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Newsletter of the Halton / North Peel Naturalist Club

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Volume 42, Number 5

## Club Activities

May-June 2008

**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.

**June 10: Walk the New Boardwalk at Silver Creek.** Evening outing will be led by Scott Sampson, Senior Natural Heritage Ecologist, Credit Valley Conservation. Meet 7:00 pm at the Silver Creek School parking lot, 9th Line and Fallbrook Trail (27<sup>th</sup> Sideroad).

**Sept. 9: Mysterious and Marvelous Monarch Migration: Monarch Butterfly Workshop Presentation and Tagging.** Kerry Jarvis will conduct a workshop presentation on the life cycle of monarchs and their fall migration to Mexico. There will be a series of field trips in September and October to tag monarchs at various locations in Halton Hills. **Location will be announced.**

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**Outdoor:** Trips begin at the Niagara Escarpment Commission (NEC) parking lot at Mountainview Road and Guelph Street, 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.

**May 18: Thickson Wood Spring Birding, Whitby.** Meeting times and locations to be arranged with trip leader, Ray Blower, (519) 853-0171 in Acton or (905) 444-9454 in Whitby. This trip is scheduled on the Sunday of the Victoria Day weekend to minimize the effect of traffic on participants coming from points west. Meeting times at Thickson Wood can be arranged for any time between 06:00 to 11:00, if the weather is reasonable. Lynde Shores Conservation Area and Cranberry Marsh are the other places visited. All locations are near the cool Lake Ontario, so bring warm clothing, binoculars, scope, water, lunch, hat and sunscreen. These places provide a variety of habitats including mature forest, meadows, marshes, swamps, scrub land and Lake Ontario. Almost any song bird may be seen as well as a variety of the "late" ducks.

**May 31: Heronry Outing.** Laurie Reed's 11331 15 Sideroad. This is an exceptional opportunity to observe a heronry and wetland from a viewing platform. Those with scopes, please bring them. Those with hip waiters can explore parts of the wetland. Directions: take 15 Sideroad west of Highway 25. Turn right onto the 4<sup>th</sup> Line and go north for about one kilometre. Laurie's place is on the east side – stone house and barn back from the road. For more information call Mike Davis, (905) 877-9665. Meet at the NEC at 1:00 pm or at Laurie Reed's at 1:30 pm.

**Sept. 13: Electrofishing in Silver Creek at Norval.** Bob Morris will be the leader. Meet at the baseball diamond parking lot in Norval at 9:00 am.

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**Evening Walks – Summer 2008 – Complete Schedule See Page 7**

## President's Message

Well, Kelly has been quite busy with Sierra, going back to work at the beginning of May and cleaning up the gardens for the spring. I, Andrew, am taking an attempt at the President's address in between my duties as a stay-at-home dad for the next two months.

These past two months have been hectic for us but the club has been full of activities. We have heard that turnout has been good for most outings. There was Long Point, Beamers, Charles Hildebrandt's place, Halton Regional Forests and Fiona Reid's. Not to mention the people heading out when the frogs started calling and the salamanders spawning. The first signs of spring came on in force this year when the temperature warmed up into the 20s in mid-April and the trilliums were coming out along with blood root, blue cohosh, trout lilies and spring beauties.

The process has started with getting the new club web site up. Hopefully by the end of the summer it will be fully up and running. We at least have the new domain name now: [www.hnpnc.com](http://www.hnpnc.com).

At the March meeting, Don Scallen gave a wonderful audio-video presentation on frogs. It was held at the Georgetown Cultural Centre and was standing room only event, with over 70 people in attendance. It was nice to see the community come out to hear about the perils frogs face in our changing local environment. Hopefully it will enhance the way people think about the changes we face and how we affect something so small in our own backyards. We need something to help eat all those black flies that we saw at Limehouse today! A donation box at the March meeting raised over \$80 for C.O.N.E, and a silent auction generated over \$220 for the club. Thanks to everyone who donated items!

On April 26, Kelly, Marg Wilkes and Ray Blower set up our club's promotional display at the Town of Halton Hills Earth Day event at the works yard. This is the annual affair with free compost and wood chips, \$5 native trees and shrubs for sale, and a number of environmentally-minded groups educating the public with their displays. The morning seemed worthwhile, as we had a number of interested people drop by our display. Many told us that they had been members in the past; hopefully they will check us out again!

On a personal note, Kelly and I have bought a house in Burlington, so we will be moving at the end of July so Kelly is close to work. It is near La Salle Park, so if you are looking at swans and ducks in the winter stop on by. We are cheaper than Tim Horton's and Kelly's hot chocolate is much better! Despite the move, we hope to stay involved with the club in some capacity next year, so we hope to see you at some of the outings!

*Andrew Kellman*

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 873-0614  
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  
Charitable number: 869778761RR0001

## Thank you Anne!

The Young Naturalists Club received a donation of \$50 from Anne French in memory of Hazel Cudmore, and Tatsuo Sanmiya.

## Long Point Trip, Saturday March 15, 2008

With the imitable Raymond Blower at the helm members of the club voyaged deep into the wilds of southwestern Ontario on this splendid sunny day in search of tundra swans and other ornithological treasures. The trip south was somewhat tense due to repeated navigational disagreements between our fearless leader and a backseat driver whose anonymity I will protect by merely mentioning his initials: R.E. Luckily for those two, Betty Ann(dreti) Goldstein (the driver) and yours truly, stepped up to diffuse a potentially incendiary situation.

The apex of the disagreement between Ray and R.E. occurred when R.E. advised a detour around the urban conflagration of Simcoe. Ray however was steadfast in his determination to press on through the heart of this urban morass, suggesting coyly that we might have the opportunity to view the wily *Anas platyrhynchos* in the ponds of that fair burg. And we did! *Anas p.* or for those of you less scientifically acute - the mallard duck - abounded! We thanked Ray effusively and R. E. was rather contrite.

Equanimity again reigned supreme and we arrived at Long Point to a welcoming party consisting of George and Marg Wilkes. Larry Martin and his young sidekick Allister would eventually join us as well.

The swans didn't disappoint. Hundreds honked and prattled about in the fields and squadrons of these whiter than white birds sailed in overhead. Against the deep blue sky of this day they were breathtaking. Raptors abounded as well. Red-tails and rough legged hawks were abundant in open country. We also recorded kestrels, marsh hawks and an immature bald eagle at the Long Point bird banding station.

The raptor highlight of the day however was a merlin dining demurely on sparrow at

Fisherville. We roared up just in time to frighten it from its fence post perch and inflame the passions of a stealthy photographer approaching from the opposite direction who, just at that moment, had finally found it in his viewfinder.

Fisherville also yielded its trademark owls. When the failed merlin photographer calmed down he told us about a long-eared owl in a red cedar. We quickly reconnoitered the cedar and found the bird in its characteristic pose snuggled firmly against the trunk of the tree. Smugly satisfied by our remarkable discovery we then scoured the countryside for short-eared owls. We were just about to call it a day when my sharp eyes detected one of them huddled inconspicuously in a Scot's pine. Deciding not to admonish it for choosing a non-native roosting tree, I alerted the others to my find. They were grateful of course and we quickly gathered about the tree and in the process frightened the owl into flight along with two more that materialized magically from the foliage.

On this fine day we also stopped at the Nanticoke Generating Station on Lake Erie where waterfowl shamelessly enjoy the warm water flowing out of that greenhouse gas spewing monolith. R.E. promised us loons here but unfortunately they were lying low, probably embarrassed by a recent Quirks and Quarks expose that labeled them as bloodthirsty killers. Ducks were plentiful however and we saw our first great blue heron of the season.

All in all a wonderful field trip. My thanks to Ray Blower who endured scurrilous innuendo from the backseat about his navigational prowess and to the anonymous R.E. who enlivened the dreary trip south with some sage comments about our leader's directional deficiencies.

*by Don Scallen*



## Halton Regional Forest Stewardship Advisory Committee

Our April 15<sup>th</sup> meeting was enlivened by guest speaker, Lisa Grbinicek, Environmental Planner/Monitoring Ecologist, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. She spoke about the forest monitoring in the regional forests. It seems monitoring is done much like Bill McIlveen et al carried out in the Crozier property: divide off lots with tape, count, mark, and measure trees, etc. Lisa also stated the Ministry of Natural Resources takes note of plantations of invasive species like dog-strangling vine, and also unusual species of trees. She mentioned cork elm, of which I had never heard, and showed slides of it. I must question Charles Hildebrand about it.

Ron Reinhold advised the committee that new gates have now been installed on nearly all regional forest entrances. They are brown and

sturdily cemented in on both ends. New signage will soon be erected at most entrances also. They will advise users to please remove their garbage, walk only on the roads, and contain symbols indicating allowed activities.

The Committee welcomed two new members, one from the Wellington-Grand Trail Riders Association, and the other from the Oakville Cycling Club.

The representative from Conservation Halton advised us that they will very soon begin aerial spraying in Burlington for gypsy moth. Spraying cannot eradicate the moth. It will merely hold it in check. Conservation Halton considers thirteen egg masses to be a great infestation.

*by Marg Wilkes*



### Ontario Crayfish

Because crayfish distributions are changing so rapidly, you may be the first to identify and report a particular species in a place where it has not been known to science.

**FIND OUT** – what to record, tips for observation, safety and ethics, what and when to collect, who to contact. Visit: [www.crayfishontario.ca](http://www.crayfishontario.ca) or email Andrew Kellman and he will send you a pdf copy of the species chart – [andrew.kellman@sympatico.ca](mailto:andrew.kellman@sympatico.ca).

Sponsored by Bishop Mills Natural History Centre, Toronto Zoo, and Ontario Nature.

## Goodbye to Zebra Mussels?

By now, nearly everyone will have at least heard about zebra mussels having invaded the Great Lakes. Chances are most people are not as familiar with its cousin the ouagga mussel. The purpose of this article is not to get heavily into the biology and the environmental problems posed by these species but to let the readers know about the shift in species and how to distinguish between the two.

A comparison of the two mussel species is presented in Table 1. The species are generally rather similar in their biology and their appearance in the Great Lakes came at nearly the same time. Zebra mussels were the first to colonize the lakes but more recently, notably in Lake Ontario, they have been supplanted by the ouagga mussel [2].

*Continued on next page....*

Category	Zebra Mussel	Quagga Mussel
Scientific Name	<i>Dreissena polymorpha</i> (Pallas)	<i>Dreissena bugensis</i> (Andrusov)
Origin	Black Sea near Ukraine and Russia	Black Sea near Ukraine and Russia
Discovery Date in North America	Arrived 1985 or 1986 but discovered in 1988 in Lake St. Clair and Lake Erie	Found near Port Colborne 1989 but not recognized until 1991
Shell	Triangular shape, byssal (ventral side flat; conspicuous ridge between side and bottom	Rounder sides, byssal side rounded, ridge lacking
Colour	Variable colours and patterns, usually dark	Pale near hinge, dark concentric rings on the shell
Byssal	Large groove in middle of flat side	Small byssal groove near the hinge
Depth	1-30 meters, rarely below 15 m	1-107 meters, common to 30 m
Temperature	32° to 86° C	32° to 86° C
Preferred	12° to 20° C	4° to 20° C

Overall, the two species are similar in appearance; however, the flat side of the valves of zebra mussel shells distinguishes it from the quagga. A zebra mussel shell can stand on its flattened edge while the quagga cannot do this. quagga mussels prefer deeper and cooler water temperatures than do the zebra mussels.

Over the years, I have collected shells of many mollusks. In view of the reported change in species distribution in the Great Lakes, I examined the mussel shells in my collection and

counted the numbers of valves of each of the two Dreissenid species from sites sampled on Lake Erie and Lake Ontario (Table 2, Figure 1). The sample size is admittedly rather small, nevertheless, the composition of the populations is entirely consistent with more detailed studies.

In the 1990s, my collections were all of zebra mussel but more recent collections were dominated by quagga mussels. This pattern was also borne out in recent visual observations where I did not collect specimens.

Date	Location	Shells		% of Sample	
		Zebra	Quagga	Zebra	Quagga
7-Nov-1992	Bronte Harbour	36	0	100.0%	0.0%
1-May-1993	Bronte Harbour	10	0	100.0%	0.0%
25-Jul-1993	Point Pelee	8	0	100.0%	0.0%
19-Sep-1993	Burlington Beach	4	0	100.0%	0.0%
2-Oct-1993	Leslie Street	4	0	100.0%	0.0%
2-Oct-1993	Leslie Street	10	0	100.0%	0.0%
15-Oct-1994	Burlington Beach	6	0	100.0%	0.0%
22-Apr-2001	Ratray Marsh	2	12	14.3%	85.7%
16-Oct-2007	Ratray Marsh	6	176	3.3%	96.7%



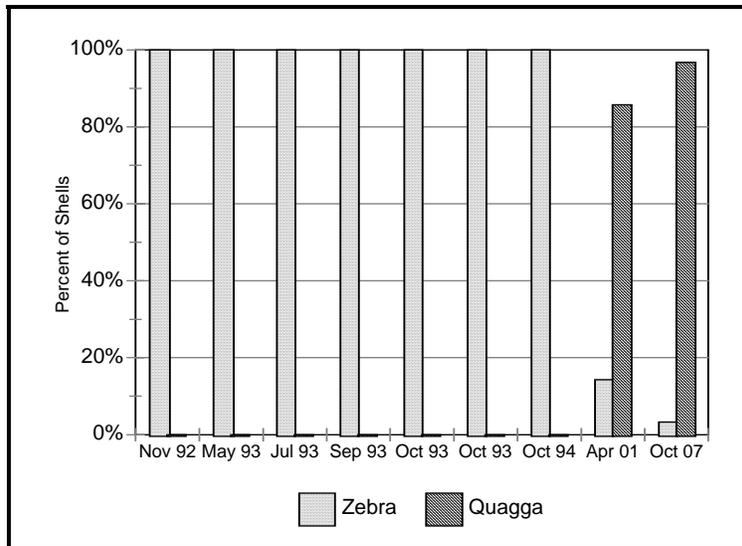


Figure 1 Species composition of mussel samples collected on Lake Ontario and Lake Erie, 1992 to 2007.

The full ecological impact of the invading mussels has yet to be determined. It is known that the great capacity for the mussels to filter water has made the lakes clearer. This allows sunlight to penetrate deeper which in turn allows the alga *Cladophora* to proliferate over larger areas of the lake bottom. As well, the digestion of organic materials by the mussels allows the mussels to release new supplies of available phosphorus in their feces. Phosphorus is critically limiting to algal growth in the lakes so even a small increment in available phosphorus causes large changes in the amount of algae that can grow, particularly the *Cladophora*. Too much algae however can be inhibitory to the development of mussels.

The introduction of the round goby may reduce populations of the mussels but may also cause harm to native fish species. Another factor that may negatively affect mussels is freshwater sponges that can overgrow the mussels, at least

in localized areas [1]. We have so much to learn but, at this stage, we can only anticipate that at least one of the introduced mussels will be with us for a very long time.

#### References

1. Ricciardi, A., F.L. Snyder, D.O. Kelch, and H.M. Reisinger. 1995. Lethal and sublethal effects of sponge overgrowth on introduced dreissenid mussels in the Great Lakes - St. Lawrence River system. *Can. J. Fish. Aquat. Sci.* Vol. 52: 2695-2703.
2. Wilson, K.A., E.T. Howell, and D.A. Jackson. 2006. Replacement of Zebra Mussels by Quagga Mussels in the Canadian Nearshore of Lake Ontario: the Importance of Substrate, Round Goby Abundance, and Upwelling Frequency. *J. Great Lakes Res.* 32:11-28.

by W.D. McIlveen

#### Invasive Plant Species Workshop and Inventory, June 26, 2008 9:00 am to 3:00 pm

Riverwood's MacEwan Field Station, 4190 Riverwood Park Lane

Learn about invasive plant species and help out with the development of an Invasive Species Management Plan for Riverwood, one of Mississauga's hidden natural gems. Registration is required for this FREE workshop, due to limited space. To register, call (905) 670-1615 ext. 411 or e-mail [ptripodo@creditvalleycons.com](mailto:ptripodo@creditvalleycons.com).

#### The 2008 Halton Enviro Guide is now available!

A pdf copy of the guide is available - <http://www.the-hen.net/images/stories/2008haltonenviroguide72.pdf>. Hard copies of the guide are available at Town Halls, libraries, community centres, and various businesses in Burlington, Halton Hills, Milton, and Oakville. Published by the Halton Environment Network.

**Naturalist Club Evening Walks - Summer 2008**  
**Halton/North Peel Naturalists and South Peel Naturalist Clubs**

This year, our evening walks will focus on green spaces within the Peel Natural Areas Inventory Study Area. This focus will help with data collection to support that project.

All walks are on Mondays and start at the meet location at 7:00pm sharp.

Please wear appropriate clothing and footwear and be prepared for biting insects.

Date	Destination	Leader	Meeting Location
19-May	Erindale Park	W.D McIlveen	Erindale Park, Dundas St.
26-May	Scottsdale Farm	W.D McIlveen	Mississauga Rd at Hwy 401
2-Jun	Riverwood	Audrey Oswald	Riverwood Gardens, Burnhamthorpe Rd
9-Jun	Meadowvale Conserv Area	Paul Tripodo	CVC Office, Old Derry Road
16-Jun	Walking Fern Trail	Dawn Renfrew	Mississauga Rd at Hwy 401
23-Jun	Ratray Marsh	Kirsten Burling	Green Glade School
30-Jun	Terra Cotta C.A.	Dawn Renfrew	Mississauga Rd at Hwy 401
7-Jul	Inglewood Slope Forest	W.D McIlveen	Mississauga Rd at Hwy 401
14-Jul	Symmes property	W.D McIlveen	Mississauga Rd at Hwy 401
21-Jul	Caledon Trailway	W.D McIlveen	Mississauga Rd at Hwy 401
28-Jul	Irwin Quarry, Silver Creek	W.D McIlveen	Mississauga Rd at Hwy 401
4-Aug	Terra Cotta Trail, Cheltenham	W.D McIlveen	Mississauga Rd at Hwy 401
11-Aug	Terra Cotta Woods	Dawn Renfrew	Mississauga Rd at Hwy 401
18-Aug	Cawthra Woods	W.D McIlveen	Cawthra Arena Parking Lot
25-Aug	Eldorado Park	W.D McIlveen	Mississauga Rd at Hwy 401

Meeting location descriptions: (In larger parking lots, we will try to meet at places nearest the entrance)

**Erindale Park** – Located just east of Credit River and north of Dundas

**Mississauga Road at Hwy 401** – Commuter parking lot west of Mississauga Road and north of Highway 401. Not conspicuous. Stop light at entrance

**Riverwood Gardens** - 1401 Burnhamthorpe West, north side of Burnhamthorpe east of Credit River

**CVC Office** - 1255 Old Derry Road, just west of Credit River

**Green Glade School** – Green Glade Drive off Meadowwood Drive, Clarkson

**Cawthra Arena Parking Lot** - 1399 Cawthra Road., Mississauga, (east side of Cawthra)

**Not as advertised!** Some destinations may change if preliminary site visits determine that a site lacks sufficient interesting items. In such cases, the meeting location will remain unchanged but the trip destination will be altered to a location nearby.

For more information, call Bill McIlveen (519) 853-3948 or cell (905) 867-9294 or  
 Audrey Oswald (905) 820-2571