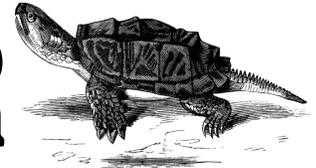




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The SNAPPER



WHAT GOES UP MUST COME DOWN!

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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K4T Norfolk Welcomes New Members:

- Alexis, South River
- Alicia and Fergus, Woodlawn
- Joel, Simcoe
- Dale-Bradley Family, Orangeville
- Yozina, Orangeville

Every time a helium-filled balloon is let loose and flies up into the wide blue yonder, one more piece of litter is deposited somewhere.

Although there is some controversy over how much damage balloon releases cause to the environment and wildlife, there is considerable evidence that the danger of death does exist. The problem with the balloon releases is not so much with the actual balloons, although they too can cause problems, but with the strings or ribbons that are attached to them.

An estimated 90-95% of released balloons rise to an altitude of five miles where the temperature and pressure is such that they burst into small fragments. The remaining 5-10% that do not reach a high enough altitude may remain inflated and can float many miles before descending back to the land or the sea semi-inflated.

Although the balloon industry claims that balloons pose no environmental threat because they are constructed of biodegradable latex, latex takes at least six months to break down in the environment. During those six months, the balloons and the string or ribbon that is attached to them pose a danger to wildlife. Meanwhile, mylar balloons are not biodegradable and can be toxic to wildlife.

Attachments such as ribbons and string tied to balloons are a particular problem as they can lead to entanglement. As

well, most of the ribbons used on the balloons are not biodegradable and remain in the environment for years. In the United Kingdom, a Code of Practice for mass balloon releases has been issued and states that ribbons must never be used, which will reduce the incidence of entanglement.

What you can do

Do not take part in balloon releases and tell the organizers of such events about the dangers they pose to wildlife.

If you do choose to use balloons as decorations at outdoor events, properly tie or weigh

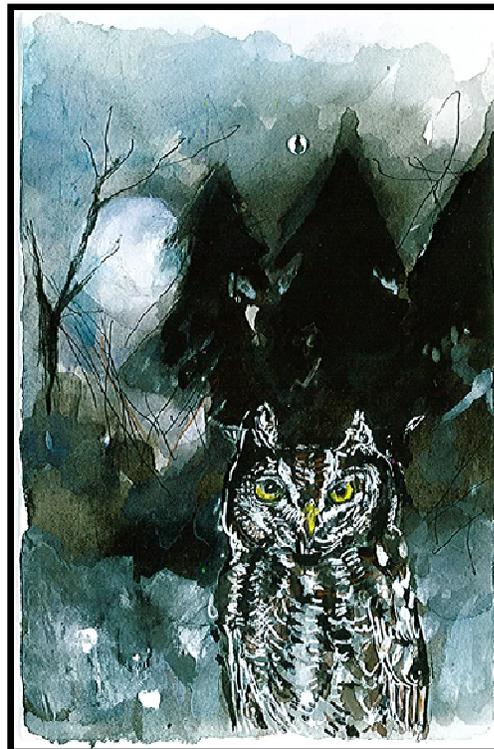
down balloons when traveling with them outdoors to prevent escapes.

Never tie balloons to other balloons, tie each balloon individually to a secure surface. That way, if one balloon escapes it makes its journey solo instead of with company.

When your balloon deflates, put it securely in the trash.

If you see balloon litter, pick it up and put it in the trash.

Plant a tree or do something positive for our Earth to celebrate an event instead of releasing balloons.



Artist and K4T Committee Member Sally Gable painted this watercolour after the K4T Owl Prowl on February 27. She told event leader Bernie Solymár, "While you were talking and playing the recorded owl songs, the sky and the clouds changed continuously; first the sky was quite white, then you could see it getting mistier and darker by the second. The clouds kept sailing across the full moon. It was a perfect evening." For more information about the owl prowls, see page 2.



Eastern Screech-Owl
Otus asio



The Eastern Screech-Owl is a small (8.5" or 22 cm) owl with ear tufts. This owl is nocturnal and roosts during the day in old woodpecker holes and other cavities or next to tree trunks. At night, it perches on low limbs in orchards, open woods, and along forest edges looking for insects and rodents. The screech-owl varies in colour from bright rufous to grayish, but is always intricately patterned.

The Screech-Owl below has been living in a cavity in an old Black Walnut tree at Arlene Guthrie's lawn, just south of Simcoe, since November. Arlene has named her little friend "Hootie" and states that he is often visible at his south facing hole, especially when the sun is out. The traffic on Highway #6, where



Arlene lives, doesn't seem to bother him, nor does the barking from the two big dogs next door. Screech

owls, which are fairly common in Norfolk, use tree cavities for "winter roosts" and if the hole is large enough, and they can attract a mate, these owls readily nest in cavities too. Screech Owls don't actually screech...or hoot for that matter...but rather make a soft whinnying sound (not unlike a horse!)"

- Submitted by Bernie Solymár

Kids for Turtles' Winter Activities

January 30: Wildlife in Winter

Although the cold temperatures seemed to have made the wildlife stay in their shelters during the "Wildlife in Winter" walk at Backus Conservation Area, an enthusiastic group of kids and parents enjoyed the 1½-hour walk through the bush.

Colleen Dale, Co-ordinator of the Long Point-Norfolk Branch of the K4T organization, led the walk along the Sugar Bush trail. The wildlife spotted was limited to a few species of birds, but evidence of other animals could be seen in abundance. Participants were given a track pattern card to help them identify some of the many animal tracks that could be seen in the newly fallen snow. Track patterns can be divided into four groups: straight walker (deer), hopper (rabbit, squirrel), waddler (skunk, raccoon), and bouncer (weasel). The group managed to find several different types of tracks and the kids in the group enjoyed identifying them.

Colleen also told the group that sometimes an animal that

has taken cover in a tree cavity can be enticed to poke its head out if it hears a scratching noise at the base of the tree. Although a couple of boys in the group gave this a good try, it didn't fool any of the wildlife that may have been in the trees.

Although there was little actual wildlife to be seen on the hike, the barren trees showed that animals are very active in the bush: a squirrel nest, hundreds of woodpecker holes in dead trees, a wasp nest, and goldenrod galls harbouring an insect over the winter were just some of the wildlife evidence spotted.

Even though the temperatures were sub-zero, there was little wind, so the hike was an enjoyable break away from the usual weekend activities.

February 27: Owl Prowl

The owl prowling held at Hay Creek Conservation Area was a well-attended event with more than 30 participants. It was a perfect night –

temperature hovering around -2C, no wind, fresh snow, and enough light from an almost full moon to light the path. The group walked about 400 m into the woods and gathered in a large clearing to try to elicit a response from any owls that were in the vicinity. Although no calls came from the Great Horned Owls that are known to be nesting in the area, the group was successful in getting two Eastern Screech-Owls to respond to recorded calls. Although a bird was spotted flying overhead, it was too quick to be identified, but it was likely a Screech-Owl checking out the intruders.



Participants in the K4T Wildlife in Winter walk head out to the Sugar Bush trail at Backus Conservation Area.

A member's perspective on Norfolk K4T's first year

By Megan Wilcox

Do you like animals, the outdoors and having fun? If so joining Kids for Turtles will be perfect for your family.

I've been a member since early last spring and we get together every few months for an activity. Last summer they held a two-day biodiversity camp. I very unfortunately had to miss it, being in Kingston, but I asked Colleen what they did and she said that they had a turtle presentation, an owl presentation (they had two barn owls flying around the classroom), and they had a talk on migration. That was only Saturday morning! In the afternoon they had an art workshop with Sally Gable.

On Sunday they had a bird banding demonstration, then went for a restoration tour of a farm. Then they went to Backus woods for a scavenger hunt.



Another activity we did was a garbage cleanup on the Long Point shoreline. Now picking up garbage may not sound fun, but it was! You just ran around with your friends on basically a big scavenger hunt. When you found a piece of garbage, you tallied it on your

paper and put in in a garbage bag. After doing all that in the morning, you got a free ice cream.

In July 2010 I know they're doing a butterfly event. How cool will it be? I don't know, but I'm going and I am sure it will be a blast.

Spring Nature Watch Checklist



COYOTE

Coyotes are a member of the dog family. Their scientific name is “*Canis latrans*,” which means “barking dog.” The coyote has excellent hearing and sense of smell. They can detect hunters coming a mile or more away and can hear their prey scurrying beneath the snow. Coyotes are found in most of North America, except the cold Arctic tundra.



EASTERN BLUEBIRD

A member of the Thrush family, the Eastern Bluebird is a bit larger than a Sparrow and has bright blue wings and tail with an orange breast. Bluebirds nest in boxes or tree cavities and can usually be seen in small groups of up to 10 that roam from one area to another in search of food such as insects and fruit.



RAINBOW

A rainbow is what results when light, water, and air meet shortly after a local shower when the sun is shining. The bow is divided into bands displaying the different colours of the spectrum by the refraction (bending) and reflection (throwing back) of the sun’s rays in millions of particles of water that are in the air.



NESTING BIRDS

This is the time of year during which birds are busy building nests and raising their broods. One of the biggest threats to bird eggs and nestlings is cats, both feral (wild) and domestic (pets.) Scientists estimate that cats kill hundreds of millions of birds every year, both common and endangered species, so keep your pet cats indoors.



AMERICAN TOAD

The American Toad is one of just two species of toads in Ontario. Toads spend most of their time on land and snap up about 110 beetles, grubs, and other bugs a day or 3,300 a month. Toads drink by sitting in water and soaking the liquid through their skin. Toads give off a gooey liquid that burns an animal’s mouth so that predators will spit it out rather than eat it.



TROUT LILY

The Trout Lily, or Adder’s Tongue or Dogtooth Violet, is one of the first wildflowers that appears in the spring. Despite being a low-growing plant, the trout lily’s fleshy green leaves with purple mottling make it easy to recognize. Its graceful yellow flower, with upward curling petals, sits atop a solitary stem and droops towards the ground.

SPRING NATURE ACTIVITY

Build a toad abode!

A toad is a gardener’s best friend because it eats lots of insects. Toads like to live in dark, cool holes or hollows in rocks or under debris. It’s easy to make a home for a toad in your garden. Here are some tips to entice a toad to move into your “toad abode.”

Most toad houses for sale in stores have openings that are too small for American Toads to fit through. The opening needs to be at least 4 inches wide.

To make your own toad house, something as simple as a board or large flat stone held up off the ground a few inches by two rocks



will form a welcome cover for a toad. Dig a small hole, about 4 inches (10 cm) deep, and fill it with loose soil and sand. Then build your toad house over the hole, making sure the stones are stable and won’t fall on your garden guest. Try to have two entrances to your toad abode so the toad is able to escape if, for example, a snake comes in one door.

If you do not have a water feature in your garden, a shallow pan with an inch or two of water and a few rocks for resting will also be appreciated.

And to really pamper your garden guest, put a battery- or solar-powered light near the toad abode to attract moths and other tasty toad snacks.

Place your toad abode in a shady spot, out of direct sunlight. Toads like to live in a cool, moist habitat.

Once you’ve provided a home for your toad, make sure you feed it properly: don’t poison it by spraying the insects in your garden!



Calendar of Events

KIDS FOR TURTLES LONG POINT- NORFOLK CHAPTER

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lpwbrf.ca

Committee:

Bernie Solymár (Chair)

Marg Werden (Secretary)

Wanda Backus-Kelly

Sally Gable

Terri Groh

Talitha Hostetter

Arden Koptik

Rick Levick

Janice Robertson

Megan Wilcox

Co-ordinator:

Colleen Dale

SIMCOE WILDLIFE FESTIVAL

Weekend of March 13-14

This weekend is all about wildlife! Drop by the Kids For Turtles booth and learn about all the events and activities we have planned for 2010. Our theme this year is "Wetlands" and we are excited to have hands-on activities, displays and the very popular 'Sciensational Sssnakes' to keep you entertained!! The Wildlife Festival will take place in the Aud at the Norfolk County Fairgrounds in Simcoe.

CELEBRATING EARTH DAY

Saturday April 17, 12-4pm

Earth day is a day dedicated to inspiring awareness and appreciation of our earth, by participating in local activities and events. Join us at Backus Heritage Conservation Area for an afternoon filled with family fun activities including tree planting, guided nature hike, earth friendly crafts and so much more! This event is a joint partnership between the Long Point Region Conservation Authority, Norfolk County Community Services Department and Earth Day Canada.

SALAMANDER MONITORING

Saturday May 8, 1-4pm

Come out and discover how to identify salamander species and learn how and why volunteers of the Long Point Biosphere have been monitoring salamander populations in Backus Woods for the last decade. Kids and adults alike will love to find the monitoring boards and flip them over to see what's hiding underneath! Information we collect will be provided to the 'Conserving Carolinian Reptiles' project and the Ontario Herpetile Atlas. Location: Meet at the Education Centre parking lot at Backus Heritage Conservation Area.

BIO-BLITZ ON BIG CREEK MARSH

Sunday June 6, 10am

Celebrate the 'International Year of Biodiversity' by exploring the fascinating and diverse world of a wetland habitat. Equipped with field guides and a camera, your group's task will be to find and identify as many species of plants and animals as possible. Don't forget to capture your experiences - winning photographs will be selected to appear in the summer edition of The Snapper! Meet at the Canadian Wildlife Service parking lot on the Causeway.

BUTTERFLY AND DRAGONFLY FESTIVAL

Sunday July 11, 10-4pm

This festival is a family-friendly event, providing opportunities to learn more about these beautiful and amazing creatures! There will be numerous scheduled activities and exhibits throughout the day including cookie decorating, crafts, and guided walks around the pond search of dragonflies and in the meadow to identify butterflies. Come on out to Backus Heritage Conservation Area for all the fun!

ECO-KIDS ADVENTURE DAY CAMP

Weekend of August 14 & 15, 9-4pm

Are you looking for some outdoor adventure this summer? If so, then look no further! Children ages 8-12 are invited to register for a two day camp from 9am to 4pm daily at Backus Heritage Conservation Area. Participants will be engaged in environmental hands-on activities, presentations, outdoor games plus so much more! Pre-registration is required. Fee: KFT members = \$30/day/child and non-members = \$45/day/child.

GREAT CANADIAN SHORELINE CLEANUP

Sunday September 19, 10am.

Roll up your sleeves and lend a hand cleaning up the beaches of Long Point. The TD Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup 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, valuable data is collected from each cleanup to determine the major (and minor) causes of shoreline litter in each area. We will meet at the parking lot beside the Causeway restaurant on Long Point.

ART IN NATURE

Saturday October 23/10, 1-3pm

Let your creative side shine as you use the natural world to inspire your works of art. Local artist, Sally Gable, will lead this program and help each participant find their inner nature spirit and express themselves in their own unique way! Time will be spent outdoors searching for the perfect items to create your masterpiece. Location: Backus Heritage Conservation Area

BIRDY DELIGHT

Sunday November 28/10, 1-3pm

Want to become a birdwatcher right from your own home? Attracting birds to your yard easy with these simple steps: come out and make your very own bird feeder, bring it home and find a good spot in your yard, and add some seed. You'll be sure to have lots of visitors to your feeder in no time! Learn about the Project FeederWatch program managed by Bird Studies Canada and how you can get involved to become a citizen scientist!

Location: Bird Studies Canada Headquarters - 115 Front St, Port Rowan.

CORPORATE SUPPORTERS

