



sault  
naturalists

**Sault Naturalists  
of  
Ontario and Michigan**

**FALL NEWSLETTER 2014**



### *President's Message*

Hello everyone.

The white stuff has come early this year and may be with us for awhile.

So what do Canadians do? We get out and enjoy what nature dumps on our doorstep. *Join us for our scheduled winter outings.*

If you have any suggestions for an outing by all means contact me or Val Walker. We are always open for new adventures with friends in nature.

***With the snow don't forget the birds!!!***

The Christmas Bird count is coming **Dec20<sup>th</sup>.**

*Ken McIlwrick* has stepped down from organizing the count this year. We very much would like to thank him for the many years he has been doing his excellent work. *Dave Euler and Don Hall* are stepping in to Ken's big shoes this year. If you could help in this count, please drop a line to Dave or Don.

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**The club is busy in many ways behind the scenes as partners with other organizations to help them with whatever projects they have in order to learn more about our landscape which lead to a better understanding of our environment. As such we need your help.**

**We need to have a full Executive Board to help with the day to day operation of the club.**

**We have vacancies in the Vice President, Environmental Action, and Publicity positions.**

*We would also welcome anyone who would like to join the Executive Board to lend a hand when needed.*

**Please drop me a line if you can help in any way. It would lighten the load, thanks.**

**I would like to thank all the volunteer members who help with the Programs, the Outings and who help with all the things that make our club work for its members. Thanks Bill Purnis and Flo MacLeod for putting this newsletter together.**

**Have a great Christmas Holiday and may the New Year be all that you wish it to be. *Remember one great stress reliever is getting out and being at one with Nature.***

**...submitted by president Ron Prickett ([ron\\_prickett@yahoo.ca](mailto:ron_prickett@yahoo.ca))**



# ***SAULT NATURALISTS EXECUTIVE BOARD***

## **President:**

**Ron Prickett**

**(705)254 1533([ron\\_prickett@yahoo.ca](mailto:ron_prickett@yahoo.ca))**

## **Vice-president:**

**vacant**

## **Treasurer:**

**Gail Jones**

**(705)942-0768**

## **Recording Secretary:**

**Donna Ryckman- Rooney**

**(705)945-9821**

## **Membership:**

**Don Hall**

**(705)248-1834**

## **Program Committee Chairperson:**

**Dave Euler**

**(705)248-1494**

## **Field Trips(outings) Coordinator:**

**Valerie Walker**

**(705)253-7044**

## **MAS Reprerentative:**

**Carl Linhart**

**(906)635-9891**

## **Ontario Nature and STAC Reprerentative:**

**Tony Walker**

**(705)759-6151**

## **Archival Coordinator:**

**Mary Ryckman**

## **Environmental Action Coordinator:**

**vacant**

## **Publicity Chairperson:**

**vacant**

## **Member-at-large:**

**Robert Cohen unlisted**

## *A Cultured Outing*

How uncharacteristic for a Sault Nats field trip. No wildflower viewing and identification on this outing. Today we were going to see the carefully cultivated garden of **Dr. Kirk Zewfelt**.

It was a lovely spring day in May when Joy and I were greeted by our smiling leader, Dave. We were joined by Evelyn and Richard, all of us excited about the prospect of what we would see.

Set on Fourth Line, Kirk's house is hidden from the road behind large trees. Entering the driveway we were surrounded by flowers on all sides. Our host was very happy to show us his beautiful species and cultivars, many of which came from as far as Asia.

**glaukidium palmatum**



**trillium kurabayashi**



We paraded up and down the hills and valleys asking various questions about Kirk's creations and habitat requirements. Our host only too happy to answer even the most basic question, such as what the difference is between a specie and a cultivar .

Some of the offerings prefer dry soil, others sunlight or shade. Each item carefully tended with growing requirements met. Many of the plants are exclusive to Dr.Zewfelt, who was keen to tell us about their history and sometimes his interaction with the source.

**anemone nemorosa**



**epimedium grandifloru**



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**helleborus X hybridus**

We looked around the corner of the house to see many work tables, pots and soil mixes. These gardens need a lot of work and a lot of patience.

We bid Kirk adieu with great thanks. He told us to drop in any time to see the garden in changing seasons. We came away with a new appreciation of what it means to be a *compleat gardener*.

**—submitted by Robert D. and S. Joy Cohen**

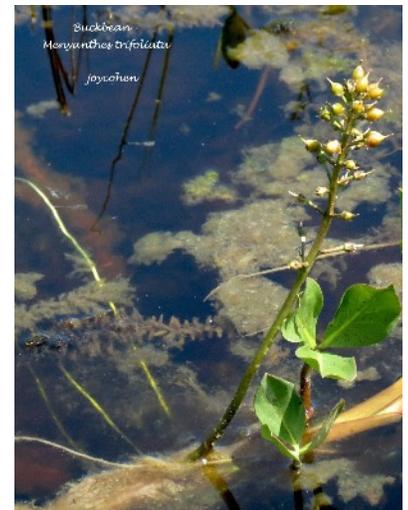


**swamp pink**

**(Goulais River Ridges  
Conservation reserve  
with Sue Meads...2014 07 05)**



**spatulate-leaved sundew**



**buckbean**

**(Dennis Township bog and fen tour  
With Rob Routledge 2014 07 10)**

## **Next June...We're having a BioBlitz-**

**What is a BioBlitz?** --A BioBlitz is a volunteer based biological inventory of a given area. Part community event and part inventory, local scientists, naturalists, and enthusiasts gather on a property with the goal of identifying as many species as possible. Typically, there is a fixed time limit such as 12 or 24 hours for the event. Events can take place on a variety of land types of varying ownership and size including private properties, conservation lands, community forests, parks, and even across entire cities.

**Why have a BioBlitz?** A BioBlitz is a great way to get the community involved in fun, outdoor, educational activities while contributing to the knowledgebase of the natural world in a manner that will be used to make appropriate conservation decisions. Members of the public can expand their knowledge of species identification, the importance of biodiversity, and participate in responsible land stewardship. It is hoped that their participation in such events will help foster an appreciation for nature, encourage community involvement, and even inspire the next generation of scientists, community volunteers, and naturalists.

### **Where is our BioBlitz?**

We are planning the BioBlitz for the Fort Creek Conservation Area next June, watch for the date. We'll set up Taxon Teams to cover birds, reptiles, amphibians, plants, terrestrial insects, aquatic insects and butterflies and moths. Our goal is to identify 500 species and at least one "Species at Risk". You won't want to miss this event, so watch for the date and mark your calendars.

—submitted by **Dave Euler**



## ***2014 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT***

The longest running Citizen Science survey in the world, the annual Christmas Bird Count will take place between December 14, 2014 and January 5, 2015. From Alaska to Antarctica, tens of thousands of volunteers will add a new layer to over a century of data vital to conservation. Scientists rely on these data to better understand how birds and the environment we share are faring. Just like canaries in the coal mine, birds serve as early indicators of problems that can eventually affect people and wildlife. Data from the Christmas count are at the heart of several scientific reports, including Audubon's State of the Birds report that climate change is already having an impact on birds across the continent. Birders and nature enthusiasts in Sault Ste Marie, Ontario and Sault Ste Marie, Michigan will join birders across the western hemisphere and participate in Audubon's longest-running wintertime tradition. The annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC), will be held on **December 20, 2014** in the twin Saults. This year, over 2,000 individual counts are scheduled to take place throughout the Americas and beyond from December 14, 2014 to January 5, 2015. **...submitted by Dave Euler**



# *Ontario Reptile and Amphibian Atlas*

Next spring, we will be looking for snakes, frogs and turtles. The Ontario Reptile and Amphibian Atlas is an opportunity to be part of a Citizen Science project organized by Ontario Nature. The Atlas is a project that includes people throughout the Province who record their observation of both reptiles and amphibians. The observations are then included in an “Atlas” which provides a picture of the range of each species as well as a technique to monitor the rise and fall of their populations. Citizen Science, as the project is called, taps into the activities of people as they hike and observe nature in their daily lives. The overall result is a large body of data, very useful to Government Ministries and scientists who study these important components of our local ecosystems. Get ready for some interesting hikes in our quest to be part of this important project. Maybe we will find another Red Eft like this one.

....see **Dave Euler** for more details and information.



## ***SOS- From Save our Swifts to Support our Swifts***

Well it has been an eventful year. We are learning more and more about the workings of the Ministry of Natural Resources, Federal Wildlife Service and the Government. Here is what we know. Every spring and fall thousands of Chimney Swifts, which are a threatened species, make their way to the giant chimneys of Sault Ste. Marie to roost until favourable conditions prevail for them to disperse throughout the landscape. More Chimney Swifts move through Sault Ste. Marie then all of Quebec. They have for many years roosted in the chimney at the Courthouse. The drama started when the courthouse chimney was capped unbeknownst to all. Fortunately for the Swifts the chimney at the Post Office was available for them or there would have been a disaster in the Swift population. After our formation of the SOS committee and contact with the Ministry, Mr. Oraziotti's office and the Government officials responsible for the Courthouse Chimney the cap was removed from the Chimney. However the Swifts continue to use the Post Office chimney and not the Courthouse. The Superintendent of the Post Office has been contacted and a meeting held to ensure that there are no plans to do any maintenance or construction associated with the chimney. They have been very receptive of their responsibilities towards a threatened species. The MNR has no moneys to investigate the chimneys and the Swift population needs. We have been invited to submit a project proposal with other interested partners to get the data and the visible record of the Swift population in the Sault. We would like as a part of this project to popularize the unique situation we have in Sault Ste. Marie with respect to the survival of the threatened Chimney Swift population. We encourage our members to help in this project and publicize the situation as wide as we can. **We will keep you posted as to the success of our project proposal.**

**Submitted by Ron Prickett ([ron\\_prickett@yahoo.ca](mailto:ron_prickett@yahoo.ca))**

**SOS Committee Reps: Ron Prickett, Val Walker, Dave Euler**

## ***GULLS*...some interesting information**

- The term *gull* refers to a group of 23 North American species of the family *LARIDAE* from the Greek meaning “ravenous sea bird”.
- Gulls usually mate for life but are known to have a divorce rate of 3 to 5%.
- A gull’s feet remain at 0C (32F) degrees while the body stays at 38C (100F).
- Angered gulls yank up grass by the roots to display their aggression.
- The *herring gull* has 63 different calls.
- Gulls can live up to 32 years.
- Gulls have been observed stamping their feet in unison to imitate rainfall tricking earthworms to the surface.
- Unlike most animals, gulls can drink both fresh and salt water thanks to a pair of glands above their eyes designed to flush the salt from their systems through openings in the bill. Gulls prefer fresh water over salt water as processing the salt is an energy-intensive process.
- Adults of many gull species have prominent spots on their bill serving as visual cues to their young. In order to induce adults to regurgitate food, nestlings peck at this spot.
- Some gulls have a small claw halfway up their leg enabling them to sit more securely on high ledges without being blown off.
- Most gulls are “klepto-parasitic”...stealers of food from other birds to feed themselves.
- Gulls have excellent vision...one of the few birds with eyes that can move in their sockets.
- Gulls often drop clams or other hard-shelled mollusks on rock surfaces to break them open...and from the correct height to avoid wasting energy.
- The most common is the ring-billed gull estimated at 3-4 million.
- Gulls can be cannibalistic eating the young of others as well as their own.
- A golf driving range in Springfield, Massachusetts, closed shortly after opening as flocks of gulls mistaking the balls for edible clams dropped them from heights bombarding golfers, motorists, and innocent by-standers.  
...from THE TIDBITS of Grand Forks, North Dakota

### ***CHECK OUT RECENT OUTINGS***

1) go to ***SooNats/Front Page***

3) go to ***Recent Outing Reports***

2) go to ***Outings***

4) ***click on one of the outings (hit the download button and enjoy)***