

The Wake-Robin

Newsletter of the Sault Naturalists of Ontario and Michigan

Volume 51, Number 1, May, 2005



Our mailing address:

The Sault Naturalists
Northern Postal Outlet
P.O. Box 21035

Sault Ste Marie
ON, P6B 6H3

Program - Thumbnails

May 3. Disease and Forest Insects.

June 14. The Polar Bears of Churchill.

Sept. 13. The Helmeted Honey Eater.

Oct. 11. Caribou Island, L. Superior.

Nov. 8. Lake Superior by Kayak.

Dec. 13. Our Holiday Get-together.

Jan. 10. Living in a Bug's World.

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Welcome
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"Woody"



Publication Deadlines for the Wake-Robin and Annual Report

Publication Target

September meeting

December meeting

February AGM

May meeting

Last date for submissions

August 15

November 15

January 15

April 15

Please keep outing reports to about a half page. Accompanying illustrations are welcome.

May to December Program

May 3, 2005, Great Lakes Forestry Centre.

Kees van Frankenhuyzen, Canadian Forest Service project leader for Microbial Control Agents. **“Disease and Forest Insect Outbreaks.”** The presentation, in workshop format, will focus on outbreaks of forest insects, which have a powerful influence on the health of forests. Insect population cycles are often driven by diseases that are caused by the same types of pathogens as affect humans—bacteria, viruses, and fungi. Volunteers will don lab coats and attempt to isolate the disease-causing microbes from caterpillars for examination under a powerful microscope, which will be hooked up to a TV monitor so that everyone can see the live images. This meeting may be in a different room than usual; directions will be given at the door.

June 14, 2005, Great Lakes Forestry Centre.

David Euler, former Dean of Forestry at Lakehead University. **“The Polar Bears of Churchill.”** Polar bears, the largest North American carnivores, live on the sea ice for most of the year, where they find and eat seals. However, the Hudson Bay population of bears has to move onto land during the summer when the ice has melted on the Bay. In late October or November the ice forms again on Hudson Bay near Churchill, Manitoba and the bears gather there to wait until the sea ice is hard enough to start hunting for seals again. Each year, some 12,000 people also migrate to Churchill to watch and study the bears. Dave Euler led a Quest tour to Churchill in November, 2004; he will discuss the bears, their ecology and the possible threats to this population from global warming.

September 13, 2005, Great Lakes Forestry Center.

Jennie Pearce, wildlife ecologist and manager of her own ecological research company in Sault Ste. Marie, Ont. **“The Helmeted Honeyeater in Australia – Ecology and Recovery Efforts.”** **The helmeted honeyeater (*Lichenostomus melanops cassidix*)** is an endangered bird species

restricted to a single wetland reserve outside of Melbourne, Australia. Jennie will discuss some of the unique aspects of its ecology, social behavior, and habitat and briefly review the past recovery efforts for the species.

October 11, 2005, Great Lakes Forestry Centre.

Susan Bryan, amateur naturalist from the Thunder Bay Field Naturalists. **“Caribou Island, Lake Superior—A Natural History Adventure.”** Susan and her husband, Mike Bryan, spent eight days on remote Caribou Island in July 2004. As volunteer birders with the Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas, they learned not only about the breeding birds of this isolated Lake Superior island, but also much



about its mammals, unusual plants, insects, reptiles, and history. Susan will show slides taken on the island and display some pressed botanical specimens collected there.

November 8, 2005, Great Lakes Forestry Centre.

Mike Petzold, retired fisheries biologist with the Ontario MNR and owner/operator of Caribou Expeditions, a sea kayak guiding company based out of Goulais River. **“Lake Superior by Kayak: from Thunder Bay to Sault Ste. Marie.”** Mike will give a talk and slide show about sea kayaking along the magnificent coast of Lake Superior. The talk will encompass the natural history of the coast, geology, flora and fauna of the area,

and sea kayaking as a means of accessing the wilderness.

December 13, 2005, Central United Methodist Church. Annual Holiday Get-Together. Last year's December meeting included photos and reminiscences related to some of the favored outing sites visited by the Sault Naturalists in past years. This December we would like to hear from some of you—particularly the newer members—about your experiences on more recent outings (within the last 5-10 years). A slide projector will be available, so you can illustrate your remarks with pictures (preferably no more than ten slides). Please call at (906) 635-5095 or Chris Sanders at (705) 759-6216 at least two weeks before the meeting to volunteer.

January 10, 2006, Central United Methodist Church. Marie Greenwood, Assistant Professor of Biology, Lake Superior State University. **"Living in a Bug's World."** Dr. Greenwood will bring along insect specimens (including live "bugs") and tell us some interesting and bizarre stories about insects and the ways in which they interact with humans. Insects exhibit some of the most diverse and complex animal behaviors known, and they play an integral role in every

aspect of life on Earth today. See how insects and related arthropods have adapted to



become the planet's most successful animals. This presentation should be of interest to "kids" of all ages, so bring your children or grandchildren along, or invite some young people to join us. Marie does request that there be no "yuck," "ick," or "gross" from the audience, as she maintains that bugs are not icky, just different from us.

Where we Meet - General Meetings

Time: 7:30 p.m; second Tuesday of each month, except May (first Tuesday)

Place: Sault Ontario, Great Lakes Forestry Centre, 1219 Queen Street East, Sault Ste Marie, ON.

Sault Michigan, Central Methodist United Church, Corner of Spruce and Court St.

Schedule: (Unless noted otherwise in program description)

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| September-November | Great Lakes Forestry Centre |
| December and January | Central Methodist-United Church |
| February | Annual Dinner Meeting- location varies |
| March and April | Central Methodist United Church |
| May and June | Great Lakes Forestry Centre |

Potpourri

Bird Saver

One afternoon last year there were 3 bird crashes into our windows in a 1/2 hour period. Soon I hit upon an idea. I immediately went to town, bought some 12" rug-backing netting and put it up over the windows using thumb tacks. The netting lets in lots of light with the bottom window left bare, making it easy to check out anything interesting or unusual that comes to the feeder. The attached picture shows how we did ours.

The netting can be purchased by the yard at



most fabric stores for a reasonable amount.

We have been using the netting for a year and feel it is time to share.

I have sent the idea to Audubon and Connie Thompson. Perhaps you could pass it on as well.

Pat Hakala

Adopt-a-Highway Program

Helen Hutchinson will coordinate the spring litter pickup for the Sault Naturalists' section of Hwy. 550. If you are able to help, please call Helen at (705) 254-3648.

Desbarats Bird Viewing Platform

Ducks Unlimited Canada and the Sault Naturalists are partnering with the Algoma District School Board and Central Algoma Secondary School to construct a bird viewing platform, interpretive signage and a floating dock system behind CASS in Desbarats. The project will be located adjacent to the Kensington Complex Provincially Significant Wetland.

The site will provide hands-on educational opportunities for ADSB students and will provide an outdoor classroom for studying the environment and educating students on the important role that wetlands play in providing wildlife habitat and maintaining water quality. After school hours, community members will be able to visit this site to learn about its unique features and participate in wild life viewing.

Construction will begin the week of May 2nd . A contractor will lead CASS students in constructing the platform and floating docks. The project is expected to be completed by the end of June.

Tracey Latulippe

Habitat Specialist, Great Lakes Coast

Thessalon

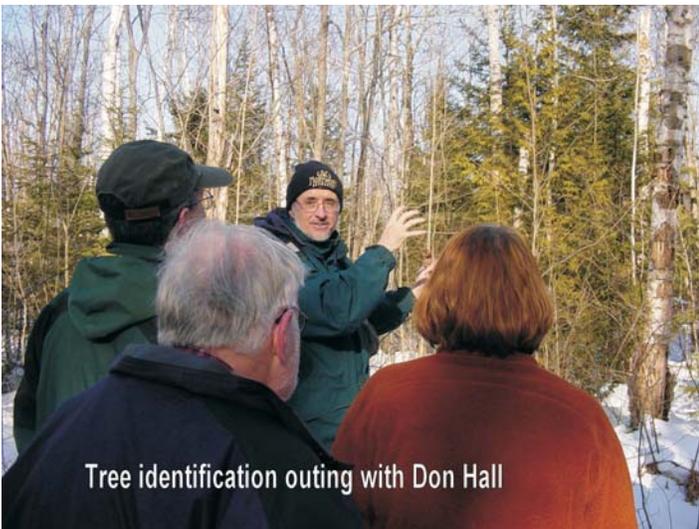
(705) 842-1929

(705) 842-1935 (FAX)

Spring and Summer Outings

Sun., May 1, 10:00 am. MWC. Examine the early spring plants along the boardwalk of the Naomikong Creek swamp, in search of skunk cabbage, cow slips and other early risers. Bring boots. Leaders: Chuck (906) 248-3287 and Ev (705) 949-8206.

Wed., May 11, 6:00 pm. Canadian Sault Locks parking lot. Join Tony for a birding walk in the Whitefish Island area. Leader: Tony Walker, (705) 759-6151.



Tree identification outing with Don Hall

Sun.-Wed., May 15-18. Annual Pt. Pelee birding and campout. Group camping at the Point for members previously registered. Leader: Don and Viv. Hall (705) 248-1834.

Fri.-Sun., May 20-22. Annual Frog Festival at Creekside Herbs, Cedarville. A variety of activities are planned for the entire family throughout the weekend. For more information, check the website: www.lescheneaux.org or call Les Cheneaux Welcome Centre at 888-36-ISLANDS.

On Saturday, May 21, from 1:00-3:00 pm. at Creekside Herbs, Chuck Bosley, from the Sault Naturalists, will lead a walk through a cedar forest as part of the Frog-fest.. Waterproof footwear recommended.

Wed., May 25, 6:00 pm. MWC. Birding and botany in the marsh along the St. Ignace shoreline. Plan to partake in the Strawberry Festival before heading home. Leaders: Chuck (906) 248-3287 and Ev. (705) 949-8206.

Sat., May 28, 8:00 am. MWC . Search for agates and explore the shore along Crisp Point on Lake Superior. Leader: Jean Mannesto (906) 632-4285.

Wed., June 1, 7:00 pm. Wellington Sq. Mall. Bird watching by the Echo River. Relax on the deck of an historic home on the Old Sault Road and view orioles or walk the laneways, checking for other species in the field and hedge rows . Leader: Helen (705) 254-3648

Sat., June 4, 9:00 am. MWC. Carl will take us along with him to some of his favorite birding areas. Leader: Carl Linhart (906) 635-9891.

Wed., June 8, 6:00 pm. MWC. Carl will lead a walk to look for salamanders in vernal ponds and for birds along Ashmun Creek. Leader: Carl (906) 635-9891.

Sat., June 11, 10:00 am. Carrie, (a naturalist interpreter at Pancake Bay Provincial Park) will lead a nature walk through the sensitive plant areas of the park. Call for meeting place. Leader: Carrie Ginou (705) 942-0715.

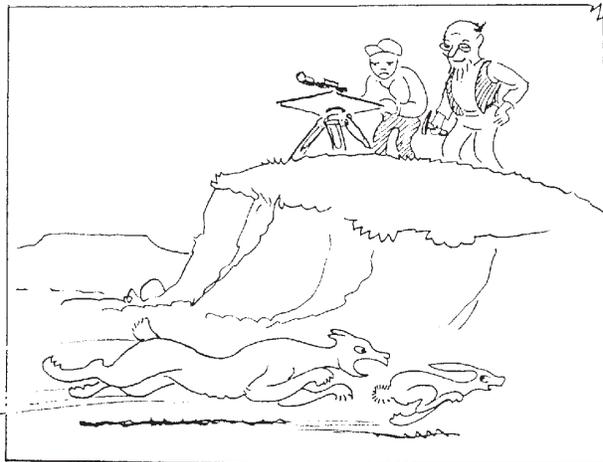
Sat., June 18, 10:00 am. MWC. Many herbaceous and woody plants are edible or have medicinal applications. John will lead us to several sites in the vicinity of Sault Michigan to hunt for various plants and perhaps sample some of the edible specimens. Leader: John Lehman (906) 635-5095.

Sat., June 25, 10:00 am. Zellers Plaza North. Hike Orphan Lake Trail (9 KM). Moderate difficulty. Leaders: Ron (705) 254-1533 or Val (705) 253-7044.

Sat., July 9, 10:00 am. Wellington Sq. Mall. Canoe the St Joseph Channel of the St. Marys River near the St. Joseph Island cutoff. Leaders: Ron, (705) 254-1533 or Val (705) 253-7044.

Sun., July 17, 9:00 am. MWC. Visit Maxton Plains Preserve, Drummond Island. We will check for alvar plants such as prairie smoke, prairie dropseed, and other rare species on the bedrock-grassland. Unimproved roads might be encountered. Leader: Chuck (906) 248-3287 or Ev.: (705) 949-8206.

Sat., July 23, 9:00 am. Zellers Plaza North. Join Jim and members of the Voyageur Trail Association (VTA) for a hike along the Pancake Trail. Contact: Jim Miller at (705) 254-7494.



No, not quite what is meant by "faunal succession".

Original drawing by Ken Hatfield

Sat., July 30, 10:00 am. Manfred will lead us on a geological adventure. Please phone for meeting place. Leader: Manfred Engel (705) 779-3738 or Chuck (906) 248-3287 or Ev (705) 949-8206.

Sun., July 31, 10:00 am. Wellington Sq. Mall. Canoe into Echo Lake, a shallow marshy lake with floating vegetation, looking for aquatic plants and shore birds. Leaders: Chuck (906) 248-3287

or Ev (705) 949-8206.

Sat., Aug. 13, 8:30 am. Wellington Sq. Mall. We'll canoe along the Echo Ridges area with members of the VTA. Leader: Garry Koteles (705) 949-1302.

Sat., Aug. 27, 9:00 am. Zellers Plaza North. Explore the geological history along Hwy. 17 North to Pancake Bay. See evidence of ancient volcanic activity and earthquakes. There will be mineral collecting so bring your hand lens and hammer. Leader: Gerry Bennett (705) 254-7214.

Sat., Sept. 3. Join Curt and Katie for a weekend campout at Van Riper State Park on Craig Lake in the western U.P. A rough road in; canoe or backpack the last two miles to the lake. Many portages to other lakes for those who wish to explore. A rustic cabin is available for washroom facilities. **Registration is needed one week in advance.** Leaders; Curt and Katie Bosket (906) 635-8367.

Potpourri - Continued

Frog Fest - Friday - Sunday, May 20th - 22nd

Springtime in the Les Cheneaux Islands is a fresh and magical time, filled with the promise of teeming new life in our pristine forests and sparkling waters of our 36-island archipelago. The season is marked by a symphony of frog and toad calls, which gave birth to Frog Fest. Come join us in celebrating amphibian calls so loud they've been described as "deafening," while learning more about the wetlands and marshes that amphibians call home.



Frog Fest will take place in Cedarville, in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. The Les Cheneaux Area is the gateway to the Eastern Upper Peninsula. The area is abundant with natural features and activities, and experienced tour guides are waiting to show you around. Frog Fest will offer several field trips to a hidden alvar and shores where rare wildflowers and ferns grow. Tours will be guided, and are a fun way to see some of the area's best-kept natural secrets.

Opportunities abound for learning more about the Les Cheneaux Area's rich natural resources all weekend. Get up close and personal with live hands-on reptiles demonstration or visit an American Indian village at the school. Biologists

will lead a bird watching expedition, botanical walk and nature tours. Great food, socialization and live music will wind-down Saturday evening, Les Cheneaux style.

Other highlights include kayak tours, hands-on educational booths, and storytelling and fun kids games for children. A Frog Hop for teens will be offered, too. Adults can check out the area's restaurants and taverns, where you're sure to find a Friday night fish fry; or just some warm hospitality. Don't miss the more than 50 different, decorated frogs at local businesses and homes, part of the community art project. A brochure will feature the different frog sponsors and their locations.

Cedarville is only 17 miles east of I-75 and less than 35 miles from three of the Great Lakes, Lakes Michigan, Huron and Superior. The Les Cheneaux Islands are located on the northern shore of Lake Huron, an area of incomparable beauty. The Nature Conservancy has named the area one of "The Last Great Places" in the Western Hemisphere.

Frog Fest is sponsored by the Les Cheneaux Watershed Council, which is devoted to protecting the area's water resources for present and future generations. For more information, contact Wendy Wagoner at (906) 484-2415, or at: www.creekside-herbs.com. Information about accommodations, shopping and services can be obtained by calling the Les Cheneaux Welcome Center at (906) 484-3935, or by e-mailing: welcomecenter@lescheneaux.org.

Bird Books for Sale

Brian R. Ingram of Sault Ste Marie, Ontario has about 20 books on the subject of birds which he wishes to sell for \$10.00 Can or less per volume. The publication dates range from 1959 to 1994.

Anyone interested may contact Mr. Ingram at (705) 253-5842

confirm that it is breeding and your observation could make all the difference.

Please pass on any information that you think might be relevant to me at 759-6216 or to any of your birding friends who are involved in the atlas.

Chris Sanders

Environmental Action Committee

As Environmental Action Chairperson, I attended the steering committee meeting of the Chippewa-East Mackinac Conservation District. The steering committee has started a Watershed Planning Project, funded by the Clean Water Act and concentrating on identifying non-point source pollution problems in our area.. The committee is seeking pictures

and historical information from the public about old pollution sites, as well as pictures and text showing changes in the Michigan Sault's natural environment over time. The group also needs volunteers to help with water quality testing, perhaps some GPS mapping, and data compilation.

Anyone interested

in helping can contact Pat Carr at (906) 632-9611, ext. 109; or . His office is in the USDA Service Center at 2847 Ashmun St. (Rt.129, north of 3-mile Rd).

Greg Zimmerman, Assistant Professor of Biology at LSSU, is planning an Ashmun Creek cleanup project for which the Sault Naturalists have pledged support. He may be looking for volunteers.

Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas

This coming summer will be the final year for recording data for the current Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas project. Across Ontario over the last 4 years, atlasers have contributed 117,000 hours of birding which is a pretty impressive figure. Here in the Sault Ste Marie Region, which runs from Batchewana Bay in the north to Thessalon in the east, the local birders have risen to the occasion and have put in over 1660 hours with more than 6800 records for a total of 180 species. This is good progress, but we still have quite a bit of work to do to fill in the gaps.

All observations and records that show evidence of birds breeding in the area are welcome, whether you have officially enrolled in the atlas work or not. That includes, among other things, birds courting, making nests or feeding young. Maybe you will have birds nesting in the garden or at the cottage; or flush a bird from its nest when hiking in the woods; or come on a hawk or raven's nest; or flush young birds from a stream or marsh when out fishing. All observations will be most welcome, even if they seem commonplace to you. We would particularly like to have more records for owls and other crepuscular and nocturnal birds, such as nighthawks, whip-poor-wills and woodcocks. Just seeing a bird species or hearing it sing makes it possible that it is breeding here; courting, nesting, or feeding young will actually



photo by
Jack Illingworth

I'm still receiving e-mails from the rules committee for Michigan's mining regulation bill. I'll try to keep everyone informed when the official public comment period commences.

A 90 day public comment period on the US Forest Service's Management Plan alternatives started on March 25th. Chuck Bosley attended the meeting. There are four alternatives which specify the amount of old growth, timber sales, motorized access, etc. Those interested should contact :

FOREST SUPERVISOR'S OFFICE
HIAWATHA NATIONAL FOREST
2727 NORTH LINCOLN RD.
ESCANABA, MI 49829 (906) 786-4062

Contact: Lee Ann Loupe, (906) 789-3329.
Lloupe@fs.f.d.us, fax (906) 789-3311

SAULT STE. MARIE RANGER DISTRICT
4000 I-75 BUSINESS SPUR
SAULT STE. MARIE, MI 49M
Fax: (906) 635-5311.

Anyone interested in being informed about environmental issues should contact me at: ibosket@charter.net. Please send your address and any issues you think are important. I will forward the information to those interested. You may also call me at (906) 635-8367.

Katie Bosket

Current Executive

| | | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| President | Carl Linhart | (906) 635- 9891 | linhartc@yahoo.com |
| Vice-president | Curt Bosket | (906) 635-8367 | ibosket@charter.net |
| Secretary | Gordon Van Midde | (705) 253-9746 | hiataus@hotmail.com |
| Treasurer | Gail Andrew | (705) 942-0768 | g.andrew@shaw.ca |
| Outings | Chuck Bosley | (906) 248-3287 | cbosley@lighthouse.net |
| | Evelyn Simon | (705) 949-8206 | |
| Programs | John Lehman | (906) 635-5095 | jlehman@lssu.edu |
| Bird Observations | Ken McIlwrick | (705) 541-5643 | kmcilwri@nrca.gc.ca |
| Archivists | Gladys and Cliff Wallwork | (705) 779-3098 | |
| Membership | Carrie Ginou | (705) 942-0715 | cginou@ekit.com |
| Publicity | Tracey Latulippe | (705) 842-1929 | t_latulippe@ducks.ca |
| Environmental Action | Katie Bosket | (906) 635-8367 | ibosket@charter.net |
| Newsletter | Betty & Gerry Bennett | (705) 254-7214 | bengerbet@shaw.ca |
| Botanical Records | Sue Meades | (705) 777-0496 | sjmeades@sympatico.ca |
| Telephone Convener | Mary Ryckman | (705) 253-6352 | |
| F.O.N. Rep. and Properties Steward | Tony Walker | (705) 759-6151 | anthonywalk@shaw.ca |
| M.A.S. Rep. | Chuck Bosley | (906) 248-3287 | cbosley@lighthouse.net |
| Web Page Maintenance | Don Hall | (705) 248-1834 | don.hall2@sympatico.ca |

Outing Report

Naomikong Creek, May 1, 2005.

Eight naturalists embarked on an outing to Naomikong Creek to search for skunk cabbage and other early Spring flora. Because the outing announcement didn't make it into the newsletter, the participants included only Internet-savvy naturalists, as well as those of us who are still jogging along the shoulder of the Information Superhighway.

Our arrival at the trailhead was brightened by a rare appearance of the sun, which warmed our spirits despite the frigid thirtyish (zeroish to Canadian naturalists) temperature. We did find numerous young skunk cabbage plants alongside a long boardwalk, but the spadices of some of them had been, mysteriously, ripped out. After a learned discussion of this phenomenon, Betty speculated that bears had eaten them. When we found no bear footprints, it was suggested that the bears must have taken the boardwalk. We encountered many other early spring plants, including Dutchman's breeches, marsh marigold, trailing arbutus, and Betty's favorite plant, bastard toadflax. Chuck and Evelyn also



Skunk Cabbage - from the Poisonous Plants Homepage of the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine

identified some interesting mosses and Plants Homepage of the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine club-mosses, including stiff club-moss *Lycopodium annotinum*, stair-step moss *Hylocomium splendens*, and feather moss *Ptilium cristacastrensis*.

During our walk the sun had disappeared and ominous clouds appeared overhead, and shortly after we sat down for lunch we were pelted with hail, which was followed by a cold northerly wind. After a brisk walk to the trail's end at the parking lot,

we drove to a Brimley restaurant to warm up with a hot drink. Most of the naturalists ordered hot chocolate topped with a large dollop of whipped cream, causing Betty to wonder about the origin of the word "dollop." This led to a confession by Ron that he had actually meant to order a "trollolop" but was misunderstood, after which the conversation degenerated. Despite the nasty weather this was a very enjoyable and educational outing, ably conducted by our leaders, Chuck and Evelyn.

John Lehman

Outing Guidelines

- **Please register for all outings** by calling the trip leader or an outing committee member. Phone numbers are listed in the outing schedule. Non-registrants are welcome but risk being uninformed of last minute outing changes.
- Please keep in mind that leaders are volunteers giving freely of their time and expertise.
- Dress for the weather and terrain with appropriate clothing and footwear. Be prepared for sudden weather changes (Depending on the season bring rain gear or extra warm clothing.) Bring snacks, water, binoculars, loupes, field guides, etc. For daylong excursions, bring a lunch, and extra water.
- Take only photographs; leave only footprints. Leave pets at home. Take out all garbage. Limited collecting of non-endangered and non-threatened plant specimens for further study may be allowed with permission of the leader, but in general no picking.
- Refer all questions and requests for transportation to the trip leader or a member of the outing committee.
- If carpooling, consider assisting the driver with gas costs (see below).
- Participants in outings do so at their own risk.

Ease up on the Environment (and the Cost) - Try Car Pooling -

It is recommended that members use car pooling for outings and transportation to meetings. With the price of gasoline continuing to increase, the cost to the driver is getting to be significant. A 100 km trip can cost between C\$8.00 and C\$12.00, plus wear and tear. Some members have suggested that riders should consider subsidizing the driver to about \$0.10 per mile (\$0.06 per km).

Call for Submissions

Help us make your newsletter more interesting. If you have stories, jokes, poems, photos etc of interest to other naturalists - please send them in by e-mail or snail mail.

We are always in need outing reports. Please try to keep outing reports to about a ½ page summary of where you went, what you did and what you learned. There is no need to get too technical but a little humor will be greatly appreciated.

The editors

Is your membership up-todate?

If in doubt ask Carrie at cginou@ekit.com