



COMING EVENTS

•**Friday, February 22, 2002, 7:30 p.m.** - General Meeting and Annual General Meeting. The program, **Birds of Presqu'ile**, will feature birds and other creatures of Presqu'ile Provincial Park and possibly a few other places. **Doug Guay**, our speaker, has done considerable photography at Presqu'ile. His technique of using a water blind and walking in the water to photograph water birds at eye level has produced some very unusual images. In addition to being an outstanding photographer, he is a good naturalist and is very knowledgeable of Presqu'ile. Doug's presentation could be described as a "birder's delight", but be assured that it will appeal to all naturalists. Kawartha-Pine Ridge District Health Unit, Rose Glen Rd., Port Hope

•**Saturday, February 23, 2002 - Outing - Owling on Amherst Island**

Meet at Port Hope (Arby's) commuter parking lot at 8 a.m. or Cobourg (Hwy. 45) commuter lot at 8:15 to carpool. This will be an all day trip, so pack a lunch and dress warmly. Call Alison Elliott at (905) 797-2584 for information or car-pooling.

•**Friday, March 22, 2002, 7:30 p.m.** - Larry Lamb from the University of Waterloo will give a presentation on Prairies in Ontario - Past, present and future of prairies in Ontario. Cobourg Public Library.

•**Saturday, April 6, 2002 - Outing - Trent University Wildlife Sanctuary**

Meet at Port Hope (Arby's) commuter parking lot at 8 a.m. to carpool up to Peterborough. Bring a lunch and wear boots as trails may be mucky or still slightly snow-covered. Call Alison Elliott at (905) 797-2584 for information or car-pooling.

MIDWINTER WATERFOWL INVENTORY - 2002

On January 13, 2002, eight members of Willow Beach Field Naturalists participated in the annual Lake Ontario Waterfowl Inventory, a count of all waterfowl found along the Canadian shore of Lake Ontario. This year, 4,562 birds of 16 species were found in the lakeshore between Widklow Beach and Wesleyville. The number of most species were down from last year due to the very windy and wavy conditions on the lake. Below is a complete list of the species total.

Mute Swan	1
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Canada Goose	1740
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Mallard	1066
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Black Duck	130
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Northern Pintail	1 1432
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BLUEBIRD ALERT

In just a few weeks the Easter Bluebirds should be returning to their nesting grounds in the Harwood area, home of the Willow Beach Field Naturalists' Bluebird Project. It is not too early to begin preparations for the routine box checking for another year.

Last year, the support from volunteers was very positive. We would welcome any past veterans, as well as newcomers, who would like to spend some time in bluebird country this year.

Depending on the weather, box-checking should begin toward the end of March and continue through July. For more information, please contact Hazel Bird at 905-342-5218.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Mrs. Mary Smith, Cobourg

THE WILLOW BEACH FIELD NATURALISTS			
Past Pres.	Terry Stopps..... 905-372- stopps@eagle.ca		1028
President	Bob Short..... 905-885- mb.short@sympatico.ca		1420
1st Vice-pres.	Carole Payne..... 905-885- bookbind@eagle.ca		6135
2nd Vice-pres.	vacant		
Secretary	Petra Kennedy..... 905-349- pkennedy@town.cobourg.on.ca		2280
Treasurer	Janette Johnston..... 905-373- jjohn@eagle.ca		
FON Rep.	Joan Norris..... 905-372- d.j.norris@sympatico.ca		9957

Willow Beach Field Naturalists - 2001 In Review

President's Report by Bob Short

This brings to an end my two-year term as president. Over the six years I have been associated with Willow Beach there has been a steady escalation of environmental issues and the Club has taken on a greater advocacy role in trying to ameliorate the negative affects on our society. This situation is not likely to improve in the near future.

I have been blessed with a very supportive and enthusiastic team and I thank them all very sincerely.

Membership

- Membership remained constant this year with 181 memberships covering in excess of 300 people.
- The basic member activities of 8 meetings and 8 editions of the Curlew were maintained. Attendance at the meetings has been good reflecting the quality of our speakers and the relevance of their subjects.
- Six of our members, A.K. Sculthorpe, Audrey Wilson, Pat Lawson, Geoff Dale, Ted McDonald and Jack Goering were presented with Ontario Volunteer Service Awards at a ceremony in Victoria Hall, Cobourg. Each has given in excess of 30 years service to Willow Beach!

WBFN Activities

- Outings. 10 outings were arranged by Alison Elliott this year, including 4 evening walks during May. Again, the evening walks proved to be very popular with great attendance. Several new destinations were visited this year including an Astronomy Night at Richardson's Lookout where the weather co-operated with clear skies.
- Peter's Woods Provincial Nature Reserve. Led by Russell Lake, WBFN completed its 6th year of managing this Reserve, under an agreement with the Ministry of Natural Resources. Attendance this year was in excess of 1,000 with 30 people from Europe and 20 from the U.S. Many hours of work by WBFN volunteers go into the effort of keeping the trail safe, the washrooms clean and the garbage picked up. Many thank to Russell for his organization and his expert work with the chain saw, since we had several large trees fall across the path this year. Thanks also to all the volunteers.
- Marsh Monitoring
Roger Frost and Elizabeth Kellogg continued the marsh monitoring programs in Willow Beach Marsh, Carr's Marsh and the Port Hope shore

marsh west of Gage's Creek.

- Bird Banding
Elizabeth Kellogg and Roger Frost continued with their bird banding projects. They banded a total of 1,424 birds of 43 species in 2001. Highlights included 47 Eastern Bluebirds, 547 Tree Swallows and 30 House Wrens as part of the nest box monitoring project; 88 Northern Saw-whet Owls at Candlestick Woods; 36 Lapland Longspurs, 16 Horned Larks and 3 Snow Buntings at the winter banding in Welcome; and 590 birds, including 299 American Goldfinches, in their backyard. A number of WBFN members and their children attended some of the banding activities.

Elizabeth and Roger also ran banding demonstrations at the Ganaraska Forest Centre, Presqu'ile Provincial Park and Darlington Provincial Park.

- Habitat Projects
WBFN was involved in a number of projects:
 - Restoration of a prairie habitat on the Koffler property near Harwood continued with several members planting plugs and scattering seed that had been collected the prior year;
 - Several members assisted in the controlled burn of a portion of the prairie habitat that has been restored at the Red Cloud Cemetery;
 - Hazel Bird's Bluebird monitoring (many members drove and assisted Hazel).

The Northumberland Forest and Woodlot Survey project, undertaken by the Northumberland Stewardship Council, and funded by a grant from the Trillium Foundation applied for by WBFN, was completed in 2000. A very positive outcome from this project in 2001 was the adoption by Northumberland County of a tree-cutting by-law. Many thanks are due to the Stewardship Council led by WBFN's Bill Wensley, and Glenn McLeod from the MNR

- Natural Heritage and Environmental Activities
 - *The Oak Ridges Moraine*. This has been a hot topic this year. During the planning process,

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WBFN submitted a brief to the committee charged with proposing the long-term plan for the Moraine, and also made a verbal presentation at the open house held in Cobourg. The final plan was approved and has now passed into law. On the whole, the plan is good; perhaps better than we might have hoped for. However, the one disappointing element is that development will be permitted in the Countryside Areas at the East End of the Moraine that includes Northumberland County.

- *James Cockburn Park.* In searching for a home for the skateboarding facility, James Cockburn Park was considered by Cobourg Council. This park is essentially on the flood plain of Cobourg Creek. Terry Stopps made an effective presentation to Council with respect to this proposal and recommended that Victoria Park or Legion Fields would be more suitable. Subsequently, Council rejected James Cockburn Park from consideration. Thanks, Terry!
- *AON.* This proposed development at the West End of Port Hope impinges on the sensitive Little Creek Ravine. A brief has been presented to Port Hope Council. Thanks to Roger Frost and Jack Goering for their work on this issue.
- *Cobourg West Headland.* This year Cobourg moved the fireworks display for the July 1st weekend to the West Headland. In order to do this, they bulldozed a very wide path down the entire headland and then cleared an area at the south end across the full width. This in spite of the fact that the headland had developed into an area of natural significance. WBFN wrote to Council expressing our dismay that this was done without any consultation with us. Subsequently, in a report to Council by the Community Affairs Officer, it was recommended that all Town departments communicate with WBFN when any work is to be done that may affect a natural area. Thanks to Clive Goodwin for his work on this issue.
- *MNR's Clearcutting Guidelines.* In the fall of 2000 the MNR released proposed new

clearcutting guidelines for Ontario's forests. These would allow parcels of up to 10,000 hectares to be cut in the Boreal Forest and up to 1,000 hectares in the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Forest region. WBFN wrote protesting these huge areas. In the summer of 2001, despite opposition from many organizations and the First Nations, the MNR confirmed the guidelines without change. WBFN has written to the MNR to protest.

- *Ontario "Smart Growth".* Following the release by the government of its guide with respect to Smart Growth, WBFN wrote to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to express our concerns with some of the approaches suggested. Thanks to Jack Goering for his work on this subject.
- *Algonquin Park Wolves.* The Algonquin Park wolf has been identified as a unique species in Canada. It has also been recognized that the pack is not sustainable for the long-term since many of them are killed in the winter when they follow their natural food source, the deer, outside the Park's boundaries. Finally, the MNR is establishing a 5-year ban on killing wolves in the 39 townships surrounding the Park. However, the killing of coyotes can continue even though it is often very difficult to determine which species a hunter is looking at through the rifle sights! WBFN has written to the Ministry applauding them for their decision to ban the hunting of the wolves in the 39 townships but also asking that the ban be extended to coyotes also. Thanks to Joan Norris for her work.
- *Species at Risk.* Twice before the federal Species at Risk Act has died on the order table. It has now been resurrected and stands a good chance of being passed before this government dies! As originally drafted, the act had several shortcomings and WBFN wrote to the Prime Minister with our recommendation for improvement. We understand that in second reading of the Bill, many of our concerns have been addressed. Once again, thanks to Joan Norris.
- *Presqu'ile Provincial Park Management Plan.* The final plan was published in

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October, 2000 and has been approved. The only outstanding issue is the phase-out of duck hunting from the park which may continue until an alternative site is found and approved. Many thank to Clive Goodwin who has spent many hours on behalf of WBFN writing reports and letters.

- *Dombind*. The Ministry of the Environment has extended Norampac's certificate (it expired at the end of 2000) to allow the continued use of Dombind to the end of 2002. It is rumoured that Norampac will again ask for a further extension and WBFN has written to the MoE expressing strong opposition to such a further extension.
- *Cobourg Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan*. The Town hired Monteith Planning Consultants to prepare the Master Plan. On behalf of WBFN, Clive Goodwin prepared a brief for consideration in the development of the plan and Terry Stopps has been involved in reviewing and making recommendations with respect to specific parks, particularly the Elgin-Densmore Park.
- *Kawartha Highlands Signature Site*. In 2000 WBFN wrote to the Minister of Natural Resources recommending that this new park, located about 50 kilometers north of Peterborough, be established as a Provincial Park rather than as a Conservation Reserve. The Provincial Park designation provides significantly more protection and funding. In the fall of 2001, the Minister announced that it would be designated a Provincial Park.
- WBFN Young Naturalists Program
Under the direction of Bruce Parker, WBFN is initiating a new direction for Young Naturalists. While activities for the children of WBFN members may be held from time-to-time, the focus will be on fostering the interest of young people in our communities in the appreciation of our natural heritage. To this end, we are offering two \$250 grants, one each for a Cobourg school and a Port Hope school. All schools, both elementary and secondary, have been encouraged to submit applications for the grant to support some environmentally related activity. One school from each community will be selected.
- Bird Counts

WBFN conducted two annual bird counts; the Christmas count and the summer breeding bird count. Both were organized by Roger Frost.

- Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas

2001 was the first year of a five-year project to collect information about the breeding birds of Ontario. This will result in the publication of the updated version of the Atlas. Margaret Bain is the coordinator for Northumberland and she is assisted by Clive Goodwin and Roger Frost, all members of WBFN. In addition, many other members have undertaken to monitor various 10km by 10km squares for this project.

Property Committee

This committee looks for opportunities to acquire or contribute to the acquisition of environmentally significant properties. This year a donation of \$5,000 was made to the Thickson's Woods Land Trust towards the purchase of "The Meadow" to the North of Thickson's Woods (Willow Beach was a contributor to the original purchase of the Thickson's Woods).

In addition the FON has matched our donation in our name. This money comes from the legacy of Ruth Mallory Wilson who left money to the FON "for the benefit of the Port Hope and Cobourg Naturalist's Club" which has been deemed to be WBFN.

The Meadow is an 8 ½ acre property that will buffer the woods, marsh and creek valley from the development that is going on all around the Wood's.

Federation of Ontario Naturalists

Joan Norris, our representative to the FON, along with other members of WBFN, has attended the FON's regional meetings to report on our activities and to share information with other naturalist clubs.

Land Trust

A committee chaired by Bryan Baxter has been established to determine whether or not WBFN should establish a Land Trust, enabling it to hold and monitor land held in trust for future generations. Audrey Stacey did the initial study and laid the groundwork for this project.

Member Activities

In addition to the involvement of our members in the activities listed above, many others were involved in different projects and all should receive recognition:

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- Bill Crowley for coordinating our regular meeting program;
- Nancy Stopps for continuing as Secretary until the fall when she started at York University to acquire her teachers certificate. Thank you Nancy. Also to Petra Kennedy for stepping in to the Secretary's role for the balance of the term.;
- Editors Norma Wallace and Elizabeth Kellogg for their interesting and informative issues of the Curlew;
- Sharon Pickering for coordinating fund raising via our monthly raffles – and a special thank-you to all of you who donated items for the raffles;
- Carole Payne for handling the selection process for the FON Young Naturalists Camps;
- Russell Lake and Geoff Dale for handling the Property Account. Geoff has resigned his position as Treasurer after many years in this role; many thanks Geoff! Geoff has been replaced by Janette Johnston.
- Janette Johnston for keeping the books and Bill McCarthy for ensuring that the accounts are handled correctly in his role as Auditor;
- Mark Rupke for his representation of WBFN on the board of the Lone Pine Marsh. In the fall Muriel Braham retired as Chair of the Lone Pine Marsh Foundation and Mark has taken over as the new Chair; congratulations Mark. Giles Burnet has taken over from Mark as WBFN's representative.
- The Executive Board (Terry Stopps, Carole Payne, Janette Johnston, Jack Goering, Russell Lake, A.K. Sculthorpe, Joann Norris, Audrey Stacey, Bill Newell, Nancy Stopps and Petra Kennedy) for their support and advice in the day-to-day issues.
- Lastly, the general membership. Without your support in attending the general meetings, outings, writing letters to support various issues, cleaning the washrooms and picking up garbage at Peter's Woods, and being involved in other activities, we

ADVENTURE WITH A TURKEY VULTURE

by Louise Schmidt

I found an injured Turkey Vulture on 7th line (of Hope) about 2 kms from our house on Saturday, November 17, 2001. A slow moving van had just passed me, accompanied by a man on foot who appeared to be looking for something along the roadside. I wondered if they were hunters looking for their game...I thought at first the vulture must have found "the game" by the roadside.

I stopped the car to observe the vulture and noticed that one wing not quite right. I wondered if it might have been shot or hit. When I got out of the car, it did not fly, but started to run/hop towards a farmer's field flapping/flailing it's wings. I decided to capture it because a bird which can't fly must be in big trouble.

I grabbed a large heavy plastic sheet from the car (this is all I had!) and started to chase it over a fence. I finally cornered it by some shrubs and grabbed it, wrapping its body with the sheet. It hissed very loudly and was quite indignant. I could not see any signs of bleeding or obvious damage other than the right wing was hanging lower than the other. I

managed to get it home. I contacted Roger Frost by telephone who advised taking the bird to a rehabilitator as soon as possible. The closest bird rehabilitator is the Avian Care and Research Foundation at Verona, north of Kingston, operated by Kit Chubb.

On Roger's advice, I placed the vulture in a large cardboard box. This became its home for the next 3 hours. It stayed fairly still and quiet in a corner of the box while we drove it to Verona. Only after the trip to Verona did I learn that vultures regurgitate when under stress or as defence. Since they eat carrion, this is a good defence. I realize I was soooo lucky this one had an empty stomach!

Unfortunately, the right wing was too damaged for rehabilitation and Kit euthanized the vulture shortly after our arrival. It was an immature, possibly male vulture, very thin from lack of food. An x-ray showed the right shoulder was also badly smashed and both areas already had callous formation. Therefore, the injury was at least 2-3 weeks old. There was muscle wasting. This poor bird had been

slowly starving to death. Kit was going to do an autopsy and invited us to stay, but after a tour of the facility we had to leave.

I later received a report from Kit on her findings from the autopsy:

- male with small blue testicles
- starved
- perfect lungs, liver, stomach
- the injury was probably 3-4 weeks old
- malunion of radius and ulna and proximal humerus

- most likely the injuries were the result of a vehicle collision. Usually, humeral fractures suggest a vehicle hit (looking at her database: 2 of 29 such fractures were proven hit by vehicles)

Even though the vulture could not be saved, we at least ended its suffering. Meeting Kit and her husband, seeing her facility and her in action was a very worthwhile experience. In that short period of time I managed to learn a lot...she has so much knowledge to share. We will no doubt be in touch again.

Most WBFN members will not have visited a bird rehabilitation centre and I think may find the following of interest.

Kit has a resident Great Horned Owl and 2 Barred Owls which she keeps in separate aviaries as foster parents for the numerous owlets that are brought in each summer. The 3 owls were brought in with injuries in the past. Even though they have recovered from the acute injuries, they are unable to

be returned to the wild because of residual handicaps. The Great Horned is blind in one eye with some partial paralysis on one side and the Barred Owls have slight brain damage. They are, however, still able to foster young owls. This allows these youngsters to imprint on their own kind which will allow them to be released later on, with a healthy fear of humans.

There are many large aviaries, designed and built by Robin (Kit's husband) - each contains natural perches, trees, vegetation and a small cement pond. The aviaries back onto a treed property - a perfect setup. Her clinic was also designed by Robin (He's an architect). The cages (more like large wooden boxes) are topped by skylights allowing natural daylight rhythms. There is a pool around 8 feet in diameter and banks of mice cages. Maintenance, the care and feeding of birds and mice is a daily ritual which must take countless hours.

Kit is enthusiastic, dynamic, compassionate, very knowledgeable. She has a wonderful sense of humour and is totally unpretentious. Her book *The Avian Ark - Tales from a Wild-bird Hospital* is full of anecdotes which demonstrates her delightful writing style, her wit, her great love of the avian species and her thirst for knowledge. Anyone with an interest in birds would greatly enjoy it. The day we visited was one of Kit's first days of feeling well and energetic after being sick all summer with a racing heart, cough and weakness. However she managed to continue her work with the same dedication. She mentions her

RECENT SIGHTINGS

compiled by Ted McDonald

Sightings - cont'd.

Observers: AA=Alfred Adamo; RA=Ruth Andrus; KA=Kurt Appleman; PA=Paul Appleman; BB=Bryan Baxter; EB=Erik Bahr; MB=Margaret Bain; AC=Alice Chenevert; CC=Charlotte Cockerill GMCD=Geoff Dale; AE=Alison Elliott JF1=John Floegel; JF=Jo Foster; RF=Roger Frost; JG=John Geale; JGo=Jack Goering; CEG=Clive Goodwin; SH=Susan Hamilton; LJ=Leslie Jacks; EK=Elizabeth Kellogg; DL=Doreen Little; BL=B. Logan; HM=Helen McDonald; ERM=Ted McDonald; KMc=Kathryn McHolm; AM=Andy McLauchlan; SM=Simone Mérey; KM=Kathryn Mills; M.Obs.=Many Observers; LS=Louise Schmidt; AKS=A.K. Sculthorpe; IS=Ian Sculthorpe; SS=Sarah Sculthorpe; DS=Dave Shirley; BS=Bob Short; MS=Marg Short; DSv=Daphne Svenningson; AT=Anne Tesluk; VU=V. Urbanski; NW=Norma Wallace; DW=Doug Watkins; LW=Lori Wensley.

Late Season Observations: