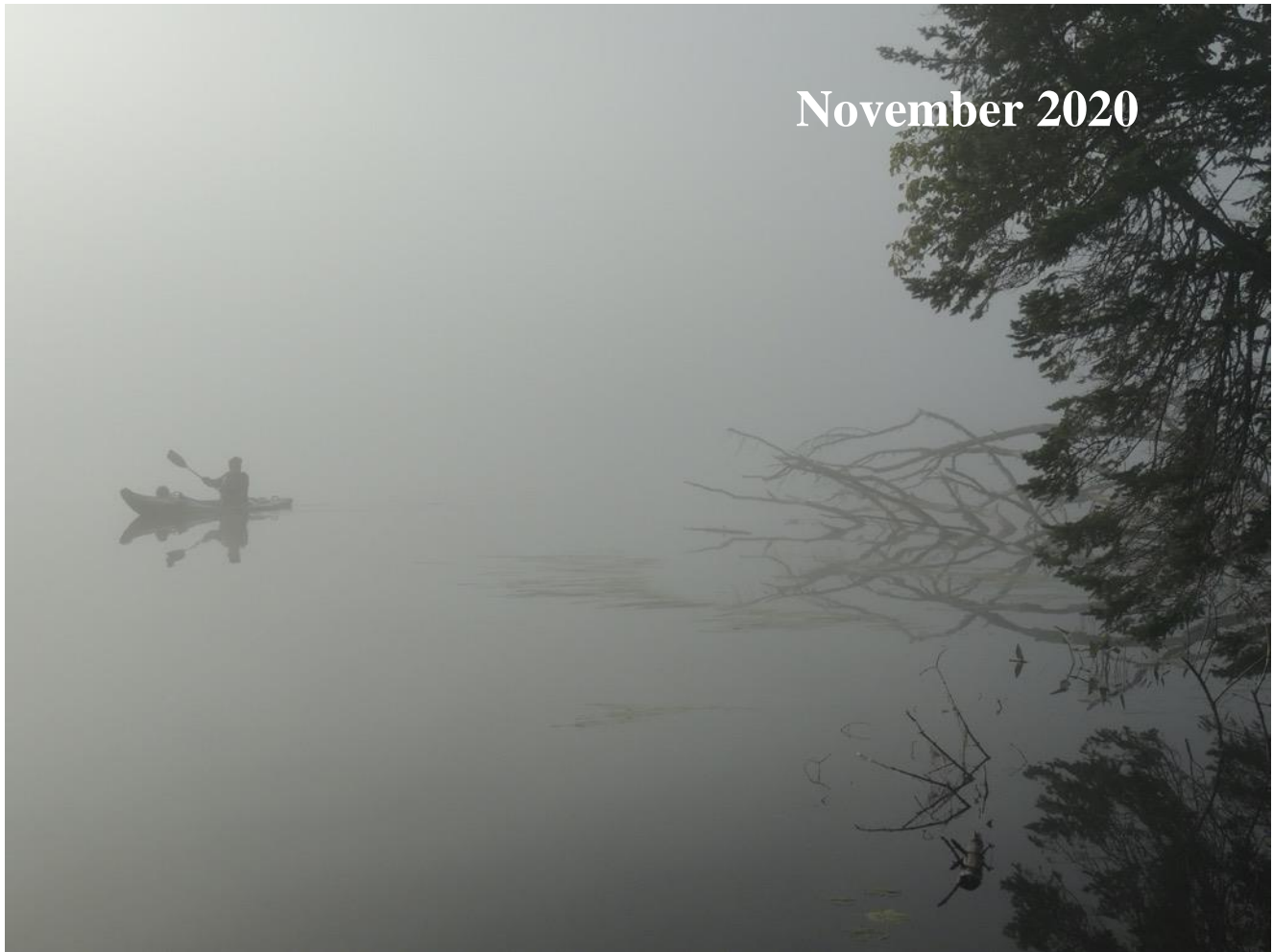


# The Woodland Observer

*Newsletter of the Nipissing Naturalists Club*

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



November 2020

*Misty Morning Paddler – Grundy Lake Provincial Park, September 2020*

*Grant McKercher*

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## **Recent Meetings and Club Activities**

### **On-line Presentation – 6 October 2020**

#### **“Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas-3”**

*Mike Cadman*

On October 6<sup>th</sup>, over 200 people attended the Atlas-3 Webinar given by Mike Cadman, Coordinator of the Atlas. The webinar will be posted on Ontario Field Ornithologist’s You Tube channel shortly.

**The atlas website is now up and running at: [www.birdsontario.org](http://www.birdsontario.org) where you can find out more about the atlas, discover resources to hone your birding skills, and register to participate.**

Atlas-3 has its own Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/ONBreedingBirdAtlas> (English) or <https://www.facebook.com/AtlasOiseauxON> (French). Find the atlas on Instagram at @ONBirdAtlas or @AtlasOiseauxON, and on Twitter at @ONBirdAtlas or @AtlasOiseauxON.

When posting on social media, please use the hashtag #ONBirdAtlas3 or #AtlasOiseauxON3.

### **On-line Nipissing Naturalists Club Meeting – 13 October 2020**

#### **Presentation – “Wolves of Temiskaming”**

Over 20 Club members attended this on-line meeting which opened with a presentation by Rosanne Van Schie on the “*Wolves of Temiskaming*”. Rosanne is a PhD candidate at the University of Toronto and has been studying the wolf populations in the traditional territory of the Algonquin Nation since 2003. The purpose of her research is to lobby for protection of the Algonquin [eastern wolf population](#) within the context of [Indigenous customary management of the environment](#). An article about her work, entitled “*Medicine Wheel Rendezvous*”, was recently published in [Women & Environments International Magazine \(Summer/Fall 2019\)](#).

Rosanne Van Schie, Pierre Fournier and Zack Pariseau studying a wolf in 2016. *Photo by Graham*



#### **Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas-3**

Grant McKercher gave a brief overview of the upcoming Third Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas project (<https://www.facebook.com/AtlasOiseauxON>) that will be getting underway in January 2021 (see also above). Grant has volunteered to be the Regional Coordinator for the Nipissing Region and can be reached at [northbay@birdsontario.org](mailto:northbay@birdsontario.org) for any questions about the project and how you can get involved.

#### **Members Photos & Identification Skills**

Kaye Edmonds presented some bird photos that she had recently taken during her outings and Rachel Sturge assisted us in identifying the species. Rachel summarized how to go about identifying birds by focusing on their size and shape, colour pattern, behaviour, and habitat. She reviewed the characteristics

of various gulls in our area and how to pick out the ‘unusual’ ones. Kaye presented photos of a white-crowned and white-throated sparrow, as well as an American pipit and a Lapland longspur which have been migrating through our area in recent weeks.

Fred Pinto encouraged members to go out and look for the planet [Mars in the eastern sky](#) the upcoming days. It will be in opposition, being closer to earth than it will be until 2052 and offer exceptional viewing opportunities in the Northern hemisphere.

Fred also mentioned that many people have been seeing [woolly bear caterpillars](#) this fall. There is some folklore about these cute crawlers’ ability able to predict the severity of the upcoming winter. [Is this true?](#)

We’re hoping to make this identification forum a regular feature of our monthly meeting, so if you have photos of any species of plants, birds, or mammals, or other natural phenomena that you would like to share, let us know!

### **Fall/Winter Photo Contest**

Keith Pearson reminded members that we have a new Fall/Winter Photo contest starting. See below for more details. Entries can be sent to [nipnatsphotos@gmail.com](mailto:nipnatsphotos@gmail.com).

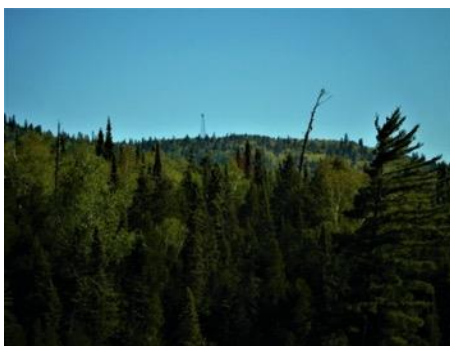
### **On-line Presentation – 20 October 2020**

#### **“A Cultural Landscape Perspective of Anishinaabe Place Names in the Territory of the Temagami Anishinaabe, Called nDaki-Menan”**

*Mary Laronde, Elected member of the Teme-Augama Anishnabai Traditional Council*

*Photos courtesy of Fred Pinto*

Twenty-one club members attended this on-line presentation by Mary Laronde about Indigenous place names in the Temagami area, and how these names reflect the historical use and events that occurred on the lands long before European contact. Traditional knowledge and archeological evidence show that the Anishinaabe people have been present here for 7000-10,000 years.



*Ishpatina Ridge*

Using detailed maps showing the Anishinaabe place names, Mary reviewed the geography of the area and gave examples of how the place names were reflective of natural features and significant events. The region encompasses two of the highest points in Ontario,



*View of Mihell Lake from Ishpatina Ridge*

Ishpatina Ridge (*Ish-pud-un-ong* = ‘where the land goes up’) and Maple Mountain (*Chee-bay-jing* = ‘place where the spirits go’) 25 miles to east. Due to this natural elevation all the water flows out of Temagami forming the headwaters (*Anima-Ni-pee-sing*) for the Sturgeon River and Lake Nipissing, but also feeding rivers that flow east to Lake Kipawa and the Ottawa River.

Mary provided some interesting history about the maps she had been studying that showed many of the Teme-Augama place names. Much of the research for the maps came from the work of Craig Macdonald, a Ministry of Natural Resources employee, who spent years studying with Anishinaabe elders in the area. They were very pleased to share their traditional knowledge, and have it documented in detail. Macdonald published the [Nastawgan Map](#) in 1993. It depicts traditional snowshoe and canoe routes as they were in 1900 and is “the most comprehensive map of traditional routes ever produced in Canada”.



*Historical indigenous campsite on Smooth Water Lake*

Mary finished her presentation by reflecting on her own heritage and the Indigenous world view which is embodied in such things as the Creation Story (which has historical roots in the Ishpatina and Smooth Water Lake area of Temagami), and traditional governance that integrates the land and all living things.



*Mihell Lake*



*Smooth Water Lake*

### **Members Photos & Identification Skills**

Rachel Sturge provided another very informative bird identification session, this time focusing on local woodpecker species – the Downy, Hairy and Pileated, as well as the less common Red-bellied woodpecker whose range is slowly moving further north. Some submitted photos of “little brown ducks” (blue-wing teal, green-wing teal and wood duck) provided discussion points for identifying these tricky species, especially when in juvenile or non-breeding plumage.

In answer to a member’s question Rachel also discussed the pros and cons of feeding wild birds - what and when to feed, and precautions to take to limit disease transmission and harm to such species as hummingbirds. For more information on feeding birds see:

<https://www.allaboutbirds.org/news/browse/topic/feeding-birds/>

### **Other Submitted Articles**

#### **Point Reyes National Seashore – Marin County California**

**11-13 March 2020**

*Text and photos by Grant McKercher*

In early March of this year my wife Shirley and I took a trip to California. Despite our later plans being derailed by the developing COVID pandemic, we did manage to spend a few days exploring the [Point Reyes National Seashore](#) in Marin County, north of San Francisco.

Point Reyes is a national park home to over 1500 species of animals and plants distributed over a number of [ecosystems](#) such as estuaries, fir and pine forests, coastal dunes, and ocean beaches. Over 45% of North American bird species and nearly 18% of California's plant species are found in the park.

Accompanied by our expert guide, David Wimpfheimer, we explored a number of different habitats in this very biodiverse area. Although focusing on birding (77 species seen!), we also spent time looking for Tule elk, coyotes, black-tailed deer, and observing the elephant seal colony on the shores of Drake's Bay. David was also extremely knowledgeable about plant life, geology, and the human social aspects (e.g. the ancient indigenous Miwok culture, and modern-day ranching vs. environmental lobbies) which has affected development of the park. *(Since I wrote this article a new [National Parks Service plan](#) has been approved that allows for culling of the Tule elk to allow expansion of commercial cattle ranching in the park. Many environmental groups are concerned about the precedent this sets in favouring commercial activities at the expense of species at risk and the overall biodiversity of the park.)*

Our day began with an early morning visit to the Bolinas Lagoon near the south end of the park. Here we were treated to views of many species of ducks and shorebirds, including one my favourites, the American Avocet, performing a series of seeming ballet moves as it searched for food in the shallows.



*Bolinas Lagoon*



*American Avocet feeding in the mud flats*



At the park visitors' centre we looked at some of the excellent dioramas illustrating the natural and human history of the park, and of course took time to check for more birds.



*Northern Flicker (yellow x red-shafted hybrid)*



*Acorn Woodpecker*



*Drake's Bay*

In the afternoon we headed to Point Reyes itself, and the spectacular coast of Drake's Bay, the probable site of Sir Francis Drake's landing in the area in 1579. It would be 200 years before Spanish settlers began to arrive in the area, establishing a flourishing fishing industry. Today many tourists come to see the spectacular coastal scenery and visit the historic lighthouse on the Point itself.

As well, there is now a well-established colony of elephant seals, which until recently were an endangered species in the region. At the time of our visit we saw the young pups, known as 'weaners', lounging on the beach in preparation for their first foray into the ocean. Their mothers had



*Elephant seal pups ('weaners')*

already left, and the pups would follow once they became hungry enough.

With no help from their parents they have to learn on their own, how to search for, and catch food in the ocean.



*Drake's Beach*



One could certainly spend many days exploring this fascinating park, with its many ecosystems linked by numerous walking and hiking trails. For those with less time, many natural highlights of the area are easily accessible by car.



*Black-tailed deer in coastal scrub habitat*

## Calendar of Events

### Video conference talks for Nipissing Naturalists

Date	Start Time	Speaker	Topic	Comments
Tuesday November 10th	7:00 pm	<b>Sam Nsiah</b> , Volunteer and project lead for the Forests without Borders Ghana Charcoal Project. Sam is a forester with the MNRF in Timmins.	<b>“Ghana Charcoal Project for Job Creation, Income and Environmental Sustainability”</b>  	This is a project of Forests without Borders, a Canadian charity that helps people around the world restore forests. This project in Ghana has established functional charcoal production enterprises within five communities. The project uses improved steel charcoal kiln production technology to convert wood into charcoal instead of traditional pit and mound method.
Tuesday November 17 <sup>th</sup>	7:00 pm	<b>Dr. Ken Abrahams</b> , Waterfowl and Wetlands Research Scientist	<b>“Geese in Ontario”</b>  	This presentation will review the status, distribution, and abundance of geese in Ontario, including the populations and subspecies of Canada Geese, Cackling Geese, Lesser and Greater Snow Geese, Ross's Geese and Brant.
Tuesday December 8th	7:00 pm	<b>Dr. Sarah Campbell</b> , Postdoctoral Fellow, University of Toronto	<b>“An Historical Review of Fish Stocking in the Laurentian Great Lakes”</b>	This presentation will review motivation, historical records, and impacts of fish stocking in the Laurentian Great Lakes fish communities, with particular focus on salmonids.

## Other Announcements/Information

### Changes in Board Members

We have had some changes to our Board membership in recent weeks. Three members have stepped down from their positions and two new members have joined.

The Board Chair and other Directors expressed thanks to Sarah Wheelan, Oriana Pokorny, and Matt Procnier who have left positions on the Board. Their contributions over the past number of years is greatly appreciated and they will certainly be missed.

Our two new members are Allison Bannister and Alexander Gomm – welcome Allison and Alex!



**Allison Bannister**

“I am an ecologist and outdoor enthusiast who is re-joining the board after a one-year hiatus. I am looking forward to participating in the club’s events this year and am particularly keen to continue supporting our annual SwiftWatch Monitoring program.”



**Alexander Gomm**

“I was born and raised in North Bay and attended Nipissing University. I graduated from the Geography of Regional Planning and International Development program and the Master of Education program. I have a long-standing interest in the environment and environmental conservation. I taught in Asia from 2010 until 2019 and had the opportunity to do some volunteering there. In 2012 I volunteered on an environmental conservation project in the Terrai Region of Nepal and also completed a Coral Reef Conservation Internship on the island of KohTao in the Gulf of Thailand. Now, back in North Bay, I am getting reacquainted with the beautiful natural environment of Nipissing and am trying to involve myself with groups such

as NipNats Club that are involved in conservation and education about our natural world. There is nothing more important than the health of our life-sustaining ecosystems.”

**Nipissing Naturalists Club 2020/2021 Fall and Winter Photo Contest**

Calling all nature photographers! The Nipissing Naturalists Club is running a photo contest this fall and winter. The contest is open for entries now until April 30th. Voting, using Google Forms, will be open during the first week of May. The winners will be announced at the May meeting and the winning photos will be published in the May 2021 *Woodland Observer*.

You may submit one photo per category for each member, including each member of family memberships. Please identify who took the photo and in which category to enter the photo. There is no age limit. If you later take a better photo, submit that to replace your original entry. You may send substitutions as often as you like. Send your entries to [nipnatsphotos@gmail.com](mailto:nipnatsphotos@gmail.com)

**Here are the categories:**

- **Wildlife** - Watch out for those bears!
- **Scenery** - Don't step too close to that cliff!
- **People Enjoying Nature** - Smile. You're on candid camera!
- **Photographers' Nature Choice** - A chance to spread your wings!

We can't wait to see your photos!  
Keith Pearson – Director



## **Snowshoe Hare Research**

*The following request for observations on snowshoe hares came to us from Victoria Reimer, an undergraduate student working at Trent University:*

“My name is Victoria Reimer, and I am an undergraduate student at Trent University working on a project concerning snowshoe hares. The project will use iNaturalist data to investigate when snowshoe hares’ fur turns white in the fall and brown in the spring, and to determine the southern range limit for snowshoe hares in Ontario. In order to collect the data I need, I have created a project on iNaturalist where app users can post their sightings of snowshoe hares. They can find this project by searching “Ontario Snowshoe Hares” on the mobile app, or by following this link:

<https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/ontario-snowshoe-hares>.

Although I would like to receive any and all snowshoe hare photos submitted by app users, I am particularly interested in users’ first sighting of white or molting hares for the season. I am reaching out to your group with the hope that you will spread the word about this iNaturalist project to your members and encourage them to post any snowshoe hare sightings they have to the project. The more people I have participating, the more data I will have to work with, so I would greatly appreciate any assistance you can give me by spreading the word!

If you or any of your members have questions about my project, you can check out my website at <https://reimervictoria.wixsite.com/snowshoehare> for more information, or you can email me at [victoriareimer@trentu.ca](mailto:victoriareimer@trentu.ca). If any of your members are new to iNaturalist, they can visit <https://www.inaturalist.org/pages/getting+started> for help getting started with the app.

Thank you for your time, and I hope to see your observations on iNaturalist!”

*Another opportunity to participate in a citizen science project and become more familiar with using iNaturalist. Ed.*

## **Banff Mountain Film Festival – \$1000.00 Donation to Nipissing Naturalists Club**

Shared proceeds from the 2020 Banff Mountain Film Festival resulted in a \$1000.00 donation to our Club. The Canadian Ecology Centre also received proceeds from the festival. Many thanks to the local festival organizer, Mark Bassam, for his time and efforts in bringing the festival to North Bay and supporting local environmental organizations.

The 2021 festival will be an on-line event. The Banff Centre is still working out the specific details for this, but tentative plans indicate that there will be 4 on-line screenings, about a month apart. Viewers will purchase a link to the films and have 3 days in which to watch them on-line. There will be different links so that the organizers know where to share the local proceeds from the purchases.

This year’s [World Tour](#) will feature a collection of the most inspiring action, environmental, and adventure films from the festival. **The proceeds from this event will be again shared between the Nipissing Naturalists Club and the Canadian Ecology Centre – so stay tuned for more information on purchasing tickets for on-line viewing and supporting our local organizations!**

## **URL Links for Articles**

*The computer gremlins have working overtime resulting in difficulty in using some of the hyperlinks that I have embedded in the newsletter. I have appended the full links below to use if needed. Ed.*

### **Wolves of Temagami:**

<http://www.algonquineasternwolf.com/eastern-wolf/>

<https://www.wolflakefirstnation.com/algonquin-eco-management>

[http://www.yorku.ca/weimag/CURRENTISSUE/images/WEIMAG\\_100\\_101.pdf](http://www.yorku.ca/weimag/CURRENTISSUE/images/WEIMAG_100_101.pdf)

### **Mars and Woolly Bear Caterpillars:**

<https://www.msn.com/en-gb/money/technology/mars-at-opposition-shines-extra-bright-in-the-night-sky-tonight/ar-BB19YQ3X>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pyrrharctia\\_isabella](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pyrrharctia_isabella)

<https://www.almanac.com/woolly-bear-caterpillars-and-weather-prediction>

### **Nastawgan Map:**

<http://www.ottertooth.com/Temagami/Maps/nastawgan/nastaw-buy.htm>

### **Feeding Wild Birds:**

<https://www.allaboutbirds.org/news/browse/topic/feeding-birds/>

### **Point Reyes National Seashore Park:**

<https://www.nps.gov/pore/index.htm>

[https://www.nps.gov/pore/learn/upload/resourcenewsletter\\_defininghabitats.pdf](https://www.nps.gov/pore/learn/upload/resourcenewsletter_defininghabitats.pdf)

<https://www.marini.com/2020/09/18/point-reyes-releases-final-plan-to-preserve-ranches-cull-tule-elk/>

### **Banff Mountain Film Festival:**

<https://www.banffcentre.ca/banffmountainfestival/tour>



**Board of Directors 2020**

Fred Pinto, President	<a href="mailto:fredpinto1@gmail.com">fredpinto1@gmail.com</a>	705-476-9006
Rick Tripp, Vice-president	Allison Bannister	Grant McKercher
Connie Sturge, Treasurer	Alexander Gomm	Keith Pearson
	Irene Kasch	Louise Simpson
		Katie Tripp

**Past Presidents**

Dick Tafel	Ted Price	Steph Romaniuk
Angela Martin	Greg Boxwell	Jeremy St. Onge

**Bird Wing**

Dick Tafel, Chairman	<a href="mailto:rtafel@sympatico.ca">rtafel@sympatico.ca</a>	705-472-7907
Gary Sturge, Treasurer		
Renee Levesque, Coordinator		

Monthly Bird Wing and Bird Bash reports are sent to members by e-mail and posted on the Nipissing Naturalists Club's website: <https://www.nipnats.com/bird-wing/bird-wing-meetings-outings/>, and <https://nipnats.com/bird-wing/bird-bash-reports/>.

## The Woodland Observer

The Club's newsletter, *The Woodland Observer*, is published electronically September to June, and sent to members by e-mail and posted in date order on the Nipissing Naturalists Club's website: <https://nipnats.com/newsletters/>.

Grant McKercher, Editor     [gmckercher@mac.com](mailto:gmckercher@mac.com)     705-499-5577

**Contributors to this issue:** Grant McKercher, Keith Pearson, Fred Pinto

## Membership Fees

Annual Nipissing Naturalist Club membership fees are:	Single	\$20.00
	Family	\$30.00

There is an **additional annual \$5.00 membership fee for Bird Wing.**

Nipissing Naturalists Club is a member Ontario Nature: <http://www.ontarionature.org/>.

