



The Quinte Naturalist

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



This furry fellow narrowly escaped death near Haig Road a few weeks ago. See page 3. Photo by Doug Knutson, Windswept Productions.

October's Speaker- Pete Davis, Lake Ontario Atlantic Salmon Restoration Program

Atlantic Salmon were extirpated from Lake Ontario nearly 120 years ago. Pete Davis will outline efforts to restore them.

Mon. Oct. 12. 7:00 pm. Sills Auditorium, Bridge Street United Church

CLUB NEWS



Monday, Nov. 5. It's our day to act as hosts for the evening at Boston Pizza in return for 10% of the evening's receipts. Last year we received a total of \$344. We'll need volunteer ambassadors at the door. Don't worry if you are a new member. You will have a partner who has been a member for several years. Of course you can also support this fund-raiser by dining at Boston Pizza that night. Ten percent of your bill will come back to the club.

Monday, Nov. 26 – Missing Moose? Moose are declining throughout their range. Dave Pearce, CPAWS Wildlands League's Forest Conservation Manager, will discuss the complex reasons why this may be happening, what steps government should take, and how you can help.



Treasure will also be available at the November meeting. At least it will be if we all remember that our annual Treasure Table has been moved to the November meeting. Previously enjoyed (Now I sound like a used car dealer) items in good condition, crafts, books and goodies are welcome. Of course bring your loonies and toonies also. Please mark items with the appropriate price.



QFN Meetings Go Carbon-Neutral!

By Denice Wilkins

Heat, lights, power, action! It takes energy to hold QFN meetings – about a third of a tonne of carbon emissions per year (7 meetings x 3.5 hours each, in a 3,200 square foot space)! To compensate for carbon our meetings are responsible for spewing into the atmosphere, QFN has decided to buy carbon offsets through Less Emissions Inc

Through Less, money is funneled to worldwide projects that reduce global GHG emissions. Each of the projects supported by Less have undergone rigorous evaluation to insure they achieve verifiable GHG emissions reductions. One of these projects is a chlorine dispenser program that provides safe drinking water to people in rural Uganda. Using chlorine tablets to purify their water instead of boiling it over a wood fire reduces greenhouse gas emissions and helps prevent deforestation.

The cost of offsetting the carbon emissions from QFN meetings comes to a whopping \$8.48 annually (however we have contributed \$20 to Less). We want to take responsibility for the impact of our actions. It is a small expense that makes a big statement!

NIGHTTIME RESCUE



Belleville Citizens Acting Illegally

Photo courtesy of Doug Knutson

A drama developed a few weeks ago in the east end of Belleville. The first act was a peaceful scene on Haig Road. For a few evenings residents gathered to watch the activities of a beaver in the Stanley Park marsh which is part of the larger Bell Creek Marsh.

The mood changed one evening when someone saw a beaver in a trap. Believing it to be suffering and in danger of drowning they decided to release it. Their mission was successful.

A few days later there was a knock on the door of one of the residents. He answered the door to be greeted by an official from the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources informing him that he was to be charged as the person who had released the beaver. Although a charge was never laid the experience was decidedly unpleasant.

You may be wondering why anyone would be trapping beavers in a residential area where children or pets could blunder into the trap. While our national symbol is noted for its industrious nature its goals and human goals can be in conflict. In this case there was a concern that a dam could raise the water level to the point where it damaged property and might flood and even wash out Haig Road.

Believing that there had to be a better solution the group took their concerns to the city council. It was obvious that most councillors were unaware of the issue. Councillor Kelly McCaw introduced a motion banning such trapping in the city and later amended it to exclude the rural part of the city in the former Thurlow Township. Both motions failed as

council decided to have staff develop policies and procedures regarding the banning of leg-hold and body-crimping traps in the city.



The leg hold trap.

Photo courtesy Doug Knutson. Follow Doug on the Facebook page for Windswept Productions for more about Belleville and our local environment.

The next council meeting saw a representative of the Ontario Fur Managers Federation present the case in favour of the methods currently in use. After a long debate council directed staff to develop policies and procedures for trapping nuisance fur-bearing animals including the use of leg hold and body-crimping traps as a last resort. Undoubtedly this is the same city staff who thought that a pollinator garden was not a good idea.

To be fair to city council and staff it must be said that they are not cruel people. They are proud of the city and have taken other very positive steps for the environment. The question of how to enable humans and

wildlife to coexist is not unique to Belleville. New information and changing social attitudes make the issue even more complicated. Like some long-running TV soap opera this drama will not end soon, if ever.

Council has not banned leg hold and body-crimping traps. They are to be treated as a last resort. City staff is to receive training in alternate methods of dealing with wildlife from the Association for the Protection of Fur-Bearing Animals. This group believes that co-existence with fur bearing animals is possible without the use of lethal traps.

Two questions remain. Will the training be conducted in the spring of 2019 as suggested or will it fall by the wayside because of other priorities? What will be the interpretation of the phrase “as a last resort” in the anticipated policy for dealing with wildlife-related problems? I guess those are the cliff hangers for the next episode.

Frink Centre Report – Help!

The bird feeders at the Frink Centre are a big success. Students are happy to see birds as the chickadees, blue jays, nuthatches and a downy woodpecker provide a constant show. Other species put in an occasional appearance. Adult visitors have commented that they are happy to see birds again. There is a sign up to show that Quinte Field Naturalists are providing the seed so we are getting positive advertising for the club.

This is almost too much success and it has created two problems.

Ideally the feeders should be filled daily. There are so many avian customers that they can consume almost any amount of seed provided. For a variety of reasons Frink Centre staff are unable to fill feeders on a regular basis. I have been visiting daily to fill feeders.



Two people have volunteered to help but we need more volunteers so I can draw up a schedule. If you are able to help please let me know how often and when you can fill the feeders. Even occasional help is welcome.

At the current rate of feeding a 50 pound bag of black oilseed lasts about 2 weeks. Michelle at Thrashers Garden Centre has given us a significant discount on the oil seed. Our current budget will provide seed until sometime fairly early in the new year. One answer, of course, is to ask you for donations. A 50 pound bag of oilseed costs \$22. Also if anyone has an unused feeder that dispenses seed more slowly please donate it to the cause. The picture on the left shows one such a feeder. I am also experimenting to find a way to allow us to fill the feeders every couple of days instead of daily.

The feeders at the Frink help us to fulfill our mandate to educate the public and increase their enjoyment of nature. The Frink provides an experience in nature for students of all ages. Parents bring toddlers and older kids on the weekend and love to have something to provide interest.

Let's not forget to visit the Frink ourselves and enjoy what it has to offer. Its varied habitats make it a local ecological treasure.

WINTER FINCHES

Get your feeders ready. The finches are coming, lots of them, because seeds crops have been poor to the north. At least that's what Ron Pittaway says in his annual prediction for the soon-to-be-arriving winter. Here are the finches that you are most likely to see in your neighbourhood.

We already have two or three purple finches at our feeders which look as though they may spend the winter with us. Here are some hints to help you distinguish them from their look-alike cousins, house finches. The colour can be misleading as diet and the light can make it vary. Note that both the male and particularly the female purple finch (below) have a more distinct facial pattern than the house finches above them. The streaking on the breast of the male purple finch is completely red rather than predominantly brown.



At a quick glance a pine siskin might be mistaken for a female house finch. The clues as to its real identity are its noticeably smaller size, delicate sharply-pointed beak and yellow in the wings which becomes very obvious when it flies. Their wheezy twittering in flocks is also distinctive. Keep a lot of nyger seed ready if the flock descends on your feeders.



Another small finch which is predicted to arrive in good numbers is the redpoll. The red cap (poll), yellow beak, wing bars and black goatee are visible in all plumages. You thought that your siskins ate a lot of nyger seed? You haven't seen a flock of redpolls in action. You are more likely to see flocks at rural feeders or in unmown fields but watch in town also.



You can see the full finch report [here](http://jeaniron.ca/2018/wff18.htm). jeaniron.ca/2018/wff18.htm. It includes the ornamental crabapple enthusiasts, pine grosbeaks and other possible sightings.

TRENTON WOODLOT CONFERENCE



Plan to attend the 29th annual **Trenton Woodlot Conference** on **Friday, November 23, 2018** at the Batawa Community Centre. It is hosted by the Hastings Stewardship Council and partners.

The theme this year is **Farms and Forests: Living on the Edge**. Much of the forest cover in our area is on farms. This forest cover provides important economic and environmental benefits, both locally and to the larger community.

The program features many relevant speakers. Dr. Rene Van Acker, Dean of the Ontario Agricultural College at U. of Guelph, will address the state of farming in Ontario and the relationship of the farming sector to our communities. Susan Willis Chan, instructor in Sustainable Agriculture, will explain how rural landowners can improve the ecological health of their property and gain in overall yield. A highlight of the day is a field trip to the Goodrich-Loomis Conservation Area.

Complete information is on the Hastings Stewardship Council web site.
<https://www.hastingsstewardship.ca/>

YOUTH SUMMIT

You may remember that we sponsored Jacob Smith, a grade IX student in Napanee for Ontario Nature's Youth Summit. It's a weekend camp in September to help students prepare to become environment and biodiversity leaders in their schools. Jacob sent the following letter.

October 15, 2018

Dear Quinte Field Naturalists

Thank you!

Again, thanks so much for sending me to the 2018 youth summit! I had a great time and learned a lot about animals and plants. I went on a night nature walk and found a glow worm and a salamander. I helped a first nations elder create healing salve, and I waded through the nearby lake to find aquatic animals for the pond life workshop. I learned basic survival, and also how salamanders live and hibernate. In the "Let's Get WILD" workshop, I got to see an owl, a falcon, a hawk, and a gyrfalcon. I met lots of interesting people, and my team (Green) won the Great Group Challenge. All in all, it was a really interesting event and I had a great time!

Sincerely

Jacob Smith

PROJECT FEEDERWATCH

PROJECT FEEDERWATCH begins on November 10.

At regular intervals from November to April, thousands of FeederWatchers count the kinds and numbers of birds at their feeders, then submit their observations to us. This information helps scientists study winter bird populations.

Project FeederWatch participants receive a full-colour bird poster and calendar, a FeederWatch Handbook and Instruction Book, access to the data entry portion of the FeederWatch website, and the chance to contribute to a continent-wide bird research project.

Project FeederWatch is a joint program of Bird Studies Canada and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. In Canada, you must be a member of Bird Studies Canada (BSC) to participate. BSC membership benefits include a subscription to their Monthly [Latest News](#) e-newsletter, four issues a year of [BirdWatch Canada](#) magazine, free participation in any of their volunteer programs, and a charitable tax receipt for the full amount of your membership.

Click here to register. <https://www.bsc-eoc.org/volunteer/pfw/index.jsp?lang=EN>





NATURE ODDITY

We know that vampire bats are real but, moths? What's going on here?

The photographer was a biologist prowling along a Brazilian river at night looking for reptiles and amphibians. He came upon a fist-sized moth sticking its tongue in a sleeping bird's eye.

Apparently this is a fairly regular occurrence. The moth needs salt.

When other sources are not available it sticks its tongue in the eye of a sleeping antbird for its salty tears. The bird is unharmed and just snoozes away, possibly unaware of what happened.

Cartoon Count Draculas are always saying, "I've come to suck your blood." The moth's version is, "I've come to suck your tears." Happy Halloween.

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

Vacant

Recording Secretary

Nancy Stevenson
613-779-9407

Corresponding Secretary

Elizabeth Churcher
613-478-3205

Treasurer

Doug Newfield
613-477-3066

Publicity/Environmental Officer

Denice Wilkins
613-478-5070

Membership/Mailing

Jessica Spooner
705-875-4643

Outings/Newsletter

John Blaney
613-962-9337

Social Convener

Sharron Blaney
613-962-9337

Next Newsletter Deadline – November 15, 2018

Please send submissions to sharronjohnblaney@gmail.com