



Kingston Field Naturalists

January and February 2022

KFN

A registered charitable organization and a member of Ontario Nature
Box 831
Kingston, Ontario
K7L 4X6

KFN Website
and links to other sites:
<https://kingstonfieldnaturalists.org>

Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/Kingstonfieldnaturalists>

Membership Inquiries:
Kathy Webb
kw2 at queensu.ca

Meetings are normally held at 7:30 pm on the third Thursday of each month from September to April. Social starts at 7:00 pm.

Thursday 20 January 2022

Steven Cooke from Carleton University will present Fish in the 613

Dr. Steven J. Cooke is a Canada Research Professor in Fish Ecology and Conservation Physiology at Carleton University. He also serves as Director of the Institute of Environmental and Interdisciplinary Science and is founder of the Canadian Centre for Evidence-Based Conservation. His work spans the natural and social sciences with a focus on developing solutions to complex conservation problems facing aquatic ecosystems. He has been conducting research at Queen's Biology Station since 1998 and spends many weeks each year snorkeling and fishing in the Rideau Waterway with his three young children. Cooke is a member of the College of the Royal Society of Canada and Chair of the Sea Lamprey Research Board for the Great Lakes Fishery Commission. Learn more about the work of his team at www.fecpl.ca

Fish in the 613 Eastern Ontario has plenty of surface waters that are home to diverse fish communities. Yet, unless harvested, these animals often go unnoticed. In this presentation Dr. Cooke will introduce you to what swims beneath. His presentation will provide an overview of fish ecology and the ways in which humans impact fish populations and fish habitat. He will also summarize the many ways in which fish benefit humans. Examples will be drawn from research projects in the Rideau Waterway, Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River covering species such as muskellunge, American eel, round goby, and smallmouth bass.



This beautifully mounted Snowy Owl is part of the KFN bird collection. Learn more about this collection and its uses during the January breakout room.
Photo J. Elliott

Zoom meeting updates for Thursday 20 January:

- You will receive a Zoom link a few days before the meeting. The Zoom link will be opened at 7 pm. The formal meeting begins at 7:30 pm.
- The **breakout room will feature Anne Robertson** talking about and showing the KFN bird collection. Please log on at 7 pm if you want to join.
- If you have a problem, turn on you microphone and ask to be placed in the room by the moderator. The room will be open from 7:00 to 7:25 pm.
- Join our monthly meetings by telephone. Contact Janet Elliott (613-547-2674) 1-2 days in advance of a meeting to obtain the Meeting ID and Passcode.

On **Thursday 17 February** our speaker will be Chris Burn from Carleton University. Dr Burn is committed to long-term field investigations of frozen ground. His research is focused on the relations between climate and permafrost.

Rambles, Field Trips, and other outings

Please check the website for any updates on rambles and field trips.

RAMBLES are slow walks to notice nature in all its forms.

As of writing, outdoor gatherings are limited to 10 people. As COVID conditions change, so may Rambles. COVID questions will be asked of each individual at each ramble. Masks will be worn for travel and at the start of rambles.

Please register with Anne (n8ture.anne at sympatico.ca or 613-389-6742) to receive detailed information about meeting points. Remember to dress warmly for winter rambles and be prepared for icy conditions. Grippers and hiking poles recommended.

Tuesday 18 January 9:30 am to noon Cordukes Road (Hwy 38) to Jackson Mill

Tuesday 1 February 9:30 am to noon Bayview Bog (from Taylor Kidd Blvd)

Tuesday 15 February 9:30 to 11:30 am Cataraqui Cemetery

Tuesday 1 March 9:00 am to 1:00 pm Camden Lake Wildlife Area

Tuesday 15 March 9:00 am to 12:30 pm Cataraqui Trail (west of Perth Road village)

Tuesday 5 April 9:00 am to 3:00 pm Presqu'île (to view waterfowl)

FIELD TRIPS Please contact the leader to register for the following trips:

Monday 21 February (Family Day) 8:45 to about noon Snowy Owls on Wolfe Island

Leader: Erwin Batalla (simbat at bell.net or 613-389-0144) Wolfe Island is a great place to see Snowy Owls, and some of these majestic birds have been seen already this winter. As with any natural wildlife viewing, owl sightings are not guaranteed. However, volunteers are busy scouting the area and hopefully the owls they have located will make an appearance for our group. Please email or phone the trip leader to register. Meeting location will be disclosed upon trip registration and the number of participants will be limited as per current COVID restrictions.

Friday to Sunday 18 – 20 February Field Trip to Algonquin Park

If conditions permit there will be a field trip to Algonquin Provincial Park on the Family Day weekend to look for winter finches, boreal forest birds, and (if we are lucky) some interesting mammals. The drive is long so to make it worthwhile we would need to stay overnight at motels in Whitney. This may or may not be advisable depending on the pandemic situation, so a final decision will not be made until the end of January. If you are interested in attending, please contact Anthony Kaduck by email: kaduckintransit at gmail.com. Maximum trip size is eight plus the leader.

Saturday 5 March 9:00 am to 03:30 pm March Migrants at Presqu'île Provincial Park

(weather date Sunday 6 March) Leader: Gary Hillaby We will meet just outside the Presqu'île Provincial Park entrance sharply at 09:00 am. If social distancing cannot be maintained, masks must be worn. We will be looking for early migrants both in and outside the park. Participants are required to register at fieldtrips at kingstonfieldnaturalists.org.

Advance Notice! May 2022 trip to Point Pelee /Western Ontario see page 4

SAVE THE DATE!! Our annual BioBlitz is scheduled for Friday 10 June to Saturday 11 June. Location has not yet been decided. (A BioBlitz is a party to document as many species as possible in a defined area within 24 hours. Our record is 996 species observed at Landon Bay in 2017.)

JUNIORS

Until conditions for indoor meetings permit, only field trips will be held each month, on the fourth Saturday.



Field trips

**Saturday 22 January 9:00 am to 2:00 pm Elbow Lake
Environmental Education Centre (ELEEC) Nature in Winter**

Details of meeting place on registration by 19 January please ([n8ture.ane at sympatico.ca](mailto:n8ture.ane@sympatico.ca) or 613-389-6742). Bring lunch with something hot in a small thermos in a pack and dress very warmly with good boots.

**Saturday 26 February 9:00 am to 3:00 pm Robertson Cottage
Wildlife in winter**

Details of meeting place on registration by 23 February please ([n8ture.ane at sympatico.ca](mailto:n8ture.ane@sympatico.ca) or 613-389-6742). Bring lunch with something hot in a small thermos in a pack and dress very warmly with good boots.

TEENS



Details of Teen trips will be sent on registration with Anne at:
[n8ture.ane at sympatico.ca](mailto:n8ture.ane@sympatico.ca) or 613 389 6742

**Saturday 12 February 9:00 am to 2:00 pm Meyer Wood Duck
boxes**

Please register by 10 February.

Saturday 12 March 9:00 am to 2:00 pm Rock hounding

Please register by 10 March.

Club News and Updates

Welcome to new members Patricia Minnes, Mark Hazelden, Gary Greer, Carol and Paul Mulligan, Shannon Willmott & Dan Sawyer, Patrick Deane & family, Petra Deane, John MacGillis, Julian Roy, Cameron Boyes, David Gascoigne, Chris Ellingwood, Frederick Nelson, Megan Lapointe, Cindy Bero, John Galea, Liz McIlwaine, George Cook and Norma Vale, Kerry Stewart, Claude Mireault, Paul Downing & Kathy Burke, Robert Van Deemter, Suzanne and Rain Saulnier, Karin Dietrich, Susan Phillips.

Thank you to Anne Robertson! Thank you to Anne Robertson!! Anne is the one who organizes the very popular junior and teen groups, teaching them about nature, and taking them on field trips. Anne is the one who organizes the Tuesday morning rambles (21 times a year!) leading KFN members on easy trails to notice nature in all its forms. Anne is the one who organizes our annual BioBlitz: arranging a site for us to investigate and then coaxing experts to come and help us identify all the living things on that site. Anne maintains the KFN bird collection: join the breakout room before the meeting to learn more about this. And Anne was part of the original group that organized the Land Conservancy for Kingston Frontenac Lennox and Addington, of which she is still a very active member. Thank you Anne for organizing us!!

The Blue Bill is the quarterly publication of the Kingston Field Naturalists, published in March, June, September and December as a benefit to our members. Articles and reports on topics of interest to KFN members may be submitted to The Blue Bill Editor (email: editor *at* thebluebill.ca). The new format of the Blue Bill requires a different **cover photo** each issue, so if you have something in high definition, in focus, of local interest, with good lighting that shows a local subject well, please send it to editor *at* thebluebill.ca for consideration.

Dr. Jesus Soriano, our November speaker, has kindly given the KFN permission to show his presentation about Campeche, Mexico privately on YouTube. If you missed this interesting talk and would like permission to view it, please send an email to info *at* kingstonfieldnaturalists.org and you will be sent a link.

Kingston Christmas Bird Count The 74th Kingston CBC was held on Sunday 19 December. Count day was beautiful and sunny with temperatures just below zero, very light winds and about 10 cm of snow cover. We had 60 participants in the field and a good turnout of 103 feeder watchers – an excellent COVID-safe activity! Overall, over 800 km of surveying and approximately 400 hours of birding. A total of 89 species was tallied in the field with 1 additional count week species. This is better than the previous 4 years but below the 20 year average of 98 species. There were no new species recorded which means that the cumulative total number of species seen in the Kingston CBC since 1988 remains at 181. There were 37,609 individual birds tallied, 78% of the 20 year average of 48,119. A full checklist will be available on the CBC website (count code ONKG) as well as in the next Blue Bill. Thank you to everyone who made this year's count a success!

Executive Elections At the Annual General Meeting in April we will elect the members of the club's executive for the 2022-2023 term. The positions are President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Membership Secretary, Recording Secretary, the chairs of the Conservation, Bird Records, Junior Naturalists, Education and Field Trips committees, the Blue Bill editor and several members-at-large. If you are interested in serving on the executive in any capacity please contact the Chair of the Nominating Committee, Anthony Kaduck (email kaduckintransit *at* gmail.com).

KFN's Endowment Fund Some good news in these challenging times! The response by KFN members to our request for donations to our Environmental Protection Fund at the Community Foundation Kingston & Area was very generous. This has enabled us to take full advantage of the \$1000 matching funds offer and go well beyond it. We have added \$7667 to our CFKA endowment fund, which provides a much-needed annual income to help with the costs of owning and maintaining our Nature Reserves. Our eventual goal is to have an endowment large enough to cover all of the costs associated with owning and protecting the Nature Reserves.

Donation to Prince Edward County Legal Fund From 2009 to 2016, the KFN actively supported The Prince Edward County Field Naturalists and allies in their opposition to wind turbines at Ostrander Point. This was a real "David vs. Goliath" battle, and a triumph for environmentalists when "David" won! Six years later, "David" is still struggling to pay its legal bills. Meanwhile KFN has spent less than budgeted this year. At their latest meeting, the KFN executive agreed to donate \$500 to the Prince Edward Country Legal Fund to help pay their outstanding legal fees.

Field Trip Advance Notice

Monday 2 May 8:00 am to Monday 9 May 2022 5:00 pm Western Ontario/Point Pelee

We will bird the South end of Lake St. Claire (Lighthouse Point & Mitchell's Bay), Pt. Pelee National Park, Hillman Marsh, Wheatley Provincial Park, Rondeau Provincial Park, Blenheim Sewage Lagoons, plus anything else of interest in between. Long Point Provincial Park and Windsor area are also possibilities, either as twitches or optional private pre/post extensions.

We will try to carpool in situ to reduce parking difficulty at locations visited.

Maximum group size limited to 7-8 participants. Contact John Licharson (jlicharson at tlaacanada dot com or at six one three, three eight six, seven seven two zero) to register.

Participants will have to make their own accommodation and travel arrangements. (There are hotel, motel, B&B and VRBO/AirBnB options in and around Leamington/Wheatley, but they tend to get booked up quickly.)

Kingston Inner Harbour Remediation Plan

News from Chris Hargreaves, Chair of Kingston Field Naturalists' Conservation Committee contact: hargreavescp at sympatico.ca)

Four representatives from the Kingston Field Naturalists - Chris Hargreaves, John Donihee, Vicki Schmolka and Susan Gagnon - met with Parks Canada / Transport Canada and their consultants on Monday 6 December to discuss the proposed remediation plan. The proposed plan has produced a variety of responses, ranging from "good and about time too", to "why disturb contaminated sediment when the harbour looks like it is recovering nicely?" The big question is whether the destruction/ disruption that the proposed remediation plan will cause to the current ecosystem in the short term, is worth the gains that the remediation plan is projected to achieve in the long term.

The KFN objectives for the meeting were to obtain more information on a number of issues, as described in the December 2021 KFN newsletter.

The key questions and responses received were:

● **What is your vision for use of the Inner Harbour after remediation? Why was it said at the EITP Committee meeting that the Inner Harbour was "not being used to its full recreational potential"?**

RESPONSE: the aim is to enhance current recreational uses, not to develop new ones. The plan is with a view to making "conservation gains".

- **Are you using up to date information that takes into account the natural remediation that is occurring? Why do you emphasize "fish deformities" when there have been no reports of deformed fish being found in recent years?**

RESPONSE: fish deformities are a complex issue, and not a major reason for the remediation plan. (This was quite a contrast to the presentation to the City's EITP Committee, when it sounded like they were a major justification for the plan.)

- **Are you using taking into account the surge in turtle numbers, or the increased number of Canada Geese and Mute Swans?**

RESPONSE: Although the Inner Harbour ecosystem may look good, it would be even better if the remediation work was done.

- **Is the disruption to the current ecosystem justified, given the comment during the EITP presentation that dredging would "remove some contamination but not all"; that the consultant's written report refers to areas where, "sediments would be expensive and/or difficult to physically manage"; and the fact that there will be a continuing flow of contamination into the Inner Harbour from the former Smelter and Tannery lands, and through the Orchard Street Marsh?**

RESPONSE: They use a risk-based approach and some areas are less risky than others -- so the "remediation" choices will eventually be based on risk. They are doing another round of sediment sampling which will inform final choices. Those choices range from do nothing to dredging. They have not yet chosen the removal option.

The team promised a detailed rationale for how they ranked the elements of the framework that led to the current part dredging and part capping recommendations.

The initiative is based on a federal funding program and is focussed on the Parks Canada lands and areas of their jurisdiction. These do not include the Tannery site.

One of the consultants said that the first principle to a clean-up is to "control sources before implementing a remedy". He said that "whatever the federal government does won't be impacted by the other work" regarding the Tannery site, which needs "resolution before implementation".

- **If contaminated sediment is removed where would it be taken? How much would be removed? How would it travel through Kingston?**

RESPONSE: There were comments that the contaminated sediment would need to be dewatered; that the dewatering might be done on a barge or on shore; and that there might be a "temporary" dewatering plant on land for one or two years! But they have not thought about where this might be done! It was pointed out that the Inner Harbour was in the middle of Kingston, and there was very little open space around it. It was requested that they should present a detailed proposal on *how* they would deal with any contaminated sediment they removed before they presented another report on *why* it should be removed.

There are a number of laws regarding the handling of contaminated sediments. Any sediment removed (if that is the treatment choice) can not be placed, stored or handled in a way that causes secondary problems. They are also going to be required to find an acceptable (and lawful) long term disposal site.

Parks Canada stated that it is going to conduct a "Detailed Impact Assessment" in accordance with its policy, and will protect the UNESCO status of the Rideau. The KFN will be following the progress of the DIA.