

## THIS ISSUE

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## UPCOMING SPEAKER

*Join us March 27th for a presentation by Dan Schneider on the Amazing Life of Spiders.*

*See [waterlooregionnature.ca](http://waterlooregionnature.ca) for details, and pg. 14&15 for information on more upcoming speakers!*

## OUTINGS, OUTINGS, OUTINGS

*Read inside for more information on upcoming outings, and check your email for further updates, cancellation information, and new outings added.*

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

*Several WRN Board positions need to be filled. No experience required! If you are interested, email [vicepresident@waterlooregionnature.ca](mailto:vicepresident@waterlooregionnature.ca) for more information.*



*Sing-a-long at the WRN Holiday Party.  
 Photo by P. Bigelow.*



## Murder Mystery

By Roger Suffling

### A Murder of Crows in Waterloo Region goes missing!

For years a huge flock of crows (A “murder” in old parlance) has gathered each winter evening in Waterloo. The roost location has varied – at one time they were along the University Avenue extension, and they have gathered at times in neighbourhoods just north of the CN tracks in Kitchener. However for the last five years or so, the main location has consistently remained at Waterloo Park. By January this year thousands and thousands of these noisy birds congregated there daily at dusk, gathering from all directions. Flights arrived nightly from the Regional landfill to the west, from the south of Kitchener and from beyond Waterloo in the North. The crows dispersed at dawn for locations across the Region and they normally stop roosting communally in late winter when they start to take up nesting territories.

Many other large crow roosts exist in North America. You can find further information on this phenomenon here:

<http://www.crows.net/roosts.html>

Roger Suffling who has been developing WRN's EcoPosts project (<https://ecoposts.waterlooregionnature.ca/>) thought that the Waterloo crow roost would be a splendid topic. It could incorporate crow biology (Why do they congregate?), folklore on crows, information on these birds' intelligence and wide repertoire of calls, and the web page could also riff off campy material like Hitchcock's *The Birds* horror movie! Thus he recruited enthusiastic WRN members to conduct a crow count in February. Along the way they discovered that WRN member Virgil Martin had covered the Waterloo Park area on the 2016 Christmas Bird Count, and he soon set people straight on some complexities of counting. It's harder than one might imagine, especially in the dark! University of Waterloo research assistant, Jessie Pearson, reconnoitred the Park area in preparation. She went out at dusk on 1<sup>st</sup> February and found ...not a single bird. Thinking that Jessie just needed new eye glasses, Roger rose before dawn on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and found ...no crows whatsoever. NOT ONE!

*Continued on pg. 11*

## **WRN Directors**

### **President**

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nature.ca

### **Submission Deadlines:**

#### **Fall Issue**

July 15th

#### **Winter Issue**

October 15th

#### **Spring Issue**

February 15th

## **Positions of Responsibility**

### **Web Site Manager**

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### **Waterloo Region Nature Kids Liaison**

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Josh Shea 519-741-3400 ext.3349  
Fraser Gibson 519-576-9287  
knap@waterlooregionnature.ca

### **Waterloo Stewardship Council**

Josh Shea 519-208-8442  
wscrep@waterlooregionnature.ca

### **Other Inquiries**

info@waterlooregionnature.ca

All WRN Club  
meetings are held  
in the Reception  
Hall of the  
Waterloo Knox  
Presbyterian  
Church

50 Erb St. West

Regular Meetings  
begin at 7:30pm.  
Doors open at  
7pm.

**All parking is  
FREE**

All parking access  
is off Dupont  
Street.



## Spring is around the corner!

That's what I hope, at least. While this winter wasn't as bad as previous ones, I'm itching to spend more time outside without having to bundle up, starting seeds for the garden to see the first spring flowers emerge, and watch birds and butterflies return. Enough of grey skies and freezing temperatures already!

Spring is a time of renewal, and this will be the last President's Corner written by me as outgoing President. I'm looking forward to hand over the reign to Jon who I'm sure will do a fabulous job carrying on our work. I'm also looking forward to see new faces join our efforts as board members and volunteers.

The club has brought nature lovers together for more than 80 years, and together we can continue this wonderful tradition for decades to come- but we need your help. No matter if you are a seasoned member, or brand new to Waterloo Region Nature, there is plenty of opportunity to show your love and join us in making the club strong and our work known across the region.

We have several board positions opening up, and the monthly Monday night board meetings are a great way to reconnect with our mission, spend quality time with friendly and enthusiastic people, bring in new ideas and help with important decision making processes. Even if you don't have previous board experience, don't hesitate to put your name forward- we would love to have you join us and will make sure to get you up to speed quickly.

In recent years, it has been challenging to fill the Vice-President position and our Publicity Director role has been vacant for most of the past year. I particularly would like to encourage our younger members to step up and consider becoming part of the team- it's a great opportunity to gain leadership experience in a supportive environment, and many of our members

started out early and later returned to the board and other volunteer positions repeatedly. I'm humbled by the fact that we have so many long-term members that have been committed to the club and nature for most of their lives. It's a real inspiration and proof that our club is welcoming and an inclusive place for everyone.

I would also like to encourage you all to bring friends and fresh faces to our monthly meetings. The presentations are always informative and often entertaining, and I'm sure there are many more community members who would enjoy them and our outings, or send kids to join a nature program. The more we talk about our accomplishments and make our offerings known, the more people will start to share our values and become advocates for the protection of nature in Waterloo Region. Together, we can accomplish so much more. I'm eager to see what 2017 will bring us!

Take care and thank you for your help,

Stephanie

*One of Canada's Premier Birding & Nature Festivals!*

## Huron Fringe Birding Festival

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Registration from February 1, 2017

**For more information**  
[www.huronfringebirdingfestival.ca](http://www.huronfringebirdingfestival.ca)  
**MacGregor Point Provincial Park • Port Elgin, ON.**





## North Shore of Lake Ontario

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**When:** Saturday, March 18, 2017. Meet at 8:00 a.m. for all-day outing.  
**Where:** Meet at the commuter parking lot on Highway 6 just south of Highway 401.  
**Who:** David Gascoigne leading [theospreynest@sympatico.ca](mailto:theospreynest@sympatico.ca)  
(H) 519-725-0866 (C) 226-747-7299

We will start our day at LaSalle Park in Burlington for the largest concentration of Trumpeter Swans in Ontario as well as a whole range of gulls and other waterfowl. A walk through the wooded area might yield Carolina Wren, Northern Mockingbird, woodpeckers, sparrows and the chance to hand feed Black-capped Chickadees. Eastern Screech Owl is possible. Many other common passerines should be seen.

Our next stop will be at Sioux Lookout Park, a great location for Long-tailed Ducks at close range. The water is very clear and the ducks can be seen “flying” underwater. Large rafts of Common Goldeneye are usually present. All three scoters are possible, as are Red-breasted and Common Mergansers, Bufflehead, Mute Swans and others.

We will proceed eastward along the lake, stopping at various points (e.g. Paletta Park, Bronte Harbour, Lakeshore Promenade) being guided by recent reports, and the time of day. Along the way we hope to encounter Red-necked Grebes and possible Horned Grebes.

There are lots of washroom stops along this route and we will stop somewhere for lunch together.

This is a full day's outing so be sure to pack a lunch and snacks. Dress for the weather, bring binoculars, a scope if you have one, a field guide and lots of enthusiasm.

## Seed Starting Workshop at *rare*

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**When:** Friday, March 24, 2017 from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.  
**Where:** *rare* Resource House, 768 Blair Road, Cambridge  
**Who:** Jenna Quinn hosting 519-650-9336 x111 [jenna.quinn@reresites.org](mailto:jenna.quinn@reresites.org)

Why start seeds indoors? When is the right time to start seeds indoors? What seeds are easiest to start indoors? Join *rare's* Garden Coordinator as she answers these questions and more to make sure you know how to give your plants the best start. We will even start seeds that can be taken home and planted. All-weather indoor event, accessible to all, with washrooms available.

## Long Point Area Migrants

**When:** Saturday, March 25, 2017. Meet at 8:00 a.m. for all-day outing.  
**Where:** Carpool lot at 401 and Homer Watson Blvd. / Fountain St.  
**Who:** The Burrell's leading Jim: 519-699-4695 [burrellsc@golden.net](mailto:burrellsc@golden.net)

Join us for this popular annual outing to Long Point, one of Lake Erie's birding hotspots. We will focus on returning waterfowl as they stop on their way northward. Bring a lunch, binos, field guides and a scope if you have one. Dress warmly as it may be cooler near the lake at this time of year.

## Voice of the Night

**When:** Tuesday, April 25, 2017 from 8:00 p.m. to about 9:30 p.m.  
**Where:** Huron Natural Area. Meet in parking lot on Trillium Drive, Kitchener  
**Who:** Fraser Gibson leading 519-576-9287 [fn.gib@sympatico.ca](mailto:fn.gib@sympatico.ca)

Experience the 'Voices of the Night' as we focus on American Woodcock, but also listen for and identify amphibian and possibly owl calls. In April and early May, the American Woodcock partakes in an interesting flight and sound mating display. Hopefully this late evening ritual will be on display in Huron Natural Area's old fields. The nearby wetlands should provide the habitat necessary for a variety of singing amphibians and the woodlands are known to be home territory for owls.

HNA footpaths are part of an established trail system. Bring binoculars and a flashlight and dress warmly. No RSVP required. The washrooms are open during the day and early evening at this time of year but will be locked sometime after dark.

## Medicinal Plants at Bechtel Park

**When:** Saturday, April 29, 2017 from 10:00 a.m. for an hour or two  
**Where:** Bechtel Park. Entrance is on Bridge St. near University Avenue, Waterloo. Meet at the end of the parking lot of the dog park.  
**Who:** Anne Godlewski leading, RSVP to [a\\_godlewski@hotmail.com](mailto:a_godlewski@hotmail.com)

Medicinal plants are all around you. Come learn about the medicinal properties of plants that may even be growing in your backyard. Feel free to bring an ID guide.

The trails at the park are fairly easy: smooth (packed mulch) and mostly flat, with some gentle hills. Depending on the group and the weather, we may wander into areas that are dewy or muddy. RSVP please, so that we know not to leave without you.

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### Explore the Wetlands and Woodlands of Nearby Oxford County

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**When:** Saturday, May 6, 2017 from 8:30 a.m. to noon

**Where:** Meet at the Service Centre at Exit 250 (Drumbo/Innerkip Exit) from the 401 at Oxford County Road 29 (west of Drumbo)

**Who:** Ken and Janet Dance leading. Ken has contributed the greatest number of bird lists to eBird from Oxford County. Feel free to contact the leaders for more information.  
519-463-6156 [dancenvironment@rogers.com](mailto:dancenvironment@rogers.com)

We will explore the Horner Creek floodplain/Pine Pond area, Pittcock Reservoir Important Bird Area, and the Black Creek Swamp. Looking for birds, especially Sandhill Cranes, as well as herptiles and spring wildflowers.

All flat walking on gravel paths. Washrooms at 401 Service Centre and Tim Horton's, Woodstock.

### Birding Laurel Creek from Bearinger Road to Columbia Lake

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**When:** Sunday, May 7, 2017 from 8:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

**Where:** Meet at Bearinger Road and Pineridge Road, just east of Westmount and Bearinger, Waterloo.  
Park on Pineridge facing Bearinger.

**Who:** Dale Ingrey leading 519-884-3667



Although this outing won't produce nearly as many species as Point Pelee, it is much closer to home and we should still be able to spot a fair number of resident and migratory birds at this time of the year. We'll move down Laurel Creek to Columbia Lake and then circle around a few stormwater ponds in the technology park before heading back to our starting point. If time permits, we could head over to the Waterloo Y and check out the ospreys and grassland birds. Bring water, binoculars, field guide and scope if you have one. The trail is mostly flat with an occasional slight grade.

Washrooms are available at Waterloo Y, corner of Laurelwood Drive and Fischer-Hallman.

### The Springflowers of Sudden Tract

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**When:** Saturday, May 13, 2017 from 10:00 a.m. to around 11:30 a.m.

**Where:** Sudden Tract Forest ESA, which is approximately 1839 Spragues Road, Cambridge.  
Meet in the parking lot.

**Who:** Jenn McPhee leading [jennmcphee9@gmail.com](mailto:jennmcphee9@gmail.com) (C) 226-791-4288

Explore the spring wildflowers of Sudden Tract forest with botanist, Jenn McPhee. The Sudden Tract is a diverse mix of upland forest and wetland vegetation community types. The terrain includes rolling hills that may not be accessible for everyone. While on the walk we will be focused on ephemeral wildflowers, and we will work through the identification characteristics of each one we find. There are no washrooms available on site. Participants are encouraged to dress for the outdoors, including footwear for muddy conditions.

No need to RSVP, but anyone not there at 10:00 may not be able to find us.

## Salamander Sleuthing

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**When:** Monday, May 15, 2017 from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

**Where:** Meet at **rare** ECO Centre, 768 Blair Road, Cambridge

**Who:** Jenna Quinn leading [jenna.quinn@raresites.org](mailto:jenna.quinn@raresites.org) 519-650-9336 x111

Come out for an interpretive hike at **rare** to look for salamanders. With Jenna, you will search for salamanders and learn how to identify different species and where to find them. This event will get you up close and personal with (hopefully) several species of salamanders and provide an opportunity to learn more about how and why these secretive species are monitored. Some hiking over uneven terrain required, so hiking boots or other appropriate footwear is recommended.

Washrooms are available at meeting point. No RSVP required.

## WRN Chimney Swift Roost

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**When:** Thursday, May 18, 2017 at 8:00 p.m. **RAIN DATE: Thursday, June 1**

**Where:** Meet at the former Zion United Church, 32 Weber St. W., Kitchener.

**Who:** Roger Suffling leading [rsuffli@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:rsuffli@uwaterloo.ca) 519-742-4577

We should be in time to check out the roost discovered last fall. I shall be checking occupancy before the trip and will post something on the WRN Facebook page if there is any problem. The swifts should be tucked up in bed by about 8:45 p.m., but if anybody wants to retire to a café or pub afterwards to talk birds we can do that.

There is no walking and the site is more-or-less wheelchair accessible. Washrooms are in the Downtown Community Centre opposite the church. Parking: the church car park off Weber Street, Downtown Community Centre car park if you have a permit, street parking on Roy Street, or paid parking at Central Library underground lot on Queen Street.

## Wednesday Wanderers: Sudden Tract

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**When:** Wednesday, May 24, 2017 at 9:30 a.m.

**Where:** Sudden Tract south of Galt, Cambridge. Meet at the carpool parking lot just south of the 401 at Fountain Street (Homer Watson)

**Who:** Marco & Donna DeBruin leading 519-658-5372

Join us for a walk through the Sudden Tract. We'll try to find a variety of species of flora and fauna. Spring migration should be well under way at this time. The Sudden Tract has a number of trees and plant species that are at the northern limits of their range. Wear sturdy footwear for the hilly trails and don't forget your binoculars and field guides. Be prepared for the possibility of biting insects.

## HAVE AN OUTING SUGGESTION?

Contact: [outings@waterlooregionnature.ca](mailto:outings@waterlooregionnature.ca)

Next outing deadline is July 15, however ideas are welcome at any time!

### Up Close to Honeybees

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**When:** Tuesday, June 6, 2017 from 6:30 p.m. to about 7:30 p.m. If it is raining this outing will be postponed because bees get grumpy in the rain!

**RAIN DATE: Monday, June 12**

**Where:** Meet on Beaver Creek Road near the entrance gate to the Laurel Creek Nature Centre, 525 Beaver Creek Road, Waterloo.

**Who:** Fraser Gibson leading 519 576 9287 [fn.gib@sympatico.ca](mailto:fn.gib@sympatico.ca)  
Contact for more info. No RSVP required.

Join Fraser, a longtime beekeeper, on this unique outing to the apiary at Laurel Creek Nature Centre. An active hive will be opened and several frames removed so attendees get a close look at the contents of a hive. You will observe workers, drones, larvae, pollen and thousands of bees while learning about the life of these amazing social insects. Other interesting hive sights are likely as well. The apiary contains a recent Australian invention known as a Flow Hive which allows honey extraction by simply “turning a few taps”.

Honeybees are very amicable at this time of year but attendees should wear long sleeves, long pants, long socks and shoes. Bonnets, veils and gloves will be provided to set your mind at ease. No washrooms available. Short walk on relatively level foot paths.

### Almost the Longest Day of the Year Outing - Drynan Tract

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**When:** Tuesday, June 20, 2017 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. or so

**Where:** Carpool lot at Hwy 401 and Homer Watson Blvd./Fountain Street

**Who:** Janet Ozaruk leading 226-748-9905 cell

Let's take advantage of the extra daylight to explore the Drynan Tract. This is a Region of Waterloo Agreement Forest located south of Kitchener and is a real gem. This area contains varied topography and habitat. We will be sure to see birds singing in the regenerating shrubby lands, lush aquatic vegetation in the small kettle lakes, and maybe some new plants in the mature forests. We will also keep an eye out for Carolinian species such as Beaked Hazelnut, Squawroot, Ribbon Snake and Blue-spotted Salamanders. No washrooms, smooth dirt path.

### A Nature Ramble at Huron Natural Area

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**When:** Tuesday, June 27, 2017 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. or so

**Where:** Meet at entry to Huron Natural Area at 801 Trillium Drive, Kitchener

**Who:** Janet Ozaruk leading 226-748-9905 cell

This City of Kitchener property brings you nature in the city! It contains:

Strasburg Creek, one of our only coldwater streams

Provincially significant wetlands, forest, meadows and significant species

Scenic hiking trails, boardwalks and lookout areas

An amazing natural and cultural history



There are a variety of trails that are accessibility friendly. Together we can decide which trails to take depending on the interests of the group and we'll head off to see what we can find. Washrooms available.



## Chimney Swift Roost Located in Preston by WRN Members

By Bill Wilson

While setting up birding nets at **rare Charitable Research Reserve** on early mornings in August 2016, WRN member, Ross Dickson, would observe scores of Chimney Swifts flying across the Grand near the Osprey Meadow. The swifts were generally flying in a north to south direction, sometimes foraging over the river. Meanwhile, each day, Bill Wilson conducted early morning counts of birds at the Confluence of the Grand and Speed Rivers just upstream from where Ross was seeing the swifts. Whenever Dickson would observe 100+/- Chimney Swifts, Wilson would observe few if any (maximum in August 2016 of six on the 22<sup>nd</sup>). Why were 100+ swifts showing up just after sunrise in the vicinity of the Osprey Meadow but not the Confluence and from where were they coming?

Dickson noted that the swifts arrived each morning from the direction of the Preston Sewage Treatment Plant, over it rather than from it. On August 30, Dickson counted 117+ swifts high over the river and Osprey Meadow. Provided within this information, Heather and Bill Wilson later that day extrapolated a line from Dickson's location into Preston, specifically into an industrial area where they located two industrial chimneys that they considered candidate roost sites for Chimney Swift.

That evening, Jerry Guenther, Bill Read and Bill and Heather Wilson confirmed that one of the chimneys on the flight path identified by Dickson was indeed a roost site. With the assistance of WRN members, Donna and Marco DeBruin, together with those listed above and Ross Dickson – seven observers in total – the roost was monitored each evening through September until the 13<sup>th</sup> when no swifts were observed. The maximum number counted was 387 on September 1; numbers decreased daily throughout the two-week period preceding the 13<sup>th</sup>.



Preston Chimney Swift Roost. Photo by: Heather Wilson

A nearby resident informed us that “the birds had used the chimney [in 2015]” during this time period as well.

Much of August is considered the Fall Migration stage of the Chimney Swift life cycle by Ontario SwiftWatch although observations in southern Ontario show that this stage extends into September.

The location of this roost site plus the data gathered has been forwarded to Ontario SwiftWatch, a volunteer program of Bird Studies Canada (<http://www.bsc-eoc.org/birdmon/chsw/about.jsp>). This program contributes to the “research and conservation of this unique urban species” considered a Species at Risk, with 60% of the Canadian population breeding in Ontario.

Monitoring of this chimney roost site will continue in 2017 during each of the four stages identified by SwiftWatch (<http://www.birdscanada.org/volunteer/ai/chsw/>) – Spring Migration, Nesting, Roosting and Fall Migration – to determine what role this chimney plays in the life cycle of this Threatened species.



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Canada 150**





**Canada** 150

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**rare Community BioBlitz July 15-16th**

*Scientists and taxa experts needed! Register now: [raresites.org](http://raresites.org)*

## Membership Director's Report

By Anne Godlewski

### *Welcome, New Members!*

*Catherine D Campbell  
Brian Hunsberger  
Carol Hunsdale-Loh  
Denise Leschak  
James Loh  
Monica Pflug  
Jocelyn Schaffenburg  
Anita Smith & Mike Smith  
Wendy Shaw  
Brandon Williams*

### *Thank you to our donors:*

<i>Ron &amp; Thelma Beaubien</i>	<i>Louise Litwiller</i>
<i>Lynn Conway &amp; Alex White</i>	<i>Lori Leavy (in honour of Bonnie-Lee Armstrong)</i>
<i>Elizabeth L Cooper</i>	<i>Denise Leschak</i>
<i>David Gascoigne &amp; Miriam Bauman</i>	<i>Greg Michalenko</i>
<i>Sandy &amp; Jaime Hill</i>	<i>Doug &amp; Su Morton</i>
<i>Doris &amp; Dennis Hilker</i>	<i>Gordon Nicholls</i>
<i>Kelly Holdaway</i>	<i>Jane Schneider</i>
<i>Douglas &amp; Barbara Inniss</i>	<i>Roger &amp; Petra Suffling</i>
<i>Marion Kelterborn</i>	<i>The Probus Club of Kitchener-Conestoga</i>
<i>Marlene Krebs</i>	<i>Michelle &amp; John Tomins</i>
<i>Jim &amp; Joanne Lackenbauer</i>	
<i>Elaine LaRonde</i>	

## Waterloo Region Nature Kids News!

By Marg Paré

**W**aterloo Region Nature Kids are a bunch of very keen 7- to 12-year-old naturalists who come out monthly along with one of their favourite adults to Laurel Creek Nature Centre. There, they learn nature stuff with WRN volunteers and Garrison who works for the GRCA. For this school year's regular meetings, we've hunted bugs, studied the pond and stream, visited up close with live raptors, and learned winter survival skills. We've also had a couple of bonus events; exploring and watching bird-banding at SpruceHaven farm and doing a Christmas Bird Count for Kids organized by *rare*.

Coming up on our calendar, we're going to go on an owl prowling, visit a maple sugar bush, learn GPS orienteering, and have our own biothon!



Photo by: Marg Paré

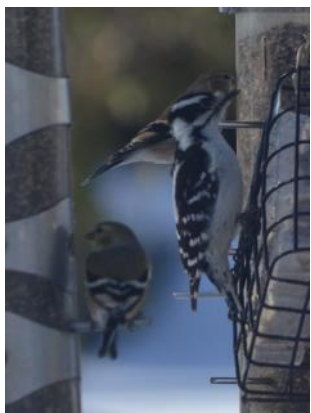


Photo by: Marg Paré

If you know some kids who'd like to be WRN Kids, get in touch! Families register and pay on the WRN website, [waterlooregionnature.ca](http://waterlooregionnature.ca). We still have a few spaces for the rest of this year (and it's half price if you start now) or sign up when we start up again in September. Have a look at our Kids website too, [wrnatureclub.wordpress.com](http://wrnatureclub.wordpress.com) especially the blog of photos and reports of our awesome activities.



# WRN: Photo Gallery



A few sightings from this year's Great Backyard Bird Count. Photos by P. Bigelow

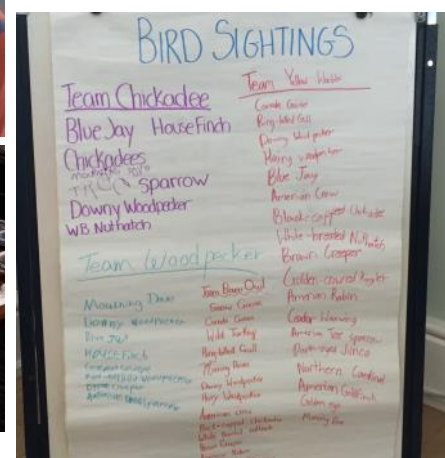


Trail camera photo provided by Gord McMillan. Don't miss Gord's April presentation at WRN where he will present more about his experience documenting Golden Eagles and Bald Eagles at his southern Ontario property. Details on pg. 15.



WRN visit to the Region of Waterloo archives. Photos by G. Macdonald.

Participants at the Christmas Bird Count for Kids. Photo by M. Paré.



Sightings from the Christmas Bird Count for Kids. Photo by M. Paré.

**Do you have nature or event photos to share? Send them to [editor@waterlooregionnature.ca](mailto:editor@waterlooregionnature.ca)**

## Murder Mystery

*By Roger Suffling*

*continued from page one*

Crows can relocate a roost (a major roost in Fredericton NB has moved in almost the same week as ours; See: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/crows-fredericton-unb-roost-1.3946252>), however, just why and how they do this is a mystery. Suggestions include changes in lighting, and the arrival of predators like great-horned owls. Suffling wonders, too, if our mild weather is a factor, and there is always the possibility that somebody has deliberately “chivied” the birds – They are both noisy and messy. However, think about this: if you

announced that everybody in Elmira had to move to Drayton this week, do you think it would happen? Do you think that we humans could agree on that in the first place or get it organised? Crows are smart!

Various people did find some remnants of the flock at the Manulife Insurance Building on King Street in Kitchener, and there are other individual trees full of crows in Mount Hope Cemetery and in Old Westmount. But where the rest of the crows went remains a murder mystery!

## Ontario Nature Report

*By Fraser Gibson*

### Ontario Nature—Great Lakes West Regional Meeting

Six WRN members attended the November Regional Meeting hosted by Nature Guelph at the University of Guelph Arboretum. Eight member groups were in attendance, sharing successes, concerns and insights.

### Ontario's Snapping Turtles

Ontario is one of only two provinces that still has a snapping turtle hunt. Ontario Nature wants to convince the government of Ontario to ban the snapping turtle hunt. Ontario Nature has submitted comments and invited all Nature Network groups to sign onto their submission.

### Our Fight for the ESA Continues

Ontario Nature and Wildlands League are seeking to appeal an Ontario Court of Appeal ruling that upheld the government's 2013 regulation exempting many harmful industrial activities from complying with core provisions of the Endangered Species Act. They have filed an application with the Supreme Court of Canada to appeal the ruling, and are awaiting their decision. This would be the first appeal ever heard by the Supreme Court of Canada regarding species at risk.



### Introducing the Sydenham River Nature Reserve

Ontario Nature is thrilled to announce that the Sydenham River Nature Reserve is a reality! December was the closing date for this spectacular 193-acre property, forever protecting one of Ontario's most biodiverse waterways. Located in the Carolinian Life Zone, this new reserve brings Ontario Nature's province-wide nature reserve system to 25 properties and more than 7,000 acres. An almost two-kilometre stretch of the Sydenham River winds through the middle of the property. The property is teeming with life including 23 species at risk, 34 species of mussel and the at-risk eastern spiny softshell turtle. WRN generously donated \$1000.00 to assist with the purchase in June 2016.

### An Online Guide to Cure Arachnophobia

As the source of spooky superstitions and phobias, spiders are some of our most feared and least understood species. Ontario Nature wants you to get to know them a bit better. You can see their brand new Guide to Some of Ontario's Spiders by visiting the [ON Nature magazine website](#).

Dan Schneider, the author of this new guide will be presenting to WRN members on March 27, 2017.

### Save the Date for the 2017 Annual Gathering

Save the date for Ontario Nature's 2017 Annual Gathering scheduled for June 2-4 at the [Kempfenfelt Conference Centre](#) on the shores of Lake Simcoe. The celebratory weekend will feature the annual Ontario Nature Conservation Awards, a suite of informative workshops on various topics, expert-led field trips to local wildlife hot spots and an inspiring keynote address.

[waterlooregionnature.ca](http://waterlooregionnature.ca)



## Nature Network News

Ontario Nature publishes a monthly Nature Network Newsletter from which I draw material for the Heron. If you wish to see each newsletter they are posted on the Ontario Nature website at:

[Nature Network News.](#)

THE BRUCE PENINSULA NATURE WEEKEND– May 26-28/17

BIRDING FIELD TRIPS

GENERAL NATURE FIELD TRIPS

BIRD QUIZ– test your knowledge

BUCKET RAFFLE

Explore the Bruce Peninsula in the company of fellow naturalists and under the guidance of expert leaders.

The cost for the weekend, per person, is \$20 leader/admin fee plus two nights' accommodation – \$236 (+ 13% taxes) including all meals and snacks (Evergreen Resort, Mar, ON)

This annual, weekend event is hosted by South Peel Naturalists' Club and we invite you to share the experience.

For further information: [mail@spnc.ca](mailto:mail@spnc.ca) or contact Donna at 905 815 0933 Audrey at 905 820 2571

## Pawpaw

*By Wayne Buck*

Roger Suffling very generously brought some packets of seeds including Butterfly Milkweed and Pawpaw to share at the October 2016 WRN meeting. I choose a packet of Papaw seeds to grow since it is a native shrub and we do not presently have any on our property. We did have two but several years ago they succumbed to some very low January temperatures. I have seen Pawpaw in the wild on two different occasions that I can recall. The first time was on an outing with the former University of Waterloo professor, John Semple near Vienna, ON where we were learning to identify asters and goldenrods. The second time was on an outing with Lynda and our son Graham along the Thames River near Delaware where we saw the unusual brown petals of the Pawpaw in bloom.

The seeds are 1-3 cm long shiny black and bean-shaped. I checked in our copy of Henry Kock's book on the propagation of native trees and shrubs of Ontario to see how to treat the seeds in order to germinate and grow them, never having had them to grow before. Kock suggests that sowing the seeds outdoors in the fall is not usually successful this far north. Pawpaw is Carolinian. He recommends 4-6



*Photo by: Wayne Buck*

months of cold (2-3°C)

stratification in the refrigerator followed by planting outdoors in April either in a pot or where you want them to grow. Kock says it takes **2-3 months for the shoot to emerge**. If grown in a pot, when the shoots emerge, the whole pot should be planted and **left undisturbed for two years** because the roots are very brittle and break easily. They can be transplanted when they are about 30 cm (1 ft.) tall. Pawpaw prefer to grow in the shade so keep this in mind when you plant them.

## Upcoming Speakers and Meeting Programs

Meetings are held on the fourth Monday of the month at 7:30pm. Meetings are free and visitors are always welcome.  
Meeting Location: Reception Hall, Waterloo Knox Presbyterian Church, 50 Erb Street West, Waterloo

### MARCH

March 27, 2017

#### Spiders: The Amazing Life of Spiders— Hunters, Fishers, Trappers

**Dan Schneider** “Dan the Nature Man”

**The Presentation:** Subject of many superstitions, spiders share our world where they are loved or loathed. Learn more of the facts about spiders, and you might want to become an arachnerd yourself!

Spiders as a whole can be a daunting group to identify, but learning how to discern certain family characteristics will make the task much easier. Come and discover more about this group, and watch for a spider field trip with Dan, later in the year! “If you want to live and thrive, let the spider run alive!” – old English saying, Kent region.

**The Presenter:** Over a career spanning more than three decades at the Guelph Lake Nature Centre, **Dan Schneider** has inspired an estimated 200,000 local elementary and high school students and a host of other visitors to the northeast Guelph site overlooking the lake and dam, part of the 1,600-hectare conservation area along Conservation Road.

He now serves part time for Conservation Halton as a nature interpreter at the Mountsbury Wildlife Centre and Crawford Lake Conservation Area, and plans to be involved in fundraising and planning for the new nature centre and staff facility at Guelph Lake.

See full speaker description and biography at  
[waterlooregionnature.ca](http://waterlooregionnature.ca).



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## APRIL

April 24, 2017

### An Abundance of Eagles– Gord McMillan

**The Presentation:** Gord McMillan will present a video and talk about his success in attracting both Bald Eagles and Golden Eagles to his Eastern Ontario country property in winter.

**The Presenter:** Gord McMillan of Golden Lake has hunted, fished, trapped, canoed, snowshoed and explored the Deacon Hills virtually his entire 58 years. He has had the privilege of witnessing and documenting one of the greatest wildlife recoveries of all time, the return of the Bald Eagle.

Using trail cameras, Gord has also documented the remarkable comeback of the Eastern Golden Eagle, amassing thousands of photographs and hundreds of hours of video in the process. He has produced three DVDs -- two on eagles and one on canoeing. His most recent DVD identifies 16 individual Golden Eagles observed over a 16-day period in 2015.

Gord joined the Colorado-based Eastern Golden Eagle Working Group in 2016 as their first Canadian camera trapper.

#### Early Spring?

*Please note, should spring be early again this year, the **Native Plant Exchange** will be held at the April meeting. Members will be advised via the meeting's Mail Chimp reminder, should this happen.*

## MAY

May 29, 2017

### Annual General Meeting: NOTE EARLY START TIME OF 7PM

**Native Plant Exchange:** Before the meeting (unless there's an early spring and the plant exchange was held in April) please bring plants to the outside of the building to the right of the entrance. This has been a popular event in past, thanks to the generosity of our members. Prior to the Annual Meeting, or during break time, all are welcome to view and share the donated plants.

### On the Hunt for Rare Plants in the Woodlands of Southern Ontario– Dr. Jenny McCune

**The Presentation:** Looking for a rare plant can be like searching for a needle in a haystack. But maybe technology can help. Dr. Jenny McCune has been using computer models to predict where to look for rare plants in southern Ontario forests. Come hear about her adventures heading out into the forests to see if the computer model works, her encounters with colourful local landowners, and some of the unexpected discoveries she made along the way. She'll also show you some of the spring woodland plants to keep an eye out for in your area.

**The Presenter:** Dr. Jenny McCune grew up on a farm in Dufferin county, and got her Bachelor's degree from the University of Guelph. Since then she has worked as an ecologist in the Florida Keys, Catalina Island, and Maryland. She completed her PhD at the University of British Columbia in 2013. Currently she is a postdoctoral fellow at Carleton University in Ottawa.

Canada Post Publication  
Mail Sales Agreement  
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### **Membership Annual Fees**

Family/Couple \$40  
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Adult Individual \$35  
Senior (60+) \$30  
Student (19+) \$25  
Free Membership  
for youth (<18)  
Club year runs from  
Sept. to August; Memberships  
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**WRN is a registered  
charitable organization.  
Membership fees and all  
donations are tax  
deductible.**

### **Objectives of WRN**

TO acquire and disseminate knowledge of natural  
history.  
TO protect and preserve wildlife.  
TO purchase and hold appropriate parcels of land for  
the advancement of conservation.  
TO support public interest in nature and its preservation  
by supporting the enactment of wise legislation and by  
other means as falls within the scope of the  
Corporation.

### **General Information**

Meetings are held on the fourth Monday of the month,  
September to May with the exception of December.  
Our meetings are free and visitors are always welcome.  
Outings are scheduled almost every month.

### **Advertising Rates for The Heron:**

Advertisement Size	Per issue	Full year ( 3 issues)
Full Page	\$200	\$520
Half Page	\$100	\$260
Quarter Page	\$50	\$130
One-tenth Page (business card)	\$25	\$65

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three times per year.  
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