



THE BULLETIN

February 2006 No. 452

2005-2006 EXECUTIVE

President	Marianne Yake (905) 883-3047 myluden@yahoo.ca
Past President & Speakers	Natalie Helferty (905) 881-8403 nhelferty@rogers.com
2nd Vice President	-- Position Available --
Secretary	Athena Antiochos . . (905) 669-1825 aathina@hotmail.com
Treasurer	Gene Denzel(905) 889-7888 lezned@yorku.ca
50 th Anniversary	Michael White (416) 926-9553 michael.white@sympatico.ca
Bird Records	Theo Hofmann theo@hera.med.utoronto.ca
Field Trips	Martin Chen(905) 709-0246 jmchentoronto@rogers.com
Environment Publicity	-- Position Available -- Sharon Bradley. . . . (905) 773-7415 sbradley@aci.on.ca
Bulletin Editor	Lloyd Helferty (905) 707-8754 lhelperty@sympatico.ca
Membership	Mike Turk(905) 731-8380 turkm@access.com
Events	Tom Waechter. (905) 737-4305 twaechter@acncanada.net
Ontario Nature Rep	Diana Piché(905) 773-4199 diana.piche@sympatico.ca

Events calendar

Botany Group	Monday March 6, 2006. 12:30pm Location: Contact Group Leaders Dana Jonak or Ted Hampton
Bird Group	Wednesday March 8, 2006. 7:30pm Location: Dana Jonak's Topic: Savannah and Baird's Sparrow
Executive Meeting	Tuesday March 14, 2006 7:00PM Location: Richmond Hill Library Meeting Rm. A
General Meeting	Thursday March 16, 2006. 7:30pm Speaker: Peter Bursztyn Topic: Energy Efficient Homes Location: Richmond Hill Presbyterian Church
Field Trip	Saturday March 4, 2006 9:00AM What: March Baillie Memorial Walk Leader: Ron Scovell

Check for more Events and Outings on Page 2

The Buzz on Bumblebees

With the onset of spring, young female bumblebees emerge from their underground or leaf litter winter hibernation sites. These queens are the sole survivors of last year's colonies that remained after summer's mating to start this year's broods.

The first task of the queen is to seek out newly emerging wildflowers, such as Trout Lily, that hang down and are full of pollen. She will grasp the edge of the flower with her jaws and feet and position her abdomen under the opening and buzz her large flight muscles of her wings. This sends a vibration through the flower of about 300 cycles per second, shaking the pollen from the anthers onto her furry abdomen. This she will clean off herself and eat.

When she has gathered enough food to meet her needs, the queen will then locate a suitable place to build her nest for the summer. There are over 200 types of bumble bee and they look for a variety of sites. Most common are the leaf litter in a hedge bottom, an old mouse hole, a cool dark place under a large stone or under the wooden floor of a garden shed or other building.

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 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:

Joe Agg

Ken Kishibe

Meet new members at club events and say Hello!

EVENTS FUTURE

- **Monday March 6, 2005. 12:30pm.** The Botany Group will be meeting at their designated location.
- **Wednesday March 8, 2006. 12:30pm.** The Birding Group will meet at Dana Jonak's, 190 Grandview Ave in Thornhill. Their topic this month will be "Savannah and Baird's Sparrow". Contact Dana at 905-881-0603.
- **Tuesday March 14, 2006. 7:00pm.** The Executive meet at the Richmond Hill Library in Meeting Room A next month. Topics discussed will vary depending on the most important issues arising at the time of the meeting.
- **Thursday March 16, 2006. 7:30pm.** The General meeting at the Richmond Hill Presbyterian Church, Wallace Hall. 10066 Yonge St., West side. The speaker will be Peter Burnsztyn who will talk about how to make your home more Energy Efficient. Don't forget to bring your own cup for coffee and refreshments.
- **Saturday March 4, 2006. 9am.** *Toronto to Burlington Waterfowl Walk.* Toronto Ornithological Club. Contact Ron Scovell at info@torontobirding.ca for more information.

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, jmchentoronto@rogers.com).

- **Saturday February 25, 2006.** [Toronto Entomologists' Association](http://www.ontarioinsects.org) "The Long Reach Of The Gene: Insect/Plant Interactions" with Marc Johnson. Marc is in his final Ph.D. year at U of T studying the ecology and evolution of plant-arthropod interactions and is a junior naturalist at Presqu'île Provincial Park. His research is part of a new discipline called community genetics. He will discuss his research on how plant genes and genetic variation in plants shape the diversity and abundance of the arthropods who depend on plants. See www.evoeco.org. Room 302, Emmanuel College, 75 Queen's Park Cres E. [Museum subway] Contact info@ontarioinsects.org.

- **Sunday February 26, 2006.** 1:30 pm. Rouge Park Nature Walk. Meet at the Conservation Centre (Pearse House) 1749 Meadowvale Rd, Scarborough (north of Sheppard). Parking is free.

- **Wednesday March 8 to Sunday March 12, 2006.** 'Canada Blooms' Toronto Flower and Garden Show at the Metro Toronto Convention Center.

- **Sunday March 12, 2006.** 1:30 pm. Rouge Park Theme Walk & ice break-up. Meet at the Pearse House.

- **Friday May 26 to Monday May 29, 2006.** Huron Fringe Birding Festival at MacGregor Point Provincial Park. For information go to www.friendsofmacgregor.org or call 519-389-6231.

...Cont'd from P.1

MEMBER SUBMISSIONS

The Buzz on Bumblebees

You can even build a raised platform out of wood and stuff some long dried grasses or dried cattail stems under it for the queen to build herself a nest. Because the bumble bee does not live in a large colony, the nest is usually little bigger than half a grapefruit even in the busiest days of high summer.

The queen begins a new nest with a ball of pollen and wax into which she lays just a few (approx 6) eggs at a time. When the eggs hatch they try to eat their way through the pollen reserve but the queen continually adds to the pollen and wax sealing them in. Eventually the grubs pupate and the queen spins a bright yellow cocoon of the finest silk from which the grubs emerge a few days later as fully grown worker bees.

As soon as they dry their wings the worker bees begin work to support the colony and their queen. She continues to lay eggs but as it takes more and more of her time the pollen and nectar collection is delegated to the workers, the queen spending her whole time in the nest.

This co-operation continues throughout the high days of late spring and summer until the nest has reached the right size for its species. At that point the queen lays eggs destined to become next year's queen bees as well as drones or male bees. The drones once hatched leave the nest and live independent lives, their only purpose being to mate with the young queens to ensure the survival of the species. Unlike honey bees the young bumble queens will continue to live and work in the mother colony for the remainder of the summer and autumn.

Come the first sharp drop in temperature and frosts the old queen, her workers and the independent drones will die. Only the newly mated queens will survive in hibernation to begin the cycle again the following Spring.

- Natalie Helferty, Past president

Home Energy Efficiency tips available on Web

Peter Bursztyń's February presentation to the Richmond Hill Naturalists about Energy Efficiency in the home has a companion document on the World Wide Web.

Peter's tips can be accessed at the web site www.livinggreen.info.

To find his 38 page energy conservation information booklet in PDF format go to:

<http://www.livinggreen.info/library/energy.cfm>

The booklet contains dozens of tips to help people save energy and money in their homes. Each tip is also accompanied by simple explanations of why they work. Some of the economics are a little out of date, but because the price of oil & electricity have actually risen over the years, the information contained within the little 38 page "booklet" is even more relevant than when it was first published.

Quarry growth bad for escarpment

By Robert Bateman

-- Reprinted from [The Hamilton Spectator](#), Jan 23, 2006

It's winter, just after a fresh snowfall, a still, sunny day.

You've set out on an afternoon hike west of Toronto along the Niagara Escarpment with your children, eager to share with them the escarpment's craggy cliffs, trickling streams and carpet of forests. You are grateful to those whose foresight decades ago spawned a protection plan for the escarpment, so that it remains saved from urban sprawl. You feel proud to be able to call the escarpment a United Nations Biosphere Reserve and the backbone of Ontario's new Golden Horseshoe Greenbelt.

You are startled out of your reverie by an explosive noise -- the blasting of escarpment rock at a nearby quarry. Soon, trucks will cart it away along nearby Highway 401 as crushed stone and gravel for highway construction and urban development.

You recall that this is the Milton Quarry, operated by Dufferin Aggregates, part of St. Lawrence Cement. It's the largest active quarry in Canada at 468 hectares (1,156 acres).

Protecting the escarpment has come full circle, for it was the blasting of a huge hole in the cliff face here in 1962 that ignited the first public outcry about saving the escarpment.

Now, the company wants a licence to destroy another 83 hectares (205 acres) of this precious natural corridor to gain about ten years of quarrying.

Premier Dalton McGuinty and his cabinet have a pivotal decision to make -- whether or not to approve the company's applications for various land-use planning amendments, permits and licences to expand the Milton Quarry.

To be true to its much-heralded Greenbelt, cabinet should turn Dufferin Aggregates away. There are many other reasons as well.

Because the Ontario government lacks any comprehensive strategy for conserving aggregates (sand, gravel and stone), companies are always looking for more places to mine. Instead, we should be stemming the need for new mines because of their destructive impacts on nature. Ontario could do far better in the recycling of used aggregates from ripping up old roads and tearing down unused buildings.

We can grow our cities in smarter ways that use less aggregate, such as through urban intensification and more public transit. The vibrant, exciting cities of Europe are much more compact than ours: Paris and London have twice as many residents per square kilometre as does Hamilton, the largest city on the Niagara Escarpment.

Dufferin Aggregates's proposed quarry expansion is troubling because it depends on massive engineering works operating successfully forever -- akin to safely storing high-level radioactive wastes from nuclear plants.

The company will need to protect the water resources of the area -- the wetlands, creeks and groundwater -- as it quarries deeper and deeper into the ground, siphoning out precious water as it goes. How this will be done entails as yet untested engineering tricks that fly in the face of the public's demand for clean, abundant drinking water and protected ecosystems, especially in an area as environmentally sensitive as the Niagara Escarpment.

The company proposes to "fix" the destruction of its escarpment lands by tacking nearby lands onto the Niagara Escarpment Plan area. This would mean that the plan's boundaries are so elastic they can readily accommodate quarrying, setting a harmful precedent that runs counter to maintaining the integrity of the escarpment's continuous natural corridor.

An expanded quarry here would fail to ensure protection for the Jefferson salamander, identified as a threatened species under the federal Species at Risk Act and would jeopardize Canada's commitment to upholding the international Convention on Biological Diversity.

McGuinty's cabinet should not risk Ontario's international reputation as a province that has long recognized the need to protect our finest natural jewels such as the escarpment.

For 20 years, I looked out from my studio towards Rattlesnake Point on the escarpment, almost in sight of the proposed quarry expansion. For 10 of those years, I tried as a Niagara Escarpment Commissioner to follow our mandate set by the Ontario government to preserve and protect the escarpment as a continuous natural area. I fervently hope that the present-day government will not sabotage this effort.

Last June, on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the Niagara Escarpment Plan, Ontario Natural Resources Minister David Ramsay, in thanking those who have contributed to protecting the escarpment over the years, said, "Keep doing what you're doing. We still need you."

Ontarians need their cabinet to save the escarpment, too, by rejecting the Milton Quarry expansion. In doing so, the cabinet will leave a green, natural escarpment as a lasting legacy of this government's commitment to the environment.

Artist and naturalist Robert Bateman was one of the charter members of the Ontario government's Niagara Escarpment Commission in the 1970s. He now lives on Saltspring Island, B.C.

Seed Balls: A New Tool For Revegetation

By Hillary Loring (Field Ecologist) Dee Ford Perkins (Soil and Water Microbiologist)

In arid areas, germination of seeds is often quite difficult. The wind blows seed away from the site, rain washes seed into arroyos, the desert heat diminishes the viability of the seed embryos. Rodents, birds and insects consume much of the exposed seed.

[Seed balls](#) take care of all these problems. Appropriate seed mixtures are encased in a ball of red clay and soil humus. The clay protects the seeds from the drying sun, rodents, birds and insects until sufficient rains come. The rains melt the clay, allowing the seeds to sprout protected within a mini environment of the nutrients and beneficial soil microbes found in the humus and clay. Although not all seedlings within a seed ball will survive to maturity, the appropriate species for each micro location will be there to survive.

Seed balls have four basic components - mixed seeds, soil humus, red clay and water. For restoration purposes, native seeds are mixed together, then in the correct proportions, the seed blend, humus, clay and water are mixed and rolled into small (1/2" diameter) clay balls. Seed balls can be made either by hand or by simple machine, depending on labor availability. They are dried in the open air for 24 to 48 hours after which they are ready for

broadcasting or short term storage. It takes at least 10 seed balls per square meter, or about 1 per square foot to establish trigger points from which the vegetation can spread.

Our unique, simplified approach to making seed balls was inspired by [Masanobu Fukuoka](#), who is considered the founder of Natural Farming. He has worked for over fifty years, throughout the world, implementing this beautifully simple method of rehabilitating damaged lands. His methodology is derived directly from observing Nature's ingenuity at work in any sort of situation. He has been applying seed ball strategies for arid and desertified, as well as marginal agricultural areas, throughout the world. Not only does it restore natural habitat, it can also provide a way for all people to begin growing their own fiber and food, sustainably. This cheap, low maintenance method of revegetation and agriculture requires no water, other than natural rainfall.

*For more information contact: ADOBE SEED BALL CONSULTANTS CONSORTIUM
P.O. BOX 101 Tesuque, N.M. 87574, (505) 955-0956. jimbones@seedballs.com
- Submitted on behalf of Claude William Genest*

LOCAL NEWS

On Monday February 6, 2006 '[Save the Rouge Valley System](#)' [SVRS] and '[Environmental Defence](#)' began deliberations at an Ontario Municipal Board [OMB] hearing regarding a proposal to build 7,500 homes and industrial buildings on the headwaters of the Rouge River in Richmond Hill.

A portion of the land where the proposed development is to take place is on the Oak Ridges Moraine, but the Oak Ridges Moraine Act did not prohibit development on the land even though 160 hectares surrounding four tributaries of the Rouge River on the site were included in the greenbelt plan last spring and protected from development.

On Friday February 3rd the province declared another 15 hectares too environmentally sensitive for development.

A May 2000 provincial map also showed that the area where the development is being proposed is just as sensitive as nearby parts of the moraine that were protected under the legislation. Recent hydrological studies of the area conducted for York Region were inconclusive, pointing to the need for more research.

The hearing is estimated to last up to 24 weeks and cost taxpayers (the Town, Region and TRCA) at least five million dollars.

Construction has begun on a demonstration site to show local residents how the Wilcox shoreline can be improved to create more diverse aquatic habitat for amphibians, birds, young of the year, adult and juvenile fish. The North Shore Parkette Demonstration Site that is being constructed for the [Lake Wilcox Habitat Enhancement Project](#) will show lake front property owners how to take steps to naturalize their lake front in order to improve erosion control, reduce the goose nuisance, help filter runoff containing harmful pesticides, and increase nature and wildlife viewing opportunities. Some hard structures like rocks and basking logs have been installed at North Shore Parkette. The Oak Ridges Friends of the Environment is looking for volunteers to help with spring planting. Contact Kathrine Mabley, Executive Director & Volunteer Coordinator at 905-773-4726 or kmabley@hotmail.com.

City of Toronto getting tough on recycling bylaw

Jan 19 2006 CBC News

Toronto homeowners who don't recycle their trash will now get warnings — and eventually fines — if they don't use their green bins and blue boxes. Geoff Rathbone, the city's director of solid waste management, says tougher enforcement of Toronto's recycling bylaw is necessary to further cut the amount of trash that's trucked to dumps in Michigan.

Currently, Rathbone says about 92 per cent of homeowners participate in the program, which sends plastic, glass and paper to recycling plants, and organic waste to composting facilities. Now, he says, the city is prepared to get tough with the remaining eight per cent.



We Bring People and Nature Together®

**8150 Yonge St.
Thornhill, On**

Phone: 905-709-3775
Email: birdtyme@sympatico.ca

**Birdseed • Birdfeeders • Binoculars
Birdhouses • Nature Gifts • Books**

Once a non-recycling home is identified, Rathbone says city workers will make sure the homeowner understands the program and has the necessary bins. If they continue to violate the bylaw, they will receive a written warning. Then, if they still aren't complying after two more garbage pickups, offenders will be slapped with a \$105 fine.

Rathbone says the sanctions will be harsher for owners of multi-unit homes who don't provide recycling facilities. "We will remove their city garbage service, and they can only get that back when they can prove to us that they have full and active participation," he said.

It will be interesting to see if municipalities in York Region, including Richmond Hill, follow suit. – Editor

NATURE NEWS

Rudd Found In Lake Wilcox

The rudd, an invasive fish, has been found for the first time in an inland Ontario lake. The rudd was discovered by Toronto and Region Conservation staff during routine fish community assessment in Lake Wilcox, which is located in the headwaters of the East Humber River in Richmond Hill.

- TREE & SHRUB PRUNING
- INSECT & DISEASE CONTROL
- TREE & STUMP REMOVAL
- DEEP ROOT FERTILIZING
- PLANTING & TRANSPLANTING

DEREK W. WELSH
I.S.A. CERTIFIED
ARBORIST #ON - 0129



**AUTHENTIC
TREE CARE INC.**

1-888-366-CARE (416) 990-CARE

P.O. BOX 118, BALDWIN, ONTARIO L0E 1A0



A European member of the minnow family, the rudd is believed to be spread through dumping of bait buckets. Prior to its discovery in Lake Wilcox, it was known to occur in Ontario only in isolated locations within the St. Lawrence River and the lower Great Lakes.

The rudd can cross-breed with the indigenous golden shiner, resulting in hybrid young and a potential loss of the unique genetics of the golden shiner. In addition, this invasive fish disrupts spawning and nursery habitats for other native species and threatens Ontario's aquatic biodiversity.

The public can help stop the spread of this invader by taking the following precautions:

- * Learn to identify invasive and non-bait species by visiting www.invadingspecies.com
- * Check bait buckets carefully for invasive or non-bait species before going out on any lake or river
- * Prevent the introduction of invasive fish species or other organisms invisible to the naked eye by never releasing baitfish or dumping the contents of bait buckets into a lake or river or on the ice of a lake.

Anyone finding minnows suspected of being an invasive species, such as rudd, is asked to remove and freeze the fish, and call the Invading Species hotline toll-free at 1-800-563-7711 to report the finding. The hotline is a partnership of the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters and the Ministry of Natural Resources.

Benefits of Canada's boreal forest worth Billions

CBC News Friday November 25, 2005

Canada's boreal forest provides clean water and a stable climate worth billions of dollars.

A recent report by the [Canadian Boreal Initiative](#) has estimated the annual value the forest creates through purifying water, regulating climate and generating oxygen is about \$93.2 billion. That's twice the total market value of forestry, hydro and oil and natural gas activity, says the report.

The clean water and stable climate provided by Canada's boreal forest are worth billions of dollars to the economy.

"Ignoring the value of Canada's boreal wealth to the well-being of the nation is akin to Exxon Mobil ignoring the volume of oil and gas reserves and annual production in its annual report," says the report.

[David Schindler](#), a professor of ecology at the University of Alberta who was a consultant on the report, hopes putting a dollar value on the boreal forest will help convince politicians and the public that it's worth protecting.

"It is indeed time to broaden our understanding of the true value of globally important forests such as the boreal," he said in a statement on the group's website. "Failure to do so not only ensures continued ecosystem degradation, but the accelerating impoverishment of human societies, ours included."

Canada's boreal region, a broad green belt across the centre of the country from Newfoundland to the Yukon, is home to more than 90 per cent of the country's remaining large intact forests and more than four million people.

Pine, spruce, aspen and poplar trees dominate its forests. Thirty per cent of it is covered by wetlands, an estimated 1.5 million lakes and some of the country's largest river systems.

The release of the report came only days before the UN climate-change conference in Montreal.

Trails for All Ontarians Collaborative (TAOC) to Develop Trail Guidelines

A recent issue of [Hike Ontario's](#) Trail Mail announced that the Trails for All Ontarians Collaborative (TAOC) has been awarded an [Ontario Trillium Foundation](#) Grant (\$97,500) to develop Inclusive Trail Construction and Maintenance Guidelines. The TAOC is a joint endeavour made up of trail groups and accessibility organizations from across Ontario, whose objective is to ensure that all Ontarians, including those with disabilities, have access to a wide range of environmentally sustainable trail experiences. The guidelines will provide information and resources on building and maintaining recreation trails that are accessible to people of all ages and abilities as well as focusing on environmental sustainability and compatibility with the local community.

For more information about the TAOC, please contact the Abilities Centre at (905) 430-4343 or email them at info@abilitiescentre.com. For more information about Hike Ontario visit www.hikeontario.com.

Bird counters are either Tough Turkeys or Crazy Loons

Jan 12, 2006 Serena Willoughby, Staff Writer www.yorkregion.com

Last weekend marked the third annual [Rouge Park](#) bird count and I found out bird enthusiasts are either tough turkeys or crazy as loons. Rising at 6:30 a.m. on a Sunday is just the beginning. You must also don several woolly layers just to have a chance of making it through the day without frostbite. A thermos of coffee and extra socks helps, but if you're a rookie, you don't think about those things. Did I mention 6:30 a.m.?

We met not much later than that at Reesor Road and Hwy. 407 in southeast Markham. Although I was expecting a group of crazy bird nerds, I was pleasantly surprised to find I wasn't the only one new to the bird counting experience. The first thing I found out was while we were spotting birds, we weren't counting them. That was left up

to Barb Davies, an ecologist at Rouge Park. She relied on our eyes to see everything there was to see.

Ms Davies and bird count organizer Vicki MacDonald led us on a trail through the woods, down a ravine, to a stream where we spotted chickadees and bluejays. Not exactly the Hitchcockian barrage for which I was hoping. After reading reports of the previous two years of bird counts I was hoping to see a great grey owl, a peregrine falcon or a wild turkey. However, as I walked with a diverse group, I found part of the experience is enjoying the park's habitat.

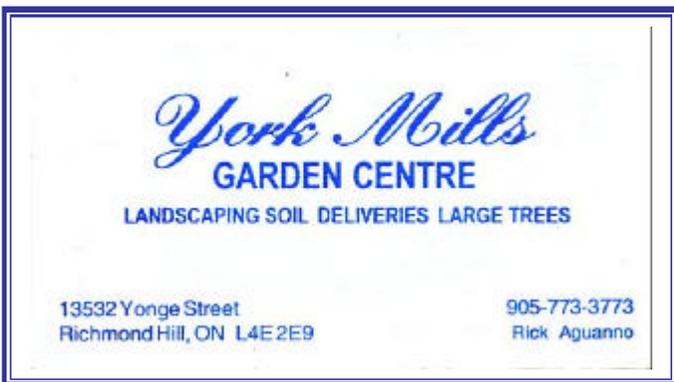
The group went to five sites. I didn't stay the whole day and missed the highlight, a bald eagle, which I was later

told by Ms Davies, is unusual at this time of year. "Birds are funny," she said. "They're suspect to weather patterns and sometimes the wind is so strong they get blown off kilter and they're so tired they drop where they are."

Like people, birds are sensitive to changes in weather and habitat and one of their main threats in Rouge Park is housing developments. Many bird species need at least a 200-metre buffer of forest in order to breed. So as civilization moves closer to the park, birds are running out of space, Ms Davies explained.

But she and Ms MacDonald were encouraged by the results of this year's count. The 48 volunteers recorded 52 species and nearly 4,500 birds. This indicates that, compared with previous years, the numbers are remaining steady. While I wasn't tough enough to last the day, I did experience the beauty Rouge Park has to offer. And even though I didn't spot a grey owl, Ms Davies said there are even more birds at the summer count -- and, hopefully, less frostbite.

Rouge Park is one of the world's largest parks in an urban area and includes Bruce's Mill Conservation Area in Whitchurch-Stouffville, Milne Park in Markham, Phyllis Rawlinson Park in Richmond Hill and Toogood Pond in Unionville. The park protects the Rouge River watershed and stretches from the Oak Ridges Moraine to Lake Ontario. It is not a municipal, provincial or federal park, but is funded by all government levels and all are part of the Rouge Park Alliance, which is responsible for park policy and planning. For more information go to www.rougepark.com or call 905-713-6038.



Wildlife in Winter

Although this winter has been milder than most so far, humans still put on lots of warm clothing and spend more time in a heated house. The wildlife, however, continue to have to deal with the great outdoors no matter what the conditions and make changes so that they can survive the winter. The Canadian Wildlife Federation tells us how they do it.

Many animals become dormant as winter deepens by dramatically lowering their body temperature, heart and breathing rate. In hibernation woodchucks and other marmots, for instance, slow their heartbeat from 100 to 15 beats per minute as well as breathing only once every five or six minutes. Since large animals cool slowly and have greater stores of energy, they can hibernate. Smaller animals, like chipmunks, can't put on enough fat to hibernate. Instead, they stash food in their underground dens and snooze for about six months, but wake up frequently for snacks.

Most animals that live in cold environments grow dense, long coats of hair as winter approaches. Birds, too, will develop thicker feather layers, sometimes even on their legs. Some mammals such as muskox and birds like ptarmigan will group together to keep warm. Smaller mammals huddle together in nests under the snow. In fact, these cozy nests can be as much as 25 F degrees warmer than the temperature above the snow. Even bees will huddle in a ball in the middle of their hive to keep warm. The colder it gets, the tighter the ball of bees become.

Some animals stay in Canada year-round and remain active throughout the winter months. Take the snowshoe hare for instance. Its fur turns white and its coat grows thicker in winter, protecting it from predators and inclement weather. Because its feet are shaped like snowshoes (hence the name), it is much easier for this hare to move about on snow and ice in search of food and shelter. The red fox, vole, gray squirrel, snowshoe hare, and wild turkey are all examples of wildlife that remain active in winter. The mink and the river otter are two more that even play in winter weather. You will often find slide marks in the snow down river banks where these fun loving mammals have "tobogganed" into the water.

For more information and links to other resources visit: <http://www.cwf-fcf.org/>.

Article from the Oak Ridges Friends of the Environment E-News

Canadian Nature Federation changes name to Nature Canada

Nature Canada has also changed address from Suite 606, #1 Nicholas Street, Ottawa to:

85 Albert Street Suite 900, Ottawa, ON K1P 6A4

For more information about Nature Canada or sign up for the Nature Canada e-newsletter contact Darcie Laur, Community Engagement and Outreach Coordinator at 1-800-267-4088 ext. 235 or go to www.naturecanada.ca.

EVENTS PAST

Lake Ontario Outing -- Toronto, January 15, 2006.

Glenn Coady of the Toronto Ornithological Club led 23 nature lovers for a tour around the mouth of the Humber River. The freezing weather was tolerable owing to lack of wind and bright sunshine.

Interesting shore ducks included Common Goldeneye, Greater Scaup, Mergansers and Buffleheads.

- MartinChen

January 28th Joint field trip with Ron Fleming

Some 22 people from the RHN, South Lake Simcoe, and Humber Bay groups joined Ron Fleming on at the Coffee Time in Kleinburg, to start on a tour of likely spots in the region.

Although the official first stop was at Joan Love's wonderful home and ravine property, some folks enjoyed an early start with a mixed flock of Pine Siskins, House Finches, and Goldfinches at a set of feeders adjacent to the plaza. At Joan's place there was a good assortment of birds around her various feeders. Many in the group got views of a Pileated Woodpecker flyover during their walkabout, and there were good views of a pair of Hairy Woodpeckers working assiduously on removing the bark from trees.

Upon leaving Joan's the group wandered (by car) around the area in the region of McGilvary Road. Numerous Red-tailed Hawks were observed, along with a few Horned Larks which favoured some of the group with close up scope views. A visit to the Bork reserve on Kirby Side Road produced a lot of feeder birds, and a few people got views of Long-Eared Owl and Great Horned Owl while searching through the evergreens, along with a couple of Brown Creepers.

The group then had a boisterous lunch at a pub in Kleinburg, after which some of the group continued with Ron up to the Bradford/Holland Marsh area in a successful search for Snowy Owls and Snow Buntings.

All in all, it was a gorgeous day to be out enjoying nature.
Many thanks to Ron for his generosity in guiding the group.

- Submitted by Gene and Charlene Denzel

Newmarket gets Eco-housing Subdivision

The Town of Newmarket has cemented its position as a municipal leader of green initiatives with the sale of 34 lots to [Rodeo Fine Homes Inc](#) for an environmentally-progressive subdivision in Newmarket.

The 34 environmentally-progressive 'green' homes will be located on the south-west corner of the Stickwood-Walker property on Mulock Drive, and will meet the following target criteria:

- 25 per cent reduction in household water draws compared to conventional homes
- 60 per cent reduction in overall water discharge flows, solid waste, energy use and greenhouse gasses compared to conventional homes

To date, this initiative has drawn the interest and support of many area municipalities, other levels of government, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), the Ontario Power Authority and more.

BIRD OBSERVATIONS

January 2006

Toronto

Peregrine Falcon - 1 at Bloor & Bedford Jan.24 (S&JB).

Dark-eyed Junco - 10 at Cabbagetown Jan.01-31 (MWh).

Peel Region

Sharp-shinned Hawk - 1 at Old Church & Mt. Hope Rds. Jan.20 (GoC).

Northern Goshawk – 1@Centreville Crk Jan6(GoC). 1@Dixie/Old Schl Rds. Jan6(GoC). 1@Albion Trail Jan28(GoC).

Golden Eagle - 1 at Centreville Creek Jan.06 (GoC).

American Kestrel - 1 at Old Baseline & Mono Rd. Jan.19 (GoC).

Eastern Screech-Owl - 1 at King St. & Caledon-King Line Jan.19 (GoC).

Northern Shrike - 1 at Old Church & Mt. Pleasant Rd. Jan.12 (GoC).

Common Raven - 2 at Dicks Gravel Pit on Old Church Jan.17 (GoC).

Red-breasted Nuthatch - 20 at Palgrave Conservation Area Jan.12 (PG).

Northern Mockingbird - 1 at Mt.Hope & Old Church Roads Jan.05 (GoC).

Bohemian Waxwing - 80 at Mt.Pleasant (Stoneheart Est.) Jan.06 (KaH fide PG). 14 at Albion Trail Jan.10 (GoC).

Fox Sparrow - 1 at Palgrave Conservation Area Jan.14 (EM fide PG.). 1 at Palgrave, Home of EM Jan.27 (EM).

Snow Bunting - 40 at Dixie & Boston Mills Peel Jan.05 (GoC).

Red-winged Blackbird - 1 at Dixie & King Roads Peel Jan.04 (GoC).

Pine Grosbeak - 12 at Palgrave Conservation Area Jan.19 (PG).

Common Redpoll - 1 at Palgrave Conservation Area Jan.09 (EM).

Pine Siskin - 26 at Palgrave Conservation Area Jan.12 (PG).

Evening Grosbeak - 27 at Palgrave Conservation Area Jan.12 (PG).

York Region

Mallard - 1000 at Markham Bypass Jan.05 (SLo).

Great Blue Heron – 1@Wallace St Woodbridge Jan1(TS). 1@Woodchopper Lane W of Keele N Jan.03(FP).

Sharp-shinned Hawk – 1@Grenfell Mrkhm Jan7,17(CMK). 1 W of Waldorf Schl Bathurst Jan20(TH).

Cooper's Hawk – 1@Lk Wilcox Jan9(S&JB). 1@Lk Wilcox Jan17(S&JB). 1@Clearmeadow Blvd. Newmrkt Jan21(RJF).

1@Graham Sdrd Jan22(RJF). 1 Juv@Snider Mrsh Mrkhm Jan30(CMK).

1@Wallace St Woodbridge Jan1(TS). 1 Ad @2nd conc. N of Queensville SR Jan.03(FP).

Red-tailed Hawk – 7@Mjr Mac, Mrkhm Jan5(SLo). 42 in Mrkhm Twp Jan.11(GL). 5@ Ravenshoe Rd. Jan14(GL,RCu).

Rough-legged Hawk - 1 at Major MacKenzie Markham Jan.05 (SLo). 1 on Road Markham Twp. Jan.11 (GL,RCu).
 American Kestrel - 1 on Road Markham TWP. Jan.11 (GL)
 Ruffed Grouse - 1 at M.MacKenzie & Hwy.27,J.Love Jan.01 (JLo). 2 at Cawthra-Mulock Reserve Jan.21 (RJF).
 Wild Turkey - 6 at 16th Ave. E of Reesor Road Jan.03 (SLo).
 Iceland Gull - ~10 at Markham Bypass Jan.21 (SLo).
 Lesser Black-backed Gull - 1 at Markham Bypass Jan.05 (SLo).
 Glaucous Gull - ~25 at Markham Bypass Jan.21 (SLo).
 Great Black-backed Gull - 17 at Markham Bypass Jan.05 (SLo). 6 at Reesor Ponds Markham Jan.11 (GL,RCu).
 Snowy Owl – 1@Markhm Bypass Jan6(SLo). 2 Ad@W/end Ravenshoe Rd Jan14(GL,RCu,).
 1 at W. End Ravenshoe Rd. Jan.20 (H&MF). 2 at Former Holland Marsh Jan.21 (RJF).
 1 Imm at W. End Ravenshoe Rd. Jan.03(FP).
 Downy Woodpecker - 3 at 123 Woodward Ave., Thornhill Jan.04 (H&MF).
 Hairy Woodpecker - 1 M@ Woodward Ave., Thrnhl Jan4(H&MF). 1@Grenfell Markham Jan.23-31 (CMK).
 Pileated Woodpecker – 1@Grenfell Mrkhm Jan1(CMK). 1 M@N/end Keele St Jan3(FP). 1@M.Mac/Hwy.27 Jan9(JLo).
 1 at 4 Grenfell Markham Jan.01(CMK)
 Northern Shrike - 1 at Kettleby Jan.22 (RJF). 2 at Weir's S.R. 1 N,1 S Old Shiloh Jan.03(FP).
 Red-breasted Nuthatch - 2 to 4 at 4 Grenfell Markham (Carol Mck) Jan.07-31 (CMK).
 Golden-crowned Kinglet - 1 at Sibbald Point Prov. Park Jan.01(BB).
 American Robin – 20@Idleswift Thrnhl Jan.?(GD) Regularly.
 Cedar Waxwing - 49 at Holland Landing at Brydons Jan.28 (BB).
 American Tree Sparrow - 30 at Reesor Ponds Markham Jan.01 (SLo). 6 at Snider Marsh Markham Jan.28 (CMK).
 White-throated Sparrow -1@Grenfell Mrkhm Jan7-8(CMK).1@Bridgport R Hill Jan15-31(FWh).1@Grenfell Jan17(CMK)
 Dark-eyed Junco – 15@Nantucket Dr. Oak Rdgs Jan1-31(SDP). 13 at 4 Grenfell Markham Jan.17 (CMK).
 Snow Bunting - large flock at W. End Ravenshoe Rd. Jan.14 (GL,RCu). 13@W. End Ravenshoe Rd. Jan.03(FP).
 Northern Cardinal - 1m;5f@ Bridgport RichHill Jan20(FWh). 10@Idleswift Thornhill Regularly in Jan. (GD)
 Purple Finch - 1 M at 4 Grenfell Markham (Carol Mck) Jan.26 (CMK).
 Pine Siskin - 1 at Whillans, Bridgport Richmond Hill Jan.01 (FWh). 2(pair)@Ozark Pk. Oak Rid Jan1(TM&GR).
 American Goldfinch – 10@Nantucket Dr. Oak Rdgs Jan1-31(SDP). 12-30 often@ Bridgport RichHill Jan1-21(FWh).
 Purple Finch – 2-4 often at Ozark Pk.-10 Nantucket Oak Ridges Jan.06-31 (TM&GR).
 House Finch - 25 at Ozark Pk.-10 Nantucket Oak Ridges Jan.06 (TM&GR).
 Common Redpoll - 2 at Ozark Pk.-10 Nantucket Oak Ridges Jan.06 (TM&GR).
 Pine Siskin - 2 (pair) at Ozark Pk.-10 Nantucket Oak Ridges Jan.01-02 (TM&GR).
BB Bruce Brydon, CMK Carol McKnight, DTH Doris Hofmann, EM Elizabeth Morton, FP Frank Pinilla, FWh Freddy Whillans, GD Gene Denzel, GL Graham Leonard, GoC Gord Cameron, H&MF Harold & Muriel Farrant, JKl Jane Kirkpatrick, JLo Joan Love, KaH Karen Hollingshead, MWh Michael White, PG Phyllis Graydon, RCu Robert Cubbitt, RJF Ron Fleming, S&JB Sharon & Jim Bradley, SDP Susan DiPucchio, SLo Stan Long, TH Theo Hofmann, TM&GR Theresa McKenzie Glenn Reed, TS Tessa Shelvey.

From the Editor

After recently returning from yet another business trip overseas I have been kept quite busy with many things in the past week including a discussion of Energy issues in Ontario (Ontario Power Generation has proposed to build new Nuclear Power Plants in Ontario) and other important discussions regarding the direction and focus of power generation in Ontario in the future – and whether we should be focusing more of our efforts on Renewable energy and Energy efficiency rather than building new Nuclear Power Plants.

There have been many proposals and ideas put forward to create a new type of electricity generation system in Ontario based on renewable energy, and much of this talk is coming from people who realize that not only do we have much more potential than we realized before but that we must do it for many good reasons. Even the current Premier of Ontario, Dalton McGuinty has talked about creating a “conservation culture” in Ontario, but unfortunately has not acted very forcefully to create it – yet.

We must create an energy system in Ontario based around renewable energy sooner or later, and now is the time to seriously consider making moves toward creating that system – while the price of non-renewable energy is still cheap enough that we can still do it inexpensively and efficiently.

Lloyd Helferty, Bulletin Editor lhelferty@sympatico.ca

905-707-8754 Mailing Address: 603-48 Suncrest Blvd. Thornhill, ON L3T 7Y1