

# THE WOODLAND OBSERVER

NOVEMBER 2015





I don't think November is at the top of anyone's list of favourite months. The splendid leaves of October are no more, the days are getting shorter and shorter, sunlight is at a premium and the temperature dips considerably. It is a time of adjustment before winter sets in. But there can be some beautiful days when the temperature climbs and the sun shines brightly and it seems as if we are stealing some extra autumn days.

The cover I chose for this month's *The Woodland Observer* was taken on a November day at Jocko Point on Lake Nipissing and reflects one of those pristine November days when we can clearly discern the bone structure of the landscape.

Lake Nipissing ties into Dick Tafel's article about a boat trip on that lake in late September when the water was as calm as could possibly be, a memory to treasure in the coming months when being on the lake can get quite nippy. There is still some colour in November, but if you miss our glorious autumn, there is Karen Major's article on two of her fall outings.

The yellow needles of the Tamarack trees are one of the last glimpses of colour before spring, so be sure to get out and take part in the November guided walk at Laurier Woods with geologist Larry Dyke. See inside for upcoming guided walks in Laurier Woods.

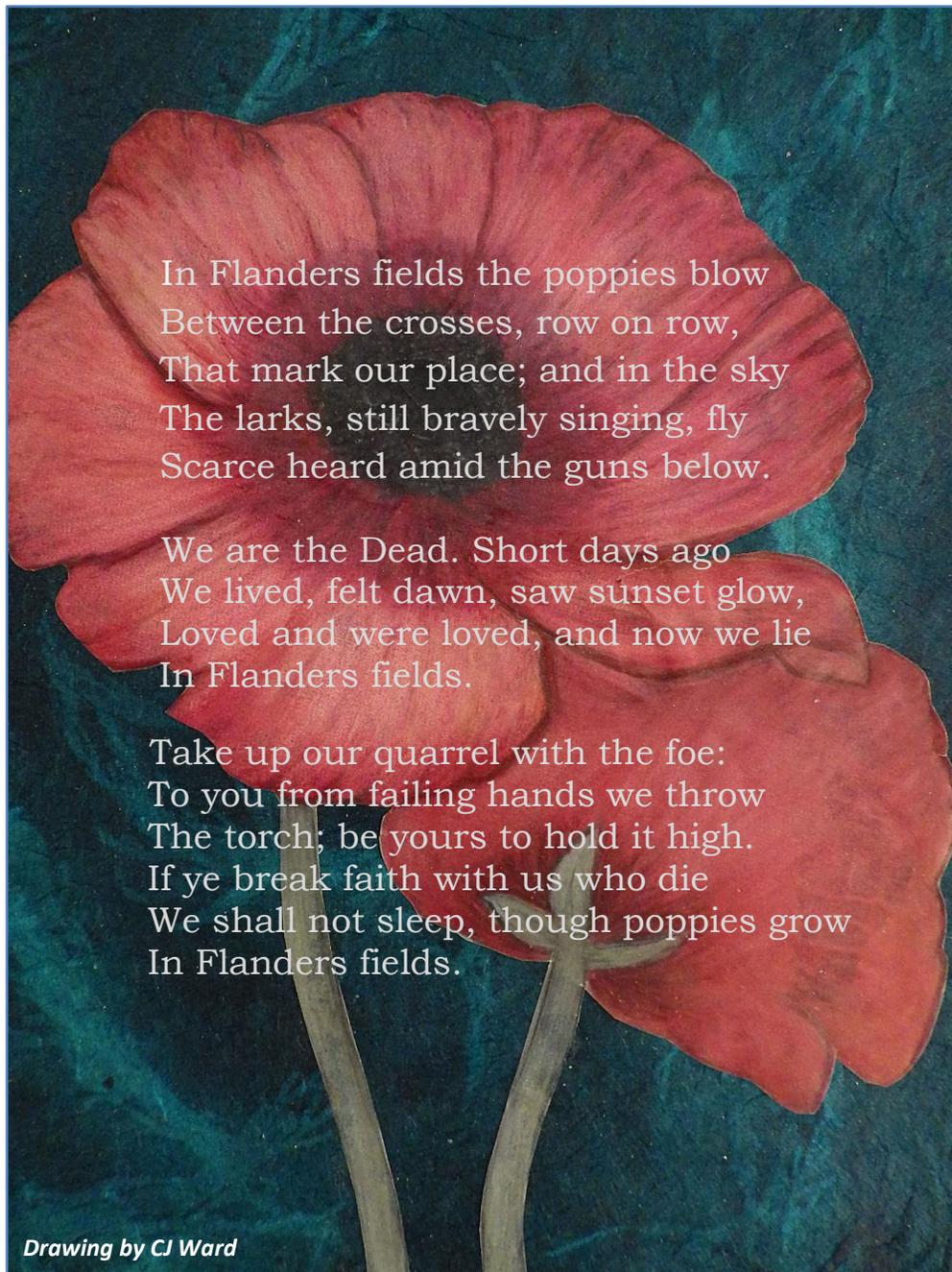
If we are lucky, we may get a glimpse of an owl this month, but if not, there are the photos of the Northern Saw-whet and Long-eared Owls that accompany Fred Pinto's article, with an addendum by me, on owl banding this fall at Hilliardton Marsh.

We will have to wait until the spring to see Lady Slippers, but, in the meantime, read about these fascinating woodland orchids in Paul Smylie's article based on Max Lefebvre's presentation at October's meeting. Paul takes some complex material and bookends it with a touch of humour.

## THE WOODLAND OBSERVER

And finally, don't forget: to vote for the bird you think deserves to be Canada's national bird (see inside for more details); to attend November's meeting to learn all about bats; and to submit stories for publication to [rlevesque1948@gmail.com](mailto:rlevesque1948@gmail.com).

But most of all, don't forget the words of John McCrae from 100 years ago:



Renee Levesque, Editor

# Don't Bee Fooled by Pretty in Pink

By Paul Smylie

Nipissing University graduate Maxime Lefebvre loves his pink slippers, and I'm not just spreading rumours about him. Max captivated the Nipissing Naturalists audience at the recent members meeting on October 13 with his presentation on the research he did on the Pink Lady Slipper, *Cypripedium acaule*, for his fourth year thesis project.

*Cypripedium acaule* is only one species of the approximately 50 species of orchids in Ontario. Orchids as a whole are distinguished from other groups of flowers by their complex morphology (form) and distinctive pollination ecology. Although we may typically think of orchids as large, conspicuously designed flowers of the tropics, the orchids of the more temperate climates of Northern Ontario can be so small as to go unnoticed. See <http://www.northland-paradise.com/orchids.html>.

Orchids rely on insect pollinators and the morphology of the flower is designed specifically to aid the insect in the act of pollination. Orchids are zygomorphic, meaning the flowers are irregular in shape. They have a very well-developed lower petal or labellum; two bilateral symmetrical halves, such that one side can be folded onto its mirror image; and have very tiny seeds. (See diagram on next page.)

Orchids produce many thousands of seeds, often of microscopic size, with very low or no energy reserves. Producing so many small seeds allows the seeds to be dispersed far and wide by the wind. However, the trade-off for such easy dispersal is that they have few lipids, proteins or starch to kick-start germination. Therefore, the odds of becoming a full-fledged flower are low.

So, enter the fungus. One very interesting aspect of orchid ecology is that almost all species rely on a symbiotic relationship with the hyphae, the threadlike elements or long fibres, of a fungus species called mycorrhizae (fungus root). With so many seeds out there, the chances of at least some of them coming into contact with fungal hyphae of the required fungus species is good. A seed on its own can only go as far as producing what is called an



Photo by Renee Levesque

## THE WOODLAND OBSERVER

epidermal hair, but the fungal hyphae associate with the orchid seed, providing it with the required nutrients to germinate.

The orchid flower has co-evolved with a specific insect pollinator and will have adaptations to ensure pollination by that insect. The orchid relies on its morphology, scent production, colour and in some cases production of nectar to attract a pollinator. The effect of this co-evolution is a tight co-dependency of each organism on the other for survival.

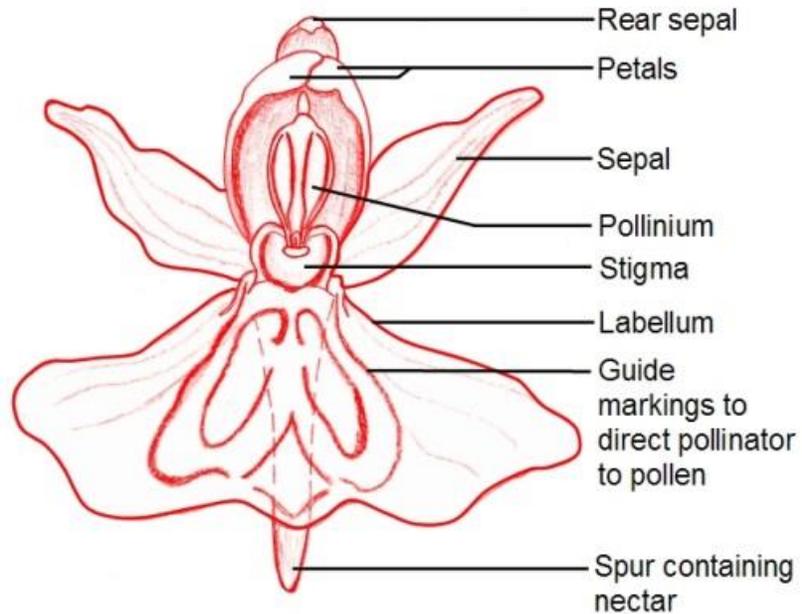
Co-evolution between species has led to some interesting flower designs. For example, some orchids have evolved to mimic the appearance of the female of the insect pollinator species. The orchid is pollinated by the male insect when he attempts to mate with the flower in what is sure to be a surprising, if not disappointing, encounter!

Orchids in most cases are masters of deception. The flower of the Pink Lady Slipper has found ways of attracting an insect pollinator, essentially by fooling the insect into slipping inside its tempting petals in search of reward. In doing so, the pollinator picks up pollen that it will transfer to another flower.

Most flowers have a give and take relationship with their pollinator(s) providing nutrition, typically in the form of nectar, in payment for the transfer of their pollen to another flower. However, in the case of the Pink Lady Slipper, the Half-black Bumblebee, *Bombus vagans*, which is its insect of servitude, is denied any compensation, any nectar, for its services. So why does this relationship continue when there is only benefit to the flower and none to the bee?

Although it may appear that the bee is providing a service out of kindness, in the big, bad world where the sword of natural selection reigns supreme, this kind of behavior is not tolerated for very long because the bees that keep this up go hungry while their well-fed counterparts thrive. Studies have shown that typically a bee pollinator will visit an orchid only three or four times before catching on to the devious tactics of the Lady Slipper.

In Max's study, he was interested in determining if Pink Lady Slippers enjoyed more or less pollination success depending on where they lived. More specifically, he wanted to determine if



Orchid Flower Structure

## THE WOODLAND OBSERVER

there was a difference in pollination success between a hardwood forest habitat, characterized by much overhead shading, and wetland bog habitat which is acidic and very open to the sky.

As indicated, orchids will use a number of features to attract a pollinator, colour being one of them. Pink Lady Slippers, despite what the name implies, are not always pink, or at least some are not as pink as others. Max set out to determine whether the depth of colour has any correlation to pollination success, or, put another way, if pinker flowers are more attractive to the pollinator than the paler hues. To do this, our intrepid researcher found himself spending a lot of time looking at pink. If he could determine that there is differential pollination success based on 'pinkness', the next question was to find out if the average depth of pink of the Lady Slipper was different depending on the habitat they grew in. So into the forest and over the bog went Max.

A number of features of the flowers were examined that may influence pollination success, including how the flower is oriented in relation to the sun, as well as leaf orientation vs. flower orientation to determine if the flowers that maximize their exposure to the sun and limit shading of the leaves by the flower realize more pollination success.



*Photo by Kaye Edmonds*

It is believed that the morphology of the Lady Slipper appears as a kind of 'runway' to the Half-black Bumblebee, guiding the insect inside the flower. Possibly if the flower is oriented directly towards the sun, this 'runway' is more visible to the bee, although the emphasis of Max's research was instead on the pinkness of the Lady Slippers.

To determine how pink a flower is, one cannot simply give it a subjective label such as 'very pink', or 'kind of pink', or 'not very pink'. Science works on numbers. To turn the shade of pink into numbers, Max came up with a colour scale based on a Munsell colour chart, ranging from 0 (very pale) to 5 (very deep pink).

Once the pinkness of the flowers was determined, Max needed a way to measure success of pollination. When they are mature, orchids produce a seed capsule full of tiny seeds ready to be dispersed by the wind. The better the pollination, the more seeds there should be, and so Max had the tedious job of counting the seeds in each seed capsule.

## THE WOODLAND OBSERVER

For his efforts, Max came up with some interesting findings:

There is a difference in the flowers when comparing those that live in the conifer forest to those in the bog. In the forest, on average, the flowers are a deeper pink. Speculation is that this may be a strategy to act as a stronger visual cue in areas where shadows and low light may obscure the Lady Slippers. The deeper pink of the forest Lady Slippers may be an evolutionary adaptation to ensure reproductive success.



Shades of pink: Photo above by Renee Levesque, photo on the right by Kaye Edmonds.



However, when Max compared the overall reproductive success using the pink scale, it wasn't always those with the deepest pink that had the most successful pollination. Interestingly, the flowers with the mid-depth of colour enjoyed the most reproductive success. Bees see in the ultraviolet spectrum of light, a wavelength of light that we humans have not evolved to see. The depth of flower colours we see may not mirror those colours the bee sees. Maybe there is something else going on here that is attracting the bees that we can't detect with the naked eye.

The wonderful thing about science is that there is always more knowledge to be gained.

Thank you, Max, for a very enthusiastic and interesting presentation on your thesis work on this beautiful and iconic native orchid. Now, go put on your pink slippers and relax a while before you head back into the woods.



# A Cavalcade of Colour

*Photo courtesy of Karen Major*

*By Karen Major*

The colours this fall are particularly vibrant and like many, I have been out enjoying nature's brilliant display.

Recently, my husband, Chris, and a friend and I took an afternoon excursion to the Temagami Fire Tower. The ride up the north highway, the old Ferguson Highway, was gorgeous with colour.

Caribou Mountain, 400 feet above the town of Temagami and 1300 feet above sea level, offers a panoramic view in excess of 40 km., including vistas of the town, the surrounding lakeland, Finlayson Provincial Park and White Bear Forest with its stands of old growth pine.

This view is breathtaking any time of the year, but was particularly breathtaking



*Photo by Renee Levesque*

## THE WOODLAND OBSERVER

this fall. For those who like to walk, there are hiking trails from the Tower through White Bear Forest and a couple of trails off the main road to the Tower, one to a marsh with a beaver pond, a flooded boardwalk and a bird blind; the other to a small rocky bay. The rocks clustered on the bay had very interesting markings on them, horizontal white stripes, as if someone had taken a ruler and painted them.



*Photo by Renee Levesque*

On Thanksgiving Monday, I went to Mattawa with Chris and some friends to visit an acquaintance who owns a cabin halfway up a mountain. The winding road to the cabin was bumpy, with a steep slope on one side. Can be nerve-racking to drive! But, WOW when we got there, the view was absolutely fantastic! The fall colours were bountiful and, the weather, with a warm breeze blowing, couldn't have been better.

After a yoga practice and meditation, we were sitting taking in all the beauty when a large hawk came flying overhead and disappeared into the tree line before I could switch to the telephoto lens on my camera. No photo unfortunately, but more importantly, I have the image in my head to enjoy whenever I want to recall it.

There's something very peaceful about doing yoga outside, on the side of a mountain, surrounded by fall colours.



# Guided Walks in Laurier Woods

Since May of this year, guided walks have been held in Laurier Woods to commemorate its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Word is getting out just how informative and interesting these walks are – over the past three months, the number of people participating in them has greatly increased.

Be sure to participate in the two guided walks that will take place on the **first Saturday of the month, from 10:00 a.m. to noon, in November and December** when you will see the Woods in its late autumn foliage and in its crisp early stages of winter.

Upcoming guided walks for the last two months of the year are:

**Saturday, November 7, *Geology of Laurier Woods***, led by Larry Dyke, retired from the Geological Survey of Canada and prior to that taught engineering geology and hydrogeology at Queen's University.

**Saturday, December 5, *History of Laurier Woods***, led by Dick Tafel, well-known local naturalist, birder and one of the founders in 1990 of Laurier Woods, saving a natural sanctuary from urban encroachment. For his efforts, Dick was awarded, in 2012, the Queen's Jubilee Medal. This walk marks a fitting way to end Laurier Woods' 25<sup>th</sup> year.

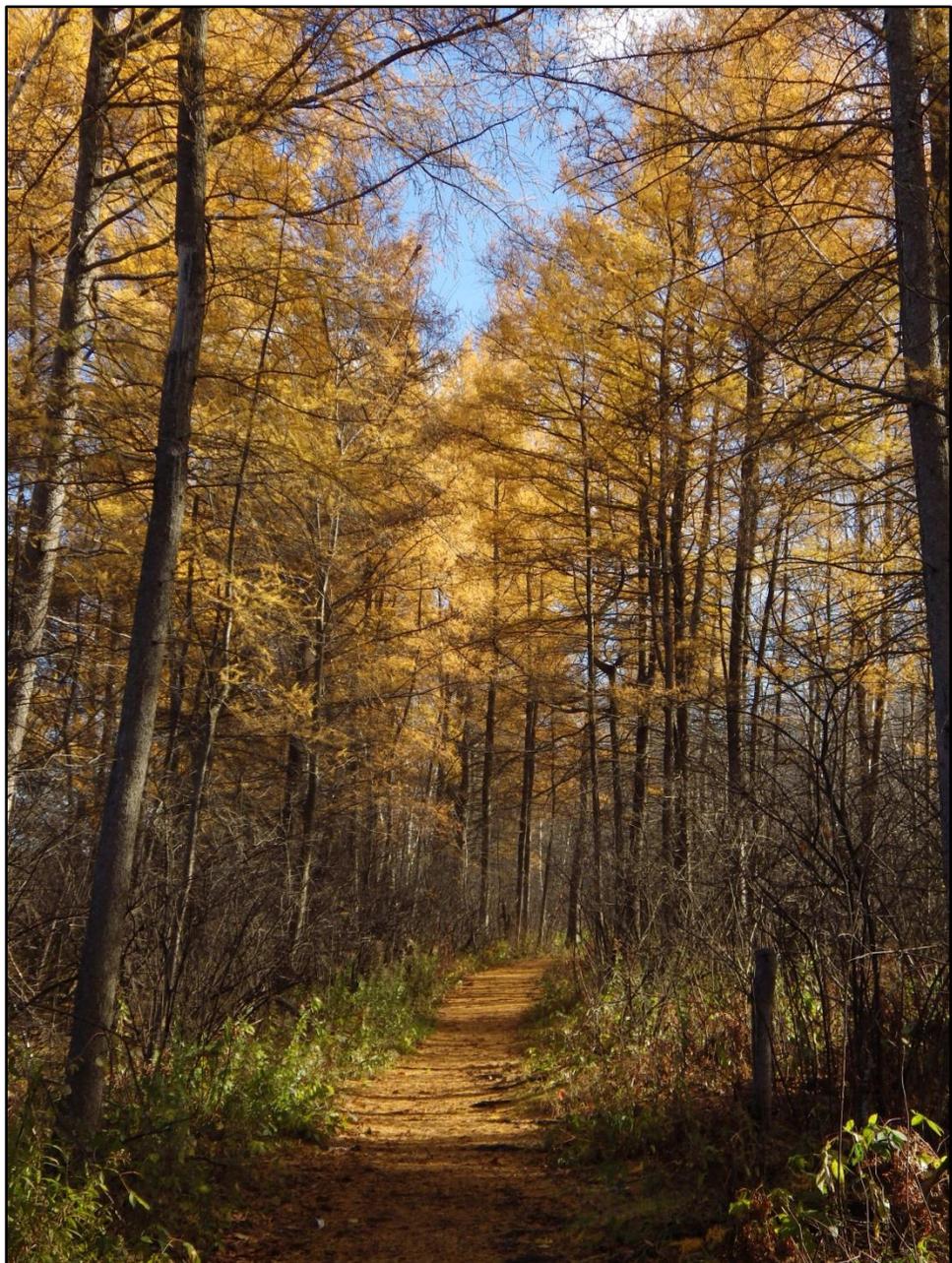


Photo by Renee Levesque

# When a Super Moon Becomes a Blood Moon

*By Renee Levesque*

On September 27, with the Super Moon clearly visible and beautiful, some made their way to the waterfront to view the total lunar eclipse with members of the North Bay Astronomy Club who had set up their telescopes and graciously allowed others to look through them. Club members also provided explanations regarding the eclipse – or anything astronomical for that matter.

Unfortunately, it clouded over in North Bay and we did not see the eclipse as well as did others around the world.

A lunar eclipse occurs when the Moon passes within the Earth's shadow. For an eclipse to occur, the Sun, Moon and Earth need to be aligned exactly or almost so, with the Earth in the middle.

This lunar eclipse was the fourth and last of a tetrad, four consecutive lunar eclipses over two years. The other three occurred on April 15, 2014, October 8, 2014, and April 4, 2015.



Unlike the Micro Moon during the lunar eclipse of April 4, when the full Moon was furthest away from the Earth during its 27-day orbit, September's Moon during the lunar eclipse was a Super Moon, the name for the full Moon when it's closest to the Earth in its orbit. The average distance of the Moon from the Earth is 384,400 kilometres within a range that varies by 42,592 kilometres.

Because the Moon was close to Earth on September 27, it tracked deeper into the Earth's umbra or inner shadow. When this shadow covers the Moon, the Moon turns a dark red-brown, an eerie wonder known as a Blood Moon. Dust and ash from the volcanic eruption in Chile five or so months ago, as well as man-made pollution, may have intensified the blood-red colour.

Although it would seem that the Moon should simply darken to black during a total eclipse, it doesn't because the Earth's atmosphere extends beyond the planet, thus allowing sunlight to pass through it and reach the moon.

The last Super Moon total eclipse occurred in 1982, and the next one won't occur until 2033.

Although I have no photos of the eclipse, there are many wonderful ones online. However, Kaye Edmonds was able to get some photos of the Super Moon before cloud cover rolled in, including the photo on this page.

If you want to know more about the North Bay Astronomy Club, visit their website at <http://www.gatewaytotheuniverse.org/about-our-club-contact-us.html>



# Once Upon a Lake...

*By Dick Tafel*

*Photos by Renee Levesque*

Boat trips in big, raw Lake Nipissing can often be hazardous. But, a group of just three intrepid birders enjoyed an amazingly tranquil trip on September 23.

It all began with the idea that we should be checking the bare, rocky islets southwest of the Sturgeon River entrance into the Lake. Frequently in September of previous years, other groups have boated across the westerly end of the wide Lake towards Sandy Island, with the main purpose to observe rarer birds that seem to find that area appropriate for easy foraging during their southern migration. These birds have been as varied as Ruddy Turnstones and Long-tailed Jaegers. Sometimes the birders have even managed to make it all the way to the westerly edge of the dangerous Goose Islands where White Pelicans and Red Knots have been seen.

This year, six possible adventurers had been dragooned towards such an adventure, though the visit had been put off later than usual in the month because adequate and economical boats were difficult to find. Two years ago, for example, a comfortable pontoon boat had been found for rent right on the edge of the river, and a pleasant, productive trip was the result.

This year, the only reasonable rental boats anywhere nearby were located at Memquisit Lodge, located a few miles east of the Highway 94, on the southwest arm of the Lake. It turned out to be some 20 miles east of prospective Sandy Island! But, we did obtain a dandy boat, an 18-foot cedar-strip with a newly engineered Japanese 20 HP motor and back rests upon the seats

On the day of our adventure, only three birders were still available, Marc Buchanan, Renee Levesque and yours truly. So off we set at 10:30 a.m. hoping to find our way amidst the myriad of unfamiliar islands.

## THE WOODLAND OBSERVER

We couldn't have asked for a better day. For the entire 7.5-hour trip, we amazingly had sun and dead calm lake waters, mirror-like in fact. Beautiful and peaceful it all was, beyond description.



We passed innumerable rocky islets, coming upon more and more Common Loons, then a few Red-necked Grebes. Some Double-crested Cormorants appeared. Then more and more cormorants were seen, until as we finally entered the main, open part of the lake, there were islets that looked as if they were made of black basal with a mass of up to 2,000 cormorants! What a sight, duplicated a few more times during our voyage!

A raft of some 20 Common Mergansers, with young not yet able to fly, tried to escape our inspection. Then more loons appeared, until ultimately some 100 of them were observed congregating together prior to their departure to their southerly winter homes.

Many Common Terns, with agile, but not yet fully plumaged young, showed their marvelous flight ability. Some 30 or more Bonaparte Gulls came into view on a couple of occasions, but none revealed the often-sought Little Gull within their midst.



## THE WOODLAND OBSERVER

And in the meantime, the calmness of the lake continued. We were like explorers within a children's book of imaginative pictures, drifting amidst innumerable islands and rocky islets, all beautifully duplicated in the mirror of the lake.



We slowly continued west, checking the islets carefully, and within one finding a few American Pipits. But, apparently the abnormally warm September had kept back the usual number of shorebirds.

In our search for shorebirds, we managed to elude all the many shallow protuberances which we knew were hidden just below the surface, waiting to interrupt our progress.

We made it safely to the beautiful Sandy Island (see next page), landing at the public beach at the westerly end about 1:30 p.m. Its magnificent stands of tall, Red Pine transfixed us, just as they had on other visits.

On the way back while having our picnic lunches en route, we managed to continue to avoid the hidden rocks, despite many more close observations of other islets. We discovered more Red-necked Grebes, some still with their attractive summer plumage. However, in our innocent enthusiasms, we managed to wander down the wrong arm, the northwesterly one, until we saw a highway in front of us.

That is when we knew we were in the wrong arm. Luckily, we managed to catch up to one of only three other boats seen during our lovely day. The occupants were fishing and graciously interrupted their sport to direct us to the arm that would take us back to

## THE WOODLAND OBSERVER

Memquisit Lodge. They mentioned a marker to look for a few miles back east, telling us, “Of course, you can’t miss it”.

Well, we missed it, but we did ultimately find our way to a series of navigational pilons that we had not noted on our way east earlier in the morning when we were in a sort of a dreamlike state with the beauty of it all. After a longer than anticipated return trek, we rather happily did find the lodge, and at 6:00 p.m. we docked.

Given the supreme calmness and beauty of the Lake and surrounding woodlands, our adventure that September day was a once-in-a-lifetime sojourn, one the three of us will never forget!



# The Beaver Deceiver

By Renee Levesque

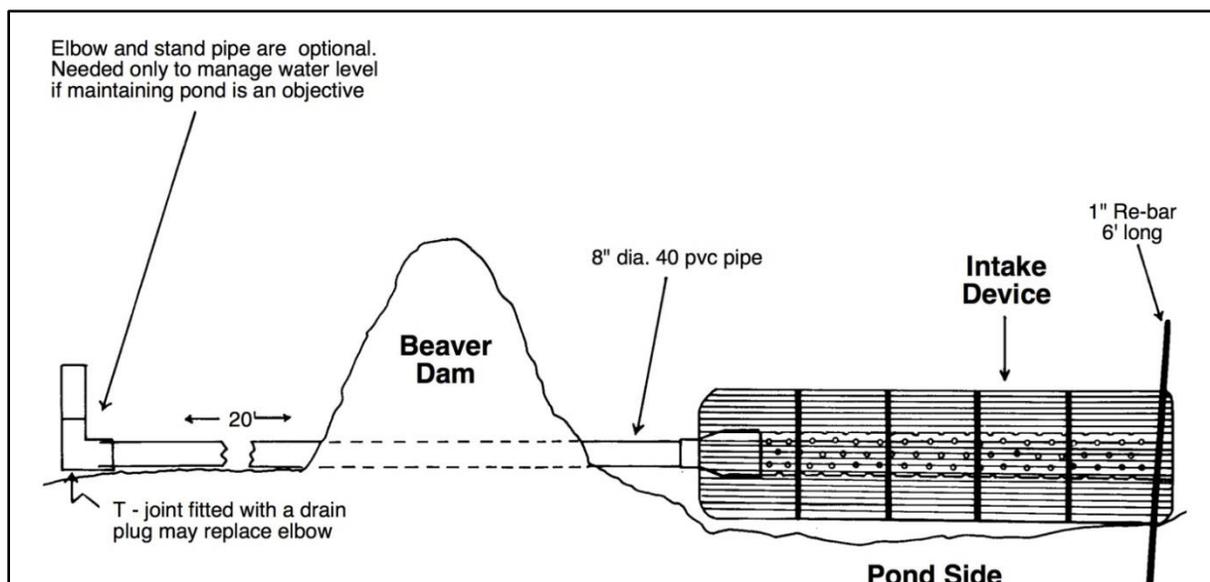
The beaver is North America's largest rodent. It almost became extinct at the turn of the century because of demand for beaver furs, but it has made a definite comeback since. It graces our nickel and, along with the moose, is synonymous with Canada.



Beavers put all their energy into looking for a home with a year-round water source, and to this end they build dams to create bodies of water deep enough to support their lodges and to store food supplies. They are superb engineers, extremely adept and persistent at manipulating their environment to suit their needs.

Beaver dams provide valuable wetland for several species, but they can cause flooding. And so humans have had to become adept at maintaining the integrity of the beaver pond while preventing costly flooding.

To help prevent possible future flooding as occurred in Laurier Woods this past spring, summer students with the North Bay Mattawa Conservation Authority installed a baffle or leveler at the beaver dam that manages water levels in small drainages. See illustration below.



## THE WOODLAND OBSERVER

This leveler is also designed to keep beavers from detecting where the water is escaping by eliminating the sound of the rushing water. For obvious reasons, beavers instinctively “plug” any area from which they hear water escaping. Once the leveler is installed at the beaver dam, the beaver builds over the leveler, making it invisible, or almost invisible. See photos below.



*Courtesy North Bay Mattawa Conservation Authority*

*Photo by Renee Levesque*



## 6,000 Owls and Counting at Hilliardton

*By Fred Pinto, Addendum by Renee Levesque*

Nipissing Naturalists visited the Hilliardton Marsh Bird Banding Station on the evening of September 26 to see Northern Saw-whet Owls being banded by Bruce Murphy and Nicole Richardson. Owl banding began on September 17 and will continue into November, although the last date for the public to view owl banding was October 10.

The Bird Banding Station is into its 15<sup>th</sup> year of continuous annual banding of birds. Bruce is the Master Bird Bander and Education and Research Coordinator. Nicole, who is on the Board of Directors for the Nipissing Naturalist Club and a Nipissing University student, is taking part in an internship program at Hilliardton.

On the evening we attended, Hilliardton had banded 5,999 Northern Saw-whet Owls over the last 15 years. And then while we were there, Nicole brought in the 6,000<sup>th</sup> Saw-whet Owl! (Pictured with it at the right.)

Saw-whet Owls are attracted to the area, a human-created wetland, by playing the call of a male Saw-whet Owl. It is not known if the playing of the male call biases the birds attracted into the nets, but 95% of all the Northern Saw-whets captured are female. The birds are caught when they fly into 10m by 4m mist-nets strung out in different areas of the marsh. The birds are then carefully extracted and brought to the banding station where they are measured,

sexed, aged and banded.

Female Northern Saw-whet Owls are larger than males and because it is difficult to tell females from males, they are sexed by weight and length of the hind limb bone of their wings. Females weigh more and have longer wing bones. The 6,000th owl was a young female, weighing 97 g.

Northern Saw-whet owls, as well as other owls, like the Boreal and the Long-eared, are aged by looking for red fluorescence on the under wing feathers. Some birds, such as Northern Saw-whet Owls, produce porphyrin, a pigment found in new feathers. This chemical fluoresces red under UV light. The pigment degrades as the feathers age so the red fluorescence can be used to age



Photos by Fred Pinto

## THE WOODLAND OBSERVER

the birds into two categories: young of the year and older birds.

Northern Saw-whet Owls migrate in the early autumn. They usually migrate when a cold front moves through the area and when there is little moon light. The Northern Saw-whet population tends to fluctuate in a four-year cycle. The data collected in Hilliardton show large numbers of Saw-whet Owls captured in 2004, 2008 and 2012. The next major population increase is expected in 2016. The reason for this population fluctuation is not known.

Until Hilliardton began banding and collecting data on the Northern Saw-whet, it was thought this owl was rather scarce. Now it is considered the most abundant of all owl species.

Boreal Owls usually migrate later, from around Thanksgiving to the end of October. They are a little larger than Saw-whets. Boreals are much more likely to protest being captured than Northern Saw-whets which are much more docile. Banders must use leather gloves to protect themselves from the Boreals' sharp talons and beaks.

**Addendum:** On October 10, my husband and I made our way north for the last public owl banding of the season. Only two owls were captured before the nets had to be rolled up because of the rain. (Owl banding is not carried out on rainy and windy evenings, nor is bird banding of any kind carried out under these conditions.)



One of the owls banded was a young female Northern Saw-whet, and the other, a young female Long-eared. (at left, held by Joanne Goddard). This was the first time I had ever seen a Long-eared Owl, so a special treat for me. The many young children in attendance over this Thanksgiving weekend seemed to bond better with the more docile and smaller Northern Saw-whet.

The Northern Saw-whet had already been banded at Hilliardton three days before, although caught in a different net. She was especially docile, perhaps because she was used to the routine. She certainly seemed to like being petted and at one point, threw her head back the

way a cat does when being petted. (Perhaps referencing a cat in this context is not copasetic, but that is what I was reminded me of.)

The Long-eared, not banded previously, was much harder to manage and could not be touched. She demonstrated many times her great head-rotating ability. She was the 28<sup>th</sup> banded this fall and three more were needed to break a record of 30. I am sure by now that record has been broken.

**Hilliardton Marsh does these wonderful *Marsh Moments* videos by Joanne. Be sure to check out the one on owl banding at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EvcC21PNM\\_s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EvcC21PNM_s). You will see Nicole and the Nipissing Naturalist Club members who attended on September 26.**

# Direct Democracy for the Birds – Vote Now!

*By Renee Levesque*

For those who are not yet aware, the Royal Canadian Geographic Society and Canadian Geographic are sponsoring *The National Bird Project*, which enables you to vote for Canada's national bird. Canada is one of the few countries in the world which does not have a national bird and this is to be rectified by 2017, Canada's sesquicentennial.

Whichever bird gets the most votes becomes our national bird.

In voting, you should keep in mind what species represents all of Canada, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and from the Arctic to the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel. You might also want to keep in mind birds that already represent our provinces. If one of them is chosen, then what happens to that provincial bird? Is it fair that one province has the same national and provincial bird? If like most, you do not know what the provincial birds are, click on this link to learn:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_Canadian\\_provincial\\_and\\_territorial\\_symbols](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Canadian_provincial_and_territorial_symbols)

Many feel that birds with Canada in the name should seriously be considered, as in Canada Goose,

Canada or Gray Jay (seen at right) and Canada Warbler. But keep in mind that Canada Geese are shot south of the border and would we want a national bird that could grace someone's dinner plate? Few know about the handsome Canada



*Photo by Renee Levesque*

## THE WOODLAND OBSERVER

Warbler. So you might want to lean towards the Canada Jay, more commonly known as the Gray Jay. But then it is also known as Whiskey Jack and what sort of image would that portray? Perhaps better we continue to be known as beer drinkers.

Then there is our beloved Common Loon with its haunting call that graces our one-dollar piece, but it is also Ontario's provincial bird. And who doesn't love the Snowy Owl, but it too belongs to a province, the province of Quebec. And finally what about the ever-present, ever-faithful Black-capped Chickadee immortalized as Peet in Louise de Kiriline Lawrence's book, *The Loghouse Nest?* But then, it is owned by the province of New Brunswick.

Currently, the Common Loon is in first place, followed by the Snowy Owl (seen at right), the Gray Jay, the Canada Goose and the Black-capped Chickadee, in that order.

So what to do if you don't want the parasitic Brown-headed Cowbird to win? Give some thought to what bird you want to see as our national bird and vote accordingly, **but vote**. Cast your vote at <http://www.canadiangeographic.ca/nationalbird/>. As in any election, you may vote only once.



Photo by Renee Levesque

## Upcoming Speakers at Monthly Meetings

Two informative speakers will be presenting appealing topics at the last two monthly meetings of 2015, followed by the Annual General Meeting in January and the world of sea turtles in February. **Meetings take place the second Tuesday of every month starting at 7:00 p.m. in the auditorium of Casselholme.**

**On Tuesday, November 10**, Rebecca Geauvreau, Biologist and the species at risk specialist with FRi Ecological Services, North Bay, will talk about bats, including

the Little Brown Myotis (seen at right), a species at risk because of a rapidly spreading fungal disease known as white-nose syndrome (WNS) that affects hibernating bats. This talk is especially topical for us in Nipissing



*Photo by Renee Levesque*

because the largest maternal colony in Ontario of the Little Brown Myotis is in Lavigne.

**On Tuesday, December 8**, Bill Steer, local author, columnist, historian and

environmentalist, will talk about the natural and cultural history of northeastern Ontario. A dynamic speaker, Bill will be sure to provide us with many interesting insights and point the way to some off-the-beaten-tracks, tracks Champlain may have put down.



*Photo by Renee Levesque*

## THE WOODLAND OBSERVER

**On Tuesday, January 13**, Nipissing Naturalists Club Annual General Meeting will be held. The business meeting will consist of the following:

- President's report of 2015 activities
- Bird Wing report
- Minutes of 2014 AGM acceptance
- Treasurer's report
- Election of Directors

**There will be a potluck dinner, so be sure to bring a dish of your choice and your utensils. There will also be a silent auction. Please bring an item you wish to donate.**

There will not be a photo contest this year because there were no volunteers to coordinate this event.

**On Tuesday, February 10**, Kathi Hunnisett, marine biologist and veterinary technician, will present *A Summer of Sand, Sun and Sea Turtles*, based on her research in Panama of Leatherback Sea Turtles (seen at right). Kathi has a strong love and passion for the ocean and its creatures, especially sea turtles. In her talk, she will share her knowledge of sea turtles and how they have been affected negatively by humans, but how we, through education and conservation, can become instead a positive force.





## Board of Directors

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### Membership Fees

Yearly Nipissing Naturalist Club membership fees are: single, \$20.00; family, \$30.00

There is an **additional \$5.00 membership fee for Bird Wing** which meets the **fourth Tuesday of every month in the auditorium of the North Bay Public Library from 6:30 to 9:00 p.m.** That fee is paid directly to Bird Wing.



The Nipissing Naturalist Club is affiliated with Ontario Nature. Check out its website at <http://www.ontarionature.org/>.

The Nipissing Naturalist Club website is found at <http://www.nipnats.com/>. The Woodland Observer and the Bird Wing monthly newsletters are posted there under "Newsletters and Bird Wing". Click on that link found on the left side of the home page.