



# THE BULLETIN

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE RICHMOND HILL NATURALISTS

OCTOBER 2010 — No. 492

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Large Gulls studied at Bird Group

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Brown Trout Spawning Surveys Coming Up

Have a Safe and Happy Halloween!



*A juvenile Black-crowned night heron basks under a bright October sun at Second Marsh, Oshawa. This youngster will soon embark on the first of many (we hope!) migrations to the southern U.S.*

## Halloween Hike at Lake St. George



Sunday Oct. 24, 2:30 pm

Join the Richmond Hill Naturalists and Oak Ridges Friends of the Environment for a family Hallowe'en hike. This is our annual visit to this historic site, now a TRCA Field Centre not normally open to the public. In the spirit of the season, costumes appropriate to hiking in the outdoors are encouraged and treats will be on hand. The hike will go for an hour and a half or so and the terrain is not too challenging and there will be a scavenger hunt for the youngsters to keep them

entertained. The Field Centre is located on the north side of Bethesda just east of Bayview. For more information, contact Jim &/or Sharon Bradley 905-773-7415, [jsbradley@rogers.com](mailto:jsbradley@rogers.com)





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NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE RICHMOND HILL NATURALISTS

The Bulletin is published 9 times per year, from September to May inclusive, by the Richmond Hill Naturalists, and is e-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.

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

See the Executive List for  
 additional contact information.

## 2008 / 2009 RHN Executive

President..... Marianne Yake (president@rhnaturalists.ca  
 ..... 905-883-3047)  
 Past President..... Natalie Helferty  
 2nd Vice President..... Position Available  
 Secretary..... Position Available  
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 Environment..... Position Available  
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 Events..... Position Available  
 Ontario Nature Rep..... Marianne Yake  
 Website Admin..... Rod Potter (webmaster@rhnaturalists.ca)  
 Chair of AstroNats..... Heidi DeBond (astronomy@rhnaturalists.ca)



Renewing your membership? Rates for a single membership are \$30; rates for a family membership are \$35. If you didn't make it to the Corn Roast and annual club kickoff on September 11, 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 by clicking on the Membership link at: [www.rhnaturalists.ca](http://www.rhnaturalists.ca)

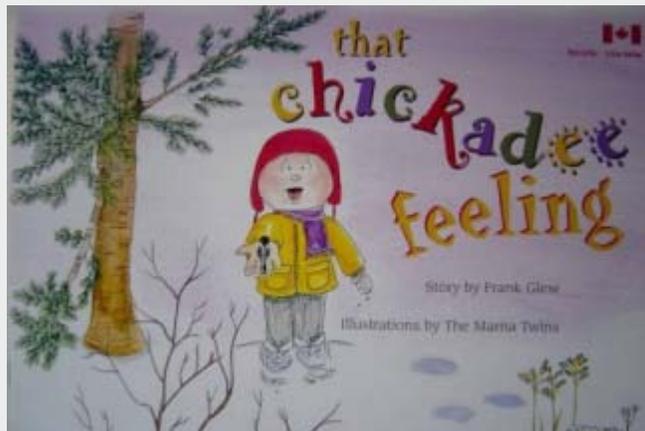
## Books help raise more than \$500 for Richmond Hill Naturalists!

by Deb Chute

This club started selling the Frank Glew Nature Books as a small fund raiser in May, 2009. Revenue from these books has now just exceeded \$500.00

Thank you to all who purchased these great environmental picture books for children. Thanks also to Dr. Glew who gave us a discount for fund raiser purposes.

From all reports, they seem to have been well received and I continue to get requests for more. If anyone has missed out, please contact me at 905 883-0688. Dr Glew says we can place an order at any time. Go to [www.igs.net/~fglew](http://www.igs.net/~fglew) and find "description of books" to review the story line. Most popular have been That Chickadee Feeling, Butterfly Wishes, Samuel's Most Important Message and Eggbert's Dragon Dreams. I, for one, wait with anticipation for the next topic and story line this retired Teacher and Naturalist will offer our young ones.



## Coming Events



Thursday, October 21, 7:30PM. General Meeting with speaker Peter Money. The Appalachians and their Margins. The meeting will take place at the Richmond Hill Presbyterian Church, Wallace Hall. 10066 Yonge St., North of Major Mackenzie Dr., West side. For info contact Marianne Yake at 905-883-3047, or visit [www.RHNaturalists.ca](http://www.RHNaturalists.ca).



Sunday, October 24, 2010, 2:30PM - Halloween Hike at Lake St. George. Meet at the Field Centre located on the north side of Bethesda just east of Bayview. Gentle hike and kids activities, and rare opportunity to see the TRCA-owned property. For more information, contact Jim &/or Sharon Bradley 905-773-7415, [jsbradley@rogers.com](mailto:jsbradley@rogers.com)



Saturday, October 30, 2010- 10:00 a.m. - Ontario Nature Fall Regional Meeting. All club members are welcome to attend. Hosted by the Durham Region Field Naturalists. Location at the Darlington OPG



Wednesday, November 10, 2010 - 7:30p.m. Bird Group - Merlin and Peregrine Falcon: hosts Tony and Joandice, 85 Routledge Drive, Richmond Hill. All are welcome! RSVP to 905-223-6770

Please note: Richmond Hill Naturalists welcomes anyone to volunteer as an outing leader. Contact [trips@rhnaturalists.ca](mailto:trips@rhnaturalists.ca) if you would like to organize or promote an outing.



### WEST HUMBER NATURALISTS' FIELD TRIPS



Saturday 23rd October 2010 - Leslie Street Spit. Join Ron Fleming for a hike along this man-made peninsula in southeast Toronto. The Leslie Street Spit is a migrant trap where southbound birds gather to feed before setting out across Lake Ontario. Wear sturdy hiking shoes for the long walk, some food for sustenance, binoculars for birding, and a spotting scope if you want to scan the rafts of waterfowl that gather here. If you are interested in participating, please confirm with Ron no later than October 20 by phoning 905-898-7216 or e-mailing [flemingron@rogers.com](mailto:flemingron@rogers.com). Approximate start time will be 9:00 a.m. This is a full-day trip.



Sunday 28th November 2010 - Niagara Gulls Join Kevin Shackleton for West Humber Naturalist club's annual excursion to the Niagara area. The Niagara River hosts a wide variety of gull species in winter while the surrounding area can be good for Carolinian songbirds, various waterfowl, and even some birds of prey. Pack a field guide, lunch, binos, and a scope if you have one. Be prepared for cold, damp weather and bring enough lunch to get you through the day; there is likely only one stop at Tim's in the morning and then nothing until late afternoon.

To car pool, meet at Vellore Hall at 6:50 a.m. on Sunday, Nov 28th. Those who want to go directly to the Falls area should head for the parking lot at the greenhouse south of the falls for 8:30. Stops will include the area around the barge, the interior pond, and Chippewa for Carolinian species. After that, we can stop for coffee at Tim's and work our way downstream to Niagara-on-the-Lake. If time allows, a visit to Van Wagner's Beach on the way home is possible. Call Kevin at 905-853-6959 if you require further information prior to the trip.

## Bird Group Compares Herring and Black-Backed Gulls

by Joe Agg

The bird group met Wednesday, October 13 at Barbara Jackson's place in Toronto.

The meeting was well attended and 2 birds were discussed, the Herring Gull and the largest Gull the Black Backed Gull. The study of Gulls puzzle many people because it can be difficult to identify them. Both of these birds are called 4 year Gulls as they reach final plumage around that age. Both birds' range is not limited to North America and the Herring Gull in particular is widespread globally. One interesting note on the Herring Gull is that it was observed nesting in trees on Grand Mannan Island perhaps in an effort to avoid predators. Another interesting note is that 2 females at times form pairs and with the aid of a sperm "donor" will raise chicks. Another rather strange habit is for young herring gulls to leave their parents hoping to get

better treatment from other parents. Most gulls have a variety of food sources such as fish both dead or alive, mice, waste products and even french fries. Mike reported that following school recess the gulls



*Greater Black-Backed Gulls are tender and loving parents. Photo from: <http://birdsbykim.com/blog/>*

would arrive to clean up any food left by the students. Because of its large size the Black Backed Gull is able to steal food from other birds and occasionally kill and eat smaller birds etc. It has been known to kill on the fly. Its aggressive behavior indicates it is at the top of the gull hierarchy.

Migration is fairly limited with breeding birds and they generally stay put unless forced south in search of food. Non breeding birds migrate more extensively. Most Gulls are quite vocal and the call of the herring gull is readily recognized and can be annoying. The call of the black backed gull is more throaty, gruff and bad tempered. Gene has observed the Black Backed Gulls along the northern edge of Lake Ontario and they can be seen above the falls at Niagara. Nests are usually a "scrape" or mound with 3 speckled eggs. Young birds get parental care for up to 6 months. In spite of its rather nasty temper Black Backed Gulls are tender, loving, parents.

In attendance:

Barbara Jackson, Tony and Joan Dice, Mike Turk, Athena Antiochos, Martin Chen, Joe Agg, Muriel Farrent, Gene Denzel

## Purple Finch, Lincoln's Sparrow and large Buck at Dunlap

by Denise Potter

A lovely fall walk around the David Dunlap Observatory property on Thanksgiving weekend yielded some good birds including a single purple finch in adult female plumage



may have been a first-year male), about 16 Hermit Thrushes, White Crowned Sparrows, White-Throated Sparrows, a Lincoln Sparrow, Blue-headed Vireo, many kinglets both Golden-Crowned and Ruby-Crowned, and dozens of Yellow-Rumped Warblers. And as usual there were large flocks of robins, perhaps numbering in the hundreds.

As Rod and I stood in the woods just south of the dome, hoping to see the Towhee we'd seen there two years ago, a large antlered buck White-Tailed Deer came through the woods toward us. Totally shocked to see us

quietly standing there he crashed away through the brambles in the opposite direction. Somewhat stunned by the experience we were very thankful that deer are really afraid of humans.



## Behind the Dome...

*Naturalist Deb Chute spent the summer hunting for pollinators around the David Dunlap Observatory*

Pollinators in the David Dunlap Observatory Park, Spring and Summer, 2010

*Story and photos by Deb Chute*

My camera and I are still at it and have discovered more new species to report this summer.

In early April, a fallen Manitoba Maple tree branch became a feeding station for Compton Tortoiseshells and Mourning Cloaks and an Eastern Comma. They were even sharing the sap from this tree with ladybugs and flies and apparently all getting along quite admirably. Papilio binoculars allow me to get very close viewing of these insects and actually see the breezes blowing the colourful fluffy hairs around their abdomens, something often not noticeable in books.



*The orange and black Pearl Crescent*

In May, two new dragonfly species showed up in the fields behind the parking lot at David Dunlap. The sparkling yellow edged wings and abdomen of the Four-spotted Skimmer caught my eye as well as the small, shyish Dot-tailed Whiteface with a dot near the end of the abdomen as the name implies.

This seemed to be a very good year for Red Admirals. One sunny

May day there were about 11 of them behind the Dome and in the nearby fields. That is the most I have ever spotted at one time.

Behind the Dome in mid June, Sue Mallinson and I discovered a huge Linden Tree in full bloom and covered with pollinating insects of all kinds.... Mourning Cloaks, Red Admirals, White Admirals, Swallowtails, a Ctenucha Moth and two new species that I had not



*Eight-spotted Forester Moth*

photographed before.

Sue was able to get a picture of the Red-spotted Purple, a relative of the White Admiral. This butterfly protects itself from predators by mimicking the blue colours of the toxic Pipevine Swallowtail. I managed to photograph the beautiful little Eight-spotted Forester Moth, an Owlet Moth that obviously enjoys sipping nectar and will never touch my woolens. An Eastern Comma also showed its shy self but because of its skittish nature, it was very hard to get close enough to photograph. And, yes, it does have a white mark that looks like a comma on its underwing as the name implies.

Behind the Dome in July, a small Blue Dasher showed its bright blue face and abdomen. This small dragonfly, only about 1 and 1/4 inches long, can consume up to 300 insects daily. Imagine what the big ones can do!

Also in July, the intricately patterned orange-black wings of a Pearl Crescent appeared in the



*Eastern Tailed-Blue Butterfly*

fields.

A very tiny blue-gray butterfly flying low in the grass in the fields near the Radio Shack showed itself in August. Fortunately, I took the time to investigate it with the binoculars because otherwise I might have thought it was a small moth. It was a beautiful Eastern Tailed-Blue, not quite an inch long with its wings open.

Of course all summer there is the usual display of Honey Bees, several varieties of Bumble Bees, Leaf Cutter Bees, Sweat Bees and the tiny green fluorescent Wood Nesting Bee.

This David Dunlap Park ecosystem is teeming with activity just waiting to be appreciated.

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## Ontario Streams Events

14 Mile Creek Shrub Planting,  
Oakville

When: Saturday October 23,  
2010

Time: 10:00am – 2:00pm

Where: Richview Blvd, just West  
of Bronte Rd, Oakville

(Site is located west of Bronte Rd., north of Upper Middle Rd. on Richview Blvd. Planting will take place along both sides of the stream, south of the culvert. Please park on a side street off of Richview Blvd, or at the culvert. Signs will be posted.) Volunteers are needed to help plant native shrubs along a section of 14 Mile Creek. This work will directly benefit the endangered redbreasted dace, as well as improve habitat for other fish and wildlife.

This event will take place rain or shine, so please wear sturdy footwear and dress appropriately for the weather. Shovels and gloves will be provided. Complementary snacks and refreshments will also be supplied during the event. For more information check [ontariostreams.on.ca](http://ontariostreams.on.ca) or contact: Peter Davis, Project Coordinator, Ontario Streams.  
Tel: 905-713-7399 (office); 416-554-6262 (cell). Email: [peter.davis@ontariostreams.on.ca](mailto:peter.davis@ontariostreams.on.ca)

Ontario Streams Annual  
General Meeting,  
Scarborough

When: Saturday October 30th,  
2010

Time: 10:00am – 1:00pm

Where: Toronto Zoo  
Administration Building, 361A  
Old Finch Avenue, Scarborough  
(Take Meadowvale Road north,  
past the main zoo entrance.  
Turn left onto Old Finch Road.  
The Administration parking lot  
will be on your left.)

Ontario Streams will be holding  
their annual general meeting at

the Toronto Zoo Administration Building in Scarborough. This meeting is open to the public and will include presentations by Ontario Streams' staff and our partners; as well as volunteer and stewardship awards. Following the meeting, everyone is invited to visit the nearby Rouge Marshes for a tour of this wetland restoration site.

Light refreshments will be provided. Additional information concerning the speakers and presentation topics will soon be posted at: [www.ontariostreams.on.ca](http://www.ontariostreams.on.ca). Please RSVP by October 25th by contacting: Doug Forder, Field Supervisor, Ontario Streams.  
Tel: (905) 713-7399 (office)  
E-mail: [doug.forder@ontariostreams.on.ca](mailto:doug.forder@ontariostreams.on.ca)

Humber River Brown Trout  
Spawning Surveys, Caledon  
When: Saturday October 30th  
and Sunday November 7th,  
2010

Time: 10:00am to 12:30pm

Where: Castleberg bridge  
(Take Hwy #50 north from  
Bolton and turn west onto

Castleberg Rd. The Castleberg bridge is located on Castleberg Rd just west of Duffy's Lane and east of Humber Station Rd. See flyer for a more detailed map.) Ontario Streams is once again recruiting interested volunteers for our annual brown trout spawning surveys in the Humber River watershed! Volunteers will be lead by experienced biologists and fishermen. Each group will walk a section of the Humber River, spotting brown trout redds and recording their locations. No experience necessary!

Please dress appropriately for the weather. Chest waders and polarized sunglasses will be provided, however if volunteers have their own it is suggested that they bring them. Light refreshments will also be supplied. For more information check [ontariostreams.on.ca](http://ontariostreams.on.ca) or contact: Christine Pritchard, Project Biologist, Ontario Streams.  
Tel: 905-713-7399.  
E-mail: [christine.pritchard@ontariostreams.on.ca](mailto:christine.pritchard@ontariostreams.on.ca)



Huge salmon seen swimming above the Cummer Mill Dam in north Toronto. Photo by Phil Goodwin, October 2010, from the eDon Parklands Partners newsletter. Mr. Goodwin founded the community organization in 1999 to restore the natural habitat of the East Don Parkland and East Don River and its tributaries.

**Rouge Park Tree Planting Opportunity**  
 Saturday, October 23rd 2010

Join us anytime between 9:00AM – 1:00PM

RSVP to: Contact: Sheryl Santos, Stewardship Coordinator, Rouge Park

905 713 6007 sheryl\_santos@rougepark.com

Location: Enter from south side of Major Mackenzie Drive, ½ km east of 9th Line, Town of Markham

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I.S.A. CERTIFIED ARBORISTS

**Phyllis Rawlinson Tree Nursery Planting and Stewardship**

Saturday Oct. 23, 10:00 am – 12:00 noon

In partnership with the Town of Richmond Hill, Evergreen invites you to join in as native trees and shrubs are planted at this beautiful park. Everyone is welcome! The goal of the event is to improve environmental health and biodiversity of Phyllis Rawlinson Park. This includes creating healthy habitat for native wildlife and vegetation.

Phyllis Rawlinson Park is located on the west side

of Leslie Street, just north of 19th Avenue. Meet at the first parking lot on your right in Phyllis Rawlinson Park. An Evergreen staff member will be there to meet you. Please RSVP to: Mildred Ho, Stewardship Coordinator, 416-596-1495 ext. 303, mho@evergreen.ca or more information please visit the web sites [www.evergreen.ca](http://www.evergreen.ca) or [www.richmondhill.ca/naturalheritage](http://www.richmondhill.ca/naturalheritage)

**SHOP LIKE THE PLANET'S WATCHING**

October 28, 2010 - 7:00pm to 8:00pm

Dufferin Clark Library

1441 Clark Avenue West, Vaughan, Ontario

Are you interested in reducing your carbon footprint or reducing the amount of waste you generate? If so, join the York Region Environmental Alliance for this informative and interactive workshop. This free workshop will show you how to easy it is to make planet friendly purchases. Learn about green washing and eco-labeling and get tips on greening your shopping habits. For more information visit the YREA website at [www.yrea.org](http://www.yrea.org)



**Did you always want to be an Archaeologist?**

Here's your chance to participate in a dig!

Saturday October 23rd 2010, 10am - 4pm

Claremont Field Centre (4290 Westney Road, Pickering, ON, 1 kilometre north of the Seventh Concession, just north of Highway 7).

Help in the excavation of the 1870s era homestead

of local blacksmith George Graham and his family! The site features fieldstone foundations of their home and thousands of artifacts relating to domestic family life and the trade of the blacksmith.

For a minimum 10 dollar donation, the general public can participate in a half day digging session, plus the opportunity to assist with basic artifact analysis. Slots are limited to those who want to actively participate, but all are welcome to stop by and observe the excavation!

**Dig in and experience Ontario History from the ground up!**

Cost: \$10 minimum donation (towards the Boyd Archaeological Field School) for those wanting to participate in the excavation - Payable by Cash or Cheque made payable to the Conservation Foundation of Greater Toronto; a taxable receipt will be mailed to you upon request.

For additional details and to book your excavation time (10am - 12:30pm or 1:30pm - 4pm) please contact

Aldo Missio at [amissio@trca.on.ca](mailto:amissio@trca.on.ca) or call the Archaeology Unit at (416) 661-6600 x6417

# Project FeederWatch starts November 13!

from *Bird Studies Canada*

At regular intervals from November to April, thousands of FeederWatchers count the kinds and numbers of birds at their feeders, then submit their observations to us. This information helps scientists study winter bird populations.

Project FeederWatch participants receive a full-colour bird poster and calendar, a FeederWatch Handbook and Instruction Book, access to the data entry portion of the FeederWatch website, and the chance to contribute to a continent-wide bird research project.

Project FeederWatch is a joint program of Bird Studies Canada and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. In Canada, you must be a member of Bird Studies Canada (BSC) to participate. BSC membership benefits include a subscription to our bi-weekly Latest News e-newsletter, four issues a year of BirdWatch Canada magazine, free participation in any of our volunteer programs, and a charitable tax receipt for the full amount of your membership.

Next PFW Season: Saturday, November 13, 2010 to Friday, April 8, 2011.

Join Project Feederwatch online at: <http://bsc-eoc.org/shopping/membership.jsp?lang=EN>

or send mail to:

*Project FeederWatch*  
Bird Studies Canada  
P.O. Box 160, 115 Front Street  
Port Rowan, ON N0E 1M0  
1-888-448-2473 / 519-586-3531  
Fax: (519) 586-3532

Email: [pfw@bsc-eoc.org](mailto:pfw@bsc-eoc.org)

SwiftWatch Workshops  
Bird Studies Canada's Ontario Region Staff will visit New Liskeard, North Bay, and Sault

Ste. Marie for workshops that will introduce Ontario Region programs and provide comprehensive training on the Ontario SwiftWatch program. Ontario SwiftWatch is a volunteer-based monitoring program designed to gather information on the abundance, distribution, and habitats of Threatened Chimney Swifts across the province, to inform Chimney Swift conservation efforts.



Workshops are free, but pre-registration is required. Please contact the local partners for additional information or to register. New Liskeard (November 5, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., Chartrand Independent Grocers Community Room): [Christine.Terwissen@ontario.ca](mailto:Christine.Terwissen@ontario.ca) or 705-568-3251. North Bay (November 6, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., Discovery North Bay): [Valerie.Vaillancourt@ontario.ca](mailto:Valerie.Vaillancourt@ontario.ca) or 705-475-5515. Sault Ste. Marie (November 8, 4-8 p.m., Great Lakes Forestry Centre): [Jessica.Sicol@ontario.ca](mailto:Jessica.Sicol@ontario.ca) or 705-941-5130.

This project was undertaken with the financial support of the Government of Canada provided through the Department of Environment, the Government of Ontario, and TD Friends of the Environment Fund. Special thanks to the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (Kirkland Lake District; North Bay District; Sault Ste. Marie District); Nipissing

Naturalists; Sault Naturalists; and the Great Lakes Forestry Centre.

Learn to edit your Digital Nature Pics at BSC Workshop Bird Studies Canada and the Norfolk Field Naturalists are hosting two workshops in Norfolk County, Ontario in the weeks to come. The courses will be led by BSC staff Ron Ridout and Jody Allair.

On Saturday, October 30 from 9:30 to 3:30, attend "Using Computer Software to Work with your Digital Nature Photographs" with noted photographer Ron Ridout, who will provide instruction on the use of photo-editing software to edit, print, and store your digital photographs. This is a hands-on workshop, with a computer workstation available for each participant. The workshop will be held in Simcoe, and the fee is \$40.

"Feeding Birds" Workshop

On Saturday, November 13 from 9:30 to 12:30, Jody Allair's "Feeding Birds" workshop will cover a wide range of topics, including advice on bird feeders and bird food, identifying feeder birds, making your backyard more bird-friendly, and participating in Project FeederWatch. The session will be held at Bird Studies Canada's headquarters, 115 Front Road, Port Rowan. The fee is \$10 per person. Kids are free.

Workshop attendance is limited and pre-registration is required. Contact Shirley Rothery at 519-586-9535 or [shirleyrothery@hotmail.com](mailto:shirleyrothery@hotmail.com), or select this link to download a printable registration form.