



Kingston Field Naturalists

May - June 2023

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.

Our May Dinner Meeting is Thursday 18 May

at the Royal Kingston Curling Club, corner of Days and Front Roads.

Dr. Jeff Bowman will present:

Muskrats, water, and cattails: a story of love and loss

Dr. Bowman is a Research Scientist with the Wildlife Research and Monitoring Section of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, and an Adjunct Professor at Trent University. He is Ontario's small mammal and furbearer research scientist, and has expertise in population and landscape ecology, genetics, and zoonotic diseases. He has conducted research on many species and ecosystems, including work on mink, muskrats, fishers, martens, lynx, bobcats, wolverines, wild turkeys, squirrels, mice, voles, and a variety of bat species. He is the Co-Chair of Canada's Federal-Provincial-Territorial working group on SARS-CoV-2 in wildlife, and he helps to lead Ontario's SARS-CoV-2 wildlife surveillance program.

Muskrats are aquatic mammals common to wetlands in Ontario, and they have often been called ecosystem engineers due to their habit of harvesting cattails and other aquatic plants. Muskrat populations appear to have been declining across North America since the 1980s and causes of the possible decline are not clear. I will present results from ongoing research into the status and ecology of this often-overlooked wetland mammal, aimed at better understanding potential causes of population decline.

Sorry, Wednesday 10 May was the last day to purchase tickets.

We will have a sale of used natural history books and paraphernalia. If you have something to donate for the sale, please contact Janet or Bruce Elliott (janet.l.elliott at gmail.com or 613-547-2674).



Our dinner speaker
Jeff Bowman

Our Annual BioBlitz will be held 9 to 10 June at Milburn Creek, a Nature Conservancy of Canada property near Battersea.

Milburn Creek NCC is an area of more than 200 acres which straddles the border between limestone and granite. Habitats include wetlands, forests, fields and a creek which widens into a large pond. Trumpeters Swans nest in the pond. On a ramble in early May, 38 species of birds were recorded. Our BioBlitz will include hikes lead by experts, mothing, children's activities, a BBQ, even flush toilets(!)

Contact Janis Grant (janis.grant at iCloud.com) to be on the list to receive more information.

Rambles, Field Trips, and other outings

Please check the website for any updates.

Be prepared for ticks! Wear long sleeves and pants tucked into socks.

RAMBLES take place every first and third Tuesday. Rambles are slow walks to notice nature in all its forms. Bring a snack or lunch and a drink. Remember sun and tick protection. Bring hat, water, possibly hiking poles. For detailed directions please register by the Sunday before the trip with Anne (nature.anne at sympatico.ca or 613-389-6742).

Tuesday 16 May 9:00 am to 2:00 pm Property of Shirley French, Cranberry Lake

Tuesday 6 June 9:00 am to 2:00 pm Opinicon Road for Odes and Leps

**Tuesday 20 June 9:00 am to 2:00 pm Purdon Conservation Area of Mississippi Valley
Conservation for Showy Lady's Slippers**

**Tuesday 4 July 9:00 am to 3:00 pm Massassauga Point CA (South of Belleville)
for Bur Oak savanna and alvar species.**

FIELD TRIPS

Sunday 21 May 8:00 am to 12:00 pm Belle Island Round-up Outing

Leader Gary Hillaby. We will be exploring the Belle Island property to see what the inner harbour has to offer. This event does fall within our Spring Round-up window. Our group will meet in the Belle Island parking lot on Montreal Street across from the Legion Hall. Contact Gary Hillaby (fieldtrips at kingstonfieldnaturalists.org or 613-547-8121) if you have any questions.

Saturday 24 June 8:00 am to 2:00 pm Up A Creek With A Paddle

Leader Gary Hillaby. Dust off your canoes and your kayaks. We will be exploring the nature in Eel Bay, taking a leisurely paddle along the shoreline of this part of Sydenham Lake. All vessels will require all provincial safety devices for their watercraft. Parking and launch point info will be given to participants prior to the event. To register contact Gary (fieldtrips at kingstonfieldnaturalists.org or 613-547-8121).

May Bird Walks at Lemoine Point

May is a great time of year to observe nature at Lemoine Point and enjoy walking the trails. Every May we invite our Kingston Field Naturalists members and the general public (non-members) to come together and take a morning or evening guided trail walk. The walks take place every Wednesday in the month of May at 6:30 am and at 5:30 pm. A KFN leader will assemble the group in the south parking lot at Lemoine Point. Please note the change in the evening start time to add more daylight to the later walks. KFN members are encouraged to invite non-members and new members out to enjoy the beauty of Lemoine Point and to introduce people to what our group is all about.

17 May	6:30 am	Dianne Croteau, Richard Brault	5:30 pm	Steve Coates
24 May	6:30 am	Erwin Batalla	5:30 pm	Chris Grooms
31 May	6:30 am	Ken Ross	5:30 pm	Janis Grant, Nancy Spencer

Spring Birding Festival at Prince Edward Point Bird Observatory

Friday 12 May to Monday 15 May

See details at <https://peptbo.ca/sbf23/>. Registration is required for some activities.

Spring Round-Up Friday 19 May noon to Sunday 21 May noon **see page 5**
Kurt's Wednesday Bird Walks in June and July **see page 4**

BioBlitz Saturday 9 June 3:00 pm to 10 June 3:00 pm

Contact Janis Grant (janis.grant at iCloud.com) to be on the list to receive more information.

JUNIORS

Thursday 11 May 6:30 to 8:30pm How to be a Birder

at Lemoine Point. Details have gone to individual members. Please dress for cool weather and wear long pants, long sleeves and good shoes or boots. THE TICKS ARE PROLIFIC AT LEMOINE POINT.



Saturday 10 June BioBlitz kids program. See email to individual members. **BioBlitz kids program** at Milburn Creek Nature Reserve, property of Nature Conservancy Canada, in Battersea, from 10:00am, with a parent. Amanda will be organising this as part of the KFN Annual BioBlitz. Let us know if you are interested and details can be forwarded. This event includes an insect hunt, dip netting, a quiz and Blitz listing (with prizes) and a BBQ (free for kids)!

SUMMER PROJECTS

Start now!

We hope you will complete a summer project for a prize in the fall. Prizes available are the Roland Beschel Prize, Nan Yeoman's Prize and Photo competition. These projects are for hands-on field projects (nature collection, diary etc.) NOT computer oriented. Ask Anne for details.

Projects completed over the summer will be due 26 October 2023

1. Roland Beschel Prize. This prize is for a project done over the summer. A collection or observing and recording something in nature are suitable projects.
2. Nan Yeoman's Prize. This prize is for a diary recording observations over the summer. Once a day or once a week- your choice.
3. Photo Competition. This prize is for up to three photos taken over the summer with a short description.

TEENS



Please register with Anne (nature.anne at sympatico.ca or 613-389-6742) by the Thursday before the trip to receive detailed directions.

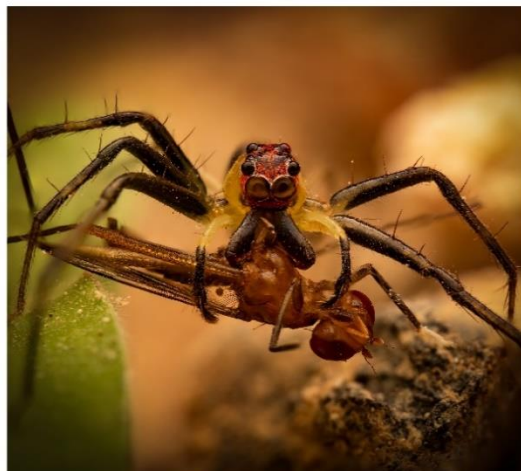
Saturday 13 May 9:00 am to 1:00 pm Using a 'scope for birding at Amherst Sewage Lagoons with Kurt Hennige. Please register by Thursday 11 May.

Friday to Saturday 9 to 10 June BioBlitz Do join us for this annual event when we list all species to record the Biodiversity of the site. See information on the KFN web site.

KFN Teen wins ROM photo Prize

A Kingston Teen Naturalist is the winner of the 2022 ROM Wildlife Photographer of the year contest.

The first place ROM Junior grand prize winner is Beckett Robertson for his image of a jumping spider, *Lyssomanes antillanus*, a species found only in the Caribbean. This adult male is feasting on a stilt-legged fly. In this image one gets a good view of the spider's face and fang imbedded in the fly. Inside the fly's legs and body are bubbles of air. This phenomenon is visible because when spiders feed, they suck out the fluid inside of their prey. This generally happens when the prey has been crushed into a ball of bolus, but this jumping spider seemed not to mind drinking directly from the fly!



ROM

First Place and Grand Prize Winner
Royal Ontario Museum
2022 Junior Wildlife Photographer of the Year Contest
Beckett Robertson's Image: Late Lunch!
Jumping Spider Photographed in the Dominican Republic, March 2023

Club News and Updates

Welcome to new members: Vivian Foster & family, Matthew Mahon, Theresa Hannah & family, Heidi Hudlass and David MacDonald, Ruth Wilson and Ian Casson, Clarinda Olsen, Tracey Taylor & family, Nancy Grew & family.

Thank you to the following club members who have agreed to serve on the 2023 – 2024 KFN Executive

Honorary President	Ron Weir
President	John Donihee
Past President	Ken Edwards
Vice President	Christine Hough
Treasurer	Larry McCurdy
Recording Secretary	Rose-Marie Burke
Membership Secretary	Kathy Webb
Blue Bill Editor	Peter Waycik
Junior Naturalists	Anne Robertson
Bird Records	Ken Edwards
Conservation	Chris Hargreaves
Education	Shirley French
Field Trips	Gary Hillaby
Nature Reserves	Erwin Batalla
Member-at-large, Newsletter	Janet Elliott
Member-at-large, Facebook	Polly Aiken
Member-at-large, Publicity	
Member-at-large	Danielle Goodvin
Member-at-large	Darren Rayner
Member-at-large	Skyler Freeman
Non-executive volunteers	
Ontario Nature Liason	Lesley Rudy
Slide Show	Gaye Beckwith
Website	Anthony Kaduck
Book Auction	Janet Elliott
May Dinner Coordinator	Poly Aiken
Bird Sightings/Ontbirds	Anthony Kaduck

Membership Renewal The KFN membership year extends from April 1 to March 31 of the following year so 2022/23 memberships have expired.

To renew your membership, you can proceed in one of several ways:

1. Join or renew online using the website: <https://kingstonfieldnaturalists.org/membership/>. Please note that you do not need a PayPal account to renew online.
2. Mail a note containing your membership information along with a cheque payable to: Kingston Field Naturalists, PO Box 831, Kingston, Ontario K7L 4X6.

If you have any questions please email Kathy Webb, Membership Secretary (membership at kingstonfieldnaturalists.org).

Friday 19 May noon to Sunday 21 May noon Spring Round-up 2023

This annual birding event will run from Friday 19 May at noon to Sunday 21 May at noon. Birds will be counted only within the Kingston Field Naturalists bird area which is a radial distance of 50 km centred on Murney Tower. Members of the KFN are encouraged to get birding. You can backyard bird, bird in small groups or get out on your own and enjoy this special time on the birding calendar. Submit your findings to eBird and they will be tabulated and the results will be reported in the Bluebill. Gary Hillaby is leading a field trip to Belle Island as part of the Round-up, see page 2.

Kurt's Wednesdays Bird Walks

Kurt Hennige is planning to provide the membership with some bird walks on Wednesdays mornings. He will be targeting our six managed by Birds Canada and Nature Canada. He was recently asked to review some of them for Birds Canada and many lack updated information on the key species which were used to create the areas.

Kurt is leading Wednesday morning birding trips, once a month from April to November to five of the six Key Biodiversity Areas in our region. Each trip will be 4 hours in the areas close areas to Kingston (Wolfe and Amherst Islands and Napanee Plain) and up to 6 hours for Frontenac Forests and Prince Edward County South Shore KBA's.

Participants will be limited to 10 people and are required to contact Kurt at least 3 days before the trips to receive information on meeting points. While the focus will be on key target species, many other species will be counted as well. This could involve spending long times on scopes to get good counts. Patience will be required!

If you are interested, contact Kurt (khennige at xplornet.com or 613-876-1804).

Wednesday 7 June 6 am Frontenac Forests Very early start. We will search for many of the forest birds at risk such as Cerulean Warbler, Golden-winged Warblers and Yellow-throated Vireos.

Wednesday 5 July 7 am Napanee Plain This area currently holds over 60% of all Loggerhead Shrikes in Ontario. We will be searching for them, Upland Sandpiper and several Sparrow species.

Conservation report from Chris Hargreaves

THE ONTARIO GOVERNMENT CONTINUES TO REDUCE PROTECTION FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

According to the Canadian Environmental Law Association:

As part of its contentious "EA modernization" initiative, the Ontario government has recently proposed more regressive changes under the Environmental Assessment Act. These changes would further narrow the scope of the Act and allow projects such as large-scale provincial freeways or high-voltage transmission lines to proceed with less rigorous streamlined environmental assessments (EA), where they once required individual or comprehensive EA's. The Registry notice provides no environmental reasons or compelling evidence to support these revisions. In CELA's view, this is an inappropriate, unjustified, and unacceptable rollback of current EA requirements for these environmentally significant projects.

For more information see <https://cela.ca/blog-more-environmental-assessment-rollbacks-in-ontario/>

Barn Swallows at Lemoine Point

If you are walking in the Lemoine Point Conservation Area, and see Barn Swallows around the Swallow nesting structure, or around Lemoine Point farm, please let Chris Hargreaves know (hargreavescp at sympatico.ca).

SALMON IN LAKE ONTARIO

There was considerable interest in the sightings of salmon in Collins Creek described last year. The following article gives information about the annual stocking of salmon in Lake Ontario.

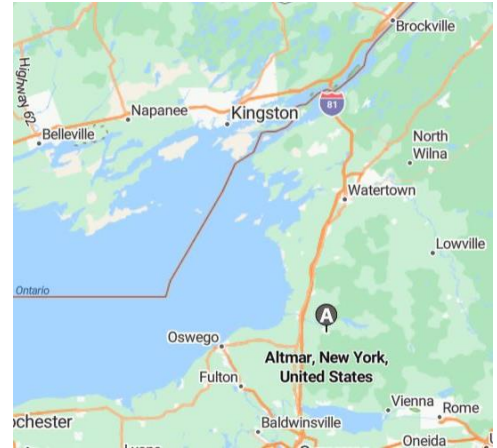
DEC will stock Lake Ontario with nearly 1 million salmon in 2023, expects 'excellent' fishing season

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry have agreed to a 10% increase in Chinook salmon stocking in Lake Ontario this year, for a total of 985,180 fish. The decision to increase salmon stocks in Lake Ontario was based on a number of factors, primarily the lake's burgeoning alewife population. Alewife, a type of herring, is the main food source for Lake Ontario salmon and trout. Last year, the total biomass for two-year-old alewife increased, and it's predicted to stay at similar levels through 2024, said Chris Legard, Lake Ontario unit leader for DEC Bureau of Fisheries. Chinook salmon were also a bit bigger in 2022, Legard said, based on the average weight of a three-year-old Chinook salmon caught in the open lake in August. The threshold weight specified in the Lake Ontario Committee of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission is 18.4 pounds. In 2022, the average weight of a Chinook increased to 20.7 pounds. Lake Ontario salmon have been tipping the scales above the threshold for the last few years. Fatter salmon are "an indicator of predator/prey balance," Legard said. "When there are too many salmon and not enough prey, the size of the fish will decrease."

"It's looking good," Legard added. "We're looking forward to the 2023 fishing season and expect that salmon trout fishing in Lake Ontario will be excellent again this year." There are seven salmon stocking sites in NY, including the Salmon River Fish Hatchery in Altmar. The approximately 90,000 extra stocked salmon in 2023 will be spread evenly among all sites except the Salmon River. "We already stock the Salmon River hatchery with 300,000 Chinook salmon, considerably more fish than the other sites get," Legard said, noting that number is three times the number of fish stocked at the other sites. That means Salmon River anglers should see no difference in the number of spawning salmon this year. Open water anglers, however, increased their chances of landing a Chinook by ten percent.

2023 Chinook salmon stocking targets:

- Niagara River – 89,930
- Eighteenmile Creek (Olcott) – 126,330
- Oak Orchard Creek – 126,330
- Genesee River – 126,330
- Oswego River – 126,330
- Salmon River – 300,000
- Sackets Harbor (Black River) – 89,930



(This article was first published 13 February 2023 by Syracuse.com; written by Steve Featherstone; used with permission.) The Salmon River Fish Hatchery in Altmar which is referred to in the article is shown at "A" on the map.

Thanks to the Friends of Kingston Inner Harbour for passing this on. For more information about FKIH contact Mary Farrar <inverarymary.yahoo.com@mail.mailchimp.com>

Kingston Field Naturalists 2023 BioBlitz
Friday 9 June 3:00 pm to Saturday 10 June 3:00 pm
at Milburn Creek, Battersea

Guided walks with expert naturalists

Children's activities

Learn to find and identify flora, fauna and fungi

BBQ on Saturday

Marsh Wren
Cistothorus palustris
(photo by Kathy Webb)

For details of activities visit www.kingstonfieldnaturalists.org (after mid-May)
To be added to mailing list please contact Janis Grant: janis.grant@icloud.com
Questions? Ask Anne (n8ture.anne@sympatico.ca or 613-389-6742)

Milburn Creek is a property of the Nature Conservancy of Canada