

NDN Christmas Bird Counts: Results

Sat Dec. 5th Christmas Bird Count for Kids. Nonquon E.E.C., Port Perry

The Christmas Bird Count for Kids (CBC4Kids) was established in 2007 in Sonoma Valley California, by Sonoma Birding, and is now conducted annually across North America. Bird Studies Canada has been the Canadian partner in this Citizen Science program since 2010. North Durham Nature's CBC4Kids was held at the Nonquon Environmental Education Centre on December 6th. Three families attended this year's count, for a total of 9 participants. A short presentation was given on how to identify different winter birds by their field marks, and young participants were introduced to binocular use. A hike through this wetland property resulted in 10 species being counted: 4 Downy Woodpecker, 2 Hairy Woodpecker, 1 Brown Creeper, 30 Cedar Waxwing, 28 Black-capped chickadee, 3 American Gold Finch, 1 American Crow, 3 White-breasted nuthatch, 1 Northern Cardinal, and 3 Bluejay. These results have been submitted to eBird Canada and shared with the CBC4Kids national database. Chickadee feeding along the hike was a highlight for all participating in this event. A cup of hot chocolate finished off the day for these new young birders.

Sat Oct 17 In Search of the Cavity Nesters. North Walker Woods

Hike Lead by Mark Stabb

A small but mighty group joined Mark Stabb on a guided hike of North Walker Woods, with a focus on forest geriatrics and flying squirrel habitat. We explored the world of trees once they reach the end of their green life. Dead trees (alias chicots) and downed logs provide important habitat features in forests, and North Walker Woods has a healthy supply. The search for tree cavities turned up a variety of nest holes, of various sizes, that were likely made by Pileated Woodpeckers, Northern Flickers and Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers. Once abandoned, those holes become potential homes for cavity-nesting wildlife such as flying squirrels. Mark found a flying squirrel, most likely a Southern Flying Squirrel earlier in the morning while scouting the hike, but unfortunately the squirrel was not present (or not cooperating) when the group examined the tree together. Overall it was a fine fall day for a walk in the forest.

Sat Sept 19 Invasive Species Walk. Uxbridge Countryside Preserve.

Hike Lead by Derek Connelly and Cara Gregory

Despite a rainy night and threats of thunderstorm activity ten people joined Cara Gregory and I for a dry walk through the Preserve. We started with a few invasive plants I had extracted from my garden to get our observation skills warmed up and show people how to use the Invasive Plant guide. We identified Gout Weed, Periwinkle and Garlic Mustard which many have growing in Uxbridge gardens. Returning the plants to my sealed garbage bag in my car we then ventured into the Preserve to see what other invasives were growing. We made a number of stops identifying both native, alien and invasive plants with Cara giving us a definition of each term. Cara had a number of identification cards for the invasives including the insect pests like the Emerald Ash Borer and the Beech Scale insect and fungus attacking our trees. Most were able to identify the Dog Strangling Vine, Buckthorn, Norway Maple and Scots Pine we found in the preserve. A small number of monarchs were observed on the many common milkweeds, and evidence of a caterpillar was found on one milkweed plant. A number of plants were keyed out using flower photographs in the Audubon guide and Paul had a plant book with a key based on structure which was also helpful. As noon approached so did the black thunderclouds but thankfully we all returned without getting wet.

Many thanks to Barb, Cathy, Coral, Donna, Ken, Lynne, Paul, Pippa, Rebecca, and Serenity for joining us and sharing their knowledge.