

# THE QUINTE NATURALIST

The Quinte Field Naturalists Association is affiliated with Ontario Nature, a non-profit organization sponsoring nature education, conservation and research.

## SEPTEMBER



## WASPS! Moving from Fear to Appreciation



*Quinte Field Naturalists*

*Lecture Series*



**Monday, September 23, 2019**

**7:00 p.m.**

**Sills Auditorium**

**Bridge Street United Church,  
Belleville**



Wasp expert, Dr. Thomas Onuferko, will dispel some of the common misconceptions about wasps, describe their ecological and economic importance and introduce some of Eastern Canada's familiar and unusual species.

*All welcome (donations appreciated) ..... Refreshments are served*



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*Please renew your membership if you haven't done so already.*

# A PROBLEM AND AN OPPORTUNITY

**The Problem.** For a variety of reasons we will lose 3 QFN Board members between now and the new year. Currently we have a board of 8 but ideally a club our size should have 10 or more on the board to maintain our current projects. With only 5 on the board we would have to give up many projects because current board members would not have time to continue them.

**The Opportunity.** We have an opportunity to restructure our board. Perhaps it would make more sense to have committees with chairs to look after key tasks. Perhaps our president should be a manager who calls and chairs meetings and is not necessarily someone with a deep knowledge of nature. Many QFN tasks and projects are either short term or are not very onerous. We need volunteers for the many activities QFN undertakes. We can sort out who does what when we know who is willing to help.

Our mandate is to sponsor nature education, conservation and research. In the next few pages you will find some of the things we do to fulfill this mandate. Please help.

## UPCOMING OUTINGS

*By John Lowry*

Join us on September 21st as Terry Sprague introduces us to the wonders of The Pannes of Sandbanks Provincial Park, an unusual flat sandy plain between the coastal dunes and the inland dunes. The tour will run from 10 am to 12 pm with the tour starting from the Dunes Trail parking lot just off County Rd 12 in the County. Those interested in car pooling should meet at West Zwick's Park by the Golden Jet with a scheduled departure time of 9 am.

Also – Donna Fano will help us discover the wonders of fungi at the Frink Centre located on Thrasher Road just north of Belleville on Saturday October 5th . The outing will begin at 10 am and run until 12 pm. Participants can meet at the site.

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**Note – I would like to take the opportunity to invite members to contact me, by email, in person or by phone, if they have any ideas for outings. We are always looking for ideas for future outings. I can be contacted at my home number 613-962-5232, my email [johnslowry18@gmail.com](mailto:johnslowry18@gmail.com) or approach me at the meetings.**

**John Lowry**

## **SUMMER OUTINGS**

*By John Lowry*

It has been an interesting summer for outings with everything from stargazing to meandering through tallgrass prairie and oak savannah to trekking through old growth forest.



On July 18th the Quinte Field Naturalists partnered with the Lower Trent Region Conservation Authority (LTRCA) for an outing to the Alderville Black Oak Savanna and Tallgrass Prairie located on the Alderville First Nations territory east of Rice Lake. The 25 participants were treated to a tour of the 162 acre site by Cheyenne Blaker who gave an informative talk on the first nation's efforts to restore this rare and intriguing habitat.

On August 19th nine members of the QFN participated in a very interesting walk through the trail systems of Vanderwater Conservation Area, a Quinte Conservation property near Thomasburg. Leading the outing was the very knowledgeable Jason King.

A first for the QFN was a chance to view the night sky and the wonders of the stars at the Lennox and Addington Dark Sky Viewing Area on Hwy 41 north of Napanee on the evening of August 30th. The numerous participants, including four QFN members, were treated to a laser guided tour of the stars by Joe Gilker of Dark Arts Astrophotography.

Lastly, six participants from the QFN had a chance to tour the Nature Conservancy of Canada's Hazel



*THE ANDROMEDA GALAXY. OUR CLOSEST INTERGALACTIC NEIGHBOUR. "ONLY" 2.5 MILLION LIGHT YEARS AWAY.*

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Bird Nature Reserve, northwest of Centreton. The tour, led by Val Deziel, consisted of a two-hour walk around the 290-acre property, which features tallgrass prairie and black oak savanna, to witness the progress of the Conservancy's restoration efforts. Members also had the opportunity for a leisurely walk around the one kilometre trail at Peter's Woods Provincial Nature Reserve on the return leg of the trip to view the beautiful near virgin maple-beech old growth forest that sits astride the Oak Ridges Moraine.

*The Alderville Black Oak Savanna, south of Rice Lake has been declared globally significant. Less than 3% of this North American habitat remains. Trails are well maintained and you are welcome to visit anytime. Photo by John Lowry*



*Jason King (right) and George Thomson (centre) pointing out plants they identified to some of the participants in the trip to Vanderwater Conservation Area.*

# SUPPORTING RESEARCH

By Elizabeth Churcher

Last winter, Marion Fisher, a QFN member since 1962, gave a monetary donation to QFN to be used in a meaningful project. With Marion's money, the QFN Board decided to assist in the purchase of a bird tracker which could be used by Trent University Professor and Researcher, Erica Nol, and her graduate students. The tracker which was purchased in the Spring was attached to a Whimbrel at Churchill, Manitoba on Hudson Bay. The Whimbrel left its summer home at the end of August and has made its way down to Trinidad and Tobago. By the time you read this article, the bird will likely be at its destination in South America where it will spend the winter. Thanks to a 102 year old woman who has cared about nature all of her life and is still contributing to the advancement of research, we are able to learn more about the life of the Whimbrel.

Thanks Marion!

## Whimbrels

Whimbrels are about the size of a crow although their long legs may make them look larger. The birds tracked by Dr. Nol and her students are part of the population nesting in the sub-Arctic near Churchill, Manitoba. Suitable nesting sites in fens, hummock bogs and drier tundra areas are disappearing. Tamarack and willow are taking over the bogs



*Photo by Sean Fitzgerald*

because of the lengthening growing season. As an "umbrella species" whimbrels claim large territories which they defend vigorously against ravens and other predators. Smaller shorebirds and other species are then able to take advantage of this added protection.

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# SUPPORTING OUR PARTNERS

**Quinte Conservation.** In addition to conservation areas maintained for visitors Quinte Conservation owns dozens of other properties. The number and extent of these lands has made it impossible for the organization to do inventories of species to be found on them. Recent budget cuts by the provincial government and instructions for Conservation Authorities to restrict themselves to limited “core” responsibilities have left few resources to investigate properties. It’s a chance for us to learn about nature in our area.

This year members of QFN have spent a small amount of time visiting some of these properties and recording what they found. Next year we hope to conduct exploratory outings to some of these properties. Armed with binoculars, cameras, cell phones and notebooks we will make a beginning on inventories and reporting to Quinte Conservation.



*Maybe you know what this is but I didn't. Within 5 seconds on iNaturalist I learned that it was probably a Common Red Soldier Beetle. A few minutes later an expert confirmed the identification. iNaturalist is one of the tools we will use for natural science inventories.*

**HR Frink Outdoor Education Centre.** Former QFN member



Phil Martin constructed the feeders, Thrashers Garden Centre helped with the funding and a co-op student at the Frink and a small group of QFN members kept the feeders at the Frink Centre filled. Staff there reported that students would often jump off the bus and immediately go to watch the chickadees, blue jays and red squirrels busy at the feeders. We'll support the Frink this winter also.

# HELP SUPPORT PEPTBO

By Kathy Felkar

This is to let you know about a new fund raiser for the Bird Observatory. We are always looking for ways to be able to give a small stipend to the young people who come from all over the world to learn about our migration monitoring program and to band birds at our station.

This year we are offering a fund raising lottery to support the Young Banders Fund. We have printed 200 tickets which we are selling for \$50 each. The prize which will be drawn on Nov 2 is **\$5000**. As you can see the odds are very good, prize is exceptional and the cause is important.

I am happy to deliver tickets or to arrange e-transfer and look forward to hearing from you.

Thanks, Kathy Felkar



**PEPtBO 2019  
Young Banders  
Fund Lottery**

**Prize \$5000**

Only 200 tickets available  
\$50.00 per ticket

Draw held at PEPtBO's Annual Dinner  
and Silent Auction on November 2, 2019  
at the Picton Golf & Country Club

For tickets contact Cheryl Anderson  
phone: 613-849-7743  
email: cherylanderson23@sympatico.ca

**Fund Raising Lottery  
to support education of  
Young Banders**

Good Luck 

  
FEDRICK EDWARD POINT  
**BIRD**  
OBSERVATORY


Lottery license: M807861  
Charitable Registration Number: 869685420RR001

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**30<sup>th</sup> Annual  
Trenton Woodlot Conference  
2019**

*“Returning to our Roots”*

*Down to Earth Forestry*

*Presented by the*

Quinte & Limestone Chapters of the  
Ontario Woodlot Association  
&  
The Hastings Stewardship Council

**ALL ARE INVITED TO OUR 30TH ANNUAL TRENTON WOODLOT CONFERENCE**

**FRIDAY NOVEMBER 22**

**AT THE [BATAWA COMMUNITY CENTRE](#) FROM 8:00 AM TO 3:30 PM**

**[REGISTER ONLINE](#)**

**OUR KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:**

Sebastian Belliard, Soil Specialist with OMAFRA: What’s Under the Leaf Litter Thom Snowman, Forester: The Inclusive Forest: Wetlands, Water, Wood and Wildlife PLUS Joseph Reid with City of Belleville: Beavers: Struggles with Co-existence Ian Fife with Bird Studies Canada: Technology in the Woodlot: Creating Your Biodiversity Inventory Todd Fritzley with BPF Safety & Consulting: Chainsaw Safety Basics

**AFTERNOON FIELD TOUR: LEARNING ON THE TRAIL**

With field trip guides: Justin Smith (professional arborist, OWA) and  
Tim Trustham (ecologist, Quinte Conservation)

**LUNCH: CATERED BY LOCAL CHEF, ANDREAS APPELBAUM OF LET’S EAT CATERING**

locally sourced food and low waste - our sustainable practices from forest to table

A **Carbon Footprint Survey** of the conference will be produced

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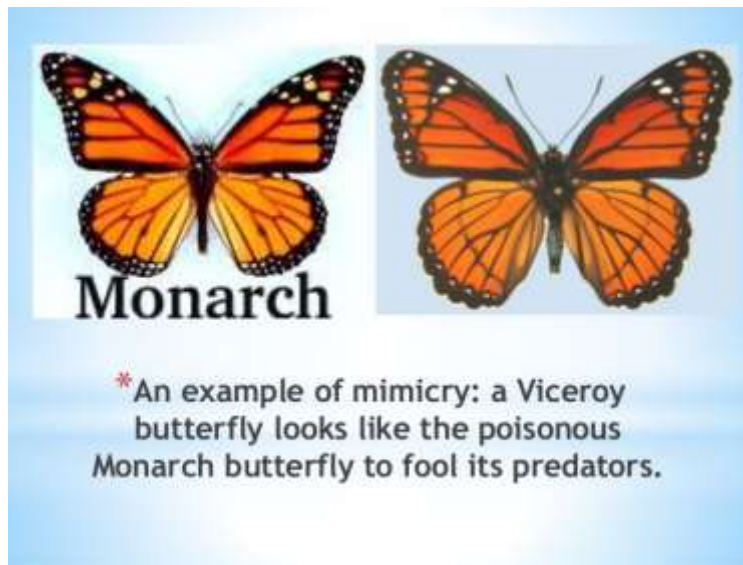


# WONDERFUL FLIERS

By Elizabeth Churcher and George Thomson

Reprinted with permission from the Tweed News, September 18, 2019

The natural world is teeming with activity. First one event and then another captures our attention. When focussing on one happening, our thoughts suddenly are drawn to another observation which takes precedence, at least for a brief time. In this season of



transition, the activities in the world around us are less routine than they have been during the Summer months. For this reason or perhaps some other, our minds are flooded with observations, ideas that we want to share. This week, we started writing about one topic and another inhabitant of the natural world redirected our story. We are very excited to retell what we witnessed last evening,

September 6<sup>th</sup>, as we were working in the garden. It was a dream come true, something that we have read about, something that we've seen in part, but never to the extent that we experienced yesterday evening. The perfect ending to a day of abundant harvest!

George was on the west side of the house watering the squash garden, a rather ordinary event that led into a joyous adventure. As always, he was preoccupied with thoughts of the world around him. His ponderings caused him to recall many conversations which we have had with folks of late about the abundance of Monarch Butterflies they have been seeing in our midst. Then his ruminations took him to our walks along country roads and in our gardens where, quite recently, we have observed encouraging numbers of the strikingly coloured and patterned Monarch larvae



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on Milkweeds and Dogbanes. Just imagine --- these larvae are grandchildren or even great grandchildren of the adult butterflies that arrived here in the Spring. George continued to turn over in his mind the details of the Monarch life cycle. He smiled as he thought of the two or three generations that are produced in our area, in our Summer gardens and meadows. At present, the adults that have been hatching from the larvae of the last generation produced here are feeding on wildflower and garden blossoms, nectaring to build up energy reserves for the upcoming long flight southwards to the small overwintering area in the mountains of Central Mexico. Soon they will leave us!

George's musings were the perfect introduction to the event that followed. Directing his mind back to reality, he moved to another area of the squash garden to complete the watering mission. But fortunately, he looked up and his thoughts were transformed quickly from his menial task to the magic of the Monarch in flight. First he saw one flying in a southerly direction, then another and another. He squinted to search the upper echelons of his field of view: the sky seemed to be filled with Monarchs flying quite high, flapping vigorously and then gliding for long stretches to conserve energy. A few of the butterflies were still near the ground, nectaring on Goldenrods at the field's edge or on New England Asters and Zinnias in the gardens. But the majority were flying high, in a determined manner, heading south. Knowing that Elizabeth was picking beans in the



east garden, George called to her, inviting her to come quickly and join the adventure. She arrived and started counting in earnest, using her sharper eyesight to spot Monarch's flying at even higher levels. In 24 minutes, she had reached a count of 1000 Monarchs! While she admitted that her count would not be completely accurate due to the large numbers, the counting task was manageable because Monarchs do not travel in tightly knit

flocks like birds. In contrast, they fly as individuals, but usually within sight of one another. While it was sometimes possible to see 2 or 3 close together, typically they were approaching from the north in single file or in pairs.

Of course, as we stood watching and counting, our thoughts drifted to the great question of migration. How do they navigate? How do they all find their way to that small area in the central Mexican mountains? How do they know the route, a route last travelled by their great-great grandparents! While there are still many gaps in the information about

migration, we do know some of the facts. The last generation produced here feeds heavily on nectar. The carbohydrates in the nectar are converted to energy-efficient storage in lipids, which form lipid bodies in the abdomen, their fuel tanks for flight. They seem hard-wired for migration: the muscles that power the wings grow larger and more powerful. They get heavier, counterbalancing the weight of the lipid body in the abdomen, improving their 'trim' or balance for flight. --- And they are not interested in reproduction! Next Spring, when still in the Mexican mountains, their sexual desires will be aroused and they will mate before they start north again. These adults will fly as far north as Texas, produce the next generation and then die. Two more generations will bring the butterflies here and then they will produce two or three generations while in our presence. The last of those generations will leave us for the Winter retreat in Mexico.

On September 6<sup>th</sup>, as we gazed upward from our gardens, we were witnessing a tiny part of one of the world's great wildlife spectacles, akin to the migrations of sea turtles, of caribou in the Canadian north, of whales, of Wildebeests in East Africa. In our province, Monarch migration is viewed by many annually in September at Presqu'ile and Point Pelee.



The Monarchs had good overwintering success in Mexico in the Winter of 2018 - 2019 and we have observed large numbers of them locally this Summer. Let's hope that they will have a successful pilgrimage south and then a prosperous 2019-2020 Winter in Mexico. From now until early October, keep watching and

cheering for them passing south through our area. As they progress in their migration, they appear to use an internal time-compressed compass to determine their current position and their flight direction. They know where they are, even on cloudy days, because of the ultraviolet sensitivity of their eyes. As they fly south, they will replenish their lipid reserves by nectaring on pollinator flowers. Hopefully, many along their path have thought of the Monarch when they were planting their gardens! Despite the fact that they fly individually, they will join together at nightfall to roost in trees along the way. We wonder what messages they share with one another as they pause together for some much needed rest.

## Monarch migration

Routes taken by Monarch butterflies during the Fall migration, designated by arrows below, are based on tag recoveries and observations.



Science has answered some of the questions but the big ones still remain. How do these small insects migrate over such a long distance and how do they know when they have reached their overwintering area? We need such mysteries to curb our Human hubris, the idea that we can understand all mysteries. We need some humbling! We are part of a much wider and intricate world, a world that supports the little wonderful fliers going to their Winter home and a world that supports us.

***The Quinte Field Naturalists Association, an affiliate of Ontario Nature, is a non-profit organization sponsoring nature education, conservation and research. It was founded in 1949 and incorporated in 1990 and encompasses the counties of Hastings and Prince Edward. The Quinte Field Naturalists Association is legally entitled to hold real estate and accept benefits. Quinte Field Naturalists meet on the fourth Monday of every month from September to March (except December), 7:00 pm, Sills Auditorium, Bridge Street United Church, 60 Bridge Street East, Belleville. In April we hold our annual dinner at an alternate time and location. New members and guests are always welcome.***

***Bring a friend.***

**President**  
George Thomson  
613-478-3205

**Past President**  
Wendy Turner

**Vice-President**  
Jessica Spooner  
705-875-4643

**Recording Secretary**  
Nancy Stevenson  
613-779-9407

**Corresponding Secretary**  
Elizabeth Churcher  
613-478-3205

**Treasurer**  
Sarah Kennedy

**Publicity/Environmental Officer**  
Denice Wilkins  
613-478-5070

**Membership**  
John Blaney  
613-962-9337

**Newsletter**  
John Blaney  
613-962-9337

**Outings**  
John Lowry  
613-962-5232

**Social Convener**  
Sharron Blaney  
613-962-9337

Next Newsletter Deadline – April 15, 2019

Please send submissions to [sharronjohnblaney@gmail.com](mailto:sharronjohnblaney@gmail.com)

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