



sault
naturalists

Sault Naturalists
of
Ontario and Michigan

FALL NEWSLETTER 2012



Sault Naturalists

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The President's Message

I've only been president for 8 months but I must say it's been quite an eye-opener. I've long thought of our club as small and "flying under the radar", but I'm learning that we are actually quite well known and well respected on both the Michigan and Ontario sides. There is a steady stream of requests for support of various sorts, and no end to the things we could be involved in.

Requests have been coming in for help searching for new breeding locations for the Kirtland's Warbler, a threatened species which nests almost exclusively in Michigan. We will not be pursuing this for spring 2013, but the possibilities for future years are quite exciting.

There have been several Hub Trail-related opportunities as well. With Tony Walker at the helm, we are working through the painstaking process of having interpretive signs placed at interesting spots along the trail. The signs will be designed by club members, including several children.

We are currently considering a request by the Sault Ste. Marie Region Conservation Authority to help with the design of a proposed boardwalk and viewing platform at Mark's Bay, near the airport on the Ontario side.

The list goes on, and each item demands careful consideration. I'm coming to see that there is plenty of interesting work to be done, and our only real limitation is availability of people willing to take on challenging and interesting tasks.

Our high profile stems, in part, from the tireless efforts of John Lehman and Val Walker. Thanks to webmaster John, people new to the area, or just developing an interest in natural things, can find us on the web, and then Val's wonderful selection of outings offers a friendly and upbeat introduction to the club.

Many thanks to Flo MacLeod and Bill Purnis for, compiling and editing this newsletter. More willing workers like Flo and Bill are needed! The Program Committee (which arranges the speakers for monthly meetings) is adopting a "divide and conquer" approach, seeking new members. Many hands lighten the load.

The interesting and challenging tasks are many. If you are able to help out, or if you have any ideas as to how the club might better be of service, please contact any member of the executive committee.

Don Hall

BIRDING MONHEGAN ISLAND IN MAINE

After five exciting days in May in Ohio (across Lake Erie from Point Pelee, Ontario) enjoying *The Biggest Birding Week in America*, Flo and I travelled to Ottawa to bid a final farewell to Flo's aunt Flora passing at 103.

Then it had been decision time...back to the Soo or another 12 hours to south-eastern Maine for more birding. Nestled 16k from the nearest mainland, Monhegan Island, similar to Mackinac but even smaller, called to us. Pegged at 75 year-round residents in 2010, it is a summer haven for artists drawn there by the breakers of the Atlantic pounding against the rugged 50m northern cliffs.

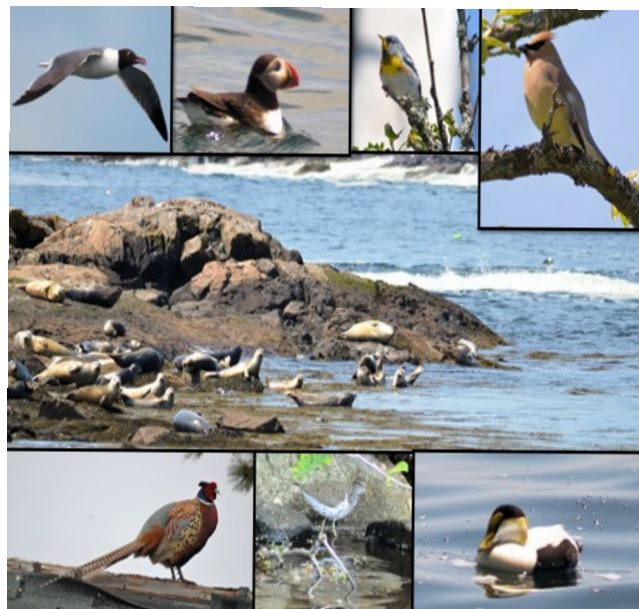
Accessible by boat only and lying amidst the coastal flyway for the spring migration, Monhegan provides a perfect setting for birders. So with the other 20 in our tour with Road Scholars (formerly Elderhostel), we settled into Monhegan House, opened in 1870 and run continuously as a summer guesthouse. The bottom two floors have been completely renovated with preparations started for the top level. And since Monhegan House wouldn't open for the season to the public until the day we left the island, we assisted in training staff for their upcoming busy season.

All of the island is privately owned with permission granted for visitors to use the 17k of trails. I particularly enjoyed the signs at the beginning of all the trails as one leaves the village..."NO SMOKING PAST THIS POINT"...survival for the island in the dry season as one spark fanned by the ever present winds would destroy all of the woodlands.

What a great place to get in shape!!! Walk here...walk there...walk, walk everywhere!!!

Oh how the muscles ached by the end of each day. Of course exercise and fresh sea air combined for great sleeps...revitalizing the body for the 5 a.m. wake-ups for the pre-breakfast birding walk.

We observed many new species there including the blue grosbeak which had eluded us on both trips to Ohio...and such close-up sightings...totally awesome!!!



by **Bill Purnis**

NOTICE OF SPECIAL EVENT

Date: Friday, Nov 2

Leaders: Don and Vivian Hall, (705) 248-1834

Meet: 6:00 pm, Wellington Square Mall

Pot-luck and Movie Night – Pot-lucks are always delicious, and naturalists will certainly enjoy the "The Big Year" with Steve Martin, Jack Black and Owen Wilson. Location – Don and Vivian's place, near Echo Bay. Please call ahead.

Outing Report June 9, 2012

I always wonder, at the start of each new Sault Naturalists hike, what will be the highlight of the hike. Birds, flowers, friends, scenery and jocularly have all been highlights as we have tramped through the fields and forests of Sault Set Marie and its surroundings. So at the beginning of the hike on June 9th, as I looked over the participants, I guessed that perhaps Ron might try out some new language he had been learning, or perhaps Evelyn might make some ribald remark that would carry us through the hike with laughter and fun. Val often makes insightful comments that reveal her hidden talents and we learn a new idea or plant. Bob brings useful skills at plant identification, while Carol usually asks good questions. Two newcomers to the hike Gillen and Sheryl, represented unknown talents.

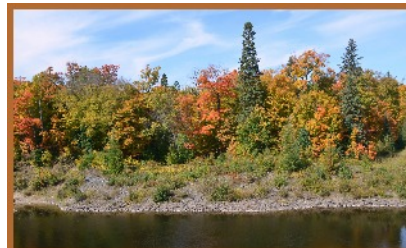
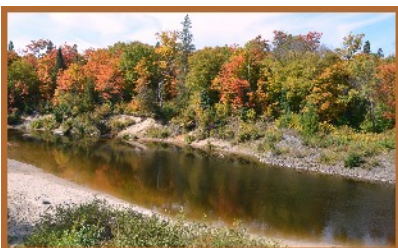
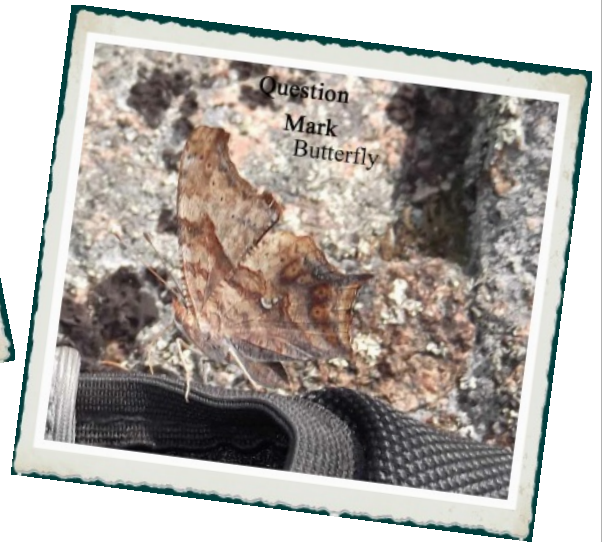


What then would be the highlight of this hike on the Gros Cap extension of the Voyageur Trail, just off Marshall Drive, east of the Sault? Several candidate highlights could qualify. The pink fleabane at the start, looking lovely in the small clearing at the start of the Trail. The Seals, both Solomon's and False Solomon were interesting as we walked through the rich forest at the start of the trail. Rosy was there as well, Rosy Twisted Stalk always lights up my life with her little discrete flowers hidden under her low hanging branches. The singing thrushes Veery and Hermit made life beautiful for all of us as we listened to their attempt to claim their very own territory. There was also a puzzle, what were those little red dots on the maple leaves??? (After the hike I learned there were probably made by mites, a small "bug" but not an insect.)

Finding the highlight of a trip is difficult, however, after some reflection I think our lunch break looking out over Lake Superior, enjoying a light breeze off the lake, thinking about coreopsis, bastard toadflax, question mark butterflies, broadwing hawks and the company of fellow naturalists who appreciate the natural world was great. It was the highlight of a very nice tramp through the forest, captured in



by Dave Euler



the Goulais river September 28th

NEDSA - GLOM was held in our city!

Wide-eyed and somewhat stunned to see ten grown men simultaneously swiping the air ten feet above them (barely missing each other) with long-handled huge white nets, I learned that *Odonata* (rhymes with dayta) means *Dragonfly*. These often brilliantly coloured prehistoric looking creatures were the subject of the Northeastern Dragonfly Society of the Americas and Great Lakes Odonata Meeting which was held here this year.

These men and women came from many of our surrounding states and provinces to get a look at some of the rare and endemic species of Dragonfly and Damselfly which inhabit northern Ontario. In most of the cases when an insect was photographed, and no worse for wear, let go to fly off and multiply. Our intrepid members, Evelyn Simon, Carl Linehart, Val Walker, and yours truly, got up for the Saturday and Sunday field trips and spent the day (til late in the evening in some cases) in the car of one of these highly knowledgeable Odonatists. So knowledgeable, as a matter of fact, that identification of some of these wonderful creatures could be made on the wing. Even as their terminal appendages differentiate one species from another.



Pictured here is Somatochlora cingulata, Lake Emerald one of the rare species that were id'd.

We learned that Clubtails have eyes that do not meet like in the other families. Darners are large bodied with huge eyes that meet at the top of the head. Spiketails have black and yellow bodies and eyes that only meet at a single point. Emeralds have bright green eyes that are jewel-like. Skimmers are the most ubiquitous family and are seen over ponds and rivers.

Sunday evening, some of the group went on to spend Monday in Wawa. For full coverage, a list of species, photos, and a write up of the Wawa trip, go to Bryan Pfeiffer's blog:

<http://www.dailywing.net/2012/07/13/in-the-wind-of-boreas-dsa-glom-wrap-up/>

This is most of the group of highly talented individuals. Birders plus botanists, plus entomologists in their own right. One chap told me that he had discovered a rare odonata species that was named after him. Bob DuBois, author of *Damselflies of the North Woods*, was one of the participants.

Our convoy was stopped abruptly when a small mammal crossed the road. Our driver (without getting out of the car) yelled out the scientific name of the creature. Everybody piled out. Many photographs taken.



Plants and butterflies were all identified by scientific name. A worthwhile, if not a somewhat daunting experience, even though much of the time was spent with wet legs from traipsing up and down the various tributaries of the Goulais and other rivers. Long days, to the point that this old dude was too exhausted to attend presentations on Saturday evening.

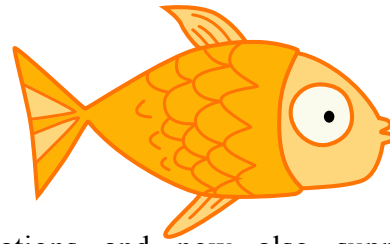
by Robert Cohen



Searchmont
Highway
September 2012



Sault Naturalists and Zone 10 Fishing Regulations



Over the past three years the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) has used stakeholder consultative committees (councils) to guide changes in fishing regulations. Valerie Walker and Harvey Robbins (as alternate) are participating on behalf of the Sault Naturalists.

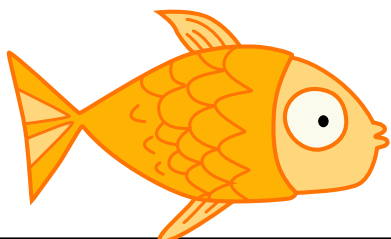
Fish populations in Zone 10 (running from Wawa almost to Temagami but excluding Great lakes waters) are in a constant flux. Many lake trout populations have been in decline as a result of over-fishing and in response the Zone 10 regulations for this species have been reduced to 2 per day with only one larger fish permitted.

One of the significant threats to Zone 10 sport-fish populations is the introduction and spread of species into non-native waters. Examples are the purposeful introduction of smallmouth bass over many years and the more recent accidental introduction of yellow perch (an illegal baitfish) and exotic and native minnow and other species beyond their native range. The sport-fish most at risk from these introductions is the brook (speckled) trout and to a lesser extent, the aforementioned lake trout. The Zone 10 council is addressing smallmouth bass regulations and will tackle brook trout regulations next.

Smallmouth bass are native to much of eastern North America from the southern Appalachians west to the Mississippi River drainage and north to the southern edge of Northern Ontario. In Zone 10 they were originally native to the Great Lakes and their tributaries usually up to the first significant waterfalls. They move back into this region upon the retreat of the glaciers as the weather warmed permitting successful spawning of this cool-water species. They arrived too late to access the myriad of lakes in Zone 10 and northward above the first significant rapids and waterfalls. But being a renowned sport-fish for their fighting ability, they have been widely introduced above these barriers throughout the southern half of Northern Ontario into waters that traditionally held walleye, lake trout and brook trout. Two well-known lakes in this category include Chiblow and Wakomata, both of which have excellent lake trout

populations and now also support significant smallmouth sport fisheries. But these lakes are large and have a varied habitat with room for both species to co-exist. It is the many smaller lakes containing brook trout where a significant problem occurs. The arrival of smallmouth bass, perch, rockbass or sunfish into a brook trout lake is the end of the native trout population with the introduced species quickly consuming the young trout. The problem with all of these non-native species is that, once above natural barriers, they quickly spread throughout the watershed into the brook trout lakes where they are not wanted. And climate change is helping them to do this. As our summers get hotter, the lakes and especially rivers become warmer further favouring these warm water invaders over the native trout.

With this scenario in mind, the Zone 10 council has proposed regulations for smallmouth bass that attempt to do two things; firstly, to ensure a continued trophy smallmouth bass fishery in the southern part of the Zone (south of Hwy 17) where the native populations are mostly located. In the vast region north of Hwy 17, there is a need to suppress smallmouth bass populations and to prevent their spread along with other non-native species. One way to do this is to protect the few large bass present (as bass can be cannibalistic) while removing as many of the smaller ones as possible. **Look for bass fishing regulation changes in these waters that will help to do this-the details of which are yet to be approved by the MNR.** And then perhaps, we will also see some changes in bait-fishing regulations that will slow the introduction of other exotics. Still to be addressed is the problem of the use of live baitfish in waters other than where they were captured and the continued illegal transfer of smallmouth bass and rockbass in new watersheds. This usually occurs in small warmer lakes where there is no self-sustaining trout population. The zone 10 council still has much to do to address these and other fisheries management issues.



by Harvey Robbins

Partnering with Pancake Bay

This summer Sault Naturalists partnered with the Natural Heritage Education (NHE) staff at Pancake Bay Provincial Park to offer two special interpretive events for park visitors. The idea worked well, and we may expand upon it next year.

The morning of July 23, Don and Vivian Hall, Christopher Zayachowski, and Mara & Brittney from the NHE staff worked together on an event called "*What is that Crazy Bird that Wakes Me Up Every Morning??*" an introduction to half a dozen common campground bird songs. Before hiking to find the birds we studied recorded songs around a picnic table, and two of the recordings (White-throated Sparrow and Red-eyed Vireo) elicited responses from nearby birds. We had to minimize disturbance to the birds of course, but this offered a great opportunity to see the birds close up and discuss the reasons why birds sing.

Encouraged by one successful event, we quickly planned another - a tree identification outing for July 28. This time we began by studying leaves around the picnic table, followed by a hike to find the trees. The visitors were really interested. There were prizes for all the kids who found trees and of course, all the kids found trees!

Special thanks to 10 year old Christopher for his help with leading the bird outing. His enthusiasm rubbed off on the other children, and his knowledge of birds was reassuring to novice adults ... If a 10 year old can recognize bird songs, so can I!

With two successful interpretive events under our belts, discussions are under way for more activities next summer. This is an opportunity to be of service, spread the good word about nature appreciation and promote the club to young families. If you would like to be involved in activities like this next year, please let someone on the executive committee know.



by Don Hall

Long-time Point Pelee birder, **Andrew Aitken**, has enrolled in the Fish and Wildlife Program at Sault College. He will be putting his birding skills to good use! As the photos show, Andrew has been an active club member for many years. Good luck in your studies, Andrew!



in 2004



in 2008

THE THOMAS TREE FARM: A family dream realized

by Ralph and Carol Thomas

In 1996 a quarter section, (160 acres) of land was purchased. This property was approximately 105 acres wooded. None of the remainder had been broken up for at least 25 years, although 35 acres were being cut for hay/weeds annually. The only building was the remains of a collapsed barn.

A goal was established to reforest the cleared area as an environmental statement and contribution.

Economically it only appeared feasible if lumber prices were to rise dramatically in the next 50 years. The family was in full support. (Also it gave an excuse to buy a tractor.)

The plan was for planting to be completed in ten years. It took eleven. The first planting was done in 1997 with the last section completed in 2008. The next two years saw an additional 100 trees purchased as fill-ins bringing the total trees planted to over 5700!

From the beginning, it was a family exercise. The first weekend in May became a tradition as tree planting weekend and a great family get together when four daughters, their spouses and kids arrived from across the province to take part.

An average of 5000 trees were planted that weekend, rain or shine. The work could be accomplished in one day, but was usually spread over two days. Planting methods varied: in worked up land, furrows, or undisturbed soil. Experience has shown that the trees got a better start and caught on better if planted in disturbed soil.

Trees were mostly supplied by New North Greenhouses. White pines, red pines and white spruce make up the bulk of the numbers although red oaks, hard maples, black spruce and a few white elm were added to the mix.

Grass was the greatest enemy to the young seedlings. Control was attempted by grandchildren on a riding mover and by Roundup. The herbicide use was the lesser of two evils. Kill the grass or it would crowd out many of the little trees. On- going maintenance involves pruning for white pine weevil and double leaders on the spruce. Already the first red pine are tall enough so that the lower

branches have been removed to improve the future quality of the lumber.

Trees were planted mostly on a two metre grid, close enough that the trees will grow to the light rather than develop a wide base of branches. In eighteen to twenty years every third row will be cut for pulpwood. After a further twenty years, another row will be removed leaving one third of the originals for lumber or hydro poles. Maturity will be seventy plus years.

No trees are planted to become Christmas trees. The only sale has been twenty-one, six foot spruce for transplanting on Manitoulin Island!

A managed Forest Plan was established to obtain a seventy-five percent reduction in property tax. However, much of this saving is reduced by the cost of establishing the plan and the cost of periodic inspections.

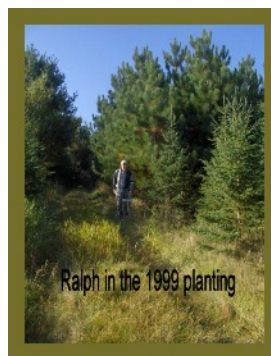
No government assistance was available at the time to offset any costs, not even GST or PST. The province did come up with a plan for assistance , a year before our completion, but the conditions made it unfeasible at that time.

We were required to state our objectives within the Managed Forest Plan. They are:

- to maintain the health and variety of all species
- to maintain the diversity and habitat of wildlife
- to provide for recreation and wildlife viewing.

The property has been posted against hunting, but not against trespassing, as hiking is encouraged.

Now we watch the trees grow. The grandchildren can solve future problems.



***look for the Thomas's tree farm on the south side of Highway 17E between Bruce Mines and Thessalon**

The Hub Trail Challenge

The Hub Trail is a wonderful new addition to the Sault Ontario landscape. To promote use of the trail and encourage people to walk or cycle rather than taking the car, the Sault Trails Action Committee staged a “Hub Trail Challenge” on July 1. The weather was cooperative, and hundreds of people were out on the trail, some making their way, self-propelled, to the Canada Day celebrations at the Bondar Pavilion. Many local organizations contributed to the event in one way or another. The Sault Naturalists wrote two articles to help promote the event in the “Challenge Magazine” and also organized and ran a “Nature on the Hub” challenge on the Fort Creek section. As people approached Fort Creek from either the north or south they encountered one of our “information stations”. At the station, through checking out our posters or chatting with club members they picked up the knowledge needed to answer nature-related questions they would later encounter along the trail. They then picked up an answer card, did the challenge and dropped off the card at the other end of the Fort Creek section.

Later at the Bondar Pavilion, participants had a chance to win one of several prizes donated by club members.

This was an excellent opportunity for the Sault Naturalists to “spread the good word” about natural things,

By Don Hall

Coffee Break Thoughts

On an outing last spring, Dave Euler took us to a spot where a male Wood Thrush was singing on territory. This was the first Wood Thrush I had heard locally in several years, though I recall they were quite easy to find about 25 years ago. Why the change? According to the book “Silence of the Songbirds” the answer may lie in changing coffee growing practices in Central and South America, where many of our favourite birds spend the winter.

The author, Bridget Stutchbury, devotes an entire chapter to the importance of buying coffee that has been grown in the shade. Shade-grown coffee is a bit more expensive and difficult to find than the regular supermarket varieties.



I always assumed that shade-grown coffee is more expensive because growing coffee in the shade is more difficult. Not so! The best tasting coffee, *Coffea arabica* prefers to grow in the shade, and it has been grown that way for centuries. Only in the last 30 years have multi-national corporations taken to clear-cutting tropical forests and farming the more bitter tasting, sun-grown *Coffea canephora*. These monocultures require high inputs of fertilizers, herbicides, fungicides and insecticides but they allow a harvest of 30% more coffee per acre, and the trees start producing at a younger age.

Translation – lower prices.

The damage these new farming practices have done to biodiversity and songbird populations is appalling. Shade grown coffee plantations are not natural forests; they consist of perhaps 6 or 8 tree species, all of which have value to the farmer. Coffee grows in the shade of taller trees that produce a year-round harvest of fruit, nuts, construction materials, fence posts and firewood. Though not quite as valuable as natural forest, these plantations are very good habitat for the migratory birds we so treasure including (you guessed it) the Wood Thrush. Plantations are important reservoirs of biodiversity – the canopy of just *one* tree was found to be home to 27 species of ants, 61 different bees and wasps and 100 species of beetles!

Wood Thrushes, American Redstarts, Black-and-white Warblers, Black-throated Blue Warblers, Kentucky Warblers, Baltimore Orioles and more than 100 non-migratory tropical birds all thrive in shade coffee plantations.

Coffee drinkers, hundreds of millions of us, are a powerful force for saving biodiversity in tropical countries and giving our migrants a safe haven for the winter. Let’s search for and publicize good sources of shade-grown coffee. If you find a good spot to shop for good coffee please let me know; I will assemble a list and include it in an upcoming newsletter.

by Don Hall

Outing Report July 22, 2012

Summer flowers bloom best in the heat and our first Outing to document plants along the Hub Trail was a prime example of a hot, but beautiful summer day. At 10:00 AM when we started, it was still cool, but we knew that the cool would not last long. By noon it was 30 C. and time to retreat to a cool house, in this case Gail Andrew's.

Identifying wild flowers, getting their names spelled correctly, ensuring that the scientific name is accurate is enjoyable, even on a hot day, and opens the door to how flowers are classified and why they have certain names. Nature is revealed in the organization and evolutionary history of these plants.



The four of us on the Outing had a good time. We didn't get very far up the trail because there were so many species of plants to identify, and then discuss how to pronounce their names. Do you say "Viper's Buglos" or "Viper's Blueglos" the common name for *Echium vulgare*? What is the difference between "Chickweed" and "Stitchwort", and how can you tell the difference?

By 12:30 we were finished with the list, which contained 31 species of plants. Then just before we left the Trail we were about 50 meters from the cars and wanted to identify one more plant, hopeful an unusual one, before we left. The image of the last plant to record that day would stay in our minds until the next outing. And the last plant we identified was Hoary Plantain, *Plantago media*, a close relative of the common Common Plantain (*Plantago major*) that exists in many yards in Sault Ste Marie.

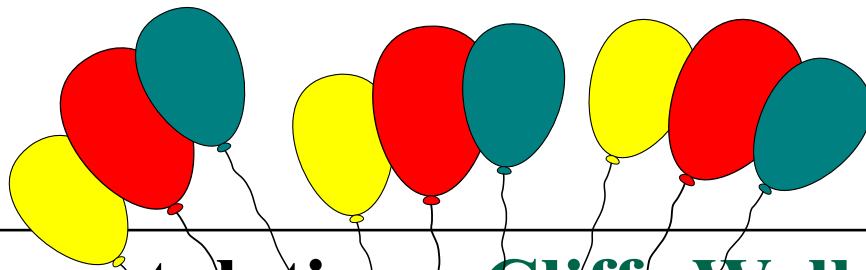
The plant list for the day is attached. To learn more about plants in Northern Ontario, check out the Northern Ontario Plant Database website located at www.northernontarioflora.ca.

by **Dave Euler**

Plant List for the Hub Trail

Agromony		
<i>Agromony gryposepaia</i>	X	Plantain, Common
Basil, wild		<i>Plantago major</i>
<i>Clinopodium vulgare</i>	X	Plantain, Hoary
Barley, Foxtail		<i>Plantago media</i>
<i>Hordeum jubetum</i>	X	Primrose, Evening
Burdock, Common		<i>Oenothera biennis</i>
<i>Arctium minus</i>	X	Redtop
Buttercup, Tall		<i>Agrostis alba</i>
<i>Ranunculus acris</i>	X	Ragweed, Common
Clover, Red		<i>Ambrosia artemisiifolia</i>
<i>Trifolium pratense</i>	X	Sow-thistle, common
Daisy, Oxeye		<i>Sonchus oleraceus</i>
<i>Chrysanthemum leucanthemum</i>	X	Jewelweed, Orange
Dock, Curled		<i>Impatiens capensis</i>
<i>Rumex crispus</i>	X	St. John's Wort, common
Fleabane, Daisy		<i>Hypericum perforatum</i>
<i>Erigeron annuus</i>	X	Stitchwort, lesser
Goldenrod, Canada		<i>Stellaria graminea</i>
<i>Solidago canadensis</i>	X	Thistle, Bull
Goldenrod, Rough Stemmed		<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>
<i>Solidago rugosa</i>	X	Strawberry, Common
Hawkweed, Orange		<i>Fragaria virginiana</i>
<i>Hieracium aurantiacum</i>	X	Timothy
Orchard Grass		<i>Phleum pratense</i>
<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	X	Treefoil, Birdsfoot
Queen Ann's Lace		<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>
<i>Daucus carota</i>	X	Vetch, cow
Pineapple Weed		<i>Vicia cracca</i>
Matricaria		Viper's Buglos
<i>matricarioides</i>	X	<i>Echium vulgare</i>
Pink, Deptford		
<i>Dianthus armeria</i>	X	





Congratulations, Cliffe Wallwork!

On July 9 the club hosted a celebration in honour of a great milestone, Cliffe Wallwork's 90th birthday! The party was held outdoors (where else?) at Cliffe's place, with decorations hanging from towering white spruce trees that Cliffe himself planted back in his younger days. Some 2 dozen people shared the celebration with Cliff and Gladys, telling stories and enjoying Cliff's special day. Thanks for the many contributions of refreshments, food and goodies, all contributing to a memorable celebration.

The Wallworks are among the club's best known and most loved members. They have been wonderful role models for many a novice naturalist. Thanks, Cliffe and Gladys for all your years of support, and helping to make the club what it is today!

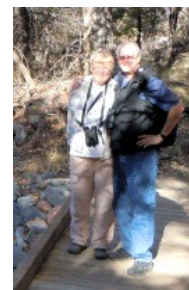


Birding in Arizona ...January 2012

I realize that winter never really showed up in Algoma this year. But Flo and I had assumed that January would rear its ugly head with significant dumps and cold temperatures especially with that nasty wind-chill factored in.

So when our birding friends from Tennessee invited us down to southern Arizona for a week...or up to two months...how could we just say “no” and then have to explain such irrational thoughts to our *snowbird* friends in Florida, Texas, and Arizona...and besides we didn't have to drive there or rent a car during our stay.

So January 8th we flew to Tucson, were met by our friends, and arrived in Green Valley by mid-afternoon. So after meeting Lily, the cat, and toasting to a safe flight, we gathered our chairs around the back window and waited...toasted again and waited some more. Then the show began...first a Gila woodpecker, then some white-crowned sparrows, but then an odd-looking one...a Gambel's quail...then another...and another...hopped onto the brick outer wall then down to the feeders...back to the wall...back to the feeders...then up to the leafy tree in front of the window. At dawn, they flew down to the feeders...up on the walls...and away until time to repeat their evening ritual.



So our shocker came each morning when the sunrise temperatures hovered around 2 °C ...that was supposed to be the exceptional winter high in the Soo...but, of course, Green Valley is desert and high altitude(908m)...so dress in layers as it could rise to 20-28°C by noon. Our birding friends naturally awoke before sunrise. We had watched the bird show, had had our coffee and breakfast, and were hitting the road before anyone in the neighbourhood had ventured out to retrieve the morning daily.

Day 2 of our trip...off to the *Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum*...a world-renowned zoo, natural history museum, and botanical garden...all in one place. With over 3 km. of trails on the 10 hectare grounds, we could, on a good day, encounter more than 300 animal species and 1200 varieties of plants. Two special timed demonstrations caught our interest: a) first indoors with a gila monster...scary in itself...but then followed with a rattle snake...only then did we learn that there are 18 types of these in Arizona. And would you believe that for the first time with this handler the snake had slithered off the table and out of sight. Of course, the girls immediately began to squirm, and fidget and then wanted to vacate the building a.s.a.p. assuming the worst. But actually the rattler had been pinned down by an assistant...out of our sight. Then b) the hawks...4 or 5 magnificent Harris hawks swooping and perching around the 500+ spectators under the control of their masters...a truly magnificent experience...and what a photo op!!!

Day 3...over to *Madera Canyon* nestled in the Santa Rita mountains. Many new sparrow species greeted us in the lower regions. Then as we ascended, the pristine vista beckoned us to enjoy the pure but thinning air and the Mexican Jays, Acorn Woodpeckers, and Lesser Goldfinches...awesome!!!

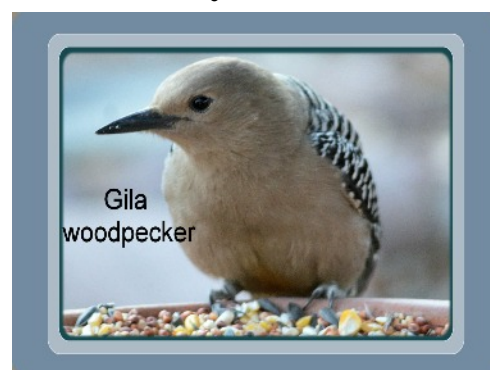
On our final full day in the Green Valley area, we left in the early hours to travel south to Cienega, near the Mexican border and home to the *Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge*. Every Saturday at 8 o'clock, the Tucson Audubon Society leads birding tours through these rare desert wetlands. To our surprise, the leader that morning was a friend of ours that we had met on our first birding tour in Iceland a few years ago...such a small world. At this higher altitude, there was a solid coating of ice on all of the ponds... but as the sun rose we warmed, the birds stirred, and by noon our count was almost 40 species...excellent for wintertime.

The next day our friends drove us around the mountains to Sierra Vista (altitude 1400m)...the hummingbird capitol in the summer. For the next five days, sixteen of us, birders, travelled with our two leaders around that area.

We often see Sandhill cranes in Algoma...occasionally in the hundreds in the late summer as they gather for their flight south. But on our first outing, we passed through the snow-dusted Chiricahua mountains to Sulphur Springs valley and its *White Water Draw*, a protected area and winter home for about 30000 Sandhills...especially magnificent around noon watching the flocks returning from their morning feeding frenzies in nearby fields.

Over the last four days, we hit many of the area hotspots...slower in January as most species move further south...and not as colourful as during mating season. But we did have relatively close-up views of over 110 species.

by Bill Purnis



REMAINING PROGRAMS FOR 2012

October 9, 2012, 7:30 pm, Great Lakes Forestry Centre

Dr. Steve Roedde, a local physician who took part in an international crossing of the Atlantic by rowboat, will present **Crossing the Atlantic by Rowboat**. Steve will discuss his experiences and relate how the crew experienced the crossing in a variety of difficult weather conditions. In January 2011, Dr. Steve Roedde, and his son, Nigel Roedde were part of an international crew of 16 who attempted to break the 33-day record for unsupported east-west trans-Atlantic crossing by rowboat. They were in a specially designed catamaran called Big Blue. Their vessel took to the water in Agadir, Morocco, and made its way to Tarafaya, Morocco where the record attempt started. Big Blue had six rowing spots and crew members had to row around the clock in shifts, battling sleep deprivation, dehydration and physical exhaustion. This will be an interesting and fascinating account of the voyage, the interactions among the crew and the result of attempting to break the record.

November 13, 2012, 7:30 pm, Great Lakes Forestry Centre

Harvey Robbins will present **Birds, Animals and Flowers of Patagonia & Iguacu Falls**. From the cold and windy extremes of Patagonia to the sub-tropical Shangri-la of Iguacu Falls, you will marvel at the exotic and unusual birds, animals and flowers of the South American land below. The adaptations of life to a harsh environment are contrasted with life in a sub-tropical paradise. And all this is to be found in a scenic wilderness like no other from the mountains and glaciers of the Andes to the world's most beautiful waterfall. Learn about the Magellan penguin, nandu, condor, guanaco, southern beech and butterflies and birds of the rainforest.

December 13, 2012, 7:30 pm, Central United Methodist Church

Our Annual Holiday get-together, **Nature on the Net**, will feature some of the amazing short nature videos that are available on the internet. Members are encouraged to send their short nature videos or links (5 minutes or less) to carrie@ginou.ca where Carrie will compile them for the December meeting. Contributors will be invited to introduce their video clip and explain why it captured their imagination. Come and enjoy the company of your fellow naturalists in a celebratory and congenial atmosphere - refreshments will be served!



REMAINING OUTINGS FOR 2012

Sat Oct 13	Dave Euler (705) 248-1494	10 am Bottom of Finn Hill (McNabb & Black Rd)	Plants on the Hub Trail- We started a plant list this summer on the Hub Trail. Once we have a reasonably comprehensive list, we can use it for public events that we might want to sponsor. Nature walks for the general public, for example, might be fun. This will be our second excursion to work on the list of plants that flower in the fall, and which can be identified by their post-flowering structure. We will also look for other wildlife on the trail as part of future educational opportunities. We'll meet at the base of Finn Hill, (corner of McNabb and Black Road) at 10:00 AM and park in the parking lot there. We will inventory as many plants as we can as we walk up the hill, and add to the list. This will be a slow walk on a hard surface. Dress for the weather, bring lunch and your favourite plant book and a camera. After we finish about 3:00 pm, we will stop in at Val Walker's house for coffee and tea, and hopefully some sweet goodies.
Sun Oct 14	Ron Prickett (705) 254-1533 Val Walker (705) 253-7044	10 am Zellers Plaza North	Robertson Cliffs Hike – Experience the fall colours of the Algoma Highlands from this breath-taking vista. It's a steep climb to the top. Approximately 6 km for the loop. Bring a lunch, water, binoculars and sturdy hiking boots. We'll be on watch for the peregrine falcons.
Sat Oct 20	Val Walker (705) 253-7044	10 am Michigan Welcome Center	Monocle Lake Fall Hike- The 6 km hike is moderate in difficulty and includes some uphill climbing. We'll look for fall plants and evidence of wildlife preparing for the winter ahead. Monocle Lake is about 30 km west of Sault, Michigan. Meet at the Michigan Welcome Center to car pool. Bring a lunch & water.
Sat Oct 27	Ron Prickett (705) 254-1533 Val Walker (705) 253-7044	10 am Market Mall	Hike Gros Cap – Come out to see what we have been missing all these years. Some climbing involved. Bring a lunch and binoculars. Permission pending.
Sat Nov 10	Dave Euler (705) 248-1494	10 am Park Canada Parking Lot	Winter Gulls and Winter Birds - November is a good time to look for gulls, ducks and swans that often spend at least part of the winter in the Sault Ste Marie area. We will scout the locks area for gulls and other water birds. Depending on the weather and reports of birds in the area we will check out the river on the Michigan side as well. Dress for the weather, bring lunch and binoculars.
Sun Nov 25	Gayle Philips (705) 942-1891 CHECK	10 am Goodlife Parking Lot	Gales of November Hike- Joint the Saulteaux Voyageur Trail Club for the Annual 'Gales of November' hike. This outing is weather permitting, so please call ahead if snow is in the forecast. Bring a lunch & water.
Sat Dec 8	Ron Prickett (705) 254-1533 Val Walker (705) 253-7044	10 am Wellington Square Mall	Tower Lake Hike – Hike the rolling hills behind Sylvan Valley. Bring lunch & water.
Sat Dec15	Annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count. Take part in observing and recording birds in an assigned area or sign up for "feeder watch" at your backyard feeders. For further information call Ken McIlwrick (705) 949-2864		

Campfire Cookery

Welcome to a new newsletter section – a place for readers to share their favourite outdoor recipes. If you enjoy the challenges of cooking over a small stove or an open fire and would like to share your “tricks of the trade” please send your favourites to Viv at donandvivhall@sympatico.ca, or give her a call at (705)248-1834. She will include them in a future newsletter.

Bannock

2 cups flour

½ tsp salt

2 tsp baking powder

2 tbsp of sugar

Water (approximately ¼ cup)

Thoroughly mix all dry ingredients. Make a small indentation in middle and add water, a little at a time, mixing until workable. Knead and form into a ball.

1. This can be pan fried in margarine and served along with main meal, great with chili!

2. Or stretch the dough until thin and wrap around a hot dog and cook over an open fire until golden brown. Make a slit in the cooked dough and add mustard, relish, or ketchup to taste.

3. Or roll into a long rope and twirl around a branch, pressing it flat. Poke branch into ground angled towards fire. Toast until golden brown and yummy. Serve hot with margarine and jam.

This is one of our family's favourite camping breads.

Recipe from Troop Twenty Ladies Auxiliary Boy Scouts Cook Book

Easy Supper for Your First Night out on a Canoe Trip

Place frozen bread dough in large zip lock bag

Let thaw all day as you paddle. By supper time it will have thawed and doubled in size.

Cut into four equal parts and pat out flat with your hands.

Cover half with pasta sauce, pre-grated cheese, pepperoni or your favourite toppings.

Fold in half and squeeze the edges to seal. Panfry in oil or margarine.

Serve hot.

Easy and not a lot of cleanup after a hard day's paddle!

Homemade Energy Bars:

(Tested on a recent Sault Naturalists bike outing)

4 cups oats

4 cups cereal

1 cup each filler (nuts, raisins, chocolate chips, etc.)

2 cups sweetener/binding agent (corn syrup, maple syrup, or agave nectar or brown rice syrup if you shop at Whole Foods)

1 ½ cups peanut butter

Heat the sweetener and peanut butter over medium heat and combine the remaining ingredients in a large mixing bowl. Stir in the heated sweetener mix, pour into a large square pan, and let it cool.

I slice each batch up into 2-inch-by-2-inch squares, each of which delivers about 250 calories and 40 grams of carbs, a perfect dose of energy for 60 minutes on the bike.

Bon appétit!