

## Results

### Special Event

#### December 27th, 2018: Uxbridge Christmas Bird Count – Numbers way down!

At -15C overnight there was very little water open for waterfowl and with reduced habitat and less people feeding at feeders the numbers of birds plummeted this year to 4300 birds. This was our lowest in the last ten years and down 3400 birds from last year. Even European starlings took a hit dropping to 133 the lowest in the last ten years. Evening and Pine grosbeaks were a welcome addition from the north this year while Purple Finch were missed. Once again, we added summer birds to our increasing list of birds found at Christmas with James Kamstra photographing a Chipping sparrow and a very rare Ovenbird.

Our species count despite these additions was down to 45 from 48 last year.

Participation was similar to other years in numbers with a number of birder recruits which we hope have caught the birding bug and join us next year. 30 people observed in the field while 20 watched at home feeders. With 780.5 km were driven, 59 km walked, 3.5 hours were spent owling adding 3 Barred owls to the count. Thanks to Carol Coleman Trotter for hosting the pot luck for those in the field, Kim Adams for inputting the data and all the birders and people that kept their feeders full and helped with the count. Winter's weather is hard for all of us, consider lending a hand to the birds by keeping a feeder full. As climate and habitat changers we are responsible for their livelihood too.

Derek Connelly compiler Uxbridge Christmas Bird Count   ndnature7@gmail.com

Results (*click on underlined text*)

#### **Saturday, November 10, 2018 - Lake Simcoe Waterfowl Outing**

Five hardy souls set out to search for staging migratory waterfowl on the southeast shore of Lake Simcoe. Large numbers and variety of birds were encountered during the 2016 and 2017 outings. However on this day, a strong wind blew in from the west forming whitecaps on the lake and tears in the eyes of observers as they looked through their scopes. There were few birds to be seen: occasional Bufflehead, Common Goldeneyes, Long-tailed Ducks and Red-breasted Mergansers. Also a few Bonaparte's Gulls dipping over the angry waters. The highlight of the day was a Northern Shrike among the shrubs at the Beaverton Lagoons. Blowing snow and poor visibility resulted in early termination of the outing.

#### **Saturday, November 3rd, 2018 - Forest Bathing - Crow's Pass C.A. - Patricia Baldwin**

Eight hikers braved the rain/snow precipitation and ventured into Crow's Pass Conservation Area to learn about the health benefits of *forest bathing*, Canadian style. Mother Nature rewarded us with beautiful sunlight filtering through the forest canopy displaying a lovely luster to the damp and shiny forest trees. We breathed in the clean forest air, high in oxygen, very low in air pollutants and filled with beneficial tree aromatics or phytoncides (smells produced by trees which help to increase human immunity to cancer). It was a pleasure to find many mushrooms along the way. And, those city sounds were too far to hear. Those who completed the mood test were amazed to see the pre-hike and post-hike results. All agreed that it was a lovely way to spend the morning.

#### **Sunday, October 14, 2018 – Mushroom Walk in Crow's Pass Conservation Area**

Autumn is the time for finding fungi in the forest. Pat Burchell of the Toronto Mycological lead a group of interested group of 25 persons through the conservation area in search of any mushrooms they could find. A

good assortment of mushroom-friendly habitats was found. In particular mature deciduous forest with rotten logs and fallen limbs. She showed a non-descript small brown mushroom known as the Deadly Galerina, and it is one of the most toxic. In all about 30 species were found and identified including misshapen Aborted Entolomas, lovely banded Turkey Tails, Purple-toothed Polypores and the highly revered Chaga, known for its medicinal properties.

### **Saturday, September 15, 2018 - Hawk Watch in Cranberry Marsh**

Geoff led a small group of NDNers to Cranberry Marsh on Saturday to look for migrating hawks. The conditions were lovely for beach goers but not so great for hawks. Not we did see a few hawks – Osprey, Sharp-shinned Hawk and Turkey Vulture. Cranberry Marsh was gorgeous with the many flowering plants and hummingbirds and Marsh Wrens flitted about, while loons and mergansers floated on the glass clear lake. Later we went to Carruther's Creek Marsh and watched several Lesser Yellowlegs and two lingering Barn Swallows as they prepared for their migrations!

### **Saturday, June 9th, 2018 - Bird Loop Hike - Uxbridge Countryside Preserve**

Eight of us enjoyed a walk about the Countryside Preserve yesterday listening and spotting breeding birds. Kim Adams demonstrated how a smart phone App now replaces the book for many new birders. Using the App both the call and the visual clues can be used to figure out what you are looking at. Derek stressed the need for caution with playing back the calls during breeding season as birds can assume there is a real threat to their nesting or courtship and may leave an area possibly abandoning a nest or mate. With that in mind the call should be played quietly so you hear it and the real bird does not.

Many of the group were able to identify by call the Red-eyed Vireo, Ovenbird, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Song Sparrow and House Wren on the walk. An eBird checklist was generated using 61 past sightings for June and we were able to add to the list this June! All in all about 15 birds were seen or heard by the group during the 2 hour walk. The weather was cloudy at first and still in contrast to Friday's sunshine and thermal updrafts which brought in more activity (34 Birds were recorded by Kim Adams on Friday morning) Butterflies also added to the fun! A Tiger Swallowtail flittered by, an American Copper appeared near a bird house, and a Common Ringlet was seen. A Red-spotted Purple challenged the whole group on the trail as we attempted to see it with binoculars or photograph it with a cell phone and it wouldn't stay still for long. New summer flowers were appearing - lots of the tall Yellow Goatsbeard and a dandelion-like plant possibly Mouse-eared Hawkweed.

Some of the group were past members wishing to join up again and we look forward to seeing them at the next event.

In July look for a Butterfly Walk in the Countryside Preserve date to be determined.

### **Saturday, June 9th, 2018 - Bird Watching at the Sewage Lagoons**

Seven members of the Orillia Naturalists Club joined Geoff Carpentier and Cara Gregory June 9th as we visited the Nonquon lagoons in Port Perry. All had obtained their mandatory access permits before we headed out on our adventure. Although the weather was quite warm, the sun and light breeze felt great. We immediately were treated to good looks at several Black Terns as they hawked over the lagoons picking off bluets and midges. Our primary goal had been to see shorebirds, but high waters put a stop to that. Or did it? Geoff quickly spotted a large shorebird in the south cell of the lagoons and identified it as an adult Reeve. This rare visitor from Europe and Asia is seldom seen here. After comparing photos later, Geoff determined this

was the same female that stayed for a few hours at Cranberry Marsh in Whitby two days earlier. After we had our fill of this great find, we also saw a locally uncommon Ruddy Duck and a summering Red-necked Grebe in one lagoon. A female Hooded Merganser, a Wood Duck with about 15 babies, two Ospreys tending their nestlings, two male Shovelers, two Trumpeter Swans with their 5 cygnets and much more entertained our little group. Myriad, butterflies, dragonflies and both Green Frogs and Bullfrogs added to our species list.

### **May 27th, 2018**

Four of us started our Flower walk by exploring the roadside of Elgin Park Drive on the east side below the Wooden sticks trail. Wood Anemone, and Oxeye Daisy were in bloom as were the aliens' Yellow Goatsbeard, Birdsfoot trefoil, and Cow Vetch. Goatsbeard is a challenge as it is a common name for two quite different plants so the colour is important in the name. The native goatsbeard has small white/cream flowers on finger like clusters giving a bearded appearance. The introduced plant is like a tall dandelion and it closes its flower by noon so you often miss it. Of course being a native plant supporter I wish we did!

We were invited into the private lane behind the new housing development and looked at flowers near an old pond near the Uxbridge Brook. More aliens White and Pink Rocket, and Bladder campion possibly planted and our native Virginia waterleaf were identified. The waterleaf is very similar to baneberry in leaf but the flowers are quite different. Returning to the Countryside Preserve trail we saw the trilliums once a mass of beauty through the woods now fading away, and the baneberry going to seed with the stalk which will soon hold its doll's eyes like berries. A season changes and summer flowers take over. Foam flower was in bloom popping up in large patches and some of our spring plants showing their true identity as all summer flowers. Lily of the Valley and the three Solomon seals continue blooming through June.

It will be interesting to add more flowers to our summer list in the Uxbridge Countryside Preserve in the weeks ahead. Thanks to Ann, Lynne and Willa for joining me.

### **May 20th, 2018 - Wildflower Walk - Uxbridge Countryside Preserve - Derek Connelly**

Six of us joined the weekly flower walk Sunday at 1pm. Retracing last weeks route we added a few more flowers to the growing list. From last week the White and Red trilliums were still in bloom but some White's were showing pink as they age. Field Pussytoes, Jack in the pulpit, Strawberry, Blue and White Violets, Miterwort, and Red Baneberry were some of the plants identified and photographed.

Next week we meet at the Elgin Park road entrance to the Preserve Sunday. Ann Goldring has some Yellow Trilliums to show us. Parking in the Rexall Parking lot is safer than roadside. Sunday May 27th 1 pm

### **May 13th, 2018 - Wildflower Walk - Uxbridge Countryside Preserve - Derek Connelly**

Twelve budding botanists enjoyed a walk in the Uxbridge Countryside Preserve Sunday morning. While many flowers are still to come the group did identify over ten species. White trilliums were abundant and had recently opened their flowers. Sharp-leaved hepatica was also in flower, as was a small number of Dog-toothed violet (trout lily) and Canada mayflower (Wild lily of the valley). The day was warming up and flowers seemed to be opening as we waked so I imagine more will be showing by the end of the week. We have agreed to meet again next Sunday at 1 pm to enjoy the advance of spring flowers. Thanks to all who shared their knowledge and enjoyment of the wildflowers.

### ***May 2018 - Spring Wildflowers of the Uxbridge Countryside Preserve trails***

In order of observation, in flower, some seen in numerous locations, in May 2018.

Can you identify the ephemerals? Add to the list and email me for next year.

1. Coltsfoot
2. Trout Lily
3. Sharp lobed Hepatica
4. Bloodroot
5. Miterwort
6. Bunchberry
7. Wild strawberry
8. Field Pussy-toes
9. Violets- White, Blue, Yellow
10. Northern Bedstraw
11. Red Trillium
12. Yellow Trillium
13. Large flowering trillium
14. Jack in the Pulpit
15. White Baneberry
16. False Solomon's seal
17. Solomon's seal
18. Starflower
19. Fringed Polygala
20. Wild lily of the Valley
21. Foam flower
22. Kidney leaf buttercup
23. Red Baneberry
24. Virginia Waterleaf

Please contribute photos to our Facebook group "Botanists of the Countryside Preserve, Or Facebook page - North Durham Nature. Thanks to those who joined me and added to the 2018 Spring wildflower walks. Derek Connelly – [ndnature7@gmail.com](mailto:ndnature7@gmail.com). Here's a website with photos to keep us looking for next year and consider planting at home...<http://www.thenewperennialist.com/sleeping-beauties-in-search-of-spring-ephemerals/>

### **May 11th, 2018 - Frog Walk - Uxbridge Countryside Preserve**

Mother nature finally came through and gave us a cool but dry evening for frogs. Thirteen of us including two children met in the parking lot for our frog evening. After brief introductions Derek Connelly introduced other members of the nature club Cara Gregory and Geoff Carpentier who would be sharing their experiences too. Participants received a Toronto Zoo "adopt a pond" brochure which has pictures of the Ontario frogs and Derek and Cara clarified which ten species were found here. Pictures and sounds of frogs from the two frog watch cell phone Aps were used. Spring is the time when frogs and toads gather to sing and mate in small bodies of water.

Walking down to the wetland areas the first pond was relatively quiet until we passed by then a few spring peepers started up. As we approached the second pond they again were quiet until we settled down to listen and then our frog solo began. The temperature was 11C which kept many frog species quiet, a true symphony only occurs after about 15 C. Wood frogs one of the first callers of spring have a quacking sound which was heard over two weeks ago were now quiet and may have laid their eggs and returned to the forest. The American Toad's trill heard last night in many backyards was absent tonight. Spring Peepers however kept up a good chorus of peeps which came from many directions as the sound bounced off the trees around the pond.

Geoff our bird expert heard the call of the Woodcock and a brief walk into the meadow allowed others to hear it too. The male does an aerial mating dance calling to impress a female sitting patiently in the field. A barred owl also called in the distance-“who who cooks for you”.

Back at the first pond Green Frogs were spotted resting in a trance like state near the surface awaiting for warmer days when they will start their banjo like call. Green’s and Bull Frogs ( the “Jug of rum call”) usually require about 17 C before they can be heard. The children continued looking with their flashlights and reported a Leopard frog too. It was hard to leave as darkness closed in and the sounds of nature continued. Thanks to all who shared their evening with us.

### **April 28th, 2018 - Canoe on the Nonquon River - Jay Thibert**

North Durham Nature explored the Nonquon River in canoes today. A group of 10 paddlers bundled up and headed upstream on the Nonquon River from the bridge on Old Simcoe Road. The wind was strong and the temperatures stayed in single digits, but spring was in the air. We spotted the following species: Bufflehead ducks, Red-winged Blackbirds, Kingfishers, Swamp Sparrow, Robins, Red-tailed Hawk, Great Blue Heron, Canada Goose, Blue-winged Teal, Mallard Ducks, Tree Swallows, Barn Swallows, (one very large flock) Rough-winged Swallow and six Trumpeter Swans. The Swans were a highlight as they flew overhead a couple of times. We enjoyed each others company and had a great morning on the water. Our eight year old paddler kept a strong pace to travel upstream for over two hours. We made it all the way to the eight concession and back. Thanks to all for a fun outing.

### **March 18th, 2018 - Uxbridge Countryside Preserve Bird Box Inspection**

Ten adults and four children assisted Derek Connelly in this years spring clean out of the twenty four bird houses in the Uxbridge Countryside Preserve. One family came up from Oshawa after reading about the event in their local paper. Participants were shown pictures of the birds, their eggs and nests and some of last years nests were examined for parasites before removal from the area. Tree swallow, Eastern bluebird, House wren and Black -capped Chickadee are the birds who use the bird houses and the Blow fly is one of the problem parasites. Six of the participants volunteered to be part of this summers monitoring program to help the birds successful nesting. Cavity birds such as these now depend on nest boxes since more of their natural habitat ( old dead trees) is being removed. If you would like to help give Derek a call or email. [905-852-5432](tel:905-852-5432), or [ndnature7@gmail.com](mailto:ndnature7@gmail.com)

### **Saturday, February 10th, 2018: Winter Wetland Snowshoe Adventure**

We had a great turn out for the Snowshoe Hike at the Nonquon Environmental Education Centre last Saturday - 79 participants (8 volunteer leaders)

All ages - children, parents, grandparents took part - many who have never been on snowshoes before! Long, medium and shorter hikes took place. Snow conditions and temperatures were perfect for a day in the wetland. Families that have lived in the area for years were joined by newer residence of Durham in learning about this ecologically important (and beautiful) Provincial Wildlife Area. Everyone enjoyed feeding Chickadees by hand and participants shared in hot chocolate and cookies around a campfire at mornings end. Fun was had by all.

Thanks to Friends of Nonquon volunteers for their efforts in making this day such a success. Thank you to all the organizers & participants!

### **January 20th: Feeder Tour 2018**

Twelve people showed up for the start of the Bird Feeder tour this year in Uxbridge. Travelling from Mount Albert, Pickering , Oshawa, and Port Perry these keen birders descended on Uxbridge. Visiting two town feeders and an estate in Uxbridge we then headed east to Scugog to visit three rural properties and an estate property. Our count for the day was about one hundred and fifty birds with thirteen species plus a possible Northern Shrike seen on the drive. Highlights were the Red Bellied woodpecker a Ruffed grouse video and the many enjoyable conversations . The Ruffed grouse was taped attacking a poodle in a backyard in Port Perry numerous times. Just one of the many funny local wildlife stories. The local media joined us at 10 am to capture us in action which may have ruffled a few feathers however the advertising could help the birds in the long run. We learned about feeder types, seeds, habitat, bird boxes, windows, birds seen, and more, all of which will help us better serve our feathered friends.

Many thanks to the Feeder hosts who filled their feeders, opened their doors to keep us warm and shared their personal glimpses of nature with us. Thanks to those who joined the tour and shared their incites, we look forward to seeing you at another North Durham Nature event.

Good Birding ! Derek Connelly

*Feeder Tour Bird List*