



Sibbald Point Provincial Park

South Lake Simcoe

The South Lake Simcoe area is dominated by Lake Simcoe itself. The Lake is a remnant of a much larger glacial lake called Lake Algonquin dating back over 8,000 years ago. Most areas of Georgina, East Gwillimbury, Brock and Uxbridge Townships reflect in their low undulating landscapes and rolling hills, evidence of this glacial history.

Today the forests and wetlands we see are not primeval; rather they are second growth forests that have re-invaded from being previously cleared for farming at the turn of the last century.

There are a few existing old forest stands in the area that are indeed rare and unique albeit small, which are worthy of more study and protection. Natural landscapes such as wetlands, riverine, lakeshores and grassland meadows are rare and being pressured today by development. The club is committed to conservation and wise management of these places, landscapes as well as flora and fauna.

History of SLSN

About Us

The South Lake Simcoe Naturalists club was formed in 1983 and became a fully federated club in 1987 with Ontario Nature. Members of the club have opportunities to be involved with surveys and counts such as butterfly surveys, Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas data collection, and many other research related activities. Outdoor events like hiking, birding, cross-country skiing, and canoeing have been major activities organized by the club.

The SLSN have conducted wildlife and environmental research projects and has been active in local conservation issues like the Provincial Landfill Dumps (GAG), Georgina smelter, Wilfred bog, Moatfield development, Ainslie Hill development, and the North Gwillimbury Forest.

The club has contributed expert witness and opinion on major planning initiatives like the Georgina Official Plan, Sutton and Keswick Secondary Plans, and the Provincial Greenbelt, Oak Ridges Moraine, and Lake Simcoe Act Legislation.

Member club of **Ontario Nature**

Contact Us

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Lake Simcoe

South Lake Simcoe Naturalists

*"We keep the Nature in
Naturalists"*



Barn Swallow

Wildlife

The South Lake Simcoe area has a wide diversity of wildlife. Waterfowl are perhaps the most obvious birds; the lake itself and many riverine wetlands attract breeders like the Mallard duck, Black duck, Wood duck, Great Blue heron and Canada goose. Ospreys have also been recorded nesting in many locations in the area in recent decades.

Small passerine birds are common throughout the year but are especially evident during autumn and spring migration. Important migrants are Canada warblers, Yellow and Magnolia warblers, are consistently observed. Some nest in the area forests. Many species of hawks and owls can be observed including Red-tailed hawk, Northern harrier, American kestrel, Great Horned owl and Screech owl. Hawk owl and Great Gray owl have been observed in the winter; while, Caspian Terns have been spotted within a few key areas on Lake Simcoe.

Many mammals native to the area include Red fox, White-tailed deer, porcupines and brush wolves often heard at night. In the rivers, beavers, muskrat and river otter are seen.

Botany

South Lake Simcoe is well known for its low lying wet meadows, wetlands and extensive forests. These areas still support the growth of increasingly uncommon wildflowers such as Fringed Gentian and orchids such as Hellebore, Yellow Lady's Slipper, Turtlehead, Cardinal Flower and Swamp Rose-Mallow. Some remnant spruce bogs persist in South Lake Simcoe with rare plants such as Moccasin flower orchid, Leather Leaf and Labrador Tea. One area, Wildfrid bog, is particularly significant though much of it has been destroyed by local extractive industry. This naturalist club is active and leading the way to advocate for conservation of all important natural areas.

Ontario Grasslands

Grassland prairies are large natural open meadow areas with little or no trees. In many places they include shrub and tree components;



while sometimes called savannas. They are home to unique combinations of plants that have evolved over thousands of years. Not only are grasslands home to special native grasses, they are also the habitat of many birds and insects including rare butterflies, spiders, mammals and other animals adapted to open, dry, sunny habitat. The health of this ecosystem is crucial to many types of wildlife yet, the number of grassland meadows are declining worldwide, including Lake Simcoe, where many of our rare or threatened birds live.

Membership Information Form

To receive an application form to become a member of the South Lake Simcoe Naturalists' contact SLSN at 905-722-8021 and/or e-mail southlakesimcoenaturalistsSLSN@gmail.com

Major areas of interest include:
birds/mammals
environmental/conservation
hiking/walking/canoeing
natural history talks

Activities/Benefits of Membership

The participation of people is imperative to the impact and success of the work of the South Lake Simcoe Naturalists. Individual or group involvement is necessary to have natural ecosystems adequately represented and protected in South Lake Simcoe.

Activities include:

- Analysis of development proposal impacts on the environment
- Forest and wildlife management and conservation research including Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas
- Research expeditions (seasonal)
- Recreation trips; hiking, birding, cross-country skiing etc. (local and far afield)
- Literature review/reading and report
- Meetings and member talks Sept-June. Information shared via e-newsletters.
- Nature advocacy work
- Bird surveys & Christmas Bird Count
- Reptile and Amphibian surveys
- Research partner, **The Zephyr Society of Lake Simcoe** www.zephyrsociety.ca