



# THE BULLETIN

August-September 2007 No. 465

## 2005-2006 EXECUTIVE

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## Events calendar

- Executive Meeting**      **Tuesday September 11, 2007. 7:30pm**  
Where: Robert Holland Centre
- General Meeting**      **Thursday September 20, 2007. 7:30pm**  
Speaker: Peter Kelly  
Topic: *The Niagara Escarpment*  
Location: Richmond Hill Presbyterian Church,  
Wallace Hall. 10066 Yonge St.
- Botany Group Meeting**      **Monday October 1, 2007. 12:30pm**
- Bird Goup Meeting**      **Wednesday October 10, 2007. 7:30pm**
- Ontario Nature's Lake Ontario North Fall Regional Meeting**  
Hosted by the Richmond Hill Naturalists  
**Saturday October 13, 2007.**

Check for more Events and Outings on Page 2

## Mysterious die-off of honeybees explained [?]

September 7, 2007 – The Globe and Mail

The sudden and mysterious disappearance of honeybees in the United States over the past year may be due to a virus, according to a new research paper by an international team of scientists.

The pathogen, called *Israeli acute paralysis virus*, was detected in almost all bee hives tested during a survey of hives afflicted by what has become known as colony collapse disorder. The pathogen is rarely found in healthy hives. The discovery will likely help put to rest rampant speculation about the source of the strange collapse in U.S. bee populations.

Beekeepers in the United States began noticing slight declines in bee numbers in 2004. The scale of deaths increased dramatically in the past year, with some apiaries losing up to 90 per cent of their hives. The workers in colonies of the highly social insects would disappear without a trace.

The enormous scale of the loss prompted worry that some new environmental threat might be killing useful insects. Some speculated that the missing bees might have become disoriented by the recent proliferation of radiation from cellphone towers and died while foraging for nectar. Others theorized that new genetically modified crops were poisoning the bees.

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: [editor@rhnaturalists.ca](mailto:editor@rhnaturalists.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.

Editor: Lloyd Helferty

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Visit our Website at [www.rhnaturalists.ca](http://www.rhnaturalists.ca)

#### 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 September 11, 2007. 7:30pm. Executive Meeting** will be held at [Phyllis Rawlinson Park](#).



- **Thursday September 20, 2007. 7:30pm.** Our first **General Meeting** of the 2007-2008 year will be held at the Richmond Hill Presbyterian Church, Wallace Hall. 10066 Yonge St., North of Major Mackenzie Dr., West side. Join author and photographer [Peter Kelly](#) to hear about and see the amazing story of the **Niagara Escarpment** and its ancient cliff forests based on the newly launched book "**The Last Stand A Journey Through the Ancient Cliff-Face Forest of the Niagara Escarpment**", co-authored with Guelph integrative biology professor Doug Larson.



- **Saturday October 13, 2007. Ontario Nature's Lake Ontario North Fall Regional Meeting** will be hosted by the Richmond Hill Naturalists. This will be a wonderful opportunity to meet others from your region and exchange and share ideas and experiences.



- **Thursday October 18, 2007. 7:30pm. October General Meeting.** Jennifer Baker of Ontario Nature will be speaking to us about Boreal Songbirds. Richmond Hill Presbyterian Church, Wallace Hall. 10066 Yonge St.

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



- **Saturday September 15, 2007. 2pm. Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup.** Mill Pond, Mill Pond Park.



- **Saturday September 15, 2007. 7pm. "Gombe & Beyond"** with Jane Goodall. Convocation Hall. \$35. [www.janegoodall.ca/news/lectures.php#3](http://www.janegoodall.ca/news/lectures.php#3)



- **Sunday September 16, 2007. 9:30am. Tree planting** at *Harper/StarCliff Nature Reserve* owned by the Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust. 5595 17th Sideroad between Concession 8 and Highway 27. Tools, gloves and refreshments provided. Contact Bill McMartin, 416-757-7795, [bill-mcmartin@rogers.com](mailto:bill-mcmartin@rogers.com).



- **Sunday September 16, 2007. Noon. Picnic** at the [Brickworks](#). Join [Slow Food Toronto](#) & [Evergreen](#) for a festival celebrating local producers, artisan winemakers and micro-brewers. Tickets 416-596-1495 ext. 251. \$95.



- **Tuesday September 25, 2007. 6pm. Gardiner Museum Sustainability Lecture**, Isabel Bader Museum. This lecture explores issues affecting the quality and sustainability of our food supply. 416-586-8080. \$25.



- **Saturday September 29, 2007. 10am -12pm. Fall Tree Planting Event** at the Beaver Woodland. Hosted by the Town of Richmond Hill. If you would like to participate, please contact the Natural Heritage Section, Parks, Recreation and Culture Department. 905-771-8870 ext. 3885.



- **Sunday September 30**, 2007. 1:30pm. **Guided nature walk** in the Rouge Valley with Robert Marshall. Meet at Glen Eagles Vista parking lot, Sheppard Ave. E @ Twyn Rivers Rd. Rain or shine. For details call 416-282-8265.



- **Saturday October 13**, 2007. 12-4pm. Annual General Meeting of the [North American Native Plant Society](http://www.nanps.org) (NANPS). Members will discuss water conservation. A sale of locally native plants and Seed Exchange will take place from 12-1pm. Markham Civic Centre, Canada Room (101 Town Centre Drive). Refreshments will be served. Members of the public are encouraged to attend. Free. For more information call 416-631-4438. [www.nanps.org](http://www.nanps.org)

... Continued from Page 1

## MEMBER SUBMISSIONS

But scientists who worked on the new research, which is being published in the current issue of [Science Express](http://www.scienceexpress.com), now believe the most likely explanation is a new infectious agent. "Our extensive study suggests that the Israeli acute paralysis may be a potential cause of colony collapse disorder," said [Jan Lipkin](http://www.columbia.edu/~lipkin/), an epidemiologist at Columbia University.



The death of bees had caused widespread alarm in the agricultural industry. Although most people associate bees with honey, the insects are far more important for their role in pollinating crops. About 90 foods, ranging from apples to cucumbers, depend on bees to ensure that fruits and vegetables develop. Any threat to bee numbers could affect the global food supply. An estimated \$2-billion worth of crops in Canada depend on honeybees for pollination, and about \$15-billion in the United States, where the collapse has already led to difficulties in pollinating crops.

The researchers also found the virus on live bees imported into the United States from Australia, and in royal jelly samples from China. Royal jelly is the food bees produce for queens, but it is also sold as a health food for humans. The discovery of the virus has raised speculation that the United States inadvertently allowed it into the country through the import of Australian bees. This was allowed in 2004, at the urging of the agricultural industry, to boost the number of hives available for pollinating high-value crops such as almonds.

The import of the bees coincided with the first reports of unusual problems in bee colonies. All the hives infected with the virus either used Australian bees, or were stored near colonies that imported the insects. To date, Canada has had no known cases of colony collapse disorder, said Danny Walker, president of the [Ontario Beekeepers' Association](http://www.ontariobeekeepers.org). He said Canada doesn't allow the importation of entire bee colonies from Australia, although it does allow apiaries to buy individual queens, which are then seeded into domestic hives.

Scientists who discovered the virus, and analyzed genes of micro-organisms found in bees, said they do not know if the pathogen itself causes colonies to die off, or whether it weakens the bees and makes them more susceptible to pesticides, poor nutrition and parasitic mites.

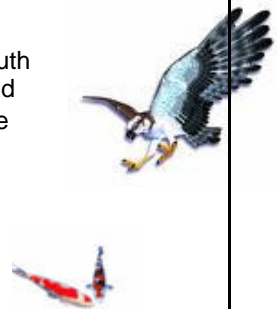
The virus was first described in Israel in 2004, leading to its name. Researchers there noted that infected bees - which exhibited shivering wings and paralysis - would die just outside their hives. One perplexing finding is that bees in Australia

don't seem to be affected by colony collapse disorder. The researchers speculated the reason might be that bees there are not infected with [varroa mites](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/npplnet/dnpublications/2006/060601a.shtml), which are found throughout in North America. The mites suppress the immune system of bees, making them more vulnerable to other threats.

### Osprey in Richmond Hill

Driving down Yonge street just north of my church I noticed the [Osprey](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pandion_haliaeetus) (*Pandion haliaeetus*) flying south with something in its talons! As I pulled into the church I saw it land on a cell tower. A bunch of us had binoculars and watched it for a while it soared around and put on a good show. A while later someone saw it catch a fish at the pond across the road. Using my binoculars I could see it caught a goldfish! (The entire fish was bright orange.) The osprey flew around with this fish for a while before landing. There seems to be at least one young osprey, possibly two.

- Diana Piche



Note: There has also a pair of Osprey nesting on the cell tower at Bloomington Sideroad and Highway 404 for the past several years as well. The cell towers may look like tall 'trees' that have convenient 'nesting platforms' for their large stick nests. I have also seen a bald eagle in the Long Point area 'fishing' by standing and staring into the water at the edge at someone's Koi pond. Easy pickings since the bright orange fish are easy to see in the pond. Lazy birds. ;-)

- Natalie Helferty

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**ORMF Website**

On August 27, 2007 the [Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation](http://www.moraine.org) announced the launch of a new website dedicated to the protection and conservation of the Moraine. The website, [www.moraineforallife.org](http://www.moraineforallife.org), is an excellent resource tool for Oak Ridges Moraine landowners, stakeholders and the general public. You can find out if you live on the Moraine and if so, how living on the Moraine affects you.



You can also find information about agencies and resources available to help you restore and enhance your property. As a stakeholder, you can list Moraine-related events or programs in the website's "News/Events" section as well as showcase work your organization has done on the Moraine, and as a member of the public, you can learn why the Moraine is so significant by browsing the "Explore" section which includes information about special places on the Moraine and the faces that call it home.

Highlights include an Interactive Map and find out about the Moraine's special spaces and places and an animation that allows you to go back in time and find out how the Moraine was formed. The website was created for everyone with an interest in the Oak Ridges Moraine with the hope that it will be an evolving education resource.

**LOCAL NEWS**

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**Nurseries fear outbreak of plant disease that has rampaged through oak forests**

Laboratory tests have found that both the eastern red oak and the sugar maple are very susceptible to a pathogen called *P. ramorum*, a fungus-like water mould of the same family as potato blight. Fears are that it may spread from California and Oregon and into the landscapes of southern Ontario, laying waste to the hardwood forests of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence region, already stressed from other exotic pests and diseases.

Federal authorities in Canada and the U.S. have been waging a continent-wide battle to contain *P. ramorum* since 2004, when a southern California grower shipped infested plants to 40 states and B.C. In Ontario, where it hasn't been detected, fear that the highly contagious disease could spread and infect forests and nurseries here. In B.C., two nurseries already remain under quarantine because spores persist in soil and a few infected plants were found in landscape projects.

The *P. ramorum* mould infects many species without killing them so they become effective carriers.

Symptoms can take weeks to show up; and there's no chemical defence. An ever-expanding range of host plants, now numbering 120, includes garden favourites from magnolia to oleander. Five - rhododendron, camellia, viburnum, pieris and kalmia - have been designated as high risk in the U.S., and Canada has designated six, adding lilac to the list. Trees include beech, fir, dogwood and variety of fruit trees such as cherry and peach.

**Call for applicants for the CTC Source Protection Committee**

The *Toronto and Region Source Protection Authority* is looking for interested, committed individuals with relevant experience to become sectoral and general members. The committee is responsible for determining the actions required to protect each of the area's municipal drinking water sources by working to identify and assess significant threats. The Source Protection Committee will be made up of

21 members plus a chair. For more information on the Act, roles and responsibilities and other background information on the SPC website ([www.ctcswp.ca](http://www.ctcswp.ca)) has copies of the notice and the application form.





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## Summit Golf Course

In June, [Summit Golf Course](#) requested York region allow them to cut about 8 acres of mature trees within the "Natural core" area of the Oak Ridges Moraine, to make way for another hole. The primary reason for changing the layout of the golf course and creating another hole is legal liability (due to the widening and extension of Bayview Avenue at Stouffville Road). Summit has other less costly, more practical options that would have virtually no impact on the forest, however. Based on a regional staff report, the application Summit was denied, but on or around August 19<sup>th</sup>, Summit appealed the Region's refusal of their Forest Conservation by -law for a "special permit application". The case will now go to [Ontario Municipal Board](#).

## NATURE NEWS

### *Nahanni National Park has been expanded*

On August 8, 2007 the federal government announced that it will add 5,400 square kilometres of land to the Park (a world heritage site), barring it from further development. This expanded park is part of a series of areas that First Nations are calling on to be protected before any further development occurs in the Mackenzie River Basin.

### *Forest Policy - Forest Practice*

A co-op effort by forest practitioners, academics, and others have created a forum for discussion and interaction. The forum aims to provide a quick response to developing stories and provide context sometimes missing in mainstream commentary. The discussion is intended to help improve existing policy and practice as it pertains to Adaptive/Ecosystem Management, Aesthetics, Policy, Ethics, Law and Policy, Leadership, Science, Sustainability and Values. <http://forestpolicy.typepad.com/blog/about.html>

### **What About Lake Simcoe?**

The [Rescue Lake Simcoe Coalition](#), [Ladies of the Lake](#), [Ontario Stewardship](#) and the [Windfall Ecology Centre](#) have built a new "must go" interactive website to help people share information and take action to help Lake Simcoe. Visit the Lake Simcoe Website at [www.whataboutlakesimcoe.com](http://www.whataboutlakesimcoe.com) for more information. Ladies of the Lake can be reached at 905-535-0444 or [www.lakeladies.ca](http://www.lakeladies.ca).

### **Become a "Species Watchdog"**

Implementation of the federal **Species at Risk Act** (SARA) is reaching a critical moment, as recovery strategies (RS) for nearly 200 species are due to be released. To make sure that the government's recovery strategies are adequate volunteers with expertise on species at risk are needed to take on a watchdog role for each of the listed species. Info about recovery strategies have been posted at [www.sararegistry.gc.ca/plans/timelines\\_e.cfm](http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca/plans/timelines_e.cfm).

For more information contact Nature Canada to volunteer for monitoring of a listed species by contacting Carla Sbert at [csbert@naturecanada.ca](mailto:csbert@naturecanada.ca) or call 1-800-267-4088 ext. 222 to sign up to the watchdog effort.

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### **Focus on the Moraine Photography Contest -- Win \$1000 dollars!**

Be sure to take your camera along with you on your next outing on the Oak Ridges Moraine. The Moraine in Focus photo contest is accepting submissions until October 15.

Entries must be taken on the Oak Ridges Moraine and fall into one of the four following categories: Land and water, Plants and animals, People and communities and Youth photographer. Remember to put your digital camera on the highest image quality setting. This contest is all about showcasing the splendour of the Moraine. Images will be

blown up and showcased at events in November.

For more information, visit [www.monitoringthemoraine.ca/moraineinfocus](http://www.monitoringthemoraine.ca/moraineinfocus), email [contest@monitoringthemoraine.ca](mailto:contest@monitoringthemoraine.ca) or call Kate Potter at 905-579-0411, extension 106.



## Trouble with Superior

Deep enough to hold the combined water in all the other Great Lakes, Lake Superior is rapidly losing water and getting warmer. The changes to the lake could be signs of climate change, although scientists aren't sure.

Superior's level is at its lowest point in eight decades and set a record this fall. Meanwhile, the average water temperature has surged 4.5 degrees since 1979, significantly above the 2.7-degree rise in the region's air temperature during the same period. A weather buoy on the western side recently recorded the warmest surface temperature the lake has ever been. Perch, walleye and smallmouth bass are migrating to cooler waters in the open lake, vessels are having to carry lighter loads to avoid running aground in shallow channels and along the shores, boats are having difficulty reaching many mooring sites and marina docks. Precipitation has tapered off across the upper Great Lakes since the 1970s and is nearly 6 inches below normal in the Superior watershed the past year. Water evaporation rates are also up sharply because mild winters have shrunk the winter ice cap -- just as climate change computer models predict for the next half-century.

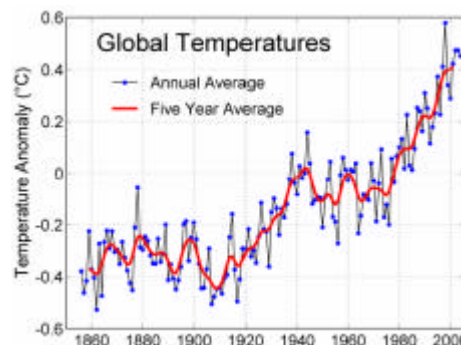
## Subsurface Communities

A sulfate-reducing bacterium has been isolated from a seam of water that was found by drilling in a gold mine at a depth of 2.8 kilometers. The microbes appear to have survived for tens of millions of years on geological hydrogen and sulfate sources without any nutrients derived from photosynthesis.

## EVENTS PAST

- On Wednesday August 1<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> at Highway 7 and Yonge Street the Town of Richmond Hill Parks Planning and Natural Heritage department organized a **stewardship event** to clean up *invasive species*, especially [garlic mustard](#), which has been crowding out some of the native vegetation in this important heritage woodlot.
- On June 15-17, 2007 the first **Carden Nature Festival**, organized by the [Couchiching Conservancy](#), [the Carden Plain Important Bird Area](#), the [Carden Field Naturalists Club](#), the Orillia Field Naturalists Club and the Kawartha Field Naturalists Club. Next year's Carden Festival will take place on June 6-8, 2008.
- On July 6, 2007 Premier McGuinty, with Cabinet approval, announced the [Lake Simcoe Protection Act](#). The government will adopt the recommendations from the [Lake Simcoe Environmental Management Strategy](#) (LSEMS), ensuring the healthy recovery of the lake over time.
  - Natalie Helferty, Ontario Nature
- On June 8-10, 2007 the [Peterborough Field Naturalists](#) hosted **Ontario Nature's 76th AGM and conference** at [Trent University](#) in Peterborough. The theme for this year's conference was "Landscapes of Transition" encompassing both the natural and the human elements of the land. Delegates had a unique opportunity to learn more about the Kawartha's amazing richness of habitats and species through a series of plenary speakers, sessions and field trips.
- In the wake of the announcement of The Endangered Species Act in May of this year, the Ontario government announced an \$18 million, 4 year "**Species at Risk Stewardship Fund**" in July to encourage and support public stewardship activities. The fund backs up the commitment to a stewardship-first approach in the recently passed Endangered Species Act, 2007. The new fund is open to individuals and groups across the province including landowners, farmers, Aboriginal peoples, education and research institutions, conservation organizations, industries, municipalities, stewardship councils and others who undertake eligible protection and recovery activities.
  - Polling released earlier this year by leading conservation groups showed that 90% of Ontarians want the provincial government to protect more forests as a defence against global warming.
  - As a result, more than 2.6 million trees were planted across Southern Ontario this spring, with funding assistance from the [Trees Ontario Foundation](#) (TOF). [Conservation Ontario](#), the [Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources](#), [Ontario Stewardship](#), the [Ontario Forestry Association](#), the [Forest Gene Conservation Association](#), the [Ontario Tree Seed Plant](#) and privately owned nurseries are among other partners that have assisted with these tree planting efforts.
  - Trees are vital for the quality of the air we breathe. One healthy, mature tree provides enough oxygen for four people each day. It takes about 80 mature trees to remove from the air the four tonnes of emissions per year that a mid-sized car produces.

- An error in recent climate-change data has led climatologists at NASA's [Goddard Institute of Space Science](#) (GISS) in New York now concede that 1934 was the hottest year in U.S. history, and not 1998 as it previously reported. From 1999-onwards NASA's temperature readings have all been too high, to a maximum of 0.15°C. NASA has since adjusted its numbers. They now show that 1998 is the U.S.'s second-hottest year and that five of the 10 warmest years on record in the U.S. date from before 1939. The worldwide numbers remain unchanged, with 1998 and 2005 tied as the hottest year on record. Climatologists at GISS say that the differences in the recalculated temperatures are so insignificant that they have no impact on the overall trend towards global warming.



## BIRD OBSERVATIONS

Theo Hoffman noted that Martin Chen spotted a Pileated Woodpecker, 4 Kingbirds, and a Lesser Heron at east end of Lake Wilcox on Monday, July 30, 2007.

### New Book about Whooping Cranes

As a follow-up to February's Bird Group meeting a little piece of news appeared in this month's edition of [Nature Canada's](#) newsletter. A New Book, "[Chasing the Ghost Birds](#): Saving swans and cranes from extinction" by David Sakrison, and published by the International Crane Foundation, recounts the amazing international efforts to save the beautiful and majestic Whooping Cranes.

The story of the Whooping Crane is perhaps the most well known case of a species being brought back from the brink. This beautiful, majestic bird is the tallest in North America and one of the oldest birds in the world. It survived millions of years of planetary change, only to become gravely endangered after a few hundred years of European settlement in North America. By 1941, there were only 21 left on Earth.

The book also recounts efforts to save two other bird species, the Siberian Crane and the Trumpeter Swan. [Chasing the Ghost Birds](#) is available from the International Crane Foundation (<http://www.savingcranes.org/>) and from the author at [www.ChasingtheGhostBirds.com](http://www.ChasingtheGhostBirds.com).

### Sierra Legal -- Canada's Failure to protect Migratory Birds

In 1916, Canada and the U.S. signed a treaty to cooperate in protecting migratory birds due to concerns about over-hunting. Both countries then adopted laws to regulate hunting and ban disturbance or destruction of nests or eggs, but no one considered that logging itself would break the law.

When the issue of loggers breaking the law was eventually raised, the federal government decided that unintentional or "incidental" nest destruction that occurred while logging would not be subject to enforcement action. In 2001, Sierra Legal on behalf of eight well-known environmental groups complained to the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) that Ottawa had no legal justification for not enforcing the [Migratory Birds Regulations](#) (MBR) against the logging industry. The CEC investigated and found that they could not enforce the MBR on a case by case basis when logging is going on.



The report showed that the MNR was ready to move towards *sustainable forest management*, but after massive cuts to MNR staff and budget that process basically stopped.

MNR had to take a back seat and hand over control to the logging industry for most planning issues. The result was that logging companies were left to set their own wildlife habitat objectives, with little interference from MNR. They called this a 'Bottom-up' approach. The problem was that with each forestry company setting its own objectives, no one was tracking overall habitat levels.

The CEC also found that for nine out of ten species, habitat is predicted to decline over the next century, with the steepest decline reported for the Pileated Woodpecker, Ontario's 'featured species' for old growth forest. The CEC report also showed that the federal government is aware, and has complained, that Ontario has failed to implement sustainable forest management and that Ontario was planning to weaken environmental rules that apply to logging that would affect federal interests, yet Ottawa apparently still pretends that logging is not covered by the MBR.

The CEC also confirmed that more than **45,000** bird nests are destroyed every year by logging operations.

- Albert Koehl, Sierra Legal

## Reminder - Bird Observations Have Changed...

Our electronic database to keep track of all the *Bird Observations* from club members is up and running. We remind you that Theo Hoffman is no longer accepting submissions from members.

The transition to electronic recordkeeping means that the *Bird Observations* for this month will (again) not be published in *The Bulletin* this month.

Since instructions for using the web-based database have not been sent to members, any members with *Bird Observations* who wish to submit sightings may still do so in two ways:

1. Send submissions by e-mail to: [Sightings@rhnaturalists.ca](mailto:Sightings@rhnaturalists.ca) or [birds@rhnaturalists.ca](mailto:birds@rhnaturalists.ca)
2. Send written submissions by surface mail to: **Gene Denzel, 9 Idleswift Dr., Thornhill, ON L4J 1K8**

[Rod Potter](#), our new website coordinator will be providing members with instructions for submitting their bird sightings using our **online Observation form** on our website at <http://www.rhnaturalists.ca>

This month's Bird observations will be viewable online or, if you would like a *paper copy* of this month's bird

### Older bird news

On June 24, 2007 Ron Fleming noted that the threatened marsh area is along Hochreiter Road between Bradford and Holland Landig was hosting at least one Least Bittern on territory in breeding season. The bird was seen by Rod and Denise Potter along with Keith Dunn. This marks the sixth occasion on which the bird has been observed near Hochreiter road since May, so its status as at least a 'probable nester' is in place. The Least Bittern is listed by COSEWIC as "Threatened", one category down from "Endangered" in Ontario.

Hochreiter Road is a single lane road with very good marsh habitat and excellent flooded fields for waterfowl in spring. It will be seriously impacted - if not totally bulldozed - by the four-lane "Bradford Bypass" slated for construction in 2012. The Bradford Bypass "connector" is supposed to link Hwys. 400 and 404 halfway between Toronto and Barrie.



## From the Editor s

### Preparing for the 2007 Election

On October 10th, the voters of Ontario will head to the polls to elect a new government.

Given the elevated public and political interest in the environment, Ontario Nature, the umbrella group of all Naturalist Groups in Ontario, including the [Richmond Hill Naturalists](#), has been working extra hard to ensure the environment is at the forefront of party platforms.

Naturalists should let their candidates know that protecting nature is a key priority for many Ontarians.

Under the **Priorities for Ontario** banner, Ontario Nature has joined forces with 13 conservation organizations to challenge Ontario's political leaders to make protection of the environment their number one priority.

Visit [www.prioritiesforontario.ca](http://www.prioritiesforontario.ca) for more information.

Ontario Nature and its members and member groups have developed four election priorities all political parties should adopt in their election platforms.

These priorities are:

- The creation of an interconnected greenway across southern and eastern Ontario
- The protection of the boreal forest
- Increased funding for government's natural heritage protection mandate and
- Increased environmental education in the school curriculum.

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