



FringeNotes

December 2006

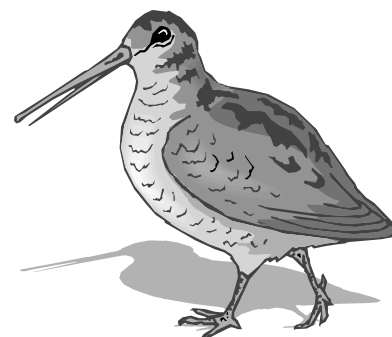
Huron Fringe Field Naturalists, Box 143, Kincardine, ON N2Z 2Y6

OUTING REPORTS

Birding & BBQ – October 21//06 Submitted by Jack Campbell

A cool but dry morning at Point Clark for our fall bird sightings with BBQ Pot Luck following. The Birds were hiding on us but we persevered & did sight a few species: loons, ducks, geese and a few shore birds including several pairs of Turnstones. All the Birders were ready for a hot cup of cider at the Campbell's as we waited for the BBQ to heat up & the ladies were soon setting their food out for the Pot Luck

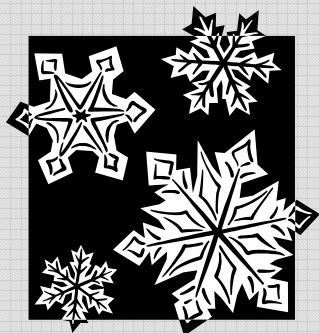
lunch. The variety of food and the many choices for dessert tempted 24 members & guests to eat a little too much I think.



McNaughton-Morrison Trail – November 4, 2006 Submitted by Jim Armstrong

Eight members enjoyed a cool but dry Saturday November 4th afternoon walking the 5-km trail from Exeter to and around the Morrison Dam and back to Exeter. The trail is maintained by the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority and passes through a variety of ecosystems including hardwood forest, pine plantation and wetlands. Much of the trail follows the Ausable River and includes boardwalks and rest areas. We saw several of the famous Exeter's white squirrels. There were a few water birds still to be

seen including Mallards, Buffleheads and Common Mergansers. Chickadees and Blue jays kept us company. This well maintained trail is a worthwhile walk at any time of the year.



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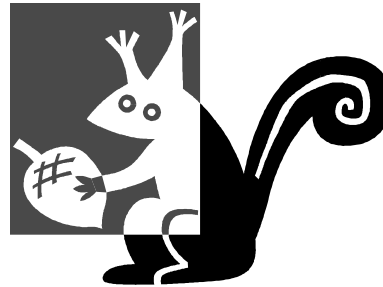
Ontario Naturalists Regional Meeting Nov. 4, 2006 Submitted by Jack and Linda Campbell

The meeting was held at the Saugeen Valley Conservation Headquarters between Hanover and Neustadt. Representatives from area clubs attended to hear from others as to projects that they are doing. We also had to list 3 speakers that we had enjoyed this past year.

The speaker in the morning was Stu Kenn from the Ontario Puma Foundation to tell us about the Puma sightings in Durham area. They know of a few dens in the region.

After lunch which was supplied by the Saugeen Field Naturalists many of us went for a walk around on one of the shorter trails, past a pond that had ducks and geese, the pens that held the pheasants and wild turkeys. They also had several fenced small fields to contain the deer. The trail led us to the sulphur spring; you could smell it before you got to it. The water was very clear and is at constant 9 degrees Celsius year round, water flow can fill 27 bathtubs in one minute

It was a very informative day.



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FringeNotes is

published three times a year for members of HFFN. Membership is \$12/year for single and \$18/year for family.

We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.huronstewardship.on.ca

Memberships Due

To verify your HFFN membership expiry date, check your mailing label. You will see beside your name either an 05 or 06 which denotes when you are paid up until i.e. April 05, April 06. The membership year runs from May 1 to April 30.

We hope that you will consider renewing your membership. Mail to Huron Fringe Field Naturalists, P.O. Box 143, Kincardine, Ontario N2Z 2Y6

By doing this you will help ensure having a continued roster of top quality speakers. Other clubs have increased their dues by quite a lot, so if you could help recruit new members it would help keep dues low. Thanks to all for your continued support of your club

OUTINGS and EXCURSIONS

23rd Xmas Bird Count – December 29, 2006

Once again the Christmas Bird Count is looking for volunteers to make it a success. All skill levels are welcome and beginners will be accompanied by a more advanced birder. After a full day of identifying and counting birds, there is a wrap-up and summation of results at a local restaurant. Contact: Ralph Knowles (519) 396-5580



Owl Outing – Date to be determined

Winter Ski/Walk – Date to be determined



Question: How do birds in which both sexes look alike know who's who?

Answer: Some birds look so much alike that researchers have to rely on DNA analysis to tell which are male and which are female.

Birds don't need to go that far, of course, and rely on their senses. It's easy to spot behavioral differences, such as with male pigeons, which coo and dance for potential mates.

Birds also hear differences in calls that aren't apparent to humans. A researcher measured seven features of crows' short alarm calls that differed among individuals and five that differed between males and females. Females' calls tended to be a bit more shrill.

Some birds can simply see what humans can't. Blue tits (*Parus caeruleus*) look alike to humans, but in 1998 researchers discovered that their plumage reflects ultraviolet light humans can't detect.

The males have distinctive ultraviolet markings only their mates can see.

-The New York Times



Help Birds Through Cold Weather

Cold winter weather complete with snow and ice poses many life-threatening problems for birds. First, their normal natural food sources may be covered up under a layer of ice or snow. How will they eat?? Then cold temperatures outside and brisk winds will chill the birds, requiring them to eat even more food to keep warm. How will they survive? Birds that you see in the winter are adapted to these harsh weather conditions. You'll see them fluffed up, trapping warm air in their down feathers, creating their own "down coats," so to speak. Some birds metabolism will also slow down, reducing the amount of food needed. But still, severe winter weather takes its toll on the bird population, killing many birds from the bitter cold and starvation.

There are many things that you can do to help the birds you see:

- Put up bird houses as shelters from the cold, ice, freezing rain, and wind. A shallow layer of straw, short cloth strips, or leaves will help the birds keep warm. A single birdhouse may contain many birds huddled together during a long cold winter night.
- Keep your bird feeders filled with food. The seed, suet, and even mealworms in your backyard may be the only food that some birds will be able to find during severe periods of cold wintry weather.
- Consider putting up additional bird feeders. You'll be amazed at the sheer number of birds that visit your yard. Huge hungry flocks of birds, such as blackbirds and finches may visit, trying to keep from starving to death. Also birds that are solitary or usually only with a mate, such as grosbeaks and cardinals, may group together in the winter, for protection from predators as well as more chances of finding food.
- Put out suet. Suet, made from fat, is a very high energy food that will feed the birds as well as keep them warm. Nuts of any kind from your freezer or pantry will be welcomed, as well as raw hamburger will be loved by many birds in the cold weather.
- Get mealworms from your neighborhood bait shop, wild bird store, or even order them over the Internet. These wiggly insects will be eagerly gobbled up by mockingbirds, bluebirds, as well as many many other hungry birds.
- Save any leftover bread, cereals, and crumbs and put them out. You can also mix these into some suet recipes.
- Grab that extra jar of peanut butter from the pantry. You can mix up smears for tree trunks, suet mixtures, or stuff the peanut butter into pine cones to feed a vast number of birds. Woodpeckers, flickers, bluebirds, mockingbirds, finches, even cardinals and grosbeaks all love peanut butter! Always mix the peanut butter with some other food, such as cornmeal, suet, seed, etc. since the sticky consistency may get stuck in some birds' throats.
- Don't forget the WATER! As in any other time of the year, water is needed for drinking. If your area has many days below freezing, consider getting a bird bath heater to keep it ice-free. If you only occasionally get a frozen day, take a bucket of hot tap water (not boiling) outside and pour it into the frozen bird bath. It'll thaw the water in the bath and stay unfrozen and drinkable for at least a few hours. If you do not have a bird bath, put out shallow bowls of warm water for the birds.

REGULAR MEETINGS

Regular meetings are held the fourth Tuesday of the month at the Pine River United Church on Hwy 21 at 8:00 p.m.



January 23, 2007

Our speaker this evening will be Beth Kumming. Beth is the director of the Bruce Trail and her topic will be "The Geology of the Niagara Escarpment"

February 27, 2007

February is member's night so bring your hobbies or perhaps a short story, or poem that that you have read.

March 27, 2007

Adam Cottrill, was with the Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority and he will speak to us about the "Pine River Watershed"



April 24, 2007

Annual meeting and the speaker will be Dr. Roger Suffling of the University of Waterloo. His topic is "The Ecology of Fire"

May 22, 2007

Diane Rooke-Harris is an enamellist artisan. She will present her "Photo Safari to Madagascar". We will see fauna and flora which is rarely seen anywhere else on the planet.



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