

The Blue Bill

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To contact any member of the executive or for
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uralists, please send an email to:

info@kingstonfieldnaturalists.org

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Cover photo: Lichens like the Candleflame
Lichen can be found throughout winter. (Peter
Waycik)

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1 President's Preliminaries

by John Donihee

The KFN's 2023 year is complete and our efforts to move beyond the restrictions imposed by COVID have, for the large part, succeeded. Fall activities are winding down and we are looking forward to Christmas bird counts already. KFN members continue to take advantage of field trips and outings and we will continue to organize and offer new events over the winter.

Our General Meetings continue in hybrid format in order to facilitate attendance by members who do not wish to brave the roads or the latest form of the virus. Our Vice President, Christine Hough has surmounted several challenges with the technology associated with hybrid meetings and facilities at Ongwanada.

As is our tradition, our December meeting will feature presentations by members. We are looking forward to their photos and observations. Please join us in person or online.

2024 marks the 75th Anniversary of the founding of the Kingston Field Naturalists. The Executive is open to and would welcome any suggestions by members about events or other ways to celebrate the work and successes of the KFN. Please contact us at 75th@kingstonfieldnaturalists.org if you have any suggestions.

As the year ends I would like to acknowledge and thank the executive members of the KFN for their hard work and continuing commitment to nature and conservation in the Kingston area.

2 2023 Fall Roundup

by Erwin Batalla



Figure 1: Peregrine Falcon. (Daphne Christie)

The format for the 58th KFN Fall Round-up was the same as last year, with the focus on obtaining a better picture of the birds in the study area: the 50 km circle centered on Murney Tower near MacDonald Park. Birds were recorded between noon Friday, November 3 and noon Sunday, November 5.

Friday afternoon was very windy. Saturday was dark and drizzly. Sunday morning was sunny. The temperature was near or above 10 °C for the 49 hours of the count.

This year, many birders submitted checklists for only one of the seven major areas (mainland of four counties and the three islands) within the circle. Maybe, they were trying to limit their carbon emissions.



Figure 2: American Goshawk. (Kathy Webb)

Paul Jones was the only visitor to the circle portion of Prince Edward County. He found a Golden Eagle, a Sharp-shinned Hawk, nine Red Crossbills and two White-crowned Sparrows at Prince Edward Point. He also located a Horned Lark and 31 Horned Grebes with one Red-necked Grebe at Cressy Point.



Figure 3: Barred Owl. (Gaye Beckwith)



Figure 4: Black-bellied Plover. (Christine Hough)



Figure 5: Northern Mockingbird. (Phil Harvey)

In Lennox and Addington, Tom Wheatley was the main contributor, finding a hardy singing Virginia Rail and a Northern Shrike in the Napanee Plain. These two species are not

found on the same day too often. Kathy Webb spotted an American Goshawk high in the sky above the Camden East alvar. Meanwhile, in Leeds and Grenville, Barbara O'Neill saw 190 Brants fly over Marble Rock Road.

In Frontenac County, Darren Rayner spotted a Great Egret, two Blue-winged Teals and a Grey Catbird along the K&P trail north of HWY 401. He also found a Red-shouldered Hawk near his home in Perth Road Village. Gaye and Betsy Beckwith, Silas Goudey, Mike and Liz Evans, Richard Brault and Dianne Croteau, Gary Hillaby and Ken Ross surveyed the shield portion of the county and spotted the only Barred Owl. Other findings of note in this county were: five Pectoral Sandpipers by Chris Grooms near Wilton, a Peregrine Falcon by Daphne Christie at Hillview Pond, an Eastern Screech-owl by John Licharson in Barriefield, a pair of Carolina Wrens by Meghan Hatch in Kingston, 13 Fox Sparrows by Paul Martin near Glenburnie, and a Northern Mockingbird by Erwin Batalla in Portsmouth Harbour.



Figure 6: Pine Siskin. (Phil Harvey)



Figure 7: Snow Geese. (Christine Hough)

The three main islands provided many interesting sightings. Peter Waycik and Sharon David surveyed Howe Island extensively and recorded two impressive groupings: 57 Com-

mon Loons and 180 Common Grackles. They also found and photographed the latest Bay-breasted Warbler for the Kingston region. It was seen on Saturday morning, November 4. The previous record for that species was Oct 27 (William Depew, 2014).



Figure 8: Bay-breasted Warbler showing multiple views. (Peter Waycik)

Christine Hough visited Wolfe Island. She recorded seven Snow Geese, six Black-bellied Plovers and an amazing 100 Dunlins in Button Bay. Reports of large groups of Dunlins were submitted in several locations. On Amherst Island, Alex and Julie Scott found a Ring-necked Pheasant as well as Short-eared, Long-eared and Northern Saw-whet Owls while Chris Ellingwood found five Black Scoters, two Sanderlings, three Black-bellied Plovers and a Pectoral Sandpiper at the Martin Edwards Reserve.

Two birders went “old-school” and roamed across several counties. Paul Mackenzie celebrated his upcoming eighty-fifth birthday by finding a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker at Hillview Pond on Friday and a Swamp Sparrow on Wolfe Island on Saturday. Bruce Ripley came out of round-up retirement to see 15 Sandhill Cranes fly over Wilton Creek. He also spotted a Northern Shrike on Amherst Island and after finding a Ruby-crowned Kinglet on that island, he located another one on the mainland near Violet.

The only winter finch seen in many locations was the Pine Siskin. Listen for their “zree” call near your nyjer feeder. The

southern movement of finches has not happened yet but the mild weather and plentiful seed crop may still keep them north. Swans and ducks were plentiful in all the bays and only Cackling Goose and Canvasback were missed.



Figure 9: Great Egret. (Phil Harvey)



Figure 10: Dunlin. (Christine Hough)

Other contributors were: Nick Bartok, Karen Becker, Janis Grant, Phil Harvey, Yvonne Hiemstra, Adam Holder, Chantal Imbeault, Andrea Kingsley, Eric Lamond, Lana Marion, Julia Marshall, Keith Mathieu, Nicolas Moreno, Jenny Newton, Todd Norris, Linda Nuttall, Iain Rayner, Jane Revell, Karen Stos and James Thompson.

Fifty-one participants took part and a total of 122 species were observed. This is slightly above the number in the past few years. It is in line with the 50-year average of 120. The Bay-breasted Warbler is a new species for the cumulative list. The table below shows the highest number of each species reported in a single checklist (eBird) for the four counties: Leeds and Grenville (L & G, 11 checklists), Frontenac (F, 101

checklists), Lennox and Addington (L & A, 22 checklists), Prince Edward (PE, ten checklists). The tallies of the high-

est count for the three islands near Kingston (Howe, Wolfe and Amherst) are also shown.

Table 1: 2022 Fall Round-Up Bird Counts

Species	County				Island		
	L & G	F	L & A	P E	Howe	Wolfe	Amherst
Snow Goose		7				7	
Brant	190						
Canada Goose	240	2500	400	120	122	2500	400
Mute Swan	8	112	14	7	53	112	9
Trumpeter Swan		17	6				
Tundra Swan		78	4	11		32	4
Wood Duck	2	10			3	3	
Blue-winged Teal		2					
Northern Shoveler		25					
Gadwall		100	52			40	40
American Wigeon	26	400	20			400	20
Mallard	45	80	120	24	32	52	120
American Black Duck	5	6	8	2	5	6	2
Northern Pintail	2	13	30				30
Green-winged Teal	44	60	24				24
Redhead		4000				4000	
Ring-necked Duck		1300	9			60	
Greater Scaup	60	3500		400		150	
Lesser Scaup		25	3			25	
Surf Scoter		3				3	
White-winged Scoter	1	11		20	11	3	
Black Scoter	1		5	2			5
Long-tailed Duck		22		10	15	22	
Bufflehead	7	33	54	60	33	30	6
Common Goldeneye		250	15	320	112	250	15
Hooded Merganser	113	55	25			55	
Common Merganser	5	117	55	1	117		2

Table 1: (continued)

Species	County				Island		
	L & G	F	L & A	P E	Howe	Wolfe	Amherst
Red-breasted Merganser		100	80	300	2	100	80
Ruddy Duck		20				1	
Ring-necked Pheasant			1				1
Wild Turkey		23	17				17
Ruffed Grouse		2		2	1		
Pied-billed Grebe		4	3				
Horned Grebe	1	1		31		1	
Red-necked Grebe				1			
Rock Pigeon	21	55	1	20	1	18	
Mourning Dove	3	28	3	2	3	1	3
Virginia Rail			1				
American Coot		130				130	
Sandhill Crane			15				
Black-bellied Plover		6	3			6	3
Killdeer		2	5				
Greater Yellowlegs		6	5			6	2
Sanderling			2				2
Dunlin		100	36	11		100	36
Pectoral Sandpiper		5	1				1
Bonaparte's Gull	8	30	60	2	1	30	
Ring-billed Gull	35	380	50	40	7	32	12
Herring Gull	55	14	80	30	3	8	30
Great Black-backed Gull		1	4	1		1	4
Common Loon	2	57	3	3	57	1	2
Double-crested Cormorant	11	190	2	6	3	4	
Great Egret		1					
Great Blue Heron	1	2	2	1	1	2	2
Turkey Vulture	1	23	1		1		1
Golden Eagle				1			

Table 1: (continued)

Species	County				Island		
	L & G	F	L & A	P E	Howe	Wolfe	Amherst
Northern Harrier	1	3	5		2	3	5
Sharp-shinned Hawk				1			
Cooper's Hawk		1				1	
American Goshawk			1				
Bald Eagle		2	2	1	2	1	
Red-shouldered Hawk		1	1	2			
Red-tailed Hawk	1	2	4			1	4
Rough-legged Hawk		1	5		1		5
Eastern Screech-owl		1				1	
Barred Owl		1					
Long-eared Owl			3				3
Short-eared Owl			1				1
Northern Saw-whet Owl			1				1
Belted Kingfisher		1	1				
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker		1					
Red-bellied Woodpecker	1	3	1		3	1	1
Downy Woodpecker	1	3	1		2	1	2
Hairy Woodpecker	2	3	1	1		1	1
Pileated Woodpecker	1	2	1		2		
Northern Flicker	1	1	2		1		1
American Kestrel		1		1	1	1	
Merlin		1	1	1			
Peregrine Falcon		1					
Northern Shrike			1				1
Blue Jay	16	25	20	10	10	4	20
American Crow	9	60	22	26	4	8	6
Common Raven		9	5	4		1	5
Black-capped Chickadee	22	35	30	6	17	1	30
Horned Lark				1			

Table 1: (continued)

Species	County				Island		
	L & G	F	L & A	P E	Howe	Wolfe	Amherst
Ruby-crowned Kinglet		1	1	1			1
Golden-crowned Kinglet	2	5	2	8	3		2
White-breasted Nuthatch	2	5	3	1	5		3
Red-breasted Nuthatch		5	1				
Brown Creeper		6				1	
Winter Wren		1		1			
Carolina Wren		2		2			
European Starling	5	550	300	8	11	7	300
Grey Catbird		1			1		
Northern Mockingbird		1					
Eastern Bluebird	5	7	3	4	7		
Hermit Thrush		2	1				
American Robin	38	68	100	26	68	11	100
Cedar Waxwing		56	15	24	40	8	
House Sparrow		30	14			30	14
American Pipit		20	60		1	20	60
House Finch		5	3	4	4		3
Purple Finch		6	2	14	1		
Red Crossbill				9			
Pine Siskin		25	2	120	12		
American Goldfinch	4	48	16	40	30	3	16
Snow Bunting		15	17	1		11	12
Chipping Sparrow		1	6				6
Field Sparrow		1	2				
American Tree Sparrow		10	20	3		6	20
Fox Sparrow		13				6	
Dark-eyed Junco	20	38	30	20	19	36	30
White-crowned Sparrow				2			
White-throated Sparrow	1	10	4	4	10	2	4

Table 1: (continued)

Species	County				Island		
	L & G	F	L & A	P E	Howe	Wolfe	Amherst
Song Sparrow	2	4	4	2		1	2
Swamp Sparrow		2				1	
Red-winged Blackbird	127	452	5600	1	452	3	
Rusty Blackbird	1	80		1	1		
Common Grackle	2	180		4	180		
Bay-breasted Warbler		1			1		
Yellow-rumped Warbler		1		5	1		
Northern Cardinal	4	6	9	2	3	2	9
Total species	48	104	84	63	52	63	59

3 2023 Odonata Report

by Bruce Ripley



Figure 11: Arrowhead Spiketail: The arrowhead markings on the abdomen and the facial pattern on the top of the thorax make this dragonfly easy to I.D. (Bruce Ripley)

With more people taking an interest in photographing wild things and submitting their photos to iNaturalist, new wildlife discoveries are being made. This year, one new species was added to the KFN dragonfly/damselfly checklist, plus there were some new locations discovered for some of our uncommon species. This year, 92 species were observed within the Kingston Study Area (KSA), Menzel Provincial Nature Reserve (Menzel PNR) and Charleston Lake Provincial Park.



Figure 12: Cyrano Darner: Named after Cyrano de Bergerac for the protruding frons (nose). (Bruce Ripley)

The big news for 2023 was the sighting of a male Comet Darner on July 30 near Hayburn. There is only one other “Research Grade” record on iNaturalist for Comet Darner for all of eastern Ontario and all the other records from the province come from the southwest. The bright red abdomen of the male and the lack of a “bull’s-eye” mark on top of the frons (uppermost part of the face) distinguish this species. Comet Darners are very large, being larger than Common Green Darners. Female and immature Common

Green Darners can have a reddish abdomen, but they are not as bright as the male Comet Darners. Female and immature Comet Darners do not possess the bright red abdomen of the males. This is a species from the south, but should be looked for at ponds, lagoons or water-filled quarries. This sighting is one of the most northerly records for this species in North America!



Figure 13: Comet Darner: The bright red abdomen of the male and plain green colour on top of the frons identify this species. (Erik Van Den Kieboom)

It's gratifying when you do your homework and then set out to find a long shot, and you find one! That's what happened with one KFN member who, after studying the field marks and habitat preference for Variable Darner, went out and found and photographed one at Landons Bay. This species has only been recorded in the KSA once before! Landons Bay was a "hot spot" for darners this year!

Sightings of Ebony Boghaunter are usually confined to Menzel PNR, which technically isn't within the KSA. However, on May 28, one was found and photographed in Charleston Lake Provincial Park, which was within the KSA circle. The Mustached Clubtail has only been found in the KSA at Depot Creek Nature Reserve, but on June 22 this year, five Mustached Clubtails were discovered by the Sheffield Bridge at the Salmon River just south of Tamworth. Sightings of Sphagnum Sprite are usually found in and around the Helen Quilliam Sanctuary and Frontenac Provincial Park, but two were discovered at a bog near Third Depot Lake.

Westfall's Slender Bluet, which has been observed at Upper Brewers Locks for the last two years, was found again at this location, which suggests that this might be a permanent pop-

ulation. In 2022, there were multiple sightings of both the Painted Skimmer and Swamp Darner, which are both southern species. This season, there was only one sighting of a Swamp Darner and no sighting of a Painted Skimmer. Spot-winged Gliders put in a good appearance with many observations, whereas last year there were none. All three species of spiketails were found this year, including a Delta-spotted Spiketail which was observed by many on a KFN ramble off Opinicon Road.



Figure 14: Spot-winged Glider: Eleven observations this year while in 2022 there were none. (Bruce Ripley)



Figure 15: Swift River Cruiser: They live up to their name as they can accelerate like a shot out of a cannon. (Bruce Ripley)

In 2022, three species of Striped Emeralds (*Somatochlora*) were found, but this year only one. Several Brush-tipped

Emeralds were found at Menzel PNR. The Unicorn Clubtail is a rare species in the KSA and has always been found singly, but one KFN member found three at once near Hayburn. A twilight trip to Third Depot Lake to seek crepuscular species yielded a Stygian Shadowdragon and a Vesper Bluet. Other notable sightings include Cyrano Darner, Lake Darner, Green-striped Darner, Mottled Darner, Harlequin Darner, Swift River Cruiser, Rusty Snaketail and Horned Clubtail.

Dragonfly Trivia: Dragonflies evolved about 300 million

years ago. The dragonflies of today have a wingspan of 5 to 12 centimetres but fossil records have been found with wingspans up to 60 centimetres.

Join the [Kingston Field Naturalists: Odonata Project](#).

[Photos and dates for the Kingston Study Area on iNaturalist](#)

[Photos and dates for Menzel PNR on iNaturalist](#)

[Photos and dates for Charleston Lake Provincial Park on iNaturalist](#)

Table 2: Odonata First and Last Sightings for 2023

Common Name	Scientific Name	First	Last
Broad-winged Damselflies	Calopterygidae		
River Jewelwing	<i>Calopteryx aequabilis</i>	04 Jun	09 Aug
Ebony Jewelwing	<i>Calopteryx maculata</i>	19 May	10 Aug
Spreadwings	Lestidae		
Spotted Spreadwing	<i>Lestes congener</i>	07 Jul	22 Sep
Northern Spreadwing	<i>Lestes disjunctus</i>	29 Jun	29 Jun
Sweetflag Spreadwing	<i>Lestes forcipatus</i>	21 Jul	21 Jul
Emerald Spreadwing	<i>Lestes dryas</i>	12 Jun	26 Jun
Amber-winged Spreadwing	<i>Lestes eurinus</i>	06 Jun	22 Jul
Elegant Spreadwing	<i>Lestes inaequalis</i>	18 Jun	25 Jun
Slender Spreadwing	<i>Lestes rectangularis</i>	21 Jun	21 Sep
Lyre-tipped Spreadwing	<i>Lestes unguiculatus</i>	21 Jul	21 Jul
Swamp Spreadwing	<i>Lestes vigilax</i>	21 Jul	22 Aug
Narrow-winged Damselflies	Coenagrionidae		
Powdered Dancer	<i>Argia moesta</i>	21 Jun	10 Sep
Violet Dancer	<i>Argia fumipennis violacea</i>	12 Jun	02 Oct
Aurora Damsel	<i>Chromagrion conditum</i>	15 May	19 Jun
Taiga Bluet	<i>Coenagrion resolutum</i>	23 May	27 Jun
Rainbow Bluet	<i>Enallagma antennatum</i>	15 Jun	24 Jun
Azure Bluet	<i>Enallagma aspersum</i>	03 Jun	22 Sep
Northern Bluet	<i>Enallagma annexum</i>	No report	
Boreal Bluet	<i>Enallagma boreale</i>	08 Jun	08 Jun

Table 2: (continued)

Common Name	Scientific Name	First	Last
Vernal Bluet	<i>Enallagma vernale</i>	No report	
Tule Bluet	<i>Enallagma carunculatum</i>	25 Jul	03 Sep
Familiar Bluet	<i>Enallagma civile</i>	15 Jun	02 Oct
Westfall's Slender Bluet	<i>Enallagma traviatum westfalli</i>	22 Jul	23 Jul
River Bluet	<i>Enallagma anna</i>	No report	
Stream Bluet	<i>Enallagma exsulans</i>	24 Jun	24 Jul
Marsh Bluet	<i>Enallagma ebrium</i>	10 Jul	24 Jul
Skimming Bluet	<i>Enallagma geminatum</i>	29 May	09 Sep
Hagen's Bluet	<i>Enallagma hageni</i>	03 Jun	21 Jun
Orange Bluet	<i>Enallagma signatum</i>	21 Jun	09 Sep
Vesper Bluet	<i>Enallagma vesperum</i>	15 Jun	09 Sep
Citrine Forktail	<i>Ischnura hastata</i>	No report	
Fragile Forktail	<i>Ischnura posita</i>	19 May	06 Sep
Eastern Forktail	<i>Ischnura verticalis</i>	15 May	28 Sep
Sedge Sprite	<i>Nehalennia irene</i>	30 May	28 Jul
Sphagnum Sprite	<i>Nehalennia gracilis</i>	10 Jun	07 Jul
Darners	Aeshnidae		
Canada Darner	<i>Aeshna canadensis</i>	17 Jun	23 Aug
Mottled Darner	<i>Aeshna clepsydra</i>	06 Aug	01 Sep
Lake Darner	<i>Aeshna eremita</i>	28 Aug	01 Sep
Lance-tipped Darner	<i>Aeshna constricta</i>	17 Jul	02 Oct
Variable Darner	<i>Aeshna interrupta</i>	26 Aug	26 Aug
Zig-zag Darner	<i>Aeshna sitchensis</i>	No report	
Black-tipped Darner	<i>Aeshna tuberculifera</i>	16 Jul	01 Sep
Shadow Darner	<i>Aeshna umbrosa</i>	11 Jul	19 Oct
Green-striped Darner	<i>Aeshna verticalis</i>	11 Aug	05 Oct
Common Green Darner	<i>Anax junius</i>	14 Apr	29 Sep
Comet Darner	<i>Anax longipes</i>	30 Jul	30 Jul
Springtime Darner	<i>Basiaeschna janata</i>	18 May	28 May
Fawn Darner	<i>Boyeria vinosa</i>	28 Jul	04 Sep

Table 2: (continued)

Common Name	Scientific Name	First	Last
Swamp Darner	<i>Epiaeschna heros</i>	14 Jul	14 Jul
Harlequin Darner	<i>Gomphaeschna furcillata</i>	14 May	19 Jun ^{MC}
Cyrano Darner	<i>Nasiaeschna pentacantha</i>	22 Jun	02 Jul
Clubtails	Gomphidae		
Unicorn Clubtail	<i>Arigomphus villosipes</i>	03 Jun	04 Jul
Horned Clubtail	<i>Arigomphus cornutus</i>	13 Jun	13 Jun
Lilypad Clubtail	<i>Arigomphus furcifer</i>	19 May	22 Jun
Lancet Clubtail	<i>Phanogomphus exilis</i>	06 Jun	26 Jun
Ashy Clubtail	<i>Phanogomphus lividus</i>	No report	
Dusky Clubtail	<i>Phanogomphus spicatus</i>	22 May	19 Jun ^{MC}
Black-shouldered Spinyleg	<i>Dromogomphus spinosus</i>	11 Jun	06 Sep
Mustached Clubtail	<i>Hylogomphus adelphus</i>	29 May	
Dragonhunter	<i>Hagenius brevistylus</i>	05 Jul	20 Jul
Rusty Snaketail	<i>Ophiogomphus rupinsulensis</i>	04 Jun	12 Jun
Eastern Least Clubtail	<i>Stylogomphus albistylus</i>	04 Jun	12 Jul
Elusive Clubtail	<i>Stylurus notatus</i>	No report	
Spiketails	Cordulegastridae		
Delta-spotted Spiketail	<i>Cordulegaster diastatops</i>	06 Jun	06 Jun
Twin-spotted Spiketail	<i>Cordulegaster maculata</i>	29 May	29 May
Arrowhead Spiketail	<i>Cordulegaster obliqua</i>	10 Jun	13 Jun ^{CL}
Cruisers	Macromiidae		
Stream Cruiser	<i>Didymops transversa</i>	21 May	13 Jun
Swift River Cruiser	<i>Macromia illinoiensis</i>	22 Jun	12 Jul
Emerald Dragonflies	Corduliidae		
American Emerald	<i>Cordulia shurtleffi</i>	28 Apr	03 Jun
Racket-tailed Emerald	<i>Dorocordulia libera</i>	21 May	12 Jul
Beaverpond Baskettail	<i>Epithea canis</i>	06 May	04 Jun
Spiny Baskettail	<i>Epithea spinigera</i>	13 May	04 Jun
Common Baskettail	<i>Epithea cynosura</i>	18 May	25 Jun
Prince Baskettail	<i>Epithea princeps</i>	03 Jun	21 Sep

Table 2: (continued)

Common Name	Scientific Name	First	Last
Uhler's Sundragon	<i>Helocordulia uhleri</i>	No report	
Stygian Shadowdragon	<i>Neurocordulia yamaskanensis</i>	15 Jun	15 Jun
Kennedy's Emerald	<i>Somatochlora kennedyi</i>	No report	
Brush-tipped Emerald	<i>Somatochlora walshii</i>	12 Jul ^{MC}	20 Jul ^{MC}
Williamson's Emerald	<i>Somatochlora williamsoni</i>	No report	
Ebony Boghaunter	<i>Williamsonia fletcheri</i>	28 May	28 May
Skimmers	Libellulidae		
Calico Pennant	<i>Celithemis elisa</i>	03 Jun	02 Aug
Halloween Pennant	<i>Celithemis eponina</i>	19 Jun	03 Sep
Eastern Pondhawk	<i>Erythemis simplicicollis</i>	28 May	28 Sep
Chalk-fronted Corporal	<i>Ladona julia</i>	28 May	18 Jul
Dot-tailed Whiteface	<i>Leucorrhinia intacta</i>	06 May	12 Jul
Belted Whiteface	<i>Leucorrhinia proxima</i>	15 May	05 Jun
Frosted Whiteface	<i>Leucorrhinia frigida</i>	02 Jun	24 Jul
Hudsonian Whiteface	<i>Leucorrhinia hudsonica</i>	28 Apr	28 Apr
Crimson-ringed Whiteface	<i>Leucorrhinia glacialis</i>	No report	
Widow Skimmer	<i>Libellula luctuosa</i>	30 May	28 Sep
Slaty Skimmer	<i>Libellula incesta</i>	03 Jun	06 Sep
Twelve-spotted Skimmer	<i>Libellula pulchella</i>	30 May	31 Aug
Four-spotted Skimmer	<i>Libellula quadrimaculata</i>	13 May	21 Jun
Painted Skimmer	<i>Libellula semifasciata</i>	No report	
Elfin Skimmer	<i>Nannothemis bella</i>	03 Jun	07 Jul
Blue Dasher	<i>Pachydiplax longipennis</i>	30 May	28 Sep
Wandering Glider	<i>Pantala flavescens</i>	18 Sep	28 Sep
Spot-winged Glider	<i>Pantala hymenaea</i>	14 Jul	18 Sep
Eastern Amberwing	<i>Perithemis tenera</i>	27 Jun	28 Sep
Common Whitetail	<i>Plathemis lydia</i>	19 May	18 Sep
Saffron-winged Meadowhawk	<i>Sympetrum costiferum</i>	No report	
Cherry-faced Meadowhawk	<i>Sympetrum internum</i>	No report	
White-faced Meadowhawk	<i>Sympetrum obtrusum</i>	25 Jul	16 Sep

Table 2: (continued)

Common Name	Scientific Name	First	Last
Ruby Meadowhawk	<i>Sympetrum rubicundulum</i>	No report	
Band-winged Meadowhawk	<i>Sympetrum semicinctum</i>	20 Jul	05 Oct
Autumn Meadowhawk	<i>Sympetrum vicinum</i>	01 Aug	05 Nov
Red Saddlebags	<i>Tramea onusta</i>	No report	
Carolina Saddlebags	<i>Tramea carolina</i>	No report	
Black Saddlebags	<i>Tramea lacerata</i>	17 Jul	23 Sep

- ^{MC} Dates marked with a superscript MC refer to observations from Menzel Centennial Provincial Nature Reserve.
- ^{CL} Dates marked with a superscript CL refer to observations from Charleston Lake Provincial Park that are outside of the KFN 50 km study area.

4 2023 Butterfly Report

by John Poland

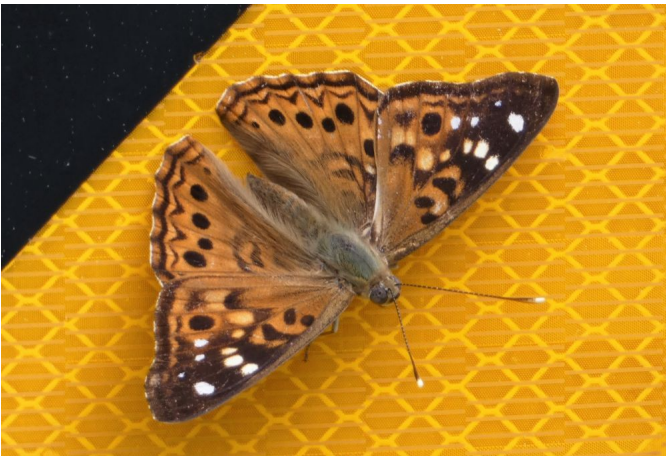


Figure 16: Hackberry Emperor. (Bruce Ripley)

This year was an average year for butterfly sightings. That was because none of the club’s butterfly enthusiasts was going for a really big year, and although warm weather persisted well into November, it did not attract any rare southern visitors. Table 3 shows that 82 species were reported this year. The Butterflies of the Kingston Study Area project on iNaturalist contains a list of 92 butterflies reported over the years. The official KFN list available from the KFN website has a complete list of 104 butterfly species ever reported from the Kingston area. Some of these are from the Toronto Entomologists Association Butterfly Atlas which includes

some without photographs or which were historically found here but are now absent.



Figure 17: Harris’s Checkerspot. (Bruce Ripley)

Peter Waycik kindly provided me with a [web address \(2023\)](#) to the Kingston Study Area for butterflies of the Kingston Study Area for the 2023 calendar year. This gives you data for all the butterflies reported in 2023 on iNaturalist within the 50 km radius around Kingston. This year I have again incorporated results as given in iNaturalist for the Kingston region (50 km circle) along with others communicated to me. For 2020-2022 there were between 2300 and 2999 re-

ported sightings of between 78-87 species per year. This year, there were 2668 sightings of 82 species. Table 3 includes sighting from the United States as reported in iNaturalist. The final column in the table lists the number of times each species was reported which gives a broad indication of their abundance—duplicates have been subtracted where an author reported a species multiple times for the same location and date.



Figure 18: Juniper Hairstreak. (Bruce Ripley)

Two rare species of butterfly were reported in the US from within the 50 km circle. A Tawny Emperor was seen on 9 July at Orleans, NY. This is a new butterfly on the KFN butterfly list. Also, a Mottled Duskywing was seen in the same general location as last year in Jefferson County. A rare Gorgone Checkerspot was again reported this year in the northwestern portion of our area. This year we did not observe any of the southern occasional fall visitors that we often see such as the Common Buckeye, Fiery Skipper or American Snout which we have often recently seen in

July. Other species that were missed in 2023 were the Two-spotted Skipper, Hickory Hairstreak and Common Roadside Skipper. The Two-spotted Skipper has generally been found each year recently but requires some diligent searching. The Hickory Hairstreak has been quite common for the past few years but before that was very rarely seen. The Common Roadside Skipper is normally seen in late May or early June but has a short season. The Painted Lady which was not seen in 2021 or 2022, was seen again this year on four separate occasions. The rare Mulberry Wing was again seen along Echo Lake Road but also this year at the Depot Creek Nature Reserve. For 2024, Peter has again provided a [web address \(2024\)](#) where butterflies hopefully observed from late March will magically appear!

Join the [Kingston Field Naturalists: Butterflies Project](#).



Figure 19: Midsummer Tiger Swallowtails. (Bruce Ripley)

Table 3: Reported Butterfly Sightings for 2023

Butterfly	First Date	Last Date	Overwintering Stage	# Reports in iNaturalist
Black Swallowtail	10 May	2 Oct	chrysalis	100
Eastern Giant Swallowtail	21May	15 Sep	chrysalis	97*
Canadian Tiger Swallowtail	19 May	21 Jun	chrysalis	16
Canadian/Eastern Tiger Swallowtail	27 Jun	21 Sep	chrysalis	38
Mustard White	22 Apr	19 Jun	chrysalis	6
West Virginia White	27 Apr	10 May	chrysalis	6

Table 3: (continued)

Butterfly	First Date	Last Date	Overwintering Stage	# Reports in INaturalist
Cabbage White	16 Apr	19 Oct	chrysalis	68
Olympia Marble	22 Apr	22 May	chrysalis	9
Clouded Sulphur	14 May	16 Nov	chrysalis	67
Orange Sulphur	5 Aug	5 Nov	migratory	9
Harvester	28 May	12 Aug	unknown	5
American Copper	23 May	2 Oct	unknown	11
Bronze Copper	13 Jun	2 Oct	egg	16
Bog Copper	7 Jul	7 Jul	egg	1
Coral Hairstreak	7 Jul	22Aug	egg	5
Acadian Hairstreak	16 Jul	22 Jul	egg	2
Banded Hairstreak	30 Jun	31 Jul	egg	9
Striped Hairstreak	6 Jul	22 Jul	egg	4
Brown Elfin	6 May	6 May	chrysalis	1
Hoary Elfin	6 May	16 May	chrysalis	7
Henry's Elfin	21 Apr	23 May	chrysalis	11
Eastern Pine Elfin	21 Apr	15 Jun	chrysalis	38
Juniper Hairstreak	9 May	12 Aug	chrysalis	12
Gray Hairstreak	6 May	22 Jul	chrysalis	10
Eastern Tailed Blue	7 May	13 Oct	caterpillar fully grown	46
Summer Azure	28 May	8 Sep	chrysalis	16
Northern Azure	16 Apl	22 Aug	Chrysalis	60
Silvery Blue	10 May	24 Jun	Chrysalis	25
Great Spangled Fritillary	29 Jun	9 Sep	caterpillar newly hatched	31
Aphrodite Fritillary	7 July	11 Sep	caterpillar first instar	4
Silver Bordered Fritillary	3 Jun	3 Jun	caterpillar half grown	1
Meadow Fritillary	23 May	11 Sep	Caterpillar	8
Gorgone Checkerspot	5 Jun	5 Jun	Caterpillar	1
Harris Checkerspot	8 Jun	13 Jun	Caterpillar	4
Northern Crescent	4 Jun	22 Sep	Caterpillar	42

Table 3: (continued)

Butterfly	First Date	Last Date	Overwintering Stage	# Reports in INaturalist
Pearl Crescent	21 May	4 Oct	Caterpillar	66
Baltimore Checkerspot	12 Jun	7 Jul	Caterpillar	3
Question Mark	16 Jun	20 Sep	Migratory	20
Eastern Comma	1 Apr	28 Oct	Butterfly	56
Gray Comma	15 Apr	25 Sep	Butterfly	20
Mourning Cloak	8 Apr	23 Oct	Butterfly	34
Compton Tortoiseshell	7 Apr	28 Sep	Butterfly	7
Milbert's Tortoiseshell	13 Apr	26 Jul	Butterfly	6
American Lady	2 May	27 Oct	Migratory	20
Painted Lady	12 July	28 Sep	migratory	4
Red Admiral	14 Apr	11 Oct	migratory	96
White Admiral	13 Jun	17 Sep	caterpillar partly grown	40
Viceroy	31 May	1 Oct	caterpillar half grown	49
Monarch	18 Jun	27 Oct	Migratory	224
Hackberry Emperor	15 Jul	15 Jul	caterpillar mature	1
Tawny Emperor	9 Jul	9 Jul	mature caterpillar	1
Northern Pearly Eye	27 Jun	6 Aug	Caterpillar	34
Eyed Brown	25 Jun	18 Sep	caterpillar half grown	12
Appalachian Brown	9 Jul	7 Aug	caterpillar half grown	5
Little Wood Satyr	2 Jun	22 Jul	caterpillar	66
Common Ringlet	22 May	19 Sep	caterpillar	48
Common Wood Nymph	2 Jul	3 Sep	caterpillar newly hatched	42
Chryxus Arctic	15 May	15 May	caterpillar	2
Silver Spotted Skipper	29 May	14 Aug	chrysalis	19
Northern Cloudywing	28 May	20 Jul	caterpillar mature	44
Dreamy Duskywing	22 May	3 Jun	caterpillar mature	3
Juvenal's Duskywing	7 May	27 Jun	caterpillar mature	32
Mottled Duskywing	15 May	15 May	caterpillar mature	1
Columbine Duskywing	6 May	3 Sep	caterpillar mature	18

Table 3: (continued)

Butterfly	First Date	Last Date	Overwintering Stage	# Reports in iNaturalist
Wild Indigo Duskywing	15 May	23 Sep	caterpillar mature	17
Arctic Skipper	2 Jun	15 Jun	caterpillar mature	5
Least Skipper	10 Jun	18 Sep	caterpillar mature	35
European Skipper	19 Jun	20 Jul	egg	28
Leonard's Skipper	13 Aug	22 Sep	caterpillar early instar	8
Indian Skipper	3 June	3 Jul	caterpillar	8
Peck's Skipper	11 Jun	21 Aug	caterpillar partly grown	7
Tawny Edged Skipper	28 May	4 Oct	chrysalis	15
Crossline Skipper	27 Jun	21 Jul	caterpillar mature	3
Long Dash	2 Jul	8 Jul	caterpillar partly grown	4
Northern Broken Dash	2 Jul	31 Jul	caterpillar	36
Little Glassywing	27 Jun	17 Jul	caterpillar	13
Delaware Skipper	29 Jun	14 Sep	caterpillar or chrysalis	19
Hobomok Skipper	22 May	10 Jul	caterpillar	75
Mulberrywing	7 Jul	20 Jul	unknown	3
Broad Winged Skipper	13 Jul	7 Aug	caterpillar	6
Dion Skipper	5 Jul	19 Jul	caterpillar partly grown	6
Dun Skipper	8 Jul	30 Aug	caterpillar	75

Contributors: Gaye Beckwith, David Edwards, Janet Elliott, John Hall, Paul Mackenzie, John Poland, Bruce Ripley, Peter Waycik, Kathy Webb, Bill Depew and many others via iNaturalist.

* In addition, seven sightings of Eastern Giant Swallowtail caterpillars were reported between 12-24 September.

5 Kingston Region Birds—Summer 2023 (June 1 to July 31)

by N. Anthony Kaduck and Mark D. Read

The KFN reporting area is centred on the datum point in MacDonald Park, Kingston and extends for a radial distance of 50 km. An interactive map showing the KFN circle is available on the website. If errors are noted or significant observations omitted, please contact me and I will update accordingly. We also encourage you to submit all sightings,

so that a better understanding of our region's birdlife can be achieved. Members already using eBird can very easily share their sightings with the username 'Kingston FN'. Alternatively, please email or phone me directly with your sightings (kaduckintransit at gmail.com / 613-331-1391).

In total, 198 species of bird were recorded in our region

during the reporting period, down slightly from last year's summer total of 200. All observations were obtained from eBird—unfortunately, just 7.06% were shared with the KFN account—a declining statistic. In total, 497 observers logged 3465 checklists, equating to 50 638 sightings, a significant decrease over last year's number. As usual, an impressive number of individual birds (185 778) were recorded, though many of these were, of course, the same birds seen on subsequent days. A huge thank you goes out to every observer, without whom our understanding of bird distribution would be far more limited. Observers with sightings in the current report are noted below.

Here are the highlights of summer 2023:

Brant: Three late sightings of single birds or pairs were recorded during the first week of June, with a final lone bird being seen at Marshlands CA on the fifth (TiH).

Northern Shoveler: A few birds decided to linger in the area rather than heading north and west with the main body. The last report was from the Amherstview Sewage Lagoons on 29 July (JCG, VPM).

American Wigeon: Single birds were spotted at Swetman Island PEC on 5 June (PBJ), and on the K&P Trail (McIvor Road to Burbrook Road) on 13 July (MRH).

Ring-necked Duck: Pairs were observed near Camden East on 2 June, and at Odessa Creek/Lake on 18 June (both KAW).

Greater Scaup: Two drakes were seen off the Invista Property (Kingston) on 26 June (RAB, DBC).

Lesser Scaup: There were four sightings between 6 June and 29 July, with a high count of four from Cataraqui Bay on 23 July (JMN).

White-winged Scoter: An impressive count of 1200 birds came from Swetman Island on 4 June (PBJ, PhM, SaS).

Ring-necked Pheasant: Five sightings were reported, with one at Chaumont Barrens in Jefferson County, NY and the remainder on Amherst Island.

Red-necked Grebe: A single bird was photographed at Doug Fluhrer Park (Kingston) on 4 June (ZaH).

American Coot: There were three records over the period, with the latest being a single bird on Camden Lake, 8 July (JPR et al).

Sandhill Crane: There were 11 records this summer, but unlike last year there was no confirmation of breeding.

Semipalmated Plover: A few late migrants were observed in June, and the first of the returning wave was seen on the K&P Trail on 15 July (CAH, MRH).

Ruddy Turnstone: Six birds on Snake Island on 1 June were the only summer records (PJH).

Sanderling: One record came from Swetman Island on 5 June (PBJ).

Pectoral Sandpiper: One bird visited the Amherstview Sewage Lagoons on 28 and 29 July (ChE, LJM, BJO, JET).

Short-billed Dowitcher: There was one sighting of four birds on 2 June at the Martin Edwards Reserve (JCG, VPM).

Wilson's Phalarope: It was not a good year for these phalaropes, with only six sightings, all at the Martin Edwards Reserve. The high count was three birds on 11 June (CAH, MRH).

Bonaparte's Gull: A handful of sightings were reported, with a high count of five birds at the Amherstview Sewage Lagoons on 26 July (BJO).

Least Bittern: 31 sightings were reported across the region. Aside from the usual spots (Moscow Marsh, Camden Lake, Perch River), there were a number of sightings in places where the birds are not traditionally seen. Is their range spreading? The high tally of three birds came from the Cataraqui River marshes on 25 June (RAB, DBC).

Eastern Screech-Owl: There were three summer records this year.

Red-headed Woodpecker: There were ten summer records, mostly from the area from the Opinicon Road West to Frontenac Provincial Park. Breeding was confirmed in at least one location (CAH).

Peregrine Falcon: There were 14 records this summer, with breeding confirmed at both Landon Bay (KAW) and at the Lennox OPG site (KJH).

Olive-sided Flycatcher: Single birds were seen at Prince Edward Point National Wildlife Area on 1-2 June (PBJ), and at Perch River WMA on 2 June (BrM).

Loggerhead Shrike: There were 14 records this summer, all from the known general breeding location of the Napanee Limestone Plains IBA. One fledged juvenile was observed on 12 June (MaB, CoG).

Fish Crow: Single birds were heard or seen three times over the month of June in City Park, Kingston.

Tufted Titmouse: There were 28 records this summer; the majority of which were in Jefferson County, NY. A high count of four birds on 5 July came from a private residence in Kingston.

Golden-crowned Kinglet: One adult and a fledged juvenile were seen at Charleston Lake Provincial Park on 2 July (AEK, MiL).

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: There were 18 reports this summer, with a high count of two at Prince Edward Point NWA on 30 July (PBJ).

Sedge Wren: This summer saw 12 reports. A single bird was seen in the Harrowsmith area from 8-18 June and again on 3 July (TAN). A singing bird (perhaps the same bird) was present at Depot Creek Nature Reserve from 25 June to 1 July (KAW). One male was assessed to be on territory near Ernestown on 9 July (KJH).

Northern Mockingbird: There were just six reports this year, but breeding was confirmed at the Lennox OPG site and also Northeast of Napanee (both KJH).

Swainson's Thrush: Single birds were noted in the area of the Opinicon Road Kingston on 4 June (KaR, WaR) and 8 June (TeS).

Evening Grosbeak: A single bird was heard near Picadilly. South Frontenac, on 11 June (MAJ).

Red Crossbill: A pair was seen at Frontenac Provincial Park on 18 June (SaL et al), five were seen at Folsom Lake on the same date (IaT), and singles were noted at Charleston Lake Provincial Park on 7 July (AEK), Blue Mountain on 9 July (AEK, MiL), and Varty Lake on 30 July (ChE).

Pine Siskin: A single sighting of one bird came from the Odessa Alvar on 30 July (BER).

Henslow's Sparrow: There was only one record this summer on 3 July in Jefferson County, NY (AnG).

Orchard Oriole: Another good year with 28 reports. A high count of five came from Prince Edward Point NWA on 1 June (JPR).

Louisiana Waterthrush: Two reports were received from the usual Canoe Lake Road site, on 13 June (JPR et al.), and 16 June (PaL).

Cape May Warbler: An unusual summer report came from Wolfe Island on 30 June (CAH, MRH).

Cerulean Warbler: It was a good year with 42 records representing 56 birds. Aside from their strongholds in Frontenac Provincial Park, Canoe Lake Road and Opinicon Road, birds were noted at a number of different locations this year. The high count of five came from the James Wilson Road area (Atlas square 18TUQ73) on 4 June.

Prairie Warbler: This summer saw an excellent total of 37 sightings, and unusually more than half came from the Canadian side of the river. A high count of five was seen along Fishing Lake Road on 13 June (PJH).

Observers:

Richard A. Brault (RAB), Marth Burchat (MaB), Stephen Chen (StC), Dianne B. Croteau (DBC), Tristan Ducharme (TrD), R. Ken F. Edwards (RKFE), Chris Ellingwood (ChE), Andrew Gaerte (AnG), Colin Gaskell (CoG), Janis C. Grant (JCG), Tim Hain (TiH), Phil J. Harvey (PJH), Kurt J. Hennige (KJH), Christine A. Hough (CAH), Margaret R. Hough (MRH), Zakhary Husak (ZaH), Paul B. Jones (PBJ), Michael A. Johnson (MAJ), Andrew E. Keaveney (AEK), Paul Lagasi (PaL), Sarah Lamond (SaL), Michelle Locke (MiL), V. Paul Mackenzie (VPM), Lana J. Marion (LJM), Phillip Mercier (PhM), Brian Miller (BrM), Jenny M. Newton (JMN), Barbara J. O'Neill (BJO), Karen Rendell (KaR), Wallace Rendell (WaR), Bruce E. Ripley (BER), Jon P. Ruddy (JPR), Sarah Sharp (SaS), Ted Stewart (TeS), James E. Thompson (JET), Ian Turner (IaT), Kathy Webb (KAW).

6 Articles

6.1 The Bald Eagles of Devil Lake

by Steve Manders

There has been a nesting pair of Bald Eagles on Devil Lake for many years now. Devil Lake is about 40 km north of Kingston, with easy public access to view them by boat. The nest is well known to the locals who often drop by to observe, and there is even a large cottage under the nest. The mere presence of people and boaters has been well tolerated by them, but they do not like it when observers linger. That is true for most wildlife.

The nest is on the west side of Vanderbilt Island in a pine tree about 15 to 20 metres high, but it is partly obstructed by pine branches making observing difficult. If you get too close, you will only view the bottom of the nest, That forces viewers to keep their distance.



Figure 20: Canoe. (Steve Manders)

The adult eagles spend very little time at the nest once the chicks are hatched, but they do have a few favourite trees to rest in other than at the nest when they are around. There are two small islands each about a half kilometre away on which you can rest and observe the activity, but you cannot see the nest itself. There are loons calling, a few gulls, and osprey and a lot of other activity there. That makes long observation sessions possible without actually disturbing the birds. Remember, there is also a large cottage directly under the nest.

For the first egg to hatch on April 22 or some time that previous week, the egg had to be laid 35 days earlier, or about

March 14. The eagles had to have sex about one week before that or about March 8 which is still winter time.



Figure 21: The father eagle on the nest April 16. He has a brown stain on both sides of his beak for identification. (Steve Manders)

I visited the site about once a week through the summer of 2023 to monitor the activity. There was one chick on April 22, then three on April 27 and only one chick after May 5. It is normal for the strongest chick to take most of the food offered and kill its siblings. That appears to have happened here. All the effort of feeding the chick is invested in the strongest and the most likely to survive.



Figure 22: One chick. (Steve Manders)



Figure 23: Three chicks in the nest on April 27. two only lasted for a week or so, leaving the strongest one. (Steve Manders)

With only one chick to feed after the siblings were gone, it grew rapidly. The chick became indifferent to me laying on the floor of my canoe, with camera in hand, silently drifting by. I was just part of its local scenery and that ultimately allowed me to get some good close-ups.

Everyone enjoys feeding time at the zoo, but there was little of that observed. I have only one photo of what looks like a noodle being offered to a chick on May 5. The chick grew rapidly and it appears that food was left in the nest to feed on.



Figure 24: The baby eagle is being fed a noodle size piece of fish. This was the last time feeding was observed. (Steve Manders)

On May 26, I had been observing the nest for many hours from my comfortable island a half km away and I knew that the adults had not been around since I arrived. The chick usually becomes quite vocal when it is hungry, but it was quiet. I went over to observe and it was eating large chunks

of fish that had been left many hours earlier. Apparently, it had its fill, took a nap, and went back to eating its food. It was impossible to see what it was deep inside the bowl of the nest up high in the tree.



Figure 25: The eagle chick had grown a lot in one month, and was now feeding itself with fish left behind for it. (Steve Manders)

The next month was relatively uneventful except for the rate at which the chick grew. It began hopping around in the nest, stretching its wings, and calling for food with a high-pitched call that could be heard a kilometre away. The parents also called with a shrill call when they came in with food. That is how they find each other (once the chick fledges) if it is not in the nest but is in the same general area. That is also how I was able to track down the chick.

The following month the chick grew stronger and spent more time in the top of the big pine tree but not in the actual nest. It was learning how to use its wings and what branches it could sit on. It made you fear for its safety, but it somehow managed. The adults were never around for these events. They just dropped off food and left.

Here is when viewing became more interesting. The chick was moving around to different trees in the nest area, but its balance on branches was very poor. It had a poor sense of what branches were suitable to land on. On one occasion it flew to a branch that looked suitable, but it was old and rotten; it snapped under the weight of the bird, sending it crashing to the ground making a lot of noise on the way down. On another occasion, it tried to sit on young green pine branches that were just too pliable to support the bird. It kept trying to make it work with a lot of flapping.



Figure 26: May 26, the chick is now one month old but it has grown a lot. Getting rid of competitive siblings seemed to work. (Steve Manders)



Figure 27: The chick would call with a shrill call for Mom when it got hungry, and kept looking around for her to show up. (Steve Manders)



Figure 28: The mother Bald Eagle. (Steve Manders)

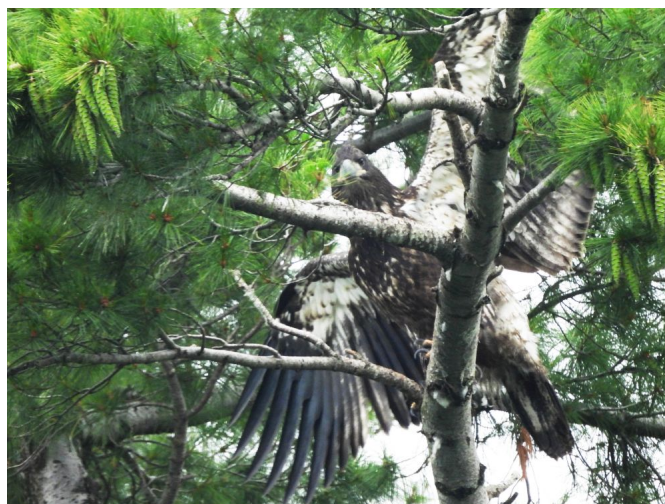


Figure 29: By June 28 the chick was climbing up the tree from the nest but it was still far from flying anywhere. It was exceedingly clumsy, and entertaining to watch. (Steve Manders)



Figure 30: Oh, to soar like an eagle. A beautiful sight. (Steve Manders)



Figure 31: On July 5, the chick had clearly left the nest and could fly to other trees, but it was very clumsy about everything. It is only 2 months old. (Steve Manders)



Figure 32: On August 14 the chick was clearly seen eating young green pine cones like corn on the cob. This was well photographed. (Steve Manders)



Figure 33: On August 23, a three year old eagle appeared for an afternoon. They do not get the white adult head and tail plumage until their fourth year. (Steve Manders)



Figure 34: Throughout the summer, the chick spent a great deal of time preening its new feathers. They seemed to cause a lot of itching as they sprouted. (Steve Manders)



Figure 35: Why do Bald Eagles look grumpy? (Steve Manders)



Figure 36: Getting great eagle photos is not easy, but the reward is very high. You need a good camera with a lot of zoom power, and a lot of patience. There were only a few opportunities like this through the whole summer. (Steve Manders)

I have photographed a lot of wildlife over the years from a Jaguar in the Amazon, a lot of grizzly bears and a mother Polar bear and two cubs eating a whale carcass on Devon Island 900 km north of the Arctic Circle. The one thing that is common to all wildlife is that you do not get better photos by staring at the animal and moving closer. That just ends the photo shoot. I behave like a cow. A cow is a half ton animal; everything should be afraid of it, but nothing is. Why? Because they stay out in the open, appear indifferent, go on eating their grass, casually looking around and making soft sounds. They do not hide, lurk, or linger. They do not keep staring at the subject, moving closer and closer. All wildlife understands this. Patience is rewarded. I get closer by moving in slowly in plain sight, on the diagonal, keep looking around in all directions, make soft sounds talking, humming

or what ever. Acknowledge that you see the subject animal, and they will acknowledge that they see you. I slowly get closer, looking for a better fore and background, better lighting, and keep taking occasional photos. You never know which will be the last photo, but it will be a lot better than using the direct approach. In the canoe, I paddle up wind of the subject animal, then slowly drift in closer with no apparent motion on my part.



Figure 37: On Aug 18, 2021, the sibling has a freshly caught fish of its own. (Steve Manders)



Figure 38: Our chick could fly well by mid August. It still had a lot to learn, but it seemed to be off to a good start, and but it was seldom seen after this time. It seems to have moved on. (Steve Manders)

The biggest thrill of it all is just being in the presence of some wildlife and knowing they are accepting you for a few minutes.

History of the Kingston Field Naturalists 1949 to 1954 (Part I)

by Robert B. Stewart

from the archives...

On March 31, 1949, a group of 22 people interested in Natural History met in the Agricultural Board Room of the Ontario Government Building on Barrie St., at the invitation of Dr. George M. Stirrett. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the formation of a nature club. An interim committee was formed comprised of the following: Chairman, Dr. G.M. Stirrett; Secretary, Dr. R.G.S. Bidwell; members, Dr. H.W. Curran, Mr. W.G. Lamb, Mr. C.M. Crawford and Mrs. T. Boardman. At this meeting the committee agreed to form a constitution for the prospective club. A meeting was planned for the following autumn, as well as two intervening field trips. The first field trip held on April 23 at the Collins Bay marshes was not an auspicious beginning, with heavy rain and only five in attendance. The second field trip held on June 1 at Collins Lake was much more successful, with fifteen attending, and all looking forward to the first meeting in the fall.

This first regular meeting was held on Nov. 24, 1949 with an attendance of nine. The Chairman of the interim committee presented a constitution which was similar in many respects to that of the Kent Nature Club in Chatham, Ontario. The club was to be called the Kingston Nature Club and its purpose "to acquire, record and disseminate knowledge of Natural History; to stimulate public interest in Nature, and in the protection and preservation of wildlife." The election of officers was held over to the following meeting, when, it was hoped, there would be a larger attendance. This meeting took place on Dec. 6, and the first executive was elected: Pres., Dr. G.M. Stirrett; Vice-Pres., Mrs. T. Boardman; Sec.-Treas., Dr. R.G.S. Bidwell, with Mrs. W.G. Lamb, Mr. W.E. Edwards and Mr. L. Thornton serving as committee members.

to be continued...

6.2 Birds in Flight —Wildlife Photography Tips #17

by Anthony Kaduck



Figure 39: Short-billed Dowitcher. 500mm, f/7.1, 1/2000 sec, ISO 800. (Anthony Kaduck)

In the realm of really great bird photographs—the National Geographic cover shots and international contest winners—the subjects are almost always shown in flight. And it makes sense: action shots are more engaging than static images, and the action of flight is the one thing that most expresses what it is to be a bird. So not surprisingly, within the world of wildlife photographers, Birds in Flight (BIF) is a particular specialty with its own unique skill set.

Capturing a great image of a bird in flight requires patience, skill, and judgement. I don't claim to be anywhere close to having mastered this particular aspect of photography, but I have learned a few things along the way. Consider this a

beginners' guide to BIF.

What makes a great BIF image?

Technical qualities. Needless to say, as with any great image, a BIF photo should show crisp focus, proper exposure, and enough depth of field so that the whole bird is in focus.

Activity. An image of a bird in its element is good enough, but it will be more engaging if the bird is doing something recognizable—carrying prey or nesting material, taking off or coming in for a landing, feeding, engaging with other birds, etc.



Figure 40: Blue-footed Booby. 300mm, f/8.0, 1/1250 sec, ISO 400. This shot was taken with the budget-priced Nikkor 70-300mm telephoto I mentioned in the September Blue Bill. (Anthony Kaduck)

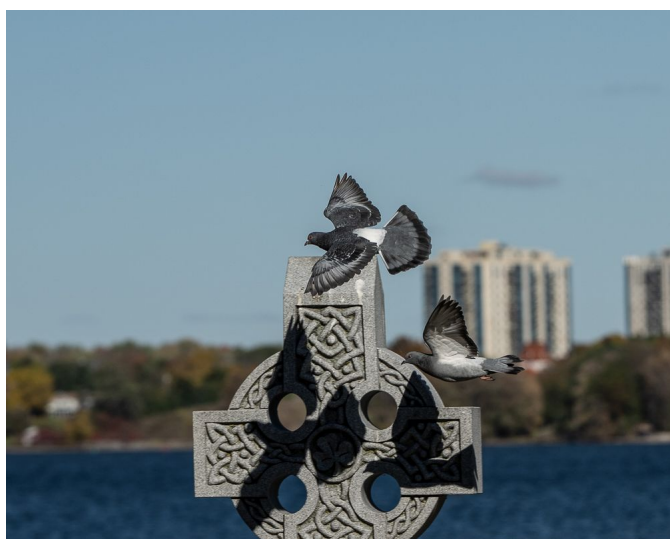


Figure 41: Feral Pigeons at Doug Fluhrer Park. 200mm, f/7.1, 1/1600 sec, ISO 160. (Anthony Kaduck)

Composition. As a general rule the bird should be:

- Flying towards the photographer or seen from a side view. The rear end view of a bird flying away is rarely interesting.
- Looking towards the viewer. For the best results the focus point should be on the nearest eye.
- Captured with its wings and legs held in an attractive manner.

Background. A bird against a featureless white or blue sky

is not as engaging as it would be with a more visually interesting background—glimpses of its habitat, for example a Northern Harrier over grassland or a Red-shouldered Hawk flying amongst the trees, or failing that at least some interesting clouds.

Books, social media posts, and blogs on photography tend to slavishly favour the convention that the background should be out of focus lest it detract attention from the subject. This is actually a stylistic choice not a rule, and you should feel free to ignore it in favour of your own personal vision.

Approach The really great BIF photographs that you have seen in exhibitions and magazines are almost certainly products of a deliberate approach to photography. What I mean by that is that the photographer set out that day aiming to get a particular image. They planned the shoot considering the light conditions they were looking for, the best background, and where the birds could most advantageously be seen. This preparation put them in the best position to get what they were looking for.

That approach does not fit in well with the normal activities of birding, which usually comprise walking around and seeing the birds as they make themselves available. However, there can be good opportunities on a bird walk, particularly in open country, if you adjust your camera in advance with the settings you would need for a BIF opportunity. Almost all of the images in this article were captured while out birding.



Figure 42: Red-rumped Bush Tyrant. 500mm, f/5.6, 1/1000 sec, ISO 900. (Anthony Kaduck)

And sometimes you can just get lucky. I am quite pleased

with the Red-rumped Bush Tyrant image (Figure 42) which came about because on a really bright day, I had dialed in a fast shutter speed just to avoid overexposure.



Figure 43: Red-tailed Hawk. 500mm, f/7.1, 1/1600 sec, ISO 400. (Anthony Kaduck)

Settings

The most important setting you will need to adopt in pursuit of BIF shots is a much faster shutter speed than you normally use. Even birds like swans or herons that appear to be slow and ponderous are actually moving quite quickly. For example, as a Mute Swan flies by, its slow cruise speed of 30 kilometres per hour equates to almost nine metres per second—for a bird that is about a 1.5 metres long. Combined with the imperfect movement of your lens as you try to track the bird, at a normal shutter speed the resulting shot will tend to be blurry, or at least not as sharp as you would want. So if you want to freeze the action and get a crisp shot, you need a high shutter speed.

How high? There are two answers:

- It depends on the bird—what it is doing, how close it is, whether it is heading towards you or across your field of vision. Experience will be your best guide in judging how fast the shutter needs to be.
- But if in doubt, faster is always better.

Shutter Speed Guidelines

I reviewed a lot of my own BIF images when researching this article and one thing I noticed is that most of the ones I like

were taken at a shutter speed of 1/1600 or higher.

For large, slow-flying or soaring birds (Canada Goose, Red-tailed Hawk) you might get away with a lower speed, particularly if the bird is in a slower phase of movement. Figure 44 shows a White-faced Ibis as it glides in for a landing. In this case 1/800 was fast enough to catch the bird and even the water droplets falling off of it, but it's the exception rather than the rule. 1/1600 is better as a baseline—it will improve the number of “keepers” in a shooting session.



Figure 44: White-faced Ibis at Erieau ON. 500mm, f/6.3, 1/800 sec, ISO 250. (Anthony Kaduck)



Figure 45: American White Pelican. 500mm, f/5.6, 1/2000 sec, ISO 1000. (Anthony Kaduck)

Note that the closer you are to the bird, the faster it will cross through your field of vision, so an even higher speed may be needed.

For smaller and/or faster-moving birds the need for speed

increases. Each situation is different but as a starting point I would suggest the following minimum speeds:

- Gulls and other medium-sized birds: 1/2000.
- Swallows, martins and small passerines (e.g. flycatchers, chickadees etc): start at 1/3200 and be prepared to go up from there, especially if the bird is flying towards you.
- Hummingbirds: these are a special case. When they are hovering, the best images often show a fair amount of blur of the wings while the body remains stationary (and thus in sharp focus). The blur gives the impression of how fast their wingbeat really is—up to 80 beats per second.



Figure 46: Bank Swallow. 500mm, f/6.3, 1/3200 sec, ISO 500. (Anthony Kaduck)



Figure 47: Sapphire-spangled Emerald. 500mm, f/5.6, 1/1250 sec, ISO 4000. (Anthony Kaduck)

Technique

Even the fastest shutter speed won't guarantee a good image. You also need to be able to track the bird closely enough that your autofocus can achieve a lock. Modern cameras have fairly advanced abilities to achieve and maintain focus lock on a moving target, but you can help things out by developing and practicing good habits.

Tracking. When you are photographing a series of birds flying across your field of vision, the natural tendency is to aim at a bird as it approaches and then try to twist your body to track it along its line of flight. More experienced BIF photographers decide where they want the bird to be when they take the shot, considering background and proximity, and set their feet so that when the bird hits that point it is straight in front of them. This gives them the greatest control at the critical moment. They then wind their torso left or right to the point where the bird will first appear. It's a simple trick but it works. Figure 39 was shot using this method. A series of Short-billed Dowitchers were flying across a lagoon so it was possible to predict their movement and be set up for the side-on flight shot.

Burst Mode. Even the best autofocus system will struggle to keep a moving target constantly in sharp focus. There will always be moments when the focus wanders a bit before the system corrects itself. You can help ensure you come away with some sharp images by firing bursts rather than single frames. To do this, set your shutter release mode to Continuous Low or Continuous High and hold the shutter release down when the bird enters your target zone.

A side benefit of firing bursts is that it also gives you a better chance of acquiring an image where the bird is doing what you want it to do—looking towards you, holding its wings in a graceful manner, etc. Figures 48 to 54 show the unprocessed raw images of an Andean Gull. This short burst took less than one second but you can see the variety of shapes and wing positions during that span. Longer bursts increase the chances of getting the shot you really want.

Environment. You can also use the wind to your advantage. All else being equal, a bird flying into a headwind will be moving slower relative to the ground observer and thus easier to track.



Figure 48: Andean Gull series. 430mm, f/6.3, 1/1000 sec, ISO 320. (Anthony Kaduck)



Figure 51: Andean Gull series. 430mm, f/6.3, 1/1000 sec, ISO 320. (Anthony Kaduck)



Figure 49: Andean Gull series. 430mm, f/6.3, 1/1000 sec, ISO 320. (Anthony Kaduck)



Figure 52: Andean Gull series. 430mm, f/6.3, 1/1000 sec, ISO 320. (Anthony Kaduck)



Figure 50: Andean Gull series. 430mm, f/6.3, 1/1000 sec, ISO 320. (Anthony Kaduck)



Figure 53: Andean Gull series. 430mm, f/6.3, 1/1000 sec, ISO 320. (Anthony Kaduck)



Figure 54: Andean Gull series. 430mm, f/6.3, 1/1000 sec, ISO 320. (Anthony Kaduck)

Light

The use of fast shutter speeds significantly reduces the amount of light that reaches the camera's sensor. In practice this means that BIF photography in low-light conditions will necessitate high ISO values with the attendant problem of excessive noise. The best results tend to come when there is full daylight but without the harsh glare of the midday sun. Days that are brightly-lit but overcast can provide excellent conditions as overly-bright highlights will be less of a problem, but in this case you will want to have something in the background other than a pale grey sky.

And if you are shooting upwards on a bright day, for example at a soaring raptor, remember that exposure compensation is your friend. Increasing your exposure by a stop or two will avoid the dreaded underwing shadow and help you bring out the colour and detail of the bird's undersides.

Equipment

In most situations all you need to start experimenting with BIF photography is the camera you already have (DSLR or mirrorless) and a telephoto lens. For close range work, for example chickadees at Lemoine Point, a shorter telephoto in the 200mm range will work; otherwise, you should look for a lens of at least 300mm. My article in the September Blue Bill identified some good choices at various price levels.

The only caveat is that if you start to shoot in long bursts you may need to upgrade to a faster memory card.

If you become really enthusiastic about BIF then you may eventually want to look at a tripod with a gimbal mount. I may eventually head in this direction, but at the moment I

almost exclusively hand-hold my cameras, so I am not in a position to recommend specific options.

Practice

Like any other photography skill, your BIF photography will improve with practice. Fortunately you don't have to go far afield to work on your skills—nature has provided us with an ample supply of gulls, Feral Pigeons and Mallards that are abundant, easily found, and not too afraid of people. They are great subjects to work with as you start out on your BIF journey. Good shooting!

... and if you find all of this too easy, and you really want to drive yourself mad, there's always IIF—insects in flight. ☺



Figure 55: Forster's Tern. 500mm, f/6.3, 1/2500 sec, ISO 400. (Anthony Kaduck)



Figure 56: Grey-headed Albatross. 500mm, f/6.3, 1/1600 sec, ISO 200. (Anthony Kaduck)

7 KFN Outing Reports

7.1 Teen Naturalists Canoe Trip to Landon Bay, September 9, 2023

by Willis Mayers



Figure 57: Rusty \times Northern Clearwater Crayfish (*Faxonius rusticus* \times *propinquus*). (Peter Waycik)

On 9 September, the Teen Naturalists started out off the canoe launch at Landon's Bay. We paddled over to the far side of the bay and started to look at the wildlife. We spotted the rare Fawn Darner flitting around our heads then some minnows swam by. One was a Western Tubenose Goby.

As we started up the channel, we spotted a Great Blue Heron flying overhead. Further on, we saw a big cliff with grey lichen on it (Rock Tripe). We splashed it with water to see what colour it would be on the way back. On the way back, after soaking for a while, it had turned a greenish colour (allowing photosynthesis). As we moved on, we saw a Peregrine Falcon fly over us and land on a tree next to us. Half an hour later, we came to a little pond with a waterfall and had lunch.

After lunch we caught some crayfish and frogs, and rested in the shade. On the way back, we got some samples of duckweed and spotted some geese; then we paddled back to the boat dock. It was a trip I won't soon forget.



Figure 58: Peregrine Falcon. (Peter Waycik)



Figure 59: Teens engaged in catch and release of water-dwelling animals. (Peter Waycik)

7.2 To the Top of Blue Mountain!

or Report of Field Trip to Blue Mountain on 16 September 2023

by Janet Elliott

On a warm, partly cloudy day in mid-September, seven Kingston Field Naturalists met at the trailhead of the Blue Mountain Trail. The trailhead is located on Country Road 4, north of Mitchellville. Our focus on this field trip was **feath-**

ers and fungi.

We hiked north along an ATV trail and into the forest for more than three kilometres before we reached Charleston

Lake Provincial Park, and we found birds and fungi in the bushes and fields beside the track.



Figure 60: Beefsteak Polypore (*Fistulina hepatica*). (Janet and Bruce Elliott)



Figure 61: Coral Fungi (Genus *Clavaria*). (Janet and Bruce Elliott)

We poked along, admiring and trying to identify the fauna and flora and fungi that we observed. After several hours we contemplated returning to the cars, but Peter Waycik insisted that our trip to Blue Mountain was incomplete unless we hiked to the top. We continued. Eventually we reached what we considered to be the summit, but Peter insisted that we had to continue. We somewhat grudgingly followed him—at least at this point we were not climbing anymore. Eventually we arrived at the end of the trail and could appreciate why we had come so far. Thank you, Peter, for leading

us to the spectacular view from the top of Blue Mountain!

So, what **F's** did we see?

In the **Fauna** category we observed 16 species and 41 individual birds. Thank you to Janis Grant for making the following eBird list. The **Feathers** were: two Canada Geese, two Hooded Mergansers, one Great Blue Heron, five Turkey Vultures, one Downy Woodpecker, two Northern Flickers, one Eastern Wood-Pewee, seven Blue Jays, four American Crows, two Common Ravens, two Black-capped Chickadees, two White-breasted Nuthatches, one Gray Catbird, three Cedar Waxwings, five American Goldfinches, one Eastern Towhee, and one Indigo Bunting.



Figure 62: Cup Fungi (Genus *Peziza*). (Janet and Bruce Elliott)

Also in the **Fauna** list, we uncovered several Red-backed Salamanders. Some insects were noted. No ticks were found; perhaps they were keeping low to the ground to avoid desiccation. Lucky for us!

In the **Flora** category we noted Pitch Pine at the top of the mountain. Pitch Pine can survive in very poor conditions. There were few other tree species on the mountain top; however, there was a variety of shrubs including both Staghorn and Shining Sumac, Pin Cherry, some blueberry species and Black Chokeberry.



Figure 63: Dead Man's Fingers (*Xylaria polymorpha*). (Janet and Bruce Elliott)



Figure 64: Eyelash Cup (Genus *Scutellinia*). (Janet and Bruce Elliott)

Some **Fabulous Fungi** were found! Of the Sac Fungi (Ascomycota), we observed Dead Man's Fingers (*Xylaria polymorpha*), Yellow Fairy Cups (*Calycina citrina*), Ochre Jelly Club (*Leotia lubrica*), Cup Fungi (Genus *Peziza*) and Eyelash Cup (Genus *Scutellinia*). Basidiomycota (predominantly bracket fungi and mushrooms) were easily found. The most colourful ones that we observed were: several species of coral fungi (genus *Clavaria* and genus *Ramaria*), Eastern Black Trumpet (*Craterellus fallax*), Old-Man-of-the-Woods (*Strobilomyces strobilaceus*), Beefsteak Polypore (*Fistulina hepatica*), Painted Suillus (*Suillus spraguei*), Orange Jelly Spot (*Dacrymyces chrysospermus*) and waxcaps (Genus *Hygroclype*).

Among the fungi were **Fungi Friends**: lichens and slime molds. There are more than two dozen genus *Caldonia* lichens in our area, these include pixie cup lichens and reindeer lichens. We noted some of them. Slime molds were

not so obvious because of the dry weather, but we did note a Honeycomb Coral Slime Mold (*Ceratiomyxa frusticulosa*) on the side of a rotting log.



Figure 65: Orange Jelly Spot (*Dacrymyces chrysospermus*). (Janet and Bruce Elliott)



Figure 66: Painted Suillus (*Suillus spraguei*). (Janet and Bruce Elliott)

We arrived back at our cars at 3:00 p.m., happy that we had "summitted" but tired because we had walked about ten kilometres! If you have not visited the TOP of Blue Mountain, plan to do so next summer; it is well worth the trip.



Figure 67: Waxcaps (Genus *Hygrocybe*). (Janet and Bruce Elliott)



Figure 68: Yellow Fairy Cups (*Calycina citrina*). (Janet and Bruce Elliott)

7.3 Ramble to K&P Trail North of Unity Road, September 19, 2023

by Ron Hipfner



Figure 69: Green Stink Bug. (Kurt Hennige)

This ramble went north on the K&P trail from Unity Road. Ten people quickly split into a bird group that sprinted ahead and was lost from view by the plant group that positively dawdled.

The temperature was in the high teens and the wind varied

from nil to five kilometers per hour. Skies were cloudy to partly cloudy.

Twenty-five bird species (267 individuals) were identified by sight and sound and recorded into eBird by Janis Grant. Highlights included 150 Common Grackles and four species of warbler (Nashville, Northern Parula, Magnolia and Black-throated Green). Nothing unusual or exotic was noticed by the bird group.

The plant group, led by Anne Robertson, identified at least four dozen soft- and hard-stemmed plants ranging from trefoil to mighty oaks. Take our word for it—no one wrote them down! Distinguishing characteristics of the various elms, hickories and asters were pointed out. Anne tore apart an Evening Primrose seed pod to display both the seeds and a tiny insect that had taken refuge for the winter. There was a remarkable variety of plant life to observe.

Invasive species such as the Black Swallowwort or Dog-strangling Vine, Wild Parsnip and Purple Loosestrife were seen, but they were not in abundance. One section of the trail was littered with a hundred unmistakable acorns from the Mossy-cup Oak (aka Bur Oak).

We were aware of several coyotes because of their yipping not too distant from the trail. Only one was spotted fifty metres east of the trail, just south of the intersection with the

Rideau Trail by your author.

A Green Stink Bug was photographed for identification, Hickory Tussock Moth and Banded Tussock Moth caterpillars were identified and several moths were captured, photographed and pointed out.

No KFN members is believed to have ingested any of the

numerous unpalatable/toxic berries. The edibles were generally out of reach or already gleaned by the birds. A few members sampled apples that were years past their lives as domestic crops.

After three hours on the trail, walking as far as the Rideau Trail junction and back (2.29 km), we were ready for sustenance.

7.4 Teen Owl Banding Trip, September 29, 2023

by Anne Robertson

Five Teen Naturalists and one parent met in town to drive via the Glenora ferry to Prince Edward Point for an evening to learn about owls and the banding program at this location. It was about 20 years since the first teen owl banding trip and things have changed—a lot—but owls still migrate through the Point at this time of year.

After eating supper, and as it was not yet dark, we took a short walk around part of the bay to see what we could see. We looked at plants and fossils and some water birds.

Our bander for the evening was Ketha. The banding experience was started with an introduction to owls and their adaptations and the different species that have been banded at this site, using specimens from the KFN bird collection. We then went out to open the nets. When not in use (during the day) the nets are pulled down and fastened so no birds accidentally get caught. We returned to the base to discuss details and history of the banding station. After half an hour, we went out to check the nets to see what we had caught. Nothing! Returning to base we learned about the

measurements that are taken on each owl before it is banded. A form to fill in these details has been superseded by computer recording but the measurements are the same including weight, amount of fat, wing length, and age. Age is now observed with a black light which shows up the under wing feathers in bright pink. Different shades of pink for different aged feathers. Hatch year (HY) birds have all new wing feathers whereas after hatch year (AHY) birds have some feathers replaced.

After an hour we went out to check the nets again. Still no luck and in the end no owls were caught for another two weeks, probably due to the lateness of the fall temperature drop this year. Back at the base Ketha used a Saw-whet Owl skeleton to show us how the band was put on and to see the band number and information for returning found bands.

We returned on the 9:30 p.m. ferry to Kingston after a good trip though disappointed to have not seen any owls. Many thanks to Ketha for showing us the station and process.

7.5 Ramble to Foley Mountain, October 3, 2023

by Mary Carlson

Eight of us carpooled to Foley Mountain Conservation Area on a beautiful summer-like fall day. It is the highest conservation area in the Rideau Valley and overlooks Upper Rideau Lake and Westport. The fall colours were at their peak—a splendid sight. We were first intrigued by a beautiful floral display that appeared to be an Indigenous design.

Anne Robertson led us on a walk along several of the trails. There was an abundance of things to see: Giant Swallow-tail caterpillars showing off their red osmeteria, an Isabella

Tiger Moth caterpillar (woolly bear), and fascinating little green caterpillars. We were puzzled by the presence of three dead short-tailed shrews along the trails. They showed no signs of having been attacked or injured; we speculated that they may have been dehydrated due to the dry conditions in the area. We saw a Giant Millipede which Anne identified as a millipede by its two pairs of legs per segment. Three garter snakes slithered across our path.

We noticed several plants: Rock Polypody, Marginal Wood

Fern, Christmas Fern, a bracken, Round-lobed Hepatica, Partridgeberry, a thistle, Woodland Sunflower, and American Hog-peanut.



Figure 70: Intriguing floral display. (Mary Carlson)

Many trees and shrubs were seen: a red oak, a white oak, White Birch, Large-toothed Aspen, White Ash, White pine, Shagbark Hickory, Eastern Hop-Hornbeam, Eastern Red-cedar, Red and Sugar Maple, Prickly Ash and a buckthorn.

Ken Ross observed 15 species of bird: Canada Goose, Ring-billed Gull, Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle, Red-shouldered

Hawk, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Blue Jay, American Crow, Common Raven, Black-capped Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, American Robin, and Yellow-rumped Warbler.

We enjoyed the beautiful views from Spy Rock lookout while we lingered over lunch.

On our return drive to Kingston we took a slight detour past picturesque Bedford Mills. Across the millpond stood a Great Blue Heron with its wings outspread drying in the sunshine, it looked like a skirted statue.

It was a perfect day to be out appreciating what Fall in Ontario has to offer.

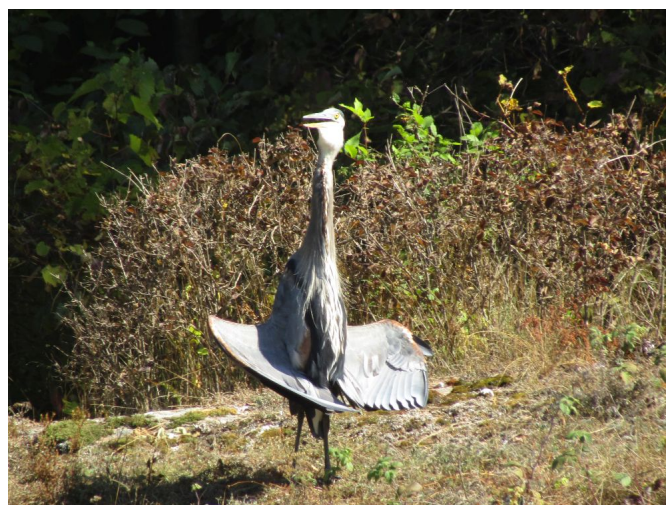


Figure 71: Great Blue Heron with upturned wings at Bedford Mills. (Jane Revell)

7.6 Ramble to Meisel Woods (Crow Lake), October 17, 2023

by Joan and Richard Worsfold

Eleven KFN members met at The Meisel Lake Conservation area which consists of 130-acres of excellent Precambrian Shield land donated to the Rideau Valley Conservation Foundation by John Meisel in 2000. It is a forested, natural area with plants, animals and landscape typical of the headwaters of the Tay and Upper Rideau watershed. The property surrounds a 60 acre headwaters lake known as Beaver or Bass Lake and includes additional water frontage on Crow Lake. Our lunch spot was high up above Crow Lake with a lovely view.

Our route followed the eastern shore of the lake, and we managed to leave the parking lot in record time! There

were a lot of oak trees in the woods; both red and white oaks. Young saplings were especially abundant. Ironwood, hemlock, Beech with marcescent leaves and Bigtooth Aspen were also observed. Several species of moss and lichen were present including a feather moss, a haircap moss and Reindeer Moss (a lichen). The latter is a favourite among 00 gauge model railway enthusiasts who use it to simulate trackside trees (thank you Mike). We saw several fairly large mossy areas. Some of the ferns present included Rock Polypody and Marginal Wood Fern. Sweetfern was also present but not a fern!. Turkey Tail and Jelly Spot fungi were identified as well as Wolf's Milk which is a type of acellular slime mold. Some of the plants observed were *Hepatica* sp. with

a variegated leaf, Large-leaved Aster, Wintergreen with a berry, Partridgeberry and False Solomon's Seal. A slug, a baby ladybug with no spots and an Autumn Meadowhawk were found. Possibly due to the lack of rain recently, we didn't find any mushrooms. Our geological member was quite excited to see some unusual magenta coloured secondary mineralization on a rock. It reminded him of cobalt bloom but he had not seen anything similar in Frontenac County before.



Figure 72: View from dock across Bass Lake. (Richard Worsfold)

Janis Grant kindly provided the following list of birds observed during the ramble one Ruffed Grouse; five Turkey Vultures; one Blue Jay; seven American Crows; one Com-

mon Raven; seven Black-capped Chickadees; five Ruby-crowned Kinglets; one Red-breasted Nuthatch; one Brown Creeper; and six Red-winged Blackbirds.



Figure 73: Coloured oak leaves with Reindeer lichen. (Richard Worsfold)

7.7 Fall Birds Field Trip on Howe Island, October 21, 2023

by Paul Mackenzie



Figure 74: Snapping Turtle hatchling. (Paul Mackenzie)

Coming onto Howe Island by the west ferry at 07:45, eight

participants in three cars were greeted by Peter Waycik, who became the leader since the original leader was unavailable.

It was a cloudy 14 °C, and after overnight rain, the fog lifted and the rain stopped. We enjoyed a fine walk along the Howe Island Trail where the leaves were quiet underfoot and the birds were active. Overhead, flocks of American Robins and Red-winged Blackbirds were heading west, while along the trail were Dark-eyed Juncos, several species of sparrow, including Fox Sparrows, and both kinglet species. This track goes east along the wooded spine of the island and is wide enough for a group to bird and chat side by each. This worked well since the group was a mix of fairly new and sea-

soned birders. We recorded 29 species there.

We next visited the Lighthouse and two outlooks along the south shore. There were small groups of Common Loons, Double-crested Cormorants, and Common Mergansers. Among the gulls were several Bonaparte's Gulls. A group of Yellow-rumped Warblers fed in the cedars and willows along the shore. We enjoyed some birds, such as a Belted Kingfisher through the spotting scopes.

Our final stop was at the east end ferry dock where Mute Swans, a Great Blue Heron and a Pied-billed Grebe was among the avifauna. The trip list which Peter kept on eBird was about 45 species. We enjoyed lunch there at the foot of the island whereupon Peter found a tiny cute Snapping Turtle in the grass. It looked as if it had just hatched and was cold and still. After some photos we warmed the turtle until it was more active and placed it in the cattails by the shore.

7.8 Ramble on Howe Island, November 7, 2023

by Mike Parry



Figure 76: Nannyberry. (Peter Waycik)

Seven KFN rambblers boarded, on foot, the 9:30 a.m. ferry to Howe Island to be met by island resident Peter “Uber” Waycik who shuttled them the 1.5 km ride to the Howe Island Trail carpark.

The baseline trail runs along an undeveloped road allowance which over years has led to the growth of a twenty-metre-wide strip of natural wood land between active farm land.

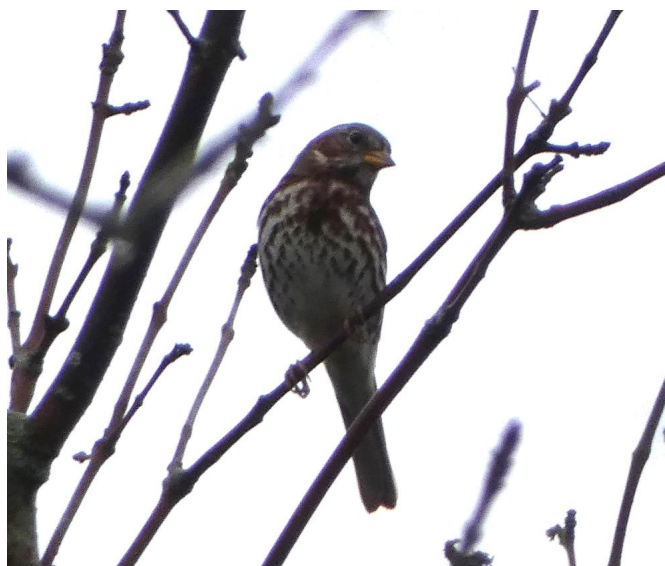


Figure 75: Fox Sparrow. (Paul Mackenzie)

We rambled slowly along the trail amongst alternating groves of Bur (mossy cup) Oak, Shagbark Hickory, Eastern Cottonwoods, red oaks, Bigtooth Aspen and a single stand of surviving White Ash, interspersed with occasional White Spruce, Rock (cork) Elm, Eastern Hop-hornbeam (ironwood), Sugar Maple and Basswood still showing their dangling seeds attached to dispersal enhancing bracts.

With most leaves now windblown it became a very berry day with many shrubs laden with unharvested crops of fruit. We recognized the berries of Grey Dogwood (white), Canada Holly (winterberry) (red), Bittersweet (red), High-bush Cranberry (red), tasty wild grape (black/purple) and the ubiquitous buckthorn (black). We paused to inspect Nannyberry (blue/black) noting the distinctively recognizable pointed leaf buds and swollen flower buds.

A number of native plants were logged along to trail including Common Hemp-Nettle still in full purple flower, aptly named Bottle Brush Grass, hollow stemmed jewelweed, bush honeysuckle, the fascinatingly named Clustered Black Snakeroot, numerous species of aster and goldenrod and the always impressive three-metre-tall wild lettuce.

Lacking a fungi expert on the day, we only identified Wolf's Milk and obligingly named (horse) Hoof Fungus. Both were

growing on fallen white birch—the only birch we noted were decaying.

The birders in the group turned the ramble into more of a 5.5 km round walk to the end of the trail observing 17 species.

The group was shuttled back to catch the 12:30 p.m. ferry.

Your author would like thank Peter for introducing me to my first Howe Island visit.

Also, our thanks go out to Anne, our ramble leader, who somehow arranged for the forecasted rainfall to hold off until we were disembarked dry and on our way home. How does Anne do it?

Bird Species List: Ring-billed Gull, Red-tailed Hawk, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Wood pecker, Merlin, Blue Jay, American Crow, Common Raven, Black-capped Chickadee,

Golden-crowned Kinglet, White-breasted Nuthatch, European Starling, American Robin, Cedar Waxwing, American Tree Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Northern Cardinal.



Figure 77: Winterberry Holly. (Peter Waycik)

7.9 Teen Naturalists Woodlot Biodiversity Trip, November 11, 2023

by Beckett Robertson



Figure 78: Teens digging aspen trees to examine long root systems. (Anne Robertson)

On Saturday, November 11, four Teen Naturalists gathered at the property of Carolyn Bonta and Michael Johnson—the Back 40 Forest. It was a cool, cloudy day, but prior to our excursion we warmed up in Carolyn and Michael's heated tent at their campsite. Here, we discussed the plan for our trip before heading out into the woods. First, we learned how to identify cone-bearing trees, and eventually drew a dichotomous key in order to successfully identify them. As we traveled, we learned the many ways to identify the various conifers on the property, including trees like Eastern White pine, Red Pine, Eastern Hemlock, Balsam Fir, and cedars.

Carolyn and Michael then took us to the North Pond, passing a homestead on the property as we walked. Eventually, we arrived at the sandpit area. We could see the remains of old trails that were beginning to become overgrown in the sandpit and the open area that was gradually becoming reforested by white pines and aspen. We dug up several of these trees to see how their root systems differed, noting the branched threadlike roots of the young white pine and the long interconnected root systems of the aspens—that were all genetically identical. We then passed a woody area filled with conifers where we took a cylindrical tree core from an Eastern Hemlock. We later examined the hemlock core and counted the rings determining that the tree must have been

around 50 years old in spite of its relatively thin trunk.

We were introduced to the invasive Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA), a plant-sucking hemipteran hailing from East Asia that had begun to impact native hemlock populations.

We then visited a small area of forest that had been filled with maple trees. Here, we took note of the most noticeable tree—called the “mother maple.” We measured it with diameter tape to determine that the tree had a diameter at breast height (DBH) of a whopping 112.4 cm.

We also observed a number of bird species in the woods, including a Great Blue Heron, three Blue Jays, two American Crows, ten Black-capped Chickadees, five Golden-crowned Kinglets, a White-breasted Nuthatch, and an American

Goldfinch.

After this, we returned to the tent where we drew our conifer dichotomous key and tasted Carolyn’s cedar tea with maple syrup and black raspberries. In the tent, we noticed several Asian Lady Beetles which had gathered there for warmth and a mosquito of the genus *Anopheles*. In the tent, we also filled in our field notebooks including a map of the property.

We would like to offer special thanks to Carolyn Bonta and Michael Johnson for making this such an incredible educational experience by guiding us through their property and teaching us about local species. We would also like to thank Anne Robertson for making these experiences possible and for sharing her invaluable knowledge of the natural world with us.

7.10 Snow Goose Prowl, November 18, 2023

by Gary Hillaby



Figure 79: Lift off! (Sam Cheng)

Our meeting spot for this field trip was at the carpool lot at 401 and Highway 15. Eight KFN members formed a convoy of three vehicles and headed east. The plan was to get off the 416 early so we could search open corn fields on the way to Winchester. In Winchester, we met up with two more KFN members (Peter and Tammy) and proceeded out of town. After passing the Winchester sewage lagoons, we noticed large flocks of geese flying to the north of us but they were too far away to determine the species of goose. I thought it might be worth going one concession north and check it out. Tammy noticed a large flock of Snow Geese had circled around behind us and landed in a field that we had just surveyed. Peter

called and said we should return to this area which we did.



Figure 80: KFN members observing and taking photos. (Gary Hillaby)

This original flock of four thousand Snow Geese had chosen this large open field as their meeting place and were calling all others to join the meeting. We stayed at this spot for over forty-five minutes watching wave after wave of white circle then come in for final approach. It was raining Snow Geese but no need for umbrellas. You could see a multitude of blue morphs and immatures both in the air and on the ground. While we were taking it all in, a local resident came out and shot off a shotgun twice. This noise caused the original flock to take to the air and simply move and settle in the adjoining

field. Fortunately we did not see any downed birds so I'm not sure what was the motivation behind this gun play. We estimated that the flock had ballooned to over twenty thousand birds. We climbed back into our vehicles amazed at what we had just witnessed.

The sewage lagoons in Crysler were next but very few bird species were present. I decided not to go to Moose Creek, so we went to Chesterville for an early lunch. Our departure from the restaurant provided our crew with another encounter with a small flock of Snow Geese flying over the parking lot. We headed south to Ingleside, Ontario.

Since we had shortened our original route, this allowed us some extra time to do some exploring in Ingleside. According to eBird reports, people were seeing a Purple Gallinule

in this area of the St. Lawrence. Our convoy converged on Farran Park and then walked the trails to see what birds we could see. A Peregrine Falcon gave us a flyover but the Purple Gallinule eluded us because of some aggressive birders that walked the trails earlier. We finished our outing at the Upper Canada Migratory Bird Sanctuary.

Our Snow Goose Prowl can be summed up in one word: incredible! This was my first experience with a "mega flock" and with this beautiful region of eastern Ontario. I realize when targeting one species on a field trip, your outing could be a hit or miss situation. Luckily, the geese made the day memorable, and our encounter could very well be a once in a lifetime event. I'd like to thank all the members who participated and thanks for the memory.

7.11 Ramble to Collins Creek Woods, November 21, 2023

Compiled by Anne Robertson; Contributions by Jackie Bartnik, Carla Baetz, and Louise Langlais

Seventeen KFN members met on a chilly morning on Taylor Kidd Blvd. west of Collins Creek. Several new members joined us to ramble in the Collins Creek Woods. Participants were reminded that rambles are a sharing of nature information and anyone with input about the natural features we pass is encouraged to let us know about them. The expected muddy trails were frozen making travel easier. We walked along the top of the ridge through woods with limestone bedrock evident and some open areas, and eventually down towards the creek and back along a lower path. There were a number of dog walkers but the area is big enough for all of us. We walked between three and four kilometres.

The group quickly divided into two equal groups—the "birders" and the "everything else" group. The birders walked a slightly larger loop getting right to the creek.

Kathy and other birders recorded 15 species on eBird. There were four species of woodpecker and 20 American Robins observed. The following species were listed: Canada Goose, Mallard, Ring-billed Gull, Great Blue Heron, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Pileated Woodpecker, Blue Jay, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, American Robin, American Goldfinch.

The other group travelled more slowly covering less ground and finding many interesting things in addition to those

recorded here.

Jackie reported on trees and herbaceous plants:

The Ramble at Collins Creek Woods was very interesting with a lot to observe. Anne let the newest members know that the Rambles are where we share all our observations and discuss items. As we walked into the woods, we noticed a large variety of trees. Anne showed us a sample of White Spruce and how we can tell it was a spruce. We saw White Pine, Balsam Fir, Eastern White Cedar, Shagbark Hickory, White Ash, Red Oak, Mossy Cup Oak (Nancy showed us a wonderful example of the leaf), Sugar Maple, Eastern Hop-hornbeam, American Beech and Basswood to name a few. As we walked along the trail, we noticed that the soil was thin, and limestone rock was very visible—like on an alvar. We noticed around the beech trees there was a parasitic brown plant called Beech Drops that feeds off the roots of these trees. We saw Canada Anemone in seed form, Sharp-lobed Hepatica leaves which were very green, leaves of Foam Flower, a Common Plantain seed head, leaves of Common Strawberry, Queen Anne's Lace (alien), Dog-strangling Vine (invasive plant), tall Flat-topped White Aster and several other asters, Canada Goldenrod, Zig-zag Goldenrod, several types of sedge and grass that "like to be" in a wooded area, berries of Blue Cohosh and Marginal Fern, Christmas Fern, and several types of mosses and lichens. As we finished our walk and walked along the fence, we noticed dandelion

plants, raspberry shrubs still with leaves, Garlic Mustard (invasive plant) and Wild Parsnip (invasive plant). The day was great and the freezing rain and snow did not appear until we ended our walk.

Carla learned to recognize some ferns. Here is her fern paragraph:

Among the golden leaves of autumn, up sprout beautiful green fern fronds intermittently dotting the forest floor. But not all ferns are the same. We must look closely to note the difference. Gently turning over the fronds from the first type of fern, and looking at the divisions of the frond called pinnales, we see that there are tiny brown spots (sporangia containing spores) that dot the perimeter of the pinnule. Because the dots are on the margin of the underside of the pinnule, we can remember that this is the Marginal Wood Fern. Not far up the path we spotted a different type of fern that sports pinnules that look like tiny Christmas stockings. Fittingly, this fern is known as the Christmas Fern.

Louise taught us about fungi:

Many people think that they won't see any mushrooms (fungi) once the cold weather arrives. Today's Ramble with the KFN showed us differently, and that being a mycophile makes for interesting nature walks year-round!

Here are a few of the interesting fungi we saw:

1. **Resinous Polypore.** This is a gorgeous polypore, with a large fan shape, and a lovely velvety surface. It flushes in the fall. It usually grows in small groupings, with one stacked on top of its fellow fungi. The surface colour is mainly a deep rich brown, but if you look closely, you will see other bands of colour. When this fungus is fresh, it may be seen oozing some drops of reddish-brown fluid, hence its name. Unlike the Turkey Tail fungus, it is several millimetres thick and very fleshy, almost soft. The pores on the under surface are white when the fungus is young, but turn brown as it ages. This mushroom is edible when young, and is called Beef of the Woods by some foragers.
2. **False Turkey Tail.** This fungus is also a polypore. It is quite thin, and has lovely bands of colour on the top. It is fan-shaped, and grows in rows and layers on decaying logs. How can you tell it apart from the true Turkey Tail? False Turkey Tail does not have small white pores on the lower surface, but rather a smooth surface that is usu-

ally pale yellowish-beige. Fungi in the *Trametes* family have medicinal properties; there are many clinical studies proving this, so it's not pseudo-science nor just anecdotal reports.



Figure 81: Turkey-Tail upperside. (Peter Waycik)



Figure 82: Turkey-Tail underside showing pores. (Peter Waycik)

3. **Brick Caps.** This edible mushroom has brick-red caps that are convex when young but flattened when older. The ones we found were definitely older and partially frozen. The gills are dark gray when young, and purple tinged when older. This mushroom is edible, but can be mistaken for its poisonous relative the Sulfur Tuft, so it is not a fungus for the inexperienced forager. The spore print is purple brown for both.
4. **Artist's Conk.** The Mushroom Expert web page describes this fungus better than I can: "Distinguishing features for *Ganoderma applanatum* include its unvarnished, furrowed and lumpy, dull brown cap surface; its white to grayish pore surface, which bruises brown; and its woody, brownish or cinnamon flesh." The pore surface of Artist's Conk can be scored or painted to create lovely pieces of art. It starts off in a horse hoof-like shape but becomes more flat as it gets bigger. It can be up to 30 cm across and 8 cm thick.

Louise has printed a mushroom identifier guide for the Friends of Frontenac Park. This can be acquired at the Park office for a minimum \$2 donation to the Friends of Frontenac Park.

Mike remembered seeing a Witch's Broom along the lower trail last time we were here a couple of years ago. Sure enough it was still there. A Witch's Broom is an extraordinary growth on trees resulting in bunches of stem, leaf or root growing from one point on the tree. This deformity may be caused by micro-organisms, so technically it might be called a gall. It may be caused by a fungus, a virus, bacteria or an insect. A witches broom does not tend to have an impact on the long term health of the tree. This naturally occurring deformity is an interesting feature.

Peter spotted one lepidopteran and managed to photograph it. A Bruce Spanworm Moth.

Janet's searching was rewarded when she uncovered a small Red-backed Salamander under a log. A real surprise at this late date. Janet's careful observing, where most of us fail to look, frequently rewards her with different species!

So much to observe and so little time! This was a good "sharing" ramble.



Figure 83: Bruce Spanworm Moth. (Peter Waycik)

Cecropia

by Rick Bortolotti

Big bugs.

What better a marriage proposal gift?

There is none for a six year old boy than the biggest daddy long legs.

Ever.

Captured with tender care a pilfered mason jar once meant for antipasto now its new home
we proposed to each other I think, Tammy and I, it doesn't matter
staring into the spider's glass house lying on our bellies chins veed in our hands
toes bounce tapping on her stoop not knowing we didn't know
the proper care for the symbol of our love.
It was not Triscuits and butter.

Fifty years on Alix calls to me from the end of our backyard

LOOK!!

I go to see, WHAT??

She moves a vine leaf and OH! we say together

it's the most beautiful

it looks like silk

its shape alluring putting anything Hermès to shame not ever thinking it could be, could it?

It is, silk.

And we wonder what could make a perfect brown silk purse and stick it to our fence.

So, maybe not learning a thing

I got out my screw gun

made a birch bark roof for its winter rest

Kingston Field Naturalists

Objectives

The Kingston Field Naturalists (KFN) is a nature club and charitable organization, active since 1949. 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.

Nature Reserves

The Kingston Field Naturalists manages three nature reserves in order to protect important habitat and allow for connections with nature.

Helen Quilliam Sanctuary at Otter Lake

A 199-hectare (492-acre) property of mixed forest located in the Canadian Shield in the Township of South Frontenac. Members may access the property using any of the established trails.

Martin Edwards Nature Reserve

A 77-hectare (191-acre) property of fields and marshland located on the southeast shore of Amherst Island. Members may access the property through a single trail along the south shore.

Sylvester-Gallagher Nature Reserve

An 37-hectare (92-acre) parcel of forest and grassland that is adjacent to the Martin Edwards Nature Reserve. Access is restricted.

Conservation and Education

The KFN actively carries out conservation efforts of its own and supports those of other organizations. Issues such as parks creation, wildlife habitat protection, public environmental policy, and environmental welfare are of ongoing concern to the KFN. The Club takes public positions on local issues affecting the preservation of our natural heritage.

Be a Contributor!

This edition of *The Blue Bill* could have contained your article, photo, nature sketch, report, puzzle, quiz, conundrum, cartoon, or other contribution (if it did, many thanks)!

Submission Guidelines:

Submit the **text of your article** in Word, Open Document Format (.odt), or Plain Text.

If your article includes a **table**, send it as a separate document in Excel, Open Document Format (.ods), or CSV even if it is contained in your text document.

Send images as separate files (e.g. png, jpg, gif) even if they are included in your text document. Please “attach” them to the email.

Crop images to show the subject and ensure they are a **minimum of 1000 px** wide for a column width photo and 2000 px wide for a page width photo.

Include a **caption and credit or attribution** for each image.

Verify common and scientific names with an up-to-date curated resource such as iNaturalist.ca.

Send submissions to the editor:

editor@thebluebill.ca

by the first of the month of publication (i.e., March 1, June 1, September 1, or December 1).





Kingston Field Naturalists

Box 831

Kingston ON K7L 4X6

<https://kingstonfieldnaturalists.org>