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MARCH PRESENTATION

Join us for a presentation on
 Waterloo Region Fungi Monday,
 March 24 @ 7:30PM

Stay up to date on all the latest outings and events by visiting the WRN Online Events Calendar here:
waterlooregionnature.ca/events



Left: Jeff with chest waders showing the water depth
 Middle: Pitcher Plant Borer Moth
 © Alan Macnaughton
 Right: Epauletted Pitcher Plant Moth © iNaturalist "btk"

THE HERON**SPRING 2025**

RECEPTION HALL
 WATERLOO KNOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
 50 ERB STREET WEST, WATERLOO

**A Big Day for Moths at Grass Lake**

By Alan Macnaughton

In September 2024, during a survey of the moths of MacGregor Point Provincial Park (near Port Elgin), I found two provincially uncommon moths: the Pitcher Plant Borer Moth (*Papaipema appassionata*) and the Epauletted Pitcher Plant Moth (*Exyra fax*; see pictures). As their names suggest, the caterpillars of these moths feed only on pitcher plants. They were previously known in southwestern Ontario only from the upper Bruce Peninsula. My mind turned to Grass Lake, a property southwest of Cambridge near the border with Brant County that is owned by the GRCA and the Ontario government. I knew it is one of the only places in Waterloo Region where pitcher plants (*Sarracenia purpurea*) grow. Could it similarly harbour these elusive moths?



I contacted Will Van Hemessen, the botanist who had earlier suggested going to Grass Lake for moths because of its numerous rare plants. He responded quickly: "Those species are both extremely cool and would be fantastic to find at Grass Lake." I also contacted Jeff Leader, who lives nearby and is up for most anything nature-wise. At dusk on September 15, Will and Jeff brought chest waders to enter the bog (see picture of Jeff emerging from the bog). They used a child's boat to float my moth traps to the pitcher plant area, which required passing through water at least knee-deep and perhaps chest-deep if you step in the wrong spot. The traps had small UV LED lamps, powered by batteries, to attract moths overnight.

Continued pg. 9

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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.

←—————→
Positions of Responsibility

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Submission Deadlines:

Fall Issue July 20th
Winter Issue October 20th
Spring Issue February 20th

Waterloo Region Nature is always looking for volunteers to fill positions of responsibility and sit on the Board of Directors. Please reach out to pastpresident@waterlooregionnature.ca if you want to learn more.

President's Corner

By Brett Fried

The Art of Conscious Photography

In the realm of wildlife photography, there exists an unspoken covenant between the photographer and the natural world – a delicate dance of respect, empathy, and mindfulness. As we seek to immortalize the beauty and grace of our animal companions through the lens of a camera, it is essential to approach our subjects with a conscious and compassionate reverence, ensuring that our presence does not disturb or disrupt their natural behaviors.

One of the fundamental principles of wildlife photography is the concept of ethical conduct and responsible stewardship. As we venture into the habitats of birds and animals, it is imperative to prioritize their well-being above all else. This means taking proactive steps to minimize our impact on their environment, maintain a safe distance, and avoid actions that could induce stress, fear, or harm.

When photographing birds in particular, it is essential to adhere to certain guidelines to ensure their comfort and security. One key practice is to respect the bird's personal space and behavioral boundaries, allowing them to engage in their natural activities without interference. This may involve observing from a distance, utilizing zoom lenses to capture detailed shots, and refraining from making sudden movements or loud noises.

Furthermore, it is crucial to familiarize oneself with the behavioral cues and body language of different bird species, enabling us to recognize signs of distress or discomfort. By staying attuned to their signals and adjusting our approach accordingly, we can create a harmonious and non-intrusive photography experience for both ourselves and our avian subjects.

In addition, practicing patience, perseverance, and mindfulness in our photography endeavors can yield remarkable results in capturing the authentic essence and beauty of wildlife. By immersing ourselves in the natural rhythms of the landscape,

attuning our senses to the sounds and sights of the wild, and cultivating a deep sense of reverence for the creatures we encounter, we can forge a profound connection that transcends the boundaries of a mere photograph.

In the art of conscious photography, every click of the shutter becomes a testament to our commitment to honoring and preserving the splendor of the natural world. By approaching wildlife with humility, empathy, and mindfulness, we not only capture stunning images but also contribute to the conservation and appreciation of our wondrous planet and its inhabitants. Let us embark on this noble journey of photographic exploration with a spirit of reverence, compassion, and awe – for in the gentle embrace of nature lies the true essence of our collective interconnectedness and harmony.



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www.wbu.com/kitchener

OUTINGS, ACTIVITIES, THINGS TO DO &

If you're new to Waterloo Region Nature, you need to know that **OUTINGS** are one of the best features of the club! From winter walks (or snowshoes?) to spring birds on the Great Lakes, upcoming outings are a great opportunity to meet like-minded members, trade stories, and share enthusiasm for our favourite places and pastimes. If you have questions about a specific outing, please contact the outing leader directly. If you want to lead an outing, please get in touch with Shane at outings@waterlooregionnature.ca.

Outings are only possible thanks to those generous members who volunteer their time and share their knowledge, helping us all enjoy nature and learn together.

You may know a great place to explore nature but don't feel confident taking on a leader role. If that's the case please consider initiating a "learning together" outing! You set a time and place (and take on a little paperwork) and invite club members and guests to meet up and enjoy nature. Easy and no stress!

Please reach out to me if you have ideas or questions about our outings!

Shane Mulligan, Outings Director
outings@waterlooregionnature.ca

Outings FAQ

Are outings for members only?

It is fine to bring a friend who is not a member. They'll want to join!

Do I need to register in advance with the leader?

Many leaders like to know who's coming and/or limit numbers, so registration is required for many (but not all) outings. Please check the listings on the website for details.

Are outings weather dependent?

Weather is part of nature too, and most outings will go ahead "rain or shine" – within reason. Leaders will do their best to communicate to registered participants (or by email announcement) any last-minute changes due to weather, illness, or site issues.

Why do we all need to sign a "waiver form"? WRN's insurance vendor has asked that all participants be required to complete a consent and risk acknowledgement. This simply confirms that you realize outings sometimes have risks—nature is like that—and you are accepting responsibility for your safety. And that you're OK (or not) appearing in an event photo. And that you won't endanger others, etc.

All these outings sound great, but how will I remember them all?

We'll send you reminders about up-coming outings. We know you're busy.

HAVE AN OUTING SUGGESTION?

Contact Shane Mulligan 519-497-9086 or outings@waterlooregionnature.ca

The next submission deadline for the Heron is July 15, but we welcome new outings at any time and will try to get them on the calendar and website promptly! And do keep an eye out for notifications of new outings.

Here's a brief list of upcoming outings in the next few months. More details are on the [club website](#).

(Signs of Spring) Winter Walkabout: Drynan Tract

Thursday, March 27 from 10:00am to 12:00pm at Drynan Regional Forest

[Register Online!](#)

Please register and join us for another “learning together” walk through a favourite natural area near Ayr. We will be watching for signs of emerging plants, animal activity, migrating birds and many changes in the trees, shrubs, and mosses.

Birding: Toronto — Mississauga — Oakville

Saturday, April 5 beginning at 9:00am (all day)

Registration Required!

Join David Gascoigne in this outing, starting at Humber Bay Park, where we will scour Lake Ontario for Redhead, Canvasback, Common Goldeneye, Bufflehead, Hooded and Red-breasted Merganser, Black, Surf and White-winged Scoters, Greater Scaup, Long-tailed Ducks, Trumpeter Swans, and others. Winter residents may still remain, breeding species and transitory migrants may have arrived. Raptors are possible overhead, mammals such as Muskrat and Mink have been seen in the past, possibly American Coot, Common Loon – and who knows what else!

This is a full day's outing so be sure to pack a lunch and snacks if you need them. Dress according to the weather, bring binoculars, a scope if you have one, a field guide and lots of enthusiasm. Please carpool if you know of others coming on the outing.

Location: Meet at Humber Bay Park, West, Lakeshore Boulevard, Toronto, ON.

Registration required:

Leader: David Gascoigne **email:** davidmgascoigne@gmail.com

Phone: 226 747-7299

Waterfowl and Early Spring Migrants in the Port Rowan/Long Point Area

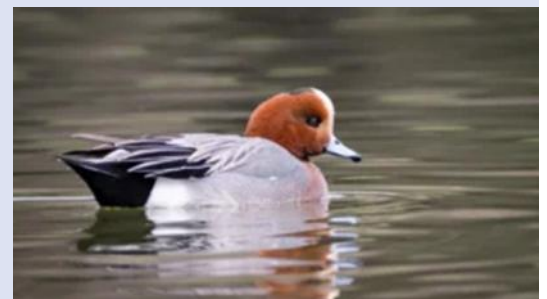
Sunday, April 6 from 8:30am to 1:00pm at Long Point Provincial Park

Registration Required!

Long Point Provincial Park is the 4th oldest Provincial Park in Ontario, established in 1921. It has been designated as a World Biosphere Reserve. It is one of the largest Waterfowl Staging areas in North America and also hosts migrating songbirds at this time of year.

Please join Stewart MacDonald, who has birded Long Point for over 30 years, in this outing. It is possible to see over 20 species of waterfowl, including the possibility of seeing the hard-to-find Eurasian Wigeon, as well as Raptors, Shorebirds, Wading Birds, Gulls, Terns and Sandhill Cranes.

Register with Stewart via email at stewjmacdonald@aol.com.



Birding Hotspots in Ontario! Rondeau Provincial Park _____

Tuesday, May 13 from 8:00am to 1:00pm

Registration is required. Maximum 15 participants.

Join Stewart MacDonald on this outing to explore a top birding hot spot: Rondeau Provincial Park, known for Carolinian forest and its proximity to Lake Erie. Migrant songbirds are the park's main attraction at this time of year. The "Star of the Show" is often the Prothonotary Warbler which is an Endangered Species in Ontario. Rondeau is usually one of the most reliable places in the province to see this special bird.

Register with Stewart via email at stewjmacdonald@aol.com.



Carden Alvar (with Peterborough Field Naturalists) _____



A joint outing to the nationally significant Carden Alvar with the Peterborough Field Naturalists. Limited to 30 participants (15 per club).

This joint outing to Prairie Smoke — Carden Alvar Natural Area will take place on the Victoria Day weekend on Sunday, May 18 (all day) and Monday May 19, 2025 (7:30 am – noon).

Registrations for this outing are now open, and each club will have 15 spaces allotted to it. The goal will be to have 30 participants in two groups with two guides per group. A waiting list for each club has been established in the event that one club is unable to fill its allocation or if there are cancellations, in order to reach the 30 person target. Please contact Stewart MacDonald for a spot on the waiting list (stewjmacdonald@aol.com).

Celebrating Birds

Huron Fringe Birding Festival



May 23 - 26
May 29 - June 1, 2025

www.huronfringebirdingfestival.ca

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MacGregor Point Provincial Park

Birding Hotspots in Ontario! Glen Morris and northern Brant County _____

Thursday, May 22 from 7:00am to 1:00pm

Join Stewart MacDonald to explore birding hot spots in the Glen Morris area, including Northern Brant County. This area is known for its Carolinian Forest and its proximity to the Grand River. It is possible we'll see Grassland Species, Wading Birds, Raptors, as well as Migrating and Breeding Songbirds, all in one day!

Target birds would be uncommon and hard to find species including Cliff Swallow, Common Gallinule, Virginia and Sora Rails, Tufted Titmouse, Bobolink, as well as Sparrow species, Warblers, and other spring migrants.

Register with Stewart via email at stewjmacdonald@aol.com.

Monthly Member Meeting & Nature Presentations

Anyone with an interest in nature is welcome to attend our free monthly meetings. We start with a few announcements of noteworthy upcoming events, conservation issues or projects and we invite all to share their recent local noteworthy nature sightings. The **main presentation begins shortly after 8pm** featuring a guest speaker on one of a variety of interesting topics.

Meetings are held on the fourth Monday of the month at 7:30pm in **hybrid** format. Join in person at Reception Hall, Waterloo Knox Presbyterian Church, 50 Erb St. West, Waterloo or register at waterlooregionnature.ca/meetings/ to join on zoom.

Upcoming Meetings: Brief presentation summaries are included on the next page, with more details to follow online. For full presentation descriptions and to register to attend online visit:

waterlooregionnature.ca/meetings/

Monday, March 24, 2025 @ 7:30pm – Waterloo Region Fungi

William Van Hemessen is an independent consultant and part-time graduate student based in Cambridge, Ontario. He has over ten years of professional experience in vegetation ecology, but for the past two years he has been studying fungal diversity for his M.Sc. at Western University. William is the editor of the Ontario Plant Press, the quarterly publication of the Field Botanists of Ontario, and has delivered numerous plant and mushroom identification workshops.

This will be a hybrid meeting and you can choose to attend either in-person or via Zoom. To attend via Zoom, register [here](#).



Monday, April 28, 2025 @ 7:30pm – Whip-poor-will Wonders

Lauren Weeks and Victoria Anne Pepe are masters students working on the breeding and migration biology of Eastern Whip-poor-wills. Mark your calendars as they talk about these charismatic birds.

This will be a hybrid meeting and you can choose to attend either in-person or via Zoom. To attend via Zoom, register [here](#).



Monday, May 26, 2025 @ 7:00pm – Annual General Meeting

Speaker and meeting details to be announced at a later date. Note special time due to AGM.

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WRN Teens' Winter Events

By Anita Smith

Despite frigid temperatures the WRN Teens' Winter Solstice Celebration at Woodside National Historic Site was a great success! Once we got the campfire started, we worked in teams to complete a scavenger hunt on the grounds. Then we gathered around the campfire to play some games including a nature trivia game. Hot chocolate, roasted chestnuts and marshmallows helped to keep us warm!

During the Upper Canada Hike in Doon in early January, we lived the reality of "if you don't like the weather, wait ten minutes." Flurries, howling winds, blizzard-like snow squalls, and blue skies and sunshine all revealed themselves during the two hour outing. Walking along the Grand River we saw a good variety of birds: Wild Turkeys, American Black Ducks, Common Mergansers, Goldeneyes, Belted Kingfisher, juvenile Bald Eagle and even a Northern Pintail!

Mid-January the Teens came together to do some winter sowing of native plants. The seeds had been collected in the fall and in the spring we will donate the young plants to the Roadside Pollinators Group. After the planting was completed, we headed outside to do some winter tracking at Bechtel Park. Thanks to the birding skills of two accomplished birders in our group we also had a chance to see a Long-Eared Owl tucked in among the spruce trees! The Owl Prowl in early February was a resounding

success! Not only did we see a beautiful Barred Owl peering down at us as we walked along the trail, but we also had a close encounter with a Great Horned Owl. Immediately after calling for the owl we heard a bark-like call respond. (I assumed it was a dog or coyote.) But after several calls the owl flew to a tree directly across the river from where we were standing, continuing with the bark-like calls. Then the owl flew to a tree beside us and perched directly overhead, changing her call to the expected Great Horned call. Apparently the first call was telling us she was a girl!

Thanks to Michelle MacMillan for leading our winter survival outing at SpruceHaven. Teens learned how to build a "quinzee", a traditional shelter used by the Athabaskan people. They also learned how to use a steel rod and flint to start a fire, and how difficult it was to keep the flames going. In the end, after much perseverance, all were successful.

Another volunteer, Carla Aquino, shared her experiences as a bat researcher in the Amazon with the teens in early March. Afterwards the teens constructed several bat boxes to be mounted on the barn at SpruceHaven in the spring.

Thank you to the teens, who have made it a great winter to be outside, and to all the wonderful volunteers who help make it happen. Can't wait to see what the spring will bring!



Photos: (left) Roderick Hornby; (right) Anita Smith

Waterloo Region Nature Kids!

By *Rachelle Swayze*

Nature Kids has been busy exploring and learning together! In September we explored Bechtel Park looking for signs of animals and in October we learned about photographing nature and then took some beautiful photos at Breithaupt Park. We explored Huron Natural Area in November and in December we trimmed trails at SpruceHaven. January's outing was at *rare* Charitable Research Reserve where we learned about Wilderness Survival including how to make a snow shelter called a 'quinzee'. This was such a fun outing! Hand-feeding chickadees was a big hit at our February birding outing at Riverside Park in Cambridge.

Please see <https://waterlooregionnature.ca/kids-events/> for details and photos of our adventures.

We are excited about our upcoming spring outings: a predator-prey game in March, a community litter clean up in recognition of Earth Day in April and a pond study in May. It is great to be out in nature learning and playing together!

A Big Day for Moths, continued

By *Alan Macnaughton*



We returned the next morning at dawn (see picture). The beautiful adult Pitcher Plant Borer Moth was in the traps in good numbers. For the Epauletted Pitcher Plant Moth, we employed a different strategy: we looked for pitchers that the caterpillars had sewn shut, to look like balloons. (The moths emerge earlier in the year and rarely come to light.) Several were found, and on shore we cut open the pitchers to find the caterpillars at the base (see attached picture). Success for both species!

There was an unexpected bonus: one trap contained the Blueberry Dart (*Coenophila opacifrons*; see attached picture), another provincially uncommon moth which, like the other two, had been known in southwestern Ontario only from the upper Bruce Peninsula. What other species remain to be found in this special habitat? We will be back, for sure.

One concern about the future of Grass Lake is the extent of *Phragmites* infestation. This invasive reed grows more than six feet tall in dense stands at Grass Lake, covering perhaps one-fifth of the area. It is expected to expand rapidly and could take over the entirety of the fen within five years if steps are not taken to prevent its spread. Areas of the *Sphagnum* mat where *Phragmites* is already established should be prioritized for eradication of this invasive species.



Top: Sunrise over Grass Lake, Photo: Jeff Leader
Bottom: (left) Blueberry Dart and (right) Epauletted Pitcher Plant Moth (early-instar caterpillar) Photos: Alan Macnaughton

WRN News and Notes

Waterloo Region Nature is currently looking for a [Membership Director](#).

Terms are two years in length or join as a Director-at-Large on a one year term to learn the ropes.

We welcome interested members to sit in on a board meeting or shadow a current board member before committing.

Contact
pastpresident@waterlooregionnature.ca
to inquire about openings.

The Laurier Sustainability Office held the Laurier 2040 Challenge: Mapping Climate Action on Oct 8. This challenge had students build a net-zero Laurier campus by 2040 and the winning team won \$500. They had a choice to donate to a charity or receive the winnings on their student code. They ended up choosing WRN.



Photo: Jade Anderson

A Letter to Waterloo Region Nature, from Amy Burke

Thank you to everyone in Waterloo Region Nature, although I must admit, I still think of the organization as the Kitchener-Waterloo Field Naturalist club because that was how Larry (Lamb) referred to it when we were first married.

The emails, cards and phone calls from various members of Waterloo Region Nature that were sent during Larry's long and difficult illness meant the world to us both. Larry always enjoyed hearing about what everyone was doing and all the various events scheduled by the club. Knowing that there were still people who cared about nature and were trying to thwart governments trying to repeal environmental protections made Larry feel better and have hope for the future. Larry joined the Kitchener-Waterloo Field Naturalists when he was only 11 or 12 years old and stayed a member a very long time. I know Larry served as President at one point, and I am sure he held other positions too, in an effort to preserve nature and ensure it was being well managed. Over the years, Larry belonged to many environmental groups and served on their Boards of Directors but I think Waterloo Region Nature remained the organization that was closest to his heart. He was always so proud of what the club accomplished, the many outings organized and the education of local residents about nature in the Region.

Larry stayed in touch with so many people from Waterloo Region Nature even after we moved to Woodstock almost ten years ago. He was always grateful to the adults who took him under their wings when he joined the club as a child and, in turn, he loved working with younger members of the club as time went on.

I would like to thank everyone for the lovely sympathy card after Larry died in July last year. I am sorry it has taken me so long to say thank you but writing all the thank you notes I owed to people has been overwhelming. Thank you again for your kindness.

Membership Report

By Judy Watson

A reminder to members to renew your membership for the September 1, 2024 to August 31, 2025 year. You can renew online or you can mail a cheque along with the renewal form you can print from the WRN website. <https://waterlooregionnature.ca/membership/>

Thank you to our donors!

Paul and Pat Bigelow

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Chris and Michael Witmer

Anonymous Donors

Waterloo Region Nature was delighted to receive a special donation from a three year old child. She was asked who she wanted her Ontario Taxpayer Rebate of \$200 to be donated to. She said she wanted it to be donated to nature!

Welcome to our new members!

Ted Creese

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At the St Jacobs Market (over 600 puzzles)

Ontario Nature Report

By Janet Ozaruk

Everyone is encouraged to check out Ontario Nature's volunteer opportunity board at <https://ontarionature.org/take-action/volunteer/>! ON is striving to match people who want to volunteer with environmental organizations that are seeking volunteers. The postings are from Ontario Nature and the 150 member groups that form the Nature Network.

Attend an Atlas-3 Sappy Hour! Sappy Hour is a webinar series aimed at providing additional information on the third Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas (Atlas-3). Each Sappy Hour event is an hour-long and generally includes a 20- to 30-minute presentation followed by Q&A. Upcoming topics include Dealing with Gaps (March 11) and Trivia Night (April 8). You can register for upcoming Sappy Hours [here](#). Recordings from previous Sappy Hour events can be found on the [Atlas YouTube channel](#).

After 19 years, Caroline Schultz is retiring from her role as Ontario Nature's executive director at the end of April this year.

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Membership details at:
[waterlooregionnature.ca/
membership/](https://waterlooregionnature.ca/membership/)

**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

"The Heron" is the official publication of WRN. Information is written and submitted by volunteer members of the club. Articles reflect the views of the authors and are not necessarily the views endorsed by the WRN club. The Heron is published three times per year. Please see page 2 for details.

Print copies of the newsletter are available at meetings free of charge to members. Newsletters available on our web site at:

[https://
waterlooregionnature.ca/
newsletter/](https://waterlooregionnature.ca/newsletter/)

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www.ontarionature.org/