



# The Woodland Observer

## Nipissing Naturalists Club

### Sept. 2015

*Enjoy Nature!*

Affiliated with  
Ontario  
Nature

President: Fred Pinto — fredpinto1@gmail.com — 705-476-9006

## Successful 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Louise de Kiriline Lawrence Nature Festival held

*A summary of the second nature festival—organized by members of the Nipissing Naturalists*

Visitors got to see live reptiles, make bird houses, pan for gold, learn how to live with bears and much more. There were fourteen different displays and activities. We had visitors from across Canada. On the guided walks in Laurier Woods during the festival, attendees got to see a large Snapping Turtle crossing the trail and a Garter snake eating a frog – these were not planted but the drama of nature unfolding on its own. Visit the festival website for more info:

<http://naturefestival.jimdo.com/>



*Above: Learning about bats, plants, aquatic insects and dragonflies at the dipping platform.*



*Above: Getting up close with snakes.*

### Monitoring Ontario's largest bat maternal roost

We helped monitor the largest Little Myotis bat roost in Ontario this summer on June 18<sup>th</sup> 2014. Last year 134 bats were counted before the females gave birth. This year 187 bats were counted on June 17 2015 during our visit before the females gave birth. When we revisited the roost site on July 11 after the young were born we counted 295 – the largest maternal roost in Ontario of Little Myotis bats.

Little Myotis bats are a species at risk. These small (6 cm – 12 cm) bats have been severely affected by a fast spreading alien fungal disease called white nosed syndrome.

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# Monitoring Ontario's largest bat maternal roost

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The disease that was introduced in a cave in New York State was first confirmed in Ontario at the site of the Purdy mica mine near Mattawa in 2010.

On our way to the site on June 17 we came across a recently killed large pregnant female Blanding's turtle. Blanding's turtles are also a species at risk. The turtle had been run over. We thought we could collect any unbroken eggs and have them hatch. However all her eggs were smashed.

We counted the bats with new monitoring devices that recorded the bat's calls. The calls can then be analyzed by trained people looking at the acoustic signature. Voice recognition computer programs have also improved and can help to identify bat species. Hand-held ipads with a special microphone were found quite useful in detecting, recording and evaluating the sounds in real time.

On our way back we stopped and checked for bat activity in Cache Bay. Here we detected Little Myotis, Big Brown and Hoary bats. The Hoary bats (a migratory bat that lives in the forest) were flying over water.

During our revisit of the maternal roost we got a recording of a Little Myotis and Silver Haired bat. Silver haired bats live in the forest but were feeding in the same vicinity as the Little Myotis bats.

## Support the Science Fair Prize!

Peyton Hack, a Grade 8<sup>th</sup> student won the Nipissing Naturalist Club Science Fair prize this year. She described her experiment to determine if back yard birds preferred bird feeders with a specific colour. She purchased five bird feeders and coloured them red, orange, green, blue and yellow. She then observed how many birds alighted on each bird feeder at specific times of the day. The bird feeders were moved to control the impact of their geographic location. She found that birds preferred the red bird feeder followed by the orange one.

The Science Fair prize is derived from sales of greeting cards made from prize winning photos from our annual contest. [Please get your best photos of animals, plants, landscapes and people enjoying nature ready for submission for this year's contest.](#)

## Wild edibles guided walk draws large crowd

Jeremey St Onge and Lucy Emmott guided a large group through Laurier Woods Conservation Area on the August monthly hike. Participants learned how to use common wild edible plants. Wetlands and riparian areas are the best to find a variety of wild edibles.



*Above: Visitors and residents of North Bay gathered during the long weekend for a fun guided hike.*



*Left: Cattails have a number of edible parts. Here Lucy Emmott shows us the part of the tuberous root that can be boiled and eaten.*



# Calendar of Events

## Next General Meeting

Tuesday, September 8th, 2015  
Cassellholme Auditorium @ 7:00 pm  
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## Previous Meeting Review

Lets give a big thank you to last meeting's speaker, Mark Kulhberg, who gave an intriguing presentation on "**How Environmentalism is Failing us**"!

## Upcoming Speakers



*Above: The beautiful Yukon.*

The Nipissing Naturalists Club has a beautiful new website with photos of past events, details about future events and meetings and information about Birdwing. Be sure to check it out at:

**[www.nipnats.com](http://www.nipnats.com)**

### Monthly Bird Bash — Saturday & Sunday

Spend some time observing our local birds and report on how many species of birds you see. Contact Dick Tafel for details [rtafel@sympatico.ca](mailto:rtafel@sympatico.ca) or 705 472-7907.

### Birdwing Meeting

Fourth Tuesday of each month at 6:30 pm  
Bird watching topics will be discussed. Meet at the library (auditorium). Contact Dick Tafel at 705 472-7907 or email [rtafel@sympatico.ca](mailto:rtafel@sympatico.ca)

**Date:** September 8, 2015

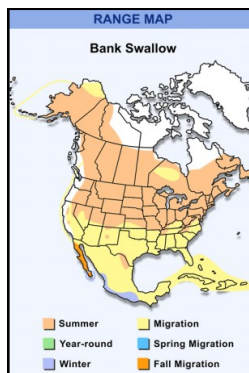
**Speaker:** Sonje Bols

**Topic:** Bank Swallows in Canada's Boreal North: past and present biogeography

This Master's project, led by Sonje Bols of Nipissing University, is a unique combination of regional history and biology. She combines Bank Swallow fieldwork conducted across southern Yukon as well as the rich history of scientific research in the region in order to better understand the decline of this fascinating species.



*Above: A bank swallow.  
Beside: Bank swallow range map.*



## Haskap, a northern fruit now a commercial crop

The Boreal Winery is located south of Hagar. Mira and Greg Melien started the orchard and winery a few years ago. They grow haskap berries that they then use to produce jams, juice and wines. They also produce a number of different fruit wines.



*Above: Greg Melien, owner of Boreal Winery explains the history and culture of Haskap berries. Greg had a love for making wine and decided to turn his hobby into a business.*

Haskap is a trade name for *Lonicera caerulea* or edible blue Honeysuckle that grow in the boreal regions of America, Asia and Europe. The name is derived from the name used in Japan where the fruit has a long history of use. The Japanese call it Haskappu. It is called Honey berry in the USA. The plant is not related to blue berries.

Work at the University of Saskatoon has resulted in varieties that produce large amounts of blue fruit that ripen synchronously. This work has ena-

bled the fruit to be grown commercially.

Haskap is adapted to grow in northern climates and withstands frosts in the fall and spring. The shrub grows to about 1 m in height and produces about 4-7 kg of fruit once it is about 5 years old. The plants live and can keep producing fruit for about 30 years. Flowers appear in May and are pollinated by native insects. The blue thinned skinned oblong fruit are ready to be hand-picked in June. The fruit has small almost undetectable seeds. There are few pests. Cedar Wax wings are known to eat the berries. Experiments are underway to determine if polarized light can deter birds from feeding on the berries. Deer, Moose and elk will all eat the plants.

Fresh Haskap berries retail for about \$21/kg. Plans are being developed to have more farms in the Nipissing region grow and market Haskap berries.



*Above: Greg Melien demonstrates how the wine is bottled. The stainless steel tanks in the background are used to age the fermented juice.*

Date	Topic	Guide	Time
September 5	Seedless plants— <b>Laurier Woods</b>	Joe Boivin	10.00 a.m. to noon
October 3	Investigating tracks and signs— <b>Laurier Woods</b>	Jeremy St Onge/Lucy Emmott	10.00 a.m. to noon
October 10	Cranberry picking and walk in partnership with Greening Nipissing— <b>Cranberry Trail, Callander</b>	Fred Pinto	10:00 a.m. to 1 p.m.
November 7	Geology— <b>Laurier Woods</b>	Larry Dyke	10.00 a.m. to noon
December 5	History of Laurier Woods— <b>Laurier Woods</b>	Dick Tafel	10.00 a.m. to noon