



# THE BULLETIN

January 2006 No. 451

## 2005-2006 EXECUTIVE

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## Events calendar

- Executive Meeting** Tuesday February 14, 2006 7:30PM  
Richmond Hill Library meeting room
  
- Bird Group** Wednesday February 8, 2006. 7:30pm  
Location: Muriel Farrant's  
Topic: Green Heron and American Bittern
  
- General Meeting** Thursday February 16, 2006. 7:30pm  
Speaker: Peter Burstyn  
Topic: Energy Efficient Homes  
Location: Richmond Hill Presbyterian Church
  
- Botany Group** Monday February 6, 2006. 12:30pm  
Location: Dana Jonak's 190 Grandview Avenue
  
- Field Trips** Sunday April 23 to Monday May 22, 2006.  
Michael biro's Point Pelee Adventures.  
**Register by January 20, 2006.**  
Call 905-763-7373 or [michaelbiro@rogers.com](mailto:michaelbiro@rogers.com)

Check for more Events and Outings on Page 2

**A change in the Richmond Hill Naturalists General Meeting speakers has been made for this month at the request of Peter Burstyn, who is running in the election. Bob Barnett will now speak at this month's meeting on 'Conserving the Escarpment'. Peter will talk about 'Energy Efficient Homes' in February.**

## Why we want to protect the Oak Ridges Moraine

The Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act was put in place and the land swap on the Oak Ridges Moraine of the Richmond Hill 'Corridor' lands was done because these lands are important to Ontario -- as natural heritage lands, wildlife habitat and corridors.

These lands need to be protected as the Act states.

A model to manage these lands could be the new [Ontario Provincial Parks Act](#).

This act describes a **Nature Reserve** park as one that will "protect representative ecosystems and provincially significant elements of Ontario's natural heritage, including distinctive natural habitats and landforms, for their intrinsic value, to support scientific research and to maintain biodiversity."

Continued on Page 3...



**The Bulletin** is published 9 times per year, from September to May inclusive, by the *Richmond Hill Naturalists*, and is mailed free to members. The Bulletin is the official publication of the Richmond Hill Naturalists, a non-profit organization, the objectives of which are to stimulate public interest in natural history and to encourage the preservation of our natural areas.

Address Correspondence to: **Richmond Hill Naturalists, P.O. Box 32217, RPO Harding, Richmond Hill, On, L4C 9S3**

**Deadlines:** The editor encourages submissions from any member on any topic related to nature or conservation, and in particular, any issue that might be of interest or concern to members of this club. e-mail: [lhelferty@sympatico.ca](mailto:lhelferty@sympatico.ca) Deadlines are the first day of each month.

Bulletin Advertisers have been selected because of their relevance to member interests.

Members are encouraged to patronize our advertisers and please mention that you saw their ad in our Bulletin.

**Change of Address:** Any change of email or street address should be sent to Mike Turk who prints the envelopes for the Bulletin mailing. See the Executive List for contact information.

Editor: Lloyd Helferty

Mailing Database: Mike Turk

Distribution: Athena Antiochos

#### MEMBERSHIP IN RHN

The *Membership Application Form*, is available at each General Meeting from Mike Turk, or in our club brochure, available from any executive member listed.

#### NEW MEMBERS:

*Meet new members at club events and say Hello!*

### EVENTS FUTURE

- **Saturday January 21, 2006. 10am.** Eldred King Woodlands Snowshoe Hike. 6 km. 2 hrs. Drive in from the West side of Hwy 48, 2.7 km N of Aurora Rd. If there is no snow we will hike. Contact Gail Morris @ 905-479-4225.
- **Saturday January 28, 2006. 8:30am.** Ron Fleming's *Casual Winter Walk* in Kleinburg. Meet at the Coffee Time in "downtown" Kleinburg. Drive the local back roads in search of rarities. Lunch at Longchamps Pub. An afternoon around Kleinburg and maybe Newmarket. Low key, civilized birding. Dress warmly. Call Ron 905-898-7216.
- **Saturday February 4, 2006. 9am.** Durham Region *Winter Birds* all day Baillie Memorial Walk with Garth Riley. Meet at the Pickering GO Station. Bring a lunch & dress warmly. Contact [info@torontobirding.ca](mailto:info@torontobirding.ca).
- **Monday February 6, 2005. 12:30pm.** The Botany Group meeting at Dana Jonak's 190 Grandview Ave, Thornhill. Call 905-881-0603 for details.
- **Wednesday February 8, 2006. 12:30pm.** Birding Goup meeting at Muriel Farrant's. The topic will be Green Heron and American Bittern.
- **Tuesday February 14, 2006. 7:30pm.** Executive meeting at the Richmond Hill Library meeting room.
- **Thursday February 16, 2006. 7:30pm.** The General meeting will be at the Richmond Hill Presbyterian Church, Wallace Hall. 10066 Yonge St. North of Major Mackenzie Dr., on the West side. The speaker will be **Peter Burstyn** from Barrie who will provide us with his advice about how to create an Energy Efficient Home. Don't forget to bring your own cup for coffee and refreshments.
- **Saturday February 25, 2006. 10am.** Small Garden Design with Lecturer David Tomlinson. Merlin's Hollow Winter Seminar at [Hillary House](#) Aurora. 15372 Yonge Street, Aurora 905-727-8979. \$40.00.
- **Saturday March 4, 2006. 9am.** *Toronto to Burlington Waterfowl* all day Baillie Memorial Walk with the Toronto Ornithological Club. Meet at Humber Bay Park East parking lot. Bring a lunch. dress warmly. For additional information contact Ron Scovell at [info@torontobirding.ca](mailto:info@torontobirding.ca).
- **Saturday March 24, 2005. 10am & 2pm.** Gardening Lectures: *Minimum Effort for Maximum Return & American Gardens for a Long Weekend.* [Hillary House](#) Aurora. 15372 Yonge St. Dave Tomlinson 905-727-8979. \$40.00.

**Please note: Richmond Hill Naturalists welcomes anyone to volunteer as an outing leader. If you would like to volunteer or you have any ideas, please submit them to Martin Chen (905-709-0246, [imchentoronto@rogers.com](mailto:imchentoronto@rogers.com)).**

- **Sunday April 23 to Monday May 22, 2006.** Michael biro's 2006 POINT PELEE SPRING ADVENTURE.

Share the finest birding North America has to offer at the peak of the spring migration. Local "hot spots" include the 'Onion Fields', Rondeau and Wheatley Provincial Parks, Lake St.Clair National Wildlife Refuge, Holiday Beach Conservation Area, Ojibway Park, Hillman Marsh, Harrow and Blenheim Lagoons, the Big "O" and Kopegaron Woods, Kingsville Harbour and some undisclosed wetlands, drylands, lowlands and highlands.

Comfortable B&B lodgings, pre-dawn meals, and unlimited fresh snacks and beverages are provided in mid-morning and throughout the day. Transportation from Toronto and throughout the trip is also included.

Cost is between \$350 for 2 days/1 night up to \$1,470 for 10 days/9 nights.

Michael is an amazing birder and you'll see things that you likely wouldn't see on your own. This is a much cheaper trip than you would pay with most trip outfitters.

Max 10 persons per outing. **Register by January 20, 2006.** (Trips do not include April 29th through May 3rd)

Michael can be contacted at [michaelbiro@rogers.com](mailto:michaelbiro@rogers.com) or 905-763-7373.

- **Sunday January 22, 2006.** 1pm. Kawartha Field Naturalists Snowshoe Hike in the Altberg Nature Reserve. Discover the beauty of our largest nature reserve in Ontario. The reserve straddles the Canadian Shield and Great Lakes-St. Lawrence forest. Meet at 1pm at the entrance to the reserve. Directions: Take Hwy 35/115 north past Coboconk. At Norland turn E on Rd#45 for 10 km. Property is a cleared farm area on the south side just past Woodcock Line. There is a nature reserve sign by the entrance. Dress warm. Bring water and snack. 2-3 hours.

- **Friday February 3, 2006. 8:30am.** York Region's 5th Stakeholders Pollution Prevention [P2] Workshop. The FREE workshop will take place in the Whitchurch-Stouffville Town Hall, 37 Sandiford Dr., 4th floor, and will provide information on: P2 activities within York Region about how you can get involved in enhancing P2 activities in York Region. Case studies will be presented from a variety of stakeholders including the TRCA, the Clean Air Partnership, a Local Organic Farmer, and the York Region Health Services Department, among others.

- **Saturday February 11, 2006.** 7th Annual Stewardship Forum at the Kortright Centre for Conservation. This forum will be dedicated to examining the relationship between our health and the health of the natural environment and will feature Dr. John Ferguson who will give a talk entitled "What Sustains Sustainability? Reinvigorating the Self and the Social with the Ecological".

- **Friday May 26 to Monday May 29, 2006.** Start planning for the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Huron Fringe Birding Festival at MacGregor Point Provincial Park hosted by The Friends of MacGregor Point Park. There will be bird hikes, nature photography, birding workshops, wood carving demonstrations, and other day and evening presentations.

For information go to [www.friendsofmacgregor.org](http://www.friendsofmacgregor.org) or call 519-389-6231.

## MEMBER SUBMISSIONS

...Cont'd from P.1

This is pretty close to what we think would be best for Richmond Hill, the GTA, the Moraine and Ontario. We want to do all we can to make this happen because those who are familiar with the Moraine lands know that the sandy undersoils and steep gradients usually result in gulleys and washouts. Bayview Avenue in the 1900's ran down the moraine edge from Oak Ridges to Richmond Hill, where now there is an enormous gully. The most serious threat to the protection, preservation and enhancement of the Corridor lands in Richmond Hill is overuse and abusive use by people.

The *Corridor Lands* are so important to us because with the preservation of the Oak Ridges Moraine from Trenton to the Niagara Escarpment, the narrow Richmond Hill Corridor becomes a critical pathway for wildlife movements east and west across the Province to achieve the real potential of the Moraine Act for connectivity for Ontarians.

Protection of the ecological integrity of this corridor is paramount. This means controlling visitors to these lands.

It means managing and educating local people, many of them new residents, to protect and value this Natural Heritage resource. This is part of Management Planning for a very special resource. It should be done by the managers of the Corridor with full consultation, education and involvement of all local groups and citizens.

This unique area of land must be viewed as an exceptional example of unusual natural heritage -- of landforms, of wildlife and of plant communities -- preserved and mandated to be special—the namesake of the Moraine.

For those who know the Moraine, it is a wonderful resource that puts Richmond Hill and Oak Ridges on the map, provincially, regionally and even internationally. We must appreciate this and what we have because it will be a major benefit to the long term viability of our region, not only environmentally, but also socially, culturally, and economically.

- from notes by Michael White (in a letter to John Barber, Globe and Mail)

# LOCAL NEWS

- **Henry Kock**, a leading authority on native woody plants, died of brain cancer on December 25, 2005, at the age of 53. Dubbed 'Mr. Arboretum,' Henry was a horticulturist at the University of Guelph Arboretum for almost 25 years until diagnosis in July 2004.

Born in the Sarnia area, Henry grew up working in the family business, Huronview Nurseries. He graduated from the University of Guelph in 1977 with a focus on horticulture and toured the province with his talks and slide shows, inspiring countless people to protect wild places, to propagate native plant species, and to liberate their gardens from pesticides. Henry was a guest speaker at the RHN/WHN Joint Meeting 3 years ago on 'If Trees Could Talk'.

Henry created the Elm Recovery Project, which will be his greatest legacy. He traversed Ontario, collecting seeds from surviving elms. He planted and tended young elms for eventual dissemination back into the landscape. He also co-founded the Hillside Festival, which has become one of Canada's premiere folk music events.

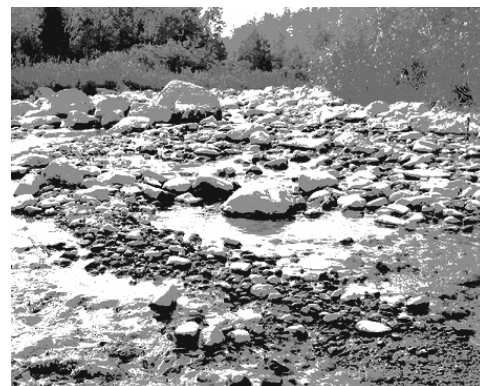
Henry rallied for peace in Iraq, renewable energy, public transit, and urban bicycling and helped spearhead the Guelph Organic Conference. Henry received the Governor General's Award for Forest Stewardship in 1998.

Henry had completed the first draft of a book on growing native trees from seed. Several of his botany colleagues now hope to complete this project. A celebration of Henry's life took place in Guelph on January 7, 2006. Donations can be made to the Elm Recovery Project in Henry's memory by calling 519-824-4120 ext. 52113.



- June and July 2005 were exceptionally warm and dry in York Region, but as a result of the massive discharge of approximately 12,000 litres/minute of groundwater into the York-Durham Sewer System during the summer and early fall of 2005, and approximately 30% to 50% decline in the summer flows, streams within the Rouge watershed went dry. It is estimated that the removal of 12,000 litres/minute of groundwater by York Region may have accounted for up to 50% of the observed reductions in Rouge stream flows.

Rouge stream flows between July 2004 and 2005 were recorded to have declines between 55% and 87% in Berczy Creek, the Little Rouge River, Bruce Creek and the Main Rouge River. The 87% streamflow drop in Berczy Creek was the most significant. Water quality in the creek has dropped from 'very good' to 'fair', according to TRCA staff reports.



*Little Rouge – dry riverbed Jun24*

As a result of presentations made to Toronto Council regarding the 19th Avenue Sewer Pipe in York Region, the City of Toronto Works Committee on Monday January 16 recommended that Toronto City Council request to the Province of Ontario to issue a 'stop work' order on the Big Pipe until the project has received the necessary Federal Environmental Assessment and Fisheries Act approvals, request the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario to initiate a Special Report under the Ontario Environmental Bill of Rights to investigate the impacts of the Big Pipe for suspected violations of environmental statutes, and a request to provide \$100,000 to gather hydrogeological evidence of harm and impact on aquifers and fisheries as well as legal costs.

The city is further asking the City Solicitor to seek an injunction to prevent the Big Pipe project from proceeding until the federal government responds to the City's request for a review and full Federal Environmental Assessment. [Ed note: we will be watching this closely due to impacts from the 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue pipe extension.]

- FON update: Wendy Francis, Ontario Nature's [ON] Conservation and Science Director has been sitting on York

Region's **Sustainability Advisory Committee** for several months which is set to present a draft set of recommendations to York Region Council this month. ON has refused to sign on at this stage because the recommendations are not specific enough. Wendy would like to convince the Committee to recommend that York Region develop a solid **greenlands** system and that all infrastructure development (e.g., transportation) be compatible with such a system, but unfortunately Wendy still feels that the Committee continues to support the Pine Valley Extension through Boyd Park.

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Though this extension is not within the town boundaries, the Richmond Hill Naturalists opposes this extension and hopes that ON takes a firm stance on Pine Valley protection and fights hard to protect other high quality natural areas that are under immediate threat. This opposition should also include the 'big pipe' extensions across 19th Avenue and up Leslie Street that would pass through the headwaters of the Rouge River and further urban sprawl on the Oak Ridges Moraine. Because infrastructure itself drives 'urban sprawl', which cannot be offset by protecting more greenspace on its own, limiting the infrastructure extensions into existing greenspace, including headwaters, is the first step we need to take in order to protect our natural resources and prevent more sprawl.

- Richard Embleton, a Richmond Hill resident has recently published a book entitled, "**Oilephant Down: Canada at the end of the age of cheap oil**". The book, ISBN number 1-4241-1710-0, will be available through online bookstores. Ask your local bookstore to order it. [Ed note: Next month's speaker will address energy efficiency to inform our club members of what we can do to protect nature from climate change effects by conserving and adapting to oil depletion and high prices. According to a recent article in the Ontario Planning Journal, we have only 30 years of oil & gas reserves left globally if consumption remains high and less time if developing countries raise their consumption, which is happening. This book will be reviewed by the editor in order to provide some insight into the possible repercussions of energy decline for Canadians in General and York Region residents, in particular.]

- Public comments on the **Greater Golden Horseshoe Growth Plan** will be ending on January 27, 2006. The proposed Plan is a major step toward stopping urban sprawl and making our cities and towns more compact, livable and transit-friendly. However, identification of the natural heritage system will be done by MNR at a 'Sub-Area' level at a later date with municipalities only and ignores the role of Conservation Authorities to do watershed planning (eg. Rouge River Task Force, of which RHN's Theresa Mackenzie is our rep). It also does not even go as far as the natural heritage protection policies of the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) under the Planning Act, ignoring the new 'ecosystem function' and 'protect, restore or improve' wording, which helps municipalities' ability to go beyond protecting only what is here. Locally Significant Features are only an 'option' for municipalities to protect, much of which is significant to local residents, as well as supporting urban ecosystems (e.g., bird migration habitat). [Ed note: This is a disaster in the making as this document will likely supersede the PPS since it is for our area!] To read the Proposed Growth Plan itself, please visit [www.pir.gov.on.ca](http://www.pir.gov.on.ca) or email / phone for a copy at [placestogrow@pir.gov.on.ca](mailto:placestogrow@pir.gov.on.ca) / 416-325-1210 or toll-free 1-866-479-9781. You can also read Ontario Nature's initial response to the proposed plan at [www.ontarionature.org/news/template.php3?n\\_code=306](http://www.ontarionature.org/news/template.php3?n_code=306). RHN will be submitting a response before the EBR deadline of Jan 23. Contact Natalie at [nhelferty@rogers.com](mailto:nhelferty@rogers.com) for your input or info.

## NATURE NEWS

### - January 11 2006 **Global warming and fungus disease lethal to frogs**

Scientists working in the cloud forests of Costa Rica think they have found at least one answer to the mystery of the world's disappearing frogs. The loss of more than 70 species of brightly coloured harlequin frogs in the Central and South American tropics can be blamed on a lethal mixture of global warming and fungal growth, says their study, to be published Thursday in the journal Nature. Climate change had been suspected as a cause, but the link was not immediately clear. The scientists' answer is this: Global warming has accelerated cloud formation, which, paradoxically, has a moderating effect on temperature, producing warmer nights and cooler days.



Unluckily for the frogs, this keeps temperatures within a range that fungus loves. More extreme temperatures, both high and low, would hold back growth. So the frogs died, especially those at middle elevations, where it wasn't as hot as in the lowlands or as cool as on the mountaintops.

"Disease is the bullet killing frogs, but climate change is pulling the trigger," lead author Alan Pounds, resident scientist at Coast Rica's Monteverde Cloud Forest Preserve, said in a statement.

"Global warming is wreaking havoc on amphibians, and will cause staggering losses of biodiversity if we don't do something fast." University of Alberta researcher Arturo Sanchez-Azofeifa, a co-author, stressed the subtle combination of factors that doomed the frogs.

"When we talk about climate change, there is so much focus on industrialized countries, but people are ignoring other ecosystems that may be extremely sensitive to climate change, such as dry and cloud forest environments," he said. "Its impact goes beyond what we can observe here in Canada and the North, and the situation is obviously very grave." © 2006 Canadian Broadcasting Corporation

- The fifth annual ultralight-accompanied migration of **Whooping Cranes** required 61 days to deliver 19 juvenile Whoopers from Wisconsin to Florida. This reintroduced, but now fully wild population numbers 64 birds, several of which will reach breeding age in spring.

These, combined with a large non-migratory Florida flock of 70 and a captive North American population of 130 make up a significant part of the world population is only 500 cranes. Whooping cranes are estimated to have numbered about 1400 in 1860, a time before the

species began to suffer a precipitous decline. The core of the world's population now numbers at least 217 birds, a number reported from the Texas wintering grounds in and around Arkansas National Wildlife Refuge in Jan 2006. As many as 230 migrated this fall from Canada's Wood Buffalo National Park. The wild population has increased dramatically for the past 65 years since it hit a low of 16 birds in 1941. Two years ago there were only 195 cranes.



- In the last issue of the Bulletin it was reported that legislation to ensure protection of the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve was introduced by the Ontario government.

Before they left for the holidays, Ontario legislators passed Bill 16, the **Duffins-Rouge Agricultural Preserve Act**. This legislation reinstates conservation easements on 800 hectares of land in the City of Pickering.

Ontario Nature had been fighting to have the conservation easements reinstated since Pickering unilaterally revoked them last February. Pickering tried to remove the easements so that the lands could be developed.

The bill strengthens all conservation easements in Ontario. Conservation easements are legal agreements between a landowner and a government agency or nonprofit organization that permanently limits development of the land.

Now, no conservation easement can be amended or revoked without the consent of the Minister of Natural Resources. This will help prevent any unscrupulous easement holder from canceling or amending these important conservation tools.

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**- Become an Advocate for Nature**

Ontario Nature has more than 2,300 Advocates for Nature - people who are willing to take that extra step by communicating directly with the government and other decision-makers about the need to protect nature.

Ontario Nature's advocates have helped with campaigns that led to a conservation plan for the Oak Ridges Moraine and 2.4 million hectares of new parks and protected areas in Ontario.

The Advocate for Nature program and will be emailing important conservation action alerts when your help is urgently needed (generally once or twice a month). Alerts will include an issue summary and a recommended action.

Advocates would write to their legislators and also pass on the action alerts to others and encourage them to write a letter and to sign on to the Advocate for Nature program through the Ontario Nature website ([www.ontarionature.org/home/advocate.html](http://www.ontarionature.org/home/advocate.html)).

Issues that advocates may be asked to get involved in include protection for species at risk, parks and other protected areas, forests and forestry policy, woodland and wetland protection, land use and development issues. The more voices we have joining together asking decision-makers to stand up for nature, the more successful we will be. Please become an advocate for nature by visiting [www.ontarionature.org/home/advocate.html](http://www.ontarionature.org/home/advocate.html).

**EVENTS PAST**

- On Monday January 9, 2006, the Richmond Hill Town council held a meeting regarding the **North Leslie Secondary Plan**, the town's draft plan for development of the lands at the north end of Leslie Street in Richmond Hill. Several recommendations to council were made by the executive of the Richmond Hill Naturalists, including a recommended requirement for a 'Natural Heritage System' setback of 100 metres from lands protected in the recent Ontario Greenbelt



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Act as well as emphasizing 'community walking trails' and for forceful wording with respect to environmental considerations.

- On Wednesday January 11 2006 the Town of Richmond Hill held a Public Council Meeting in order to consider issues around a proposed plan for the **West Gormley Secondary Plan** - an area bounded by Bethesda Sideroad, Bayview Avenue, Stouffville Road and Leslie Street. These are part of the 'land swap' lands that were approved by the backroom deal outside the OMB hearing. This is the first time Council has seen this plan, despite it being at an OMB hearing. The development proposal includes as many as *6 high density buildings, the tallest of which may be 18 stories* at the corner of Bethesda and Bayview overlooking Lake Wilcox, and up to *1450 homes plus commercial establishments along Leslie between Stouffville and Bethesda*. The Richmond Hill Naturalists consider that any proposal to develop these lands is both 'premature' because it lacks servicing (the 'big pipe' up Leslie from 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue) and this is 'urban sprawl', contrary to good planning. RHN recommended looking at energy production options in place of 'residential' for these lands, i.e. wind and natural gas production from dry solid organic waste.

## BIRD OBSERVATIONS

December 2005

### Durham

Hooded Merganser - 2 (pair) at Petticoat Creek Cons. Area Dec.03 (GD).  
Killdeer - 2 at Petticoat Creek Cons. Area Dec.03 (GD).

### Toronto

Merlin - 1 at Riverdale park (W) Dec.01-30 (MWh).  
Northern Mockingbird -2 (pair) at 41B Clairville Dr. Rexdale Dec.12 (TW).

### Peel

Ring-necked Pheasant - 1 at Bolton Dec.31 (anon. fide PG).  
Pine Siskin - flocks at Palgrave Conservation Area Dec.10-31 (EM).

### York

Great Blue Heron - 1 at Wilcox Lake Complex Dec.01-19 (S&JB).  
Snow Goose – 1@Reesor Pnds Mrkhm Dec3(TH). 1@Reesor Pnds Dec5(SLo). 1 Blue@Reesor Pnds Dec7(SLo).  
Cackling Goose - 8 at Reesor Ponds Markham Dec.01 (SLo).  
American Black Duck - 50 at Bethesda Rd 1/2 km W o McCowan Dec.21 (AIJ).  
Mallard - 100 at Bethesda Rd.1/2 km W of McCowan Dec.21 (AIJ).  
Hooded Merganser - 18 at Lake Wilcox Dec.02 (S&JB).  
Bald Eagle – 1@Cook's Bay Dec11(BB). 2@Cook's Bay L Simcoe Dec27(RJF). 2@Willow Bch L. Simcoe Dec28(KDu).  
Sharp-shinned Hawk – 1@Ozark Prk Oak Ridges Dec21(TM&GR). 1@Idleswift ThrnHl Dec26-31(G&CD).  
Cooper's Hawk – 1@L Wilcox Dec2-3(S&JB). 1@Snider Mrsh Mrkhm Dec13(SLo). 2@Idleswift ThrnHl Dec26+(G&CD)  
Red-tailed Hawk - 9 at Kleinburg Dec.03 (RJF).  
Rough-legged Hawk - 1 at W. End Ravenshoe Rd. Dec.13 (RJF).  
Golden Eagle - 1 at Bathurst & Mulock, Newmarket Dec.03 (RJF).  
American Kestrel – 2@Weston/Mjr Mac Dec2(JLo). 3@Klnbrg Dec3(RJF). 15@Duclos Pnt Dec11(BB).  
2@Doane Rd. W of Main Str. Dec.13 (RJF). 4@M.MacKenzie & Hwy.27 Dec.14 (JLo).  
Iceland Gull - 4 at Reesor Ponds Markham Dec.08 (SLo).  
Lesser Black-backed Gull - 11 at Markham Bypass Dec.01 (SLo).  
Glaucous Gull - 3 at Reesor Ponds Markham Dec.08 (SLo).  
Eastern Screech-Owl - 1 at Ladies Golf Course Thornhill Dec.01 (SVa).  
Great Horned Owl - 1 at M.MacKenzie & Hwy.27,J.Love Dec.01-31 [Singing Male] (JLo).  
Snowy Owl - 1 F at W. End Ravenshoe Rd. Dec.13 (RJF).  
Red-bellied Woodpecker - 1 (large flock) at Bathurst S of Hwy 11 Dec.29 (RBo).  
Downy Woodpecker - up to 3 daily at 123 Woodward Ave., Thornhill Dec.01-31 (H&MF).  
Hairy Woodpecker – 2@Ladies Golf Course Thornhill Dec1-12(SVa). 1@Ozark Pk. Oak Ridges Dec.31 (TM&GR).  
Northern Shrike - 1 at Kleinburg Dec.03 (RJF). 1 at N End Bathurst Street Dec.31 (RJF).

Red-breasted Nuthatch - 1-3 daily at 123 Woodward Ave., Thornhill Dec.01-31 (H&MF).  
 Amer. Robin-8@Shdy Ln ThrnHl Dec11(SVa) 12@Bthsd Rd/McCwn Dec21(AIJ) 5@Wdwrd Av ThrnHl Dec29(H&MF)  
 Gray Catbird - 1 at 123 Woodward Ave., Thornhill Dec.30 (H&MF).  
 Northern Mockingbird - 1 at Kleinburg Dec.03 (RJF). 1 at Snider Marsh Markham Dec.13 (SLo).  
 Cedar Waxwing - 15 at M.MacKenzie & Hwy.27,J.Love Dec.06 (JLo). flock at Aurora Rd. Weston Rd. Dec.14 (CAT).  
 American Tree Sparrow - 10-15 daily at Ozark Pk.- 10 Nantucket Oak Ridges Dec.01-31 (TM&GR).  
 Field Sparrow - 1 at M.MacKenzie & Hwy.27,J.Love Dec.02,04 (JLo).  
 Fox Sparrow - 1 at 190 Grandview Ave., Thornhill Dec.07 (DJ). 1 at M.MacKenzie & Hwy.27,J.Love Dec.09 (JLo).  
 White-throated Sparrow – 1@Bridgport Rich Hill Dec1,13,31 (FWH). 3@M.Mack & Hwy.27 Dec.28 (JLo).  
 Lapland Longspur - 1 at W. End Ravenshoe Rd. Dec.11 (BB).  
 Snow Bunting-40@MjrMac/9th Ln Dec9(SLo). 50-60@Ravenshoe Dec11,13(BB). Lrg Flock@Rvnshoe Dec29(RBo)  
 Northern Cardinal - 5 m, 5 f at Idleswift Thornhill (G.Denzel) Dec.10-31 (G&CD).  
 Eastern Meadowlark - 1 at Hwy 9 W of Hwy 400 Dec.20 (KRS).  
 Purple Finch – 4-5 daily@10 Nantucket Oak Rdgs Dec1-31(TM&GR). 1-3@M.Mack/Hwy.27 Dec.03,04 (JLo).  
 Common Redpoll - 1 at Woodbridge Dec.20-31 (JKi). 10 at Wilcox Lake Complex Dec.31 (S&JB).  
 Pine Siskin - 4 at Holland Landing at Brydons Dec.09 (BB). 1 at M.MacKenzie & Hwy.27,J.Love Dec.28 (JLo).

AIJ Al Johnston BB Bruce Brydon, CAT Carol Ann Trabert, CMK Carol McKnight, DJ Dana Jonak, EM Elizabeth Morton, FP Frank Pinilla, FWh Freddy Whillans, G&CD Gene & Charlene Denzel, H&MF Harold & Muriel Farrant, JKi Jane Kirkpatrick, JLo Joan Love, JMa Julia Marco, KDu Keith Dunn, KRS Kevin Shackleton, MWh Michael White, PG Phyllis Graydon, RJF Ron Fleming, S&JB Sharon & Jim Bradley, SLo Stan Long, SVa Sandy Vanderbrug, TH Theo Hofmann, TM&GR Theresa McKenzie Glenn Reed, TS Tessa Shelvey, TW Tom Waechter.



Notes: - In December cave swallows were seen in southern Ontario. This often happens in conjunction with storms and hurricanes.

- 500 Trumpeter Swans were seen in Southern Ontario, some of which could be seen at Lake Wilcox.

- Up to three Bald Eagles have been seen for some time on both sides of Cook's Bay as well as on Lake

Simcoe in the area between Fox and Georgina Island. (Reported by Paul Harpley)

- The Christmas Bird Count reported 55 species and a total bird count of 6500, which represents an increase in the number of species but marks a decrease in the total number counted [ Ed: *Report will be in February Bulletin*]

## From the Editor

The lead article published in last month's RHN Bulletin entitled "It's birdfeeder time again", which recommended that even House Sparrows should be fed even though they are a species that were introduced from Europe, has been roundly criticized for its unscientific position.

It was reasoned that House Sparrows should NOT be deliberately fed if one wants to keep Warblers and other native species around. The House Sparrow is extremely aggressive and usurps the nests of our native birds, which is why we don't have Bluebirds or Swallows living in urban areas that could readily do so if the House Sparrows were not around. Climate change also adds to the pressure that our native birds and other species are already feeling, so having invasive, non-native competitors around does not help the situation.

As well, bird feeders can actually contribute to the loss of our native birds if they are not designed and placed appropriately with the correct seed type for our native birds. House sparrows will eat cracked corn whereas other species do not, so using cheap birdseed is a big problem. Black squirrel overabundance is also a major problem as they are nest predators, as are blue jays, grackles, crows and raccoons so the bird-feeder should not be large enough to accommodate these species. Keep seed from falling to the ground and squirrel-proof it.

Using native vegetation is very effective at both providing winter food and keeping house sparrow numbers down, or away from natural areas, as well as providing habitat and cover for both the birds and top predators.

It was suggested that the best way to improve native bird habitat within our towns and cities would be to remove our lawns and add in "3D habitat structure" (a combination of both short grasses and tall vegetation such as trees, bushes and shrubs), which would provide for more shade and transpiration (evaporation through the pores of leafy plants), a benefit of which would also be to help mitigate climate change effects (heat and dry air) and infiltration (moist soils and therefore less surface runoff, which can cause flooding).

- From Natalie Helferty, President.

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