

THE QUINTE NATURALIST

The Quinte Field Naturalists Association is affiliated with Ontario Nature, a non-profit organization sponsoring nature education, conservation and research.



BIRDING IN STANLEY PARK, BELLEVILLE

QFN member Keith Gregoire has compiled a list of over 100 species of birds found in Stanley Park in just 2 years. Here are four of his pictures of his observations. We hope that recent changes in the park do not reduce this diversity. Clockwise from top left: Virginia Rail, Brown Creeper, Gray Catbird, Cedar Waxwing.



CLUB NEWS

Outings

Not unexpectedly there has been only one club event this season and it is just not possible to plan much as the second wave of covid is underway. John Lowry organized several excellent outings but he has other projects demanding his attention so he has decided to retire as outings coordinator. His influence will continue for future outings. His contacts and plans for other hikes are available for a new outings coordinator.

Our thanks to John for leaving the outings file in such good shape. We need a new volunteer coordinator. Your introduction to the job will be simple because of John's hard work. Please contact a member of the executive if you are interested.

If you would like to help but don't want a permanent role you could make arrangements to lead a hike on your own property, someone else's property or a favourite trail or Conservation Area. You don't have to be an expert. Members would appreciate a 2 or 3 hour walk to simply enjoy nature, watch for the unexpected and help each other with species identification. Please contact the executive with ideas and offers to help.

Hanna Park Outing

Report by John Lowry

Twelve members of the QFN enjoyed an outing to Hanna Park, Trenton on the 9th of September. The outing was led by Terry Sprague and the members were led on a tour of the large wooded area that spreads westward from the dog park.

Terry pointed out the various flowers, fungi and trees throughout the area and members heard about the development pressures on the park from the western side of the property.

Four members took the opportunity to clamber up Mount Pelion to enjoy the amazing views of the west end of the Bay of Quinte, the Trent River and the hills to the north.



The View from Mount Pelion



Marie Clarke takes a picture of white baneberry. The name may originate in the fact that all parts of the plant are poisonous but the roots and berries are most toxic. It's a common woodland plant also known as Doll's Eyes because each of the white berries in a cluster have a small black dot..



Terry Sprague gave his usual knowledgeable commentary. Robert Ormston who grew up in Trenton talked about the threats to the park from neighbouring development. Of course, thanks to John Lowry for organizing this event.

Memberships

Because of the current uncertainty about when meetings will begin again all current memberships will be extended to January 2022. Any renewals or new memberships will receive the same benefit. News about QFN will continue to be posted on our Facebook page, monthly newsletters, emails and Terry Sprague's website naturestuff.net. Look under "Organizations."

SELF-GUIDED OUTINGS

One thing that the current crisis has underlined is that there is no need to travel to distant, exotic locales to enjoy nature. Quinte offers a myriad of possibilities for exploring our heritage, both natural and human.



The view from a lookout in Eagle's Nest Park.

If you are planning a colour tour in North Hastings Eagle's Nest Park in Bancroft will be an essential stop. The website for the park contains maps of its location and its trails and the Algonquin and European history of the area.

<https://bancrofteaglesnestpark.com/>.

The Hastings Historical Society also suggests a tour route in north Hastings to visit their historical plaques. That's another reason to just wander around this part of our county's diverse ecosystems

and to better understand how humans and nonhuman processes interact.

<https://hastingshistoricalplaques.ca/regional-maps/category/northern-hastings/15>.



Central Hastings has its colourful landscapes also. In the picture you can see a site which we often visit. It's the type of place which every serious birder has on their must-see list, a sewage lagoon. I probably don't need to tell you that sewage lagoons are well fertilized. They are just filled with organisms and plants providing a rich ecosystem which supports waterfowl and shorebirds, especially during migration. In this case it's the Tweed sewage lagoon. Even Sharron who took this picture admits that it's not objectionable (no odour). Although you are closer to the pond than the picture suggests birds are best viewed with a telescope but binoculars are also useful. Turn right on Sulphide Rd. beside Tim Horton's and watch for Lajoie Road. Not really anxious

to visit a sewage lagoon? The next page offers alternatives in central Hastings.

Continued from previous page

If you are one of those people who doesn't understand the appeal of sewage lagoons the Tweed area has far more to offer. The Hastings Historical Society encourages us to follow their road trip titled *The Villages of Centre Hastings*. The seven plaques on this route include a particularly timely one explaining the Hungerford Smallpox Epidemic of 1884. <https://hastingshistoricalplaques.ca/road-trips-map/category/road-trip-1-villages-of-centre-hastings/31>.

As you travel this route you could stop and walk trails in the Vanderwater Conservation Area east of Thomasburg. You can choose between a walk in the hardwood woods and an easy stroll along the river. Tweed offers possibilities also. The park at the beach provides a short easy walk if you are feeling lazy. Bring your binoculars. It's the season to look for migrating sparrows on the ground, other migrating perching birds in the trees and waterfowl like loons, mergansers and diving ducks in the lake.

Conveniently for anyone wanting a longer but still easy hike the Trans-Canada Trail runs through the centre of the village. For trail parking turn right onto River St. past the Park Place Motel. From River St. turn left onto Louisa St. Follow Louisa and right after you cross the river turn right onto Alexander St. Follow Alexander to a small parking area by the trail.

QFN member Jason King posted these two pictures from the Tweed area on iNaturalist. The monarch caterpillar (left) and the tussock moth caterpillar wear bright colours for the same reason. The colours warn potential predators that the milkweed they eat has made them poisonous.



OUR LINK TO ONTARIO NATURE

As announced in the previous newsletter Denise Wilkins is now the Regional Director in Ontario Nature for Ontario East.



Ontario Nature (ON) is our voice in the province dedicated to protecting wild species and wild spaces. This Fall, I accepted a position on the ON board as Regional Director for Ontario East. I'm very proud to be associated with an organization carrying out the important work I am so passionate about.

Let me tell you just a few of the things Ontario Nature does.

- Protect, restore and preserve vulnerable habitats across the province through a system of Nature reserves totaling 7,679 acres.
- Conduct workshops for youth to inspire the next generation of conservation leaders (QFN supports a youth at the summit each year.).
- Encourage increased political support for nature protection.
 - fighting to ban neonicotinoid pesticides to protect pollinators
 - taking legal action when necessary to force the government to abide by their own environmental laws
- Influence land use policy and key decisions
 - advocate for sustainable logging

- advocate for Conservation Authorities to maintain their role in planning and development decisions
- Conduct collaborative research on projects like the Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas and Ontario Reptile and Amphibian Atlas.
- Monitor and mount opposition against provincial government proposals that will reduce Nature protection and conservation.
 - the elimination of the position of Environmental Commissioner,
 - the gutting of the Endangered Species Act,
 - the intentional destruction of piping plover habitat.
- Public education about Nature and conservation issues and so much more.

Check out their website at ontarionature.org and get more details on their programs and campaigns, sign-up for action alerts on conservation issues, and become a member!



This flower has several names but I like *Spotted Touch-me-not*. My inner child, which isn't buried very deep anyway, delights in touching the mature seed pods to see them explode and launch their contents in all directions. This close relative of the garden impatiens has far more to recommend it. It is pollinated by hummingbirds and bumblebees. Indigenous peoples used the sap to treat dermatitis. I can testify from experience that rubbing it on incipient poison ivy eases the itch and may stop the development of blisters. It's also proven to be anti-fungal for the treatment of athlete's foot. To top all these benefits, it is even reputed to compete successfully with garlic mustard. Look for it in shady areas with rich, wet soil. Photo by John Lowry.

AUTUMN GLOW

By Elizabeth Churcher and George Thomson
Reprinted with permission from the Tweed News, October 14, 2015

The 'Season of Thanksgiving' is with us. As we load up the wheelbarrow with Butternut Squash and fill bushel after bushel with potatoes, we are reminded that we live in a land of plenty. A brief departure from the fruit and vegetable gardens to gaze across our rolling landscape, too, fills us with gratitude for living in beautiful Tweed surroundings. Right now, as autumn is making its way onto the stage, a spectacular show is beginning to unfold --- a show that is unique to northeastern North America. Our woodlands are transforming from their lush green summer cloak to their magnificent autumn glow.



The Group of Seven was inspired by our rugged landscape and started our first truly Canadian national art movement. Franklin Carmichael titled this painting "Autumn in Orillia."

Only at this time of the year, in the northeastern portion of our continent, do whole forests change colour almost simultaneously. The colour change is confined primarily to the hardwood trees. Here, though, we may mention one cone-bearing tree, the Tamarack or Larch. Who has not been thrilled by the wonderful golden-yellow colour of the Tamarack needle-leaves in autumn, especially when they stand out against the dark greens of spruces and pines? The Tamarack is our only deciduous conifer, and, along with poplars, lends colour to regions of Western Canada.

Each season of the year welcomes a different set of conditions for trees and they respond in ways that support their ongoing life. After their green phase and their production of sugars by photosynthesis all through spring and summer and into autumn, leaves on trees change to other vibrant colours. We have only to think of the bright crimson of Sumacs & Red Maples, the golden yellows, roses & oranges of Sugar Maples, the yellows of poplars, hickories, birches & oaks, and the wines of the ashes.

What causes all of these colours? Sit back, relax and let us explore these changes together. The green pigment, chlorophyll, the pigment in leaves that is essential for photosynthesis, is contained in leaf cell structures called chloroplasts. Countless numbers of green chloroplasts give the green colour to leaves. But what about the yellows and oranges? It turns out that they are in the leaves all along, hidden by the predominant green colour. Just like the chlorophyll, the yellow and orange pigments, called xanthophylls and carotenes respectively, are located in the chloroplasts. In the chill of autumn, the production of chlorophyll slows and the chlorophyll molecules eventually break down into colourless compounds. This hierarchical shift in pigmentation allows the carotenes and xanthophylls to show their colours. --- Voila, the bright yellows of aspens, birches & hickories and the oranges of Sugar Maples! Just in case you are



Autumn in the Vanderwater Conservation Area. Photo by Danny Sheppard.

<https://www.dannysheppard.com>

wondering, this orange colour is produced by the same carotene pigment that fills our carrots with vitamin A.

The 'reds', from flaming scarlet to deepest purple, have a somewhat different story. These rich colours are caused by pigments called anthocyanins which are also responsible for the red colour in fruits and vegetables such as red cabbage, radish, beets, cherries, apples and grapes. --- And after we enjoy the brilliant scarlet red of

the Red Maple, we can look forward to anthocyanins providing beauty for us as we decorate our homes with Christmas Poinsettias. Anthocyanins are found in a structure within the leaf cell called a vacuole. As the weather gets colder, they become more abundant. All of the vibrant colours of autumn appear as we feel a chill in the air. A sudden temperature drop just after the sun has set is especially likely to produce brilliant autumn leaves. --- And so are crisp, sunny fall days. If, however, a hard frost visits early, the pigments in the leaves are destroyed and the leaves on the trees become more brownish than coloured.



An autumn trail at the Frink

As winter approaches, our landscape changes gradually one more time. With the help of winds, leaves fall to the ground and the magnificent glow dims. Eventually, chemical changes in the colour pigments cause the leaves to turn brown and we are left with a sombre blanket over our gardens and forest floors. But do not despair: all is not dark. These leaves will decompose and, after winter's sleepy days, will provide nutrients to soil that will support new life in spring.

As autumn marches on, we encourage you to give thanks and feast on all that this wonderful season shares with us. Enjoy the fall colours while they last. Go out into the woods, wander down a trail or stroll across a meadow and revel in Nature's spectacular production, 'Autumn Glow'.

The Quinte Field Naturalists Association, an affiliate of Ontario Nature, is a non-profit organization sponsoring nature education, conservation and research. It was founded in 1949 and incorporated in 1990 and encompasses the counties of Hastings and Prince Edward. The Quinte Field Naturalists Association is legally entitled to hold real estate and accept benefits.

Quinte Field Naturalists meet on the fourth Monday of every month from September to March (except December), 7:00 pm, Sills Auditorium, Bridge Street United Church, 60 Bridge Street East, Belleville. In April we hold our annual dinner at an alternate time and location. New members and guests are always welcome.

Bring a friend.

President George Thomson 613-478-3205	Past President Wendy Turner	Vice-President Vacant
Recording Secretary Vacant		Corresponding Secretary Elizabeth Churcher 613-478-3205
Treasurer Mike Shaw 613-967-1055	Publicity/Environmental Officer Denice Wilkins 613-478-5070	Membership Nancy Stevenson 613-779-9407
Newsletter John Blaney 613-962-9337	Outings Vacant	Social Convener Sharron Blaney 613-962-9337

Next Newsletter Deadline –October, 15, 2020

Please send submissions to sharronjohnblaney@gmail.com