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Newsletter of the Halton / North Peel Naturalist Club

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Volume 43, Number 2

November-December 2008

## 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.

**Dec. 9: Annual Pot Luck and Members' Night.** Limehouse Hall. Please bring your own plate, mug, cutlery, and a pot luck dish of your choice. If you take nature slides or have other show-and-tell items, please bring some to share with the other members. Doors open at 6:00 pm; dinner 6:30.

**Jan. 13: Travels in Tanzania.** Don Scallon will be giving an audiovisual presentation on his adventures in Tanzania.

**Feb 10: Peel Natural Area Inventory (NAI).** Dawn Renfrew, Coordinator, NAI Project, Credit Valley Conservation will be giving a talk on this project to identify significant and natural heritage features and functions through out the Credit River watershed in Peel.

**Mar 10: Bee Colony Collapse in Ontario.** Alison Skinner, Ontario Beekeepers Association will talk about the research and conclusion for the collapse of the bee populations in Ontario.

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**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.

**Nov. 15: Late Flowering Plants Survey Hike.** Bill McIlveen will be leading this outing to find and identify any flowering plants that are still blooming. Meet at 1:00 pm.

**Dec. 27: Christmas Bird Count.** Each group will have at least one experienced birder, so all participants needn't be birders, just sharp-eyed and keen-eared. There is a \$5.00 fee to participate in the count, to cover the cost of information management and publication of the results. This does not include those who will be counting birds at their feeders – see page 3 for details. If you would like to join the count, call Bill McIlveen at (519) 853-3948 or email [wmcilveen@sympatico.ca](mailto:wmcilveen@sympatico.ca). **More details on page 3.**

**Jan. 18: LaSalle Park and Burlington Area** Meet 10:00 am at the Travelodge, downtown Burlington. Chili lunch at Andrew and Kelly's before leaving for LaSalle Park at 1:30. Call or email Kelly or Andrew so they know who is coming and then maybe a car pool can be arranged from Georgetown - (905) 681-3701 or [andrew.kellman@sympatico.ca](mailto:andrew.kellman@sympatico.ca).

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## President's Message

With the winter season fast approaching, it is time to reflect back and look at what is ahead for the club and the area that surrounds us. The first two meetings of the year were well attended and very interesting talks. In September, our own Kerry Jarvis, talked about the flight of the Monarch butterfly and about tagging them. It was followed up with a tagging outing in Oakville, but unfortunately this was not well attended by club members due to inclement weather. Kelly and I went tagging the following week, and had a lot of fun chasing and releasing them. In October we hosted Kay McKeever from the Owl Foundation who gave a very insightful and humorous talk about the lives of owls and their tremendous efforts to rehabilitate and breed injured birds. We have a couple of copies of her entertaining book available for sale.

October was also our AGM when Kelly stepped down as President and Ray Blower stepped forward to replace her, but for personal reasons was unable to fulfill the role. Therefore, I have assumed the position of President as stated in our Constitution. As a result, the Vice-president position is vacant. We also need someone to be our Ontario Nature representative and look after publicity in Brampton. This a position we would like filled as we do have members in Brampton and would like to try and get more from there. We have also created a new appointed position of webmaster. This position is open to anyone but for now is being run by myself.

I would like to thank Kelly Bowen, Teresa Rigg and Gerry Doekes, on behalf of the club, for all their years of time dedicated to the running of our club. They have done a wonderful job in the different positions they have held.

Our current executive is:

President .. Andrew Kellman	Membership .....Christine Williams
Vice-president.....vacant	Publicity ...Christine Williams (Georgetown)
Past president ..Kelly Bowen	.....Marg Wilkes (Milton)
Secretary .... Janice Sukhiani	Newsletter .....Gerda Potzel
Treasurer.....Marg Wilkes	<b>New –Webmaster.....Andrew Kellman</b>
	Ontario Nature Representative ... <b>vacant</b>

If anyone wishes to be President or Vice-president please let me know as I would like to only fill this position as interim and go back to being Vice-president or webmaster. As we are now living in Burlington, it is difficult to know about and participate in all that is happening in Halton Hills and the surrounding area.

To clarify the roles of the executive, a brief description is provided below:

The **President** shall have the direction of affairs of the club, subject to its regulations. He/she shall preside at all meetings of members and if no other chairperson is appointed, at meeting of the executive board. The **Vice-president** shall assist the president in the execution of his/her duties. In the absence of the president, the Vice-president shall officiate in that office.

I would also like to thank Bette-Ann, Bev and Christine for helping out at the Bruce Trail AGM and the Community Open House, both held in Georgetown this fall. From those two events we had a couple of new members join our club.

We hope to see you all out at our annual December potluck/slide show being held in Limehouse this year. Please email or call us if you wish to present photos (either slide or digital), and that will help us determine time limits. We normally try to keep the time limit to about 5-10 minutes per person.

Any help at all for the Christmas bird count would be appreciated, even if it is for a few hours. It will be on Saturday, December 27<sup>th</sup>.

Sincerely,  
*Andrew Kellman*



## ***Christmas Bird Count***

*Do you watch the birds at your feeder all winter?*

The Halton/North Peel Naturalist Club (HNPNC) invites you to help with the Halton Hills 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Bird Count.

The Christmas Bird Count is a North America-wide effort. Last year our club observed 8,206 birds from 53 different species. The most frequently observed birds were, Canada Goose, European Starling, Mourning Dove, and Black-capped Chickadees.

The Club would appreciate your assistance in collecting data by recording and reporting the number and species of birds you observe on **December 27<sup>th</sup>**.

Report **ONLY** birds observed on **December 27<sup>th</sup>**.

- Report the location where you made the observation (Location could be “backyard on Princess Anne Drive” or “Cedarvale Park”).
- If observations were recorded in more than one location, please keep multiple lists (For example, report 3 Blue Jays in Cedarvale, 10 Gold Finches in backyard).
- If you are not certain which bird you have seen don’t guess, do your best to describe it or do not include it.

You may report your observations by **December 31<sup>st</sup>**, in one of two ways:

- E-mail your observations to [hnpnc@hotmail.com](mailto:hnpnc@hotmail.com) (If you are interested in learning the results for our area, please indicate so in your e-mail).
- Or mail you observations to the HNPNC, P.O. Box 115, Georgetown, Ontario L7G 4T1



### **Royal Botanical Gardens (RBG) presents**

#### **Last Child in the Woods - An evening with Richard Louv**

Award-winning author of *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-deficit Disorder*

**Friday, November 21<sup>st</sup>; 7:00 to 9:00 pm RBG Centre, 680 Plains Road West, Burlington**

In this special presentation, Richard describes the new body of scientific evidence demonstrating just how important direct contact with the outdoors is to healthy child development, touching on such health issues as ADHD, child obesity, stress, creativity and cognitive functioning. He’ll outline practical suggestions for action by parents, grandparents, educators, government and others concerned about the future of childhood and the earth itself.

To reduce his carbon footprint, Richard is presenting from California via a live, interactive, HD video conference, and there will be ample time for questions and answers. Dr. Cheryl Charles, president of the Children & Nature Network that Richard founded, will be on-hand in person.

Please book tickets [online](https://secure.e-registernow.com/cgi-bin/mkpayment.cgi?state=75) (<https://secure.e-registernow.com/cgi-bin/mkpayment.cgi?state=75>) by **November 18**, or call 905-527-1158, ext. 270 (credit card required).

RBG members: \$10; Non-members: \$12.

## Close Encounters with a Ruffed Grouse

The Natural Areas Inventory field work has wrapped up for this year and we're drying our boots out. Our field workers had a very productive season, conducting inventories on over 5000 acres of natural areas, and collecting information on the presence of plant communities, plant species, birds, reptiles and amphibians, mammals, butterflies, damselflies and dragonflies.

Given the amount of rain we had over the summer, we spent a lot of time getting wet in swamps and marshes, but the crews were



undaunted and waded right in. They mapped a lot of uncommon species though and obtained good inventory coverage for the areas they visited. Throughout the fall and

winter we'll be compiling the data into the NAI database and then preparing for next year's field season. It has been very encouraging to see the high quality of many natural areas in the region, and where the areas are privately owned, it is even more encouraging to see the strong sense of



pride and care by the owners and that they value the areas for their natural qualities.

The NAI web pages have received some significant updates so check out the new articles and a new quiz at [www.creditvalleyca.ca/NAI](http://www.creditvalleyca.ca/NAI).

One of the most memorable events of the NAI field season was having a ruffed grouse "hang out" with a crew at an area near Erin. The little fellow turned up when the crew went into the forest and followed them around, day after day. Each day he would come running through the woods when he heard the voices of his new human pals. He was very curious and thoroughly investigated, first the field gear and knapsacks and then the crew themselves, all the while giving voice to his thoughts about the visitors to his forest. He demonstrated some of the things grouse eat, by snapping up various colourful berries he encountered. Several weeks after their main visits to the area, the crew returned one day to collect some last bits of data and were again happily greeted by the grouse. We hope he has a safe winter.

The NAI project receives generous financial support from the Ontario Trillium Foundation.



*Dawn Renfrew*  
Credit Valley Conservation  
Coordinator, Natural Areas Inventory Project



## Visit to the Leslie Street Spit

I had been intending to take a walk on the Leslie Street Spit for thirty years and this year I finally made it. Like the rest of the summer the weather that day was “exciting”. The group of us set off from Unwin Avenue in brilliant sunshine and by the time we reached the lighthouse it was teeming rain. But warm rain, and short-lived, so we were practically dry by the time we finished the ten kilometer walk.



It was the end of June and the wild flowers were very colourful, especially the vipers bugloss. The most extraordinary part of the walk for me was the noise. Not traffic or aircraft; however, as one might think that close to the city and the island airport. I had thought “Frogs” to start with, though it was getting late in the year for them to be so loud. We had walked along the east side of the spit and as we turned following the path toward the west it got louder and louder. Those of you who have visited the Spit in recent years will know exactly what the cacophony was: gulls and cormorants. There are reputed to be 56,000 nesting gulls and more than 7,000 nesting cormorants. The rumours of a need for some culling are discounted in the Friends of the Spit newsletter. However, seeing what has happened to the trees around Burlington Bay, that might become necessary. To find out more about Tommy Thompson Park visit the Friends of the Spit web-site at <http://www.friendsofthespit.ca/> where you will find a link to an excellent video. The Friends say “The Leslie Street Spit is North America's most remarkable public urban wilderness.”

*Valerie Dobson*



Andrew and Sierra - Hiking Hendrie Valley, Burlington, ON

**Protect Our Water and Environmental Resources (POWER)**  
**Annual General Meeting** , Thursday November 20, 2008  
Christ the King High School Auditorium, 6:30 – 10:30 pm  
There will be a special guest speaker as well as our fundraiser Silent Auction

## Pest at Our Door! -The Status of the Emerald Ash Borer Infestation, 2008

Most naturalists and many of the general public are now likely aware of the presence of the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) (*Agilus planipennis*) in Ontario and the threat it poses to the ash tree populations in Ontario and the rest of North America. It was first noted in Windsor in 2002 and has been found more recently at sites further north and east. By the time they are discovered, populations of the beetle are typically well established from dates several years earlier, perhaps four or five years earlier. It should be noted that even when concerted efforts are made to determine the presence of the species, detection of the insects can be very difficult and it is easy to overlook an infestation until the host trees begin to die.

Prior to 2007, the presence of EAB was known to occur in several counties in Southwestern Ontario. These included Essex, Kent, Elgin, Middlesex, and Lambton. These areas were designated as infested areas by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and Ministerial Orders were put in place to restrict movement of ash lumber, nursery stock and firewood out of these areas. The latter method, in particular, appears to be a prime vector for the spread of the insects. During 2007 and 2008, new infestations were discovered much further east. The sites involved included such places as London, Toronto, Turkey Point in Norfolk, Ottawa, and even into Quebec. The newest reports show the species in Huron County and in northern Ontario at Sault Ste Marie. The local (GTA) known infestations are tabulated in Table 1 on page 7.



ADULT MALE *Sirex noctilio*

Photo from: <http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us>

The extent of the spread of the pest means that the species will never be eradicated, at least not

until the last ash host of the EAB is destroyed. On the positive side, progress is being made to utilize natural control agents. Once, it was considered woodpeckers would curb the spread of the insects. There is little doubt that woodpeckers have found the EAB as a suitable food; however, there is little hope that the birds can keep the outbreak under control. Other measures will be required. These include native and non-native parasites that can feed on the beetles or their larvae.



From: [http://www.mdinvasivesp.org/sirex\\_noctilio.pdf](http://www.mdinvasivesp.org/sirex_noctilio.pdf)

At this point in time, three species of parasitic wasps have been found in China, the original source of the EAB. The list of species that show promise in attacking the beetles includes: *Oobius agrili* (Encyrtidae - egg parasitoid); *Spathius agrili* (Braconidae) - larval ectoparasitoid; and *Tetrastichus planipennis* (Eulophidae) - larval endoparasitoid. Most of the research on these species has been conducted in a concerted effort between U.S. and Chinese scientists. Sufficient progress had been made with these species. Approval was given to small scale releases of these wasps at five locations in Michigan during 2007. The real effectiveness of these wasps will not be known for several years. The impact of additional non-native species within the environment is unpredictable and at this time we can only wait for the results whether they are positive, negative or neutral. If the wasps do become established from these or future releases, it is likely that they will eventually make their way into Ontario.

The other avenue of research has been to examine the potential of our own native species to adapt to the EAB as a new host. This means that huge numbers of the beetles (including the larvae) have been collected and examined for the presence of various control agents. Surveys in Michigan and Ontario have shown that at least five species of insect pathogenic fungi (*Beauveria bassiana*, *Paecilomyces farinosus*,

*Continued on page 7*

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*Paecilomyces fumosoroseus*, *Verticillium lecanii*, and *Metarhizium anisopliae*) will attack the larvae of EAB causing mortality in approximately 2 percent of the population. The fungi are common insect pathogens and appear to be more effective than native insects in controlling the pest, at least up to the present time. Surveys in Michigan turned up several species of native insects that attacked the EAB in low numbers. Potential larval-pupal parasitoids of immature EAB causing mortality in approximately 0.05 percent of EAB were three braconids (*Atanycolus* sp., *Heterospilus* sp., and *Spathius simillimus*), one chalcid (*Phasgonophora sulcata*), and an exotic eupelmid (*Balcha* sp.). A eulophid wasp, *Pediobius* sp., parasitized approximately 0.3

percent of EAB eggs. Given time, it does appear that some of these insects might adapt to becoming reasonably effective in controlling the numbers of EAB.

There is no doubt that the EAB poses a very major threat to ash forests and landscape plantings for the foreseeable future. It is not known whether the entire species (all species of ash appear to be susceptible) will be destroyed or if various measures will kick in to limit the impact of the insects. It seems that major changes in the structure of our forests are inevitable.

W.D. McIlveen

Date	Municipality	Location
December 04, 2007	Scarborough	Sheppard Avenue East and Highway 404
July 16, 2008	Brampton	Dixie Road and Steeles Avenue
July 24, 2008	Oakville	8 <sup>th</sup> Line and Highway 403-QEW
August 28, 2008	Vaughan	Highway 7 and Weston Road area

Table 1: GTA known tabulations



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

**Executive**

President: Andrew Kellman (905) 681-3701  
 Past President Kelly Bowen (905) 702-1132  
 Vice-President: Vacant (905) 681-3701  
 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: Vacant  
 Public Relations: Vacant  
 Young Naturalists: Nancy Kovacs (905) 702-1132  
 Webmaster: Andrew Kellman

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](mailto:gpotzel@sympatico.ca)

[www.hnpnc.com](http://www.hnpnc.com)



Halton/North Peel Naturalist Club

Membership for September 2008 to September 2009

\_\_\_\_\_ 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?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**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: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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