



COMING EVENTS

- **Friday, November 25, 2005, 7:30 p.m.** - District Health Unit, Rose Glen Rd., Port Hope
Speaker: **Otto Peter**, Topic: **Thickson's Woods**. Otto Peter of the Thickson's Woods Land Trust will present a slide show entitled **Thickson's Woods: An Urban Treasure**. Birds, plants, butterflies and history of Thickson's Woods.
- **Saturday November 26, 9 a.m.- Port Hope Harbour, A.K. Sculthorpe Marsh and Cobourg Harbour**. An early winter outing to look for waterfowl. Meet at 8:45 a.m. in Port Hope at the parking lot on Lake St. at the west side of the marsh. There is a sign here for the A.K. Sculthorpe Marsh. Directions from Hwy. 2 (Peter St.): Turn south on Hope St.S. (the west end of the Peter St. plaza, across from A & P). Turn east (left) at the gazebo on Lake St. Follow Lake St. to the parking lot.
- **Saturday, December 17, 2005 - Annual Christmas Bird Count**. This is an all-day event, ending with a pot luck dinner at Welcome United Church, (Cty. Rd. 2 just south of Welcome corner). Counters will be in the field throughout most of the daylight hours. They will gather at the church at about 4:30 p.m. Feederwatchers are welcome to participate. Contact Roger Frost, 905-885-9615 for more information and to determine the boundaries of the count circle.
- **Friday, January 27, 2006, 7:30 p.m.** - Terry Fox School, 1065 Riddell Ave., Cobourg
Speaker: **Mark Rupke**, Topic: **Plankton**. Learn about the base of the aquatic food chain, diatoms, *spirogyra* and *daphnia*. Mark has been looking through the microscope studying and photographing plankton for 20 years. Come and listen while he shares what he has learned.
- **Sunday, February 19, 8:30 a.m. - Outing to Kendal Crown Land**. A winter outing to look for birds, mammals and owls in a parcel of crown land just north of Port Hope. Meet at 8 a.m. at the commuter parking at Hwy. 28 and Hwy. 401, opposite Arby's.
- **Friday, February 24, 2006, 7:30 p.m.** - District Health Unit, Rose Glen Rd., Port Hope
Annual General Meeting and Social.

Watch future editions for more details of meetings and outings.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

● On October 28, three WBFN members were honoured at the 2005 Ontario Volunteer Service Awards. **Carole Payne**, Past President; **Sharon Dey**, meeting raffle coordinator; and **Janette Johnston**, Treasurer received awards for five years of service to the club. As well, **Bob Short**, another WBFN Past President, was recognized for five years of service to the Ganaraska Hiking Club and Janette Johnston was recognized for five years of service to the Victoria Hall Volunteers.

● On October 27, **Allyson Parker** received notification that she had won the **Canadian Geographic Polar Bound Contest for 2005**. She will be heading off to the Antarctic for 2 weeks on December 27, 2005. She wrote a paper on the role of Canadian youth in the upcoming International Polar Year 2007-2009 which will be a two-year program of science, research and education focused on the Arctic and Antarctic Regions. This is the same contest that Kelsi Prince, our October meeting guest speaker, won in 2004. How fortunate we are to have in our community two young people who are so concerned about environmental issues. Members can follow Allyson's travels at www.studentsonice.com.

Welcome to New Members

Chris Gallant, Port Hope
Margo Loucareas, Downsview
Gina McFarlane, Cobourg

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BOX 421
PORT HOPE, ON L1A 3Z3

THE WILLOW BEACH FIELD NATURALISTS

Past Pres.	Carole Payne	905-885-6135	bookbind@eagle.ca
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1st Vice-pres.	Simone Mérey	905-885-8347	archangel@nhb.com
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Curlew Ed.	Norma Wallace	905-885-5552	
	Elizabeth Kellogg	905-885-9615	ekrf@eagle.ca

The editor is most grateful to those who have contributed to this issue of the Curlew. Copy for the January 2006 issue should be received by December 31, 2005. Rare or interesting sightings should be reported to Ted McDonald (885-4764) or Norma Wallace (885-5552) for the January Curlew. Correspondence for WBFN should be addressed to: "The Willow Beach Field Naturalists, P.O. Box 421, Port Hope, ON L1A 3Z3."

In Praise of Patches

We have a lot of great birders in Northumberland, but I am often surprised at how few of them record their observations or send their sightings in to the monthly review in *The Curlew*. Perhaps they feel they are not “expert” enough, or that their everyday observations are not worth recording. But think of the beautiful sand dunes at Sandbanks – they are all made of individual grains of sand and wouldn’t exist otherwise. I hope you have all visited Clive Goodwin’s excellent website *Birds of Northumberland County* at http://homepage.mac.com/wings_4d/bonc/bonc_index.html. Here are all the grains of sand, the individual observations that add up to an intricate, detailed, year-round picture of the birdlife in Northumberland. Useful now, useful for generations to come in understanding migration and breeding patterns, in measuring change of habitats and climate change, in planning land use, and just letting interested birders know what to expect and where.

Which brings us to patches. Many birders “go birding” to hotspots like Pelee, Presqu’ile, Amherst Island - nothing wrong with that, and it’s usually great fun. But all these birders are then basically seeing the same birds, while less obviously fruitful areas are ignored. There is so much to be said for having your own “patch”, the area you bird day in day out, summer and winter, in sunshine and showers. Preferably, your patch should not require a car to get there, or be at most a short drive away. It could be the trees and gardens around your own block, a nearby wooded park, a small neighbourhood marsh or creek beside walking trails, even the bird feeders outside the kitchen window. The grains of sand then are what you see every day, and any area regularly observed yields a much more varied and interesting list than you would ever expect.

My own patch is in downtown Cobourg, an old residential area with abundant mature trees, only two blocks from the lake-shore and an easy walk along the pebbly beach to the harbour. It’s sometimes full of birds, sometimes almost deserted, but it’s always interesting. Recent northerly gales have blown flotillas of Turkey Vultures almost as far as the lake, before that the algae on the beach fed a medley of small shorebirds – nothing rare, but numbers and diversity changing day by day. Sparrows of various kinds in brush piles and skulking through thick, tangled vegetation present an exciting ID challenge. Gulls and ducks, warblers and flycatchers – the variety seems endless.

But for the patch to fulfill its potential, you do have to write all this down somewhere! If you’re like me, you’re quite sure you will remember the day you saw that unexpected Lapland Longspur on the harbour rocks, but a week or two later... was it last Tuesday? - or was it the Thursday? (no, that was the dentist) - or perhaps it was even the previous week? The date is gone. So a small notebook is almost as important as your binoculars. It doesn’t have to be anything fancy, but it will provide a fascinating and useful record of your observations.

And for the grains of sand to become part of that impressive sand dune, send your notes in, perhaps at the end of each month, so they can be included in *The Curlew*. Ted McDonald compiles the sightings list each month, so you can mail them to him at 33 Centennial Drive, Port Hope, L1A 3S9, or email them to Elizabeth Kellogg at ekrf@eagle.ca We look forward to a sand-storm of wonderful observations!

Margaret Bain

Free Ontario Nature Membership for WBFN

Our Club is a member of Ontario Nature (Federation of Ontario Naturalists) and this year, Ontario Nature is providing an opportunity for our Club to win free membership for a year while supporting the ongoing conservation work of Ontario Nature and the Nature Network. From now until January 15th, if our Club sells eight new memberships to Ontario Nature, our Club membership fee of \$150.00 will be waived.

Ontario Nature memberships are the gifts that give back to nature. Memberships help support Ontario Nature's conservation programs and services that protect our nature across the province.

Following are the special discounted rates being offered to our group until January 15, 2006:

- Individual is \$40.00 (save \$5.00)
- Student or Senior is \$35.00 (save \$3.00)
- School/Library is \$35.00 (save \$5.00)
- Family is \$45.00 (save \$5.00)

Please contact me for an application form.

An Ontario Nature membership makes a great holiday, Christmas or Birthday gift.

Bryan Baxter,
WBFN President
905-372-6273

WILLOW BEACH FIELD NATURALISTS FUNDRAISING DRAW

1st Prize: Limited Edition Framed Print by Saul Williams
Baby Thunderbirds - 49/125
(donated by Minnie Pennell)

2nd Prize: Framed Photograph - Owl Butterfly - by Bill Crowley

3rd Prize: Framed Photograph - Orchid - by Bill Crowley

4th Prize - Framed Photograph - Mushrooms - by Bill Crowley
(all photographs donated by Bill Crowley)

Draw: Friday, February 24, 2006
at the Annual General Meeting of WBFN
Tickets \$2.00 each or 3 for \$5.00

Available from Michael Biggar, 905-372-7407

Michael would appreciate assistance in selling tickets or suggestions of possible locations or events at which to sell them.

This notice was received from Ontario Nature in mid-September, but we did not have space in the November Curlew to publish it. WBFN is a member group of Ontario Nature (formerly the Federation of Ontario Naturalists).

CHANGES AT THE TOP OF ONTARIO NATURE

Ontario Nature, the province's largest and oldest conservation organization, has hired Caroline Schultz to be its new executive director. Ms. Schultz, who takes over October 24, is an experienced and dynamic leader of environmental non-profit organizations with degrees in both science and non-profit management.

Ms. Schultz is taking the helm from Babak Abbaszadeh, who is leaving next week to become the executive assistant to Ontario's Energy Minister, Dwight Duncan. Mr. Abbaszadeh said: "Ontario Nature is a worthy organization doing important work. It has been a pleasure to work with its dedicated staff, Board and member groups. I am optimistic about the organization's future. I wish Caroline Schultz great success and will help during the transition."

Ontario Nature President Steve Hounsell said Mr. Abbaszadeh will be missed. "Babak is an effective leader who has worked well with the Board and staff, and has been a strong ambassador for Ontario Nature. The organization is in a stronger position today than when he arrived."

During the interim period, Wendy Francis, Ontario Nature's new Director of Conservation and Science, will serve as Acting Executive Director. Ms. Francis is a nationally respected conservationist, with advanced degrees in biology, law, and environmental law. She has experience filling interim executive director positions, most recently with the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society.

Looking forward, Mr. Hounsell said he is confident Ms. Schultz will bring energetic leadership, a strong scientific background, and fundraising know-how to Ontario Nature. "I am thrilled to be taking on the role of Executive Director and serving an organization I have known and respected for many years. More than ever, Ontario Nature has a critical role to play in en-

sureing the ecological health of this Province - for Ontarians, for Canadians, and for the global community." said Ms. Schultz.

Ms. Schultz is leaving her job heading up the Nature Conservancy of Canada's program in Central and Eastern Ontario. She spent 10 years as Conservation director of the Canadian Nature Federation, with which Ontario Nature is allied. She has played a key role in the strategic development of a number of key national and international conservation initiatives and organizations, including BirdLife International as Chair of the Americas Regional Council. Ms. Schultz has a master's degree in plant ecology, and completed a Master of Management for voluntary sector leaders at McGill University.

Ontario Nature, which celebrates its 75th anniversary next year, has a long history of advocacy of wildlife, woodland and wetland protection. It is the steward of 21 nature reserves in the province, each protecting a unique habitat; it publishes the award-winning quarterly magazine ON Nature; has 25,000 members and supporters and runs the Nature Network of 140 member groups.

Respected for its science-based advocacy, Ontario Nature - formerly called the Federation of Ontario Naturalists - played a key role in securing the Niagara Escarpment, the hundreds of new parks designated under the Living Legacy process; the Oak Ridges Moraine Protection Act, and most recently the Greenbelt Act. As the battle continues for ecologically-sound development, rather than uncontrolled urban sprawl, Ontario Nature is campaigning for an Ontario Greenway. Ms. Schultz said she's excited at the prospect of leading the fight for the Greenway vision of core protected natural areas and green links stretching right across the province from Windsor to Ottawa.

Annual Meeting

Thursday, January 12, 2005, at Lions Community Centre, 157 Elgin St. Cobourg

Social hour 6 P.M. Dinner 7 P.M.

Cost \$50.00 per person (tax receipt for \$25.00) and includes a 2006 Membership

Speaker: John Shaw-Rimmington, Port Hope

Topic: Dry Stone construction of walls and bridges.

RECENT SIGHTINGS
compiled by Ted McDonald

Sightings - cont'd.

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Observers: MB=Margaret Bain; KB=Kim Braat; KBr=Kelli Brooking; MC=Maureen Campeau; SB=Susan Bailie; GMCD=Geoff Dale; BF=Brad Foster; JF=Jo Foster; RF=Roger Frost; KH=Kyle Horner; MJ=Mike Jones; CEG=Clive Goodwin; MH=Marguerite Huggins; EK=Elizabeth Kellogg; PL=Pam Lancaster; MR=Martha Robinson; LS=Louise Schmidt; DS=Dave Shirley; NW=Norma Wallace; BW=Ben Walters; DW=Doug Watkins; MW=Marie Watkins

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.



Willow Beach Field Naturalists
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