



THE BULLETIN

November 2007 No. 467

2005-2006 EXECUTIVE

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Events calendar

- Botany Group Meeting** **Monday December 3**, 2007. 12:30pm
- Executive Meeting** **Tuesday December 11**, 2007. 7:30pm
Where: Robert Holland Centre
- Bird Group Meeting** **Wednesday December 12**, 2007. 7:30pm
Topic: Red and Red & White Crossbill
Host: Charlene Denzel, 9 Idleswift Dr.
- General Meeting** - NO meeting in December –
Next meeting: **Thursday January 18**, 2008. 7:30pm
Speaker: Mark Stabb, NCC
Topic: Happy Valley
Location: Richmond Hill Presbyterian Church,
Wallace Hall. 10066 Yonge St.

Check for more Events and Outings on Page 2

Caring for Heritage Woods - Part 2

... continued from last month

In 1992 and 1993 Bryan Wilfert was the Town of Richmond Hill Councillor who lead the development of the Langstaff Jail Farm Lands. Bryon is now the Member of Parliament for the Richmond Hill Riding.

The development included the new bus terminal, a lot of commercial development along the Hydro corridor, the big cinema complex, the little woodlot and the Oak tree. Saving the Oak tree and moving the storm water pond that had been built beside the (at that time) new Highway 407 was a different story.

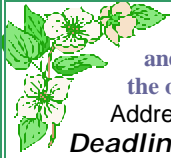
For the Jail Farm and the woods, representatives of Council and of the Richmond Hill Naturalists' held meetings with the developers (Condrain) and their planners.

Councillor Wilfert insisted on keeping the woods and the big oak tree, but not much else. (The Richmond Hill Naturalists had asked for pathways and bike trails as well, but none were included.)

Naturalists' member Margaret Cranmer Byng was involved, and Robert Holland did his best to save the Carpathian Walnut grove situated north-east of the woods.

Before the development there used to be a small farmhouse just north of where the woods are.

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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 **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

Mailing Database: Mike Turk

Distribution: Athena Antiochos

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

 - **Wednesday December 12, 2007. 7:30pm. Bird Goup meeting.** The topic this month is Red Crossbill and Red and White Crossbill. The meeting is hosted by Charlene Denzel and will be held at 9 Idleswift Dr., Thornhill. Contact Charlene at 905-889-7888 for more information.

 - **Thursday January 18, 2008. 7:30pm. Mark Stabb** from the **Nature Conservancy of Canada** will speak to us about the *Happy Valley Wildlife Management Area* at our next **General Meeting** at the Richmond Hill Presbyterian Church, Wallace Hall. 10066 Yonge St., first block North of Major Mackenzie Dr., West side. For further info contact Marianne Yake at 905-883-3047, or visit our web site at www.RHNaturalists.ca.

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

 - **Saturday December 15th, 2007.** This years **Christmas Bird Count** will take place in Richmond Hill and surrounding areas. For details contact Marianne Yake at president@rhnaturalists.ca.

 - **Tuesday April 22-26, 2008.** 7th International Ecocity Conference and World Summit 2008. San Francisco, California. For information regarding registration and sponsorship opportunities, visit the conference website (www.ecocityworldsummit.org) or contact the Conference Director at Kirstin@ecocityworldsummit.org.



2008 Carden Festival and Ontario Nature AGM



The second annual Carden Nature Festival will be held **June 6-8, 2008.**

Over 50 field trips and workshops for naturalists at all skill levels will be offered. For 2008, the Festival will also be a partner in hosting the Ontario Nature Annual General Meeting, so that members can make the most of their spring weekend.

230 people attended the 2007 Carden Nature Festival and participated in activities ranging from bird ID sessions on warblers and sparrows, to kayaking the Head River, to butterflies and dragonflies. Expert leaders, lots of interesting displays and exhibits, and a superb natural setting all make this Festival a natural!

You can see the 2007 program on-line at www.cardenguide.com/Festival.

If you think you might like to attend the Carden Nature Festival in 2008, please contact Diana Piche at diana.piche@sympatico.ca or call 905-773-4199 so that she can make the arrangements to receive discounted passes.

... Continued from Page 1

MEMBER SUBMISSIONS



Caring for Heritage Woods - Part 2

Today the land where this farmhouse was located is under the road that leads into the shopping mall. A young Annishnabe family used to live there. They called the house and land the "Turtle Island Art Gallery". The father was a well known native artist.

One would have to look back in notes from 1992 or earlier to see what the young native's name was. He was a medicine man and his family was from Rama. He came down and blessed the little activist camp in the valley south of Highway 7, which was built to encourage the Bob Rae government to build a bridge over the East Don River instead of filling the valley before building the new Highway 407 which crossed between Bathurst and Yonge Streets. The Medicine man burned sweet grass and we cooked and ate Jerusalem artichoke tubers.



Soon after this, the Minister of transport announced a three span bridge. Perhaps if we had eaten fish from the river it would have been a 5 span bridge. That was before the woods were saved.

- Michael White, Past President

... To be continued

NATURE NEWS

Animals at Play: Audio Slide show

Anyone who has a pet can testify that play is not exclusive to humans. And, in the wild, different species often are at odds. But, Stuart Brown witnessed something different. He describes Norbert Rosing's striking images of a wild polar bear playing with sled dogs in the wilds of Canada's Hudson Bay.

Listen and watch at <http://speakingoffaith.publicradio.org/programs/play/audiogallery/soundseen.shtml#slideshow>

- Posted on the Richmond Hill Naturalists blog on Sunday, October 21st, 2007 by unknown.

A clog in the world's carbon dioxide 'sinks'

Nature is having a harder time absorbing greenhouse-gas emissions, which may increase the pace of global warming. A large number of major droughts have occurred in mid-latitude regions from 2002-2005. This has resulted in a drop in plant growth, which has led to reduced carbon dioxide uptake on land. This means that the predicted capacity of the world's oceans and land to absorb carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere by industrial activity is diminishing, raising the possibility that global warming will happen more rapidly and will be more dramatic than is currently anticipated.

A major paper published by an international team of scientists in the online edition of the **Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences** stated that "nature's reduced ability to remove carbon dioxide that humans are adding to the atmosphere, along with surging world economic growth, explain why atmospheric concentrations of the gas rose during the 2000-2006 period at *the most rapid seven-year pace since modern record keeping began* (in 1959). All of these changes characterize a carbon cycle that is generating stronger-than-expected and sooner-than-expected climate forcing. (According to the paper, carbon dioxide concentrations are at the highest level in the past 650,000 years, and probably the past 20 million years.)

The failure of the oceans and land to absorb as much carbon dioxide as they once did is being attributed to global warming, and is raising the worrisome possibility that this could lead to a cycle of

2007 Greeting Cards / Hasty Notes Fundraiser

This year's card is a lovely Robert McCaw photo of a Pine Grosbeak. They are available in two forms:

1. Blank inside for year round use, or
2. Greeting Cards with this message:

*"Season's Greetings and
Best Wishes for the Coming Year"*

Packages of 10 cards are \$7.50. Order through the us and we receive a portion of the cost and you save shipping charges.

Please contact Diana Piché at diana.piche@sympatico.ca or 905-773-4199. -
- Cards must be pre-ordered as there is a no return policy --

weather destabilization that could cause the pace of warming to accelerate.

It is not good news: It's a positive feedback whereby sinks appear to be responding to global warming in a way that increases global warming. The rapid growth in the atmosphere's carbon dioxide concentration in the seven-year period from 2000-2006 was "beyond the worst scenarios" outlined by most experts and indicates that getting the threat of climate change under control will be more difficult than expected. (The amount of carbon dioxide staying in the atmosphere is about 5 per cent more than expected.)



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The paper also says that rate of increase of carbon emissions due to the burning of fossil fuels have also increased significantly. Since the year 2000 emissions have surged 3.3 per cent a year, more than double the 1.3 per cent annual growth rate of the 1990s, and the most rapid pace of increase since the beginning of the industrial revolution more than 200 years ago. (Carbon dioxide releases last year were 35 per cent above the 1990 level.)

Part of the reason for the rapid rise is the burgeoning economies in many developing countries, including China and India, however, for the first time in more than three decades, emissions of carbon dioxide are rising

more rapidly than the world's economic growth rate. Most experts had assumed that as the world economy grows, it would require less in the way of fossil fuels to produce each unit of output, as businesses introduce energy-saving and energy-efficiency measures. This has turned out **not** to be the case.


The **Nature Conservancy of Canada** (NCC) will be receiving up to \$1 million from RBC and its clients to help protect more than 100 natural properties across Canada this year, to help NCC towards its five-year goal of conserving 500,000 acres of ecologically significant land across Canada. RBC has stated that they will donate \$5 to the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) every time an account holder switches from paper to electronic statements. The aim of this campaign is to raise \$1 million. If you care about protecting nature and are an RBC account holder who receives paper statements, now is the time to switch to electronic statements.



Two New Biosphere Reserves Put Canadian Important Bird Areas in the International Spotlight

Thousands of hectares of critical bird habitat are now part of two new biosphere reserves in Canada. In September, the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) added Manicouagan Uapishka in Quebec and Fundy, New Brunswick to its World Network of Biosphere Reserves. These two reserves contain all or part of at least five internationally recognized Important Bird Areas (IBAs). UNESCO also approved a considerable expansion of Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve near Kingston, Ontario.

Biosphere reserves are "living laboratories" where conservation and sustainable land-use practices are intertwined. They are critical tools in helping us conserve global biodiversity. They also allow us to maintain healthy, natural ecosystems. These provide us with clean water, healthy soil, pest control and other services that are impossible to duplicate and without which we would not survive. At the same time, one of the basic functions of a biosphere reserve is to foster economic and human development that is ecologically, socially and culturally sustainable.



LANDSCAPING SOIL DELIVERIES LARGE TREES

13532 Yonge Street
Richmond Hill, ON L4E 2E9

905-773-3773
Rick Aguzzo

Extending from the St. Lawrence in the south to the Manicouagan Crater in the north, Manicouagan Uapishka is now Canada's largest biosphere reserve. Included within its boundaries are boreal forest habitat, whale feeding grounds and the Baie Comeau Important Bird Area. Three bird species that are



nationally at risk – the Harlequin Duck, Piping Plover and Short-eared Owl – have been recorded at this IBA.



Situated on the New Brunswick side of the uppermost reaches of the Bay of Fundy, the Fundy Biosphere Reserve's mudflats and tidal marshes represent one of the most important staging sites for shorebirds in eastern North America. An estimated one to two million shorebirds congregate there before the fall migration. The Bay of Fundy's rich feeding habitats are ideal for the birds, allowing them to build up the fat reserves they need for this marathon migration.

A Need for a Sea Change

The significance of the ocean's declining diversity on humanity has been difficult to assess. The loss of marine diversity on local, regional, and global scales has affected the functioning and stability of marine ecosystems, the flow of ecosystem services, and the rise of associated risks to humanity.

Biodiversity change and ecosystem services at scales ranging from small square-meter plots to entire ocean basins implies that small-scale experiments can be used to predict large-scale ocean change. A recent small-scale study has shown that at current rates of biodiversity loss, there will be no more viable fish or invertebrate species available to fisheries by 2050.

Cold Snap

The shattering of rock by ice freeze has long been thought to be caused by volumetric expansion when water distributed within the rock freezes. However, a new study has demonstrated experimentally an alternative mechanism, called "ice segregation", which operates when there is a temperature gradient.

As a freezing 'front' moves through the rock, it squeezes water from its pores into pockets where "ice lenses" form, which causes the rock to crack. Cold-room experiments quantified this process by monitoring heave, temperature, moisture, and pore-pressure for two distinct thermal regimes. The results were verified with numerical modeling and are consistent with field observations.

The conclusion: In warming climates, such fracturing may increasingly destabilize permafrost in Polar Regions.

EVENTS PAST

On Thursday, **October 18th**, Jennifer Baker gave a talk about the Ontario Boreal Forest during our October General Meeting. She spoke of the forest north of the French River as being the "songbird nursery of Ontario". Its ecosystem is threatened by development, primarily mining and logging. Ms. Baker will share information on the forest and its feathered migrants, such as the warblers, woodpeckers and wrens. This special presentation was held at the Richmond Hill Presbyterian Church Wallace Hall.

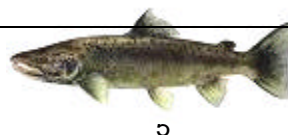
On **September 18th**, the David Suzuki Foundation released a report which outlined the need for Canada to address environmental hazards to human health. The report, called "Prescription for a Healthy Canada", stated that Canada not only needs to step up its efforts to protect people, because it actually lags behind other industrialized countries in this regard. The report gives five examples of ways that Canada has fallen behind including Canada's lack of any legally binding national standards for air and drinking water quality and the continued use of pesticides that other countries have banned for health and environmental reasons. The full report is available for download on the David Suzuki website at http://www.davidsuzuki.org/Publications/Prescription_For_A_Healthy_Canada.asp.

Mixing Species

A little publicized news article from last year indicated that the [Ringwood Fish Hatchery](#) in Ringwood Ontario had been leased to a private organization by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. Apparently, Ringwood has been producing pacific Chinook salmon and Rainbow trout for release into the Great Lakes.

Not only are Chinook salmon and Rainbow trout non-native to the Great Lakes, but their stocking program has been leased to the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters (OFAH), with the Pizza-Pizza Corporation actually sponsoring OFAH. The transfer of responsibility was done very quietly and without any public input, and of course because Pizza-Pizza is a private corporation, they can essentially tell concerned citizens to 'take a hike' if they voice concerns. Pizza-Pizza actually refused to disclose the amount of money they have pumped into the fish hatchery. Another twist that makes this story of additional concern is that Ontario is also releasing Atlantic salmon into Lake Ontario. Atlantic salmon is native to Lake Ontario, but this is the first time in the history of the Natural World that Pacific and Atlantic salmon have swum in the same waters.

For more information, please call AnnaMaria Valastroat the Peaceful Parks Coalition. 416-785-8636



BIRD OBSERVATIONS

Reminder of our Electronic Bird Observations Tracking System

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

Members with *Bird Observations* who wish to submit sightings may still do so in two ways:

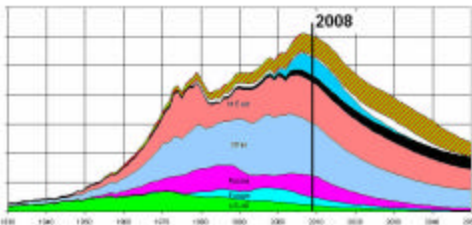
1. Send submissions by e-mail to: Sightings@rhnaturalists.ca or birds@rhnaturalists.ca
2. Send written submissions by surface mail to: **Gene Denzel, 9 Idleswift Dr., Thornhill, ON L4J 1K8**

[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 are viewable online or, if you would like a *paper copy* contact:
Marianne Yake at 905-883-3047.

From the Editor

The largest things humans create – cities, towns and villages – fit squarely within the context of the triple crisis of peak oil, species extinction and climate change. Life-threatening global environmental problems and limitations on resource consumption demand a restructuring of cities and transportation systems worldwide for long-term energy efficiency and conservation. Concerned citizens in every community - in every city, town and village - *must* get

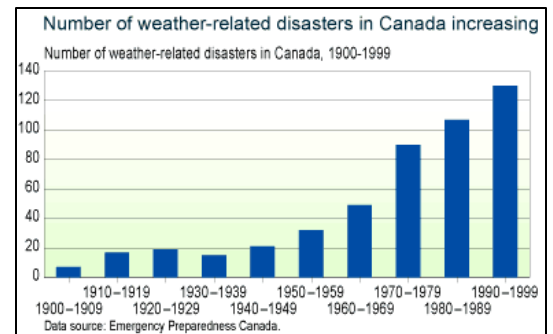
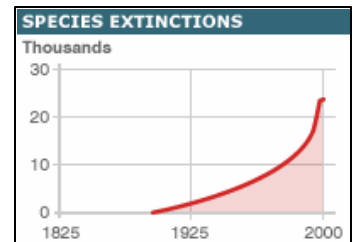


involved in formulating and implementing new land use and transportation policies and practices that preserve and reclaim agricultural lands and open space, and reclaim natural habitat. The challenge facing us in the immediate future is daunting. It requires that we redesign our built environment so that it works for everybody – not just the few – and is contributing to biodiversity on the planet, not destroying it.

The challenge requires that we design and plan our future with an emphasis that moves us away from or eliminates the automobile, implements Green architecture, Green building practises, Eco sanitation, composting, water treatment, transportation (again with the emphasis on moving away from the automobile), renewable energy solutions, restoration of natural ecologies including watersheds, water bodies, forests and grasslands, restoration and protection of agricultural lands, increased recycling and reuse, pollution abatement and population stabilization.

We must also educate an entire generation about ecological resource management, lifestyles, culture, policy and law, governance, belief systems, religion and ecological ethics. Surmounting the psychological barriers will likely be the greatest hurdle, but this is the primary means by which we will overcome this crisis, because, make no mistake, this is a life-style change issue.

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Green Tip: In addition to local fruits and vegetables available at farms and farm markets, you can now find sources of local meat, specifically pork, lamb and veal at Homegrown Ontario – www.hgontario.ca. The site also has some interesting recipes and cooking tips.