



# Kingston Field Naturalists

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## OBJECTIVES

The Kingston Field Naturalists (KFN) is an active, local club of over 300 members interested in a wide variety of natural history. The objectives of the club are:

- to acquire, record and disseminate knowledge of natural history;
- to stimulate public interest in nature and in the protection and preservation of wildlife and natural habitats; and
- to acquire, receive and hold lands for the purpose of preserving their natural flora and fauna, and to encourage and assist other organizations and individuals to do likewise.

## HISTORY

Founded as the 'Kingston Nature Club' in 1949, the name of the Club became the 'Kingston Field Naturalists' on incorporation in 1963. In that year the Club made its first purchase of land for preservation purposes – 81 hectares (200 acres) of land in the Canadian Shield north of Sydenham. Now known as the Helen Quilliam Sanctuary at Otter Lake, this property has been increased to approximately 206 hectares (510 acres) through land purchases over the past 30 years. The most recent addition came in 1993 with the purchase of Van Luven Point on Otter Lake.

In 1986, with the assistance of Wildlife Habitat Canada, the KFN acquired approximately 77 hectares (190 Acres) of land on southeastern Amherst Island. The Martin Edwards Reserve, modified with the assistance of a Ducks Unlimited project, helps to protect one of the few migratory stopover points for shorebirds along Lake Ontario. In 2018, an adjacent property was purchased from the children and grandchildren of Jack Sylvester thanks to a donation of securities by Emily Sylvester and John Gallagher. The Sylvester-Gallagher Nature Reserve has a small wooded area as well as some open fields that support Eastern Meadowlarks and Bobolinks.

In 1975 the KFN established an observatory at Prince Edward Point (located in Prince Edward County). Since then, Club members have gone to Prince Edward Point to observe the spectacular numbers of birds migrating through the area in spring and fall. From 1975 to 1986 the lighthouse at this location was leased from Parks Canada for use as the headquarters for regular field trips and bird banding projects. In 1987 a Parks Canada cottage in the area was reorganized for these purposes. Over 90,000 birds have been banded to date. Most notably, a Saw-Whet Owl project operated during autumns from 1975 to 1999 resulting in over 5,000 birds being banded.

## MEETINGS

The KFN holds meetings every month from September through May, with speakers on a wide range of subjects. Guest speakers have included naturalists, scientists, conservationists and photographers.

## FIELD TRIPS

The KFN offers frequent field trips, usually held on weekends, on a variety of nature themes. Birding trips are popular and include spring and fall round-ups, and bird counts. Other field trips have highlighted topics such as botany, geology and astronomy. Rambles are held twice monthly on Tuesdays; they are slow walks to notice all aspects of nature. While most of the trips are in the local area, longer excursions are occasionally planned. The Club regularly publishes a newsletter announcing meeting and field trip details. Details are also available online.

## PROJECTS

KFN members have participated in several wildlife projects. Monitoring and survey projects have included:

- Forest Breeding Bird Monitoring Study
- Tree Atlas of Ontario Project
- National Audubon Society Christmas Bird Counts (KFN members organize and participate in several local National Audubon Society Christmas Counts, with results published in *American Birds*.)
- Breeding Bird Atlas of Ontario Project (The KFN was an active supporter of the five year projects – 1981 to 1985 and 2001 to 2005 – to determine the presence of breeding birds in Ontario).

- Canadian Wildlife Service Breeding Bird Survey
- Canadian Lakes Loon Survey
- International Survey of Wintering Bald Eagles (St. Lawrence River)
- Marsh Monitoring Project
- Mid-winter Waterfowl Survey
- KFN BioBlitz
- iNaturalist – ‘Natural History of the Kingston Study Area’ project

Habitat and Species preservation projects have included the construction, installation and monitoring of:

- Wood Duck and Bluebird nest boxes
- Osprey nesting platforms
- Peregrine Falcon nest boxes
- Loggerhead Shrike habitat restoration sites

The Club also initiates and supports plant inventory and bird banding projects.

### NATURE RESERVES

The KFN has acquired properties which are designated as nature reserves. Trail systems are accessible to members at the Helen Quilliam Sanctuary and at the Martin Edwards Reserve.

#### *Helen Quilliam Sanctuary at Otter Lake:*

- A 206 hectare (510 acre) property of mixed forest located in the Canadian Shield in the Township of South Frontenac.

#### *Martin Edwards Reserve on Amherst Island:*

- A 77 hectare (190 acre) property of fields and marshland located on the southeast shore of Amherst Island.

#### *Sylvester-Gallagher Nature Reserve on Amherst Island:*

- A 37 hectare (92.5 acre) property of forest and grassland located adjacent to the Martin Edwards Reserve.

### CONSERVATION AND EDUCATION

The KFN actively supports conservation efforts. Issues such as park creation, wildlife and habitat protection, and environmental welfare are of ongoing concern. The Club also makes natural history resources and knowledge available to the community through education programs which include field courses, talks and awards.

### PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE

- KFN journal: *The Blue Bill* reports quarterly on all aspects of local natural history; it is included with membership and is available on-line. Contact the Membership Secretary for details.
- Checklists: *Field Check-list of Birds*
- Reference book: *Birds of the Kingston Region*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Weir, Ron. (2008).
- Maps of local birding areas

### YOUTH PROGRAMS

The KFN sponsors a thriving Junior Naturalists Club for children aged 6 to 12, designed to foster interest and understanding of natural history. Juniors meet twice each month indoors for investigation of a variety of local natural history topics, and also take part in monthly field trips, September through May. A teen program for youth aged 13 to 16 includes monthly field trips to explore local natural history, experience research and field techniques and may involve advocacy or projects to benefit the natural world. Hiking, cross-country skiing and canoeing are part of the program. For information, please contact program coordinator, Anne Robertson: (613) 389-6742.

*The Kingston Field Naturalists is a member of Ontario Nature and Nature Canada. The KFN is a registered charitable organization and is pleased to accept donations for habitat preservation and other conservation efforts. Charitable tax receipts are issued for donations of \$10 or more.*



The KFN logo shows our most common transient duck, the Greater Scaup (*Aythya marila*). It is also known as a Blue Bill, a name we have adopted for our journal. The logo also shows a Bullhead Lily (*Nuphar variegatum*); and leaves and flowers of the Broad-leaved Arrowhead (*Sagittaria latifolia*).