



Fall 2023

## A Message from the Board

We are pleased to share this latest edition of our BMNC Rambler newsletter and hope you enjoy the articles.

As you know, we are currently functioning without a president and vice president, with board members sharing these responsibilities. For our club to function well, we need to have strong leadership. Currently, there are two unfilled director positions on our board, and we urge anyone interested in participating to attend one of our board meetings as a visitor. This will provide an opportunity to see how the board functions and what is expected of a director. We need new blood, and welcome anyone who may be interested. There will be no obligation if you want to attend a few

meetings. We meet virtually on the first Monday of the month. Please reach out to any current board member if you are interested or you can contact us by email at [bertmillernatureclub@gmail.com](mailto:bertmillernatureclub@gmail.com).



*A beautiful young doe seen strolling down North St. in Fort Erie.*  
© Ron Goodridge

We are also happy to accept contributions of articles and/or photos for our newsletter. We currently print it twice per year, Spring and Fall. Please contact Tim Seburn if you'd like to contribute.

Many thanks to those who have contributed articles to this issue. A big thank you to our newsletter editor, Lorraine Brown-Joyce, for putting everything together so effectively.

Enjoy nature,  
Lynda Goodridge (on the board's behalf).

## In Memoriam

Last July, our oh-so-very dear Peter Bonenfant lost his battle with cancer. Peter was born and raised in the Fort Erie area. A brilliant student, he studied law at the University of Toronto and became a Bay Street lawyer. Later, preferring to help the good people of his hometown, Peter returned to our area to practice and opened an office on Ridge Road in Ridgeway.

In 2011, he became a director on the Bert Miller Nature Club board and remained an enthusiastic director until the very end. On the board, he was a steady, thoughtful and always kind voice, with a dry sense of humour. On the road or out hiking with the Club, Peter was always good company. He became an avid birder and some of our

favourite memories are being with him when a Red-throated Loon, a Red-necked Phalarope or some other surprising waterfowl was spotted on the Niagara River.



*Peter on one of the many birding outings he attended.*  
© Ron Goodridge

Everyone remembers the first time they experienced a spring fallout of migratory birds. These times feel so significant that many of us begin to measure our lives by the number and size of fallouts we experience. We know Peter shared the sheer joy of fallouts, and one he experienced in Waverly Woods, is available on

YouTube. The magic of the moment left everyone silenced. Turn up the volume and listen to the hundreds of birds singing and fondly remember Peter. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Zet6iRsPoM>

## Welcome New Members

- Ellen Borean
- Thaia Jones
- Cassie & Josh Sleep and family
- Elizabeth Szockyi

## Upcoming Meetings

- November 13 @ 7:00 pm - Marcie Jacklin - Birding in Borneo (on Zoom).
- December 11 @ 7:00 pm - Autumn Jordan - Nature Canada: The Bird Friendly City (on Zoom).
- January 8/24 @ 7:00 pm - Emily Posteraro - Invasive Species Centre: Invasive Species and Climate Change (on Zoom).
- February 12/24 @ 7:00 pm - Chantal Theijn, Founder - AWC: The Hobbitstee Wildlife Refuge (on Zoom).
- March 11/24 @ 7:00 pm - Brian Pihak, Royal Astronomical Society, Niagara Chapter - Astronomical Events in 2024 (on Zoom)
- Watch your email for updates on our April, May and June meetings.

## Upcoming Outings

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

## Memberships

- September is the start of a new season for the club. Thank you to everyone who has renewed their membership already. We look forward to being together with old friends and meeting new ones. Everyone is always welcome.



## In Memoriam *continued*

**I**t is with sadness that we learned of the passing of Dr. John Potter on September 22, 2023. He and his wife Mary have been members of the BMNC for many years.

John contributed a great deal of time and expertise to Shagbark Nature Park's restoration project in 2005 - 2006. He listed many plants that he thought would do well at Shagbark. He then ordered them from Mary Gartshore and Peter Carson's nursery, Pterophylla Native Plant and Seed in South Walsingham, Ontario. A community planting was planned, so John and Dawn Pierrynowski drove his truck to the farm to pick up all the plants. John was instrumental in the success of this project.



John planting at Shagbark.  
© BMNC Archives

He also led many winter tree identification walks for our club at Shagbark.

Most recently, John and Mary could be seen attending the virtual meetings on Zoom. He will be missed by many people.

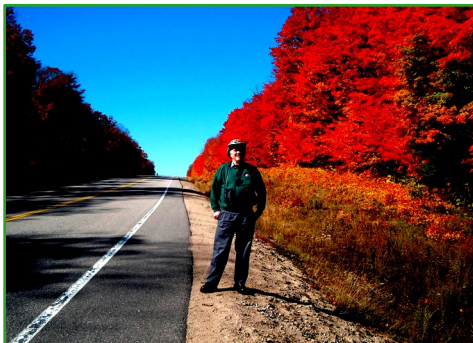
To learn more about John, The St. Catharines Standard has a detailed obituary for him, listing many of his accomplishments and where to make a memorial donation if desired.

<https://obituaries.stcatharinesstandard.ca/obituary/john-woodall-potter-1088854564>

## Looking for a Home for a Friend

*Don Mills, a former member of the Niagara nature clubs, passed away in 2015 at the age of 81. Birding with Don meant you were going to be regaled with great stories while out on the trail. Here, reprinted with the permission of his widow Gisele, is one of Don's all-time favourite stories.*

**I** was out on a rural road bird watching when I saw a dog on the other side of the road, so I spoke to him and he came over to greet me. When he reached me I could see that he was a Pit Bull, and he was wiggling all over, so I petted him and said to him that he should come back across the road with me because I didn't think that he was used to crossing the road. Which he did happily.



Birding in the beautiful Fall. © Gisele Mills

Then as I opened the car door to get in my car he buzzed under the half open door and up on to the driver's seat and so I reached in to try to remove him and he got

up and moved to the passenger's seat. Then around the car I go to get him out from that side. You guessed it, he moved back to the driver's side. I tried to coax him out and told him no that he had to get out. That really made an impression on him, so much that he curled up and laid down on the seat. No amount of coaxing would get him out. So I tried to pull him out but could not budge him.

So not wanting to be outsmarted by some dog, I figured that he must live nearby and I would go to the house up the road in the hopes that he lived there. So when I arrived at the house and asked the woman if she could help me, because I had this dog in my car which I could not get rid of and would she be able to get him out. She says "No we don't have a dog, but it looks like it might belong across the road". Across the road we go and I knock at the door and got no answer. So I figure that maybe I have the wrong house so I go to the house next door. A man comes to the door and no they didn't have a dog, but it looks like the one next door, but they both work and wouldn't be home until five o'clock or so.

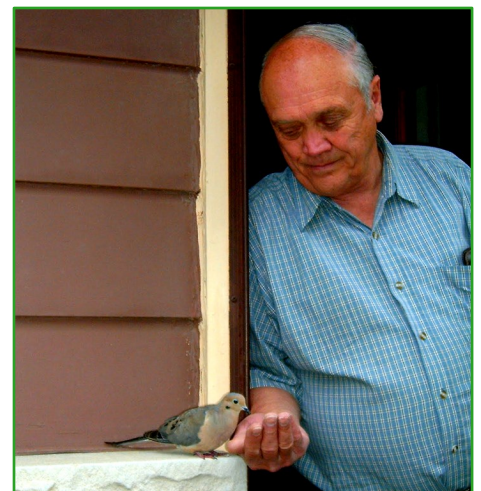
Now I'm getting somewhere, all I have to do is go back to his house and open the car door and he will get out. After all, he lives there! Well that theory was soon shot down. I opened the door and he doesn't move, so I tried to push him out and all he does is lean in to me and brace his feet into the seat. Needless to say he doesn't push any better than he pulls. So it would seem that I'm stuck with him until five o'clock.

So to kill some time, since it was only two-thirty I went home and as I arrive my wife is just getting in with the groceries and she walks up to the car and says "What the hell do you have there and you can't keep him!" "You take him to the pound." I replied no way if I take him there they would do away with him. Now I know what was ticking her off. She thought that if we were to keep the dog she would be demoted to riding the back seat and the dog would be in her seat in the front.

You know that it seemed that the dog was the only one that was happy with the whole situation, and in fact he was as happy as a lark. I'm sure he thought that he was going to be my buddy, whether I liked it or not.

So after receiving less than a hero's welcome at home I decided that I would go back early and wait until somebody comes home back at his place. So we sat in his drive waiting, and as I look around at the end of the driveway is a doghouse with BEWARE OF THE DOG over the entrance. I thought "Yeh, beware if he gets in your car you'll never get him out"!

Later a woman drives in and says to me "Yes... Is there something you want? So I answered, "Yes, don't you recognize the dog"?? She replied "Oh! Yes, but that's not my dog, it's my brother's and the dog and I don't get along. I'll call my brother". Great! I'm stuck here for who

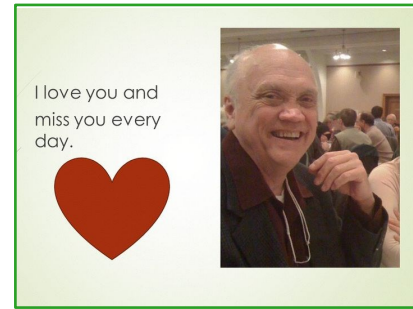


A friend to all.

© Gisele Mills

## Looking for a Home for a Friend *continued*

knows how long and it's my suppertime now. Just then the dog looks at her and wags his tail. So I said to her "he seems to think that you are O.K. so why don't we both try to coax him out"? So she agreed and went in the house to get him a treat. She came back out and offered him potato chips and I coaxed him to come out at the same time. This finally worked and he got out of the car to eat the chips. Well I did not wish to give him time to eat the chips and decide to get back into the car. So I ran around to the driver's side of the car, got in and slammed the door and drove off before he could get back in. Needless to say no birds were recorded that day. However, I had made a friend and I'm sure he enjoyed the ride around town.



Loved and missed by all who knew him.

## The History of A Possibly Native Black Locust Tree

by Tim Seburn

About 20 years ago, Rob Eberly came by my place to show me a cross-section slice he had cut from an ancient black locust tree. He was still working for the Town of Fort Erie at the time and was required to take down the tree on the unopened road allowance for Scott Street in Crescent Park. Rob recognized this slice offered a rare opportunity to learn something about the history of the black locust in Niagara.

We were aware there was a controversy about whether the black locust was native to Ontario or not. The native range of this species had been confirmed to include the region only a few hundred kilometres south of Ontario. This tree was one of a handful of apparently ancient black locusts scattered across Niagara. Would it be old enough to pre-date the Loyalist settlement period which began in 1783, and possibly be naturally occurring, the seeds brought in by water currents or perhaps by bears?

We were also aware natives planted certain trees and shrubs before pioneers arrived in Niagara. Bert Miller had co-authored [a paper on the distribution of pawpaw](#). While conducting this study, he found there were two varieties of pawpaw native to eastern North America. Since the more delicious variety had made its way here, he theorized pawpaw was brought here by humans. However, in our case, the northern end of Crescent Park wasn't near an area known to be used by natives. It seemed unlikely this particular black locust would have been planted by them.

We counted the rings and calculated the tree began to grow in 1787 - very early, but within that time Loyalist refugees had started to arrive in Bertie Township. We thought of the hardship this particular pioneer family would have faced at the location where this tree was planted. There would have been no road access into or out of this property. It was located too far from the Niagara River for convenient boat access. Lake Erie could only be reached by trudging through a wooded back-shore swamp, which is what Crescent Park originally was. They would have had no neighbours, and to top it off, the soil was good old rock-hard Bertie Township clay. Their black locust tree did okay, but we wondered how this family otherwise fared.

Recently, I came across [a 1789 map of Niagara](#) in the Library of Congress created by a talented surveyor, Andrew Ellicott. When I zoomed in on Bertie Township, I noticed he had drawn a cabin in what would have been a very isolated area in 1789. I wondered how Ellicott had discovered this cabin. Who did this cabin belong to? I noticed the cabin was located in the same area where Rob had cut down the ancient black locust tree. Rob and I got together to see if we could figure something out.



1789 Map portion with isolated Cabin west of Kraft Creek and old Fort Erie, north end of Crescent Park.  
© Library of Congress

First, we determined the black locust tree was located on Lot 6 Concession 3 Lake Erie. Next, we checked early maps to see if anyone was recorded as living at this location in 1789. The earliest maps of Bertie Township, then called Quaker Township, showed a man named Abraham Smith as being located here. This was a name I was familiar with.

In 2018, I published a family history book on my Seburn ancestors. While doing research I became fascinated with the 1787 journey they made from Newton, New Jersey, through the wilderness to Niagara along with about 500 other refugees, and I dedicated an entire chapter of my book to this "caravan", as I called it. I studied the circumstances of many of the families in the caravan. One of those families was the family of Abraham Smith.

A wheelwright and miller by trade, Abraham Smith, served as a Patriot militiaman during the Revolutionary War, captured and likely imprisoned by the British. Despite this, after the war ended in 1783, he fell under suspicion for secretly helping Loyalist fugitives escape from the colonies to Niagara. He was imprisoned again, this time by the state of New York. They confiscated his property, and he and his family were exiled from New York and deported to New Jersey with few portable possessions. New Jersey officials then gave Abraham sixty days to exit the state or face trial for treason. The Smiths headed to Newtown, where they joined the refugee caravan. (ref: Smith family tradition; Upper Canada Land Petitions; The Hegira of Abraham Smith to Canada by Alan J. Clark M.D.)

# The History of A Possibly Native Black Locust Tree *continued*

The caravan left Newton in late March 1787. On May 15, Abraham's wife gave birth to a baby boy, Abraham Junior, at the mid-point of their migration, near what is today Syracuse, New York.



Rev. Abraham Smith was born near Syracuse NY May 15 1787, died June 13 1863 at Charlottesville ON © Photo permission Linda Scheer

When the caravan reached the Niagara River at Fort Schlosser on July 10, 1787, the land had not yet been surveyed, so refugees could only be assigned to general areas. Most Loyalists were sent north to Niagara, Stamford and Thorold Townships where the soil was better. The others, including the Abraham Smith family, were sent south to Quaker Township. The Quakers in the caravan settled in the area between what is now Ridgeway and the Sugar Loaf.

Not a Quaker (the Smiths were non-conformists) or a Loyalist, it may have been particularly difficult for Abraham to locate with neighbours who would help his family get established. As a wheelwright stranded on a frontier without roads and not a farmer by trade, he found himself in a tough spot. According to Smith family

tradition, they "pitched a tent in the wilderness", and Abraham, his family, and their new black locust tree put down roots on Lot 6, Concession 3. Life was extremely hard, but they were still living here on the 14<sup>th</sup> of June, 1794 when a certificate from the Land Board for the land was finally obtained. This gave Abraham the possibility of obtaining title to their land in a couple of years, but only if they continued to live here. However, that summer the family finally gave up, abandoned their property and walked away from seven years' worth of improvements. They moved to Youngs Creek in Norfolk County to start over once again, leaving behind a young black locust tree as evidence of their attempt to "make it" in the wilderness of what is now Crescent Park.



Naturally occurring along Lake Erie at Windmill Point Road allowance. Note the compound leaf and small thorns at the base of the leaf node. © Tim Seburn

## Pawpaw Trees of My Own

I learned about pawpaws a few years ago when I visited my friend Carla Carlson, who runs Niagara Nature Tours and she introduced a group of us to the Pawpaw tree along with its flowers and fruit. Carla offered samples to taste, and I received a few fruits from her to take away. A day or two later, I made pawpaw bread. It was so delicious I went and purchased two trees online to plant the following spring (two are needed to enable fruiting). If you don't know what a Pawpaw tree is - it's native to southern Ontario and the unique flavour and smell of the fruit resembles a combination of various tropical flavours, including banana, pineapple, and mango. It's incredible! The flavour and custard-like texture make pawpaws an excellent substitute for bananas in almost any recipe.

My two pawpaw trees flowered for the first time. This is only their second year with me - they were 4 years old when I planted them. One tree has five blooms, and the other has eleven. I noticed three tiny (baby?) flies on the largest and most open pawpaw



The flower. © Liz MacDonald

*by Liz MacDonald*

flower. Fingers crossed that they find their way inside.

It's May 21 and after the frost last night, I noticed that one tree lost three or four tiny flowers (1/4 inch in size or less) out of eleven. The larger blooms survived the frost. The other tree with five blooms did fine as all its blooms were of the larger ~3/4 inch size.

I tried my hand at helping Mother Nature in pollinating a few of the flowers; fast forward three weeks and it appears I just might have bluffed my way through. I have baby pawpaw fruits growing! While I'm sure there's the possibility that some, if not these, will fall off before maturing in the fall, I hope at least one makes it to maturity.

Here we are now in mid-September and I have managed to get four pawpaw fruits to survive and grow (almost) to full maturity. However, just this morning I noticed one of them has cracked from stem to stern. The inside looks perfect with no mould or rot.



Fruit! © Liz MacDonald

But as of today, all four of them are still hard as rocks. I

## Pawpaw Trees of My Own *continued*

asked myself what I should do with the cracked one. Just leave it and hope for the best or if I pick it, will it continue to ripen and get soft?

It's a few days later, and my cracked pawpaw has fallen off the tree! I cut the cracked one to see if it had rotted inside as I suspected, but no! The crack seems to have sealed the inside from any rot and I could salvage most of the delicious fruity pulp.

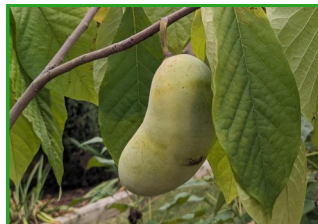


© Liz MacDonald

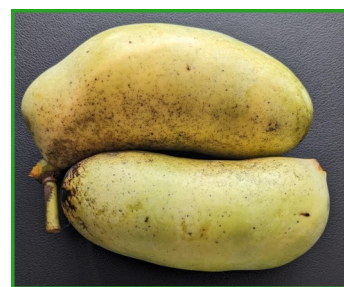
'Tis the season! I picked my first-ever pawpaws today. Can you tell I'm excited? The other two in the clump of fruits are now ripe (soft to the touch) and in my fridge, awaiting the last

one, which needs another day or two before I pick it as well.

I now have my very own pawpaw trees and fruit for many years to come. I



© Liz MacDonald



© Liz MacDonald

would encourage everyone in the Niagara Region to give this unique and native fruit tree a try in your yard.

## Notable Birds in Niagara 09/01/22 - 08/31/23

by *Marcie Jacklin*

**T**his was a great time for rarities. Unfortunately, I missed some of them because I was in Pelee or Borneo!

facility, followed by release much further south.

Unfortunately, we are seeing a decline in the number of birds. Usually an annual bird, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, was last reported in Niagara from Sept 3 to 5, 2022.



Buff-breasted Sandpiper at Charles Daley Park on 09/03/23. © Marcie Jacklin

Remarkably, the goodies kept showing up along the Lake Ontario shoreline, and from December 16 to 19 many observers saw the Barrow's Goldeneye, a rare visitor to Niagara.

Many lucky observers got to see a Glossy Ibis on September 15, 2022 at Charles Daley Park. This was an exceptional find. Unfortunately, it only stayed for a short time and wasn't located again.

Once again, birders were treated to views of Razorbills at Queenston. At least two Razorbills were blown in from the east coast and stayed from Dec 4 until Dec 30, at which point hunting season opened on the US side and the birds were believed to have been shot.

On September 26, 2022, we had another magical fallout day along the river just south of the Peace Bridge. Birders tallied one Red Phalarope, one Red-necked Phalarope; one Black-legged Kittiwake; one Sabine's Gull; three Little Gulls and a Forster's Tern.

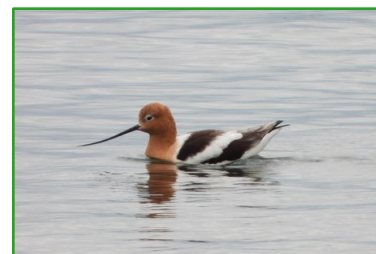
Sadly, a Snowy Owl which was found by Lynda and Ron Goodridge along the Parkway in Fort Erie on January 6, 2023, died shortly afterwards.

On October 2, 2022, a Hudsonian Godwit was found at Morgan's Point Conservation Area, but only three observers reported it.

It was a good winter for Common Redpoll sightings. Many were reported. A Black-legged Kittiwake along the Niagara River and King Eider at Fifty Point Conservation Area were also seen during the winter.

On October 22 there was a remarkable find of ten Cattle Egrets at Erie Beach/Waverly Woods. Multiple observers saw these birds.

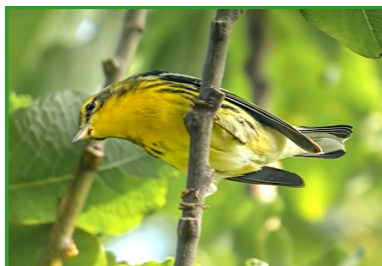
Another rare visitor on April 19, 2023, was two American Avocets at Port Weller. Although they only stayed one day, many observers were able to see them.



American Avocet at Port Weller East on 04/18/23 © Marcie Jacklin

On October 29, one lucky birder found a Townsend's Warbler in his yard. This is the first record for Niagara. Only the homeowner saw it.

On November 6, 2022, some birders who were looking for Cave Swallows (17) at Fifty Point Conservation Area also got to see a Northern Gannett. A few observers also had a flyover of Evening Grosbeaks (15).



Prairie Warbler in Lynda and Ron's backyard on 08/20/2023. © Ron Goodridge

So close, but about 700 metres away, was a Limpkin at Lewiston, New York. Although many Canadians could see it from Queenston, they could not count it for Ontario. This bird was first reported by birders on November 15 and remained until approximately November 18, happily munching on snails. Due to a pending snowstorm, the bird was captured and transported to a rehab

Locally, a rare Snowy Egret showed up at Frenchman's Creek from May 3 to 5. A great find.

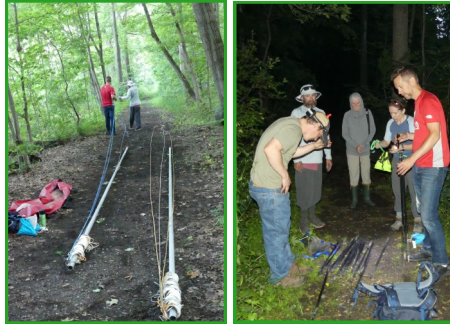
Sighting a Prairie Warbler is always exciting but for Ron Goodridge to find and photograph one in his backyard on Aug 20 was thrilling!

Wishing you all good birding.

# Going Batty

On July 7, Land Care Niagara's Michelle Karam along with staff and local volunteers set up for bat monitoring at Shagbark Nature Park.

8-meter and a 10-meter mist nets were set up along the trails early and then opened shortly after 9:00 p.m. They set a processing table up between the nets, which were checked every 15 minutes.



A digital bat detector was used to process the ultrasonic chirps, smacks and clicks of bats that are inaudible to humans. The frequency indicates what species are in the area. It didn't

take long before the call of a possible Big Brown Bat was detected and then one was captured in a net. On July 9, four Big Brown Bats were captured and processed. Four nets were used on the second night. Three adults and one juvenile Big Brown Bat were captured and processed.

Species	Code	Frequency	
Hoary bat	LACI	20 - 26	
Silver-haired bat	LANO	30 - 37	Not at-risk
Big Brown bat	EPFU	30 - 37	
Eastern Red bat	LABO	37 - 42	
Tri-colored bat	PESU	42 - 46	
Little brown Myotis	MYLU	42 - 51	Species at-risk
Eastern small-footed Myotis	MYLE	42 - 51	
Northern long-eared Myotis	MYSE	52 - 59	

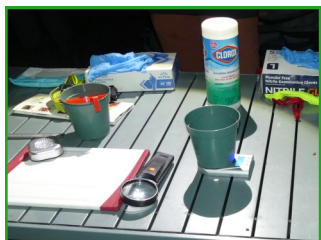
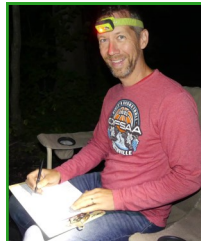


Michelle untangled the bat and put it into a bag to be taken to the processing table for positive identification and further inspection. She was the only person who could safely handle this bat on the first night, as she had the training and inoculations against rabies. She is wearing leather gloves with surgical gloves overtop and an N95 mask. Her blood is also tested



regularly.

Once the bat was untangled from the net and brought to the processing table, Michelle verified its species and sex. It was then weighed, and measured and its general health was determined. A volunteer recorded all the information on a Bat Capture Data Form.



The Processing Table has sanitizing wipes, surgical gloves, magnifiers, a weigh scale, light, and calipers.

This first bat was determined to be a

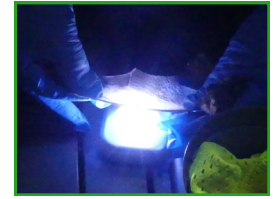
male Big Brown Bat (*Eptesicus fuscus*) or EPFU for short.

by Dawn Pierrynowski



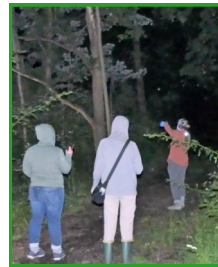
The bat is in a bag, in a flower pot, on the weigh scale. It is a young bat that weighed 18.70 grams.

They examined its fur for fleas, mites and ticks. Its wings are stretched over a light to look for tears and scars.



Calipers are used for measuring.

The sex of the bat is noted. This is the male genitalia.



The young, very healthy Big Brown is being released.

They planned a second night of monitoring as six or more bats flew overhead when the group was leaving the woods.

On the July 9, four nets were set up. Three adults and one juvenile Big Brown Bat were processed.

A special thank you to Brigitte and Tim Bonner who graciously allowed us to enter their property and showed us possible places to install bat boxes.



The participants included: Director, Land Care Niagara Michelle Karam  
Observers over the two nights: Sarah Fuller, Mike Weber, Katja Odegard, Marcie Jacklin, David Denyes and Shannon and Chris Laroque.

Bert Miller Nature Club Directors and observers: Lynda Goodridge and Dawn Pierrynowski  
Town of Fort Erie Liaison: Sean Hutton.

### Did You Know?

"The big brown bat is a species of vesper bat distributed widely throughout North America, the Caribbean, and the northern portion of South America. It was first described as a species in 1796. Compared to other microbats, the big brown bat is relatively large, weighing 15-26 g and possessing a wingspan of 32.5-35 cm." [Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Big_brown_bat)

To Learn More About Bats, visit:

- <https://landcareniaagara.com/wp/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Bats-Brochure-Final.pdf>
- <https://ontarionature.org/ontario-bat-guide/>
- <https://blog.burbankids.com/bat-puns/>
- <https://idioms.thefreedictionary.com/bat>



## Fort Erie Conservation Club Fall Fair

by Dawn Pierrynowski

What fun! It was a lovely, warm fall day. The Club had an opportunity to set up a pop-up tent with activities for children and displays for adults. The children became very involved with animal tracks in the sand, matching feeder birds, and nature items, to name a few.

Thanks to the Fort Erie Conservation Club for supplying us with a picnic table for children to craft buttons and colour pictures. Tim Seburn



set up a display of pawpaw seeds and had a container of fruit. He invited the public to take some fruit to taste and some seeds to try their hand at propagating them.

Many thanks to our club's volunteers who made this possible: Viki Busche, Lynda Goodridge, Christine Knighton, Anne Mills, Tim Seburn, Deb Sherk, Dawn Pierrynowski and Rick Stockton. We

look forward to attending the 2024 Fall Fair.

© Dawn Pierrynowski

## BMNC to the Rescue

Three members of the Bert Miller Nature Club joined others throughout the world in participating in Global Bird Rescue (GBR) during the week of October 2 to 6, 2023. Anne Mills, Chris Knighton and Lynda Goodridge teamed up to search the areas around Town Hall, the Boys and Girls Club, The Willows Seniors Residence, Albany Place and Brimstone Brewery to check for any injured or dead birds resulting from collisions with these buildings.

During the peak of fall migration, an estimated 4 billion birds will not arrive at their winter destinations due to a fatal collision with a building. Global Bird Rescue is an annual event hosted by FLAP Canada (Fatal Light Attraction Program) designed to raise awareness about bird-building collisions and to inspire home and workplace bird-safe retrofits to prevent them. According to FLAP Canada, each year approximately 25 million birds are killed in Canada as a result of preventable collisions with windows on buildings. The proliferation of plate glass in the construction of building facades represents a growing threat to wild birds. Collisions with windows are known to affect at least twenty-four Species at Risk in Ontario.

This is the second year that BMNC members, who are also

members of the Bird Friendly City - Fort Erie team, have taken on this task. Last year, the group found one fatality on the south side of the Town Hall building, and this year, they found one on the northwest side of the Boys and Girls Club building. These fatalities were recorded on the Global Bird Collision Mapper, which documents bird-building collisions worldwide.

by Lynda Goodridge



Dark-eyed Junco found deceased. © Lynda Goodridge

Bird collisions are not limited to commercial buildings. Statistics show that these collisions happen frequently in single-family residential buildings as well as multi-story buildings. FLAP Canada offers a variety of window treatments for both home and office buildings that are very effective in addressing this problem. Visit [flap.org](http://flap.org) for more information. Concerned citizens can also help with this issue by encouraging their MPPs to adopt mandatory bird-friendly standards in the Ontario Building Code.

## Shagbark Nature Park Fall Outing

What a great day for a walk at Shagbark Nature Park in Ridgeway. Not only did it not rain, but it was a pleasant stroll with new members and their enthusiastic children. Fourteen of us enjoyed the morning of Saturday, October 21, exploring the park and looking at the land the Town of Fort Erie recently acquired for the park.

Birds that were seen along the trails included House Sparrow, House Finch, Song Sparrow, American Goldfinch, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, White-breasted Nuthatch, approximately 25 Eastern Bluebirds, approximately 50 Cedar Waxwings, lots of Dark-eyed Juncos, several White-crowned Sparrows and one Lincoln's Sparrow.

Through the eyes of the adults:

- Lots of acorns on the ground.
- Beautiful fall colours on the trees, especially the yellows.
- Very pleased to walk through the plot of land recently purchased by the Town.
- Enjoyed having five kids with us and seeing their enthusiasm for nature.



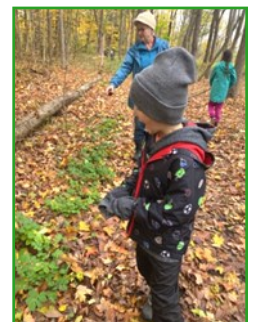
All ready to enjoy the day. © Dawn Pierrynowski

by Dawn Pierrynowski

- Grateful the rain held off so we could take a walk.
- Noticing how calming it is to be in nature, I could feel my shoulders relax as we walked through the woods.
- Seeing a cranberry bush with berries and seeing the Swamp Rose Mallow seed pods.
- Walking in the woods never disappoints.
- Just soaking up the sights and sounds was awesome, especially with the fall foliage.

Through the eyes of the children:

- Saw the Golden-crowned Kinglet for the first time.
- Enjoyed exploring the new piece of land acquired for Shagbark.
- I noticed the park was clean, and I loved that people had thought to bring things they needed to clean up as necessary.
- Enjoyed that the park was mostly forest and had some meadows too.



## Bert Miller Nature Club

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### 2023 - 2024 Executive

**President** •vacant  
**Past President** •*Deb Sherk*  
**Vice President** •vacant  
**Secretary** •*Viki Busche*  
**Treasurer** •*Rick Stockton*  
**Memberships** •*Dawn Pierrynowski*  
**Directors** •*Eliza Durant*  
•*Lynda Goodridge*  
•*Anne Mills*  
•*Dawn Pierrynowski*  
•*Tim Seburn*

### The Rambler Newsletter

•*Newsletter contact: Tim Seburn*  
•*Editor: Lorraine Brown-Joyce*

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 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.

Meetings are held the second Monday of the month at 7 p.m., in person for September, October and April to June, and virtual via Zoom for November through March. 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.

## In closing...

**E**njoy the local sightings in photos.



Returning Winter Wren in Fort Erie 10/09/23.  
© *Wally Parker*



Gum Tree leaf (*Nyssa sylvatica*).  
© *Dan Andrews*



Another photo of the young doe.  
© *Ron Goodridge*