



NEWSLETTER

SOUTH LAKE SIMCOE NATURALISTS

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

Telephone 905-722-8021

(www.slsnc.ca)

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

Well, this has certainly been a traditional cold and snowy Canadian winter so far! As noted in our last SLSN newsletter these recent cold/snow events had been forecast in through South Lake Simcoe and to the north of us. The volume of snow has been demonstrated in much climate change science modelling for south-central Ontario for many years. And, if there is moisture in the air, and the temperature drops below zero, here comes the snow! So, get out your snow boots, snowshoes and cross-country skis for touring. This is all a welcome bonus for the naturalist, as for the last few years we have had spotty undependable winter naturalist outings. Also, you will notice that we have some warmup topics of talks, such as “Birding in Ecuador” to warm you up on a cold Sunday afternoon.

Every year in December we participate in the Sutton Christmas Bird Count. We had the 38th annual count! Compared to the rainy, windy 2023 count the weather this year was similar to climatological predictions noted above. The air temperature varied generally from - 4 to 4 degrees C, with snow-covered ground and some sunny spells throughout the day resulting in good optical bird observation conditions. Our total species count for the day was a solid 59 species. Please read the full Official Report summary below.

On the topic of birding, recreation and citizen science, contributions of naturalists to local Ontario and continental scale avian research, this 2025 spring/summer is the last year of the third Ontario Breeding Bird atlas program. Some members have been contributing their observations to the effort consistently. Also, from all SLSN outings during the last 4 years, the avian data collected has been included in the program data base. **This year most all the club outings and some meetings effort will focus on breeding birds! You will notice that our outings and meeting plans this year (see below) that a major focus on SLSN efforts will be on this!**

The Annual Sutton CBC and the once-in-a-generation field and data collection for the Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas program (of which SLSN members have contributed avian data) spans Atlas 1, 1981-1985, Atlas 2, 2001-2005, and now Atlas 3, 2021-2025, in our geographic area of the province!

We continue to be concerned about the Pefferlaw area proposed aerodrome from a natural heritage perspective of potential destruction in our area, and monitoring the progress of the Pefferlaw area ratepayers (PAR) community group. PAR is working with Ontario Government ministries and other work related to putting a stop to this ridiculous development adventure in our area.

Recently the Town of Georgina advised that developers are moving ahead with the Ainslie Hill II Subdivision, Plan of Subdivision, including asking for zoning, density and built-form changes, among other concerns.

Also, as always in your newsletter, you'll read other information on current science, documentation, conservation and environmental concerns in our area such as opportunity to comment on the recent "Uxbridge Provincial Urban Park", and review of the "Rescue Lake Simcoe Coalition" organization, Ontario Nature focus information and Canadian national and international wildlife and conservation concerns, beyond are detailed herein. Enjoy!

Paul Harpley SLSN

The 2024 Annual Sutton Christmas Bird Count (C.B.C.) Report

The 38th Annual Sutton Christmas Bird Count was Friday, December 27, 2024 with a total of 8,319 individual birds, a noticeable increase from last year's 7,176 birds counted. Central to this increase was more Canada geese counted. On count day participants documented 59 species in the entire official count area.

Geographically, the survey area includes parts of York Region's municipalities Georgina, East Gwillimbury, Durham Region's northwest Uxbridge districts, and a part of south-east Simcoe County. A total of 31 birders formally participated in the field and at feeders for the count area this year.

The observation day started as overcast with a 10 kph wind from the southeast at 6:15 a.m. for those "owling". The air temperature was -4 C at 5:10 a.m. when one individual started their count day. At 7:45 it was -1C near the count center. As the day progressed the temperature rose to 4C in sheltered areas and continued to be cloudy to the end of the day. Some sheltered Lake Simcoe small bays were ice covered. Indeed, Jackson's Point harbour was completely frozen, and Cook's Bay was ice covered south of Lakeview Park, where it was open water for good viewing by scope and binoculars to the north and west.

Feeder watchers this year noted in most cases birds were not visiting in numbers they had seen in previous years, though some notable species were observed. With good geographic coverage, participant observers recorded a solid 59 species, up from 55 species in 2022, and 50 in 2023, though heavy rain events and other conditions in recent past years undoubtedly accounted for some of this difference.

Some highlights and notables for the count day were: American robin (313), Brown creeper (2), Pine siskin (3), Eastern screech owl (2), Great Horned owl (3), Snowy owl (8), Barred owl (3), Bonaparte's gull (1), Merlin (3), Northern harrier (1), Snow bunting (397). Obvious species in absence but expected (called misses) this year were some of the common finches.

Rough-legged hawk (2) in Georgina documented consistently in the past in the whole count area, always in small numbers, and habitat-specific, returned to past Georgina locations. Two consistent bird species of interest for bird watchers on the Sutton count, Bald eagle (21) and Snowy owl (8), were seen on count day

although absent on the previous year's rainy CBC day. One birder reported seeing 8 Bald eagles together on the ice!

One rarity, a Hermit thrush (1) in East Gwillimbury, was well documented with photos and a sound recording. The thrush has a bold, buffy to whitish eye-ring and throat, heavy spotting on throat and breast, reddish tail and wing edges which contrast with the otherwise brown feathered back. Another unexpected species White-winged scoter (2) seen in the Innisfil area of the count is not a usual bird for the Sutton CBC, seen in the past only one bird in 2005. They are migrants from western Canada and the southern Hudson Bay coast flying to main wintering coastal shore grounds on the Atlantic Ocean of the U.S. and southern Canada.

Thanks to all participants on the Christmas Bird Count as field birders or feeder watcher/property observers. South Lake Simcoe Naturalists (SLSN) members' contributions, and local or 'from further afield' birders' efforts always result in documenting birds that would otherwise not be found. Your collective efforts on the CBC day essentially make each annual Sutton count successful.

Paul and Debra Harpley

Paul and Debra Harpley are compilers of the official Sutton CBC, founding members of the SLSN, and long-time residents of Georgina.

Contributed Photos



Hermit thrush, photo credit: Steven Kinsley



Bald Eagle, photo credit: Heather MacKay, member SLSN

Outings Notice: All planned regular outings/meetings. SLSN members in good standing include liability insurance coverage with recreational volunteer participation.

Presently, in Ontario outdoor enthusiasts continue taking precautions following local, provincial, and other guidance/recommendations for COVID-19, RSV, and Norovirus regarding physical distancing and other actions. Information on public health guidance can be found on the Government of Ontario [website](#).

2025 Winter

Thursday February 6: Snowshoeing (or with boots)

We are going to the Metro Tract of the York Regional Forest. Members should meet at 2 p.m. at the parking lot for Coffee Time in **Baldwin**. We will meet there and drive to the parking lot on Metro Road just west of Jackson's Point. Dress for the weather. Bring binoculars. Plan for a minimum of 2 hours.

Wednesday March 12: Hiking the Zephyr Tract

This area is south of Georgina, just east of Hwy 48 approx. 10 min from Baldwin. Members should meet at 2 p.m. at the parking lot for Coffee Time in **Baldwin**. Dress for the weather. Bring binoculars. Plan for a minimum of 2 hours.

Meetings Notice: In-person

All Meetings start at 4:00 p.m. in the community meeting room at the York Region Police Building (Baseline Road between McCowan and Civic Centre Road) unless noted otherwise.

York Regional Police, 3 District Community Meeting Room
3527 Baseline Road, Georgina from 4:00-5:30 p.m.



Sunday February 16: Birding in Ecuador

Presentation by SLSN members Richard & Susan Weatherston.



Tandayayapa birding



Hummingbirds at feeder

Birding in Ecuador

Come in from the cold and enjoy some of the world's prettiest tropical and rainforest birds. This presentation will explore some of the beautiful sights of Ecuador's magnificent landscapes, from coastal regions to Andes mountains to the Amazon and treat you to images of delightfully colorful and unusual birds.

Tourism gets a lot of negative criticism for hurting the environment. But birding tourism in Ecuador has done a remarkable job of giving small farmers a way of supporting themselves while re naturalizing small land holdings and at the same time protecting birds and wildlife. We will explore together the beauties of Ecuador.



Sunday March 16: Saving an internationally endangered species from extinction – Asiatic Black Bear

Presentation by SLSN member Paul Harpley.

The Asiatic black bear was researched back in 2003 in the high mountain ranges of the Republic of South Korea. Paul was part of this research team, working for a project in collaboration with Conservation breeding Specialist Group of the United Nations (PHVA project). The city of Seoul and Seoul National University sponsored this research. As part of a team from Canada and the United States, researchers were to verify the status of the species at that time. Paul will report on the findings in an illustrated talk.



Asiatic black bear

Sunday April 27: Bird houses, building and maintenance, important things to know for nesting birds on your property
Presentation by SLSN member Jeff Boylin.

Local Planning Matter

Ainslie Hill II Area Development – Plan of Subdivision comment, SLSN



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Post Office Box 1044 Sutton West, Ontario, L0E 1R0

Telephone 905-722-8021

(www.slsnc.ca)

2024-11-08

Kim Harris Planning Clerk
Development Planning Division, Town of Georgina

c.c. Sean Lapenna Town of Georgina

Re: Notice, Ainslie Hill II – New DRAFT Plan of Subdivision, Amendment to Official Plan.

Dear Kim Harris:

Thank you for your document, Ainslie Hill II – New DRAFT Plan of Subdivision, Amendment to Official Plan.

I am responding on behalf of the South Lake Simcoe Naturalists (SLSN) after our executive review of your plan information and attached reports.

As you may be aware, our organization has been active in conservation including review and contribution to planning matters of development, recreation, and science and natural heritage-

related matters for over three decades. We have worked with Town of Georgina staff, Council members and others on many diverse interests to our membership, and other community members endeavour to contribute to discourse and design/planning where we can, within the limits of our volunteer membership, resources and other diverse commitments.

Regarding your Notice “Ainslie Hill II – New DRAFT Plan of Subdivision, Amendment to Official Plan”, we offer our first impression from review, and past contextual comments below.

Firstly, our organization has been involved in review and comment on development proposals for the Ainslie Hill I and II area of Georgina since before 2006. A References summary of key SLSN documents is added below on this letter of comments, reviewed and contributed technical comment to past plans/reports. These SLSN contributions to discourse would be in your Town of Georgina files and could be referred to by Town of Georgina staff and Council for our contextual position of science and planning matters related herein. The basic science and planning concerns and opportunities in the geomorphic/ecological area of Ainslie Hill II are detailed there and would apply to this recent Notice in SLSN comment from 2006 to 2024.

We recommend staff and council be provided with these documents for review in this matter, by way of them understanding the deep context of our comment and recommendations. I have included an addendum of some of our Key past documents and technical research **References** (below) and evidence on this development process for Ainslie Hill I and II.

By 2017 Ainslie Hill I and II were moving along and we were communicating with Town staff and the development consultant on both proposed development areas I and II, regarding these deliberations dated 2017-09-03 providing context, science and conservation concerns and opportunities for development areas I and II. The landscape geomorphology, hydrology and natural heritage/habitat are similar in both areas of development (I and II) with similar concerns and opportunities, **this document including ancient Glacial Lake Algonquin Shoreline feature in the Ainslie Hill II site area.**

Comments and Recommendations SLSN:

Regarding this recent “Notice Ainslie Hill II – New DRAFT Plan of Subdivision, Amendment to Official Plan” and reports, we provide the following initial review comment, by a few obvious areas of concern and/or opportunity. We do have other areas of potential comment, but the level of rigor and detail provided in reports and maps do not allow for the level of depth of our review required, for our comment at this time.

Proposal to Rezone the subject Property

Currently, and from review of the supporting information Reports you have sent. members of SLSN do not support Rezoning the subject property.

We note this proposed subdivision is far flung in location to the urban area of Sutton, will be car dependent, is not of intensification priority in the developed area of the village, and is essentially a rural area which has been important productive farmland. Consequently, we seriously question the much higher density, many townhouse-like, intensive density building units added in this proposal.

DRAFT Plan of Subdivision Ainslie Hill II Map 964-00

This Plan map is basically a “Concept” Map only. SLSN cannot support the presented proposed design of this subdivision at this time based on this very simple supplied Draft Plan, and the concerns identified below which require more detailed site plans, site walking, and ground proofing/surveys etc. to comment on.

Landscape geomorphology, hydrology and ecology natural heritage/habitat alterations

Based on our review of provided reports and documentation, SLSN cannot support fully the site alteration and impact of this development as presented at this time. Particularly of concern to SLSN is the full conservation and “no disturbance” to the important landscape features here.

As detailed previously in our numerous submissions to Georgina Council since 2016 where SLSN identified the large ancient Glacial Lake Algonquin Shoreline feature in the Ainslie Hill II site area, we see the establishment of a public Park here on the tablelands at the top of the wave-cut bluff that would allow opportunity for future subdivision neighborhood residents and local community to passively visit and experience this area. Views of Lake Simcoe, not publicly available in other areas of the Town from this vantage point, are rare. As per our Report of 2017-09- 03 we implore the Town of Georgina and the proponents of the Ainslie Hill II development to act now to consider this possibility, in this Revised Draft Plan of Subdivision.

The current DRAFT Plan of Subdivision on Map 964-00 does not appear to provide this conservation of the landscape features and seems to show potential disturbing earthworks and fill-works at the north end (ancient beach formation) of the proposed subdivision. Very small roadside viewing areas are shown, squeezed into proposed housing at this critical location.

Also, the proposed natural habitat block (saved area) corridor is very small and shows no additional east-west habitat restoration for form and function on the site. And the stormwater management pond requires destruction of considerable natural regenerating forest area. Furthermore, actual landscaping around built form housing of native trees, grassland meadow and other natural area/park amenities are not in evidence in most of the proposed developed site. At a time when the Town of Georgina is promoting native tree planting, naturalization etc.

in a time of climate crisis, SLSN believes our community must “walk the talk”. **This Draft Subdivision Plan is the place to start!**

Sustainability, new alternative energy proposals, passive and active solar, wind, electrification and other renewable energy components to the DRAFT Plan

Based on the information provided by the proponent SLSN cannot support this DRAFT Plan of Subdivision at this time and note the well-known need for Ontario and Canada to design these features into all new development proposals to meet international U.N. and Canadian obligations, especially in light of current science Climate Change science findings.

Town Owned Lands marked on Map 964-00

Members of SLSN see the Town owned lands marked on Map 964-00 in the proposed DRAFT Plan of Subdivision as a progressive and good conservation of low, wet clayey soil sites and mid-successional existing forest area, not suitable for housing. SLSN would welcome conversations of conservation and research opportunities, and natural habitat restoration for wildlife with the Town of Georgina.



Paul Harpley BSc. (Hons.) M.A.
Lake Simcoe Naturalists (SLSN)
Simcoe, Research Organization

President, South
Director, The Zephyr Society of Lake

References of Key Past documents to the Town of Georgina regarding Ainslie Hill I and II

Harpley, P. (2012), 2012-12-10, SLSN Comments to Town of Georgina and Council, - Proposed Southwest Sutton Development Area Plan (Ainslie Hill Development Master Plan and Associated Proposed Official Plan Amendments) and a Settlement Proposal Respecting an OMB Appeal Against the Sutton/Jackson’s Point Secondary Plan. Part Lots 20, 21, 22 & 23, Concessions 7 & 8 (NG) Appellant: Dr. E. Byrnes Shouldice, 5 pages.

Harpley, P. (2016), 2016-02-08, SLSN Letter to Town of Georgina and Council, Proposed Draft Plan of Subdivision and Amendments, Ainslie Hill I Inc. and Ainslie Hill II Inc. To Zoning By-Law No. 500 2 pages.

Harpley, P. (2017) Report of 2017-09- 03 SLSN – Comments to Town of Georgina, Response to Comments Issued by Michael Smith Planning Consultants; Development Coordinators. Regarding Proposed Ainslie Hill I and II Development, Catering Road, Sutton (dated June 12, 2017) 16 pages.

Local Planning Matters

Rescue Lake Simcoe Coalition – Strategic Planning Meeting

For 2+ decades now, [Rescue Lake Simcoe Coalition](#) has been working hard to protect the Lake Simcoe watershed. We intend to keep working hard, but we're at a crossroads. RLSC has many decisions to make. To that end, we will be holding a strategic planning session on **Feb 1st** in [Clearwater Farm's](#) beautiful barn (in Willow Beach), and we would love you to come and share your thoughts and ideas with us.

The meeting will be held from **1:00-4:00 p.m.** Snacks and drinks (but not meals) will be provided. The event will be hosted by RLSC's board, and facilitated by Cheryl Daniel.

Please RSVP to RLSCJessica@gmail.com

Uxbridge Provincial Urban Park – Request for Comment

The recently established Uxbridge Urban Provincial Park (UUPP) designated by the Province of Ontario in the Greenbelt and the Oak Ridges Moraine is located on the north slope of the ORM draining the South Lake Simcoe Watershed area, and very important headwater area of Lake Simcoe stream and rivers. The Pefferlaw River and Uxbridge Brook sub watersheds are involved in the area. It is an area SLSN members use to recreate and have knowledge of. Please consider reviewing the Provincial Ministry of Environment and Parks. Comment is requested by 2025-01-26.

Paul Harpley SLSN

On Nov. 27th, the Provincial Government invited the public to review the **Preliminary Management Plan** and provide feedback. Learn more and comment at <https://ero.ontario.ca/notice/019-9209>. A public open house will take place

January 16th at the Uxbridge Seniors Centre (75 Marietta St., Uxbridge) from 4:30-7:30 pm. Comment period is open until January 26th, 2025.

Between April 2023 and June 2024 Ontario Parks conducted extensive indigenous, stakeholder and public consultation and published [background information](#) prior to opening the park on July 1st, 2024.

More Info: <https://www.uxbridge.ca/en/explore-and-play/ubridge-urban-provincial-park.aspx#Public-Consultation>

The Wildlands League connection to comment on the Uxbridge Urban Provincial Park Plan – below.

Uxbridge Urban Provincial Park (UUPP) is located on the Oak Ridges Moraine - a key part of the Greenbelt. Despite the creation of the Greenbelt by prescient citizens and politicians decades ago, it is still vulnerable to inappropriate development, over-use and fragmentation. **With a climate and biodiversity emergency facing our planet and the political drive to solve these issues unravelling before our eyes, your actions count more than ever.**

The Oak Ridges Moraine - undulating hills of sand and gravel north of Toronto that filter rainwater and contain some of the best nearby nature - has protection under the Greenbelt and other conservation measures. But these protections are vulnerable to shifting political priorities. Protection under legislation like the Provincial Park and Conservation Reserves Act is the gold standard for nature. As the most recent addition to this legacy, UUPP should be well protected, but a lot depends on how it is managed. You can have a say [right now!](#)



The Wildlands League.

Water Watchers

Fighting Salt Pollution: Municipal Toolkit

This winter / spring we will ask municipal Councils to support our call for the province to take serious action on salt pollution threatening our lakes and rivers. Learn about the issue and prepare to be a force for good!

Read More:

https://www.waterwatchers.ca/fighting_salt_pollution_municipal_toolkit_launch?recruiter_id=58478

The Alliance for a Liveable Ontario

Tell Political Leaders to Endorse Five Ways Home Recommendations

More more:

<https://win.newmode.net/allianceforaliveableontario/fivewayshomepoliticalpartyendorsement>

We want to ensure every political party is promoting actions that will help solve the housing crisis, create liveable communities and protect our precious natural areas, wetlands and farmland.

We've come up with the actions that will make this happen in our report [Taking Action Together: Five Ways Political Parties can make homes affordable in Ontario.](#)

Now we need you to tell Ontario political party leaders to endorse our Five Ways Home actions.

York Region Forest News

York Region's Fencing contractor has installed new fence at the Nobleton and Brown Hill Tracts, and is currently installing new fence at the Eldred King Tract. The work is expected to be completed in November.

For the safety of the public and workers please keep clear of the operation. If you have any questions regarding this operation please contact Matthew Currie at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 75249.

SLSN members nature documentation of interest – Nov./Dec.



Barred owl in Georgina forest area,
Paul Harpley



Dead Common merganser Lake Simcoe,
Heather MacKay

Provincial Environmental Issues

Other O.N. News

Rallying Support for Landscape Connectivity From Algonquin to Adirondack

Algonquin to Adirondack Collaborative (A2A) would like your support in amplifying their latest action alert urging the Government of Ontario to advocate for wildlife crossings on highway 401 in the Frontenac Arch region.

As you may know from the recent release of our [Right to Roam report](#), we estimate that more than 20,000 animals are killed every year on highways in the A2A corridor. These roads impose a barrier to wildlife movement. As development increases, habitat loss accumulates and species ranges shift in response to climate change, wildlife movement routes will become more limited.

The planned widening of Highway 401 to six and eventually eight lanes in portions of the region will further reduce connectivity and increase wildlife mortality. We're working hard to preserve this landscape connectivity for the long-term function and resilience of the A2A region— but we need your help to reach a wider audience.

1. Sign the [Action Alert](#).
2. Please share this alert with your network, whether it's via social media, a monthly newsletter or in any other way you see fit. We've provided sample language in this to make it as easy as possible for you to spread the word!

Article by A2A, Photo of possible overpass location by Ryan Danby

Green Islands

A recent hike at the [Willoughby Nature Reserve](#) after the Great Lakes West Region's fall meeting was more than just a walk in the woods.

Our guide picked up a dying leaf with green spots that represent active photosynthesis in the leaf and are almost always associated with insects, typically moth larvae, eating there.

The obvious conclusion is that larvae are causing the green islands. However, research indicates that the larvae have a symbiotic relationship with bacteria living on their bodies. The bacteria increase the production of cytokinins which are normally shut down when the plant goes dormant, thus allowing the larvae to have food to eat later into the fall.

Thanks to Ron Jasiuk of Headwaters Nature for that interesting information.

Article and photo by Dorothy Wilson

Atlas-3 Needs Your Photos

We know there are many talented bird photographers in the Nature Network. What better way to support the third Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas than to contribute and potentially see your images featured in the final published materials? The Atlas is looking for good quality photos of all Ontario breeding birds, preferably taken in Ontario during the breeding season (and in breeding habitat wherever possible). We're especially interested in photos that depict elevated breeding evidence (e.g., nests, young, carrying food).

Some Interesting Links and Opportunities

- [CBC Article covering wetland loss](#) that Ontario Nature has been involved in fighting
- Please [sign our new action alert](#) to join us in requesting that provincial wetland protections be restored and strengthened.

Canadian Wildlife Federation News

Be a Biodiversity Ally: Get Started on iNaturalist.ca

Here's a good news story about nature connection we can all celebrate. Last year, Canadian's made 3,666,988 observations of wildlife using the iNaturalist app. Those observations were part of the 47,838,830 nature observations made worldwide in 2024. That's great news for scientists, naturalists, and nature lovers in general who are using iNaturalist to help track biodiversity around the planet. People concerned about wildlife, declining biodiversity and habitat loss often wonder what they can do to have a meaningful impact on conservation efforts across Canada. Uploading your wildlife observations and sound recordings into the iNaturalist.ca platform is one simple, fun, family-friendly way to contribute to conservation efforts while fostering your own deeper connection to nature. Using iNaturalist is like participating in the world's biggest ongoing treasure hunt; you never know if you'll find a rare plant, an invasive species, or wildlife you've never noticed before. This year the focus on biodiversity will be a key pillar for many conservation organizations. You can continue to be a great ally in the effort to seek out biodiversity from coast to coast to coast. Learn more at [iNaturalist.ca](#)!



Adopt a Monarch Butterfly

Meet your new friend, the Monarch Butterfly! Did you know that some Monarchs travel 4,000 kilometres every fall? They rely on nectar rich flowers to fuel their journey. Unfortunately, this little one couldn't find any flowers to sip from and he got too tired to carry on. Will you take care of him? Your adoption of a Monarch Butterfly will help CWF conserve at-risk species and areas in Canada.

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International Conservation

2024-10-12

BBC Conservation News Article

'People can be a positive force for nature': The fishermen reviving Finland's scarred wastelands

12 September 2024

Becca Warner

Mika Honkalinna

Finland's Linnunsuo wetland used to be a barren "moonscape". A local fishing community has transformed it into a biodiverse haven and an important carbon sink.

On a patch of land near Finland's eastern border, life exists where once it didn't.

Shallow water ripples against a bank of grass and rushes, where endangered duck species nest low to the ground. Small flocks of waders gather, their thin legs moving through the silvery water, beaks jabbing busily at its surface.

This is Linnunsuo wetland, a patch of land that hasn't always splashed and rustled with life. Just 13 years ago, it was a brown and barren "moonscape", says Tero Mustonen, a local fisherman and co-founder of the Finnish environmental non-profit Snowchange.

Finnish bioenergy company Vapo (now Neova) drained the land in the 1980s, so it could dig up the energy rich peat beneath the water. For more than two decades, it mined the area, leaving a scarred brown landscape where nothing could grow. (Vapo did not respond to the BBC's request for comment.) ...

We try to restore the functionality of nature. That's it – Tero Mustonen

The Snowchange team's camera traps have revealed wolverines visiting the area, attracted to Linnunsuo by the remains of dead birds, says Mustonen. Bears, presumed to live in the forest nearby, now wander into the wetland as part of their wide-ranging travels. And moose amble past the ponds, feeding on young trees that surround the water.

Read more: <https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20240912-the-finnish-fishermen-fighting-climate-change-by-preserving-carbon-rich-peatlands>