



# THE BULLETIN

February 2007 No. 461

## 2005-2006 EXECUTIVE

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## Events calendar

<b>Botany Group</b>	Monday March 5, 2007 Topic: Wild Orchids Where: 25 Citation Dr.
<b>Executive Meeting</b>	Tuesday March 13, 2007. 7:30pm Where: Robert Holland Centre
<b>Bird Group</b>	Wednesday March 14, 2007 Topic: Black and White and Blackpoll Warbler Where: Theo Hoffman's 905-889-7156 199 Arnold Ave Thornhill
<b>General Meeting</b>	Thursday March 22, 2006. 7:30PM Speaker: Dr. Daniel J. Mennill Topic: Ivory-billed Woodpecker Location: Kortright Conservation Centre 9550 Pine Valley Drive, Woodbridge, South off Major Mackenzie Drive 905.832.2289

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

## Greenspaces are making a Comeback

While suburbanites sometimes rue the lack of planning that provides few greenspaces to call their own, land reclamation projects are turning parts of York Region's urban sprawl into a green sanctuary. The Avondale composting and clay pit in Vaughan could become part of a reclaimed area. Politicians will soon vote on whether or not to buy it and make it part of the city's Maple Valley Plan. The former clay pits take up 160 acres north of Teston Rd on the east side of Keele St. The Maple Valley Plan is an ambitious project to eventually make Avondale, the former Vaughan landfill in Maple Valley, into a reclaimed natural area. Picnic areas, botanical gardens and a nature reserve are part of the plans.

But while opportunities for reclaimed land are huge, former uses must be kept in mind and monitored. In Thornhill, Settler's Park is such a well used greenspace, even those who own land nearby may not realize part of it was once a landfill. In fact, naturalists have found 40 bird species in the meadow habitat. But with the system that manages methane production due for an upgrade, residents have had to consider options for maintaining the park, which is south of John and west of Leslie streets.

Since the landfill was built before strict environmental guidelines were imposed, it has no liner around it and chemicals are starting to leach into nearby German Mills Creek. One solution is an aerobic landfill system that pumps air and water into the landfill via a series of wells to help landfill materials break down faster, ultimately reducing methane production. But residents are concerned the process might disturb the park's natural habitat.

**Cont'd on Page 6...**



*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:

**Sara Puppi**

**Nancy Zalman**

**Lynne Grabner**

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

## EVENTS FUTURE



- **Friday-Monday February 16 to 19, 2007. The Great Back Yard Bird Count** is this weekend! This is an annual four-day event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of where the birds are across the continent. Anyone can participate, from beginning bird watchers to experts. It takes as little as 15 minutes. It's free, fun, and easy—and it helps the birds. It is a joint project of the [Cornell Lab of Ornithology](http://www.cornell.edu/ornithology/) and the [Audubon Society](http://www.audubon.org/). For more information go to: <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/whycount.html>



- **Sunday, February 18 and Sunday February 25, 2007. 1pm. XC-skiing on the Oak Ridges Corridor Park trails.** Meet at the Oak Ridges trail access parking lot on the south side of Old Colony Rd., 1/2km east of Bayview. Intermediate skill level required. Contact Tom at 905-737- 4305.



- **Saturday March 3, 2007. 10:30am. Organic Lawn Care for the Cheap and Lazy.** Learn how to eliminate your dependency on pesticides & over use of fertilizers. Join the [York Region Environmental Alliance](http://www.yorkregion.ca/environmental/) for this free and informative workshop sponsored by the Town of Richmond Hill. Bayview Hills Community Centre, 114 Spadina Rd.



- **Monday March 5, 2007.** The March meeting of the Richmond Hill Naturalists **Botany Group** will be held at Siglint Fitting's, 25 Citation Dr. The topic will be Wild Orchids.



- **Saturday, March 10, 2007. 8am. Algonquin Park full day outing.** Come to Ontario's most famous provincial park where we will search for wildlife and **birds** at hot spots along the highway 60 corridor and stop at visitors centre for lunch. Leaving from Richmond Hill. Returning approx. 6pm. Contact Tom 905-737-4305.



- **Tuesday March 13, 2007. 7:30pm.** The March **Executive Meeting** will be held at [Phyllis Rawlinson Park](http://www.phyllisrawlinsonpark.com/).



- **Wednesday March 14, 2007.** The **Bird Group** will meet at Theo Hoffman's, 199 Arnold Ave in Thornhill. Contact Theo at 905-889-7156. The topic will be Black and White and Blackpoll Warbler.



- **Thursday, March 22, 2007. 7:30pm.** Joint meeting with the **West Humber Naturalists** at [Kortright Conservation Centre](http://www.kortrightconservationcentre.com/) Auditorium in Kleinburg, 9550 Pine Valley Drive, Woodbridge south of Major MacKenzie Drive. **Dr. Daniel J. Mennill** of the Univ. of Windsor will present a special lecture on his research and findings of **Ivory-billed Woodpeckers** on the Choctawhatchee River in Northwest Florida, where a number of sightings and recordings have been obtained. Tickets are **\$10.00**. Only about **100 tickets** available. To reserve call Marianne Yake (905-883-3047) or Mike Turk (905-731-8380).



- **Monday, March 26th**, 2007. 9:30 am. **Oak Ridges Corridor Park Hike** . Walk the trail from Old Colony Road to Bathurst Street through this natural moraine corridor with the Oak Ridges Trail Association. IAbout 7.5 km in length. Reasonably flat terrain. Slow pace. Meet at the Trail Car Park on Old Colony just west of Bayview Avenue.



- **Saturday, March 31**, 2007. 8am. Newmarket **Early Spring Migrants**with Ron Fleming. Meet at the Tim Horton's in south Newmarket. The target birds will be Tundra Swan, Hooded Merganser, Northern Pintail, Great Blue Heron, Eastern Meadowlark, Red-winged Blackbird and Turkey Vulture. This will be a half-day trip finishing around noon. Bring snacks, coffee money, binoculars, warm clothes and a scope (if you have one). In the event of inclement weather please phone Ron at 905-898-7216 between 7-7:30am on the morning of the trip to confirm.



- **Thursday April 12th**, 2007. 7pm. A repeat of the workshop, "**Organic Lawn Care for the Cheap and Lazy**". Elgin West Community Centre, 11099 Bathurst St.

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



- **Monday, February 19**, 2007. 7pm. Learn about Climate Change. What does Global Warming mean? Free public viewing of "**An Inconvenient Truth**", the powerful 2006 documentary by Al Gore (nominated for best documentary). Film to be followed by discussion about what actions we can each make. Evening hosted jointly by the [Aurora Community Arboretum](#) and the Town of Aurora [Environmental Advisory Committee](#). Location: Council Chambers at the Aurora Town Hall. 1 Municipal Drive. One traffic light west of Bayview and Wellington, turn north on John West Way , then left into the parking lot for the Aurora Town Hall.



- **Sunday February 25**, 2007. 1:30pm. Rouge Valley Nature walk. Meet at the Hillside School, Old Finch Avenue and Meadowvale Road. Walk lasts about two hours and are on rain, cold, snow or shine. Call 416-282-8265 for more information. Free to the public.



- **Wednesday February 28**, 2007. 7:30pm. **Gridlock in the GTA**. A free public discussion. Natalie Helferty, Planning Ecologist, past president of the RHN and board member of the York Region Environmental Alliance will be part of the Panel who will discuss what the future holds for Regional Transportation Planning. The discussion will take place at the [St. Lawrence Centre Forum](#), 27 Front Street East, 2 blocks east of Union Stn, in Toronto.



- **Thursday March 8**, 2007. 1pm to 5:30pm. **Shades of Green: Exploring Biodiversity, Human Values and Urban Planning**. [Royal Botanical Gardens](#). Centre, 680 Plains Road West, Burlington, ON.

Explore the inter-relationships between the protection of natural areas, urban planning, human values and rural/urban issues like the Ontario Greenbelt, the growth and sustainability of urban communities and the creation of liveable cities. 3 exciting speakers at the cutting edge of research in innovation, sustainability and urban design:

- [John Ahern](#), Head of the Department of Landscape Architecture & Regional Planning, University of Massachusetts, Amherst
- [Dawn Bazely](#), Director of York University's Institute for Research and Innovation in Sustainability
- William Sullivan, Director of the Environmental Council of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

The moderator for the evening will be Rob MacIsaac, head of the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority and former Mayor of Burlington. The cost for the public is \$25 (plus GST). Students, Members of the Royal Botanical Gardens, Friends of the [Arboretum](#) at the University of Guelph: \$10 (plus GST). Parking is Free but please carpool or use public transit (the Burlington #1 bus from the Burlington GO Station stops at the door).

Visit <http://www.rbg.ca/greenspace> for more information and to register on-line or email: [greenspace@rbg.ca](mailto:greenspace@rbg.ca). To register by phone, call 1-800-694-4769 ext.270.



- **Sunday March 11**, 2007. 1:30pm. Rouge Valley Public 'Theme hike': **Ice Break-up**. Meet at Rouge Valley Conservation Centre, 1749 Meadowvale Road, Scarborough, TTC routes: 85A, 85B and 86A. Free.

## MEMBER SUBMISSIONS

### Learn more and get involved to **Strengthen Ontario's Endangered Species Act!**

The need for and urgency of securing updated legislation is so great that *Ontario Nature* is convening a rare, all-club Summit to engage our member groups and volunteers in this issue. Please indicate your interest by saying yes that you will attend a 1-day session entitled the Endangered Species Summit which will take place in Toronto at Ontario Nature's Head Office at 366 Adelaide St. W., Suite 201 in Toronto on **Wednesday, February 28, 2007** OR **Saturday, March 3, 2007**.

The Endangered Species Summit will provide you with Briefings from Ontario Nature staff, Tools and Techniques that can be used in your local community, an "MPP Briefing Package", a "Role Playing" exercise, a question and answer period, lunch and snacks.

! IMPORTANT → Please RSVP by **Friday February 16**, 2007 to Barbara MacKenzie-Wynia, Ontario Nature's Central Regional Coordinator at either [barbaraw@ontarionature.org](mailto:barbaraw@ontarionature.org) or 705-424-4399.

- Please indicate whether or not you can attend and your *preferred date*.

### Youth Essay Contest

Help to promote the Youth Essay Contest in your area schools. This year's essay topic is "*What will the environment be like in 2050*". Students must be in Grades 7 or 8. The essay can be a story, a piece of creative writing or an essay with a maximum word count of 700 words, typed and double spaced. The top 3 entries will be published in **ON Nature** magazine. The winners will receive great prizes for their work. Entries must be mailed or faxed to the Ontario Nature head office at 366 Adelaide St. West, Suite 201, Toronto, ON M5V 1R9. Fax: 416-444-9866.

The deadline is April 15, 2007. If you have any questions, please call Barbara MacKenzie-Wynia, Central and Northern Region Co-ordinator, Huronia Regional Office (705) 424-4399 or Email: [barbaraw@ontarionature.org](mailto:barbaraw@ontarionature.org).

The Concept Plan for a new '**Lake Ontario Park**' was presented to a standing room only crowd on January 17, 2007 at an event hosted by the [Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation](#) (TWRC). The organizers of the event were surprised by the turnout. It is understandable though. The scope of the plan is huge, it takes in an almost 8 km stretch of Toronto's waterfront from Cherry Beach in the west to the RC Harris Filtration Plant in the east. It includes the Leslie Street Spit which reaches out over 5 km into Lake Ontario. These lands are much loved and much used parts of the waterfront. The uses vary along the length of this shoreline.

Cycling along the Martin Goodman Trail or out onto the Leslie Spit, sailing in the Outer Harbour, bird watching on the Spit, wind surfing along Cherry Beach, walking along the boardwalk in the Eastern Beaches, canoeing in Ashbridges Bay, swimming, playing beach volleyball, running, sunbathing, and I am sure many more. The crowd was there to make sure if there were going to be changes the changes had better be done right.

Theo Hofmann of the RHN attended the meeting and reported, "The Park is planned to stretch from the Eastern Gap to the RC Harris Filtration Plant and to cover some 950 hectares of land, or over 1600 if the water area is included. It includes the Spit, of course. On the whole it sounds quite exciting. A lot of emphasis will be placed on restoring natural areas and keeping land that needs care (lawns etc.) to an absolute minimum. I am sure that it looks very exciting for the average Torontonian (whoever she or he may be), but for the birding community it is not too great. In particular the Baselands of the Spit are going to be much altered. There is a "canoeing channel" planned and extensive habitat rehabilitation for birds especially, except that the emphasis will be on public

education which involves lots of boardwalks. The Spit itself will not be changed to any extent (we hope) and many areas will be provided with good new habitat."

### New Book by Paul Hawken: " *Blessed Unrest* "

This is first full account of the real news of our time, and it's exactly the opposite of the official account. The movers and shakers on our planet aren't the billionaires and the generals—they are the incredible numbers of people around the world filled with love for neighbour and for the earth who are resisting, remaking, restoring, renewing, revitalizing. This powerful and lovely book is their story - our story - and it's high time someone's told it. Nothing you read for years to come will fill you with more hope and more determination.

- Bill McKibben

For more information about the book go to <http://www.blessedunrest.com>



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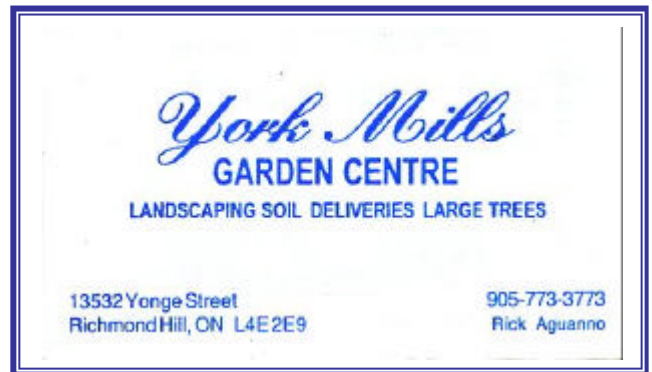


## LOCAL NEWS

The [Ontario Ministry of Transportation](#) (MTO) has initiated an Environmental Assessment (EA) Study for yet another new 400 series highway to be called the "GTA West Corridor". This expressway will be routed from Bolton/Woodbridge to Guelph via Acton. It is very likely that this new highway is not needed as there is already a railway corridor through Brampton and Georgetown that could have its GO train and VIA Rail service dramatically improved. With all of the current interest in climate change perhaps the province should be persuaded to make this an example of a **modal shift to public transportation**.

The province has initiated the first step in their study process, which is to prepare the Terms of Reference (ToR) for an Environmental Assessment. Members are encouraged to send their comments about this project to Minister of Transportation Donna Cansfield ([dcansfield.mpp@liberal.ola.org](mailto:dcansfield.mpp@liberal.ola.org)), the Ministry of Transportation, at 77 Wellesley St W, 3rd Flr, Ferguson Block Toronto ON M7A 1Z8 and the Project Team, who will be seeking public input on the project and community issues at [project\\_team@gta-west.com](mailto:project_team@gta-west.com). Visit [www.gta-west.com](http://www.gta-west.com) for more info.

[Burr House Craft Gallery and Tea Room](#) present over 30 new **oil paintings by Valerie Kent** at the Burr House Gallery and Tea Room starting on **February 10th until March 25th**, 2007. The Gallery & Tea Room is at 528 Carrville Road in Richmond Hill. The tea room and craft gallery is open to the public on Saturdays and Sundays from 12:30 to 4:30 p.m. Tea is served from 1:00 - 4:00. Drop by and see the new Impasto landscapes painted with palette knife, have some tea and enjoy the beautiful handcrafted items for sale in the store.



In 2004 **Dr. Henry Barnett** of Happy Valley, Ont., donated 80 acres of his land on the Oak Ridges Moraine north of Toronto to restrict future development. The moraine's forests and wetlands provide habitat for plants and animals, some of which are at risk. Henry is still working to secure more land for **The Nature Conservancy** in the Happy Valley Forest on Ontario's Oak Ridges Moraine, just 40 kilometres from Toronto's core.

Over 110 bird species that live on these lands, including the Red-Shouldered Hawk and the Scarlet Tanager, both of which are in jeopardy of losing their homes forever because the rapidly expanding Greater Toronto Area. [Happy Valley Forest](#) is the largest and most intact older-growth forest on the Oak Ridges Moraine. It's largely made up of mature Sugar Maples and Beech trees. The 1,560-acre area is home to 7 provincially or nationally imperilled species. Its wetlands are critical to the survival of many plants and animals.



Markham officials are relocating **beavers** from **Walden Pond** to save trees and prevent flooding in the area.



While the marsh, formally known as Austin Drive Park, is designed as a safe haven for many creatures, including redwing blackbirds, northern leopard frogs and great blue herons, the beavers, which can weigh between 40 and 60 pounds, are being evicted. Beavers can wreak havoc in urban areas by altering streams with dams, which can create flooding. This causes problems around culverts and overflow pipes.

Along the perimeter of the pond, fed by the Rouge River, a number of wetland trees have been felled. The animals' handiwork, including gnawed tree trunks, stripped bark and wood shavings, is evident throughout the park, between Hwy. 7 and Austin Drive.

Normally less active and in partial hibernation during winter, the beavers continue to be active while temperatures and appetites remain high. Meanwhile, the town has wrapped a significant portion of the trees, including sumac, white pine and sugar maple, with protective metal mesh since the smaller saplings are especially at risk. Occasionally, some bank dens cause damage when they undermine the integrity of a water-holding structure.

The town is following provincial guidelines on how to handle the animals and is using live traps. If they can be caught, they'll be sent elsewhere.

**Greenspaces** ...Cont'd from Page 1

Meanwhile, King Township is considering turning sewage treatment canals into much needed sports fields. The canals were built about 15 years ago and now that the region is building a plant to treat sewage indoors, the canals will be drained and filled. In places such as Mount Albert and Holland Landing, lagoons have been turned into wetlands, which improve the health of an area's ecosystem. But in King, where Dufferin Marsh sits in the middle of town, playing fields are another option.

Work on the treatment plant begins in the spring. Once it is operational, all but one and a half of the lagoons will be decommissioned and given to King. While the township will have to wait until it officially owns the land, most elected politicians already support the project.

- Feb 1, 2007. Serena Willoughby, Staff Writer Vaughan Citizen

A **herd of deer** makes its home on 200 acres owned by the University of Toronto's **David Dunlap Observatory** in the centre of Richmond Hill. The observatory land is home to a shifting population of as many as 25 white-tailed deer at any one time. Adjacent CN Rail lines allow them to migrate on and off the property.

Prof. Slavek Rucinski, a longtime astronomer who lives on the site, said residents are split between those who love the deer and those who wish they would go away. There is also a possibility that some people may be using the observatory land as a "game reserve". While there is no specific proof, several factors suggest that someone has been hunting deer before Christmas. Local residents frequently walk their dogs on the property and one walker has encountered a man wearing an orange vest and claiming to be from the university police. The man warned her to look out for hunters with silent crossbows on the property. The heavy-duty gate to the observatory's road has also been vandalized in the past, potentially to gain access to the property for this purpose. There have been reports of a trailer being parked outside on the weekend and of a bonfire being visible on the lands. On other nights, flashlights have been spotted on the private property.

Anyone who sees anything should notify authorities, including the university's police who are responsible for the property.

**NATURE NEWS**

On February 13, 2007 Gerry Phillips, Minister of Government Services, announced that an additional 1,500 acres of significant natural land to expand was being added to **Rouge Park** to increase the area to **11,500 acres** or 46 square kilometres. This addition increases the size of Rouge Park by 15%, making it one of the largest natural preserves in an urban area in North America. The province previously donated approximately 3,500 acres to Rouge Park. The park is designated as part of Ontario's greenbelt, 1.8 million acres of permanently protected greenspace.

Rouge Park, now over 11,500 acres (46 square kilometres) in size, protects natural areas, national historic sites, and greenspace that stretch from the Oak Ridges Moraine to Lake Ontario. It offers visitors hiking, camping, a beach and spectacular views.



Chemicals known to change the sexual characteristics of fish and other animals [Endocrine Disruptors] have been found in West Virginia tributaries of the Potomac River, which runs through Washington, D.C. and surrounding areas, the U.S. Geological Survey said on Wednesday. The Potomac is fed by rivers and streams in Maryland, Virginia and West Virginia.

An investigation into fish that had both male and female characteristics turned up a range of chemicals including pesticides, flame retardants, and personal-care products.

The USGS said the sexual changes in the fish were discovered by accident in 2003, when scientists were investigating massive fish kills.

The answer to reducing female sex hormones in waterways is to ban pesticides and perhaps to use melatonin as a contraceptive. Melatonin is produced in the pineal gland in your brain and released in dark conditions in all mammals. It regulates circadian rhythms and is the hormone that repairs your cells because it is a powerful antioxidant.

- Natalie Helferty

## Volunteer for Nature expands

A grant from The *J.W. McConnell Family Foundation* allowed the expansion of the successful **Volunteer for Nature** (VfN) program. VfN engages people in protecting Canada's biological diversity, while providing a meaningful educational experience in ecologically significant natural areas. The Nature Conservancy of Canada [NCC] and Ontario Nature will launch a pilot of the program in Alberta in 2007, with a view to expanding to the rest of Canada in the future. NCC's volunteers are crucial to stewardship work across the country.

The **Crowe Valley Conservation Authority** is intending to sell one of its 3 conservation areas, the **Crowe Bridge Conservation Area**. They are doing this because allegedly they cannot afford to maintain it anymore. ("Maintaining" the conservation area over the last ten years or so has included building and staffing an ice cream shack, and building and staffing a mini-put golf course). On February 15th The CVCA will make their final decision on whether to sell the property. The property, if sold, will be sold without any stipulations on what can or cannot be done with the property. The newly formed Crowe Bridge Preservation Alliance is desperately hoping to find a way to preserve this beautiful natural area. The meeting of the CVCA, where the final decision on whether to sell the property or not will be made, is on February 15<sup>th</sup>. To contact the Crowe Bridge Preservation Alliance, email [savethecrowe@hotmail.com](mailto:savethecrowe@hotmail.com) or call 705.653.5055. If you are concerned about the loss of this and other conservation areas, you are strongly encouraged to contact the Honourable David Ramsay, Minister of Natural Resources ([dramsay.mpp.kirklandlake@liberal.ola.org](mailto:dramsay.mpp.kirklandlake@liberal.ola.org)) or call 416-314-2301. Lou Rinaldi, MPP for Northumberland Quinte-West ([linaldi.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org](mailto:linaldi.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org)) can also be reached at 416-326-3058 (Queen's Park).

- Coffee lovers the world over are unknowingly drinking coffee that was illegally grown inside one of the world's most important national parks for tigers, elephants and rhinos. Using satellite imaging, interviews with coffee farmers and traders, and monitoring of coffee trade routes, the World Wildlife Fund [WWF] has tracked the illegal cultivation of Robusta coffee inside Indonesia's remote Bukit Barisan Selatan National Park all the way through its export routes to coffee companies such as Kraft Foods, Nestlé, Lavazza and Marubeni, and the shelves of grocery stores across the US, Europe and Asia.

## Launch of first regional blueprint for biodiversity

The Nature Conservancy of Canada and Ontario's Ministry of Natural Resources unveiled the first ever **Regional Blueprint for Biodiversity**. The map-based analysis of the biodiversity of Canada's Great Lakes region identifies key areas of biodiversity, and is a crucial step in building consensus on where to focus conservation efforts.

Developed with leading scientific expertise from within the region, the "Bi-national Conservation Blueprint for the Great Lakes" identifies more than 500 sites within the Great Lakes basin as priorities for conservation, including forests, coastlines, islands, wetlands, rivers and inland lakes.

## Windfarm Permit Contradicts Endangered Species Act

A proposed windfarm in the Karso del Sur Important Bird Area (IBA) in Puerto Rico is the latest in a series of windfarm proposals around the world that threaten bird populations of conservation importance. The Karso del Sur IBA is the most important remaining stronghold for the Puerto Rican Nightjar, which has been reduced to a global population of as little as 1400 individuals. The development could impact 40 of the 46 identified territories of this ground nesting species and could reduce the global population of the critically endangered Puerto Rican Nightjar (*Caprimulgus noctitherus*) by up to 5%.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recently approved an "incidental take permit" for the WindMar project, which requires a Habitat Conservation Plan but allows the company to *incidentally impact* the endangered species without any penalty. In addition to the nightjar, other species that could be affected and that are protected under the Endangered Species Act include the Roseate Tern (*Sterna dougalli*) and the Brown Pelican (*Pelecanus occidentalis*).



**We Bring People and Nature Together®**

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Climate change is perhaps the most serious threat to the world's biodiversity, damaging the last remaining habitats of threatened species, and causing catastrophic breeding failures amongst seabirds as rising sea temperatures drive their prey (plankton) into colder waters. BirdLife considers that in many parts of the world, wind has the greatest potential of all renewable energy sources, but believes that windfarm proposals should be treated on a case-by-case basis to establish that there will be no negative impact on wildlife.

Wind energy continued its huge growth worldwide in the year 2006. 14,900MW of new wind turbines were added globally in 2006. The year-over-year growth rate topped off at 25%, exceeding the record 24% growth rate in 2005. Currently wind power generates more than 1% of the global electricity supply, and based on the accelerated rates of development, the World Wind Energy Association predicts that 160,000MW of wind generators will be installed by the end of 2010. Five countries have added more than 1000MW, including the United States (2,454MW), Germany (2,194MW), India (1,840MW), Spain (1,587MW) and China (1,145 MW) [China is now among the top five countries in the world]. Five other countries added more than 500MW: France (810MW), Canada (768 MW), Portugal (628MW) and the United Kingdom (610MW). Brazil also took off and added 208MW which marked a seven-fold increase of installed capacity within one year.

## EVENTS PAST

- On February 14, 2007 the province of British Columbia [BC] unveiled a plan to cut Greenhouse gas emissions by 10% below 1990 levels by the year 2020. Targets recently introduced by governor Arnold Schwarzenegger in California also call for regulations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2020.

BC's greenhouse gas emissions are now estimated to be 35 per cent higher than in 1990.

The B.C. government plans to work with Schwarzenegger and other west coast governments to tackle global warming and wants to meet with the leaders of those states to develop methods to reduce greenhouse gases in the entire Pacific Coast region. New tailpipe emission standards for all new vehicles sold in the province will be phased in from 2009 to 2016, which alone are expected to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 30 per cent.

As of this month, all new cars leased by the government must be hybrid vehicles.

- Canadian Press

- On January 31, 2007 An Evening Public Forum on the Future of the Great Lakes was held at Toronto City Hall. The forum featured the Honourable Laurel Broten, Minister of the Environment for Ontario, Mayor David Miller, City of Toronto and Rick Findlay, Pollution Probe's Water Program Director.

## BIRD OBSERVATIONS

### January 2007

#### Durham Region

Cooper's Hawk - 1 at Halls Rd. Jan.24 (G&CD).

Rough-legged Hawk - 1 at Halls Rd. Jan.24 (G&CD).

Northern Shrike - 1 at Halls Rd. Jan.24 (G&CD).

Red-winged Blackbird - 3 at Halls Rd. Jan.24 (G&CD).

#### Toronto

Black-crowned Night-Heron - 15 at Lower Don River Jan.01 -10 (SVa).

#### Peel Region

Bald Eagle - 1 at Holland Drive Jan.25 (anon. fide PG).

Sharp-shinned Hawk - 1 at Caledon East Jan.16 (GoC). 1 at Mayfield/Torbram Jan.22 (anon. fide PG).

Cooper's Hawk - 1 at Mayfield/Torbram Jan.22 (anon. fide PG). 1 at Brampton Jan.30 (GoC).

Red-bellied Woodpecker - 1 F@Coolihans Rd. Jan7(anon. fide PG). 1@Bolton Jan22(Lori Kangas fide PG).

1@ Old King Road, Bolton Jan.26 (anon. fide PG).

Pileated Woodpecker - 1 at Graydon Property, Humber Grove Jan.29 (PG).

Common Raven - 1 at Mt.Pleasant & Old Church Rd. Jan.04 (GoC).

European Starling - 3000 at Dixie & Mayfield Jan.22 (GoC).

Brown-headed Cowbird - 2 at Mayfield/Torbram Jan.22 (anon. fide PG).



## York Region

Double-crested Cormorant - 1 at Sutton Jan.?? [January 2007] (KDu fide KRS).  
Snow Goose - 1 at Reesor Ponds Markham Jan.10,15 (SLo). Among 3,000 Canada Geese.  
Cackling Goose - 13 at Reesor Ponds Markham Jan.04, 9 on 01/14 (SLo,m.obs.).  
Gadwall - 1 at Cook's Bay (S End) Jan.01 (BB).  
American Wigeon - 1 at Cook's Bay (S End) Jan.01 (BB).  
American Black Duck - 1 at Cook's Bay (S End) Jan.01 (BB).  
Green-winged Teal - 1 at Reesor Ponds Markham Jan.07 (SLo).  
Ring-necked Duck - 1 at Vodden-Hwy 410 area Jan.10 (ARa).  
Greater Scaup - 500 at Cook's Bay (S End) Jan.01 (BB,TH).  
Lesser Scaup - 1 at Reesor Ponds Markham Jan.01 (SLo).  
Common Goldeneye - 50 at Cook's Bay (S End) Jan.01 (BB,TH).  
Common Merganser - 15 at W. End Ravenshoe Rd. Jan.01 (BB).  
Bald Eagle - 4 at Snake Island Jan.20 (P&LC fide RJF).  
Northern Harrier - 1 M at W. End Ravenshoe Rd. Jan.13 (FP).  
Sharp-shinned Hawk - 1@Yonge/Mulock Jan4[Flying West](KRS). 1@Doncaster Rail Crossing Jan18(FP).  
1@Ozark Pk. Oak Rid Jan25(TM&GR). 1@Huntington Rd/Humber Rd Jan28(RHNC,WHNC, fide GD).  
Cooper's Hawk - 1@Miles Hill Cr. RichHill Jan6(FP). 1@Reesor Pnds Mrkhm Jan6(FP).  
1@Elgin Mills E of Yonge Jan.13 (FP). 1 at W. End Ravenshoe Rd. Jan.13 (FP).  
Red-tailed Hawk - 11 at Hwy 407 from Hwy 27 to Yonge Jan.01 (G&CD).  
Rough-legged Hawk - 2@W. End Ravenshoe Rd. Jan1(BB). 1 Imm@Cold Crk Cons Area Jan1-7(DaC).  
2@Huntington & Major MacK Jan.28 (RHNC,WHNC, fide GD).  
Merlin - 1@Nashville Cemetery Jan27(JLo,RHNC). 1 W of Hwy 27, N of 16th S.R. Jan.28(RHNC,WHNC, fide GD).  
Wild Turkey - 3 at M.MacKenzie & Hwy.27,J.Love Jan.04&17 (JLo).  
Iceland Gull - a couple at Reesor Ponds Markham Jan.15 (SLo).  
Lesser Black-backed Gull - 1 at Reesor Ponds Markham Jan.15 (SLo).  
Glaucous Gull - ? at Reesor Ponds Markham Jan.15 (SLo).  
Great Black-backed Gull - 12 at Cook's Bay (S End) Jan.01 (BB).  
Snowy Owl - 1 at W. End Ravenshoe Rd. Jan.01 (BB).1 at 404 at Green Lane Jan.12 (JCh fide MYa).  
Long-eared Owl - 5 at Nashville Cemetery Jan.27 (JLo,RHNC). 1 at M.MacKenzie & Hwy.27,J.Love Jan.29 (JLo).  
Short-eared Owl - 3 at Miles Hill Cr. Richmond Hill Jan.20 (FP). 2 at Oak Ridges Corridor Park Jan.21 (FP).  
Red-bellied Woodpecker - 1 at Faulkner Ave. Woods Jan.01-15 (ChvR).  
Northern Flicker - 1 at Tim Taylor trail Newmarket Jan.21 (RJF).  
Pileated Woodpecker - 1 at Ozark Pk.-10 Nantucket Oak Rid Jan.25 (TM&GR).  
Northern Shrike - 1 at McGillivray & Rutherford Rd. Jan.01 (G&CD).  
1 at DeGasperis Farm Huntington Rd. Jan.01 (G&CD).  
1 at Reesor Ponds Markham Jan.04 (SLo).  
1 at M.MacKenzie & Hwy.27,J.Love Jan.20,29 & 2 Jan.31 (JLo).  
Common Raven - 1 at Happy Valley Forests Jan.01 (HBa). The first one seen in the forest in 47 years.  
Horned Lark - 50 at M.MacKenzie & Hwy.27,J.Love Jan.29 (JLo).  
Eastern Bluebird - 3 at Reesor Road, N of Steeles Jan.01 (CDu,Jum).  
Hermit Thrush - 1 at 16th Ave. E of reesor Road Jan.01 (CDu,Jum).  
American Robin - 30 at M.MacKenzie & Hwy.27,J.Love Jan.29 (JLo).  
Northern Mockingbird-1@Idleswift ThrnHl Jan1-31(G&CD),regular in area. 2@DeGspris Frm Hntngtn Rd Jan1(G&CD)  
Cedar Waxwing - 35 at Lake Wilcox Jan.21 (S&JB).  
Yellow-rumped Warbler - 1 at Aurora SW Jan.05 (KDG,GD). often comes to feeder.  
Snow Bunting - 40 at W. End Ravenshoe Rd. Jan.01 (BB).  
Northern Cardinal - "lots"@Shady Lane ThrnHl Jan1-10(SVa). 5-7@Grenfell Mrkham Jan.11-31(CMcK).  
Brown-headed Cowbird - 1 at Reesor Ponds Markham Jan.07 (SLo).  
House Finch - 40 at Pugsley Ave Richmond Hill Jan.01-31 (D&RP).  
White-winged Crossbill - 30 at YRF North Tract Jan.26; 15 Jan.28 (CDu,Jum).  
American Goldfinch - 6@Grenfell Mrkhm Jan1(CMcK). 100 @ M.MacKenzie/Hwy.27 Jan.03 (JLo).

anon. anonymous, ARa Alfred Raab, BB Bruce Brydon, CDu Chris Dunn, ChvR Christel von Richter, CMcK Carol McKnight,

D&RP Denise & Rod Potter, DaC David Caple, FP Frank Pinilla, G&CD Gene & Charlene Denzel, GD Gene Denzel, GoC Gord Cameron, HBa H Barnett, JCh Joy Chambers, JLo Joan Love, JuM Julia Marko, KDG Karen DeGroot, KDu Keith Dunn, KRS Kevin Shackleton, m.obs. Many Observers, MYa=Marianne Yake, P&LC Paul & Lorena Campbell, PG Phyllis Graydon, RHNC Richmond Hill Nats., RJF Ron Fleming, S&JB Sharon & Jim Bradley, SLo Stan Long, SVa Sandy Vanderbrug, TH Theo Hofmann, TM&GR Theresa McKenzie & Glenn Reed, WHNC West Humber Natural.

**Note:** Probably because of the long-lasting open water there were an exceptional number of **Bald Eagles** reported. We had a Bald Eagle for the first time in the 50 years of the Christmas Count, but they have turned up in quite a few places. The records picked up on Ontbirds include 4 on Lake Simcoe near Snake Island on 20 January (Paul & Lorena Campbell), 2 in Scarborough on 25 January (Larry Menard), 1 in Toronto on 1 February (Mike Strobel, Toronto Sun) and 8 farther away near the Deschenes Rapids on the Ottawa River (Tony Beck).

**Correction Notice:** For those of you amazed by the 35 mockingbirds from last year's count, don't be. It was only 8. The extra 27 birds were starlings, sitting one row below mockingbird.

Thanks to Winnie Poon, Mockingbird Queen, for finding this Compiler's error.

- Natalie Helferty

## From the Editor

### Are cormorants a problem in Ontario?

According to the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters (OFAH), double-crested cormorants "consume more fish than commercial fishing, sport fishing and poaching combined", are "decimating shoreline habitat", "threatening water quality" and are "out of control". OFAH figures that cormorant numbers "are 250-times historic population records" and "leave behind... only the skeletons of mature shoreline trees" therefore "devastating (the) nesting areas for other birds". They also state that, "Cormorant droppings are so toxic they have destroyed thousands of miles of precious shoreline habitat."



Recently, Ernie Parsons, M.P.P. for Prince Edward-Hastings introduced a private members bill (Bill 156) that would "remove the protection that cormorants currently enjoy". The bill would essentially allow people to "treat these birds the same as American Crows, brown-headed cowbirds and the common grackle" – and "allow for culling of the birds in addition to other population control methods currently being used."

According to Environment Canada, although the cormorant is a native species in Canada, "historically... the Double-crested Cormorant *did not nest in the Great Lakes*" and "the first suspected nesting on the Great Lakes did not occur until 1913, at the far western end of Lake Superior." However, "studies have repeatedly shown that in a natural environment, cormorants *feed primarily on small, largely non-commercial, shallow-water fish* On the Great Lakes, these include abundant species such as Alewife and Rainbow Smelt (both introduced species) as well as Yellow Perch (a native). The birds also take much smaller numbers of White Suckers, Pumpkinseed, crappie, bass and sticklebacks." Studies of cormorant diets in Lake Ontario show that "*less than 2%* of their prey... is Lake Trout or Salmon." Also, the same Environment Canada studies have shown that "cormorants consume only about 0.5% of the prey fish (the fish which the large predatory fish need for food), which is insignificant when compared to about 13.4% taken by sport fishing." Another study has shown that the cormorants in Eastern Lake Ontario "eat (about) the same amount of fish as 300,000 Lake Trout". But, "since there are about 6.1 million sport fish in eastern Lake Ontario, this means the cormorants are eating the same amount of fish as only 5% of the sport fish".

There is still a valid concern about the effect of cormorants on the vegetation in their nesting grounds. Cormorants can "damage vegetation by stripping leaves from trees..." and the "combined weight of the birds and their nests can even break branches". But perhaps most importantly, "their excrement, which rains down to the ground from their nests", does "kill the ground vegetation and eventually kill the nest tree", which "can lead to increased erosion, and "is of particular concern on sandspits and barrier beaches which protect interior wetlands." This was the reason why the Management Scientific Review Committee at Presqu'île Provincial Park recommended culls on Gull Island and High Bluff Island within the park -- because these islands provide habitat and are "a migratory stop-over for woodland birds and Monarch butterflies."

Is it time to lift protections on a bird that once numbered as low as 125 nesting pairs (1973) but now number at least 38,000 nesting pairs?

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