

Free at Last *A Good News Story!*

by Geoff Carpentier

My faithful readers will know that I write a newspaper column called *Walk Softly* for the Standard Newspaper (published every second Thursday) about natural history subjects of local or broad interest. A recent column focussed on an adventure where I had the good fortune to receive a call from local Scugog Councillor Betty Somerville asking me to assist with a wonderful good news event. Here's a summary of the story in case you missed it:

Councillor Somerville and her husband Len found an injured Red-tailed Hawk along a roadside in Scugog

Township near their farm. Len cautiously approached the bird and placed a coat over it to calm it. They knew they needed to act fast as the injuries appeared severe, so they

drove to the Scugog Animal Hospital, where Erin Forget, a Registered Veterinary Technician, examined the bird. Clear signs of trauma were noted and the bird appeared weak, spastic and had trouble holding its head and wings in place. After some preliminary x-rays, it was confirmed that the bones were undamaged – lucky! Soft tissue damage and trauma could be dealt with, but not at the vet clinic.

So the bird was carefully bundled up and sent off to Pefferlaw, where Gail Lenters of Shades of Hope Wildlife Refuge, a privately run wildlife rehabilitation centre,

and Dr. Sherry Cox of the National Wildlife Centre in Caledon East took over the care. Their examination and x-rays likewise confirmed that the bird didn't have any broken bones, but was traumatized, had suffered severe bruising and exhibited some neurological signs of head trauma, but no permanent harm was expected. Slight bleeding in the eye and an

inability to perch added to the treatment considerations. The hawk was very thin - an indication that it hadn't learned how to hunt effectively. A few days after treatment



Young Red-tailed Hawk shortly after its release

began, the bird was eating well and starting the long road to recovery. Once Gail was satisfied that the damage had been repaired, the swelling had subsided, the balance re-established and the bird was gaining weight, it was transferred to Sandy Pines Wildlife Centre in Napanee, where Sue

was a U-tube flop. Heading straight for the barn, it tried to land on the roof, but it was a metal roof and it was slippery! Instead of perching safely and then leisurely taking time to get its bearings, panic set in as the hawk slid down the slick surface, as if on a toboggan. Realizing the peril, we watched in



Meech took over the rehab. A large flight pen allowed the hawk time and space to hunt and gain full wing strength. After about two weeks, off he went back to Pefferlaw for the final stages of treatment and then back to Betty and Len. On February 20th, we released the bird at their Scugog farm, near where the bird had been found in December. Resting on the bed of their pick-up, the hawk cowered in the transport cage for a few moments and soon flew out of the cage, circled over our heads, panicked some pigeons on the barn and then tried to land in the wild for the first time in almost two months. But the landing

was anxious anticipation but the hawk took care of his own fate and lifted off, circled again and this time landed safely in a tree. As it preened, it searched the area for landmarks it knew.

In the distance, another Red-tailed Hawk flew past, not seeing our little guy, but he saw it! Maybe, if it is a female, he will have a family of his own this year. I suspect the first lesson he will teach his young is to avoid those big shiny cars that can hurt you and the second is don't land on metal roofs!

Thank-you so much to Betty, Len, Erin, Sue, Sherry and Gail for caring so much about our wild things!

All these organizations rely on donations and public funding to support the great work they do. Please consider supporting them when deciding on your gift-giving choices.

For more information or if you need help with a wild animal:

Shades of Hope Wildlife Refuge -
www.shadesofhope.ca

By the way, Shades of Hope is holding a fund-raising golf tournament on July 14, 2017 at 269 Durham Regional Road 8, Uxbridge, Ontario, L9P 1R1.

National Wildlife Centre -
www.nationalwildlifecentre.ca

Sandy Pines Wildlife Centre -
www.sandypineswildlife.org

Please remember that your good intentions may not always be the best option. If you find a wild bird or mammal don't always presume it needs your help. A baby bird fallen from the nest may be just fine if left alone. Wild birds can be very stressed when injured so it is critical to first decide if you can catch it without causing further harm or if you should seek help from a professional. Injured animals on the other hand need help and often the best action you can take is to call someone like Gail, Sherry, Sue or Erin to seek advice and then decide what to do. If harm is imminent then you should act quickly, but always be cautious in your

zeal. Never ever try to keep wild animals as pets. It is illegal without special permits and never advantageous to the animal. Their place is in the wild. But whatever you do, if you find an animal in distress, thank-you so much for even caring enough to try to help.

Logo Contest

North Durham Nature needs a Logo! And we want you to help us design it. Don't worry if you can't draw very well, just give us a sketch and if your submission is chosen, we'll have it prettied up by a local artist! So here's what you do:



Contest Rules:

1. Contest is open to any member of NDN or their extended family.
2. The logo should be submitted in hard copy on letter-sized paper or as a scan that can be emailed.
3. The logo should consist of original artwork and not be a copy.
4. The logo should be handed in at an NDN meeting or emailed to: james.kamstra@aecom.com no later than June 15, 2017
5. A prize (yet to be determined) will be awarded to the winner.
6. The winning logo will become the property of North Durham Nature to be used on the website, newsletter, letterhead or wherever the organization sees fit without any further compensation to the artist.
7. The logo can include one or more species of plant or animal that

characterizes the nature of North Durham.

8. The logo should be clearly distinct from logos of other organizations.
9. The artist must provide a verbal description of the logo and its significance in the context of North Durham with the application.
10. The various submissions will be presented to members attending the June NDN meeting.
11. Members present at that meeting will be able to vote for their preferred logo by secret ballot. Subject to Board approval, the logo, which receives the most votes, will become the NDN Logo.

NDN is going to Cuba!

North Durham Nature Tour to Cuba in Winter 2018

Remember hearing about the trip to Colombia in January 2016, attended by a number of NDN members and lead by Geoff Carpentier? Remember all those birds, exotic tropical landscapes and wonderful experiences? Well there is another trip planned for the winter 2018 with priority given to NDN members, this time to Cuba and under the guidance of James Kamstra.

Vinales – western Cuba



Cuba has long been a favourite winter destination for Canadians. But it is also a fantastic nature destination for there are picturesque landscapes with many endemic birds and animals found nowhere else in the world. It also has retained a unique historic character. The trip will visit several of the prime natural hotspots of the island nation. These include Viñales National Park in the Sierra de los Organos which is characterized by surreal, limestone knolls, with vertical walls and rounded tops. And the vast Zapata Swamp, similar to the Everglades National Park, supporting many of the same species but also others found nowhere else in the world including the Zapata Sparrow. Then the trip will move on to the forest covered Escambray Mountains in the middle of Cuba. The tour will primarily be a nature tour, to experience the diverse wildlife but will also take in some of the cultural highlights.



Cuban Grassquit

The Cuba tour is being setup with a Cuban nature tour company, but there are a few final touches to be worked out. It is planned for the end of February 2018. Stay tuned for the final details including itinerary and costs.

Local News

Uxbridge Countryside Preserve Nest Box Report 2016

by Derek Connelly

North Durham Nature has coordinated the maintenance and monitoring of bird boxes in the Preserve since 2008. Our local 1st Uxbridge Scout troop has assisted annually with replacement, maintenance and predator control modifications. In 2014, several of the boxes were removed and some replaced by sturdier boxes. In 2015, predator control technology was implemented and in 2015 and 2016, local Countryside Preserve trail users volunteered to assist in the monitoring the boxes, enabling a more accurate analysis of the use of the boxes and bird production. The table below shows nest box usage during the period 2013 -16.

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016
# Boxes	45	25	25	25
Tree Swallows	14	15	20	21
Eastern Bluebird	4	4	2	4
Black-capped Chickadee	0	1	2	0
House Wren	17	10	6	4

Note: Numbers of each species means pairs nesting in a box, which does not imply success.

This year there was a slight increase in the numbers of Tree Swallows and Eastern Bluebirds using the boxes. Bluebirds and House Wren numbers appear to be remaining low perhaps influenced by the predator control devices on the boxes. This year we documented bluebirds fledging a

second brood. Actual fledged birds recorded were 61 Tree Swallows, 21 Eastern Bluebirds and 16 House Wrens. It appears the maximum number of nesting bluebird pairs the Preserve can hold is four, one in each meadow. Tree Swallows appear to be increasing in number which is in contrast to Canadian trends for aerial insectivores. Additional boxes could be added for Tree Swallows however 2013 records indicate this may have increased wren populations instead. Wren nesting usually takes place after swallows although usage by wrens increases if boxes are placed too close to trees and shrubs.

Continued removal of Scots Pine and enhancement of the meadow habitat will assist Tree Swallow and Eastern Bluebird success. Bird boxes are an artificial home which we create to compensate for the loss of natural cavities caused by human activities. The bird box program helps connect users of the Preserve to the wildlife found here and should be continued. North Durham Nature is pleased to work with the Township of Uxbridge on this project. This year special thanks go to the group I call the Bird Box Buddies - the six individuals and their families who have adopted the caretaking of the Preserve's birds and boxes.

Lafarge - Regan Pit, Uxbridge – 3-year Nest Box Summary

by Derek Connelly

In 2013 North Durham Nature Club became aware of habitat restoration activities at Lafarge's Regan Pit on Concession Road 7 and was willing to assist. The club arranged a meeting with Lafarge and offered to provide advice on a bird nest box program, to encourage the nesting of birds, specifically Eastern

Bluebird and Tree Swallow. At the club's recommendation, Lafarge purchased and installed 50 nest boxes and donated \$500 for a three year monitoring program from Nov 2013 to Nov 2016. Members of the club volunteered each year recording species of bird nesting, number of eggs or young, fatalities and if fledging had occurred.

Nest Box Usage at Regan Pit

Year	2014	2015	2016
Tree Swallow	19	25	29
Eastern Bluebird	5	7	9
House Wren	0	2	0
Black -capped Chickadee	1	0	1
Total Number of Boxes	48	48	48
Total Occupied Boxes	25	34	39
% of Occupied Boxes	52%	71%	81%

Note: Numbers represent bird boxes (not birds) with active nesting activity and fledged young.

Over the three years, the success of the program became obvious as more birds utilized the boxes, increasing from 52% to 81% over the period. The actual number of fledged birds produced in 2016 from the 39 boxes was 97 Tree Swallows, 19 Eastern Bluebirds and 5 Black-capped Chickadees. While weather conditions varied over the three years, 2016 was drier and more favourable for bird nestling survival. Reforestation and the growth of trees will change habitat conditions in the future, but at present the conditions are still favourable for Tree Swallows and Eastern Bluebirds. We recommended that Lafarge continue the nest box program for another three years. A meeting is to be arranged to discuss North Durham Nature's future part in the natural restoration of this area.

The Brook Never Sleeps

by Mark Stabb

Uxbridge youth event recognized by international nature conservation body

Dozens of young people braved chilly winter winds during the March Break to explore their local stream during *The Brook Never Sleeps*, a free annual educational event held in Uxbridge, Ontario. North Durham Nature (NDN) sponsors this free annual event and NDN members have volunteered and helped organize the event since it started 7 years ago. The local event has been a success, so much so that it was recently recognized by the global “#NatureforAll” program of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), which promotes and profiles efforts to connect young people, everywhere, with the natural world that is all around them.

“It’s great to give young people the chance to connect with nature in their community,” said Uxbridge Youth Centre (UYC) Program Facilitator Dale McKnight. “And it is really thrilling to see our local program



recognized on a global scale!”

Hundreds of youth have investigated the shores, waters and aquatic life of Uxbridge Brook since the Uxbridge Youth Centre and the Uxbridge Watershed Advisory Committee (UWAC) first organized *The Brook Never Sleeps* in 2011. The program hub is actually the Town Hall Council Chambers, which is offered free for some of the indoor programming. The field work takes place in and around Uxbridge Brook and a tributary that run through Centennial Park, in downtown Uxbridge. This year the young people enjoyed a creekside hike, scientific demonstrations about water and hands-on outdoor demonstrations about creek ecology. A highlight was the streamside sampling of minnows and aquatic insects, with the young people shoulder-to-shoulder with biologists and stream conservation experts.

Some of the species encountered – in the birding world they would be “lifers” for most of the young people – included caddisfly and stonefly larvae, Creek Chub, Longnose Dace and the striking Brook Stickleback.

Later the youth visited displays about frogs, turtles and endangered species and they also tried their hand at fly-tying, as part of an introduction to the wonders of fly-fishing.

“Streams and rivers run through the heart of so many of our communities,” said Andrea Gynan, Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority staffer and UWAC liaison. “*The Brook Never Sleeps* is an annual reminder to young people and all of



us, that the local brook remains part of our community and is part of the natural fabric of the town.”

Alongside the UYC and UWAC, the day was supported by Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority, Metro Toronto Zoo, North Durham Nature, Ontario Nature, Ontario Streams, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and Trout Unlimited. The Town of Uxbridge is a key contributor to the event.

The Uxbridge Youth Centre, opened its doors in 2008 to youth ages 11 and up. The UYC offers drop-in hours that allow young people in the community to convene, use the internet, access resources and delve into music and art. *The Brook Never Sleeps* was partly inspired by the fact that Uxbridge Brook runs directly under the Youth Centre, in a culvert underneath the downtown – it was a natural connection. The UYC is planning a follow-up stream cleanup on Earth Day, Saturday, April 22, 2017. Watch the North Durham Nature website and Facebook page for more information!

The Owls Came Down for Dinner!

by Geoff Carpentier



Every few years northern owls make an appearance in southern Canada, and although it took some time, they did finally make it here in good numbers. To date Snowy (at least 5 individuals), several Northern Saw-whet, a few Long-eared, at least one Short-eared, several Great Horned and many Barred Owls put on a good show in Durham. A smattering of Eastern



Screech Owls and most exciting at least 3 Great Gray owls showed up. Albeit the



latter were elusive and didn't stay long. Now to be fair, many of these come every winter or simply live here, but nonetheless they are quite mobile and usually are fleeing food shortages in their sojourns to our door and it is always nice to see them! Here are a few photos I took of a few of the visitors this winter ... Great Gray Owl (upper left), Northern Saw-whet Owl (above), Barred Owl (lower left) and Snowy Owl (below).



Kid's Corner

by Cara Gregory

The arrival of spring marks the awakening of many animals that have been hibernating or in a deep winter sleep (torpor) for the winter months, the growth of new plants and leaves, the arrival of migrating birds and butterflies and the birth of many insects. The barren winter landscape is suddenly filled with colour and the air filled with song. Spring is a favourite time of year for many nature enthusiasts who welcome the many changes it brings. The first official day of spring arrived on March 20th.

Spring Ephemerals



Red Trillium - photo by Ann Goldring

This also marks the time of year when many people appear to come out of their own “hibernation”, as the temperatures begin to warm up. With the warmer weather bringing more people outdoors, it is the perfect time to head out on a hike with family and friends along one of your favourite trails to enjoy the colours of the

Spring Ephemerals. They are the first wildflowers to appear in the spring and are short lived. Such an outing would provide a good opportunity for young naturalists to learn about the importance of wildflowers in the creation of seeds to grow new plants, and to learn their identification. There are many common Spring Ephemerals that have very distinctive features that make them easy to identify. These include, but are not limited to, Coltsfoot, Hepatica, Blue Cohosh, Bloodroot, Trout Lily, Trillium, Spring Beauty, Wild Ginger and the Mayapple, which is the last one to bloom. Coltsfoot is a yellow flower commonly misidentified as Dandelion to the untrained eye and is one of the first plants to flower in the spring, often when the snow is still melting. Its name refers to the shape of its leaves. A good wildflower guide for children is the *Golden Guide, Wildflowers* by A.C. Martin and H.S. Zim. The *ROM Field Guide, Peterson Field Guide* and *Newcomb's Field Guide to Wildflowers* are all good guides for adults to use alongside children to help identify wildflowers.

Songs of Spring

Early spring marks the first arrival of several migrating birds. The welcome sounds of these early bird migrants are often confused with the sound of the frogs that have recently come out of their hibernation and gathered in local vernal pools, ponds or marshes. The male frogs are loudly making their mating calls, in an attempt to attract females to lay eggs for them to fertilize. Vernal pools are a temporary “pooling” of meltwater in low lying areas. These vernal pools also provide an area for salamanders and newts

to pair up and lay and fertilize their eggs. The first frogs to call in the spring are the Spring Peepers and the Wood Frogs. They are followed in a couple of weeks by the American Toads and Leopard Frogs. Other frogs can be heard calling in the summer. This congregating behaviour provides a good opportunity for children, accompanied by an adult, to head out into the woods, in search of breeding areas, to get a closer look at these usually elusive amphibians. It's important for children to know that this is a chance to quietly observe these creatures and listen to and learn to identify the different frog calls. It is not a good time to go wading through these pools and catching them, which will disturb their breeding. The best time to observe is after dusk which is the main time when the frogs call. You will need to bring a flashlight. It is best that the light coming from the flashlight be red, so as not to affect the night vision of yourself or of the amphibians and to reduce your impact on them. Covering the end of the flashlight with a bit of red cellophane, attached with elastic, is an easy way to make the flashlight red. The *ROM Field Guide to Amphibians and Reptiles of Ontario* by R. D. MacCullough (only used copies available) and the *Photo Field Guide to the Reptiles and Amphibians of Ontario* by S.D. Gillingwater and A.S. Mackenzie are useful for identification. The Toronto Zoo produces a *Frog and Toad Calls of Ontario* CD that can help children to learn the frog calls as well.

However you decide to spend your time this spring, be sure to get the young people in your life out and exploring nature! Have a wonderful spring season!

Kudos

One of Lafarge Canada Inc's gravel pits has been given the Progressive Rehabilitation Award by the Ontario Stone, Sand and Gravel Association. This award is given by the OSSGA to recognize Lafarge's efforts by "providing solutions using sustainable manufacturing practices and improving the environment in and around its operations." NDN has a great relationship with Lafarge as part of our nest box program that Lafarge has supported since its inception. Congratulations!

Outings

It may not feel like it but spring and the butterflies are coming!

Upcoming Butterfly Counts in North Durham

by James Kamstra

Two butterfly counts are happening in Durham Region and we are looking for eager participants: the Oshawa Butterfly Count on Sunday July 2nd and the Sunderland Butterfly count will take place on Sunday July 9th.

Both counts are conducted in a similar manner to Christmas Bird Counts. Several parties head out, with nets in hand, to count all the butterflies that they can find within their areas. The entire count circle is 25 km in diameter. The Oshawa count extends from the north end of Oshawa to north of Port Perry, while the Sunderland Count includes portions of Brock, Uxbridge and East Gwillimbury Townships. This year will mark the 23rd year for the Oshawa count and the 21st for Sunderland. Over

their history a total of 73 species have been documented on Oshawa and 76 on Sunderland. The most in any given year were 55 and 62 species respectively. Count results reflect weather conditions, butterfly migrations, population fluctuations and how early the spring is. We pray for sun because few butterflies are on the wing when it is overcast. About 30 butterfly counts take place across the province each year.

If you would you like to participate in either the Oshawa or Sunderland Count (or both), please contact James Kamstra before the count dates at (905) 985-4497 or email at james.kamstra@aecom.com.

Inexperienced counters will be put into parties with at least one expert. These are whole day events starting at 8:30 am. We break into parties of between 2 and 5 people and attempt to find all species and count individual butterflies in our respective areas. The day ends with a grand tally at a local restaurant.

Quiz

I am an even-toed ungulate which means I have two toes that are not fused together. I can be found throughout North America and much of South America as well and I live right here in Durham Region! I grow and shed my antlers every season, producing soft velvet that can be most irritating to me.

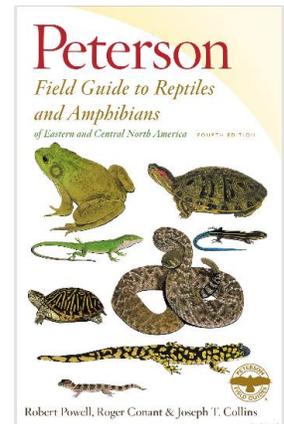
What am I?

Book Reviews

Peterson Field Guide to Reptiles and Amphibians of Eastern and Central North America by Robert Powell, Roger Conant and Joseph T. Collins, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing, 2016. \$24 CN. ISBN: 978-0-544-12997-9, 494 pp.

by James Kamstra

This is the fourth edition of this field guide which has been greatly expanded. The original version was published in 1958 by Roger Conant, the second in 1975 and the third in 1991 by Conant and J.T. Collins. Conant passed away in 2003 and Collins in 2012, but so much of their original material is still in this edition that they were made co-authors in absentia.



The book covers all of the species and subspecies of reptiles and amphibians in the eastern half of Canada and the United States. There is a brief introductory section but the bulk of the book is comprised of the species accounts of the multitude of species. The introduction section has actually been reduced from 37 pages in the third edition to 13 pages. Each species account includes a detailed description of the organism, how to distinguish it from similar species, its habitat and range. In the case of frogs, their calls are also described. It is interesting to put our Ontario species in perspective with the more diverse herpetofauna that occurs in the nation to our south. In comparing with the third edition, this version has glossy paper, larger colourful and more detailed range maps

which accompany the species accounts (instead of the maps being stuck in a separate section in the back as in the earlier additions). Virtually all of the plates and diagrams of the third edition are still included but now there are colour photos of many species in their habitat.

If you have the third edition, you will still want to acquire this new version because so much has changed in the field of herpetological taxonomy in the past 25 years. There were 380 species in the 1991 edition but now there are 500! Genetic research, a somewhat different approach to species definition and the discovery of many 'cryptic' species has meant that many new species are now recognized. For example the Slimy Salamander was formerly considered to be a single species (*Plethodon glutinosus*), but now more than a dozen species are recognized in different parts of the range and most of those cannot be distinguished morphologically. Trying to identify the various dusky salamander species that occur in the Appalachians is now a nightmare. Also many forms that were previously considered to be subspecies are now assigned to full species status. The Midland and Boreal Chorus Frogs (both of which occur in Ontario), for example, are now treated as separate species. Eastern Massasauga is now a separate species from Western Massasauga. The other reason for so many more species in this edition is the bewildering number of non-native species that are now established and breeding in the south, particularly Florida. Over 50 species of non-native lizards now occur and also several snake species. Most noteworthy is the infamous Burmese Python, but there are also African Rock Pythons and Boa Constrictors.

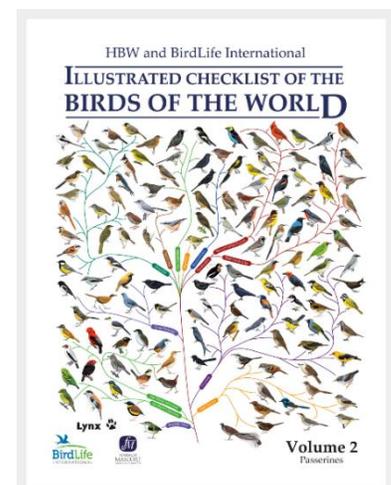
Nomenclature has had some significant changes in the past 25 years. Several long familiar genera, such as *Bufo* (toads), *Rana*

(frogs) and *Elaphe* (rat snakes) have been replaced with new names. Some common names have also changed. Map Turtle is now Northern Map Turtle and Five-lined Skink is now Common Five-lined Skink. My personal pet peeve was the joining of many snake names (e.g. "garter snake" is now "gartersnake"), which was made official by the Society for the Study of Reptiles and Amphibians (SSAR), apparently because "rattlesnake" was one word. Now that the Peterson Guide follows this format, it will be universally accepted (sigh). Despite this disappointing fact, I believe the Peterson guide is the best guide that covers all of the reptile and amphibian species in eastern North America.

Checklist of the Birds of the World (Vol. 2 - Passerines). 2016. Edited by Josep del Hoyo and Nigel J. Collar. Lynx Edicions, Barcelona, Spain. E-mail: lynx@hbw.com. Hardcover 1013 pages. 225.00€. ISBN – 978-84-96553-98-9.

by Geoff Carpentier

A few months ago, Lynx Edicions introduced Volume 1 of one of the most ambitious projects I have ever heard about to try to chronicle all the birds of the world into two volumes. It is not just a list of name after name of birds, but rather a detailed annotated list with a painting of each of the over 10,000 species in the world. Volume 1 dealt with the Non-passerines (non-perching birds)



and Volume 2 completes the task speaking to the Passerines. The endeavour becomes even more complex as the genetics and re-evaluation of species around the globe unfolds. Daily new species are being defined as genetic analyses are undertaken on many of the world's species.

So what does the book actually cover? According to Lynx's statistics, here's what you'll get - descriptions of 138 families, 1,358 genera, 6,592 species, 57 extinct species, 446 plates, 12,629 bird illustrations and 6,649 distribution maps. So to break it down, every passerine known at the time of printing was included – every one! Incredible! To even gather the information to write this book, 2 senior editors and 5 sub-editors, hundreds of volunteers, writers and authors and billions of bits of information were consulted.

The format is Spartan and simple but incredibly readable and informative. The first chapter is short but informed. An analysis of the “new taxonomy” is undertaken in response to the genetic work I mentioned above. How does the scientific community respond and what “splits and lumps” should be included? Make sure you read this 3 page article before you dive into the book!

The format of the rest of the book is eye-pleasing, clear and concise. Each two page foldout contains (on the left) the Order, Sub-order, Family and then information on each species covered on these two pages. Economy of scale is included as coloured headers separate species and a simple two letter code explains their vulnerability and status globally. English, French, German and Spanish names are offered for each

species, as this is truly an international volume. Then a statement of distribution and an indication of its taxonomic status and a list of recognized subspecies are issued. This is very important for future generations who try to track the genealogy of these evolving species. Sounds a little scientific when I write about it, but it will be clear when you read it. It truly is a great analysis of the status of these over 6600 species covered in this volume. The opposing page depicts a full colour painting (or more) for every species, with similar species lumped together of course for easy comparison. And sharing the page is a great and readable map showing the world distribution for each species. Following is a sample page to give an idea of the detail.



The book goes on page after page for over 1000 pages treating you to this marvel of science. Even if you never will or never want to see all the birds in the world, you will find this book very helpful. I travel a lot so am perhaps more attuned to the value of the book. I use it for myriad purposes – to confirm what I believe I saw in the past, to highlight changes to taxonomy that might affect what I saw, to help with my writing and even to entertain myself. You won't be disappointed if you decide to buy

the book. I think every High School and library should own one to round out their reference section.

The book is timely and current and supersedes much of the knowledge we have about the birds of the world. Highly recommended. Now I have to go check out what the heck a Russet-backed Thrush is??? This is a new species to me and it occurs in Canada! Formerly considered to be a subspecies of the Swainson's Thrush, many authorities now deem it to be a full species. Wonder if I've ever seen one? Yup – sure have – I love this book!

Answer to Quiz

Well there are a couple clues here. First of all being an even-toed ungulate means that any single-toed ungulate such as a cow or horse or their relatives are immediately eliminated. I am therefore most likely a member of the deer family – so that narrows it down considerably.

In the east, we only have two native choices (Moose and White-tailed Deer) and one re-introduced one (the Elk). So since the Elk doesn't exist in the wild in Durham, I must be a White-tailed Deer! Well, no I could also be a Moose as all the characteristics mentioned fit both of us - darn there are two choices. Is there another clue that helps me eliminate one of the other of the two possible choices? Aha – I'm found throughout North America and parts of South America ... so the Moose is now eliminated. I am indeed a White-tailed Deer!



Nifty Nature News

In the recent edition of the Old Farmer's Almanac, some revelations were offered about how wildlife can predict weather that might raise your eyebrows. Here are some samplings:

Hawks flying high, means a fair sky, but when they fly low, the winds will blow! It is partly due to decreased lift in response to the low atmospheric pressure and sometimes the high winds that precede storm events. Birds sing more if the weather is improving but go silent in advance of a storm. Look for pairs of crows, as opposed to singles, for the weather will be fair. Autumn drumming grouse mean a fair and mild winter, but if a goose walks east and flies westward it will assuredly be cold - really!

And in other news ... *Dumb as a Stump!* A group of revellers decided to swallow all the goldfish in an aquarium and did so with ease. Not to be outdone, one of them spotted one last fish, a bit different looking but nonetheless a fish so he ate it. Turns out it was a catfish, which when being swallowed defended itself and raised its

spines, lodging in the man's throat. An experienced doctor and seven days in intensive care fixed the problem. Puts a new light on sushi.

According to the Associated Press, the Jaguar may be making a comeback in North America ... That's north of Mexico! In the mountains of Dos Cabezas in Arizona, a wildlife cam caught an image of the cat in November. This brings new hope to the recovery of decimated populations of the Jaguar in its traditional range. Ironically if President Trump builds his wall between the US and Mexico it may impede the further expansion of the Jaguar – interesting twist on a political story!

For more information about NDN

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*Note: All photos and text in this newsletter
by Geoff Carpentier unless otherwise stated*

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Spring is finally here!



American Robin – nest and eggs



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