, red highlights on the wingtips, brilliant yellow tail tips and black masks, they were a beautiful sight!

Why don't I see this more often, I wondered. Great flocks of native songbirds were once common, as many of us have read. Habitat loss is a major problem, of course, but I was recently surprised to learn that cats account for a larger number of bird deaths than wind mills or even window collisions. That is a reminder to keep our cats indoors, if possible, or at least put bells on their collars. I'm hoping that a flock of cedar waxwings will be a common sight for future generations.



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In 1962 and 1971, Campbell and Dagg received reports "by several competent observers" of otters "at their slides on the banks of the Grand River and at plunge holes in the ice". GRCA also documented slides and tracks in 1996 in Wellington County (Campbell et al. 1997). Greg Michalenko and Carroll Klein observed an otter upstream of Conestoga in early fall about 2005. Greg also verified an otter sighting from a photo taken in Bechtel Park in or about 2010. (Greg Michalenko, pers. comm.).

In 2013, a number of observations of otters and otter activity include the following: in February and March, evidence of otter activity reported at Rockwood C.A., in the Eramosa River and downstream of Inverhaugh in the Grand River (MNR comm.); and in summer, three observed and photographed at Luther Marsh by Kevin Tupman and Tony Zammit (pers. comm.).

Will Northern River Otter become re-established in Waterloo Region? Commenting to MNR and to others in response to the sightings being reported in the Bronte Creek Watershed in 2001, David Featherstone paraphrases former KWFN member, Bruce Duncan (*The Wood Duck*, April 2001) "that the increased extent of natural areas in the rural portions of our watersheds are providing suitable habitat for species which were extirpated following extensive forest clearing/wetland draining associated with European settlement in the 1800s. These species appear to be returning via corridors which radiate outward from relatively intact natural areas outside of our area." (MNR comm.). Our PSWs, ESPAs and ESLs of which *rare* is a part, may contribute to the renewed presence of Northern River Otter in our Region's waterways.

#### References:

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