



The Preserver, August 2020

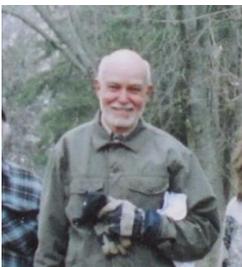
PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

Robert Fishlock

My last message in April was about a month into the COVID-19 pandemic. Who would have thought that in the middle of the summer we would still be struggling to manage semi-normal activities and trying to figure out how our children will go back to school in September (if at all)? I can only hope that you are all healthy and finding ways to cope. At least visits to nature and fresh air are still allowed and even encouraged.

Our **Annual General Meeting** will take place on **Wednesday, September 9**. A formal notice has been sent out with the venue and time. We will also provide proxy voting options and encourage feedback on our 2019 financial statements, committee reports and Board nominations by email or normal mail. We are not encouraging a large attendance and will propose a resolution to change our by-laws to permit electronic/virtual meetings in the future. At present we cannot have such meetings, and yet by law we must have our AGM by the week of September 9.

Discussions between representatives of the Boards of NLT and the Lone Pine Land Trust are progressing and so far nothing has been identified that would prevent an amalgamation of the two organizations. Key financial and legal information of each land trust has been exchanged. The next step is to obtain legal advice on how best to proceed, which would lead to the preparation of a formal legal agreement. That will not happen by September and therefore a Special Members Meeting will be required later in the year or in 2021. I again encourage you to contact me at Robert.fishlock@cogeco.ca if you have any questions.



Robert Massie
Photo by Ron Cole

I am also pleased to announce that in July NLT received a very generous bequest of \$100,000 from the Estate of Robert Massie. Robert was born June 11, 1937, in Toronto and died May 18, 2020 in Cobourg. He was a graduate of Loyola College, Université de Montréal and the School of Psychology/Education of the University of Ottawa. Robert was an early executive member of the Northumberland Orchestra Association and played double bass in the orchestras in Cobourg and in Belleville. He also was involved in at least one Cobourg initiative to protect trees along Molly Baker Lane. We greatly appreciate this gift and extend our heartfelt thanks to his remaining family.

Please find some time to visit one of our nature reserves or one owned by the Lone Pine Land Trust. See: <http://www.lonepinelandtrust.ca/about/> or nltrust.ca . Or just take a hike in one of our great provincial or national parks. It has been an amazing summer so far.

2020 WALLACE MEMORIAL BIRDATHON

John Geale

This year's Birdathon was a huge success, with the number of sponsors, dollars raised, and total species observed all reaching new highs. Here are some of the highlights at each of our Nature Reserves.

Bonebakker - David Geale carried out the inaugural birdathon here and found 71 species. These included, thanks in part to a nearby wet cornfield, two species (Lesser Yellowlegs and Great Black-backed Gull) new for our birdathon, and this year's only Wilson's Snipe. Perhaps aided by his selection of a relatively early date for the event, he also found nine sparrow species.

Chub Point - Doug McRae birded here and among his 56 species were five (Merlin, Golden-winged Warbler [right], Mourning Warbler, Eastern Meadowlark, and Orchard Oriole) new for the property list. This small property now has 98 birdathon species in total, very good for 17 acres!



Jack van Nostrand - Richard Pope, on his first Wallace Birdathon, recorded 72 species, the second highest ever here, and added a remarkable 10 species to the property birdathon list. The best of these was a Cliff Swallow, a first on any NLT property. Richard also did some excellent work finding sponsors for his efforts, and in the end he raised just over \$1150! This is not actually part of what we ask our birders to do, and we very much appreciate this aspect of his contribution to this event.

Laurie Lawson Outdoor Education Centre - Kurt Appleman's 75 species shattered the previous record of 63. He found an outstanding 17 warbler species, including this year's only Bay-breasted. In addition, he recorded four other species seen by no other birdathoner: Philadelphia Vireo, Golden-crowned Kinglet, and Gray-cheeked and Swainson's Thrushes.

Leckey - Roger Frost was our birder here, for the 5th consecutive year. As is almost always the case, his species count (79) topped all other properties. His highlights included Canada Warbler and Black-throated Blue Warbler, and his Chimney Swift (right), a first for the Wallace Birdathon, brought the species total for this location to 113.



McEwen - Ben Walters reported 69 species, including five woodpecker species in a single forest stand, and close encounters with a Northern Goshawk and a female Wild Turkey. His Pine Siskin was the only one seen on any property. In the evening, seeing a Barred Owl and hearing at least two Whip-poor-wills finished his day off in fine style.

Pelton - Paulette Hebert also had a close encounter, but in her case it was with two black bears; fortunately, they were eager to get away from her as quickly as possible. Barred Owls serenaded her both morning and evening, and she was one of only two birdathoners to record Vesper Sparrow and American Bittern (right) among her 50 species.



All of the available full reports can be seen on our web page (nltrust.ca), by clicking on "Blog and Events" on the home page, or by going to <https://nltrust.ca/index.php/blog/item/14-birdathon-reports>

Our members and other sponsors responded enthusiastically to our message that this might be our only major fund-raiser this year because of COVID-19 restrictions, and our sponsorships totalled just over \$5650. We are most grateful for your generous support, as it will make up for some of the income we cannot expect this year. Although our Stewardship activities will be somewhat reduced, we will be able to carry on with most of them.

The Wallace Memorial Birdathon clearly demonstrates just how many birds can be found by skilled birders on our Nature Reserves: the cumulative species total now stands at 161. This year alone our birders recorded 131 species, and the winner of the contest to guess this number was Russ Lake (his guess was exactly correct), a member of NLT since its inception and a former Pelton Steward - CONGRATULATIONS, Russ! Honourable mentions go to founding NLT Board member Audrey Wilson and former winner Martha Oldham, who guessed 132 and 130 respectively.

MILESTONES

In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic we were saddened to hear of the passing of Marguerite Doritty, one of our long-time supporters. We will miss her presence at our events, and we extend our condolences to her friends and family.

Another strong supporter, Pauline Graham, passed away in March, and we offer our condolences to her friends and family as well. Her husband, James, made a generous donation to NLT in her memory, for which we thank him most sincerely.

We were also sorry to hear of the death of Molly Leckey's son, Robert. Molly and her late husband set up the Conservation Easement on what is now the Leckey Nature Reserve, our largest at 177 acres. Although the property has been sold twice in recent years, we are most grateful for Molly's continued support of NLT.

Mark Rupke (right) has retired from his teacher/naturalist position at the Laurie Lawson Outdoor Education Centre (LLOEC) after more than 32 years. During that time he has introduced thousands of students of multiple generations to such topics as biodiversity, ecology and microscopic studies of pond life. During this time he has also acted as our Steward for the 100 acre (40 ha) property. In this capacity he has overseen projects like transplanting native wildflowers to LLOEC from sites doomed by construction, planting hundreds of native trees on the property, the removal or control of non-native invasive species such as Norway maple, dog-strangling vine and periwinkle, and improvements to bridges and trail accessibility.



We are delighted that Mark intends to continue as Steward for the LLOEC. He tells us, "I hope to further enhance the ramps and stairs, do a lot more invasive control, and continue to improve the pollinator garden. I would like to make it a place where a lot of seniors and people with exceptional needs can visit."

NLT is grateful to Mark for all his work on our behalf, and we wish him all the best in his retirement.

Every year in late May or early June - one of the best times of year in Ontario - I do a survey of breeding Grasshopper Sparrows on the Northumberland Land Trust's McEwen Nature Reserve, north of Garden Hill. Just before my planned survey in 2020, I purchased a LepiLED - a special moth-attracting light that I had recently seen in action in Peru (back when international travel was a regular occurrence!). I wasn't sure what to expect in Ontario - we don't have as many moths as Peru - but I decided to camp out at McEwen on the night of May 27th, before counting Grasshopper Sparrows the next morning.

I arrived around sunset, and set up my tent near the southwest corner of the property, in a field but with my "moth sheet" at the edge of extensive hardwood forest. Around 9:00 p.m., it got dark enough to plug in the light; almost immediately I started seeing White Spring Moths (*Lomographa vestaliata*) fluttering around. After about half an hour, I slipped on my goggles (simple and cheap, but they block the UV light the LepiLED emits) to make my first serious



check of the sheet, and saw the first of many *Plagodis* moths - two species showed up through the night: the bright yellow Lemon Plagodis (*Plagodis serinaria*) and the mottled Hollow-spotted Plagodis (*P. alcoolaria*). Also among early visitors were a very fresh **Oak Beauty** (*Phaeoura quernaria* - photo, left) and several *Zale* species. I was

distracted around 10:30 by a heavy rustling in the bushes nearby; I snuck around quietly and found a large porcupine waddling among young birch trees. I didn't want him wandering into my moth sheet - a skunk recently did that on an expedition in Northern Ontario - so after taking a few pictures I shoed him off into the undergrowth.

By midnight, my sheet was crowded with moths (photo, right), and I realized that I wasn't going to sleep much before my Grasshopper Sparrow survey! It was around that time that two big silk moths showed up - a lime-green, long-tailed (but worn) Luna Moth (*Actias luna*) and a beautifully fresh **Polyphemus Moth** (*Antheraea*



polyphemus - photo, left) that was happy to sit anywhere, including my face! In my mind, there's something special about green insects, so I was thrilled with a Comstock's Sallow (*Feralia comstocki*), and I also enjoyed several smaller species attracted to the light, like the uncommon *Bondia crescentella* and a striking *Telphusa longifasciella* (many of these less well-known moths don't have English names).

One of my great passions is butterfly photography, and - at least with the equipment I use - the key to getting good photos is getting VERY close to your subject. This can be difficult with butterflies, as they are usually very active during the day; an attraction of moth photography is how many individuals are very confident in their camouflage, and can be convinced to walk onto sticks or leaves and transferred onto a photogenic trunk if necessary - and then they sit still! So through the night, and especially in the early morning light, I spent a

lot of time moving moths around - tree bark makes a much prettier background than my moth sheet! I was busy doing this as the sun rose around 5:00 the next morning. Hubner's Pero (*Pero anetaria*) and **Sigmoid Prominent** (*Clostera albosigma* - photo, right) looked best on dry leaf litter; One-eyed Sphinx (*Smerinthus cerisyi*) and Black-rimmed Prominent (*Pheosia rimosa*) were better on sticks; Bicoloured Woodgrain (*Morrisonia evicta*) and Sweetfern Geometer (*Cyclophora pendulinaria*) posed on birch trunks.



I managed to stay alert through my sparrow survey (9 individuals - a good count) and awake as I drove home; the rest of the day was mostly dedicated to sleeping! Over the next few days, I sorted through over a thousand pictures I'd taken overnight and was able to identify 93 species - along with about 10 unidentifiable "micro-moths." I can unequivocally say that my LepiLED had an incredible debut in Ontario, and I can't wait to see what it produces through the rest of the summer!

[Editor's note: Although moths are often not as colourful as butterflies, some have exquisite and attractive markings. Both adults and larvae are vital food sources for a great many birds, and they add enormously to the biodiversity of most ecosystems. There are approximately 10 times as many species of moths as there are of butterflies in our area; many are difficult to identify, but it is interesting to know about some of those that occur at McEwen.]

Joint Working Group - Wesleyville

Jenny Jackman & Miriam Mutton

The Joint Working Group - Wesleyville (JWG-W) was established as a cooperative effort among the Northumberland Land Trust, Lone Pine Land Trust and Willow Beach Field Naturalists. Its main focus is the protection of significant natural features in the Wesleyville site that are vulnerable because of its Rural Settlement zoning and its proposed designation as a Provincially Significant Employment Zone. The JWG-W is discussing its assessment in the County Natural Heritage System Plan, and zoning with Port Hope and County planners.

Wesleyville is one of the largest remaining natural areas on the north shore of Lake Ontario, and the largest near the GTA. It has an extraordinary diversity (38) of habitats, including sand dunes along the waterfront; meadows; deciduous, coniferous and mixed forests; and several types of wetland communities. There are indicators of tallgrass prairie on the tablelands, and soils that would support this very rare ecosystem. It contains three Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI) that are ecologically very different from one another: forested ravines with cold-water streams that host native brook trout, wetlands, and coastal bluffs. Impressive old growth forest includes hemlock, red oak, sugar maple, white cedar, white pine, blue beech and other species. The area is within the Postglacial Lake Iroquois Plain, an eco-region that has been



Bird surveyors at one of the cold-water streams at the Wesleyville site.

Photo by Frank Godfrey

identified to be of the highest priority for protection in southern Ontario, and it is connected with other significant features in the area such as the Newtonville Bog ANSI and the postglacial Lake Iroquois Beach.

The major landowners (OPG, Hydro One and Cameco) have been recognized for conservation. OPG's Wesleyville site has been awarded Gold Certification by the Wildlife Habitat Council (Sept. 2019). OPG's biodiversity program includes enhancement and monitoring of Wesleyville Creek, conservation of marshes in the area, and wildlife habitat studies including nest box installation and monitoring. There has been extensive tree planting (estimated >50,000 trees over the last 25 years). Other works include construction and monitoring of turtle nesting beds, snake hibernacula and reptile cover boards. Hydro One, GRCA and OPG have conducted watershed habitat restoration and biological monitoring work in Wesleyville Creek.

The area supports at least 98 species of breeding birds, and is important as a migratory stopover and overwintering locale as well. There have also been observations and/or evidence (tracks, scat) of deer, coyotes, fishers, rabbits, rodents, raccoons, reptiles and amphibians. Stay tuned for future reports on results from two recent bird counts organized by JWG-W, and on other developments, as work by this group continues.



Wildlife photographed on a recent bird survey at Wesleyville (left to right): juvenile Great Horned Owl, Dekay's brownsnake, and raccoon. Photos by Don McLeod

[Editor's note: Jenny Jackman deserves congratulations for taking the lead in this project. She has obtained permission from Ontario Power Generation (OPG), Cameco and Hydro One for entry onto their properties, organized two bird counts, and been involved with both Port Hope and Northumberland County planners. Thanks, Jenny!]

STEWARDSHIP NOTES

Our stewardship activities have been somewhat curtailed this spring by weather and by COVID-19 restrictions. For instance, we had to cancel a planned prescribed burn at the Pelton Nature Reserve, and we have avoided having any large groups working together. However, large signs have been installed at the new Bonebakker NR (right) and at the Pelton

Bill Newell



NR. We have also managed to do some dog-strangling vine (DSV) control at the McEwen NR (left). Plans for later this year include installing a new and updated sign at McEwen, more DSV and *Phragmites* control also at McEwen, and setting up two more Wood Duck nest boxes at the Jack van Nostrand NR.

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS! (January 1 to June 30, 2020)

Mighty Oak Branch (\$5000 and over)

None to Report

Sturdy Maple Branch (\$2500-\$4999)

None to Report

Enduring Pine Branch (\$500 -\$2499)

Mary Bedford-Jones

Joan Chalovich

Robert Fishlock

George Gordon

Barbara Heidenreich

Brian Maxwell

Graceful Ash Branch (\$100-\$499)

Paul Appleman

Jennifer Atkinson

Tyne Bonebakker

Marion Boys

Robert Carman

Bob Coleman

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Marguerite Doritty[†]

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Audrey Wilson

Cheryl Wilson

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Jane Zednik

Willow Beach Field Naturalists

HEARTY ACORN (LIVING BEQUEST)

Marg and George Gordon

Robert Fishlock

[†]deceased

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY ENDORSES ENHANCED NHS PLAN

After more than two years of study, planning, and consultation with the general public and many organizations, the Northumberland County Council has developed a Natural Heritage System (NHS) Plan. Dwayne Campbell (Manager, Planning and Inspection Services with the County, and who was to have been NLT's guest speaker at our AGM this year), presented three options: Basic, Comprehensive and Enhanced. We are pleased to note that on July 22 the County Council endorsed the Enhanced option, which identifies the most watercourses, wetlands and forests, and connectivity between them, and is the most conservation-oriented option. In terms of protecting natural spaces, this option is the strongest, and it seems to be the wisest choice for future generations.

MEMBERSHIP/DONATION FORM

Our members make the conservation work of the Northumberland Land Trust possible.

We hope we can count on your support in 2020. Members receive:

- A tax receipt (Charitable Registration #89257-5930 RR0001) for the full amount of your membership and any donation
- The right to vote at the Annual General Meeting
- Newsletters, and invitations to events such as our dinner, hikes and lectures
 - and if you have some time and/or expertise to offer, we would love to have you join us as a volunteer!

If you prefer, you may now submit your membership and make donations by using Canada Helps: please go to nltrust.ca and click on the "Pay Your Membership" button near the bottom of the home page; this will allow you to use your credit card. Otherwise:

Please fill out the form below. Make cheques payable to
"Northumberland Land Trust", and mail to:
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Individual: \$25 Family: \$40 Supporting: \$50 Corporate: \$100

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Members of the Board or Stewardship Team can be contacted by phone at 905-342-3851 or by e-mail at info@nltrust.ca.

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