Halton/North Peel Naturalist Club

The Esquesing

March – April 2020 Newsletter
Volume 54, Number 4

Table of Contents

Acting President's Message

One of the joys of living in a temperate climate is seasonal change. The movement of winter into spring is especially dramatic as life responds in all its glorious diversity to the twin engines of warmth and liquid water.

Soon salamanders will slip into the chilly water of vernal ponds. Soon grackles will add their discordant calls to our neighborhood soundscapes and soon the brilliant little parabolas of crocuses will beckon hungry bees.

Please consider joining your fellow naturalists on springtime outings that are on tap. We'll seek salamanders at Silver Creek and Woodcocks at Scotsdale Farm. Ray Blower will reprise his annual triumvirate of springtime outings: to Long Point and vicinity in March, which usually features sandhill cranes, bald eagles and whistling swans; to the Grimsby Hawk Watch in April for migrating raptors; and in May to a wonderful forest remnant on Lake Ontario called Thickson's Woods for migrating warblers, thrushes, waterfowl and other avian attractions.

Indoors we have three excellent spring presentations lined up. This month club member Bob Noble will tell us about the remarkable insect diversity that can be found in the urban oasis of Heart Lake Conservation Area in Brampton. In April Professor Bridget Stutchbury will grapple with a conservation dilemma: many species need help, but help demands money and resources from a finite pot. Should iconic, beloved species, be helped at the expense of less charismatic species that may play more important ecological roles?

And then in May we dive into the seminal issue of the day: Climate Change, with club member Aki Tanaka. A bleak topic perhaps, but Aki promises to leaven despair with solutions and good news on the local front.

Despite the challenges of our time, spring is a balm for the spirit. Nature, after the long winter, flaunts its diversity. As naturalists we draw soulful nourishment from this diversity. It merits our care and protection.

Don Scallen

Talks and Walks

Indoor Events: Meetings begin at 7:30 p.m. on the second Tuesday of the month, September to June at St. Alban the Martyr Anglican Church, 537 Main Street, Glen Williams, unless stated otherwise.

Tuesday March 10, 2020
Bob Noble: Local Insect Discovery
In 2015 Bob Noble inadvertently began a journey of discovery into the world of the insects that live in his neighbourhood using a camera, a macro lens and a community of naturalists from around the world. Since then he has photographed and identified over 700 insect species within walking distance of his home. He has found several species that are rare or have not been previously identified in Ontario. Bob will be sharing some of the photographic highlights from this and will also suggest a few ideas that you can use to start your own journey.

Bob is a fellow HNPNC member. He is an avid naturalist and photographer who lives in the Heart Lake area of Brampton. He was an active member of West Humber Naturalists, serving as president and Christmas Bird Count Compiler. He has also volunteered extensively with the TRCA including serving on the Etobicoke and Mimico Creek Coalition and participating for many years in the Heart Lake Road Ecology Monitoring Project. Since retiring, he has specialized in the Macrophotography of insects and other small animals and has led photography workshops at the Huron Fringe Birding Festival.

Tuesday April 14, 2020
Bridget Stutchbury: Panda porn, crane cross-dressing and dirty devils…. time for conservation triage?
How much is the giant panda worth as a species? More, or less, than a whooping crane, Tasmanian Devil or California Condor? Why should we spend millions of dollars a year on each of these species while hundreds of lesser-known species are neglected and underfunded? The practice of 'conservation triage' means that some species should be neglected (and go extinct) in order to save many others who can more easily be saved. If we must prioritize who to help first, can we place a value on a given species? Should we favour species that are important ecologically or culturally or, instead, species that are evolutionary unique? Maybe species with high medicinal or economic value to humans, like sea sponges and bumblebees, should get top priority. Bridget Stutchbury discusses the conservation triage controversy and which species are destined to be the winners and losers.

Bridget Stutchbury is an ornithologist at York University. She is the author of *Silence of the Songbirds* and *Bird Detective.* On January 2, 2020 her campaign to save birds at York University from window collisions was featured on the front page of the Toronto Star.

Tuesday May 12, 2020
Aki Tanaka: Climate Change: From Despair to Hope

Aki's talk covers:

- Science of climate change and effect on temperature, weather and other systems that affect humans and other living things
- Solutions at hand, local good news
- What we can do

Aki is a retired engineer but for most of her paid working life, she worked in the nuclear power business. For three years, she sold perennials at Terra Nurseries. For one season, she was the gardener at Appleby College. She is married with two grown sons and has lived in Oakville for 33 years. She is a lifelong lover of plants with a special interest in native species. In March of 2019, she went to Atlanta for 3 days of Climate Reality training with Al Gore which she found overwhelming but inspiring.

Tuesday June 7, 2020 at 7:00 pm
Please note that we don't have an indoor meeting in June. Instead interested members are invited to help with our annual monitoring of bird boxes at Scotsdale Farm.
Meet at 7 pm in the main Scotsdale Farm parking lot at the end of the laneway east off Trafalgar Road north of Silver Creek and south of Ballinafad.

We'll check on the 50+ birdboxes installed at Scotsdale by our club for cavity nesting birds. Expect to find nesting tree swallows and house wrens and perhaps bluebirds.

Outdoor Events

Reminder: As per new club policy we will pick up litter that we encounter on our walks. Gloves could come in handy. The leader will supply a litter bag.

Saturday March 14, 2020.
Tundra Swans at Long Point
Flocks of Tundra Swans stop at Long Point during their spring migration to their northern breeding grounds. Many other species of waterfowl, early-returning songbirds, Bald Eagle, and Short-eared Owl may also be seen on this long day trip. Be advised that lunch at the restaurant is usually after 1:00 pm and we usually do not head for home until around sunset. Bring snacks, water, a lunch or money for the restaurant, and layers of warm clothing, etc. **Call Ray Blower, (519) 853-0171 by Friday, March 13 for more details.**

Sunday March 22, 2020 at 1:30 pm
Tree identification and general nature walk
Meadowvale Conservation Area
https://www.google.com/maps/dir/Meadowvale,+Mississauga,+ON//@43.6283363,-79.7322167,16z/data=!4m8!4m7!1m5!1m1!1s0x882b4005c75c7eb3:0x3ef577796a950b76!2m2!1d-79.7231612!2d43.6283316!1m0
Access the parking lot north on Second Line West from Old Derry Road

This park contains the largest bur oak in the Credit Valley Watershed. Well, I'm being a little facetious. I don't know for sure, but it *is* a monumental tree with a DBH (Diameter at Breast Height) of 172 cm! Other large trees are found in this area as well: silver maples, willows and bitternut hickories. We won't limit our attention to trees but will allow ourselves to be distracted by other natural phenomena.

Difficulty level: easy
Duration: About two hours but feel free to escape at any time.
Contact: Don Scallen dscallen@cogeco.ca

COMING SOON!
1) Bogsuckers. (aka Timberdoodles and more prosaically, Woodcocks)
2) Salamanders at Silver Creek.
Both will be evening events, and both will take place in late March or the first half of April. Definite dates and times will arrive in your inbox.

Saturday April 11, 2020
Beamer Conservation Area Hawkwatch, Grimsby
Stops on the way to Grimsby include Scotch Block reservoir and La Salle Park to see waterfowl and early songbirds. Beamer C.A., at the top of the escarpment in Grimsby, provides a large clearing and two cliff-edge platforms to search the sky for migrating hawks. Walking trails in the surrounding woods show early wildflowers and more songbirds. Bring a lunch, hat, sunscreen, binoculars etc**. Call Ray Blower (519) 853-0171 for starting location and time.**

Sunday May 17, 2020
Spring Birding at Thickson Wood, Lynde Shores Conservation Area and Cranberry Marsh
If I had only one day in the spring to go birding, this is where I would go. These locations provide a wide variety of habitats including mature forest, meadows, swamps, marshes, old fields and Lake Ontario and its shoreline. The result is a diverse collection of bird species, especially during spring migration. Scheduling on the Sunday of the Victoria Day holiday weekend has resulted, so far, in trouble-free driving to and from these Whitby birding hot spots. Bring a lunch, water, hat, sunscreen, binoculars, etc. **Call Ray Blower (519) 853-0171 for starting location and times.**

Events and notes of interest for Naturalists

Niagara Peninsula Hawkwatch (NPH) http://www.niagarapeninsulahawkwatch.org/
Raptor tallies will take place on the tower at Beamer Memorial Conservation Area next door to Grimsby each day from March 1st to May 15th from 9 to 5. There is an official counter scheduled for each day during that time period to document the raptor spring migration.

Halton Hills Lecture Series at the John Elliot Theatre (Free admission)**:**

Hummingbirds of Canada
Speaker: Cindy Cartwright - Wednesday, March 18 at 7:30 p.m.

Exploring the Birds of Ontario
Speaker: David Chapman - Wednesday, April 15 at 7:30 p.m.

Local Biodiversity
Speaker: Don Scallen - Thursday, April 23 at 10 a.m. (morning series)

What Good Are Mosquitoes?
Speaker: Dr. J.J. Berry Smith - Thursday, May 21 at 10 a.m. (morning series)

ECO Film series: https://hheff.ca/2020-eco-films-are-here/

The Biggest Little Farm – Wednesday April 22 at 7pm

Anthropocene – Monday May 25 at 7pm

University of Guelph Arboretum Workshop
Pond Life
Instructor: Don Scallen – Saturday April 25 from 9am to 4pm. Early bird cost $80. For more information: https://www.uoguelph.ca/arboretum/educationandevents/workshops

Seven Simple Actions to Help Birds
https://www.birds.cornell.edu/home/seven-simple-actions-to-help-birds/

Privately Owned Tree Management Strategy
The Town of Halton Hills is asking for feedback from residents about how we can best manage the tree canopy in the town. For details and to participate in a survey to share your views go to ***Take The Survey***

Red Bay Weekend on the Bruce Peninsula
This is an annual birding and botany weekend May 22 – 24, 2020 is organized by the South Peel Naturalist Club. Bill McIlveen is a co-leader of the event. Please see the invitation on the next page.

BRUCE PENINSULA – NATURE WEEKEND

May 22 – 24, 2020

South Peel Naturalists' Club extends an invitation to Halton North Peel Naturalist Club members to join us to explore the Bruce Peninsula. This annual weekend event provides the opportunity to see the best of the Bruce with expert leaders and in the company of fellow naturalists.

From sandy beaches of Lake Huron to limestone cliffs above Georgian Bay, from sparsely vegetated rare alvar habitat to rich hardwood forest…The Bruce is a place of unique flora and fauna…and only a three hour drive from Mississauga/Oakville. Please join us for the weekend to explore this special area.

You can look forward to:

- Birding Field Trips
- General Nature/Botany Field Trips
- Bucket Raffle and Bird Quiz

The cost per person for the weekend:

- $20 registration fee - covers cost of bucket raffle prizes and lodging for volunteer leaders

- $253.76 (+ 13% taxes) per person for two nights' accommodation at Evergreen Resort, Mar, ON (includes all meals and snacks)

For further information: mail@spnc.ca or contact Donna - 905 815 0933
or Audrey - 905 820 2571

rare Charitable Research Reserve

In 2019, the ***rare*** Charitable Research Reserve, with headquarters in Cambridge. acquired a new property on the Eramosa River. The 87-acre property is located at 5174 7th Line, Guelph-Eramosa which is just upstream from Rockwood. In 2020, there will be at least three bioblitzes of the property starting with a spring plant survey on May 2. **rare**, with the help of Nature Guelph members, will welcome the assistance of volunteers to conduct those inventories. We will keep HNP members appraised of the volunteer opportunities on our doorstep.

In addition, donations of cash to help purchase a second property on the river just downstream from Eden Mills would be welcome.

Snowy Owl Outing - Sunday 16 Feb, 2020

Article and Photos by Ian Jarvie

Almost 20 members signed up for this outing, some leaving from the meeting place in Georgetown, some joining us at the obligatory pit stop at Tim Hortons in Arthur.
We left Timmies sometime after 1 o'clock, and headed to the area where Snowy Owls seem to come each winter, about 20 to 30 minutes south-west of Arthur.

Some members were only able to be with us for some of the afternoon, while other hardy souls were able to stay till the bitter end, and we finished around 5pm and then headed for home. In fact, the weather cooperated well, with mixed sun and cloud, and temperatures just below freezing, but a bit breezy, making windchill a factor.

We covered a lot of ground in total, with our convoy of vehicles taking mostly country roads around the area, stopping when something of interest was spotted. Even before the outing "officially" started, 2 Northern Shrikes were seen at separate locations on the wires at the side of Trafalgar Road on the way to Arthur.

One particularly good location was the Conestoga Lake Conservation Area dam, where eagle-eyed Mark did actually spot an eagle - an adult Bald Eagle perched in a tree some distance away. Red-tailed Hawks were plentiful, and we saw at least 4 around the dam, initially circling overhead as we parked the vehicles, and many more were seen at various locations throughout the course of the day. A dozen or so Common Mergansers and several Mallards were seen braving the cold water downstream of the dam.

A flock of Snow Buntings cooperated by perching in a tree - personally I have never seen them sitting in a tree before - but they gave us the opportunity for very good looks and photographs in the late afternoon sun before they flew to the ground by the side of the road. Spectacular little birds!

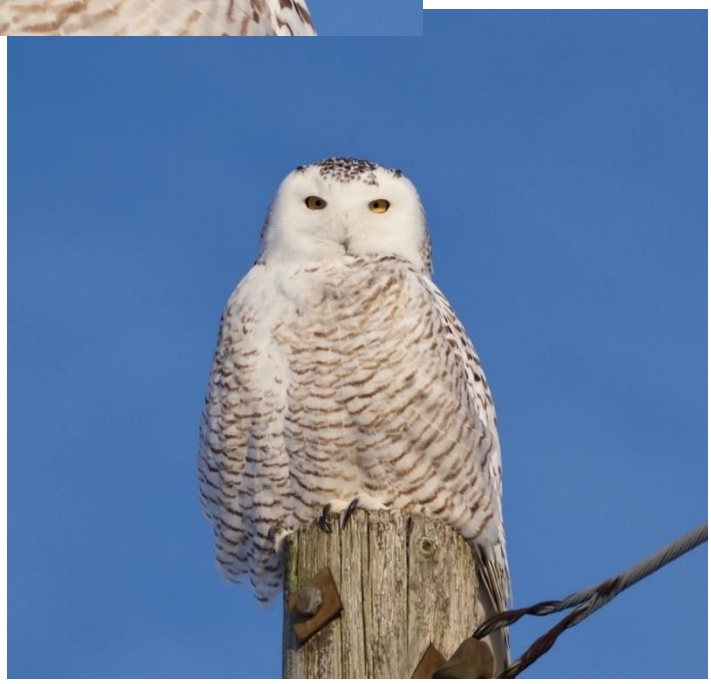
Feral pigeons and starlings were spotted at many locations, mostly sitting on or flying around the tops of the farm silos. Now here's a bit of wild speculation…the farms in this area seem to be predominantly chicken farms, and if that's true, it's possible that the waste chicken feed is what attracts pigeons, and also possibly rats and mice, which in turn attract snowy owls. Possible, but who knows?

The odd Horned Lark was spotted here and there, and then a group a little distance away, enough to positively identify and add to the tally of species, but not close enough for really good viewing.

Ravens too were in evidence, with a group of 4 or 5 flying together, possible a family group. Ravens used to be listed in eBird as rare this far south in Ontario, but no longer. They seem to be, if not plentiful, certainly around, and not an unusual sight these days. Of course lots of crows at many locations in the area, I sometimes wonder what they find to eat in the winter?

One solitary Rough-legged Hawk was identified as it flew over our vehicle, and a Merlin gave us quick views, just enough to ID it, as it flew low and fast in a field by the side of the road. Probably looking for a starling or pigeon for dinner.

And now to the star of the show - we saw 2 Snowy Owls, one just a distant white speck in a tree, the second bird very close, and was seen on the same hydro pole on more than one occasion as we passed by. Initially, it seemed to be asleep, but later we saw presumably the same bird wide awake on another hydro pole just a few metres away from its previous location, its amazing yellow eyes staring at us, and allowing us some great views and photographs in the afternoon sunlight.



All in all, I think everyone enjoyed the day, and thanks to everyone who made it to the outing.

A special thank you to the drivers for providing their vehicles, and to Sandy for being our scribe and keeping a tally of species seen from the lead vehicle.

Puzzling tracks lead to a surprising discovery

Article by Don Scallen

At our February meeting, club member Karen Hobbs showed me photos of tracks crossing her property north of Glen Williams. I was flummoxed. The tracks were unlike any I had previously encountered. I visited Karen and Brian Hobb's property the following day to try to sort out the mystery.

The tracks skirted the edge of an ice-covered quarry pond before rising from the pond to cross the Hobb's front yard. The width of the track set was approximately 18cm. The distance between foot-falls varied widely, with the largest measurement being two metres. And, importantly, there was a shallow trough between each footfall. Mink sometimes slide and create troughs as they traverse a landscape, especially on downslopes. But this was no mink. It was much larger: An otter!

Photo by Karen Hobbs

Club member Jon Clayton agreed with my ID and for good measure shared photos of the tracks with colleagues at Credit Valley Conservation. They too agreed that the track maker was an otter. According to Jon this is only the fifth time an otter has been recorded in the Credit River Watershed. And perhaps the only time in the watershed that the presence of an otter has been confirmed with photographic evidence (tracks).Otters range widely. Is this a one-off? Perhaps a lonely male in search of love – we're in the midst of otter breeding season. Or is this otter part of a small resident population that has, until this time, slid under the radar? Regardless, in the vernacular of the day, this discovery was very cool!

My thanks to Karen Hobbs for bringing it to our attention.

Photo by Don Scallen

For a contrast to the snow in the shot above, I thought I'd send a bit of warmth from Florida your way. I spotted this little guy snuggled up in a seed pod. The seed is about the size of a grape.

My guess is that it is an Anole Lizard in a Nickerbean seed pod. I'm sure one of our knowledgeable members would know for sure!

Laura Weihs

The Spread of Keratin Loving Fungal Diseases

W.D. McIlveen

In a recent search for information into a completely unrelated topic, I discovered that there was a relatively new disease that was a serious threat to snakes. That was more than enough to catch my attention so I followed up to learn more about the cause which was a species of fungus. A combination of a significant environmental threat, pathology, fungi, and something quite new could not be left alone and I had to investigate the situation further.

The problem for snakes was the Snake Fungal Disease caused by *Ophidiomyces ophiodiicola.* It quickly became apparent that the disease of snakes had some parallels with the serious White-nose Disease of Bats. In addition to a comparable geographic range (Fig.1) and some physiological features, it was noted that the two fungi shared an ability to attack keratin. I was also aware that the Chytrid that infected frogs share this feature. I was also reminded that the nail fungus that has been the subject of extensive advertising on TV would also be keratinophilic. With that introduction to the topic, it was possible to assemble the following table of diseases and the fungi that cause them.

Disease	**Fungal Species**
White-nose Disease of Bats	*Geomyces destructans*
Snake Fungal Disease [Eastern Foxsnake*, Common Water Snake*, Blue Racer, Eastern Ratsnake, Ringneck Snake, Timber Rattlesnake, Eastern Massasauga*, Milk Snake, Eastern Garter Snake*, Queen Snake*]	*Ophidiomyces ophiodiicola*
Chytrid Pathogen of Frogs	*Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis*
Chytrid Pathogen of Salamanders	*Batrachochytrium salamandrivorans*
Onychomycosis = *tinea unguium* (Nail Fungus)	*Candida, Trichophyton rubrum, T. interdigitale, T. violaceum, T. tonsurans, and T. soudanense, Epidermophyton floccosum, Microsporum gypseum, Neoscytalidium, Scopulariopsis,* and *Aspergillus*
Crayfish Plague	*Aphanomyces astaci*

* Confirmed in Ontario

White-nose Disease of bats has become well-known in recent years due to its serious nature and rapid spread across North America. The causal agent is *Geomyces destructans* that attacks the skin and fur but is best known from the dense fungal growth that appears around the animal's muzzle. The fungus also damages the membranous wings attacking the keratin layer there. It disturbs the overall physiology of bats including the overall energy requirements and other physiological functions of the wing, in part by leaving holes in the membrane [Cryan et al; Voigt]

The Snake Fungal Disease has mainly been encountered in the eastern United States including those states that are adjacent to Manitoba, Ontario and Quebec [Stephen et al.]. The disease was first documented in a few Foxsnakes in Ontario. Up to 2016, the disease had been confirmed in five species in Ontario at widely-dispersed locations. It is not known how widespread the disease is because relatively few people are even aware of the disease and are aware of the need to look for it. It appears as a lesion or a scabby growth on the skin of the snake. It can survive as a saprophyte in soil and therefore can survive for some time in the absence of any snake host. Anyone that encounters a snake should observe it carefully and watch for signs of infection on live animals as well as on shed skins. Ten of the known host species occur in Ontario though the Timber Rattlesnake has been extirpated. Several species that are known hosts are uncommon or rare and hardly need another stress.

Infections range from surficial infections to lesions penetrating into deeper tissues. Deeper lesions can lead to other infections that are lethal. The ability of the fungus to persist on debris containing keratin in the soil makes this disease particularly difficult to manage.

Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis was not identified until 1999 [Longcore *et al*.]. Since that time, it has been shown to be associated with severe declines and even extinctions of frog species around the world, particularly in tropical areas. The disease generally affects the skin of the frog host causing dead patches through attacks on the keratin component of the epidermal layer. Subsequent studies have shown that other organisms can serve as alternate substrates and means of transport and disease dispersal, again via the keratin substrate. [Taegan *et al*.]. Such findings demonstrate that the fungus disease is complex and control methods are going to be difficult. *Batrachochytrium salamandrivorans* is a closely-related species that infects mainly salamander species, again attacking the skin. This fungus

was only identified in 2013 [Martel *et al*.]. So far, the infections have been diagnosed only in Europe but considerable concern has been raised about the potential for the disease to become introduced and established in North America.

In our part of the world, we are regularly reminded via television advertising of a fungal infection in humans, namely 'Nail Fungus'. Overall, the threat of this disease to human life is rather small though the advertising would have consumers believe that their social standing is at considerable risk if the disease is left untreated. The disease referred to as 'nail fungus' by the general public is clinically identified as onychomycosis or *tinea unguium* [Weserberg and Voack]. It is caused by not one but at least eleven different fungal species depending upon factors such as conditions of exposure, finger vs toe nails, patient age, and geographic location. The prevalent species is apparently *Trichophyton rubrum*. Some species preferentially attack skin but share the characteristic of attacking keratin, the main component of nails.

Crayfish Plague is a severe fungal disease of crayfish in Europe and other parts of the world [Vrålstad *et. al]*. It is believed to have originated in North America where the native crayfish species are resistant due to co-evolution with the fungus *Aphanomyces astaci*. In contrast, European, Asian and Australian freshwater crayfish species are highly susceptible to *A. astaci* infection. The fungus was transferred to Europe in three North American crayfish species that were introduced there and are invasive in their own right. The first reports of the plague date back to Italy in 1859. Outbreaks are characterized by mass mortalities of the European crayfish species. This disease is mentioned here because it is strongly species-specific with respect to host, is fungal in nature, and has a generally comparable epidemiology to the diseases mentioned above. It does have at least one feature contrasting to the others in that the host outer surface in not composed of keratin but of chitin. Chitin is a long-chain polymer of N-acetylglucosamine and is a derivative of glucose. Crayfish plague is mentioned to illustrate that fungi that cause disease in animals need not be keratinophilic. Although the diseases mentioned are severe problems, they represent only a tiny proportion of all the diseases that are due to some form of fungal infection.

All of the diseases mentioned above have some characteristics in common. They are all fungi that can attack animal hosts. All except the Crayfish Plague mentioned for contrast utilize keratin as a growth medium. The diseases would appear to be brand new but they likely have been associated with certain hosts for a very long time. It is only because they have been introduced to new areas, probably by human intervention, that they have emerged as issues. Control for many of them will be difficult if not impossible. And there appears to be a role of climate change that has facilitated the spread or altered the severity of the respective problems.

<u>Literature Cited:</u>

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Remembering Cecil Morris

Cecil Morris was a long-time member of our club. But due to the inevitable passage of time he found it difficult to come out to meetings in recent years. Many new members will likely not know him. He passed away on January 15th at the age of 91.

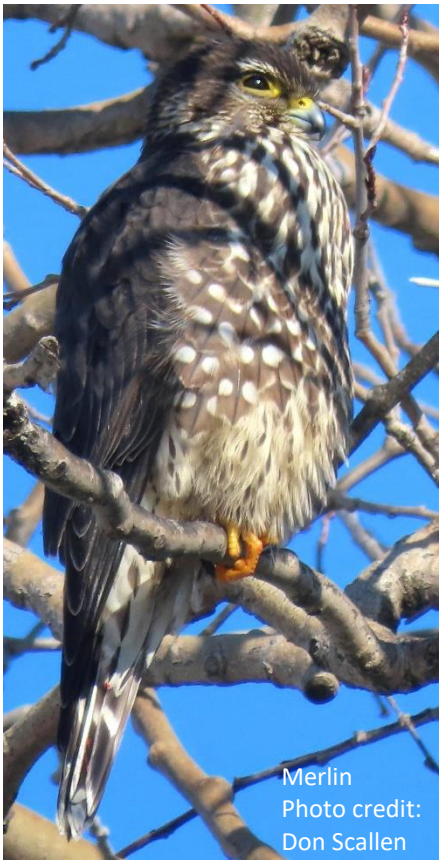
I did the Christmas Bird Count with Cecil for many years. He was a delightful character – warm and genuine. I looked forward to our annual birding adventures with much anticipation. Though he built and operated a very successful business in Milton, Cecil was always humble and down to earth. He was passionate about nature and a fine storyteller. We last got together in 2019 at an eatery close to Cecil's home and shared some good food and conversation.

When I arrived to meet Cecil we spotted a Cooper's hawk roosting in a tree along his driveway. We put our luncheon date on hold (of course!) while we admired this bird. After lunch, on the way back to Cecil's place, we took a detour to collect seed pods of Kentucky Coffee Trees growing along a roadside. Both of us were excited about the prospect of germinating and growing these rare trees. So my final meeting with Cecil was exactly apt. A hawk, tree seeds, and great conversation. I will miss Cecil greatly.

Don Scallen

A favour request

Most of us are aware of the peregrines that nest on Pete Bailey and Rose O'Reilly's Brampton condominium building. Though the peregrines refuse to pay condo fees, Pete and Rose remain very supportive of their presence. Peregrines are arguably the highest profile raptor species choosing to live among us, but they are hardly alone. Red-tailed hawks and Cooper's hawks are also finding cities to their liking.


Merlin
Photo credit:
Don Scallen

And in Georgetown last year a pair of sharp-shinned hawks reared a family near the library. (Though some of us were delighted, one local resident complained about their incessant squawking in the early morning hours and the bird parts that rained down from their feeding perches.)

Also in Georgetown last year merlins were seen – and heard! – mating in a tall Norway spruce tree at Greenwood Cemetery. (May you never find yourself in a hotel room adjacent to a merlin couple. They are noisy love makers.)

Here's the ask:
I'd appreciate hearing about breeding/nesting hawks in our area's villages and towns this year for a story I hope to write. Raptor breeding ramps up in April and the nesting period extends into the summer. Please be on the lookout.

Thanks!
Don Scallen dscallen@cogeco.ca


Sharp-shinned Hawk. The little claw belongs to a hapless male house sparrow... it is the way of the wild. Photo credit: Don Scallen

Hawk-eyed

Article and Photos by Don Scallen

If you see a large raptor, perched imperiously by roadside on your morning commute, it is most likely a Red-tailed hawk. Red-tails have adjusted well to the landscapes we've created. Our farms, meadows and highway margins serve them a buffet of mice and voles.

As you drive by that roadside hawk reflect that if you can discern its shape, it can almost certainly see the colour of your eyes or the trim of your fingernails on the steering wheel. Hawk vision can be ten times more acute than ours.

Peering through a good pair of binoculars give us some appreciation of this acuity. But powerful optical equipment will get us only partway towards an understanding of what it is like to be hawk-eyed.

Ultraviolet vision

Hawks not only have far superior visual acuity, they also see a greater range of colour than we do, with their vision extending to the ultraviolet. We are as blind to the ultraviolet as our dogs are to red and green.

Perceiving this ultraviolet allows hawks to see things largely invisible to us. Rodent urine, reflecting ultraviolet light, becomes obvious. A winter meadow that appears featureless to us – a sere landscape of brown grass and weeds – transforms into an intriguing world of possibility through the eyes of a hawk.

Peering through hawk eyes I try to fathom what such a meadow might look like. I think of a satellite photo taken at night showing towns and cities burning brightly, linked by lighted highways and secondary routes. Is this what the hawk sees in a meadow - hubs of rodent activity, connected by a glowing network of rodent trails?

To look briefly through a hawk's eyes would allow us to see an astonishingly different world of colour and complexity. I wonder if we'd rue the return to the poverty of human vision.

For a picture of a juvenile red-tailed hawk and more of Don's In The Hills stories see: https://www.inthehills.ca/2015/12/red-tailed-hawk/

March/April Quiz

Questions & Photos by:
Bob Noble

Quiz Answers:

1. White-margined Burrower Bug
2. Firefly Beetle Larva
3. Wooly Alder Aphid
4. Modest Masked Bee
5. Small Honey Ant Queen
6. Mining Bee (Subgenus Melandrena)
7. Sawfly - Green Honeysuckle Sawfly
8. Moth - Raspberry Cane Borer
9. Rove Beetle Genus Philonthus

Introducing the new Halton Hills Public Libraries' Backpack Kits!

Our club supported the purchase of binoculars for each backpack.

Also included in each of five backpacks are:

- field guides
- a compass
- a flashlight
- a Bruce Trail Map
- and a Trail Guide.

We hope these kits will encourage and inspire local residents to get out in our local natural areas to learn more about the flora and fauna and foster a vested interest in the environment.

Halton/North Peel Naturalist Club, Box 115, Georgetown, Ontario L7G 4T1
Charity Registration number 869778761RR0001

Executive

Past President: Don Scallen	(905) 876-6180
Vice President: Ian Jarvie	(905) 877-1441
Secretary: Helen Ross	(519) 766-8876
Treasurer: David Williams	(905) 877-1539

Appointments

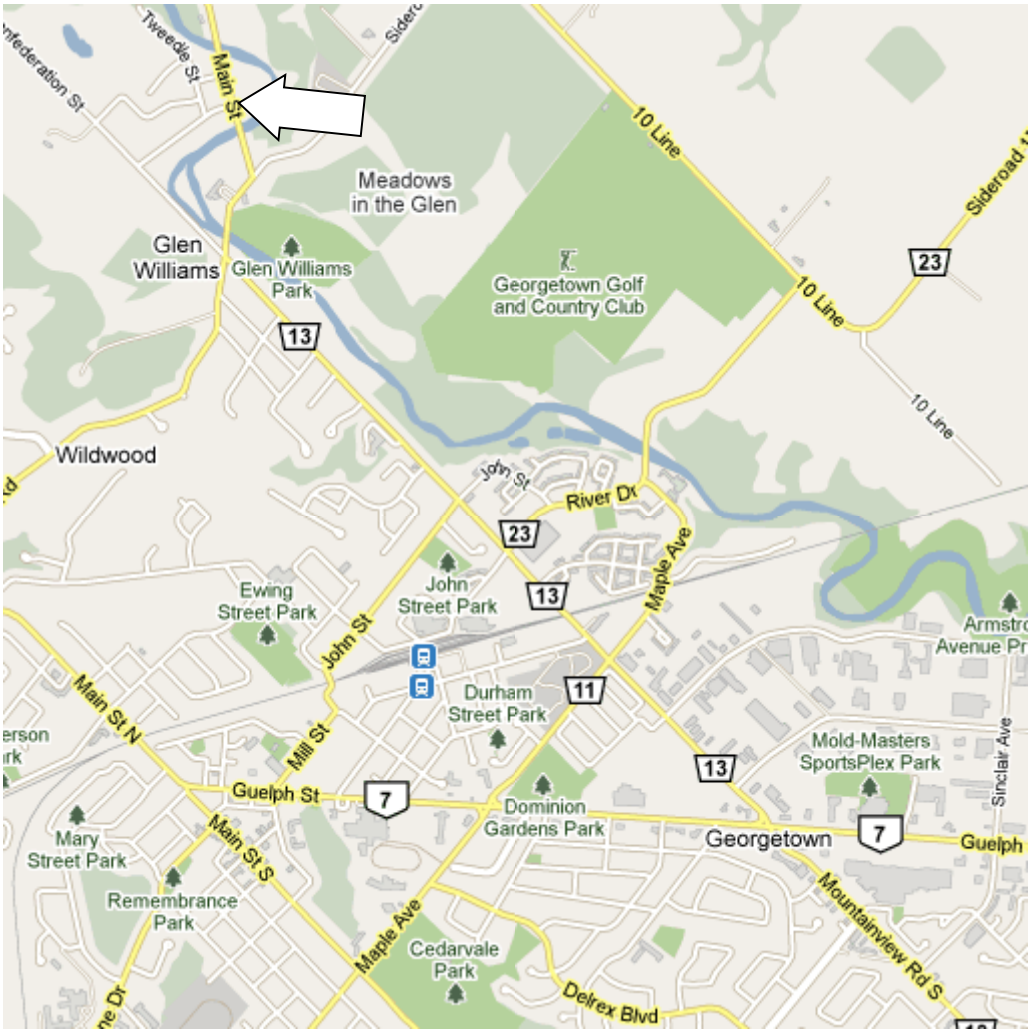
Membership:	Lorysa Cornish
Newsletter:	Laura Weihs
Ontario Nature Rep:	Don Scallen
Webmaster:	John Beaudette
Crozier Property Steward	
Hardy Property Steward	Ray Blower

Membership for one year: $30 Single; $40 Family
The Halton/North Peel Naturalist Club is an affiliated member of Ontario Nature.

www.hnpnc.com

Halton/North Peel Naturalist Club

Meetings are at St Alban's Church in Glen Williams starting at 7:30 p.m.



Halton/North Peel Naturalist Club Membership Form

_____ Renewal or _____ New Member(s) Date_____

Name(s): _____

Address: _____ City: _____

Postal Code: _____ Telephone: _____

E-mail: _____

Membership Renewal: _____ Single ($30.00) _____ Family ($40.00)
New members only for the period:
from December through to August _____ Single ($22.50) _____ Family ($30.00)
from March through to August _____ Single ($15.00) _____ Family ($20.00)
from June through to August _____ Single ($ 7.50) _____ Family ($10.00)

Would you like to make a donation to help send a youth to the **Ontario Nature Youth Summit for Biodiversity and Environmental Leadership**? If yes, amount of donation: $_____

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