



THE BLUEBIRD

Newsletter of the Upper Credit Field Naturalists

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www.uppercreditfieldnaturalists.org

July 2014

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Why I Like UCFN Field Trips

I really like being what my non naturalist friends and my spouse would call a "nature guy" or "nut" or "freak" or worse. I get a lot of pleasure knowing things about the natural world such as being able to identify the call of Cardinal when a neighbour asks "what's that?" or being able to identify a tiny pink orchid as a *Calypso sp* from a picture sent by a friend on a fishing trip. Even more though, I really enjoy being exposed to aspects of the natural world that I know nothing or very little about. This was the case when I joined an UCFN trip earlier this summer lead by David d'Entremont, a dragonfly expert. One could not help but admire the speed and dexterity of David's net handling skills, his intensity and passion and his intimate knowledge of all things dragonfly. So intimate that in order to identify some species he needed to use a hand lens to look at parts of dragonflies that would embarrass my non naturalist friends. (Is this maybe why they call us nature nuts?) By the time we started along the Island Lake trail we were an intimidating group of 22 nature nuts armed with cameras, nets, field guides and a stroller. Our ages ranged from preschoolers to those in the sixth of Shakespeare's seven ages of man. The morning was spent catching identifying and releasing an assortment of dragonflies and other insects. For me this was once again a reminder how I can still be awed and energized by learning more about the diversity and com-

plexity of the natural world. These field trips also remind me how much I love the time spent outside in a natural setting, the hunting for specimens and the shared sense of exploration. We have several other field trips with a variety of themes planned over the next couple of months and more will be forthcoming. I would encourage you to participate in these trips, bring your friends, your family and share your knowledge and/or enthusiasm with other nature nuts.

.... Ron Jasiuk

ABOUT THE UPPER CREDIT FIELD NATURALISTS

The Upper Credit Field Naturalists is made up of people who share a common interest in the natural environment: enjoying it, preserving it, and learning more about it, in all of its incredible complexity and beauty.

We organize a variety of activities throughout the year, including the ever-popular Spring and Christmas bird counts, wildflower walks and other field trips. The regular monthly meetings (Sep. - Nov. and Jan. - April) are a cornerstone activity of the club at which top-notch speakers are brought in to inform and delight all who attend.

The Club was founded in 1986 and is managed by an Executive Committee that is elected by the membership each year. The meetings are open to the public, and anyone who shares our interest in all things natural is welcome to take out a membership.

See inside for meetings schedule, speaker profiles and membership rates.

MEETING SCHEDULE & PROGRAM

The Club's regular meetings are held at 7:30 p.m. on the last Tuesday of the month at the Orangeville and District Senior Citizens Centre at 26 Bythia Street in Orangeville. Meetings are held from September to November and January to April of each year. For directions, see the map above. Below you will also find the program for the next few club meetings.

Sept. 30 2014: Bird-Friendly Certified Hay:

Help for Bobolinks and Meadowlarks— Mark Eastman will be introducing us to Credit Valley Conservation's innovative new program that brings landowners, growers and buyers together to produce hay in a way that is friendly to grass-land birds.

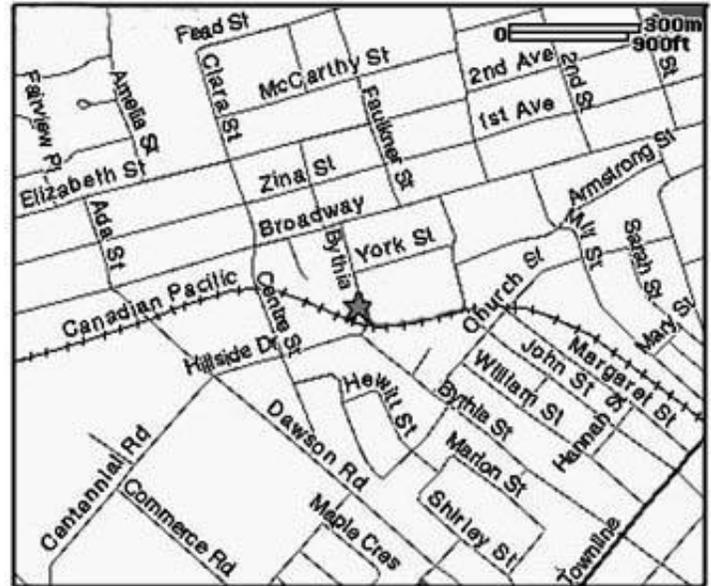
Oct. 28 2014: John Riley is the author of "**The Once and Future Great Lakes Country: An Ecological History.**" Here are a couple of quotes from reviews of John's book.."a monumental work...compelling narrative"..... "a complete historical account of the Great Lakes region, and the different species and societies who have inhabited it over the last 15,000 years....a 'must read', particularly for people who inhabit this region." John lives locally in the Headwaters area and will be speaking specifically about changes that have occurred in this area.

Nov. 25 2014: To Be Announced—we are still trying to find a speaker for this meeting so if you are interested or if you know of someone who would be a good speaker, please let Ron Jasiuk know at rjasiuk.....

Note: Speakers are subject to change.

UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS & OTHER CLUB EVENTS

We are looking for club members to step up and help coordinate the field trips. This could be one



person or several people working together as a committee. The coordinator doesn't have to lead the trips, but organizes the trip calendar, communicates with trip leaders and sends out details to those on the Field Trip Notification List. Please contact Ron Jasiuk (see back page) if you are interested in helping out and making our club great!

Coming up:

July 26—Glen Haffy—CANCELLED due to trail closure

Aug. 10— 100 Plant Photo Challenge Part 2

Oct. (exact date not yet determined)—100 Plant Photo Challenge Part 3

We will continue to plan field trips but usually do not plan them too far ahead. We normally do a reconnaissance trip a week or two before the planned trip to ensure the destination hasn't been bulldozed, flooded or turned into a shooting range, and it gives us an opportunity to ensure our directions are up-to-date. So please bear with us and make sure you are on the Field Trip Notification List. **Contact: Chris Punnett (cpunnett.....)** to be put on the list or for more information.

TRIP REPORTS

Field trips since the April issue:

May 3 – Minesing Swamp

May 10 – Mono Cliffs Park

May 17 – Tiny Marsh

May 24 – 100-Plant Photo Challenge

May 31 – Luther Marsh

June 14 – CVC's Upper Credit Tract

June 28 – Bruce Trail, Moss Haven & Enchanted Forest sidetrails

July 12—Dragonflies and Damselflies at Island Lake

In May, as last year, we decided to do a trip every Saturday as it is **the** month for birds and there is only a small window between the birds arriving and the foliage being too thick to get decent views. At least that's the plan..... The trip to Minesing started well with an adult bald eagle flying low over us. The water level had been up and down like a yo-yo in the preceding week and we did have to ford a wash-out on McKinnon Road. We had to adjust our plans with regard to a walk down the hill into the woodlands around the swamp when we discovered that a bunch of turkey hunters had beaten us to it. Not knowing for sure whether the club's insurance policy covered gunshot wounds we decided on caution and went in search of Sandhill Cranes instead.

Mono Cliffs was its usual charming self and the trip benefited from Mark Whitcombe's knowledge of the history of the place. Highlights, as far as birds were concerned were good views of a Northern Waterthrush singing from a tree top and a Black-throated Blue Warbler. Tiny Marsh is a long trip up from Orangeville/Caledon and that was reflected in the number of people who made it. That's a pity as it was probably the best morning's birding we have ever had on a UCFN field trip. Forty eight species with the highlights being Cape May and Blackpoll Warblers and a Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher.

Luther Marsh, a UCFN favourite, provided excellent weather for both the club and the resident mosquitoes. After walking across the dam and into the woods we retreated south to "Mallard Pond" and were able to view the Sandhill Crane nest that is only about 70 metres from the road.

The CVC's Upper Credit Conservation Area was a new venue for us and provided "more Savannah Sparrows than you can shake a stick at" – to quote a Past President. It has rolling meadows with lots of Bobolinks and some mature woods which are home to an enormous white pine. Worth a visit if you are in the Alton area.



Upper Credit Conservation Area

The Moss Haven and Enchanted Forest sidetrails north of Primrose is simply a delightful walk along a series of tumbling woodland streams. We were fortunate to have Darcie McKelvey with us to provide some botanical insights.

..... Chris Punnett

THE CHANGING CLIMATE OF ORANGEVILLE

This year's first of three 100 Plant Photo Challenge hikes was a success with a good, keen group, perfect weather and loads of gorgeous wildflowers. We went to a different part of Hockley Valley Provincial Park than we did last year and saw a different suite of wildflowers. The second hike in this series will focus on wetland and cool forest plants near Caledon Lake and the third hike in the fall will look for late-blooming flowers and seeds.



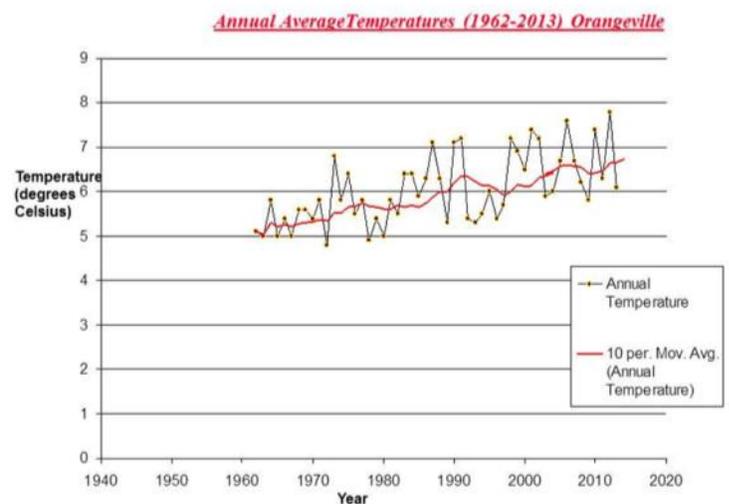
Calico Pennant, male

David d'Entremont, Ecologist at the Royal Botanical gardens made the trip up to Island Lake to introduce us to the world of dragonflies and damselflies. These jewel-like insects have imaginative names that disguise their true identity as voracious predators. David was a wealth of information about their biology and walked us through the more practical aspects of how to identify them. We saw over a dozen species, some of them uncommon, and the last of which was one that even David had never seen before!

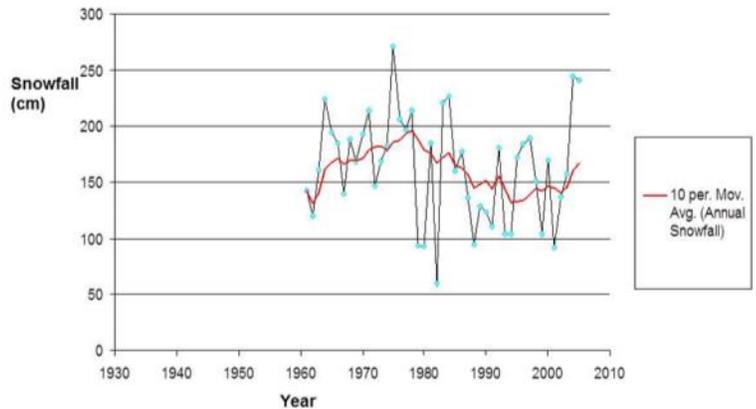
..... Dawn Renfrew

If Bob Dylan re-wrote his famous song "The Times They are A Chang'n" today, the title may well have been "The Climes They are A Chang'n". The facts show that global temperatures have risen steadily over the past few decades. Despite some localized downturns, such as we experienced in Eastern North America this winter, the global temperature has increased at least one Celsius degree since the 1960's. Moreover, this increase is expected to continue and the consequences appear to be dire. Whereas climates have changed many times in former eons, the culprit this time around is us. Since the industrial revolution, greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide and methane have been added to our atmosphere in such large quantities that Earth's normal temperature regulating system is broken.

To provide a local perspective, I have graphed Orangeville's annual mean temperature from 1963 to 2013. In addition, I have shown Orangeville's seasonal snowfall from 1963 to 2006. The climate statistics for Orangeville are based on data recorded at the Orangeville Sewage Treatment Plant on Townline in the southeast part of Town.



Total Seasonal Snowfall (1962-2006) Orangeville



Unfortunately due to numerous budget cuts by Environment Canada in the field of climate monitoring, the quality of the snowfall data at many climate sites, including Orangeville's site has declined since 2006 and is no longer reliable. The temperature data however appears to be in much better shape.

To show the trends in temperature and snowfall, I used a ten-year running mean. To do this I took the average over the first ten years and plotted that as the beginning of the red trend line. Then I took year 2 to year 11 and plotted that value. I continued averaging ten year intervals dropping the oldest year and adding the more recent year. The result was a smoothed trend line showing the temperature and the snowfall pattern.

The temperature graph clearly shows an increase from an annual mean of approximately 5.5 C in the 1960's to a mean annual temperature close to 6.5 C by the mid 2000's. This one Celsius degree increase is similar to the average global increase during the past 50 years. In addition to this mean annual increase, daily maximum and minimum temperature data (not shown graphically) indicates that Orangeville has experienced an increase in the number of summer days over 30 C and a decrease in winter days colder than minus 20 C. In particular the greatest temperature change has been in warmer overnight temperatures. Another change is a lengthening of the growing season.

As for snowfall, the trend shows significantly less snowy winters through the 1970's to early 2000's but an increase in last few years. This is somewhat understandable as the warmer climate means warmer water in the Great Lakes which in turn can result in heavy lake-effect snow in Orangeville when strong westerly winds flow over the open water during the winter. However, in most years the milder winter temperatures has resulted in a reduced snow cover.

Although I did not graph Orangeville's annual precipitation, the annual totals show fairly consistent amounts generally in the 800 to 900 mm range. The problem given warmer temperatures however involves the nature of the precipitation. With more energy in the atmosphere, North American records indicate that thunderstorms are more prevalent and rainfalls more torrential. This results in more runoff and less precipitation infiltration into the soil. As well, evaporation rates have been increasing causing more moisture stress for vegetation.

Accordingly, although the 50 years of records for Orangeville are far from conclusive proof of climate change, the global evidence continues to mount. A one degree global temperature rise is likely only the beginning. Based on extensive analysis by the IPCC (Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change), a two degree increase is the tipping point at which very serious consequences would unfold. The IPCC report (available online) discusses in detail other related consequences of a warmer world including diminished polar ice caps, dramatically rising sea levels, acidic oceans due to more dissolved CO₂ and the alteration of world ocean currents. The IPCC also discusses the positive economic opportunities of reducing our carbon emissions.

.....Bryan Smith , UFCN member since 2011,
Retired Environment Canada climatologist

Book Review—Bears Without Fear

Bears Without Fear. Kevin Van Tighem. Rocky Mountain Books. 2013 ISBN: 978-1-927330-31-9 Caledon Library Call Number: 599.7809712 Van

Bears Without Fear is an engaging book on many levels. The title speaks to that frisson of fear that many experience when encountering a bear or walking in bear country. Do I need to be concerned? What should I do if I surprise a bear?

The book is beautifully laid out, with many photographs of black, grizzly and polar bears, the three North American bear species, out of only eight bear species worldwide. The history of human-bear interactions is explored, including the impact of parklands, natural resource development, and human habitation. There are coloured sidebars that explore a variety of topics in more detail, such as statistics about bears, information about specific bear habitat, and interesting human-bear encounters.

As naturalists, we want to see more bears in our wilderness landscape, but we are also aware of the risk to bears whenever people encroach on ever-dwindling bear habitat. Although classified as carnivores, black and grizzly bears are really omnivores, with the bulk of their diet made up of vegetation in most areas. Given the large ranges which bears require in order to thrive, is there a possibility that these wonderful animals will be able to thrive, or is it inevitable that they will slide toward extinction at an accelerating rate?

Van Tighem provides numerous examples of ways in which human beings can provide bear habitat and bear corridors throughout much of the range which bears occupy. Beneficial practices include:

- reducing the numbers of bear kills through hunting;

- carrying mace in bear country (more effective than firearms, resulting in fewer dead bears and human beings when used appropriately);
- staying out of prime bear feeding grounds on a seasonal basis; and
- using electric fencing to protect beehives and livestock, bear-proofing garbage containers, and making thoughtful decisions about where to place campgrounds and trails.

Bears without Fear is an easy book to pick up and dip into. It is fascinating and even those who know much about bears will find nuggets of intriguing information to increase our appreciation of these often misunderstood animals.

..... Betty Cerar

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

We need a volunteer to take on the role of club **Secretary**. The Secretary takes the Minutes of executive meetings and provides a written summary at the next executive meeting. This is not a large commitment as we have only a handful of executive meetings a year. The Secretary responds to correspondence received by the club, under the direction of the executive or general membership. And the Secretary generates correspondence for the club, under executive direction, where the executive will discuss the content of the correspondence and the Secretary will then compose the letter and present it for review.

We also need an **Advertising & Publicity** person, who will publicize club meetings and activities via e-mail, some magazines (already determined which ones) and on several bulletin boards. Again, this is not a huge commitment and it could be a good job to share with a friend.

If you're enjoyed the club's activities over the years, this would be a good way to give back!

Early Bird Membership Renewal

Renew

your club membership before November 26, 2014
and your name will be entered in an

“Early Bird”

draw for a chance to win a \$25.00 gift certificate
from

“For the Birds”

Credit Creek Village North
165 First Street
Orangeville



Send or give your completed form and payment to: → Elsie Baker, Box 143,
Orangeville, Ont. L9W 2Z5



Upper Credit Field Naturalist Club

2014 - 2015 Membership Application

Membership runs from September 1st. to August 31st

Check appropriate box: → Renewal New Member

Family (\$25) Adult (\$20) Senior/Student (\$15)

Name: _____ Telephone _____

Mailing Address _____ Postal Code _____

E-mail _____ Newsletter: → E-mailed Posted

Interests: Animals Birds Plants Trees Insects/Butterflies/Moths Aquatic life Reptiles
Environmental Issues Ecology Where did you hear about us _____

Make Cheque payable to: **Upper Credit Field Naturalist Club** and send to membership & treasurer coordinator: →

Visit our Web site: → www.uppercreditfieldnaturalists.org

<u>Official use only</u>
Date.....
Receipt #.....
<u>Card Issued</u> <input type="checkbox"/>

<u>Return form to:</u> Elsie Baker, Box 143, Orangeville, Ont. L9W 2Z5
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ODDS & ENDS

In the “I didn’t know that” category: I noticed a large bird wading in our pond early one evening two weeks ago which I initially took for a Great Blue Heron (GBH). It was up to its belly and was stabbing at the water – there are a lot of small fish, frogs and dragonflies in that area. It spent about 15 minutes wading and by this time I realized that it was too dark for a GBH. Tiring of the fishing (or full) it climbed up the bank, found a dusty patch to have a dust bath and then sauntered off into the woods. It was a Wild Turkey – the first time I have ever seen one “fishing”! Sorry – no photo!

..... Chris Punnett



Asilid Robber Fly—photo by Mark Whitcombe

Try the **Feather Atlas** to identify feathers at:

<http://www.fws.gov/lab/featheratlas/index.php>

2013/2014 CLUB EXECUTIVE

<i>President:</i>	Ron Jasiuk
<i>Vice-President:</i>	Mark Whitcombe
<i>Past President:</i>	Linda McLaren
<i>Treasurer:</i>	Hart Brasche
<i>Membership:</i>	Elsie Baker
<i>Secretary:</i>	vacant
<i>Newsletter :</i>	Dawn Renfrew
<i>Advertising & Publicity:</i>	vacant
<i>Field Trips:</i>	Chris Punnett
<i>Ontario Nature Rep.:</i>	Anne-Marie Roussy
<i>Speaker Program:</i>	Ron Jasiuk & Dawn Renfrew
<i>Refreshments:</i>	Linda Dadd
<i>Raffle:</i>	Rob Best

**If you have comments, concerns, suggestions and/or material for “Bluebird”, please contact the editor:
Dawn Renfrew**

Visit the club’s website: www.uppercreditfieldnaturalists.org

Web Designer: Katherine Steadman

MEMBERSHIP RATES

Adult: \$20.00, Family: \$25.00, Seniors & Students: \$15.00

Visitors & Guests: Voluntary Donation

Membership dues are to be paid at the September meeting, or the first meeting you attend.