



# The Quinte Naturalist

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

## November



### MISSING MOOSE?

Monday, November 26

7: 00 pm

Sills Auditorium

Bridge Street United Church

Belleville

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.

## CLUB NEWS



Do whatever it takes to remember that November is our annual **Treasure Table**. It's a fund-raiser for our many projects. Donate items with a nature theme or a Christmas theme or just something useful. It's almost December. Anything that someone else might enjoy or be able to use such as goodies, books, decorations, etc will be welcome. Use your imagination. Mark the suggested price on what you bring. No yard sale rejects please. And don't forget your loonies, toonies and foldable currency.



One of our projects is providing seed for the bird feeders at the **H.R. Frink Conservation Area and Outdoor Education Centre**. During the school year hundreds of students and their teachers visit the Frink Centre. Staff have told me that the birds at the feeders are a major attraction. On weekends and during off hours families have the same opportunity to see our winter birds. It's an irruption year for red-breasted nuthatches and these tiny birds are regulars at the feeders. (Photo by Keith Gregoire)

At the Frink visitors can also see the window-saver treatments which QFN purchased and members installed. We are making important contributions to the Frink Centre and giving a public profile to our club.

If you are shopping at Thrashers remember to mention that you are a member of Quinte Field Naturalists and to thank them for their assistance in providing seed for the feeders.

## *Hudgin-Rose Property*

Earlier this year QFN donated \$5,000 toward the Nature Conservancy of Canada's purchase and preservation of the Brighton Wetland. Another important local property has become available. At the November meeting members will be asked to support a club donation of \$1,000 toward the purchase of the Hudgin-Rose property by the Nature Conservancy. Our treasurer has determined that our finances allow us to make this donation if members vote in favour.

Club member John Lowry gleaned the following information from the internet to explain the importance of the property:

### *Help protect an important part of Prince Edward County's heritage*

On the south coast of Prince Edward County lies the Hudgin-Rose property — 76 acres (31 hectares) of biologically rich alvar, grassland and wetland habitats that are home to Blanding's turtle, monarch and eastern whip-poor-will.

Part of the Prince Edward County South Shore Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA), the property and the south coast generally provide vital staging and stopover habitat for a wide variety of migratory birds. The surrounding area has also provided habitat for a variety of bat species, such as the at-risk little brown myotis, big brown bat, hoary bat, the migratory silver-haired bat and eastern red bat.

This unique landscape has a long human and natural history. Originally settled by the Moses Hudgin family, the property is home to a historic log cabin that dates back to 1865. The Rose family later cared for the land and the building, and their stewardship led to the heritage designation for the cabin. The Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) is committed to complying with the heritage bylaw and will work with local groups to maintain the historic building into the future.



***In Ontario the eastern whip-poor-will is listed as "threatened." This designation means that the species is not yet endangered that it may become endangered if the factors threatening it are not dealt with. Biologists believe that the problem is caused by habitat loss and degradation. Several pairs of whip-poor-wills nest along PEC's south shore so the area must be protected.***



***Bonita Allen (in the brown coat) joined the QFN field trip to the Hudgins-Rose property. Bonita is a direct descendant of Moses Hudgin who built the cabin more than 150 years ago. We were fascinated by her memories of summers spent at the cabin and her stories of what life would have been like for settlers. Isolated, the Hudgins and a small group of neighbouring families existed mainly by farming and fishing.***

The Hudgin-Rose project is a chance to add an important piece to a growing network of conservation lands. The property lies next to the much celebrated and locally cherished Ostrander Point Crown Land block and is just west of the Prince Edward Point National Wildlife Area (NWA) — an important migratory bird hot spot.

Just a bit further west lies the 490-acre (198-hectare) Miller Family Nature Reserve, owned and stewarded by the Hastings-Prince Edward Land Trust (HPELT), and protected with financial assistance from NCC. NCC and HPELT are committed to working together to

protect and care for the Hudgin-Rose property and other lands as part of the Point Petre to Prince Edward Point Conservation Project.

### **Prince Edward County South Shore**

The South Shore peninsula of Prince Edward County has exceptional natural heritage value due to the habitats and species it supports. It is designated as a globally significant Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA).

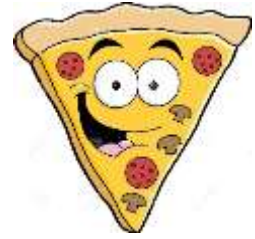
The south shore of the IBA encompasses about 30 kilometres of shoreline. It is, indeed, one of the few shorelines of Lake Ontario that has remained undeveloped.

The popularity of Prince Edward County has grown in recent years, and opportunities to acquire undeveloped lands in a network such as this are becoming increasingly rare. But we need to act fast.

To support this project make out a cheque to the “Hastings Prince Edward Land Trust” and mark it for the Hudgins-Rose property. Bring the cheque to Monday’s meeting or mail it to *Hastings Prince Edward Land Trust, Box 20042, Belleville, ON K8N5V1.*

## *PIZZA NIGHT*

November 5 was a good evening for QFN. On Mondays Boston Pizza supports local charities by allowing them to act as greeters between 5 pm and 8 pm. Ten percent of the take during that period goes to the chosen charity. November 5 was our turn and we raised just over \$360.00 for our projects. According to the manager on duty this amount was a little above average. Obviously our celebrity greeters did a good job. Thanks to Denice Wilkins, Elizabeth Churcher, George Thomson, Jessica Spooner, John Lowry and Nancy Stevenson. Additional thanks to Denice who created a very impressive information board for our display. Of course thanks also to those of you who dined at Boston Pizza that evening. There was a good turnout.



## *CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT*

The annual Christmas Bird Count began in 1900. Frank Chapman, an ornithologist, proposed that a Christmas Bird Census should replace the Christmas “side hunt,” a competition to determine what team of hunters could shoot the most birds. In that year 27 birders in 25 counts found about 90 species mainly in the northeastern United States but also California and even Toronto. Now results come in annually from sites as far flung as Rankin Inlet in Nunavut and Asuncion Bay, Paraguay. Two years ago there were 2536 counts. Ontario alone had 126 count circles with 174 species.

Researchers, naturalist groups and government agencies have used the results of CBCs in hundreds of studies. Population trends, species distributions and the results of climate change can all be seen in CBC results. In other words Christmas Bird Counts are not just an activity involving eccentrics willing to spend a day out between December 14 and January 5 regardless of the weather. They are a big deal and an important citizen science project.



***One of the species we all hope to see on a Christmas Bird Count is snowy owl. On the ice or in a snowy field they can be hard to spot.  
Photo by Frank Pinilla.***

I must admit the time I drove across someone's lawn because the blizzard was so bad I couldn't see the road tends to limit the plausibility of the previous paragraph. In my defense I did go home after realizing that if I couldn't see the road I probably couldn't see the birds. Nevertheless it is true that hundreds of studies have been used by biologists, government agencies and environmental groups to make important decisions about birds and the ecosystem.



***Pine Grosbeak***  
***Photo by Kyle Blaney***

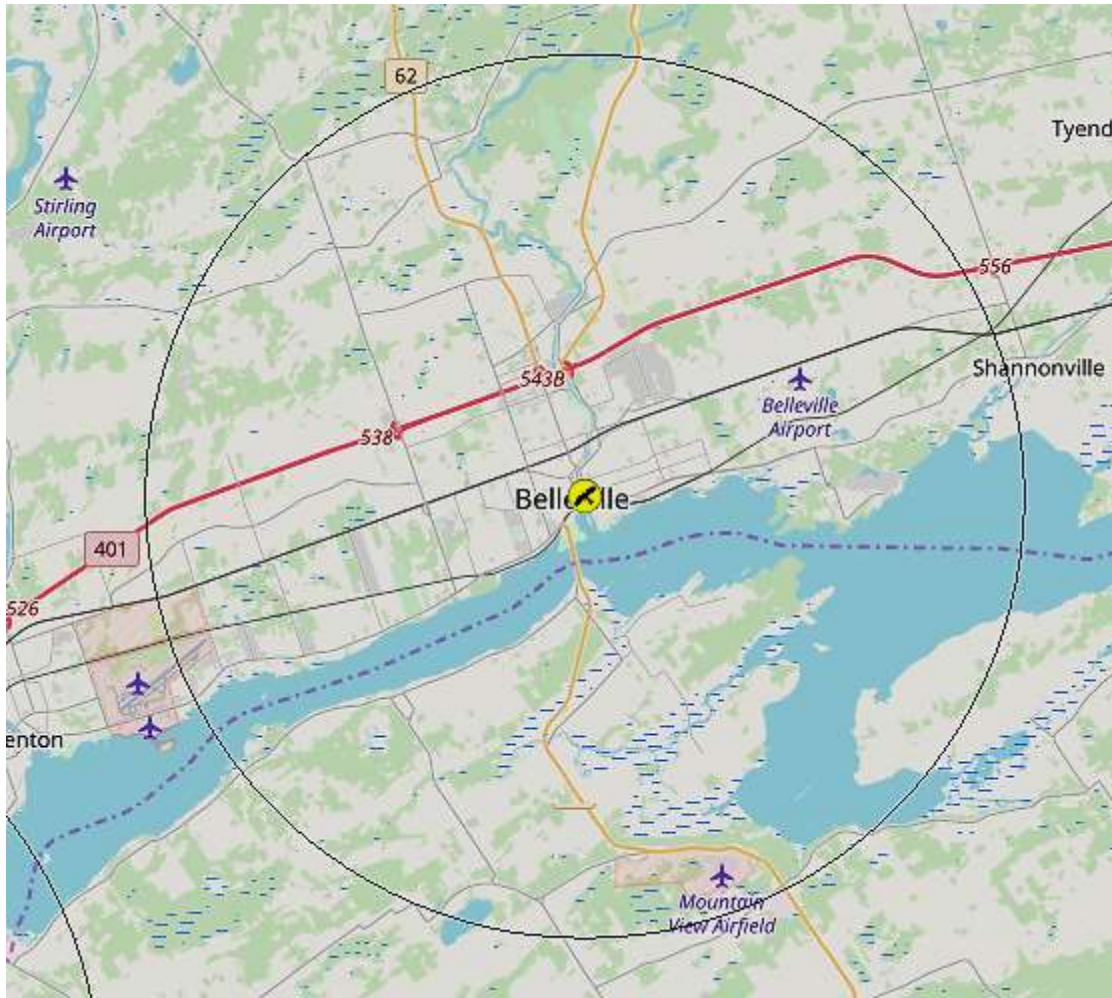
Last year on the Belleville count we found 60 species, well above our average of about 50 species. The number of species we find is influenced by weather, the amount of open water and other factors. On this count the weather was cold, starting the day at -28 Celsius, but otherwise conditions were good for spotting birds. The weather was clear with almost no wind in the morning, increasingly only slightly in the afternoon.

This year we do know there is one factor which will probably bring us a few species. There was a limited seed crop in northern and northwestern Ontario this year. The result is that this is an irruption year, a year when some species, normally hard to find in Quinte, will be seen in good numbers. Many of us have already had red-breasted nuthatches at our feeders. Finches like the pine grosbeak and common redpoll should be in the count circle. Watch for Bohemian waxwings. Like the pine grosbeak they enjoy the fruit on ornamental shrubs and can occur right in town.

If you would like to join one of our CBC teams contact Tom Wheatley [wheatleytom@hotmail.com](mailto:wheatleytom@hotmail.com) or John Blaney [sharronjohnblaney@gmail.com](mailto:sharronjohnblaney@gmail.com) or speak to us at the meeting. You could also participate as a feeder watcher in your own yard. To do this you must live within 12 kilometres of the city hall steps. See the map on the next page.



***Northern Shrike is one species we find every year.***  
***Photo by Musa Murawih***



***Our Christmas Bird Count circle stretches from Foxboro in the north to Mountainview in the south and Shannonville in the east to the CFB base in the west. We count as many birds of as many species as we can during the 24-hour period on December 27, 2018.***

## ***YOU ASKED***



Naturalists tend to be curious about what they see. Recently a QFN member wondered why some young swans are grey and others are white. All swan species have these two colour morphs with white being more common. The grey morph occurs when both parents pass on the recessive gene for that characteristic. In mute swans selective breeding in Europe has made the white even more prevalent among juvenile birds. Although both morphs molt into white plumage there is some evidence that the white morph is able to reproduce a year sooner than the grey morph so they have more offspring. Nature is more complicated than it may appear.



## CHRISTMAS COFFEE

Every meeting Kathy Felkar and Mike Burge sell Prince Edward Point Bird Observatory coffee. The beans come from a small family-owned plantation and are shade-grown. This method of production preserves the forest canopy which provides winter habitat for many of the warblers and other species. We see many of these species in the spring and some such as the Magnolia Warbler seen on this bag may even nest locally.

It fits in a Christmas stocking; it's a great hostess gift; it's high quality coffee. You'll be supporting PEPtBO; you'll be helping the birds; you'll be enjoying a great cup of coffee on Christmas morning.

*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.*

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Next Newsletter Deadline – January 10, 2019

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