



NEWSLETTER

SOUTH LAKE SIMCOE NATURALISTS

SLSN is an incorporated not-for-profit Member of Ontario Nature.

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(www.slsnc.ca)

Research Partner with The Zephyr Society of Lake Simcoe (www.zephyrsociety.ca)

Member: Rescue Lake Simcoe Coalition

Member: Ontario Greenbelt Alliance

Note: Please renew your membership to receive future Newsletters

Meetings and Outings

Meetings: All Meetings start at 7:30 p.m. at the York Region Police Building Meeting Room (Baseline Road between McCowan and Civic Centre Road) unless noted otherwise. No July or August Meetings. Members events (insurance compliance). Visitors welcome.

York Regional Police, 3 District Community Meeting Room
3527 Baseline Road, Georgina.



Tuesday, April 11 **Milkweed:** The milkweed plant is now well-known for its importance to Monarch butterflies. But it was not long ago that it was known as a pest plant and noxious weed. We will take a detailed look at this actually beautiful wildflower in our area, and consider recent efforts to encourage its introduction and expansion in Ontario as a grassland prairie meadow plant species.

Tuesday, May 9 **Wetlands and Natural Habitat – Land Development Impacts and Options:** Land development, both urban and rural, has been ongoing in the GTA and for many, many years and especially in the earlier days, inadequate protection of the natural resources impacted by this development was evident due to inadequate consideration, understanding and future planning needed to protect and sustain the natural environment for future generations. This meeting will briefly discuss some of the lessons learned, expanded regulations for environmental protection, importance of wetlands and need for conservation of natural habitat. Gord Zwaigenbaum, club 2nd Vice-President will lead our discussions.

Tuesday, June 13 **Costa Rica:** Norma Knowlton, our club treasurer recently went on an adventure tourism trip to Costa Rica. She will lead this meeting with a travelogue and fact based introduction and analysis on the geography of Costa Rica including its diverse rainforest, upland and lowland landscapes.

Phone Paul 905-722-8021 or Norma 905-476-4747 for further information about meetings.

NOTICE about Meeting hours – 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. only.

Outings: All regular outings – Note: **Paid-up members may participate (for insurance compliance).**

2017 SPRING

May 6 and 7th **Presqu'ile Provincial Park birding trip:** This early to mid-May (the second bird wave) is the best time for birding at Presqu'ile as the passerines including warblers, tanagers, flycatchers and particularly shorebirds will be arriving then. If the foliage isn't fully out and the weather has warmed up it is the best time to be on the Lake Ontario coast. We could easily get up to 100 species with some effort. We will arrange meeting at the Park on the weekend as the dates arrive. There is camping in the Park, and local accommodations in the area. Book early as spaces will book quickly. More information on accommodations will follow. Mark Calhoun and Paul Harpley can be contacted for further information.

Large Development Application Raised Again and Proceeding in Sutton: Ainslie Hill

After a number of years this proposed subdivision development now fronted and being pushed by two separate named companies has recently come forward again. In 2012/2013 it was raised, and for years the developers had been trying to get servicing allocation into the Sutton Secondary Plan. In recent years they have done this. We (SLSN) reviewed and made comment on past submissions. I had inquires of concern by members of our organization and the general public in the spring of 2016 and I participated, and other club members individually, at a Public Meeting last April 28. We raised a number of key issues at this meeting as did a number of community members, in a rather heated discourse with the developer and Town staff. At this meeting on behalf of SLSN I advanced a number of issues related to the size of the application area, protection of natural features, quality of developer breeding bird consultant work, soils and hydrology, new green design principles and actual actions in development design of Phase I hosing, conservation of important forest corridor wildlife habitat, and impact on adjacent the Regional Greenlands Plan, among other concerns. Other than a brief 3 page summary of the meeting prepared by developer proponent consultant Michael Smith to meeting participants we have received no correspondence from the Town or the Developer on issues raised and solutions and substantive design changes.

In this regard I had requested the Town of Georgina planning department make available copies of the detailed information for public and community review. The Town has requested our (SLSN) review, and I have requested and received digital copies of key information for review. Gord Zwaigenbaum and myself have been reviewing this information for comment. In the meantime the Town of Georgina is has advanced an attempt the bring this development forward at the upcoming Wednesday April 19, 2017 the Town of Georgina Council Meeting commencing at 7:30 p.m. The Town Report with details of this advance of the development is not available for public review until Thursday, April 13th on the Town's website on the 13th to access the Council Agenda for the April 19th Council Meeting, on the Town website.

Paul Harpley

Moatfield Site in Sutton West Active Again: Importation of Fill to Site documented by Community

I have been advised by local community members that over the last couple of weeks since 2017-03-30 of incidents of the flow of trucks hauling fill into the Moatfield development site. They further advised that traffic signs and a sweeper were engaged in cleaning Black River Road at the Black River Road location.

Our organization (SLSN) and the local community group NESRA were involved in the OMB Hearing here as Parties for nearing a decade. It is SLSN recollection and contention that the stipulation of the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) that "No foreign fill" be imported into the Moatfield site, particularly indicated in the Minutes of Settlement. Concern for potential impact of sediment on Sibbald Creek and Lake Simcoe has been raised. Question about the quality, composition and source of off-site fill is also a contemporary concern.

My recent investigation of this with community members, observations, inquiries of the Town of Georgina Planning staff, and advisement of other agencies (MNRF, LSRCA etc.) are on-going. We have had response from the Town that they have started allowing fill arriving on the site. It was the Town Planning Director, Harold Lenters initial contention that there was nothing preventing the developer dumping fill at the site, but when challenged on this, from our extensive experience and involvement as a full Party in the OMB Hearing here he has recognized the complex and discursive nature of approved direction of this development site, and has agreed for his staff to meet with us. Gord Zwaigenbaum and I will expect to meet with staff in the future on this, but we insist that Town staff provide detailed documented information on their actions and activities on fill and the consultants, before any meeting for our review. Important wildlife impact provisions were won by us at the Board back in 2002, including impact on rare bird breeding including Red-shouldered hawks have not been followed up or acted on by the developer or the Town of Georgina in this regard to our knowledge and we must press then on these matters, now that this development misadventure here at Lake Simcoe is apparently proceeding after languishing for almost a decade.

I have advised with regard to the fill issue it is my interpretation of the minutes of settlement is somewhat different than Harold Lenters of the Town. The minutes do not mention or give specific instructions for the importation of fill, because there was not an expectation that fill would be wanted to be used here. It was the OMB evidence of our expert witness Dr. Abe House from Trent University and the Ontario Water Centre (MNR) and others (extensive volumes of written and verbal expert opinion), that the intent and introduction of housing be done here that incorporate an overall site balanced cut-and-fill which is the standard for a development site compromised by existing hydrology and especially near an important wildlands and aquatic riparian area of Sibbald Creek and Lake Simcoe. Fill in the identified clayey aquitard zones, if breached was problematic, and hence the house basements issue. It is recognized that back in 2004 when the minutes were signed that the "fill" issue was not the serious concern it is today in other ways.

Also, in regard to wildlife issues we (SLSN and the community) were all also very concerned about the conservation of area "C" forest site and changes to drainage and viable survivorship. Parts of the overall site is severely constrained with regard to surficial drainage and hydrogeology, and straight forward engineering solutions were demonstrated from Board expert witnesses to be problematic with regard to long-term on and off-site impacts for surrounding natural areas and wildlife (aquatic and terrestrial) over time, hence the concern in the Minutes of Settlement in this regard. The importation of fill onto the site remains worrying to us at this stage. Our first question of many would be has the the developer contractor(s) breached the

clayey aquitard of the complex glacio-lacustrine historical Lake Algonquin native overburden complexes. I expect Town staff will be able to advise us of this, and on the quality, composition and source of off-site fill. We will follow-up with Town staff in this regard. Members of the surrounding community, some of whom are long-term members and associates of our organization. The continuing community of off-site change in drainage and impact on wells, land drainage and vegetation is of paramount I expect remains.

Also, having not been updated on developments on the site in years, wildlife impact of the site works here, on/off site over many years are not ideal for wildlife species (including previous invasions of invasive species). I had an opportunity in the last couple of days to visit the site edges with community members and myself and have spoken to others on the phone and there are questions and concerns about what is visible to be seen here. We, for example have had no update on impact to habitat for Red-shoulderd hawk (*Buteo lineatus*) habitat and continued use of the site and surrounding area, important in the OMB Hearing and in the Minutes of Settlement. As you know there were many other valuable wildlife species in this area pre-development extensively detailed by our organization as a party at the Board, academic University partners and others for the Town of Georgina community over the years of the Moatfield OMB Hearing. I do get inquiries from people previously involved in this bigger Southern Ontario constituency about this natural area site about these wildlife matters. Has the developer environmental consultants or Town of Georgina consultants documented and detailed these impacts and current conditions? I do not expect Town engineering staff would have this information, so I have asked Town staff to please advise us who does?

Paul Harpley

Greenbelt Review Approaching Final Changes: Make your conservation comment to the Provincial Government NOW!

Please use the summary below (copy) of planning initiatives we have advanced and had the Town of Georgina support to go to the Province of Ontario now!

Paul Harpley SLSN

copy

We (SLSN) have been intimately involved in meetings, workshops, presentations and technical comment on the Greenbelt Plan in South Lake Simcoe and particularly in the Town of Georgina, for over 2 years. We have worked very hard to ensure the Town of Georgina has enacted our recommendations below as Policy.

SLSN Two key issues define our needed and recommended improvements,

Growing the Protected Area of the Greenbelt by Shrinking the Pefferlaw Secondary Plan Area in the Town of Georgina (thereby Growing the Protected Area of the Greenbelt in the Town of Georgina).

The Pefferlaw Secondary Plan Area should never have been as large as it is from 2005, when the first Greenbelt Plan was designated. It includes significant parts of three public York Regional Forests (Pefferlaw Tract, Cronsberry and Godfrey Tracts) and on a Provincial Nature Reserve (Duclous Point P.N.R.) other significant forests and wetlands and agricultural areas. This is particularly distressing in light of the Town of Georgina Council Meeting (May 13, 2015) of the proposed report 2015 PROVINCIAL CO-ORDINATED LAND USE PLANNING REVIEW- Report No. PB-2015-0026, (For Georgina Council Consideration May 13, 2015) and later to York Region recommending that the Pefferlaw Secondary Plan area be “Shrunk” (thereby Growing the Protected Area of the Greenbelt in the Town of Georgina). **The details of this Policy change is illustrated in Figure 1 attached for Town of Georgina Approved Report which has been submitted to the Province of Ontario “Comprehensive Review”.. The shrinking of the Pefferlaw Secondary Plan has been determined by consultants to be approaching 60 percent.**

Urban Valleyland Designations (River Valley Connections) in the communities of Keswick, Sutton and Pefferlaw (Maskinonge River, Black River and Pefferlaw River) in northern York Region (Town of Georgina).

At this point none of the rivers north of the Oak Ridges Moraine are designated in the new Urban Valley Designations even though many of our rivers are degraded through very significant environmental challenges of phosphorus loading, invasive species, erosion, old institutional, municipal and industrial services and site constraints among other things. They are in need of new Policy, future rehabilitation, restoration and funding potential that this designation will hopefully in the future allow. This is particularly important for Georgina in relation to the **Lake Simcoe Act and Plan** moving forward.

Please move these initiatives forward for us as discussed in any way you can for their incorporation into the new Greenbelt Plan for Ontario.

This information above can be copied by SLSN members and pasted into the recent Environmental Defence web site Comment letter on the Greenbelt to Premier Kathleen Wynne and other Government officials.

Environmental Defence Petition:

http://action.environmentaldefence.ca/p/dia/action3/common/public/?action_KEY=12028

and, or you can send an e-mail directly to Premier Wynne at Premier@ontario.ca

York Region Forest News

This email is to advise you that the Region's site preparation for tree planting will be undertaken in the Northwest corner of the North Tract beginning next week. The operation is expected to last five days.

The Region's Hazard Tree Removal contractor will be undertaking work in the Porritt Tract, Dainty Tract, Clarke Tract, Patterson Tract, Eldred King Tract, Scout Tract, Mitchell Tract, Bendor and Graves Tract, Zephyr Tract and Godfrey Tract beginning on Monday March 27, 2017. The operation is expected to last up to six weeks.

P.H.

The 27th Annual York Regional Forest Green Up Clean Up Day Saturday, May 6, 2017

Keep Our Forests Clean Join the York Regional Forest Advisory Team, partners, neighbours and friends to help collect garbage in and around our York Regional Forest tracts.

High School Students Help clean up your local forest and earn community volunteer hours.

TO PARTICIPATE Please call Linda at 905-473-6047

Great Backyard Bird Count – The Results are In 2017 GBBC Summary

March 3, 2017

By Marshall Iliff and Pat Leonard

Another Great Backyard Bird Count is in the books, and thanks to participants from around the world, it was the biggest count in its 20-year history. Bird watchers set a new high bar for number of checklists submitted and total number of species reported. Whether longtime contributors or first-timers, many expressed their enjoyment of the experience.



Downy Woodpecker by Shelia Rudesill, North Carolina, 2017 GBBC.

Schoolchildren in Memphis, Tennessee, clearly had fun with their count. Their teacher wrote to say:

“Our school ‘Backyard Bird Watch’ event was wonderful. As a second grader told the adult leader of her group, ‘This is the best day of my life! I got to see a Downy Woodpecker.’ ”

We hope many of you experienced a similar thrill during the count!

Let’s look at some of the numbers as of the afternoon of March 3, 2017—they’re pretty impressive!

Estimated Participants: 214,018 (2016 final total estimate: 163,763)

Species: 5,940 (2016 final total: 5,689)

Complete Checklists: 173,826 (2016 final total: 162,052)

Note that some of the numbers may still change slightly as the final checklists for the GBBC dates are added through eBird or flagged reports are validated by our reviewers. Our Top 10 lists tell a few stories, too.

Top 10 most frequently reported species:

(number of GBBC checklists reporting this species)

What's interesting to note in this list is that the American Crow has bounced all the way up to the number two spot. It has typically come in near the bottom of the Top 10 ever since West Nile Virus appeared in North America in 1999. Perhaps the crows are finally rebounding after the virus took a serious toll on their overall population.

Species	Number of Checklists
Northern Cardinal	52,422
American Crow	47,275
Mourning Dove	47,076
Dark-eyed Junco	42,208
Downy Woodpecker	38,760
Blue Jay	38,402
Black-capped Chickadee	36,417
House Finch	35,889
House Sparrow	33,749
White-breasted Nuthatch	32,598

Data totals as of March 3, 2017

Note: All Top 10 species are common in North America, reflecting continued high participation from this region.

Top 10 most numerous species:

(sum of how many individuals were observed across all GBBC checklists):

Species	Number of Individuals
Snow Goose	4,793,261
Red-winged Blackbird	2,464,572
Canada Goose	1,895,077
European Starling	919,038
Mallard	715,594
Ring-billed Gull	647,950
American Coot	500,261
Greater White-fronted Goose	426,040
Common Grackle	416,720
American Crow	378,483

Data totals as of March 2, 2017

Note: These Top 10 species are common in North America, reflecting high participation from this region.

Top 10 Canadian Provinces by checklists submitted

* New provincial checklist record
 New records were set in four provinces!

Province	Number of Species	Number of Checklists
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Ontario	158	7,158*
British Columbia	206	2,227
Quebec	120	2,215*
Alberta	91	869
Nova Scotia	135	748*
Manitoba	63	566
Saskatchewan	68	405 (equals record)
New Brunswick	94	303
Newfoundland & Labrador	75	184
Prince Edward Island	63	145*

Data totals as of March 3, 2017

Top 10 countries by checklists submitted

* New country checklist record

[See the current listing for all participating countries.](#)

The list is similar to that of 2016, but the checklist totals are higher, setting new records in 7 of the top 10 countries.

Country	Number of Species	Number of Checklists
United States	671	113,117
Canada	258	14,908*
India	801	11,008*
Australia	552	1,675
Mexico	774	1,190
Spain	291	696*
Costa Rica	648	645*
Portugal	220	480*
Taiwan	267	451*
United Kingdom	190	396*

Data totals as of March 3, 2017

Rarities

Very rare species are always GBBC highlights. a couple of noteworthy species reported this year include the two owls shown here, the Blakiston's Fish-Owl in Japan, and a Jungle Owlet in India.



Chevêchette de jungle. Photo : [Amal, É.-U.](#), prise à Kerala, en Inde [Bibliothèque Macaulay](#)

World Water Day 2017: Why waste water



World Water Day, is on 22 March every year, and is about taking action to tackle the water crisis. Today, there are over 663 million people living without a safe water supply close to home, spending countless hours queuing or trekking to distant sources, and coping with the health impacts of using contaminated water. This year's theme was: Why waste water? in support of SDG 6.3 on improving water quality and reducing, treating and reusing wastewater.

Globally, the vast majority of all the wastewater from our homes, cities, industry and agriculture flows back to nature without being treated or reused – polluting drinking and bathing and irrigation and losing valuable nutrients and other recoverable materials.

Reducing and safely treating and reusing wastewater, for example in agriculture and aquaculture, protects worker, farmers and consumers promotes food security, health and wellbeing.

Here They Come! Monarch Butterflies

March 23, 2017 by Elizabeth Howard

Mass departure from Mexico occurred this week and 1st arrivals were reported across Texas and beyond. Spring migration is officially underway!



"As I drove up the mountain, around noon time, the hurried flying of hundreds and hundreds of monarchs streaming down from El Rosario and flying north, was not to believe!" wrote Estela on March 19, 2017.

Departure From the Sanctuaries

Mass departure has finally occurred. Monarchs are now heading northward by the millions after a slow and gradual start to the spring migration season.

"As I drove up the mountains around noon time, the hurried flying of hundreds and hundreds of monarchs streaming down from El Rosario and flying north was not to believe!" wrote Estela on March 19th. [Read more...](#)

Dr. David Mota-Sanchez is based at Michigan State. He has been monitoring departure from Sierra Chincua's Koala site with his team at the sanctuary. On March 21st he noted:



"By this afternoon more than 99% of the biggest colony located in Koala at Sierra Chincua had migrated."

Flying Northward

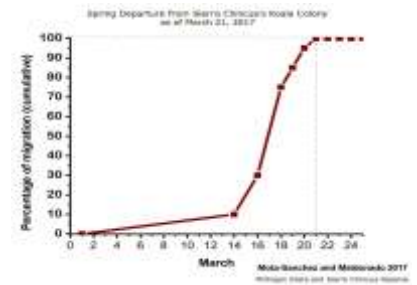
On March 21st, Ellen Sharp encountered a cloud of monarchs flying straight north on the highway near the Piedra Herrada Sanctuary:

"...we ran smack dab into a cloud of migrating monarchs. We slowed down, put on our blinkers, and started counting: we spotted at least 100 butterflies between 10:11 and 10:16 am. While some were flying high, others darted dangerously low across the road way."

Entering and Crossing Texas

It has been an amazing week for the monarchs! The migration's leading edge entered *and crossed* Texas. The northernmost butterflies have already reached Oklahoma. Strong and steady south winds across the region carried the monarchs swiftly. After a slow start they are now making up for lost time.

Letter from Estela
[El Rosario](#) | [Chincua](#)



[Departing from Chincua](#)



[Resting in Guanajuato](#)

CONSERVATION NEWS - INTERNATIONAL

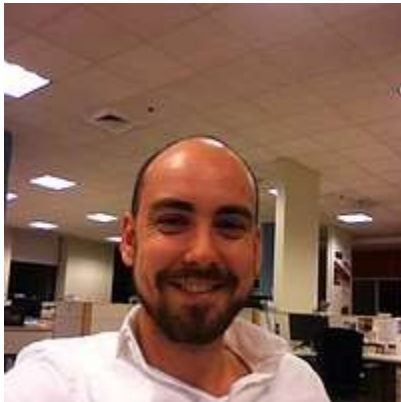
ENERGY/ENVIRONMENT FIRST LOOK

Decades after extinction declaration, hunt for Tasmanian tiger resumes

There have been many reported sightings, but one, in particular, was enough to get scientists to begin the search for a creature thought to have gone extinct in 1936.



Robert Harbison/The Christian Science Monitor/File | [Caption](#)



- **[Josh Kenworthy](#)**
EqualEd Fellow

MARCH 31, 2017 —The Tasmanian tiger is a creature of legend. The only confirmed sightings since the last one held in captivity died in Australia's Hobart Zoo in 1936 are stuffed ones, aging photographs, or depictions on beer bottles.

But ever since, reported sightings, ranging from the plausible to ones that sound like a video of a flying Frisbee being declared a UFO, have piqued the interest of scientists.

Many who are certain they've spotted the small, dog-like form of the carnivorous marsupial with distinctive black stripes on its hindquarters have only told trusted friends for fear it would draw people to hunt the creatures.

But recently, a team of scientists from James Cook University in Queensland decided to launch a new study after a journalist encouraged Bill Laurance, one of lead researchers to take seriously an account by Brian Hobbs, a former tourism operator in Far North Queensland.

To conduct the study Professor Laurance and his colleague Sandra Bell will deploy 50 camera traps on Cape York, a rangy and remote peninsula in the country's northeast.



14 animals declared extinct in the 21st century

"Laurance said Mr. Hobbs account stood out as being 'fair dinkum' and was clearly not fictitious," Australia's ABC news reported.

"He was quite detailed in terms of his descriptions of eye shines and aspects of the body pattern and movements," Laurance told the ABC. "All stuff that we were able to go back and cross-reference against other accounts."

The Tasmanian Tiger, also known as *Thylacinus cynocephalus* or thylacine, were once common in Tasmania and on the Australian mainland. But that was more than 100 years ago before a big Tasmanian land company offered a bounty to kill the tigers because they were hunting newly introduced sheep. The state later introduced its own bounty between 1888 and 1909 and eventually paid out more than 2,000 rewards, according to NPR.

The scientists said Hobbs description, although from a camping trip in 1983, corroborates with many other accounts since and was particularly noteworthy because of its detail and because the behavior he described was inconsistent with other dog-like mammals in the region. The ABC offered excerpts from his account earlier this month:

"I hopped out of bed and put her [his dog] on a short leash, grabbed a spotlight and started to look around the camp towards the ravine area where I'd been walking the dog previously," he said.

" 'All of a sudden I had these sets of red eyes looking at me and there was a male, a female and two pups – I got within 20 metres of them.' "...

" 'These animals, I've never seen anything like them before in my life,' he said.

" 'They were dog-shaped – I had a shepherd with me so I certainly know what dogs are about – and in the spotlight I could see they were tan in color and they had stripes on their sides.'"

Still, the scientists say the likelihood their camera traps will spot one of these creatures is remote, but with concern about other animal populations on the peninsula declining, Dr. Bell says time is of the essence.

"It's really important to get all the facts together and there are a lot of different things we need to be sure of before we spend the resources to actually go out look for something," she told the ABC.

"We have had declines in our mammals all through Cape York and through Australia, so my concern is that if we leave it too much longer to just go and have a look then we could actually miss out on seeing something."

Weather and Songbird Migration: March 15, 2017

By Dr. David Aborn

Winter returned with a vengeance!

Journey North,

March Madness?

While we may have set our clocks forward this weekend, I think we apparently set the season backward! When the sports channels started talking about March Madness, I don't think this is what they had in mind! It is definitely more like January than March, and it will definitely affect bird migration.

Many Migrants, Many Places

Many of the early migrants started arriving in many places last week. Many of the various swallow species, Black-and-white-Warblers, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, and Ruby-throated Hummingbirds showed up in Georgia, while in Texas, the first Yellow-throated Vireos, Northern Parulas, Purple Martins, and Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were seen. Here in Chattanooga, all the swallows have arrived, along with the first Blue-headed Vireo. Also, I just returned from taking my ornithology class (ornithology is the study of birds) down to the South Carolina coast for a few days, to see birds they might not see here, and we saw our first Blue-gray Gnatcatchers.

Out west, southerly winds helped bring in many new arrivals, including Bell's Vireos, Plumbeous Vireos, Lucy's Warblers, Rufus Hummingbirds, and Black-chinned Hummingbirds. In southern California, the first Hooded Oriole was seen, along with hundreds of Swainson's Hawks.

But Winter Wouldn't Let Go!

Then winter returned with a vengeance! The storms in the south and blizzards in the Midwest and east meant all those birds couldn't go anywhere. There are no reports of migrants north of the Carolinas in the east, Oklahoma in the Midwest, or Arizona in the west. If you look at the weather map, you can see that the cold front has moved off the east coast, taking the rain and snow with it, but there is a large area of high pressure bringing down lots of cold north winds to the eastern half of the country. Temperatures were near or below freezing all the way down to Florida (it was 24 here!). All those migrants need to just bundle up and stay put for a few days, because they have some strong headwinds.

Better Weather On the Way

In the western part of the country it is a different story. That high pressure area has moved far enough east that migrants now have a tail wind, which means the birds that are already here can continue their journey north, and new groups can start arriving from the tropics. They won't have very long, however. If you look at the map, there is another front coming in off of the Pacific, bringing rain to the northwest.

In the next couple of days, conditions in the east and west will reverse; the high pressure will have moved far enough east that the winds will shift to the south, making for good flying weather, while the west will be shut down by rain, snow, and north winds. Over the weekend, it will flip-flop again, with good weather in the west and poor weather in the east.

Things Will Pick Up As March Ends

As you can see, March can be very changeable. As we head toward the end of March migration will really start to pick up, so knowing how to interpret the weather patterns will help you predict where there might be a lot of birds! Take care,

- **David Aborn**
North Chickamauga Creek Conservancy
Chattanooga, TN



Blue-gray gnatcatcher

Laura Erickson



Blue-headed vireo

Laura Erickson



Hooded oriole

Linda Tanner/CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

CONSERVATION NEWS

Environment minister Catherine McKenna needs to step up to protect the Great Lakes

March 19, 2017 - 9:24am



Scott Pruitt

Catherine McKenna,

US President Donald Trump appointed Scott Pruitt to head the Environmental Protection Agency -- and he is no friend of the environment or the Great Lakes.

CNBC reports, "Democrats and environmentalists opposed Pruitt's nomination to lead the EPA due to his close relationship with fossil fuel companies and his history of casting doubt on climate change. Conservatives and the energy industry have cheered his efforts to push back on what they view as over-regulation under President Barack

Obama. Pruitt previously served as Oklahoma attorney general, where he rose to prominence as a leader in coordinated efforts by Republican attorneys general to challenge Obama's regulatory agenda. He sued or took part in legal actions against the EPA 14 times."

In addition, The New York Times has noted, "Pruitt has harshly criticized the role of the federal agency, saying much of its authority should be dissolved and left to the states. Mr. Pruitt's legal views on environmental protection broadly, and the role of the EPA specifically, appear to line up with Mr. Trump's campaign claim that 'Environmental Protection, what they do is a disgrace'."

That article also highlighted, "Over 700 former EPA employees signed a letter to senators opposing his confirmation."

Nicole Cantello, a lawyer at the EPA whose work focused on the Great Lakes, says, "I'm afraid all the work I've done will be abandoned."

On March 16, Trump announced a budget that would cut \$2.6 billion in funding from the EPA in 2018, including cutting one-fifth of the budget for the enforcement of the EPA's clean air and water laws, the cutting of one in five EPA employees, and eliminating large-scale clean-up initiatives for the Great Lakes.

Canadian environment minister Catherine McKenna met with Pruitt just after that budget announcement.

Contrary to all evidence, McKenna has commented, "I was pretty clear on how important continued investment by Canada and the U.S. is to the health of the Great Lakes, and I think he gets it. I think he understands the importance of the Great Lakes to the region and to the economy."

Nothing could be further from the truth.

Given the Trudeau government has decided not to strongly denounce the funding cut to Great Lakes (a shared source of drinking water for 45 million Americans and Canadians) and has placed an emphasis on being amicable with the Trump administration -- from the North American Free Trade Agreement to asylum seekers crossing into Canada fearful of Trump's anti-immigration statements to possibly joining Trump's "state of the art" multi-billion Star Wars missile defence plan -- one hope is that the Trudeau government will do more themselves to protect the Great Lakes.

The Trudeau government has two imminent opportunities to do so:

1- Implement a comprehensive action plan to protect the Great Lakes (cost: \$500 million in year one and \$950 million a year in each of the following four years). Water campaigner Emma Lui has noted that the Trudeau government's Budget 2016 allocated just \$3.1 million to improve nearshore water and to address phosphorous pollution in Lake Erie. The federal government will table its budget on March 22, World Water Day.

2- Oppose the controversial plan to bury 200,000 cubic metres of low- and intermediate-level radioactive waste near Lake Huron. The Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency is currently reviewing the proposal and is expected to make recommendations to McKenna in the fall (September-October 2017). To call on McKenna to reject the nuclear dump on Lake Huron.

Source: Brent Patterson's blog

2017-03-07

Big News! We're Suing.



Valerie Strain
Buckhorn, Canada



MAR 5, 2017 — Since our dog George was killed by a trap on a public snowmobile trail, more than 80,000 people have signed our petition asking for much-needed changes to Ontario's outdated laws about trapping.

We asked for some common-sense changes to the legislation: things like minimum setbacks and warning signs at the head of public trails. Unfortunately the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) will not address the problem and seem more concerned about "spinning" their position than trying to end pet deaths. They acknowledge that an "acceptable" (to them) number of pets die each year but they don't actually have any data. Ontario lags behind other jurisdictions that have already dealt with this issue, Manitoba for example.

Here are the facts:

- every year, dogs and cats die in kill-traps set in public spaces
- traps and snares are allowed on public snowmobile trails, beside municipal roadways, on Crown Land, on your neighbour's private property and in the provincial park where you camp and hike
- the MNRF leaves it up to individual trappers to use "reasonable precautions" despite the overwhelming evidence that this is not working
- the rules are outdated and it is only a matter of time before a child gets hurt

So we are suing. We have hired Gartner & Associates to prepare an Application that compels the MNRF to review and update their trapping policies.

Our campaign has widespread support from the public and we appreciate everything that our supporters have done to spread the message. You are the reason we keep working towards our goal and your continuing support reassures us that we are on the right track.

If you have had a similar incident happen to you, please contact our lawyer Suzana Gartner at sgartner@animallawyers.ca

www.notrapsontrails.org

Tell Tim Hortons to make a bigger impact on reducing WASTE



Jennifer Moulton Lucan, Canada



Tim Hortons *says* that they want to help reduce waste. This was pulled from their website: "*While recycling and composting are great solutions for waste, reducing waste through reuse and improved processes can have greater benefits. We continue to encourage our guests to use ceramic mugs, plates and bowls when dining in our restaurants, and guests are also provided with a 10 cent discount when they bring in their own travel mug for hot beverage refills.*"

However, a friend recently started working there and says it is actually policy for them to mix your coffee in a disposable cup and then throw it away, so it really reduces only the wasted lid. **Tim Hortons is not making a big enough impact on waste reduction. How many cups do you suppose are disposed of in any given day?** Most places don't recycle them either (even when you put it in your recycling container). And I would say they hardly encourage the use of ceramics in store.

Its time for Tim Hortons to make a stand and make a change. **They need to change the policy for using disposables to mix coffee even when you use a travel mug. Tim Hortons could also go a step further and post signs to encourage you to Bring Your Own Mug.** This has made a big difference at grocery stores by getting people in the habit of bringing their own shopping bags. This is only one small change, but the waste it would reduce could be huge.

Web site: https://www.change.org/p/tim-hortons-tell-tim-hortons-to-make-a-bigger-impact-on-reducing-waste?utm_content=petition&utm_medium=email&utm_source=45347&utm_campaign=campaigns_digest&sfmc_tk=AhDeUyeEndGsq47Ln%2fXuYHHvBY8H2x0VNPCivD2lkRepf9HZkbB4M9ILpB6awIbr

