



# The Rambler

Fall 2020

## From the President's Pen

Yesterday (October 6) in Crystal Beach, it was warm, sunny and dry. I was able to work in the garden, go for a lovely walk by the lake and have a cup of tea with a friend on the patio. Today in Crystal Beach, it is rainy, cloudy, windy and damp. I will probably be inside all day. Isn't that typical autumn weather for you? With winter coming and the prospect of many days spent inside, I plan to get outside on the nice days and enjoy nature whenever possible.

COVID-19 has taught us all many things. On the lighter side - how to wear a face mask; how to ration toilet paper; how to use Zoom; how to bake bread; how to eat a meal on a restaurant patio even when it's too chilly to be eating outside and how to organize that closet you've been ignoring for ten years. On a more serious note, however, perhaps COVID-19 has taught us to value our families and friends more deeply; to figure out what is truly important to us; to enjoy our home and community, and truly

appreciate the recuperative powers of nature.

Wasn't it wonderful in April to be able to walk on the Friendship Trail? Wasn't it restorative in May or June to be able to visit a conservation area? Wasn't it lovely in July and August to ride your bike or take a hike or look for birds or work in your garden? Wasn't it inspiring in September to see the leaves begin to turn colour and enjoy the bounty of the fall harvest? We all owe so much to the natural world around us. Let's continue to work together as a nature club to protect, restore and preserve our natural world. We can donate to a nature organization; we can speak out when we see parts of our natural world being developed; we can introduce the young people in our lives to nature. We can lobby our politicians to do their part to protect our shrinking natural areas. COVID-19 has shown us that we need our green spaces and natural areas now more than ever.

Deb

## Remembering Rick

Many of you may already know that Rick Young, one of our Bert Miller Nature Club members, passed away in the summer, doing what he loved: enjoying nature. Rick was an avid naturalist whose knowledge was extensive. He was our "go-to" person for any plants or shrubs that needed identifying. He made it his mission in life to learn both the common and scientific names for each of these.

Rick and his wife, Dora (who predeceased him), were volunteers with the Rock Point bird banding station, headed by Jim Smith. It was through this

*by Lynda Goodridge*

experience that he increased his knowledge of bird species. As a fitting memorial to Rick and Dora, the Bert Miller Nature Club is partnering with the Niagara Falls Nature Club to contribute to the Motus Tracking System tower located at the Grimsby Wetlands. As



Rick taking a photograph for his records or to assist with identification. © Paul Philp

you might recall, if you were able to attend our virtual meeting in October, the Motus Tracking System collects data from birds, bats and insects through automated radio telemetry. Our contribution will help cover the cost of maintaining the station so that this important data will continue to be

## Welcome New Members

- Julie & Nick Brady and family
- Beth & Tim Cockcroft and family
- Sheila & Donnie Edwards and family
- Chris & Gord Lannan and family
- Carrissa & Tim Lapp and family
- Jennie & Brandon Marlatt and family
- Yvonne & Wayne Marlatt and family
- Melanie & Chris Martin and family
- Anne & Chris Mills
- Diana & Tim Priebe and family
- Betty & Paul Roberts-Smith
- Julie Rorison
- Kayse & Steve Sodaro and family
- Wendy & Ryan Willick and family

## Upcoming Meetings

- All monthly meetings for the foreseeable future will be held virtually via Zoom. Check our website or Facebook for the up-to-date schedule. (Clickable links below).

## Upcoming Meetings

- Watch for email updates or refer to the club's website or Facebook page for future outings information.



## Remembering Rick continued

tabulated. We will work with the Hamilton Naturalist Club to create a memorial plaque that will be placed on the structure to recognize Rick and Dora's contributions to our natural environment.

In 2010, Rick was the recipient of the Bert Miller Nature Club Award. The following article, reprinted from our Spring 2010 newsletter, outlines his many contributions to nature in Niagara.

The Bert Miller Nature Club Board is pleased to announce the 2010 recipient of the Bert Miller Award, Rick Young. Rick has been a mentor to many budding naturalists by sharing his knowledge and enthusiasm for Niagara's flora and fauna. He is a member of all three nature clubs in the region and has been instrumental in bringing these organizations closer together. For many years, Rick has served on the Niagara Falls Club executive in several capacities, including that of the president. He is a

## Passing of a Longtime Member

With regret, we pass on the news that Ferd Fonfara passed away on November 14, 2020. Ferd and his wife Joan have been members of our club for many years. Ferd was also a very active member of the Ridgeway Lions Club and was often seen working their fish fries, pancake breakfasts and other fundraising

regular leader on club outings and always makes a point of helping others learn how to identify the various species that are found along the way. He continually upgrades his own skills by doing identification research to ensure his accuracy and generously shares this information with others. Along with other dedicated individuals, Rick has put in countless hours conducting a natural areas inventory in conjunction with the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority. He has also been a regular volunteer at the Haldimand Bird Observatory banding station in Rock Point Provincial Park for a number of years. In recent years, Rick has used his interest in technology to keep us all informed of upcoming events and recent publications through his email network - a fantastic volunteer service that is much appreciated. It is an honour to recognize this gentle naturalist for whom volunteering seems to come so naturally! Congratulations, Rick, and thank you for all your contributions.

events. His working years were spent in the aerospace industry at Fleet Manufacturing in Fort Erie. Some of you who remember the Summer Delight Restaurant on Gorham Road may not know that the Fonfaras built this popular eatery. We extend our condolences to Joan, their daughter Dawn Pierrynowski and the entire family.

## Ontario Nature Virtual Youth Summit for Mother Earth 2020

*Again in 2020, provided the funding to send two students to the youth summit. The following are letters they sent for publication describing their experiences. -Editor*

My name is Kyla Hicks, and I am a 17-year-old from Kingsville, ON and I would like to thank you for providing me with the opportunity to attend the youth summit.

In the past, Ontario Nature has held numerous summits to educate others on global issues and inspire youth to become more environmentally conscious. There would be team-building activities, workshops, guest speakers, and most importantly, like-minded youth. Even though we were hit with a global pandemic, members and leaders ensured that this year would be no less.

Over a few weekends in August and September, youth from all over Ontario joined Zoom meetings to listen to guest speakers. We would later be split up into groups to join various workshops. These workshops ranged from Treaties and Indigenous politics to Grant Writing and Biodiversity. The one workshop that stuck with me addressed the issue of Environmental Anxiety. Here, the other participants and I did an exercise called the

"Medicine Wheel," which had us reflect on our mind, spirit, emotions and body. We would rate how we saw ourselves in each category then think of a few ways to improve in each area.

Outside of the workshops and seminars, we would have a campaign or event planning group and challenges to keep us inspired. These smaller groups gave us a chance to speak our minds and address local environmental issues. My group planned a campaign about a plant-based diet's environmental benefits, as this was a topic we were all passionate about. During this group project, I realized how many ways I could make a change in my community. We discussed how to make a difference in local schools, promotional ideas through social media, even fundraisers that would be possible during the pandemic.

Overall, this summit has given me more confidence to protect the earth in any way I can. It made me remember that even the smallest change can make a difference and that I should try my best. I hope to continue to connect with the friends I've made with hopes to make the planet a greener place. I would recommend this summit to any youth interested in nature, or even youth struggling with themselves. Being one with nature is incredibly grounding, and it is up to us to protect our earth.

My name is Isabella Fiore, and I am a grade twelve member of the Ontario Nature Youth Council. I had a hand in planning and running the 2020 Virtual Youth Summit for Mother Earth and participated with the Bert Miller Nature Club as my sponsor! I am from York Region but have ties to Niagara as my parents grew up in Welland. Much of my love of nature comes from explorations of Niagara's many trails and parks, and this inspired me to join the Ontario Nature Youth Council three years ago. The workshops for this year's summit were even more exciting than in previous years. The cross-cultural

elements of Indigenous culture integration inspired me to explore my Canadian history and reconciliation interests further. The aspects of youth-led interactions and discussions made for fantastic conversation and connections, even as we were all at our computers across the province! As part of our team activities, I worked with local teens to create a waste management project in high schools. We created one-page outlines, project plans, and an informational video to express our ideas. I loved the opportunity to stretch my brain muscles and chat with others.

# Ontario Nature Virtual Youth Summit for Mother Earth 2020 *continued*

I am so grateful for the opportunity to join this fantastic programming with the Bert Miller Nature Club's generous donation. I am so passionate about the environment and relished in the virtual summit's community. In my city, I will continue to spread the word about conservation and climate action. I plan on hosting a pollinator planting at the Mulock-Cawthra Nature Reserve in the spring when

the world begins to open back up (fingers crossed!) Every year, the Youth Summit reinvigorates my love for the planet and concern for my generation's future. I can't wait for the winter council gathering to see my peers in person and continue the discourse!

## Shagbark Nature Trail Annual October Walk

*by Dawn Pierrynowski*

On October 18, the weather cooperated, and a lovely time was had by a group of eighteen adults and four children. The new waiver form was filled out before we set out on the trail. I am happy to inform everyone that no bodily harm came to anyone. Quite the opposite, the two groups came out of the woods cheerful and filled with the beautiful, colourful sights and sounds of nature. It is always such a pleasure to see people enjoying a walk on this footpath through the meadows and woods. Janet Damude commented that she enjoyed the "forest bath."

Some of the children in the group collected a few wildflowers on their sticky, duct tape bracelets. Of course, the search for the best, most colourful fall leaves was on. I found a very large Basswood leaf.

The older kids got to look through their binoculars and may have spotted some of the birds that the two groups saw. See the sightings listed below.

Thank goes out to Peter and Lynda for volunteering to lead smaller groups. Other thanks to those who brought pruning shears to cut back any multiflora roses that hung into the trails, ready to grab clothing or hair. Some remembered garbage bags to pick up the litter of which they found very little.

Please note the Town has removed the large map and sign at the beginning of the trail and replaced it with a new signpost. They have also installed more culverts and provided woodchips on some of the trails. It is an easy walk.



Out with the old (left), in with the new. New signs, new rules. © Dawn Pierrynowski

### Bird Sightings

Two Lists of birds that were seen at two different times and locations in Shagbark Nature Park. October 18, 2020 Time 10:16-12:03. There is an overlap of sightings, one on the white (short trail) and the other on the red (long trail).

#### Lynda Goodridge's Sightings

##### 12 Species

- Eastern Bluebird 3
- American Goldfinch 3
- Pine Siskin 6
- Turkey Vulture 1
- Hairy Woodpecker 1
- Red-bellied Woodpecker 1
- Black-capped Chickadee 3
- Blue Jay 3
- American Crow 1
- Red-tailed Hawk 1
- Yellow-rumped Warbler 3
- Song Sparrow 2

#### Carol Horvath's Sightings

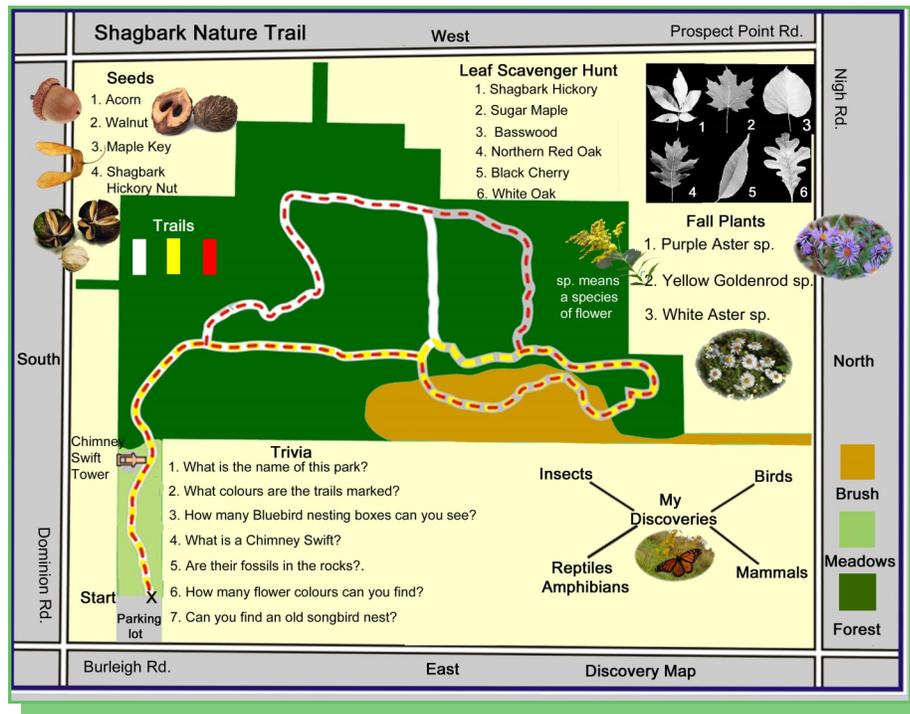
2.575 kilometers

##### 20 species

- Canada Goose 7
- Red-tailed Hawk 1
- Red-bellied Woodpecker 4
- Downy Woodpecker 2
- Northern Flicker 1
- Eastern Phoebe 1
- Blue Jay 3
- Black-capped Chickadee 14
- Golden-crowned Kinglet 2
- White-breasted Nuthatch 1
- Carolina Wren 1
- Eastern Bluebird 8
- American Robin 13
- Pine Siskin 2
- American Goldfinch 10
- Dark-eyed Junco 1
- White-crowned Sparrow 2
- Song Sparrow 1
- Yellow-rumped Warbler 7
- Northern Cardinal 1

“If you go out in the woods today, you’re in for a big surprise.” No, it won’t be a Teddy Bear’s picnic, but you will discover many wonders of the natural world.

Here is a map of the Shagbark Nature Trail. Happy trails to you.



## Notable Birds in Niagara Sept 1, 2019 - Aug 30, 2020 by Marcie Jacklin

I'll start this report off on a high note for me. On Sept 15, 2019, Blayne and Jean Farnan found a juvenile **Ruff** in a field in Wainfleet. This is a difficult identification, and kudos to this amazing couple for all the rarities they find in Niagara. The Ruff was seen until Sept 17. The last time a Ruff was reported in Niagara was 1994. A juvenile **Long-billed Dowitcher** was also seen at this location.

A **Brant** was located on the Parkway in Fort Erie on Oct 24, 2019. This bird had a light-level geolocator attached to the band on its leg. We were able to find out that this bird was born in 2017 or earlier and banded on Jan 28, 2019, in New Jersey. The folks conducting this study were disappointed that the bird wasn't shot because they wanted to retrieve the geolocator, which would have provided information about where this bird had travelled since it was banded.

On Oct 27, 2019, Ryan Griffiths found the third record of **Arctic Tern** in Niagara. Fortunately, Ryan promptly posted his exceptional sighting, and I was able to arrive at Miller's Creek to see this bird before dusk. The bad news is this bird disappeared overnight and wasn't reported again on either side of the river. Ryan also found a **Slaty-backed Gull** on Dec 8 in Thorold, which many people dashed off to see. Great work, Ryan!

**Summer Tanager** is a climate change bird that is becoming more regular in Niagara. One showed up at a feeder in Niagara-on-the-Lake on Nov 19, providing great views.

Two great birds at the Whirlpool Aero Car site attracted birders from all over Ontario for their 2019 and 2020 lists. A **Black-legged Kittiwake** was reported from Dec 22, 2019, to Feb 5, 2020, and a **Black-headed Gull** was reported from Nov 29, 2019, to Feb 20, 2020.

A Facebook posting of a **Western Grebe** in Niagara-on-the-Lake on Mar 4, 2020, and confirmation by Ryan Griffiths on Mar 5 lead to a mad early morning dash on March 6 for many Niagara birders who were rewarded with stunning views of this western bird. Many people from outside Niagara travelled here to see it, and this is only the fourth record for Niagara.

COVID-19 had a significant impact on spring birding, with many birders reluctant to venture too far afield. Many of us had the opportunity to learn about early spring migration in our neighbourhoods, which didn't disappoint. However, by May, the migration flood gates opened, and Waverly Woods (Harbourtown/Erie Beach) became the hot spot for Niagara again this year. The highlight was on May 15 when many birders from the public area observed **Golden-winged, Prairie and Cerulean Warblers**. An astonishing 28 species of warblers were seen in this area in May. To find out more about this important bird area and the historical significance, see [The Rambler Fall 2018](#).

On Aug 27, 2020, Wally Parker found a juvenile **Laughing Gull** along the Parkway in Fort Erie. The last Laughing Gull in Niagara was reported in 2006! The gull seemed to fly back and forth between the United States and Canada (no COVID border issues) and lingered until Sept 13, 2020.

On Aug 29, 2020, I was thrilled to get a call from Mourad Jabra reporting a **Western Sandpiper** at Jones Beach in St. Catharines. This bird is difficult to identify, but a few of us had stunning views once the word got out, and the identification was confirmed.

# When Planting Milkweed Just Isn't Enough: How to Rear Monarchs in Your Home Garden

by Jamie Hunter

For years now, the battle cry of the monarch butterfly enthusiast has been: "Plant milkweed, and they will come!"

So I listened. I planted. I waited. And in the summer of 2019, I was rewarded for my efforts.

I watched as monarch after monarch arrived in my garden to consume nectar from the fragrant milkweed flowers and lay eggs on the underside of the leaves. Monarch caterpillars are specialists. They only eat milkweed plants (*Asclepias* spp.). I had incredible success with the swamp milkweed in my backyard (common milkweed and butterfly weed are two other favourite host plants native to Southern Ontario).

However, I noticed a troubling trend throughout last summer – only about one in 10 caterpillars survived to reach adulthood. Monarch caterpillars are incredibly vulnerable to predators (paper wasps, yellow jackets, various ants and spiders all prey on monarch eggs and larva). Even if they live long enough to transform into a chrysalis, they're still not in the clear – field mice will eat low-hanging chrysalises if they have the opportunity.

I couldn't just stand by and witness the carnage. I had to take action. I decided that 2020 was going to be the year I gave monarchs a fighting chance.

## The Enclosure

If you want to raise monarchs in a controlled outdoor environment, you need something to contain them. A quick Google search of "butterfly enclosure" will result in an overwhelming number of results – everything from pricy pre-made cages to do-it-yourself-style enclosures. I opted for a DIY-model made from 1x2 lumber, strapping, window screening and plywood. It did the trick. The most important aspects of any enclosure include good airflow, plenty of space and a door that seals tightly to prevent predators from entering the cage and potential escapees.



I purchased ten 60ml floral tubes in a rack to hold my milkweed cuttings. There are lots of floral tubes available online. I've also seen cuttings in small glass vases with narrow openings. Either way, you want to ensure that there is next-to-no space between the stem and the container as caterpillars will crawl down the milkweed cutting, into the water and drown.

I hung my enclosure on a fence on the north side of my property, where it avoids both direct sun and bad weather.

## Hungry, hungry caterpillars

Once the enclosure is ready, you will need to monitor your milkweed plants for eggs and caterpillars. If you find an egg, remove a good portion of the stem with the leaf, place it in a container with water in the enclosure and after three to five days, a tiny caterpillar will emerge.

If you find larger caterpillars on your milkweed, follow the same procedure – make sure you cut the stem with enough leaves to support the appetites of rapidly growing caterpillars. They eat a lot. More than you think. Check your milkweed supply each morning to ensure there is enough to sustain the caterpillars for the day.



It's also good practice to keep the more mature caterpillars separate from the eggs and smaller caterpillars. Larger caterpillars will accidentally eat eggs and smaller caterpillars if they are on the leaves they are munching on. I learned this the hard way.

You will also discover that growing caterpillars produce a lot of waste, known as frass. You must remove it from the enclosure at least once per day. Frass harbours bacteria and can make caterpillars sick if it piles up in a cage. The bottom of my enclosure was made with a removable plywood piece that is easy to shake free of any debris that accumulates.

In ten to fourteen days after hatching from an egg, monarch caterpillars will begin to leave the milkweed cuttings and climb their way to the top of the enclosure where they will pupate.

## The Transformation

When the caterpillars are ready to transform into a chrysalis, they'll attach themselves with a silk-like mat to a rough surface and hang in a J-shape. After about 24 hours, their skin splits, revealing a bright green chrysalis.

For some reason, my caterpillars seem to congregate in the same location when transforming into chrysalises, which can be problematic. The chrysalises' proximity makes it difficult for emerging butterflies to hang with enough space to dry their wings properly. To prevent this, I remove the bunched up chrysalises – making sure to get most, if not all, of the silk mat – with a razor. I carefully tie dental floss to the cremaster (the stem) of the chrysalis and hang them from a branch at the top of the enclosure.



The chrysalis will turn from emerald green to black in approximately two weeks, with the monarch butterfly wings visible through the now-transparent covering. Once the butterfly emerges, it takes a few hours for the

## When Planting Milkweed Just Isn't Enough *continued*



wings to fully expand and dry before it's ready to fly away to advance the next generation of the monarch population.

When your enclosure is vacant between generations of monarchs, you must spray it down with a mild water and bleach solution to kill any mould, bacteria, or diseases.

**So far, so good**

To date, I have successfully reared fourteen monarch butterflies. Another bunch of caterpillars are chewing their way through my milkweed as I type this. In addition to it being fun and rewarding, the fourteen butterflies I successfully reared this year will, in a small way, contribute to boosting the population of



one of North America's most revered butterflies. Every little bit helps.



Jamie Hunter is a freelance content specialist living in Dundas, Ontario with his wife, nine-year-old daughter and five-year-old son. Over the past 15 years, he has contributed to various national print publications and worked in corporate communications roles at Harbourfront Centre and the University of Toronto. A self-described amateur entomologist, wannabe ornithologist, and fair-weather angler, on weekends, he can be found covered in dirt tending to his gardens.  
All photos © Jamie Hunter



## Lake Erie Seiches; A Historical, Personal and Future Perspective by Tim Seburn

When there is a sudden increase of wind pressure pushing the lake's surface water of from the west, this can produce a tsunami, or a flood of water, stacking up at the eastern end of Lake Erie and lower the water level at the western end of the lake. These events, known as seiches, can create an initial wave much higher than usual, leading to shoreline damage. Before modern weather forecasting, they were the source of much death and destruction.

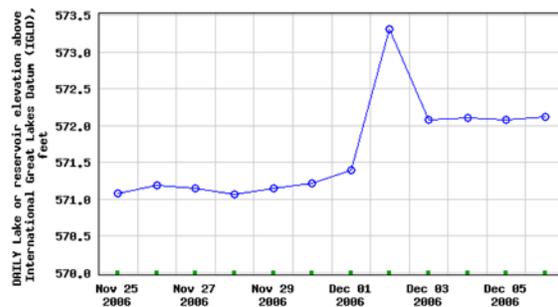
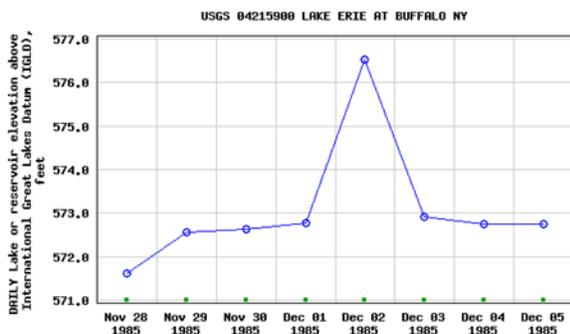
The deadliest seiche I have come across records for occurred on 18 October 1844. Several days of heavy north-east wind stacked the water up at the west end of the lake. The water came back with a vengeance when the winds shifted to the west in the middle of the night. The water at Main Street between Scott and Ohio Streets was over six feet deep. Buildings were destroyed, and many bodies were swept back out into Lake Erie. One author estimated several hundred people died. There have been many subsequent seiche events, including one on 20 January 1907, when ninety miles per hour winds from the west again sent waves over the break wall, lifting three large ships out of Buffalo harbour, depositing them onshore.

Although I could not relocate the source, the earliest

record of a seiche I have come across was for 1795. This was before the construction of the Buffalo harbour break wall, in 1820, when the mouth of Buffalo Creek was protected only by a series of sand bars. The seiche came down the lake and pushed well up into Buffalo Creek, drowning many living near the creek, mostly Natives of the Seneca tribe.

Today the break wall refracts waves, diverting much of their effect into the Niagara River, frequently causing the Niagara Parks Commission wall south of the Peace Bridge to be overtopped and damaged. The area that is regularly flooded here was originally marshlands infilled by soil excavated from the Sugar Bowl Park next to the Library's Centennial Branch.

I witnessed the impact of a seiche event on Peace Bridge operations during the night of 2 December 1985. If you had been coming from Buffalo that night in a car, entering the primary inspection line with your car window rolled down, your vehicle would have filled with water. Thankfully the seiche occurred in the middle of the night when traffic was light.



## Lake Erie Seiches *continued*

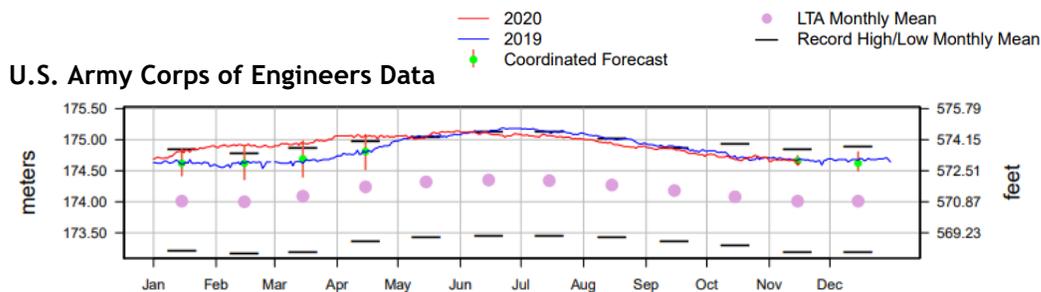
On the morning of 4 December 2006, I noticed the bay in front of our house had emptied of water after several days of heavy east winds. This particular morning though, there was no wind, and no water, an ominous sign. Around noon I went for a hike along the shore. I looked at the Point Abino lighthouse in the distance through my binoculars and noticed a flood of water (not really a wave) coming towards me. I ran and reached the end of Kraft Road in time to avoid getting swamped. I quickly drove my car down to the Niagara River Parkway and observed the water to be about one foot above the height of the Niagara Parks Commission wall. Later, after the water level returned to normal, Rick and I went back and measured the change in water elevation to be about ten feet.

There is a weather buoy in Buffalo Harbour, and the data for this buoy is available online. The charts show the water level at the buoy increased only a few feet for both of the events I just described. The break wall protects this buoy but it still provides a sense of each event's relative scale.

Whether the water level of Lake Erie is high or low can

also affect a seiche. The U.S. Army [Corps of Engineers provides this data every Friday](#). Lake Erie has an annual cycle where the lowest water level is in December, and the highest month is June. The most significant seiches historically have happened in the fall when the lake level is relatively low. However, as a result of climate change, Lake Erie is now less likely to be frozen over during the winter months. Many of you will remember the seiche that occurred on 24 February 2019, resulting in large ice slabs being pushed over the wall above the Peace Bridge. This seiche was the third and least significant of the seiches that occurred that same month.

Scientists are now also noticing that the base [water level of the Great Lakes is increasing](#). This is being attributed to deforestation, infilling of wetlands, hardening of surfaces and an increase in precipitation resulting from climate change within the drainage basin. Much of this additional precipitation is coming in the form of winter rain. The frequency and intensity of storms are projected to increase.



## Did You Know...

by Lynda Goodridge

Canada Geese are an iconic species that almost everyone recognizes as they are found throughout North America. Did you know that there are two distinct populations of these birds? There are migrating Canada Geese that breed in the northern part of the continent and winter in central and southern North America. The birds most of us are familiar with are resident birds that live in and around towns throughout the year. Resident birds are, by far, the larger of the two populations.

We often think of Canada Geese flying south as a sign of fall and the impending winter. These birds, usually flying south in a V-formation, are mostly migratory geese. Sometimes we see these birds flying in the wrong direction. The Cornell Lab of Ornithology has an interesting article from 2009 that explains this phenomenon. Here is a reprint of the article from their website: <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/news/canada-geese-resident-vs-migratory/>

Why Do Migrating Canada Geese Sometimes Fly In The “Wrong” Direction?

April 1, 2009



Canada Geese migrate south in winter and north in summer, but their travels may take a few detours along the way. Photo by [Jean Ange](#) via [Birdshare](#).

## Bert Miller Nature Club

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### 2020-2021 Executive

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•Brandon Marlatt  
•Dawn Pierrynowski  
•Tim Seburn

### **The Rambler Newsletter**

**Co-Editors**  
•Lorraine Brown-Joyce  
•Tim Seburn

The Bert Miller Nature Club is a charitable organization formed in January of 1995 by a group of people interested in sharing their enthusiasm for nature. Earl Plato, a local naturalist and history buff, was the founding president. The club is named after a well-known naturalist and resident of Fort Erie, Bert Miller, whose passion inspired all those who participated in his many rambles throughout the Niagara Peninsula. Since its inception, the Bert Miller Nature Club has been committed to preserving, protecting, restoring and improving the Niagara Peninsula's natural environment. Through monthly meetings, field outings and advocacy activities, the Club strives to foster an understanding and awareness of our natural heritage and its value in enhancing the quality of life. It also promotes cooperation with other organizations having similar interests.

In conjunction with the Town of Fort Erie, the BMNC maintains stewardship of the Shagbark Nature Park. This rehabilitated natural area that features a woodland with marked trails and interpretive signage, a meadow containing native plantings and a chimney swift tower. The Park is located on Burleigh Rd between Nigh and Dominion Roads in Ridgeway.

Indoor meetings are not being held at this time, but virtual meetings will be via Zoom on the second Monday of the month, September through June, at 7 p.m. Field outings may be scheduled periodically. Please visit our website, [www.bertmillernatureclub.org](http://www.bertmillernatureclub.org) for more information on our club and a complete list of activities.

The Rambler newsletter is published biannually in the Spring and Fall. Members are encouraged to submit articles, nature events or experiences, photos and outing reviews to [bertmillernews@gmail.com](mailto:bertmillernews@gmail.com). Items submitted may be edited and will be used subject to space allowances. Thanks to the many members who take the time to contribute to making a newsletter for everyone to enjoy.

## Did You Know... *continued*

There are several possibilities, but in fall it's likely that these are family groups moving around, now that the yearlings can fly, in search of feeding grounds.

Canada Geese raise their young near water, where the goslings can feed and if necessary dive or swim away to escape predators. In late summer the adults temporarily become flightless for several weeks as they moult their wing feathers. Once the young have learned to fly, and the parents have regained their flight, the whole family will take off from their nesting grounds to find more productive feeding areas—and this movement could be in any direction. This happens in the late summer before the massive southward migration as temperatures drop across the continent.

First- and second-year geese (not old enough to breed), along with those that lost nests early in the breeding season, also undertake a moult migration. Individuals may move several to hundreds of miles during the late spring and summer to large bodies of water where they will be safer as they moult their wing feathers. In September and October, many of these individuals will be returning from this seasonal journey, and again may be seen flying in almost any direction.

Also, bear in mind that there are increasingly large numbers of resident Canada Geese across North America. These birds do not migrate at all and so you may see them at any time of year flying in any direction. Their numbers have been growing exponentially since the mid-twentieth century and they have begun to be seen as nuisances in some communities.

## It's Time to Count Birds

Christmas bird counts are coming up fast. If you'd like to help out with socially distanced counts this year, or you'd like more information, contact Marcie Jacklin at 905-871-2577 or [mjacklin@brocku.ca](mailto:mjacklin@brocku.ca). Birders at every level are welcome.

spring or fall count would interest you. Bird counts happen throughout the year, and it's a great way to get out in nature, learn to identify birds, meet fellow birders and learn about some lesser-known birding spots. Everyone wins!

If winter is your time of year to hibernate, then maybe a