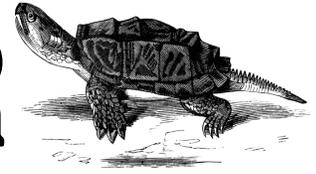




Autumn 2009

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# The SNAPPER



## Kids for Turtles and Local Schools Clean up Long Point Beaches

**Mission Statement:**  
*The Long Point World Biosphere Reserve Foundation is dedicated to conserving biodiversity, promoting sustainable communities, and partnering in research, monitoring, outreach and education.*

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**By Bernie Solymár, Co-Chair, Kids for Turtles, and Terri Groh**

On Sunday, September 20<sup>th</sup> a group of 15 Kids for Turtles members, parents and friends met at Hasting Beach to participate in the Great Canadian Shoreline Clean-up. An initiative of the Vancouver Aquarium and TD Friends of the Environment, the Great Canadian Shoreline Clean-up is a national conservation initiative that allows all Canadians to have a positive impact on their local environment. More than just a program to pick up trash, the Great Canadian Shoreline Clean-up also collects data from each cleanup, which then allows the organizers to determine the major (and minor) causes of shoreline litter in each region. Last year alone, over 63,000 Canadi-



ans registered for the TD Great Canadian Shoreline Clean-up, and, in only one week, participants removed 135,467 kg of litter from 1,280 kilometres of Canada's shorelines.

On that sunny Sunday in September our little group collected 77.7 kg of garbage and 16.7 kg of recycling over the length of the beach along Hastings Drive and along the Canadian Wildlife Service's property along Big Creek Marsh!

On the following Thursday forty-five Grade 9 to 12 students from Valley Heights Secondary School and seventy-eight Grade 7 and 8 students from Port Rowan Public School tackled Long Point Beach from The Causeway Restaurant to (and including) Long Point Provincial Park. They collected another 52 kg of garbage and 1.4 kg of

recycling.

Under the capable supervision of Terri Groh, our Shoreline Clean-up Co-ordinator and Kids for Turtles Committee member, we are thrilled to have participated in the Great Canadian Shoreline Clean-up and anticipate many more years of involvement in this worthwhile project.

Thanks to Norfolk County's Roads Department for doing a special pick-up of garbage bags we deposited along Hastings Drive, to the Long Point Ratepayer's Association for covering the cost of bussing the Valley Heights students to Long Point, and to Jeff and Rebecca Bouck, owners of @Play Adventures for their generous donation of ice cream to over 100 kids who participated in our first annual "Long Point Shoreline Clean-up."

### K4T Has a New Coordinator

The Kids for Turtles Long Point-Norfolk Chapter is pleased to announce the appointment of Colleen Dale as their K4T Program and Outreach Coordinator, a part-time position funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

Colleen has been a volunteer with the K4T Committee since its inception in March 2009. She brings seven years of experience working with the Ontario Parks system as an interpreter and, for the last 4 1/2 years, with the Long Point Region Conservation Authority as the Outdoor Educator at the Backus Heritage Conservation Area. Colleen's responsibilities will include the development and delivery of conservation and envi-

ronment-based programs for local youth – including classroom presentations, leading hikes, and coordinating K4T events and projects, development of displays, outreach and educational materials, exploring partnership opportunities, liaising with other community groups and partners, and pursuing sponsorship and fundraising opportunities.

No stranger to the local conservation and education community, to K4T members, and to the many kids she has taught, Colleen will play an important role in engaging Norfolk's youth in environmental and conservation-based activities. Congratulations, Colleen!



# Why our turtles are in trouble

**TESS KALINOWSKI**  
STAFF REPORTER  
(Reprinted with permission - Torstar Syndication Services)

They call him "the monster." One look tells you why.

At 10 kilograms, he is the biggest snapping turtle among dozens veterinary technician Maureen Lilley has nursed back to health in her three years at the Toronto Wildlife Centre, and she won't even attempt to lift the big guy.

A jigsaw-sized wound is gouged into its shell, probably by the underside of a car.

Tough to imagine driving over the monster without feeling like you hit a boulder – but it's possible, speculates Nathalie Karvonen, director of the Downsview centre, which takes in 30 to 60 turtles among the 5,000 animals that arrive there annually.

"Sometimes it's an accident. People feel terrible and do everything they can to help. Other people aim for them," Karvonen said.

The monster was picked up on Highway 28 north of Peterborough.

Summer is high season for turtles at shelters like this one. That's when turtles leave their swampy homes to lay eggs in sandy areas, frequently by the side of rural roads. They lumber across the asphalt only to be injured or killed by cars carrying cottagers rushing to commune with nature.

It's a major reason snapping turtles, like other southwestern Ontario species, are in decline.

But rescue centres are trying to bolster turtle populations by tending to one injured specimen at a time, mending their shells and incubating eggs so the young animals can be released into the wild when they hatch.

Few survive to adulthood, but those that do tend to be long-lived and reproduce for decades.

"Rehabilitating an individual adult can make a real difference to a population," said Gina Var-

But that doesn't help when the threat is a car.

"If there's a little crack (in the shell) sometimes it will repair itself. If it's a serious injury and there's pieces missing, then no, they can't survive like that. They really do need their shells to protect them, to keep them warm (and) cool," Karvonen said.

In a nearby room, heat lamps shine on a row of tanks that hold turtle eggs. The sex of the animals will be determined by the temperature at which the eggs are incubated. Females hatch from eggs incubated at a higher temperature.

A snapping turtle being kept in a pool near the monster's produced 42 eggs. One tank holds 13 eggs extracted from a pregnant Blanding's turtle found with her head crushed at the side of the road. The mother didn't survive, but it's hoped one of the hatchlings might replace her.

All turtles are X-rayed when they arrive at the centre to determine if they have internal injuries and if they're carrying eggs, said Sue Carstairs, a vet who works in both Toronto and Peterborough.

Using a dental instrument to probe the scarred shell of a painted turtle, Carstairs said, "Turtles do have remarkable healing abilities, but it's very slow."

When they have healed, turtles are released as close as possible to where they or the eggs were found.



An injured 50-year-old snapping turtle, found on the Long Point Causeway, had to be put down despite efforts to save it.. (Photo by Bernie Solymár)

rin, a volunteer with the Kawartha Turtle Trauma Centre in Peterborough.

A turtle that can't hold up its head when it comes to a rescue centre probably has bad internal injuries and won't live.

"But of the ones that make it past the first day, 90 per cent survive to be released again," according to Varrin.

A snapping turtle is surprisingly fast if it feels threatened, extending its long neck and delivering a devastating chomp to an attacker.

## How trees prepare for winter

**By Colleen Dale, Kids for Turtles Coordinator**

As the days get shorter and the temperature begins to drop, animals begin to prepare for the cold winter ahead. Some animals start collecting food and storing it while others migrate south to a warmer winter home. If you take a walk in our beautiful Carolinian forests, you can find evidence of this happening right now.

But animals are not the only living things in our forests preparing for the cold season ahead. Trees also go through seasonal changes and during the fall this change happens to be the most spectacular of them all! The Carolinian forest is dominated by deciduous trees and every fall it explodes into an incredible showcase of colours. Did you ever wonder why leaves change colour or how that change happens? If so, we first have to understand how leaves work and what their job is.

Leaves are the plants' food factories! As the plant takes water from the ground and carbon dioxide from the air, it uses sunlight to turn the water and carbon dioxide into oxygen and glucose. Oxygen is a gas that we need to breathe and glucose is a sugar that the plant uses as food in order to grow. This process is called 'photosynthesis' and happens with the help of a chemical called chlorophyll. Chlorophyll is what turns the leaf green in colour.

In the winter, there is not enough sunlight or water for photosynthesis and the tree will shut down and live off the stored food produced in the summer (just like some animals). As the chlorophyll disappears from the leaves and the green pigment fades, other colours like orange and yellow will appear. These colours have been present in the leaf all year long, but are hidden by the

(Continued on page 3)

# Autumn Nature Watch Checklist

Photos, unless otherwise noted, by Marg Werden



**VICEROY BUTTERFLY**  
(*Limenitis archippus*)

The Viceroy butterfly mimics the Monarch, but has a horizontal stripe on the hind wing. *Limenitis* comes from the Latin root word meaning marshes. This is a good name for the Viceroy butterfly, because it describes the environment it lives in. Like the Monarch, the Viceroy tastes bad to predators.



Photo by Teija Kovanen  
**LANCE-TIPPED DARNER**  
(*Aeshna constricta*)

Darners probably got their name from the old superstition that they sew up the lips of naughty boys with their long slender abdomens -- the devil's darning needles. Darner larvae live in water for several years, but after emerging as adults, these dragonflies only live for 8 to 10 weeks.



**NEW ENGLAND ASTER**  
(*Aster novae-angliae*)

The name *Aster* means star, for the many-rayed flowerheads. Of this common and familiar wildflower. The large deep blue-purple flowers are distinctive, as are their clasping leaves and rough stem. New England Aster sometimes has white flowers. The upper part of the stem is often crooked.



**STAGHORN SUMAC**  
(*Rhus typhina* Linnaeus)

Staghorn sumac is abundant in old fields, fencerows, ditch banks, ravines, and roadsides. Although the fruit is rich in fats and vitamins, they are not preferred by most birds, but, in the absence of other foods, they are often eaten late in winter. The staghorn name comes from the similarity of the wood to a stag's velvety new horns.



**WHITE-TAILED DEER**  
(*Odocoileus virginianus*)

This animal is the most widely distributed and the most numerous of all North America's large animals. A doe will leave its fawn unattended for hours at a time. White-tailed deer may have difficulty surviving the winter, particularly if there are too many deer competing for food or if snow is deep.



**WHITE-BREADED NUTHATCH**  
(*Sitta carolinensis*)

White-breasted Nuthatches are active, agile little birds with an appetite for insects and large, meaty seeds. They get their common name from their habit of jamming large nuts and acorns into tree bark, then whacking them with their sharp bill to "hatch" out the seed from the inside.

How many of these species can you spot? Use the internet or wildlife identification books from the library to get more information about these species.

## What causes our fall colours

(Continued from page 2)

abundance of green chlorophyll. In the case of the bright reds we see in trees such as maples, glucose (or sugar) is trapped in the leaf after the tree stops photosynthesizing. It is the sunlight and cool temperatures that cause the glucose to change colour, turning the leaves a striking red colour.

So this fall don't forget to take a nice long walk in the forest and gaze in wonder at the picturesque show Mother Nature has provided, free of charge!



Sassafras in beautiful fall foliage.  
(Photo by Colleen Dale)

### Common Tree Species and their Fall Colour Foliage

- Sugar Maple** – Bright orange-red, becoming yellow
- Red Maple** – Red, often very bright
- White Oak** – Reddish brown, often dull
- Black Gum** – Dark red, very deep
- Beech** – Light yellow
- Tulip** – Bright yellow
- Sassafras** – Reddish orange, becoming yellow
- Yellow Birch** – Bright yellow
- White Ash** – Maroon, dark reddish green
- Cottonwood** – Yellow



# The importance of wetlands & shorelines: a story

## KIDS FOR TURTLES LONG POINT- NORFOLK CHAPTER

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Bernie Solymár (Co-Chair)  
Marg Werden (Secretary)  
Wanda Backus-Kelly  
Wendy Cridland  
Terri Groh  
Arden Koptik  
Rick Levick  
Janice Robertson  
Jen Smit  
Elizabeth Van Stam

Farmer Harry and Homeowner Sue live on a pond. Sue didn't like the mosquitoes that hovered in the rushes on her shoreline, so she mowed them down. Farmer Harry wanted more land for his fields, so he filled in half of the pond.

Farmer Joe and Homeowner Linda also live on a pond close to Harry and Sue. Linda planted shoreline plants and rushes to create a better shoreline environment. Joe left buffers between his fields and the pond to prevent erosion.

The next year, they all moved away.



Farmer Ted and Homeowner Sarah moved into Harry and Sue's properties. That spring was very wet, but over the sum-

mer there was very little rain. Ted's fields dried up as there was no water and Sarah's lawn died. The mosquitoes were also really bad due to the rain in the spring.

Farmer Jack and Homeowner Lara moved into Joe and Linda's properties. Jack's fields and Lara's lawn stayed green as water from the pond moved underground and Jack was able to set-up a simple irrigation system too.

The mosquitoes weren't as bad because small fish and amphibians that lived in the rushes along the shore ate the mosquitoes.

## TURTLES

B	D	D	S	E	L	T	R	U	T
R	L	N	T	I	D	R	M	G	H
T	V	A	I	B	A	E	A	N	R
C	E	L	N	W	O	T	P	I	E
E	S	T	K	D	R	A	I	P	A
T	G	E	P	T	I	W	T	P	T
O	G	W	O	N	H	N	C	A	E
R	E	P	T	I	L	E	G	N	N
P	A	E	R	K	N	U	K	S	E
E	D	N	O	O	C	C	A	R	D

- BLANDINGS
- BOAT
- EGGS
- MAP
- PAINTED
- PROTECT
- RACCOON
- REPTILE
- ROAD
- SKUNK
- SNAPPING
- STINKPOT
- THREAT-ENED
- TURTLE
- WATER
- WETLAND

TURTLES ARE RARE!

— — — — —  
— — — — —  
— — — — — !

## CORPORATE SUPPORTERS



THE ONTARIO TRILLIUM FOUNDATION  
LA FONDATION TRILLIUM DE L'ONTARIO

## K4T Coming Events

**July 2010 - Butterfly and Dragonfly Festival.**

Details are still being worked out, but Kids for Turtles will be looking for ideas and volunteers for a weekend festival to celebrate local butterflies and dragonflies.

**The Kids for Turtles Committee**

is also planning a number of winter and spring activities, which may include:

- an owl prowl
- a winter/Groundhog's Day hike
- amphibian monitoring

**Watch for the next issue of The Snapper for more details.**



Tundra swans and other waterfowl during fall migration at Big Creek Marsh, Long Point. (Photo by Colleen Dale)