

**Mission Statement:**

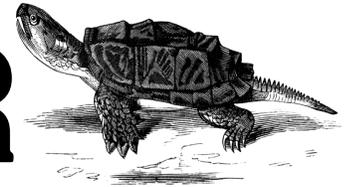
Our mission is to connect youth and families with nature and the outdoors, to raise awareness and appreciation for our natural world, and to foster a strong environmental ethic through community-based education and hands-on activities to improve our local environment



Spring 2013

Volume 5, Issue 1

# The SNAPPER



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## NCEE Looking for Volunteer Outdoor Families

Nature's Calling Environmental Education (NCEE) has received \$22,426 from the Great Lakes Guardian Community Fund to develop an activity guide for local families. Titled "Take a Hike!" the publication is a family activity guide for the nature trails and paddling routes of the Long Point Watershed. "Take a Hike!" will be available as a booklet and on the organization's website, and will feature 13 nature trails and four canoe/kayak routes within the Long Point Watershed.



The booklet will introduce important concepts such as the function of watersheds, the Carolinian life zone, local biodiversity, and the importance of different habitats to plants and animals. Simple, fun, hands-on activities will help parents and children enhance their experiences in the outdoors, and better appreciate our interconnectedness with nature. Some of the activities included in the Eco-Guide are directions on how to determine the height and age of a tree, how to "collect" plants and animals using

only photographs, learning to identify frog species by their songs, using all one's senses in the woods, and a challenging nature bingo game for the whole family. Additional activities will be available on NCEE's website.

NOTE: We are looking for 20 families to "test drive" the activity guide! If you would like to be part of this project, give Bernie a call at 519-426-7124 or e-mail him at [info@naturecalling.ca](mailto:info@naturecalling.ca)



*The work will wait while you show the child the rainbow, but the rainbow won't wait while you do the work.*

## Stormy Weather Ahead

Although thunderstorms can occur year-round and at all hours, they are most likely to happen in the spring and summer months and during the afternoon and evening hours.

Some quick facts about thunderstorms:

- ✓ Thunderstorms are the most common type of storm and, at any time, about 1,800 thunderstorms are happening in the world.
- ✓ Throughout the world there are about 16 million thunderstorms each year and 100 flashes of lightning every second.
- ✓ Thunderstorms occur when the warm, humid air rises upward very quickly, forming giant cumulonimbus clouds that can measure more than 20 km.
- ✓ Moisture that is sucked up into the cloud turns to ice crystals and as they whirl around, colliding with each other and with water droplets, they create

tiny electrical charges. The lower part of the cloud carries negative charges, while the top carries positive charges. At the same time, the earth builds up positive charges. When a cloud builds up enough electricity, the positive and negative charges flow toward each other, causing a lightning bolt.

✓ The flash of lightning and the sound of thunder occur at the same time, but the light travels much more quickly than the sound of thunder.

✓ The amount of time between a flash of lightning and a clap of thunder tells you how far away the thunderstorm is. To determine this distance, count the seconds between when you see the lightning and when you hear the thunder. Divide the number 3 to get the distance in kilometres and by 5 to get the distance in miles.



## Nature Hike Bingo

B	I	N	G	O
		<b>FREE</b>		

B	I	N	G	O
Robin	Marsh Marigold	Animal Scat (Poop)	Turkey Tail Fungus	Butterfly or Moth
Snake	White Trillium	Squirrel	Bird's Nest	Fly or Ladybug
Red Trillium	Rabbit	<b>FREE</b>	Red-Winged Blackbird	Woodpecker Hole
Frog or Tadpole	Killdeer	Turtle	A Spring Peeper calling	Mosquito
Jack-in-the-Pulpit	Snail Shell	Fern or Fiddle-head	Violet	Dandelion

The next time you head out to the great outdoors to explore nature in the backyard, in the woods, at the pond, or along the stream, take along these two bingo games to get you to really open your eyes and make you more aware of everything Mother Nature has for you to look at and listen to.

**What to do:**

Make one copy of the bingo cards for everyone going on the hike and paste them onto a piece of cardboard. Provide everyone with a pen or pencil.

For the colour bingo game, look for something in nature that is as close as possible to

the colours on the card. When you find something, put an X on that square. For the "signs of spring" bingo, put an X on the square of the sign you see or hear.

How many rows can you complete before the end of the hike? Can you fill the entire card before you're back home?

## Amazing Spiders and their Incredible Edible Webs

Spiders are among the most amazing creatures on earth and there are between 30,000 and 50,000 different kinds of them.

Although many people believe that spiders are insects, they are not; they are arachnids [ah-rak-nids]. Arachnids have eight legs while insects only have six. Spiders also don't have antennae like insects do. Other members of the arachnid family include ticks, scorpions, mites, and harvestmen.

All spiders make silk, but not all spiders use this material to make webs. Spiders also use silk to climb on, to build smooth walls in their burrows, to build egg sacs, and to wrap their prey. Spider silk comes from four or more glands, called spinnerets, that spiders have on their abdomen. As the silk is released, it looks like one thread, but it is actually many fine threads that are stuck together. The liquid hardens as soon as it hits the air.

Have you ever picked up a spider and had it fall out of your hand and hang by a

piece of silk? These are called "draglines," which help the spider climb back to where they were if they fall.

Not all spider silk is the same; it can be sticky, dry or stretchy, and it is very strong. If we could make a thread of steel as thin as spider silk, the silk would be five times stronger than the steel. Some large spiders use their silk to catch animals as large as bats, mice, fish, birds, and even snakes with their webs.

Some spiders use silk for travelling, attaching one end to a surface such as a tree branch, hanging onto the end of it and letting the wind carry it away, just like Spiderman! This technique is called "ballooning" and can help the spider travel many kilometres.

If you look a really closely at spider silk with a microscope, you would see that there are tiny drops of sticky liquid on the strands. Inside each drop is more silk, coiled up like a spring. When an insect gets caught in the web and struggles, the coil unwinds and the



strand stretches, so the bug can't get free.

When you walk into a spider web, it usually sticks to your face or clothes. Why don't spiders get caught in their own webs? It's because not all the strands are sticky and the spider knows which ones to step on and which ones to steer clear of.

Did you know that spiders recycle their silk? Once the web, which took only about half an hour to build, is no longer useful, they eat it and start over with fresh stuff.



# Spring Nature Watch

Photos by Marg Werden



### KILLDEER

*Charadrius vociferus*

The Killdeer is most often heard before it is seen as its shrill *kill-deer* call is quite loud. The Killdeer's broken-wing act leads predators away from a nest, but doesn't keep large animals from stepping on eggs. To guard against this, the Killdeer fluffs itself up, displaying its tail over its head, and runs at the animal to attempt to make it change its path.



### EIGHT-SPOTTED FORESTER MOTH

*Alypia octomaculata*

This moth is black, with 2 whitish or yellowish spots in each of its four wings. It has a wingspan of 30 to 37 mm. This day-flying, nectar-eating moth can be seen from April to June in woodlands and forest edges. The caterpillars, which can be found on Grape and Virginia Creeper vines, overwinter in chewed-out cavities in pulpy wood.



### BLOODROOT

*Sanguinaria canadensis*

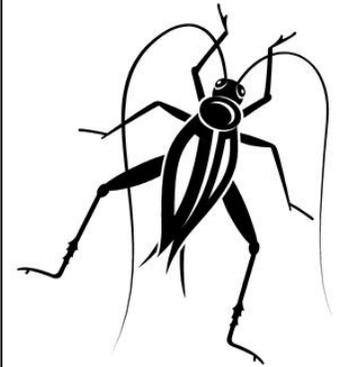
Bloodroot is found growing in moist to dry woods and thickets, often on flood plains and near shores or streams on slopes. Bloodroot flowers are produced from March to May, with 8 to 12 delicate white petals and yellow stamens. Bloodroot stores sap in an orange coloured rhizome root, the juice of which is red and is poisonous to animals and humans.

## Jiminy Cricket, how hot is it?

Spring and summer will bring out the insects once again and before long you'll be hearing the chirping of crickets in the warm or hot evening hours.

With the use of a watch and some careful counting, the crickets can tell you just how hot it is where the cricket is sitting.

**What to do:** Look at your watch and note the start of a minute. Then count how many chirps the



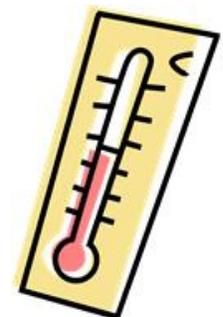
cricket makes in the next 14 seconds.. Take that number and add 40. That will give you the temperature in Fahrenheit degrees.

Example: 30 chirps + 40 = 70° F

To get the temperature in Celsius, count the number of chirps in 25 seconds, divide by 3, and then add 4.

Example: 48 chirps divided by 3 + 4 = 20° C.

**How this works:** Like other insects, a cricket is a cold-blooded animal and its body temperature is always at the same temperature as the air around it. As crickets get warmer, they get more active. The crickets make the chirping sound by rubbing the bases of their back legs together. The warmer the temperature, the faster they rub!



### EASTERN COTTONTAIL

*Sylvilagus floridanus*

There are several species of Cottontail Rabbit, but the Eastern Cottontail is the most common. All feature the distinctive "cotton ball" tail for which they are named. These rabbits seek out habitat on the fringes of open spaces, such as fields, meadows, and farms, but can adapt to other habitats—including those of humans. They browse at night on grasses and herbs and are fond of garden fare such as peas and lettuce.



### PAINTED TURTLE

*Chrysemys picta*

The Painted Turtle is the most widespread turtle in Canada and can often be seen basking in conspicuous places just out of the water. They bask in the sun to raise their internal temperature, which needs to be over 20°C for the turtles to be able to function well. During winter, turtles bury themselves in the soft mud of lake bottoms. By mid-spring, when the water reaches 15°C, they once again become active.



### WHITE-TAILED DEER TRACK

*Odocoileus virginianus*

A White-tailed Deer track is heart-shaped with a line down the middle of the hoof print. A buck's track is about 9 cm long with a space of about 50 cm occurring between the prints when walking. A doe's print is slightly smaller and a fawn's print measures about 4 to 6 cm in length. The pointed end of the track points to where the deer was going. Look for them in muddy ground or on the banks of ponds and streams.

## NATURE'S CALLING

Our name, Nature's Calling! Environmental Education, symbolizes a call to action to reconnect and embrace the natural world around us.

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# Nature's Calling Coming Events

### CELEBRATE EARTH DAY

Backus Heritage Conservation Area  
 Saturday, April 20: Noon to 3 p.m.

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

### BACKUS WOODS FAMILY NATURE HIKE

Saturday, May 11: 10 a.m.

Join our Nature Educator, Colleen Dale, for a spring walk in beautiful Backus Woods. Look under logs for salamanders, identify frogs and birds by their songs, and learn about the carpets of spring flowers on the forest floor. Meet at the entrance to Backus Woods off the Third Concession and don't forget your rubber boots!

### 4th ANNUAL BUTTERFLY AND DRAGONFLY FESTIVAL

Backus Heritage Conservation Area  
 Sunday, July 14: 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Bring the whole family to this popular annual festival! See live butterflies and learn more about these beautiful and amazing creatures! Activities and exhibits throughout the day will include a "Spread Your Wings" parade, crafts, games, and guided walks around the pond to search for dragonflies. Come on out to Backus Heritage Conservation Area for all the fun!

WIN ONE OF THESE COOL PRIZES!!



Mio Go Pedometer Watch with Steps + Distance + Calories

OR



Barska CO11010 Colorado 12x25 Waterproof Binocular

OR



The ROM Field Guide to Amphibians and Reptiles of Ontario

To enter provide us with your e-mail address or like us on



[info@naturecalling.ca](mailto:info@naturecalling.ca)  
[www.naturecalling.ca](http://www.naturecalling.ca)

(Draw will take place on Earth Day, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2012)

NATURE'S CALLING! and SHADOWLAND Theatre Inc. Environmental Education present

## SPIRITWALK

A Nocturnal Celebration of Norfolk's Nature through Theatre

St. Williams Nursery and Ecology Centre & St. Williams Forestry Interpretive Centre

Nightly Shows starting at 6pm  
 September 26th, 27th and 28th, 2013

Admission by Donation

For more information phone 519-410-7376,  
 e-mail [info@naturecalling.ca](mailto:info@naturecalling.ca) or visit [www.naturecalling.ca](http://www.naturecalling.ca)

**Nature's Calling! Environmental Education is an incorporated not-for-profit organization. Donations to support our work are gratefully accepted.**

### Our Partners

Norfolk Field Naturalists, Long Point Basin Land Trust, Long Point Region Conservation Authority, Bird Studies Canada, Pt. Rowan/South Walsingham Heritage Association, St. Williams Nursery and Ecology Centre, Acorus Restoration, Long Point Waterfowl, Shadowland Theatre, Scales Nature Park, Comfort Inn - Simcoe.