



## COMING EVENTS

•Friday, February 27, 2004, 7:30 p.m.      **HKPR District Health Unit office, Rose Glen Rd., Port Hope**

**SPEAKER: Ted Cheskey, Federation of Ontario Naturalists**

Ted Cheskey is the Ontario Provincial Coordinator of the Important Bird Areas Program of the Federation of Ontario Naturalists. Mr. Cheskey works part-time for the FON in this capacity, and operates an outdoor education centre for the Waterloo Region District School Board. Mr. Cheskey holds a Masters Degree in Regional Planning and Resource Management from the University of Waterloo. He has been an active field ornithologist and conservation advocate for birds for many years in Ontario.

**TOPIC: Ontario's Important Bird Areas Program** - Past, present and future. Ted will review the International, National and Provincial Important Bird Areas programs. Specific sites that will be reviewed include: Presqu'ile, Napanee Plains, James Bay.

•March 26, 2004, 7:30 p.m.      **Cobourg Public Library**

**SPEAKER: Stuart Kenn, Ontario Puma Foundation**

Stuart Kenn is a long-time naturalist with a 30-year interest in the Puma. When he was a young boy, Stuart's favourite animal was the puma. Most people grow out of a "favourite animal" but for Stuart it became a passion and he is now the founder and president of the Ontario Puma Foundation.

**TOPIC: Ghost of the Forest**

Learn about the historical and current distribution of the second largest cat in the western hemisphere. Explore why puma concolor has so many names, its life cycle, habitat, prey... and why this cat may be closer to home than you think!



## REMINDER - MEMBERSHIP DUES

Willow Beach Field Naturalist membership dues are payable annually, at the beginning of each calendar year. If you have not renewed for 2004, dues can be paid at the monthly meetings, or send a cheque, to The Treasurer, Willow Beach Field Naturalists, P.O. Box 421, Port Hope, ON L1A 3Z3. Dues information is on the last page of the Curlew.

Thank you for your support.

## WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Fran Brumell-Nijhowne, Port Hope

Judith McIntyre, Cobourg

### THE WILLOW BEACH FIELD NATURALISTS

Past Pres.	Bob Short .....	905-885-1420 .....	mb.short@sympatico.ca
President	Carole Payne .....	905-885-6135 .....	bookbind@eagle.ca
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*The editor is most grateful to those who have contributed to this issue of the Curlew. Copy for the March 2004 issue should be received by February 29, 2004. Rare or interesting sightings should be reported to Ted McDonald (885-4764) or Norma Wallace (885-5552) for the March Curlew. Correspondence for WBFN should be addressed to: "The Willow Beach Field Naturalists, P.O. Box 421, Port Hope, ON L1A 3Z3."*

# PRESIDENT'S REPORT for 2003

## **Northumberland Land Trust**

Undoubtedly the Club's most important action over the last two years has been the setting up of the Northumberland Land Trust. After two years, the NLT is now a legal entity, having the ability to purchase land, work with landowners to set up conservation easements and accept gifts of land, all with the aim of protecting and preserving habitat and endangered environments. Bryan Baxter, our incoming president, has spent more than a year completing the tremendous amount of paperwork involved in setting up the Land Trust, which included obtaining charitable status, letters patent and a business number. He and his committee of Margaret Bain, Russell Lake, Bob Short and Jim Tedford are in the process of gathering names of people who will sit on the Board of Directors. Thanks to Bryan and his committee, and to Paul Peterson, who all helped to make this a reality.

## **Wesleyville Ravines**

The Wesleyville Ravines have continued to be a topic of interest to us. We received a great boost in morale when Jim Faight, the Executive Director of the FON, walked through the ravines with Bill Newell and me in advance of his visit to our May executive meeting. He was taken with their beauty, their diversity and with their importance on the "Big Picture Map" of the FON. He had been unaware that this large parcel of unspoiled land existed along the north shore of Lake Ontario. He declared it to be of provincial significance and promised that the FON would do everything it could to ensure its protection. To that end we approached the Nature Conservancy of Canada. With Jim's encouragement, the NCC launched a study to see if they could participate in the Ravines' protection. Our

spirits were high for a few months, until they sadly turned down our request for help. We suspect that their biggest reason was lack of resources, as they are presently quite over-extended financially. In the meantime, we are looking at other partnerships. With Jim's encouragement, we were in touch with the Harris government about the Hydro lands. They were pre-occupied with their own agenda. We will be following up with the present government. In the meantime, none of the land is for sale, and no development is taking place on it.

## **Tucker Creek Proposal**

The proposed Tucker Creek development at the west end of the Municipality of Port Hope still raises concerns for Willow Beach, both for its effect on the adjacent Wesleyville Ravines and on the "unsmart" growth precedent it would set for the municipality. As your president, I represented WBFN's concerns at a second public meeting on July 6 in Port Hope. The Council had earlier turned down a proposal for a community of 4000 people, but in July, they assented in principal to 350 houses, a golf course, a hotel, retail space, etc. It is not clear what the status of the proposal actually is at this moment. The failure of the ITER development to materialize at Bowmanville will probably have a cooling effect on development at least in the short term. We will maintain our vigilance in this area.

## **Cobourg**

WBFN continues to have a good working relationship with the Town of Cobourg. Terry Stopps, Russell Lake and Clive Goodwin, have all continued to do yeoman duty in representing the club on environmental issues. They have had recent

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success in saving 30 plus acres of environmentally sensitive areas in the North East Sector Development. Earlier this year, Terry and Russ made a presentation to Senior Management Committee regarding the West Harbour and Beach. They also have done a walk-about with The Environmental Advisory Committee to suggest protective measures for environmentally sensitive lands.

### **School Donations**

This year, our educational funds dedicated to supporting projects of environmental clubs at local schools went to Central Public School, Port Hope for greening of their playground, and to St. Mary's High School, Cobourg for their memorial garden. Two hundred and fifty dollars went to each project. Funds from our 50th Anniversary raffle (\$475.00) will ensure the continuation of the project.

### **Outings**

This year's very successful outings included trips to the Darlington Waterfront; Alderville to see Tallgrass Prairie Restoration; Peter's Woods; Ganaraska Trail in Port Hope; The Northumberland Forest; Candlewick Woods; Bluebird Walk; Prince Edward Point Bird Observatory; Cobourg/Port Hope Harbours for gulls and waterfowl.

Thanks to Alison Elliott for great year of outings!

### **Alderville**

In our continuing partnership with Alderville First Nation, several members of WBFN planted lupines again this spring. We participated in the burn of several fields to restore tall grass prairie. Rick Beaver spoke at our May meeting, where we participated in the book launch - *To Know This Place, the plants of Alderville*. The next day, Rick led our most popular outing at the Alderville Black Oak Savanna. This year, we were able to make a donation and give volunteer support to the Savannah Restoration project.

WBFN continues to support the efforts to protect the Red Cloud and Russ Creek Cemeteries.

### **Federation of Ontario Naturalists**

The FON played a larger part in our consciousness this year, with the visits of Jim Faught to our May Executive Meeting and to our 50th Anniversary celebrations in October. Port Hope hosted the FON's Regional Meeting the following day. A presentation of the impact of our Ecological Foot Print on the sustainability of our environment attracted several members of the public.

### **Donations**

This year, WBFN made donations to The Owl Foundation, FLAP, Long Point Bird Observatory, Avian Care and Research Foundation, the Port Hope and Cobourg Ecology Gardens and the Port Hope Fair. As well, we supported the Alderville Savannah Project and the Laurie Lawson Centre. As mentioned elsewhere, we donated \$500 to local school environmental projects. This year, we received almost a thousand dollars from the Baillie and Wallace Birdathons.

### **Fiftieth Anniversary**

Much ink has been spilled about the 50th Anniversary in previous issues of the Curlew, so I won't expand on what has already been said, except to once again thank everyone who made our past come to life with energy and promise for a bright future.

### **Cobourg Ecology Garden**

In 2003, the Cobourg Advisory Environmental Association disbanded, and transferred its remaining funds of \$8,000 to the Town of Cobourg with Willow Beach acting as the transferring agent. The money has been designated to be used by the Cobourg Ecology Garden and the Arboretum.

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## **Northumberland County Forest Draft Management Plan**

In the fall, Bill Wensley called together a number of our members to respond to a request from Northumberland County for input into the County's Draft Management Plan for the Northumberland Forest. Everyone read the Draft and met with County staff and consultants to offer suggestions and discuss the plan. The suggestions were well received. Thank you all.

## **Programme**

That Louise Schmidt has continued to provide a most amazing roster of speakers is evident in the growing attendance at meetings. On a really bleak winter night last March, Kevin Callan entertained 126 of us. We were pushing out the walls. Over 400 people attended our 50th Anniversary. These numbers show that people are increasingly interested in environmental issues. WBFN is well thought of in our communities and we will continue to work in ways that raise environmental issues thoughtfully and respectfully. We will also continue to expand our partnerships with others interested in these issues.

Thanks go to Allyson Parker for reporting to our September meeting on her experiences at the Doug Tarry Young Ornithologists Workshop; thanks to Glen McLeod for bringing us details of the Asian Long Horned Beetle in November; and to Elizabeth and Louise for keeping us informed about the West Nile Virus.

## **The Curlew**

The Raffle of the framed Curlew print at our last annual meeting netted \$2,112.92. One set of fifty years of *The Curlew* has been bound for the Club. Two more sets are in the process of binding, one for the Port Hop Library and the other for the Cobourg Library. The expense of the binding will be taken from the raffle proceeds, and the

remaining funds will go the Land Trust.

As for the current newsletter, everyone will have noticed by now that we have gone to a new format and process in mailing *The Curlew*.

## **Various**

As your President, I represented WBFN at the following meetings: a Pesticide Free Cobourg, the Brighton Field Naturalists, The Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan meeting at the GRCA, the opening of the GRCA Millennium Park Building, the Rice Lake Plains Joint Initiative at Grafton. I have been representing the club as a member of the Cobourg/Port Hope Waterfront Trails and Parks Committee. To increase my knowledge and in order to better serve as your president, I attended two Land Trust Workshops, and the Raptor Conference sponsored by the Haliburton Stewardship Council.

As a thank you to Regency Manor for offering us space to hold our executive meetings, WBFN donated a tree to them, which Bill Newell planted in November.

Things to still be pursued: a Web site for WBFN, e-mailing *The Curlew*, a privacy policy for the club.

This year we owe thanks to John Geale and Barbara Evans who created a workable system for members' names tags at meetings.

Once again, thanks to club members who have folded and mailed *The Curlew*; to Lawrence Holmes for clipping newspapers; to Marilyn Harris for taking care of our sound system; to all who have set up and taken down chairs and tables. Thanks to Sharon Pickering for doing the raffle and to Andy McLaughlin for counting attendance and always being there. Thanks also to Marilyn and Bob Harris for representing Willow Beach on the Board of the Lone Pine Marsh.

The current Executive has been exceptional. Bob Short has been consistently cheerful about giving good advice every time

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I called him, and as he steps away from the Executive, we wish him well. We know we will miss his quiet wisdom and his great knowledge.

The position of second vice-president can be intimidating. There is so much to learn and a long time to worry about whether you will be up to the job. Simone Mérey has willingly jumped into the midst of the action and has been prepared to take on responsibility even though she is still teaching every day. She has consented to be our new FON rep and she has recently updated our information for new members. Janette Johnston continues to pay the bills and do the banking. Jean Wilson has done an amazing job at learning how to distil the essential from the often wide-ranging discussions of our Executive meetings to give us an excellent set of minutes. It doesn't hurt that her sister, Audrey Wilson, is able to fill her in on the background of every issue. Thanks for continuing to share your wisdom and experience with the rest of us, as well, Audrey. Bill Newell continues his active support of the Wesleyville Ravines initiative, and helps us expand our partnership with the GRCA.

Russell Lake continues to be responsible for supervising volunteers who oversee the maintenance of Peter's Woods. With over 1400 visitors in 2003, this is becoming an increasingly important task. We are grateful to Russell for this work.

Norma Wallace has continued with Elizabeth Kellogg to Publish *The Curlew*, one of the best naturalist publications in the Country. They also did a tremendous amount of organizing me and others, as did Bill Wensley, for the 50th Anniversary.

Elizabeth Kellogg and Roger Frost continue to do the important work of the club in finding, counting and banding birds. Elizabeth's enthusiasm and delight when she leads the bird sightings at our meetings, is infectious, and is still my favourite part of the

evening. Besides taking responsibility for our summer and winter bird counts, Roger has proved to be an excellent director. Alison Elliott's outings always have room for the novice naturalist. Her generosity and willingness to share her knowledge have made all her outings a delight - even the one to Amherst Island when there was lots of snow, lots of cold and no owls. When John Geale left for New Zealand, Alison cheerfully agreed to take his place as director as long as she could give up her responsibility as Outings Co-ordinator. Thank, Alison.

Jim Tedford also joined us as a new director this year. His input has been invaluable in helping us clarify the club's direction and the necessity of broadening our partnerships in the community to ensure that our environment continues to be protected. Bruce Parker has continued to challenge us to find ways of involving young people in the club. It was his initiative that established donations for environmental projects in the schools. Louise Schmidt has continued to provide amazing speakers, and she has already started compiling next year's list. Such organization leaves me in awe.

A poem by E.B. White fell into my lap the other day, that perhaps sums up the nature of my presidency.

*If the world were merely seductive  
That would be easy.  
If it were merely challenging  
That would be no problem.  
But I arise in the morning,  
Torn between a desire to save the world  
And to savour the world.*

*That makes it hard to plan the day.*

It has been an exciting two years for me. The personal learning curve has often been steep. But it has been easy to learn from people who have been so generous of spirit. It

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is true that I have worked harder at WBFN than I have at my business, but I have enjoyed every minute. Thank you so very much for the opportunity to serve, and for your patience, generosity and kindness.

It is time to say thank you to everyone and to pass the torch to Bryan. It is fitting that this report begins with the most important accomplishment to of my tenure as president. Although I was involved from the first meeting, it was Bryan Baxter who did the majority of the work in setting up the Northumberland Land Trust. It is a tremendous thing to have done, and the future of Northumberland County will surely benefit from his work. Bryan comes to the position of president with many strengths. He is a knowledgeable birder and confirmed environmentalist. He brings a lifetime of

management and organizational skills to the job. He knows how to do things properly and he is a warm and kind individual. As I pass the torch to him, I know the club will continue to prosper under his leadership. Best of luck, Bryan!

*Carole Payne*

### **The Trumpeter Swan Restoration Program 2003**

*Brief summary of report written by Harry G. Lumsden:*

In 1982, there had been no wild Trumpeter Swans in Ontario for nearly 100 years. The restoration program began in 1982.

It is estimated that there were about 406 wild Trumpters in southern Ontario on Sept. 2/02. By Sept. 1/03, 36 (9%) of these birds were dead (17) or missing (19). A 9% loss is much lower than usual. In September 2003, it was estimated that there were 482 swans in southern Ontario.

While trumpeters frequently die because they fly into hydro wires, it has been noted that since Hydro One Network put "flappers" on the top wire on the line that runs along the barrier beach at Burlington, no further swans have been lost there. The number of wing tag sightings reported is down. It is hoped that this is not the result of flagging interest on the part of observers.

The program feels that it is close to the goal of developing a self-sustaining population of Trumpeter Swans. Geneticists have recommended a minimum population size of 500 Trumpeters with at least 100 breeding pairs.

Copies of the full 6-page report can be requested from H.G. Lumsden, 144 Hillview Road, Aurora, ON, L4G 2M5, E-mail: [THEHOLTENTWO@cs.com](mailto:THEHOLTENTWO@cs.com)

*summary prepared by Don Davis*

## MID-WINTER WATERFOWL INVENTORY

2004

by Roger Frost

On January 11, 2004, 8 members of the Willow Beach Field Naturalists participated in the Lake Ontario Mid-winter Waterfowl Inventory. Participants were Roger Frost, Elizabeth Kellogg, Louise Schmidt, Graydon Bowman, Alison Elliott, Ben Walters, Lori Wensley and Clive Goodwin. Our group was responsible for the lakeshore from Wicklow Beach to Wesleyville. Strong south-west winds and at times heavy snow reduced visibility and made the ducks on the lake difficult to count. Overall, our group found 13 species of waterfowl and one Double-crested Cormorant. The totals are as follows:

Double-crested	1
Mute Swan	10
Canada Goose	1751
American Black Duck	94
Mallard	837
Redhead	2
Greater Scaup	43
Lesser Scaup	2
Long-tailed Duck	68
White-winged Scoter	2
Common Goldeneye	536
Bufflehead	170
Common Merganser	41
Red-breasted Merganser	16
American Black Duck	2

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## ASTRONOMICAL HIGHLIGHTS FOR 2004

*Condensed by Don Davis from "The Universe"  
column by Terence Dickinson and published in the  
December 28/03 Toronto Star.*

**Saturn.** The giant ringed planet is at its closest approach to the Earth in 29 years, at a distance of 12.043 billion kilometres, or 8 times the Earth-sun distance. Look for prime Saturn-viewing for backyard and balcony astronomers over the next few months. Look for Saturn after 7 p.m. as the brightest starlike object to the left of Betelgeuse in Orion's shoulder. Saturn is also the target for Cassini, a spacecraft launched from Earth in 1997 but only now arriving at the distant world.

**Transit of Venus.** On June 8, for the first time since 1882, the planet Venus will pass in front of the sun. The event will be visible from southern Ontario in small telescopes for about one hour following sunrise that morning. However, it is only safe to view with a proper solar filter.

**Bright Comets?** What we will see here in Ontario won't be known until March. As of now, though, astronomers are expecting Comet NEAT Q4 will reach at least binocular visibility in May.

**Total Eclipse of the Moon.** If you enjoyed watching the beautiful total lunar eclipse on November 8, all of North America gets another one on October 27. At 89 minutes, this totality (peaking at 11:04 p.m.) will be more than twice the length of the November eclipse and is considered a must-see by all astronomy fans.

**Mars Rovers.** Astronomers have been bowled over by the clarity of the new images showing the surface of the red planet.

*Below is a list of upcoming workshops which were brought to our attention by the Federation of Ontario Naturalists. The sponsoring organizations are listed in the announcements.*

## **UPCOMING WORKSHOPS**

### **1. Invasive Species Workshop, Saturday March 6, 2004, Durham College, 2000 Simcoe Street North, Oshawa, Room UA1120, 9 a.m. to 2:15 p.m.**

**Ontario's Forest, Wetland and Lake Invaders!** This is a full day workshop coordinated by the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters (O.F.A.H.), in partnership with the Oshawa Creek Watershed Committee and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. Asian Long-Horned Beetle, Grass Carp, and Dog Strangling Vine are examples of just a few invasive species that threaten the health of Ontario's forests, lakes and wetlands. Introduced from other regions of the world these invasive insects, plants and fish can have devastating environmental impacts. This workshop will provide you with the most current information on these invaders and actions to date to prevent their spread. Registration (including lunch) is \$10 before March 3, 2004 and \$15 after this date.

For more information or to pre register, contact the O.F.A.H. Invading Species Hotline at 1-800-563-7711, email [invasive\\_species@ofah.org](mailto:invasive_species@ofah.org) or fax to (705) 748-9577.

### **2. Well Awareness Workshop, Monday March 15 at the Blackstock Recreation Center 3440 Church St. W., Blackstock OR Monday March 22nd, at the Sunderland Memorial Arena 7-9:30 p.m.**

**Know Your Well!** A community forum to provide you with the facts you need to know about owning and maintaining your well. Guest speakers will teach you how to maintain your well for safe drinking water, seal your old well properly, test your well, and how you can help protect groundwater sources in your area. Brought to you by the Green Communities Association, the Ontario Ground Water Association and the CAW Durham Regional Environment Council. For more information, contact Dave Renaud at [drenaud@cawdrec.com](mailto:drenaud@cawdrec.com) or (905) 404-1279.

### **3. Ontario Vernal Pool Association Special Meeting, Saturday March 6, 2004, Credit Valley Conservation Boardroom, 1255 Old Derry Rd., Mississauga, ON, 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.**

The Ontario Vernal Pool Association presents....some great speakers and information about vernal pools in Ontario. Guest speaker topics for the day include Introduction to the Ontario Vernal Pool Association, provincial planning policy for the protection of vulnerable species' habitats in Ontario, introduction to the amphibians and invertebrates of Ontario vernal pools, amphibian conservation and Toronto Zoo's Adopt-A-Pond Program, waterfowl and ephemeral wetlands and funding options for protecting vernal pools. Field trips at the end of the day will round out this great set of sessions! Registration includes lunch and costs \$10 for an OVPA member, \$15 for non-members. For more information or to register, contact Scott Sampson at [opva@sympatico.ca](mailto:opva@sympatico.ca), or by mail to: Membership Secretary c/o Ontario Vernal Pool Association, P.O. Box 263, Norval ON, L0P 1K0

## RECENT SIGHTINGS

*compiled by Ted McDonald*

Horned Grebe	Jan. 5-6	1	off Lakeshore Rd., Cob.	LW
Red-necked Grebe	Jan. 29/31	1	Cobourg Harbour	CEG, M.Obs.
Double-crested Cormorant	Jan. 11	1	Port Hope yacht basin	MB
Mute Swan	Jan. 11-12	10	Cobourg Harbour	CEG
Northern Pintail	Jan. 6	1	Cobourg Harbour	CEG

Sightings - cont'd.

Black-capped Chickadee	Jan. 12	5	Lakeshore Rd., Cob.	LW
Red-breasted Nuthatch	Jan. 22	4	Bowmanton Rd. feeder	KD
White-breasted Nuthatch	Jan. 22	2	Bowmanton Rd. feeder	KD

**Observers:** EB=Erich Bahr; MB=Margaret Bain; HB=Hazel Bird; AB=Arnaud Braat; KB=Kim Braat; EC=E. Chapman; GMCD=Geoff Dale; KD=Karen Drew; JF=Jo Foster; RF=Roger Frost; CEG=Clive Goodwin; EK=Elizabeth Kellogg; GL=Gary Little; BL=Bill Logan; NL=Nancy Logan; ERM=Ted McDonald; KMc=Kathryn McHolm; AMc=Andy McLauchlan; BMc=Bill McMann; M.Obs=Many Observers; CO=Cath Oberholzer; CP=Carole Payne; MR=Martha Robinson; DS=Dave Shirley; BS=Bob Short; MS=Marg Short; JS=J. Smith; DSv=Daphne Svenningson; AT=Anne Tesluk; NW=Norma Wallace; DW=Doug Watkins; MW=Marie Watkins; LW=Lori Wensley; AEW=Audrey Wilson

Brown Creeper	Jan 3	1	Gage's Creek Trail, PH	EK

*The Curlew* is published 8 times per year, January, February, March, April, May, September, October and November by the Willow Beach Field Naturalists.

Membership in WBFN includes a subscription to *The Curlew*.

Annual membership fees are:

Family - \$20    Single - \$18    Senior Couple - \$18    Senior Single - \$16

Cheques for membership should be made out to Willow Beach Field Naturalists and sent to The Treasurer, Willow Beach Field Naturalists, P.O. Box 421, Port Hope, ON, L1A 3Z3. A receipt for Income Tax purposes will be provided for your membership fee as well as for any donation. Willow Beach Field Naturalists is a Registered Charitable organization.



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