



THE BULLETIN

March 2006 No. 453

2005-2006 EXECUTIVE

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Events calendar

Botany Group	There will be no meeting in April
Executive Meeting	Tuesday April 11, 2006 7:00PM Location: TBA (RH Library likely)
Bird Group	Wednesday April 12, 2006. 7:30pm Location: Martin Chen's Topic: Pine and Palm Warblers
General Meeting	Thursday April 20, 2006. 6:00pm AGM & Pot Luck! Speaker Theo Hofmann Location: Richmond Hill Presbyterian Church
Field Trip	Saturday, April 22, 2006 Earth Day What: Oak Ridges and Mill Pond Cleanups Leader: Martin Chen, contact for info. Sunday, April 23, 2006 What: Annual Tiny Marsh Birding Outing Leader: Ron Fleming, with OFO Check for more Events and Outings on Page 2

MEETING MARTIN ON THE SPIT

I biked over to the entrance to Leslie Street Spit after visiting Riverdale Farm with a friend and her kids. That was why I had to be late meeting Martin Chen and Michael Biro. Michael was leading a early October Saturday morning walk on the Spit. They had started at 7.30.

I realized something special was happening soon after I passed the Conservation Authority Gate. A flock of White Crowned sparrows scattered across the long road to the Lighthouse and settled into the tall Goldenrods and Asters on the city side of the road. And then another flock of 10-15 birds flew up into an Aspen. That tree was already quite full of a mix of warblers, some with identifiably yellow rumps as they quit the tree for shrubs and plants nearby.

Next were the thrushes. The rusty red backs of the robin sized birds identified them as Hermit thrushes, even though they weren't doing their usual tail wagging. Up in the trees, flashing back and forth across the road and scurrying about in the underbrush, their red backs and sometimes their bright speckled chests identifying them.

I missed Michael and Martin and the others because they had turned off the main trail, so I rode on up to the end of the spit and around the Lighthouse. It was a clear sunny blue-sky day, but there was a strong cool south-east wind blowing from the Lake, which explained the why there were so many flocks of migrant birds in the shelter trees of the Spit.

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

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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

- **Wednesday March 22, 2006.** 7:00pm. "Learn How to Identify Birds" at the Boyd Field Centre 9755 Canada Company Way, Vaughan. (Islington/Major MacKenzie) For more info call 416-661-6600 x5668.

- **Tuesday April 11, 2006. 7:00pm.** Executive meeting. No location has been set.

- **Wednesday April 12, 2006. 12:30pm.** Bird Group meeting at. Topic will be "Pine and Palm Warblers". Contact Martin Chen at 905-709-0246 for more information.

- **Thursday April 20, 2006. 6:00pm.** General meeting and Annual Pot Luck will be at the Richmond Hill Presbyterian Church, Wallace Hall. 10066 Yonge St., West side. Our speaker will be Theo Hoffman talking about the most recent Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas Results after 5 years of hard work by many local birders.

Errata: The February edition of the Richmond Hill Naturalists Bulletin indicated that the March meeting would feature Peter Burnstyn talking about "Energy Efficient Homes". The speakers for the March meeting are actually Gene and Charlene Denzel who will give a presentation on the "Fauna and Flora of Western and Central Australia" based on their Fall 2005 trip to Australia.

- **Friday April 21, 2006.** Tree Planting at Phyllis Rawlinson Park. Please contact our Field Trip Coordinator, Martin Chen at 905-709-0246 for details about this event.

- **Sunday March 26, 2006.** 1:30 pm. Rouge Park Nature Walk. Meet at Glen Eagles Vista parking lot, Sheppard @ Twyn Rivers. Drive north on Meadowvale from Sheppard, stay in the right-most lane, follow the blue RVCC signs, drive up the ramp and turn right at the top. Parking is free.

- **Saturday April 22, 2006.** "Oak Ridges Community Clean Up" OR "Annual Mill Pond Clean Up". Please contact our Field Trip Coordinator, Martin Chen at 905-709-0246 for details about these events.

- **Sunday April 23, 2006.** 8:00am. Tiny Marsh Birding with Ron Fleming - Waterfowl and early spring migrants. Meet at the commuter parking lot on S-W side of Highways 9 & 400 or 9am at the Tiny Marsh Nature Centre.

- **Friday May 5 & Saturday May 6, 2006.** Spring Hike in Pelee National Park. Hotel and hike weekend. This perennial favourite trip is ideal for beginner and expert birders alike. Leader: Michael Biro 905-763-7373.

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).

- Under their "Green Neighbourhood's Healthy Yards Program" the York Region Environmental Alliance and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority is conducting free **organic lawncare workshops** at various locations across the Town of Markham. Learn more about healthy natural lawns at the following locations:

- **Thursday March 23, 2006.** 7- 9 pm. Ukranian Episcopal Church. 15 Church Lane north of John St.
- **Thursday March 30, 2006.** 7-9pm. Heintzman House C.C. 135 Bay Thorn Dr., Thornhill Meeting Room.
- **Saturday April 1, 2006.** 10-12am. Markham Civic Centre. 101 Town Centre Blvd. Canada Room.
- **Tuesday April 25, 2006.** 7- 8:45pm. Unionville Library. 15 Library Lane, Unionville. Meeting Room.

- **Saturday March 24, 2006.** 10am. Merlin's Hollow Winter Seminars. Lecturer David Tomlinson will hold two seminars called "Minimum Effort for Maximum Return" and "3 American Gardens for a Long Weekend" at Hillary House in Aurora. The cost is \$40.00 for the day. For information contact: David Tomlinson at 905-727-8979.

- **Saturday, April 1, 2006.** 3rd annual Naturalized Landscape Conference hosted by the [Naturalized Habitat Network](http://www.naturalizedhabitat.org). Speakers include Wendy Francis, Director of Science and Conservation for Ontario Nature, Native plant expert Craig Willette, Dan Dufour, Senior Naturalist of Point Pelee National Park, Environmental lawyer Jerry DeMarco, ecologist Paul Morris, organic specialist Linda Wonsel and alternative energy engineer Thomas Greenside. Windsor. To learn more, visit www.naturalizedhabitat.org or call 519-259-2407.

- **Thursday April 27, 2006.** 7pm-9pm. YREA's spring workshop: "Organic Lawn Care for the Cheap and Lazy" Elgin West Community Centre.

- **Saturday May 6, 2006.** 10am-3pm. [North American Native Plant Society](http://www.nanps.org) Annual Sale. Native ferns, shrubs, trees, vines, and wildflowers for sun, shade, wet, or dry conditions. Markham Civic Centre, Atrium. 101 Town Centre Boulevard (Hwy 7 at Warden Ave.), Markham, Ontario L3R 9W3. There will be an Organic Lawn Care Workshop at 12-1pm with Janet May of the *York Region Environmental Alliance*. Learn lawn care techniques that won't cost the earth. Our own Natalie Helferty will give a talk on the Noah Project: Building an Ark in your Eden. Experienced volunteers will also be on hand to help you pick the perfect plants for your yard. All plants come from ethical growers approved by NANPS. NANPS plants are of local origin ensuring hardiness and genetic suitability. For more information or to volunteer www.nanps.org voicemail: 416-631-4438.

- **Sunday, May 28, 2006** 10am-2pm. Friends of the Rouge Watershed (FRW), <http://www.frw.ca/>, is holding an interfaith tree planting and more in the Rouge Park. The actual planting will be done on a site near the Toronto Zoo. If your faith group would like to participate, or if you would like to volunteer alone, please RSVP Sadi, FRW's Volunteer Coordinator, at (416)208-0252, sadhana@frw.ca



- **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.

- **Friday June 2 to Sunday June 4, 2006.** Ontario Nature's 75th AGM and Conference hosted by the Kitchener-Waterloo Field Naturalists (KWFN) at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo.

Ontario Nature will open the conference with Provincial Issues Day followed with an evening BBQ to meet and greet. Saturday's program opens with a keynote speaker followed by numerous session presentations and panel discussions to choose from throughout the day, closing with a special presentation speaker and a 75th banquet celebration.

A large variety of field trips will also be available and are designed to illustrate first hand the topics discussed in the program sessions while showcasing the natural and cultural assets of the Region of Waterloo. These trips include among others, a heritage Grand River, rafting, unique geological and forested areas and visits to wet lands, areas of birding and botanical interest alight in spring with delicate flowers and regionally rare plants.

Visit the conference website <http://cobalt.golden.net/~kwfnconference/> for more information.

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MEMBER SUBMISSIONS

...Cont'd from P.1

The Spit was built nearly 25 years ago with the excavations from the skyscrapers of Toronto. It was planned as a container Port for Toronto until they moved that idea further east along the shore. Then they started adding the less attractive sediments from the Lower Don River into lagoons along the Spit. But over the years without much help from anyone, Nature took over the prominent man-made feature. Now during this Fall Migration it almost rivals Point Pelee for its profusion and diversity of birds.

I saw my first redstart here a couple of falls ago. During the rest of the year it has its residents: coyotes, Canada Geese, a Night Heron colony that feeds (perhaps fortunately) on the young Gulls in the huge Ringbill colony. There is also a new group of cormorants who are forcing out the herons.

Today there is the beginning of the Toronto fall and winter duck population arrivals. As I rode west towards the end I met a gentleman with a pack and a big pair of binoculars - a long time visitor to the Spit.

" Bunch of loons in the pond over there. The usual Mute Swans. There's a Merlin and a Peregrine flying around". I didn't see them.

A phone call located Martin and the group at the Bird Research Station in Tommy Thompson Park (that's what the Conservation Authority have named the Spit, after my old Metro Parks boss). The Station is a little hut down a side road on the leeward side of the Spit among 20 foot trembling aspens. The aspens are why it seems so much like Point Pelee, especially with the throngs of small birds among them.

Going off into the woods from the station hut, narrow paths lead to where almost invisible nets are strung between high aluminum wands. Here, beginning in September, Dan Derbyshire of the TRCA and a group of volunteers document the fall migration. Dan has been doing it for 15 years and today is a 200 bird day.

I arrive as the last bird, a young Swainson's Thrush, is gently but firmly held - its leg ring attached, its fat condition determined by a slight puff into the speckled white breast. It goes headfirst into a small plastic tube for weighing, all the time, its details being recorded by a young volunteer who stands beside Dan. Then it is the end of the young thrush's ordeal it is "flushed" out of a white tube in the side of the hut, then flits away unharmed.

Dan tells us the bird count goes on until December, and the whole wonderful story can be seen on your computer at the Tommy Thompson Park Bird Research Station: Sightings Board web page.

- Michael White

January 2006 Bird Group Report

On Wednesday, January 11, 2006 the bird group met to discuss the Northern Flicker (*Colaptes auratus*) and the Pileated Woodpecker (*Dryocopus pileatus*).

The Northern Flicker [~32cm] (formerly called the Common Flicker, which also included the Guided Flicker of the southwest) is now comprised of the Yellow-shafted Flicker, which is the more western bird. All three are known to interbreed where their ranges meet and produce hybrids so commonly that they are now considered races, or subspecies. Nine subspecies are currently recognized.

The Yellow-shafted Flicker is easily identified while flying by its deeply undulating flight, its white rump, and the golden yellow under its wings and tail. It can often be found on the ground enjoying the ants found in many lawns and gardens, probing into the anthills with its long sticky tongue which extends many inches beyond the bill tip, and sucking up ants and ant eggs. While thus engaged it is easy to see his barred brown back, spotted underparts, crescent-shaped black bib, and [if a male], his back moustache. When available, his favourite foods are bayberries and torpid insects. The Red-shafted Flicker's main difference is that it has a red moustache and its underparts are, of course, red.

The Northern Flicker can be found throughout most of North America and into Mexico, on the Grand Cayman Islands, and in Cuba. They prefer open forests or forest edges. During courtship they are very vocal and their wik-wik-wik-er...wik-er calls and loud drumming can be heard throughout the forest. Both sexes will help to excavate a cavity in a dead tree or limb, in a telephone pole or a post or sometimes in an old cavity. In their nest they will lay 5-10 white eggs on a layer of wood chips. The young will leave the nest after 25-28 days.

The Pileated Woodpecker [~42cm] can be identified in flight by its level, crow-like flight and its smooth, rowing wing-beats at irregular intervals. It appears long-necked with broad wings, a long tail and a prominent crest. It has large white patches on the underside of the forewings.

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Sometimes called a 'Log-Cock', 'Cock-of-the-Woods', or 'Carpenter Bird', they can often be heard chiseling into a tree with their powerful bill in search of carpenter ants – their favourite food – or other insects (which comprise 75% of their diet – the remainder being fruit, acorns and other nuts). A perched Pileated Woodpecker looks almost entirely black on the back of the wings and has a bright red crest, although the female has a black forehead and lacks the red moustache of the male.

These shy birds require extensive conifer, mixed, and hardwood forests and thus are vulnerable to habitat loss and forest fragmentation. They reside from northern British Columbia and southern Mackenzie valley, across southern Canada east to Nova Scotia and all the way south to northern California, Idaho, Montana, eastern Kansas and Texas, and the Gulf of Florida. They winter from Columbia south to northern Chile and Argentina.

The nest is excavated by both sexes with the hole being either a long oval or rectangular in shape. Occasionally they reuse a cavity or nest in a utility pole. Nests usually have one clutch of 3 to 5 eggs. The young fledge in 24 to 28 days.

- Muriel Farrant

Greenbelt grade: Environmental group gives it a 'B'

Excerpt from the TORONTO STAR, Feb. 28, 2006

Ontario's efforts to build an urban backyard full of rich farmland, pristine natural features and wide-open countryside on the edge of Greater Toronto and Niagara rate a solid "B" from environmentalists.

A report card to be released today by the Ontario Greenbelt Alliance on the first anniversary of the Greenbelt Act says that Provincial plans to expand and build new highways through the area must stop.

The Greenbelt Alliance, a coalition of more than 75 organizations that wants to preserve and expand the Golden Horseshoe Greenbelt, says that key areas that were not included in the greenbelt must be added to ensure safe drinking water and to protect endangered species and natural features.

The Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation, an independent body set up by Queen's Park last June, is ready to hand out grants of up to \$500,000 to non-profit groups with plans to promote and preserve the 728,000-hectare arc of rolling green space that extends from Niagara to Peterborough. The foundation expects to grant about \$25 million over the next five years.

One of the foundation's top priorities will be to help preserve agriculture in the greenbelt by raising the profile of farmers' markets, he said. About 40 farmers' markets operate in Greater Toronto and demand for fresh local fruits and vegetables is high, said Bob Chorney, executive director of Farmers' Markets Ontario. Chorney would like to use the foundation's money to promote the markets more aggressively. The development industry is still wary of the greenbelt and worries that limiting urban expansion without a growth plan for the area will send housing prices through the roof.

The Greenbelt Alliance notes several big "wins" for the environment in the past year. Just this month, the province blocked a plan by the city of Vaughan to extend Pine Valley Dr. through Boyd Park. The move protects a sensitive old-growth forest in the area. Last fall, the province passed legislation to protect the Duffins-Rouge Agricultural preserve in Pickering where the local council was pushing for residential development.

However, there have been some failures. Although Queen's Park has protected the northern tributaries of the Rouge River from development in the North Leslie area of Richmond Hill, a proposal to build 7,800 homes currently before the Ontario Municipal Board would have grave environmental consequences (for the area) and the planned sewer pipe expansion in the King City area continues to threaten local streams and water sources.

- submitted by Marianne Yake

- The [Ontario Hummingbird Project](#) is a province-wide initiative to learn more about the life cycle of Ontario's hummingbirds. The project was initiated in 2005 and received information from three migration monitoring stations, one raptor watch and several individuals.

The website www.ontariohummingbirds.ca is now available, so please forward this information to anyone (birders, gardeners, nature lovers, organizations) who does not subscribe to Ontbirds and who may be interested in contributing to the project.

Along with collecting observation information, the project also includes banding of over-wintering hummingbirds, spring and fall migrants, and breeding hummers. If you know of a migration hotspot or a yard with high numbers of hummingbirds during the breeding season, please let the homeowner know about the project so they can contact me if they are interested in having their hummingbirds banded.

Cindy Cartwright, Ontario Hummingbird Project pom@bmts.com

- contributed by Theo Hofmann

LOCAL NEWS

- Spring bird migration is just around the corner and the [Fatal Light Awareness Program](#) (FLAP) is preparing to rescue even more birds this year. Last year 50 volunteers rescued over 4,700 birds from 98 species that had hit the windows of buildings in Toronto. Two thousand of these birds found dead during migration in the Fall of 2005 were publicly displayed at the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) on Wednesday, March 8th.

FLAP would like to recruit many more volunteers in the downtown area this year as they will be expanding their territory beyond the 'Financial District' (downtown core) to include Bloor Street down to Lake Ontario & University Avenue down to Jarvis St. In partnership with the City of Toronto, FLAP hopes to rescue as many birds as possible at night and throughout the day. If you work downtown or know of anyone who does and you wish to volunteer for FLAP, please contact Susan Krajnc, Program Assistant & Volunteer Coordinator for the Fatal Light Awareness Program (FLAP) at 416-366-3527 or flap@flap.org

- On March 1, 2006, the Ministry of Environment approved the Terms of Reference for an Individual Environmental Assessment for York Region's Southeast Collector Trunk Sewer from 9th Line in Markham to the York-Durham boundary for this **'Big Pipe' sewer expansion into Pickering from Markham.**

- The **19th Avenue 'big pipe' expansion in Richmond Hill** among other sections is in the hands of the Ministry of Environment for a decision. The preferred route suggested by York Region is still 19th Avenue, despite the 'dam effect' to the southerly groundwater flow from this 11 foot diameter pipe through the North Leslie lands which are the headwaters of the main branch of the Rouge River connecting to the Jefferson Swamp to the north on the Oak Ridges Moraine. John Morton, P.Geol., P.Eng. (pipeline project manager in the 70s for the section up Yonge and across Hwy 7) and Dr. Ernst Zaltsberg, hydrogeologist (retired MOE reviewer for water infrastructure for 14 years) have submitted their report to the MOE on behalf some of the ISAC members consisting of members of the Richmond Hill Naturalists and local residents. Hydrogeology data collected was insufficient to determine the 19th Avenue route as less sensitive, according to Mr Morton and Dr. Zaltsberg's report.

- The **North Leslie OMB hearing** continues with ecology evidence wrapping up, to be followed by hydrogeology evidence which apparently shows almost the whole of these lands south of 19th Avenue to be under high artesian groundwater pressure. Many wetlands and cold headwater streams form on these lands to feed the Rouge River. Steve Varga, Ministry of Natural Resources Biologist, gave evidence under summons on February 22 talking about conservation biology and the need for extensive protection of these lands. Save the Rouge is the Party opposing the residential rezoning, overseen by lawyer, David Donnelly from Environmental Defence Canada. Natalie Helferty was under summons, but was released when MNR granted Steve Varga's appearance on Feb. 21.

- The **Bayview Avenue widening from Elgin Mills to Stouffville Road** Environmental Assessment has been put on hold by York Region. This widening needs to be considered in the context of planning for North Leslie and the sewer pipe in these sensitive areas. Coordination is lacking. (Natalie Helferty)

- The first Public Consultation for the **Leslie Street Road Improvement Project** was held on March 1st at the Oakview Terrace in Richmond Hill. This consultation was held in order to get public input into plans to consider improvements to Leslie street between Bethesda Sideroad to Bloomington Road.

The proposed improved road standard is intended to mitigate water overflow from Haynes Lake at the existing culvert over Berczy Creek that result in flooding across the road several times a year. The proposals would also help mitigate or reduce the amount of road salt that needs to be applied in the winter and that leach into Berczy Creek.

A project team had identified five road improvement alternatives, including doing nothing, building a new culvert or bridge, or relocating the road to the east or west of Haynes Lake.



Toronto Star
Tuesday February 14, 2006

York Region Poultry plant fined for huge sewage spill

A York Region poultry plant has been fined \$90,000 after an April 2005 accident dumped 24.5 million litres of partially treated duck sewage into a nearby ditch, creek and roadway.

The spill at King Cole Ducks, at Aurora Sideroad and Warden Ave. in Whitchurch-Stouffville, occurred after the walls of an on-site treatment pond collapsed.

The owners of King Cole Holdings Ltd. pleaded guilty in Richmond Hill court yesterday to one count of violating the Ontario Water Resources Act.

About 50 homes in the area were issued a boil-water advisory after the spill, although later tests found no traces of E. coli.

The Richmond Hill Naturalists feel that overall this plan to mitigate the impacts of the road on the lake, river and wetlands is a positive move because the road is currently very close to the lake and wetlands, although it is generally not heavily traveled, which could change if the alignment were redone. Natalie Helferty's previous amphibian migration road surveys have found wood frogs and spring peepers and leopard frogs crossing in the area. RHN has suggested that amphibian surveys be done to determine if there will be an impact and to provide for wildlife underpasses and a full Environmental Assessment be done.

- The **Oak Ridges Moraine Wildlife Park** on either side of Yonge Street in Oak Ridges has construction started for a wide pathway being built by the landowners. This is not subject to the Environmental Assessment Act as a private project. The final Management Plan is to be reviewed by the Executive for input via Sharon Bradley to the TRCA-managed public input group. Wildlife passage under or over Yonge Street has not been seriously considered by the consultants, despite the fact that this is the 'bottleneck' of the moraine and one of the only large wildlife areas left to connect eastern and western Ontario due to development up Yonge Street. Future restoration on either side of Yonge Street will produce heavy roadkill and be a hazard to traffic as this route will also have more traffic from the new development, as well as becoming a major Rapid Transit corridor. RHN has requested that the Province undertake a full review of the management plan prior to disposition of the land to the TRCA, who has indicated some interest in accepting the land as a park, subject to funding availability for management and restoration.

Queen's Park Set to Finalize Greater Golden Horseshoe Growth Plan

Thanks to all clubs and Ontario Nature members who submitted comments to Queen's Park in January on the Proposed Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH). The plan will set out how and where the GGH will grow to the year 2031. The proposed plan goes a great distance to reining in urban sprawl, setting out a strong, smart framework for managing urbanization and protecting natural areas and farmlands in the GGH. The GGH Growth Plan may be important for all Ontario residents since it may serve as a prototype for growth plans in other regions under the Places to Grow Act. These plans will be approved by the Province but implemented by municipalities through their Official Plans.

The Proposed Growth Plan has some serious deficiencies, however. Ontario Nature has pointed these deficiencies out both in our original submission on January 10, 2006 and in an addendum on January 26, 2006. The concerns relate to the environmental sustainability of the projected amount of growth, some major variances among experts about population growth projections for the GGH, appropriate protection for the Natural System, and proposals for several new highways or highway extensions. Visit www.ontarionature.org for more information.

NATURE NEWS

- In late February **Barbara MacKenzie-Wynia** became the new Interim **Ontario Nature Central Region Co-ordinator**. She will continue to hold this position until January of 2007 (while Andrea Smith is on maternity leave). Barbara can be reached at bmw-ontarionature@sympatico.ca, by calling Ontario Nature at 1-800-440-2366, or by writing to Ontario Nature, 355 Lesmill Road, Toronto, Ontario, M3B 2W8.

- Ontario's "**Bill 11 2005, An Act to enact the Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves**" is opening the door to motorized uses in Ontario's wilderness parks.

The draft Act received its first reading in the Legislature in the fall of 2005, with a second review expected later this spring. Although there are important changes being made to improve the protection of Ontario's provincial parks from industrial activities, some amendments do not bode well for the future of wilderness in the province.

One of the amendments, which would be a change to the definition of wilderness park's "objectives", would permit motorized uses (e.g. snowmobiles, ATVs, float planes motorboats and personal watercraft) into Ontario's last, undeveloped wilderness areas.

If you have ever enjoyed the solitude of Ontario's beloved wilderness parks like Quetico, Wabikimi, Woodland Caribou, Temagami and others please let the Ontario Minister of Natural Resources, David Ramsay, know that motorized access should be *prohibited* in Ontario's wilderness parks.



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You can write or email The Honourable David Ramsay, Minister of Natural Resources at the following address:
6th Floor, Room 6630, Whitney Block, 99 Wellesley Street West, Toronto, ON M7A 1W3 Fax: (416) 314-2216
Email: minister@mnr.gov.on.ca

Note that the wording of the new definition of a "Wilderness Provincial Park", which formalizes permitted uses in law, now states that "visitors travel *primarily* by non-motorized means" rather than the old wording which stated that "visitors (must) travel by non-mechanized means and experience expansive solitude". This new wording would thus allow for the use of motorized vehicles within Wilderness Provincial Parks.

Ontario Cabinet Deliberating on Escarpment Quarry Expansion Your Voice is Still Needed!

The Coalition on the Niagara Escarpment (founded in 1978 by Ontario Nature) and Escarpment-watchers across the province are anxiously awaiting a decision by the McGuinty Cabinet on the proposed 205-acre expansion of the 1,156-acre Milton Quarry on the Niagara Escarpment operated by Dufferin Aggregates. Already the largest active quarry in Canada and a serious environmental concern, if this quarry is allowed to become even larger, it will seriously jeopardize the natural corridor and the water resources of the escarpment – a UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve and part of the new Golden Horseshoe Greenbelt.

While we will always need to mine some new aggregates, Ontario does not recycle enough aggregates and has no conservation strategy for managing the demand for yet more aggregates. Given these shortfalls, to approve the Milton Quarry expansion would perpetuate the cycle of always looking for more sources of aggregate supply and thereby putting more natural habitats at risk. Please visit the CONE website at www.niagaraescarpment.org to read the Action Alert, and consider calling or writing Premier Dalton McGuinty to register your concerns. Every letter and voice counts! Thank you.

- from Nature Network News, February 16, 2006

EVENTS PAST

- On Saturday February 4, 2006 Tom Waechter and Martin Chen explored **Arrowhead Provincial Park** in Huntsville during a winter **Cross Country Ski** trip. The well maintained trails around the 2 lakes were a pleasant adventure out of Toronto's pouring rain. Many chickadees, chipmunk tracks and sharp shinned hawk were seen in the hilly, green landscape of the Canadian Shield. Martin was able to rent snowshoes from the park. - Martin Chen

- On February 15, 2006 as a result of an Environmental Assessment [EA] the Ontario Government directed the City of Vaughan to remove the **Boyd Conservation Area** as a possible route to address transportation problems in the Pine Valley corridor. Boyd Park includes a sensitive portion of the East Humber Valley.

Environment Minister Laurel Broten said, "We believe that a roadway through the Boyd Conservation Area could have significant environmental impacts. I have amended the environmental assessment work plan to exclude the conservation area as a possible route. There will be no road through Boyd Park."

There is currently development near the area and there is an anticipated population growth of about 60,000 by 2021. The EA will look at alternative routes between Weston Road and Highway 27 and from Teston Road to Highway 407. The City of Vaughan will be required to provide ample opportunity for the public to review how the EA will assess and compare alternatives routes.

The TRCA will continue with the creation of **The Living City Centre Campus** at Kortright adjacent to Pine Valley Drive as a *centre of excellence for sustainable community planning* in York Region and throughout the GTA.

- Between February 17 and 20, 2006 the **Great Backyard Bird Count** took place. Last year there was a record-breaking 6,546,606 birds sightings and the results revealed an exciting array of bird trends across the continent.

This year was once again a great opportunity for people across the continent to get out during the cold winter days and see some birds. Many people also went to their favourite birding place and some were able to introduce someone new to birding. The gallery of photos can be found at <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/gallery/>. This year, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Audubon also launched a photo contest for the best photos by jurisdiction. Winning localities photos are found here <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/press/gbbc-contest>.

- On Saturday March 4, 2006 the all day **Toronto to Burlington "Waterfowl" trip** took place as part of the March "Baillie Memorial Walk" with the Toronto Ornithological Club. The leader was Ron Scovell and their adventure started at Humber Bay Park East.

BIRD OBSERVATIONS

February 2006

Durham Region

Brant - 1 at Whitby Harbour Feb.12 (DJM).
Wood Duck - 1 at Lynde Shores C. A. Feb.12 (DJM). 1 at Lynde Shores C. A. Feb.22 (G&CD).
Hooded Merganser - 3 at Whitby Harbour Feb.12 (DJM).
Barred Owl - 1 at Halls Rd. Feb.12 (DJM). 1 at Halls Rd. Feb.22 (G&CD).
Red-bellied Woodpecker - 1 M at Old Brock Pickering-Uxbr.Line Feb.08 (SLo).
Northern Flicker - 1 at Lynde Shores C. A. Feb.22 (G&CD).
Horned Lark - a flock at Halls Rd. Feb.12 (DJM).
Golden-crowned Kinglet - 1 at Lynde Shores C. A. Feb.12 (DJM).
American Robin - 200 at Lynde Shores C. A. Feb.12 (DJM).
Song Sparrow - many at Halls Rd. Feb.22 (G&CD).
Snow Bunting - a flock at Halls Rd. Feb.12 (DJM).

Toronto

Great Blue Heron - 2 at Lower Don River Feb.17 (SVa).
Belted Kingfisher - 1 at Lower Don River Feb.17 (SVa).

Peel Region

Trumpeter Swan - 7 at Hwy 9 near Ballyroy Feb.26 (anon fide PG,).
Wild Turkey - 12 at Duffy's Lane Feb.26 (RJF).
Pileated Woodpecker - 1 at Graydon Property, Humber Grove Feb.06 (PG). 2 at Duffy's Lane Feb.15 (DPe).
Horned Lark - 6 at Humber Station Road Feb.09 (PG).
American Robin - 200 at Humber Station Road Feb.12 (DJM).
Bohemian Waxwing – 36@Albion Hills Cons. Feb9(PG). Few w. CEDW@Humber Stn Rd Feb12(DJM).
78 at Duffy's Lane Feb.15 (DPe). 65 at Innis Lake Feb.15 (JCa).
Cedar Waxwing - small flock at Humber Station Road Feb.12 (DJM). 21 at Duffy's Lane Feb.15 (DPe).
Purple Finch - 1 at Graydon Property, Humber Grove Feb.09 (PG).
Common Redpoll - 30 at Caledon East Feb.25 (anon. fide PG,).
Pine Siskin - 25 at Graydon Property, Humber Grove Feb.06 (PG).
American Goldfinch - 50 at Graydon Property, Humber Grove Feb.06 (PG).

York Region

Muscovy Duck - 2 (pair) at Toogood Pond, Unionville Feb.23 (CMK).
Wood Duck - 1 M at Toogood Pond, Unionville Feb.23 (CMK). 1 M at Toogood Pond, Unionville Feb.25 (SLo).
American Wigeon - 2 (pair)@Toogood Pnd, Unionville Feb23(CMK). 2 (pair)@Toogood Pond, Unionville Feb25(SLo).
American Black Duck - 50 to 60 at Toogood Pond, Unionville Feb.25 (SLo).
Mallard - 1 at Toogood Pond, Unionville Feb.25 (SLo). Leucistic individual.
Sharp-shinned Hawk – 1@Nantucket Dr. Oak Rdgs Feb1-28(SDP). 1 Daily@M.Mack/Hwy.27 Feb1-28(JLo).
1 Daily@Arnold Av Thrnhl Feb17(TH,DTH). 1@Grenfell Mrkhm Feb23-28(CMK). 1@Shady Ln Thrnhl Feb24(SVa).
Cooper's Hawk -1@Lk Wilcox Feb4,23(S&JB). 1@London Rd Nwmrkt Feb27(KRS). 1@Idleswift Thrnhl frequent (GD).
Northern Goshawk - 1Juv@Arnold Av Thrnhl Feb14(TH). Large accipiter, probably fem, strongly brown / white speckled
back, uneven tail bands, pronounced white eye-brow. Killed and ate Rock Pigeon. 1@Mrkhm Bypass Feb27(SLo).
Rough-legged Hawk - 2 at Markham Bypass Feb.18 (SLo).
American Kestrel - 2 at W of Newmarket Feb.04 (RJF).
Gyr Falcon - 1 at Clark & Bathurst Thornhill Feb.28 (Donna Walker).
Snowy Owl – 5 W of Nwmrkt Feb4(RJF). 1@Mrkhm Bypass Feb11(CMK). 1@HInd Mrsh/Hwy 400 Feb12(JKi).
Photographed 3 at Woodchopper's La. E of Hwy 400 Feb.26(RJF). 1 at Markham Bypass Feb.27, 28(SLo).
Red-bellied Woodpecker - 1 at Miller SR W of Newmarket Feb.04 (RJF).
Pileated Woodpecker - 1 at Lake Wilcox Feb.21 (S&JB).
American Crow - 400 at 10th line & Major MacKenzie Feb.08 (SLo).
Horned Lark – several W of Nwmrkt Feb4(RJF). Sml flock@10th Lin/Mjr Mac Feb8(SLo). 33@Mrkhm Bypas Feb27(SLo)

Red-breasted Nuthatch - 2 (pair) at 4 Grenfell Markham (Carol Mck) Feb.01-28 (CMK).
 White-breasted Nuthatch - 1 at 123 Woodward Ave., Thornhill Feb.01-04 (H&MF).
 American Robin - over 30 at M.MacKenzie & Hwy.27,J.Love Feb.24 (JLo).
 Gray Catbird - 1 at 34 Shady Lane Thornhill Feb.14 (JKi).
 Northern Mockingbird – 1@John St.@Rlwy. Crossng Feb17(SVa). 1@Idleswift Thrnhl Feb.21-22 (G&CD).
 Cedar Waxwing - 20 at M.MacKenzie & Hwy.27 Feb.20 (JLo).
 American Tree Sparrow - 14 at Lake Wilcox Feb.17 (S&JB). 30 to 40 at Markham Bypass Feb.25 (SLo).
 Song Sparrow - 1 at M.MacKenzie & Hwy.27 Feb.27 (JLo).
 White-throated Sparrow – 3@M.MacKenzie/Hwy.27 Feb1-28(JLo). 3 at 34 Shady Lane Thornhill Feb.01-28 (SVa).
 Dark-eyed Junco - 10 at Nantucket Dr. Oak Ridges Feb.01-28 (SDP).
 Snow Bunting - small flock at 10th Line & Major MacKenzie Feb.08 (SLo). 50 at Markham Bypass Feb.12 (SLo).
 Northern Cardinal - 9+@Shdy Ln Thrnhl Feb1-28(SVa). 5 (4 f, 1 m)@Woodward Av Thrnhl Feb4(H&MF).
 9 -10@Arnold Ave., Thornhill Feb.17-21 (TH,DTH).
 Purple Finch - 1 M at 4 Grenfell Markham (Carol Mck) Feb.19 (CMK).
 Common Redpoll - 25 at Ozark Pk.-10 Nantucket Oak Ridges Feb.15, 6 on Feb.22 (TM&GR).
 Pine Siskin - 30 at Mount Albert Main Street Feb.17 (AI).
 American Goldfinch -15@Nantucket Ok Rdgs Feb1-28(SDP). 40@Ozark Pk. Ok Rdgs Feb15(TM&GR).
 22-35@Lake Wilcox Feb.16-21 (S&JB).
 Al Anne Ives, CMK Carol McKnight, DJM Dave Milsom, DPe Don Perks, DTH Doris Hofmann, G&CD Gene & Charlene Denzel,
 GD Gene Denzel, H&MF Harold & Muriel Farrant, JCa John Carley, JKi Jane Kirkpatrick, JLo Joan Love, KRS Kevin Shackleton,
 PG Phyllis Graydon, RJF Ron Fleming, S&JB Sharon & Jim Bradley, SDP Susan DiPucchio, SLo Stan Long, SVa Sandy Vanderbrug,
 TH Theo Hofmann, TM&GR Theresa McKenzie Glenn Reed.

From the Editor

As many of you know I have been working for a company in Markham that often sent me overseas to South Korea. Because of this I have an interest in what happens in Asia and South Korea, and have been following the proceedings of one particular project that the South Korean government has undertaken that has potentially grave consequences for birds in Eastern Asia. This project has been ongoing for many years.

The Korean Federation for Environmental Movement in conjunction with Friends of the Earth Korea has been fighting a government plan to build a giant seawall along a huge portion of a significant tidal flat on the Korean coastline that is a major stopping point for migratory birds in Asia. The tidal flat is called the *Saemangeum* wetland and the project is called the *Saemangeum Reclamation Project*.

The tidal flat and wetland is vitally important to migratory waterfowl in Asia. For instance, a joint Korea-Japan Survey Team just recently discovered 4 unrecorded species from the Saemangeum wetland. However, the wetland and tidal flats are not only vitally important to migrating waterbirds -- they are also the lifeblood of thousands of fishermen who have been sustainably using the tidal flats for generations. The fishermen just recently received notice that they had to move all of their ships to the outside as the seawall as construction approaches completion.

Their story is the tragic ongoing account of cultural and ecological destruction at the hands of central planners. The loss of these tidal flats will encompass more than the wetland and the sealife that helped the locals to raise and educate their children, but also the unique names of the wetlands along with the histories and the legends associated with them, which have passed from generation to generation. The entirety of the cultural and ecological systems that have kept these fishing villages alive for centuries will be wiped out with the draining of this vast wetland. The wetlands are so important culturally to the Korean people that last year religious leaders marched with their 'knees on earth' all the way from the Saemangeum area to Seoul. The religious leaders' way of marching was by making a full bow down to the earth every three steps.

I encourage all of our members to try and learn more about this devastating project by visiting the following website: <http://fass.or.kr/eng/index.php>.

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