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Newsletter of the Halton / North Peel Naturalist Club

Volume 42, Number 1

September-October 2007

Club Activities

Indoor: Meetings begin at 7:30 pm on the second Tuesday of the month, October to June at St. Andrew's United Church, 89 Mountainview Road South (at Sinclair) in Georgetown unless stated otherwise.

Sept. 11: Boreal Forests. Jen Baker, Boreal Campaign Coordinator, Ontario Nature will speak on the importance of this ecosystem and the proposed development threats.

Oct. 11: To be announced. The annual general meeting will follow the presentation.

Nov. 13: To be announced.

Outdoor: Trips begin at the Niagara Escarpment Commission (NEC) parking lot at Guelphand Mountainview Road, Georgetown unless stated otherwise. If you would like to meet the group at the trip site, please speak to the trip leader for the location and directions to the starting point.

Sept. 16: Forks of the Credit Provincial Park. Don Scallon will be leading this outing. Meet 1:00 at the NEC.

Oct. 14: Currie Tract. Marg Wilkes will be leading this hike. Meet 9:30 at the NEC or 10:00 at Marg's house – 5393 Campbellville Road (east of Hilton Falls). For more details call Marg at (905) 878-6255.

Oct. 25: Parks Canada Discover Centre. Leader – Sheldon MacGregor. This is an after hours private group visit of the Discovery Center including a guided tour and short film in the theater. The centre features 3 galleries each exploring a different theme. Displays and interactive exhibits feature Canada's heritage through our system of national protected and important areas, the culture and interactions with our varied marine areas, and a simulated Voyage of Discovery including a scientists' cabin. For more information visit their website at: www.pc.gc.ca/canada/decouvertes-discovery/index_E.asp. Space is limited. Pre-register with Sheldon at smcgrego@scj.com or (905) 304-8282. Admission fee of \$5.45 for adults, and \$2.95 for children 16 and under is payable at door. Meet at 7:15 p.m. at Parks Canada Discovery Centre at 57 Guise Street East, Hamilton,

Young Naturalists

Note: Meetings and outings begin at 1:00 pm the last Saturday of the month. Contact Nancy and Andy Kovacs (905) 702-1132.

President's Message

Greetings to all of our long-time club members, plus any new readers! I hope that everyone had a great summer (it can't really almost be over, can it?). I'm sure that there will be many stories of summer travels to exotic and not-so-distant locales to share at our September meeting, and I look forward to viewing member's nature photos in December. As for Andrew and I, as many of you know, we embarked on a fantastic adventure of another type this summer. Our daughter Sierra Lynne was born healthy on July 13. The time since has been a bit of a blur of feedings and diaper changes too numerous to count, and she is growing as fast as the unchecked bindweed in our garden (well, almost)! Right now I am learning to type with her in a sling around my neck. It has been great having the summer off work, but we have been too busy with the day-to-day baby stuff to embark on any serious nature outings. There will be time for that in the future, and it will certainly be fun to introduce Sierra to the world of "creepy-crawlies" out there! We hope that she will be quiet enough to bring her to a few meetings this fall, so we can show her off!

On a club note, in May, Andrew Kellman accepted the *2007 Conservation Award of Excellence* on behalf of our club from Conservation Halton. Our club along with other participating organizations was recognized for our efforts in the development of the Halton Natural Areas Inventory. Bill McIlveen has primarily been the driving force behind our involvement, and we wish to thank him for his efforts. The club received a framed colour certificate and a copy of the coffee table book, *Halton, Rising, Wild and Beckoning*. We are uncertain where to permanently house this material, and are open to suggestions.

Finally, we are still looking for people willing to step up to the plate to help out with the executive this fall. Nearly all of the positions are available to anyone interested, as many of our current members have served on the executive for a number of years and are looking for new challenges. Andrew and I feel that we will no longer both be able to commit as much time to the club with our new family responsibilities. Please contact any member of the executive if you're interested in serving, or would like to nominate anyone for our October elections.

Sincerely,
Kelly Bowen

Halton/North Peel Naturalist Club, Box 115, Georgetown, Ontario L7G 4T1

Executive

President: Kelly Bowen (905) 873-7338
Past-President Andy Kovacs (905) 702-1132
Vice-President: Andrew Kellman (905) 873-7338
Secretary: Janice Sukhiani (905) 693-8227
Treasurer: Marg Wilkes (905) 878-6255

Appointments

Membership: Christine Williams (905) 877-1539
Newsletter: Gerda Potzel (905) 702-1681
Ontario Nature Representative: Teresa Rigg
Public Relations: Vacant
Young Naturalists: Nancy Kovacs (905) 702-1132

Membership for one year: \$20 Single; \$30 Family
The Halton/North Peel Naturalist Club is an affiliated member of Ontario Nature

Email submissions/questions/concerns to: gpotzel@sympatico.ca
<http://haltonnorthpeelnaturalists.org>

CONE Annual General Meeting 2007

Sunday, October 14, 2007 – Annual General Meeting, Coalition on the Niagara Escarpment (CONE), 11:30 am to 2:30 pm, Mono Community Centre, 754483 Mono Centre Road, Mono Centre (north of Orangeville). Catch up with CONE happenings, learn more about the Biosphere Reserve, enjoy the escarpment and take in the fall colours. Guest speaker – Sean Liipere who will share his wealth of knowledge and experience from the Bruce Peninsula Biosphere Association. Bring picnic lunch. Beverages will be provided. There will be a silent auction with all proceeds in support of CONE's work to protect the escarpment.

Spring and Summer 2007 - Outing Reports

Spring of 2007 was a busy time for the HNPNC in terms of outings, and I was really pleased to see a great member turn out for many of the events. Of course I meant to write a summary of the events months ago, but didn't. Therefore, I will have to rely on my somewhat baby-fatigued memory for the details!

Beamer's Hawk Watch – April 21

This was a gorgeous, sunny, warm spring day, and a number of people turned out for Ray Blower's adventure. The first stop was the Scotch Block Reservoir, where a variety of waterfowl were observed (albeit from afar in most cases). We lingered for a while in the sunshine and watched a downy woodpecker excavate a nest cavity in a tree right beside the road. At LaSalle Park in Burlington, we were greeted by many mute and trumpeter swans and an assortment of ducks, mostly mallards. The large rafts of migrant waterfowl that occupy the harbour during the winter months had largely moved on. From afar, we spotted a few red necked grebes.

We finally reached Beamer's conservation area in the early afternoon. The gorgeous sunny weather that we were enjoying turned out not to be so great for hawk watching, as the raptors had taken advantage of the strong thermals and climbed to great heights. We still spotted a number of dark specks on high, mostly the larger raptors and vultures. Besides red tails, these included ravens, broad winged hawks, osprey, bald eagle, merlin and northern harrier. The smaller accipiters were harder to spot in the bright sky. It never ceases to amaze me how the expert hawk watching volunteers can identify raptors from kilometres away! Closer to the ground, we spotted chimney swifts, a brown thrasher and hermit thrush, along with the usual passerine suspects. A cardinal and a flicker battled it out for vocal supremacy.

We also enjoyed a nice spring walk around the escarpment edge, observing the new plant life springing from the soil. Once back at the clearing with the observation tower, the less ambitious of us opted to hawk watch by lying on a picnic table and gazing up at the sky, while a few went for a second hike. One of the more unusual events of the afternoon was watching

dead leaves and pieces of paper fluttering out of an empty sky. Given our high elevation, so we had no idea where they originated, but they must have been sucked up by some kind of updraft. Strange!

Mount Nemo Conservation Area – April 29

We were treated to another gorgeous spring day for this outing. Although we didn't find anything too unusual on this hike, it was great to explore an area that most of us were relatively unfamiliar. The spring wildflowers were beginning their show, and the abundant red elderberries were in full bloom in the deciduous part of the forest. We did find a mutant white trillium which possessed an extra whorl of leaves, petals and stamens, and the largest petals were mostly green. Apparently genetic mutations are quite common in trilliums, and are thought to be caused by viral or bacterial infection.



Along the cliff edge the trail was dominated by old cedars, and the undergrowth was sparse. The view from the cliff top is very good, and on a clear day the Toronto skyline is visible. Turkey vultures soared by, some passing below us. I always like this vantage point of the large birds – they make flight look so effortless! One sad finding of the outing was a dead snake just off the trail. It appeared to have been thoughtlessly stepped on by a hiker. Why do people find it necessary to kill snakes that are doing them no harm? Something I'll never understand...

Credit River Canoe Trip – May 6

On this outing we weren't quite so lucky with the weather, as the day was cool with a chilly wind blowing in from Lake Ontario. Regardless, about 10 people showed up at the Port Credit marina and we launched our canoes into the slow moving river. We paddled upstream past some pretty incredible real estate. So this is how the other half lives... The most amazing house was located right on the riverbank just above the water level with a huge terraced patio, and had a

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boathouse under the house. And we thought we had a wet basement! We wondered how one possible obtained a permit to build so close to the river. Are the lessons of Hurricane Hazel being forgotten?

In terms bird life, we found generally what one would expect at a southern Ontario river mouth – great blue herons, black crowned night herons, a great egret, common and Caspian terns, mute and trumpeter swans, a kingfisher, and of course mallards and Canada geese. We also found a

bank swallow colony, a muskrat, and less desirably, two decomposing male white tailed deer, including antlers. We pondered how they ended up in the river. We paddled upriver as far as we could, our way finally blocked by rocky shallows upstream of the QEW. At this point, we pulled ashore onto a small island and ate lunch. Being seven months pregnant added an extra element of challenge to balancing on a suspended log while launching the canoe back out into the current. Hopefully our next canoe outing will be with baby Sierra on board! We look forward to new adventures with her!

Andrew Kellman



Andrew Kellman and Kelly Bowen with the 2007 *Conservation Award of Excellence*
(see *President Message*, page 2 for details)

Local Sightings

Despite one American Woodcock nest getting destroyed in the spring, another nest of the same species was successful, and fledged young were found in another area of the UCC Norval Outdoor School property, when Forest Bird Monitoring sites were being attended to.

Mid -summer there were four *Cecropia* moth's in the area of the security lights, over a period of three weeks.

Also we found a beautiful *Polyphemus* moth in the arboretum during the day My maintenance helper had never seen one before. Talk about a close up look at it! The moth landed on his arm and spent a few minutes resting there.

Gerry Doekes

Halton/North Peel Naturalist Club

Membership for September 2007 to September 2008

_____ Renewal or _____ New Member(s)

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Postal Code: _____ Telephone: _____

E-mail: _____

_____ Single (\$20.00) _____ Family (\$30.00)

Do you have any suggestions for programs or field trips?

WAIVER OF LIABILITY

(**must** be signed by anyone planning to attend field trips or other outdoor activities)

In making this application, I affirm that I am in good health, capable of performing the exercise required to participate, and that I accept as my personal risk the hazards of such participation and will not hold the Halton/North Peel Naturalist Club or its representatives responsible.

In consideration of the Halton/North Peel Naturalist Club accepting my application, I hereby and forever release and discharge the Halton/North Peel Naturalist Club and its officers, directors, servants and agents from any liability whatsoever arising as a result of my participation in these trips and declare that this is binding upon me, my heirs, executors, administrators and assigned.

Signature(s): _____ Date: _____

_____ Date: _____

Please fill out this form and bring it in to next indoor meeting. or mail with payment to:

Please complete the survey on page 6 prior to mailing!

Halton/North Peel Naturalist Club,
P.O. Box 115,
Georgetown, Ontario,
L7G 4T1

Halton/North Peel Naturalist Club Survey

To help your executive decide what speakers to get, outings to go on and to help the club grow and be more active, we are asking for your input in the future direction of your club.

Please circle your answer.

Please feel free to add any comments or suggestions at the bottom.

- | | | |
|---|-----|----|
| 1. Are you satisfied with the current outings mixture? | Yes | No |
| 2. Are you satisfied with the monthly speaker mix? | Yes | No |
| 3. Would you be interested in a canoe outing to Luther Marsh or Minising Swamp? | Yes | No |
| 4. Would you be interested in an outing to Carden Alvar? | Yes | No |
| 5. Would you be interested in an outing to Rock Glen (NW of London)? | Yes | No |
| 6. Would you like to hear a talk on geology? | Yes | No |
| 7. Are you willing to assist in promoting the club to the community? | Yes | No |
| 8. Are you willing to sit on the executive or assist the executive? | Yes | No |

Comments/suggestions

