



THE WOODLAND OBSERVER

SEPTEMBER 2016

NIPISSING NATURALISTS CLUB



From the editor:

Farewell to an active summer

Photo by Renee Levesque

Summer is always a very active time for those who participate in nature activities and this summer was no exception for Nipissing Naturalists Club members.

Highlighted in this issue are some of the activities, some of them sanctioned club activities and some not.

In June, three club members accompanied Brent Turcotte on a dragonfly outing; some members climbed the heights of Devil Rock's near Haileybury; and two club members participated in the Breeding Bird Survey.

Two Laurier Woods walks took place over the summer. In early July, there was a plant walk with Lori Beckerton, followed in early August by a scavenger hunt and wetland walk with Valerie Vaillancourt, Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. (Laurier Woods walks continue from October through to December, on the first Saturday of each of these months. Inside this issue, you will find information on October's walk with Jeremy St. Onge and November's walk with geologist Larry Dyke.)

August was a busy month, what with the plaque ceremony honouring Louise de Kiriline Lawrence and all the preparations that entailed, followed two days later by the Louise de Kiriline Lawrence Nature Festival at Laurier Woods.

Also in August was a gathering at the home of Angela and Gary Martin of some Ontario Nature members.

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September is here and with it we are back to our regular monthly meetings. First up is Paul Smylie to talk about his paddling trips this summer and with September bringing an end to summer and the beginning of fall, we can perhaps think about some paddling trips ourselves, long or short, either next summer or this fall.

The Fall Equinox is on Thursday, September 22, at 10:21 a.m., when day and night are about 12 hours each, hence the word equinox, meaning equal. However, it is really not until a few days after September 22 that the hours for day and night are actually equal. Fall brings a drop in temperatures and days that become shorter than nights. For me, as no doubt for many others, the shorter days are the downside of fall, but there is so much beauty in fall with its brilliant oranges reds and yellows that this can make up for the shorter days.

The unexpected death of Craig Hurst was difficult for many of us to process. Craig was such a gentle and kind person, so very modest and so complimentary of others, liked by everyone. I first met Craig at a Friends of Laurier Woods annual general dinner meeting just over three years ago. We discussed Ireland and his very enjoyable time there with his Irish cousins. And the last time I saw Craig was on a May bird walk through Laurier Woods. I had been in email contact with him since then and our last correspondence in mid-July was about the Great Lakes Marsh Monitoring Program. I did not know Craig was seriously ill and emailed him to ask him to send me the results of his and Elaine's survey in Laurier Woods. He told me for health reasons he was not able to do the survey this year, but he would be back next year to do it. I meant to then email Craig to let him know I discovered a mistake I had made in one of *The Woodland Observer* issues. Although he probably noticed but did not say anything, I had attributed to him a photo I thought he took when it was obviously taken by someone else, probably Elaine, because Craig is in the photo grinning at the camera! I think he would have had a good laugh about this. We never got the chance. Craig died on August 6.

Renee Levesque,
rlevesque1948@gmail.com





Craig with Blaze, photo by Elaine Hurst

Craig Hurst, 1944-2016

By Dick Tafel

Craig Hurst, a member of Nipissing Naturalists Club and keen birder, died on August 6. He was 72. His death, from cancer, came suddenly with little warning to anyone.

Such a fellow was Craig! His love of birds started many years ago when he was a teacher in the Toronto area and expanded with every year thereafter. Just a few springs ago near his home, Craig encountered a very rare Northern Wheatear. He was disappointed he was not able to contact others to view it before it quickly continued on its way north. He kept track of birds he saw wherever he travelled, and a trip in the planning to Panama this coming winter with his wife, Elaine, for that major purpose obviously will not now happen.

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Craig was very active in the Anglican Church and was always so thankful when the Christmas Bird Count in which he and Elaine participated for many years did not occur on a Sunday because of his many activities and commitments on Sunday mornings.

For a number of years through Bird Studies Canada, Craig and Elaine undertook the Great Lakes Marsh Monitoring Program within Laurier Woods, as well as the Ontario Nocturnal Owl Survey and Project FeederWatch. Craig, a long-standing director on the board of Friends of Laurier Woods, diligently looked after the monthly exchange of birding checklists on the notice board at the Brule Street entrance to Laurier Woods. And if all that wasn't enough, for a few years, Craig and Elaine volunteered with the remarkable Dr. John Theberge, wildlife biologist, and Mary Theberge, wildlife illustrator, helping with their research on wolves in Algonquin Park. *Wolf Country*, a compelling book about the wolves in Algonquin Park, is the result of some of that research.

Craig and Elaine's dog, Blaze, a rescue dog, was a big part of their lives. Blaze died in December 2015 at the age of 13. During the nine years he was part of their lives, he went everywhere with them. Many of us would see Blaze with Craig and Elaine on the Laurier Woods walks and anyone seeing them would immediately be aware of just how devoted Blaze was to them and they to him.

Craig and Elaine had four rather remarkable and adventurous years in the Northwest Territories where Craig, after years in education, became the first Director of Education for the Sahtu District School Board.

Craig, son Adam, and Elaine returned to Ontario in the early 1990s so Adam, who was about to enter grade 10, could continue with his high school education. It was Adam who was a major decision-maker in choosing the site of Craig and Elaine's lovely, rural home with its 76 acres of land, complete with wooded trails Craig and Elaine made and tended. Tragically, Adam died in a motor vehicle accident a few months after he began his grade 10. Craig's daughter, Shannon, and two grandchildren, Jordan and Dagen, currently live in Alberta.

Craig began working in a different field when he came to North Bay. He worked at Fabrene Inc., a plastic fabrication company, initially in health and safety and then as Director of Human Resources until he retired in 2006.

It is no surprise to discover that in Craig's library are dozens of books about butterflies, mushrooms, trees, flowers and, of course, birds - all aspects of nature he wholeheartedly embraced.

Such a sad loss! We all will miss him much!

A PLAQUE FOR THE AGES



LOUISE DE KIRILINE LAWRENCE 1894-1992

Louise Flach was born in Sweden and grew up on the scenic Baltic coast where she developed an interest in nature. Flach became a Red Cross nurse, serving during the First World War in Denmark, and then with her first husband Greb de Kiriline who died in revolutionary Russia. She immigrated to Canada in 1927, settled near Bonfield, Ontario and was head nurse for the Dionne Quintuplets. In 1935, she retired from nursing to study the flora and fauna – specifically birds – near her log home located at the edge of Pimisi Bay west of here. Her writing included five wildlife books, 17 scientific papers, over 500 reviews and an autobiography. Her papers and research are preserved at Library and Archives Canada and at the Royal Ontario Museum. Louise de Kiriline Lawrence was an early environmentalist and an internationally renowned ornithologist recognized by the American Audubon Society, the Society of Canadian Ornithologists, the American Ornithologists' Union and Laurentian University, and was the first Canadian to receive the John Burroughs Medal in 1969.

Ontario Heritage Trust, an agency of the Government of Ontario

Photo by Renee Levesque

By Renee Levesque and Steve Pitt

On the way to the plaque ceremony in honour of Louise de Kiriline Lawrence, a bird suddenly flew out in front of Steve Pitt's car, forcing him to hit the brakes to avoid hitting it. It was a

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Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, a bird Louise featured in her book *Mar: A Glimpse Into the Natural Life of a Bird*. Steve reports, "I'm not one to believe in omens, but it was hard not to think that Louise was sending me some kind of sign, probably scolding us for making such a big fuss about her when we should be out enjoying nature."

Fuss there was, though, when approximately 100 local residents, nature lovers, history buffs and health care professionals gathered at Ste Bernadette Parish Hall in Bonfield on August 18 to unveil the Ontario Heritage Trust plaque in honour of Louise, internationally renowned as an ornithologist, nature writer and conservationist, and known locally as Nurse de Kiriline.

In attendance were three Ontario Heritage Trust employees: Beth-Anne Mendes, Coordinator, Plaque Programs; Dawson Bridger, Community Programs Officer; and Wayne Kelly, Manager, Public Education and Community Development. Wayne was Master of Ceremonies for the event and, with Fred Pinto, unveiled the plaque.

Also in attendance and speaking at the event were Anthony Rota, Member of Parliament for Nipissing-Temiskaming; Randall McLaren, Mayor of the Township of Bonfield; Fred Pinto, President of the Nipissing Naturalists Club; Dick Tafel, who spear-headed the whole enterprise and Chair of Bird Wing; Derek Day, Mattawa and District Historical Society; and Eloise Dewar, 90, who as a toddler suffering from rickets in 1929 came under the care of Nurse de Kiriline.



Photo courtesy of Ontario Heritage Trust

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Eloise (photo at right) credits Nurse de Kiriline's kindness and professional care with curing her rickets and ensuring that she would not only be able to walk normally as an adult, but would also be able to dance.

Not speaking, but in attendance, was the Mayor of the Township of Calvin, Wayne Brown, who also remembers Louise from long ago. He would often see her hiking along Highway 17 with notebook in hand, looking up into the trees and down into Pimisi Bay. He and others knew Louise as the Bird Lady. (From an article by Steve Pitt in the *North Bay Nipissing News*, September 3, 2015.)

Dick read from Louise's award-winning John Burroughs Medal book, *The Lovely and the Wild*, and thanked many who were involved in seeing the plaque come to fruition – Fred Pinto for asking Dick three years ago to speak about Louise at the annual general meeting of Friends of Laurier Woods; Renee Levesque who subsequently suggested applying for an historic plaque and for completing



Photo by Renee Levesque

and submitting the application to Ontario Heritage Trust; Steve Pitt (photo at left) who secured the Parish Hall and organized the refreshments; and the Ministry of Transportation who came through for us at the last minute. (That the Ministry acted so quickly and willingly is thanks to Dick.)

After the unveiling, guests were served delicious Swedish cookies, called Pepparkokar, cut into the shape of two birds. Steve Pitt was behind the idea for the cookies, baked by Bonfield resident Monica Bessette. Steve came up with the idea when he read that Louise served her loghouse



Photo courtesy of Ontario Heritage Trust

guests tea and cookies. The Swedish theme was completed with blue and yellow napkins, the colours of the Swedish flag - and more or less the colour of the plaque. The Swedish Ambassador to Canada had been invited by Ontario Heritage Trust, but he was on vacation at the time of the ceremony.

Steve also arranged to have coffee, tea and soft drinks supplied by Gagne's Red and White Store on Hwy. 17 in Rutherglen and arranged for

Elmer Rose, a local historian and a member of the band Rutherglen Jammers to provide the sound system for the ceremony.

Nipissing Naturalists Club was the sponsor of the plaque and raised \$5,000.00 through contributions and auctions towards its cost as was required by Ontario Heritage Trust. The total cost of the plaque was \$17,500.00, and was funded, minus the \$5,000.00, by Ontario Heritage Trust.

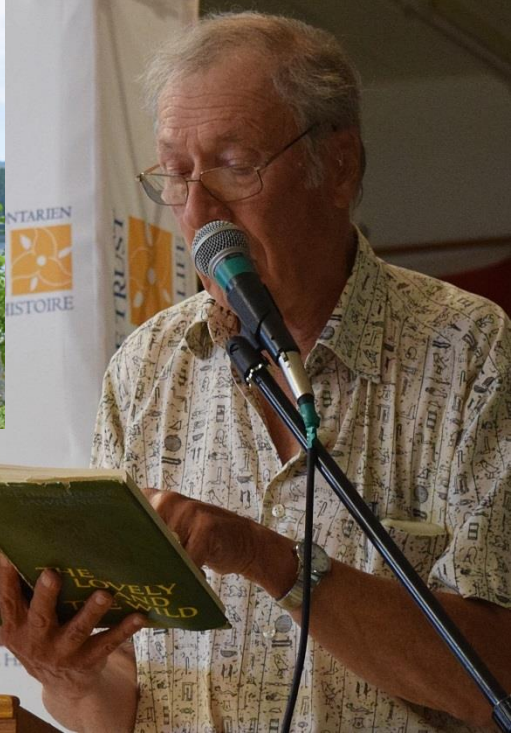
Many of the people who attended the indoor ceremony followed the plaque to its official location at Pimisi Bay Rest Stop where it was installed, thanks to the Ministry of Transportation for approving the location and for installing the post in a nearby spot on the shores of Pimisi Bay where Louise spent many decades reading, writing and observing nature.

In honour of the plaque's dedication, the current owner of Louise's loghouse nest opened her property to the public to see the log house and to wander along the trails, trails initially made by Louise.

A fitting tribute to Louise's skills as a nurse is that Eloise Dewar at the age of 90 was one of the people who was able to make that walk along the trail to the log house on a hot, muggy day. And a fitting tribute to Louise as a naturalist and conservationist is that the trails continue to be used today, faithfully preserved by the current owner. And now with the plaque installed on Pimisi Bay close to where Louise had lived and worked, she will once again deservedly become known for her contribution to nature and to the world of ornithology.



Ontario Heritage Trust members left to right: Wane Kelly, Beth Anne Mendes and Dawson Bridger. Photo by Renee Levesque



Photos by Steve Pitt, Renee Levesque and courtesy of Ontario Heritage Trust.



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Contributors to the plaque

Nipissing Naturalists Club is very grateful for the following contributions towards the funding of the plaque honouring Louise de Kiriline Lawrence:

Clubs and Organizations:

Great Canadian Birdathon: \$626.25

Township of Bonfield: \$500.00

Derek and Dianne Day on behalf of the Mattawa Museum: \$500.00

Jam Session sponsored by the Rutherglen Ramblers: \$363.00

Red Cross: \$250.00

Lake Talon Conservation: \$250.00

Bonfield Lions Club: \$200.00

Bird Wing: \$100.00

Individuals:

Barry Penhale and Jane Gibson Penhale: \$125.00

Anonymous: \$100.00

Elizabeth Dean: \$100.00

Wayne Cotgreave: \$100.00

Mary and John Kirton: \$100.00

Dr. Frederick and Lois Helleiner: \$100.00

Anonymous: \$50.00

Anonymous: \$50.00

Erica Dunn: \$35.00

Dale and Ron Kelly: \$15.00

Exior and Therese Bellaire: \$15.00

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Auctions and Sale of Prints:

Nipissing Naturalists Club AGM 2016 Silent Auction: \$345.50

Nipissing Naturalists Club Web Auction: \$728.00

Sale of Paul Smylie Prints at AGM Silent Auction: \$165.00

Total funds received: \$4812.75

Balance of the \$5,000.00 required for our share of the cost of the plaque and the cost of the refreshments paid for by Nipissing Naturalists Club.

Special thank you to:

Township of Bonfield for the use of the Parish Hall at no charge. Mayor McLaren was very supportive of the entire event from beginning to end.

Ministry of Transportation, Eric Doidge in particular, for permitting the plaque to be installed at Pimisi Bay Rest Stop and for the installation of the post.

Leslie McKinnon for allowing a tour of Louise's former property and loghouse nest.

Gagne's Red and White Store in Rutherglen for a significant discount for the tea, coffee and soft drinks.

Elmer Rose for the use of the sound equipment and for helping with the set-up and the clean-up the hall.

Monica Bessette for baking the delicious Swedish cookies. They were a big hit!

Ontario Heritage Trust for approving the application and to Wayne Kelly, Beth-Anne Mendes and Dawson Bridger for their hard work, cooperation and presence, all pleasantly executed with good humour.

Dick Tafel for starting the whole process; Nipissing Naturalists Club Board for approving funding; Renee Levesque for completing and submitting the application; Steve Pitt whose creative idea it was to have Swedish bird cookies, who looked after obtaining and delivering the refreshments, who arranged to get the Parish Hall and then helped set it up for the ceremony.

And finally, all who supported the concept of honouring Louise with a plaque and all who attended the ceremony.

Jewelwings and more on a sunny June day



By Brent Turcotte, with photos by Renee Levesque

On a perfect late June day, Nipissing Naturalists Club members Renee Levesque, Sarah Wheelan and Marc Buchanan accompanied me to Samuel de Champlain Park for a dragonfly outing to look for and learn about dragonflies and damselflies. We visited five spots: Moore Lake; the Wabashkiki Trail; Long Lake; Campion Rapids; and Pautois Creek just outside the park.

The area around Moore Lake provided a good introduction. We saw the flashy Calico Pennant (below right) which was a hit, and the aptly named Chalk-fronted Corporal (below left).



We also saw the Eastern Forktail, the female of which has three distinct appearances. The immature female is orange; the mature female is powdered blue; and there is a male-like female which we didn't see.

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Species I captured to show included Hagen's Bluet (probably below), which requires a hand lens to distinguish it from the Marsh Bluet; Lancet Clubtail, a rather tame species; and Prince Baskettail, a flyer that has distinct wing patterns and, as a result, can be picked out in flight.



We then moved on to the Wabashkiki Trail to find a Common Baskettail; a Stream Cruiser (below right); and a pair of Elegant Spreadwings. Spreadwings are a family of damselflies that hold their wings at a 45 degree angle.



It was then time for our picnic lunch, after which we visited Long Lake. The flashy Calico Pennant was abundant there. New sightings were the large, deep dark violet Slaty Skimmer; a Dusty or Ashy Clubtail; and Aurora Damsselfies pictured left in the tandem position used before and after copulation. In many species after copulation, the male will hold onto the female until she has laid her eggs in the water. On occasion, the female can be submerged in the water while in tandem.

Along the trail bridge between the lake and wetland, the wildflowers also proved interesting.



A brief stop at the Campion Rapids produced only Powdered Dancers, whitish damselflies which like rivers.

The last stop was Pautois Creek (right) where we all cooled down on this warm, sunny day by wading in the Creek with our water

shoes and me with my waders. There the group learned the difference between River Jewelwings (below left) and Ebony Jewelwings and between the male and female of these damselflies. The female of these jewelwings have a large white spot, known as pseudostigma, at the tip of their wings as seen in the photo below right. The jewelwings were the favourites of the

group and it is no wonder. You will see how delicate and beautiful they are from the photos of them. Sarah was deemed the Damselfly Whisperer when a female Ebony Jewelwing landed on her sleeve (below right).

I injured a Swift River Cruiser, the only dragonfly I caught on the river. Its tail hit the rim of the net. Injuring a dragonfly just happens sometimes. Alas, a large fraction of dragonflies are simply unidentifiable without capture.

We ran out of time to go past the bend in the Creek where the river bed gets shallow with a mostly sandy bottom and

where a small marshy area is visible. Here, we may have seen the Common Whitetail, a skimmer with distinctively marked wings, as well as the even more common Four-Spotted Skimmer, also distinctive. With a bit of luck in the extremely rocky part of the creek, we may also have seen the Eastern Least Clubtail, a very small but distinctive river dragonfly.

All together we saw sixteen species (not including two I had seen on my own). A modest number of species, but still a lot for three beginners to take in.



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Editor's Note: Brent also led a dragonfly walk though Laurier Woods on July 23.

Dragonflies seen were:



✓ Band-winged Meadowhawk: These late season dragonflies from the skimmer family are bright red, have amber on their wings and black triangles along their abdomen. They like marshy areas with slow spring-fed streams and lots of sedges.

✓ White-faced Meadowhawk, a common meadowhawk with a white face (photo below on left). Meadowhawks - and there are many other meadowhawk species, such as the Autumn and Cherry-faced - are usually the last species to emerge in the summer.

✓ Sedge Sprite, a tiny damselfly from the bluet family.

✓ Marsh Bluet

✓ Common Whitetail, a distinctive dragonfly with a white abdomen and prominent black markings on its wings (photo below on right).



Rising to a great height

By Fred Pinto

It was a lovely, sunny mid-June day for Nipissing Naturalists Club's 3 km hike to Devil's Rock, a 300 foot fault cliff in Temiskaming Shores that offers a fantastic view of Lake Temiskaming.

We began our ascent at Bucke Camp, a municipal tent and trailer park off Hwy. 567 near Haileybury. As we climbed Devil's Rock, we noted that the higher slopes had more Balsam Fir and White Pine.

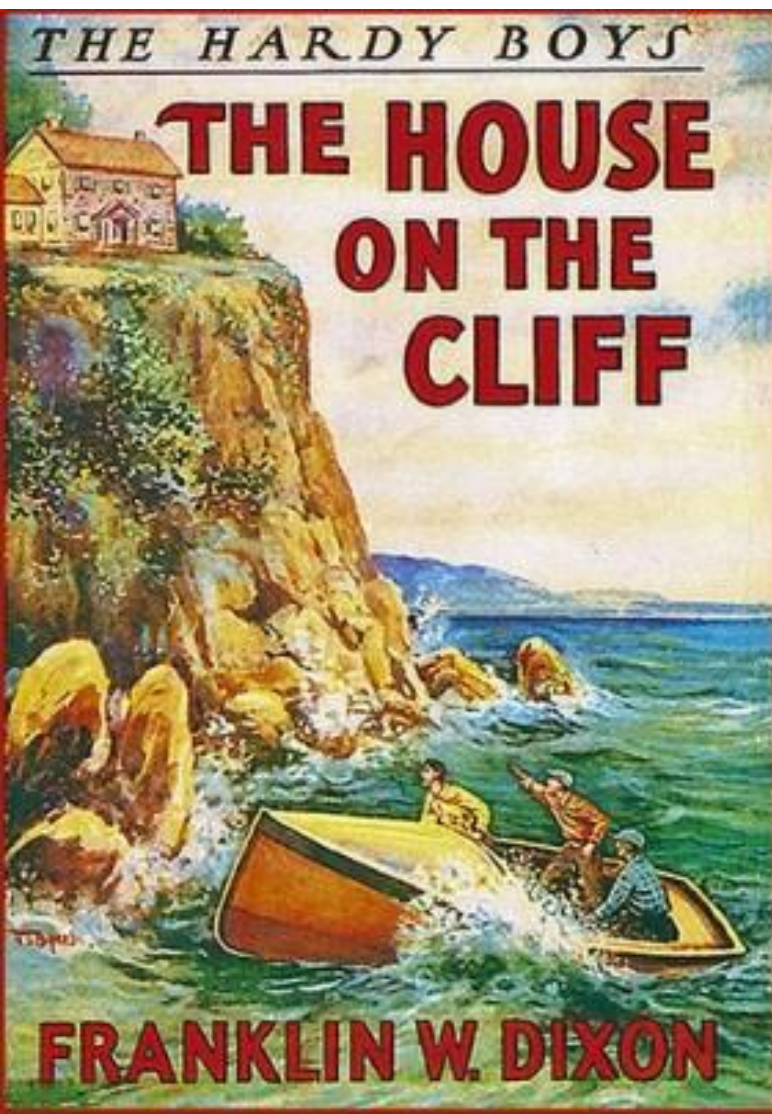
The Balsam Fir showed signs of recent herbivory (eating of plants) by the Eastern Spruce Budworm. (Spruce Budworm caterpillar below left, and the female moth of the Spruce Budworm, below right, courtesy of Natural Resources Canada.)



Populations of the Eastern Spruce Budworm are again increasing across Ontario.

We tried to locate the warblers that feed on Spruce Budworm: Bay-breasted, Tennessee and Cape May, but to no avail. However, we did hear and see the more common insect-feeding warblers: Yellow, Nashville and Chestnut-sided (right).

We spent some time exploring the top of the cliff. We tried to see the five tunnels that were chiselled into the cliff between 1907 and 1912 by miners looking for silver, but the viewing angle from this 2.2 million year old precipice made it difficult to look below.



Editor's Note: In the Hardy Boys novel, *The House on the Cliff*, Leslie McFarlane who lived for a period of time in Haileybury, and wrote the Hardy Boys novels under the name of Franklin W. Dixon, based the cliff in that novel on Devil's Rock:

"The cliff jutted up out of very deep water and rose to a great height... The face of the steep rock was uncompromising. There seemed to be no foothold for man or beast. It was just an unscalable, craggy wall..."

For more information on Devil's Rock see Lori Anderson's article and Bill Steer's photos in February's issue of *The Woodland Observer*:

<http://www.nipnats.com/newsletters/>.

Breeding Bird Survey 2016

By Renee Levesque and Paul Smylie

On June 19, Paul Smylie conducted the annual Breeding Bird Survey along his predetermined, roadside route. Paul's route starts on Trout Pond Road, along Development Road, around Lake Nosbonsing, through Astorville and ends up along Wasi Road.

The reason for the same route every year is to maintain consistency of reporting. Paul has been conducting this survey, with various assistants, for at least five or six years, and with Paul this year was Marc Buchanan. Other years Paul has been assisted by Dick Tafel who did the survey for approximately 20 years before Paul took over; Kevan Cowcill; Luke Stephenson and Balbina Rosabel.

The survey is conducted across Canada, the United States and Mexico at the height of the breeding season during the month of June. The data gathered is used to determine long-term, large-scale population trends, relative abundance and species composition in North America's breeding birds. Data are used by scientists, wildlife managers, educators, students and the general public.



Northern Flicker, photo by Renee Levesque

The Breeding Bird Survey has been ongoing since 1966 and is one of the oldest surveys of breeding birds in North America. In Canada, it is coordinated by Environment and Climate Change Canada, with Bird Studies Canada acting as the provincial coordinator in Ontario and British Columbia. Currently, there are more than 3,000 active Breeding Bird Survey routes across North America.

Survey routes are 24.5 miles (39.4 km) long and consist of 50 three-minute stops, each 0.5 miles (0.8 km) apart. At each stop, Paul and Marc recorded the total number of bird species seen or heard within about 400 metres.

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The list of birds Paul and Marc observed in order of seeing or hearing them are as follows:

Indigo Bunting
American Crow
American Robin
American Redstart
Mourning Warbler
Ovenbird
European Starling
Common Yellowthroat
Chipping Sparrow
American Kestrel
Savannah Sparrow
Yellow Warbler
Red-eyed Vireo
Brown Thrasher
Hermit Thrush
Black and White Warbler
Red-winged Blackbird
Blue Jay
Red-breasted Nuthatch
Brown-headed Cowbird
Swamp Sparrow
Veery
Common Grackle
Bobolink
Cedar Waxwing
Gray Catbird
Barn Swallow
Song Sparrow
Rock Pigeon
Sandhill Crane
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
White-throated Sparrow
Nashville Warbler
Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Alder Flycatcher
Common Raven
Eastern Meadowlark
Chestnut-sided Warbler
Rough-winged Swallow
Belted Kingfisher
American Bittern
Northern Flicker
Hairy Woodpecker
Black-capped Chickadee



Above: Ovenbird, photo by Lisa Hackett

Below: Indigo Bunting, photo by Renee Levesque



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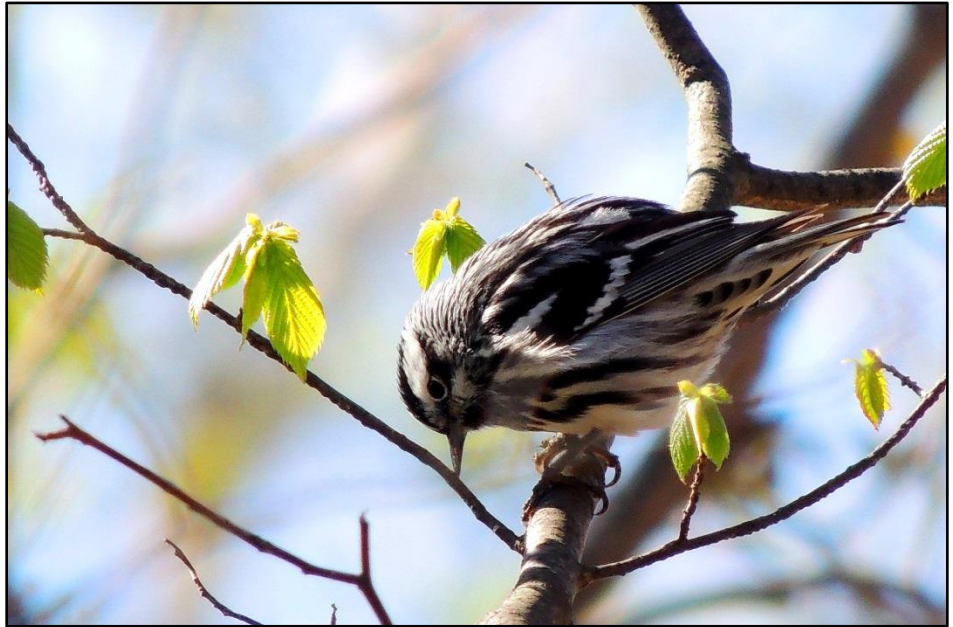
If you wish to participate in next year's Breeding Bird Survey, and there are many routes that need to be surveyed, the requirements for participating are:

1. The ability to quickly and accurately identify all birds in the area by sight and by sound.
2. Good hearing and eyesight.
3. Access to suitable transportation.
4. An intention to participate in the survey for at least two years.

If you meet these criteria and are interested in participating, contact Audrey Heagy, BBS Ontario Coordinator, Bird Studies Canada, by phone at 1-888-448-BITD, ext. 166, or by email at ahagy@birdscanada.org.

If you are still working on your identification skills, you can pair up with an existing observer, as Marc did with Paul, until you learn the ropes and are able to take on a route of your own.

For more information on the rules of the Breeding Bird Survey, visit Environment and Climate Change Canada: <https://ec.gc.ca/reom-mbs/default.asp?lang=En&n=5EE0ADBA-1>



Above: Black and White Warbler, photo by Matt Walter

Left: Rose-breasted Grosbeak, photo by Renee Levesque

Early summer flowers in splendid bloom



by Lori Beckerton, with photos by Renee Levesque

On a beautiful Saturday morning in early July, I led a group along the Orange Trail in Laurier Woods to view the flowering plants and flowering or fruiting trees and shrubs.

Seen were: Meadow Buttercup, Raspberry, Yarrow, Blackberry, Sedge, Dwarf Raspberry, Oxeye Daisy, Bird Vetch, Red Clover, White Clover, Common Winterberry Holly, Meadowsweet (White Spirea), Climbing Nightshade, Blue Flag Iris, Cattail, Sumac, Honeysuckle, Orange Hawkweed, Spreading Dogbane, Common Elderberry, Curly Dock, Bunchberry, Beaked Hazelnut, Dogwood, Canada Mayflower (False Lily-of-the-Valley), Clintonia (Blue-Bead Lily), Starflower, Blueberry, Goldthread, Pyrola (Shinleaf), Bush-Honeysuckle. **(See the collage of some of these wildflowers on the next page.)**

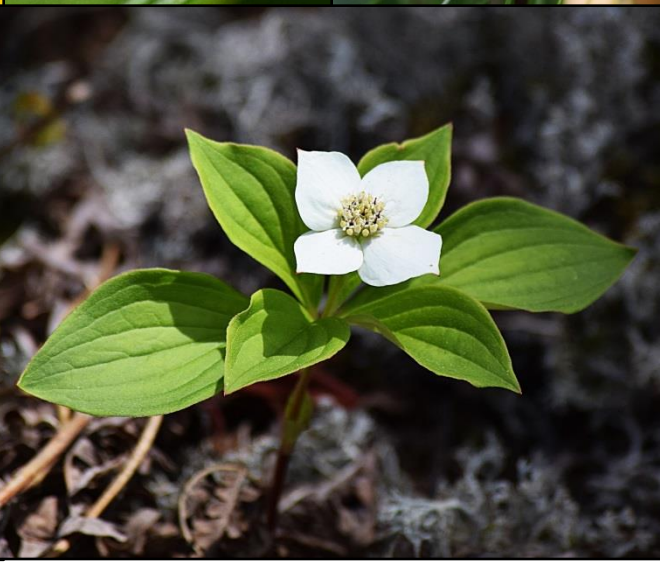
At the beaver pond, there were berries on the Chokecherry, Black Cherry and Pin Cherry trees. Also at the beaver pond, the Common Elderberry was in full bloom and a number of Common Winterberry Holly bushes were in flower. Many Saskatoon berries were forming and the viburnums, like the Nannyberry and Northern Wild-Raisin, were coming back after an infection a few years ago wiped a lot of them out.

Chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*), pictured at right with a Song Sparrow perched on one of the branches, is an important food source for birds, as are many of the berry trees and shrubs.





Clockwise from top left: Bird Vetch, Oxeye Daisy, Yarrow, Iris, Clintonia, Bunchberry, Red Clover, Meadow Buttercup.



The wonder of wetlands and the fun of a scavenger hunt

*By Valerie Vaillancourt, Biologist,
Ministry of Natural Resources and
Forestry*



Photo by Randall Ranger

Saturday, August 6, was a beautiful day for a hike in Laurier Woods with a focus on wetlands – what is in them and what do they do. The wetland walk was followed by a scavenger hunt. The turnout was great with about 15 people, adults and children.

Wetlands, oh what a wonder! They are so full of life and surprises. We saw a wide variety of aquatic plants, minnows, a couple of turtles and snakes both big and small. We also saw signs of other creatures, like geese and beavers and their dams. We learned how wetlands provide food, homes for animals and recreational enjoyment for people.

We also learned that sometimes wetlands look different than what we would expect. In some wetlands you can't even see the water. However, it's there, it's just hiding underground! Wetlands are amazing and surprising and sometimes in places you least expect them.

We had a lot of fun with the scavenger hunt. We searched for a variety of items, such as animal tracks, wildlife and wildlife habitats, as well as plants and trees, focusing on identifying types of trees. We also looked for different functions the wetlands around Laurier Woods provide, such as erosion control and social and educational use. We were able to check off everything on our scavenger hunt list! **(Photo at left by Kaye Edmonds.)**



At the end of the hunt, I asked the younger participants what was something special they saw or what was their favourite part of the trails, and all the kids responded that their favourite part was the raspberries!

What a great way to spend the morning - with new friends, learning about the environment and seeing all that Laurier Woods has to offer.



Photo by Joe Boivin

How to create an instant garden

By Renee Levesque

A nice combination of activities is learning about plants and nurturing creativity at the same time, and what better way to do both than to create a terrarium. At the Louise de Kiriline Lawrence Nature Festival, Joe Boivin, Biologist, Nipissing University, and Nipissing Naturalists Club board member, showed children – and adults – how to do just that.

With mosses, lichens, groundcovers, miniature plants and other natural materials, it is easy to create a terrarium. It can be as plain or as fancy as you want it to be. Joe showed samples of terrariums he had done in plastic containers. But you can use whatever transparent container you like and it can be as large or as small as you like. If you are very creative, you can add pathways and even little animals and people.

Below right is the handout Joe provided to the participants and above is a photo of three sample terrariums, with the tops off for photo-taking purposes. Once you master this fairly simple example, you might want to try your hand at more complex terrariums.

Check out this site for images of some terrariums:

<https://www.google.ca/search?q=how+to+make+terrarium+at+home&sa=X&biw=1680&bih=925&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&ved=0ahUKEwjburj0t-nOAhXJB4KHQMJBcQsAQITA>

Make a "Bryophyte" Terrarium



Question: What is a Bryophyte?

Answer is below

There's really no right or wrong way to make a terrarium. Simply get a small transparent plastic or glass container and follow these simple instructions:

- 1) Place some moist potting soil into the container along with some pebbles or rocks
- 2) Place the bryophytes on top of the soil
- 3) Cover the container with a lid
- 4) Enjoy your terrarium!

Answer: Bryophytes are small non-vascular plants that don't produce seed. Three common types are known as Mosses, Liverworts, and Hornworts

Bryophyte & Lichen scavenger hunt

- Which of these species can you identify in Laurier Woods?
- Confirm your identification by going to borealforest.org on your smartphone

Polytrichum commune _____

Sphagnum sp. "Peat moss" _____

Pleurozium schreberi _____

Bazzania trilobata _____

Cladonia rangiferina "Reindeer lichen" _____

Cladonia sp. "False pixie cup" _____

PLEASE NOTE: DO NOT take bryophytes from Laurier Woods to preserve our shared natural space.

These species can be collected from crown land or from private property. Always seek permission of the land owner prior to collecting specimens. For more information on what can be collected on crown land please go to:

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/crown-land-use-policy-atlas>

Fake fossils find fans at festival

By Renee Levesque, photos by Fred Pinto

Kaye Edmonds' "fossils" were a big hit with the kids at the Louise de Kiriline Lawrence Nature Festival. Inside the fossils were found animals pertaining to Laurier Woods – raccoons, bears and foxes, for example-- and to find them, the kids had to chip away at the fossils to open them.

To make the "fossils", Kaye used this recipe:

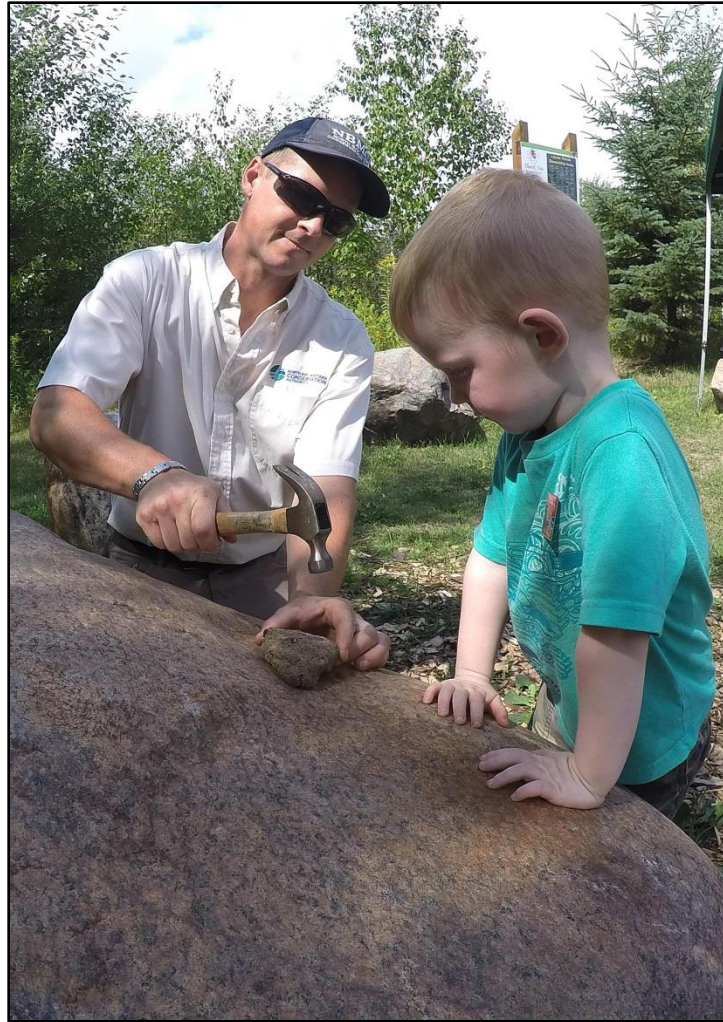
1 cup of used coffee grounds

1/2 cup of cold coffee

1 cup of flour

1/2 cup of salt

Stir together the coffee grounds, cold coffee, flour, and salt until well mixed. Knead the mixture, shaping it into a rough ball and embedding in each ball one of the animals. Set to dry on waxed paper. The "fossils" should dry in a day or two, although in the heat and humidity, they will take longer.



Working with wood attracts young builders

By Fred Pinto

Irene Kasch, Nipissing Naturalists Club board member, organized a wooden craft building event for the Louise de Kiriline Nature Festival. From Home Depot, Irene obtained bird house, pencil case and cell phone holder kits, as well as the necessary tools to put the parts of the kits together. Children got to choose what they wanted to build and after building their kit, they were able to take their finished product home.

Thanks to Home Depot for providing the kits and tools.

Photos by Kaye Edmonds, except photo below left by Fred Pinto



Other LKL festival activities

Photos by Fred Pinto

April Phelps, Nipissing Naturalists Club board member, provided drawings and equipment for children to colour and to make prints using items from nature. (Photo above right)



Paula Loranger of the North Bay-Mattawa Conservation Authority (photo below left) led a group to the dipping platform to look for aquatic insects and found spined sticklebacks, predaceous diving beetles, dragonfly larva, mayfly larva, tadpoles, water striders and water boatmen.

Guyline Thauvette, Forests without Borders, displayed seedlings one can order to celebrate various events, such as birthdays, anniversaries and weddings. Forests without Borders uses the funds from the sale of seedlings and handmade containers to help people in various countries restore forests.



The Ontario Professional Foresters Association (below) tested participants' biodiversity skills and none other than Dick Tafel won a prize for his knowledge, although Dick did admit to a little help from a friend.



THE WOODLAND OBSERVER

An appreciation of Ontario Nature and Mashkinonje Provincial Park

By Renee Levesque

On a rainy Saturday afternoon, August 13, I had the pleasure of meeting some members of Ontario Nature at a gathering hosted by Angela and Gary Martin at their lovely home on the west arm of Lake Nipissing. Angela is a past president of Ontario Nature and is currently on the Board of Directors of Ontario Nature. She is also a past president of Nipissing Naturalists Club.



By the time April McCrum and I arrived, the other members, despite a steady rain, had left with Dr. Peter Beckett, biologist, Laurentian University, for a walk along Loudon Peatland Trail, a provincially significant bog in nearby Mashkinonje Provincial Park. **(See aerial photo above by Angela Martin.)** The peatland trail is 2.9 km. in length and despite this short enough distance, the group was gone a good four hours. They arrived back at Angela's and Gary's soaking wet, but all said they thoroughly enjoyed the walk and learned a lot about wetlands from Peter and about trees from Fred Pinto who accompanied the group.

The accessible Loudon Peatland Trail with its fen border and central bog is of great ecological importance, as is Muskrat Creek, also in Mashkinonje. The latter is 2.5 km. in length and extends into Lake Nipissing. It is explored by canoe or kayak from Hwy. 64. Mashkinonje is unique in terms of wetlands with over 38% of the park covered by Loudon and by Muskrat Creek. For more information on this non-operating park, administered by Killarney Provincial Park, visit: <https://www.ontarioparks.com/park/mashkinonje> and <http://www.mashkinonje.com/>.

One couple did not go on the walk and that turned out to be fortunate for me because this couple, Gord and Angie McNulty, was from Hamilton where Gord, before he retired, worked as a journalist at the *Hamilton Spectator* with my husband. We had time before the others arrived back from their walk for some amusing reminiscences.

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Lunch gave people time to get to know one another and I had an interesting talk with Peter about rehabilitative sites, the mine sites of Elliot Lake in particular. I spent a few years at Can-Met Mine site when I was young. When my husband and I discovered Mississagi Provincial Park in 1992 and returned there almost every year since, we made our way each year to most of the rehabilitative sites, noting from year to year how much they had changed, gradually reverting back to more natural states. Where I lived and where I went to school are no longer there, and some years back, I buried a bottle with written information in it at the exact location where I had once lived. I can't recall what I wrote and every time I have returned to see if I can find where I buried the bottle, and I highly doubt I can, the presence of a bear has made itself known, hence turning me back to the safety of my vehicle. I think I am not meant to look for my buried bottle.

Caroline Schultz, Executive Director of Ontario Nature, was in attendance. Caroline spoke about the many causes Ontario Nature has taken on, including the MNRF proposal in Northern Ontario to waive the need to purchase a special hunting seal to kill wolves; to increase the killing of wolves to two per person per season; and to remove the limit on the number of coyotes killed. As a result of Ontario Nature's voice and that of others, the MNRF backed down from its position.

Caroline also spoke about the number of plants and species that are at risk in Ontario, species in danger of becoming extinct or of disappearing altogether. *"Ontario Nature is actively involved in research, public education and policy work by promoting public awareness of and engagement in the conservation of all wildlife – including species at risk – through public presentations, workshops and outreach materials."* (From the Ontario Nature website, the link for which is found on the last page of this newsletter.)

Ontario Nature offers numerous citizen science programs to gather data on frogs, salamanders, bats, bees, invasive species, frogs, birds, butterflies, turtles, dragonflies and snakes. All are "kid friendly", so young people can get involved at an early age. Check out these citizen science programs at:

<https://www.ontariounature.org/directory-of-citizen-science/home.php>. Ontario Nature also provides opportunities for volunteers to be involved in projects like the [Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Ontario](#) and the ongoing [Ontario Reptile and Amphibian Atlas](#).



**Angela Martin and Caroline Schultz,
photo courtesy of Angela Martin**

Return of the photo contest



Members will be pleased to know that the photo contest has returned.

As in the past, there are four categories: **flora, fauna, landscape and people enjoying nature.**

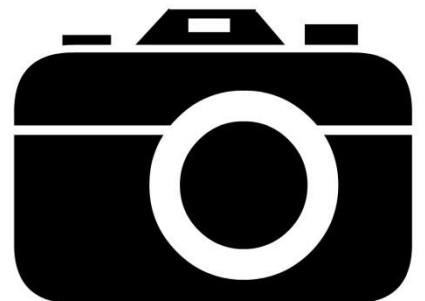
The rules are as follows:

1. Members can submit up to **2 photos per category.**
2. Photos must be taken **within 50 miles or 80 km of North Bay** or on a sanctioned **Nipissing Naturalists Club** outing.
3. Photos must be submitted by **October 31, 2016.**
4. Photos must be taken within the 12 months of the deadline, **from November 1, 2015 to October 31, 2016.**

Time is running out, so get clicking and submitting! Submit your photos to Sarah Wheelan at nipnatsphotos@gmail.com.

Members will get to vote on the best photo in each category at the December 2016 meeting.

Photo above of Kaye Edmonds at Cache Bay by Renee Levesque.



Guided Walks in Laurier Woods

On **Saturday, October 1, from 10:00 a.m. to noon**, Jeremy St. Onge will be demonstrating

how to make cordage from common local natural fibres, such as dogbane and milkweed. There are a few milkweed plants at the entrance to Laurier

Woods and dogbane within the woods, and no doubt Jeremy has more plants in mind.

On **Saturday, November 5, from 10:00 a.m. until noon**, Larry Dyke, Geologist, will lead another geology

walk, focusing on the minerals that make up the rocks of the Canadian Shield in the North Bay area. Participants will examine outcrops to show how these rocks formed 20 km below the surface of the Earth.

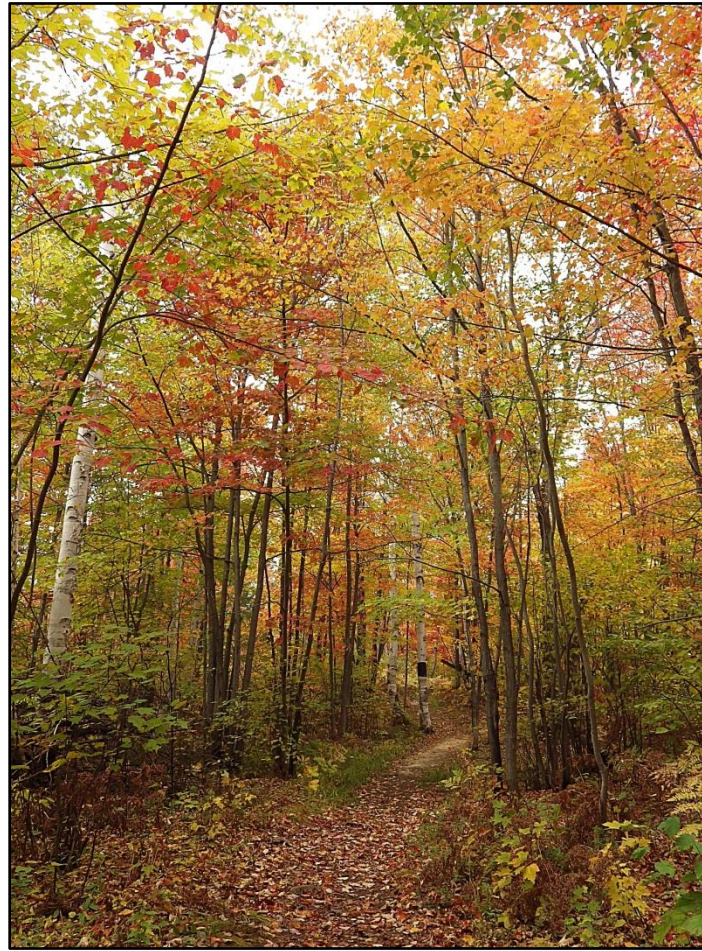


Photo by Renee Levesque



Photo by Renee Levesque



Photo by Larry Dyke

Other upcoming events

On **Wednesday, September 21**, Dick Tafel will talk about identifying birds in your backyard at a meeting of the **Callander Horticultural Society** to take place at the Community Centre, Swale Street, Callander. General meeting starts at **7:00 p.m.** A social follows after Dick's talk. For those interested in gardening, the Master Gardener will be on hand for questions and answers. Everyone is welcome to attend. Admission is free.



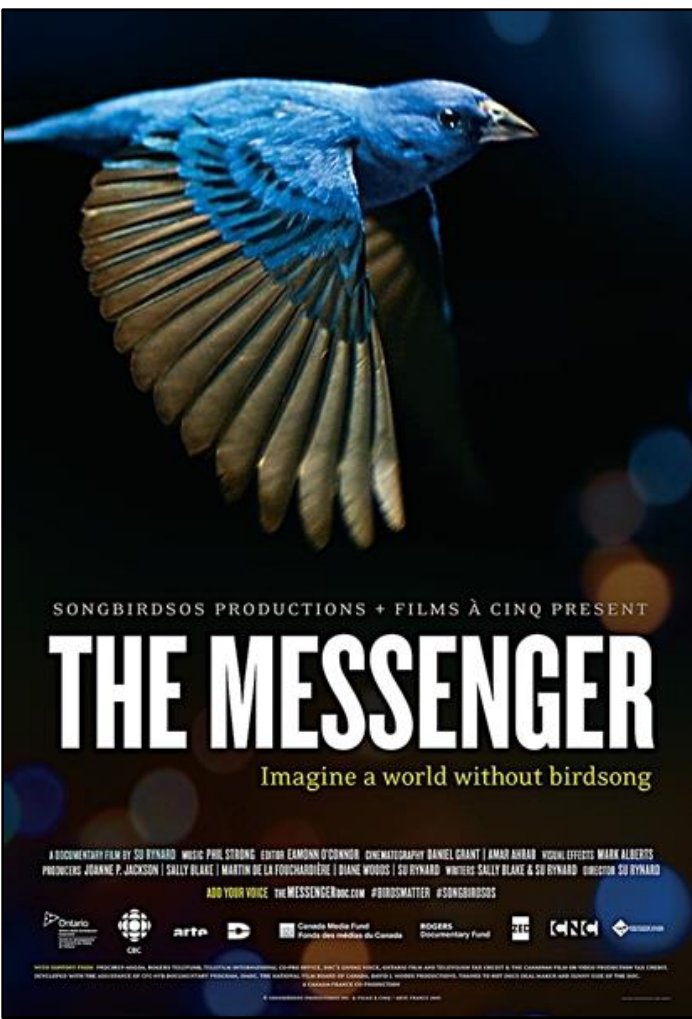
Photo by Renee Levesque

As part of the North Bay Film Festival running from September 29 to October 2 at the **Capitol Centre**, on **October 2, at 11:00 a.m.**, there will be a viewing *The Messenger*, an award-winning documentary about the depletion of songbirds and their importance to the global environment. This film “chronicles the struggle of songbirds worldwide to survive in turbulent environment conditions.” To experience this “visually stunning emotional journey” on the large screen with great sound quality is not to be missed. (You will also see club member Kevan Cowcill's name appearing in the credits during the last 10 seconds of the film.) Single admission is \$10.00 or \$6.00 for students and seniors. See [website](http://songbirdsos.com/) for details.

A question and answer period will follow the screening. Award-winning producer of *The Messenger*, Joanne Jackson, who is originally from New Liskeard and has family in North Bay, will be on hand with other panel members to answer questions.

The Messenger will also be screened for a week in **Sudbury** starting Friday, **September 30, at 7:00 p.m.** each evening, at the Downtown Movie Lounge, 40 Elm Street. It will also be screened in **New Liskeard** on **October 3, at 6:30 p.m.**, at the Empire Theatre, 35 Armstrong Street.

For more information about *The Messenger*, visit the website: <http://songbirdsos.com/>. (Poster at left is courtesy of that website.)





Paul Smylie to talk on joys of canoeing

After a summer hiatus, Nipissing Naturalists Club returns to its monthly meetings, held the **second Tuesday of every month in the auditorium at Cassellholme at 7:00 p.m.** The next meeting is **Tuesday, September 13.**

September's speaker is **Paul Smylie** who will talk about his adventures this past spring and summer **canoeing rivers in Northern Ontario.** Paul's talk last May about his bicycling trek along the Dempster Highway to the Arctic Circle was a big hit. Although he stayed closer to home this summer, his paddling jaunts are sure to be of great interest. With paddling, you can experience the tranquility and peace of being far away from it all and see areas of scenic beauty that have remained virtually unchanged for centuries.



THE WOODLAND OBSERVER



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Gary Sturge, Treasurer

Renee Levesque, Bird Wing Scribe.

The Bird Wing newsletter is published each month, except December, and sent to members by email and posted on Nipissing Naturalists Club website, <http://www.nipnats.com/club-activities/bird-wing/>.

The Woodland Observer is published electronically each month from September to June and sent to members by email and posted on Nipissing Naturalists Club website, <http://www.nipnats.com/> under the link, "Newsletter".

Editor: Renee Levesque: rlevesque1948@gmail.com

Contributors this issue: Lori Beckerton, Joe Boivin, Larry Dyke, Kaye Edmonds, Lisa Hackett, Elaine Hurst, Renee Levesque, Angela Martin, Fred Pinto, Steve Pitt, Randall Ranger, Paul Smylie, Dick Tafel, Brent Turcotte, Valerie Vaillancourt, Matt Walter.

Special thanks to: Ontario Heritage Trust for use of three of their photos; Natural Resources Canada for the photos of the Spruce Budworm and moth; songbirdsos for the use of their poster for *The Messenger*.

Membership Fees

Annual Nipissing Naturalists Club membership fees are: single \$20.00; family \$30.00.

There is an **additional annual \$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.** This fee is paid directly to Bird Wing.



The Nipissing Naturalist Club is affiliated with Ontario Nature: <http://www.ontarionature.org/>.