



# The Quinte Naturalist

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

## April



About a year ago Denice Wilkins suggested a project for our club. Knowing that all but one of Ontario's turtle species were in danger she suggested that the club should sell Turtle Incubation Care Units (ICUs) to protect turtle eggs from predatory raccoons, foxes and skunks. With the approval of the membership Denice made it happen and the project has been a big success.

Thanks to the Hastings Stewardship Council which provided funding, to Chris Rashotte of Rashotte's Home Building Centre in Tweed for providing materials at a discounted price and to Brad Olsen and his class at Centre Hastings Secondary School who constructed the ICUs.

The picture shows Brad's students with their handiwork and Denice with a big smile in the middle at the back.

## THIS MONTH'S SPEAKER

**Cliff McClean**  
**Past Chair of the Hastings Stewardship Council**

### **TRANSFORMATIONS - OF MAN AND BEAVER**

#### **Annual Dinner**

Monday, April 28, 2014 – 6:00 p.m.  
St. Mark's United Church  
237 Cannifton Rd. N.  
Cannifton



*The Quinte Field Naturalists Association, an incorporated 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, 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.*

<b>President</b> George Thomson 613-478-3205	<b>Past President</b> Wendy Turner	<b>Vice-President</b> Phil Martin 613-395-3246
<b>Recording Sect'y</b> Bernadette Hymus 613-962-7926	<b>Corresponding Sect'y</b> Elizabeth Churcher 613-478-3205	
<b>Treasurer</b> Doug Newfield 613-477-3066	<b>Environmental Officer</b> Denice Wilkins 613-478-5070	<b>Membership/Mailing</b> Marjorie Fisher 613-968-3277
<b>Outings/Newsletter</b> John Blaney 613-962-9337		<b>Refreshments</b> Sharron Blaney 613-962-9337

Next Newsletter Deadline – September 10, 2014  
Please send submissions to [sharronjohnblaney@gmail.com](mailto:sharronjohnblaney@gmail.com)

## CLUB NEWS

### UPCOMING OUTINGS

**Birdathon. May 10 – 17.** The actual date for this outing will be determined by weather and the preferences of participants. We will be birding for the entire day in Prince Edward County but you are welcome to join the group for only part of the day if you wish. That means you don't have to meet us at 6 a.m. if that's too early. Warblers in their most radiant garb are the stars of the show. Many of the supporting players such as scarlet tanagers, Baltimore orioles and indigo buntings are just as colourful and there's always a good chance of finding a rarity. Let me know if you are interested so that I can include you in the negotiations about the date.

[sharronjohnblaney@gmail.com](mailto:sharronjohnblaney@gmail.com).

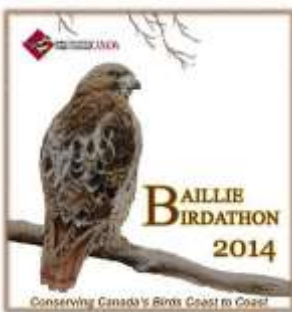


*Photo by Kyle Blaney*

**Saturday, June 7. Napanee Limestone Plain – Rare Habitat, Rare Birds** – Mike Burrell from Bird Studies Canada will lead this tour of the Napanee Limestone Plain Important Bird Area. It is one of the few places in Ontario to find the endangered loggerhead shrike nesting. While that fact alone makes it an extremely important local ecological feature many other significant bird and plant species can be found there. See the article on page 7

Meet behind the Shell station at the Quinte Mall. **Saturday, June 7, 7 a.m.**

### WE'RE THE RAVEN LOONATICS (And we need your help)

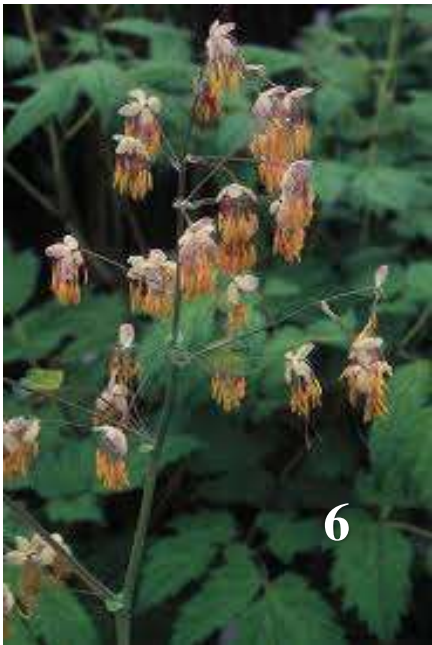
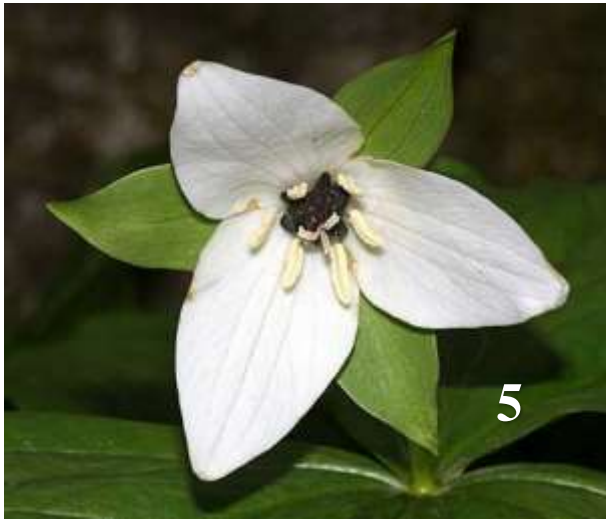


The Raven Loonatics are the Quinte Field Naturalist team in this year's Baillie Birdathon. Of course funds raised by the birdathon support bird research and conservation. Fifty percent of our total goes to assist the Prince Edward Point Bird Observatory which receives no government funding. The rest is divided between Bird Studies Canada and QFN.

You can sponsor us at a flat rate or give an incentive by pledging so much per species. We usually find between 100 and 110 which isn't enough to make us competitive with some other teams but does make for an interesting day. You can make a pledge at our annual dinner or make a donation or pledge online. Go to the Bird Studies Canada website <http://www.birdscanada.org/>. Click on the blue Baillie Birdathon button and follow the instructions. You can also just let me know by phone or email. Donations of \$10 or more receive a tax receipt. Thanks for whatever support you can give.



**HOW MANY OF THESE SPRING WILDFLOWERS CAN YOU IDENTIFY**





1. **Dutchman's Britches** (or Breeches). It's not hard to guess where this plant got its English name as its flowers look like miniature pairs of baggy pantaloons hung on the line. For some people the flowers take on a different appearance so they may know it as fairy candles, monk's head or butterfly banners. Some farmers know it as staggerweed because it contains depressants to the central nervous system. Grazers which consume it develop a staggering gait followed by vomiting and convulsions. The botanical name *Dicentra cucularia* betrays its close relationship to bleeding heart. *Dicentra* comes from the Greek and means two-spurred while the species name is from *cucullus* meaning a hood. Bumblebees are the primary pollinator and the seeds are dispersed by ants.
2. **Cut-leaved Toothwort.** Cut-leaved refers to the deep cleavages in the leaves. Toothwort refers to its supposed effectiveness in treating toothache. The belief was a result of the Doctrine of Signatures popularized by the Renaissance physician Paracelsus. This doctrine stated that plants were put on earth by God who gave clues about their use in their appearance. The rhizome of this plant is ivory in colour and has tooth-like knobs on it. "Wort" comes from the old English *wyrt* meaning root and was applied to all plants thought to have medicinal value. Pepper root, an alternate name, comes from the pungent root which can be used in place of horseradish. Other names such as lady's smocks and milkmaids are fanciful references to its appearance. Toothwort is known as a "true spring ephemeral" meaning that it completes its life cycle early in the spring and dies back and goes dormant after the leaves appear in the forest canopy.
3. **Hepatica.** There are actually two species of hepatica, sharp-lobed hepatica and round-lobed hepatica with the difference being evident in the tips of the three-lobed leaves. Although sharp-lobed hepatica tends to be more common on calcareous soils both species are common in Quinte's spring woodlands. Hepatic refers to the liver and the leaves have three lobes like the human liver so liverleaf and liverwort are alternate names. The flowers can be various shades of blue, lavender and even pink. According to Appalachian Mountain lore a girl can win the love of a boy by sprinkling powder made from fire-dried hepatica leaves on his clothes.
4. **Bloodroot.** The orange-red sap of this plant explains its name. The alternate name Indian

paint has its origins in the wide use of the sap as a red dye by Native Americans. Another name, red pucoon, is somewhat redundant as pucoon comes from the Algonquin word *pocan* meaning blood red. Like hepatica which also blooms early in the spring bloodroot is self-pollinating if the weather is too chilly for flies or bees. Bachelors of the Ponca tribe in the Ohio valley are reported to have believed that applying the red sap to their palms and shaking hands with a prospective bride would induce her consent to marry.

5. **Red Trillium.** What's a quiz without a trick question? It's hard to know what to call this wildflower. Very occasionally red trillium flowers will be white and even less often yellowish or green. The plant can still be identified by the purple reproductive parts in the centre. Wake-robins is another name, possibly because it supposedly flowers about the time robins appear but for us the two are not really in sync. Stinking Benjamin and stinking Willie are two other possibilities. Benjamin is a corruption of benjoin, an ingredient in a plant from Sumatra used in perfume. The red flower of the trillium is definitely not sweet smelling so it is a stinking perfume. In Scotland the invasive tansy ragwort is known as stinking Willie, named after William, Duke of Cumberland, the British commander against the Jacobites at the bloody Battle of Culloden. Perhaps descendants of the Jacobites in North America thought that William needed another memorial. In any event the scent of this plant smells vaguely like rotting meat. Lacking nectar to attract bees the plant has to attract carrion flies as pollinators. Whatever we call it this trillium is a welcome sight in the early spring woodlands.
6. **Early Meadow-rue.** This plant with its delicate flowers and lacy blue green foliage is also known as quick-silver weed but it really is too lovely to be called a weed. This is another plant with a problematic name. It grows in open woods rather than meadows. It also is not closely related to the culinary herb rue but is given this name because of a perceived similarity between its leaves and the herb.
7. **Trout Lily.** For some people the mottled leaves recall the pattern of the sides of brook or speckled trout. A very common alternate name is dog-tooth violet but the plant is a lily, not a violet. People who see a resemblance between the fully developed flower and the open mouth of a snake may call the plant adder's tongue. The flower is most often yellow but at Prince Edward Point there are many plants with white flowers.
8. **Twinflower.** A close look at the large leaves which are nearly divided in half clearly shows the reason for the name of this plant. It's at the northern edge of its range in southern Ontario but is uncommon throughout its range. I do know of a patch in the deciduous wood at the western end of Army Reserve Road near Point Petre in the southwest corner of Prince Edward County. Known as *Jeffersonia diphylla* to botanists this plant was named in honour of Thomas Jefferson, third president of the United States, who had a great interest in botany. Greek words meaning "two" and "leaves" describe its distinctive foliage. The plant supposedly has many medicinal properties leading to its alternate name, rheumatism root. However the Medicinal Herb Info website concludes its discussion of Twinleaf with the statement, "Too rare to harvest. Probably toxic."







*Photo by Dave Stuckey*

***Northern Shrike***



*Photo by Kyle Blaney*

***Loggerhead Shrike***

Obviously our two shrike species can be tricky to tell apart. Fortunately for a good portion of the year the date will tell you which species you are seeing. The northern shrike is a winter visitor while the loggerhead shrike nests and raises its young during the warmer months. However according to the second edition of *Birds of the Kingston Region* during March, April, October and November you may see either species.

The differences between the two species can be difficult to determine in some situations. The northern shrike has a 25% larger body size but such a comparative measure is helpful only if you see both species at once. The easiest differences to detect are on the bird's head. The northern shrike's beak is more robust but again this can be difficult to see on a single bird. The black mask of the northern is narrower and does not extend across the base of the forehead just above the beak as it does on the loggerhead shrike. The vermiculations or wormlike lines on the northern shrike's breast are much more distinct than they are on the loggerhead. Juvenile loggerheads may have faint similar marks but the breast of an adult loggerhead often appears pure white.

Examine any shrike in detail whatever the season. Experience always makes identification easier. Also you need to beware of misidentifying a northern mockingbird. This bird is uncommon in Quinte but it can occur in any season.



**WILDFLOWERS AT LAST!**

Join Ewa Bednarczuk of Lower Trent Conservation Authority to enjoy the spring wildflowers carpeting the woods of Proctor Park in Brighton.

Friday, May 16, 1 p.m., 96 Young St. Brighton. Meet at the trailhead sign.

Don't forget to visit Terry Sprague's website [www.naturestuff.net](http://www.naturestuff.net). His daily reports of birds found in Quinte will keep you up-to-date about our returning migrants and tell you where to find them.