

Wannigan

Newsletter of the Rideau Valley Field Naturalists
September 2010 - 4



"To Be or Not To Be"

RVFN MEMBERS, IMPORTANT NOTICE

As readers of the Wannigan know, the Executive of the Rideau Valley Field Naturalists has long been appealing for new people to join in sharing the work of running the club and its programs. There has been little response.

The current Executive consists of Past President, Secretary, Treasurer, and committee chairs for Membership, Outings, Flora and Fauna, Newsletter, Ontario Nature Representative and Librarian-Historian. Publicity is handled by the Past President. Our Program Chair recently resigned due to heavy personal work commitments.

Article V of our Club's Constitution stipulates that:

"1) The Executive of the organization shall consist of the following: Immediate Past President, President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and committee chairs for Program, Outings, Membership, Flora and Fauna, Newsletter, Refreshments, Publicity, Ontario Nature Representative and Librarian-Historian.

2) The Executive may appoint up to two members-at-large to serve as part of the Executive.

3) The Executive shall be elected at the January meeting.

4) The Executive term of office shall be one year.

5) The President may hold office for a maximum of two consecutive terms. "

Article VI.2 states that "At any meeting of the Executive, four members shall constitute a quorum and one of those must be the President or Vice-president." As there is no President or Vice-president, our meetings for the past season have been illegal!!

Discussion at the last Executive Meeting concluded with regret the decision that unless Club members came forward as candidates for President, Vice-president and Program Chair no later than the September 12 General Meeting, two members of the Executive would put forward the following motion for the Club members present to decide by open vote at that meeting.

"The Executive is instructed to wind up the affairs of the Club following our Annual Banquet on September 23 and to dispose of the Club's assets at their discretion."

Please seriously consider how important the Club and its activities are to you and act accordingly. If you can devote some time and effort to furthering the work of the Club, please contact Secretary Frank Roy at **613 264 8856** or **froy@ripnet.com**.

Wildlife Watch

By Jean Griffin

Some interesting summer observations:

A Great Egret was seen by the Hunts on Aug 14 on the bank of the Tay River near the outlet of the Lagoons - the first report in our area this summer. Were the 2 birds seen flying over Westport by Frank Roy on July 22 Night-Herons?

6 Common Terns were seen by Mike Jacques flying over Carleton Place on July 21. This species has nested on an island in Mississippi Lake.

3 Broad-winged Hawks turned up in Winona Barker's backyard in Perth on July 28 - apparently a family. Fred Lepine had a Peregrine Falcon visit his backyard Aug 23 and captured a tidbit, possibly a frog, on which it dined.

Good news about Common Nighthawks - Mike Jacques, Carleton Place, spotted 2 on Aug 13 flying over his backyard, and on Aug 25 Iain Wilkes reported about 30 over the river also in Carleton Place. Marcel and Jane Turpin, Dopson Road had between 25 and 30 hawking insects over the hay bales on Aug. 24.

Both Barred and Great Horned Owls have been heard.

Joanne Ewart heard the Whip-poor-will calling at Adam Lake on Aug 24, and also at Adam Lake got pictures of a Mink along the shore. At Tennyson Road she also got a picture of a Gray Treefrog.

An uncommon plant grew in Rosemarie Hoppe-Wilhelm's yard this summer. It turned out to be Velvet Leaf - with beautifully soft leaves. How did it get there? - maybe from birdseed or perhaps from bird droppings.

Rosemarie also took a picture of a white moth, with wings held at an unusual angle. Research on the Internet showed it to be an Agreeable Tiger Moth, distinctive because of the yellow-orange on it.

Please continue to share your observations with me - birder13@bell.net, or phone 264-8411.

SPECIES AT RISK

How You Can Help!

Several of our formerly common species are now less common - numbers are declining. What can anyone do to help? There are a number of surveys being done by Bird Studies Canada, the government, and other organizations which need data input - you can help! A few suggestions (there are several other surveys that also need help!) -

Loggerhead Shrike - Young birds with extensive blue or green areas on their breasts have been released. If you see one of these birds with a coloured breast and/or wearing bands, please report it to Wildlife Preservation Canada at (email) jessica@wildlifepreservation.ca, (phone) 1-800-956-6608, or (fax) 519-836-8840. We will need details about specific location (GPS coordinates are ideal, but not essential) and any colour(s) (breast and/or bands) seen.

Bank Swallow - post-breeding and pre-migratory roost sites for Bank Swallows in Ontario. Observations of evening roosts in wetlands and daytime roosts on wires, etc. are needed. Please email details of your observations (i.e., date, time, number of birds, UTMs, and site details) to Myles Falconer, Bank Swallow Project Coordinator Ph. (519) 586-3531 (ext. 165); toll free 1-888-448-2473 email: mfalconer@birdscanada.org <mailto:mfalconer@birdscanada.org>

Great Egret - nearly 100 young egrets have had orange wing-tags placed on them, each with 2 numbers and 1 letter on them. If you observe one of these birds, please record the characters on the tag, the date and location of your sighting and your name and send them to chip.weseloh@ec.gc.ca. Also, please watch for evening/overnight roosts of Great Egrets during the July/August - September/October period all across southern Ontario; please report these as well.

Don't forget Project Feeder Watch (all winter), Canadian Lakes Loon Survey, Grassland Birds Survey, and Great Backyard Bird Count (Feb 18-21, 2011). And don't forget to report Reptiles and Amphibians - reporting forms can be found at www.ontarionature.org.

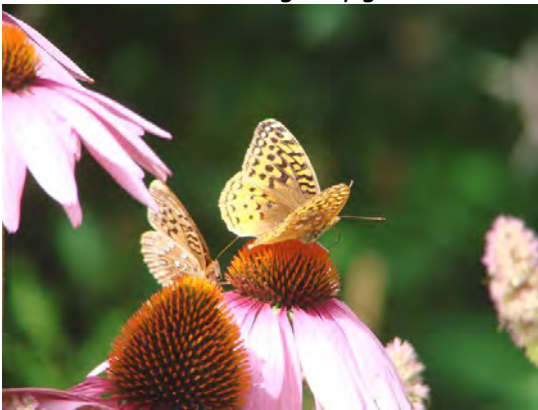
And our Christmas Bird Count, Dec. 30, 2010.

Club Members Give Careful Tending To Butterfly Garden

After soft, followed by heavy rains in mid August, our Butterfly Garden beds at the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority's Perth Wildlife Reserve have burst into flower once again, with inviting vigour. Now the monarchs and other butterflies can sleep tight at night and leave their flitting about to daytime.

During our hot dry drought, I invited a friend out to view the 5 garden beds and go for a walk. Some walk! We spent two sweaty hours on garden bed number two. Heave-ho went the weeds. Then we liberally applied compost to each plant using double-sized plastic buckets. Then came cedar mulch even more liberally. Good thing the solar-powered water reservoir was handy. Each plant received four pails of water straight from the bucket. And did they suck it up as our arms got longer!

All five beds are looking very good thanks to our reliable volunteers and my "non-volunteer" friend. It's such a pleasant place to be, made more so by the mowed field paths that roam about. You can come in by the main entrance to the Butterfly Garden and walk a complete loop going round the pond, out back and over a field path.



Frank Roy and I realigned the T-rails holding up the first lattice trellis and rehung it to remove the twist. Now we have another green trellis on the far side thanks to grunt and groan. We dug the grass way out from them so the mower could get around easier. Frank commented, "Eric, do you have to remove every last rock? A plant won't mind a few rocks!" I replied, "I have this thing about stubborn rocks in the earth, I'm more stubborn!" I love rocks for

I've hauled many in my former Pontiac Sunfire compact from the Perthmore subdivision, Roger's Road extension (dynamited rocks in February) and the Perth Landfill site. But they go artistically where I want them.

Jean Griffin has done a wonderful job of coordinating and setting things up for the Butterfly Garden. She has now passed this "Monarch" duty onto me. So I am the new contact; boo to Eric Wilson at 613-267-4581.

Submitted by L Eric Wilson

A Message from Gray Merriam

There is a new, free book about Canadian environments available on the web, in *html* or as *pdf*. Go to www.specialplaces.ca and click the book link to *Special Places in Canada*. There is no cost. You are free to enjoy insights into the ecological functioning of natural processes and a wealth of photos from seven special places: the Gulf of St. Lawrence, the Bay of Fundy, the Backbone of the Continent, the Boreal Forest, the Peace-Athabasca Delta, and the Greater Golden Horseshoe. This book examines how the individual processes of the 2005 book *Discovering Natural Processes* work together to sustain environments with integrity or how sustainability is lost if processes are degraded or displaced.

***Special Places in Canada* by Gray Merriam, Aileen Merriam and Jeff Amos.**

Gray Merriam 613-335-3589

Natural History Workshops at Queen's University Biological Station

Fabulous Fall Fungi
Oct 4 – 8

Details at
www.queensu.ca/biology/qubs

The RVFN Picnic, Sunday June 6

By Murray Hunt

We pulled up to the Perth Wildlife Reserve (PWR) about 12:15 pm in a cool and steady rain to meet Rosemarie and Jean. By about 1240 pm we were 10 in number despite the weather. We had a great lunch and exchange of stories under cover in the Outdoor Centre.

Midway through lunch Carson Thompson, the former RVCA person in charge of the PWR during the 80's and 90's joined us and proceeded to enlighten us about the PWR.

By the end of lunch the rain had stopped and we set out on a hike around the PWR for 3½ hours! Rosemarie and Susan were our hike leaders but Carson Thomson gave us the background and history of the development of all areas of the PWR - including parts that most of us had not seen. It was quite a day for Carson as he had not returned to the PWR since his retirement in 2000 and he wanted to see how his projects had fared.

We all agreed that it was a great day and that we should do this again. We just need to arrange better weather so that more members will come out. A special thanks goes out to Susan and Rosemarie.

By the way this privileged group of 10 is now aware of the location of the single Ponderosa Pine and the single Kentucky Coffee Tree in the PWR.



Cruise up the Tay on a Solar Canal Boat

On a sunny August Saturday, Karen and I, our son and his family, were transported back in time as we boated up the Tay from Beveridges Locks to Perth on the 30 foot canal boat, Sparks. The boat is visually reminiscent of the fantail steam launches used on the Trent Severn Waterway over a hundred years ago. It brings to mind an era when taking a journey was as enjoyable as arriving at the destination. Our connection to Sparks is that Karen is the cousin of the boat builder, Ted Moores, of Bear Mountain Boats, Peterborough.



Although Sparks is representative of canal boat designs used many years ago and is a great example of craftsmanship in wooden boat building, its most remarkable features are "under the hood". Ted Moores and his partner Joan Barrett are environmentally focused and the design of their boat reflects this.

Sparks has an electric/solar/diesel propulsion system. The power for the electric motor is supplied by solar energy collected from eight solar panels fixed to the roof of the cabin. Batteries are recharged by the solar panels and if necessary, by "shore power" during nightly stopovers. The diesel is used to power the generator only if the batteries become depleted or in situations where maximum propulsion is required.



The maximum speed is six knots (limited by the hull speed) but a typical canal cruising speed would be three knots which is more efficient in battery use. On our morning cruise up the Tay, we consumed less battery power than during the previous night's stopover use of the microwave, stove top and coffee maker. You can read more about the boat on their website: <http://www.bearmountainboats.com/launch.htm#>

A trip on the Tay from Beveridges to Perth by boat through the Tay Marsh is always a great opportunity to connect with nature. We had good views of several bird species and a highlight of our day was the sighting of a Great Egret.

Murray and Karen Hunt

Noticeboard



25 Years



**Celebrate the Silver Anniversary
Of
The Rideau Valley Field Naturalists
At
Our Annual Banquet
On
September 23, 2010
The Royal Canadian Legion
Branch 244, 26 Beckwith Str., Perth**

Guest Speaker: Cliff Bennett

Cocktails at 6:00, cash bar
Dinner at 7:00 - includes Salad,
Roast Beef and Turkey Meal
Served Country Style
Dessert, tea/coffee

Contact Murray Hunt for Tickets
(after Sept. 12, contact Judy Bueler)

\$30 per person, \$2 from each ticket
sold will go to the
Cliff Bennett Bursary Fund

General Public Welcome
Tickets available at Sept. 12th meeting
Ticket sales close Friday, September 17th

General Meetings 2010

**September 12, 2010: Mike Yee, Biologist with the
RVCA will explain and
discuss "The Bioblitz"**

October 3, 2010

November 7, 2010

December 5, 2010

Our general meetings continue to be held in the Multi-Purpose Room of the Perth Swimming Pool, Wilson Street at Sunset Blvd. usually the first Sunday of each month commencing at 2pm. There is an admission fee of \$5 for non-members.

Your Volunteer Executive

President _____
Past President ___ Judy Buehler ___ goodlife@rideau.net ___ 613-326-0106
Vice-President _____
Treasurer ___ Murray Hunt ___ mkhunt@ripnet.com ___ 613-264-9273
Program _____
Outings ___ Margaret Lafrance ___ margaretf@cogeco.ca ___ 613-264-0057
Membership ___ Karen Hunt ___ mkhunt@ripnet.com ___ 613-264-9273
FON Rep ___ Eric Wilson ___ 613-267-4581
Flora & Fauna ___ Jean Griffin ___ birder13@bell.net ___ 613-264-8411
Rosemarie Hoppe-Wilhelm ___ rosemariehw@storm.ca
Publicity ___ Judy Buehler ___ goodlife@rideau.net ___ 613-326-0106
Historian/Librarian ___ Georgina Doe ___ loonlady@sympatico.ca ___ 613-257- 2103
Secretary ___ Frank Roy ___ froy@ripnet.com ___ 613-264-8856
Wannigan ___ Sue Hull ___ rodneyhouse@sympatico.ca
Refreshments _____