



# THE BULLETIN

December 2006 No. 459

## 2005-2006 EXECUTIVE

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## Events calendar

- Botany Group** There will be no Botany meeting in January  
Monday February 5, 2007  
Topic: Wild orchids  
Where: Siglint Fitting, 25 Citation Dr, Toronto
- Executive Meeting** Tuesday January 9, 2007. 7:00pm
- Bird Group** Wednesday January 10, 2007  
Topic: Semi-Palmated and Wilson's Plover  
Where: Mike Turk's, Thornhill 905-731-8380
- General Meeting** Thursday January 18, 2006. 7:30PM  
Speaker: Crystal Piche  
Topic: **Art in Killarney Park**  
Location: Richmond Hill Presbyterian Church,  
Wallace Hall. 10066 Yonge St.  
North of Major Mackenzie Dr., West side.

**Check for more Events and Outings on Page 2**

## The Quiet Disappearance of Pollinating Insects

When was the last time you saw a bug screen on a car or truck?

I first thought about it two summers ago when my windshield only killed two bugs the entire summer. During that time I also hiked through [Balsam Lake Provincial Park](#) here in Ontario. Instead of clouds of insects rising around me as I walked through grassy natural meadows, I saw nothing. It was like walking through a diorama in a museum - lifeless except for the plants. A hike to some Vernal ponds in dense bush, again at Balsam Lake, on the other side, was the same - no bugs, no frogs, no salamanders and even more shocking, the rotted logs when ripped open had nothing in them either, no ants, no centipedes, no millipedes, no beetles - nothing. And this time I was really looking. Not a transect mind you, but it shouldn't take a transect to find what was formerly abundant life. All I saw were six mosquitoes, and on the verges, a few dragon flies and damsel flies and a monarch. That was it.

We did have more Monarchs this year, but I don't believe they can sustain their population because of habitat destruction, pesticides and air pollution all the way through the US and their destination in Mexico. Other butterflies were very few and far between last summer and many were completely absent such as Red Admirals, Question Marks, Blues and so on. The skipper population is practically non-existent. That is not to say they are all gone, but they were once a common sight. Now they are rare.

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 2nd Thursday 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.

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### 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. You may also sign up or renew at <http://www.rhnaturalists.ca/membership/>

### NEW MEMBERS:

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

## EVENTS FUTURE



- **Tuesday January 9, 2007.** 7pm. The first **Executive Meeting** of 2007 will be held at the selected location.



- **Wednesday January 10, 2007.** The **Bird Group** will meet at Mike Turk's, 217 Romfield Circ., Thornhill. Contact Mike at 905-731-8380 for details. The topic will be Semi-Palmated and Wilson's Plover.



- **Thursday January 18, 2007.** 7:30pm. The first **General Meeting** of 2007 will again be at the Richmond Hill Presbyterian Church, Wallace Hall. 10066 Yonge St. in downtown Richmond Hill, just north of Major Mackenzie Dr. on the west side. **The speaker for January will be Crystal Piche.** Her topic will be "**Art in Killarney Park**". Crystal is an up and coming artist and spent her summer working for Ontario Parks leading art tours. She will talk about Killarney Provincial Park as a 'Mecca' for artists including the Group of Seven. Come see beautiful art slides!



- **Monday February 5, 2007.** The February meeting of the Richmond Hill Naturalists **Botany Group** will be held at the home of Siglind Fitting, 25 Citation Drive in Toronto. The topic will be "Wild orchids". There is no Jan. meeting.

**Please note: Richmond Hill Naturalists welcomes anyone to volunteer as an outing leader.**



- **Sunday January 14, 2007.** 1:30pm. "**Winter Wonderland**" guided public mid-winter hike at the Rouge Valley Conservation Centre. Phone 416-282-8265. Free.



- **Sunday January 28, 2007.** 1:30pm. **Rouge Valley Nature Walk** Meet at the parking lot at the Bailey Bridge in the Finch Meander, Old Finch Rd. Free, rain or shine. Approx. 1-1/2 to 2 hrs.

...Continued from P1.

## MEMBER SUBMISSIONS



### The Quiet Disappearance of Pollinating Insects

I haven't seen hawk moths, sphinx moths, cecropias, or underwings for years. The millions of smaller moths that gathered at porch lights are vestigial populations and Mayflies that once used to blanket roads and buildings are nearly history and much smaller than their forebears. In the absence of all these insects, what do you suppose is going on under the water? Fish are huge consumers of aquatic insects, larvae and adult phases.



Without substantial insect populations, our fish populations can't survive. Same goes for birds too. Ottawa's purple martin population has been decimated. They eat insects.

I was in Trinidad at the beginning of October and I saw first hand the evidence that insects are disappearing there too - and I don't mean just the pollinators. Insects of every nearly every description appear to be in peril. We had a power failure the second night I was there. The entire area was black. Trinidad is on the equator and jungle conditions prevail in the smallest wild areas. We had candles burning inside and out, doors and windows open - it was hot - not one bug showed up in the entire evening!

The next day I had a meeting with a formerly well-known scientist and naturalist and related my observations in Canada and the previous evening in Belmont, Port of Spain. At first he was disinclined to agree with me, showing his innate disinclination to believe anything without checking it 85 times. But then I pointed out that we were standing in front of the monkey house in the middle of the zoo (and that is one very old fashioned concrete and steel barred zoo) that is not exactly spic and span (though not dirty either) and there were no bugs of any description to be seen. We walked the entire zoo without seeing a single insect of any description. To be sure I did see butterflies when I was there and I was there only two days. However, I've been to Trinidad enough times to know a troubled environment when I see one. Besides that, having already noticed the steep decline in Canada, I was focussed on the issue from the moment we landed. My recollections are of plenty of winged nocturnal insects and no shortage of flies or mosquitos. Seeing nothing but a few butterflies was a profound shock.



The situation is even more alarming if you stop to consider that frog populations are also crashing. They are going extinct planet wide. You would think that since frogs subsist on insects there would be a dramatic bloom of insects in the nearly complete absence of a significant category of predators. But that is not happening. The frogs are established to be going extinct including here in Canada. They have already been extirpated from much of their range.

I've contacted a number of scientists on the issue and found that for the most part they are completely oblivious. Fortunately, not everyone is asleep at the switch, but it still demonstrates how completely out of touch they still are with respect to the impact of the overall degeneration of the entire planet's atmosphere and the chemical science behind it. Those of you who have read my book, "**Land Grab in North Pickering**" will have no trouble understanding how VOC's impact respiratory systems in all living things.

There is no way we can afford to keep developing land as we have in the past. Considering how long we have been hammering this message home, it's about time the public is finally starting to get it. We have no time to lose in putting together plans to try and reverse the damage before it goes beyond redemption.

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People who didn't believe the scientists about the coming [sixth wave of extinction](#) (us and all other mammals) need to rethink their positions. In 1998, scientists said the [Larson B Ice Shelf in Antarctica](#) -- a sheet of ice as big as the entire state of Rhode Island -- would take a thousand years to melt. In 2002 the entire shelf fell into the sea and broke up in one week. That's a huge margin of error. Other ice packs around the world are quickly following suit. When they are gone, areas watered by those icesheets will become desert. The American mid-west is one of those areas. Most Americans still don't get it.

In 2005 over thirteen hundred of the world's most learned scientists told us we have until 2050 to clean up our environmental act or face extinction. We can only hope that their margin of error is not as out of whack as the previous bunch. Regardless, I think we can all accept that we have past the point where we can afford to fool around with this.

We are going to be in for some very tough love - not just here in Canada -- but every country in the world is going to have to cooperate -- like it or not. The consequences will be brutal if we don't get this right fast enough.

In Europe, they get it. At election time, parties and candidates are falling all over themselves to be the greenest public servants available. Here in Canada, people are only starting to wake up to the magnitude of the work we face.



- John Newell, Mayoral Candidate, Pickering, October 20, 2006

# LOCAL NEWS



**Oak Ridges Moraine: The Buck Stops Here** – RHN Members Marianne Yake, Carrie Hoffelner, Sharon Bradley and myself (Natalie Helferty) have been involved in several meetings and committees on the various issues that are cropping up that are challenging the integrity of the Oak Ridges Moraine in Richmond Hill as we plan for our future.

The Oak Ridges Corridor Park Plan is now up for 'endorsement' by RHN, despite a less than stellar document by the consultants for TRCA and a partly-paved truck-width trail that has been built across the moraine park lands. We asked for a narrow trail to have minimal disturbance and prohibit vehicle access, similar to Algonquin Park trails, but

to no avail. Sharon has thankfully managed to get York Region Police to set up a system where licence plates of ATV's and dirt bikes will be traced and a warning letter sent to those motor vehicle offenders.

In our public meetings for the Park, we repeatedly expressed the need for wildlife passage under or over Yonge Street. This need was downplayed, despite the plans to restore the park to forest promoting more wildlife. And said as "too expensive" despite the wildlife passage that I managed to get under Bayview and Bathurst Streets for amphibians and the Bridge over the sand barren ravine on Bayview that Michael White managed to secure, all in 2001—one budget year! Marianne and I have talked to Regional staff about wildlife passage under or over Yonge Street through the Environmental Assessment (EA) processes that are currently ongoing as well. Being planned for are: dedicated bus lanes down the centre of Yonge Street, a water pipe up Yonge Street with a water tower on Bloomington at Yonge, as well as our hydro utility (Powerstream) that is about to install hydro poles along Bayview Avenue in the Park. We want the hydro lines buried and we are wondering about the need for a new water tower, since the old one is proposed for demolition. This water pipe is to feed development on the moraine.

This creeping infrastructure is an issue that must be addressed as it will cause cumulative impacts in terms of facilitating more growth on the moraine and northward. STORM's recent interview in The Liberal does not concur with our understanding that the [Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act](#) (ORMCA), along with the [Greenbelt Act](#), is indeed a means for the Province to stem 'urban sprawl' and provide for intensification using '[smartgrowth](#)' methods within existing built up urban areas as was to be facilitated through the "[Places to Grow Act](#)".

In the Oak Ridges Moraine Act, Section 41 regarding Infrastructure across the moraine needs to be addressed by the Province. So far, we have been shuttled between the Province and the municipalities whenever we try to pin down the person who is supposed to be overseeing and administering the ORMCA.

As testimony to the need for a wildlife passage, a coyote was recently killed trying to cross Yonge Street where I proposed the "wildlife bridge" be built. I took these photos on Dec. 15 and according to Carrie it was there at least 4 days earlier.



So, despite the *Oak Ridges Moraine Act and Plan* and the **Greenbelt Act and Plan**, as well as the *Places to Grow Act and Growth Plan*, we are still in the position of having to fight the Region of York tooth and nail over every application that is coming forward!

This is true especially for road widenings like for that of Bayview Avenue, which is slated to be widened to 5 lanes north of Elgin Mills and 7 lanes south of 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue!



In spite of York Region's plan to update the "Transportation Master Plan of 2002", the road widening EAs are moving forward before the Master Plan is updated! Talk about putting the motorized cart before the horse!

We are consistently frustrated when dealing with the [York Region Transportation & Works Department](#) and their lack of a comprehensive vision for a future that is both 'nature-based' and protects the moraine and our natural resources -- including our health. They also are proposing a 'thermal waste-to-energy solution' (incinerator) for our garbage for all the non-recyclable toxic plastics that should be banned, but are still being produced (avoid plastics #3, 6, 7). There is no thought about a local 'green bin' organic treatment facility despite all municipalities shipping our organics to Quebec for treatment.

But there is some hope in the Planning Department. The Regional Planners have finally acknowledged Climate Change and Peak Oil (see <http://www.peakoil.net> for more info about this issue of fossil fuel depletion and rising demand) through their 'Planning for New Communities' public input process.

What is ironic however -- despite their recognition of these two major Global issues -- is that the 'new communities' that they are planning are slated for the last remaining farmland outside the Greenbelt -- in places like Queensville and in the prime agricultural area of Holland Marsh

We have already essentially relegated all farming to three main "Class 1" farmland areas (the Holland Marsh, the Niagara Peninsula, and the Duffins-Rouge Agricultural Preserve) to feed the population of the entire GTA in all perpetuity -- even after our Global oil reserves eventually run dry or become so rare that bloody wars and takeovers collapse the Global economy -- which is already starting to happen in places like Africa, Iraq and Afganistan as well as their spill-over effects in Russia and Chechnya. All these conflicts are essentially over oil.

China is growing like crazy, and its government has tried to buy oil companies wherever they can find a willing seller. They may not wait in future for 'willingness' if push comes to shove. Corporate takeovers are an easy and legal method to acquire resources -- and Free Trade facilitates this. It is likely that China will eventually get much of the resources generated from abroad, including a good portion of our Canadian oil sands. And, in addition to these pressures, water will likely become the new "oil" of the future in terms of importance, especially given climate change-driven droughts and floods.

So, despite the 'Ecovillage' concept being accepted by Neil Rogers, President of the [Urban Development Institute](#), and his curiosity when I raised the prospect of a 'car-free community' design, the Region does not have any plans to change the way current development is designed, i.e., 'urban sprawl' -- car-based communities of single-family homes separated from work and resources. Shopping is still being designed as 'big box' car-based malls based on perpetual oil-driven cheap imports, including food. No local food security is being contemplated.

Climate change impacts on California, Florida and Washington and even our own Prairies as food-growing 'bread baskets' of the world are ignored. Where will we get our food if it's too costly or can't be shipped with oil depletion in the next few years as 'peak oil' hits home? Yes, that is the timeline within which we will feel the impacts economically given that the easy oil is gone -- it's in the atmosphere already.

Nature is at the heart of our existence on earth and yet the Region is still so disconnected by its own 'growth' mandate that it fails to make the connections to what is truly sustainable. That will have to change, and soon.

- Natalie Helferty, Past President

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### North Leslie Decision Not Conducive to Moraine Protection

-- On Tuesday November 11, 2006, (a day to remember indeed), the Ontario Municipal Board [OMB] made a final decision (#3289) about the "North Leslie Lands", the block of land in the northeast corner of Richmond Hill from Elgin Mills Road East to 19th Avenue and from Bayview Avenue to Hwy. 404.



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The area takes in three major tributaries of the Rouge River and is a discharge area for the Oak Ridges Moraine. The province's greenbelt legislation designated much of the land near the rivers and valleys as protected lands.

The Board ruled on the side of the developers and current landowners who intend to build upwards of 7,800 homes (as sewer capacity allows) in the 1530 acre space, about 26% of which is to be protected for environmental reasons in the Greenbelt, which protects only the river corridors. The remaining land is the Rouge Headwaters and is also a significant archeological area for First Nations, with some of the oldest artefacts found here dating back to about 7000 BC – to the time of the Paleo-Indians who hunted caribou on these lands after the last ice age.

If 7800 homes are built and each is sold for an average price of \$400,000, total gross revenue for the homes will be over \$3 billion. If each home corresponds to 1.5 motor vehicles, this will mean an additional 11,700 vehicles in Richmond Hill, all trying to get to work down Highway 404 and Leslie Street in the morning.

The Town of Richmond Hill had sought the eastern third of the subject lands, between Leslie and Highway 404, and between Elgin Mills Road East and 19th Avenue, to be designated as employment lands. However the decision document stated that, "Ever so slightly, (the factors that the Board considered) collectively suggested that residential land uses would be more appropriate (for portions of the land)." The Town was able to retain about 2/3rds of the land it wanted for employment purposes. This land between Leslie Street and Highway 404 is owned by long-time residents the Bawden and Wood families who wanted a heritage home community, at most.

Rick Smith, executive director of Environmental Defence, which partnered with Save the Rouge Valley to fight the developers said, "We need to be planning communities that don't contribute to urban sprawl, that support public transit and are people-oriented." This decision unfortunately does not do that. We are hopeful that the new Planning Commissioner for Richmond Hill, Ana Bassios, will take into consideration the lack of sewage services for this land, as well as the need to protect the archaeological history of the land when subdivision applications come forward.

Bruce Rhodes, a Richmond Hill resident who submitted a written argument to the board in defence of the employment lands and sat in on the hearing, was also disappointed with the outcome of the hearing. *"It's unfortunate the province has put so much pressure on Richmond Hill that it is compelled to develop the few remaining greenfields."* Mr. Rhodes said, adding this type of residential growth will only worsen traffic congestion.

The RHN submission was a proposal for a project called 'The ROSE Garden' that would pay tribute to Richmond Hill's history as the [Rose Growing Capital of Canada](#). The proposal integrated a 'green bin' organic treatment facility that would provide start-up for a *Restoration Industry*. The plan included a facility that would have the capacity to create both heat and soil for local greenhouse food production and would be in keeping with the Rouge Strategy. This land is the last remaining Class 1 farmland in Richmond Hill.

The ROSE project could have also been integrated (through both energy and waste heat production) with the "Hilltop Retirement Community" that was being proposed by John Fedyna, who also presented to the OMB at the public meeting. John wanted to build a walkable mixed-use retirement community for his lands. He was not a Party at the OMB hearing however, so none of his public comments were part of the OMB decision.

- Natalie Helferty, Past President

## NATURE NEWS

### **High-Tech Barn Swallows**

A couple of Minnesota Barn Swallows have raised the bar on the scale of "Swallow IQ." For the past four years, a pair of Barn Swallows has nested inside the lumberyard entryway at the Home Depot store in Maplewood, Minnesota.

At least one pair has learned that if they fly a tight circle in front of the motion detector above the double doors at the entry to the Home Depot, the doors open. Each bird then flies one more loop as the doors open and swoop inside where the pair has built a nest atop a small pipe near the ceiling. When a bird is ready to leave, it flies a tight circle in front of the motion detector inside the doorway and the doors again open for Home Depot's small avian customers.



Keith Stomberg, a supervisor at the store, first noticed the birds nesting inside in the summer of 2001. He was fascinated by their apparent learned behaviour and left them alone to raise their families. It was a good place for the swallows to raise their young because there were no predators or bad weather. The pair typically raised two broods each year. When the birds returned to nest in 2003, he contacted the staff of the Non-game Wildlife Program of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

Wildlife biologist Joan Galli observed the nesting swallows and was amazed to see how the birds had adapted to the unique setting in order to raise their families. "We typically think of the crow family and the parrot family as among the most intelligent of birds," according to Galli, "but apparently the swallows have a few tricks of their own that help us appreciate how birds are constantly adapting to survive in novel human-created environments!"

- Diana Piche

## EVENTS PAST

- On **Friday December 8, 2006** a ***Monitoring the Moraine Ecological Monitoring Workshop*** was held in order to formalize a suite of community-based monitoring protocols for the Oak Ridges Moraine that will be used by the public to assess and track changes to terrestrial and aquatic features of the landscape.

- On **Thursday December 7, 2006** the [Ontario Greenbelt Alliance](#) issued a press release indicating that an Ontario Cabinet decision to approve a quarry expansion that will harm the environmentally sensitive Niagara Escarpment. The area in question has one of the highest levels of protection within the Niagara Escarpment Plan Area, and is included in Ontario's new Greenbelt. The McGuinty Cabinet decision contradicts the Liberal government's commitment to the Greenbelt.

The Niagara Escarpment is a [UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve](#), an international designation for ecologically significant areas. Dufferin Aggregates had proposed to expand its mining activities by nearly 70 hectares into Ontario's Greenbelt. The Dufferin Aggregates proposal is one of many quarry expansion proposals in the Greenbelt. When added together, these quarries will have a huge negative environmental impact

The Cabinet decision likely came about because Dufferin has proposed handing 1,000 acres (405 hectares) of rehabilitated quarry lands over to public ownership. This exchange sends the message to developers that the Greenbelt boundary is a "moveable target".

Last year the "Consolidated Hearings Board" decided to allow the expansion to go ahead. The Coalition on the Niagara Escarpment ([CONE](#)) and Protect our Water and Environmental Resources ([POWER](#)), both members of the [Ontario Greenbelt Alliance](#), used their appeal right to Cabinet, in the hope of preventing the destruction of this fundamental part of Ontario's natural landscape.

The proposed site is already the home of the infamous "Dufferin Gap", a highly visible gouge blasted out of the cliff face of the escarpment by a quarry company in 1962 – and was this flash point that led to the much-praised protection program for the escarpment, the strength of which is now in question.

To try and mitigate the effects of their expanded quarrying on the groundwater table and on local creeks and wetlands, Dufferin Aggregates has proposed engineering works that will require management and maintenance in perpetuity because of massive physical alterations to the landscape.

For more information contact Jennifer Foulds, Environmental Defence [416-323-9521 ex232 or 647-280-521 (cell)] or Leslie Adams, P.O.W.E.R. [905-877-4766.]

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- On **Wednesday December 6, 2006** an Environmental Assessment [EA] meeting was held at the Chinese Community Church at Bayview and Weldrick Road in Richmond Hill concerning the widening of Bayview Avenue south of 16th Avenue. Marianne Yake attended on behalf of RHN. Many more roads are planned for widening.

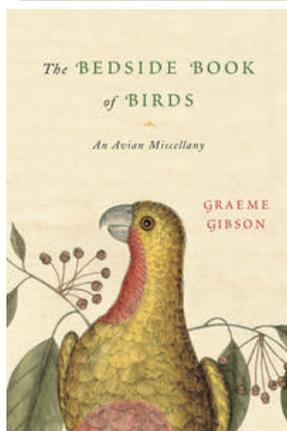
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- On **Thursday November 30**, 2006 The Ontario government took another step forward toward re-opening the [Frost Centre](#) in Haliburton by approving FCI Group as the preferred proponent. The government is discussing with the company the finalization of a long-term lease to operate the facility with an emphasis on environmental and outdoor education programs. Work is underway to see the centre operating by June 2007.



- On **Wednesday November 29**, 2006 the Loree Forest, located on the Niagara Escarpment, was renamed to the "Len Gertler Memorial Loree Forest" to honour the man who helped develop the Niagara Escarpment Plan – a cornerstone of the Ontario Greenbelt. Len Gertler, who died in 2005, was considered a founding father of urban and environmental planning in Canada.

The Len Gertler Memorial Loree Forest covers 339 hectares and is one of the most outstanding parks on the escarpment offering spectacular views and many outdoor activities. The park, located in the Blue Mountains, is halfway between Collingwood and Thornbury overlooking Georgian Bay.



- On **Thursday November 23**, 2006 the Joint Meeting of Richmond Hill Naturalists and the West Humber Naturalists was held at the Kortright Centre in Vaughan.

Our honourable guest speaker was Graeme Gibson, author of "The Bedside Book of Birds".

Graham presented his latest book which has been described as, "an unprecedented and enchanting treasure trove of paintings, drawings, poems, essays, and scientific observations beautifully capturing the interest and emotions birds evoke".

Graham is partner of writer Margaret Atwood and a recent speaker for the Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust.



On **Thursday, November 30**, the last meeting was held of the Rouge River Watershed Team developing the Rouge River Watershed Plan. Endorsement was given, with public meetings still pending in the new year.

The Rouge Strategy was developed over 3 years with various stakeholders including RHN. The conclusion is that "if future development proceeds with current approaches to community design and stormwater management, it will not be possible to maintain current conditions, let alone improve them. Instead, we can expect additional deterioration of environmental conditions and associated quality of life. Further, our analysis showed that even if the most innovative sustainable community measures are applied, this deterioration cannot be completely prevented."

For more info, please see Natalie Helferty as RHN Rep on the Rouge River Watershed Team. (Thanks Marianne for acting as Alternate when I couldn't make it! Natalie)

## BIRD OBSERVATIONS

### November 2006

#### Durham Region

Tundra Swan - 4 at Cranberry Marsh, Hall Road on Nov.11 (SLo).

#### Peel Region

Northern Harrier - 1 at Mt. Wolfe & Halls Rd. Nov.25 (GoC).

Merlin - 1 at Dixie & King Rds. Nov.28 (GoC).

Wild Turkey - 36 at Albion Trail Nov.28 (GoC).

Eastern Screech-Owl - 1 at Graydon Property, Humber Grove Nov.01 [Singing Male] (PG).

Great Horned Owl - 1 at Palgrave Conservation Area Nov.02 (PG).

Red-bellied Woodpecker - 1 at Palgrave Conservation Area Nov.05-20 (Mr.Lauri Kangas).  
 Common Raven - 2 at Hunsden S.R. Nov.01 (anon. fide PG). 2 at Palgrave Conservation Area Nov.02 (PG).  
 Red-breasted Nuthatch - several at Palgrave Conservation Area Nov.02 (PG).  
 White-breasted Nuthatch - several at Palgrave Conservation Area Nov.02 (PG).  
 Swainson's Thrush - 1 at Palgrave Conservation Area Nov.02 (PG,GoM).  
 Fox Sparrow - 3 at Palgrave Conservation Area Nov.02 (PG,GoM).  
 White-crowned Sparrow - 3 at Palgrave Conservation Area Nov.02 (PG).  
 Dark-eyed Junco - 40 at Palgrave Conservation Area Nov.02 (PG,GoM).  
 Common Redpoll - 150-200 at Castlederg Road Nov.27 [Flying over] (PG).

#### York Region

Common Loon - 37 at Cook's Bay (S End) Nov.04 (KDu).  
 Red-necked Grebe - 1 at Cook's Bay,S Shore Lake Simcoe Nov.15 (KDu,CDu fide RJF).  
 Great Blue Heron – 1 @Pioneer Pk Rich Hill Nov10(MCh). 3 @ W. End Rvnshoe Rd Nov24(GL).  
 20+ empty Nests@Heronry on Leslie St Nov24(GL,RCu). 1@Reesor Pnds Mrkhm Nov28(SLo).  
 Snow Goose - 1 at Soldier's Bay Holland Landing Nov.22 (BB).  
 Cackling Goose - 8 at Reesor Ponds Markham Nov.19 (SLo).  
 Trumpeter Swan - 2 ad., 1 juv. at Lake Wilcox Nov.01-03 (S&JB). 1 at Cook's Bay (S End) Nov.19 (CDu).  
 Tundra Swan - 20 ad.,2 imm. at Cook's Bay,S Shore Lake Simcoe Nov.17 (KDu).  
 Northern Shoveler - several at Cook's Bay,S Shore Lake Simcoe Nov.18 (KRS).  
 Green-winged Teal – 10 @Reesor Pnds Mrkhm Nov4(SLo). Several@Cook's Bay,S Shore Lk Simcoe Nov18(KRS).  
 Canvasback - 1 at Cook's Bay (S End) Nov.19 (CDu).  
 Surf Scoter - ? at Cook's Bay,S Shore Lake Simcoe Nov.15 (KDu,CDu fide RJF).  
 White-winged Scoter - ? at Cook's Bay,S Shore Lake Simcoe Nov.15 (KDu,CDu fide RJF).  
 Black Scoter - ? at Cook's Bay,S Shore Lake Simcoe Nov.15 (KDu,CDu fide RJF).  
 Bufflehead - 800 at Jackson's Point, L. Simcoe Nov.24 (GL). 6 at Reesor Ponds Markham Nov.30 (SLo).  
 Hooded Merganser - 6 at W. End Ravenshoe Rd. Nov.15 (RJF).  
 Common Merganser - 5 at Reesor Ponds Markham Nov.30 (SLo).  
 Northern Harrier - 2 at Reesor Ponds Markham Nov.01 (SLo). 1 F at Reesor Ponds Markham Nov.21 (SLo).  
 Sharp-shinned Hawk - 1 at 4 Grenfell Markham (Carol Mck) Nov.01 (CMK).  
 Cooper's Hawk – 1 @Coyote Pnd, Mrkhm Nov4(SLo). 1 @Lk Wilcox Nov5(S&JB). 1 @Oak Rdgs Park Nov8(S&JB).  
 1 @Arnold Ave, Thrnhl Nov17(TH,DTH). 1 @Avenue Rd Nwmrkt Nov17(CDu). 1 @Idleswift Thrnhl Nov30(G&CD)  
 Red-tailed Hawk - 8 during Drive Richmond H - Lake Simcoe Nov.24 (GL).  
 Merlin - 1 at Reesor Ponds Markham Nov.26 (SLo). Dark morph.  
 Ring-necked Pheasant - 1 at Reesor Ponds Markham Nov.01 (SLo).  
 Killdeer - 1 at Reesor Ponds Markham Nov.16 (SLo).  
 Greater Yellowlegs - 1 at Coyote Pond, Markham Nov.15 (SLo). 1 at W. End Ravenshoe Rd. Nov.18 (KRS).  
 Lesser Yellowlegs - 1 at Reesor Ponds Markham Nov.04 (SLo). 1 at W. End Ravenshoe Rd. Nov.15 (RJF).  
 Sanderling - 1 at Reesor Ponds Markham Nov.15 (SLo fide CMK); Nov.16-17 (SLo).  
 Pectoral Sandpiper - 2 at Coyote Pond, Markham Nov.06 (SLo).  
 Great Black-backed Gull - 1 Juv at Reesor Ponds Markham Nov.02 (SLo).  
 Great Horned Owl - 1 at Dunlap Observatory Nov.01 (NH,MaY).  
 Snowy Owl - 1 at Ravenshoe Nov.15 (KDu,CDu fide RJF).  
 Barred Owl – 1 @YRF, Hollidge Tr. Nov27(KFu). ?@YRF, Hollidge Tr. mid-Nov [Singing Male] (LoP).  
 Long-eared Owl - 1 at Holland River Trail Newmarket Nov.11 (MvdT fide RJF).  
 Short-eared Owl – 1 @Reesor Pnds Mrkhm Nov23(SLo). 1 @Reesor Pnds Mrkhm Nov24 [Flying West] (SLo).  
 Northern Saw-whet Owl - 1 at M.MacKenzie & Hwy.27,J.Love Nov.26 (JLo). Whitewash only seen regularly.  
 Belted Kingfisher - 2 at Bartley Smith Greenway Nov.12 (H&MF). 1 at M.MacKenzie & Hwy.27,J.Love Nov.22 (JLo).  
 Hairy Woodpecker – 2 @M.MacK & Hwy.27, Nov.1-30(JLo). 1 @Grenfell Markham Nov.09-30(CMK).  
 Pileated Woodpecker – 1 @Oak Rdgs Crdr Park Nov8(S&JB). 4 (2ad 2juv) @YRF, Hollidge Tr. Nov30(anon fide LoP).  
 Northern Shrike – 1 @Bthrst N of Green Ln Nov11(MvdT). 1 @W End Holborn Rd Nov18(KRS).  
 1 @W. End Ravenshoe Rd. Nov.19 (CDu). 1 at Reesor Ponds Markham Nov.28 (SLo).  
 Red-breasted Nuthatch - 2 (pair) at Grenfell Mrkhm Nov1-30(CMK). 2 (pair) @M.MacK/Hwy.27 Nov1-30(JLo).  
 2 @123 Woodward Ave., Thornhill Nov.01-30 (H&MF).

Carolina Wren - 1 at Elmhurst Bch: Keith Dunn Home Nov.19 (KDu).  
 Ruby-crowned Kinglet - 4 at Lake Wilcox Nov.06 (S&JB).  
 Eastern Bluebird - 12 at Granger Greenway Trail Kleinbg Nov. 01-03 (TS).  
 Hermit Thrush - 1 at 4 Grenfell Markham (Carol Mck) Nov.06 (CMK).  
 Northern Mockingbird - 1 at Jonquil & Robinson Rds. Nov.15 (CMK). 1 at Idleswift Thornhill Nov.30 (G&CD)  
 American Pipit - 6 at Reesor Ponds Markham Nov.06 (SLo).  
 Black-throated Blue Warbler - 1 M at Dunlap Observatory Nov.16-17 (DCh).  
 Yellow-rumped Warbler - 1 at Toogood Pond, Unionville Nov.05 (H&MF).  
 American Tree Sparrow – 30@Oak Rdgs Crdr Pk Nov8(S&JB). Small flock@W End Holborn Rd Nov18(KRS).  
 3@Reesor Ponds Markham Nov.29 (SLo).  
 Swamp Sparrow - 1 at Snider Marsh Markham Nov.08 (CMK).  
 White-throated Sparrow - 5 at Lake Wilcox Nov.02 (S&JB).  
 Dark-eyed Junco - 12 at M.MacKenzie & Hwy.27,J.Love Nov.01-30 (JLo).  
 Lapland Longspur - 3 at Reesor Ponds Markham Nov.26 (SLo).  
 Snow Bunting - 60 at W. End Ravenshoe Rd. Nov.03 (KDu). small flock at W End Holborn Road Nov.18 (KRS).  
 Northern Cardinal - 4 at 4 Grenfell Markham (Carol Mck) Nov.01-30 (CMK).  
**BB Bruce Brydon, CAT Carol Ann Trabert, CDu Chris Dunn, CMK Carol McKnight, DCh Deborah Chute, DTH Doris Hofmann, G&CD Gene & Charlene Denzel, GL Graham Leonard, GoC Gord Cameron, GoM Gordon Morton, H&MF Harold & Muriel Farrant, JLo Joan Love, KDu Keith Dunn, KFu Karen Fulwood & School Group, KRS Kevin Shackleton, LoP Lorie Parrott, MaY Marianne Yake, MCh Martin Chen, MvdT Mike van den Tillaart, NH Natalie Helferty, PG Phyllis Graydon, RCu Robert Cubbitt, RJF Ron Fleming, S&JB Sharon & Jim Bradley, SLo Stan Long, TH Theo Hofmann, TS Tessa Shelvey.**

## From the Editor

### Holiday Safety Tips for Pets and Wildlife - From the Oak Ridges Friends of the Environment

The holiday season means lots of food, drink and sharing good times with family and friends. However, the same treats and trimmings considered harmless for humans can be hazardous to the health of your pet as well as that of wildlife. Here are some helpful hints:

- Chocolate or holiday baking with chocolate can be potentially poisonous to many animals and birds. In general, the less sweet the chocolate, the more toxic it could be. It can cause vomiting, diarrhea, seizures and other behavioural disorders.
- Replace metal ornament hooks with tightly knotted fabric ribbons or yarn to slip easily over branches of the tree.
- Keep aluminum foil, cellophane candy wrappers, and tinsel away from pets and dispose of them carefully so that wildlife cannot be attracted to them. They can cause vomiting and intestinal blockage.
- Holiday plants such as poinsettias, amaryllis, mistletoe, ivy, hibiscus and holly are poisonous to pets. Lilies in holiday floral arrangements can cause kidney failure in cats.
- Tape electrical cords to the walls or floors to ensure that your pet will not chew on them.
- Resist tying ribbons around pets' necks for the holidays – pets can tighten ribbons by their movements resulting in choking.
- Caution visitors against giving pets "special treats". Holiday treats and cuisine, especially fatty food scraps and bones are very harmful to pets.
- Do not put out bread crumbs or your leftover stuffing for the wild birds. Bread swells in the birds' stomachs making them feel full but provides very little nutrient value. This can be fatal in the harsh cold of Canadian winters. Try plain popped popcorn, sunflower seeds, peanuts or fruit and fruit seeds instead.

Another special cold weather alert – please be very careful with your anti-freeze. This chemical is very sweet tasting to pets and wildlife thus they are attracted to it. It is also extremely poisonous. Thus, you should clean up any spills very carefully.

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