

# Northumberland Land Trust

Ontario, Canada

Preserving Northumberland County - one acre at a time

The Preserver, August 2016

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: WE'RE CELEBRATING - AND YOU'RE INVITED!**

John Geale

Thanks to the generosity of John van Nostrand and Kate Wilson of Toronto, NLT is in the process of finalizing the gift of a sixth property. It will be known as the Jack van Nostrand Nature Reserve in memory of John's grandfather (who was a great friend of Frank Kortright, one of Ontario's early conservationists - see <http://www.kortright.org/about-kortright/>) and father, who were both known as Jack van Nostrand.

Located a short distance south and east of Grafton, this 14 ha (35 acre) parcel includes a sizable portion of a Provincially Significant Wetland as well as a drier wooded area. The wetland is largely cattail marsh bordered by alder swamp and wet woodland. Along its south edge is about 400 m of essentially pristine Lake Ontario shoreline, an increasingly rare habitat.



Cattail marsh at Jack van Nostrand NR

In order to thank the donors and to allow them to meet members of NLT, we will be hosting a reception at the home of new Board member Robert Fishlock on **Sunday, September 18, from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m.** We hope you will be able to join us to celebrate this donation and to hear a few words from the donors.

To give us an idea of numbers, please RSVP to President John Geale at 905-342-3851 or [president@nltrust.ca](mailto:president@nltrust.ca) if you plan to attend. Many thanks!

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## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

At our AGM in June, two new Directors were elected for three-year terms: we welcome Jane McGrath and Robert Fishlock. Bill Crowley and John Geale were re-elected for three-year terms; Joan Chalovich, George Gordon and Miriam Mutton have two years remaining, while Janette Johnston, Whitney Lake and Bill Newell have one year remaining in their terms. After our August 23 Board meeting, we will post on our website ([nltrust.ca](http://nltrust.ca)) the various positions all Board members will take for 2016-17.

## ANNUAL GALA DINNER

Whitney Lake and Doug Galt have been hard at work planning this year's dinner, which will take place at Dalewood Golf Club on **Wednesday, October 26**, beginning at 5:30 p.m. Here's what we have lined up:

**Guest speaker:** Michael Runtz (photo to right), noted author, naturalist and superteacher at Carleton University. His topic will be "The Natural History of Beavers and their Ponds" - what could be more Canadian?



**Music** by local musician James Ferth, a live and silent auction, and the latest NLT news.

Tickets are \$70 (with a tax receipt for \$35), and can be ordered from Whitney Lake ([whitlake@hotmail.com](mailto:whitlake@hotmail.com)), or Doug Galt ([douglasgalt@gmail.com](mailto:douglasgalt@gmail.com)), or from John Geale at 905-342-3851, or online at [nltrust.ca](http://nltrust.ca).

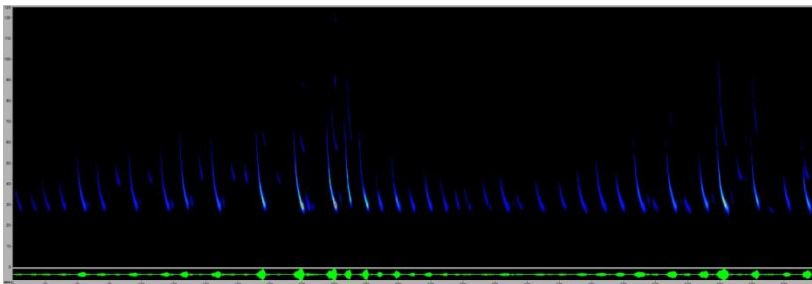
Please order your tickets asap and join us for an enjoyable and informative evening.

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## BAT SURVEYS

During July and August this summer we conducted surveys at the McEwen and Pelton Nature Reserves in an effort to determine which species of bats are there. Because the only reasonable way of determining their presence is by hearing them, and because human ears cannot hear their high-frequency calls, this is not an easy task.

Toby Thorne, a bat expert working with OLTA (the Ontario Land Trust Alliance), brought with him two electronic devices. One of them lowered the pitch of the bat calls and broadcast them at frequencies we could hear, and the other recorded the actual calls so that they could be analysed later. These recordings can be used to



produce a "picture" of the sound that is called a sonogram - a colour enhanced sonogram of a Big Brown Bat is shown on the left.

Toby has not yet analysed the result of our surveys, but he believes that we heard mainly Big

Brown Bats, and it seems we may have recorded Hoary Bats as well. We did see a few bats before it got really dark, but we could "hear" many bats at both properties, the most active location being the pond at the McEwen NR. One more set of surveys is planned for later this month or early September.

We will publish Toby's final report on our website ([nltrust.ca](http://nltrust.ca)) as soon as we have it - probably not until early next year. Thanks to OLTA for proposing and supporting this initiative!

## WALLACE BIRDATHON 2016

This year's new format, which saw five expert birders each cover one of our properties, was highly successful. Here are some of the highlights along with a brief quote from each birder's report.

### Margaret Bain at the Laurie Lawson Outdoor Education Centre: Margaret was joined



on May 19 for part of her day by Maureen Riggs and Karin Fawthrop. Although conditions were not ideal, she still managed to find four species not seen by any others: Brown Creeper, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Eastern Phoebe and Northern Parula. She told us,

"... two Wood Ducks suddenly squealed up from the slough, a testy Least Flycatcher 'che-becked' at us and our first Eastern Wood-Pewee answered... Black-throated Blue Warblers started to buzz in the undergrowth and Northern Waterthrushes shouted from their poolside territories. Sunlight finally struggled through the clouds about 8:00 a.m., bringing a flurry of small birds: Magnolia, Palm, Tennessee, and Black-throated Green Warblers flitted among the branches, along with a few Northern Parulas and American Redstarts and a female Scarlet Tanager."



Northern Parula

### Roger Frost at the Leckey Nature Reserve: Roger's best birds on May 23 were Great



Horned Owl, Common Nighthawk, Gray-cheeked Thrush, and Blue-winged Warbler. He also saw a "Brewster's" Warbler, a hybrid between Blue-winged and Golden-winged Warblers. He

enjoyed the varied habitats on this Reserve, and reports that the birds found in the lowland swampy forest "... had more northern affinities: Purple Finch, Northern Water-thrush, Winter Wren, Blackburnian Warbler, Canada Warbler, Blue-headed Vireo, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Nashville Warbler and Black-throated Green Warbler. The swamp also produced the best bird of the day and the only likely migrant, a Gray-cheeked Thrush."



Blue-winged Warbler

### David Geale at the Pelton Nature Reserve: Because he had to leave to guide a tour in



Peru, David had to do his share of the birdathon early, on May 6, before many migrants had arrived. However, his Sharp-shinned Hawk, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Eastern Meadowlark and Red Crossbill were not reported by anyone else. He tells us that in the evening he was "... confident

that American Woodcocks would be in evidence soon - and they were, but not until after I'd already reached 50 [species] with a Barred Owl barking in the forest to the south. As I headed back towards the road satisfied with my day at Pelton, the peacefulness was suddenly broken by a cacophony of coyote howls - then silence again, save for the constant twittering of woodcock wings."



Barred Owl

Doug McRae at the Chub Point Nature Reserve: Tom Jackman went with Doug as he checked out this small property on May 28. True to its wetland nature, they had a spectacular close-up look at a Virginia Rail, and a Green Heron flew over. Other good birds were Red-bellied Woodpecker and Blackpoll Warbler, seen at no other property. Doug noted that "... mammals were 1 Red Squirrel, raccoon scat and tracks, plus an antler of White-tailed Deer; herptiles were Spring Peeper, Gray Treefrog and one Green Frog, all calling."



Virginia Rail

Ben Walters at the McEwen Nature Reserve: Simone Merrey and Anne Tesluk had their first look at this property as they birded with Ben for part of his time there on May 20-21. The best birds reported were Osprey, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Grasshopper Sparrow and White-winged Crossbill, and Eastern Newts were seen at the pond. At the end of his evening, Ben reported that "... coyotes started up all around me... they were calling from the woods where I had just been and were in the direction of my truck. I made sure I knew where my bear spray was... . As I entered the south field I was greeted by 3 Whip-poor-wills calling at each other at an amazingly fast pace ... and a Woodcock was doing its twittering display flights. A great end to a fantastic evening."



White-winged Crossbill

We are still adding up the sponsorships, but they will total comfortably over \$2000; many thanks to all donors and, of course, to our five expert birders as well as our members and friends who accompanied them. Between them, our birders identified a total of 106 species. The winners of the contest to guess this total were Molly Leckey (who guessed 97) and Martha Oldham (115); we trust they will enjoy their maple syrup! The full results will be posted on our website ([nltrust.ca](http://nltrust.ca)) shortly, along with the complete reports from all the birders.

## MEMBERSHIP/DONATION FORM

You may now submit your membership and make donations using your credit card: please go to [nltrust.ca](http://nltrust.ca) and click on the "Donate Now" button; this will allow you to use PayPal or CanadaHelps. Otherwise:

Please fill out the form below. Make cheques payable to "Northumberland Land Trust", and mail them along with this form to: Northumberland Land Trust, P. O. Box 1153, Cobourg, ON, K9A 5A4

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Last name \_\_\_\_\_ First name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

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Individual:  \$25      Family:  \$40      Supporting:  \$50      Corporate:  \$100

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I wish to remain anonymous

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