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THE HURON FRINGE FIELD NATURALISTS' FRINGE NOTES

FALL INTO WINTER,
2014
WALKS,
MEETINGS
&
POTLUCKS

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**FROM OUR NEW
PRESIDENT...
GINA DALKIN-DAVIS**

In writing this note, my first thought was: "How the heck do I follow such a super president and



persuasive speaker like our outgoing president Marilyn Fink; or like Jack Campbell, Catherine Hogg, or any of the others in the long line of past presidents?" All have successfully demonstrated their commitment to nature in Huron and Bruce Counties in spectacular fashion.

So, I got onto the Internet to find out what direction other, wiser incoming presidents were taking. Well, there are lofty statements about "environmental sustainability", the "wise use of our lands", etc. and the quality of Leadership. All very noble and successful, indeed... big boots to fill.

For how else would we hold so tenaciously to such a strong belief in preserving our environment if it were not for local people like Marion, Jack or Catherine? Or on the national scale, Charles Canswell the founder of The Royal Canadian Geographical Society, or The Nature Conservancy guys who planted the seeds of an idea that grew into these very powerful advocates on sustainability.

How do I fit into all this? My only claim to organized nature conservancy is that I once had an office next door to Ducks Unlimited/Nature Conservancy. A shared coffee and gossip hardly counts! I don't know much about the natural environment (my husband, Walter, teases me about getting a nosebleed when I go north of Bloor Street in Toronto, for heaven's sake!) But, just maybe, my naivety will work in my favour. So here goes...

First, the 2014 Success Stories:

Marion ... Hats off to you on your enthusiastic leadership over the last two or three years. Your gusto not only makes each meeting fun but inspires all who meet you to do our best. You can and do charm the birds out of the trees.

Tom ... Congratulations! On receiving the Ontario Nature award for your exceptional volunteerism.

PLEASE TURN THE PAGE.....

Inside this Issue:

PAST OUTING REPORTS:	3-15
PAST MEETING REPORTS:	16
MEMBERSHIPS/ ADVERTISING INFO:	13
REGULAR MEETINGS:	16
UPCOMING OUTINGS:	17
MEMBERS' PAGES:	17-18



LIKE TO JOIN US?

HURON FRINGE FIELD NATURALISTS MEETS THE 4TH TUESDAY OF FEB., MAR., APR., MAY & JUNE, AND SEPT., OCT., & NOV., 7:30 PM AT PINE RIVER UNITED CHURCH, HWY 21**. MEMBERSHIP IS NOMINAL—SINGLE OR FAMILY. (EXECUTIVE CONTACT NUMBERS & MORE INFO INSIDE.)

**except April, Annual Dinner at another venue.

FALL EVENTS — PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Full details inside.

SEPTEMBER 23 Meeting - scheduled speaker: Kyle Horner: 'An Island Apart. The stunning and bizarre life of Madagascar'.

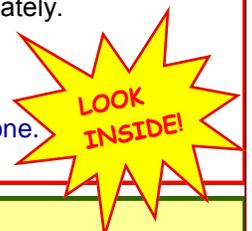
September **Corn Roast** was Sept. 6th at the Zinn's, announced alternately.

Outing to Homefront Acres Orchard (was on September 9th).

OCTOBER: 18th, ANNUAL BEACH BIRDING WALK, Pt. Clark - followed by members' potluck.

Oct. 28th Meeting : Two speakers lined up, we will announce which one.

NOVEMBER: 25th, regular meeting, speaker TBA.



FRONT PAGE PHOTO CREDIT: CEDAR RAIL FENCE WITH FALL CREEPER (Pepper)

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OUR CONTACT DETAILS ARE BELOW.

H.F.F.N. EXECUTIVE MEMBERS AND CONTACT NUMBERS:

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Gina D. Davis 519-440-0403

Past President:

Marion Fink 395-395-3701.

Vice-President:

Open position

Secretary:

Jackie Clements 396-3655.

Treasurer :

Rhodora Doughty 396-4368.

Memberships:

Kirk McNaughton 395-5711.

Speakers & Outings:

Tom Lobb 482-3342.

Open position

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Member-at-Large:

Linda Somerville 395- 3603 .

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Barb McNaughton,
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**FRINGE NOTES**

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Incoming President's Comments, Con't:

....I will lean heavily on you, Tom, as the year progresses to educate me in identifying birds, plants, frogs, toads, those shy little orchids, etc., etc.

The Hoodie/Hat program is proving to be very rewarding (cozy, too!) Thanks Steve and Jeni for all your hard work and 'to-and-fro-ing' to Goderich to get best prices of the highest quality hoodies.

I love mine. It's so warm and cozy. If you haven't ordered your own, please be sure to get one....they're the best! And new orders will contribute to the health of our Treasury.

Speaking of **Treasury**, Kudos to you, Rhodora. As treasurer you've helped our Club maintain a very healthy bank balance.

Speakers ... Joy ... a well-deserved round of applause for your dedication in bringing in the best of the best speakers. We'll not forget that George Kourounis of the Angry Planet gave us all something to dream about, ponder over and basically take us out of our geriatric doldrums.

Social Events ... 'An Army Marches on its Stomach'.... A million thanks to Barb and Linda and their volunteer angels for providing all the goodies at our meetings. We're looking forward to more!

Once again, on September 6th, we'll enjoy the beautiful grounds at the Zinn property. Please, Mother Nature, give us good weather! By the way, do you have a recipe for microwaving corn? A friend sent me the following for "silkless" corn on the cob.

Recipe for Silkless Corn:

Place a cob of corn in the microwave and turn on high for 4 minutes. If you place 2 cobs of corn in the microwave, increase the time to 8 minutes (4 minutes/ cob). **When cooked** (Hot!) remove from microwave and place on cutting board.

With a sharp knife, cut off the husk at the bottom by about 1 to 2 inches. Use oven gloves as the corn will be hot. Then place the corn upright and squeeze the cob out of the opening while holding the husk at the silk tassel end.

Voila... hot, delicious corn without the mess.

NOTE: You may like to cut off the stalk up to the bottom of the kernels BEFORE microwaving...when done, squeeze the husk holding the silk, as above.

You can watch the demo.

See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AJ75-64Gm5w>

Communications ... While I'm acknowledging all the expertise that continues into the coming year, I'd be remiss in failing to compliment Jeni and Steve for keeping us well informed. The newsletters are artful and packed with loads of relevant information.

Now, we also face Challenges in the coming year....

Speakers ... Joy Munn's retirement has left an opening on the Executive. This is a fabulous opportunity to get involved and choose the speakers and topics that you would like to hear at our meetings. Don't be shy... this is your chance to wield power and influence.

Membership Development ... Kirk ... you've done a fine job of managing our Memberships. We've gained 11 new members (Welcome!) but we lost 18, or a net of 7 lost members. So, my challenge to Club members is this: In the coming year, please let's each of us do our best to bring in just one new member per current member. How? For example, we have great speakers at our meetings. Invite a like-minded friend or two.

NEXT PAGE PLEASE...

CHALLENGES CON'T...Gina Dalkin-Davis

Annual Meeting Location ... The good ladies at St. Peter's Anglican Church, Lucknow, will not be offering catering in 2015, as the church is closing its doors. This is indeed a blow because the food, I think, was a major attraction. We are looking for an alternative site; so, if you have an idea please follow up on it and bring your suggestions to the September 28th meeting.

Other Clubs

In the coming year, we will continue to cement our relations with our neighbouring nature clubs.

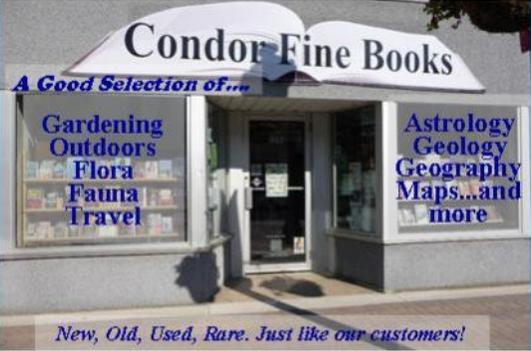
In conclusion, with your help, as your 2015 president and on behalf of our Executive, I promise to do our best to bring you interesting, informative and fun programs that help sustain our Club and contribute to our local environment.

Walk with me on the surrounding nature paths: teach me to identify those bird songs and spot the tiny orchids that you see so effortlessly.

~ Gina



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PAST OUTINGS

May 7th, Kincardine Lagoon, with Bruce Birders' Club – Birdathon

James Turland invited HFFN members on an informal walk with the Bruce Birding Club.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to Baillie Birdathon. We collected \$325.00 at the Annual General Meeting in April. 25% comes back to the club.

Bird Studies Canada administer the fund. The money goes to Bird Conservation, Research and Education. Amateur Naturalists may apply for grants for their research, if no other resources are available.

I started my Marathon May 6 evening and ended the same time on the 7th. The Warblers had not returned to my area, so my numbers were down.

One of the interesting sightings was one Sandhill Crane. I returned to Hullett Wildlife in late July and observed a family of three, to confirm they actually nested in the area.

The Sandhill's natural colouring has changed from grey to brick red, according to 'Peterson's'; that is because there is iron in their water.

Thank you to our anonymous donor who credited their donation to our club, it is very much appreciated.

Thank you also to Joan Dougherty who helped at Hullett Wildlife.

~ Catherine Hogg

Kincardine Lagoons Hike - James Turland's take: (photos of this event follow)

Participants: Bob & Anne-Marie Taylor, Bill Klein, Stewart Nutt, Bonnie Patterson-Collins, Jim Punnett, Alfred Raab, Dave Jean & Gayle Schaus, Kim and Kevin Towes, Connie Plante, James Turland, Ralph & Mary Anne Knowles, Linda & Jack Campbell, Brad Rotteau, Marg MacDonald

...Well, Pelee North lived up to its name today; a total of 67 species were observed. Things started off a little slowly, but as we persisted almost everyone got looks at an elusive Northern Waterthrush. A lot of new birds arrived overnight, including Orioles and Grosbeaks... the Tanagers and Buntings won't be far behind. The birds were low to the ground, the treetops were quiet and with a slight overcast, viewing conditions were near perfect. A dozen Warblers in total were amassed, with the most memorable for me, the two Blackburnians that visited us at lunch. Two flaming orange throats got the shutters clicking while they perused a bush right beside us. A hawk?? also seen at lunch I originally called a Goshawk. But reviewing the guides I see it shares too many features in common with a Red-shouldered Hawk (barred belly, banded tail, black fringe to trailing wing edge) so will have to let that one go as a 'Hawk sp.' Fred set this hike up as a do-it-yourselfer and as so many Bruce Birding members were away I invited members from the Huron Fringe Field Naturalists to join us. I think all enjoyed their day and we may well try this joint effort again for the Non-Pelleeians. Most people disbanded at noon but there were some nice sightings for those who stayed. In the afternoon the warblers started hawking insects in the clearing areas and could actually be seen out in the mowed grass. Thanks to all who lent their eyes to this day.

(See count results next page....)

~ Cheers, James

Kincardine--Sewage Lagoons, Bruce, CA-ON**May 7, 2014 7:00 AM - 1:00 PM****Protocol: Traveling 5.0 mile(s)****Comments: Joint HFFN + BBC Outing****67 species**

Canada Goose 6	Hermit Thrush 3
Wood Duck 4	Wood Thrush 1
Mallard 3	American Robin 8
Lesser Scaup 20	Gray Catbird 1
Bufflehead 15	Brown Thrasher 1
Double-crested Cormorant 1	European Starling 3
Great Egret 1	Ovenbird 1
Green Heron 2	Northern Waterthrush 4
Turkey Vulture 5	Black-and-white Warbler 12
Red-tailed Hawk 2	Orange-crowned Warbler 1
Killdeer 3	Nashville Warbler 4
Spotted Sandpiper 1	American Redstart 1
Ring-billed Gull 8	Cape May Warbler 2
Herring Gull 2	Magnolia Warbler 1
Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon) 3	Blackburnian Warbler 3
Mourning Dove 2	Black-throated Blue Warbler 3
Belted Kingfisher 1	Palm Warbler 30
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker 2	Pine Warbler 3
Downy Woodpecker 1	Yellow-rumped Warbler 45
Hairy Woodpecker 1	Black-throated Green Warbler 2
Northern Flicker 3	Chipping Sparrow 5
Least Flycatcher 2	Savannah Sparrow 1
Eastern Phoebe 2	Song Sparrow 12
Great Crested Flycatcher 1	Swamp Sparrow 5
Blue-headed Vireo 3	White-throated Sparrow 15
American Crow 6	Dark-eyed Junco 2
Horned Lark X	Northern Cardinal 2
Barn Swallow 1	Rose-breasted Grosbeak 2
Black-capped Chickadee 5	Red-winged Blackbird 7
White-breasted Nuthatch 1	Common Grackle 5
Brown Creeper 12	Brown-headed Cowbird 4
Golden-crowned Kinglet 5	Baltimore Oriole 1
Ruby-crowned Kinglet 25	American Goldfinch 54
Veery 2	

PAST OUTINGS....

Sandhill Cranes, Manitoulin Island. Caught by Bob Taylor

Blackburnian Warblers stole the show
~ Bob Taylor picture

Palm Warbler - B. Taylor



Common Yellowthroat - B. T.



Green Heron ~ Bob Taylor

MANY THANKS TO ALL OF THE WONDERFUL PHOTOGRAPHERS WHO SEND IN THESE LOVELY PICTURES!
- ED.



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Sunday, May 11, 2014

Spring Welcome Walk



Although only 4 months have passed, it seems like yesterday that we hiked the MacNaughton Morrison Tract in Exeter. We were a small, dedicated group of naturalists. Jeni and Steve, Gord, Ann-Marie and Bob met up at Timmies; I caught up with them after finding a hard-to-find parking spot. Located on the north-west corner of Exeter, the tract runs for 8 kilometres, going east from the Park winding along the river path through the scenic Ausable River Valley. →

PAST OUTINGS.... SPRING WELCOME WALK.....





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J. PEPPER

Indigo Buntings, Warblers, Goldfinches, Kingfishers, and Woodpeckers were among the birds that could be spotted if you had a sharp eye or binoculars. As this was a fine day, it wasn't too difficult to do. Finding a parking spot wasn't so easy. The good weather had brought out families, kids, couples and singletons to enjoy the sunny spring day.

Midway between MacNaughton Park and the Morrison Dam, we came upon the 75-meter Stirling Bridge spanning the Ausable River. This bridge provided a very attractive break as we journeyed through the towering hardwood and pine forest.



B. TAYLOR



B. TAYLOR

Beech, Basswood, Black Maple, Hemlock, White Pine were among the more readily identifiable tree species. Benches are thoughtfully provided for the faint of heart.

Along the forest floor, wildflowers were poking their delicate heads through the soft earth. Although we were somewhat late for the first spring flush, Bloodroot, False Solomon's Seal, Marsh Marigold, and White Trillium were still in evidence.

The high point of our hike was the Woodland Reflection Shelter Pavilion near the Morrison Line entrance to the trail. At that point we headed back down the Ausable River on the opposite bank, back to the Park. Being a bit of a nosy-parker, I couldn't help rubber-necking at some of the more stately yards backing onto the park on the return journey. Even then, bold little canaries and warblers distracted us from the opulence of the neighbourhood. As the website points out, the MacNaughton section of the South Huron trail took more than half a million dollars to create. Money well spent, in my opinion.

(PHOTOS FOLLOWING)

~ *Gina*



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VIEWS FROM OUR SPRING WELCOME WALK....

(PREVIOUS PAGE: We were greeted at the start of the walk by this exhausted white Mama squirrel, taking a break from the kids on a friendly tree branch in the day's heat.)



A TRANQUIL SCENE ON A PEACEFUL AUSABLE RIVER - J. P.

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DRYAD'S SADDLE FUNGUS - B. TAYLOR



SPRING AZURE BUTTERFLY - B. TAYLOR



BALTIMORE ORIOLE - B. TAYLOR



TWINLEAF....LIKE BUTTERFLIES - J. PEPPER



WHITE DOGTOOTH VIOLET - B. TAYLOR

The 2014 Bruce Peninsula Explorer, TUES., MAY 20th-THURSDAY, MAY 22 (into Friday):

We were extremely gratified, and not a little surprised this trip, to have signed up no less than twenty people, including two guests. It is a little amazing to discover that there are still people who enjoy traipsing and tramping the trails in sunshine and in showers (to put it lightly) and we thank each and every one of you for throwing in your lots with us for these days. Well done!

DAY 1: Tues., May 20th – Kincardine - Tobermory

North to Southampton: who wasn't watching?!

The day started off from Kincardine Sobey's parking lot at ten am, heading north. After turning west on Green Street in Port Elgin to take the scenic route to Southampton and pick up lunch at Tim's, the leaders of the expedition demonstrated their expertise by overshooting the turn on South St. back to Hwy 21, so then had to backtrack south through the centre of town to get back to Southampton Tim's. Fortunately, most of the members have done this trip before, and followed faithfully on. Promptly at ten thirty it began to rain, which made for an interesting damp lunch as everyone scattered to sit at picnic tables (or stand) under cedar trees at the Oliphant Women's Institute parking lot! I think those who had eaten lunch sitting down had a reminder of lunch for a while, in the form of damp nether regions....but never mind.... 'It's nature!' cried a few hardy souls, munching sandwiches and squinting out at the rain.



Oliphant Fen: a Coastal Meadow Marsh, with Added Moisture at No Charge

The recent rainy weather and probably some of the snow melt from winter made for an even wetter fen, with areas of standing shallow water and a couple of streams gurgling merrily by. One of the wettest visits we have had, and the rain added somewhat amusingly to this, with people walking the boardwalks in rain gear, umbrella in one hand and camera in the other. However, it was still an interesting walk, with many fresh-looking Pitcher Plants in evidence and a good display of Birdseye Primrose. Of interest also were three broken eggshells, the size of small hen eggs. These had been opened and emptied. One was very pale aqua, one white, and one cream with brown speckles, probably duck eggs brought from nearby, but no identification has been made. An Osprey nesting pole on the lakeshore across the road was investigated (despite something of a paddle with wind-blown umbrellas....)and was found to have occupants, but no close approach was made for the sake of the bird on the nest.



Sandy Bay:

This small nature area a little way north of Oliphant Fen is an area of shoreline posted as being home to shorebirds, waterfowl, and Massassauga Rattlesnakes. It is a damp, slightly raised area of the lakeshore not much higher than the water. A brief stop was made, with shorebirds, however, too distant to identify well. This area is at Shoreline Ave./Spry Lake Rd.

Petrel Point Fen: Off the Beaten Track!

Our next stop was Petrel Point, where despite the insistent rain we took to the narrow boardwalks, umbrellas and cameras at the ready. This excellent description is borrowed from Lambton Wildlife's publication, *Earthways*, dated 2008:



Grateful for boardwalks! - Pepper

The area is home to a deciduous swamp, a cedar swamp, an open fringe fen, a wet fen, treed islands, and a dry fen. The alkaline environment supports marsh fern, yellow lady's slipper, star flower, pitcher plant, tamarack trees, potentilla, rare arrowgrass, Indian plantain, ragwort, round-leaved sundew, thread-leaved sundew, bluet, Indian paintbrush, star toad-flax, white bog orchis, wood lily, buffalo berry, Joe Pye weed, honeysuckle, red osier dogwood, sweet gale, and marsh-marigold.

PITCHER PLANT - PEPPER



2014 Bruce Peninsula Explorer.....

Despite the rain, everyone went to explore for a time, and as we prepared to leave it was discovered that one of the trails did not circle back to its starting point as the others did, taking several members quite a bit further away than they expected. A willing search party went out and did not return either. However a couple of cellphone calls eventually rectified the situation, and our adventurers were picked up a little way down the road, none the worse for wear but perhaps feeling a little sheepish....!

Perhaps a lesson here, as the trail which seemed to lead back in the right direction actually led deeper into the bush...a good argument for trail maps in pockets!



Rural Rootz: a special place

About this time, we saw the clouds scudding away as the sun began to beam down warmly on our damp attire. Our first trip to Rural Rootz as a club was upcoming.

This piece of saved Peninsula wilderness, owned by Dee Cherrie and Tom Ashman since the 1970's, is tucked away just west of Warton on County Road 13. We found the Rural Rootz sign along the road and wound our way up the long driveway with its encouraging 'Keep going!' signs, to be warmly greeted by our smiling hosts. We were supplied with hiking staffs, given a short talk, then took a rough but wonderful hour or so's guided hike through the forest, led by our host Tom, who showed us the wonderful ancient rock formations, explained the geology, and demonstrated a remarkable agility on the terrain. **Photos this page: J. Pepper**

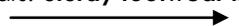


Surrounded by stone quarries, Rural Rootz covers 100 acres of wooded, rocky terrain, and has been carefully enhanced to reflect many aspects of nature. Besides having several trails of varied length, it has perennial gardens to be walked, two labyrinths, learning facilities and a charming tented gift shop, which we also enjoyed. Here are Dee's beautiful wall or garden Spirit Catcher plaques with nature themes, and Dee's lovely art has also been carried over to bookmarks and greeting cards. Each card has a lighthearted but thought-provoking poem about the subject on the front of the card. There are natural skin products, herbal items, hummingbird feeders, and unique, beautiful 'flower scan' cards, along with many other special and lovely items.

There are group sessions for yoga, hosted group hikes to some fantastic places, and you can even have tea leaf reading lessons from Dee. Tom has a Cedar Workshop

which is easy for anyone to do. If it rains, they can usually come up with 'something or other' inside. A portion of the trails has been added to the Bruce Trail as a side trail, not a common circumstance. The side trail is known as Rural Rocks Side Trail. Rural Rootz is also a certified Monarch Butterfly way-station, providing nectar, milkweeds, and shelter for butterflies on their migration through North America. A sign posted by Monarch Watch, based at the University of Kansas, informs the visitor of this.

So much has been done in this lovely space. Well worth a visit if you are in the area – give it at least two hours, or maybe a leisurely afternoon. Check the colourful and informative website for hours of operation – or call and enquire – they will open for you if they can. Enjoy a glass of Sunshine Tea and bring your camera and binoculars! **Sturdy footwear is**



2014 Bruce Peninsula Explorer.....

We want to spread the word about Rural Rootz, so tell your like-minded friends, and take a little side trip next time you're around Wiarton. A garden tour is all of three dollars, and well worth it.

We owe this visit to Catherine Hogg and Joan Dougherty, who visited it on their way home from the last Peninsula Explorer and suggested it as one of the places to see this year. They were so right!

We will return..... <http://www.ruralrootz.com> Photos: J. Pepper



Tobermory:

By this time we were all (I suspect) beginning to feel our age despite having had such a good time, and so it was nice to finally reach our destination. After checking into our respective motels, we all scurried over to the Princess Hotel for a hearty meal, with Whitefish dishes being the preferred choice.



After a traditional after-supper harbour walk, we bade the day adieu and retired to our cabins a tired bunch of naturalists! If there were bears, raccoons, or coyotes visiting during the night, we didn't hear them.



Day 2: Wednesday, May 21st: Off to the Dump!

After a great, conversational 9:00 breakfast at the Princess Hotel, during which we greeted the Campbells who were just arriving in the village, we picked up lunches at the grocery store, then reconvened at the motel before heading down the highway to Emmett Lake Road and a hike to Halfway Log Dump. As the day was not blisteringly hot, we

were able to spread out and have a good scramble amongst the rocks and cliffs. Several people scaled the rock barricade that blocks off the boulder beach on its other side, and explored the alien landscape over there with gusto, as well as finding one or two of the yellow-tagged ancient cedars that have grown out of the rock for hundreds of years. We shared our exploration with a small group of young 'rock-hounds' who were using climbing equipment to perform rather dangerous maneuvers on various tall outcroppings. Before we left, we explored the special, somewhat spooky area just back of the rocky beach which features huge, tumbled, moss-cushioned boulders which form passageways and caves in the gloomy, mossy woods there. A lot like Hobbit lands, and seeing giant spiders or a Unicorn would maybe not have been too surprising!

