

NEWSLETTER



photo by Sydney Smith

President's Report Myrna Wood

The Executive has been busy planning for outings after the worst of the winter is over. Well, okay, some want to go out in the snow and cold too.

We are planning to join Peptbo in counting wildfowl at the end of March or early April and we will add a survey for emergent turtles around the same time on the South Shore. We will be looking for the same species in the wetlands along the Millennium Trail. If you know of a site where you would like to survey let us know.

Peptbo is planning several surveys for different species across the Important Bird Area in order to update its Conservation Plan. To volunteer, please contact Cheryl Anderson at 613-471-1096.

The Bioblitz is being expanded to include a Biothon – that is a monthly look at species found on a chosen site, which this June will be the Provincial Wildlife Area and Point Petre.

We also want to organize a Tree workshop and are looking for other organizations as partners. Please let us know if you have contacts with other tree-huggers.

We hope that these activities will provide all of you with a chance to participate in your favourite interest and activities. As always if you have an idea to add to the list just let us know.

Jan. 2015 PECFN CALENDAR

Tues. Jan. 27 Members Night p. 5
7pm Bloomfield Town Hall

Tues. Feb. 24 - Kyle Blaney, nature photographer
7pm. Bloomfield Town Hall, p.5

Tues. Mar. 31- Pamela Stagg- Wetlands
7pm Bloomfield Town Hall, p.6

Sat. April 25- Third Annual OPAF Gala Dinner with Chef Michael Hoy, Picton, PEC Curling Club 6pm. p. 6

Tues. April 28- Nick Cairns- turtles/ frog/ snake ecology
7pm Bloomfield Town Hall;

Tues. May 26- Ryan Norris - Monarch study

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photo Sydney Smith

PECFN BioThon

.... “BioThon” for the Provincial Wildlife Area (PWA) from Point Petre to Charwell Point Rd., south of Army Reserve Rd. This area, in South Marysburgh, lies within the South Shore

weencourage PECFN members visiting the PWA on their own or with a group to send their natural history observations to Sheila Kuja (sanda.kuja@bell.net) with dates and locations for sightings.

PECFN is sponsoring a 2015 “BioThon” for the Provincial Wildlife Area (PWA) from Point Petre to Charwell Point Rd., south of Army Reserve Rd. This area, in South Marysburgh, lies within the South Shore Important Bird Area. We will be collecting as much biological information as possible all year long and will be inviting the community to take part in our second BioBlitz to be conducted on June 20-21, 2015 with the Base Camp situated off Simpson Rd. in the PWA.

The BioBlitz, as you are aware, is a 24 hour period when experts in various fields will lead walks for the public to discover the plants, butterflies, birds, turtles, frogs and other wildlife that are present within some of the many habitats of the PWA. The area is quite diverse and includes woodlands, thickets, open scrubland, open meadows and wetlands. Ducks Unlimited has developed two projects for enhancing waterfowl populations, one of which supports a heronry. Several streams also pass through the PWA providing habitats for nesting and migrating birds, amphibians, reptiles and fish species.

Each month throughout the year we will try to encourage experts in different fields to come to the area to lead outings for PECFN members. We ask that anyone visiting the PWA on their own or with a group send their natural history observations to Sheila Kuja (sanda.kuja@bell.net) with dates and locations for sightings. This request will be sent to members of the Quinte Field Naturalists, Kingston Field Naturalists and the Willow Beach Naturalists as well. The data will be compiled at the end of the year and made available to all contributors, to the County and to the MNRF. The BioBlitz report will also include a section on observations made during the winter and spring.

photos by John F. Foster





Point Petre *photo by Sydney Smith*

The PECFN Bioblitz is being expanded to include a Biothon – that is a monthly look at species found on a chosen site, which this June will be the Provincial Wildlife Area and Point Petre.

Here is a report of our first monthly Biothon:

FIRST 2015 PECFN OUTING TO SIMPSON ROAD IN THE PROVINCIAL WILDLIFE AREA

by Sheila Kuja

Our first outing took place on Tues. Jan. 20 at 10 AM, meeting at Point Petre to determine whether a Snowy Owl or other northern visitors are present in the National Defense Area and then proceeding to Simpson Rd. to walk south of Army Reserve Rd. to the berm and possibly to the lake if weather permits. We had a second outing on Thursday Jan. 22 at 1 PM for those unable to attend on Tuesday

Although a quiet day in terms of birds, Tuesday January 20th was a glorious, sunny winter's day with, can you imagine, little wind to chill the well clad bones of the five hearty souls who met at Point Petre for a PECFN outing to the Provincial Wildlife Area. There was no Snowy Owl to be seen but at least 50 Long-tailed Ducks bobbed among the ice floes beyond the ice structures built by the lake along the shoreline. A solitary Black-backed Gull soared over the water.

Travelling to Simpson Rd. along Army Reserve Rd all was serene and quiet. It was a bit slippery underfoot where the rain on Sunday, followed by the cold temperatures had hardened the car tracks to a glistening surface. A Chickadee greeted us from the shrubs under the poplar trees not too far along the roadway. Two Blue Jays announced that they had seen us or just wanted to let us know they were about.

Ducks Dive Berm



A little later a flock of 12 redpolls (we think) alluded a positive identification. We wanted to pursue them to get a better look but water was flowing over the dam, creating a stream across the roadway which was just too wide and deep to cross so they flew off to the east and we couldn't follow. A small flock of Chickadees and Juncos were again in the thickets near the meadow as we headed back to the cars. We saw plenty of deer tracks, coyote scats and rabbit tracks during our hike but none of the mammals themselves.

FIRST 2015 PECFN OUTING TO SIMPSON ROAD IN THE PROVINCIAL WILDLIFE AREA cont'd

The highlight of our trip home was the Pileated Woodpecker in Cherry Valley that flew across the road in front of us and posed for a few moments on a tree trunk before proceeding northward. After saying goodbye to Boris and dropping Sandra off in Bloomfield, the Wellington "bunch" (Sydney, Sheila and Amy) set off to locate some Horned Larks and perhaps Snow Buntings. Instead we found three Red-tailed Hawks in the Wilson Rd. area, two trying to sun themselves in the same woodlot. We ended our foray by admiring a flock of Juncos with some Tree Sparrows and a Redpoll along Gilead Rd. A female Cardinal joined the group

feeding by the roadside and a White-breasted Nuthatch couldn't decide which side of the road it preferred, flying to a tree on one side, then returning to the shrubs close to the flock. Even though we hadn't seen our Horned Larks, we decided that it had been a most enjoyable morning.



On Thursday (22nd) afternoon, Bert, Agneta, Cheryl and I met to hike Simpson Rd., this time following the right-hand trail to the lake rather than to the berm, although we did walk to the berm later. Again we had a magnificent day of sunshine and blue sky AND the temperature was WARMER for our 5 km hike! We heard a Ruffed Grouse flush, saw a Sharp-shinned Hawk fly overhead, heard a Downy Woodpecker, and saw thousands of Long-tailed Ducks in the calm waters of L. Ontario. A Raven was vocal near the beginning of the walk and Chickadees were seen throughout the afternoon with an occasional Junco or Tree Sparrow as well. We again saw lots of evidence of deer, coyote and rabbit – and possibly Wild Turkey. The crunchy snow underfoot warned all the wildlife that naturalists were coming, however we did find a dead mouse on the road, probably killed that day, so we did see and photograph a mammal.

Sheila Kuja



The beach at end of Simpson Rd. /photo Bert Jenkins

List of what we saw:

- Long-tailed Ducks
- Black backed Gull
- Chickadee
- Bluejays
- Juncos
- deer tracks
- coyote scat
- rabbit tracks
- Ruffed Grouse
- Sharp-shinned Hawk
- Downy Woodpecker
- Long-tailed Ducks
- Raven
- Tree Sparrows
- dead mouse

Membership night is coming up on Tues. January 27, 2015.

This is your opportunity to tell us about what you have seen on your rambles around the country or around the world. All forms of communication are welcome - photo albums, collections of rocks or shells or whatever, or power point presentations. If you have an IT version of your presentation please bring it on a memory stick - a computer will be provided. We hope that many people will present, so please try to keep your presentation to 10 minutes. Please let Sheila Kuja (sanda.kuja@bell.net) know in advance of your intention to present.

It is not too late to add your name to the list of presenters...

**PECFN speaker for Tues. Feb. 24
Kyle Blaney Nature Photographer**

He has kayaked with grizzly bears..

Kyle Blaney is an avid traveller and accomplished amateur nature photographer from Belleville. In this multimedia presentation, Kyle will show his favourite photos, discuss where they were taken, and talk about the process that led to their capture. Kyle has been incredibly lucky to travel all over North America. He has kayaked with grizzly bears and

watched them mate. He has stood in awe as a humpback whale breached over and over again right beside his boat. He has had a flat tire on Yukon's Dempster Highway and been prepared to camp beside the road. He has watched a Kermode bear amble along a wet log right in

He watched in awe as a humpback whale breached..... right beside his boat.

front of him and hunt for salmon. He has photographed a bird in Prince Edward County that baffled North America's leading experts.

Kyle will share his photos and talk about all of these stories and more!



To view Kyle's photos go to:
www.kyleblaneyphoto.com

Hear Pamela Stagg 's presentation on WETLANDS
Tues. Mar. 31- 7pm Bloomfield Town Hall,



Least bittern photo by Derek Dafoe



Third Annual OPAF Gala Dinner & Art Auction
Sat April 25 5:30 pm
PEC Curling Club
with Chef Michael Hoy
\$75 dinner includes wine donated by PEC wineries
(tickets available after Feb 9)

Peptbo is planning several surveys for different species across the Important Bird Area in order to update its Conservation Plan. To volunteer, please contact Cheryl Anderson at 613-471-1096.



Red bellied woodpecker

photos by Sydney Smith



Downy woodpecker and Red bellied woodpecker

**Have you paid your PECFN membership dues for 2015?
Send your \$15 single membership cheque to
Box 414, Bloomfield, ON K0K 1G0**

Amazing as it may seem it is over two years since PECFN decided to appeal the Ministry of the Environment's decision to approve the Ostrander Point Industrial Wind Turbine project. And, as they say, a lot of water has gone under the bridge – or through the wetland- since then. We based our case before the Environmental Review Tribunal on serious and irreversible harm to plant life animal life and the natural environment at Ostrander Point. Following Environment Canada, Ontario Nature, Nature Canada, Bird Life International, Audubon Society, Royal society for the Protection of Birds, the Suzuki Foundation joined us in declaring that Ostrander point was the worst site for wind turbine development. Not only is Ostrander Point in a major migratory pathway, it is the home of several endangered species notably the Blanding's Turtle and the Eastern Whip-poor-will and has throughout the habitat threatened Alvar habitat and provincially significant wetlands.

In December after winning at the Tribunal level and losing Gilead's appeal to the Divisional Court, PECFN was back in Court again at the Appeal Court of Ontario. The lawyers battled it out for two days and now we wait for the final decision.

We could not have done any of this without the help from all of you, our friends. Money has poured in from all across Canada to help us pay the legal bills from this fight. It is clear that many, many thinking people agree that Ostrander Point must be saved from development.

This is to say a huge thank you. Of course we are still raising funds. We plan another gala dinner and art auction on April 25. This event has proven very popular. Once more Michael Hoy will be our chef and we plan some special entertainment.

Myrna Wood is checking the Appeal Court "decision" page daily. As soon as we know anything – you will know. Myrna Wood is checking the Appeal Court "decision" page daily. As soon as we know anything – you will know.



Blandings turtle *photo by Ian Dickinson*

Hubbs Creek Marsh at the Millennium Trail gets Provincially Significant Status

By Amy Bodman

The Hubbs Creek Marsh.....at the Millennium Trail between Danforth and Benway Roads, has received Provincially Significant status.

In response to a site visit by representatives of the MNRF on November 28th, and the verification of two Species at Risk who use the site as habitat, the Hubbs Creek Marsh which is intersected by the Millennium Trail between Danforth and Benway Roads, has received Provincially Significant status. Although the status does not completely protect the marsh from drainage or filling in, it does allow the owners of the marsh to get a Conservation Land Tax Exemption on their property tax for keeping it as conservation land. It is the first step in protecting this valuable site.



Black Tern photo by _Jeremy Patenaude

.. any evidence of additional Species at Risk will help protect the special status of the marsh.

What sealed its Provincially Significant Status is the positive identification a small Black Tern Colony, a Species at Risk of “special concern”, which has nested in the site for the last few years, and the presence of Least Bitterns, a “threatened” Species at Risk, which is likely to become endangered if measures aren’t taken to protect it. Least Bitterns are very shy and secretive and do not react well to human disturbance like boat traffic and loud noises during their breeding season (May to mid-July). Bearing this in mind, PECFN will continue to work with the PEC Trail Committee to monitor proposed changes to the Millennium Trail in that area to ensure protection for this marsh.

..Black Tern Colony, a Species at Risk of “special concern”, and Least Bitterns, a “threatened” Species at Risk, .. likely to become endangered (without protection) .

When informing us about the Hubbs Creek Marsh’s upgraded status, Todd Norris of the MNRF reminded us that that status can change if Species at Risk get down-listed or de-listed. Therefore any evidence of additional Species at Risk at that marsh will help protect it. I myself have seen a Blandings Turtle crossing the Millennium Trail there. PECFN members can help maintain this rating by photographing/recording any sightings at the marsh substantiated, when possible, with a photograph and GPS coordinates.



Least Bittern/photo by Gilles Bisson

If PECFN members see Species at Risk at the marsh they should contact amy.bodman@gmail.com

This marsh is a wonderful place to birdwatch in the spring, summer and fall. If you do see any Species at Risk on site, please let me know at amy.bodman@gmail.com so we can forward the information to the MNRF.

In late March or early April PECFN is planning to survey for emergent turtles on the South Shore. We will be looking for the same species in the wetlands along the Millennium Trail. If you know of a site where you would like to survey let us know.

When a Blanding's Turtle is observed, the following information should be collected:

- Name of observer and contact information,
 - Time and date of observation,
 - Number of individuals observed,
 - Photograph of the turtle to confirm identification,
 - GPS coordinates, including accuracy.
- If multiple individuals of the same species are observed
- and are more than ten m away from each other,
- separate GPS coordinates should be submitted for each individual.
- If the GPS location is taken from a shoreline and not the location of the turtle,
- include additional information to allow the point to be mapped accurately
- (e.g. turtle was 20 m NW of GPS location).



Blandings /*photo by Gilles Bisson*

It's Time to Participate in the 2015 North American Trumpeter Swan Survey!

The North American Trumpeter Swan Survey is the official population status assessment for this species. This survey was first conducted in 1968 and has been completed at five-year intervals since 1975. **The survey involves cooperators from federal, state, and provincial agencies across the United States and Canada, as well as volunteers from non-government organizations and the public.** The information resulting from this coordinated effort is used to assess and track population status, evaluate restoration efforts and inform development of conservation and management plans for this species.



Here in Ontario, assistance is needed to survey Trumpeter Swans during winter 2015. Ontario covers a vast area, but is a province that has many people.

Having many volunteers out looking for and reporting information will provide much new, invaluable information on swan abundance, geographic distribution and seasonal habitat use that is much needed for Trumpeter Swan conservation and management. Winter is an ideal time to survey because swans concentrate where there is open water and accessible food. The survey typically is conducted during a short period of time to minimize the possibility that birds will move and be counted elsewhere in the province.

It is easy to participate in the Trumpeter Swan survey and to have a hand in contributing to their management and conservation. Trumpeter Swans are very conspicuous and can be easily distinguished from the two other swan species found in Ontario, the Tundra Swan and Mute Swan. The equipment required is minimal and the required information is easy to collect. Even not seeing any swans at a locale is important to record. Even though the focus of the survey is on Trumpeter Swans, observations of other waterfowl or any birds, especially notable winter sightings, are welcomed submissions.

OFFICIAL SURVEY DATE

31 January 2015 (Saturday) / weather date: 1 February 2015 (Sunday)

Note: swan data collected at any time during winter is useful and will be accepted, but data from within a day or so of the official survey day is most appropriate / valuable.

WHERE AND HOW TO SURVEY

Trumpeter swans can be found **anywhere in Ontario with open water**, check ice-free areas of lakes, ponds and rivers. Please respect private property and seek permission before accessing land. Surveyors may drive or walk survey areas and it is recommended to use binoculars, spotting scope, camera, etc. to count and reliably identify swans/birds. All information should be recorded on the data sheets. (**See below**)

SWAN SPECIES IDENTIFICATION

The Trumpeter Swan Society's website is an excellent information source to help with swan identification. This organization has produced a printable brochure that will help you distinguish between the three species of swan found in Ontario.

www.trumpeterswansociety.org/swan-identification.html

USEFUL EQUIPMENT

- Datasheets for recording survey information (see website)
- Identification brochure from the Trumpeter Swan Society's website
- Binoculars/Spotting Scope
- Camera (with zoom lens), aids with reading/documenting wing tags and species identification.

WHERE TO SEND COMPLETED DATA FORMS & SURVEY-RELATED QUESTIONS

- E-mail: trumpeterswan@live.com
- Post: Ontario Trumpeter Swan Restoration, 1482 4th Concession West, RR 1, Troy, ON L0R 2B0

Data Sheet: 2015 North American Trumpeter Swan Survey – Ontario Region.

Loc. #	Location Name (be specific if No GPS given)	GPS N (DD)*	GPS W (DD)	MM	DD	YYYY	Species	Family / Group #	# of Adult (white)	# of Cygnet (gray)	# Un-known	Markers

Comments:

Observer Information – Name(s): _____ Email: _____ Phone: _____

* A useful website to find GPS (Lat/Long) coordinates: <http://touchmap.com/latlong.html>

Note: Please provide 1 line of data for each swan Family (adults + cygnets) or Species / Group (other swans, bird species, etc.) at each location.



Mute Swan Trumpeter Swan Tundra Swan

“The only place I know where there are wintering Trumpeter Swans (other than on the Rideau) is in (an) area up at Barcovan in the northwest corner of Wellers Bay.”
 Terry Sprague

Distinguishing Trumpeter Swans

Distinguishing Trumpeters from Tundras is not easy, but it is possible by paying close attention to a few distinctive characteristics.



Trumpeter Swan

red border on lower mandible

Voice of Trumpeter

resonant, sonorous, loud, low-pitched, bugle like call.



Tundra Swan

yellow marking on the lore

Voice of Tundra:

high pitched often quavering oo-oo-oo accentuated in the middle; or who, who-ho: woo-oo-woo; or who-who.



Mute Swan

orange bill and black knob on forehead

Voice of Mute:

generally silent but not 'mute'; hissing sounds are common and occasional snorting noises.

**Minutes of the Executive Meeting
Prince Edward County Field Naturalists
282 Niles Street, Wellington
January 5, 2015**

Present: Cheryl Anderson, Amy Bodman, Elizabeth Cowan, Sheena Kennedy, Sheila Kuja, Agneta Sand, Myrna Wood

Regrets: Sandra Dowds

1. Status Reports

(A) Membership: Agneta

We have four honorary members, 54 paid-up members, and 38 members who need to be nudged.

(B) Treasurer: Sheena

Sheena reported the following balances:

PECFN bank account: \$2,356.25

OPAF bank account: \$2,341.67

The CRA has approved PECFN's 2012-13 income tax return.

There was some discussion of the best way to show people how much money we have raised for Ostrander Point when there is no real ceiling we can put on it at this time. Cheryl will ask Boris if he can take the \$220,000 figure off the website thermometer.

(C) Programs:

Outdoor programs

Myrna raised the possibility of a turtle survey in late March or early April as they emerge from overwintering ponds. PEPtBO will be doing a waterfowl survey then, so it might be possible to combine the two.

Cheryl is attempting to reach Margaret Kerr of the Stewardship Council about a tree workshop in the spring. Amy will contact Tim Gray of Trees Ontario about a seed workshop.

Cheryl asked about a winter walk along the Millennium Trail if it were dry enough. It was decided to hold a BioThon field trip in January instead (see under Bioblitz below).

Indoor programs

Jan.27, 2015: Membership night. Cheryl has sent a write-up to Sandra for distribution to the members. Myrna pointed out that we didn't hold the vote on the two resolutions amending the by-laws at the November meeting; this will have to be done at the January 27 meeting.

Feb.24: Kyle Blaney, nature photographer - Myrna has a blurb for the newsletter.

Mar.31: Pamela Stagg - wetlands - Amy

April 28: Nick Cairns turtles/frog/snake ecology- Amy

May 26: Ryan Norris Monarch study - Cheryl

Nov. 2015: Joanne and Kendal Dewey - Amy

(D) Fundraising Committee:

The two screenings of Suzanne Pasternak's film (at the Regent and at the Drake Devonshire) were both very successful at raising awareness of the issues and what PECFN is doing about them. The Regent netted \$3,450.00 and the Drake Devonshire \$2,745.00.

Myrna will speak to Treat Hull about the County radio station's policies on reporting local news.

(E) Ostrander Point and Tribunal:

Myrna reported that Council has turned down PECFN's application for a grant toward our legal costs. However, a majority of the new councillors seem ready to combat the province more vigorously on invasive industrial projects. A judicial review has been requested under the *Heritage Act* at the Divisional Court on the White Pines project.

Asked about options open to the Court in our case, Myrna said that one possibility is that it could return the matter to the Environmental Review Tribunal to reconsider mitigation measures or "irreversible harm".

(F) BioBlitz:

The committee members went down to the South Shore to scout out locations for the next BioBlitz and found hunters everywhere, plus some clearly marked hazardous material, which they duly reported. Point Petre has a garage that could be used as a base camp; the Simpson Road has a large open space that would also be suitable. This year's dates are June 20-21. Sheila will look into involving school groups and will draft a press release, a newsletter and info for interested groups. Cheryl will edit. Cheryl is working on an application for a Stark Family grant. Amy will contact a lichen specialist.

Sheila proposed adding to the BioBlitz with a year-round BioThon: field trips would take place every month, and any member who goes anywhere in the Provincial Wildlife Area and Point Petre would be encouraged to report on what they see. It was decided that a BioThon field trip would be held instead of a winter walk on the Millennium Trail, at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, January 22, starting from the Simpson and Army reserve roads.

(G) PEPtBO:

Environment Canada could use some of the new funding for National Wildlife Areas for a new banding/visitor centre, but the process could take another four years.

The waterfowl blitz referred to above will be taking place along both sides of Prince Edward Point on March 21 or 28, depending on the weather.

(H) Ontario Nature:

The June AGM will hold a vote to make official their name change from the Federation of Ontario Naturalists. Their lawsuit on the changes to regulations under the *Endangered Species Act* goes to Divisional Court on January 14.

(I) Millennium Trail:

MNR visited the Hubbs Creek Marsh on November 28 to see if it might qualify as a provincially significant wetland, which would mean tax breaks for property owners. Amy suggested monitoring by

PECFN to identify any species at risk there. She accompanied the MNR experts on their tour and will write to ask what evidence they require on species at risk.

With Pamela's help, Amy will prepare a PowerPoint presentation on the economic benefits of wetlands and birding to show the Trail Committee; she will also try to contact the couple who are objecting to motorized vehicles on the Trail. She noted that the OPP is patrolling the Trail looking for speeders.

- (J) **Newsletter:**
This month's deadline is January 20.

Next meeting: Monday, February 2, 2015, 10:00 a.m., 28 Low Street,