
Nature Niagara News



Bulletin No. 323
February 2018

ISSN: 0829-1241

Niagara Falls
Nature Club

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niagarafallsnatureclub.org

LEV FRID SPEEDS UP TIME ON THE OPEN OCEAN

On November 8, the Niagara Falls Nature Club hosted Lev Frid to speak about wildlife in the open ocean. Frid, an experienced naturalist, photographer, and tour guide, is well known for his expertise on a variety of wildlife, especially birds. He set the stage with the photo of a vast expanse of water and sky – but declared that this picture didn't represent an area of desolation, rather it was bursting with life. You just need to know where, and especially WHEN, to look! The where would be the confluence of the Gulf Stream and Labrador Currents. This large tract of watery real-estate is found far off the coast of eastern Canada, a boat ride of several hours from the Maritimes. Why this particular location? When the warm (Gulf Stream) and cold (Labrador) currents collide, life abounds! Underwater, schools of fish and other creatures thrive, and where there's a food source, there are birds aplenty to eat them. Throughout the year, this zone is teeming with aquatic and aerial life. In the winter, more than 400 gulls can often be found following Frid's boat out to sea. It's fun to watch the gannets diving like torpedoes into the water, and a multitude of gull species and even pelicans soaring alongside the vessel. The Great Skua is large bird with a wingspan of 125-140 cm. This bird is parasitic – it attacks other birds in flight to get their food and can even cause them to regurgitate what they've already swallowed and steal that.

Frid also points out that in the winter the temperature extremes where the currents meet are at their maximum, creating "sea smoke" mist. Through this backdrop the sight of black-legged kittiwakes and razorbills are often seen. And

starting about 30 miles off-shore, Sargassum seaweed floats in raft-like accumulations along the water's surface, harbouring all kinds of life. Crabs and shrimp hide here, trying to escape the bills of birds from above and fish and other creatures from below. Logger-head sea turtles pass by, feeding on jellyfish, and migratory manta rays, as big as the stage Frid was speaking from, may also be seen.

Spring is the prime time for seabirding, says Frid. He stands at the front of his boat, searching for the M shape of Gadfly petrels. If he's lucky he spots a Bermuda petrel, of which only a few hundred are left in the world. Or maybe a Cape petrel will dance along the top of the water nearby, looking for fish oil from the boat to sip on. One of his favourite sightings is a Long-tailed Jaeger, whose swift and graceful flight is easy to identify among the other birds.

Summer brings cetaceans near the boat, or vice versa, like short-finned pilot whales, sperm whales, and even a rare beaked whale in 2015. Dolphins are more common sights, their playful and friendly behaviour always welcome out in the open ocean. And of course, still lots and lots of birds crowd the skies. Cory's shearwaters (the biggest shearwaters in the world), sooty shearwaters, and another of Frid's favourites – Audobon shearwaters, can all be seen in the summer season.

Autumn's arrival corresponds with jellyfish blooms – the perfect snack for migrating Leatherback turtles. Growing up to 700 kg, this sea turtle is the largest in the world with a carapace (shell) larger than a dinner table. Many birds migrate, too, and can be seen from the boat during autumn. Occasionally, wayward travellers like warblers and ovenbirds may be spotted many miles offshore, blown about by wind or unexpected weather. Kiera Newman

BOOK REVIEW: A HISTORY OF CANADA IN TEN MAPS, BY ADAM SHOALTS

Adam Shoalts's fascination with maps began in childhood, when his breakfast placemat was a map of Canada. Later he purchased a sextant from a second hand shop and eventually learned enough about how to use it to appreciate the superlative skill and mathematical knowledge of the early explorers and cartographers who charted the world.

In his book, *A History of Canada in Ten Maps*, Shoalts chose epic stories of explorers whose journeys and records culminated in ten maps spanning over a millennium. He begins with the Vikings in 793 AD, and the lands they plundered and colonized, including Scotland. Pushing ever westward, they reached the previously unknown east coast of North America, leaving evidence of their settlements at L'Anse aux Meadows, Newfoundland.

The name "Canada" first appeared on a 1535 map when Jacques Cartier misapplied the Iroquoian word Kanata," meaning village, to denote the country along the St. Lawrence River. Cartier was convinced he would find the rare spices and silks of China if he followed the St. Lawrence. Stymied by the fierce rapids just beyond Hochelaga, (Montreal), he named the area "La Chine" (in English, China), a name that endures in nearby Lachine, Quebec.

Champlain, unlike previous colonizers, admired aboriginal people and treated them with respect. Travelling and joining forces with them in battle he explored and mapped further into New France than any previous European. In 1613 while portaging through dense bush he lost his astrolabe. A farm boy unearthed the strange instrument in 1867. It now sits preserved in the Museum of Canadian History.

In 1675 La Salle, also seeking a route to China, led an expedition up the Niagara River, portaging through the rattlesnake-infested forest in a 100 metre high limestone gorge, to "a spectacle that defied their wildest imaginations, the falls of Niagara,... a serious obstacle in the quest for Asia."

Alexander Mackenzie was born in the Outer Hebrides, off Scotland, likely a Viking descendent. Determined to reach the Pacific, he followed an earlier map mistakenly showing a river flowing from Great Slave Lake to the

Pacific, but found to his surprise he had instead reached the Beaufort Sea in the Arctic. He had paddled Canada's longest river, later named after him. The following year he did indeed, after a harrowing and dangerous trek, reach the Pacific, thus becoming the first person to cross the continent, and the first to fill in crucial details in what had been a big blank space in what would become Canada.

David Thompson travelled across 90,000 km of North American wilderness, and created a 5 x 3 metre map of the Northwest. He was considered one of Canada's greatest explorers and cartographers, and was appointed after the war of 1812 to map the border between Canada and the United States. Win Laar

GRIMSBY TO BURLINGTON OUTING

On a rather windy day in mid November a few club members gathered to take a trip along the south shore of Lake Ontario. The lake was rather rough with winds from the north-west. Although the waterfowl were not close to shore members scopes gave us an opportunity to see the many different species. Great numbers of Long-Tailed Ducks were seen. In addition we had Surf and White-Winged Scoters along with Common Goldeneyes.

Below the skyway in Burlington we had the good fortune to find a Snowy Owl plus a Ruddy Duck. At La Salle Park in Burlington and the Hamilton Bay We found an abundance of waterfowl including a Horned Grebe plus Redheads, Gadwall, American Coot, Scaup, Bufflehead and a Wood Duck and as usual many Mallards, Two members had the good fortune to find a Peregrine Falcon at the Burlington lift bridge. An interesting day thanks to our leader Paul Philp.

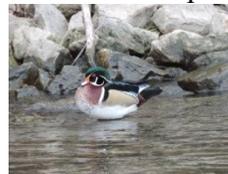
Rick Young



Our Group



Oldsquaw



Wood Duck

MEMBERS NIGHT PRESENTATIONS

Our indoor meeting/Christmas get-together on December 13 was a fun night of short presentations and delicious treats. Rick Young started off the evening's talks with a slide show and commentary about the Harold Mitchell property. For those who don't know its history, the Niagara Falls Nature Club bought the property in question and donated it to Ontario Nature. Since 2001 we have been stewards of the park, doing annual surveys and making sure the area remains in pristine condition. Rick showed beautiful pictures of Beefsteak mushrooms, Cinnamon ferns, Downy yellow violets, and water arum. Beechdrops, plants that don't use chlorophyll, as well as red backed salamanders are also found here, and abundant Mayapples in the spring and purple New England asters in the fall. It's nice to know there are still wild places nearby and that we have the privilege of helping Ontario Nature to preserve this biodiversity.

In early July, the Newman/Glancy family travelled to Iceland. Their children, Duncan, Wyatt and Skye, presented a video and slideshow about their trip. The pictures including purebred horses, waterfalls, and glaciers. In fact, they were able to take a walk inside of the Langjokull Glacier and travelled across the desert highlands where they could see glaciers on all sides. In July the sun set only for a few hours, so they were in almost constant daylight. Although this meant no Northern Lights sightings, it left plenty of time for hiking to hot springs, visiting waterfalls, and even a whale watching trip where they saw Humpbacks. Helen McDonald entertained the audience with pictures and stories about her recent trip to Japan. She started in Tokyo, the most populated city in the world. There, at the port in Yokohama, she boarded the Diamond Princess. The boat stopped near Nagoya, now home to the headquarters of Toyota, but in the 17th century this was a seat of power for the Tokugawa family. Helen visited the remains of Nagoya Castle and saw early looms with their complicated patterning abilities. Her cruise continued and she then stopped in Nagasaki. Here, at the Peace Garden, the bells tolled at 11:10 to honour the 65,000 people who died in 1945 when a nuclear bomb exploded there. Helen was able to ring the bell herself. Helen also spoke about the beauty of the coastal mountains and forested areas surrounding a Shinto shrine, and all of the pretty, but mostly cultivated, gardens she saw during her trip. The Kennedy family

travelled to Lithuania this past summer as their youngest son, Neil, as well as Fraser Darling, competed in a rowing regatta for the Junior Canadian team. Only in Europe could a competition buoy course be stationed beside an ancient castle – in this case the 14th century Trakai Island Castle. On the way to Lithuania the Kennedys traveled via Estonia in search of unique flora and fauna, but also discovered many plant species that also grow near home in Canada, such as wild geranium, fireweed and goatsbeard. They spotted white stork nest platforms built in agricultural fields. These white and black birds are species at risk because their habitat has been largely destroyed. Visiting Oteppa they came across the War Oak, a 300-400 year old tree, named after peasants revolted in 1841 and which reminded them of the Comfort Maple in Pelham, Ontario. Following the races, one of the highlights of their trip was visiting sand dunes on the coast of the Baltic Sea – some more than 100 m high and home to beach pea, lichens, small pines and wild boars! Ian and Emmy Darling presented next, adding more pictures and stories to the adventure their family shared with the Kennedy's in Eastern Europe. Specifically, they emphasized the importance of mushrooms to the Lithuanian lifestyle. From women selling mushrooms beside the road to creamy forest mushroom flavoured chips, fungi are eaten and appreciated regularly. From Lithuania, Ian and Emmy shifted to pictures and discussion about a mushroom-like plant, Indian Pipe, at the Harold Mitchell property, that can break down matter for food instead of using the sun's energy. And from there to their home property where slime mould on a fallen log, puffball mushrooms, and morels were all abundant due to the wet summer we experienced. The evening's presentations then moved from the screen to be brought to life with a hands-on demonstration by Dawn Pierrynowski. Dawn brought hornet nests and hexagonal-celled combs to show some local inhabitants of her own yard. She showed us the difference between bald-faced hornets and non-native European hornets, including sample specimens that we could see up close afterwards. Dawn had found the European hornet's nest in her wood duck box earlier in the winter when, even after a few frosts, she had seen individuals flying in and out. A retired teacher, Dawn has the perfect personality for show and tell, leaving all of us in awe of the amazing world

of hymenoptera and wanting our own Wood Duck boxes!

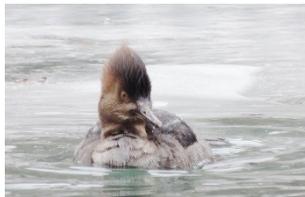
Kiera Newman

FORT ERIE TO DUFFERIN ISLANDS

Sunday, January 21 was a much milder day as 16 people met to check out the waterfowl along the Niagara River. We had 5 new people join us. We saw many Scaup, Redhead, Canvasback, Golden-eye and Buffleheads along the river. A highlight for me was the Belted Kingfisher we saw south of the NCC. We all had good views of him flying. We also had an immature Bald Eagle. After lunch at Tim Horton's in Chippawa we headed to Dufferin Islands where we had a male Red-winged Blackbird pose for us. We also had the usual Chickadees, Cardinals, Junco's, Tufted Titmouse and a Hooded Merganser was in the pond. We walked across to the control dam only to find out it was totally frozen over. A good time was had by all. Carol Horvat



Club members



Hooded Merganser

MEMORIAM

We are saddened to report the passing of Don Dimond, December 4, 2017. Don was a long time member of NFNC, and served for several years as a director, being responsible for our sound We are saddened to report the passing of Don Dimond, December 4, 2017. Don was a long time member of NFNC, and served for several years as a director, being responsible for our sound system. He was a true gentleman and an avid birder. Our condolences go out to his wife Elaine and their three sons.



DON

MEMORIAM

The name Rae Yaki will not be familiar to many of us, but she is a very important person in our club's history. Rae was the wife of Gus Yaki, our founding president, and has been described as the wind under Gus's wings. Denise Davies remembers her as a backroom girl, doing all the printing of newsletters on the Gestetner, clearing ditches and the Lake Erie shoreline of garbage, and participating enthusiastically in environmental projects. They went several times to visit The Owl Foundation, back when visitors were welcome, and a donation to TOF has been made in her memory. Rae passed away December 4, 2017. Our condolences go to her daughter, Robyn, and to the rest of her family.

NIAGARA FALLS NATURE CLUB

FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31 2017

REVENUE	2017	2016
Memberships	\$ 1,990.00	\$ 1,625.00
Donation		
Conservation	\$ 328.00	\$ 452.00
Bank Interest	\$ 108.67	\$ 103.46
Fund Raising (Draws Coffee Shirts Crest Books Plant Sale)	\$ 284.25	\$ 145.80
Other Income: Annual Dinner Meeting	\$ 1,895.00	\$ 1,830.00
	\$ 4,605.92	\$ 4,156.26
EXPENSES		
Bulletins (printing, envelopes, postage)	\$ 49.19	\$ 265.80
Meetings (incl. "Directions" Meetings, Rent, Speakers)	\$ 613.00	\$ 656.00
Printing (Schedules)	\$ 134.48	\$ 111.89
Liability Insurance (F.O.N)	\$ 469.80	\$ 460.08
Rental P.O. Box	\$ 183.06	\$ 176.28
Annual Dinner	\$ 1,740.00	\$ 1,869.25
MISC.	\$ 12.64	\$ 131.09
Administration	\$ 164.79	\$ 16.94
NFNC Website	\$ 93.36	\$ 120.36
Microphone	\$ 150.00	
Bruce Trail Conservancy		\$ 100.00
Donations		
The Owl Foundation	\$ 350.00	\$ 400.00
Bruce Trail	\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00
Adopt-A-Pond (Toronto Zoo)	\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00
Fatal Light Awareness		\$ 100.00
Memorial Donation(HEARTLAND Forest)	\$ 225.00	\$ 100.00
Awards	\$ 39.55	\$ 39.55
Subscriptions and fees:		
Friends of the Land Trust	\$ 150.00	\$ 150.00
Ontario Nature (F.O.N.)	\$ 83.00	\$ 83.00
Long Point Bird Observatory	\$ 35.00	\$ 35.00
	\$ 4,592.87	\$ 4,915.24
Excess of Revenue over expense	\$ 13.05	\$ (758.98)
Balance of assets January 1/2016	\$ 9,717.94	\$ 10,476.92
Balance of Assets December 31 ,2017	\$ 9,730.99	\$ 9,717.94
Bank Account #124851369	\$ 3,000.99	\$ 2,787.94
Certificate of Deposit	\$ 6,700.00	\$ 6,900.00
Membership Floater	\$ 30.00	\$ 30.00
	\$ 9,730.99	\$ 9,717.94
Assets consisting of:- Current Account	\$ 7,537.51	\$ 7,436.46
Designated Conservation	\$ 1,685.00	\$ 1,623.00
Funds for Fieldwork	\$ 508.48	\$ 658.48
Total	\$ 9,730.99	\$ 9,717.94

At our February meeting.
Tickets for our Annual Dinner
will be on sale \$33 per person.

At our March meeting
we will have our book and puzzle sale.
Please bring your unwanted items.

Your editing team wishes to thank
you for your contributions that
help make your newsletter interesting.
Please send your contributions to Lorraine
Brown nfncnewsletter@gmail.com

Memberships for the coming year are now
due.

The club has many fixed expenses,
and we count on your active
participation
to be able to continue to bring you
excellent speakers, walks and outings
Memberships are
\$35. for a family,
\$25. for an individual
\$15. For a student
or mail to NFNC, PO Box 901
Niagara Falls, ON L2E 6V8

Red Bay Weekend June 22 - 24, 2018
Join us for a weekend of exploring the beautiful
Bruce Peninsula. We expect to visit Singing
Sands Provincial Park at Dorcas Bay on the Lake
Huron side, and more trails and vistas overlooking
Georgian Bay.
Accommodation is at Evergreen Resort, Red Bay,
in self-contained cottages, with all meals served in
the central lodge. Cost covers dinner first night
through to breakfast departure day.
Participants must make their own reservations, by
calling 519-534-1868 or email
frontdesk.evergreenresort@gmail.com .
Be sure to mention that you are with Niagara Falls
Nature Club. Our cost will be \$118.90 plus tax
per person per night. Optional bagged lunch is
available departure day for \$5. plus tax.
Cottages are being held for us, but make your
reservation early!
Please contact Win Laar 905-262-5057 or
winkal@sympatico.ca for further information, and
to let me know when your reservation is made.
Hope to see you on the Bruce!

46th Annual Niagara Falls ON/NY Christmas Bird Count December 27, 2017

There is only one word for the weather on count day – COLD. The average temperature that day was -15.7°C. Brrrrrr.

Despite that several records were set. A lone Harlequin Duck was the second record for the count. The 11 Bald Eagles, 5 Yellow-breasted Sapsuckers and 410 American Goldfinch were all record highs for the count. The 6 Lesser Black-backed Gulls and 2 Eastern Towhee were ties for record highs. Several sightings tied for record lows – Horned Grebe (1), Black Vulture (2), Eastern Screech-Owl (1), Merlin (1), Common Raven (1), and Red-winged Blackbird (1).

The total number of species seen was 90 plus 2 on count week. The number of individual birds tallied was 31,617. The accumulative total for the count remains at 164 species and the new accumulative total is 2,208,978 individuals.

Many thanks to the 41 participants including members of the NFNC, PFN and BMNC as well as U.S. birders covering the New York State portion of the count. Thanks to Willie D'Anna who organizes the U. S. counters. We couldn't do it without any of you!

Marcie Jacklin

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>ON</u>	<u>NY</u>	<u>COUNT</u> <u>TOTAL</u>	<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>ON</u>	<u>NY</u>	<u>COUNT</u> <u>TOTAL</u>
Canada Goose	536	677	1213	Great Horned Owl	0	1	1
Mute Swan	1	0	1	Snowy Owl	1	2	3
Gadwall	28	0	28	Belted Kingfisher	3	0	3
American Wigeon	2	0	2	Red-bellied Woodpecker	24	16	40
American Black Dk	24	0	24	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	2	3	5
Mallard	286	13	299	Downy Woodpecker	49	23	72
Canvasback	18	0	18	Hairy Woodpecker	5	17	
Redhead	3	0	3	Northern Flicker	12	6	18
Ring-necked Duck	2	0	2	Pileated Woodpecker	0	1	1
Greater Scaup	32	3	35	<i>woodpecker species</i>	2	0	2
<i>scaup species</i>	1	1	2	American Kestrel	4	2	6
Harlequin Duck	1	0	1	Merlin	0	1	1
Surf Scoter	0	2	2	Peregrine Falcon	1	1	2
White-winged Sco	1	262	263	Blue Jay	125	137	262
Long-tailed Duck	166	59	225	American Crow	39	60	99
Bufflehead	215	13	228	Common Raven	0	1	1
Common Goldene	65	327	392	Horned Lark	27	38	65
Hooded Merganser	4	0	4	Black-capped Chickadee	114	52	166
Common Merganse	465	14	479	Tufted Titmouse	11	2	13
Red-breasted Merg	42	394	436	Red-breasted Nuthatch	12	5	17
<i>duck species</i>	1	0	1	White-breasted Nuthatch	26	10	36
Wild Turkey	22	0	22	Brown Creeper	2	0	2
Red-throated Loon	1	1	2	Winter Wren	5	2	7
Common Loon	0	1	1	Carolina Wren	15	3	18
Horned Grebe	1	0	1	Golden-crowned Kinglet	12	0	12
Double-crested Co	40	0	40	Eastern Bluebird	15	40	55
Great Blue Heron	2	0	2	American Robin	787	333	1120
Black Vulture	0	4	4	Brown Thrasher	1	0	1
Turkey Vulture	8	23	31	Northern Mockingbird	7	3	10
Northern Harrier	7	0	7	European Starling	7137	1557	8694
Sharp-shinned Hk	2	1	3	Bohemian Waxwing	0	1	1
Cooper's Hawk	4	7	11	Cedar Waxwing	1	51	52
Bald Eagle	7	4	11	Lapland Longspur	0	19	19
Red-tailed Hawk	33	18	51	Snow Bunting	18	76	94
American Coot	3	0	3	American Tree Sparrow	109	169	278
Bonaparte's Gull	3306	10	3316	Dark-eyed Junco	334	374	708
Ring-billed Gull	1040	1703	2743	White-crowned Sparrow	44	9	53
Herring Gull	3416	3347	6763	White-throated Sparrow	35	77	112
Thayer's Gull	1	0	1	Song Sparrow	5	6	11
Iceland Gull	7	8	15	Swamp Sparrow	1	1	2
Lesser Black-back	6	0	6	Eastern Towhee	0	2	2
Glaucous Gull	1	2	3	Northern Cardinal	145	87	232
Great Black-backe	82	46	128	Red-winged Blackbird	1	0	1
<i>gull species</i>	5	217	222	Brown-headed Cowbird	7	1	8
Rock Pigeon	331	323	654	House Finch	84	117	201
Eastern Screech-o	0	1	1	American Goldfinch	134	276	410
				House Sparrow	310	293	603
				Count Week			
				Trumpeter Swan	2	0	0
				Red-headed Woodpecker	0	1	0
				TOTAL BIRDS	20035	11582	31617
				TOTAL SPECIES	90 plus 2 on Count Week		

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_____	_____
_____	_____

